The Role of Gender Bias in Gender-based violence

A qualitative study in Mumbai, India

A Report of the None in Three Research Centre, ISDI School of Design & Innovation and Idealists Consulting.

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It is a scourge on our global society that even today, one in three women and girls experience physical or sexual violence in their lifetime. Gender-based violence (GBV) is a crisis that extends beyond national and socio-cultural boundaries, across the globe, and across our Commonwealth member countries alike. It affects people of all ages, genders, ethnicities and economic backgrounds. It is an urgent, world-wide human rights issue.

Recognising this, national governments, international bodies such as the United Nations (UN) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), have developed strategies to end violence against women and girls (VAWG). Appropriate national and international laws are a crucial component in safeguarding women's and girls' rights. But alone, they are not enough. From the moment they are born, millions of girls are subjected to multiple forms of violence including rape, female genital mutilation (FGM), sexual exploitation and child marriage. Survivors may experience trauma, drop out of school, suffer from mental health problems, all of which also have significant social and economic costs.

In spite of the progress made over recent decades, the statistics still tell a shocking and unacceptable story, as do the harrowing individual experiences of the survivors of gender-based violence interviewed by the None in Three Research Centre for this report.

India ranked first in the list of most dangerous countries for women in 2018[1]. 41% of Indian women aged 15-49 have never been to school, compared with 18% of men in the same age bracket[2]. The gender bias underlying this inequality, and the violence it can result in, is at the heart of None in Three India's work.

Media attention in countries across the globe raises consciousness of the issue in waves, from the Me Too movement, to the reported 'hidden' pandemic behind the 2020 lockdown due to Covid-19 – a surge in domestic abuse. This is not a new phenomenon, but the growing awareness is a catalyst for action to which we must respond. All countries, all societies need to work to eradicate this pandemic that affects one in three women in their lifetime.

The Commonwealth Secretariat is working alongside partner organisations on measures that will help our 54 member countries to stem the rising tide of gender-based violence, especially school related gender-based violence. Educating to actively promote a gender equal, respectful, non-violent culture with gender aware pedagogy or approaches is key. As a member of the Global Working Group to End School-Related Violence, the Secretariat aims to help practitioners and policy makers in the education sector, apply a gender lens when developing violence prevention, response approaches and safeguarding. School related gender-based violence (SRGBV) affects millions of children and young people, especially girls.

The Ni3 Centre's approach, which we in the Commonwealth subscribe to, is one of prevention through high-quality, gender sensitive education. By engaging young people as adolescents, when attitudes and opinions are forming, we stand the best chance of influencing them for good. The potential for adolescents and young people to act as agents of change and achieve the social transformation necessary to end GBV is tremendous. None in Three's approach includes developing and testing immersive, pro-social computer games, themed around issues of gender-based violence, to help young players build empathy with victims, and to prevent future violence.

We welcome this research and the accompanying three reports (from None in Three in Jamaica, Uganda and the UK) and the contribution that the innovative approach could make to our work. By listening to the lived experiences of both victims and perpetrators of gender-based violence in four study countries, the global research centre has built up a solid evidence base for each of its culturally appropriate, educational video games. It will therefore provide a new resource to help end GBV including school related gender-based violence.

Through renewed commitment and concerted action, we can end domestic and gender-based violence.

Layne Robinson
Head, Social Policy Development
Commonwealth Secretariat

Message from the Commonwealth Secretariat

1 Thomson Reuters Foundation(2018).
2 Dasra.(2015).

In an order granting bail to a rape accused in June, 2020, the High Court of Karnataka remarked that it was "unbecoming of an Indian woman to sleep after being ravished, not how our women react" it said. Though the observation was expunged after protests from lawyers and activists, it reflects the deep rooted gender bias still prevalent even among the higher judiciary and the need for a continued and persistent engagement at every level to eradicate both gender-based violence and gender bias.

When Prarthana and Bhanu approached me with the None in Three project of pro-social gaming interventions among young people to reduce gender-based violence, it brought renewed hope and energy. Having litigated for women in situations of violence for over two decades and not seeing much change, such preventive intervention seems of immense value. They wanted me to reflect on my years of working with survivors of violence on how best to address the issue of gender-based violence among adolescents.

Intense discussion took us through experiences of extreme violence faced by women I represent in Court, to our own everyday experiences. Gender-based violence (GBV) is normalised in all of our lives and the lenses to recognise it fogged by internalised gender bias and gender constructs. To address such violence, one has to see and recognise the overt and covert gender bias that construct women to become targets of violence. Hence, the focus of their study, which is to be the foundation for the game, of addressing GBV through everyday gender bias is very valuable and would prove enormously effective.

Since the early '80s, women's movements in India have sought legislative and judicial intervention to deal with GBV. Over the last few decades several legislations and legal changes have been brought in, including criminalising domestic violence, expanding the definition of rape, introduction of sexual harassment, voyeurism and disrobing of a woman as criminal offences etc. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 and Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, were enacted to protect women's rights in situations of violence and harassment. However, one continues to see not just regressive and sexist attitudes and behaviour, but a reluctance to recognise structural oppression and violence against women.

In addition, over the last few years there has been a concerted effort to create a myth that women are misusing these laws, which has resulted in the Supreme Court of India and High Courts endorsing this view and diluting the laws. However, analysing the reports of the National Family Health Survey and the National Crime Record Bureau does not substantiate the claim of misuse. The present study conducted by Ni3 also shows that women not only face violence, but are also reluctant to approach authorities in such situations. Their research reveals that mere availability of legal remedy is not sufficient for women to access the law.

The 2020 coronavirus pandemic and consequent lockdown has once again shown that women are still not safe in their homes. While there seems to be more of a discussion on GBV, there is still a lack of adequate response by State and society. Working from home has also exposed the continued widely held belief in traditional gender roles within family and the increased burden on women of all classes. There can be no better time for preventive interventions such as the Ni3 initiative.

The findings of their research reinforce the need to positively influence adolescents to not only understand, but recognise gender bias in our everyday life. Having interviewed women, men and young adults, the study reveals how they perceive discrimination and violence. How institutions such as marriage and family perpetuate inequality and violence for their survival and at the cost of women. This study, based on lived experiences, provides a solid foundation to aid in developing a robust design to help young adults imagine a more equal and just society.

As observed in the study, many times children of survivors of violence play an important role in the decisions they make. Working with children to teach them to recognise and understand not just violence but every day bias that results in such violence, would go a long way in moving towards a GBV free society.

It is efforts such as this, which is built on lived realities of both survivors and perpetrators of violence and aimed at transforming the next generation, that has the potential to be a game changer in tackling and reducing gender-based violence.

Advocate Veena Gowda
International Advisory Group, None in Three

Foreword

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Abbreviations

DV	Domestic Violence
ENSS	Ekal Nari Shakti Sanghathan
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GBV	Gender-based violence
GCRF	Global Challenges Research Fund
GO	Government Organisation
IDI	In-depth Interview
NCRB	National Crime Records Bureau
NFHS	National Family Health Survey
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
Ni3	None In Three Research Centre
NSSO	National Sample Survey Office
PLFS	Periodic Labour Force Surveys
PWDVA	Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005
UKRI	United Kingdom Research Institute
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VAC	Violence Against Children
VAW	Violence Against Women

Gender-based violence, which occurs in every country, territory and region of the world, is *a violation of basic rights* that also prevents women from exercising their other social, economic and political rights. Globally, *35 percent of women* have experienced physical and/or sexual violence.[5]

Executive Summary

However,
gender-based violence is neither inevitable nor acceptable.

A Report of the None in Three Research Centre,
ISDI School of Design & Innovation (ISDI) and Idealists Consulting, Mumbai

5 *UNDP.(n.d.)*

Global statistics show that, one in three (World Health Organization, 2013) women and girls have faced some form of GBV in their lifetime. The research in this report is based on the idea that the only acceptable statistic is none in three (Ni3), and represents part of our efforts to make this idea a reality. Ni3 is now a global, transdisciplinary research centre, focused on understanding the roots of GBV in different contexts, and on using this knowledge to develop early, prosocial gaming interventions to reduce GBV across four countries: Jamaica, Uganda, India and the UK. Each country team has their own focus area; for India this is the links between gender bias and GBV. This topic was decided after consultation with lawyers and social activists who emphasised how gender roles, leading to gender bias, have become a primary driver of GBV in India. The India project was initiated by the Design School, ISDI School of Design and Innovation, Mumbai, and is now based within an independent consultancy organisation- 'IDEALISTS CONSULTING ' which works in collaboration with the University of Huddersfield, UK

This report draws on qualitative data collected from men and women in Mumbai to investigate the relationship between gender bias and GBV.

We spoke to a total of 89 participants: in-depth interviews with 42 women and 7 focus-group discussions with 47 men.

Participants were drawn from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds, to ensure a wide range of perspectives on GBV were captured. Our research questions focused on participants' understandings and experiences of gender bias across sexual, domestic, economic and institutional spaces.

Fieldwork was carried out between October and November 2018, with the following groups:

1. Women with a history of domestic violence or who were currently facing it;

2. Men belonging to lower-middle to middle income groups and a wide age range of 18-60 years, who had witnessed violence or had themselves been violent;

3. Young men who had spent time in juvenile observation homes for committing crimes related to women.

Interviews were transcribed and analysed with the assistance of NVivo® qualitative data analysis software (version 12). Our research findings highlighted four key themes that account for some of the links between gender bias and GBV in India, each of which has several sub-themes. The overarching themes are: 1. violence, gender bias and its transmission; 2. marriage, family and embeddedness of gender roles; 3. invalidation of women's experiences throughout their life cycles; and 4. how women respond to and resist bias and violence. Together, these themes and subthemes capture the key aspects of GBV, gender bias and the connections between them in India. Throughout these themes, we found that GBV was underpinned by a complex system of gender biases, expressed in a variety of institutions and everyday social practices. For example, when families limit girls' education from a young age relative to boys, women are often held back from accessing the same economic opportunities as men, and lack of economic autonomy is one reason women remain in violent relationships. Additionally, while efforts have been made to legislate against some gender-biased traditions, such as dowry, these traditions continue to be widely practiced in covert ways. Our research participants' stories revealed how pervasive such gender biases were in India, and showed the many ways in which such biases all too often translate into GBV. However, and despite the pervasiveness of biases against women, we found encouraging instances of GBV being resisted or challenged by our participants. From the lessons we learned from their stories, we were able to develop 37 specific action points, under nine categories, which we suggest can be used to reduce GBV in India.

Primary Research Questions

for Men and Youth

1. How do men recognise and understand gender bias?
2. What are the different ways men define GBV?
3. According to men, what factors (e.g. age, culture, poverty, social group, pregnancy, marriage) lead to increasing GBV?
4. Do men see the interconnectedness of gender bias and GBV?
5. Do men see normative family structures as propagating gender bias and GBV?
6. What is the role of other family members in maintaining/supporting anti-female bias?
7. What are men's perspectives on gender roles?
8. Does gender bias impact men?
9. What are the reasons why men become violent against women and children?
10. What are the possible ways men can help reduce gender bias and GBV?
11. According to men, how can NGOs, government schemes, laws and policies help women combat gender bias and GBV?

for Women

1. How do women recognise gender bias?
2. What are the different ways women define gender-based violence (GBV)? What are the different kinds of violence that women face?
3. What factors (e.g. age, culture, poverty, social group, pregnancy, marriage) lead to greater gender bias and greater GBV?
4. Do women perceive the interconnectedness of gender bias and GBV?
5. Do women see normative family structures as propagating gender bias and GBV?
6. What according to women are the factors that will help reduce gender bias and GBV?
7. What is the role of other family members in maintaining/supporting anti-female bias?
8. What are the effects of violence on other family members including children?
9. How do women define womanhood, and their specific roles?
10. How do women understand the division of public and private spheres? What are the instances of their defying/challenging this binary?
11. What strengths, resilience and strategies do women draw on in managing/reducing/preventing gender bias?
12. How do women manage/prevent/escape violence?
13. How do women define support? Are there people (community members, friends, family members) who can help women in difficult situations?
14. Are NGOs or women's groups helping women in difficult situations?
15. How have government schemes, laws, and policies helped women facing bias and violence?

Developing Themes & Action Points

Re-imagination of gender roles

Our study showed how gender roles affected women and men over time, often placing women at a disadvantage, or in risky situations. Most women and men suggested masculinity and femininity to be binary categories. Unfortunately, this perception underpinned gendered double standards, through which men and boys are given preference over women and girls. The following action points are designed to empower women to find fulfilling roles for themselves from a young age.

Action points

1. There is a need for government, government-funded public education programmes and third sector organisations to promote and build awareness of gender bias within society, specifically addressing double standards.

2. These programmes should educate men and women about the need to develop opportunities for women in economy and society.

3. In schools, girls and boys should be taught to speak up against negative bias and double standards. School programmes could build girls' self-esteem and autonomy by offering the same opportunities as boys in areas such as sciences and sports training.

4. Training for teachers should incorporate awareness of the adverse effects of double standards on the lives of young girls.

5. Classrooms should have an equitable environment with no tolerance of violence or discrimination.

Abuse has different manifestations and meanings

Our data demonstrated that women from different locations experience different types of abuse. Additionally, violence and abuse were understood differently by men and women. We found this to be a result of the way rights are interpreted and understood. It is important to understand men's perspectives on violence and harassment, and to help men understand why women's right to a life free from violence is an important goal.

Action points

1. Further research is needed on what makes men resist the idea of equity.

2. All forms of abuse against women need to be identified and categorised to show their prevalence.

3. In programmes that promote interaction between genders, it is important that efforts are made to counter the belief that women's empowerment would mean women becoming more powerful than men. The perception of misuse of women-centric law is a common complaint raised by men. Research is needed into ways to get men 'on board' with laws to protect and promote women's rights.

4. NGO programmes should focus on building public awareness of the more covert kinds of violence occurring in women's lives that remain unknown to many.

Transmission of negative gender bias through institutions

We noticed throughout our study that certain institutions were negatively affecting the daily lives of women as well as men. These institutions were helpful in addressing some forms of GBV, yet often we saw them spread negative biases. Exploring how biased beliefs can be prevented from passing from person to person and through systems is critical to our understanding of GBV. Family, marriage and the State need to be looked at critically to understand their positive and negative roles in women's lives.

Action points

1. It is important that education is provided to service providers throughout government and community-based institutions about the ways in which gender bias can affect service delivery, and how negative impacts on women can be reduced.

2. Incentives and support could be offered for singlehood or to help unmarried women access opportunities that would benefit their living conditions. For this the Government could liaise with movements like Ekal Nari Shakti Sanghtan (ENSS)[6] to better understand the complications of marriage.

3. As well as strengthening anti-dowry or child marriage laws, governments need to recognise the grassroots nature of these practices. Grassroots understanding of gender-biased traditions can inform law and policy changes.

4. A shift in attitude towards women's rights by State agencies, from a protectionist to a rights-based approach should be encouraged.

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6 *This is a movement which collectivised "single" women (including never married, divorced, separated) to demand separate rights and privileges for themselves. The movement began in Rajasthan and has found support in Himachal Pradesh, North Bengal and Sikkim. ENSS builds leadership among single women and addresses social marginalisation associated with singlehood.*

Developing Themes & Action Points

Violent relationships do not always have simple solutions

The prevalence of violence in intimate relationships has several causes, one of which is gender inequality. However, the reasons why women remain in violent relationships are complex. Utmost importance should be given to understanding problems with nuance and listening to women without judgement. It is essential that women are given the help that they want, at the time when they need it most.

Action points

1. Governments liaising with NGOs can offer women who do not wish to leave the sites of violence alternative or temporary arrangements.

2. There is a need to approach GBV in more culture and context specific ways by policymakers. A community-centred approach is necessary for grassroot changes.

3. Widespread screening processes for women who are at risk of abuse should be encouraged in clinical settings, so that clinicians can offer the help that is needed at the right time.

4. Government policies that give only protection from or punishment for complicated manifestations of GBV - such as dowry, forced marriages, early marriages - need to be supplemented by wider cultural changes and activism from researchers, women's groups, and NGOs. Changing perspectives on the ground about the negative impacts of patriarchal traditions is essential for both government and non-government agencies to address. Interventions based on evidence from communities will help with this.

Women's lives are controlled in covert ways

Women are controlled in different ways, which are often hidden from view. Respondents told us extensively about the subtle ways in which they had faced abuse and neglect. From their narratives we found that women's agency was disregarded regularly. However, women themselves sometimes held beliefs that supported these covert forms of control and violence. The various ways women's lives were controlled emerged from, and were justified (in the eyes of those involved) by the very simple yet unfounded belief carried by many of our respondents: that women are "weaker" than men.

Action points

1. Government or NGO interventions that distinguish between men and women solely on a biological basis need supplementing with a social constructionist understanding of GBV. Such an emphasis could help people understand how gender roles are prescribed, and can be re-imagined. This would be useful in achieving gender equality and challenging biological essentialist ideas that confine men and women to narrow, pre-defined roles.

2. Schools can promote gender egalitarian practices among students by offering the same learning opportunities to boys and girls. In curricula, students should be taught about GBV and how to prevent transmission of violence, by including such information in textbooks.

3. There is a need for more family centred interventions by NGOs to address specific issues such as problematic or abusive relationships between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law.

4. Governments should collaborate with NGOs to develop parenting programmes that promote the safety and wellbeing of mothers and children, taking a rights-based approach.

Discovering the role children play in help-seeking and help-giving

In our study, for women who were also mothers, children had a profound effect on their lives and sometimes on their decision-making. Motherhood could be both liberating and restraining for women. Children could be beacons of hope to women who faced abuse regularly, or they might become reasons for women to remain in abusive situations. It is important to see the place children occupy within a family, whether and how they can help women in situations of abuse.

Action points

1. From an early age, girls should be educated to understand that childbirth is not an inevitable eventuality, that choosing whether to have children is their fundamental right.

2. More research to be undertaken on empathy in children towards survivors of abuse, teaching them to respond to difficult situations at home and outside.

3. Governments need to implement schemes for expecting mothers, who do not have family support to start a life with just their child(ren).

4. Both NGOs and Government Organisations should be targeting interconnectedness of Violence Against Women (VAW) and Violence Against Children (VAC) to look for joint solutions to imminent problems.

Developing Themes & Action Points

Un-silencing women's narratives

Kept away from the public sphere, many of our respondents were sharing their life stories for the first time by participating in our study, since women's lived experiences do not gain easy access to public discourse. We see an urgent need to share women's narratives to show how, from a young age, women are kept dependent on families so that in older age they are left without support and in risky living conditions. It is crucial that women have financial independence to live a secure life.

Action points

1. Central governments should incentivise education by way of funding for young women who wish to pursue higher studies and are unable to do so because of lack of funding.

2. Offices should make workplaces safe by implementing anti-GBV policies and closing the gender pay gap. Women's participation in the workforce should be encouraged by both private and public sector companies.

3. Banks can make information more freely available to women who wish to start their own businesses (sometimes from inside their homes).

4. Governments need to have special provisions for older women who do not have family support, like having functional and liveable spaces for the elderly.

5. Schools should encourage young girls to learn about earning and saving, investing in land and housing, so that later in their lives they are not restricted and dependent only on their families.

6. Sharing of stories by women in the media, about the abuse they have faced and the obstacles they have overcome, to counter the normalised narrative of GBV.

Formal systems' responses need to change

Dissatisfaction with systems was a recurring issue in our study; women did not feel comfortable reaching out to authorities. Very few women chose to take a formal stand against the abuse they faced even though they knew where to find support. State run services like the police often either scared women or gave them bad advice. Women said NGOs were unhelpful at times, and taking legal help was impossible as it would taint their family name. That said, women did expect better support from the Government, tailored to their specific needs.

Action points

1. Implementation level monitoring of government and NGO schemes should be carried out.

2. Help should be given to women to ensure they understand what schemes would benefit them most. This may be done with help of government employees working in banks, post offices, or any holding any other post.

3. NGOs need to model their interventions in accordance with the needs of the survivor, understanding women have different lives and complications.

4. Interventions for domestic disputes should be used to help train community leaders to mediate in cases of disputes.

Gender-based interventions focusing equally on men and women

During our data collection we realised that men and women saw themselves as very different from each other. Preventing GBV will not be possible if men are not aware of women's situation, and supportive of their demands for violence prevention. Demanding equal rights and no discrimination towards women should also include men's voices. Instead of men being silent observers or perpetrators, men and women together should be able to converse and find solutions.

Action points

1. NGOs addressing GBV should encourage open conversation between genders, inviting both men and women to take part in interventions to reduce GBV.

2. NGOs and government agencies should focus on interventions specifically targeting the bystander attitude, in public as well as private spaces.

3. Community-centric interventions should be given more importance to inculcate bystander responsibility. Research on family-specific programmes to change the bystander apathy within families could help prevent abuse.

Mumbai local trains are the lifeline and identity of the city. One can examine the culture of this city by observing the *8 million passengers* who use the services daily,

one quarter of whom are women.

INTRODUCTION

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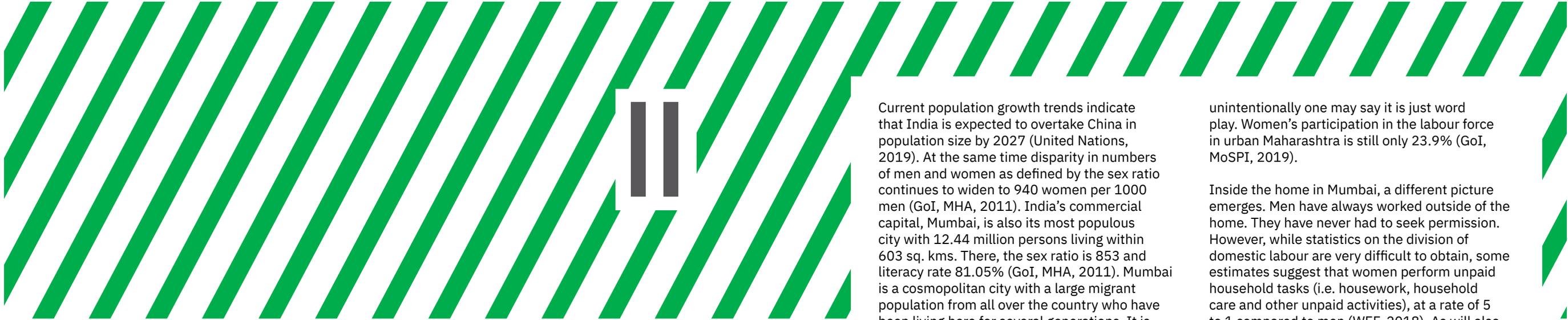
Current population growth trends indicate that India is expected to overtake China in population size by 2027 (United Nations, 2019). At the same time disparity in numbers of men and women as defined by the sex ratio continues to widen to 940 women per 1000 men (GoI, MHA, 2011). India's commercial capital, Mumbai, is also its most populous city with 12.44 million persons living within 603 sq. kms. There, the sex ratio is 853 and literacy rate 81.05% (GoI, MHA, 2011). Mumbai is a cosmopolitan city with a large migrant population from all over the country who have been living here for several generations. It is considered a safer city for women compared to many other metropolises in India.

Mumbai local trains are seen as the lifeline and identity of the city. One can examine the culture of this city by observing the 8 million passengers who use the services daily, one quarter of whom are women (Bhide, Kundu, & Tiwari , 2016). Mornings usher in a hoard of women of all age groups travelling to their respective destinations in the "ladies' compartments" – to schools, colleges or offices. Come evening, the return of these working women is a striking sight. Each finds their space in the compartment, sitting cross legged on the floor at times, creating a small space along with their travel mates. They comfortably sit there splitting pea pods or cleaning and chopping vegetables, preparing perhaps for dinner or the next day's lunch. It is an activity reflective of their understanding of the role they play at home and at work.

A similar scene is not seen in the "gents' compartment" of these same trains where you will find the 'bhajan mandali' (prayer chanting groups) or a gang of travel mates playing cards. While the working woman is celebrated as a sign of progress, the fact that patriarchal society has "allowed" them to work is a contradictory but persistent thought, one that often goes unnoticed. Intentionally and

unintentionally one may say it is just word play. Women's participation in the labour force in urban Maharashtra is still only 23.9% (GoI, MoSPI, 2019).

Inside the home in Mumbai, a different picture emerges. Men have always worked outside of the home. They have never had to seek permission. However, while statistics on the division of domestic labour are very difficult to obtain, some estimates suggest that women perform unpaid household tasks (i.e. housework, household care and other unpaid activities), at a rate of 5 to 1 compared to men (WEF, 2018). As will also become clear from our data, men are seldom expected to be equal partners in household work. The woman, now with "freedom" to work, contributes to the household financially without compromising on the role she plays as a woman inside the house. But what about the man? Has he achieved that level of equality?

At their destination station men and women rush towards the exit, hoping to catch the bus, or share an auto to their final destination. In the rush, however, lies the discomfort of women who have not been as quick footed and have to share the space with insensitive men as they climb the staircase to cross over. Thousands of women have expressed their disgust as they experience the groping, pinching and the "unintentional pressing" within this space.

Similarly, private spaces are not devoid of their own challenges. While in public there is an opportunity to rebel, or react against these afflictions, within the four walls of the house, a woman seldom has a say in matters. As the data from our study will show, the home was the site in which women often experienced the most severe forms of gender bias, and related forms of GBV. These experiences are borne out in large-scale studies too: for example, one study of recent mothers (n=1038) in Mumbai revealed that 17.6% of them had experienced

intimate partner violence in the postpartum period, with 41.7% experiencing gender-based household mistreatment e.g. withholding of food, medical services, mistreatment for not bearing a boy child, (Wagman et al. 2016). Some other previous work in India has shown how gender biases underpin GBV and the mistreatment of women within the home. Mittal (2008) and Satish-Kumar et al. (2002), have both argued that GBV is underpinned, first, by the deep-rooted beliefs in bias against women in the home, but also in men's perceptions that their "entitlements" to women taking care of household duties are being undermined by any moves towards gender equality. Such gender bias can lend legitimacy to violence within the domestic space: in short, when 48.5% women of Maharashtra say that they are ok with domestic violence, it is a matter of concern (IIPS, 2018).

For years, women have experienced harassment tantamount to violence in some form or other. The Declaration of Elimination of Violence against Women (United Nations General Assembly, 1993) has defined violence against women as *"any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life".*

This research report intends to examine the idea that gender bias emerging from set gender roles is a root cause of GBV. This bias can be seen in how women are deprived of education and agency to decide whether to work, whether to get married, how many children to have, whether to have children, etc. This series of restrictions on women's freedom can be seen as a spiral of control that reduces women's defences against GBV. As a woman accepts these deprivations as norms for herself and future generations, the spiral is further fuelled by intergenerational influences within family spaces.

The majority of the masses in India live together with a minimum of three generations. (Shukla, 2015) The problems of living within this family structure exceeds its benefits in today's time. While the premise was to ensure transmittance of value systems which are associated with the older generation, it is often noted that these systems can be convoluted to an extent that along with these values (respecting elders, respecting food, trusting in God, moral conduct, love etc.) an underlying voice is found that speaks of respecting *male* elders, that *boys* are the providers and hence must earn, that an "ideal" woman is like the *sacrificing caretaker* who will consume all leftovers to avoid wastage and so on and so forth.

The gender roles defined by the patriarchal society run deeper than just breaking the stereotype of a woman not being able to earn. Now, many women can choose to earn, however it only adds to her routine. The woman is expected (an expectation which seems to have acknowledged and accepted as a part of their inherent womanhood) to continue caring for the house equally well, regardless of their status of employment. Women perform the majority of unpaid tasks (i.e. housework, household care and other unpaid activities), 5 to 1 compared to men. (WEF, 2018)

India's Gender Inequality Index Rank is 127 (UNDP, 2018) and on the Global Gender Gap Index India ranks 108. (WEF, 2018) Child Marriage is still prevalent here despite the same being criminalised. This shows in the adolescent birth rate being at 23.1 births per 1000 women between the ages of 15-19. India is the least improved country when it comes to the health and survival gap for women given India's Maternal Mortality Rate is 174 deaths per 100,000 live births. The population of women who are 25 years or older with some secondary education is 39%, (UNDP, 2018) reflecting an inverse correlation between the number of years of education and how young a woman first gets pregnant. (IIPS, 2018)

The Indian Constitution gives legislation powers to make laws that ensures there is equality among equals, including among the genders. Using this provision, the Indian Parliament has made several laws and policies to protect the rights of women specifically, given the nature and extent of GBV in India. Many of them, however, take a protectionist approach which, among other things, leads to contention in whether they further the cause of women's equality. Some interpretations of these laws by the judiciary further perpetuate the inherent gender bias. In a case of divorce, the Supreme Court of India judged that a wife asking her husband to move away from his parents to live with her would amount to cruelty. (Narendra vs K. Meena, 2016)

Furthermore, although protectionist laws relating to crimes against women are being made more stringent in terms of punishments, they have had little success in deterring violent crimes. According to the latest Indian National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report 2015-2017, 7.19% of all reported crimes were of violence against women; of these approximately 35.5% were in the domestic space. Of the total crimes reported in Mumbai, 9.33% were instances of violence against women. In Maharashtra 21.3% of women have faced physical or sexual violence and 2.9% of that during pregnancy, and 9.8% of women reported emotional violence in the National Family and Health Survey (NFHS–4) (IIPS, 2018). These estimates are likely to be an under-representation of the true crime rate, given the difficulty many women experience in reporting violence within the home.

Even so, Maharashtra State has a few schemes being implemented to rehabilitate and empower women. Manodhairya Victim Compensation scheme is one such where a victim of violence (rape, child sexual abuse and acid attack) can claim up to ₹ 10 lakhs (1 million rupees) for rehabilitation (GoM, WCD, 2017). The State also

monetarily incentivises inter-caste marriages (GoM, SJSA, 2010), unions which are generally discouraged by people, sometimes even with violence (Krithiha, 2018).

Our Work

One in three women in the world experience gender-based violence in their lifetimes. And to turn that statistic into "None in Three", researchers in the UK, India, Uganda, and Jamaica have come together to engage with students and other stakeholders to prevent such violence. None in Three (Ni3) is a transnational research centre which was launched in October 2017 at the University of Huddersfield, UK.

Ni3 teams from each of the countries have identified a key area of study within the wider spectrum of GBV, specific to their country. The decision on the topic to address was informed by consultation with stakeholders, as well as extensive reviews of the academic literature.

The India research team recognised gender bias as a central reason for the perpetuation of GBV, to be further explored, understood and addressed.

The University of Huddersfield, UK partnered with ISDI School of Design and Innovation (ISDI), Mumbai, to carry out the research in India. The India team went on to create a separate entity 'Idealists Consulting' which has taken the work forward. Most of the research data has been gathered from Mumbai city and suburban districts with a portion from the neighbouring Palghar district.

Literature Review

A systematic literature review was conducted by the None in Three Research Centre, India (Ni3 India) (publication - "Linking gender biases to forms of gender-based violence: A metasynthesis of research from India" in progress). To that end, a systematic search across academic databases was conducted and supplemented with hand searches of key journals. Six articles met the inclusion criteria and six prominent themes emerged from the analysis. The first theme covers the aspect of compulsory gender normativity which elucidates the typical gender expectations placed on women and girls in India. Then, we examined how these gendered biases underpinned four types of gender double standards that placed women at risk of GBV: sexual double standards; domestic double standards; economic double standards; and institutional double standards. Subsequently, the paper examined the creative ways in which women and men resisted damaging gender biases under the theme of resisting bias. We concluded with reflections on how GBV might be reduced in Indian society by addressing gender biases.

Methods

Design

This study took a qualitative approach to gain insights into the perspectives and experiences of our participants in Mumbai. Qualitative methods are well placed to gain insights into the life experiences of research participants and are flexible enough to follow up on unexpected questions that might emerge in the course of the fieldwork. Our overall approach was informed by a rights-based approach to reducing GBV. Additionally, we started the study with a broad set of guiding questions, as can be seen in Appendix 1. Underpinning all our questions was the aim to better understand the links between GBV and gender bias in India. For the purpose of this study, and based on our review of the literature, gender bias was defined as: a system of norms and practices that functions on binary constructions of gender, with the specific belief that one gender is inherently inferior to another, manifesting through negative acts.

Recruitment and participants

Our fieldwork took place from October to November 2018. We identified specific areas of the city and IDIs were conducted in the home of one respondent, who later helped to recruit other women from her neighbourhood who had been or were facing violence at home, to share their stories with us. In order to assist with participant recruitment, a market consultancy firm, Triune Consultancy, was contracted to recruit participants and arrange in-depth interviews (IDIs) with women and focus group discussions (FGDs) with men. The interviews and focus groups were conducted by Ni3 India researchers. The women participants were purposively selected to identify those who were best placed to aid our understanding of the research focus. Only those who had faced violence or were living in violent situations were interviewed. Women were recruited from various parts of Mumbai City to gain perspectives of women of different social backgrounds. Additionally, a wide range of ages and marital status were sought: Forty-two women (age range 18-65) were interviewed. They were either never married, ever married, separated, divorced and widows, most of whom had children, and some with grandchildren. Many participants were married very young. They came either from middle or lower middle income groups, with varying education levels, some of whom had an income. Most of the participants were migrants from rural areas to the city, some grew up in the city, and belonged to different religions and castes. The list of attributes is given in Table 1 and 2.

For the focus group discussions, seven groups were conducted over two days. The first five groups were arranged with the help of the consultancy firm while the remaining two were held inside the Observation Home at Mumbai City with the help of an organisation called Prayas that rehabilitates children in conflict with the law. The first five groups consisted of around eight men each. There was a schedule of questions and the discussions were moderated by two male researchers. The participant age range was from 18 to above 50, with income levels of lower middle to middle income groups. The men were either married or unmarried, some with children and some with grandchildren. They were either working or studying. The last two groups had three and four men respectively (aged 17-24) who had been or were still in the juvenile justice system. There were three different schedules of questions prepared and the IDIs and FGDs progressed organically based on the flow of discussions.

Data collection

In both individual interviews and focus groups, data were collected using a semi-structured interviewing approach. In order to guarantee anonymity, all respondents were asked to provide a false name for themselves to use in the sessions and this is the name that appears in the quotations used in this report. We started with an interview guide for individual interviews covering a range of key topics – namely, understandings of gender bias and GBV, experiences of marriage and (if applicable) divorce, perceived links between gender bias and GBV, and strategies for dealing with or negotiating violent situations. For focus groups, the questions focused on understandings of GBV, motives for GBV, understandings of gender bias, and perceptions of strategies to reduce GBV. Full interview schedules can be seen in Appendix 1.

Data analysis

Interviews and FGDs were digitally recorded and transcribed and where necessary were translated into English. The resulting transcripts were uploaded to NVivo® software for analysis. A thematic analysis approach was chosen as an ideal way to enable a thorough analysis of the data, without requiring any specific theoretical commitments. First, each transcript was read thoroughly by a member of the Ni3 India research team. Then, line-by-line coding was undertaken to generate descriptive codes that stayed 'close' to the data. Then, constant comparison was undertaken to identify commonalities and differences throughout the interviews. Finally, more abstract, overarching themes were generated to describe important concepts and themes throughout the dataset. Throughout this process, the quality and trustworthiness of the analysis was ensured by a number of measures, namely:

- Regular, at least fortnightly meetings between Ni3 India researchers, country leads, and Qualitative Research leads.
- Seeking negative cases in the data – that is, examples of data that challenged emerging themes.
- Maintaining an audit trail of the analysis process by maintaining our NVivo® files, including documentation of analytical decisions via memos.
- Ensuring all analytical claims could be supported by clear examples from the data, and maintaining clarity about the role of the participants' and researchers' voices in the write-up.

Data: Process and Visualisations

With a new and young design team the focus was always to make the findings of the report visible, evocative, and accessible to a wide readership. Consequently, data visualization became a key part of our analysis and data presentation. One of the texts we looked at quite closely when examining ways of transferring knowledge from one medium to another was Catherine D'Ignazio and Lauren F. Klein's "Feminist Data Visualisation" – a paper prepared for a workshop on visualisation for the digital humanities (IEEE 2016). The research team considered that an academic report without thoughtful data visualisation would keep it within the reaches of a few academics and practitioners only. From the beginning of the coding process the design and research team together followed the guidelines set by D'Ignazio and Klein (2016):

- Rethink Binaries
- Embrace Pluralism
- Examine Power and Aspire to Empowerment
- Consider Context
- Legitimise Embodiment and Affect
- Make Labour Visible

Data have the power to affect individual stories and bring out the humanitarian aspect of every issue that they represent. For storytellers, visualisers, academics, informers, statisticians etc., there is a special need to explain the data in such a way that it can be understood widely. Thus, it may be possible to reach to more people, even people who are not accustomed to regular reading and who belong to other professions. Such data should simplify complex information so that knowledge transfer is easy and sustainable.

Ultimately, visualisation is done keeping in mind how end-users will be helped in representing their positions to others.

Our designers undertook the process by:

a) finding a main theme from a pre-written memo that touched upon several concepts;

b) ideating and brainstorming to represent the meanings clearly and simply;

c) then connecting the multiple themes and their graphic/visual with the other themes to bring forth the pluralism of every visualisation;

d) deciding how to use text, statistics, numbers, icons, etc;

e) weaving in an affective and empowering aesthetic to the visuals;

f) understanding and considering the context not only of the readers, but also of the people whose lives have become data;

g) presenting ideas to as many people as possible: friends, teachers, professionals, and any others who are trusted to give valuable comments and direction.

Taking this methodical approach our design team came up with what we hope are interesting and insightful examples of qualitative data visualisation, a practice which we believe needs more representation in the academic and non-academic spaces.

Ethics

The research plan and all related documents were approved by the University of Huddersfield Research and Ethics Panel for the School of Human and Health Sciences. Permissions were obtained from all participating agencies and the research was conducted with strict adherence to the None in Three ethics protocol (see Appendix 1). Our duty of care to participants was assured by providing them with clear information about the purpose of the study, putting in place stringent measures to protect confidentiality, secure data management, informed consent and the establishment of National Response Teams (volunteer counsellors and psychologists) who were available to provide post-research counselling to any participant in need. An ethics audit was carried out throughout the process to ensure compliance with the high ethical principles and standards we had set for ourselves.

Social norms and patriarchal traditions leading to prescribed gender roles

Translating to gender bias, transmitted inter-generationally

Acceptance of gender bias and normalisation of GBV

|| A visual representation of India's country focus 'gender bias as an enabler of GBV'

Key to our respondents' attributes

[1] Level of Education & **[2]** Religion

[8] No. of Children

[4] Age at Marriage

[6] Working/Earning

[5] Income Level

[7] Marital Status

[3] Location
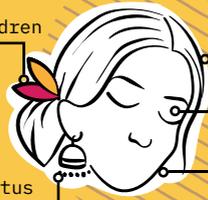
Yamini, 39

False Name, Age

[1] Level of Education
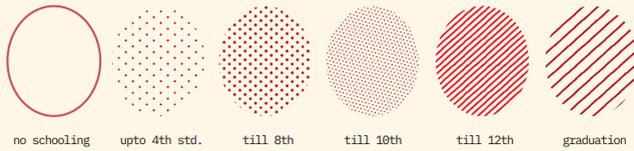
| no schooling | upto 4th std. | till 8th | till 10th | till 12th | graduation |

[2] Religion

Ambedkarite   Christian

Hindu   Muslim

[3] Location

Mumbai City   Eastern Suburbs   Western Suburbs

[4] Age at Marriage

below 18 yrs   18-25 yrs   26 & above   Unmarried

[5] Income Level

Lower   Lower Middle   Middle

[6] Working/Earning

No   Yes

[7] Marital Status

Never Married   Married   Widow   Divorced/Separated
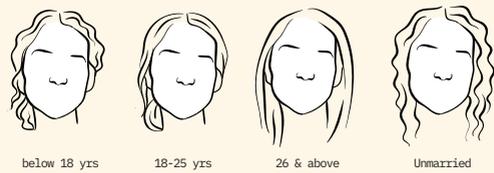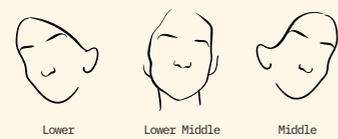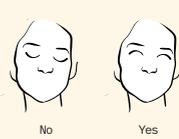
[8] No. & Gender of Children

Female   Male

An illustration of our women respondents by Ishani Kulkarni

Yamini, 39

Sonu, 37

Reba, 40

Chaki, 33

Sayali, 23

Sarita, 35

Komal, 43

Anushka, 24

Devi, 55

Indu, 40

Soni, 40

Teju, 42

Sunita, 33

Chanda, 33

Madhu, 60

Nayna, 18

Pooja, 40

Neha, 22

Asha, 50

Kavita, 32

Seema, 45

Deepa, 38

Josie, 50

Pia, 42

Reeti, 31

Kanta, 65

Noor, 45

Dipti, 32

Arfa, 36

Sarala, 62

Gauri, 45

Shanta, 50

Anju, 29

Sheba, 21

Sana, 19

Jaya, 33

Farah, 38

Shruti, 22

Rashmi, 33

Sujata, 43

Rashi, 23

Rabia, 36
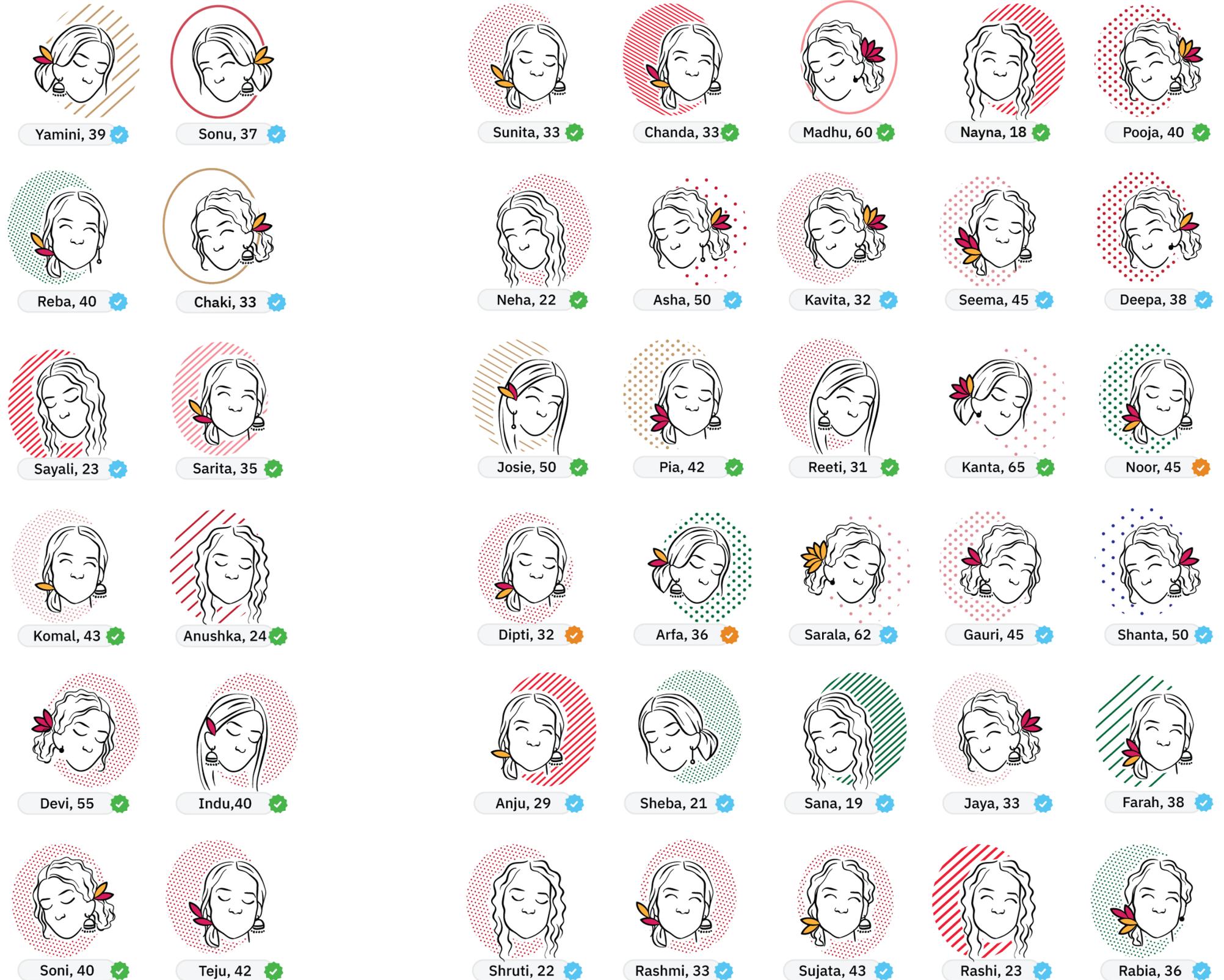
Violence, Gender bias, & Transmission

JUSTIFICATION

she DESERVES it

BYSTANDER

it's a private matter

GENDER BIAS

GENDER BINARIES

GENDER ROLES & STEREOTYPES
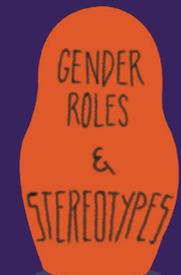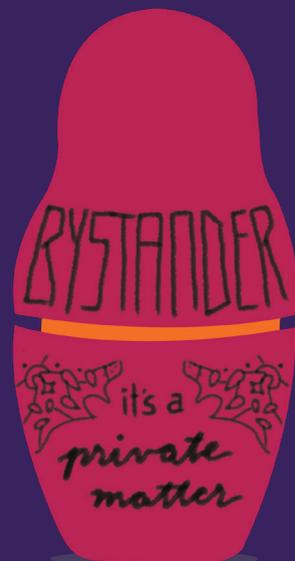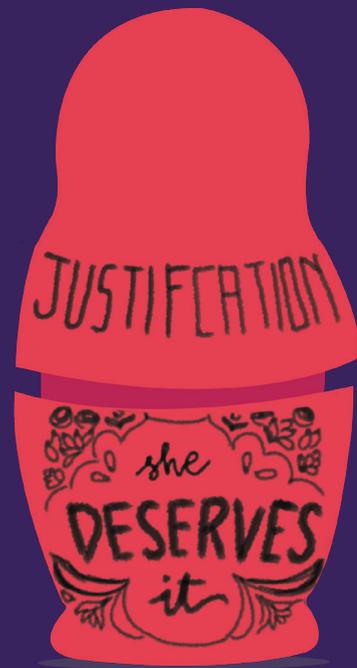
|| Graphic representation of how prescribed gender roles lead to justification and further inaction to violence

In this section we will first try to clarify how violence is constructed in urban Indian society by distinguishing between men's and women's understanding of violence. Our data showed that these notions were different for men and women, although we also examined where perspectives overlapped. This section will also touch upon the construction of binary gender through normative roles prescribed by society. In turn this will help illustrate the depth of gender bias. Through concepts of violence and women's rights we will analyse the interconnection of gender bias with GBV.

1.1 How men and women perceive violence

By introducing violence, we do not necessarily mean to focus only on its physical practice. In fact, we will outline conceptual myths of both genders on self-related and personal violence, and the perception of violence itself. Several women we spoke with who have faced violence believed it need not be addressed, as it is well within their tolerance levels. They were concerned that addressing violence could also interfere with their social location, their families' honour, and their children's futures. Our participants often viewed violence as a reality, one which is lived and can be everlasting (Piterman, 2014). There are ways to respond to violence and seek help or even change the situation, but still it is a recurring issue for many women. The regularity with which women faced violence at the hands of even family members made them resigned to and accepting of violence.

"M: What happened?

R: He used to drink and come, he used to get abusive, and then beat me.

M: Why would he beat?

R: If I say something about his family,

he will beat, and if the food is not good, then he will beat.

M: What about food?

R: Like, if there is something less, or I didn't make what he wants.

[...]

M: So one is food, is there anything else that angers him?

R: He is always angry with me, if I say something, he will scream over me. He beats when he is really angry. But what to do, I don't have anywhere to go."

– Pooja, 40, IDI 16

"For men, they just do what they want, if they want to keep up, they keep up, or else they just leave. For women leaving is not so easy."

– Reba, 40, IDI 2

Pooja's situation and Reba's response show that escaping from violence was not realistic for many women, therefore acceptance could be one of the ways to cope with violence. According to Reba, men had the privilege of altering a rough situation by escaping from it, underlining society's inherent double standard. Our data showed that violence against women was often viewed as a banal topic, as everyone had gone through some form of violence in their lifetime. Interestingly, men's views on what violence and its several manifestations were, showed they agreed with our conclusion, that violence against women should be condemned. Although, unlike women, violence was not as often a part of men's everyday lived realities. Some male respondents claimed to have faced violence at the hands of women, but these were in the minority. We identified a specific theme, "men as victims of violence," with men complaining about how women have become more active against male perpetrators.

"R2: [...] like if I am in a bus, I might touch someone's breast by mistake, it is not that she should complain against me! [...]

R7: If we are sitting in rickshaw, it is three-seater, if there are 2 women and 1 man then obviously some touching can happen no matter how hard we try." – FGD 3

Both responses showed the everyday nature of violence against women in public spaces and the justification of harassment. Their perceived victimisation as men was a result of more women taking a clear stand against violence. Studies have shown that GBV against men has proliferated over time (Malik & Nadda , 2019), but it does not happen on the same scale or with the same prevalence so as to invalidate or subjugate the entire male gender through violence, as it does for women. While men can be victims of gender-based violence, this matter requires further research – our study focuses on the established global health issues of violence against women.

Agreeing with global discourse that violence against women should be prevented did not mean that the men in our study understood women's lived experiences of violence. Men also shared their reasons for exerting coercion and control over the women in their lives in domestic spaces. Even though some men suggested they felt insecure in public spaces because some women were not afraid to speak up, the story was rather different in domestic spaces.

"R4: My wife knows that if she says something, I will get angry and I cannot control my anger. And even if I try to control, she will still go on and on, till I take any action." – FGD 1

In the above case, violence was triggered through the perception of women as "nagging", and men as aggressive disciplinarians who must teach women lessons. Within the study,

gender roles were viewed as clear and precise descriptions of how to behave according to one's gender. Gender roles were prescriptive and socialised into everyday behaviour, the choices made, understanding of the world – encompassing every aspect of existence. The interviewees in this study typically indicated that gender roles were generally played out in binaries. Men were viewed as providers, women were consumers, men aggressive and women passive – always pitching masculinity versus femininity. This may be one way in which violence and gender roles have a very close relationship: what was perceived as a violent act was affected by the extent to which the act transgressed gender roles. More violence could ensue if the double standard reinforcing genders was not maintained. Young boys and girls learned to conform to values passed on by family, community and society.

1.2 Understanding normative gender roles and double-standards

There were clear lines drawn on what women can/not do but no such restrictions for men. In our interviews, we saw the gender double standard as an indicator of gender bias against women. It was applicable to sexuality, domesticity, economics and even to institutions.

"For instance, after marriage I came across my male schoolmates. And when they came up and spoke to me my husband said, there is no need to talk to your school friends and all that. So, what men do is justified, but if women do the same then there is a problem?" – Teju, 42, IDI 11

Gender roles, when unquestioningly conformed to, gave rise to what we understand as anti-female bias, or gender bias.

"If boys will walk naked no one will tell them wear an underwear. If girls are going nude, then boys will be ready to lick them."
– Rashmi, 33, IDI 38

The above quote explicates a sexual double standard of Indian society, which is linked to the risk of GBV – that is, the sexualisation of women's bodies and their concomitant restriction to the private sphere. Men sexualising women in public space is often accepted as 'normal' (Zaikman & Marks, 2014). Conversely, given that most GBV is conducted within the home, the restrictions to 'protect' women are counter-productive. At the same time, many men in our study perceived legislation to protect women to be biased against men.

On being asked why rapes and murders happen in India, some men answered:

"R5: It is clothes; women wear short clothes.

R7: And movies.

R2: Sexual attraction because of clothing.
R5: Sexual attraction is always there, even if you are over 50 years. You see the clothes and appreciate the woman. Only cure is that you have to control your thoughts." – FGD 5

Although this FGD was conducted with elderly men, similar responses were seen amongst men of different age groups. Just as sexual double standards play out, our respondents also brought in the concept of domestic double standards. This is the very foundation of the public-private binary in relation to gender. Women were thought of as harbingers of domesticity, an extension of family, home, morals. Even though taking care of the domestic sphere was women's primary role, they were rarely given the opportunity to be at the head.

"M: If mom is supporting financially, will she take decisions?

R6: My mom is also supporting financially, still dad takes all decisions.

M: Why? But both are earning.

R3: Dads have more knowledge." – FGD 2

If domesticity was considered a prerequisite of femininity, masculinity was seen as its opposite and its superior. Domesticity was further connected to submissiveness which many of our respondents carefully outlined in their narratives. Encouraging women to be submissive were many members of society including parents, friends and others. Without household decision-making powers, women were taken advantage of, taught not to question norms.

"[...] My mother told me that if somebody tells you anything, I should not answer back. I should tolerate it because I have to stay there (marital home), to ask them (in laws) if there was any mistake in my understanding, and since I don't have a mother-in-law, to ask the elders.

M: What else did she advise you?

R: To make good food, and if anything hurts me then not to bother, just ignore, and listen to what the other person is saying."

- Madhu, 60, IDI 14

There were many such instances of mothers explaining to their daughters how to behave in line with gender roles, transmitting their own stereotypes (Halpern & Perry-Jenkins, 2016). Additionally, mothers and other elders often did not give any information to young women about their bodies or the probable changes in their lives because of marriage (Abraham, 2001). In the above narrative a mother showed a daughter her role as a daughter-in-law, advised her to forget about the violence, asked her to consider what the perpetrator is saying. Such perspectives play a powerful role in perpetuating and justifying

GBV, with women implicitly and explicitly encouraged to accept it. We also suggest that this acceptance is tied to wider biases which consider men as more knowledgeable and authoritative than women:

"[...] Actually, boys know how to be safe, by 17-18 years they understand, they know what they have to do. However, girls tend to be gullible, they are susceptible to anything that one may tell them." – Respondent 3, FGD 7

The everyday nature of gender bias solidifies and intensifies social stratification based on gender roles. Respondent 3's double standard showed through his narrative: he believed that boys understand the world faster than girls, which means girls either need protection, or their gullibility justifies violence against them. Girls' susceptibility to violence was increased through such invalidation of women's perspectives and knowledge.

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1.3 Defining gender bias – positive and negative

</div>

As well as establishing how gender roles restrict men and women, our data also illustrated that the links between gender bias and GBV are multifaceted. Globally, gender bias is seen to comprise both conscious and unconscious acts that bring out gender disparity, specifically in workplaces (Locke, 2019). Gender bias has also become the reason for a skewed gender ratio in India, due to excessive female mortality that continues to manifest in different parts of the country, particularly in the northern regions (Guilmoto, Saikia , Tamrakar, & Bora, 2018).

We asked our respondents if they knew the term "gender bias" and participants had varying understandings of it. To bring changes in women's lives, widespread understanding of gender bias is critical. Gender bias can manifest as anti-female or even anti-feminine sentiment,

suggesting that females or other genders are of lower standing than males. Alternatively, positive acts biased towards the discriminated gender (i.e. positive discrimination) can help in challenging inequalities. Both aspects of gender bias were touched upon by respondents, both male and female. Women highlighted negative bias that affected their everyday lives, demonstrating sometimes sophisticated understandings of gender bias:

"I have seen women are considered inferior to men. Men are respected in all ways even if he does not earn or take care of his family, this should not be happening. In this life if a woman is financially contributing equally with her husband, why is she not equally respected? What is the reason the male gets more respect? Just because he is male? Why?"
– Komal, 43, IDI 6

Men also agreed that negative bias in society should be changed although their understanding of positive bias contrasted with that of women in interesting ways. In the case of positive acts of bias, where it is believed that enabling women can be done through reservations, rights, and restructuring, most men failed to accept this.

"R1: Girls say, girls and boys are equal, and then they say, ladies first. This is not right!

M: Where did you experience this?

R1: When we are traveling in metro, or there is a common washroom, or we are standing in line, they say, can't you see, I am a lady?"
– FGD 4

Men questioned the need for special laws and schemes for women when they see women succeed in life and see them in public spaces. Both men and women in our study had very limited concepts of women's rights and of how these could contribute to the stand against violence and for better education and employment opportunities.

1.4 Awareness of GBV and women's rights

Some highly advertised schemes and laws have achieved public awareness, but were seen as unsuccessful, or tedious to access and even comprehend. Most women shared that they have almost no information about anything designed by the government to benefit them. The reason given was that generally women do not go out, they are unable to know about their own rights.

The Government has in place several laws, schemes, policies that can help women escape abusive situations and enable a better future for them, yet knowledge of these was low. Furthermore, these provisions should not necessarily be looked at uncritically. For example, implementation of the scheme "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao" (Save the girl child, Educate the girl child) has been questioned in the media:

> *"…there are three clear lacunae in implementation which have been highlighted through a series of audit reports by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG): (i) inefficient allocation and release of funds at State level; (ii) insufficient monitoring and oversight of community-level activities by district-level task forces and (iii) excessive expenditure on communication-related activities, vis-à-vis multisector interventions focussed on education and health." (Nikore, 2019)*

The above scheme was indeed advertised so widely that it managed to reach many people even in remote areas. Some respondents knew about the scheme but only had a vague idea of how it helps the girl child. Similarly, some women spoke about another scheme, 1298, although it was clear that their knowledge was limited only to what was advertised.

> *"M: There is a service 1298, have you tried that?*
>
> *R: No.*
>
> *M: Were you aware of it?*
>
> *R: No. I am not aware of the outside world."*
>
> *– Arfa, 38, IDI 28*

Women who did know about special provisions were afraid to avail them for reasons like losing respect in the community or getting harassed by state functionaries, especially police and lawyers. It should be noted that women need to know their rights in order to be able to exercise them. However, awareness of schemes alone was not enough; other factors that stopped women from recognising their rights were equally important, like their filial responsibilities.

> *"[…] we need to give women that awareness, that there is an Act for women who go through mental violence, there is an Act for women who go through physical violence, that you can go and tell the police what the truth is. Police helps people who are in trouble. But we should complain only if we are against the perpetrator. There are many women who don't say anything thinking about the respect of their family. This I think is very wrong. These women are bearing so much in the name of respect, that should not happen." – Anushka, 24, IDI 7*

Anushka looked at knowledge and principles underlining women's availing of legal help. She believed that women avoid speaking up against violence to avoid bringing dishonour to their family's name, because of patriarchal beliefs and cultural translations. Anushka, who was studying for a Master's degree, one of the younger, never-married women participating in our study, understood that women needed to be able to accept help to protect themselves. This is significant because several women who did

not complete schooling also emphasised the value of education to combat poverty, violence and discrimination. Knowledge about self and surrounding, knowledge that can combat patriarchal perceptions, is important in women's lives.

Nayna, another never-married young woman who had just completed her schooling at the time of the interview succinctly expressed how she desired knowledge:

> *"Classes should be freely available so that everyone can learn. Mom will agree only if it will be free of cost." – Nayna, 18, IDI 15*

Nayna's belief that education needed to be free came from the understanding that families did not wish to invest in women's education. She suggested the only way women could gain knowledge was if the Government made sure that women's education was free.

Men we spoke with had a different understanding of what support women needed – mainly they focused on protection and education, although when queried about women and their right to earn a living, men registered their reservations. What discrimination meant to men surfaced throughout several FGDs. That discrimination between genders exists seemed to be accepted by all the participants, although, views on how this discrimination manifested and what should be the response to it differed between the sexes:

> *"M: Why don't boys and girls get equal treatment?*
>
> *R1: Because of social media.*
>
> *R3: […] other TV shows like Savdhaan India, they are trying to create awareness but because of that ladies get advantage." – FGD2*

Men from our study repeatedly mentioned a Hindi language crime anthology series[7] which claims to be based on real life stories to explicate that women are either in a better position than men or are in need of protection. Another example showed men's reservations about women going out to work and why that lead to both violence and the need for protection from men.

> *"M: Which are the scenarios when women need protection?*
>
> *R2: Sometimes it happens that private companies are not safe. Sometimes boss will start blackmailing women. They will say, spend one night with us and you will get promotion, or will get a salary increase. She has financial need, and she also is afraid, she doesn't have any support. Neither can she share this with parents, nor anyone else […] This has happened with my friend's friend – she left the job.*
>
> *R1: Until she gets married, she will have problems." – FGD 3*

Sexual harassment in the workplace is a form of violence that women faced regularly. In the above quote, Respondent 2 depicted working women as being exploited by others and having no real support to combat it, and therefore needing protection. Respondent 1 clarified what made women face the brunt of office harassment – being unmarried and working. Doing work outside of the domestic space was either considered unsafe, unnecessary, or beyond the limits of women's gender roles. Some younger women showed resistance to women's primary roles as wife and mother; the younger men didn't necessarily agree. Criticising women's clothing and wanting women to continue with their gender-defined work showed the disparity between men's and women's

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7 *Savdhaan India and Crime Patrol are two popular TV series in India that show women in binaries, either as victims or as fallen. Instead of generating awareness around issues of violence and crime, these shows have actively made money from making serious situations into fearsome possibilities. Several of our respondents mentioned watching these shows to gain knowledge on women's issues. The blog "Feminism in India" writes succinctly about the problems of representation in these shows here: https://feminisminindia.com/2019/11/21/crime-patrol-savdhaan-india-mockery-sexual-violence/*

social expectations. This introduces a pertinent question: why do younger generations of men and sometimes women still carry age-old ideas of masculinity and femininity? In our study we encountered several ways young people were being socialised into believing that keeping the status quo benefited both genders.

1.5 Transmission of bias and violence, the role of family & community

In our interviews and focus groups, we found that families transmitted inherent bias through repetition and through everyday negotiations. Gender role stereotypes were at the core of this transmission affecting both adults and younger family members, who received information on gender bias from other members of the family or community. Besides parents, even elders could be transmitters of violence. Families or community members expressed that not maintaining rules may lead to more danger of GBV or complying with rules and roles could bring safety and comfort.

Several different factors lead to normalisation of violence, an important one of which is negative gender bias that manifests through the enforcement of social roles. In our study, some women were urged to accept that at times they were at fault in a situation of GBV, and they could prevent the problems if they tried to understand the perpetrator's story. Josie, who went through extreme physical and psychological abuse for three years after her marriage, who is educated and independent now supporting her family, illustrates this.

> *"[...] I told you that there are two sides of a story. So maybe my physical and mental abuse led me to the state that I wanted to get out of it. So, mistakes don't necessarily mean sins, just normal mistakes. Even when you live with your parents there is always friction*

in the house. But then you overcome that friction. Your parents will also overcome that friction. It happens. It is normal. I mean it is two human beings staying together so there are bound to be problems. So those problems if I can try to acknowledge and overcome them, why can't you? Physical and mental abuse should not be agreed with in life. I don't know how I got through three years thinking things will get better. That was the only thing I was seeing." – Josie, 50, IDI 22

The "friction" she talks about arises from petty adjustment related issues which she rightly illustrated as everyday issues people experience when living with each other. But she also explained how this precise belief, that "friction" is a part of our lives, led her to bear three years of abuse in marriage. Specifically, women are made to believe that their lives are inextricably connected with their partner's, and keeping the family together is their key responsibility. Eventually, Josie also shared how her ex-husband had come from an abusive family himself and therefore had learnt certain behaviour and traits from his parents. This example, while not absolving perpetrators of abuse from their responsibility, does demonstrate how transmission of violence emerged from normalised gendered codes of violent conduct for men and women and was passed on generationally.

Our study found instances of negative bias and violence being transmitted to others in both explicit and covert ways. One explicit way is through people's construction of the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationship. After marriage women who stayed in their marital family homes with other members were sometimes expected to receive violence, especially from the mother-in-law, as that was considered a "normal" way of interaction with new brides.

Husband and son were also expected to take a stand and support either person in times of distress. The mother-in-law became a driver of patriarchal thought, transmitting both bias and violence to the younger women and the children who cohabit with her.

> *"M: Do you think it is okay that elders shout to keep children disciplined?*
>
> *R: Actually, my mother-in-law does not have any discipline herself, she herself is undisciplined. Our entire house does not have any discipline. If there was any discipline in the house, then each member would have to follow some structure, but no one does. I keep saying that my mother-in-law is the one who spoilt my husband. If she had discipline in her life, then her children would not be like this. [...]" – Sunita, 33, IDI 12*

In understanding the normalisation of negative gender bias, we discovered "respect" and "honour" to have the most influence on adherence to rules. Rules were closely linked to gender roles that had negative impact on women's lives. Reeti, who had faced dangerous natal family violence from parents and siblings, explained why she decided to go ahead with an arranged marriage:

> *"I respected my parents a lot and therefore, I never went for love marriage as I knew they will not be able to live with their heads held high if I go for love marriage. And even after their demise I never did anything that would defame them because I knew they trusted me a lot and I maintained that respect that they had even after they passed away. And therefore, I had an intra-caste marriage."*
>
> *– Reeti, 31, IDI 24*

Parents sometimes became carriers and transmitters of biased beliefs and action, but elders commanded an incredible amount of

control over younger generations, making it quite difficult to resist. Standing up for one's parents and family was considered an important aspect of a young person's personal development. The respondent in the above extract represents this unquestioning devotion to elders even though younger generations often believed that there was space for resistance. Reeti's story also illustrates some of the trade-offs women make in negotiating prescribed gender roles: although she adhered to her parents' decisions about marriage and "never did anything to defame them", she challenged the restrictions on her and managed to make enough money to be autonomous. It is as if she knew that her resistance to rules would only apply to work, and not in marriage. In her personal life, parents (whether violent or supportive) were pivotal in making choices and decisions. Given their influence, the question is how elders can help in reducing GBV, rather than becoming a fitment to it.

Transmission of violence and negative behaviour can also occur without having familial roots, in other words, children and adults learn from their surroundings about the prevalence and acceptance of violence. This learning through exposure to violence can trigger people to choose violent acts to respond to problematic situations (Abramovaite, Bandyopadhyay, & Dixon, 2015). Therefore, along with parents, other elder family members or community heads have a hand in promoting or challenging negative gender bias that can lead to violence. For Shanta, her immediate social circle was very important. She herself played the role of advisor for the community:

> *"The girls were wearing clothes where one could see everything. And nothing on top (bra)! They should at least wear a slip (camisole). How does it look? And boys will come to play, drunk, intoxicated, and then they will comment "dekh, dekh, dekh kaisa hai dekh" (see, see, see, see how it is) "dikhta hai na sabh" (everything can be seen), and this I did not like it. I fought so much for two days. I told them (parents) to send*

their girls only if they are properly dressed. The ground gets filled, the boys will create issues, will fight, will go to police station... Third day the girls did not come to play. In such situations even good boys get spoiled. So, this I truly don't like, I am telling you the situation as is. I have given my children the same sanskaars (values)." – Shanta, 50, IDI 31

What is worth noting in the above excerpt is that the respondent accepted the importance of modest clothing in preventing GBV, which arguably put the onus on girls for preventing the sexualisation of their bodies. This is especially striking because Shanta belonged to a progressive family where her son was allowed and supported by her in his transgressive behaviour, while she subscribed to the negative bias against the young girls of her community that others from the community witnessed and agreed to. Shanta's story illustrates well the unconscious and pervasive nature of bias against women, even among people who are against gender bias in principle.

Women's clothing was a topic of conflict – many younger women preferred clothes that give more movement and older generations of men and even women sometimes rejected this. "Not having the right values" means women were held responsible for any act of violence that befell them. Codified in the term sanskaar which translates to "values" are prescribed gender roles. Along with respect for elders, personal development of individuals is associated with these widely learned values, which put men on a higher pedestal.

1.6 Effects of negative bias & violence transmission – children's behaviour and family functioning

Having demonstrated the ways in which negative bias and violence can be easily transmitted, it should be noted how this affects people,

especially younger generations. Respondents, both men and women, believed teaching younger generations about GBV was required. They understood that development of children depended upon their surroundings:

"M: If you spread a message to the younger generation that GBV is not good, then can this end?

R6: It really depends on the house they are brought up in. If they see father shouting at mother from a young age, they will think that is correct. So, as we grow up, we start believing this and will take out our frustrations at home." – FGD 4

Men were sympathetic to the idea that children should not be mistreated by elders, but young people were often at risk of facing violence even when they are not transgressing their gender roles. Violence was regarded as a common aspect of life and when young people see pervasive and persistent violence around them it becomes difficult to guard them from learning it. FGDs 6 and 7 were conducted with young men who had spent time in juvenile observation homes because of GBV related crime. This gave us deep insights into the effects of violence on younger people. A study of men in North India showed that when abuse is prevalent during childhood, the repercussions are seen in adulthood, where men have less gender egalitarian thoughts and predisposition to violent acts against the female gender (Martin, et al., 2002)

"M: From the time that you have spent in observation home, has that brought about any change in your mind, in how you think?

R3: It has brought a lot of change. Everything was normal earlier. When I was sent in, I had a brother who was also interned, not real brother, a friend. I was beaten up on the first day itself. The boy who hit me on the first day, I hit him 2 - 3 weeks later.

M: If I am understanding right, have you become more aggressive after coming out from observation home?

R2: When we were inside we used to constantly think about life outside. There was a window and we used to constantly look outside. There used to be constant fights at home, mother used to beat me. When I went to observation home, I used to cry a lot and think how bad everything was outside." – FGD 6

Both Respondents 2 and 3 suggested that violence was prevalent in everyone's lives and surroundings. Both were exposed to violence either inside the observation home or in their homes, displaying the cyclic nature of violence and how difficult it is to undo violent behaviour once negative bias and violence has been transmitted. As young men the respondents were not given any alternative but a language of violence, perhaps because of their socialisation as men. Understanding why society and jurisprudence currently fails to curb GBV is a rich topic for further study, our study would suggest, however, that observation homes may struggle to change people interned in them if systemic violence continues outside.

India is also a country where violence against children is acceptable as corporal punishments are given out by parents, family members, school teachers, in fact just anyone who is higher in authority. Interestingly, one respondent explained why she believed in corporal punishment, showing that domestic violence had a close relationship with harsh parenting practices (Fulu, et al., 2017).

"M: Do your children listen to you?

R: Yes they do. But sometimes they also behave differently, where I will keep saying and they don't respond to me. It is that stage of growing up, and the atmosphere at home is also like this, it definitely affects the children. I can

understand because I am a mother. But if children are not listening, I will beat them, my mother-in-law never hits them though.

M: You hit your kids?

R: Yes, if they are not listening to me. The days there has been fights with my mother-in-law, or husband, they get a beating from me. But really children don't listen to me, they see things happening this way in the house. My elder daughter is not listening to me anymore, younger one is just 2—

M: Do you feel a bit tense because of this situation with your daughter?

R: Yes, I do, that is why I will scold her and beat her—

M: Is that a solution?

R: When it goes beyond the limit, that time I hit her. I do control my anger, only sometimes I hit them. If she gets less marks in school, then I will scold her. She is growing up now, I must be at it with her, she will either get spoilt or she will not. If I am not behind her all the time then because of the situation at home, it will be easy for her to lose track." – Sunita, 33, IDI 12

Sunita had been in an abusive marriage, she had seen periods of extreme physical and mental trauma which had occurred in front of her children. In the excerpt she was conscious about her daughter picking up things from home. Her belief is shared by many women who think, in order for children not to "lose track" they need to be disciplined through verbal or physical violence. What is particularly interesting is her making a connection between her daughter's behaviour "not listening to me anymore" and what her daughter witnessed between her parents. Moreover, Sunita's belief that violence can be used positively for reprimanding children seems to be a result of the violence she herself is facing. In this case, violence was transmitted

both explicitly and implicitly to the respondent's children.

Cultural transmission of values and biases that increase the risk of GBV was also evidenced in our data. Respondent Anju took the decision to marry outside her community thinking that love would help her escape her lived reality. Her husband, whom she was earlier "dating", did not actually speak with her, they never went on any dates, and yet, she believed that was love. Film, a medium of communication, along with her area of habitation, together became society's way of simultaneously transmitting norms and values and giving an aspirational image of life without suggesting any ways of achieving it.

"M: You never knew about the reality in life movies?

R: No, now I know but the area we stay in functions like this. I had seen in my childhood that a man beats his woman, my area is like this. I thought, no, he (husband) doesn't say anything to me, so he must be good. When I went to some posh areas I came to know that a man and woman are like this as well, like wear matching clothes, share everything among them, after so many years also when they go out for dinner after years of marriage, they feed their wife, and then I realized that this is love. Sometimes I feel what I have is madness (laughing). That which we see in the movies also happens in reality! [...] I have not seen love in my area, I have seen a man going to work in the morning and coming back home drunk in the night. Then he beats his wife, I have seen all this."
– Anju, 29, IDI 32

Culture is responsible for making people susceptible to negative bias and transmits the same through several media. Anju remembered how she learnt about the idea of love and how those definitions are based on one's social location. Films in India promote a certain idea of

love. Realistically only some people can afford those versions of love, others can only aspire and eventually be disappointed. As a married woman seeking answers to her problematic marriage, Anju surmised that she did not belong to those "areas" where love could be companionship. For her, what she had with her partner was "madness". Seeing domestic violence from an early age gives a skewed perspective of marriage, which is why women's expectations of their partners are low.

From the perspective of a younger woman living with parents, Anushka claims that her family functioning got hampered the more her parents fought in front of her. Younger people, when exposed to everyday violence go through psychological trauma and may internalise negative bias. The feeling of loss is carried by women when they see other women, especially family members, being dominated.

"I keep thinking that even after the generation has moved so forward still in many houses this problem keeps arising and we as children also face the stress. We don't know what we should do! Should we go and study or help our parents at home, because studying is also important and managing our house is also important. We don't know how to handle this kind of situation."
- Anushka, 24, IDI 7

To conclude, even though the definition of gender bias can be complicated in Indian society, there are several visible instances of it. Men and women judge situations of abuse and negative or positive bias very differently. Their thoughts come from years of internalising gender roles and subsequent acts that conform to such roles. Family, community and society together transmit stereotypical roles in the garb of values. Women and children are most vulnerable because of systemic violence and the imbalance of power that subjugates them.

Marriage
Traditions
Culture
In-Laws
Natal Family
...
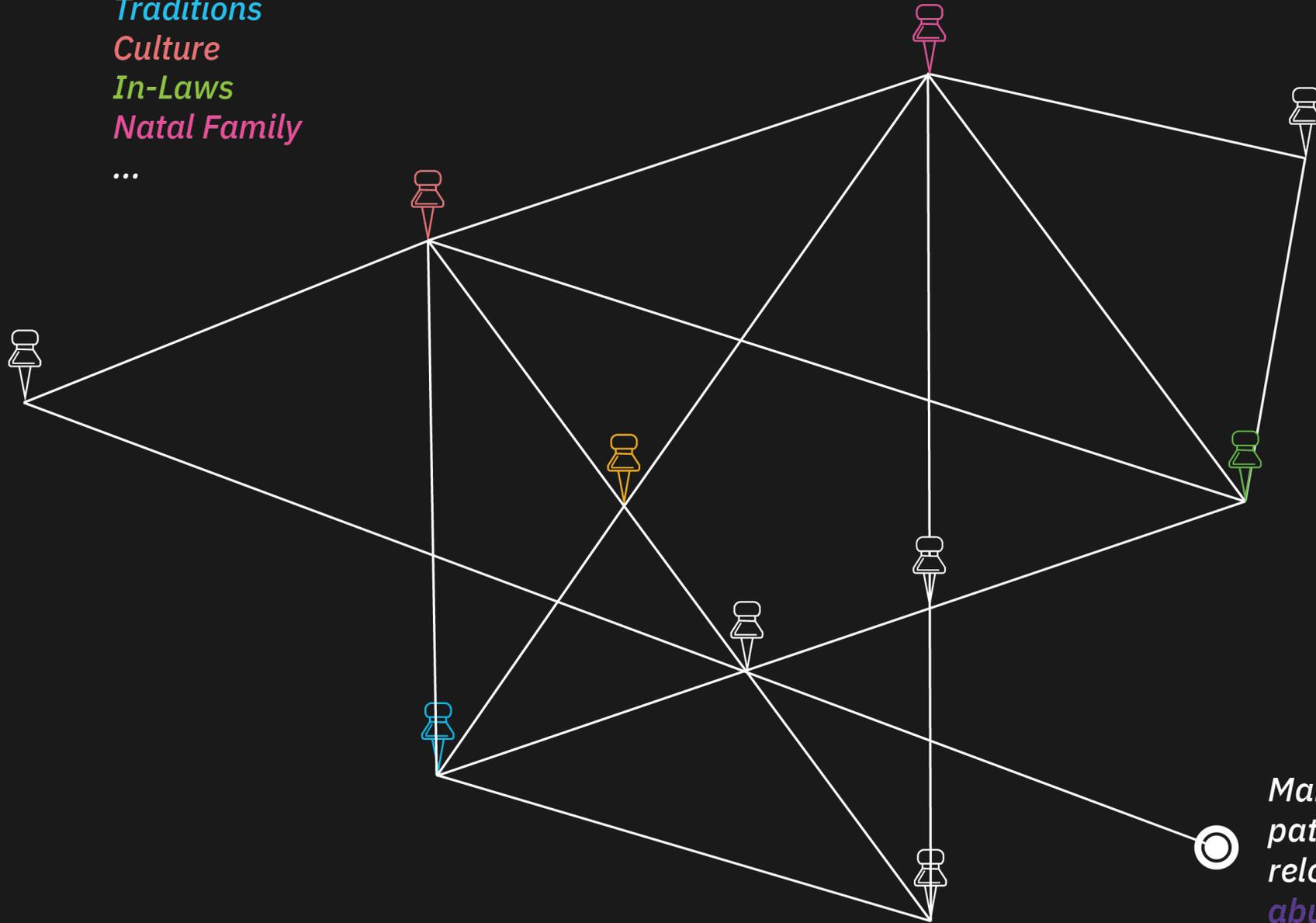
Marriage, Family & Gender Roles

Making women comply to patriarchal traditions like marital relocation is a form of abuse
abuse of her right to space & choice of habitat

|| Sunayna Waghmare's depiction of Indian women's intricate married lives, resulting in migration, intimate and spatial violence

Examining anti-female bias in India helps to explain how many social institutions are collaborators in invalidating women's experiences and preventing them from achieving their full potential. Across our interviews and FGDs, whether overtly or covertly, the two most relevant and important themes to have emerged that affect women's everyday lives were family and marriage. The relationship between the two functions through traditions, rituals, and beliefs. Although there are everyday acts of subversion, perceptions of both family and marriage need to be critiqued from the ground up if these institutions are to change. In India, marriages are inextricably linked to patriarchal traditions and rituals, as is the notion that women and family are co-dependent, making it harder to see that the familial space can be violent too.

2.1 Importance of marriage as an institution

The seminal report Towards Equality first published in 1974, gave a comprehensive overview of women's condition in India. Some of the themes outlined in this report still have resonance in our study. Towards Equality took a critical look at both marriage and family, expansively showing women's complicated relationship with both these institutions. Joint-family living systems, gender role socialisation, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law violence and lack of women's decision-making powers, contribute to keeping women dominated, and these issues continue to be the same even 45 years later.

Our research shows the several fronts where marriage and family can impede women's social growth as individuals and as a community. Women's relationship with marriage is replete in dichotomies as narrated by several women in the study. Men too have specific views around marriage and its importance to our lives today.

We asked both men and women to explain to us the importance of marriage, to which we received mixed responses. Older men explained:

> *"M: Is it important for her to get married?*
>
> *R6: Yes, absolutely. How long will she be on her own? It is important to get married.*
>
> *M: Why?*
>
> *R1: When she gets married, she will be considered as Lakshmi. And she can bring changes in a man's life.*
>
> *M: But what is the benefit for her?*
>
> *R6: She gets a family till the end of her life."*
>
> *– FGD 5*

A woman married early in her life, and now a mother described her relationship with marriage:

> *"I had initially declined marriage and my father too had accepted it. Then I thought that I did not want to add to the troubles that our family was already going through. The day before the matchmaker came to our house I thought, that someday, now or later,   I will have to throw myself in this inescapable chasm. Some get thrown soon, some can buy a little time (laughs)." – Chanda, 33, IDI 13*

Arfa, a survivor of ongoing domestic violence who did not have an immediate way out of her situation told us the importance of marriage for her:

> *"M: Why is marriage important?*
>
> *R: All men are not like my husband. One gets a good husband according to one's fate.*
>
> *M: You said, a man is important in a woman's life, why?*
>
> *R: You get respect in the society if you have a*

man in your life. I have seen people talking about women who may be doing the right kind of work, yet they talk rubbish about her just because she does not have a husband. But when you have a husband nobody dares to trouble you even though your husband is an alcoholic." – Arfa, 36, IDI 28

Reeti who faced natal family violence and had a late marriage clarified how marriage was significant in her life:

> *"[…] according to me marriage is very important, but we should not expect a lot from our life partner. If you think that only your husband will earn and keep your house running then you are thinking wrong, both must struggle equally. If he's earning, then saving that money is the job for a woman. So, by saving from that income, we can move forward to our future, so marriage is very important." – Reeti, 31, IDI 24*

Rabia who survived extreme physical and mental violence, an acid attack, eventually starting an NGO to help women like herself questioned the meaning of marriage:

> *"It has least importance in my life. What the elders say about marriage is wrong. Marriage is not important. Before marriage the two parties should meet and check whether they are compatible, if their thinking is matching. If it is not then you have to let it go. Marriage is not that important, people can spend their lives not married. In fact, that is best."*
>
> *– Rabia, 36, IDI 41*

The above five quotes make amply clear the ambiguity of marriage in people's lives, especially for women. Male participants in the study who were from older generations and most likely patriarchs of their households, were of the opinion that marriage is central to women and

they benefit from it. Men's responses also show that women who play out their gender roles, i.e. primarily a caregiver to the family, are deified and placed on a higher pedestal[8]. Older men compared married women to the Hindu goddess Lakshmi who is the goddess of fortune, showing that married women need to bring in fortune to their marital families. Women who can bring fortune are supposed to be deified, if not then they are not executing their duties in the correct manner. Older men believed, with marriage a woman becomes complete.

The inescapability of marriage is another factor that emerged in the study. Chanda had tried for a brief period to decline marriage proposals but finally gave in and married at the age of 18. This also indicates that her parents were pushing for her marriage since before she became an adult. Child marriage is a punishable offence in India but still a recurring phenomenon, since many women in our study had been married off early or as minors. It is also important to recognise women's agency to marry; in Chanda's case, she gave in perhaps to maintain family peace, a concept inextricably linked to women's actions. In the rest of her interview, Chanda reflected her dislike of marriage and the emotional upheaval it caused, raising questions as to why she was both disempowered and yet had agency at the same time, with her decision to marry.

Marriage as beneficial to women was seen in a different way by Arfa. For her, marriage added to a woman's honour even if her husband was violent. She echoed the views of several of the older men – married women were considered more respectable than unmarried women. Marriage and family, she believed, had given her the dignity that she desired, even if it came with violence and abuse. During the interview she narrated the kinds of violence she went through in her marriage yet ultimately, she also described how her fate was responsible for her situation. This is another common theme that women

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8 *An ad campaign against domestic violence showing bruised faces of several goddesses from Hindu mythology was hailed as significant in challenging deification and abuse of women. For more information visit:* https://www.huffpost.com/entry/abused-goddesses-campaign-domestic-violence-india_n_3880515

have expressed, a woman's fate is to tolerate humiliation and accept what is handed to her. For Arfa it was not an easy path to walk out of her situation: she had children; she believed that marriage meant security and she was also aware that what was happening to her was unjustified.

Reeti and Rabia expressed views slightly different from the others. While Reeti questioned the inequality in marriages, Rabia denied the importance of marriage as an institution. The former respondent married late but through an arrangement, something that the latter respondent didn't have the option to do since she was married at 13. Rabia, despite having faced immense challenges in her life, with her abusive marriage at the root of her problems, managed to denounce marriage itself. In this way, she set an example to help other women combat violence. Reeti faced natal family violence and decided to carry on working as a beautician despite her family's disapproval, which came in the form of abuse. She "chose" marriage as an escape from natal family violence and arranged her marriage with a man of whom her natal family members did not approve. She still remained within her caste and chose an endogamous marriage.

Both women were successful in more ways than one, primarily because they complicated the idea of marriage itself by taking a stand for it in one case and reproving it in the other. The women in the study have had diverse experiences of marriage with some experiencing benefits and others questioning whether it is beneficial in the long run. This finding raises the question as to whether marriage can be viewed without its connections with patriarchal beliefs or normative gender roles

2.2 Family and gender roles – a collaboration in marriage

Marriage is multifaceted and the debate about whether marriage can be helpful to women will have several outcomes; one is marriage's relationship with social norms. Family as an

institution with its own belief systems can be associated intimately to the institution of marriage. This belief transmission is not restricted to families, even community members, elders, all collaborate to impose a specific imagination of marriage. Women go through extensive changes in their lives due to marriage and a lot of these changes are piloted by families. Women are repeatedly told that they belong to their marital families and their prime role is to keep that family together in all possible ways. Sometimes along with giving information of normative gender roles families can give women a space to be themselves. However, many women reminisced about their lives before marriage, how it all changed, at times how their inner selves had to change, because of marriage. Women were specifically asked how they lived their lives before marriage, many of them spoke about how they had enough freedom to express themselves till a certain age.

Teju shared a time in her life when she was independent and didn't have many commitments. While she was talking about her life before marriage there was a nostalgic tone, she loved her life then. Married off at a young age, she felt that she lost out on a lot because of it, especially since she was not allowed to work after she moved to her marital home. Because Teju was younger and unmarried, she could choose to do the things she cared about one of which was working.

"M: You used to enjoy working there?

R: Yes. There were ladies working there and they had become friends. My shift timing was from 6 AM to 2 PM. After 2 PM I would go home and after 15 days the shift timing would change. After coming back home I didn't have to do any household work as my mother used to do the house chores. So I just had to go to the job and enjoy the rest of the day."

– Teju, 42, IDI 11

Listening to the stories of life before marriage, it was clear that marriage had brought immense change in women's lives.

"M: Then what were you doing at home?

R: We used to play around the whole day, no cooking, we used to go to the garden then. No children now like going to the gardens, but before we used to go around the whole day, there were no restrictions and no harassment, I used to roam the whole day with my friends and come back home slowly at curfew time. My mother used to sit with a cane in her hand, she was strict, but she loved me a lot."

– Sarala, 62, IDI 29

Many women in the study reported feeling unhappy leaving their space of security, their natal homes. We have also seen that families of unmarried women can perpetuate negative bias by encouraging normative expectations. Nayna lived with an abusive brother and a younger sister. In the interview, she repeatedly

Economic violence 27
Physical violence 32
Psychological violence 34
Emotional violence 31
Epistemic & Linguistic violence 15
Sexual violence 7
Caste based violence 5
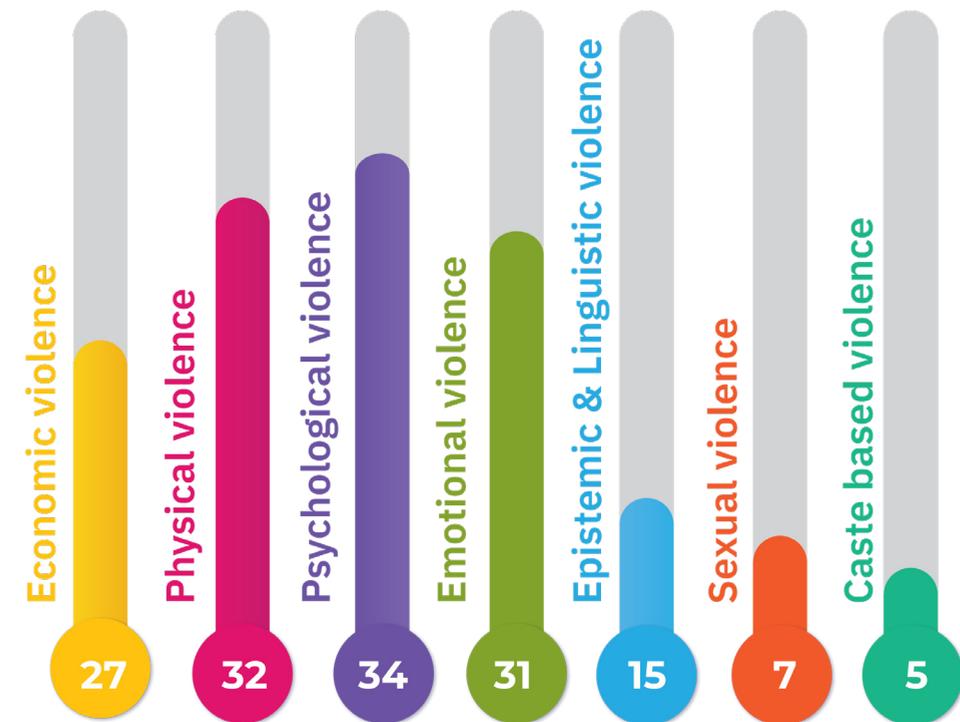
Types of violence & instances shared (n=42)

|| The above infographic shows seven most recurring types of violence against women from our data. We can see here the number of instances women respondents have shared about facing such form of violence.

mentioned how before the age of 18 her mother and brother wanted to marry her off. She is restricted to her home and not allowed to work. Finding an alternative living arrangement would have helped both her and her sister, but parental pressure to conform to values and roles for younger women forced the normative way of life upon them. The quote below shows how mothers may have conversations with daughters but may not give them the agency they seek.

"My mother has told me very clearly that if I do anything wrong, like having a boyfriend, then she will not ask me, she will get me married somewhere else. She has alerted both us sisters. So love marriage scene cannot happen." – Nayna, 18, IDI 15

"After periods, parents do say, now she has grown, she has become a woman from a girl. Some girls get it early; some get it late. But we can consider that when we become 18 years then we become women, not from getting periods. The thinking of the family is also problematic. They say don't wear clothes like this, like that, cover head with dupatta (stole). Don't sit in front of this person, that person..." – Rabia, 36, IDI 41

Rabia did not think that starting to have periods was the definitive moment in the evolution from a girl to a woman, but she clarified how many parents control young women's actions once they hit puberty. Adulthood, it seems, came with a whole lot of rules and regulations, mostly around women's sexuality and desires. Nayna explained that even if she chose a partner whom she desired, her marriage would probably be fixed somewhere else. Rabia's explanation illustrates how parents exercised control over young women's lives.

The burden of marriage, societal and parental expectations together normalise stereotypical gender roles for women, so that many women

accept this progression of life. For Soni, her parents' decision on whom she should marry was final, she shared that if anything went wrong in the marriage, she would blame her destiny, not her parents, and not societal expectations. On the one hand parents generally tended to look for a "good match" for their daughters, but narratives of some women also showed that parents rushed to marry their daughters because of age-related norms and the patriarchal belief that daughters do not belong to the natal family. Shruti is a young woman who resisted marriage but has overheard elders in her home wanting to rid themselves of her by marrying her off. This show of aversion to marriage was clearly stressful and disheartening and such reactions may lead to hasty decisions by young women as well as by their parents and family members.

"M: When you came to know about the change that was about to take place in your life, how did you feel about it?

R: I trusted my parents. They gave birth to me, so they will have good intentions when it comes to getting me married. Rest all depends on fate. If something goes wrong, then it is our fate. Parents look for 10 options before they shortlist even one, they will always look for the best option." – Soni, 40, IDI 10

"My grandfather says girls are old now, just arrange their marriage and get rid of them. I am just 22 years old..." – Shruti, 22, IDI 37

By contrast, Josie, who did not have parental pressure to marry, ended up experiencing societal pressure much more seriously. Living with someone because of companionship is only possible through marriage in Indian society. Josie said she married much later than most women around her and it was because she wanted children, for which she had to find a partner and marry. In her late twenties childbearing became a concern which led to her marriage, then her two children, finally her

separation because of extreme physical and mental abuse. Josie's situation leads to the question as to whether agency to seek marriage, within the context of stereotypical family values and patriarchies which define marriage can be said to be true agency?

"M: What were the situations that led you to getting married?

R: Normal situations like pressure from family. It was not like I had to get married. My parents were a little fine with it. They were broadminded, not very but little. It was not like I had to get married or they will kick me out of the house. It was not that kind of situation. But then after a certain age you also feel something." – Josie, 50, IDI 22

The women in this study were changed by marriage as a consequence of codified rules and practices. Housework is closely related to a woman's normative gender role, she is expected to do work both in her natal and marital families. Teju's response showed that when in the natal home women may not need to do the rigorous domestic chores, her mother would look after her so that she could go for work outside. Once married, however, the situation changed and whether she worked outside of her home or not, Teju was expected to do everything in relation to the house.

"After marriage, you are stressed because of your husband, your kids, and your house responsibilities. I always advise all the girls to never marry and if they get married they should not leave their jobs because if you have financial independence, you don't have to beg for money from your husband. I would say don't get married as there are so many problems after marriage that it is better not to get married at all." – Teju, 42, IDI 11

"M: Inside your mind, what changed, did

you think that you grew up? Do you think something happened?

R: Yes, my age changed, my lifestyle changed, my pattern of living has changed completely. In my house I never washed clothes, but here I have to do everything. I have to wake up early as I have to fill water. Everyone says that I am fat, before marriage I was not fat, I was medium, I was not too fat. Due to lack of sleep, my weight is gaining and my whole structure has spoilt. I don't have time to spend on myself. (voice shaking) All of them say you can go for walks, but there is no time for that! I have to wash clothes; I have to look after my children. He (husband) used to go for walk to the park, and as soon as he returns, I have to keep his clothes ready." – Yamini, 39, Pilot

"Now see, if you are not married you will not be able to progress, and how long can girls stay single anyway? And inside desires are also there, we all have "energies", but the boy also has to be on the same page. If we fall sick then he should help, he should be able to handle things fast. So girls should give extra importance to their career and education. It is women who give birth, women who go for jobs, women who do housework." – Sarita, 25, IDI 5

When fixed gender roles are repeated and fitted into everyday mundane activities, they become internalised. A married woman's focus has to be on her family, her children and her home. Yamini shared how she changed completely because of three specific things related to marriage –chores, children and husband. She did not have time to take care of herself, she had to give all her attention and care towards others. As Teju said, there is a lot of stress associated with marriage that that unmarried people don't tend to know about. To her, the only escape from the stress was to have financial independence. But even

Certificate of Marriage

Hereby binding a union of two people in the eyes of the state, society, and all those that have been eagerly awaiting this piece of paper and accompanying ceremony for reasons unjustified.

Thus begin the primary duties of a woman's life~ of caregiving and child-rearing. She now belongs to the family whose surname she will take, and will reside with them for the rest of her life fulfilling any and all responsibilities asked of her.

She will adjust to this new life and role immediately with little to no support, for a woman's fate is to tolerate and accept whatever is handed to her. In return she will receive the respect of those around her, only lasting for as long as she continues to fulfil this ordeal that has been imposed upon her.

Congratulations!

|| A parodic visual of 'certificate of marriage' informed by responses of some women respondents. The words used here are all inspired from lives of many of the women we interviewed, to show how for some, the uncritical and ritualised reproduction of marriage can be like signing away our life's rights.

working women have to take care of their homes. Sarita reflected on this issue – "it is women who do everything, they work, they do childcare, as well as upholding the family honour". Multiple roles make women susceptible to mental as well as physical ill health, risking their wellbeing.

2.3 Marriage and family contributing to GBV

This study aims to increase understanding of GBV so that effective change can be brought about. In India, many women's problems are related to marriage and its associations. Our data shows that family and marriage are closely allied to maintain and further prescriptive gender roles. In our everyday lives, control of those two institutions happens through repetition of patriarchal traditions and belief systems. Conformity to rituals helps propagate negative biases that may lead to more violence. We encountered several types of violence women face because of marriage, showing us that in India, marriage can frequently be risky for women.

Some younger women from our study showed apathy towards marriage, challenging the very centrality of marriage in a woman's life. 18-year-old Nayna's response to whether she is interested in marriage or not is illuminating. Even though Nayna recognised that marriage was not without risk, her understanding was that she would eventually have to marry. Her mother's difficult marriage would not necessarily discourage Nayna from marrying; even if it did, familial and societal pressures from childhood could make her conform to marriage eventually.

> *"[…] I have seen my mom being married, but what did she get? She didn't get anything, and she just had to hear abuses from people. Even the person who she married is not there anymore. It is not actually a long-term relationship. It is just that we have learnt from our childhood that we have to get married, so I will get married."*
> *– Nayna, 18, IDI 15*

Sujata, a mother of two girls, worried about what would happen if her daughters did not marry and feared that she would not be able to support them all their lives if they remained unmarried. Even though she worried about their marriage, she was also the person who was letting her daughters study and make a life for themselves. Although she believed marriage to be an important event in a woman's life, she also acknowledged that her early marriage had changed her life altogether, and had limited her opportunities. The complexity of marriage depends on various factors such as culture, values, and traditions and the findings suggest that it is very difficult for Indian women to escape the pressure of marriage. Mothers like Sujata can only prevent the pressure for a while, after a particular age she believed that her daughters should marry for company. We wish to highlight that young women like Nayna or Sujata's daughters find no support to avoid marriage even if they wish to.

> *"R: My daughters say that they will not get married, I keep saying that they have to get married, how they will live their whole life like that. How long can I support them?*
>
> *M: They can take care of themselves. Suppose they say that they will study and stand on their own feet? They are doing B. Ed., MBA…*
>
> *R: There are many proposals coming for them, but I say no, I say that they want to study. They should get chance to study. What I could not do in life, they should do, what is their fault? Do they not have the right? Our dreams have died…" – Sujata, 43, IDI 39*

Risks associated with marriage identified in the study include the inability to maintain self-care, the dangers of refusal of proposals, violence

and oppression within marriage and receiving ill treatment after the death of a spouse. Clearly, the functioning of the family institution is closely tied to marriage, and together these can result in different types of violence against women. Women from our study had not only gone through physical, psychological and sexual abuse, but there were some types of culture-specific violence that must also be acknowledged.

2.3.1   Love and arranged Marriages

Our data shows endogamy is practised by "arranging" for proposals, and exogamy finds expression in what colloquially people call "love marriage," both are prevalent but only one is widely seen as more acceptable. Even though exogamous marriages can be between people of the same caste/religious groups this was not something that we found evidence for in our data.

Endogamy is not only practised but it is also preached, marrying within one's community is an order that comes directly from elders and other eminent persons of the community. 60-year old Madhu was married at the age of 7, which we can assume was arranged by her parents. When asked if she would accept love marriages she replied:

> *M: Is love marriage allowed in your family or in your native village in U.P.?*
>
> *R: It happens a lot.*
>
> *M: If your granddaughter says that she wants to do love marriage, will you allow her?*
>
> *R: No, we will get insulted. We will see the boy, the family, and then decide."*
>
> *– Madhu, 60, IDI 14*

Women, like Madhu, who go through forced marriages, may either have empathy with the desire of women to have agency in their decisions about marriage and dismiss the

importance of "arrangements" in marriage, or they may continue to hold the belief that parents and elders know best for their daughters, emphasising intra-community marriage as ideal. Endogamy was widely viewed as the most desirable form of marriage among our respondents, and standing up against this system may mean being penalised. Respondent Pia's husband explained to her why it is unacceptable when a girl marries outside her community:

> *"M: And son? Can he get married to a person of another community?*
>
> *R: Yes*
>
> *M: What does that mean?*
>
> *R: He says that the girl is coming to our community. My elder son is 22, but he does not have a girlfriend." – Pia, 42, IDI 23*

For men, marrying outside of their community may not be as unacceptable as it is for women. Women lose their community affiliation if they partake in exogamous marriages, while men marrying women outside of their communities are sometimes lauded for inducting another person in to the community. A clear difference of one losing a community, and one gaining, shows the imbalance between genders in marriage. For women, love marriage may mean that they have a certain amount of choice in the matter of partner selection. However, if the marriage turns abusive, sometimes this can lead to self-blame, with GBV being seen as a result of the women's own decision, as can be seen in the following extract:

> *"R: […] Earlier everybody used to love me a lot and today they all cry looking at my condition because I chose this husband for myself, if I had listened to them, I would have been happier.*
>
> *M: Do you really think so?*

> *R: Yes. We are a big family and they would have chosen a better partner for me."*
>
> *– Arfa, 36, IDI 28*

Accepting an arranged marriage thus appeared to be a double-edged sword for our participants. Although the arrangement of marriage illustrates an intergenerational and gendered power imbalance against women, the arrangement may mitigate some of the blame that is often placed on women for GBV within the marriage. When both the inevitability of marriage and finding a partner who is abusive becomes reality, women require support and advice from friends and families to help them understand their situation and decide their next steps – accessing this support may sometimes be easier for women who adhered to social norms. Losing the support of a parent can be devastating for women, a fear that makes them accept their parents' wishes and demands.

> *"In arranged we don't love; our parents arrange when they like a boy. If the boy is good or bad, their problem. Say I get into a love marriage, or elope, he leaves me, hurts me, where will we go? We will not have any support. We eloped, so whether our parents will support us or not, we cannot say. If our parents don't agree then who will we go to? We don't have anyone then to share things with. So we will do as our parents decide."*
>
> *– Sana, 19, IDI 34*

Some couples who actively choose their partners are going against the caste-system that is still prevalent in India. Honour killings take place in India, mostly in rural areas (Dhar, 2013) even though there are Supreme Court judgements that rule against it, as in the Shakti Vahini case[9]. Implementation of guidelines set by the court has not been followed through by any of the States which are in fact responsible for at-risk couples. Inter-faith and inter-caste marriages are condemned by communities and not

promoted by governments. Financial incentives by the State Government of Maharashtra to help promote inter-caste marriages (referred to earlier) are only likely to be effective if communities are made aware of the dangers of forced endogamous marriage. Asha had an inter-caste love marriage, yet she was unhappy with her decision to marry at an early age (16 years) because her husband ultimately fell in love with another woman, she explained during the interview. Before abandonment she was also very much abused by her marital family and continues to face discrimination because of her son's disability.

> *"M: When did you get married?*
>
> *R: I was 16 years when I got married.*
>
> *I did love marriage. I was interested in love marriage that time (laughing). It just happened with me, what to say.*
>
> *M: Was there any problem from your family? Was he from the same community?*
>
> *R: He is also Marathi, but from a different caste.*
>
> *M: Was there any dowry when you got married?*
>
> *R: No, I got Rs.5000 from the court, I got 5 vessels from court.*
>
> *M: That is for inter-caste marriage?*
>
> *R: Yes."*
>
> *"[…] I used to go to my mother-in-law's house. She also never kept me, she would say, that she never asked us to do anything, that we have to do whatever needs to be done ourselves. My mother-in-law would say that she didn't ask both of us to marry, so why should she help. And even I cannot tell her anything as we did a love marriage."*
>
> *– Asha, 50, IDI 18*

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9 *For more information on the March 2018 judgement please refer to* https://sci.gov.in/ supremecourt/2010/18233/18233_2010_Judgement_27-Mar-2018.pdf. *For specific guidelines set by the Supreme Court read pages 47 to 54 of the document.*

Education may not be the only way to change the caste system, state action could also lead to change. Narzary and Ladusingh in their article "Discovering the Saga of Inter-caste Marriage in India" have analysed from the large-scale Indian Human Development Survey (2011-2012) data to show that inter-caste marriages are most prevalent in the North-Eastern region (11.6%), and least likely to take place in Central regions in India (1.8%) where caste stratification is most prominent. (Narzary & Ladusingh, 2019) NCRB data for 2017 shows 16 honour killings in the state of Maharashtra alone, while the national total was 92. Mumbai city did not report any such crimes, although that does not mean that discrimination in urban spaces do not exist. (NCRB, 2019) Men are supposed to be upholders of honour of their community by keeping control of "their women," which is done through restricting people's choice. When such structures are unable to keep women confined, violence is used against them.

2.3.2   Caste-based violence

Some women shared that they had inter-caste marriages and were at the receiving end of much abuse – difficulties which were unique to their situation. If physical, psychological and sexual abuse is the effect of gender bias and its relation to power, caste-based violence is a manifestation of GBV within hierarchical caste divisions. It is essential therefore to include this type of violence within the purview of domestic violence since many women reported violence against them specifically because they were of a different (lower or even upper) caste from their marital families. Since these verbal and sometimes physical/psychological abuses are made to make women feel bad about marrying outside of their caste, it becomes a clear violation of women's agency.

"[...] My mother-in-law used to consider me so low—I used to do the cooking, for the first month it was not up to their taste, but then I learned how to cook according to their taste. But whenever I used to cook, she would throw it away. She used to cook separately for herself. I would tell her, things are so expensive these days, how can we afford two vegetables, two curries? She would say, this is how I am going to be, if this works for you stay or else you can leave, you do not cook well at all, I am not liking it! Then I would tell her, you make according to your taste and we all will eat that because cooking two separate dishes increases the expense. She did not listen to me. Then she would tell my husband things to incite fights, your wife says this and that to me. And my husband would fight with me, even hit me. I got back pain because of that, he used to kick me or whatever used to come in his hands he used to throw at me. Now I am not able to sit for a long time in the same posture. Even my mother-in-law troubles me a lot, even though I think and work for them endlessly. This is their house, nothing is mine...

M: Did you have a social marriage?

R: No not at all. We did not have such ability. We had financial problem.

M: Does she still bother you?

R: Yes, even today she tells me, if a girl from our caste had married my son she would have got so many things, you have not given anything. I tell her, I may not have done anything, but I am taking care of you now, your caste women would not have done so much for you." – Komal, 43, IDI 6

In our interview with Komal we encountered several kinds of violence faced by her

specifically because of her lower caste. She married at 22 and chose her partner who was from a different faith and higher caste. She also belonged to a low-income family therefore was unable to provide much of the expected dowry to her upper caste marital family. Komal explained that she had executed all the duties expected of her but was still abused regularly for belonging to a different caste. Here we can see that in women's lives it is not only gender roles that affect– other intersections matter in understanding the kind of violence they face. Executing her wifely duties Komal believed she would be accepted into her marital home, although not only was she treated like an outsider, she was also permanently given a secondary position within the family hierarchy, all because she belonged to a lower caste, and dared to marry someone beyond her social location.

Marital families are known to be violent towards daughters-in-law who go to their families by choice, especially if they are from a different caste. Like marital families, natal families also perpetuate caste-related violence on women by imposing patriarchal rules that are caste-specific. Sayli explains the rules that she had to abide by, which were not necessarily unique to her, but which were intensified with the caste-angle added to them.

"M: When did the problems in your family start?

R: From the beginning our caste is like that, they don't let girls out, don't let us speak to other caste people [...] In my caste people only think like that. But I am educated, and I know about things, so my thinking is different. Others think that I am spoilt, they don't understand, if I tell two words, they can't tolerate it. Even if I go to meet my friend, they

matrimonials

|| Satirical portrayal of a generic caste-based matrimonial advertisement found in almost all leading newspapers in India.

say, why do you want to go there, even small little things they have problems with!

M: Do you have a mobile phone?

R: No, I had bought one phone for my sister doing some odd jobs, but my family says, why do you want to use the phone, do you want to talk to people of other caste?"
– Sayli, 23, IDI 4

Caste-prevalence is not limited to restrictions on marriage, as Sayli explained, her mobility was restrained because her family did not want her to mingle with people of other castes. Restriction on higher education, jobs, mobility, choice all are justified through caste.

> *"M: What is different in your caste?*
>
> *R: Like we should not study much, should do housework, know how to wash vessel, because in future what will we get by studying, we will have to do this itself when we grow older. That's not necessary, we can have our own life as well. They are torturing me so much, but I want to study."*
> *– Shruti, 22, IDI 37*

Caste is integral to our study, out of the 42 women we interviewed 11 women belonged to Hindu lower castes out of whom 7 spoke about caste and violence in their lives. Government policies should also aim to change the perspectives of families and communities about caste, rather than just offering protection to runaway couples.[10] Reducing caste-specific forms of GBV would require change at family and community levels.

2.3.3 Migration related violence

One among many challenges women face due to marriage is the age-old tradition of leaving her birthplace or natal family and moving to the house of her husband, her marital home. Because of this move there are several problems she must face, this also puts her at risk of marital family violence since women may not have necessary support systems in place in their new places of habitation. As identified in one previous study, "Not all women move far, but the majority are moving far enough to restrict social contact and communication with their birth families." (Fulford, 2015, p. 12) Men's migration rates are only 15% as compared to "three quarters of

women older than 21" who all migrate due to marriage. (p. 2)

Married women in the study had either been forced to move, or had done so willingly, from their natal homes to their marital homes. Some lived without the extended families, some lived with them. Complaints about living in a joint family setup came from many women, who wished they could live separately with their husbands and children to avoid in-law conflict.

Migration to the husband's family is acceptable as the norm as women are not supposed to be kept in the natal home for long, they are seen as only belonging to their (eventual) marital families. Teju summarised problems with migration, saying that violence happens because the daughter-in-law had adjustment issues in her new marital family, indicating young brides' vulnerable position. She reasoned that most problems arose because husbands had to choose between mother and wife. Fighting between women of the household is often cited as a reason for discord post-marriage but little attention is given to the fact that many new brides experience problems due to a shift in location and even culture. Women's adjustment and tolerance are appreciated while their desires of having their own homes are disregarded.

> *"M: You feel that if you and your husband lived without your in-laws, life would have been different?*
>
> *R: Yes, many times I think like that. Wish I had my own house, I could have lived according to my desires, would have done a job even!*
>
> *M: Where is the problem then according to you?*
>
> *R: Problem is in marriage. Because when you are in love it is okay but when you get married the problems start. What happens is,*

> *the girl lives in her parent's house and the boy lives in his parent's house, they meet outside. When the girl leaves her house and comes to stay with the boy, the boy has to listen to both his mother and his wife, he has to listen more to what his mother says because he knows that if he pampers his wife more she will become uncontrollable later and won't listen to him at all."*
> *– Teju, 42, IDI 11*

The adjustment argument, that people need to find partners according to their socio-cultural location, otherwise there will be conflict of interest, can be seen from a different perspective too. In arranged marriages that are endogamous, if brides have adjustment issues, can they move out of their in-laws' place because they should have more marital as well as natal family support? None of the women in this study reported that they felt they had the agency to do so, and most were unable to even voice their opinions. Chanda explained that not only was it impossible for women to choose where they live, but also that after marriage their decisions were vetoed and their parents' wishes were ignored.

> *"I resisted going and living with my in-laws'. My parents also agreed to what I said. However, beyond mine or my family's knowledge, my in-laws arrived with full preparation and got me married and whisked me away. I had to go and live with them, I did not have an option. I was unable to say anything and right after the wedding we shifted to Bombay. Here the environment is completely different."*
> *– Chanda, 33, IDI 13*

Marriage also leads to relocation from rural areas to metropolitan cities; women in our study had been forced to accept this difficult move without

any support structures or help. Married in the village, such a move can be quite unnerving for women because of language and culture difference (Lal, 2019). Some husbands may take interest in teaching their wives about the new place of habitation, while others simply expect their wives to "adjust". This depends in large part on how in-laws perceive the new bride and whether she is viewed as compliant,

> *"M: How did you like Mumbai?*
>
> *R: Not nice at all, there was just jhoparpatti (shacks in slums) all around, and during rainy season it would get horrible. I would not go to the toilet for 2-3 days. My mother is from Punjab, I liked Punjab and when I came here, I was told that I cannot go out of the house, have to wear ghunghat (covering head and or face with saree as a ritual for married women) all the time, not talk so much [...]"*
> *– Gauri, 45, IDI 30*

Having to adjust within families is a basic idea propagated through the institution of marriage. Many women are not only forcefully married, they are also made to leave every identity marker of their pre-married life including the homes they grew up in. Making women comply with patriarchal traditions such as this, can be construed as a form of abuse since it denies rights and choice. State action is necessary to help women actively choose where they wish to live both before and after marriage.

> *"M: What if there is a rule from the government that says men will have to live with their in-laws?*
>
> *R: It will be so nice, then we can stay with our family, no tension! Then I would not think that I should have been a boy."*
> *– Sana, 19, IDI 34*

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10 *The Hindu published an article in February 2019 about a raid by Delhi Police and Delhi Commission for Women on an illegal NGO named 'Love Commandos' who claim to give safe spaces to runaway inter-caste couples. They were blackmailing the young couples instead of helping them find a secure place to cohabit. To read the article please refer to this link: https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/six-couples-in-search-of-a-safe-home-in-delhi/article26358478.ece*

2.3.4 Dowry

A more common form of patriarchal tradition is dowry or money given by a bride's family to the groom's family in return for the marriage.

Indian law defines it as "any property or valuable security given or agreed to be given either directly or indirectly:
a. by one party to a marriage to the other party to the marriage; or
b. by the parents of either party to a marriage or by any other person, to either party to the marriage or to any other person; at or before or any time after the marriage in connection with the marriage of said parties but does not include dower or mahr in the case of persons to whom the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) applies." Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961

The phenomenon of dowry is widely practised in Indian marriages despite the Indian government having put in place anti-dowry laws (Banerjee, 2013). Many women have been harassed through dowry demands, sometimes resulting in deaths. Indian National Crime Record Bureau data shows that in the State of Maharashtra in 2016, there were 248 incidences of crimes related to dowry, with a national total of 7621. The practice of dowry was a lived reality for most women in our study.

> *"M: If she gets married in your society, you will have to give a lot of dowry?*
>
> *R: Yes, six to seven lakhs.*
>
> *M: Was it like that during your time too?*
>
> *R: No. During my time if we gave two or four hundred it was a big thing. Nowadays people spend 10-12 lakh and get their children married. They take so much loan. […] We did*

> *not have much problem as we had four sons. But if people don't give dowry, they torture the girl, they even burn her alive."*
> *– Madhu, 60, IDI 14*

Coercion of brides' families becomes easy because it is a historically sanctioned patriarchal tradition, also because this helps in keeping the daughters-in-law under control and constant harassment. Still, natal families go out of their way to gather the money and resources to comply to the demands of the bride's in-laws. Not asking directly for dowry, rather covertly suggesting jewellery or other "gifts" continue the tradition of dowry in clandestine ways, continuing to plague women of diverse backgrounds.

> *"M: Was there any demand from your in-laws?*
>
> *R: They had asked my father to give whatever they wished to give to their daughter. My father gave me jewellery. In Maharashtrian's, we give jewellery to the girl when she gets married and so my father also gave me mangalsutra (necklace–mark of marriage on women) and bangles and all.*
>
> *M: Do you remember any incident where she was unkind to you?*
>
> *R: She says that I have hardly got any dowry and yet I show attitude. She tells me, you should tell your father to give you something more." – Teju, 42, IDI 13*

> *"M: […] was there dowry?*
>
> *R: They had not demanded anything before the marriage, but exactly on the day of the marriage at the ceremony hall they asked for a Maruti car. How could anyone accept this demand on the spot! If you want something*

> *then ask for it earlier..." – Chanda, 33, IDI 13*

> *"[…] they (parents) said that he (husband) has lot of money, and the family is good, and he said he does not want dowry, which is the main reason why I chose him. Otherwise I would have married in my native place, there they ask for even minimum dowry […] Before marriage they had said they don't want dowry or anything, and nick of the moment his uncle said they want dowry. They didn't compel us, but he asked. My parents gave Rs. 1 lakh and 50 pavun (measure) of gold to support me."*
>
> *– Yamini, 39, Pilot*

All the above quotes show the normalisation of exchanging material gifts or money in the name of marriage. Even when women receive gifts from families, they may not have access to those gifts. For Chanda, the dowry demand of a car meant the in-laws would be using the "gift" that the bride brought with her. Money and jewellery are the most common exchanges but demands from in-laws often increase with time, including on the day of the marriage, parents of the bride may be compelled to give in to demands in order to close the wedding ceremony successfully. Women are considered a burden not only by their natal families but also by marital families who seek to balance out the cost of the wedding in the dowry exchange. It is likely that treating women as a burden in this way increases the risk of GBV by devaluing women in the context of marriage.

Education
Knowledge
Awareness
Well-being

Invalidating Women's Experiences

|| What are the various ways women feel invalidated?

We found women are isolated and confined within their gender roles throughout their life cycles. Education, Knowledge, Awareness and Wellbeing are still luxuries that our women respondents have not been able to afford.

Throughout our study one crucial idea connecting all other themes was the invalidation of women's experiences. It was seen in our data that women's own knowledge, experiences, and perspectives were under-valued relative to men's as a result of socialisation into prescribed gender roles and punishment of transgressive acts. Our data shows invalidation happening in various ways; beginning with denial of women's abilities, not letting women have any structural support, manifesting throughout their lives. This form of gender bias was tied to increased risks for GBV by minimising women's access to various resources that could support their autonomy – for example, education, justice, and financial independence.

3.1 Negation of women's experiences and potential

Women are often prevented from accessing work or education due to families' or communities' pressure to conform to the specified gender role. Most women live in the domestic sphere; very early on they are made to understand the problem of role transgression. While men are given opportunities to succeed, women are not given the same, mainly because of negative gender bias. Keeping women restricted to households also means they are forced to confront domestic violence (both covert and overt), which people may not even see, or read as violence. Silencing women's narratives - what they have to say or what they believe in - also contributes to everyday invalidation of women. Women's agency is further neglected by disallowing them to be purposeful outside of the domestic space.

3.1.1 Education, work, mobility & transgression – women navigating restrictions

"M: Can you share with us some of the dreams and desires that you had?

R: I wanted to study further and work eventually, but I always took a little time to learn well, so after 12th I felt that I will not be able to study further. I had lost courage and confidence. I gave up my education and then got married.

M: Could you afford private tuitions?

R: I could do everything. However, the thought to pursue further education did not strike me. I wondered about what purpose education can have in my life." – Chanda, 33, IDI 13

Most apparent in this narrative is the subtle way in which negative gender bias enabled violence in young girls' lives. When talking about her childhood, Chanda indicated that since she did not do well in her studies, her family had not encouraged or helped her to continue with her education. Rather, they presented marriage as an option instead of higher education, something she accepted because she saw it as inevitable since she was a woman.

Amongst our 42 respondents, only four women had completed their bachelor's degree and only six had completed schooling. Like Chanda, other women showed the restrictions they faced and the ways in which they were prevented from speaking up against injustice and discrimination.

"[...] I studied in a municipal school. I did not think anything about my future. [...] The problem is only with me. Regarding women he (her husband) has the impression that women are machines for producing children. No respect at home. Until now they have not included me in the ration card. It shows their (in-laws) intentions – marry a woman, produce children and then leave them. It should not be like this. Daughter-in-law is a family member also. I don't even have a voting card, imagine that!"

– Kavita, 32, IDI 19

Married at 16 years, Kavita explained how she was considered inconsequential by her marital family. Ration card and voter ID are both integral domiciliary documents, to have access to subsidised food, grains and ration; here we find that women are not just second-class citizens, they sometimes do not have any identity in the eyes of the very state they belong to. Sometimes the lack of identity (through identification) may mean that the woman will be unable to access schemes and programmes placed for her benefit. Not being considered an active and complete citizen would mean that state-sponsored help becomes inaccessible. A government-funded scheme known as Ayushman Bharat giving health insurance to rural and urban poor has been lauded for its intention. To avail any of the sub-schemes, however, people need to be on the Government's database [11]. Vulnerable women like Kavita who are not officially recognised as citizens of their State or even as members of their own families are unable to access schemes such as this. This finding suggests that empowerment-based schemes, educational and, health programmes need to address barriers to the recognition of women's citizenship and agency. They also need to address patriarchal traditions that prevent women making choices about such programmes independently of the family.

"I was not interested in studies; I didn't like to go to school. All my sisters are well educated but I didn't study much. And there used to be a lot of quarrels in the house due to financial problems and I never saw anything progressive about my life. Hence I was not interested in studies, because in our home, girls were not allowed to go out for long. They were supposed to stay at home. So I thought what is the use of studying? If I study but I am not allowed to work, then my future is going to get spoilt anyway. [...] He (father) never realized, that

so what if I'm a girl? He never bothered to recognize my talent and support me in moving forward." – Reeti, 31, IDI 24

Reeti's experience illustrates that many women who feel there is no possibility of a future that includes earning and living independently, they themselves choose a life that has been prescribed for them. Even before women consider whether to marry or do something else, patriarchal rituals are performed to bind them to their gender roles.

"M: What is the difference between when a girl gets married before periods or after?

R: If the girl gets married before maturity then there are 10-15 people to perform all the rituals and be lucky to do the kanyadaan. People in the house do not even drink water or have food before the ritual is completed. Generally, in our place marriages are performed in the night, so it is only after the ceremony is over they drink water and have meals." – Soni, 40, IDI 10

Kanyadaan is the Hindu ritual of literally handing over the bride to the groom's family. Soni explained that pre-pubescent girls are fixed to be married because those rituals performed in such marriages bring luck not to the girl but to the people performing the ritual. Once the ritual is complete the girl becomes the "other" as she now is related to her marital family only. Generally it is male family members who perform this ceremony in Hindu weddings – a ceremony often criticised now, is still widely practised[12]. Not only rituals of marriage, ritualistic encouragement to women for taking up one of the identities, of a daughter, wife, mother, makes it difficult for them from having a life-plan besides the one handed out to them. (Kakar, 1981)

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[11] *Ayushman Bharat is specifically targeted at families who are deprived on the basis of living conditions, occupational categories and income range, based on the Socio-Economic Caste Census database. One of the critiques of this scheme by Jean Drèze, an eminent scholar and professor is that it proposes to strengthen healthcare infrastructure with only focusing on insurance coverage and not on other sectors of human development. https://thewire.in/health/ayushman-bharat-trivialises-indias-quest-for-universal-health-care*

[12] *Some Indian websites promote this ritual as something special between daughters and their fathers, who are primary in this ritual. Due to commercialisation and globalisation of wedding ceremonies and to some extent Bollywood film industry, this ritual has become a part of all Hindu weddings. Read for more info (Kapur, J. (2009). An "Arranged Love" Marriage: India's Neoliberal Turn and the Bollywood Wedding Culture Industry. Communication, Culture & Critique).*

Other narratives have also emerged that challenges this particular tradition of "bride giving" by younger women in newsmedia. See article: https://www.huffingtonpost.in/urvashi-prasad/i-said-no-to-kanyadaan-and-all-hell-broke-loose_a_21450201/

M: Can female members work outside and support with money?

R1: In our community only male member can earn, females don't earn.

M: Why?

R1: It is like that from the beginning, according to our tradition females don't go for work outside.

M: What will happen if females go for work?

R1: They say that nose will be cut (naak kat jayega, lose respect). And others will keep taunting the father.

M: What will they say?

R7: They will say, you are eating your wife's earning, you are sending women out for work, all that." – FGD 4

Young men from our fourth FGD (from lower middle income households) expressed the belief that women's rightful space was within the home. Women are told to think about family and children above anything else, and rituals and traditions are put in place to ensure their effective 'handcuffing'. Women's "value" becomes entangled with their "productivity" within the family; they are supposed to work at home while husbands earn and maintain the family and men's responses indicated that any wavering from this structure would lead to "taunting" of men who "allowed" this transgression.

We asked FG respondents what they thought about transgressive acts, things that do not conform to dominant understandings of gender roles. The most common transgressive act was said to involve men being forced to do domestic chores when women in their families were incapacitated.

"M: [...] is it only your mother who should be making food always?

R2: No, when I am at home and if I am in the mood, I ask my mother if I can help with anything. I do it.

R3: On Sundays when I am home, I sometimes cook Hyderabadi dum-biryani because my mother likes it.

R1: When my mother is unwell I get groceries from the market." – FGD 6

When asked about women who do not live according to the expected norms of society, most men and women both responded with antipathy. While some of the younger women mentioned that women should take steps towards changing their narratives, most others advised women to stay within their gender role. Transgressive acts were condemned by our respondents, as transgression may lead to reprimand and eventual violence. For many women, living alone without a partner or parents was unthinkable, as shown in Dipti and Sarala's excerpts below. Many women thought that single unmarried women had "problems" and had to face dire situations that led to their being single.

M: There are single women who don't marry and are self-employed and live a good life. What are your views on such women? Does this really happen or we only hear about it?

R: Yes, due to some problem.

M: Is it because they are staying alone?

R: Yes.

M: What problem could be there?

R: Her parents might not have loved her. Or her husband might not have loved her, and

parents-in-law were also quarrelsome, so she preferred to stay alone." – Dipti, 32, IDI 27

"[...] As long as she is young and energetic it is okay, but in old age she needs support. Like sharing her happy and sad times, if she is not married means she is going to stay alone all her life, but later in life she needs a companion. She may have depression thinking what have I done with my life! A woman needs to understand marital bliss at some point." – Sarala, 62, IDI 29

Sarala, like many others, explained why a woman should actively seek a companion for herself – to be secure in older age. Interestingly Sarala gave the "transgressive woman" some leeway to be who she wished to be, to achieve her dreams, but ultimately believed she should want to experience "marital bliss". This position, as expressed by many participants, tells us how powerful the pull can be for women to conform to gender roles. The fear of loneliness is instilled into women and marriage is presented as the only way to address this fear, even if that marriage is unhappy or even abusive. Josie, who married relatively late in life, gave an example of how she eventually came to marry:

"[...] But then after a certain age you also feel something.

M: What is that something that we feel?

R: You want a life partner and children. Basically, I love children. So, getting married was a way to get into motherhood, that was my main reason." – Josie, 50, IDI 22

The "something" that Josie felt "after a certain age" is possibly a form of gender bias asserting to women that companionship and motherhood are only possible through marriage. Although companionship and motherhood can be experienced in the context of a marriage, the pull of marriage can also place women in risky

situations: Josie's own marriage was abusive and eventually she had to separate from her husband. Perhaps increasing awareness of alternative choices to address the "fear of loneliness" or "getting into motherhood," could reduce the risks for women such as Josie to endure violence.

While the pressure to enter marriages was deeply felt by many women in our study, powerful forms of stigma and shame also operate to discourage women from leaving problematic and violent marriages. Reba, like Josie, was also separated from her husband and lived with her children without any male or elderly supervision. Both had similar perspectives about how they are seen in society and their communities by others:

"M: So you are free now, you are earning, do your neighbours say anything about you living alone?

R: No one has said anything to my face till now.

M: But do you think women have to hear this generally?

R: I'm sure this happens, they should be saying these things behind my back, (laughing) but I don't care. I have to work, I have to go to the market. Those who have to speak will speak. I can't bother about all this and sit at home, I have to earn and take care of my children. My husband will say all this, you live alone, you earn only for yourself, he will say some useless things, but I don't listen." – Reba, 40, IDI 2

"But why should the guys get enticed? I can dress up in any way I want. It is my life. So every female has the right to dress up the way she wants. But yes, generally it does happen if you are staying alone, if you dress up as per how you want to dress up, then you are viewed a bit more of a dark kind. It does happen in our society which is very sad." – Josie, 50, IDI 22

Both women, learning from their life experiences, transgressed their gender roles and walked out of abusive marriages. Their quotes clarify that the simple act of living without a husband, or "living alone", has provoked conversation about them. Both women faced repercussions of their decision either from community, family members, or ex-husbands. However, both are conscious of their right to live lives free from violence and judgment. Nevertheless, given the widespread social pressures toward marriage and adhering to domestic roles, divorce was very rare. Amongst all our respondents we found only one case of divorce, a few instances of separation, and one case of desertion. Sheba, who is 21, and was married early, faced abuse, but managed to escape the relationship and start a fresh life. As a young Muslim woman, Sheba showed courage and took a stand against ill treatment; her parents' distress supplemented her decision to move out of her marital home.

"M: When did the divorce happen?

R: Fifteen days after my marriage. I was back home in fifteen days.

M: They readily agreed for the divorce?

R: Actually, they insulted us a lot, you know I had never seen my father crying, that day he cried and I saw my mother crying and saw myself craving for a different life. I have never experienced such difficulty in my life but when I saw my father crying for me, that was my worst day...

M: Then what happened during those fifteen days? How did the topic of divorce come up?

R: Divorce came up because, they (the in-laws) had kept an assembly of the family members. Something had happened. I had said only one thing, if he wants me to leave then no problem, there are many others behind me. But it was me who had chosen him.

M: When did your divorce happen?

R: I got married in 2015 and the divorce happened in 2016. So prior to that when the case was on I was sitting at home. I was asked and I also said that they had kept me hungry for three days. On holidays people are generally at home. He used to go and gamble on such days. If I asked for something they would not bring it." – Sheba, 21, IDI 33

Some young women showed resilience in the face of bias and violence, like Sheba, who not only managed to get a divorce, but also explained to us in the interview that she is not interested in remarrying. Commonly though, women are both punished for being transgressive and glorified when complying with prescribed gender roles. Unlike Sheba, Sunita had a completely different perspective towards violence and its normalisation.

"[...] we cannot just leave and go. I am capable of doing a job, even now, but I don't want to hear that I am burden on someone, that I have left my husband. I have a reputation, I can tolerate so much pain and still live at my in-law's. Everyone thinks so highly of me now, that I am bearing so much but still living with my husband."
– Sunita, 33, IDI 12

Before marriage Sunita was doing a fashion design course, was working as an art teacher and was interested in taking her career in art and design ahead, all of which changed after her marriage. Entering an early marriage, her in-laws negotiated that she could not be a working woman after the marriage. Unable to challenge the normativity expected from her, Sunita preferred to maintain a "reputation" – even at the cost of experiencing violence at her husband's hands.

There are several ways gender that bias, in terms of emphasising marriage, can operate, including through education, work and women's own understanding of their capabilities. Emphasis on marriage and family become a hindrance to any kind of uplift in women's situations. Some parents let their daughters study only up to high school because they do not consider there is any benefit to them continuing any further, while others are forced by family members to make their daughters complete their schooling. Some women were denied education due to cost or accessibility issues, and others did not continue with education because they knew they would not be able to combine it with fulfilling their primary roles.

"M: [...] You have completed 10th standard, if you would have been a boy, would you have studied more?

R: If I was a boy and if I would have told my parents that I wanted to study more, then maybe they would have allowed [...] In the village till 10th standard schools were nearby, but after that colleges, [...] they didn't send girls. They sent my brothers [...]"
– Soni, 40, IDI 10

"[...] our father did get us educated, but we have only one brother. So we thought, we are all old, we have only one younger brother, so if he gets educated, tomorrow he will take care of us. We (sisters) will go to other houses. When he studies, he will do some work, and will look after us."
– Shanta, 50, IDI 31

"M: Have you told them that you can do private schooling also?

R: Yes I have told them, and they say that they don't have money.

M: Suppose it is for free and you don't have to pay money?

R: Then I will do it. And I have to do housework, I can do anything in my free time.

M: So you will do housework first and then studies?

R: At first I had said that I want to do private schooling, and they (parents) replied, that there is no money and who will do housework ?" – Shruti, 22, IDI 37

One connecting issue between our participants' stories is the failure to prioritise women's need for education. Education is something that can change a person's life (and is widely acknowledged as such); our study shows that women tend not to be offered educational opportunities, and their desires are seldom given importance. Even when young girls want to study they are not given the same priority as their brothers. As Shanta elucidated, social norms indicate that investing in boys' education will have more return for the family, since men are supposed to be the breadwinners.

With education comes the possibility of change from everyday situations. Most of the female participants in our study did not work, despite living in an expensive city and facing difficult economic circumstances. They cited reasons such as not being allowed to work by their marital or natal families, or that they are not educated enough to seek jobs. Out of 42 female respondents, 22 women were in paid work, either outside or working from home. Working from home was only possible to some extent as it did not help them make more money, just helped sustain their own personal expenses which they spent on either the household or their children.

"[...] in our caste/community, we never went outside for work. If we cannot go out how can we earn? At home my father-in-law and husband were there, so it was not necessary

to work. But we stitched our own blouses, did fall and beading of our own saris, and this money was saved. We couldn't do it for others, but we did it for ourselves…because in our place we are not supposed to do other's stitching, can only do for persons within the family. We cannot take money for work."

– Soni, 40, IDI 10

Soni explained in detail her community's restriction on work outside the home, which women of different ethnicities did not have. Soni's circumstances show that a community's expectations are followed regardless of any individual desire for financial independence.

"Narendra Modi has made some (schemes), for women who don't have jobs or are not educated enough, like in this area only. You know what dear, in UP even if you tell a woman to do a job they will not."
– Soni, 40, IDI 10

What is important here is that Soni identifies her place of origin as having certain cultural regulations. These traditions do not actually change when women migrate after marriage. In fact, because of negative bias transmission, women continue to internalise such restrictions unquestioningly in their new places of living. These restrictions exemplify negative gender bias towards women through the division of women and men to private and public spaces, respectively, particularly in relation to work. Such a division can be harmful in several ways, but especially in the sense that, by curtailing women's financial independence, opportunities and options for escaping violent domestic situations are reduced.

"M: […] What is different between home and outside?

R: See if you go to office then it is ok, outside means standing on the road and doing things

is an insult. If you are standing outside on the road and earning you are not making your parents proud." – Soni, 40, IDI 10

Mobility restrictions on women is also a component of negative gender bias that prevents them from seeking employment. Societal pressure makes women's movement difficult for both higher education and work. In case women go out for any reason they are made to recognise that their bodies can be violated, and they are living precarious lives.

"R3: […] in our house, girls are not allowed to go out after 8 PM. If there is any work, my mother will go. Any outside work I will do."
– FGD 2

"R8: […] if women are at home, it is good, once they go out of the house, they get wings, they want to fly." – FGD 4

"R2: Men can go everywhere but women cannot. We roam around and go here and there but women mostly stay at home, I see that happening. They should also be allowed to move around, they also want to do it.

R3: What he is saying is true, but in current times, if women get freedom, anything can happen outside. Parents will worry at home.

R2: Parents will worry, but if women are always made to stay indoors, they will go mad.

R3: One little girl was violated then killed and thrown." – FGD 6

The above statements from our male participants show the restrictions imposed on women and girls when it comes to leaving the home. In FGD 2, a respondent gave an example of his own home where women were not allowed to move outside. FGD 4 and 6 respondents clarified the two most important factors used to justify constraining women's movement: the risk that women will misuse their freedom, doing things that are not

expected of them; and that they will be at risk of violation if they leave the security of home to go outside. This apparent concern for women's safety is misplaced and as we have seen from our data, women are often no safer in their homes than outside. Both violation and misuse of freedom are highlighted so often in discourse that women themselves think their security is connected to their mobility. Our findings raise the question as to whether emphasising the risks women would face outside of home enables the violence they are facing at home to be trivialised. For the women in this study, wishing to do something besides housework, be it employment, or seeking entertainment, whether living with their natal or marital families is almost never allowed.

"We are not able to much involve ourselves in the outside world, we cannot afford to, but mom says that we have our self-respect and we have to protect that. She says that we have to reduce presenting ourselves to the outside world, not engage with social media so much. Whatever entertainment we need can come from within the family."

– Nayna, 18, IDI 15

"M: Apart from education, was there any activity, like if you wanted to join some dance classes, you did not get permission for?

R: No. I had learnt to draw mehndi (henna art) from a friend who was our neighbour. I had learnt the beautician course and I go out for makeup orders, but at home there are restrictions for it.

M: Why do they restrict?

R: No, it is not allowed. I go out for mehndi orders, with which I cover my personal expenses.

M: Do you go without informing at home?

R: My mother knows about it. She sends.

M: Does your brother know?

R: Yes, he knows but my father doesn't know about it. I don't go late in the night, I come back home before he comes."

– Rashi, 23, IDI 40

"[…] Because of my husband no one comes in contact with me. I also should not go outside.

M: What about your husband's friends, do they come home?

R: No, they don't come inside the house, I also cannot go to their house, and for their functions (events) also he will not take us. He will not even take our daughter. And if any one comes home, […] me and my daughter have to go to the kitchen, while he entertains them." Yamini, 39, Pilot

Even though it is believed that women are primarily caregivers, their everyday care-work is neither given importance nor compensation of any kind. India's female participation in the labour force is low[13] and according to our data it may be because of the prejudices around women and work, combined with the belief that men should be sole wage earners.

In the FGDs, most men were repelled by the idea of women working. They were, at most, fine with the idea of women working from home or doing a part time job, but were immensely worried about women not being able to take care of children because of work. Older men were especially wary of their daughters-in-law or wives taking up jobs. Some of them expressed concern that women in the workplace misuse rules to gain favour, making men's work less valuable. The idea that women use their sexuality to circumvent workplace rules was a theme than ran across several FGDs. Some men felt that making money is not women's work, others were afraid that men's importance in the workplace would be challenged because of women's participation.

13 *The periodic labour force survey (PLFS) data published by the NSSO show that in 2017-18 women's participation has gone down to 23.3%. For more information the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation and National Statistical Office has shared the report online on http://www.mospi.gov.in/sites/default/files/publication_reports/Annual%20Report%2C%20PLFS%202017-18_31052019.pdf*

"R1: It is not about money; priority is to take care of the children. Money is 'haath ki mail' (dirt of the hand). It is there today gone tomorrow.

R5: It is difficult for them to handle both house and job.

R1: They will absolutely not be able to handle. I will never allow her to do a job."
– FGD 1

"M: You work in the night shift, are there restrictions in office?

R5: There is no night shift for girls.

M: What is the reason?

R5: There is no pick-up and drop for girls, and if something happens to them, then company has to take care of that, they don't want to take that risk. So only boys.

M: And in your case, is there discrimination between male and female?

R4: In my office, if girls come in late, it is fine. There is politics." – FGD 2

"M: Have you noticed any bias in workplace?

R4: If the girl is good looking, she gets promotion faster." – FGD 4

"M: Do you think female members should contribute financially?

R3: Not necessary. We are running the family, females can look after the house, and she can take care of the family. And she can concentrate on needs of the family, and we are there to earn. I don't want her to contribute...

R5: Now see, if there is something crucial, like business, there is some loss, then they may go for work, I have not faced any such situation, my daughter-in-law wants to go for part time work, which is also 9 to 1. She

will have to wake up early, leave by 7, and come back by 1 or 2, half a day is gone. Then who will concentrate on the child? I go for work; my son goes for work, daughter is working, so if all are going for work, who will look after the child?

R1: My parents are 80 years old, who will take care of them if they (women family members) go for job, if there is any health issue, who will take them to the doctor?

R2: If any problem arises, we need at least one person in the house

R4: My wife will also say that she wants to go for job, I will say you can take tuitions at home only." – FGD 5

Men saw women's work, whether inside the home or outside, as inconsequential, especially if they themselves were earning. Even women did not see income generating work as a possible part of their lives due to negative gender bias. Our research shows that gender role stereotypes, which confine women to the domestic space, also make it much more difficult for them to find gainful employment.

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3.1.2 "Silencing" as violence and invalidation of women

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The last and perhaps most profound way in which women's experiences are invalidated involves keeping them unaware of their rights and silencing their narratives. Several women spoke about the trauma they faced in their lives and while most narratives explained how physical and psychological abuse affected women, there were shades of violence which did not align with the established definitions of either domestic abuse or gender-based violence.

In her seminal work, Gayatri Spivak used the term "epistemic violence", meaning the silencing of marginalised groups. This was a process

colonisers used to make all forms of indigenous knowledge from colonised places "disappear" (Spivak, 1988). Carrying forward from Spivak, Dodson explains that epistemic violence can lead to harm, but it is context specific as well. Refusing to listen and respond to women because of "pernicious ignorance," which is any intentional and potentially harmful ignorance of a community, can also lead to silencing of the speaker (Dodson, 2011). Silencing or not letting the speaker of a marginalised community effectively communicate should be considered a form of GBV if, as in the case of gender bias, the speaker or community is marginalised because of their gender.

"Epistemic violence does not require intention, nor does it require capacity. It does, however, require a failed communicative exchange owing to pernicious ignorance." (Dodson, 2011, p. 240)

In our study we find epistemic violence is caused by withholding of information that would help women break the silence. With the use of language women are repeatedly shown that they are marginalised, communication is used to demean women and disempower them. People may argue that both epistemic and linguistic violence can be categorised under psychological violence because they affect the mind of the survivor, but the findings of this study suggest that it is essential to widen the definition of GBV to show the true extent of the many and varied ways women are being violated.

"[...] If there is something in English that we do not know, we ask our children. So, what you are saying is prevalent today, it was not there earlier. But yes, if we would have been educated, we could have done things better, we would not have to ask people [...] That is why we make our children study. In our times English was not there much. Education was in Hindi language, and if we did not understand some question then we asked other girls or

the teacher, but we used to feel lost. If we would have known things ourselves then we wouldn't have to wait for people to come and help us. That is why education is so important [...] If we would have been well educated then we would have been better respected [...] Children are not speaking to us with respect, they call us like tu (a friendly/informal form of "you" in Hindi, used mostly between peers) and all. It is important to respect all big and small, as well as respect the society [...]"
– Soni, 40, IDI 10

"My husband had married once earlier [...] I am his second wife. This information was also not shared with me before marriage. Even if it is the smallest of things, my mother-in-law will point fingers at me, never at her son, and it is the same in society. I had left home for 15 days, everyone pointed fingers at me, but no one said a thing to him. I have seen this, everyone holds women responsible, never men [...]"
– Sunita, 33, IDI 12

The above quotes expand our understanding of the practices that keep women away from information, making them vulnerable to GBV. In one instance a woman was not given the education and opportunity that she desires. Although knowledge of English language might have helped Soni to have better prospects and become a more respected member of society, the critical point is the need for women and girls to be able to access equal education opportunities to males. . A common occurrence is sending boys to English-medium schools while girls are taught in vernacular-medium or in less expensive schools. Pia said,

"There is one vegetable seller, he has son and one daughter. He has put his son to an English medium school and daughter to a municipality school" – Pia, 42, IDI 23

	Reason for stopping studies	Work	Oppressor	Pressure for marriage
Sayali, 23	Sayli's brother did not let her study after completing school, also citing that women from their caste do not study a lot.	Not allowed by brother. Also extreme mobility restriction that is blamed on her caste and segreggation. Threatened her at a friend's place for staying over and thinking about working. Mother drinks and sister-in-law does not take her side.	Elder brother, to some extent her mother and sister-in-law	✓
Anushka, 24	N/a	Studying currently. Cannot work as she has extreme mobility restrictions. Her parents do not want her to go anywhere far from their house, and nearby there are no jobs she can do. She had worked earlier for 2-3 months at a place next to her home, but left it to pursue her Masters degree.	Both parents; they believe that girls must be married and leave for her marital home, so it is pointless for Anushka to pursue higher education or work.	✓
Nayna, 18	N/a	She is currently taking private tutions to pay her college fees. Her mother only started working after the death of her father.	Mother and other members in her extended family; while her younger brother was encouraged to pursue extra-curricular activities despite their financial crisis, she was not given that opportunity.	✗
Neha, 22	Belonging to a lower income family Neha had to drop out of school and start working immediately.	Neha has constant earning by tailoring from home, although she gives her earnings to brother and mother. Mother used to work but stopped due to medical reasons. She is not the sole earning member of her family, yet she has no control over her own income, half goes for her mother's medical treatment and the other half is used up in household expenses.	Brother allows work only from home, there is verbal and financial abuse.	✓

	Reason for stopping studies	Work	Oppressor	Pressure for marriage
Sana, 19	Sana's mother did not have enough resources to let her study further to become a teacher.	Tailoring takes up most of her time along with housework. Brother stops her from working outside of the house and doing a beautician's course which her elder sister is allowed to do. Sana's mother is a vegetable seller, her brother's income stopped recently.	Brother dictates everything in the house and imposes extreme mobility restrictions, including checking personal mobile phones.	✓
Shruti, 22	Shruti had to fight to go to school as women in her caste are not allowed to study after a certain age.	Learning jobs from a nearby women's salon without payment. This is done outside of the knowledge of elders, especially father and brothers.	Father is very strict and mother also discourages her from studying or working. Similarly, extended family gives no support to girls or boys who wish to study beyond school. According to them and their caste, boys are earners, housework is best suited for women.	✓
Rashi, 23	She dropped out after completing school. She wanted to finish her Bachelor's but didn't have a chance. Girls' education not given any priority, i.e. her younger brother is doing engineering while she sits at home.	Since Rashi wanted to become a teacher she gives private tuitions of all subjects to young children. She also learnt mehendi art and a short beautician's course because she had to drop out of her studies. Now she takes orders for mehendi and makeup to pay for her personal expenses. She informs her mother and brother but hides it from her father.	Entire family very strict about preserving gender roles, especially father is controlling. Rashi cannot think about standing up against the unjustified norms she faces regularly.	✓

|| **A special focus on the difficulties never-married women face within their homes. This table hopes to show their lived realities and the systemic oppressions they regularly resist.**

This discrimination is an outcome of epistemic violence; women are not valued enough to be given knowledge that can raise them from subjugation and the kind of education a girl child will receive is dependent on how she is valued by her family.

Sunita's quote exemplifies what Dodson calls "testimonial quietening" (p. 242), a process that devalues the knower because of her gender, that may ultimately prohibit her from presenting her own testimony. Before her marriage, Sunita was unaware of her husband's ill behaviour or that he was married earlier, which triggered her to question society's double standard in the fundamental depreciation of women's knowledge and experiences. As she belongs to the female gender her knowledge (about her own marriage) was not considered important. Dodson writes,

"One can imagine circumstances in which one's intellectual courage is undermined through routinely being taken as a "non-knower" as a result of social perceptions of one's identity. One can also imagine circumstances in which one's epistemic agency is undermined through testimonial quieting." (p. 243)

This is applicable to both Soni's and Sunita's experiences. Soni was considered a non-knower because she is a woman, her need to receive knowledge was seen by her marital family as unjustified. In Sunita's experience it is seen that women are always at risk of shaming and have to carry certain burdens which make it impossible for them to leave abusive situations, even temporarily. Forcing women to stay indoors or making sure that they are not exposed to worldly knowledge can be said to be a form of violence. Along with making sure women do not have the ability to speak, their testimonies or narratives are routinely smothered. Dodson calls this another kind of violence that silences women, "testimonial smothering."

"Testimonial smothering, ultimately, is the truncating of one's own testimony in order to insure that the testimony contains only content for which one's audience demonstrates testimonial competence." (p. 244)

Smothering happens over time and make women believe that they need to adjust their own testimony in favour of what the larger society thinks and feels about them. Through this kind of epistemic violence prescriptive gender roles are perpetuated. Both bias and double-standards are reiterated to people, so that their understanding of stereotypes get moulded, so that they conform to what is expected of them even if that harms their gender. Anushka was pursuing her Master's degree but faced immense trouble from her family. She shared:

"They were not happy with me doing M. Com. They said that graduation was enough. If I had been a boy then they would have said yes for further studies, they would have been like if you will earn then we will get some money as well. But with a girl it is like she will earn a little right now and then get married and go away so why should we make her study. But okay I still managed to start my M. Com. I have job restrictions; they say the job should be nearby not far away. We don't know how boys are, just by looking at the face we cannot say how they are, that is why I have restrictions that I should not go far for job or don't do a job and sit at home and do some house work [...] My dad still refuses but my mom says that if I want to study I should do it right now and my mom is doing a job so I have support from her. But my dad still says no [...] We fight, we argue because I need to explain why I want to do it and what the benefits are. They have studied less so they don't know what the benefits of education are."
– Anushka, 24, IDI 7

Evident in her narrative is her parents' belief that, in accordance with societal norms, there is no point in women participating in higher education as they are supposed only to do unpaid care-work. Anushka's father saw higher education as useless and was unable to understand his daughter's "testimony". The challenge she faced because of her decision to continue her education was a kind of everyday coercion which may ultimately have led to "smothering" of her testimony. She ultimately gave in to her parents' demands, altering her own testimony and her own life plans.

"M: Has it ever happened that you got very furious and you thought enough is enough?

R: Once I wanted to go out with my friends but my parents denied permission because I had boys in my group. My father used to say that I should not go out with boys, but we all have friends. They don't know what our friends think like. So, I wanted to go out and enjoy myself but I never got permission because they thought I had bad friends. Then I used to get frustrated and tell them, it is ok, I will not go, I will do only whatever you please! [...] They never thought of my happiness."
– Anushka, 24, IDI 7

Language and knowledge together help women to project their own individual perspectives. But these two core issues are left aside in discourse about GBV. This devaluing of women's learning grows from a stereotypical understanding of what femininity "should" be. Resulting from this are epistemic violence, testimonial quietening and testimonial smothering that women unknowingly deal with on an everyday basis. To raise awareness of this covert violence which goes completely unnoticed, women need to be encouraged to speak their mind and have opinions of their own, and to be granted their right to knowledge, information and education. Lived realities of women must contain speech and acts that negate the undermining of their own capabilities. .

A specific dislike towards the female gender manifests through language, behaviour and most importantly acts. As an experience of negative gender bias we encounter both these situations, daughter aversion and son preference, in turn leading to the skewing of gender ratio of this country. Daughter aversion leads to health-related risks to women since they are the ones who are held responsible for birthing daughters.

In India female foeticide or determination of the gender of the foetus is punishable by law. Even so, in our study we have found instances of daughter aversion. Patriarchal traditions and beliefs again aid the proliferation of discrimination against women and girls.

"R5: Dada-dadi (paternal grandfather & grandmother) and nana-nani (maternal grandfather & grandmother) think that there should be a son" – FGD 3

"R3: If there are 2-3 daughters in a family, it is then that people start discriminating [...] If there are too many daughters, that becomes a problem. If there is one son and one daughter, or if there are two sons and one daughter, that does not become a problem. As far as I have seen, if there are two, three or four daughters and one son, even then there is some amount of discrimination. People worry about having so many daughters."
– FGD 7

Quotes from FGDs 3 and 7 show that men are very much aware of daughter aversion as a contemporary reality. Sometimes it shows through everyday discriminations, other times much more violently. Elders who are aligned with daughter aversion serve as one way through which violence and bias together are transmitted down the generations. Having more daughters is

seen as detrimental to the household and this belief is carried by both men and women.

"R: If I had son, it would have been better.

M: Why?

R: I have to think where he is going, meeting whom.

M: But they are so young?

R: Yes, she is small now, but when she grows up, I will be afraid to send her out [...] I only pray one thing, nothing bad should happen to them [...] I don't leave my daughters alone, if I had two sons, it would be better, I got one son, he died, then I got two daughters."
– Sonu, 37, IDI 1

Besides thinking that women are a burden to the household, participants also perceive young girls as being exposed to GBV much more than young boys. In our study, just five of the 42 women had only daughters, and just two women had an only-child who was a girl. Pushing women to become pregnant and give birth to sons is a form of GBV that is a direct outcome of gender bias. These numbers are telling because many women from our study did not want to have more children, regardless, they were pressured by their families to bear more sons. Women were also shamed for not being able to have enough sons.

"... I was saying that one son is enough I want to stop this (get a hysterectomy), as my husband is not good. My mother-in-law said that I should have one more son and after that have operation. And then I got a daughter. I wanted to do operation so that I don't get more children. My husband is not the right type, he is drinking, why I should have more children? My mother-in-law said no, then I got another child, it was daughter, and again one more daughter.

M: You wanted only one child?

R: Yes, I knew that husband is like this so who will bring up children?" – Pooja, 40, IDI 16

After her first son, Pooja wished to go for a hysterectomy since she was unsure if her financial situation would give her the ability to bring up more children. Familial pressure held her back from going for the surgery and ultimately, she had four children. Belonging to a lower income household and having an alcoholic husband has made her life difficult and impoverished. She also spoke about not being allowed to go outside for work but still managing some paid work from home to manage day-to-day living.

"R: In the beginning when my first baby was born he did not like it because he wanted a son [...]

M: Did you want a second child also?

R: No, that's why there is a gap of 12 years. I didn't want another child, didn't have any such plans. [...] Then his job started paying some more, so he said that we can afford a second child. Even my mother-in-law supported the idea expecting a son, but it was a girl.

M: What was the situation when it was a girl?

R: There was no problem as such in the family, but there was discontent since it was a girl."
– Sunita, 33, IDI 12

Sunita, one of the few women who had two daughters explained that it was never her intention to have more than one child. Similar to Pooja's situation, Sunita was also coerced by family and husband to have a second child in the hopes of giving birth to a son. The discontentment that Sunita spoke of shows how daughter aversion plays out across the generations: in this process, not only do daughters feel the aversion but mothers themselves have to bear the brunt of the shame

associated with not being able to produce sons in line with families' expectations. Even though Sonu herself showed son preference, Pooja and Sunita's excerpts show that families can instil fear and discontent in women when they have daughters.

Society has double standards when it comes to men and women from birth and through adulthood, as seen above, with in-laws, husbands, and even women themselves generally expressing a strong preference for sons. However, although daughter aversion is most powerfully expressed against women who bear "too many" daughters or "not enough" sons, mothers can also experience negative reactions – especially envy – for bearing sons:

"They were jealous in the house because I had sons. Everyone's behaviour toward me changed after I had sons." – Gauri, 45, IDI 30

Whether they bear a son or a daughter, women continue to experience the effects of this form of bias for one reason or another. Having daughters is bad for mothers primarily because daughters are seen as an economic burden, yet having more sons means women's honour is uplifted and the marital family members are displeased with this shift in power dynamics. Teju summarised precisely this double-bind through her experience of being a mother of two sons.

"[...] after my first son was born the arguments started. He would listen to his mother and think that I keep sitting all day long and do nothing in the house, he would never believe my side. My mother-in-law was of the thought process that I have delivered a baby boy and so her son will start treating me well. She was insecure. Today also people wish for baby boy, nobody wants a girl child. That is the reason my mother-in-law got insecure and she would lie to my husband

that I don't take care of the kids properly so that he would fight with me."
– Teju, 42, IDI 11

Another reason for daughter aversion is linked with the common expectation that girls leave the community they were born in, adjusting their identities based on their marital families. This is considered a "loss" in societal terms and encourages endogamy, so that women seldom stay within their communities and carry the communities' honour. Pia's extract below shows two reasons for daughter aversion: one is economic, that more resources need to be spent on girls compared to the returns; the other is the belief that girls cannot be trusted to keep the community's honour. Young girls' sexuality is seen as sacrosanct and in need of protection from the outside world, so that their natal and marital families do not face disrespect. Focusing on the dangers of outside violence, women and young girls are often made to believe homes to be safe, which may not necessarily be true. Certainly this has not been the experience of our study participants, and NFHS-4 indicates that 31.1% of ever-married women in India experience violence from their own spouse (NFHS-4 India report p5).

Conversely, boys are not considered to be at risk either outside or inside the home, therefore have far fewer mobility restrictions. Pia's husband explained to her why boys have fewer restrictions, expressing the view that boys are low maintenance, that no matter what they do, their actions will not be questioned.

"M: You have 3 sons, if you had a daughter, what would you think about her future?

R: We would have to arrange so much for the daughter in advance, she would not have been allowed to go out all the time. My husband always said, if we had a daughter, she would throw more tantrums, boys don't throw

tantrums. Good thing that we don't have a daughter [...] He thinks that when girls go to college, they have boyfriends, but for sons he will not think like that, boys can have as many girlfriends as they want. I asked him why he thought this way, he said girls don't get married in the same community and they elope with boys from other communities. That is why he doesn't want any daughter."
– Pia, 42, IDI 23

Control of young girls by their families/elders includes not letting them take any significant decisions related to their own lives, and can sometimes be seen through restrictions imposed on more mundane activities like what they wear and where they go – and we saw descriptions of these restrictions running through our data set. These forms of control may act as a powerful form of socialisation for young girls, encouraging them to comply with orders from elders even if they wish for something different for themselves.

"[...] I wanted to wear jeans, but I was not allowed, I had to wear salwar-kameez (traditional two-piece clothing, can be symbol for unmarried women) only. If I don't put on my dupatta (long scarf worn on top covering breasts, part of the traditional clothing) even then my brother shouts at me [...]"
– Neha, 22, IDI 17

Control can also be seen through regulation of women's sexuality; women in our interviews reported that they are not given the opportunity to have opinions on friends, going out, or expressing their desires. Important decisions were usually taken by someone else, be it in the natal or the marital home. As we saw in our earlier analysis of marriage experiences, unmarried women are often seen as untrustworthy as they do not have husbands to stop them from taking bad decisions. By contrast, once our participants married and had husbands, they were expected to follow

protocols set by their husbands and marital families.

"M: If your daughter-in-law had friends who were boys, would you be okay?

R: I am okay with that but she should know her limits. She can go to a party but with her husband, I will not tolerate her going at late night parties alone or with her set of friends. I will not want my next generation to face problems." – Chanda, 33, IDI 13

Men respondents also had the opinion that women's lives require control from an early age. In FGD 6 that was conducted with young men who have spent some time in juvenile observation homes, the issue of control came up significantly. The young men who participated in this FGD had all spent some time in the observation home because of GBV related crimes. Their belief showed dangerous negative gender bias against women. They shared that specifically young girls who complained against them needed to be controlled, so that the girls wouldn't get a chance to "trap" boys. They reiterated the belief that young women with too much freedom misuse it and make young men fall in trouble with the help of law.

"M: Do you think girls should be controlled and their parents should be given the right to control and restrict their movements?

R2: I think parents should take control.

R3: This particular girl trapped us so badly, we had tried to tell everyone, so I think that girls should be controlled.

M: But that is only one girl, do you think all girls are the same?

R2: It is like one rotten fruit, if you keep it in one basket along with other ripe ones, all the others rot." – FGD 6

As well as restricting women's autonomy with respect to childbearing, daughter aversion can have serious impacts on the physical health of women. The expectation to control girls' lives, puts unfair pressure not only on the daughters themselves, but on their parents, particularly the mothers who are held (unreasonably) responsible for having borne them. This can have a negative impact on mothers' wellbeing. Women who only have female children are often coerced into getting pregnant repeatedly, or to aborting female foetuses. Even health professionals, it seems, may give women poor clinical advice concerning family planning. Two specific cases illustrate this, one acting illegally, albeit in support of the mother's wishes, and the other refusing treatment for reasons that are unclear.

"M: And your mother-in-law, how was she with your children?

R: Even when the children were small, she never cared to look after them.

M: You have six daughters, you said you are very lucky—

R: I had nine girls, and In the past rajas and maharajas they had nine daughters, so your uncle (her husband) was a maharaja. I had abortion three times and all the three were girls.

M: Can you elaborate a little on this, when you went to the doctor what did you tell the doctor, what did they say?

R: My doctor was very good, she listened to me, especially if I wanted a boy or a girl. Before doctors would abort but nowadays they file complaints [...] I had gone to the doctor for a check-up and asked her to abort it if it was a girl and she agreed to do it, gave me some medicine, asked me to give money, and did it.

M: You knew it was going to be a girl?

R: Yes, the doctor told me after sonography.

They take more money and do it, which my husband was ready to pay. Because it was my regular doctor that is why this happened [...] But before marriage I was told that I will have sons, but not even one, all daughters! [...] We told the doctor that we have five daughters and no earning member in our family, so we needed to do it."
– Sarala, 62, IDI 29

"M: Because of the mental pressure from mother-in-law you got pregnant?

R: I would try every week to abort. I would do all things possible, saam, daam, dand, bhed (materially, financially, punitively, threat) to abort the foetus. But a son had to be born and so it happened. He was in my destiny, so he came to me. Even after he was conceived, I used a lot of ideas for abortion. But he was written in my destiny.

M: Did you consult the doctor?

R: Yes. Doctor said abortion can be done after you complete the first month only, not before that, it cannot happen immediately.

M: Who said this?

R: A lady doctor nearby. So I said ok, I will visit again after a month.

M: How many months pregnant were you when you visited her?

R: I came to know that I was pregnant within 10-15 days. [...] Maybe the doctor had some other plan which is why she asked me to wait. I was worried that it will become late if I waited. It was better to abort before it became an actual life. I ate so many things, I had so many pills, so many tonics. (Laughs) But it remained in my womb. I was so afraid during the entire nine months. I was scared, I had consumed so many things, I was praying to god not to punish my child because of me. There could have been other problems too,

maybe my child would be born with some disabilities. But I prayed with a clean heart, that is why nothing went wrong."
– Chanda, 33, IDI 13

In the first instance Sarala kept trying for sons because she was told before her marriage that she would bear sons, an 'honourable' thing for married women. Despite having so many pregnancies and childbirths she continued trying to have sons. The situation became truly perilous for her when she decided to abort a foetus towards the very end of her pregnancy, which is punishable by law. As an older woman she insisted that female foeticide happened in "olden times", but some evidence suggests that it still operates[14]. Daughter aversion leads to dangerous choices for women, some of whom will go to great lengths to avoid giving birth to girls. This seemed to be the case for Sarala in the extract above. What is striking here is the matter-of-fact way in which the rejection of a further daughter is discussed: it is simply taken for granted that daughters, but not sons, are a financial burden for the family. Sarala lived with her daughters in front of whom she recounted this story, making us wonder how her daughters must have felt, knowing they were not their parents' first choice.

Chanda, who is much younger, wanted to abort a pregnancy without knowing the sex of the child, but was refused by the doctor. She herself tried to abort the foetus using methods that could risk her health as well as that of her unborn child. The depth of son preference is elucidated most in Chanda's narrative. First, she was under pressure from her family to have a second child because her first was a girl. Second, even when she went to a doctor to abort, she was not only refused but provided incorrect clinical advice by the doctor. Both narratives show various kinds of violence women face because of daughter aversion and son preference throughout society.

Risking women's physical health in pursuit of sons is another – and an extreme – way in which gender bias directly leads to GBV.

3.3 Interconnections between age, gender role and patriarchy

As well as intersecting with caste and marital status, gender bias and GBV were reflected in different ways through adulthood and into old-age. Our study reached out to seven older women (aged 46 and above). While this may not seem like an older age to many readers in other countries, as we go on to show, the participants in our study defined older age for women in relation to their social roles, and especially in relation to child-bearing. The involvement of these women in the study gave us insights as to why older women have certain perspectives on gender roles, and how they face specific kinds of violence at their stage of life.

The ambiguity of age is an interesting phenomenon that has emerged from our data. Huma Ahmed-Ghosh writes:

"But in India as in other traditional societies, ageing is determined by one's social roles and is also a cultural construct, especially for women. Chronological and social ageing could overlap but there could also be a gap between the two, which in women's case in India could complicate her life. For example, socially in India, early widowhood itself could define ageing." (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2009, p. 5)

Women from our study confirm that social ageing is quite different from physical ageing. Experiences of their life cycles were bound by social norms and gender roles. As societally "useful" life trajectories of women neared completion – especially child-bearing and rearing – they felt their value decrease significantly within private spaces. Some older women in the study did not have a clear

memory of either their own age or in fact even their children's ages. We are aware that understanding time as being linear and non-relational for women is counterproductive in research (Davies, 1996). We do not question the nature of time in women's experiences; rather we recognise and wish to highlight the issues women face as they age, what makes women grow "old", and what are the requirements of older women in India.

When considering the life cycles of the women in our study, it is crucial to understand GBV as a continuous and pervasive facet of their lives. Early emphasis and internalising of gender norms and patriarchal traditions increase intra-family dependence and eventually intra-partner dependence. Early steps towards discounting women's agency are often taken with child marriage – and this continues to affect women into later life. Due to excessive pressure from childhood to conform to set gender roles, young girls are married off in a hurry without information or the chance of denial.

> *"M: What was your age?*
>
> *R: I was 9*
>
> *M: You were so young!*
>
> *R: Yes, after the wedding I was in my parent's house. And when I turned 15, I came to my sasural (in-laws house).*
>
> *M: After periods?*
>
> *R: In our village it is called gauna (event when young bride goes to her in-law's house after getting her periods)—we are married and then left for 3-5 years, after that girls are brought to their marital homes.*
>
> *M: You got married at a small age, how was the condition in the family?*
>
> *R: My father has breathing problem. He said, I don't know when I will die, I want to see my daughter married." – Pooja, 40, IDI 16*

Pooja was 40 years old at the time of data collection and had been married for almost 30 years. She belongs to a lower income household and has four children to feed without any help from her husband who she says is an alcoholic. She expressed her problems in detail but did not think her child marriage was something to condemn or a reason for her problems. The financial condition of her natal home was unstable, and she had four other sisters, driving her to accept a marriage proposal. Interestingly, in Pooja's account, child marriage appears to be taken-for-granted as part of the normal run of a woman's life, with gauna as a marker of the usual time to move into the in-law's home. The idea of a woman choosing when and whom to marry is not even mentioned as a possibility.

> *"M: How did you feel when you got the news of your marriage?*
>
> *R: I didn't know anything about it—I was very young. What can a 9-year-old even understand?*
>
> *M: But the ceremony happened?*
>
> *R: My sister's marriage was going on, that time they caught me and got me married in the same place." – Pooja, 40, IDI 16*

Marrying girls at such early ages before they even understand what marriage means denies them the option of any alternative life. Out of our sample of 42 women, 14 had child marriages and 17 had early marriages. Many shared similar experiences of having married at the wishes of parents or grandparents, or because of poverty or patriarchal beliefs.

> *"Early marriage was common at the place where we lived. My sister got married at the age of 9 years as we three sisters were married off on the same day. My elder sister was 15 years old, I was 13, and the younger one was 9 years." – Gauri, 45, IDI 30*
>
> *"I came here after my marriage. I got married*

---

14 *Recent news articles show there are stray incidences of illegal abortion and foeticide through prenatal determination of sex of the child. In 2017 BBC reported functioning and raid of an illegal abortion racket. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-39176668*

when I was 12 and at 13 I came to Mumbai. I attained puberty after marriage. Mother married me when I was young. [...] Earlier they used to get girls married at early age. I used to work as a labourer in the field. My mother got me married, my father was not there." – Chaki, 33, IDI 3

Chaki who was only 33 years old explained that in her native place, they used to marry off girls at young ages. She felt that she was "old" and belonged to an "olden" time which is why she had to be married as a child, even though child marriages happen across different eras and are still prevalent today.[15] Chaki knew nothing about what was going to happen to her after marriage, information was withheld, and her consent not sought. For young girls, a lack of education and early marriage together cut short and seemed to invalidate their childhoods and had spilled over into the problems they experienced in adulthood.

Once marriage is complete and girls are sent to their marital homes, their journey as wife and eventual mother begins. Besides Reeti and Sheba no other married women was childless. Reeti had a late marriage and had not started planning for a child but was eager to start a family during the time of the interview. Sheba who got married at 18 and immediately divorced was probably what helped her to remain childless. Besides the two respondents who chose not to have children or were not in a favourable situation to become a mother, every other married respondent we interviewed had at least one child, either male or female, bringing us to the next stage of a woman's life – motherhood.

Childbirth happened early for women who married early, not having much information about sexual and reproductive health, women at

times became pregnant unwillingly, but decided to continue with it.

"M: The first time you were pregnant what was your age? You were quite young...

R: 14.

M: What had happened? Was it with your consent?

R: No, I did not know much. So it just happened. [...] Now I have come to know, earlier I had not experienced the world, it was school to home, home to school [...]"

– Rabia, 36, IDI 41

"It was after I came to Mumbai after marriage, my husband came close to me and I understood [...] If you marry then husband comes physically close to you [...] Let me tell you frankly, when he would touch my hands I had an idea of what was going to happen, I was scared. I was small, I didn't know anything [...] I knew later; I knew after everything happened. (laughing) [...] I had pain when it happened. I got fever for two days [...] after it happened. [...] I was 14 then. My husband didn't come near me till I was 14, I got pregnant when I was 15-16."

– Chaki, 33, IDI 3

Chaki's was a child marriage and the age difference between her and her husband was very wide, making the above excerpt very troublesome to read. She was obviously unprepared for sex because she had almost no knowledge of it. The first couple of times she had miscarriage and eventually had children before she turned 20. Her narrative along with Rabia's depicts a dismal reality of women's lives; sexual violence may be recurring form of violence for girls who marry very early. Beginning

motherhood with confusion and violation, the above two respondents also show how important motherhood is to married women and how society naturalises this pressure.

Married women may end up thinking that after childbirth, and children's growth into adulthood, their productive years are complete and they are now elderly women. For women who marry early or as children, their "productive" lifespan begins much earlier and ends also much earlier compared to women who marry and have children late. Motherhood then is in a complex relationship with women's sense of time – especially when women use it to justify their self-worth or their primary role as a woman. It becomes a reason to continue to live in difficult situations for the sake of children so that the children may have the protection of a family.

"[...] I pray to God that I have given birth to them (sons) true, but I couldn't fulfil everything for them. Once God takes care of their marriage, I want to enjoy my life. [...] At least now I have to live my life, I don't want to have a rebirth and another life, so I am trying to do my duty in this life as possible and then will depart (aapna karam halka karke nikal rahe hai)."

– Gauri, 45, IDI 30

Gauri's explanation reads precisely as an example of this attitude – that women's lives are governed by their children's lives, once they become mothers. Gauri was only 45 years old and believed she had lived most of her life, she wished to marry off her sons and then "attain peace". She had also told us that she attended religious programmes to help her combat the mental stress in her marital home – another important phenomenon, older women seeking spirituality to reconcile to the loss of maternal role.

Motherhood is a significant factor in keeping women tied to difficult situations and marriages. Sometimes this places women at significant risk of violence within marital homes, where they feel obliged to remain with violent husbands. On a lower level, many women are thrown into situations where there is no other option but to care for the children, as in case of Sunita. While her husband slept peacefully at night she was made to focus on her primary role – that of a new mother caring for her child:

"When I was a new mother I would get really irritated, because she used to cry a lot, constantly. I used to say, I want to go back to my parent's place. I had never taken care of small babies before, I didn't have any knowledge about it. First time I had to take care of a baby, it was my own, so I would often get irritated. My husband used to sleep nicely, and those moments I thought I don't want to do this, but I had to take care of the baby because that was my responsibility."

– Sunita, 33, IDI 12

Yet, obedience to normative family system make women stay in abuse and tolerate violence, so that their children can have a "wholesome" upbringing with both parents together. Simultaneously, those very women who choose to stay in abusive marriages for their children also see them as a beacon of hope – that once children are adults, they will take care of their mothers. Eventually though it is expected of the sons to take care of older mothers, a duty which is embedded in Indian masculinity. Avoiding this favour to older parents make men irresponsible.

"Mother's role is main thing, because at home she's the old one, my wife listens to her, she lives in village, this is when she comes here to visit sometimes. And main role is mother, she is elder to me, so we need to listen to her." – Respondent 7, FGD 1

15 *Recent studies on early and child marriage show the prevalence of it across the country. Tata Institute of Social Sciences and American Jewish World Services initiative project "Addressing Early and Child Marriage in India: A Participatory Study on Mapping Outcomes" shows the various processes undertaken by grassroot organisations to curb violence against women and children through questioning patriarchal traditions like early and child marriage. The report indicates that this phenomenon is very much practised in India and remains to be a deterrent to social progress. The report can be found at http://download.tiss.edu/ECM24Jan2017.pdf*

For mothers who have adult children and grandchildren, their role becomes even more complex. Even though motherhood can be initially difficult for some women, at a later stage in life some older women are able to support their daughters in leaving abusive spaces. As in case of Rabia, she was forced to marry at a very early age, became a mother at a very early age and faced physical complications. It was her mother who helped her through the initial phase of bringing up her young children. Similarly, Sarala also shared that her children were both protectors for her in times of difficulties, and because they were six sisters, they also became the reason for her abuse. Mothers care for their children in a way that may make them susceptible to violence, children can also become the reason for women to take a stand against violence.

> *"I had a lot of support from mummy, regarding my children and me. If I did not have my mother to help me with my children, I do not know what would have happened to me." – Rabia, 36, IDI 41*

> *"My children used to save me, I did not want to fight from the beginning itself but if they come here and talk dirty to my children then I have to talk back." – Sarala, 62, IDI 29*

In turn, elderly women can also become dependent on their families because of the process of socialisation – that women need to be cared for, once widowed, by their sons, less frequently daughters. Relationships with children become complicated when sons do not take care of mothers, but daughters become their unexpected saviours. The study found that some married women who take care of their mothers are made to feel as if what they are doing is unnatural, that they are actually doing the job of a son. This role transgression is linked to gender bias and stereotyping and reinforces the recurring notion that women are caregivers

to their marital family, while men must look after their natal family.

> *"I look like this because of my daughter. She can't rest if she doesn't talk to me, on the phone, if she doesn't hear a few words from me. Sometimes I feel that I have only daughter and no son." – Kanta, 65, IDI 25*

Kanta has three other sons who all had some kind of falling out with her, only her daughter is her primary caregiver. She lives alone in a house, another specific issue older women who are widows have to face if their sons are not ready to take them into their homes. Because women are told from early on that they need support to be able to live - support of parents, friends, husbands, and eventually of children - living alone in a house becomes difficult for many. Having said that, UNFPA's report shows that older women accept their living arrangements more readily, even if that means living alone (Giridhar, Subaiya, & Verma, 2015).

> *"I live alone. After my husband passed away, I live alone. [...] My boys don't look after me. My relatives don't talk to my boys. They get angry with them [...] They get angry thinking that they are not taking care of me. I don't fight with anyone; I live a happy life. But what is the purpose of a daughter-in-law, that if I get sick I will have someone to look after me. [...] I don't get sleep. I cry a lot. I do a lot of things. I talk a lot to my children (in my head). Alone. I don't get sleep at all. I stay awake till 4-6 in the morning. After the death of my husband; I became totally alone and it's a horrifying feeling to live alone. It's been 6 years now I am living alone in this flat. Sometimes I go to my neighbour's house to sleep because I don't get sleep in my flat." – Kanta, 65, IDI 25*

Kanta was thankful to her daughter whose "expected" role was not to look after her mother after marriage. Kanta expected her

sons and daughters-in-law to take care of her, but, as she was getting help from her daughter instead, she was grateful for her love and care. Kanta's daughter may have been taking care of her mother because she loved her and was concerned about her, yet, in reality she was exposed to the belief that she was somehow "transgressing" her expected role and adopting the role of her brothers, who were not taking responsibility for their parents. Women who do not receive the support expected from male members of the family may feel depressed and anxious, as in Kanta's case.

Sarala, who had six daughters and shared a space with them, mentioned how her daughters were better than sons, since in her experience sons are not trustworthy. She was also worried about the time when her daughters would leave their natal family after marriage, what her life would become. Both elderly women in our study outlined the same notion, that women are not expected to be responsible for their parents, that women who are, do it out of the goodness of their heart, women who do this are like "men". Rather than being given credit for doing something positive, when women transgress their gender role, there are praised only in so far as they are emulating men's roles. The above examples illustrate that expectations of who should care for whom do not always match well with lived reality: sons may opt not to care for their mothers, older women may still need to care for their daughters, or young women may not be well equipped to adopt a caregiving role for a new family. This highlights the need to balance caregiving duties more equally across the generations and genders in order to reduce women's risk of exposure to GBV.

In summary, our interviews showed that, at various junctures of a woman's life cycle, she faces invalidation from family and other institutions. Continuous repetition of the idea that women's lives are defined by domestic

duties and childrearing, as well as women being in need of "protection", ensures that by the time they are past child rearing age, women start seeing themselves as a burden.

The notion of women as simultaneously a burden to her family, yet as being responsible for the continuation of family, plays out in various stages
1) when women enter into early marriage, the practice of dowry implicitly positions the woman as a financial burden for her natal family;
2) unaware of sexual intimacy, women resort to it (or have it forced upon them) and become mothers at an early age –making motherhood their most important role;
3) in the course of their role as mothers, many women are prohibited from taking decisions that may be good for them, like setting up support structures beyond the family, or attaining financial independence;
4) as they approach old age, because of the socialisation process from their childhood, women's perceived primary function comes to an end – and, as Gauri said in her interview, many come to look forward to "departing" from life. This cycle can make women invalidate their own existence. It is also, we suggest, a critically important driver of GBV which requires addressing: If women are seen as a burden within a family, this may build resentment by other family members, which may be expressed as violence. Additionally, hampering a woman's access to education and well paid work limits her means to escape situations of violence. Empowerment of women, including older women, is possible but not without structural changes to Indian society, not without stressing from childhood onwards that women should work and save their income, so they can support themselves as individuals.

4

"Achieving gender equality is about disrupting the status quo - not negotiating it. "

– Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director, UN Women

Bias and Violence Response & Action

|| With violence we have also found engaging stories of resistance - this gives us a perspective for a way forward.

Having gender bias at the core of our study shows how GBV proliferates in many covert ways. Gender bias is closely related to stereotyped gender norms and gender inequality. Part of the power of these biases comes from the fact that they are not always explicitly articulated: women are simply expected to play certain roles, as are men, and these inform the broader understanding of masculinity and femininity. Bias and violence were not necessarily accepted by all respondents however; it was encouraging to see that some actively questioned established norms, especially when they were exposed to violence. While the examples in the coming chapter show localised, often individual forms of resistance to gender bias and GBV, they may have wider implications for designing strategies to reduce GBV in the Indian context.

Just as resistance by women is significant in understanding subversion, women's help-seeking behaviour can also define our route to more actionable responses to violence. If women need to be made aware of their rights, others should also be aware of those very rights and enable women to seek justice in case of violence. Response of formal systems like police and law enforcement or NGOs and mahila mandals, along with responses of neighbours, friends and family members together can clarify what prevents and what accelerates women's help-seeking. Can we make it easier for women and young girls to be able to take a stand against abuse and violence, to be able to become independent enough and have a better future?

4.1 Violence, bias and resistance – what data says?

One of the complications in relation to these questions is a lack of clarity around what can or should be called resistive acts and how we map those in respondents' narratives. Women's

Gender roles as described by the respondents helped us somewhat to understand the ways women tried to "subvert" those norms in their everyday lives. We also acknowledge that resistance to abuse and bias has myriad ways of presenting. Sometimes these acts of resistance are conscious, other times unconscious, being tactically played by women in order to navigate their lives. In the larger picture, whether micro-subversive acts can bring about social or collective change is a question we were left with and which we aim to address in this section.

"Resistance" comes with a history of being used symbolically and politically in class struggle. James Scott has expressed how the word has been viewed as a large-scale political action, and the "everyday" forms of resistance that challenge status quo are often overlooked (Scott, 2008). Subordinated groups challenge hegemonic narratives of State and society to make their lives liveable in implicit and explicit mundane acts. While Scott wrote specifically about peasants' rebellion against State authority, we found the same was true of many women in our study. Conversely, there were women who were opposed to rebellion or resistance due to expected backlash from family and community.

> *"M: Is a man a must for the family?*
>
> *R: Yes.*
>
> *M: Why do you feel this way?*
>
> *R: If the woman is not working how can she earn, how will she run the family?"*
> *– Madhu, 60, IDI 14*

We have categorised women's responses to control as:
a) ideological resistance;
b) explicit acts of resistance;
c) covert acts of resistance; and
d) challenging institutions.

An important but difficult change to bring about is one that requires questioning of our own belief systems and ideologies. We asked women about normative gender roles to get an idea of their beliefs around the same; the answers were quite diverse. We also gave men a chance to respond to and resist gender bias, some of whom showed interest in understanding transgression. In FGD 7 (young men who had spent time in juvenile observation homes), we heard mixed opinions on whether participants had changed their perceptions of the world. On one hand they spoke about how women's participation in public spaces has increased, with benefits for both women and men:

> *"In our office, questions were raised around the need to hire women for work. Our Sir had told us that the amount of dedication that women can put into work is much more than what men can. This is why we created a women's team in our NGO, one which can work with full concentration and dedication. They were very good at their work and no mistakes were made. [...] None of my friends are from the field of social work, but I am there. I talk to them. They work in the field of automobiles and others, but I always talk to them about laws and other such things and in fact, ask them to engage with the field of social work too. I made one person join this field." – FGD 7*

However, the men seemed particularly ambivalent about changes to address gender inequality, especially where changes in the legal framework were involved. The same respondent also expressed his dislike of how laws are advantageous to women:

> *"Everything that the government is doing at present is for girls. It is believed that mistakes are always made by boys. Through my travels*

> *to many places and experiences on the field I have seen that it is not the boy's mistake always, girls also make mistakes, but no one listens to boys, without listening properly people assume that the boy is wrong. One must study the entire case, do all kinds of verification and only then draw a concluding result. [...] When I was here, I had once seen that a girl and a boy had made a mistake and eloped, but if the police was holding up the boy for so many days why did they let the girl go in just one day? She had also committed a mistake, right? The police cannot penalise them differently in such a case. It is not the family who engages in differential treatment, it is the government." – FGD 7*

Commonly amongst our male participants, responses to women misusing the law came out clearly. Men did say that women do not deserve violence whether in the workplace or at home, but mostly they continued to believe that women face violence for transgressing gender roles. Positive bias towards women (positive discrimination) in laws was often criticised by our male participants. That equality is achievable without States' intervention towards persons who have been subjugated for centuries is the underlying belief which makes people question positive bias. All men we spoke to indicated that they subscribed to the belief that women should be empowered, but positive gender bias, much like affirmative action as a means of uplift, was not seen by them as acceptable. The respondent below explicated the double standard he views as associated with women's empowerment narratives, noting that women's choice in clothing is not easily acceptable to men who still think that women "ask for it" when they transgress traditional norms of "modest" femininity.

> *"Girls should stop wearing jeans-pant, because it riles up the boys, when girls wear dress (salwar suit), no one sees them. Boys*

say, who will look at this girl? But when she wears jeans pant, then they think that she is a pathaka (bomb). So, they should stop wearing jeans-pant." – FGD 6

Above is one example among many of victim blaming from men of our study. There were several instances where men directly advised women to conform to prescribed gender roles to avoid conflict.

Interestingly women also showed some signs of ambivalence when it came to challenging beliefs around normative gender roles, transgression and violence. Seema, a middle-aged woman whose husband was violent towards her, enough for her to stop living in the same space with him, said:

"M: You told me about going out of line. What do you not like about women who are out of line?

R: They should not be doing rubbish things with boys.

M: What are those rubbish things?

R: They roam around with boys, that is rubbish. I say live with respect. Our neighbours or relatives should not come and say anything wrong about them."
– Seema, 45, IDI 20

Like Seema, many women challenged a specific patriarchal notion that was closely related to their own lived experience, retaining other aspects of conformity that were unrelated to their situation or simply not admissible in their minds. Our data shows us that women who have been in extremely difficult situations are often not aware of the many other kinds of violence or violation of rights of other women, making it difficult for them

to actually look at women's issues in a holistic way. Reeti, who married at 29, faced extreme natal family violence which drove her to decide to marry and move to her marital family home. During the interview she explained that women who face violence need to be strong enough to report it to the authorities, otherwise they will not be able to seek justice. Her stand is also the stand of many other activists; if violence happens then the "victim" has to take immediate action.[16]

"[...] If it is too difficult and your husband is not agreeing at all then leave it in the beginning itself rather than making yourself miserable after living with him for four years. There is no need to have an unnecessary struggle as you being a woman can do household work and sustain. It is wrong when you stay with him and say you have been tortured. There are times when women need to take the necessary steps, and not think about what people, the society will say. Nobody is saying anything and stopping you from progressing in life. You reveal that all this has happened and come out of it by taking a quick decision. Or else stay away for six months; if he cares he will come back, else start living alone as nobody is going to be with you till the last minute of your life." – Reeti, 31, IDI 24

Although Reeti's observation that women need to resist "what people, the society will say" to escape violent situations is shrewd, this excerpt arguably underplays the challenges and complexities of victims' responses to systemic violence. For example, and as discussed in previous sections, women's inaction can result from reasons that include fear of the consequences, not being believed, judgement and being shamed by others, and lack of economic independence. Reeti had managed to leave her

site of abuse, her natal family, and perhaps this made it difficult for her to understand women who continue to stay in abusive situations. While her decision to act against abuse is commendable, it is perhaps surprising that she was unable to adopt a more sympathetic view of the predicaments of other women. Blaming women for "misusing law" or not taking a "quick decision" against violence indicates that respondents believe the onus is only on women to change their surroundings and situations. Rabia's narrative, by contrast, demonstrated an ideological shift towards recognition of how gender roles fuel violence. Rabia's long journey from abuse to recovery and eventually becoming a leader is uplifting. In her story we found several instances where she ideologically opposed gender roles:

"Daughters are the best, sons will get a wife and make a separate family with his wife. But daughters are such...like I stood up for my mother and my mother for me, that a son will not do. So that is why people's mindset needs to change. In this generation daughter is best. Today in which field is a girl not ahead? What a girl can do a boy cannot do. [...]

M: What about marriage for your boys?

R: I don't think about it now. If marriage happens then it should be peaceful. Everyone should be free, both me and my daughter-in-law. She can do anything with her life, and so can I. I shouldn't hear her say behind my back tauntingly, my mother-in-law is too modern. You (daughter-in-law) can do the same things as freely as my daughter. If this understanding is maintained, then we both can get along well." – Rabia, 36, IDI 41

4.1.2   Everyday explicit acts of resistance

In a context where powerful gender norms operate, visible forms of resistance can help usher in tangible changes. Our study suggests

that challenging gender norms and negative gender bias is an important way to prevent GBV. We saw that non-normative expression and experience in women's lives can help them counter the status quo and violence they would otherwise have faced. Judith Butler's theories on resistance and subversion are important to consider here. She has written, in "What is Critique? An Essay on Foucault's Virtue" (2002) and "Critique, Dissent, Disciplinarity" (2009), that critiquing the morality of authority can be seen as resistance. She also notes that this questioning of morality, if it is to effect change, requires continuous tactical practice. Therefore, how our respondents openly critiqued normative expectations and roles is of great significance to our research.

"My brother-in-law got married and my mother-in-law did not show us the girl, the girl was only 13 years old and he was 32 years [...] the girl came looking at their property thinking the family is very well off. In my brother-in-law's name there was nothing, because they all stay together. I was shocked to see such a small girl, even my own daughter was 8 years old. [...] I told in front of everybody, he's marrying such a young girl, to which my husband asked me to sit quietly. [...] then I said, I will not allow for this marriage to happen! My husband said for his sake to not utter a word or meddle as we have not married in this village. I said, so what if we have not, have you seen our daughter?!!"
– Farah, 38, IDI 36

What comes through clearly in Farah's defiance of her husband and his family's decision is her stand against socially accepted child-marriage. As discussed, child marriage is one among many patriarchal traditions that places women at a high risk of GBV, and which prevents them from actualising their potential. Taking a stand against a normative practice shows Farah's dissent to authority in an explicit way – and, what is more, it prevented a girl being exposed to a potentially

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16 *In FGD 3 with middle-aged lower income males a discussion came up about a sexual harassment allegation against an experienced old actor from the Bollywood film industry. This case received some twitter and news media attention. The survivor, a young actress reported that she was harassed by him during filming of one of their films back in the mid-2000s but eventually after police probe the male actor was given a clean chit. The discussion during the FGD was interesting as many of the respondents said she was maligning his image to gain publicity, and this was an old accusation without proof. Several of the respondents of this particular FGD agreed that, "[...] Girls will do sex with men and show it like he forced her. And the man is stuck, because he did it with her consent."*

risky and violent situation. Her response to her husband in particular shows resistance not only to moral values but also the normative belief that husbands occupy higher status than wives.

Nayna, aged just 18, shared her conflict with authority: her mother, because of her own socialisation, told her about an age-old custom, one which she wanted to defy. Finding a teacher who supported her disbelief about girls not entering temples during periods gave her the confidence to challenge an archaic custom. Finding no reason for the custom, Nayna realised such beliefs were unfounded. She challenged authority by acting on her own belief and defying normative expectations by going to temples even when she is on her period. The act of stepping outside of her home and claiming a public space, the temple ground, was Nayna's unambiguous rejection of traditional norms that restrict women. Both Farah and Nayna, from their own social locations, exemplify resistance to harmful and biased patriarchal traditions.

> *"[...] Our teachers told us that we can go to temples, I asked my mother, and she said no, I cannot go to temple during periods. There is a lot of confusion. Teachers say that we can go to the temple during period and mother says I cannot go.*
>
> *M: What do you do?*
>
> *R: I go to the temple, I think we can go to the temple, that it is not wrong. God has given us this, and why should we hide from god? I go.*
>
> *M: Mom does not oppose?*
>
> *R: She says, god will curse me."*
>
> *– Nayna, 18, IDI 15*

4.1.3   Everyday covert acts of resistance

Acts of resistance by women that are less visible or even undetectable do not get as much attention. In our study many women showed these more implicit forms of resistance to violence and negative bias in their everyday lives. No matter how insignificant the resistance looks, in the broader context, it does challenge and can even weaken authority. Mila Tuli quotes Vinthagen and Johansson,

> *"The routine, non-dramatic and non-confrontational character of everyday resistance has led some authors to suggest that everyday resistance provides a "continuum" between open confrontation and unseen agitation and further proof of the belief that resistance is actually built into our daily existence. (Vinthagen & Johansson, 2013)" (Tuli, 2017)*

Respondents indicated that everyday resistance is built into their lives, whether they are aware of this is another question to address. More than 50% of our respondents have said something against negative gender bias or have shared with us their ways of resisting violence. The interviews capture many methods women use to negotiate their lives, here we will capture some of the most important iterations of the same.

Indu, 40 years old, who belonged to a middle income household expressed her unsatisfactory relationship with her husband with a sense of humour. She wasn't exposed to physical or sexual abuse although she felt her relationship had worsened because her husband's behaviour towards her had changed. Even though she has faced verbal abuse and was publicly shamed by him, her unique approach to explaining her situation made us smile.

> *"No he does not do anything. He simply drinks and eats. Sometimes he acts like a demon, so I have named him Rakshas. He starts giving lecture like Narendra Modi. The minute he starts talking we call him Narendra Modi. We eat our food and go and watch TV [...] So I cook and eat, I keep his food on the table, clean the kitchen, finish all my work as the*

> *maid does not come in the night [...] and if my husband starts talking too much then we simply ignore him and go away."*
> *– Indu, 40, IDI 9*

Out of the 42 women respondents we interviewed, it was only a few who found comedy as one of the coping mechanisms. Our respondents explained at length how they were regularly violated and "talking back" or sometimes "talking behind" the perpetrator's back can be "non-confrontational" kind of resistance. Indu found her middle-ground between overt and "unseen agitation" by "name calling" her husband and at times just ignoring him. Not giving husbands the due respect that society asks of wives is a stand that some women take to resist patriarchal expectations. Sometimes, these forms of resistance extended to gender relations beyond marriage:

> *"And when this guy who used to try to hit on me, I asked him, don't you have a mother or a sister? I told him, chutiya (slang) if you try to hit on me on the phone again then I will smack your face with my slippers! He liked these words I spoke, and he was like in that day and age this girl is so straight forward. [...] He then apologized and asked me to be his friend. I said I would be his friend, but that he should not disturb me or come to meet me, to see how I look. [...]" – Ritu, 33, IDI 38*

Ritu's experience with a man speaks volumes about how women face constant harassment at the hands of men. Ritu's response to her then male friend who first tried to hit on her was harsh and abusive, yet necessary. Men's persistence in finding a partner has been represented on the big screen, from where many men take inspiration. Stalking is considered a serious crime in India with legislation that supports women, even then instances of stalking-related crimes, both online and physical, have continued. Mumbai itself saw 513 incidences of just stalking in 2018. (National

Crime Records Bureau, 2019) Ritu's firm stand against her pursuer made an impact on him because of the straightforward reprimand, Ritu continued to engage with him over the phone that ultimately led to her marriage with the same individual who earlier harassed her. Ritu's story explicates how harsh language can be used in a way to resist abuse, like Indu's comic approach Ritu resorted to a more aggressive approach. Alternatively this story also shows how men wear women down slowly to get what they want, sometimes using inferred violence. Ritu's decision in choosing a husband can be seen as agentic as well as socially constructed. On the one hand she resisted social norms and chose her partner, on the other she chose the very person who had been her perpetrator. Proving that women's lived realities are complex and resistance is governed by situational factors.

Women use language and imagination together to challenge their perpetrators as evidenced above. Similarly, they also resist violence by physically removing themselves (sometimes temporarily) from sites of violence to protect themselves. We have shown in this report some of the complications that come with marriage; one specific issue that controls women's lives is moving in to the marital home, this further heightens the possibility of conflict. Women in our study often expressed their wish to have a separate home after marriage, and in some instances, women had managed to live separately, as in the case of Chanda. For other women, leaving the site of abuse would mean taking temporary refuge at another "friend's" home, or even going outside for a small walk.

> *"Me, my family, my jeth (husband's elder brother) and jethani (his wife), mother-in-law. [...] All live nearby. Houses are near each other. Hence, I lived separately during my pregnancy. When I used to live alone, mornings would be so pleasant, I loved my life then, felt like my life was just beginning.*

I never had a life there before that. There it was me, my husband, that time he would earn a bit, and my daughter, who was not admitted to school yet." – Chanda, 33, IDI 13

"M: Do you like when you come here and talk to her? Is there some amount of relief?

R: Yes, I feel that once I step outside my house my sorrows are all gone, I feel tension free. Or else I will be doing my work at home, get children from school, stay at home. I don't go anywhere else." – Pooja, 40, IDI 16

Mobility restrictions can be defied openly as was done by Nayna by rebelling against her mother's instructions. Or this can be done silently, as a way of not only rebelling against, but also coping with violence, as by Pooja. One thing is clear, all women in their own ways are trying to disrupt the everyday norms impinging them as and how they feel the need to. It is impossible to see resistive acts without context. To explore women's everyday resistance, we also have to learn about social locations and how transgression of social norms is constructed in the moment.

4.1.4   Challenging institutions

Another important act of defiance women respondents shared was challenging institutions – primarily, marriage. Most of the women we spoke to who stayed in abusive relationships did not see separation as an option. For various reasons they put it down to fate and sought strength from their faith to help them sustain, instead of taking steps to prevent it. Very few women had taken conscious steps actually to leave abusive situations. Five women from our study reported that they had separated from their husbands, of whom two also sought divorce – which can be seen as an act of resistance through challenging the institution of marriage. Other women who wished to separate from

their partners felt unable to take such measures because of family, societal pressure and children.

Sheba's marriage was announced by the time she turned 18, and in about 15 days, after only one meeting with the groom, she was hurriedly married. Recalling the 15 days she spent in her marital home she described her in-laws picking on her when her cooking "fell short" and taunting her for her looks since she was "dark" and did not fit into the standard "beauty" paradigm. Her husband's gambling addiction was also an issue. The process of divorce was quite onerous for her, yet she managed it alone. Another participant, Josie, showed how leaving her site of abuse was self-affirming and showed her to be resilient. However, she also struggled with indecision about her separation.

"Then I was like enough is enough, to hell with it and I separated. My parents were supportive at that time. Very much. They helped me a lot. My second pregnancy was more or less at my parents' house. [...] But then it takes lot of courage and lot of guts to come up to that level. Once you are out of a marriage it takes lot of courage to live independently. I am glad I did it." – Josie, 50, IDI 22

"Your morale is down when you go through abuse, when you go through separation (voice shakes). Only thing that gets affected is your morale and you. I don't know why we have to go through that because it is a good thing that now we have broken norms and come out of that situation, but we don't feel like that. Deep within we still feel that we did something wrong and we should have tried harder. Maybe things would have changed. I think that hope makes us feel more down. Especially females." – Josie, 50, IDI 22

Josie's hesitation shows how very difficult it is to challenge powerful institutions like marriage.

Women in our study sometimes ended up blaming themselves for not being able to have the life promised to them – another important reason holding women back from separation or divorce. Walking out of marriage means disrupting normative family structures which, as we saw in our previous analysis of marriage experiences, can lead to social stigma and blame. Josie was able to take this decision as her parents finally noticed the violence she was enduring and chose to take her side and give her the support she needed to leave. Women who have had the courage to challenge institutions and have saved themselves from more violence deserve admiration. Josie, Sheba and others like them have managed to find their space in society even after questioning the sanctity of marriage. Walking out of violence and abuse is symbolic of critiquing systematic and structural inequalities.

4.2 Bias and bystander apathy

In our field work, we found that belief in normative gender roles prevents people from taking any real action against GBV. An important discovery from our data was that many people close to victims of GBV, such as family, friends and neighbours, did not help them in times of need. Instead, they either did nothing, or took the side of the perpetrator and defended acts of violence on women.

"I have a neighbour family who have three young daughters, husband wants a boy, and they have fights because of that. That is the root of their fights. We can also hear them fighting. He says, we have three girls, it is not my fault, I want a boy surely. Sometimes even mother comes in between in the fight. Sometimes their fight spills out. [...] I thought of saying this once or twice, but then my wife said, don't get into others' fight, it is their fight; it will reach our house, that is not necessary." – Respondent 6, FGD 1

"It will be like an interference if I try to ask, I cannot ask the girl, I would have to interact with the man. I cannot judge based on that day's situation only. And eventually it will revert back on me, who are you to ask, don't interfere. The man can take out his frustration on me." – Respondent 3, FGD 2

When people do not take action while witnessing an episode or continuous violence and abuse we can assume that they are bystanders. This is particularly harmful when trying to prevent GBV because survivors may not be able to survive situations of abuse without some sort of support for either friends or families or at least neighbours. (Snell-Rood, 2015) Neighbours or community members believe that helping in "private matters" will be problematic for them since they are not a part of the couple's dynamics. They feel scared of speaking up against the violence lest it makes them fall in trouble. Respondent 3 shows an instance of a witness not taking any action to help the "victim" or prosecute the perpetrator, also known as the "bystander effect", wherein responsibility of the onlooker is diffused.

The classic "bystander" research championed Bystander apathy is a well-known phenomenon in social psychology. It is perhaps most closely associated with the work of Darley and Latané, who showed that unfamiliar bystanders do not act in conflict situations because they are confused about whether and how to respond. They write, "nonintervening subjects had not decided not to respond. Rather they were still in a state of indecision and conflict concerning whether to respond or not." (Darley, 1968). They went on to describe how "bystander apathy" is less to do with "personality deficiencies" and more to do with witnesses' response to other onlookers. In the above excerpts, men shared with us the reasons for non-intervention, either they didn't think it was their responsibility, or

they were concerned about facing violence because of their intervention. Since both the excerpts signal men's generic reluctance to address conflict among unknown or lesser known people, the indecision described by Darley and Latané may be an important factor in their inaction. But what happens when the bystander is familiar to the perpetrator and/ or the victim? Can this be seen as mere indecision, or does this indecision and subsequent inaction stem from a gender bias ingrained to some extent in all people?

Our data has evidenced that "bystander apathy" can be a prominent factor in the perpetuation of GBV in India, especially when it comes from close or known members of the survivor's circle. While men explained the reasons for their inaction, women respondents also referred to the inaction of other women in their lives when they were in a state of need.

> *"My sister-in-law was there, she got married one year after my marriage, and she was double of any mother-in-law. (laughing) She was older than me, but she was younger than my husband, she was educated, but her behaviour was that of an uneducated person. She felt that bhabhi (respondent) should be kept under control. Even speaking too loudly meant I was getting out of her control. She never smiled and spoke to me with care."*
> *– Reba, 40, IDI 2*

> *"[...] nobody knew about it. Only when things went to extreme my parents came to know. My neighbours also heard sounds, but they pretended that everything is fine. [...] I used to go to work and nobody in the office knew what I was going through. I used to take leaves saying I am not well. Something used to happen at home and I would have swollen eye, black eye, or my wrist would be swollen. I would not go to work for 2 days, but 3rd day when I went back to work people felt that everything was okay..." – Josie, 50, IDI 22*

Peers and neighbours along with relatives showed apathy to the extent that Josie could hide her abuse from everyone for nearly three years. Reba's situation was similar; her abusive husband's sister, who knew about her abuse, flatly refused to help her in any way, wanting to keep her under "control" so that she would execute only her wifely duties. Both of these instances show bystanders not taking the survivors' problems seriously enough to act on them. We suggest that in these cases, people who were witnessing regular abusive behaviour without taking a stand were doing so because of the bias against the woman/wife they had internalised, perhaps thinking that domestic violence is a "private" matter. We can see in our data that women facing GBV within the domestic space are not only not finding support from people close to them, but in fact they are sometimes advised to continue facing the violence.

> *"M: How was your relationship with your husband [...]?*
>
> *R: Good.*
>
> *M: But earlier you sad that he didn't speak up for you?*
>
> *R: Yes, even now he won't. He never took anyone's side. He used to tell everyone to adjust and live peacefully together. He said, let people do what they are doing, you do your own thing.*
>
> *M: He would say the same thing even when he saw you face so much violence?*
>
> *R: Yes. He would ask me to bear with it, or to just let it be. [...] Even now he says the same thing when my daughter-in-law is misbehaving..." – Devi, 55, IDI 8*

In Devi's case her perpetrators were her in-laws and not her husband, but his complicity is noteworthy. People expect women simply

to adjust to whatever situation is thrust upon them, right from a young age through to the very end of their lives. Having this belief makes people dismiss the threats women face inside their homes, evidencing that bias, complicity and bystander apathy can come together to enable GBV. Inaction can never be the answer to a situation where one person is being violated in front of another person, but bystanders need to be able to help the survivor without getting hurt themselves – and, for that matter, without placing the survivor at greater risk. Intervention strategies need to be developed according to the context of the violent situation. If gender bias keeps bystanders inactive, those who have overcome their biases and have taken a stand may be able to explicate the process undertaken to enrich bystander intervention models in India.

4.3 Women helping other women, who/ what helped most

Women being violent towards other women is a recurring theme in our study because patriarchal attitudes and normative beliefs are ingrained throughout society. In spite of this, we also found evidence of women transgressing their prescribed roles and helping one another. Our data is replete with examples of women reaching out to women in their time of need. We have also encountered instances where other people, including men, have intervened in abusive situations to help women. As evidenced earlier, women need to know about each other's problems in order to be conscious of the enormity of domestic abuse, making it doubly important for women survivors to speak about their abuse, to build a network of support. One of the factors that hinders the building of this network is women's difficulty in deciding whether to ask for help in the first place. Doing so means challenging age-old norms and shaking up the gender roles that keep women confined.

> *"M: Have you ever felt that your issues are so grave that you need to seek someone's help?*
>
> *R: I don't involve anyone too much. I don't even tell my mom. [...] It is not so bad, he does not beat me up every day. [...] For mental torture what should I do, if I complain once they (police) will take him and it will be me who will lose respect. After all I have to stay right here isn't it? – Indu, 40, IDI 9*

> *"M: What do you think – police, government, law, can they help in such matters?"*
>
> *R: They can help women who are highly educated, what can women like me do, we are not well educated. We need to even look after children. If we go out for job, then who will look after the child? And when children grow up then their expenses increase monthly. We need to first look after our child only." – Sarita, 35, IDI 5*

Indu and Sarita show us two different reasons why women find it difficult to seek help without any external support. Both women highlighted that they see no possibility of leaving their abusive husbands either because the violence they were facing was, in their view, "insignificant", or due to the lack of access to and trust in law enforcement agencies. Lack of access to education and financial resources were also highlighted, once again, in Sarita's account. These reasons were reiterated by many other participants. To transform women's situations, it is clear that widespread changes to improve women's access to resources that provide independence are required. However, equally importantly, the instances where women have asked for help and other women have understood and come out to help, require highlighting.

> *"M: Your sisters studied because of you, would you help anyone if you see them in trouble?*
>
> *R: Yes. There are two girls, they are my neighbours, they also have family problems*

like me. Brother drinks and beats them, they ask me, will you take me to Mahila Mandal (women's support group)? I told them that I will help them. Those who go through problems know and understand other's problems too. [...] actually whatever you are doing is a very good job. There should be something good for women and I don't want anyone to face all the bad things which I faced in life so I will stand for anyone."
– Reba, 40, IDI 2

Reba also helped arrange an interview with her young neighbour who was facing abuse at her home from her brother. We were fortunate to be able to speak with Sayli because Reba helped us get in touch with her, proving that women are indeed helpful of other women, especially when they are survivors themselves. Reba's helpful attitude was because she learnt from her marriage that women should not be hurriedly married off, which was Sayli's brother's intention. Common interest and experience shared between Sayli and Reba's shows solidarity. Reba's question: why women should not be allowed to study and married off instead, helped Sayli to question that same norm.

From survivors helping other women in similar condition to survivors being helped by women to survive and come out of difficulties both are necessary to prevent GBV.

"[...] When I was getting the divorce, we had gone to the court, we all were very quiet, but my mother was very angry, and she wanted a way to fight, as they had spoiled and ruined my life. From my childhood my mother has been very close to me, I have shared with her everything before doing it. Even if I want to make a friend I have asked my mother first."
– Sheba, 21, IDI 33

As well as emotional support, women have also given one another financial help to set up a

different life. Support can be given even if there are no common experiences to share between women. Empathy and support are not exclusive to women with similarities, in fact, in Jaya's case her didi was also her employer who gave her extensive personal support.

"M: How do you want to make your home?

R: Work hard, make money and then do something. My madam is also ready to help me. We had nothing in this house, fridge, cupboard, etc. before. I have bought some of this and paid in monthly instalments. Even somethings for my children's school I have taken from her. Didi (elder sister) is also helping me out. She says if I am good then everything is good. [...] I have been beaten with a stump. I tell Didi, he hit me. I tell her with a laugh, but what do I do? Even if I am sick, it doesn't reflect on my face."

– Jaya, 33, IDI 35

Women have also shown structural support for one another. Rabia started her own organisation to help acid attack survivors lead a dignified life. Her experiences showed her that women need a variety of structural changes in their lives to fight violence.

"When people like me talk about these topics of facing violence, other people have the space to voice their problems too. Awareness means bringing out the truth that people wish to share. To teach them that you can fight for justice. Like I can give you my own example, I started my foundation in 2016, I survived through so much of violence, I still managed to help 9 women do their surgeries, managed to get 3 victims married even. So, if more people like me come out then problems can reduce, and that is our goal, to reduce the filth of this society." – Rabia, 36, IDI 41

Without women supporting one another there cannot be any real change, but men need to be included in this equation too. Even though most men showed less interest in helping women fight violence, without their help society cannot be restructured. It is necessary to encourage men to intervene instead of being passive bystanders, and to educate men about what kind of intervention to use.

"M2: Suppose you are walking down the road and you see a woman being harassed. What do you do?

R2: I would have hit the perpetrators.

R1: Before coming here I would have hit them too, but now I would have dealt with it legally. First, I would have called the police and then held up the harassers till the police would come.

R2: If the girl is asking for help then everyone would do the same, beaten up the perpetrators.

R1: If 1 person hits then a whole mob will gather around to beat up the boy.

R3: If it is at night, I will take action. But if it is a public place and 10 people are already at it then I will probably not." – FGD 7

In the above excerpt young men share their concerns about violence on the streets and how to tackle it. However, it is notable that these participants suggest that they would respond to violence with further violence – we suspect this is likely to be an unhelpful intervention. This may be because the need for intervention and how best to intervene are not clearly explained to people. Changing men's attitudes to GBV will not be possible if they are not encouraged to question the balance of power between genders – and especially to question violence as a solution to conflicts. The above respondents show that they are still unsure if they would help

a woman who is being violated in public and according to them, women automatically get help from bystanders in an unsafe situation. Men need to know that it is each individual's responsibility to support and safeguard all members of society, because only widespread challenges to GBV will reduce harm. Both men and women require education about understanding violent or abusive situations, and choosing the best strategies for intervention to prevent violence.

4.4 Formal systems response

Women we spoke to were generally against approaching law enforcement agencies or NGOs to address the abuse they were facing. Further research is called for to investigate why women feel that they cannot approach formal systems or official organisations in times of need, although our data does provide some useful insights for explain women's reluctance to seek help.

"M: If your friend comes to you and says that her father is beating her what advice would you give?

R: There are NGOs, she can take help from them. One of my friend's father would start scolding her before she even came to college. Sometimes she would come right after getting beaten. [...] She took help from a women's organisation. They helped her for some time, after which her father thought that his daughter was going against him and for some time situation was okay. Then the organisation people stopped going to their house, and the torture has started again.

M: Do you think these NGOs are doing any help?

R: They don't take immediate action; they take a lot of time. And in between all of that, family members brainwash about what to do, and what not to." – Nayna, 18, IDI 15

Nayna's response to NGO interventions also succinctly explains one of the limitations with women's organisations, and why women choose to avoid reaching out. Nayna points out that it is not that NGOs do not try and help, but according to her it is unsustainable help. The last significant factor that Nayna explains is about family members brainwashing the survivors to stop seeking help from outside authorities because the family would then "lose respect". Any successful intervention must take the difficult but necessary approach of explaining to women with care that they should not endure violence because of family values or respect.

Similar responses were found among women regarding police intervention. In fact, many women who had approached the police for help found them to be unhelpful, or even complicit in violence:

> *"Once I had gone to the police station. He said that you are from a good family, you know how things happen, you might have seen it on TV, and you don't have money. How will you spend so much money? He asked me to leave it. […] The police said that my husband will face consequences of whatever he does, and I should not take any tension."*
> *– Asha, 50, IDI 18*

> *"M: Have you thought of police complaint?*

> *R: No, if I complain to the police, they will take him and beat him for 2 days. Again he will come back, then where will I go? Now I am dependent on him." – Pooja, 40, IDI 16*

In the experience of the women we spoke to, their complaints were not given any importance and women are aware of this issue with law enforcement. Even men are aware of police not intervening in domestic violence cases.

> *"R6: Police persons have also become smart, they are not interested in small cases, they*

> *come, see and leave. Where they see big cases, where they will get big money, then they will take up. That is why NGOs work." – FGD 5*

All our women respondents had agency in their own ways, they showed resilience in the face of abuse, they rebelled against authority, they resisted gender norms, but in the absence of support from formal systems, these efforts did not have longevity.

So what happens when everyday subversive acts are not sustained for longer periods? We noticed that most of these acts of resistance were very much at the surface level, and were also specific to personal contexts. When there was a shift in the situational factors women were quick to fall back into violent situations, and into subscribing to gender norms that underpin them. Taking a feminist approach would mean translating agency into action over the longer term. For women to be able to have a dignified existence free from GBV, access to justice and social change at both micro and macro levels is crucial. On this point, grassroots mobilisation within urban spaces could be one useful tactic. As our findings on women's mutual support suggest, efforts to increase positive resistance should include informing women that there are others in similar situations and that mobilising is essential for social change. Since cosmopolitan cities like Mumbai have an extremely diverse population composition, any mobilising will need to be cross-cultural. The following section collates recommended actions necessary to change people's attitudes towards GBV.

Journey of Rabia

Rabia, 36 ✔

Acid attack survivor divorced with 4 children.

Started her own NGO for acid attack surviors

Childhood
- *No Tension, no work*
- *Just ate and enjoyed*
- *Use to dress up like a boy and also use to behave like one, being bold*
- *Working mother, father passed away*
- *6 sisters (no brothers)*
- *Studying in 8std - interupted to marry*

Adolescence
- *Consumed poison (twice) to avoid marriage*
- *Post consuming poison in ICU for a month*

Marriage
- *Got forcefully married at the age of 13*
- *Husband 6years older*
- *1year - Treatment for mental health*
- *First child (Girl) at the age of 15*
- *Husband left and came back after 2 years*
- *Stayed with Rabia's mother, husband very violent*
- *Ate age of 21 had Triplets (2B,1G)*
- *Soon after the birth her mother made her husband leave after an instance of violence*
- *Got divorce in 2009*

Post - Marriage
- *Mother was a constant support until her death*
- *Acid attack by elder sister and her husband for money and property.*
- *Had to work odd jobs to meet expenses. Even begged to feed her 4 toddlers*
- *Got a job as a social worker with an NGO to provide legal aid to acid attack survivors. Got support to start an NGO to provide complete structural support to acid attack survivors.*

Our data is informed by rigorous qualitative research; we interviewed 42 women and conducted focus groups with 47 men. We have highlighted several intersecting themes that emerged from participants' responses to the primary research questions we developed. Our interview questions were developed after conducting a systematic literature review, which was a metasynthesis of studies conducted in India addressing the issue of gender roles, anti-female biases and their links with GBV. We found that the imbalance of power between men and women was typically the result of gender norms that construct binary and opposing beliefs about gender roles within people. This dichotomous view of men and women gives way to deploying double standards in everyday realities; we created a set of themes and questions to investigate how gender norms (and biases) predict this duality.

Conclusion & Key Insights

Primary research questions:

We asked women about what gender bias is and how that links to violence. We questioned them about family structures, violence and its effects on families and children, how abusive situations can be avoided, and prevented. We also wanted to know from women how they remain resilient in the face of violence, how they resist it, and what kinds of support women expect.
Of men we asked how they understand gender bias and its link with GBV, their perspectives on what factors lead to GBV. We asked about how men look at normative gender roles and family structures, the relationship of that with GBV. Most importantly we asked men how they think they can help bring an end to GBV, and what kinds of support they think are necessary for women's empowerment.

In conversation with both men and women, our team recognised some key areas that affect GBV and how those emerge from attitudes of negative gender bias against females. To recap briefly, we identified four key areas where the links between gender bias and GBV were most apparent. First, we found that men and women had distinct, but overlapping, understandings of gender bias and GBV. While GBV was part of many of our women respondents' lived realities, men understood bias and GBV in different ways – for example, pro-woman laws were seen by some as examples of GBV against men. Importantly, both men

and women frequently normalised violence and engaged in its transmission through the generations. Mothers-in-law, in particular, were often seen to act in violent and biased ways towards their daughters-in-law, or to condone their sons' violent behaviour. Additionally, both men and women often subscribed to a binary view of gender, with men and women playing fundamentally distinct roles. Second, marriage was seen as a key site where gender bias and norms were promulgated and policed. Specific marriage and family-related practices, such as child marriage and dowry, were seen to place women in especially vulnerable situations with respect to GBV. Our third chapter focused on the everyday devaluing of women's perspectives, for example through denying girls access to education and gainful employment, silencing women's narratives, and through restriction of women to the private sphere. While this devaluing can be seen in itself as what we have called epistemic violence, it also places women at increased risk of GBV within their homes, by curtailing their options to identify escape routes. For instance, a lack of financial independence makes it difficult for women to seek alternative housing arrangements, and a lack of knowledge about available forms of formal and informal support for women experiencing GBV hampers women's attempts to seek help. Finally, and to end on a more encouraging note, we identified instances and tactics employed by women – and sometimes men – to resist GBV, and to challenge the forms of bias that underpin it. Despite a frequent lack of support from formal systems, we saw examples of women helping other women to escape violent situations and to rebuild their lives. Additionally, we saw some participants consciously articulating gender biases and challenging them head-on. Based on these findings, we will now highlight a set of themes and action points that require addressing to prevent and reduce the incidence of GBV in India.

// Re-imagine gender roles

Our study showed how gender roles affect women and men over time, solidifying normative and patriarchal stereotypes. Most women and men showed they had a deeply held binary construction of masculinity and femininity, inherited through years of socialisation. The duality between genders manifested through social norms promoting double standards where men and boys are given preference over women and girls. The following themes are proposed to help combat patriarchal imaginations of gender roles in society.

Double-standards in society need address, equity of genders promoted:
We suggest that, at the heart of all instances of GBV we examined in this study is a gender double standard that exists in India. Male and female genders are governed by different rules and are judged differently on their conformity with and transgression of prescribed roles. Affirmative action is necessary to undo the historic denigration of women, because it is difficult to see how GBV can be reduced while women are tied to restrictive roles which place them in risky, violent situations. However, where laws and schemes exist to promote women's rights and autonomy, unfortunately we saw in our data that often men believe such laws are "biased" against them. Future interventions should aim to help men realise that empowering women's personal growth and autonomy will ultimately enrich all of our lives.

Tackling daughter aversion and son preference:
The existence of daughter aversion is as clear as son preference in India. Young girls are considered a "burden" even before they begin to form their self-image. Sons on the other hand are seen as harbingers of security and have many

more resources allocated to them. Patriarchal beliefs that sons are supposed to carry forward lineage, or that they will be the ones taking care of the family economically at all times, help construct an idealised image of masculinity. Young girls' guardians provoke negative bias by devaluing femininity, women's work and their purpose.

Action points
1. NGOs and municipal schooling should promote and build awareness of gender bias within society through programmes specifically highlighting double standards.

2. These programmes should try and explain, among other things, the historical marginalisation of women and the benefits for all of more opportunities for women.

3. In schools, young girls should be supported to speak up against negative bias and double standards. School programmes focusing on developing girls' self-respect could help to reduce daughter aversion in future generations.

4. Researchers in the area of GBV should make efforts to provide their findings to teachers and other change agents, in order to make them aware of the adverse effects of double standards on the lives of young girls.

5. Classrooms should provide an equitable environment with no tolerance of violence or discrimination. Both educational policy and local head teachers' approaches to the classroom are levers that could be used to promote gender equity and reduce GBV.

// Different manifestations and perceptions of abuse require different interventions

Our data demonstrates that women from different locations experience several types of abuse. Among our respondents, violence and abuse were understood differently by men

and women. While many men believed they were being victimised by women, we noticed this to be an outgrowth of the way rights are interpreted and understood by the two genders. All forms of abuse against women need to be identified and categorised to show the nuanced prevalence of the same including understanding men's perspective of violence and harassment, to share with them why women's right to violence-free life should be an important goal.

Identifying abuse: We have discovered that women go through GBV in all parts of their lives. Although the GBV they face in public has a higher public profile than that which happens within domestic spaces, the evidence from the literature suggests that GBV is more often experienced in the home. Women's social locations (in terms of caste, financial status, and migration status) influence the forms of abuse they may face. Our findings show that in India, it is essential to take these issues into account when attempting to reduce GBV.

Men and women have different ideas of abuse: Primarily men construct violence as a temporary realitythat is escapable. While women often look at abuse as cyclic and never-ending, or they see it as something to tolerate in order to keep themselves safe. The "usualness" of violence for women need to be seen with a human rights approach for any tangible change. All male respondents agreed that women need to be given basic rights protecting them from violence but other rights, like working outside of home, wearing desired clothes, were not included in their narratives. Women on the other hand were remarking on the lack of control they had in their lives.

Men's resistance to anti-GBV legislation: We heard men question gender equality because India has laws which are designed specifically for women. One significant and repeated theme underlying our group discussions showed men's

discomfort about how women are taking what the men saw as an aggressive stand against violence in public as well as private spaces. According to our male respondents, women have become the more powerful gender because of pro-women legislation, believing that, generally, "everyone takes the side of women". These findings suggest there is an urgent need to help men understand how equitable distribution of resources can help change the whole of society for the better.

Action points

1. Research is needed on what makes men resist the idea of equity.

2. In programmes that promote gender equality, efforts to minimise the misconception that women's empowerment would mean women becoming more powerful than men is important. The perceived misuse of women-centric laws was a common complaint by men in our focus groups.

3. Government and NGO programmes should focus on building public awareness of the more covert kinds of violence occurring in women's lives that remain unknown to many.

4. To deliver the most effective forms of support, practitioners in GBV-related fields require up-to-date awareness of the ways in which caste, social class, and migration status affect the ways women in India experience GBV – and the challenges in reducing GBV that are particular to these contexts.

// Transmission of negative gender bias through institutions

We noticed throughout our study that certain institutions were often having a negative impact on the daily lives of women. These institutions were helpful in some circumstances, yet more often we saw these acting on the basis of gender-biased assumptions. Critical to our understanding of preventing GBV is the idea that

gender bias requires challenging. Institutions such as family, marriage, the police, and state-level policy all have far-reaching positive and negative roles in women's lives. With the right action over the long-term, we believe that the positive impacts can be strengthened, and the negative impacts eliminated.

Ambivalence of family: The institution of family has been at the core of all conversations with all respondents. Construction of family has been positive and affirmative, although according to our analysis family can be ambivalent, it protects, it also harms individuals. Family in India means hetero-normative and very central to everyday lives, with little or no room for alternative expressions. While the public sphere that is beyond family is constructed as violent, the private family space is seen as comparatively innocuous; a mistaken assumption indicated by our data. Women face violence in "safe" domestic spaces as much as anywhere else. We wish to challenge the unquestioning acceptance of family as only safe and inclusive.

The importance of marriage in GBV: Marriage, and women's gender roles therein, can lead to the proliferation of GBV. Indian marriages are embedded within the family institution, in which the community subsumes the individual. Marriages, especially in childhood, and where dowry payments are made, place women at high risk of GBV. Additionally, the roles women are expected to play within the family (no paid work, emphasis on child rearing, maintaining "honour") reduce opportunities for women to escape violent situations.

Visibility of State bias: The Indian State has passed important laws and policies for the benefit of women and other minorities, although our data conveyed the lack of implementation of the same. Women were rarely aware or accessed

support structures. A protectionist attitude of the State shows negative bias intrinsic within systems, processes and individuals. To enable preventative measures against GBV, we suggest a shift away from protectionist interventions, and towards programmes that empower women to take decisions for themselves, and to expect their lives to be free from GBV.

Action points

1. It is important that education is provided to service providers throughout government and community-based institutions about the ways in which gender bias can affect service delivery, and how negative impacts on women can be reduced.

2. Incentives and support could be offered for singlehood or to help unmarried women access opportunities that would benefit their living conditions. For this the government could liaise with movements like Ekal Nari Shakti Sanghtan[17](ENSS) to understand better the complications of marriage.

3. As well as strengthening anti-dowry or child marriage laws, governments need to recognise the grassroots nature of these practices. Grassroots understanding of gender-biased traditions can inform law and policy changes.

4. A shift in attitude towards women's rights by state agencies, from a protectionist to a rights-based approach should be encouraged.

// Violent relationships do not always have simple solutions

The prevalence of violence in intimate relationships has multiple reasons, and there are also multiple reasons why women do not simply leave violent relationships. Additionally, some of the factors governing intimate relationships are social and systemic – therefore, studying and addressing these

factors is of crucial importance, alongside providing tailored support to individual women in violent relationships. Utmost importance should be given to understanding problems with nuance and listening to women without judgement. It is essential that women are given the help they want, when they need it most.

Why women do not leave abusive situations: Many women in our study were continuing to stay in violent circumstances for various reasons. Deeply socialised into believing women's primary role is to uphold family and community's honour, women chose not to exit from difficult conditions. As researchers it is important that we understand this choice and try to find the underlying reasons that keep women confined within situations where their physical and mental health is at risk. Along with finding out what women need to escape abuse we must give importance to learning more about the common feeling that abuse is inescapable.

Patriarchal traditions add more violence to women's lives: Social norms along with patriarchal rituals and traditions give rise to anti-female bias. Women who are at the receiving end of abuse do not always get a chance to oppose such norms and traditions. The justification for patriarchal traditions is deeply woven into daily cultural practices, so that women accept beliefs and assumptions which make them more vulnerable to GBV. Our respondents have shown that traditions which have historically undermined women's agency continue to harm and discriminate against them.

Leaving abusive relationships may not be the only way to challenge social perception around GBV: In India leaving the site of violence, which is often within the family, can be overwhelming for women as families can also be a sort of safety net for them. Worried about their self-image in society women feel the need to challenge

some norms and follow some others. Not necessarily always helping women to escape the site of violence, but working with individuals, communities, institutions, and societies together can change social perceptions around gender roles, and help to prevent GBV.

Action points
1. Governments liaising with NGOs can offer women who do not wish to leave the sites of violence alternative or temporary arrangements.

2. There is a need to approach GBV in more culture and context specific ways by policymakers. Community-centred approach is necessary for grassroot changes.

3. Hospitals and clinical practice offer a valuable opportunity for confidential, widespread screening for women who are facing abuse. Clinicians should be supported to initiate discussions about GBV, and to provide women with tailored information about local women's support and advocacy services so that they can access the right help at the right time.

4. Government policies that give only protection from or punishment for complicated manifestations of GBV, such as dowry, forced marriages, and early marriages, need grassroots change to be effective in the longer-term. Changing perspectives on the ground about the negative impacts of patriarchal traditions is essential for both government and non-government agencies to address. Interventions based on evidence from communities will help with this.

// Women's lives are controlled in covert ways

Women are controlled in different ways, many of which are hidden, or simply taken for granted as the way things are. From denial of education as girls, through early marriage, and to the denial of autonomy once women

pass child-bearing age, we found in women's narratives that their agency is disregarded regularly. Facing violence themselves, women can become carriers and transmitters of violence too. The various ways women's lives are justifiably controlled emerge from the very simple belief carried by many of our respondents: women are "weaker" than men.

Biological essentialism gives women secondary status: Biological essentialism is the belief that masculinity and femininity have different and sometimes divergent scripts, rooted in biological difference, which predetermine the life courses of men and women. The implication of this idea is that women and men have a lack of agency to choose their own behaviours and life paths. As well as undermining women's agency, we saw biological essentialism being used to justify violence against and control of women in our findings. When queried on the differences people see between the genders, many of our respondents categorised the differences through work and roles. One point highlighted by several respondents was the belief that women are emotionally more mature than men. This may be a reason for women feeling they must withstand abuse and discrimination.

Everyday violence restricting women: Violence is closely associated to everyday lived realities of the women in our study. Many of them did not think they had a difficult life, but we saw that the small, everyday acts of violence make women normalise and accept the idea of abuse in their lives. Excessive acts of violence did not feature in too many narratives but regular negative biased attitudes telling and showing women they are inferior emerged massively.

Recognising the people who control women: Family, as explained earlier, is a big component that controls women's lives especially within the domestic sphere. Most women in our study

shared that family members were not only unhelpful in situations of violence, they were in fact perpetrators. Complicity of family members when they see violence inside the home further confine women with a lack of support. Elders can punish younger people including women and children that generationally transmits violence.

Women's violence against women and children: We were struck as we encountered several narratives that showed women to be perpetrators of violence to other women. Even though women can be carriers of patriarchy, believing that women are women's enemies can isolate women. Women articulated that specifically mothers-in-law treat new brides with contempt because they reaffirm the cycle of abuse they had faced earlier in their lives. We also noticed that women who face violence themselves frequently behave violently with their children, another way of violence transmission.

Action points
1. Government or NGO interventions to reduce GBV should incorporate a sound understanding of how gender roles are prescribed, and how they can be re-imagined. Interventions to reduce GBV can benefit by exploring, with their beneficiaries, how both men and women can go beyond narrow, pre-defined roles.

2. Schools should promote gender egalitarian practices among students. Rather than segregating and separating boys and girls, offering all children the same educational opportunities will help to empower girls, while promoting understanding and empathy among boys. Equally important is to teach all students about GBV and how to prevent the transmission of violence, by including such information in textbooks.

3. There must be more family centred interventions by NGOs to address specific issues like problems of mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law.

4. Governments should collaborate with NGOs to develop parenting programmes that challenge child neglect and promote the safety and wellbeing of children, taking a rights-based approach.

// Discovering the role children play in help-seeking and help-giving

For women who were also mothers, children had the greatest effect on their lives and sometimes their decision-making. Motherhood can be both liberating and restraining for women. Children can be beacons of hope to women who face abuse regularly, and can be a reason to escape abusive situations, or they may become reasons for women to remain in abusive situations. It is important to see the place children occupy within a family, whether and how they can help women in situations of abuse.

How child abuse and neglect affect women: Mothers were asked about the well-being of their children and many women were visibly bothered with the way violence was being transmitted to their children. Women were really worried about their children inheriting the traits of perpetrators. Women respondents took a stand against violence towards their children. Corporal punishments to children are still a reality, even so women were very forthright regarding who can or cannot discipline and reprimand their children.

Adherence to normative family structure: Reacting against child abuse may not necessarily push women towards exiting the cite of violence, due to the absolute faith on normative family structures. Most women who thought they needed to escape their marriages did not do so because of their children's wellbeing. Mothers explained to us how giving children the love of both parents would give them a holistic upbringing. We also encountered narratives

where women did not leave the cites of violence with their children because of lack of financial support. Our data shows that marriage and childbirth both can add more complications to women's lives.

Children can be emancipating: Even though children may have a confusing and complicated effect on women in abusive situations, respondents overwhelmingly showed us that their children became their survival strategy. Relationships of mothers with their children is crucial to our study to see if those very children can help women come out of situations of abuse.

*Connecting women and child rights:*The connection of VAW and VAC is undeniable, our data evidenced that. The need for linking these two forms of violence would also help women and children support each other in situations of domestic violence. Sharing communication and decision-making would ultimately support both parties and strengthen demands for rights.

Action points
1. From early age women should be given the information that childbirth is not an eventuality, that choosing whether to have children or not is their fundamental right.

2. More research to be undertaken on empathy in children towards survivors of abuse, teaching them to respond to difficult situations at home and outside.

3. Government needs to implement schemes for expecting mothers, who do not have family support to start a life with just their children.

4. Both NGOs and governments should consider the interconnectedness of violence against both women and children, to look for joint solutions.

// Making women's narratives and education public

Kept away from the public sphere, many of our respondents were sharing their life stories for the first time by participating in our study. Clearly, women's lived experiences do not gain easy access to public discourse, which hampers improvements in public understanding of GBV. There is an urgent need to share women's narratives, in order to build empathy and understanding, as well as to aid in the design of strategies to reduce GBV.

Education and work's interconnections with empowerment: All our respondents mentioned that for immediate change education and ability to earn are most important. Among 42 respondents only four had completed graduation, but every respondent emphasised on the need for higher education. Having an income was important and reiterated, although the impossibility of going outside for work was also a reality for many respondents. Many respondents were tired of doing unappreciated (and unpaid) domestic work. Women need increased opportunities to go outside of their homes to try and make a living, especially the ones who belong to no-income households or are facing abuse at home and need temporary respite.

Gender bias affecting young girls: Our study found daughter aversion as an important factor in the socialisation of young girls, making them believe they are unwanted. All women respondents had faced or witnessed negative bias towards girls, through withholding of opportunities, restricting activities outside the home, shaming for transgressing gender roles, forcing marriage, forcing pregnancy. Daughter aversion appeared to have a long-lasting impact on many of our participants – and, consequently, some did not see the value of telling their stories. Daughter aversion, and the perception that

daughters are a "burden", should be targeted in efforts to reduce GBV.

Older women need special care: Our data evidenced how invalidation of girls' childhoods also disempowered them when they become adults and later elderly women. The three older women we spoke with told us how early marriage, early childbirth, and staying inside the home, made them susceptible to more violence later as they were dependent on others for income and shelter. We believe older women need immediate attention, and younger women need to be made aware of the problems they may face later if they do not become independent.

Survivor narratives as enabling: One of the goals of this report is also to exhibit the different stories that have emerged from our data collection. Each of our respondent was unique and shared their complex lived realities with us in the hopes that they can be heard. This is an important way to undermine the normalisation of violence, by focusing on women's narratives of their own lives and bringing them into public discourse.

Action points
1. Central governments should incentivise education by way of funding for young women who wish to pursue higher studies.

2. Employers should make workplaces safe and give equal benefits to women and men. The gender pay gap is known to be high in India, and government can take actions to reduce this – for example, by examining the policies of countries with lower gender pay gaps, and by publishing guidance for companies to address the issue.

3. Banks can make information more freely available to women who wish to start their own businesses (sometimes from inside their homes).

4. Government needs to have special provisions for older women who do not have family support, like having functional and liveable spaces.

5. Schools should encourage young girls to learn about earning, saving, and investing to promote financial independence.

6. Regular sharing of women's stories, in their own voices, is needed in the classroom and media. GBV-focused curriculum development in schools can benefit by incorporating survivors' stories to promote awareness among children from a young age.

// Formal system's responses need change

Dissatisfaction with systems was a recurring issue in our study, women did not feel comfortable reaching out to authorities. Very few women chose to take a formal stand against the abuse they face even when they knew where to find support. State run institutions like the police either scare women or give them bad advice. Women said NGOs were unhelpful at times, and taking legal help was impossible as it would taint their family's honour. Women expected better support from the government, tailored to their specific needs.

Dissatisfaction with government policies: Another issue we encountered with women respondents was the lack of clarity on laws and policies and lack of understanding of the process to be undertaken to avail their benefits. Absence of awareness and information make it impossible for women to know about their rights and the support mechanisms in place. Advertising campaigns should be deployed alongside the development of new sources of support where possible. Ongoing evaluation of new interventions' effectiveness can inform strategy to address GBV.

Recognising different perspectives: In some instances, women said they were unable to find the help they needed from NGOs, because the organisation's stated beliefs clashed with theirs. In one woman's narrative a women's group even asked for money in exchange for help. NGOs providing support for women can benefit by assessing and taking into account the diverse perspectives of the diverse communities they serve, and tailoring their services accordingly.

Action points
1. Implementation level monitoring of government and NGO schemes is essential to ensure effectiveness of GBV reduction.

2. Help should be given to women to make them understand what schemes would benefit them most. This may be done with help of government employees working in banks, post offices, or any holding any other post.

3. NGOs need to model their interventions in accordance with the needs of survivors, understanding that women have different lives and complications.

4. Training should be provided to community leaders to help them safely intervene and mediate in domestic disputes.

// Gender-based interventions focusing equally on men and women

During our data collection we realised that in India men and women saw themselves as very different from each other. Preventing GBV will not be possible if men are not aware of women's situation and their demands for violence prevention. Demanding equal rights and no discrimination towards women should also include men's voices. Instead of men being silent observers or perpetrators, men and women together should be able to converse and find solutions.

Gender segregation as an issue: India has an inherent gender segregation which is why most men lack a clear understanding of what independence means to women. More talks should be initiated for men to understand women's issues so that they can take a stand against violence against women. Men are seen as potential perpetrators and women as potential victims; this narrative has to change and that will not be possible without communication between the two genders. Research is needed to understand how to engage men and women in productive dialogues.

Bystanders need to take a stand: Most interesting revelation in our data was the issue of the bystander. We did not encounter as many perpetrators as bystanders, and people's apathy and inaction towards violence made us think that this needs urgent intervention. In order to be able to prevent GBV every individual of the society needs to be responsible, to stand up against violence. . Many women recounted how, instead of supporting them, friends and family members quietly let them suffer, either because they thought the role of women is to suffer, or they were apathetic to the situation. Young and old men explained how they would never intervene in people's "private" matters even if they saw something wrong happening. GBV must no longer be seen as a private matter; it is a social problem affecting women and children across all social locations. Support from neighbours, families, and friends will enable survivors to demand a safe and violence free life.

Victoria Banyard's work touches upon the concept of "community approach to interventions" for sexual violence deterrence on college campuses Her work focuses on encouraging communities to exhibit more prosocial bystander behaviours, especially on college campuses. Several of our respondents also belonged to close-knit communities to

whom they looked for support and advice. Integrating the idea of prosocial bystanders within the community consciousness would perhaps help to avert some instances of domestic abuse.

Action points
1. NGOs looking at GBV should encourage open conversation between genders.

2. NGOs and government agencies should focus on interventions specifically targeting the bystander attitude, in public as well as private spaces.

3. Community-centric interventions should be given more importance to inculcate bystander responsibility. Research on family-specific programmes to change the bystander apathy within families could help prevent abuse. For example, the work of Banyard and colleagues has shown how community-based interventions that encourage bystanders to take responsibility against GBV can be effective (Banyard, Moynihan, & Plante, 2007, p. 464).

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Tables - FGD & IDI

Focus Group Discussion

	Age range	Income level	Working status	Marital status
FGD 1	26-34 years	lower-middle	working	married+unmarried
FGD 2	18-25 years	middle income	studying+working	unmarried
FGD 3	36-45 years	lower-middle	working	married+unmarried
FGD 4	18-25 years	lower-middle	studying+working	unmarried
FGD 5	50+ years	middle income	working	married
FGD 6 + 7 (observation home)	17-25 years	lower-middle	working+not working	unmarried

	False name	Current age	Highest level of education	Working/ earning	Income level	No. & Gender of siblings	Location	Current marital status	Age at marriage	No. of children	Gender of children	Language	Religion
Pilot 1	Yamini	39	B. Com	No	Middle	1F	Mumbai city	Married	24	2	1M, 1F	Tamil	Catholic
IDI - 1	Sonu	37	Never went to school	Yes	Lower	6F	Mumbai city	Married	25	2	2F	Hindi	Hindu
IDI - 2	Reba	40	10th std.	Yes	Lower middle	2F, 2M (?)	Mumbai city	Separated	22	2	1M, 1F	Hindi	Muslim
IDI - 3	Chaki	33	Never went to school	Yes	Lower	1M	Mumbai city	Married	13	2	1M, 1F	Telugu	Christian (by marriage)
IDI - 4	Sayli	23	12th std.	No	Lower	1M, 1F	Mumbai city	Never-married	NA	NA	NA	Marathi	Hindu lower caste
IDI - 5	Sarita	35	2nd yr B Com. Didn't complete Grad	Yes	Lower middle	2M, 1F	Western suburbs	Married	22	2	1M, 1F	Gujarati	Hindu Brahmin
IDI - 6	Komal	43	10th std.	Yes	Lower middle	1M, 2F	Western suburbs	Married	22	1	1F	Marathi	Hindu lower caste
IDI - 7	Anushka	24	B. Com	No	Lower middle	1F	Western suburbs	Never-married	NA	NA	NA	Hindi	Hindu lower caste
IDI - 8	Devi	55	10th std.	No	Middle	3M, 3F	Western suburbs	Widow	15	3	3M	Gujarati	Hindu upper caste
IDI - 9	Indu	40	10th std.	No	Middle	1M, 3F	Western suburbs	Married	26	1	1M	Gujarati	Hindu upper caste
IDI - 10	Soni	40	10th std.	No	Lower	2M, 2F	Western suburbs	Married	15	1	1M, 1F	Hindi	Hindu upper caste
IDI - 11	Teju	42	10th std.	No	Lower middle	1M	Western suburbs	Married	19	2	2M	Marathi	Hindu upper caste
IDI - 12	Sunita	33	10th std.	No	Lower middle	1M	Western suburbs	Married	20	2	2F	Hindi	Hindu
IDI - 13	Chanda	33	12th std.	Yes	Lower middle	2M, 5F	Western suburbs	Married	18	2	1M, 1F	Hindi	Hindu Brahmin
IDI - 14	Madhu	60	Never went to school	No	Lower	1M	Western suburbs	Widow	7	2	2M	Hindi	Hindu lower caste
IDI - 15	Nayna	18	12th std.	Yes	Lower middle	1M, 1F	Western suburbs	Never-married	NA	NA	NA	Hindi	Hindu lower caste
IDI - 16	Pooja	40	8th std.	Yes	Lower	3M, 4F	Western suburbs	Married	9	4	2M, 2F	Hindi	Hindu upper caste
IDI - 17	Neha	22	10th std.	Yes	Lower	1M, 3F	Western suburbs	Never-married	NA	NA	NA	Hindi	Hindu
IDI - 18	Asha	50	3rd std.	No	Lower		Mumbai city	Separated/Deserted	16	3	1M, 2F	Marathi	Hindu lower caste
IDI - 19	Kavita	32	9th std.	No	Lower	1M, 5F	Mumbai city	Married	16	4	2M, 2F	Marathi	Hindu lower caste
IDI - 20	Seema	45	2nd std.	No	Lower middle	2 Step-brothers	Mumbai city	Married	Unsure, child marriage	5	3M, 2F	Hindi	Hindu lower caste
IDI - 21	Deepa	38	8th std.	Yes	Lower	4M, 2F	Mumbai city	Widow	15	2	1M, 1F	Hindi	Hindu
IDI - 22	Josie	50	Graduation	Yes	Middle	2(?)	Western suburbs	Separated	29	2	1M, 1F	English	Catholic
IDI - 23	Pia	42	5th std.	No	Lower middle	1M, 4F	Western suburbs	Married	20	3	3M	English	Catholic
IDI - 24	Reeti	31	10th std.	Yes	Middle	2M, 2F	Western suburbs	Married	29	0	NA	Marwari	Hindu upper caste
IDI - 25	Kanta	65	4th std.	No	Middle	1M, 3F	Western suburbs	Widow	18	4	3M, 1F	Marathi/ Konkan	Hindu lower caste
IDI - 26	Noor	45	5th std.	No	Lower middle	4F, 5M(4M-alive)	Eastern suburbs	Married	20	3	1M, 2F	Konkan	Muslim
IDI - 27	Dipti	32	9th std.	No	Lower middle	1M, 3F	Eastern suburbs	Married	18	2	1M, 1F	Marwari	Hindu upper caste
IDI - 28	Arfa	36	7th std.	No	Lower	NA	Eastern suburbs	Married	18	2	1M, 1F	Konkani	Muslim
IDI - 29	Sarala	62	1st std.	No	Middle	4M	Mumbai city	Widow	16	6	6F	Marwari	Hindu lower caste
IDI - 30	Gauri	45	6th std.	Yes	Middle	1M, 2F	Mumbai city	Married	13	2	2M	Marwari	Hindu lower caste
IDI - 31	Shanta	50	4th std.	Yes	Lower	1M, 3F	Mumbai city	Married	16	2	2M	Marathi	Ambedkarite
IDI - 32	Anju	29	12th std.	Yes	Lower middle	1M	Mumbai city	Married	20?	1	1F	South Indian	Hindu. Married to Ambedkarite.
IDI - 33	Sheba	21	9th std.	No	Lower	1M, 2F	Mumbai city	Divorced	18	0	NA	Hindi	Muslim
IDI - 34	Sana	19	12th std.	Yes	Lower	1M, 2F	Mumbai city	Unmarried	NA	NA	NA	Hindi	Muslim
IDI - 35	Jaya	33	10th std.	Yes	Lower	3F	Mumbai city	Married	17	3	3M	Kannada	Hindu lower caste
IDI - 36	Farah	38	B. Com	Yes	Lower middle	3M, 1F	Mumbai city	Married	21	3	2M, 1F	Hindi	Muslim
IDI - 37	Shruti	22	10th std.	No	Lower middle	3M, 2F	Mumbai city	Unmarried	NA	NA	NA	Hindi	Hindu upper caste
IDI - 38	Rashmi	33	10th std.	Yes	Lower middle	1F	Mumbai city	Married	22	2	1M, 1F	Kannada/ Punjabi	Hindu/ married into Sikh family
IDI - 39	Sujata	43	10th std. + correspondence course	Yes	Lower middle	1 step-sister	Mumbai city	Married	16	2	2F	Hindi/ Marathi	Hindu
IDI - 40	Rashi	23	12th std.	Yes	Lower middle	2M, 2F	Mumbai city	Unmarried	NA	NA	NA	Hindi	Hindu
IDI - 41	Rabia	36	10th std.	Yes	Lower middle	4F	Mumbai city	Divorced	13	4	2M, 2F	Kannada/ Hindi	Muslim

CONTENTS

Appendix Qualitative Research Design

1. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

Qualitative methodology is sensitive to unique personal experiences, perceptions, beliefs and meanings of individuals and is considered therefore to be the most appropriate approach for exploring the needs of victims and perpetrators of gender-based violence. This aspect of the None in Three project is led by Dr Graham R Gibbs and Rukmini Banerjee and carried out by a team of highly skilled Indian researchers (http://noneinthree.hud.ac.uk/india/)

The research design is a cross-sectional qualitative study - data are collected at one time-point using semi-structured interviews and focus groups with purposively selected participants. Criteria for selection are determined by the research questions we seek to answer and the analytic approach used will be template analysis informed by grounded theory and situational analysis.

Conceptual Framework
The conceptual framework underpinning the design is informed by four factors:
1. Extensive expertise of the social, legal, policy and cultural context (the research leaders have researched and published extensively on the topic of qualitative research, gender-based violence in the region and have provided consultancy, training and programme development support to the Indian government, international development agencies, professionals and civil society organisations.
2. Excellent local knowledge – key researchers are nationals of the country in which the study is conducted and have appropriate linguistic skills; cultural, geographical, political and demographic knowledge and are in touch with contemporary realities and the impact of current social stressors on populations

3. Theories on causation of gender-based violence
4. A narrative literature review of issues affecting the victims of gender-based violence, the impact of domestic violence on children and young people, intimate partner violence, gender bias and factors that contribute to abuse behaviours.

Quality
It is important to ensure that qualitative research is credible and does not stray into the anecdotal. We will therefore adopt the quality framework proposed by De Witt and Ploeg (2006) which calls for 'balanced integration, openness, concreteness, resonance and actualization' (p.224). This will be given effect in several ways:
1. Authentication of claims made through the use of NVivo software to manage the data
2. Close supervision of the research process
3. Consistent application of the guidance contained in this document to all research activities
4. Ensuring the data generated are dependable and that findings are derived directly and only from the data
5. Differentiation between the voices of the research participant and the researcher
6. Documentation and audit trail of procedures adopted
7. Meticulous data management procedures

Sampling
This research uses convenience, purposive, non-probability sampling techniques in order to identify particular groups of people whose circumstances are relevant to the social phenomena being studied. This approach is particularly important given the sensitivity of the issue being explored and the potential to increase risk to participants who are recruited through other means.

The qualitative research for None in Three comprises semi-structured interviews with

women and focus groups with men and youth. Interview and Focus Group Guides are included in the Appendix.

1.1 Interviews with women

In addition to face-to-face interviews, women should be offered the option of telephone interview or Skype interview (without video). IMPORTANT- If a woman chooses this option, researchers should never leave messages on women's cell phones/mobiles or initiate email contact unless the woman gives assurance that this is safe for her. These 'innocent' behaviours can be a source of great risk to a woman who is being abused.

The aim is to interview 40 women survivors of gender-based violence in each country. The decision about which groups of women to include should be based on the circumstances and proposed focus of the computer game in your country as well as the literature review.

Research questions
The primary research questions will be derived from your literature review but could include which those that follow. These will inform the prompt questions in the interview guide in the appendix.

1. How do women understand gender bias?
2. How do women define gender-based violence?
3. What factors (e.g. age, culture, poverty, social group, pregnancy, marriage) lead to greater gender bias and greater gender-based violence?
4. What are women's views about the reasons for these increases?
5. Do women connect anti-female bias to the increased risk of gender-based violence?
6. What are the effects of these factors on them and their families?
7. What is the role of other family members in

maintaining/supporting anti-female bias?
8. How women (of same or other generations) add to gender bias and gender-based violence?
9. How do families and children get affected through anti-female bias and gender-based violence?
10. What strengths, resilience and strategies do women draw on in managing/reducing/preventing gender bias?
11. What strengths, resilience and strategies do women in circumstances of female aversion and gender-based violence draw on in managing/reducing/preventing or escaping risk of violence in private spaces?
12. Are there people (collectives / community members) who help women in difficult situations?
13. What kind of help do women need to combat gender bias or gender-based violence?
14. How can NGOs or other government agencies help with reducing anti-female bias and gender-based violence?
15. What can help women identify and challenge anti-female bias and reduce gender-based violence?

Recruitment
We should aim to recruit forty women in total. Basic demographic data will be obtained from the women but there is no requirement to ensure representativeness for this aspect of the research. Sampling and recruitment is purposive based on the objectives of the research. Access to these women will be primarily through stakeholder agencies, government departments and snowballing. In relation to group iv, access is likely to present significant challenges. Creative methods (e.g. approaching night clubs or advertising should be considered).

Criteria for inclusion:
• Total number of women participants is 40
• Is a female aged 18 years or above (legal age of consent)

- Self-identifies as a victim or survivor of gender-based violence
- Has an experience/s of gender-based violence that is current, recent (in the last 12 months) or historic (older than 12 months)
  i) Distribution through income – 30 women from middle to lower-middle income households, 5 from below poverty line households or women coming from extreme poverty, 5 women from middle to high income households
  ii) Distribution through language – 25 women Marathi speaking, 10 women Hindi/Urdu, 5 women Gujarati and/or other languages
  iii) Distribution through location – 25 from Mumbai city, 10 from suburbs (within MMR), 5 from places beyond MMR and specifically small towns and/or villages in Maharashtra. Women who are not originally from Mumbai need not be living in their places of origin since migration for work to metropolitans is a reality, but they should have some experience of being in non-urban spaces
  iv) Distribution through religion – depends upon women's identification
  v) Distribution through caste – depends upon women's identification

1.2   Focus groups

We are aiming to conduct four focus groups with men (aged 26-79) and youth (aged 18-25 years) as follows:
- Total number of men to participate in FGDs is 40 (10-person x 4 sessions)
- Distribution of participants on the basis of income, language, region, caste, religion can be similar to women, or snowball methods or purposive sampling.
  i) Group 1 – comprises men who have participated in a violence prevention programme (It is important that participants have reached a point in their programme where they are accepting responsibility for

their behaviour rather than blaming women and should therefore be mid-way or have completed the programme).
ii) Group 2 – comprises young men 18-25 years who have been identified as having involvement or risk of involvement in offences of a violent nature
iii) Group 3 – comprises men 25 years or older who have experienced violence themselves but are against violence in interpersonal relationships.
iv) Group 4 – comprises young men, 18-25 years who have experienced violence themselves but are against violence in interpersonal relationships.

Research questions
The primary research questions the focus groups aim to address will be guided by your literature review, your country circumstances and the proposed focus of the computer game but could include the following: (they also feature in the focus group guide in the appendix):

1. How do men understand gender bias?
2. How do men define gender-based violence?
3. According to men what factors (e.g. age, culture, poverty, social group, pregnancy, marriage) lead to greater gender-based violence?
4. Do men connect anti-female bias to increase risk of gender-based violence?
5. How do men see families (including women) contributing to the proliferation of gender-based violence?
6. What is the role of other family members in maintaining/supporting anti-female bias?
7. What are the impacts of situations of gender-based violence on men?
8. What according to men are the reasons for them becoming violent against women and children?
9. What are the possible ways men can help with reducing anti-female bias in Indian society?

10. What are the ways in which men can help in situations of female aversion and/or gender-based violence?
11. What kind of help do women need to combat gender bias or gender-based violence?
12. How can NGOs or other government agencies help with reducing anti-female bias and gender-based violence?
13. What can help women reduce gender bias and gender-based violence?

Criteria for inclusion:

i) Group 1 – comprises men who have participated in a violence prevention programme (It is important that participants have reached a point in their programme where they are accepting responsibility for their behaviour rather than blaming women and should therefore be mid-way or have completed the programme).
ii) Group 2 – comprises young men 18-25 years who have been identified as having involvement or risk of involvement in offences of a violent nature
iii) Group 3 – comprises men 25 years or older who have experienced violence themselves but are against violence in interpersonal relationships.
iv) Group 4 – comprises young men, 18-25 years who have experienced violence themselves but are against violence in interpersonal relationships.

Recruitment

Groups 1 and 2 should be recruited via relevant organisations. Groups 3 and 4 should be reflective of diversity in terms of socio economic status, age, urban/rural habitat, occupation (we will not be seeking representation of sexual orientation in this aspect of the research, given the risks involved in 'outing'). Each group should have a maximum of 10 members. Ways of achieving diversity are by recruiting participants

from generic settings such as sports clubs, churches, mosques, temple, social gatherings, community colleges, social media, rather than through employment routes.

Data analysis

All interviews and focus groups should be digitally recorded and transcribed by the researchers. Thematic analysis will be carried out based initially on a-priori (pre-prepared) themes using NVivo software in order to identify and report patterns across groups of participants and across all countries. Pre-prepared themes will be drawn from those identified in the literature review, topics from the interview schedule and the case data collected. These themes will be drawn up by Dr. Graham R Gibbs (the Work package 2 lead) in consultation with each country director and country qualitative lead. The analysis will follow the general procedures as described by Braun and Clarke in the adapted table below. (Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology. Qualitative research in psychology, 3(2), 77-101.)

Data management

i. If possible, all interviews and focus group discussions should be digitally recorded.
ii. If this is not possible, field notes should be taken and written up as soon as possible to allow the aforementioned analysis by the senior researchers in your country.
iii. Used digital recorder memory cards should be kept in locked storage.
iv. Recordings should be transcribed at the soonest opportunity, with a 'master' copy available to draw on if needed.
v. Any identifying information in the transcripts should be anonymised
vi. All transcriptions and field notes should be entered into a single, Indian NVivo database for analysis.

vii. All electronic data should be password protected (e.g. with a password protected personal computer).

viii. Digital files (transcriptions etc.) should be stored in the Indian secure storage area. This should be password protected and regularly backed up ideally to a geographically separate site.

ix. A systematic approach to version control during data analysis should be adopted and the NVivo database should be stored in the Indian secure storage area.

x. Retain and store securely all signed, fully informed consent forms.

xi. Any hard data (handwritten field notes etc.) obtained should be kept in locked storage.

xii. All digital files (transcriptions, NVivo database etc.) should also be archived in the None in Three Centre secure storage area to which researchers in all countries will have access. This will ensure that data are backed up (for verification, archiving and audit purposes).

xiii. Hard data sets should be copied and sent to the None in Three Centre Project Administrator by courier or scanned and deposited in the None in Three Centre secure storage area

Phase	Description of the Process
Familiarization	Transcribe data, read and re-read the transcript, noting down initial ideas. Write a short summary of each interview (focus group) identifying key themes.
Generate initial codes	Code interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code. Use the pre-defined codes/themes for this initially, but where possible or necessary create new codes too.
Search for themes	Collate the codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme
Review themes	Check if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (level 1) and the entire data set (level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis
Define and name themes	Conduct ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
Produce the report	A further opportunity for analysis. Select compelling quotations to illustrate findings, relate back to the research questions and literature, produce the report of findings

2. ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

2.1 The conduct of the research will be based on clear ethical standards which will assure confidentiality, privacy, anonymity and informed consent. All research assistants will receive training in the research methodologies to be employed in the project. This training will also address ethical issues and stress the need to maintain strictest respect for confidentiality

2.2 Ethical adequacy of the research will also be assured through ensuring that the research outcomes are geared towards policy reform and that the participants are not exposed to detriment or harm

2.3 The project will be carried out in accordance with the University of Huddersfield's Research Ethics Guidance as outlined in the website extract below and with the India ethics guidance.

RESEARCH: Honesty and Misconduct

Introduction
...Research misconduct is often easier to recognise than to define but two broad categories can be distinguished. The first involves fabrication or falsification of research results; the second arises where there is plagiarism, misquoting or misappropriation of the work of others. It also includes, for example, the unethical use of material provided in a privileged way for review or assessment.

Research misconduct involving plagiarism, piracy or falsifying results is a form of dishonesty which is viewed by the University as a serious offence...

8.2 Good practice, ethics and plagiarism in research

(i) Principles of good practice
In the conduct of all research, the University expects the following general principles to be understood and observed.
Honesty
At the heart of all research, regardless of discipline, is the need for researchers to be honest in respect of their own actions in research and in their responses to the actions of others. This applies to the whole range of work, including experimental design, generating and analysing data, publishing results and acknowledging the direct and indirect contributions of colleagues, collaborators and others. All researchers must refrain from plagiarism, piracy or the fabrication of results. In the case of employees, committing any of these actions is regarded as a serious disciplinary offence.

Openness
While recognising the need for researchers to protect intellectual property rights (IPR), confidentiality agreements etc., the University expects researchers to be as open as possible in discussing their work with others and with the public. Once results have been published and where appropriate, the University expects researchers to make available relevant data and materials to others, on request.

Guidance from professional bodies
Where available, the University expects researchers to observe the standards of good practice set out in guidelines published by relevant societies and professional bodies.

(ii) Leadership and co-operation in research groups
The University is committed to ensure that a climate is created which allows research to be conducted in accordance with good practice. Within a research group, responsibility lies with the group leader who should create a research environment of mutual co-operation. They must also ensure that appropriate direction of research and supervision of researchers are provided.

(iii) A critical approach to research results
Researchers should always be prepared to question the outcome of their research. While acknowledging the pressures - of time and resources - under which researchers often have to work, the University expects research results to be checked before being made public.

(iv) Documenting results and storing primary data
Throughout their work, the University requires researchers to keep clear and accurate records of the procedures followed and of the results obtained, including interim results. This is necessary not only as a means of demonstrating proper research practice but also in case questions are subsequently asked about either the conduct of the research or the results obtained. For similar reasons, data generated in the course of research must be kept securely in paper or electronic form, as appropriate. The University expects data to be securely held for

a period of five years after the completion of a research project.

(v) Publishing results
It is expected that research results are published in an appropriate form, usually papers in refereed journals. This has long been widely accepted as the best system for research results to be reviewed - through the refereeing process - and made available to the community for verification or replication... The University expects anyone listed as an author on a paper to accept personal responsibility for ensuring that they are familiar with the contents of the paper and that they can identify their contributions to it. The practice of honorary authorship is unacceptable.

(vi) Acknowledging the role of collaborators and other participants
In all aspects of research, the contributions of formal collaborators and all others who directly assist or indirectly support the research must be properly acknowledged. This applies to any circumstances in which statements about the research are made, including provision of information about the nature and process of the research and in publishing the outcome. Failure to acknowledge the contribution of others is regarded as unprofessional conduct. Conversely, collaborators and other contributors carry their share of the responsibility for the research and its outcome.

2.4   The proposal will be subject to approval by the University of Huddersfield Ethics Committee and by the ISDI School of Design and Innovation ethics procedure. Specific ethical guidelines to be applied will be as follows:

i.   The aims and objectives of the research will be clearly explained to all participants and stakeholders
ii.   All interview respondents will remain anonymous – actual names and other means

of individual identification will not be used and each person will be allocated an ID number
iii.   Focus group participants will be advised of the need to protect confidentiality and that individual experiences of abuse should not be disclosed within the group setting
iv.   Focus group participants wishing to share personal experiences about abuse will be given the opportunity to do so in private and referred for counselling/other support as appropriate
v.   Data will be kept confidential in a secured and locked location. Each Research Assistant will be asked to sign an undertaking to this effect and that, when each stage of field work is complete, the data sets will be transferred to the operational office for the project where they will be kept in locked storage and backed up in secure electronic storage.
vi.   The data will only be seen by members of the research team
vii.   The project will not provide financial inducements to participants although travel costs and any other expenses incurred by participants will be met
viii.   Due to the sensitive subject of the research, and the possibility that during interviews, topics may be brought up that cause psychological distress or trauma (child abuse or violence), National Response Teams will be identified comprising statutory specialists (social workers, police, therapists other government personnel) and trusted organizations (shelters, homes, health clinics, NGO's, appropriate support groups, women's empowerment organizations, etc) and individual specialists (social workers, counsellors, government staff etc.). These teams will be briefed about the research and will be asked to provide support/interventions for research participants who have experienced abuse or are at risk
ix.   Where focus groups are held with young people in institutions, participants will be asked to self-select for inclusion in the study

based on a briefing from the researchers. Where appropriate the consent of parents/ guardians will also be sought. In addition to the general consent form, participants will be asked to confirm that no coercion or inducements were involved in their decision to participate
x.   Informed Consent - all participants in the project (e.g., interviewees, survey informants, practitioners, agency representatives) will be asked to sign a consent form and will be informed:
- Of the nature of the research (goals and objectives, etc.)
- Of the research methodology to be used
- Of any risks or benefits
- Of their right not to participate, not to answer any questions, and/or to terminate participation at any time without prejudice
- Of their right to anonymity and confidentiality
- That in the interests of safeguarding children, any information revealed in the course of the project that indicates risk of abuse will be passed to the relevant authorities in line with country safeguarding protocols

3. INFORMED CONSENT

The project will allow for any of the following methods of obtaining informed consent:
3.1   Informed consent form: an informed consent form will be provided for use by the researchers. This will detail the principles outlined above and require the participants' signature.

3.2   In instances in which written communication is not appropriate (for example with people with visual impairments or with people with literacy challenges) researchers will read the information contained in the consent form and ask the participant to sign.

3.3   Participants who do not wish to sign can have their consent recorded by the researcher

4. ETHICS AND CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

4.1   Owing to the sensitive nature of the study and the potential for actual cases of sexual abuse to be disclosed, commitment to confidentiality must be balanced by the primary need to safeguard participants' welfare first and foremost. Additionally, professional judgement and discretion must be exercised in consideration of their welfare needs, beyond the implementation of the study.

4.2   These issues will be addressed in the training for Research Assistants

4.3   Guidelines regarding confidentiality, information sharing and duty of care to participants will be made available to all members of the research team.

4.4   The project will not involve interviews with children and young people under the age of 16 years. However, it is possible that in the course of the study, information regarding children at risk of abuse will be revealed. Furthermore, it is likely that some young people may wish to discuss experiences of past abuse. It is therefore important to identify the ways in which the project in each country will seek to safeguard children, to uphold children's rights and to support young people through any traumatic disclosures.

4.5   Safeguarding Children and Young People - At all times the safeguarding of the well-being of children will be paramount. Given the context of research confidentiality which requires that names of individuals are not obtained, individual follow-up will require the consent of the person concerned. Participants with knowledge about children at risk will be empowered and supported in disclosing the

information to professionals within the National Response Teams who have statutory child protection responsibility.

4.6 Where appropriate, young people participating in the project will be advised to share information with relevant authorities and helping agencies, in the interest of their own safety.

4.7 Information about how to access the help of the National Response Teams will be provided to all participants

4.8 The researchers will ensure that young people are not harmed through participation in the research by providing a safe research environment for focus groups, through training for researchers on how to respond appropriately to distress and disclosures of trauma and abuse and by organising de-briefing sessions.

4.9 Youth-appropriate information will be produced detailing the aims of the research, how long the focus group sessions or completion of survey questionnaire will take, where they will take place and contact details for the research team. This information sheet will also include a statement explaining participant's rights as follows - We respect your rights:
- To take time to decide whether to help us
- To refuse to take part
- To refuse to answer questions
- To withdraw from this project at any time
- We will keep notes and digital recordings from the groups in a safe lockable place
- When we talk about the research or write reports, we will change people's names so that they remain anonymous.

4.10 The reporting of any allegations regarding actual sexual abuse shall be in accordance with the child protection policy and legislative framework of the specific country in which the research is taking place and will be assessed not only in terms of the immediate support needs for the survivor but also, the perpetrator's potential risk to others.

4.11 Concerns in respect of potential or identified risk to children will be passed to the respective country child protection agencies who will determine what action should be taken.

5. RISK ANALYSIS AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

Brief description of activity: research field work – interviews and focus groups
Location: India,
Assessment by: Graham R Gibbs and Country Co-Directors (CDs)
Assessment date: March 2018
People at risk: Research Assistants (RA)

Hazards identified	Risks to health and safety	Measures to manage the risk effectively	Action Who	When
Travel and working in remote areas	Isolation Fear	Must carry authorisation, ID and cell phone at all times	RA	During fieldwork
	Increased possibility of personal harm or injury	Within-country travel must be with regard to personal safety. Only the following forms of transport permitted: own transport, friends, relatives, authorised car rental companies or authorised taxi's	RA	Ongoing monitoring and vigilance required
	Increased risk of theft of personal goods	Must notify the CD they are reporting to of their whereabouts at all times during fieldwork	RA CDs	
		Must only go to locations pre-agreed with CD and to agencies where authorisation has been obtained	RA	
		Must be mindful of and take responsibility for assessing risk for personal safety within any given situation. I.e. if allocated an area considered unsafe, alternatives must be secured	RA	
		Must conduct interviews, survey and focus groups in daylight hours	RA	
		Must not carry valuables during fieldwork	RA	
		CDs to follow up all stages of fieldwork through daily email/phone contact	CDs	
Invitations into people's homes	Reduces opportunity for staying safe, may present unknown risks or compromise RA	Must not enter private homes	RA	
Female RAs working with young men	Increased risk of sexist, or abusive or inappropriate behaviour	Guidance and training to be provided	WP2 leader/co-PIs	
		Focus group, interviews and surveys must be held in appropriate (public) settings	RA	
		Where there are any obvious signs of alcohol or drug use among participants, then the research process should be ended immediately	RA	
		Abusive language or behaviour must lead to the immediate termination of research process	RA	
Participants request ongoing contact	Inappropriate crossing of professional boundaries	Should not divulge personal contact details	RA	
Researching sensitive topics	Distress or disclosure of abuse from participants	Training Establishment of National Response Teams	WP2 leader/co-PIs CDs	

		Should not engage in counselling or giving advice but must refer to the National Response Teams (NRTs)	RA
		If the RA is distressed in carrying out the study they should debrief with the PI at the soonest opportunity, make use of peer support and may also access counselling through the NRTs	RA CDs
Over exposure to computer work (data entry & analysis, lit searches)	Eye strain, neck/headache Wrist strain	Repeated breaks – self monitoring	RA

Risk Assessment review to be carried out by the Indian Co-directors, Bhanu Varma and Prarthana Patil and Qualitative lead, Rukmini Banerjee before the commencement of the fieldwork

6. GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

This section gives general guidance on how to conduct interviews and focus groups.

Selecting participants
Approach potential participants in any appropriate manner (e.g. in person, by telephone or email, fliers, posters). Briefly describe the research, including aims, expected outcomes and research methods (interview, focus group). Ask if they are interested and have any questions. Give them an Information Sheet and provide researcher contact details.
Hard-to-access individuals, or those consulted because of particular experiences may have to be contacted through others, called gatekeepers, such as managers of agencies. In such cases, explain the research to the 'gatekeepers', to reassure them and so they know who you are trying to access and why.

Focus groups should comprise between 4 – 10 people. Use at least two digital recorders and if possible have at least two researchers present. Who selects? Participants should be self-referring although agencies may also refer. Selection should aim to ensure diversity (e.g. socio economic status, education, employment status, age, urban-rural) and participants must meet the minimum criteria.
External ethical approval. Some organisations or agencies may have formal ethical approval procedures for you to follow. In such cases check how long these procedures take and build in time to follow them. Ensure that you get written confirmation of approval once it is given.

Preparation
Check practical arrangements with participants one or more weeks before interviews or focus groups take place. These arrangements should include dates, times and locations of interviews. They should also identify any particular participant needs (including mobility, dietary

and audio-visual needs) and how these can be catered for.
Provide more detailed information about the interview to participants, including the aim of the research, the role they can play and assurances about confidentiality and how to withdraw. Give them an opportunity to ask questions.
Easily accessible locations and times where participants feel at ease can help the discussion in interviews and focus groups. If necessary, discuss with participants where would be appropriate for them.
Appropriate locations. Focus group locations should be quiet and private, and should be visited by researchers before the consultation. Check what facilities it has (such as flipchart and pens, enough tables and chairs cups for drinks, tea or coffee-making facilities and whether there are nearby toilets). Any recording equipment should be tested to ensure there is no background noise that will interfere with transcribing. Consider whether the participants will feel at ease in the proposed location – places they already know may be better, or alternatively they may prefer a neutral space.
Food? Food can help people relax, which is important in focus groups where participants don't know each other. It is also important to provide food, drinks and breaks in extended interviews or those that take place during mealtimes. In both cases, ensure that food is appropriate for participants and that there is sufficient cutlery and crockery available.

The interview
Arrive early, to prepare the space and to be there to greet participants when they arrive.

Bring: Consent forms
    Information sheets
    Flipchart and pens (if using)
    Notebook for researchers
    Audio Recorders, with a spare
     if possible
    Spare batteries

    (for recording equipment)
    Spare, blank memory cards
    (for recording equipment)
    Details of support groups and helplines
    Water or water jugs
    Water glasses/cups
    Food, plates and cutlery
    (if providing food)
    Tea, coffee, milk, sugar and cups
    (if providing hot drinks)

Arrange the interview space and any waiting area. Have a chair for each person, laid out in a circle or round a table, so that everyone can see everyone else. Water should be easily available before and during the consultation, particularly to stop people's throats going dry. Toilets should be easily accessible. Food or other drinks (if provided) should be available before or after the interview, to avoid it distracting participants or muffling their voices.

Check any recording equipment (audio or visual), including how background noise is affecting it on the day. Before starting the recording of a session, the researcher should dictate and audio record details of the session (date, time, place, respondent identifier, focus group etc.) on all the memory cards being used.

Welcome all participants (and anyone accompanying them) warmly and try to make them feel relaxed. Explain housekeeping arrangements, such as where the toilets are, and answer any questions people they have.

Introductions. Researchers should introduce themselves and their roles in the project, then ask participants to introduce themselves (if a focus group) - by pseudonym if they wish Researchers explain purpose of the None in Three project, including the focus on resilience and strengths of persons affected by gender-based violence.
Give out information sheet

Explain participants' rights in relation to the interview, notably that they do not have to take part in the research, that they can refuse to answer any questions if they wish, that they can decide to withdraw from the research if they wish and that none of the above decisions would have any negative consequences.
Provide time for questions.
Give consent forms to participants to sign. Collect signed copies and retain.

Using recording equipment- Check it can pick up everyone's voice well enough for transcription. Ask everyone to speak briefly ("hello, my name is..." is enough) and then play back the recording. This is particularly important in a focus group where there are many voices coming from different directions. Ask participants to turn off mobile phones.

Taking notes- Ensure there is sufficient space for writing and explain that will be taking notes during the focus group. If conducting an interview – notes should be taken immediately afterwards.

Explain role of researcher, which is to ask questions and listen to participant's answers. As researcher, you may try to clarify or reflect on what is said, or ask follow-up questions not on the original interview schedule, to develop the discussion or ensure you understand the point the participant was making.

Begin with easy questions that participants are happy answering, moving onto more detailed or difficult issues later.

How to ask questions. Active efforts must be made to minimize any possible distress caused by the research. Gender-based violence is a sensitive and stigmatized issue, and women are often blamed for the violence they experience. All questions about violence and its consequences should be asked in a supportive

and non-judgemental manner. In addition, care needs to be taken to ensure that the language of the questionnaire cannot be interpreted as being judgemental, blaming or stigmatizing

Focus groups
Explain ground rules for focus groups, which should include:
• Respect, particularly being polite, not talking over another person and giving everyone a chance to participate;
• Confidentiality (not repeating content of the meeting to anyone else);
• Anonymity (not giving examples in ways that reveal personal or confidential information to other group members)

Explain role of researcher, which is to ask questions but not participate in the discussion. However, researchers may try to clarify or reflect on what people have said to develop the discussion or ensure they understand the point the participant was making. The researcher will also intervene if the discussion is being dominated by some participants or to move the discussion on.

Interactive sessions. Some participants answer better when being more interactive. One way of doing this is to ask people to write down or draw answers to questions on Post-it notes, with one response on each (they can use as many notes as they like). All the Post-it notes are then placed on a chart, with identical/similar answers from different people placed together. This can be useful for stimulating discussion about lots of issues covered by one question and for seeing which issues are important for many people. It can also allow quieter focus group participants to participate equally with those who dominate conversations. However, this format can take up lots of time and result in long discussions, so researchers may need to halt discussions to enable other questions to be asked.

Endings
Finish on time. Some participants will have other commitments and you may only have the venue for a fixed period of time.

Provide expenses, if applicable. Make sure you get originals or copies of any receipts/tickets people are claiming. If paying in cash, note down how much is being given out.

Provide support information (National Response Team information) for participants who may want it. This information, which could include telephone helpline numbers or details of organisations, should be easily accessible somewhere that people can take it without having to ask.

Provide researcher contact information in case participants want to clarify anything later or are uneasy about what they said in the consultation. Wait behind in case any participants want to discuss anything with you in private. Do not look as if you want to leave or begin packing up until the participants have all left.

Label recording memory cards. E.g. put them in labelled envelopes.

7.UNIVERSITY ETHICS APPROVAL

Ethical approval has been obtained from the University of Huddersfield, School of Human and Health Sciences Research Ethics Panel and from the by the ISDI School of Design and Innovation ethics panel before commencement of the research.

8. GOVERNMENT/AGENCY APPROVALS

In addition to approval from the University of Huddersfield, School of Human and Health Sciences Ethics Panel, written permissions must be obtained from all relevant government

departments and agencies in the research countries, where such permissions are appropriate.

9.   APPENDIX:

i.   Information for Women
ii.   Interview Guide for Women
iii.   Information for Men/Youth
iv.   Focus Group Guide for Men/Youth
v.   Ranking Exercise
        (for male focus groups)
vi.   Consent Form
vii.   National Response Team Information
viii.   Research Check List

INFORMATION SHEET FOR WOMEN

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study on the needs of women who are affected by gender-based violence (violence directed to women because they are women). It is important that you understand why the research is being carried out and how you will be involved should you agree to take part.

What is the purpose of the study?
Although there is research on gender-based violence, we need to understand the problem from the perspectives of women themselves; the effects of violence on them and their families. We want to improve services and access to justice for all women and this research will be used to train professionals and agencies to be able to respond more effectively to the needs of women.

Where is the research taking place?
The research is taking place in India and similar research is being undertaken in Jamaica, Uganda and the UK. We hope its findings will be valuable for women globally.

Who is conducting the research?
The research is being undertaken by the None in Three Centre which is based at the University of Huddersfield in the UK. The persons responsible for the research in India are Co-directors, Bhanu Varma and Prarthana Patil and Qualitative lead researcher, Rukmini Banerjee. It is likely that they will have other local experts working with them. The contact details of the lead researchers are at the end of this sheet.

Why have I been asked to take part?
You have been invited to take part in the study because as a survivor yourself, you may be in a position to offer an insight into the challenges of women who face gender-based violence.

Do I have to take part?
No, it is up to you to decide whether or not to join the study and there will be no adverse consequences if you decide not to participate

What is required of me if I do take part?
If you agree, we will ask you to choose a false name (which you should remember) – this is to protect your confidentiality and this is the only name that will appear on our records. We will not ask you for any other contact details, although you may contact us at any time. We would then ask you to read and sign the consent form (using your 'new' name). We would then carry out an interview of between 45-90 minutes. The interview will be done in a place which is safe and which offers privacy. We would like your consent to audio record the interview, this would only be used by the research team and means we can capture everything that is important. Once we have written up the interview, the recording will be destroyed. We will make sure that transcripts have identifiable information removed and are carefully stored in a locked storage cupboard or on password protected computers. Audio recordings will also be stored securely using a password.

What are the possible advantages and disadvantages to taking part?
We hope that your participation may help to improve support and services in the future for women experiencing violence. On a personal level, you may find it beneficial to be able to talk about your experiences but if you feel upset, the interview will be paused and you can take a break or you can withdraw from the study. If you think that participating in the study will put you or anyone you know at risk of harm, we would support you in seeking help and protection.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?
Yes, all information gathered in this study will be kept confidential. If you reveal any information that suggests someone is at significant risk of harm, we will ask your permission to inform the appropriate authorities or support you in doing so. Everyone in the study will be given contact details of counsellors – it is your choice whether to seek help. Your identity and confidentiality will be protected at all times. We may use quotations from your interview in publications but these will not be traceable back to you.

What will happen to the results of the research study?
A preliminary report of the research findings should be available within six months of completing the study. The report will be placed on the project website and if you wish you will be able to download this. We will use the research findings to produce policy and practice guidance and we will write publications and present the findings at conferences. In this way we will be able to share your views with as many people as possible.

What if there is a problem?
If you have a concern about any aspect of this research, you should ask to speak to the Country Director or Qualitative Lead for your country. If the matter concerns them or if you so wish, you can contact one of the Co-Directors of the None in Three Centre. All contact details are listed at the end.

What do I do next?
If you would like to take part in the study, please contact Qualitative lead researcher, Rukmini Banerjee. Their details are listed below.

Further Questions?
If you are interested in taking part but have further questions please contact one of the research team.
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Website: *http://noneinthree.hud.ac.uk/india/*

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR WOMEN

These questions are a general guideline for the interview.

Introduction
The researcher should establish rapport, explain the purpose of the study, and explain what will happen with the information. During this time, assurances of confidentiality and anonymity should be given. The participant is given the information sheet and is given the opportunity to ask questions and raise any concerns before consent is obtained. Ask the participant to choose a false name – this is how she should be referred to throughout the interview. Inform the participant of the likely duration of the interview, and ask if there is any objection to recording the interview.

I.   Beginning questions (for all respondents)
    1.   Name and age
    2.   Did you go to school? Till which class did you study?
    3.   Are you working anywhere now?
    4.   Are you married? If yes, when did you marry?
    5.   How many children do you have, what are their age and gender?
    6.   Where do you live? [village, town, suburb, city]
    7.   Who all do you live with?

II.   Understanding experiences of violence
(For married women who live in marital homes)
    1.   How did you meet your husband? Please share with us the circumstances that led to your marriage?
    2.   Have you faced any problems from family members (husband/mother/child/other relatives you live with)? Do you want to share with us how these events took place? [This can include all forms of violence, like physical – slap, kick, push, not giving enough food etc., emotional – screaming, insulting,

ignoring, anything that has hurt you in any way, financial – not giving enough money to you, taking away your earnings, withholding your assets like jewellery.]
    3.   Did you face any kind of conflict during your wedding or during courtship, like dowry threats? Can you tell us what happened and how you felt at that time?
    4.   What were the circumstances that led to your early/child marriage (if applicable)? Can you tell us what happened and how you felt at that time?
    5.   (If it was an inter-caste/inter-religious marriage – which can be understood when the woman answers love/arranged marriage question) Did you face more problems than others who married within their communities or according to their parent's choice? Can you tell us what happened and how you felt at that time?
    6.   Are you an earning member of your family? Are you the only earning member of your family? Are there any financial problems that leads to fighting between you and other family members?
    7.   Can you share with us if any elders (in laws, grandparents) ever mistreated you or other women in your family?
    8.   (if applicable) Do you think not having a child has been a source of conflict for you? Please tell us how you felt when this happened?

(For never-married women)
    1.   Have you ever faced any problems from any family members? (mother/brother/other relatives you live with) Do you want to share with us how these events took place? [This can include all forms of violence, like physical – slap, kick, push, not giving enough food etc., emotional – screaming, insulting, ignoring, anything that has hurt you in any way, financial – not giving enough money to

you, taking away your earnings, withholding your assets like jewellery.]
    2.   Do you have pressure from your family/relatives/neighbours to get married soon? Can you share with us why you think you are facing this pressure?
    3.   Do you want to marry someone? Why do you want to marry? Please tell us how you feel when you hear about plans for your marriage?
    4.   What do you think means to be unmarried in your community? Can you share with us why you feel this way? Can you tell us about a time when you felt powerless because you were unmarried?
    5.   Are you an earning member of your family? Are you the only earning member of your family? Are there any financial problems that leads to fighting between you and other family members?
    6.   Can you share with us if any elders (in laws, grandparents) ever mistreated you or other women in your family?

(For divorced/separated women who live in natal/marital homes)
    1.   Have you ever faced any problems from any family members? (husband/mother/child/other relatives you live with) Do you want to share with us how these events took place? [This can include all forms of violence, like physical – slap, kick, push, not giving enough food etc., emotional – screaming, insulting, ignoring, anything that has hurt you in any way, financial – not giving enough money to you, taking away your earnings, withholding your assets like jewellery.]
    2.   What circumstances led to your divorce? How did you feel when you were going through your divorce/separation?
    3.   How did your natal family react to your divorce/separation? [If you had continued with your marriage, would you have been treated better by your family and friends?]

How has your relationship with them been since then?
    4.   Do you see yourself having a better future now that you are separated/divorced?
    5.   Are you an earning member of your family? Are you the only earning member of your family? Are there any financial problems that leads to fighting between you and other family members?
    6.   Can you share with us if any elders (in laws, grandparents) ever mistreated you or other women in your family?
    7.   Do you think not having a child has been a source of conflict for you? Please tell us how you felt when this happened? (If applicable)

(Questions for women who have children - married/unmarried/divorced/separated)
    1.   Has any family member been abusive to your children? What do you think was the reason for abuse?
    2.   Have you been praised for bearing a male child? (if applicable)
    3.   Have you ever been abused because you have a female child? (if applicable)
    4.   Do you see any instance of discrimination between girls and boys in your family? Please share any detail.

III.   Connecting gender bias with gender-based violence (for all respondents)
    1.   Do you think men and women are different? What would you say are the differences between men and women? [e.g. is it only body/strength or something more like the work that men and women are expected to do?]
    2.   In your family do you think a man is the head of the household? If yes who and why? Can women ever be heads of households? If yes, why and how? If no, why not?
    3.   What is your role in your family as a woman? [e.g., should only women be responsible for housework and childcare?]

What are the expectations of your family from male members?

4. Do you want to change anything about your relationship with your family?

5. Do you think women can choose what to do and how to do it? [e.g. marriage, work, caring for family and child etc. Has anyone used violence (or the threat of it) to make you do things at work, in marriage or in your family?]

6. Do you think people should always follow rules according to their genders? [What do you think about women who are more masculine and men who are more feminine than others?] Are there any particular rules that women are supposed to follow that you dislike?

7. Can you tell me what, in your experience, usually happens to women who don't follow their roles and duties? Can you give me an example of that? [e.g., if you did not do housework one day, will your family be more violent, OR, will your family be less violent if you do all the things they have asked of you?] Are there any reasons why families don't have the same expectations with men?

8. Your beliefs about womanhood and what women should or should not be doing, did this change at some point, like after marriage or after puberty? When did this happen and why do you think this happened? [Why is puberty and marriage so important in the lives of women and young girls?]

9. Do you believe a girl child has the same future as a boy child? What are the difficulties of bringing up a girl child in India? [Is it fear, or do you think it is more responsibility?]

10. With more money in your hand, do you think you will have more say in matters of the family? [Is there anything that you think you can do to help you make more decisions within the household, like earning money, speaking up for yourself, moving out of your joint-family set up etc.?]

IV. Negotiations and strategies (for all respondents)

1. If there is an episode of violence, what is the first thing you do afterwards?

2. Are there people who you can speak with regarding some of the things we discussed today? If you have support then who are they, and how have they helped?

3. Do you know any NGOs who have helped you or anyone like you in difficult situations?

4. Can NGO programmes and campaigns help change the situation in anyway?

5. Do you think the government or police can do anything to prevent violent situations? What kind of help do you expect from the government or police?

6. Can the law help women in difficult situations? If yes, then what can be done to make it easier for women to find help through law?

7. What are the most important factors that can change young girls' future?

8. Can you share with us any advice you would give younger women or girls in your position?

Ending
The researcher should turn off the recorder and spend the final few minutes of the interview checking whether the participant would like to say anything that will not be audio recorded, how she is feeling, whether she would like support in accessing any help. Remind her that she will be able to read the report on the project website. Give the participant the National Response Team information and thank her. Settle any travel expenses.

INFORMATION SHEET FOR MEN AND YOUTH

We would like to invite you to take part in a research study to increase our understanding of gender-based violence. It is important that you understand why the research is being carried out and how you will be involved should you agree to take part.

What is the purpose of the study?
There is a lot of research on gender-based violence yet we do not know much about the experiences or perspectives of men and youth. Although women are more likely to be victims than men, we know that men are affected by domestic violence too, either because they have been a victim or, because they have harmed someone. We also recognise that many men, even if they have grown up witnessing violence are not violent at all. We believe that only by talking with men can we gain their perspectives on the causes of violence, the kinds of strategies men use to prevent violence and what forms of action they think are needed to reduce gender-based violence in our societies. We will use this information to provide training for professionals and agencies and to promote better services for victims and perpetrators.

Where is the research taking place?
The research is taking place in India and similar research is being undertaken in Jamaica, Uganda and the UK. We hope its findings will be valuable for women globally.

Who is conducting the research?
The research is being undertaken by the None in Three Centre which is based at the University of Huddersfield in the UK. The persons responsible for the research in India are Co-directors, Bhanu Varma and Prarthana Patil and Qualitative lead researcher, Rukmini Banerjee. It is likely that they will have other local experts working with them. The contact details of the lead researchers are at the end of this sheet.

Why have I been asked to take part?
You have been invited to take part in the study because we believe you may be in a position to offer an insight into how men view violence against women, its causes and effects, the specific strengths and challenges they face in preventing such violence and ideas about what can be done. These circumstances may or may not apply to you, but if you are in agreement, we would still like to talk to you.

Do I have to take part?
No, it is up to you to decide whether or not to join the study and there will be no adverse consequences if you decide not to participate
What is required of me if I do take part?
If you agree, we will ask you to choose a false name (which you should remember) – this is to protect your confidentiality and this is the only name that will appear on our records. We will not ask you for any other contact details, although you may contact us at any time. We would then ask you to read and sign the consent form (using your 'new' name). We would invite you to take part in a focus group discussion which will last approximately 45-90 minutes. We will be audio recording the discussion (unless you object), this would only be used by the research team and means we can capture everything that is important. Once we have written up the discussion, the recording will be destroyed. We will make sure that transcripts have identifiable information removed and are carefully stored in a locked storage cupboard or on password protected computers. Audio recordings will also be stored securely using a password.

What are the possible advantages and disadvantages to taking part?
We hope that your participation may help to improve support and services in the future in the prevention of gender-based violence. On a

personal level, you may find it beneficial to be able to talk about your experiences but if you feel upset, you can take a break or withdraw from the group.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?
Yes, all information gathered in this study will be kept confidential unless there is a possibility of harm occurring to yourself or others. In the possibility of harm, we will ask your permission to inform the appropriate authorities. Everyone in the study will be given contact details of counsellors – it is your choice whether to seek help. Your identity and confidentiality will be protected at all times. All the members of the group will be asked to respect each other's confidentiality, but we would make you aware that we cannot control what others say outside of the group. We may use quotations from the discussion in publications but these will not be traceable back to any individual.

What will happen to the results of the research study?
A preliminary report of the research findings should be available within six months of completing the study. The report will be placed on the project website and if you wish you will be able to download this. We will use the research findings to produce policy and practice guidance and we will write publications and present the findings at conferences. In this way we will be able to share your views with as many people as possible.

What if there is a problem?
If you have a concern about any aspect of this research, you should ask to speak to the Country Director or Qualitative Lead for your country. If the matter concerns them or if you so wish, you can contact the Co-Directors of the None in Three Centre. All contact details are listed at the end.

What do I do next?
If you would like to take part in the study, please contact Rukmini Banerjee. Their details are listed below.

Further Questions?
If you are interested in taking part but have further questions, please contact one of the research team.

None in Three Project Contact Details
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Website: http://noneinthree.hud.ac.uk/india/

FOCUS GROUPS WITH MEN AND YOUTH

Introduction
Introduce facilitator and explain purpose of focus group: "This group is part of the None in Three Project on preventing gender-based violence in India and our hope is that it will help us to better understand the needs and views of men and youth who have lived with violence. Your responses will be very useful to us as we complete this project and we are grateful to you for participating. Each of you has important information to share, we encourage everyone to participate, and to allow others time to talk".

Provide everyone with an information sheet and provide the opportunity for questions. Ask participants to choose a false name, write it down in order to always use this in the discussion. Ask participants to sign the consent form. Go over the rules about confidentiality and respect. Double check permission to audio record the session.

Beginning
Ask participants to introduce themselves. You may wish to include an 'ice-breaker' exercise to get the discussion started – using the ranking exercise (see next sheet) would be an appropriate exercise to facilitate discussion. Consider getting each man (but no compulsion) to complete this to help get things going.

I. Understanding gender-based violence
   1. What do you understand by gender-based violence (GBV)?
   2. What do you understand about gender bias?
   3. Do you think this is a problem in our country [e.g. rapes, murders, female infanticide etc. that we read about in the news]?
   4. Are there any particular factors leading to these kinds of violence [e.g. lack of education or money, traditional ways of thinking etc.]?

   5. Have you ever been accused of being violent by a woman? Can you share your thoughts on any such incident?
   6. Should elders in families have the right to discipline women and children? Can they also do the same to men like yourself?
   7. Should women in families also contribute financially?
   8. What important decisions do women of your family make [e.g. to have children or not, to work or not, to get education or not]?

II. Motive for gender-based violence
   1. What is your expectation from a woman as a partner / mother / sister / daughter?
   2. How different are these expectations from that of a male fulfilling the roles of partner / father / brother / son?
   3. What do you feel when a woman does not meet your expectations as a partner / mother / sister / daughter? (e.g. Angry, sad, disappointed, neutral etc.)
   4. How do you express yourself when your expectations from a woman are not met? (E.g. anger, scream, hit, do nothing etc.)

III. Understanding gender bias
   1. Do you believe men and women are different? What are the things that make them different [e.g. is it only body/strength or something more like the work they do]?
   2. In your families are women/girls treated differently than men/boys [e.g. do you all eat together, who does domestic work more]?
   3. What role do you have in your family?
   4. What role do the women of your family have [e.g. is it only marrying and bearing children, doing housework]?
   5. What do you think about women's safety and protection?
   6. Do you think all children are equal?
   7. Are there any reasons why you think sons are more preferred than daughters [e.g. is it more problem to have girl child]?

IV. Strategies and help
1. Have any of you ever witnessed any incident of GBV? What did you do?
2. Are there any ways that you think you can help women who are being abused in their families?
3. Do you know of people from your community who are talking about the issues we discussed today?
4. Do you know any organisations who are working against GBV?
5. Will you ever consider talking to someone when you are feeling violent (i.e. a community person or NGO worker)?

6. The government has been implementing many schemes for women's safety or empowerment, what are your views on them? (E.g. DV Act/498A, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao etc.)
7. Do you think GBV can be prevented in the future if young children are taught to think differently?

Thank everyone for their participation and make sure each person is given a National Response Team information sheet. Settle travelling expenses.

RANKING EXERCISE

Ranking is a useful technique to help participants prioritize problems and solutions. The researcher gives participants a series of categories and asks them to rank them in order of priority, urgency, or severity. This is then used as the basis of discussion for action needed. In the adaptation below, we have also included the possibility of men as victims.

Type of Abuse	not violence	minor violence	moderate violence	serious violence	very serious violence	Most likely victim Male or Female (M or F)	Most likely perpetrator Male or Female (M or F)
			Insert √				
1. Yelling at or humiliating in public							
2. Throwing things							
3. Demanding sex from your partner when s/he doesn't want it							
4. Threatening to hit							
5. Threatening to withdraw financial support							
6. Destroying objects that belong to the partner							
7. Not paying for household expenses							
8. Denying visits to and, or from own children							
9. Pushing or shoving							
10. Slapping							
11. Blows with the fist, on any part of the body except the head, that don't leave a scar							
12. Beating up with bruises or swelling							
13. Saying constantly that your partner is stupid or worthless							
14. Controlling your partner's activities (work, visits, friends, cell/mobile calls)							
15. Blows with a fist to the head							
16. Blows during pregnancy							
17. Beating up with wounds or fractures							
18. Threats with a gun or knife							
19. Other – please specify							

Adapted from 'A Practical Guide for Researchers and Activists' (p138), https://www.path.org/publications/files/GBV_rvaw_ch9.pdf)

RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

1. *I confirm that I have been given the information sheet for the None in Three research. I understand the purpose and nature of the study, have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had these answered to my satisfaction.* ☐
2. *I agree to take part in the study. I know that my participation is voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without facing any adverse consequences.* ☐
3. *I understand that the study is confidential and my real name will not be used at any stage.* ☐
4. *I understand that I can refuse to answer any questions.* ☐
5. *I give permission for interviews/focus group discussions to be audio-recorded and transcribed* ☐
6. *If I am uncomfortable with the session being recorded, I can ask for the recording to be stopped at any time.* ☐
7. *If I am distressed as a result of taking part in the study, I will be given help to access counselling or support from an appropriate agency.* ☐
8. *I agree to inform the researcher if I am unsafe because of my participation in the research.* ☐
9. *I give permission for anonymised quotes to be used in any publications.* ☐
10. *I understand that all information gathered in this study will be kept confidential unless there is a possibility of harm occurring to a child or other vulnerable person. In the event of the possibility of harm, I give permission for appropriate authorities to be informed.* ☐

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Website: http://noneinthree.hud.ac.uk/india/

_____
Name of participant   Date   Signature

_____
Name of researcher   Date   Signature

NATIONAL RESPONSE TEAM

Are you having difficulty dealing with the issues raised by this study?
We believe that you, like us are committed to ending gender-based violence and to ensuring the safety of those who are vulnerable or at risk of being harmed – in fact, this is probably the reason that you agreed to take part in this study. However, answering our questions may have raised fears for vulnerable people that you know (such as children) or else reminded you of distressing personal experiences.
If your concern is for children who may be at risk of violence or have been abused **you can do something now!**

If you need help to work through your own feelings about domestic violence (or other form of gender-based violence) **you can do something now!**
Men often find it especially difficult to talk about domestic violence – if you are a man and want support to handle how this study has affected you, **you can do something now!**
A Response Team has been established in your country. These are counsellors who have volunteered their services to support this project. They have agreed that they can be contacted in case you wish to report your concerns or if you need to help yourself.

Names	Professional role	Tel #	Email address
Aditi Thakur	Social worker	+91 8454842213	aditithakur89@gmail.com
iCall – Tata Institute of Social Sciences	Telephone counselling service MON - SAT 8am - 10pm	022-25521111	http://icallhelpline.org/
Piyali Khanra	Student advisor/ counsellor	+919711649050	piyali@isme.co.in

In case of need, please call any member from the above list. If the matter concerns an urgent threat of violence, you must call your local police station. You can also access help by going onto the None in Three website *www.noneinthree.org.*

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RESEARCH CHECK LIST

Item	Requirement	
Qualifications & experience	Researchers have appropriate qualifications and experienced of researching sensitive issues	☐
Methods	Researchers understand the methods to be used and are fully acquainted with the interview/focus group guides. They have adequate numbers of guides and ranking exercise sheets	☐
Ethics	Researchers understand their responsibility to ensure proper ethical procedures and to minimise any risks to themselves	☐
Equipment	Researchers are familiar with using the digital recorder. The recorder is in good working order and additional batteries have been provided	☐
Field notes	In the event that recording is not possible, researchers know how to take field notes and have a note book for the purpose	☐
Information sheets	Researchers have adequate supplies of information sheets	☐
Consent forms	Researchers have adequate supplies of consent forms	☐
NRT	Researchers have adequate supplies of National Response Team information sheets	☐
Venues	Appropriate venues for interviews/focus groups have been arranged	☐
Petty cash	Researchers have adequate petty cash to cover refreshments, participant travel expenses and miscellaneous items	☐
Receipting	Researchers are aware of need to receipt all expenses and have a receipt book for the purpose	☐
Data management	Researchers are aware of the need to back up digital recordings and transcriptions. Confirmation is given that computers used for the project are password protected and field notes and memory cards will be kept in locked storage	☐
Debriefing	Arrangements are in place to avoid secondary traumatisation (e.g. self-care discussions have taken place, de-briefing sessions planned, counselling services made available)	☐

Profiles

Professor Adele Jones, PhD

Professor of Social Work at the University of Huddersfield, Adele specialises in international children's rights andprevention of violence against women and children. She has authorednumerous publications on a range of topics around child abuse and gender inequality andled more than 26 international research projects, culminating in the creation and leadership of theglobal Ni3 Research Centre.

http://www.noneinthree.org/meet-the-centre-team/adele-jones/

DrGraham Gibbs,PhD

An expert in qualitative research methodsbased at the University of Huddersfield,Grahamhas led and supported a range of social science research projects, with a focus on computer assisted learning. Graham has written two bookson qualitative data analysis and supported researchers withNVivo data analysis in international projects including Ni3.

http://www.noneinthree.org/meet-the-centre-team/graham-gibbs/

Dr Tim Gomersall, PhD

Senior Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Huddersfield, Tim's research interests include: the psychology of illness self-management; gender, sexuality and health; and health technology evaluation. He has authored and co-authored several publications around psychology and health, and has provided expertise to the Ni3 team in using a metasynthetic approach to reviewing existing literature.

http://www.noneinthree.org/meet-the-centre-team/timothy-gomersall/

Bhanu Varma

Bhanu Varma manages the None in Three India Research Centre, alongside his colleague Prarthana Patil from Mumbai, India. Prior to this engagement, Bhanuhas been managing and growing corporate accounts for over 25 years. His penchant for working amongst people was made very clear early on and he found genuine joy in helping others succeed in variousroles,over years. His passion for workingin Gender Upliftment and his experience in managing large multi million dollar projects, made him an apt resource to co-lead the project in India. As the Country Co-Director, Bhanu oversees the timeliness and quality of delivery for None in Three India chapter. He supervises the various external engagements, wherever necessary. He also has a keen eye for details and edits the centre's publications.

http://www.noneinthree.org/meet-the-centre-team/bhanu-varma/

Prarthana Patil

Prarthana Patil is the Academic Dean at the School of Foundation Studies at ISDI School of Design and Innovation, and the Co-Country Director for None in Three India. She is a passionate educator with over two decades of experience in teaching essential critical thinking and reflection skills. Her interests include designing curriculums with a focus on films, mythology and culture.

http://www.noneinthree.org/meet-the-centre-team/prarthana-patil/

Rukmini Banerjee

Rukmini Banerjee is a researcher based in India. Her work focuses around community-centred development and transdisciplinary approaches to research. She has experience of working with the LGBT community on issues of violence and social exclusion. Her interests include academic and activist collaborations, gender and culture, and sexuality rights movements in India.

http://www.noneinthree.org/india1/meet-the-team/rukmini-banerjee/

Anne Panicker

Anne did her undergraduate studies in Political Science and postgraduate studies in Law and MBA (Social Entrepreneurship). She previously worked as a lawyer representing children in conflict with law and filing successful compensation applications under schemes for acid attack survivors.

http://www.noneinthree.org/india-anne-thomas-panicker/

Ishani Kulkarni

Ishani is a visual communication designer with a keen interest in using design for social good in impactful ways. Her work with None in Three includes visualisingresearch data to further the understanding of gender bias and gender-based violence.Her areas of interest includedatavisualization, type design, photography and writing.

http://www.noneinthree.org/india-ishani-kulkarni/

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