

End-Term Evaluation Report

Engaging People & Institutions for Change (EPIC): Promoting Violence-free Lives for Women in India

Submitted to



By



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Executive Summary

The report presented here is the endline evaluation report commissioned by OXFAM India and was carried out by the external evaluation agency Independent Thought.

Introduction

Violence is defined by the World Health Organization as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation¹. It is now accepted that violence negatively affects women's general well-being and prevents women from fully participating in society. It impacts their families, their community, and the country at large. The issue of gender-based violence in India has been creeping up the policy agenda over the past couple of years. And with substantial data, it proves one thing: rampant domestic violence against women in India is a reality. Prevention of domestic and gender based violence has been a key area of intervention of Oxfam India. The Project *Engaging People and Institutions for Change (EPIC)* was launched in March 2017 in 165 villages across the states of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh to consolidate Oxfam's multi-dimensional efforts on this issue. This project sought to impact the lives of more than 52,000 direct beneficiaries and more than 1.5 Lakhs indirect beneficiaries.

Methodology

The present study is the endline evaluation of this EPIC project and had been undertaken by Independent Thought to assess the project's impact, achievements, best practices, gaps and challenges. The study was conducted in a participatory manner where on field data was collected using the OXFAM approved tools developed by Independent Thought. Data was collected from 21 districts across 4 intervention states. The respondents for the study included household respondents (both male and females), Community Based Group (CBG) members, District level Service providers, Bano Nayee Soch (BNS) leaders and survivors of Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG). The secondary data for this report was collected from the project and partner documents shared by Oxfam India. The findings from the data was compiled and is presented in the Main Finding Chapter of this report.

Findings and Conclusion: The respondents of almost all the category shared that before the implementation of the EPIC project, there was little or no awareness regarding the women's rights and the project has been instrumental in bringing about changes in attitude and practice at village level. Women are now better informed and are aware of their rights. There has been a definite shift in the social perception of VAWG and this is reflected in the decreased incidence rates of domestic violence and child marriages. Resolution of issues concerning women and girls through informal systems and group meetings has also helped in minimising violence. Awareness about laws and in cases of continued violence and failed conciliations, women have asserted their rights and there has been an increase in the reporting of the cases of domestic violence and the number of such cases being referred to by the VWAG has increased from 38 in 2017-18 to 213 cases in 2019-2020².



¹<https://www.who.int/violenceprevention/approach/definition/en/>

² Annual report 2017-2018 and 2019-2020

These numbers also reflect that the victims of violence, with appropriate intervention at the right time, can become a great source of strength and guidance to other violence victims.



Across States, the respondents on field shared that women have started participating in the Gram Sabha and raising their voices on issues concerning them like building of toilets and roads. The women in the village are also involved in helping other women and girls who become victims of domestic violence. Women have also been instrumental in preventing child marriages. They are also part of the village level protection system. Training and capacity programmes for women and girls has been an integral part of this project which have made them capable of functioning as a unit independent of the implementing partner. Women's groups have been strengthened enough to be able to meet and discuss relevant issues and resolve them in the best possible manner. Most cases of domestic violence and/or child marriages are resolved by these women's group and village level. However, in complicated matter or in the cases of repeat offenders, the group members do not hesitate to involve the Mukhiya, police or even the ward members for intervention. Organizing women and girls into groups and ensuring their participation in the monthly meetings held also helped in cultivating strong bonds between them.

Recommendations –

- OIN is the flag bearer on gender justice along with its partners in India and symbiotic relationship is beneficial for overall movement. Partnerships have been nurtured over decades and there should be efforts, to preserve and strengthen.
- The project was well conceived and had critical components towards the larger goal of gender justice, however the project planning in terms of number of groups formation and engagements was experienced to be too spread across. Focus on quality while decreasing quantity could be a better strategy.
- The modules were found to be too exhaustive and use of other IEC materials with simplified legal / procedural information could be used in future as handouts/pamphlets
- Implementation delays in terms of rolling out of the modules, its timely availability in local language etc should be ensured
- Attention should be given to staff remunerations as it has a bearing on the quality and motivation and time spent. Budgetary allocation for field programme was also felt to be too meager; which must be looked at.
- BNS youth leaders was a good concept, but there were little plans for their action in field. Their potential could be used as the 'new voice' of the society. They can act as the role model for others. It was felt that BNS could have been used as a TOT / cascade model, to be more effective.
- Engaging boys, men and college youth has great potential that must be further explored.
- Sustainability aspects of the programme have to be in built and a proper exit plan and execution must be part of the plan itself.

1. Introduction

Women will work out their destinies – much better too than men can ever do for them. All the mischief to women has come because men undertook to shape the destiny of women.....

– Swami Vivekananda

Indian society has been often accused of harboring negative gender bias and perpetuating gender based discrimination and violence in the name of culture and societal pressure. Today, armed with legal provisions economic requirements, women and girls do enjoy the perks of a democratic society. They are, in many ways, as equal as men, at least in the eyes of the constitutions. However, in the race to make women and girls as 'good' as men, most of the focus remained on women and girl 'development'. We, as a country, overlooked the fact that for and transformation to take place, both men and women have to be made equally responsible. The men and boys were left behind in the government's effort to uplift the women. So, today, in the 21st century, women and girls are on the threshold of liberation but are being held back by the men have not been equipped to deal with the aspirations of the new age women.

Violence against Women

Violence is defined by the World Health Organization as the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either result in or have a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal development or deprivation³. Similarly, Article 1 of The United Nations Declaration of Violence Against Women 1993, defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life. It is now accepted that violence negatively affects women's general well-being and prevents women from fully participating in society. It impacts their families, their community, and the country at large. It has tremendous costs, from greater strains on health care to legal expenses and losses in productivity⁴.

The present condition of women in India:

According to National Crime Record Bureau's 'Crime in India 2019' Report there were about 4,05,861 cases of crimes against women in 2019 and Uttar Pradesh topped the list with 59,853 such incidents, and this can be stated as the major challenge to women development and empowerment.

Despite existence of a number of special legislations for providing protection to women, crime against women has increased. The National Commission for Women (NCW) registered an increase of at least 2.5 times in domestic violence complaints since the nationwide lockdown and in September the government told Parliament that legal assistance through the National Legal Services Authority was provided in a total of 2,878 cases of domestic violence in the lockdown period of April to June⁵. The latest NHFS data also indicates that every 3rd women in India has faced some form of domestic violence, 27% of them have faced physical violence but only 14% of them ever sought support to end it.

³<https://www.who.int/violenceprevention/approach/definition/en/>

⁴<https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women>

⁵<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/not-rape-domestic-violence-is-top-crime-against-women/articleshow/78494876.cms>

2. Methodology

a. Research Design

The endline evaluation of EPIC project which was implemented from April 2017 – Mar 2021 in the four states of Jharkhand, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, was with the following objectives;

- A. Understand the progress towards the impact of the project
- B. Assess strategies and models of change
- C. Identify and document as case studies the best practices and opportunities to strengthen the program
- D. Foster learning across partners and program working areas
- E. Foster learning across Oxfam Gender Justice programs and staff

The evaluation study has a participatory research design. Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected through The WHO guidelines and Government COVID guidelines were adhered during data collection process. *In-depth methodology including details of study area, respondents profile, tools developed, data collection process and limitations of the study is provided as Annexure 1 of the report.*

b. Universe, Study Area, Respondents and Tools

The universe of the study is 165 villages across 4 the States of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh where the EPIC project has been implemented. The samples for the evaluation were 24 villages (15% of the universe). The respondents for the study represented the wide range of direct beneficiaries of the project including survivors of domestic violence, key service providers, government officials and partner NGO staff members. A mix of random and purposive sampling method was used to identify the primary respondents for the house hold survey. For the KII tool, purposive sampling method was used for ensuring reliability of the data collected. The tools included survey questionnaire for household respondents, Key Informant Interview (KII) schedule for district level service providers, FGD form for CBG members and case study for VAWG survivors were developed in consultation with OXFAM team.

c. Data Collection, Entry and Analysis

For the purpose of data collection and analysis, some of the data was to be extracted from the documents, reports, etc shared by partner organizations and Oxfam India. This formed the Secondary Data for the Study. Additionally, desk review was carried out of guided material and resources relevant to understand and contextualize the key issue addressed by the project. The census data and other reliable government data sources like NFHS, NCRB was also reviewed and referred. The primary data collection process was spread across 45 days (15 Dec 2020 – 30 Jan 2021) for this study from across 4 states. To initiate the data collection process, Independent Thought had contacted the state level in-charge of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh⁶. The data collection commenced from 15th Dec onwards as the Oxfam partners were busy in conducting the scheduled “16 days of activism” in their respective intervention areas. The regional in-charge then connected us with their respective partners. Independent Thought also mailed their detailed field visit plan to Oxfam. After approval from the partners, the proposed field visit dates were finalized. The consistency of quality of data collection

⁶ The state incharge contacted were Ms Urmimala (Chhattisgarh), Ms. Susmita (Jharkhand), Ms. Rukmini (Odisha) and Ms. Meghna (Uttar Pradesh)

was assured through regular monitoring and cleaning of the data collected. Collected quantitative data was filtered in MS Excel while the qualitative findings were noted, compiled and analyzed for the report. The data was analyzed mainly for frequency and percentage. The data were classified and tabulated manually according to their attributes. The results of analysis were presented in tables, graphs, and interpretation. The qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis method. The transcripts of Interviews, FGDs and field notes were systematically coded and broken down theme wise for analysis. Qualitative analysis from questionnaires was done by identifying repeating words and themes. The data is presented in themes and interpretation of the results was drawn.

d. Challenges, Risk (General & COVID-19)

- Covid19 related restrictions were a hindrance to an extent. Impromptu field plan could not be carried out.
- The field activities have practically stopped in the last three quarters in the field due to Covid19 restrictions and groups engagements were impacted
- Partner nonpayment in last quarter has further disconnected the field interactions of the team, this was apparent from the efforts made in organizing meetings with group or respondents.
- Selection of villages by partners keeping in mind the COVID related restrictions, need not necessarily had all relevant respondents. There were some sample villages where the team could not locate BNS leader or VAWG survivor.

e. Protocol adopted for data collection under COVID-19

Data collection from the field was particularly challenging due to the COVID pandemic restrictions. The field enumerators were trained to follow the guidelines including social distancing, wearing of masks, regular hand washing etc.

3. Main Findings

This section presents the findings and analysis of the data collected during the evaluation study. This section gives the broad over view of the project with state wise findings. The quantitative indicators are presented on tabular format. These indicators have been presented with respect to the relevant project objectives for better understanding of the progress of the project

Respondent Profile (Household)

For the study, a total of 218 household respondents were interviewed. Of these, there were 145 females and 73 males. The tables below present the religion and caste wise distribution of the household respondents.

Table 1: Religion wise distribution of respondents

	Hindu	Muslim	Sarna ⁷	Total
Jharkhand	58	14	38	110
Odisha	60	0	0	60
Uttar Pradesh	21	7	0	21
Chhattisgarh	20	0	0	20
Total (2018)	159 (73%)	21 (10%)	38 (17%)	218

There were a total of 218 respondents out of which 110 were from Jharkhand, 60 were from Odisha, 28 from UP and 20 from Chhattisgarh. There were 159 Hindu respondents, 21 Muslim respondents and 38 Sarna respondents for the study.

Table 2: Caste wise distribution of respondents

	SC	ST	OBC	General
Jharkhand	21	38	51	0
Odisha	17	37	6	0
Uttar Pradesh	8	5	6	9
Chhattisgarh	0	20	0	0
Total (218)	46 (21%)	100 (46%)	63 (29%)	9 (4%)

The table above describes the caste wise distribution of the household respondents. Out of 218 respondents there were 100 respondents who belonged to the schedule tribes (ST) and there were 63 respondents who were from the other backward castes (OBS). A total of 46 respondents belonged to the scheduled caste and there were 9 general category respondents.

Outcome 1: Strengthened engagement of individuals, communities and institutions in reducing domestic violence and child marriage

The following tables present the findings of the data collected from the household respondents (Both male and female respondents) and indicate a definite change in the status of domestic violence in the intervention areas. Many of the tables reflect multiple response indicators. This section also incorporates the findings of the FGD conducted with the CBGs and the voices from the field. Care has been taken to put findings of similar indicators together so as to provide a more rounded perspective to the reader.

⁷ A tribe found in Jharkhand

Table 3: Prevalence of Domestic Violence (Household – male and female)

State	Common (N=16)	Declining (N=186)	No DV (N=6)	Don't Know (N=218)
Jharkhand	0	97	3	10
Odisha	0	57	3	0
Uttar Pradesh	16	12	0	0
Chhattisgarh	0	20	0	0
Total (N=218)	16 (7%)	186 (85%)	6 (3%)	10 (5%)

Key Finding and Analysis: The table suggests that out of the 218 respondents interviewed, 85% believed that the incidence rate of domestic violence in the intervention areas was on a decline. Out of the 85% (186), 52% respondents were from Jharkhand, 31% were from Odisha, 11% were from Chhattisgarh and 6% were from Uttar Pradesh. 7% respondents, all belonging to Uttar Pradesh, felt that DV was still common. Interestingly in Jharkhand and Odisha, the respondents gave positive responses and shared that either DV was on decline or there were no DV cases in their respective areas. Among respondents 124 out of 145 females interviewed and 65 out of 83 males interviewed maintaining that the case of DV were decreasing, it can be concluded that the project intervention has led to decline in the cases of DV which can be reflected as a definite achievement.

Table 4: Do you think violence against women is still treated as acceptable in your family/area?

State	Yes (N=23)	No (N=174)	Don't Know (N=21)	Total (N=218)
Chhattisgarh	0	20	0	20
Jharkhand	20	90	0	110
Odisha	0	60	0	60
Uttar Pradesh	3	4	21	28
Total (N=218)	23 (11%)	174 (80%)	21 (9%)	218 (100%)

The table above indicates that only 11% of the HH respondents believed that violence against women is acceptable in their respective communities. Majority of the respondents (80%) believed that post the EPIC intervention, violence against women is no longer a socially accepted norm. None of the respondents from either Odisha or Chhattisgarh agreed that VAWG was acceptable in their area/family. In Uttar Pradesh, most respondents (21/28) were unaware whether the gender based violence was acceptable in their area.

There were 111 out of 145 female respondents and 63 out of 83 male respondents who believed that violence against women and girls was unacceptable in their area or families. While the respondents from Jharkhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh were definitive in their opinion on this indicator. The responses in Uttar Pradesh reflect the need for more intervention.

Output 1: Individuals and communities have developed understanding on the links between social norms and violence against women and girls.

Table 5 : Acts/situations which may be termed as violence against women

State	Physical Beating (N=218)	Verbal Abuse (N=196)	Scolding for not having a son (N=177)	Demanding Dowry (N=209)	Making unsolicited sexual advances (N=157)	Sexual assault/violence/rape (N=153)	Mental harassment (N=193)	Restriction on movement/interactions (N=155)

Jharkhand	110	90	110	110	110	110	110	110
Odisha	60	58	20	59	20	8	57	20
Uttar Pradesh	28	28	27	20	7	15	6	5
Chhattisgarh	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Total(N=218)	218 (100%)	196 (90%)	177 (81%)	209 (96%)	157 (72%)	153 (70%)	193 (88%)	155 (71%)

The above table indicates the community's awareness on their understanding on the kind of domestic violence they witness around them. Everyone acknowledges physical beatings as violence and dowry demand is similarly recognized by 96% respondents. Verbal abuse (90%) and scolding for not having a male child (81%), sexual advances and assault including rape are now well recognized as violence against women. Restrictions imposed on a woman's movement and interaction is also not perceived as a 'protective' or 'caring' gesture any more with 71% respondents saying that this amounts to violence against women.

Community against violence – community empowerment

One of the major accomplishments of the EPIC project has been building up confidence and self-esteem of the direct beneficiaries including women children and youth. The focus of the awareness generation activities was to make the community members understand that gender based violence can never be justified. The trainings also encouraged the victims to speak up and seek help.

Table 6: HH response on who they share incidents of DV with

State	Parents / Sibling (N=110)	Friends (N=114)	Neighbor (N=114)	Pradhan (N=100)	NGO (N=214)	CBG (N=101)	Police (N=149)
Jharkhand	110	110	110	20	110	21	109
Odisha	0	0	0	60	60	60	20
Uttar Pradesh	0	4	4	0	24	0	0
Chhattisgarh	0	0	0	20	20	20	20
Total (N=218)	110 (50%)	114 (52%)	114 (54%)	100 (46%)	214 (98%)	101 (46%)	149 (68%)

The table above shows HH responses as to who they share incidences of DV with, and these are multiple response questions. 98% of the respondents would approach the NGO and 68% of the HH respondents chose to approach the police if they experience any form of gender violence and 54% chose to share it with their neighbours. There were 50% of the respondents who said that they shared their experience with their parents or their siblings and 46% said that they would approach the CBG for assistance under the given circumstances. Only 1 respondent out of 218 spoke about not sharing about VWAG incidents.

The community perception about the partner organizations in sorting matters related to VAWG seems to be overwhelmingly positive. The beneficiaries seem to have more confidence in the NGOs than even the police or the family members in cases related to gender based violence. One of the reasons for this confidence could also be the fact that almost all the 12 partner organizations have been working on this issue in their respective intervention areas long before the launch of the EPIC project.



Table 7: Do community members take any action when they come to know about a DV victim

State	Yes (N=210)	Don't Know (N=8)	Total (N=218)
Jharkhand	110	0	110
Odisha	60	0	60
Uttar Pradesh	20	8	28
Chhattisgarh	20	0	20
Total	210 (96%)	8 (4%)	218 (100%)

The table indicates that almost all the HH respondents interviewed shared that they were confident that their respective communities would surely take action if a VAWG case is brought to their notice. Community referrals have increased with 51 cases referred by the community, 3 cases were referred by teachers, 3 cases were referred by CSO members, 1 case each by doctor, ASHA, bank officer, media person, Anganwadi worker, and 6 cases were referred by gram *pradhans* and other members⁸.

Table 8: Increase in male Participation on VAWG discussions

State	Yes (N=125)	No (N=85)	Can't Say (N=8)
Jharkhand	50	60	0
Odisha	37	23	0
Uttar Pradesh	18	2	8
Chhattisgarh	20	0	0
Total (N=218)	125 (57%)	85 (40%)	8 (3%)

The table above indicates that 57% of the HH respondents interviewed shared that there has been an increase in the participation of males on VAWG discussion. All the respondents from Chhattisgarh, 50 Out of 110 respondents from Jharkhand, 37 out of 60 respondents from Odisha and 18 out of 28 respondents from Uttar Pradesh confirmed increased male participation in the project implementation. Increased participation of males in the project's goal achievement is more likely to translate into the sustainability of its achievements.

As per the FGD findings, all the members of CBG in Chhattisgarh and Odisha shared that all the youth do support the CBGs to fight against domestic violence and the CBGs member strongly feel that the youth play an important role in addressing the issue of VAWG. In Jharkhand, the CBG members shared that the youth from Bengabad (Devatand village) and Baghmara have been helpful in spreading awareness in community and support to fight against domestic violence. In Namkum block, female youth support in this initiatives whereas there is lack of support from boys. CBGs from these blocks do feel the important role of youth in addressing the issue of VAWG. In other blocks namely Chandwara, Bengabad (Raniyantand), Ichak, and Tithaitanger, there is no involvement of youth. They are taking interest to fight against the problem. Thus, CBGs in these villages feel that the youth play presently are not playing an important role in addressing the issue of VAWG. In UP, the CBG members shared that the youth actively participated in addressing the VAWG through various activities such as organizing rally, role play etc. The youth are supportive of the CBGs to fight against domestic violence. All the group members felt that the youth play an important role in addressing the issue of VAWG. Specifically, in Azamgarh the youth, especially boys/men, has been involved in theatre and use strong medium for passing social change messages among their peers and community at large.

⁸Oxfam Annual Report 2019-2020

Table 9: Reporting of DV cases by male heads of family

State	Yes (N=129)	No (N=81)	Can't Say(N=8)
Jharkhand	110	0	0
Odisha	3	57	0
Uttar Pradesh	5	15	0
Chhattisgarh	11	9	8
Total (N=218)	129 (59%)	81 (37%)	8 (4%)

The table above shows that 59% of the HH respondents confirmed that there has been instances of the male head of the family reporting cases of domestic violence to appropriate agencies. The table also shows that this trend is more prevalent in Jharkhand as all the 110 respondents confirmed about such instances. Even in Chhattisgarh, 55% of the respondents shared about such cases. The male head of a family reporting case of domestic violence does not seem to be prevalent in Odisha and Uttar Pradesh.

Output 1.2: Relevant institutions at all levels have endorsed the new and positive norms and its link with VAWG

Table 10: institutions / Agencies, who do the communities approach to resolve cases of VAWG

State	Inform village level vigilance group or volunteers (N=194)	Inform NGO office (Oxfam partner) (N=209)	Call govt run helpline	Go to Police Station (N=42)	Go to Police Station and get FIR registered (N=40)	Inform PRI leader/ members (N=190)	Inform Jati panchayat (N=190)	Inform family counseling center (N=0)	Inform WSC (N=0)	Resolve matters at personal level (N=170)
Jharkhand	110	110	0	40	40	110	110	0	0	90
Odisha	60	60	0	0	0	60	60	0	0	60
Uttar Pradesh	4	19	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chhattisgarh	20	20	0	0	0	20	20	0	0	20
Total (N=218)	194(89%)	209(96%)	0	42(19%)	40 (18%)	190(87%)	190(87%)	0	0	170(78%)

The table here suggests that 96% of the HH respondents believed that the community approaches the partner organization to resolve the VAWG cases while 89% respondents shared that the community is likely to raise these issues at the village level vigilance committees formed. 87% respondents shared that such cases are brought up at the *Jati Panchayat*⁹ or approach the PRI members. There were 19% respondents who felt that community members would approach a police station and lodge FIR. Surprisingly none of the respondents felt that the community would call the government helpline or approach the family counseling center or inform the WSC if they came across cases of VAWG. This remains a concern from the sustainability point of view.

⁹Jati panchayat is an informal but socially recognized and accepted forum of elders of a specific caste(jati) who are approached by the members of their caste to resolve contentious civil issues. Each caste usually has some or the other form of jati panchayat. These panchayats are not legally recognized but hold sway in their areas.

The above break up of institutions which the community approaches to resolve VAWG cases is also mirrored by the field respondents with whom the team interacted during data collection. A majority of the respondents including PRI members, BNS youth leader etc. maintained that most of the cases of domestic violence were still resolved informally with active intervention of PRI members and/or jati panchayat. These respondents, specifically from Jharkhand and Odisha also shared



that they approached the police only in cases of repeat offenders of domestic violence. However, they approached the police sooner if they discovered cases of child marriage. Most respondents shared that while cases of child marriage have declined, some stray case does come to their notice. There is a collective understanding of child marriage as a criminal offence which requires police intervention¹⁰. According to the staff members¹¹, domestic violence is still considered to be a family matter and hence the community members prefer to resolve these at village level only.

Table 11: Have you ever contacted these agencies for yourself or others

State	Yes (N=101)	No (N=116)	Total (N=218)
Jharkhand	63	47	110
Odisha	13	47	60
Uttar Pradesh	12	15	28
Chhattisgarh	13	7	20
Total(N=218)	101 (47%)	117 (53%)	218 (100%)

The table above indicates that 47% of the HH respondents shared about contacting these agencies for assistance, either for themselves or for someone they knew. The fact that a good number of respondents have reached out to seek assistance is a positive impact of the project. Both male and female respondents have shared about seeking assistance/guidance in cases related to VAWG. The direct involvement of men and boys in project's activities have resulted in their involvement in prevention of VAWG.

This sentiment has been echoed by the field level respondents too across the four States. The BNS, PRI members and SHG members in Jharkhand and Odisha have maintained that during the initial phase of the EPIC project, the women did face opposition from their male family members. The men would often discourage women from joining the *Sakhi Samooh* or participate in any discussions. However, with persistent persuasion of the project staff and complete transparency in their process of community engagement, the male members of the intervention area became more amiable to the project's objectives. By the time the project reached its peak, it had been able to engage 8528 males in the continuous monthly meetings across 4 intervention states. The project also managed to train and develop 45 male Bano-Nayi-Soch (BNS) youth leaders spread across Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh.

¹⁰ BNS - Jharkhand

¹¹ ISWO staff, Dhenkanal, Odisha

Output 1.3: Enhanced understanding of relevant laws & implementation gaps related to violence within private spaces by government officials

Legal literacy at community level is a preventive measure for domestic violence. An increase in level of one's rights is more likely to translate into thwarting violence. The tacit acceptance of violence as a socially acceptable norm stems from the basic lack of knowledge of one's rights. Awareness generation on laws supportive of women and their rights is an important component in any intervention which aims to address the issue of gender based violence. The EPIC project had incorporated legal literacy at all levels of intervention in its project design. The legal literacy training was carried out with women, men, youth, adolescents and government officials including police personnel. The awareness generation on laws like PCPNDT, Dowry, child marriage, POCSO etc. was carried out in the community through the groups formed. This activity was also carried out at school and college level. A total of 51 institutions across four focal states participated in the intervention meetings organized under the project. Total 3678 female students and 2858 male students participated from across four focal states. Complaint boxes were successfully installed in 10 colleges in the state of Chhattisgarh and this success story is being shared and efforts are being made to replicate the practice in all the remaining 30 educational institutions wherein the violence tracking mechanism tool is being used. In Odisha, in 10 colleges, the students have taken pledge to stop eve teasing and ensuring safety in campus for which these students are regularly meeting with college authority.



Table 12: HH respondents' awareness on Laws regarding VAWG

State	Yes (N=102)	No (N=27)	Do Not Know (N=89)
Jharkhand	41	27	42
Odisha	25	0	35
Uttar Pradesh	16	0	12
Chhattisgarh	20	0	0
Total (N=218)	102 (47%)	27 (12%)	89 (41%)

The table above indicates that 47% of the HH respondents interviewed shared that there has been an increase in the awareness in the community regarding the laws related to VAWG. All the 20 respondents from Chhattisgarh were aware of the laws related to the issue of VAWG. However, the respondents of other States, Jharkhand, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh were not completely aware.

Table 13: HH respondents' awareness on specific VAWG laws

State	Dowry Act (N=46)	PWDVA (N=84)	Child Marriage (N=98)	Equal Inheritance (N=74)	Divorce Related (N=41)	PCPNDT (N=21)	Women Reservation (N=21)	No Response (N=116)
Jharkhand	40	40	40	40	40	21	21	70
Odisha	0	26	26	26	0	0	0	34
Uttar Pradesh	6	14	12	0	1	0	0	12
Chhattisgarh	0	4	20	8	0	0	0	0
Total (N=218)	46 (21%)	84 (89%)	98 (45%)	74 (34%)	41 (19%)	21 (10%)	21 (10%)	116 (53%)

The awareness of the HH respondents on specific VAWG related laws is shown in the table above. Majority of the HH respondents (89%) were aware about the PWDVA¹² followed by 45% respondents who were aware about the PCMA¹³. There were 34% such respondents who were aware about the law which ensures equal inheritance for girl child in her father's assets and 21% respondents were aware of the dowry related legislation¹⁴. There were only 19% respondents who were aware of the laws related to divorce while 10% respondents were aware of the laws related to PCPNDT¹⁵ and women reservation. However, there were also 53% respondents who were not aware of any of these legal provisions available for women. The legal literacy was highest among the respondents from Jharkhand. The respondents from the remaining 3 states need more inputs on these issues.

Table 14: Community awareness on laws related to VAWG

State	Yes (N=210)	No (N=8)	Total (N=218)
Jharkhand	110	0	110
Odisha	60	0	60
Uttar Pradesh	20	8	28
Chhattisgarh	20	0	20
Total (N=218)	210(94%)	8(6%)	218(100%)

The table above indicates the HH respondents view on community level awareness on laws for prevention of gender based violence. There were 94% respondents who shared that they believed that the awareness on the gender laws had increased in the community after the implementation of the EPIC project. All the respondents from Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Jharkhand felt that people in their areas were now more aware of these laws. In Uttar Pradesh, 71% respondents shared this confidence about their community.

B. Outcome 2: Enhanced access to support services and economic opportunities for women and girls, including those affected by domestic violence and child marriage

Financial independence of women is an important step to ensure decline in VAWG. An economically self-sufficient woman is less likely to be bullied and more likely to seek help sooner than later if she suffers abuse. She is also more likely to have a more resilient support system backing her during tough times.

Table 15: Main Reasons for VAWG victims not Seeking Support

State	Fear of threats / consequences (N=197)	Afraid relationship would end (N=214)	Afraid to lose children (N=192)	Bring bad name to family (N=201)	Did not believe in help (N=121)	Embarrassed / ashamed (N=100)
Jharkhand	110	110	110	110	40	20
Odisha	60	60	60	60	60	60
Uttar Pradesh	7	24	2	11	1	0
Chhattisgarh	20	20	20	20	20	20
Total (N=218)	197(90%)	214(98%)	192(88%)	201(92%)	121(55%)	100(46%)

¹² PMDVA – Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005

¹³ PCMA – Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006

¹⁴ Dowry Act – The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961

¹⁵ PCPNDT – Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act, 1994

The above table presents the reasons for victims of VAWG not seeking support as shared by the HH respondents. An overwhelming majority of HH respondents (i.e. 98%) shared that the fear of ending their relationship with their family (marital or otherwise) is the biggest reason why the victims of VAWG suffer in silence. The reporting of abuse may bring bad name for the family was a fear shared by 92% of the respondents. There were 90% such respondents who shared that fear of negative consequences after reporting the DV incidents prevented the victims to shy away from seeking support. However, 55% respondents felt that many a times the victims of abuse had no faith in the system and believed that nobody could really help them. These victims had come to terms with the abuse and therefore did not seek support. And finally, 46% respondents shared that the DV victims felt too ashamed or embarrassed to report about the abuse.

Almost all the respondents from across all 4 states have echoed similar views. The project staff from Denkanal and Jharkhand shared that without economic independence, the women do not have any bargaining power. The SHG members of Denkanal also shared that women’s voices are not heard in their families because their contribution to the family income is not understood. One of the BNS from Odisha shared that it was important for girls to get trained for working so that they can take employment and become financially independent. Almost all the respondents felt the need for some financial component in the project. Almost all the members of the SHG voiced their demand for initiating IGPs for SHG members.



Support Seeking Behaviour of VAWG victims/survivors

Table 16: Who do you inform suffering from Domestic violence

State	No one (N=1)	Parents / Sibling (N=110)	Friends (N=114)	Neighbor (N=114)	Pradhan (N=100)	NGO (N=214)	CBG (N=101)	Police (N=149)
Jharkhand	0	110	110	110	20	110	21	109
Odisha	0	0	0	0	60	60	60	20
Uttar Pradesh	1	0	4	4	0	24	0	0
Chhattisgarh	0	0	0	0	20	20	20	20
Total (N=218)	1	110 (50%)	114 (52%)	114 (52%)	100 (46%)	214 (98%)	101 (46%)	149 (68%)

The case reporting by the victims of VAWG brings legitimacy to the issue and can bring the various stakeholders together. The table above shows the various agencies/individuals approached by the victims of VWAG to seek support. 98% of the HH respondents interviewed shared that the DV victims felt comfortable approaching the implementing partners/NGOs while 68% respondents felt that now the DV victims did not hesitate to approach the police for assistance. There were 52% respondents who felt that the victims of abuse approached their friends or neighbors for assistance while 50% respondents shared that the victims approached their parents. However, only 46% respondents shared about approaching the CBGs for support.

Table 17: What should a woman do if she is facing violence within the family?

State	Talk to her immediate family (N=212)	Talk to relatives (N=201)	Share with Friend (N=213)	Keep Quiet (N=6)	Approach Panchayat (N=208)
Jharkhand	110	110	110	0	110
Odisha	60	60	60	0	60
Uttar Pradesh	22	11	23	6	18
Chhattisgarh	20	20	20	0	20
Total (N=218)	212 (97%)	201(92%)	213(98%)	6(3%)	208(95%)

Table 18: What should a woman do if she is facing violence within the family? (Continued)

State	Become more adjusting (N=171)	Counsel her husband (N=191)	Avoid doing things which make her husband angry (N=191)	Approach Police (N=107)	Approach Support Center (N=39)
Jharkhand	90	110	110	40	0
Odisha	60	60	60	40	39
Uttar Pradesh	1	1	2	7	0
Chhattisgarh	20	20	20	20	0
Total (N=218)	171(78%)	191(88%)	191(88%)	107(49%)	39(17%)

The two tables above indicates that almost all the HH respondents shared that the victims approach their friends or immediate family if they are facing violence of any sort while 95% respondents shared that they would approach the Panchayat. 88% of the respondents shared that the victims should either counsel their husbands or avoid doing things which make their husbands angry and 78% of them said that the victim should become more adjusting to avoid violence. There were 49% respondents who felt that the victims should approach the police station and only 17% said that the victims should contact the support center if they are facing any kind of violence. Only 3% respondents said that the victims of gender based violence should keep quiet.

- **Output 2.1: Increased leadership among women and girls for better decision making, more entitlements and effective redressal of violence against women and girls**

Political engagement and empowerment of women is one of the indicators of a progressive society. Women representation at every level of governance ensures that their voices will definitely be heard. Political power and responsibilities which come with it cements the position of women in the society. The Panchayati Raj Act mandates 33% reservation for women at Gram Panchayat level. So, women involvement at village level politics is not unusual anymore.

Table 19: Awareness on women participation in PRI/ village level meetings and discussions

State	Yes (N=202)	No (N=14)	Don't Know (N=4)	Total (N=218)
Jharkhand	110	0	0	110 (50%)
Odisha	60	0	0	60 (28%)
Uttar Pradesh	12	13	3	28 (13%)
Chhattisgarh	20	1	1	20 (9%)
Total(N=218)	202 (92%)	14 (6%)	4 (2%)	218 (100%)

The table also indicates that 92% of the HH respondents were aware of women participation at PRI level and only 14 respondents were unaware of the same. However, more than women's representation at PRI level, it is the active participation of women in the gram sabha meetings which can be attributed to the EPIC project's intervention. Most field level respondents, especially in Jharkhand and Odisha had shared that because of the project implementation, the women in their villages have become vocal about their problems and their needs. The respondents shared that due to the active participation of the women, they have been successful in securing toilets, roads and other such basic amenities for their villages. The women's participation in gram sabha has also contributed to the decline in the cases of child marriages and increase in the reporting of domestic abuse cases.



Table 20: Awareness of women leading/speaking out in a village level meeting or group

State	Yes (N=146)	No(N=64)	Don't Know (N=8)	Total (N=218)
Jharkhand	90	20	0	110
Odisha	20	40	0	60
Uttar Pradesh	16	4	8	28
Chhattisgarh	20	0	0	20
Total (N=218)	146 (67%)	64 (29%)	8 (4%)	218 (100%)

The table above indicates that 67% of the HH respondents were aware of women who lead or speak at village level meetings. Jharkhand leads in this indicator. Data reflects less women participations in Odisha compared to other states.

- **Output 2.2: Increased access to formal justice systems and support services for women facing violence**

Increased awareness about the VAWG being a crime has also led to a jump in the number of violence victims seeking support. This is one of the key achievements of the project. The awareness and training imparted at community level as made it easier for the direct beneficiaries to grasp the mechanism of seeking support in cases of violence.

Table 21: Awareness regarding institutions available to support victims of VAWG

State	Support Center	Shelter Home	NGO support (N=138)	Hospitals (N=114)	Police Station (N=110)	Community Members (N=110)	Don't know (N=80)
Jharkhand	0	0	110	110	110	110	0
Odisha	0	0	0	0	0	0	60(75%)
Uttar Pradesh	0	0	28	4	0	0	0
Chhattisgarh	0	0	0	0	0	0	20(25%)
Total(N=218)	0	0	138(63%)	114(52%)	110(50%)	110(50%)	80(37%)

The table above indicates that 63% of the respondents believed that the NGOs / partner organizations is available for them is there is a case of gender based violence where has 52% of the respondents were aware of hospital being the service provider for the victims of violence. There were 50% such respondents who felt that police station was equipped for providing the necessary support for the victims while another 50% relied on the community members for providing support to the victims. However, 37% respondents were not aware of institutions engaged in providing services for the victims of VAWG. Surprisingly, none of the respondents saw the support center or shelter homes as institution for providing support to the victims of violence.

The project has also been successful in creating awareness regarding agencies which may be contacted by victims of violence. The table below shows that 98% of the HH respondents were aware of the agencies which may be approached if they come across a victim of violence.

Table 22: Are you aware of agencies which should be contacted if a woman is facing violence

State	Yes (N=213)	No (N=0)	Can't Say (N=5)	Total (N=218)
Jharkhand	110	0	0	110
Odisha	60	0	0	60
Uttar Pradesh	23	0	5	28
Chhattisgarh	20	0	0	20
Total(N=218)	213 (98%)	0	5(2%)	218(100%)

Table 23: If yes, what are those agencies/person

State	Village level group (N=198)	NGO office (N=203)	Govt run helpline (N=130)	Police Station (N=41)	Ward/Panch/PRI Leader (N=140)	Family Counselling Center (N=190)	WSC (N=40)
Jharkhand	110	110	30	40	50	110	40
Odisha	60	60	60	0	60	60	0
Uttar Pradesh	8	13	20	1	10	0	0
Chhattisgarh	20	20	20	0	20	20	0
Total(N=218)	198(91%)	203(93%)	130(60%)	41(19%)	140(64%)	190(87%)	40(18%)

The agencies and persons involved in supporting victims of VAWG play an important role in rescue and rehabilitation of the victims. As per the table above, 93% of the HH respondents understood the partner agency as the one to be contacted under these circumstances while 91% of them took the village level groups as the most appropriate agency for resolution of violence related cases, a good number of respondents (i.e.87%) felt that family counselling centers are the best equipped agency for handling these cases while 64% respondents put their faith in PRI members. 60% respondents felt that government run helpline are good choice for addressing the issues of victims of VAWG while only 19% of them felt police station is equipped for such cases. 18% respondents felt that WSC should be contacted for resolution of gender based abuse cases.

- **Output 2.3: Enhanced linkages of economic and livelihood opportunities for women and girls**
 - **Building linkages with livelihood options based on the needs of the women and girls in the area**
 - **Specialized training of women and girls through technical experts if required**

Economic self-reliance is the hallmark of any intervention which aims at re-aligning age-old social constructs. The EPIC project too has incorporated these aspects in the project design. Under the project, 626 women and girls were trained in livelihood securing activities, across the four states. Total 1424 community members were supported by getting linked with government-run livelihood/vocational trainings, job card applications, health schemes benefits like PMSMA¹⁶, disability pension/compensation schemes. In the 3rd year of implementation, the EPIC project tied up with the BTI College of Engineering, Raipur, and Chhattisgarh and under this partnership, students from this college provided vocational training to 67 women and 23 youths to make fairy lights so that they could start this home-based business enterprise with the raw materials provided by the college post training.



Experts in the fields of home-based soap making and mushroom farming were also invited to provide training to 60 women. External agencies also provided training to 45 women in phenyl making and strawberry cultivation. Training for 40 women was also organized on candle making to generate self-employment opportunities for them. Several training sessions were held for women on sustainable agricultural practices, livestock development and social security schemes.

The CBG members, in practically each of the districts visited for data collection, rued about the inadequacy or lack of the component of financial empowerment in the project. The partner staffs who were contacted for the evaluation also feared that the absence of any sustained effort for embedding financial liberation for women may also affect the continuation of the CBGs formed. The survivors and BNS also voiced similar concerns. There is a realization among the community members that financial empowerment of women is important if they have to raise their voices against abuse. A total dependence of women on their family members hinders them to speak against violence. Even if a woman is not a victim of violence, she cannot raise her voice for her compatriots if the male members of her family do not deem it important. There was enough scope for the project to initiate income generation activities which may have remained underutilized.

As per the findings of the FGD with CBG, none of the CBGs have received livelihood training in Chhattisgarh and Odisha whereas the CBG members from UP shared that they have been told that the project has initiated discussion with the concerned departments for livelihood. Majority of CBGs in Jharkhand have also not received training on livelihood so they are not putting any effort towards building linkages with livelihood. In Baghmara block, CBGs are taking some initiatives such as pisciculture (fish farm), toilet construction, MNREGA. Namkum CBGs have shared they have received training on shop operation. The groups have expressed their interest to get training on goat rearing, agriculture, tailoring, and handicraft to become financially independent.



¹⁶ Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA) is a central government scheme to provide assured, comprehensive and quality antenatal care, free of cost to all pregnant women <https://pmsma.nhp.gov.in/>

C. Outcome 3: Increased use of knowledge by institutions and alliances to influence change

- **Output 3.1: Improved knowledge generation, learning and dissemination of women's rights organizations on the prevention and response to violence within private spaces**

Table 24: Have you attended meeting etc. organized by partner

State	Yes (N=173)	No(N=45)	Total (N=218)
Jharkhand	69	41	110
Odisha	60	0	60
Uttar Pradesh	24	4	28
Chhattisgarh	20	0	20
Total	173(79%)	45(21%)	218(100%)

Conducting awareness and trainings with beneficiaries has been an effective strategy of the project. The table above suggests that 79% of HH respondents shared that they had attended these meetings/session organized by the partners. However, 42% of these respondents shared that they had attended these sessions organized more than 6 months ago.

Table 25: Topic of Meeting /Training

Partner	Information about domestic violence (N=200)	Information about seeking legal aid/counseling (N=199)	Immediate measures that one can take to resolve issues (N=187)	Awareness on rights of women (N=184)	Acts that come under domestic violence (N=105)	Special information on violence against women for men (N=34)
Jharkhand	100	100	100	90	90	20
Odisha	60	60	60	49	0	0
Uttar Pradesh	20	19	7	25	15	14
Chhattisgarh	20	20	20	20	0	0
Total	200(92%)	199(91%)	187(86%)	184(84%)	105(48%)	34(64%)

The table above indicates that 92% of the respondents attended training on information on domestic violence while 91% of them received training on relevant legal literacy. There were 86% respondents who had received training on measures to resolve issues and 84% had attended training on women's rights. There were 46% such respondents who have been trained on information regarding actions which are deemed as domestic violence and there were 34 such male respondents who have attended a special session on prevention of violence against women.

Apart from the trainings on domestic violence and legal literacy, there were 43% respondents who had attended awareness programs on issues other than domestic violence or gender while 48% had attended Rallies/campaigns. There were 12 such respondents who had made representations to the local administrations on VAWG.

As per the findings of the CBG FGD, all the group members from Chhattisgarh have been a part of awareness campaign on VAWG and they also ensured community participation. To encourage the community participation, the group members carried out rally, conducted meetings and held street plays. The Youth and male members of the community helps in every activity like awareness campaign on VAWG. The challenges faced in ensuring women and girl's participation in the project activities was lack of interest among them and to overcome this challenge, CBGs member took an initiative to make them aware about the project activities and gradually their and participation was increased.

In Jharkhand, CBGs from Bengabad, Baghmara, Ichak, and Namkum blocks have participated in many awareness campaigns on VAWG in their respective villages. In order to ensure community participation for the programme they organized street plays and meetings, took out rally to spread awareness. Whereas CBGs from Chandwara and Tithaitanger have not taken such initiatives. CBGs do face some challenges in ensuring women and girls' participation in project activities including fear among the women to raise their voices, family responsibilities, restriction on their movement, and lack of support from family members.

All the group members in Odisha have participated in awareness campaign on VAWG in village. In order to ensure community participation, they organized many awareness program such as rally, wall painting, nukkad-natak, meeting etc. In all program they make sure that all women participate. At earlier stage of group formation, CBGs faced challenge to ensure women and girls participation in the project activities such as lack of understanding about the project activities, family objection, and lack of family support.



All the group members from UP have participated in awareness campaign on VAWG in village. In order to ensure community participation, they organized many *dharnapradasan* (demonstrations), rally, meeting with local representatives to address the village problem. The group does not face challenges to ensure women and girls participation in the project activities. Many women came forward to be part of CBGs activities and families also support them. CBGs maintain good rapport with families.

Table 26: Do community members take any action when they come to know about a DV victim

State	Do you know that husband is responsible for sex of the child	Every Family should have 1 son	Boys should study more than girls	Boys should be given better food	Boys should have freedom to go out	Girls should attend to daily household chores	Boys should attend to daily household chores (N=218)
Jharkhand (N=110)	106	110	0	0	0	110	110
Odisha (N=60)	20	19	0	0	0	60	60
Uttar Pradesh (N=28)	0	15	0	2	0	28	28
Chhattisgarh (N=20)	4	14	0	0	0	20	20
Total (N=218)	130 (60%)	158 (72%)	0	2(9%)	0	218 (100%)	218 (100%)

The table above represents the prevalent gender based prejudices among the community. The study tried to capture how the community perceives the role of male and female children in their lives. A total of 130 out of 218 respondents shared that they were aware that the husband is responsible for

determining the sex of the child. This awareness was maximum among the respondents of Chhattisgarh with 106 out of 110 respondents agreeing to this statement followed by Odisha where 20 out of 60 respondents agreed to it. Only 4 respondents in Chhattisgarh were aware of the husband's role in producing a male child. None of the respondents from UP endorsed this fact. On the issue of having a male child, a total of 158 HH respondents agreed that each family should have at least 1 son. All the 110 respondents from Jharkhand felt that a son is required to complete the family. In Odisha, 19/60 respondents agreed with this statement while in Chhattisgarh, 14 out of 20 respondents spoke about the importance of having a son in the family. There were 15 respondents out of 28 interviewed in UP who agreed with this sentiment. However, none of the respondents felt that boys should study more than girls but only 2 respondents from Uttar Pradesh felt that boys should be fed better than girls. Similarly, none of the respondents agreed with this statement while all the respondents from all the states opined that there should be no gender based discrimination while allocating the responsibility to carry out the household works and both boys and girls should be made equally responsible to help their families in their homes.

Table 27: Awareness and attitude of the community regarding child marriage children decision making

State	Its ok to get girls married before 18 years(N=0)	Prevalence of early or child marriage in community	Aware of consequences of early marriage	Girls should be allowed to decide when they want to marry	Freedom of choosing Groom - girls	Boys should be allowed to decide when they want to marry	Freedom of choosing bride – Boys
Jharkhand (N=110)	0	0	110	0	0	0	0
Odisha (N=60)	0	0	26	30	30	30	30
Uttar Pradesh (N=28)	0	6	21	4	12	28	28
Chhattisgarh (N=20)	0	0	7	7	7	7	7
Total (N=218)	0	6(3%)	164 (75%)	41 (19%)	49 (22%)	65 (30%)	65 30%

The table above shows the awareness and attitude of the community regarding child marriage and their attitude towards the role of their children in the decision making process when it comes to their marriage. All the respondents were aware that it was not correct for the girls to get married before the age of 18 years. However, 6 out of 218 respondents, all 6 from UP, shared that the practice of child marriage was still prevalent in their respective communities. A total of 164 respondents shared that they were aware of the consequences of child marriage. In Jharkhand, all 110 respondents were aware of this while in Odisha, 26 out of 60 were aware of child marriage consequences. Similarly, 21 respondents in UP and 7 in Chhattisgarh were aware of the consequences of child marriage.

With regard to allowing their children the freedom to choose when they would get married, there were a total of 41 respondents who agreed that the girls should be allowed to decide when they wish to marry. Out of these 41, 30 respondents were from Odisha, 4 from UP and 7 from Chhattisgarh. None of the respondents from Jharkhand agreed to this. Similarly, a total of 49 respondents agreed that the girls should be able to decide who they marry. In Odisha, 30/60 respondents in Chhattisgarh, 12 out of 28 in Uttar Pradesh and 7/20 respondents in Chhattisgarh shared this sentiment. None of the respondents from Jharkhand felt that the girls should be allowed to choose their groom.

There were 65 respondents who felt that the boys should be allowed to choose their brides where 30 respondents were from Odisha, 28 were from UP and 7 were from Chhattisgarh who agreed to this statement. Similarly, a total of 65 respondents agreed that the boys should be allowed to decide when they want to marry out of which 30 were from Odisha, 28 from UP and 7 were from Chhattisgarh. In UP, all the respondents were comfortable with their son choosing when and who to marry while most of them were not comfortable with their daughters doing the same.

Table 28: Attitude toward domestic violence/partner violence

State	It is okay for a husband to beat his wife if she refuses to have intimate relations with him	It is okay for a husband to beat his wife in case she goes out without telling him or is disrespectful to his parents (N=110)	Its ok to beat a woman if she neglects household responsibilities and disobeys the instructions of her husband/elders	If a woman bears only daughters, it is alright if her husband taunts/beats her (N=12)	Woman should bear abuses quietly (N=127)	woman should inform police about violence by family member (N=92)
Jharkhand (N=110)	0	110 (100%)	87	0	30	42
Odisha (N=60)	17	0	14	0	60	10
Uttar Pradesh (N=28)	0	0	0	12	17	20
Chhattisgarh (N=20)	0	0	0	0	20	20
Total (N=218)	17 (8%)	110 (50%)	101 (46%)	12 (5%)	127 (58%)	92 (42%)

The table above shows the respondent's attitude toward domestic violence/partner violence. The study tried to understand how the community justifies gender based violence in a household setting. There were 17 such respondents who felt that the wife deserves a beating if she refuses to have intimate relation with her husband and all these 17 respondents belonged to Odisha. All the respondents from Jharkhand said that women should get beaten up if they leave the house without informing. However, none of the respondents from the other states endorsed this statement. Similarly, a total of 101 respondents felt that wives deserve a beating if she neglects the household chores. Out of these, 87 respondents were from Jharkhand and 14 were from Odisha. None of the respondents from UP or Chhattisgarh agreed to this statement. There were also 12 such respondents, all from UP who agreed that a woman deserves to be punished/beaten if she is not able to bear a son. However, respondents from the remaining 3 states did not endorse this statement. A total of 127 respondents agreed that woman should bear all the abuses silently. Out of these, 30 were from Jharkhand, 60 were from Odisha, 17 from UP and 20 respondents were from Chhattisgarh. There were 92 respondents who agreed that a woman should approach/inform the police if she is facing abuse. In Jharkhand, 42 respondents felt that informing police was the right thing to do for a victim of domestic violence. In Odisha, 10 respondents endorsed this sentiment while there were 20 respondents each in UP and Chhattisgarh who agreed with this statement.

Table 29: General perception regarding impact of Project

State	Are you aware of EPIC	important to know about laws for protection of women	Are more women talking about violence	Is there a change in the thinking of men regarding violence	Are all communities/religions covered by project
Jharkhand (N=110)	110	110	110	110	110
Odisha (N=60)	60	60	60	60	60
Uttar Pradesh (N=28)	28	28	28	28	24
Chhattisgarh (N=20)	20	20	20	20	20
Total (N=218)	218 (100%)	218 (100%)	218(100%)	218(100%)	214 (98%)

The above table informs us about the general perception regarding the impact of the project. As the data indicates, all the respondents were aware of EPIC project and all of them also agreed that it is important to know about the laws regarding the protection of women. The respondents also agreed that more women were now talking about gender based violence and they also felt that there is a change in the thinking of men regarding the violence against women and girls. All except 2 respondents (both from UP) agreed that all beneficiaries from all communities/ religions were covered by the project.

Table 30A: Change in People's perception as an impact of project

Partner	Gender inequality/discrimination	Awareness about DV/VAWG	Availing of Legal aid/support by women	Access to agencies/organizations that can assist women in need of protection	Awareness on women's rights
Jharkhand (N=110)	110	110	30	100	110
Odisha (N=60)	60	60	0	60	60
Uttar Pradesh (N=28)	21	27	3	3	0
Chhattisgarh (N=20)	20	20	0	20	20
Total (N=218)	211(97%)	217 (99%)	33 (15%)	183 (84%)	190 (87%)

Table 30B: Change in People's perception as an impact of project

Partner	Effective leadership/decision making on part of women (N=191)	Awareness on roles and responsibilities of PO, WSC, NGO workers, lawyers, PRI members? (N=191)	Putting forth opinions in public meetings? (N=191)	For women - actions taken against DV/VAWG (N=190)	For men - awareness on consequences of an act of DV/VAWG (N=180)	Awareness on govt. schemes for women (N=109)
Jharkhand (N=110)	110	110	110	110	100	110
Odisha (N=60)	60	60	60	60	60	60
Uttar Pradesh (N=28)	1	1	1	0	0	0
Chhattisgarh (N=20)	20	20	20	20	20	20
Total (N=218)	191 (88%)	191 (88%)	191 (88%)	190 (87%)	180 (82%)	190 (87%)

The table above explains the respondent's awareness on the impact of the project. As per the data, 99% of the respondents felt that the project has been able to create awareness on DV/VAWG while 97% shared that the project has been successful in combating gender inequality. There were 88% such respondents who felt that the project has been successful in imparting skills for effective decision making and public speaking among women and also created awareness on the responsibilities of the key community level and district level service providers. About 87% respondents felt that the project has opened discussions on women's rights and another 87% respondents felt that the project enable the victims of VAWG to take action against the violence and also made the community aware of the government schemes. There were 84% respondents who felt that the project has increased their access to agencies which can assist women in need of protection and 82% respondents agreed that the project has increased the awareness among men regarding the consequences of perpetuating violence against women and girls.

Support Center

Shushri Sujanya is 32 years old, shelter home in charge for last 4 months in Odisha. She shared that while the shelter home dealt with several cases of domestic violence earlier, their numbers have come down drastically. There were no victims of DV residing in the shelter home on the day of the field visit. The shelter home in charge was aware of the EPIC project and she shared that such projects are crucial in ensuring the reduction in VAWG. According to her, such projects also provide the much needed psycho social and legal support to the victims of violence.

The Protection Officer (PO)¹⁷interviewed for the evaluation opined that the most common reason for initiation and continuation of domestic violence remains the easy availability and consumption of liquor in the area. According to her, alcohol consumption is a socially acceptable practice in some areas and the consequence of this is an increase in the incidence of violence against women and children. However, the situation has improved in the past 3-4 years and the work by EPIC project has also played a major role in this. The PO also shared that the Department of Women and Child Development (WCD) is working on the issue of domestic violence since 2005 and she believes that one protection officer at district level is enough to handle the ongoing activities like social awareness, gender awareness, child marriage, domestic violence and society development. Similar sharing was made in Azamgarh where the organizational facilities are at times useful for supporting women victim of DV. However, during the FGD meetings with the CBGs the participants in 4 states very few could refer the existence of support center.

COVID

At the time of COVID 19 related lockdown, the communication with the community was affected. The field staff could not visit the beneficiaries directly. The partners then established contact with the Panchayat members and worked on raising awareness on COVID prevention. The partners also tried to intervene in the issues of domestic violence brought to their notice through phone calls. They established a village level local volunteer to assist them in identifying and intervening in cases of domestic violence. She also shared that the PO, WCD government and the NGO) is working in tandem to on the issue of VAWG and all three parties are involved in providing the various services to the victims. The Project staff maintained that there is a good coordination between the stakeholders and the service provided involved. Issues they both are counselling together and provide medical support, police support and other required help.¹⁸

¹⁷ Ms. Shobhita Sharma, District PO and Counselor, Dhenkanal, Odisha

¹⁸ LASS - CG

4. Effective Practices and Case Study

The Goal of the EPIC project was “By 2021 more poor and marginalized women will claim and advance their rights, and violence against women is less prevalent” in the project area. This section presents the brief assessment of the project based on the analysis of key components, such as training module, violence tracking tool, community based groups (CBGs) etc. This section details the best practices adopted by the project for ensuring maximum level of outcomes. Further the section brings out the important interventions in the form of case studies that also reflect the practices of organizations which were effective and led to certain achievements.

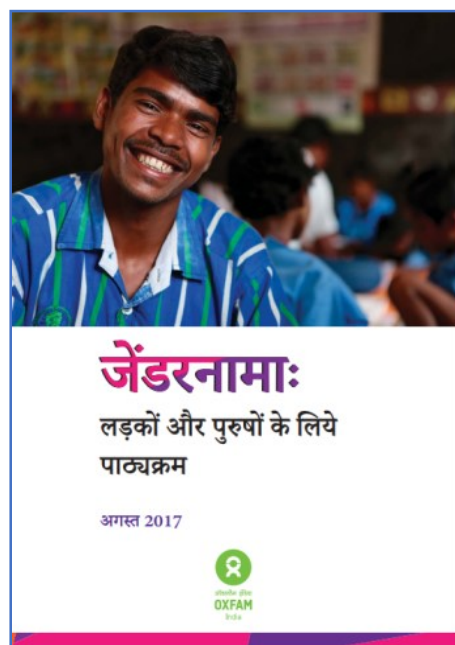
The modules, ‘Gendernama’, ‘Jagoaur Jagao – Badlao ki Or’ were the referencebooks which were used to inform an train community members and the CBG’s. These books are very effective to relate the issues on ground level¹⁹.

a. Gendernama

The module was developed as training material dedicated for men and adolescent boys. The module was designed to have four year roadmap with specific modules for each monthly meeting – thus had four sections and 48 meetings topics. The course was to be used through 48 months during 60 minute monthly meetings consisting of 15 -20 participants. The module is a detailed with well-designed course curriculum aimed at instilling gender sensitization among men and boys.

The Gendernama undoubtedly was the backbone of the project which envisaged engagement with the boys and men for mindset change and positively impact VAWG issues. The module was well conceived and designed for the four -year intervention period.

However, there were concerns expressed with regard to the timing of its publications and access to partners. Most of the partners received the document almost a year late than expected and due to Covid19 restrictions the time got further restricted for its use. Partners have been able to use the document in a limited way.



b. JagoAurJagao – Badlao ki Or

The literal translation is ‘Wake and Awaken – towards change’ and this module was developed as training material for dedicated for adolescent girls and women.

¹⁹ Survivor Bhumika, LASS, CG

The module was designed as a parallel to Gendernama and had four-year roadmap with specific modules for each monthly meeting; thus, had four sections and 48 meetings topics. The course was to be used through 48 months where meetings are conducted each month. Each meeting was of the duration of 45 – 60 minutes and 1 chapter was to be covered in each meeting conducted. The module is a detailed one with well-designed course curriculum.

The module was well received by the community groups and its interactive method was well liked. However due to the COVID lockdown, meetings could not take place in 2020 and hence at the time of this evaluation, many group members were not able to recall specifics of the curriculum administered. Some of the groups could recall basics of gender discrimination, patriarchy, GBV etc but these sharing were limited to handful of the active group members.



During the FGDs members shared their experiences regarding the Gendernama and Jago Aur Jagao.

Table 31: FGD response on Gendernama and Jago aur Jagao

Chhattisgarh	Jharkhand	Odisha	Uttar Pradesh
None of the group members have read these two books, but they have been trained on the principles of concerned books. Few could recall some aspects of the books.	Except groups from Baghmara block, none of the CBGs could recall about either of the books.	The group members have not read the books by themselves but they have been taught and trained on the basis of principle of the books.	Members of groups were aware of 'Jago aur Jagao Badlaav Ki Or'. On various CBGs meetings they have discussed about the same. Based on that they have received orientation and training which has helped to access police department and local representative offices.

c. Banao-Nayee-Soch (BNS)

The Banao-Nayi-Soch among youth leaders was an empowering concept where the young people with some inclination for social change were identified and trained under the project to spread the message at grassroots level and among their peers. The BNS leaders were representative of the ideology promoting gender parity by the project. The BNS was integrated with the project yet was also a standalone activity where selected youths underwent intensive training and were exposed to the various aspects of gender programming. These youth leaders were the voice of the community who guided the community towards a better society. Both men and women were selected to be trained to become the BNS leader. The representation of male BNS provides even more acceptability of the project at the grassroots level.

However, it was felt that BNS lacked the understanding on their role at field level. A more rigorous campaign for the promotion of BNS as the 'new voice' of the society would have helped the project to place them better in their respective communities. The BNS leaders were identified from the community as youth with the potential to become the change agents. Their training and exposure to the issue had

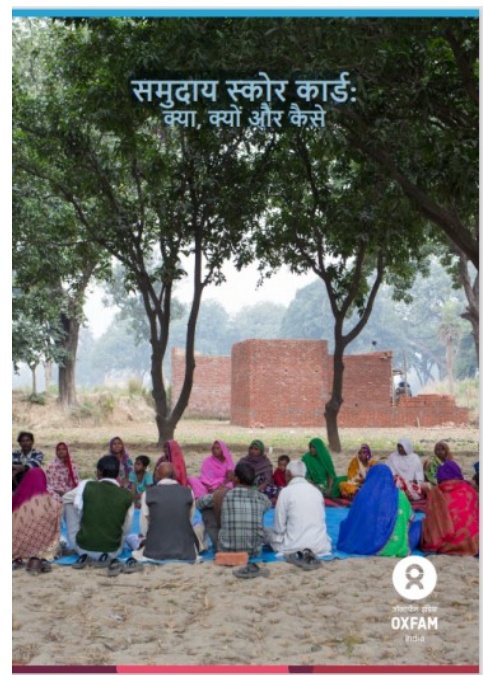
given them an edge over the community members. They could have been groomed and projected to take the project forward after its conclusion. During the data collection, we met 11 BNS as respondents. The details of the BNS youth leaders interviewed is attached as Annexure 3.

The awareness regarding the BNS youth leaders and their role in the community was also missing at the community group level. This was especially true for Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh where none of the CBGs which were part of the evaluation were aware of the BNS youth leaders. In Chhattisgarh and Dhenkanal& Kandhmal, the CBG participants did share about their awareness on the BNS youth leaders. However, none of the CBG members were aware of any BNS leader selected from their localoti/district.

d. Community Score Card²⁰

Community scorecard was developed by OIN to monitor the status of VAWG in the community during and after the intervention. Community score card was a novel idea and was directly linked with the modules Gendernama and Jago aur Jagao to map the changes as it happened. Mechanism was developed so that the partners could submit the community scorecards.

This manual was designed to be used by partners of Oxfam working on gender issues. The manual provided procedure for rating and ranking by community members. The scorecard manual had listed certain key indicators which had to be scored between 0-5 by the community members. The indicators were –



- Reporting on child marriage
- Community intervention
- The Score Range for the manual was 0 – Not applicable / 1 – Strongly Disagree / 2 – Disagree / 3 – slightly Agree / 4 – Agree / 5 – Strongly Agree

- General questions
- Incidences of Domestic Violence and awareness on DV law
- Reporting of Domestic Violence
- Awareness on child marriage

The partners were supposed to administer this manual every six months initially and then on an yearly basis. The finding of the scorecard was to be compiled and submitted to OIN by the partners. While partners were the enthusiastic about this mechanism/activity, there were certain concerns with the kind of questions asked and a little disappointment regarding being uninformed about the end use of the exercise/input from the community. Community score card is effective but there is a problem to fill the

²⁰ SRSP annual report 2019-20

score card because many words have been written in short form, which was difficult to understand by the community members²¹.

The table below also indicates the HH respondents view on community score cards

Table 32: HH respondents on use of community scorecards

<i>Table :HH respondents who have used community scorecards</i>				
States	Total Respondents	Respondents who have used community score cards		
		Female	Male	Total
Jharkhand	110	14	6	20
Odisha	60	22	16	38
Uttar Pradesh	28	0	0	0
Chhattisgarh	20	14	6	20
Total	218	50/145(35%)	28/83(34%)	78/218 (36%)

The table above indicates that only 36% of the respondents had used the community scorecard. Interestingly, all the 20 respondents of Chhattisgarh had used the scorecard while none in Uttar Pradesh. The FGD with CBGs on Score Card gave following inputs.

Table 33: FGD on use of community scorecard

Chhattisgarh	Jharkhand	Odisha	Uttar Pradesh
All group members were aware of the community score cards mechanism developed under the project to track VAWG. All the groups have filled the community scorecard in order to track violence in the village. According to all the members the scorecard is very effective.	Community scorecard has helped a lot in tracking the VAWG in Namkum and Baghmara blocks. CBGs from other sampled blocks were not aware of community scorecard. However, none of the group members from other locations in Jharkhand were aware of the community score cards mechanism developed under the project to track VAWG.	All the groups have filled the community scorecard to track the violence in village and they found it to be very effective.	None of the group members were aware of the community score cards mechanism developed under the project to track VAWG.

e. Educational Institution – Pyarmeinwaarnahiand Meri Shadi Meri Marzi²²

The data and media news prove that gender based violence knows no caste, class or regional boundaries. Women and girls of all walks of life have faced, are facing or will face some or the other form of violence in their lifetimes. Most people do make the mistake of assuming that gender based violence is restricted to the lower social strata as it is poverty and illiteracy which



²¹ Survivor Bhumika, LASS, CG

²² SRSP annual report 2019-20

leads to VAWG. So restricting an intervention to particular social strata may not be effective as the gender based violence is equally common in all segments of the society.

It is commendable that the EPIC project understood this perspective on violence and their work with the students in the educational institutions adds another layer of effective good practice to this project. There were two themes undertaken by the project at institutional level – Payar Mein WaarNahi and Meri Shadi Mari Marzi. These topics dealt with the issue of partner violence and forced marriages. Both the topics were relevant to today's youth and therefore found a resonance with them. A total of 30 educational institutions were part of these initiatives. As the next step of the intervention, complaint boxes were also installed in these institutions which could be used by anyone to report about cases of VAWG anonymously. More than 100 teachers and staff of these institutions were also provided with training on how to identify, report and resolve cases of gender based violence²³.

f. Support group (Sakhi Samooh)

The evaluation conducted 21 FGDs with the community based support group of women called Sakhi Samooh (Women's Group) across the 4 intervention states. According to all the FGD participants from Odisha and UP, the main reason to form these groups was to stop domestic violence and child marriage in the village and make its information available on women's rights available to all. The group was formed by implementing partners and in order to empower the group members, monthly meetings were held for the last three years and maintain the documents/report in a register. Initially community and family attitude towards the groups was negative but now they support and participate in group activities.

Additionally, the participants from the Chhattisgarh groups felt and shared that the main reasons behind joining the groups was to inculcate the values of financial independence among women. The idea of regular saving and pooling in their resources for the future was found to be very appealing to the members. The fact that the corpus can be utilized by any member in need is also an incentive for the members to continue to be part of it. Discussion on social issues was an added bonus and the members claimed that they are now more aware of the going on in the village. The groups in Uttar Pradesh and Odisha maintained that they groups were formed to address the issue of domestic violence and child protection issues like child marriage.

Groups from Jharkhand reported that initially the groups were meant for banking system only but now they are also involved in solving the issues of child marriage and domestic violence. The group members have been trained on these social issues such as domestic violence, child marriage, gender equality. In order to manage groups, some of the group members has started taking guidance and help from the partner's counselors who have trained them in maintaining registers etc and trained the treasurer of the group to maintain the cash registers. Some of the groups are also actively involved in IGP like mushroom farming, mask making, incense

In order to sustain the project activities in future, the groups are implementing activities by themselves. They shared that they will continue to have regular monthly meetings and keep depositing the money. They were confident that they can sustain without any support a stick making etc. and continue to fight against VAWG. The members shared that the project activities have empowered them.

²³ Annual Reports

Trainings of CBG members

- **CHATTISGARH:** The group members have attended 4-5 trainings every year in village on the issue of domestic violence, child marriage and gender discrimination. These group members have also attended training on leadership and technical expert training for women and girls organized by NGO under the EPIC project. The training has helped to empower the group members through providing knowledge and information on women rights, domestic violence. The capacity building sessions have helped them in effectively dealing with the cases of VAWG as they are more aware about the procedures. These trainings have also brought the groups together to help and fight for the problem related with VAWG. However, none of the group members were aware of any elected women representative who had been trained to carry out community based monitoring of VAW and vulnerability mapping. So far none of the women with disability have been part of any kind of training.
- **JHARKHAND:** None of groups have attended any kind of training in the last three years except group from Baghmara and Namkum. In Baghmara CBGs are trained on social issues such as domestic violence, child marriage and women empowerment. And the groups from Namkum have attended training on vocational programme such as tailoring and sewing. The group members were not aware of any women with disabilities been a part of training. Except group from Baghmara block, none of the group members have attended any leadership programmes and training conducted under EPIC project. The CBGs from Baghmara shared that such training has helped to be aware of women rights and how problem related with women can be solve. None of elected women representative have been trained to carry out community based monitoring of VAW and vulnerability mapping.
- **ODISHA:** CBGs from Dhenkanal block have attended 5-6 trainings every year in village on the issues of domestic violence, child marriage and gender discrimination in the last three years. Kandhamal CBGs have attended two trainings and Rayagada groups have attended 3-4 trainings. Women with disability have not attended any trainings, CBGs etc. All the group members have attended leadership programs and trainings conducted under EPIC project. They have shared that such trainings have helped in dealing cases related with VAWG as they are now aware of various rights of women and together how they can solve the problem. They are not aware of any EWRs (Elected women representative) have been trained to carry out community based monitoring of VAW and vulnerability mapping.
- **UTTAR PRADESH:** The CBGs have attended training on domestic violence, child marriage, Gender equality, a process of police /FIR registration, prevention of sexual harassment at workplace in every year. None of women with disability were part of training or CBGs. The group have also attended leadership programs and trainings conducted under EPIC project. These trainings have helped women and girl to empower and now they want to resolve the problem at village level instead of taking help from police. They have gained knowledge and information which helped in referral cases accordingly the need. None of members were aware of any EWRs (Elected women representative) have been trained to carry out community based monitoring of VAW and vulnerability mapping.

Community based women support groups are effective in preventing gender based violence. The groups formed under the Epic project have eventually gained social recognition as an institution working for the betterment of women and the society. This validation by the community members is an important achievement for the project. The groups, however, still may need guidance and/or trainings from the organizations to keep them relevant. Since these support groups are integral for the continuation of project activities after the project's exit, a road map for their sustainability would have been desirable.

g. Youth Festivals and 16 Days of Activism²⁴

One of the most promising activity of the Project was its engagements with the College youth. 80 colleges and universities were identified for youth engagement. For this initiative, 864 students from 20 colleges in 2 districts of Odisha were contacted. Almost 300 students from 10 colleges in Azamgarh district in UP were regularly engaged on sensitization activities on gender bias and social norms. In Chhattisgarh, 20 educational institutions were identified and around 1383 students participated in the interface meetings.



Regular meetings with collective of boys and girls on the curriculum Gendernama and Jago Aur Jago have been organized on 30 schools in Jharkhand with the participation of 3694 children

In Azamgarh, UP, the annual campaign activities were organized in which 595 men, 455 women, 1037 boys and 986 girls participated. International Women's Day was observed in 6 project districts of Jharkhand on the theme of violence-free environment for women, gender discrimination, and stop child marriage where around 700 participants participated.

Pakhwada divas (observance of 16 days- violence against women) was observed in all 4 states each year and specific events were carried out. In Azamgarh, youth festivals were organized at the block and district level and 410 women, 431 men, 895 boys and 927 girls participated from more than 25 colleges and schools. More than 5000 young students from 80 educational institutions across four regions are regularly engaged for promoting positive social norms. About 13,200 individuals from 660 collectives were engaged for



bringing about change in the communities and in their own lives. During youth festivals more than 10,000 young minds were made aware on gender issues, Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act and positive social norms.

h. Case Studies

Case studies done for an evaluation bring out the project's achievements directly from the beneficiaries. Case studies also offered a panoramic view of the interventions by the project as it showcases its role at every step of the problem solving process. For this evaluation, data was collected from 11 survivors of VAWG. The nature of violence included domestic violence, caste based violence, rape (including sexual assault of a minor), human trafficking, economic hardships and property disputes. On all the cases presented, the sakhi samooh (CBG) played a crucial role in identifying the victims. While the cases identified for this evaluation were spread across all 4 intervention states, protocol followed in case resolution follow a pattern.



²⁴ SRSP Annual report 2019-20

5. Conclusion

This section presents the conclusions of the findings of the study. The conclusions are presented objectives and outcome wise. The baseline findings have also been referred wherever required for cultivating a better understanding.

Outcome 1: Strengthened engagement of individuals, communities and institutions in reducing domestic violence and child marriage

- The respondents of almost all the category shared that before the implementation of the EPIC project, the women as well as men were ignorant on women's rights issues. The project has definitely transformed the perceptions and attitudes regarding women and VAWG at community levels with 80% HH respondents, all the FGD participants and the BNS interviewed confirming that VAWG is no longer acceptable in their respective families and village. This is an increase from the average 65% respondents²⁵ in the baseline study who confirmed that VAWG was unacceptable in their family.
- A drastic decrease in incidence rates of domestic violence and child marriages has been confirmed by various stakeholders of all the sample areas including 85% from the HH respondents.
- Strengthening of community based support system for women and girls have been an important strategy for consolidating women and girls to stand up against gender based violence.
- The strengthened community based groups of women and youth also acted as deterrent for gender based violence. More men and youth became aware that violence against women and girl is a punishable offence.
- More women are now aware of their rights and also are able to assert these effectively. This is reflected in an increase in the reporting of cases of domestic violence.
- More VAWG survivors are referring cases of gender based violence to appropriate institutions. The number of such referrals has increased from 38 cases in the 2nd year of the implementation to 213 cases in its 3rd year.

Output 1: Individuals and communities have developed understanding on the links between social norms and violence against women and girls.

Output 1.2: Relevant institutions at all levels have endorsed the new and positive norms and its link with VAWG

- There is a clear shift in the way a community perceive actions/situations as gender based violence. The definition of domestic violence and VAWG has become more inclusive with seemingly harmless actions like taunting a woman for not producing a male heir is considered violence by 81% of HH respondents or making unsolicited sexual advances towards a woman is now being considered as a form of violence by 77% of the HH respondents.
- More women are coming forth with their experiences with violence. The culture of sharing about abuse has started with more than 50% of the respondents saying that they share information on DV experienced with family or friends. The study also found that in 96% of the VAWG cases, community does take action to resolve it.
- The implementing partner/NGO is the most popular agency for the victims of DV to approach. Almost all the HH respondents found it easier to confide incidence of violence (self or of other women/girls) with the NGO staff.

²⁵ Average of 61.7% in Jharkhand, 57% in UP, 79.6% in Chhattisgarh and 62.7% in Odisha from the baseline report indicator "Do violence against women still treated as acceptable in your family/area."

- With 40% of respondents preferring to approach the police in VAWG cases, one can conclude that the community realizes the importance and need for the involvement of the police in such matters.
- It is encouraging to observe that 47% respondents have confirmed that they have definitely approached atleast one of the appropriate agencies for resolving cases of VAWG.
- There has been an increase in the male participation on VAWG related discussions and activities with 57% HH respondents, all the FGD participants from Chhattisgarh & Odisha and the BNS interviewed confirming it. The NGO staff with whom the study interacted in the course of data collection also confirmed about the rise in the participation of men and boys in the project initiated activities. This is higher than the average 49%²⁶ confirming baseline respondents confirming male participation in these activities.
- As compared to the 14% respondents in the baseline, 59% of the respondents of this study confirmed that cases of VAWG are being reported by the male members of a family.

Output 1.3: Enhanced understanding of relevant laws & implementation gaps related to violence within private spaces by government officials. (advocacy)

- There is more awareness in the community about laws related to women and VAWG and 94% of the respondents confirmed this. 94% respondents confirming this. This has increased from the average 29.9% in the baseline²⁷.
- The awareness regarding the laws on domestic violence (PWDVA) is the highest among the respondents with 89% confirming the same. The awareness regarding the child marriage law is still less than 50% and the awareness on other key gender specific laws like that on dowry or inheritance is even lower. There is an urgent need to address this gap in the knowledge at the community level.

B. Outcome 2: Enhanced access to support services and economic opportunities for women and girls, including those affected by domestic violence and child marriage

- Lack of support and financial stability is remains the biggest reason for women not seeking help in DV cases (even an abusive one).
- Most respondents also believed that increased financial independence of women will make them more capable of raising their voices against violence.
- There was also a consensus that if women are economically self-reliant, they are more likely to influence and negotiate the outcome in an abusive relationship.

Output 2.1: Increased leadership among women and girls for better decision making, more entitlements and effective redressal of violence against women and girls

- There has been an increase in the women participation in PRI/village level meetings and discussion. There were 92% respondents who confirmed this as against the average 50%²⁸ respondents in the baseline report.
- 67% respondents also confirmed that the women are also more vocal and participative in the village level meeting and Gram Sabha. This is a definite increase from the average 39.4% indicated in the baseline report²⁹.

²⁶ As per the baseline report – 6.1% respondents in Jharkhand, 43% in UP, 77.8% in Chhattisgarh and 38% in Odisha said ‘yes’ to participation of men is increasing in awareness session.

²⁷ Average of 47.6% in Jharkhand, 21.5% in UP, 3.7% in Chhattisgarh and 46.8% in Odisha for the response ‘yes’ to indicator “Aware of law protect women from discrimination and violence” in the baseline report.

²⁸ Average of 68.8% in Jharkhand, 32.3% in UP, 31.5% in Chhattisgarh and 69.6% in Odisha who said ‘yes’ to indicator ‘Aware of women participating in PRI/Village level meeting

- Increased participation of women in Gram Sabha and meetings has also resulted in development of WASH facilities and infrastructure at village level.

Output 2.2: Increased access to formal justice systems and support services for women facing violence

- Awareness on the specifics of the institutions available for support for victims of VAWG is average with 50% respondents aware of hospitals and police stations.
- There is no awareness regarding the support center and shelter homes as institutions for the support of victims of VAWG. But 87% respondents were aware of the family counselling centers.
- However, 60% respondents were aware of the government run helpline for women.

C. Outcome 3: Increased use of knowledge by institutions and alliances to influence change

Output 3.1: Improved knowledge generation, learning and dissemination of women's rights organizations on the prevention and response to violence within private spaces

- The Project has been successful in establishing connect with its primary beneficiaries with 79% of the respondents saying that they were regular in attending meetings organized by the partners.
- The project has initiated dialogue in violence and even the men have started discussion on this topic. All the respondents felt that it is important to be aware of the laws.
- 97% respondents felt that the project has addressed the prevailing gender discrimination and inequality effectively.
- 99% respondents felt that the project helped in increasing awareness in DV and VAWG
- 84% respondents felt that the access to organizations and schemes has increased due to the project.
- 87% of the respondents felt that they are now more aware of their rights.

Gender Bias perception:

- A definite decrease in the gender bias is reported on indicators related to distribution of food and freedom of movement of boys and girls from 30% respondents in baseline promoting gender based discrimination and compared to only 2 respondents in the endline.
- Prevalence of child marriage has reduced to 3% and the awareness of the consequences of underage marriage has increased to 75% from 23% in baseline³⁰.
- There is also an increase in the perception that gender based division of HH work is not correct with almost all the respondents agreeing that both boys and girls should be made responsible for household work.
- There is an increase in the awareness that education is equally important for both boys and girls.
- However, 50% respondents still feel that it is ok to beat a woman if she leaves home without informing or if she neglects household duties (46%). More disturbingly, 58% respondents still feel that woman should bear abuses silently.

Project SWOT

The exercise was undertaken with the project teams including heads to understand their project experiences. The below are consolidated sharing of partners on what could be termed as the *Strength-Weakness-Opportunities-Threat* of the overall project.

²⁹ Average of 58.7% in Jharkhand, 24.7% in UP, 18.5% in Chhattisgarh and 55.9% in Odisha who said 'yes' to indicator 'know of any women leading/speaking in village level meetings'

³⁰ Average of 28% in Jharkhand, 16% in UP, 3% in Chhattisgarh and 50% in Odisha

Strengths

- The project continued the long standing partnerships of Oxfam with grassroots partners, many of which has almost been for two decades on the issue of gender justice
- Project created the scope for legal work and active engagement of different stakeholders on the issue of domestic violence/VAWG. The project support on legal empowerment and capacity building of teams of even smaller organization helped the organizations to achieve the project goals.
- The organizational approach towards the issue became more systematic. The active involvement of the male staff in training youth and women groups on gender based violence was a break in the stereotype.
- The case based intervention and multi-level support provided for the survivors made this project holistic.
- Theoretical backing of the project through modules such as Gendernama and Jago-aur-Jagaoand use of community scorecards were innovative and strengths of the programme
- The Bano-Nayi-Soch (BNS) youth leaders is a good concept towards creating young and new voices within the community.

Weakness

- Common concern was that there were too many groups to be formed and maintained. Four groups per village were expected to be formed with limited staffing. The project was spread over 165 villages across 4 states. The project design relied heavily on the formation of community based groups. Every village was expected to have 4 CBGs – 1 each for women, adolescent girls, youth and men. A total of 660 CBGs were formed across 165 villages. Regular monthly meetings of all 40 groups, further joint meetings and quarterly meeting of all groups together was felt to be spread too thin; in comparison to the staffing. This affected the quality of the groups formed.
- Group strengthening could have been better if the curriculum was not so exhaustive. The partners also maintained that a fewer number of groups would have improved the trainings and interactions considerable. The curriculum was supposed to be shared with groups during monthly meetings. The gap between 2 meetings was very long and the participants/members would often loose interest or forget the discussion in the previous meeting.
- Partners felt that the Budget for field staff was inadequate looking at the work. The job description of the field staff included strengthening of the groups. The staff had to initiate a change in the mindset of the people and more often than not challenge the existing patriarchal attitude towards women and children. It was important to employ an educated, informed and dynamic person for this job, but with the limited budget, may at times the person maintain the groups was not the best fit. This also may have impacted on the quality of groups formed.
- Delays in project implementation and availability of the Modules had its impact. Project sanctioning was 6 months delay and arrival of modules was almost a year delayed and initially arrived in English was little use of field workers.
- Partners felt a little let down at the end of the project where they felt the spirit of partnership was missing with lack of communications. They felt lack of transparency with regard to future of project. Partners felt that often there would be a mismatch between the instruction from the OIN headquarters and the State office. Over the course of the project, the OIN also adopted a more top down approach towards the partner organizations, which they see as a clears shift in OIN approach with partnerships. Many of the older partners feel that over the years there has been a sliding down or degradation of understanding on gender and partnership within OIN.

Opportunities

- The scope of the project to address different issues on women rights and law has provided the partners with opportunities to function beyond their project. It has also helped in strengthening the interdepartmental linkages.
- Lack of coordination is one of the gap areas of PWDV Act which has been successfully addressed by this project. 70% cases of DV are referred to the organization by the survivors.
- All partners felt that working with boys and men was a big strength of the project and an opportunity for a holistic intervention. It will have a long term sustainable impact on the community.

Threats

- The overall stigma around the gender based violence and the women who raised their voice against abuse was also one of the reasons for delaying the identification and quantification of the problem.
- The patriarchal society does not accept interventions for the empowerment of women and girls. There have been incidences of project staff being threatened by the influential community members because of the work they do.
- The male members accuse the organization staff of empowering and misguiding women and breaking families (*ekkhathiyako do khatiyakardiye meaning dividing one bed into two beds*)
- Insensitive PRI members/mukhiya and lack of cooperation of the male members of the family
- Indifferent attitude of some of the police personnel toward the victims of abuse. On many occasions, the respondents shared that the police preferred the community members to resolve the cases of violence and abuse informally at village level. It was not uncommon to let of the perpetrators if they belonged to a particular caste or class. The respondents also shared that initially the police would outright refuse to lodge a FIR when a case of VAWG was brought to them.
- Covid19 related restrictions somehow had a major impact on the project as the last year of the four year project was expected to consolidate and build on the efforts of the initial years – but that got completely washed off.
- During COVID lockdown, no meetings could be organized and therefore none of the groups were active during this period. The field team maintained contact with the community members over phone, but personal interaction during this period was missing. During the COVID lockdown, identification of cases of domestic violence and other gender based violence became difficult. The cases identified before the lockdown could also not be followed up by the agencies.
- Delay in filing of cases and Judicial delays which is beyond control of project also reinforces the social mind- set that nothing happens in such cases

6. Recommendations

The OIN project was initiated on the bedrock of long standing partnership across states on gender justice. Most of the partners have been associated for 15-20 years with OIN. There was already a body of work to back the present project. The project has achieved most of the expected results. However, partners did encounter certain bottlenecks and shared their concerns. The following are the recommendations based on partners sharing and observations by the team;

- OIN is the flag bearer on gender justice along with its partners in India and symbiotic relationship is beneficial for overall movement. Partnerships have been nurtured over decades and there should be efforts, to preserve and strengthen.
- The project was well conceived and had critical components towards the larger goal of gender justice, however the project planning in terms of number of groups formation and engagements was experienced to be too spread across. Focus on quality while decreasing quantity could be a better strategy.
- The modules were found to be too exhaustive and use of other IEC materials with simplified legal / procedural information could be used in future as handouts/pamphlets
- Implementation delays in terms of rolling out of the modules, its timely availability in local language etc should be ensured
- Attention should be given to staff remunerations as it has a bearing on the quality and motivation and time spent. Budgetary allocation for field programme was also felt to be too meager; which must be looked at.
- BNSyouth leaders was a good concept, but there were inadequate planning for their action in field. Their potential could be used as the 'new voice' of the society. They can act as the role model for others. It was felt that BNS could have been used as a TOT / cascade model, to be more effective.
- Engaging boys, men and college youth has great potential that must be further explored.
- Sustainability aspects of the programme have to be in built and a proper exit plan and execution must be part of the plan itself.

Annexure 1 – Methodology

a. Research Design

The endline evaluation of EPIC project which was implemented from April 2017 – Mar 2021 in the four states of Jharkhand, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, was with the following objectives;

1. Understand the progress towards the impact of the project
2. Assess strategies and models of change
3. Identify and document as case studies the best practices and opportunities to strengthen the program
4. Foster learning across partners and program working areas
5. Foster learning across Oxfam Gender Justice programs and staff

The evaluation study has a participatory research design. Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected through The WHO guidelines and Government COVID guidelines were adhered during data collection process.

b. Study Area

The universe of the study is 165 villages across 4 the States of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh where the EPIC project has been implemented. The samples for the evaluation were 24 villages (15% of the universe). The final selection of specific villages for data collection was undertaken in consultation with OXFAM. For the purpose of the end line Evaluation *the sampling was 4 States, 12 Districts, 12 Blocks, 24 Village*

Table 34: Intervention Areas and endline sampling size

Intervention Areas	Endline Sampling Size
4 States	4 States
12 Districts	12 Districts
16 Blocks	12 Blocks
165 villages	24 villages

The respondents for the study represented the wide range of direct beneficiaries of the project including survivors of domestic violence, key service providers, government officials and partner NGO staff members. The following table indicates state wise and partner wise distribution of primary respondents.

Table 35: Sample size

SN	Partner	State	District	Block (12)	Sample Villages	Number of HH
1	LASS	Chhattisgarh	Gariyaband	Chura	2	20
2	Srijan	Jharkhand	Hazaribagh	Ichak	10	100
3	Mahila	Jharkhand	Ranchi	Namkum		
4	Vikas	Jharkhand	Girdih	Bengabad		

5	Manch (SMVM)	Jharkhand	Simdega	Tangar		
6		Jharkhand	Dhanbad	Baghmara		
7		Jharkhand	Koderma	Chandwara/Koderma		
8	ISWO	Odisha	Dhenkanal	Dhenkanal (Urban) / Gondia / Sadara	8	80
9	ISD	Odisha	Raygada	Rayagada		
10		Odisha	Kandhamal	K.Nuagaon		
11	Humsafar	UP	Lucknow	Kashyap Nagar (Urban)	4	40
12	SRSP	UP	Azamgarh	Haraiya / Azmatgarh		
Grand Total					24	240

c. Study Tools

The tools were developed in consultation with OXFAM team. The following matrix presents the tools to be used for data collection for the study

Table 36: Data collection Tools

SN	Respondent Type	Tool Type	Sample Size	Type of data
1	Households (Female)	HH Questionnaire (women)	160	Quantitative
2	Household (Male)	HH Questionnaire (men)	80	Quantitative
3	CBGs (660)	FGD form	36	Qualitative
4	Partner Organizations (Team)	KII	7	Qualitative and Quantitative
5	Partner Organization (Head)	Questionnaire	7	Qualitative
6	In-charge, Shelter Home	KII	12	Qualitative
7	Survivor (VAWG)	KII / Case Study	24	Qualitative
9	District level Service Providers	KII	12	Qualitative
10	BSN (Male)	KII / Case Study	12	Qualitative
11	BSN (Female)	KII / Case Study	12	Qualitative

The tools were designed to capture overall impact of the project including the change in the attitude and perception towards gender based violence. Some of the key evaluation questions covered by the tools were:

- What are the results achieved (intended and unintended) against the outputs, outcomes and objectives of the project; including social acceptance of violence against women
 - Change at individual level (Women, Adolescent Girls, Youth)
 - Change in the policy environment Change in the civil society organizations' capacity to influence and monitor government policy and services
 - Service provision for survivors of violence
 - Access to formal justice systems and support services for women facing violence; and
 - Community and individual awareness and action
- How have the different strategies in the project contributed to the outcomes? Which have been most effective?
- How well has the project been implemented; including gender empowerment, community involvement in project design and implementation, inclusion of people with disabilities and other marginalized groups, and working in partnership?

- What have been the challenges to access to formal and informal justice system for the women experiencing violence, especially those from marginalized communities
- What are the overall project’s sustainability strategies?

d. Sample Respondents

A mix of random and purposive sampling method was used to identify the primary respondents for the house hold survey. For the KII tool, purposive sampling method was used for ensuring reliability of the data collected. While collecting primary data from household, no harm policy was followed as per the WHO data collection guidelines. The table below shows respondent wise target achieved for the study:

Table 37: Respondents sample

SN	States	Female (HH women)	Male (HH men)	BNS (Female)	BNS (Male)	VAWG	CBG - FGD	NGO Head	NGO Staff	District Service provider
1	Chhattisgarh	12	8	1	0	2	2	1	1	0
2	Jharkhand	73	37	4	0	4	11	2	7	0
3	Odisha	36	24	4	1	2	6	1	5	1
4	Uttar Pradesh	24	4	2	2	4	2	2	4	2
5	Total	145	83	11	3	12	21	6	17	3

The study was able to collect data from all the proposed respondent categories. To ease the process, the field team had mailed partner wise field plan in advance with the details of the respondent category and the number of respondents in each category. This made it easy for the partner organization to ensure the presence of the respondents on the day of data collection. However, the study was able to establish contact and collect data from Odisha and Uttar Pradesh but not from Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand.

e. Data Collection, Entry and Analysis

i. Data Collection Team Recruitment

The field enumerators recruited for the data collection were either graduates or Masters in Social Work background with knowledge and professional experience of field research. The field enumerators were from Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and UP. They were conversant with the local language, situation and cultural aspects. The team was able to collect data from the respondents easily due to existing rapport of the implementing partners in the field. The team members got handholding support and introduction to the community and stakeholders through the OIN partners working in the intervention areas. The field enumerators were closely monitored by the Independent Thought team on day to day basis.

ii. Training for data collection

Before the commencement of the data collection process, the field enumerators were given training on each of the tools which were used for the study. The team was trained in soft skills and ethics to be adhered to while collecting data; especially with regard to interacting with children and women respondents. They were also briefed about the usage of MS Excel application and were provided basic training on data collection data entry in MS Excel. The team was provided with a detailed *Data Collection Guideline* and specific guideline concerning *Covid pandemic*.

iii. Secondary Data

For the purpose of data collection and analysis, some of the data was to be extracted from the documents, reports, etc shared by partner organizations and Oxfam India. This formed the Secondary Data for the Study. Additionally, desk review was carried out of guided material and resources relevant to understand and contextualize the key issue addressed by the project. The census data and other reliable State government data sources like NFHS, NCRB etc was also reviewed and referred.

iv. Primary data collection process

The primary data collection process was spread across 45 days (15 Dec 2020 – 30 Jan 2021) for this study from across 4 states. To initiate the data collection process, Independent Thought had contacted the state level in-charge of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh³¹. The data collection commenced from 15th Dec onwards as the Oxfam partners were busy in conducting the scheduled “16 days of activism” in their respective intervention areas.

The regional in-charge then connected us with their respective partners. Independent Thought also mailed their detailed field visit plan to Oxfam. After approval from the partners, the proposed field visit dates were finalized. **Annexure**

v. Quality Control Mechanism

To ensure the quality of data, the field teams were monitored on a regular basis by the Independent Thought team. The field teams were provided formats for daily entries to capture the entire data collection process. Regular team meetings were held to understand the problems faced during data collection and provide the team with best possible solutions. Day to day coordination with the field team ensured that data collection timeline is adhered to.

The data collected in notebooks was entered on MS Excel by the team members after coming back from the field. The data was downloaded by the Independent Thought team and was checked for gaps in the data. The gaps found were highlighted and sent back for correction. This process ensured that complete data was there for analysis. Efforts were also taken to ensure zero error in data entry by double cross checking by team members. The enumerators’ team members maintained and updated a daily field note. Daily coordination meeting helped in accessing the process and progress for the day and planning for the next steps.

vi. Data analysis

Collected quantitative data was filtered in MS Excel while the qualitative findings were noted, compiled and analysed for the report. The data was analyzed mainly for frequency and percentage. The data were classified and tabulated manually according to their attributes. The results of analysis were presented in tables, graphs, and interpretation. The qualitative data were analyzed using content analysis method. The transcripts of Interviews, FGDs and field notes were systematically coded and broken down theme wise for analysis. Qualitative analysis from questionnaires was done by identifying repeating words and themes. The data is presented in themes and interpretation of the results was drawn.

vii. Challenges, Risk & Mitigation measure (General & COVID-19)

- Covid19 related restrictions were a hindrance to an extent. Impromptu field plan could not be carried out.

³¹ The state incharge contacted were MsUrmimala (Chhattisgarh), Ms. Susmita (Jharkhand), Ms. Rukmini (Odisha)and Ms. Meghna (Uttar Pradesh)

- The field activities have practically stopped in the last three quarters in the field due to Covid19 restrictions and groups engagements were impacted
- Partner nonpayment in last quarter has further disconnected the field interactions of the team, this was apparent from the efforts made in organizing meetings with group or respondents.
- Selection of villages by partners keeping in mind the COVID related restrictions, need not necessarily had all relevant respondents. There were some sample villages where the team could not locate BNS leader or VAWG survivor.

viii. Protocol adopted for data collection under COVID-19

Data collection from the field was particularly challenging due to the COVID pandemic restrictions. The field enumerators were trained to follow the guidelines while upholding the dignity of the respondents and sanctity of the data collection process. The team was provided with the guideline to follow on field while collecting data. These included:

- Making prior appointments with the partner staff
- Informing the respondents on the usage of mask during and after data collection
- Use of masks by field staff at all times including during travel/using public transport.
- Carrying personal hand sanitizers by each team members.
- Carrying own food and water bottles
- Avoid sharing water bottles
- Follow social distance guidelines while conducting FGDs
- Ensure a distance of 6 feet atleast from the respondents while filling questionnaires
- Hand washing as often as possible
- Ensure data collection and FGD takes place in open if rooms available cannot accommodate social distancing
- Avoiding field visits if the team member had cold or fever.

Annexure 2 – Case Studies (VAWG Survivors)

POCSO Survivor

Kamla³² (name changed) a minor girl staying with her elder sister (also minor) and mother. Her father had migrated to another city for work. In the last week of April 2020, she told her mother about the sexual assault on her. Their neighbour's son, a police constable and gunner for a politician was the perpetrator. The victim's family approached the perpetrators family. The village and the perpetrator's family tried to hush up the matter and forbade them to lodge police complaint. The victim's family, however, approached the police but the police also did not file FIR. After 5 days of the incident, the victim and her family approached the SRSP. The organization staff accompanied the victim and her family to the police station where the FIR was finally filed. Based on the FIR, the accused was arrested. The case has been presented in the court once. However, the CWC intervention was not done. The victim and her family have been informed about the child friendly procedures by the organization which is also providing them with free legal advice and representation.

Domestic Violence and Caste based atrocities Survivor

Ankhi's³³ (name changed) husband, daughter and father in law were killed by people belonging to the upper caste community. The victim was provided with police protection and legal aid and she won the case at trial court which led to the life imprisonment of the 7 accused. However, the victim was thrown out from job as cook in village school. She is presently working in the organization as a cook. The organization also receives threats for supporting and employing the victim.

Domestic Violence Survivor

Kusum³⁴ (name changed) was a victim of harassment and domestic violence. Kusum got married at 16 years with a person who used to travel extensively for work. Kusum used to be left alone in her house for extended periods. One man from the village took advantage of her husband's absence and started stalking her and troubling her. This person also started spreading rumour about her in the village. This caused her marriage to break as her husband abandoned her. With no other support in sight, Kusum had to marry her perpetrator by force. However, after the marriage, the new husband's family started demanding dowry of 10 lakhs which her family could not afford. Kusum gave birth to a baby, 1 year after her 2nd marriage. The in laws and her 2nd husband refused to accept the baby and eventually kicked the mother and child out of their home. Kusum was again left to fend for herself but now she had the additional responsibility of her child.

At this stage, Kusum was approached by the women's group formed by JMJK, Koderma. who ensured conciliation with her in laws family. However, her 2nd husband and her in laws refused to see reason. Eventually, with the guidance of the group, Kusum was able to muster up courage to file an FIR against her 2nd husband and his family. The police did take action and the accused were eventually tried and

³² Case study from SRSP, Azamgarh, UP

³³ SRSP, Azamgarh, UP

³⁴ Jago Mahila Jagriti Kendra (JMJK), Koderma

punished by the court. Presently, Kusum and her child lives with her family but has no means of getting employment. She is keen to learn some skills and earn money for herself, her child and her family

Rape Survivor

Rajni³⁵ (name changed) is a students who presently lives with her family. She is a rape survivor. After the death of her mother, she was sexually abused by her father. Rani was only 12 years old at that time. Her father also threatened her to keep her quiet. Rajni also shared that her father would also try to molest her friends when they came to visit her. Eventually, she gathered courage to contact the women's group formed by EPIC project. The group members approached the police with Rajni's case. Rajni was able to get her father behind the bars with the assistance of the group.

Human Trafficking Survivor

Mita Kumari³⁶ (name changed) is a 25 year old married woman who lives with her husband and children. Mita is a survivor of human trafficking. She was enticed by a woman in her native village who had been sending girls to Haryana and other states to work as household maids. She also agreed to go with her to work as a household maid. Mita lost touch with her family for 3 years. She managed to contact them and with the intervention of ASHA and her family, Mita was rescued from her abusive employers. She was brought back to her family and was provided with counselling services and vocational training. Eventually she got married and is now supporting her family by doing tailoring work.

Domestic Violence Survivor

Sarita Kumari³⁷ (name changed) is a 40 years old married woman. She is a VAWG survivor. Her husband would beat her up regularly under the influence of alcohol. Sarita shared that no one in her family would come to her rescue. She had started experiencing issues like sleep disturbances, feeling sad and helpless and sometimes would also want to indulge in self harming behaviour. Sarita then approached the woman's group formed under the EPIC project and the group members tried to make her husband realize his mistake. However, when the husband did not relent, Sarita along with the group members approached the police for intervention. The police were very helpful and when her husband realized about the involvement of police, he also started to mend his ways. Sarita shared that while she had never attended any training on domestic violence, she realizes that domestic violence is wrong. She also believes that the SakhiSamoooh (women's groups) are very effective in preventing and handling cases of domestic violence at village level. Sarita also feels that the problem of domestic violence is still common in her village.

Domestic Violence Survivor

Savitri Devi³⁸ (name changed) is a 35 year old married woman who is a survivor of domestic violence. Her husband would thrash her after consuming liquor on a daily basis. Savitri endured this violence and humiliation for 10 years but none of her family members ever came to support her. During one of the

³⁵ Mahila Mukti Sansthan, Hazaribagh

³⁶ Asha, Ranchi

³⁷ Sahbhagi Vikas, Simdega

³⁸ LASS, Chhattisgarh

beatings, she also injured her ear. Savitri eventually approached LASS and she was provided with counselling and then she was also oriented to women's rights and life skills education. This made her realize that domestic violence is a crime and no woman should have to endure it. Savitri Devi has also received training on vocational skills like tailoring which she uses to support her family. She is also a member of the sakhisamooch.

Rape Survivor

Rakhi³⁹ (name changed) was only 3 years old when she was brutally raped. She was found in a critical condition by the staff of ISWO, Dhenkanal who took her to the government hospital. The hospital informed that the child was injured very badly and her chances of survival were bleak. However, Rakhi is a fighter and she fought against all odds and came out victorious. Rakhi is now living in the CCI with 50 other children. She is now safe and happy and can look forward to a better future.

Vulnerable Condition

Babita Kumari⁴⁰ (name changed) is a 32 year old woman who stays with her children. After the death of her husband, she had to pull out her children from school as she did not have money for their survival. She approached LASS and received vocational training. Babita also received leadership training and orientation on women's rights, legal literacy and life skill education. She is member of sakhisamooch of her village. Babita feels that while the groups are effective in helping women in need of protection, there is need for livelihood training and handholding for economic independence of women. Savitri also feels that the project has brought about many changes especially in the mind set of men. She says that men and boys have become more supportive of the women due to the project's interventions. She is quite active with the project activities and has participated in rallies, meetings and workshops conducted. She has also participated in the community score card activity and has found it useful.

Domestic Violence Survivor

Kamala⁴¹ (name changed) is a 31 year old domestic violence survivor. She got married at the age of 18 years with a man of her choice. Her husband's attitude towards her changed after Kamala gave birth to 2 daughters. He started beating her under the influence of alcohol. Kamala shared that no one in her family came forward to help her even when she received serious injuries due to her husband's beatings. She also shared that she had complained to police about this and her husband was put in lock up twice. But the beatings continued after he came back home. Finally, Kamala filed for divorce. She has sent her 2 daughters to her native village to live with their maternal grandmother. She is working as an Anganwadi worker. She is also member of the Sakhi Samooch. She has received training on women's rights, legal literacy, life skills education, leadership and vocational skills under the EPIC project. She feels that incidence of VAWG is decreasing and also there is a [positive change in the attitude of men in her village.

³⁹ ISWO, Dhenkanal

⁴⁰ LASS, Chhattisgarh

⁴¹ ISWO, Dhenkanal

Janaki⁴² (name changed) is a 26 year old married woman who is currently staying with her parents. She married a man of her choice 2 years ago. However, her husband started torturing her soon after as he wanted her parents to transfer their property in his name. The husband also had extra marital relations with another woman. Eventually her parents brought her back and approached the Sakhi Samooh for help. Janaki was made aware of her rights and the domestic violence law by the implementing agency. She was also provided with counselling services. Janaki has now filed for divorce from her abusive husband and is awaiting trials. She has also attended various training programmes conducted under the EPIC project including legal literacy, life skill education etc. However, she feels that more efforts need to be put to make women economically independent.

⁴²ISWO, Dhenkanal

ANNEXURE 3 – Case Studies (BNS Leaders)

1. UshaDeepa Nayak⁴³ lives in JubliTown locality of DandaSahi village of District Dhenkanal, in Odisha. She is 19-year-old and stays with her aunt (mother's sister), 1 older sister and 1 younger brother. Usha's Mother died few years ago. Usha had to leave her studies after her mother's death. The extended family of Usha was worried about her future but were apprehensive about the correct course of action for her. She was approached by ISWO and Usha became one of the beneficiaries of the organization. She received counselling services, vocational training, legal literacy awareness, life skills education etc. Usha was inspired and motivated by these sessions and decided to do her bit to bring about positive changes in the society. Usha believes that the women's groups are very effective in bring transformations at village level. She also believes that the work initiated by the EPIC project will be continued by the groups formed.
2. Tapaswani Nayak⁴⁴ lives in Badeketa village of NuagaonBlock in KandhamalDistrict of Odisha. She is 24 years old and stays with her family. Tapaswani works under the MGNREGA scheme and supports her family financially. She had to drop out of school after class 10 to support her family. Tapaswani is one of the beneficiaries of ISD and has received counselling and vocational training, legal literacy training etc. She feels empowered and in control of her destiny after becoming associated with this NGO. She believes that the groups formed under the project will sustain the work initiated by the EPIC project.
3. Yamuna Unrav⁴⁵ is a 15 year old girl who lives in Nayabhusur village in Ranchi, Jharkhand. She was identified and trained by the ASHA organization. Yamuna is a rescued child labour and presently she has completed has class 10 exams. She has received training on gender and life skill education. She feels that the number of child marriage and domestic violence cases have decreased after the project intervention. Yamuna also feels that education for all is important. She shared that she has observed changes in the attitude of men as they are becoming more supportive. However, she was not aware of any support center or any other BNS leader at district level around her. Yamuna was also not able to elaborate much on her role as a BNS.
4. ShabnamKumari⁴⁶ is a 22 year old woman from Kasdega Village in Jharkhand. She shared that her village had witnessed several cases of domestic violence. After receiving training on gender issues, Shabnam feels that she is ready to transform the world. She says that the orientation provided during the training programme has helped her observe things differently. However, she says that she has not attended any further training in the last 3 years. She also spoke about her training she received at Ranchi 3 years ago where she was provided training on women's rights, child marriage, domestic violence, gender equality. She credits these trainings for helping her become a more responsible citizen. Shabnam also feels that the BNS leaders and the CBGs will be instrumental in carrying forward the project activities after it's exit.
5. GuddiKumari⁴⁷ is an 18 year old girl from Kasdega village. She shared that the domestic violence in her village used to be very common. She says that she feels like an agent of change after joining the project. Guddi also informs us about the training programme she attended in Ranchi 3 years ago where she became aware of domestic violence, child marriage, gender equality etc. She feels that the project will be more effective if there is scope of income generation activity for women. She has also observed changes in the attitude of males after the project intervention with youth and men.

⁴³ISWO, Odisha

⁴⁴ISD, Odisha

⁴⁵Asha, Ranchi

⁴⁶Jharkhand

⁴⁷Jharkhand

But she maintains that the boys are still reluctant to participate in the project activities like youth festivals and awareness drives.

6. Mehroon Bano⁴⁸ was a victim of child marriage and eventually became the mother of 6 girls and 1 boy. She used to get beaten up by her husband on a regular basis. She became the member of the Sakhi Samoooh formed by the EPIC project. After receiving training on leadership, legal literacy, women's rights etc, she feels empowered enough to work for the betterment of her village. She shared that while domestic violence was common earlier, it is now on a decline. She also says that the attitude of men has also changed for the better. The men and boys are more respectful towards women. She is now promoting gender equality in her village. She says that the trainings have made her a more confident person. Mehroon shared that she now participates in the gram sabha and with the efforts of the group, child marriages have completely stopped in their village. She has also mobilized women to participate in rallies and street play and believes that women have now become fearless. She believes that the women's groups are empowered enough to take the project work forward after it ends.
7. MiliSobar⁴⁹ is a 23 year old girl who supports her family by working in the mall. She shared that she gained a lot of knowledge and confidence after becoming member of the adolescent group of her village. She has received training on topics like gender equality, women's rights, legal literacy and life skills. She was also excited about her participation in training workshops which were conducted in other cities. She feels that the groups are empowered enough to sustain the project activities by themselves.
8. Sara Tandi⁵⁰ is a 24 year old girl who works in a mall to support her family. She was member of the adolescent group. She has attended trainings on gender equality, women rights, legal literacy and leadership. She feels that attitude of the community members is changing for the better and gender based violence is becoming unacceptable. She feels that this intervention has made the girls more confident. She shared that community score card and the training modules were very helpful.
9. Nirdesh Nayak⁵¹ is a 24 year old IIT student. He was a member of the youth group. He says that by joining the youth group, he became aware of gender issues and gender equality. He also became aware of inequality around him. He feels that the project intervention has resulted in decrease in the incidence of VAWG. Nirdesh is now happy to motivate fellow youth to understand the concepts of gender equality and wants to work to end all forms of gender based discrimination and violence. He feels that Gendernama and community score cards are good tools to address the issue of VAWG at community level.

⁴⁸Jan Sarokar, Giridih

⁴⁹ISD, Rayagadha

⁵⁰ISD, Rayagada

⁵¹ISD, Rayagada