

AMRA AKSATHE CHOLI

WE WALK TOGETHER

SELF HELP GROUPS AS A SAFE SPACE FOR GENDER JUSTICE



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The project, Collective Action for Gender Justice in West Bengal, and the ensuing Manual: "We walk together" (Amra Aksathe Choli): Self Help Groups as a safe space for gender justice," would not have been possible without the dedication, commitment and participation of many actors.

For their vision in addressing the issue of gender injustice that women face across India, and their support in including the participation and voices of some of the most marginalized women, we extend our gratitude to the Ford Foundation.

A special thanks to the many women in rural areas who shared their stories and experiences of horrible and seemingly inescapable abuses. We salute your bravery and honesty and your efforts collectively taking action towards promoting gender justice. You are an inspiration to us all.

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For her tireless commitment to producing a document to strengthening self-help groups to address gender justice, our deepest thanks to Maitreyee Ghosh, State Program Coordinator, TU India for leading the project and the production of this manual.

Finally, our deepest thanks to the self-help groups who spontaneously engaged in collective action to create a culture of zero tolerance of violence against women and girls. We have taken inspiration and learned much from you. This manual will only be successful to the degree to which it provides a platform for others to also learn and be guided by your stories and experiences.



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FOREWORD

I am pleased to introduce the manual, "We walk together" (Amra Aksathe Choli): Self Help Groups as a safe space for gender justice. Building on the platform created by economic strengthening of women through self-help groups, this manual presents an innovative methodology to increase awareness of gender issues and strengthen collective action to promote gender justice. The utilization of participatory video lends an innovative dimension to the approach adopted and an important authenticity and realism to the approach. The notion of participatory videography is gaining ground with advance of technology. There is now much easier access to such technology and costs are no longer prohibitive.

In women's studies, we have myriad problems of silence, which has been written about extensively. The idea of voices from the margin finding modes of self-expression is exciting. It contributes greatly to processes of knowledge-making, which have been by and large the exclusive preserve of the elite. The notion that women from the margins can be 'creators' of knowledge about themselves challenges both authorship and modes of knowledge.

Thus, the exercise undertaken by Trickle Up is a new way forward. It is a laudable effort and framing it in this manual is also helpful for others who may wish to widen the net of such practices. It is a very valuable resource for NGOs and for classroom teaching in various courses, including women's studies and film studies. There is expanding scope for including non-traditional and visual material for all kinds of communication.

I congratulate the Trickle Up team for this effort. I hope this manual will receive wide dissemination.

Professor Samita Sen, School of Women's Studies | Jadavpur University Kolkata | September 2015



I could visualize women in the communities sitting around and discussing on the issue of gender and gender justice. As a practitioner and trainer on gender, I would first of all congratulate you for taking up this process and thinking of such an innovative methodology to building women's understanding on gender based violence. I would also like to convey my best wishes to the organization (Trickle Up) that had taken up such effort to develop this module.

Moitrayee Mondal, Programme Officer, Gender Justice | Oxfam India | Bhubaneswar, Odisha, | September 2015



INTRODUCTION

In presenting this manual to you, TU takes this opportunity to thank the Ford Foundation for their vision in addressing the issue of gender injustice that women face across India. In the wake of the infamous Delhi gangrape case, Ford took immediate action to call a group of organizations together to address this issue. Their support for this project: Collective Action for Gender Justice in West Bengal created the opportunity for the participatory films to be made and framed within this manual for broader impact.

This project has been a journey for Trickle Up and its partner Jamgoria Sevabrata (JS) as it has forced us to delve into issues that we always knew were there, but were never quite sure how to respond to. Many participants shared heart-wrenching stories and experiences of horrible and seemingly inescapable abuses. We salute their bravery and honesty in sharing their stories and collectively taking action towards promoting gender justice. Our work with them has inspired us to further action, and we present this manual with hopes that providing a framework and platform to hear their stories will inspire women, peers and others in the community to move towards creating a culture of zero tolerance to violence against women and girls.

These questions are at the heart of addressing the issue of gender justice. Despite international progress in establishing an international commitment to zero-tolerance for gender violence, women and girls are still not safe in their homes, communities and beyond as underscored by the Barasat case in West Bengal in 2013¹. Legal recourse is weak, especially in rural areas, and the cultural norms that support gender injustice are seemingly intransigent. Through this manual, Trickle Up has tried to capture the experience of the project Collective Action for Gender Justice in West Bengal which aimed to strengthen the Self Help Groups (SHGs) of women living in ultra-poverty as safe spaces to build awareness around issues of gender violence and actively promote gender justice from the grassroots level. This manual combines the conceptual framework of gender justice with the experiences of women themselves. Through participatory videos by rural women living in extreme poverty the modules stimulate processes of reflection, analysis and action around gender justice that can be shared with their peers in other areas.



What steps can be taken to move from a culture of impunity to a culture of zero-tolerance for violence against women and girls? How can programs realistically protect some of the most marginalized and high-risk groups from violence? And how can we effectively engage men and boys in these efforts?

United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women, Annual Report 2012



¹Barasat Rape, Murder and the Culture of Rape in West Bengal, Soma Marik, 17 June 2013

BACKGROUND ON THE MANUAL

This manual builds on the experience of marginalized women living in ultra-poverty in the Purulia District of West Bengal. Through a sequenced and focused intervention called the graduation approach, these women have been able to build economic and social capital through Self Help Groups (SHGs). Shared interests and group activities provided some of these groups moral strength to initiate collective action for addressing the ubiquitous issues of gender injustice. Given that women prioritized gender issues such as domestic violence and abuse affecting their ability to live with dignity, they were eager to mobilize collectively to address them more effectively. Trickle Up sought to document the formation and learning of these groups in an attempt to then disseminate these experiences as concrete examples for other women living in extreme poverty who undergo situations their lives. Seemingly intransigent cultural norms promote impunity for gender violence. Raising awareness of women's rights and providing examples of collective action can combat these norms. This manual provides a framework for reflection and analysis amongst self-help groups of rural women. Women will deepen their understanding of the dynamics of gender violence and its cascading effect on the society in which they live. Through these processes, women are able to open up a space for dialogue about gender justice within their SHGs, families and communities, and even identify actions they can take to improve gender justice in their communities.

BACKGROUND ON TRICKLE UP (TU)

Trickle Up has been working with marginalized groups of women living in ultra-poverty in different parts of the world. The issue of gender injustice has always been implicit in TU's work, and over the last years has become more explicit. As an organization, TU has intentionally targeted the ultra-poor, or the lower 3-4 quintiles of the population living in extreme poverty through the Graduation Approach². This livelihood strengthening approach aims to stabilize household consumption and income through direct participation of women. Through a rigorous and participatory selection process, the poorest women in the community are chosen to participate in the program and supported in forming SHGs. Along with group activities, each woman is provided individual coaching, accompaniment and grant support to build confidence through skill development and take up livelihood activities based on their grant. SHGs play a critical role here – they not only provide a safe place for women to save and take out small loans, but also build social capital that breaks the isolation the most excluded and marginalized women experience, providing a forum through which they develop confidence and decision-making skills. TU maintains constant monitoring and conducts regular evaluations that capture both the livelihood strengthening and the increased capacity of women. Evidence demonstrates the effect of economic strengthening, particularly access to credit and assets, in changing the status of women within their families and community. This has led to collective action in which women, through their SHGs, have demanded responses to issues they face from Panchayat³ officials and addressed gender violence in their households and communities.

²[Insert Graduation reference, maybe Science article]

TU believes that gender justice is intrinsically linked to economic status, particularly amongst the poorest and most marginalized women. To address the issues of gender injustice amongst scheduled tribes and castes in one district of rural West Bengal, TU partnered with Jamgoria Sevabrata (JS) in Purulia given its strong outreach to tribal and scheduled caste communities and longstanding relationship TU. JS serves a primarily tribal population which is an interesting context to the development of the 'safe space' model. The experience of TU and its local partners in West Bengal suggests that the combination of increasing women's household economic power and finding them support from peers (didis⁴) in the SHGs can enable them to address issues of gender injustice such as domestic violence and decisions around educating and marrying off their daughters. This manual structures an approach to address these issues by deepening the understanding of the dynamics of gender violence by sharing peer experiences from families living in ultra-poverty. The manual also aims to build on the success women have had in gaining economic and social capital through SHGs and expanding the engagement on these issues with their husbands, and within their families and communities.

THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN GENDER JUSTICE & ECONOMIC STRENGTHENING

While forming SHG groups and exploring potential livelihood options, women often raise issues related to gender injustice as barriers to greater social and economic participation which shape the choices they make for their daughters (from feeding practices to education). Gender power dynamics also impact the women's success in livelihood activities such as promoting savings and creating assets. Gender-based violence is a common problem in communities across economic sectors and this particular project will call attention to these issues and support the SHGs in promoting action plans to combat this social evil.

The issue of gender justice was a part of the discussions at the individual and SHG levels in the graduation approach, however a more concerted focus on the issue of gender justice has strengthened the intervention and has the potential to contribute useful materials and perspective to others that seek to serve groups that face multiple dimensions of poverty and rights violations. That is why we have chosen participatory videography for this project as it reinforces the position that women make decisions around their lives and those of their children, to the extent they are able. These participatory videos are at the core of this manual. There is a great power in women sharing their own stories in their own words and images. Building the capacity of the SHGs to raise awareness and support actions around gender justice contributes to their role as a 'safe space.' We have combined these video cases with methodologies designed to train other groups to take on create a dialogue around gender justice and address gender violence.

³Panchayat: A village council and the body of local government in three tier governance system in India
⁴Didi: Elder sister

PURPOSE OF THIS MANUAL

This manual was designed for local community facilitators to develop a conceptual understanding of gender justice and then facilitate a dialogue and potentially subsequent action to promote gender justice at the grassroots level through self-help groups of women living in extreme poverty. The approach to gender justice in this manual is based in self-help groups (SHGs), whose primary goal is to improve household economic level. These groups often take collective action to respond gender injustice and this manual aims to support that initiative and provide tools through which SHGs become more aware of varied levels of gender injustices and learn from the experiences of their peers to craft responses within the context of their local community.

Part I provides an introduction to conceptual framework on gender justice, clarifying terms, linkages to economic empowerment, and critical legal frameworks. **Part II presents five modules** that incorporate participatory videos by women confronting experiences of gender injustice to guide a process of dialogue, reflection and action. Each module includes additional resources for practitioners to utilize.



LIMITATIONS IN THIS EFFORT

Originally planned as a three year project, constraints only enabled one year for the initial work on this project. Given the tight time frame, we chose to prioritize discussion in SHGs. Although husbands and children were involved through organized separate sensitization sessions for the male folk and adolescent boys in the community, these inputs were not always captured in the project and there is no separate module in this manual for working with men and boys. This is a work in process and we understand the need for developing a separate manual for sensitizing male folks in the community so that men and women could jointly take steps towards establish gender justice. In the scope of this project, men were interviewed for some of the videos but did not produce their own videos. However, it is important to note that women themselves engaged men at the household and village level and navigated the spaces within the local context to create a constructive dialogue around gender justice. This project could have further benefitted from separate modules for girls. Although we organized a few sessions for girls, they also did not prepare their own videos but were involved in the women's videos to some extent. We also facilitated SHG engagement with legal services which was very useful in the latter modules addressing redress. Again, we would like to take this further in exploring the possibility of utilizing videos to document testimonies for cases of redress.

Despite the limitations of this manual, we felt it was important to share it at this stage as an active resource for work in the field and welcome suggestions and partnerships to further the outreach in addressing gender justice.

SECTION 1

GENDER JUSTICE:
WHAT, WHY
AND HOW ?

Despite global efforts to eliminate any form of discrimination on the basis of sex, women continue to suffer from gender injustice and inequality.

PART I

GENDER JUSTICE
KEY CONCEPTS

Part I provides an introduction to key concepts in gender justice, clarifying terms, linkages to economic empowerment, and critical legal frameworks. **Part II** presents five modules that incorporate participatory videos by women confronting experiences of gender injustice to guide a process of dialogue, reflection and action. Each module includes additional resources for practitioners to utilize.

Part I: Gender Justice: Key Concepts

This Part of the manual is divided into three sections. **Section 1** aims at giving users an understanding of primary concepts in the realm of gender, and particularly gender justice. This conceptual framework will then be applied to the particular situation of rural women living in extreme poverty through a series of modules in Part II. **Section 2** presents gender justice through the lens of poverty. Poverty impedes risk-taking ability and presents vital challenges to strengthening human and social capital. **Section 3** covers issues related to gender injustice in India.

WHAT IS GENDER JUSTICE ?

Gender justice is a constantly evolving concept and as the society evolves the nature of discrimination and oppression also changes. Hence, any definition of gender justice also changes its parameters with time, as it tries to incorporate emerging complexities.

DEFINITION

- OXFAM has defined gender justice in terms of 'equality and equity among women and girls and men and boys in every sphere of life'. To ensure gender justice OXFAM advocates a two-pronged effort:
 - To change societal norms, attitudes and behaviors that lie at the heart of gender inequality.
 - To change laws, policies and government programs that discriminate against women and sustain gender inequality. (Oxfam Novib 2007)
- Gender justice means enabling women to realize their full potential by removing pervasive gender inequalities and discrimination, which constrain women at every level. It also means affirmative action to enable women, and also men, to promote and benefit from this change. Gender equality and women's empowerment are now widely recognized as integral and inseparable parts of any sustainable strategy for economic growth and pro-poor development. (Mayoux 2010)
- Ann Marie Goetz defines gender justice as the ending of, and the provision of redress for, inequalities between women and men that result in women's subordination to men. (Anne Marie Goetz 2007)

WHY GENDER JUSTICE ?

UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-Moon, while addressing the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), rightly justified the need for gender justice saying: "[...] Let us invest in women. Until women and girls are liberated from poverty and injustice, all our goals - peace, security, sustainable development - stand in jeopardy. Empowering women is an economic and social imperative." He added, "Violence against women is a crime and must not be acceptable in any culture. [...] We must end inequality and discrimination and make women and girls aware of their inalienable rights." (Dialogues at the Economic and Social Council, United Nations 2010)

The goal of gender justice implies access to and control over resources, combined with the ability to make choices. As an ongoing process, gender justice brings an additional essential element: accountability—which implies the responsibility and answerability of precisely those social institutions set up to ensure justice. The right to gender justice can be read from basic contracts (formal or implicit) that shape membership in a range of social institutions—the family, the community, the market, the state, and even religion. Understanding the ideological and cultural justifications for women's subordination within each arena can help identify how to challenge patterns of inequality.

Setting standards of gender justice against which we can assess whether social arrangements are gender-just or gender-unjust is difficult. The dilemma of whether absolute standards be set for a universal application or designed for specific cultures and economic contexts remains unresolved.

HOW CAN GENDER JUSTICE BE ACHIEVED ?

The struggle for gender justice has been made by right activists, civil society organizations, international bodies, and governments across the world with a belief that no state can truly progress if half of its population is held back. These outcomes need to be combined with agency, the ability to make choices, and accountability of social institutions in order to ensure justice. The following table highlights some of the important advances that have been made internationally to reframe issues of women's rights and gender justice.

GENDER JUSTICE: INTERNATIONAL INSTRUMENTS

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) [adopted in 1979 and instituted on 3 September 1981]: is often described as an international bill of rights for women. Consisting of a preamble and 30 articles, it defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination.

Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 1995: The Platform for Action imagines a world where each woman and girl can exercise her freedoms and choices, and realize all her rights, such as to live free from violence, to go to school, to participate in decisions and to earn equal pay for equal work. As a defining framework for change, the Beijing Platform for Action made comprehensive commitments under 12 critical areas of concern. Even 20 years later, it remains a powerful source of guidance and inspiration. (See 12 points in box)

Millennium Development Goals 2000: In addition to goals around maternal and child health, Goal #3 sets the commitment to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015

UN Security Council resolution on Women Peace and Security 2000 (UNSCR 1325): The resolution reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction and stresses the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

UNDP Gender Global Equality strategy 2008-2013 (GES), Empowered and Equal. Establishes the commitment of the UNDP to cooperate on women's empowerment.

The Eight Point Agenda for Women's empowerment and gender equality in crisis prevention and recovery (The 8PA) 2008. This document focuses primarily on women in crisis situations a couple of the points are very relevant to the work of this manual. Point #2 emphasizes the importance of advancing gender justice and providing justice and security for women through laws to protect them; raising awareness of women to ensure they know their rights and are able to access legal systems. It also states that custom, tradition or religious beliefs should never serve to excuse or justify violence against women. Point #8 emphasizes the need to develop capacities for social change by working together to transform society. It highlights the role of strong women's organizations and networks to ensure responsiveness and accountability on gender issues and the need for men to be educated to promote gender equality and support women's empowerment.

12 CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN FROM BEIJING

- Women and the environment
- Women in power and decision-making
- The girl child
- Women and the economy
- Women and poverty
- Violence against women
- Human rights of women
- Education and training of women
- Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women
- Women and health
- Women and the media
- Women and armed conflict

For further reading:
<http://beijing20.unwomen.org/en/about#sthash.A2327Fhr.dpuf>

It is important to understand the work that has been done in framing international agreements to support a goal of gender justice. However, these agreements depend upon the legal support systems at the national level and the strength of these at the local level. Access to these legal support and good service for redress are also critical. It is encouraging to note the recognition of the role that strong local women's organizations, such as SHGs, and the inclusion of men in promoting gender justice. It is important to be aware of international frameworks and national legislation and refer to them to support the work to fight harmful societal and community based practices.

In order to secure the implementation of international agreements, the UNDP recommends the following:

- End violence against women and consider the critical role of men in reversing the pandemic of violence against women.
- Ensure justice and security of women through:
 - Laws to protect women's rights are enforced within legal frameworks.
 - Knowledge by women of their rights and ability to access legal systems (e.g. through free legal services).
- Expand women's participation and leadership so that women can effectively participate in the decision-making process.
- Include women's issues on the national agenda and engage women in decision-making processes.

To achieve this, UNDP looks for favourable macro and micro level efforts to:

- Incorporate gender equality priorities into advocacy and strategic planning in the development, humanitarian, peace, and security spheres.
- Strengthen human resources, policies and programs to ensure responsiveness and accountability on gender issues.
- Build partnerships to maximize impact on gender priorities.
- Develop gender-responsive funding mechanisms and resource mobilization strategies.
- Support data collection that counts women, counts what women value, and values what women count.

Trickle Up believes in women's empowerment and works with women living in extreme poverty through Self Help Groups (SHGs). The SHGs support economic empowerment goals for women to establish sustainable

livelihood resources which have an important relationship to power and position within the household and community. Moreover, the process of governance within the SHG builds women's joint decision-making skills and models accountability and transparency. In the SHGs women are encouraged to have charters that often include their commitments to social causes, such as not marrying their daughters and sons before the legal age, or supporting women within the group or community that suffer domestic violence. This manual seeks to strengthen the SHGs to further articulate these commitments and to build awareness around gender issues so that they can serve as a safe space in the community and promote gender justice.

NOTE TO THE FACILITATOR

As you prepare to facilitate the trainings outlined in this manual, it is important to reflect on your own experience of these gender concepts and how they manifest themselves in your family and community, and in your society at large. These inequities are engrained and sustained through socialization and it can be difficult to identify these trends. This manual shares stories and frames discussions to open a dialogue around questions of gender justice and facilitate a process of reflection and potential action. You can begin by reflecting upon the following questions in your own life.

- Do you notice any existing social role in your society that you feel is discriminatory and biased towards a particular sex?
- If you had an opportunity to make one single change with respect to gender justice, what would that be?
- Name three factors that you consider deterrents towards the formation of a gender equal society?
- Do you think policy related to gender justice should favor a particular sex? Justify your answer?
- Do you know any organization or person locally working in the area of gender justice? Please write a few words about their activities.

The following table includes common terms frequently used while exploring gender justice



GENDER TERMS

Gender: Refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/ time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between men and women in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context. Hence, gender is a culturally and socially constructed difference between men and women that varies from place to place and time to time. In comparison, 'sex' denotes biologically determined, thus unchangeable, difference between them.

Gender Relations: Gender Relations are the ways in which a culture or society defines rights, responsibilities, and the identities of men and women in relation to one another (Bravo-Baumann, 2000)

Gender Discrimination: Gender discrimination is prejudice or discrimination based on a person's sex or gender. Sexism affects men and women, but especially women. It has been linked to stereotypes and gender roles, and may include the belief that one sex or gender is intrinsically superior to another.

Gender Equality: Gender Equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender Equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development.

Gender Equity: Gender equity means fairness in treatment for women and men, according to their respective needs. This may include equal treatment or treatment that is different but equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities.

Gender Role: Gender Roles are the 'social definition' of women and men. They vary among different societies and cultures, classes, ages and during different periods in history. Gender-specific roles and responsibilities are often conditioned by household structure, access to resources, specific impacts of the global economy, and other locally relevant factors such as ecological conditions (FAO, 1997). Traditionally, fathers teach boys how to fix and build; mothers teach girls how to cook, sew and keep house.

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SECTION 2

POVERTY THROUGH THE LENS OF GENDER JUSTICE

Gender justice is critical to addressing poverty. Besides women becoming economically empowered, gender justice has other positive effects on society as a whole. Women form the majority of those living in poverty and have limited access to resources and lack agency. Furthermore, women are often exposed to various forms of violence and discrimination, which act as tremendous impediments towards realizing their potential and effectively participating in society.

DEFINITIONS OF POVERTY

Poverty is often defined by one-dimensional measures, such as income. But no one indicator alone can capture the multiple dimensions of the experience of poverty. In fact, other indicators take into consideration various aspects of health, education and standard of living. These are further elaborated in the Multidimensional Poverty Index produced by Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative and the UNDP which is conducted at an individual and household level. This tool is important to compare poverty across countries and to target the most vulnerable households for program interventions. Understanding the specific barriers faced by vulnerable groups living in extreme poverty can help inform programs designed to support these populations. (Human Development Report, UNDP:2014)

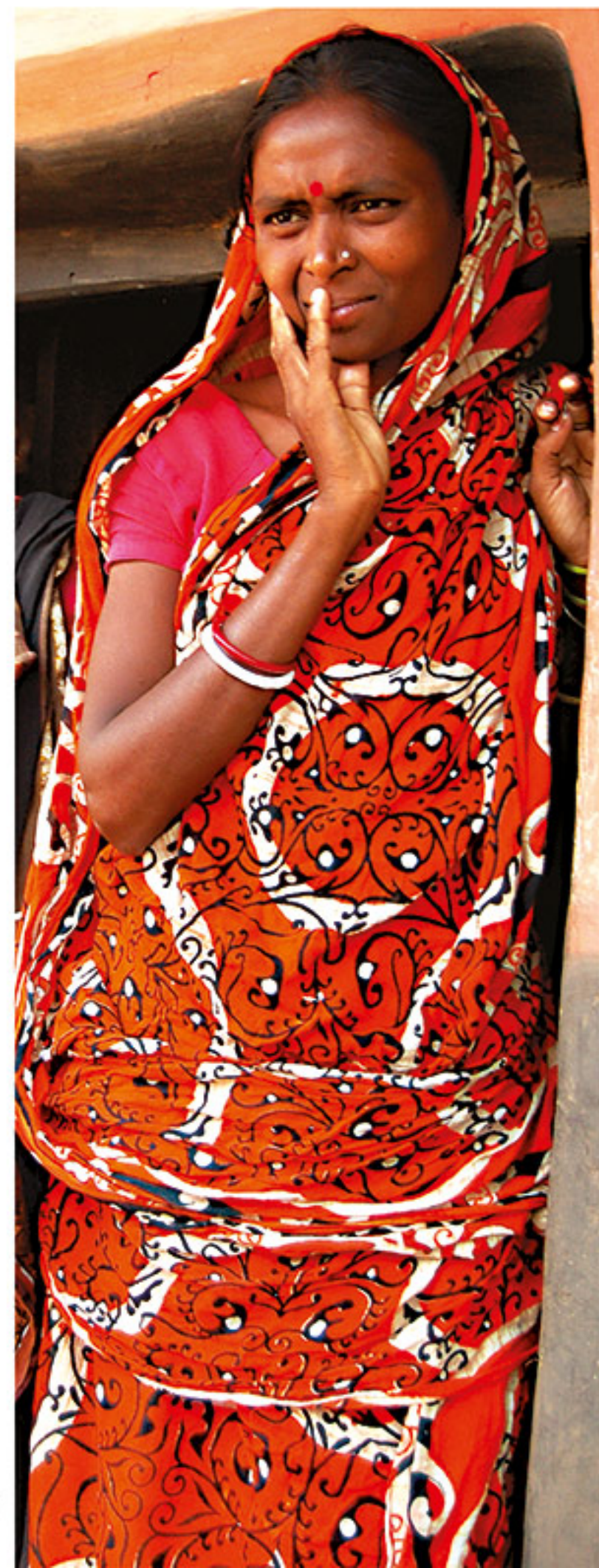
The World Bank defines poverty as 'the inability to attain a minimal standard of living' (World Bank 1990). This has often been understood in terms of income. A person whose income falls below a certain minimum level necessary to meet basic needs is considered poor. This minimum level is usually called the poverty line and this varies across time and contexts though the level of extreme poverty has been set at \$1.25 per day.

THE COMMON FEATURES OF POVERTY ARE⁵

- Lack of income and productive resources sufficient to ensure sustainable livelihoods;
- Hunger and malnutrition;
- Ill health;
- Lack of access to education and other basic services;
- Increased morbidity and mortality from illness;
- Homelessness and inadequate housing;
- Unsafe environments;
- Social discrimination and exclusion; and
- Lack of participation in decision-making and in civil, social and cultural rights.

Measurement of poverty is complex and varied; however, it is important to measure poverty to ensure that program interventions are appropriately targeted and not based on assumptions. This is vital to ensure that the impact of social development policy and interventions are reaching the intended beneficiaries. Considering the optimum utilization of allocated resources, most of the poverty alleviation programs target the bottom billion, which is comprised of the most vulnerable section of the population. Those at the bottom of the pyramid are often classified as ultra-poor or poorest of the poor.

⁵The programme of action of the world summit for social development (United Nations, 2006, resolution).



WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS OF ULTRAPOVERTY ?

- People living in ultrapoverty are those who live in the lowest earning half of those below the extreme poverty line.
- The term ultra-poor was first used by Lipton (1983), where he defined people living in ultra-poverty as those who spend 80% of their total expenditure on food and cannot attain 80% of their standard calorie needs. This calorie deficiency leads to malnutrition and thus ill health makes the fragile livelihood of people living in ultra-poverty even more precarious.
- People living in ultrapoverty lack social assets, for that they may not to be included as members of self-selected microfinance groups. (Matin et al. 2008)
- People living in ultrapoverty often do not self-select for social programs or access government services and due to lack of awareness and histories of discrimination.
- Due to these complex challenges and deprivations, people living in ultra-poverty face structurally different conditions from other categories of poverty and their issues needs to be addressed
- People living in ultra-poverty generally experience multiple dimensions of poverty and often belong to historically excluded groups.

The cycle of poverty is intergenerational in nature. Unequal gender roles at the household and community levels put women at a disadvantage. Lower access to productive resources further adversely affects women's physical, financial, social and human assets. This ultimately makes them more vulnerable. Without sufficient resources for investment, they remain trapped in poverty. Women who live in extreme poverty have limited access to critical resources, education and financial services. They also lack the agency to turn their activities into productive outputs. Economic empowerment of women is key to deal with the vulnerability and in taking transformative steps to move out from the extreme poverty which make them confident and capable to raise their voices against gender based social norms and practices.

DEFINING ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

A woman is economically empowered when she has both the ability to succeed and advance economically, and the power to make and act on economic decisions.

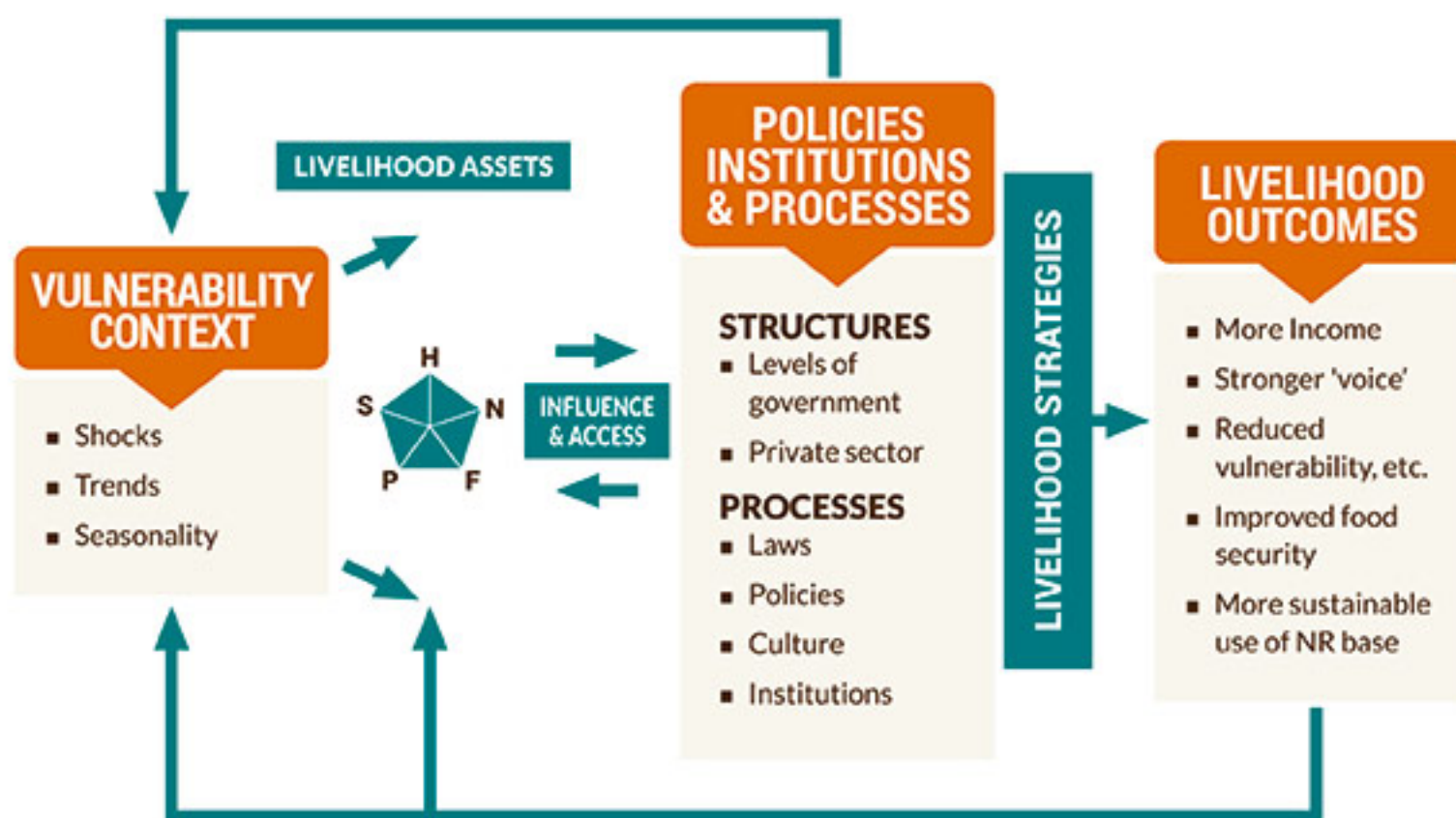
- To succeed and advance economically, women need the skills and resources to compete in markets, as well as fair and equal access to economic institutions.
- To have the power and agency to benefit from economic activities, women need to have the ability to make and act on decisions and control resources and profits.



The diagram above illustrates economic empowerment is comprised of two inter-related components: 1) economic advancement and 2) power and agency. Both components are connected, and both are necessary to achieve better lives for women and their families. Economic gain and success (economic advancement) promote women's power and agency. At the same time, when a woman is able to control and share in resource use (power) and to define and make choices (agency), she is better able to advance economically.

Development practices and evidences say Self Help Groups (SHGs) have potential to augment economic benefits and provide a platform for agency in addressing gender injustices, including redressing violence against women. This requires specific capacity building initiatives for the SHG members on livelihood activities, and taking into perspective gender issues in linking their activities with the value chain of the market, Institution building to strengthen SHGs, and building awareness around gender issues and mechanisms for redress.

The existing socio-cultural system often deters women from entering into the market. Rather, they often face violence at home and in their communities. The Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF) promoted by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) identifies how this cycle might be broken (see diagram below). It is interesting to view this framework through a gender lens, thinking about the particular issues that women might face in developing different kinds of capital.



F = Financial capital
P = Physical capital
S = Social capital
H = Human capital
N = Natural capital

The sustainable livelihoods framework (SLF) is useful to understand the livelihoods of poor people. It illustrates the main factors that affect poor people's livelihoods and the typical relationships between these factors. At the centre of the framework are the resources and livelihood assets that people have access to and use. These include financial capital (sources of credit and savings), physical capital (infrastructure, tools and technology), natural capital (access to land and other natural resources), social capital (networks and social support) and human capital (health, knowledge and skills). The extent of their access to these assets is strongly influenced by their vulnerability context, but also by their social environment (including gender relations). In order to achieve gender justice, careful analysis of these factors in the design of interventions is necessary to ensure that women can effectively combine and use their assets to reach their goals.

Through their SHGs, women can combine their financial and social capital in order to strengthen their ability to address their vulnerabilities and improve their status at the household and community levels.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER JUSTICE, EXTREME POVERTY AND LIVELIHOOD

- Women comprise around 70% of the world's poor people.
- The majority of women living in poverty rely on the rural, informal economy.
- Women lack agency necessary to unleash their capabilities.
- Studies have shown that gender dynamics change as economic conditions improve and that women's agency increases as they move up the graduation ladder.
- Violence against women and discrimination limit the economic empowerment of women, thereby pushing the family further into the vicious cycle poverty.

To understand the complexity of how different dimensions of poverty interact, and more importantly, what mechanisms and strategies exist to reduce vulnerabilities, it is always important to have the perspective of individuals who experience this condition. In the second part of the manual you will be introduced to the participatory videos of women living under multiple dimensions of poverty. Through their videos they not only share their condition, but also how they have been able to seek to overcome these difficult situations.



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SECTION 3

"FEMINIZATION OF POVERTY AND GENDER JUSTICE-AN INDIAN PERSPECTIVE"

Degrees of inequalities and injustices differ depending on where a woman lives. Therefore, interventions should be locally-adapted and take into account contextualized complexities. The table below provides data on gender inequality in India:

SEX RATIO		
OVER ALL	2001 CENSUS	2011 CENSUS
India	933	940
Rural	946	947
Urban	900	926
0-6 YEARS	2001 CENSUS	2011 CENSUS
India	927	914
Rural	934	919
Urban	906	902

- The improvement in overall sex ratio is largely in urban areas
- Though the Urban Child sex ratio is far worse than in the rural areas, the fall in Child sex ratio in rural areas is around 4 times that in urban areas. In fact the decline is more gradual in urban areas.
- There is a decline of 8.9 million children in rural areas, while in urban areas has shown increase of 3.9 million.

LITERACY RATE		
MALE LITERACY RATE	2001 CENSUS	2011 CENSUS
India	75.3	82.1
Rural	70.7	78.6
Urban	86.3	89.7
FEMALE LITERACY RATE	2001 CENSUS	2011 CENSUS
India	53.7	65.5
Rural	46.1	58.8
Urban	72.9	79.9

- Improvement in female literacy is more than males in both rural and urban areas
- The gender gap in literacy has come down from 24.6 in 2001 to 19.8 in 2011 in rural areas and from 13.4 in 2001 to 9.8 in 2011 in urban areas

POPULATION AS PER 2011 CENSUS

- Total Population: 1,210,193,422
- Rural: 833,087,662 (68.84%)
- Urban: 377,105,760 (31.86%)

(Source: The World Bank's Gender Statistics database for 2012)

The data above depicts moderate degrees of gender inequality, however in reality the gap is significantly wider. Institutionalized patriarchy in Indian society has made it a daunting task to practice gender equality. Ensuring gender justice in India is a real challenge as the society is segregated across caste, class, religion, and varied economic and educational status.



GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS TOWARDS GENDER JUSTICE IN INDIA

The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights, and Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles. The Constitution not only grants equality to women, but also empowers the States to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favor of women.

Article 14 of the Constitution ensures gender equality. Article 15 prohibits discrimination on grounds of sex. Article 16 provides for equality of opportunity in public employment. Article 15 (3) of the Constitution permits the State to make special provisions for women and children. Article 39 enjoins the State to provide an adequate means of livelihood to men and women. Article 51 A (e) makes it a duty of every citizen to renounce practices derogatory to the dignity of women. Source: <http://pib.nic.in/feature/feyr2001/fjun2001/f190620011.html>

LEGAL AID SERVICES IN INDIA

Legal Aid in India implies giving free legal services to the poor and needy who cannot afford the services of a lawyer for the conduct of a case or legal proceeding in any court, tribunal or before an authority. Article 39A of the Constitution of India provides for free legal aid to the poor and weaker sections of the society and ensures justice for all. Article 14 and 22(1) of the constitution also make it obligatory for the State to ensure equality before law and a legal system which promotes justice on the basis of equal opportunity to all. The name of different legal committees are as follows:

Names of Legal Committees	Contact Person
The National Legal Services (NALSA) is the apex body constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 at the national level	Member Secretary
The State Legal Aid Committee in every state	Member Secretary, The register-cum-Deputy Secretary
District Legal Aid Committee in every district	The Secretary
Taluka Legal Aid Committee in every Taluka (Sub Division, one district is divided into Subdivisions)	

(Source: <http://www.legalserviceindia.com/articles/laid.htm>)



PROTECTION OF WOMEN FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT (PWDVA) 2005

In 2005, the government of India passed new legislation on domestic violence called the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005 (PWDVA). It is a civil law aimed at providing relief to millions of women including wives, mothers, daughters and sisters affected by violence in their homes including those of a physical, sexual, verbal, emotional or economic nature.

The woman or somebody on her behalf can file a Direct Information Report (DIR) with:

- The Protection Officer (PO) deputed by the Govt. in every district
- A Service Provider-any voluntary organization registered with state Govt.
- The Police
- The Magistrate

As per provision of PWDVA Act 2005, affected women are entitled to:

- Protection
- Residence
- Monetary Relief and Maintenance
- Compensation
- Custody
- Legal service

(Source: <http://wcd.nic.in/wdvact.pdf>)



GENDER JUSTICE AT THE DIFFERENT LEVELS

Promoting gender equality at the community level is often challenged by social and attitudinal biases, which prevent women from attaining their rights. To address gender justice across society, macro-micro links are vital. At the **macro level**, there is a need for suitable legal and regulatory frameworks to ensure gender justice and equity. A national action plan for translating the policy into a set of concrete actions should be drawn. Setting a framework is just the first step. Disseminating the knowledge across society at a **micro level**, so that men and women become aware of their rights and opportunities, is equally important. Commitment of resources for women in key sectors relating to education, vocational training, income generation, health, and gender sensitisation is essential. Media can play a significant role in creating awareness. Moreover, locally popular communication means, such as folk music (e.g. 'yatra') can be used as a platform to reach the target group.

Participatory videography can also be a powerful tool for sensitizing women, helping them to articulate and analyze their own situation and motivating them to take collective action to address gender injustice issues and violence against women. Through the project Collective Action for Gender Justice in West Bengal, gender sensitization training is facilitated using participatory video tools to strengthen SHGs as a safe place to address gender justice, and inform women of the legal provisions to redress violence against women.

Initially, these groups might need support to build their capacity. These groups will not only open the door for economic empowerment, but they will also act as a catalyst for strengthening their human and social capital. Furthermore, these groups can influence policy at the local level and may gain access to local resources to increase their ability to invest in livelihood activities. For example, many of the elementary and primary schools in India have hired SHGs to cook lunches (Mid-Day Meals) for students. Provision of school lunches is one of the government of India's flagship programmes to address school drop outs, treat malnutrition, and promote prevention of child labour and early marriage. SHGs can play a key role in the synergistic implementation of all the social and economic development programmes by drawing resources made available through government and non-government channels and by establishing a close interface with the local government.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- Did you see any change in the status of women in your community and beyond?
- What are the major challenges India faces towards formation of a gender equitable society? Do you have any idea about how to overcome those challenges?

INTRODUCTION

PART II

BRINGING THEORY
INTO PRACTICECOLLECTIVE
ACTION FOR
GENDER JUSTICE

Collective Action for Gender Justice was designed in response to the issues of gender justice, particularly for women living in poverty in rural areas. Given that concepts of gender justice are deeply embedded in cultural norms, this project sought to open spaces for discussion of issues that women faced within the safety of their self help groups. Participatory video was introduced so that women living in poor rural areas themselves could share their own experiences directly with their peers. Part I of this manual outlined a broader conceptual framework for issues of gender justice, in Part II, the guide presents modules around how gender justice relates to issues that women living in poverty in rural areas face, using the videos as a centerpiece to begin a dialogue and introduce action to combat gender injustice.



WHY WE CHOSE TO USE PARTICIPATORY VIDEO

The participatory videos are the centerpiece and key resource for the training as they reflect actual experiences of women living in ultrapoverly. The training is organized to introduce the women as peers and present their experiences to help members of other self-help groups analyze and reflect upon their own experience of gender justice. Within the context of international and local legal frameworks, ultimately, the response to gender justice must be defined by families and communities themselves. Through these videos, women chose to share their stories. The production of each film represents an act of bravery in sharing experiences that often caused them shame, pain and frustration. They also represent an act of hope. In bringing their experiences to the SHG, they found tremendous solidarity. In many of the films women talk about bringing problems to the group that they, 'could not solve alone.' The SHG supported their members, often intervened through visits with their families, took the lessons learned from individual members and applied them to all group members through commitments in their charters. After seeing a couple of the videos, one woman commented, "I'm not from that district, but it could easily have been a story from my village." Through these videos, women have given voice to their experiences. Not all the cases shared in these videos have been resolved, but they have been heard and the isolation and silence has been broken.

TRAINING METHODOLOGY

Training is a planned process designed to expand or refine skills and knowledge and to examine attitudes, ideas and behaviour with a view to take action to modify them. This needs to take into account cultural and social differences and be adaptive and flexible. Particular sensitivity is required when working with people living in ultrapoverly who experience multiple vulnerabilities. The role of the trainer is to facilitate the process of learning rather than to teach, as learning becomes more effective when people are active participants in the process.

Part II of the manual focuses on Involving Participants in the Video Process. Keeping in mind that film is a 'one way' communication, the real learning comes from the discussion that the film generates. It is important to involve Self Help Group (SHG) members in discussing the films' messages and for them to understand that these films were shot by women they would consider to be their peers. Showing the videos to participants allows them to open up and engage in intensive discussions, as they can easily relate to the situations of their peers shown in the films. Use of proper participatory techniques, including well-articulated pre and post video activities will make this process more effective.

This part of the manual lays down the session plans, the modules and how they need to be facilitated by the staff. These training materials have been developed and adapted for populations with low or no literacy skills, focusing on participatory approaches, particularly sharing experiences. The focus of this training is to bring about a positive attitudinal change in favour of gender justice and meaningful impact on the lives of the people.

The overall objective of these modules is for women to promote gender justice through SHGs. Each module has specific objectives and is accompanied by one or several video(s). Field staff will manage the process of viewing the videos and facilitating discussions after the screening. Each module takes about 45 minutes to deliver. We expect that the modules to be treated in the SHG groups. Each session would be followed up in the next group meeting thus the entire manual will be covered over 10 weeks, or over approximately three months. Thematic discussions on gender justice, along with its practice in rural society are divided into five modules.

The five modules are:

1. Identifying personal experiences of gender justice
2. Identifying discrimination in one's own life
3. Identifying violence faced by one's self
4. Taking the first steps in one's own life to reduce discrimination
5. Seeking social and legal support to redress violence

HOW TO USE PARTICIPATORY VIDEO IN TRAINING



FUNDAMENTALS OF UTILIZING FILM IN TRAINING

The films are the centerpieces of the gender justice training and each module includes the screening of films. They embody the essential purpose of the project in opening a space for dialogue on gender justice issues so that they can be discussed within the SHGs and the communities. In discussing and analyzing the films of their peers, participants analyze the issues of gender justice in their own families and communities. Our belief is that this dialogue will foster awareness, formulate household and community-based responses, and, in some cases, support for legal recourse. Issues of gender justice are powerful and pervasive at the community level.

STEPS

PREVIEW THE FILMS

To avoid surprises and for better understanding of the relevance of the film, preview the films before presenting them to participants to inform the design of activities for active involvement of the participants in training sessions. The trainer should preview the films identified for the module s/he will be presenting, considering local issues while choosing videos to be used to accompany the module. Several options for each module are given and you may want to choose a film that relates to an issue that is present in the community.



INVOLVE SEVERAL PEOPLE IN THE PREVIEW PROCESS

This should be part of the training of trainers. Take notes on how participants react to particular scenes from the films and how they generate discussions. Activities during the preview sessions should focus on the following:

- Parallels and contrasts to the messages that facilitator is trying to share
- Major questions/issues the film raises
- Questions/issues which the film answers
- Significant incidents, events or situations to emphasize in training
- Opportunities to involve group in discussion (see film discussion techniques)



INTRODUCE THE FILM

Remind the participants that these films were made by women living in rural communities very much like their own who wanted to share their stories.

- Provide an opening statement which will challenge and excite participants.
- Tell them what to look for in general and in particular so that they relate the incidents to their own situations.
- Point out areas that may fall outside the group's experience or possibly have an element of controversy or ambiguity. Anticipate or defuse possible negative reactions by candidly stating at the outset that they will see something which they may not like or agree with.

POST-FILM ACTIVITIES

The objective of the project is to generate a dialogue around issues of gender justice within the SHGs and community. Therefore, it is important to foster and facilitate discussions around potentially sensitive and controversial issues during the workshop that can then be continued within the SHGs and community. Here are a few techniques to facilitate discussions around the films.

1 DYADS (PAIRS OF TWO)

This can be a quick and efficient way to generate discussion post-film, especially when participants may not be comfortable speaking out to the whole group right away. Pairs can be organized quickly ('talk to the person on your right or left') and it is best if they are presented with some guiding questions to fuel the discussion. It is also a more intimate way of sharing experiences in which participants may feel more comfortable.

General questions can include:

- What are the most significant learnings of the film for you? What lessons can be learned from the film?
- Why did the women produce this film? What were they trying to accomplish?
- What did you like or not like (agree/disagree with) in the film? What did the film omit or overlook, if anything?
- Was the film a balanced presentation of the problem?
- If you were to redo the film, what approach would you take?
- How do the film's ideas match with your own experience? Or what is significant to you from the standpoint of your current situation?

Specific Questions can also be helpful, for example:

- With whom could you identify yourself in the film?
- With whom could you not identify?
- Do you feel the treatment of women in the family is fair?
- Comment on the choices and behaviour of the husband or wife or other members of the family?
- What does the film show us about the issues of gender justice?
- What are the risks in taking action against gender injustice? Is it worth it?

2 TRIADS (GROUPS OF THREE)

If you would like more perspectives in the conversation you can add an additional person to form a trio. The trio is a bit less intimate but still enables a great deal of interaction. The general and specific questions from the dyads can also be used in the groups of three.

3 BRAINSTORMING

Groups of six to ten can be used to generate multiple ideas about or solutions to problems raised in a film, including how to seek legal recourse or what happens in a family when unfair treatments are challenged. This may be appropriate for later films, once the group becomes accustomed to speaking about the sensitive and controversial issues and are ready to seek solutions to certain cases.

4 ROLE PLAY

If the film illustrates an interpersonal problem, you may ask for two or more volunteers to see how they would handle the problem. This may relate to the situation of the family in the film. The purpose of the role play enactment is to explore alternatives and more effective ways of resolving the one-on-one difficulty that the film highlighted. Through discussion and analysis, many groups come to a point in which they make a *Commitment to action*. Role playing helps them to explore these actions and anticipate consequences. If the film is used to solidify and reinforce learning, you can plan for back-home activities. For example, depending on the themes that the film stresses, you can ask participants to think about how they can incorporate these lessons into the work of their SHGs or home situations.



PRE-FILM ACTIVITIES

Whereas the post-film assignment is designed to exploit the film after it is seen, the pre-film assignment or activity is designed to set the stage for the visual presentations. Some examples of methodologies are the following:

a. Using Viewing/Listening Teams:

The facilitator can heighten interest for a film by giving small groups or teams an assignment in advance of watching the film. The rationale for this procedure is that by giving participants responsibility for a task in conjunction with the forthcoming film, they are certain to be looking for specific film dynamics and their viewing becomes purposeful. These assignments may be specific or general.

General Assignments:

Teams may be assessed to function in these capacities:

1. Question-raisers: look for something that raises or stimulates a question in your mind.
2. Agreers: Look for something you really agree with or identify with.
3. Disagreers: Look for something that you don't agree with.
4. Appliers: Look for practices or techniques that you can implement in your SHG or community right away.

Specific Assignments:

1. Leadership styles. Who has power in the household? How do they exercise that power?
2. Decision-making processes. How are decisions made in the household?
3. Communications processes.
 - a. Identify techniques on how to address issues of gender violence in the home or community;
 - b. Handling of complaints: how are complaints by women handled?
 - c. Climate of the household: how does gender justice/violence impact the day to day situation of the household?

How does it impact different members of the household? Husband, wife, children?

Note: These specific questions above are given as examples and can be adapted to the particular videos chosen for viewing.

After the film is shown, the teams will meet to discuss their assignment and then have a spokesperson who will report on groups' findings. The assignments may be treated in various ways: all teams may be given the same assignment; each team may be given a different assignment; half of the team members may receive one assignment and the other half another one, etc.

b. Different techniques for showing the films:

- **Point of view teams** - Another form of the viewing-listening technique is to allow teams to observe/listen from a given perspective (wife, husband, child and mother-in-law).
- **Non-verbal Approach** - At times it may be worthwhile to ask participants to analyse the nonverbal communication through which characters in the film engage. If so, simply turn off the sound and let the group analyze the silent interaction. To reinforce this point, you can show the video with and without sound.
- **Stop-Film Technique** - The real value of the films as a training tool comes through the discussion generated in the group before, after, or during screening of the film. Added involvement is possible through the "stop-film"

technique. This simply entails stopping the film at one or more appropriate points and asking the group to discuss the film up to that point.

Some examples of stop-film uses are the following:

- **"Prediction."** The film can be stopped to enable viewers to "predict" what each person will do next. Example: What is likely to happen? Who will do what?
- **Assessment of characters.** The film can be stopped at a certain point to ask, "What is your impression of a certain person," perhaps a husband before he stopped drinking. Example: How do you see so and so - wife, husband, mother-in-law, neighbour and child- at this point? How do you see the situation at this point? What are the prospects?
- **Discuss decision-making.** Stop the film at a critical decision-making point (perhaps a woman is trying to decide whether or not to leave her home) and let the audience discuss what decision should be taken. Example: What would you do? What decision will the person in the film make?
- **Resolution.** Stop the film before a situation is resolved. Ask them to discuss resolutions for the situation and then compare them to the film's ending.

The rationale for the stop-film technique is to:

- Allow for discussion in the midst of the situation when the audience is enthralled in the theme.
- Prevent information overload and let people process the information along the way.
- Get attention and creates suspense.
- Most importantly, convert a one-way communication device into a participant-involving medium.

Planning for Multiple Film Use

At times, the training design may call for use of several films. For this, it is good to use a combination of approaches for different films.

Note: Techniques to facilitate film viewing need to be selected based on the audience and their particular situations.

Here are few examples:

1. **Pre-film group assignment.** Allocate the tasks in relation with the film's content. For example, Group 1 will look for the women's perspective, Group 2 for the man's perspective, etc.
2. **Post film, discussion in pairs.** Turn to your neighbour and discuss the most significant learning for you from the film.
3. **Post-film, small group assignment.** Ask each group a different question such as, "What did you really like about the film?" or "What made you upset about the film?"
4. **Post-film, large group discussion.** Generate reactions from the group, including thoughts on the significance of the themes. Questions can include: Do you agree? Disagree? Do you think this is possible? Have you heard of a case like this? Use specific questions such as "what do the experiences of woman shown in the film tell us? What does the experience of xx man tell us? What about the experience of their children?"
5. **Post-film, discussion on actions.** Discuss possible changes the group wants to bring into their practice including in their personal life, family or their community⁵.

⁵Video methodology has been adapted from, "The Winning Trainer," Julius E. Eittington, second edition, Gulf Publishing Company, Houston, Texas, 1989.

The videos will be used around five modules

The approach and techniques used to show the films will be selected by the facilitator. Synopses of all the gender justice cases and videos used in the modules are detailed below.



ADURI SINGH
KEY MODULE

1

This video highlights Aduri Didi's story since childhood. Aduri reflects on the impact her early marriage had on her life. She talks about her inability to escape her abusive marriage with her alcoholic and unemployed husband. Aduri works hard for the family by balancing both household chores and outside activities. When asked why she performs all household chores by herself, she retorts: "Who will do the household work if I don't do it?"

Geeta's story is all too common for rural girls in India. Early marriage is a frequent practice among the rural poor family where a lack of awareness and information aggravate the situation. Decisions regarding marriage are taken by male heads of household. This video focuses on how this situation can be altered through a peaceful intervention by the SHG members. It also shows that the role of SHG members does not come to an end by hindering the family from arranging the early marriage of their daughter. Their role also lies in helping the family improve their situation, and in so doing combat some of the causes of early marriage. SHG members get involved with the family members of the would-be husband of Geeta's daughter and succeed in getting their consent that they will wait until both the daughter and son reach the right age for marriage.

Dire poverty and prevalent social norms related to early marriage of daughters compelled Anjali to decide on early marriage of her daughter. This video captures how solidarity and awareness-generation in her SHG, through meetings and use of video, motivated SHG members to take the collective decision to stop early marriage and ensure equal rights and provisions for boys and girls regarding education. This video also highlights the ill health effects of early marriage, which motivated the rural women to take steps to stop early marriage.



GEETA RANI MONDAL
KEY MODULES SUPPORT MODULE

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ANJALI'S DAUGHTER (ANJALI SOREN)
KEY MODULES SUPPORT MODULE

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This video points out the complexity and difficulties of a woman after being victimized by her husband. She previously sought help from community members, but they failed to give her justice. It is very difficult for her to share, and she fears that revealing her experience may further worsen her situation. Bearing the pain becomes her way of life. Gradually, Anita gains confidence and shares her story. She receives some emotional support from her parents, but she remains undecided about leaving her husband because of the potential outcomes for her children. In this case, though unresolved, SHG members stand by her side, which is a great support to her. This film gives a ray of hope that one day her group will succeed in giving her a violence-free life.

Her husband's alcohol consumption and physical abuse is the regular state of affairs for Rosomoni. Her SHG intervenes, and through their interactions with Rosomoni's husband and the involvement of other community members, they jointly convince him that his spending on alcohol is actually affecting the wellbeing of their family and keeping him from working. He is now engaged in one small business and Rosomoni is rearing livestock and performing agriculture activities that help them lead a better life.

Regular alcohol consumption and physical abuse by her husband was the regular state of affairs for Shymali. Initially, she was hesitant to share her situation with the group members. Awareness generation at the group level led Shymali to take the first step to address her situation by sharing with her fellow SHG members. Physical violence follows her husband's excessive drinking, and her SHG becomes involved and successfully resolves the issue. It is not done in one attempt, but through constant follow-up and interaction with the husband.



ANITA BASKE
KEY MODULE SUPPORT MODULE

3

4



THE STORY OF ROSOMONI BASKEY
KEY MODULES SUPPORT MODULE

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4



SHYMALI SINGH
KEY MODULES SUPPORT MODULE

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PANMONI'S STRUGGLE CONTINUES (PANMONI BASKEY)

KEY MODULES **3 4** SUPPORT MODULE **5**

This video case describes the nature of domestic violence Panmoni faced in her life and how that affects the life of her daughter also. This video highlights how isolation makes it impossible to get legal assistance and social support from fellow community people. This video also portrays inequality in the treatment of the daughter and son within family. Panmoni's daughter has been victimized along with her mother whereas her son enjoys a much better life than his sister. Being united and informed through peer group, SHG members prioritized Panmoni's wellbeing as the first step towards taking action against violence. Though this case is yet to be solved, it has created hope in Panmoni that one day she will get justice. She is not alone; there are women who stand with her to give her courage and support her to continue her struggle.

This video shows the ill effects of over-consumption of alcohol on the family. It highlights how regular discussion within the SHG about gender justice and violence against women helped one individual member share her husband's habit of excessive drinking and its impact on the overall wellbeing of her family. Video has also captured Sajani's revelation about the abuses she had experienced from her husband. Beyond sharing Sajani's story, this film also captures how solidarity in the group has helped Sajani understand the collective power of the group and led her to seek help from them. This film portrays how the SHG decided to address the issue and their success in changing Sajani's husband's mind. This film also shows how addressing the issues properly could turn a perpetrator into an actor for convincing other male folk in the locality to quit destructive habits. This video demonstrates how a positive impact on the livelihoods and the overall wellbeing of the family can be ensured if people freely share their story and believe in collective power of women.

This film shows the effectiveness of SHGs collective action to bring about positive changes for Suktara and other members of her family. It shows how collective action by fellow women could ensure better food, good earning and a more peaceful life for Suktara, her children and her husband also. This video also shows how the collective initiative by SHGs gains support from their counterparts to address the issues of domestic violence and henceforth improves the overall livelihood status of their families.



LAXMIKANTA STOPS DRINKING (SAJANI HEMBRAM)

KEY MODULES **3 4** SUPPORT MODULE **2**



CASE OF SUKTARA MUDI

KEY MODULES **3 4** SUPPORT MODULE **2**

This film demonstrates how an SHG helps one of its members improve her relationship with her husband. Earlier Lalita's husband was not supportive at all, and never used to help her carry out livelihood activities. Action taken by SHG members has brought changes in her husband, Now Lalita's has become supportive. Now both are engaged in livelihood activities and enjoying a better life.

This video shows how peer pressure (initially) stops the early marriage of Jyotsna's daughter and allows her to enjoy childhood life and continue her studies. It shows how SHG members act collectively to protect the future of female children and created a positive influence on female children. This video also captures various levels of potential disasters that could result from early marriage, and how learning from experience and sharing in the peer group can help others make better decisions. It also highlights how success in one case increases the group's confidence. SHG members not only change the mind of its member and her family, but also that of the family members of the boy who was to marry Jyotsna's daughter.

This video captures the various issues that Shibani Singh faced when there was no support from her fellow SHG members. It also highlights how solidarity among women helps them understand the common problems of women living in ultrapovertry. Her husband's abusive behaviour after drinking alcohol, extra-marital affair with her own sister, and physical torture by her husband was her status quo. But the solidarity of women triumphs over Shibani's mental and physical pain as her fellow group members stand by her side, take charge by involving the community to warn her husband, and convince her husband to ensure a better home situation for Shibani. This video also shows that the importance of follow-up of this case by SHG members to ensure a permanent solution for Shibani.



LALITA SINGH

KEY MODULE

4



JABA WILL GO TO SCHOOL AGAIN —(JYOTSNA SINGH)

KEY MODULES **4 2** SUPPORT MODULE **5**

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2

5



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STOPPED, AT LEAST (SHIBANI SINGH)

KEY MODULES **5 3** SUPPORT MODULE **4**

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SHIBANI BAURI

KEY MODULES

4 5

This video captures the violence and oppression Shibani Bauri faces. Her husband and his entire family behave badly towards her and physically abuse her. She requests help from her parents, who take her back. But her in-laws lodge a case against her father for stealing, and her father is taken into police custody. He is released on bail and Shibani returns to her parent's house. She also joins an SHG when groups are formed. She comes to know about the legal protection and provision for domestic violence cases, and SHG members help her to lodge the case against her husband. She is currently awaiting the verdict.

Name of the Video: Shibani's struggle for Justice (Shibani Bauri)

Synopsis of the Video: see above

Questions for discussion:

1. What kind of problems has Shibani faced in her life?
2. What do women do in this type of situation?
3. What legal support can women get in cases of discrimination and violence?
4. Did Shibani get any support from her peer group or community?
5. What kind of support has she got now?
6. What could the SHG do in this type of situation?

Facilitator's note: This is very a critical case related to gender-based violence. Facilitator should put emphasis on the question regarding what SHGs could do in dealing with this kind of case. Members need to understand that first social support is needed to give immediate relief to the women while they are facing unjust situations. In this case Shibani has got support from her parents but in many cases, women do not get any kind of support from their parents. At that point, support from the community or peer group is very much needed. If the group cannot resolve the situation they can seek legal support.

HOW TO INCORPORATE THE VIDEOS INTO THE MODULES: AN EXAMPLE

MODULE 1

IDENTIFYING PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF GENDER JUSTICE

1 OVERVIEW

This is the first Module for discussion with the program participants/SHG members on gender justice issues. The facilitator should be familiar to the SHG members and may introduce some initial activities to create a relaxed environment. This is crucial for initiating the video and the following discussion.

The **objective of this module is to help each SHG member to internalize the issues** shown in the video, encourage them to compare with their own life and identify **similar kinds of issues they are facing in their own family** and in their surroundings. The facilitator needs to foster discussion among participants on the action points they want to change in their life. The facilitator may share the historical perspective of gender injustice in our society in the form of storytelling so that participants can understand the societal perspective of gender injustice and different attempts in establishing justice in broad sense.

Logistics:

- Choose a private space where participants can sit with children.
- Materials should include a laptop with extra battery, the facilitator's notes and a low height table/chair for setting the laptop.
- Time required: 45 minutes

2 OBJECTIVES: IDENTIFYING PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF GENDER JUSTICE

- To familiarize participants with the videos and how they will engage with them over the course of the trainings.
- To foster a discussion among the participants on the issues highlighted in the video to enable them to identify similar issues they may be facing in their own life and their community
- To introduce the historical perspective of gender and how gender injustice has taken its roots in our society.
- To motivate participants to identify the issues they want to change by adopting action points.

3 SCREENING

Showing time: Approximately 10 minutes

Pre-video activity: organize participants in small groups of two or three (dyads or triads) and ask each group to discuss issues related to the video before sharing in plenary.

Name of the video: Story of Aduri Singh

Synopsis of the video: This video highlights Aduri Didi's story since childhood. Aduri reflects on the impact her early marriage had on her life. She talks about her inability to escape her abusive marriage with her alcoholic and unemployed husband. Aduri works hard for the family by balancing both household chores and outside activities. When asked why she performs all household chores by herself, she retorts: "Who will do the household work if I don't do it?"

4 DISCUSSION

After the videos have been shown to participants, the facilitator shall:

1. **Initiate discussion** as detailed in the methodology section. This discussion should be done in two phases. The first phase should address the issues highlighted in the video and the second phase should focus on guiding participants to identify similar issues they facing in their life be it in their family or in the community.
2. **Provide background on gender concepts** to make participants aware of the gender justice and fairness issues and motivate them to take action to uphold gender justice in their life.
3. **Consolidate learning and identify action points** to help participants bring about changes in their lives.
4. **Facilitate a participatory evaluation** of the training.

Questions for post-video discussion

General Questions:

- How do you feel after watching the video?
- Is there any similarity between your childhood and Adurididi's childhood?
- Tell us about your daughter's life and your son's life.

Note: The main purpose of this discussion is to create an environment for the SHG members so that they can share their own story. The facilitator can encourage participants by sharing her/his own story.

Specific Questions:

- Is there any difference between your childhood life and that of your daughter's? If yes, then why?
- Is there any difference between your daughter's and son's upbringing? The facilitator can point out the areas like education, dress, or household work to facilitate the discussion.
- What are the areas where you have experienced different treatment, for example from your parents regarding your education, time for playing, performing household chores, etc.?

Note: During discussion on specific questions, please encourage all women to participate. After allowing discussion for 5-10 minutes, ask them why injustice happens and ultimately pin down to the rights to equality of all human beings, as there is no difference between men and women. Then tell them to identify the specific areas where they have experienced differences.

NOTE TO THE FACILITATOR

The facilitator needs to be prepared to explain the concepts of gender justice, basic human rights and fundamental rights under the Indian Constitution. Discussion on how our society treats men and women differently. Facilitator needs to relate these topics with the points highlighted in the video to help participants engage in the discussion.

Discussion on many aspects should not be done in one session. SHG members meet on weekly basis. Facilitator should take at least two meeting to discuss the following topics:

- Concept of gender justice and human rights and relating those with the life of women living in extreme poverty so that SHG members could understand about the discrimination they are facing throughout their lives.
- Fundamental rights as enshrined in the India Constitution and how this information would help SHG members to identify self-experience with gender justice issues.

Following questions could help facilitator to involve participants in those discussion:



SOME QUESTIONS FOR INITIATING DISCUSSION IN REGULAR SHG MEETINGS

- Tell us about your own family, your mother and father?
- How many siblings did you have?
- How was your childhood?
- Did you go to school? How far did you study?
- Did all your siblings go to school? Who did not go and why?
- With whom did you play? What were your common sports/games?
- Did you go outside your village ever? Why and with whom?
- What were your other sources of entertainment? Like, going to fairs, playing games, participation in festivals etc. whom did you go with? How did you celebrate your festivals?
- Did you do household chores? What type of work did you have to do? Did your brothers help out in the household chores?
- Did your parents scold you? How often and for what reasons? Did your brothers get scolded? How often and for what reason?
- Did all your siblings take food together? Did you all have the same type and amount of food? Who would be the last one to eat at home?
- When did your parents start talking/ thinking about your marriage?
- Did they discuss with you about your marriage?
- Did they also consider marriage plans for your brother?
- When did you get married? Did you want your marriage then? If not, why? If yes, why?
- Did you have any preference for your husband?

5 CONSOLIDATING LEARNING AND NEXT STEPS

The facilitator may want to review key learning from this session and identify areas where participants want to bring changes in their life, such as the education of their daughters, early marriage, gender-discrimination with regard to access to food (favoring boys) and other basic human rights. These discussions can take place weekly (one topic per week) and focus on bringing positive changes in their lives. Action points can be discussed and finalized at the group level and focus on 1) what changes are possible and 2) what SHG members can do to achieve gender justice.

Note: It is suggested not to use any development jargon while facilitating these sessions.

6 PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Participatory evaluation using pictorial faces (sad/neutral/happy faces) could be used for assessing how participants rate the training. In addition, the facilitator can ask open-ended questions to find out what participants liked and disliked during the training. Participants' recommendations will help improve the training design and delivery process in subsequent trainings.

7 RESOURCES

- Note on historical perspective of gender and gender justice issues.
- Key Human Rights tools and Fundamental Rights given by The Indian Constitution.
- Gender roles associated with men and women.
- List of participatory videos available for this module.
- Other materials including, Information Education Communication (IEC) materials, case studies, etc.

The additional **resource video** for this module is given below:

8 MODULE VIDEO

Video Name

GEETA
RANI MONDAL



Geeta's story is a common story for rural girls in India. Early marriage is a common practice among the rural poor family where a lack of awareness and information aggravate the situation. Decisions regarding marriage are taken by male heads of household. This video focuses on how this situation can be altered through a peaceful intervention by the SHG members. It also shows that the role of SHG members does not come to an end by hindering the family from arranging the early marriage of their daughter. Their roles also lie in helping the family improve their situation, and in so doing combat some of the causes of early marriage. SHG members get involved with the family members of the would-be husband of Geeta's daughter and succeed in getting their consent that they will wait until both the daughter and son reach the right age for marriage.

MODULE 2

IDENTIFYING DISCRIMINATION IN ONE'S OWN LIFE

1 OVERVIEW

This module is designed to make program participants aware of issues related to gender discrimination. Through this module participants will be introduced to various types of discrimination women face in society. The aim will be to help participants recognize these issues and encourage them to identify examples of social discrimination they encounter in their daily lives and in the lives of others.

Logistics:

- Choose a private space where participants can sit with children.
- Materials should include a laptop with extra battery, the facilitator's notes and a low height table/chair for setting the laptop.
- Time required: 45 minutes

2 OBJECTIVES: IDENTIFYING DISCRIMINATION IN OWN LIFE

- Introduce concepts of gender injustice and discrimination embedded in social and cultural practice and understand how this can hurt self-esteem.
- Enable participants to identify gender-based discrimination women generally face in the family and in the community.
- Encourage participants to take conscious actions to redress gender-based discrimination.

3 SCREENING

Showing time: Approximately 10 minutes

Pre-video activity: organize participants in small groups of two or three (dyads or triads) and ask each group to discuss issues related to the video before sharing in plenary.

The trainer needs to preview the videos identified for this module and select the specific video(s) following the methodology given in the introduction. Below is the synopsis of a video that could be used for this module:

Story of Anjali Soren

Synopsis of the video: Dire poverty and prevalent social norms related to early marriage of female children compelled Anjali to decide on early marriage for her daughter. This video captures how solidarity and awareness-generation in her SHG, through meetings and use of video, motivated SHG members to take the collective decision to stop early marriage and ensure equal rights and provisions for boys and girls regarding education. This video also highlights the ill health effects of early marriage, which motivated the rural women to take steps to stop early marriage.

Introducing the video: The facilitator may ask participants about problems they face around issues affecting children prior to showing the videos.

4 DISCUSSION

Before the video is shown, you might want to use the **pre-film group assignment**. One group can take the perspective of the mother, another of the daughter, and a third group can take on the perspective of the SHG. If the film includes some perspective of the husband or brother, include a group that will take that perspective as well.

1. **Initiate discussion** as detailed in the methodology section. This discussion should be done in two phases. The first phase should address the issues highlighted in the video and the second phase should focus on guiding participants to identify similar issues they are facing in their family or in the community. The perspectives identified through the pre-group activities can help in talking about the different issues in the community.
2. **Provide background on gender discrimination** through storytelling to make participants aware of the different areas where women face gender-based discrimination and various legal and constitutional provisions for addressing gender discrimination. This shall also serve to motivate SHG members to take the first steps in addressing gender-based discrimination in their own life and at the community level.

Questions for post-video discussion

General questions (here the pre-film groups will report back):

- Thinking about the perspective you were asked to take at the beginning of the film – mother, daughter, SHG - How do you feel about this video?
- Did you face this kind of discrimination in your own childhood? If yes, what happened and how did it make you feel?

Note: In this kind of discussion, women generally say they do not discriminate between their sons and daughters. The facilitator may share her/his own story to help participants open up and reflect deeper into their own situation.

Specific Questions:

- Why are early marriages arranged for daughters?
- Why does the mother give more attention to her son than her daughter?
- If there is scarcity of money, on what basis do parents decide who to send to school?
- Why are there restrictions on girls' mobility after marriage?
- Why do parents appear to prefer their sons over their daughters?
- What are the areas in which girls and women face discrimination?
- Do women notice any change if they compare their life and their daughter's life? If yes, then, what are those changes? How did those changes come about?
- Where can they bring further change?

NOTE TO THE FACILITATOR

Dealing with harmful traditional practices (such as early marriage and gender-based discrimination) are highly sensitive issues and deeply rooted in the community culture and history. The role of the facilitator is not to judge such practices, but rather help participants analyse their own situation and come up with solutions. Remember that the 8 Point Agenda states that: custom, tradition or religious beliefs should never serve to excuse or justify discrimination against women. Some of these discussions may require follow-up sessions during regular SHG meetings. The main areas of discrimination relevant in the life of participants can be identified during training. The facilitator should tactfully initiate discussion among the participants on those issues and guide them in assessing whether these practices are fair and show an equal valuing of boys and girls, men and women. These issues may include the following:

- a. Land ownership, particularly in tribal area (if participants belong to tribal area).
- b. Decision-making on financial matters.
- c. Mobility.
- d. Participation in community activities.
- e. Decision-making related to livelihood activities.
- f. Decision-making related to agriculture (what crop to grow? labour use, harvest, and seed conservation, sale of produce and handling of revenue, livestock rearing, microenterprises)
- g. Health decisions of household issues (including physical, mental and sexual health and when to seek medical help).
- h. Children's education and equal access to food.
- i. Decisions around marrying their daughters.

The facilitator should also give information related to different national and local laws and constitutional provisions related to women rights for addressing gender discrimination in very simple manner in the subsequent 1-2 SHG meetings:

- Right to education
- Right to equal wage for equal work
- Right to work and employment (as mentioned in the Directive principles of Indian constitutions)
- Child marriage Act

Discuss the provisions above and ensure participants are aware of possible corrective actions and have examples of how their peers have addressed these issues. This should help build their confidence in taking action.

5 CONSOLIDATING LEARNING AND NEXT STEPS

The facilitator will need to consolidate the main discussion points raised by the group, as well as provide technical input on gender roles and examples of various forms of gender discrimination. She will also help participants identify areas where they want to bring changes in their life, such as prevention of early marriage and equal treatment of sons and daughters.

6 PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Participatory evaluation using pictorial faces (sad/neutral/happy faces) could be used for assessing how participants rate the training. In addition, the facilitator can ask open-ended questions to find out what participants liked and disliked during the training. Participants' recommendations will help improve the training design and delivery process in future trainings.

7 RESOURCES

- Notes from Part I of this manual on gender discrimination (including causes and different forms of gender discrimination).
- Selected legal and constitutional provisions to address gender discrimination.
- List of additional videos available for this module (below).

The additional **resource video** for this module is given below:

8 MODULE VIDEO

Video Name

GEETA
RANI MONDAL



Geeta's story is a common story for rural girls in India. Early marriage is a common practice among the rural poor family where a lack of awareness and information aggravate the situation. Decisions regarding marriage are taken by male heads of household. This video focuses on how this situation can be altered through a peaceful intervention by the SHG members. It also shows that the role of SHG members does not come to an end by hindering the family from arranging the early marriage of their daughter. Their roles also lie in helping the family improve their situation, and in so doing combat some of the causes of early marriage. SHG members get involved with the family members of the would-be husband of Geeta's daughter and succeed in getting their consent that they will wait until both the daughter and son reach the right age for marriage.

MODULE 3

IDENTIFYING VIOLENCE AGAINST ONE'S OWN LIFE

1 OVERVIEW

This module focuses on creating awareness around the topic of gender-based violence and its impact on women's lives and livelihoods, as well as the impact on children and other family members. This is a highly sensitive topic requiring tact, cultural sensitivity and ability to manage confidential information with care.

Logistics:

- Choose a private space where participants can sit with children.
- Materials should include a laptop with extra battery, the facilitator's notes and a low height table/chair for setting the laptop.
- Time required: 45 minutes

2 OBJECTIVES: IDENTIFYING VIOLENCE ON SELF

- Help participants talk about the violence they may be facing in their lives, breaking the isolation they may feel.
- Facilitate an open discussion through which women feel empathy for each other and the SHG becomes a safe place for sharing difficulties and offering support.
- Gain a better understanding of types of violence women may be facing (including physical, emotional and psychological violence).
- Increase participants' understanding of the concept of gender-based violence.

3 SCREENING

Showing time: Approximately 10 minutes

Pre-video activity: organize participants in small groups of two or three (dyads or triads) and set up viewing teams have one group look for questions the film raises, another group can look for things they agree with, and the third group can look for things they don't agree with.

Note: The trainer needs to preview the videos identified for this module and select the specific video/film following the methodology given in the introduction part of this manual. Below is the synopsis of a video that could be used for this module

Name of the video: Panmoni's Struggle Continues (Panmoni Baskey)

Synopsis of the video: This video case describes the nature of domestic violence Panmoni faced in her life and how that affects the life of her daughter also. This video highlights how isolation makes it impossible to get legal assistance and social support from fellow community people. This video also portrays inequality in treating daughter and son within family. Panmoni's daughter has been victimised along with her mother whereas her son enjoys a much better life than his sister. Being united and informed through peer group, SHG members has prioritized Panmoni's wellbeing as the first step towards taking action against violence. Though this case is yet to solve, it has created hope in Panmoni that one day she will get justice. She is not alone; there are women who stand with her to give her courage and support her to continue her struggle.

Introducing the video: There are two themes in the video. One is the violence the protagonist is facing and the other is the impact on her daughter. Therefore, the video can be shown in two parts. Part one will show Panmoni's story and the second part will show her daughter's. This will help participants understand the relationship between the mother's and daughter's cases and analyze how discrimination and gender-based violence are related. The video also explains how SHG members can play a role in addressing the plight of Panmoni (see module 4 and 5).

Definition of violence: The facilitator should describe different types of violence, as participants may not consider emotional and psychological violence as acts of violence. Often, incidents remain unnoticed because of lack of awareness. The trainer may want to discuss the Domestic Violence Act in India (2005), which details different types of violence.

4 DISCUSSION

After the videos have been shown to participants, the facilitator shall:

1. **Initiate discussion** as detailed in the methodology section. This discussion should be done in two phases. The first phase should address the issues highlighted in the video and the second phase should focus on guiding participants to identify similar issues they are facing in their family or in the community.
2. **Provide background on gender-based violence, particularly violence against women** through storytelling to make participants aware of the different areas where women face gender-based violence and motivate them to take action to redress violence.

Questions for post-video discussion

General questions (here the pre-film groups will report back):

- What is you're feeling about Panmoni?
- Why is her daughter mistreated and why doesn't her son experience that?

Note:

- Encourage participants to share their feelings after seeing the video.
- Use discussion on this topic to reinforce learning from Module 2 (gender-based discrimination between daughters and sons and preference for sons in Indian society)

Specific Questions:

- What kind of violence is Pammoni facing?
- What is gender-based violence?
- Why are women often victims of violence?
- Are you finding any similarities between Pammoni's situation and your life?
- What should women do if they experience the same treatment as Pammoni does?
- Where can they bring further change?

NOTE TO THE FACILITATOR

The facilitator needs to be aware that participants may become emotional when telling their story. Also, some sensitive issues may come up during discussion and create unrest in the community. The facilitator needs to weigh all of these factors when facilitating discussion around those issues and discuss possible implications with the group.

Following issues should be discussed in next 2-3 SHG meetings:

- a. What is domestic violence, different types of domestic violence and Protection of Women Against Domestic Act, 2005
- b. Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961



5 CONSOLIDATING LEARNING AND NEXT STEPS

Opening up about difficult situations such as domestic violence in front of others is generally not easy for participants. It may take time for some women to share their story and understand the different facets of violence. Despite the fact that participants may be neighbors, sensitive cases like Pammoni's case may or may not be raised in one day. The facilitator may want to focus on how SHGs can organize to provide necessary support to protect fellow members who are facing similar situations. Through this process, the trainer can also encourage women to gain enough confidence to share their own story.

Through this module and follow-up discussions in weekly SHG meetings, participants should learn ways to strengthen their SHG as a social protection system for SHG members who are facing different types of violence in their lives. The follow-up sessions will provide women with more specific information to understand and redress mechanisms at the community level, as well as legal steps and provisions to redress violence against women more broadly. Participants should be introduced to the different categories of violence as per the Domestic Violence Act of 2005 in India. This information and the examples of their peers as seen through the films will gradually motivate them to strengthen their SHG as a safe space for Gender Justice.

6 PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Participatory evaluation using pictorial faces (sad/neutral/happy faces) could be used for assessing how participants rate the training. In addition, the facilitator can ask open-ended questions to find out what participants liked and disliked during the training. Participants' recommendations will help improve the training design and delivery process in future sessions.

7 RESOURCES

- Notes from Part I of this manual on gender discrimination (including causes and different forms of gender discrimination).
- Selected legal and constitutional provisions to address gender discrimination.
- List of additional videos available for this module (below).

The additional **resource video** for this module is given below:

8 MODULE VIDEO

Video Name

SHYAMALI
SINGH



Regular alcohol consumption and physical abuse by her husband was the regular state of affairs for Shyamali. Initially, she was hesitant to share her situation with the group members. Awareness generation at the group level led Shyamali to take the first step to address her situation by sharing with her fellow SHG members. Physical violence follows her husband's excessive drinking, and her SHG becomes involved and successfully resolves the issue. It is not done in one attempt, but through constant follow-up and interaction with the husband.

Video Name

ROSOMONI
BASKEY



Her husband's alcohol consumption and physical abuse is the regular state of affairs for Rosomoni. Her SHG intervenes, and through their interactions with Rosomoni's husband and the involvement of other community members, they jointly convince him that his spending on alcohol is actually affecting the wellbeing of their family and keeping him from working. He is now engaged in one small business and Rosomoni is rearing livestock and performing agriculture activities that help them lead a better life.

NOTE ON GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Gender-based violence (GBV) is violence that is directed against a person on the basis of gender. It constitutes a breach of the fundamental right to life, liberty, security, and dignity. GBV is a violation of equality between women and men, and physical and mental integrity.

Gender violence can be against any gender. But women and girls face more violence more often, both at home and in the society. Men and boys also face violence in the society. Gender based violence begins before birth as we see in the rates of female foeticide and continues through old age as illustrated by traditional practices around treatment of widows. Some of the common violence women face throughout their lives are highlighted in the table below.

- | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| ■ Prenatal sex selection | ■ Acid attack | ■ Rape/forced sex |
| ■ Female foeticide | ■ Mental torture | ■ Molestation |
| ■ Female infanticide | ■ Cruelty by husband and relatives | ■ Kidnapping and abduction of women and girls |
| ■ Early marriage | ■ Dowry deaths | ■ Forced trafficking |
| ■ Honour killing | ■ Bride burning | |
| ■ Domestic violence | | |

In India, women often face domestic violence, dowry deaths, acid attacks, honour killings, rape, abduction, trafficking through false promises of marriage, and cruelty. Sadly their first experience of this is generally in their own families and later by husbands and in-laws. Women often face the pressure of early marriage and getting pregnant against her will. One of the key challenges is dowry – a practice of the bride's family giving gifts of cash and kind to the groom and his family. In some cases the groom's family mistreats the bride if such demands are not met, and may continue to blackmail for additional funds.

"Sati", the practice of the Hindu widow being burned on the funeral pyre with her husband was only recently banned in the early 20th century. Similarly, child marriages of very young girls with elderly men were prevalent. They often used to become widow at very early age. Later, they were left to fend for themselves. Laws abolishing these practices were introduced after long struggles and various social movements. However the marriage of young daughters for their "safety and security," is still a common practice. Despite struggles to abolish these practices, inhumane customs are still practiced by the society. Violence against women continues at unacceptable rates. The issues are hugely under-reported and information and implementation of these laws is not readily available, particularly in rural areas among semi-literate women.



MODULE 4

FIRST STEPS TO REDUCE DISCRIMINATION AND VIOLENCE

1 OVERVIEW

This module seeks to identify solutions against discrimination and violence against women. This module also tries to consolidate all the action points developed through the previous three modules. The goal of this module is to strengthen the capacity of SHGs to address issues of gender-based violence and gender-based discrimination in order to attain gender justice.

2 OBJECTIVES: FIRST STEPS TO REDUCE DISCRIMINATION AND VIOLENCE

- Discuss and take decisions collectively for bringing changes in attitude and behaviour needed at different levels – household, community, and local government—to create an environment that supports gender justice.
- Review actions identified in discussions in previous modules and those presented in the videos to identify how SHG or women collectives could serve as a 'Safe Space' to promote gender justice.
- Define an action plan at the SHG level to establish SHGs as a "Safe Space" to foster dialogue, provide support and seek redress to promote gender justice.

3 SCREENING

Showing time: Approximately 10 minutes

Pre-video activity: organize participants in small groups of two or three (dyads or triads) and ask each group to discuss issues related to the video before sharing in plenary.

Note: The trainer needs to preview the videos identified for this module and select the specific video/film following the methodology given in the introduction part of this manual. Below is the synopsis of two videos that could be used for this module

Video 1: Jaba will go to School again – (Jyotsna Singh)

Synopsis of the video: This video shows how peer pressure (initially) stops the early marriage of Jyotsna's daughter and allows her to enjoy childhood life and continue her studies. It shows how SHG members act

collectively to protect the future of female children and created a positive influence on female children. This video also captures various levels of potential disasters that could result from early marriage, and how learning from experience and sharing in the peer group can help others make better decisions. It also highlights how success in one case increases the group's confidence. SHG members not only change the mind of its member and her family, but also that of the family members of the boy who was to marry Jyotsna's daughter.

Techniques for showing the video: Here, it may be valuable to use the **stop-film technique** and pause the video after the presentation of the issues in Jaba's life and start a discussion with SHG members about what may happen next (general questions). Then, the facilitator could show the second part of the video detailing how SHG members had taken action to stop Jaba's marriage and then allow participants to share thoughts on the collective action undertaken in the video by asking specific questions.

Video 2: of the video: Story of Rashmoni

Synopsis of the video: Her husband's alcohol consumption and physical abuse is the regular state of affairs for Rosomoni. Her SHG intervenes, and through their interactions with Rosomoni's husband and the involvement of other community members, they jointly convince him that his spending on alcohol is actually affecting the wellbeing of their family and keeping him from working. He is now engaged in one small business and Rosomoni is rearing livestock and performing agriculture activities that help them lead a better life.

4 DISCUSSION

Initiate discussion as detailed in the methodology section. This discussion should be done in two phases. The first phase should address the issues highlighted in the video and focus on guiding participants to identify issues related to violence against women they are facing in their life. The second phase should focus on the review of actions to undertake in order to reduce gender-based discrimination and redress gender-based violence at the group level.

1. **Review concepts of discrimination and violence against women** and share some successful examples of addressing gender-based discrimination and violence against women to motivate SHGs to taking action at the group level and at the larger level of women collectives.

Video 1 Questions

General Questions:

- How do you feel after seeing Jaba's story?
- Do you see any similarity in your daughter's life?
- How are their lives different?

Specific Questions:

- What did Jyotsna do to reduce discrimination in her daughter's life?
- Why did she do that?
- What else could she have done?
- If you were in Jyotsna's place, what would you do to reduce discrimination?

- What are the areas where girls and women face discrimination and what could be done to reduce that?
- What did you notice about the style in which the SHG communicated with the family?

Video 2 Questions

General Questions:

- How do you feel about Rasmoni's story? (here (Q.1 & 2) we could ask the responses from participant from two perspective – one from Rasmoni's perspective and one from her husband's perspective to see the violence through different eyes)
- What do you think about Rasmoni's husband?
- What was your mother's situation and what is your daughter's situation in this regard? Have any changes taken place comparing your mother's life to your own life and your daughter's life?

Specific Questions:

- What was Rashmoni didi's response after being abused by her husband?
- What step would you take if you face a situation like Rashmoni didi?
- How did SHG members help her? What else could have been done?
- What style of communication did the SHG use to intervene in this case?
- If efforts from SHGs to stop violence do not work, what should they do next?



NOTE TO THE FACILITATOR

The facilitator should focus on the responses of the participants regarding redress of violence in their lives. This discussion will lead them to gain more confidence to raise their voice against gender-based violence.

The facilitator needs to encourage participants to share their feelings after seeing the video and allow them to do a comparative analysis about the changes in the attitude of mothers from one generation to another.

There is a common notion in the community and among the women that they face violence due to over consumption of alcohol by their husbands. Facilitator needs to break this myth among the participants. They should understand it not the alcohol but rather the deep rooted male domination and power which enable this behavior in men. Although alcohol is often given as an excuse societal and cultural practices in the society and community let violent behaviors go unchecked.

Separate discussions on each type of discrimination (as mentioned in module II) and violence and the ways to address those should be initiated by the facilitator in regular SHG meetings as follow-up of the training to boost the confidence of participants and motivate them to take action.



5 CONSOLIDATING LEARNING AND NEXT STEPS

The facilitator should consolidate learning first **review the concepts of discrimination and violence against women** and share some successful examples of addressing gender-based discrimination and violence against women to motivate SHGs to take action at the group level and at the larger level of women collectives. Then facilitator should motivate and help SHG members to develop a charter for taking action against gender based discrimination and to redress gender-based violence by themselves in their lives or and in the community. SHGs should have concrete goal to establish SHG as a Safe Place for Gender Justice.

Taking the first step for behaviour change is difficult and simply training on the themes in this module will not bring about change. The facilitator needs to undertake these discussions at regular interval in the groups to bring change in the mindset of the participants. Ongoing dialogue and discussion will help to solidify some change in their thinking and behaviour. Actions to address gender discrimination and violence against women should only be taken up by participants once they have this basic understanding and have assessed their risks. The facilitator should guide the SHGs in defining a charter of principles and actions to which each SHG member commits. Below is an example of one SHG's charter where you can see how they have incorporated commitments to establish the role they would like to play in being a safe place for gender justice.

SHG Charter

- All individual members will send their daughters to school and provide equal opportunity to their sons and daughters as per their economic condition
- SHG members will not arrange their daughter's marriages before the age of 19 and take steps against this kind of incident if it takes place in their community
- They will not give dowry during their daughter's marriage
- All individual members will take part in decision making processes related their household matters, especially on livelihoods activities in which they are involved
- SHG will raise its voice against witchcraft and other social taboos that exist in their community to curbing women's independence
- SHG will give first hand protection in the case of any gender based violence faced by the members or any other women in the community
- SHG members will take action to redress violence faced by their members by interacting with community members and other stakeholders in the community.

6 PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Participatory evaluation using pictorial faces (sad/neutral/happy faces) can be used for assessing how participants rate the training. In addition, the facilitator can ask open-ended questions to find out what participants liked and disliked during the training. Participants' recommendations will help improve the training design and delivery process.

7 RESOURCES

- Different IEC materials (including case studies) relevant to addressing gender-based discrimination and violence against women.
- List of videos available for this module (below).

8 MODULE VIDEO

Video Name

LAXMIKANTA STOPS DRINKING (SAJANI HEMBRAM)



This video shows the ill effects of over-consumption of alcohol on the family. It highlights how regular discussion within the SHG about gender justice and violence against women helped one individual member share her husband's habit of excessive drinking and its impact on the overall wellbeing of her family. Video has also captured the Sajani's revelation about the abuses she had experienced from her husband. Beyond sharing Sajani's story, this film has also captured how solidarity in the group has helped Sajani understand the collective power of the group and led her to seek help from them. This film portrays how the SHG decided to address the issue and their success in changing Sajani's husband's mind. This film also shows how addressing the issues properly could turn a perpetrator into an actor for convincing other male folk in the locality to quit destructive habits. This video demonstrates how a positive impact on the livelihoods and the overall wellbeing of the family can be ensured if people freely share their story and believe in collective power of women.

Video Name

CASE OF SUKTARA MUDI



This film shows the effectiveness of SHGs collective action to bring about positive changes for Suktara and other members of her family. It shows how collective action by fellow women could ensure better food, good earning and a more peaceful life for Suktara, her children and her husband also. This video also shows how the collective initiative by SHGs gains support from their counterparts to address the issues of domestic violence and henceforth improving the overall livelihood status of their families.

MODULE 5

SEEKING SOCIAL AND LEGAL SUPPORT TO REDRESS VIOLENCE

1 OVERVIEW

Women too often face violence in their every day lives and so many of the decisions in their lives are rooted in ideas that do not value them equally. Alone, it is difficult to fight these, even when they are aware of the law. Solidarity and organized efforts are critical in obtaining justice and carrying forward efforts to promote gender justice.

This module will be focusing on consolidating women's awareness, building solidarity, and using the information for getting protection and legal support as per the provisions of existing laws. Emphasis on social networking and linkage with different support systems within the SHG and the community is critical. Women and SHGs should also be guided on how to build a relationship with key government stakeholders to strengthen their efforts in obtaining justice. This module focuses on awareness and actions to seek social and legal support to secure redress for cases of gender violence.

2 OBJECTIVES

- To strengthen solidarity among women and encourage them to take collective actions
- To build the capacity of women to establish relationships with community members and stakeholders
- To inform participants about the government provisions for protecting women against discrimination and violence and where to go to access these support systems

3 SCREENING

Showing time: Approximately 10 minutes

Pre-video activity: organize participants in groups and give them specific assignments. Given that this module focuses on collective action and relationships with external actors, groups can be divided into the following:

Group 1: Leadership styles – who takes decisions in the household? How do they use their power to take decisions? Who takes decisions in the SHG? How do they use their power to take decisions?

Group 2: Decision-making processes: How are decisions taken in the household? How are decisions taken in the SHGs?

Group 3: Communications processes:

- Identify techniques on how to address issues of gender violence in the home or community.
- How are complaints by women handled?
- How does gender justice/violence impact the day to day situation of the household? How does it impact different members of the household?

Note: The trainer must preview the videos identified for this module and select the specific video/film to assess which would be most compelling for the group following the methodology given in the introduction part of this manual. Below is the synopsis of two videos that could be used for this module:

Name of the Video: Shibani's struggle for Justice (Shibani Bauri)

Synopsis of the video: This video captures the violence and oppression Shibani faces. Her husband and his entire family behave badly towards her and physically abuse her. She requests help from her parents, who take her back. But her in-laws lodge a case against her father for stealing, and her father is taken into police custody. He is released on bail and Shibani returns to her parent's house. She also joins an SHG when groups are formed. She comes to know about the legal protection and provision for domestic violence cases, and SHG members help her to lodge the case against her husband. She is currently awaiting the verdict.

Techniques for showing the video:

Some points to take care of by the facilitator (especially for the second part of the discussion on specific questions):

- Facilitator can start the session sighting an example of domestic violence faced by women; s/he can take any case within their group or some other groups. Those cases should only be cited which have been openly discussed. Ask participants for their suggestions on what should be done in such cases.
- Listening to the suggestions of participants is extremely important, that will give them the confidence to discuss more on the issue that they face almost everyday. These discussions will make them understand that "facing violence" is not normal, it is not natural nor is it their fate! Identifying issues will make them conscious and will give them confidence to take action and to help others who are facing this suffering regularly.

4 DISCUSSION

- **Initiate discussion.** Ask the different **viewing groups** to report back what they saw in the video. Their observations can be discussed and incorporated into answering the questions below. This discussion should be done in two phases. The first should focus on strengthening solidarity among women to fight against gender discrimination and violence against women taking instances from the video. What can they learn about **leadership styles, decision-making processes, and communication processes?** What skills do they need to develop for each of these areas?

- The second phase of the discussion should revolve around how SHGs can build a network and establish relationships with stakeholders to get access to legal support system for redressing violence against women and addressing gender discrimination. Both these approaches should help to establish the SHG as a safe space for gender justice.
- Share different types of experiences SHGs have had locally in their interaction with government officials such as the Legal Aid Officer and the Protection Officer for Domestic Violence against Women.
- Organize meetings with these key government officials for women to obtain information on legal support systems and how cases are managed in terms of processes and services available.

Questions for discussion:

General Questions:

- What kind of problems has Shibani faced in her life?
- Has she received any support from her peer group or community?
- What kind of support does she have now?
- What can an SHG do to help in this type of case?

Note: This is very a critical case related to gender based violence. The facilitator should give emphasis on what an SHG can do in these kinds of cases. Members need to understand that first social support is needed to give immediate relief to the women while facing this kind of discrimination. In this case Shibani received support from her parents, but in many cases women do not get any support from their parents. In the absence of support from parents or family members, the community or peer group support is critical. The community group can provide social support and support the woman to pursue legal support. Depending on the case, securing legal support can be a longer process and the woman and family depend on the immediate support of the SHG and community as the legal process is being resolved.

Specific Questions:

- What types of violence has Shibani faced in her life?
- What can women do in these types of cases?
- What legal support are women entitled to in case of discrimination and violence?
- How can they access this legal support?

NOTE TO THE FACILITATOR

Facilitation of this discussion needs specific knowledge and information on different legal Acts and provision mechanisms. The facilitator should take help from the government legal aid resource person or use identify expert resources to explain the legal provisions and acts that pertain to women's rights. The facilitator should have basic information on the legal process and share that with the groups, for example the first steps in submitting a First Incident Report (FIR) to the local police station, and contact information for the district level Domestic Violence Against Women Protection Officer. Apart from that initiative for potential social leaders from the women could be promoted as local resource person for legal aid by imparting specific additional training.

5 CONSOLIDATING LEARNING AND NEXT STEPS

Facilitator should highlight the areas in which SHGs can play a supportive role for women in getting justice. It should also be mentioned that legal support may not be required in many cases if women collectively take action and discuss the issues with key stakeholders. The films have good examples of the tactics that SHGs have done to do this. The SHGs play an important role in the community and their leadership, decision-making and communication skills are critical to their effectiveness.

What action should women take: Taking the appropriate "action" to stop gender violence is a challenge. The premise of this manual is the important of creating a space for dialogue and problem solving at the community level. As the videos demonstrate, beginning to speak about these issues in the group is a powerful first step, the groups have then shown some success in helping women approach their husbands and visiting the homes from the SHG as well. Keep in mind that there are also men in the village who can be engaged as allies in establishing gender justice and contribute to a community dialogue. Members of the Panchayat should also be engaged and sensitized around these issues as it is both their community and legal duty to ensure the rights of women. It is important to recognize that there are cases in which the case should be filed and a First Information Report (FIR) lodged, in which case the SHG can provide social support and facilitate access to legal processes.

The films demonstrate that SHGs have been able to play a constructive role in promoting gender justice in the community, as noted in their Charter commitments. It is critical that they maintain a principled position and help to problem solve as they discuss and negotiate very difficult issues. Ideally, SHGs will use their knowledge of community dynamics and the new information and understanding they gain from the modules, to be a positive a constructive force for gender justice in their communities.

Here is a possible sequence of interventions SHGs can undertake that is driven by the severity of the specific case.

1. Participant informs her peers/group members about the problem.
2. Peers discuss the issue in the group
3. Group jointly makes a visit to the participant (victim's) house to make her family understand the situation. Group can make regular visit as follow up visits.
4. Depending on the severity of the issue, group should discuss with the facilitator or organization staff to seek support.
5. If the abuse of the women/girl is serious, and even after repeated counseling by group, no change in behaviour is noticed, then the incident should be brought to notice of the local Panchayat member. A written notification should be done to seek their assistance.
6. If things do not change then a FIR (First Information Report) should be lodged with the police. There are

special cells to help victims of domestic violence in police stations.

- At this point the 'Women Protection officer' at district level must be contacted and seek her legal and social advice to take legal action to stop violence on women. This service is totally free.
- Help participant's access to Government schemes. For example the SABLA a program for adolescent girls enables them to build vocational skills to work towards economic empowerment.

Why should these actions be taken: Women, particularly the most vulnerable and marginalized, often do not have support groups and face different sorts of problems alone. It becomes difficult for one woman to solve them alone but if she knows that there are like-minded people who will stand by her and support her in difficult times then it is easier to face, tackle and overcome violence. Where Trickle Up has worked with local partners, SHGs have already been formed and meet regularly. There may be other SHG groups in a community through which the module could also be applied (though this has not yet been tested). We must use this forum to address issues of gender violence as it not only jeopardizes human rights, but is also a key impediment to economic success. In turn some economic empowerment can be a catalyst to improve issues of gender justice and open up more options for women. The initial pilot with 48 groups has validated the potential for SHGs to serve as a 'safe space' for women to talk about their problems and to take collective actions to improve their situation. Informing the group can help the participant break their isolation and shame and become a part of a social network. Group members, being her neighbours, can also provide support any time during a crisis. This would give mental strength to the participants to 'fight back'. Also family members will realize the power of the community support she has and this may convince the family to reduce or stop the abuse on the woman. If the husband and his family do not change their behaviour and keep abusing the woman, then the issue should be put forward to the Panchayat member/Sarpanch of the village. Being a power holder, s/he can make the family understand the negative effect of violence, even explain the legal consequences. The SHG can monitor the situation after the involvement of the Panchayat and if the case does not improve, they can support the woman in seeking legal redress as mentioned in the steps above. It is a difficult decision to engage in the legal process and the group members can provide critical encouragement and accompaniment.

Support and legal actions for early marriage and dowry cases faced by Participants: Early marriage is illegal. The legal age of marriage for girls is 18 years and for boys 21 years. If marriages take place before the legal age then it is the duty of the community to take action to stop the marriage. However, too often the community pressures the girl's family to arrange an early marriage. The SHG members must be aware of the ill effects of early marriage and because they live in the community they come to know of the marriages days before. Action to stop this illegal activity should be taken before and not left for the day of marriage, as this is a social harassment of the family and also financial loss for the families which often reduces chances of stopping the marriage last moment. The table below outlines the specific legal parameters against child marriage and dowry.

ACTIONS TO TAKE IN CASE OF A FORCED CHILD MARRIAGE

- Put social pressure as a group to stop the child-marriage or forced marriage
- Discuss and act against dowry/child marriage
- Inform Panchayat, District Child Protection officer, Child Welfare Committee, District Magistrate about the child marriage and dowry
- Call ChildLine (1098) and inform about child marriage/dowry in the locality and ask for support
- Lodge First Incidence Report with police
- Under the law, any person aware of an impending marriage who fails to report it is also guilty.
- Child marriage is an offence punishable with rigorous imprisonment, which may extend to 2 years, or with fine up to Rs.1 Lakh, or both.
- Asking or giving of dowry can be punished by an imprisonment of up to six months, a fine of up to Rs. 15000 or the amount of dowry (whichever is higher), or imprisonment for up to 5 years.

6 PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Participatory evaluation using pictorial faces (sad/neutral/happy faces) can be used for assessing how participants rate the training. In addition, the facilitator can ask open-ended questions to find out what participants liked and disliked during the training. Participants' recommendations will help improve the training design and delivery process. Highlight potential cases in the community for follow up.

7 RESOURCES

- Note on each of the laws for protection of women against discrimination and violence
- List the officials, by position, the women can approach to seek redress
- List officials, by position, the women can contact to access the government programs mentioned.



8 MODULE VIDEO

Video Name

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STOPPED, AT LEAST (SHIBANI SINGH)



This video captures the various issues that Shibani faced when there was no support from her fellow SHG members. It also highlights how solidarity among women helps them understand the common problems of women living in ultrapoverty. Her husband's abusive behaviour after drinking alcohol, extra-marital affair with her own sister and physical torture by her husband was her status quo. But the solidarity of women triumphs over Shibani's mental and physical pain as her fellow group members stand by her side, take charge by involving the community to warn her husband, and convince her husband to ensure a better home situation for Shibani. This video also shows that the importance of follow-up of this case by SHG members to ensure a permanent solution for Shibani.

Video Name

LALITA SINGH



This film demonstrates how an SHG helps one of its members improve her relationship with her husband. Earlier Lalita's husband was not supportive at all, and never used to help her carry out livelihood activities. Action taken by SHG members has brought changes in her husband, Now Lalita's has become supportive. Now both are engaged in livelihood activities and enjoying a better life.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

WOMEN

We've been impressed by the bravery and solidarity of women in reflecting on difficult issues, providing support to their peers and carefully navigating and negotiating spaces for change within their families and communities. As one husband comments in the film, "We are lucky to have a self help group in our community." Women successfully negotiated a space for dialogue around gender justice issues that enabled men to join in the discussion, sometimes make significant changes, and support the issues. Women made various visits to affected households to discuss difficult cases in a private and personal way. The videos highlight the agency women have developed to negotiate changes in the power dynamics, discriminatory gender practices, and their position in the household and community.



COMMUNITY LEVEL

Video cases are the evidences how SHG members being united could be a Safe Space for Upholding Gender Justice in the community. Legal Aid experts have also acknowledged the power of SHGs in redressing the gender based violence and ensuring justice to the women in a shorter time while legal procedure may take longer time. Trickle Up also experienced the spill over effect of this training and sensitization process in the community. SHG members, once sensitized and motivated will take action against any gender based violence and injustice in the community. This unity and solidarity will led them to form a women collective to address critical issues related to gender based violence against women. This organic process will evolve among SHG members if initiative is taken but to sustain this initiative needs further capacity building of SHG members along with promoting community based people's institution. Regular interface between this people's institution and Panchayat (also Block and District level administration) is key for influencing local government at different level. Capacity building is also required for strengthening this type of initiative. Following steps may strengthen SHGs struggle to fight against gender based violence:

- Promote barefoot legal resource persons or counselors among the SHG members to ensure legal support for women and girls who are facing violence
- Support the network of SHG clusters and Federations at the Block and District levels
- Advocate for the appointment of legal support



- persons at the Gram Panchayat Level
- Regular interaction with NGOs which are working on women issues
- Promote champions from SHGs who intervened in gender-based violence cases
- Support to the victims of gender based violence for accessing the programs that would benefit them. For example, a girl whose early marriage has been prevented could be linked to a vocational training or income generation program.

ORGANIZATION LEARNING AND DISSEMINATION

Through this project, Trickle Up has learned a great deal about the intersection of economic strengthening and gender justice and we will seek to apply this learning in our India program with our local partners, and also internationally in our regional work in Central America and West Africa. This project also suggests the benefits of collaborating between organizations that focus on economic strengthening of the most marginalized populations and those who are advocates for women's rights. Trickle Up will raise the issue of gender justice in the community of practice around the Graduation Approach through CGAP (the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor), and will look to coordinate more actively with networks of organizations focused on promoting gender justice. Key lessons from this project include:

Combining prescriptive technical approaches and participatory methodologies: The Graduation

Approach has proven effective in developing pathways out of poverty for women living in extreme poverty and has many technical aspects in which the women and SHGs are trained. Although there is consultation and participation in these trainings, the nature of the knowledge transfer is based on research and, though adapted to local contexts, is generally prescriptive. In contrast, the participatory approach employed by the gender component is based in the experience of women at the grassroots and their ability to navigate the local spaces for change. These videos are not prescriptive, but rather share a peer experience in the hopes that it generates reflection and action. These two approaches must be clearly managed so as not to create confusion, and yet the approaches should also inform each other to best frame activities to reach the final goal of improving the condition and position of women in the community.

Combining an economic empowerment approach with a rights-based approach: The Graduation Approach has typically tracked changes in decision-making power and agency in the household and collective action of SHGs. However, the direct link between how economic empowerment and agency to promote gender justice merits more research and deeper understanding, particularly in extremely poor and marginalized communities. A compelling illustration of this is found in the Charters that the SHGs themselves commit to. These charters typically include decisions they have made to ensure the effectiveness of the economic goals of their group, such as attendance at the SHGs, required savings, loan terms, and group decision-making processes. However, in this project we also witnessed their commitment to address gender issues such as committing that no member shall engage in early marriage of their daughters or sons, and that the SHG will take action to provide protection in cases of

gender based violence faced by the members or any other woman in the community. Some charters further state that they will take action to redress violence faced by their members by interacting with community members and stakeholders in the community. This demonstrates their awareness of the situation and their sense of agency in their commitment to take action. Moreover, they are wielding their position as a community based organization to mediate with other stakeholders in the community and local government.

Navigating cultural spaces: Some conflict should be expected in any shifts in the power dynamics or questioning of embedded cultural practices. These tensions did occur in the implementation of this project, in some cases necessitating a break from project activities until emotions subsided. However overall, we were very impressed by the ability of the SHGs to leverage their solidarity and social space to address issues in member's households and in the community. Even more impressive was their inclusive and engaging approach to address these issues including frequent visits to households with issues and opening discussions with the actors involved. In the case of men who were abusing alcohol and behaving violently at home, the videos poignantly demonstrate an approach of engaging the men in a private and personalized way as opposed to publically shaming them. This project would have benefited further from a more focused engagement of men, and of youth to provide additional support to securing these spaces for dialogue. We will explore options for this going forward. The practitioner and academic knowledge of gender approaches will strengthen local implementation and in turn, broader discussions will be enriched through a deeper understanding of the options available to women living in extreme poverty in rural areas, and the strategies they employ to navigate these cultural spaces.



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