

Strength in Action

An Educators' Guide to Preventing Domestic Violence

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

Foreword

Part 1 Facilitator Notes 3-18

Introduction: Why a Resource Guide on Domestic Violence	5
Building a Human Rights Culture: Understanding Human Rights	8
Domestic Violence and Human Rights: The Global Context	10
Domestic Violence: The Indian Context	13

Part 2 Talking About Domestic Violence 19-58

Resource Guide Overview	21
Section 1: Setting a Context	23
Section 2: Contributing Factors	32
Section 3: Impact and Consequences	40
Section 4: Dealing with Violence	45
Handouts	51

Annexure 59-82

1. Fact Sheet on Domestic Violence	60
2. Facilitator Tips	63
3. Ideas for Action	65
4. Lyrics of <i>Mann ke Manjeeré</i> and <i>Babul</i>	67
5. Timeline of Key Moments in the Women's Movement	68
6. Universal Declaration of Human Rights	71
7. Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women	76
8. Legislation and Domestic Violence in India	81

List of other resources

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Foreword

“Strength in Action – an Educators’ Guide to Preventing Domestic Violence,” provides essential resources to teachers, facilitators and leaders who desire to make the world a safer place for women and girls. This effort began with the launch of ‘Mann ke Manjeere- An Album of Women’s Dreams’ and the corresponding video addressing domestic violence. Our goal at Breakthrough was to create innovative ways for educators to use our music videos to engage young people in understanding and challenging the factors that lead to gender-based violence.

What began as a simple project of creating a study guide has turned into this rich resource which provides exercises, workshop plans, visual media and human rights documents. Contributions from educators, students, battered women, journalists and leaders from the women’s movement ensure that this guide is both practical and valuable.

From the outset, Breakthrough has sought to locate this endeavour within the larger context of human rights. After all, the pervasive nature of violence against women and girls has at its root the denial of women’s fundamental humanity. Social and cultural norms that render women and girls second class citizens underlie the discrimination and violence they experience from birth throughout their life cycles. Male child preference has led to the trafficking of women from the East to the North to provide brides where women of marriageable age no longer exist. Sexual violence and the inability to negotiate safe sex have led to millions of young women being infected with HIV. Burn wards around the country continue to be filled with women who have been set on fire for dowry or other reasons by spouses or other marital family members. Large numbers of Dalit and poor women continue to experience violence at the hands of upper caste men, government officials and others in positions of power. The promise of India’s independence still eludes half of its population.

Breakthrough seeks to find innovative ways to transform the family home from a place of violence and discrimination to the safe sanctuary it is meant to be. Families should protect and nurture, not take away fundamental human rights to life, health, and dignity. In order to transform social and cultural norms into human rights values, we believe that our work must begin with young people, with community groups, with businessmen, with media – with all the sectors of society that must take responsibility to end gender-based violence. It is no longer enough just to organize women or address the needs of battered women – for many of whom interventions may anyhow come too late.

“Strength in Action – An Educators’ Guide to Preventing Domestic Violence” provides the resources necessary to conduct a systematic, ongoing education process. It aims to build a culture of human rights where all of us, boys and girls, men and women, can enjoy equal rights, equal respect and freedom from violence. After all, this was the promise of not only the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the UN in 1948 but also India’s constitution, which guarantees men and women, equal protection under the law.

This guide has been two years in the making and a number of organizations have supported its creation. We would like to thank the Holdeen India Fund, the Ford Foundation, UNIFEM, NOVIB, Oxfam and the Global Fund for Women along with all the individuals who have made it possible to make this guide a reality.

By framing domestic violence as a human rights issue, it is Breakthrough’s belief that we can all work together as schools, colleges, neighbourhoods and communities to make the world a safer space for women and girls. After all, strength lies in action – concerted, united action to transform violence into peace and justice. We would be delighted if through the use of this rich resource, you would join us our journey towards human rights for all.

We welcome you, through the use of this rich resource, to join us in our journey towards human rights for all.

Mallika Dutt
Executive Director

Part 1

Facilitator Notes

Part 1 Contents:

Introduction: Why a Resource Guide on Domestic Violence	5
Building a Human Rights Culture: Understanding Human Rights	8
Domestic Violence and Human Rights: The Global Context	10
Domestic Violence: The Indian Context	13

Why a Resource Guide on Domestic Violence

In India, women can experience violence through their life cycle, across regions, religions, communities and classes. It can take the form of sex-selection, female feticide and infanticide, forced pregnancy, domestic violence, dowry-related violence, violence against widows, violence in armed conflicts, sexual harassment and assault, forced prostitution and honour killings. In each of these cases, violence is perpetrated because of a woman's gender.

Gendered violence has its roots in a cluster of norms, expectations and understandings that define, discipline and subordinate women. One of the most pervasive forms among these is patriarchy. These beliefs and understandings are reflected politically,

Domestic Violence includes physical, sexual violence as well as psychological abuse such as isolation, humiliation, denial of support and threats of violence or injury. Those working with survivors of domestic abuse often report that women consider psychological abuse to be even more devastating than physical assault.

economically, culturally and socially and are also imprinted in the law, resulting in a legal system that excludes women's voices, silences them and denies them their rights.

Unequal inheritance laws, for example, legitimate patriarchy by ensuring that women have very limited access to resources of their own, whether land, housing or money. At the same time, they give both the natal and marital home the potential to become sites of violence: dowry deaths, in fact, are closely

connected to unequal inheritance laws.

Of all the forms of violence faced by women and girls, domestic violence, which occurs in the sanctity of the home, remains one of the least discussed in the public sphere. Violence that takes place in a personal space is very difficult to talk about, especially in the Indian socio-cultural context. In a society where people are loathe to get involved in matters between husbands and wives, domestic violence is routinely ignored as a "personal matter." Yet, violence – physical, psychological, and sexual – is an everyday reality in the lives of many women in India.

The insidiousness of domestic violence makes it a vital issue for proponents and practitioners of women's rights to address. Women's movements and activists have carried on several laudable efforts in this regard: reaching out to battered women and encouraging them to seek services, on the one hand, and focusing on legal reforms and training of personnel in legal, health or enforcement situations on the other.

However, a clear-eyed appraisal of the above makes it evident that initiatives like appropriate legislation, mechanisms to punish offenders and shelter homes can succeed in lowering violence against women only if they are complemented with social awareness of and consensus against these violations. It is important to focus not only on the violation *after* it has been committed, but at the same time to address violence *prevention*, so as to disrupt the overall societal context that allows the violence to continue.

Several innovative attempts at community organizing, particularly in rural areas, have led to the identification of such prevention strategies, but there have been few attempts to make them part of a comprehensive approach to address violence against women. Breakthrough seeks to change this by setting its sights on reaching out to broader

constituencies in order to make violence against women a part of mainstream, public discussions.

There is a need to involve men as much as women into these efforts since men themselves are often victims of conventional patriarchal stereotypes that bind them to certain roles and behaviour-patterns and perpetuate gendered violence. Moreover, a social consensus against violence can be generated only when all the members of the society are made equal participants in the process of creating critical consciousness.

This Resource Guide, based on the premise that **women's rights are human rights**, is thus an endeavour to foster a human rights movement where each person recognizes a personal responsibility to promote equal rights and individual dignity for all and to fight against oppression and discrimination.

Objectives of the Resource Guide

Targeted at young people, the main objectives of the Resource Guide are:

- To create a dialogue around culture, violence, vulnerability, and rights
- To create an understanding of domestic violence: what is it, why it exists, and what can be done to prevent it
- To increase an understanding of human rights and their application to domestic violence
- To encourage a better understanding of the role of gender and the notions of masculinity and femininity

Methodology of the Resource Guide

- **The Resource Guide encourages discussion on the issue with both boys and girls through a participatory process.** It stimulates dialogue and open discussions, and encourages responsible taking action, problem solving, and negotiating skills.
- **It promotes a gender sensitive approach to relationships, family and society.** It provides adolescents with information and knowledge about DV, and skills for what can be done about DV in real life.
- **It focuses on experiential learning.** It is structured so that the facilitator guides the participants through a process of experiences and activities, reflection and discussion. The participants are encouraged to look for ideas for action and application to similar situations in their lives. Situations and problems are presented, discussed and analyzed.

Target audience and facilitators

The Resource Guide, though put together to address senior school students, can be adapted and used with other groups as well.

It is intended for:

- Senior school teachers and counsellors
- University and college students
- Government organisations that hold trainings on specific issues that impact violence against women
- Nongovernmental organisations (NGOs)

Tools for transformation

Breakthrough uses popular culture as a tool for transformation. Our resource package for the Resource Guide encourages the use of popular electronic and print media. The materials included in the accompanying Audio Visual produced by Breakthrough, has materials reflecting both positive and negative messages reinforced in popular culture. Images from popular media are an interesting and stimulating way to engage participants and encourage examination of many ignored issues.

Many of our suggested materials relate directly to Indian culture. Therefore, when applying this resource guide outside of the Indian context one must adapt sections of the guide to the specifics of the new context.

Taking time to reflect

It would help the facilitator to ask herself/himself the following questions before using the manual:

- What do I know about Domestic Violence?
- Why is it important for me to talk about the issue?
- Am I comfortable talking about difficult issues such as physical and emotional violence and would I be comfortable conducting a workshop on these issues?
- What do I know about the ideologies of gender, and the specific vulnerability of women?
- How would I handle a situation if there were a victim of violence in the participating group?

The Resource Guide is structured so that it can help answer some of these questions, and sensitise the facilitator as well as the audience to the issues. (For more on tips for facilitators see Annex 2)

Working with Young People

Breakthrough created this Resource Guide for facilitators who work with young people, in order to help sensitize the latter to issues around domestic violence (“DV”) and encourage them to begin addressing situations of DV.

Adolescence is a transitional period during which young people begin defining themselves, their future interests, morals and values. In a move towards independence, they also begin to experiment with and question the rules and limits set by adults in authority. This is therefore a critical phase for teaching youth the social skills, emotional competencies, and qualities of character that are needed to shape a safe, sustainable, democratic and just world.

An orientation to an alternative way to think about human rights, sexuality and violence becomes all the more important in the light of the profusion of stereotypical, distorted images that teenagers today are bombarded with. It is all too easy for them to internalize conservative, stock beliefs and attitudes about how men and women should behave. Men and boys, for instance, have to be aggressive, dominant, and tough; women and girls: passive, submissive, and weak. It is okay for women to cry, but men must hide their vulnerability and emotions. Men are breadwinners and women are housewives.

These traditional notions of masculinity and femininity, unless challenged, can embed themselves into the consciousness of adolescents and can, in turn, foster unequal relationships where an imbalance in power makes it easy to slip into patterns of violence and abuse. Patriarchy is perhaps only one of the many systems of power including classism, casteism, heterosexism, imperialism and militarism that foster the unequal relationships and sanctions for violence.

Thus, addressing issues of violence, discrimination and oppression in the world make it imperative to teach adolescents to think critically about popular ideas and representations of masculinity and femininity and to find alternative ways of “being a man” and “being a woman”.

Building a Human Rights Culture

Human rights provide a universal framework for justice and equality, highlighting the importance of access to all rights for all people. It allows an understanding of the broader connections of domestic violence to socio-economic issues, class, religion and geography. Understanding DV within a human rights framework and promoting the values of respect and tolerance is an important step towards preventing violence in the home.

Domestic violence is an area where amongst the worst violations of women's human rights occur. Women who face domestic violence are denied their fundamental rights to life, health, bodily integrity, privacy, access to public space, political expression, shelter and food.

Individuals and communities have a critical role to play in reducing the incidence of domestic violence. Their involvement in this struggle is also essential to reducing the stigma surrounding violence in the home. DV must be taken out of the private sphere and tackled as a public and human rights issue.

Respecting human rights means respecting all rights. All human rights are universal and apply to each and every human being. They should be respected equally regardless of an individual's sex, race, religion, ethnicity, sexuality or geographic orientation. The true power of human rights lies in recognizing the value and contribution of each individual and respecting the basic dignity and rights of all human beings.

Human rights can be understood at three different levels, all of which interact with one another – values, politics, and law.

Values: Human rights operate most importantly at the level of our value systems. These are the values that support our social relationships, our work relationships, our religious beliefs, and how we treat our families and ourselves. Do we respect each other's right to live with dignity? Do our daily practices promote equality, justice and peace? Do we have respect and compassion for the people in our lives? If we are part of institutions, do we try and ensure that they treat all human beings with respect?

Politics: The second level of human rights, which many of us are more familiar with, is the political level. People who are from a disadvantaged community can come together and organize for and demand their human rights. Groups of people can resist government policies and actions that undermine their human rights. Based on a common value system, individuals can come together to ensure respect for the human rights.

Law: The third level of human rights operates at the level of law – at the international, national and local level. Internationally, the United Nations has codified many human rights in documents. The basis of all these documents is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. At the national level, the constitution of a country embodies human rights principles and governments create legislation to implement these principles. Such legislation provides a system that allows individuals to seek redress for violations. At the local level, the strength of these laws is often dependent on each individual's respect for another individual's human rights.

Domestic Violence: The Global Context

Domestic Violence is Global

- At least one in every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex or abused in some other way - most often by someone she knows, including a family member; one woman in four has been abused during her pregnancy (UNFPA)
- Between 10-50% of women in various countries report they have been physically abused by an intimate partner (WHO)
- Interpersonal violence was the tenth leading cause of death for women 15-44 years of age in 1988 (WHO)
- Population based studies report that between 12 and 25% of women have experienced attempted or completed forced sex by an intimate partner or ex-partner at some point in their lives

“Any act of gender based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.”

- UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women

According to these guidelines, domestic violence clearly falls within the sphere of such violence and can also be defined as “any physical or psychological abuse imposed on one family member by another.” It refers to acts of violence that take place in the domestic sphere

Domestic Violence is Universal

Domestic violence occurs in all societies around the world and it is not a function of class, caste, race, religion or nationality. It occurs in rich and poor households alike and it is a fallacy to believe that higher levels of wealth or education automatically protect women from violence. Perpetrators and victims may be highly educated and also aware that domestic violence is “wrong” or a crime. They may belong to any age, sexual orientation and socio-economic background. (See fact sheet in annex 1)

Beyond Physical Violence

Domestic violence is not always physical. It can involve behaviour that causes psychological harm or attempts to maintain power and control through intimidation or coercion. Name-calling, humiliation, constant criticism, attempts to isolate a woman from her friends or family, extreme jealousy, restriction of personal freedom, tight control of family finances, and threats of physical harm are all hallmarks of an abusive relationship. If a person is controlled by her partner and lives in fear, she is a victim of domestic violence. Abuse does not have to happen every day or every week for it to be classified as domestic violence.

Domestic Violence: The Indian Context

- According to a 2000 study by the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW), as many as 4 out of 10 women in India experienced violence in the home.
- 44% of women interviewed in the ICRW study reported at least one incident of physical or psychological violence in their lifetimes.
- 40% of the same respondents experienced at least one form of physical violence.
- 56% of women justified beatings (National Family Health Survey 2).

A Hidden Problem

Concealed: In a country like India the private domain – the home — is considered to be under the control and unquestionable authority of the male head of the household. Acts of violence against members of the household, whether a wife or child, tend to be perceived as disciplinary measures, essential for the maintenance of authority within the family. Our society often frowns upon public complaints by women of any male violence within the home. If and when violence is publicly acknowledged then it brings dishonour on the family, but not on the perpetrator of the violence. Women are seen as traitors to the family when they report violence.

Underreported: There are several factors that contribute to DV being a highly underreported and hidden phenomenon. A woman may experience confused and conflicting feelings when her lover or husband is physically or psychologically violent toward her, finding it difficult to see herself as a victim of abuse. She may, in many cases, not even realise that she is in a violent situation and that the way she is being treated is not right or acceptable. She may be embarrassed or ashamed to talk about the violence in her home due to social pressures and expectations.

Actors in Domestic Violence

Although domestic violence is carried out in the home environment, the state and the community are as responsible as the family in its perpetuation.¹ It is important to acknowledge the role of these actors as a first step in finding solutions to violence against women

The family: The family, which gives nurturing and love, can also be discriminatory and violent. The natal family can socialise its members to believe in gender inequality by discriminating against boys and girls. Mobility for girls gets restricted in different ways including the *purdah* and night curfews. In the matrimonial home, women's fertility can be controlled by making them go through unwanted pregnancy or female feticide.

¹ See Shades of Courage, Women and the IPC Section 498 A, TISS, 1999

The community: Different rules are set for boys and girls, which get reflected in social, cultural and religious practices. Women traditionally perceived as housewives, even with many of them having to work, enter the workplace in lower paying positions and jobs. The media reinforces the stereotypical notion of women as daughters, subservient wives and self-sacrificing mothers, despite evidence in society that women are branching away from these prescribed roles.

The state: Although it is the responsibility of the state (government and state-led authorities such as the police and the judiciary) to create an environment in which people’s rights are respected, the state and its agencies have not only failed to protect women’s human rights in cases of violence, they very often perpetuate discrimination and violations. A major factor in keeping women from seeking help from violence is the extreme lack of gender-sensitivity in Indian legal and state bodies. While women’s cells have been set up in police stations and an increasing number of gender-sensitive lawyers in the legal system are helping women seek legal recourse, the majority of Indian institutions remain male-dominated and insensitive to women’s rights.

Factors that Perpetuate Gender-based Violence	
Cultural	Gender specific socialization Cultural definitions of appropriate sex roles Expectations of roles in relationships
Economic	Women's economic dependence on men Limited access to cash and credit Limited access to employment
Legal	Lesser legal status of women Laws regarding divorce Legal definitions of rape Low levels of legal literacy Insensitive treatment of women and girls by police and judiciary
Political	Under representation of women in power and politics Domestic violence not a serious issue Notions of family being private, beyond control of state

Courtesy “Local Action, Global Change”

Changing parameters

Gender roles determined by the socio-cultural construct of a society have a definitive role to play in perpetuating DV. While traditional gender roles are being challenged by current social and economic transitions, they are also being reinforced by moves to preserve an “Indian identity.” On the one hand women gain more access to education, work outside the home and are able to exercise more choice in their own lives, and on the other there is a push toward retaining traditional gender roles as a means of preserving Indian culture and traditions.

How do men and women balance modernity and tradition? Are there choices available for women who want to follow tradition, yet work, be independent and make life choices for themselves? Or do Indian cultural traditions firmly keep women in a subservient position? Do some traditions have to be discarded (say rituals surrounding widowhood or rituals asking for sons rather than daughters) for women to be fully equal to men in the family and in society? Are women going against their heritage and their “Indian-ness” by choosing to work, to study and to choose to *not* follow traditions? Is a changing value system necessarily wrong and something to be condemned?

There are several exercises in this resource guide that encourage participants to explore these questions and understand gender roles in our society. Some examples of the issues that must be addressed by the family, the community and, in some instances, the state, are given below.

Symbols and tradition: There are numerous symbols and rituals in Indian society that reinforce the notion of a secondary status. For instance, married Hindu women are expected to wear *sindoor*² and a *mangalsutra*³, clearly signifying their married status in society, while there is no corresponding cultural requirement of men, perhaps because there is no need to show “possession.”

These symbols are seen as part of the Indian cultural heritage and many women like using these in their lives. The question remains, however, as to whether women have **any element of active choice** in following these traditions. How often can a woman choose *not* to wear *sindoor* if she does not want to?

Access to education: Today more women are able to access higher education, work and step outside the confines of the household. Education gives women the opportunity to question the traditional expectations placed upon them, while giving them freedom to make choices. While higher education is bringing positive changes in relationships between men and women, this does not automatically protect women from violence within the home.

Single women: Indian culture often derives the worth of a woman through her relationship to a man whether this is as a daughter, wife, or mother. Where does this leave single women in Indian society? Unmarried women are constantly under pressure to marry and start their own families because women are not considered to be “settled”

² Vermilion, powdered red lead, applied as a dot on the forehead, like the regular *bindi* or in the parting of the hair by all married women in the Hindu custom. Married women use it as a visible expression of their desire for their husbands' “long life”. Traditionally therefore, widows are not allowed wear vermilion.

³ Mangalsutra, or thread of good will, is a necklace worn specifically by married women as a symbol of their marriage

unless they are married, no matter if they have a good career and are happy not being married.

Widowed women may also face stigma in Indian society. They are often not allowed to participate in religious and cultural rituals and they may be ostracized from their husband's family. While this treatment is clearly changing, especially in urban India, a woman who is widowed is faced with two major losses upon the death of her husband - one of her life partner and the other of the social space she acquires as a "married woman." Divorce creates another scenario in which a woman is stigmatized through the failure of a marriage and where the blame of not "saving" the marriage often falls upon the woman.

We must ask ourselves whether these myriad "popular" understandings of gender roles are acceptable or whether they need changing. Do our norms and values reflect and reinforce an ideal that makes women more vulnerable to violence? We need to explore how we can make positive changes to the current norms and benefit both men and women.

Consequences of Domestic violence

(See Annex 1, for an overview of consequences of domestic violence)

Many women face violence because they lack options to escape a violent situation. They usually do not want to return to their natal home and be a “burden” to their parents. Families often believe that a wife should adjust to her matrimonial home even if she faces extreme violence. At the same time, many women do not have the skills or the education to live independently if they leave a violent marriage. Women may opt out of violent relationships only when it becomes impossible for them to continue in them – if their lives are threatened or if they are grievously hurt. Society also does not penalize the perpetrator of violence, blaming the woman for being aggressive or “asking for it.” The perpetrator may even be free to marry again and continue with his life.

The impact violence can have on victims is deadly. Many can never recover from the physical trauma they suffered and women also endure tremendous psychological suffering. Sleep disorders, nightmares, and alcohol or drug dependency are often the outcomes of violent relationships. The cost that society has to pay for such violence is also high. Working women lose time at their jobs. The legal and state systems also has to dedicate lawyers, the police, social workers and court time in assessing cases of domestic violence. While more effective mechanisms are required for dealing with the consequences of domestic violence, it is clearly imperative to identify and promote means to prevent such violence.

Challenges and Solutions

Strategies to combat domestic violence have included counselling, legal aid and shelter, awareness campaigns as well as campaigns for legal reforms. These have evolved amidst a host of challenges reinforced by gender stereotypes and prejudices:

Limited options for women: Studies indicate that women in abusive situations often believe that they do not have any choice but to live with the abuse. Coping mechanisms can take the form of getting support from the natal home, bearing sons or – in extreme cases – committing suicide. Sometimes, women continue to endure the violence in the hope that time will mitigate the situation.

The challenge here is to empower women and girls to find solutions of their own for resisting the abuse in their lives, and further to lead their lives with dignity and self-respect.

Unwillingness of outsiders to help: Even when others in the family or neighbourhood are aware of violence in the marriage, they refrain from interfering, as it becomes a “personal matter between the husband and the wife”. Tolerance is considered a good virtue for the woman, and exposing the husband (and thus violating the family honour), is not considered acceptable behaviour from “well brought up girls.”

How can this reluctance to intervene be overcome, while challenging the notions of what are the correct social norms for a woman/her neighbour, relative or friend?

Few resources: Institutions that help women in violent situations are few and far between. There are very few shelter homes for women in India and these cannot cope with the range of problems that victims of domestic violence must cope with.

Structural issues: In the long run the violence needs to be tackled from a systemic and structural perspective. This includes addressing:

- The status of women in the family
- Economic independence for women
- Participation in decision-making, particularly around marriage, for both men and women
- Reduction of stigma around violence and encouraging both men and women to seek help and support
- The social sanction given to violence, especially against women, in Indian society

Education and dialogue are the two main methods to teach people about domestic violence and, more importantly, to make them understand that such violence is always against the values of human rights. The solution has to be two-pronged:

- Women and girls learn to recognize that violence against them is not acceptable, in fact a crime, and that they have ways and means to escape violent situations.
- Men and boys recognize that violence against women is deplorable and will not be tolerated socially or legally.

Clearly, such an enforcement and change in attitudes will take a long time to come through. It remains imperative to reach people, especially young people, and to make them aware of their rights and their duties as members of society.

A Positive Outlook

In a group of young people it can be very difficult to discuss the issue of domestic violence. The facilitator will need to be extremely careful and sensitive while conducting workshops because there is always a possibility of having victims of violence or people from violent homes within the group. It would be a good idea to discuss some of the **success stories** where women have come out of such situations. Facilitators should also stress ideas for action and how participants can make a positive difference through their own lives. On an issue such as DV it is critical for the group not to go away with a sense of despondency and gloom.

Part 2 Contents:

Resource Guide Overview	21
Section 1: Setting a context	23
Section 2: Contributing Factors	32
Section 3: Impact and Consequences	40
Section 4: Dealing with Violence	45
Handouts	51

Overview

Through a combination of exercises from the different sections in this part of the Resource Guide, the workshop can be comfortably completed in two full-day workshops. Nonetheless it may not be possible to make this kind of time in all the workshops. If that is the case the facilitator will have to carefully select those activities which best meet the objective of the given training and the needs of the audience.

The Resource Guide can easily be supplemented with activities and information from other sources. Specific sections can also be adapted into other workshops addressing human rights and women's rights issues.

- It is important to allow people sufficient time to reflect and discuss. You can add some unstructured time into the workshops for this purpose.
- If the workshop takes place over more than one day, make sure you do a recap and ask participants to share their insights and feelings about the discussions from the previous session(s).
- Much of the learning on a topic such as this takes place in the safe and secure space of people's minds, and some participants may not be able to open up comfortably to discussions. You can offer time to participants to make notes, which would be their own and confidential, to ensure that they put down their observations. This tool for reflection can also serve as a powerful resource for the group at a later stage - both as a source of information and for them to analyze their attitudes.

More guidelines for trainers and energizers are available in Annex 2. Workshops can begin with and be interspersed with energizers to create an enabling environment.

Section 1: Setting the context

This section sets a context for human rights and domestic violence, demonstrating that domestic violence is a violation of basic rights. In addition, domestic violence will be placed in the context of other types of violence.

Objectives

- To provide a context for domestic violence
- To begin discussions on various forms of violence: physical, psychological, and sexual
- To understand how human rights and domestic violence are connected

ACTIVITY 1: Building a Human Rights Tree⁴

Time: 1 hour

Materials: Flip chart, art supplies/markers, abbreviated UDHR (available in Annex)

Objective

To create an understanding of human rights and basic human needs

Methodology

- Ask participants, working in small groups of 3 to 6, to create a tree on a large chart paper, following these guidelines:
- Give the tree **roots** labelled with things that make human rights flourish. These could be, for instance, the rule of law, a healthy economy, universal education and good governance.
- Give the **leaves, branches, fruits and flowers** which are labelled with those human rights that people need to live with dignity and justice. These could be the right to a life free from violence, the right to food and shelter, the right to hygiene, the right to marry, the right to free speech etc.
- Encourage participants to experiment and to look beyond actually codified rights (like those in the UDHR or other rights documents). They should really articulate those basic rights they envision a person needing to live a healthy, dignified and just life.
- When the trees are complete, ask each group to present its tree and explain its reasons for the items they have included.

Follow up or extensions

- Match the fruits, leaves, and branches with articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and write the number of the article next to each item. This is also an opportunity to see how applicable this fundamental document is today. (See Annex for UDHR summary). Alternately participants can simply discuss how these components constitute different kinds of rights we are all entitled to.
- Display these trees in the classroom or in public places to encourage discussion.
- Identify rights that are of particular concern to you and your community.

Discussion Points

- Divide up categories of rights that participants have identified into categories such as family, state, government, legal system, society, the self, community and peer group
- Who is responsible for ensuring that these rights are respected?
- How do our individual values and ethics drive our ability to create a world in which human rights are respected?
- How can individuals change their value systems to ensure respect for all people's rights?
- The discussion can also deal with the basic principles of human rights including **indivisibility, universality and intersectionality** (See Facilitator Notes for more

⁴ Adapted from "University of Minnesota, Human Rights Education." <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/> (November 17, 2003).

information on these). For instance, the facilitator can choose a combination from the list of rights given by the participants to discuss indivisibility.

- Education
- Justice
- Freedom of Expression

Assuming that all people have the right to access these rights, ask the group if any one right takes precedence over the other? Can any of these exist without the other?

Facilitator Notes

The three fundamental principles of human rights are the universality, indivisibility and intersectionality of all rights.

- All rights are universal and belong to all people. We must all be active participants in creating global norms by which we hold governments, communities and ourselves accountable.
- Human rights are indivisible. Access to adequate food, housing and work are as important as political participation, free speech and religious expression. There should not be a hierarchy of rights where any one right is privileged over the other.
- Human rights must reflect our diverse and intersectional identities. To understand the similarities and differences in how we experience human rights, we must incorporate the factors like gender, race, sexuality, class, geographic location and religion which make up our identities.

Intersectionality is also a way of understanding how individuals can have power and privilege while simultaneously experiencing a violation of their rights. For example a poor, Dalit man who suffers violations based on his caste and economic class, can still have power and privilege because of his gender. A woman who is experiencing violence because of her gender could still have power because of her economic class. We must all acknowledge and take responsibility for our privileges and power if we are to become participants in creating a human rights culture.

ACTIVITY 2: Identifying Violence⁵

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: Flip chart, markers

Objective

- To identify different kinds of violence in society
- To understand definitions of domestic violence

Methodology

- Ask the group to identify different types of violence evident in society
- This could include public/private violence, physical, mental or emotional violence, state inflicted or individually inflicted violence etc. Some expected responses may be rape, beating, war, murder and mental torture. Encourage the group to think of specific acts with scenarios in mind.
- After the group has listed 10-12 acts of violence, add two more columns on the board and ask them to identify the perpetrator and the target of violence. An example is given below:

Defining violent acts:

Violent Act	Perpetrator	Target	Kind of violence
Rape	stranger / boyfriend	woman / girlfriend	Sexual and physical
Beating	goonda / father / employer	passer-by / son / servant	Physical
Abusive Language (<i>Gaali</i>)	husband / employer	wife / servant	Mental
Murder	thief / husband and mother-in-law	owner of property / wife or daughter-in-law (dowry related)	Emotional

Note: The group should provide this information itself. Make a suggestion for them to understand how the table is constructed, but do not lead their answers.

The purpose of identifying the perpetrators and victims is to place violence within the context of personal space - that violence is not just something you see on the television or read about on the news. Highlight the acts of violence that occur within a domestic setting - with family members and perpetrated by familiar people. Defining the kinds of violence being perpetrated (mental, physical etc.) highlights the fact that violence can take many forms and is not limited to physical abuse.

- It is very important for the group to understand that the targets or victims of violence are not “getting what they deserved,” and the idea of blame has to be removed.
- Discuss the implications of witnessing or experiencing violence at the hands of a known person versus at the hands of a stranger.

⁵ Adapted from: Mertus, Julie, et al. “Local Action, Global Change.” Unifem and the Center for Women’s Global Leadership, 1999.

- The facilitator must keep in mind the possibility that participants may have experienced violence in the home. It is important to treat the issue sensitively while encouraging the group to explore this kind of violence.
- Discuss the difference in the types of violence.
 - Is physical violence worse than mental or emotional violence? Is it harder to quantify and understand mental violence? Why?
 - Does violence differ depending upon who is perpetrating it?
 - Are the perpetrators of violence more often strangers or known people?

Defining causes:

(1) Add another column to the list, titled “Cause.” Encourage participants to now discuss and analyse what could be possible triggers for this kind of violence in this instance. Encourage discussion around whether this “cause” is actually justifiable in this or any other circumstance.

Violent Act	Perpetrator	Target	Type of violence	Cause
Rape	stranger / boyfriend	Woman / girlfriend	Sexual and physical	Anger, rejection, sexual desire, assertion of power
Beating	<i>goonda</i> / father / employer	passerby /son / servant	Physical	Work not done, disobedience, drinking
Abusive Language	husband / employer	wife / employee	Mental/ emotional	Problems at work, demanding household chores, dowry
Murder	thief / husband and mother-in-law	owner of property / wife or daughter-in-law (dowry related)	Physical	Burglary, desire for more money, anger

Facilitator Notes

Domestic violence is part of a larger scenario of violence. It takes place mainly within the private sphere—in the house and within close relationships. Incest, parent-child abuse and abuse from other members of the family can all fall into the category of domestic violence. For the purposes of this Resource Guide we are looking specifically at violence between husbands and wives within the larger context of daily violence that exists in our world. This kind of violence is important to recognize and discuss because it is not taken as seriously as it merits within our society.

By examining the many different forms violence can take and examining some of the common causes (or excuses) for this violence, participants will be better equipped to understand the myriad forms of domestic violence women around the world face. This will also set the context to understand the difficulties facing women who try to leave violent relationships.



ACTIVITY 3: Screening Babul

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: Babul video, VCR, TV

Objectives

- To visually portray to the group instances of domestic violence in an urban middle-class context
- To discuss how DV cuts across socio-economic categories in society

Methodology

Screen *Babul* twice for the group. Ask them to just watch it the first time, the second time ask them to jot down any thoughts or reactions they have to video. If there is a time constraint you can screen the video once and then directly move into discussion.

Discussion Points

Ask the group to respond to the *content* of the video. Discuss all three scenes as instances of *domestic violence*. Some suggested questions:

- What is the little girl seeing in the video?
- What happened in the first scene (with the man and woman in the car)? Why did the man slap the woman? Is this “acceptable” since he is her husband?
- What happened in the scene where the woman is taking clothes out of the rain? Was there any violence in this scene?
- What happened in the last scene (marital rape)?
- Does this video represent reality?
- What are the expectations placed on girls around marriage? What are the expectations and limitations placed on them around career, education?
- What are the complexities of the relationship between fathers and daughters (refer to lyrics and video concept)?
- What exactly is domestic violence? (Refer to the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women in the Annexure)
- Is it violence that we should not interfere in? Is it more acceptable than any other kind of violence?
- What is the role of parents in perpetuating or implicitly supporting domestic violence?
- What can parents teach their daughters, or what kind of support can they give them, to avoid domestic violence?
- A woman’s socialization begins in the natal home, with her parents, siblings and relatives. In this video we see a young girl who is asking her father to not marry her to a goldsmith, trader or a king, but rather to an ironsmith who will break her chains (see *translations in annex*). It highlights the fact that choices available to girls and women in our society are limited and ultimately the men in their lives—fathers and husbands—have much control over their fate. Encourage participants to discuss the role of the natal home and parents in the lives of girls. How can girls and women encourage basic rights in the home?
- Encourage the group to discuss various “justifications” for domestic violence and judge how valid they are. Some common reasons for domestic violence cited in studies are: alcohol, drugs, infidelity (of the husband or of the wife), working women, and household incidents such as food not being prepared on time. Ask the group to think of other reasons why domestic violence may occur and discuss the validity of a

violent response. Along with an understanding of domestic violence, the group should leave the workshop with the knowledge that it is wrong.

Facilitator Notes

Facilitators should highlight that there are certain misconceptions about DV such as the idea that only poor or illiterate women are victims, or that women who are professionally qualified do not suffer from violence. Domestic violence can occur in any social context and it does. Women who are better educated, who are financially independent and have the support of their own families are more likely to leave a violent situation, but social pressure and traditional expectations of women still make it a very difficult choice. You can present students with the “Men’s Pledge to End Violence” or “The Ally Pledge” as a concrete action they can take against violence. Both are available in the Handouts section.

ACTIVITY 4: Playing the Other

Time: 1 hour

Materials: Paper, pens

Objective

- To question identity-related assumptions about causes for domestic violence.

Methodology

Divide the group into smaller groups of three or four. Ask each sub-group to assume a different identity (see table for examples) and discuss how someone belonging to that identity would experience and/or resolve domestic violence. Ask each smaller group to create a role-play around this. Ask each group to enact the same for all the participants

<i>Examples of identities that can be adopted</i>
Regional geography (for e.g., from Bihar/U.P., Karnataka/Kerala, Assam)
Religion (say, Hindu, Muslim, Christian)
National geography (say, India, America/England, Africa)
Class status (lives in a slum, government servant, rich business family)

Discussion Points

Ask the sub-groups to talk about the assumptions that fed the role-play they presented. Encourage divergent viewpoints from the larger group here.

Discussion points

- (a) What were the assumptions about men and women from a particular background? Were they considered likely to be more or less violent than those from another background (for instance, extreme poverty in Bihar as a cause for violence among Bihari men)?
- (b) The different ways in which women experience violence across communities.
- (c) The shared experiences between women who experience violence – dealing with the emotional and socio-economic consequences of violence.
- (d) Question assumptions. Do Muslim women get beaten up more than Hindu women? (Is it assumed that Muslim men are more violent than Hindu men or that all Muslim men are polygamous?) What about “Western” women: do they also face domestic violence?

Encourage the group to talk about what they have seen around them or heard, among their neighbours, friends, or relatives; or come across in films, newspapers or books.

Facilitator Notes

All over the world, excuses are used to find reasons for domestic violence - in Israel, it could be the Palestine problem; in New Zealand, it is because the Maoris are a warrior class; and in Australia, since men drink a lot of beer. What about India? Do we have community-specific or region-specific justifications as well? For instance, an academic

article states: "Female powerlessness is much more acute in north India than in south."⁶ Similarly, it is mistakenly assumed that educated women are not subjected to domestic violence.

It should be stressed to the participants that patterns of violence are found in all our lives. Domestic violence is not something that happens only to "others", removed from "our" lives, and all of us have to find ways and means to eliminate it.

The facilitator can choose one of these role-play exercises or more, depending upon her/his comfort level and experience in handling identity-questions. S/he should take special care that the discussion does not become too personal or heated, since identities can be an extremely sensitive topic for most people.

⁶ "Wife-Beating in Rural India: A Husband's Right? Evidence from Survey Data" by Shireen J. Jejeebhoy **Economic and Political Weekly**. 33(15) April 11, 1998. p. 855-862.

ACTIVITY 5: Human Rights Table

Time frame: 30 minutes

Materials: Copies of the abbreviated Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR), flip chart, markers. (See Handouts section)

Objective

To identify the linkages between Domestic Violence and Human Rights.

Methodology

- Choose an act of domestic violence. It can be a common instance of domestic violence taken from Activity 2: Identifying Violence. Make a table similar to the one shown below:

Incident	Kind of violence	Right being violated
Man slaps wife because she is home late from work.	She is being hit – physical violence	Right to security of person, right to dignity.
	She is not allowed to work late – mental violence	Right to work. Right to liberty.
Father abusing Son on his decision to become a cook	Verbal abuse – mental violence	Right to freedom of choice, Right to desirable work

Using the UDHR and the group's own knowledge of what basic rights are, break down the acts of violence into the violations of rights.

Discussion Points

Look at the kinds of violence and the corresponding human rights violations.

- How fundamental are the rights being violated? How valid are they?
- Who does one suffering from domestic violence turn to for their basic rights?
- Does every section of the population have a right to these rights?
- Who are the people who most often suffer from a violation of these rights? (Poor people, illiterate people, people disadvantaged by the caste system, minorities?)
- Within these classes or divisions who is more disadvantaged, men or women? Why?
- What are some ways to ensure basic rights are upheld in our own lives? Are we empowered enough to ask for these rights?
- Who can we approach to uphold our rights?
- Do people who have their rights violated in some sphere have the power to uphold the rights of others in another sphere? For instance, can a rich woman uphold the rights of a poor man? Can a poor man uphold the rights of a Dalit?
- Ask the group how can they put the rights perspective into their daily lives? How does it apply to domestic violence in "real life"? What actions might the participants take if they knew of a case of domestic violence? Are they more likely to take action if the violence is taking place within the family or outside? Also ask the participants if they can do something together as a group. (See Men's Pledge in the Handouts section)

Facilitator Notes

Copies of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights should be made available to every participant in the workshop. Discuss the UDHR before starting this activity, allowing participants to examine different rights and understand how the document is structured. A brief history of the Declaration is provided in the first section of the Resource Guide. Discuss with students how this international document crosses over into local legislature and common practice. Once this is done, the rights language can be taken into the realm of gender-based violence and, specifically, domestic violence.

This activity aims at concretizing human rights and showing participants that they are not some vague notion. The rights perspective is applicable in all spheres of our lives and we are all empowered to do something about it. We do not have to sit back and wait for legal and state bodies to enact the UDHR, we can enact it ourselves. Domestic violence needs to be brought out of the private sphere and into the public domain and tackled as a human rights issue. Unless society as a whole works towards empowering women, promoting fair and equal relationships and condemning violence in the home, domestic violence will persist. Here one may discuss the importance of non-state actors and the role of the state in creating an environment free from violence for women.

Section 2: Contributing Factors

Gender roles and expectations can produce reactions and behaviours that lead to violence. Traditional expectations that establish men as bread winners and decision makers can put many men under a lot of anxiety, which in turn can be a factor that precipitates violence. Unequal power relations between men and women exacerbated by other social and cultural inequalities make women more vulnerable to violence. When gender roles are not abided by, violence often follows. This section examines how certain gender expectations of both men and women can cause and impact violence.

Cultural beliefs in different societies can also increase a women's vulnerability to violence. This section also examines how Indian socio-cultural beliefs and structures can disempower women. It will look at how culture prescribes symbols, roles and expectations for both men and women and at the degree of choice people, especially women, have in taking on these roles and expectations.

Objectives

- Begin a discussion and understanding of how cultural beliefs and gender roles form social norms
- Encourage critical thinking around the topics of cultural norms and gender constructs
- Identify how socio-cultural beliefs and structures can make women vulnerable to domestic violence
- To see how these structures impact decision-making and choice for men and women

ACTIVITY 1: Professions – Men and Women

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: Flash cards or flip chart

Objective:

To initiate a discussion on gendered expectations in society.

Methodology:

- List a set of professions on flash cards.
- Present the profession listed on the card to the group, one at a time.
- Ask the group to spontaneously respond to whether these are male and/or female centred professions.

Some of the professions that can be listed are:

Engineer, teacher, doctor, nurse, homemaker, social worker, fashion designer, graphic designer, computer specialist, dancer, *tabla* player, truck driver, sweeper, gardener, sex worker, CEO and so on.

Discussion Points:

- Are some professions more suitable for men or women?
- Why is it natural for us to believe that some professions are more suitable for one gender?
- What examples do we have of people working in non-traditional fields for their gender? (For instance women who are heart surgeons and men who are homemakers.)
- How are these people viewed by society? Is this non-traditional choice a big deal? Should an increasing participation by women in the workplace lead to a change in the way work around the house is divided among men and women? Does it?
- How is your life impacted by changing gender roles?
- What happens when we question gender norms and make choices against traditional expectations?

ACTIVITY 2: Gendered expectations

Time: 30-45 minutes

Materials

Flip chart, markers

Objective

To understand how different expectations of boys and girls are in our society

Methodology

Divide the participants into groups. It would be interesting to put them into single-sex groups to get a real feel for how gendered these expectations are.

Ask the groups to divide their charts into two big columns. One side is for expectations of girls/females and the other for expectations of boys/males.

Ask each group to spend 10 minutes on each column (set a time limit for them). In each column they must write what they think is expected of males and females in these areas:

- 1) As students – what subjects are they expected to do well in, what sports are they expected to play etc.? How are they judged to be good students (for their age group)?
- 2) In the house – what are they expected to do around the house, are they expected to help their parents in any area, do they enter the kitchen, make their own beds, walk the dog etc.?
- 3) With their families/extended families – are they expected to help with their extended family, if anyone is ill do they help out etc.?
- 4) What are they expected to do in the next 5 years? College, work, career expectations, marriage etc.?
- 5) Seeing the adults around them in their lives, what do they foresee as their own life trajectory over the next 10-20 years?

NOTE: Can use print advertisements here to look at how different products are targeted to men and women (kitchen products for women, cars and electronics to men etc.). Photocopies of select ads can be provided for use in workshops.

Discussion Points

Bring the group back together to discuss what they have written down. Ask one member from each group to share their discussion and responses. Write these down on a flip chart or board so everyone can see.

- Ask the group if they see different expectations for men and women in:
 - Education and training
 - Employment
 - Family responsibilities
 - Socially acceptable behaviour
- Why are there different expectation for men and women? Is this because of innate abilities or is it about tradition/culture?

- What are the main differences between what is expected of men and of women? What effect do you think these different expectations have on men and women?
- Do these distinctions feel 'right' to you?
- How do these expectations or limitations impact young people and their choices? Do girls and boys have different expectations for themselves?
- Do these limitations have an impact on the access of a person to basic rights? For instance, do expectations of limit her ability to leave a violent marriage?

Ask participants to reflect on how attitudes and expectations can be changed within their own context and society.

Activity 3: The Value of a Son and the Value of a Daughter⁷

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: Flip chart, markers, cards (or small sheets of paper)

Objective

At the end of the session participants will be able to examine the value of sons and daughters in the family

Methodology

List the following “things to do” on the cards:

- Get a job and earn an income
- Buy a house
- Look after parents
- Look after the requirements of home
- Take care of the children's needs

(You can think of more activities to list, depending on the group profile.)

Put all the cards into a box. Ask a volunteer from the group to pull out one card at a time and read it out loud to the group.

The group can then explore the following questions:

- Who is expected to do this work – a man/son or a woman/daughter?
- If the answer is both, then ask if it has always been that way.
- In the past how were gender roles constructed? How is it changing now?
- Are there communities and societies where this is still different (for instance matrilineal societies)?

Discussion Points

After all the cards have been read aloud and discussed, present the following general questions to the group:

- How do gender roles limit what both men and women can do?
- Are sons and daughters (and men and women) valued differently according to what roles they fulfil in society?
- To what extent are gender roles determined by society (religion/culture/tradition)? What kind of pressures can society apply in telling a person who to be, what to be, and whom they should be with (marry)?
- How do role expectations get transmitted to children?
- How can these be changed and gender equality be promoted? How can we learn to equally value women and the roles they have traditionally occupied (mothers, care givers, homemakers)?

Facilitator Notes

This simple exercise can be used as an entry point into a larger discussion on gender roles and how it is linked to violence. The exercise is only to introduce the idea of gender roles; it cannot be used as a stand-alone exercise to initiate a discussion on gender based expectations and DV.

⁷ Adapted from CEDPA Manual "Choose a Future"

ACTIVITY 4: Mann ke Manjeere - Turning the tide

Time: 1 hour

Materials: TV, VCR, *Mann ke Manjeere* video

Objectives

- To question the roles we take on in relationships, especially those defined by society
- To establish the link between rights, violations and gender
- Using a real life story to question stereotypes

Methodology

Screen the MKM video and discuss the following questions with the group:

Discussion Points

- What are the roles you have seen women/men play in the video shown to you? Are these typical representations of men and women that you see in TV and films?
- How is the representation of women in the video different from a typical representation? How is the main character "defying" the typical gender roles?
- From the video, what are some of the rights the woman is denied and conversely what are some of the rights that she is able to realize by taking up truck driving for a living?
- Even while claiming her right to work, what are some of the rights you think she will still not be able to access? (e.g. property, inheritance)
- What kind of response do you think a video like this would generate in society at large? Do you think it would be accepted, or rejected as too "*film*" (i.e. too fanciful and impossible under real circumstances)? [The video tells the real-life story of Shameem Pathan from Ahmedabad]
- How does society define ideal gender roles for men and women?
- What do you think are some reasons why girls and boys do not challenge the existing gender roles?
- What might be some ways in which you could challenge these norms and values? (For instance choosing a non-traditional job; choosing to not get married; helping in the kitchen/household.)
- What difficulties would you face if you challenged norms? Who might question your choices? Would you have a problem following through with them?
- Can you think of concrete examples in the media where these norms and values are being challenged? (Examples include *Bend it Like Beckham*, a film by Gurinder Chaddha where a girl from a typical Indian family settled in Southall in London decides much against the wishes of her family to become a professional footballer; *Kya Kehna* where an unmarried woman chooses to have a baby; *Samay*, where Sushmita Sen plays a police officer investigating a series of murders and is also a single mother raising her daughter)

ACTIVITY 5: Understanding Gender

Time: 1 hour

Materials: Flip chart, markers

Objectives

- To understand rights from the perspective of different gender roles
- To understand the role of gender
- To examine the differences in roles in the marital home vs. the natal home

Methodology

Ask the participants to break into smaller groups and create a “life story” for a male or female. Ask them to select and identify an individual (for instance a middle-class, Punjabi, married man) and then construct this life story according to what they believe this person would experience. They should address the following points:

- Identify life experiences for boys and girls at different stages in their youth (reception at birth, education, treatment regarding sports, behaviour, opportunity etc.),
- Highlight where the individual might be treated differently from a person of the opposite gender.
- Articulate the long term impact of the differences in the processes of socialization and see if they lead to discrimination

Encourage the group to describe the lives of these two individuals. Make a list of the roles they are likely to adopt. For example the woman may get married, have a child, get a job, have children and so on. After the life stories are completed, ask the groups to present them and discuss the differences in these stories. Identify opportunities and limitations in the lives of girls and boys by virtue of their gender.

Discussion Points

- Is the treatment different for boys and girls?
- Leaving aside material goods (boys and girls getting similar access to clothing, food, education), is treatment different when it comes to attitude and behaviour requirements?
- Do boys have greater choice than girls, or can choice be as limited for them in a different way? For instance, marriage, career and sexuality are some areas in which they may experience such a lack of choice.
- How does this play out particularly in the choice of whom to marry, when to marry and why to marry?
- Discuss how "adjustment" can be a common feature in both natal and marital homes for girls.
- How would you define a “good” or “successful” marriage or relationship? Do men and women have to behave in a particular way to maintain such a successful relationship?
- Have changing gender roles affected marriage? Have they affected other areas of life: at work and in the home?
- How do you empower girls, what are their rights and how can these be made more accessible?

Facilitator Notes

The role of the facilitator in the session is to highlight the linkages between gender norms, impact of socialization and the increased vulnerability of women to DV.

Young people may come from democratic and open-minded backgrounds where these may not be issues to deal with in their everyday lives. The point to iterate then is that this is largely the scenario that we are living in even though we may ourselves not be affected. They could one day be in decision-making positions where they need to be sensitive to these issues (For instance as police officers, as lawyers, as IAS Officers etc.)

Also if you know of a situation where a student in your group has faced difficult circumstances at home because of these prescribed expectations, then it would be sensitive *not* to take her/his example.

It is important for the facilitator to focus on the experience of boys as well as girls when discussing how choices may be restricted by stereotypical constructions of gender. This would help a comparative understanding.

ACTIVITY 6: Gender in the media – how do we view ourselves⁸

Time: 45 minutes (creation 15-20 minutes, displaying 10 minutes, 15 minutes group observations and discussion)

Objective

To make explicit the 'loaded' images of gender difference around us in our culture

Materials:

Chart paper, scissors, glue and magazines/newspapers for each group. Tape or pins to put up collages; Markers if needed.

Methodology

Bring to the group a diverse selection of publications available that day in kiosks, newsagents etc. They should try to include a range of women's magazines, men's magazines (even provocative ones) – aimed at different ages, interests, as well as daily news media.

Divide the group into smaller groups of 4 or 5. Each group should have a couple of magazines/newspapers. Ask them to go through the publications and tear out images of men and images of women. Then, using tape or glue, make a collage of 'images of men' on one flip chart page, and 'images of women' on another.

After 15 – 20 minutes, ask them to finish up – then have all the sheets of 'images of men' fixed along one wall, and the 'images of women' on another.

In new smaller groups of 3, ask them to go around and examine the collages. In each group one person pretends to come from another planet, where there is no gender system (just one kind of creature/being – neither male nor female). The other 2 must explain to this visitor, **based only on the images they see**, what a "man" and a "woman" IS with ideas taken only from images on the walls.

After 10 minutes, return to full group.

Discussion Points:

Use the following questions to get feedback from group:

- What did the 'visitors' learn about men? About women? What seem to be their characteristics? Typical gestures? Activities? How do they hold their bodies?
- What do men look like? What do they 'do'? How do they behave? What interests them?
- What do women look like? What do they 'do'? How do they behave? What interests them?
- In comparing these images of men and women... who seems to have power? Who seems to have agency? Who is assertive? Who seems to be more likely to take decisions? Who is confident/vulnerable – and in what ways? Who is strong/weak – and in what ways?
- Do these media images look like YOU and the men and women you see every day?

⁸ Adapted from the Lewis, J. / Nordic Institute for Women's Studies and Gender research (NIKK), "Gendering Prevention Practices: a practical guide to working with gender in sexual safety and HIV/AIDS awareness education", 2003.

- What is the real situation of men vs. women in India today? In terms of access to public space, ability to make choices and decisions? Ask this in terms of the rights of people in all social settings – not just about individual interpersonal relationships (for instance, what access does a woman in Delhi really have to public space? What factors can affect this access?)

Talk about what steps they as individuals can do to alter the current situation.

ACTIVITY 7: More on the media

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: AV

Objective

- To help participants look critically at the media around them and understand that stereotypes abound.
- Also an effective way for facilitators to learn about new examples from popular culture they can use in the future.

Methodology

Play back select portions from the AV. Ask students to give more examples from the media (songs, movies etc.), apart from those that have come up in the workshop already, that perpetuate gender stereotypes or fight them. List them all on the blackboard.

Notes to the Facilitator

A very short exercise, which should come right at the end of the session after the participants have been introduced to and become comfortable with the notion that gender roles can be highly stereotyped. Should be conducted in a fun, fast, “toss-your-ideas-quickly-in-the-ring” way for maximum impact.

The facilitator can focus the discussion on how the media actually plays an important role in shaping the way we perceive and respond to violence against women in society. For instance masculinity is linked to aggression and violence, or that women get “turned on” by this aggression.

This will also encourage participants to use media as an effective advocacy/training tool.

ACTIVITY 8: Using popular culture to talk about cultural symbols

Time: 1 hour

Materials: TV, VCR, clips from films/TV serials (tool-kit AV), flip charts, markers

Objective:

- To use examples from popular culture that visually portray how cultural symbols reinforce gender difference and roles
- Initiate a discussion on cultural beliefs, conditioning and vulnerability to violence

Methodology

Screen a scene from a film or a soap opera that the audience is likely to be familiar with where the protagonist is about to be married (for example, *Mehndi*, *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* or *Hum Apke Hain Kaun*).

The Facilitator can also use scenes from other religious contexts e.g. *Maqbool* and *Khamoshi*.

Ask them to identify at the end of the sequence the symbols and customs specific to:

- Women in this cultural context
- Men in this cultural context

Draw two columns on the board and title them “Men” and “Women.” Ask the group to list cultural beliefs and expectations that are gender-specific and promoted in the dominant Hindu tradition within the Indian society. The group can be given some of the following suggestions:

- Symbols of marriage for both men and women, for instance *mangalsutra* and *sindoor*.
- Different rituals surrounding marriage (for example *grihpraves*, *chudaa*, the symbolism of a new bride bringing prosperity into the household etc.)
- The rituals men have to follow in marriage
- Rituals associated with fertility, for instance prayers asking for sons rather than daughters
- Marriage rituals such as dowry, *stridhan*
- The practice of *ghungat* or *purdah*
- What are the traditions for single women (unmarried women, divorced women and widowed women)? Are there similar expectations or traditions for single men?
- Move on to a discussion of similar cultural symbols, customs and rituals for men and women in other religions (for instance *burkha* for women in Islam).

Discussion Points

- What role do culture and religion play in perpetuating gender stereotypes, in defining women's roles in society?
- How do religious/cultural symbols and traditions impact the lives of men and women?
- How do they impact a woman's perception of herself? A man's view of himself?
- How do they impact a man's view of women, and a woman's view of men?
- How are women who do not believe in or follow these customs and traditions generally perceived/ looked at? What about men?
- What does the tradition of *ghungat* or *purdah* and the idea of “modesty” mean in Hindu culture and where does it place women? What about the *burkha* or headscarves for Muslim women?

- Can such customs be empowering for women in some way? For instance, a wedding ring or a toe-ring symbolizing status? Or do these symbols signify the “ownership” of the husband?
- How important are these customs in our lives today?
- Do these customs and symbols make any judgment on the relative value of men versus women?
- How much do we know about the history of these customs/symbols/rituals? How they came into place?
- Have we ever thought of questioning these?
- Is it even necessary to question these symbols?

Facilitator’s notes

This list is not exhaustive and the facilitator should urge the group to bring up other points for discussion. It should be stressed that this discussion is not about passing value judgments on tradition, but rather to understand how culture defines our understanding of gender and gender roles.

The facilitator can also use this space to discuss how culture can be transformed into a space for the protection and promotion of rights, rather than viewing it as an oppressive institution. Participants should look at how we, as responsible citizens, build a culture or a value system of human rights where people see themselves belonging to a society where respect for human beings is nurtured and promoted.

Section 3: Impact and Consequences of Domestic Violence

This section deals with the important question of how women overcome and deal with violent situations. It will sensitize the target group on the problems that women in violent relationships face in seeking recourse from family or institutions that deal with the issue of violence or in seeking legal recourse - the provisions in law that address domestic violence. It will also look at how effective these systems are in helping women overcome their violent situation.

Objectives

- Understand the impact of domestic violence on the victim/survivor, the family, the community and society
- To understand the difficulties women face in leaving a violent relationship

ACTIVITY 1: Experiencing violence

Time Frame: 1 hour

Materials: Copies of the different scenarios

Objective

Personalizing the experience of violence.

Methodology

- Divide the group into small sub-groups.
- Give each of them one of the scenarios (you may create more scenarios). Printable copies of these two scenarios are available in the Handouts section.
- Let them discuss the scenarios (some important discussion points are provided) for 15 minutes.
- Now bring the group back together and ask them to share their opinions with the whole group.
- At this point ask them to take these scenarios into the realm of domestic violence between a husband and a wife. Additional discussion points have been provided.

Scenario 1: You are in a fight that you did not start, and are pushed down onto the ground. The fall results in you breaking your arm. It's put in a cast for 3 weeks, but you have to go about your life as normally as possible—you are not allowed to stop working/coming to school/doing housework etc. The person who pushed you down and broke your arm is not reprimanded at all and continues to treat you badly.

Discussion Points

- What limitations are you going to face? How would you feel, being put in this situation?
- How does the lack of sympathy from anyone around you, least of all the person who hurt you, make you feel?
- Who is in the wrong—you or the person who broke your arm?
- Does your work or quality of life suffer?
- Will you be able to work as well as before or will your output be affected?
- How will you feel about the person who hurt you? Will you be afraid of this person?

Discussion in context of domestic violence

- Imagine the person who broke your arm is the husband and you are the wife. Who is in the wrong?
- How would the wife feel about being in such a close relationship with someone who hurt them physically?
- How is her output (domestic work and job) going to be affected because of this violence?
- Is there anyone she can go to for help? Does she have a right to seek help?
- Is she justified in leaving her husband after such treatment? If not then when would she be justified?

Scenario 2: Your teacher/boss is constantly berating you and is unsatisfied with your work, though you know your work is very good. When you try to talk to him (or her) about it, he increases his criticism. You cannot quit your job (or school) and cannot complain about your teacher/boss to anyone.

Discussion Points

- How does this treatment impact your work?
- What will your mental state be?
- If you were able to talk to someone about this treatment what would you say?
- Do you think it would be taken seriously since there is no physical mistreatment?
- Would you be blamed in this situation? How can you explain exactly what is happening?

Discussion in context of domestic violence

- Imagine the teacher/boss is the husband and you are the wife. Is the equation changed? Is the wife any more deserving of mental trauma?
- What options did you have to escape the situation that the wife doesn't?
- Is it likely that she will be taken seriously if she tries to discuss this mental trauma with anyone?
- Do we (as a society) accept mental violence as *real* violence? *Is* it violence?

ACTIVITY 2: Violence and the inability to leave⁹

Time: 1 hour and 15 minutes

Materials: Copies of Factors that Perpetuate Gender Based violence (Available in the Handouts section), post-it notes or pieces of paper and tape.

Objective

To identify constraints that prevent women from leaving a situation of domestic violence and opportunities that might support their leaving.

Methodology

- Share the following scenario with the participants:
 - Your friend keeps leaving her husband because he beats her, but she also keeps returning.
 - Why does she keep returning?
 - What do you think is happening?
- Ask for a volunteer from the group to sit in the centre of the room. She represents the “Friend”.
- Participants should state reasons why she cannot leave the violent relationship for good. Each reason is discussed in the larger group and whatever is agreed upon is put on piece of paper and taped on to the volunteer’s body.
- For instance, papers can symbolize economic dependence, community attitudes, lack of independent work and housing opportunities etc.
- Ask the participants to then name factors that would enable the woman overcome these “papers” i.e. the reasons she cannot leave (e.g. availability of shelter care, supportive friends and family, etc.).
- As solutions are presented, remove the relevant paper from the volunteer till they are almost gone.
- Ask the volunteer to stand once she is free of the burden of the papers, symbolizing her ability to choose.

Discussion Points

- How easy or difficult was it to find solutions to the problems a woman might face in leaving violence behind?
- Do you think education, in and of itself, empowers a woman enough to help her leave violent relationships? Does education stop men from becoming violent?
- How can we avoid blaming survivors and victims of violence for not leaving violent relationships?
- What can be done to ensure women in violent relationships are better empowered to leave or find solutions?
- What can you, as an individual do to help?

Facilitator Notes

See Annexure 5 for an article on “Why Victims of Partner Abuse Stay with Their Batterers”.

⁹ Adapted from: Mertus, Julie, et al. “Local Action, Global Change.” Unifem and the Center for Women’s Global Leadership, 1999

ACTIVITY 3: Survivors and perpetrators speak

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: TV, VCR, tool-kit AV

Objective

To understand violence from the perspective of the survivors and develop empathy for their situation

Methodology

- Divide the participants into small groups.
- Screen the ICRW spots on domestic violence (included in the Resource Guide AV).
- Assign each group 1-2 spots and give them the following points to discuss.

Discussion Points

- According to the group, why do men become violent?
- How can this violence be prevented?
- Do you feel that women “who do not want to” leave violent situations “deserve” what they get?
- Why would the women not want to leave such a situation?
- How is the family affected by this violence?
- What were the reasons the women shown in the spots were finally able to leave?

Facilitator Notes

The key purpose of this exercise is to highlight the fact that coming out of a violent situation can itself be a very traumatic and intimidating process. The fear and the lack of choices available to the woman can often make leaving a violent relationship a very difficult decision for the woman. Even women who are educated and economically independent find this decision very hard, particularly if children are involved.

Section 4: Dealing with violence

This section addresses the important aspect of dealing with violence. It follows very closely from the previous section in looking at violence from the perspective of the survivor or victim of violence. It also looks at current and pending legislation on domestic violence in India to familiarize participants with the current scenario for women seeking legal recourse. The activities in this section also encourage participants to see how they can themselves prevent violence or help individuals who are in violent situations.

Objectives

- Find realistic solutions to domestic violence in our own homes and communities
- Understand the difficulties a victim is likely to face in dealing with or coming out of a violent situation
- Begin drawing up strategies to deal with DV and understanding how everyone can play a part in reducing violence against women

Activity 1: What would I do?

Time: 30 minutes

Materials: Flip chart, markers

Objective

To begin understanding the kinds of choices a woman must make to leave a violent relationship.

Methodology

This is a discussion-based exercise to encourage participants to understand the issues women in violent situations must deal with. It also looks at how participants are willing or unwilling to stop violence around them. Present the following questions to the group and write down the responses where all can read them.

- If you were in a violent relationship, where would you go and/or whom would you see for help?
- If a friend were in such a situation, what would you do? What would you say to that friend?
- If your friend were violent towards his/her partner, what would you do? What would you say to him/her?
- If you witnessed a violent act, what would you do? What would you say?
- How much violence against yourself or others are you willing to tolerate?

Facilitator Notes

This exercise is an entry into the many choices and decisions women must make in order to leave a violent relationship. It encourages participants to understand how they would react to a woman trying to leave a violent relationship. It is also an opportunity for participants to examine their own attitudes towards and tolerance of violence. Encourage all participants to speak during this exercise and mediate the discussion so that there is a free flow of ideas and thoughts.

Activity 2: Popular media and women's choice

Time: 45 minutes

Materials: Clips of popular films (some available on tool-kit AV)

Objective

To use media as an entry into the discussion around women's ability to make choices.

Methodology

- Screen a clip from the popular Hindi film such as *Dilvale Dulhaniya Le Jayenge* that has scenes addressing choices for women. In *DDLJ* there is a particular scene that shows the mother (Farida Jalal) in conversation with the female lead (Kajol), discussing with her what choice means in the life of a woman.

After screening these clips, use these discussion points to talk about choice and agency for women.

Discussion Points

- Can women exercise their rights in the Indian cultural context?
- Are these rights accessible in every socio-economic strata and religion in India?
- Do girls/women have any choice or agency in decision-making or must they accept whatever their parents/husband/in-laws tell them to do?

Discuss then with the group what happens if girls choose *not* to follow these rules/regulations?

- Does it mean they will remain single or will they be considered "bad women"?
- If they choose to work or not be married will they be considered bad mothers, daughters or wives?
- If women do not have the right to make choices within their natal as well as marital home, how does this impact their ability to deal with violence?
- How can women have more agency and ability to make choices in their lives?

Facilitator Notes

Discuss with the group how social conditioning can actually perpetuate inequalities. Refer to the Fact sheet in annex 1 to look at what are some of the reasons why women face domestic violence. It is also important to keep in mind that violence occurs across all classes, so the issues around choice are not restricted to specific socio-economic backgrounds.

Segue into the role-plays from this section.

ACTIVITY 3: Role Plays

Time: 1 hour

Materials: Role play situations

Objective: Discuss violent and non-violent solutions to a problem with the group through role plays.

Methodology

- Ask members of the group to volunteer for a role play.
- Brief them on their roles and leave the situation open ended so that they can create a resolution themselves.
- Ask the volunteers to present their mini-play to the group.

Role Play 1 (See Annex 2 for guidelines on role plays)

Ravi and Vani have been married for three years. Ravi's brother lives with them. Ravi returns from work very hungry one day and when he finds the food not ready gets upset with Vani and starts shouting at her. In her defence Vani tells him that she is not merely a cook and has also returned from work after an exhausting day. A heated situation follows. This is not the first time that this has happened.

Discussion Points

- Can Ravi justify his anger?
- Is it all right for Vani to retaliate?
- Should Vani become a "housewife" so that she can take care of his requirements?
- What can Ravi do to make things different?
- What should Vani do?

The group should be encouraged look for non-violent alternatives in this relationship.

Role Play 2

Sheila returns home with a suitcase. Her father, mother, brother and his wife are sitting in the living room. They are surprised to see her arrive without notice. She says she does not want to go back.

(The role-play can be cast in any socio-cultural or religious context and the discussion can be directed accordingly)

Discussion Points

- What were some of the other options Sheila could have considered other than returning to her natal home?
- What are some of the reactions society has to women who return to their natal homes?
- What are ways in which a woman can cope on her own after leaving a violent marriage?
- What are the chances that she will be able to look for alternatives if she decides to move out of a violent marriage?
- What are some reasons that make it difficult for most women to look for alternatives?

Facilitator Notes

Discuss issues of women's rights and the violation of these rights For instance, most women will not get any rights to property or inheritance from their natal family or from the family of her husband. In case of divorcees maintenance and alimony are issues that can mean long legal battles. Custody of children can also become an issue to contend with, and women are not assured of custody.

List out some of these rights and ask the group to respond on how these can be addressed and what the difficulties would be in doing so.

At the end of both the role-plays ask participants to state what their feelings were when they were enacting the role. Ask the group to respond and state their observations. Especially encourage responses from the actors.

See Annex 3 for ideas on how communities, individuals and victims can seek redress in such situations. Discuss this with the group.

Activity 4: Taking action

Time: 1 hour

Materials: Flip chart, markers, tape, newspaper clippings on violence against women, legal definitions of rape in your country, and penalties for rape-crimes, Handouts “Men’s Pledge to end Domestic Violence”

Methodology

Use large sheets of newsprint (“graffiti sheets”) to complete the following sentence stubs:

- Domestic violence is...
- Domestic violence can be stopped by...

Post four large sheets of paper around the walls; write one statement on two sheets and the other on the remaining paper. Invite participants to anonymously write their feelings, thoughts and beliefs about each one. Ask volunteers in the group to read each of the sheets.

Discussion Points

To introduce discussion ask:

- What did you learn from graffiti sheets?
- Are there things that you are surprised to learn?

Facilitator Notes

Ask students to sign onto one of the two pledges available in the Handouts section (Men’s Pledge and the Ally Pledge). Offer them copies if they think other people should sign onto the pledges. See Annex 3 for more Ideas for Action.

ACTIVITY 4: Legal response in India

Time: 1 hour

Materials: “The legal primer” given in the annex

Objective: To look at some of the proposed legal resolutions to domestic violence in India.

Methodology

- Break participants up into groups of 4-5 and give them a copy of the legal primer.
- Ask them to discuss the primer and to write down reasons why it would or would not reduce and prevent domestic violence.

Bring participants back together and discuss the legal situation. Ask each group to present their suggestion and comments.

Discussion Points

- What are the constraints in the legal response to DV?
- How, in your opinion, can state and legal responses to the problem of domestic violence be made better?
- Would a strong law against domestic violence stop the problem in India? Why or why not?

Facilitator Notes

This exercise does not require you or the participants to have a legal background. This is an opportunity to look at how a law on the matter is being drafted and examine it critically. Encourage participants to judge how a law would affect a woman seeking recourse for domestic violence. Also encourage them to examine other avenues of state and legal response that women can seek and how effective they are (calling the police etc.). While highlighting the complexities in looking for solutions to resolve DV, the facilitator can iterate the importance of prevention education.

HANDOUTS

Section 1, Activity 2: Defining Violence

Violent Act	Perpetrator	Target	Type of violence

Section 1, Activity 4: Human Rights Table

Incident	Kind of violence	Right being violated

Section 1 Activity 4: **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Abbreviated)**

Article 1

Right to Equality

Article 2

Freedom from Discrimination

Article 3

Right to Life, Liberty, Personal Security

Article 4

Freedom from Slavery

Article 5

Freedom from Torture and Degrading Treatment

Article 6

Right to Recognition as a Person before the Law

Article 7

Right to Equality before the Law

Article 8

Right to Remedy by Competent Tribunal

Article 9

Freedom from Arbitrary Arrest and Exile

Article 10

Right to Fair Public Hearing

Article 11

Right to be Considered Innocent until Proven Guilty

Article 12

Freedom from Interference with Privacy, Family, Home and Correspondence

Article 13

Right to Free Movement in and out of the Country

Article 14

Right to Asylum in other Countries from Persecution

Article 15

Right to a Nationality and the Freedom to Change It

Article 16

Right to Marriage and Family

Article 17

Right to Own Property

Article 18

Freedom of Belief and Religion

Article 19
Freedom of Opinion and Information

Article 20
Right of Peaceful Assembly and Association

Article 21
Right to Participate in Government and in Free Elections

Article 22
Right to Social Security

Article 23
Right to Desirable Work and to Join Trade Unions

Article 24
Right to Rest and Leisure

Article 25
Right to Adequate Living Standard

Article 26
Right to Education

Article 27
Right to Participate in the Cultural Life of Community

Article 28
Right to a Social Order that Articulates this Document

Article 29
Community Duties Essential to Free and Full Development

Article 30
Freedom from State or Personal Interference in the above Rights

Section 3, Activity 1: Experiencing Violence

Scenario

You are in a fight that you did not start, and are pushed down onto the ground. The fall results in you breaking your arm. It's put in a cast for 3 weeks, but you have to go about your life as normally as possible—you are not allowed to stop working/coming to school/doing housework etc. The person who pushed you down and broke your arm is not reprimanded at all and continues to treat you badly.

Discussion Points

- What limitations are you going to face? How would you feel, being put in this situation?
- How does the lack of sympathy from anyone around you, least of all the person who hurt you, make you feel?
- Who is in the wrong—you or the person who broke your arm?
- Does your work or quality of life suffer?
- Will you be able to work as well as before or will your output be affected?
- How will you feel about the person who hurt you? Will you be afraid of this person?

Discussion in context of domestic violence

- Imagine the person who broke your arm is the husband and you are the wife. Who is in the wrong?
- How would the wife feel about being in a such a close relationship with someone who hurt them physically?
- How is her output (domestic work and job) going to be affected because of this violence?
- Is there anyone she can go to for help? Does she have a right to seek help?
- Is she justified in leaving her husband after such treatment? If not then when would she be justified?

Section 3, Activity 1: Experiencing Violence

Scenario

Your teacher/boss is constantly berating you and is unsatisfied with your work, though you know your work is very good. When you try to talk to him (or her) about it, he increases his criticism. You cannot quit your job (or school) and cannot complain about your teacher/boss to anyone.

Discussion Points

- How does this treatment impact your work?
- What will your mental state be?
- If you were able to talk to someone about this treatment what would you say?
- Do you think it would be taken seriously since there is no physical mistreatment?
- Would you be blamed in this situation? How can you explain exactly what is happening?

Discussion in context of domestic violence

- Imagine the teacher/boss is the husband and you are the wife. Is the equation changed? Is the wife any more deserving of mental trauma?
- What options did you have to escape the situation that the wife doesn't?
- Is it likely that she will be taken seriously if she tries to discuss this mental trauma with anyone?
- Do we (as a society) accept mental violence as *real* violence? *Is* it violence?
- How does an individual deal with mental and emotional violence?

Section 3, Activity 2: Violence and the inability to leave

Some Factors that Perpetuate Gender based Violence

Cultural	Gender specific socialization Cultural definitions of appropriate sex roles Expectations of roles in relationships
Economic	Women's economic dependence on men Limited access to cash and credit Limited access to employment
Legal	Lesser legal status of women Laws regarding divorce Legal definitions of rape Low levels of legal literacy Insensitive treatment of women and girls by police and judiciary
Political	Under representation of women in power and politics Domestic violence not a serious issue Notions of family being private, beyond control of state

Courtesy Local Action, Global Change

Section 1 Activity 3, Section 4 Activity 5

Men's Pledge to End Violence¹⁰

Because:

- I believe that violence will not end until men become part of the solution;
- I take pride in myself as a man;
- I care about the women in my life;
- I am angry that people I know have been hurt;
- I know that a woman faces violence every ___ minutes in this country;
- I understand that violence against women's bodies, women's emotional well being and women's right to do with their bodies as they choose;
- I recognize that men and women will not be equal till violence against women ends;
- I know that happiness between men and women is difficult in a world where violence exists;
- I accept my responsibility to assist in making this a safer world.

I pledge to:

- Speak out my anger about violence;
- Talk with other men about violence;
- Look at how men are raised that helps create a culture where violence is possible;
- Interrupt "violence" jokes;
- Support laws that encourage men to take responsibility for ending violence;
- Listen to women friends, to their fears and concerns for their safety;
- Pay attention to cries for help;
- Challenge images of violence against women in advertising and pornography;
- Encourage women to be strong and powerful;
- Recognize that cooperation is power;
- Change whatever I am doing that helps create a culture where violence is possible;
- Support women and men working to end violence.

I, _____, pledge to do everything in my power to end violence.

Signed _____ Date _____

Witness (Classmate/teacher/friend/sister/brother) _____

¹⁰ This pledge can be used when working with boys. Alternately one can use the Ally Pledge, also available in this section. These pledges can also be developed into a signature campaign, which could feed into the campaign for the domestic violence bill in India. (Adapted from a statement by the California Anti-Sexist Men's Political Caucus)

Section 1 Activity 3, Section 4 Activity 5

The Ally Pledge¹¹

Five qualities of an ally:

1. **An ally listens.**

Pay attention to, believe in and respect what the person who needs help says.

2. **An ally is present.**

Back the person up – by being a friend, by keeping your word and by letting the person know when you *can't* be there.

3. **An ally opens doors.**

Help the person explore the available options, resources and support. Provide useful information and share your resources and connections.

4. **An ally takes chances.**

Sometimes we don't reach out because we fear we will make a mistake or say the wrong thing. An ally is bold. When they mess up, they fix it and try again. It's always important to take a chance and reach out.

5. **An ally gets support.**

When you are helping someone, remember to take care of yourself. Don't do it alone.

Above all, an ally is a peacemaker.

<p style="text-align: center;">The Ally Pledge</p> <p>I pledge not to be violent to myself, my friends, my family, my lover or anyone else. I will stand up for other people and make the peace.</p> <p>Signed,</p> <p>_____</p>

¹¹ Kivel, Paul, and Allan Creighton. "Making the Peace," Oakland Men's Project. Alameda: Hunter House, 1997