

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

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.

Table of Contents

• Introduction	2
• Table of Contents	3
• Context and Background and Objectives of the Summit	4-6
• Challenges Faced by DVA Survivors in Accessing Support Services	7
• Welcome Address by Host: Ekta Viiveck Verma	8
• Chief Guest Address: Shikha Goel, IPS	9
• 1st Panel Discussion – Setting Up DVA Crisis Centres In Hospitals in Telangana	10-11
• 2nd Panel Discussion – Increased Involvement of CSR in GBV Issues	12-13
• Round Table Discussion	14-23
◦ Collective Brainstorming: Rehabilitation of DVA Survivors	14
◦ Participants’ Names and Organisations	15-16
◦ Skill Building	17
◦ Shelter Homes/Alternate Shelter	18-19
◦ Designing Collaborative Models	20-21
◦ Misc Suggestion, Success Stories & Best Practices	22-23
• Final Outcomes of the Summit	24-25
• Closing Address by Guest of Honour: Vanitha Datla, VC & MD at Elico Ltd	26
• Conclusion and Call to Action	27
• Acknowledgements	28-29
• About Invisible Scars Foundation	30
• Glimpses of Our Event	31
• Thank You to Our Partners	32

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 crises, 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 Raghuveer (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. Raghuveer 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
- Dr. Soma Sri Harsha for his help with badge design and summit logistics
- 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

- Our Partners

- IIIT, Hyderabad and Prof. Ramesh Loganathan for venue sponsorship at IIIT, Hyderabad
- Kaumudi Nagaraju of Learning Space Foundation for cash sponsorship
- Geeta Goti of Wishes Foundation for cash sponsorship
- Goonj for the customised attendee gift bags
- Sahaja Aharam for organic snack packets for gift bags
- Vikram Muday of Moksh events for backdrop and standees
- Siddhartha Jain of Sua Gifts for mementoes for chief guest, guest of honour and panelists

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



Thank You To Our Partners

TELANGANA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STAKEHOLDERS SUMMIT

1ST EDITION

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

OUR PROUD PARTNERS

March 23, 2024



WHITE PAPER

TELANGANA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
STAKEHOLDER SUMMIT 2024
FIRST EDITION



THANK YOU

Presented By

Invisible Scars Foundation



Authored by

Ekta Viiveck Verma

Founder: Invisible Scars Foundation



WHITE PAPER

Domestic Violence Stakeholders Summit

MAHARASHTRA

6th July, 2024

Presented By

Audrey Dmello, Director, Majlis

majlislaw@gmail.com

Ekta Verma, Director, Invisible Scars

info@invisiblescars.in

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 co-ordination 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.



Audrey Dmello,
Director, Majlis
majlislaw@gmail.com

Ekta Verma,
Director, Invisible Scars
info@invisiblescars.in

Imagine a future free from domestic violence

Table of Contents

No	Contents	Page
1	Context	3
2	Background and Objectives of the Summit	4
3	Challenges Faced by DVA Survivors	5
4	Welcome Address by Host: Ekta Viiveck Verma	6
5	Setting the Context by Host: Audrey Dmello	6
6	Chief Guest Addresses: Satish Shivale, Hon'ble Judge, Secretary, District Legal Services Authority, Mumbai Suburban.	7
8	Chief Guest Address: Shobha Shelar, District Officer, Mumbai Suburban, Department of Women and Child Development.	8
9	Guest of Honour Address: Adv. Flavia Agnes, Womens Right Lawyer, Legal Scholar and Pioneer of the womens movement in India	9
10	Panel Discussion 1 - Reimagining shelters for domestic violence victims and their children	10
11	Panel Discussion 2 - Challenging misinformation (false case/ misuse narrative)	13
12	Roundtable Discussion - Economic Empowerment of Survivors and Initiatives to improve coordination between police, judiciary, NGOs	17
13	Way Forward	20
14	Glimpses of Our Event	22
15	Acknowledgements	
16	Participants' Names and Organisations	
17	About Invisible Scars Foundation & Majlis	

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

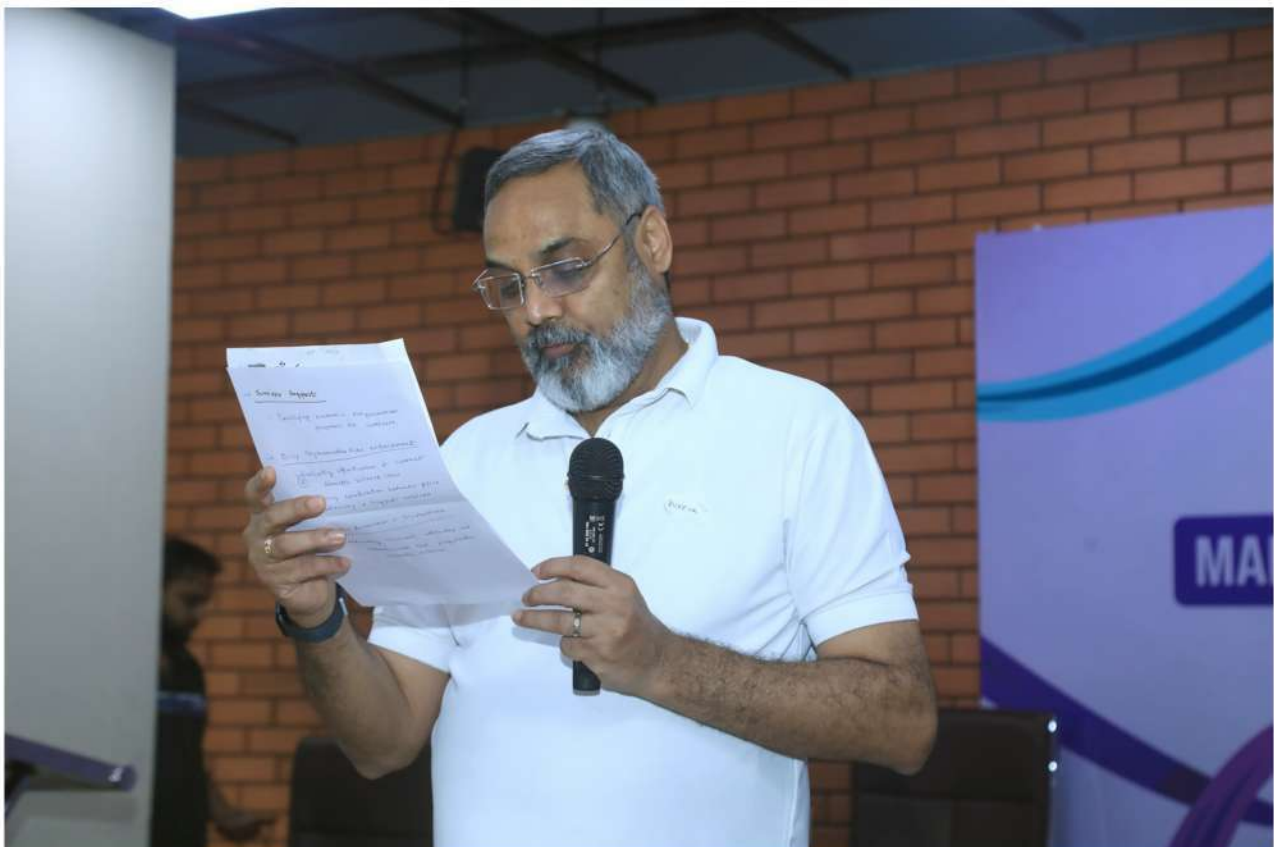
Majlis

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 suggestion 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



**invisible
scars®**
we help you heal



PRESENTS

MAHARASHTRA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STAKEHOLDERS SUMMIT

1ST EDITION



Saturday, 6th July 2024



9:30am to 5:00pm



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

PRESENTING PARTNER



VENUE PARTNER



ITM Institute of
Design & Media
ITM SKILLS UNIVERSITY



**DISTRICT LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY
(MUMBAI CITY & SUBURBAN)**



**DISTRICT WOMEN & CHILD
DEVELOPMENT (MUMBAI CITY)**

COMMUNITY PARTNERS



S A H E
Society for Advancement
of Human Endeavor

Red Dot™
Foundation



in.visiblescars



in.visiblescars



in_visiblescars



Invisible Scars Foundation

MDVSS Posters

MAHARASHTRA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STAKEHOLDERS SUMMIT

1ST EDITION

BROUGHT TO YOU BY



invisible scars
we help you heal

CO-ORGANISED BY



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, Suvidha Square, Junction
of Ceaser Rd, Swami Vivekananda Rd., Andheri West-400058

in_vissibscars f in_vissibscars x in_vissibscars in Invisible Scars Foundation



invisible scars
we help you heal



PRESENTS

MAHARASHTRA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STAKEHOLDERS SUMMIT 1ST EDITION

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

ITM Institute of Design & Media (ITM IDM), Floor 1, Suvidha 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  **futureworks**

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

 **DISTRICT LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY**
(MUMBAI CITY & SUBURBAN)

 **DISTRICT WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT** (MUMBAI CITY)

COMMUNITY PARTNERS  **aks**
अक्षर

 **SAHIE**
Society for Advancement of Human Education

 **RedDot**
Foundation

in_vissibscars f in_vissibscars x in_vissibscars in Invisible Scars Foundation

MAHARASHTRA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STAKEHOLDERS SUMMIT

1ST EDITION

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

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

BROUGHT TO YOU BY



invisible scars
we help you heal

CO-ORGANISED BY



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 Talker Women &
Risk on Mumbai Streets



PANELIST
Gautam Mengle
Crime Journalist &
Author



PANELIST
Audrey Dmello
Director
Majlis Legal Centre



MAHARASHTRA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STAKEHOLDERS SUMMIT

1ST EDITION

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

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

BROUGHT TO YOU BY



invisible scars
we help you heal

CO-ORGANISED BY



TOPIC:
Reimagining Shelters for Domestic
Violence Survivors and Their Children

MODERATOR
Audrey Dmello
Director
Majlis Legal Centre



PANELIST
Pramila Sharma
Senior Field Coordinator
Kahamata



PANELIST
Susieben 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



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.
Pramila Sharma, Mr. Sudharak Olwe, Ms. Sameera Khan, Mr. Gauntam Mengle, Ms.
Audrey Dmello

Attending Organizations

Sneha CORO Chetna Mahila Vikas Kendra THOHF Urja Trust Vanitashtray

Men Against Violence and Abuse Aks Foundation Goonj Helping Hands

Sneha One Future Collective Saheli HIV/AIDS Karyakarta Sangh Akanksha

Foundation Muktaa Charitable Foundation Cehat Parity Lab

Red Dot Foundation Citi Core Group Mumbai Smiles Anusandhan Trust Sweekar the

Rainbow Parents Akshara Centre Sakhya Kshamta

SNEH Foundation Vacha Charitable Trust

Writing and Designing the White Paper

Ms. Audrey Dmello and Ms Ekta Verma

Participants

1. **Aarya Atulkumar Kashid**
Sneha
2. **Assunta Pardhe**
Chetna Mahila Vikas
Kendra
3. **Anisha Gore**
DWCD Office Worli
4. **Anupama Silas**
Vanitashray NGO Pune
5. **Aparna Dhule**
CORO
6. **Arlene Kokate**
Majlis
7. **Aruna Desai**
Individual
8. **Audrey Dmello**
Majlis Legal Centre
9. **Brika Fernandes**
Sakhya
10. **Chandni**
Individual
11. **Chandni Chawla**
Individual
12. **Chandni Amit Raut**
Individual
13. **Deepali Vandana**
Urja Trust
14. **Flavia Agnes**
Majlis Law
15. **Gautam S Mengle**
Individual
16. **Harish Sadani**
Men Against Violence and
Abuse (MAVA)
17. **Harpreet Kalra**
Asks Foundation
18. **Hera Shaikh**
CORO India
19. **Himanshu Kulkarni**
Goonj
20. **Ishita Gime**
MCF
21. **Jenifer Billimoria**
Aks Foundation
22. **John Sircar**
Helping Hand Foundation
23. **Jyoti Shailendra Borkar**
Sneha
24. **Kavitta Sharma**
Majlis
25. **Kuhoo Tiwari**
One Future Collective
26. **Lasic**
THOHF
27. **Linda Dhakul**
St. Xavier's college
28. **Liza**
Majlis
29. **Mallika Verma**
Majlis
30. **Minu Gandhi**
Sneha
31. **Mohua Das**
The Times of India
32. **Mou Sengupta**
Individual
33. **Nameera**
Majlis
34. **Namrata**
Vacha Charitable Trust
35. **Neerja Bajaj**
Aks Foundation
36. **Neha Chaubey**
Goonj
37. **Prerna Sanas**
TISS

38. **Noreen**

City Core Group

39.

Prajakta Usha Vinayak

Saheli HIV/ AIDS

Karyakarta Sangh

40.

Pratibha Manojkumar

Sakat

Sneha

41.

Rakesh Ghone

Akanksha Foundation

42.

Reshma Jagtap

Sneha

43.

Ritik Sarda

SNEH Foundation

44.

Rupa Agarwal

Muktaa Charitable

Foundation

45.

Sakshi Palav

Special Cell for Women and District Officer, WCD,
Children

46.

Sameera Khan

Journalist

47.

Sangita Rege

Cehat

48.

Sanjyot Pethe

Parity Lab

49.

Sanjivani Dambhare

Urja Trust

50.

Pramila Sharma

Kshamata

51.

Sanobar Patel

Muktaa Charitable

Foundation

52.

Satish Dashrath Kasbe

Akanksha Foundation

53.

Satish Hiwale Judge

Secretary, DLSA, Mumbai

Suburban

54.

Seema Sachin Dhavle

Sneha

55.

Shaikh Aiman

Majlis

56.

Shakira Kaul

Individual

57.

Sheela Pawar

CORO India

58.

Shobha Shelar

District Officer, WCD,
Mumbai City

59.

Sindhu Nair

Urja Trust

50.

Somalatha Jacob

YWCA of Bombay

61.

Sujata Jadhav

Sneha

62.

Surekha

Majlis

63.

Supreet K Singh

Red Dot Foundation

64.

Sweta Xavier

Red Dot Foundation

65.

Tania Dsouza

Majlis

66.

Ujwala Guntiwar

Sneha

67.

Urmila Salunkhe

Akshara Centre

68.

Vandana Singh

Sneha

69.

Varsha Kamble

Mumbai Smiles

70.

Vikas Kadam

Prayas- TISS

71.

Vivek Verma

Invisible Scars Foundation

72.

Vibhuti Patel

Anusandhan Trust

73.

Kartik Desai

Sweekar The Rainbow

Parents

74.

Disha Chopda

Individual

75.

Aarya Sandip Mundaye

Individual

76.

Sushma Tambe

Urja Trust

77.

Divya Taneja

TISS



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.



Domestic Violence Stakeholders Summit UTTAR PRADESH

WHITE PAPER

22ND FEBRUARY, 2025

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STAKEHOLDERS SUMMIT, UTTAR PRADESH

Invisible Scars Foundation and Vanangana organised the Domestic Violence Stakeholders Summit, Uttar Pradesh, on 22nd February 2025 at IIM Lucknow, Prabandh Nagar, IIM Road, Lucknow. Invisible Scars Foundation is an NGO dedicated to raising awareness and protecting and promoting 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).

Vanangana is a rural community-based women's rights collective located in Bundelkhand, Uttar Pradesh, that has been operating from Chitrakoot since 1993 and Banda since 2003. Vanangana has been combating the grave and pervasive problem of violence against women by making Dalit women an important part of village development and thus ensuring their safety as well as an influential position in the social ladder.

Over **75 professionals, experts, and key stakeholders** from across Uttar Pradesh participated in the full-day summit, including legal practitioners, grassroots activists, social workers, researchers, and 24 survivor advocates.

The summit was structured into two panel discussions followed by a roundtable:

Panel 1: *Feminist Approaches to Safe Shelter for DVA Survivors*

Panel 2: *Exploring Justice for DVA Survivors in the Legal System*

Roundtable: *A collective brainstorming on what “skilling” for survivors of DV*

The summit aimed to facilitate dialogue, share best practices, and establish a roadmap for future interventions. The discussions and recommendations from this summit now provide a roadmap for sustained advocacy, grassroots interventions, and policy engagement, which are meticulously documented in this comprehensive white paper and will be submitted to the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Uttar Pradesh.

Table of Contents

1. Context
2. Background and Objectives of the Summit
3. Challenges faced by DVA Survivors
4. Welcome and Introductory Address by Host: Ekta Viiveck Verma and Shabina Mumtaz
5. Guest of Honour Address: Prof. Roop Rekha Verma, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lucknow and Professor of Philosophy, Activist against gender-based violence
6. Panel Discussion 1: Feminist Approaches to Safe Shelter for DVA Survivors
7. Panel Discussion 2: *Exploring Justice for DVA Survivors in the Legal System*
8. Roundtable: *A collective brainstorming on what "skilling" for survivors of DV*
9. Way Forward
10. Glimpses of the Summit
11. Acknowledgements
12. Participants' Names and Organisations
13. About Invisible Scars Foundation and Vanangana

Glossary

Context

Domestic Violence (DV) remains a pressing issue in Uttar Pradesh, deeply entrenched in socio-cultural and economic structures. While legal provisions like the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA), 2005¹ exist, implementation gaps, lack of access to justice, and societal stigma often prevent survivors from seeking redress. Addressing these gaps requires collaborative efforts across various stakeholders—civil society, legal experts, grassroots activists, policymakers, and survivors themselves.

Recognising this need, two organisations—one dedicated to legal representation, advocacy, and training to promote the rights of women and children, and the other, a rural, community-based women's rights collective in Bundelkhand, Uttar Pradesh—came together to organize Uttar Pradesh's Stakeholders' Summit on Domestic Violence. The summit aimed to facilitate dialogue, share best practices, and establish a roadmap for future interventions.

¹ [PROTECTION OF WOMEN FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT 2005.](#)

Background and Objectives of the Summit

Background

Invisible Scars Foundation and Vanangana organised the Domestic Violence Stakeholders Summit, Uttar Pradesh, on 22nd February 2025 at IIM Lucknow, Prabandh Nagar, IIM Road, Lucknow. 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. India's economic output is lowered by an estimated \$479 million to \$880 million per year due to domestic violence. Children exposed to domestic violence face higher risks of behavioural problems, including hostility, anxiety, and mental instability. This cycle often perpetuates within families, leading to low self-esteem, addiction, and other psychological challenges. Adults may face lasting mental and physical health impacts, including low self-esteem, suicidal tendencies, self-destructive behaviour, or addiction. This often undermines faith in marriage and harms children through poor parenting. Domestic violence erodes the family unit, creating weak, dysfunctional structures that perpetuate violence and intergenerational trauma. This cycle undermines societal prosperity, economic growth and increases vulnerability. Emergency services provide only short-term relief without sustainable long-term solutions, which forces many victims back into abusive environments. To address these gaps, greater coordination between the stakeholders is needed to ensure victims receive the holistic support required to rebuild their lives.

Objectives

Through this DVA summit, we intended 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 summit. This summit will help build the professional capacity of organisations participating by strengthening their network. The following needs were kept in mind while deciding to organise this summit:

- Encouraging an interconnected network of DVA stakeholders at the state level, fostering improved collaboration.
- Enhancing the collective capacity of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and DVA professionals.
- Continuously shaping innovative practices and partnership approaches on an ongoing basis.
- Exploring the legal landscape and justice mechanisms available to survivors.
- Engaging in discussions about prevention and intervention strategies tailored to local culture.
- Discussing prevention and intervention strategies relevant to local culture.
- Collectively exploring new research approaches and tools for the prevention of DVA at a state-level.

Challenges faced by DVA Survivors

Survivors of domestic violence in India face a web of challenges that often prevent them from seeking justice, escaping abuse, or rebuilding their lives. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA), 2005, was enacted to provide civil remedies, including protection orders, residence rights, and monetary relief. However, its implementation remains weak due to systemic barriers.

Delayed and Ineffective Legal Recourse

Court proceedings are notoriously slow, and enforcement of protection orders is weak. Many women are unaware of their legal rights due to a lack of legal literacy, especially in rural areas². Even when survivors approach the police, they often face apathetic or hostile attitudes, with officers discouraging them from filing complaints, urging "family reconciliation" instead³.

Economic Dependence

Economic dependence is another critical barrier. Many survivors have no financial autonomy, making it difficult to leave abusive relationships⁴. Even when skilling programs exist, they often fail to align with survivors' actual economic needs, offering low-income, unsustainable work.

Social Stigma

Social stigma and lack of community support further silence survivors. Many women fear social ostracisation or backlash from their families. Dalit and marginalised women face even greater hurdles due to caste-based discrimination when seeking shelter or justice⁵.

Safe Shelter Options

Additionally, safe shelter options are scarce and restrictive, often functioning more as confinement than empowerment spaces. Survivors also face mental health neglect, with few trauma-informed support services available.

² Chaudhuri, T. (2011). *Legal Protection Against Domestic Violence in India: Scope and Limitations*, *Journal of Family Violence*, 26(4), 319–330.

³ Jagori & UN Women. (2019). *What Will It Take? Promoting Cultural Change to End Sexual Harassment*.

⁴ Desai, M., & Patel, P. (2020). *Understanding Domestic Violence in India During COVID-19*, *Journal of Family Studies*.

⁵ Human Rights Watch. (2020). *'I Sleep in My Own Deathbed': Violence Against Women in India*.

Welcome and Introductory Address by Host: Ekta Viiveck Verma and Shabina Mumtaz

The summit commenced with an opening address by representatives from the two host organisations— Invisible Scars Foundation and Vanangana by Ekta Viiveck Verma and Shabina Mumtaz, respectively. In their remarks, the speakers acknowledged the urgency of addressing domestic violence (DV) as a structural issue rather than an isolated social problem. They emphasised that while laws like the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA), 2005 exist, their implementation remains inconsistent, and survivors—especially from marginalised communities—face multiple barriers in seeking justice, shelter, and economic independence. The hosts highlighted that GBV interventions must be survivor-centered, intersectional, and community-led, rather than relying solely on legal frameworks.

Rashmi Yadav, resident of Purani Bazar, Karvi, Chitrakoot

Rashmi was married in 2013 in Karvi itself. Her harassment started soon after the marriage, and it gradually increased. The husband and wife got separated in 2015. During this time, Rashmi gave birth to a daughter and also filed a case of 489A, domestic violence, in the court. Since then, the case has been pending, and Rashmi is wandering for justice with her daughter.

Guest of Honour Address: Prof. Roop Rekha Verma, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lucknow and Professor of Philosophy, Activist against gender-based violence

The keynote address by Prof. Roop Rekha Verma, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lucknow, philosopher, and a long-time activist against gender-based violence (GBV), set the tone for the summit. With decades of experience in academia and activism, she provided a deeply insightful reflection on the systemic nature of domestic violence (DV) and the urgent need for multi-stakeholder intervention.

Prof. Verma began by stating that domestic violence is not just a private or familial matter but a structural issue rooted in patriarchal norms, economic inequality, and caste-based oppression. She pointed out that despite legal provisions such as the DV Act, justice remains elusive for many survivors, especially those from marginalised backgrounds. She emphasised that laws alone cannot create change unless they are backed by robust implementation, institutional accountability, and community-driven support systems.

She highlighted three critical focus areas for the summit:

1. **Safe Shelter as a Right, Not a Charity** – Shelters should be empowering spaces, not just temporary relief. They must integrate mental health support, legal aid, and pathways to economic independence.
2. **Making the Legal System Accessible** – Survivors face delays, intimidation, and a lack of legal literacy. There is a pressing need for paralegal support and community legal networks.
3. **Economic Independence as Liberation** – The most sustainable way for a survivor to escape the cycle of violence is through financial autonomy. Skilling programs should be meaningful, market-aligned, and survivor-led.

Prof. Verma concluded with a call for solidarity and action, urging attendees to build survivor-centred frameworks that prioritise justice, dignity, and long-term empowerment.

Panel Discussion 1: *Feminist Approaches to Safe Shelter for DVA Survivors*

Moderated by Madhavi Kuckreja, a distinguished leader in social development, cultural preservation, and women's empowerment, this panel discussion focused on rethinking shelter models for survivors of domestic violence (DVA) from a feminist lens. The conversation delved into the challenges of existing shelter systems, the need for survivor-centric models, and best practices in ensuring safety, dignity, and long-term support for survivors.

The panel brought together four seasoned practitioners and experts:

- Hina Desai, Executive Director, SRSP, Jokahara, Uttar Pradesh
- Shinjini Singh, Lead, Measurement, Learning & Evaluation (MLE), Dasra's Rebuild India Fund
- Archana Singh, Centre Administrator, One Stop Center, Lucknow
- Ekta Viiveck Verma, Founder & Director, Invisible Scars Foundation

Together, they explored the critical gaps in the current shelter infrastructure and the potential for transformative, feminist approaches to survivor support.

Challenges in Existing Shelter Systems

1. Accessibility Issues

Hina Desai opened the discussion by highlighting the exclusionary nature of state-run shelters. She noted that Dalit, Adivasi, disabled, queer, and other marginalized survivors often face discrimination in accessing these facilities. Many shelters follow rigid bureaucratic procedures that discourage survivors from seeking help.

Ekta Viiveck Verma emphasized the urban-rural divide in shelter availability. While urban centers have some functional shelter homes, rural women often lack nearby safe spaces, forcing them to travel long distances, which adds financial and safety burdens.

2. Restrictive and Controlling Environments

Archana Singh, representing the One Stop Center (OSC) in Lucknow, acknowledged the well-intended but flawed approach of institutional shelters. Many of these spaces operate more like confinement centers than healing environments, with strict curfews, limited mobility, and lack of survivor agency. Survivors often feel they are being policed rather than supported, which discourages them from staying in shelters long-term.

Shinjini Singh from Dasra's Rebuild India Fund added that many shelters fail to provide comprehensive psychosocial and economic reintegration support, leaving survivors vulnerable to returning to abusive situations. She stressed that survivors should not have to choose between violence at home and oppression in shelter spaces.

3. Lack of Holistic Support Systems

The discussion also highlighted the absence of integrated services in most shelters. Mental health support, legal aid, skill-building, and economic rehabilitation are often fragmented or entirely missing. Survivors need more than just a roof over their heads;

they need a pathway to rebuild their lives.

Feminist Approaches to Safe Shelter

The panelists then shifted to discussing how shelters can be transformed into survivor-centred spaces that foster healing, autonomy, and long-term empowerment.

1. Decentralized and Community-Based Shelter Models

Hina Desai and Madhavi Kuckreja emphasised the need for community-led shelter models where survivors are housed within trusted local networks, such as women's collectives and self-help groups (SHGs). This model reduces stigma and isolation while fostering community-based protection mechanisms.

2. Survivor-Led Decision-Making

Ekta Viiveck Verma argued that shelters should be designed and run with survivor participation. Survivors should have a say in rules, programming, and daily operations to ensure these spaces remain empowering rather than restrictive.

3. Trauma-Informed and Healing-Centered Practices

Archana Singh stressed the need for trauma-informed care in shelter homes. This includes:

- Counseling and mental health support are integrated into daily routines.
- Creative and expressive therapy (e.g., storytelling, theatre, art).
- Survivor peer-support groups to build solidarity and resilience.

Shinjini Singh added that healing-centred approaches should also be woven into legal and economic support programs to ensure survivors are not re-traumatized by institutional processes.

4. Economic and Skill-Based Pathways to Independence

One of the biggest shortcomings of current shelter models is the lack of economic exit strategies. Without financial independence, many survivors return to abusive homes due to economic insecurity.

The panelists suggested:

- Livelihood training based on local economies and survivor aspirations rather than generic, low-paying skills.
- Partnerships with businesses, NGOs, and social enterprises to create direct employment pathways.
- Shelter-based cooperatives where survivors collectively run small businesses (e.g., tailoring units, food catering, handicrafts).

Key Takeaways and Action Points

- 1. Reforming Shelter Policies** – Advocate for flexible, survivor-led policies that prioritise agency over rigid control mechanisms.
- 2. Expanding Community-Based Shelter Models** – Strengthen village-level safe spaces, particularly for marginalised survivors.
- 3. Integrating Mental Health and Legal Aid Services** – Ensure trauma-informed support is part of every shelter's core services.
- 4. Developing Sustainable Economic Pathways** – Move beyond short-term skilling to long-term financial independence for survivors.

The discussion concluded with a powerful call to action from Madhavi Kuckreja, who urged collective responsibility in building feminist, survivor-led shelter spaces. She stressed that a shelter should not just be a place of refuge but a foundation for reclaiming life, dignity, and autonomy.

Each panelist reinforced that safe shelter is a fundamental right, not a privilege, and achieving that requires transforming existing systems into ones that centre survivor voices, intersectionality, and long-term empowerment.

The session set a critical foundation for the summit's broader objectives, reinforcing that justice for survivors goes beyond legal recourse—it must include safety, dignity, and a future free from violence.

Panel Discussion 2: Exploring Justice for DVA Survivors in the Legal System

The second panel discussion of the summit, “Exploring Justice for Domestic Violence Act (DVA) Survivors in the Legal System,” was moderated by Astha Bamba, an assistant editor and communications strategist at The Third Eye, Nirantar Trust, Delhi. The discussion brought together a diverse group of experts from the fields of journalism, law enforcement, survivor support, and grassroots activism to critically examine the accessibility, effectiveness, and gaps within India’s legal system when it comes to justice for domestic violence survivors.

The panelists included:

- **Kavita Bundelkhandi**, Editor-in-Chief and co-founder of Khabar Lahariya, an independent rural media collective.
- **Vrinda Shukla**, IPS officer and SP in the Women and Child Security Wing of 1090, the Women Helpline in Uttar Pradesh.
- **Richa Singh**, Project Coordinator at Humsafar Trust, an organization that provides legal aid and psychosocial support to survivors.
- **Avdhesh Gupta**, from the leadership team of Vanangana, a grassroots women’s rights collective working with Dalit and marginalised women in Bundelkhand.

Together, they unpacked the structural and cultural challenges that prevent survivors from seeking and obtaining justice and explored solutions for a more survivor-centred legal system.

Challenges in the Legal System for DVA Survivors

1. Barriers to Reporting and Seeking Legal Help

Kavita Bundelkhandi, drawing from her experience with Khabar Lahariya, pointed out that in rural and marginalised communities, survivors often do not report violence due to fear, stigma, and societal pressure. Many women are financially and emotionally dependent on their abusers, making it nearly impossible to approach the legal system without support. She highlighted cases where police officers refused to file FIRs, minimised the abuse, or pushed survivors to “settle” issues within the family.

Richa Singh from Humsafar Trust added that queer and transgender survivors of domestic violence face additional discrimination within the legal system. The DV Act is heteronormative in its language and does not explicitly include LGBTQ+ survivors, leaving them with even fewer avenues for justice.

2. Institutional Apathy and Police Response

Vrinda Shukla, as a senior officer in the Women and Child Security Wing of 1090, acknowledged that police insensitivity and lack of gender training remain serious obstacles. While women’s helplines like 1090 aim to create a more survivor-friendly reporting process, they cannot replace in-person police intervention or legal follow-up. She admitted that many police officers still prioritise “family reconciliation” over a survivor’s safety, delaying legal action or discouraging women from taking legal steps against their abusers.

To address this, she emphasised the need for mandatory gender-sensitive training for all police personnel, along with accountability mechanisms to ensure proper implementation of the PWDVA.

3. Legal Delays and Bureaucratic Hurdles

Avdhesh Gupta from Vanangana highlighted the slow judicial process as a major barrier to justice. Even when survivors file cases, legal proceedings can take years, forcing them to stay in unsafe conditions or rely on temporary shelters. Many survivors lack legal literacy, which means they often do not understand the process, their rights, or how to navigate the system.

Furthermore, she pointed out that most Protection Officers (POs)—who are supposed to help survivors access legal remedies under the PWDVA—are often overburdened, under-trained, and unavailable in many rural districts.

A Feminist Vision for a Survivor-Centered Legal System

After outlining the challenges, the panelists proposed concrete, feminist interventions to create a legal system that prioritises survivor safety, dignity, and justice.

1. Strengthening Local Legal Aid and Community-Led Justice Mechanisms

- Kavita Bundelkhandi emphasised the need for grassroots legal literacy campaigns so that women, especially in rural and Dalit communities, know their rights and how to access justice.
- Vanangana and Humsafar Trust have experimented with community-based dispute resolution models, where local women's collectives support survivors in navigating the legal system.

2. Reforming Police and Judicial Practices

- Vrinda Shukla argued for stronger accountability mechanisms for law enforcement, including strict action against officers who fail to register cases of domestic violence.
- Panelists also stressed the importance of fast-track courts for cases under the PWDVA to ensure survivors do not have to wait years for justice.

3. Expanding the Scope of the PWDVA

- Richa Singh from Humsafar Trust called for amendments to the PWDVA to explicitly include LGBTQ+ survivors and those in non-marital relationships.
- Avdhesh Gupta emphasised the need to expand survivor definitions in legal frameworks to include those facing violence within live-in relationships, second marriages, or extended family structures.

4. Ensuring Holistic Survivor Support

- Legal intervention alone is not enough—survivors need safe housing, financial aid, and mental health support while they pursue justice.

- Panelists stressed the need for stronger linkages between women's shelters, legal aid cells, and financial empowerment programs to create a sustainable justice ecosystem for survivors.

Key Takeaways and Action Points

- 1. Make the Legal System Survivor-Centric** – Ensure fast-tracking of cases, survivor-sensitive courtrooms, and proper enforcement of protection orders.
- 2. Strengthen Community Legal Aid** – Expand local paralegal networks, self-help groups, and women-led legal support systems in rural areas.
- 3. Hold Law Enforcement Accountable** – Train police officers in gender sensitivity and implement zero-tolerance policies for negligence in DV cases.
- 4. Expand Legal Definitions of Survivors** – Amend the PWDVA to explicitly include queer, Dalit, disabled, and other marginalised survivors.
- 5. Ensure Long-Term Survivor Support** – Link legal aid with financial and mental health services to create a holistic justice system.

The panel ended with a powerful message from moderator Astha Bamba, who emphasised that justice for survivors is not just about punishment—it's about rebuilding lives. The legal system must shift from being intimidating and bureaucratic to being accessible, survivor-friendly, and truly transformative.

The discussion underscored that justice must go beyond the courtroom—it must be felt in the everyday lives of survivors. The legal system must be a pillar of support, not another source of trauma. The session concluded with a call for collaborative action among activists, legal professionals, and policymakers to ensure that every survivor has access to timely, fair, and survivor-centred justice.

Roundtable: A collective brainstorming on what “skilling” for survivors of Domestic Violence

The final session of the summit was a roundtable discussion moderated by Viiveck Verma, Director of the Invisible Scars Foundation. This session took a holistic approach to skilling, recognising that economic empowerment for survivors of domestic violence (DV) is not just about jobs, but about rebuilding confidence, securing long-term financial stability, and ensuring access to mental health and legal support.

The discussion was designed as an interactive and participatory space, bringing together survivors, grassroots workers, legal experts, and development practitioners to collectively reimagine what skilling should look like for DV survivors. The participants identified four key pillars essential for a survivor-centered skilling framework: Livelihood, Mental Health, Legal Advice, and Economic Empowerment.

1. Skilling as a Pathway to Livelihoods and Financial Independence

The conversation began with a discussion on what kind of skilling programs work for survivors. Participants noted that most mainstream vocational training programs are generic, outdated, and do not cater to survivors' specific needs. Many programs offer sewing, beauty, or handicraft training, but do not consider market demand, survivor aspirations, or financial sustainability.

Key Challenges Identified:

- **Limited market alignment:** Many survivors struggle to find employment after training because the skills taught are either low-paying or oversaturated in the market.
- **Mobility and safety concerns:** Survivors often have restricted mobility due to social stigma, safety risks, or childcare responsibilities, limiting their options for work outside the home.
- **Lack of financial literacy:** Even when survivors secure income-generating opportunities, they lack financial management skills, making them vulnerable to economic exploitation or dependence on others.

Solutions Proposed:

- **Market-Driven and Digital Skilling:** The group emphasised the need for tech-based and remote work opportunities, such as digital marketing, content writing, data entry, and e-commerce training. These would allow survivors to work from home while building financial security.
- **Collective and Cooperative Models:** The discussion explored the potential of survivor-led enterprises, where small groups of women could co-own businesses, reducing individual risk and increasing bargaining power.
- **Building Financial Independence Beyond Skilling:** The roundtable called for long-term financial inclusion, including easy access to bank accounts, credit, and micro-financing opportunities for survivors starting businesses.

2. The Role of Mental Health in Skilling

Viiveck Verma guided the discussion toward the intersection of trauma and skilling. Many survivors experience years of psychological abuse, which affects their confidence, decision-making ability, and motivation to pursue livelihoods. Participants emphasised that without addressing mental health, skilling programs risk being ineffective.

Challenges Identified:

- Survivors often struggle with low self-esteem and self-doubt, making it difficult to engage in professional spaces or advocate for fair wages.
- Many survivors experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety, which can interfere with their ability to focus, learn, or hold long-term employment.
- Existing skilling programs do not integrate mental health services, making survivors feel unsupported when they face psychological setbacks.

Solutions Proposed:

- **Trauma-Informed Skilling Programs:** Participants called for integrating counseling and peer support groups into skilling programs, ensuring survivors receive psychosocial support alongside economic training.
- **Mentorship and Role Models:** The discussion highlighted the need for peer mentorship programs, where former survivors who have rebuilt their lives could guide new trainees, offering emotional support and real-life strategies.
- **Flexible Learning Approaches:** Since survivors may struggle with rigid schedules, skill-building programs should offer self-paced courses, hybrid learning models, and mental health days to accommodate their needs.

3. Legal Advice as an Essential Component of Skilling

The conversation then turned to why legal empowerment should be an integral part of any skilling initiative. Survivors often face ongoing legal battles related to custody, financial compensation, or protection orders, which directly impact their ability to focus on work and rebuild their lives.

Challenges Identified:

- Many survivors do not understand their rights under the law, leading to manipulation by their abusers or delays in legal action.
- Legal procedures are expensive, time-consuming, and emotionally exhausting, making it difficult for survivors to pursue justice while also focusing on livelihood opportunities.

- Lack of survivor-friendly legal aid services means that many women abandon legal battles mid-way, further disempowering them financially and socially.

Solutions Proposed:

- **Incorporating Legal Awareness into Skilling Modules:** Programs should include basic training on financial rights, inheritance laws, custody laws, and employment protections to ensure survivors are legally informed.
- **Partnerships with Legal Aid Groups:** NGOs and skilling programs should collaborate with legal organisations to provide free legal clinics for survivors, ensuring they receive ongoing legal support without financial burden.
- **Legal Workshops with Employers:** Employers should be sensitised to the legal challenges survivors face, ensuring workplace policies are survivor-friendly (e.g., allowing time off for court hearings, protection against workplace harassment).

4. Economic Empowerment Beyond Skilling

The final segment of the roundtable explored long-term economic stability for survivors. Skilling is only the first step—what follows is ensuring that survivors can sustain themselves in the long run.

Challenges Identified:

- Survivors often face discrimination from employers, particularly if they have gaps in their work history or lack formal education.
- Childcare responsibilities and social stigma often push survivors into low-paying, informal jobs with little job security.
- There is no structured financial safety net (such as survivor-specific employment schemes or start-up grants) to help survivors transition from shelters to independent living.

Solutions Proposed:

- **Employer Sensitisation and Survivor-First Hiring Policies:** Organisations and businesses should be encouraged to adopt inclusive hiring policies that prioritise survivors.
- **Flexible Work Models:** Work-from-home or hybrid models should be expanded to ensure survivors have options that suit their circumstances.
- **Access to Micro-Loans and Business Incubators:** Survivors should have access to seed funding, cooperative business models, and financial mentorship to help them launch small enterprises or self-employment ventures.

Conclusion and Key Action Points

The roundtable concluded with a powerful consensus: skilling should not be treated as a one-size-fits-all solution. Instead, it must be trauma-informed, market-relevant, and legally and financially empowering.

Key action points included:

1. Developing survivor-led skilling programs that integrate mental health and legal awareness.
2. Strengthening digital and market-driven livelihoods to ensure financial security beyond shelter homes.
3. Building partnerships with businesses and policymakers to create safer, more inclusive workplaces for survivors.
4. Ensuring legal aid and financial inclusion are part of every skilling and livelihood program.

The discussion ended with a commitment from stakeholders to advocate for survivor-centric skilling models that prioritise dignity, autonomy, and long-term empowerment.

Way Forward

The Uttar Pradesh Stakeholders' Summit on Domestic Violence brought together survivors, grassroots organisations, legal experts, law enforcement officials, and development practitioners to engage in critical discussions on addressing the gaps and challenges in supporting domestic violence (DV) survivors. Throughout the summit, the recurring theme was the need for an intersectional, survivor-centred approach that ensures lasting empowerment.

The way forward for DV survivors must not be fragmented—it must integrate skilling, sustainable livelihoods, mental health support, and legal empowerment into a comprehensive ecosystem of care and opportunity. Survivors of domestic violence do not just need immediate relief; they need long-term, structural solutions that restore their agency, security, and dignity.

The first step toward breaking the cycle of violence is to equip survivors with skills that enable them to become financially independent. However, traditional vocational training programs have often failed survivors by offering stereotypical or low-income skills with limited market demand. Actionable steps towards the new approach to skilling can be collaborating with businesses to create direct hiring pipelines for survivors, keeping a check on government and private sector incentives for companies employing DV survivors, and providing access to technology to bridge the digital divide, enabling survivors to work from safe, controlled environments.

While skilling is crucial, it is not enough on its own—survivors need direct access to sustainable livelihood opportunities that provide economic stability and self-reliance. Many survivors have children and caregiving responsibilities, making it difficult to take up conventional 9-to-5 jobs. The lack of financial safety nets forces many survivors into exploitative labor or unstable informal work. Some sustainable livelihood solutions in the form of actionable steps can include employer sensitisation programs to create workplaces that actively hire and support DV survivors, partnerships with financial institutions to provide interest-free loans and economic aid for survivors' ventures, and integrating skilling programs with direct employment placement services to eliminate job-search barriers.

Similarly, mental health is often the most overlooked aspect of survivor rehabilitation, yet it is the foundation for all other aspects of empowerment. A need for holistic mental health interventions is required in the form of scaling up mental health services within One Stop Centers (OSCs), NGOs, and shelters, training frontline workers in trauma-informed approaches to ensure survivors receive compassionate care, and destigmatising mental health discussions through public awareness campaigns.

Lastly, legal empowerment is not just about securing justice—it is about ensuring survivors have the tools to protect their rights and independence. Survivors often lack basic legal awareness about their rights to protection, maintenance, and custody, and legal aid services are underfunded, under-resourced, and inaccessible in many districts. The strengthening of legal support is crucial for survivors, which can be done through creating “Legal Literacy” modules within shelters and skilling programs, strengthening the role of Protection Officers (POs) under the PWDVA by ensuring they are well-trained and accessible to survivors, and fast-tracking DV cases in the judicial system to ensure swift justice.

The summit underscored the importance of a multi-sectoral approach in ensuring long-term empowerment for survivors of domestic violence. No single intervention—whether skilling, legal aid, or mental health support—can work in isolation. Survivors need a holistic ecosystem that simultaneously addresses economic, psychological, and legal barriers.

The way forward must include:

1. Survivor-led initiatives that ensure programs are responsive to survivors' real needs.
2. Policy advocacy for stronger implementation of the PWDVA and survivor-friendly legal reforms.
3. Collaborations between the government, the private sector, and civil society to build sustainable economic models for survivors.
4. Public awareness campaigns to destigmatise survivors and encourage community-based support.

By strengthening these pathways, we can move closer to a society where survivors of domestic violence are not just free from abuse but are fully empowered to lead safe, independent, and fulfilling lives.

Glimpses of the Summit



Acknowledgements

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all the individuals and organisations whose support and contributions were instrumental in making the Uttar Pradesh Domestic Violence Stakeholders' Summit a resounding success.

Our Partners

Hosts: Invisible Scars Foundation and Vanangana

Venue Partner: IIM Lucknow, Prabandh Nagar, IIM Road, Lucknow

Gift Bags: Goonj

Planning and Organisation Support: Vanangana

Guest of Honour and Chief Guest:

Prof. Roop Rekha Verma, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Lucknow and Professor of Philosophy, Activist against gender-based violence

Moderators and Panelists

Moderators: Madhavi Kuckreja, Astha Bamba, Viiveck Verma

Panelists: Hina Desai, Shinjini Singh, Archana Singh, Ekta Viiveck Verma, Vrinda Shukla, Kavita Bundelkhandi, Richa Singh, Avdhesh Gupta

Attending Organisations

NAV BHARTIYA NARI VIKAS SAMITI

Gramin Punarnirman Sansthan

KURSATH FOUNDATION

Jan Vikas Kendra

Sri Ramanand Saraswati Pustakalaya

Anchal Samajik Vikas Samiti

Navbharat samaj Kalyan Samity

Prayas Jan Utthan Samiti

Aarambh Foundation
Sadbhavna Trust
Sabla
Anchal samajik vikas's samity
SAHAYOG
Nari chetna Foundation
Khabar Lahariya
DEHAT India
Association for Advocacy and Legal Initiatives Trust
Astitwa Samajik Sanstha
HUMSAFAR
TARUN CHETNA
Initiative Foundation
Baseri Samajik Sansthan
Bhartiya Jan Sewa Ashram
Saajhi Duniya
Dasra- Rebuild India Fund
Gramonnati Sansthan
Vanangana
Swabhimani Samiti
Sangharsheel Mahila
Vanangana
Bhartiya Jan Kalyan Seva Sansthan
Sahayog
Social Action for Knowledge Building and Awareness Raising (SAKAR)
Mitra Bundelkhand
Peoples Voice

KALYANAM BHAVAH CHARITABLE TRUST

Manthan Foundation

People Voice

One Stop Centre

IPS 1090

The Third Eye

Bundelkhand Dalit Adhikar Manch(BDAM)

Writing and Designing the White Paper

Pranjali Sharma

Sandali Sinha

About Invisible Scars Foundation and Vanangana

Invisible Scars Foundation is a non-profit organisation headquartered in Hyderabad, dedicated to centering domestic violence and abuse conversations in the space of gender based violence. It helps Domestic violence & abuse (DVA) survivors of all ages and genders. The organisation works PAN India as well as with NRI survivors, and has covered the length and breadth of the country, supporting survivors. It aims to bring essential assistance directly to survivors' doorsteps, enabling them to focus on what truly matters during challenging times. Through a confidential, non-judgmental, compassionate, and inclusive approach, it ensures that survivors receive the assistance tailored to their specific circumstances. The organisation empowers survivors with available resources, including educational materials and customised toolkits. Invisible Scars Foundation has partnered with several NGOs, Legal Professionals, Police, and Other Domestic Violence and Abuse ecosystem stakeholders to create a countrywide network of empathetic professionals. ISF provides awareness, first-level support, mental health support, legal counselling, litigation support, shelter, skilling, livelihood, other ad hoc necessities, and policy advocacy.

Vanangana, a rural community-based women's rights collective, located in Bundelkhand, Uttar Pradesh, has been operating from Chitrakoot since 1993 and Banda since 2003. Vanangana is combating the grave and pervasive problem of violence against women by making Dalit women an important part of village development and thus ensuring their safety as well as an influential position in the social ladder. By creating platforms that allow women to come together, Vanangana enables them to identify common problems, confront them through collective action, and demonstrate the impact to the entire community. In all efforts to access justice, the organisation allows leadership to emerge from within the communities. Working strictly within the socioeconomic framework, Vanangana is uncompromising about the judicial system and promotes a multilayered application of the law, which cuts across social hierarchies.



INVISIBLE SCARS FOUNDATION

Impacting 20,000 Domestic Violence & Abuse Survivors

SERVICES WE OFFER

Survivor Support

FIRST LEVEL SUPPORT

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

LEGAL COUNSELLING

SKILLING/LIVELIHOOD

LITIGATION SUPPORT

SHELTER SUPPORT

MISCELLANEOUS

Sustainable Ecosystem Building

AWARENESS

CAPACITY BUILDING

POLICY ADVOCACY

If you or someone you know is facing
Domestic Violence & Abuse,
Reach out for Support!

HELPLINE



+91 90151 22122

Mon-Sat 9am-9pm





घरेलू हिंसा हितधारक शिखर सम्मेलन उत्तर प्रदेश

श्वेत पत्र

22 फ़रवरी, 2025

घरेलू हिंसा हितधारक शिखर सम्मेलन, उत्तर प्रदेश

इनविज़िबल स्कार्स फाउंडेशन और वनांगना ने 22 फरवरी 2025 को आईआईएम लखनऊ, प्रबंध नगर, आईआईएम रोड, लखनऊ में घरेलू हिंसा हितधारक शिखर सम्मेलन, उत्तर प्रदेश का आयोजन किया। इनविज़िबल स्कार्स फाउंडेशन एक गैर सरकारी संगठन है जो कानूनी प्रतिनिधित्व, वकालत और प्रशिक्षण के माध्यम से महिलाओं और बच्चों के अधिकारों के बारे में जागरूकता बढ़ाने और उनकी रक्षा और प्रचार करने के लिए समर्पित है। महिला वकीलों और सामाजिक कार्यकर्ताओं की हमारी टीम यौन और घरेलू हिंसा (डीवी) की पीड़ितों को कानूनी और सामाजिक सहायता प्रदान करती है। वनांगना उत्तर प्रदेश के बुंदेलखंड में स्थित एक ग्रामीण समुदाय-आधारित महिला अधिकार सामूहिक है, जो 1993 से चित्रकूट और 2003 से बांदा से संचालित हो रही है। वनांगना दलित महिलाओं को गाँव के विकास का एक महत्वपूर्ण हिस्सा बनाकर महिलाओं के खिलाफ हिंसा की गंभीर और व्यापक समस्या का मुकाबला कर रही है और इस प्रकार उनकी सुरक्षा के साथ-साथ सामाजिक सीढ़ी में एक प्रभावशाली स्थान सुनिश्चित कर रही है।

पूरे दिन के इस शिखर सम्मेलन में उत्तर प्रदेश के 75 से अधिक व्यवसायी, विशेषज्ञों और प्रमुख हितधारकों ने भाग लिया, जिनमें कानूनी व्यवसायी, ज़मीनी स्तर के कार्यकर्ता, सामाजिक कार्यकर्ता, शोधकर्ता और उत्तरजीवी अधिवक्ता शामिल थे।

शिखर सम्मेलन को दो पैनल चर्चाओं में संरचित किया गया था, जिसके बाद एक गोलमेज बैठक हुई:

पैनल 1: डीवीए उत्तरजीवियों के लिए सुरक्षित आश्रय के लिए नारीवादी दृष्टिकोण

पैनल 2: कानूनी प्रणाली में डीवीए उत्तरजीवियों के लिए न्याय की खोज

गोलमेज बैठक: डीवी उत्तरजीवियों के लिए "कौशल" क्या है, इस पर सामूहिक विचार-मंथन

शिखर सम्मेलन का उद्देश्य संवाद को सुगम बनाना, सर्वोत्तम प्रथाओं को साझा करना और भविष्य के हस्तक्षेपों के लिए एक रोडमैप स्थापित करना था। इस शिखर सम्मेलन की चर्चाएँ और सिफारिशें अब निरंतर वकालत, ज़मीनी स्तर पर हस्तक्षेप और नीतिगत जुड़ाव के लिए एक रोडमैप प्रदान करती हैं, जिन्हें इस व्यापक श्वेत पत्र में सावधानीपूर्वक प्रलेखित किया गया है और इसे उत्तर प्रदेश के महिला एवं बाल विकास मंत्रालय को प्रस्तुत किया जाएगा।

विषय-सूची

1. संख्या
2. संदर्भ
3. शिखर सम्मेलन की पृष्ठभूमि और उद्देश्य
4. डीवीए उत्तरजीवियों के सामने आने वाली चुनौतियाँ
5. मेजबान द्वारा स्वागत और परिचयात्मक भाषण: एकता विवेक वर्मा और शबीना मुमताज़
6. मुख्य अतिथि का संबोधन: प्रो. रूप रेखा वर्मा, लखनऊ विश्वविद्यालय की पूर्व कुलपति और दर्शनशास्त्र की प्रोफेसर, जेंडर-आधारित हिंसा के खिलाफ कार्यकर्ता
7. पैनल चर्चा 1: डीवीए उत्तरजीवियों के लिए सुरक्षित आश्रय के लिए नारीवादी दृष्टिकोण
8. पैनल चर्चा 2: कानूनी प्रणाली में डीवीए उत्तरजीवियों के लिए न्याय की खोज
9. गोलमेज: डीवी उत्तरजीवियों के लिए "कौशल" पर सामूहिक विचार-विमर्श
10. आगे की राह
11. शिखर सम्मेलन की झलकियाँ
12. आभार
13. प्रतिभागियों के नाम और संगठन
14. इनविज़िबल स्कार्स फाउंडेशन और वनांगना के बारे में

शब्दावली

संदर्भ

घरेलू हिंसा (डीवी) उत्तर प्रदेश में एक गंभीर मुद्दा बना हुआ है, जो सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक और आर्थिक संरचनाओं में गहराई से समाया हुआ है। जबकि घरेलू हिंसा से महिलाओं की सुरक्षा अधिनियम (पीडब्ल्यूडीवीए), 2005¹ जैसे कानूनी प्रावधान मौजूद हैं, कार्यान्वयन में अंतराल, न्याय तक पहुँच की कमी और सामाजिक कलंक अक्सर उत्तरजीवियों को निवारण की मांग करने से रोकते हैं। इन अंतरालों को संबोधित करने के लिए विभिन्न हितधारकों- नागरिक समाज, कानूनी विशेषज्ञ, ज़मीनी स्तर के कार्यकर्ता, नीति निर्माता और स्वयं उत्तरजीवियों- के बीच सहयोगात्मक प्रयासों की आवश्यकता है।

इस आवश्यकता को पहचानते हुए, दो संगठन- एक महिलाओं और बच्चों के अधिकारों को बढ़ावा देने के लिए कानूनी प्रतिनिधित्व, वकालत और प्रशिक्षण के लिए समर्पित है, और दूसरा, उत्तर प्रदेश के बुंदेलखंड में एक ग्रामीण, समुदाय-आधारित महिला अधिकार सामूहिक- घरेलू हिंसा पर उत्तर प्रदेश के हितधारकों के शिखर सम्मेलन का आयोजन करने के लिए एक साथ आए। शिखर सम्मेलन का उद्देश्य संवाद को सुविधाजनक बनाना, सर्वोत्तम प्रथाओं को साझा करना और भविष्य के हस्तक्षेपों के लिए एक रोडमैप स्थापित करना था।

¹ [PROTECTION OF WOMEN FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT 2005.](#)

शिखर सम्मेलन की पृष्ठभूमि और उद्देश्य

पृष्ठभूमि

इनविज़िबल स्कार्स फाउंडेशन और वनांगना ने 22 फरवरी 2025 को आईआईएम लखनऊ, प्रबंध नगर, आईआईएम रोड, लखनऊ में घरेलू हिंसा हितधारक शिखर सम्मेलन, उत्तर प्रदेश का आयोजन किया। घरेलू हिंसा अधिनियम, भारत में एक ऐतिहासिक कानून है, जिसका उद्देश्य पीड़ितों को चिकित्सा सहायता, मानसिक स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं और आश्रय सहित कानूनी और अन्य सहायता सेवाओं के माध्यम से व्यापक सहायता प्रदान करना है। घरेलू हिंसा के कारण भारत का आर्थिक उत्पादन अनुमानित \$479 मिलियन से \$880 मिलियन प्रति वर्ष कम हो जाता है। घरेलू हिंसा के संपर्क में आने वाले बच्चों को शत्रुता, चिंता और मानसिक अस्थिरता सहित व्यवहार संबंधी समस्याओं का अधिक जोखिम होता है। यह चक्र अक्सर परिवारों के भीतर बना रहता है, जिससे कम आत्मसम्मान, लत और अन्य मनोवैज्ञानिक चुनौतियाँ पैदा होती हैं। वयस्कों को कम आत्मसम्मान, आत्मघाती प्रवृत्ति, आत्म-विनाशकारी व्यवहार या लत सहित स्थायी मानसिक और शारीरिक स्वास्थ्य प्रभावों का सामना करना पड़ सकता है। यह अक्सर विवाह में विश्वास को कम करता है और खराब पालन-पोषण के माध्यम से बच्चों को नुकसान पहुँचाता है। घरेलू हिंसा परिवार इकाई को नष्ट कर देती है, जिससे कमज़ोर, बेकार संरचनाएँ बनती हैं जो हिंसा और अंतर-पीढ़ीगत आघात को बनाए रखती हैं। यह चक्र सामाजिक समृद्धि, आर्थिक विकास को कमज़ोर करता है और भेद्यता को बढ़ाता है। आपातकालीन सेवाएँ स्थायी दीर्घकालिक समाधानों के बिना केवल अल्पकालिक राहत प्रदान करती हैं, जो कई पीड़ितों को फिर से दुर्व्यवहार वाले वातावरण में जाने के लिए मजबूर करती हैं। इन अंतरालों को दूर करने के लिए, पीड़ितों को उनके जीवन को फिर से बनाने के लिए आवश्यक समग्र सहायता प्राप्त करने के लिए हितधारकों के बीच अधिक समन्वय की आवश्यकता है।

उद्देश्य

इस DVA शिखर सम्मेलन के माध्यम से, हमारा उद्देश्य GBV में समान पृष्ठभूमि और रुचियों वाले व्यवसायिकों को एक साथ आने, ज्ञान साझा करने, संबंध विकसित करने और भविष्य की प्राथमिकताओं पर निर्णय लेने का अवसर प्रदान करना है। इस शिखर सम्मेलन के परिणामस्वरूप संगठनों और राज्यों को अपने समुदायों की सेवा करने के लिए जिन प्रणालियों, संरचनाओं, संस्कृतियों, कौशल, संसाधनों और शक्ति की आवश्यकता होती है, उन्हें विकसित और मजबूत किया जाएगा। यह शिखर सम्मेलन अपने नेटवर्क को मजबूत करके भाग लेने वाले संगठनों की व्यावसायिक क्षमता का निर्माण करने में मदद करेगा। इस शिखर सम्मेलन को आयोजित करने का निर्णय लेते समय निम्नलिखित आवश्यकताओं को ध्यान में रखा गया:

- राज्य स्तर पर DVA हितधारकों के एक परस्पर जुड़े नेटवर्क को प्रोत्साहित करना, बेहतर सहयोग को बढ़ावा देना।
- जेंडर-आधारित हिंसा (GBV) और DVA व्यवसायिकों की सामूहिक क्षमता को बढ़ाना।
- निरंतर आधार पर नवीन प्रथाओं और साझेदारी दृष्टिकोणों को आकार देना।

- पीड़ितों के लिए उपलब्ध कानूनी परिदृश्य और न्याय तंत्र की खोज करना।
- स्थानीय संस्कृति के अनुरूप रोकथाम और हस्तक्षेप रणनीतियों के बारे में चर्चा में शामिल होना।
- स्थानीय संस्कृति से संबंधित रोकथाम और हस्तक्षेप रणनीतियों पर चर्चा करना।
- राज्य स्तर पर डीवीए की रोकथाम के लिए सामूहिक रूप से नए अनुसंधान दृष्टिकोण और उपकरणों की खोज करना।

डीवीए पीड़ितों के सामने आने वाली चुनौतियाँ

भारत में घरेलू हिंसा से पीड़ित उत्तरजीवियों को कई चुनौतियों का सामना करना पड़ता है, जो अक्सर उन्हें न्याय पाने, दुर्व्यवहार से बचने या अपने जीवन को फिर से बनाने से रोकती हैं। घरेलू हिंसा से महिलाओं की सुरक्षा अधिनियम (PWDVA), 2005, नागरिक उपचार प्रदान करने के लिए बनाया गया था, जिसमें सुरक्षा आदेश, निवास अधिकार और मौद्रिक राहत शामिल हैं। हालाँकि, प्रणालीगत बाधाओं के कारण इसका कार्यान्वयन कमज़ोर है।

विलंबित और अप्रभावी कानूनी उपाय

अदालती कार्यवाही बेहद धीमी है, और सुरक्षा आदेशों का प्रवर्तन कमज़ोर है। कानूनी साक्षरता की कमी के कारण कई महिलाएँ अपने कानूनी अधिकारों से अनजान हैं, खासकर ग्रामीण इलाकों में²। यहाँ तक कि जब पीड़ित पुलिस से संपर्क करते हैं, तो उन्हें अक्सर उदासीन या शत्रुतापूर्ण रवैये का सामना करना पड़ता है, अधिकारी उन्हें शिकायत दर्ज करने से हतोत्साहित करते हैं, इसके बजाय "पारिवारिक सुलह" का आग्रह करते हैं।³

आर्थिक निर्भरता

आर्थिक निर्भरता एक और महत्वपूर्ण बाधा है। कई पीड़ितों के पास कोई वित्तीय स्वायत्तता नहीं होती है, जिससे अपमानजनक रिश्तों को छोड़ना मुश्किल हो जाता है⁴। यहां तक कि जब कौशल कार्यक्रम मौजूद होते हैं, तो वे अक्सर पीड़ितों की वास्तविक आर्थिक जरूरतों के साथ तालमेल बिठाने में विफल हो जाते हैं, जिससे उन्हें कम आय वाला, अस्थिर काम मिल जाता है।

² Chaudhuri, T. (2011). *Legal Protection Against Domestic Violence in India: Scope and Limitations*, *Journal of Family Violence*, 26(4), 319–330.

³ Jagori & UN Women. (2019). *What Will It Take? Promoting Cultural Change to End Sexual Harassment*.

⁴ Desai, M., & Patel, P. (2020). *Understanding Domestic Violence in India During COVID-19*, *Journal of Family Studies*.

सामाजिक कलंक

सामाजिक कलंक और सामुदायिक समर्थन की कमी पीड़ितों को और भी चुप करा देती है। कई महिलाओं को सामाजिक बहिष्कार या अपने परिवारों से प्रतिशोध का डर रहता है। दलित और हाशिए पर रहने वाली महिलाओं को आश्रय या न्याय की तलाश करते समय जाति-आधारित भेदभाव के कारण और भी बड़ी बाधाओं का सामना करना पड़ता है⁵।

सुरक्षित आश्रय विकल्प

इसके अलावा, सुरक्षित आश्रय विकल्प दुर्लभ और प्रतिबंधात्मक हैं, जो अक्सर सशक्तिकरण स्थानों की तुलना में अधिक कारावास के रूप में कार्य करते हैं। पीड़ितों को मानसिक स्वास्थ्य की उपेक्षा का भी सामना करना पड़ता है, और कुछ आघात-सूचित सहायता सेवाएँ उपलब्ध हैं।

⁵ Human Rights Watch. (2020). *'I Sleep in My Own Deathbed': Violence Against Women in India*.

मेज़बान: एकता विवेक वर्मा और शबीना मुमताज़ द्वारा स्वागत और परिचयात्मक भाषण

शिखर सम्मेलन की शुरुआत दो मेज़बान संगठनों - इनविज़िबल स्कार्स फाउंडेशन और वनांगना के प्रतिनिधियों द्वारा क्रमशः एकता विवेक वर्मा और शबीना मुमताज़ द्वारा दिए गए उद्घाटन भाषण से हुई। अपने भाषणों में, वक्ताओं ने घरेलू हिंसा (डीवी) को एक अलग सामाजिक समस्या के बजाय एक संरचनात्मक मुद्दे के रूप में संबोधित करने की तत्काल आवश्यकता को स्वीकार किया। उन्होंने इस बात पर ज़ोर दिया कि घरेलू हिंसा से महिलाओं की सुरक्षा अधिनियम (पीडब्ल्यूडीवीए), 2005 जैसे कानून मौजूद हैं, लेकिन उनका कार्यान्वयन असंगत है और पीड़ित - विशेष रूप से हाशिए के समुदायों से - न्याय, आश्रय और आर्थिक स्वतंत्रता पाने में कई बाधाओं का सामना करते हैं। मेज़बानों ने इस बात पर प्रकाश डाला कि जी.बी.वी. हस्तक्षेप केवल कानूनी ढांचे पर निर्भर होने के बजाय पीड़ित-केंद्रित, अंतर्विषयक और समुदाय-नेतृत्व वाले होने चाहिए।

रश्मि यादव, निवासी पुरानी बाज़ार, कर्वी, चित्रकूट

रश्मि की शादी 2013 में कर्वी में ही हुई थी। शादी के कुछ समय बाद ही उनका उत्पीड़न शुरू हो गया और धीरे-धीरे यह बढ़ता गया। 2015 में पति-पत्नी अलग हो गए। इस दौरान रश्मि ने एक बेटी को जन्म दिया और कोर्ट में 489 ए यानी घरेलू हिंसा का मुकदमा भी दर्ज करा दिया। तब से यह मुकदमा लंबित है और रश्मि अपनी बेटी को लेकर न्याय के लिए भटक रही हैं।

मुख्य अतिथि का संबोधन: प्रो. रूप रेखा वर्मा, लखनऊ विश्वविद्यालय की पूर्व कुलपति और दर्शनशास्त्र की प्रोफेसर, जेंडर आधारित हिंसा के खिलाफ कार्यकर्ता

लखनऊ विश्वविद्यालय की पूर्व कुलपति, दार्शनिक और जेंडर आधारित हिंसा (जी.बी.वी.) के खिलाफ लंबे समय से सक्रिय कार्यकर्ता प्रो. रूप रेखा वर्मा के मुख्य भाषण ने शिखर सम्मेलन की दिशा तय की। शिक्षा और सक्रियता में दशकों के अनुभव के साथ, उन्होंने घरेलू हिंसा (डी.वी.) की प्रणालीगत प्रकृति और बहु-हितधारक हस्तक्षेप की तत्काल आवश्यकता पर गहन अंतर्दृष्टिपूर्ण विचार प्रस्तुत किया।

प्रो. वर्मा ने यह कहते हुए शुरुआत की कि घरेलू हिंसा केवल एक निजी या पारिवारिक मामला नहीं है, बल्कि पितृसत्तात्मक मानदंडों, आर्थिक असमानता और जाति-आधारित उत्पीड़न में निहित एक संरचनात्मक मुद्दा है। उन्होंने बताया कि डी.वी. अधिनियम जैसे कानूनी प्रावधानों के बावजूद, कई पीड़ितों, विशेष रूप से हाशिए की पृष्ठभूमि से आने वाले लोगों के लिए न्याय अभी भी मायावी बना हुआ है। उन्होंने इस बात पर जोर दिया कि अकेले कानून तब तक बदलाव नहीं ला सकते जब तक कि उन्हें मज़बूत कार्यान्वयन, संस्थागत जवाबदेही और समुदाय द्वारा संचालित समर्थन प्रणालियों द्वारा समर्थित न किया जाए।

उन्होंने शिखर सम्मेलन के लिए तीन महत्वपूर्ण फोकस क्षेत्रों पर प्रकाश डाला:

1. सुरक्षित आश्रय एक अधिकार है, दान नहीं - आश्रयों को सशक्त बनाने वाले स्थान होने चाहिए, न कि केवल अस्थायी राहत। उन्हें मानसिक स्वास्थ्य सहायता, कानूनी सहायता और आर्थिक स्वतंत्रता के मार्ग को एकीकृत करना चाहिए।
2. कानूनी प्रणाली को सुलभ बनाना - पीड़ितों को देरी, धमकी और कानूनी साक्षरता की कमी का सामना करना पड़ता है। पैरालीगल सहायता और सामुदायिक कानूनी नेटवर्क की सख्त ज़रूरत है।
3. मुक्ति के रूप में आर्थिक स्वतंत्रता - हिंसा के चक्र से बचने के लिए पीड़ित के लिए सबसे टिकाऊ तरीका वित्तीय स्वायत्तता है। कौशल कार्यक्रम सार्थक, बाज़ार-संरेखित और पीड़ित-नेतृत्व वाले होने चाहिए।

प्रोफेसर वर्मा ने एकजुटता और कार्रवाई का आह्वान करते हुए अपने भाषण का समापन किया तथा उपस्थित लोगों से उत्तरजीवी-केंद्रित ढांचे के निर्माण का आग्रह किया, जिसमें न्याय, सम्मान और दीर्घकालिक सशक्तिकरण को प्राथमिकता दी जाए।

पैनल चर्चा 1: डीवीए पीड़ितों के लिए सुरक्षित आश्रय के लिए नारीवादी दृष्टिकोण

सामाजिक विकास, सांस्कृतिक संरक्षण और महिला सशक्तिकरण में एक प्रतिष्ठित नेता माधवी कुकरेजा द्वारा संचालित, इस पैनल चर्चा में नारीवादी दृष्टिकोण से घरेलू हिंसा (डीवीए) के पीड़ितों के लिए आश्रय मॉडल पर पुनर्विचार करने पर ध्यान केंद्रित किया गया। बातचीत में मौजूदा आश्रय प्रणालियों की चुनौतियों, पीड़ित-केंद्रित मॉडल की आवश्यकता और पीड़ितों के लिए सुरक्षा, सम्मान और दीर्घकालिक समर्थन सुनिश्चित करने के सर्वोत्तम तरीकों पर चर्चा की गई।

पैनल ने चार अनुभवी चिकित्सकों और विशेषज्ञों को एक साथ लाया:

- हिना देसाई, कार्यकारी निदेशक, एसआरएसपी, जोकाहारा, उत्तर प्रदेश
- शिंजिनी सिंह, लीड, मापन, शिक्षण और मूल्यांकन (एमएलई), दसरा के रीबिल्ड इंडिया फंड
- अर्चना सिंह, केंद्र प्रशासक, वन स्टॉप सेंटर, लखनऊ
- एकता विवेक वर्मा, संस्थापक और निदेशक, इनविजिबल स्कार्स फाउंडेशन

साथ मिलकर, उन्होंने मौजूदा आश्रय ढांचे में महत्वपूर्ण अंतराल और उत्तरजीवी सहायता के लिए परिवर्तनकारी, नारीवादी दृष्टिकोण की क्षमता का पता लगाया।

मौजूदा आश्रय प्रणालियों में चुनौतियाँ

1. पहुँच संबंधी मुद्दे

हिना देसाई ने राज्य द्वारा संचालित आश्रयों की बहिष्कृत प्रकृति पर प्रकाश डालते हुए चर्चा की शुरुआत की। उन्होंने कहा कि दलित, आदिवासी, विकलांगता के साथ जी रहे लोग, समलैंगिक और अन्य हाशिए पर पड़े उत्तरजीवियों को अक्सर इन सुविधाओं तक पहुँचने में भेदभाव का सामना करना पड़ता है। कई आश्रय कठोर नौकरशाही प्रक्रियाओं का पालन करते हैं जो उत्तरजीवियों को मदद लेने से हतोत्साहित करते हैं।

एकता विवेक वर्मा ने आश्रय उपलब्धता में शहरी-ग्रामीण विभाजन पर ज़ोर दिया। जबकि शहरी केंद्रों में कुछ कार्यात्मक आश्रय गृह हैं, ग्रामीण महिलाओं के पास अक्सर आस-पास सुरक्षित स्थान नहीं होते हैं, जिससे उन्हें लंबी दूरी तय करनी पड़ती है, जिससे वित्तीय और सुरक्षा बोझ बढ़ जाता है।

2. प्रतिबंधात्मक और नियंत्रित वातावरण

लखनऊ में वन स्टॉप सेंटर (OSC) का प्रतिनिधित्व करने वाली अर्चना सिंह ने संस्थागत आश्रयों के अच्छे इरादे वाले लेकिन दोषपूर्ण दृष्टिकोण को स्वीकार किया। इनमें से कई स्थान उपचारात्मक वातावरण की तुलना में कारावास केंद्रों

की तरह अधिक काम करते हैं, जहाँ सख्त कर्फ्यू, सीमित गतिशीलता और उत्तरजीवी एजेंसी की कमी होती है। उत्तरजीवियों को अक्सर लगता है कि उन्हें समर्थन देने के बजाय पुलिस द्वारा नियंत्रित किया जा रहा है, जो उन्हें लंबे समय तक आश्रयों में रहने से हतोत्साहित करता है।

दसरा के रीबिल्ड इंडिया फंड की शिंजिनी सिंह ने कहा कि कई आश्रय व्यापक मनोवैज्ञानिक और आर्थिक पुनर्मिलन सहायता प्रदान करने में विफल रहते हैं, जिससे उत्तरजीवी अपमानजनक स्थितियों में वापस लौटने के लिए असुरक्षित हो जाते हैं। उन्होंने जोर देकर कहा कि उत्तरजीवियों को घर पर हिंसा और आश्रय स्थलों में उत्पीड़न के बीच चयन नहीं करना चाहिए।

3. समग्र सहायता प्रणालियों का अभाव

चर्चा में अधिकांश आश्रयों में एकीकृत सेवाओं की अनुपस्थिति पर भी प्रकाश डाला गया। मानसिक स्वास्थ्य सहायता, कानूनी सहायता, कौशल-निर्माण और आर्थिक पुनर्वास अक्सर खंडित या पूरी तरह से अनुपस्थित होते हैं। पीड़ितों को अपने सिर पर छत से ज्यादा की ज़रूरत होती है; उन्हें अपने जीवन को फिर से बनाने के लिए एक मार्ग की ज़रूरत होती है।

सुरक्षित आश्रय के लिए नारीवादी दृष्टिकोण

इसके बाद पैनलिस्ट इस बात पर चर्चा करने लगे कि आश्रयों को किस तरह से पीड़ितों पर केंद्रित स्थानों में बदला जा सकता है जो उपचार, स्वायत्तता और दीर्घकालिक सशक्तिकरण को बढ़ावा देते हैं।

1. विकेंद्रीकृत और समुदाय-आधारित आश्रय मॉडल

हिना देसाई और माधवी कुकरेजा ने समुदाय-नेतृत्व वाले आश्रय मॉडल की आवश्यकता पर जोर दिया, जहाँ पीड़ितों को महिला समूहों और स्वयं सहायता समूहों (एसएचजी) जैसे विश्वसनीय स्थानीय नेटवर्क में रखा जाता है। यह मॉडल समुदाय-आधारित सुरक्षा तंत्र को बढ़ावा देते हुए कलंक और अलगाव को कम करता है।

2. उत्तरजीवी के नेतृत्व में निर्णय लेना

एकता विवेक वर्मा ने तर्क दिया कि आश्रयों को उत्तरजीवी की भागीदारी के साथ डिज़ाइन और चलाया जाना चाहिए। नियमों, प्रोग्रामिंग और दैनिक संचालन में उत्तरजीवियों की बात सुनी जानी चाहिए ताकि यह सुनिश्चित हो सके कि ये स्थान प्रतिबंधात्मक होने के बजाय सशक्त बने रहें।

3. आघात-सूचित और उपचार-केंद्रित अभ्यास

अर्चना सिंह ने आश्रय गृहों में आघात-सूचित देखभाल की आवश्यकता पर जोर दिया। इसमें शामिल हैं:

- परामर्श और मानसिक स्वास्थ्य सहायता को दैनिक दिनचर्या में एकीकृत किया जाता है।
- रचनात्मक और अभिव्यंजक चिकित्सा (जैसे, कहानी सुनाना, रंगमंच, कला)।
- एकजुटता और तन्यकता बनाने के लिए उत्तरजीवी सहकर्मी-सहायता समूह।

शिंजिनी सिंह ने कहा कि उपचार-केंद्रित दृष्टिकोणों को कानूनी और आर्थिक सहायता कार्यक्रमों में भी शामिल किया जाना चाहिए ताकि यह सुनिश्चित किया जा सके कि संस्थागत प्रक्रियाओं द्वारा पीड़ितों को फिर से आघात न पहुंचे।

4. स्वतंत्रता के लिए आर्थिक और कौशल-आधारित मार्ग

वर्तमान आश्रय मॉडल की सबसे बड़ी कमियों में से एक आर्थिक निकास रणनीतियों की कमी है। वित्तीय स्वतंत्रता के बिना, कई पीड़ित आर्थिक असुरक्षा के कारण दुर्व्यवहार वाले घरों में लौट आते हैं।

पैनलिस्टों ने सुझाव दिया:

- सामान्य, कम-भुगतान वाले कौशल के बजाय स्थानीय अर्थव्यवस्थाओं और पीड़ितों की आकांक्षाओं पर आधारित आजीविका प्रशिक्षण।
- सीधे रोजगार के रास्ते बनाने के लिए व्यवसायों, गैर सरकारी संगठनों और सामाजिक उद्यमों के साथ साझेदारी।
- आश्रय-आधारित सहकारी समितियाँ जहाँ पीड़ित सामूहिक रूप से छोटे व्यवसाय चलाते हैं (जैसे, सिलाई इकाइयाँ, खाद्य खानपान, हस्तशिल्प)।

मुख्य बातें और कार्रवाई के बिंदु

- आश्रय नीतियों में सुधार - स्थिति-स्थापक, पीड़ितों के नेतृत्व वाली नीतियों की वकालत करें जो कठोर नियंत्रण तंत्रों पर एजेंसी को प्राथमिकता देती हैं।
- समुदाय-आधारित आश्रय मॉडल का विस्तार - विशेष रूप से हाशिए पर रहने वाले पीड़ितों के लिए गाँव-स्तर के सुरक्षित स्थानों को मजबूत करें।
- मानसिक स्वास्थ्य और कानूनी सहायता सेवाओं को एकीकृत करना - सुनिश्चित करें कि आघात-सूचित सहायता हर आश्रय की मुख्य सेवाओं का हिस्सा हो।
- सतत आर्थिक मार्ग विकसित करना - पीड़ितों के लिए अल्पकालिक कौशल से आगे बढ़कर दीर्घकालिक वित्तीय स्वतंत्रता की ओर बढ़ना।

चर्चा का समापन माधवी कुकरेजा की ओर से कार्रवाई के लिए एक शक्तिशाली आह्वान के साथ हुआ, जिन्होंने नारीवादी, पीड़ित-नेतृत्व वाले आश्रय स्थलों के निर्माण में सामूहिक ज़िम्मेदारी का आग्रह किया। उन्होंने जोर देकर कहा कि आश्रय केवल शरणस्थल नहीं होना चाहिए, बल्कि जीवन, सम्मान और स्वायत्तता को पुनः प्राप्त करने का आधार होना चाहिए। प्रत्येक पैनलिस्ट ने इस बात पर जोर दिया कि सुरक्षित आश्रय एक मौलिक अधिकार है, न कि विशेषाधिकार, और इसे प्राप्त करने के लिए मौजूदा प्रणालियों को ऐसे सिस्टम में बदलने की आवश्यकता है जो पीड़ितों की आवाज़, अंतर्संबंध और दीर्घकालिक सशक्तिकरण पर केंद्रित हों।

सत्र ने शिखर सम्मेलन के व्यापक उद्देश्यों के लिए एक महत्वपूर्ण आधार तैयार किया, यह पुष्ट करते हुए कि पीड़ितों के लिए न्याय कानूनी सहारा से परे है - इसमें सुरक्षा, सम्मान और हिंसा से मुक्त भविष्य शामिल होना चाहिए।

पैनल चर्चा 2: कानूनी व्यवस्था में डीवीए पीड़ितों के लिए न्याय की खोज

शिखर सम्मेलन की दूसरी पैनल चर्चा, “कानूनी व्यवस्था में घरेलू हिंसा अधिनियम (डीवीए) पीड़ितों के लिए न्याय की खोज,” का संचालन द थर्ड आई, निरंतर ट्रस्ट, दिल्ली की सहायक संपादक और संचार रणनीतिकार आस्था बंबा ने किया। इस चर्चा में पत्रकारिता, कानून प्रवर्तन, पीड़ितों के समर्थन और ज़मीनी स्तर पर सक्रियता के क्षेत्रों से विशेषज्ञों के एक विविध समूह को एक साथ लाया गया, ताकि घरेलू हिंसा पीड़ितों के लिए न्याय की बात आने पर भारत की कानूनी प्रणाली के भीतर पहुंच, प्रभावशीलता और अंतराल की आलोचनात्मक जांच की जा सके।

पैनलिस्ट में शामिल थे:

- कविता बूंदेलखंडी, प्रधान संपादक और खबर लहरिया की सह-संस्थापक, एक स्वतंत्र ग्रामीण मीडिया समूह।
- वृंदा शुक्ला, आईपीएस अधिकारी और उत्तर प्रदेश में महिला हेल्पलाइन 1090 की महिला और बाल सुरक्षा विंग में एसपी।
- हमसफ़र ट्रस्ट की परियोजना समन्वयक ऋचा सिंह, एक संगठन जो पीड़ितों को कानूनी सहायता और मनोवैज्ञानिक सहायता प्रदान करता है।
- वनांगना की नेतृत्व टीम से अवधेश गुप्ता, बूंदेलखंड में दलित और हाशिए पर रहने वाली महिलाओं के साथ काम करने वाली एक ज़मीनी स्तर की महिला अधिकार सामूहिक संस्था।

साथ मिलकर, उन्होंने संरचनात्मक और सांस्कृतिक चुनौतियों को उजागर किया जो पीड़ितों को न्याय मांगने और प्राप्त करने से रोकती हैं और अधिक पीड़ित-केंद्रित कानूनी प्रणाली के लिए समाधान तलाशती हैं।

डीवीए पीड़ितों के लिए कानूनी प्रणाली में चुनौतियाँ

1. रिपोर्ट करने और कानूनी सहायता प्राप्त करने में बाधाएँ

खबर लहरिया के साथ अपने अनुभव से कविता बूंदेलखंडी ने बताया कि ग्रामीण और हाशिए पर रहने वाले समुदायों में, पीड़ित अक्सर डर, कलंक और सामाजिक दबाव के कारण हिंसा की रिपोर्ट नहीं करते हैं। कई महिलाएँ आर्थिक और भावनात्मक रूप से अपने दुर्व्यवहार करने वालों पर निर्भर होती हैं, जिससे बिना समर्थन के कानूनी प्रणाली से संपर्क करना लगभग असंभव हो जाता है। उन्होंने ऐसे मामलों पर प्रकाश डाला जहाँ पुलिस अधिकारियों ने एफआईआर दर्ज करने से इनकार कर दिया, दुर्व्यवहार को कम करके आंका, या पीड़ितों को परिवार के भीतर मुद्दों को “समझौता” करने के लिए मजबूर किया।

हमसफ़र ट्रस्ट की ऋचा सिंह ने कहा कि घरेलू हिंसा के समलैंगिक और ट्रांसजेंडर पीड़ितों को कानूनी व्यवस्था में अतिरिक्त भेदभाव का सामना करना पड़ता है। घरेलू हिंसा अधिनियम अपनी भाषा में विषमलैंगिकता पर आधारित है

और इसमें LGBTQ+ पीड़ितों को स्पष्ट रूप से शामिल नहीं किया गया है, जिससे उन्हें न्याय के लिए और भी कम अवसर मिलते हैं।

2. संस्थागत उदासीनता और पुलिस की प्रतिक्रिया

1090 की महिला और बाल सुरक्षा शाखा में एक वरिष्ठ अधिकारी के रूप में वृंदा शुक्ला ने स्वीकार किया कि पुलिस की असंवेदनशीलता और जेंडर आधारित प्रशिक्षण की कमी गंभीर बाधाएँ बनी हुई हैं। जबकि 1090 जैसी महिला हेल्पलाइन का उद्देश्य पीड़ितों के लिए अधिक अनुकूल रिपोर्टिंग प्रक्रिया बनाना है, वे व्यक्तिगत पुलिस हस्तक्षेप या कानूनी अनुवर्ती कार्रवाई की जगह नहीं ले सकती हैं। उन्होंने स्वीकार किया कि कई पुलिस अधिकारी अभी भी पीड़ितों की सुरक्षा पर “पारिवारिक सुलह” को प्राथमिकता देते हैं, कानूनी कार्रवाई में देरी करते हैं या महिलाओं को उनके दुर्व्यवहार करने वालों के खिलाफ कानूनी कदम उठाने से हतोत्साहित करते हैं।

इस समस्या के समाधान के लिए उन्होंने सभी पुलिस कर्मियों के लिए अनिवार्य जेंडर-संवेदनशील प्रशिक्षण की आवश्यकता पर बल दिया, साथ ही पीडब्ल्यूडीवीए के समुचित कार्यान्वयन को सुनिश्चित करने के लिए जवाबदेही तंत्र की भी आवश्यकता पर बल दिया।

3. कानूनी देरी और नौकरशाही की बाधाएँ

वनांगना के अवधेश गुप्ता ने न्याय में एक बड़ी बाधा के रूप में धीमी न्यायिक प्रक्रिया को उजागर किया। जब पीड़ित मामले दर्ज करते हैं, तब भी कानूनी कार्यवाही में वर्षों लग सकते हैं, जिससे उन्हें असुरक्षित परिस्थितियों में रहना पड़ता है या अस्थायी आश्रयों पर निर्भर रहना पड़ता है। कई पीड़ितों में कानूनी साक्षरता की कमी होती है, जिसका अर्थ है कि वे अक्सर प्रक्रिया, अपने अधिकारों या सिस्टम को कैसे नेविगेट करना है, यह नहीं समझते हैं।

इसके अलावा, उन्होंने बताया कि अधिकांश सुरक्षा अधिकारी (पीओ) - जो पीडब्ल्यूडीवीए के तहत पीड़ितों को कानूनी उपायों तक पहुँचने में मदद करने वाले हैं - अक्सर बहुत अधिक बोझिल, कम प्रशिक्षित और कई ग्रामीण जिलों में अनुपलब्ध होते हैं।

उत्तरजीवी-केंद्रित कानूनी प्रणाली के लिए एक नारीवादी दृष्टिकोण

चुनौतियों को रेखांकित करने के बाद, पैनलिस्टों ने एक कानूनी प्रणाली बनाने के लिए ठोस, नारीवादी हस्तक्षेप का प्रस्ताव रखा जो उत्तरजीवी की सुरक्षा, सम्मान और न्याय को प्राथमिकता देता है।

1. स्थानीय कानूनी सहायता और समुदाय-नेतृत्व वाली न्याय व्यवस्था को मज़बूत करना

कविता बुंदेलखंडी ने ज़मीनी स्तर पर कानूनी साक्षरता अभियान की आवश्यकता पर ज़ोर दिया ताकि महिलाएं, विशेष रूप से ग्रामीण और दलित समुदायों में, अपने अधिकारों को जानें और न्याय तक कैसे पहुँचें।

वनांगना और हमसफ़र ट्रस्ट ने समुदाय-आधारित विवाद समाधान मॉडल के साथ प्रयोग किया है, जहाँ स्थानीय महिला समूह कानूनी प्रणाली को नेविगेट करने में पीड़ितों का समर्थन करते हैं।

2. पुलिस और न्यायिक प्रथाओं में सुधार

वृंदा शुक्ला ने कानून प्रवर्तन के लिए मजबूत जवाबदेही तंत्रों के लिए तर्क दिया, जिसमें घरेलू हिंसा के मामलों को दर्ज करने में विफल रहने वाले अधिकारियों के खिलाफ सख्त कार्रवाई शामिल है।

पैनलिस्टों ने पीडब्ल्यूडीवीए के तहत मामलों के लिए फास्ट-ट्रैक अदालतों के महत्व पर भी जोर दिया ताकि यह सुनिश्चित किया जा सके कि पीड़ितों को न्याय के लिए वर्षों तक इंतज़ार न करना पड़े।

3. पीडब्ल्यूडीवीए के दायरे का विस्तार

हमसफ़र ट्रस्ट की ऋचा सिंह ने पीडब्ल्यूडीवीए में संशोधन करने का आह्वान किया ताकि LGBTQA+ पीड़ितों और गैर-वैवाहिक संबंधों में रहने वालों को स्पष्ट रूप से शामिल किया जा सके।

अवधेश गुप्ता ने कानूनी ढाँचे में उत्तरजीवी परिभाषाओं का विस्तार करने की आवश्यकता पर बल दिया, ताकि लिव-इन रिलेशनशिप, दूसरी शादी या विस्तारित पारिवारिक ढाँचे में हिंसा का सामना करने वालों को भी इसमें शामिल किया जा सके।

4. सर्वाङ्ग को समग्र सहायता सुनिश्चित करना

केवल कानूनी हस्तक्षेप ही पर्याप्त नहीं है - न्याय की तलाश करते समय उत्तरजीवियों को सुरक्षित आवास, वित्तीय सहायता और मानसिक स्वास्थ्य सहायता की आवश्यकता होती है।

पैनलिस्टों ने उत्तरजीवियों के लिए एक स्थायी न्याय पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र बनाने के लिए महिला आश्रयों, कानूनी सहायता प्रकोष्ठों और वित्तीय सशक्तिकरण कार्यक्रमों के बीच मजबूत संबंधों की आवश्यकता पर बल दिया।

मुख्य बातें और कार्रवाई बिंदु

1. कानूनी व्यवस्था को उत्तरजीवी-केंद्रित बनाएं – मामलों की त्वरित सुनवाई, उत्तरजीवी-संवेदनशील न्यायालय और सुरक्षा आदेशों का उचित प्रवर्तन सुनिश्चित करें।
2. सामुदायिक कानूनी सहायता को मजबूत करें – ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में स्थानीय पैरालीगल नेटवर्क, स्वयं सहायता समूह और महिलाओं के नेतृत्व वाली कानूनी सहायता प्रणाली का विस्तार करें।
3. कानून प्रवर्तन को जवाबदेह बनाएं – पुलिस अधिकारियों को लैंगिक संवेदनशीलता के बारे में प्रशिक्षित करें और घरेलू हिंसा के मामलों में लापरवाही के लिए शून्य-सहिष्णुता की नीतियाँ लागू करें।
4. उत्तरजीवियों की कानूनी परिभाषाओं का विस्तार करें – समलैंगिक, दलित, विकलांगता के साथ जी रहे लोगों और अन्य हाशिए पर उत्तरजीवियों को स्पष्ट रूप से शामिल करने के लिए PWDVA में संशोधन करें।
5. उत्तरजीवी को दीर्घकालिक सहायता सुनिश्चित करें – समग्र न्याय प्रणाली बनाने के लिए कानूनी सहायता को वित्तीय और मानसिक स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं से जोड़ें।

पैनल का समापन मॉडरेटर आस्था बाम्बा के एक शक्तिशाली संदेश के साथ हुआ, जिन्होंने इस बात पर ज़ोर दिया कि उत्तरजीवियों के लिए न्याय केवल सज़ा के बारे में नहीं है – यह जीवन के पुनर्निर्माण के बारे में है। कानूनी प्रणाली को डराने-धमकाने वाली और नौकरशाही से हटकर सुलभ, उत्तरजीवी-अनुकूल और वास्तव में परिवर्तनकारी होना चाहिए।

चर्चा में इस बात पर ज़ोर दिया गया कि न्याय को अदालत से परे जाना चाहिए - इसे पीड़ितों के रोजमर्रा के जीवन में महसूस किया जाना चाहिए। कानूनी प्रणाली को समर्थन का एक स्तंभ होना चाहिए, न कि आघात का एक और स्रोत। सत्र का समापन कार्यकर्ताओं, कानूनी व्यवसायिकों और नीति निर्माताओं के बीच सहयोगात्मक कार्रवाई के आह्वान के साथ हुआ ताकि यह सुनिश्चित किया जा सके कि प्रत्येक पीड़ित को समय पर, निष्पक्ष और पीड़ित-केंद्रित न्याय मिल सके।

गोलमेज बैठक: घरेलू हिंसा के उत्तरजीवियों के लिए “कौशल” क्या है, इस पर सामूहिक विचार-मंथन

शिखर सम्मेलन का अंतिम सत्र एक गोलमेज बैठक थी जिसका संचालन इनविज़िबल स्कार्स फाउंडेशन के निदेशक विवेक वर्मा ने किया। इस सत्र में कौशल विकास के प्रति समग्र दृष्टिकोण अपनाया गया, जिसमें यह माना गया कि घरेलू हिंसा के उत्तरजीवियों के लिए आर्थिक सशक्तीकरण केवल नौकरियों के बारे में नहीं है, बल्कि आत्मविश्वास का पुनर्निर्माण, दीर्घकालिक वित्तीय स्थिरता हासिल करना और मानसिक स्वास्थ्य और कानूनी सहायता तक पहुँच सुनिश्चित करना है।

चर्चा को एक संवादात्मक और सहभागी स्थान के रूप में डिज़ाइन किया गया था, जिसमें उत्तरजीवियों, ज़मीनी स्तर के कार्यकर्ताओं, कानूनी विशेषज्ञों और विकास चिकित्सकों को एक साथ लाया गया ताकि सामूहिक रूप से यह कल्पना की जा सके कि घरेलू हिंसा के उत्तरजीवियों के लिए कौशल कैसा होना चाहिए। प्रतिभागियों ने उत्तरजीवी-केंद्रित कौशल ढांचे के लिए आवश्यक चार प्रमुख स्तंभों की पहचान की - आजीविका, मानसिक स्वास्थ्य, कानूनी सलाह और आर्थिक सशक्तीकरण।

1. आजीविका और वित्तीय स्वतंत्रता के मार्ग के रूप में कौशल विकास

बातचीत की शुरुआत इस बात पर चर्चा से हुई कि किस तरह के कौशल कार्यक्रम पीड़ितों के लिए कारगर हैं। प्रतिभागियों ने कहा कि ज़्यादातर मुख्यधारा के व्यावसायिक प्रशिक्षण कार्यक्रम सामान्य, पुराने हैं और उत्तरजीवियों की विशिष्ट ज़रूरतों को पूरा नहीं करते हैं। कई कार्यक्रम सिलाई, सौंदर्य या हस्तकला प्रशिक्षण प्रदान करते हैं, लेकिन बाज़ार की मांग, पीड़ितों की आकांक्षाओं या वित्तीय स्थिरता पर विचार नहीं करते हैं।

पहचानी गई प्रमुख चुनौतियाँ:

- सीमित बाज़ार संरेखण - कई उत्तरजीवी प्रशिक्षण के बाद भी रोज़गार पाने के लिए संघर्ष करते हैं क्योंकि सिखाए गए कौशल या तो कम वेतन वाले होते हैं या बाज़ार में अत्यधिक संतृप्त होते हैं।
- गतिशीलता और सुरक्षा संबंधी चिंताएँ - उत्तरजीवियों की अक्सर सामाजिक कलंक, सुरक्षा जोखिम या बच्चों की देखभाल की ज़िम्मेदारियों के कारण गतिशीलता सीमित होती है, जिससे घर के बाहर काम करने के उनके विकल्प सीमित हो जाते हैं।
- वित्तीय साक्षरता की कमी - जब उत्तरजीवी आय-सृजन के अवसर प्राप्त करते हैं, तब भी उनके पास वित्तीय प्रबंधन कौशल की कमी होती है, जिससे वे आर्थिक शोषण या दूसरों पर निर्भरता के प्रति कमज़ोर हो जाते हैं।

प्रस्तावित समाधान:

- बाज़ार - संचालित और डिजिटल कौशल - समूह ने तकनीक-आधारित और दूरस्थ कार्य अवसरों की आवश्यकता पर ज़ोर दिया, जैसे कि डिजिटल मार्केटिंग, कंटेंट राइटिंग, डेटा एंट्री और ई-कॉमर्स प्रशिक्षण। ये उत्तरजीवियों को घर से काम करने और वित्तीय सुरक्षा बनाने की अनुमति देंगे।

- सामूहिक और सहकारी मॉडल - चर्चा में उत्तरजीवियों के नेतृत्व वाले उद्यमों की संभावना का पता लगाया गया, जहाँ महिलाओं के छोटे समूह व्यवसायों का सह-स्वामित्व कर सकते हैं, जिससे व्यक्तिगत जोखिम कम हो सकता है और सौदेबाजी की शक्ति बढ़ सकती है।
- कौशल से परे वित्तीय स्वतंत्रता का निर्माण - गोलमेज बैठक ने दीर्घकालिक वित्तीय समावेशन का आह्वान किया, जिसमें व्यवसाय शुरू करने वाले उत्तरजीवियों के लिए बैंक खातों, ऋण और माइक्रो-फाइनेंसिंग अवसरों तक आसान पहुँच शामिल है।

2. कौशल विकास में मानसिक स्वास्थ्य की भूमिका

विवेक वर्मा ने चर्चा को आघात और कौशल विकास के प्रतिच्छेदन की ओर निर्देशित किया। कई उत्तरजीवी वर्षों तक मनोवैज्ञानिक दुर्व्यवहार का अनुभव करते हैं, जो उनके आत्मविश्वास, निर्णय लेने की क्षमता और आजीविका को आगे बढ़ाने की प्रेरणा को प्रभावित करता है। प्रतिभागियों ने इस बात पर जोर दिया कि मानसिक स्वास्थ्य को संबोधित किए बिना, कौशल विकास कार्यक्रम अप्रभावी होने का जोखिम उठाते हैं।

पहचानी गई चुनौतियाँ:

- पीड़ित अक्सर कम आत्मसम्मान और आत्म-संदेह से जूझते हैं, जिससे पेशेवर स्थानों में शामिल होना या उचित वेतन की वकालत करना मुश्किल हो जाता है।
- कई पीड़ित पोस्ट-ट्रॉमेटिक स्ट्रेस डिसऑर्डर (PTSD), अवसाद और चिंता का अनुभव करते हैं, जो उनके ध्यान केंद्रित करने, सीखने या दीर्घकालिक रोजगार रखने की क्षमता में बाधा डाल सकता है।
- मौजूदा कौशल विकास कार्यक्रम मानसिक स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं को एकीकृत नहीं करते हैं, जिससे पीड़ित मनोवैज्ञानिक असफलताओं का सामना करने पर खुद को असमर्थ महसूस करते हैं।

प्रस्तावित समाधान:

- आघात-सूचित कौशल विकास कार्यक्रम - प्रतिभागियों ने कौशल विकास कार्यक्रमों में परामर्श और सहकर्मी सहायता समूहों को एकीकृत करने का आह्वान किया, ताकि उत्तरजीवियों को आर्थिक प्रशिक्षण के साथ-साथ मनोवैज्ञानिक सहायता भी मिले।
- मेंटरशिप और रोल मॉडल - चर्चा में सहकर्मी मेंटरशिप कार्यक्रमों की आवश्यकता पर प्रकाश डाला गया, जहाँ पूर्व उत्तरजीवी जिन्होंने अपने जीवन को फिर से बनाया है, वे नए प्रशिक्षुओं का मार्गदर्शन कर सकते हैं, भावनात्मक समर्थन और वास्तविक जीवन की रणनीतियाँ प्रदान कर सकते हैं।
- अलग-अलग तरह से सीखने के दृष्टिकोण - चूँकि घरेलू हिंसा के उत्तरजीवी कठोर शेड्यूल के साथ संघर्ष कर सकते हैं, इसलिए कौशल-निर्माण कार्यक्रमों को उनकी ज़रूरतों को पूरा करने के लिए स्व-गति वाले पाठ्यक्रम, हाइब्रिड लर्निंग मॉडल और मानसिक स्वास्थ्य दिवस प्रदान करने चाहिए।

3. कौशल विकास के एक आवश्यक घटक के रूप में कानूनी सलाह

फिर बातचीत इस बात पर केंद्रित हुई कि कानूनी सशक्तिकरण किसी भी कौशल विकास पहल का अभिन्न अंग क्यों होना चाहिए। उत्तरजीवियों को अक्सर हिरासत, वित्तीय मुआवज़ा या सुरक्षा आदेशों से संबंधित चल रही कानूनी लड़ाइयों का सामना करना पड़ता है, जो सीधे तौर पर उनके काम पर ध्यान केंद्रित करने और अपने जीवन को फिर से बनाने की क्षमता को प्रभावित करते हैं।

पहचानी गई चुनौतियाँ:

- कई उत्तरजीवी कानून के तहत अपने अधिकारों को नहीं समझते हैं, जिसके कारण उनके साथ दुर्व्यवहार करने वाले या कानूनी कार्रवाई में देरी होती है।
- कानूनी प्रक्रियाएँ महंगी, समय लेने वाली और भावनात्मक रूप से थका देने वाली होती हैं, जिससे उत्तरजीवियों के लिए न्याय प्राप्त करना और साथ ही आजीविका के अवसरों पर ध्यान केंद्रित करना मुश्किल हो जाता है।
- उत्तरजीवियों के अनुकूल कानूनी सहायता सेवाओं की कमी का मतलब है कि कई महिलाएँ कानूनी लड़ाई को बीच में ही छोड़ देती हैं, जिससे वे आर्थिक और सामाजिक रूप से और भी कमज़ोर हो जाती हैं।

प्रस्तावित समाधान:

- कौशल विकास मॉड्यूल में कानूनी जागरूकता को शामिल करना - कार्यक्रमों में वित्तीय अधिकारों, विरासत कानूनों, हिरासत कानूनों और रोजगार सुरक्षा पर बुनियादी प्रशिक्षण शामिल होना चाहिए ताकि यह सुनिश्चित किया जा सके कि उत्तरजीवियों को कानूनी रूप से जानकारी हो।
- कानूनी सहायता समूहों के साथ भागीदारी - गैर सरकारी संगठनों और कौशल कार्यक्रमों को कानूनी संगठनों के साथ मिलकर पीड़ितों के लिए निःशुल्क कानूनी क्लीनिक उपलब्ध कराने चाहिए, ताकि यह सुनिश्चित हो सके कि उन्हें बिना किसी वित्तीय बोझ के निरंतर कानूनी सहायता मिलती रहे।
- नियोक्ताओं के साथ कानूनी कार्यशालाएँ - नियोक्ताओं को पीड़ितों के सामने आने वाली कानूनी चुनौतियों के प्रति संवेदनशील होना चाहिए, यह सुनिश्चित करना चाहिए कि कार्यस्थल की नीतियाँ पीड़ितों के अनुकूल हों (जैसे, अदालती सुनवाई के लिए समय निकालना, कार्यस्थल पर उत्पीड़न से सुरक्षा)।

4. कौशल से परे आर्थिक सशक्तिकरण

गोलमेज बैठक के अंतिम खंड में उत्तरजीवियों के लिए दीर्घकालिक आर्थिक स्थिरता की खोज की गई। कौशल केवल पहला कदम है - इसके बाद यह सुनिश्चित करना है कि उत्तरजीवी लंबे समय तक खुद को बनाए रख सकें।

पहचानी गई चुनौतियाँ:

- उत्तरजीवियों को अक्सर नियोक्ताओं से भेदभाव का सामना करना पड़ता है, खासकर अगर उनके कार्य इतिहास में अंतराल है या औपचारिक शिक्षा की कमी है।
- बच्चों की देखभाल की ज़िम्मेदारियाँ और सामाजिक कलंक अक्सर उत्तरजीवियों को कम वेतन वाली, अनौपचारिक नौकरियों में धकेल देते हैं, जिसमें नौकरी की सुरक्षा बहुत कम होती है।
- उत्तरजीवियों को आश्रय से स्वतंत्र जीवन जीने में मदद करने के लिए कोई संरचित वित्तीय सुरक्षा जाल (जैसे उत्तरजीवी-विशिष्ट रोजगार योजनाएँ या स्टार्ट-अप अनुदान) नहीं है।

प्रस्तावित समाधान:

- नियोक्ता संवेदनशीलता और उत्तरजीवी-प्रथम भर्ती नीतियाँ - संगठनों और व्यवसायों को समावेशी भर्ती नीतियों को अपनाने के लिए प्रोत्साहित किया जाना चाहिए जो उत्तरजीवियों को प्राथमिकता देती हैं।
- फ्लेक्सिबल कार्य मॉडल - उत्तरजीवियों के पास उनकी परिस्थितियों के अनुकूल विकल्प सुनिश्चित करने के लिए घर से काम करने या हाइब्रिड मॉडल का विस्तार किया जाना चाहिए।
- सूक्ष्म ऋण और व्यवसाय इनक्यूबेटर तक पहुंच - पीड़ितों को प्रारंभिक वित्तपोषण, सहकारी व्यवसाय मॉडल और वित्तीय मार्गदर्शन तक पहुंच होनी चाहिए, ताकि उन्हें लघु उद्यम या स्वरोजगार उद्यम शुरू करने में मदद मिल सके।

निष्कर्ष और मुख्य कार्य बिंदु

गोलमेज बैठक का समापन एक शक्तिशाली आम सहमति के साथ हुआ - कौशल को सभी के लिए एक ही समाधान के रूप में नहीं माना जाना चाहिए। इसके बजाय, इसे आघात-सूचित, बाजार-प्रासंगिक और कानूनी और वित्तीय रूप से सशक्त बनाना चाहिए।

मुख्य कार्य बिंदुओं में शामिल हैं:

1. घरेलू हिंसा के उत्तरजीवियों के नेतृत्व वाले कौशल कार्यक्रम विकसित करना जो मानसिक स्वास्थ्य और कानूनी जागरूकता को एकीकृत करते हैं।
2. आश्रय गृहों से परे वित्तीय सुरक्षा सुनिश्चित करने के लिए डिजिटल और बाजार-संचालित आजीविका को मजबूत करना।
3. घरेलू हिंसा के उत्तरजीवियों के लिए सुरक्षित, अधिक समावेशी कार्यस्थल बनाने के लिए व्यवसायों और नीति निर्माताओं के साथ साझेदारी बनाना।
4. कानूनी सहायता और वित्तीय समावेशन सुनिश्चित करना हर कौशल और आजीविका कार्यक्रम का हिस्सा है।

चर्चा हितधारकों की ओर से घरेलू हिंसा के उत्तरजीवियों पर केंद्रित कौशल मॉडल की वकालत करने की प्रतिबद्धता के साथ समाप्त हुई, जो सम्मान, स्वायत्तता और दीर्घकालिक सशक्तिकरण को प्राथमिकता देते हैं।

आगे की राह

घरेलू हिंसा पर उत्तर प्रदेश हितधारकों के शिखर सम्मेलन में घरेलू हिंसा (डीवी) के उत्तरजीवियों की सहायता करने में आने वाली कमियों और चुनौतियों को दूर करने के लिए महत्वपूर्ण चर्चाओं में शामिल होने के लिए पीड़ित, जमीनी स्तर के संगठन, कानूनी विशेषज्ञ, कानून प्रवर्तन अधिकारी और विकास व्यवसायी एक साथ आए। पूरे शिखर सम्मेलन में, आवर्ती विषय एक अंतर्विषयक, पीड़ित-केंद्रित दृष्टिकोण की आवश्यकता थी जो स्थायी सशक्तिकरण सुनिश्चित करता है।

घरेलू हिंसा के उत्तरजीवियों के लिए आगे का रास्ता खंडित नहीं होना चाहिए - इसमें कौशल, स्थायी आजीविका, मानसिक स्वास्थ्य सहायता और कानूनी सशक्तिकरण को देखभाल और अवसर के व्यापक पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र में एकीकृत करना चाहिए। इन्हें केवल तत्काल राहत की आवश्यकता नहीं है; उन्हें दीर्घकालिक, संरचनात्मक समाधानों की आवश्यकता है जो उनकी एजेंसी, सुरक्षा और गरिमा को बहाल करते हैं।

हिंसा के चक्र को तोड़ने की दिशा में पहला कदम उत्तरजीवियों से लैस करना है जो उन्हें आर्थिक रूप से स्वतंत्र बनने में सक्षम बनाते हैं। हालाँकि, पारंपरिक व्यावसायिक प्रशिक्षण कार्यक्रमों ने अक्सर सीमित बाजार मांग के साथ रूढ़िवादी या कम आय वाले कौशल की पेशकश करके बचे लोगों को विफल कर दिया है। कौशल के नए दृष्टिकोण की दिशा में कार्रवाई योग्य कदम व्यवसायों के साथ सहयोग करके उत्तरजीवियों के लिए सीधे काम पर रखने की पाइपलाइन बनाना, घरेलू हिंसा से बचे लोगों को रोजगार देने वाली कंपनियों के लिए सरकारी और निजी क्षेत्र के प्रोत्साहनों पर नज़र रखना और डिजिटल विभाजन को पाटने के लिए प्रौद्योगिकी तक पहुँच प्रदान करना हो सकता है, जिससे उत्तरजीवी सुरक्षित, नियंत्रित वातावरण से काम कर सकें।

कौशल विकास महत्वपूर्ण है, लेकिन यह अपने आप में पर्याप्त नहीं है - पीड़ितों को स्थायी आजीविका के अवसरों तक सीधी पहुँच की आवश्यकता है जो आर्थिक स्थिरता और आत्मनिर्भरता प्रदान करते हैं। कई पीड़ितों के बच्चे और देखभाल की ज़िम्मेदारियाँ हैं, जिससे पारंपरिक 9 से 5 की नौकरी करना मुश्किल हो जाता है। वित्तीय सुरक्षा जाल की कमी कई पीड़ितों को शोषणकारी श्रम या अस्थिर अनौपचारिक काम करने के लिए मजबूर करती है। कार्रवाई योग्य कदमों के रूप में कुछ स्थायी आजीविका समाधानों में नियोजन संवेदीकरण कार्यक्रम शामिल हो सकते हैं जो कार्यस्थल बनाते हैं जो सक्रिय रूप से घरेलू हिंसा के उत्तरजीवियों को काम पर रखते हैं और उनका समर्थन करते हैं, पीड़ितों के उपक्रमों के लिए ब्याज मुक्त ऋण और आर्थिक सहायता प्रदान करने के लिए वित्तीय संस्थानों के साथ साझेदारी करते हैं, और नौकरी-खोज बाधाओं को खत्म करने के लिए कौशल कार्यक्रमों को प्रत्यक्ष रोजगार प्लेसमेंट सेवाओं के साथ एकीकृत करते हैं।

इसी तरह, मानसिक स्वास्थ्य अक्सर उत्तरजीवी पुनर्वास का सबसे अनदेखा पहलू होता है, फिर भी यह सशक्तिकरण के सभी अन्य पहलुओं का आधार है। वन स्टॉप सेंटर (ओएससी), एनजीओ और आश्रयों के भीतर मानसिक स्वास्थ्य सेवाओं को बढ़ाने, आघात-सूचित दृष्टिकोणों में फ्रंटलाइन कार्यकर्ताओं को प्रशिक्षित करने के रूप में समग्र मानसिक स्वास्थ्य हस्तक्षेप की आवश्यकता है ताकि यह सुनिश्चित किया जा सके कि उत्तरजीवियों को दयालु देखभाल मिले, और सार्वजनिक जागरूकता अभियानों के माध्यम से मानसिक स्वास्थ्य चर्चाओं को कलंकमुक्त किया जा सके।

अंत में, कानूनी सशक्तिकरण का मतलब सिर्फ न्याय हासिल करना नहीं है - इसका मतलब यह सुनिश्चित करना है कि पीड़ितों के पास अपने अधिकारों और स्वतंत्रता की रक्षा करने के लिए उपकरण हों। पीड़ितों में अक्सर सुरक्षा, भरण-पोषण और हिरासत के अपने अधिकारों के बारे में बुनियादी कानूनी जागरूकता की कमी होती है, और कई जिलों में कानूनी सहायता सेवाएँ कम वित्तपोषित, कम संसाधन वाली और दुर्गम होती हैं। पीड़ितों के लिए कानूनी सहायता को मज़बूत करना बहुत ज़रूरी है, जिसे आश्रयों और कौशल कार्यक्रमों के भीतर "कानूनी साक्षरता" मॉड्यूल बनाकर, PWDVA के तहत सुरक्षा अधिकारियों (PO) की भूमिका को मज़बूत करके यह सुनिश्चित करके किया जा सकता है कि वे अच्छी तरह से प्रशिक्षित और पीड़ितों के लिए सुलभ हों, और न्यायिक प्रणाली में DV मामलों को तेज़ी से निपटाना ताकि त्वरित न्याय सुनिश्चित हो सके।

शिखर सम्मेलन में घरेलू हिंसा के उत्तरजीवियों के लिए दीर्घकालिक सशक्तिकरण सुनिश्चित करने में बहु-क्षेत्रीय दृष्टिकोण के महत्व को रेखांकित किया गया। कोई भी हस्तक्षेप - चाहे कौशल, कानूनी सहायता, या मानसिक स्वास्थ्य सहायता - अकेले काम नहीं कर सकता। पीड़ितों को एक समग्र पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र की आवश्यकता है जो एक साथ आर्थिक, मनोवैज्ञानिक और कानूनी बाधाओं को संबोधित करता है।

आगे बढ़ने के मार्ग में निम्नलिखित बातें शामिल होनी चाहिए:

1. उत्तरजीवी के नेतृत्व वाली पहल जो सुनिश्चित करती है कि कार्यक्रम उत्तरजीवियों की वास्तविक जरूरतों के प्रति उत्तरदायी हों।
2. पीडब्ल्यूडीवीए और उत्तरजीवी-अनुकूल कानूनी सुधारों के मजबूत कार्यान्वयन के लिए नीति वकालत।
3. उत्तरजीवियों के लिए स्थायी आर्थिक मॉडल बनाने के लिए सरकार, निजी क्षेत्र और नागरिक समाज के बीच सहयोग।
4. उत्तरजीवियों को कलंकमुक्त करने और समुदाय-आधारित समर्थन को प्रोत्साहित करने के लिए जन जागरूकता अभियान।

इन मार्गों को मजबूत करके, हम एक ऐसे समाज के करीब पहुंच सकते हैं जहां घरेलू हिंसा के उत्तरजीवी न केवल दुर्व्यवहार से मुक्त होंगे, बल्कि सुरक्षित, स्वतंत्र और संतुष्ट जीवन जीने के लिए पूरी तरह सशक्त होंगे।

शिखर सम्मेलन की झलकियां



स्वीकृतियाँ

हम उन सभी लोगों और संगठनों के प्रति हार्दिक आभार व्यक्त करते हैं जिनके सहयोग और योगदान ने उत्तर प्रदेश घरेलू हिंसा हितधारक शिखर सम्मेलन को सफल बनाने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई।

हमारे सहयोगी

होस्ट - इनविजिबल स्कार्स फाउंडेशन और वनांगना

स्थल भागीदार - आईआईएम लखनऊ, प्रबंध नगर, आईआईएम रोड, लखनऊ

उपहार बैग - गूंज

योजना और संगठन सहायता - वनांगना

विशिष्ट अतिथि और मुख्य अतिथि

प्रो. रूप रेखा वर्मा, लखनऊ विश्वविद्यालय की पूर्व कुलपति और दर्शनशास्त्र की प्रोफेसर, जेंडर आधारित हिंसा के मुद्दों पर काम करती हुई कार्यकर्ता

मॉडरेटर और पैनलिस्ट

मॉडरेटर - माधवी कुकरेजा, आस्था बाम्बा, विवेक वर्मा

पैनलिस्ट - हिना देसाई, शिंजिनी सिंह, अर्चना सिंह, एकता विवेक वर्मा, वृंदा शुक्ला, कविता बुंदेलखण्डी, ऋचा सिंह, अवधेश गुप्ता

उपस्थित संगठन

नव भारतीय नारी विकास समिति

ग्रामीण पुनर्निर्माण संस्थान

कूसाथ फाउंडेशन

जन विकास केंद्र

श्री रामानंद सरस्वती पुस्तकालय

आंचल सामाजिक विकास समिति

नवभारत समाज कल्याण समिति

प्रयास जन उत्थान समिति

आरंभ फाउंडेशन

सद्भावना ट्रस्ट

सबला

आंचल सामाजिक विकास समिति

सहयोग

नारी चेतना फाउंडेशन

खबर लहरिया

देहात इंडिया

एसोसिएशन फॉर एडवोकेसी एंड लीगल इनिशिएटिव्स ट्रस्ट

अस्तित्व सामाजिक संस्था

हमसफ़र

तरुण चेतना

इनिशिएटिव फाउंडेशन

बसेरा सामाजिक संस्थान

भारतीय जन सेवा आश्रम

साझी दुनिया

दसरा - रीबिल्ड इंडिया फंड

ग्रामोन्नति संस्थान

वनांगना

स्वाभिमान समिति

संघर्षशील महिला

वनांगना

भारतीय जन कल्याण सेवा संस्थान

सहयोग

सोशल एक्शन फॉर नॉलेज बिल्डिंग एंड अवेयरनेस रेजिंग (साकार)

मित्र बुंदेलखंड

पीपुल्स वॉयस

कल्याणम भवः चैरिटेबल ट्रस्ट

मंथन फाउंडेशन

पीपल वॉयस

वन स्टॉप सेंटर

आईपीएस 1090

द थर्ड आई

बुंदेलखंड दलित अधिकार मंच

श्वेत पत्र लिखना और डिजाइन करना

प्रांजलि शर्मा

संदली सिन्हा

इनविजिबल स्कार्स फाउंडेशन और वनांगना के बारे में

इनविजिबल स्कार्स फाउंडेशन हैदराबाद में मुख्यालय वाला एक गैर-लाभकारी संगठन है, जो जेंडर आधारित हिंसा के क्षेत्र में घरेलू हिंसा और दुर्व्यवहार की बातचीत को केंद्रित करने के लिए समर्पित है। यह सभी उम्र और जेंडर के घरेलू हिंसा और दुर्व्यवहार (DVA) पीड़ितों की मदद करता है। यह संगठन पूरे भारत में और साथ ही NRI पीड़ितों के साथ काम करता है, और पीड़ितों की सहायता करते हुए पूरे देश में फैला हुआ है। इसका उद्देश्य पीड़ितों के दरवाजे तक सीधे ज़रूरी सहायता पहुँचाना है, ताकि वे चुनौतीपूर्ण समय के दौरान वास्तव में महत्वपूर्ण चीज़ों पर ध्यान केंद्रित कर सकें। गोपनीय, गैर-निर्णयात्मक, दयालु और समावेशी दृष्टिकोण के माध्यम से, यह सुनिश्चित करता है कि पीड़ितों को उनकी विशिष्ट परिस्थितियों के अनुरूप सहायता मिले। संगठन शैक्षिक सामग्री और अनुकूलित टूलकिट सहित उपलब्ध संसाधनों के साथ पीड़ितों को सशक्त बनाता है। इनविजिबल स्कार्स फाउंडेशन ने सहानुभूति रखने वाले पेशेवरों का एक देशव्यापी नेटवर्क बनाने के लिए कई गैर सरकारी संगठनों, कानूनी पेशेवरों, पुलिस और अन्य घरेलू हिंसा और दुर्व्यवहार पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र के हितधारकों के साथ भागीदारी की है। आईएसएफ जागरूकता, प्रथम-स्तरीय सहायता, मानसिक स्वास्थ्य सहायता, कानूनी परामर्श, मुकदमेबाजी सहायता, आश्रय, कौशल, आजीविका, अन्य तदर्थ आवश्यकताएं और नीति वकालत प्रदान करता है।

उत्तर प्रदेश के बुंदेलखंड में स्थित ग्रामीण समुदाय आधारित महिला अधिकार समूह वनांगना 1993 से चित्रकूट और 2003 से बांदा में काम कर रहा है। वनांगना दलित महिलाओं को गांव के विकास का अहम हिस्सा बनाकर महिलाओं के खिलाफ हिंसा की गंभीर और व्यापक समस्या से लड़ रही है और इस तरह उनकी सुरक्षा के साथ-साथ सामाजिक सीढ़ी में एक प्रभावशाली स्थान सुनिश्चित कर रही है। महिलाओं को एक साथ आने का मौका देने वाले प्लेटफॉर्म बनाकर वनांगना उन्हें आम समस्याओं की पहचान करने, सामूहिक कार्रवाई के जरिए उनका सामना करने और पूरे समुदाय पर उनके प्रभाव को प्रदर्शित करने में सक्षम बनाती है। न्याय तक पहुँचने के सभी प्रयासों में, संगठन समुदायों के भीतर से नेतृत्व को उभरने देता है। सामाजिक-आर्थिक ढांचे के भीतर सख्ती से काम करते हुए, वनांगना न्यायिक प्रणाली के बारे में समझौता नहीं करती है और कानून के बहुस्तरीय अनुप्रयोग को बढ़ावा देती है, जो सामाजिक पदानुक्रमों को काटती है।



**invisible
scars**[®]
we help you heal

Humrōhi
TOGETHER WITH YOU



इनविजिबल स्कार्स फाउंडेशन

द्वारा घरेलू हिंसा एवं भावनात्मक शोषण से पीड़ित लोगों को सहायता

हमारी सेवाएं

पीड़ितों को सहायता

तत्काल राहत और मार्गदर्शन

कानूनी परामर्श

काउंसलिंग सहायता

मुक़दमे में सहायता

आश्रय सहायता

अन्य सेवाएं

राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर काम

जागरूकता

क्षमता निर्माण

नीति निर्माण

यदि आप या आपका कोई परिचित घरेलू हिंसा एवं भावनात्मक शोषण का सामना कर रहे हैं, तो सहायता के लिए हेल्पलाइन नंबर पर कॉल करें

हेल्पलाइन



+91 90151 22122

समय: सोमवार - शनिवार | सुबह 9 बजे - रात 9 बजे





WHITE PAPER

Domestic Violence Stakeholders Summit NEW DELHI

1st March, 2025

PRESENTED BY

Ekta Verma, Director,
Invisible Scars Foundation, Hyderabad
info@invisiblescars.in

Viiveck Verma, CEO,
Invisible Scars Foundation, Hyderabad
info@invisiblescars.in

Dr. Ranjana Kumari, Director,
Centre For Social Research India
Info1@csrindia.org

Dr. Manasi Mishra, HoD,
Research & Knowledge Division, Centre for Social Research, India
Info1@csrindia.org

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STAKEHOLDERS SUMMIT, NEW DELHI

The **Invisible Scars Foundation (ISF)**, in collaboration with the **Centre for Social Research (CSR), India**, successfully hosted the first edition of the **Delhi Domestic Violence Stakeholders Summit (DDVSS) 2025** on **March 1st, 2025**, at the **Vishwa Yuvak Kendra, New Delhi**. The summit convened professionals, experts, and stakeholders from Delhi NCR, Punjab, Haryana, and Rajasthan to foster dialogue and develop actionable solutions for combating domestic violence and abuse.

This **full-day event (10:00 AM – 5:20 PM)** featured two panel discussions, a roundtable session, and an interactive "Wish Expression" activity. Discussions centered on critical issues affecting domestic violence survivors, particularly **shelters and sustainable livelihoods**.

Panel 1 – Safe Shelters: Examined the challenges within existing shelter systems, including restrictive regulations, inadequate facilities, and the need for survivor-centered spaces that promote long-term rehabilitation.

Panel 2 – Livelihoods: Explored economic barriers faced by survivors, emphasizing skill development, financial independence, and employment opportunities.

Roundtable Discussion: Experts engaged in a facilitated discourse to propose policy and programmatic solutions aimed at improving survivor rehabilitation through shelter access, livelihood support, and systemic coordination between law enforcement, the judiciary, and NGOs.

Wish Expression Activity: Participants were invited to share their aspirations for an ideal future free from domestic violence. This session concluded with poetic reflections by Gayatri Kaushal and Shalini Shrinet, highlighting the emotional and societal dimensions of the issue.

The summit aimed to **break the silence surrounding domestic violence** and **encourage constructive discourse** to drive meaningful policy and social reform. Key insights and recommendations from the event have been documented in a **comprehensive white paper**, which will be submitted to the **National Commission for Women (NCW)** for policy consideration.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

1. Context	4.
2. Background and Objectives of the Summit	5.
3. Challenges Faced by DVA Survivors	6.
4. Welcome Address & Introduction by Host, Ekta Viiveck Verma	7.
5. Chief Guest Address: Jyotsna Roy	8.
6. Chief Guest Address: Smt. Asha Devi Pandey Ji	9.
7. Guest of Honour Address: Dr. Ranjana Kumari	10.
8. Panel Discussion 1: Safe Shelters	12.
9. Panel Discussion 2: Model Livelihood	13.
10. Roundtable Discussion: Economic Empowerment of Survivors & Initiatives to Improve Coordination Between Police, Judiciary, and NGOs	15.
11. Wish Expression Session	18.
12. Poem Presented by Gayatri Kaushal	19.
13. Poem Presented by Shalini Shrinet	20.
14. Way Forward	22.
15. Glimpses of Our Event	24.
16. Acknowledgements	25.
17. Participants' Names & Organisations	26.
18. About Invisible Scars Foundation	29.
19. About Centre for Social Research, India	30.
20. ISF Services & Helpline Info.	31.

GLOSSARY

DDVSS: Delhi Domestic Violence Stakeholders Summit
DV: Domestic Violence
DVA: Domestic Violence and Abuse
GBV: Gender-Based Violence
CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility

CONTEXT

Statistical data from two Times of India online articles—"After rise in '21, domestic violence cases fall in '23" (Jan 5, 2024) and "Dowry torture, domestic violence remains serious worry: NCW Data" by Ambika Pandit (Jan 2, 2025)—indicates a decline in domestic violence complaints in 2023 after a surge during the COVID-19 pandemic. The National Commission for Women (NCW) reported 28,811 total complaints of crimes against women in 2023, down from over 30,000 in the previous two years. Of these, 6,304 were related to domestic violence, compared to 6,970 in 2022 and 6,633 in 2021.

Between 2019 and 2024, domestic violence complaints peaked in 2022 at 6,986 cases. Although numbers have declined, they remain above pre-pandemic levels (2,960 in 2019 and 5,297 in 2020). In 2024, the highest proportion of complaints originated from Uttar Pradesh (54%), followed by Delhi (9%), Maharashtra (5.1%), Bihar (4.8%), Madhya Pradesh (4.2%), and Haryana (4.1%).

Domestic violence remains a grave human rights violation, irrespective of statistical reductions. Even minimal occurrences represent a systemic failure and a significant breach of individual dignity and security. Beyond the immediate harm to survivors, domestic abuse disrupts families and communities, particularly impacting children exposed to violent environments, leading to long-term psychological and behavioral consequences. The economic toll is substantial, with global estimates reaching \$1.5 trillion in 2016 (2% of global GDP), while in India, losses range from \$479 million to \$880 million annually.

Addressing this crisis necessitates a multi-faceted approach, including legal reforms, safe shelters, survivor economic empowerment, and widespread awareness campaigns. The Domestic Violence Stakeholders Summit aims to bridge systemic gaps, foster collaboration, and drive sustainable solutions to both support survivors and dismantle structures that enable abuse.

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

Background

The **Delhi Domestic Violence Stakeholders Summit (DDVSS) 2025**, held on **March 1, 2025**, at **Vishwa Yuvak Kendra, New Delhi**, examined systemic barriers to supporting **domestic violence survivors**, particularly in **shelter access and economic independence**.

While the **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA), 2005**, provides legal, medical, and psychological support, **patriarchal biases, institutional inefficiencies, and inadequate enforcement** hinder its effectiveness. **Victim-blaming, legal skepticism, and lack of awareness** further discourage survivors from seeking help.

Shelters, meant as safe havens, often impose **restrictive rules** and lack adequate **resources, funding, and trained staff**, limiting long-term rehabilitation. Similarly, **economic dependence, financial abuse, and workplace discrimination** prevent survivors from achieving independence.

The summit aimed to **develop survivor-centered solutions**, advocating for **inclusive, rehabilitative shelters and livelihood opportunities**. It sought to **bridge systemic gaps** and inform **policy reforms** to ensure comprehensive support for survivors.

Objective

The **Delhi Domestic Violence Stakeholders Summit (DDVSS) 2025** sought to unite key stakeholders to address two critical challenges: **limitations in shelter homes** and **barriers to sustainable livelihoods for survivors**.

The discussion focused on **reimagining shelters** to provide **secure, rehabilitative spaces** that empower survivors rather than restrict them. It also examined **economic challenges**, emphasizing the need for **livelihood opportunities** to ensure financial independence.

Beyond theoretical discourse, the summit aimed to generate **practical, survivor-centric solutions** that can be implemented in social sector settings, fostering **policy reforms** and systemic change.

CHALLENGES FACED BY DVA SURVIVORS

Unhabitable Shelter Homes

Shelters for domestic violence survivors often fail to provide the **safe, rehabilitative environment** they are meant to ensure. Many are **underfunded, overcrowded, and lack trained staff**, limiting their ability to offer meaningful support. **Restrictive rules**, such as limitations on mobility, employment, and communication, further isolate survivors, and hinder reintegration into society.

For many women, the **greatest deterrent** is separation from their children, forcing them to choose between **safety and family unity**. LGBTQ+ survivors face additional **exclusion and discrimination** due to a lack of inclusive policies. The absence of **long-term, community-integrated housing solutions** often leads survivors to return to abusive environments.

Addressing these gaps requires **reforming shelter models** to prioritize **autonomy, accessibility, and holistic rehabilitation**, ensuring survivors can rebuild their lives with dignity.

Challenges To Livelihoods

Economic dependence is a significant barrier preventing domestic violence survivors from achieving long-term security. Many face **financial abuse, disrupted careers, and limited work experience**, making it difficult to secure stable employment. **Workplace discrimination and social stigma** further restrict opportunities, particularly for women lacking formal education or vocational training.

Without **sustainable livelihoods**, survivors remain vulnerable to returning to abusive environments. Addressing these challenges requires **targeted skill development, financial inclusion, and employment initiatives** to empower survivors and facilitate economic independence.

WELCOME ADDRESS & INTRODUCTION

Ekta Viiveck Verma, Invisible Scars Foundation Foundation

Ekta Viiveck Verma, founder of the **Invisible Scars Foundation**, opened the summit by sharing her journey from personal experience to advocacy. She highlighted how domestic violence extends beyond physical abuse to **emotional and psychological harm**, often leaving survivors isolated and unheard. Recognizing the need for structured support, she **transformed Invisible Scars Foundation** from a small online group into a formal network providing **legal aid, mental health counseling, and survivor assistance**.

Ekta emphasized the importance of **collaboration** over competition among NGOs, advocating for a **unified approach** to supporting survivors. She discussed key initiatives, including **Project Fearless**, a partnership with **Urban Company** that provides **legal, mental health, and financial support** to over 13,000 women. She also highlighted the **Rahat Crisis Center**, a hospital-based support model for survivors.

Stressing that domestic violence is a **systemic issue requiring sustained intervention**, Ekta underscored the summit's goal: to **develop actionable solutions** addressing survivors' **economic empowerment and access to safe shelters**. She emphasized the need for **long-term solutions over short-term fixes**, noting that domestic violence is not a single event but an ongoing crisis requiring **continuous support and structural reforms**. The Invisible Scars Foundation Foundation has already conducted summits in **three states** and aims to expand to other states to build a **broader support network for survivors**.

Ekta concluded her address with a **call for collaboration**, urging stakeholders to **share resources rather than compete for limited funding**. She stressed that the issue of domestic violence is **too vast and complex for any single organization to address alone**. A **united effort among NGOs, the private sector, and government agencies** is essential to creating a **comprehensive support system** that empowers survivors and ensures they have the **resources and confidence to rebuild their lives**.

Following her address, Ekta introduced **Jyotsna Roy**, a distinguished **social scientist** with over three decades of experience in **institutional strengthening, capacity building, and community empowerment**. Roy has worked extensively in **gender equality, policy advocacy, and**

post-conflict rehabilitation, focusing on women's rights, displaced communities, and social justice initiatives. Her expertise spans multiple developing nations, where she has led programs on **gender-responsive governance, economic empowerment, and violence prevention.** She has collaborated with **government agencies, international organizations, and grassroots movements** to advance systemic reforms and improve support structures for vulnerable populations.

Roy holds degrees from **Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU)** and internationally recognized institutions and has received multiple certifications in **participatory gender audits, human development, and leadership training.** Her contributions have been instrumental in shaping policies on **women's economic independence, access to justice, and social welfare,** making her a **key advocate in the fight against domestic violence.**

CHIEF GUEST ADDRESS

Jyotsna Roy

Jyotsna Roy began her address by reflecting on the **significance of the term "Invisible Scars Foundation,"** emphasizing that domestic violence is not just a single act of abuse but a long-term issue that leaves deep psychological, emotional, and physical wounds. She underscored the **urgent need for sustained support,** highlighting how survivors often struggle to access quality counseling and mentoring due to financial constraints and systemic inefficiencies. She pointed out that trauma frequently manifests in **physical and mental health crises,** with some survivors experiencing extreme emotional distress to the point of becoming unresponsive.

Roy stressed that **economic independence is central to a survivor's ability to rebuild their life.** Many survivors, despite holding academic qualifications, face barriers in securing stable employment due to a **lack of financial resources, disrupted careers, and social stigma.** She emphasized the role of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives in bridging this gap by linking skill development programs with employment opportunities. However, she cautioned that **supporting survivors requires a strong foundation of self-care,** drawing an analogy to securing one's own oxygen mask before assisting others.

Illustrating the **systemic failures survivors face,** Roy recounted two

incidents. In one case, a woman seeking a bank loan for financial independence was instead subjected to inappropriate advances by a bank official, demonstrating how **insensitivity and exploitation** often replace meaningful support. In another instance, a woman confronting her abusive husband at his workplace was publicly humiliated, highlighting the **institutional disregard for survivors' dignity and justice**. These examples, she argued, reflect the **deep-rooted failures of institutions to provide safe and supportive environments for women seeking autonomy**.

Roy called for **greater sensitivity across all sectors**, emphasizing that survivor support should extend beyond NGOs and government programs to include the **private sector, local communities, and financial institutions**. She advocated for **scaling up support networks** and implementing **survivor-centered interventions** in states such as **Odisha, West Bengal, Assam, and Tripura**, where systemic support structures remain weak.

She concluded by stating that **violence against women is deeply embedded in social and cultural norms**, requiring not only **individual recovery but systemic transformation**. She called for **collaborative action among government agencies, private sector organizations, and civil society** to establish sustainable solutions. True progress, she argued, depends on **addressing both the immediate needs of survivors and the long-term structural challenges that perpetuate domestic violence**.

CHIEF GUEST ADDRESS

Asha Devi Pandey Ji (Nirbhaya's Mother)

Asha Devi Pandey Ji began her address by expressing gratitude to Ekta Viiveck Verma and acknowledging their long-standing association, which began during the **Nirbhaya case**. While her primary advocacy focuses on supporting **rape survivors**, she highlighted the **alarming prevalence of domestic violence**, particularly in **Uttar Pradesh**. She emphasized that **domestic violence often originates within the home, making conflict resolution and prevention crucial**.

She stressed that **men must also receive counseling** to understand the underlying causes of domestic violence. Instead of allowing **jealousy, frustration, or misunderstandings** to escalate into abuse, she argued for the **promotion of open dialogue and mutual respect** within families. She underscored the **home as a place of security**, stating that while one may

stay in a luxurious hotel, true comfort and belonging should come from one's own household. However, **when a woman is forced to leave due to abuse**, she must have access to **shelter homes that provide dignity and support** rather than making her feel like a burden.

Asha Devi Ji raised concerns about **victim-blaming** within shelter homes, where survivors are often labeled as **difficult or at fault for their circumstances**. She recalled the **COVID-19 pandemic**, when many women, **especially those from marginalized communities were evicted from their homes** due to financial instability or social discrimination. Her team worked with **families and law enforcement** to mediate conflicts and help women reintegrate into their households rather than being forced into shelters. She emphasized that the **goal should not be dependency on shelters but ensuring that women feel safe in their own homes**.

Criticizing the **government's response to gender-based violence**, Asha Devi questioned the **effectiveness of the Nirbhaya Fund**, which was intended to establish **one-stop crisis centers for survivors**. She recalled raising these concerns with the **President of India**, who assured her that the issue would be addressed. However, despite reports of new centers and allocated funds, the **persistence of domestic violence and sexual assault highlights systemic shortcomings** in survivor support.

She concluded by advocating for a **fundamental shift in societal attitudes**, arguing that **prevention should take precedence over shelters and legal remedies**. **True gender equality must begin within the home**, ensuring that women do not have to **fight for safety or acceptance**. She reaffirmed her commitment to working with organizations like the **Invisible Scars Foundation** to build a society where **women are secure, respected, and empowered within their families and communities**.

GUEST OF HONOR ADDRESS

Dr. Ranjana Kumari, Director of Centre for Social Research, Social Activist, Prolific Academician & Writer

Dr. Ranjana Kumari began her address by rejecting the need for formal introductions, asserting that **real impact matters more than titles**. Expressing gratitude for the opportunity to speak, she underscored the **gravity of violence against women** and the systemic failures that allow it to persist.

Illustrating the **harsh realities of domestic violence**, she shared the story of **Sumitra Devi**, a woman abandoned by her husband and forced to sleep in a cowshed in **Mehrauli, Delhi**, for three days. With no access to employment or medical care, she was eventually brought to Dr. Ranjana's center by other women from her village. Over time, Sumitra became **a leading counselor**, providing critical support to survivors at all hours. Her transformation exemplified the **resilience of women** and the **need for structured, long-term interventions**.

Dr. Ranjana questioned why, despite decades of advocacy, **women must still fight for their basic rights**. Even after landmarking global conferences such as **Nairobi, Beijing, and UN summits**, the demand for **shelter homes** persists. She argued that while the **Indian Constitution guarantees equality**, power structures remain deeply entrenched in **male-dominated family and societal systems**. Even women who achieve **professional or political success** face precarious positions dictated by **patriarchal control**.

She critiqued **deep-seated cultural norms** that reinforce gender inequality, pointing out that families often invest heavily in **daughters' weddings** but hesitate to give them an **equal share in property**. Even when women claim their legal inheritance, they are pressured to **compromise or avoid family disputes**. She recounted the experience of a **female CEO**, whose father insisted on managing workplace conflicts on her behalf, reflecting a broader societal belief that **women require male intervention**.

Calling for a **fundamental societal shift**, Dr. Ranjana urged women to **assert their rights with confidence rather than seek permission**. She emphasized that hard-won legislative victories—such as the **Domestic Violence Act (2005)** and the **establishment of the National Commission for Women (NCW)**—are being undermined by **underfunding and leadership gaps**. Women must **demand accountability** and **challenge systems that perpetuate inequality** rather than waiting for change.

She also highlighted the **normalization of domestic violence**, citing a study where **49% of women justified spousal abuse** in certain circumstances. This mindset, she argued, **must be dismantled through education, awareness, and legal enforcement**. Women should be taught to **resist the first instance of abuse**, assert their autonomy, and demand respect.

Dr. Ranjana concluded by emphasizing that **true empowerment requires economic independence, political representation, and social reform**. Women must **claim their rightful space in all spheres**, from **financial security to leadership positions**, to break the **cycle of violence and dependence**.

PANEL DISCUSSION 1 – SAFE SHELTERS

Moderated By Gayatri from Friedrich-Ebert-Shiftung India

Panelists - Smritikana Ghosh Paul (STOP), Gayatri Kaushal (Sankalpit Foundation), Naseem Khan (CEQUIN), Arshiya (One Future Collective)

Ekta Viiveck Verma opened the discussion by emphasizing the **need to redefine shelter homes**, as survivors rarely choose them willingly. Many enter shelters out of necessity, yet these spaces often fail to offer **true security and rehabilitation**. The panel, moderated by Gayatri from Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung India, featured Smritikana Ghosh Paul (STOP), Gayatri Kaushal (Sankalpit Foundation), Naseem Khan (CEQUIN), and Arshiya (One Future Collective), each contributing insights into the challenges within shelter systems and the urgent need for reform.

Smritikana Ghosh Paul highlighted the **intersection between domestic violence and human trafficking**, stressing that **violence against women is deeply rooted in regressive social structures**. While shelters provide temporary refuge, many suffer from **underfunding, overcrowding, and inadequate support services**, preventing survivors from achieving long-term stability. She also raised concerns about the **exclusion of marginalized groups**, particularly **LGBTQ+ individuals**, who often lack access to safe shelter.

Naseem Khan addressed **legal barriers to residence rights**, explaining how the **2006 Supreme Court ruling on shared households** complicates survivors' ability to remain in their marital homes, particularly when property is owned by in-laws. She noted that many **NGO-run shelters face financial instability**, with some shutting down due to **delayed government funding**, further limiting safe housing options.

Arshiya discussed the **challenges faced by LGBTQ+ survivors**, emphasizing that **most shelters cater only to cisgender women**, leaving many without support. Even within existing facilities, **violence and discrimination remain pervasive**. She advocated for **inclusive policies and community-based interventions** that allow survivors to access help without leaving their familiar environments.

Gayatri Kaushal provided a perspective on Haryana, where **patriarchal norms are deeply entrenched**, and survivors often **have nowhere to turn after escaping abuse**. She stressed that while the **Domestic Violence Act (2005)** grants women the right to residence, many are still **forced out of their**

homes, increasing their reliance on shelters that fail to offer long-term solutions. The panel also discussed **what an ideal shelter home should look like**. **Naseem Khan** shared an example from the **United States**, where **rape crisis centers incorporate therapy animals** to create a sense of safety. She suggested that **Indian shelters should prioritize mental health services, legal aid, and skill-building programs** to support survivor reintegration.

Smritikana Ghosh Paul called for **less restrictive shelter policies**, proposing a **"No Questions Asked"** approach, allowing survivors to return if needed without stigma. Many women leave abusive situations but are **forced to return due to financial constraints**, and shelters should remain an accessible option for them.

The session concluded with a **proposal to rename shelters as "safe houses,"** a suggestion put forward by **Jyotsna Roy**, a social scientist with extensive experience in **post-conflict rehabilitation**. Drawing from her work in **Afghanistan, Ethiopia, and Sudan**, she stressed that **confidential and secure spaces** are essential for empowering survivors.

The discussion underscored the **need for policy reforms, increased funding, and more inclusive shelter models**. Panelists emphasized that shelters should **not merely serve as temporary escape spaces but as centers for empowerment, healing, and long-term stability**.

PANEL DISCUSSION 2 – MODEL LIVELIHOOD

The discussion on **livelihoods** focused on the **economic challenges faced by domestic violence survivors** and the importance of **financial independence in breaking cycles of abuse**. The panel, moderated by **Dr. Manasi Mishra**, Head of the Research and Knowledge Department at the Centre for Social Research (CSR), featured **Ekta Viiveck Verma** (Invisible Scars Foundation Foundation), **Seema Devi Ji** (Sarpanch, Jhirandiya Village, Alwar), and **Rakhi Sharma** (Counselor, CSR).

Dr. Manasi Mishra outlined CSR's **structured skill development programs**, which train women in **security services, digital literacy, office administration, and entrepreneurship**. These programs, aligned with **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) standards**, provide **certification and job placement opportunities**, particularly in **Delhi and Gurgaon**. She emphasized that **economic self-sufficiency is critical for survivors' long-term security and dignity**.

Ekta Viiveck Verma stressed that **financial independence is essential for breaking the cycle of abuse**. She highlighted **training programs in digital marketing and remote work**, developed through partnerships in **Chandigarh and Hyderabad**, which allow survivors, especially **single mothers**, to earn a living without compromising their safety. She also discussed **entrepreneurship initiatives**, which support women in establishing **small businesses in fashion, jewelry, and food services**, ensuring **long-term financial stability** beyond reliance on charitable assistance.

Seema Devi Ji, drawing from her experience as **Sarpanch of Jhirandiya Village, Alwar**, discussed the **impact of Self-Help Groups (SHGs)** in empowering rural women. Many women in her village have successfully launched **dairy businesses, goat farming, tailoring, and small-scale agriculture**, providing them with sustainable incomes. She highlighted the **crucial role of microfinance and government-backed loans**, explaining how **low-interest loans from banks such as SBI, starting at ₹2 lakh and increasing to ₹5 lakh based on repayment performance** have enabled women to expand their businesses. **Financial literacy and business management training**, she noted, have helped these women move beyond **subsistence living to economic self-sufficiency**.

Rakhi Sharma emphasized that **economic stability directly influences a survivor's ability to leave an abusive situation**. Many women lack confidence after prolonged abuse, making **career mentorship programs essential**. She stressed the need for **emotional and psychological support alongside financial aid**, as survivors often struggle with self-doubt when attempting to re-enter the workforce.

During the **Q&A session**, panelists addressed concerns about **career gaps** in survivors' work histories. **Ekta Viiveck Verma** shared strategies to bridge these gaps by engaging **HR professionals in mentorship programs**, helping survivors **identify flexible career paths** suited to their unique circumstances. She stressed the importance of **non-traditional job opportunities**, citing the **rise of female cab drivers and security guards** as examples of **expanding employment prospects for women**.

Following the panel, **Viiveck Verma** introduced the **roundtable discussion**, transitioning from **structured panels to an interactive problem-solving session**. He encouraged participants to **bring forward solutions and engage in collaborative discussions on domestic violence, economic empowerment, and systemic change**.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION:

Engaging the Experts in the Audience to Provide Solutions for the Critical Issues, Initiatives for Economic Empowerment for Survivors, Strengthening Coordination—police, judiciary, and NGOs.

Moderator – Viiveck Verma, CEO, Invisible Scars Foundation Foundation

The **roundtable discussion**, moderated by **Viiveck Verma, CEO of Invisible Scars Foundation Foundation**, focused on **collaborative strategies to enhance legal support, economic empowerment, and institutional coordination** in addressing domestic violence. Unlike the structured panels, this session fostered **interactive problem-solving**, encouraging participants to share **practical solutions** rather than theoretical discourse.

Bhaskar Kumar Agrawal (Helping Human Rights Foundation) proposed a **coordinated legal advocacy effort**, suggesting that participants draft **letters to district judges advocating for improved policies and survivor support mechanisms**. He emphasized the need to **expand this initiative beyond Delhi** to states like **Maharashtra, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Punjab**, ensuring a **nationwide push for legal reforms**.

Indu Prakash Singh (City Makers Mission International) highlighted the **urgent need for grassroots collaboration and networking**. He introduced the **'No Violence Against Women' WhatsApp helpline**, initially created for women but later expanded to support **transgender individuals**. He called for the **establishment of a 24-hour crisis helpline**, noting that survivors often struggle to access assistance late at night.

Dr. Manasi Mishra (Centre for Social Research) stressed that **structured skill development programs** are essential for survivors' long-term financial stability. She detailed CSR's **initiatives in security guard training, digital literacy, and entrepreneurship**, emphasizing the importance of **job placement partnerships** to ensure sustained employment. She also underscored **education as a key tool in breaking cycles of violence**, citing cases where **girls were forced to drop out of school due to a lack of access to secondary education**.

Ekta Viiveck Verma (Invisible Scars Foundation Foundation) called for **stronger corporate partnerships** to provide employment opportunities for survivors. She highlighted **successful remote work initiatives in digital marketing and customer service**, which have **enabled single mothers and**

abuse survivors to work from home safely. She urged private companies to actively recruit survivors and establish **mentorship programs** to help them regain professional confidence.

Gayatri Kaushal (Sankalpit Foundation) discussed the **challenges survivors face in patriarchal regions like Haryana**, where women seeking legal protection are often **perceived as troublemakers** rather than individuals asserting their rights. She advocated **community-based interventions to shift social attitudes and increase acceptance of survivors in their local environments.**

Rakhi Sharma (Centre for Social Research) emphasized that **financial insecurity often forces survivors to remain in abusive relationships.** She proposed the creation of **mentorship programs connecting survivors with professionals who can guide them toward career development.** She also stressed the **importance of providing both emotional and financial support**, as many survivors face **psychological barriers to rebuilding their lives.**

Shalini Shrinet (Mera Rang Foundation) highlighted the **role of media in shaping public perceptions of domestic violence.** She criticized how **survivor stories are often sensationalized rather than framed in an empowering manner.** To counter this, she proposed **sensitivity training for journalists**, ensuring that survivors are **represented with dignity and respect** in media narratives.

Shalini Sharma (Jagori), a psychologist, emphasized the **importance of proper counseling services for survivors.** She noted that while **police stations and courts claim to provide counseling**, these services often **lack trained professionals and survivor-centered approaches.** She argued that counseling should **empower women to make informed decisions, rather than pressure them to reconcile with their abusers.** She also discussed the **crucial role of legal documentation**, citing a case where retrieving school certificates strengthened a survivor's legal claim for child custody and financial support.

Jitendra Kumar Jha (The Jurists, Law Offices) addressed **deficiencies in the legal aid system**, recalling a case where a survivor felt lost **even after the Supreme Court upheld the death sentence for her attackers.** He argued that **legal aid is ineffective when provided by undertrained or disinterested lawyers**, calling for **greater accountability in legal aid committees and stronger government oversight to ensure survivors receive competent legal representation.**

Brijendra Singh Chauhan (Pragati Path) shared his experiences in **Varanasi**, where he helped survivors access **government-backed vocational training programs**. He highlighted the **success of women-owned businesses in fruit processing, pickle making, and food production**, demonstrating how **entrepreneurship can provide survivors with financial independence without requiring them to enter corporate workplaces**.

The discussion concluded with **Viiveck Verma** reiterating the importance of **ongoing engagement beyond the event**. There was a unanimous consensus that **advocacy, networking, and financial empowerment programs** should be **expanded and sustained** to ensure that survivors receive **long-term, meaningful support**.

NAMES OF SPEAKERS IN THE ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

Viiveck Verma – Moderator, CEO of Invisible Scars Foundation
Bhaskar Kumar Agrawal – Helping Human Rights Foundation
Indu Prakash Singh – City Makers Mission International
Dr. Manasi Mishra – HoD, Research & Knowledge Division, Centre for Social Research, India
Ekta Viiveck Verma – Director, Invisible Scars Foundation
Gayatri Kaushal – Founder of Sankalp Foundation
Rakhi Sharma – Counselor, Centre for Social Research, India
Shalini Shrinet – Head of Mera Rang Foundation
Shalini Sharma – Psychologist from Jagori
Jitendra Kumar Jha – Advocate, The Jurists, Law Offices
Brijendra Singh Chauhan – Pragati Path

WISH EXPRESSION SESSION

The **Wish Expression Session** provided an interactive platform where participants voiced their **aspirations for a future free from domestic violence**. Moderated by **Viiveck Verma**, the session encouraged attendees to share **personal reflections and transformative ideas** rather than engage in debate.

Dr. Manasi Mishra expressed her wish for a world where people **consider the consequences of their actions before inflicting harm**, envisioning a truly **gender-just society where survivors are not further victimized**.

Gayatri Kaushal shared a deep personal account of **her family's struggle with inheritance rights**, highlighting the **urgent need for gender equality in property laws**. She recounted how her father intended for all his children, **daughters included** to have an **equal share**, yet **bureaucratic and societal barriers complicated the process**. Her mother's insistence on fairness ensured justice, reinforcing the importance of **equitable legal frameworks** for women.

Naseem Khan called for a **societal reckoning with outdated customs**, advocating for **public acknowledgment and redress for historical injustices against women**. He emphasized that **harmful traditions must be left behind** to create a more **progressive and inclusive society**.

Shalini Shrinet, a poet and activist, performed a compelling piece urging **women to break free from societal oppression and reclaim their identity**. Her poetry evoked **powerful imagery of dismantling patriarchal structures and embracing empowerment**.

Gayatri Kaushal presented a poem inspired by a young girl's question about **why dowries take precedence over education**. Her piece **challenged cultural norms that devalue daughters**, advocating **equal opportunities in education and inheritance**.

The rapporteur, **Ketaki Ruchika Singh**, expressed a wish for **universal access to mental health services**, stressing that **psychological support should be available to all, regardless of economic status**.

Another audience member, **Vatsala**, emphasized the **importance of complete freedom for women**, arguing that **even small restrictions in daily life such as movement and decision-making reinforce patriarchal oppression**.

The session concluded with reflections on equality, justice, and systemic change, leaving participants with a collective sense of responsibility and hope for a future free from domestic violence.

POEMS PRESENTED BY GAYATRI KAUSHAL AND SHALINI SHRINET

Gayatri Kaushal

Stop calling us the burdens of another home. Stop calling us someone else's wealth. Give us an equal share in the property.

We are not meant to be sent away to another household. We are not the vessels of another home. We are your children, just as much as your sons are.

If a son is the torchbearer of the family, then I, too, am the Lakshmi of this home. We do not need dowry, extravagant clothes, or gold jewelry. Why spend an entire lifetime saving up for our weddings? Why do parents spend their whole lives worrying—Which family will we marry into? How grand will the wedding procession be? How many guests? How many cars? How lavishly will the groom's chariot be decorated?

Why do parents endure a lifetime of stress, saving every penny, Mothers quietly buying small trinkets—an earring here, a necklace there—And saying with a hopeful smile, "My daughter is growing up; we'll collect bit by bit, so everything is ready for her wedding."

And we, their daughters, when asked to try on these ornaments, Obediently wear them and admire ourselves in the mirror. Sometimes we even say, "Ma, if it were just a little bigger, it would look even better."

But why do we never say, "Ma, why don't you and Papa invest this money in my education instead?" Perhaps I could study, get a job at an IT company, and my annual salary could be worth more than Papa's lifetime savings.

"Jewelry can be artificial, Ma, but education cannot." "You can always buy imitation ornaments, but there is no imitation for knowledge."

So why are you preparing to sacrifice my dreams?

From the moment we understand the world to the day we are married, We hear the same words over and over—"You belong to another home, you are someone else's responsibility, you are the family's honor, you are someone else's possession."

Why? My brother and I were born from the same womb—Why is he the heir to the family, and I, an outsider?

This tradition is flawed. And we reject it.

We are not someone else's burden. We are not someone else's wealth. We are not just the family's honor or a thing to be given away.

We are individuals. We have souls of our own. We are not someone else's property.

I want the same freedom as my brother. I want an equal share of the land. I want an equal right in my father's property.

And when you grow old, Mother and Father, You will not have to live month after month in different sons' homes. You will stay with us, your daughters. We will care for you in your old age. We will be there for you in your final moments. We will carry out your last rites, And immerse your ashes in the sacred Ganga.

And you will reach the same peace, As if a son had done it.

Yes, perhaps some traditions will change. But so will the fate of daughters.

Shalini Shrinet

Set out on a journey to find yourself, Why do you despair? Go on, for even time seeks your existence.

So set out on a journey to find yourself, Why do you despair? Go on, for even time seeks your existence.

The chains wrapped around you— See them not as shackles, but as garments. These chains will melt, Transforming into scriptures of change. So why do you despair?

Go on, for even time seeks your existence.

When your character is pure, Then why must you suffer this fate? The sinners have no right to put your purity to the test. So why do you despair?

Go on, for even time seeks your existence.

Burn to ashes the web of cruelty, You are not the gentle flame of a prayer lamp, You are the raging torch of fury. So set out on a journey to find yourself, Why do you despair? Go on, for even time seeks your existence.

Raise your veil like a flag, Even the sky will bow before you. If your veil falls, The earth itself will tremble. So why do you despair?

Go on, for even time seeks your existence, Aashadeep.

The chains wrapped around you— See them not as shackles, but as garments. Let them melt and forge them into scriptures of change. So why do you despair?

Go on, for even time seeks your existence.

When your character is pure, Then why must you suffer this fate? The sinners have no right To put your purity to the test. So why do you despair?

Go on, for even time seeks your existence.

Burn to ashes the web of cruelty, Burn it until nothing remains. You are not just the gentle glow of a prayer lamp, You are the raging torch of fury. So set out on a journey to find yourself, Why do you despair?

Go on, for even time seeks your existence.

Raise your veil like a flag, Let the sky itself bow before you. If your veil falls, The earth itself will tremble. So why do you despair?

Go on, for even time seeks your existence.

—Aashcharya

NAMES OF PERSONS WHO PRESENTED THEIR WISHES

Dr. Mansi Mishra – HoD, Research & Knowledge Division, Centre for Social Research, India
Naseem Khan – CEQUIN
Shalini Shrinet – Head of Mera Rang Foundation
Gayatri Kaushal – Founder of Sankalp Foundation
Rapporteur: Ketaki Ruchika Singh , Centre for Social Research, India

WAY FORWARD

To strengthen support for domestic violence survivors, a **coordinated multi-stakeholder approach** is essential. The following measures must be implemented to ensure **effective intervention, legal support, and economic empowerment**:

- 1. STRENGTHENING LEGAL AID AND NGO NETWORKS:** NGOs should register under legal provisions that allow them to **file reports and provide structured assistance** to survivors. A **nationwide network of service providers** must be established to ensure **accountability and efficiency** through **digital case tracking and structured intervention models**.
- 2. EXPANDING COLLABORATIVE NETWORKS:** A structured **multi-organization network** should be developed to **streamline resources, prevent duplication of efforts, and promote collective action** rather than isolated initiatives. Clearly defined **operational boundaries** will be crucial to maintaining **efficiency, transparency, and ethical standards**.
- 3. HOSTING REGIONAL SUMMITS FOR EXPANSION:** State-level summits should be organized to **engage more stakeholders**, fostering knowledge-sharing, resource mobilization, and collaborative strategy-building. These summits will contribute to the development of a **nationwide survivor support system**, ensuring regional challenges are addressed effectively.
- 4. ENHANCING DIGITAL CASE TRACKING & INTERVENTION STRATEGIES:** A **centralized digital tracking system** must be implemented to **monitor legal aid, shelter assistance, and rehabilitation services**. This will reduce **bureaucratic delays** and ensure survivors receive **timely and consistent support**.

5. ADVANCING FINANCIAL & LIVELIHOOD PROGRAMS FOR SURVIVORS: Economic independence is key to ensuring long-term security for survivors. Expanding livelihood programs, remote work opportunities, vocational training, and financial inclusion initiatives will enable women to become self-sufficient and less vulnerable to returning to abusive environments.

These measures will establish a sustainable, survivor-centered support system, ensuring survivors receive holistic, long-term assistance that empowers them to rebuild their lives with dignity and independence.

WAY FORWARD

Achieving meaningful progress in addressing domestic violence requires sustained collaboration, policy reforms, economic empowerment, and public awareness initiatives. The following strategies must be prioritized:

- 1. SUSTAINED COLLABORATION IS ESSENTIAL:** A unified approach among NGOs, legal professionals, private sector stakeholders, and government bodies. It is necessary to create a comprehensive survivor support system. Coordinated efforts will ensure efficient resource allocation, streamlined services, and greater impact.
- 2. POLICY AND STRUCTURAL REFORMS ARE NEEDED:** Interventions must go beyond short-term relief and focus on long-term policy changes to improve access to legal aid, financial support, and safe housing for survivors. Institutional frameworks must be strengthened to facilitate the effective implementation of laws and protection mechanisms.
- 3. EMPOWERMENT THROUGH ECONOMIC STABILITY:** Survivors must be provided with sustainable employment opportunities, entrepreneurship training, and financial aid to break free from economic dependence on abusers. Access to vocational training, remote work options, and microfinance opportunities will enable survivors to rebuild their lives with independence and dignity.
- 4. PUBLIC AWARENESS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT:** Transforming societal attitudes toward domestic violence requires consistent awareness campaigns, education programs, and active community participation. Public engagement will help create a zero-tolerance culture for abuse while challenging victim-blaming and stigma.
- 5. COMMITMENT TO ACTION AND FOLLOW-THROUGH:** Discussions must lead to tangible action, ensuring that advocacy, structured interventions, and survivor-centered policies continue beyond the summit. A robust nationwide framework must be developed to guarantee that every survivor has access to comprehensive, long-term support.

By implementing these strategies, stakeholders can drive **systemic change**, **enhance survivor protections**, and create a society where domestic violence is neither tolerated nor ignored.

GLIMPSES OF OUR EVENT



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We appreciate the dedication and support of every individual and organization whose contributions played a vital role in making the Delhi Domestic Violence Stakeholders Summit a meaningful and impactful event. Their collective efforts ensured the success of this gathering, fostering critical discussions and collaborations that will drive lasting change.

We thank all attendees for their active participation, thoughtful insights, and willingness to share their experiences. Their engagement enriched the conversations and strengthened the collective mission to address domestic violence with effective solutions. We acknowledge the invaluable role of both familiar and new participants, whose presence and perspectives created an environment of learning, connection, and shared commitment to advocacy and action.

We are especially grateful for the dedication and hard work of the organizing team, whose meticulous planning and execution ensured the smooth flow of the event. We extend our thanks to the following responsible parties:

OUR PARTNERS

Hosts – Invisible Scars Foundation and Centre for Social Research, India

Gift Bags – Invisible Scars Foundation

Planning and Organisation Support – Centre for Social Research, India

GUESTS OF HONOUR AND CHIEF GUESTS

Dr. Ranjana Kumari, Director, Centre for Social Research, India

Ms. Jyotsna Roy, Social Scientist & Centre for Social Research Board Member

Asha Devi Pandey, Nirbhaya's Mother and Founder of Nirbhaya Jyoti Trust

MODERATORS AND PANELISTS

Moderators: Gayatri, Dr. Manasi Mishra, Mr. Viiveck Verma

Panelists: Gayatri Kaushal, Naseem Khan, Smritikana Ghosh Paul, Arshiya, Seema Devi, Rakhi Sharma, Ekta Viiveck Verma, Dr. Manasi Mishra

ATTENDING ORGANISATIONS

SPARSH, Jagori Women's Resource Centre, TERI SAS, Deepalaya, One Future Collective, University of Delhi, Helping Human Rights Foundation, Pragati Path, Deep Shades, Aawaaz Foundation,, Invisible Scars Foundation Foundation, Centre For Social Research, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung India, Sankalp Foundation, Bhavi Nirman Society, Daftee, Nav Nirman Evam Paryavaran Kendra, City Makers International, SAMVAD Advocacy, Prod, The Jurists, Law Offices, CFAR, Toli, Institute for Social Development and Disaster Management, Asmita Social Welfare Association, Justice and Development Foundation, Centre For Social Research, Pravah, Sarthak Charitable Trust, Raahat Crisis Centre, CEQUIN, Prod, Maryada Shiksha Samiti Jajwar District Bundi, Jagori, Mera Rangg Foundation, Ramola Bharat Charitable Trust (STOP), Aura Aarini Foundation, Adhita Foundation, Asmita social welfare Organisation, Goonj, Srinagaar, Crea, Magic Bus Foundation

WRITING AND DESIGNING THE WHITE PAPER

Ekta Viiveck Verma and Ketaki Ruchika Singh

PARTICIPANTS

1. Aarini Mishra - Individual
2. Amrit Solomon - SPARSH
3. Amrita - Jagori Women's Resource Centre
4. Ananya CG - TERI SAS
5. Anita - Deepalaya
6. Arshiya - One Future Collective
7. Ashutosh Yadav - University of Delhi
8. Bhaskar Kumar Agrawal - Helping Human Rights Foundation
9. Brijendra Singh Chauhan - Pragati Path
10. Deepali Chanana - Deep Shades
11. Dinesh Shrinet - Individual
12. Divya Yadav - Aawaaz Foundation
13. Dr. Manasi Mishra - HoD, Centre for Social Research, India
14. Dr. Naveen Kumar - HoD, Centre for Social Research, India
15. Dr. Ranjana Kumari - Director, Centre for Social Research, India

16. Ekta Viiveck Verma – Invisible Scars Foundation
17. Gaurika – Centre for Social Research, India
18. Gayatri – Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, India
19. Gayatri Kaushal – Sankalp Foundation
20. Giriraj Prasad Sharma – Bhavi Nirman Society
21. Harshita C – Daftee
22. Heera Lal Shastri – Nav Nirman Evam Paryavaran Kendra
23. Indu Prakash Singh – CityMakers Mission International
24. Jayant Verma – SAMVAD Advocacy
25. Jhoomar Mehta – Prod
26. Jitendra Kumar Jha, Advocate – The Jurists, Law Offices
27. Juhi Jaini – CFAR
28. Jyoti Goyal – Toli
29. Jyotsna Roy – Institute for Social Development and Disaster Management
30. Ketaki Ruchika Singh – Individual
31. Kiran Kanojia – Individual
32. Kiran Pathak – Asmita Social Welfare Association
33. Mahesh Singh – Justice and Development Foundation
34. Manoj – Centre for Social Research, India
35. Manoj Saxena – Individual
36. Mehreen Khan – Pravah
37. Mohan Bacholiya – Sarthak Charitable Trust
38. Mumtaz Fathima – Raahat Crisis Centre
39. Nandini – Pravah
40. Naseem Khan – CEQUIN
41. Neeru Chaudhary – Individual
42. Neemat Tahid – Individual
43. Nisha – Centre for Social Research, India
44. Nisha Verma – Action for Health Education and Social Awareness Society (AHESAS)
45. Ojaswi Anand – Prod
46. Poonam Panwar – Poonam Panwar
47. Paveen Gulati – Individual
48. Rama Sharma – Bhavi Nirman Society
49. Ramlal Gurjar – Maryada Shiksha Samiti, Jajawar
50. Rishita Maiti – Invisible Scars Foundation
51. Shalini Sharma – Jagori
52. Shalini Shrinet – Mera Rang Foundation

53. Sinjini Sengupta - Individual
54. Smriti Shankar - Individual
55. Smritikana Ghosh Paul - Ramola Bharat Charitable Trust (STOP)
56. Sonika Singh - Aura Aarini Foundation
57. Shristi Gulati - Self
58. Saubhagya Singh - Individual
59. Sunil Pal - Adhita Foundation
60. Tanya R - Individual
61. Tara Shankar - Individual
62. V. Prabha - Asmita Social Welfare Organisation
63. Vaishali Nigam - Goonj
64. Vaishali Sahu - Srinagaar
65. Valerie Hohman - HoD, Organisational Development Centre for Social Research, India
66. Valleri - Crea
67. Varun - Magic Bus India Foundation
68. Vatsala - Aawaaz Foundation
69. Viiveck Verma - CEO, Invisible Scars Foundation
70. Vishalakshi - Individual

ABOUT INVISIBLE SCARS FOUNDATION

Invisible Scars Foundation is a survivor-led initiative providing **legal aid, mental health support, and crisis intervention** while advocating for **policy reforms and systemic change**.

Founded by **Ekta Viiveck Verma**, it began as an **online support group** and grew into a structured organization focused on **empowering survivors through awareness, resources, and direct intervention**. It collaborates with **NGOs, legal professionals, corporate partners, and government agencies** to build **comprehensive survivor-centered support systems**.

Its flagship initiative, **Project Fearless**, launched with **Urban Company**, offers **mental health support, financial literacy, and legal aid** to over **13,000 women professionals**. The **Rahat Crisis Center** integrates **hospital-based assistance**, providing survivors with medical, legal, and psychological support.

Committed to **breaking cycles of abuse**, Invisible Scars Foundation advances **shelter policy reform, stronger legal protections, and economic empowerment**. Having conducted **domestic violence summits in three states**, it aims to **expand nationwide** and strengthen its survivor support network.

Through its initiatives, Invisible Scars Foundation **challenges social norms, strengthens institutional responses, and fosters safe spaces where survivors can heal and rebuild their lives with dignity**.

ABOUT CENTRE FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH, INDIA

Founded in **1983**, the **Centre for Social Research (CSR)** is a pioneering organization dedicated to **women's rights, gender equality, and social justice**. Through **policy advocacy, research, and grassroots initiatives**, CSR works to **empower women, prevent gender-based violence, and promote systemic change**.

With over **40 years of experience**, CSR has played a crucial role in **legal reforms, capacity-building programs, and community interventions**. Its initiatives focus on **skill development, leadership training, crisis intervention, and economic empowerment**, ensuring **gender inclusivity in policy implementation**. CSR actively collaborates with the **Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD), Government of India**, to implement the **Beti Bachao Beti Padhao** program, promoting girls' education and welfare.

CSR is accredited with the **United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**, reinforcing its role as a **globally recognized advocate for gender equality**. It partners with **government agencies, international organizations, academic institutions, and civil society groups** to advance **gender-sensitive policy reforms and legislative advancements**. Its extensive research has shaped **laws on domestic violence, workplace harassment, and political representation**, strengthening institutional accountability. Through strategic partnerships, CSR has **expanded its efforts beyond national borders**, engaging in **global advocacy, knowledge exchange, and best-practice implementation** in addressing gender-based issues.

Committed to **strengthening institutional responses to gender-based violence**, CSR continues to advocate for **women's rights, improved access to justice, and long-term solutions for gender equality**. By extending its efforts across **rural and urban communities**, it strives to **create a society where women can live free from violence, discrimination, and socio-economic barriers**.



INVISIBLE SCARS FOUNDATION

Impacting 20,000 Domestic Violence & Abuse Survivors

SERVICES WE OFFER

Survivor Support

FIRST LEVEL SUPPORT

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

LEGAL COUNSELLING

SKILLING/LIVELIHOOD

LITIGATION SUPPORT

SHELTER SUPPORT

MISCELLANEOUS

Sustainable Ecosystem Building

AWARENESS

CAPACITY BUILDING

POLICY ADVOCACY

If you or someone you know is facing
Domestic Violence & Abuse,
Reach out for Support!

HELPLINE



+91 90151 22122

Mon-Sat 9am-9pm





WHITE PAPER

Domestic Violence Stakeholders Summit

KARNATAKA

26TH APRIL, 2025

Presented by:

Bembala Foundation

bembalainfo@whitefieldrising.org

www.bembalafoundation.org

Invisible Scars Foundation

info@invisiblescars.in

www.invisiblescars.in

INVISIBLE SCARS FOUNDATION

An NGO based in Hyderabad, Telangana, dedicated to supporting domestic violence and abuse survivors through comprehensive services including awareness, advocacy, legal aid, counselling, mediation, and rehabilitation.

BEMBALA FOUNDATION

A Whitefield Rising initiative based in Bangalore, Karnataka, committed to supporting women and child survivors of domestic violence and abuse through their crisis centre, helpline, and referral networks.

Karnataka Domestic Violence Stakeholders Summit

The Karnataka Domestic Violence Stakeholders Summit was organised by Invisible Scars Foundation in partnership with Bembala Foundation on April 26, 2025 at Vydehi Institute of Medical Sciences & Research Centre, Whitefield, Bangalore.

The full-day summit convened over 85 professionals, experts, and key stakeholders from across Karnataka for outcome-driven dialogue, collaboration, and action.

This summit was a significant step towards catalysing structural change through expert engagement and cross-sector collaboration. The insights and recommendations emerging from the discussions have been consolidated in this comprehensive white paper, which will be submitted to the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Delhi, to inform future policy and program design.

Agenda Highlights

The summit was anchored by two high-impact Panel Discussions followed by a Roundtable Discussion.

Panel 1

Designing Dignity:
Reinventing Safe
Spaces for Domestic
Violence and Abuse
Survivors

Panel 2

Unpacking
Addiction, Mental
Health, and
Domestic Violence

Roundtable Discussion

A collective brainstorming on long-term skilling for economic empowerment, legal aid resources, and the way forward

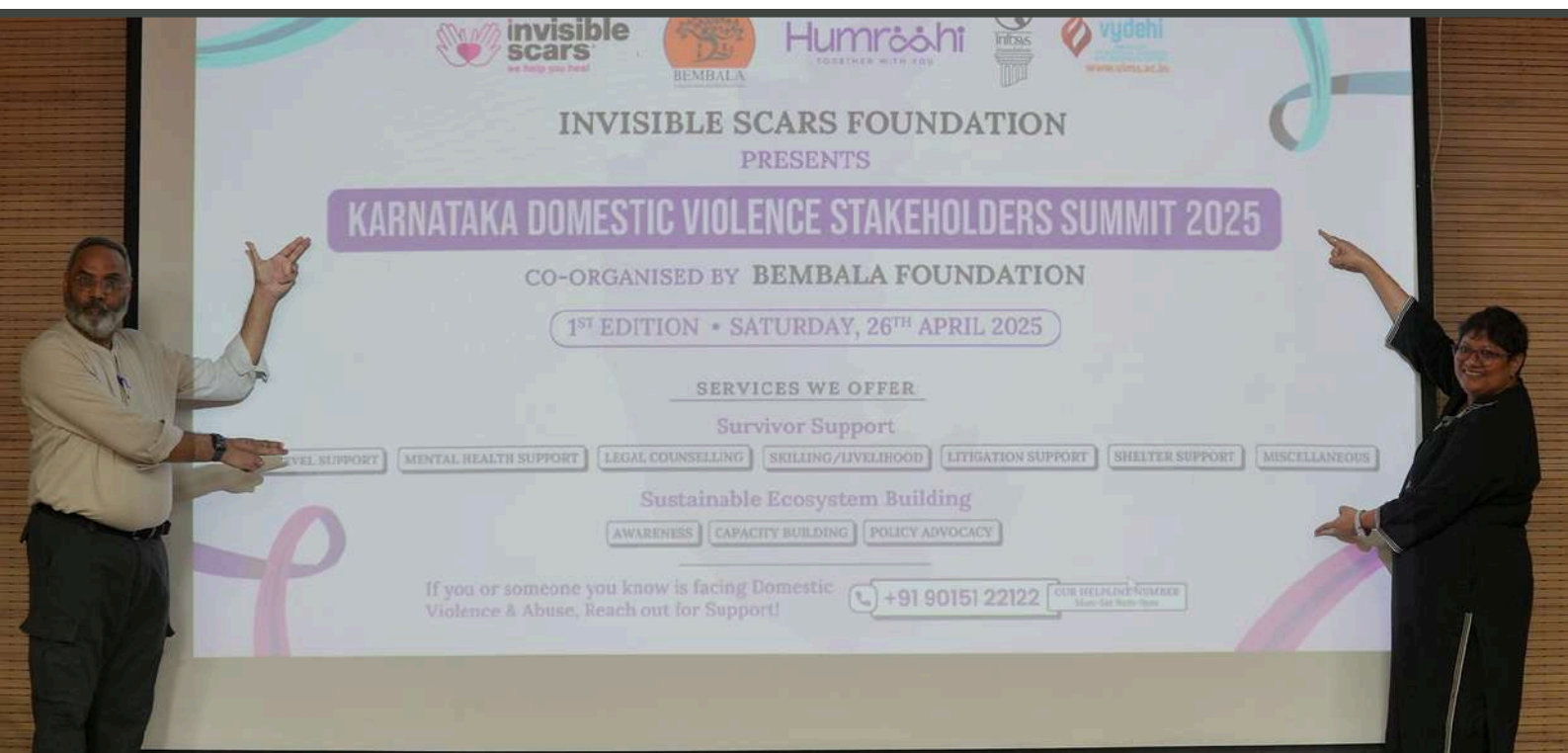


Table of Contents

Sr. No.	Contents	Page No.
1	Glossary	4
2	Context	5
3	Challenges Faced by DVA Survivors	6
4	Welcome Address by Host: Ms. Ekta Verma	7
5	Introduction to Keynote Speaker by Host: Dr. Iram Ahmedi	7
6	Keynote Address: Ms. Dhanya Rajendran	8
7	Panel Discussion: Designing Dignity: Reinventing Safe Spaces for Domestic Violence and Abuse Survivors	9
8	Guest Speaker: Ms. Reshma	13
9	Panel Discussion: Unpacking Addiction, Mental Health, and Domestic Violence	14
10	Guest Speaker: Ms. Christy Abraham	20
11	Moderated Round Table	22
12	The Way Forward	27
13	Glimpses of the Event	30
14	Acknowledgements	35
15	Participants' Names and Organisations	36
16	About Invisible Scars Foundation and Bembala Foundation	38

Glossary

- KDVSS - Karnataka Domestic Violence Stakeholders Summit
- DV - Domestic Violence
- DVA - Domestic Violence and Abuse
- GBV - Gender-based Violence
- IPV - Intimate Partner Violence
- CSR - Corporate Social Responsibility
- PWDVA - Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act
- WHO - World Health Organisation
- NFHS - National Family Health Survey
- PTSD - Post-traumatic Stress Disorder
- UN - United Nations
- ICRW - International Centre for Research on Women
- NCR - Non-cognizable Report
- MLC - Medicolegal Case
- PO - Protection Order
- AA - Alcoholics Anonymous
- OSC - One Stop Centre
- SHG - Self-help Group

Context

Domestic violence is one of the most widespread yet under-recognized human rights violations in the world. It cuts across geography, class, caste, religion, and education – occurring most devastatingly within the very homes where women should feel safest. Despite decades of global advocacy, millions continue to suffer abuse, often with limited legal recourse or social support.

According to the World Health Organization, nearly one in three women **worldwide** has experienced physical or sexual violence in her lifetime. In 2023, an estimated 140 women and girls were killed each day by intimate partners or family members, underscoring the dangers women face in their own homes.

In **India**, the crisis is compounded by entrenched patriarchy, stigma, and inconsistent enforcement of protective laws. The National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5, 2019-2021) found that nearly 30% of women aged 15–49 had experienced physical or sexual violence since the age of 15. Underreporting remains severe: a 2006 study revealed that 85% of women who faced sexual violence did not seek help, and only 1% reported it to the police.

Karnataka reflects a similar alarming trend. NFHS-5 data shows that 44% of married women in the state reported spousal violence; up from 20.6% in the previous survey. In just the first half of 2024, Karnataka recorded 6,551 cases of crimes against women, including rape, molestation, kidnapping, and domestic abuse.

The **consequences for survivors** are profound. Many endure lasting trauma, including PTSD, depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. Abuse often limits women's access to education, employment, and support networks. Children exposed to such violence face emotional and developmental challenges, perpetuating the cycles of abuse.

The **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005)** defines domestic violence broadly – covering physical, emotional, sexual, verbal, and economic abuse – and offers civil remedies such as protection and residence orders, and monetary relief. However, enforcement remains weak. Many survivors are unaware of their rights, and the shortage of trained Protection Officers hampers implementation. Societal stigma and financial dependence further discourage reporting.

Beyond its human toll, domestic violence carries substantial **economic costs**. The UN estimates that intimate partner violence costs the global economy \$1.5 trillion annually – around 2% of global GDP. In India, a study by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) estimated that domestic violence costs the country 1.4% of its GDP, factoring in lost productivity, healthcare, absenteeism, and legal expenses. These figures make a compelling case for increased investment in prevention and survivor support – not only as a moral imperative, but also as an economic necessity.

Addressing domestic violence requires a **comprehensive approach**: raising awareness, strengthening legal enforcement, expanding survivor support services, and advancing economic empowerment. It is not a private issue; it is a systemic one. Meaningful change demands collective action, survivor-led frameworks, and sustained community and policy engagement to build a safer, more just society for all women.

Challenges faced by DVA Survivors

Shelter Homes

In India, shelter homes have long served as a crisis response mechanism for women facing domestic violence.

Mandated under schemes like the **Swadhar Greh** and supported through **One Stop Centres (OSCs)**, these spaces aim to provide immediate safety, counselling, and legal support. However, the system is fraught with challenges. Shelters are often under-resourced, institutionally restrictive, and unequipped to offer trauma-informed care. Many operate with a custodial mindset, limiting women's mobility and autonomy rather than supporting recovery and empowerment. For survivors who are forced to leave their homes to access safety, this displacement often results in loss of housing rights, economic insecurity, and further stigma. Despite the legal provision under the **Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA), 2005** that guarantees a woman's right to reside in her shared household, shelters remain the default solution due to weak enforcement, lack of community alternatives, and limited awareness among survivors of their legal entitlements.

Mental Health and Addiction

The intersection of mental health, substance use, and domestic violence is increasingly recognized but remains poorly addressed in India's public systems.

Research shows a strong correlation between alcohol abuse and Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), with substance use often acting as both a trigger and a coping mechanism in abusive relationships. Survivors may develop anxiety, depression, PTSD, or suicidal ideation, while perpetrators with untreated mental illness or addiction may repeatedly commit acts of violence. Despite this, access to quality mental health care remains deeply limited – especially for women in rural or marginalised communities. **Social stigma, gender bias, and systemic neglect** mean that neither survivors nor perpetrators receive the psychological support they need. While government initiatives like the **National Tele-Mental Health Programme** and **Sakhi One Stop Centres** represent steps forward, a more integrated, trauma-informed, and gender-sensitive approach is urgently needed to address the psychological dimensions of domestic violence in India.

Welcome Address

Ms. Ekta Verma, Founder, Invisible Scars

Ms. Ekta Verma opened the summit by introducing the work of the Invisible Scars Foundation in the field of gender-based violence and abuse. She set the tone in her welcome address, emphasising that advocacy thrives on persistence and collective action.

She shared that Invisible Scars held previous summits in Telangana, Maharashtra, Delhi, and Uttar Pradesh, with upcoming editions planned for West Bengal and Tamil Nadu. Ekta also introduced her colleagues, Ishwari and Parna, and then went on to introduce the co-organiser of the summit, Bembala Foundation. Bembala's vision of raising awareness and challenging abuse – and their support for over 700 women and child survivors so far – was warmly acknowledged.



Introduction to Keynote Speaker

Dr. Iram Ahmedi, Founding Trustee, Bembala Foundation

Dr. Iram Ahmedi welcomed the attendees and introduced the keynote speaker, Ms. Dhanya Rajendran, Co-founder and Editor-in-Chief of The News Minute, an award-winning senior journalist whose work spans politics, human rights, gender-based violence, and disaster coverage.



Keynote Address

Ms. Dhanya Rajendran, Co-founder and Editor in-chief, The News Minute

Ms. Rajendran brought a journalist's perspective to the complex, often unsettling realities of reporting on domestic violence. Marking a year since the Prajwal Revanna case surfaced, she highlighted the state's selective urgency on such matters and the trauma faced by survivors within shelters.



She underscored how deeply normalised abuse is – many women see violence as something they must endure. Recalling another case of a woman who died by suicide, Ms. Rajendran shared how the woman's father had urged her to leave her husband, but she felt bound by marriage to stay.

She emphasised that the media must persistently cover such issues. "Awareness is a nonstop process," she said. She also flagged the inadequacy of support infrastructure, including the under-resourced Sakhi helpline.

Drawing on her work with the International Foundation for Crime Prevention and Victim Care (PCVC), Chennai, Ms. Rajendran pointed to a rarely acknowledged issue: the risks and threats that exist within shelters – not only for survivors, but also for the shelter staff.

She stressed on the need for inclusive support systems, not just for marginalised women, but for all women across socio-economic backgrounds. She also cautioned against the growing push for gender-agnostic laws by some men's rights groups, asserting that domestic violence remains a profoundly gendered crime, requiring a focused, women-centred response.

Designing Dignity: Reinventing Safe Spaces for Domestic Violence and Abuse Survivors

Ms. Nitya Ramakrishnan opened the discussion with a stark statistic: nearly 30% of women in India face domestic violence, often at the hands of those they trust most. She urged the panel to reimagine shelter as a space that is rooted in dignity and care.

Ms. Sumithra Acharya made a strong case against using shelters as the default option. While the Domestic Violence Act, 2005 includes shelter as a provision, she argued that it should be a last resort. Removing a woman from her home can weaken her legal standing, deny her property rights, and cause psychological harm. In her view, shelters are often likened to jails – restrictive, poorly designed, and disempowering. She emphasised that women must know they have the right to remain in their own homes. She called for a paradigm shift: instead of displacing survivors, move the perpetrators to reconstructive shelters.



Panel Discussion

Moderator: Ms. Nitya Ramakrishnan, Co-founder, Bambala Foundation

Panelists:

- Ms. Sumithra Acharya, Senior Advocate and Legal Advisor to Bambala Foundation
- Dr. Faraz Syed Mohammad, Psychiatrist and Deputy Director, Aladamara
- Ms. Maya Sharma, Senior Journalist
- Dr. Ashwini N. V., Founder, Mukhta Foundation
- Dr. Iram Ahmedi, Founding Trustee and Mentor, Bambala Foundation

She criticised how the shelters are considered “correctional institutions,” and asked, “What are you really correcting?” She urged that women should have full autonomy to enter and exit shelters as they choose and for a woman who chooses to stay at home, she can get a Protection Order (PO) after filing an NCR and that would effectively help restrain the violence.

Dr. Iram Ahmedi supported this view, highlighting the poor hygiene and the inadequate trauma-informed care in most shelters. She echoed Ms. Rajendran's concern that shelters are designed for a narrow demographic and exclude many women based on socio-economic background. Recounting a rescue operation with Ms. Donna Fernandes from Aweksha, Dr. Iram described how the children wanted to return home the very next day – underscoring how unwelcoming such spaces can be.



Ms. Ramakrishnan added that survivors often endure up to seven episodes of severe abuse before seeking shelter. She asserted that safe, supportive, and dignified housing should be a constitutional right – not an act of charity.

Dr. Faraz Mohammad explored the bidirectional link between domestic violence and mental health. Survivors may suffer from PTSD, anxiety, or depression, while those with pre-existing mental health conditions may be more vulnerable to abuse.

Perpetrators, too, may struggle with untreated mental illness, often exacerbated by substance abuse. He warned against placing survivors with untrained counsellors and stressed that shelters must uphold survivors' agency, not diminish it.



Dr. Ashwini N. V. categorised perpetrators into three types:

1. Family-only Perpetrators – who are able to control their aggression outside the home.
2. Dysphoric-borderline Batterers – who are dealing with a mental illness like psychosis, schizophrenia, etc., making legal deterrents ineffective.
3. Antisocial Perpetrators – who have antisocial personalities and are defiant and unmoved by legal consequences.

In her experience, women who are dealing with the latter two types are in the most need of shelter. Further, she cautioned that the women who choose to stay at home (where the violence has occurred) can be re-traumatised due to the environment itself and shelters could provide a space to heal from that. Similarly, she pointed out that poorly managed shelters could also cause re-traumatisation.



She recommended mental health pre-screenings for those entering shelters, and psychological first aid protocols, peer-led support groups, and trauma-informed group therapy for shelter residents. She also brought up the need to look at the perpetrator's mental health as well. And lastly, children in shelters, too, must be supported – often having developed internalising or externalising concerns as a result of witnessing violence. They must also be a part of the intervention plan.



Ms. Maya Sharma presented her point of view as a journalist, addressing the role of media in both perpetuating and challenging the normalisation of abuse. She emphasised the need for public awareness campaigns, responsible reporting, and sensitivity when covering stories of domestic violence. She also suggested using repeated public service announcements for awareness. Adding helplines to stories related to domestic violence and holding systems accountable – like government shelter investigations and follow-ups – could enhance the media's role in reform.



Dr. Iram Ahmedi concluded by envisioning what a truly dignified shelter could be – sharing the dream that Bembala dreams. She drew a parallel to senior living communities, which offer safety without shame, unlike the often-stigmatized old-age homes. She also critiqued the superficial nature of vocational training programs in shelters that fail to provide true economic independence.

The discussion ended with a lively **Q&A**, where audience members shared insights from their own work and engaged meaningfully with the panel's vision for safer, more empowering alternatives to conventional shelter homes.



From left: Ms. Maya Sharma, Dr. Ashwini N. V., Ms. Sumithra Acharya, Ms. Nitya Ramakrishnan, Dr. Iram Ahmedi, Dr. Faraz Mohammad

Guest Speaker

Ms. Reshma, a survivor supported by Bembala Foundation

After a short break, the room went quiet as Ms. Reshma, a survivor of domestic violence, shared her lived experience. Her testimony was raw, heartbreaking, and deeply inspiring – a reminder of the courage it takes to speak out in the face of fear and isolation.

Ms. Reshma recounted the hardships she faced while raising three children with a violent and alcoholic husband who eventually developed cirrhosis and passed away. After his passing, the abuse didn't end – her brother-in-law began harassing and tormenting her. With the support of Bembala Foundation, she reported him to the police and he eventually backed off.

The trauma extended beyond her home. At work, her character was questioned, and her reputation suffered. Her struggles deepened when her daughter, too, faced domestic abuse after marriage. With Bembala's assistance, her daughter was able to seek a divorce – closing a cycle of violence and beginning a journey towards healing.

Ms. Reshma's presence at the summit and her powerful story underscored why these conversations must lead to action.



Unpacking Addiction, Mental Health, and Domestic Violence

The session confronted the complex interplay of substance use, trauma, and domestic violence. **Ms. Kiran Bhatia** opened the discussion by addressing the compounded effect of addiction and abuse on both survivors and perpetrators. She invited the panelists to share insights into the psychological dimensions of these issues, as well as the outcomes and systemic responses required to address them.

Dr. Madhuri H. N. began by highlighting the well-established link between substance use and gender-based violence, including suicide, self-harm, and a range of psychological disorders. She noted that this correlation holds true across low-, middle-, and high-income countries. Research indicates that individuals with substance use issues are up to seven times more likely to commit intimate partner violence.

Emphasising on the bidirectional relationship between addiction and domestic violence, she explained how substance use triggers a pattern of physiological and psychological changes – leading to disintegration, aggression, discord, and violence. Survivors, too, may turn to substances as a coping strategy, including prescription medication, making substance use a risk factor for both perpetrator and survivor.

Reflecting on the Covid-19 lockdowns, she described the surge in domestic violence cases as a “shadow pandemic,” with helplines overwhelmed by distress calls.

Panel Discussion

Moderator: Ms. Kiran Bhatia, Co-founder, Bembala Foundation

Panelists:

- Dr. Madhuri H. N., Psychiatrist, NIMHANS
- Ms. Shameem Sheik Dastagir, Independent Development Professional
- Dr. Jagadeesh Narayanareddy, Vice Principal and HOD, Forensic Medicine, Vydehi Institute of Medical Sciences and RC
- Ms. Shobha N., Sub-Inspector, All Women and Child Department, Shivaji Nagar
- Mr. Sachin, Representative, Alcoholics Anonymous

In her role as the lead for the Stree Manoraksha project, Dr. Madhuri was involved in training the counsellors and paraprofessional staff at the Sakhi OSCs across India. She shared that there are 750 functional Sakhi OSCs in every district of India.

She is currently working with the National Tele-Mental Health Program, which offers support for various mental health concerns through their toll-free helpline number – 14416. This program is government-funded and accessible in over 20 languages; it also includes structured referral pathways for continued care.



Mr. Sachin shared his personal journey with alcohol addiction, which began at a very young age. He spoke about having experienced both sides of violence – as a survivor and as a perpetrator. His father, also an alcoholic, was physically and emotionally abusive, making life especially difficult for his mother and sister. Despite being educated, his family didn't know how to seek help, and his mother eventually passed away without finding a way out. This cycle of abuse lasted over 20 years.

Unknowingly, Mr. Sachin himself repeated the same pattern. His own addiction caused immense harm to his family and friends. He recalled always feeling misunderstood – until he found a safe space in Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), where others shared similar experiences. The fellowship, built on empathy and mutual support, gave him the care he had longed for.

His family also received support through Al-Anon, a sister fellowship that helps the families of addicts.

Mr. Sachin described the psychological grip of addiction: how an alcoholic's day revolves around the next drink, often leading to mental, emotional, and financial breakdown. Most alcoholics don't recognise their behaviour as addiction, and families often struggle to understand it too.

In AA, each person is paired with a sponsor who guides them through a 12-step program – a process that begins with acknowledging the problem and includes making amends to those harmed. He described alcoholism as a “disease of denial,” and emphasized AA’s constant reminder to never forget where you’ve come from.

At present, AA has around 100 groups across Bangalore, with each group having 5-10 members.



Sub-Inspector Shobha N. shared her perspective as a frontline police officer and the first point of contact for many survivors. She noted that until February 2024, Bengaluru had only 2 all-women police stations. That number has since grown to 8 dedicated women’s divisions across the city.

She outlined the process followed in domestic violence cases. The first step is dialing 112, which alerts the local police. A team typically arrives within 8 minutes and then directs the survivor or complainant to the women’s division within the relevant

jurisdiction. If physical harm has occurred, the survivor is taken to a local hospital for Medicolegal Case (MLC) examination. However, as per current protocol, a police case is not immediately registered after the MLC unless the survivor explicitly agrees to proceed with legal action. Many women, Ms. Shobha noted, are hesitant to pursue legal proceedings. In such instances, officers refer them to a counsellor from Parihar, an NGO assisting with counselling services, which places two trained counsellors in every women’s police station.

Ms. Shobha raised concern that when women choose not to press charges, perpetrators often go on to abuse others, continuing the cycle of violence unchecked.

She also provided insights into the one-stop crisis centres, where women can get shelter for up to 5 days. After this period, they are referred to NGOs for longer-term rehabilitation and support.

Addressing the question of why perpetrators are not arrested even after complaints, she cited the *Arnesh Kumar vs. State of Bihar* (2014) Supreme Court ruling. This judgement made arrests under Section 498A of the IPC non-automatic, mandating preliminary inquiry before arrest – resulting in greater restrictions on police action in such cases.

Dr. Jagadeesh Narayanareddy acknowledged Vydehi Hospital's six-year collaboration with Bembala Foundation, noting that a good system is in place, and ongoing efforts are focused on strengthening and improving it. He strongly advocated for every hospital to have such a dedicated crisis centre – spaces designed to offer survivors immediate support, counselling, and a safe environment for disclosure.

Emphasising on the importance of survivor-centric care, he stressed the need to first establish systems and later, focus on better implementation. He pointed out that the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act is a civil law and not a criminal law – underscoring that the role of stakeholders is to stop the violence, and not necessarily dissolve marriages.

He promoted a “cafeteria approach,” where survivors are offered a range of options, such as involving elders, invoking civil or criminal law, or accessing counselling, allowing them to decide what course of action best suits their situation.



At Vydehi Hospital, they have adopted WHO's LIVES protocol – Listen, Inquire, Validate, Enhance safety, and Support – as a mandatory guideline for responding to survivors in clinical settings. Dr. Jagadeesh advocated that every hospital or individual in the healthcare sector must follow this approach. Even beginning with the first three steps of active listening, sensitive inquiry, and validation can create a significant impact. The latter steps, safety and support, require dedicated crisis centres like Bembala's to be fully effective.

He concluded on a hopeful note, highlighting that capacity-building efforts are underway in the healthcare sector. Doctors as well as nursing students are now being trained to handle cases of gender-based violence with sensitivity and care.

Ms. Shameem Sheik Dastagir brought a powerful perspective on individual and collective responsibility, emphasising that solutions to domestic violence must be locally led, inclusive, sustainable, and practical. True transformation, she argued, requires systemic change – and that begins with challenging the normalisation of patriarchal structures that condition society to accept inequality and violence.



She noted that patriarchy, contrary to popular belief, is not ancient – it has dominated only for the past three centuries. Until the 16th century, many societies functioned under matriarchal systems. At the core of patriarchy, she emphasised, is power and control.

Ms. Shameem posed two critical questions for reform. First: How do we address the frontline gap? She proposed strengthening and training existing community health workers and women leaders in a holistic and replicable manner – transforming them into trainers of trainers who can cascade knowledge within their communities. This approach fosters resilience, leadership, and a sense of agency, ultimately building the critical mass needed to drive lasting change.

Second: Why don't we speak enough about classroom education? She recommended the creation of a simple, illustrative manual that does not require formal education to understand and it is something that can be taught by anyone, anywhere.

She also stressed on the importance of clear referral pathways and incorporating them into training modules. Communication tools like a dedicated helpline (14416), WhatsApp groups, and other 24x7 support systems must be easily accessible and widely known. To ensure uptake, these must be validated through community trust circles.

She further suggested engaging religious leaders, who often hold moral authority within communities, to support survivors and discourage perpetrators – leveraging community accountability as a deterrent to violence. Finally, she emphasised the need for skill-building programs for survivors to support their long-term independence and recovery.



Ms. Kiran Bhatia



Ms. Ekta Verma



From left: SI Shobha N., Ms. Shameem Sheik Dastagir, Ms. Kiran Bhatia, Dr. Jagadeesh Narayanareddy, Dr. Madhuri H. N., Mr. Sachin

Guest Speaker

Ms. Christy Abraham, Activist and Social Worker

Post lunch, Ms. Christy Abraham delivered a compelling address that offered a holistic understanding of the spectrum of violence. She emphasised that violence is not merely an individual behavioural issue, but a structural and systemic phenomenon – manifesting as cultural, social, religious, or institutional violence.

She urged the audience to examine the systems and structures that not only marginalize women but also render support providers vulnerable. Often, the goal is to reach a desirable level of well-being and support for survivors. However, due to systemic constraints, interventions are reduced to what is viable or doable. Governments and institutions, she pointed out, frequently prioritise what is profitable and doable, rather than what is necessary or just.

Ms. Abraham then discussed the importance of choosing the right framework. The human rights approach, she explained, is grounded in the obligation to act even if only one person is suffering. It holds the state accountable and places the most vulnerable individual at the centre of strategy-building.

However, to go deeper, she advocated for a feminist approach. While aligned with human rights, the feminist lens puts women at the centre and interrogates the structures that shape their experiences. This bottom-up framework calls for intersectional analysis, asking: What is marginalising this woman? Whether it's religion, poverty, a health issue, disability, or social identity – each layer must be examined through root-cause analysis.

She also stressed on the importance of understanding contextual vulnerability. A woman's access to safety and justice is shaped by her geographical, political, and legal environment.



Legal recourse alone is not sufficient; equitable and accessible implementation mechanisms are crucial to achieving gender-transformative outcomes.

Ms. Abraham then introduced the **Gender at Work framework** (Figure 1), a tool for understanding and addressing gender dynamics at both organisational and community levels. She described its four quadrants:

1. **Consciousness and Capability:** Creating awareness and building the confidence of women to speak up, access authorities, and navigate systems.
2. **Access to Resources:** Ensuring availability of support structures like shelters, financial aid, helplines, and networks.
3. **Informal Norms:** Challenging societal attitudes and unwritten rules that reinforce gender inequality.
4. **Formal Systems:** Addressing institutional rules, laws, and policies that must align with gender equity goals.

She concluded by emphasizing on the importance of collaboration and knowledge building. The lack of long-term research data hampers effective intervention. Partnering with academic institutions can not only validate survivors' experiences but also generate the evidence needed to influence systemic change.

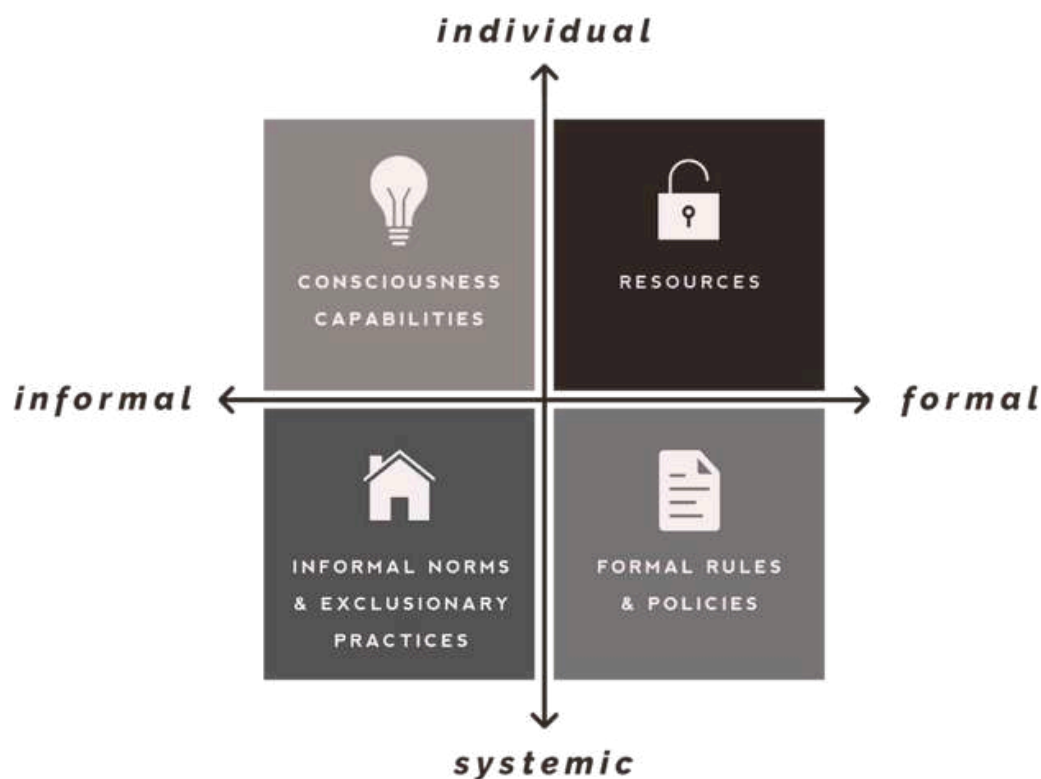


Figure 1: The Gender at Work framework

Roundtable Discussion

The afternoon's roundtable discussion buzzed with collaborative energy as participants reflected on the critical importance of **long-term skilling for economic empowerment, legal aid resources, and the need to engage external stakeholders** in a unified response to domestic violence.

Moderated by **Mr. Viiveck Verma**, the session brought together stakeholders from diverse sectors to brainstorm practical, survivor-focused strategies. The discussion aimed to foster cross-sector collaboration, inspire innovative solutions, and generate actionable recommendations that could be implemented by both government bodies and organisations working on the ground.



Roundtable Discussion

Moderator: Mr. Viiveck Verma, Director, Invisible Scars Foundation

Participants:

- Ms. Ramya Sundararajan, WeLive Foundation
- Ms. Prarthna Appaiah, CEHAT
- Ms. Radhika Jain, First Drop Change Foundation
- Mr. Sachin, Alcoholics Anonymous
- Ms. Nida Sheriff, Rocky Books Co.
- Ms. Lakshmi V. M., Vimochana
- Ms. Sowmya S., Aweksha Foundation
- Ms. Anitha P. Rao, APSA
- Ms. Jacintha Thukarama, DEEDS
- Ms. Lakshmidhevi M., Gamana Mahila Samukha
- Ms. Dechu Banerjee, Ashraya
- Ms. Sumithra Acharya, Legal Advisor, Bembala Foundation
- Ms. Yamini Chandrasekaran, Bembala Foundation
- Ms. Smitha Kumar, Vimochana
- Ms. Manjula N., APSA
- Ms. Avani Pandya, Bembala Foundation
- Ms. Yashaswini, Nyaaya Foundation
- Ms. Ashwini Tambe, Independent Researcher
- Mr. Samarth Srinivasa, J. K. Legal
- Mr. Ravi, BRDO
- Mr. Ritash, RANG Foundation
- Mr. Channappa, Prakruthi NGO
- Ms. Sumedha, Whitefield Ready
- Ms. Pallavi Deshpande
- Ms. Ameena, Vimochana
- Ms. Anjali Saini, Whitefield Rising
- Ms. Christy Raj
- Ms. Himani Durgamohan
- Ms. Joby Jacob Varghese
- Ms. Mamata Yajaman

Long-term Skilling for Economic Empowerment

Skilling is a critical pathway to economic empowerment for survivors. Financial dependence often traps them in cycles of violence, limiting their ability to leave unsafe environments or rebuild their lives. Access to skill development enables women to secure livelihoods, regain agency, and make independent choices. It not only boosts self-confidence but also **breaks intergenerational patterns** of dependence and vulnerability. When survivors are equipped with market-relevant skills, they are better positioned to achieve long-term stability, reclaim dignity, and participate fully in social and economic life.

Participants shared models where skill development was integrated with housing support, structured routines, and emotional care. **Transitional shelters and crisis centres** were seen as important spaces not only for recovery but also for initiating skilling efforts. Practitioners highlighted the importance of clear expectations and **structured timelines** for survivors in such programs, noting that accountability frameworks helped many women transition from dependence to self-reliance.

Others spoke about creating linkages between survivors and local industries, where women could take up full-time or part-time jobs or be supported in developing artisanal and entrepreneurial ventures in **tailoring, fabric and leather industry, jewellery-making, cooking and baking, beautician services, and retail**.

In parallel, participants stressed the need for **scaling skilling efforts** across different levels – from **foundational training** in literacy and basic qualifications (like completion of 10th or 12th grade through NIOS), to **professional upskilling** in **hospitality, IT, paralegal services, and driving**.

Community-based efforts like **self-help groups** offering microloans were seen as particularly effective in enabling women to start their own businesses.

Moreover, the value of integrating life skills and **therapeutic modalities** such as **theatre and martial arts training** into skilling programs was discussed as a means of addressing both livelihood and healing.

Roundtable at a Glance



Legal Aid Resources

Legal aid remains one of the most critical yet under-accessed resources for survivors of DVA in India. Despite legal provisions under the PWDVA, 2005, survivors often face significant structural and emotional barriers to accessing justice. These include limited awareness of rights, fear of retaliation, lack of access to affordable legal representation, and the intimidating complexity of legal procedures. Many survivors are further discouraged by the fragmentation of services and the **absence of coordinated referral systems**. In this context, the availability of timely, trauma-informed, and survivor-centric legal assistance becomes indispensable for both immediate protection and long-term redress.

During the roundtable, participants listed numerous existing initiatives and legal support models – from **free legal clinics** and **subsidised law firms** to **survivor-led paralegal services**. Several **NGOs** have developed **in-house legal wings** that not only assist with filing complaints and securing protection orders but also offer counselling and help survivors navigate the procedural landscape.

Community collectives and **independent legal aid organisations** are also stepping in to fill the gap left by overburdened public systems, offering legal awareness camps, simplified resources, and helplines. Additionally, some organisations have developed **booklets and survivor-friendly legal toolkits**, including a step-by-step guide on **“How to build a domestic violence case without a lawyer”** – resources co-created with survivors, lawyers, and field practitioners to ensure usability and trust.

Participants emphasised the need for a **stronger legal aid ecosystem** that blends **formal institutional mechanisms** with **grassroots legal literacy**. This includes **enhancing partnerships** between legal clinics, women’s organisations, police units, and shelter homes to ensure smoother and **more accountable referral pathways**.

There was also consensus on the importance of **including legal awareness in skilling programs and frontline trainings** so that women not only access justice but also build long-term resilience. A call was made to bolster **pro bono and subsidised legal services**, streamline case documentation processes, and create regionally accessible databases of verified legal aid providers. The discussion reinforced that legal empowerment must be integrated into every stage of survivor support, not treated as a standalone or final step.

Roundtable at a Glance



The Way Forward

The **Karnataka Domestic Violence Stakeholders Summit** surfaced a shared understanding: addressing domestic violence in India requires structural reform, not piecemeal solutions. Survivors need more than protection. They need systems that prioritise their dignity, autonomy, and long-term empowerment. Drawing from survivor voices, cross-sector expertise, and grassroots fieldwork, the following key directions are proposed to guide future policy design and institutional practice.

A. Reimagining Shelter as Support, Not Displacement

- **Shelters should be a last resort option**, not the default. The legal right of women to remain in their own homes – guaranteed under the PWDVA – must be upheld and made accessible.
- **Reconstructive shelters for perpetrators** should be explored as an alternative to displacing survivors, shifting the burden of relocation from the victim to the abuser.
- Shelter environments must be **trauma-informed**, inclusive, and flexible – offering physical safety, emotional healing, and dignity.
- Policy should mandate **minimum standards for shelter hygiene, access to legal aid, mental health support, and childcare**.
- Women must retain **full autonomy to enter and exit shelters**; current models resembling correctional facilities must be transformed.
- Shelters must include provisions for **children's care**, recognising the psychological impact of exposure to violence.

B. Integrating Mental Health and Addiction Services

- The state must embed **mental health care** and **addiction recovery services** into all levels of domestic violence response – particularly within OSCs, hospitals, and shelter homes.
- All survivors should undergo **mental health pre-screenings** and be provided access to trauma-informed counseling and group therapy.
- Frontline responders – including police, shelter staff, and legal aid workers – must be trained in the **psychological dynamics of trauma and addiction**.
- The **WHO's LIVES protocol** (Listen, Inquire, Validate, Enhance safety, Support) should be made mandatory across healthcare and clinical settings that serve survivors.
- Public health programs must explicitly address **substance use as both a cause and consequence** of domestic violence, and invest in recovery pathways that reduce stigma and increase access.

The Way Forward

C. Strengthening Legal Aid Access and Referral Systems

- Legal empowerment must be treated as a **core service**, not a secondary step. Every shelter, OSC, and women's police station should have access to trained legal personnel.
- Expand **pro bono and subsidised legal aid** for survivors, and create a **statewide database** of verified legal aid providers accessible to NGOs and police.
- Support the development and dissemination of **survivor-friendly legal toolkits**, co-created with NGOs, legal experts, and survivors.
- Enhance coordination between **legal aid clinics, women's collectives, law enforcement, and social workers** to streamline survivor referral pathways.
- Integrate **legal literacy modules** into skilling programs, SHG meetings, and community health training to improve informed decision-making.

D. Scaling Skilling and Economic Empowerment

- Survivors must be connected to **market-relevant skill development**, including digital, service-sector, and artisanal industries, with clear employment pathways.
- Support **transitional programs** that combine temporary housing, income generation, and mental health care, especially for women leaving orphanages or shelters.
- Invest in **community-based skilling hubs** tied to local industries (tailoring, garment, beauty, hospitality, retail), and link them to SHGs and microloan platforms.
- Encourage innovative and therapeutic skill-building through **art-based, theatre-led, or martial arts interventions**, which support both healing and confidence-building.
- Government schemes like **PM Vidyalakshmi, NRLM, and NIOS** should be integrated more effectively into DV response networks, enabling survivors to complete education and access loans without collateral.
- Offer **seed funding for survivor-led enterprises** through partnerships with women's entrepreneurial networks and CSR initiatives.

The Way Forward

E. Community Engagement and Systemic Change

- Build **community-led survivor support ecosystems**, leveraging trained women leaders, peer counsellors, and local religious and social leaders to prevent, report, and intervene in violence.
- Develop **non-literacy-dependent awareness materials** (manuals, posters, digital media) for rural and marginalised communities.
- Mandate the integration of **DV and gender sensitisation education** into school and college curricula.
- Institutionalise **24x7 multi-platform communication tools** (WhatsApp, helplines, chatbots), verified through community trust networks.
- Empower **frontline workers** – ASHAs, Anganwadi workers, police officers – with training in trauma response, referral mechanisms, and survivor rights.

F. Data, Research, and Accountability

- Invest in **long-term research and documentation** on domestic violence to inform policy and service delivery.
- Collaborate with **academic institutions** to validate survivor experiences, evaluate interventions, and close data gaps.
- Build an independent **monitoring and accountability framework** to evaluate OSCs, shelter homes, police response, and legal aid performance.
- Establish a **centralised survivor feedback system** to ensure policy evolves in direct response to those it is meant to serve.

Closing Note

To move from crisis response to systemic change, we must adopt a **rights-based, survivor-led, and intersectional approach** to addressing domestic violence. The insights and evidence generated from this summit reaffirm that coordinated action across law, health, livelihood, community, and media is not only possible, but urgently needed. The recommendations outlined here are intended to inform state and national policies, strengthen grassroots interventions, and guide multi-sector collaborations in the shared pursuit of **a future free from violence**.

Glimpses of the Event



Glimpses of the Event



KDVSS Posters



INVISIBLE SCARS FOUNDATION PRESENTS

KARNATAKA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STAKEHOLDERS SUMMIT

CO-ORGANISED BY **BEMBALA FOUNDATION**

Keynote Speakers



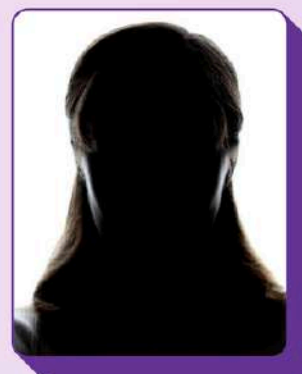
Ms. Dhanya Rajendran

Co-founder & Editor in Chief,
The News Minute



Ms. Christy Abraham

Activist, Social work Professional
& Independent Consultant



Ms. Reshma

DV Survivor



Saturday, 26th April 2025



9:30am to 5:00pm



Venue Partner



**Vydehi Institute of Medical Sciences & Research Centre,
#82, Nallurahalli, Whitefield, Bangalore-560066**



in.visiblescars



in.visiblescars



in_visiblescars



Invisible Scars Foundation

KDVSS Posters



**invisible
scars®**
we help you heal



BEMBALA
A WRITABLE MIND INITIATIVE

Humrosahi
TOGETHER WITH YOU



INVISIBLE SCARS FOUNDATION PRESENTS

KARNATAKA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STAKEHOLDERS SUMMIT

CO-ORGANISED BY **BEMBALA FOUNDATION**

TOPIC: Unpacking Addiction, Mental Health & Domestic Violence



Moderator

Ms. Kiran Bhatia

Gender & Social Inclusion
Technical Advisor, Co-Founder
& Member Bembala Foundation



Panelist

Dr. Madhuri H N

Psychiatrist, NIMHANS



Panelist

**Ms. Shameem
Sheik Dastagir**

Independent Development
Professional



Panelist

**Dr. Jagadeesh
Narayanareddy**

Vice Principal Prof. & HOD Forensic Medicine,
Vydehi Institute of Medical Sciences & RC



Panelist

Ms. Shobha N

Sub Inspector, All Women
and Child Dept, Shivaji Nagar



Panelist

Mr. Sachin

Representative,
Alcohol Anonymous



Venue Partner



**Vydehi Institute of Medical Sciences &
Research Centre, #82, Nallurahalli,
Whitefield, Bangalore-560066**



Saturday, 26th April 2025



9:30am to 5:00pm



in.visiblescars



in.visiblescars



in_visiblescars



Invisible Scars Foundation

KDVSS Posters



INVISIBLE SCARS FOUNDATION PRESENTS

KARNATAKA DOMESTIC VIOLENCE STAKEHOLDERS SUMMIT

CO-ORGANISED BY **BEMBALA FOUNDATION**

TOPIC: Designing Dignity: Reinventing Safe Spaces for Domestic Violence and Abuse Survivors



Moderator

Ms. Nitya Ramakrishnan

Member, Whitefield Rising and
Co-Founder, Bembala Foundation



Panelist

Ms. Sumithra

Senior Advocate & Legal
Advisory, Bembala Foundation



Panelist

Dr. Faraz Syed Mohammad

Psychiatrist and Deputy Director,
Aaladamara



Panelist

Ms. Maya Sharma

Senior Journalist



Panelist

Dr. Ashwini N V

Founder,
Mukhta Foundation



Venue Partner



*Vydehi Institute of Medical Sciences &
Research Centre, #82, Nallurahalli,
Whitefield, Bangalore-560066*



Saturday, 26th April 2025



9:30am to 5:00pm



in.visiblescars



in.visiblescars



in_visiblescars



Invisible Scars Foundation

Acknowledgements

We sincerely thank all the individuals, partner organisations, and collaborators whose dedication and contributions made the Karnataka Domestic Violence Stakeholders Summit a success. Your commitment to advancing dialogue, support systems, and policy reform for survivors of domestic violence has been invaluable to this collective effort.

Our Partners

Hosts: Invisible Scars Foundation, Bembala Foundation

Venue Partner: Vydehi Institute of Medical Sciences & Research Centre, Bangalore

Planning and Organisation Support: Bembala Foundation

Keynote and Guest Speakers

Ms. Dhanya Rajendran, Co-founder and Editor-in-Chief, The News Minute

Ms. Reshma, Survivor supported by Bembala Foundation

Ms. Christy Abraham, Activist and Social Worker

Moderators and Panelists

Moderators: Ms. Nitya Ramakrishnan, Ms. Kiran Bhatia, Mr. Viiveck Verma

Panelists: Ms. Sumithra Acharya, Dr. Faraz Syed Mohammad, Ms. Maya Sharma, Dr. Ashwini N. V., Dr. Iram Ahmedi, Dr. Madhuri H. N., Ms. Shameem Sheik Dastagir, Dr. Jagadeesh Narayanareddy, Ms. Shobha N., Mr. Sachin

Attending Organisations

Vydehi Hospital, Vimochana, Aweksha, APSA, Gamana Mahila Samukha, J. K. Legal, CEHAT, Parihar, Nyaaya, WeLive Foundation, ENFOLD, Payana, DEEDS, First Drop Change Foundation, Alcoholics Anonymous, Mukhta Foundation, Prakruthi, RANG Foundation, Whitefield Rising

Writing and Designing the White Paper

Ms. Avani Pandya (www.avanipandya.com)

Participants



- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. A. M. Rajendra Prasad | 21. Dr. Kiran Kumar K. |
| 2. Adv. Pallavi Deshpande | 22. Dr. Madhuri H. N. |
| 3. Alamelu Harish | 23. Durga Nelakurti |
| 4. Ameena | 24. Eshwari Rajan |
| 5. Anitha P Rao | 25. Farzana |
| 6. Anjali Saini | 26. Hajira Begum |
| 7. Anju Singh | 27. Hemalatha |
| 8. Antonia | 28. Himani Durgamohan |
| 9. Ashwini Tambe | 29. Dr. Iram Ahmedi |
| 10. Avani Pandya | 30. Jacintha Anitha Pereira |
| 11. Celine Suguna | 31. Jessy Mariam Mathew |
| 12. Christy Abraham | 32. Joby Jacob Verghese |
| 13. Christy Raj | 33. Khushi |
| 14. Dechu Banerjee | 34. Kiran Bhatia |
| 15. Deepak B. | 35. Lakshmi V. M. |
| 16. Dhanya Rajendran | 36. Lakshimidevi M. |
| 17. Dr. Jagadeesh N. | 37. Mamata Yajaman |
| 18. Dr. Ramya R. S. | 38. Manjula N. |
| 19. Dr. Ashwini N. V. | 39. Maya Sharma |
| 20. Dr. Faraz Mohammad | 40. Sachin |

Participants

41. Mrudula
42. Shobha N.
43. Nagalakshmi V. P.
44. Najma S.
45. Nandana H. N.
46. Nida Sheriff
47. Nina Agtey
48. Nitya Ramakrishnan
49. Parna Tarafdar
50. Prabha K.
51. Pragati Bhatnagar
52. Pramila
53. Prarthana Appaiah
54. Radhika Jain
55. Rajini
56. Ramya Sundararajan
57. Rashmi V. G.
58. Ravi
59. Rekha Venkatesh
60. Reshma
61. Ritash
62. Ruchi
63. Safeera Begum
64. Salma Tabassum
65. Samarth Srinivasa
66. Shameem Sheik Dastagir
67. Shirisha B. Reddy
68. Smitha Kumar
69. Sowmya S.
70. Sudha L.
71. Sumithra Acharya
72. Supriya Rao
73. Thukarama Ekkaru
74. Vijayalakshmi Appu
75. Yamini Chandrasekaran
76. Yashodhamma P. H.
77. Channappa
78. Latha
79. Satish K.
80. Madhubhushan
81. Manu Chowdhary
82. Sahana
83. Sumedha
84. Stephen
85. Kavitha Madan
86. Sunitha
87. Aparna
88. Jayashree Srikanth
89. Dr. Sweta Chowdhary
90. Agneta
91. Shraddha
92. Dr. Sripriya
93. Suresh
94. Ekta Verma
95. Viiveck Verma



About Invisible Scars Foundation

Invisible Scars Foundation (ISF), founded by Ekta Viiveck Verma in 2016, is a non-profit organisation that aims to empower 50,000 gender-based violence (GBV) survivors to reclaim their dignity and self-worth over the past 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 sensitised 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 behavioural problem.



About Bembala Foundation

Bembala Foundation is a Whitefield Rising initiative, dedicated to supporting women and children who have experienced violence or abuse. Bembala provides free, confidential assistance through their crisis centre in Bangalore and a pan-India helpline. Their trained volunteers – called befrienders – create a safe space for survivors to share their experiences. They offer compassionate emotional support and further assist the survivors through their trusted network of partners: police, lawyers, counsellors, shelter homes, vocational trainers, and medical professionals.

Bembala also conducts awareness and outreach programs in schools, communities, workplaces, and with frontline workers like police officers and teachers, working towards building a society that stands up against all forms of violence.



Invisible Scars Foundation

IMPACTING 20,000 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & ABUSE SURVIVORS

SERVICES WE OFFER

Survivor Support

FIRST LEVEL SUPPORT

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

LEGAL COUNSELLING

SKILLING/LIVELIHOOD

LITIGATION SUPPORT

SHELTER SUPPORT

MISCELLANEOUS

Sustainable Ecosystem Building

AWARENESS

CAPACITY BUILDING

POLICY ADVOCACY

If you or someone you know is facing
Domestic Violence & Abuse,
Reach out for Support!

HELPLINE



+91 90151 22122

Mon-Sat 9am-9pm

