

Evaluation Report on:

Awareness Generation on Issues Relating to Violence  
Against Women

Consumer Unity & Trust Society  
Chittorgarh, Rajasthan

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## **Purpose and Objectives of Evaluation (as defined by CUTS):**

As defined by CUTS, the purpose of this evaluation is to make an assessment of the results of ‘Awareness Generation on Issues Relating to Violence Against Women in the Society, Rajasthan’ and formulate recommendations accordingly. In specific objectives, results will be assessed in the view of Centre for Human Development (CHD) – a division of CUTS vision, mission, goals, and strategies, taking into account the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the program.

Specific objectives of evaluation:

- To assess the relevance of ‘Awareness Generation on Issues Relating to Violence Against Women in the Society, Rajasthan’ in view of present local, situational, and developmental context (especially the awareness of elected women members of Gram Panchayat and community leaders) and the VMG of the organization.
- To review the findings of “baseline survey” of the project, which is a very important document related to the project.
- To assess the different program components, their relevance, inter-linkages, effectiveness, and contribution towards the aims and objectives of the program and measurement of the quantum of effects at village, district, and state level.
- To assess the relevance and effectiveness of loose network of elected women members of Gram Panchayat, community leaders, social activists, legal practitioners, members of village level SHGS, ANMs, teachers, Anganwadi workers, rural networkers to address issues of violence against women.
- To assess the meaningfulness and synergy of different components and activities of the program, including: empowerment of rural women, sensitization of men on gender issues through an integrated program covering subjects such as gender inequality, reproductive and child health care, social justice, basic needs and sustainable development, institutional development and capacity building, and creation of awareness among community leaders and members of Gram Panchayats about violence against women.
- To assess the implementation of the program in terms of efficacy, effectiveness, and sustainability.
- To assess the outputs and outcomes of the program in view of the program’s specific objectives and considering the different strategies as mentioned above.

- To assess the areas still to be covered to achieve the goals and specific objectives of the project and effective strategies to cover the areas within minimum time and without disturbing the harmony of the family and society.
- To assess members' capacity towards undertaking the awareness generation on violence against women and taking leadership role in the management of the network.
- To assess the extent of outreach as well as the training module under which the project was effective and provide recommendations to make them more impressive, effective, and reader friendly.
- To assess the quantum of awareness in the society for child rights, specifically of the girl child, since one of the hidden goals of the project was the empowerment of rural girls and their rights.

### **Methodology:**

A team of five people led by Swati Patel, Coordinator of the Women's Development Unit at Seva Mandir, conducted the evaluation. Team members included Women's Development professionals Laxmi Jain, Minakshi Dewan, and Anju Verma from Seva Mandir and Hart Fellow Laura Thornhill from Duke University. The following tools were used for the evaluation:

- **Report Review:** All team members reviewed reports compiled by CUTS on the program "Awareness Generation on Issues Relating to Violence Against Women." These reports included the Report of Baseline Survey, the Sub-Project Reporting Form, the Training Module, and the Draft Annual Report.
- **Staff Interviews:** On January 28, the team interviewed CUTS staff associated with the project, animators, and field officers.
- **Field Visits and Group Discussions:** From January 29 to 31, the team visited ten project villages. Team members held group discussions with community members involved in the project, such as members of the women's self-help groups (SHGs), Social Justice Development Committee (SJDC), and other community members. The evaluation sought to assess community perceptions of the SJDC, the activities and processes of the SJDC, capacity building and awareness levels generated on the issue of violence against women, and perceptions of community change regarding violence against women. Group discussions were held for approximately two to three hours in each village.
- **Interaction with women victims of violence from the project area**

## **SWOT Analysis:**

### *Strengths:*

- The program has good linkages and networking with the government and government functionaries at all levels. This is especially important when working on an issue as sensitive as violence against women.
- The program team is composed of young and hardworking women and men.
- CUTS reports and the results of the baseline survey demonstrate a deep understanding of the situation of violence against women in the work area.
- The program involves people from three different levels (district, block, and village) and is very comprehensive in its approach.
- With the SJDC, the program has created a platform through which people can come forward about community issues.

### *Weaknesses:*

- SJDCs at the village level need further orientation and training on issues regarding violence against women.
- Field organizers need further and ongoing training and support to help them work with and engage communities toward achieving project goals.
- Village men and women not involved in the SJDC committee must be made aware of its purpose so that they can approach it for help regarding violence.

### *Opportunities:*

- Though the concept of SJDCs is very good, these committees are still very young. With further training and support, they show promise of becoming self-sustaining.
- Women's Self-Help Groups in project villages can be used as a base for supporting the project as well as for supporting individual women needing assistance.
- SHGs could be more instrumental in spreading awareness on violence against women to villagers not involved in the SJDC and in building the capacities of ordinary villagers to approach the SJDC for help regarding violence in their homes.
- Bal Panchayats are very strong in project villages. This emerging generation of children can be sensitized on issues regarding violence against women and reinforce the message sent by the SJDC.

- Both the Self-Help Groups and the Bal Panchayats in project villages can play a critical role in making awareness generation on violence against women a sustainable effort.

*Threats:*

- A project-based approach to the issue of violence against women could in itself be a threat to sustainable work on this complex issue.
- Groups that have not received proper training on violence against women may not be able to handle issues in a sensitive manner and may cause conflict within the community.

**Other Findings:**

*1) Awareness Building Tools:*

As CUTS acknowledges, the social structure of its project villages is of a conservative and segmented nature with caste and gender playing a strong role in social interactions. In this context, significant social changes must be directed and informed by people within the community itself. SJDC members are gatekeepers for their villages and because of their powerful positions, they hold great potential to be catalysts for change. While awareness generation meetings were organized by SHGs and 90 legal literacy camps were held in program villages, the evaluation team suggests that further efforts are required to raise the awareness levels of SJDC members on violence against women. CUTS will have to invest more in the training and awareness-raising of village-level SJDC members so that they could properly capitalize on their strategic position in village society to effect positive change on women's issues.

CUTS reports state that 90 legal literacy trainings were conducted across 45 villages during the project implementation period. The team suggests that two such trainings per village would be not be sufficient to educate villagers on both the concept of violence against women as well as legal measures in place to prevent it. Hence, 2-3 days residential trainings may prove to be more effective.

*2) Awareness Levels on Issues of Violence Against Women:*

Group discussions and interactions with SJDC members in project villages revealed that awareness and understanding of violence against women is still in its early stages. Discussions revealed that village women perceive violence against women as physical i.e., wife-beating, as

violence perpetuated by other men or women, such as sons, daughter in laws, brother in laws, father in laws, mother in laws, etc as domestic violence. In the group meeting, several women approached the team members individually to report that they are badly beaten by their husbands. While they recognize this as violence, they felt unable to discuss it in a group or committee setting.

Women, men, and children in several villages expressed approval of wife-beating (slapping, hitting) if the wife has not done her work properly. One 15-year old boy who is a member of both his Bal Panchayat and the village SJDC said that it is acceptable for men to hit their wives if the wives have done a poor job working in the fields or if they have been rude to their mother-in-laws. Villagers seem to perceive violence against women only as severe wife-beating involving alcohol consumption by the man. Villagers recognize this type of violence as unjust. One common comment was “violence is not a problem in this village because men here don’t drink alcohol.” It also came out clearly through group discussions that awareness on the legal aspect of violence against women needs to be enhanced. Men and women were unaware of any laws in place specifically to protect women.

On the issue of child marriage, villagers reported that the age of marriage has been steadily rising over time. The team met one married girl, aged 7, but her family says she will not go to her husband’s home until she turns 18. In another village, a married 15-year-old boy reported that his wife would not come to his home until she reaches the age of 18.

The team met several women leaders in the villages who were very vocal and demonstrated immense confidence. With the right support, they can play an important role in organizing women on issues surrounding violence. Information sharing seems to be limited to a small group of around 10 women. It should be taken beyond this so that other women can be involved, and the support of the larger group can be gained.

**Case Study:** Women also talked about the issue of *ata sata* and the problems caused by this system. The team met Vishnu in Unkhalia village, a woman who has been living with her parents for the past three years. She was tortured by her mother-in-law and has been deserted by her husband. The evaluation team asked the group about their intervention in this matter. The women leaders were willing to take action. Two of the group leaders, along with CUTS staff

and others, visited Vishnu's in-laws, but nothing came of this meeting. Vishnu is prepared for nata, but no one has taken the initiative to finalize her case. The group related that her parents are not interested, and group members cannot further intervene without their consent. When the team asked a male motivator and SJDC member about Vishnu's case, he was unaware.

### ***3) Village Level Social Justice Development Committees:***

The evaluation team feels that SJDCs have great potential. The plan of involving key village stakeholders in awareness generation on issues relating to violence against women is conceptually strong and necessary for the project's success. As it is, the SJDCs at the village level seem to be still in their early stages of formation. Though the committees have been formed, villagers need to be oriented about the function and purpose of the body. In Gangral, villagers reported that their SJDC meets every month, the SJDC has settled a dispute between two quarrelling men and has discussed community problems such as the need for a new hand pump and community center. Similarly, in Upreda, villagers said that their SJDC discusses issues of water and education. Thus, the team feels that the SJDC is functioning at different levels in each village and can play an active role in addressing the issue of violence against women.

As acknowledged by CUTS, trainings for members of village level SJDCs have been inadequate. As the center of the awareness campaign at the village level, these committee members should receive intensive and participatory trainings on violence against women and how to impart this knowledge through their committee activities.

Bringing people from diverse caste communities and having different interests must have indeed been a difficult task. It is important to realize that bringing people with clashes of interest to discuss any issue is complex and will take time. Much investment must be made to firstly bring about a change in their attitudes towards violence against women, and then to take steps to work together to take action on these issues.

**Case Study:** In Khirkheda village, the evaluation team met one woman who has been repeatedly physically abused by her husband. She sought the help of the village animator, and together, they approached the police to register her case. The police took no action against her husband, and no follow-up was conducted. The woman still resides with her husband, and says that the

beatings have become worse now that he has learned that she took the case to the police station. She no longer attends village meetings for fear that this will lead to further abuse by her husband. The village SJDC is aware of the woman's situation, but has taken no further action on her behalf. Though the animator had initially given help to the woman, the case has not yet been successfully resolved. During the meeting with the evaluation team, the woman pleaded for further help.

#### ***4) Capacity of Personnel:***

Domestic violence is often not discussed outside of the home because of the taboo nature of the subject. Field officers have a good rapport with women and encourage women to come forward with this issue. Field officers have an understanding of the issue of violence against women, the ability to organize others to discuss the issue, and a sensitive attitude that encourages others to come to them.

The team feels that field organizers should also be oriented towards empowering women members of Self-Help Groups to become involved in project interventions. A more holistic approach involving women's groups would help women feel empowered and give them more space to come together to discuss the issue of violence against women.

#### ***5) Trainings of Animators:***

The role of animators is very important, as they are the link between the village community and CUTS program staff. Field observations revealed that animators are knowledgeable about issues relating to violence against women than other villagers, but in future, there is a need to enhance their expertise to impart this knowledge, spread awareness to others, and properly deal with sensitive cases arising in their own communities. Trainings should also prepare animators to face the challenges of confronting such a sensitive subject by addressing skills such as informal counseling, how to make proper referrals, and how to conduct culturally sensitive awareness generation meetings. Trainings must not only sensitize animators on issues relating to violence against women, but they must also help animators become catalysts for change in their communities.

### ***6) Selection of Target Work Area***

Villages selected in one block are situated in different directions and at a distance of 15-20 kilometers from each other. The evaluation team feels that if a more compact area within each block had been selected for the project intervention, the impact of the project could have been greater, as coordination and interaction between project villages would be enhanced.

### ***7) Sustainability:***

Violence against women is too complex an issue with deep social, cultural, and political underpinnings to be sufficiently addressed in a two-year time period. The evaluation team feels that sustainability on this project will require a long-term commitment by the implementing agency to support the village level committees that are addressing the issue. Sustainability of this program depends largely on village level SJDCs and SHGs and their ability and enthusiasm for continuing the awareness campaign. The evaluation team feels that at present, these village groups are not receiving adequate support to make their efforts sustainable. Few SJDCs are currently capable of addressing the issue of violence against women. Work conducted during the two-year project implementation period was able to establish these committees and lay the foundation for future action, but much more capacity building must take place before these committees will be able to sustain themselves.

An increase in the membership of SHGs and women's groups would help to spread the message and provide a congenial environment and platform for women to discuss issues of violence against women at their own level, and also to bring such concerns to the SJDC later on. Strengthening women's groups, their leaders, and SJDCs will be a step forward in ensuring that violence against women becomes an important issue for discussion in villages.

### ***8) Legal Aid***

The Legal Aid Counseling Cell based at CUTS in Chittorgarh is another important intervention. Strengthening SJDCs and promoting linkages between the SJDC and this legal aid cell will be an immense help to women.

### **9) CUTS Reports:**

The “Report of Baseline Survey” clearly illuminates the situation of violence against women in Chittorgarh district and is thorough and comprehensive in its findings. The team found that the “Sub-Project Reporting Form (Consolidated)” containing the project’s expected outputs, actual results, and variance did not fully describe the methodology used to arrive at the stated results, i.e. results are not properly substantiated with data from the end-line survey. For example, the result that “Physical abuse after getting drunk has reduced by 55 percent” should be further verified and emphasized for the reader with data from both the baseline and end-line surveys.

### **Discussion:**

The project design is comprehensive in its approach and rightly recognizes that work on violence against women must involve key stakeholders at the village level (teachers, ANMs, Self-Help Groups, Anganwadi workers, Jati Panchayat members, village elders, etc.), stakeholders at the block and district level (police, civil society leaders, activists, etc.), as well as the emerging generation of children. Change must come from the grass-roots level and be supported and encouraged by relevant societal, cultural, and political structures. However, the idea to train and empower village and block level pressure groups to confront violence against women must be met with appropriate and sustained capacity building efforts for these groups. As CUTS must already recognize through its work with village Bal Panchayats, targeting younger generations is often an effective way of bringing about social change. Thus, sustained efforts must also be directed at younger generations so that they can form healthy attitudes regarding women, develop an understanding of the social roots of violence, and develop an understanding of the negative societal implications of these practices.

### **Limitations of Evaluation:**

The evaluation team covered only a limited part of the project implementation area over a very short span of time. Though the team tried to talk with a diverse group of the target population, the team was unable to speak with all members of village SJDCs and did not speak with any students who had attended school talks about violence against women. As they were not randomly selected, the ten villages visited by the team may have not been representative of

the villages overall. The time constraint further hindered the team's ability to gain an in-depth knowledge of awareness levels on issues surrounding violence against women in project villages.

### **General Recommendations:**

Based on its review of project materials and observations in the field, the evaluation team recommends the following for future work on this intervention:

#### **1) Project work should be continued with emphasis on the following areas:**

- Increased trainings and capacity building of SJDCs at village level
- Strengthening of SJDC at block level so that they can support efforts made by village level SJDCs
- Increased interaction and coordination between SJDC at the village and block level
- Additional trainings for field officers so that they can better facilitate committee meetings, encourage the discussion of violence against women, and facilitate an open atmosphere where people feel safe discussing potentially sensitive or taboo topics
- Emphasize the strengthening of women's groups at the village level. Strong women's groups can perform the same functions of the SJDC and can serve as another outlet for women facing violence in the home. Women's groups can also serve as an important platform for women to raise other issues in the future, and they can serve as an intermediary between village women and members of the SJDC.
- Involve Bal Panchayats and village children in confronting the issue of violence against women through trainings, age-specific workshops, community theater, etc.

**2) New work initiated on the project should be focused in a compact geographic area** as to facilitate collaboration between the SJDCs of different villages and the block level committees.