



# MAPPING INCREMENTAL CHANGE IN A COMPLEX SOCIETY

## Working with Young People Confronting Early Marriage in India

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Working with Young People  
Confronting Early Marriage in India

## **A FEMINIST PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT BY:**

Advanced Centre for Women's Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences

and

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with

American Jewish World Service

2022

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# Introduction

How do we measure  
change in girls' lives in  
complex societies?



This report details an initiative undertaken from 2014 to 2018 by a donor agency, a research institution and 29 grassroots organizations to measure change effected through their community-based programs related to early and child marriage. What distinguished these programs was that they were targeted not just at delaying the age at marriage of girls in their communities, but at enabling and empowering them towards transforming gender relations and social structures underlying the practices that govern intimacies in individual lives. The initiative also emerged from the belief that, as feminists have long averred, marriage is an institution governed by its foundation in diverse social structures—such as patriarchy, caste, sexuality, religion, family, and class—that need to be considered when judging the success or failure of community-based interventions. The initiative therefore needed to be grounded in the lives of women and girls, and to emerge from the community-based work of organizations. Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) conceptualized and led the research process from 2014- 2018, through the Advanced Centre for Women's Studies.

American Jewish World Service (AJWS), a global philanthropic organization, initiated this project in 2014. Its intention was to find a way to monitor progress in work on early and child marriage that went beyond the traditional indicator of numbers of girls who delayed marriage until India's legal age of 18. It grew from a conviction that the conventional age-focused method of defining success in addressing child and early marriage has limitations; it cannot capture changes in the underlying factors (such as gender inequality, strict gender norms, compulsory marriage, and sexuality-related taboos) that lead to such marriages. The focus was shifted in this initiative from short-term gains (a delay in age at marriage) to long-term transformation (greater self-confidence, aspirations beyond marriage, increased mobility and access to education and livelihoods), through incremental yet significant shifts in young people's lives. The initiative attempted to strike at deep-seated norms and practices that young people are empowered to negotiate, rather than just postpone these efforts at empowerment by focusing only on delaying their age at marriage.

Using a feminist participatory approach, the Advanced Centre for Women's Studies at TISS collaborated with 29 community organizations (primarily grantee partners) of AJWS who work on diverse issues of social transformation, such as women's rights, youth empowerment and

workers' rights, to create a framework to map change when addressing the root causes of child and early marriage. The 29 organizations who were partners for the study were Awaaz-e-Niswaan, Amra Padatik, Astitva, Azad Foundation, Bhumika, Bhartiya Gramin Adivasi Vikas Sanghathan (BGAVS), Feminist Approach to Technology (FAT), Humsafar, Jeevika, Kislay, Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan (KMVS), Mahila Sarvangeen Utkarsh Mandal (MASUM), Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti (MJAS), Mohammad Bazar Backward Classes Development Society (MBBCDS), Nishtha, Praajak, Rajsamand Jan Vikas Sansthan (RJVS), Ruby Social Welfare Society (Ruby SWS), Sahajini Shiksha Kendra (SSK), Sahiyar, Sadbhavana Trust, Samvada, Sampada Grameen Mahila Sanstha (SANGRAM), Shaheen, SETU, Thoughtshop Foundation, Vanangana, Vikalp and Voice4Girls (Please see Appendix 1 for details). The methodology used was outcome mapping, a planning and monitoring methodology that uses clearly defined progress markers to assess the progression of change. Organizations adapted the general aspects of the outcome mapping framework, using progress markers that were relevant to their context or thematic area of work.

Together, TISS and the 29 participating grassroots organizations:

- adopted a feminist perspective that recognized the patriarchal and other social inequities that enable child and early marriage, and focused on empowering women and girls;
- arrived at measures of change beyond age at marriage that would capture small but significant shifts in actions, behaviours and relationships that challenge the practice of child and early marriage in communities; and
- conducted research in a participatory manner that also built up the organizations' capacities and knowledge of monitoring and evaluation for social transformation.

In a feminist participatory approach, the process is as important as the outcome of the study. The participatory and dialogic mode—iterative field visits, introducing the method of outcome mapping, implementing the tools to capture change—enabled change to be documented as people experienced it. Change was not inferred or construed by those in more powerful situations, even the researchers. The feminist participatory approach centered experiences from the standpoint of the most marginal rather than the most powerful to lead towards a transformational goal. The approach aimed for ethical inclusion and democratic practices, so as to uncover the experiences of young women, young men and older women who are typically ignored or overlooked.

In this approach, participating organizations reflected on their objectives and strategies and placed them within a gender-transformative framework. TISS aligned the participating organizations' gender-transformative objectives with the feminist visions articulated in scholarship and politics. As the study progressed, these organizations found feminist impulses embedded within their work, which pushed participants to connect their strategies with incremental change observed on the ground through a critical perspective, and to redefine success in addressing early and child marriage.

The study underscored how people closest to the issue are best placed to define “success” as well as the multiple factors that influence change. One of the strengths of this approach is that it accounts for the complex realities that women and girls live in, with their intersection of caste, class, region, language, religion, sexuality, ability and other social locations.

The participating organizations redefined their markers of success as something beyond the age at marriage. This then encompassed wider changes that affect the quality of girls’ lives in various thematic domains. Further, they were able to see and mark change as incremental, as not always linear, and as multi-layered, leading to shifts in behaviours, actions and relationships. The non-linear nature of some of the change was evident when there was no chronological progress but instead a regression or an unexpected eventuality.

Although many of the participating organizations are centred on women’s and girls’ issues but not specifically on child and early marriage, the focus of the study did not divert their attention (as often occurs) but instead complemented and illuminated their work. The project, by starting from where each organization was located, connected with the organizations’ resistance work and struggle towards social transformation, rather than functioning as a separate project to tackle child and early marriage.

The participatory approach allowed the research team to dismantle hierarchies of power. It also deepened the collaboration, equalizing power relations and knowledge production between the Advanced Centre for Women’s Studies at TISS and the women’s, youth and workers’ collectives at the community level, as well as between academics and activists.



# CHAPTER 2

Documenting change:  
The research process

The project was carried out in two phases. In the first phase (2014–2015), TISS worked with 16 grassroots non-government organizations with whom AJWS<sup>1</sup> had partnered to address child and early marriage, primarily to train them on the outcome mapping methodology. Together, they adapted the method to develop a framework and the tools to map change in the work of the organizations over the ensuing year.<sup>2</sup> In the second phase (2016–2017), the outcome mapping framework was put to use by the partner organizations, which by then had expanded to 29,<sup>3</sup> as they documented and monitored the impact of their strategies on their desired goals. In a final phase (2018 onwards), TISS worked on analysing, meaning-making and writing up the results of the study at a time when university campuses across the country were in a volatile situation, followed by the pandemic that caused much disruption in the academic endeavours of teachers, students and researchers.

The 29 organizations combined operated in eight Indian states at the time of this project. All were working to address the root causes of child and early marriage, although from different standpoints. The organizations viewed child and early marriages as a symptom of wider inequities and indicative of patriarchal and other socially regressive norms, rather than the problem in itself. They therefore focused on root causes or structural factors, such as gender inequality, the centrality of marriage, control over girls' sexuality and mobility, as well as other strict gender and social norms within which an early or child marriage becomes the inevitable life trajectory for girls in India.

<sup>1</sup> Awaaz-e-Niswaan, Amra Padatik, Bhumika, Feminist Approach to Technology, Humsafar, Jeevika, Kislay, Mahila Sarvangeen Utkarsh Mandal (MASUM), Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti (MJAS), Sahajini Shiksha Kendra (SSK), Sahiyar, Shaheen, Thoughtshop Foundation, Vanangana, Vikalp and Voice4Girls.

<sup>2</sup> Details of this phase are documented in the report *Addressing Early and Child Marriage in India: A Participatory Study on Mapping Outcomes*, available at <https://tiss.edu/view/6/research-projects/early-child-marriage-initiative-a-monitoring-and-e/outcomespublications/>.

<sup>3</sup> The additional 13 organizations: Astitva, Azad Foundation, Bhartiya Gramin Adivasi Vikas Sanghathan (BGAVS), Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan (KMVS), Mohammad Bazar Backward Classes Development Society (MBBCDS), Nishtha, Praajak, Rajsamand Jan Vikas Sansthan (RJVS), Ruby Social Welfare Society (Ruby SWS), Sadbhavana Trust, Samvada, Sampada Grameen Mahila Sanstha (SANGRAM), SETU. The 29 organizations are spread over the following states: Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Gujarat, West Bengal, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh (which became two states, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana).

When organizations work with this perspective, merely delaying the age of marriage till age 18 is not the primary or only desired outcome. Instead, the goal is to effect a qualitative change in girls' lives and greater self-determination or agency over their life trajectories.

## 2.1 Research participants

The 29 grassroots organizations were diverse in their thematic areas of work, the ways they had arrived at working with adolescent girls or on the issue of child and early marriage, the strategies they used, and their locations of operation (both urban and rural locales).

Half (15) of the organizations were women's rights groups that had numerous years of experience in women's empowerment. Some of them had expanded their focus to girls and interventions with youth recently, with AJWS's support. For them, working with girls was a newly added component of their work. Three of the women's groups had a special focus on working with young women, girls and even boys.

Six organizations worked only with youth, young women and young men. Five organizations worked in the community with a focus on labour and workers' rights.

Although the 29 groups employed their own strategies, they all worked through collectives that they had established in their targeted communities. Table 2.1 charts the diversity of work of the participating organizations and the way they were clustered by TISS according to their primary area of work.

**Table 2.1 Categories of participating organizations, based on their focus of work**

	Women's group (also worked with youth)	Women's group (with focus on youth)	Youth group	Labour-focused group
<b>Urban</b>	Awaaz-e-Niswaan	Sahiyar	Feminist Approach to Technology (FAT)	Kislay
	Shaheen		Samvada	Amra Padatik (youth)
	Nishtha		Praajak	
	Ruby Social Welfare Society (SWS)		Thoughtshop Foundation	
	Sadbhavana Trust			
	Humsafar			
	Bhumika			

<b>Rural</b>	Vanangana	Mahila Sarvangeen Utkarsh Mandal (MASUM)	Voice4Girls	Azad Foundation
	Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan (KMVS)	Mohammad Bazar Backward Classes Development Society (MBBCDS)	Vikalp	Sampada Grameen Mahila Sanstha (SANGRAM)
	Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti (MJAS)			Bhartiya Gramin Adivasi Vikas Sanghathan (BGAVS)
	Astitva			
	Sahajini Shiksha Kendra (SSK)			
	Jeevika			
	Rajsamand Jan Vikas Sansthan (RJVS)			
	SETU			
<b>Total</b>	15	3	6	5

## 2.2 Arriving at the framework to map change

One of the aims of this project was to evolve a framework of relevant markers of change that are developed in a participatory manner and based on a feminist perspective. The traditional understanding of change in early and child marriage has been limited to a top-down articulation of change within an age-centric linear logic model. Reality is more complex, messy, and not always predictable. Thus, because of its sensitivity to complexities and ability to mark change through processes, outcome mapping was chosen as the preferred methodology for this project. Outcome mapping provides a set of tools to define markers and gather information on the outcomes, defined as behavioural changes, among the “boundary partners” of a project—or changes in the behaviour, relationships, activities, or actions of the people, groups, and organisations with whom a programme works directly.

From February to July 2015, the research team from TISS held workshops introducing the outcome mapping method to 16 organizations that worked with communities of women, young girls and boys, construction and domestic workers' groups, Adivasis, Dalits, sex workers, transgender persons, migrants and so on. Through an iterative process, these

workshops led to the evolution of a framework within which to locate the organizations' work and measure their individual outcome or progress.<sup>4</sup>

Drawing from the diverse work of the 16 organizations and their collectives, six comprehensive outcome categories were identified which everyone agreed change was necessary for striking at the root causes of child and early marriage. The six outcome categories were: collectivization; gender and sexuality; negotiations around marriage; education; livelihood; and law, policy and advocacy (see Appendix 2 for details).

The report on the first phase (TISS, 2016) details each outcome category in terms of how it related to child and early marriage. It is summarized here briefly:

1. **Collectivization**, or mobilizing interest groups to undertake perspective building and collective action for social change, is the bedrock of social transformation in communities. Its centrality is reflected in the descriptions of each organization's work, history and context.
2. It is strict gender and caste norms, gender inequality and anxieties around girls' sexuality that drive child and early marriage in India. Thus, norms around **gender and sexuality** influence the structures of control and social relations that govern heteronormative endogamous marriage, especially child and early marriage.
3. At the organizational level, collectives worked with and sought to build up girls' capacities and opportunities to **negotiate around marriage** (as a distinct thematic area, separate from gender and sexuality, although conceptually linked to it).
4. **Education** offered the space to build aspirations, achieve autonomy and gain perspective to challenge structures in tackling child and early marriage.
5. Engagement with **law, policy and advocacy** as instruments of social change was also used judiciously by organizations.
6. An understanding of, and access to, **livelihoods and labour** was central to challenging the control of women's labour within marriage and their ability to seek financial independence (and thus potentially have more say in the family and community).

Each outcome category had a set of **progress markers** that reflected gradations of steps needed to meet the objective that each organization committed itself to as an outcome challenge (see Appendix 2 for all outcome categories and progress markers).

In the project's second phase, the by-then 29 organizations selected their own progress markers from a menu that the research team had developed. Each organization adapted its selection according to its location, history, experience and own assessment of how to attain

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<sup>4</sup> TISS: Addressing Early and Child Marriage in India: A Participatory Study on Mapping Outcomes (Mumbai, 2016), available at <https://tiss.edu/view/6/research-projects/early-child-marriage-initiative-a-monitoring-and-e/outcomespublications/>



the change. Change was to be recorded at two levels: (i) at the level of the organization (such as changes in organizational perspective or strategies) and (ii) at the level of the collective and its members (such as the ability to take collective action or discuss taboo issues).

The distinctiveness of this framework was that, unlike other monitoring and evaluation (M&E) methodologies, it did not impose a common and rigid set of indicators on organizations confronting similar challenges but working in diverse communities and contexts. In the case of child and early marriage, which is present in whatever developmental work organizations are embedded in, this becomes even more pertinent.

**Fig. 2.1 Project timeline for Phase 2**



## 2.3 Developing tools to map change

The year-long monitoring of chosen outcome categories (and progress markers within each) was carried out using two sets of tools. One was a journal that each organization maintained, with monthly recordings of activities and a quarterly report on their chosen outcome categories. The quarterly reports from the organizations to TISS formed the primary database for the analysis. The journal tool was pilot tested in the first phase (September 2015) by a few organizations and finalized.

The second was a storytelling tool for use by the collectives, intended to record collective members' experiences of change during the second phase of the project. Stories of change were documented and sent along with quarterly reports or separately (see Appendix 3 for sample tools of a quarterly journal and a story of change from a collective).

## 2.4 Selection of outcome categories

At a national consultation of all 29 organizations in October 2015, the outcome categories and journal and storytelling tools were introduced to the participating organizations, which then selected the outcome categories that they would monitor over the year (Table 2.2). The collectivization outcome category was mandatory for all participating organizations. They could additionally select a minimum of one from the gender, sexuality and marriage cluster (a choice of gender and sexuality or negotiations around marriage) and one from the education; livelihood; and law, policy and advocacy cluster. Some organizations chose more than two additional outcome categories.

The TISS research team carried out field visits to each organization (October 2015 through July 2016) to assist in the selection and adaptation process. In these visits, TISS supported the organizations to formulate and adapt progress markers for each selected outcome category and worked with them to determine how they would document activities and report on changes across their chosen outcome categories. These visits and the collaborative support (which happened throughout the data-gathering phase) were crucial for both building the capacities of the participating organizations and deepening the TISS team's perspective.

**Table 2.2 Organizations' choices of outcome categories, apart from collectivization**

Type of organization	Gender and sexuality	Negotiations around marriage	Education	Livelihood	Law policy and advocacy
<b>Women's groups</b>	<b>Ruby Social Welfare Society (SWS)</b>	<b>Awaaz e Niswan</b>	<b>Awaaz e Niswan</b>	<b>Shaheen</b>	<b>Bhumika</b>
<b>Urban</b>	Sadbhavana Trust	Shaheen	Ruby SWS		
	Humsafar	Nishtha	Nishtha		
	Bhumika	Ruby SWS	Sadbhavana Trust		
	Vanangana	Humsafar	Vanangana	Jeevika	KMVS

<b>Rural</b>	KMVS	MJAS	MJAS		Astitva
	Astitva	Astitva	Sahajini Shiksha Kendra (SSK)		
	Sahajini Shiksha Kendra (SSK)	SETU			SETU
	Jeevika				
	RJVS		RJVS		
	Sahiyar	Sahiyar	Sahiyar		
<b>Women's groups (youth)</b>	MASUM	MASUM		MASUM	
	MBBCDS		MBBCDS		
<b>Youth</b>	Feminist Approach to Technology (FAT)		FAT		
	Samvada	Samvada	Samvada		
	Praajak		Praajak		
	Amra Padatik				Amra Padatik
	Thoughtshop Foundation		Thoughtshop Foundation		
	Voice4Girls		Voice4Girls		
	Vikalp	Vikalp	Vikalp		
<b>Workers</b>	Kislay	Kislay		Kislay	
		SANGRAM	SANGRAM		
	Azad Foundation	BGAVS	BGAVS	Azad Foundation	
<b>Total</b>	22	15	18	5	5

Note: Collectivization as an outcome category was mandatory for all the 29 organizations. Some organizations chose the minimum requirement of two additional outcome categories, while some chose three additional outcome categories.

## 2.5 Rollout of the monitoring process and data gathering

The organizations gathered data from January through December 2016, covering four quarterly reporting periods. As soon as an organization finalized its outcome categories and progress markers and felt comfortable using the journal method, it began its monitoring process. Through the journals, the organizations documented changes they witnessed as a result of their efforts to address child and early marriage in the communities where they worked.

Each organization articulated an outcome challenge within each outcome category as the ideal goal or vision to be realized. Progress markers were chosen for each outcome category and graded from a minimum of "expect to see" (E) to the next level of "would like to see" (Li) to the ideal: "would love to see" (Lo). By definition, "would love to see" matched the outcome challenge for that outcome category.

Within the template, the organizations were free to choose progress markers according to their chosen objectives, depending on their starting point and in any order they wanted. Several organizations made the progress markers from the template more specific and meaningful to their needs and contexts. Some made small changes while others made significant adaptations.

Some organizations placed progress markers under "expect to see", while others placed the same or similar progress markers under "like to see", indicating their different levels of preparedness to meet the outcome challenge, their assessment of their own strengths and the possibilities of moving from one level to the next. For example, a progress marker like "building a deep understanding of gender" would be "expect to see" as a natural progression for a women's group already operating with a feminist perspective. However, for an organization more focused on labour rights, this goal might be further away and require special strategies to achieve, and thus could be a "like to see" or a "love to see", depending on the organization's starting place.

The process of recording monthly progress in the journal and preparing the quarterly report involved staff coming together across management levels to reflect on the changes observed during the month, and discuss and debate what would be included and why. It also gave them the opportunity to carry out their own analyses of the change, whether there was progress or not. The storytelling tool captured changes in the lives of the individuals within the collectives.

In the journal, organizations had to qualify or rate the scale of change they had observed as "none", "low", "medium" or "high". Not all organizations were able to do this, which led to intense conversations among the respective staff, who found three quarterly periods too brief a timeframe to assess documented shifts with these qualifications. The journal had a special section for organizations to document unexpected outcomes.

The data-gathering process went beyond a year (into 2017) due to delays that some organizations encountered. With the flexibility offered through the participatory process, some organizations submitted all four quarterly reports while others could only complete two or three of their reports, but they connected regularly with the TISS team by telephone to share updates from the field which were documented and added to their reports.

Additionally, four thematic regional consultations were organized in January and February 2017: on education (in Jaipur), on livelihoods (in Hyderabad), on law, policy and advocacy (in Kolkata) and on gender and sexuality (in Lucknow). At these regional gatherings, rich discussions helped the organizations address their concerns around monitoring change within the theme, while learning from others' experiences. The TISS research team also participated in several events organized by participating organizations, which contributed to the overall data gathering.

## **2.6 Data analysis and meaning-making**

The year-long monitoring process resulted in large volumes of data. Each participating organization's quarterly report averaged eight pages, which translated to 32 pages of documentation per organization for the year. For the 29 organizations, this meant the number of pages of data went into the hundreds. In addition, there were reports from the consultations, field visits and events.

The following section highlights journal entries from three organizations (one per type of work focus) across two categories (collectivization and gender and sexuality) to illustrate the nature of data gathered across outcome categories. The journal entries show the kinds of shifts that were documented, based on the kind of work each organization did and its own assessment of what it considered significant to achieving its outcome challenge.

### **2.6.1 Women's groups cluster: Vanangana**

Vanangana is a rural, grassroots, women's rights organization based in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh. It focuses on spreading awareness among women about their rights, mitigating violence against women and building leadership of women from marginalized communities, such as Dalits.

As indicated in the Table 2.3 journal entry, Vanangana observed that physical spaces being created to discuss violence against women served as entry points to address child and early marriage. As the year progressed, they reported how these spaces increased in number and extended to new locations. Other villages were added, followed by work to understand the situation in each of them before seeking a space, conducting village meetings and obtaining platforms, such as schools. Spaces of trust and safety were created for discussions; the organization could communicate its availability for support to girls and women, even in an instance of early marriage. In the gender and sexuality category, physical spaces of safety

were created during casework, workshops and meetings. By the third and fourth quarters, women and girls were expressing courage to speak up about issues at home.

**Table 2.3 Example of documented change from the women's groups cluster (Vanangana)**

<b>Outcome category:</b> Collectivization	<b>Outcome challenge:</b> To collectivize women and adolescent girls from Dalit, Ati-Dalit and Muslim communities so that they can be self-reliant and self-dependent and secure their rights.	
<b>Progress markers</b>	PM1 (E)— Mobilize young persons, especially women and girls.	PM2 (Li): Build collectives as safe spaces.
<b>First Quarter</b>	PM1 (E)- Newer villages added to and introduced to Dalit Mahila Sanghathan; 10 villages with Muslim women as members were approached. Preparations were made by discussing personal problems and rights in Ati-Dalit hamlets.	PM2 (Li)— Organized youth festival for young boys and girls of Guftugu Manch, where girls made a presentation to discuss numerous issues and understand health, education, gender, sexuality and violence against women to raise voice against it in society and family.
<b>Second Quarter</b>	PM1 (E)— Going to each village to understand the political situation while talking to the women, which castes, who are the leaders. And then taking up a case and conducting discussions on violence against women.	PM2 (Li)— No change documented.
<b>Third Quarter</b>	PM1 (E)— The Ati-Dalit women were able to give a petition to the district deputy collector. When discussions took place with posters on violence against women, it was realized that there was an instance of early marriage. When the men and women said that the girls here decide to marry on their own, it was discussed further as to how girls too had as much rights as boys.	PM2 (Li)— Among the discussions in the Dalit bastis, it was also communicated to oppressed bahu (daughters-in-law) in one family that they can come to the office and they will be supported. In discussions, many cases of early marriage emerged.

<b>Fourth Quarter</b>	PM1 (E)— Got a platform through the headmaster of the school to talk to boys and talk of gender perspective, violence and discrimination.	PM2 (Li)—When discussions are held in a combined manner, with open discussions, many men's inhibitions were broken, and it became participatory. Women and girls in the discussions said they would work to establish their own identities. If the women couldn't, they would at least support the girls.
<b>Outcome category:</b> Gender and sexuality	<b>Outcome challenge:</b> Vanangana, along with its different collectives, would develop understanding and awareness on gender and sexuality through continuous discussions. It would help to bring out issues related to gender and sexuality and women's agency would be foregrounded.	
<b>Progress Markers</b>	PM1 (E)— Engage deeply with issues related to gender.	PM4 (Li)—Comfortably discuss issues of gender and sexuality.
<b>First Quarter</b>	PM1 (E)—Through a case that came, they resolved the matter so that the young couple could have their inter-caste marriage protected and live the life of their choice.	PM4 (Li)—Discussed detailed issues of child marriage with girls of Guftugu Manch through games in meetings. Girls felt courage to raise the issue. One incident of early marriage of a girl in the village was halted very quietly, with the help of Vanangana.
<b>Second Quarter</b>	PM1 (E)—Supporting a case, where a woman's wish to leave the marriage because she desired someone else and support her to make her decision as per wish and obtain divorce.	PM4 (Li)—Through the case work, understand issues of sexuality and speak in support of the women.
<b>Third Quarter</b>	PM1 (E)— In workshops in schools and society, girls expressed through chart depictions how there was discrimination against them in matters as diverse as food and choice of marriage.	PM4 (Li)— The women in the Sangharshil group gathered courage to speak of husbands' coercion of unspeakable sexual acts, which they are hurt by.

<b>Fourth Quarter</b>	PM1 (E)— Women spoke after meetings, saying they would speak up rather than suppress the violence against young girls. They would counsel them and help them speak about their personal issues.	PM4 (Li)— Girls raised issues of how they worked hard at home but were not allowed to go out like their brothers and spoke of their right to mobility and choice.
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Note: PM=progress marker; (E)=expect to see and (Li)=like to see.

### 2.6.2 Labour-focused groups cluster: Kislay

Kislay is a Delhi-based organization that promotes the rights of urban poor communities in slum areas of the capital, many of whom comprise migrant workers. Its programmes focus on the rights to housing, food and education and on the regulation of employment and social security for domestic workers and other members of its five trade-based unions.

As the entries in Table 2.4 indicate, among the workers' group, unlike the women's group (where discussions on violence became an entry point in collectivization), there was tremendous hesitation and lack of trust in discussing personal issues. This gradually changed, and more members began to trust; this increased as more spaces of collective and social events were created and discussions occurred. There were still traces of lack of trust among some members in the fourth quarter. Within gender and sexuality, there was slow recognition of gender discrimination, with some discussions on sexuality in the second quarter and youth empowered to raise gender issues within their families and integrate these with workers' issues. But there was less discussion on sexuality. The discussions on sexuality were still not being connected to structures that dictated their choices, which the organization noted for future work.

**Table 2.4 Example of documented change from the labour-focused groups cluster (Kislay)**

<b>Outcome category:</b> Collectivization	<b>Outcome challenge:</b> Collectivizing unorganized sector workers within communities who face low levels of education and awareness, are in a vulnerable financial position, and also who face challenges related to caste, religion, gender and various regional factors, especially women and girls.		
<b>Progress markers</b>	PM1 (E)— Mobilize young people, especially girls and women.	PM2 (E)— Build collectives as safe and inclusive spaces.	PM3 (Li)— Work with communities to accept and support collectives.



<p><b>First Quarter</b></p>	<p>PM1 (E)— Newer members in the youth workshop were very hesitant but had the space to express their disagreements. Older members participated well. We need to have more discussions on the questions raised.</p>	<p>PM2 (E)— Most members feel hesitation in discussing personal issues in the collective or organization but have begun discussing them in the smaller groups.</p>	<p>PM3 (Li)— Working collectively was practised through social programmes, such as cultural activities, community dining.</p>
<p><b>Second Quarter</b></p>	<p>PM1 (E)— Newer members are enthusiastic about collective processes, but they have many questions about the relations between individuals and the collectives. There was lot of discussion in meetings about the need for collectivity and its role in societal change.</p>	<p>PM2 (E)— There has been increasing interest or attraction towards collective work. But still there is a lack of feeling secure or trust in discussing personal issues, although they have begun discussions.</p>	<p>PM3 (Li)— Members organized and participated in collective activities and were enthused.</p>
<p><b>Third Quarter</b></p>	<p>PM1 (E)— Collectivity is an option of alternative strength, for which collective programmes are organized and understanding built.</p>	<p>PM2 (E)— There is more openness now among members, compared with earlier periods. They discuss their family problems, education and work-related issues. But they are still unable to discuss their personal matters in the group.</p>	

<p><b>Fourth Quarter</b></p>	<p>PM1 (E)— Boys and girls taking part in Delhi meetings and outside Delhi was a positive step for them.  Increased participation in social programmes, collective decision-making and division of responsibilities.</p>	<p>PM2 (E)— Young members are speaking their mind. Some are still hesitant, although a majority wish to speak on friendship, love and relationships and feel a forum has emerged where they can speak of the heart's matters. They are feeling secure with each other.</p>	
<p><b>Outcome category:</b> Gender and sexuality</p>		<p><b>Outcome challenge:</b> Creating awareness among all community members about the existing mindset of patriarchy within the community and the discouraging socioeconomic and political environment towards women and girls.</p>	
<p><b>Progress Markers</b></p>	<p>PM1 (E)— Engage deeply with issues related to gender.</p>	<p>PM4 (Li)—Comfortably discuss issues of gender and sexuality.</p>	
<p><b>First Quarter</b></p>	<p>PM1(E)—Began recognizing and initiating discussions on gender and sexual inequality along with discussions on class and social discrimination.</p>	<p>PM4 (Li)—Even now, some members are unable to discuss issues of sexuality comfortably.</p>	
<p><b>Second Quarter</b></p>	<p>PM1 (E)— Had discussions on what is sexuality following training session. Newer members also recognized discrimination based on sexuality in society.</p>	<p>PM4 (Li)— An understanding on gender and sexuality is being prepared through training, but they are unable to connect it to their work. Most of them are hesitant to still accept it.</p>	

<b>Third Quarter</b>	PM1 (E)— Based on the understanding they have till now, members are trying to practise reducing gender discrimination in their life. They are trying to think of ways to handle the challenges of family before them.	PM4 (Li)— Some colleagues are stuck in their inner conflicts and trying to get out of it, while some are practising the new learnings in their personal life.	
<b>Fourth Quarter</b>	PM1 (E)— Team members are more active and participating in discussions on gender. Discussions are happening in their families. They want to bring this understanding into the reality of their lives.	PM4 (Li)— Compared with earlier situation, team members have better understanding of gender and sexuality and are trying to bring it into social and personal life through different programmes by integrating gender into workers' issues and via attempts to speak in the larger group.	

Note: PM=progress marker; (E)=expect to see and (Li)=like to see.

### 2.6.3 Youth groups cluster: Praajak

Praajak is a Kolkata-based organization that works together with communities and government and non-government actors to provide an enabling and secure environment for vulnerable children and young people in West Bengal.

In the collectivization work with youth reflected in Table 2.5, direct discussions took place but there were still issues in reaching out to girls. In the direct discussions, some alienation of members was evident due to their gender presentation and expressions of sexuality. But by the second and third quarters, the issues of fluidity of gender and sexuality were accepted. In the discussions on gender and sexuality, there were easier discussions and sharing of personal stories at all levels on gender, while discussions on sexuality could take place only after addressing or acknowledging the deep stigma and taboos around freely talking about sex and sexuality in society. What is interesting from all three examples is that collectivization clearly contributed to creating spaces for discussing issues of gender and sexuality, with gradual processes of empowerment.

Table 2.5 Example of documented change from the youth groups cluster (Praajak)

<p><b>Outcome category:</b> Collectivization</p>	<p><b>Outcome challenge:</b> To empower the collectives of young people to effectively intervene in the situations of the community where gender and sexual rights of youth are being violated, through an intense and deep understanding of the concept of gender and sexuality.</p>		
<p><b>Progress markers</b></p>	<p>PM1 (E)— Mobilize young people, especially girls and women.</p>	<p>PM2 (E)— Build collectives as safe and inclusive spaces.</p>	<p>PM3 (Li)— Work with communities to accept and support collectives.</p>
<p><b>First Quarter</b></p>	<p>PM1 (E)—Difficulty in reaching girls (out of 31 reached, only 10 attended the training).</p>	<p>PM2 (E)— Sometimes people are rejected because of the way they project themselves and speak.</p>	<p>PM3 (Li)—Sensitization through theatre campaign.</p>
<p><b>Second Quarter</b></p>	<p>PM1 (E)—Theatre show and Child Protection Unit meeting helped contact young people.</p>	<p>PM2 (E)—Acceptance of a collective member who cross-dressed, shared experience and later reverted to earlier attire. The collective appreciated previous and present attire, accepting fluidity of gender and sexuality.</p>	<p>PM3 (Li)—Collective supports community in access to govt. schemes, RTI (Right to Information Act) etc.</p>
<p><b>Third Quarter</b></p>	<p>PM1 (E)— To overcome difficulty of accessing girls, reached out to self-help groups who have more power in the community, to help girls forced into early marriages, reach newly married girls and also their own daughters.</p>	<p>PM2 (E)—More spaces created, theatre shows, addas (informal gatherings), WhatsApp groups to tell their stories.</p>	<p>PM3 (Li)—Thirteen-week training initiated for boys who will follow up with action in community.</p>

<b>Fourth Quarter</b>	PM1 (E)—Not submitted.	PM2 (E)—Not submitted.	PM3(Li)— Not submitted.
<b>Outcome category:</b> Gender and sexuality	<b>Outcome challenge:</b> Members of the collective engage with notions of gender and sexuality and develop a perspective on child and early marriage, based on the understanding and thereby shift from age-centric approach to an approach emphasizing choice, consent and agency.		
<b>Progress Markers</b>	PM1 (E)—Engage deeply with issues related to gender.	PM4 (Li)—Comfortably discuss issues of gender and sexuality.	
<b>First Quarter</b>	PM1 (E)—Discussions on gender at all levels, daily conversations, workshops, in office.	PM4 (Li)— In organization, people are sharing personal stories.	
<b>Second Quarter</b>	PM1 (E)— In addas (informal gatherings), collective members are discussing gender-related issues.	PM4 (Li)—Collective is overcoming stigma related to sexuality and having discussions.	
<b>Third Quarter</b>	PM1 (E)— No change documented.	PM4 (Li)— No change documented.	
<b>Fourth Quarter</b>	PM1 (E)—Not submitted.		

Note: PM=progress marker; (E)=expect to see and (Li)=like to see.

## 2.7 A new understanding of how change takes place

The TISS research team developed an analytical framework and codebook to classify the various kinds of change that the organizations documented. This was an iterative process. Through manual coding, consolidation of data and use of a qualitative data software, the team drew out the broad trends as they emerged under each outcome category, as well as those that overlapped outcome categories.

Oftentimes, change was noted as small shifts over time through the progress markers. At other times there were dramatic shifts. For example, additional discussions on menstrual taboos within the collective meetings might emerge as a small or gradual shift in discussions

on sexuality over the four quarters. But the collective's participation in Gay Pride parades for the first time in their city, conversation on sexual and gender diversity or attending to a crisis of violence and its aftermath in the home of a collective member constituted dramatic shifts for the organization and the collective members.

Fig. 2.2: Example of emergence of a theme



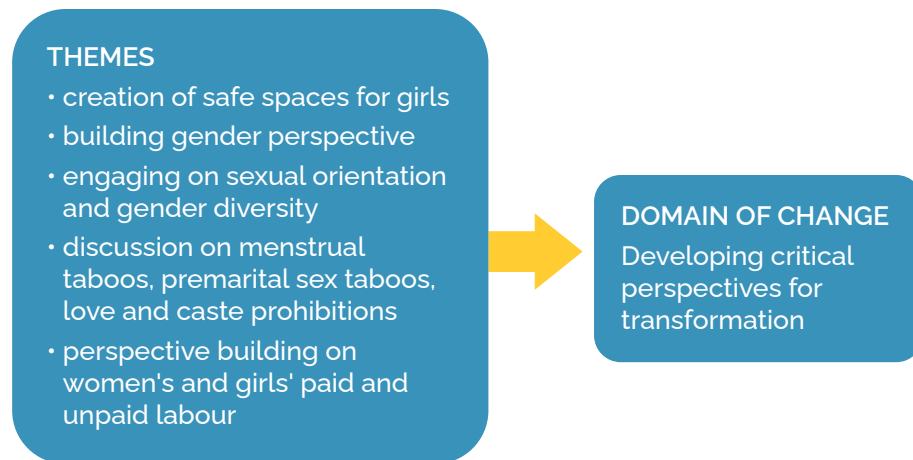
When aggregated, these changes formed themes that demonstrated shifts in the work that organizations did or that were observed as having significant impact in the lives of women, girls, boys and others in the communities. A theme could be defined as evidence of a set of changes influenced by activities undertaken by the organization, which could be commonly observed across all organizations despite their diversity of work. For instance, the notion of a "safe space" or a "dialogic space", which can be tangible (a physical space) or intangible (trust, belongingness and so on), developed as a result of the mobilizing and organizing strategies. The creation of safe spaces using various modes of collectivizing and mobilization, as well as offering sustained support to get girls to access that space (see Chapter 7, Fig. 7.2) is a theme that emerged repeatedly.

In this report, incremental changes are presented graphically as pathways of change.

In our analytical frame, the various themes captured—such as building an understanding of gender through training; efforts to dialogue with stakeholders on the importance of girls' education; having discussions on menstrual taboos; or participating in Gay Pride parades and engaging on issues of sexual orientation and gender diversity—were aggregated across the outcome categories. These aggregations created bounded terrains of behaviour, relationships and actions that underlay the change. These were termed "domains of change", where deep changes occurred. A domain is the aggregation of actions, behaviours and relationships that indicate a substantive outcome or change. For instance, the aggregate of organizations creating collectives as safe spaces where young people gather frequently,

builds their trust and comfort to speak about their desires for education rather than early marriage, strengthens them to engage with conversations at home or the caste group on the value of education, and finally creates a shift in perspective related to girls' education and careers indicates a shift in the domain of bargaining with patriarchy.

**Fig. 2.3: Example of aggregation of themes into a domain of change:**



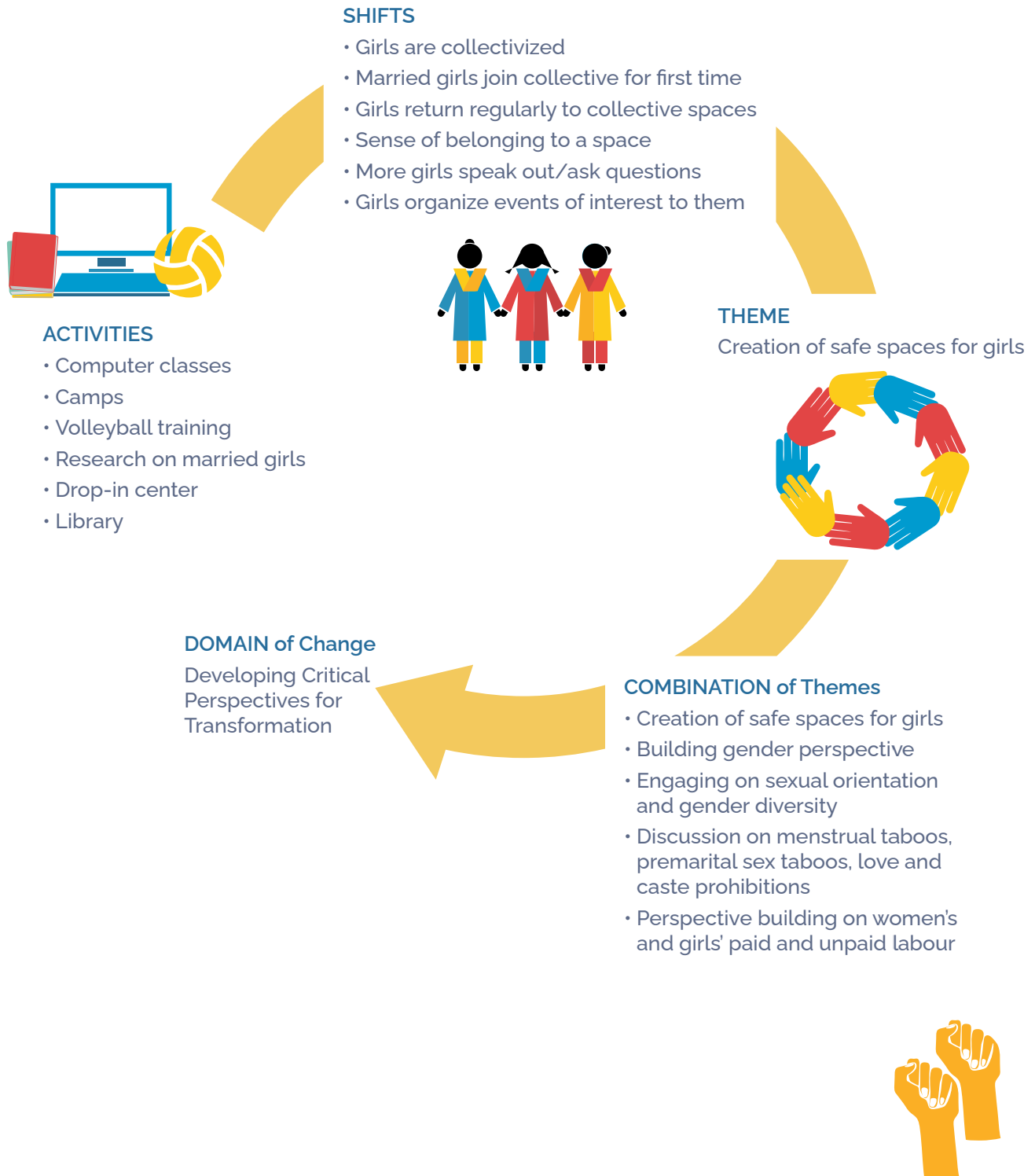
After an exhaustive analysis of the large volume of data gathered from the 29 grassroots organizations, we found that a root-cause approach to addressing child and early marriage entails incremental change that occurs through various pathways into broad domains that were aligned with feminist ideals or visions. These domains are as follows, not necessarily in a linear logic but inter-connected or occurring simultaneously, indicating the complex nature of change across several domains.

- creation of feminist dialogic spaces;
- developing critical perspectives for transformation;
- bargaining with patriarchy;
- creating solidarities, networks and collectives; and
- building autonomy and dignity.

Each domain emerged through the analytical framework drawn up from the data, but is also an analytical frame in itself, which is why the domains are used in this report as starting points for the following chapters. From an M&E perspective, the domains could be considered as "indicators".

As a corollary, we can say that addressing these domains is imperative to the process of social transformation that all the organizations are carrying out, wherever they are located and whatever the nature of their activities.

Fig. 2.4: Example of emergence of a theme, and aggregation of themes into a domain of change (Chapter 4)





# CHAPTER 3

## Safe spaces and dialogic spaces

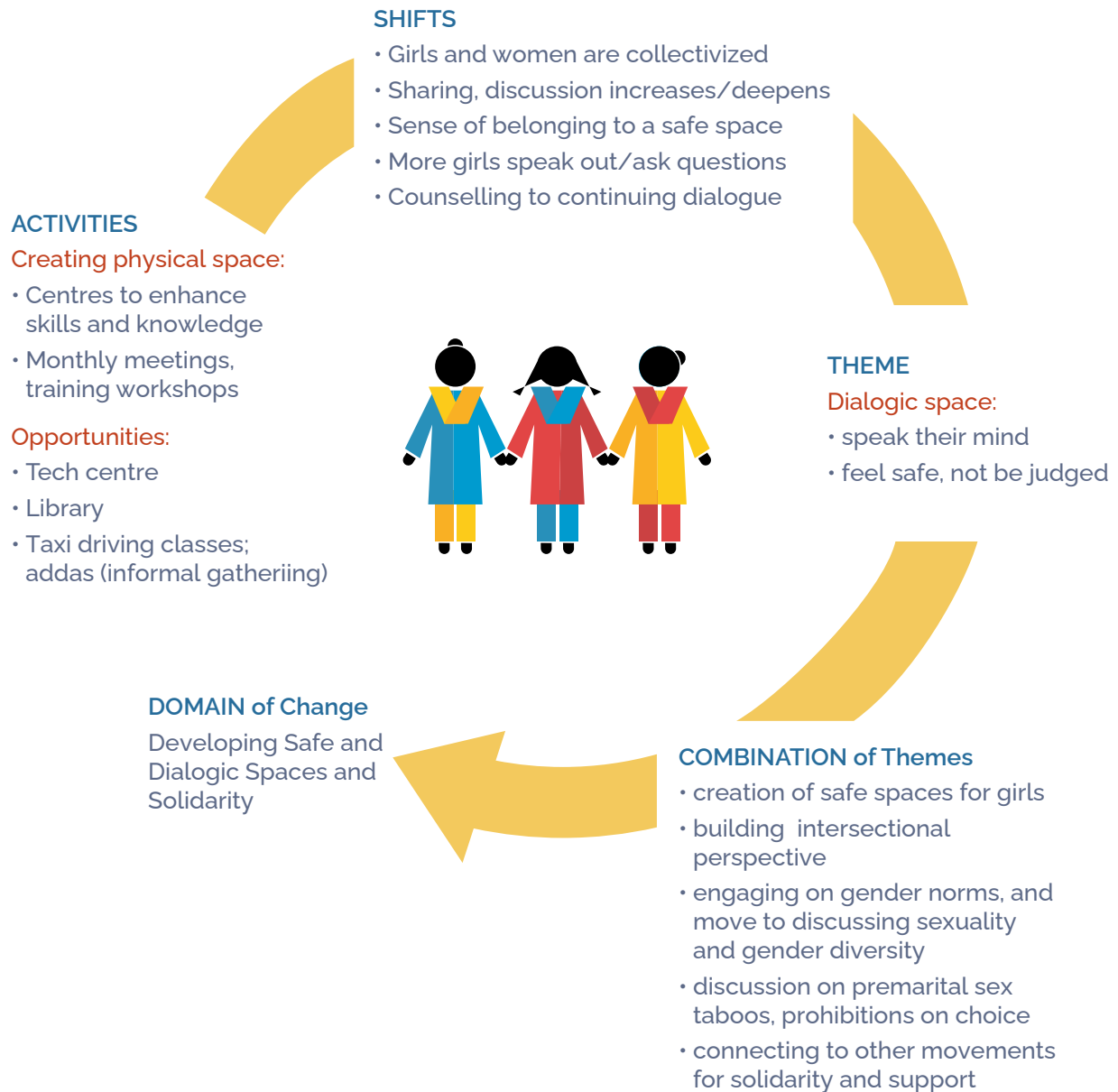
One of the most enduring of feminist strategies worldwide has been to mobilize or collectivize women to create not just safe but also dialogic spaces in which to question women's oppression. Dialogic spaces are those that are formed as a result of strategic mobilizing for engaging in discussions, planning, conversations and critical debate in a manner that nurtures trust and solidarity. The solidarity leads to sustained collective action geared towards structural change and social transformation.

This was the resounding goal of all the organizations participating in this project. Since they work to put an end to gender inequality and oppressive social norms, a core strategy for them is encouraging girls, women and young people to form safe spaces that can become dialogic spaces of critical thinking to propel change.

This chapter looks at the formation of, and the dynamics within, these safe spaces, largely based on the journal entries from 29 organizations under the collectivization outcome category. It is not only about creating physical spaces that can be deemed "safe"—a strategy that has received much traction in work on girls' empowerment. It is also about creating the dynamics within that space for the dialogue, conversation and critical thinking that are crucial to propel change. Thus, it is important to not just monitor the creation of collectives but to track what happens within them and how they contribute to change.

The ability to discuss issues around gender and sexuality emerged as a key marker of the transition from a safe space to a dialogic one. Hence, the analysis also draws on the data gathered by 22 organizations under the gender and sexuality outcome category to understand how a space becomes safe and conducive to critical thinking on the most sensitive of issues—norms around gender and sexuality, which are at the heart of patriarchy and the subordination of women and girls.

Fig. 3.1: Example of emergence of a theme, and aggregation of themes into a domain of change (Chapter 3)



### 3.1 Creating a physical space: Strategies and formal modes of organizing

The idea of a safe space has emerged as an important means of empowering girls in the development sector. Often viewed as a girls-only space, given that public spaces are often dominated by men, a safe space is typically a place where women and girls can go at any time to feel safe and empowered and have access to information, education, recreational activities, support and services (UNFPA and IRC, 2017).

All the organizations recognized that the most dominant form of control over young women's sexuality is control over their bodies and their movements, which manifests itself in many forms, such as strict restrictions on mobility, confinement in the home or surveillance over who they talk to. This control is resisted in many ways.

In this context, the organizations in this project imagined a safe space as something crucial for girls, women and youth, where they access opportunities that are otherwise denied and discuss issues usually forbidden. Women and girls in particular crave a safe and separate space where they can talk about personal choices, desires and aspirations, share experiences of violence and think of how to negotiate and resist them.

One of the most significant steps in building and sustaining a safe space is to mobilize girls and young women to form a collective in their community. This can take many forms, from a more permanent girls' group in the village to temporary spaces where youth can engage for certain periods. Through these varied processes of mobilization, collectives are nurtured into being safe spaces. In the case of Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan (KMVS), the formation of microcredit self-help groups predated their setting up of girls' collectives, and became the foundational model. Mahila Sarvangeen Utkarsh Mandal (MASUM) formed adolescent collectives by mobilizing youth and women through village and subdistrict meetings and through life skills training programmes. The young people went on to take initiative in their villages to mobilize others to attend village meetings. On the other hand, Voice4Girls set up regular "camps" within schools attended by girls from poor socio-economic backgrounds as a temporary space for learning, sharing and celebrating. Samvada created safe spaces within colleges for engaging with young people on discussions over marriage, gender-based and caste-based discrimination, romance, love and the importance of education. Sahajini Shiksha Kendra (SSK), through its bridge course preparing young girls who have dropped out of school to re-enroll, created space for girls from marginalized and Dalit communities who otherwise had no opportunity to join a collective.

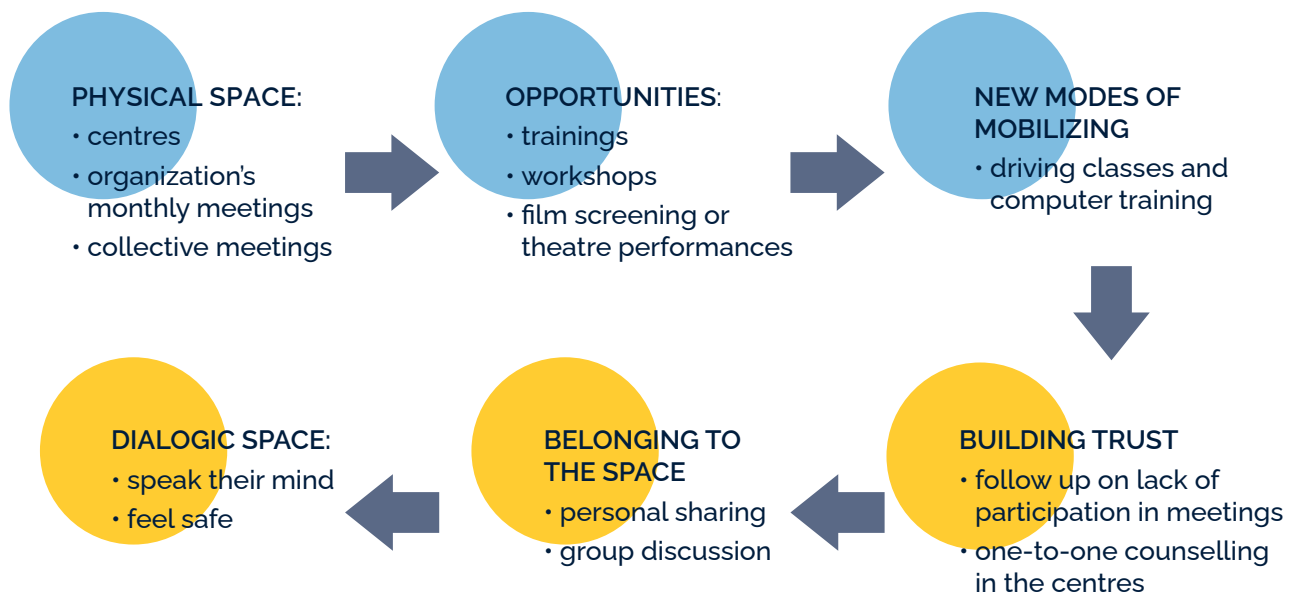
A space thus created may have multiple functions. For example, the space created by Sampada Grameen Mahila Sanstha (SANGRAM) is where their swadhayan classes are held (tuition sessions for the children of sex workers in the collective), but it has also become a provisional hostel for children of members of the sex workers' collective who need a place to

stay. The Tech Centre space which Feminist Approach to Technology (FAT) set up for girls to access and learn how to use technology is now used for more than projects and programmes: girls use it with a sense of belonging as a quiet space where they can prepare for exams.

A safe space encompasses the physical space that the organization/collective occupies, as well as the opportunities and the intangible sense of comfort, strength and trust that is built up among the girls and women. It was this confidence, security and trust that helped girls negotiate with larger institutional structures, often with the support of other members of the collective and the organization.

A safe space is not only physical—a building, a room, a camp, a centre—but is also created by collective members through meetings, workshops, training programmes, activities and casual exchanges. It is the bonding, trust, dependability and shared idea of resistance and struggle. It can be located anywhere: under a tree, in a courtyard or in a sports field.

Fig. 3.2 Pathways of change: Dynamic approach to safety



Note: Blue boxes indicate creation of tangible spaces, yellow boxes are intangible spaces.

### 3.2 Developing a sense of belongingness

Initially, the spaces created by the organizations were places to meet, learn and study.<sup>5</sup> Gradually they became spaces in which they could discuss matters that are forbidden or

<sup>5</sup> The chapter that deals with critical perspectives clearly demonstrates the connection between the creation of safe spaces for young people, especially girls, and learning (see figure 4.1 in chapter 4).

taboo in other spaces. For example, in a Voice4Girls camp which 1,200 students participated in during the project's first quarter, the journal entry referred to discussion on gender equality and gender roles within the family. A similar camp organized in the second quarter incorporated information on sexual and reproductive health, mental health, gender identity and sexuality. The journal reflected a change in the young girls' confidence, from talking about aspirations of financial independence in the first quarter to showing willingness to negotiate with family and overcome challenges (gaining autonomy, respect and control over their bodies) in later quarters. Girls were also inquisitive to learn more about the LGBT community after learning the difference between sex and gender during the camps.

A collective typically becomes a crucial space for vibrant discussions on young peoples' everyday lives, leading to the possibility of building an understanding on a wide range of issues. "Youth Resource Centres" run by Thoughtshop Foundation were designed as fun and learning spaces to support formal education, prevent school drop-out, and provide counselling as well as emotional, financial and practical assistance. In the first quarter, Thoughtshop staff organized a workshop on how to explore gender issues as a collective, connect members' own lives to these ideas and be comfortable in discussing gender and sexuality together. This led to the organization developing a module that they used in the second quarter for regular interaction with the Youth Resource Centre members. By the fourth quarter, one of the youth trainers confidently represented the organization for the first time at a national workshop on early marriage to present on the challenges they overcame in their lives with the support of the collective. In these Youth Resource Centres, the idea was to create a different type of learning space in which girls and boys can learn and spend time together away from daily responsibilities and pressing demands at home, and connect "gender and sexuality" to their own lives. They became vital spaces for friendships and for finding support systems and networks.

A sense of responsibility and belongingness was marked by collective members wanting to organize events. For example, adolescent girls in KMVS organized garba (a community dance during the Hindu Navratri festival) and invited people from all castes, communities and religious groups. In MASUM, individuals who had attended youth camps or peer counselling training took up leadership roles and conducted sessions in summer camps.

### 3.3 Building intersectional understanding

The organizations in Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat states (Vanangana and Sahiyar, working with women), Telangana state (Shaheen and Voice4Girls, working with youth)<sup>6</sup> and in Delhi (Kislay working with workers) brought people from marginalized castes, classes and

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<sup>6</sup> Women's groups and young women's collectives in Telangana state see building and strengthening collectives (called Bal Sanghas in Bhumika, young women's collectives in Shaheen, Sakhi Peers in Voice4Girls) as the crux of their work. They use these spaces to build intersectional understanding on gender, caste and religion through melas (festivals), workshops and discussions in the collectives.

religious backgrounds together in the collectives they set up. Vanangana, for example, works with Dalit, Adivasi and Muslim women. The collectives created are identity-based (the Dalit Mahila Samiti, or Women's Collective, the Sangharshil Mahila Sanghathan, or Single Women's Collective, and the Guftugu Manch, or Adolescent Girls Collective) and within each, the starting points of discussions are around the intersecting oppression of caste, gender and religion. This is an important function of the collective: to help members understand and challenge intersectional discrimination.

For example, labour rights group Kislay conducted unique activities such as community cooking programmes with men and women workers in the bastis (urban slums) of Delhi, to overcome social barriers that prescribe that cooking be done only by women or is "impure" when done by certain castes. With this activity, they challenged the social norms around mixed sex and castes dining together: women served the food that was cooked by men to guests who belonged to diverse castes. This (along with discussion on issues that occurred in the process of organizing the activity) resulted in people rethinking gender roles and developing a critical understanding about caste discrimination as a structural form of exclusion and oppression. Kislay staff hoped this activity would empower young people to challenge gender and caste-based norms of early marriage when confronted with it.

### **3.4 Challenges in creating safe spaces**

As the organizations will attest, safe spaces do not evolve naturally and can only be achieved with an investment of time and through different strategies. Challenges include the unavailability of real physical spaces for women to meet in, as well as local caste and communal (heightened tension between Hindu and Muslim communities) politics.

Unable to find a closed-door space for their collective meetings, MASUM organized meetings in open spaces, although women did not feel comfortable to speak their minds. MASUM also found that restrictions on girls increased when they introduced meetings, workshops and camps that encouraged intermingling between girls and boys. Sahajini Shiksha Kendra found that upper caste men in the communities where they worked tried to stop the organization's engagement with girls from Dalit communities (a bridge course that would help the girls from marginalized castes prepare to re-enter the school system).

In the political climate of Muzaffarnagar (tension and violence between groups of Hindus and Muslims), where Astitva is located, the need for safe spaces was urgent. Public spaces were occupied by goons, political thugs and right-wing groups. But the wider communal environment made it difficult for these spaces to realize their potential. As Astitva found, the overall political climate is important to the realization of safe spaces. The women in its collectives could relate gendered discrimination to their everyday lives, but despite the trust and safety they felt in their collective, they also felt the presence of a socio-political environment that created vulnerability and some distrust.

### 3.5 Reducing hesitation around discussing sexuality through informal spaces

The deep-rooted taboo around sexuality and the hesitation that young people and women felt in talking about their sex, sexuality and gender, along with socialization that prevented people from questioning social structures and hierarchies, added to the challenges that organizations were juggling. Through individual counselling and continuous dialogue, organizations responded strategically and thoughtfully to young people who wondered if their discussions were tantamount to disrespect of their elders. Discussions on gender and sexuality, they realized, required the creation of non-judgmental spaces.

Organizations' staff who found it difficult to address sexuality directly in their work (through modules or trainings conducted by feminist resource organizations) managed to do so indirectly (using songs or talking broadly about consent<sup>7</sup>). Other women's groups used sexual harassment, gender-based violence and discrimination as entry points to talk about sexuality.<sup>8</sup>

One of the ways in which organizations built a space that inspired feelings of trust, belongingness, safety and even friendship was informal discussions. In addition to workshops, training sessions and meetings, there were informal discussions during lunch hour at FAT's Tech Centres, after film screenings in the block addas (informal gatherings) in Praajak and Sahiyar, or on the WhatsApp groups of several other organizations.

Some organizations found certain aspects of sexuality challenging<sup>9</sup> while others found effective strategies for such conversation.<sup>10</sup> For girls struggling to be free of control from families and the community, KMVS developed games to use in (and outside) the collective meetings. In the games certain situations were imagined, such as being sexually harassed on the street or feeling attracted to someone, in order to prepare a response and build strength among girls to gradually challenge such control. The girls individually and collectively asked

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<sup>7</sup> FAT drew parallels with the idea of consent while taking photographs, as part of a photography workshop for their young campaigners, which underscored the importance of maintaining the privacy and personhood of a subject.

<sup>8</sup> In MASUM, girls felt it was "wrong" to have sexual relations, and this belief severely affected the ability of the organization to address sexuality; most discussions tended to shift towards sexual harassment. MASUM then used youth camps as a medium to discuss sexuality and masculinity. This was possible both in the boys' collectives as well as during residential camps (with girls and boys) through the modules of love and attraction and "knowing your body". During the interactions, boys shared personal experiences and problems related to relationships. Such discussions indicated a degree of comfort that had been built by overcoming the challenge of perceiving discussions about sexuality, caste and masculinity as taboo.

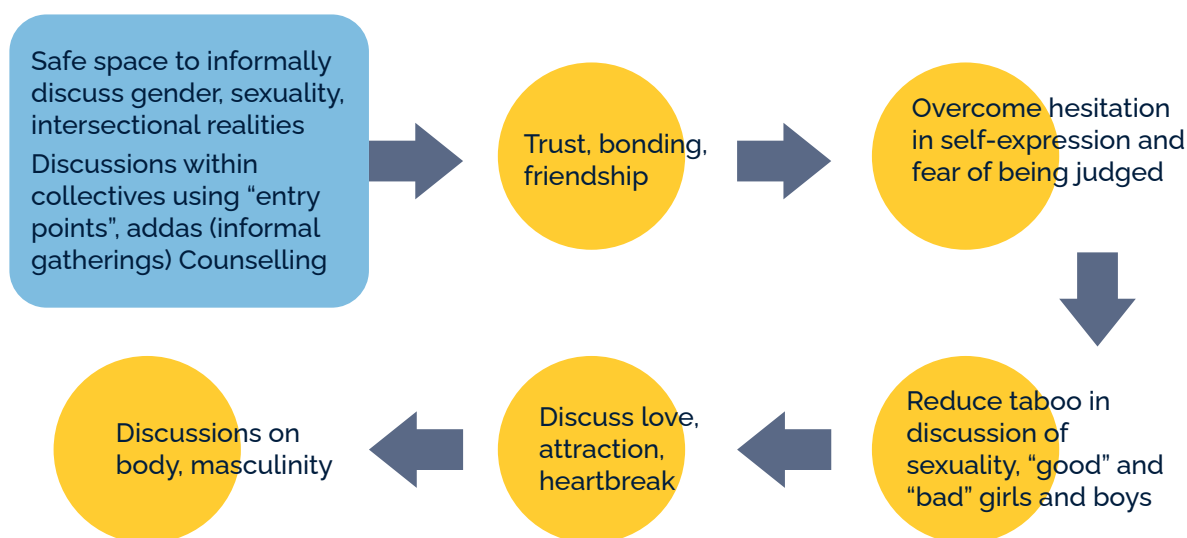
<sup>9</sup> For KMVS in Gujarat state, talking about sexuality with women and girls in a communal environment where there is hostility and antagonism between Hindu and Muslim communities was challenging, but important because of the ways in which community honour is associated with women's sexuality.

<sup>10</sup> Praajak and the FAT overcame the taboo through games and facilitated discussions, while others like MASUM and Thoughtshop Foundation used workshops, trainings and residential camps to encourage conversations around gender and sexuality. In Humsafar, similar discussions happened in the Yuvati Mela where young girls felt safe and confident to ask questions about health, bodies and sexuality.



questions relating to the situations and developed a range of possible responses. This helped them develop an understanding of how patriarchy, caste norms and power structures operate in society, and think through how to challenge these structures and norms while keeping themselves safe.

**Fig. 3.3 Pathways for dialogue and conversations around gender and sexuality**



Note: Blue box indicates the examples of organizations' efforts, and the yellow boxes indicate the gradual and incremental outcomes.

The organizations' staff were often part of the communities they worked in. Ruby SWS worked first to build an understanding among its staff so that they could question norms around sexuality and dialogue with their families to challenge patriarchy at home. In the first quarter, staff members began discussions on gender and sexuality and overcame their initial hesitation; this was followed in the second quarter with discussions between the staff and young women in meetings. In the third and fourth quarters, Ruby SWS staff was better placed to empathetically support the girls in their collectives on sensitive matters, and encourage them to voice their opinions openly.

### 3.6 Sustaining collectives

Organizations learnt to remain dynamic and not become complacent once a safe space or collective has been created. In a sense, their work has only just begun. Sustaining the

safe space after it is created, and ensuring it is strengthened and that members keep participating, is the biggest challenge. Yet it is an absolute necessity.<sup>11</sup> Youth groups faced the vulnerability of young girls who needed a lot of support and follow-up when they dropped out or experienced abuse. One of the non-tangible results of this sustained engagement is the solidarity that is built among members of the collective and between a collective and its supporting organization.

For example, Thoughtshop Foundation's collectives, the Youth Resource Centres, were in constant interaction with young people over the journal-reporting year to sustain the mobilization process. They looked out for instances of violence or abuse in members' lives that might alienate them, reached out with home visits to young people who dropped out of meetings and provided support when members experienced backlash from their community.

The organizations constantly supplemented the spaces and opportunities they had created by adding to them incrementally to keep up the momentum. This helped them sustain their mobilization and expand through a multiplier effect, whereby the small supplement led to an extended response, with more girls coming to workshops, more demand for activities, and so on. Amra Padatik experienced the constant dropping out of members or leaders in its established areas, although membership increased in new areas, where adolescents joined in the first quarter. By the fourth quarter, adults had also joined the collectives in these areas; their trust had grown after witnessing and later attending meetings with the young people.

Instead of being the main initiators of mobilization, women's groups and some youth groups encouraged women and girls to mobilize themselves, thereby creating a ripple or chain effect in other spaces and other geographies. For example, Samvada carried out a campaign on delaying marriage (the Hold On! campaign) after organizing a series of workshops with young people on marriage preparedness, where the cohort of young people come together regularly over a period of time. When, as part of the programme, the young people were made trainers, they then mobilized youth themselves. These young people began speaking publicly with confidence after the workshops and during the campaigns, and later vowed to influence future students when they have jobs.

### 3.7 Diverse strategies of mobilization

While the women's groups relied on traditional modes of mobilization and followed up to retain as well as expand membership, the youth groups used practices that kept the unique requirements of young people in mind, or adopted strategies learned from women's groups.

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<sup>11</sup> Shaheen adopted one-to-one counselling in schools, thereby building trust among young women to "open up" and speak their minds, which also helps them approach the organization if they face problems. Thoughtshop Foundation and FAT maintained dialogue through individual counselling, convincing young women and girls to negotiate with their families to continue with the organization's work. Awaaz-e-Niswaan offered a comfortable, non-discriminatory and non-judgmental space free of fear for girls, and this was a big draw.

Praajak, for example, reached out to girls who were in difficult situations to mobilize them, through connections with a local women's self-help group. Other organizations reached out to young people where they were most accessible—in their location of learning. For example, Voice4Girls used the curriculum in their camps affiliated with certain schools, MASUM reached out through their state-level youth camps and Jeevika reached out through specific programmes in schools or through their newly formed girls' collective, named Moner Katha ("innermost thoughts").

Jeevika reported that young girls participating in its Moner Katha group over a few meetings returned with interest, speaking up and sharing their own experiences. Voice4Girls saw a shift towards a more stable collective with regular attendance when girls began to ask for knowledge about gender and sexuality, which led to discussions on gender identity and issues of transgender communities. The girls also talked about violence and violations around their bodies, and uninhibitedly asked for sanitary napkins for their menstruation days.

### **3.8 Extending from the collective to the home**

A sense of relationship with a collective becomes instrumental in challenging patriarchal oppressions within the home and outside. However, several members of a collective started by FAT emphasized that a safe space needs constant maintenance to remain safe. The safety of a space, even one with four walls, is always shifting, they said. And while organizations can create a safe space, where people can talk freely, taking that environment home is another struggle for the collective members, despite the strong and sustained support of friends who are also collective members.

This process of speaking and finding their voices in the groups translated slowly into the homes, although not always successfully, as observed by FAT, Thoughtshop Foundation and Awaaz-e-Niswaan.

Sometimes, this finding of voice by young girls led to upheaval in the community and backlash, beginning with denials by community leaders of the collective's presence and influence, which later became a slow acknowledgement of the collective as having bargaining power. In some cases, girls were denied permission by their parents or family members to attend the collective meetings in the village or basti due to unforeseen incidents, such as when boys spoke to girls and raised social hackles for transgressing social norms, or when a young woman eloped with her boyfriend, as reported by Amra Padatik, Jeevika, Thoughtshop Foundation and MASUM.

### **3.9 Extending dialogues and connecting to other movements**

Several organizations rooted discussions on gender and sexuality in notions of choice and consent, and in the connections between themes being discussed and ongoing conversations in the world outside. Making a safe space inclusive in terms of expressions of

different genders and sexualities was the objective for some organizations. For example, FAT took girls from its Tech Centre to the Gay Pride march in Delhi, which made it easier for them to talk about sexuality. They also invited activists and people who do not identify themselves within the male-female gender binary into their team to generate conversations that went beyond the general issues of gender and sexuality.

The women's groups historically associated with the women's movement, such as Awaaz-e-Niswaan and Sahiyar, organized campaigns and protests where a lot of young women and adolescents regularly participated, to challenge religious and patriarchal institutions, such as the harmful diktats by religious leaders and lack of state support for women's rights. Youth groups, such as Samvada and FAT, also participated in events related to citizenship questions during the reporting period, such as events related to the rights of Muslim women, people's protests to reclaim constitutional rights, protests against rape, and against plans to build a nuclear facility, and so on. Through these events, campaigners built a nuanced understanding of gender justice and its links with religion, social locations and the State. For example, Samvada, in its marriage preparedness campaigns, was able to see the reverberations of its campaigns across a whole geography of spaces and movements where youth discussed the intersections of caste, sexuality and religion in making choices around marriage.

This ability to link issues and build meanings in an interconnected manner was seen to be crucial for the work of several organizations. For example, Sahiyar mobilized girls and women from Muslim communities in the state of Gujarat into local collectives. In these collectives, space was initially created to discuss issues of gender and sexuality and even child sexual abuse in the first quarter, with the help of an external resource organization. By the third quarter, the girls were visibly more comfortable talking about taboo topics such as friendships with boys, love and their experiences with unviable relationships. Their discussions about interpersonal relationships, intimacies and friendships were possible in the collective only once it was perceived as a safe space. Sahiyar also initiated discussions on women role models who had championed education, like Pandita Ramabai, Savitribai Phule and Malala Yousafzai. Alongside, they held discussions on sensitive topics like triple talaq,<sup>12</sup> domestic violence and gendered roles in the household. These discussions led to girls and women clarifying their thoughts on triple talaq (something controversial in their communities and also politicized by the government to demonize Muslims), developing a viewpoint and participating in public events, protests and campaigns against triple talaq as unconstitutional and in violation of women's rights.

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<sup>12</sup> Triple talaq is a practice of divorce in Islam whereby a man can dissolve his marriage through uttering or communicating "talaq" three times.

### 3.10 Building affective relations and collective solidarity

The sense of trust, bonding, solidarity or a sense of “collectivity” in collectives is very strong. For example, there is a shared sense of comradeship and struggle among VAMP, Muskaan, Mitra and other sex workers' collectives, among members of the collectives, and between SANGRAM (the parent organization associated with these collectives) and the collectives themselves. If VAMP faces any crisis, Muskaan will immediately come to help. If there is a raid by police on sex workers in Gokulnagar (one of the community areas of VAMP) the entire community in Gokulnagar will go to the police station. It is this sense of collectivity coming from a shared sense of struggle that makes each of these collectives and SANGRAM fight the external political, judicial and other forces.

Consciousness about identity, caste-related politics, and girls talking about choosing partners irrespective of caste are instances of choice and decision making in individual lives which are connected to membership in a collective. In the stories of change from collectives, individuals, especially girls, mentioned how difficult it was to challenge early marriage. But as they gained space and time to explore issues in the collective, their desire to be autonomous in making decisions about themselves became apparent. Friendships made within the collective were valued and crucial in times of crisis. Stories from several collectives reflected discussions on societal restrictions and moral restraints in the spheres of love, intimate relationships and friendships that made it difficult for spontaneous exchanges, interactions and relationship-building with peers.

The collective and the safe spaces created within it became extremely important in such situations for clarifying personal thoughts and drawing support. Married women in the Bhumika, MASUM, KMVS and Shaheen collectives found they could discuss domestic violence, issues related to reproduction, and other forms of stress and violence in their lives while aspiring toward livelihood and income-generating activities. They sought counselling services from the organization and tried to negotiate within their families, to change the circumstances of their individual lives.

### 3.11 Bargaining for rights with family and community

Organizations and collectives used innovative strategies to influence conservative societal attitudes and put forth their messages about the value and rights of girls in society. FAT, for instance, made sure that the members of the girls' collective officiated as designated photographers at their events or shared personal experiences in front of parents during their convocation, which had a long-term effect on their confidence and also showcased the girls' capabilities. Similarly, the Kishori Mela (adolescent girls' festival) organized by KMVS provided an opportunity to discuss discrimination based on gender and sexuality with community leaders.

Engaging with parents, especially mothers, on issues of child and early marriage and mobility

was an important entry point into engaging with the community for Thoughtshop Foundation and Praajak. In the second quarter, RJVS organized a workshop of fathers and daughters coming together, with a focus on understanding daughters' aspirations and the importance of sharing views. The organization observed that by the fourth quarter, several men and women in the workshops said they would send their daughters to school rather than keep them at home to be married early.

### **3.12 Reaching out to other movements and the outside world**

Networking with other organizations as well as individuals through workshops helped organizations learn new strategies as well as build upon their understanding of sexuality and gender. Most organizations learnt to build upon their understanding of gender from feminist organizations, preparing workshops and modules with their inputs or participating in their training programs to build their staff and collectives' perspectives. Collaborating with others enabled them to go deeper into intersectional understanding of gender, caste and religion.

Reaching out to inspiring leaders and activists to speak to the collectives was also an important strategy. For example, Humsafar invited youth activist Sahba Naqvi from the Pinjra Tod ("Break the Cages") campaign against discriminatory curfews on women in college hostels for a yuva sammelan (youth convention), where she talked about the growing resistance by girls in hostels and campuses across the country against draconian rules that restricted their mobility. She talked to young people in the collectives about how male students were allowed to stay off hostel premises until midnight, but girls had a curfew of 6 p.m. If they entered the hostel after that time, they had to sign a register absolving hostel authorities of responsibility for their safety. This helped young people understand how restrictions on the mobility of girls affected their ability to access education (girls weren't allowed to leave the hostel in the evening, and hence could not access libraries) and expanded their understanding of gender-based discrimination.

## Summary

- Collectivizing girls takes diverse forms and performs multiple functions.
- Intangible elements make a space safe and conducive to transformative discussions.
- The ability to discuss issues around gender and sexuality is an important marker of the transition from a safe space to a dialogic one.
- These spaces build affective relations and collective solidarity; reduce taboos around sexuality; facilitate critical thinking in an intersectional manner on gender in collective members' socio-political contexts; enable members to bargain with family members, especially for greater mobility; and are a bridge to the outside world and a wider community struggling for social justice.
- When girls join a collective, they undergo transformation at the individual level and become politically aware and active through certain pathways of change.

Fig. 3.4 Role of safe spaces

What success looks like as a result of collectivizing dialogic spaces:

Collective feels strong enough to offer support to an outcast pregnant married girl without judgement.

**Nishtha**

Collective members are questioning marriage practices, such as dowry for themselves and their sisters and thinking of alternative arrangements for intimacy.

**Samvada**

Collective members are able to negotiate successfully with caste panchayats to delay a mass marriage to accommodate exam schedules due to negotiation by the organization and its collectives.

**SETU**

Collective spaces offer safety to discuss matters otherwise taboo for young girls.

**Sahiyar, MASUM**





# CHAPTER 4

Critical perspectives  
through education  
and other tools for  
transformation

Imagining an educated life and accessing educational opportunities in India is a struggle for most young people, especially girls. The reality is replete with stories of insufficient schools in villages and towns, poor facilities, lack of teachers, and youth exiting schools for a variety of reasons from harassment to lack of resources and even early marriages. Most participating organizations worked with girls and young people through the portal of education. Strategies included helping women and girls access and participate in both formal and non-formal structures of education, generating awareness of related issues and developing the capabilities for negotiating with diverse stakeholders, and taking other creative approaches to furthering their education and skills.

This chapter draws primarily from the data under the education outcome category monitored by 18 organizations (FAT, Awaaz-e-Niswaan, Voice4Girls, MBBCDS, Sahiyar, Samvada, BGAVS, Ruby SWS, SANGRAM, MJAS, RJVS, Vikalp, Sadbhavana Trust, Sahajini Shiksha Kendra, Vanangana, Nishtha, Praajak and Thoughtshop Foundation). Additional data were drawn from the livelihood outcome category monitored by five organizations (Shaheen, Jeevika, MASUM, Azad Foundation and Kislay).

## **4.1 Creating diverse opportunities for learning—inside and outside school**

The 18 organizations used different strategies to keep girls connected to education or in a mode of learning, even if their circumstances pushed them out of the school system. Most offered critical material support to reconnect girls who had dropped out. For example, Vikalp assisted girls who had dropped out in accessing, completing and submitting application forms for open schools and counselled them concerning higher school education and other opportunities. In the first quarter, they started "Khushi [Happiness] Centres" that prepared students to enrol in the open school. In the second quarter, they organized campaigns, such as "Aapni ladli ne school bhejo abhiyan" ("Send your dear daughter to school") and staged rallies on the Right to Education Act in villages, which, by bringing together young boys and girls who had dropped out of school, proved an effective way to raise awareness. In the Meri

Khushi ("My Happiness") camps, participants discussed immediate issues around education, gender discrimination and their rights. In the third quarter, Vikalp helped school drop-outs in 10 villages complete application forms and provided them the needed fees. They also organized workshops with parents to talk about the importance of education. In the fourth quarter, Vikalp spoke to teachers in schools seeking their support for girls who had dropped out and were now seeking readmission. They also organized Girl Child Day, an event that kept up the momentum of their educational efforts.

Several organizations provided extra classes, tuition or a space to study in to help keep girls in school. A few organizations started schools.<sup>13</sup> Some organizations operated within a school to complement the formal curriculum.<sup>14</sup> Workshops on sexual and reproductive health and rights were common ways of discussing violence, sex, gender and sexuality—all issues never mentioned in a standard school curriculum—to lead young people to exercise their rights.

Other organizations created an alternative space for learning by offering additional skills-building or training courses, such as computer classes, vocational training, mehendi (henna) application or tailoring. Organizational learning spaces often doubled as safe spaces where organizations could talk with young people about their rights.

For example, Ruby SWS, Shaheen and Awaaz-e-Niswaan provided coaching classes and spaces to read and study, and sometimes supported girls whose parents could not afford to pay tuition fees. They also used their spaces to talk about the need for a secular education. The organizations' curricula were not fixed but flexible to suit the life situation of each member. Community libraries run by Awaaz-e-Niswaan (Rehnuma Centre) and Praajak created opportunities for girls to be together and study.

Organizations approached educational needs of girls through holistic ways. Shaheen, for instance, provided girls with access to government schemes regarding education. The organization's collective space was used to discuss gender-based discrimination and girls' aspirations. They also conducted surveys on women's education and workshops in schools on gender, sexuality, violence, the right to primary education, and other issues to build a wider positive environment for education.

Sadbhavana Trust initiated technical education and skills-development programmes, in which chikan (an embroidery pattern specific to the city of Lucknow) embroidery workers

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<sup>13</sup> MBBCDS had instituted a school for girls. They reported that government schools provide clothes, food and other benefits but classes were rarely held, and there was a lack of teaching staff. Children went to those schools for a degree or certificate and to the MBBCDS school for learning, where discussions on women's rights, environmental issues and skills training on handicraft production (or pottery or construction) were also available. Their dream was to create a university in the village. Each year, MBBCDS taught around 150 girls from impoverished families, with several even attending college.

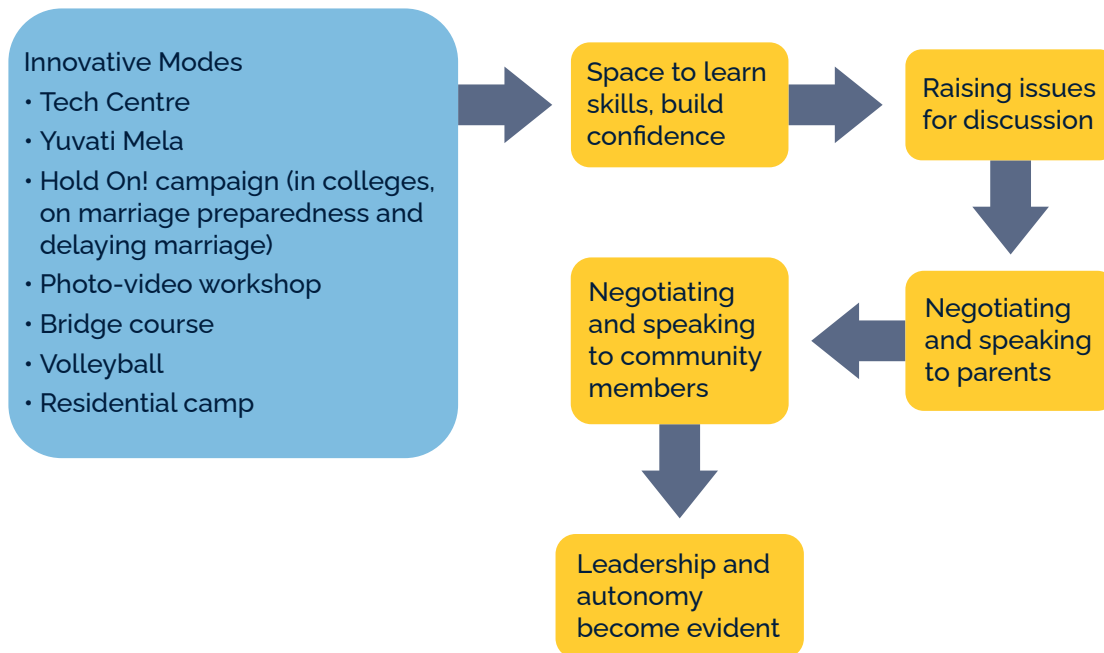
<sup>14</sup> Meri Khoj Yatra (My Journey of Self-Discovery) is a programme that Sahiyar ran in government schools through weekly sessions, in which girls were informed of their rights. Through the impact of the programme, girls became more vocal within their homes and community. Through the Yuva Netritva Talim (Education for Youth Leadership) programme, Sahiyar encouraged students to join as volunteers.

were trained in marketing skills. Women who were survivors of violence were introduced to technical education to develop a skill for earning income and becoming independent. Of the 20 women trained during the year, two secured a job. In such ways, organizations built support structures for girls and women to widen their educational attainment in very specific contexts.

## 4.2 Innovations in enabling gender-transformative learning

Some organizations introduced innovative ways of learning, such as through the use of technology<sup>15</sup>, sports, residential camps, youth melas, cultural events or festivals. These were usually designed to raise issues of gender inequality and involved engaging with the general public or with smaller groups of community members and parents.

Fig. 4.1 Pathways of change: Innovative modes of education



Note: The blue box indicates innovative examples from organizations and the yellow boxes indicate the incremental steps demonstrating change.

Involvement in sports was an effective way of shedding patriarchal control, and was a method used by several organizations. This was specifically the case of groups in Rajasthan (MJAS,

<sup>15</sup> FAT challenged the gendered access to technology by creating opportunities for girls to learn computer skills. Workshops on “women and cameras” were offered in which the history of women and photography was discussed to counter the prevailing notion that only men were photographers.

Vikalp, RJVS) and West Bengal (MBBCDS), which engaged girls in football, volleyball and other sport. Organizing melas and other cultural events were common strategies, where presentations were made on women's issues, such as "What is beauty?", street harassment and sexual assaults. Such events provided platforms for debates, learning and girls' confidence building, as they interacted with many people. These "non-normative" knowledge-building systems and mechanisms opened a different avenue of learning outside the formal school system, which helped in the politicization of the young minds.

### 4.3 Backing individual aspirations through support of the collective and organization

In one of the regional consultations, Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti (MJAS) staff spoke of young girls associated with their Kishori (adolescent) and Yuvati (youth) collectives and how playing football had given them opportunity to "breathe freely", challenge restrictions on mobility, dress and marriage norms, and defiantly resist patriarchal norms. Becoming a football coach became a dream for many of the girls, if not a railway driver, teacher or film director. In contexts in which resisting marriage was near impossible, being able to aspire to such dreams became a reflection of the inspiration that girls drew from the collective and organizational support.

These aspirations were also supported to the extent possible by the organizations and collectives (through such activities as re-connecting to open school, offering vocational training and supporting them to find employment opportunities).

#### Box 4.1

##### Supporting individual aspirations: Vikalp

"I was married at the age of 17 in Akha Teej, a ritual in Rajasthan, where girls and boys are married at a young age in group marriages. But I have struggled hard with both my natal family and in-laws to continue my education despite repeated backlash. My husband's family did not want that I study, and they wanted me to stop studying. But I continued with the support of Vikalp to pursue my dream and change the course of my life."

Young woman in Udaipur,  
Rajasthan, part of Vikalp's girls' groups.

Apart from formal education, SANGRAM and Amra Padatik defined education as that which brings empowerment, or "education for resistance". Their attitude spoke of the role of education as a deeply transformative tool in individual and group members' lives.

SANGRAM narrated how, with time and through their work, the children of the sex workers that the organization set out to assist had realized the politics of being a sex worker's child. They had come to reject societal shame and stigma. Instead, they mobilized to claim an identity with dignity as sex workers' children, which was the basis of their discrimination and ostracization by society.

## 4.4 Building voice, autonomy and leadership

All organizations observed an increased ability of girls and women to talk more freely and speak their minds after being part of the collective and organization's activities. The stories the girls and women wrote included instances of individual autonomy. Four girls from MJAS said that after they joined the football activity they were able to talk more openly and freely, including talking about themselves. Being able to dress in shorts and T-shirts and stay away from home during football matches and camps was a new free world for them. In Vikalp, the collective became a space in which girls could speak about their aspirations. Some girls wanted to become police officers and wanted to meet police officers. Girls learned to dialogue with their parents. They sought support of friends who were also collective members to engage with their parents to resist post-marriage rituals and re-enrol for education. They were encouraged to take leadership in organizing campaigns and facilitating workshops.

Leadership building was integral to the programmes of several organizations. For example, Voice4Girls nurtured peer leaders (among girls who had been through their camps and were senior returnees), who were an inspiration for newcomers. At the Sanatkada festival (a high-profile cultural event in the city of Lucknow that Sadbhavana Trust organizes), the organization started including a youth fair within the festival, which gave girls in their collectives the opportunity to express themselves freely. The youth fair was organized by girls in the leadership programme. This was a space in which people from different religions, castes and sexes came together, giving the girls an opportunity to talk to different people in their city. Talking to men and people of different ages made the girls feel confident. The experience prompted the organization to conduct more such festivals.

Getting out of the home and into the public space is a major challenge for girls. Many stories from organizations indicate there were no restrictions over boys' mobility while girls were always required to ask for permission to go out and inform their whereabouts to parents. Staying out at night or roaming outside after dark was not permissible for girls. The story of a younger brother accompanying an older sister if no other male member of the family is available is common.

Although fear of sexual assault was the stated cause of worry by the girls' parents, it was more motivated out of fear that girls would end up having relationships that are taboo in the gender-segregated society and thus bring dishonour to the family. These concerns are connected to education because they are used as reasons to have girls drop out of school and collectives and therefore end their access to learning. The examples and stories from Sadbhavana Trust, Nishtha and other organizations indicate how, through long-term dialogue and counselling with families, girls were able to leave the home for various reasons. It was only when parents were convinced that their daughter was not going out alone but accompanied by friends that movement in public places could begin. Sometimes, girls took initiative by moving together in groups.

After being connected to an organization, girls were able to participate in residential workshops, meetings and camps or start moving outside the home with female friends or alone for daily work or even for leisure. Access to educational and earning opportunities alleviated fear of the unknown and challenged the social control over their movement. There was severe backlash from community and society once women, girls, and youth started being independent and politically aware. For example, the college students in Samvada faced attacks in a press conference in 2016, when senior journalists denounced their student-led "Hold On!" campaign on delaying marriage and young peoples' right to choose when and who to marry. The journalists criticized them publicly for "getting too educated and independent before marriage", thus rupturing the Indian family system. Shaheen encountered challenges while intervening in private and government schools, where it was always under surveillance as it undertook its mobilization strategies. But it was the leadership and motivation of the youth and women in the collectives that pushed the organizations to continue their long-term engagement in educational spaces.

Earning an income forms an important part of establishing autonomy within the home and in the public sphere. Both formal and non-formal methods of learning are directed towards opening the material avenues of earning. However, non-formal ways of learning go beyond this into political questions about self, being aware, forming collectives and resisting patriarchal norms in everyday lives.

Many girls earned income from the organizations they were aligned with, which paid them to tutor other children; this in turn is how they paid their school or college fees. The necessity of earning for independent living was emphasized by the experiences of girls in FAT, Shaheen and Voice4Girls. It is through internships, fellowships and vocational training from organizations, and from working as volunteers, paid staff and leaders, that women, girls and youth often try to claim their independence and autonomy.

## **4.5 Critical perspectives through political education**

The critical understanding that leads to a politicization of the self could be equated to a Freirian conscientization<sup>16</sup> leading to action. Influenced by their learning in the collective and from peers, and emboldened by a new support structure, girls are able to negotiate better at home regarding delaying marriage, convincing parents about further education, being self-dependent, looking for jobs and having the mobility to move freely. It is only by being part of educational and learning opportunities that the pressure of marriage can be delayed. In such situations, the desire to go to school and learn new things is also immense.

Organizations were constantly creating collective opportunities for young people to be aware of power in society and ways to challenge it. This politicization was buttressed by their

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<sup>16</sup> Paulo Freire's concept of conscientization refers to the process of developing a critical awareness of one's social reality through reflection and action.

consistent support for building youth leadership; the innovative strategies and the formal and non-formal spaces of learning created a multi-faceted "education" through which youth could articulate their own voices and demands. It is this variety of learning opportunities and support systems that inform the capability approach discussed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum (1993). The capability approach focuses on choice or freedom, holding that the crucial inputs good societies should be promoting for their people are a set of opportunities, or substantial freedoms, that people then may or may not exercise in action: the choice is theirs. It thus commits itself to respect for people's power of self-definition.

## Summary

- Education was not viewed as only an entitlement, service, a way of attaining literacy or just going to school. It came alive for organizations in the communities as an arena of transformation through critical reflection, conscientization and politicization.
- Various innovative modes of learning under this umbrella term enabled girls to have an understanding of the structures that controlled women's and girls' lives, and built critical perspectives on social norms.
- Organizations worked to transform this understanding and perspective into potential for action, making way for individual aspirations to bloom.



Fig 4.2 Role of critical perspectives in addressing child and early marriage

**What success looks like:**

Young people who had dropped out of school are drawn into non-formal education, vocational training or alternative schools (if they cannot be re-enrolled in school) which opens up other avenues of self-realization and autonomy for them.

**Vikalp, MBBCDS, SANGRAM**

Discussions on education and marriage, gender and sexuality are held in a self-reflective manner in educational spaces thereby creating a more holistic and transformative educational experience.

**Samvada**

Leadership among peers is promoted through residential camps.

**Voice4Girls**

Girls' mobility is enhanced through access to learning spaces, technology, new skills

**Sahiyar, Azad Foundation**

Married girls (who have already experienced child marriage) are re-enrolled into formal schooling

**Vikalp, MJAS**



# CHAPTER 5

Bargaining with  
patriarchy and other  
negotiations around  
marriage

Marriage in India is experienced as something inevitable in the lifecycle of a girl and thus is a structural and not a personal event. Organizations that work in communities, specifically with women and girls, work within this context. For them, child and early marriages are a practice regarded as normative, that is, all girls (and to some extent boys) must marry at an age that is the local norm because it is a socially sanctioned and accepted practice. Young women and girls must constantly engage in negotiations with their family and community, who have a great hold over their life. Thus, women's and girls' lives are a constant flux of patriarchal bargains. Deniz Kandiyoti (1988), in speaking comparatively of patriarchal structures in South Asian and Middle Eastern societies and women's diverse locations within them, described women's agency in bargaining with patriarchy within their specific cultural constraints as significant in making structural shifts in their lives.

Negotiations around marriage emerged as an outcome category that 18 organizations (Awaaz-e-Niswaan, Ruby SWS, Nishtha, Sadbhavana Trust, Vanangana, MJAS, Sahajini Shiksha Kendra, RJVS, Sahiyar, MBBCDS, FAT, Samvada, Praajak, Thoughtshop Foundation, Voice4Girls, Vikalp, SANGRAM and BGAVS) used to map the changes in their work in addressing child and early marriage in communities. This chapter draws on this data as well as on the national and regional consultations that specifically engaged with negotiations around marriage as an outcome category.

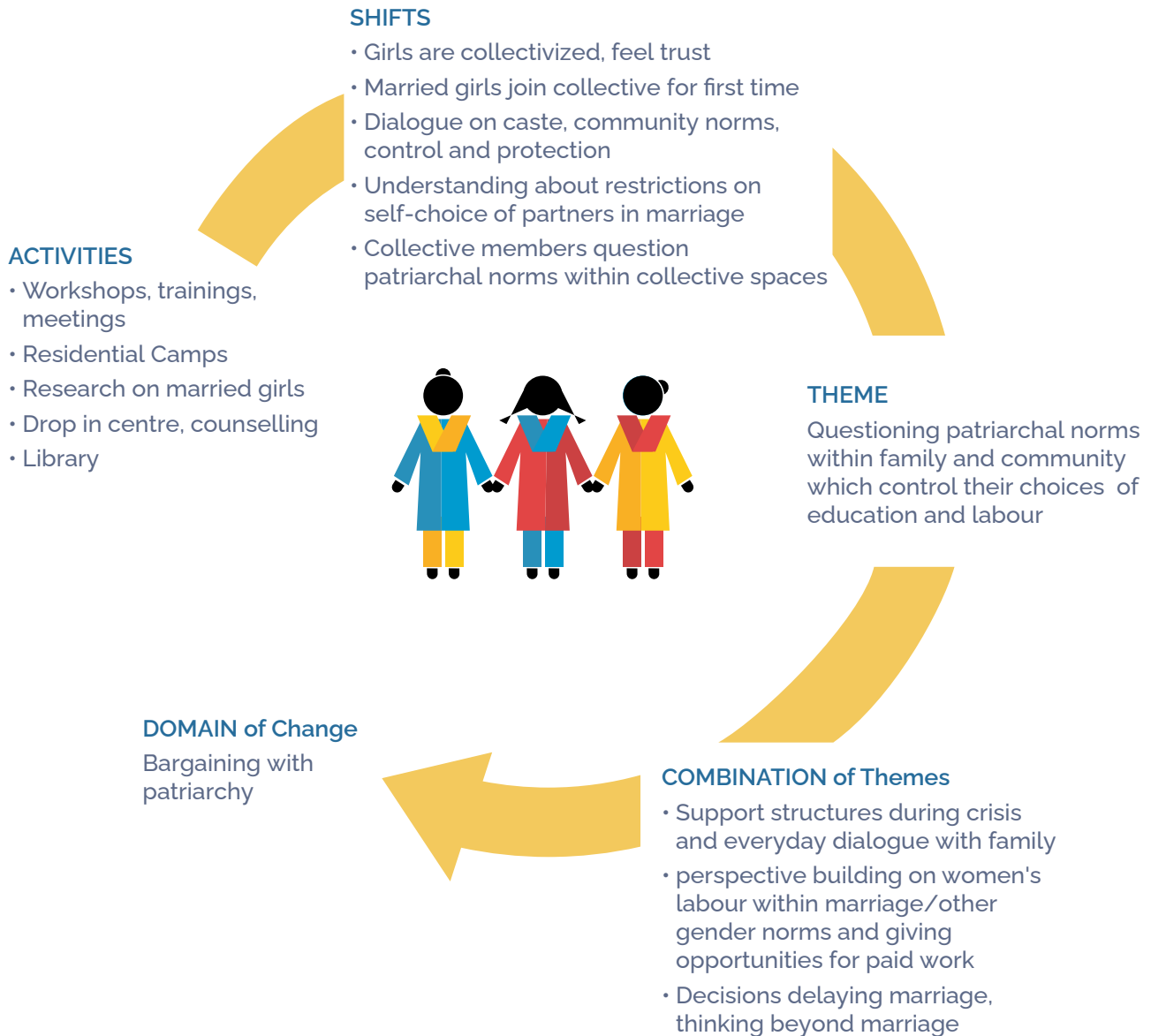
The discussions in this chapter highlight the overlaps with other objectives (education, livelihood and so on), for which patriarchal bargains come in handy in the context of child and early marriage.

## **5.1 Building a critical understanding of marriage as an institution**

While working on this outcome category, issues of gender and sexuality loomed large in terms of control over mobility, notions of honour, the power of caste and community norms, and so on.

The organizations' role was to develop an understanding among their collective members about the ability to make personal decisions with respect to marriage, not just in terms of

Fig. 5.1: Example of emergence of a theme, and aggregation of themes into a domain of change (Chapter 5)



Box 5.1

**Small shifts in forming  
critical perspective: Kislay**

Kislay, a workers' organization, reported in the first quarter that during trainings many collective members denied the role of power and control within marriage. They believed that it was actually a reflection of protection by parents and concern for women and vulnerable girls. They even believed that although marriage was a personal matter, parents should have ultimate rights and the choice to select grooms and brides for their children. At the outset, collective members agreed that the norm of marrying within the same caste and religion should be accepted and was preferred. The organization in its collective space initiated dialogue among members to build a better understanding of the patriarchal structure of marriage. By the third quarter, rigidity towards such norms had begun to relax, as younger collective members began discussions on marriage with more openness. They questioned the patriarchal structure within marriage and accepted notions of choice and consent as important. In the fourth quarter, younger collective members also expressed the dilemma of affirming their choice with regard to marriage and relationships without antagonizing their parents.

the age at which to marry but also the choice of partner, whether to marry or not and whether or not to have children after marriage—even as they learned about the power of norms. The expression of choices and the dilemmas encountered indicated significant shifts with tremendous potential for dialogue and transformation in the collective members' lives.

Building dialogic spaces is an important strategy among organizations to create awareness and develop a critical understanding of gender and sexuality as well as marriage as an institution. It is within this outcome category that the distinctions in how youth groups and women's groups addressed marriage became evident. While a youth group like Samvada directly engaged youth in discussions and activities, the women's groups dealt with the topic indirectly by targeting domestic violence.<sup>17</sup>

According to staff of Samvada (which initiated the Hold On! campaign with college students), youth are anxious about marriage in their lives and the responsibilities that it carries. They recognize marriage as a social system that is both patriarchal and capitalist in nature. Norms like the girl moving to the boy's family and relinquishing her own family, the practice of dowry, the consummation of marriage on the first night were questioned by the youth. The collective

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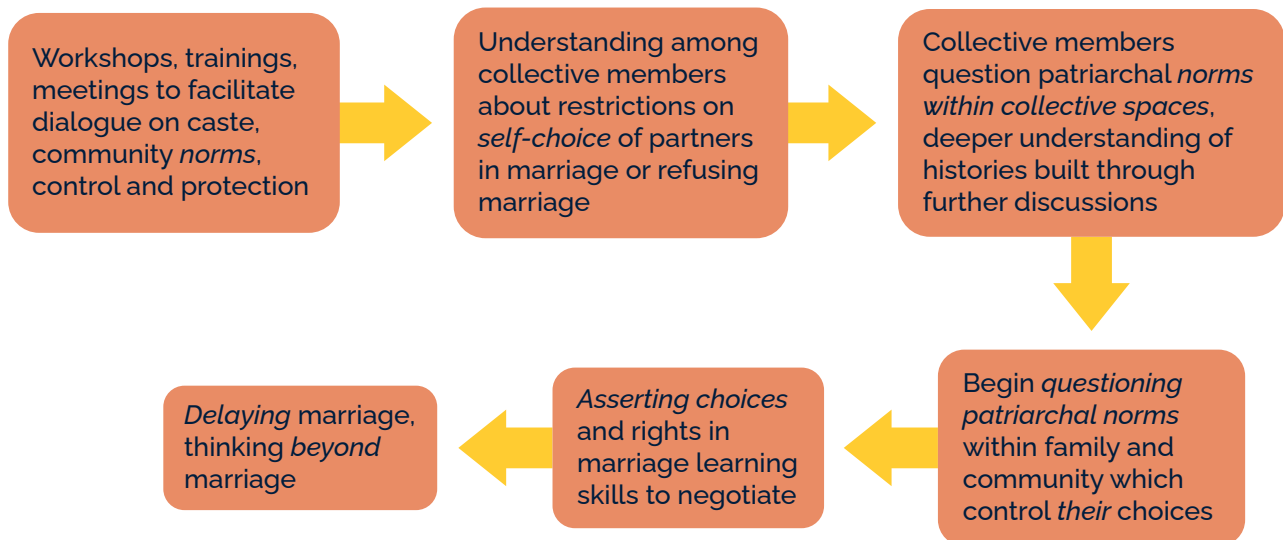
<sup>17</sup> Astitva, which works with women from Muslim communities, created awareness among its collective members through various discussions and trainings on personal laws and legal rights. Astitva believes that engaging with men of the family and community is also important. Both Astitva and Ruby SWS engage with religious leaders to negotiate and question discriminatory practices around marriage. Organizations like Awaaz-e-Niswaan and Shaheen, which identify with the women's movement, used one-to-one counselling to address violence within marriage to support women as well as to build perspectives among their collective members.

members even questioned the importance of marriage in life, its religious significance and how emotions and expectations are formed within marriage. Many of them, in the course of discussions, seemed to prefer live-in relationships.

Samvada created opportunities in which collective members could increase their understanding of the structure of marriage, such as learning about the Devadasi system, whereby some girls are not allowed to marry because they are supposed to be dedicated to the deity. So, here the question of right to marriage needed to be discussed, revealing how social structures dictate who has the right to marry and who does not. Marriage emerged in the discussions as a complex system with many histories that needed to be understood.

Fig. 5.2 provides a composite picture of the diverse pathways that lead to critical understanding through discussions around marriage.

Fig. 5.2 Pathways to build critical understanding via discussions on marriage



Many organizations focused on the adverse effects of early marriage on the lives of young girls in terms of health and education. They provided examples of early pregnancy, and exploitation by the marital family and its effects on young women, while creating space for the affected women to discuss their issues.

The socioeconomic context of the region greatly influences the work of organizations. MBBCDS, which operates in the Birbhum District of West Bengal, also works with Muslim communities and relates the issue of child and early marriage directly to the question of education for girls and their livelihoods. Most of the girls coming to the collectives are from poor families. The organization runs a school that provides free education, but the girls who seek admission must first negotiate heavily with their parents. The organization staff

appreciate that if it is difficult for girls to negotiate their education, imagine how much harder it is for them to delay their marriage. The concept of choice and consent remains constricted, out of reach for most of the girls. They also experience strict controls when it comes to livelihood opportunities. The organization believes if girls can gain some choice over their education and livelihood, they likely will gain the power to negotiate choices in other spheres, including marriage.

## 5.2 Marriage as a topic for discussion and intervention

Marriage, still considered a private and personal matter, was a challenge for organizations to take on as an issue publicly. Hence, they prioritized creating and enabling safe spaces within collectives for discussions around marriage, such as the ideal time to marry, prioritising education over marriage, the choice and social background of partners and so on.

This included special attention to ensuring that married youth were part of the discussions. Married youth are often left out of programmes because of challenges in accessing them, and because focus is on preventing early marriages which excludes those who are already married before the legal age.

When RJVS organized their residential camps for training of their collective members, many young married women were not allowed to stay overnight for trainings. With time and the support of its collectives, some of them eventually negotiated with their marital family for permission to attend. Other specially curated spaces were organized by several organizations<sup>18</sup> in which discussions on marriage, sexuality, masculinity and relationships beyond heteronormativity were discussed. These spaces enabled participants to think critically of the institution of marriage and gender roles within it. Even older women spoke of the negotiations they had to do at home with husbands who would refuse to share in household

### Box 5.2

#### Learning about ill-effects of early marriage on health: Nishtha

During its trainings and meetings, Nishtha staff discussed with the girls the adverse effects of early marriage, both physical and mental, the rights women are deprived of if married early, and so on. One of the collective members recalled that when she listened to the discussion, she realized why she always remained ill after her early marriage and early pregnancy. Her in-laws always harassed her that she had all these ailments before marriage, and therefore she should bring money from her parents for treatment. But from the discussions she was able to identify that the adverse effects she had experienced were related to early pregnancy. What collective members also realized is that they could strive for the rights and health of their daughters by preventing them from marrying early.

<sup>18</sup> These specially curated spaces were given different names as per the local flavour, such as Manthan (“churning”) in Sahiyar, the Meri Khushi Camp (“my happiness”) of Vikalp, Yuva Tarang (“youth wave”) of Humsafar and Antariksh (“exploring the universe”) of Praajak.



Box 5.3

**Space to discuss marriage: RJVS**

“Shashi, one of our Mahila Mitra (collective members) had been a victim of early and forced marriage. She left her husband because he was drinking a lot and beating her. After attending the three-day residential programme, she summed up her feelings: ‘Till now, I was considering myself a party towards breaking my marriage, causing distress and embarrassment to my parents, and was silently suffering from the guilt. But during these three days when I came to know that my marriage was an illegitimate and wrong act on the part of my parents and I have the right to make this marriage null and void, I feel what I did was right. All my guilt has now gone, and I am relieved.’”

Staff at RJVS, Rajasthan

tasks, as reported in BGAVS workshops.

Samvada decided that they would not collectivize young married people separately, as other organizations had started to do. Rather, they would include married couples in their collectives. They recognized that discussions of marriage should include married persons and their spouses sharing their challenges, and yet-to-be-married persons talking of their expectations and aspirations related to marriage. While those participants who were new were a bit hesitant with the discussions, those who were more frequent participants spoke uninhibitedly. For instance, some men refuted the double-standards around notions of virginity, which they felt was disproportionately expected only of women and not them, while some women participants felt empowered enough to negotiate their sexual rights with their husbands. Samvada also decided that the sense of a safe space should not

be restricted to the physical space. Instead, they spoke about transporting the sense of safe space into intimate relationships.

Since there still existed a strong perception that there is hardly any alternative to marriage, fostering young women's ability to negotiate within it remains a persistent strategy of organizations.

These dialogues had concrete outcomes in several situations. For example, Praajak, which is a youth group, supported a girl who came to them for help as she was pregnant and unmarried. Her family had abandoned her, but the Praajak collective took her in and gave her space and comfort. Such actions indicate that organizations reject the rigidity of social norms by offering substantive alternatives to support members.

### 5.3 Engaging with caste, cultural norms and intersectionality

A crucial norm influencing marriage is caste endogamy, which defines all social relations in Indian society. Organizations across different regions have similar stories to share about the rigidity of caste endogamy.

For example, the Kislay collective members, mostly migrant labourers from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar states who settled long ago in Delhi, had achieved some class mobility through their hard work, but remained conscious of caste-bound notions of honour. Older men are willing to marry their children across class but will not agree to inter-caste marriages. The idea of choice and consent becomes irrelevant when confronted with the rigidity of caste endogamy. At the start of the reporting period, many young men said that they want a marriage of their choice but had no courage to challenge their parents. By the end of the project through participation in numerous workshops, through discussions, and conversations, many young people in the Kislay membership had embarked on an inter-caste marriage and the organization had even intervened whenever families created conflict.

RJVS and MJAS in Rajasthan State and SETU in Gujarat state reported on the varied dynamics of caste endogamy in their regions. Caste leaders and caste councils (jati panchayats) are powerful, and organized group or mass marriages along caste lines, thus reinforcing caste endogamy. Mass marriages are celebrated events that occur on special occasions and often include many early marriages. Parents use these events as an opportunity to marry off their daughters at an early age to save money (the organizers subsidize these events) and to address their insecurity about the possibility of their daughter eloping with a boy of another caste. In the case of such marriages, some parents do not hesitate to kill the daughter or both the girl and boy to maintain the "family honour". RJVS, Vanangana and Humsafar referenced cases of "honour killing" as common in their geographic regions. It is important to stress that most "elopement" cases are of inter-caste marriages and thus transgress not just gender- and sexuality-related norms but also caste endogamy.<sup>19</sup>

Over the year of journal reporting, organizations noticed some change due to their engagement with caste institutions and their leaders. For instance, SETU staff noted that the caste council of a village made a concession and delayed the holding of a mass marriage due to school exams that young people had to attend. This preference of exam over marriage was a significant change. Negotiating with a caste organization to make such a concession sends positive signals about the nature of change effected by the organization. It may not directly stop early marriage, but it demonstrates a shift in norm to a higher value placed on education and the quality of young people's lives.

## 5.4 Supporting resistance and radical acts of agency

Several organizations found it challenging to view elopement as an expression of choice and

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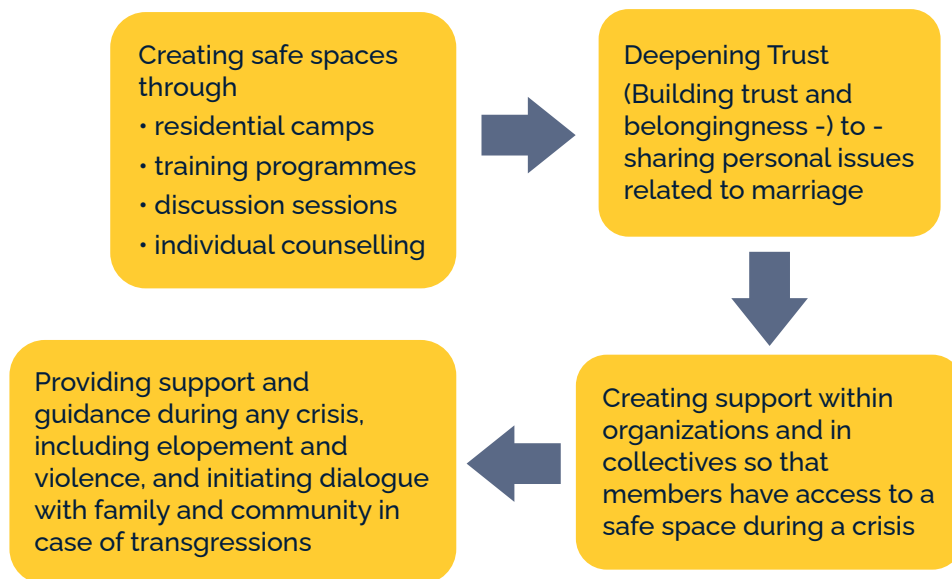
<sup>19</sup> During the national consultation, participants from Humsafar and Vanangana spoke about the extensive perception in Uttar Pradesh state, from the government to family members, that elopement is a sin and, because of it, grooms and their families are often punished. Run-away couples who survive the wrath of the community face violence, are separated, detained at home or pursued by parents and families with the help of the police. Once caught, girls may be placed in a shelter home, while boys are typically charged with kidnapping and rape. Organizations are often called into action when elopements take place, usually being asked for support by the girl or boy implicated in it. But it remains a challenge for the organizations to handle such cases because backlash from a family and community can be immense.

consent within the various constraints of young people's lives. Families and communities demand that the staff do not harbour young people who have eloped or seek to, when they approach the organization looking for support.

Other organizations perceive elopement as a reflection of the autonomy of girls and an assertion of their choices. However, the balance among agency, sexual expression and well-being remains a challenge to most organizations. In dealing with these cases, the organizations constantly wrangle over the dilemma of whether to view them as a case of choice and consent or through a protectionist mode.

A Nishtha staff member cited the case of a girl who had run away, lived with a boy for a week and then came back complaining that the boy had abused her. Azad Foundation staff referred to such romantic relationships as "risky" relationships, knowing from experience they could go either way. Jeevika's volunteers debated and shifted their position, from blaming girls for their "mistake" to engaging in training to help them deal with each case sensitively.

Fig. 5.3 Indirect pathways to create support structures: Organizational shifts



Sahiyar mentioned cases of premarital relationships in which girls end up feeling "guilty" and lose hope in life. The organization reported that in such situations, its members counsel the girls to replace the guilt with feeling positive about their choices (if the physical relationship was based on a girl's choice and consent). They reassure and support girls to focus on their life and career. Bhumika staff highlighted instances in which adolescent girls wanted to marry at an early age because they were suffering violence in their home and marriage was a way out. In all such cases, the organizations faced a dilemma on how to respond—acknowledging

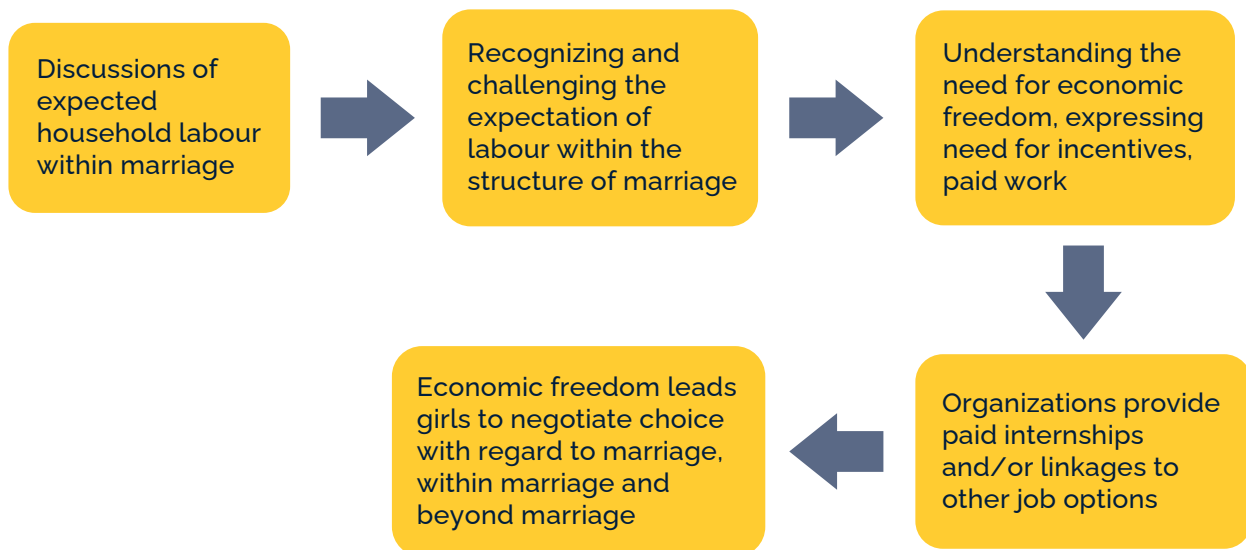
adolescents' agency and enabling capacities but also conscious of their need for protection from harm.

## 5.5 Challenging marriage through economic empowerment

The inevitability of marriage in society is situated at the interface of the economic and social security that it gives to women. The organizations promoted discussion of women's labour where possible, using the path of economic security and independence as a potential way to challenge traditional marriage norms.<sup>20</sup> The gendered division of labour, unpaid work, women's right to property, economic empowerment and care work within the structure of marriage were all proactively discussed in many collectives.

These discussions resulted in new conversations as well as change in some instances. For example, young girls from Ruby SWS over time challenged the norm of doing household work after returning home from working long hours in the public domain. The trainees of Azad Foundation's Women on Wheels programme wanted to be professional drivers and live their lives with dignity. The organization engaged with their family members to ensure they would support their daughters and daughters-in-law to opt for driving as a profession, and helped each woman negotiate with her family.

Fig. 5.4 Discussions of labour and need for economic freedom to challenge marriage



<sup>20</sup> Leaders of several collectives said economic support was imperative, in the form of monetary incentives, paid volunteer work or scholarships to help girls and young women negotiate with their family to delay marriage.

## 5.6 Bringing married girls together

Collectivizing married girls separately was considered an important strategy by many organizations, although not an easy task.<sup>21</sup> Several rural-based organizations reported that married girls were treated differently in schools, which prevented them from returning to school. In their youth camps, Vikalp and RJVS actively sought out married girls. Gradually during the course of the camps, the organizations made inclusive spaces for married girls, integrated with other young girls in which they felt safe and free to share their problems. This did this in order to remove the stigma of being married and hence discriminated against. Vikalp even reached out to and mobilized groups of young married men, so that they are supportive of their wives. The organizations believe that young married men and women need to learn strategies for managing the challenges of marriage.

These efforts had varied outcomes. Many married girls who were part of the MJAS collective requested opportunities for livelihoods. The organization motivated them to negotiate with their husbands and parents-in-laws for the continuation of their education. Vikalp also reconnected married girls with formal education by motivating them, speaking to their families and offering hands-on support in completing applications for exams through the open school system. Through its income-generation programme, Jeevika provided opportunities for married or deserted women to become economically self-sufficient rather than be neglected by their natal families or have no other options.

## 5.7 Engaging with state policy and law

Many organizations reported on the need to focus on education and awareness of laws related to child marriage, child abuse and domestic violence to delay marriage. The examples they provided demonstrated organizations are cautious about using the law to halt child marriage, and that there are situations in which young people themselves seek early marriage. Several groups are aware of the limitations of the law in preventing child marriage because it criminalizes the vulnerable adolescents. Yet, they use the law at times strategically as a threat to powerful members in a community.

The organizations integrated ideas of choice and consent in other ways. MASUM, Sahiyar, Bhumika and FAT opted to change the terminology of early and child marriage, to focus on forced marriage and coercion. MASUM adopted an umbrella term—FECH (forced, early, child and hasty) marriage, which reflects the different circumstances in which girls are married without their choice or consent. This differentiation ensured that the concepts of choice and consent were integrated into their strategy and transferred to their collective members.

While the government pushed the age discourse (delaying marriage of girls till age 18 as

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<sup>21</sup> MJAS collectivized married girls of different villages by conducting community meetings and then provided training on gender and sexuality. MASUM also formed collectives of married girls and offered training on health.

the sole agenda), women's groups talked about the greater empowerment of girls based on the structural understanding of lack of choice, consent and autonomy in girls' lives. The government, in the name of women's and girls' empowerment, introduced the Kuvarbai Nu Mameru (in Gujarat), Kanyashree Prakalp (in West Bengal) and Shaadi Mubarak (in Telangana)<sup>22</sup> schemes to provide girls (or their families) with money as cash transfers when they attain the legal age of marriage, ostensibly to help with marriage expenses. At the same time, the government makes available or promotes few options for education or employment that can help girls. The government schemes ironically incentivize marriage (albeit at age 18) rather than promote girls' education, betraying their patriarchal bias. Several organizations were vocally critical of these schemes.

Triple talaq is another issue in which the organizations engaged on law and policy around marriage. In their work with Muslim communities, Astitva, Ruby SWS, Awaaz-e-Niswaan and Shaheen strongly condemned state initiatives to criminalize triple talaq, while engaging with different networks and joining advocacy efforts to challenge the practice and protect the rights of Muslim women.

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<sup>22</sup> Kuvarbai nu Mameru, or Bridal Gift from Uncle; Kanyashree Prakalp, or Bridal Programme; Shaadi Mubarak, or Congratulations on the Wedding.

## Summary

- To successfully negotiate on not just when but whether and who to marry, there is a need to begin with a critical understanding of the institution of marriage and society's expectations of women's roles within it.
- Young people need to engage with and then have multiple conversations about the various aspects of marriage as an institution (such conversations are currently absent or sparse). This enables young people to connect with strategies on negotiating and bargaining for education and livelihood.
- Young people who desire to marry and those already married must also find a place in organizations' strategies.

Fig. 5.5 Role of negotiations around marriage

### What success looks like:

Youth have discussions about marriage, its expectations and demands, and make comparisons to live-in relationships, which expands their ideas of alternative forms of relationships.

Samvada

Young married women negotiate with families to stay overnight for training camps and therefore loosen families' and husbands' control over their mobility.

**RJVS**

Young people marry across castes—a forbidden practice—seeking the organization's support where needed.

**Kislay**

Organizations express the dilemma of acknowledging young people's agency while also wishing to protect them, when young people run away to marry—indicating a churning within the organization about young people's sexuality that will potentially drive a less protectionist and more rights-based response to such cases.

**Bhumika**





# CHAPTER 6

Economic  
empowerment,  
autonomy and dignity

While working in communities, organizations found that it is often through access to education and livelihood options that young girls and women are empowered to delay marriages or negotiate better within marriages. Yet, young women struggled with accessing educational opportunities or skills training, and did not have any avenues for earning that would empower them to negotiate, delay or avoid marriage and make their own choices.

This chapter draws on the data collected under the livelihoods outcome category chosen by five organizations (Shaheen, Jeevika, MASUM, Kislay and Azad Foundation). Livelihood as an outcome category notably captured intersectional discussions around gender and labour, caste and labour, and unionization and collective action.

## **6.1 Establishing the right of women to seek economic independence**

Since women are expected to contribute to reproductive labour or unpaid labour within the domestic space, their access to public spaces and to jobs is restrained or denied. Even when women occupy public spaces, as in the unorganized labour sector, they remain vulnerable to multiple forms of violence, in which their social security in terms of standardized wages and protection from harassment in the workspace is often compromised.

Azad Foundation's work to train women to be taxi drivers stemmed from the idea that they should occupy public spaces and subvert the gendered division of labour while asserting livelihood as a fundamental right for women. They undertook their various activities to reinforce within the community the importance of paid work for women, including non-traditional livelihood options.

They adopted a different approach with adolescent girls. They initially introduced the Azad Kishori programme so that girls within their community outreach programme could consider driving as a future option for themselves. Within this programme, young girls in the collectives expressed interest in learning other non-traditional livelihoods, such as electrical wiring. Azad Foundation observed that their intervention had dispelled the myth that girls are only keen on soft skills, such as tailoring or beautician training. Strategically, they encouraged girls to build a perspective beyond gender stereotypes and imagine a world beyond gendered rules and regulations.

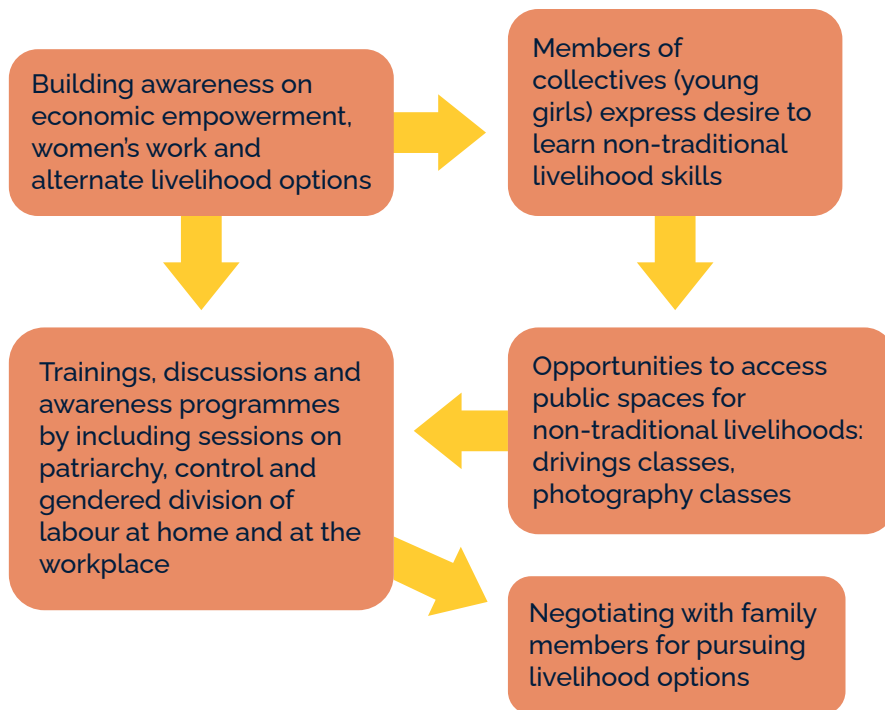
Box 6.1

**Collaboration among organizations on girls' rights and access to livelihoods: Jeevika**

Jeevika organizes programmes for girls, like Anonde Kanyakal (Happy Girlhood, which celebrates National Girl Child Day) and a career fair so that girls get information about livelihood opportunities. In the first quarter, Jeevika collaborated with Maitri, another grassroots organization, to provide a training programme on home-based livelihood opportunities. This reflects the collaborative efforts across organizations to sustain each other's work and to forge solidarity. Jeevika also connected members to other organizations for other opportunities, like domestic work. Eight girls began working, earning about 5,000–6,000 rupees a month.

Azad Foundation held other events in the community to involve the families of drivers so that they could showcase what their daughters and wives were doing. This instilled pride in them as well as appreciation for the unconventionality of the work and its long hours. At the same time, the organization worked steadily to address violence against women and girls in the community and women's safety in the city. They thus strategically integrated their livelihoods and skills-building work with the wider context of women and public spaces, acknowledging that one is not possible without the other.

Fig. 6.1 Pathways to change: Livelihood as a right and for empowerment



## 6.2 Addressing questions of gender, caste and citizenship rights

In creating an understanding of the rights of women and girls to undertake paid work, organizations did not immediately see what is conventionally observed as success. Over the journal-reporting year, they observed small but significant shifts in the lives of the people they worked with.

For example, Azad Foundation acknowledged that most of their women collective members in urban poor communities may not adopt driving as a livelihood option after the completion of their training. But they believed that with the training many women would become more aware of their rights. The organization helped them assemble identity documents and other official paperwork to ensure their citizenship rights and thus enable them to access entitlements under various social benefit schemes offered by the government. By means of the identity cards women receive when they join unions, Kislay helps them develop a worker identity and consciousness of their rights.

Shaheen, too, provided women with information on government schemes and benefits, and helped them access these, which led to one of their collective members giving up her caste-based occupation of sanitation work, and beginning a tailoring business.

In Jeevika, there were interesting changes at the local level because of discussions taking place for some time. By the end of the journal-reporting year, women were asserting emphatically that housework is as important as work outside the home. Many girls worked outside and thought that boys should also work at home. Village women were expressing that they wanted their daughters to complete their education and become independent.

After the training on gender-based discrimination with male farmers, many changes were observed among them, as well. They helped their wives with housework and said it was good for a healthy atmosphere at home. They also became active in a fortnightly programme in which they organized a rally with slogans of their own to protest violence against women and girls, followed by the staging of a theatrical play. The farmers spoke in public about gender-based discrimination and expressed that equal wages should be given to both women and men for the same kind of work. One of the most important discussions in the Jeevika collectives was the role of women in political parties and the challenges they might experience to entering politics as a profession. Jeevika thus adopted an expansive understanding of women's public role and moved beyond a focus only on paid work to include political participation.

## 6.3 Supporting individuals, sustaining collectives

For many organizations, providing economically disadvantaged women with access to financial credit was an important strategy. For example, Azad Foundation created "social security funds" to help young women. Women who wanted to join the foundation's Women on Wheels programme but were unable due to lack of financial resources could access a loan through these funds. Trainees with little means were offered interest-free loans. FAT

offered paid internships for their trainees in the Tech Centre so they could enhance their position within their family. MBBCDS of West Bengal also provided paid internships to their younger collective members (typically adolescent girls) so they could negotiate or delay their marriage.

The livelihood outcome category helped organizations like Awaaz-e-Niswaan, Sahiyar and FAT, which previously did not focus exclusively on skills training, to make this a focus area that responded to the needs of the girls in their collectives. They were able to reach out to more women by addressing livelihood concerns in the following manner: individuals in the organizations moved from being members of their collectives to being part of the staff (Sahiyar and Awaaz-e-Niswaan) or from being an intern to becoming a staff member (FAT). Once an individual gained critical understanding and awareness, she then became a crucial part of the organization and its politics. Thus becoming a member of the organization itself indicated that the organization's approach had been somewhat successful in economically empowering girls and women in the communities.

## **6.4 The debate around education versus skills**

Is education a means of providing a holistic and critical perspective for understanding society, or it is just a means to acquiring livelihood skills? Can skills training be a substitute for education? What is the government's responsibility in providing education? These were common themes of conversations in organizations and collectives on education and livelihood over the journal-reporting year. These debates were significant because the organizations had to weigh whether their support for skill acquisition in order to seek a livelihood opportunity qualified as an educational effort (if they were marking change within the education outcome category).

For example, Vanangana used the collective as a space to provide access to government education schemes. The collectives, with the support of Vanangana, helped young women negotiate with their families to engage in these opportunities, and young girls were encouraged to study. This was an important change from earlier fixed ideas about the lack of value for girls' education. However, senior members of Vanangana had a different understanding of education, which went beyond the ability to read and write. In their view, a hand pump mechanic was also capable and empowered.

But in Sahiyar, there was a discussion about what constituted education for young people, and whether the social responsibility of the government was fulfilled through providing certain gendered skills, seen to be women's skills, like mehendi application, sewing and tailoring classes. They strongly believed that basic education should be provided by the state, so that basic but comprehensive education would then enhance the application of skills, and expressed alarm at the increasing privatization of education. Similarly, Nishtha shared its strategy of using the Right to Education Act to enrol young people in the community in schools, making the government more accountable to its obligations.

In most organizations, a distinct perspective emerged to distinguish between education and skills for livelihood. In FAT, where girls were given training in computer skills, staff reflected that the training was important in that it addressed the gendered nature of labour, but education was as important. For this reason the organization offered space to the girls to prepare for exams. Skills-building was therefore not seen as a substitute for comprehensive education but as a potential avenue towards it.

## 6.5 Non-traditional versus traditional livelihoods

Some organizations, such as Azad Foundation, believed that role models were essential for motivating girls to pursue unconventional livelihoods, like driving. Other organizations, such as Shaheen, thought that providing girls with non-formal training in conventional, gendered skills, like mehendi application, sewing and knitting, still had a strategic value, because it allowed girls to get out of their home and learn a skill that could potentially make them economically secure. At the regional consultation, organization staff reported that these activities allowed girls mobility and a space to make friends, besides earning a livelihood.

BGAVS provided capacity-building training for its members in skills that would increase their employability and likely bring them wages higher than what they currently earned, as well as increase their business knowledge. Many of the women they trained opened businesses, like making jewellery, condiments, pickles and so on. They also empowered women in their self-help groups to save money and access loans, thus giving them control over what they earned. BGAVS staff explained that the increase in these women's incomes enabled their children to access more education, which served ultimately to delay marriages for several children in the reporting year.

## 6.6 Livelihood as a means of realizing “self” and dignity

Because these field-based organizations worked with several socially and economically marginalized communities, the issues of “self” and dignity emerged as underlying and crucial objectives of their work in the journal-reporting year. For those organizations that worked at the intersection of labour and sexuality, the collective of children of sex workers, Amra Padatik, and the collectives of SANGRAM focussed specifically on the rights of sex workers and the struggles for the recognition of sex work as dignified labour.

Other organizations articulated how their collective members underwent considerable change in their self-perception and gained considerable confidence. They became self-reliant, conscious of their rights and willing to speak about their experiences of domestic violence within the organizational space. Some took up domestic responsibilities and paid for health care for family members. Thus, access to livelihood was not only about employability but about reaffirming the lives of people at the margins.

## Summary

- Access to livelihood opportunities not only led to the economic empowerment of girls and women and thus provided bargaining -power with their family and community, but it added to their sense of dignity and confidence.
- Organizations found that it was also critical to understand the link between the gendered household labour of girls and women that is omnipresent in society, its link to marriage, and the absence of women and girls in paid labour.
- Conversations around sexual harassment, rights, dignity and laws can help ensure rights within the workplace.
- The link between girls' labour and early marriage also arose in discussions, particularly on the topic of how marriages were often arranged to transact girls' and women's labour: not just reproductive labour within the household but unpaid labour related to other productive tasks, like working in family fields, which benefit others.<sup>23</sup> This then curbs women's access to paid labour outside the household.
- The employment of women creates intergenerational ripples as mothers invest in daughters' education or families converse with other families to support girls' education.
- Maintaining dialogue with family members or with government officials creates and maintains an enabling environment for women and girls to pursue economic empowerment to challenge early marriage.

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<sup>23</sup> Feminist scholars have worked consistently to highlight and seek official accounting of women's care work, domestic labour and reproductive labour, which continues to remain unrecognized, despite the scholarly work and policy advocacy over decades.

Fig 6.2. Role of livelihoods in addressing child and early marriage

**What success looks like:**

Women's right to paid employment is linked to their access to public spaces through training as taxi drivers thus contributing to gender transformative change.

**Azad Foundation**

Through training for livelihood, women secure documents and access to schemes that lead them to gain citizenship rights.

**Azad Foundation**

There is a realization that housework is as important as paid work outside the home; mothers say boys should do housework while acknowledging girls can be educated and seek paid employment and therefore challenge significant gender norms.

**Jeevika**





# CHAPTER 7

## Building solidarity and networks

The themes in this chapter connect with those of the other chapters but stand on their own as a crucial outcome of organizations' efforts to address the root causes of child and early marriage in their work with women and girls: the building of feminist solidarity and creating networks of support within and outside organizations. This is one of the foremost feminist ideals and visions and the basis of sustained collective action and social movements.

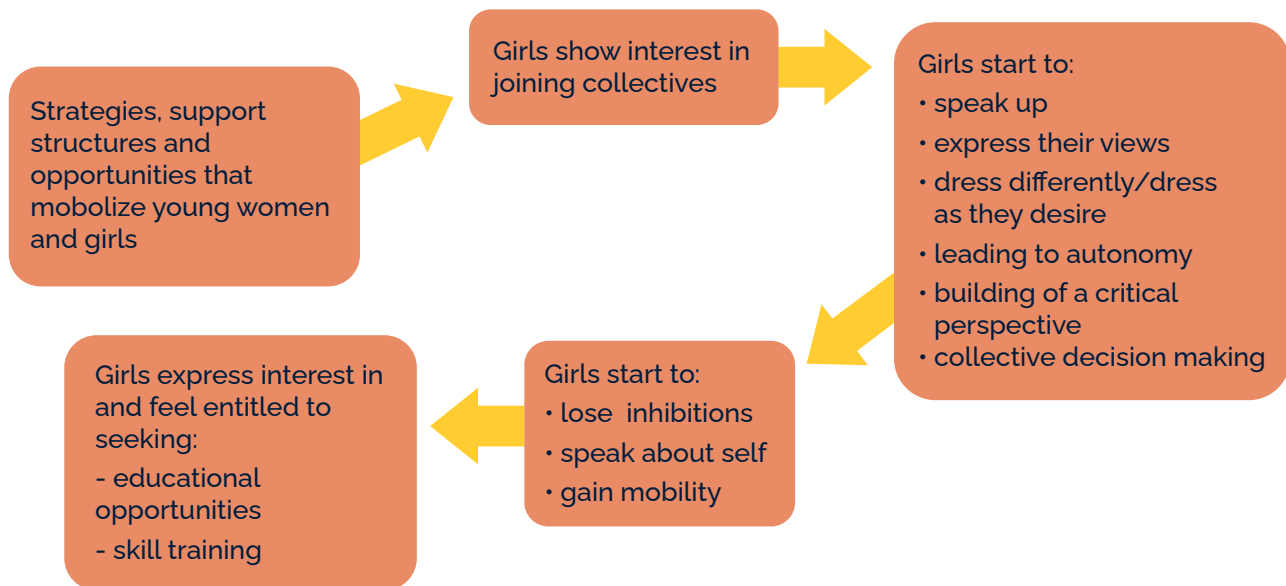
At the collective and organization levels, solidarity emerged from the creation of safe spaces and activities. When this was sustained at a larger level, with other initiatives and organizations locally or nationally, it aided in creating political networks of solidarity that fuelled individuals, collectives and organizations to participate in social movement campaigns and in regional, national and international advocacy networks at diverse forums.

## **7.1 Second-line leadership and collective decision-making**

Following the formation and sustenance of collectives, some of the changes observed at the individual and organization levels were the clear expression of leadership by collective members, autonomy, building of second-line leadership in the organization, and collective planning and decision-making by youth themselves.

For example, Thoughtshop Foundation held meetings with members of the Youth Resource Centres in their first quarter, in which they collectively took stock of their plans, functioning and communication. They monitored their groups' status through a questionnaire and group monitoring book. Regular core group meetings helped Youth Resource Centre members connect with one another, ensured equal participation among the different Youth Resource Centres and provided the scope to talk about roles and responsibilities and resolve conflicts. While all 10 Youth Resource Centres participated in the meetings, six of them carried out a collective and decentralized process of submitting their reports about their group work during the fourth quarter. This demonstrated to the organization that the core group could operate autonomously in a systematic way, which bodes well for the sustainability of this work.

**Fig. 7.1 Pathways of incremental change in young women's collective agency:  
Girls evolve critical perspective and become autonomous**



## 7.2 Consolidation through development of critical perspectives

Even as everyday support was offered through various modes (safe spaces, access to education, livelihoods), the building of a critical perspective was ongoing. The organizations thus became a portal for discussions on larger issues, such as happened in MASUM, where young men wanted to discuss the controversial issue of reservations (affirmative action) for the Maratha community. This request indicated the trust and comfort they felt in bringing up these topics.

Perspective and understanding about various social issues were encouraged so that young people were able to first dispel myths and then understand the social meaning of certain practices. In Samvada's Learning Lenses workshops, boys learnt the value of marriages based on equality with autonomy for both partners, the social value of inter-caste marriages, and the equality inherent in sharing household responsibilities. Girls questioned the submissiveness expected of them as wives and wished to negotiate sexual autonomy, right to do paid work outside, and choice in marriage. These types of activities helped the organizations to create links between issues and struggles, fostered a sense of common political purpose and facilitated connections with other organizations and social movements, thereby creating a widening support system and universe for their members.

### 7.3 Sustained material support

The organizations were able to sustain their support of collectives by following up with members, addressing crises, and providing access to opportunities and information on services and schemes. By supporting young girls and women who are members in moments of crisis (such as violence or an impending forced marriage), or by directing them to some future prospect, the organizations provided access to opportunities, legal and resource information, and skills training towards livelihood opportunities.

As is evident in discussions on the outcome categories of education and livelihood, girls came to the organizations with aspirations and dreams as well as the need for paid work to earn an income. Many achieved this through support accessing schemes or the provision of opportunities for paid work within the organization.

An important factor in an organization's offer of support structures to members is the referral service they provide to other groups, experts, lawyers and/or counsellors as needed. Through this support, they have been able to build on networks and further create solidarity.

#### Box 7.1

#### **Mobilising and influencing community and family: Amra Padatik**

Sections of the community became aware of Amra Padatik's work in the first quarter, after which mothers permitted their children to attend their meetings and training programmes. Komol Gandhar (the cultural collective of the group) began teaching dance to 12 children in Kalighat in the second quarter and organized street corner plays and meetings on early marriage. In this quarter, they also reported fighting against discrimination and for admitting young people into schools. In the fourth quarter, youngsters joined Komol Gandhar as members and part of the troupe (thus coming into the ambit of the organization), opting for this over other forms of potential livelihood and giving them a chance to continue in school.

### 7.4 Influencing the family and community

The gender-transformative nature of the organizations' work challenged gender inequality of girls in the family and community. Engaging with parents, community members and other stakeholders was in some cases a strategy and in others an outcome of the work. For example, Sadbhavana Trust found that reaching out to girls helped them reach out to women (their mothers, sisters, sisters-in-law, others in the community) and vice versa. RJVS conducted workshops where fathers spoke of their relationships with their daughters, which the organization felt could influence decisions around further education that could possibly delay marriages. In their campaign for marriage preparedness, Samvada's youth members not only spoke up to other young people (the main strategy), but also ended up having dialogue with teachers, principals,

the media, family, community and the general public on marriage-related issues that youth experience. Samvada reported in the third quarter that young people began to speak of the ideas they had learned not only with their families but in their workspaces, thus expanding their areas of engagement.

## **7.5 Working with government**

Most organizations continuously engaged with state institutions or with municipality-run schools. This not only helped them reach out to young people in schools but also engage with the government in keeping educational structures open and responsive to the needs of young people. Shaheen, for example, participated in state processes as counsellors; Kislay participated as members in school management committees; Sahiyar conducted programmes on a regular basis through educational events; and Jeevika and MASUM organized programmes on special days.

There was close connection, rapport and communication between state officials and organization staff and collective members. Building these relationships also offered another kind of access and support structure to girls and youth who associated with the organization. Some organizations, like Vanangana and Shaheen, were able to make the local government work with accountability by reaching out to state officials, petitioning, organizing public hearings, getting work done without bribes, convincing officials, inviting them to their events and persuading them to collaborate with them on their agendas. By the end of their journal-reporting year, SETU had supported 40 women in their areas of work to be elected as panchayat members. These women were initially reluctant, not sure what their roles should be, but they developed their leadership skills and confidence to govern the village as a result of consistent training by their Mahila Nagrik Sanghathan collective. SETU trained the women of the Mahila Nagrik Sanghathan to speak up in meetings, dialogue with and negotiate in the community, and to demand such things as basic infrastructural facilities for their village.

## **7.6 Emergence and creation of support networks**

This process led to a web of relationships and a network of support that began with the organizations and spread to the collectives, bringing in community and family, followed by the formation of larger networks, social movements and new collectives.

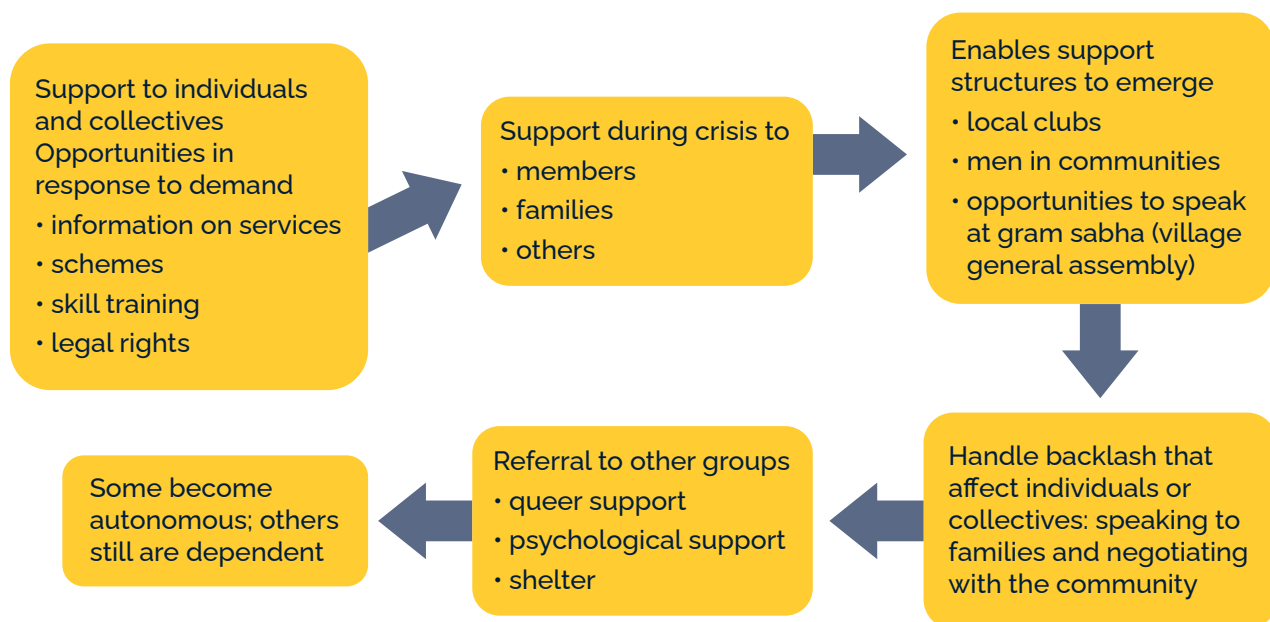
Vanangana, through its network of collectives of Dalit Mahila Sangathan and Sangharshil Mahila Samitis, often quickly received information on incidents of violence against women and girls in a village. Its networks of support, in which the women and girls had committed to supporting one another, would then spring into action to help the victim.

The organizations adopted different strategies to meet potential challenges to their collectivization and work on issues that were sensitive in the communities. Some organizations directly addressed issues of marriage through workshops, discussions, personal stories

and so on, addressing challenges as they arose. Others worked indirectly through the work that they were already doing: addressing violence against women or gender inequality, slowly bringing in questions around women's labour, status and rights in a marriage.<sup>24</sup> A few groups adopted even more conventional modes. In its work with women within the Muslim community, for example, Astitva strategically reached out to organizations and stakeholders who believe in using the tenets of the Quran for accessing Muslim women's rights. This strategic relationship hedged their bets against potential backlash, ensuring that the women in their care were not alienated from the community they were a part of.

The women's groups enlisted the support of women for girls' participation in residential workshops or for seeking future educational opportunity for girls. For example, organization staff reached out to women to allow their daughters to attend workshops on sexuality. Awaaz-e-Niswaan reached out to mothers to support their daughters' further studies. These strategies built support structures for the girls within the communities they lived in, and often connected them with women's collectives and other local networks that the organizations were part of. Meanwhile, through campaigns and public actions they were connected to other critical events in the public domain (such as in citizenship protests, Pride marches and protests against sexual assault), and their participation in these through the organization connected them with other social movements.

Fig. 7.2 Pathways of change: Diverse and sustained support



<sup>24</sup> Shaheen, for instance, adopted the indirect mode by challenging “sheikh marriages” (a girl is married off to an older man, a “sheikh”, from the Gulf region), which are common in their locality.

## Summary

- Building solidarities, networks and continuing leadership was a core outcome of these diverse organizations' work.
- Sustaining and consolidating the collectives through innovative strategies and material support took organizations' time and effort, but was crucial for change to be seeded.
- By building relationships within their larger sphere of work, including with girls' families, community leaders, the government, and other stakeholders including social movements, organizations were able to continue their activities with greater effect and address child and early marriages in their communities.

Fig. 7.3: Role of building solidarity, networks and leadership in addressing child and early marriage

### What success looks like:

Attendance in collectives is sustained by reaching out to members who drop out or face backlash in their community.

**Thoughtshop Foundation**

Young girls return to group meetings with interest, speak up, share and are inquisitive about gender and sexuality.

**Jeevika, Voice4Girls**

Older members of the organization encourage newer entrants to conduct trainings and take up leadership.

**Awaaz-e-Niswaan, MASUM, Samvada**

The organization's work is supported through local endorsements, referrals and support networks, thereby expanding the web of support for girls or women associated with the organization.

**Amra Padatik, Jeevika, Awaaz-e-Niswaan**





# CHAPTER 8

## Conclusion

Beyond age as an  
indicator of success in  
addressing early and  
child marriage

Although this research study to monitor and measure change in efforts in addressing child and early marriage in communities began as an action research partnership between a university research centre, 29 grassroots organizations and a donor agency, the results and outcomes lend valuable lessons to both academic research and the developmental field.

The study presented the challenge of determining what is measurable and how to assess change in efforts to address child and early marriage.

Outcome mapping as a tool helped with pinning down markers of progress in this complex practice. In doing so, the framework of outcome categories and progress markers linked individual lives of girls, women and youth through their actions and relationships to structures, norms and practices in their specific social contexts.

Along with the outcomes from the study, the tools and methods employed by the researchers and community-based groups, as well as the conceptual understanding gained from the study, should benefit feminists and development theorists. As feminist researchers, we stressed: 1) the need for solidarity as the bedrock of potential change and 2) clarity for addressing the intersectional realities of disempowered people.

Drawing from these two non-negotiable principles, the study began from the lives of girls, women and youth and adopted a bottom-up approach to monitoring the activities and potential changes. Each chapter highlighting a domain of change links intersectionally with the others, affirming how change operates in non-linear and interconnected ways. The outcome categories offer a measurement template for groups in the development field that are addressing diverse goals and challenging the prevalent M&E model of one-size-fits-all, which is often executed top-down.

The study brought together the visions nurtured within academic objectives of feminist scholarship and the goals nurtured by community-based organizations. The insights that emerged through the journal recording of observations—the themes, domains and pathways of incremental change—contributed to the alignment of the visions and goals.

The most significant insight is the addition to existing discussions on bargaining with patriarchy. What we found reflects the feminist theoretical understanding of diverse

patriarchal formations that women and girls have resisted across cultures. Often, in individual acts of agency, slight compromises sustain strength for larger battles. In this year of journal recording, what was evident in the lives of girls and women were the small trade-offs they made as they sought to negotiate marriage through various bargains with their families, communities, government and social forces.

Borrowing from standpoint epistemology—the experiences of African-American women and the writings of women of colour that dot transnational feminist academic spaces (for example, Hill Collins, 1990)—the study findings underscore the significant feminist and developmental imperative of creating and working through safe and dialogic spaces, through conversations that generate empathy and mutual support across divisions, multiple locations and diverse histories. Small yet significant changes could be captured through pathways that marked change within these safe and dialogic spaces.

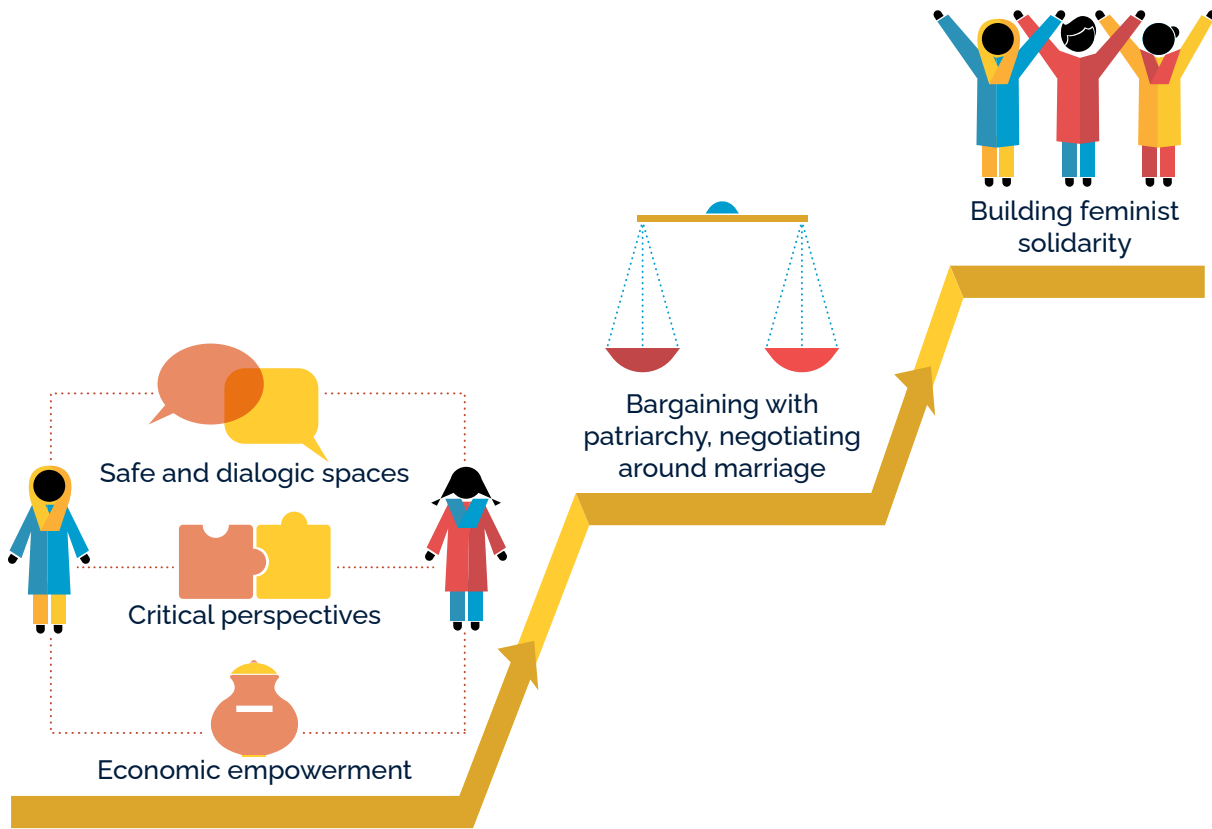
Through a sharp and critical perspective, both buttressed and nurtured by solidarity, collectives and networks, such safe spaces made structural change seem possible while transforming individual lives. Critical perspectives evolving from the standpoint of the individual lives of women and girls illuminated the strategies, plans and efforts to bring to life the ignored existence of people at the margins, whose voices had been muted, silenced and controlled. This led to individuals demonstrating new confidence and emerging as second-line leaders within organizations.

Significant transformation was evident, even within the short period of the project, through the varied learning processes that were facilitated by solidarity-building, friendships, bonding, networking and collective formations at diverse levels.

The organizations depicted and documented small or incremental changes that they noticed over the course of a year, in various shades and patterns. These illustrated pathways or small-yet-significant milestones that will impact young women's empowerment, addressing child and early marriages in communities by supporting autonomous voices. Girls and women had to constantly negotiate their work, skills and capabilities in a patriarchal world that kept them bound to marriage, the household and unrecognized reproductive tasks. The core of any effort at social transformation thus mandates mobilizing, collectivizing and solidarity-building, usually in that order, a painstaking but enriching process that illuminates the women's movement and all social movements across the world. Finally, autonomy and dignity capped young women's and girls' lives when their aspirations were supported by critical perspectives and collective strength that created opportunities for livelihood and autonomy.

The study thus emerges from the work of community-based organizations and collectives engaged in women's, girls', and people's lives. But in the process of surveying their individual lives, it brings to life ideas, concepts and modes of living that are liberating and enlightening for all.

Fig. 8.1: Steps toward structural change: New 'indicators' for a complex problem like early and child marriage



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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Organizations participating in the study

**Amra Padatik** is a community-based organization of the Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (DMSC) in West Bengal. It was founded in 2006 by the children of sex workers, with the support of DMSC to work against the stigma and discrimination that children of sex workers experience. A strong rationale behind its formation was to challenge against the amendments of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 2006, which criminalized children who lived with their mothers and were dependent on their income as sex workers. Amra Padatik now works as a platform for children of sex workers for their education as well as their livelihood. The organization also extensively works with the sex worker community to spread awareness against child marriage through meetings, discussions, street plays, and cultural activities. Amra Padatik has enabled its members to assert their identity as sex workers' children and helped them to fight for their mothers' dignity in various forums, including through cultural and sports activities, Komol Gandhar being one such cultural space. The organization established a residential school for the boys of the community, as well as a sports academy. They also play an active role in DMSC's Self-Regulatory Board to prevent trafficking.

**Astitva Samajik Sanstha** is a rights based organization established in 2005 in Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh, working for the rights of women and girls of marginalized communities in the districts of Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar and Shamli in western Uttar Pradesh. With the objective of raising awareness in these Dalit and Muslim communities on equality and rights, their activities and campaigns include enhancing access to justice for minorities and those affected by caste-based discrimination, preventing early, forced and child marriages, redressal for domestic and other gender-based violence, supporting families in communities displaced on account of communal violence, increasing access to government welfare schemes, improving education of girls, collectivizing women and restoring their livelihoods. While collectivizing women, they organize diverse meetings and gatherings such as on the International Women's Day and the Girl Child Day to create awareness and establish solidarity.

**Awaaz-e-Niswaan** is a community-based organization located in Mumbai that began its work in 1985. The organization works for the rights of women who experience violence and focuses on

the rights of women and young girls from Muslim communities. Their work grew from individual cases of supporting women who faced violence in their everyday lives to supporting women who experienced communal violence during the Mumbai riots in 1992–1993, the Gujarat carnage of 2002, and the 2013 Muzaffarnagar communal violence (in Uttar Pradesh). Awaaz-e-Niswaan is known for their innovative approach of mobilizing women and girls, for example by setting up a library called Rehnuma center, at Mumbra in Thane district, in response to the demands of young girls of the community who would visit the organization's counselling center. Awaaz-e-Niswaan also works with the local communities and tries to reach out to larger groups and networks to create and strengthen these groups with secular, feminist, and human rights perspectives. It provides training and support in constitutional law and continuously deals with issues of gender discrimination within the Muslim personal laws. Being a part of the women's movement struggles, Awaaz-e-Niswaan was part of the formation of the Muslim Women's Rights Network.

**Azad Foundation** is an organization founded in 2008 in Delhi, later in Jaipur and other cities, that works with the objective of equipping resource-poor women with knowledge and skills to empower themselves as professionals and entrepreneurs, providing them opportunities for livelihoods in job markets traditionally denied to them, and they become catalysts of change in their own lives, their families and communities. One of the key activities is the Women on Wheels programme that with minimum economic and social capital trains women to become professional drivers and seek employment opportunities. Women thereby acquire non-traditional livelihoods and transform themselves into agents of change in their communities. Their Young Women Leadership and the Azad Kishori programmes aim at young girls in communities through interactive sessions provide life skills and training related to gender and legal rights, sexual and reproductive health, and providing exposure to non-traditional livelihoods. In addition, Azad Foundation also engages with communities, specifically men to prevent violence against women and promote gender justice.

**Bhartiya Gramin Adivasi Vikas Sanghathan** works in and around Nagpur, among dalits and adivasis on issues of natural resource rights, displacement and livelihood. In the 1980s and '90s, their work began through social movements mobilizing diverse sets of workers, such as migrant construction workers, domestic workers and other informal labour. In the 1990s a construction workers' union was formed, and in 2000, the domestic workers organization Vidarbha Molkarin Sanghatana was registered. Constant discussions and meetings with the women in the unions brought out the realities of their conditions of work. This in turn was extended to gender relations within the household and the role of men, all of which strengthened women's solidarity. As part of working with women workers via forming savings groups, their work extends to mobilizing and creating awareness among girls and young women on their rights. With young people their work began by addressing the educational needs of the children of these working communities, by preventing their entry into child labour. Such mobilizations later extended to young girls' rights around gender and sexuality.



**Bhumika Women's Collective** initially began as a feminist magazine in 1995; today, it is published as a monthly magazine. In 2006, Bhumika began a helpline for women in distress, offering counseling and connecting women to support services. It set up Support Centres for Women in the women's police stations in Hyderabad and Karimnagar. Through these interventions, Bhumika has reached out to more than 55,000 women and girls across the state and provided them with counseling services and useful information on laws, support systems and free legal aid. Support Centres for Women attempt to sensitize men and family members of women and empower women by counseling them to demand their rights. Bhumika advocates with the government for proper implementation of laws and regulations and influencing policy changes and budgetary allocations for the protection of women under the Domestic Violence Act, 2005. They have built a civil society alliance at the state level. Over the past three decades, Bhumika has also come to be viewed as a gender training and resource organization that undertakes training workshops for various stakeholders, including the judiciary, police, journalists and college students.

**Feminist Approach to Technology (FAT)** was registered in 2008 in New Delhi. It began as a reaction to what the founder experienced as the technical support person at a women's rights organization. FAT initially worked with women to provide training on technical skills where they discussed the gendered aspects of technology. In 2011, FAT identified the critical gaps that result in the absence of women's voices in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and prepared its strategic plan, for an innovative strategy for working with adolescent girls from underprivileged backgrounds. Since 2012, FAT has mostly worked with adolescent girls promoting the use of technology as a tool for emancipation while also doing advocacy to break the stereotypes that restrict women's participation in STEM. The work with adolescent and young girls is being undertaken through their tech centers, which are set up in the communities they work in. This space is provided for girls to learn and create and is envisaged as a shared space for the girls where they can support and build peer networks, friendships, and solidarities.

**HUMSAFAR Support Centre for Women (HUMSAFAR)** In 2003, HUMSAFAR started as a crisis support center in Lucknow for women who had faced or were facing violence, that registered itself in 2008. HUMSAFAR was formed to ensure a holistic feminist response to women's human rights violation in Uttar Pradesh. HUMSAFAR had initially worked through their crisis centers and then expanded to create awareness among various groups they worked with, such as young people in colleges. Based on the emerging need, they also branched into training and sensitizing the local government department officials on various laws and legislation related to women. HUMSAFAR provides various kinds of support, including paralegal, legal, medical, social mediation, counseling, rescue, shelter, and rehabilitation for women facing violence, in addition to livelihood training. Their activities include casework units, public education programmes in educational institutions and urban *bastis* (slums), and advocacy and networking for better implementation of laws for women. HUMSAFAR actively participates in the campaign for the right to choice within relationships among various networks and coalitions. It is also part of the

women's rights network, not just at the state level but also at the national and international levels.

**Jeevika Development Society (Jeevika)** was registered as an organization in 1994, although its work began in 1989 through its income-generation program for women, via self-help groups. It came to be established as an organization working to further the rights of underprivileged women and girls of marginalized and scheduled caste communities, living in 54 villages spread across three blocks in the South 24 Parganas district in West Bengal, by improving their access to livelihoods and financial resources as well as challenging patriarchal norms. In 2002, Jeevika mobilized, established, supported, and nurtured Alor Disha, a collective of women volunteers from their self-help groups, that take up preventive work around violence against women and provide support to survivors of violence. In 2011–2012, Jeevika formed Alor Barta, a similar collective of women volunteers working to prevent early marriage of girls and campaigning among schools to discuss issues of sexuality while promoting their education. In 2008, Jeevika registered their rural credit program, Swayamsampurna, as an independent financial federation, and further works on strengthening of the traditional craft base and the system of rice intensification.

**Kislay** was founded in 1992 to promote the rights of urban poor communities in slum areas of New Delhi. The organization's programs focus on the rights to housing, food, and education and the regulation of employment and social security for domestic workers and construction workers, among others and has taken the form of a federation of five trade-based unions. The organization began its work within seven slums in the resettled colonies of Vikaspuri and has now expanded to work across 92 slums in Delhi that mostly comprised migrant workers, from the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Rajasthan. Prior to 2008, the focus was on creating an inclusive environment for education that included aspects of enrolment, creating infrastructure for and access to basic schooling in the community, and conducting sexuality education for young adults. With respect to livelihood, the focus was on ensuring economic security through self-help groups promoting savings, better wages, employee negotiations, and grievance redress. Kislay also works on issues of caste and religious intolerance. With the beginning of active slum demolitions in Delhi from 2008, Kislay began to focus on issues of the right to housing and living standards of the communities.

**Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan (KMVS)** was founded in 1989 with the objective of organizing and empowering rural women of Kutch, through collectivizing and consciousness raising, to address gender inequities in their region. Over the years, KMVS has grown from a single collective of rural women to a network of seven grassroots organizations, across Kutch district, that work on traditional livelihoods, support for women's rights and participation in local governance both in rural and urban areas. In recent years, KMVS has engaged with local government, service providers and communities to build an environment of safety for women in the district. In this young people, women and girls have played a role sensitizing panchayats, caste based justice systems and community leaders, as well as families in creating both a discourse and space free of violence against women, patriarchal practices and gender based vulnerabilities.

**Mahila Sarvangeen Utkarsh Mandal (MASUM)**, was established in 1987, as a community-based organization working primarily with rural women in the perennially drought-prone areas of Pune and Ahmednagar districts of Maharashtra. In the early years of its work they addressed women's health concerns and focused on training community health volunteers. It was from this work that a number of issues related to women's rights, such as violence against women and women's livelihood concerns, emerged. Over the years, the organization began working with youth and children on issues of gender and caste discrimination. Political participation of women, both as elected representatives, and strengthening children's rights through village-based children's councils (Bal Panchayats) are other arenas where MASUM is progressively making inroads. In the last few years, MASUM has been undertaking extensive work on early, child, and forced marriages. MASUM is now recognized as a credible training institute on gender, health and rights, violence against women, and Dalit and minority rights. MASUM is also extensively involved with campaigns and networks that strengthen women's rights from the local to the international levels.

Based in Ajmer, Rajasthan, **Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti (MJAS)** started in 1995 as a collective of women working on issues of violence against women. It was formally registered as an organization in 2000 to ensure gender justice to women in both urban and rural areas. MJAS works directly with rural communities around the concerns of young women and girls to address issues around child marriages alongside addressing normative traditions as well as inhuman practices, such as naata, "witch" hunting, and bigamy, and for women's right to property. Another major area of focus is on women elected as representatives in Panchayati Raj institutions. Various programs have been implemented by documenting their experiences, which have helped in influencing state policies for ensuring protection of women. In collaboration with village committees, MJAS also works on children's right to survival, protection, participation, and overall development. It has recently started working on the issue of early and child marriage and organizing young persons' collectives of facilitators, such as Bal Manch, to ensure that they are able to make their own choices regarding their aspirations, education, work, and marriage.

**Mohammad Bazar Backward Classes Development Society (MBBCDS)** is a non-governmental, secular organization formed in 2000 and situated in the Mohammad Bazar block of Birbhum district of West Bengal. Their work involves the educational, economic and political empowerment of marginal groups such as adivasis (specifically the Santhal community) and Muslims in several villages in Birbhum district and nearby Shikaripara district of Jharkhand state. Despite the challenges of working among these most marginalized groups, MBBCDS have been encouraging children and young girls who drop out of school, by supporting local educational initiatives such as a school that provides free study material, free coaching, free uniforms, boarding and stay. Through their educational efforts with girls, MBBCDS reached out and began collectivizing women around gender justice and rights. In addition, the organization also organizes awareness generation programmes on health and rights, education, counselling, training in leadership for social uplift and political empowerment.

**Nishtha** is an organization based in the south 24 Parganas of West Bengal working in four blocks in the district, on the empowerment of women and girls, providing educational support to young girls who drop out of school, night shelters, collectivizing young girls and boys in communities, providing skills for livelihood opportunities, providing training and leadership, creating awareness to women on their rights, and to tackle discrimination. Nishtha also provides legal aid to women, counselling and financial support to women survivors and their families, as well as training and initiatives supporting women to become entrepreneurs. The various collectives of young people and women, such as the Balak and Kishori Vahini and Mahila Mandals, have been also active in conducting various programmes in communities to ensure a more equal and violence free space.

**Praajak** is an organisation dedicated to preventing the abuse and exploitation of children and young people, especially those who occupy marginalised social locations. Their work is primarily with children who live on streets and railway platforms and in government care and protection institutions, and also with those children who are particularly vulnerable to social stigma and discrimination in communities. Praajak works collectively with children and youth, the communities they live in, governmental and non-governmental institutions to create a caring and protective environment for them. Praajak conducts programmes for children in several towns of West Bengal and support programmes for vulnerable children and youth in 16 districts of the state. Praajak focuses on child protection issues such as unsafe migration, child trafficking, child sexual abuse, early/child and forced marriages and child work and labour.

**Rajsamand Jan Vikas Sansthan** is a grassroots organization set up in 2003 in Rajsamand district of Rajasthan, committed to transforming the lives of women and adolescent girls through intervention and programmes towards mitigation of violence against women, promoting education amongst girls, and participation of communities in rural development activities. Its thrust areas of work are collectivizing women and girls through the Rajsamand Mahila Manch and Kishori Manch, addressing the prevalence of child marriages in the communities, gender sensitization, livelihood and economic empowerment, counselling, legal support, health programmes, and diverse advocacy campaigns. Jagruti Pariyojana is one of the key programmes that address adolescent girls and boys, through awareness programmes, capacity strengthening workshops, self-defence, and livelihood training. Regular monthly meetings also help with women's collectives in nearly 50 villages in the district.

**Ruby Social Welfare Society (Ruby SWS)** is an organization registered in 2005 and working in Nagpur, Maharashtra among women and girls on issues such as prevention of violence against women, supporting education and training of young girls, and organizing programmes and activities to prevent discrimination based on gender, caste, religion, nationality and disability. The association with the Muslim Mahila Manch strengthened the organization's feminist perspective especially with respect to women's rights dictated by the personal laws with the family and community. Some of the specific activities include counselling services for redressal of violence against women, providing training in technical skills such as computer proficiency, language

and communication skills, educational support for young drop outs from high school, as well as networking, campaigning and advocating for rights on diverse forums and spaces. Specific activities with youth include melas, rallies, and discussion sessions.

**Sahiyar (Stree Sangthan)** began its work in 1984 through the initiative of a group of students at MS University, Vadodara, Gujarat. As a women's rights organization, Sahiyar's broad objective is to build awareness on injustice against women and campaign for the rights of all marginalized groups. Sahiyar addresses the issues of inequality, oppression, and violence faced by women within the patriarchal structures of family, society, State, and market. They also create awareness among communities about the effects of environmental deterioration on women. Further, Sahiyar has a general awareness program about women who are affected by communal violence. They use various modes of building awareness through plays, songs, public demonstrations, research, documentation and publication. Their range of activities include counseling in cases of violence and providing legal support, building leadership of women, youth and adolescents on issues of peace and justice, training programs and workshops with professionals, government officials, and students. Manthan, a center for youth, is a space for learning technical skills, building leadership among youth, and creating a community space for young women and men. Sahiyar's strength lies in the fact that it is also connected with various networks across the state and country.

**Sahajani Shiksha Kendra (SSK)** came into being as an organization since 2002 with the help of Nirantar, Delhi, and is based in Lalitpur, Uttar Pradesh. Lalitpur is one of the 200 most impoverished districts of India and SSK has been working there for the past 14 years with adolescent girls and women on issues of literacy, livelihood, and empowerment. The majority of its staff members are not just women from the local communities but the marginalized groups of Dalits and Adivasis (mostly Sehariyas) the organization works with. SSK's work began with focusing on education and creation of literacy centers where they later collectivized women as samitis. Some of the areas in which concerted work began were on issues of violence against women, livelihood, and intervening and providing support in cases of violations of rights at the work place (including extensive work on sexual harassment at the work place). One of the major highlights in SSK's work is their successful residential schools for adolescent girls, which ran between 2008 and 2011, where girls received quality education and awareness of their bodies, sexuality, rights, and entitlements.

**Sadbhavana Trust**, registered in 1990, has been working in Lucknow on concerns of gender and equity providing advocacy, referral and support services to women experiencing violence, through legal aid, medical services, literacy, skills development and counselling. In addition, they provide legal support to those, especially in prisons, who have no access to legal representation, and empowering them towards livelihoods. Their sustained leadership programme enables young girls from minority communities towards a strong gender identity perspective and skills to expand their opportunities in their lives. Educational support to children from economically depressed backgrounds through financial assistance, and access to technological skills such as

computer access, videography, photography, editing, and self publishing are also part of their programme of empowerment. Through these modes, Sadbhavana Trust envisions a society where people from marginalized and minority communities, especially women, are able to break from patriarchal norms and inspire others to lead an empowered life with dignity.

**Samvada**, established in early 1990s in Bengaluru, has been continuously evolving, innovating and growing to address the complex needs of young people in a rapidly changing world, advocating youth rights and building youth-centric knowledge through research. In 1994, Youth Resource Centres were formed in several rural districts of Karnataka to mentor youth through participation and reflection in residential courses and workshops, leading to the emergence of youth leaders who branch out to other movements, campaigns, and initiatives for social change. The Baduku Centre for Livelihood Learning addresses the need for meaningful, rewarding and dignified livelihoods for young people from socially excluded communities. Through four centres, short and long term courses are offered that mould young people as professionals in counselling, early childhood care and education, natural resource management, agricultural entrepreneurship, teachers, educators, theatre artists and journalists. Samvada's vision thus aims to create a gender just, socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable world by partnering with young people.

**Sampada Grameen Mahila Sanstha (SANGRAM)** established in 1992 in Sangli, Maharashtra has as its primary focus working with marginalized groups to prevent gender based violence, and HIV, and to provide care and support to their group members who are in need. It has evolved into collectives and groups from communities of sex workers, MSM and transgender individuals spread over south Maharashtra and north Karnataka that focus on the rights in terms of protection, property and power. SANGRAM's focus is on involving community members in programmes and their leadership, creating a collective sense for collaborative work, and eliminate stigma and discrimination associated with sex work. Among their main collectives, VAMP comprises women in sex work working on health and human rights of sex workers, while Muskaan is a collective of male and trans sex workers, and Nazariya collectivises Muslim women through rights information and support. Mitra is a collective of children of sex workers, with whom SANGRAM runs a hostel and provides supplementary education classes to the children. They also work with adult children of sex workers in terms of capacity building to support VAMP.

**Shaheen Women's Resource and Welfare Association (Shaheen)** Located in the old city's Sultanshahi area of Hyderabad, an area that frequently experiences communal conflicts, Shaheen was formally registered in 2002 and works primarily in 20 bastis (slums), specifically with Muslim women, Dalit women, and women from Other Backward Classes. Their main area of work focuses on vocational training for young women (tailoring, embroidery, mehendi [creating floral designs using henna paste], flower-making, and basic computer literacy); health (conducting health camps and free health check-ups and conversations around general and sexual health, puberty, and menstruation); and violence against women (providing emotional and physical structures of support such as shelter homes and legal counseling). It is through these spaces of their work

that they have created dialogue with the women in various communities. Shaheen also has six learning centers, where they have discussions and training sessions with women and girls around rights, entitlements, and sexual health. Shaheen also makes use of cultural activities like qawwali and drama to discuss issues around women's rights. In 2003, they went on to perform a play called *Purdah* in Mysore and have composed a qawwali on the 2012 Delhi gang rape case.

**SETU** Serving as a bridge as their name suggests, following the 2001 earthquake in Bhuj, SETU realised the need since 2004 to strengthen local governance structure more prominently among communities, via various innovations to decide, negotiate, and monitor the kind and pace of development they need. Since 2014 they have focussed on local government institutions such as panchayats and urban local bodies. Working with gram panchayats their work has been directed towards strengthening the capacities, skills, perspectives, and opportunities of the members to understand their roles, and fulfil their mandate under the Constitution, by developing their abilities to plan, make budgets, and engage with the gram sabhas. SETU has also helped form collectives to support livelihood needs of communities of cattle breeders, saltpan workers and dryland farmers. In both the activities related to local governance and livelihood of communities, SETU has addressed the concerns of women, children, youth, and other vulnerable sections.

**Thoughtshop Foundation** was established in 1993 and began working with the mission of creating and increasing access to strategies and resources that would aid social transformation and empower individuals—specifically youth—groups, and communities. Thoughtshop Foundation has two broad streams of work: social communications and youth development innovating with effective ways to challenge social inequalities; empowering young persons by making relevant knowledge accessible; finding ways of bringing about an attitudinal shift on sensitive issues; and facilitating change by creating interactive tools (games, pictures, models, films etc.) that aid dialogue especially at the community level. Thoughtshop Foundation has engaged with youth resource cells (YRCs), collectives of young people, that are situated in urban slums, peri-urban areas, and remote rural locations. Some groups are from predominantly Muslim communities. Through an intensive “listening process” of case studies, self-exploration sessions, field visits, focus group discussions, counseling, and support group sessions, they have realized the extent to which young persons’—especially girls’—rights are being violated.

**Vanangana** was established in 1993 in Bundelkhand in Uttar Pradesh. Its major area of work has been on human rights, violence against women, working women in rural communities, and administrative and legal work with women from different communities. Issues of sexuality have been central to their work in the rural communities. Vanangana has reached out to inculcate leadership among women from Dalit, Adivasi, and Muslim communities and created platforms such as Dalit Mahila Samiti, Sangharsheel Mahila Sanghathan, and Guftugu Manch. It has mobilized women toward accessing livelihood options mainly assumed to be for men through technical skill building as hand pump mechanics and masons, campaigned against violence against women as a human rights issue, and mobilized young girls from marginal groups for access to education

via the collectives. After 2002, Vanangana has focused on issues of communalism and the marginalization of women from Muslim communities. It also focuses on working against the rigid norms of the caste system with the participation of women from Dalit and *Ati-Dalit* communities in their community kitchen program. Within the organization, women are collectivized to ensure access to safe spaces, enabling them to speak about and claim their rights.

**Vikalp Sansthan** was registered in 2004 to articulate the needs and aspirations of youth to create a new generation of agents of change. They work in two districts of Rajasthan: Udaipur and Jodhpur. The organization believes in accomplishing projects through the democratic system already in place, instead of investing in new, parallel systems and uses a number of campaign strategies to reach out to youth and their families at the village level. It is their very effective model of investing in local volunteers that has aided in their outreach. Over the years, the organization has come to use a variety of extremely innovative methods to mobilize and create awareness among the communities they work in, such as bike rallies, comic-strip making, sport competitions, and melas. Vikalp raises awareness and creates a space for dialogue around girls' and women's rights with different community members—such as parents, panchayats, health and marriage service providers, and the administration—with the help of volunteers. Vikalp strongly believes in the transformative potential of education which has included not just enrolment of girls in school but also providing bridge classes and ensuring that there is support even to those outside the school system.

**VOICE4Girls**, registered in July 2012, works with adolescent girls from marginalized communities across Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Uttarakhand to enable them to overcome economic, social, and gender inequalities by advocating for themselves and to seek educational opportunities. It helps these girls mould their futures by imparting critical knowledge, communication, and life skills through an innovative activity-based camp model. With this underlying belief, the organization focuses on working with young girls who attend government schools or affordable private schools, focusing on access to critical information around basic health, safety, rights, future planning, and self-awareness as well as life skills through the lens of a gender empowerment curriculum - developing a sustainable peer mentoring model known as the Sakhi program within these residential schools. An important aspect of this innovation is the use of activity-based models wherein the camps are led by college students as intern counselors who are just four to five years older than the girls, the Sakhis, they work with. Hence, though the programme focuses on the adolescent girls, there is a significant impact on other beneficiaries who are part of this process. Additionally, the teachers, school officials, government officials, and even parents are impacted in the process.



## Appendix 2: Outcome categories and progress markers

Progress Markers: Collectivization		
	Organizations	Collectives
1	Mobilize young persons, especially women and girls.	Build new learning and knowledge.
2	Build collectives as safe and inclusive spaces.	Form friendships and peer networks.
3	Work with communities to accept and support the collectives within their community.	Ensure that members perceive the collective as a safe space.
4	Support and enable young persons to pursue their aspirations.	Strengthen trust and solidarity within the collective.
5	Support autonomous voices within the collectives.	Take leadership initiative.
6	Build sustainability mechanisms within the collectives.	Negotiate with the family members and/or other immediate persons of influence.
7	Shift responsibility for generating supportive spaces from the organizations to communities.	Build support at family and community levels through dialogue and collective action.
8	-	Practice notions of autonomy, choice, and agency.

Progress Markers: Gender and Sexuality		
	Organizations	Collectives
1	Engage deeply with issues related to gender.	Build awareness about gender and sexuality.
2	Situate sexuality in the organization's work.	Comfortably discuss issues of gender.
3	Ensure safe spaces for discussions on gender and sexuality for staff and collective members.	Comfortably discuss issues of sexuality.
4	Comfortably discuss issues of gender and sexuality.	Question norms that control and regulate expression in everyday life.
5	Further build an increased positive and intersectional understanding of gender and sexuality in the organization's work.	Negotiate with family and community for collective members to exercise choice, consent and agency.
6	Support collectives and individual members to engage with a comprehensive and positive understanding of gender and sexuality at the community level.	Actively challenge norms that control and regulate collective members' expression in everyday life.
7		Engage with the community on issues of gender and sexuality.

Progress Markers: Negotiations around Marriage		
	Organizations	Collectives
1	Recognize links between marriage and structures of power and control.	Facilitate opportunities and spaces to discuss rights and choices around marriage.
2	Create spaces for young persons to discuss, support, and negotiate their choices around marriage.	Discuss marriage not just in individual contexts but in relation to larger structural issues as well.
3	Strengthen collectives for young married women.	Provide support to negotiate with family and community members around marriage and related issues.

Progress Markers: Law, Policy, and Advocacy		
	Organizations	Collectives
1	Build perspectives and capacities on relevant law, policies, and programs.	Facilitate awareness of rights and entitlements allowed in family law.
2	Facilitate access to existing laws and programs around securing rights of young persons and women.	Enable the recognition of violation of young persons' and women's rights.
3	Develop a critical perspective of the organization's work relative to the law associated with early and child marriage.	Enable access to support mechanisms (legal and other support systems).
4	Dialogue with other organizations, networks, and/or movements on early and child marriage and related issues.	Support young persons and women to voice and address violations of their rights.
5	Dialogue within the community on early and child marriage and related issues.	Discuss and question notions of age and consent in relation to marriage.
6		Dialogue within the community on early and child marriage and related issues.
7		Represent the collectives' voices in larger networks and forums on early and child marriage and related issues.

Progress Markers: Education		
	Organizations	Collectives
1	Actively work on barriers to young girls' and women's education (formal and nonformal opportunities).	Enable young persons and women to reflect on and confidently articulate their aspirations.
2	Create support mechanisms to build enabling learning spaces.	Build leadership skills among young persons and women.
3	Understand education as a transformative tool	Enable young persons and women (married and unmarried) to negotiate with family and community members around opportunities and aspirations.

4	29.Enable young people and women to negotiate with family and community members around opportunities and aspirations.	Facilitate support mechanisms for young persons' and women's access to learning spaces.
5	Facilitate opportunities that are available for girls and women after marriage.	Support youth and women to pursue aspirations of their choice.
6	Create spaces for reflection and critical thinking, both within the organization as well as in the collectives.	

<b>Progress Markers: Livelihood</b>		
	<b>Organizations</b>	<b>Collectives</b>
1	Enable access to livelihood opportunities for young persons.	Identify and make choices about aspirations and opportunities related to livelihood.
2	Facilitate discussions with members of the community on livelihood access for women and girls.	Enable access to schemes, services, rights, and legal entitlements for young persons.
3	Assist women in seeking redress for violations of rights in the workplace using current systems.	Enable redress of violation of rights in the workplace.
4	Engage with issues around women's labor in an intersectional manner.	Build an understanding on labor and gender.
5	Ensure access to opportunities of livelihood for women.	Negotiate with family members on issues around the divisions of labor.
6	Build capacities and systems to address issues of violations of rights in the workplace.	Support negotiations with family and community members on livelihood opportunities, especially after marriage.

## Appendix 3: Sample Tool 1

### Organization Journal: Description of Change- Quarterly Report

#### A. Outcome Scoring: Outcome Category Group 1

Progress Markers		N	L	M	H
<b>Expect to See</b>	<b>Description of Main Changes</b>				
PM 1:					
PM 2:					
PM 3:					
<b>Like to See</b>					
PM 4:					
PM 5:					
PM 6:					
<b>Love to See</b>					
PM 7					
PM 8					
<b>Description of Unintended Changes and Learning/Lessons Learned:</b>					

On a Scale of 10, ratings are: N- No Change, L- 1-4, M- 4-7, H- 7-10

## B. Outcome Scoring: Outcome Category Group 2

Progress Markers		N	L	M	H
<b>Expect to See</b>	<b>Description of Main Changes</b>				
PM 1:					
PM 2:					
PM 3:					
<b>Like to See</b>					
PM 4:					
PM 5:					
PM 6:					
<b>Love to See</b>					
PM 7					
PM 8					
<b>Description of Unintended Changes and Learning/Lessons Learned:</b>					

On a Scale of 10, ratings are: N- No Change, L- 1-4, M- 4-7, H- 7-10

### C. Outcome Scoring: Outcome Category Group 3

Progress Markers		N	L	M	H
Expect to See	Description of Main Changes				
PM 1:					
PM 2:					
PM 3:					
<b>Like to See</b>					
PM 4:					
PM 5:					
PM 6:					
<b>Love to See</b>					
PM 7					
PM 8					
<b>Description of Unintended Changes and Learning/Lessons Learned:</b>					

On a Scale of 10, ratings are: N- No Change, L- 1-4, M- 4-7, H- 7-10

## Appendix 3: Sample Tool 2

### Story Telling: Guiding Questions

#### Outcome Category 1: Collectivization

1. आप इस समूह से कब से जुड़े हैं?

Since when have you been associated with this collective?

2. समूह से जुड़ के आप में या आपके दोस्तों या समूह के साथियों में क्या बदलाव आए हैं ?

What are the different changes that you think have occurred within your life or the lives of your friends since you have become a part of the collective?

#### Outcome Category 2: Gender and Sexuality

##### Gender

1. एक लड़के और लड़की के ज़िन्दगी में घर से लेकर बहार तक क्या क्या फर्क है ?

What do you think is the overall difference between a girl and boy ranging from everything within the home to outside?

2. आपकी ज़िन्दगी में इस फर्क या अंतर को लेकर क्या अनुभव है ?

What is your experience with such differences?

##### Sexuality

1. दोस्ती और प्यार के बारे में आपकी क्या सोच है ?

What is your opinion on matters related to love and friendship?

2. लड़के लड़कियों की दोस्ती / प्यार / चाहत के बारे में अपना या अपने आस पास के लोगो के अनुभव के बारे में आप बता सकते हैं क्या.

Can you share your personal experience or that of a friends' about feelings of love, friendship and attraction between boys and girls?



## Outcome Category 2: Negotiations Around Marriage

1. शादी के बारे में आपके क्या विचार हैं?

What are your views on marriage?

2. शादी किसी की ज़िन्दगी में कितनी महत्वपूर्ण होती है ?

What is the significance of marriage in one's life?

3. शादी को लेकर आपके या आपके आस पास के लोगो का क्या अनुभव है (शादी से जुड़ी अड़चनों को सुलझाने के तरीके भी चर्चा कर सकते है) ----- (इस बात का ध्यान दें सवाल करते वक़्त , कि उत्तर देने वाली महिला शादी शुदा है या नहीं, सवाल उसी अनुसार पूछें )

What is your experience regarding marriage, or the experience of your friends? Could you also share the obstacle related to marriage and the negotiations to deal with it? (Care is to be taken to ensure that if the respondent is a married person or not and the question is to be asked accordingly)

## Outcome Category 3: Education

1. आपकी ज़िन्दगी में आपके क्या सपने हैं?

Tell us about your dreams in life.

2. इन सपनो को पाने के लिए किन किन चीज़ों की ज़रूरत है ? क्या इन सपनो को पाने के लिए शिक्षा एक जरिया है ?

What are the different things that you think you need to materialize your aspirations into reality? Is education a tool to attain your aspirations?

3. आपको संस्था या समूह से इन चीज़ों को पाने में क्या मदद मिलती है ?

Do you get any support from the organization or from the collective in attaining your aspirations?

## Outcome Category 3: Livelihood

1. आजीविका के बारे में आपका क्या अनुभव रहा है ? (यदि उत्तर देने वाला व्यक्ति एक पुरुष है तो उनसे औरतो के आजीविका के बारे में सवाल पूछें )

What has been your experience regarding livelihood? (if the respondent is a man, ask him what he thinks of women's livelihoods?)

2. आपकी आजीविका और रोज़गार के फैसलो में क्या किसी और का भी प्रभाव है? इस तरह का कोई अनुभव बताइये, अपनी या अपने किसी परिचित की ज़िन्दगी में .

Has anyone influence your decision towards your livelihood? Share your own or the experiences of your friends.

3. जब आप आजीविका से जुड़े तो क्या घर के कामो के विभाजन/ बंटवारे में कोई बदलाव आया??

Did the sharing of household chores become different after your involvement in your livelihood?

4. शादी के बाद क्या आप आजीविका में शामिल हो सकते हैं/ विस्तार में बताइये ?

Do you think one can be employed after marriage? Discuss.

### Outcome Category 3: Law, policy and Advocacy

1. समूह के अंदर कानूनों और अपने अधिकारों के बारे में किस तरह की चर्चाएं होती हैं ?

What are the different kinds of discussions that take place within the collective regarding rights and laws?

2. क्या इन चर्चाओं से आपके ज़िन्दगी में कुछ प्रभाव पड़ा है ?

Have these discussions impacted your life?



