

18- 19th JUNE, 2019



**A
COMPREHENSIVE
REPORT**

Roundtable conference: Girls and young women- Negotiating agency, choice and consent



Compiled and prepared by ANANDI

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Roundtable conference: Girls and young women- Negotiating agency, Choice and Consent

18-19 June, 2019

Venue: CHETNA Samvaad Heritage Conference Centre, Khaida, Ahmedbad



Executive Summary

In the backdrop of increasing violence against and cases of abduction and kidnapping of young girls, ANANDI undertook an exploratory study on “Girls and young Women at the crossroad of law and customary practices in the context of underage marriage.” Leading to the envisioning of the roundtable.

The roundtable focused on discussing the vulnerability of girls and young women deep rooted in gender discriminatory values, law and customary practices .The research and program strategies that the roundtable focused upon was on **agency, choice and consent**. Highlighting the following:

- Emerging areas for further exploration and building evidence.
- Sharing programme strategies and practices engaging with girls & young women.
- Identifying opportunities and constraints /challenges in state program/ services such as Childline, Women’s helpline and Sabla in addressing needs of girls and young women for protection and promotion of their right to security and choice.
- Scope the investments being made or needed by civil society in addressing the needs of girls and young women for the protection and promotion of their right to security and choice.

Under the coordination of Area Networking and Development Initiative's Technical Support Unit (ATSU), young representatives from 32 civil society organizations from 10 different states the country, representatives from WCD, GSCW, Department of Health and Family Welfare, GRC, Manager Abhyam 181, DGP women's cell and representatives from AJWS, UNICEF, UN Women, Ford Foundation and CRY met in Ahmedabad on 18-19 June, 2019 at the **Roundtable conference** : The conference was divided into three slots of panel discussions:

- Criminalization of choice, consent and Agency of girls and Young women,
- Opportunities and Gaps in Current Policy and Programmes,
- Approaches and Investments in Programmes for young women and girls for protection and promotion of right to Security and Agency.
- The first panel discussed the evidence that the organizations have built from experience in the field. It is to be noted that multilevel and multidimensional stigmatisation and social criminalisation of young couples is done and all possible options are exploited in doing so.
- POCSO and PCMA are being used by the parents to control agency of girls at the cost of her consent and choice. These laws are strengthening the patriarchal logic of honour crimes. In most of the cases young boys are branded as criminal at early age affecting their prospects of being employed.
- Evidently, girls are likely opt for self-arranged marriage after being dropped out of the school for shouldering the responsibilities of domestic chores.
- Customary Practices like 'Dava' and 'Gunhegari' are used to penalise and stigmatise young couples and burden them with loans. 'Dava' acts like extortion – threats to ostracise families as well as young couples.
- Pregnancy is used, by young couples, as a tool to preserve the relationship with person of choice as parents force them to withdraw while on the other hand pregnant girls are not able to access the abortion services due to POCSO.
- Age of Consent for medical legal cases is 12 but under POCSO age of Consent is 18. Youth under 18 not able to access contraceptives due to fear of being criminalised / victimised under POCSO.
- In the working Group, organizations discussed strategies used for working with young people and challenges faced. Mobilization strategies that initiate collective action has been quite successful. Leadership training programmes and fellowships have helped in creating cohorts of youth leaders that recognize, engage and work on youth issues at local levels. Media strategies have been empowering for the youth and enable conversations in difficult situations on topics on concern.
- In the second panel, state representatives shared their experiences and available schemes and policies. Specific to Gujarat state, it was re-enforced by all the officials that a few structures are in place but are not entirely sensitive or inclusive and while we also have to work towards creating newer structures, it is important we acknowledge the successful models of action and scale it in as many places as possible.
- There is a definitive need of creating forums for regular interactions between civil society organizations, government agencies and other active agents to pace up the work on violence against young girls and women, to discuss the experiences, strategize and act together.
- While working on the cases of 'missing children' or 'kidnapping and abduction' or working with young girls in cases of violence in different aspects- an essential component of consent should remain. When we work on strengthening the component of consent we should educate, inform and aware young girls and boys for them to become capable of taking decisions in their best interest.
- Sensitive and non-judgmental approach is required within all the departments and the conflict of these ethics with the legal obligations, needs to be re-visited and this has to be a joint effort from all the active agents in the issue.

- In the third panel the potential opportunities were explored along funding partners and UN agencies to further our work on the issue. It was concluded that creating evidence and data is extremely important for advocacy and shifting structures. For eg. Central govt. is opening formats of census and NFHS for review we can see that as an opportunity to add indicators of early/child marriage and questions around agency and consent.
- Grassroots level research is a key strategy for national and international level advocacy. Scaling is important as we move towards a more extremist era globally. Working with young boys and men extremely important to bridging gaps and creating allies in the movement.
- Need of the hour is that different movements- labor movement, feminist movement, farmers movement etc speak to each other and break their silos. Equally important for organizations of different standpoints but similar values to come together and dialogue on matter of importance.

More information, including all presentations and background documents, can be found at:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1PoSQSz_OjOegOHo9rcl3B25pt5Pnp1Ad

Background

Census 2011 records that every third person in India is young (10-24 years) but the sex ratio for this cohort is mere 908. This gender imbalance stemming from patriarchal value structure of the society also reflects a paradox social invisibility one hand, and on the other there is social anxiety over the chastity and sexuality of young girls which get linked to the *honor* of the community. These social realities are also responsible for the poor performance of young girls on education and health indicators. This paradox jeopardizes their voices, aspirations and agency with which they can develop their capacities, navigate their life-choices, negotiate violence-free spaces and in reality, contribute to meeting the SDGs.

Out of this cohort, young girls in the age group of 15-19 tend to face enormous challenges of access to education, under-age marriages and restrictions on physical as well as social mobility. According to the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) states that around 39.4 percent of adolescent girls in the 15-18 age group are not attending any educational institution, and a vast majority — around 65 percent — of them are "either engaged in household activities, are dependents, or, are engaged in begging". NFHS 4 had recorded that 7.9 percent of girls in the age group of 15-19 years were already mothers or pregnant at the time of the survey. As per NFHS-4, fifteen percent, currently married women, in the age group of 15-19 are employed.

Young girls from socially marginalized and economically deprived communities are especially disadvantaged, given their low enrolment rate and educational attainment levels. They typically lack access to financial capital and have limited opportunities to gain knowledge, and skills that can lead to economic advancement.

In these circumstances, the young girls get emotionally and socially vulnerable. Sometimes they take the escape route to leaving home with the partner of their choice. These choices and agency of the young girls get criminalized through law and customary practices. ANANDI's research informs that the legal guardians of the young girls apply the sections dealing with Kidnapping and Abduction of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) along with Protection of Children Against Sexual Offence Act (POCSO), 2012 in the FIR instead of putting the complaints of the missing person. The reports of the National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) reveal that the percentage of the child marriages booked under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (PCMA), 2006 remains negligible but there has been a continuous rise in the number of abduction and kidnapping as well as sexual abuse incidences in this specific age cohort. The child marriage with parental consent continues to prevail without being stringently prevented by the agencies dealing with law and order as well as child protection, but early marriage by young people's choice get criminalised.

Though the marital rape has yet to come under the purview of law, IPC sections 366 (kidnapping and abduction for compelling a girl to marry) and POCSO criminalize the possibility of sexual exploitation in the (assumed) kidnapping for marriage. The POCSO, 2012, a law framed for protection from sexual abuse and violence of the minors, does not take into account consensual sexual relations among adolescents and youth. Instead, it criminalises them. The judiciary has used statutory rape and Kidnapping and abduction while undermining the agency of the young girls.

Dealing with these issues of agency, choice and consent of the young girls has been a tough call for researchers as well as practitioners. The feminist principles are always put to the test while addressing the question of ethical practices, dilemmas of maintaining confidentiality in the purview of laws which have made reporting mandatory and rolling-out the practices participatory, democratic and inclusive manner while they face the surveillance of the families and communities. This roundtable is expected to be a platform to bring together civil society organisations, especially feminists working with girls/ young women on issues around agency, choice and consent to share research and practice.

Purpose

The purpose of the **Roundtable conference: Girls and young women- Negotiating agency, choice and consent** is for civil society organizations , government agencies, funding partners and other key partners to develop joint innovative strategies and approaches on the key actions that are required to address the issue of shrinking safe spaces for young girls and increasing cases of violence and curbing of the basic rights of the girls. This conference was aimed at churning out best practices and approaches for researchers and practitioners to work towards a more youth-inclusive safe ecosystem in a holistic manner.

Objectives

1. To understand emerging areas for further exploration and building evidence on vulnerability of girls and young women due to deep rooted gender discriminatory practices.
2. To share and learn best practices and strategies adopted by organizations engaging with girls and young women.
3. To Identify opportunities and constraints/ challenges in state program/ services such as Childline, Women's helpline and Sabla in addressing needs of girls and young women for protection of their right to security and choice.
4. To Scope the investments being made or needed by civil society in addressing the needs of girls and young women for the protection and promotion of their right to security and choice.

Participants

Participants included representatives of 26 civil society organizations from about 10 states across India (Agents of Ishq. ANANDI, AWAG, Awaaz-e-Niswaan, Buniyad, CHETNA, Jagori, KMVS, Masum, Nirantar, Olakh, Parvaz, PLZ, Pravah, Sahaj, Sahiyar, SWATI, Sauhard, SHAHEEN, SHAISHAV, SNEHA, SEWA Rural, Vacha, Vikalp,Vishakha, YP Foundation), representatives from WCD, GSCW, Department of Health and Family Welfare, GRC, Manager Abhyam 181, DGP women's cell and representatives from AJWS , UNICEF, UN Women, Ford Foundation and CRY.

Overview of the meeting

Day1: Tuesday, 18 June 2019-06-29

The conference was opened by Ms. Sejal Dand, Director ANANDI Technical Support Unit; with a welcome song led by Ms. Neeta Hardikar and Ms. Arundhati Sridhar

Ms. Sejal Dand welcomed all the participants and began with laying a brief foundation of the two day conference. She highlighted the importance of talking about youth issues with gender lens and looking at the experiences of youth, as the demography of the world and country has significantly shifted, with both India and world having the highest population of youth ever. She envisaged that in the global discourse youth perspective has gained momentum and we, as a global community, are focusing on creating opportunities and enhancing the role of youth and that, with essential gender lens.

Ms. Dand emphasized on the requirement of sharing experiences and stories to build a narrative of our collective experiences that would be a guiding force for creating sustainable safer spaces of expression and participation, as more and more youth today are falling into the ambit of socio-economic- political vulnerability. It is a need of the hour, according to her, to analyse and understand effective methods and approaches while engaging with the youth. She recognized that the average age of the participants in the room has significantly gone down and this is an opportunity for everyone present, to indulge in relevant conversations over each of our roles towards ensuring a better, inclusive and sustainable spaces for the current and coming young generation.

Ms. Dand stated that the comprehension of the roundtable is not representative and we might not have voices from different groups, identities, regions of the country but the participants were selected on the basis of their level of engagement with youth and we must be hopeful to gain insights, perspectives and best practices in field and research as we move forward with the conference.

She briefly talked about the issue of snowballing unnatural deaths of young boys and girls that ANANDI has been witnessing in its area of work; and highlighted on the growing intolerance in the society on the concept of choice of partner and agency in relationships.

In the end, she laid a blueprint of the upcoming two days and briefed about the panels that we should be looking forward to. Starting with sharing of research reports on criminalization of choice, consent and agency of young women and girls, she said, we would move towards sharing of experiences from the field and preparing points for advocacy and recommendations. We would be sharing these recommendations with state representatives and listening to their experiences on engaging with young population. We would then move to getting some understanding of investment and theory of change of our funding partners as we work towards protecting and promoting rights, of young women and girls, to security and agency.

Following this, there was a round of introduction of all the participants and then we moved on to our first panel.

Panel 1: Criminalization of choice, consent and Agency of girls and Young women

The panel focused on sharing results of researches done by different civil society organizations as they have engaged and worked with the youth in their context. The panel was chaired by Dr. Anandiben Patel, Professor, Department of Social Work, Gujarat Vidyapeeth and was constituted by Ms. Madhu Mehra, Director, PLD; Ms Pragnya Joshi, Sr. Research Associate ATSU and Ms Seema Shah, Project Coordinator ANANDI, Ms Sanjida Arora, Research Officer CEHAT, Ms Pallavi Patel, Director, CHETNA.

Dr. Anandiben Patel started the panel with sharing her experience of working with young girls and women as a professor and a social worker. The issue, she said, is that as a society we have been

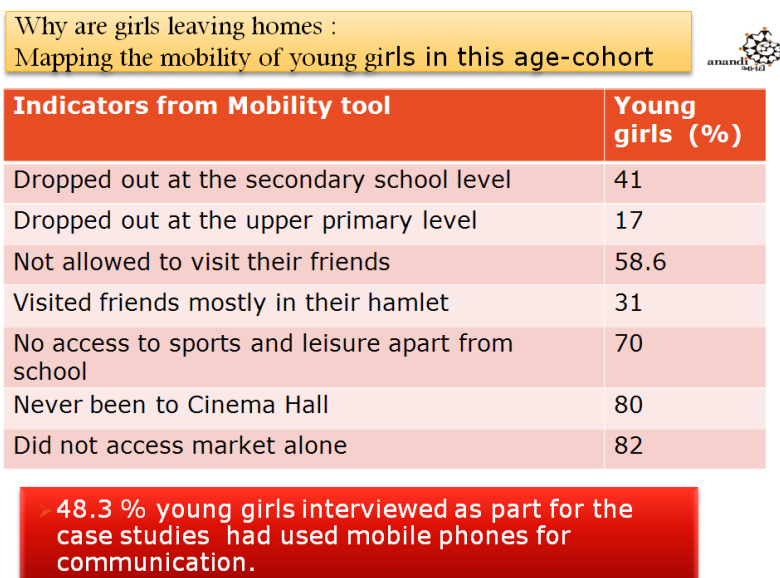
using a criminalizing language for the stories of love and consent. We term consensual and love relationships as 'cases' and have shrunken spaces of expression of these feelings making it a threatening concept. She said it's important to create regular spaces of dialogue between active agents on the issue and this panel is one such initiative.

Ms Madhu Mehra elaborated on the requirement of initiating dialogue from a perspective of agency and choice rather than just violence. She shared the results of the national level dialogue on PCMA conducted by PLD in December, 2018 wherein various organizations directly dealing with the law had participated. Ms. Madhu shared that PCMA and POCSO as child protection laws are, in majority of cases, being used by parents as a weapon to restrict young boys and girls from choosing their partners. In these cases, victimization happens in two layers- while the boy involved is tagged as a child in conflict with law, the girl is put in protection home. The intent of these laws are punitive and protectionist, she said. Additionally, POCSO also legitimizes honor crimes when parents use it in order to teach the young couple a lesson. Ms. Madhu further detailed that there is a whole political economy pushing forward this phenomenon. She said, most of these parents are from lower income migrant urban population. Girls in their families are dropped out from school in-order to help in domestic work or taking care of younger siblings as both parents have to work for making both ends meet. These girls, generally opt self-arranged marriage and are vulnerable to become victims of laws made with an intent to protect them. These laws are increasing parental control over children and criminalizing any practice of choice or agency. She added that progressive organizations with feminist perspective have been using PCMA to negotiate with the community in order to counter forced/early marriages and generally avoid going to the police. It's important, she concluded, to reflect on who is using the law and for what purpose and then reframe those laws to be a lesser evil.

Ms. Pragnya Joshi and Ms. Seema Shah shared with panel and participants the results of a research on the topic "Girls & young women at the crossroad of law & customary practices: Context of underage marriage in Gujarat". The research was conducted over a period of two years (2014-16) where 713 cases of kidnapping and abduction were analysed and 29 young girls who were victim of these criminalisation practices were interviewed. The team shared that most of these cases of kidnapping and abduction were filed by the parents, where in they gave complete details of the accused and the purpose of abduction, while filing the case. The most prominent purposes reflected in these first information reports were that of 'marriage' or 'sexual exploitation' or 'both'. There is a clear seasonality in the reporting of these cases and pertinent time gaps between the actual date of incidence and date of reporting. The most established conclusion of the research was that these FIRs are tool of criminalisation of choice and agency of young girls. This process becomes more pertinent when it gets married with the customary practices like '*davo*' or '*gunehgari*' which re-enforce the criminalisation. The team furthered, that 58% of the girls who had gotten into these relationships had dropped-out from school and had negligible mobility. The team highlighted on the strategies used by girls to sustain these relationships and presented that Young couples use **early pregnancy as a strategy** to negotiate return to families; fact being, 11 out of 29 respondents conceived within 6 months of elopement. They also highlighted on the challenges faced by these young girls in accessing basic health facilities, once they are pregnant. Moreover, they are pushed into extreme conditions and become vulnerable to violence due to lack of any support mechanism, as a cost of making a choice of romantic partner. The team concluded with a set of recommendations for state and civil society organisations in order to decriminalise choice, consent and agency in their respective contexts.

(Note: to access the PPT: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PkYcEQ7f4wtobv3ULyzWHBGQKvOTo_IJ/view?usp=sharing)

Figure 1 Reasons of girls leaving homes (presented by Ms. Pragnya Joshi, ATSU)



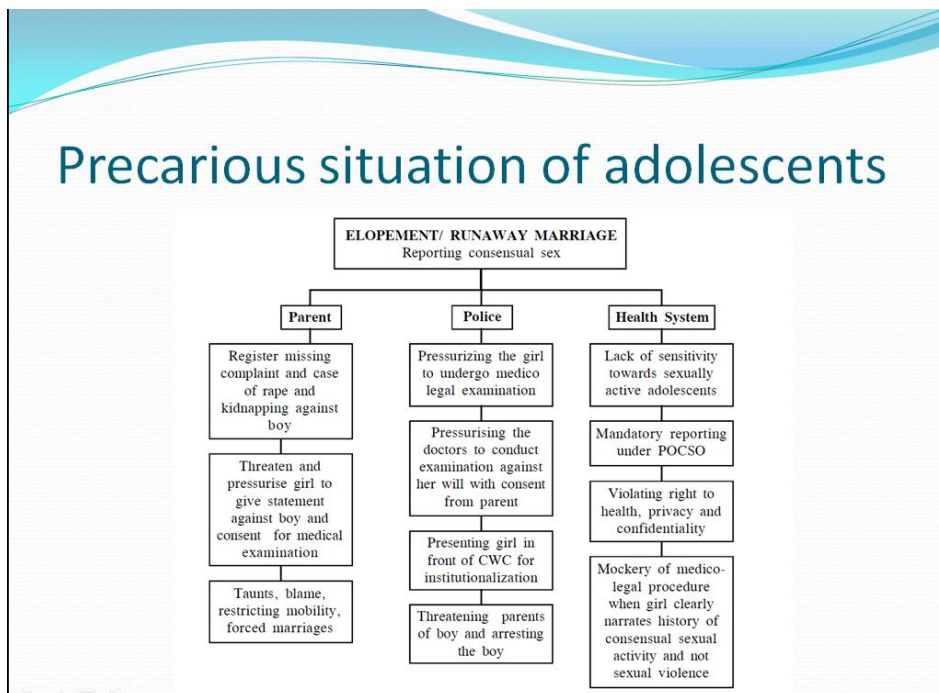
Ms. Pallavi Patel shared the experience of her organization of working with adolescent boys and girls in 73 villages of Talod block of Sabarkantha district in Gujarat for a span of 4 years. Their work majorly focused on adolescent nutrition, sexual and reproductive health and elimination of tobacco consumption. They had partnered with Department of Health and Family Welfare, Department of Women and Child Development, Department of Education and Literacy, State Resource Centre for Adult Education, Gujarat Vidhyapith and Indian Institute of Public Health (IIPH), Gandhinagar. They worked towards capacity building of young men and women and creating peer educators who would educate young boys and girls across the region about sex, sexuality, reproductive health and nutrition. Ms. Pallavi enhanced that the major challenge that they faced in the process is the absence of young boys and girls from the village as they would all be involved in some or the other labor. The mandate of taking these sessions after school hours and the reluctance of teachers to talk about topics like sex acted as a major barrier. She added that when we talk about choice and consent it's important that young minds are informed before they make a choice and are prepared for all kinds of consequence. But unfortunately our super structure is as such that these conversations are not accommodated or are frowned upon and hence state policies like RKSK and NRSH have terribly failed. She recommended that it's important to look into these schemes and strengthen them in order to create a dialogue around consent, choice and agency.

Ms. Sanjida Arora shared the results of a research conducted by CEHAT examining the experiences of young girls in the health system. The research was conducted using the data from Gynecological crisis centers that they run in three government hospitals in Mumbai. There are three major kinds of cases that they come across in the centre- rape, abortion and elopement. 90 cases out of 728 total cases were that of elopement. There were 90 cases of elopement out of 728 from 2008 to March, 2015 in 89 out of 90 cases, the girls were brought to hospital by police for medico-legal examination for sexual assault. In only one case, the girl came with her mother to seek abortion. The majority of the adolescent girls (60 per cent) who reported that they had eloped were 16- 17 years old; 40 per cent of the girls were 13-15 years old, the youngest being 13 years old. Of all the girls who eloped, only 22 per cent (16) reported that they had married their partners in a temple or masjid after

running away from home. 6 cases were of pregnancy and all 6 girls had agreed to have consensual relationship. Ms. Sanjida elaborated on the conflict that occurs due to MTP and the violence these pregnant girls have to face because of the non-confidential and insensitive provisions within MTP. She stated that the police department is extremely overactive in cases of consensual sex and pregnancy as compared any other actual cases of violence. Ms. Sanjida, in the end, highlighted on the contradiction faced by practitioners in such cases and raised ethical questions of respecting the victim's privacy or abiding by the law.

(Note: to access the PPT: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AyUoVS4eV-ZJbeHn9GOFB1NIMsh4I4Bb/view?usp=sharing>)

Figure 2 Source: CEHAT presentation made by Ms Sanjida Arora



Key Messages:

The panel was furthered with a brief discussion on the presentation made by the panelist. The key messages from the over-all discussion were as follows:

- 1) Violence against young women and girls should be looked holistically and not in episodes. When we understand that violence is a manifestation of larger socio-political discrimination we would begin to move from protectionist approach to enabling approach and put more energy in creating dialogues of empowerment and strength.
- 2) More churning is required on defining consent and understanding the comfort spaces of young boys and girls- what they open up about and why.
- 3) It is established, from the experiences shared in the conference, organizations use the laws like POCSO and PCMA as a tool, it is strategic and ensures the safety of young people but we have to move towards making the law in itself more enabling and empowering rather than protectionist.
- 4) An analysis of strategies used by the young couples who exercise their agency against all odds could be an enriching experience for civil society organizations.

Working groups discussed the themes addressed in the panel and shared valuable practices as detailed below:

Working group 1: Training and curriculum building

- 1) Training sessions with young girls are regularly taken in different strategic locations viz. Schools, Tech Centres, Vocational training centers, community halls etc. with a focus on building youth leadership and creating cohorts of informed and empowered young girls to promote youth agenda in all spaces of development. Eg. Sahiyar Stree Sangathan runs a training programme they call *Balpan gayu kishoravastha aavi*(Childhood left and adolescence has come) with adolescent girls in different school area and tech centres.
- 2)The modules of these trainings range from- informative sessions on MHM,SRHR, , body and Sexuality to Leadership sessions on public speaking, citizenship, Articulation, breaking stereotypes to perspective sessions on Equity, Environment and peace.
- 3) Curriculums are created through experiences of these training sessions which include - Defining issues- Pedagogy- Methods- Involvement of youth and Measuring impacts.
- 4) Key points to remember while preparing these trainings, modules and curriculums is : Research and highlighting of Age appropriate discourse; finding 'right' words; involving all stakeholders; and the trainer to be an emotional intellectual being.

Working group 2: Fellowship Programmes

- 1) There are multiple fellowship programs running across the country majorly focusing on channelizing the youth potential and creating youth leadership. Some of the fellowships that came out from the group were: SMILE youth fellowship, run by Sauhard; Umang fellowship for rural youth, run by ANANDI; Development Apprenticeship, run by Pradan; KYBK YR fellowship run by YP foundation.
- 2) Outcomes that are aimed through these fellowships can be clubbed as following;
 - a. Creation of safe, open, non-judgmental spaces for fellows .More reflective and better prepared leaders in the sector and in communities
 - b. Enhanced leadership abilities of fellows
 - c. Communities of fellows and the communities where they engage leading their own agendas
 - d. Expansion of safe, diverse leadership spaces in communities that can demand government accountability
 - e. Building movement action and participation
 - f. Expanding and building networks.
 - g. Building perspective leadership on some thematic focus viz. addressing SRHR issues, gender norms, patriarchal oppressions



- 3) Constituencies of these fellowships are :
 - a. Young people between 18 – 35 years old
 - b. Young women and girls
 - c. Often determined by the organizational focus
 - d. Passionate, committed individuals who have a personal stake in issues they take up
 - e. Experienced in community engagement
 - f. Specific programmes have educational criteria (Pradan’s development internship)

- 4) Systems and structures of the fellowships are:
 - a. Between 12- 50 fellows are enrolled in a batch
 - b. Regular Input sessions are conducted with the fellows
 - c. Learning -by -doing pedagogy and reflection in action processes are encouraged and practiced.
 - d. Mentorship structures provide mental and emotional support to the fellows while also giving them technical guidance with minimal sense of hierarchy.
 - e. Stipend: Full time programmes have a support stipend and Voluntary or part time programmes have a small learning stipend
 - f. There is a Geographical focus while designing these fellowships.

- 5) Innovative Impact assessment methods are used such as:
 - a. Reflection logs by fellows
 - b. Mentor feedback and assessment
 - c. Baseline and end line assessments
 - d. Discussions and independent assessments
 - e. Observation of leadership and action
 - f. Outreach and impact number collation
 - g. Community surveys and,
 - h. Feedback from community action processes and platforms

Working group 3: Forms of Media and Communication used for dialogue

- 1) Major Learnings that the group reflected on when using media were :
 - i. Art provides access to communities and creates spaces of dialogues in difficult situations.
 - ii. Media is not merely a tool for dissemination, but it is also an outcome.
 - iii. Fun’ as a valid methodology- as a legitimate reason behind choice of tools
 - iv. The ‘power’ of oral forms of communication- they are democratic and spontaneous.
 - v. Need-based methodology behind the choice of media.
 - vi. Emotions/Feelings as a source for knowledge building
 - vii. Media has created enabling and alternative spaces
 - viii. The language of the vernaculars is bridging gap as a ‘*desi*’, fun, humorous tool
 - ix. Creation of media tools and content is a process in continuum. It should emerge from the space of our audience.
 - x. Using ‘gauge’ as a tool to understand ‘impact’- a non-audit model

- 2) Forms: Poster making; Street theatre; Story telling; Poetry; Newsletter; Poster making; Speaking tool; Folk Song; Video; Music; Songs; Comic; Radio; Memes; Instagram stories; Symbols/Slogans; Sports; Games.

- 3) Challenges:
 - i. 'Media' reach out limited to a particular audience- niche
 - ii. Not treated as an authentic source of information for policy level change.
 - iii. Lack of self-reflexivity- not recognizing our own biases.

Working group 4: Strategies of Mobilizing youth groups and collectives

- 1) Constituency: Marginalized communities within Hindu, Muslim, Dalit, 18-25 year old youth, Migrant population, rural and urban women and girls, Adolescents with disabilities, Sexual Minorities, with Special needs
- 2) Issues: Violence, kidnapping, 'Dawa', lack of basic infrastructure, early marriage, identity issues, negligence, mental health issues.
- 3) Strategies: making groups, Fellowships, Awareness programs, Counselling and case work; Using local festival for inducing messages of social change, safety walk, Skill trainings Exposure Visits, Sports club, Working with different govt. stakeholders
- 4) Challenges: Resistance from the community, Patriarchal norms, to maintain the group, taboo on SRHR, Availability of community in adherence with work hours, Lack of resources; community mobilizers not the decision makers, lack of community ownership.

Working Group 5: Public campaigns, policy issues and Advocacy (presented on day 2)

1) Campaigns:

- CRY programs on KAP change: Menstrual health, Education, nutrition - with city population, Elected Reps, combining community issues and various stakeholder perspectives.
- AWAG school campaigns on hygiene created platforms to discuss/ identify sexual health needs with multiple stake holders
- Dignity March – 5000 sexual violence survivors marched across the country(survivors designed the march and the charter of demands)
- Right to Pee campaign in Mumbai – girls and women created campaign & charter of demands
- 'Me Too' as a campaign which was survivor driven
- Campaign against Sec 377 tried to change public opinion and it was totally community led.
- Slogans / one liners are very effective communication tools
- Slogans can be appropriated/ adapted for political purpose - eg "*beti bachao beti padhao-sabka sath sabka vikas*".
- Campaign participation depends on trajectory before campaign: is it campaign for a law? Is it campaign after a law, is it campaign by a sangathan etc. eg : Vishakha Rural Girls Groups slogan '*ye kyun hona chahiye ki aurat muh band rakhe aur kokh khuli rakhe* '

2) Advocacy issues:

- Conflict of Laws – inconsistency between legal frameworks of CMPA, MTPA, POCSO, CHILD LABOUR etc.
- Definition of Child (Difference in ages in departmental interventions and policy eg, child labour, health, education)
- Age of Marriage should be contextual
- Should early marriage be Voidable marriage or void?
- Age of consent in the JJ Act a point of debate.

- Advocacy on inclusion of Educational programmes like comprehensive sexuality education and life skills in to the school curriculum to address structural inequality.
 - Investigate unnatural death of young people below 25
- 4) Future Research:
- Study of what strategies do adolescents use to navigate education / health /livelihood etc – to give us insights about what works, What does not
 - Study of status of Education in Rural area / Secondary, Higher sec (including budget analysis –spending etc.) (E.g. there is an observation that higher education money is being diverted to skill building? So we divert potential engineers to become plumbers.
 - Examine the pressure and social phenomena that impair / impede progressive/ rights based work e.g. observation of the Sanand Village where Right Wing camps on ‘Aachi ladki”
 - How do toxic masculinities develop / to plan effective equity interventions for working with men and boys.
 - Review of law and policies in other countries where age of consent is different
 - Study of consent Vs. Juvenile criminal age debate
 - Judgement analysis of elopement cases factors responsible for acquittal & conviction

Day 2: Wednesday, 19th June. 2019

Reflections on research-based evidence:

Ms Pragnya Joshi briefed about the previous days research and evidence panel and gave an overview of the research results discussed by different panelists (detailed in day 1, panel1). While comprehensively briefing about the research results, Ms Pragnya emphasized that Multilevel and multidimensional stigmatisation and social criminalisation of the girls and young women is a common phenomenon and to promote the right to choice, consent and agency for young women and girls its mandatory that we work towards creating supporting enabling system which do not with an intent of criminalisation. She added that medical practitioners, police and other important agents involved in such cases are required to be sensitised regarding ethical practices of working with individuals. Furthermore she reflected that, overall paradigm shift is required, within all active state and non-state agencies- from Protectionist approach to enabling rights approach.

In the following segment Ms. Sejal Dand invited the first panel of the day which is detailed below.

Panel 1: Opportunities and Gaps in Current Policy and Programmes: Panel Discussion

This panel focused on discussing the policies of the state and the experiences of state representatives while acting on them. The panel was chaired by Dr. Jahnvi Andharia, Bricoleur at Indian School of Development Management and was constituted of Mr. Anil Pratham, DGP, Gandhinagar, Gujarat; Mr. Izaz Mansuri, WCD; Dr. Shikhanandi, Family welfare and Health Department; Ms. Jigna Surkar, Programme Officer, Gender Resource Centre and Mr. Narendra Sinh Gohil, head of helpline network Abhyam 181.

The chair, **Dr. Jahnvi Andharia**, opened the discussion by talking about the challenges faced by young boys and girls, especially those coming from poor income families as they stand on the crossroads of economic and social responsibilities (at an early age) and young aspirations of a better life. She also brought to attention that voices of youth are very important whenever and wherever we talk about the issues of youth and hence it’s important to create spaces for youth in our panels. Dr. Andharia, then, moved on to briefing the panel about the expectations from this panel and said that, “Through this panel, we are looking forward to having a dialogue between civil society organizations and state agencies, to come up with plausible options of converting experiences of

practice into policies. She further explained that we will be, in this panel, hearing about the challenges faced by the government agencies while implementing existing policies for youth and looking at meaningful relationships with the state and potential of collaboration on the given agenda, keeping in mind the recommendations of the research.

Mr. Narendra Sinh Gohil, in the beginning of his presentation shared that Gujarat is one of the first states in India to provide efficient women helplines that are 24*7 active. He said that unlike other states- where the professionals/ counselors register the case, listen to the caller, understands the issue and then refer them to some other department- Gujarat has started a service of rescue vans which are immediately sent to the location of violence. Currently, 47 rescue vans are dedicatedly working in Gujarat and each of these vans have experienced and trained counselors and atleast one constable to immediately provide a support to the victim. Mr. Gohil added that government has invested in emergency services and One stop centres. He elaborated that one stop centres have made the entire process of report and redressal less taxing and less time consuming, increasing efficiency at every stage.

Mr Gohil, further said that in order to efficiently implement child protection policies and deeper reach outs, Teacher, Asha worker and Anganwadi workers are trained to take action in any cases of violence against child or child marriage in their respective village. Their identity is hidden confidentiality maintained for the safety of these workers. As a result of these measures, he shared, 180 cases of child marriage have been registered in the past one year. At the district level, the government has placed Social development officer, District child protection officer who in support of the police and trained counselors take up cases of child marriage hands on, in the process also enabling better reporting mechanisms.

Among the cases of child marriage, Mr. Gohil also shared, there has been increase in love marriage cases where the caller doesn't want to go to natal or marital family. For such cases there is an immediate response team to rescue her and put her in a safe abode. If the girl is of legal marriageable age and wants to marry by her choice, the helplines also provide assistance and talk to her guardians or parents if the caller consents to it.

Mr. Gohil shared that a major challenge that the helplines are facing these days are with cases of young girls- younger than 18 - with Mental health problems as they can't be put in children's home or women shelter homes and need special care. He concluded by saying that we are all striving to create safe spaces for these girls and we must collaborate with our skills and expertise to holistically tackle the issue.

Ms. Jigna Surkar, was the second speaker on the panel. She began with underlining the fact that the forms of violence has changed and the issues faced by young girls have changed in the current reality of our country. She said that the cases that GRC deals with on a regular basis can be classified into two major types a) Exploitation and violence on young girls by partners and families when she had decided to be in the relationship and b) Violence that a girl goes through at the hands of the state because she made a choice before the age of 18 (i.e. younger than the legal age of consent and decision making). She said, there is a serious lack of information among these girls about their body, safe sex and sexuality. Girls are becoming sexually active at a younger age but they are not prepared for the process or provided any form of education due to lack of policy and schemes provisioning sex education. The question that needs to be asked, then, is whether her consent is fully informed when she has no clue of the consequences of the act. Ms. Surkar insisted that there is a requirement of regular dialogue between state and non-state agents actively working on this issue, so that we can strategize and act together. She said that the onus is on us and not these girls that informed decisions are taken on their part. The form of violence has changed- the issues of girls have changed-

Mr. Izaz Mansuri, highlights that in our culture Consent is replaced with permission and the permission giver has immense power. Men decide for women and they assert their power on them through manipulative decisions. As a society, he said, we have not understood the concept of consent, especially men. He suggested that panels and forums like these should also bring more men

in their ambit so that these conversations can permeate through them. He briefly placed that with all our mechanisms in place, we would be only working with response approach unless society and state mechanisms get a clear understanding of consent. In the end, he invited suggestions from the participants on how to go about the same.

Dr. Shikhanandi initiated with discussing the difference between medico-legal concept of informed consent and consent as a social value. He stated that the menstruation age of girls has gone down in the past decade and they achieve sexual maturity at a younger age now. Parallel to this biological phenomenon, he opinionated, is the growing reluctance in parents and young adults to talk about their sexual and reproductive health. He emphasized that a girl is to be made aware of the changes in her body and parents have to build such friendly spaces at home for her to share her experiences and stories. As a state mechanism, he stated, RKSK centres are opened where young girls and boys are given counseling about sexual and reproductive health. The centre provide counseling and advise on nutrition and special focus is on creating awareness in the young population about HIV, he concluded.

Mr. Anil Pratham, joined us and gave insights on the role of police and the challenges faced by the department while working with young girls and boys. Mr. Pratham said that working on the issue of 'Missing children' requires sensitive approach, it is a tricky situation because the officials are most caught in the conflict of being non-judgmental or fulfilling the legal obligations. These cases require efficient coordination with various departments and we face real challenges in coordinating with the health department while education department has readily worked with us for sensitization and trainings on the issue. Within the police department also regular trainings and sensitization programs are organized for the department officials.

Key Messages:

- 1) Specific to Gujarat state, it was re-enforced by all the officials that a few structures are in place but are not entirely sensitive or inclusive and while we also have to work towards creating newer structures, it is important we acknowledge the successful models of action and scale it in as many places as possible.
- 2) There is a definitive need of creating forums for regular interactions between civil society organizations, government agencies and other active agents to pace up the work on violence against young girls and women, to discuss the experiences, strategize and act together.
- 3) While working on the cases of 'missing children' or 'kidnapping and abduction' or working with young girls in cases of violence in different aspects- an essential component of consent should remain. When we work on strengthening the component of consent we should educate, inform and aware young girls and boys for them to become capable of taking decisions in their best interest.
- 4) Sensitive and non-judgmental approach is required within all the departments and the conflict of these ethics with the legal obligations, needs to be re-visited and this has to be a joint effort from all the active agents in the issue.

Panel 2: Approaches and Investments in Programmes for young women and girls for protection and promotion of right to Security and Agency

The second panel of the day was focused on sharing from the funding partners about their approaches and Investment when working with young women towards the protection of their Right to security and agency. The panel was headed by Dr. Vimala Ramchandran, Director, Educational Resource Unit, Delhi and President, ANANDI, and it constituted of Ms. Sanya Seth, Programme Analyst, UN Women; Mr Vedprakash Gautam, Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF; Ms Rama Vedula, Programme Officer, AJWS; Ms Aparna Uppaluri, Programme Officer, Ford Foundation and Mr Siddarth Ughade, Programme Manager, CRY.

Ms Sanya Seth was the first speaker in this panel representing UN women. In her presentation, Ms Seth, foregrounded that main the roles of UN Women were to a) support intergovernmental bodies in formulation of policies, global standards and norms. b) help Member States to implement these standards through technical and financial support, and to forge effective partnerships with civil society and c) lead and coordinate the UN system's work on gender equality and their main focus area included - Discriminatory Social Norms and Gender, Early and Forced Marriage, Early Pregnancy and Motherhood and, Violence and Unsafe Working Environments. While working and enabling other partners to work on these focus areas, Ms Seth shared, UN women defines there role as 9Is (ref.fig3) and has adopted Three cross-cutting approaches - strengthening **Participation, voice and partnerships with young women** and young women-led organizations and networks, with **young men** as partners of gender equality, and with **inter-generational partners** . With this approach, she shared, their experiences of leading international campaigns like *Beijing Platform for Action (Beijing in 25)*, *#HearMeToo*, *Shaurya Dal* and more. She emphasized that it is important for us as a community to strengthen feminist movement and for that it is inevitable that we create **Leadership** of young women in all spheres; work towards **Economic empowerment** and skills development of young women; and take immediate **Action on ending violence** against young women and girls

(Note: to access the PPT: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1foHUqzh8Z6yd_L-mWT6EGd3iqr6d9fDs/view?usp=sharing)

Figure 3 source: *Leave no one behind ppt (presented by Ms. Sanya Seth)*



Mr Vedprakash Gautam, the second speaker on the panel, threw some light on the perspective of UNICEF on this issue. He began with explaining the '*key markers of successful transition in adulthood*'. It's important for young girls and boys to have livelihood opportunities which are Sustainable and profitable wherein girls have absolute control over their income; and young adolescents should have informed safe and consensual entry into sexually active life. He contested the approach of promoting early marriage and reducing the age of marriage; instead, he said, we should promote consensual, empowering relationships of the choice of young girls. Stopping child marriage, he added, doesn't change the life of the girl, by itself. We need to have a more holistic approach to empower girls to make their own decisions. He briefly discussed that we are in the 30th year of UNCRC which is centrally located in the concept of agency of adolescents. We should be able to draw more references from the convention as we move towards the discourse of choice and agency.

Mr. Vedprakash concluded with sharing pathways to change. The speaker pointed out that international organizations invest intensively in piloting new ideas but post pilot there is no investment on scaling, which is the requirement of our times. There is a requirement of ownership of ideas and their contextual duplication. He also added that we should be addressing economics of marriage and creating empowering schemes which are women-centric. Also, he added, we should work towards amplifying positive variances, creating change stories to motivate a large cultural shift. Evidence generation and partnerships are key to bring about the change as per our vision, he concluded.

(Note: to access the PPT: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1h8Fe9CdHPaMnHyw75Epfhg5ufCPmU-c2/view?usp=sharing>)

Ms. Rama Vedula from AJWS shared with everyone the focus area of the organisation and their funding strategies. She said AJWS has been keen on working on Sexual and reproductive health rights and has over the period added in its ambit the issue of early and forced marriage as it is closely linked with SRHR. In their involvement with grassroots organizations for over a decade the organization has learned about a range of causes of early and forced marriages. The most prominent being lack of control of young girls over their own life. The organization has picked many brains to come up with strategies to address early and forced marriages with the feminist framework and move the discourse from age to agency. The approach of the organization has been to invest in rural grassroot organizations and learn from the voices and experiences of these organizations. Ms. Vedula highlighted that the issue of early and child marriage is a concern for everybody- legal rights group, women's rights group, child rights group, labor rights group – and AJWS has attempted to bring these groups on one platform to understand the intersections with which we need to see early and forced marriage; with a square emphasis on gender and sexual rights. She added that robust and grassrooted research is missing and AJWS supports research on questions raised by the organizations and hence could explore intricacies of the issues. It's important to curate new knowledge for advocacy at national and international level and AJWS supports these organization to platforms like CSW.

Ms Vedula suggested that Collectivization and organizing is important to creating safe and political space. It is in these spaces that the Feminist movement thrives as we move from gender roles to gender identity and sexual rights. We should map the groups in which they informally talk and not just the number of group, Covering the negotiations around marriage. She shared that grassroot researches have highlighted important issues and address structural factors creating environmental health, labor-migration, sexual, singleness

She concluded with saying that there is an emerging need to focus on how to include political discourses while talking to the girls in young groups. How do we look at girls as constituency and visiblise them while enabling and empowering young feminist leadership both young women and young men.

Ms. Aparna Uppaluri shared that Ford foundation's work in the region largely entails SRHR focus in India/ Nepal/ Srilanka and Gender Justice work on violence against women. The foundation is working on two level strategy- at global level on funding organizations that anchor international dialogue and global norm setting and at South Asia regional level to shift the strategy from service delivery and response framework to women citizenship approach. Ms. Aparna shared that as a strategy we choose violence as an entry point to work with women which helps us to look at the structures of inequality. But with the Increase in the different forms of violence against women across the region we are now looking at investing in more and more change agents and building larger cohort of responsible active women citizens. The crucial tool to this strategy is capturing conversations, creating forums for dialogue between donors and implement organizations to build a larger stronger network, creating forums of dialogue between different movements to build holistic strategies and understanding collectivization deeply. Ms Aparna, in conclusion, said that, the foundation intends to support institutional building processes and has a special grant for the same because it is important at this juncture to build foundations of institutions with perspective, intent and approach in order to address the growing problem at hand.

Mr. Siddarth Ughade from CRY shared some insightful data in his presentation on 'Childescents' - a term coined by CRY to visibalize the issues of children in the age group of 15-18. Some of his data are as follows:

There are nearly 100 million Childescents between 15-18 years~~ss~~. Only 1 in every 2 Childescents between 15-18 years is studying-. Only 1 in every 3 school-going Childescents complete class 12 at an appropriate age. Only around 15% of the schools in India have opportunities for secondary and higher secondary education. 23 million children between 15-18 years are working, and 19 million working children are out of school. 9.2 million Childescents are married, and 3.7 million girls between 15-19 years are married and working.- 3.4 million girls within 15-19 years are mothers-. 40% of children between 15-19 years are undernourished. Childescent girls account for 60% of all kidnappings and abduction of children-. 4 out of 5 child suicides happen in the Childescent ~~years~~ -year's. Childescent girls account for 25% of all female rape victims in India.

Mr. Ughade recommended that there is an immediate requirement of advocacy to make secondary education free and bring it under RTE. He added that Health services should be provided regardless of age and education around Safe sex and easy access of condoms to adolescents should be promoted.

(Note: to access the PPT: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1pm6W4dCmQnj-RlztqCB-0k9BeeskzWC/view?usp=sharing>)

Dr. Vimala Ramchandran closed the session by thanking the panelists and some concluding remarks. She underlined that as organizations we should pick up these experience and collate them as evidence for advocacy. She said that there are three major take away from the sessions of the day-
1) Situations of children in under the age of 14 and those above are very different. We should then look at child marriage separately in these two groups which will help us strategies more carefully.
2) A lot of real time data is being gathered by state and non-state agencies but they do not include crosscutting issues like child marriage which we can push for through our advocacy.
3) Since the year 2000 many small studies have been done in different pockets of India and that are getting lost. If we synthesize these small studies, we will be able to get a lot of evidence and knowledge.

The Chair concluded by saying that we should acknowledge the relations between action and knowledge as actions give us knowledge in its crudest form and we have keep this continuum intact

in order to make tangible shifts. In the end, she said, perhaps it's time, we start working with men-young adults and boys to shrunken the gender gap.

Key messages:

- 1) Creating evidence and data extremely important for advocacy and shifting structures Govt. opening formats of census and NFHS for review we can see that as an opportunity to add indicators
- 2) Grassroot level research is a key strategy for national and international level advocacy.
- 3) Scaling is important as we move towards a more extremist era globally.
- 4) It is crucial to look at violence against women more holistically and not fragment it.
- 5) Working with young boys and men extremely important to bridging gaps and creating allies in the movement
- 6) Need of the hour is that different movements- labor movement, feminist movement, farmers movement etc. speak to each other and break their silos; It is equally important for organizations of different standpoints but similar values to come together and dialogue on matter of importance.

Conclusions:

This roundtable had aimed at bringing together, experts, practitioners, researchers, funding partners and state representatives under one roof to initiate a conversation around the right to choice, agency and consent. The conversations over the span of two days ranged from discussing the intensity of the issue and the manifestation of the non-consensual culture of the society in different forms of violence, to discussing existing practices, systems, schemes and policies, to testing the waters for potentials of working together on the issues of youth with choice, agency, consent and participation as the foundation stone of all future initiatives.

As we deeply analyzed the issue of early/forced marriage and violence indicted in self arranged marriages – we delved into the effect criminalization of choice has on the entire life of a young adult- from impacting education, health and livelihood of young girls to criminalizing young boys. Understanding consent of young 'uninformed' adults and creating safer spaces and support structures for them while respecting their agency, seems as a utopia that this conference took one step towards.

We moved towards sharing our best practices while working with the youth and discussed the successes and failures in mobilization strategies, usage of media and campaigns to developing participatory learning processes through training modules and fellowships. It's essential, in this process, to consider youth as an equal participants and a constituency with a voice of its own and not merely beneficiaries or elements of concern.

The government shared some insights on available schemes and policies of child protection. Though it was emphasized that we have to consciously acknowledge the agency of the victim and marinate our policies and implementation strategies in the concept of consent, choice and agency.

In the end, we looked at the potential partnerships and investments on the issue and it was clearly articulated that the movements have to come together on an issue like this in order to, in totality, address the invisibilization of young women and girls and their curtailed right to agency and security.

Recommendations

Department of Law and Justice

- ☒ Treat runaway children who leave home to be with their partners without the permission or knowledge of guardians as 'children at risk' and develop special protocols for them.
- ☒ Decriminalize non-exploitative, non-coercive, consensual sex between peers/ persons of proximate ages by revisiting the provision of 18 years as a minimum age of sexual consent under the POCSO Act, and restoring it to 16 years.
- ☒ Critical abortion services for young girls must be seen as legal without referring them to 'Medical board' evaluations.

Police

- ☒ Publicize about the repository of missing children.
- ☒ Conduct training of investigating officials at ground level on Special Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Missing Children in the context of the abduction of minor girls to ensure better implementation.
- ☒ Form specialized investigative units for the 'children at risk' including the runaway couples. Sensitize police personnel in the trained units regarding the nature of vulnerabilities faced by the missing child after provisioning adequate budgets for the same.
- ☒ Create non-judgmental, supportive spaces for missing girls and later traced by police.
- ☒ Refer a retrieved missing girl and her parents first to the Child Welfare Committees, District Child Protection Unit and Childline for counselling and support as per the Directives for Missing Children & Children in Need of Care and Protection,

Juvenile Justice Act

- ☒ Referrals should also be made to Women's Organizations and Women's Support Cells at the district level. Members of the Women's Support Cells linked to police stations need to be trained to counsel and provide redressal for such vulnerable girls to ensure that they face further violence and indignity.
- Helplines:
- ☒ Childline 1098 and women's helpline 181 should also publicize their services and support vulnerable runaways. Develop special protocol for the same.
 - ☒ Disseminate information about gender-just collectives as alternative violence redressal systems in schools and panchayat to constrict the runaway incidences of young adults after altercations with parents and create enabling environment for conversations about safe navigation of relationships.
 - ☒ The helplines must provide alternative safe accommodation to the young adults in situations of altercations with their parents.
 - ☒ Proactively ally with the DCPU and Child Welfare Committees to protect the rights of adolescents and young adults on priority.
 - ☒ Set up protocols to respond to situations where girls experience violence from families because they exercised their agency.
 - ☒ Maintain confidentiality and recognize the choice, agency and consent of this age cohort as part of ethical practices of respecting the rights of the adolescents and youth.

☒ Hold community dialogues regarding the pressure of underage marriage borne by young girls during the season of *Holi* and *Akha Teej*.

☒ Helplines must carry campaigns against customary practices like *davo*, which criminalize the agency of the adolescents and youth.

Department of Women and Child Development:

☒ Initiate programmes to develop capacities of young adults in negotiating consent with their families as well as peers based on informed knowledge.

☒ The vision statement of WCD may be rephrased as To stay safe, secure and be assured that the capacities of a child care enabled and respected, in all settings and circumstances.

☒ Department must train state agencies like police, child protection units, shelter homes, village level committees including school management committees and child protection committees, and women's collectives to cultivate ethical practices in counselling to ensure that confidentiality and individual rights of the young adult are respected and adhered.

Department of Social Justice

☒ Campaigns for the prevention of child marriages should hold dialogues with parents and youth before the traditional marriage season along with negating the customary penalty.

☒ The child marriage prevention officer should be trained in counselling adults and youth to address social pressures that lead to early marriages.

☒ The state agencies must act stringently towards not just stopping child marriages, but also widely publicizing helplines as well as office and community spaces where the support services available for youth at risk of early marriage could be accessed.

Education:

☒ Schools and colleges must initiate programmes on comprehensive sex education and negotiating consent with family, community, and peers.

☒ Schools must hold counseling sessions for adolescents and young adults to navigate the pressures of marriage, especially around the season of *Holi* and *Akha Teej*.

Further, the sessions on sex education and strengthening individual agency in voicing consent would prove fruitful. A massive drive to link young with KGBVS, Open-Schools and bridge courses at the village level.

☒ Investing in the development of safe and affordable public transport facilities would contribute considerably towards improving access to higher education of young girls. Health

☒ No girl or woman should be denied access to health services on the ground of non-possession of identity documents.

☒ SABLA programmes and Kishori Shakti Scheme at the ANGANWADIs and Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics (AFHCs) need to address issues related to consent, choice and mobility of young girls and hold counselling sessions with parents.

☒ Special efforts should be made to ensure that young women and girls get access to reproductive health services and maternity benefits regardless of their marital status or age.

☒ Guidelines for medical establishments must include quality, safety, confidentiality, and legal, sexual and reproductive health information and services in line with evolving capacities of adolescents and young adults, their sexual orientation and gender identity.

Civil Society organizations and Women's Collectives

☒ Women Collectives and Civil Society organizations working for enabling rights of youth and children should conduct advocacy campaigns, whereby the principles of enabling capacities of the youth and

children are applied to reduce the criminalization of agency and recognize choices of this age cohort (16- 18 years).

☒ Women's Collectives should strengthen efforts to enhance the mobility of the young girls by creating a mandate to de-legitimize practices that curtail their mobility

☒ Civil Society Organizations and Women's Collectives need to build a movement to address complexities of customary practices that penalize the agency of the youth in general and women in particular.

☒ Women's organizations need to strengthen their network to provide support including counselling young girls so that they and their partners can deal with consequences appropriately and can make use of the available institutional support arrangements without compromising their agency and choice.

☒ Women's collectives need to work towards reducing the vulnerability of young girls denied entry into their natal homes, thus depriving them of social and emotional support resulting in further distress.

Annex A: Schedule

Girls and Young Women: Negotiating Agency, Choice and Consent.

Roundtable June 18-19th, Ahmedabad

TIME	SESSION	CHAIR
18th June 2019		
<i>8.00-9.30 : BREAKFAST</i>		
9:30- 10:15: Registration		
10:15am-11:00 am	Welcome, Introductions and Setting the agenda	Ms Sejal Dand: Director, ANANDI
11:00 am-1pm	Criminalisation of Choice, Consent and Agency of girls and young women	
11am-11:20am	Speaker: Ms Pragnya Joshi, Sr Researcher ANANDI <i>Girls and young women at the crossroad of law and customary practices in the context of underage marriage.</i>	
11:20-11:40am	Speaker : Ms Madhu Mehra, Director PLD <i>Intersections between adolescent sexuality and early marriage.</i>	
11:40- 12pm	Speaker: Ms Sajida Arora, Research Officer <i>Moving Towards Adolescent friendly Sexual and reproductive health services in India.</i>	
12pm-1pm	Discussion and sharing (60 minutes)	Dr Manjima Bhattacharya: AJWS
<i>1pm -2pm : LUNCH</i>		
2:00 pm – 5:00pm	Community of Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Training and capacity building- Curriculum and modules ☐ Fellowship Programs ☐ Forms of media used for communication and dialogue ☐ Strategies for mobilisation of youth group ☐ Public Campaigns 	AGENTS of Ishq, AKSHARA, ANANDI, AWAG, BUNIYAD, DHRISHTI, GMVS, ICRW, JAGORI, KMVS, MASUM, MJS, NIRANTAR, OLAKH, PARVAZ, PLD, PRAVAAH, SAHAJ, SAHIYAR, SAUHARD, SHAHEEN, SHAISHAV, SNEHA, SEWA RURAL, VACCHA,

		VIKALP, VMSESS, Vishakha, Y P Foundation.
5:00pm – 5:30 pm	Tea- Break	
5:30 pm-6:30pm	Group Presentations and summary	Dr Anandiben Patel: Professor, Department of Social Work Gujarat, Gujarat Vidyapith
6:30pm : Summarisation		

<i>8:00am-9:00am Breakfast and Registration</i>		
9:00am-10am	Gallery Walk and Reflections from Day 1	
10am-11:30	Opportunities & Gaps in Current Policy and Programs: Panel Discussion Mr Anil Pratham: DGP Women’s Cell Mr Narendra Sinh Gohil : Manager, Abhyam 181 Ms Kavita Sheth: Director GRC Ms Hansaben Majiyatar , Joint Secretary WCD Ms Leelaben Ankolia, Chairperson GSCW Mr Manoj Aggarwal: Chairperson of GSCPS Dr Gaurav Dahiya: Dept. of H & FW*	Dr Jahnvi Andharia: Bricoleur at Indian School of Development Management, U.P
11:45am - 1:30 pm	Approaches and Investments in Programs for young women and girls for protection and promotion of Security and Agency : Panel Discussion Dr Manjima Bhattacharya : Program Officer ,AJWS Mr Vedprakash Gautam: Child Protection Specialist, UNICEF Ms Sanya Seth: Programme Analyst , UN Women Ms Aparna Uppaluri : Program Officer, Ford Foundation Ms Sidharth Ughade: Manager, CRY	Ms Vimala Ramchandran: Director of the Educational Resource Unit, Delhi & President ANANDI

	Representative, Edelgive Foundation	
	Vote of Thanks	Ms Neeta Hardikar, ANANDI
	<i>1:30pm- 2:30pm: LUNCH 2:30pm-5pm : Networking</i>	

19 th June 2019

Annex B: List of participants.

No.	Participants	Organisation Name	Email Id	Work with Girls and Young Women
1.	Dr.Anandi Ben Patel Professor	Department of Social Work, Gujarat Vidyapith	anandi.ahm@gmail.com	Professor and HOD at the department of Social work, Gujarat Vidyapith.
2.	Ms.Aparna Uppaluri Program Officer	Ford Foundation	ford-delhi@fordfound.org	Across eight decades, the Ford Foundation has invested in innovative ideas, visionary individuals, and frontline institutions advancing human dignity around the world.
3.	Ms.Apexa H. Bhatt Project Director	Mahila Samakhya, Gujarat	ahbhatt332@yhao.com	Mahila Samakhya is committed to making a strong, equitable and gender just society where every woman from poor and disadvantaged communities enjoy equal rights, opportunities, security, justice and freedom and empowered enough to contribute to the holistic development of family, community and nation.
4.	Mr.Bharat Founder Member	Vishakha Mahila Shiksha Evam Shodh Samit	kahanshab2@gmail.com	Vishakha is an organisation based in Jaipur, Rajasthan. We have been working since 1991 on issues of literacy, education, comprehensive health, and combating violence against women towards Empowerment of Women, girls and communities.
5.	Ms.Dimple Assistant Coordinator	Drishti media	dimplemakwana.drishti@gmail.com	Drishti has produced over 30 documentary films, supported setting up of over 20 community radio and video units, designed over a dozen rights based campaigns, and conducted over 200 pieces of training on campaign planning, theatre and audio-visual production. It uses media as a tool to Work on Women's Rights and awareness.
6.	Ms.Dristi Coordinator	Ajeevika Bureau	amrita.sharma@ajeevika.org	Ajeevika Bureau combines direct service delivery, advocacy, research and technical support in advancement of its work on issues of migrant workers. Through a network of field based Shramik Sahayata evam Sandarbh Kendra-s. It provides a range of services to migrants and their households.

7.	Ms.Gayatri K Patel Co-ordination at Mahila Kendra	Sewa Rural V Jhagadia	gayu.patel09@gmail.com	SEWA Rural is a voluntary development organisation involved in health & development activities in the rural tribal area of South Gujarat at Jhagadia since 1980
8.	Mr.Hozefa Founder	Buniyaad	hozefa09@gmail.com	Buniyaad is an organisation working for the empowerment of Muslims and for promoting conflict transformation processes among the marginalised communities in Gujarat. Working with youth to build their leadership as young citizen leaders since 2015.
9.	Ms.Indira Pancholi Researcher	Mahila Jan Adhikar Samit	indiraajm@gmail.com	MJAS empowers adolescent girls and young women through imparting information and knowledge on their rights and entitlements. We also engage with parents and support them in their furthering the aspirations of their daughters. The organisation also engages girls in playing football in their villages, schools and at district and state level.
10.	Dr.Jahnvi Andharia Bricoleur	Indian School of Development Management	jahnvi.andharia73@gmail.com	Professor at Indian School of Development Management, UP. And also founder member of ANANDI
11.	Ms.Jharna Secretary at AWAG	AWAG	fmjharna@gmail.com	AWAG works closely with the government on issues related to violence against women and works as a pressure group to properly implement or revise schemes as the need be. AWAG sensitises adolescent boys and girls in schools on health and hygiene. In all these multifarious activities, providing violent free society to women is a common thread that runs through all of these interventions.
12.	Ms.Jyoti Sonawane Community Organiser	Vacha Charitable Trust	vachamail@gmail.com	Vacha's mission is to focus on issues of women and girls through educational programmes, resource creation, research, training, campaigns, networking and advocacy.
13.	Ms.Kamal Thakar member Stree Sangathan	Sahiyar(Stree Sangathan)	sahiyar@gmail.com	Sahiyar works with youth and adolescent girls to promote education, destigmatise Menstrual health.
	Ms.Kausar Ansari	Awaaz-E- Niswaan	niswaan@gmail.com	Aawaaz-e-Niswaan (voice of women) is a vibrant feminist collective of students, academicians,

14.	Counsellor and Coordinator			activists from the women's movement and women who daily confront violations of their rights and evolve strategies to combat them.
15.	Ms.Khairunnisha Coordinator	Parwaaz Sanstha	parwaaj@gmail.com	Parwaaz Sanstha works for Women Rights
16.	Ms.Krishna Panchal Young Women Leader	Society for Nutrition Education and Health Action (SNEHA)	krishna.panchal@snehamumbai.org	SNEHA's program on Prevention of Violence against women and children (PVWC) works for primary prevention, ensure survivors' access to protection and justice, empower women to claim their rights.
17.	Ms.Kruti Laheru KMVS Secretariat	Kutch Mahila Vikas Sangathan	kruptl@gmail.com	KMVS's Yuva Vani program works with youth in school and out of school. This program has added youth as a stakeholder to overall efforts of KMVS.
18.	Ms.Madhu Khetan Program Director	PRADAN	madhukhetan@pradan.net	In 1987 PRADAN began working with the government and over the years they have played a major role in developing such programs as IRDP, SGSY, and the National Rural Livelihood Mission. They continue to work for change that is sustainable and self-perpetuating, bringing skills and system that help women, families and communities gain confidence and take charge of their own lives.
19.	Ms.Madhu Mehra Executive Director	Partners for Law in Development	madhu05.m@gmail.com	Advancing social justice and women's rights through law.
20.	Ms.Manisha Juneja Program Monitor	SWATI	manishaswa7@gmail.com	SWATI's project 'kNOwFear' looks at rural women's and girls' public space safety and it's impact on their lives.
21.	Ms.Manushi Sheth Co-ordinator	SAHAJ	manushi.ssm@gmail.com	SAHAJ has been working with adolescents and youths on their reproductive and sexual health and rights, including life skill education and personality development as a part of their comprehensive development.
	Mr.Mayank Matiyani Executive Director	The YP Foundation	reena@theypfoundation.org	The YP Foundation aims to strengthen young people's engagement with policy-making at local, national, regional and international levels through several programmes.

22.				The Butterfly Project: Enabling young women from marginalised communities in low-resource settings to creatively address gender & discrimination through digital media.
23.	Ms.Nandini Das Project Associate	Nirantar	nandinij1177@gmail.com	Gender and Sexuality team of Nirantar runs the 'Yuva, Yaunikta aur Adhikar' course, focussing on issues of child marriage, education and work towards young women empowerment and capacity building.
24.	Ms.Neepa Vyas Assistant Professor	Government Law College	neepavyas@gmail.com	Assistant professor at law, affiliated with Gujarat University
25.	Ms Nimisha Desai Founding Member	Olakh	nimisha.olakh@gmail.com	Olakh's mission is to center-stage feminist perspectives and practices to initiate conscious action to challenge patriarchal mindsets, structures & systems of dominance considering all prevailing violence, discrimination & injustice based on gender, caste, class, sexuality, ethnicity etc. to promote dignity and justice for all.
26.	Ms.Olimpika Oja Creative Assistant	Agents of Ishq	olimpika.pdp@gmail.com	Agents of Ishq is a multi-media project about sex, love and desire. Or, to put it another way, we make cool video, beautiful images and great audio about sex, love and desire in India
27.	Ms.Parul Sheth Co-Founder	Shaishav	parul@shaishavchildrights.org	Shaishav runs Kishori Mandals since 2004 and provides specific training to the adolescent girls and boys about the gender sensitisation. We have created special age-appropriate curriculum for providing feminist personal safety training called "Wenlido" for girls. We are working with children's collective 'Balsena' and youth collective 'Tarunsena' where there is equal leadership of girls.
	Ms.Rajiben Shiruka Aashabhai Coordinator	Gramya Vikas Trust	shirukarajvi786@gmail.com	Gramya Vikas Trust is working with young girls on the issues of health, education and protection from abuse and child marriage. It also imparts the necessary knowledge of financial saving by running

28.				young girls saving groups to promote economic independence.
29.	Ms.Rama Vidula Program Officer	AJWS	rvedula@ajws.org	AJWS strive to end poverty and promote human rights in the developing world.
30.	Mr.Rajvi Founder	Sauhard	raval.gaurang@gmail.com	Sauhard, founded in 2011, is a non-profit organisation working on youth development to promote and establish peace, harmony and equality.
31.	Ms.Rupal Bhutak Coordinator	AWAG GHAR: Ahmedabad Women's Action Group	infi@awagindia.org	Supporting adolescent girls and women for equitable access, control, decision making and mobility in their lives. Sensitising the societal forces towards changing the mindsets and behaviour of various stakeholders of the society towards the empowerment of less privileged women.
32.	Ms.Sanya Seth Programme Analyst	UN Women	sanya.seth@unwomen.org	UN Women focuses on priority areas that are fundamental to women's equality, and that can unlock progress across the board.
33.	Ms.Sanjida Arora Research Officer	CEHAT	sanjida@cehat.org	CEHAT (Centre for Enquiry Into Health and Allied Themes) is the research centre of Anusandhan Trust. We are involved in research, training, service and advocacy on health and allied themes.
34.	Ms.Shital Waikar Youth Organiser	Mahila Sarvangeen Utkarsh Mandal (MASUM)	shitalwaikar83@gmail.com	MASUM coined the term FECH marriages to address Forced, Early, Child and Hasty marriages, all of which impinge upon people's human rights, especially reproductive and sexual rights. Creating awareness within the community and enhancing youth-led advocacy.
35.	Mr.Sidharth Ughade Manager	CRY-Child Rights and You	sidharth.ughade@crymail.org	To enable people to take responsibility for the situation of the deprived Indian child and so motivate them to seek resolution through individual and collective action, thereby enabling children to realise their full potential.
	Ms.Smita Bajpai Founder Member	CHETNA	nso@chetnaindia.org	CHETNA has 30 years of experience of working with women and girls on body, literacy, health and nutrition issues.

36.				
37.	Ms.Sukannyaa Lahon Associate Coordinator	Pravah	sukannyaa.lahon@pravah.org	Pravah's 'My Life, mere Faisle' (MLMF) aims to address the issue of early, child and forced marriage. This program aims to build the agency of young people, especially young girls, to be able to take charge of their lives and bodies and make decisions, including decisions with regards to marriage, choice of partner and sexuality.
38.	Ms.Swaranjali Agrawal Legal Research Associate	PLD	pldindia@gmail.com	Advancing social justice and women's rights through law.
39.	Ms.Titas Ghosh Project Associate	Jagori Women's Resource Centre, Delhi	helpline@jagori.org	Helping build a just society through feminist values.
40.	Ms.Urmila Salunkhe Training officer	Akshara Center	urmilas.aksharacentre@gmail.com	Akshara is working with young women from marginalised communities through its 'Empowering dreams' program by providing educational support to enhance their employability skills.
41.	Ms.Usha Choudhary Founder, Program Director	Vikalp Sansthan	vikalporg@gmail.com	Through campaigns, Vikalp forms task forces of local youth and community leaders who can address issues of child marriage, education and the rights of girl children within their communities. Vikalp endeavours to empower girls to advocate for their futures, negotiate with their families and their communities for their education, dreams and equality.
42.	Mr.Vedprakash Gautam Child Protection Specialist	UNICEF	vegautam@gmail.com	UNICEF works in over 190 countries and territories to save children's lives, to defend their rights, and to help them fulfil their potential, from early childhood through adolescence.

43.	Ms.Vimla Ramchandran Director & President ANANDI	Educational Resource Unit	vimalar.ramchandran@gmail.com	Educational Resource Unit is a consulting group in India working on education, health, rights, livelihood and sustainable development.
44.	Ms.Zehra Jabeen Women Leader	Shaheen Women's Resource and Welfare Association	swrwas@gmail.com	Shaheen is keen to enable women to gain control over their resources, livelihoods, and community-level decision-making processes.
45.	Ms.Deepa Project Coordinator	ANANDI	deepa.3295@gmail.com	<p>ANANDI which also stands for Area Networking and Development Initiatives, has been working with over 10,000 women from resource-poor communities in four districts of Gujarat since 1995. Forming women's collectives and working towards changing the nature and direction of systemic forces which marginalise women has been an integral component of ANANDI's work.</p> <p>Since its inception, ANANDI has also specifically invested in building young women's leadership. This has manifested in the Umang Fellowship and Young People's Program, which currently works with collectives of young women in marginalized communities to take a rights-based lens to their choice, voice and agency.</p>
46.	Ms.Ruksana Malik Community Organiser	ANANDI	ruksana.15708@gmail.com	
47.	Ms.Sejal Dand Director	ANANDI	sejaldand@gmail.com	
48.	Ms.Neeta Hardikar Founder Member	ANANDI	hneeta192@gmail.com	
49.	Ms.Sumitra Thacker Founder Member	ANANDI	sumithacker@yahoo.co.in	
50.	Ms.Seema Shah Programme Coordinator	ANANDI	seemushah74@gmail.com	

51.	Ms.Arundhati Sridhar Programme Officer	ANANDI	arundhati.sridhar@gmail.com	ANANDI Technical Support Unit (ATSU) focuses on contributing to feminist knowledge building through research, curriculum building, and developing participatory training modules. It holds dialogues for policy advocacy and networking from a feminist human rights perspective.
52.	Ms.Suman Bharti Research and Documentation Associate	ANANDI	sumanbhartianandi@gmail.com	
53.	Ms.Pragnya Joshi Senior Research Associate	ANANDI	pragnyaj1@gmail.com	

Annex C: Working Groups: Questions and Guidelines

Group1: Training and capacity building- Curriculum and modules

- 1) Details of curriculum vis a vis – Agency , choice , consent – training material - on line, off line (length , target group,
- 2) Learning outcomes
- 3) the facilitation skills are built
- 4) Content of the training module (information -knowledge / attitude / skill based

Group 2 : Fellowship Programs

- 1) Details of fellowships, scope, selection process, selection criteria etc.
- 2) What are expected outcomes of the fellowship?
- 3) Impact and how you measure it?

Group 3: Forms of media used for communication and dialogue

- 1) Need for generating the material

- 2) Process of making the material (engaging youth, participatory)
- 3) Language- Form
- 4) Way of dissemination
- 5) Impact and ways of capturing

Group 4: Strategies for mobilisation of youth group

- 1) Constituency - How did you decide to reach the constituency
- 2) Strategies for issues / Methodology
- 3) Challenges/Limitation of strategy

Group 5: Public Campaigns, Research advocacy

- 1) Public Campaigns around youth issues and their impacts
- 2) What are our advocacy requirements for promoting youth-centric policies?
- 3) What would be potential fields of enquiry for future researches?

2 REFERENCES

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