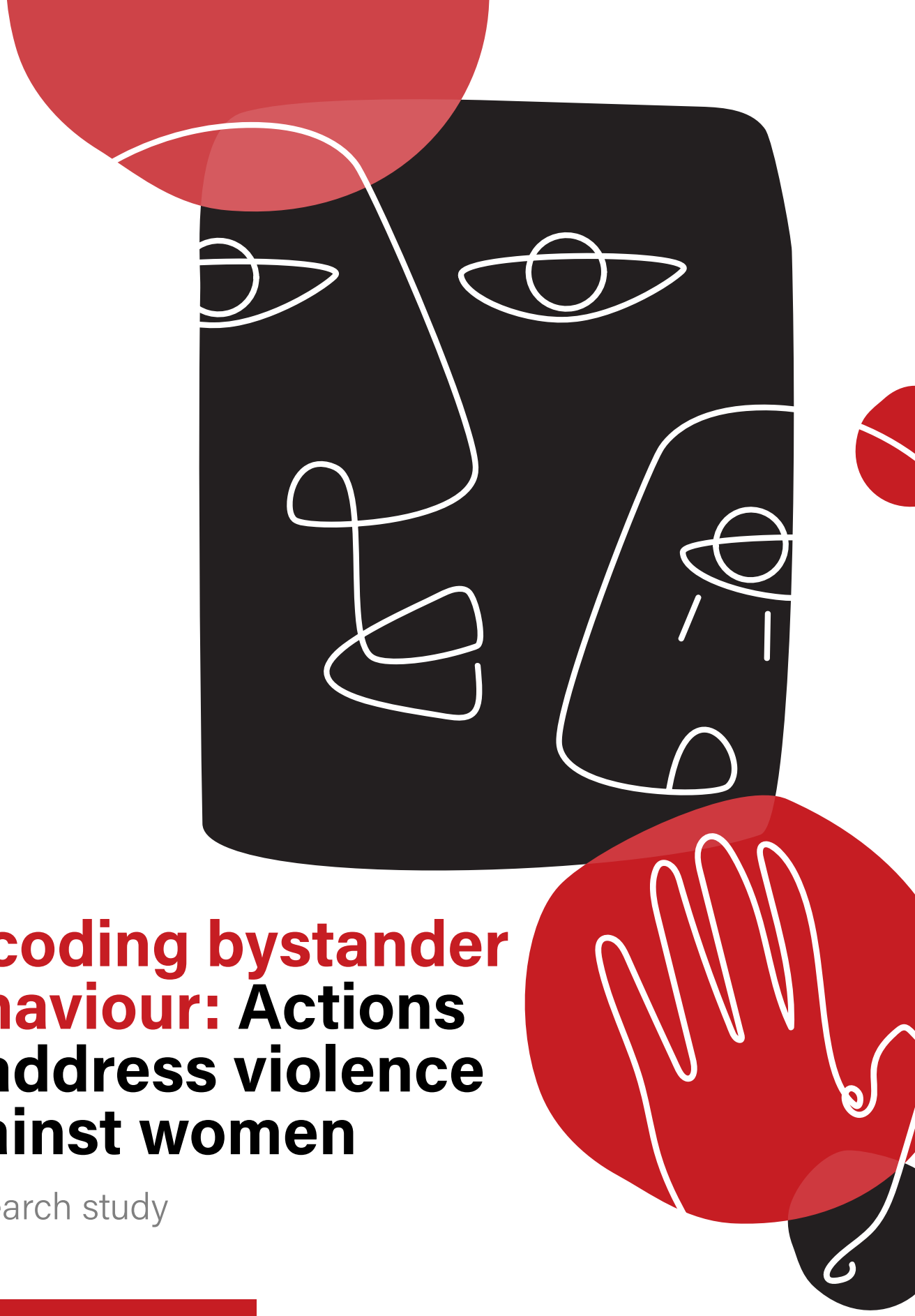

Decoding bystander behaviour: Actions to address violence against women

A research study

Breakthrough

Act. End Violence Against Women.

About Breakthrough

Breakthrough works towards making violence and discrimination against women and girls unacceptable. We transform gender norms by working with adolescents and youth, their families and communities, as well as by using media campaigns, the arts and popular culture to build a more equal world around us.

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Acknowledgements

The making of the report has been an overwhelming journey for us – both in terms of the quantum of material we were confronted with and the scale and diversity of violence that women lived with on a daily basis. Antithetical to popular perceptions and official narratives around women's safety, our interviews attested to the harsh reality of how often those closest to them were those perpetuating the greatest violence. The physical and psychological aftermath of this every day patriarchy and misogyny was evidently immense. We were greatly moved by the stories our participants chose to entrust us with and to them we owe our sincerest gratitude.

At its heart research is a collaborative exercise. It cannot be achieved without the collective effort of a number of people. The project was funded by Uber and IKEA Foundation. Without their support this study would not have achieved fruition.

We are indebted to our excellent collaborative partners in the cities of Mumbai, Kolkata and Hyderabad- *Habitat and Livelihood Welfare Association, Rangeen Khidki and My Choices Foundation* respectively. In these trying times of the pandemic they facilitated our data collection in these cities by identifying potential participants and arranging interviews.

The programme and media teams at Breakthrough worked closely with us- setting up the interviews, coordinating logistics etc.- we are grateful for all the help they generously offered. Their consistent presence throughout enabled us to concentrate on thinking and working on the report better. We would also like to thank our interview transcribers for the sound work they did with the transcriptions.

The larger Breakthrough family has been a source of encouragement. From eagerly and excitedly enquiring about the findings of the report to offering different kinds of assistance every step of the way, they have been phenomenal. We particularly thank our staff at office for providing us endless cups of chai, biscuits and kind words that sustained us in our endeavours.

The dream and hope of change embodies the soul of this study- how does one envision change and how can one realise it? In order to answer that we thought it was imperative to understand people and their contexts first, to understand why people think and behave the way they do. We requested our participants to travel back, to dissect their pasts for clues of their shaping. For women eternally caught between the binaries of responsibility and resistance, family and freedom; dharma and desire, this was no easy task and yet they persevered. We hope that one day these impossible binaries are obliterated and that this report is one more step in that direction.

Research team

Shreya Jha is a sociologist of development and social development practitioner. A foundational training in inclusive mental health directs her to examine social identities through the medium of individuals' subjective experiences. Her recent research- on wellbeing in the Global South, doctoral research on women's agency in India, and children's lives- attends to layers of relationality, focusing on relationships between and among social and individual processes, and within individuals' proximate and distant relationships. She advises NGOs on wellbeing operationalisation and assessment. She previously worked in Breakthrough's Research and Evaluation team. She holds a PhD in the Sociology of Development from the University of Bath, UK.

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List of abbreviations

DV	Domestic violence
EM	Early marriage
CSA	Child sexual abuse
IPV	Intimate partner violence
SH	Sexual harassment
VAW	Violence against women

1. Introduction

Gender-based violence and its myriad manifestations have been a feminist and rights issue for decades now. It has been one of the cornerstones of women's movements globally with major public campaigns emanating from the discourse around violence. In India, VAW (Violence Against Women) has been a vital component of the women's movement since the 1970s - particularly with the inception of the Anti-Rape movement of the 1980s.[1] As the promises of a nascent India crumbled and the Emergency (1975-77) brought forth violent excesses committed by the state, a reinvigorated women's movement exploded in these decades questioning simplistic ideas of tradition and modernity while militantly raising the issues of gender inequality and concomitant forms of of gender based atrocities.

Nandita Shah and Nandita Gandhi, chroniclers of India's women's movement(s) post independence, point out, how the movement "also concerned with violence against women, although not with the earlier issues of sati and ill treatment of widows, but marriages, rather divorce, maintenance and child custody; with legislative reform, not the enactment of more laws but in amendments and with the implementation of the existing ones; with education, not merely spreading educational facilities but attacking sexist and stereotyped textbooks, with equality, not only equal rights, but equal opportunities to work and with equal pay."[2]

The current pandemic has foregrounded the issue of VAW yet again, registering a surge in violent cases against women worldover- what the UN and other bodies have called the 'Shadow Pandemic'.[3] Numerous reports[4] and scattered studies in India give evidence of deepening vulnerabilities in an already hierarchical society, with women and children the most affected by this. According to data released by the National Commission for Women, the body received a total of 13,000 domestic violence (DV) during March-September 2020, with the numbers peaking in July 2020 during the height of the lockdown.[5]

The present study was formulated against the backdrop of these developments. The research hopes to unpack bystander attitudes towards incidents of VAW, and the rationale of their actions - whether they act to intervene and stop the incident or choose to keep silent. In the process we have also attempted to map the larger forces that determine both bystander and survivor behaviours and responses.

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1 Patel, Vibhuti. 1998. "Campaigns against Gender Violence (1977-1993)". In Violence against Women: Women against Violence edited by Shirin Kudchedkar and Sabiha Al-Issa, P.198-207. Delhi: Pencraft International.

2 John, Mary E. 2008. "Introduction." In Women's Studies in India: A Reader, 1-19. New Delhi: Penguin Books India

3 https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/in-focus-gender-equality-in-covid-19-response/violence-against-women-during-covid-19

4 https://www.thehindu.com/data/data-domestic-violence-complaints-at-a-10-year-high-during-covid-19-lockdown/article31885001.ece
https://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/india-news-rise-in-domestic-violence-across-all-strata-of-society-in-the-coronavirus-lockdown-period/350249

5 https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/data-stories/data-focus/abuse-of-women-at-home-rose-during-lockdown/article33060560.ece

1.1. Key terms

The study was informed by certain conceptual understandings of terms used extensively in this document. Stakeholders working on the issues of gender rights and equality are aware of the complexity of these terms and the genesis of these ideas with regard to the women's movement in India and globally.

Violence Against Women (VAW) is a comprehensive term and we have employed the working definition as given in The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1993. It stands for "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". It comprises "physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry related violence, marital rape, female genital mutilation and other traditional practices harmful to women, nonspousal violence and violence related to exploitation; physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere; trafficking in women and forced prostitution; and physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the state, wherever it occurs."[6] Thus, VAW as it is deployed in this research comprises Domestic Violence (DV) - violence that occurs within the family and the home including, but not limited to, Intimate Partner Violence (IPV); Sexual Harassment (SH) signifying unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favours etc. across various settings from education institutions, work spaces to public transport; Dowry Violence indicating violence done on the woman over dowry demands and Honour Killing which refers to killing or maiming of women over community and family honour.

Bystander refers to individuals around a survivor when an act of violence against a woman is committed and has the potential or capability to act.

Intervention represents any positive non-violent action (sans morally prescriptive codes) taken by a bystander to immediately stop an act of VAW.

Public space for the purpose of our study, to include all spaces that women navigate such as public roads, trains, buses, taxis, even privately-owned malls etc. Any space that is outside of the immediate confines of the home has been assumed to be public. However, the complexity of spaces and the false dichotomy underpinning constructs of the private and public is explored in the report.

[6] https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocity-crimes/Doc.21_declaration%20elimination%20vaw.pdf

1.2. Background

This report presents research undertaken by Breakthrough regarding bystander interventions during incidents of VAW. The origins of this research lie in Breakthrough's mission to prevent VAW, a significant part of which includes raising awareness about VAW. An important aspect of Breakthrough's work on awareness-raising on this issue is to encourage people to intervene when they witness VAW– whether to prevent an imminent or ongoing incident or to aid the person on whom the violence has been perpetrated. In February-March 2020 Breakthrough began planning a campaign of which the aim would be to encourage bystanders to intervene when witnessing VAW in order to stop the violent events.

There has long been a recognition that there needs to be an additional focus on the role of bystanders in addressing VAW. This stems from the fact that the person on whom violence is being inflicted is rarely in a position to prevent the perpetrator from inflicting violence. In the most common scenario the perpetrator of violence is likely to be in a position where they have much greater power in the relationship as compared to the person on whom violence is being inflicted. This usually renders the survivor of violence relatively helpless during the actual incident of violence. While this would be assumed to be the case in instances of domestic violence, a similar pattern is also observed in incidents of VAW which occur in public spaces including public transport. It is often observed that even in the event of the survivor of violence calling attention to the incident as it occurs very few bystanders are seen to intervene to either stop the perpetrator or to assist the survivor following the incident. This suggests a passivity on the part of the majority of bystanders when witnessing incidents of VA and a reluctance to intervene in any manner.

What then accounts for this reluctance, and on the occasions when bystanders engage in an active manner what accounts for that engagement? These are the two issues that are fundamental to the design of the Bystander Intervention Campaign.

The primary audience for this campaign comprises young people in the age group of 19-25 years as this is one of the key demographic categories with whom Breakthrough works. In order for the campaign to speak to this group it was thought to be important to understand the underlying factors and issues which encourage or discourage young people in this age group to act or intervene when confronted with the issue of VAW. This research– referred to as the Bystander Intervention Research- was, therefore, conceptualised with the aim to inform the Bystander Intervention Campaign.

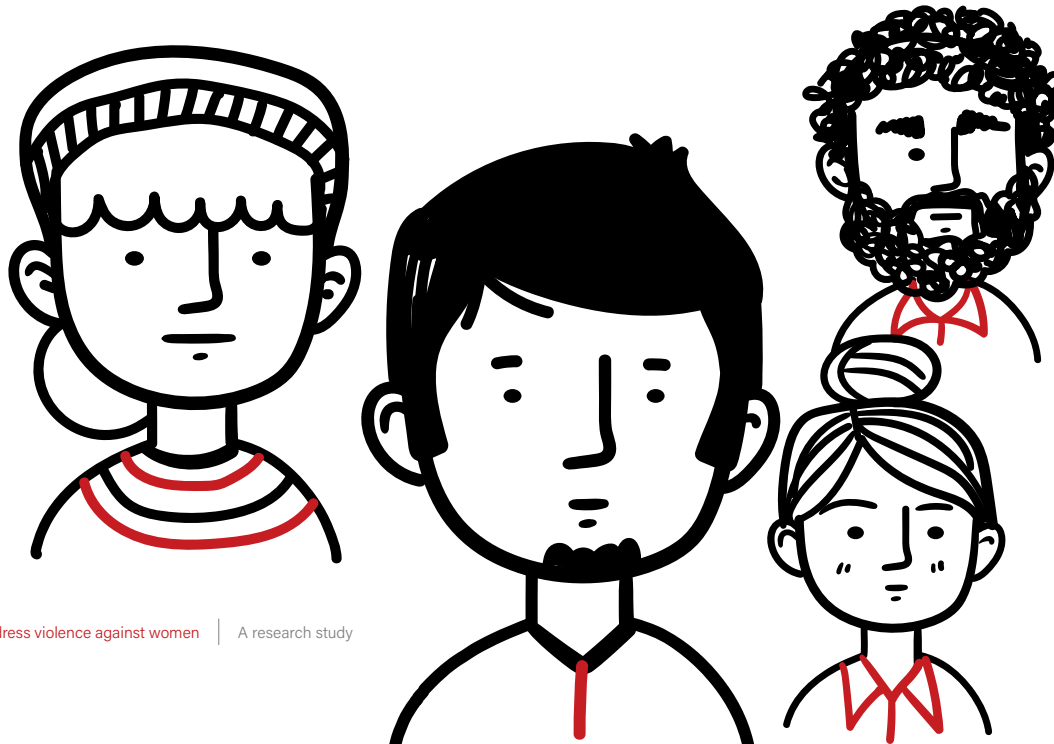
An important aspect of Breakthrough's work on awareness raising on this issue is to encourage people to intervene when they witness VAW– whether to prevent an imminent or ongoing incident or to aid the person on whom the violence has been perpetrated.

The research sought to explore these two core questions with reference to this age-group. Further, there was the recognition that these questions needed to be foregrounded within the broader discussion around VAW itself. This assumes importance because decisions to intervene or not would arise from individuals' understandings– and, therefore, recognition– of VAW of itself. Within the broader VAW discourse important issues to consider pertain also to who– with reference to sex and age– is able to intervene with confidence during VAW incidents. These issues, while not exhaustive, informed the research design.

The Bystander Intervention Research aimed to:

- Explore bystanders' understandings of VAW, i.e. the range of actions and events that they understood and categorised as violence and, therefore, felt the need to respond to
- Explore the factors which encourage and prevent bystanders from intervening when they witness VAW
- Explore the effects of bystanders' actions to intervene in a VAW event

All these issues informed the research design which is detailed in the Methodology section.



Literature review

The consistent engagement with the theme of VAW within the women's movement has produced a rich repository of academic literature. Scholars across disciplines have interrogated VAW from various vantage points focusing on how institutions of the family, community and nation/state have determined gendering in India (Kannabiran 1996; Vaid, 1998; Karlekar 2001; Rajan 1999; John 2008; Butalia 2002). Concerted debates around the question of caste and sexuality in the 90s have served to unpack the conceptual underpinnings of seemingly homogeneous categories of 'woman' and 'family.' This section presents a brief outline of the theoretical frameworks that have informed this study.

Family as a fundamental unit of social organization is well documented (Shah, 1968, 1973; Bharat and Desai, 1991; Das 1993; Deshpande 94; Uberoi 2000). It is here that the elementary lessons of gender socialization are picked up and where everyday acts of gender enactments are performed. The disciplines of history, law and sociology/social anthropology in particular have interrogated this institution from gender perspectives. The new discipline of women's studies in the 1980s worked towards delinking the woman from the family in order to study and analyse her in her own right (Jain and Rajput, 2003; John 2008). The multiplicity and complexity of family structures have been outlined (Kolenda 1967), with scholars calling out the tendency to privilege heteronormative and middle-class conceptualisations of the family in official and popular discourses. Academic inquiries over the years have demonstrated how focusing on the transition of joint family to nuclear tends to sideline the vast forms of family organisation, including in matrilineal and tribal communities, in India (Bailey, 1960; Uberoi 2000).

These scholars collectively demonstrated how women's lives are shaped by the affective ties of kinship and endogamous marriage that dictated their status within family and community (V Geetha, 2007). Feminine identity formation was understood to be indelibly defined by the daily negotiations of discrimination and violence - both physical and other non aggressive forms - that women encountered while growing up. The life-cycle approach pushed for a holistic method to evaluate and examine the construction of female identity and gendering while simultaneously recognising the monumental role played by larger networks of kinship located at the confluence of caste, class and regional variations (Karlekar, 1998).

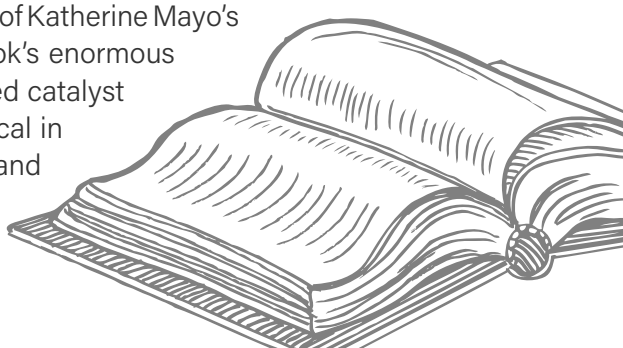
Studies of family and household have also explored the traditional hierarchies dominant within these spaces dictating resource and responsibility allocations. Though often used interchangeably, the terms 'family' and 'household' are not the same entity and represent interlinked albeit different concepts. "Household is usually defined in terms of residence or habitat and family in terms of something more intimate in human terms of relationships" (Jain and Banerjee,1985; Shah 1973, 1988; Sharma 1989). Examining the economic terrain of the household provides a sharper perspective on how material realities dictate gender inequalities. An intra-household analysis tells us how women specifically are regularly pushed towards the bottom of the hierarchical order while undertaking an overwhelming burden of household duties (Jain and Banerjee, 1985). Women of the household are often under the

"triple authority" of senior women (usually wife of the household head and mother of the husband), their own husbands and the male head of the household (Palriwala,1993). Possibilities of manipulation and discrimination are particularly evident when it came to special food items such as milk, ghee, sweets etc. with women receiving substantially lower quantities of these, if at all. However, in terms of household labour women shoulder a substantial responsibility. These patterns of segregation are governed by values internalised from infancy with "kinship status, specifically agnation, contribution to household income and work, and the concrete content of social relationships" operating as "determinants of intra-household access to consumption." (Palriwala, 1993)

Feminist economists have argued the necessity of looking at household closely over the operational conceptions of family as understood in other disciplines considering how it is the material reality of the household that dictates gender inequality particularly amongst marginalsied castes and communitites (Krishnaraj 1990; Agarwal 1994; Banerjee 1997). "Amongst the poor in rural areas, whether they are scheduled castes or not, poverty and unemployment are so acute that there is a greater push towards various types of migrations which has also diluted the family. Then there is the economic phenomenon of female-headed households where women are bread-winners and nurturers. Family, therefore, is not a crucial foundation for these classes and castes" (Jain and Banerjee 1985). Scholars argue that the economic family, particularly amongst the poor, remains understudied. In a deeply unequal world endlessly precipitated by growing poverty diminishing resources necessitate constant re-configuration of hierarchical relations, gender being a core axis of realignment.

The site of the family and the household become critical sites of study for exploring the structuring of gender and concomitant treatment of women due to historical reasons. Since the onset of colonial rule in India, the status of women was projected as an ideal metric to evaluate the 'progressiveness' of Indian society (Sangari and Vaid, 1989; Forbes 2005).

The women's question was central to 19th century reform movements in India and the debates it spurred, in the subsequent years, were integral to how the 'tradition' of a colonised people was re-configured and reimagined while squarely placing 'women' at the heart of these debates. Gender scholars, particularly feminist historians such as Lata Mani and Mrinalini Sinha have successfully argued and established how the 'question of women and her status' is so much more than the woman (Mani, 1987; Sinha 2006). Women's bodies have become the terrain and site over which family, kinship and community linkages and honour have been historically forged, particularly in the throes of the anti-colonial struggle. In the process ideas of tradition, modernity, customs were constructed to facilitate the nationalist discourse and anti-imperialist movements (Mohanty 1984; Chakravarti 1989; Chakrabarty, 1995; Arunima 1995; Bhattacharya 1996; Sinha 2000; Kodoth 2001; Sarkar 2001; Pandian 2002; Sarkar and Sarkar 2008). The potent concept of Mother India- which conflates the imagery of the mother to that of the nation- illustrates how ideas of female honour and chastity are woven into the tapestry of nation and community building (Sinha, 2006).
In her celebrated work dissecting the controversial publication of Katherine Mayo's Mother India in 1927, Sinha meticulously details how the book's enormous success and ensuing debates proved to be an unprecedented catalyst in remapping interlinkages between the social and the political in India, with the woman occupying the space of the social and politics hitherto deemed the domain of men.

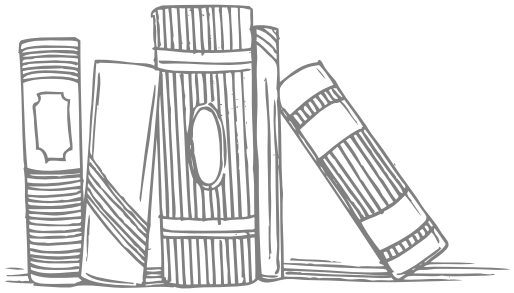


Notions of domesticity and conjugality too have historical antecedents (Nair 1994; Arunima 1995; Kodoth, 2001; Ghosh 2004, Sarkar 2008) with intellectuals and reformers in colonial India arguing on issues affecting women, focusing particularly on questions around women's education and (re-) marriage. Reformers pitched women's education as making them better and more responsible mothers and wives. The Age of Consent debates of the early 20th century- about determining the right age of marriage for girls and boys- brought the institution of marriage into scrutiny by reformers and women activists alike (Sarkar 1993, 2000). The notional idea of companionate marriages and accompanying notions of conjugality were debated consistently and diligently in these pages. Concurrently, equating mythological figures such as Sita or Savitri to ideal notions of Indian womanhood ensured that women remain bound to exacting standards of 'purity' and 'perfection' (Rajan 1998; Devika 2005).

Over the years, modalities employed to dictate normative definitions of woman and womanhood have been called into question by gender theorists. This is perhaps best reflected in the realm of law and activism. The 1970s and 80s witnessed a series of extreme events of brutal VAW– the custodial rapes of a young tribal girl, Mathura, and a young Muslim girl in Hyderbad, the sati of 18 year-old Roop Kanwar in 1987, and dowry-related deaths– representing focal points of public campaigns against VAW. Kanwar's sati threw up a peculiar problem that continues to plague debates around Indian feminism and women's movement today- the complicated question of woman's agency (Vaid and Sangari 1991; Loomba 1993; Phadke 2003; Dyahadroy 2009; Chaudhuri 2012; Rao 2015). While the Rameeza Bee and Mathura rape cases forgrounded issues of accountability and impunity of state actors such as the police, they highlighted how the specific locations of these women - tribal and muslim- compounded the issue. The politics of caste and sexuality foregrouded by debates around Mandal and the AIDS epidemic of the 80s respectively, ruptured the homogenous categorisation of 'woman' and facilitated the replacement of the biological category of sex with gender (John and Nair, 1998; Menon 2009).

Law and legal jurisprudence is another area wherein the feminist lens has been incroprated to further gender justice (Agnes 1992; Kannabiran 2009), with ceaseless feminist engagement since the late 1970s leading to significant changes in legal frameworks (Kumar 1993; Sen, 2010). Custodial rape was added to the crime of rape in 1983 as a result of nation-wide agitations propelled by a letter written by four univesrity researchers to the then Chief Justice of India in 1979 severely criticising the massive mishandling of the Mathura rape case of 1972 which to the eventual acquital of the perpetrators (John 2008). The anger stemmed in no small measure from the court's observation that the 16 year-old girl was habituated to sex and therefore could not be 'so overpowered by fear that she could not resist'[7] (Gangoli 1996; John 2008). A similar rationale was provided by the courts while acquitting the accused policepersons in the Rameeza Bee rape case of 1978 (Kannabiran 1996). The defense in its arguments in court had attempted to establish Bee as a sex-worker and hence undeserving of justice.

[7] The Right to Protection from Sexual Assault: The Indian Anti-Rape Campaign, Geetanjali Gangoli, Development in Practice , Nov., 1996, Vol. 6, No. 4 (Nov., 1996), pp. 334-340



Responding to major campaigns around VAW in the 1980s other key changes were made to the law: Dowry Prohibition Act was amended in 1984 and again in 1986; cruelty and harassment of wives was made a cognisable offence under section 498(A) IPC in 1983; and Section 304B was included in the IPC, in 1986, addressing dowry-deaths (Agnes 1992, 2013). Justice, however, remains elusive for a vast number of women even today; Flavia Agnes (1990) cites the pro-family and anti-woman mindsets of those tasked with the job of providing justice to women as a major impediment. Kapur (2001) similarly demonstrates how the category of 'unwelcome' signs is often dictated by dominant sexual norms. Moreover, the burden of proof, element of consent and the possibility of sexual pasts of the survivor are often used to establish her 'loose' character hence an undeserving woman. An undeclared yet powerful idea of 'Indian value' underscores the fabric of law and its implementation. Local bodies such as khap panchayats also ensure the implementation of unwritten socially sanctioned norms often resorting to violence and murder to ensure strict compliance of these moral and cultural codes (Choudhary, 1998)

Feminist geographies as a sub-discipline within human geography has critically positioned the gendered study of geographical spaces within academia (McDowell 1999; Rai 2007). As stated earlier, the dichotomy between 'public' space and 'private' space has been an enduring concern of feminist activism and scholarly engagement. The distinctions between public and private might appear a well-defined binary. However, earlier approaches to studying space, largely within cultural sociology, illustrate that physical spaces reflect social structures and have conceptualised space as given and fixed in time (Abraham 2010). However, recent scholars note that the occupants of these spaces and their interpersonal dynamics blur the demarcation that exists between the binary (Gupta 2012, Bhattacharyya 2014, 2016). This does not reject material existence of public places (e.g.parks, streets etc.) and private spaces (e.g. the household/family). However, a nuanced understanding of these spaces reveals that the 'private' or 'public' nature of a space is fluid and constantly shifting– dependent on the actions and interactions of people occupying these spaces. While these spaces are not fixed in time, they do largely reflect the dominant social structures (Abraham 2010), cultural narratives and gender norms (Menon and Allen 2018) thereby influencing everyday negotiations of and within these spaces.

Further, it is imperative to delve into who the occupants of these spaces are: who has access to these spaces; who is removed from these spaces and why? In some spaces that are clearly demarcated as public, certain people are denied access due to social identity markers (around caste, gender, class etc). Recent findings have shown that public spaces in India suffer from a "culture of misogyny", which indicates a high prevalence of violence against women, regardless of factors like race, culture or age (Gupta 2012, Bhattacharyya 2016, Madan and Nalla 2016). Scholars have pointed that among all the identity markers, that of being a female has been noted to increase the fear of violence against women particularly in the public place (Starkweather 2007, Bhattacharyya 2014, 2016). Research unveils that the factors that have influenced the increase in violence against women include poverty, unemployment, deeply embedded patriarchal practices, and gendered socio-cultural values that consider women to subordinate to men (Fenster 2005, Bhattacharyya 2014, 2016). These greatly contribute to three issues:

- Women's and girls' greater restrictions in access to public spaces compared to men and boys
- Women's and girls' status as 'properties' enabling male kin to make decisions regarding their access to spaces
- Women's and girls' chances of being blamed in case they face violence are higher because they are not supposed to be in this space in the first place (disbelonging)

Loiter without purpose and meaning. Loiter without being asked what time of the day it is, why we are here, what we are wearing, and whom we are with. This is when we will truly belong to the city and the city to us.

Violence against women is a manifestation of gender inequality moulded by dominant cultural narratives through different social institutions and thus solidified (Verma and Mahendra 2004, Zietz and Das 2017). In India, young men grow up in a male-dominated context with little contact with peers of the other gender(s), thereby having limited modelling of male-female relationship (Zietz and Das 2017). Growing up, boys experience increased autonomy, mobility, opportunity and power in comparison to girls (Verma and Mahendra 2004, Zietz and Das 2017). Whereas, girls experience increasingly restricted access to public spaces, their autonomy overruled by male family members who decide on their behalf. In addition to that, the narrative of a family's honour present in a girl/woman's chastity places a burden on women which leads to the culture of silence and non-disclosure of violence against women (Menon and Allen 2018). This culture stems from the patriarchal belief that silence will protect and maintain a woman's honour, thereby her family's. It fails to account for the fact that silence only serves to protect the perpetrators and those who benefit from patriarchy. Such narratives also reflect the collectivist values present in the Indian society that disregards an individual's wellbeing over a larger community's (Menon and Allen 2018).

The example of home as the epitome of safe, private space is a claim to be contested (Fenster 2005, Bhattacharyya 2014, 2016, Das et.al 2015). The home, is rather, a site of abuse for women, where they fail to fully assert their autonomy and participate in terms of decision making etc. (Bhattacharyya 2014, 2016, Das et.al 2015) Patriarchal structures of domination consider women as objects/commodities of their immediate male family members. This notion of ownership, amongst other factors, leads to various forms of domestic violence, including sexual and physical violence (Bhattacharyya 2014, 2016, Das et.al 2015). Therefore, any violence against women like marital violence within household or private spaces are referred to as private acts which do not call for external intervention (Menon and Allen 2018). In fact, a large section of Indian women interviewed in one of the studies found out that women largely viewed violence in their marital life as an acceptable routine, and that it was viewed as legitimate by the community. (Srivastava & Murugesan 2001 in Menon and Allen 2018).

In their pioneering work on reimagining public spaces for women titled *Why Loiter (2011)*, Shilpa Phadke, Sameera Khan and Shilpa Rande argue for embracing risk-taking and pleasurable acts in women's daily activities as a radical means to reclaim public spaces for and by women. The premise is to pre-figure a utopia which is free and inclusive of all while simultaneously foregrounding a quest of pleasure that strengthens our struggles against VAW which is framed by the language of rights rather than protection. It enables the possibility of accommodating the multifarious manifestations of women's desires while annihilating potential acts of moral policing undertaken as a means to keep women under check and thereby "safe". For them loitering- for women across all classes and groups- represents an act of feminist assertion which would potetnially open up spaces while dismantling notions of sanitised homogenous spaces. *"Loiter without purpose and meaning. Loiter without being asked what time of the day it is, why we are here, what we are wearing, and whom we are with. This*

3. Methodology

The research was planned in January 2020 through initial discussions within Breakthrough regarding the types of insights that the team designing the campaign were then seeking. At that initial stage we decided we would undertake this research in areas where Breakthrough implements programmes as this would facilitate the process of introductions to research participants through the programme implementation teams. Further progress in the research was, however, interrupted by the COVID-19 associated lockdown and the restrictions that it imposed on travel for data collection purposes. We then decided on alternative strategies for data collection, discussed in greater detail in the following sections, although there were delays in undertaking the research.

Further to these initial plans, in March-April 2020, the organisation also decided to undertake additional research on similar themes for a separate social media campaign on bystander intervention. This second research, however, was to be conducted with regional representation from northern, southern, eastern, and western parts of India. This research phase also demanded exploration of individuals' experiences of VAW in public transport. We planned to undertake this research through collaboration with partners situated in these geographies who could facilitate introductions to research participants.

There were two distinct phases of the research:
July-August and September-October 2020. During the first phase, facilitated through the Breakthrough programme teams, we interviewed 36 participants in:

- Rural Hazaribagh (Jharkhand)
- Rural Gaya (Bihar)
- Rural Jhajjar (Haryana)
- An informal working-class Delhi neighbourhood and,
- College-going women from Delhi and peri-urban/ rural Haryana.

In the second phase we interviewed 55 participants based in four Indian cities:

- Kolkata
- Hyderabad
- Mumbai
- Delhi

The participants were identified through partner organisations in each city - My Choices Foundation, Hyderabad; Habitat and Livelihood Welfare Association (HALWA), Mumbai and Rangeen Khidki in Kolkata.

Lastly, a distinct component of the research in Phase 2 entailed a survey to collect quantitative data. The purpose of this survey was to understand the extent of VAW in public spaces and public transport. Since it was impossible to administer this survey in person, this was shared on Breakthrough's social media pages and through organisational networks so that people could self-administer the survey.

2.1. Research questions

In order to understand what drives bystander behaviour especially regarding intervention in acts of violence in public spaces the research team planned to undertake primary research.

The research asked three key questions:

- *What motivates people to intervene to prevent or stop an ongoing violent act in public spaces which they witness?*
- *What factors prevent people from intervening to stop violence in public spaces that they witness?*
- *What is the effect of bystanders' interventions?*

In the second phase of the research we added an additional question as below:

- *What is the experience of persons facing violence in public transport?*

2.2. Research methods

This section details the methods that were applied and used during this study and the rationale for doing so. One critical factor that informed decisions about the sampling and type of research methods was that this research would be primarily exploratory in nature, i.e. it was setting out to explore an issue in depth. One of the aims was to hear people's voices– their words– about why they did and did not intervene as these will be a critical aspect of the Bystander Intervention Campaign. This, therefore, demands nuanced data that are available primarily through qualitative data-collection methods. These issues are discussed below along with brief discussions on the approach to sampling and respondent categories, data collection methods, and data analysis.

2.2.1. Approach to sampling

The approach to sampling, including deciding the respondent categories, was based on the target audience of the campaign. Bearing in mind that the Bystander Intervention Campaign would seek to address young people in the age-group of 19-25 years the research team decided that this would be a key respondent category for the research. However, the research team also recognised that in a society that gives greater importance to seniority by age young people do not necessarily have sufficient power to intervene in incidents of VAW. Thus, it would seem logical to include a category of older people with the recognition that within this group of older people men are far more likely to be visible in public spaces and also have greater power to both perpetrate violence but also to

intervene in VAW incidents. Three respondent categories, as below, were therefore decided based on these issues:

- Girls/ women in the 19-25 age group
- Boys/ men in the 19-25 age group
- Men in the 25-40 age group

The sample size in each phase was expected to be approximately 45 with proportional representation of each group. As the research progressed, however, and study participants were identified the actual process of getting in touch with participants - detailed in the next section - resulted in additional categories of respondents of women in the 25-40 age group and women above 40 in Phase 2.

2.2.1.1. Purposive sampling

Based on the fact that this research aimed very specifically at understanding especially the factors that motivate individuals to intervene when faced with incidents of VAW the sampling strategy was purposive. This was to ensure that we would indeed gather enough breadth of data to answer especially the first research question regarding individuals' motivations to intervene when they witnessed violence. During both phases of the research, therefore, we specifically asked the facilitating teams to identify people who had at least one experience of having intervened in an incident of VAW. In spite of this, however, we discovered when we began to collect data that this was not always the case.

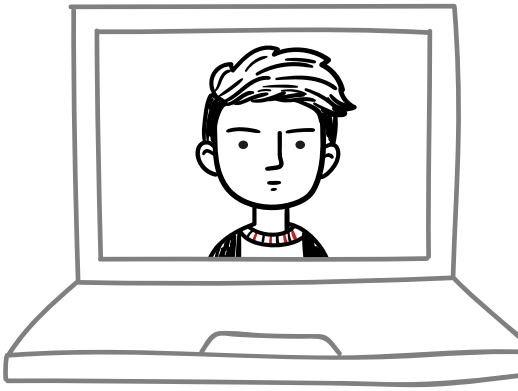
In order to reach participants, we requested the facilitating teams within Breakthrough and partner agencies to specifically identify individuals who fulfilled the criteria of the research and respondent categories. We shared a brief introductory note with the facilitating teams explaining the purposes of the research and issues of confidentiality; this was also the basis to explain the research to potential participants and seek their preliminary consent to being contacted by the research team.

Due to the difficulties in identifying people who matched the criteria of having intervened in VAW incidents once the research was underway, the actual sample comprised people who may not have actually done so, but whom we could interview so that we would generate sufficient depth of data from the interviews. The actual distribution of study participants by age and sex is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Age-groups	19-25		26-40			Above 40		Total
Phase	F	M	F	M	Other	F	M	
1	12	11	6	7		-	-	36
2	10	3	22	13	1	6	-	55
Total	**22**	**14**	**28**	**20**	**1**	**6**	**-**	**91**

Table 1: Distribution of study participants by age and sex



2.3. Qualitative data-collection

In order to fulfill the need for depth and fine-grained detail in this research we decided to use in-depth qualitative interviews to be undertaken with individuals or groups when possible. These took the form of semi-structured, open-ended interviews with individuals or a maximum of four-five persons during group interviews. A semi-structured interview guide was developed for this purpose- this is appended as *Annexure 4*. Questions were also added to this through the data-collection when participants brought up new issues which we had not anticipated earlier. Thus the development of the questions was itself an iterative process.

The purpose of conducting group interviews was to generate conversations among participants and thereby richer data on how effective intervention strategies have been in practice. This was undertaken only when we were sure that the participants were already known to each other since it would otherwise defeat the purpose of generating conversations among them. The process of group interviews allows for different forms of questioning among participants which emerge from participants' own experiences of particular events rather than being dependent on only the interviewer's skill in generating questions from the emergent information during the interview process.

The interviews were conducted either through internet-based video-calling platforms or through individual and conference phone calls. We used these mediums due to the pandemic and concomitant restrictions, which prevented the research team from traveling to undertake face-to-face interviews. These forms imposed their own restrictions especially when there were poor telephone and internet connections which resulted in poor audio quality and tired out both interviewee and interviewer. The absence of the visual medium, in most cases, meant that it was impossible to get visual cues about how the interview was progressing from the individuals' non-verbal communication and body language. We felt the impact of this form of remote data collection throughout the research process– while conducting the interviews and while documenting the research; the cumulative effects of both these earlier processes affected how we analysed the data especially what questions we could and could not answer through our data. We discuss this in greater detail in a section on the factors affecting the research.

2.4. Ethics and consent

As with all research with people, ethics and consent were important parts of the research planning, more so for the two additional reasons relating to first, the topic of research and, second, the nature of data collection through remote mediums.

We were aware that conversations on violence could be difficult for the participants, especially in the cases of women if they have also faced violence themselves. We were conscious, therefore, of the need to listen to participants carefully to ensure that they felt comfortable talking with us and spoke with us only to the degree that they were comfortable speaking. Due to the fact that all interviews were undertaken on phone we also attempted to ensure that we did not take more than about one hour for most interviews although on occasion, especially during group interviews, we spoke to some participants for almost or more than two hours.

A significant aspect of ensuring ethical conduct through the research process is to seek informed consent and to remind of their freedom to withdraw consent at any time in the process. Consent-seeking was a two-stage process. The facilitating teams/ partner agencies first sought preliminary consent after sharing the information from our introductory research information note. Once participants had given an initial consent to being interviewed we then spoke to them again to explain what the research is about and to explain the interview process in order to ensure that they understood what the interviews entailed. Once we could be sure they had understood these aspects and that there would be no benefit to them from the research, and gave their consent we proceeded to fix the interview at a convenient time for them. At the beginning of each interview we again described the research and sought their consent, reminding them that they could choose to end the interview at any time for any reason whatsoever. Interviews were recorded with participants' permission.

It should be noted, however, that the process of remote data-collection imposes a greater burden of ethical care especially, but not only, while discussing a topic such as VAW which can produce challenging conversations. However, we were also conscious of factors such as imposing on people's time when they may have had other work to do; being present in-person allows for researchers to be more sensitive to such issues. It was also difficult to gauge, at times, the impact of the conversation on the person themself– were they angry, or upset, or sad while discussing this issue? If they were, the question arose as to what we could do to mitigate the effects of the conversation on them. This, again, was made difficult by the absence of visual cues and body language due to the solely aural medium of the interviews; this too was impacted at times by poor connection resulting in our limited abilities to even correctly identify the tone at times. We were thus reliant on asking participants whether they were comfortable continuing the conversations or not, with the hope that they recognised their choice in this matter.

The issue of whether participants were comfortable during the interviews was further complicated by the fact that women participants did not just describe instances where they witnessed VAW but also their own experiences of VAW, which then raises questions of how to support individuals who may require it. While most participants had already been linked to supportives services, this was also aided by the fact that partner organisations work in the area of VAW and, therefore, were already aware of such instances that were described or could support them in some manner. There were also instances where participants described how they had equipped themselves to either protect themselves or cope with the situations in some way.

A significant aspect of ensuring ethical conduct through the research process is to seek informed consent and to remind of their freedom to withdraw consent at any time in the process.

2.5. Data analysis

Interviews were recorded with participants' consent and deposited in a shared drive which only the research team could access to ensure participants' confidentiality. Participants' records were maintained in a separate file indicating significant personal details and dates of interviews- this list of (pseudonymised) participants is appended as Annexure 3. Notes were maintained after each interview documenting significant issues to which the participants had referred. This also ensured that issues that we had not anticipated earlier would feed into the interview guide and subsequent interviews as described in the section on data collection methods.

This documentation ensured that themes were documented early and allowed the research team to decide which interviews would need to be transcribed for detailed analysis. Once both phases of data collection concluded the transcription was contracted out to various people who produced detailed verbatim English transcripts of the interviews. In most cases this also required translation of the interviews from Hindi to English.

The process of detailed data analysis was driven by the initial documentation as this indicated to us which interviews had generated the depth of information that merited detailed analysis. At this point we referred to all the interviews once more and examined those that had not generated any data on intervention. In case these interviews had generated other significant information such as experiences of violence or witnessing the effects of intervening or not during VAW then these were retained for detailed analysis.

2.5.1. Narrative analysis

Analysis of transcripts was undertaken manually applying a narrative analysis process to generate themes from the data. This involved two distinct methods. The first was to read across the transcripts to understand the key themes from the data. This was based on repetition of themes across the dataset as a whole, generating breadth not only in the number of themes but also in how often themes appeared and reappeared across the transcripts. The second process was to read each transcript in detail to see how each of the identified themes developed within specific participants' narratives. This generated depth to each theme. It also added to our understanding of how themes might vary in their specificities across age and sex. This then raised further questions for analysis regarding how age, gender, or other forms of social identity such as class or community might result in divergences in self-presentation which appeared in the interviews. As new themes emerged from analysis of different transcripts, we explored whether they applied to previously analysed narratives. This process was further informed by referring to existing literature not just on bystander intervention but on VAW itself, which itself was discussed in great detail through the interviews.

The thematic narrative analysis was itself an iterative process that involved three distinct processes: first, reference to existing literature; second, discussion within the research team as each member came across new themes; third, taking new themes back to previously analysed transcripts to understand whether these also referred to newly developed themes.

Throughout this process, we categorised findings by themes and explored patterns of similarity and difference across age and sex, as well as urban and rural or geographical location. These are presented in detail in a subsequent section on findings. In the next section on the limitations, we discuss the degree to which it was or not possible to analyse the data along such axes of social identities.

2.6. Limitations of remote data-collection

The section on ethics and consent has already presented some aspects of the limitations of the remote data-collection process, discussing it from the perspective of ethical issues; this section discusses the issue from the perspective of data analysis. However, it is important to recognise that the ethics of research feeds into all aspects of the research. This means that the ethics of data production and co-creation also affects the ethical stance of the data analysis, i.e. how true and, therefore, rigorous can the analysis be with respect to the nature of the data itself.

The research team's inability to travel for data-collection and speak with people in person posed two types of difficulties. First, it constrained our ability to be more purposive in the choice of persons who we spoke to; both the Breakthrough programme team and partner organisations were constrained in whom they could contact as the larger pool of participants due to the lockdown and their dependence too on phone calls rather than in-person conversations about the research as many people whom they thought of as potential participants could not be contacted. This also meant that, in some cases, they too had only rudimentary information about the participants' background thereby being able to share only limited information with us. This limited the group of potential participants in terms of numbers. However, the combination of a limited group and having limited background information constrained our ability to ensure that we could talk to people of diverse backgrounds in terms of their social identities. Thus, we had limited knowledge about their socio-economic status, community and ethnic identities, all questions which are best asked in sensitive ways in person. Further, in-person data collection renders us the advantage of being able to combine information from interviews and observations; in this case we had no observations which could support or lend nuance to the information from interviews. We had to rely on information relayed to us verbally and build our knowledge from pieces of information that we thus gleaned.

The second impact of remote data-collection follows from the first and impinges on the data analysis. We are aware from our own understandings of social processes and the existing literature on VAW that individuals' experiences of violence and, in many cases, their abilities to intervene too are mediated by their social identities- of age, sex, dis/ability, community or ethnic identity, and economic status. None of these identities exists in isolation but, in fact, are multiple overlapping sites of difference that mediate individuals' social interactions to produce particular experiences. This intersectional approach is important to understand how individuals' experiences of both violence as well as intervention differ and converge around these identities. Although these were questions that

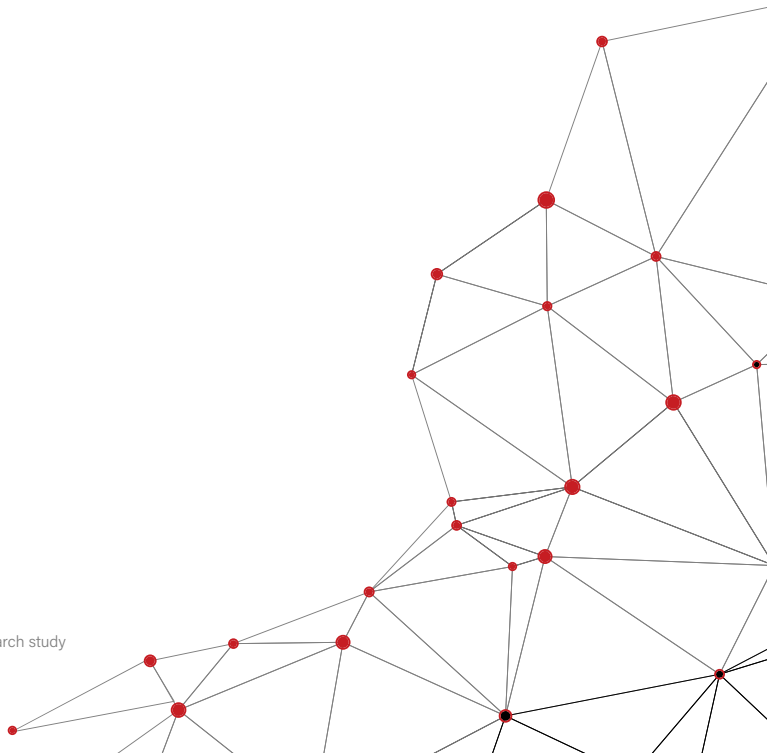
we took to our data we were not able to analyse these questions in depth as we did not have sufficient information that allowed for the emergence of observable patterns of similarities and differences among the participants' experiences of VAW or of intervening in such instances. We consider this to be a limitation of this research and one that we would seek to rectify in future.

2.7. Quantitative data-collection

A distinct component of the second phase of the research was quantitative data collection through a self-administered survey. The aim of this survey was to be able to generate data on the following:

- The prevalence of various types of VAW
- The spaces where women experience VAW
- Whether or not they are able to call attention to the incident to stop it themself or by asking bystanders for help
- Whether or not bystanders come to the assistance of women facing VAW in public, and whether they do so on their own or due to the survivor calling attention to this
- Whether survivors report the VAW incident and what percentage of them do so

A survey was designed for this purpose- this is appended as Annexure 2. The survey was shared on Breakthrough's social media pages and through networks in order for members of the general public to self-administer it. Since this was solely an online survey, there was no possibility of adhering to a sampling strategy as individuals would self-select themselves to respond to the survey. The survey was shared for a period of approximately one month. The data that were available after cleaning referred to 721 sets of unique responses of which there were 580 female and 133 male respondents, and eight respondents who identified as other gender. These data did not feed into the analysis in this report since they did not integrate with the qualitative data. The results are summarised and presented in *Annexure 1*.



3. Key findings

This section presents the important findings from the combined dataset from both phases of the qualitative research interviews. The first subsection provides a numerical snapshot of the range of VAW that participants witnessed or experienced and whether or not they intervened, along with where the violence took place. Subsequent subsections go on to take up key themes– which number eight– from the findings which are discussed in some detail and illustrated with excerpts from the participants' narratives, which are as follows.

The second subsection refers to the types of VAW that emerged from the participants' narratives while the third describes the sites or spaces where VAW takes place. In the fourth subsection, we present the types of interventions that bystanders reported using and, within these, both those that immediately address the VAW incident as well as those that are aimed at long(er)-term redressal. The fifth subsection presents patterns of difference in the approaches to interventions that women and men tend to adopt. In the sixth subsection, we discuss the significance of female silences and what accounts for this loud silence. The seventh subsection focuses on the nature of the family and how it is implicated in the production of violence through the social reproduction of patriarchal gender-discriminatory norms. This is followed, in subsection eight, by a discussion on DV specifically as a type of VAW that is foregrounded in the participants' narratives including a brief discussion on why women continue to face DV rather than exit such situations. Next, subsection nine presents participants descriptions of what motivates them to intervene when they witness VAW.

3.1. Overview of findings

This section presents a brief overview of the findings that emerged from the qualitative data. Participants described a spectrum of incidents which they identified as violence. While doing so they did not necessarily employ terms and categories that we have used in the report or as are commonly understood as terms among scholars and practitioners in the area of VAW. Nonetheless, however, their descriptions of what they understood or had witnessed clearly aligned with recognisable types of VAW. The overview below makes a distinction between the types of violence that participants witnessed and those that they experienced in the cases of women/ transgender participants.

The types of violence that participants described as having witnessed are as follows: sexual harassment (SH); domestic violence (DV); sexual abuse or assault including child sexual abuse (CSA); 'honour killing' and/or dowry violence; early marriage (EM); and psychological trauma. The type of VAW that participants described most frequently was SH; among the 91 research participants this is described as being witnessed 74 times. The next most frequently witnessed type of VAW is DV which is 51 times among all participants. This is followed by nine instances of witnessing sexual abuse/ assault and six instances of EM. There are three instances of 'honour killing' that are reported as having been witnessed. Lastly, one participant reported witnessing an instance of psychological violence or trauma.

The types of VAW that women participants described as having experienced are as follows: SH, DV, and sexual abuse or assault. The frequently experienced type of VAW is SH of which 45 instances were reported. This is followed by eight instances of sexual abuse or assault, including seven CSA instances; seven instances of DV; three instances of EM being reported as experienced by participants; and one instance of psychological trauma.

Among the 91 participants, 63 reported having intervened to prevent or stop the violence they witnessed while 45 of those who experienced VAW reported raising their voice during the incident. A further 36 participants reported that they had approached authorities, including police, to complain about the incident. Among women participants 15 reported that they had received assistance from bystanders. Among men participants who intervened in VAW incidents 20 reported that they faced some repercussions as a result of their intervention.

The reasons cited for intervening in incidents of VAW are broadly categorised as: the idea that violence is wrong and unacceptable of which there are 20 instances; the instinct to help someone who seemed to need it or felt that they have a duty to help someone in need of which there are; and, lastly, they had experienced violence themselves and do not want others to face it, of which there are 10 instances.

3.2. Kinds of VAW

The narratives that emerged from this research foregrounded women's daily negotiations and contestations within their homes and larger society. Most participants, particularly women, identified violence as a broad term incorporating a spectrum of abuse including physical, mental, verbal and sexual abuse leading to trauma.

Both phases of the research reflected the particular socio-political dynamics and cultural contexts of participants' locations. During Phase 1- in which participants were drawn from rural Jharkhand, rural Bihar, rural Haryana, and urban Delhi- women and men across age groups identified and spoke about gender discriminatory behaviour; DV; the stigmatising or blaming of women; sexual harassment including objectifying women, passing sexually lewd comments, and making unwanted sexual advances; harassment over being unable to produce male heirs; emotional, physical and financial abuse; women being denied access to education or employment; and restrictions on mobility and freedom of varying forms. These were described as occurring on a daily basis. Phase 2 of the study comprised participants from metro cities of Kolkata, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Delhi. Overall most of the issues that respondents highlighted overlapped with those mentioned in Phase 2.

There were, however, two significant types of VAW that came up in each phase but did not come up in the other. Participants in phase 1 referred to honour killing and dowry which phase 2 participants did not while phase 2 participants talked about CSA which was not mentioned at all in phase 1. These

Most participants, particularly women, identified violence as a broad term incorporating a spectrum of abuse including- physical, mental, verbal and sexual.

particularities could well be attributed in part to the particular contexts– geographical and socio-economic– from which the participants spoke. For instance, it is worth noting that the participants who mentioned both these extreme forms of VAW in Phase 1 were from Haryana where skewed sex ratios and emanate from a culture of socially sanctioned gender-discriminatory customs. The participants who talked about CSA were all located in large metropolitan cities where it could be assumed that there is greater awareness of the issue.

The complexity and breadth of people's understanding of VAW was vividly reflected in the varying kinds of experiences participants listed. 33 year-old Anindita[8], who works as a content writer in Kolkata, says,

> *"Violence against women is a very broad umbrella, I think. It ranges from hurling abuses to beating and all kinds of obnoxious acts that you can do to disrespect a woman...anything that harms the safety of the woman, harms the respect of the woman, launches an attack on the woman, I think that is violence."*

Her friend and make-up artist 30 year-old Sakshi, also from Kolkata but currently a resident of Mumbai, agrees and adds,

> *"I do consider violence against women to be a very broad, what do you call it, broad subject. Basically whenever a woman is violated, I think that is violence. It doesn't have to be physical, it can be mental, it can be psychological, it can be our social pressure, anything. So I have kind of witnessed all of these."*

Using abusive language too qualifies as violence. 34 year-old Sabeeha from Kolkata shares one such incident where she and a female co-passenger felt violated due to the foul language used by male co-passengers; she describes the incident as follows:

> *"So, some boys... that is, very young... not very old... a couple of them within 17-18 years of age- something like that. So, they were drunk... that is, they were on their way back from a party probably- this was in the afternoon. So, the seats at the far end, right, where two people each can sit? So, they went and sat in those seats and they were talking very loudly and hurling abuses. So, a girl got on and sat there, and I was in the seat that's close to the driver. So, I had a problem with that. Perhaps because they were abusing so much in a public place or because they were talking so loudly- I was feeling disturbed. So, for a while it went on like that, then suddenly... I was feeling very irritated, so I shouted very loudly. First, I told the conductor (stutters) "why do you let such boys sit... get on the bus? Because this is a public place, and everybody wants to travel peacefully, right?" So, no one said anything at that time, so I directly said to the boys-"what is your problem? Why are you speaking so loudly (stutters)? Can't you talk without hurling abuses? And all your abuses are directed at girls." I mean, we... we know that all our abuses... all of them have to do with women's bodies."*

[8] Names of all research participants in this report are pseudonyms following standard research practice to protect participants' identities and privacy.

The range of VAW that participants talked about also included ideas of consent as illustrated by 29 year-old Debjyoti from Kolkata,

> *"I feel anything that is being done without her consent- it can be verbal, it can be physical, it can be mental, it can be of any sort that is being done without her consent- is violence. And most of the time I think, the main problem that we face here is people don't know the exact meaning of consent and when they should say yes and when they should say no. You know, because that knowledge is not there even mostly amongst you know girls, if I am talking about the whole India."*

These brief excerpts demonstrate the complexity and nuance that participants themselves brought to the conversations on VAW and bystander intervention; these were significant in informing our analyses of the data.

3.3. Sites of violence

The majority of our participants encountered violence in two key sites, namely the family and public transport. We undertake an in-depth analysis of how the family becomes a critical locus of most cases of VAW later in the report. With regard to public transport, a significant number talked about facing violence of different forms while commuting.

29 year-old Uma from Hyderbad says taking a public bus was the first time she was confronted with sexual harassment.

> *"So, I think for me that was the first brush with violence in public spaces because, and then in the buses for me, for us it was extensive. And like men would, we had uniforms for our eleventh and twelfth grade school which is not very common in Hyderabad. So, people would come and ask, like you know, "which school, which college" or whatever, all these things. But men, a lot of men would take video, videos of you know [of] our cleavage, when we are either sitting and then they are standing or they'll try to grope us. So that happened a lot during that time. Yeah, so that's where you get groped the most. And obviously you won't dare to go back towards the men's side and sit, right (nervous and matter-of-factly laughter). So, and during peak hours it's always full, so the seats are full and you're always standing and you know, everybody is standing. So, so the biggest advantage with these gropers was, you know, even if we would turn back and shout at them, they'd be like, "but we didn't do anything. They hit a brake and we just fell or where else would I put my hand" you know, all these, they'll, they'll gaslight you, you know, and say, "we didn't do anything, why are you overreacting if you're so precious you know, just go by car, take an auto."*

Numerous accounts that participants shared with us highlighted how perpetrators of sexual violence used the convenience of overcrowding to molest women and get away with it. Female participants told us that, when they were sexually harassed in a crowded bus or train, they were often faced with the reality of being unable to confront the perpetrator as they were at a loss to identify who it was- exemplified in the account of 25 year-old Bhama from Hyderabad:

"When I was like 22...I was in a movie theatre. I went with my friends...We had gone there to watch, if am not wrong Bahubali or something, some big movie like that .... during the break, I went to buy popcorn or something. And then, uh, since it was all very crowded, and there were no really boys, girls separate, women just go to buy popcorn and there were men in front of you and behind you, everywhere. And I just went with my boyfriend there and he went to get something else. So I went to get popcorn. And I felt something really like, you know someone trying to I mean you know when people are pushing you ... But you also know when it feels against your hip, right. Like from behind. So I know that this person had a hard-on and he was trying to like you know, trying to like, push me and then I even tried to look back and I couldn't because it was that crowded. And I did not want to slap a wrong person obviously."

For Anindita from Kolkata the bus was where she first grappled with sexual harassment.

"I had my first brush with this kind of molestation cases in the bus when I was, when I used to, when I was in the first year of my college, I used to get confused about the thing because the bus used to be very crowded; so I was confused whether the person is intentionally touching me or because of the crowded thing he is getting closer to me. Another point is that most of the people who had done these things to me were not young guys; but middle-aged people, like uncles and all."

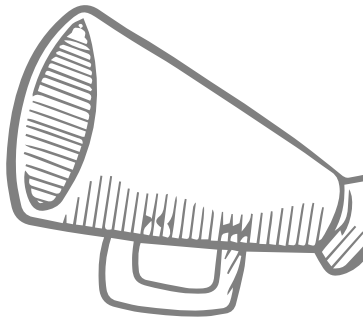
Along with trains and buses, women's frequent use of taxis these days render those another viable site for VAW. 31 year-old Tharini from Kolkata talked to us about how she and her friends barely managed to avoid a potentially dangerous situation during a taxi ride.

"So, we four booked the cab and we noticed that he was taking us in the wrong lane (galli)...I told him 2-3 times, that "bhaiya, this is the wrong way" so then he said no no, we will take you correctly only. Then we thought he was taking us through an entirely wrong way...there was one boy who was younger than all of us. His age was 20 and all of us were 31 at that time. So, he was the youngest... so then, when we kept saying that you are taking us the wrong way, so then what happened was...so before that only he had turned off his connection, saying that this is my last trip so the money would be mine. So we said, fine, because not that we have any problem... so then he showed that he had cancelled his ride and he took us on the trip. So then okay. Then after that, just when we began screaming and shouting in the car, then he turned the car at such a dangerous speed...we got really scared that where is he taking us? This we knew that we are 4 people so he wouldn't take us anywhere...but we weren't able to understand the place as well. So then we tried to open the doors while we sat inside, he slowed the speed a little and he turned back to say that you are doing too much you don't know that this is my area this that...by this time we had begun to get down from the car...so after getting down, 1097 maybe...there is a number when the cab is doing something so the number directly goes to lal bazaar here. where the headquarter is the number goes there directly. So that number, I had tried before also when one of the taxi's wasn't taking a passenger that's why. So, I dialed that number. The number did get connected to lall bazaar and we already had the details because we were the ones who had taken the cab So, we told them that we wanted to go to Kaalighat but he took a wrong way, so why he did that we could not understand and his behaviour was also very weird."

These excerpts speak of the endemic and acute presence of gender-based violence in women's lives across spaces While the excerpts presented here mostly describe women's experiences of violence in public transport, our participants also described numerous instances of VAW in the home– these are described in section 3.8 which deals explicitly with VAW in the family.

3.4. Modes of intervention (The how)

From an active bystander perspective intervention strategies and methods were influenced by multiple factors such as gender, age, socio-economic standing, gender rights awareness etc. Participants (both cis male and cis female) who shared experiences of interventing described varied methods of helping survivors. These can be broadly categorised as modes of immediate intervention and methods of long(er)-term redressal.



The modes of immediate intervention include:

- Speaking up
- Exchanging positions with the survivor
- Sharing contact details
- Assisting the survivor with medical help
- Escorting the survivor safely home
- Resorting to violence or the use of patriarchal scripts

Longer-term redressal comprised primarily two methods:community mobilisation and building institutional redressal mechanisms. The subsequent subsections present, first, the modes of immediate intervention followed by the long(er)-ter redressal strategies.

3.4.1. Speaking up

Often something as seemingly simple as standing up for someone and perhaps reprimanding the perpetrator had the desired impact in terms of stopping an incident of VAW. 31 year-old Rakesh from Kolkata says,

> *"I have a few friends who don't identify as either men or women. I remember, we were in Delhi then... we were working in Delhi. We had gone for some work. So, I have three friends- I'll take their names- Sid, Riju and Debu. They don't fit themselves into either box of male or female. So, we were going around in Delhi and in the metro, there was a similar (case of) harassment... some people were taunting them. So, at first, we were 'enjoying' it, because they too were 'enjoying'... "look, guys from Haryana are hollering at us." But after a point they felt- this is not right. So, we had protested. They said, "let's not get into this, this is not our city. We're also fewer in number than them." But they said, "no, the water's gone over our head (idiom; literally, things have got out of hand), we have to get into it now." They said, "we have to protest now." And we, who were fewer in number and from a different city... we protested. And, when we raised our voice, some people in the metro- both men and women- supported us quite a bit, saying, "whatever's happening... whatever you want to do, get out of the metro and do it." So, the people... the people who were being nasty... they turned them out of the metro. Such an incident occurred too... something positive."*

Anindita recounts the time a group of women had helped her and her friends deal with a man who used to wait for them, masturbating, at the same spot:

> *"So at one time like I was like in the eleventh standard and all and we used to take, while coming back from college, we used to walk down the metro subway. So every day we used to see a man who, who will be waiting for us over there and the moment we used to come before him, he started shagging. He used to start shagging okay, and we were young and we couldn't say anything and we were like, you know, we were barely 18 and all, so we didn't have the courage to, honestly we didn't have that courage to go up to the guy and do, like say something and all. But it kept on happening for like a week, one month actually. Then, one day what happened, a few women were also coming down with us, we didn't know them, they were coming down with us and they saw him. And then like, they really like you know they went ahead and they went forward and rebuked him and all. After that the guy never came to the metro station."*

Sometimes speaking up need not entail articulating but might just comprise a decisive action. 32 year-old lawyer Parizaad from Mumbai recounted how she and her friend once attempted to intervene in a case of verbal abuse that was happening between a couple. Since they were very young (just out of school she recalls) and unsure of how they could help, they decided to stand as close to the couple as possible in the hopes of making the man conscious of his actions and thereby make him back off.

26 year-old transgender photographer Zeenat from Mumbai shared this memorable experience when female co-passengers in the ladies compartment of a local train came together and formed a circle around her to prevent the police from taking her away, as she describes below:

> *"... at that time, the train was made to stop at Jogeshwari...the constable came to pick me up...8-9 women made a wall and kept me behind and said if you want to take her, call a ladies constable... if you want to take her, call a ladies constable...so there was a press person, a lawyer and 2 were in uniform working in some company job... they got down from the train, came with me to the chowki and argued for me."*

21 year-old Roopmala from Delhi recounted an incident from nearly three years ago when she was helped by an uncle who was passing by while she was confronting a group of boys who were harassing her by passing various comments.

> *"An uncle came, who enquired about what was happening, then one of the boys responded, "nothing uncle, sister had a slight misconception." Then the uncle asked me what was the matter, I explained, "they were commenting at me so I am reacting." Then the uncle was trying to make those boys understand that it was wrong on their part and then they turned to me said, "sister just leave, we are sorry!"*

3.4.2. Exchanging seats with survivors

28 year-old Ankit from Kolkata talked about how, on witnessing a girl being molested by the driver of a shared auto, he exchanged seats with her so as to immediately address the problem while ensuring that he did not draw attention towards what was happening. The importance of dealing with a

situation of VAW in a non-intrusive manner which did not draw unnecessary attention was important, particularly from the perspective of the survivor. This is even more critical when one contrasts this with the response of a female bystander to a similar scenario which will be discussed a little later (p. 32) in this document:

> *"I could notice that the driver was using his elbow to nudge/ touch the girl's breasts on the side.... five minutes into the journey, I asked the auto driver to stop, even though my destination hadn't come, I got down from my seat and asked the lady in front to take my rear seat and she happily agreed. The auto driver gave me a dirty look as if he could beat me up."*

3.4.3. Giving one's mobile number to connect later

The intervenor's strategy of sharing their phone number with the person facing violence is used particularly in cases of intimate partner violence wherein the woman might need time to reflect on her next steps.

On witnessing a couple fighting aggressively in a mall, 25 year-old doctor from Hyderabad, Zainab, tried intervening only to be angrily told by the man to "stay away from her it is our personal matter... she is my wife. Although I told that woman "I can give you my cell number." I was searching for a paper in my bag so that I could sneak it in." However, she was unable to eventually give the paper as the mall authorities were fervently trying to get the couple off the premises. We found that this constituted a common type of response in the wake of VAW incidents in privately owned spaces such as malls. Their immediate and, often, only reaction was to ensure that the people involved were physically removed from the space. 40 year-old research scientist Sharad from Kolkata narrated something similar when he witnessed an incident of VAW in an airport. The officials present at the scene were more keen in moving the couple along rather than putting an end to the violence.

3.4.4. Taking the survivor for medical help

43 year-old housewife Soumya from Hyderabad says,

> *"A couple of years ago my maid's husband hit her so bad....he hit her with a sickle, that too so her hand kind of got cut and she was bleeding terribly and she fainted also and she fell. Her daughter came running to me..I went down and I saw that the lady was bleeding crazily and the first thing I could think of was that I told that man to back off, that is what I did. After that I ran to Apollo, because it is just next door to our house. And I told them that they need to take that person in."*

While some interventions do not take place as the violent incident occurs, they take place soon after. Even though taking someone for medical help seems like an uncontroversial thing to do, in the context of VAW it has the effect of an intervention because it calls attention to the very occurrence and infliction of VAW. The perpetrator can no longer thus remain sanguine that their actions have gone unnoticed beyond the immediate context in which the violence occurs.

3.4.5. Physically escorting someone home safely

19 year-old Raj from Hyderabad talked about the time he helped a young girl who was being harassed by a group of drunk men.

> *"It was at midnight, around 11pm, I was walking down the streets of my lane- nearby to home, so there was a group of people, drunk, jerks. There was a girl alone there- it was a dark and silent place. I saw her [passing] by and I told her, "if you don't mind I can drop you to your home, there are some people there." She hesitated by looking at me first, then I gave her assurance that it's no problem I will be there, I can drop you off till your home..They stopped teasing her when I dropped her till her home and while coming back I don't know how...I got beaten up by those people."*

In this case, Raj himself faced repercussions as a result of intervening and this is often cited, in fact, as a reason not to intervene in incidents of VAW.

3.4.6. Resorting to violence or employing patriarchal gender scripts

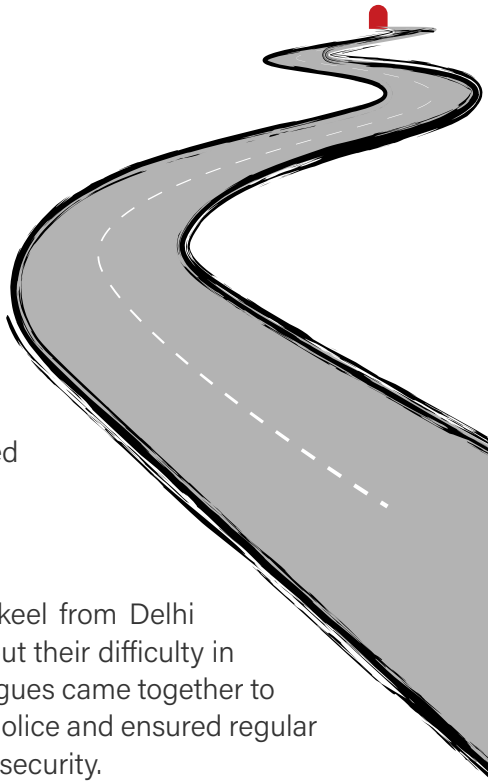
A common strategy that was employed by both men and women, was to resort to patriarchal scripts as a means to shame the perpetrator of violence in public view, especially in cases of sexual harassment.

Patriarchal gender scripts refer to commonly heard statements that reflect patriarchal norms. Most often these tend to invoke ideas of family honour being associated with women's chastity and modesty. Their use seeks to shame men- who are perpetrating violence or sexual harassment- by referring to their female kin to ask how they would feel if she were to be harassed in a similar manner. In doing so the statement exhorts men to remember that their own family name is tied up with their female kin's modesty.

For example, 24 year-old Farooq narrated to us the almost filmy ways in which he helped women who were being harassed. Despite his good intentions, the underlying idea of him perhaps thinking of himself as a knight in shining armour rescuing a distressed lady could not be overlooked.

Male bystanders resorted to violence themselves as a direct way of intervening in incidents of violence. Sakshi shared with us the time a male co-passenger stood up for her and her friends. However, he himself used violence to end the assault. She says,

> *"Travelling with a couple of friends, all females... we were just standing and some guy came and started touching all of us at the same time. So I couldn't actually believe the audacity, so I just pulled his collar and said, "What is happening? And stuff like that." Just confronted him. And as usual everyone started staring as if some show was going on but a guy just, I don't know, we didn't know this person. He got up from his seat and came and punched him in the face and then he turned around to the public and said, "You can see what's going on for the last five minutes. You're not doing anything; why are you even here?" So he asked the public this and then suddenly everyone started taking part and the bus conductor, you know, pulled the guy by the collar and threw him out of the bus."*



While this section presented a brief overview of the modes of immediate intervention employed by the study participants, some also mentioned methods adopted as more long-term redressal mechanisms.

3.4.7. Long-term strategies: Community mobilisation

A long-term intervention strategy shared by 30 year-old teacher Shakeel from Delhi involved community mobilisation. On being told by his girl students about their difficulty in getting to school owing to sexual harassment, he and some of his colleagues came together to patrol the streets around peak hours. They also roped in the help of the police and ensured regular patrolling. He says that it helped the girls get to school with a feeling of security.

> *"We were a team of two-three teachers who made a list of these spots, and we patrolled those spots. We also got in touch with the local police station and told them, "our girls are facing this issue. Some rowdy, drunk, boys are harassing them." The police cooperated with us a lot and increased the patrolling in those areas. We also helped the police for some time and slowly this issue was resolved. The police patrolled in the morning and in the afternoon in those exact spots and now those boys are hardly there. Now the girls go to school smoothly, the atmosphere of the place has become safer."*

3.4.8. Long-term strategies: Building institutional mechanisms

Some participants also walked us through procedures institutionalised in their office or educational spaces as long term mechanisms in dealing with sexual harassment and abuse. 28 year-old Onil shared with us the cumbersome process his colleagues and he went through to set up a sexual harassment cell in his previous workspace. When a female colleague of his narrated the harrowing sexual experience she had with one of the senior management members it sparked an important conversation around workplace harassment, the guidelines of the Vishaka Judgement and the urgency for setting up a POSH (Prevention of Sexual Harassment at the Workplace) committee. He also shared how the incident was particularly disturbing for some of them as it demonstrated the empty rhetoric of those involved in organisations that talk about making the world a better place through their work but were themselves active proponents of unacceptable abusive behaviour.

> *"And when this thing happened I just approached my senior management- I didn't know who was involved- I just said there is some problem in the organisation and we need to find out..So they ignored me for a few days, they were not taking it seriously. I said this is a serious issue, I don't want to work in this toxic environment if you are not doing anything about this..and then they agreed. I am not comfortable that we are talking about gender equality and women empowerment but the people of that very organisation have to face all this. I am not comfortable I might have to leave this organisation. Then they said, "whatever it is we will look into the matter." The only thing they said is, "just because you are complaining means we can't help. The girl has to come forward and she has to complain."*

"I said the problem is not that everybody made mistakes but you took so many days to even accept that he made a mistake and you were just mentally harassing that girl that there is no proof and you knew that this has happened because of that guy. And when I saw that report, signed by both the parties I resigned, I said I don't want to work here anymore."

This section illustrates that intervening in VAW takes two clear forms– either to end the VAW immediately or build longer-term redressal mechanisms. In reality, of course, these two distinct types are not mutually exclusive; if anything, the excerpts that are presented in this report clearly tell us that both immediate and long-term redressal go hand-in-hand. We will discuss this in greater detail in the concluding section on 'Reflections.'

3.5. Female and male bystanders: Differences in approaches

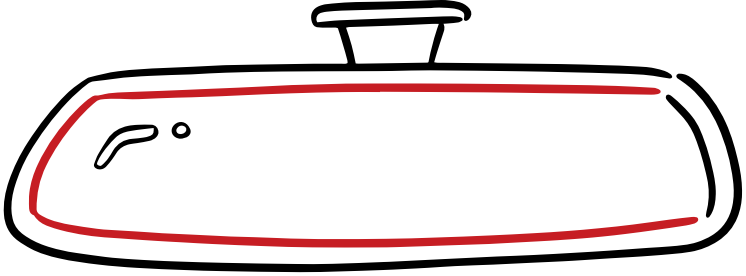
There is also an interesting difference in the way men and women responded and intervened. Most men we spoke to talked about the perils of being an unrelated stranger while intervening for women unknown to them. Other passive bystanders questioned, often aggressively, the intervening man's right to speak up for a girl who was clearly not related to him.

For example, Rakesh from Kolkata told us about this one time when he tried to speak up against molestation happening in a local train. However, along with hostile co-passengers even the Railway Police asked him what business he had intervening and how the survivor was related to him.

"A lot of people jumped on me saying "why are you getting into this? Who is she to you? Why are you meddling? Stay away. You're jealous because you're not getting it"... A lot of rubbish...a lot of things were said. So, the train stopped at a station, they got down too, and so did the girl. The girl was thinking of getting hold of someone and telling them, "these people... all these boys... men they were behaving inappropriately with me." She was about to speak, and the police arrived there luckily. I told the police (officer), "sir, please look into this, the girl was going through something bad, they were the ones doing it, I protested so they jumped on me." The 'scene' had now turned towards me. The police said, "I'd say to you the same thing as everybody else. Why are you meddling in this? Go wherever you were going. It was the girl's job to come to me first. The girl isn't saying anything. The girl isn't coming to the police. Nor is she screaming out. So, why are you getting into this? Is there something between the two of you?" So, things got a little out of hand."

Some men also cited concerns over their own safety as an important factor. For example, 38 year-old Prasad who is an architect based in Bombay witnessed a brutal instance of DV in the backseat of Mumbai's ubiquitous black and yellow taxi. What was even more alarming to him was

Most men we spoke to talked about the perils of being an unrelated stranger while intervening for women unknown to them.



the absolute lack of effort on the part of the taxi driver to stop the violence. On being asked why he didn't do anything, the taxi driver told him that he feared he might be hit like the girl if he dared speak up.[9] This fear is not misplaced considering how men suffering physical harm, sometimes leading to fatalities, is a harsh reality. The tragic murder of Keenan Santos and Reuben Fernandez in 2011 in Mumbai for speaking up against a group of men molesting a few of their female friends at a party is a bitter reminder.

This reality motivated some male bystanders to assume the facade of kinship or romantic relationships with the survivor to gain credibility to intervene, along with ensuring that this kept the survivor and themselves safe from further repercussions.

Farooq adopted the role of a girl's boyfriend when he saw her being harassed by a group of drunk boys on new year's eve. He points out that though the boys looked slightly unconvinced they didn't really question him and stopped following them after half-an-hour.

> *"I went there. Those boys were all seated there... Then, after going there I removed boys. After removing those boys...That girl, the girl's face was turned down, I noticed carefully. Her face was turned down, I told her, "You are sitting here and I've been looking for you all over. Let's go from here!" I directly... this was my first reaction...I said, "why are you seated here? I've been looking for you all over. Let's go, hurry up!" Then, one man among them raises his voice, "hey..."and pushes me. While pushing me, he says, "Hey, we've been standing here for so long, have been trying to talk for so long, and you come here and do this?" Then I, I used foul language, I abused him in bad language and said, "I'll rip you apart right here, okay?" She's my girlfriend. And you're disturbing my girlfriend? Should I go and complain to the officer?"*

Some men described the difficulty of assisting survivors who were not vocal about what was happening to them. A few highlighted how the situation turned messy when, despite their intervention, some women failed to acknowledge abuse had happened.

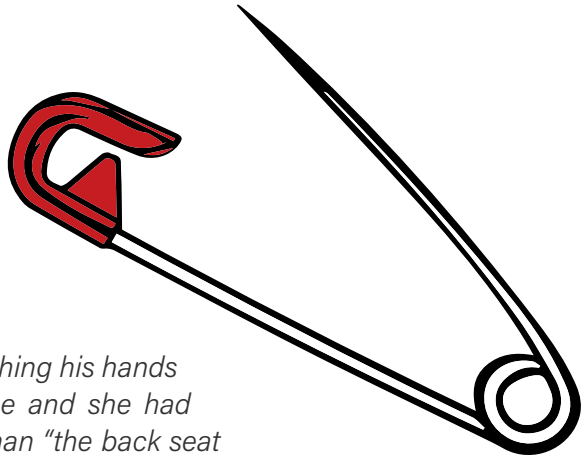
29 year-old Umang from Kolkata says,

> *"If that girl doesn't speak up, if she doesn't have the knowledge that a man is raising his voice then she should speak up too, then what happens is that the man gets into a fix. That's why sometimes one has to step back. So, these things... they create a lot of problems."*

Ankit, who we have discussed above, told us how such an experience had prompted him to think of ways to quietly deal with a VAW situation without bringing attention to the survivor- hence the rationale for his strategy. This is in contrast with a similar scenario in which a female bystander intervened a lot more overtly.

On witnessing a girl being harassed by her male co-passenger in a shared auto 22 year-old Aruna from Kolkata directly confronted the perpetrator.

[9] Raj from Hyderabad, who is mentioned earlier in this document, also talked about how he was beaten up by drunk men for helping a girl who was being harassed by them.



"I could see everything, I could literally see the man brushing his hands against the lady's thigh and she had a lot of baggage and she had completely frozen with fear. So very politely I told the man "the back seat is empty, please go and sit at the back." He refused point-blank saying "I don't want to sit at the back." I directly told that man, "why do you want to sit in the front- so that you can harass this lady?" He stared at me as if he had seen a ghost and autowallah gave me a similar stare, I continued saying "I can clearly see what you are doing. You are harassing her, you are actually molesting her." He got so embarrassed that he got off the auto, paid and left."

In terms of women themselves dealing with sexual violence in public transport they talked about using everyday objects such as safety pins as armour. Sakshi from Kolkata says,

"Like I used to go to school and I used to come back from school or college and stuff and I used to see that every single day, someone is either touching me or someone is either touching some other woman in the bus. So I actually started carrying a safety-pin; so that if someone comes too near, I will just push that person."

Some also talked about using objects such as umbrellas, jackets or backpacks. 32 year-old lawyer Parizaad from Mumbai says:

"I used to board the train from Dadar station, which is this extremely crowded station. And it's a very big station. And it can be a little daunting if you've not taken public transport before. I was constantly dodging people, so I used to keep my umbrella out because it was during a very rainy season that college had started, June-July. I used to use that umbrella to dodge men from walking into me, and besides I was wearing sleeveless clothes, which we all wanted to wear to college. I used to wear a jacket, and I used to kind of take off the jacket when we were approaching college. So clearly I was uncomfortable, but I was not going to let that discomfort come in the way of what I really looked forward to. I was using all these mechanisms to make myself feel more comfortable."

For Bhama from Hyderabad backpacks came in handy while taking public transportation or moving on roads.

" If I walk in public spaces I just put my backpack in the front and I walk."

Women travellers also demonstrated camaraderie with other female co-passengers by strategically and quietly asking survivors to move forward or aside without bringing attention to themselves. ***"I don't think we were the kind who kept quiet a lot; we would talk back but you know sometimes the women would sort of try and protect us like they would come at the back and push us to more of the women's side to sort of thing but I think that happened very rarely,"*** says 29 year-old Uma from Hyderabad. Avoidance of potentially dangerous situations or locations is a common survival strategy employed by women while travelling.

3.6. Understanding female silence

Gender theorists and feminists have referred to the 'culture of silence' that determines survival response in cases of VAW. This is reflected in general reluctance on the part of women to vocally protest or speak up, to engage with the legal or criminal justice system and to seek help from natal family members or friends. The responses stem from a variety of factors including but not limited to- fear of being blamed or stigmatised, having one's mobility curtailed or facing aggravated assault or aggression in the wake of confrontation.

Numerous participants who had experiences of intervention expressed their exasperation at the silence of many survivors of abuse, molestation or any other form of sexual violence. They decried women's silence in this regard as unhelpful to women's own need for safety and felt that calling attention to the violence would be the first step in ensuring that the violence would end. 29 year-old Umang from Kolkata says:

> *"I used to always see a man... a particular man who took an auto... used to sit in an auto, if any girl sat next to or in front, then his hand... I mean he used to reach out in a peculiar way. So, one day I had made my mind that if something happens, I'll hit him, whatever happens- okay? So, I saw that man, he was standing ahead of me. I asked him to sit. He sat and a woman sat in front of him. So, I had turned on the camera on my mobile to record the incident discreetly and hit him after getting down. So, suddenly what happened was... he was doing that 'behaviour.' I thought that if the woman speaks up once or feels uncomfortable, then I would raise my voice. I was thinking she's not feeling uncomfortable so by the time I could ask, "you... are you feeling uneasy..." something like that... she got down, okay? So that couldn't happen. So, I couldn't do anything at the time because she didn't raise her voice. So... that is one incident."*

On probing further, through the course of our interviews, we explored how a woman's 'silence' was usually the result of years and decades of systematic gender socialisation, gradual obliteration of self-worth and confidence while also being forced to carry the cumulative burden of shame, stigma and guilt on her body. Gender theorists have repeatedly highlighted the relevance of investigating 'the culture of silence' as they call it to better comprehend why women find it difficult to speak up or acknowledge abuse both within or outside their homes. A significant portion of that fear stems from the culture of victim-blaming that women are routinely subjected to rendering it nearly impossible for them to articulate their experiences.

28 year-old Sravani from Kolkata says,

> *"...my point and my take on violence is a little different, was a little different because I said that it keeps a mark with you. Right? even if it doesn't have a mark on your body it can have a mark on your soul and it shapes the way you grow up; it shapes the way you start believing in things and it shapes the way you look at the world...not an incident but several incidents that happened since the day I was born. since the day I started understanding what is happening."*

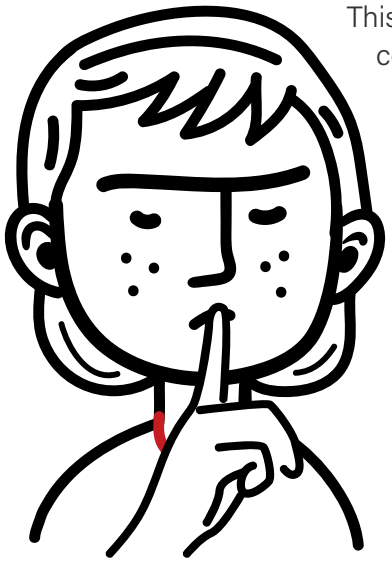
A few of our participants did acknowledge the critical role played by structural and social conditioning in influencing female behaviour and 'choices'. Some of the male participants from Phase 1 of our study, where the pool of participants were drawn from semi urban or rural spaces, pointed out how girls were taught from childhood to be submissive and not challenge their surroundings, at least not overtly.

Nazar from Haryana observes,

> *"As of now, where we're from, that is not how the situation is. If a girl... even if she is called to panchayat and is asked, and gets support too... but so far as the question of a girl coming forward to speak is concerned... so, that is (met with) a little (resistance). This may be people's ignorance... but they believe, "if a girl comes up to speak in front of us then our honour will diminish. And a girl should... that is, it is better to limit the girl to her home, she shouldn't come out to speak in the panchayat." So, in this way... to an extent, a climate of ignorance exists at the moment...(The response) of many was- "what will we get out of educating girls? Since there are very few jobs at present, and if they don't get jobs... and these girls need to cook for their family and look after their children, so what is the point in wasting money on them?"*

Vinay from Haryana also refers to the repeated reiteration that leads to social conditioning:

> *"Thirty percent girls don't raise their voices themselves. Let's say that we raise them in such a way that we never tell them to raise their voice. We tell them-"never tell this to anybody". That's why when some incident happens, they recall- "don't do this, don't do that." So, we (don't teach them) to resist this and we raise them to feel (go through?) all this... and our society is becoming such these days that it has begun to depict this as natural. That this is natural, this is alright, harassment keeps happening in buses, in a city like Delhi these cases keep coming up...So, whether it be Delhi or any other city- a woman is a woman, wherever she may live. So, there I felt that yes, to an extent, girls are also responsible that they don't raise their voice. Let's say that we are unable to give them an upbringing- our society is unable to give them that upbringing- that they raise their voices."*



This recognition, apparent in Vinay's narrative, that women remain silent due to social conditioning is important. It is equally vital that participants like Vinay and Umang whose voices are represented here also recognise that that social conditioning means that girls need to be socialised differently. With regard to Umang's notion that girls are responsible for not raising their voices, the responsibility for that will need to be shifted to society– families and communities– so that girls and women can actually raise their voices and call out VAW effectively.

Some women also spoke about the sheer regularity of the incidents of harassment being an important reason for them not to act or respond.

30 year-old Sharanya from Kolkata recalls an intervention story wherein she helped a girl who was being molested by exchanging positions with her. When Sharanya questioned her on her evident reluctance to speak up she cited the almost daily occurrence of such incidents as a significant deterrent.

"Alright, so a guy was standing there and he was touching a girl inappropriately. So, I saw and I told the girl, "come to this side". Then the girl... the girl did come. (stutters) And I shifted to where she was, so the guy tried to grope me too. So, I said, "you were enjoying doing it to her... what are you doing? I'm not the kind you can mess with". So... then the guy's friends there... all of them were laughing... they were laughing about something, and that girl said to me, "don't make a fuss, there's no need." So, I said to her, "you're the one who should've raised her voice. You should have said –what are you doing? Don't do it." So, she told me, "this is an everyday affair. Don't take the trouble... we mustn't." So, this in itself is an important fact that girls... some girls themselves... they don't want to get into a hassle. I mean, they put up with it silently, thinking – come on, it's alright. This is a regular affair."

This silence also extends to women not being able to speak up within their homes and families about the abuse they face both within and outside their homes. Most women we spoke to told us how they could never report to their families incidents of violence or abuse that happened to them as the usual response of parents and older relatives would be to immediately curb their freedom and restrict their mobility. While institutional mechanisms and legal frameworks exist for survivors the vast majority of women do not avail these services and often end up seeking help from immediate family members, if at all.

Even within the family, most female participants showed immense hesitation to talk to their family members due to the fear of inviting further restrictions on their mobility. Shakeel told us that most of the girls in his school never talked to their family members about their experiences of eve teasing as they were worried, they would be stopped from coming for tuitions altogether. Both Onil and Ravi said that their female friends didn't talk to their families about the consistent sexual harassment they faced in their workplaces for fear that they would be forced to give up their jobs. "She did not try and do that because she knew how her parents would react. She was also afraid that her liberty would get destroyed. Like if she wanted to go for a walk, she would have to take her brother along," says Raj. Restrictions on mobility come with notions of protection as much as preserving and maintaining honour. Many parents think keeping their daughters at home would ensure their safety. There is also the perennial fear of escalation wherein parents imagine a worse off scenario where their daughter would be caught in.

Victim blaming was another powerful deterrent against women speaking up. 25 year-old Bhama recalls the time she and a group of her friends (girls and boys) were blamed by a group of female bystanders for the sexual harassment her friend had to endure.

Even within the family, most female participants showed immense hesitation to talk to their family members due to the fear of inviting further restrictions on their mobility.

"..we had to control my friend. Like, we just took her to the nearby bus stop and we sat her down there and got some water for her and she was just crying...couple of ladies who was standing by and the men who were standing there in the bus stop they asked us, 'what happened' and all that...we told them that one guy misbehaved with her and ran away. And then they, the ladies were standing there, they were all like you shouldn't come alone now. You know. That too with a bunch of guys. That time I was in like, I was 18 years old. Like I just started my CA, it was after Inter basically...so they were like you people are really young, you shouldn't come out with the guys and none of them were asking about the guy who ran away. Or you know what he was, whether there were was cameras where it could capture. Nothing was, we were just blamed basically. And yeah, the guys were also scolded (chuckles a bit), that why did you come out with a girl and all that. We just were really embarrassed because we just had to go away and to watch the movie. We went home, and my friend she told that she did not want to tell it to her parents because again they would not allow her to go out."

Even when women are aware of the recourse to legal remedies, actually using these has been shown to be a fraught process in at least four different ways. The first is the sheer difficulty of getting any part of the legal or violence prevention system to acknowledge VAW. This is exemplified in Anita's description of an incident of VAW that occured right outside a police station in Kolkata in spite of which the policeman manning the entrance to the station chose to look the other way. His considered obliviousness to the incident continued even in the face of Anita and friends calling attention to the incident. The second issue that plagues survivors' or intervenor's efforts at legal recourse is the fact that the system questions their interests; this itself takes two forms. In the case of men they are first questioned about their relationships to the women to whose aid they come as has already been described above as in Rakesh's case.

The second part of this is how they may be harassed even beyond this; this is exemplified in Chaman's description of how, when he intervened in instances of VAW in his hometown of Gaya, the police systematically filed charges against him instead. The third issue pertains to the sheer difficulty of women being able to exit from violent situations within families- whether natal or conjugal- resulting from their relative lack of economic resources. Lastly, and most importantly, is the issue of social stigma which always attaches to women even though they face and survive violence as opposed to men who are- most often- the perpetrators of violence. This last statement received almost unequivocal support from all the research participants including men, all of whom recognised and acknowledged that their reputations would remain unscathed in instances of violence or harassment.

Yet, it is important to state here in no uncertain terms that though women are products of larger processes of gendering, they are not mere hapless 'survivors' but complex beings subverting patriarchal power in innovative and covert ways. This was perhaps best illustrated in a group interview we had with five women largely associated with the educational sector either as teachers or students in the NCR. Our conversations with them were telling of the complicated maneuverings that marked women's lives. All of them shared a passion for women's rights and issues and were militantly aware of how social scrutiny and structuring defined their everyday existence while repeatedly reiterating the necessity to break out of these prescriptive gender moulds.

In concluding this section, it is important to note that women's silences emanate from their earlier social interactions which are situated in the family. We found that the word 'family' functioned as a veil shrouding many forms of violence from view, often not just passively effacing violence but actively suppressing many forms of violence or even legitimising them under the garb of protecting women. This discussion of how the social idea of 'family' is implicated in the production of VAW, therefore, demands its own distinct space in the next subsection.

3.6. Family and VAW

Our interviews vitally brought to the fore how the locus of the family was integral to normalising gender tropes and patriarchal practices. It taught women the fundamentals of how to 'behave' and conduct in society binding them within a web of traditionally sanctioned customs. The unwritten law that a woman's body is the site of family and community honour is slowly and meticulously established within the microcosm of the family. Yet, modalities (both state and civil society interventions) currently in place to challenge gender inequality in society do little to question this foundational unit of gender discriminiation and oppression.

The myth of the big happy functional family is uncritically celebrated in Indian society and popular culture. Sociologists such as Patricia Uberoi and scholars such as Shohini Ghosh who work on the role of media in influencing cultural norms have demonstrated how mediums such as cinema have had a great role to play in the perpetration of this myth. The 1990s was a crucial period wherein a burgeoning middle class was being reinvented in tandem with the imaginations and aspirations of neo liberal India. 1994 was declared as the year of the family by the UN while Bollywood super hits like *Hum Aapke Hain Kaun* and *Hum Saath Saath Hain* unabashedly paid ode to the Indian joint family conveniently glossing over the deep fissures that sustained this unequal institution.[10]

Through the course of our conversation with the participants, we found that the family is seldom a site of strength as it almost inevitably functioned as a unit that valorised and cemented gendering while also encouraging and perpetuating shaming. A well researched and documented fact vis-à-vis VAW is that most perpetrators of violence are usually intimately connected with the survivor. Our study reinforced this observation.

The family is also where numerous female participants encountered sexual violence for the first time and were often on the receiving end of consistent abuse meted out by family members or partners. Forms of violence included Child Sexual Abuse (CSA), Domestic Violence (DV), Marital Rape and

A well researched and documented fact vis-à-vis VAW is that most perpetrators of violence are usually intimately connected with the survivor. Our study reinforced this aspect.

[10] *Ghosh, S. (2000). Hum Aapke Hain Kaun...!: Pluralizing Pleasures of Viewership. Social Scientist, 28(3/4), 83-90*

brutal gender discriminatory practices. Years of abuse left unaccounted and unaddressed trauma in its wake leading to varying kinds of debilitating mental distress. Some of them sought therapy to deal with the pain and anguish, particularly in the case of CSA survivors, as even after many years they were unable to broach the topic even with those closest to them. The fact that most perpetrators of CSA were intimately related to the survivors - brothers, uncles, cousins etc- made it almost impossible for them to confront them. Numerous of our participants talked about how it might be more difficult to intervene within the family, the private, than "outside or the public."

Some of our participants who were survivors of CSA and DV referred to unresolved rage at their own helplessness at the time of the incidents and how this pent up anger was triggered whenever they encountered abuse or sexual violence either themselves or witnessed others going through it. However, some participants also expressed deep distress even now, if and when, they faced abusive situations. Although these are intrinsically tied up with and situated in the family space, we present DV and CSA in separate subsections. This is because the sheer prevalence of references to DV in the participants' narratives suggests that it is the most immediately recognisable form of VAW for many participants and often the first that they encounter. CSA, although it was not mentioned as often, demands its own space because of the particularities it presents especially in that it refers to violence that is perpetrated on children who are usually unable to protect themselves and voice their experiences.

3.7.1. Early gender discrimination and reiteration

Gender is systematically constructed and meticulously performed every moment of our lives and thereby operates as an overarching structuring force. A powerful and disturbing incident of early gender moulding was shared by 28 year-old research scientist Avani from Kolkata. She witnessed and attempted to stop a brutal case of DV involving an 8-9 year-old girl who was being beaten up by her father for failing to look after her toddler male sibling.

"He started beating her up vigorously. I can't even explain how pathetic that was. In fact, it was not only us, it was also some other families who were there, who instantly rushed to her aid. Like, it was a spontaneous reaction on our part. We had to, like, detach him, and he was lashing out at us as well. He shoved me, and [it was as if] 'meri beti ke saath mein kuchh bhi karoonga. I can do whatever I want with my daughter.' That was his attitude even if he didn't say that explicitly until later."

Similarly, Shakeel the teacher from Delhi told us how most of his girl students told him that their parents were highly invested in their brothers' education (sending them to good private schools) while being completely indifferent to theirs.

> *"We asked them if they faced any barriers in their education from their families or society? They said that their families are not very concerned about their studies, it's alright either ways, if they study or they don't study, their mothers tell them, "quit after the 10th standard, what is the point?" they are not put in tuitions. In case they need books, that too is not given to them. As in I spoke to a number of girls and I am giving you a gist of it. So I asked one of the girls, "how many members are there at your home?" she said, "I have two brothers and I am the only sister." So I further*

asked, "where do your brothers study?" she responded, "they go to good private schools. I go to a government school." I asked about their tuition classes to which she said, "ya they have good tuitions, my parents take good care of them."

18 year-old Sweety from Delhi told us how her family, particularly her mother, always talked about the importance of ignoring and not confronting any abuse she might encounter so as to ensure she remained safe.

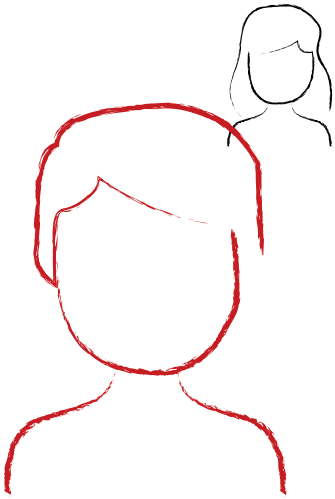
"We are not allowed to say anything...it's happened to me...if we talk something like that then mother tells that "if someone is saying anything, don't say...look down and keep walking...don't answer back..." So I tell my mother that till the time we don't answer back they will keep saying... yes if we answer back maybe they won't say something again. But my mother says not to answer back."

28 year-old Sravani from Kolkata talked to us about how early everyday lived experiences of gender discrmination by her extended family left an indelible mark on her. She shared a particularly painful memory from when she was a teenager visiting her native village on the occasion of a family puja. Amidst approximately 3000-4000 people gathered for the puja, she told us how her grandaunt and some of the other older women made it a point to keep bringing up the fact that Sravani's parents had no sons to carry forward the family's legacy.

"...one of my grandmothers.. just very casually commented that our house is already cursed because my father's generation has already started with a daughter and I am the cursed person who has cursed the entire generation...she's saying this in front of the entire family and mind you a lot of people who I don't even know...till date I can completely envision the entire thing happening in front of me I mean, it is so vivid a memory in my head...I couldn't even cry, I couldn't say anything, everybody was there, nobody said a word...that do not say such things, what happens if there is a daughter in the family...what is a big deal if you don't have a son. You wouldn't believe...these Pujas are very costly because you can understand so many people eating and huge program happening and everything.. but they used to keep these Pujas just so that the family would be blessed with a son."

She also pointed out how women with such a mentality were also raising sons in their own families leading to a generational perpetuation of patriarchal practices.

"...these are these women who are bringing up the men in the family they have men in the family these that is the ideology that they grow up with. What more can we expect? so when this thing was happening the women could not say anything in the family, the men were also bystanders and mind you there were, they might not be reluctant but they did not have a say. I don't know whether they were reluctant or they didn't have a say. I have no idea but this is what happened.. So when men are also being brought up with these ideologies embedded in their childhood, embedded in their nature, embedded in their character, they also grow up to inflict such things on their next generation, you know men also think that, oh my God! I didn't have a son. So who's going to take forward my name, who's going to to look after this, who's going to look after that? okay? So like I told you I have a family business, right?"



She also contrasts this with her own father's behaviour who didn't discriminate against her but didn't stand up for her either when older members of the family said such things. "He always treated me like you would have treated a boy you know, he pushed me to mold me, to become the best that I can become and he still does that so I don't have any complaints against him but he was also a very silent bystander.

The desire to have male progeny cuts across communities and the mental anguish it leaves on young girls, having realized this fact that they were not wanted or desired, was immense. Dr. Zainab recounts,

> *"I was four years old when my mother constantly used to say, "I should get pregnant with a son next, you are girl no, I wish you were a boy, I want a son the next time. You pray for it!" She used to make me sit on the prayer mat and pray that I should get a baby brother...and then a baby girl was born. I was very tomboy, because mother used to constantly say, "I wish you were a son", she didn't let me grow my hair that much so growing up I felt like a boy. [change in pitch] "I was like I am boy, I should be a boy to please my parents." But I was not accepted as a boy, because sexually [my gender is that] I am a girl. That is my earliest memory of being sad of being a girl and the fact that somehow boys are superior than girls and better. Then when my sister was born I still remember my mother crying, again I used to hate my sister for almost 10 years of my life I hated my sister because she is a girl and then when I was 11years, my last sister was born, my mother was about to abort her because she is a girl! [sounds horrified] I remember crying and begging her not to do it and apparently I don't know how true it is but she did sign some papers and she was supposed to go and get an abortion but last minute she backed out because of some weird reason. And she had severe postpartum depression, now looking back [I] realise for almost a year she was depressed and not taking care of my sister at all and I became the mother to my youngest sister."*

She also extensively talked about the idea of 'sin' that was drilled into her as a child- how she was made to feel conscious of her body and how she carries this conditioning to this day.

> *"... my father or my mother or making like a face, you know, those bodily conversations, wherein, okay, I realize, Oh, I did something wrong and the way we sit, we cannot spread our legs and sit at all. Even as a child when I was wearing a frock my mom stared at me or pinched me on my thigh to make me realize, okay, I should sit with my legs close together. There was this one time in my childhood with my cousin brother, we were playing this game called "message message", wherein you hold each other's hands and you pass the message. So I was 8 years old and he was 10 and we were playing with my sister and another cousin and my mom saw that and that night she told me "are you a slut? because you touched your cousin's hand you played with him. Are you getting those feelings to touch his hand?" and I was like "I AM an eight year-old girl! I don't even know the definition of a slut!" and she is telling me in hindi, "tu randi hain kya?" and the whole night she is telling me, "you are a slut! You want to hold hands with boys! How dare*

you?" She is so mad at me for playing a stupid game, if I knew my mom has an issue I would have probably never touched his hand. I am that scared! I didn't realise because I was playing a game and didn't realise it was a sin!"

Formative years of gender moulding thus has a critical role to play in how these girls grow up. Positive parenting and an encouraging family space tend to be critical for the development of strong confident women.

62 year-old Anusree from Hyderabad, talks about the profound impact her father had on her and how his unconditional support and encouragement gave her immense strength

"Born and brought up in a Gujarati family. And a very pampered child. My father, like you know it was a very, I didn't do much, I was, since we were two sisters, I was always trained as a brother....I wanted to be a 'girl-girl' and my father would make me do everything what a boy would do...Those days I started learning driving when I was in 9th class. I finished my studies and immediately started working. Any fuse going or anything you would be the first one. Come on, you are going to do this. There was no stopping from him and I would always take back, 'no, no,no', I want to be a like my other friends who are always playing and ... But, now I realise the importance. He gave me the freedom of thought"

Similarly, Anindita tells us that her encouraging family, particularly her father, was key in the way she dealt with issues of VAW.

"One thing I should note over here is that I have seen that with my dad that whenever he, whenever we find ourselves, whenever he finds himself in such kinds of situations like a person is you know launching an attack on a girl, he always stands up and like tries to get things in order. Like he always protests and all and he is not bothered to get into a fight and all. So..And I have seen him like fighting for women we didn't even know; like in a fair or somewhere, women he didn't even know. And I was really small' so somebody was attacking a woman and molesting her, something like that. So he stood up for that woman."

This excerpt tells us the powerful positive impact strong parenting and family support has on girls. However, it is interesting and salient to point out here that despite Anindita's father's active interventions to stop violence against women, he does not seem to have attempted to do so when his own sister was a constant survivor of DV. This is a scathing reminder of the fact that people who are often vocal about speaking up against VAW outside of their homes are reluctant to challenge it within their own family spaces.

"They stay like nearby only and whenever this used to happen, my maternal aunt used to come to our home and stay with us. So they tried a lot actually to stop it but there were some people who were very aggressive and they think that's the only way to like you know, if you have to teach her a lesson that that's the only way to do it. They are very, what can I say, I am at a loss of words; like in Bengali there is a word called maarkute, so like there are people like who breaks into fights very often; so they think that's the only way to solve things. So my maternal uncle was

like that. He was good in other fields and all, other aspects and all but this, this trait in him was really heinous and menacing. So he could not control himself and also my maternal aunt used to do things that were like you know, that deserved the kind of rebuke and all but not in that manner. She used to do some really nonsense things but that doesn't mean that somebody will come and beat her up or abuse her in such a way that would disrespect her very existence. So yes, my mom, dad, everybody intervened, everybody intervened but you know, there are things that, people get really biased when it comes to family matters and all. So that's one problem. So that's one problem."

3.8 Domestic violence

While the previous section examined how gendering was carefully practiced within the family to socialise women into subscribing to normative and prescribed forms of behaviour, this section examines how women are subjected to systematic violence within the institution of marriage- vastly supported by attendant and celebrated ideas of conjugality and domestic duty. An overwhelming majority of our participants cited DV as their intervention stories or having grown up in homes where DV happened on a regular basis. It cut across all social groups- rural-urban divide, class etc. indicating the ubiquitousness and normalisation of DV in Indian societies. As per the National Family Health Survey-4 (NFHS) survey conducted in 2015-16, 33% of married women in the age group of 15-49 experienced physical, sexual, or emotional spousal violence. Of these women, only 14% sought help and 77% never spoke about it. Among those who sought help, 65% reported to the natal family and only 3% reported to the police.[11]

Nirmal from Hazaribagh succinctly describes it when he observes,

"This is village level and domestic violence happens most of the time because either women don't know about the law or if they know...they don't want to move forward...that if the fight within the family will go out then...it will put a stain on their family. In this situation, the regional officers...they go to them and ask for justice..."

For the purpose of our study and in the interest of clarity, we selected narratives that we thought demonstrate the different facets of DV as we encountered in our data. Five major elements emerge from our cumulative narratives on DV- that it was considered normal and hence quite regularly overlooked; despite its significant prevalence most women were averse to reaching out for help owing to various factors; it was the most common type of violence where perpetrators and sometimes even survivors cited "our private matter" to prevent or dissuade any kind of intervention; systemic apparatuses meant for helping DV survivors often fail owing to the fact that those meant to ensure the implementation of the system are also products of the same society and hence prone to believe in prevalent social biases and lastly, the consequential, yet grossly understudied, area of how children growing up in homes with DV carried serious psychological trauma into their adult lives.

20 year-old college student, Anita from Kolkata talked about her experience of witnessing an incident of domestic violence between a couple. What was immediately glaring about the episode was the

[11] https://www.oxfamindia.org/blog/locked-down-domestic-violence-reporting-india-during-covid-19

location where it happened - in front of a police station. Anita and some of her friends were at the station to report a case of harassment that had happened in their college when they saw a young woman with a 3 year-old child standing at a crowded junction near the station and trying to hail an auto. She had been standing there for about 15 minutes when a man approached her and tried to take her back along with him. The situation quickly deteriorated into screaming and eventually physical assault even as a cop nearby and numerous commuters quietly ignored the whole incident.

> *"The most peculiar and the weird thing was, it was absolutely right in front of the police station. And there is one person, the constable or someone, who just stand outside the police station. He could see, it was happening right in front of his eyes. So, we were constantly telling that you can call the police if you want,....And, after sometime, the man slapped her, in front of us.....And I remember few of us were there and we told.. the police constable standing there, that you should have told something...Like you are slapping a woman, in the middle of the road, in the junction, there are few roads. There were people. It was 9.45-40 at night and there were people around. It was not that nobody was seeing. But nobody even bothered to turn back."*

This episode foregrounds how most people, including law enforcement agents, respond to instances of DV. This theme is reinforced again in the stories shared with us by 25 year-old Bhama, born and brought up in Hyderabad. Having grown up in a home where DV was a regular occurrence for many years, her narrative illuminates some of the core themes of the section. Talking about why she didn't believe in engaging with the systems in place for redressal, she highlights the endemic issues that influenced her decision including how most protectors of law seem to be in favour of resolving the matter "internally" and to not get the system involved.

> *"... police are the most... I don't know, what else word to use, but 'incapable 'of solving domestic... they just bribed and went off, all they do was they just tried to explain both of us. And the second time... one of the lady police came and she was telling my mother things like, you know... people will be like that and husband will be like that and you have to... she told my mom.. some of these options like...don't try to aggravate him and you know, don't make this a thing, because even the fact that you people call the police you know it will make another issue. That is definitely happens whenever I call the police, it used to be more... the biggest challenge I found and I feel everyone in domestic violence will face is... I don't know what to do (sounds low)...I don't think there is a system in place or at least it's not well recognized or put up in a way which is very approachable... lot of the people in it, mostly I don't know their... mentality is like... the police woman who guided us... and the people in the 'She team' told us, there were all like , 'personally if I have to advise off the record I just say, let it be or it will just get ugly, or if you are ready to fight ,then fighting until you get it done, or is not going to make it easy."*

Yet, systemic apathy and inadequacy is not necessarily always the norm. For example, Mumbai-based 30 year-old architect Prasad spoke about his story of intervention wherein he interceded in a case of DV involving a young couple (possibly boyfriend and girlfriend) unfolding in the backseat of a moving (Bombay's iconic) black and yellow taxi. He talked about how he got the police at a traffic signal to help him with the situation and how they were receptive and helpful. It is also interesting to note that there were two female police present, one of whom repeatedly requested the survivor to take up the matter legally and to register a case. Prasad's narrative constantly highlighted

the survivor's own reluctance to receive any 'outside' help and how she kept blaming herself for her assault.

> *"There was at least three or four policemen, there was a police lady at the junction. So we managed to get the guy stop. We stopped the taxi and we got them out and they this girl and this boy and that boy was so aggressive he was abusing us also and he was abusing the police. So basically we told the police...the girl comes out and she was like.. you know she had a bad eye..she had been punched on the face. Obviously she was crying but what shocked us was that she didn't want to like press charges. She was "no no its not his fault it's my fault only and I don't know what happened."*

Similarly, for 25 year-old Nandita, who sells fish for a living in Mumbai, the police have been helpful. DV is a regular occurrence with both her spouse and brother. She says that though she tolerates it sometimes, considering her relationships with them, when things go out of hand she did engage the police. ***"The policemen who come after you have called the helpline, they are really very well behaved. They take action on the matter."*** However, we do get a sense of the issues Bhama brought up mainly of no long term solutions to fix the problem, just a quick fix solution to deal with the immediate issue of controlling a violent man, intimately connected to a woman or girl, beating or abusing her.

While discussing domestic violence, a significant number of participants talked about either personal or social reluctance to intervene citing "their personal matter" as a reason. The logic of "our personal matter" is also conveniently used by perpetrators to get people to back off. This is exemplified in a DV incident shared by Hyderabad based 25 year-old doctor Zainab when she tried to help a girl who was being abused by a man who looked like her partner. When she tried to inquire about what had happened and if she could help in any way, she was promptly told by the guy to back off.

> *"I was just there and the guy was behind us and saying, "miss please it is our personal matter you don't need to interfere. She is like this only." He is saying she is crazy. You don't believe her, she is crazy and I was not listening to him at all and then the guy got frustrated that I was not listening to him and he was like "I will call the police." I said, "you call!" because as long as the girl is not having an issue why should I go? It is a public place I can sit wherever I want, I said, "you call, please call the police, if you don't call, I will."*

As mentioned earlier, DV was prevalent across categories of participants but we observed that amongst self described middle class participants there was considerable reluctance to talk about the issue or acknowledge the problem with outsiders including extended family. As Bhama puts it "talking about it, made it real". She also points out how the reluctance to talk about DV stemmed from the fear of shattering the facade of the happy and normal family that was so important to people from her similar class background. Outside intervention was tantamount to obliterating this image for the family and for those associated with them (neighbours, extended family and friends).

Fear of the aggression and assault getting worse was also a very tangible one. For example, when her mother, after a particularly harrowing night, called her (mother's) brother for help. However, she says that after the visit of her uncle her father got even more mad as he was rattled by the fact that her mother had dared to involve people from the "outside" for help. This sentiment finds resonance in Hyderabad participant Soumya's observations on DV.

> *"Among our friends itself, even though women are educated and working, among us there are people who take beatings from their husbands, they are in abusive relationships and most of the time they don't want anybody to intervene... I think what they want for us to hear so that they can let it out you know, but most of the women don't want the intervention happening because..they will say "let us not do that because it is going to get worse"... Like for example, one of my friends is in an abusive relationship [hesitates] and parents of both the sides don't know that, so when you say, "why don't you tell your mom, or your mother-in-law" she will say, "no. The moment that thing happens he will get more aggressive." He will say, "now you are telling the whole world, go tell the whole world or okay you can't live with me go ahead and have your own life." They don't want to get out of the relationship, they just want to talk about it to let it out."*

Rationalising DV was key to how most women lived with it on a daily basis. For many the best way to do it was to talk about incidents of DV as anomalies and occasional incidents or attributing it to external factors such as alcoholism, job and financial frustrations endured by men. What these narratives point towards is how the underlying gender power dynamics that validates or excuses such excesses and brutalities within marriage is never acknowledged or dealt with. It is symptomatic of larger structures of gendering and misogyny existing in society.

For example, 29 year-old Payal from Hyderabad talks about her experiences of DV involving her father during her childhood and now in adulthood, her brother. Alcoholism is identified as an underlying causality and she also talks about how she and her mother, both working and independent women, tried to deal with the issue.

> *"I come from a middle class background and my brother, he's been having like...a little...episodes of addiction.. like alcohol addiction so because of that there used to be constant fights at home... because of that I've been...also a subject...for...violence and...yeah...once or twice it has also gone public where few of my neighbours have had to intervene but none of them...actually kind of did anything about it..."*

Similarly, Amrit from Delhi also talked about how he intervened in a case of DV wherein the man would beat up his wife on a regular basis when he was inebriated.

> *"They have 2 kids, who were sitting in a different room, they looked very scared they didn't come out of the room and the parents were fighting in the next room. When I asked them, "why are you behaving like this? The wife said, "this is how he behaves." The husband was completely drunk and there were alcohol bottles everywhere in the room, the wife said, that "he gets drunk and comes home and then he fights...The next day when the husband met us, he was in his senses and said, "I have this bad habit, if I drink only then this happens otherwise I never do, you see."*

I said, "why do you drink then? Today you are doing this, your kids are seeing it, tomorrow your they will grow up and do the same."

Vijay and Nirmal from Hazaribagh also shared incidents of DV and stalking involving alcohol consumption, identifying it as a major trigger for incidents of VAW. Relating episodes of DV with alcohol consumption often implies that men physically assault their partners only when they are drunk but are otherwise 'good men'. Although men say this more frequently– as is the case amongst our participants from both rural and urban settings, women make this statement too. In both cases it is intended as a 'character certificate' of sorts. Men use it to distance themselves from what they perhaps recognise as their own unacceptable behaviour. However, we would suggest that when women state this, it assumes an explanatory role in why they do not– and, in fact, often cannot– leave the abusive relationship. It provides them with the justification of staying on in relationships in which abuse is a significant part. It is also useful to flag at this point how alcohol prohibition movements have been an integral demand of women's movements across various parts of the country. For example, historically Andhra Pradesh and what is today Telangana and recently in Bihar, the ban of alcohol has been a vehement demand for a substantial chunk of women.

Another thread that emerged from our data pertains to the trauma faced by children as a result of growing up in homes which witnessed DV on a regular basis. The psychological burden this has on children is poignantly exemplified in Bhama's narrative.

"... the smell itself gives me very bad memories and I feel little bit of closure, I think that's what it is. So, I do not drink at all in parties, anywhere. I never drank because that smell is not something for me to go and have fun. That smell is basically sleepless nights and you are taking turns keeping a watch on my mom, police, it reminds me of all that...I don't think many people can try to break in and understand what we have been going through for seven or eight years in just a day or in an hour. Or rather a month or a year."

Payal also recounts the seminal impact witnessing her father hit her mother had on her as a child.

"when I was a kid and...something happened where... my dad kind of hit my mum like...when I was probably around 10 years or something so...I actually don't remember that incident a lot but I do remember how my mom looked afterwards. So that had a great... impact but...I was still clueless of what's happening...so yeah that was my experience...where my mom's eye was completely swollen and you know like my dad hit her with...pipe or something I guess so yeah...that has been like a very overwhelming experience. Now that I think about it, it is, it is very overwhelming but then I had no clue what was happening."

3.8.1. Why do they stay?

Despite the trauma of abusive relationships, a substantial number of women do not leave such relationships. It is crucial that this be unpacked for us to better understand how gendering and overarching patriarchy makes it almost impossible for women to break free. As gender activists, feminists or observers one of the biggest 'mistakes' that we tend to make, while talking about intervening in DV/ IPV, is that we forget that ultimately women's interests if they do not have financial 'bargaining power' lie in the conjugal household, because ultimately, in India at least, the household continues to be the unit of economic production and consumption and is a site for pooled economic resources. Thus, her economic interests lie there, and material positions matter.

Indian women's rights lawyer Flavia Agnes points to the absence of any structured legal exploration of economic entities within matrimonial relations for women as a major drawback. "We are confronted with a glaring void within the Indian matrimonial statutes which do not provide for division of property upon divorce. Thus, fear of poverty, destitution, or a lowering of economic standards haunts women during divorce proceedings. As we shall see, dominant gender ideologies shape the extent to which women are punished or rewarded within these proceedings."[12]

This is exemplified in Amar's observation:

> *"The reason...for example the local ladies think that if we leave our husband...where will we go? After seeing the situation of the house...of the children...imagine if there are children...and they think that they will do case against the husband but they see their children's face and think... One incident...she was a lady...she was 18 years old girl...so didn't know...there was mayhem in the house...husband used to come home drunk and beat her...so we got to know through someone that this was happening so we spoke to them...first time we went so she said "no, no... this is normal...this keeps happening with me..." So, we told her that if this happens again, please tell us...this had become a long case...The neighbourhood ladies...called us and so we went there...after explaining it to her, we called the police...they recorded...everything was written... so that time she said that "yeah, I want to separate from my husband...do a case..." but when he presented the both in front of the lawyer...the lady herself said...that "I want that both of should compromise" so we asked her at that time you told us so and so...now why are you compromising? So she said that "I have a daughter...if I get separated from him...what will the society tell us...what will our family say?" This case had happened in front of me."*

Nirmal from Hazaribagh echoes a similar sentiment,

> *"There are two-three to whom when we say that you can go to the court, teach him a lesson... they say that "no, how will family eat...survive"...we say that "you don't want..." they say that they have problems...they beat...they abuse...you don't want to move forward to teach him a lesson... so what can we do in that? You try to move forward, the way will be shown to you."*

[12] *Ray, R. (2012). Handbook of Gender (ed.), p. 52. Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780198071471*

Further, notions of honour and chastity for which women (are made to) carry the burden complicate avenues of social or economic independence. A woman, once stigmatised, will not find it easy to access networks through which she might ultimately establish economic independence if she already carries some stigma. Sometimes, the cycle of violence is perpetuated due to women's sincere affections and thinking that the man could change. 41 year-old Renuka from Hyderabad reflects on the abusive relationship she was in for most of her 20s. She goes into details as to why she found it difficult to walk out of the relationship- it had been years of her life, her youth and possibly a desperate attempt at preserving a life and future she and her partner had dreamt together.

> *"I was in an abusive relationship and I was in my 20s. I was very sure that I'd marry that person.. We were going to each other's homes meeting each other's family on occasions and stuff like that. When you love someone so deeply and when that person turns into somebody else...You forgive the person the 1st time which is the biggest thing that a victim does. That its okay this happens, its the first time. It happened. Then it happens a second time and then it happens a 3rd time and then it happens a 4th time and then it becomes a fact and then you think where does it end? So I asked that question to myself that where is this going to end because it'll end."*

Something similar is found in Raj's narrative as well wherein he talks about how his mother stopped talking to him when he confronted his father for abusing his mother. He thought it was unacceptable the way his father was treating her only to be rebuked by his mother. Theirs was an intercaste marriage forcing them to elope so perhaps his mother still cared deeply for the father despite his abusive behaviour

> *"She got upset with me...My mother knows that this is how my father will behave, we have seen this since we were kids...so she has gotten used to it. She is used to my father's abusive words. She didn't care but I would care...people in the society (outsiders) can speak like this, I don't care but my own father talking like this, it bothers me. So I raised my voice against this."*

Some of our respondents pointed towards the unfortunate reality of how an unattached woman, that is someone without a male partner- free of male ownership so to speak, was perceived 'available' and hence perennially vulnerable. Soumya says,

> *"At the end of the day the whole society will say that, "the man is not with her." I mean not everybody is bold enough right, not everybody will say, "what he did was wrong, that is why she came out of the relationship." At the end of the day whatever the man did, the moment there is no man beside a woman, she is considered available right? And also if you are well educated and in a good job and somebody finds out you are in an abusive relationship and then they are wondering what is wrong with you? Like why are you taking the abuse? So I don't think they want to face that shame. The second thing is, even though it is an abusive relationship, I think they still take comfort in having the relationship than not having it."*

3.9. Child sexual abuse

A number of participants, seven in all, from Phase 2 of the research talked about sexual abuse during their childhood- often at the hands of close family members or friends- as being debiliatingly formative. They narrated their experiences of trauma to provide a glimpse of how these systematic experiences of abuse had shaped them; from fear of walking alone on roads to being scared of being in crowded places, trauma has had manifold affects. Some of our participants also shared with us how the interview was perhaps one of the first times they had openly talked about their experience of abuse; a few, however, had sought therapy in order to understand and cope with their past experiences. During our conversations we became aware of the power of testimonies and bearing witness in dealing with and healing repressed trauma.

One of our participants, 34 year-old Ananya based in Kolkata, narrated to us how every time somebody tried to inappropriately touch her she 'froze' thereby being unable to react in any manner:

> *"I was in the metro and there was absolutely no space for anyone, I remember standing near the door and there was this man who suddenly just started rubbing my private parts inside the metro. In the beginning I did not understand what was happening, then I saw his face and realised soon after and I literally could not move. I stopped using the metro when it's crowded after that, I couldn't get myself to get in. I have a past of child sexual abuse, my reaction then is to freeze on spot and I can't control my reaction... Since that time I remember seriously avoiding crowded metros, though it's a much faster way to commute, I would stick to more expensive public transport."*

> *"Once I started therapy, it is only then I could take simple actions like telling somebody to move if they were coming on to me in a bus and I would retort to such advances in a loud voice so that other people could hear. That is the only action I have been able to take over the years, just to tell somebody that "I am not feeling comfortable so please move." Till a year back, when I faced sexual harassment in office and I could find courage to report the entire incident. So I have been fighting a lot with myself to be able to speak up and say that I am uncomfortable with whatever is happening and that has been my usual understanding of any gender based violence, where I cannot bring myself to react physically for very loudly. This is also something I trying to really work on with therapy."*

24 year-old Sunita from Hyderabad talked about how issues of intimacy she encountered as an adult led her to unearth the hidden and repressed memory of abuse she suffered as a child:

> *"I was sexually abused by my brother when I was a child so that didn't happen in a public setting...but it caused a lot of trauma to me, so for a long time it was in my repressed memory*

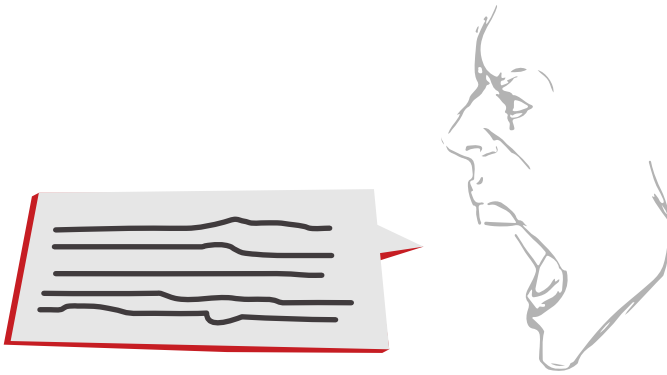
Some of our participants also shared with us how the interview was perhaps one of the first times they had openly talked about their abuse while others had turned to therapy for some kind of closure which remains elusive.

and I didn't know it had happened you know but every time I was getting physical with any guy... I was very conscious about my body. I used to always switch off the lights and I didn't know where all that was coming from. But last year when I was in art therapy or something is when my repressed memories came back then I got to know that my brother actually sexually abused me and I couldn't take it, I just couldn't take it. I had pains everywhere. This personal experience I had pains in my organs and everything, everywhere. I couldn't bear it and...I felt it was my fault. Whatever happened to me as a child I felt that I let it happen to me. What I didn't realise was that I was a kid back then, I was in 6th class so and the guy was the adult and I sort of blamed myself a lot that I sort of enjoyed it, I was a kid maybe I enjoyed it. I realised that I was blaming taking a lot of blame on myself that is when I started going to therapy and I think I am doing a lot better now."

When asked about if she had talked about her experience with anyone she says, "No, I didn't want to talk to anybody about it like I said I blamed myself and I felt like everybody is going to blame me. I didn't say anything to anyone but I sort of did a lot of things to myself. I have a history of depression, I was in depression four years ago. I also have... suicidal behaviour and everything back then so when I got my repressed memories back last year I felt like I was sort of going back there and I knew that I had to take help and the first person I opened up was to my mom, she was really supportive but after that I knew that I had to take therapy."

Interestingly, a few of our participants talked about how their mothers' responses to their experiences of abuse were critical to how they felt about themselves and how they decided to deal with the problem. 32 year-old Sonalika narrates her disappointment at her mother's reaction when she told her about an incident of abuse she faced as an early teenager:

"I was in the marriage of one of my maternal uncles...my maternal uncle's friend...he actually abused me...I was wearing one of my favourite skirt and I didn't know that a 13 year-old's breasts were even sexual objects, you know. So, this guy touched my breast and I was there standing... thinking, "okay, why is he doing this? What is happening? I think it's happening to me! I was like okay...why is he doing this?" After 6-7 months, I realised...oh shit, this happened to me. So what happened was that I spoke to my mother...and she said,"...it was your fault. Why were you wearing that skirt and top?" And you know...you won't believe me but I left wearing that skirt and t-shirt...my favourite skirt and shirt...it went...it became like a nightmare...every time I used to go and confide in her...I have always had her telling me...it was my fault..."Why did you go there? There was this one close neighbour...like I used to call...like a brotherand when I was growing up, even before I could understand...okay different body parts have different physical you know, attributes to certain body parts and (to pleasure and all; ...I had no idea about it but...this guy...I used to go and play around...and he used to come and touch me inappropriately which I later realised "Oh, this is happening..." So I even told my mom and my mom said, laughs, that's why I used to go...and I used to feel like... "What is this...and what is wrong?" And then it took me years...at that time, I took that it was my fault...so later it took me years to abolish those memories of my mind that it was not my fault and even then when I confronted my mother many times... later...later means what...like when I was 25-26 maybe...and then I said that uh...but do you realise...and I realised that she became extremely defensive because some or the other way, her



being a party to it...that okay, she was also responsible ...somehow makes her an irresponsible mother...I realised that and she was so not okay...she was like "no, I didn't do anything..."

Sakshi from Kolkata shares a similar experience of having received no support, especially from her mother, when she opened up to her about the abuse she had suffered. She also goes on to reflect on the possible reasons as to why her mother might have reacted the way she did.

"While growing up, I realized this violence thing quite early, at the age of eight, seven or eight, because someone in my family was abusing me and initially I didn't understand that. I used to see that person once in a while and you know, I tried to kind of make myself think that (inaudible) but later on it started happening in public also, like people grabbing me and stuff like that, so I kind of correlated that. And when I told this to my mother, and I was, this is very young girl you know, seven-eight years old child (sounded anguished) is telling her mother that someone is touching her in public and she just told me that you should not wear jeans and stuff, you should not wear sleeveless; and this is a very educated, very, very highly educated woman and she told me that you should not do this, you should not do that; if someone does that you need to run away from it. You should never protest. I understand now, today I understand where that suggestion came in from, because she was afraid that they might attack me in the worst manner, that's why she had told me to get away from it but she never actually empowered me and said it's not my fault. She never said all that. So I kind of from a very young age, I became very protective about myself and there is a lot of rage inside me because this was never resolved at that time. And even in public, with my mother present, usually with my father present these things have never happened so I cannot comment on that; but even in public when stuff like this, when my mother is present has happened and I was a bit older as well, she has made sure that she never raises her voice. I think it's because she maybe has had experiences of her own which have given her a negative you know, idea about how to deal with the situation but because my mother used to tell me not to do this and that, I used to do that more, you know, protest, shout."

3.10. Motivations to intervene (The why)

People who intervened provided a number of reasons for their actions. Some of them talked about the urge to do the 'right' thing attesting to the presence of a strong moral component in speaking up. As discussed above, some of the women respondents cited rage as their motivating factor. Some (both male and female) also talked about their own journey towards better gender sensitisation. Often it took them years to recognise certain kinds of violence and how it was symptomatic of skewed gender dynamics and patriarchal power. This evolution in their own understanding vis-a-vis VAW was attributed to their association with gender rights organisations either as volunteers, full time employees or general exposure to them. A few participants also talked about random courses or gender sensitivity lectures organised at their schools/colleges or place of work or even engaging in social work as being important trigger points. These experiences led them to further read around the issue.

3.10.1. The moral component: Doing the right thing

A number of men and women who intervened cited their strong sense of right and wrong as being the key driving forces behind their actions. For some it emanated from their upbringing where parents told them that irrespective of the circumstances they had to speak up.

Ullesh from Hazaribagh says, "So in this way I try and do my work and try and show people the right path and people listen to me also, and for all this my father has been my inspiration…He is 85 year-old now and he was an old teacher, a private teacher and he always told me that it is our responsibility to free people who are under oppression."

Similarly, Shikhar from Delhi tells us:

> *"I don't care about people…that I don't care since childhood…but I do care about how my terms will be with my mausa…*gets angry* I will explain to him that what he did was wrong…I am still against it. *Loudly* I will tell that what I did that day…I was right…it was a reflex action…it was my spinal cords' fault…it's not my fault. *Loudly* I wasn't wrong. I am not wrong… and I will not accept it…"*

Chaman from Gaya also alludes to the 'right' thing and as a result, the truth, while talking about his actions, "the aim of raising my voice is that I will take the truth forward. In today's world those who do good are treated as bad people…[those] who do bad are treated as good."

Nirmal from Hazaribagh says,

> *"Since childhood…I have this thinking…even if somebody abuses me, I don't feel angry…There are some people who are not interested…I ignore them…I stick to your thing… I will do my work…I try to do good things…now whether people think negative or positive [about what I do]… so definitely inside they might be thinking whether they did the right thing or not…some people abuse…some laugh…see, to form a relationship…it's up to God…humans should not move away from their work."*

3.10.2. Female fury

Women who have been on the receiving end of abuse or violence seem to feel strongly when they witness other women facing abuse elsewhere. Quite a number of women participants mentioned their anger at their own helplessness when incidents of abuse happened to them as children or younger people.

Sakshi, 30 year-old content writer and make-up artist, says:

People who intervened provided a number of reasons for their actions. Some of them talked about the urge to do the 'right' thing attesting to the presence of a strong moral component in speaking up.

"... from a very young age, I became very protective about myself and there is a lot of rage inside me because this was never resolved at that time...Because my mother was so, not open to the idea of doing something about people molesting me in public; as a child I felt that if I tell my parents about this family member molesting me and stuff, I felt that they would somehow blame me because they have done...my mother, I won't say they, because she has done that in the past with other people. So I actually till date they do not know that it has happened. But I have talked about it in therapy later on in life and you know, kind of dealt with it today. But I was very reluctant to tell my mother that someone in the family is doing it because she would blame me and I would have to keep meeting the person. So I tried to avoid that as much as possible and at the end of the day, like when it didn't stop, and I knew that I couldn't tell my parents, one day I just took a knife and threatened the person when he was going to do that. And I was like eight or nine years old at that time."

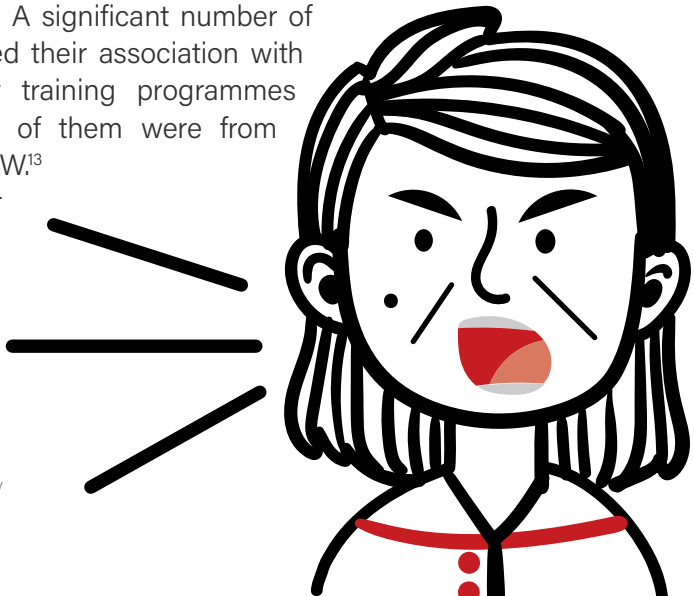
Kolkata participant, 32 year-old Sonalika says,

"Somehow you feel like that...sometimes, it feels like...that's one thing...your own lived experiences and places where you couldn't react properly ...that might be the hidden anger... that you feel "I will end this today itself" types...that one...and also second, I think...exposure and education does matter. In the way... that you know... that you have a voice. The group...the people that we interact with...the things that we read...it also makes a lot of change. I think that is also"

As demonstrated in the excerpt above a person's own personal experience of violence can be critical in the way they deal with issues of gender violence and abuse as adults. Often there is a built-up anger over one's own helplessness. A few participants talked about how memories of their own experiences were triggered when they witnessed acts of violation against other women and it recreated the sense of helplessness they felt in similar past situations.

3.10.3. Understanding gender discrimination

While some participants were able to identify specific events such as attending a gender sensitisation course during college or the death of a favourite cousin as the immediate catalyst for their journey to greater awareness of gender discrimination, for most the trajectory was gradual and, in all cases, complex. A significant number of participants who had experiences of intervention cited their association with gender-rights organisations, or undergoing gender training programmes conducted in schools or office spaces. A number of them were from organisations that worked around gender-rights and VAW.[13] Participants have mentioned how their own readings or exposure to certain course structures enabled them to think about what had happened to them as children or understood the structural reasons why gender discrimination is practiced. Some of our Hyderabad respondents also had degrees in psychology and



had experience of offering counselling themselves.

28 year-old Amina from Hyderabad mentioned how Breakthrough's *Bell Bajao* campaign helped her think about issues of DV. Onil, a Mumbai based participant and social worker, told us how the processes towards setting up a sexual harassment cell in office and conversations with one of his female colleagues helped him first think about the notion of 'consent.' This turned out to be instrumental as it propelled him to read extensively around the concept and how it was vital to gender rights and equality. It also helped him revisit some of his own past actions and to reflect on how they might have been potentially abusive for the girls he was then interacting with.

> *"When I think of my childhood and the last 27-28 years I never really personally think of any kind of harassment or sexual harassment...but few years back when I was in college, even I have done this shit, I shouldn't say this but I thought its okay, this is how it is. Obviously, I did not force myself on anyone but whenever I was going out...I have tried things and when the girl said NO I respected her because she was my friend I said okay. But when this incident happened (referring to the office incident) I realised the importance of consent, I called those girls and I said I am extremely sorry, I have done this..."*

Some even talked about how college generally turned out to be an immense learning experience for them and also an empowering space. Zainab says, *"when I joined college and I finally started questioning my entire childhood, I told my sister, I realised she used to know about this from her teenage life only she was 10-15 steps ahead of me but she just kept it to herself and she told me, "didi you don't know but I am depressed, I don't sleep and I don't eat."*

Ananya, from Kolkata, told us how a gender paper in college was fundamental in helping her recognise and finally articulate the sexual abuse she had suffered as a child.

> *"I was abused when I was just about 11 years old. I had just hit puberty and it was a very long and continuous process of abuse and it was my own aunt's husband. I was a very naive child and I did not know what was happening and I was very scared and I used to think "what had I done so wrong that he was punishing me by afflicting so much pain on me?"...He was behaving in such a way that it was causing a lot confusion, hurt and pain. I have grown up not knowing what was happening with me...I realised what had happened much later, when we were studying a paper on Gender, in my first year of college. I was 19 years old then for so many years I had known nothing...When it came to the chapter on gender, it felt like this was the reason why I had to take up that subject. It was very well taught, encouraged a lot of discussion and argument in the classroom. The chapter on Gender was the only class that had a very participative-interactive teaching process; our professor encouraged a lot of discussion and arguments in the class. What happened after that is that we started looking at the structure of our society very differently after that class. A lot of things started falling into place a lot of questions started forming in my head. I think the biggest impact it had on me was that I started to look at my mother not just as my mother but as a human being."*

[13] The fact that we relied on organisations, including Breakthrough, to identify potential participants meant that a fair number of them came with some exposure to conversations around gender equality and women's rights even if they were not actively working on these issues.

Swaroop from Haryana identifies training sessions organised by Breakthrough and the nature of her job as key factors shaping her understanding of gender, saying:

> *"I have participated in some training sessions organised by Breakthrough on DV. But I have mostly received training from my workplace. I work in the position of Supervisor in the Women and Child Development Ministry in (redacted for maintaining anonymity) block...We have held a lot of activities through the anganwadi centres especially in the area of nutrition, child welfare, schemes for pregnant women etc. Other schemes are "Aapki Beti, Hamari Beti"; "Kanya Samridddhi Yojana."*

Organisational association was again the key factor for 30 year-old Kabir from Mumbai. He talked about how even though he was familiar with some ideas with regard to women's equality before joining his current organisation through his reading etc, it was only after he joined he started paying closer attention to the larger phenomena of discrimination and gender marginalisation:

> *"I didn't have a deep experience about these issues. But since my association [with the organisation] I have had a lot of experience and knowledge, and also my perspective towards a lot of things I observe has changed. I also became aware of a lot of things, because I am from a middle class family, our family is based on the patriarchal views that men are superior and girls are inferior. This thought is there in my family as well. This thinking is very...how to say....very.... umm...entrenched."*

For some the journey towards better gender sensitivity was a plethora of factors. Parizaad cites strong women in her home, having friends from marginalised communities (one of her close friends is gay while the other is Muslim), and following the bar-dancer issue in Mumbai and the conversations it generated as critical entry points into the discourse around gender.

> *"I've grown up in a space where my mother is extremely strong. My mother is a very strong woman, and I think from my childhood she kind of inculcated in me, and for what reason I didn't ask her... A lot of emphasis on the fact that I should be financially independent, till date. That I need to be on my own person; that I need to be independent, financially, emotionally. I think that was there from the beginning. I was surrounded by girls. All my cousins were also girls... as I started reading, it started developing into more sort of feminist understanding. One of my closest friends in school was gay, he's a boy. And that was my first exposure to someone from the minority...So that was kind of the first time that I started understanding how someone is different.. you're targeted because you're different. I had a friend who was Muslim, a very close childhood friend. Once a teacher passed some remark that was communal. Those were the few of examples that I would say made me more aware of what exists in reality as it is. So you know through those experiences, I kind of started reading more or learning more... If you remember, the bar dancer issue in Mumbai. And Flavia Agnes's stand at that time was, a lot of people at that time were considered different and unique, and it was something that really interested me. She was called for a panel discussion to our college on this issue. So I read up more about it, and then I read up about the work that Majlis does."*

For 19 year-old Raj, the tragic suicide of a young cousin when he was a boy led to the germ of understanding gender discrimination in him. He became acutely aware of how his sister was repeatedly maligned, even post-death and how enthusiastically people had cast aspersions on her "character". He says that even as a young boy he could tell that there was something fundamentally flawed about the whole system that enabled and sanctioned this sort of behaviour.

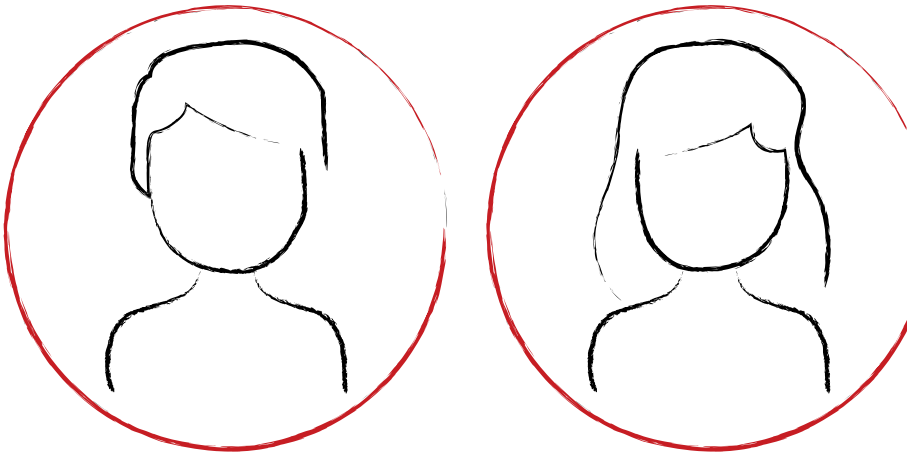
> *"I still don't know for what reason she died...I was helpless in the situation..whom I loved the most, my childhood was incomplete without her. So I was like, I could do nothing to help a woman or a girl. Later I got to know, she got abused by her boyfriend. He had broken up with her and that is the decision she took. Rumours had spread, especially people who gossip like, "what happened? Why did this girl do so?" That's when I understood the reason. I didn't try to know the reason myself; because I was heartbroken....but the cause was made apparent through gossips...that she shouldn't have done it...they were blaming the girl that, "it was not right, it shouldn't have happened, but the girl was at fault...this is her punishment."*

Overall what these processes do is to enable participants to recognise and name discriminatory gender practices while equipping them with a vocabulary to talk about it. It was evident from our conversations that this went a long way in empowering them to speak up for themselves and for others. This appears, therefore, to constitute a fundamentally important step– for many participants in this research– in motivating them to intervene when witnessing VAW.

3.10.4. Positive role models

Some of our female respondents talked about the importance of having found strong role models to look up to and who encouraged them to speak up for themselves and for others. Ananya talked about how her supportive colleague was a huge help in giving her the strength to confront her harasser in office:

> *"I have very close friend who helped me in the process of coming to terms with my abuse as a child. She was first person I spoke to about the workplace abuse and she encouraged me to*



report. This was the first time when the harassment was happening there were people around me who were telling me that "you should report and we will support you" and I think this enabling environment really helped me take that step ahead."

28 year-old Shraddha from Hyderabad narrated to us how her friend, who was more outgoing than her, was instrumental in helping her find the courage to stand up for herself:

"It was B.Tech inter for me, I think firstly, I'm supposed to say inter. We were a sixteen-member gang and I had a friend called Bratiti[14], how can I forget her. I think she is one such person who boosted up and then... There were certain instances where she used to stand up, it was not like if something is not fine, even with faculty, with respect to teaching or anything as such, she was one person who is very vocal. Very much vocal and she used to carry herself with so much of confidence and everything. And she was one person who used to not even stand mockery against faculty. She used to always being very vocal and what you are doing is not fine. So yeah may be the roots are there...I think she was one person who actually embraced this idea of self-help, like you help yourself first and then think about anything different."

Some of our participants such as Neeta, Parizaad, and Prasad- whose narratives we have presented earlier- also cited their mothers as important role models for them and how their strength helped them gain the courage to stand up for themselves and to speak for others.

"My mother herself was fierce...I told you about the hindu/muslim tensions (referring to the Mumbai riots of 1992) no? My mother would travel alone then, even during curfew. Yes. I have just observed my mother and learnt it all. That if she is so bindass (fearless) I can be the same. When my mother used to go out, the police constables on the road would stop her and ask "bai, you are not scared there is a curfew? Anything could happen to you, you could get shot." My mother used to say, "Sir if I stay at home my four kids will starve to death, it is better that I die alone." After listening to this, the policemen used to escort my mother to the train every day. So I have learnt it all from my mother and I try to impart the same knowledge to my daughters as well," says Neeta.

Bhama also highlighted the recent MeToo movement as an important empowering force in giving her the strength to speak up:

"I think the one which has really really (reaffirms confidently) remember where it all started was the MeToo movement where people actually started coming out and telling stuff...But when people started, you know, now we know that people are there to support there. Will not be like if I go and tell them like I have been sexually abused people will not come to me and tell that, ok, fine, what were you wearing then and, uh, which time was it, were you with a guy. I know that

[14] This is a pseudonym to protect the person's identity.

all those questions will not be at me. So I am more comfortable telling it out, uh, but back then, I mean even with one of the experience with my friend, even the one with me happened with me rather, uh, it was more like I just wanted to get out of that place. Forget about reporting him and everything. Mentally I just wanted to forget it and there were people who would just come up to me and tell that if there is something happening, I would definitely say No. Because I didn't want then to, yeah."

4. Exposing gaps: What needs to be done

This section attends to the major hurdles that bystanders face while attempting to intervene in an act of VAW. An acute lack of support and fear of the situation rapidly deteriorating and resulting in more violence resonated through almost all the interviews. "No one cared, No one stopped", "It's not your problem" were refrains we heard over and over again. One of our participants from Delhi, Jaya, told us that she and her teacher were threatened with acid attack when she attempted to intervene and help a girl who was being harassed by a group of boys at a bus stand. Yet, no one around came forward to help. These kinds of incidents played an enormous part in preventing a substantial number of our female participants from confronting perpetrators as the cognition that most people couldn't be bothered was something they had acquired from experience.

Specific issues pertaining to the system, larger societal pressure to conform and an absolute absensce of any constructive information vis-a-vis sex and menstrual health, were also recurring issues in our conversations. 'The Culture of Silence' we minutely dissected earlier in the report brought to the fore particularities of the system which made the hope of attaining any form of justice or closure for the survivor an elusive matter/illusion. Moreover, the fact that the onus of furnishing proof was always disproportionately on the woman (the debate in the wake of the MeToo Movement foregrounded this aspect powerfully) made it almost impossible for them to break free from the cycle of violence. We pay closer attention to the factors preventing people from raising their voices and how that might be rectified in the following subsections.

4.1. Building enabling eco-systems

One of the strongest deterrent for intervention was the absence of an enabling ecosystem that supports survivors. This includes women's fears of being blamed for or stigmatised by both family members and larger society over incidents of harassment and abuse, restrictions on their mobility owing to concerns over their "safety" and the magnitude of a formal 'system' that is both apathetic and dehumanising. Numerous of our participants cited harrowing experiences of engaging with the 'system.'

32 year-old Radha, a social worker from Hyderabad, recounted how heartbroken and disillusioned she was when she witnessed the terrible treatment meted out to a 3 year-old CSA survivor wherein the perpetrator was her father. From the callous attitude of medical staff at a government hospital to crude police officials, the system had no empathy, time or justice to offer for the brutal assault suffered by a young toddler, this is how Radha described what she witnessed:

"Just another person coming up for uh...for a medical examination which was uh...which falls under the category of rape and sexual assault and they just handled it in the worst possible way and the child just looked down and she was scared to come into that hospital again."

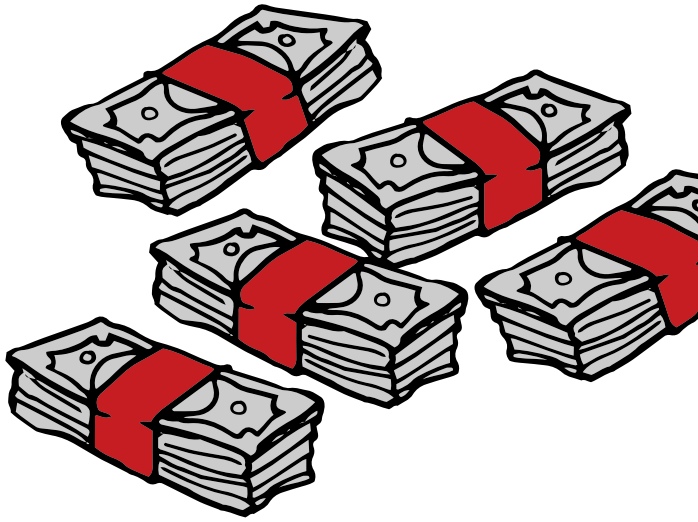
Lack of interest or apathy of authority figures is a recurring theme in the interviews. Numerous participants alluded to how frequently the system colluded with perpetrators or subscribed to stereotypical assumptions around causes of violence. A young man based out of Gaya, Chaman talked about how the police in his locality actively worked towards burying serious offences of sexual assault including rape leading to complainants completely losing faith in the formal system. He repeatedly cites money power as being the sole factor as to why perpetrators walk out freely despite the dire offences they did. He says,

"Decisions are taken in the Panchayat...but like they said liquor will not be sold but it is being sold...child marriage is happening...because the officials are involved...nearby, a girl was raped... the police station took money and they beat the father, uncle...they didn't do anything to the guy...In today's date, people forget everything about money...no matter how many wrong things you do, it doesn't matter if you have money."

Sunil, a young journalist in his 20s based in Haryana shared his experiences of DV resulting in the death of a girl - a case which eventually disappeared with the help of the panchayat and local police. What's more the Gram Panchayat created an atmosphere of intimidation and terror by threatening anyone who would report the matter with grave physical harm.

"Regarding this...people...they didn't want to come out openly...so the case happened but people crushed it...compromise happened after giving money...they crushed it...the Gram Panchayat also met...they said that those who talk about will not be spared... we are journalists also so we get into all of this...so there were meetings that were held...there were talks that violence against women be stopped and second, action will be taken."

Formal systems of justice are thus easily subverted or thwarted. Money is usually one of the strongest causality but other factors such as filial relationships or social networks of caste and class etc. were also responsible.



Anonymous complaints that have been incorporated into the system for the security of those reporting cases of abuse and violence are also repeatedly compromised in the face of social and political power. Swati from Haryana who had made an anonymous call to the police about a case of DV in her village was faced with the dangerous situation of being exposed by the police themselves. On receiving the distress call, the police landed up at the local leader's home, kept asking who the caller was resulting in the obliteration of the idea of anonymity in rural intimate communities networks.

> *"When I came as a newly married woman in my current neighbourhood, the couple in the house next to ours would fight a lot. The fight would escalate to such a level that it felt like it would end only with someone's death. So I decided to report them through the helpline number because I was really scared of even stepping outside the house in fear of being caught in the crosshairs of their fight. Then I called and reported in the 100 (police) helpline number. In the few training sessions I have received I was informed and taught that if you call the helpline number to report such cases then they are kept confidential. However, when the police came they went straight to the MLA's house and asked the MLA about who reported the case. They further started calling on my number to find out my identity. I got scared and immediately told my husband what I had done and to not receive the police persons' calls. I was also scared when the police called me back on my number because in my area interfering in private matters is unacceptable."*

This was also echoed in an incident that Mala described from rural Gaya where a resident in the village was concerned about reporting an incident of EM herself as she feared that her neighbours would discover that she was the complainant and, therefore target her for ostracism and worse. The above excerpts illustrate how often cases of grave sexual assault were made to disappear with the active collusion of law enforcement, however it takes on a different dimension when the perpetrators themselves are police officers.

28 year-old transgender participant and photographer Zeeenat from Mumbai spoke to us about the violent assault she suffered at the hands of police officials. She was picked up at the Marine Lines station by plain clothes police, taken to a station, stipped naked, brutally beaten and forced to have sex with a man while being filmed and physcially assaulted by the officials standing around. She was subsequently released at around 3 am when the police shift ended.

> *"... so they took us to the chowki...they got me completely naked and first they beat me up very badly and later they told me to sexually perform with that guy... and they were making my video and they were beating me...they beat me so much so that...we clap, right...they made my hands swell and then somebody was punching me, somebody was beating me with a stick, somebody*

In India, informal systems and processes of justice have a remarkable hold in local, particularly rural communities.

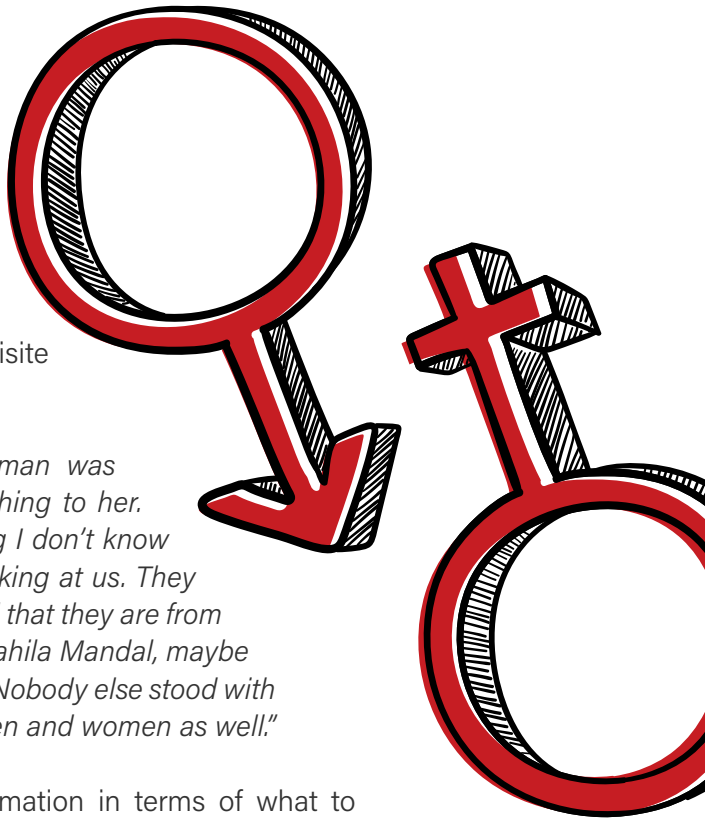
was beating me with a strip...they got me fully naked and they were beating that guy also... he didn't do anything wrong...but they were beating him...and someone was making a video in the mobile...they did all this with me...and then I asked what are you doing...so around 3 AM...I think they are relieved from duty...so...they get off at around 3 o'clock...so they left me at 3 o'clock. So, I didn't even know how to wear a saree because my mother used to tie it for me but somehow I attempted to wear a saree and came outside ... I quietly went to the public toilet and changed my clothes...I wore salwar kameez...I didn't even have money at that point...whatever money I had, they had snatched it from me."

Abuse by law enforcement officers such as the police and subsequent impunity they enjoy is a critical factor that has intimately informed the direction of women's activism in the country, particularly with regard to VAW. The Mathura Rape case in 1972 and Rameeza Bee's case in 1978 represent two of the earliest public campaigns against rape and the countours of the debate is of particular relevance even today. In the case of Bee's legal battle, the defense mounted an aggressive campaign systematically aimed at establishing Bee as a sex worker thererby faciliating the dismissal of her rape as a 'non issue.' In the case of Mathura, the court observed that the girl was habituated to sex and therefore could not be 'so overpowered by fear that she could not resist.'[15] Both cases are illustrative of how easily the character of a survivor is covertly inserted into narratives of the incident to subconsciously influence public opinion while simultaneously establishing how these 'loose' errant women, not subscribing to codified modes of gender behaviour, were somehow undeserving of justice. The continuities with Nirbhaya- when it was asked what a young girl was doing alone with her male friend in the night- and even more glaringly in the park street gang rape of Suzette Jordan where Jordan's image of a 'party girl' was carefully used against her, are hard to miss. The caste, class and communal location of the survivors is another critical facet highlighting how notions such as justice may well be outside the purview of those hailing from minority communities. Therefore it is paramount that systemic blindspots, apathy and impunity are addressed to facilitate any meaningful engagement with issues around gender based violence

The difficulties accessing formal systems of redressal - legal, criminal justice etc. also lead people to reach out to informal systems for justice. In India, informal systems and processes of justice, such as khap panchayats, have a remarkable hold in and on local, particularly rural communities. They sometimes have the power to bring about positive change but overall function as conservative and bodies perpetuating the status quo of feudal, patriarchal and caste interests. Local government bodies also mirror societal and community conservatisms of various kinds. The experiences shared by Sunil and Swaroop from Haryana are illustrative of this fact.

Another informal body but perhaps one of the most effective for women to counter violence, particularly within their homes, is the Mahila Mandal. Amanat from Mumbai tells us how her involvement in women centric social service forums such as local Mahila Mandals gave her both credibility and some kind of authority to intervene in cases of VAW especially in DV. Moreover, Her long standing association (over two decades) with various women's rights bodies and organisations have also

[15] Gangoli, G. (1996). The Right to Protection from Sexual Assault: The Indian Anti-Rape Campaign. Development in Practice (Taylor & Francis), 6(4), 334-340



equipped her with the vocabulary and language requisite to identify and challenge VAW.

> *"After that the woman went ahead and the man was walking behind her. But then he didn't do anything to her. Maybe we reached ahead and did do something I don't know but I know this much. The whole crowd was looking at us. They were probably staring because they knew us well that they are from the Mahila Mandal. They are women from the Mahila Mandal, maybe that's why they raised their voice for the woman. Nobody else stood with us. They were merely standing and watching. Men and women as well."*

A number of participants talked about lack of information in terms of what to do, who to reach out to etc as one of the reasons for their reluctance to intervene. Hyderabad participants talked about the presence of mobile apps having given them a one stop platform to seek help. Though the effectiveness of these apps need to be systematically studied, the fact that they existed acted as an important psychological resource for some of the female participants.

4.2. Promoting sex-education and gender sensitisation counselling for families

Lack of sex education, poor awareness about menstrual and reproductive health was cited by numerous of our women participants as a serious problem. A few of them explained how their abysmal understanding of what sex entailed proved critical in terms of how poorly and violently they were treated by their spouses during their marriage- within the 'safety' of the 'private.'

40 year-old Amanat from Mumbai says, "he had forced himself on me. I could neither walk nor sit. But I couldn't share this at home either. I used to cry to my mother that he's naked and I don't like it at all... and my mother used to hurl abuses at me. No matter what I said, she would say aren't you ashamed? This and that! And till date I have not been able to talk about this at home."

38 year-old Khadeeja from Mumbai tells us about the first time she had her periods and how even her mother refused to explain to her what was happening to her body.

> *"... 7 am I realised something was coming out, something warm was coming out, something was happening. So I told my mother that something has happened inside me, something is broken. Something has happened, there is blood...My mother said shut your mouth, you can't say these things like that. So I said what is going on? If something has happened I will tell you who else am I going to tell. I had to tell Amma only, rest everyone else was younger than me."*

She further adds,

> *"Like when I talk about my marriage then I had no idea what happened after getting married.*

And what they would call as Suhagraat, what happens on that suhagraat. You always teach us to cover and hide ourselves, that we have save ourselves from, you have to save yourselves from boys, from men. First of all when "mahawari" (quite possibly menarche) we were stopped from playing, that used to make me very angry. what is this. First of all we have to bear the discomfort and on top of that we are subjected to restrictions. Like that would infuriate me, what is this!..the second thing is that you have taught us to be covered and hidden and suddenly after getting married you are telling us to take off our clothes infront of a man. That man tells you to take off your clothes and you have to take them off because you are his wife."

Both Khadeeja and Amanat were married off at a young age to men much older than themselves, with no knowledge of what sex is or entails leading to substantial physical, mental and sexual abuse. Both referred to systematic marital rape as one of the major reasons for their deciding to walk out of their marriages. Amanat, who was married to her maternal uncle who was double her age, says that her first night with her husband was scarring and brutal.

"First night he came and asked me did they tell you anything so I said yes, your sister-in-law came and said do as your man tell you and the moment he heard those words, then he..whenever he did..have..kept physical relationship with me so he would have sex with me in different ways. Everytime he used to tell me that what my sister-in-law told you that you do whatever your husband tells you to do and used to listen to him that maybe this is how it is and I am supposed to abide by it. and like that.many..like this he caused me a lot of pain that way also."

Payal, a survivor of CSA and whose experience we shared earlier in the report also referred to the lack of any knowledge with regard to matters of sex and the body compounding her inability to deal with her abuse in any way for many years.

"I always felt like okay I'm obliged because like, its been happening for so long that I can't just stop it right away. I don't remember how it started though...you know like probably this is normal like...no one really educated me about this."

The role of the family in disempowering women cannot be overstated. The body of interviews repeatedly reinforced its foundational role in entrenching the idea of honour ingrained into the female body thereby rendering any perceived transgressions as shameful and worthy of immediate rebuke and disciplining. For example, Zainab extensively talked about how her mother repeatedly inculcated the notion of 'sin' vis-a-vis the female body into her psyche and how it was something she struggled with to this day.

"Anything which is not common in our family if we do that, it is considered to be a sin or "the girl will get spoilt". For example, one year ago I uploaded a photograph on sexual abuse and so the photograph was with some makeup of domestic violence. And only my face was seen till up to the chest but I was wearing a towel, my account was public and some relative saw it and told my mother and I was given hell for the next six months, like my father freaked out, my mother freaked out, she called me a "whore" at the age of 24-25 years in the car in front of my sister she said, "You are a whore, are you a virgin? How did you manage to get that photograph" these are her

questions...There was a time when I had to apologise, I had to take down my account, my photo and the guy, the male cousin who pointed it out, who is younger than me, he also told, "look such a whore she has become after becoming a doctor."

"He said to his aunt, who had the audacity to tell my mother over the phone and my mother is telling me, "Look that kid is also calling you a whore." Even after I took down my account, my aunt also said, "you brought shame to me." And I am like can you just sit and talk to me? Can I just tell you what the photo is about, so contrary to what you think it is? NO. But in my family I can't talk, it's a one way conversation, they will speak and I have to listen; I cannot talk because it's "NOT MY AGE. I don't have experience and as a woman I am not worth it to talk. I have sinned so I should SHUT UP!" [voice quivers].

Very few of our participants referred to their families having given them the strength to believe in themselves. The monumental impact of positive parenting in raising strong women was particularly evident in the experiences shared by Sharmila from Mumbai and Anusree from Hyderabad. They talked about how their own parents and their homes were positive spaces where in topics such as puberty, menstruation, sex etc. were openly discussed and they were made aware of numerous issues at an early age itself. This enabling environment provided by them is in sharp contrast to experiences shared by Amanat, Khadeeja, Sakshi, Sonalika, Zainab and numerous others for whom the family was never a safe space wherein their trepidations and anxieties could be freely shared.

Summing up, this section tried to map the various factors that prevent bystanders from taking action. Lack of robust redressal systems and the tediousness of the system were key deterrents. Legal systems have failed owing to ineffective implementation as well as significant impunity enjoyed by those who misuse their powers- as evident from Zeenat's experience, the cops who did that to her remain scot-free even today. Fear of stigmatisation and being blamed for the violence also had an important role to play in women being able to speak up for themselves or for others. Dominant social scripts that determine regressive gender norms and stereotypes were identified as playing a pivotal role in normalising violence. And importantly, as most participants noted, family often functioned as the primary unit of surveillance and gender conditioning.

5. Reflections: The event versus the everyday

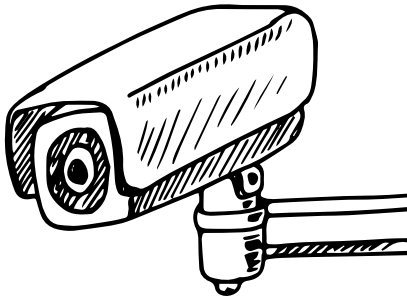
This report has attempted to unpack processes determining actions from both the bystanders' and survivors' perspectives. The thick descriptive format that we have applied presents a clear, granular analysis of how gender is systematically constructed through the everyday accretion of gendered roles and practice. These provide the scaffolding of gender ideologies that are then reflected in acts of VAW which, in turn, reinforces those very ideologies. This implies, therefore, that it is the everyday forms of violence that require careful study which is pivotal in determining responses to violence. Intervention must not be just about confronting perpetrators, but also about challenging deep-rooted practices that lock women in a regressive gender matrix from which they find it difficult to break out of. Without asking larger questions about social make-up and power structures, intervention in any meaningful sense as well as long(er)-term change is not possible. Sitara, a journalism student from Delhi, sums it up perfectly when she observes,

> *"... people have normalised violence so much that if something happens to a girl, you are not supposed to raise your voice, just keep it to yourself and forget it. Why should we forget? Why can't you question? Family's respect, society's impression, our freedom will get curbed...I feel that the kind of complex society in India that we have created, where we use abuses which involve mothers and sisters. We have normalised everything, rape culture, etc. If we want to change something, we should change the stories, but we see stories like Tere Naam [film], we see songs where women are treated as eye candies...a girl has to think about everything before she takes any step, she has to think about her parents pride, her family's respect. Why do we have to think?"*

In conclusion, we would like to leave with a few reflections on the ideologies of space and how processes of 'othering' influenced by social identities are integral to understanding questions of women's safety and empowerment. We also make a case for a decisive shift in approaches towards the question of women's safety from the present infantilising mode wherein women are projected as objects in need of saving to one that recognises women's agency and their right to have absolute access to all spaces.

5.1. Girls just want to have fun: Shifting women's safety discourse from 'protection' to 'pleasure'

The state's response to violence in public spaces and public transport has always been protectionist. From installing CCTVs to women only buses and metro compartments, such protectionist measures address part of the problem. Lately, technological interventionist innovations such as safety apps mentioned by some of our Hyderabad participants have been promoted with much fanfare. However,



these methods tend to function more as reactionary responses to incidents of violence after they have occurred. Moreover, they put the onus of safety on women and girls. In some cases, like in the case of safety applications, they exclude a large section of the population which does not have access to smartphones, a prerequisite for many technology-driven solutions. Further, such interventions do not invest in altering mindsets that condone violence against women. Therefore, it is imperative to imagine proactive measures that help ensure women's safety without sacrificing their freedom and accessibility.

Both the official and popular discourse around women's safety needs to engage with the idea of pleasure for women– their right to roam around and freely engage with the world, their right to have fun and feel joy. Our interviews, particularly with young women, highlighted this aspect of their wanting equal access to spaces sans moral prescriptions and proscriptions. The incident shared by Shakeel (in section 3.4.7, p.28) about how patrolling helped mitigate the problem of boys' sexually explicit behaviour did not tell us the other side of this act: that, now, the girls too were under surveillance for potentially transgressive behaviour. Families and neighbourhoods, while creating webs of protection simultaneously bind women to culturally and socially sanctioned gender practices.

Moreover, discourse around safety is implicitly structured around the normative, middle-class woman who is assumptively from a privileged caste, able-bodied, often young and always heterosexual; anyone else remains a deviant or anomaly who is left unaccounted for. The corollary of this is that she is at risk of violence from men who are patently not of the same social groups, i.e. he is 'lower-class' and, by implication, violent. What this effaces from view, and which our data makes evident is that, in fact, violence is a continuum of everyday actions which are perpetrated as much within the physical and socially constructed space of the 'home' by proximate others, including within the middle-class, as much as they are outside this space by unknown strangers.

And what of the woman who does not conform to the ideal presented in the previous paragraph? For example, Prasad, in his conversations with us, talked about how he witnessed a migrant woman and a lady living on the streets being subjected to regular violence. The state's official narratives vis-a-vis protecting women seldom refer to these two categories of women– the migrant labourer and the pavement dweller who live in a vicious cycle of vulnerability precipitated by poverty. Tharini, a participant from Kolkata whose mother is a professional sex worker, told us how due to her mother's job she was always treated with scorn and ridicule by the larger society where she interacted. She was also sent to a school far away from her home so as to protect her both from stigma as well as men thinking they could make a pass at her owing to her background. While the second phase of our interviews were ongoing the gang rape of a young Dalit girl allegedly by dominant-caste men in Hathras was reported and a few of our participants mentioned how disturbed they were by the brutality of the incident and how abysmally the case had been handled by the state apparatus. Sonalika and Ananya, two participants from Kolkata who work in the development sector, drew parallels with the situation of women from tribal communities with whom they interacted in their work. Sonalika described forced sterilisation drives carried out by the state in the tribal belts; these routinely devalue the lives and rights of women in marginalised tribal communities by invalidating their say over what happened to their bodies.[16]

[16] https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/dead-tribal-woman-gave-consent-for-sterilisation-227441-2014-11-17

Similarly, space in India is inherently exclusionary by virtue of being defined by broader power paradigms involving class, caste, ethnicity, gender, and disability. Space is neither inherently safe or unsafe– it is the socio-political dynamics that makes it so. Our interviews foregrounded how the seemingly clear-cut binary of 'private' and the 'public' is fluid terrain, a distinction that is particularly fraught in cases of DV which formed a substantial number of the intervention stories. The bogey of the 'private' was also conveniently used by numerous perpetrators to ensure no interference from bystanders. What might appear to be a deceptively clear-cut case of VAW in a public space is very easily rendered into a private matter among the two individuals by invoking the relationship between them, whether of kinship or (romantic) partnership. The notion of the private immediately signals to observers that no interference will be brooked in the matter.

Additionally, the element of moral codes render certain women more vulnerable to censure than others. Always implicit in the narrative of protecting women and keeping them safe is the assumption of the kind of women who need or deserve to be protected. The codes that determine these are defined by larger socio-political and cultural forces. Thus, it is vital that a shift be made from a language of protection and saving which imbibes patriarchal value systems to one of inclusivity wherein we can imagine spaces open and accessible to all people.[17]

5.2 In conclusion: Re-framing bystander intervention

This research has been conceptualised around three main aims, re-presented below:

- Explore bystanders' understandings of VAW, i.e. the range of actions and events that they understood and categorised as violence and, therefore, felt the need to respond to
- Explore the factors which encourage and prevent bystanders from intervening when they witness VAW
- Explore the effects of bystanders' actions to intervene in a VAW event

In this section we summarise briefly the import of the data on each of these issues by turn.

5.2.1. Understandings of VAW

The data from this research indicate firstly, that participants used the term VAW to describe a range of actions which they thought constituted violence, i.e. this was not restricted to physical violence. It should also be noted that a number of participants had had some exposure to gender sensitisation training at one point or the other. In spite of this, though, when asked to describe VAW that they had witnessed the most dominant types referred to DV. This seems to point to the fact that there is a default mode of thinking that links VAW first and foremost to physical violence even when individuals have an understanding of the broader nature of VAW.

The second important point that emerges from the data is that often people when they witness violence, they immediately recognise it to be wrong yet do not have the vocabulary to identify it as violence against women and to articulate that women have the right to live without violence. Thus

[17] Phadke, S. (2013). Unfriendly Bodies, Hostile Cities: Reflections on Loitering and Gendered Public Space; Why Loiter. Economic and Political Weekly, 48(39), 50-59.

efforts to reduce VAW through encouraging bystanders to intervene must also necessarily equip bystanders with the specific language to identify what they are acting against.

5.2.2. Factors underpinning the intervention

The issue of what motivates individuals to intervene or not is no easy question to answer since the participants' narratives around this are complex. The key point that appears to emerge is that individuals want to act in the right way, often referring to this as a duty to act. However, what is right is also already shaped by their understanding of VAW.

Often the intervention is shaped by the idea of protecting women, and although it might be effective in ending an incident of VAW, it can reinforce patriarchal scripts. Thus, there is no straight line between an effective intervention and a rejection of traditional forms of gender roles, i.e. they are not equivalent. Forms of intervention motivated by protecting women are situated, as mentioned in the section reviewing the literature, in women's bodies as being the bearers of family and community honour. The intervenor is thus very much in control of who they see as 'worthy' of acting for, i.e. women need to be seen as morally deserving of the support of others as described in section 5.1.

This is in stark contrast to those participants, mostly women, who were motivated by the sense of anger and injustice of the violence they have themselves experienced and witnessed others undergoing. This motivation tends to distinguish less between women deserving or undeserving of support and sees the intervention much more as a right to being safe.

The last significant issue that this section describes is of acting as an individual or in a group. Numerous participants described the difficulty of intervening when they were alone; all of them talked about the far greater safety of acting when in a group. However, this raised the issue of how to spontaneously bring a group into being when suddenly witnessing an act of violence. Associated with this issue is that many participants feared, and described, negative repercussions of intervening. This was further complicated by the issue of what is public and what is private. Our interviews foregrounded how the seemingly clear cut binary of the 'private' and the 'public' was in fact fluid terrain especially in cases of DV. The bogey of the 'private' was also conveniently used by numerous perpetrators to ensure no interference from bystanders. Thus, what might appear to be a deceptively clear-cut case of VAW in a public space is very easily rendered into a private matter among the two individuals by invoking the relationship between them, whether of kinship or (romantic) partnership. The notion of the private immediately signals to observers that no interference will be brooked in the matter.

In concluding this report can only reinforce what has been stated throughout this report in myriad ways. The act of immediate intervention needs to be accompanied by longer-term institutional measures that support people who face violence as well as those who choose to intervene. These institutional mechanisms refer as much to formal as well as informal social mechanisms. Ultimately, it is not just the code around intervening or not intervening that needs to be shifted, but, in order for this to be a sustainable change, it has to be buttressed by a greater understanding of VAW and the gender-discrimination that underpins it.

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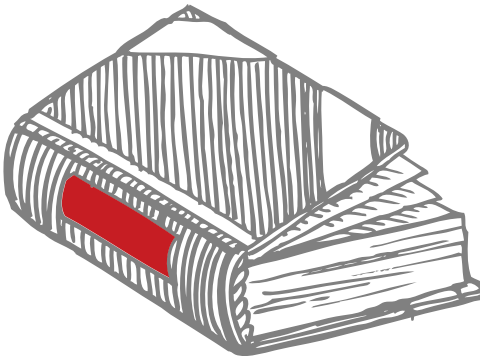

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Annexure 1

Quant survey results

As delineated in the Methodology the self-administered survey was conceptualised with the hope to broadly map common sites of VAW and kinds of and challenges to intervention. The aim of the survey was to be able to generate data on the following:

- The prevalence of various types of VAW
- The spaces where women experience VAW
- Whether or not they are able to call attention to the incident to stop it themself or by asking bystanders for help
- Whether or not bystanders come to the assistance of women facing VAW in public, and whether they do so on their own or due to the survivor calling attention to this
- Whether survivors report the VAW incident and what percentage of them do so

The survey was structured in such a way that depending on participant's gender- female, other and male- they were directed to a specific set of questions. As our primary aim was to understand if and how women experienced violence in public spaces (Section 4) with a focus on transportation (Section 5), the set of questions dealing with the personal experience of VAW across these two spaces were earmarked for those participants who identified themselves as women or other. Queries that were formulated to map larger dynamics vis a vis intervention were open to all genders (Section 6).

The survey was taken by a total of 721 participants and it generated interesting, though patchy, responses which we present below.

Public space

For the purpose of the survey we defined 'Public Space' as all kinds of spaces outside of people's homes with an exception of public transportation. The rationale of this division was to capture VAW as experienced in public transport distinctly.

Our first set of questions were framed around understanding how many of our participants who identified as female and other experienced violence in public spaces.

- 78.4% of the respondents said they experienced violence
- 21.6% said they had not experienced violence

Out of the 78.4% who experienced violence - 50% were able to speak up or confront the perpetrator. Out of this 62% said that the violence stopped as a result of them speaking up, 17% said the situation further escalated and 20% said they had to involve authorities.

Public transport

Public transport was defined as means of transportation regularly used for commuting such as buses, trains, autos/shared autos, cabs etc.

Here again, our first set of questions were designed to understand how many of our participants who identified as female and others experienced violence in public spaces.

- 68% experienced violence
- 32% said they had not experienced any violence

Out of the 68% who did experience violence - 60% were able to speak up or confront the perpetrator. Out of this 73% said that the violence stopped as a result of them speaking up, 12% said the situation further escalated and 14% said they had to involve authorities.

Speaking up and its ramifications

The survey provided a glimpse into the possible consequences of a survivor speaking up or confronting the perpetrator in case of violence (as collated from responses to Section 1 and Section 2). Figure 1 presents an illustration of the percentage of people who were able to speak up or confront their perpetrator while Figure 2 gives a sense of the results of their actions.

Figure 1: Experience of violence

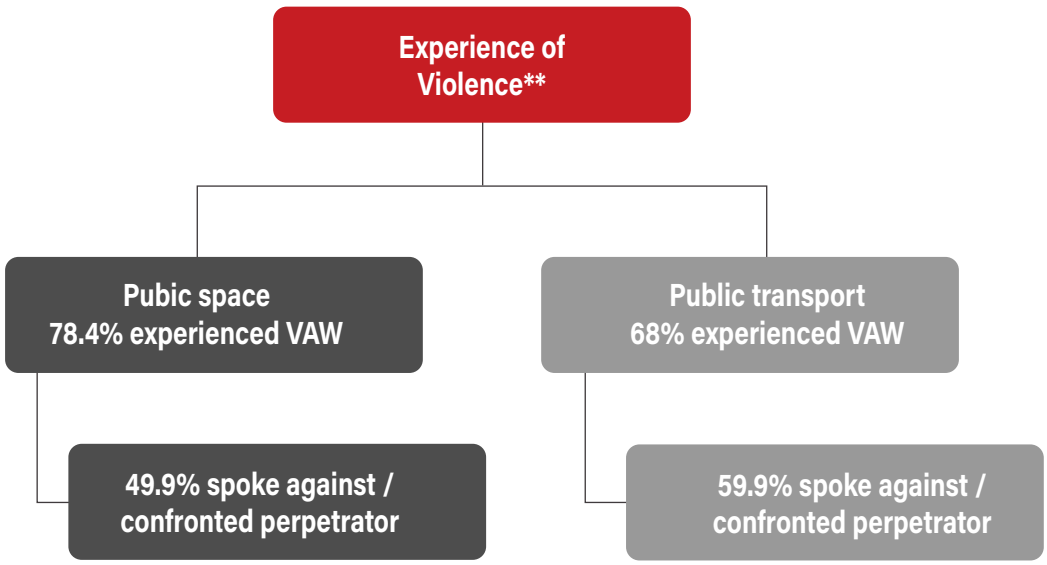
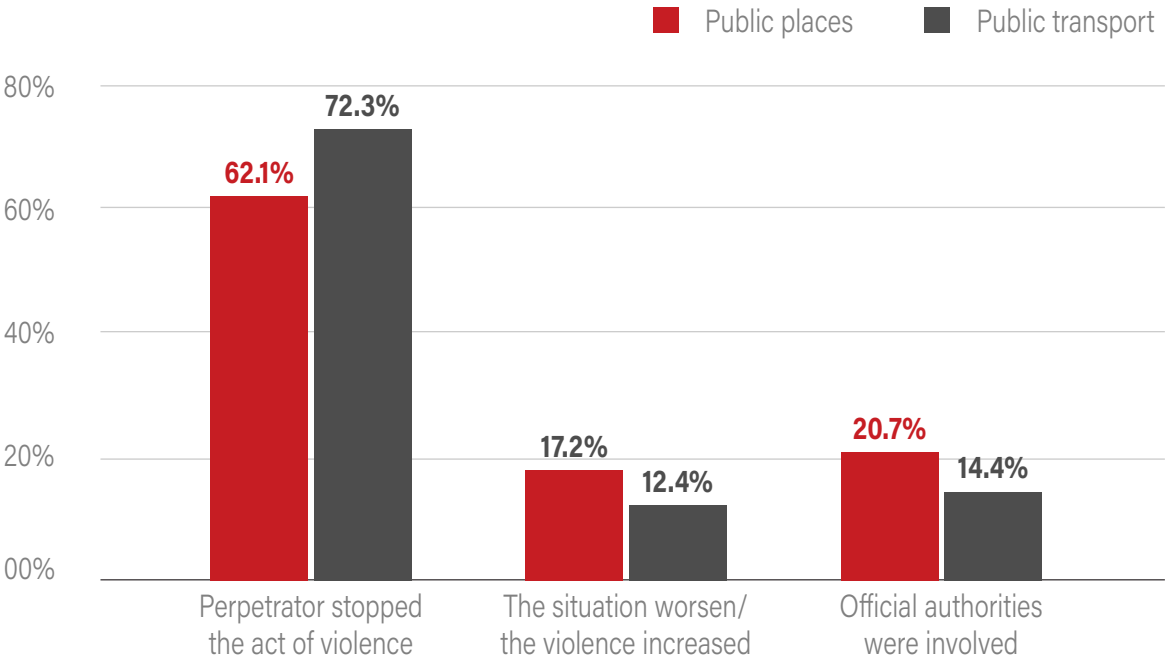


Figure 2: Result of speaking up / confronting perpetrator**



** Responses are from participants who identify as female or others about their own experience of facing violence and speaking up against it or confronting the perpetrators

In an effort to add a layer of depth as to why bystanders intervene when respondents (female and others) were faced with violence, we offered three possible reasons in the survey and requested them to choose.

- Survivor raised an alarm
- Bystander witnessed violence and came forward
- Bystander observed survivor's discomfort and came forward

The numerical breakup and variations in violence as experienced differently in public spaces and public transport is presented below in the form of pie charts.

Reasons for intervention:

Figure 3: Reasons for intervention in public places*

- Survivor raised an alarm
- Bystander witnessed the violence and intevened
- Bystander observer survivor's discomfort and intervened
- Bystander both witnessed the violence and observed survivor's discomfort then intervened

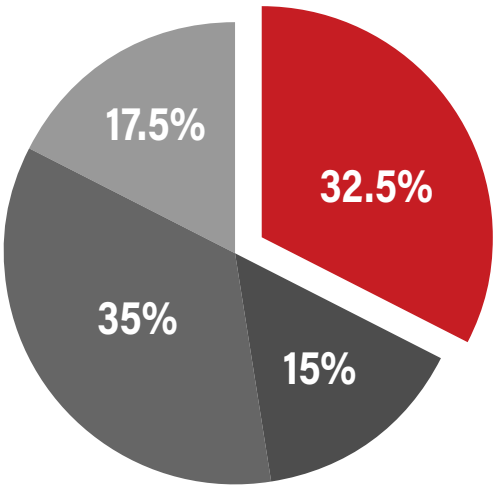
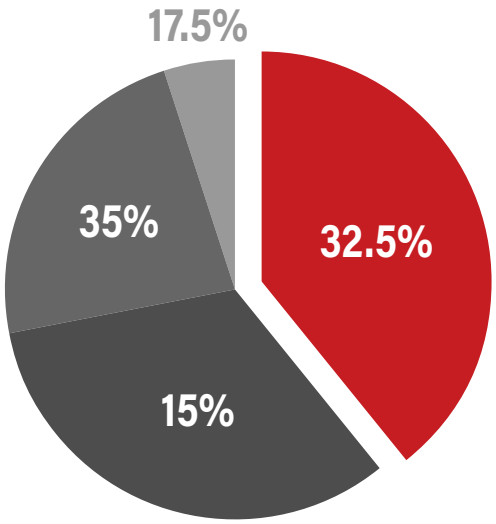


Figure 4: Reasons for intervention in public transport*

- Survivor raised an alarm
- Bystander witnessed the violence and intevened
- Bystander observer survivor's discomfort and intervened
- Bystander both witnessed the violence and observed survivor's discomfort then intervened



* These results were extrapolated from participants identifying as female or other genders and their understanding of reasons behind why bystanders intervened in violence against women and girls.

Our next set of questions (Section 6) dealt with experiences of intervention and were open to all participants irrespective of gender. Intervention was defined as any attempt to stop the violent act, e.g. physically ending it, speaking out or calling attention to it, or involving official authorities etc.

513 participants answered Section 6. 55% of them had experiences of intervention while 45% did not. Here again, three options were given as possible reasons and the following is the percentage breakup of the responses to:

Survivor raised an alarm	**16%**
Bystander witnessed the incident and came forward to help	**29%**
Bystander observed survivor's discomfort and came forward to help	**55%**

With regard to possible reasons for not intervening, participants were given six options. The options along with the percentage breakup of responses is the following:

I get blamed for the violent incident against the woman/ girl	**3%**
I worried about my safety	**31%**
I worried about being dragged into a legal/ police matter	**12%**
It was none of my business	**9%**
The woman did not ask for help	**11%**
I did not know what to do (signifying lack of informations)	**39%**

In the final section, Section 7 of the survey participants were asked an open-ended question about what they felt constituted an ideal bystander response to VAW. Out of 721 participants only 137 people- 119 female and 18 male- answered the question. Some of the responses from the participants are documented below. The comments show some overlap with some of the themes detailed in the report.

Female fury:

I want the people to condemn such indecent acts that make them show their superiority by being males who by patriarchal means are considered head of the families. They need to be hanged to death. There is simply no aid to cure their sick mind that has grown to be a terror causing element in a society.

Failure of systems and institutions:

I want people to come forward to help the women in the situation. And along with that authority to should take action without traumatizing the women. Because in one of the incidents i have noticed the women was in very discomforting situation and when authority came forward they questioned that women more than other person like she is the one to blame. They judged women more than they blamed other person.

Lack of information:

The victim in my personal situation seemed was getting beaten by who seemed like her husband. After I asked her if she needs my help he stopped hitting. Though I was very sure that the violence would continue the moment they step in their home. I am not sure what bystanders can do in such a situation

Family/societal pressure to not intervene:

To not to be mute spectators but intervene. I also have not been able to intervene at every place I wanted to. Many a times as a young person when you have seniors of the family travelling with you they decide whether it is worth raising a voice . I regret doing what they expected of me. I have always supported the woman raising her voice. I now raise my voice every time.

The moral component: Violence is wrong

When it comes to violence at public places, anyone men or women should be very aware not for just themselves, for people around them. Getting scared of the consequences will not lead you anywhere. However, as a bystander if you stop abuse, it does give you a sense of empowerment and a courage to not let anything abusive happen to you or stop if it is already happening.

For example, Mumbai local, many women feel uncomfortable stalking. In such case just an strong and fearless eye contact by a bystander or victim herself would probably work. Just raise the Voice, because not saying anything is not going to help either. As bystander at least don't leave the place by saying it doesn't matter to you. For some instances you don't have to do anything, just stand over there . If that doesn't help you should intervene. Because though we can't stop it, we can significantly reduce the GBV.

Annexure 2

Quantitative Survey

Survey: Experiences of VAW and bystander intervention

Introduction

Who are we?
Breakthrough is an organisation which works on ending violence* against women. We engage with people through campaigns and direct interventions on issues of gender-based violence and discrimination. One of the issues we are interested in understanding is women's experiences of violence, and associate with that we also want to understand what motivates or would motivate people to act or speak against a public act of violence against women which they witness, both in general public spaces, buildings etc. as well as on public transport. Would you be interested in helping us learn more about this issue?

Who are you?
Are you a woman who has experienced violence in a public space? Are you someone who has tried to prevent or spoken out against a public act of violence against a woman or girl? Would you be willing to share your experience with us?

What do we aim to do?
If you would like to share your experiences we would be glad to hear them. We would like to know whether you experienced violence in a 'public' space such as roads, markets, or in public transport such as buses and trains and what occurred thereafter. We would also like to know whether you have intervened to prevent an act of violence you have witnessed or raised your voice against it in any way, and what happened thereafter.

This data will be used for advocacy through designing a campaign to that aim to engage with bystanders to intervene when they witness violence against women.

Your participation in this survey is entirely voluntary.

* Violence refers to physical, verbal, sexual or mental abuse/assault/harassment

Consent

I understand

- that the answers I give will be used for research and advocacy purposes
- my identity will not be revealed anywhere without my explicit consent

1. Age

2. Sex

1. Female	2. Male	3. Other

3. City/Town of residence

4. Have you experienced violence in a public space (not in buses, trains, autos, metro, taxis)? (only if answer to Q2=1 or 3)

1. No	2. Yes

4.1. If yes, were you able to speak up or confront the person? (only if answer to Q4=2)

1. No	2. Yes

4.2. If yes, what happened as a result? (only if answer to Q4.1=2)

1. The perpetrator stopped the act of violence	2. The situation worsened/ the violence increased	3. Official authorities were involved

4.3. Did anyone come forward to help you?

1. No	2. Yes

4.4. If yes, then what prompted them to come forward? (only if answer to Q4.3= 2)

1. I raised an alarm	2. Person witnessed the incident and came forward	3. Person observed my discomfort and came forward

Cont...

5. Have you experienced violence while taking public transport? (only if answer to Q2=1 or 3)

1. No	2. Yes

5.1. If yes, were you able to speak up or confront the person? (only if answer to Q5=2)

1. No	2. Yes

5.2. If yes, what happened as a result? (only if answer to Q5.1=2)

1. The perpetrator stopped the act of violence	2. The situation worsened/ the violence increased	3. Official authorities were involved

5.3. Did anyone come forward to help you?

1. No	2. Yes

6. Have you intervened* in any incident of violence against a woman or girls that you have witnessed in a public place? *intervention can refer to any attempt to stop the violent act, e.g. physically ending it, speaking out or calling attention to it, or involving official authorities etc. (only if answer to Q2= 2)

1. No	2. Yes

6.1. What prompted you to intervene? (only if answer to Q6=2)

1. Woman/ girl raised an alarm	2. I witnessed the incident and intervened	3. I observed woman's/ girl's discomfort and intervened

6.2. What happened as a result of your intervention? (only if answer to Q6=2)

1. The perpetrator stopped the act of violence	2. The situation worsened/ the violence increased	3. Official authorities were involved

6.3. If you did not intervene what was the reason? (only if answer to Q6=1)
(Tick all answers that apply)

1. I get blamed for the violent incident against the woman/ girl	2. I worried about my safety	3. I worried about being dragged into a legal/ police matter	4. It was none of my business	5. The woman did not ask for help	6. I did not know what to do

7. How would you ideally like bystanders to intervene/help in scenarios of gender based violence?

Annexure 3

List of participants - phase 1 and 2

S. No	Participant Names	Age/Age Group	Gender	Location	Rural/ Urban	Profession/ Occupation	Date of Interview	Individual/ Group Interview
1	Maheer	20	Male	Delhi	Urban	Student	3 Jul 2020	Group
2	Devesh	20	Male	Delhi	Urban	Student	3 Jul 2020	Group
3	Shantanu	20	Male	Delhi	Urban	Student	3 Jul 2020	Group
4	Apurv	18	Male	Delhi	Urban	Student	3 Jul 2020	Group
5	Prashant	19	Male	Delhi	Urban	Student	3 Jul 2020	Group
6	Rajmala	18	Female	Delhi	Urban	Student	3 Jul 2020	Group
7	Ashmita	18	Female	Delhi	Urban	Student	3 Jul 2020	Group
8	Sweety	18	Female	Delhi	Urban	Student	3 Jul 2020	Group
9	Pinky	19	Female	Delhi	Urban	Student	3 Jul 2020	Group
10	Nisha	18	Female	Delhi	Urban	Student	3 Jul 2020	Group
11	Sitara	19-25	Female	Delhi	Urban	Student	1 Aug 2020	Group
12	Jaya	19	Female	Delhi	Urban	Student	1 Aug 2020	Group
13	Babli	25+	Female	Delhi	Urban	Social Worker	1 Aug 2020	Group
14	Amar	25+	Male	Delhi	Urban	Social Worker	23 Aug 2020	Individual
15	Shikhar	19-25	Male	Delhi	Urban	Student	23 Aug 2020	Individual
16	Shravan	31	Male	Delhi	Urban	Behavioural Economist	2 Oct 2020	Individual
17	Roopmala	21	Female	Delhi	Urban	Student	2 Nov 2020	Group
18	Amrit	27	Male	Delhi	Urban	Student	2 Nov 2020	Group
19	Saira	25	Female	Delhi	Urban	Student	6 Nov 2020	Individual
20	Shakeel	30	Male	Delhi	Urban	Private Tutor	6 Nov 2020	Individual
21	Chaman	19-25	Male	Gaya	Rural	Student	16 Jul 2020	Individual
22	Kasturba	25+	Female	Gaya	Rural	Social Worker	22 Jul 2020	Group
23	Mala	25+	Female	Gaya	Rural	Social Worker	22 Jul 2020	Group
24	Pratistha	25+	Female	Haryana	Rural	Professor	1 Aug 2020	Group
25	Neelu	19-25	Female	Haryana	Rural	School Teacher	28 Aug 2020	Individual
26	Nazar	19-25	Male	Haryana	Rural	Student	28 Aug 2020	Individual
27	Sonam	25+	Female	Haryana	Rural	Government Official	21 Aug 2020	Individual
28	Bhavana	19-25	Female	Haryana	Rural	Student	21 Aug 2020	Individual
29	Vinay	19-25	Male	Haryana	Rural	Government Official	22 Aug 2020	Individual
30	Jagdeep	25+	Male	Haryana	Rural	Government Official	27 Aug 2020	Individual
31	Ragini	25+	Female	Haryana	Rural	Student	1 Aug 2020	Group
32	Madhulika	19-25	Female	Hazaribagh	Rural	Student	8 Jul 2020	Individual

S. No	Participant Names	Age/Age Group	Gender	Location	Rural/ Urban	Profession/ Occupation	Date of Interview	Individual/ Group Interview
33	Vijay	19-25	Male	Hazaribagh	Rural	Journalist	8 Jul 2020	Individual
34	Ullesh	25+	Male	Hazaribagh	Rural	PRI member	8 Jul 2020	Group
35	Bahadur	25+	Male	Hazaribagh	Rural	School Teacher	8 Jul 2020	Group
36	Shivani	19-25	Female	Hazaribagh	Rural	Homemaker	10 Jul 2020	Individual
37	Kajal	25+	Female	Hazaribagh	Rural	Homemaker	9 Jul 2020	Individual
38	Sufian	19-25	Male	Hazaribagh	Rural	Student	9 Jul 2020	Group
39	Rajat	19-25	Male	Hazaribagh	Rural	Student	9 Jul 2020	Group
40	Nirmal	25+	Male	Hazaribagh	Rural	Landowner	10 Jul 2020	Individual
41	Shishir	25+	Male	Hazaribagh	Rural	Social Worker	22 Jul 2020	Group
42	Soumya	43	Female	Hyderabad	Urban	Homemaker	12 Oct 2020	Individual
43	Kalyani	23	Female	Hyderabad	Urban	Law Student	14 Oct 2020	Individual
44	Raj	19	Male	Hyderabad	Urban	Student	15 Oct 2020	Individual
45	Radha	32	Female	Hyderabad	Urban	Psychiatrist	16 Oct 2020	Individual
46	Payal	29	Female	Hyderabad	Urban	Student	16 Oct 2020	Individual
47	Zafirah	25	Female	Hyderabad	Urban	Student	16 Oct 2020	Individual
48	Uma	29	Female	Hyderabad	Urban	Development Professional	20 Oct 2020	Individual
49	Bhama	25	Female	Hyderabad	Urban	Chartered Accountant	22 Oct 2020	Individual
50	Zainab	25	Female	Hyderabad	Urban	Doctor	23 Oct 2020	Individual
51	Shyamlal	35	Male	Hyderabad	Urban	Social Worker	24 Oct 2020	Individual
52	Hyderali	19	Male	Hyderabad	Urban	Student	26 Oct 2020	Individual
53	Anusree	61	Female	Hyderabad	Urban	Counsellor	27 Oct 2020	Individual
54	Shradha	28	Female	Hyderabad	Urban	Engineer	27 Oct 2020	Individual
55	Renuka	41	Female	Hyderabad	Urban	Instructional Designer	1 Nov 2020	Individual
56	Sunita	24	Female	Hyderabad	Urban	Certified Counsellor	1 Nov 2020	Individual
57	Amina	28	Female	Hyderabad	Urban	Digital Marketer	17 Oct 2020 -24 Oct 2020	Individual
58	Anita	21	Female	Kolkata	Urban	Student	26 Sep 2020	Individual
59	Tharini	31	Female	Kolkata	Urban	Social Worker	26 Sep 2020	Individual
60	Anindita	33	Female	Kolkata	Urban	Content Writer	27 Sep 2020	Group
61	Sakshi	30	Female	Kolkata	Urban	Content Writer and Make-up artist	27 Sep 2020	Group
62	Rakesh	31	Male	Kolkata	Urban	Social Worker	27 Sep 2020	Group
63	Sabeeha	34	Female	Kolkata	Urban	Social Worker	27 Sep 2020	Group
64	Umang	29	Male	Kolkata	Urban	Social Health Worker	27 Sep 2020	Group
65	Sharanya	30	Female	Kolkata	Urban	Social worker/ Professional Writer	27 Sep 2020	Group

S. No	Participant Names	Age/Age Group	Gender	Location	Rural/ Urban	Profession/ Occupation	Date of Interview	Individual/ Group Interview
66	Sharad	40	Male	Kolkata	Urban	Research Scientist	30 Sep 2020	Individual
67	Avani	28	Female	Kolkata	Urban	Research Scientist	2 Oct 2020	Individual
68	Ananya	34	Female	Kolkata	Urban	Development Professional	2 Oct 2020	Individual
69	Ankit	28	Male	Kolkata	Urban	Entrepreneur	3 Oct 2020	Group
70	Subhash	27	Male	Kolkata	Urban	Entrepreneur	3 Oct 2020	Group
71	Aruna	22	Female	Kolkata	Urban	Student and Writer	3 Oct 2020	Group
72	Sravani	28	Female	Kolkata	Urban	Freelancer	4 Oct 2020	Group
73	Debjyoti	29	Female	Kolkata	Urban	Wellbeing Counsellor	4 Oct 2020	Group
74	Rani	35	Female	Kolkata	Urban	Freelancer	4 Oct 2020	Group
75	Farooq	24	Male	Kolkata	Urban	Apparel Designer	15 Oct 2020	Individual
76	Suman	33	Female	Mumbai	Urban	Home Maker	7 Oct 2020	Individual
77	Parizaad	32	Female	Mumbai	Urban	Lawyer	7 Oct 2020	Individual
78	Jagriti	20	Female	Mumbai	Urban	Student	9 Oct 2020	Individual
79	Amanat	40	Female	Mumbai	Urban	Counsellor	13 Oct 2020	Group
80	Khadeeja	38	Female	Mumbai	Urban	Counsellor	13 Oct 2020	Group
81	Onil	28	Male	Mumbai	Urban	Trainer - Social Sector	13 Oct 2020	Individual
82	Zeenat	26	Transgender	Mumbai	Urban	Photo Journalist	15 Oct 2020	Individual
83	Sharmila	28-29	Female	Mumbai	Urban	Entrepreneur	17 Oct 2020	Individual
84	Vaishali	40+	Female	Mumbai	Urban	Home Maker	19 Oct 2020	Individual
85	Nandita	35	Female	Mumbai	Urban	Fish Seller	21 Oct 2020	Individual
86	Tejaswini	44	Female	Mumbai	Urban	Salesperson	24 Oct 2020	Individual
87	Parman	27	Male	Mumbai	Urban	Film Industry	28 Oct 2020	Individual
88	Kabir	30	Male	Mumbai	Urban	Social Worker	29 Oct 2020	Individual
89	Prasad	38	Male	Mumbai	Urban	Architect	3 Nov 2020	Individual
90	Romita	55	Female	Mumbai	Urban	Street Hawker	19 Oct 2020 -28 Oct 2020	Individual
91	Sonalika	32	Female	Ranchi	Urban	Student	30 Sep 2020	Individual

Annexure 4

Qualitative interview guide

Consent:
Name:
Age:
Sex:
Marital status:
Address:
Block & District:
Interviewer name:

1. What types of violence have you witnessed?
2. How do people in your community usually react when they witness violence?
3. What are the reasons that you think they react the way they do?
4. How do you think that people should react when they witness violence?
5. What have you been told about how to react to violence as you have grown up?
6. How do you usually react when you see a violent act being committed?
7. What goes on in your mind when you see such an event happening in front of you?
8. Do you think there is a difference between how you act when you see violence and how others around act when they see violence?

8.1. If there is a difference, what do you think are the reasons for the difference?

9. Have you always reacted in this way when you see violence?

9.1. If not, then what is different about how you react now to violence from how you reacted earlier?
9.2. Are you able to act in a consistent manner when you witness violence?
9.3. If not, then in what makes it easier to act in some situations than in others?
10. If there has been change then what would you say is the reason for that change? Was there a specific event that motivated this change?
11. What do people around you say about the way you react when you witness violence?

11.1. How do you feel about what they say?

12. What do you say to others about your reactions/ actions when you witness violence?
13. What do you think will make others intervene when they witness violence?
14. Is there a difference between the ways in which women and men react to violence?
15. Is there a difference between the ways in which older and younger people react to violence?

Support structures:

16. Are there people around you who support your intervention?
17. How does the community (as a whole) react to incidents of violence against women?
18. If there is violence in your community is there a support group/ community group that would come to the aid of the person facing violence/ or the person who intervenes?

Breakthrough

Act. End Violence Against Women.

Data collection partners:

Rangeen Khidki Foundation

My Choices Foundation

Habitat and Livelihood Welfare Association

Report designed by:

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Supported by:

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