

Documentation of a  
Campaign  
to end Violence  
against Women and  
Girls and to Promote  
Gender Equality in  
India



# MASVAW

Men's Action for Stopping Violence against Women



**Save the Children**

Save the Children fights for children's rights.  
We deliver immediate and lasting improvements to children's lives worldwide.

Save the Children works for:

- a world which respects and values each child
- a world which listens to children and learns
- a world where all children have hope and opportunity

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# Contents

	<i>Preface: Reclaiming humanness</i>	4
	<i>Acknowledgement</i>	5
	<i>Save the Children Sweden: Addressing gender equality by involving boys and girls</i>	6
	<i>Abbreviations and Acronyms</i>	8
	Executive Summary	9
1	Overview The Situation of Violence against Women in Uttar Pradesh, India	11
2	Getting familiar with MASVAW The birth of MASVAW, the SAHAYOG connection	15
3	Work with Adolescent and Younger Boys	26
4	Tools of Change	29
5	Domains of Change – Bringing Impact	32
	Conclusion: Lessons Learned and the Way Ahead	35

## *Preface: Reclaiming humanness*

The state of Uttar Pradesh in India is a region where men dominate the public places, and where a large proportion of women still observe the 'purdah' (cover their faces with a veil). The newspapers are full of daily stories of rape and dowry murders, painting a pathetic situation about the women of the state. Having participated in a state-wide women's campaign against Violence Against Women in 2001, many of us (men) felt that it was such a pervasive and pernicious social issue that we as men had to join in the struggle to eliminate it. This consciousness of a shared responsibility for dealing with and possibly eliminating what the erstwhile UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan had once termed the 'most shameful human rights violation', was the beginning of the journey called MASVAW (Men's Action for Stopping Violence Against Women). You will read about our journey in this publication you hold in your hand. It is not the story of extraordinary people or of extra-ordinary actions, but of ordinary men from villages and small towns in Uttar Pradesh trying to reclaim a human-ness, that many of us men have forgotten is also part of our core as human beings.

Masculinity, macho, machismo or its counterparts in Hindi like 'muchch' (moustache) or 'mardana' (masculine) are ideas which thrust on men the onus to be callous and uncaring, put on a swagger, act aggressively and be competitive. At the same time, these shut men out from experiencing some of the more fulfilling emotions which emerge from acts of caring and sharing. MASVAW has been a journey of men across many districts of the what may termed as the 'badlands' of Uttar Pradesh to re-discover our identities and explore alternate behaviours for ourselves, as well as raise our voices against the exploitation and violence that other men so callously inflict upon women. Our challenge however is not just to bring such incidents to light and justice, but to initiate a process of social change that will make our whole society a better place to live in.

On behalf of all the men associated with MASVAW, I would like to thank Save the Children, for providing us with the opportunity to share our story with you, and I look forward to receiving your feedback and support for this small effort of ours.

**Dr Abhijit Das**  
Senior Adviser  
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## *Acknowledgement*

I would like to express our sincere gratitude towards Save the Children Sweden for spontaneously supporting the idea of documenting the work of MASVAW. Lena Karlsson, Ravi Karkara and Saghir Bukhari personally supported this work by giving their ideas and their valuable comments on the draft of the report.

It would not have been possible to get this report done without the valuable support of Karna Bahadur Maharjan and Sibghatullah Ahmed who interacted with MASVAW members through extensive field visits across the state of Uttar Pradesh, India. I specially thank Neha Bhandari for leading the field team and also for her valuable time in writing this report.

Jashodhara Das Gupta and Dr Abhijit Das, reviewed the draft of this report and gave their comments. The SAHAYOG administrative team provided all kinds of logistic support. The MASVAW secretariat including Ravi, Amit and Mahendra, provided support in organising interviews and meetings in the field.

I especially thank all members, volunteers and advisors of MASVAW without whose sustained support such an effort would not have been possible.

**Satish Kumar Singh**

Convenor  
MASVAW

## *Save the Children Sweden: Addressing gender equality by involving boys and girls*

Save the Children has made a commitment to address gender discrimination and violence against children by working with boys and men - in partnership with girls and women - to challenge root causes of rights violations such as unequal gender and power relations and hegemonic forms of masculinities. Save the Children is also committed to link various forms of discrimination and address them holistically from a child rights perspective. To be able to promote gender equality and a society free of violence, boys and girls have to be involved in designing and monitoring these interventions and in addressing the responsible actors such as family members, community leaders, teachers, religious leaders, governments and the private sector.

With this understanding and commitment, Save the Children has engaged closely with the UN Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children (2006) since the very beginning. The UN Study is intended to lead to the development of strategies aimed at effectively preventing and combating all forms of violence against children, outlining steps to be taken at the international level and by the government. Save the Children has also developed a global strategy with concrete recommendations on how governments and other key actors can address violence against children. Among the six recommendations made by Save the Children, one of them is the following:

*“States should make particular efforts to promote the active involvement of boys and men in ending discrimination and violence against children.”*

This recommendation has been endorsed by the UN Study on Violence against Children. The UN Study has also noted the work being done by Save the Children Sweden in South and Central Asia on issues of masculinities.

*“Since 2003, Save the Children Sweden in South and Central Asia has included working with men and boys in its regional strategy, in the belief that many males are uncomfortable with constructs of masculinity which tolerate violence against women and children. Working to support alternative constructs with men and boys as partners is now being explored in the region. Workshops on working with men and boys have been conducted to enlist them in efforts to reduce violence against girls, boys, women and other men. Country-based workshops have also been held, and in Bangladesh, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) network on the issue has been formed. Increasing the focus on the socialisation of boys is now seen as the challenge.”*

*- The UN Secretary General's Study on Violence against Children (2006)*

In South and Central Asia, Save the Children's work revolves around the following actions to promote the involvement of boys and men:

- Questioning narrow definitions and perceptions of gender roles and relations, including different ways of expressing one's masculinity,

- calling on and organising boys and men – in partnership with girls and women – to take action against violence and abuse and to take initiatives for more equal gender roles and relationships,
- carrying out or participating in campaigns, such as the White Ribbon Campaign,
- encouraging men and boys who have developed the positive and protective aspects of their masculinity to support programmes addressing violence and abuse. These boys and men can also become good role models for other boys and men,
- promoting programmes for men/male youth on parenting and responsible sexual behaviour and
- stressing the benefits for all members in society when men play a more active role in nurturing their children and reject the culture of violence as a “proof” of masculinity.

While some individuals and groups have sought this understanding, they have often worked in relative isolation from each other. There has not been a concerted effort or opportunity for an exchange between groups of individuals to map successes and failures (what works and doesn't work), or discuss strategies and methodologies for working with boys and men, especially in the area of building a partnership towards addressing violence against girls and boys and for promoting gender equality. Save the Children believes that this can be done by sharing, analysing, documenting and disseminating good practises and experiences from across the world on working with boys and men, which will help in building a constituency of like-minded professionals and organisations. It is with this belief that Save the Children has supported the documentation of the MASVAW (Men's Action for Stopping Violence Against Women) campaign in India.

**Fredrik Malmberg**

Regional Representative

Save the Children Sweden

Regional Office for South and Central Asia

## *Abbreviations and Acronyms*

MGKVP	Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidya Peeth
MASVAW	Men's Action for Stopping Violence against Women
NCRB	National Crime Records Bureau
NGO	Non Government Organisation
NSS	National Service Scheme



## *Executive Summary*

Men's Action for Stopping Violence Against Women or MASVAW is a network of over 175 individuals and 100 organisations, a member based campaign in the Indian State of Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal. These men have decided to bring about a change within themselves and in other men to raise their voice against traditional patriarchal values and challenge stereotypical notions of what it means to be a man.

MASVAW believes in public action, at the core of which is self change. Boys and men raise their voices against violence against women and gender inequality through agitations, campaigns, media reactions, public debates, discussions, workshops and seminars.

MASVAW is a watchdog. It works with the police, doctors, lawyers, boys and men in universities, schools and the media, supporting them to form groups to intervene in instances of violence within the community, provide support to survivors and ensure that local schools and colleges become violence-free zones.

The issues raised by MASVAW are often sensitive, requiring the use of appropriate tools targeting different age groups. Therefore MASVAW invests many resources in developing and adapting tools for change. The most popular among them is the traditional snakes and ladders game, used to sensitise boys and men on gender and violence. Such innovation and finding points of entry to reach out to a wide target group is MASVAW's forte.

MASVAW's journey is full of learning, informed by practical experience at various levels. What has worked for MASVAW is its informal structure, which gives it flexibility. Working at different levels, in cities and villages, with different age groups and classes, has broadened its reach. MASVAW believes in involving boys at a young age, influencing them with values of gender sensitivity and non-violence. Girls and women also take part in the campaign, helping both the sexes to learn about respectful relationships. Supporting boys and men in this journey has been crucial. MASVAW has created an environment of understanding and warmth, where boys and men can vent their emotions. Being part of global networks on working with boys and men to promote gender equality and to end violence, such as MenEngage, has given the campaign a global identity and international exposure.

As the campaign looks ahead, it becomes important to find more points of entry in work with boys and men. Working with men as fathers, promoting positive fatherhood could be one such way. Expanding networks nationally, regionally and globally, using the MenEngage platform will lead to a larger impact. MASVAW's work with women and

children will also help human rights practitioners find and strengthen the link between the women's movement and child rights movement. As it looks ahead, MASVAW is looking forward to strengthening children's participation in its campaign, especially targeting younger boys in schools and families. Today, MASVAW is striving to be a learning network, by conducting regular documentation, monitoring changes and evaluating its work.

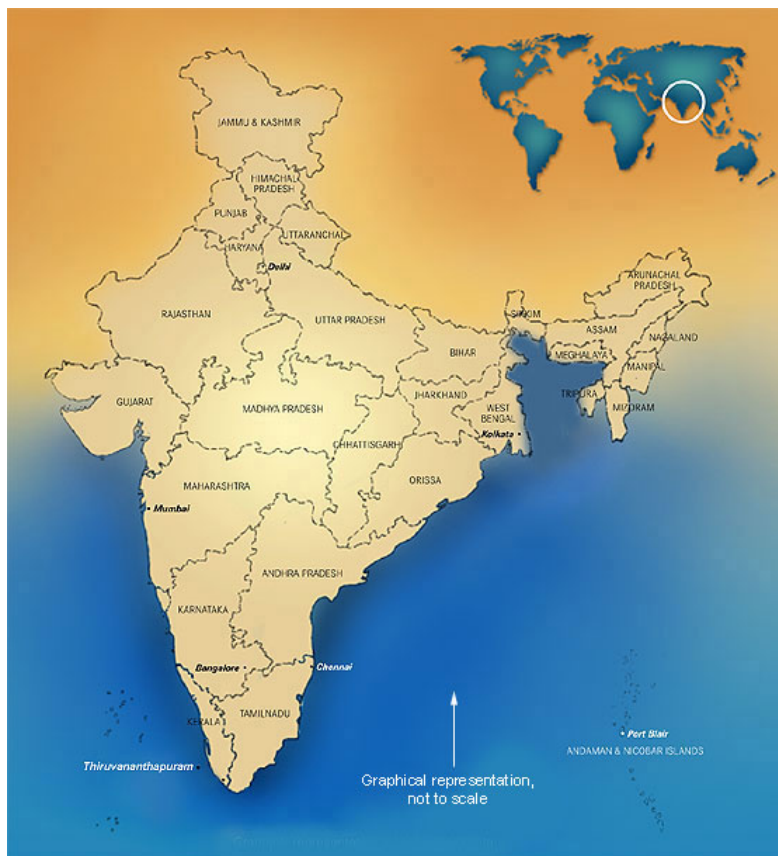
# Chapter One

## OVERVIEW

### ***The Situation of Violence against Women in Uttar Pradesh, India***

India is a patriarchal society. Girls and women of all regions, origin, religions, caste and creed are subjected to violence which includes murder, rape, torture, domestic violence, molestation, sexual harassment and so on.

#### MAP OF INDIA



In the Indian State of Uttar Pradesh, human development indicators are very poor, for instance, sex ratio, female education, women health status and access of health services. The society is highly governed by its feudal customs and traditions with a very high level of gender based discrimination. Women and girls are not allowed to take decisions and have little control on their own body.

Since boys and men are socialised in a very patriarchal fashion, they do not consider violence against girls and women to be an issue. Since the traditional definition of a 'man'

defines a man as someone who yields authority, leadership and power, the fear of losing their leadership position, of being left behind in the race by girls and women, makes boys and men find ways of controlling children and women.

Although many programmes have been formulated and implemented by the Government and the NGOs with the aim of women's empowerment, violence against women and girls still remains a peripheral issue. It is also largely seen as only a 'women's issue' not a social problem or a human rights violation. Since close male relatives or relatively powerful perpetrators are likely to be involved in violence against girls and women, most NGOs implementing development programmes have been reluctant to take on such issues and challenge local established social hierarchies.

### ***Men's attitude to Violence against Women in Uttar Pradesh***

During the last decade or so, the issue of gender equality has been raised very fervently in the arena of women's development. There have also been some changes. While on one hand the need for women's education is being recognised, the same cannot be said about the control over her property, mobility or sexuality. There is also increasing fear among men about decreasing opportunities and resources as a result of women's empowerment. There are anxieties among some men of their decreasing control over women, of losing their leadership position, of 'being left behind in the race' by women. As a result, some men see gender equality as harmful for their interests. In a study conducted in Uttar Pradesh<sup>1</sup>, it was found that men consider wife battering as their natural right.

District	% Who admit o forcing wife to have sex	% Who agree that if wife disobeys, she should be beaten	% Who admit of hitting wife	% Who hit wife in last year
Aligarh	31	15	29	17
Banda	17	50	45	33
Gonda	36	27	31	20
Kanpur Nagar	14	11	22	10
Naintal	21	10	18	11

Source: Narayana, G. (1996). Family Violence, Sex and Reproductive Health Behaviour among Men in Uttar Pradesh, unpublished.

<sup>1</sup> Narayana, G. (1996). Family Violence, Sex and Reproductive Health Behaviour among Men in Uttar Pradesh, unpublished.

## ***Violence against Children (girls and boys) in India***

According to the Ministry of Women and Child Development initiated National Study on Child Abuse in India (2007), two out of every three children are physically harmed. Out of those children physically abused in family situations, 88.6 per cent were physically abused by parents. In addition, two out of three school going children were victims of corporal punishment. The State of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar and Delhi have almost consistently reported higher rates of abuse in all forms as compared to other states. Moreover, 53.22 per cent children reported having faced one or more forms of sexual abuse. The study also shockingly reveals that every second child faces emotional abuse.

### ***The need to work with boys and men***

Gender discrimination and violence against women and children requires more attention than what has been forthcoming from decision-makers and the development sector. A number of initiatives exist in the area of women and girls' empowerment, but there is inadequate attention to build partnership with boys and men to promote gender equality and to address various forms of violence against girls and boys.

However, boys and men are not the problem! It is the social constructions, adult's attitudes and their input on boys' socialisation which is the problem. Although a patriarchal society may provide boys and men with a sense of power, it also makes them a victim by pressuring them to conform to a particular social milieu. Boys and men, girls and boys are not born violent, they are socialised into a culture of violence. There is a critical need to make boys and men the subject of a gender discourse, with their own set of issues: socialisation processes, fears, patriarchal pressures, violence and performance anxieties.

On the positive side, the fact that not all boys are violent gives a hope for changing the world. All young boys are socialised in ways that promote gender inequality and violence but not all boys adopt these gendered behavioural patterns and most do not act out these roles all the time. This experience could be the resource for building interventions and partnerships with young people on gender-based violence.

It is with this idea that a group of development professionals, in Uttar Pradesh embarked on a journey to create a movement of gender equitable men, who believe in promoting gender equality and violence free relationships. Today, MASVAW or Men's Action for Stopping Violence Against Women is a campaign that has spread to over forty districts of Uttar Pradesh and state of Uttaranchal, and now includes youth in university and colleges, rural adolescents, school and university teachers, media persons, social activists, academicians and local elected councillors in rural areas. The members of the campaign prove that even in the most patriarchal society, there are men that are non-violent and want to establish a gender equitable relationship. MASVAW provides these boys and men support to be able to take a personal and where necessary, a public stand against violence against women in their society. It also provides a safe space for the boys and men to express their emotions.

In the last three years, MASVAW through its practical experience has amassed a great deal of knowledge and understanding on working with boys and men on gender equality. Its trials and tribulations, its strategies, structure and growth has a great deal of learning to offer for similar initiatives across the world. With the purpose of creating a wider constituency of like minded organisations and individuals, Save the Children Sweden and MASVAW have attempted the documentation of the campaign. The documentation highlights the process and strategy adopted by MASVAW, its core activities and tools, while drawing out the overall lessons learned, the challenges and barriers and the means adopted to overcome them.

### ***Methodology, Limitations and Challenges***

The material was collected using primary and secondary sources. Field visits were conducted at the MASVAW headquarter, campaign sites and engaged villages, schools and colleges. Interviews were held with the field staff, members of the Advisory Board, university members, media persons, boys and men of different age groups. Visual documentation was also undertaken together with written documentation.

## Chapter Two

### GETTING FAMILIAR WITH MASVAW

#### ***The birth of MASVAW, the SAHAYOG connection***

Established in 1992, SAHAYOG is an NGO based in Lucknow, in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. It promotes empowerment of women in the framework of rights. It began as a gender resource organisation, using advocacy, capacity building and research to achieve its objectives. As the organisation began to evolve, it realised that real empowerment is only possible if women have control over their health, resources and body. By 1995, a new thought was emerging within the organisation. To achieve this goal, gender equality was a precondition, for which it was imperative that boys and men were as engaged together with girls and women.

By 1997, this understanding was incorporated in both the projects SAHAYOG was involved in, namely, Women's Empowerment Project and *Dalit*<sup>2</sup> Development Project. Both projects had a strong component of women's participation together with gender equality.

The genesis of male involvement was in the *Dalit* Development Project. During the project, it was evident that gender issues and *dalit* issues had commonalities. Before the project took shape it was seen that the girls enjoyed a better status in the *dalit* community. The need to especially work with *dalit* men, while working with the community as a whole became evident. This experience highlighted the complex dynamics in any community - for real empowerment it is necessary to converge development, gender, caste and violence issues, involving both men and women as part of the interventions.

At the same time (during 1995 to 2001), SAHAYOG became involved in state level gender trainings. 80 per cent of the participants at these trainings were women, while only 20 per cent were males. It was also noticed, that while most of the NGOs in Uttar Pradesh were male headed, 90 per cent of them worked on women empowerment. However, women were not at the decision making level in most of these organisations. Although gender was an important mandate, no organisation raised gender equality as a value or the fact that violence against women had a correlation with women's participation, equality and empowerment. Many organisations working on women empowerment had little focus on sexual harassment, reduction of VAW as a major thematic area. Our baseline held in 2002 further build our understanding on need of clear focus on gender based violence. At this point, SAHAYOG felt compelled to ask a

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<sup>2</sup> In the Indian society, *dalits* are the lower caste. They are often treated as untouchables.

question – How can organisations working for women empowerment, ignore violence against women?

By 2001, SAHAYOG began to monitor the situation of violence against women in the state. Together with Page: 16 WAMA (Women's Alliance for Mobilisation and Action), a state level network on women's rights, SAHAYOG conducted a study on the status of Violence against Women in Uttar Pradesh. Together they also organised a public hearing in Lucknow, which was attended by 3000 women and men. This was part of a state-wide HISAAB campaign on violence against women.

*HISAAB - Hinsa Sehna Bandh  
(We Demand Accountability - Stop Tolerating Violence)*

In 2001, SAHAYOG together with other women's groups initiated a state wide HISAAB campaign in Uttar Pradesh, questioning the state's accountability on gender equality and violence against women. A series of meetings were held to bring the issue to the fore and to build a broad coalition of concerned and active men to work on gender equality. Individuals, activists and NGO workers - all male - participated in the forum. This was a crucial period as the men realised, that this was not just an issue for women but one that involves the society at large. Here it was agreed that there was a need to direct special attention on involving men with the issue of violence against women.

In October 2002, a state level consultation was organised with men on gender equality and violence against women. 30-32 men from 19 organisations, working on women's empowerment took part in the consultation. Out of which only 2 organisations worked directly on violence against women. These men had also been part of the previous gender trainings organised by SAHAYOG. The result from this consultation was used as a baseline on violence against women. The consultation also tried to demystify how these organisations ensured gender equality in their own management.

The consultation highlighted that there is first a need to understand boys and men, their perspectives, before involving them in a movement towards gender equality. It is also important to understand what women empowerment leads to - How do boys and men and girls and women deal with empowerment, how does it change gender relations? How do women change because of empowerment and how do men react to it? These discussions resulted in the need for all the participating organisations to work together to find a collective answer.

A follow up workshop was organised in December 2002 with 42 men. By then it was clear that personal development and self reflection was the first key to the change desired in the society. It was also realised that men have restrictions and societal pressures. There is a need to break the privileges that boys and men receive, by showing them other advantages of being gender equitable. It was also becoming important to make clear that gender equality is not about giving one section power over the other, but sharing the power equally.



The group also felt that these discussions needed to be made public. A platform was required to raise these issues in the society. The group also felt a need for an identity which would help them advocate for their issues with the authorities. In 2002, the group was named as *Men's Association for Stopping Violence Against Women* or MASVAW. Soon after it was realised that although the group talked of sharing power, the word 'association' would lead to a power struggle with the women's group.

In 2002, the word 'association' was changed to 'action'. MASVAW is today known as *Men's Action for Stopping Violence Against Women*. The focus was on self action, highlighting the need to change the self first.

Initially this group held trainings for men, where they realised that men were not the enemy. Not all men were all violent and they certainly were not born violent. But what was true was that men were quiet and did not speak out against violence, so they legitimate violence in that sense. At the same time, boys and men are socialised to control women through aggression.

### **MASVAW takes shape**

Today, MASVAW is a unique campaign by male activists from several existing NGOs in the Indian states of Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal. These men have decided to bring about a change within themselves and in other males to remove gender injustice.

#### **MASVAW believes...**

- ...violence against women is a larger social issue.*
- ...domestic violence is not an issue of the family alone.*
- ...in promoting positive use of power and seeing violence in the context of power.*
- ...that it is not a competitor but a collaborator on women's issues.*
- ...in working on sexuality such as with transgender and bisexuals.*
- ...that men and boys too gain by gender equality.*

#### **Objectives of MASVAW**

- To increase the visibility of violence against women and facilitate the process of challenging set attitudes and beliefs around it.
- To develop a rights-based approach among NGOs for addressing and mainstreaming violence against women and initiating a campaign of men against it.
- To increase awareness among men about violence against women as a larger social issue.
- To motivate men to shun violence, protest against violence, support survivors and provide new role-models.

Within one year of MASVAW's inception, it was realised that the group's activities needed to go beyond training of NGOs. MASVAW needed to work directly with the target groups and stakeholders i.e. men. This meant that first MASVAW needed to find

ways in which it could connect with men, find entry points to work with them. Keeping this in mind, MASVAW's initial strategy was to work with the following men:

- Men as perpetrators, targeting their behaviour with women.
- Men in peer groups, targeting their behaviour with friends.
- Men in positions of authority.

To take this strategy forward, MASVAW identified youth, middle age and elder men (and eventually young boys and adolescents) in the following arenas that could advance the campaign:

## UNIVERSITIES

In 2003, MASVAW's activities first began in Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidya Peeth University in the city of Varanasi. The universities were chosen as an arena of work, as the youth and peers could be targeted easily through this setting. Universities are also a place where young girls often complained of harassment. In such cases, it was seen that even male teachers questioned the girls' accusations. Although a sexual harassment committee existed in Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidya Peeth (MGKVP) and was active against the male students, it was ineffective when it came to the male teachers. In order to create a violence free campus, as a deliberate strategy then, both teachers and students were targeted through the campaign.

**BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS** → As a first step, MASVAW built a relationship with the faculty of the Masters of Social Work Department, raising the issues of gender equality and violence against women through them in the campus. With the help of the teachers, workshops and numerous informal sessions were organised with boys and girls at the university, focusing on issues of eve teasing.

**INVOLVING BOTH YOUNG MEN AND YOUNG WOMEN:** In most discussions, students raised personal issues, leading to confrontations between boys and girls. The boys refused to acknowledge any eve teasing in the campus. This often led to heated debates between the girls and boys. In the end, the sessions highlighted the negative impact of eve teasing on girls. Over a period of time, it was seen that the aggression in the sessions reduced, as the interaction between the girls and boys increased. Slowly, the students who showed interest were encouraged to become volunteers of MASVAW, who took forward the campaign's activities in the campus. Later, young people also became involved in casework, providing support to survivors, supporting sexual harassment committees in their institutions and so on.

*“The incidence of eve teasing has reduced in the campus (after MASVAW became active here). Earlier no girls used to come here to study. Today so many of us study here.”*

- Girls at MGKVP University, engaged in MASVAW's initiatives at the campus

**In conversation with a 26-year-old male student at MGKVP University (name concealed)**

*“I come from a middle class Muslim family. My first reaction when I heard of MASVAW was that it means nothing in a patriarchal society. I didn’t have much understanding of the issues MASVAW talked about. I didn’t feel that men were responsible. But as I had more interactions with some of the faculty members involved in the campaign, things begun to change.*

*I remember when we were discussing the issue of rape, I said, if women do not want it, then men can't rape. I was explained how wrong I was and that rape cases are linked to aggression and frustration in men. That caught my curiosity and I began to take an active part in MASVAW's activities in the campus. Even now I don't have clarity on some issues, for instance, I still believe that girls should dress conservatively – I discuss this issue openly in my group to understand another viewpoint. Today if some of my friends, abuse and eve tease girls, I try to reason out with them. I know they ridicule me. I also know that we can't change things immediately, but we can lessen it in the short run. At home, I feel scared to raise these issues with my father, but I try to engage my brothers and cousins in this work.”*

**BUILDING A CONSTITUENCY**→ At a later stage, the Department of Fine Arts was also influenced to take part in the campaign. Today the students take part in poster making competitions on issues of gender and violence, which helps them to start thinking of the issue as a social problem. The posters created as a result of the competition, are useful resources for MASVAW. Students also organise film screenings of popular films at the campus that raise these issues. These are often followed by discussions and debates with the audience.

The campaign has encouraged PhDs on issues of masculinities. This is an impact, a spin off of MASVAW's work in the campus. At present, two girls and three boys are doing their thesis in the following areas: gender socialisation process, violence against women, MASVAW, concept of masculinity in Eastern UP and HIV/AIDS and masculinities.

**INVOLVING MEN WITH POWER**→ MASVAW realises that it needs to work with the system, involving all superiors and power heads in the university, if it wants to sustain its campaign in the campus. The heads of different departments and men holding power in various offices in the university are always invited to be part of all the activities. As a result of these efforts, MASVAW's work has been endorsed by the Vice-Chancellor and the Proctor's board of MGKVP, which helps MASVAW create a stronger base in the University.

However, the relationship with the teachers has not always been favourable. MASVAW's campaigners and believers have often faced threats from other faculty members.

*“These issues are always ridiculed. It has taken a lot of sustained effort to get students and teachers on board.”*

- Faculty KVP University, member of MASVAW

**REPLICATING THE WORK** → In Lucknow University, MASVAW is working with Departments of Sociology, Anthropology and Social Work. A close link has been established with the male teachers there. As a result of which, the Department of Social Work in Lucknow sent a student to work as an intern with MASVAW. The intern helped mobilise a male youth group at the university, which now carries forward MASVAW's ideology.

In 2004, this work was also replicated in Chitrakoot and Faizabad Universities.

### **SCHOOLS**

From 2005 onwards, MASVAW has been targeting girls and boys in the age group of 8-12 years in junior schools and 12-18 years in high schools, in cities and villages in Uttar Pradesh. Working with children, required a change in the way MASVAW approached the issues. The focus was on creating child friendly age appropriate tools and activities. Today more than 400 young and adolescent girls and boys are part of MASVAW's activities. *(Read more about it in chapter 3 and 4.)*

### **MEDIA**

MASVAW acknowledges the powerful role of the media. It partners with the media to actively shape public opinion on gender equality and violence. It influences the media to increase the coverage on violence against women and gender inequality. It creates awareness among journalists on sensationalism of reports on violence against women. MASVAW especially partners with the vernacular press in Uttar Pradesh, working together with them to pressurise the authorities to follow up on individual cases of violence against women, supporting mobilisation of rallies and evoking public reaction and outcry on cases of injustice.

MASVAW does this by identifying, training and supporting journalists from mainstream media based in rural areas. Over 25 journalists from 12 districts have now linked with local MASVAW groups who follow-up cases following reports by these journalists. There are also a number of media persons within the MASVAW core group itself.

### **WORK PLACE**

With gender inequality being rampant at the workplace, MASVAW felt compelled to work in this arena. MASVAW began by approaching some of the owners of brick kilns near Gorakhpur city. By working together with the owners, male and female workers, MASVAW has been able to address the discriminatory work policies and practices. Regular discussions on gender discrimination and peer influence have led to these changes.

The brick kilns are today a safer place for women workers. The rampant abuse by alcoholic male workers and resultant frequent brawls with men has decreased, due to the ban on the use of alcohol in the premises. Pregnant women who were earlier forced to work throughout their term are now given light work. They are also provided free medicines. The women also receive equal wage as men. It is even seen that owners, now involve their wives in the business activities.

Be it an industrial enterprise or participation in local elected councils, MASVAW members have tried to involve women as equal partners with men. In villages that they work in, they are trying to ensure that women elected into *Panchayats* (local governing bodies) and other local bodies from 'women-reserved seats' are not moved aside by their men who then exercise all the powers in their name.

At the same time, MASVAW works with various service providers that could be related to a situation of violence. For instance, lawyers who need to be sensitised on issues of gender justice and doctors on working sensitively with the female patients.<sup>3</sup>

### **MASVAW today...**

The MASVAW campaign brings together all these boys and men to raise their voices publicly against violence against women and gender inequality. This is done through agitations, campaigns, media reactions, public debates, discussions, workshops and seminars. Today MASVAW is a watchdog, working with police, doctors, lawyers, universities, schools and the media. Over hundred watch groups have been organised in villages across Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal. These groups intervene in instances of violence within the village, provide support to survivors and ensure that local schools and colleges become violence-free zones.

With an attempt to change social norms, MASVAW organises annual campaigns at the grass root level, such as during the "Sixteen Days of Activism" and International Women's Day celebrations. The campaigns include intense rallies, demonstrations, slogan shouting, candle marches, programmes at universities and schools, wall writing and pamphlet distribution. The campaigns are undertaken with active support of the local media. MASVAW also undertakes rallies and demonstrations to support its case work.

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<sup>3</sup> Rediscovering Ourselves : first document made on MASVAW experience by freelancer journalist Rimjhim and published by Sahyog in 2004

### **Campaign against Sati**

*'Sati' or 'widow immolation' is an ancient Indian custom which compels a woman to join her husband in his funeral pyre. This practice was outlawed over a hundred and fifty years ago, but it is still glorified as a form of idealised womanhood. There have been sporadic reports of Sati from Uttar Pradesh in the last few years. MASVAW groups from different districts, in collaboration with other social groups started a campaign against Sati through identifying cases, stimulating public discussion questioning the glorification of Sati.<sup>4</sup>*

### **Connecting with women organisations**

MASVAW realises that various notions regarding its ideology and mandate might create confusion with the women's groups. Many feminists have been of the viewpoint, that movements with boys and men would pull resources away from the women's empowerment movement. In order to address this belief, together with Jagori, a local NGO, MASVAW conducted a workshop in March 2005 with male and female activists working on gender equality. The workshop resulted in a clear understanding that the male movement does not undermine the female movement, but complements it. The workshop was also able to successfully highlight the fact that MASVAW supports equal power relations and does not believe in shifting power from one group to another. Meeting with women organisations face to face resulted in an understanding that MASVAW and NGOs working on female empowerment need to support and partner with each other, to achieve their common objectives. MASVAW is also a partner of Hum Safar, a women's crisis centre established in 2003 by SAHAYOG, women NGOs and one MASVAW member, where girls' and women's issues and cases taken up by MASVAW get connected.

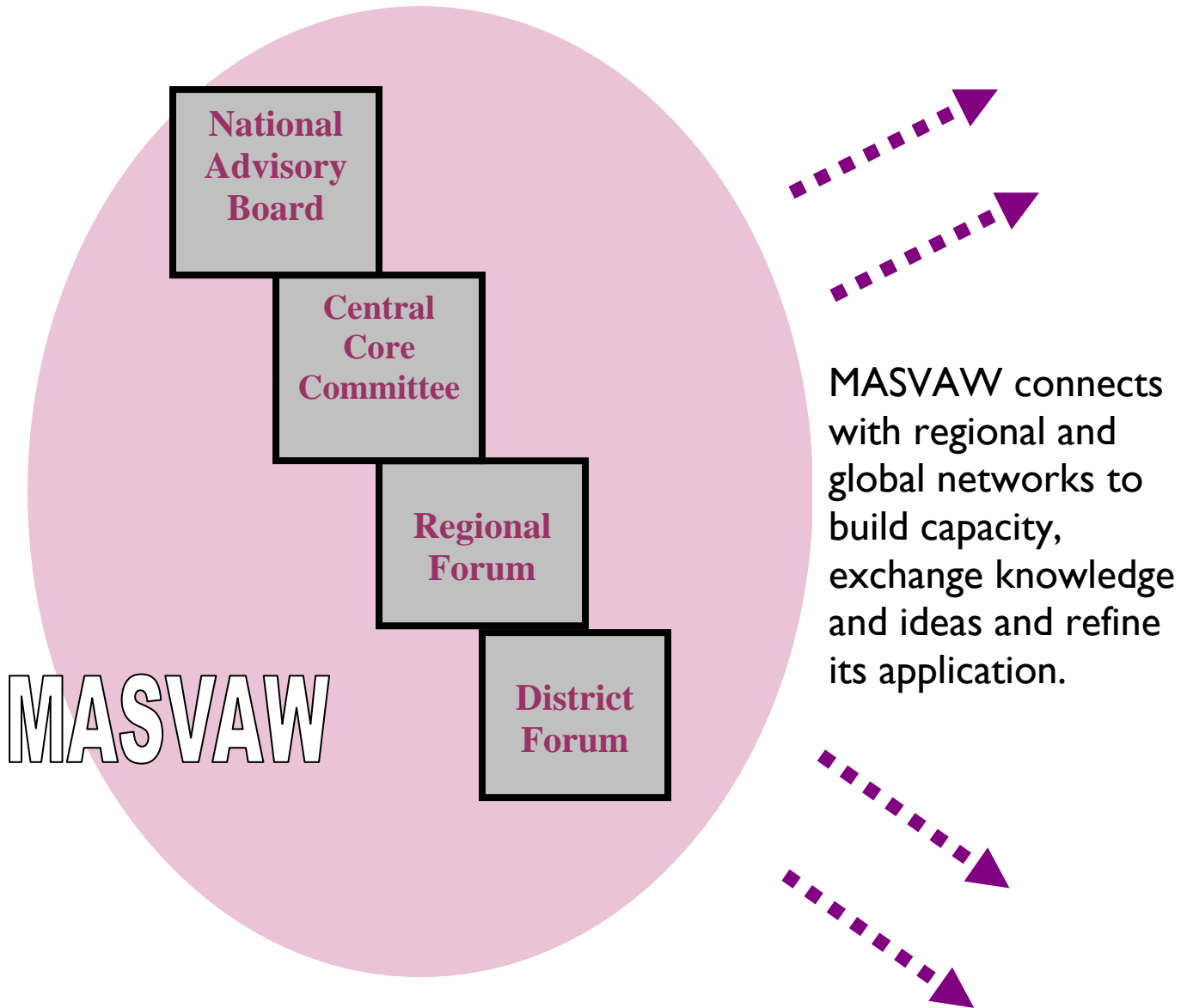
### **The Structure of MASVAW**

MASVAW is an unregistered network of individuals and organisations which functions as a member based campaign. It is not a NGO project, but a movement. Today, over 275 members, 175 individuals and 100 organisations are members of MASVAW. All members are chosen on their commitment to the issue, demonstration of application of MASVAW's value in their practical life and active participation and facilitation of MASVAW's activities. MASVAW supports and encourages its staff and members and their spouses to apply its ideology in their day-to-day life. Peer vigilance is used to apply this concept. Therefore, membership is by reference only. However, MASVAW does encourage affiliates, who are spread across villages and cities of Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid

A four level structure exists within MASVAW, which is as follows:



The **District Forums** bring members and associates of MASVAW in one district, together, to collaborate and support each other. Incidents of violence against women often have strong local political links preventing such cases from being officially registered. District forums provide a platform for collective fact-finding, bringing pressure to bear on the district administration, interacting with the media for positive coverage and so on. The district forums regularly scan media reports to identify and act upon cases of violence against women.

The members of different districts come together at the **Regional Forums**. In Uttar Pradesh there are six regions, namely, Varanasi, Gorakhpur, Central and Western Region, Lucknow, Banda and Jhansi. In each region there are 5-7 districts. Uttaranchal forms one region in itself. The purpose of the regional forum is to facilitate support and cooperation at the regional level in case of common issues, such as during the Sati campaign in the Banda region.

The **Central Core Committee** consists of one MASVAW member from each district in addition to the Secretariat. The committee meets twice a year for planning and reviewing. In 2006, the committee was set up with the purpose of decentralising day-to-day decision making.

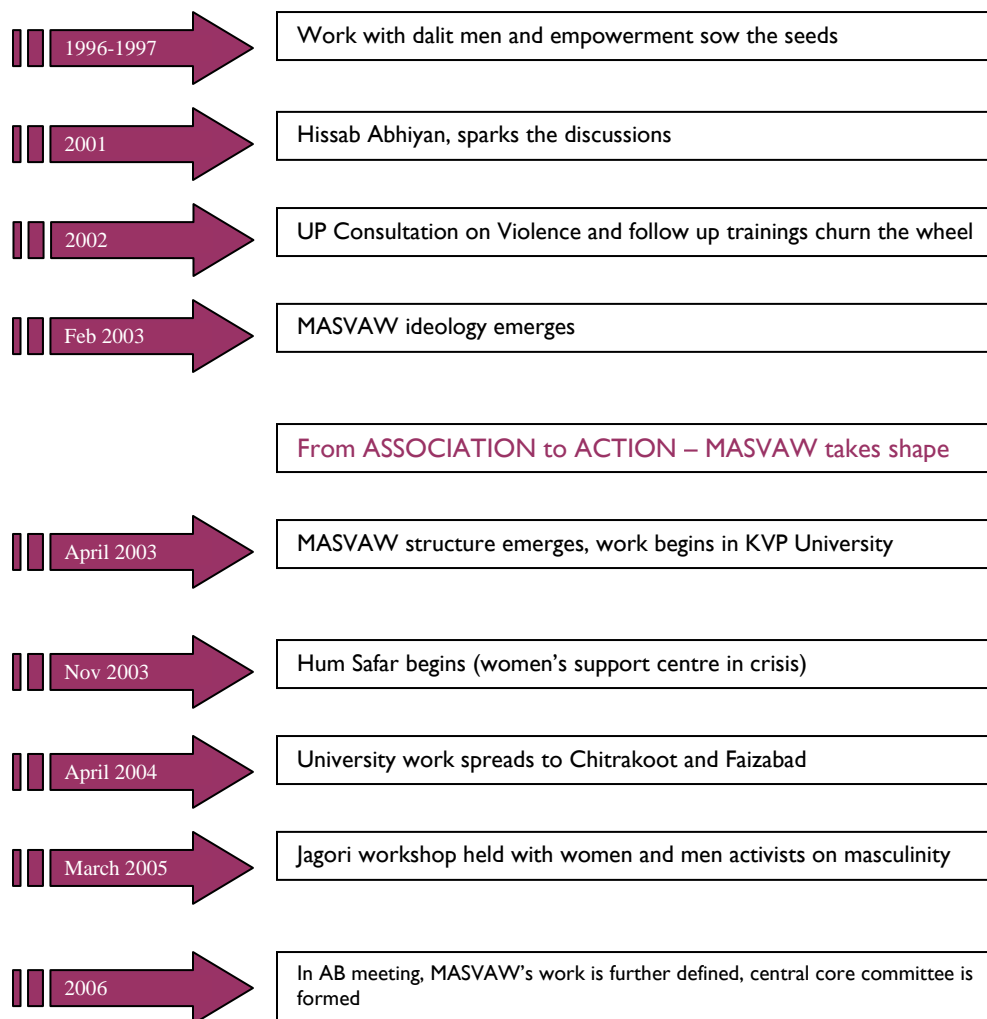
A **National Advisory Board** of 15 people exists at the top of the institutional structure, comprising of senior women and men including lawyers, development professionals and female activists. The board meets once a year to review the campaign and aid perspective building. In particular, the board provides conceptual clarity on working with boys and men and provides strategic direction to this work. For instance, with the advice of the board, in 2006, MASVAW focused its attention to work with boys and men on issues of boys and men as well.

The Secretariat of MASVAW is currently located in Lucknow, and is hosted by SAHAYOG. The Secretariat organises capacity building, training, documentation, communication, case work and advocacy.

MASVAW also works in close cooperation with other like minded networks in India, in the region and globally. It is a member of MenEngage, a global network working with boys and men for gender equality and for ending violence. Through these networks, MASVAW is able to contribute to a pool of knowledge base on working with boys and men. Through exchange of practises and ideas, it is also able to influence the global movement on working with boys and men. MASVAW is also involved in building capacity and regional cooperation among different network members.



## MILESTONES IN MASVAW'S JOURNEY



## Chapter Three

### WORK WITH ADOLESCENT AND YOUNGER BOYS

Following the life cycle approach, it calls for a need to work with men and women at a much younger age, when they are being socialised to take on patriarchal roles in the society. In 1992, when SAHAYOG was holding gender trainings for teachers, the idea of including adolescent boys in their activities came out strongly. This idea was finally put into practise in 2005, when influenced by SAHAYOG, MASVAW reached out to adolescent boys in schools.

Today, in ITI (Industrial Training Institute) Gorakhpur, MASVAW engages boys in the age group of 16-19 years on gender equality and violence against women. Similarly, adolescent boy groups exist in 15 high schools and inter colleges in Lucknow, involving boys in the age group of 12-18 years. As a strategy, even tutorial centres and coaching classes frequented by girls and boys in this age group, were targeted. During work in universities, the coordinator of NSS (National Service Scheme) was made to be involved in the sessions with students. As a result of which, 1000 under graduate students also learn about these issues in their camps.

Like in universities, the MASVAW campaigners approached the principal and teachers at these schools. As a result of which, MASVAW was given space to speak at the school assemblies, which sparked an interest in the faculty and students. Following which, an orientation and informal sessions were organised with adolescent girls and boys on gender equality. Quiz games and flash cards are often used to break the ice with the students (*See chapter 4 for details on MASVAW's tools*). This sets the grounds for discussion on serious issues such as stereotypical roles of men and women, eve teasing, violence against girls and other sensitive issues. At times, complaints of sexual harassment have come up, which were then directed towards higher school authorities, with MASVAW following them up regularly. Discussions on good touch and bad touch are held, sensitively steering around the issue of child sexual abuse. Adolescent girls and boys are encouraged to ask questions which they might feel hesitant to discuss outside the group. Peer pressure, mechanisms to deal with it and positive role models are highlighted. The focus is on building a healthy, mutually respectful relationship between the girls and boys.

While it is difficult to monitor how most of the boys and girls internalise these discussions some boys show a lot of interest and want to get connected to MASVAW's activities. These boys are identified by the staff and are encouraged to form a group, supported by MASVAW's activists.

The boys often organise road shows, holding posters, speaking to passers by. The planning for such events is done by the boys together with MASVAW activists. One of the first few road shows organised targeted other children. With the boys group gaining

more confidence today, the road shows are now targeting the common public on the streets.

The MASVAW activists also help the boys to organise monthly meetings, where they raise their doubts and gain conceptual clarity on issues of gender equality. However, as students pass out each year, activists have to be on their toes, working with new students every time.

*“In the first year, we showed interest, in the second year, they (the boys) are showing interest. The involvement of the boys has increased today, a rapport has been established.”*

- A MASVAW activist, working with adolescents in schools

***In conversation with Md. Anas (16 years), Ashutosh Bhatt (17 years) and Sri Prakash (18 years), studying in class 12 at Lucknow Inter College. They boys share their experience of getting connected to and working with MASVAW.***

*“Initially MASVAW came to our school every two weeks and held discussions, but we didn’t pay much attention. We used to treat these group discussions like a free period, happy we didn’t have to study. But over a period of time we thought, these people are working so hard on this issue, there must be something to it, we must try and listen... Today, if we have any free time we use it for discussions on gender equality and violence against women and girls.*

*From our class, four of us came forward to learn about the issues MASVAW was raising. We needed to show that all boys are not violent and that is why we formed a group. Because of some men, all men cannot be labelled as violent. Later joined by three more friends, we spoke to other boys and encouraged them to speak to MASVAW about their doubts. We were given MASVAW’s registration form and their Snakes and Ladders game. They told us how to use it. Through the game we hold discussions with other boys.*

*Today we are a group of nine boys. We speak to other boys, taking guidance from MASVAW staff. We also speak at our coaching classes, that way we can reach out to adolescents from other schools as well. We realise we couldn’t have done this alone. MASVAW provides us an affiliation which motivates and supports us.*

*The biggest change we see in ourselves is that now we know what abuse means. The way we define abuse has changed itself. Today, we feel so connected to this work, that we know we will continue spreading the message when we go to university. This work won’t stop when we pass out of school.”*

*MD Anas adds, “I used to think badly about the concept of having a girlfriend. Now in the monthly meetings we discuss what it means to have a girlfriend. Now I understand it is a mental relationship too. “We used to think, women are inferior, but not now”, points out Ashutosh. “Earlier we were indifferent, if eve teasing happened in front of us, we ignored it. But now we try to speak to the guy if he is alone and not in a group.” says Sri Prakash.*

## **Work with Younger Boys**

In a few villages in Uttar Pradesh, MASVAW's activists are reaching out to junior and primary schools, influencing boys and girls in the age group of 8-12 years on issues of domestic violence, physical and verbal abuse and unequal division of work between boys/men and girls/women. As always, through the teachers, students are introduced to the issues through games and drama.

*In a school in Azamgarh district in Uttar Pradesh, a group of boys wanted to do something to prevent eve teasing by other boys in schools. They asked the principal to change the school timing, so that girls could go home one hour earlier than boys. The principal readily agreed to this demand. But as a result, the girls began to lose one hour of school everyday. This demand then had to be pulled back. This was an important learning for MASVAW staff as well. Boys need to be given proper conceptual understanding and a support system, to help take their initiatives forward.*

Today, in a school in Gorakhpur, younger students have proclaimed their school to be *Danda Rahit Vidyalaya* or *School without Stick*. In five schools in Gorakhpur younger children have initiated a *Gali Band Karo Abhiyan* or *A Competition to Stop Verbal Abuse*. The idea being that all verbal abuse whether directed at boys or girls, degrade women and girls in some way. The children raise awareness on this fact and run a competition based on self and peer monitoring.

*“It is difficult to speak about these things at home. My sisters make fun of me when I say I will help in the kitchen. Even my mother laughs at me.”*  
*- A 10 year old boy in a school in Gorakhpur*

The teachers and campaigners realise that discussions on gender equality, also need to be introduced at home, if children are to be encouraged on this path. Children are therefore initiated into simple activities like writing letters to parents, performing street dramas in the school and for parents, holding debates and competitions in schools, on issues of violence and gender.

## Chapter Four

### TOOLS OF CHANGE

Through its journey, MASVAW has been raising awareness and building capacity of men in different fields such as in academia, media, private sector, with other professionals on a wide range of topics including men and gender equality, gender based violence, violence against women, masculinity, male reproductive and sexual health, men as responsible partners for women's reproductive and sexual health and as responsible parents and the sexual rights of young people and sexual minorities.

All the above topics being sensitive require the use of appropriate material targeting different age groups. The tools are used as ice breakers, to initiate and facilitate discussion and further understanding of the target group and stakeholders on these issues. The materials developed and widely used and adapted by MASVAW and SAHAYOG are as follows:

#### ***Sara Jahan Hamara (The World is Ours)***

This is a set of 15 flash cards on men and gender equality. This is supplemented by *Insaniyat ki khoj me (In Search of Humanity)*, another set of 15 flash cards on men's role in stopping violence against women.

*The tool especially targets men.*

*The tool is best used to start a discussion in training or in a community meeting in the most non-threatening way.*

#### ***A tool: Saanp-Sidi (Snakes and Ladders)***

This is a variation of the traditional snakes and ladders board game. In an easy and entertaining way, it breaks the stiffness surrounding the issues, introducing the concept of gender and violence in the most subtle ways. This tool is under use in training settings from last many years and provides spaces for discussion and reflection on attitudes and behavior regarding VAW. While playing in the community, when participants reach at a particular point, ample time is provided by trained facilitator to discuss the related point on behaviour. It is available in different sizes, such as 16 feet and as a board game.

*The tool especially targets boys and young men, although it is very popular with all age groups men.*

*The tool is best used to bring about gender sensitivity.*

### **Umang (Enthusiasm, joyous energy)**

With MASVAW's work expanding to a younger age group, the need to have specific material sensitive to the children's growing sensibilities was required. *Umang*, an exercise book, uses different activities, to introduce the concept of gender equality in an engaging manner. Teachers are encouraged to facilitate this tool in the classrooms.

*The tool especially targets* children in the age group of 8-12 years.

*The tool is best used to* create gender sensitivity among younger children.

### **Book Marks**

MASVAW has created two book marks as part of its awareness campaign.

*The tool especially targets* students.

*The tool is best used to* raise questions on violence against children and encourage action to stop such injustice.

### **Rediscovering Ourselves**

This is a documentation of MASVAW's work in different parts of Uttar Pradesh, focusing on community level changes that have started taking place in men.

*The tool especially targets* other local networks and organisations.

*The tool is best used to* encourage replication of MASVAW's campaign in other Indian States.

### **Manual for Working with Men on Gender, Sexuality, Violence and Health<sup>5</sup>**

This is an important resource for those working with boys and men around issues of equality–equity, gender, sexuality, violence and health. The manual was developed within the Indian context, yet it can be widely used by adapting it to other countries in South Asia.

*The tool especially targets* trainers and facilitators.

*The tool is best used as a* facilitator's guide and resource on working with boys and men.

### **Workshops, Rallies and Seminars**

Other tools of change, such as rallies, seminars, meetings and workshops, support MASVAW's work to organise men against violence and gender inequality. MASVAW groups also provide a safe and supporting environment to men to vent their own feelings, conflicts and confusions. MASVAW also trains facilitators who support men in freely discussing their personal issues.

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<sup>5</sup> In collaboration with SAHAJ and Tathapi, listed on the web as a resource on [http://www.siyanda.org/static/khanna\\_menandgender.htm](http://www.siyanda.org/static/khanna_menandgender.htm)

## ANOTHER IMPORTANT RESOURCE AVAILABLE IN THE REGION

### **Mapping of tools for working with men and boys to end violence against girls, boys and women<sup>6</sup>**

The publication compiles tools, so as to enable practitioners to add value to their current interventions of working with boys and men, by adapting them to their context. The mapping also attempts to create linkages between the growing community of people and organisations working with men and boys to end violence. The publication is accompanied by a Resource CD which is a compilation of key documents, publications and toolkits available on the theme and is complementary to the information in the publication. The overall purpose of the publication and the Resource CD is to further knowledge excellence, to enable the development community to share information, to work together to end violence against women and children.

#### CHANGING THE COURSE

A film on men and boys initiatives for gender equality and stopping violence

The film is a visual documentation of MASVAW's work in the Indian State of Uttar Pradesh. It will take you through a journey of MASVAW's ideology, practical application of its concepts, its trials and tribulations. You will meet MASVAW members – young children, adolescent students, youth in universities, journalists, women rights activists, teachers among others, who will narrate their experiences and understanding of what is MASVAW today. The film promotes replication of its network, ideologies and beliefs, targeting NGOs, local organisations, global and regional networks and agencies. It also motivates children, youth and adults, girls, women and boys and men, people from different walks of life, to connect with the movement.

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<sup>6</sup> By Save the Children Sweden, Regional Office for South and Central Asia Region and UNIFEM Regional Office for South Asia, together with The White Ribbon Campaign and Instituto Promundo. The publication can be downloaded at <http://sca.savethechildren.se>

## Chapter Five

### DOMAINS OF CHANGE – BRINGING IMPACT

In 2005, SAHAYOG<sup>7</sup> conducted a study to understand the domains of change in men as a result of interventions and association with MASVAW. The study sought to find answers to the following questions:

- What kind of man joins MASVAW? Why join MASVAW itself?
- Has he changed since MASVAW?
- What are the positive and negative consequences of changes after joining MASVAW?
- What are the tensions and risks in the process of change?

During the course of the study, 27 open-ended interviews were conducted with nine active MASVAW men, including their nine “private contacts” such as wife, mother, daughter-in-law and their nine “public contacts” such as friends and colleagues.

The study tried to understand change on the following levels:

#### 1. Changed conception of violence

The study revealed that the men gained a new definition of violence, while recognising their own violence. There is also a growing realisation in most men who get involved in MASVAW activities that social change is not only about changing others but about changing themselves as well.

*“I used to think that things like beating up your wife or rape constitute violence but now I think that doing something without a wife’s permission or consent is a kind of violence. If a woman wants to say something and a man stops her from expressing herself, even that will count as violence.”*

– Amit, a MASVAW activist

*“Initially I thought I would only work with others. I didn’t think I wanted to change myself but later realised that if I don’t change myself first, there is no way I can bring change in others.”*

- A MASVAW activist

#### 2. Changed relationship with spouse

The study reveals that there is a qualitative change in the relationship with the spouse. Coercive sex has been reduced. There is also a visible change with other members of the household.

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<sup>7</sup> In collaboration with the Centre for Health and Social Justice, New Delhi: a paper was presented at the 3<sup>rd</sup> APCRS (Asia Pacific Conference on Reproductive and Sexual Health) at Hyderabad in Oct., 2007



*“For example today he has left me alone to sit and talk with you. This was not there earlier. I have the freedom to go wherever I want to go. I can freely talk to anybody.”*

- Wife of a MASAW activist

*“I wasn’t doing anything before joining MASVAW. When I woke up, [my wife] would fold the bed sheets. When I brushed my teeth, she would bring the water. I thought, “This is my right. Without money I got a servant. My father purchased this servant for me.” I ordered, “Do this, do that.”, But after joining MASVAW, I realised actually I’m doing a very wrong thing”.*

– A MASVAW activist

### **3. New management of conflict and anger**

According to the study, these men have a greater understanding of violence against women and their own culpability. The men are now practicing mechanisms to manage their own conflict and anger.

*“Earlier I used to keep things in my heart. Now I write down “what I should do which I am not able to do” when I get angry. It’s on pieces of paper hanging on my wall.”*

- A MASVAW activist

### **4. Broader range of emotional expression**

Being involved in MASVAW has given the men a broader range of emotional expression. It has given them confidence to express pain and joy, to shed tears without fear of ridicule. The men enjoy better and mature relationships with other men and women.

### **5. Leadership, mentoring, influencing others**

Men are now taking a lead in mentoring and influencing others using formal and informal opportunities such as through workshops, appearing in local media, speaking to people on the streets, etc.

### **6. Violence against women interventions**

A major change in men’s lives is the amount of time and effort they are spending on violence against women cases. While some are part of University Sexual Harassment Committees, others follow up newspaper reports, bring media attention to cases and raise publicity and so on.

### **Consequences of change**

The men highlighted the negative comments and reactions they received, while they imbibed these changes. Family conflict was common, so were abuses for doing ‘women’s work’. Family members also began to blame the wife. There was also lack of time with the family, as a result of being involved with public action. This led to household tension and stress.

At the same time, men highlighted the positive consequences of change such as growth in self development and self-esteem. The men were more confident, articulate and had more clarity around their beliefs. They also gained respect and recognition.

*“People see me and they don’t make fun of me. They admire me and try to practice it themselves. Other men take inspiration from me.”*

– Samir, a MASVAW activist

Being engaged with MASVAW also lead to better marriage for both partners. Above all, their engagement with MASVAW created a satisfaction in them, knowing they are making a positive change.

*SAHAYOG has also carried out an experimental study<sup>8</sup> (2004-2005) to evaluate the impact of a learning curriculum on gender equality, reproductive health and HIV/AIDS among rural youth in two districts of Uttar Pradesh.*

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<sup>8</sup> In collaboration with the Centre for Health and Social Justice, New Delhi , 2007

## Conclusion

### LESSONS LEARNED AND THE WAY AHEAD

MASVAW's journey through the ages has been full of learning, enriched with practical experience at the field level. Together with their supporters, MASVAW is trying to answer the question, what works in working with boys and men? As the campaign gained momentum MASVAW has refined its strategies, broadened its target base and incorporated their learnings. Today, MASVAW's success is attributed to its growing believers, who have joined the movement in firm belief in gender equality, demonstrated by practical application in their own life. In return, MASVAW Page: 35 provides them space for venting their own frustrations and sentiments, supporting them in gaining recognition that not all boys and men favour violence and gender inequality. The promise is of a world which is gender equal, which benefits men as much as women. But convincing men to give up their privileges and leadership position is far from easy. In a society, ridden with rigid gender norms, notions of gender equality evoke intense ridicule and shame. It is only a strong conviction in its work, that MASVAW can help boys and men deal with such criticism. Encouraging boys and men to sustain the momentum, to not give up and to remove complacency is important. Above all, boys and men need to be helped to strike a balance between public action and private change. The former being relatively easy, a change within self, requires much more introspection and commitment. Given these challenges, MASVAW has worked with the following strategies:

#### *MASVAW, a campaign versus a NGO project*

MASVAW is a campaign, a well known movement and not a project. This was a deliberate strategy, rooted in what MASVAW wants to achieve and how it wants to do so. The clarity on this has given MASVAW focus and flexibility and has removed many administrative obstacles. MASVAW does not have a specific project approach, which helps to bond non-activist people, civil society members and the media. The system of peer accountability works well here. The four tier institutional structure that has emerged within MASVAW is a result of the campaign's practical need and not an idea of a NGO to structure or to monitor the campaign.

#### *Being flexible, finding connections*

Working with boys and men to end violence against women and children, requires work at different levels using innovative approaches, converging issues of gender, caste and violence, all in the rights framework. MASVAW has made connections with all these issues as it progressed.

### *Working with boys and men in all age groups and positions of authority*

MASVAW has engaged with men at different stages in their life cycle. Starting from youth in universities, to adolescent boys in high schools, younger boys in primary schools to middle age and older men with power in panchayats, brick kiln owners and so on. MASVAW has chosen its stakeholders and target group strategically. Investing and adapting activities and tools to the different age groups, was then the next strategic step. MASVAW also deliberately engaged with men in power such as teachers, vice-chancellors of universities, business owners, panchayat members and journalists, all those who could exercise influence on other boys and men and the communities.

### *Catching them young: working with adolescent and younger boys*

As the campaign gained momentum, the need to work with boys at a younger age became obvious. Involving younger boys in this work ensured that they grew up challenging gender stereotypes, rather than following them. Although, when initiated, the campaign did not clearly demarcate this target group, but it was flexible and eager to incorporate the learnings from other networks, this provided space to girls and boys to be part of the campaign.

### *What's in it for boys and men?*

Today at the core of campaign, MASVAW is helping boys and men find answer to - how do boys and men benefit by sharing their power with girls and women? Helping boys and men understand this, is the key for getting them to support the campaign in the long-term. This means, counselling and supporting boys/men to talk about the pressures they face as a result of being a boy/man and how that will change when they share their privileges with girls/women, has been crucial.

### *Involving with girls and women*

The work in the universities, schools and workplaces demonstrate the strategic importance of involving both girls/women and boys/men in the interventions for gender equality. Getting both the sexes to interact in a healthy manner is the key to an equitable relationship. Connecting with the women's movement, dispelling their fears of working with boys and men, has also been a strategic move. Involving the girls and women, has helped make the campaign stronger.

### *Strategic Advocacy*

Strategic and sustained advocacy are strengths of the campaign. The campaign has clear goals of whom it wants to involve, in arenas they can be involved in – where they have to take a lead and where the other parts of the civil society should take a lead. Use of consistent advocacy messages has helped. MASVAW has also been very opportunistic, in a positive sense, taking advantage of every local current affairs issue, to highlight its ideologies. At the same time, the campaign is backed by non-threatening messages that encourage men to be gender equitable rather than showing them in a poor light.

### *Collaboration and Networks*

Today the MASVAW campaign is part of several regional and global networks, helping it to connect with the discourse on working with boys and men at an international level.

As part of the global MenEngage network, MASVAW builds capacity for working with boys and men for different organisations and supports and encourages exchange of tools, good practises and approaches to facilitate change at the field.

## **Way Forward**

In Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal, the campaign has taken shape in a very short span of three years, with many successes and learnings. It is now time to replicate the campaign in different Indian states, creating some sort of a national coalition. At the same time, it is important to retain the core strategies the campaign began with. Retaining the same campaign structure and not 'NGOising' it, is important to retain the flexibility.

As the campaign continues to spread, there is a constant need to develop and understand ideologies on working with boys and men on violence and gender equality. For instance, being wary of promoting the protective role of boys and men, while asking them to shun gender based violence is important. At the same time, there is a need to expand an understanding among the activists on the connection between the rights framework and gender equality. It is also time to connect to other issues that affect the relationship between women and men, for instance, livelihood and HIV/AIDS. Other areas such as parenting – mothering and fathering – can be addressed more proactively as part of the campaign. Positive fathering can be used as an entry point for reaching more men. The campaign can highlight the role of men as nurturers and its importance in creating a healthy family and respectful and equal relationships.

In the future, MASVAW will need to find ways to connect its learning and work to the global movement on working with boys and men. It is also time to expand its networks and use the MenEngage platform and other similar networks for larger impact. Through its work and ideologies, MASVAW can also be the crucial link between the women's movement and child rights movements. Exchange visits, sharing good practises etc, with other organisations doing similar work will benefit other organisations and MASVAW leading to learning and cross fertilisation. Strengthening link with the universities and academia can also help in process documentation and further research in this area.

Although MASVAW is encouraging participation of younger boys and adolescents, it is important to view children's participation more holistically keeping non-discrimination and an accountability focus. Capacity building of the staff on child participation is central if the campaign wants to meaningfully and ethically engage with children and young people. Linking adult groups and youth groups to children's groups is important to integrate the under 18s in the campaign. An increased focus is required on working with younger boys and reaching the families (at the moment the programme is focused on involving the boys through the schools). The campaign also needs to develop methodologies for working with very young boys. More boy and child friendly material in local languages and tools should be developed.

To sum up, the campaign has reached a stage, where it needs a more coherent and concrete strategy to take the next leap. The strategy process needs to be informed with

participation of MASVAW members including girls and boys, supported by the four tier institutional structure. A thorough review and impact assessment of MASVAW's activities will support the strategy development process. It is also important to strengthen the monitoring, evaluation and learning aspects of the programme. Collecting baseline data, a system for monitoring change should be institutionalised and learnings should be documented regularly. Learning's from the programme could be further used for advocacy (policy advocacy, etc), together with other organisations.

# MASVAW

## MEN'S ACTION FOR STOPPING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Women of all regions, ethnic-origin, religion and creed face gender-discrimination and are subjected to direct and indirect violence due to patriarchal structure of our society. In India, which accounts for one-sixth of the world population, incidences of murder for dowry, rape, torture, domestic violence, molestation, sexual harassment and similar acts are extremely common. MASVAW is a campaign started by a group of concerned men who collectively felt responsible for this situation and decided to bring about a change within themselves and in other men. Here you will read how the campaign took shape and now is a movement of sorts in Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal.

The publication is accompanied by a visual documentation of the campaign.

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