

# EFFECTIVE INTERVENTION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES TO COUNTER VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

## A National Consultation



**Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace**  
*an initiative of the*  
**Foundation for Universal Responsibility of His Holiness the Dalai Lama**

# **Effective Intervention and Communication Strategies to Counter Violence Against Women**

**A National Consultation**

**November 28-30, 2016**

New Delhi, India

*A Report of the Proceedings*

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Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace  
Foundation for Universal Responsibility  
Of His Holiness the Dalai Lama  
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**Meenakshi Gopinath**  
Director  
and  
The WISCOMP team

## **List of Abbreviations**

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CHRI	Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative
FICCI	Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
JVC	Justice Verma Committee
NAWO	National Alliance for Women
NIMHANS	National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences
PFI	Population Foundation of India
PRIA	Public Service Broadcasting Trust
PSBT	Participatory Research in Asia
SLAP	Street Level Awareness Program
UN	United Nations
VAW	Violence Against Women

# Introduction

Actions against Violence Against Women (VAW) gained unprecedented currency post the 2012 rape case of Jyoti Singh.<sup>1</sup> In many ways, the brutality of the case and the subsequent reactions that it aroused invited a more thorough engagement with VAW from the citizens of the country. Activists, policy makers, lawyers and practitioners from the field participated in discussions and critique. These attempts were underlined by an urgency to change the state of affairs. While the opinions were varied, they were united in their intention to build a more secure and inclusive society for women.

The path-breaking Justice Verma Committee report<sup>2</sup>, brought to fore, not only the areas that needed action to bring about lasting change but also outlined ways for moving ahead. One saw several new initiatives and localized movements sought to change attitudes, improve infrastructure and reform law and order. These were, however, not without intertwined problems. Some movements, despite being well-intentioned, fell back on the very stereotypes of gender that perpetuate violence in the first place.

An overall analysis of these initiatives has largely been missing from the public discourse, as has been the stitching together of strategies which have proven to be effective. Given that the statistics on crimes against women do not document

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<sup>1</sup> On December 16 2012, a 23-year old woman from Delhi, Jyoti Singh, was brutally tortured and gang-raped in a moving bus by 6 men and a juvenile in the capital. While her male friend was beaten and badly injured. 11 days after the incident, Singh died from her injuries in Singapore where she was taken for emergency treatment. There were widespread protests across India and thousands (especially young people) came forward to raise their voice against government's failure to provide adequate security to women and girls. Since it is illegal to reveal the rape victim's name in public, Jyoti Singh was called 'Nirbhaya' (meaning '*fearless*') in the press and the public discourse that followed.

<sup>2</sup> Following the Jyoti Singh gangrape case, a three-member committee headed by Justice J.S. Verma, former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court was constituted by the Government of India to recommend amendments to the Criminal Law in order to fast-track trial and intensify punishment for criminals accused of committing sexual assault against women. Justice Leila Seth, former Chief Justice, High Court of Delhi, and Gopal Subramaniam, former Solicitor General of India were the other members of this Committee constituted on December 23, 2013. The Committee submitted its report on January 23, 2013 and made recommendations on laws related to rape, sexual harassment, trafficking, child sexual abuse, medical examination of victims, police, electoral and educational reforms.

The full text of the Justice Verma Committee Report, an expansive 644 page document can be accessed here: <http://www.prsindia.org/uploads/media/Justice%20verma%20committee/js%20verma%20committe%20report.pdf> (Last accessed on 01.05.2017)

a significant shift, it is the need of the hour to take stock of where we are as a society in our attempt to counter the most gruesome forms of gender-based violence and make informed choices towards transformative change.

In this context, the WISCOMP National Consultation titled ‘Effective Intervention and Communication Strategies to Counter Violence against Women’ proved to be a significant event which brought together practitioners, judges, lawyers, civil servants, NGO professionals, teachers, students, administrators, artists, activists, among others, to engage in a constructive dialogue on specific themes of GBV. The interdisciplinary nature of the consultation facilitated the sharing of success stories, challenges and strategies across sectors and fields.

From delving into tensions between legality and justice to addressing issues of violence at home, in conflict areas, in public spaces, in the media and in education, the Consultation invited a rich debate on each of these issues while also highlighting the challenges still being faced. The interventions from the participants further paved the way for deeper contemplation and articulation on the issues raised and strategies outlined. The group discussed the manner in which these can be made robust and thus, more effective.

The need to push the envelope, especially by young people, was constantly highlighted and the Consultation foregrounded their role as the agents of change. Within this ambit, articulations about the need to expand vocabulary, build more inclusive approaches, think beyond the faultlines were periodically reiterated.

The three-day consultation succeeded in generating a nuanced debate on the issue of gender-based violence. This report documents the proceedings and seeks to inform future interventions by diverse stakeholders on gender justice.

## **Summary of Sessions**

Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP) was tasked to implement a project titled ‘Partners in Wellbeing: Youth Countering Violence Against Women’ in the Delhi-NCR region support by the Public Affairs Section, Embassy of United States of America in India, during 2014-17. The project aims to empower young people and youth leaders in the age group of 14-35 years in order to prevent and stop violence against women. Several workshops have been conducted over the course of the past two years to engage young people and educators on the issue of ending violence against women.

The National Consultation organized on November 28-30, 2016, titled ‘*Effective Intervention and Communication Strategies to Prevent and End Violence against*

*Women in India*', brought together experts, practitioners, young activists and youth leaders from various fields to engage in an informed dialogue on countering VAW. The objective of the Consultation was to take stock of the issues at stake and the strategies that have worked in countering VAW. The Consultation sought to foreground the reflections on the learnings from the past and strategizing about the initiatives in the future. The Consultation was held in solidarity with the global 16 Days of Activism against Gender based Violence (November 25-December 10), worldwide.

The Consultation was attended by over 120 participants including academics, practitioners and experts from the areas of law, policy, media, advocacy, academia and research who have shown exemplary commitment to the cause of women's rights and gender justice and actively worked with young people.

Comprising nine different sessions over three days, the Consultation commenced with remarks from WISCOMP Director, Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath, which set the context of the deliberations and the potential outcomes of the discussions. The inaugural session saw Keynote Speaker, Justice Gita Mittal who spoke of the gaps between legality and justice, and the acute need of sensitizing the judiciary in order to build a gender-just society. Senior Lawyer Naina Kapur, National Alliance of Women (NAWO), President Dr. Ruth Manorama and Police Reforms Coordinator from Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), Devika Prasad foregrounded the issues of equality, caste and the need for police reforms, respectively; informing the larger agenda of the session titled 'Legality or Justice: The Issues at Stake'.

This was followed by a special address from Deputy Chief of Mission, MaryKay Carlson, Embassy of United States in India, who highlighted the need to rising against gender-based violence and the thrust of the work of the US Embassy on these issues in India. Dr. Rebecca Tavares, Representative of UN Women in India, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Maldives, outlined the expansive work of UN Women (earlier UNIFEM) to achieve gender-justice, speaking to the theme of the session which was titled 'Walking the Talk on Violence Against Women'.

With its emphasis on recognizing the communication strategies which proved to be successful interventions against VAW, the next session of the Consultation, titled 'Changing Attitudes & Behavior through Popular Culture: The Impact of Advertising and Multimedia Campaigns', foregrounded the role of media campaigns and popular culture in bringing about change in the perception of gender stereotypes and challenging the socially accepted notions of gender-based violence. Professor Dipti Nath and CEO of Sideways Consulting, Abhijit Avasthi

deftly contextualized the issue using contemporary examples while actor and media personality, Maala Parvathi shared her personal account of activism against GBV. The session was chaired by Pamela Philipose, gender specialist and well-known journalist.

The discussion continued with the session titled 'Right to Secured Public Spaces', focusing on making public spaces secure and accessible for everyone. Chaired by Dr. Swarna Rajagopalan, the session saw thought-provoking talks by: Prof. Sanjay Srivastava on the idea of masculinity and its linkages with cultures of violence; Meenu Vadera who spoke of the work of the Azad Foundation in empowering women with driving skills to make public and private spaces safer; Shweta Kohli Rajpal from Uber who shared the initiative taken by Uber to ensure the security of women passengers; Street Level Awareness Program (SLAP) founder Mriganka Dadwal talked about the need of equipping women with self-defense techniques. The session concluded with a presentation by Vandana Vasudevan who talked about her ongoing research on gender-sensitive urban planning and its role in making public spaces safer and more secure.

Day Two of the Consultation began with a discussion on violence in the private sphere and the possible legal and support resources available to deal with it. Senior Lawyer Geeta Luthra spoke from the perspective of the law and the gaps within it in this regard. Breakthrough India's Vice President Sonali Khan highlighted the campaigns against domestic violence which had a measureable impact on such cases. Senior Lawyer, Mrinalini Padhi also shared her experience in trying to bridge culture and law and how the gap between the two adversely affects victims of GBV. A special intervention by psychiatrist Dr. Vranda illustrated this with the case of a Psychosocial Clinic from NIMHANS, Bengaluru, set-up to help victims of intimate-partner violence.

The next session was invested in exploring Gender Identity, Intersectionality and Socio-Political Conflicts and was chaired by Rita Manchanda, Research Director, South Asia Forum for Human Rights, who also focused on Negotiating Patriarchies in Socio-Political Conflicts. Senior Lawyer, Vrinda Grover made a presentation on the Extraordinary Impunity in Conflict Zones and Ezabir Ali from Kashmir shared her experience of using an unconventional intervention strategy to address security issues of women in Kashmir.

The last session of Day Two focused on listening to stories from the field with a view to understand how impacts are measured by organizations when they design programs to counter GBV. Executive Director of Population Foundation of India, Poonam Muttreja talked about the use of mainstream television series to educate

the masses on the rights of women, Retd. Indian Police Service Officer Manjari Jaruhar underlined the methods for creating awareness about laws protecting the rights of women. Dr. Nandita Shah from the Akshara Foundation and Akhila Betsy George from Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) shared successful case studies of engaging with communities to spread awareness and engage women through innovative methods like sports and games.

Day Three commenced with a session on education with experts Prof. Jaya Indiresan who spoke about designing education to build a gender-positive society; Ravi Gulati who shared the innovative methodology used by his organization, Manzil, to build a counter-culture; Suman Kumar, Principal, Bluebells School International, who talked about integration of gender-studies in the school curriculum and the collaboration with WISCOMP and Dr. Sheeba K.M from Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit, who spoke at length about the need to make structural changes in educational institutions to ensure gender-justice. The session was chaired by Prof. Krishna Menon, School of Human Studies, Ambedkar University who also presented her views on ‘Teaching to Transgress and Resist Gender-Based Violence’.

The Consultation concluded with an open session inviting suggestions and comments from the participants to help formulate recommendations for effective strategies for countering gender-based violence and bringing about an effective change in the future. This enriching session saw the coming together of numerous implementable ideas as well as some out-of-the-box suggestions with many participants expressing eagerness to be a part of the proposed initiatives.

*Deconstructing Violence* – an exhibition-in-a-bag, curated by Public Service Broadcasting Trust (PSBT), as a part of the WISCOMP project, was also partially showcased at the Consultation. An interplay of images and verse, the exhibit documented stories of women from different backgrounds and their everyday experience, struggles and hopes. The exhibition provided a space for introspection and reflection as the Consultation proceeded with deeper contemplation on specific issues.

## Opening Remarks

**Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath, Director, WISCOMP** began her remarks by quoting from Maya Angelou's seminal poem 'Phenomenal Woman' (1995):



*“Pretty women wonder where my secret lies.  
I’m not cute or built to suit a fashion model’s size  
But when I start to tell them,  
They think I’m telling lies.  
I say,  
It’s in the reach of my arms,  
The span of my hips,  
The stride of my step,  
The curl of my lips.  
I’m a woman  
Phenomenally.  
Phenomenal woman,  
That’s me.*

*...Now you understand  
Just why my head’s not bowed.  
I don’t shout or jump about  
Or have to talk real loud.  
When you see me passing,  
It ought to make you proud.  
I say,  
It’s in the click of my heels,  
The bend of my hair,  
the palm of my hand,  
The need for my care.  
'Cause I’m a woman  
Phenomenally.  
Phenomenal woman,  
That’s me.”*

Gopinath underscored the power of the poem which challenged the prevalent stereotypes about women in the 1970s. She further quoted Angelou,

*“My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style.”*

She called this an anthem for generations of women, especially in the women’s movement, who do serious work but do not take themselves too seriously and retain a sense of humor.

Commenting on the need to question, address and break the cultures of impunity and cultures of silence, Gopinath also invoked Anasuya Sengupta’s poem, ‘Silence’:

*“Too many women in too many countries  
speak the same language of silence.”*

She underlined the need for women to have freedom and power to speak and to be heard. Gopinath said that both these articulations point to the “bumpy, non-linear trajectory between victimhood and agency”, and emphasized on the continuous need for “everyday resistance and daily mutinies” to ensure a gender-just environment. In traversing the distance between the sorrows of ‘Silence’ and the self-assuredness of the ‘Phenomenal Women’, said Gopinath, lie innumerable stories – stories of pain, struggle, solidarity, faith and of triumph - even in the face of structural challenges.

She asserted that we must reflect upon the privileges of our education which enable us to potentially advocate for the needs of women worldwide.

Recalling the five waves of feminism in India and a plethora of issues germane to gender justice, Gopinath noted that contemporary theorizing is refining these strains, revisiting its own fundamentals and making the articulations on the centrality of women’s issues more nuanced. The recognition of gender being mediated along the faultlines of class, caste, religion and region and the methodological difficulty in treating ‘woman’ as a homogenous category is being addressed in contemporary discussions along with a deeper understanding of the operationalization of patriarchies in our societies, families, communities and the state and the complicities between them.

Issues of violence against women – both structural and overt violence – have resurfaced in the debates and discussions on the continuum and the spectrum of violence that women confront.

The slippage between Law (*Niti*) and Justice (*Nyaya*) and the symbolic deification of goddesses with no real power, point to the deep-seated ambivalence to violence that pervades the land of Gandhi and the land of the Buddha.

Gopinath recognized the ironically tragic importance of the Nirbhaya case (December 16, 2012) which prompted spontaneous and unprecedented mobilization, of particularly young people, to document the outrage of the pervasive brutal, systemic and overt violence against women. She calls it the ‘**un-closeting moment**’ of GBV, foregrounding it as a social and not just a women’s issue underlining an urgent call for immediate change. The path breaking Justice Verma Committee (JVC) report, taking into consideration civil society inputs and discussions led to two important landmark legislations - the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2013 and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, which sought to alter the experience of women’s security in public and private spaces. Gopinath said that JVC report catalyzed a new discourse on GBV, bringing to light multiple layers of violence (both manifest and structural). The most important contribution of the report, said Gopinath, is the Bill of Rights which she referred to as the Magna Carta for anyone working in the field of gender justice. The Bill reiterates the rights guaranteed to women under the Constitution of India, its commitment to international covenants including CEDAW and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and speaks to the historic exclusions on the basis of gender which impairs the agency, dignity and equality of women.

Referring to the National Crime Records Bureau Report (NCRB)<sup>3</sup>, Gopinath acknowledged the importance of many more cases being reported and coming to light, even though she expressed concern over the continued increase in the rates of violence in some “rogue states”<sup>4</sup> of the Indian Union.

Gopinath outlined the gravity of the issue of VAW which is continuing unabated in many parts of India. Cultures of impunity and cultures of silence continue to exist and a deep-seated ambivalence to violence still remains. Primitive notions of masculinity are still asserting themselves, misogyny seems to be regaining legitimacy in India and many parts of the world. Intolerance of alternative

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<sup>3</sup> The annual NCRB report compiles and presents state level and city level data on crimes reported in India.

<sup>4</sup> Some states in India have been recording a very high number of crimes against women and girls and record the worst child sex ratio. These states are Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Punjab, West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Jammu & Kashmir is fast catching up. Dr. Gopinath called these the “rogue states”. For more details, see Appendix 1 of the Consultation background note.

sexualities still continues. Community honor is still inscribed on the bodies of women, particularly in situations of conflict and rape continues to be a weapon of war.

The “Silver Lining”, she said, is the emergence of movements across the country with the will to combat, challenge and engage with VAW. She located the WISCOMP Consultation within the ambit of melding theory and practice with a focus on the role of young people in pushing the agenda forward. Gopinath highlighted the positive developments in the field. Men and women are building solidarities across ‘borders and boundaries’ to resist ubiquitous forces of violence, especially against women. There has been an efflorescence of initiatives post December 2012 by scholars, practitioners, civil society activists, lawyers, legislators, judges, women’s groups, media persons, entrepreneurs, who she said, “*are pushing the envelope on gender justice in spaces which were hitherto opaque to innovative change.*” She said that the time is conducive to break out of the discourse of victimhood. She also noted that young people today are increasingly discovering and asserting agency, demonstrating a refusal to accept a culture of silence and inaction.

Gopinath said that this Consultation was not a one-off event and sustained engagement is the only way forward. Gopinath also summarized the other events held over the past fifteen months to engage the youth as a part of the WISCOMP project.

Gopinath briefly introduced the sessions scheduled, highlighting the questions of inquiry and the areas for discussion. (See Annexure A for these questions) She also acknowledged the support of the Public Affairs Section, Embassy of United States, India, and introduced the Keynote Speaker, Justice Gita Mittal whose reputation as a staunch crusader of gender justice on the Bench has won her both accolades and admiration.

## Legality or Justice: The Issues at Stake

The first session titled *Justice versus Legality: The Issues at Stake* explored the challenges within the justice delivery systems and examined the accomplishments of the judicial system post the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2013<sup>5</sup>. The session also involved introspection on the tensions, anomalies and successes of the enforcement of laws like the Sexual Harassment of Women at the Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013<sup>6</sup>, with a focus on language as well as the substantive aspects of the discourse. The speakers drew upon their extensive experience and deftly analyzed whether the proposed legal shift towards women's 'empowerment' truly addresses root causes of VAW.



The **inaugural lecture by Justice Gita Mittal, Judge, High Court of Delhi**, foregrounded the practical issues at stake to improve law and order to counter violence against women. In an honest account of her successes and struggles as a judge, Mittal asserted that legal reforms have led to some constructive change but their lasting impact on society is yet to be seen. She highlighted the fact that progressive laws may not directly translate into positive social transformation without incorporating mindset and behavior change.

Foregrounding the context of the Nirbhaya incident, Mittal outlined the uniqueness of the public outcry and the representation that it found in the media. Within a week a committee of eminent judges was formed (on December 23rd, 2012) with a mandate to suggest amendments to the criminal law for those committing VAW. A month later, the committee submitted an exhaustive report with recommendations to amend the criminal law, with a special reference to

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<sup>5</sup> Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2013 is a legislation passed by both the Houses of the Parliament in India in March, 2013. The legislation amended laws related to sexual offences in the Indian Penal Code, Indian Evidence Act and Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973. The Act explicitly recognized sexual offences. Acid attacks, sexual harassment, voyeurism, stalking, trafficking, disrobing a woman have been incorporated in the Indian Penal Code. The official gazette can be accessed at: <http://indiacode.nic.in/acts-in-pdf/132013.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Sexual Harassment of Women at the Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act was passed to protect women from sexual harassment at their workplace. This statute supplanted the Vishakha Guidelines for prevention of sexual harassment introduced by the Supreme Court of India. The official gazette can be accessed at: <http://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/Sexual-Harassment-at-Workplace-Act.pdf>

rape and other forms of violence against women including the reforms required in education. The government, however, did not include all the reforms in the amendments. In March 2013, a report specifically looking at rape as an offence was submitted. This report marked a huge milestone in redefining the nature of evidence in sexual assault. The presumption now was that the victim did *not* give consent as opposed to the earlier legal position when the victim had to prove that she/he did not give consent to the intercourse. The age of consent was raised and the definition of rape itself was amended to include gang rape as an offence. The sentences were also advanced.

For long, VAW has been accepted as a part of the society. However, changes are beginning to take place including the recognition of rape within marriage, recognition of insensitive questioning of victims by judges. Stalking, touching, passing sexual remarks, acid attacks are all now seen as specific criminal offences. This has led to the women's movement against these crimes finding a legal basis in India.

Highlighting the main objective of the Verma Committee Report, and speaking directly to the objective of the Consultation, Mittal emphasized upon the acute need for implementing effective measures to prevent violence against women. In what is seen as the effect of increased attention on VAW, there has been an increase in the number of cases of VAW reported, leading to a rise in the rate of convictions as well.

However, there are still many critical areas of improvement as Criminal law does not provide for protection and prevention in all cases. Mittal explained through an example of how a victim withdrew a case of rape as a result of ill treatment by the system and ill-representation by the court. There is a reluctance to engage with details about personal issues like sexual intercourse and penetration and even teachers are reticent to talk about the particulars of rape, sex, etc.

Mittal made a significant point about the importance of linguistics in law. She cited a case from Tamil Nadu where the victim came from an illiterate family and the judge was Kashmiri and there was a sizeable communication gap which became an impediment in delivering justice. She emphasized the role of translators in portraying accurate information of and for the victims. Highlighting her own experience as a member of a committee to make changes with linguistics in the Delhi High Court and working with the police, Mittal asserted that the competency of the police is of extreme importance as they need to handle sensitive evidence which can be easily tainted or damaged. Simultaneously, the hospitals need to be sensitized as well so that the victims are not mistreated. If the information is

not recorded properly, the offender may not get caught. Mittal advocated for a sensitization program that includes those from the top to the bottom.

Under her leadership, a program for gender-sensitization of fellow judges was initiated. Through adept translators, testimonies were transformed. In the program, she included voices from marginalized groups including Hijras<sup>7</sup>, sex workers - people who have been hurt as a result of unfair procedures and who have never been heard owing to being a part of a different group mostly treated as ‘invisible’ and because judges often lack awareness and “are in their own bubbles”.

Mittal called for an examination of our value systems, a closer look into how we treat our young people, engage with matters of sex and the things that we permit young men to get away with. These are the very issues which manifest as serious crimes much later. Men are brought up with attitudes that normalize violence against women. There is a dire need for educating boys and girls on how to treat each other, about sex and sexuality and their own rights. She asserted that one needs to start early to see any real societal change. The 2012 Nirbhaya case initiated an unprecedented response but in reality, Mittal believes that there is a long way to go.



**Dr. Ruth Manorama, President, National Alliance of Women** started her talk titled ‘**Dalit Women: Claiming Rights and Addressing Violations**’, highlighting the need for understanding the importance of finding justice for women regardless of our position and identity. Acknowledging the legal reform ushered by the Nirbhaya case, Manorama said that laws alone cannot change the society. There is a need to educate

the public and social movements are the only solution to ensure that legislation translates into implementation/ reality on the ground.

Talking about the fight of Dalit women, Manorama said that they are survivors of over five thousand years of historical violence. Over 20 years of the Dalit Movement in India, there have been changes in the law and yet, the reality of discrimination against the Dalits continues to exist. Caste violence is not talked about but it permeates every aspect of society, at every step, asserted Manorama.

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<sup>7</sup> “Hijra” is a social term used for transgender persons in India, usually those who are born male. Being a sexual minority face widespread ostracization and discrimination. It is often translated as “eunuch” or “hermaphrodite” in English. Until the Supreme Court of India judgement of 2014, recognizing transgender persons as the ‘third gender’ in law, *Hijras* experienced disenfranchisement. As a result, they were not allowed to vote or contest elections as themselves.

She cited the example of a Dalit scholar from Hyderabad who committed suicide as a result of caste based discrimination.

She emphasized that Dalit women seek real societal changes and not just mere words on paper; that women recognize caste as a form of discrimination. Dalit women's movement was accused of dividing the feminist movement even though Dalits were excluded from the feminist movement. Highlighting the irony, she said that the Dalit women's movement was started to fight for *inclusion* in all general forums.



**Naina Kapur, Senior Lawyer, Supreme Court of India**, commenced her talk '**Equality - a pivotal benchmark?**' by posing the following question to the audience: "*Is equality for you a given or an aspiration?*" Most of the audience agreed with the latter. Kapur highlighted the dichotomy of the situation by stating the fact that equality is a right guaranteed under the Constitution of India and yet, it is seen as an aspiration

by a majority of people, and this belief informs the everyday lives and actions of the people.

Recounting her story as a corporate lawyer, Kapur shared that she became disillusioned of the courtroom. She realized that justice did not lie in the courtroom and that she had to make herself accessible to women around the country. Travelling and meeting women across the country, she asked women what justice meant to them. The resounding answer that she received across the board was to have their "sense of self intact". The justice system is linear and not systemic and thus, despite reforms in the law, the agenda of justice remains unfulfilled and the underlying discrimination continues. She further elaborated that most reforms are based on antiquated ideas about women (chastity, virginity, etc.). Kapur urged for a careful change in the vocabulary.

She said that it is important to correct the terminology in order to shift the blame from women to the institution (for e.g., it is important to call it sexual harassment instead of eve teasing as sexual harassment implies a direct violation of one's right to equality). She further advocated for innovative redressal mechanisms to end systemic discrimination normalized as sexual harassment.

The emphasis should be on making the current laws work rather than making new laws. She stated that the young generation should focus on the road to equality that can preempt acts of violence rather than emphasizing on criminal law which

only sets in motion a process of retribution after the violence is afflicted. Saying that every law should include provisions that outline preventive measures, Kapur highlighted the need for accountability and the subsequent need for budget allocation for such preventive measures.

**Devika Prasad from Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), Coordinator, Police Reforms,**

threw light on the status of the police reforms with her talk ‘**The State of Police Reforms: Gaps and Challenges**’. Justice Verma Committee report included an entire chapter on police reforms to ensure the safety of women. Prasad asserted that a recognition of the centrality of police actions in ensuring justice for victims of violence and preventing all forms of VAW, demonstrates a move towards framing the issue better and to encompass its complexity.



Ever since its inheritance from the British, India has not transformed the police system. She listed the following systemic hurdles with the current police system:

- i) The police are severely under-resourced and under-staffed.
- ii) Deployment is an issue. For example, more than half of the Delhi Police are actually not at the Police stations.
- iii) There are huge amounts of diversion of the force to unnecessary security of VIPs<sup>8</sup>
- iv) Police are still mainly male. Women make up only 6 % of the police force across the country.
- v) Women do not occupy key operational posts anywhere, indicating the lack of equal opportunities in police.
- vi) There is a lot of interference from political leaders, gangsters, criminals and other influential bodies, that often results in divided loyalties.

Given that there are many issues at play, the police force cannot be held solely responsible for the high rates of crimes against women. It is important to have the focus of the discussion on reforming systems and institutions. Police is

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<sup>8</sup> VIP stands for “Very Important Person”. This person is accorded special privileges due to their rank or status. Often at least three to four police personnel are deputed for security of VIPs in India.

required to address very sensitive issues (like domestic violence, trafficking, etc.) and therefore, requires appropriate training.

Even though the Supreme Court of India guidelines have mandated security of tenure and that law and order functions have to be separated from crime functions, the implementation of these reforms has been extremely delayed. Given these delays in the reform of traditional policing functions, gender reform in the police is a far cry. Sharing CHRI's attempt to make an intervention in this regard, Prasad shared that they have demanded for a public consultation. This demand has stalled things from getting worse by bringing the issue into limelight.

There is increased awareness but little change in terms of practice, for e.g., there has been a real rush to increase the number of women in police to fulfil certain legal requirements. However, the levels of sexual harassment within the police are very high and women at the lower levels do not know where to file complaints.

Prasad advocated multiple interventions at the level of the court and civil society. She also emphasized the need to have more allies to facilitate real change. She urged participants to reflect on the meaning of 'real change'; our vision of policing and how should it change for everyone (including women).

### **Key Discussion points and Learnings**

More alliances and partnerships are needed from different stakeholders (governmental and civil society partners). There is a need for substantive equality rather than just symbolic equality and, the gap between law and justice needs to be bridged. More spaces and avenues need to be created to facilitate open inclusive dialogue on gender-justice, security and rights of women. The importance of multi-layered gender-sensitization of different stakeholders including lawmakers, protectors of the law, police and members of civil society.

## **Walking the Talk on Violence Against Women**

Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath opened the session titled the ‘Walking the Talk Against Violence Against Women’, introducing the two speakers for the session, Hon. MaryKay Carlson, Deputy Chief of Mission of The US Embassy in India and Dr. Rebecca Tavares, the Representative of UN Women to India, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Maldives. She applauded their work to pilot, support and strengthen initiatives at the regional, national and international forums. She also acknowledged the presence of Jeffrey Sexton and Mandeep Kaur from the US Embassy in India and thanked them for their support to the WISCOMP project.



**MaryKay Carlson, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of United States in India**, delivered the **special address** at the Consultation. In support of the 16 days of Activism against Violence Against Women, Carlson outlined GBV as a global human rights issue that needs will, resources and partnerships between all the stakeholders (governments, civil society, media, youth, intellectuals and citizens at large) to ensure security for women and girls. She talked about the 16

days of Activism campaign which seeks to usher an urgent reflection, awareness, attention and action to make women and girls safe from all types of abuse. She advocated for recognizing the individual responsibility in supporting gender equality in personal and professional capacities. Invoking President Obama, Carlson said that the growth and development of communities is directly proportional to the opportunities and education they give to girls. Carlson shared her personal life journey where in a family of four children (two boys and two girls), everyone was treated equally, leading them to get a college education and build their careers. She found it difficult to imagine societies where girls are treated violently and not just unequally. She asserted that gender equality is a priority for the governments of India and the United States and work with partners like WISCOMP has helped in bringing about attitudinal and behavioral change in society, especially amongst young people. This, she stated, contributes towards developing a generation that is committed to equality.

*“I am particularly proud of the partnership between US Public Affairs Section and WISCOMP for the Youth Countering Violence against Women in India program. This program focuses on youth taking leadership roles to counter*

*violence against women by focusing on attitudes, beliefs and behaviour changes. Together we are developing a generation that does not accept violence against women as the norm - a generation that is committed to create a more equitable world for both men and women.”*

She elaborated upon the work of the US Embassy and US consulates in India that work throughout the year to empower women through dialogue, discussion and action. She highlighted some of the notable initiatives of the US which include: bring American gender experts to exchange views with their Indian counterparts, organize film screenings & discussions, support art exhibits, host library programs and curate articles from leading experts on Gender in the Embassy’s Magazine *Span*. She underlined the need for understanding the issues faced by women through a holistic perspective that includes the life-cycle approach to violence prevention. She said, “*The United States understands that GBV and women’s issues in general cannot simply be addressed from the top-down but must also be addressed through grassroots and community-based solutions.*” Carlson emphasized the multiple initiatives of the US Embassy on issues of women’s rights and gender based violence including mainstreaming gender within the Embassy. She further commented on the necessity of this work and continued dialogue which will go a long way in making equal opportunities available to the next generation regardless of their gender.



**Dr. Rebecca Tavares, Representative of United Nations for India, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Maldives,** in her talk ‘**Towards Planet 50-50: Stepping it Up to End Violence Against Women**’, shared the background of the International Day of Fighting Violence Against Women. November 25th was marked by the United Nations (UN) in response to a very specific event in 1960 in the Dominican Republic when three sisters were killed by the then dictatorial regime.

Highlighting the structural nature of violence against women, Tavares said that it is not just a domestic issue and not just about crime. There is a need ‘to speak truth *with* power’ and take cognizance of intersectionalities and the multiple forms of discrimination faced by many people, not just the minorities.

Tavares noted that for decades violence had been normalized and now people are becoming more aware of it and identifying it. Underlining the universal nature of gender-based violence, Tavares pointed to the difficult task of changing society through education and communication. Drawing upon UN Women’s work,

Tavares shared the struggle to bring about reforms in law. However, even in India, where the law has been reformed, violence has not abated. There is a need to look for a new strategy which must include education and focus on youth.

In this regard, she talked about different campaigns of the UN including the '16 Days of Activism' (Nov 25 - Dec 10), 'Step - It - Up' and 'He for She'. The campaigns focus on the participation of young people and initiating men and boys into the conversation through innovative communication strategies. She emphasized on making the heads of state a part of the conversation and leading the campaigns in their countries. Quoting research statistics, she said that nearly half of women in Asia have faced physical or sexual violence. UN Women is working with the government and the private sector to emphasize the economic costs of violence and subsequent costs of the women's absence from the workforce. She said that lack of safety of women also results in the burden on healthcare and overall national budget. She advocated for community level education programs to address this.

UN Women has also worked on making cities safer for women and emphasized simple things such as public lighting and focus on anti-voyeurism to make public spaces safer for women. UN Women has also worked with female police officers, training them to respond better to victims of violence. UN Women's work with UN peacekeepers in training them to realize their mandate to intervene if they witness VAW by state or non-state actors was also one focal area, she observed. UN women has piloted a women peacekeepers' course with the Government of India so that women are always at the table with regard to peacekeeping and this position has been supported by the UN Secretary General as well. The attempt is to change the framework so that the importance of VAW which now ranks very high on the Security Council agenda, is recognized by everyone. It has been found that women's economic freedom contributes to their freedom from VAW but it is important to note that women cannot be economically empowered if they continue to face these pervasive forms of violence. One of the issues that Tavares has been trying to advocate in India and make visible is, that this is not just a violation of right to life but also a violation of women's right to work and equality in the workplace.

She said that women's participation in private sectors must be encouraged for several reasons. While more research needs to be undertaken, existing studies reveal that women tend to seek out diverse points of views before making decisions; decisions made by women tend to reflect different opinions leading to a more stable performance of groups as they focus on consensus building; women's leadership styles improve performances in a business setting as it has

been observed that they are more open to views of the customer. She underlined that this is not an essentialist argument. The differences are not based on biology but on socialization. She also emphasized the need to work with political parties as they have been found to be major impediments to women's increased presence in politics that can build strong voices in favor of equality for women.

## Key Discussion Points and Learnings

An important point that is often missed in the discourse on violence against women is that women too sometimes are perpetrators of violence, and intervention strategies should be cognizant of this fact. The role of political leaders in fast tracking redressal was highlighted and in this context the example of politician Mayawati, ex-Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, who had set up special police stations for Dalit women to register complaints was quoted. "*Political parties must realize that this issue is a vote-getter*", the interventionist said. The importance of sensitizing parents was commented upon because discrimination begins at home; within the family. Citing an example of her work in Hyderabad where she had interviewed children (aged 8-10), one of the participants shared that she found that boys are often sent to public schools for a 'better' education whereas girls are admitted to government schools. She articulated that equal



opportunity and education are crucial to break this cycle of discrimination otherwise boys will grow up to believe that inequality is normal. The importance of learning from women's movements in the past was also articulated as important to build on what had already been articulated and understood. The significance of engaging all the stakeholders in communities was highlighted. A question about the difficulty of imparting gender-sensitive education to children when

the stereotypes are often reinforced at home and in society was posed to the panel.

Tavares responded by saying that research has shown that by increasing the number of women in workspaces, decisions begin to change overtime. Women have a more expansive view of who the stakeholders are and once they change the composition of stakeholders at the table, new strategies are evolved. UN Women works with multi-party political caucuses of women, working at the village level with the Panchayati Raj System. *“Because of the way in which women are socialized, they do seek out diverse points of view”*, she said.



Carlson responded with a personal experience, where her 16-year old daughter remarked that the women’s movement is about making life better for **both men and women** and *not* just women. She said that young boys and girls are listening to us and that she is confident that children will be able to make informed decisions because they are increasingly getting exposed to a variety of views.

Building partnerships with women and men, especially young people to craft a more inclusive, humane, democratic society based on equality, dignity, freedom and justice, emerged as the primary learning from the session.



## Changing Attitudes and Behavior through Popular Culture: The Impact of Advertising and Multimedia Campaigns

The third session at the Consultation facilitated reflection on the changing trajectory of *Advertising and Multimedia Campaigns* post-Nirbhaya and the attempts to impact the popular culture space. Specific campaigns were discussed to examine how far the messaging (as received by the audience) matched the intended outcomes and trace the trajectory of change. The deliberations also focused on how this space can be inducted for the gender justice agenda and can be utilized for challenging gender stereotypes. How can one navigate through commercial interests that can act as impediments to making the shift in perspectives? The panelists also dwelt on the new opportunities that the digital space has to offer.



**Pamela Philipose, Public Editor, The Wire,** introduced the session stating that understanding the effect of popular culture on gender was an early directive of the women’s movement. Several people had analyzed how women were represented in the media and the public space. She referred to a survey of magazine covers in the 1980’s by *Manushi* to ascertain the social roles that women are expected to perform.

“It was observed,” said Philipose, “*the women on the cover of these magazines were portrayed as smiling, passive women, like dolls in a shop window or as gifts to be unwrapped.*” The survey argued that these portrayals symbolized the ideal woman of men’s fantasies, simply an object of male desire. Philipose quoted Barbra Fredrickson and Tomi Ann Roberts in defining ‘Objectification’<sup>9</sup>:

*“Women were viewed primarily as objects of male desire rather than persons themselves. Objectification functions to socialize girls and women to treat themselves as objects to be looked at and evaluated.”*

Over time, the issue has assumed complexity from pitting representation against reality to challenging the homogenous category of ‘women’ to make room for

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<sup>9</sup> Barbara L. Fredrickson, Tomi-Ann Roberts. “Objectification Theory: Toward Understanding Women’s Lived Experiences and Mental Health Risks” *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, Vol.21, Issue No.2 (June 1997), Pg 173-206

intersectionalities and recognize the role of ethnicity, caste, class, language and religion.

Philipose averred that media conflates the experience of middle class women as the experience of 'all women'. Outlining the aspirations of the modern woman, she made an argument for the 'new woman' to not only be 'an independent consumer' but also 'an independent citizen' who needs to be projected as such. She underlined the need for an **ideological critique of power** and foregrounded the question of analyzing the functioning of 'apparent' agency and the power of women to change the relations of power.

*"Is it just the case of feminine subjectivity now being moulded for a post-feminist, heteronormative, neo-liberal framework or in this case does this really change the relations of power within the society?"*, she asked.

She further talked about two striking aspects about the Nirbhaya moment: i) the cry for death penalty for rapists and for a protectionist society and state and ii) the demand for equality and freedom for women and young people.

Philipose pointed out that even though both these conversations had their origins in their demand for justice, they showcased divergent viewpoints and ideological approaches. She particularly referred to two articulations, one by gender - activist Kavita Krishnan and the other by journalist Pratikshya Bakshi. Krishnan had emphasized on women's rights to bodily integrity by challenging the claim of the then Delhi Police Commissioner who said that women often invite this trouble by being too adventurous. Krishnan declaimed that, *"we will be adventurous and rash... freedom without fear is what we need to protect, to guard."*

Philipose quoted Bakshi, "Women in the country have been confined and regulated, even as they were routinely stigmatized, medicalized, sexualized, maimed, stalked, harassed, raped, burnt and killed." She further said that women have to reclaim their rights even if it meant bearing the charge of shamelessness by a patriarchal society.

Philipose highlighted these issues be foregrounded in the discussion and introduced Dipti Nath who presented on changing portrayals of women in advertisements and the visual media.

**Dipti Nath, Associate Professor, Department of English, Lady Shri Ram College**, tracked the trajectory of changing representation of women from victims of violence to agents of change and the role of popular culture in changing the



mindsets of people in her presentation titled **‘From Victims of Violence to Agents of Change: The Changing Media Discourse Post- Nirbhaya’**. Her presentation was a curtain-raiser to a larger project in association with WISCOMP. She referred to advertisements, short films and public service announcements, many of which were released in the wake of the Nirbhaya movement.

The Nirbhaya incident resulted in unprecedented public reaction, spontaneous citizen activism, groundbreaking public engagement with the issue of gender-based violence and sustained media coverage. The changes that took place in public policy were also reflected in media perceptions and imaging of women. Nath asserted that society is growing increasingly visual and visual culture has a great deal of impact on the society.

*“We live in a culture of spectacle and surveillance and cultural practices are becoming more image oriented. The image is the most significant site where ideology can be perceived”, she said.*

She highlighted social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Youtube, and Snapchat which have become important sites of disseminating messages as well as the changing public discourse. Drawing upon the portrayal of women on screen, Nath emphasized on the significance of this shift which is positively contributing to gender-sensitization and expanding the normative. She argued for a perceptible shift in the portrayal of women in films, television, computer and mobile screens. This, she said, is playing a significant role in making people question gender roles and espouse a more inclusive attitude.

Nath used several advertisements and promotional campaigns<sup>10</sup> to demonstrate how the perspectival shift was occurring, these included the following:

*i) Rape – It’s my Fault by AIB (All India Bakchod Pvt. Ltd)*

The video used humor to focus attention on the sensitive topic of sexual violence and worked as a satirical video compelling the viewers to question. It showed a mirror to the society and sought to make people uncomfortable with the existing state of things. The script espoused all the stereotypes that are propagated by

<sup>10</sup> These videos are available for public viewing on the internet & in the multimedia presentation titled ‘Re-Imaging: Frames of Empowerment’ by Dipti Nath in WISCOMP’s training package.

patriarchal discourse that rape is a woman's fault and that these assumptions are illogical.

ii) *MARD*

MARD stands for Men against Rape and Discrimination. Launched in 2013 as a social campaign to raise awareness about violence against women, the campaign used the social media space to spread this message. The symbol of the 'moustache' was used strategically as a symbol of masculinity, even while attempting to redefine masculinity. The campaign distributed fake moustaches at popular events like IPL<sup>11</sup> and was successful to an extent in making men and boys think about the issue. Nath also noted that down the line, MARD campaign has got derailed in its focus.

iii) *Seatbelt Crew*

Following the Justice Verma Committee report, the Supreme Court recognized the third gender in all official documents.

The video shows a band of transgender persons mimicking the flight crew on an aircraft to instruct people at traffic lights to use seatbelts. The video, Nath commented, is an excellent example of inverting the stereotypes by casting the Hijra who has always been stigmatized, seen as an outsider and as sinister. The video recasts the Hijras into benefactors, figures who can impart wisdom as responsible citizens, who accept and are accepted.

iv) *Series of Make-Up Tutorials by an Acid Attack Survivor*

The video by a group called *Make Love and Not Scars* features an acid attack survivor, Reshma who gives make-up tutorials and reminds the viewers that acid is as readily available as make-up products like lipsticks and eye-shadows. The video takes the viewers to a petition to ban the sale of acid that is used freely in India by stalkers and 'jilted lovers' to punish women who stand up against sexual intimidation.

v) *Female Taxi driver advertisement for IPL Season 6*

The video shows a group of male fans directing the female taxi driver who is scared to go into a dark and deserted lane. Her fears are allayed by one of the

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<sup>11</sup> IPL stands for "Indian Premier League" which is a professional Twenty20 cricket league in India. Cricket is arguably the most popular sport in India and teams representing different Indian cities contest against each other. The reach of the IPL platform is widespread and cuts across the fault lines of caste, class, gender and region. Thus, the MARD campaign had the potential to spread awareness about gender-based violence through this platform.

male passengers. The video attempted to redefine the attitudes traditionally associated with men.

vi) *Dekh Le*

Across four scenarios this video documents how women are viewed as objects. The video inverts the gaze by mirroring the looks by men to make them realize, in that voyeuristic moment, the illegitimacy of their gaze and shame them.

Nath reiterated that advertisements are significant sites of socialization. While there are commercial interests capitalizing on current public opinion, their contribution to the public discourse cannot be negated. They depict attitudes and behavior, social stature and agency, and still continue to portray women as passive objects of desire.

vii) *Ariel – Share the Load Campaign*

The video depicts two mothers-in-law talking about the ‘progress of women’ and the hike in women’s salaries. The daughter-in-law earns more than the son. However, the husband still expects the wife to wash his shirt. This advertisement won the Glassline Award at the Cannes Film Festival for showcasing gender equality. Ariel (a popular brand of detergent) has persuaded garment manufacturers to have care labels that state – *can be washed by both men and women*.

viii) *Women have to do everything alone*

The video showed a father apologizing to his daughter for not having taught her about gender-equality and setting the wrong example. He asserts that how men and women have grown up with stereotypical understanding of gender roles. He pledges to now contribute to household chores and help his wife.

Nath concluded that most media campaigns are driven by profit motive and feed upon popular opinion. She asserted that their importance and contribution to changing the wider social structures, still needs to be recognized. They can have far reaching effects and are crucial in changing perspectives.

**Abhijit Avasthi, CEO, Sideways Consulting**, shared his experience as a creative director and commented on the power of advertising in his presentation titled ‘**You think Our girls are any less than boys?**’ Advertising is subjective storytelling, he said, but possesses the power



to push boundaries and shape behaviors. He contextualized violence as not just physical violence or abuse but also as denial of opportunities and lack of recognition. Advertising can be used for reversal of stereotypes and deliver direct messages. However, Avasthi argued that if the storytelling aspect of advertising is utilized creatively and optimally it can have a more permanent and powerful impact.

He went on to screen select advertisements<sup>12</sup> which, he claimed, were moving the discourse in the preferred direction of gender justice.

*i) Will of Steel*

The video highlighted traditional mindset that restricts women to the domestic arena. Yet this advertisement by a steel company showcases Geeta Phogat who is a body building champion and an Olympic gold medalist, as a role model.

*ii) Boys don't cry by Vogue Empower*

The video reiterates the conventional stereotype that is imposed on boys: to be strong and to not display “emotions”. Through the power of visuals from different junctures in the life span of a boy the video shows their vulnerability and how they are not able to express themselves because of social codes. The video ends with a visual of a man hitting a woman in an intimate setting and ends with the message that instead of teaching our boys not to cry, we must teach them not to make anyone else cry. Avasthi argued that correcting language, which is an inextricable part of culture, can go a long way in bringing about change.

iii & iv) Other advertisements used by Avasthi showcased the intricacies of language while linking possibilities to the names given to girls. These highlighted the paradoxes in our society. “*Aanchal sirf aasun na pooche*”, “*Shanti ke saath maar peet na ho*” “*Saraswati ke paas kitabein rahein.*”<sup>13</sup>

The advertisement ended with a message that we must give our girls as beautiful a life as the names that we give them.

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<sup>12</sup> All these videos are available for public viewing on the internet.

<sup>13</sup> “Aanchal”, “Shanti” and “Saraswati” are names given to girls in India. “Aanchal” is a garment worn by women in the upper part of the body. The edge of Aanchal is often used by women for many things including wiping tears. “Shanti” means peace. “Saraswati” is the goddess of knowledge and learning in Hindu mythology. The phrases above are particularly intended to highlight the irony behind the names given to girls and their realities. They roughly translate as: Aanchal shouldn't just be used to wipe tears. Shanti should not be a victim of violence. Saraswati must have books and access to education. By making these statements, the advertisements illuminate that often the opposite is true in our society and hence, must be changed.

Avasthi opined that putting the message across through a normal situation is better than a dramatic portrayal. “*The more we see of something, the more we accept it. That is human nature*”, he said.

In this regard, he shared a campaign that he had designed for *Star Plus* where the channel consciously decided to re-align its image around the empowerment of women. A series of four advertisement films saw women speaking up for themselves and defying the ‘normalized’ stereotypes and infusing the screen time with a certain ‘normalcy’ where one would expect drama.

He ended his presentation by sharing some clips from Breakthrough’s ‘Bell Bajao’ campaign which encouraged neighbors to intervene in the cases of domestic violence, sharing that it was one of the most successful campaigns. He recognized the need to do more work in the field.



**Actor, Writer, Psychologist, author and television personality Maala Parvathi** shared her personal experience in the context of her work in Kerala in her presentation titled ‘**Seeking Perception Change Amongst Decision-makers and Administrators.**’ She said that effective communication in today’s world of armchair technology remains a challenge as a lot of communication happens virtually.

She recalled an incident from February 2006 when she had a harrowing experience in a bus in Trivandrum in Kerala, while traveling at night. During the journey she was continuously groped. She felt terrorized and despite being a public figure, she could not summon the courage to call for help. A lady came to her rescue and Parvathi borrowed her cellphone to call her husband, choosing to alight with her much before her destination. Even though the lady complained to the conductor, he grinned back saying that such known faces have no business travelling in public transport at night. She recounted the fear and helplessness she felt and talked about burning the clothes she was wearing once she reached the safety of her house, since she felt “invaded” and “unclean” after the incident.

When she questioned the indifference that she met with, she was appalled to receive the most stereotypical responses, those of apathy and judgement – may be she asked for it. How do you know that she did not enjoy it? Her own reaction to blame herself worried her the most.

She proposed to *Malyalam Manorama*, a well-read daily in Kerala, to do an expose on Women's Day about how women are blamed in cases of violence against them. She agreed for a 'Ratri-Yatra' (Journey in the Night) with the media team shadowing her at a distance. One of the busiest routes was chosen that took the team from the main bus depot to the main hospital in the city of Trivandrum. She was not only solicited but also forced into a waiting autoriksha and saved from harassment only when the photographer intervened. The findings stared back in the face of the media house and they followed it up with an incisive article. The government reacted and partnered with the media house to implement safety measures for women. Parvathi's recommendations were accepted and shadow policing was introduced, street lighting was improved and police check posts were introduced.

Parvathi faced hostility after the story was published. She was particularly targeted by women who thought that this whole incident was engineered by Parvathi to grab attention. Later the same media house hosted a talk show, planting opinions in advance to prove that this was a publicity stunt on Parvathi's part. She described this experience as extremely painful.

In 2012 after the Nirbhaya case, Kerala was alarmed and girls were told to dress conservatively so as to not invite or tempt men. The conduct of men and what they must do with their desire and the need to subjugate and violate women was unaddressed. The state became repressive instead of adopting progressive measures, shared Parvathi.

Recounting one such incident from 2015, Parvathi elaborated that ten boys and girls were punished and suspended in a reputed college for sitting together on a bench. Parvathi became actively involved in the case, appealing for the revocation of the suspension. In Kerala, any interaction between the two sexes is prevented, gender segregation is the norm and discrimination exists even in the usage of mobile phones. She further highlighted that parents are in favor of this culture of surveillance and moral policing, and consider their girls safer under these restrictive measures. Non-conformists are punished severely through shaming.

Parvathi condemned the state of affairs and said that teaching women to speak up and be aware of their rights is the way out. Conditioning the minds of boys to respect women is important and regressive beliefs must be corrected. Decision-makers and administrators have to play a key role by taking decisive and sensitive actions in this regard to enable women to challenges and resist pressures.

She also referred to the case of Jisha, who was brutally raped and murdered. Her body was unattended on the street for one and a half day. Parvathi is currently

fighting for justice in the Vadakanjari rape case where a 32-year old was raped by four men who sought to assert their rank on her alcoholic husband by raping her. The victim was bereft of any support and did not even share her plight with her alcoholic husband. After a couple of years, when the husband noticed a marked change in her and was able to talk to her about it, they filed a police complaint. The victim was doubly victimized by the police, who asked her insensitive questions like, “Who gave you the maximum pleasure?” The victim and her husband were made to come to the police station for four consecutive days and were made to sit from dusk to dawn while every passerby jibed at them with insensitive remarks and mocked them for reporting the crime two years late.

Character assassination is the order of the day to malign the victim. Parvathi questioned that can women who do not fit the stereotype of the ‘good woman’ – wife, mother, employee, be raped? Do they not have the right to live with dignity?

### Key Discussion points and Learnings

One participant shared an experience from a workshop with women in higher education in Kerala where a state government official who was invited to address the audience started making lewd comments. Another participant commented on the importance of recognizing that literacy does not always translate into ‘education’ as was demonstrated by the cases coming to light from Kerala, a state with the highest rate of literacy in India. Another participant highlighted that the advertisement (*Ring the bell against domestic abuse*) while being seemingly progressive, showed men as the saviors who were ringing the bells or



initiating the change in the norms. He also commented on the lack of depiction of men inflicting violence on other men. The use of humor in advertisements (*Rape, it's my fault*) was problematized by a participant who said that society needs to be ready to receive such humor. She observed that humor can also be counterproductive. The stereotypical



portrayals of transgender persons without adequate research, was also questioned by a transgender participant. Another participant observed that the entire discussion was framed in heteronormative terms, thus limiting its scope. The euphemistically used word ‘Nirbhaya’ was also objected to by a participant who said that the victim’s own mother said that she should be called by her real name - Jyoti Singh. The name ‘Nirbhaya’ propagates a certain understanding of fearlessness in the context of rape which is not without complexity and reiterates a culture of fear.

Responding to these comments from the participants, Nath said that there needs to be a shift in our understanding of rape as the worst fate that can befall a woman to begin considering it as a form of violent assault. She also added that advertisements are meant for a certain kind of consumer and are one aspect of public discourse. Yet even this limited reach is significant as it ignites discussion and problematizes received beliefs and norms.

The Chair, Pamela Philipose pointed out that everything that is in the public domain is open for public interrogation. She further added that creative people are also products of culture and one must constantly attempt to improve culture. A participant also interjected saying that if the flaws of popular culture are not critiqued then the concepts that follow will remain wanting; understanding will not be nuanced. Philipose thus underlined the need for informed critique.

The session was successful in both documenting the positive and negative aspects of the power of media in changing the discourse on gender roles and stereotypes. The films showcased the need for looking at representation in all its complexity since simplistic portrayals can be problematic.

## Right to Secured Public Spaces

The session sought to document the strategies that have worked to make public spaces safer and accessible for women and the role of enablers like female cab services, self-defense techniques in reducing incidents of stalking, acid attacks and other such forms of violence and harassment. The deliberations also focused on transforming violent masculinities and the role of bystanders in making effective interventions to counter violence in public spaces.

Dr. Swarna Rajgopalan, Founder, Prajnya Trust piloted the session, beginning with her own work in documenting the limitations that women face, including those of mobility in public spaces. Prajnya, she said, works on recording coping strategies employed by women which may not fit the textbook definition but were responses, nevertheless. She traced the progress in the discourse by stating that individual and collective silence on the issue has ended and we are moving towards constructive solutions that target society. Beyond the work in public spaces, Rajgopalan raised the question of building better infrastructure, both physical and attitudinal to prevent violence.



**Professor Sanjay Srivastava, Professor in Sociology, Institute of Economic Growth, University of Delhi,** commenced his talk ‘**Changing Masculinities? Gender, Cultures of Violence and the Possibilities of Change**’ by making a few fundamental points in the context of VAW.

It is important to recognize and accept that nobody gives up power willingly and masculinity is a source of power. Understanding masculinity is crucial in the efforts to end violence because, *“Gender is always a relationship - between men and women, between men and men, between women and women, etc.”*

Another basic idea that must be kept in perspective is the distinction between masculinity and patriarchy. Patriarchy establishes the superiority of all men to all women. Masculinity believes that some men are better than other men and more than just better than women. Therefore, masculinity is a relationship between men

and women but also men and men. Masculinity, he said, is produced at different sites like the family, law, civic associations, schools, through rituals, etc.

Srivastava argued that masculinity is a more nuanced way of understanding gender and the ‘psycho - social factors’ behind identities, hierarchies and exclusions that set men and women apart. He asserted that masculinity cannot be disentangled from sexuality and is mostly defined within the realm of sexuality. Concurring with Nath, Srivastava noted that the Nirbhaya incident urges us to ask the question - “Is rape the worst thing that can happen to a woman?” The idea that women must be protected from men and thus, defined in relationship to men, needs to be closely examined and moved away from.

He illustrated three strategies which have worked through three case studies each of which explores a different idea of masculinity and gender. These he asserted will also help differentiate between theory and practice.

1. Men’s Action to Stop Violence Against Women (MASVAW) Initiative by Centre for Health and Social Justice was started in Uttar Pradesh in 2002. It was established with a view to discuss men’s action for stopping violence against women and to introduce complex ideas among men’s groups about **power, violence and sexuality in public spaces**. Discussions included ways of encouraging men to reflect on gender power relationship through workshops, trainings, participation and community action. This was started without any intention of measuring the impact. He observed that NGOs often avoid initiating such discussions as they think that these will drive people away. Having worked with the initiative himself, Srivastava remarked that this was done to provide a non-instrumental way to talk about gender.
2. *Samajhdaar Jodidaar* (trans. Smart Partner) Project by Centre for Health and Social Justice – A program rolled out by the NGOs in different villages, generated complex discussions about the **nature of domesticity and the burdens of masculinity**. Srivastava extended a nuanced explanation of power. Patriarchy is about power and nobody wants to give up their power willingly and hence, if one has to convince someone to give up some power, you have to convince them of the benefits of doing so. Through this initiative, ideas of developing social movements and non-normative ideas of sexuality for men and women were introduced. He shared that there were no immediate results but the willingness to engage with these issues increased. Srivastava emphasized on the role and utility of technology in assisting in this change but he also cautioned that technology alone cannot overturn structures. Social media, he said is a reflection of this and not the solution. “*It is imperative to not shy away from complex ideas to make change plausible*”, he said.

3. *Ek Saath* (trans. Together) project - This initiative is being introduced across different sites of masculinity - families, mohallas<sup>14</sup>, higher educational institutions. It explores interesting links between what happens on the ground and the sites where masculinities are constructed. Anxieties about masculinity will also be discussed.

*“Masculinity is always about anxiety of being”,* said Srivastava.

The importance of collectively discussing these ideas on the ground was reiterated by Srivastava. Throwing more light on masculinity, he said that contrary to popular perception of being ‘solid’, masculinity is extremely fragile and is easily offended. Such projects need to be unfolded in larger groups so that men are able to see that other men are involved and are able to share their experiences. The burdens of masculinity along with its privileges should be discussed in such forums. *“Masculinity is an extraordinary burden”,* he said.

He further added that these ways are not utopian but rather complex, incomplete but necessary ways in which we can engage with our gendered world. They speak to, in his opinion, actual situations of power rather than theoretical ideas of power and the strategies to deal with these situations.



**Meenu Vadera, CEO, Azad Foundation,** spoke from the position of a practitioner and shared her experience of running a taxi service by women in her talk ‘**Women on Wheels: Making Public Private Spaces Safer for Women.**’ Vadera talked about the informal sector where poor women are employed and which is unsafe and disempowering. In an attempt to break the mould for these women and combat violence in the public and private spheres, Azad Foundation and Sakha Cabs were

started by her to bring together women and train them to become professional chauffeurs. Vadera stated that driving as a livelihood choice strikes at the heart of patriarchy as it empowers women with freedom and movement.

She shared details of her work on mobilization and outreach; of working with communities and the families of the drivers. She outlined the basic parameters of the training process that was designed after taking into consideration the needs of women who would be served by the organization.

<sup>14</sup> “Mohalla” is a Hindi-Urdu word for locality or community in a town or a village.

- i) The process is learner centric and encourages women to value the self.
- ii) The work is flexible and cognizant of women's domestic responsibilities.
- iii) One-third of the training is about driving skills and two-thirds is about rights, understanding gender and self-confidence. Thus, it caters to the varied needs of women.
- iv) Faculty-family meetings are organized to help women's families take pride in their profession and spread awareness in the community about the rights of women.
- v) Women are also connected with other NGOs so that they can network with women in different non-traditional professions and build social capital.

Vadera said that drivers become financially independent and often their work becomes the main source of income for the household. This brings them dignity and a sense of accomplishment. It also helps them in reclaiming citizenship and looking at spaces outside of the homes as women's spaces. Vadera concluded by sharing the learnings from her journey:

1. Change is gradual and takes time and investment of resources;
2. Driving is a strategic intervention - bridging the divide between public and private for many women;
3. It helps to build a network of women working in different sectors; and
4. Connections with NGOs empower women to seek the right kind of help/support in times of need.



Drawing upon Uber's user experience, **Shweta Kohli Rajpal, Head, Public Policy, Uber**, spoke about the company's increasing network in India and the measures developed to ensure the safety of riders in her presentation '**Smoother Rides, Safer Roads.**'<sup>15</sup> Technology has been harnessed in place of street hailing and Uber has included safety features for before, during and after trip with complete information of the driver.

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<sup>15</sup> Uber is a for profit private company that builds a network of cab service providers in its areas of operation. Over the years it has extended these networks to several countries across the world. Given its exceptional rise as a transportation service provider in NCR, particularly for women and concerns being raised about its driver verification processes after a cases of sexual assault and rape were reported. On December 5, 2014, an Uber driver raped and attempted to strangle a 25-year old female passenger. He was found guilty as charged after trial and was given a life sentence. Other cases of assault and harassment by the drivers have also been reported.

It also provides the users with an option to share their trip with a person known to them so that the trip can be tracked.



SLAP (Street Level Awareness Program) was established after the 2012 Nirbhaya incident to help women become physically and psychologically stronger. **SLAP Founder, Mriganka Dadwal**, shared SLAP's work in a presentation titled '**Rape, Assault, Acid Attack: Surviving the Mean Streets.**' SLAP prepares women to prevent themselves from getting into a dangerous situation and to escape if they are in a situation. It teaches martial arts - a self-defense system which focuses primarily on prevention. They work with girls and young women in schools, universities and corporate spaces. SLAP approach is based on what they call a principle of 3As - Accept, Acknowledge, Act.

SLAP was started in 2013 and garnered a lot of attention from the media, attracting many people to come for the workshops it organized. Besides girls and women even men and young boys started to join in when the workshops were organized in public places. SLAP re-conditions participants and brings awareness about the different responses in threatening situations: fight, freeze and flight. She outlined the following broad areas of emphasis:

- Train women to assess unsafe spaces.
- Recondition them to not consider themselves as the 'weaker' sex.
- Provide information about some basic precautionary measures, like installing offline maps on phone, alertness while boarding and de-boarding cabs, installing safety apps on the phone, keeping a record of the helpline numbers, keeping pepper spray handy and having an escape plan in mind for emergency situations.
- Understanding the power of saying no and trusting their gut feeling.
- Awareness about legal rights

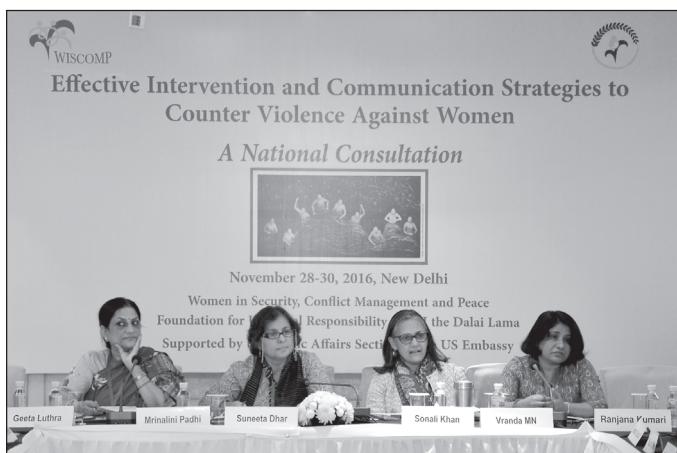
Knowledge of combat skills including knowing where to hit and how and skills about disarming a strong opponent.

**Vandana Vasudevan, a doctoral student and researcher**, presented her work on urban infrastructure and how it affects peoples' movement in cities in her presentation titled '**The Mobility of Women: How Urban Planning Affects their Freedom to Move in the City.**' Through her presentation, she argued that

infrastructure in India is failing women. She asserted that there is a fundamental difference between the mobility patterns of men and women. Women have different needs and traditionally spend more time at home engaged in domestic duties due to the gendered division of labor. Therefore, women across the world are *'time poor'*. Mobility studies show that women make a web of trips every day, from visiting parents to children's schools, etc. Men generally commute in a more linear manner from home to work and vice-versa. The concept of the 'rush hour' does not mean anything to a large section of women who are part-time workers. Yet the public transport schedules are designed for a 9 am - 5 pm workday and are mostly used by men. As a result of this women have to wait longer for public transport outside of these hours. Women have less ownership of cars and use public transport more. All these factors also contribute in making women more prone to sexual harassment.



Additionally, the mobility of women is dependent upon socio-economic factors and a range of factors including street lighting, roads and other facilities. She emphasized on the need to study transport and infrastructure situations which cause fear in the minds of women. For example, multistoried parking lots, underground parking, dark bus stops, empty train carriages are some of the places where women feel most fearful. Women are also compelled to pay heed to what they wear at these places so that they don't attract attention and are often forced to alter or compromise their travel plans because they perceive a threat in their mode of transport. This affects their choices, work, education, etc. These patterns need to be studied more carefully and taken into consideration at the time of drafting the plan for the city.



## **Key Discussion Points and Learnings**

The comments during this session highlighted the futility of digital technology based solutions as they do not take into account millions of women for whom technology is not a savior; they are invisible in this emphasis on technology. It was also pointed out that there is a need to simplify processes of emergency help. Currently, every police station has its own mobile application. It would be better if there was only one number to call. One participant urged the gathering to ask, “What would the discussion look like if we didn’t start with Nirbhaya?” The idea of a public space should be bigger than cars, buses, etc. The idea of the ‘public space’ as being limited to streets was also called into question.

This session was particularly useful in taking stock of proactive strategies that can be employed in public spaces, especially on the streets used by women to travel safely. The session also acquainted the audience with the infrastructural challenges as well as ideas of ‘masculinity’ that conflate the issue of power and subsequent violence, vis-à-vis, public spaces.

## **Women’s Safety Begins at Home – Impact Assessment of Strategies to Prevent/ End Domestic Violence**

The fifth set of deliberations foregrounded strategies to prevent and end domestic violence, and examine intimate partner violence beyond the institution of marriage. The discussions also examined which class of women are most vulnerable to violence and dwelt upon whether it is a phenomena universally present in India across faultlines of class, caste, religion and region? The challenges faced in ending domestic violence were also discussed, especially in the light of the psycho-social trauma that survivors of domestic violence and intimate partner violence suffer.

**Suneeta Dhar, Advisor, Jagori**, facilitated the session.

Locating the discussion in the context of the ‘home’ which is deemed as the safest place, Dhar said that the experience of violence is most common in this space. Making an important observation, Dhar said that there are many studies in India that assess the impact of particular strategies to prevent domestic violence. They largely focus on providing information to the organization that commissions the research. She emphasized on the need to have a meta analysis of all the work done to understand the effectiveness of the diverse strategies that have been used.



She reiterated the importance of nomenclature, especially the choice between domestic violence and intimate partner violence. Drawing upon research produced by WHO she stated that majority of violence experienced by women is intimate partner violence. This, she said, included abuse against children and elderly women.

*“There has been a recent study by WHO (in 2013/14) where 184 studies from 86 countries were reviewed. It concluded that VAW is a worldwide issue. We know that there are some issues that don’t get covered much-for example women in same sex relationships, and transgender relationships. There are very few services available for these people as well. This also applies to women with disabilities, and women from tribal areas that are far more marginalized and due to being remote, are far away from services.”*

She further elaborated that in high income countries there is evidence about the success of 'response interventions' but not enough is known about rates of re-victimization. In low income countries, there is promising evidence for that aspect. For example, it is clearly understood that training makes a difference and women-centered home visits reduce the risk of further victimization. Jagori<sup>16</sup> has become the first collective that provides immediate counseling to victims of violence in cases where police does not respond.



**Senior Counsel, Geeta Luthra, Supreme Court of India** extensively spoke about the nuances the Domestic Violence Act in her talk on '**Prevention of Women from Domestic Violence**'. Enacted in 2005 and enforced in 2006, the law has been criticized vehemently over the past 10 years for its poor composition. Yet, the fact that it is a single window act cannot be ignored as it allows for the filing of several simultaneous petitions including under the Hindu Marriage Act, Adoption Act, etc. In a way it is a panacea for multiple problems for women.

Being women centric, it includes many provisions for protection. It gives woman the option of accessing safe space in her own home (generally owned by the husband) or of money for rent elsewhere. However, the right to residence in the Act is loosely worded and the fact that homes are owned by joint families in India adds to the complexity. Though the interplay is difficult and cannot be easily resolved in some cases, the Act ensures that a woman is not made a victim or homeless.

She acknowledged that balance is hard to find when the joint family owns the home. This is particularly made difficult when people find ways to abuse the law. The other issue highlighted by Luthra was that of custody of children. The law on custody presumes that women will have custody and the husband would have visitation rights. However, the domestic violence law believes that custody should be shared (primary and secondary). Thus, there are several contradictions in the law and when multiple laws are blanketed together, further complexities are revealed. There is a need for deeper understanding of the various laws that apply to such cases and address stark contradictions.

<sup>16</sup> Established in 1984, Jagori is a women's resource and training center based in New Delhi and works to inform, inspire and empower women in innovative ways. More details can be found on their website: [www.jagori.org](http://www.jagori.org)



**Sonali Khan, Vice President, Breakthrough**

commenced her presentation ‘#shareyourstory with Men and Boys’ by highlighting the fact that there is high acceptance of violence among men towards each other. According to a study conducted with adolescents in eastern Uttar Pradesh on the violence faced in families it was revealed that there is a high prevalence of violence, both peer to peer and from those in authority towards youth. Violence was recorded to be higher for young men than women and violence was accepted as a mechanism of control and was normalized. This violence included all forms - mental, physical and sexual violence. Khan said our socialization makes us more accepting of violence and hence, we often choose not to react to it when it is used for control and management. Thus, she said that the focus of Breakthrough’s work was on strategically addressing the deeply entrenched cultural and societal norms which create this acceptance.

Khan emphasized upon the need of a multi-pronged strategy to channel this change and the significance of looking at different groups within communities (men, boys, young people, women, girls, etc.). Men and boys must be engaged to be a part of the solution she opined. To demonstrate an example she screened a video clipping of a breakthrough campaign.

The Breakthrough campaign, #shareyourstory, focused on having difficult conversations with families, especially men, on sexual harassment and highlighted the impact that stories passed down the generations in families can have. The campaign received a positive response on social media and acted as a trigger for many women to share their stories with their sons. Khan also highlighted the important hidden message that not all men are perpetrators. Young people today are interested in talking about these issues and the social media space can be utilized to initiate this dialogue.

‘Be my safe space’, another campaign by Breakthrough was able to create space for difficult conversations said Khan. In Haryana, they worked with college students, law enforcement, judicial functionaries and school principals and initiated conversations on gendered segregation of students. Though they were not able to arrive at solutions, they succeeded in documenting the reluctance towards desegregation on the part of teachers and students. The leadership at the schools and colleges said that the format was followed at the insistence of the parents.

Khan emphasized that change is a two-way process and there is an acute need to work with communities in order to normalize change, apart from strategizing and creating solutions.

**Mrinalini Padhi, Senior Mediator with the Orissa High Court** shared her experience of working with the two pillars of democracy – the judiciary and the legislature in her talk **‘Social Stress and the Law.’**



Padhi discussed the need to translate judgments in local languages and disseminate them to groups on the ground so that they can actually become tools of empowerment. Domestic violence, Padhi remarked, pervades all sections from rural to urban, from slums to well-educated households. Very often people are not aware of the legality of their actions, she observed. For example, acid is available everywhere despite a ban on its sale as people do not know the law. She also shared many other examples of lacunae in legislations:

1. In the Dowry Prohibition Act, there is no provision for the care of children if the order is filed against a woman who has children and she has to be jailed.
2. The Sexual Harassment Act is not sensitive to the respondent and in cases of misuse, the respondent has to suffer.

The absolute lack of provision of services to survivors of violence was another issue Padhi underscored. If a rape-victim lives in a slum area, then it becomes very difficult for her to go home given the societal stigma attached. Very often she is further victimized by other men. However, often such women have nowhere to go and are forced to return to the same area where they had been assaulted. Padhi ended by underlining the urgent need to disseminate the knowledge of the law and rights available amongst the masses.



**Dr. Vranda MN, Associate Professor, National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (NIMHANS)** conceptualized and helped establish the AWAKE clinic for women and girls with trauma from domestic violence and intimate partner violence. She shared her experience in her talk **‘Psychosocial Care for Victims/Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence: The AWAKE Clinic Experience.’** She began her talk

by elaborating on the need for such a clinic within a mental health hospital.

Existing counseling centers do not provide expert care for the needs of women suffering from domestic or intimate partner violence. She further added that insensitive attitude of the service providers (counselors, police) often contributes to re-victimization. These very reasons led to the setting up of the AWAKE clinic, to provide comprehensive support to women in distress and sensitize different counseling agencies.

The clinic helps women move past self-blame as very often they internalize the social perception that they are responsible for violence. Vranda outlined the issue of protecting anonymity and funding as the two broad challenges faced.

### **Key Discussion Points and Learnings**

This session was particularly insightful in identifying the role of culture in informing both law and its implementation. The case studies outlined the complexities encountered by practitioners, particularly highlighting the stigma attached with intimate partner and domestic violence. The issue of using the correct nomenclature and translating judgments in vernacular languages for better understanding was outlined by the speakers. The advantages and disadvantages of the Dowry Prohibition Act were discussed, especially the complexities with regard to the custody of children, the homes owned by joint families, and the lack of clarity on the spaces of rehabilitation for victims as victims are sometimes forced to return to the very spaces of oppression. The inclusion of men and boys in the issue was reiterated. Khan particularly advocated for enhancing men's understanding of violence and patriarchy in order to usher a lasting societal change. The facilitator emphasized on the gravity of VAW worldwide and the need for a meta-analysis. The group also discussed the need to map the effective interventions in different geographical spaces and learn from them.



## Gender Identity, Intersectionality and Socio-Political Conflicts

Session six foregrounded the complex issue of gender identities and the vulnerabilities of gender minorities and women in situations of conflict. The speakers highlighted the complicity of patriarchy in family, community and the state in foreclosing women's access to justice. How the multiple identities and roles of women are often straitjacketed to deny them agency, especially in situations of ethnic/communal conflict was also discussed. The presentations deftly illustrated the work of women's groups to regain agency by lobbying for space in efforts at conflict transformation.

The facilitator, **Rita Manchanda** foregrounded the need for deconstructing the monolithic category of 'women' along the axes of class, ethnicity, geographic location, caste, among others. Manchanda remarked that talking about VAW without paying heed to intersectionality is actually counter-productive. She referred to the keynote address at the Beijing +20 Summit for women where it was noted that there has been a mistake by not sufficiently considering the problems of intersectionality. Manchanda argued that the State's relationship with family, and with other collectives is patriarchal. This is true not only of the legislature and the executive but also the judiciary. Illustrating this with an example, Manchanda traced the trajectory of the 1956 Special Marriages Act which was amended in 1976 to make it mandatory for Hindus who marry under this act to follow the Hindu Marriage Code. Manchanda claimed that legitimization of the religion based personal codes and customary laws makes the 'private' space feminine and the public space masculine, excluding women as a result. It affects the citizenship of women. She called to question the role of the community, "*Despite its importance for plurality, is it a friendly place for women?*" She further claimed that at times 'local patriarchy' can be more regressive than the state. Manchanda argued that women's claims for expansion of citizenship and rights have often followed war. Rights have often been achieved as a part of a trade – off but sometimes women's rights are sacrificed in the process of achieving peace after conflicts and war end.



In her talk '**The Extraordinary Impunity in Conflict Zones**', **Senior Lawyer, Supreme Court of India, Vrinda Grover**, looked at the case of extraordinary impunity in conflict.

In the post Nirbhaya scenario, statistics and anecdotal evidence indicate that not much has changed with reference to the incidence of VAW. However, change can be recorded at the level of accountability. Perpetration of such violence is increasingly seen as a responsibility of the state and the general argument that these are collateral damage during conflicts is no longer pushed. Despite there being a clear outlining of the issues at stake in the public (mainly feminist) discourse, the response of the state is still lacking. This is where Grover located the gap in addressing VAW in conflict zones.



Giving credit to women's and feminist organizations for repeatedly breaking the silence with the help of media, Grover said that their efforts have not received adequate response from either the State or other public institutions. Referring to the broader framework of conflict encompassing intrastate, inter-caste, caste and communal conflict, Grover urged the audience to reflect on why has there been no redressal of cases of violence against women in these situations. Putting the onus on citizens in so called peaceful areas, she said, "*Impunity comes from us, we have allowed this to take place.*" Grover emphasized that raising these issues is important because "*Impunity spills over into spaces - it won't stop at Kashmir*", she said.

Grover defined impunity as an "*institutional habit of no accountability.*" She highlighted the impunity of the police and their flawed practices and pervasive corruption; the impunity of upper caste perpetrators, especially in terms of crimes committed against Dalit women; and the impunity of armed forces and paramilitary in conflict zones. She questioned how one should disrupt such habits of institutions.

She noted that there is a culture of compromise, and change in perception is most required. The inordinate delays and long drawn out court procedures re-victimize women who report cases in the difficult situations of conflict. She illustrated her point through the example of a case of mass communal rapes that she fought for seven women. One of the women is dead, two of them have refused to identify the perpetrator, only one of them is still in touch and the case has not been heard in eight months. Grover underlined that this was not just apathy but complicity. She urged the audience to re-evaluate their role as citizens. She asserted that women victims should not have to challenge the perpetrators as well as the state if they experience sexual violence.

**Ezabir Ali, Kashmir Coordinator, Conciliation Resources** talked about the security needs of conflict affected women in Kashmir in her presentation ‘**Unconventional Interventional Strategy to Address Security Issues of Directly Affected Women in Kashmir.**’ Referring to the importance of the armed conflict of Jammu and Kashmir for national identities of India and Pakistan, Ali said that post 1988 the conflict had become more civilian based. She outlined the massive impact it has had on the civilian population. There have been thousands of deaths and enforced disappearances which have resulted in ‘half widows’ - women whose husbands have forcibly disappeared. Ali said that most of these women are from rural areas where generally men are the breadwinners and there isn’t much help from the Central or the State government. There is only ambiguous legal support available. As a result, these women constantly fight society, culture and norms, while struggling to support their children.



Talking about her study on half widows that she completed in 2013, Ali found three main problems faced by these women - emotional distress, loneliness and loss of property. Findings also revealed that due to high levels of distress, the prevalence of suicidal tendencies was very high. She also noted a propensity amongst the widows to commit violence against other people.

The situation was unprecedented, and hence, there was little scope for women to start their lives afresh. What further compounded the problems for these half widows is that the idea of re-marriage in Islamic law is ambiguous, particularly the prescribed mandatory period of waiting.

Ali shared the interventional strategy employed by her through the EHSAAS program, to address this problem of waiting period. She created a ground for discussions with the *Ulemas*<sup>17</sup> as well as members of the civil society, and tried to sensitize the society by writing articles in newspapers about the plight of widows. She also facilitated the coming together of the *Ulemas* to come to a consensus on the period of waiting.

*Ulemas* took a landmark decision that half-widows can re-marry after four years of disappearance of their husbands. The issue of property is still being discussed

<sup>17</sup> “Ulemas” are Muslim scholars or a body of Muslim scholars who are recognized as having specialised knowledge of Islamic theology and law.

in line with the *Quran*, and Ali is currently engaging with *Ulemas* regarding the property issue which has proven to be trickier.

Ali faced a number of challenges like insensitivity of the families and ignorance amongst in-laws about the effects of depriving half-widows of their property share. Some conflict 'actors' perceived the issue of the rights of half widows as a threat to the on-going movement for *aazadi* (freedom). There was reluctance to discuss it as it was representative of the scars of the conflict.

### **Discussion and Learnings:**

The session was crucial in foregrounding the stories of women affected by conflict and the precarious trajectories they have to traverse in order to fight for justice and deal with oppression which exponentially increases for them during the times of conflict.

Summing up the discussion, the Chair said that there has been widespread instrumentalization of women, and gender has been mobilized by armed actors in particular ways. Additionally, women have also been found to be complicit in attaching community honor to their bodies. Thus, a nuanced understanding of the relationship between gender, violence and community is required to assess whether there is scope for creative agency. She urged the audience to ask, "*Why are women attracted to violence, and end up joining these movements which undermine their agency?*" She further said, "*There is a tension between gender and ethnicity, and what is central is that women are the markers and are seen as the reproducers of community honor, so conflict is waged on women's bodies.*" She illustrated this by giving the example of Naga women who are fighting customary laws which trivialize sexual violence against women.

## Stories from the Field

This session focused on successful initiatives from the field. The progress made in police personnel trainings and the strategies employed; learnings from the analysis of the serial *Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon* (I can do Everything); the initiatives of the Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) in Haryana and effective strategies from the work of Akshara in Mumbai on capacity building initiatives on making cities safer, were shared through insightful presentations.



Introducing the panel, the Chair, **Sumona DasGupta**, an **independent researcher**, highlighted the importance of listening to the experiences in the field in order to refine theory.

In her presentation “**Edutainment’- Challenging Social Norms to Counter Violence Against Women’**, **Poonam Muttreja**, Executive Director, **Population Foundation of India (PFI)**, outlined PFI’s work and their use of ‘Edutainment’ (educational entertainment) to counter violence against women. The primary tool used in this process was a television series titled, “Main kuch bhi kar sakti hoon” (I can achieve anything) with a female protagonist. The protagonist is a female doctor and foregrounds issues of gender-based violence, child marriage, adolescent issues, etc. The serial’s outreach is extensive and the number of urban viewers of the series is expected to be around 58 million. The viewership has benefited from the fact that it is spread through transmedia – TV, radio and new media.

Muttreja noted that the series was commissioned for a second season as it had succeeded in touching a chord with the audience. In spite of its popularity, Muttreja observed that the series has not been able to bring about any change in social norms. What it did achieve was bringing change in some of the negative behaviors in the communities and at the level of individuals. It was also significant that the program was designed to attract male viewership and in the end 48% of viewers were found to be men.



Muttreja observed that the change in behavior was achieved with the help of local NGOs as the screening of the episode was followed with phone numbers

of support centers working on the issue. The phone calls that were received after the screenings were tracked for identifying patterns. The serial was shown globally and dubbed in several Indian languages. NGO partners of PFI organized outreach groups across the country to give awards to young men and women who took positive action after seeing the program.

**Retired Officer of the Indian Police Service and Chairperson, Private Security Industry, FICCI,**

**Manjri Jaruhar** shared the inefficiencies of certain laws from an administrator’s point of view in her presentation ‘**Legal Issues to Create Awareness Among Women.**’ Jaruhar also shared that her quick responses to cases of violence against women were often labeled “emotional” and even when she knew she was legally right, she faced opposition from her seniors instead of support.



In her presentation Jaruhar touched on the varied issues that are considered to be yardsticks for measuring gender sensitivity of the police. She observed that in the police there is a strict hierarchy, and even though sexual harassment is not unheard of, complaining against senior officials is difficult, and hence, the implementation of the Vishaka guidelines<sup>18</sup> within the police force becomes an issue. This is a serious problem as women work mainly at the entry level (as constables) and are mostly reporting to superior officers who are male. She further went on to highlight that even though many laws have been enacted, there is limited awareness about them. Additionally, the implementation is so bad that even if a woman is filing a complaint, she might be required to go from police station to police station for her to be taken seriously. Even the police department is ignorant of many laws.

Jaruhar’s presentation outlined some of the main laws which women must be aware of. For example, Right to Free Legal Aid and Right to Privacy. She also emphasized on the importance of using the laws honestly and shared examples of misuse. She concluded that more women police officers are needed and more women need to use laws to claim rights.

In her presentation, ‘**Building a Gender-Friendly City: Strategies and Challenges**’, **Dr. Nandita Shah, Co-Director, Akshara** talked about her work

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<sup>18</sup> The Supreme Court of India passed a landmark judgment in 1997, in the case of *Vishakha and others v State of Rajasthan*, laying down guidelines to be followed by establishments in dealing with complaints about sexual harassment. These guidelines were superseded in 2013 by The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.



with the Akshara Foundation in trying to make inroads into engaging with the state and have a dialogue on planning cities that women perceive as safe. She talked about engaging young people and addressing the issue of fear. She said that women often make choices based on their fears and underlined the need for sensitizing communities to make cities more gender conscious.

“What is the right that we (women) have to the city?”, she asked. Shah also reflected upon on how must one build evidence and use the evidence to expand the impact on a larger scale.

As an instrument of outreach, Akshara targeted a national daily and ran a campaign (for 22 days) urging the readers to conduct safety audits and interview bus operators. Using this crowd sourcing campaign Akshara gained an entry point with the public and opened a dialogue about the issues of gender-based violence in public spaces. The data collated through this exercise was then presented to the authorities to highlight different issues with respect to women’s safety. Simultaneously, pointed out Shah, Akshara also organized expert roundtables on infrastructure and design, policing and legal frameworks and on prevention strategies. The strategies collated as a result of bringing together various public voices (principals, colleges, actors, etc.) were submitted to the Chief Minister of Maharashtra (the state where the campaign was held).

The other strategy to engage young people was pivoted around mobilizing communities and going to teachers and parents through colleges to ideate about how young women can access public spaces more easily. She urged the participants to ask themselves why certain spaces are not claimed by women. Shah elaborated on the need for engaging young men to be a part of the solution.

In this regard, Akshara has attempted to engage young men through street plays and art installations. They also support an emergency helpline in Bombay. Set up in 2008, Akshara is now attempting to connect these neighborhood level interventions with the response system on the ground at the level of police stations.

Shah also highlighted the challenge of documentation of the good work an organization undertakes and the need to connect different strategies to the overall plan of development and infrastructure especially since city designs are often flawed and unsafe for women. Citing the biggest achievements of Akshara Shah gave examples of the incorporation of multi caucus housing for single women and students, and care centers for women in distress. Shah also shared that Akshara is in the process of setting up a gender resource center.

Throwing light on some of the challenges faced, Shah talked about working at different levels, in different time frames and requiring a variety of skillsets. The challenge of inclusivity is complex, she said. The key question for her was who does the concept of a safe city serve - middle class women or the working class? She also noted that while the police often involves her organization for trainings, there is no institutional mechanism for monitoring and evaluation. Additionally, the issue of limited period funding causes serious hurdles in sustaining the processes that can lead to real change.



Drawing upon her organization's work in an area that is deeply patriarchal, **Akhila Betsy George, Program Officer, Participatory Research Institute Asia (PRIA)**, presented on '**Violence Against Women: A Continuing Pandemic.**' George said that the thrust of PRIA's work was on economic independence of women, women's political empowerment and attitudinal change in the communities. PRIA has been working in North

Indian states with youth to end violence against women and child marriage.

PRIA works with schools and one of their strategies is to have boys and girls map their perception of their school. George said that it was found that boys and girls had very different perceptions of the school. While boys tend to have a larger picture of the school, including the sports field and the surrounding areas because they are the ones who maximize the space; girls' sense of ownership extended only to the classroom. A similar trend was observed when asked to map their homes. This clearly indicated to PRIA that spaces where girls do not feel safe are areas that they are not able to access. In this regard, PRIA has created resource centers in rural areas in an attempt to make them places where girls feel safe and have the permission to access. PRIA is currently working on strategies to involve families to avoid the alienation that girls experience in the innermost sphere.

## **Key Discussion Points and Learnings**

This session was of particular relevance because of the case studies that were discussed. With practitioners highlighting their experiences, their successes and challenges, the practical aspects of leading an informative campaign or a community initiative were showcased. The value of using entertainment and popular media was specifically highlighted in the presentation by Muttreja. Her presentation showed that empowering portrayals of women can lead the way for attitudinal change in the public. The importance of being aware of one's legal



rights and the importance of a sensitive police force was brought out by Jaruhar and motivated the group to know about their rights. The Consultation group learnt about engaging different stakeholders and encouraging them to assume active roles in the presentation on Akshara's work by Shah. PRIA's initiatives to help young girls change their gendered perspective of the world, was enlightening; especially with regard to rethinking access to public spaces. The different case studies were able to showcase the positive outcomes of informed and well-thought out efforts with regard to GBV. They also reiterated the need for a multi-dimensional approach to change, involving *all* the stakeholders.

## Education and Socialization to Counter Gender Bias and Discrimination

The deliberations during the first two days of the Consultation foregrounded the theme of ‘Changing Mindsets’, underlining the need for changes in education-curriculums of school, universities and think tanks. The eighth set of deliberations at the consultation assessed frameworks and approaches that address gender based violence in women’s studies program and curricula at institutions of higher education. The presentations also evaluated programs that seek to sensitize administrators and educators in this regard. Training programs encouraging women’s leadership and facilitating dialogues about masculinities and femininities among adolescents and young adults were also presented. The methodologies adopted by the whole-school-immersion program (of WISCOMP) in partnership with Bluebells School International to reduce gender based prejudice and discrimination was also shared. The presenters dwelt upon the challenges that schools, colleges and universities confront in giving voice to vulnerable groups that are silenced by administrative hierarchies. The rich discussion after the presentations focused on the future role of institutions of learning as crafting ‘liberating’, ‘transformative’ and ‘engendered’ spaces for the pursuit of knowledge.



Calling it an opportune time to think about these issues, **Prof. Krishna Menon, Professor of Political Science, School of Human Studies, Ambedkar University** talked about the pedagogies needed to counter gender bias and to discuss gender-based violence in the classroom. In her presentation, ‘**Teaching to Transgress, Teaching to Resist: Education as Freedom\* (\*with apologies to bell hooks)**’, Menon said that such a classroom needs to be of a different

kind - one that is more democratic, non-hierarchical and feminist. She further said that, “the teacher must always remember that the students come from diverse and different backgrounds. The teacher must be very mindful of the gendered nature of the classroom. In the feminist epistemology we take the methodology of experiential learning for both the student and teacher and this should go into the making of the classroom discourse. The uniqueness of the student experience must be primary in pedagogy.”

Menon shared her experience of teaching Gender and Nutrition to young people between the ages of 14-18 years in a Dalit settlement of scavengers and rag pickers. Menon shared that she realized the futility of her previous knowledge from books and theories in that environment unless she learnt about the experiences of her students, and let that inform what transpired in the classroom. Drawing on bell hooks, she asserted that challenging gender bias is “necessarily transgressive in nature”, and a teacher must ensure that every student in the classroom, despite their difference, is acknowledged. A teacher must do little but significant things such as how to pronounce the names of her students correctly. It is also important to recognize that there are students who are resistant to transformation and don’t want to transgress. The teacher must respect this and the student must not be made to feel less important because of this. As teachers, it is important to recognize that all students are on a different journey. The teacher has to be more than an imparter of knowledge and must be empathetic to the experiences shared by the students.

She drew upon the writings of Thich Nhat Hanh about the need to go beyond simply inspiring passion to engaged pedagogy. The teacher must always be engaged in self-actualization, examining oneself in the classroom. In this regard, the teacher’s life habits become very important.

In the second part of her presentation, Menon talked about the milestones in gender studies and women’s studies. Citing the 1970s as a crucial time, when the report on equality<sup>19</sup> was published. Though there was a lot of activism around it, the mention of violence was absent from the report. Even academia was slow in reacting to violence against women. However, from 1970s onwards, there has been a constant conversation between activism and academia. Referring to the Rameeza Bee rape case<sup>20</sup>, Menon asserted that it initiated an analysis of the relationship between violence against women and other issues in the society.

Menon also talked about the work that she has been doing with WISCOMP to produce an annotated bibliography of over 50 guidelines, toolkits, NGO reports

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<sup>19</sup> Towards Equality: Report of the Committee on Status of Women in India (1974). The report can be accessed here: <http://pldindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Towards-Equality-1974-Part-1.pdf>

<sup>20</sup> The Rameeza Bee was gang-raped by policemen and her husband was taken into custody and severely beaten up after he protested against the policemen (Hyderabad, 1978). Later, he succumbed to his injuries and died. This was followed by public uproar and protests. However, the then Chief Minister claimed that the protests were politically motivated and the policemen tried to implicate that Rameeza Bee was a prostitute. The Mukhtadar Commission which inquired into the case found that medical evidence was tampered with and the allegations were false.

and research reports on violence against women. The Saksham report<sup>21</sup>, Menon said, was of great significance. She said that she is hopeful that there will be continued resistance to violence against women from various sections of the society.



**Prof. Jaya Indiresen's** presentation '**Education for a Gender Positive Society**' focused on the role of higher education in addressing violence against women. Indiresen is a **researcher, training consultant & Board Member, CAP Foundation**. Talking about her book for which she collected data from 150 women's colleges in India, she highlighted the significance of the growing number of women's colleges in India. The objective of

Indiresen's study was to understand how these colleges functioned with regard to gender sensitization. A similar study was conducted in the United States and it was found that graduates from women's colleges tend to do better in many aspects of their life as compared to their counter parts graduating from co-educational institutions. Indiresen was keen to find if this also resonated for India.

In her interviews with students of Lady Shri Ram College, respondents were of the opinion that there are fewer opportunities for leadership in co-educational colleges for women in comparison to women's colleges. Women are often relegated to traditional roles such as hospitality and decorating while men are given facilitation roles. At LSR, women had opportunities to do everything, including assuming leadership roles without any barriers. These opportunities result in instilling confidence in students and empowering them, argued Indiresen. Therefore, women's colleges provide opportunity for students to feel empowered. The spaces enable women to break stereotypes.

Indiresen designed a study to quantitatively measure such gender positive initiatives in colleges. She also observed activities in the colleges in relation to women's holistic development. The focus of the study was on life-skills and not academic skills because according to Indiresen, unless you come from a gender equal family, it's difficult for women to be exposed to life skills.

She visited different colleges and questioned the principals about the objectives of the college.

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<sup>21</sup> Saksham: Measures for Ensuring the Safety of Women and Programmes for Gender Sensitization of Campuses (2013), University Grants Commission, New Delhi. The report can be accessed here; [http://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/5873997\\_SAKSHAM-BOOK.pdf](http://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/5873997_SAKSHAM-BOOK.pdf)

Of the 150 colleges that Indiresen visited for the study, she shortlisted 20 colleges where she was able to identify gender positive practices. Her book *Education for Women's Empowerment (2002)* based on this research talks about the methodology used (Gender Positive Index (GPI)) in detail. She further said that a college is not required to have Gender Studies department for this purpose and students from all disciplines can be sensitized in this regard.

Women's colleges are needed to enable more women to get into higher education. There are many societal restrictions on girls and women's colleges are preferred as they make education available without the fear of harassment. Indiresen referred to Maslow's model of hierarchy of human needs<sup>22</sup> and advocated for a holistic model of education which not only builds academic knowledge but also meets other needs of the students. She further emphasized on the role of teachers in creating "whole" human beings. From her study, she found that very few colleges employ this approach.

In outlining the way forward, Indiresen made the following recommendations to achieve a healthy environment for women's higher education and careers. i) There is a need to create a warm environment for women that addresses specific concerns like providing crèches for children ii) Flexible working hours iii) Special attention to prevent harassment iv) Gender-sensitization of heads of the institutions.



**Ravi Gulati, Founder, Manzil** started his thought-provoking presentation '**Education for a Counter Culture**' by sharing some pictures of everyday life which prompted questions about livelihood and the meaning of success. He cited two examples: that of an engineer from IIT who created micro power stations in remote villages, and of a villager who learnt simple science and built a power station for the village he lived in.

Gulati focused his presentation on the aim of education. He went on to define this aim as one being beyond academics, integrating the power of the 'head, heart and hands.' This, he said, is the premise behind his organization, Manzil. Referring to the book *Danger School*, Gulati emphasized on exploring ways in

<sup>22</sup> According to Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (1943), there is a hierarchy of five needs within each individual. These five needs are: physiological needs, safety needs, Social needs, esteem needs, self-actualization needs. This theory is a classical depiction of human motivation.

which this kind of learning can make its way to a mainstream classroom. Family and schools are main sites of socialization and they can be key contributors to cultural change. Gulati defined counter-culture as a respectful, loving space without fear. He emphasized that it is important to live these values, in addition to talking about them in order to experience authenticity and open dialogue. He added that teachers must be conscious of the values they live in their classrooms. He also said that children must be allowed to lead their own learning because it is possible even for a small child to decide what he or she considers worthy of learning. In this regard he observed that a leader with a positive attitude can turn around systemic constraints that many schools face.

Gulati also shared his experience of working with government schools where he has been involved in an initiative for the past two years. With a cluster group of 10 schools, he works on a peer learning program. The curriculum of this program is based on reflective questions. Principals can voluntarily offer to support such groups and in the process, learning themselves. Gulati referred to this endeavor as a space for counter-culture of training of trainers since the relationship at the training was non-hierarchical and sought to connect people at a basic human level. It operates on the understanding that the facilitator does not know more than the student and hence, the role of the facilitator is based on listening, drawing on everyone's inputs, looking at challenges and helping everyone to learn. The goal of the program, said Gulati, was to develop a shared vision of working together in the light of differences as opposed to a top-down narrative.



**Suman Kumar, Principal, Bluebells International School**, talked about the partnership with WISCOMP in her presentation '**Integration of Gender Studies in the School Curriculum.**' The whole school immersion program was carried out in five phases she said with workshops for teachers, students and parents with a view to make the school and the home space more gender-sensitive. The initial workshops were conducted with

teachers, senior student council and the parents of senior and junior student council. The workshops were positively received and parents requested that the workshops should continue. Senior students' council then conducted a workshop with the junior student council. This workshop was called 'Gender - Bender'. These students also carried this workshop with them to an exchange program with their sister school, Cooinda Primary School Bunbury, Australia. The engagement of the students with their Australian counterparts to share the learnings from the Gender-Bender workshop was presented as a video clip by Kumar which deftly illustrated the impact of the workshop on young minds.

In June 2016, another workshop was conducted with the teachers with the aid of the film *He Named Me Malala* (2015) to revisit the learnings from the previous workshop. Feedback from teachers illustrated that a change was observed in the way the teachers dealt with the female and male students in the classroom. They also tried to make changes in their teaching style and in their personal lives at home.

These workshops also lead to re-thinking the structure of the school and revisiting some of the norms. There was a conscious effort made to mix groups in sports activities, to have mixed groups in the classroom, in the waiting area and in the canteen. School uniform was made unisex in the primary classes and duties such as hospitality, lifting of furniture and cleaning classes were more mindfully distributed between boys and girls. Both parents were invited as volunteers to help in the classrooms instead of just having the mothers as was traditionally the practice.

The partnership also led to some changes in the curriculum of the school. For class I and II, more gender sensitive stories, narratives and short films were included to facilitate discussion and brainstorming. For classes II, IV and V, film reviews were included that foregrounded the question “How do we measure change?” With classes VI, VII & VIII Civics was taught through visits to a village, through surveys, case studies and film reviews and more research components were included in the social science syllabus of class IX & X. All these changes were made to ensure that students reflected on gender stereotypes and gender biases that are prevalent.

To sum up her presentation, Kumar also outlined the following challenges faced in this enterprise:

1. It is difficult to assess the movement quantitatively especially since change is a process.
2. While girls are quick to feel empowered, take on leadership roles and confront gender stereotypes, boys show little change in their thinking and actions.
3. It is often a challenge to perceptibly integrate the program in the curriculum.
4. Sometimes, it is difficult to work with the cultural beliefs of the teachers which may clash with the change that is being promoted.

**Dr. Sheeba K.M., Associate Professor, Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit** spoke on ‘**Conceptualizing Gender Justice in Educational Institutions**’ and shared her experiences from the field. Sheeba is the part of a

team preparing a report on the issues of gender and has recorded many appalling accounts of gender based discrimination and violence from students, teachers and activists in the Kerala context. Despite the common perception that Kerala is progressive and socially advanced, it should be included in the list of ‘rogue states’ with regard to violence against women, said Sheeba. In fact, it is this façade of equality, she claimed that is difficult to break down. She emphasized the need for teachers to change so that the educational institutions can be more sensitive. Referring to her work with the transgender community, she also commented that there is a need to move beyond the gender binary and address stereotyping of other genders and not just females and males.



Sheeba said that while the number of women approaching the higher education arena is on the rise in Kerala, beyond a certain point both education and employment are unable to retain women. There is disproportionate attention given to implementing gender-sensitive measures without really measuring if the measures are actually bringing about change in behaviors. Sheeba also urged to look at gender justice in terms of wider possibilities of correcting gender imbalances and not just addressing violence. Illustrating her point, she said that in many places, gender studies are being taught without breaking the stereotypes within the family on resource allocation for education, access to different career options and changes in attitude towards women’s mobility.

She also talked about the need for sensitizing institutions to understand women’s circumstances and troubles in order to ensure that there is a conducive environment for academic pursuits. She commented that hostels are becoming bastions of patriarchal privilege, and espouse rules which are not congruent with society. Dress code, gender-segregation, gendered assignment of tasks, she said, are expressions of this kind of patriarchal culture.

## **Key Discussion Points and Learnings**

Menon concluded that Sheeba’s presentation exposed many myths about development and literacy rates having a positive co-relation with gender justice.

In this context, one of the participants, dispelled some myths about North East India and Manipur as being matrilineal societies. She pointed out that only the Garo and Khasi tribes are matrilineal. Patriarchal practices abound in the states of North East as well. She also cautioned that women’s rights and human rights

activists must not create a binary between the North East and the rest of India. Despite differences in the way patriarchy operationalizes itself in North East as opposed to the rest of India, one cannot make a blanket statement that states in the North East are more egalitarian. There are many complexities within that statement that need to be examined.

Another interventionist, who works with tribal women, found it difficult to impart awareness about gender-based violence because it is normalized by the prevalent culture to the extent that women are not able to register that they are being subjected to violence. She talked about the necessity of tools for educators to change mindsets and spread awareness in this regard.

A participant who works with Karbi tribes in Assam, to promote education and end child-trafficking, talked about the challenges in the region and sought ideas from the participants at the Consultation for more effective ways of sustaining her work.

Another participant questioned the idea of imposing a single model for effecting change. She observed that it is difficult to work in remote areas where there is no support. She remarked that we think of patriarchal challenges and its manifestations like domestic violence and workplace harassment through the eyes of the law. Foregrounding the need to think about educational strategies which can effect behavioral changes towards equality in such settings, she asked, *“Could alternative systems that women have started be a possible solution?”*

A participant shared his teaching experience and integration of gender studies curriculum in the school itself. He raised the question of how men who do not identify with gendered norms that are being deconstructed in workshops on gender, extract out of these experiences. He further advocated for bringing more nuances in the curriculum beyond a sporadic value-education class. For e.g., schools and colleges could talk about Mira’s sexuality when reading her poetry, talk about transgender rights, women’s experiences of Partition, use art to explore desire, etc. Responding to this comment, Menon said that the leadership of education in changing culture and introducing effective methods is crucial.

Another participant intervened saying that gender should surface in all subjects and not just history lessons. He also added that apart from talking about violence associated with gender, one could also talk about the positive aspects of one’s identity.



A transgender participant reminded the group to be conscious of the vocabulary being used and to be constantly cautious of not falling into binaries.

A participant said that, *“Awareness is not behavioral shift.”* She centered the question of inquiry to focus on what must be done to ensure that behavioral shift occurs. Gulati responded that mindset and behavior are like two wheels of a bicycle. For example, he said that Indian schools focus on discipline and yet we see children having difficulty in standing in a straight line. The discomfort of doing things which are not accepted is about mindset and behavior follows, he noted. *“Awareness is overrated. Awareness is only at the level of intellect. Sensitization takes it deeper and leads to a shift in perception & behavior.”* It takes a gamut of things like appreciation, reflection and systemic change to achieve behavior change.

The session offered extensive learning in different contexts of education and how classrooms must rise up to counter gender stereotypes and patriarchal ideas which perpetuate violence. Innovative methodologies to build cultures of equity were also introduced.

## Recommendations and Takeaways

The last session provided space for the participants to make broad suggestions and recommendations on creating enabling spaces for the youth to carry forward the agenda of gender justice. The discussion drew upon the experience, expertise and insights of the senior practitioners from the field, and from the young new entrants who were present at the Consultation. The discussion was pivoted around the following key questions:

*What were your major takeaways from the consultation?*

*What according to you are the “effective” interventions?*

*How can young actors and practitioners push forward this agenda? What methodologies in your view are practicable?*

*How can the community of practitioners and theorists committed to this cause consciously engage new actors to the cause of gender justice?*

Dr. Rajgopalan, who chaired the session, asked that the participants also think about, “*Who are we making these recommendations to? What are these recommendations for?*” She further said, “*The strength of this gathering is that people come from various backgrounds and hence, possibilities of what can be done together are enormous.*”

The participants shared their key takeaways which can be broadly outlined below:

- Increased awareness of the varied initiatives in the field on preventing GBV.
- Increased awareness of different and effective interventions with respect to support for gender-based violence survivors.
- There was a validation of not just positive thinking on ending VAW but also a palpable sense of what was happening ‘in the field’/ at the grassroots, thus a unique way of knowledge creation. Strategies to translate knowledge into action and link theory with praxis were shared. Participants were able to further nuance their understanding of gender and GBV and gain a more informed perspective about the challenges on the ground with respect to implementation of initiatives.
- Awareness of rights in situations of violence, conflict and oppression was facilitated.

- Participants were exposed to new ideas that can be adapted as per one's context.
- Some new entrants to the field acknowledged that their theoretical understanding of gender and GBV and nuances of VAW was enhanced.

The discussions saw rich participation from the Consultation group, which eagerly came forward to make innovative and nuanced recommendations. The suggestions ranged from working with civil society and the government to ushering changes in the academic discourse and culture. The major recommendations are summarized below:

### **Recommendations for Civil Society**

It was recommended that Consultations of this nature should be held in different cities as it might be productive to learn from different settings. Experiences from the field must be periodically shared with different stakeholders across the board. Participants also suggested that different ways of working together and alliances around communication strategies are worth exploring. In the words of a participant, *“It is invigorating to be speaking the same language and still find areas where one can fill gaps.”*

On the knowledge creation aspect, participants recommended that initiatives across geographies must be mapped and an archive of initiatives, available theorization and methodologies that has information about the field and about the myriad organizations working on different aspects of VAW & GBV, should be built. This will be particularly helpful in making it easier for new entrants and people in need of connecting with the community to access the required information in a timely manner. Over the years, a lot of organizations have engaged in remarkable work on countering gender-based violence. Existing data and insights from their work can be used to create a framework to contextualize and evaluate new initiatives in the field.

Many participants underlined the importance of using vocabulary that is inclusive. The revised language must challenge, and attempt to transgress, boundaries and binaries with regard to gender-based violence. It was also noted that words like “community” and “empowerment” that are frequently used in the field must be problematized and oft used words like “gender”, “equality” and “patriarchy” must be thought about more deeply. Some of the participants also underscored that inclusivity may mean conversations in languages other than English, in some contexts.

The group advocated for the use of creative methodologies to speak directly to the rapidly changing perspectives in the media and the culture of latent violence.

In this regard, creation of visual material to engage more people was emphasized. Participants were in agreement that the medium of television has a far reaching effect and thus, producing more effective tele-series can help in building a space of 'counter culture'. Newer technologies like mobile apps could be explored to bring more people into the conversation.

Given that many institutionalized arrangements under the state seek to promote gender equality, participants underlined the need for coming up with innovative strategies to engage youth and work across fault lines of caste, class, gender and ethnicity so that these institutional mechanisms are functional and effective on the ground. Reflections on the overarching structure and political economy and how they connect with gender inequalities must be included in the conversation. The role of men and boys is crucial, especially to counter the backlash that women run into when they speak out about violence and hence, they must be continuously engaged to ensure a lasting change.

There is an urgent need to mainstream gender-sensitization and participants suggested that efforts must be made to talk about issues of gender-based violence across the different cross-sections of the society. Thus, it was recommended that the design of interventions must be cognizant of lived experiences of people.

## **Recommendations for the Government**

It was articulated by the Consultation group that government must play a pivotal role in the effort to gender-sensitize different sectors. Participants opined that law and policy are embedded in a patriarchal framework and this directly affects the justice system.<sup>23</sup> The group discussed the need for state interventions in the form of guidelines for the corporate sector where there is a lack of dialogue about the organizational culture which is often informed by patriarchal belief systems. Some participants shared personal examples to show how women are treated as liabilities and gender - discrimination pervades even seemingly progressive organizations. Another state sector that was highlighted in the discussion was the Police force. Given that the Police is considered to be the 'protector' of rights of citizens, it was suggested that it is imperative that they have a nuanced understanding of women's rights and the rights of the LGBT community.

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<sup>23</sup> In this regard, a participant underlined the need for law to address the issue of half widows. It was suggested that special courts be institutionalized to decide their cases. 'Half-widows' is a term given to women in Kashmir whose husbands have disappeared during the on-going conflict in Kashmir and it is unknown whether they are dead or alive.

## **Recommendations for Academia**

The role of academia in breaking gender stereotypes and challenging the norms is crucial. Participants suggested that there is a need to focus on bottom-up initiatives and both students and teachers must partake in them. Students should be sensitized early about gender and their academic learning should include investigation into: i) what is political; ii) how can they deal with gender inequality; iii) how can they fight against gender-based violence (even in hostile environments); iv) how can they design their reality differently and move towards a more equal society.

## **Recommendations for Changing Culture**

A long-lasting change, opined participants, must reflect in our culture. Given that there is a widespread 'culture of fear' in the Indian society, there must be an immediate attempt to address it in all the spheres, including the family and the community.<sup>24</sup> Participants shared many examples from their personal lives and experience to further illustrate this phenomena.

Gopinath concluded with the hope that solidarities will emerge out of this session and all the stakeholders involved will agree to be accountable for the commitments they make.

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<sup>24</sup> In this context, one participant found the usage of the term 'Nirbhaya' problematic. While trying to denote freedom and fearlessness, the term paradoxically reiterates a culture of fear.

## Feedback

The participants' feedback reflects their learning over the three days of the Consultation, and shows that the proceedings were largely able to meet objectives of the Consultation. Since the participants came from myriad walks of life, different aspects of the Consultation were found useful by them. For many, the Consultation served to improve their understanding of gender and GBV. Participants were motivated to take action and make interventions in their work and daily life. Some of their ideas are shared below:

### *I am Motivated...*

- To use my power to change the world. Gender is not a burden.
- To fight back on issues of GBV and use the 4C's (by *Prof. Jaya Indiresen*) approach of being Committed, Concerned, Competent and Conscious.
- To adopt some of the strategies shared in the Consultation directly in my work context.
- To introduce new sessions especially on legal awareness in my work on conflict resolution for the Tibetan community.
- To spend more time with my thirteen year old daughter to sensitize her and talk to her about gender issues.
- To connect with organization to work with men and boys, especially on emotional health-related notions of what masculinity is.
- To implement strategies for women to reclaim public spaces and create avenues for Tibetan women to share their views, stories and experiences.
- To gender-sensitize my friends, my partner, my family and others through personal interactions.
- To create an online platform on spreading awareness on women's rights.

Participants were appreciative of the holistic approach to the issue of GBV at the Consultation and the reflections on the role of all the stakeholders. They also documented their desire to participate in more such forums where resolutions and creative solutions can be arrived at through informed dialogue. Almost all the responses received indicated a keen interest to work more on the issue and stay connected with WISCOMP in future.

## Conclusion

As our project, *Partners in Wellbeing: Youth countering Violence against Women in India* nears its completion (In March 2017), the Consultation served to bring together different stakeholders practitioners, activists, theorists, survivors, administrators, lawmakers and those who have worked on the project with WISCOMP to the same table. It was instrumental in highlighting the heterogeneity within the field, giving an opportunity to learn about diverse perspectives and understand the challenges in the path towards equality. Not only did it register voices from different parts of the country, it also facilitated a dialogue that looked beyond fragments of work on different aspects of VAW, in order to think about larger systemic and societal change.

The case studies brought to light the impediments encountered by activists and practitioners in the field and the multiple layers of intervention required to bring about effective change. Most sessions reiterated the importance of involving the community and building an inclusive vocabulary. The sessions were successful in stimulating discussions amongst the participants on effective communication and intervention strategies in different contexts.

Thus, the Consultation became a space for like-minded scholars and practitioners who were not tasked with a particular pre-determined agenda to take stock of different initiatives in an open manner. The Consultation process became a space for mutual sharing, building solidarities and stimulating reflection.

It is WISCOMP's hope that this collective synergy will positively inform research and practice in the field and bridge the gaps between the different approaches adopted to end GBV, ushering a truly gender-just and non-violent society.

## Annexure A

### Background Note\*

An oft repeated *mantra* among the cognoscenti about India is that the social and economic costs of endemic gender based violence (hereafter referred to as GBV) including sexual violence are staggering. Equally, that the discrimination that girls and women in the country face in terms of access to education, denial of equal property rights, gender bias in access to livelihood opportunities and inadequate participation in the public sphere – all continue to undermine women’s security and well-being and consequently, national capital.

Yet, how widely acknowledged or accepted is this perceptive and how much does policy reflect this understanding? This remains an open question. Are some positive changes already underway that will contribute to a positive perspectival shift towards gender justice? If some recent developments in India are an indicator of how imaginative civil society initiatives and public institutions can exercise agency to propel the process, there is hope indeed.

Following the gang rape (referred to as the Nirbhaya Rape Case) of December 16, 2012 in the city of Delhi and the widespread protests that followed, there has been a new phase of public awareness and mobilization, including both young women and men, about the nature and extent of sexual violence in the country and the targeting of young women and students more specifically. There is also greater awareness of the misogyny prevalent in contemporary society, as more and more young people access (higher) education in the hope of upward mobility and expanded knowledge and independent futures, the spectre of violence has come to mar the everyday lives and aspirations of youth. Many more cases of sexual violence are coming to light and many more are being reported, whether it be in metropolitan India or in seemingly backward locations. It is clear that GBV has finally “come out of the closet” and commands the attention of governments, international agencies, universities and other public bodies. This is borne out by the ubiquitous rise in the reported crimes against women as demonstrated by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data.<sup>1</sup>

The spontaneous mobilization among the youth following the Nirbhaya incident, (shaking off the efforts of political parties to hijack the movement for electoral

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\* © WISCOMP not for citation.

<sup>1</sup> Please refer to factsheet as in Appendix 1.

gain) the expressions of outrage, dismay and anger at the continued and dehumanizing experience of brutal systemic and overt violence against women (VAW) across faultlines of class, caste, community etc. shook the establishment and society out of its denial and stupor.

Making use of the public awareness and outcry generated by the Nirbhaya Rape case and the pathbreaking Justice Verma Committee Report, women's groups in India highlighted a disturbing legacy of VAW, reinforced by cultures of impunity and cultures of silence. The debate and public pressure led to two landmark legislations: The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2013 and The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013. Together, these legislations made changes to the Indian Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Indian Evidence Act, thereby seeking to alter the experience of women's security in public spaces and at the workplace. India's law to punish sexual violence has catalyzed new movements bringing together women and male activists, scholars, civil society stakeholders and disparate social movements. In addition, the Justice Verma Committee Report, foregrounded the many levels and layers of violence and its multiple forms, both manifest and structural that are arraigned against women in Indian society. This has led to a more nuanced, substantive revisiting and interrogation of the many sectors in which violence against women manifests in the Indian state and society<sup>2</sup>. A pathbreaking contribution of the Report in signaling a new discourse is the **Appendix 3** of the report that details **The Bill of Rights** (often referred to by activists as the Magna Carta of Women's Rights). It sets out the rights guaranteed to women under the Constitution of India, its commitment to international covenants, including CEDAW and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It explicitly speaks to "the historical exclusions and restrictions on the basis of gender while also taking note that certain practices including cultural, social, political, religious and customary norms are patriarchal and impair the agency, dignity and equality of women."

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2 Government of India, *Report of the Committee on Amendments to Criminal Law*, January 23, 2013. The 14 core areas highlighted by the report referred to as Justice Verma Committee Report cover: Constitutionalism, Republicanism, and Gender Equality, Gender Justice and India's Obligations under International Conventions, Rape and Sexual Assault, Sexual Harassment at the Workplace, Other Offences against Women, Trafficking of Women and Children, Child Sexual Abuse, *Khap Panchayats* and Honour Killings, Sentencing and Punishment, Provision of Adequate Safety Measures and Amenities in respect of Women, Medico-Legal Examination of the Victim, Police Reforms, Electoral Reforms, Education and Perception Reform.

**The Bill of Rights**<sup>3</sup> covers six basic areas and their subjects namely Right to Life, Security and Bodily Integrity (Part – I), Democratic and Civil Rights (Part – II), Equality and Non-Discrimination (Part – III), Right to Secured spaces (Part – IV), Special Protections for elderly women and women with Disability (Part – V), and Special Protection of Women in Distress (Part – VI).

The Bill of Rights provides formal articulation and a conceptual vocabulary which reflects the aspirations of the women’s movements in India that had from the mid-1980s sought to highlight the many forms of VAW in society. Their long struggles did have some successes, but also a string of setbacks and reversals. Right from the unsuccessful battle to bring justice to the victims of the infamous Mathura and Rameeza Bi rape cases in the 80s; to the spirited fight against the practice of *Sati* (the Roop Kanwar case), the protests against patriarchal *khap Panchayats* that decreed that community ‘honor’ was ‘inscribed’ on the bodies of women; to their sustained battle to bring justice in the Bhanwari Devi Rape Case in the 1990s against recalcitrant judges and patriarchal courts (that finally yielded, the landmark **Vishaka Guidelines** against Sexual Harassment at the Workplace); to their courageous (albeit failed) struggle against religious orthodoxy in the Shah Bano case in 1985 – the women’s movements had focused largely on the pivot of victimhood.

The Verma Committee turned this metaphor on its head giving women ‘**agency**’ **and** enlisting both men and women in the struggle for gender justice. It is also relevant to mention here that from closing decades of the 20th century India has seen an upsurge of people’s movements – protesting forced displacement, big dams, dismantling of workers’ rights, marginalization of minorities, environmental issues, food security etc. Many of these have been led by women – the Chipko Movement, the Anti-Dam Narmada Agitation, Vandana Shiva’s Navdanya movement against Genetically Modified products, the Right to Information Movement led by Aruna Roy, the Rights of Minority Women (by leaders like Syeda Hameed) and many more.

The growing acknowledgement that women along with men, are not just ‘objects’ of history, but have the intrinsic capabilities to shape and reshape their destiny has yielded a wide range of initiatives— intellectual, political, cultural and economic—where barriers are being broken and spaces being reclaimed. The significance of this particular moment needs to be seized, putting our heads together, sharing our collective experiences to evaluate the progress made; the

<sup>3</sup> The Bill of Rights is appended to this note as Appendix 2.

challenges encountered and the potentialities that the future holds. Above all, how do we harness the energy of the “**youth dividend**” that is likely to be most impacted by violence in order to craft protocols of justice for our ‘*democracy-in-the-making*’.

This National Consultation on *Effective Intervention and Communication Strategies to Counter Violence Against Women*, is an effort by WISCOMP to put the spotlight on the rich plethora of creative and imaginative initiatives that have been taken by the courts, legal practitioners, legislators, the media, educators, and civil society activists to push the agenda of gender justice, post-Nirbhaya.

The Consultation also aims to extend the canvas of discourse and push the envelope to engage both with the challenges and the possibilities ahead. The primary aim of this sharing on best practices and experiences from the field, is **to engage the youth to see themselves as stakeholders and as a force that can provide effective responses to quell the violence** (GBV in particular) that is almost endemic in contemporary society. It is also an attempt to open up potential pathways for constructive engagement through critique, dialogue and a nuanced understanding of the intersectionalities of caste, class and regional identities that compound the experience of violence. The manner in which women and children experience heightened violence in regions of conflict will be foregrounded. Equally, the violence of exclusion, and the “peacetime war” that women and sexual minorities experience in quotidian but relentless ways will provide the backdrop against which the impact of initiatives to counter VAW will be explored.

## **The Gendered Nature of Violence**

In the land of Gandhi and Buddha, ironically, there is a high degree of ambivalence to violence. Violence in India unfortunately is not episodic or sporadic, but is in fact routinized, every day, and in turn seemingly ‘normalized’. Whether it is symbolic or systemic violence or the ‘subjective’ violence (of immediate physical, physiological even psychological nature), it is often structurally embedded and more often than not **gendered**.

Women’s movements (feminists in particular) have worked tirelessly to understand the issue of VAW, to provide services to women and girls impacted by violence and also to engage in advocacy and activist work. While the experience of violence is dark and oppressive, a violation of dignity and even bodily integrity, the fact is that women **are** capable of making the journey from being victims to ‘citizens with agency’ and collectively fight and resist violence.

The substantive action- research that has been generated, the insightful reports and initiatives from the field that have emerged post-Nirbhaya fill us with hope and anticipation of the power and the will to change.

No discussion on the gendered nature of violence can overlook its inextricable links with power, control, oppression and dominance. But the stories of resistance are equally important in that they provide invaluable lessons for engagement. They provide resources, both in theory and praxis to encourage women and men to resist regressive patriarchies, their ideas of hegemonic masculinity and their illegitimate use of power and control. To demystify the source of this power, exercise the right to redressal and take charge of their lives, women (and men) are building solidarities across traditional faultlines and forging communities of choice to resist communities of coercion.

The world over, movements and initiatives during the last three decades have resulted in forcing an interrogation of tradition and institutions that legitimize violence against women. Governments have been exhorted by civil society groups, internationally, to adopt policies that debunk monolithic static representations of culture, participate in validating alternative and non-hegemonic interpretations of culture by women, encourage cultural negotiation and ultimately declare zero tolerance for all forms of violence against women. Gradually, states have moved from a mere obligation to 'protect victims' towards **dismantling obstacles** to 'agency' and **enabling** prevention of violence.

The UN and UN Women in particular have played a considered role in this process. Sixty governments have put in place National Action Plans on issues of Women, Peace and Security. There are any number of reports, guidelines, assessment studies and links that provide conceptual resources put together by scholars, activists and legal practitioners.

India too has witnessed a growing body of work and spirited attempts by civil society groups to provide an alternative discourse to combat patriarchy and VAW. Yet, the incidents of VAW continue, decreasing in some pockets, but alarmingly on the rise in other locations. Some startling data is included as Appendix 1.

The fact that much needs to be done is clear. Yet, the growing constituency of women and men, engaged at the level of law, media, education, policy and the grassroots, at the national, state (provincial) and local levels involving thousands of young people is truly unprecedented. The challenge still remains on how the time frame for changing entrenched mindsets can be shrunk and fast-tracked to impact even more citizens in a country of 1.2 billion.

## Law and Justice

The Justice Verma Bill of Rights for Women is an implicit acknowledgment of the fact that legislation does not always translate into transformatory action. The political and social will has to be pressed into service. The slippage, as Amartya Sen has observed, between *Niti* (law) and *Nyaya* (justice) in India is all too familiar.

The period post-Nirbhaya has seen much progressive legislation in pushing the agenda of gender justice. There have also been some rather startlingly “conservative” pronouncements/ judgments by some benches where the “old order” has sought to assert itself. Several lawyers approaching issues from the rights perspective are pushing the envelope to combat VAW that manifests at both tangible or “less visible” levels. Their battles have reflected daily resistances and everyday mutinies involving functionaries within the criminal justice system and on benches of courts. Their spirited work needs to be visibilized as examples of possibilities within erstwhile inflexible and opaque systems.<sup>4</sup>

Indira Jaising, a senior lawyer of the Supreme Court and a prominent women’s rights activist has pointed out that recent legislations in India have not only created a more nuanced normative framework on violence against women and children through progressive interpretations, but also that the courts are recognizing and deepening, in particular, the rights of survivors within the criminal justice system.<sup>5</sup>

Jaising has drawn attention to the fact that much of the progressive change in the legal framework relating to women have followed and implemented landmark judgments given by the Supreme Court. For example, the **Sexual Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act 2013** seeks to implement the directions of the Apex Court in the *Vishaka v State of Rajasthan and others* judgment in 1997.

Similarly gender justice was upheld in the Supreme Court pronouncements in the *Delhi Domestic Working Women’s Forum v Delhi Police* (1995) and also its

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<sup>4</sup> An outstanding example has been the Lawyers Collective Women’s Rights Initiative’s *Learning and Sharing Manual on Violence Against Women*, New Delhi, 2016.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid p.9. Jaising has cited as examples, legislations such as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005; the Protection of Children against Sexual Offences Act, 2012; the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2013; and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013. These changes are making available civil remedies for survivors of violence, ensuring that service providers are skilled and coordination exists between multiple agencies. One stop centers for health and legal services are a key achievement in this regard.

stand against “compromise” in rape cases where perpetrators accede to marry the victim/survivor as in the *State of Madhya Pradesh v Madanlal case* (2015).<sup>6</sup> On balance, the progressive judgments by the court have outnumbered those that have upheld patriarchal mores. Yet a great deal more needs to be done in terms of training and advocacy with all levels of functionaries within the criminal justice system to ensure that gender justice and zero tolerance of GBV becomes the norm of governance and indeed the default option.

Police reforms to build response mechanisms to VAW have been part of consistent advocacy initiatives by several groups in the NGO sector and here, the contribution of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) has been exemplary. It has not only undertaken a review of the compliance made by the central government on the Supreme Court directives as for example in *Prakash Singh and others*.

*v. Union of India and others* but has generated greater awareness among the masses about their rights when they approach the police. CHRI has, through its work, highlighted the responsibilities of the police personnel as enumerated in the Model Police Act 2006 and initiated pathbreaking studies on public perception of law enforcement machinery and people’s sense of ‘safety’. Some of this work has revealed the disturbing underreporting of sexual harassment that women and girls experience in public spaces, like parks, roads, public transport. In two cities where a recent survey was undertaken by CHRI, reporting was as low as 7.5% (Delhi) and 11.1% (Mumbai). It casts doubt on the purported success of initiatives like *Operation Shishtachar* that was initiated in Delhi to apprehend men who engage in sexual harassment.

There is an urgent need for law to plug the gaps that allow the police to act as ‘gatekeepers’; obstructing and violating the process of justice delivery. In this context, the honorable Supreme Court’s judgment in *Prakash Singh’s case*<sup>7</sup> giving directions for the autonomy and improving the quality of policing, remain to be implemented by governments at the State and Central levels. These directions pertain to the constitution of State Security Commissions; fixed tenure and selection procedure of senior police officials; the separation of law and order from investigation in the Union Territories; ensuring political non- interference in appointments, postings and transfers ;and an independent oversight body to

<sup>6</sup> A list of progressive judgements and those that uphold the older norms, by the Courts on gender justice, is included as Appendix 3. In addition, there are instances where judges have made comments that link women’s particular dresses to the violence they have experienced.

<sup>7</sup> *Prakash Singh and others v Union of India and others*, 2006,

ensure that the police fulfilled their obligations and duties in the law. However, one positive development for women has been achieved with the establishment of women police stations and affirmative action to increase their representation in the police in several states.<sup>8</sup> Henceforth, the role of NGOs and media in generating awareness and educating the public on sexual harassment and other forms of GBV could go a long way in increasing women's confidence to report cases.

The media and the advertising industry in particular have sought to capture feminist messages in their content. Bollywood, television serials and corporate advertising have not remained immune to gender issues in the marshaling of popular culture. Yet, even some well-intentioned initiatives still carry 'baggage' especially in continuing to legitimize the **patriarchal, patrilineal and virilocal** foundations of the Indian family system. The cooption of popular culture into the VAW agenda has been a mixed bag, but as TRPs of one very popular serial – *Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon* (trans. I can do anything) especially in rural areas, have demonstrated, there is a growing openness to questioning received mores on issues of gender equality. How far these efforts can be sustained and "visiblized" will depend largely on the success of efforts to open spaces for democratic dialogue and debate. The interstices through which patriarchal practices systematically seep into structured effort at reform, need to both be cognized, analyzed and systematically plugged. Here again, young people can play a critical role.

## Violence and Conflict Situations

The Indian Civil Society's 20 Year Review of the Beijing Platform for Action<sup>9</sup> has drawn attention to the violence against women prevalent in India's conflict zones (especially in identity based conflicts) where often the female body becomes the site on which 'war' is fought. Woman as the purveyor and reproducer of community identity has been sexually tortured, stigmatized, displaced, impoverished, maimed or widowed. Reproductive rights have been violated by extremist diktats and gendered insecurities have curbed freedom of movement, access to schools, healthcare and livelihoods. The right to victim-centered justice for human rights violation under the regular criminal law has been denied by recourse to special provisions of the Army Act (1950) or the Armed Forces

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<sup>8</sup> Tamil Nadu is the frontrunner among the Indian states in this regard with 12% of its force comprising of women. It also has 199 all women police stations.

<sup>9</sup> See Rita Manchanda with Shivani Vaishnava, *Beijing Platform for Action: Indian Civil Society 20 Year Review*, New Delhi, 2014, pp. 97-99.

Special Powers Act by agencies tasked with providing ‘security’ and enforcing law and order.

Several women’s groups have deliberately entered the peacemaking space, attempting to broker agreements between warring ethnic groups (as in Nagaland), intervening to stop bloodshed during ceasefire between the armed forces and militant groups, pressing their networks into intensifying demands for reworking impunity for perpetrators of violence and demilitarization of civilian spaces.

Internationally too, women’s groups have brought pressure through a Shadow Report to intervene in seeking compliance to General Recommendation 30 of the CEDAW Committee to draw attention to the challenges confronting the Women, Peace and Security agenda in India and to lobby for their active official induction in conflict prevention processes and also in peacebuilding efforts during and after conflict.<sup>10</sup> The CEDAW Shadow reporting mechanism was used to leverage international accountability on women’s rights violation especially in situations of communal violence, and also women living in situation where AFSPA (The Armed Forces Special Powers Act) has been invoked. The *NGO Alternative Report on CEDAW* (2014) by the National Alliance of Women’s Organization (NAWO) has made an exemplary contribution to this process. NAWO’s engagement, in particular with women who are “doubly” even “triply” disadvantaged has been pathbreaking.

Rita Manchanda has shown how forcefully the culture of ‘female aversion’ that manifests itself in incidents of sex-selection, abortions, dowry deaths, honor killings, acid attacks, and sexual harassment at the workplace and in politics is magnified in armed conflict and communal situations. During armed conflicts sexual brutalities, enslavement, forced prostitution, and forced pregnancy are dubbed as unfortunate outcomes and invisibilized. Very often these crimes are explained away as aberrant behavior by ‘individual’ men under harsh conditions of conflict and separation from their families and communities. However, international norms on prevention of gender based violence have evolved considerably. Beginning with a limited recognition of sexual violence in conflict to the inclusion of rape within the scope of the definition of torture through

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<sup>10</sup> The General Recommendation 30 imposes on the state the responsibility for illegal acts that are not directly committed by the state or its agent but also by private actors on account of state failure to take sufficient steps to prevent illegal acts from occurring. It states that CEDAW requires State parties to regulate the activities of domestic non-State actors by exercising due diligence to prevent, investigate, punish and ensure redress for acts of private individuals or non-State groups that impair rights enshrined in the Convention.

expansive interpretation, UN bodies have, following the Rome Statute, included rape in their definition as ‘an instrument of war’.<sup>11</sup>

on account of state failure to take sufficient steps to prevent illegal acts from occurring. It states that CEDAW requires State parties to regulate the activities of domestic non-State actors by exercising due diligence to prevent, investigate, punish and ensure redress for acts of private individuals or non-State groups that impair rights enshrined in the Convention.

## **Educating for Gender Sensitization**

There exists in India an architecture of institutions at the National and State level tasked with promoting gender equality.<sup>12</sup> The erstwhile Planning Commission had in the 12th Plan document incorporated a special focus on gender in public policy as part of its **inclusion** priorities. Yet socially sanctioned stereotypes prevail, serving to dilute their impact in practice. For example, while a big milestone in challenging gender stereotypes was the Supreme Court Judgment of 2014, recognizing the third gender, the Apex Court has also, following a patriarchal heterosexuality bias, effectively endorsed the criminalization of same- sex relationships in the Naz Foundation case of 2013. A Private Member’s Bill seeking to redress this in parliament was summarily thrown out.

The Verma Committee Report has highlighted the role of education, as critical and central to the urgently needed behavioral and perspectival change for gender justice to strike roots in India. Of the fourteen chapters in the Verma Committee Report, the one on Education and Perception Reform (Chapter 14) reflects an in-depth analysis and critique of areas in which education has fallen short in reversing gender stereotypes, thereby reinforcing patriarchal and severely retrogressive practices in society.<sup>13</sup>

There are specific exhortations here to building alternative perspectives and perceptions in the education space, for example i) preventing stereotyping and ‘blinkered’ acculturation, ii) interrogating cultures of ‘replication and consensus’

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<sup>11</sup> 15 Years of United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women its Causes and Consequences (1994-2009) – A Critical Review, 2009. <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Women/15YearReviewofVAWMandate.pdf> (Accessed May 27, 2014)

<sup>12</sup> National and State Commissions for Women, Missions for Women’s Empowerment and tools such as gender budgeting, microcredit, banking sector initiatives etc.

<sup>13</sup> See Justice Verma Committee Report, Chapter Fourteen - Education and Perception Reform, pp. 383-410.

in the context of caste and gender, iii) notions of manhood and masculinities and women as the repository of 'honor', iv) received structures of power and entitlement, v) recognizing discrimination, vi) abuse of age, authority, power and position by teachers/mentors in the education space, vii) asymmetrical power relations viii) prevalence of transgressions, verbal abuse, and violence and harassment in schools and educational institutions, ix) the need for sexuality education, x) psycho-social effects of abuse, xi) problematic construction of identities xii) kinds of peer pressure, xiii) forms of corporatization impinging on autonomy and creativity in the education space, xiv) intolerance of alternative sexualities xv) need for 'alternative' life skills training etc.<sup>14</sup>

## **The Education Space**

Education plays a crucial role in promoting the egalitarian commitments of Equality and Justice enshrined in the Indian Constitution. It is integral to processes that engender and expand horizons of opportunity for all disadvantaged and marginalized groups, including women. Promoting equity through education reflects the commitment to nurture and preserve democratic praxis in spaces of learning. Gender equality, consequently, is integral to this imperative.

The spate of disturbing events of gender based violence in the national capital and in other parts of the country necessitate a critical review and interrogation of the existing arrangements in our institutions of higher learning to ensure the freedom, safety and security of girls and women in particular and of the entire youth population in general. While institutional mechanisms have been mandated for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to follow truly responsive or emancipatory practices, processes are still woefully inadequate. Not merely careful supervision but also educational interventions, counseling and quick redressal, are the need of the hour.

Colleges and universities are complex institutions engaged in the education of future generations. Institutions of higher education today are more diverse than ever before and in terms of numbers also have a growing proportion of women among their ranks. To this extent these are institutions that may be the closest to fulfilling the potential of the ideals of equality and social justice. Furthermore, members within these institutions are in a position to reflect on existing hierarchies and differences, oppose the growing prevalence of violence, especially sexual violence and harassment, and evolve impactful practices to preserve the rights and dignity of citizens in a democracy.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, pp. 404-410.

At one level, a quiet revolution has been taking place in institutions of higher education in recent years. In terms of growth and expansion the current situation appears unprecedented. On the eve of the Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012-17), there were 31,935 higher educational institutions as of August 2011. Out of these just over 600 are universities. The total enrolment stood at approximately 13 million in colleges and 2 million in universities. There has been a mushrooming of HEIs of all kinds across the country, some with state financing and many more from private sources. Among the largest in number of HEIs, are the undergraduate college with their arts, science and commerce faculties, and this is reflected in the proportion of students inhabiting the Under Graduate (UG) space.<sup>15</sup>

There is a complex combination of uneven representation together with very significant rates of growth in enrolment from social groups that even as recently as 20 years ago were effectively marginalized if not excluded from higher education.

What these numbers are telling us, is that the much cited ‘demographic dividend’ representing the youth of our country are placing their faith in higher education more than ever before in India’s history. Families are sending their daughters and sons to college or university for several years, sometimes at considerable financial cost, in the hope of a new and better future. Huge aspirations for change are being incubated in HEIs in India today. Claims of equality, dignity and the ability to live, work and study without fear of harassment are intrinsic to this moment.

Institutions of higher education in India today are at a critical juncture in relation to the basic ideals of equality enshrined in the Constitution.

The recent expansion in higher education has made colleges and universities more demographically democratic than ever before, with growing diversity and heterogeneity among social groups. Women constitute 42% of all students in higher education in India today. At the same time, this closing gender gap hides on-going inequalities and disparities among women and men, which can only be approached with an intersectional analysis that combines gender with region, class, caste, religion, ability and sexuality, among others. As institutions of higher

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<sup>15</sup> Proportion of students inhabiting the UG space – 42 per cent are Arts, 19 per cent Science, 18 per cent Commerce, 4 per cent Education, and 10 per cent engineering, 3 per cent Medicine, 2 per cent law, to take only the most prominent.

education engage in teaching, research and the spread of knowledge, HEIs are well placed to reflect on, become sensitized to and oppose all forms of discrimination and harassment, especially sexual harassment on campuses across the country.

Social conditions vary from state to state and the composition of university and college communities displays distinct patterns depending on their size, type and location and how entrenched feudal and patriarchal tendencies are in a particular milieu. At the same time, the vulnerability of women seems to be pervasively high. There are signs of widespread misogyny in contemporary society as women from all groups and regions seek to realize their full potential, especially through education and higher education. The need is to build self-correcting mechanisms in our society but more especially in institutions of higher education. The Constitution needs imaginative interpretation in terms of contemporary conditions and contemporary aspirations, and the role of HEIs in this enterprise remains crucial.

It is important to transform our campuses into spaces that respond to the democratic aspirations for genuine citizenship of ever growing numbers of young Indians.

The *Saksham Report*<sup>16</sup> of 2013, tasked by the UGC to recommend Measures for Ensuring the Safety of Women and Gender Sensitization on Campuses, made scathing observations about the systemic violence, gendered practices, and patriarchal norms and hierarchies prevalent on campuses. Even the mandated *Vishaka Guidelines* were flouted in practice, there was a singular lack of awareness of rights to safety and dignity and an atmosphere of silence and impunity existed on issues of gender based violence. Basic infrastructural arrangements and civic amenities to women and sexual minorities were inadequate, and mandated institutional redressal mechanisms were not even in place on many campuses. Intimate partner violence, sexual harassment at the workplace including *quid pro quo* and *hostile working environment* were experienced by women faculty, staff and students and especially research scholars. Many women and some men became targets of sexual harassment and violence; such vulnerabilities were compounded by other axes of discrimination and exploitation based on class, rural location, caste, minority identity, sexuality and so on. Fortunately, the *Saksham* recommendations were taken on board by the MHRD, which sent directives to all HEIs in the country for compliance.

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16 See [http://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/5873997\\_SAKSHAM-BOOK.pdf](http://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/5873997_SAKSHAM-BOOK.pdf)

Three years down the line, an impact assessment study is yet to be done on how far the recommendations have transformed the ethos of HEIs *vis-a-vis* gender sensitization. The question remains, on how best, educational institutions can empower themselves to play this transformatory role. How can they introduce alternate paradigms of perception around sexual stereotypes, gender bias, discrimination and regressive socialization? What initiatives have been taken that have proved game changers within the education space? What more can be done, and what are the institutional and ideological challenges that the community of learners and ‘educators’ face? What are the methodologies that have enabled gender based violence to be addressed in the curriculum or ‘gender studies’ programs on campuses?

The WISCOMP National Consultation will largely focus on lessons learnt on intervention and communication strategies to counter VAW, and will attempt to chart new pathways for engagement and interventions that can be forthcoming to enlist larger numbers of young people to advance the agenda of countering VAW.

This forms part of WISCOMP’s project, *Partners in Wellbeing: Youth Countering Violence Against Women* that seeks to facilitate vibrant constituency building amongst the youth across professional affiliations to craft new and innovative strategies based on the learnings from the collective sharing of practitioners who have pushed the envelop of gender justice, and “walked” their talk in the courts, media, civil society and educational institutions and think tanks.

The **first** set of deliberations at the session titled *Justice versus Legality: The Issues at Stake* will explore the challenges within the justice delivery systems; examine the accomplishments of the judicial system post the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2013. Also, the extent to which legal reforms (post-Nirbhaya) have facilitated a cultural sensibility that promotes zero tolerance for violence in both the private (family/home) and public spaces. This will also involve introspection on the tensions, anomalies and successes of the enforcement of laws like the Sexual Harassment at the Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005, and others, with a focus on language as well as the substantive aspects of the discourse. It will draw on the experience of legal practitioners, and those charged with justice delivery including judges and police functionaries to assess if the shift towards women’s ‘empowerment’ truly addresses root causes of VAW.

The **second** set of issues that will be foregrounded at the Consultation will include the changing trajectory of *Advertising and Multimedia Campaigns* post-Nirbhaya

and their attempts to impact the popular culture space. Some of the specific campaigns will be discussed, to examine how far the messaging matched the intended outcome. How effectively can this space which has been a potent purveyor of gender stereotyping in India, be garnered/inducted for the gender justice agenda? Or do the commercial interests prove impermeable to making the shifts in perspectives? What new opportunities does the digital media space offer?

The **third** set of issues focuses on the *Right to Secure Public Spaces* and safe cities. What have been the violent expressions of **masculinities** in public spaces? What strategies have succeeded in reducing incidents of stalking, acid attacks and other such forms of violence and harassment? What have been some of the successes in the Police Reforms and Tracking Programs of the CHRI, for example? What initiatives have private enterprise like *Uber* and NGOs like *Sakha Cabs* taken to prevent/end violence against women and girls? What efforts have been made to encourage by-stander interventions in situations of violence in public spaces?

The **fourth** category of issues revolves around strategies to prevent and end domestic violence, and examines intimate partner violence beyond the institution of marriage. Which class of women are most vulnerable, or is domestic violence a phenomenon that is almost universally present in India across class, caste, religion and region? The outstanding work of NGOs like Jagori and the Centre for Social Research will be discussed to ascertain their effective trainings and advocacy (as well as their information toolkits) and which sections have benefited most from them. The challenges faced will be discussed, especially in light of psycho-social and trauma counseling services rendered to survivors of domestic violence and intimate partner violence by institutions like NIMHANS and others.<sup>17</sup>

The **fifth** set of deliberations will focus on gender identities and the special vulnerabilities of gender minorities and women in situations of violent conflict. How the patriarchies of family, community and the state become complicitous and implicated in foreclosing access to justice for women and how the multiple identities and roles of women are often straitjacketed to deny them agency, especially in situations of ethnic/communal conflict will be foregrounded. How women's groups have worked to regain agency by lobbying for space in efforts at conflict transformation will also be addressed.

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<sup>17</sup> In a comparative study undertaken by ICRW (2011), when compared to Brazil, Chile, Croatia, Mexico and Rwanda, Indian men were among the least supportive of equitable relationships and roles between men and women. Further, relatively Indian men's awareness of and attitudes about domestic violence laws did not coincide with a decrease in their use of intimate partner violence.

The *Stories from the Field* session will focus on initiatives that have been seen as largely successful. Progress made in police personnel trainings and the strategies employed; learnings from the endline evaluation of the serial *Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon* (I can do Everything), the *Kadam Badhao* initiative in Haryana of the Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) and effective strategies from the work of Akshara in Mumbai on capacity building initiatives with women, girls, men and boys. This session will also provide an opportunity to discuss other initiatives like *Bell Bajao* and *Wada Na Todo Abhiyan* that have used multiple formats nationally to reinforce the message of gender justice.

The **seventh** set of deliberations at the session titled *Education and Socialization to Counter Gender Bias and Discrimination* will focus on frameworks and approaches that address gender based violence in women's studies program and curricula at institutions of higher education. It will also evaluate programs that are directed at changing perceptions of 'masculinities' among adolescent boys and young male adults within the school system and the training programs that have focused on promoting women's leadership in colleges and university administration. The methodologies adopted by the whole school immersion program (of WISCOMP) in partnership with Bluebells School International to reduce gender based prejudice and discrimination will be shared. The challenges that colleges and universities confront in giving voice to vulnerable groups that are silenced by administrative hierarchies. The session seeks to provide the context for deliberation of the future role of institutions of learning as crafting 'liberating', 'transformative' and 'engendered' spaces for the pursuit of knowledge and for making young people "future ready".

The closing set of deliberations will attempt to reflect upon the experiences and insights brought to the table for making broad recommendations on creating enabling spaces for the youth to carry forward the agenda of gender justice. It is WISCOMP's hope that this effort that seeks to synergize experience and potential, theory and practice, the expertise of senior professionals with the enthusiasm of newer entrants into the field in a non-hierarchical, collaborative reflection, will broaden the vistas of engagement that could well overturn conventional notions of power to yield a more inclusive and humane world in this millenium.

# Appendices of the Background Note

## Appendix 1

**327394** incidents reported in 2015

**26 crimes against women every hour, or one complaint every two minutes\***

A **decrease of 3.1%** in total number of cases from previous year.

The proportion of crimes committed against women of the total IPC crimes: Up from **9.4% in 2011** to **11.1% in 2015**.

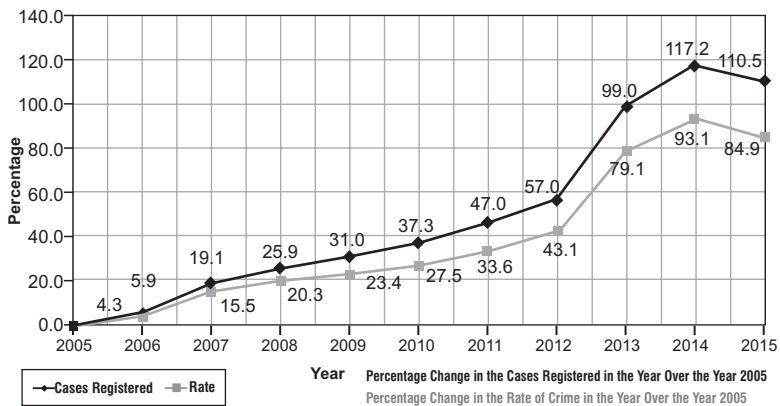
Majority of cases reported under ‘Cruelty by Husband or His Relatives’ (34.6%) followed by ‘Assault on Women with Intent to Outrage her Modesty’ (25.2%), ‘Kidnaping & Abduction of Women’ (18.1%) and ‘Rape’(10.6%)

Of the **1,28,240** cases in which trials were completed, 27,844 cases ended in conviction and in **1,00,396** cases accused persons were **acquitted/discharged**

**Conviction rate:** 21.7%

**10,80,144** cases remained **pending** in various courts for trial at the end of the year

**1,30,195** cases of sexual offences (Rape, attempt to commit rape, assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty and insult to the modesty of women)



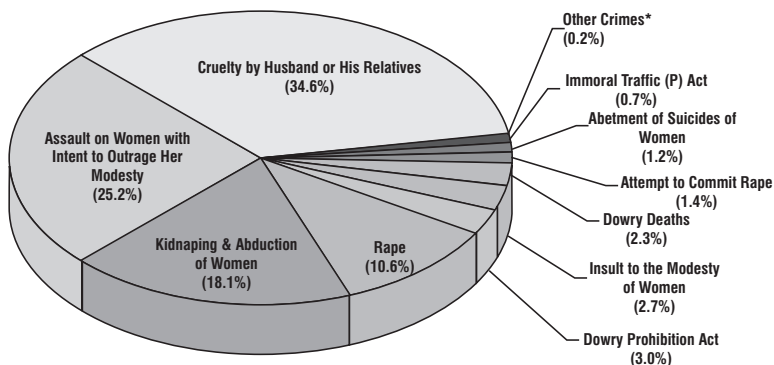
### Percentage Change in cases Registered & Rate of Crime Against Women during the Year Over 2005 (NCRB, 2015)

**Assault on women** with intent to outrage her modesty **63.3%** of total sexual offences (82,422 cases)

**Fall** in incidents of Assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty: 10.8% over the previous year

Of the **34,651** rape cases, in **95.5%** cases offenders were known to the victim

Cases of rape have also shown a decline by 5.7%, also indicating a decrease in the incidents of gangrape



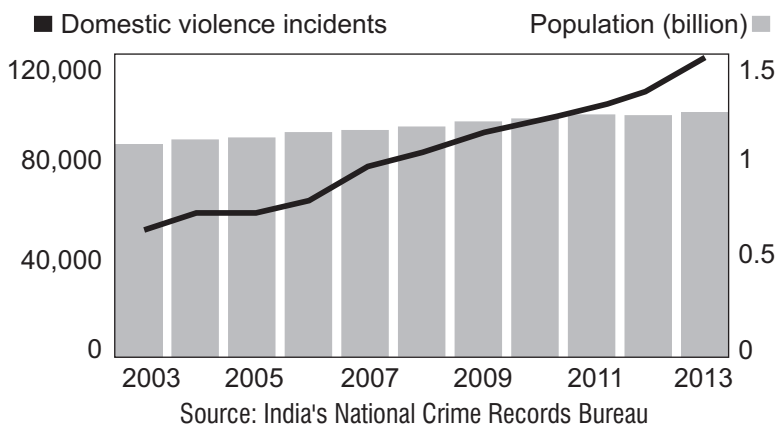
\*\* The cases of Importation of Girls from Foreign Country, Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act, 1986, Commission of Sati Prevention Act, 1987, Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 altogether have been shown as Other Crimes.

### Crime Head-wise Percentage Distribution under Crime against Women during 2015 (NCRB, 2015)

30% of the women, having experienced sexual violence, tell someone about it but **only 1% report it to the Police**=

Under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005: 461 cases registered, an increase of 8.2% over 2014

**7634** of Dowry Deaths reported. **Decline of 9.7%** (from 2014)



### Incidents of Domestic Violence in India (BBC News India, 2014)

States with the highest rate of crimes against women overall:

**Delhi:** 184.3 per 1 lakh female population

**Assam:** 148.2 per 1 lakh female population

**Telangana:** 83.1 per 1 lakh female population

**National Average:** 53.9 per 1 lakh female population

Of the total cases across the country, 10.9% cases reported in Uttar Pradesh, 10.1% in West Bengal, and 8.6 % in Rajasthan

Only **1 in 13 cases** of sexual harassment **reported** in Delhi#

Over 50% cases of human trafficking involved minors, about **90% of these are girls trafficked** to be forced into prostitution==

Child sex ratio in the age group of 0-6 years\*:

**Haryana** – 834

**Punjab** – 846

**Jammu & Kashmir** – 862

**National Average** – 914

Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan are worst states for women, Jammu & Kashmir fast catching up\*\*\*

Women in these states are among those who are most likely to be aborted as children, have the lowest literacy rates, marry earliest, die most frequently while pregnant, bear the most children, have the most crimes committed against them and are least likely to be employed\*\*\*

Haryana has India's worst child sex ratio, the number of females per thousand males in the age group 0-6, followed by Punjab (846) and Jammu & Kashmir (862)\*\*\*

Women in West Bengal marry youngest (19.3 years), followed by UP and Rajasthan (19.4 years for both)\*\*\*

UP has highest MMR (27.8), followed by Rajasthan (23.9) and Bihar/Jharkhand (21.4)\*\*\*

Households in UP are India's largest, an average of 5.6 people, indicating that women bear more children than other states and therefore largest burden of housework\*\*\*

Bihar has the lowest female literacy rate: 51% of Bihari women are illiterate, followed by Rajasthan (52.1%) and Jharkhand (53.4%)

*Source:* NCRB, 2015

*Other Sources:*

\* IndiaSpend, 2015

† National Family Health Survey, 2015

# CHRI, 2015

††The Indian Express, 2016

\*\*\*Source: The Wire, 2016

## Appendix 2

# Bill of Rights

### **Statement of Objects and Reasons**

*A charter to set out the rights guaranteed to women under the Constitution of India, and to provide for justiciability of the various rights;*

*And in consideration of India's commitment to international conventions including Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.*

*And to recognize the historical distinctions, exclusions and restrictions on the basis of gender, while also taking note that certain practices including cultural, social, political, religious and customary norms are patriarchal and impair the agency, dignity and equality of women.*

*And being firmly convinced that any practice that hinders or endangers the normal growth and affects the physical and psychological development of women and girls should be condemned and eliminated;*

*And being determined to ensure that the rights of women are promoted, realised and protected in order to enable them to enjoy fully all their human rights;*

### **Part I**

#### **Right to Life, Security, and Bodily Integrity**

1. Every woman shall be entitled to respect for her life and the integrity and security of her person. All forms of violence, exploitation, cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment and treatment targeting women are prohibited.
2. Every woman as the right to dignity inherent in a human being and to the recognition and protection of her human and legal rights.
3. Every woman has the right to be respected as an independent person and to the free development of her personality.
4. Every woman has the right to express and experience complete sexual autonomy including with respect to her relationships and choice of partners.
5. Every woman has the right not to be subjected to medical or scientific experiments without her informed consent; with an exception in the case of an emergency;
6. The State shall ensure to every woman protection from all forms of violence whether the violence takes place in private or public, including unwanted or forced sexual intercourse or activity;

7. The State shall protect, rescue and rehabilitate every woman who is at the risk of or has been a victim of trafficking and all other forms of such treatment.
8. The State shall promptly provide effective mechanisms and accessible services for information, redressal, rehabilitation and reparation of every woman being a victim of violence.

## **Part II Democratic and Civil Rights**

9. Every woman should have the right to participative governance through participation without discrimination in all elections; representation at all levels in electoral processes; equal opportunity for partnership in decision making and implementation of development and economic programs.
10. Every woman has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, and belief, including the right to adopt, convert, and to hold opinions without interference.
11. Every woman has the right to manifest that person's religion or belief in worship, observance, practice, teaching, ideas, or opinions of her own choosing, either individually or in community with others, both, in public or private.
12. Every woman has the right to freedom of expression, including the freedom to seek, receive, and impart information and opinions of any kind in any form.
13. Every woman has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly.
14. Every woman has the right to freedom of association.

## **Part III Equality and Non-Discrimination**

15. Every woman shall have the right to equality before the law and equal protection of all the laws.
16. No woman shall be unfairly discriminated on grounds of gender including –
  - (1) Preventing women from inheriting family property.
  - (2) (b) Any practice including traditional, customary or religious practice that impairs dignity of women and undermines equality between women and men, including the undermining of the dignity and wellbeing of the girl child.
  - (3) Any policy or conduct that unfairly limits access of women to land rights and finance and other resources
  - (4) Discrimination on grounds of pregnancy

- (5) Limiting access to health care, education and other social welfare.
  - (6) Denying access to opportunities including services or contractual opportunities or failure to accommodate diversity.
  - (7) Systematic inequality in access of labour, contractual opportunities etc.
  - (8) Systemic inequality to opportunities by women as a result of sexual division of labour.
  - (9) Or discrimination by virtue of a woman belonging to another sub-sect of caste, religion, region or race.
17. Every woman shall have the freedom to marry any person of her choice and be regarded as an equal partner in the marriage.
18. Every woman shall have the same rights in case of separation, divorce and annulment of marriage.
19. Every woman shall have the Right to Free Education until under-graduate level.
20. Every woman especially the girl-child must be protected from all forms of abuse, including sexual harassment in schools and other educational institutions and provide for sanctions against the perpetrators of such practices;
21. Every woman who suffers abuses and sexual harassment must have access to counseling and rehabilitation services to women who suffer abuses and sexual harassment;
22. Every woman shall have the Right to Reproductive and Sexual Health.
23. Every woman shall have the right to nutritious and adequate food as well as access to clean drinking water.

#### **Part IV** **Right to Secured spaces**

24. Every woman shall have the right to equal access to housing/shelter and to acceptable living conditions in a healthy environment.
25. Every woman, whatever her marital status has access to adequate housing/shelter.
26. Every woman should have access to Public Transport facilities without fear of the risk of violation of her dignity in any form by means of teasing, molestation, stalking etc.

**Part V**  
**Special protections**

27. Every elderly woman must have specific measures commensurate with her physical, economic and social needs as well as her access to employment and professional training;
28. Every elderly woman must have the right to freedom from violence, including sexual abuse, discrimination based on age and the right to be treated with dignity.
29. Every woman with disability must have special protection and specific measures commensurate with their physical, economic and social needs to facilitate their access to employment, professional and vocational training as well as their participation in decision-making;
30. Every woman with disability must have freedom from violence, including sexual abuse, discrimination; and the right to be treated with dignity.

**Part VI**  
**Special Protection of Women in Distress**

31. Every woman below poverty line; and women heads of families including women from marginalized population groups must be able to fulfil their special physical, economic and social needs;
32. Every pregnant or nursing women or women in detention must be provided with an environment which is suitable to their condition and should be guaranteed the right to be treated with dignity.

## Appendix 3

### Judgments of Significance

In the wake of the Verma Committee Report, the judiciary has been committed to addressing the issue of violence against women. A series of progressive judgments reassert women's right to security, bodily integrity, equality and justice.

#### **Right to Privacy of Victims of Assault**

Date of Judgment: **February 5, 2013**

Case: *ABC v. Commissioner of Police and Ors.*

Bench: **J. Vipin Sanghvi**

The identity of a victim of sexual abuse was compromised by the police and the media. Despite the protests of her mother to comment, her voice was broadcast and the location of residence was revealed. This led to the identification of the victim who had been sexually abused by her father. The notoriety of the coverage that followed became an enormous source of trauma and distress to the mother and the girl. They were forced to relocate to escape the social ignominy. A complaint was filed before the Delhi High Court against the Police Commissioner and the media for revealing the identity of the victim. The High Court upheld the grievance that the police had broken the law in giving out details of the victim to the reporters and violated her right to privacy and ordered compensation. The Court termed the conduct of the media as “prurient and morbid curiosity” as they publicized the details of the case without the victim's consent.

The Court said, “By revealing details about the age of the victim, class of study, name and occupation of the father, the colony where the family lived, and visuals of the doorstep of the house, and broadcasting the mother's voice recorded (against her will) while she was refusing to talk to the reporter, the TV crew had violated the right to privacy, which is an integral part of the right to personal liberty under Article 21 of the Constitution.”<sup>2</sup>

#### **Delegitimizing the Two-finger test as proof of consent**

Date of Judgment: **April 11, 2013**

Case: *Lillu @ Rajesh and Anr v. the State of Haryana*

Bench: **J. Dr. B.S. Chauhan and J. Fakkir Mohamed Ibrahim Kalifulla**

The Supreme Court of India, in view of its previous judgments (with reference to examination of prosecutrix, irrelevance of previous sexual experience and character of the victim, and rape as a crime against dignity, honor, reputation, chastity of women and their right to life) held that the two finger test and its interpretation violates the right of rape survivors to privacy, integrity and dignity

(physical and mental). The Court ruled that even if the report of the test is affirmative, it cannot *ipso facto*, give rise to the presumption of consent.

The Court observed, “*In view of International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights 1966; United Nations Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power 1985, rape survivors are entitled to legal recourse that does not re-traumatize them or violate their physical or mental integrity and dignity. They are also entitled to medical procedures conducted in a manner that respects their right to consent. Medical procedures should not be carried out in a manner that constitutes cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment and health should be of paramount consideration while dealing with gender-based violence. The State is under an obligation to make such services available to survivors of sexual violence. Proper measures should be taken to ensure their safety and there should be no arbitrary or unlawful interference with his privacy.*”

### **Divorce Act of Christian Women**

Date of Judgment: **February 3, 2015**

Case: ***Mr. Shiv Kumar v. Union of India***

Bench: **C J. D.H. Waghela and J.B.V. Nagarathna**

Section 10-A of The Divorce Act of 1869 prescribed two years of separation for Christian women. Whereas, under the provisions of The Hindu Marriage Act of 1955, The Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act of 1936, as well as The Special Marriages Act of 1954, a waiting period of only one year is specified before divorce with mutual consent can be sought. Section 10-A violated the constitutional guarantee of law equality before the law, regardless of religion. The Karnataka High Court ruled that one year separation rule should apply to all women and mentioned the need for a Uniform Civil Code.<sup>3</sup>

### **Regulation on the Sale of Acid**

Date of Judgment: **April 10, 2015**

Case: ***Laxmi v. the Union of India and Ors.***

Bench: **J Madan B. Lokur and J. UdayUmeshLalit**

Over 800 cases of acid attacks have been reported in the last five years in India with Uttar Pradesh recording the highest number of cases. Responding to a petition filed by a survivor, Laxmi Agarwal, the Supreme Court held that acid should be sold only to people who show a valid identity card to regulate the sale of acid. Buyers have to explain why they need the chemical and sales must to be reported to the police. The Court also ordered that free-of-cost first-aid and treatment should be extended to acid attack victims including “food, bedding, medicines and reconstructive surgeries”, even by private hospitals. The Court urged States/UTs to take serious note of the directions of the Court and issued immediate notices in this regard. Additionally, a compensation of Rs.3,00,000 is to be given to the victims by the State Governments.

In another case (Parivartan and Anr. Vs. Union of India and Ors.), the court ruled on December 7, 2016 that the names of acid attack victims should be added to the disability list.<sup>4</sup>

### **Rights of a Single Mother**

Date of Judgment: **July 6, 2015**

Case: *ABC v. the State (NCT of Delhi)*

Bench: **J. Vikramjit Sen and J. Abhay Manohar Sapre**

In an important judgment, the Supreme Court secured the rights of a single mother, recognizing a woman's input in terms of child rearing. When a single woman approached her local family court seeking the sole guardianship of her child the court wanted to send a notice to the father. This prompted the petitioner to seek the opinion of the Supreme Court. The judge held that an unwed mother can be made the sole guardian of her child without disclosing the identity of the father. The Court further added that guardianship rights of the mother can be decided in the absence of the father if it is seen that he never cared for the child and she had to bring up the child on her own. "The views of the uninvolved father are not essential to protect the interests of the child," the judgment said. The judgment goes so far as to say that "in situations where the father has not exhibited any concern for his offspring, giving him legal recognition (as a guardian) would be an exercise in futility; we, therefore, see no purpose in imposing an unwilling and unconcerned father on an otherwise viable family nucleus".

### **Permanent Commission in the Navy**

Date of Judgment: **September 4, 2015**

Case: *Annie Nagaraja and Ors. v. Union of India and Ors.*

Bench: **J. Kailash Gambhir and J. Najmi Waziri**

The High Court of Delhi held that women can have full-term service in the Navy and enjoy retirement benefits, including pension. Women in the Navy were only entitled to a short service commission (upto 14 years) while men were allowed both short service and permanent commissions. The petitioners contended that they were losing out on career opportunities and had been deprived of pension because of the forced short service commission.

The Bench said since women were "here to stay" and since they worked shoulder to shoulder with their male counterparts, the court would "frown upon any endeavor to restrain the progress of women".

However, the discrimination against women in the armed and security forces is apparent. From being considered liabilities to being treated with contempt because of their gender, the struggle for equality of women stretches much beyond their induction in the forces.<sup>5</sup>

### **Inalienable Right To ‘Streedhan’**

Date of Judgment: **November 20, 2015**

Case: *Krishna Bhattacharjee v. Sarathi Choudhury and Anr.*

Bench: **J. Dipak Misra and J. Prafulla C. Pant**

Pronouncing a judgment in the case of a woman who wanted her ‘streedhan’ back from her husband’s custody after they were judicially separated, the Supreme Court held that abused women judicially separated from their husbands had every right to invoke the domestic violence law to get back their ‘streedhan.’ Streedhan’ is movable or immovable assets, received during the lifetime, by a woman either prior to marriage, at the time of marriage or at child birth. The woman, who had suffered domestic and economic abuse at her matrimonial home, continued to be a victim or an “aggrieved person” under the domestic violence law even after her judicial separation. The Court said ‘streedhan,’ gifts given to a woman by her family, is her “exclusive and absolute property.”

### **Woman can be the ‘Karta’ – Head of the Family**

Date of Judgment: **December 22, 2015**

Case: *Mrs. Sujata Sharma v. Shri. Manu Gupta*

Bench: **J. Najmi Waziri**

The Delhi High Court ruled that women can now be the ‘karta’ – the legal head of their households. A unique position carved out by Hindu customs and ancient texts, “Karta” denotes managership of a joint family and is traditionally inherited by men. The Karta occupies a position superior to that of other members and has full authority to manage property, rituals or other crucial affairs of the family. These include taking decisions on the sale and purchase of family assets, mutation of property, etc.

The High Court ruling is important because it takes the 2005 reform in the Act to its logical conclusion. While the amendment restricted itself to providing women equal inheritance rights, the verdict now allows them to manage property and rituals of a joint family.<sup>6</sup>

### **Women’s Entry to Haji Ali Dargah**

Date of judgment: **August 26, 2016**

Case: *Dr. Noorjehan Safia Niaz and Anr. v. State of Maharashtra and Ors.*

Bench: **J. Revati Mohite Dere and J. V. M. Kanade**

The Bombay High Court upheld the right of women devotees to go right up to the sanctum sanctorum of the city’s popular Haji Ali Dargah who were previously disallowed. The caution with which the court decided the matter is worth noting. Initially, the judges had asked the Trust to resolve the matter amicably. However, the Trustees stuck to their ban. Finally, the Court ruled that, “the right to manage the Trust cannot override the right to practice religion itself”.

The Supreme Court is also currently hearing a public interest litigation challenging the decades-old tradition of banning the entry of women aged between 10 and 50 (menstrual age) into the Sabarimala Temple on account of them being impure. The Kerala government told the Supreme Court that it is in favor of allowing all women inside the Sabarimala temple, reversing its earlier stand that defended the entry ban.<sup>7</sup>

The judiciary has largely been progressive in its pronouncements. Some that uphold older norms are listed below.

### **2005 cut-off on women's right to ancestral property**

Date of Judgment: **October 16, 2015**

Case: *Prakash and Ors. v. Phulvati and Ors.*

Bench: **Justices Anil R Dave and Adarsh K Goel**

The Supreme Court ruling restricts the right of women seeking equal share in ancestral property. The Supreme Court ruled that the 2005 amendment in Hindu Law will not give property rights to a daughter if the father died before the amendment came into force.

The court held that the amended provisions of the Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005, could not have retrospective effect despite it being a social legislation. The Court said the father would have had to be alive on September 9, 2005, if the daughter were to become a co-sharer with her male siblings.

### **Husband obliged to take care of his wife because a Hindu wife 'treats him like a God'**

Date of Judgment: **December 02, 2015**

Case: *Vennangot Anuradha Samir v. Vennangot Mohandas Samir*

Bench: **J. M. Y. Iqbal and C. Nagappan**

In a seemingly well-meaning judgment, the Supreme Court espoused regressive understanding of marriage, locating the position of the wife as subservient to the husband. The Supreme Court refused to allow a man to divorce his terminally ill wife, on the grounds that he must stand by her through difficult times even if she was willing to break off the marriage by mutual consent. The Court acknowledged that she might have agreed to an alimony of Rs. 12.5 lakh only because she needed money for treatment, and ruled that the divorce case would not be admitted in court again for at least another six months, or until her cancer was cured – whichever came first.

The Court pronounced, "Hindu marriage is a sacred and holy union of husband and wife by virtue of which the wife is completely transplanted in the household of her husband and takes a new birth. It is a combination of bone to bone and flesh to flesh. To a Hindu wife her husband is her God and her life becomes one of the

selfless service and profound dedication to her husband. She not only shares the life and love, but the joys and sorrows, the troubles and tribulation of her husband and becomes an integral part of her husband's life and activities”.

**Divorce granted to a man on wife's refusal to stay with her in-laws**

Date of Judgment: **October 6, 2016**

Case: *Narendra v. K. Meena*

Bench: **J. Anil R. Dave, J. Nageshwara Rao**

In a recent case, divorce was granted to a man by the Supreme Court on the grounds of “cruelty” after his wife refused to share a home with her in-laws, effectively ruling that a married woman must live with her husband's family. There is no such obligation for the husband. The judgment said that the wife's desire to leave her in-laws' home was inspired by “western thought” and violated traditional values of Indian Hindus.

The Court pronounced that, “in normal circumstances, a wife is expected to be with the family of the husband after the marriage,” stated the Supreme Court ruling, which also dismissed the wife's attempt to kill herself as a plot to “torture” her husband and his relatives.

**(Endnotes)**

<sup>1</sup> The details of all the Hon'ble Supreme Court judgments have been obtained from the Supreme Court's website – <http://supremecourtfindia.nic.in/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://delhihighcourt.nic.in/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://karnatakajudiciary.kar.nic.in/>

<sup>4</sup> Here the Court was making a reference to the Gazette of India - Persons of Disability Rules, 1996; amended in 2009.

<sup>5</sup> <http://delhihighcourt.nic.in/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://delhihighcourt.nic.in/>

<sup>7</sup> <http://bombayhighcourt.nic.in/>

## Annexure B

### Consultation Program

**28 November 2016 (Monday)**

*Venue: Juniper Hall, India Habitat Center*

9:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. **Session 1**

*Legality or Justice: The Issues at Stake*

**Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath**

Director, WISCOMP

**Justice Gita Mittal**

Judge, High Court of Delhi

**Dr. Ruth Manorama**

President, The National Alliance of Women

**Naina Kapur**

Co-founder and Director, Sakshi

Advocate and Preventive Law & Equality

Practitioner

*Special Intervention*

**Geeta Luthra**

Senior Lawyer, Supreme Court of India

11:15 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. **Tea Break**

11:30 a.m. – 12:45 p.m. **Session 2**

*Walking the Talk on Violence Against Women*

*Facilitator*

**Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath**

*Special Address*

**MaryKay L. Carlson**

Deputy Chief in Mission,

US Embassy in New Delhi

**Dr. Rebecca R. Tavares**

Representative, UN Women Office for India,

Bhutan, Sri Lanka & Maldives

12:45 p.m. – 1:30 p.m. **Lunch**

- 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. **Session 3**  
*Changing Attitudes & Behavior through Popular Culture: The Impact of Advertising and Multimedia Campaigns*  
*Facilitator*  
**Pamela Philipose**  
 Senior Fellow, Indian Council of Social Science Research
- Speakers*  
**Dipti Nath**  
 Assistant Professor, Department of English, Lady Shri Ram College
- Abhijit Avasthi**  
 Founder, Sideways Consulting
- Maala Parvathi**  
 Actor & Senior Consultant, Hanmer MS&L
- 3:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. **Tea Break**
- 3:15 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. **Session 4**  
*Right to Secured Public Spaces*  
*Facilitator*  
**Dr. Swarna Rajagopalan**  
 Founding Trustee, Prajnya Trust
- Speakers*  
**Prof. Sanjay Srivastava**  
 Professor in Sociology, Institute of Economic Growth
- Devika Prasad**  
 Coordinator (Police Reform), Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative
- Meenu Vadera**  
 CEO & Secretary of the Trustee Board, Azad Foundation, CEO, Sakha Cabs
- Shweta Rajpal Kohli**  
 Head, Public Policy, Uber India
- Mriganka Dadwal**  
 Founder, SLAP (Street Level Awareness Program)

*Special Intervention*

**Dr. Vandana Vasudevan**

Author and Researcher on Gender and Urban spaces

**29 November 2016 (Tuesday)**

**Venue: Juniper Hall, India Habitat Center**

9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. **Session 5**

***‘Women’s Safety Begins at Home’:  
Impact Assessment of Strategies to Prevent/  
End Domestic Violence***

*Facilitator*

**Suneeta Dhar**

Advisor, Jagori

*Speakers*

**Dr. Ranjana Kumari**

Director, Centre for Social Research

**Sonali Khan**

Vice President & Country Director - India,  
Breakthrough

**Mrinalini Padhi**

Lawyer, Orissa High Court

*Special Intervention*

**Dr. Vranda MN**

Associate Professor, NIMHANS

11:30 a.m.–11:45 a.m. **Tea Break**

11:45 a.m. – 1:45 p.m. **Session 6**

***Gender Identity, Intersectionality and  
Socio-Political Conflicts***

*Facilitator*

**Dr. Syeda Hameed**

Social & Women’s Rights Activist,  
Former Member, Planning Commission of India

*Speakers*

**Vrinda Grover**

Lawyer and Human Rights Activist

**Rita Manchanda**

Research Director, South Asia Forum for Human Rights

**Ezabir Ali**

Kashmir Coordinator, Conciliation Resources

1:45 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. **Lunch**

2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. **Session 7**

*Stories from the Field*

*Facilitator*

**Dr. Sumona DasGupta**

Independent Researcher

*Speakers*

**Poonam Muttreja**

Executive Director, Population Foundation of India

**Manjari Jaruhar**

Chairperson, Private Security Industry Committee, FICCI

**Dr. Nandita Shah**

Co-Director, Akshara

**Akhila Betsy George**

Program Officer, PRIA

4:30 p.m. **Tea**

**30 November 2016 (Wednesday)**

*Venue: Lecture Hall, India International Center Annexe*

10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. **Tea**

11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. **Session 8**

*Education & Socialization to Counter Gender Bias and Discrimination*

*Presenter/Facilitator*

**Dr. Krishna Menon**

Professor, School of Human Studies, Ambedkar University

*Speakers*

**Prof. Jaya Indiresan**

Research & Training Consultant & Board  
Member, CAP Foundation

**Ravi Gulati**

Founder, Manzil

**Suman Kumar**

Principal, Bluebells School International

**Dr. Sheeba K.M.**

Associate Professor, Sree Sankaracharya  
University of Sanskrit

1:00 p.m. – 1:45 p.m. **Lunch**

1:45 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. **Session 9**

*Brainstorming on Core Recommendations of  
the WISCOMP Consultation*

*Special Interventions*

**Prof. Jaya Indiresan**

**Dr. Swarna Rajagopalan**

**Pamela Philipose**

**Suneeta Dhar**

**Dr. Syeda Hameed**

**Dr. Sumona DasGupta**

**Rita Manchanda**

**Anju Pandey**

Program Specialist, Ending Violence Against  
Women, UN Women

**Mrinalini Padhi**

**Ezabir Ali**

**Aanchal Kapur**

Founder, Kriti Team

*With Inputs from all Participants*

5:00 p.m.

**Tea**

## Annexure C

### Profiles of Presenters and Facilitators

**Aanchal Kapur** (New Delhi) has been working on gender and social development issues in India and internationally for 25 years, as a researcher, facilitator-trainer and communication specialist. She works with a wide range of groups from local communities and academic institutions to human rights agencies. She has extensive experience of working with survivors of violence and groups organizing around violence against women and girls. Her publication *From Thought to Action: Building Strategies to Combat Violence against Women* is used by women's rights organizations and government functionaries. She represented the International Labor Organization at the Beijing Plus Five conference in New York in 2000, showcasing a project on Women Workers Rights. Ms. Kapur is the Founder and Leader of 'KRITI: a development, research, praxis and communication team', a capacity building, information and networking support group for grassroots and national civil society organizations since 1999. She has also worked as a Consultant with WISCOMP.

**Abhijit Avasthi** (Mumbai) is CEO of Sideways Consulting, a creative problem-solving outfit that aims to infuse right-brain thinking into every aspect of a business. Drawing from its multi-disciplinary team, Sideways is currently working on projects around product innovation, service design, sales issues and, of course, branding and communication. Before founding Sideways Consulting in 2015, Mr. Avasthi was National Creative Director of Ogilvy and Mather. Some of the brands he helped build over the years include Cadbury Dairy Milk, Fevicol, Asian Paints, Google, Star TV, Tata Sky, Bajaj Pulsar and Perfetti. In fact, he is the creative mind behind the 'Cadbury 5 Star's forgetful brothers', 'Asian Paints Wah! Sunil babu', and the 'Google reunion' ads. Mr. Avasthi graduated from Banaras Hindu University with a degree in Engineering.

**Akhila Betsy George** (New Delhi) is a graduate in History from St. Stephen's College, University of Delhi. She later went on to pursue a Masters in Social Work from the University of Mumbai specializing in Gender Studies and Human Rights. Currently, she is working as Program Officer (in charge of programs in Haryana) at Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), Delhi. She was felicitated with the title 'Outstanding Social Worker-2016' at the Social Worker's National Summit and is also a recipient of the MFF-NAPSWI Award facilitated by the Martha Farrell Foundation and the National Association for Professional Social Workers in India (NAPSWI).

**Anju Pandey** (New Delhi) is Program Officer at the Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW) Unit of the UN Women Office for Bhutan, India and Sri Lanka. She is currently working on identifying and training 1000 women who are active in politics across India. Ms. Pandey has been working in the development sector extensively since 1987, her specializations including gender sensitization and mainstreaming trainings. She has conducted gender trainings with numerous organizations nationally and internationally. While at the Center for Social Research, she worked as the Project In-charge for the UNDP-UNDEP 'Enhancing the Role of Women in Democracy'. Previous to this, she was the head of the Gender Training Institute in New Delhi, and also worked as a Research Associate and Development Professional for the Center for Social Research.

**Devika Prasad** (New Delhi) is the Coordinator of the Police Reforms Program at Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) and oversees the implementation of all of the program's areas of work. She has researched widely on police reform and accountability in India and other countries. Previously, Ms. Prasad worked with the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Working Group on Human Rights in India and the UN. She has a Bachelor's degree in Political Science, a Master's degree in Comparative Legal Studies from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London; and a Master's degree in Human Rights and Criminal Justice from Queen's University, Belfast.

**Dipti Nath** (New Delhi) is Associate Professor in the Department of English at Lady Shri Ram College for Women, Delhi University, where she has been teaching for the last 16 years. She holds an M.Phil from the University of Delhi and her areas of academic interest include Visuality, Gender Studies and Popular Culture. Her research spans the field of Indian Poetry in English, specifically the writings of Indian women poets. She teaches Popular Fiction, Contemporary Literature, British Romanticism and Jacobean Drama. She has written on the politics of language in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* as part of the collection *Rushdie the Novelist: From Grimus to the Enchantress of Florence*. Ms. Nath has also written on Postcolonial Literature and Questions of Form. Because of her abiding passion for sports and involvement in it, she also serves on the Advisory Board of Anglian Medal Hunt Company, a not-for-profit venture that supports potential Olympic medal-winners.

**Ezabir Ali** (Srinagar) is a development professional and a core member of the WISCOMP *Athwaas* initiative in Kashmir. She has worked extensively on the issue of psycho-social and economic development of Kashmiri women and conducted several livelihood training workshops for women. She was a participant

at the 58<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. Currently, she is partnering with Conciliation Resources, a UK-based peacebuilding organization, as the local coordinator in the implementation of an action-research project on Kashmiri women. Ms. Ali has written numerous articles in magazines and is a regular contributor to local newspapers on issues of gender, peace and development. She holds a Masters' degree in English Literature from Kashmir University and also a Masters' degree in Development Studies from the University of East Anglia, Norwich. She is also a Commonwealth Professional Fellow and Harvard Alumnae.

**Geeta Luthra** (New Delhi) is a graduate of Lady Sri Ram College, Delhi with an outstanding academic career. She holds a Bachelors' degree in Law from Delhi University, a Masters' degree in Law from Cambridge University (UK), and an M.Phil in International Relations. She specializes in International and Commercial Arbitration, Constitutional Law, and Conflict Law. She has a professional experience of over 35 years and has been a Senior Special Counsel for the Central Government in the Supreme Court as well as in the High Court. She has defended the Union of India in many arbitration disputes under the Requisition and Acquisition of Immovable Property Act and acted as an Arbitrator in several commercial and contractual disputes. Ms. Luthra has several leading judgments to her credit, including in the field of Right to Employment of Transgenders in Para Military Forces in India as well as in the Rights of Tribal Women to Property in view of Article 15 of the Indian Constitution. She is the Vice President of the Governing Body of the Indian Council of Arbitration; a Trustee at *Manushi* (a trust for the welfare of women and children); and a Trustee of the Indian Chapter of the Inlaks Foundation. In 2015, she was awarded an Honorary Professorship by the Amity University.

**Gita Mittal** (New Delhi) is currently an Honorable Judge at the Delhi High Court. During her legal career as a lawyer, she has conducted cases in all branches of law at the Delhi High Court and other tribunals including the Company Law Board, Monopolies & Restrictive Trade Practices Commission and Appellate Authority for Industrial & Financial Reconstruction. She has been a senior arguing counsel for the Union of India in the Delhi High Court; Standing Counsel for the Delhi Development Authority; Standing Counsel and Legal Adviser for Delhi Jal Board and Bharat Scouts & Guides; and Special Counsel for the Municipal Corporation of Delhi. She has also represented the Land and Building Department of the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, the Delhi State Industrial Development Corporation, the Delhi Financial Corporation and the National Housing Bank. She was appointed as an Additional Judge of the Delhi High

Court on 16 July 2004 and was confirmed on 20 February 2006. Justice Mittal has worked with several social work groups in Delhi and outside in areas of empowerment of women and provision of medical aid and facilities.

**Jaya Indiresan** (New Delhi) is a Research and Training Consultant and Board Member of the CAP Foundation. She has taught at the National University of Educational Planning and Administration, Jawaharlal Nehru University and the Technical Teachers' Training Institute, Madras. She has been a Visiting Professor at the University of Manitoba, Canada, and a Jean Campbell Scholar at the Centre for Education of Women at the University of Michigan, USA. She is also involved in several developmental initiatives with particular reference to women. Dr. Indiresan has been a Consultant with several national and international agencies including the University Grants Commission, Swiss Development Cooperation, the World Bank, The British Council and the Commonwealth Secretariat. She conducted a national research project on 'Moving Beyond Access: Gender Positive Initiatives in Women's Colleges'. She was educated in Madras University where she was awarded the university gold medal in psychology, and also holds an M.Phil degree from the same university and a Ph.D. from IIT, Delhi.

**Krishna Menon** (New Delhi) is Professor, School of Human Studies, Ambedkar University. Prior to joining AUD she taught at the Department of Political Science at Lady Shri Ram College for Women, University of Delhi for over two decades where she was the Director of the Aung San Suu Kyi Centre for Peace. She has published books, papers and articles on debates within political theory, issues in Indian politics, and feminist theory and politics. Her publications include *Women and Political Process* (2015), *Human Rights, Gender and Environment* (2009), and contributions to *Sentiment, Politics, Censorship- The State of Hurt* (2016), *Women and Empowerment in Contemporary India* (2016), *Women's Studies in India* (2014), *Political Theory: An Introduction* (2008), *Applied Ethics and Human Rights* (2010), and research monograph with Prof. Sumangala Damodaran titled *Gender and Identity: A Case Study of Nurses from Kerala in Delhi* (2008), among many others. She received the Teacher of Distinction award from the Vice Chancellor of the University of Delhi in 2009.

**Maala Parvathi** (Thiruvananthapuram) is a psychologist, actress, writer and TV anchor. She started her career in anchoring through 'Ulkazha' in Doordarshan and made her acting debut in 2007 through the film *Time* directed by Shaji Kailas. Ms. Parvathi has 30 films to her credit including, *Neelathamara*, *Apoorvaragam*, *Pramani*, *Beware of Dogs* and *Munnariyippu*. She is also associated with Abhinaya, a theatre group in Thiruvananthapuram. Ms. Parvathi has worked

with the internationally acclaimed director MG Jyothish for the plays *The Lady from the Sea* (Sagara Kanyaka), *The Lesson* and *Bhagavadajjuga*. She has authored a book titled *Mayoorasandesham* and penned lines for *Sreeprasadam* and *Megamalhar*. She completed her Bachelor's in Psychology from Government College for Women, Thiruvananthapuram and her Master's and M.Phil. in psychology from Kerala University. She also holds an LLB from Kerala Law Academy Law College. Ms. Parvathi is passionate about women's rights and has supported several survivors of gender based violence.

**MaryKay L. Carlson** (New Delhi/USA) is a member of the Senior Foreign Service with the rank of Counselor, is the Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi. Prior to taking up DCM position for U.S. Mission India in August, 2016, she was Principal Deputy Executive Secretary in the Department of State's Executive Secretariat in Washington, D.C., where she led teams that support the principal officers of the Department and their staffs. From 2013 to 2014 she served as Office Director of the Executive Secretariat Staff. Ms. Carlson previously served as Deputy Director of the Office of Korean Affairs in the Bureau of East Asia and Pacific Affairs. Since joining the Foreign Service in 1985, Ms. Carlson has served all over the world in Africa, Asia and Latin America. A native of Little Rock, Arkansas, Ms. Carlson received her BA in Spanish and International Studies from Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee. She holds Masters Degrees from Georgetown University (International Relations, 1985) and the National War College (National Security Studies, 2007).

**Manjari Jaruhar** (New Delhi) is presently an Advisor to Tata Consultancy Services (TCS). She was selected for the Indian Police Service (IPS) in 1976 and has held positions in the State Governments of Bihar and Jharkhand, the National Police Academy (NPA), the CISF and the Central Reserve Protection Force (CRPF). Currently, she is also the Chief Coordinator with the Indian Music Industry (IMI), a Senior Advisor to 9.9 Media, and Chairperson for the Committee on Private Security Industry of FICCI. She is one of the first five women police officers in India and the first from the state of Bihar and is the recipient of the Government of India's Police Medal for Meritorious Service and the President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service. After the new law on Sexual Harassment at Work Place, she has been invited frequently to Seminars, Group discussions and training programs to share her experiences on the subject. Ms. Jaruhar also visited Afghanistan on the invitation of OXFAM and Research Institute of Women Peace and Security, to help them understand changes and improvements required for raising an effective women police force besides professionalizing and mainstreaming them.

**Meenu Vadera** (New Delhi) is Executive Director, Azad Foundation. Her commitment to women's rights and development has been an integral part of her personal as well as professional life. She has been involved with grassroots-level initiatives, in India as well as in Uganda, where she lived before 2003. After her return to India in 2003, she led an innovative initiative to establish the *Aagaz Academy*—schools of leadership for elected woman *panchayat* leaders. A graduate of the London School of Economics, with a M.Sc. degree in Social Policy and Planning, Ms. Vadera has written and published articles on women's rights. After working on women's issues for over 20 years at the grassroots as a trainer, implementer and a leader, Ms. Vadera founded *Women on Wheels*—a hybrid social enterprise designed to provide livelihoods with dignity to resource-poor women on the one hand and safe and alternate transport to women users on the other. A pioneer in bringing women into the transport sector, the Azad Foundation has already helped hundreds of women in gaining employability in this sector and establishing *Sakha Cabs*.

**Mriganka Dadwal** (New Delhi) is a journalist, TV Anchor & Founder, SLAP (Street Level Awareness Program). She is a Post Graduate in Journalism from YMCA, New Delhi. She started her career with the Press Trust of India and later moved to TV with Zee Business. In 2012, Ms. Dadwal founded SLAP in response to Nirbhaya incident. The idea behind SLAP was to go beyond slogans and practically empower women. SLAP's Street Survival workshops train women to use technology, presence of mind and martial arts to escape an attack. In 2014, she attended US government's professional exchange program, International Visitor Leadership Program on Gender-Based Violence. In 2015 she was conferred with National Achiever's Award by Sashakt Nari Parishad, a Gurgaon based NGO.

**Mrinalini Padhi** (Cuttack) has over 30 years' experience in law, having joined the Orissa High Court in 1985. She is also known as prominent social activist on the rights of those with disabilities and filed public interest litigations for rights of marginalized groups such as mentally challenged and prisoners. Previously she has been a member of the Orissa State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, and a Senior Standing Counsel for Central Excise and Customs. She empaneled counsel for various government bodies and has also been appointed as Member of the High Court and Cuttack District on sexual harassment in workplaces. Ms. Padhi has been working with differently abled children since 1991 as Honorary Secretary of Sahaya which runs special school for the mentally challenged. Her other interests include Odissi dance and created an award-winning documentary film on Gotipuas of Raghurajpur. She completed a M.A. in Economics and also a LLB.

**Naina Kapur** (New Delhi) is a Senior Lawyer who has been working on Preventive Law and Equality compliance. With the passing of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition & Redressal) Act, 2013, Ms. Kapur is actively pursuing compliance, prevention, mediation and redress at workplaces. Prior to forming a virtual law practice, Ms. Kapur has various professional experiences in the private and public sector where she has handled all kinds of legal matters. As a civil society leader, she has accumulated expertise in gender equality and non-discrimination compliance through innovative training processes. In the past she framed and acted as lead instructing counsel before the Supreme Court of India in the *Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan* case, as well as founded and designed a unique Asia-Pacific judge/NGO partnership on judicial education about Equality issues, which has fine-tuned her skills as a facilitator and trainer. Ms. Kapur is an accredited Mediator of the Indian Institute of Arbitration & Mediation (IIAM).

**Nandita Shah (Mumbai)** is Co-Director and Managing Trustee of Akshara, a Women's Centre, where she has worked for over 20 years. Akshara works by bringing individual as well as structural societal change. The organization educates and empowers youth to become social change agents, with girls from low socio economic backgrounds by assisting them financially and by supporting students and activists with material on gender related issues. Dr. Shah is a gender trainer, activist of the women's movement and an educator. She is also an active member of the World Social Forum, one of the largest civil society networks. Dr. Shah completed her Ph.D. in Social Sciences from University of Amsterdam in 2002. She holds Masters' degrees in Social Work from Mumbai University and an M.A. in Development Studies from International Institute of Social Studies, Netherlands.

**Pamela Philipose** (New Delhi) has just completed her term as Senior Fellow with the Indian Council of Social Science Research. She is presently Public Editor, The Wire. She began her career with The Times of India and until recently served as Director and Editor-in-Chief of Women's Feature Service (WFS), an agency mandated to highlight development issue with a gender focus in media coverage. Earlier, Ms. Philipose was senior associate editor with *The Indian Express*. Ms. Philipose was awarded the Chameli Devi Jain Award for Outstanding Woman Journalist in 1999 and the Zee-Astitva Award for Constructive Journalism in 2007. She was also an advisor to the Media Task Force of the Government of India's High Level Status of Women Committee Report. Ms. Philipose has recently co-edited two volumes; one focusing on reportage on conflict entitled *Across the Crossfire: Women and Conflict In India* (2012), and another

that looked at women's employment, *Work In Progress* (2013). She has also contributed to various anthologies, including *Memoirs From The Women's Movement In India: Making A Difference* (2011) and *Making News, Breaking News, Her Own Way* (2012).

**Poonam Muttreja** (New Delhi) is Executive Director of the Population Foundation of India (PFI), a New Delhi-based NGO established in 1970 to promote population stabilization in India and global thinking on population and human development. She has been a member of the Family Planning 2020 Reference Group – a global initiative to develop a new global architecture for increasing access to voluntary family planning services. Prior to joining PFI in 2010, Ms Muttreja served as the Country Director of MacArthur Foundation in India for close to 17 years. In the earlier stages of her career, she was instrumental in setting up the Ashoka Foundation, India (as its Indian Founder/Director); the Society for Rural, Urban and Tribal Initiatives (STUTI); and the NGO Dastkar, both based in New Delhi. Ms Muttreja studied psychology and mass communications in Delhi University and Public Administration at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. She has taught courses on development from a grassroots perspective in Amherst College and Earlham College in the United States.

**Ranjana Kumari** (New Delhi) is a renowned social activist, reformer and a prolific academician who has devoted over three decades of her life towards assisting marginalized women in the society. Presently serving as the Director of Centre for Social Research, Dr. Kumari has been conferred with the prestigious Lotus Leadership Award in the year 2015 along with numerous national and international accolades. She has been a scholar with great felicity and has many books and research studies to her credit. A doctorate in Political Science from Jawaharlal Nehru University, Dr. Kumari is the author of several books; including the world-famous *Brides are Not for Burning* and *Women in Decision Making*. As an activist in the women's movement and ardent supporter of reservation of seats for women in the parliament, Dr. Kumari has actively campaigned for the issue for over a decade. She has also been involved in research, advocacy, lobbying, mobilizing campaigns and trainings for the protection of women's human rights." Having dedicated her life to significant social causes, Dr. Ranjana Kumari continues to impact the lives of many with her zeal.

**Ravi Gulati** (New Delhi) has extensive experience in building and nurturing learning communities of across-age learners. Almost 20 years ago, he co-founded Manzil – a youth-led non-profit where 250+ youth are at once both learners and teachers, committed to making the world a better place, equally for themselves

and others. He also co-leads a group facilitating Delhi Government's 1000 school principals' learning in leadership and teacher development in a five-year-long program offered with SCERT. In addition, he enthusiastically mentors many other youth initiatives addressing a diversity of social issues, in particular facilitating spaces of group learning for young social entrepreneurs, especially those who have founded community learning centers. Mr Gulati also serves on the Boards of a few NGOs like Pravah that focus on youth leadership.

**Rebecca R. Tavares** (New Delhi/USA) is the Representative of UN Women's multi-country Office for India, Bhutan, the Maldives and Sri Lanka. Previously Dr. Reichmann Tavares was Representative for Brazil and Regional Programme Director of UN Women's Brazil & Southern Cone Office (2009-2013). Dr. Tavares has served as Executive Vice President of Tavares Associates, an international consulting firm. She helped to found and was Executive Vice President of the New Americans Museum, San Diego, and served as Vice President (Programs) at the San Diego Foundation, California. Following the transition to democracy in Brazil, Dr. Reichmann Tavares lived in Rio de Janeiro for eight years where she was a Program Officer with the Ford Foundation's Rights and Social Justice Program. A native of Southern California, Dr. Reichmann Tavares graduated from Yale University and holds a Ph.D. from the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She has published several books, monographs and articles on race relations in Brazil, women's empowerment, and microfinance in Latin America and South Asia.

**Ridhima Mehra** (New Delhi) is Executive Producer and Director, Open Frame, PSBT's annual film festival and forum. Over the last decade, she has been involved with commissioning, production, evaluation, managing PSBT programs and has worked on over 500 films.

**Rita Manchanda** (New Delhi) is Director-Research at the South Asia Forum for Human Rights, where she founded and developed the programs, 'Women Conflict and Peacebuilding', 'Media and Conflict' and 'Minority Rights'. She is a writer, researcher, journalist and a human rights activist and has written extensively on security and human rights issues, particularly on feminizing security. Among her many publications are the edited volumes entitled *Sage Series in Human Rights Audits of Peace Processes* (2015) and *Women, War and Peace in South Asia: Beyond Victimhood to Agency*. Ms. Manchanda's research study on 'Naga Women in the Peace Process' is a benchmark contribution to the study of gendered war narratives. She is founding Member of the Pakistan India Forum for Peace and Democracy and of the Women's Regional Network (Afghanistan-India Pakistan) and is team leader of the research advocacy initiative

for a South Asia Tribunal on Women's Human Rights. Ms. Manchanda has organized numerous regional dialogues on media reporting of conflict, women and peacebuilding and minority rights. She serves on the board of several prestigious organizations and journals, including the *International Journal of Transitional Justice*.

**Ruth Manorama** (Bengaluru) is a women's rights activist well known for her contribution in mainstreaming Dalit issues. Herself from the Dalit community, she has helped throw the spotlight on the precarious situation of Dalit women in India. Dr. Manorama has also contributed enormously to breaking the upper-class, upper-caste image of the women's movement in India. In 2005, she was one of 1000 nominees for the '1000 women for the Nobel Peace prize' campaign. She was also closely associated with the mobilization of Dalits towards the World Conference Against Racism in Durban and organized the public hearing on Violence Against Dalit Women in Bangalore which led to the founding of National Federation of Dalit Women. Her work on coordinating the South India chapter of the preparations for the Fourth UN World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 was followed by the establishing of National Alliance of Women (NAWO), with her as President. Dr. Manorama received her B.A. and M.A. degrees from Chennai and an Honorary Doctorate for her exemplary social work from Bangalore University.

**Sanjay Srivastava** (New Delhi) is Professor in Sociology, Institute of Economic Growth, Delhi University. Prof. Srivastava specializes in Social Theory, Globalization and Culture, Masculinity and Gender, Urban Cultures, Cultures of Consumerism and Globalization and the making of middle-class cultures in India. He has written extensively in these areas. Some of his books include, *Entangled Urbanism: Slum, Gated Community and Shopping Mall in Delhi and Gurgaon*. 2014; *Passionate Modernity. Sexuality, Class and Consumption in India*. Routledge, 2007; *Sexualities in India Reader. Oxford India Studies on Contemporary Society* (Contributing Editor) 2013; *Sexual Sites, Seminal Attitudes: Sexualities, Masculinities and Culture in South Asia* (Contributing Editor), 2004. Prof. Srivastava holds a Ph.D. in Social Anthropology from University of Sydney and B.A. and M.A. degrees in Economics from University of Delhi.

**Sheeba K.M.** (Kochi) is Associate Professor, Department of History, Sree Shankaracharya University, Kerala. At the University she is the Coordinator of the Masters Program Gender, Ecology and Dalit Studies, an innovative M.A. program funded by the University Grants Commission. Dr. Sheeba researches

on New Social Movements, especially on women's movements and new sexualities. She is also involved in Women's groups for affirmative action and in women's publishing. She is editor of *Sanghaditha*, the feminist monthly in Malayalam. Dr. Sheeba has completed her Ph.D. and M.Phil from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

**Shweta Rajpal Kohli** (New Delhi) is the Head of Public Policy and Government Affairs for Uber-India operations. Ms. Kohli was previously working as the Economic Affairs Editor at NDTV. She has over 18 years of experience in electronic and print media, and worked across media houses such as Bennett Coleman and Co Ltd, *Business Standard*, *The Hindustan Times* and *The Indian Express*. She has received several awards including Ramnath Goenka Award for Excellence in Broadcast Journalism and the Business Standard-Seema Nazareth Award for Young Print Journalists in 2001. In 2013 she was selected among 45 Young Global Leaders to attend the Asian Forum on Global Governance organized by Germany's ZEIT Foundation and Observer Research Foundation. Ms Kohli studied at Wharton Business School, University of Pennsylvania, INSEAD Business School, Singapore and at the University of Westminster, London. She was also received a Fulbright scholarship for the International Visitor Leadership Program for Business Journalists in 2007.

**Sonali Khan** (New Delhi) leads and provides strategic direction through the India and regional operations of Breakthrough as Vice President. Since joining the organization 10 years ago and she has led Breakthrough's key campaigns including 'What kind of man are you?' in 2005 and the 'Is this justice?' campaign in 2007. She also played a pivotal role in conceptualizing Breakthrough's Bell Bajao! Campaign against domestic violence. She has been instrumental in expanding Breakthrough's regional and global reach and has been actively developing support for the organization, and has played a key role in extending the work of Breakthrough to focus on issues of early marriage and sex selective elimination. Ms Khan has designed innovative strategies using range of media and mobilization tools to create large scale programs. Also an accomplished business journalist, she has created programs and documentaries for networks including the BBC World Star Plus and CNBC. She has an M.Phil in Political Philosophy from Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi.

**Suman Kumar** (New Delhi) is Principal of Bluebells School International. Prior to taking her position at Bluebells, Ms. Kumar was a lecturer in Miranda College, University of Delhi. She has conducted Teacher Training Workshops and programs on 'Instructional Skills' and 'Cooperative Learning' in several schools

across India. Recently she received the State Teachers' Award from the Government of Delhi. In 1996, she was awarded the International Women's Day Medal for innovation in Education and Child Development by the Russian Centre of Science and Culture and Indo-Russian Literary Club, and in 2004, the National Award to teachers from CBSE. She was formerly the Chairperson of Sahodaya Schools (Delhi) and is a board member at Pravah, a Delhi based organization that seeks to impact issues of social justice through youth citizenship action. Ms. Kumar holds a Masters in History and a Bachelors' degree in Education. She also pursued an advanced course in Educational Inspection and Supervision from Institute of Education, University of London. She is also a Fulbright Scholar.

**Sumona DasGupta** (New Delhi) is a political scientist, researcher and independent consultant and also Senior Visiting Fellow with Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA). She is a Member of Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata, and the chair of International Advisory Group at International Conflict Research Institute, University of Ulster in Northern Ireland. She has written extensively on conflict transformation, critical security studies, governance and politics in South Asia, particularly on Jammu and Kashmir and gender issues as a crosscutting theme. Ms DasGupta was a Visiting Fellow at the Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) and Nanyang Technological University, Singapore in 2014 and Lead Researcher for Participatory Research in Asia on the EU research Project on Cultures of Governance and Conflict Resolution in Europe and India. Earlier she was Assistant Director at WISCOMP.

**Suneeta Dhar** (New Delhi) has four decades of experience on gender equality and women's rights, combining feminist activism and research, capacity building and institution development, philanthropic and policy work. She is currently a Senior Advisor with Jagori, supporting gender mainstreaming, strategic and policy initiatives. Ms Dhar has engaged extensively with issues of ending violence against women, women's safety in urban and rural areas and advancing leadership of rural and tribal women. She has worked with a range of organizations at both the national and international levels, including the UN, providing technical and policy advisory inputs. Ms Dhar is a co-Founding Director of the South Asia Women's Fund (Colombo and India), core group member of SANGAT and member of the Civil Society Advisory Group of UN Women, India. She is a member of Expert Committees and Advisory Committees of NCW, ICRW, Oxfam, CHSJ and others. She has a post graduate degree from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, and has been a recipient of the Fulbright and Advocacy Institute Fellowship Awards.

**Swarna Rajagopalan** (Chennai) is a writer, political analyst, consultant and social activist. She is the founding trustee of The Prajnya Trust, a center for policy research, advocacy and networking in the areas of peace, justice and security. Her consultancy, Chaitanya, has undertaken educational programming, research conferences, commissioned research, research direction and reviews as well as project evaluations and reviews. Dr. Rajagopalan received her Ph.D. in Political Science at the University of Illinois, an M.A. in International Relations from Syracuse University and a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Bombay. She has authored several articles and book chapters and recently, a monograph for the East-West Center, Washington DC, on peace accords in Northeast India. She has edited *Security and South Asia: Ideas, Institutions and Initiatives* and co-edited *Women, Security, South Asia: A Clearing in the Thicket*, with Farah Faizal and *Re-Distribution of Authority: A Cross-Regional Perspective* with Jeanie J. Bukowski.

**Syeda Hameed** (New Delhi) is a social and women's rights activist, writer, educationist and former member of the Planning Commission of India. She chaired the Steering Committee of the Commission on Health which reviewed the National Health Policy of 2002, until the dissolution of the body in 2015. She is also a Founder Member of the Muslim Women's Forum and Founder Trustee of the Women's Initiative for Peace in South Asia. She previously served as a Member of the National Commission for Women and as Chancellor, Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU). Ms. Hameed's report, *Voice of the Voiceless: Status of Muslim Women in India*, published in 2000, is a document of her research on the problems faced by minority women in India. She has published several books, including most recently *Maulana Azad, Islam and the Indian National Movement (2014) as well as many others*. She received a Bachelor's degree from the University of Delhi, a Master's degree from the University of Hawaii, USA, and a Ph.D. from the University of Alberta, Canada. The Government of India awarded her the Padma Shri, in 2007, for her contributions to Indian society.

**Tulika Srivastava** (New Delhi) is Executive Producer at PSBT and has been responsible for the commissioning, production and telecast of over 600 films over the last fifteen years. She is also Director of Open Frame, PSBT's annual film festival and forum.

**Vandana Vasudevan** (New Delhi) is currently doing her Ph.D from the University of Grenoble, France on how urban infrastructure affects women's accessibility to their cities. She is an alumna of the Indian Institute of Management,

Ahmedabad. Previously she studied Economics at Delhi University's Lady Shri Ram College and completed a Masters in Urban Studies from the Institute de Urbanisme, Grenoble, France in 2014. Ms Vasudevan has worked in the corporate sector for several years in leading banks and media companies. In parallel, she has been a writer. She wrote a fortnightly column for the business daily Mint for 3 years. She is the author of two books. Her first book, *Urban Villager: Life in an Indian Satellite Town* (2013) is a reflection on the socio-economic and territorial impact of India's rapid urbanization of rural areas, with a focus on Greater Noida. Her second book *Tough Customer* (2014) is on urban consumer experiences.

**Vranda MN** (Bengaluru) is Associate Professor and Consultant of Awake Clinic for Women with Intimate Partner Violence, Department of Psychiatric Social Work, National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS). She established the Awake Clinic in a mental health setting to provide comprehensive and specialized psychosocial counselling for either victims or survivors of intimate partner violence/domestic violence. She has published several research articles on child and adolescent mental health, life skills training for vulnerable groups especially children either infected or affected with HIV/AIDS, and particularly marginalized children. Dr. Vranda has also developed the first of its kind in India; Video based Training Kit ASHA and Guide 'Psychosocial Intervention for Women with Intimate Partner Violence/Domestic Violence'. She is also a Core Committee Member of "Special Unit for Women affected by Domestic Violence" at Department of Women and Child Development, Government of Karnataka and NIMHANS.

**Vrinda Grover** (New Delhi) is a lawyer, researcher and human rights and women rights activist based in New Delhi, India. She has appeared in landmark cases, representing victims and survivors of sexual violence, communal conflict, extrajudicial killings, custodial torture and human rights defenders. Ms. Grover's research and writing explores the impunity of the State for human rights violations of marginalized and vulnerable groups. She has contributed to the drafting of laws including; the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 2013, relating to sexual violence against women; The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012; the Prevention of Torture Bill, 2010; a law for protection from Communal and Targeted Violence. Ms. Grover actively engages with the UN human rights mechanisms, including the Universal Periodic Review and UN Special Rapporteurs. She is a prominent commentator in the media on jurisprudential issues relating to constitutional rights and freedoms.

## Annexure D

### Profiles of Participants

**A. Radhika** (New Delhi) is a Ph.D. research scholar at University of Delhi and has previously completed a Masters in Psychology at the same University. She has worked as a counselor at Aditi Mahavidyala and as a Guest lecturer at Shyama Prasad Mukherji College for Women, University of Delhi. Currently, she works at Sahas as a counselor. radhika.hope@gmail.com

**Aarti Tikoo Singh** (New Delhi) is Senior Assistant Editor at The Times of India. She has experience working as a freelance writer, as a Research Assistant for Columbia University, and has experience as an editor and journalist for both international and national agencies such as the United Nations and the Hindustan Times. She has a Master's degree in International Relations and Affairs from Columbia University. aarti.tikoo@gmail.com

**Abhiruchi Chatterjee** (New Delhi) is a researcher that examines how migration and forced displacement affects gendered structural and normalized violence, focusing on marginalized communities. Formerly a Research Associate at the National Maritime Foundation, she has researched on numerous dimensions of the rights of various refugee communities. She completed her Master's in International Relations from South Asian University, New Delhi. chatterjee.abhiruchi@gmail.com

**Afroza Ahad** (Kupwara, Kashmir) has an M.B.B.S. from the Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences and is currently working at a government hospital working as a GP as well as a maternity and child health counselor. As well as working as a GP, she also volunteers with local NGOs and assists with running campaigns that focus on child rearing, and diseases specific to women. Dr. Ahad has also been involved with KFORD that conducts health and nutrition research in Kashmir. drmahil211@gmail.com

**Anandana Kapur** (New Delhi) is Founder and Director of CINEMAD India. As an award winning filmmaker and communications designer, she has worked extensively to integrate film with social change initiatives. Ms. Kapur has published on gender, media practices and culture, taught courses on cinema, and worked in a consultative capacity for UNDP, UNICEF and IGNCA. As a Shastri Indo Canadian Institute Fellow she is currently developing a feminist interactive narrative on Delhi. contact.anandana@gmail.com

**Anandini Dar** (New Delhi) is Assistant Professor at the School of Educational Studies, Ambedkar University. She has worked as a consultant with Safety and

Security of Girls' Education, CARE India. She received her Ph.D. in Childhood Studies from Rutgers University in 2014, and has been a Senior Researcher with the Butterflies Program where she has worked with street and working children. Ms. Dar has also been a Research Fellow and Child Protection Officer at Prayas Juvenile Aid Centre. anandinidar@gmail.com

**Anish Vanaik** (Sonipat) is an Assistant Professor at Jindal Global Law School. Dr. Vanaik has a BA (Hons) from Delhi University, a M.A. and M.Phil from Jawaharlal Nehru University and completed a Ph.D. in history on modern formations of property at Oxford University. avanaik@jgu.edu.in

**Azim Hussain Mazumder** (New Delhi) is currently pursuing Master of Laws from Jamia Millia Islamia, He graduated in Law from Assam University, Silchar, and also has a Diploma in Human Rights from the same University. Mr. Mazumder is also associated with Jhai Foundation, Guwahati as a Research Assistant. azimhussain.law.jmi@gmail.com

**Avani Bansal** (New Delhi) is an alumna of HNLU, University of Oxford and Harvard Law School. She is a litigating lawyer and founder of Avani Bansal Chambers (ABC) and specializes in gender justice, access to justice, environment and constitutional law. She is currently running 'Hamara Kanoon' - a project that aims to explain important laws in Hindi through short videos in simple and accessible way. avani.hnlu@gmail.com

**Baseera Rafiqi** (Srinagar) has a Masters in Mass Communication and Journalism from Kashmir University. She is currently a freelance journalist who works with a number of high profile news agencies such as the Times of India and also a number of women's news focused media agencies such as Women's News Network and Women's Feature Services. Ms Rafiqi is also a media fellow with Save the Children. rafiqibaseera@gmail.com

**Beishamayum Deben Singh** (New Delhi) is a Ph.D. Research Scholar in Anthropology at Delhi University. Mr. Singh is a Certificate holder of PGDDM from IGNOU and life member of the Indian National Confederation and Academy of Anthropologists. His research focuses on youth as the future of society and his study interests include youth and gender as well as social change and conflict. debengya@gmail.com

**Chavi Bhargav Sharma** (Faridabad) is Professor and Dean at the Faculty of Management Studies, Manav Rachna International University, and has extensive teaching experience. She was awarded WISCOMP Scholar for Peace Award in 2004-05 for her work "Between Two Worlds: Long Term Effects of Communal Violence on a Multi-Religious, Marginalized Community (2006)". Prof. Sharma

is also an alumni of the Regional Center for Strategic Studies (RCSS), Colombo. dean.fms@mriu.edu.in

**Chintan Girish Modi** (New Delhi) is a writer, educator, columnist, researcher and teacher-trainer. He is currently working with UNESCO's Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development on a guidebook for textbook writers, embedding principles of peace, global citizenship and social justice into school textbooks. chintan.backups@gmail.com

**Col. Sachin Marwah** (Faridabad) is Associate Professor in Mechanical Engineering at Manav Rachna International University. Previously, Col. Marwah served in the Indian Army for 26 years and has also served in Defense Research and Development Organization on deputation. As a technocrat, he completed his Bachelor of Technology from Thapar University Patiala and Masters of Technology from NITIE, Mumbai. sachinmarwah.fet@mriu.edu.in

**Dechen Wangmo** (Dharamsala) is currently Coordinator, Women's Empowerment Desk, Department of Home, Central Tibetan Administration. Ms. Wangmo has completed an M.Phil, and submitted a dissertation "Understanding Gender Relations in Tibetan Community among Tibetan Diaspora in India: A Critical Analysis". empoweringtibwomen@tibet.net

**Devyani Srivastava** (New Delhi) works for the Police Reforms program at the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative. She has engaged in research on police accountability mechanisms in India, status of police reforms in South Asia, advocacy on modern police laws and role of women police in South Asia. She completed her Master's degree in International Relations from University of Warwick, UK, and Bachelor's degree in Political Science from Hindu College, Delhi University. devika@humanrightsinitiative.org

**Dhira Madan** (New Delhi) is a Post Graduate Teacher (English) and is currently working at Bluebells School International, New Delhi since 2015. She completed her Masters from IGNOU in 2007 and has experience as a facilitator for English teaching workshops. Ms. Madan also teaches underprivileged children at Udayan Care (Foster Home), Sant Nagar, East of Kailash. dhira.madan@gmail.com

**Elsa Marie D'Silva** (Mumbai) is the Founder and Managing Director of Red Dot Foundation (Safecity), a successful crowdsourcing platform of personal experiences of sexual violence and abuse in public spaces, and the largest of its type in India, Kenya, Cameroon and Nepal. Ms. D'Silva is involved in a number of organizations, listed as one of BBC Hindi's 100 Women and has won awards including the Niti Aayog's Women Transforming India Award. elsamarieds@gmail.com

**Farhat Mohsin** (Faridabad) is Assistant Professor in Management at Manav Rachna International University. She holds a Ph.D. and Post Graduate degree in Business Management and Economics. She has around fifteen years of experience spanning academic and Industry. Her expertise lies in Consumer Behavior and Service Marketing. She has published a number of research papers in many refereed National and International Journals. farhat.fms@mriu.edu.in

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**Gitanjali Surendran** (Sonipat) is Associate Professor at Jindal Global Law School and is currently working on two books, one of Indian Buddhism and the other a history of SPICMACAY. She holds a Master's degree in modern history from Oxford University and a M.A.-Ph.D. in history from Harvard University. She was a Junior Research Fellow at the Nalanda-Sriwajaya Centre in Singapore in 2010. gsurendran@jgu.edu.in

**Harshita Murarka** (New Delhi) is completing a Diploma in Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding from LSR College. She has previously completed undergraduate and postgraduate studies in English Literature. Ms. Harshita has a keen interest in development that is in line with principles of peace, sustainability and equality. harshitamurarka14@gmail.com

**Insha Zaina Khan** (New Delhi) is currently pursuing her L.L.M. at Jamia Millia Islamia. khanzaaina99@gmail.com

**Ivy Dhar** (New Delhi) is Assistant Professor at the School of Development Studies, Ambedkar University. Her research interests include identity and inclusion, peace and conflict, gender violence and material culture, on which she has presented papers in conferences, contributed articles in journals and edited books. ivy@aud.ac.in

**Jaya Singh** (New Delhi) is an English Honors student at LSR College and also completing a diploma in Conflict Transformation and Peace-building. She is a member of the Women's Development Cell and the Dramatics Society, and performed in a play on normalization of patriarchy during the One Billion Rising campaign. She has also been involved with Kat-katha, an NGO working to prevent second generation prostitution. zoya.theunknownpen@gmail.com

**Jayant Sundaesan** (New Delhi) is Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Management at the Manav Rachna International University. He has over 15 years of corporate experience and worked internationally and nationally. Mr. Sundaesan is qualified in Management from Amity Business School, prior to

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**Karma Lekshey** (Dharamasala) is the Director of the Tibetan Centre for Conflict Resolution. tccrteam@gmail.com

**Karuna Krishan Thareja** (New Delhi) is a Digital Marketing and Communication Specialist with over 13 years of global marketing experience. She is currently in her final year of an L.L.B. and has been actively working with Senior Counsels (Supreme Court of India) on matters affecting women and child rights. She has participated in discourses, workshops, and events to discuss issues affecting women and child rights including prevention, intervention, and legal remedies. karuna.thareja@gmail.com

**Kasturi Kanthan** (New Delhi) is an Advisor to the Office of International Programs at LSR College and a regular contributor to the journal 'The Book Review'. She was Associate Professor in the Department of English at Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi since 1979 till her retirement in 2013. She has anchored one of the series of Classical Carnatic Music of the Doordarshan (Indian National Television) Archives as well as been active in the Tamil Stage in Bombay. kasturikanthan@hotmail.com

**Khrielhoumenuo Suokhrie** (New Delhi) is a Ph.D. candidate at Jawaharlal Nehru University, researching the protection of human rights in Sri Lanka. She is currently working as the Project Coordinator at Jamia Millia Islamia on a project sponsored by National Commission for Women (NCW), entitled 'Discrimination Against Women from North Eastern Region: A Proposed Survey of Class I and II Cities in India'. amenuos@gmail.com

**Kritika Bhardwaj** (New Delhi) works as a Program Officer at the Centre for Communication Governance at the National Law University. Ms. Bhardwaj has a B.A. in Political Science from LSR College. After LSR, she went on to study law at the Delhi University as well as the University of Cambridge. She also completed the one year post-graduate diploma in Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding from LSR in 2012. Her research during the diploma looked at sexual harassment within the legal profession. kritika.bhardwaj12@gmail.com

**Logna Bezbaruah** (New Delhi) is currently working as the assistant coordinator of Sangat, a Feminist Network. She is a graduate of English Literature from Hindu College Delhi University and has a Masters in Peace and Conflict Studies from the Nelson Mandela Centre, Jamia Millia Islamia. Ms. Bezbaruah has worked at the Centre of Health and Social Justice and for the Menengage symposium 2014. logna.sangat@jagori.org

**Lovitoli Jimo** (New Delhi) is Assistant Professor in Gender Studies, School of Human Studies at Ambedkar University, Delhi. Her area of interests is on women and gender in North East India; kinship, family and marriage practices; culture studies; consumption and middle class; colonialism and post-colonial studies. lovijimo@gmail.com

**Nisha Kumari** (New Delhi) gained her L.L.B. from Delhi University and is currently pursuing a LLM from Jamia Millia Islamia. nishayadavap29@gmail.com

**Nikita Begum Talukdar** (New Delhi) is presently pursuing a Masters in Law from Jamia Millia Islamia with an interest in Indian law and legal system. She gained her Bachelors in Law from Aligarh Muslim University in 2015. She has also worked as an intern with the National Human Rights Commission as well as with the Supreme Court of India. nikita05talukdar@gmail.com

**Nitika Verma** (New Delhi) has a B.A. from LSR College, a Post Graduate Diploma in Public Relations, Advertising and Marketing and a B.Ed. degree. She started her career as a PR person but soon took education as a career. Since 2015 Ms. Verma has been working as a teacher at Manav Sthali School, New Delhi. nitika\_06verma@yahoo.co.in

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**Pallavi Sachdeva** (Jammu-Tawi) is Assistant Professor in the Department of Lifelong Learning at the University of Jammu and also Associate Editor of the Journal of Advanced Research in Psychology & Psychotherapy. Her research interests include gender issues and she has published research and taught about women's mental health issues and empowerment of women and girls. pallavisachdeva9@gmail.com

**Payal Mehta** (Faridabad) is a Senior Manager in Human Resources & Training at Manav Rachna International University. Ms. Mehta has had a varied career ranging from Banking Operations to HR Administration. She has a B.A. in Home

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**Pravin Nikam** (Pune) is completing a Masters in Political Science at IGNOU and is a Global Youth Ambassador for the United Nations program: A World at School. Mr. Nikam is also the founder of ROSHNI, which is an organization that focuses on providing an education for children and improving the health conditions of women. [pravin.nikams@gmail.com](mailto:pravin.nikams@gmail.com)

**Priyanka Kher** (New Delhi) heads the Media and Communications team at Breakthrough. She has a background in advertising, production, marketing and digital communication, and moved to the nonprofit sector in order to apply all her acquired experience and create effective and progressive communication on women's issues. An English (hons) graduate from Delhi University, Ms. Kher lived and worked overseas before moving back to India three years ago. [priyankakher79@gmail.com](mailto:priyankakher79@gmail.com)

**Priyanka Londhe** (New Delhi) has eight years' experience working in the Indian development sector. Priyanka started her career in strategic communications and went on to do social and rural research. She has researched a number of subjects including subjects like HIV/AIDS and Women and Child Health and related Government schemes. Ms. Londhe is currently employed in the Centre for Social Research as a consultant writer, researcher and social media coordinator. [priyanka@csrindia.org](mailto:priyanka@csrindia.org)

**Purvi Yadav** (New Delhi) is Co-Founder of Sahas, and works with underprivileged youth about puberty and social and psychological aspects of growing up through a designed Gender, Sexuality and Reproductive Health curriculum. She is also co-leading the Delhi Chapter of 'UnGender - Gender Sensitivity Training' under the Dalai Lama Fellowship. She is a trained gender facilitator; and has participated in 10<sup>th</sup> Gender, Sexuality and Rights institute organized by CREA, a leading Feminist organization. [pvpune@gmail.com](mailto:pvpune@gmail.com)

**Ranjani Arvind** (New Delhi) has completed a Masters in Philosophy in Educational Studies from Jawaharlal Nehru University and a Masters in Applied Psychology from Delhi University. Currently, she is a consultant with Centre of Social Research in the Media and Communication Division, handling the organization's social media presence on Facebook, Twitter, as well as managing the organization's blog. [ranjani@csrindia](mailto:ranjani@csrindia).

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**Sagari Chatterjee** (New Delhi) is currently pursuing a Masters in Sociology at Ambedkar University, Previously, she has interned for ActionAid in Kolkata for their ‘Beti Zindabad’ campaign. Beti Zindabad aims to bring about social justice for girls, whilst challenging patriarchal institutions which legitimize discrimination and elimination of girl children. [sagarichatterjee93@gmail.com](mailto:sagarichatterjee93@gmail.com)

**Santosh Kumar Giri** (Kolkata) is currently the Director with Kolkata Rista, a Transgender community based organization working for Sexual and Gender minorities in India. She has extensive experience as a facilitator and trainer and she is the first transgender activist working for women and girl issues and engaging men and boys for gender justice. [santoshrista@gmail.com](mailto:santoshrista@gmail.com)

**Seema K. Terangpi** (New Delhi) is currently pursuing a Masters in Psychology at IGNOU, and has a Masters in Political Science from Delhi University. Ms. Terangpi has had over 13 years’ experience working in program management, community development and counseling. She has considerable experience in projects that have addressed complex gender issues for sexual and gender minorities, sex workers and other marginalized groups in society. [skterangpi@gmail.com](mailto:skterangpi@gmail.com)

**Severyna Magill** (Sonipat) is Assistant Professor and Assistant Director of the Centre for Women, Law and Social Change at Jindal Global Law School. Ms. Magill’s research interests include access to gender sensitive, rights based justice, gender based violence, human rights law, and reproductive rights of women. She is currently researching access to justice for women experiencing domestic violence at the district court level in Haryana. [smagill@jgu.edu.in](mailto:smagill@jgu.edu.in)

**Shagorika Das** (New Delhi) is a Management consultant with KPMG Advisory Services. She graduated with honors in Psychology from LSR College, New Delhi. With an inclination in folk art, she has been keenly pursuing her passion for art in the form of Madhubani painting. Her interest lies in gender studies, women and psychological connotations and organizational leadership. [das\\_shagorika@yahoo.com](mailto:das_shagorika@yahoo.com)

**Shannon Philip** (New Delhi) is a Ph.D. Scholar in International Development at the University of Oxford. His research interest includes men and masculinities, violence towards women, consumption and sociocultural changes. Mr. Philip has carried out long-term ethnographic research in India and hopes to contribute to the field of gender and development. [shannon.philip@qeh.ox.ac.uk](mailto:shannon.philip@qeh.ox.ac.uk)

**Shiv D. Sharma** (New Delhi) is the Deputy Manager of the Centre for Studies in Gender and Sexuality at Ashoka University. He has been involved in queer activism in Delhi and helps run the Delhi-based queer collective, “Queer

Campus”. He is a trained gender, sexuality education, and human rights facilitator. His current research interests include the subjects of gender-based violence, desire, masculinity, and queerness in the Indian context. shiv.sharma@ashoka.edu.in

**Shobha Shrivastava** (Faridabad) is Associate Professor in Biotechnology and Deputy Registrar at Manav Rachna International University. She has a Ph.D. in Microbiology and a trained faculty of The Art of Living Foundation and had over 25 years of experience as an educational professional. She is an executive member in the Pink Pulp Foundation, and instrumental in providing a platform for women entrepreneurs from Madhya Pradesh. deputyregistrar.fet@mriu.edu.in

**Shreya Jani** (New Delhi) is the Managing Trustee of Standing Together to Enable Peace (STEP) Trust, which works towards educating and training for building a culture of peace. She also works as a curriculum developer, campaigner, trainer and researcher for various NGOs, government institutions and private schools across India. Her specialization is in the areas of ecology, education and human rights. jani.shreya@gmail.com

**Shreya Khedia** (New Delhi) is a Genpact Social Impact Fellow. She has also worked with Ashoka University as an Outreach Manager and with Defense Research and Development Organization as a Fellow. She has also worked with Majlis, researching on Rape Trials in the Mumbai district court. She is interested in studying psychological causes of accepting inequality & gender. She holds a Master’s degree in Psycho-Social Clinical studies from Ambedkar University. shreyakhedia@gmail.com

**Shruti Sharma** (New Delhi) is a researcher and development practitioner and has worked on issues of governance and development for the last ten years. Her research on issues of security governance examine the process and impact of gender sensitive “whole of society” approach in de-escalating conflicts in India. As a practitioner, she develops strategic interventions empowering women in marginalized and vulnerable communities through education, upskilling and financial independence. julayshruti@gmail.com

**Shweta Kapoor** (New Delhi) is an independent practicing lawyer and has extensive experience dealing with matrimonial law. She has witnessed the development of law and applied it to issues such as domestic violence, maintenance for women and children and the changing definition of cruelty under marriage laws. adv.shwetakapoor@gmail.com

**Subaya Yasmeen** (Srinagar) is a law officer in the Jammu and Kashmir High Court. Ms. Yasmeen was a founding member and also research executive for the Centre for Law and Development, working on laws for women in Kashmir. She

has also worked for the Lawyers Collective promoting women's rights and as an associate legal officer on domestic violence in J&K. subaya.yasmeen@gmail.com

**Subhi Dhupar** (New Delhi) has a Master's degree in International Relations specializing in Peace and Conflict Studies from South Asian University. Throughout her peacebuilding experience and research, she has focused on issues of youth and women's empowerment in India, South Asia and the world. Currently she works as the Regional Coordinator of North India and Supervisor for Afghanistan and Nepal with United Religions Initiative. subhidhupar15@gmail.com

**Sweta Suman** (New Delhi) is a Ph.D. candidate at the School for Development Studies at Ambedkar University. suman.sweta@gmail.com

**Sushma Bhatnagar** (New Delhi) is a Hindi-Urdu linguist and has the distinction of being the first woman interpreter in the Parliament of India. She presently teaches Interpretation at the University of Delhi. She has contributed extensively in print and audio-visual forms, on issues related to women over the past four decades. She has authored books, written several articles and book reviews for literary journals, and drawn up papers for seminars organized by various prestigious institutions. sushmabhatnagar2407@gmail.com

**Tanya Jain** (New Delhi) is an author, blogger and an editor. Her area of research is women's studies and currently she aims to establish identities of women from Tibetan and other refugee settlements under Marginalized Literature. She is an aesthetic and spiritual individual, who has a quest for exploration and education can empower any individual and literature allows that space for everyone to accommodate. tanyajain183@gmail.com

**Vinitika Lal** (New Delhi) is a psychologist by training and has been working with young people and educators on building social responsibility and sensitivity to social issues through personal growth. For the last 10 years, she has been working on bringing educated youth to work with marginalized rural communities, especially marginalized women. She is also a facilitator of women's peace circles, for Creators of Peace which is a part of Initiatives of Change. vinitika@gmail.com

**Vrinda Sharma** (Faridabad) has recently graduated with an honors degree in Sociology from the Jesus and Mary College, University of Delhi. baron.vrinda@gmail.com

## Annexure E

### Profiles of WISCOMP Members

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**Seema Kakran** is Deputy Director, WISCOMP with over the 15 years of experience working with NGOs. At WISCOMP, she is responsible for the grassroots peace building initiatives in Kashmir, mentoring of research by Scholars of Peace and Interns in the areas of conflict resolution, international law and non-traditional security. Prior to joining WISCOMP she taught Political Science and International Relations for six years at colleges at Delhi University including Miranda House and Hindu College, and at University of Nebraska–Lincoln.

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