



# WHITE PAPER

## Domestic Violence Stakeholders Summit

**MAHARASHTRA**

**6th July, 2024**

**Presented By**

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## Domestic Violence Stakeholders Summit, Maharashtra

The Domestic Violence Stakeholders Summit, Maharashtra was organised by Invisible Scars Foundation and Majlis on 6th July, 2024 at ITM IDM, Andheri West, Mumbai.

Invisible Scars Foundation is an NGO dedicated to raising awareness and to protect and promote the rights of women and children's rights through legal



representation, advocacy and training. Our team of women lawyers and social workers provides legal and social support to victims of sexual and domestic violence (DV).

The full day summit brought together over 75 professionals, experts and key stakeholders from across Maharashtra to share insights and forge a path towards a future free from DV.

There were two thought-provoking Panel Discussions followed by a roundtable:  
Panel 1 - *Reimagining shelters for DV victims and their children.*

Panel 2 - *Challenging misinformation (false case / misuse narrative) on DV.*

Roundtable - *A collective brainstorming on what economic empowerment for survivors of DV should look like and what could be the initiatives to improve the coordination between the police, support services and the judiciary.*

This summit was about igniting constructive dialogues to drive real change. The insights gathered will undoubtedly pave the way for more informed policies and effective strategies. The outcomes and key recommendations from the expert consultations are meticulously documented in this comprehensive white paper and will be submitted to the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Maharashtra.

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**Imagine a future free from  
domestic violence**

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## Glossary

1. MDVSS - Maharashtra Domestic Violence Stakeholders Summit
2. DV: Domestic Violence
3. DVA: Domestic Violence and Abuse
4. GBV: Gender Based Violence
5. CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility

## Context

Domestic violence in India is a pervasive issue that affects millions of individuals across gender, age and socio economic classes with women and children bearing the brunt of this human rights violation. Domestic violence includes physical, emotional, psychological abuse, sexual violence, and economic abuse. Deeply ingrained patriarchal norms contribute to the justification of violence against women.

The worldwide cost of violence against women is estimated at a staggering \$1.5 trillion in 2016, equivalent to approximately 2% of global GDP. In India, the macro-level consequences are equally alarming, with domestic violence estimated to lower the country's economic output by \$479 million to \$880 million per year.

According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2019-2021), about 29% of women aged 15-49 have experienced physical or sexual violence. This highlights a significant public health and human rights concern.

The long-term impact of domestic violence on victims is devastating, including low self-esteem, suicidal behaviour, self-destructive actions, and addictions. The reverberating effects extend to children facing risks of developing hostility, anger, anxiety, low self-esteem, addiction and mental health issues

The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, aims to provide legal protection and support to victims. However, implementation varies widely across states. Despite existing laws, many women face obstacles in accessing justice, including bias within law enforcement and lengthy legal processes. Many cases remain unreported due to stigma, fear of social ostracisation, and lack of awareness about legal rights. Various organisations offer legal aid, counselling, and shelter services. However, awareness of these services is often limited

Addressing domestic violence in India requires a multi-faceted and there is an urgent need for concerted action at both state and national levels.



## Background and Objectives

### Background

The Domestic Violence Stakeholder Summit, Maharashtra was held on 6th July, 2024 at ITM IDM, Andheri W, Mumbai. It took place against the backdrop of a set of critical and multifaceted issue faced by domestic violence victims. The DV Act, a landmark law in India aims at providing comprehensive support to victims through legal and other support services including medical assistance, mental health services, and shelter. Despite its progressive intent, the Act's implementation faces challenges due to systemic biases. They are majorly led by the misconception that women often misuse the law, leading to apathy within institutions like the police and judiciary. This results in domestic violence complaints being dismissed or inadequately addressed, with police often failing to record cases promptly, losing crucial evidence. Additionally, shelter for victims facing domestic violence, particularly those with children are inadequate. Shelters impose restrictive rules that disrupt victims' lives and hinder their rehabilitation and re-integration in society. Emergency services provide only short-term relief without sustainable long-term solutions This forces many victims back into abusive environments. To address these gaps, greater co-ordination between the stakeholders is needed to ensure victims receive holistic support required to rebuild their lives.

### Objective

The objective of the Summit was to bring different stakeholders to initiate a dialogue about the two emergent issues of mis-information about the DV laws in the country and discuss a strategy to challenge the prevalent narrative about women misusing the law.

Secondly, to discuss the present system of shelter homes available, the challenges that lead women in not opting for them and how can shelters need be reimagined.



# Challenges faced by DV Survivors

## **False Case Narrative**

It is essential to have a basic grasp of the criminal procedure to understand the flaw in this narrative, From registering of the FIR to filing of the chargesheet, the entire process is governed by legal protocols that the police officer is supposed to follow. Apart from being a witness the woman has no role to play in the process. It is therefore argued that it is impossible for women to file false cases in criminal matters as the false hood would be revealed during the investigation and police can close the case by filing A, B or C summary. The Supreme Court in various judgements have reprimanded the police about illegal and unnecessary arrests. But unfortunately women are accused of filing false cases. The burden of the false case narrative results in denial by police in registering FIRs to refusal in medical treatment and other support services. The response of the judiciary has also been extremely lax leaving women vulnerable to further abuse from their husbands.

## **Shelter Homes**

The State response to women facing domestic violence is offering her a space in a shelter home. Women have shared that shelter homes feel like living in a jail. Shelters are situated in remote areas which victims are not familiar with. Restrictions on women leaving the shelter to continue their job, education and other day to day activities further complicate rehabilitation. There are rules on food, use of mobile, religious rituals and even dressing. Moving away from the community isolates victims. However the biggest deterrent victims have shared is the separation from their children. Women have shared a need for half way homes that can provide a holistic living experience. Where they can live in their community with their children, be able to cook food and lead a normal life so that they can slowly rebuild their lives. Anything short of this forces women to return to abusive homes,

Victims of domestic violence faced multiple challenges but for this summit we have limited our focus to two issues - the impact of the 'false cases' narrative and lack of accessibility to 'shelter homes'.

## Welcome Address

### Ekta Viiveck Verma, Invisible Scars

Ekta introduced Invisible Scar's work in the field of DV redressal. She delivered a background on the DV Summit, Telangana and stated that the main outcome was a healthy dialogue between different stakeholders working in the field converging on ideas. She acknowledged the support of Majlis in co-organizing and conceptualizing the Summit and acknowledged the work done by all the partners involved. She emphasized on the importance of convergence and working together to ensure effective solutions .



## Introduction

### Audrey Dmello, Majlis

Audrey welcomed everyone and mentioned that Maharashtra has always been a pioneer in women's rights initiatives. She thanked all the NGOs that were present, and thanked them for their tireless efforts in providing support to victims of DV. She introduced the work done by Majlis in addressing sexual and DV in the past 30 years. To set the context she traced the legal journey to address DV for the past four decades. From combating wife-burning and dowry deaths to the DV Act.

Even today one in every three women face DV and the DV Act is meant to provide medical, shelter and legal aid to women and their children to ensure their rehabilitation. However, without convergence between stakeholders a dynamic response is not possible. She mentioned that the DV summit will focus on two crucial issues - Housing for single mothers and Addressing the spread of the false case / misuse narrative. She went on to introduce the Chief Guest and invite them over for the talk.



## Chief Guest

### Smt Shobha Shelar, DWCDO, Mumbai City

Ms. Shelar gave us a comprehensive view into the perspective of survivors. She said that it is time to reimagine what shelter homes should look like for DV victims. She narrated how women come to a Protection Officers to file their Domestic Incident Report (DIR) detailing the abuse meted out at them. **After filing a report, the first thought she usually has is where can she go now, what about her safe shelter?** She stated that most of the women do not find it safe to go back to the matrimonial home after filing the report. **The thought of where she can take her children and herself plagues her.** When there is no shelter for her and her children, the only possible route she sees for a comparatively secure environment is the house of her abusive husband. **This leads to victims taking back the case.** She also highlighted the narrative of the false complaint and how it is not reflective of the plight of what the victims go through. As the DWCDO, she informed that 22 State homes and 2 protective homes are currently functional in the State of Maharashtra. **She highlighted that the bureaucratic red-tape and the loopholes in the law are what lead to ineffective implementation.** She also pointed out that the existing shelters cater to women aged between 18-65 years and there is a requirement for shelter homes catering to older women.





## Chief Guest

### Shri Satish Hiwale

Mr. Hiwale enriched the audience by explaining the objectives of passing the DV Act. **He clarified that the law provides a subjective definition of 'domestic violence' which may vary in its application and perspectives of those involved.** Mr. Hiwale briefed the audience on how legal-aid works and explained the application process for becoming a Legal Aid lawyer. Becoming a legal-aid lawyer remains to be one of the most effective ways to deliver to the society. He elaborated and spoke extensively on two aspects, **support** and **assistance** to find a safe shelter and courts' power to grant ex-parte interim relief. He dived into the different provisions of law that can be utilized by the victims to get relief. While addressing the audience, Mr. Hiwale provided valuable insights on the **exclusion of liability of the informant.** He ended by stating that **any person can inform about DV to the Protection Officer** and contact the police in case of an emergency.



## Guest of Honor

### Flavia Agnes, Women's Rights Lawyer

Ms. Agnes, provided a comprehensive overview of the evolution of DV laws in India. She highlighted the significant progress made since the introduction of **S. 498A in IPC to the current DV Act in 2005**. The DV Act provided crucial civil remedies and protections for women facing domestic abuse. Agnes reflected on the historical context, noting how DV was once poorly understood and inadequately addressed, with issues like dowry deaths being dismissed or misrepresented.

She emphasized that the DV Act acknowledged various forms of abuse, physical, emotional, sexual, and economic and offered remedies such as protection orders, maintenance, and custody arrangements. She pointed out that, **prior to 2005 legal provisions were scattered and often inaccessible**. The Act consolidated these remedies into a single framework, making it easier for individuals and organizations to navigate the legal system.

Despite these advances, Agnes acknowledged that challenges remain. She noted that **while there is greater awareness and understanding of the law among judges, NGOs, and society at large, practical challenges persist, particularly regarding the provision of shelter and comprehensive support for victims**. Agnes called for continued efforts to address these gaps and improve the system, emphasizing the need for ongoing awareness, effective implementation, and the involvement of diverse organizations to advance the cause.



## Challenging misinformation on DV

The first panel discussion focused on **Challenging misinformation (false case/ misuse narrative) on DV**. The panel discussion began with **Supreet Singh** introducing the topic by citing an alarming statistic about 38% of women being murdered by intimate partners, and one in four women facing DV, according to the NHS. Despite the presence of laws and policies, there is a significant gap in their implementation. Supreet highlighted the **normalization and internalization of DV setting the stage for a detailed examination of the role of misinformation perpetuating this issue.**



**Ms. Supreet Singh**

Moderator

**Adv. Audrey Dmello**  
(Director Majlis)

**Mr. Gautam S. Mengle**  
(Independent Journalist)

**Ms. Sameera Khan**  
(Journalist, Feminist Researcher)

**Mr. Sudharak Olwe**  
(Documentary photographer)

**Sameera Khan**, pointed out that **media coverage predominantly focuses on violence in public spaces rather than the domestic sphere**, resulting in insufficient attention to DV. Khan attributed this gap to a **patriarchal mindset** and emphasized that DV is prevalent in every household and should be treated as a significant issue regardless of where it occurs. When the law was introduced there was significant media coverage but currently reporting is skewed towards highlighting false cases. **This shift has led to diminished coverage of the challenges women face** when seeking justice and perpetuates the narrative that laws protecting women are often misused.

**Gautam Mengle** spoke on the role of the media in fueling misinformation of DV law. He attributed this to society's patriarchal structure, which perpetuates victim-blaming and skepticism towards women seeking help. Gautam also noted **the ease with which unverifiable information is shared on social media, compounding the problem by reinforcing myths and false narratives about DV**. He critiqued the media for focusing disproportionately on sensational stories or high-profile cases, which often skew public perception of DV. He highlighted that **the media's tendency to emphasize the misuse of DV laws, rather than the systemic issues faced by victims, undermines efforts to address the problem effectively**.



**Audrey Dmello** spoke about how the spread of misinformation impacts the victims. She highlighted **the systemic hurdles victims face, from societal pressures to judicial biases**. Audrey stressed that **misinformation and societal biases also infiltrate police stations and courts, making it even more challenging for victims to access justice**. She criticized the prevailing narrative that **prioritises family unity over the victim's well-being** and pointed out the dangers of misinformation reaching the justice system.

Adv. Audrey Dmello while addressing the **role of the internet** in spreading misinformation and suggested that while freedom of speech is paramount and should not be curtailed, there is a need for a collective effort to challenge false narratives. She emphasised that focusing on the **accuracy of information** and holding **stakeholders accountable** can help combat misinformation.

**Sudharak Olwe** spoke about his experience of travelling across the country observing that women are reluctant to approach police stations or courts, as **DV is viewed as a private matter**. Sudharak underscored the **critical role of NGOs and civil society organizations** in supporting women and helping them navigate the system, emphasizing that these organizations are essential in addressing the issue where formal institutions fall short.

In response to a question about balancing truth with sensationalism in photojournalism, he explained that his work focuses on **stories often overlooked by mainstream media**. He stressed that staying true to the realities of DV rather than seeking sensationalism, is crucial for maintaining journalistic integrity.



In the closing remarks, **Supreet Singh** emphasised the **importance of education and collective action** in combating misinformation about DV. She encouraged attendees to educate their families and communities about gender equality and respect. The discussion also highlighted the need for **continuous dialogue** and **collaboration** among NGOs, media, and the public to address and correct misconceptions about DV. The session concluded with a call for action to **educate and support victims, counter misinformation, and engage in ongoing discussions** to drive positive change.

## Reimagining shelters for DV victims

In the panel discussion moderated by Audrey Dmello various experts delved into the **current state of shelter homes for DV victims and explored ways to improve and reimagine these facilities**. She provided an overview of the shelter system, explaining the **distinction between shelters for children and adults**, and **highlighting the historical challenges faced by shelters**, particularly those for DV victims. She noted the **inadequacy of government shelters** to cater to the needs of women with children and the logistical issues, such as distance from schools and lack of privacy, that women face when placed in shelters.



**Audrey Dmello**

Director, Majlis

**Deepali Vandana**

(Co- Founder, URJA)

**Sangeeta Rege**

(Co-ord, Director, CEHAT)

**Pramila Sharma**

(Field-coord, Kshamta)

**Shobha Shelkar**

(DWCD Mumbai City)

**Deepali Vandana** shared the motivation behind **Urja Trust** and their work in starting safe shelter women space. She emphasized the **critical lack of safe spaces** in metropolitan areas, which exacerbates the cycle of violence. She said that there is a need to focus on **marginalized survivors** who face heightened risks, including potential exploitation and involvement in sex work due to insufficient resources and support.

On the point of what are the challenges she sees in the current shelter homes, she pointed out that the shelter homes should **cater to beyond the immediate accommodation needs**. She stated issues such as the limited options available for

unmarried women and the lack of psychological support in shelters. She criticized the **restrictive nature of many shelters** and emphasized the importance of a **holistic approach** that supports **women's overall development** and **career aspirations**.

**Shobha Shelar** stated that the idea of shelter was for women who are unsafe and was inevitably used for the **victims of trafficking**.

She detailed the evolution of shelter homes, including open shelters and the special adoption agencies, and discussed the challenges of supporting victims from various backgrounds, including those under the **ITPA (Immoral Traffic Prevention Act)**.



**Sangeeta Rege** shared insights from Cehat's work with **gender-based violence** within the **healthcare system**. She highlighted that many women only seek help when their health issues become severe, often due to violence. Sangeeta stressed the need for **improved training for healthcare professionals** to recognize and address signs of DV early. She also illustrated the lack of appropriate shelter options for women with complex needs, recounting a poignant case where a woman with mental health issues struggled to find suitable shelter.

She agreed on the necessity of improving shelter conditions and suggested that NGOs and government bodies need to collaborate more effectively. She advocated for better training for shelter staff and the **establishment of more inclusive and accommodating facilities**.

**Pramila Sharma** from Kshamata explained their **motivation for establishing shelter homes**. Kshamata's mission is to provide **not just temporary refuge** but also **vocational training** and **counselling** to give survivors a hopeful outlook and a fresh start. She said that the **Kshamata Transformation Centre** represents their commitment to offering practical support and rehabilitation.



**Audrey Dmello** concluded the discussion by **proposing a shift in perspective**, suggesting that shelters should be **reimagined as community-based solutions** rather than isolated institutions. She argued for **integrating corporate social responsibility into the solution**, recognizing **DV as a broader societal issue** that requires community involvement and support.

The panel discussion provided a **comprehensive look at the current state of shelter homes**, the **challenges faced**, and **potential avenues for improvement**, highlighting the need for both systemic change and community-based solutions to better support survivors of DV.







## Rountable Discussion

The session was moderated by Viiveck Verma, Founder, Upsurge Global and Director of Invisible Scars Foundation. The goal was to bring together stakeholders from various backgrounds to brainstorm effective strategies to support survivors of DV. The session sought to encourage collaboration, innovation, and actionable recommendations that could be adopted by the government and different organisations working in this field.

## Initiatives for economic empowerment for survivors.

Participants highlighted the need for both economic growth and overall development for survivors. They shared several notable examples of best practices of organisations which not only provide economic opportunity but also help them with gaining skills. This approach equips survivors with valuable skills and fosters economic independence by generating income through the sale of their products. There was a consensus among participants about the need for a more holistic approach to support women.

Following the discussion the recommendations can be summed under a holistic-approach for funding to address the reintegration process for survivors. A joint proposal for CSR funding can be a solution for targeted projects and initiatives in skill building and vocational training.

Additionally, a dedicated budget for implementation of Domestic Violence Act is needed. A fund like this can help the survivors by supporting essential services and resources for providing a safe environment for them to rebuild their lives.

There is also a need for ensuring vocational training and skill-enablement for them to gain economic independence.

### Viiveck Verma

Director, Invisible Scars

### Anupama Silas

Vanitashray, Pune

### Assunta Pardhe

Chetna Mahila Vikas Kendra

### Harish Sadani

Men Against Violence and Abuse

### John Sircar Dr

Helping Hand Foundation

### Kuhoo Tiwari

One Future Collective

### Mallika Verma

Majlis

### Meena Gandhi

Sneha

### Neerja Bajaj

Aks Foundation

### Neha Chaubey

Goonj

### Reshma Jagtap

Sneha

### Ritik Sarda

SNEH Foundation

### Sanjyot Pethe

Parity Lab

### Satish Kasbe

Akanksha Foundation

### Urmila Salunkhe

Akshara Centre

### Vibhuti Patel

Anusandhan Trust

### Kavitha Sharma

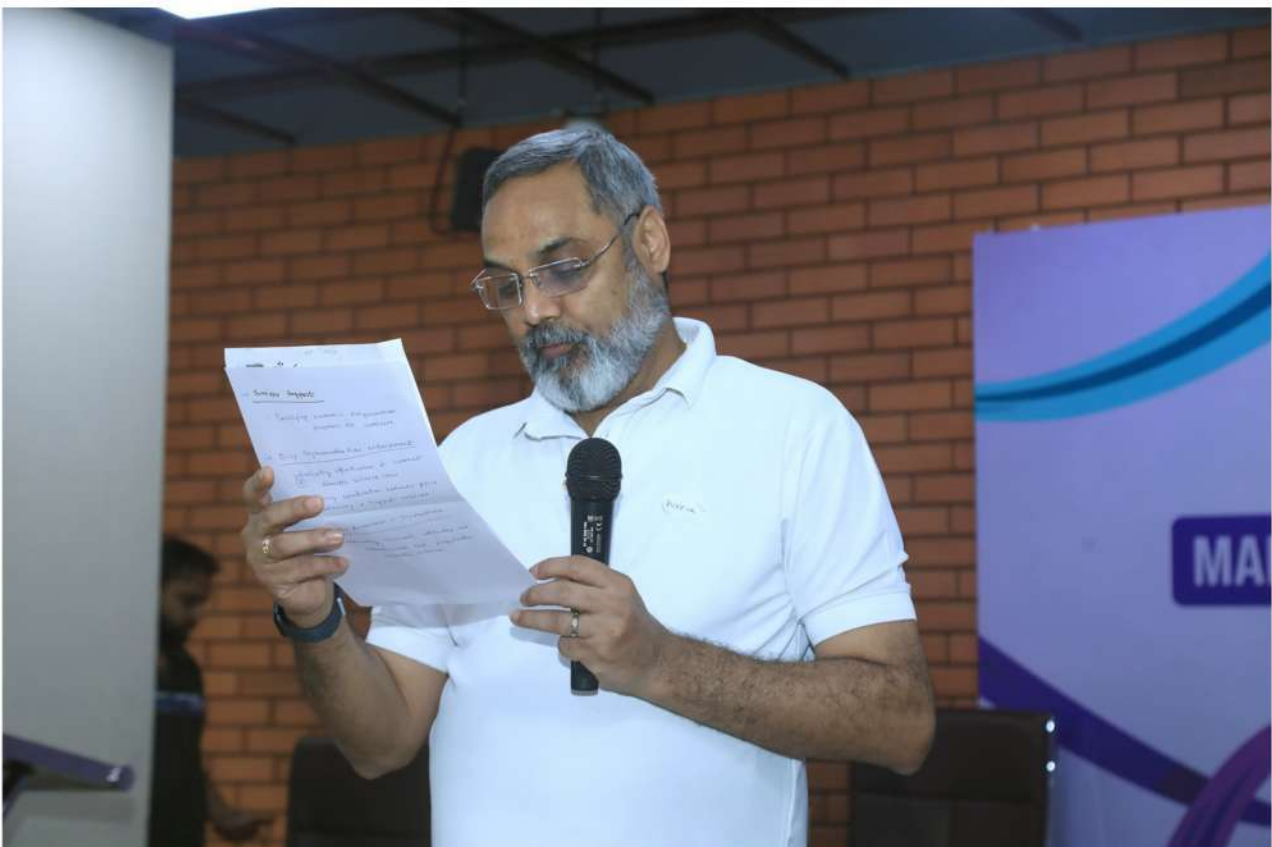
Majlis

## Strengthening coordination - police, judiciary and NGOs

To enhance the coordination between police, judiciary, and support systems, participants proposed a range of strategies and shared several practical examples.

- Increasing awareness, **knowledge of the law** and **sensitivity among police officers**.
- **Accountability mechanisms**, such as reporting issues directly to high-ranking officials, can provide a clear picture of ground realities and drive improvements.
- **Importance of educational initiatives**. The National Education Policy's mandate for social work could be enhanced by equipping student volunteers with skills to contribute more effectively to support systems.
- **Establishing forums** that include representatives from stakeholders could facilitate better communication and problem-solving.
- Fair and transparent **judicial** processes.
- **Improving coordination among NGOs** and **fostering collaboration**. WhatsApp groups to ensure synergy and effectiveness across different organisations.

Overall, a **multi-faceted approach** involving increased training, accountability, practical support measures, and improved collaboration was seen as essential for better coordination among police, judiciary, and support systems inclusive of civil society organisations.





## Way forward

**Addressing the narrative surrounding false cases** in domestic violence requires a multifaceted approach that protects victims. Some suggestions for way forward are:

- Launch initiatives to educate the public about the realities of domestic violence, dispel myths regarding 'false cases' through workshops, seminars, and media campaigns.
- Involve community leaders and influencers to promote understanding of domestic violence dynamics, fostering a supportive environment for victims.
- Review the law to bring clarity on the definition of S.85 BNS so that there is no contradiction in registering an FIR.
- Implement measures to protect victims from harassment or repercussions if their case does not result in a conviction.
- Develop SOPs for police on handling domestic violence cases
- Establish mechanisms to review judicial handling of domestic violence cases, with feedback loops to improve processes and address biases.
- Police and Judiciary training on their role and the complexities of domestic violence cases.
- Collect data on domestic violence cases, including statistics on false allegations. This data can provide insights into trends and inform policy decisions.
- Establish anonymous and safe ways for victims to report violence, ensuring their safety and confidentiality.
- Create processes for follow-up with complainants to assess their safety and well-being, reinforcing that their voices matter.



## Way forward

**Creating safe and supportive homes for single mothers** facing domestic violence is crucial for their recovery and empowerment. Some suggestions for way forward:

- **Short-Term Housing:** Establish emergency shelters that provide immediate refuge for mothers and their children. Ensure these shelters are accessible, secure, and equipped with necessary resources. Include on-site counseling, legal assistance, and child care services to help women transition safely from crisis.
- **Short to Medium-Term Housing:** Develop transitional housing options that allow single mothers to stay for several months while they stabilize their lives. This can include access to job training and educational programs. Provide workshops on budgeting, parenting, and job readiness to help mothers gain independence.
- **Subsidized Housing:** Partner with local governments and housing authorities to create subsidized housing specifically for single mothers escaping domestic violence. Implement supportive housing that combines affordable housing with wrap-around services, including mental health support and job placement.
- **Cooperative Housing:** Create cooperative living arrangements where single mothers can live together, share resources, and provide mutual support.
- **Community Centers:** Establish community centers that offer not only housing but also educational and employment resources, creating a supportive environment.
- **Advocacy for Housing Rights:** Advocate for policies that protect the housing rights of domestic violence survivors, ensuring they are not discriminated against or evicted due to their circumstances.
- **Funding and Grants:** Seek funding from government and private sources to support housing initiatives specifically for survivors of domestic violence.
- **Culturally Sensitive Services:** Ensure that housing programs are culturally sensitive and tailored to meet the diverse needs of mothers from various backgrounds.
- **Child-Friendly Spaces:** Design housing facilities with children in mind, including play areas, educational resources, and safe environments for children to thrive.

# Glimpses of Our Event



# MDVSS Posters



PRESENTS

# MAHARASHTRA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STAKEHOLDERS SUMMIT

1<sup>ST</sup> EDITION



Saturday, 6th July 2024



9:30am to 5:00pm



ITM Institute of Design & Media (ITM IDM), Floor 1, Suvridha Square, Junction of Ceaser Rd, Swami Vivekananda Rd., Andheri West-400058

PRESENTING PARTNER



VENUE PARTNER



**ITM** Institute of  
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ITM SKILLS UNIVERSITY



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(MUMBAI CITY & SUBURBAN)



DISTRICT WOMEN & CHILD  
DEVELOPMENT (MUMBAI CITY)

COMMUNITY PARTNERS



S A H I E  
Society for Advancement  
of Human Endeavor

Red Dot<sup>TM</sup>  
Foundation





# MDVSS Posters

## MAHARASHTRA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STAKEHOLDERS SUMMIT

1<sup>ST</sup> EDITION

BROUGHT TO YOU BY **invisible scars** we help you heal

CO-ORGANISED BY **majlis**

**GUEST OF HONOUR**

**Flavia Agnes**

Women's Rights Lawyer, Feminist Legal Scholar & a Pioneer of the Women's Movement in India



Saturday, 6th July 2024 9:30am to 5:00pm

ITM Institute of Design & Media (ITM IDM), Floor 1, Suvridha Square, Junction of Ceaser Rd, Swami Vivekananda Rd., Andheri West-400058

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PRESENTS

## MAHARASHTRA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STAKEHOLDERS SUMMIT 1<sup>ST</sup> EDITION

Saturday, 6th July 2024 9:30am to 5:00pm ITM Institute of Design & Media (ITM IDM), Floor 1, Suvridha Square, Junction of Ceaser Rd, Swami Vivekananda Rd., Andheri West-400058

### CHIEF GUESTS



**Judge Mr. Anant Deshmukh**  
Secretary  
District Legal Services Authority  
Mumbai City



**Ms. Shobha Shelar**  
District Officer  
Women and Child Development  
Mumbai City



**Judge Mr. Satish Hiwale**  
Secretary  
District Legal Services Authority  
Mumbai Suburban

PRESENTING PARTNER **FWX** | futureworks

VENUE PARTNER **ITM** Institute of Design & Media ITM SKILLS UNIVERSITY

DISTRICT LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY (MUMBAI CITY & SUBURBAN)

DISTRICT WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT (MUMBAI CITY)

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## MAHARASHTRA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STAKEHOLDERS SUMMIT

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CO-ORGANISED BY **majlis**

**TOPIC:**  
Challenging Misinformation On Domestic Violence & Abuse

**MODERATOR**  
**Supreet K Singh**  
Co-Founder  
Red Dot Foundation & Beyond Black





**PANELIST**  
**Sudharak Olwe**  
Internationally Acclaimed Photo Journalist



**PANELIST**  
**Sameera Khan**  
Journalist & Author of Why Lollar Women & Walk on Mumbai Streets



**PANELIST**  
**Gautam Mengle**  
Cine Journalist & Author



**PANELIST**  
**Audrey Dmello**  
Director  
Majlis Legal Centre

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**TOPIC:**  
Reimagining Shelters for Domestic Violence Survivors and Their Children

**MODERATOR**  
**Audrey Dmello**  
Director  
Majlis Legal Centre





**PANELIST**  
**Pramila Sharma**  
Senior Field Coordinator  
Kaharota



**PANELIST**  
**Susieban Shah**  
Chairperson  
Maharashtra State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (MSPCR)



**PANELIST**  
**Sangeeta Rege**  
Director  
Centre for Enquiry into Health and Allied Themes (CEHAT)



**PANELIST**  
**Deepali D Vandana**  
Co-founder & Managing Trustee  
URJA Trust

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# Acknowledgment

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the individuals and organizations whose support and contributions were instrumental in making the Maharashtra Domestic Violence Stakeholders Summit, a resounding success.

## **Our Partners**

Hosts - Invisible Scars and Majlis

Government Partners - District Legal Service Authority (Mumbai City and Suburban)  
and District Women and Child Development (Mumbai City)

Community Partners - Aks Foundation, SAHE and Red Dot Foundation

Venue Partner - ITM Institute of Design and Media

Presenting Partner - Future works

Gift Bags - Invisible Scars

Planning and organisation support - Majlis

## **Guest of Honour and Chief Guest**

Ms. Flavia Agnes, Women's rights lawyer, Feminist Legal Scholar

Judge Satish Hiwale, District Legal Service Authority, Mumbai Suburban

Ms. Shobha Shelar, District Women and Child Officer, Mumbai City

## **Moderators and Panelist**

Moderators - Ms. Supreet K. Singh, Ms. Audrey Dmello, Mr. Viveck Verma

Panelist - Ms. Shobha Shelar, Ms. Sangeeta Rege, Ms. Deepali D. Vandana, Ms.  
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Men Against Violence and Abuse Aks Foundation Goonj Helping Hands

Sneha One Future Collective Saheli HIV/AIDS Karyakarta Sangh Akanksha

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### **About Invisible Scars Foundation (ISF)**

Invisible Scars Foundation (ISF), founded by Ekta Viiveck Verma in 2016, is a non-profit organization that aims to empower 50,000 gender-based violence (GBV) survivors to reclaim their dignity and self-worth over the next five years by using technology to cross geographical boundaries. ISF provides comprehensive support, including guidance to resources like police, legal aid, and mental health services, as well as financial assistance for essential needs. With a gender-neutral approach, ISF has directly assisted over 3,700 survivors and sensitized 40,000 individuals about domestic violence across India and globally. Partnering with Urban Company in 2024, as their implementation partner across 14 cities they work in, for the Workplace Domestic Violence Policy. ISF seeks to expand its reach and help 6 lakh GBV survivors through a unified, compassionate, and inclusive platform, advocating for policy-level changes and shifting the narrative on domestic violence from a gendered issue to a behavioral problem.



### **About Majlis**

Majlis is a team of women lawyers, social workers, academicians and activists who work for the protection and promotion of women and children's rights through legal representation, advocacy and training.

Majlis' Rahat offers legal and social support to women and children victims of sexual and domestic violence.

Majlis' Flavia Agnes Centre for Learning is a multi-disciplinary hub for advancing knowledge, promoting research and fostering discourse on the intersection of gender, law and society.

March 23, 2024



# WHITE PAPER

## TELANGANA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STAKEHOLDER SUMMIT 2024 FIRST EDITION



Presented By  
**Invisible Scars Foundation**



Authored by  
**Ekta Viiveck Verma**

Founder: Invisible Scars Foundation

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# FORGING A SAFER TELANGANA

Collaborative Strategies To Combat Domestic Violence and Abuse

## INTRODUCTION

Invisible Scars Foundation (ISF) successfully organized the first edition of the Telangana Domestic Violence Stakeholders Summit on March 23rd at IIT Hyderabad. This pioneering event brought together professionals, experts and key stakeholders to address the critical issue of domestic violence and abuse in the state.

The full-day summit featured thought-provoking panel discussions that provided a platform for diverse perspectives and engaged discourse on the multifaceted challenges surrounding domestic abuse on the topics of “Setting up DV crisis centres within hospitals in Telangana” and “Increased Involvement of Corporate Social Responsibility in Gender Based Violence Issues”.

A moderated Round Table with domestic violence and abuse experts also facilitated in-depth deliberations and collaborative problem-solving on the issue of rehabilitation of abuse survivors through shelter and skilling, focussing on unique experiences of the stakeholders.

This summit was about breaking that silence and igniting constructive dialogues to drive real change. The insights gathered will undoubtedly pave the way for more informed policies and effective strategies. The outcomes and key recommendations from the expert consultations were meticulously documented in a comprehensive white paper to be submitted to the Telangana Ministry of Women and Child Development.

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## Glossary of Terms

DVA: Domestic Violence and Abuse

GBV: Gender Based Violence

CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility

RT: Round Table



# Context, Background and Objectives (1/3)

## Context

Domestic violence is a pervasive global issue and a public health crisis, affecting millions across gender, age, and socioeconomic boundaries, with women bearing the most brunt of this human rights violation. The far-reaching impact of this crisis is staggering, with the worldwide cost of violence against women estimated at a staggering \$1.5 trillion in 2016, equivalent to approximately 2% of global GDP. In India, the macro-level consequences are equally alarming, with domestic violence estimated to lower the country's economic output by \$479 million to \$880 million per year.

The reverberating effects of domestic violence extend to children, adults, and entire family units. Children face heightened risks of developing behavioural problems like hostility, anger, anxiety, and mental health issues – a cycle that often persists within families, contributing to a generation struggling with low self-esteem, addiction, and psychological challenges.

The long-term impact on adults is equally devastating, including low self-esteem, suicidal behaviour, self-destructive actions, and addictions. This erodes faith in marriage, adversely affecting children through poor parenting. Domestic violence's corrosive impact gradually undermines the family unit, perpetuating a cycle of trauma across generations.

In Telangana, recent statistics stress a troubling reality, with the state ranking second highest in reported domestic violence cases, reflecting a prevalence rate of 50.4%. This data, sourced from the Women and Men in India 2022 survey conducted by the Union Ministry of Statistics, illuminates the urgent need for concerted action at both state and national levels

# Context, Background and Objectives (2/3)

## Background

The Telangana Domestic Violence Stakeholder Summit, First Edition, held on March 23rd, 2024, took place against the backdrop of a critical and multifaceted societal challenge.

The summit represented a rare collaborative effort, bringing together privately run organizations (both for-profit and non-profit) and existing state systems. Networking among organizations in this field is seriously lacking, and capacity-building and sensitization opportunities are scarce, with professionals often lacking a platform to share their lived experiences of working with survivors.

Glaring systemic gaps exist in primary prevention, early intervention, response, recovery, and rehabilitation. Moreover, the gender-based violence (GBV) space suffers from a severe shortage of funds and funders interested in long-term change.

The TDVSS, First Edition, sought to bridge these divides and catalyse more effective, collaborative, and sustainable approaches to addressing the complex and far-reaching impacts of domestic violence in the state and beyond.

# Context, Background and Objectives (3/3)

## Objectives

### Rationale

Through this DVA summit, we intend to provide an opportunity for professionals with similar backgrounds in GBV and interests to get together, share knowledge, cultivate connections, and decide on future priorities. The systems, structures, cultures, skills, resources, and power that organisations and states require to serve their communities will be developed and strengthened as a result of this conference

### Need

The Telangana Domestic Violence Stakeholder Summit, First Edition, held on March 23rd, 2024, sought to establish an interconnected network of domestic violence and abuse (DVA) stakeholders at the state level, fostering improved collaboration and enhancing the collective capacity of gender-based violence (GBV) and DVA professionals. The summit provided a platform to continuously shape innovative practices and partnership approaches, engage in discussions about prevention and intervention strategies tailored to local culture, and collectively explore new research approaches and tools for the prevention of DVA at the state level.

# Challenges Faced by DVA Survivors in Accessing Support Services

- The actual magnitude of the problem is not well understood due to lack of robust statistics, making it difficult to form a holistic picture
- Lack of awareness, leading to perpetuation of myths
- Apathetic and untrained professionals hinder effective understanding and efforts to address DVA
- Inadequate and poorly maintained shelter options
- Lack of counselling resources, skilling, livelihood avenues, and emergency financial relief for survivors
- Comprehensive policies factoring diverse experiences of victims are lacking
- Under-recognition of male, transgender, elderly, and child survivors impact and numbers

# Welcome Address by Host

## Ekta Viiveck Verma

Ekta Viiveck Verma, founder of the Invisible Scars Foundation and gender-based violence expert, delivered a compelling welcome address at the Telangana Domestic Violence Stakeholders Summit.

She acknowledged domestic violence's pervasive and gender-transcending impact, encompassing physical, psychological, and emotional abuse. Stressing urgency for collective action, she urged attendees to collaborate in combating this pressing societal issue.

Highlighting the need for cross-sector partnerships and community engagement, Ekta presented stark statistics on domestic violence's economic and social costs. Globally, it results in \$1.5 trillion in annual losses. In India, the impact ranges from 4.79 to 8.80 million INR. Moreover, a woman in India is affected every 4.4 minutes, emphasizing the critical need for intervention. She also shared a personal anecdote illustrating the power of community support for domestic violence survivors. Her experience underscored the crucial role of women's networks and community solidarity in providing much-needed assistance.

Through her impassioned address, Ekta called upon attendees to collaborate and take decisive action. She drew attention to domestic violence's staggering human and economic costs, while highlighting the transformative potential of community-driven interventions.

# Address by Chief Guest

## Shikha Goel, IPS. ADGP: Women Safety Wing

Shikha Goel IPS, the Additional Director General of Police (Women Safety Wing) in Hyderabad, delivered an insightful address as the Chief Guest of the summit. She provided a comprehensive understanding of domestic violence, emphasizing its multifaceted nature encompassing psychological, emotional, and physical abuse, requiring a holistic approach.

Addressing the prevalent culture of silence surrounding domestic violence, Shikha shared alarming statistics – approximately 30% of reported crimes under Section 498A are related to crimes against women. She shed light on the challenges faced by law enforcement agencies, stressing the need for specialized training to handle domestic violence cases sensitively and efficiently.

Drawing from her experience at the Women Safety Wing, Shikha shared insights into the initiatives undertaken by her team. They have handled 6000 cases, conducted 20000 counselling sessions, and restored 42 percent of families affected by domestic violence.

In conclusion, Shikha Goel urged stakeholders to work collaboratively towards eradicating domestic violence. She emphasized the importance of sustained efforts from both government agencies and civil society organizations to create a safer and more inclusive society.

# First Panel Discussion (1/2)

## Setting Up DVA Crisis Centres In Hospitals In Telangana

The first panel discussion focused on the establishment of domestic violence and abuse crisis centres within private as well as government hospitals in Telangana

Moderator: Dr. Farzana Khan, Head of Programs at My Choices Foundation

### Panelists

- Dr. Evita Fernandez (Chairperson & Managing Director – Fernandez Foundation)
- Dr. Mamatha Raghuvver (Founder & Director – Tharuni NGO; Chairperson – CWC, Warangal, AP)
- Pearl Choragudi (Head of Counselling – Operation PeaceMaker, My Choices Foundation)
- G. Shailaja (Chairperson – Child Welfare Committee, Hyderabad)

### Discussion Highlights

- Dr. Fernandez highlighted the critical importance of awareness and sensitization in addressing domestic violence. She emphasized the urgent need to prioritize the establishment of crisis centres and highlighted the pivotal role of healthcare professionals in providing support to survivors
- Dr. Raghuvver highlighted the pervasive influence of patriarchy and its profound impact on domestic violence. She stressed the imperative need for healthcare professionals to receive comprehensive training in identifying and addressing domestic violence cases effectively

# First Panel Discussion (2/2)

## Setting Up DVA Crisis Centres In Hospitals In Telangana

- Pearl emphasized the crucial importance of providing psychological support to survivors of domestic violence. She advocated for training healthcare staff in empathetic listening and robust referral systems to ensure comprehensive support for survivors
- Shailaja discussed the distinct needs of young girls in crisis centres, drawing attention to the importance of early intervention in dysfunctional families. She advocated for collaboration between healthcare professionals and community leaders to prevent domestic violence.

The panelists discussed key aspects of establishing crisis centres, including raising awareness, training healthcare professionals, providing psychological support for survivors, and addressing the specific needs of young girls. They emphasized the fundamental importance of collaboration between healthcare professionals, community leaders, and NGOs to prevent and effectively address domestic violence and abuse

### Summary.

1. Awareness and Sensitization: Prioritize awareness and sensitization to address root causes of domestic violence.
2. Training for Healthcare Professionals: Provide training for healthcare staff to identify and support domestic violence survivors effectively.
3. Psychological Support for Survivors: Ensure psychological support for survivors through empathetic listening and referral systems
4. Specific Needs for Young Girls: Address specific sexual and reproductive health needs of young girls through crisis centres, focusing on early interventions and community collaboration.



# Second Panel Discussion (1/2)

## Increased Involvement of CSR in GBV Issues

The second panel discussion focused on the increased involvement of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in addressing gender-based violence issues

Moderator: Moderated by Kaumudi Nagaraju, Founder & CEO of Learning Space Foundation

### Panelists

- Kamal Nayak Founder – Good Universe; Head of CSR at ESG, DE&I at SAGE IT
- Viiveck Verma Corporate & Social Impact Leader; Founder – Upsurge Global
- Geeta Goti Executive Director of CSR – ProArch; Managing Trustee – WISHES Foundation
- Satyavati Kondaveeti Founder – Bhumika Women's Collective; Editor – Bhumika Feminist Magazine

### Discussion Highlights

- Kamal emphasized the impact of diversity and inclusion measures in impeding gender-based violence within workplace settings. He stressed the necessity for broader leadership awareness and involvement, extending beyond corporate social responsibility roles, to instigate impactful transformations
- Viiveck delved into the hurdles that corporations encounter when backing domestic violence initiatives, stressing the importance of reshaping organizational culture to prioritize employee well-being over mere compliance
- Geeta highlighted the need for corporate metrics to address the impact of gender-based violence initiatives. She advocated for crisis centres within hospitals and emphasized the importance of structural support from corporates
- Satyavatiji emphasized the importance of corporate funding for domestic violence initiatives and highlighted the need for gender-sensitive policies in workplaces

## Second Panel Discussion (2/2)

### Increased Involvement of CSR in GBV Issues

The panelists discussed strategies to enhance corporate involvement in addressing gender-based violence. This included promoting diversity and inclusion policies, shifting organizational cultures, establishing impact metrics, and providing funding for domestic violence initiatives. They emphasized the need for strong leadership engagement, structural support from corporates, and collaboration with social organizations to drive meaningful change and champion the rights of women and marginalized genders

#### Summary.

- Diversity and Inclusion Policies: Implement diversity and inclusion policies to prevent gender-based violence in workplaces.
- Organizational Culture Shifts: Shift organizational culture to prioritize employee well-being over compliance.
- Metrics for Impact Assessment: Develop metrics to assess the impact of gender-based violence initiatives in corporates
- Funding for Domestic Violence Initiatives: Provide corporate funding for domestic violence initiatives, including crisis centres within hospitals

# Round Table Discussion (1/10)

## Collaborative Brainstorming On The Issue Of Rehabilitation Of Abuse Survivors

### Overview of the Round Table Session

The round table discussion on collaborative problem-solving on the issue of rehabilitation of domestic violence and abuse survivors was divided into four comprehensive areas:

- Skill Building
- Alternate Shelter/ Shelter Homes
- Collaborative Efforts
- Miscellaneous Suggestions, Success Stories and Best Practices

The session was moderated by Viiveck Verma, the Founder of Upsurge Global and Director of Invisible Scars Foundation, with Vanitha Datla, the Vice President of ELICO Ltd., serving as the Guest of Honour. The goal was to bring together stakeholders from various backgrounds to brainstorm effective strategies to support survivors of domestic violence.

The session sought to encourage collaboration, innovation, and actionable recommendations that could be adopted by the government and different organizations working in this field

# Round Table Discussion (2/10)

## Participants Names and Organisations (1/2)

### Participants of the Round Table Session

The round table included participants from various professionals who contributed in detail to the summit. They are listed below

1	Dr. Vijay Rukmini Rao	Gramya Resource Centre for Women
2	Kanakadurga Kalidindi	Ex-Bharosa Centre Head
3	M.A. Shakeel	High Court Lawyer
4	Rubina Nafees	SAFA
5	Pearl Choragudi	My Choices Foundation
6	Farzana Khan	My Choices Foundation
7	Amrita Grace	My Choices Foundation
8	Shravya Mandadi	WE and SHE Foundation
9	Satyavati Kondaveeti	Bhumika Women's Collective
10	Ekta Viiveck Verma	Organiser, Invisible Scars Foundation
11	G. Anitha Reddy	Sakhi Centre
12	Renuka	Sakhi Centre
13	Manjula	Sakhi Centre
14	Renuka	Sakhi Centre
15	P. Prathima	Sakhi Centre
16	Kalpana	Sakhi Centre

# Round Table Discussion (3/10)

## Participants Names and Organisations (2/2)

17	Ch. Hemlatha	Sakhi Centre
18	D. Swapna	Sakhi Centre
19	G. Daniel Kumar	Public Prosecutor
20	Geeta Goti	CSR Head, ProArch
21	Kaumudi Nagaraju	Learning Space Foundation
22	P. Varalakshmi	Sayodhya Home for Women in Need
23	Devaki	Shaheen Women's Resource & Welfare Assn
24	Anusha Vadlamudi	CDEW, Women Safety Wing, TS Police
25	M. Sudha Rani	CDEW - WSW
26	A. Pooja	CDEW - WSW
27	Pulipati Jyothi	CDEW-WSW
28	K. Soujayana	Aman Vedika
29	Archana Brian	Individual (Ex-My Choices Foundation)
30	Debdutta Saha	DV Survivor
31	Dr. Anjali Agarwal	Medical Professional

# Round Table Discussion (4/10)

## Skill Building

### Introduction

Comprehensive support for domestic violence survivors must address not just their practical needs, but also their mental and emotional well-being. A crucial aspect is providing resilience-focused training to aid survivors in building the inner strength needed to overcome trauma. Equally important is ensuring that skill development opportunities are personalized to align with each survivor's unique interests and goals. To create lasting impact, it is essential to develop sustainable and scalable training programs that can empower survivors with in-demand skills and set them up for long-term success and independence

### Suggestions

1. Small and/or home-based businesses
2. Tailoring, design
3. Entrepreneurship programs
4. Culinary skills
5. Digital literacy skills
6. Eco-friendly crafting skills
7. Hospitality industry
8. Online employment, freelancing
9. Women in mobility

# Round Table Discussion (5/10)

## Shelter Homes/Alternate Shelter (1/2)

### Introduction

Leaving an abusive household is a monumental challenge for domestic violence survivors. Abusers often retain control over the survivor's possessions, leaving them with few resources to start over. Even after mustering the courage to leave, survivors face daunting practical obstacles – finding a place to go, transportation, and affording it, especially in emergencies.

The severe lack of accessible, well-equipped shelter homes across India further compounds the problem. Many survivors are unaware of the limited options available or unsure of how to access them. Even when they locate a shelter, they may be turned away due to bureaucratic hurdles, lack of documentation, or inadequate staff training.

The scarcity of public infrastructure equipped to handle domestic violence forces many survivors into destitution. Systemic gaps, from information deficits to victim-blaming attitudes, stall survivors' attempts to escape abuse and rebuild their lives. Urgent, holistic reforms are needed to strengthen the shelter system and empower survivors towards safety and independence.

There is an urgent need to explore alternate shelter options beyond government-run facilities. This includes expanding access to hostels, paying guest accommodations, government housing quarters, and a wider network of shelter homes catering to survivors from diverse economic backgrounds. Crucially, these expanded shelter options must be equipped to accommodate women with their children, providing comprehensive support during their transition.

# Round Table Discussion (6/10)

## Shelter Homes/Alternate Shelter (2/2)

### Suggestions

1. Promote awareness about available shelters, so survivors know where to get help
2. Provide temporary accommodation in girls' hostels or PGs, maintained with private or community funding
3. Utilize orphanages as shelters to offer survivors temporary refuge, care, and support
4. Implement the empty apartment housing model to provide survivors safe, private, and secure spaces in apartment complexes
5. Temporarily allocate government housing to survivors for stable and subsidized accommodation during crises
6. Utilize community halls as temporary shelters to offer survivors a safe space with basic amenities and support services
7. Provide shelter in residential government schools to offer survivors a safe and supportive environment
8. Incorporate shelter projects in corporate social responsibility (CSR) to support survivors of domestic violence
9. Use industrial spaces as discreet, safe shelters for survivors, supported by corporate partnerships and community engagement



# Round Table Discussion (7/10)

## Designing Collaborative Models (1/2)

### Introduction

The response to domestic violence appears to be fragmented, with a lack of coordinated efforts among the various stakeholders responsible for providing support and resources to survivors. Government agencies, NGOs, community groups, and other key players often work in silos, leading to gaps, inconsistencies, and inefficiencies in service delivery.

This lack of collaboration stems from factors like limited funding, competing priorities, differences in organizational missions and approaches, and an overall systemic failure to recognize domestic violence as a complex, multifaceted issue requiring a holistic, cross-sector solution.

Without strong partnerships and aligned strategies among all the stakeholders, survivors continue to face significant barriers in accessing the comprehensive support they need to escape abuse, heal, and rebuild their lives. Fostering genuine collaboration and coordination among domestic violence resource providers is crucial to creating a more seamless, survivor-centric system of care and support.

# Round Table Discussion (8/10)

## Designing Collaborative Models (2/2)

### Suggestions

- Engage healthcare workers in supporting survivors
- Involve community panchayats in survivor support for grassroots empowerment and collective action
- Involve schools in childhood development programs and normalize discussions on domestic violence from birth to promote awareness, prevention, and early intervention
- Provide training for hospital staff on handling domestic violence cases sensitively and effectively across functions
- Facilitate collaboration and training among NGOs to strengthen service delivery, funded by CSRs
- Collaborate with frontline workers such as Anganwadi and Asha workers for community outreach and support
- Engage more legal professionals to spread awareness about legal aid and accessing public prosecutors for survivors' access to legal support and representation
- Pool resources for collective fundraising efforts among NGOs to scale up impact
- Create country wide PSA campaigns that run for a minimum of 5 years, in major regional languages to create awareness

# Round Table Discussion (9/10)

## Miscellaneous Suggestions, Success Stories & Best Practices (1/2)

During the summit, compelling success stories and best practices were shared, showcasing innovative approaches to supporting survivors and preventing domestic violence. Case studies and personal testimonials highlighted the effectiveness of diverse interventions and programs in empowering survivors and fostering safer communities. These success stories served as inspiration and motivation for the stakeholders, demonstrating the positive impact that can be achieved through collaborative efforts and evidence-based strategies in addressing this critical issue. In addition to the success stories, the summit also featured discussions on cutting-edge approaches, emphasizing the need to adapt interventions to meet the varied needs of survivors. From community-based initiatives to technological solutions, these innovative approaches showcased the creativity and resilience required to tackle the challenges posed by domestic violence. By highlighting these best practices, the summit underscored the importance of continuous learning and innovation in the field of domestic violence prevention and response

# Round Table Discussion (10/10)

## Miscellaneous Suggestions, Success Stories & Best Practices (2/2)

The roundtable discussions highlighted the critical importance of raising awareness through impactful campaigns and dialogues for preventing domestic violence and supporting survivors. Equally critical was the emphasis on empowering survivors to make informed decisions, promoting their autonomy and resilience as they rebuilt their lives.

Providing education and rehabilitation programs for abusers was recognized as a key strategy to foster accountability and healthier relationships. The participants also underscored the value of financial empowerment in reducing survivors' vulnerability and enabling them to break free from coercion. Cultivating dignity, empathy, and reducing stigma were identified as vital for creating supportive environments that encourage survivors to seek help without fear of judgment. The discussions stressed the importance of sensitizing influential individuals, educating youth about respect and equality, and offering girls career opportunities regardless of marriage - all of which were seen as holistic strategies to tackle domestic violence and foster lasting change.

# Final Outcomes Of The Summit (1/2)

- Joint Working Group Creation
  - Invisible Scars Foundation will lead the effort to create and manage a joint working group of domestic violence professionals across Telangana state. This group will bring together experts and practitioners from various backgrounds to collaborate on addressing domestic violence within the Telangana region
- Joint Proposals To Corporate Social Responsibility Funders
  - The joint working group will explore developing joint proposals to tap into corporate social responsibility (CSR) funding. The focus will be on creating specific projects and initiatives that align with the CSR funding requirements of companies, in order to secure the necessary resources to support the group's domestic violence prevention and response efforts
- Online Listing Of Domestic Violence Resources
  - The joint working group will work with the government to ensure creation and maintenance of an comprehensive online listing of all available resources and agencies addressing domestic violence in Telangana
- Skill Building And Vocational Training
  - The joint working group will also act as a central coordinating body to forge partnerships with local vocational training institutes and NGOs across Telangana to develop and deliver customized skill-building programs for survivors

# Final Outcomes Of The Summit (2/2)

- Alternate Shelter/ Shelter Homes
  - The joint working group will jointly conduct feasibility studies specific to the Telangana context to assess the need and allocate appropriate resources for the establishment of temporary housing solutions for survivors in the state
- Targeted Awareness Campaigns
  - The joint working group will support the Ministry of Women and Child Development create targeted awareness campaigns tailored to the cultural and linguistic diversity of Telangana, leveraging local media channels and community platforms
- Independent Monitoring Agency
  - The government should appoint an independent agency to regularly track and monitor the utilization of all domestic violence resources and services in Telangana. This tracking will provide data on challenges and allow the ecosystem to improve utilization of support systems. This agency will also partner with the joint working group to organize regular state-level inter-agency meetings to coordinate efforts and monitor the implementation of collaborative support models

## Conclusion and Call to Action

As we work to address the outcomes and recommendations from the round table discussions, it is vital that these efforts are meticulously tailored to the unique context and needs of Telangana. Concerted action from all stakeholders, especially the Telangana government, will be essential in translating these recommendations into tangible initiatives for the welfare and prosperity of the state's citizens.

The government of Telangana is encouraged to take proactive measures in implementing the key recommendations that emerged from the round table process. Through collaborative endeavours and targeted interventions across sectors, we can aim to create a more equitable and prosperous society. By working together, we can strive to positively impact the lives of the people and contribute to their overall well-being

# Closing Address by Guest of Honour Vanitha Datla, VC & MD at Elico Ltd

During her address, Vanitha Datla emphasized the crucial role that corporations must play in combating domestic violence and abuse, with a particular focus on working women who often face these issues. She cited examples of employed women who endure abuse but remain silent due to a lack of awareness about available resources and support systems.

She reiterated the necessity for companies to allocate funds from their corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives towards organizations and programs that provide comprehensive assistance to survivors of domestic violence. She stressed that one of the most significant hurdles survivors face when attempting to leave abusive situations is a lack of economic resources and financial independence.

Vanitha garu emphasised that corporations, with their vast resources and influence, have the potential to make a profound impact in this space by not only raising awareness but also by providing tangible support to existing organisations in this space.

She pledged her unwavering commitment to supporting the stakeholders present at the summit, promising to lend her assistance in whatever capacity possible to further their efforts in addressing domestic violence.

Vanitha garu's call to action highlighted the need for a multi-faceted approach, involving both the private and public sectors, to tackle this pervasive societal issue effectively.



# Acknowledgements (1/2)

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the individuals and organizations whose support and contributions were instrumental in making the Telangana Domestic Violence Stakeholders Summit, 1st Edition, a resounding success.

## Chief Guest and Guest of Honour

We express our sincere appreciation to Shikha Goel IPS, ADGP Women Safety Wing of Hyderabad, for gracing the event with her presence and delivering an insightful address. Special thanks also to Vanitha Datla, Vice President of ELICO Ltd., for being present as the guest of honour.

- Panelists and Moderators of Panel Discussions: We express our sincere appreciation to the esteemed panelists and moderators for their invaluable contributions to the Telangana Domestic Violence Stakeholders Summit. The first panel, led by Farzana Khan, featured Dr. Evita Fernandez, Dr. Mamatha Raghuvver, Pearl Choragudi, and G. Shailaja, who provided insightful perspectives on establishing domestic violence crisis centres in Telangana hospitals. In the second panel, moderated by Kaumudi Nagaraju, Kamal Nayak, Viiveck Verma, Geeta Goti, and Satyavati Kondaveeti shared valuable insights on enhancing corporate social responsibility to combat gender-based violence.
- Participants of the Round Table Discussion: Our sincere gratitude to all the participants of the moderated round table discussion which saw the participation of Dr. Vijay Rukmini Rao, Kanakadurga Kalidindi, M.A. Shakeel, Mrudula Vemulapati, Rubina Nafees, Pearl Choragudi, Shravya Mandadi, G. Anitha Reddy, Renuka, Salomi, Manjula, Renuka, P. Prathima, CH. Lavanya Devi, Kalpana, Ch. Hemaltha, D. Swapna, Devaki, Farzana Khan, G. Daniel Kumar, Geeta Goti, Kaumudi Nagaraju, Anusha Vadlamudi, M. Sudha Rani, Rubina Nafees, Satyavati Kondaveeti, P. Varalakshmi, A. Pooja, K. Soujayana, Pulipati Jyothi, Shailaja Gondlyala, Archana Brian, Dr. Anjali Agarwal, Amrita Grace, and Ekta Viiveck Verma.

# Acknowledgements (2/2)

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the individuals and organizations whose support and contributions were instrumental in making the Telangana Domestic Violence Stakeholders Summit, 1st Edition, a resounding success.

- Invisible Scars Foundation Team Members:
  - Dr. Rithvik Ryaka for help towards note taking for the white paper
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  - Manal Doshi for her help with summit logistics
  - Viiveck Verma (Director - Invisible Scars Foundation), who is the backbone of the organisation, for overall guidance and structure to the summit and its outcomes
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# About Invisible Scars Foundation (ISF)

Invisible Scars Foundation was founded in 2016 by Ekta Viiveck Verma, a specialist, consultant, and trainer on Gender-Based Violence, as an initiative and registered as a section 8 not for profit in January 2023.

ISF envisions a world where GBV survivors are empowered with the tools and support they need to reclaim their dignity, resilience, and self-worth. Our mission is to help 50000 GBV survivors reclaim their dignity over the course of the next 5 years through using technology as an enabler of uniform, compassionate, inclusive, and networked help and not limited by geographic boundaries.

The organization aims to shift the narrative surrounding DVA from a gendered issue to recognizing it as a behavioural problem, advocating for policy-level changes in DVA redressal. The foundation assists survivors by guiding them to various resources such as police, legal aid, mental health services, and shelters. It also provides financial assistance for essential needs like food, rent, and medical/legal help.

Notably, ISF operates with a gender-neutral approach to ensure inclusivity for survivors of all genders and ages. Invisible Scars Foundation envisions a world where gender-based violence survivors reclaim their dignity, resilience, and self-worth. In 2024, ISF was signed on by Urban Company as their implementation partner across 14 cities they work in, for the Workplace Domestic Violence Policy.

With an ambitious goal to help 6 lakh GBV survivors over the next five years, the foundation aims to achieve this through a uniform, compassionate, inclusive, and networked platform, transcending geographic boundaries. With a wide reach across PAN India and NRI survivors, ISF has directly assisted 3700+ survivors directly and sensitized over 40,000 individuals about domestic violence and abuse

# Glimpses of Our Event




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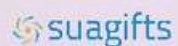
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March 23, 2024



# WHITE PAPER

TELANGANA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE  
STAKEHOLDER SUMMIT 2024  
FIRST EDITION



Presented By  
**Invisible Scars Foundation**



Authored by  
**Ekta Viiveck Verma**

Founder: Invisible Scars Foundation

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