

UDAY SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY

NYAY CHAUPAL

LEGAL AID CELL FOR WOMEN

**COMMUNITY BASED LEGAL AID MECHANISM
OF, BY AND FOR WOMEN SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE**



**END LINE EVALUATION OF THE 3-YEAR PROJECT
(2020-2023)**

A JOINT STUDY BY UDAY SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY &
EKA - THE COMMUNICATORS' COLLECTIVE

UDAY SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY

Nyay Chaupal (Legal Aid Cell for Women)

Endline Evaluation of the three-year Project

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THE CONTEXT: UNPACKING GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

WHAT IS GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

Gender-based violence is defined as any physical, mental, sexual or economic harm that is inflicted on a person, because of their gender. It is one of the most pervasive human rights violations and it cuts across religion, region, race, caste and nationality, affecting millions of people every day.

Globally, women and girls have borne the brunt of gender-based violence due to ingrained power imbalances created and maintained by society. However, gender-based violence is also inflicted upon the disabled, men, boys, LGBTQIA+, and gender non-conforming people because the violence is rooted in power, patriarchy, inequality and is upheld through a culture of silence.

Women and girls, however, continue to suffer gender-based violence at a disproportionately high rate worldwide. And among women too, those at the intersection of caste, poverty and disability suffer even more. GBV occurs both within and outside the home, perpetuated by those who are intimately known to survivors, as well as by strangers.

In many cases, survivors face gender-based violence from both. According to World Health Organization data from 2021, almost one in every

three women have been subjected to intimate partner violence, non-partner sexual violence or both at least once in their lifetime.¹

WHAT ARE THE FORMS OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Gender-based violence takes many forms and may include some, all or a combination of harmful behaviour that includes physical, verbal, sexual, psychological and socio-economic violence. From sex-selective abortion, female genital mutilation and trafficking to intimate partner violence, withholding of finances, denial of education, early marriage, and 'honour'-killing, GBV can take many forms.

Even the threat of violence, non-consensual acts including marital rape, coercion, manipulation, gas-lighting, sexual harassment at the workplace and cyber-bullying also constitute gender-based violence². Across societies, use of violence by men to control behaviour of women and girls is condoned, and even looked upon agreeably. Women's bodies, resources, decisions, thoughts and ideas are constantly sought to be disciplined and controlled. Therefore, in all spaces where women and girls are present, the threat of gender-based violence exists as well.

IMPACT OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE (GBV)

Survivors of GBV face both short and long-term consequences in ways that devastate their physical, mental and emotional well-being. Physical violence may lead to include broken bones, burn marks, concussions, life-altering traumatic injuries and even death. Violence also leads to depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), the limited ability to complete daily tasks, and suicidal thoughts³. Thus, GBV impacts, in various degrees, and for extended periods, the health, dignity, security and autonomy of survivors.

Society's tacit approval of violence as a means to control women and girls also mean that survivors are often blamed for the violence inflicted upon them. Dismissal of women's legitimate fears and complaints, limited means of legal redressal, access to justice, and low support from families and communities to survivors of GBV leave them isolated and vulnerable to further violence. Survivors who come forward and speak up are also side-lined, rebuked or retaliated against, leading to low reportage of incidences of GBV.

COST TO SOCIETY

When a large section of women and girls face a constant threat of violence, and spend their lives negotiating, compromising, adjusting, tolerating and suffering GBV, its impact is not limited to the survivors but their families, communities and society at large. GBV becomes the norms, and an accepted practice perpetuated under a culture of silence. Structural inequalities are retained, and even reinforced. Autonomy of the body, access to equitable resources and rights are severely diminished, spilling over the trauma again.

Girls withdraw from their education, and remain entangled in situations that restrict their growth. Women withdraw from the workforce, diminishing their economic potential and their ability to generate wealth while risking their economic safety. Effectively, GBV stunts the potential of all women and girls to make meaningful changes to themselves, their families, communities and the world.

POSSIBLE INTERVENTIONS

Addressing GBV needs the concerted efforts of governments, institutions, the law and its lawmakers, local and international organisations, and the civil society. Reaching out to women and girls across communities needs a strong ground-based intervention spearheaded by an informed, rights-based network of women and youth organizations, and civil society groups. These interventions have to be supported by sensitive, justice-oriented health services, social services and police-judicial services.

Survivors need to begin recognising GBV and take steps to access these services. They have to be assured of safety, confidentiality and protection from further violence. Wide dissemination of information about services, and ways to access them will ensure that survivors feel empowered to come forward for redressal.

Working with men and boys on patriarchy, sexuality, masculinity and gender equality is an important intervention. Involvement of positive male role models, open discussion of sexual expectations, gender equality, and depictions of healthy, non-violent relationships in the media also will help in creating and reinforcing a violence-free future. Governments, law and policy makers, judicial institutions as well as international organisations to create the necessary legislative, administrative and institutional reforms.

¹<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240022256>

²<https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/faqs/types-of-violence>

³<https://www.unicef.org/protection/gender-based-violence-in-emergencies>

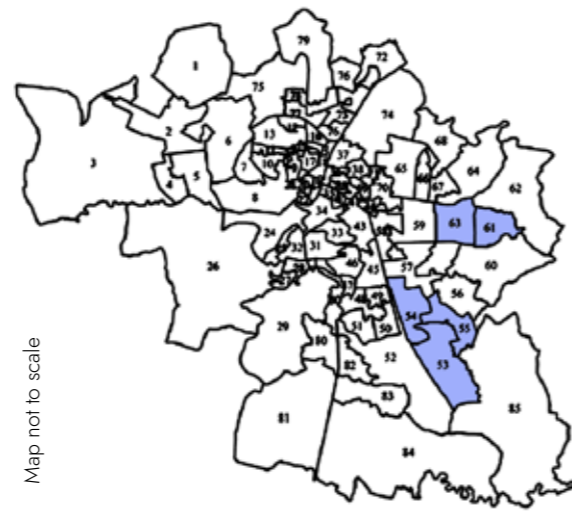
THE INTERVENTION: NYAY CHAUPAL

INTRODUCTION TO NYAY CHAUPAL (LEGAL AID CELL FOR WOMEN)

Uday Social Development Society, a non-profit entity is the social work wing of the Pavitra Atma Sevika Sangh (Managed by Holy Spirit Sisters), India. Uday has been working around issues related to Access to Justice, Rights and empowerment of children and women since 2003 in 56 urban poor communities of 17 Municipal Corporation wards in Bhopal.

Following recommendations by an external evaluation in 2010, the organization expanded its operations into 3 more districts of Madhya Pradesh – Indore, Khandwa and Jhabua.

Ward Map of Bhopal City



Map not to scale

■ Areas of intervention by UDAY in Bhopal city

NYAY CHAUPAL (LEGAL AID CELL FOR WOMEN)

The idea of Nyay Chaupal as a Community Based Legal Aid Cell for Women was conceived by Uday in response to the increasing number of cases of violence against women. Nyay Chaupal is a colloquial word used for a safe space where women and girls could gather for discussion and advice for enabling access to justice, especially in cases of domestic violence. Nyay Chaupal is a forum and a community based legal aid mechanism – of, by and for survivors of domestic violence. Nyay Chaupal members strive for peace and harmony in their families and communities.

The Forum attempts to settle conflicts in the beginning itself by trying to resolve the issues at the family/community level. They accompany cases to the police station, to legal aid cells and other institutions, and stand with the survivor despite the procedural delays.

Nyay Chaupal members seek to resolve cases within their collective without approaching the authorized institutions. In cases where external intervention is required, the Nyay Chaupal members refer the same to the Uday team, Police or other legal aid institutions.

NEED AND SCOPE OF A LEGAL AID CELL FOR WOMEN

As per NCRB 2021, Madhya Pradesh had recorded an overall 30673 cases of crimes against women. Bhopal district recorded 1941 cases of crimes against women including sexual assault, sexual harassment, murder, dowry deaths, abetment to suicide, kidnapping, acid attacks, trafficking and cases of POCSO. While working with women, adolescent girls and children in urban poor households, team at Uday experienced an increasing number of cases of domestic violence reported by women. The organization therefore decided to intensify their work around addressing domestic violence.

Intensive community engagement had raised issues of verbal, physical, sexual and economic abuse and violence against women. Women faced intimate partner violence at home in public places as well. Under the influence of alcohol, men would not only physically assault their wives, but also snatch away their hard earned money.

Besides this, marital rape, harassment by family, assault, suspicion, restriction of mobility, refusing to pay for household expenses and neglecting children's education, threatening and attempting to commit self-harm, openly forming extra marital relationships, showing pornographic material, throwing her out of the house, humiliating her in front of her children, character assassination, attempt to murder the woman (pouring petrol on her, hitting her head with a stone, strangling, breaking her spine, physical assault under the influence of substance abuse) were some of the forms of violence that women would report to the organization team.

While Uday Society has been responding to these issues through meetings and workshops, a direct intervention with focus on elimination of domestic violence against women was initiated under the title of "Nyay Chaupal" (Legal Aid Cell for Women) on June 28, 2017 which was inaugurated in Bhopal

School of Social Sciences with participation of 1100 people. Through the process, gradually the women leaders themselves were able to resolve the situation of violence in their own families, with counseling and improved communication skills.

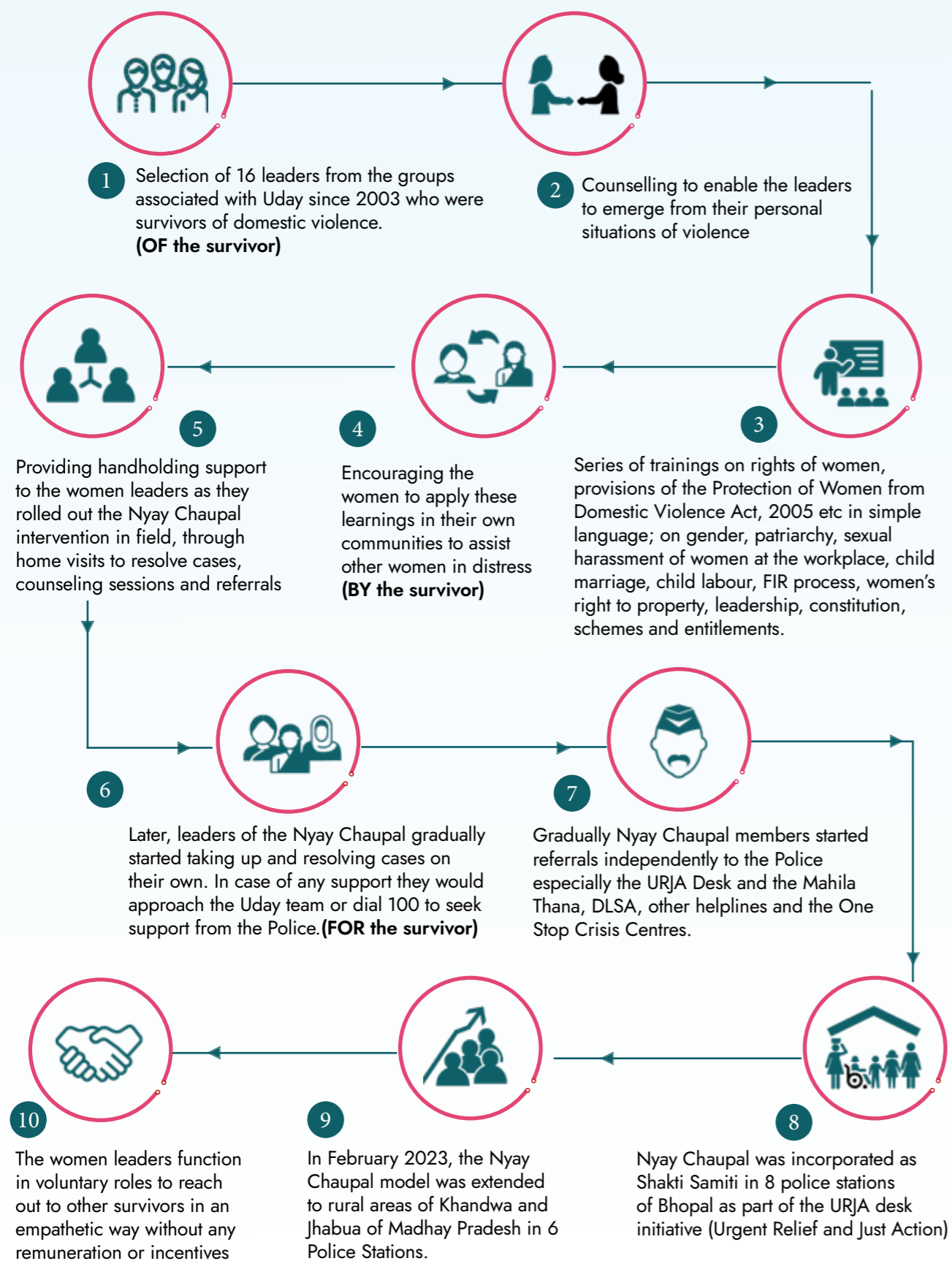
Having gained courage and confidence from the capacity building, exposure visits and hands on work, they learnt to negotiate with families of survivors and help them salvage their marriage and relationships. In cases where this was not possible, the Nyay Chaupal members helped the survivor to initiate the process of separation.

One of the key outcomes of the Nyay Chaupal process was the restoration of peace and strengthening of family bonds through continued counseling. The leaders recognize their duty to reach out to women in distress and assist them. Despite multiple risks, they do not give up on women approaching them for help and stand by them throughout the process.

Today, these leaders are respected by the police, community, helplines and other collaborative referral services. Continued work has meant acceptance from the Police as well from where they have started getting positive responses. Unlike earlier, they are no longer inhibited while approaching the Police.



ESTABLISHING THE NYAY CHAUPAL: KEY PROCESSES



EXPANSION OF THE NYAY CHAUPAL

Following a review of the pilot phase of the Nyay Chaupal the organization decided to plan the expansion of the intervention strategically. Uday conducted a baseline research in 2020 with 1000 households from 20 slums of Bhopal wherein 96.4% women reported facing violence during the project period. Seeing the enormity of this reality and with the successful run of the pilot roll out of the Nyay Chaupal, Uday expanded the intervention with 181 leaders across 20 slums of Bhopal.

Table 1: Area and Ward-wise Information

No.	Basti	No of Nyay Chaupal members	Number of cases resolved	No. of Cases Referred to Police station	No. of cases referred to Gauravi OSCC
1.	16 Acre	0	45	0	0
2.	48 Jhuggi	3	34	3	0
3.	Ambedkar Basti	13	32	6	0
4.	Ganesh Nagar 1	11	33	9	0
5.	Ganesh Nagar 2	4	32	7	0
6.	Chandbadi basti	15	42	0	0
7.	Jai Bhim Nagar	8	50	1	1
8.	Gyanodaya Basti Bagmugaliya	14	102	5	3
9.	Durga Nagar Multi	0	48	1	0
10.	Durga Nagar Habibganj	14	38	1	0
11.	Priti School Bagmugaliya	1	47	1	1
12.	Badh ka Ped, Bagmugaliya	0	54	1	0
13.	Bus Stop, Bagmugaliya	5	61	2	2
14.	Basti no.1 Bus Stop	7	24	0	0
15.	Balaji Nagar	14	50	0	0
16.	Bhawani Nagar	0	13	1	0
17.	Mansarovar	6	53	0	2
18.	Laharpur Samsan Ghat basti	14	40	2	1
19.	Sanjay Nagar 1	0	50	3	0
20.	Sanjay Nagar 2	14	53	8	1
21.	Other bastis	0	155	2	0
TOTAL		143	1056	53	11

Source: Field Survey

On the International Women’s Day in March 2022 (Uday observed on the 7th), DCP Headquarters, Vineet Kapoor was invited as Chief Guest for interacting with the Nyay Chaupal members and the survivors. After listening to the testimonies of the women, DCP Vineet Kapoor suggested to scale up the Nyay Chaupal Model to other police stations of Bhopal, besides Misrod and Baghsewaniya.

Uday agreed to join hands with police department especially in 8 police stations of Misrod, Baghsewaniya, Kolar, Aishbagh, Piplani, Awadhपुरी, Kamla Nagar and Katara Hills of Bhopal where Uday had community based interventions. DCP Vineet Kapoor proposed that if the model rolled out effectively and showed considerable impact, it could be scaled up to all 45 police stations in collaboration with other

CSOs in Bhopal. Nyay Chaupal expansion strategy is applied by training 30 women survivors under 8 police stations and they start helping other women and girls. Gradually, the 30 members from 8 police stations (240 leaders) of Nyay Chaupal will be integrated into police stations as “Shakti Samiti”. Shakti Samiti is a wing of the URJA Desk (Urgent Relief and Just Action), a women’s helpdesk established in every police station to address the issue of domestic violence.

URJA Desk is a special Desk set up for immediate hearing, assistance and action on violence against women handled by only women police personnel with separate infrastructure set up.

Currently, the Desk is established in 1000 Police stations of Madhya Pradesh.

THE PURPOSE OF THE LEGAL AID CELL FOR WOMEN



FOCUS GROUPS:

Children, adolescents, youth and women



Inauguration of the Nyay Chaupal

FUNCTIONS OF THE LEGAL AID CELL FOR WOMEN:

1. To provide legal services and support to women and adolescents
2. Case based counseling
3. Filling up the case forms
4. To make the community aware about the prevention of domestic violence and follow it up with the support of law.
5. Maintaining the honor, self-confidence and confidentiality of the victim
6. Providing prompt legal advice and assistance to the victim
7. To provide legal information to women and adolescents in order to ensure their safety.
8. To promote the concept of equality between men and women through awareness programs, as well as to work towards a sense of equality within the family.
9. Making efforts to be self-reliant through livelihood programs

OUTCOMES

1. 181 women core leaders are voluntarily working together for the prevention of domestic violence and women’s issues.
2. All 181 women have become members of the Shakti Samiti at the Police Station level (URJA help desk) who are registered at police station for community policing.
3. 1056 cases related to domestic violence have been resolved through counseling and assistance from 2020 to 2023 by the Nyay Chaupal members.
4. Counseling on cases of domestic violence emanating from the slum area are being held through the core leaders
5. The leaders visit government departments to discuss various issues, submit applications and follow up.
6. As a result of the programs, women have gained confidence to speak out openly against domestic violence

ABOUT THE STUDY

CHALLENGES DURING THE WORK:

1. Violence against women is on the rise and in different forms.
2. Negative comments on the women leaders as they are engaged in community policing. At times this prevents them from carrying out their responsibilities
3. Sometimes, the services of these leaders are not accepted some are from the SC/ST section
4. Lack of support from the family and husband
5. The cooperation of the police department is not fully received.
6. Normalization of Domestic Violence, not accepted as a criminal act.
7. Patriarchal attitude and male domination thereby women's leadership is not promoted.



Not only working for the cause of domestic violence but also reached out to the community during COVID

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To study the impact of the Nyay Chaupal as a model to bring about change in the lives of survivors of domestic violence.
2. To suggest strategies and methods for further growth of this forum in view of expansion of this work in new areas.
3. To analyse the relevance of Nyay Chaupal from primary and secondary stakeholders
4. To recommend way forward towards the diverse progress and development of this model.

STUDY TOOLS:

1. *Suljhaya Case Prapatra* (Resolved Case Form)
2. Case Recall Form
3. Semi Structured Interviews
4. Focused Group Discussion

METHOD

1. Mix of Quantitative & Qualitative methods

METHODOLOGY

1. Secondary Data Review
2. Field Visits
3. Team meeting
4. Group Analysis

RESPONDENTS

1. 1056 Women Survivors of Violence
2. 4 women survivors of domestic violence from 4 bastis
3. Sanjeev Chouksey, TI, Bagsewaniya Police Station
4. Rasbihari Sharma, TI, Misrod Police Station
5. Vineet Kapoor, DCP (Headquarters)
6. Shivani Saini, One Stop Crisis Centre, Bhopal
7. Sister Dr.Lizy Thomas, Director, Uday Social Development Society
8. Nyay Chaupal members, Piplani, Bhopal

STUDY TEAM: UDAY

1. Adv. Anita Rajpali, Legal Advisor
2. Sonu Solanki
3. Dr. Sister Lizy Thomas
4. Sister Rosline
5. Anjali Xess
6. Manish Raju
7. Jagdish Lodhi
8. Seetu Jadon
9. Urmila Lodhi
10. Deepa Jain
11. Renu Xalxo
12. Rashmi Gaur
13. Sapna Jain

STUDY TEAM: EKA

1. Seema Kurup
2. Sachin Shrivastava
3. Sajana Jayaraj
4. Neelu Dahiya
5. Sarthak Tomar
6. Nighat Khan

PROCESS

1. Team meetings to understand the need and scope of the Study
2. Defining methodology, tools and methods.
3. Defining the Case Recall Form
4. Data Collection
5. Field visits for interviews with Survivors and stakeholders
6. Data Collation
7. Analysis
8. Report writing

FGD in progress with Nyay Chaupal members, Piplani



URJA Desk-incharge, Piplani Police Station, Kanchan interacting with women complainants arriving at the URJA Desk.

5

FINDINGS

STUDY TEAM FROM UDAY & EKA

Twelve team members from Uday (3 men and 10 women) worked to fill in the responses from 1056 women survivors of violence from 20 urban poor communities. All team members are working on the issue of child protection, women’s empowerment, domestic violence, access to justice and right to education. Each team member made an average of 100 calls to women from the Baseline survey to understand the current status of their cases. Each call was of 20 minutes duration. Team members used the Suljhaya case form with additional questions to track the progress in cases. Of 1056 women the team spoke with, one woman had passed away as informed by the Nyay Chaupal members.

Eka - The Communicators’ Collective is a registered non-profit trust, with offices in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh and operations in Central Indian states. The Community Development Initiative of Eka works in 4 Zones of Bhopal Municipal Corporation on issues of Access to Justice, Women’s Empowerment, Constitutional Rights, Youth Engagement, Child Rights, Gender and Community based Legal Aid Mechanism.

The Development Communication Initiative works through Research & Documentation, Capacity Building, Design & Development of Communication Resources, Performing Media and Samvidhan Live to provide development communication support to Civil Society Groups working for social change.

Eka has in the past carried out an Endline Evaluation Study for Uday for its 10 year-long project with Women and Children in Khandwa and Jhabua.

A two-member team from Eka along with Anita, Legal Advisor from Uday Society, Sr. Lizy and Sr. Roseline (For Police Stations) carried out the semi structured interviews. A FGD was conducted with the Nyay Chaupal members of Piplani. Case studies were developed accordingly. The data was analyzed over a period of one month and the report written with inputs from the Access to Justice team from Eka including content writer, paralegals and lawyer.

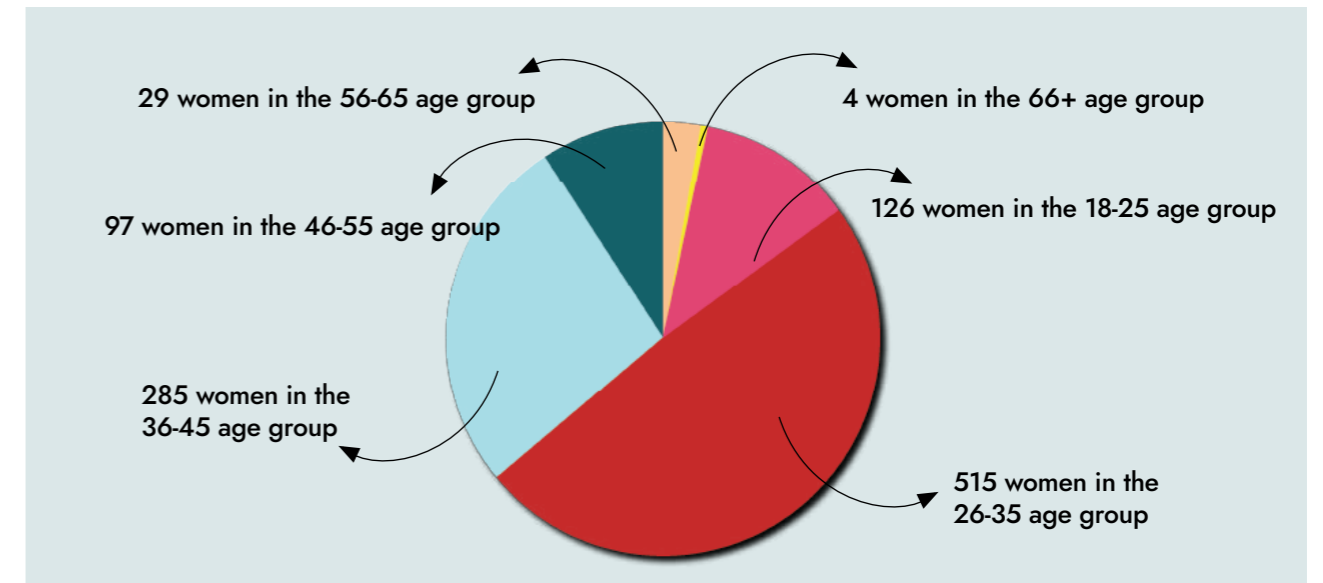
RESPONDENTS PROFILE

Age of the Respondents:

Cases of domestic violence arriving at the Nyay Chaupal are of women in the range of 18-80 years. Maximum women (926) are from the reproductive age group. Women in the age group of 46-65 are 126 in number. Four women are in the 66 to 80 years age bracket. Cases of these older 4 women are related to property disputes.

It can be seen that most women suffer intimate partner violence during pregnancy and /or when they are with young children. Many older women and their teenage children too were victims of domestic violence. Though many have been resilient during this period, it has been at a great personal cost, especially on their mental health. Very often the women have narrowly escaped death due to the physical assaults by their partners or even their own suicidal tendencies in face of extreme violence.

Age of the Respondents



No.	Age Group	Number of Women
1.	18-25	126
2.	26-35	515
3.	36-45	285
4.	46-55	97
5.	56-65	29
6.	66+	4

As the women age, they are now dealing with multiple chronic illnesses that was caused due to the extended period of violence and neglect of health and well-being. Older women involved in property cases are living in compromised conditions with their children.

Most women survivors have undergone child marriage at ages as young as 14 years and become mothers before they reach 18. By the time they are 30, the women have already spent half of their lives negotiating violence. If a woman makes a choice to enter into a new relationship, she has to face her own feeling of guilt first besides being branded as a wayward woman. The choice of continued asylum in their parents house is not available for most women. Social norms dictate that they return

to the site of violence – their marital homes to abusive partners. Most women as young as 25 year olds bear the marks of the violence on their bodies. The same is also reflected in their low confidence and self esteem since they are made to feel worthless, non-contributory, a burden and a misfit. With no property, no sizable income, responsibility of nurturing children and ensuring food security – the dehumanization renders her vulnerable.

Normalization of the violence in her life is imposed on her. All the women survivors have questions, but are unable to raise them. Their key focus is on surviving each day from the continued physical, mental and sexual assaults. Ensuring personal safety and that of their children is first on their minds.

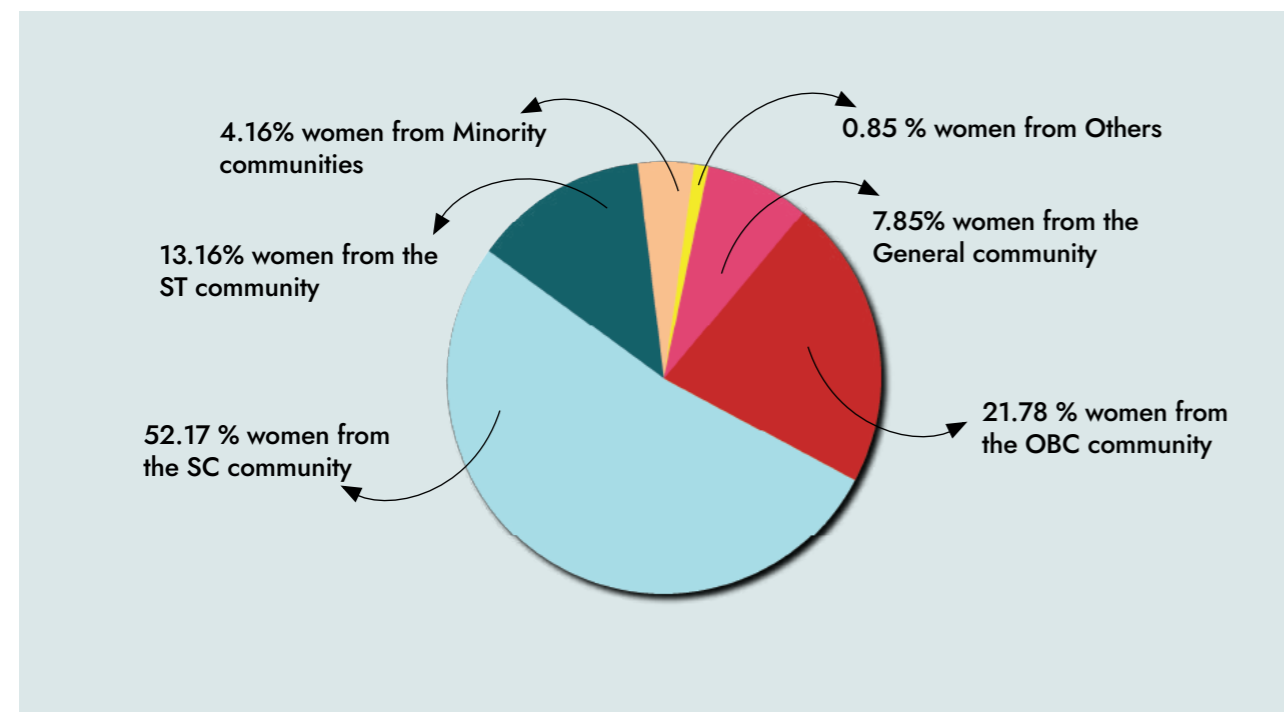
Social Group of the Respondents:

Bastis where most of the 1056 respondents live largely hold SC, ST and Minority communities. The study findings are indicative of this grouping. Accordingly, a large number (52.1%) of 551 women survivors of violence are Dalits belonging to low income groups, often daily wagers or employed as domestic workers. All women respondents are members of the Domestic Workers Union or SHGs anchored by Uday. All Nyay Chaupal members (181 women) are also members of the Domestic Workers Union.

A considerable percentage of 230 women are from the OBC (21.8%) community. 139 women belong to Tribes (13.1%). 44 women are from Minorities are at 4.2%. Women from the General category are 7.8%.

It is an encouraging finding that women belonging to Dalit, Tribes, OBC and Minority communities have chosen to register their case at the Nyay Chaupal or in Police Stations indicating their affirmative action to end violence. By doing this they are also setting precedents.

Social Group of Respondents



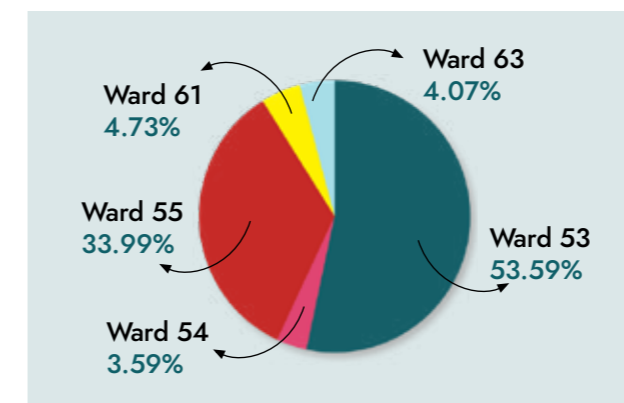
Social Group	Number	Percentage
General	83	7.85
OBC	230	21.78
SC	551	52.17
ST	139	13.16
Minority	44	4.16
Others	9	0.85

Location: Survivors and the Nyay Chaupals

The study was carried out in 20 urban poor communities of Bhopal Municipal Corporation from Zone 13 (Ward no. 53, 54 and 55), Zone 14 (Ward no. 61) and Zone 15 (Ward no 63). Uday covers a population of almost 1, 55,181 in all the bastis where it works. The community profile varies across bastis that house migrants from districts in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh. Most survivors are second generation of the migrants who identify with Bhopal city as their home. Most women live in bastis that are far away from the approach roads.

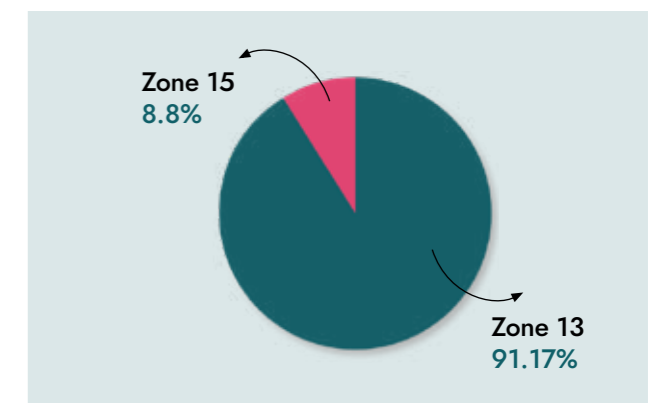
Working women spend around 30 to 60 minutes to walk up to and fro to their work place. These bastis are in the rapidly developing region of Bhopal city near Hoshangabad Road, Kolar region where the city limits are being expanded. It's the bastis that supply the city with human resources who manage their colonies and households including plumbers, electricians, painters, cooks, domestic workers, watchmen, contractual workers, waste pickers, sweepers, drivers and other such city-makers. Colonies are the key site for employment of women providing them with a minimum of 2000 rupees as wages. The same may go upto 10000 rupees for women in care taking roles of the disabled and elderly. Their colonies hold Buddh Vihars, Mosques, temples indicating a mixed community presence. Schools, educational institutions are at a distance. Private schools are present in some numbers. SHGs are active in the communities where we visited.

Ward and Zone distribution



Respondents belong to the following bastis

Basti	Number of cases resolved
16 Acre	45
48 Jhuggi	34
Ambedkar Basti	32
Ganesh Nagar 1	33
Ganesh Nagar 2	32
Chandbadi basti	42
Jai Bhim Nagar	50
Gyanodaya Basti Bagmugaliya	102
Durga Nagar Multi	48
Durga Nagar Habibganj	38
Priti School Bagmugaliya	47
Badh ka Ped, Bagmugaliya	54
Bus Stop, Bagmugaliya	61
Basti no.1 Bus Stop	24
Balaji Nagar	50
Bhawani Nagar	13
Mansarovar	53
Laharpur Samsan Ghat basti	40
Sanjay Nagar 1	50
Sanjay Nagar 2	53
Other bastis	155
Total	1056



Family Size of the Survivor

The family is a safe space for many, but it is here that the woman has to deal with criminal acts of intimate partner violence. In nuclear families, the woman has no one to turn to for protection. In joint families, at times they receive support. But most have reported violence from their in-laws as well. 51(4.8%) women are having a family size of 2. 114(10.7%) women have a family size of three. 464 women (43.9%) have a family size of four. Women who have a family size of 5 are 250 in number (23.6%). A considerable number of 177 women (16.7%) had a family size of more than 5 members. 68 women only live with their joint families.

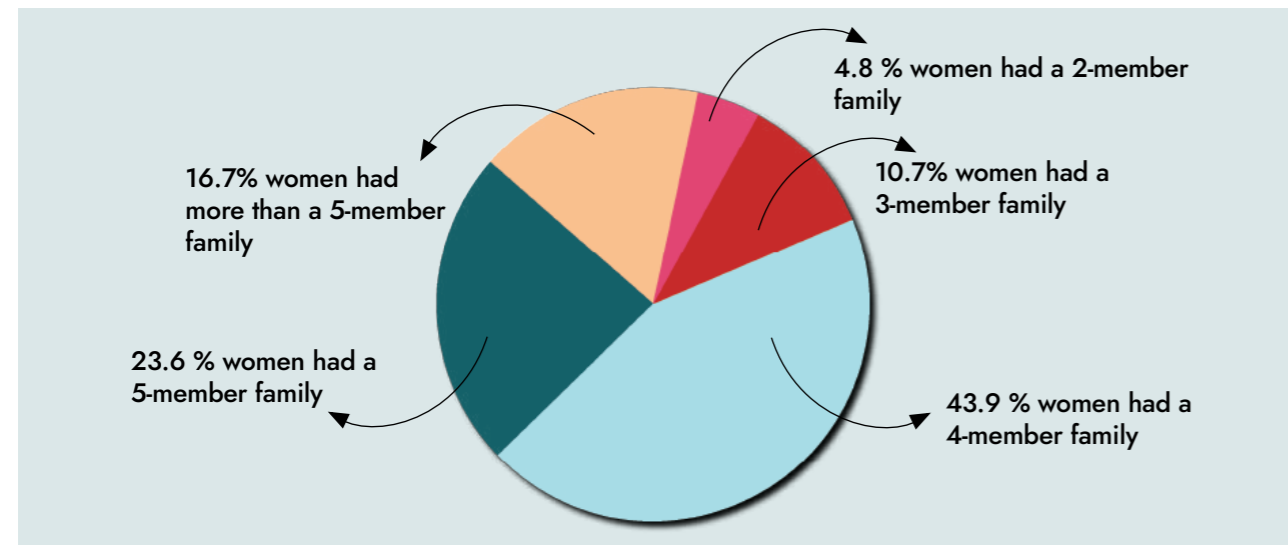
Large family size in a low income group setting may lead to high economic distress especially during the two years of COVID when unemployment was at a peak. Other studies have also shown higher incidences of domestic violence during COVID

period. Children were also prone to stress having been confined to smaller dwelling spaces, with no scope of socializing, mobility or means of entertainment coupled with the food insecurity during this period which coincided with the project period.

Maximum number of respondents 88.6% (938) shared that they are living as a nuclear family. Women feel that their exit from the joint family set up has been instrumental in reducing the domestic violence in their lives. Expanded living space, privacy for the couple has helped improve communication and also given agency to the woman for handling the household on her own.

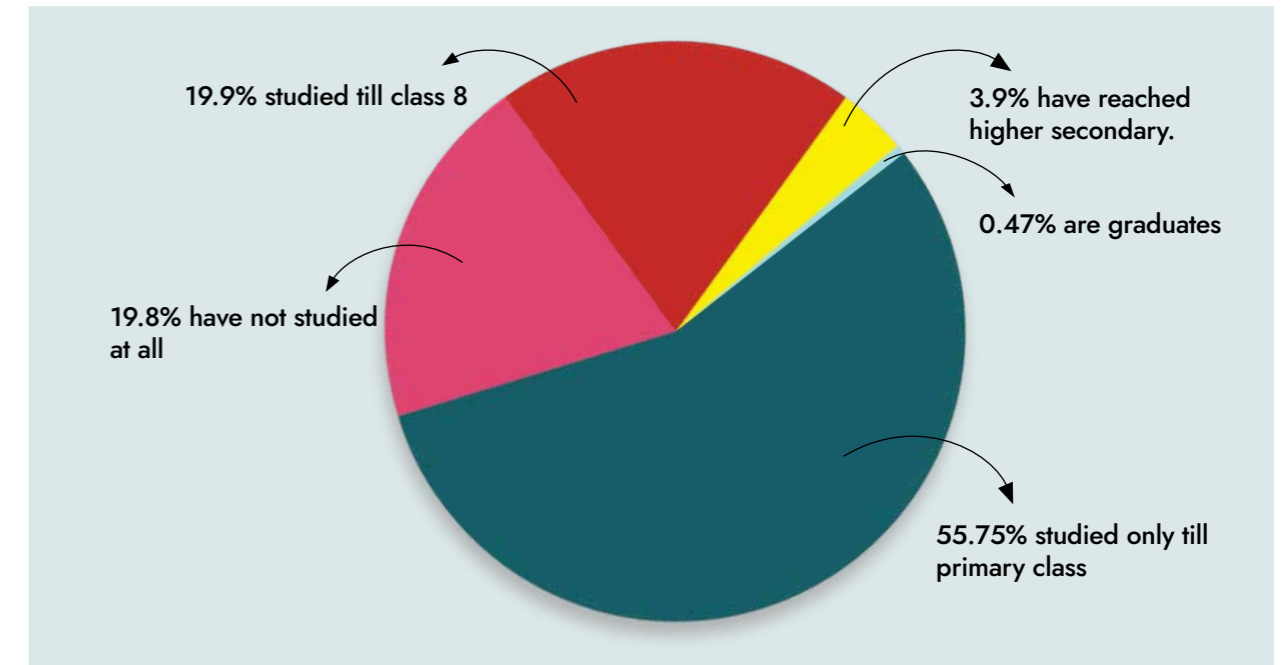
However, some women also felt that they were safer in an extended family set up. 11.3% (120 respondents) said that they continue to live with their extended family since they receive support for child care, finances are shared and they have support in case any incident of violence occurs.

Family Size of the Survivors



No.	Family size	No. of Women	Percentage
1.	2 members	51	4.8
2.	3 members	114	10.7
3.	4 members	464	43.9
4.	5 members	250	23.6
5.	More than 5	177	16.7

Education of Women



Education of Women

Women who have received atleast 6-12 years of schooling may feel more empowered to deal with domestic violence as can be seen in the study. 55.75% (589 women) have studied only till primary school. 211 women (19.9%) have studied till class 8th. 42 women (3.9%) have reached higher secondary. 0.47% (5 women) are graduates. And 19.8% (209 women) have not studied at all. Low education has pushed them into circumstances where they deal with the normalization of violence. While women may have low education, it is relevant to state here that survivors after gaining confidence and information about legal rights from the Nyay Chaupal initiative have taken a step forward instead of resigning to their fate.

Women with better education also have possibilities of better paid incomes once they enter the job market. Financial independence has been a key factor in helping women combat domestic violence. Women have learnt to challenge the socio-eco-cultural subjugation in their families and communities. They have come forth to claim a better quality of life for themselves, their children

and at times in their reconciled relationships with their partners. Women from low socio-economic groups have better chances of reporting their cases at any of the support groups as compared to women from upper castes / class who are more likely to suppress cases of violence and may rather uphold the family honour and status quo.



One Stop Crisis Centre, Bhopal

Number of Children

Maximum number of survivors (40.90%, 432 women) are mothers, with two children. 275 women (26.04%) have 3 children. 147 women (13.92%) have a single child. 104 women (9.84%) have 4 children. 31 women (2.93%) have 5 children. 15 (1.42%) women have more than 5 children while 52 (4.92%) women are without a child.

Social norms uphold motherhood as an essential 'duty' of all married women and the absence of a child and a male child is largely unacceptable. Women who have birthed only daughters are expected to try again till they have a male child even at the cost of their own reproductive health. Normalization of son preference harms not just the mother but the daughters who are at risk of developing low self-esteem since they are not considered as good enough as a male child. the family honour and status quo.

Number of women with three or more girl children are 97 in number. One of the reasons for violence against women is having multiple girl children. Girls in such an environment are prone to absorbing the negativity around them including the normalization of violence. However, most women are making attempts to educate their daughters and are proud of their presence in their families.

No	Category	0 child	1 child	2 child	3 child	4 child	5 child	5+ child	
1.	0 girl	52	77	125	32	6	0	0	292
2.	1 girl	0	70	241	117	25	4	3	460
3.	2 girls	0	0	66	96	36	7	2	207
4.	3 girls	0	0	0	30	30	11	0	71
5.	4 girls	0	0	0	0	7	6	2	15
6.	5 girls	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	4
7.	5+ girls	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	7

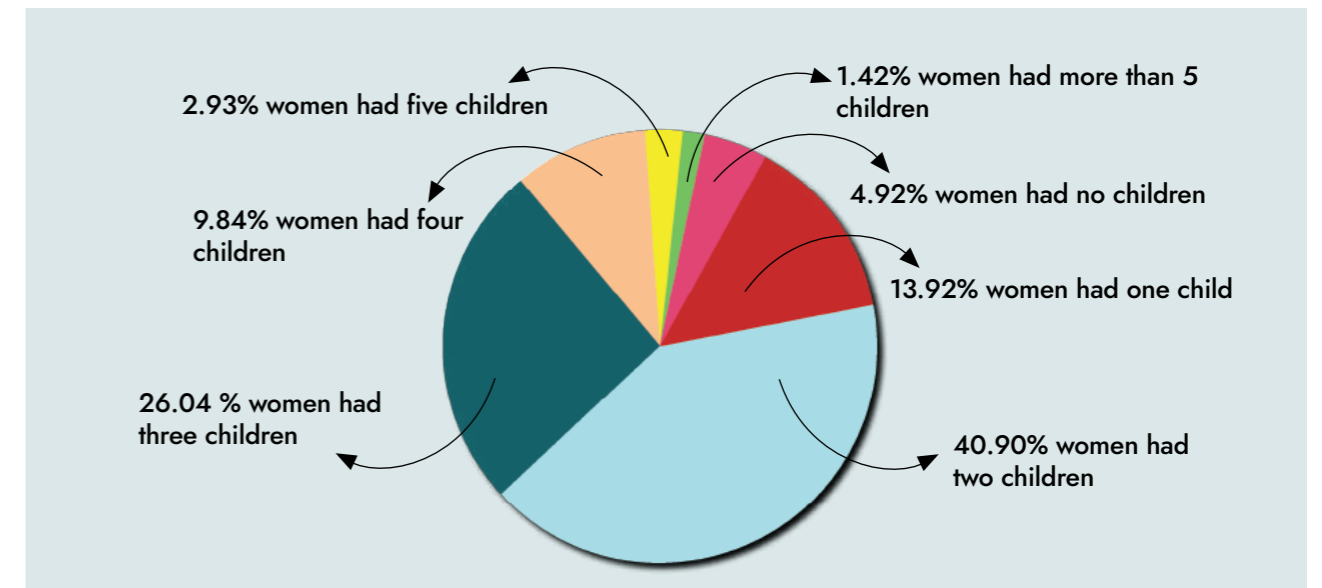
Children who are witness to domestic violence are often mentally disturbed and unable to concentrate on their education, play or other activities. They live with the trauma of having to witness continued violence and being terrified. Children often feel helpless and carry the sense of victim-hood that their mothers experience. Most children prefer to spend their time outdoors or in their friends/ neighbour's houses.

Children fear their fathers and have no opportunities to develop a loving bond with them. Most children declare that they hate their fathers. Children barely experience the love and togetherness with both parents. Boys are prone to fall into substance abuse or enter the unorganized labour market as child labourers.

Adolescent girls prefer to start working early as domestic workers in colonies. Children also imbibe the visible domestic violence and exercise the same on their peers and younger siblings to assert power and control.

Uday's work around child protection has helped to some extent to address this issue of school drop outs. Coupled with education support and collective engagement of children, Uday has been successful in ensuring continued education of children and mental health support as well.

Number of Children



No.	Women	No. of children	Percentage
1.	52	0	4.92
2.	147	1	13.92
3.	432	2	40.90
4.	275	3	26.04
5.	104	4	9.84
6.	31	5	2.93
7.	15	More than 5	1.42



Most children of survivors of domestic violence stand in support of their mothers.

Collective Support

All women surveyed felt associated with some group formation or the other. Most women were able to articulate the exact names of their groups. Some women expressed their association with Uday since they attend the meetings. All women therefore responded that they are part of at least one of these collectives - Domestic Workers Union, SHGs, Nyay Chaupal or Uday. 230 women said they are associated with Uday. 149 women said they are associated with the Nyay Chaupal. 544 women said they are part of the Domestic Workers Union. 134 women are members of SHGs anchored by Uday. Besides this, many of their children are associated with the children's groups (Bal Samuh) formed by Uday where parents are also engaged.

Period & Nature of Suffering

Team from Uday and the Nyay Chaupal women quote that most women face serious injuries that damage some part of their body permanently or cause aches that last for a lifetime. Slaps on the ear have caused loss of hearing, continued pain, bleeding from the nose, breaking the jaw, a permanent neck ache due to the impact of strangling, a hurting arm or leg since it has been twisted often forcefully, hair loss due to hair being pulled out from the roots, back aches because of being kicked continuously, scars of various kinds all over the body, a broken forehead caused due to banging on the wall by the husband, reproductive tract infections, bruised/torn vaginas due to sexual assault, miscarriage of pregnancy due to stress and physical violence, eye damage even leading to loss of vision among several other form of attacks. Violent men would hurl anything that could find at the women including chairs, utensils, sticks, tables or even stones.

It is therefore a matter of concern that only 14% of the respondents said that they have accessed medical aid after being attacked. This indicates that women have faced multiple barriers or did not make an attempt to avail medical aid.

The Nyay Chaupal and Uday team state that most women are under extreme family and societal pressure to not reveal the violence that they have suffered since it is a matter of family honour. Taking medical aid would reveal the incident and the woman would be accused of bringing shame to her family by making her ordeal public.

After she has been assaulted, most women are not in a state of mind, have support or resources to access medical aid. Many a time, the woman besides being brutally beaten up is also thrown out of the house. Here, her first worry is about seeking shelter. Many women have bruises on their private parts, due to the sexual assault that they face from partners. This happens more often when they refuse sex to their husbands. Women barely report these incidents or seek medical aid. There are cases where pregnant women have been hit on their abdomen with an intent to harm. These may be some of the rare cases where the woman seeks medical aid, only to ensure that the baby is well

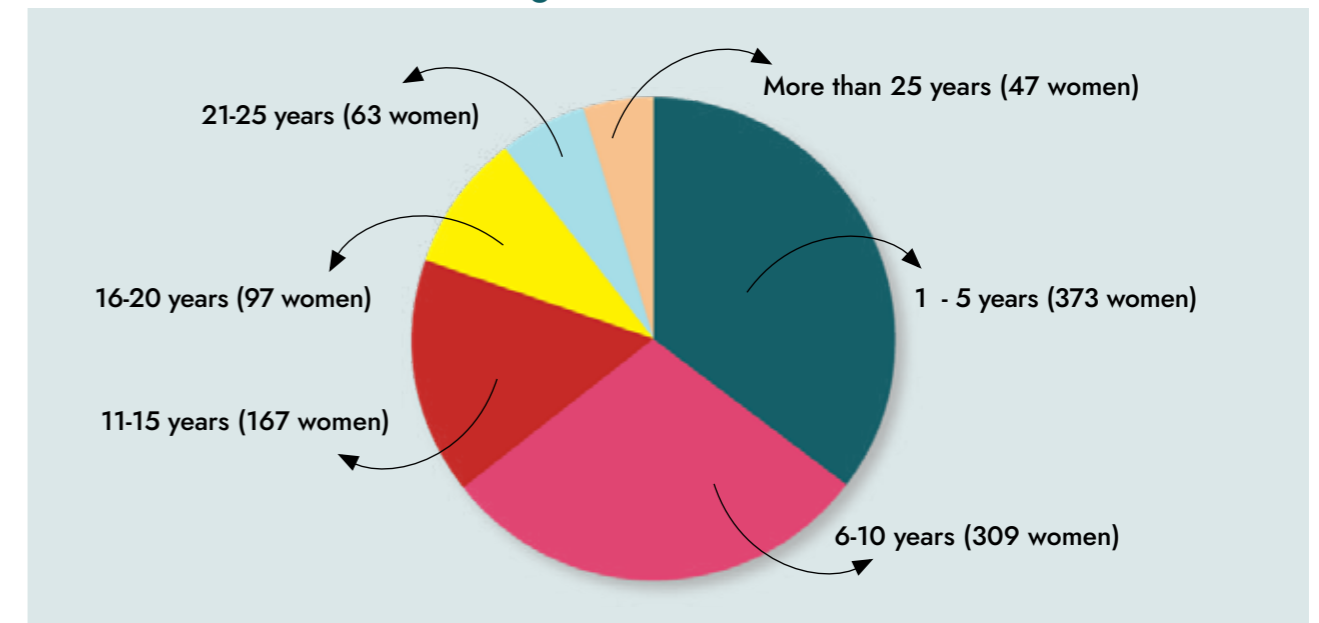
373 women were able to report the domestic violence faced in less than 5 years of their marriage. These were resolved majorly by counselling the partner and family members. In some cases, police intervention was required. Most women (476) have suffered domestic violence between 6-15 years. This data reflects that most women have faced violence as young persons and in their most formative years. Most women are also in the reproductive age group while they are suffering violence.

Children grow up witnessing and absorbing violence as part of their lived realities impacting their psyche. For women who have suffered patriarchal violence for 20+ years, it's an act of courage to go against social norms and find confidence to take affirmative action. Despite the long years of suffering, they found strength in their collective to report and restore normalcy in their lives. This wouldn't have been possible without the active support of the Nyay Chaupal and other collectives.

Many younger women having witnessed the lives of other older survivors have decided to take immediate action to end the violence in their lives. This reflects the encouraging number of 373 women who have responded early in their married life (less than 5 years). It also shows that with continued capacity building support, exposure to legal aid mechanisms, laws for women and confidence building women can come forward to stop the violence in their lives.

No.	No. of years of suffering violence	Total number of women survivors
1.	1 - 5 years	373
2.	6 - 10 years	309
3.	11 - 15 years	167
4.	16 - 20 years	97
5.	21 - 25 years	63
6.	More than 25 years	47

Period and Nature of Suffering



Most women have spent their reproductive years negotiating domestic violence in their lives

Category of Violence Suffered

Most of the survivors were married off as children, at ages as low as 14 years to boys in the same age group. Poor living conditions of an urban poor community compounds the struggle of the child bride to settle into the new environment where housekeeping roles are expected from her. Restricted mobility, poor access to money and recreation, low decision-making space and lack of opportunities to learn skills all act as deterrents and often keep her confined either in the household or in low income labour.

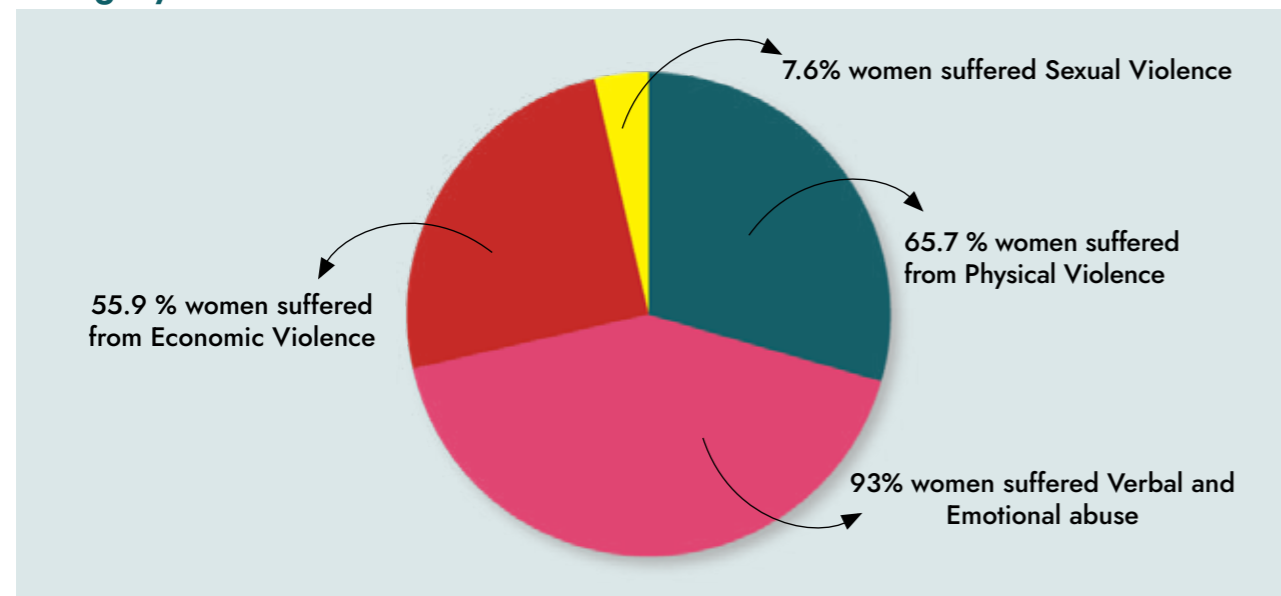
It is in this context of economic hardships and constricted existence that sparks domestic violence. With alcoholism snatching away more than 50% of the family income the woman is left to deal with a hand to mouth existence with her children.

Many women stated that the first bout of violence began when they raise questions or ask for money to run the household.

Maximum women (93%) 985 women reported that they suffered verbal and emotional abuse. Beginning with verbal abuse (cursing her parents, accusing her of extramarital relationships, neglecting children and in-laws, nagging for money, for coming home drunk, of not looking good, sexually unsatisfactory), the violence extends to physical and sexual assault often leaving the woman with grievous injuries. 65.7% (696 women) said that they suffered physical violence while 80 women (7.6%) openly stated that they suffer sexual violence. Most women have been assaulted by their partners in public as well.

Women have said that but for their supportive neighbours or in-laws, they would have been beaten to death by their husbands. A large section (55.9%) 592 women said that they suffer from economic violence. This includes not giving money for household expenses, not paying for children's education or even snatching away the money earned by the woman. The women feel cheated of their hard earned money that they received from low income jobs.

Category of Violence Suffered



Women reported suffering more than one form of violence. While the number of sexual violence seems to be very low, it may reflect the fact that women are not comfortable sharing details about sexual violence. This needs a separate study by Uday to arrive at some new findings that can lead further work on sexual violence

No.	Category of Cases	No. of Women	Percentage
1.	Physical Violence	696	65.7%
2.	Verbal and Emotional Abuse	985	93%
3.	Economic Violence	592	55.9%
4.	Sexual Violence	80	7.6%

Women also suffered violence including being pressurized by children for property, alcoholism, superstition, dowry related, education of girls, son preference, being a single woman among others.

Madhya Pradesh Domestic Workers Trade Union (MPWTU)

An association of women working in households anchored by Domestic Workers

In India, one of the earning groups who are below poverty line and are not recognized by the government and society are the domestic workers engaged in household works; such as in cleaning, cooking, washing dishes, taking care of children, elderly, garden etc. in their employers' house. According to the current registration rate on the E-Shram portal, there are 33.5 crore domestic workers in the country. India is a signatory to the International Labour Organization Convention C-189 (Domestic Workers Convention, 2011).

In Madhya Pradesh, there have been several governments in power during which these domestic workers' rights were advocated with the government, but no plan was made for the upliftment and empowerment of these women by any government. In 2009, domestic worker cards were created for them by the then government, but it remained only for name's sake and these women could not benefit from any plans or schemes. The contribution of these women to the progress of the city is so important that if they do not go to work even for a day, the daily routine of their employers gets disrupted.

Despite the high number of domestic workers, they do not have any legal rights or specific leave entitlements. Their working hours are not fixed, they are often made to work more than the allotted time, they receive very low wages and they do not receive any kind of medical support. Women share that during their work, even if a woman needs to change her menstrual pad or use the toilet, she is not allowed to do so by the employers. Neither does she have any access to kitchen utensils for

eating and drinking. Employers often think that working women should come to our homes, do all the household work, and then leave. Employers also deduct wages if the woman takes leave without prior notice. Taking into account the problems and needs of these women, the M.P. Domestic Workers Trade Union (MPWTU) was formed in 2009 to work with these women. This union operates from Mumbai over 17 states in which the domestic workers associated with Uday are also registered, Indore being the head office. Additionally, the union covers more than 200 areas of Indore, Bhopal and Khandwa districts in Madhya Pradesh.

This syndicate comprises more than 6000 domestic workers associated and currently, among them 3838 domestic workers take their annual membership regularly; 1135 are members of Bhopal. There are 148 groups formed with these members who are given capacity building training on a monthly basis on gender, education, housekeeping and cooking, union, health and employment based issues. The members of the union receive support from Uday for accessing government entitlements, counselling services, providing legal aid when faced with allegations of theft, education support for their children etc. There are many cases where the union members come to the rescue of women domestic workers were they are held in custody.

Domestic violence is a lived reality of these women, in addition to the hardships that they face at their workplace. Here the members of Nyay Choupal with their empathetic approach come forward to support the women either by counselling or referring to police if required.

Violence Faced by Women in the Initial Stage

No.	Category of Cases	No. of Women	Percentage
1.	Verbal & Emotional Abuse	921 women	87%
2.	Physical Assault	530 women	50.1%
3.	Physical assault under the influence of alcohol	634 women	59.9%
4.	Suspicion of extramarital affair	274 women	25.9%
5.	Sexual assault	65 women	6.1%
6.	Forced sex	34 women	3.2%
7.	Snatching money	87 women	8.2%
8.	Not sending children to school	24 women	2.3%
9.	Not allowing to go to work	54 women	5.1%
10.	Passing snide remarks	351 women	33.2%
11.	Pressure from relatives	66 women	6.2%
12.	Birthing a girl child	21 women	2%
13.	Second marriage by partner	10 women	0.9%
14.	Extramarital affair	12 women	1.1%

Others including dowry related pressures, discrimination, girls education, mental torture by son, being a single woman, pressure for male heir, for speaking up and many other reasons. Please note this is a multiple response question where the woman survivor may have suffered multiple kinds of violence.

Registration of Cases

883 women (83.6%) registered their cases in the Nyay Chaupal highlighting the efficacy of the Community based legal aid mechanism handled by the Survivors themselves. It also indicates that women were aware of the Nyay Chaupal or were informed and assisted to access them by others. These 883 women have trusted the process and ability of the Nyay Chaupal members to help them access justice. 112 (10.6%) cases have been referred by the Nyay Chaupal members to Uday team for their assistance. Nine cases were referred to the One Stop Crisis Centre for medico-legal counselling and support.

52 cases (4.9%) were referred to the Police. As shared by Shivani Saini from Bhopal One Stop Crisis Centre, the number of referrals from CSOs has come down since helplines, URJA Desk and other community based legal aid cells are receiving, responding to and resolving cases. Most referrals are done by the Nyay Chaupal members themselves looking at the severity of cases or expertise to resolve the same. It can be seen that the Nyay Chaupal has been effectively retaining and handling cases of domestic violence at their own end, with much success.

No.	Case Registration at	No. of Women	Percentage
1.	Nyay Chaupal	883	83.6
2.	Uday (referred by Nyay Chaupal)	112	10.6
3.	One Stop Crisis Centre	9	0.8
4.	Police Station	52	4.9

Role of Protection Officer

Protection officer in most cases provided counselling support and information about legal aid, helplines and the One Stop Crisis Centre. Most of the times, the Protection officer would be from the WCD. Many women reported that they received information about their rights, categories of violence. Some advised to stay peacefully in the family without fights. The URJA Desk In charge

would often counsel the husband to mend his ways. Legal Advisor from Uday gave advice and listened to their queries. Shatki Samiti group also counselled the women and their families. A large number of women said that the URJA Desk in charge listened to their case and advised them. In some cases the One Stop Crisis Centre of Bhopal too had provided counselling support.

Current Status of the Cases

No.	Current status of case	No. of Cases	Percentage
1.	Talks in the family or group are in process (SHG/Nyay Chaupal)	192	18.1
2.	Counseling is in process (One Stop Crisis Centre, Police, Uday team)	190	17.9
3.	Resolved	674	63.8

In the current day, 674 women (63%) stated that after the Nyay Chaupal intervention especially counselling of their partners and police complaint followed by abstinence from alcohol has helped in reducing domestic violence in the family. Additionally men have started focusing on household responsibilities including ensuring household ration and education fees for children.

This has helped the survivor heal from her past traumatic experiences of violence and revive her relationship with her husband. Some women shared that the communication in their relationship has improved after several rounds of intervention and counselling by the Nyay Chaupal members. The overall environment in the extended family has changed leading to a peaceful life for the women.

Most women said that unlike earlier their husbands no longer restrict their mobility or are suspicious about their character, are earning regular incomes (attending work regularly), often help with the household chores when the woman is ill, do not verbally, physically, sexually or emotionally abuse them in private or in public.

Women also said that their husbands have left the "bad company" of friends and instead are focusing on their household and children's education. Women feel that the Police intervention in the form of counselling, detention and arrest if required along with firm handling of the male anger has been a huge deterrent for men.

The Nyay Chaupal members, now recognized as Shakti Samiti are now part of the community policing process and are in regular touch with the Police. Most men are aware of this association, and about the strength of the women's group.

The Nyay Chaupal is also a respected entity in the community, standing up for women facing domestic violence.

Progress in Cases

No.	Category	No. of Cases	Percentage
1.	Home Visit to survivor's family by the Nyay Chaupal members	1038	98%
2.	Counselling	986	93.1%
3.	Referred to Police Station	632	59.7%
4.	Shared Helpline information	583	55.1%
5.	Referred to One Stop Crisis Centre	18	1.7%
6.	Referred to Helpline	26	2.5%

63.8% of (674) women said that their case has shown much progress while 18.1% (192 women) said that their case has progressed somewhat. 190 women (17.9%) feel that their case is in the process of progressing gradually. These cases are in various stages of counselling by the Nyay Chaupal, Uday, Police or One Stop Crisis Centre.

By progress they mean either the violence has ebbed out completely or has reduced drastically. As indicators they say, "he does not hit me unnecessarily any more" (stating the possibility of violence reoccurring occasionally) "he only fights when he is drunk." "He only drinks occasionally." "The fights are not as bad as they were before." "He does not hit me anymore. At times he may verbally abuse me because he is angry with something. But no beating." "Even I see to it that I do not make him angry".

"Everything is good now, but I fear that something may happen to upset him again. This fear always hangs over me."

Survivors who have decided to separate from their husbands are seeing this as an affirmative action on their part to end the violence and restore their dignity.

Nyay Chaupal members rely on counselling as the first step for support. In maximum number of cases, they ensure a home visit to the survivor's family to understand the situation and express solidarity with her. This is a confidence building action that enables the survivor to take decisions in her case. Nyay Chaupal also shared that in cases where they are unable to support immediately, they refer the cases to the Police. Large number of referrals over phone is also done to helplines.



Capacity Building at the Community Level.

Flash-Points and Sources of Courage

For many women the decision of speaking up and finding solution to their condition was influenced by a single triggering event (a flash-point) and for others it was a gradual process. Largely, it felt somewhere in between: where the women were gradually coming in contact with a support group and gaining confidence but the eventual flash-point event forced them to ultimately act. For some the flash-point came in form of a health issue, for example, urinary tract infection due to regular sexual abuse causing physical and economic hardship or, physical injuries.

An important flash-point event for many women was violence in front of their children or on the children. A woman said that being sexually abused in front of her teen daughter was the turning point, several said that their husband violently hitting children was the event that forced them to speak up. Some reported that they had reached the limits of their tolerance. Reaching their limits was a critical point either mentally or getting up and trying to leave the house or contemplating ending their lives. Another important flashpoint was economic necessity to start earning and the economic condition getting from bad to worse. In these conditions and after reaching a flash-point and limits of tolerance the essential condition that led to productive action were the presence of solidarity networks in form of Nyay Chaupal and, Didis, regular Nyay Chaupal meetings where the women learned about violence and various forms of violence. This raising of consciousness and being in midst of a network with similar issues and conditions where women were hearing and helping each other out was one of the major reasons why victims reached out to the Nyay Chaupals and Didis.

Hearing about similar stories and learning about Nyay Chaupal helping those women gave the victims confidence that their situations might also change. Nyay Chaupal trainings were also reported to be important factor that gave women confidence. Didis also ensured that the information would remain confidential this must have further strengthened the sense of a safe space the women must have been seeking. Seeing Nyay Chaupals talking confidently with cops assured the women. In such condition with a sense of solidarity, not being alone, of safe space, seeing changes in other women's lives gave the victims confidence to speak up in face of severe risks of violence and social stigma.

A section of women also responded refusing to say anything about their current status. This needs attention from the Nyay Chaupal members.



Conditions of Violence and Potential Risks of Speaking Up

This study also sheds some light on the sources of courage and willingness to speak up and act in face of intimate violence being faced. Analysis of the conditions and nature of violence the women were facing prior to approaching the Nyay Chaupals (NCs) highlights the risks they faced while deciding to act and speak up against their predicament. It also foregrounds the sources of courage that enabled them to act including a supportive friend, neighbor, in-law or relative. At times this person would be a former survivor of violence.

One of the most prominent form of violence these women faced was physical violence in form of battery causing (or intended to cause) physical pain and injury to the women by the men (in most cases the husband.) In other cases the man and/or his family had also kicked the woman out of the house. Sexual violence was also common among the surveyed women, along with verbal abuse and insult causing mental and emotional suffering to the victim. Along with this, the families in most cases were not supportive of the victim and the women hence, found herself alone. In some instances, the newly-wed women faced alcoholic and abusive husband in new and unfamiliar household. Often, the men were reported to be stealing money from the women and/or not providing necessary money to the women for her sustenance and maintaining the household.

The economic and financial hardship added to the emotional and mental suffering and violence towards the women. Women who couldn't birth children for health reasons were treated with physical and mental violence regularly. Some women also received death threats from her husband. Jealous husbands forcing the woman to quit her job, making her socially and financially vulnerable and isolated was also common. In other cases, women were mistreated and abused by sons and daughter-in-laws. In such conditions, almost all women risked social stigma and further isolation if they decided to speak up against these acts of violence by their families. They also risked continuation and intensified violence. There was much at stake for the women who eventually did decide to take the risks and speak and act against these conditions.



NYAY CHAUPAL RESPONSIVENESS

Change as Experienced by the Survivor in Self, Relationship with Partner and Family

Women strongly feel that abstinence from alcohol by their partners has helped them change. They now have regular jobs and financial security bringing peace to the households. Finances improved when the woman started working as well. The men do not restrict their mobility anymore nor accuse them of having affairs. Their daughters too are allowed to work contributing to the overall finances. School fees are never late.

In laws are now supportive, do not pester them for dowry related issues. They even take care of the children when the woman goes out to work. Older women said that their husbands and sons are now supportive.

"Tensions seem to have disappeared from our family. We are happy now" say many women. Some women are overwhelmed with gratitude, "He even takes me out for outings and helps me in my household chores". Unlike earlier women no longer have to seek asylum in their parents' house which they say is a huge relief since they feel embarrassed to be "bothering" their parents often.

Some women have walked out of their marriage and are living separately with their children after a divorce. Those who left their marital homes state that they are now able to live in peace with their children or on their own. "My mother in law passed away. Finally now I am able to live in peace." There are others who receive a lot of support from their in-laws presence. Women reported that the environment of peace changes completely if and when their husbands come back drunk occasionally.

Women shared that counselling of partners and family members have been instrumental in bringing down the level of violence in their families. Some women reported that they still face occasional bouts of verbal abuse from their partners. A section of women reported that their husband still drink but do not fight or create nuisance. Children have grown up and now support their mothers in running their household. Older women are unhappy with the fact that they are now in the care of their sons and daughter in laws who at times abuse them.

How was this change possible?

Women unanimously stated that the presence and intervention of the Nyay Chaupal members was instrumental in ending the violence and abuse in their lives. The first step was taken by the women themselves when they reported the violence to the Nyay Chaupal who in turn whole heartedly received them into their fold, counselled them, their families, registered complaints and stood by them. The women have since then started attending the monthly Nyay Chaupal meetings regularly. The mere act of reaching out took a long time for the survivor woman who was sceptical about the process ahead.

Women survivors who had earlier met with failed attempts at support from the police now witnessed the Nyay Chaupal members easily interacting with the police and other duty bearers. This instilled a lot of confidence in them to move ahead with their cases. They also gained new information about their rights and entitlements, especially about the Domestic Violence Act in the Nyay Chaupal meetings. The key process of the Nyay Chaupal was to listen to the woman, provide her emotional support, share information about her rights, counsel her partner and family members as well. If required provide case registration support in the police station and regularly follow up on the case.

Counselling Support

Women have received counselling support from the Uday team, Nyay Chaupal members, One Stop Crisis Centre, URJA Desk personnel, One Stop Crisis Centre and DLSA. Women appreciated the counselling they received from the One Stop Crisis Centre, Bhopal and Uday since they listened to the survivors and encouraged them to take voluntary and informed decisions on their own. Most URJA Desk personnel have attempted to resolve cases by making the couple and family members sit together and talk.

CURRENT STATUS

Financial Independence

Currently, 79.64% of (841 women) were found to be working. 20.35% (215 women) are not working. Financial independence has been highly contributory in helping women emerge from the situation of violence. Engaging in paid work also improves the mobility, gives her access to new information, learn skills, develop friendships, connect with the world outside and develop communication skills to enter into decision-making roles. In the Domestic Workers Union, the women are encouraged to learn more about their rights and engage in leadership roles.

No.	Earnings per month	No. of women	% age of women
1.	More than 10000	1	0.09
2.	Upto 2000 rupees	74	7
3.	Between 2000-5000 rupees	738	69.88
4.	Between 5000-10000 rupees	28	2.65
5.	Not doing paid work	215	20.35

Women survivors however fall in the low income category with 69.88% (738 working women) earning 2000 to 5000 rupees in a month, way below the minimum wages. 20.35% (215 women) are not into paid work but do contribute to the overall household economy in their homemaking roles. 7% (74 women) are earning less than 2000 rupees. Only 2.65% of working women (28) are earning incomes in the range of 5000-10000 rupees. Most women are employed as part time domestic workers working for 3-5 hours a day. Women in full time work (eg. Care taking of elderly persons in 8 hour shifts) are able to earn more (around 8000/- a month). However their numbers are low. Most women receive support from their employers for their cases. Uday has carried out a series of skills training for the women to help them enhance their income.

Training program	Duration	Number of Participants
Domestic Violence	3 months	40
Child Marriage	3 months	35
Child Labour	3 months	42
Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace	3 months	15
Leadership skills	3 months	154
Self Defence	3 months	45
Gender	3 months	35
Patriarchy	3 months	33
Mental Health & Psycho-social support	3 months	44
Stereotypes	3 months	31
Men and Masculinities	3 months	31
Legal Trainings (in groups of 15)	Once a month	181

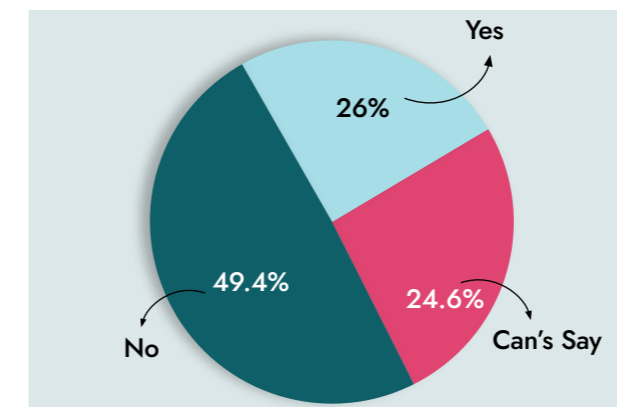
Only one woman is earning income above 10000/- If women have the opportunity to work in regular jobs that require them to work more than 8 hours shifts, they can earn more.

In comparison to working women, men are earning somewhat better. 66.5% (704 working men partners) are earning incomes between 5 to 10000 rupees. 15.1% (160 men) are earning 10 to 20000 rupees. 9.1% (96 men) are earning incomes between 2000 to 5000 rupees. 8.4% (89 men) were reported to be unemployed and earning no income at all. If family size is large, the unemployment of skilled men leads to financial distress in the family, since the woman even if earning is burdened with low paid and unpaid work.

Follow up on Support Required Currently

The study team discussed with the respondents if they required any further support from the Nyay Chaupal. 49.4% women stated that they do not need any further support from the Nyay Chaupal since their case is resolved. 26% (275 women) said that they need continued support from the Nyay Chaupal and would want to stay connected with them. 24.6% (260 women) said that they were not sure if they would need help. This is also indicative of the fact that their cases may not have been resolved and would need further support. Nyay Chaupal is actively following up with women who need extended support. Women expect Uday team to be in touch with them not just for their cases but for advice on matters concerning the well being of their children and themselves. They also seek training and learning, education support besides staying friends with some members in the team with whom they have developed a strong bond over the years.

Follow up on Support Required Currently



Alcoholism

Since women themselves had stated alcohol as the key reason for domestic violence, the study showed that the violence came down drastically when men gave up alcoholism after counselling by the Nyay Chaupal members and with support from the family. 515 women(48.7%) said that alcoholism has reduced and so has the incidents of violence. 45.6% (482 women) reported that the incidences of verbal abuse (the biggest irritant for most women) has come down. 435 women(41%) said that the husband no longer physically assaults them. 201 women (19%) are relieved that their husbands don't drink anymore. A section of 180 women (17%) stated that the physical assault has reduced. This needs further probing by the organization and Nyay Chaupal team members. Setting boundaries, establishing non-negotiables in intimate partner relationships are gradually being applied by women survivors. Social norms hamper them throughout, pushing them to their earlier status.

Current status	No. of women	Percentage
Husband is an alcoholic	140	13.2%
Husband does not drink	201	19%
Husband is verbally abusive	54	5.1%
Husband does not verbally abuse	292	27.6%
Husband assaults the woman physically	13	1.2%
Husband does not physically assault the woman	435	41.1%
Alcoholism is very less now	515	48.7%
Verbal abuse has reduced	482	45.6%
Physical assault has reduced	180	17%
Others	21	2%

21 other women shared about the giving up of other addictions like gutkha, reducing gambling habits, declining mental health of their partners, death of partners, partner is no longer suspicious of her, husband does not live with her, woman has passed away, does not get irritated easily now, in-laws do not fight with her, no longer threatens to throw her out of the house among others.

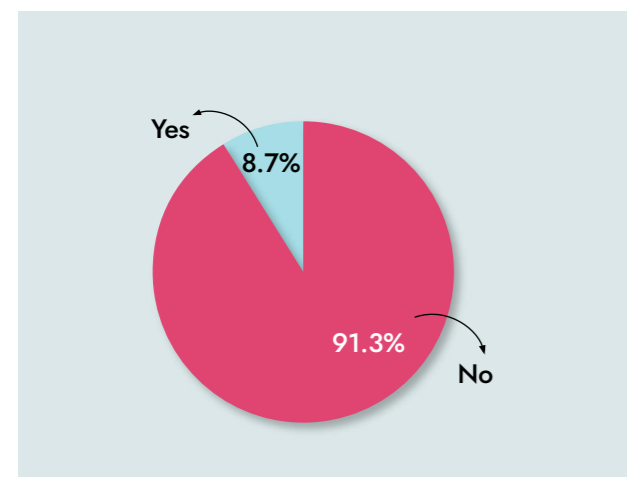
SUPPORT – NYAY CHAUPAL, UDAY, POLICE AND REFERRALS

Educational Support

8.7% (92 children) from the survivor’s families have received educational support in the form of school fees and bags. Having received this support, the children are able to concentrate on their education better. Also, there is lesser financial distress for the survivor woman. It’s a relief for the survivor woman whose key worry is about the education of her children. The support has helped the children focus on their studies and attend school regularly. The partner and family members are also aware of this support by the organization. This helps build acceptance of the overall team of Nyay Chaupal and Uday while dealing with cases. Children themselves appreciate and acknowledge the education and case support for their family.

Children are aware of the work done by the women’s group. As members of the Bal Samuhs in some bastis, children especially adolescent girls are learning about their rights. This is reflected in the statements made by children of survivors who want to be police women, lawyers, judges, social workers and other such people who are justice workers.

Educational Support



Connect with other survivors:

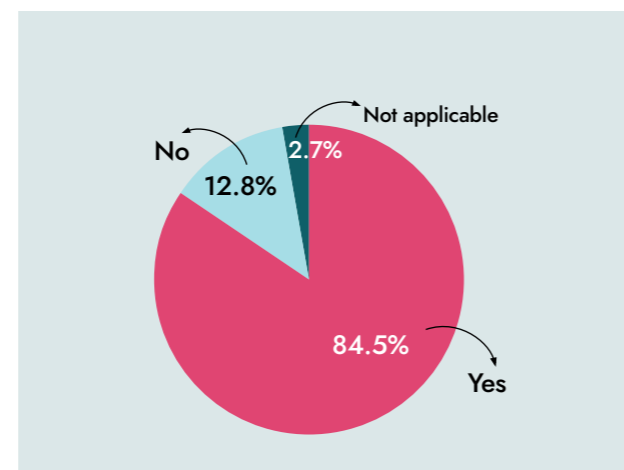
Having received the support from the Nyay Chaupal, Uday encourages women survivors to continue the chain of supporting other women in their work place, community and families. Monthly trainings and meetings with the Nyay Chaupal, with SHGs, adolescent girls have helped transfer skills, knowledge and a rights based approach of working on ending domestic violence.

As a result, the network of Nyay Chaupal members and their associates is slowly expanding. It is an organic growth taken forth by survivors themselves as they start extending support to others. It may begin with identifying a particular case, listening to her ordeal, referring her to services or even handling the case with the help of Nyay Chaupal members.

Familiarization with the Police Thana made possible through the URJA Desk has led to a surge in cases arriving at the Thana referred by the Nyay Chaupal. However, many more cases do not need referral at the Thana since the Nyay Chaupal resolves it on their own.

In the study, 84.5% (894 women) said that they supported others. 12.8% (135 women) said that they did not support any other woman yet.

Connect with Other Survivors



Location where they have provided this support

It’s an encouraging finding to see that 799 women have extended support to other women in their own community, establishing the efficacy of the Nyay Chaupal model. A large number of 402 cases from their own families and 269 cases among their relatives have been resolved by the Nyay Chaupal. A total of 95 cases outside Bhopal has also been resolved by the Nyay Chaupal groups. The model engaging survivors seems to be impactful especially in Bhopal where they have

resolved 134 cases in other bastis, beyond their own communities. Members of newly set up Nyay Chaupals are in awe of the work done so far by the older Nyay Chaupals in Jatkhedi. “We wish to work confidently and without fear like them” state the Nyay Chaupal members of Piplani. “They are very powerful, just and sure about their process. They will try their best to save a marriage, but never at the cost of a woman’s life”. At most Police Thanas, the TI and URJA Desk personnel work together with the Nyay Chaupal members creating confidence among the community and establishing their identity.

Kind of support extended	No. of women supported
Listened to the survivor and share our experiences with them	832
Share information about legal aid with the woman	317
Supported the survivor to access legal aid	59
Talked to the person/family members who are causing the violence	201
Has supported court cases	5
Know women who suffer violence but have not started actively helping them	152
Shared information about Helpline with them	444
Referred the woman to other services	113
Physical assault has reduced	180
Others	21



Training on Gender

Focused Group Discussion with Nyay Chaupal members– Piplani

The Nyay Chaupal is a group of 15 women in Piplani community in the BHEL area of Bhopal. Most of the members belong to the Schedule Castes and have been living in this region since their marriage. These women are survivors of domestic violence and have emerged from their situations to assist other women. Clad in their uniform saris, they stand out distinctly as a group of community leaders. Their confidence, aura, communication skills and knowledge supports the image of the Nyay Chaupal. They are just, patient, caring but assertive when it comes to dealing with cases of domestic violence against women. In our interaction with this group, they shared the inception and training process, nature and process of case work and their collaboration with the system including the Police.

Key Findings from the FGD:	
1.	Their idea of Nyay Chaupa is a collective of women who will handle cases at the community level and try to resolve it rather than refer it to the police. They believe they have the solutions for most domestic violence related conflicts.
2.	The system (Police, One Stop Crisis Centre, DLSA) and CSOs are located outside the community. Timely support can be provided only by the Nyay Chaupals.
3.	They explained the various forms of violence including physical, emotional, sexual, verbal and economic, giving examples from their own case work.
4.	They say that cases that “come back” from court are resolved by them because they do good counseling of the couple and family members.
5.	The Nyay Chaupal is of the opinion that alcohol, drugs and son-preference, low socio-economic status of women, lack of education, information, confidence, extra marital affairs are key reasons for violence against women.
6.	Men have a problem if their wives go out to work. They suspect her of having an affair. Women feel humiliated if their character is questioned.
7.	Earlier they were fearful of the police, courts, government offices. But now they freely visit them, interact with them and also get their case work done.

8.	The members still talk in terms of “some bit of violence” “little beating” and have to think ahead of violence as a non-negotiable. They feel in an ongoing argument between the couple, one of them has to stay quiet. It is mostly advised that women should keep calm and not get into arguments when the man is angry. This is to primarily avoid any physical violence.
9.	They are appreciative of the police, especially the URJA Desk team who is supportive when the refer cases. They also think that the counseling process at the One Stop Crisis Centre in Bhopal is very sensitively done and is effective.
10.	As a process, the Nyay Chaupal makes home visits, talks to the woman separately, the family members and also the husband. They believe in listening to all sides before taking the case ahead. Counseling is their key action.
11.	The women have solved 10-12 cases which they call “big cases” requiring them to intervene intensively. They refer many more to the Police stations.
12.	They have got alcohol banned from their community. But men fetch their stock from other areas.
13.	Cases of men cheating on their wives are frequent. In these cases, the women advice the men over a period of time. They may also put in a threat of complaining to the police in case he does not listen.
14.	Cases of young people eloping are also on the rise. School students often attempt to elope. Their families are often unwilling to take them back. Sometimes young people in love also attempt suicide.
15.	They face resistance from their own families. Most family members fear a backlash on the women leaders if they insist upon proceeding with a case. The leaders also feel that they should keep themselves safe when dealing with cases.
16.	They admire the Jatkhedi Nyay Chaupal group for their courage. They wish to reach the level of the Jatkhedi Nyay Chaupal.
17.	Men and other community members are observing them work together with the police and hence are wary about the Nyay Chaupal members. Abusive men start behaving after seeing them work as Shakti Samitis with the Police.
18.	They mention Uday’s intensive support to the leadership process. They feel Uday has invested a lot of time in training them and preparing them for their role.

19.	They take up cases from other bastis as well. They work beyond the barriers of religion stating many cases of Muslims that they have resolved. They are willing to go to other bastis and train women if required. Other Nyay Chaupal members are already engaging in trainings.
20.	They feel strongly that the Nyay Chaupal should start working with men as well.
21.	The women leaders feel that the government should ban alcohol if they want to end cases of domestic violence in the state.
22.	Despite most of them being primary school drop outs, they have maintained records of their case work. They feel the need to improve their documentation work.
23.	Each woman handles about 10 cases in a year.
24.	They are aware of all the helpline numbers and the services that they offer.
25.	The Nyay Chaupal is actively exploring livelihood opportunities for women affected by domestic violence.
26.	They believe children are the most affected by domestic violence.
27.	They are interested to learn more about love, sexualities, polygamy and other dilemmas that they face while dealing with cases. They also feel the need to brush up their information about various laws regularly.
28.	They feel that Uday should continue guiding them for some more years till they feel completely confident of running the Nyay Chaupal on their own.



Sunita

Bagmughalia, Ambedkar Basti

The by-lane where Sunita was beaten up brutally by her partner is overseen by an Ambedkar bust in the adjoining Buddh Vihar. The Constitution of India has specific guarantees for ensuring rights for women including protection from discriminatory practices, creation of special provisions for protection of women, equality before law, and enabling access to justice. But women from the poorest strata, in free India still need to fight a long battle to claim equal status and representation in their intimate partnerships, their family, community and even before law. With each generation of educated and/or informed women, strong bridges are being built to enable women to access their rights.

32 year old Sunita, born into a low-income, Maharashtrian migrant, Dalit family could emerge from her situation of domestic violence due to her resilient mother, also a Nyay Chaupal member. But the scars remain; the uncertainty of a violence-free existence troubles her even as she continues to nurture her small family in the roadside shanty that she calls home.

In a society where women are “given away” in marriage, objectified and expected to uphold regressive gender norms, Sunita struggled to cope in her in-laws house. Living together with an abusive and alcoholic family of 5 members in a 10 x 10 feet structure, Sunita felt claustrophobic but never complained. Her parents were supportive but apprehensive of her failing in her second marriage. “Be good, but do not accept violence ever”, was the advice of her mother. Living next door to her parents did not save her from abuse.

Madhukar her husband, with a chronic alcohol problem used to randomly abuse and hit her. “In our personal space, in the house, in the lane outside... wherever he could find me, he would drag me into the open and beat me mercilessly. Several times I have wanted to kill myself for all the humiliation that I have faced.” Her mother holds her steady as her voice trembles and tears flow out. “My daughter has suffered a lot. I suffered with her. Our entire family would not eat on days she was battered. But what could we do? He destroyed all the items that we had given for dowry. Her in-laws are non-responsive. He would hit her till she bled...”

As children, Sunita and her two sisters would accompany her mother, a domestic worker in the up-market Arera Colony area. After assisting their mother, they would attend classes at Old Campion School and return back home with their mother. "We shared a deep friendship amongst us. We never felt the need for any other friend outside." But for the mother, it was the only way to ensure protection of her adolescent girls. Sunita got married early at 16 but the marriage did not work out. Soon, Madhukar, her neighbor approached her parents for marriage. Says her mother, "We agreed thinking our daughter would be close by. All looked good well initially, but then the nightmare began. I kept advising them and consoling my daughter, but the day came when I too picked up a heavy stone to stop him from breaking my daughter's head. I just wanted my daughter alive."



Parents intervened to create space for the young couple in the small house. "My parents helped build a small partition, but it was of no use. We could hardly fit in there. Even his father and younger brother were abusive drunkards. They would abuse my parents often. I could not take it anymore. I implored Madhukar several times to shift to a rented space, but he wouldn't agree. He once threw out all the utensils in my kitchen out into the lane. That was the last straw. I picked up my child and left for my mother's house. But they came and took away my son. For months together they kept him away from me... That was perhaps the worst time of my life - to be away from my child. I think that was the turning point for me. I wanted my child back. I wanted my life back."

The Domestic Workers Union had been active in her basti and Sunita's mother too was a part of the Union and the Nyay Chaupal group as well. She got in touch with the Legal Advisor at Uday, Anita who often held sessions for members of the Union. Following a series of counseling sessions, Sunita gained the courage to start thinking about putting an end to the violence in her life. Attending the Union meetings, training programs and exposure visits at Uday equipped her with the information and confidence to think ahead.

The Nyay Chaupal anchored by Uday responded to Sunita's request for support. They counseled her family and Madhukar separately. Gradually with their advice, Madhukar and Sunita took up another room on rent. The fights gradually reduced. But there were several times when Sunita would end up at her mother's place. It was only after repeated counseling by Sunita's family and the Nyay Chaupal members that Madhukar reduced his drinking habits, gained a steady job and started contributing a regular income to his family. Sunita received some support from her employer as well.

Together, they started piecing their lives together. Soon, the couple was able to construct a small shanty on the outskirts of the basti. In the current day, Sunita has all the essentials required for a family set up. Her neatly arranged kitchen, wall displays, family photographs and furniture reflect the couple's focus on rebuilding the family. Meanwhile the Nyay Chaupal continues to keep an eye on the couple.

Sunita wears her troubled look. "I take each day as it comes. All is good till so far he is not drinking. But one can never be sure. That is why I feel that women should have their own income, their parent's support and confidence to stand up and speak. I have come a long way with the support of the organization and the Nyay Chaupal women. They stood by me even when I was wavering with my decisions. Their presence, their advice, their love has made me strong. I hope in future, I will be able to help some other woman to emerge from the violence. That is why I attend all the meetings that Uday organizes. These meetings give me confidence and strength."

Sunita, with all her dithering is an important marker in the journey of the Nyay Chaupal process and Uday's efforts to ensure access to justice for the most marginalized women. Anita says, "I have seen her moving from a voiceless young girl, weeping, confused and fearful of unknown consequences. Today, when I see Sunita, I see a resolute young woman, who has set certain non-negotiables for herself. She has learnt to say no to violence. She has taken charge of her own life. There's no looking back now. For me, she reflects the Nyay Chaupal's successful efforts. She is our strength, the hope that guides our legal aid initiative. More power to her!"



Jyoti Khillare

Bagmughalia Basti

When Jyoti speaks, her voice is unwavering and words definitive. Her narration is linear and clear, demarcating the flow of events as they occurred. Despite her frail physique, she exudes strength with her resolute statements and the distinct decisions she has made at this point of time in her life. This young woman before us has physically fought off multiple attacks on her being. Yet she continues to live with her daughters right next to her abusers, in the same locality with little support from her neighbours. Her story is a representation of what many other young women face in communities. The difference in Jyoti's story is that she has decided to take a stand. And act on it.

30 year old, Jyoti Khillare is a survivor of extreme mental, physical, sexual, emotional, and financial abuse. She continues to be abused by her husband 36 year old husband, Gangadhar Khillare, and in-laws. Jyoti turns into a fierce warrior woman when she fights off the physical attacks, especially to protect her two young daughters who are primary school students.

Jyoti's marriage was arranged and performed with all rituals including dowry by her farming family in Maharashtra. She arrived at her in-laws' place in Bagmughaliya basti, Bhopal. Soon after her marriage, she learnt that her husband was an alcoholic right from his teenage. Every night, he would drink and leave the house. When she confronted the family about it, she was told, "this is what happens in cities and this is the way of life here. He is a man and an earning member. He can choose to do whatever he deems fit and you have to comply." Jyoti complied. After the birth of her first daughter at her maternal home, none from her in-laws went to fetch her back for 7 months. The birth of a daughter was unwelcome. The inlaws demanded a male child who would continue their family name. The abuse hereafter worsened. Very often Jyoti would be taunted for taking care of her daughter since it distracted her from catering to the needs of the family. Gangadhar did not bother either. He had multiple extramarital affairs. When Jyoti confronted him about this, she met with more physical and mental abuse. Her parents advised her to remain calm and carry out her duties as a good daughter-in-law should. Jyoti later gave birth to another daughter and the degree of violence increased.

Despite the intervention of her parents and relatives, things got worse. Jyoti loved Gangadhar and wanted a family with him. Even when Gangadhar attempted to douse her with petrol and burn her, Jyoti refused to file a complaint at the Police station. "I was too young, too raw. I was scared of the police, of what would happen to my father's honour, worried about my daughters. All the words got stuck in my throat. My father returned home, disappointed."

Gangadhar would often force himself on Jyoti causing severe pain and infections. He refused her requests for safe sex. Jyoti ended up pregnant. Fearing that she would birth a girl child again, Gangadhar forced her into an abortion after 2 months of her pregnancy. The MTP procedure wasn't successful leaving Jyoti with severe bleeding and high fever. She lost a lot of blood and physical strength. This was followed by a 4-month period of typhoid fever, with continued ill-health. Having suffered this physical hardship, Jyoti started refusing sex with her husband. And for this, she was beaten up mercilessly till she bled. She would often be accused of having affairs with other men. Though hurt by all this, Jyoti refused to give in.

Her mother in law exhorted Gangadhar to marry again. Gangadhar often threatened Jyoti with a second marriage. Despite belonging to a well-earning family, her husband stopped paying for her household expenses. Even the children's school fees were not paid.

But at times, desperation did get better of Jyoti. Especially in situations where her daughters were concerned. Her younger daughter had diarrhoea for 15 days and after a day of treatment in a private hospital, the in-laws forced Jyoti to bring her home. They insisted that the child was not showing any progress and hospital bills were mounting. When she came home, Jyoti had nothing to cook in the house. Feeling defeated, she took 7-8 sleeping pills that she could find in the house and passed out. That was her first and only attempt to die by suicide. In retrospect, she says that she learnt from this mistake and decided to work and earn for her daughters' futures.

Around this period, Jyoti came into touch with the Uday team and the para legal volunteers. "They told me, 'suffering is a crime' and that resonated with me. I started attending the meetings. Slowly I learnt that everything I was going through is called domestic violence and it is a crime. I never knew this!" Jyoti continued learning about her rights. She also learnt about the work of the Police, One stop crisis centre, helplines and courts. She recalls her pleasant surprise at meeting some good police personnel who actually supported her case. Jyoti decided to make a last attempt at compromise. She made a request to the Uday team to talk to her family.

When Uday team intervened with a home visit, they were told by the in-laws that men have the right to abuse and curse their wives and daughter-in-laws. That is how the world is. Even the mother-in-law who was abused by her husband refused to support Jyoti. Having understood their response, Jyoti realised that she was on her own. Uday team encouraged her to start working. Beginning with a cleaning job, Jyoti gradually graduated to a cook's job in the school where she works. Earning money was an important step in building her confidence. She also received assistance for school fees from Uday as part of the scholarship programme.

Jyoti recently caught her husband red-handed with another woman. Yet again she was beaten up in public by her in-laws. Her husband has filed for a divorce. But Jyoti is unwilling to free him. "Not so easily", she says with her steely look. "Let him give me and my daughters maintenance".

The in laws meanwhile abuse her every single day, telling her that other men in the neighbourhood have two wives. Jyoti should comply since she cannot produce a male heir. They also tell her to live as a widow in their house and not go out for work."

Gangadhar stalks her often as she goes to work and abuses her on the way. He often threatens to kill her. Following the Nyay Chaupal's advice, Jyoti has submitted a statement at the police station stating that if anything were to happen to Jyoti, her in-laws shall be held accountable. With each such firm step, Jyoti says she is growing stronger and feels no fear. Currently, Gangadhar and Jyoti are undergoing mediation in court. Her husband wants to leave Jyoti and re-marry. Jyoti has demanded maintenance and childcare which her husband is unwilling to pay. Jyoti says, "I wasted 13 years of my life but never received respect and love in my marriage. In fact I receive much more respect at my work place. Let him pay up."

Her dreams are brighter. "My daughters have dreams of becoming working adults so they can 'paint the house' and earn well. I hope when they grow up they seek partners that love and respect them, understand them and are kind to them. In their little lives so far, they have seen a lot."

Today, Jyoti volunteers with Uday and supports other women in distress in her neighbourhood. Despite her own bad experiences, she believes in communication and says that compromise should be the first goal to resolve conflicts. Having learnt some computer skills during the lockdown, Jyoti has started to use various applications on her smartphone. Her favourite is the Google Maps. "I am interested in locating directions to different places. I am curious to know where all places that concern me are located. Like the court... Once you know the direction where you are headed, it's easier to start moving. I have started going out on my own now."

Jyoti concludes her conversation, "My world expanded when I met the Uday team. Other women came to the meetings from different bastis. I heard their stories, observed them closely, saw them taking actions. I learnt new skills and started placing my thoughts in the meetings. Slowly, I realized that I am capable and the sky is my limit. Truly, when my daughters stand together with me, I feel I can conquer the world!"



Bharti Verma
Piplani

The voice of a man shouting for a tumbler freezes Bharti's conversation. Her sister quickly pulls over a veil and sends out a child with the tumbler. The man continues to create a din. Everything that was normal within the house – laughing children, carefree sisters making jokes, the visitors and a Nyay Chaupal member – fall silent. Bharti is the first to break free. "So, let us continue our talk. This is an everyday thing. He is angry because I have come home after four days. No one has given any food to him since last 15 days. Let him manage. We have done enough." Turning to Anita, Legal Advisor at Uday, she says, "This time I have decided didi. I am getting a divorce."

Later Anita shares, "she often says this. And each time, she steps back at the last moment. Her case will not progress till she makes up her mind." That is Bharti for you then, living with the dilemma of staying on in her abusive marriage for the sake of her children. "Children need a father, don't they? If he gives up drinking and drugs, we can all be together. But even the children are terrorized by him. Now they are grown up and want me to separate." Nyay Chaupal members and Anita listen quietly. They know Bharti will need more time to make up her mind. This is the way Nyay Chaupal and Uday team functions. There is no pressure on the woman, no rush to take a decision. They have known Bharti for more than 2 years now. It is a long period of abuse, but it is Bharti who has to make a choice.

33 year old Bharti Verma, a vibrant personality, enjoys making reels on social media, has a sparkling laughter and looks healthy. At 18, she and her younger sister were married off to two brothers. Bharti left for Jhansi with Deepak, where she looked forward to setting up her new house with the gifts that came in her dowry. But she was in a for a rude shock when she learnt that Deepak was a drug addict and had sold off her dowry worth 2 lakhs for just 15000 rupees. Traumatized, Bharti continued in Jhansi despite facing extreme violence from Deepak who often overdosed on drugs. Deepak's extramarital affair also caused Bharti much pain. But being pregnant with her first child, Bharti decided to continue. Post delivery, Bharti developed a lump in her breast which caused her much distress. Finding no support from Deepak, Bharti asked her parents to take her back to Bhopal. It was in Bhopal that her mother nursed her back to good health.

Deepak followed Bharti to Bhopal. They had two more children, two girls aged 11 and 5. Her eldest is a son, aged 13. Bharti had seen her mother struggle with domestic violence and hence she believed it would get better with age. Deepak's addiction made life and sustenance very difficult for everybody. He earned well in multiple jobs, but would not support the household. Bharti started working but Deepak would snatch away all her earnings, leaving nothing even for buying groceries. He sold off everything that he found in the house to buy drugs. A time came when he would sell the food, furniture and even the doors and windows of the house. This was the same house that Bharti had built bit by bit by taking a group loan. She says, "My heart and courage gave way when I saw the destruction in my house. I had worked day and night to earn money and build the house. There would be no food for the children. But all he wanted was drugs."

Bharti persisted. Her mother, a domestic worker herself supported her. Everyone felt things would change with time. The time extended for 15 years to the current day. By this time, Bharti has spent almost half of her lifetime suffering physical, emotional, sexual and verbal abuse. She had chosen to stay in it. "I did not have the courage to even speak up. How could I take such a big step", she says nervously. Three years back, Bharti came into contact with the Uday team. She attended their meetings and sessions. Slowly she learnt about new topics like rights, gender, empowerment and working together as a collective. "I received a lot of support from this group. But I had no education. I had no work..." Soon, Bharti started working as a domestic help. Deepak would not let her work in peace, he would follow her, abuse her on the way and even complain to her employers. In order to avoid him, during the COVID period, Bharti started working as a care-taker for home-bound elderly patients. This was better paying job. In the current day, Bharti is forced to do double shifts of 8 hours each to earn a monthly wage of 15000 rupees. Her mother and sister takes care of her children when she is away. She says, it is the only way I can get some peace and avoid trouble. If he sees me, he starts fighting."



Bharti runs the household by herself; she pays for her children's education and loans that she often takes to run the family. "I juggle my activities each day. One miss and everything can fall down on the ground. Then, I will have to start from scratch, all over again." Bharti's sister often tries to help. There were many organizations that she went to for help. "Even the Bajrang Dal promised me help. But they never turned up. But this Uday organization is different. The day they met me, they started working on my case. They have spent a lot of time with me. I trust them like my own sisters", says Bharti.

Despite Uday and the Nyay Chaupal presence Bharti continued to suffer violence, causing much despair to the group. Once Deepak even tried to douse the entire family with kerosene and made an attempt to burn them. He spent that night in the lock up. Several such incidents followed, when Bharti would lodge a complaint at the Police Station but he would come back in a couple of days. He would be sober for a few days and then fall back into his earlier ways.

Till date, Deepak continues to snatch her money, hit her, abuse the children and remain drugged throughout the day. He stalks Bharti, suspecting her to be having an affair. He often drags her out of the autos she takes, and abuses her in public including threatening to kidnap and rape her. Of late, he has been threatening to cut himself or commit suicide. Bharti does feel intimidated and disturbed by this repeated assault on her being. The Nyay Chaupal members are constantly on her case. They often intervene, but also prod Bharti to stop accepting the violence in her life as her destiny. Bharti says, "They all tell me, a strong woman can write her own fate. She just has to see the courage within herself. And then she can take some step. I am waiting for myself to feel that strength. I think the time will come soon. Even I am waiting for myself to move forward..."

Bharti could be one of the many women who spend decades of their lives suffering violence, because of low self worth, confidence, lack of resources, information and a collective to nest them. This year, perhaps the patience and perseverance of the Nyay Chaupal women will pay off. There are chances that Bharti may take an affirmative step to resolve the situation in her life. Her daughter is firm, "Earlier, mother was silent, always scared... Now, she has started speaking up. I like this version of my mother better!" Both mother and daughter look at each other and burst into peals of laughter!



Shivani Gaurvi

Coordinator OSCC, Bhopal

Gaurvi (Sakhi) is the One Stop Crisis Centre at JP Government District Hospital at Bhopal, offering socio-medico-legal counseling and shelter support to women in distress. Coordinator, Shivani Saini who has been with the OSCC since its inception says that the centre receives around 200 cases from communities of which 5% of cases are reported by CSOs and 23% are directly referred from communities. She attributes this drop from the pre-COVID period to the improved functioning of the systems including Police, Hospitals, Helplines and DLSA. Community based Paralegal Volunteers refer cases over phone and at times even accompany them physically. However, it is the URJA Desk initiative that she says has been referring the maximum number of cases to the OSCC. The Police stations follow a protocol which makes it mandatory to refer cases to Gaurvi. Shivani strongly feels that the police should not step into extensive counseling since it is a specialized area of work and should be ideally handled by trained counselors.

Shivani acknowledges the role of community based organizations in helping women access the justice system. Capacity building, legal empowerment programs, exposure visits and case work enable women to pick up confidence to pursue their complaints. Presence of Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs) is an enabler since women feel comfortable with their peers. However, Shivani stresses that the actual onus is on the system to receive and refer cases to the OSCC. The URJA Desk therefore can play a key role in bridging this gap, aided by PLVs.

The OSCC has a special focus on counseling. Shivani says, "It is our specialized task. Therefore if PLVs refer pre-counseled cases it creates barriers for our process. At times, we receive women who have written notes of specific sections under laws like 377, 498 or 360 that they want to be applied in their cases. We prefer to begin from the start to understand, investigate and help the survivor collect evidence. Eventually, if the case goes to court, lack of evidence will create burden on the survivor. We attempt to advise the woman based on her statements, not on the counseling that she may have received earlier. This needs time and patience. At times, women find it tough to complete the counseling process. This is where the CSO or the PLV can help her stay steady."

Shivani shares that most women are marginalized, come from low income groups, do not have any financial backing, no social support and extremely low confidence for taking decisions. These factors also impact counseling. The OSCC holds several training sessions with police, medical staff, CSOs and PLVs to brief them about the process. Over the years, this collaborative approach has helped improve referrals.

Regarding PLVs from Uday, Shivani has interacted with them through trainings, over phone calls and in person when they refer cases. She says, "these PLVs live and work in the same community, so the risk is manifold for them. We try our best to keep their identity confidential during the case work. Some women may turn hostile especially during the long court process. The PLVs should be protected in all such instances where the cases may turn against them. We should create a ground for them to do their work. That is why we do not jump to rescue women on the basis of PLV statements, till the woman herself has given a statement. We have to think about their security as well."

Currently, the OSCC receives high number of cases from Shahjanaanbad, Kamla Nagar, Gandhi Nagar, Nishatpura, Jahangirabad, Sukhi Sewaniya police station areas. It is however not possible for the OSCC to reach far off areas. They depend of PLVs or thanas to refer cases from these areas. About Misrod and Bagsewaniya Thana, Shivani feels that more synergy needs to be built up here, especially with the understanding that counseling should not be done at Police thanas. She hopes that in future referral from Misrod thana especially will improve.

Shivani concludes, "Eventually women take a decision when they are pushed beyond their limits. They suffer for as long as 40 years. But when they receive even a slight support from their grown up children, family or PLVs they take a step ahead. This confidence building is what we need to focus on. Women do not trust the justice system yet. Because finally when the case arrives in court, the process is slow. The man who needs to pay her compensation runs off, she is left without money. Her troubles multiply. So, it will take more efforts for all of us to earn the survivor's trust. Meanwhile, there is the out-of-court settlement that may help her resolve her distress. If there is a women's collective who can absorb some of her stress, stand by her and build her resilience – then maybe she can fight her battles better."



Sanjeev Chouksey
TI, Bagsewaniya Police Station

Thana Bagsewaniya is a busy station especially during evening hours. Women start arriving with their families or neighbours. The front desk gives them a patient hearing before referring them to the URJA Desk. Kanchan has just rushed in for her shift in the evening. She says, “Women facing violence and abuse, need time to think and sort out their emotions. At URJA Desk, we attempt to create that space for her. In the past, we have seen several cases when women turn hostile after their complaint has progressed, even in the court. There are several factors that pull the woman back when she tries to make a decision. At our URJA Desk, we make sure to listen to her, ask her to take time and only when she is sure, we register her complaint. We have learnt this from our trainings and from organizations like Uday as well, who are actually working in field with women. Their patience and skill in counseling is remarkable.” URJA Desk at Bagsewaniya police station works in collaboration with Uday team and the Nyay Chaupal mechanism to respond to cases arriving from the basti. The Nyay Chaupal leaders try to resolve most cases in the basti itself. However, they often refer cases over phone to the Police station. These referrals are most welcomed by the Police. “We are trained to attend to women’s cases on a priority. But when a case is referred by the Shakti Samiti (Nyay Chaupal members are now integrated as Shakti Samiti members), we take it up immediately.

TI, Sanjeev Chouksey is all admiration for Uday’s work. “We have worked together for years in other bastis as well. Their work is based directly with women, so we trust any case that is referred by them. Now, since we have the URJA Desk initiative, the cases are getting solved systematically. Earlier we used to do FIR directly. Now, we have the counseling system. Though this is a time taking process, it helps the woman resolve her case in the long run.

He makes a special mention about his women staff Sushma and Kanchan who manage the URJA Desk. “They are very impactful. They are trained to handle such cases. We have 4 women staff and they arrive during evenings. They have no issues about working late hours. With such committed staff and support from Uday, we are able to run the URJA Desk effectively.

The TI approves of the Commissionerate system which making policing more effective. He says, “Earlier we had to rely on the SDM. But now, we can proceed with cases in our jurisdiction and resolve it immediately. We ask the woman directly if she wants to take any action and move accordingly.”

After having worked closely with Uday for community policing and integrating the Nyay Chaupal into the Shakti Samiti identity, the Bagsewaniya Police Thana has more hopes from the women leaders. “They have a strong presence in the community. People know they work together with the police. It creates some kind of fear and respect as well. This goes a long way in protecting women from domestic violence. Some women believe in the fear that police creates. They come here for that. But there are others who know that we will counsel them. So, they come to us for advice as well. This is the changing the way people view police.”

The TI is of the opinion that cases accompanied or referred by CSOs have a stronger element of trust. Women who are inhibited about approaching the police gain confidence when they come with CSOs. They observe us and understand if we are doing the procedure to their best interest. Once convinced, they may also refer others to the Police station. This is how CSOs can be useful for policing.

The URJA Desk works in collaboration with the Nyay Chaupal (Shakti Samiti) to handle cases. The TI however feels that 30 is a low number and the number of Shakti Samitis need to increase as per the size of the urban poor settlements. He also feels the need to focus on community policing and increased outreach of police through Shakti Samiti meetings in the community. “Shakti Samitis have helped improve the image of the Police”, he says. “Because of them the load on the Police Stations has decreased. Earlier in the 7 to 11 pm slot, more women’s cases would arrive. Now, it’s less because of the Shakti Samitis. There is a drop of almost 40% cases. This is also due to the counseling in all places.”

Adding to the challenges of handling the URJA Desk, the TI says, “we need more women staff. This is a process oriented work. Women staff is engaged in other duties. URJA Desk needs focused hands to investigate and do social policing as well. We need good localized resources as well for display in the reception area, in the URJA Desk unit. This can be adapted as per the local issues – alcoholism, daily wagers related, fights, domestic violence and others as identified in each community. CSOs can help us develop such resources.”

Beyond URJA Desk, the Police have to deal with cases that have possibilities of taking a communal angle, especially when Hindu and Muslim young people fall in love. “We then have members from both communities to counsel. It is a very sensitive issue and sometimes, in the URJA Desk we approach the community with a lot of planning. Here CSOs can work together with us.”

Today, the URJA Desk receives 40% of its cases from CSOs, including the Shakti Samitis. “This is a good number. We are hopeful of improving our collaborative presence in the communities with more Shakti Samiti groups. As usual, Uday’s presence will be instrumental in taking this further.”



Rasbihari Sharma

TI, Misrod Police Station

Misrod Police Station has a welcoming and pleasant look. The structure has a fresh coat of paint, well maintained and spaced-out seating arrangements, new constructions in the front reception area, as well as the backyard space with informative flex posters displayed on the walls. The open space is where the Shakti Samiti and Nagar Suraksha Samitis meetings are held. Unlike earlier, women leaders from the community frequent the police station not just for referring complaints but for planning and sharing meetings as well. This Police Station covers a population of approximately 2.5 lakh population has 2 SIs, 2 constables at the URJA Desk and an overall staff of 61. Women staff are encouraged to work in evening shifts since cases of domestic violence start arriving during evenings.

TI, Rasbihari Sharma, youngest officer to hold the position and recipient of several performance awards is appreciative of the collaborative work done with Uday Society. "We hold community meetings organized by Uday and their women leaders. In these meetings, we commonly discuss issues that are faced by women including domestic violence. Since this is carried out in community spaces, everyone acknowledges the connect between the police and the women leaders in the community. Men who drink and abuse their wives and other trouble makers are aware of this. It has had a great impact on the nature of violence in the community."

TI Rashbihari shared that the CSO legal aid cell for women has helped improve the reporting irrespective of whether they are escorted by the Nyay Chaupal leaders or even if they come on their own. He credits this to the continued training inputs received from his seniors especially on gender, violence against women and child protection. Over years, the police has been sensitized to integrating the counseling approach in their work. The appreciation for counseling as a method to resolve conflicts in intimate partner relationships and to "stop families from breaking up" is reflected in the URJA desk data which shows 31 cases of violence against women.

The TI stated that in most cases they wait before filing an FIR. Very often the complainants are in anger and most cases get resolved through counseling. Earlier it was the fear associated with the Police that would help stifle conflicts. But now, the police is investing in creating improved community connect through public meetings and dialogue using various performing media tools. Consequently, there is improved awareness about the helplines, URJA Desk service, legal rights and procedures about registering a complaint. At the URJA Desk as well, the presence of women police personnel makes the helpdesk more approachable for women in distress. However, the TI insists that the male staff in his police station are equally sensitive and attend to women's cases efficiently, in absence of women staff.

Acknowledging the role of the Nyay Chaupal members, the TI says that they frequently receive calls and cases from them. These women leaders are assertive and have built their identity as powerful women who intervene on behalf of women requiring support in cases of violence. He also proudly displayed several photographs of his community engagement with the Nyay Chaupal leaders.

The TI appreciates the self defence training with 107 adolescent girls organized by Uday. These girls are potential leaders who will report cases of violence. The TI says that the organization can help develop some innovative resources including posters / display charts of progressive judgements related to women. These could be illustrated charts displayed in the police station for building a positive environment related to law enforcement as also to inform the visitors.





Ramavati

Jatkhedhi

Ramnagar basti in Jatkhedhi houses women of strength. Despite the normalization of violence against women and the culture of silence, a handful of women leaders are setting new norms in their own communities that redefine how women should be treated within their families. That is how soft spoken and docile Ramvati found the courage to emerge from her situation of violence. Alumati and Lilavati didi, members of the Nyay Chaupal are pillars of support to women suffering violence. Being members of the Domestic Workers Union, sisterhood is an organic process. Women nest each other at critical junctures in their lives, especially when they are combating violence. Team from Uday guides them gently into setting up this support mechanism.

Ramvati with her low voice, slight build and dithering, seeks validation for every thought she shares. It is only as we get to know Ramvati gradually, that we learn about her inner strength and resolve. About 33 years old, mother to 4 girls Ramvati's body bears scars of the violence she has undergone. The Nyay Chaupal didis prod her to share the brutalities that she has experienced. "Don't be afraid. Speak what you have faced. Talk openly, you have done no wrong. Others have wronged you". That's how the women move from strength to strength. Ramvati recounts her struggles, yet does not want to be viewed as a victim. "That is all over. I want to think ahead for my children and myself. It is 13 years now. If he continues his good behavior, we will stay with him. Else, there are other ways to live."

Married at 16, Ramvati was one of the 7 daughters in a farmers' family. "I dropped out of school early. Everyone would taunt my mother for her line of daughters. So, I would stay back with mother and help her with household chores. We lived with our large extended family of uncles and aunts. From that environment, I came to a small slum settlement in a city where I was locked in a room and not allowed to go out even into the lane. At times, I longed to see the sun. But my husband suspected that my good looks would attract other men. He was only 4 years older to me, but behaved badly. He even hid under the cot to see if I was talking to other men. He was such a suspicious man. Have you ever seen a woman being so suspicious, didi?"

Vishnu, Ramvati's husband was prone to substance abuse. Besides being addicted to alcohol, he would also consume locally available drug pills. According to Ramvati, "The pills made him crazy and wild. He would bang his head against the wall, tear up his clothes, break furniture and even pick up the children and fling them down. Many a times he has flung heavy furniture at me. He has hit me with a stick, slapped me, twisted my arm, strangled me, forced himself on me, beaten me up mercilessly when I refused... I would be terrified when he did that. Even in his sleep, he would turn round and round on the bed, clenching his teeth and not sleeping till the effects wore off. In the morning, he would get up and behave normally. He would not remember anything that happened. If I questioned him, he would hit me. I have been beaten up mercilessly and even ran out. But you know the people in our neighbourhood, didi? None of them came out to help me...!"

Alumati pitches in. "You can't blame people. Who would want to meddle with a madman who creates noise and unrest in the neighbourhood every single day? There were times when he would attempt to blow up the gas cylinder. The entire locality would have been destroyed. No one wants to intervene when a woman gets beaten up. They think it's the couple's personal matter. Even if she is bleeding to death, no one would bat an eyelid." Ramvati would therefore be often rescued by the Nyay Chaupal didis. "I would have died if they had not saved me and sheltered me in their homes. But how long can we burden other people ...even they have their own families, isn't it didi?"

Ramvati was also beaten up by her mother in law who blamed her for not birthing sons. "It was not my choice. I was fed up with their constant abusive behavior. I thought maybe having a son would put an end to all my troubles. It did not. There was a time when we had no food in the house for days, my children were starving. He fought with me throughout the night. In the morning, I was so exhausted and desperate when my children asked for food, that I poured kerosene over all of us. I wanted to die. But not leave my children behind. He would surely sell them for his alcohol money. Such was my situation...He taunted me and asked me to go ahead and die. It was only when outsiders intervened that we were saved. I know it was wrong...but."

When her father came to visit, he took her to the Misrod Police station to lodge a complaint against Vishnu. "I was young then, had never been to a police station before. I couldn't utter a word. We had to come back. Also, Vishnu had threatened to kill my father and my family members if I lodged a complaint. Father had to go back with a heavy heart. I wish I could have spoken up then..."

Mustering some courage, Ramvati started attending a government run 6 month beauty parlor course. She slowly earned regular clients in the neighbourhood. "It was little money, but it was my own. I spent it on my children. Vishnu is a skilled mason but he would hardly go to work. I had to support my family. No one helped me in any of my pregnancies. In fact I was beaten up during my pregnancy as well." Alumati say, "In her last pregnancy, we rushed her to the hospital after Vishnu beat her up. At the hospital when I saw the scars all over her body, I wanted to lock him up in a room and give him the same scars. Such barbarian acts should not be tolerated. We lodged a complaint at the police station, they picked him up and from that day onwards, he has sobered down. Sometimes, being in the police lock up also changes people, in a single day," she says meaningfully.

Ramvati came into contact with Uday through the Domestic Workers Union. Later she started working at Uday office, earning 4000/- . She says, "The sisters were very nice to me. I liked being there. There were meetings which I attended but never spoke anything. Gradually, I shared my story.

Other women gave me strength. Sisters and Anita didi spoke about rights of women. I never thought women had any rights! Gradually with support from Uday, Ramvati found the courage to speak up and take concrete actions. Today, she is at the point where she has carried out a tubectomy, has regular paid work and has encouraged Vishnu to give up his alcoholism. With a smile and twinkling eyes, she says, "I have a secret cure that I cannot disclose. But for the last six months, there has not been a single fight. He goes to work regularly and earns well, looks after the family and is caring towards the girls. See, he is a good man, but alcohol can change him any day...Can't the government close all alcohol shops, didi?"

Ramvati is prepared for any eventuality. "All these women, the organization have worked so hard for me. They supported me at a time, when I wanted to kill myself. My parents tell me to return to them. But they also tell me to keep my mouth shut when he is angry. How is this possible? How can I be quiet if somebody tries to hurt my children?"

Her questions and musings are like a stream of consciousness process where she asks and answers at the same time. "Let us see how long these good times last. If not, I will take my children and leave. Enough is enough..."

Vishnu and many other young men like him are caught in a vicious cycle of substance abuse, prodded on by peer pressure. Alumati didi says, "We have to talk to them as well. They are the perpetrators of violence, but they do respond if we hold extended conversations with them. We need to have patience with them." Ramvati meanwhile is lost in her thoughts. As we move out, she says, "It's true isn't it didi, that a woman's worth is dependent on how much she earns? If women start earning, nobody will dare to hit them. Women need their own money, isn't it didi?"

We couldn't agree more!



Dr. Vineet Kapoor

DCP (Headquarters)

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CSOs overall have a very crucial role to play if they align with the mandate of access to justice and support of victims of violence, in all aspects. The victim has low or no agency due to social conditioning and the social disadvantage that they have. The criminal justice system in the form of law and enforcement agencies cannot be the only mechanism to enable their access to justice. The agency to redress their wrongs, to listen to them or to take action is largely missing. The CRPC or the IPC doesn't say that you have to create an agency in the victim so that the victim can come and report the case. So how would the victim who is already living in a disadvantaged social situation and learnt the behaviour of an oppressed come out and speak for herself in the context of equality, justice or wrongs being done against her? This is the key question.

It's not enough to say that the law enforcement agencies should be empathetic and it should take up the thing or any woman can come and claim the existing court-based legal aid mechanisms. But the whole gap between the cup and the lip is the social condition of the woman to feel the agency to utilise the legal system as such to redress her wrongs, to keep herself or her person secure from the incidence of violence, the expectations of the violence or the continued existence within the violence. So in all these aspects, I think the CSOS has a very big role to play.

To give effects to equality, justice and security for the battered women or the women facing endemic violence, I think we must graduate to that level within our procedures and systems of understanding the law and its enforcement. Organizations like Uday are giving a very good context through their example set in this regard.

The Police station is the only agency which is open 24 hours and is available for the woman in distress unlike other CSOs or government agencies. The URJA help desk is the centre for the first response, first listening, first advising, first decision-making support and improving the agency of that person. Now assuming that Shakti Samiti of that Thana which is a women's collective kind of a

group initiated through the community engagement of that Thana through the URJA help desk would support that. But over the years through my experience I find if there is a CSO involved working in a local community, they can create this Shakti Samiti and strengthen the Shakti Samiti to support the agency factor of the women better than police people themselves, going and creating the social group called Shakti Samiti on their own

As a CSO, Uday has got a marvelous perspective in organization. Their organizational capacity to align with women and form women's collectives in each community particularly, the slum community and then give them a identity is very much appreciable. We discussed with them to align the Nyay Chaupal work with the Shakti Samiti group also because of the overlaps.

It is very important that we have Nyay Chaupal didis as our Shakti Samiti's members. Soon we will be able to give them identity cards of Shakti Samiti members. We would like to see them as claim holders for their community in the police station, with the police station. To claim their rights as bridges between the victim women and the police station. And the police station through its community police mandate has the responsibility to listen to these women so that is very important.

What I find very valuable in organizations like Uday and its dedicated workers is that their purity of purpose remains intact when they are social work and legal support professionals working with these didis to align with the police Station. There is a need for a better informed or a better law knowing professional to support them at times. Because of the social position of these women and the high level of vulnerability within which these women leaders operate, Nyay didis, they might at a lot of risk of them slipping back to their own earlier social roles of subjugated identities if there is no constant support. The police also would not be able to keep in touch with them because of the lack of time police has to engage persistently for a long term and every week or every fifteen days in the community. CSOs like Uday can work together to make this a sustainable exercise.

We are now considering allotting Nagar Raksha Samiti identity cards to the Nyay Chaupal and Uday team because actually they are community police volunteers. Our community police mandate is to involve people who are doing some socially relevant work and have a social standing so they have that. If the Nyay Chaupal and Uday teams remain aligned then the system of work would go better and more professionally with more integrity.

Uday team has been very persistent with achieving their targets in a planned manner. I would still suggest they keep on pushing the police a bit more to get their cards made for Nyay Chaupal, for Nagar Raksha Samiti, get their Shakti Samiti Membership approved and also start calling them as Shakti Samiti members because that gives them a status. This gives Uday workers a status as well with the police. In the long run this would help even if they do it in 3 or 4 police stations. That will become an example setting for other. We have to keep it as a sustainable exercise. I have seen a lot of paralegal workers being made by some other organizations also and I see after a while these all things get slipped. Let the Nyay Chaupal not be merely a memory in some police thana years later, but an actual, continued and sustainable process of ensuring access to justice for most marginalized women.



Sr. Dr. Lizzy

Director, Uday Social Development Society



“Having spent three focused years on anchoring the Nyay Chaupal, we are watching with much anticipation as they forge ahead, spearheading an innovative model – a community based mechanism for legal aid. This model is an initiative by, of and for women survivors of violence. Our role as an organization team is to facilitate this process of empowerment by engaging them in various capacity building processes. It is the collective strength of the women that takes this initiative ahead. For us it has been an empowering experience to engage with the women in their journey.

What began as a resolution taken by our congregation (Pavitra Atma Sewa Samiti) of sisters to work on the issue of Domestic Violence; gradually took shape initially in the bastis of Jatkhedi and Bagmugaliya and later on spread onto other police thana areas as well. The initiative demanded a full time commitment that I took up, supported by my dedicated team. Anita Rampali, our legal advisor especially took it up as a mission to implement the process in field, and work together with the women. I am happy and satisfied with the progress that Nyay Chaupal has made. We have a system in place – regular planning, monitoring, documentation, field engagement and evaluation which ensures that the Nyay Chaupal leadership evolves and functions smoothly. However, we have had our share of challenges. The pick-up point came with the UNICEF partnership and when the Police department got involved. Besides this, CSO partners and other stakeholders also collaborated to make the Nyay Chaupal model effective. Our association with CSOs like Eka helped us move forth by working together on Research and Evaluation processes.

The process began with a consultation meet with CSOs, Police, Corporators and Streevani – our Pune based sister organization. Following the inputs from the consultation, we developed a concept note for the intervention in 2017. We looked for women with whom we could start work. 22 women who were connected to us since 2006 expressed willingness. But only 16 turned up. We had hope in them. They were scared but took up the challenge and continued work. Today they are the leaders. When we evaluated this group, we gathered some learnings based on which we took the initiative ahead, branching out into another communities.

We did a survey with 1000 women and in the process identified more women who can be part of the initiative. Following a training on soft skills, the survey was done by women survivors of violence themselves. We invested in a lot of capacity building and it helped build their confidence. They were trained to handle 2 cases in a year, take up counseling cases in their own bastis and support women. The police gave them all the required technical support. Slowly they started engaging on their own.

Attending to cases and resolving them on their own was very much needed. We as an organization can do this. But to make it a sustainable exercise, we have to ensure the involvement of women themselves. From 15 members to 165; to 8 thanas and 3 districts now, the Nyay Chaupal model has moved ahead step by step.

The most crucial part of this engagement was the regular monthly meetings that we held, with a agenda and training inputs on the problems that they shared. Further ahead, they need training on how to document their cases at the local level. That is our next step.

Each woman member of the Nyay Chaupal has a journey of empowerment that she engages in – as an individual and as a collective as well. They have strong leadership skills today, they are confident and engage with a range of stakeholders without getting inhibited. Their understanding about gender based violence, their sensitivity towards other women, their willingness to take up further challenges are reflected in their increasing number of collaborations. Today they refer cases of their employers groups as well, from high-end colonies. Many of them face pressure from their families, but they have their own resilience and coping mechanism. As of now, they are focused on working with men. They are also integrated into the Shakti Samiti structure in the Police. This integration took place after DCP Vineet Kapoor interacted with our women’s groups. This integration is a sign of sustainability and we see this as our success.

Scaling up this model to rural areas will be challenging. The patriarchal structure is very difficult to handle in rural areas. Here, we plan to engage with men right from the beginning of the intervention. We will also collaborate with the police to make the Nyay Chaupal model applicable in rural areas as well.

Our vision is to enable a transfer of knowledge, skills and perspective of working with the most marginalized. In this case, it was the women survivors of violence themselves who were at the centre of attention of this initiative. The organization approach is to enable empowerment of this group of women through direct engagement on the issue of violence against women. We hope we have made much progress in this direction.”



Women leaders awarded by Police Department



Regular monthly capacity building



Women’s Day with Nyay Chaupal

6

KEY FINDINGS

KEY FINDINGS: NYAY CHAUPAL

No.	Findings
1.	Nyay Chaupal is a tried and tested sustainable model to demonstrate the efficacy of the Community Based Legal Aid mechanism implemented by collectives of survivors of domestic violence.
2.	Nyay Chaupal is already being adapted and up-scaled in collaboration with the Police department, CSOs and DLSA thereby establishing the functional potential of the model to make larger impact on the overall scenario of eliminating violence against women.
3.	Nyay Chaupal members work in close collaboration with external legal aid mechanisms helping them pick up confidence, skills, knowledge and best practices of dealing with cases of violence. Intensive capacity building inputs including exposure visits, trainings and regular meetings have enabled the group to function as the first point of contact in the community that women in distress can access.
4.	Nyay Chaupal members are sensitive counsellors who attempt the process of informed and voluntary decision-making while interacting with women from their own communities. There is much focus on 'listening' and enabling the woman to make informed choices.
5.	Nyay Chaupal members are now designated as "Shakti Samiti" members, a part of the community policing initiative by the Police department. They will be soon issued identity cards by the Police establishing the collaborative work.
6.	Nyay Chaupal members are aware about their own rights & entitlements, and have basic understanding about procedures to be followed at the Police station, while counselling, during court cases and in all stages of referrals.
7.	Nyay Chaupal members have built bridges between themselves across bastis and also take up cases from other communities in Bhopal and even from other districts. They are eager to learn more and capacitate themselves to impact their work with women.

KEY FINDINGS: NYAY CHAUPAL

No.	Findings
8.	Uday Social Development Society has actively channelized the Nyay Chaupal to function independently and ensure their sustainability. The organization continues to guide the collective in their new role as Shakti Samitis, functioning smoothly within the URJA Desk initiative of the Police department. The organization has built trust with the referral systems of Police, OSCC, CSOs and DLSA.
9.	Uday is interested in handing over skills, knowledge and methods of engaging with the justice system to the Nyay Chaupal members.
10.	Uday has been able to do this with a team of dedicated para legals and a proactive process-oriented Legal Advisor who are clear about the purpose of the intervention and have strategies in place including training, exposure visits, livelihood support, education support and parallel child protection interventions.
11.	Uday has been able to do this with a team of dedicated para legals and legal advisor who are clear about the purpose of the intervention and have strategies in place including training, exposure visits, livelihood support, education support and parallel child protection interventions.

KEY FINDINGS: WOMEN SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:

No.	Findings
1.	The study was carried out with 1056 women survivors of violence, in 20 urban poor communities of Bhopal Municipal Corporation covering a population of 155181, from Ward no. 53, 54, 55, 61 and 63. Maximum cases are from ward 53 (54%) and 55 (34%).
2.	80% are working women engaged in cooking, cleaning and care-taking jobs, earning between 2000-5000 rupees. Very few earn more than 5000 rupees.
3.	88% of women suffering domestic violence are from the reproductive age group of 46-65 years. These women are largely victims of child marriage.
4.	52% of women belong to Dalit communities and are largely Domestic Workers. 22% are from the OBC category and 13% from the Tribes.
5.	All 181 members of the Nyay Chaupal are survivors of Domestic Violence and members of the Domestic Workers' Union.
6.	Nearly 88% of the women are living in a nuclear family set up.
7.	56% women have studied only till primary school. 19.9 have studied till class 8th.19.8% have not studied at all.
8.	Nearly 66% of women are mothers with 2 to 3 children.

KEY FINDINGS: WOMEN SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:

No.	Findings
9.	93% of women reported verbal and emotional abuse. 66% said they suffered physical violence. 56% women suffer economic violence. 7.6% reported sexual violence.
10.	Key method of intervention by Nyay Chaupal is through Home Visit (98%) and counselling (93%).
11.	Most women are members of a collective including 544 members of the Domestic Workers Union, 134 SHG members and rest members of Uday and Nyay Chaupal.
12.	Most women have suffered severe injuries but only 14% sought medical aid.
13.	A large number of women (476) have suffered 6-15 years of violence before taking action. 373 women have taken action within 5 years of their marriage.
14.	87% of the women reported to have been facing verbal and emotional abuse. Nearly 60% of women have suffered physical assault under the influence of alcohol. 25% women reported their husband suspect them of extramarital affairs causing physical violence.
15.	83.6% of women registered their cases with the Nyay Chaupal. Rest of the cases have been referred to Uday(10.6%), OSCC(0.8%), and the Police (5%)
16.	64% cases are resolved by the Nyay Chaupal, while rest are in various stages of counselling.

7

WAY AHEAD

KEY FINDINGS: WOMEN SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE:

No.	Findings
17.	63% of women say that Nyay Chaupal intervention especially counselling of the women, partners and families have helped resolve the domestic violence and led to the phenomena of “reformed men”.
18.	All women are able to state the changes that they experience in their lives with much clarity. This includes no or low incidences of domestic violence in their families, peaceful co-existence, conducive environment for children, financial stability, freedom for the women to continue paid work, improved communication and relationship with spouse all adding to a better quality of life. They are aware about their rights and entitlements.
19.	Almost all women stated alcoholism as the key factor that impacted their relationships and nearly 49% women said that incidences of violence reduced when their spouses gave up alcohol.
20.	Almost 50% of the women said that their case has been resolved and they do not require further support from the Nyay Chaupal. Others wish to remain connected.
21.	9% of children of survivors of domestic violence have received educational support for their children.
22.	Nearly 85% women survivors stand up for other women in distress and support them to access legal aid.

WAY AHEAD

No.	Findings
1.	Having successfully demonstrated capacity to take up research to guide organization learning, inform the intervention and scale up functional models, it will be worthwhile for Uday to take up Rapid Action-Based Research processes. Quite a few issues needs further in-depth investigation including impact of violence on children, the silence around sexual violence, seeking medical aid after incidences of domestic violence, ‘reduced domestic violence’ and its parameters, co-relation of child marriage and domestic violence, impact of domestic violence on the perpetrators – men among others.
2.	Profiling of women leaders in the Nyay Chaupal to document their story of growth from individual to collective building and action.
3.	Engage deeply around “Men & Masculinities” both with men and women. Involve men as partners and build communication bridges with active role of Nyay Chaupal members.
4.	Include documentation trainings in the Capacity Building series for Nyay Chaupal members to enable them to document their cases, processes, stories in various formats including print, video, audio and photo.
5.	Organize symposium to disseminate the learnings from the Nyay Chaupal model with other groups doing similar work. Encourage Nyay Chaupal members to organize, host and facilitate the symposium.
6.	Actively support Nyay Chaupal leaders with good communication skills, knowledge and a rights-based approach to organize and facilitate training programs for other emerging groups.
7.	Bring out a publication of stories written / narrated by Nyay Chaupal members.

ANNEXURES

WAY AHEAD

No.	Findings
8.	Encourage women to learn about other issues beyond domestic violence expanding their world view and knowledge.
9.	It is recommended that Uday writes papers to pitch the Nyay Chaupal as a sustainable, replicable model that can be up-scaled highlighting the collaboration with Police.
10.	Currently, women are often in a dilemma when the issue of “a marriage breaking up” arises. Domestic Violence as a criminal act should not be justified at any cost. More intervention is required to establish a dignified, violence free life for all women so that they too can attain their highest potential as human beings.
12.	Create opportunities for women leaders to engage with experts and other practitioners to improve their knowledge base.
13.	Sexual violence needs to be researched by a well informed and sensitive, trained team of mental health experts. Currently, it does seem that women are not very open about speaking about sexual violence.

1.	Study Tools (Questionnaire, Semi Structured Interview Guide, Focused Group Discussion Guide, Suljhaya Case Prapatra)
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No.	SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDELINES : POLICE
1.	Introduction – Research Team for understanding progress of collaborative efforts in eliminating violence against women including police, legal aid cells, elected representatives and government departments.
2.	Number of cases of violence against women?
3.	Number of cases supported by legal aid cells and/or Uday
4.	How does the legal aid initiative at Uday support the Police in their work?
5.	About URJA Desk initiative and how does it collaborate with CSOs?
6.	Does the URJA Desk have well equipped team and resources to deal with cases of women facing violence?
7.	What is the response mechanism of the Police towards such cases?
8.	What is the counseling process adopted by Police
9.	What is the process for resolving cases from filing of complaint to resolution?
10.	What challenges are faced by women when they are seeking help in their situation of violence?
11.	Do you collaborate with community women leaders who are trained as paralegals for case referrals?
12.	What is the difference that you observe between the cases that come to you directly as compared to the cases that are accompanied by legal aid cells/Women leaders from the community?
13.	Do you collaborate with other organizations to resolve cases of violence against women?
14.	Has your team received any training around Gender, especially VAW? Some detail about these trainings – duration, topics, follow ups, documentation.
15.	What suggestions would you give to a legal aid cell for women?

No.	SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDELINES : FOR INTERVIEW WITH WOMEN SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE
1.	Introduction by team – to the objectives of the visit and interview. How the case story will be used. Her confidentiality assured.
2.	Brief profile of her basti, the family, partner, leaderships in the Nyay Chaupal who may have assisted in the case, records, registers, perceptions of different individuals/groups.
3.	Her earlier understanding about Violence Against Women and the status now
4.	Her mindset then and now.
5.	What was the situation of violence faced by her?
6.	What was the trigger that led to her seeking help for her situation?
7.	What was her own struggle, when there was no one else to help?
8.	Who would listen to her, support her at that time?
9.	Who associated with her in her situation of violence?
10.	What did she think was responsible for her situation of violence?
11.	Was she able to cope/manage or she succumbed to the pressure?
12.	Did she attempt any extreme steps like self harm?
13.	When did she first get some hope about emerging from the situation?
14.	When she started seeking help to resolve her situation, what were the barriers that she faced?
15.	What is the current status?
16.	How has the journey been so far? Can she describe it?

No.	SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDELINES : FOR INTERVIEW WITH WOMEN SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE
17.	Who were the people who created the situation of violence for her? What is her current situation with them?
18.	Did neighbors / friends /in-laws help her? How was her relationship with her parents during this period?
19.	Has her relationship with them changed? How? Why? Is it because of education, some new relationship that she has entered or money or any other such factors?
20.	Did she face intimate partner violence? How was it then and now? What has changed?
21.	Is she continuing with the earlier relationship? Why?
22.	Has she supported any other woman to emerge from the situation of violence.
23.	What does she feel are the causes of Violence against Women? Is it individual or a much broader?
24.	Does she have any suggestions/advice for legal aid initiatives working to prevent violence against women?
25.	If she gets an opportunity to support any other woman, how would she do it?
26.	Does she have information about legal rights? Where did she learn this from?
27.	What advice will she give to a woman in distress? What system will the woman need to access to resolve her situation of violence?

II List of 181 members of the Nyay Chaupal and their education status

No	Name of the Woman	Education Status	Basti	Zone	Ward
1.	Rachna Vaman	8th	Chanbadi Basti	15	63
2.	Asha Nagle	8th			
3.	Aarti Verma	8th			
4.	Laxmi Singh	12th			
5.	Bharati Verma	8th			
6.	Yashoda Prasad	5th			
7.	Suman Mehra	8th			
8.	Priyanka Verma	B.com			
9.	Kusum Brar	5th			
10.	Ladkunwar Vaman	1st			
11.	Mehri Mehra	8th			
12.	Gayatri Mehra	5th			
13.	Puja Vaman	10th			
14.	Panna Singh	5th			
15.	Sarita Mehra	5th			
16.	Rupali Narwale	12th	Gynodaye Basti	13	55
17.	Sunita Devi Prajapati	8th			
18.	Sarju Bai Jatav	NO			
19.	Rekha Khilae	9th			
20.	Lata Khillare	8th			
21.	Rajkumari Jatav	5th			
22.	Neha Pantge	10th			
23.	Deepika Khilare	10th			
24.	IndiraRizal	8th			
25.	Jayanti Maravi	7th			
26.	Sunita Jatav	8th			
27.	Shilpa Khillare	8th			
28.	Meena Ranveer	8th			
29.	Kranti Ranveer	12th			
30.	Jyoti Khillare	10th			

No	Name of the Woman	Education Status	Basti	Zone	Ward
31.	Jyoti Sahu	10th	Balaji nagar	14	61
32.	Sarla Radhavashi	NO			
33.	Rajkumari Sisodia	12th			
34.	Rani Dondiya	UG			
35.	Saroj Gouur	NO			
36.	Tulsa Thakur	5th			
37.	Parvati Gaud	NO			
38.	Rajkumari Sharma	10th			
39.	Jyoti Vishwakarma	12th			
40.	Kusum Sharma	NO			
41.	Shama Qureshi	NO			
42.	Shyam Bai	NO			
43.	Sunita Uikey	NO			
44.	Jyoti Thakur	NO			
45.	Urmila Thakur	NO			
46.	Bhagwati Yadav	11th	Durga Nagar, Habibganj	13	54
47.	Rani Nishad	10th			
48.	Nemin Vishwakarma	7th			
49.	Vidya Sahu	8th			
50.	Kunti Patel	8th			
51.	AmrikaNetam	9th			
52.	Ranjita Chauhan	10th			
53.	Anita Gond	4th			
54.	Usha Malviya	9th			
55.	Rekha Malviya	9th			
56.	Sulochana Malviya	5th			
57.	Babita Sahu	6th			
58.	Ganga Chauhan	NO			
59.	Seema Meena	7th			
60.	Rupesh Sahu	8th			
61.	Rekha Bakate	10th	Ambedkar Park Bagmugaliya	13	55
62.	Malati Bagate	2nd			
63.	Nirmala Pohare	NO			

No	Name of the Woman	Education Status	Basti	Zone	Ward
64.	Manisha Veerghat	8th			
65.	Kalpana Damodar	NO			
66.	EmalNarwade	NO			
67.	Priyanka Salve	10th			
68.	Sangeeta Pohre	5th			
69.	Kavita Wankhede	NO			
70.	Archana Virghat	10th			
71.	Kalpana Athole	2nd			
72.	Chhaya Ingle	NO			
73.	Jyoti Ingle	9th			
74.	Sujata Bare	12th			
75.	Deepa Sapkade	9th			
76.	Yashoda Nayak	10th	Ganesh Nagar	13	53
77.	Sunita Jordaar	9th			
78.	Meena Sahu	7th			
79.	Radha Vanshkar	4th			
80.	Krishna Prajapati	10th			
81.	Sharmila Uikey	5th			
82.	Savita Kushwaha	2nd			
83.	Vaijanti Malvi	8th			
84.	Geeta Deshmukh	8th			
85.	Girija Vaghel	12th			
86.	Savitri Prajapati	3rd			
87.	Antarbai Naya	2nd			
88.	Nirmala Uikey	2nd			
89.	Leelavati Nayak	8th			
90.	Pushpa Vanshkar	5th			
91.	Anita Vishwakarma	12th	Mansarovar Nagar Jatkhedi	13	53
92.	Juveda Begum	11th			
93.	Sapna Vishwakarma	10th			
94.	Tara Arse	NO			
95.	Pramila Vishwakarma	10th			
96.	Pavitra Ahirwar	12th			

No	Name of the Woman	Education Status	Basti	Zone	Ward
97.	Anita Ahirwar	3rd			
98.	Asha Vishwakarma	NO			
99.	Uma Vishwakarma	10th			
100.	Geeta Varghat	NO			
101.	Lakshmi Dwivedi	10th			
102.	Rachna Lakhera	8th			
103.	Guddi Jaiswal	NO			
104.	Gudiya Begum	8th			
105.	Sangita Vishwakarma	NO			
106.	Ramabai Sunderlal	2nd	Sanjay nagar	13	53
107.	Pushpa Ahirwar	NO			
108.	Savitri	8th			
109.	Rekha Malviya	2nd			
110.	Bhagwati	NO			
111.	Raju Malviya	2nd			
112.	Suman Ahirwar	7th			
113.	Janki Ahirwar	8th			
114.	Kesarbai Hiralal	NO			
115.	Puja Purviya	NO			
116.	Geeta Ahirwar	8th			
117.	Laxmi Ahirwar	8th			
118.	Pavitra Ahirwar	NO			
119.	Shantabai	NO			
120.	Ganga Ahirwar	8th			
121.	Ranu Raikwar	10th	Laharpur Basti	13	55
122.	Aarti Raikwar	NO			
123.	Ramkali Ahirwar	NO			
124.	Meena Arse	5th			
125.	Lakshmi Katare	NO			
126.	Santoshi Ghodpade	5TH			

No	Name of the Woman	Education Status	Basti	Zone	Ward
127.	Maya Mahodia	5th			
128.	Shugana Katare	5th			
129.	Sunita Malviya	7th			
130.	Manu Bai Malviya	NO			
131.	Sohram Bai Ahirwar	NO			
132.	Anju Mehra	NO			
133.	ShivakaliPiyarde	10th			
134.	Vinita Makoria	10th			
135.	Anita Malviya	5th			
136.	Bhagvati Ahirwar	10th	Bus stop Bagmugaliya	13	55
137.	Nanda Ahirwar	5th			
138.	Rukmani Bansal	NO			
139.	Krishna Verma	NO			
140.	Sunita Ghodke	7th			
141.	Mamta Meena	NO			
142.	Priti Kushwaha	5th			
143.	Ashok rani	5th			
144.	Draupadi	10th			
145.	Mamta Patidar	8th			
146.	Moni Ahirwar	5th			
147.	Mamta Yadav	7th			
148.	Bhavati Kushwaha	NO			
149.	Reena Prajapati	NO			
150.	Arti Mehra	6th			
151.	Puspa Lonkar	10th	1 No. Basti, Bagmugaliya	13	55
152.	Komal Gayakwad	12th			
153.	Asha Sarkate	5th			
154.	Mamta Mishram	10th			
155.	Laxmi Ingle	9th			
156.	Sarita Saroge	3rd			

No	Name of the Woman	Education Status	Basti	Zone	Ward
157.	Meena Paurkar	9th			
158.	IndubaiSurwade	NO			
159.	PantsheelaPokare	5th			
160.	Kusum Vathore	8th			
161.	Meena Surwade	9th			
162.	Savita Savle	8th			
163.	Hemlata Meena	8th			
164.	Sunita Wathore	5th			
165.	Anjana Ranveer	No			
166.	Alomati Rai	5th	Core team	13	53,54
167.	Rajkumari Ragse	5th			
168.	Phoolvati Sahu	7th			
169.	LeelavatiChaudary	12th			
170.	Mamta Chaudary	10th			
171.	Bindu Prajapati	8th			
172.	Tara Ahirwar	NO			
173.	Parvati Ahirwar	NO			
174.	Rekha Ahirwar	10th			
175.	Vimla Verma	NO			
176.	Sindu Sansare	2nd			
177.	Shobha Vishwakarma	10th			
178.	Seema Verma	2nd			
179.	Rani Verma	NO			
180.	Kanchan Ranveer	10th			
181.	Rita Jatav	8th			

ACRONYMNS

No	Name of the Woman	Education Status
1.	GBV	Gender Based Violence
2.	LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and + indicates all the new identities that are emerging in the gender spectrum
3.	PTSD	Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
4.	NCRB	National Crime Records Bureau
5.	POCSO	Protection of Children from Sexual Offences
6.	FIR	First Information Report
7.	URJA	Urgent Relief and Just Action
8.	DLSA	District Legal Services Authority
9.	OSCC	One Stop Crisis Centre
10.	DCP	Deputy Commissioner of Police
11.	TI	Town Inspector
12.	FGD	Focused Group Discussion
13.	SC / ST	Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes
14.	OBC	Other Backward Castes
15.	SHG	Self Help Groups
16.	COVID	Corona Virus Disease
17.	MPWTU	Madhya Pradesh Domestic Workers Trade Union
18.	WCD	Women and Child Development Department
19.	NC	Nyay Chaupal
20.	J-PAL	The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab



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