

# Because the Personal is Political

A Documentation of the Work of the  
Special Cell for Women and Children  
1984-1994

A Field Action Project of the  
Tata Institute of Social Sciences  
in Collaboration with the  
Bombay Police Commissionarate



The Special Cell for Women and Children would appreciate if it is acknowledged for the use of any material from this document

*Note:* The name Bombay has been retained in favour of Mumbai, its present name, due to the period of this documentation's setting.

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

When we first began the 'Special Cell for Women and Children' at the office of the Commissioner of Police, Bombay, in June 1984, we had hoped to learn to work with violated women along with the police. In the last ten years we have not only learnt what we had set out to, but have travelled many an unchartered sea of experience. In the process of working in the area of violence against women, we have acquired considerable knowledge and insight and hope to have contributed to the life of the women, in our chosen area of work.

Here, we would like to record our GRATITUDE, RESPECT, REGARD AND ADMIRATION for all the persons who have made the work in the Special Cell meaningful and most of the time fruitful.

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**Prof. (Mrs.) M.J. Apte**  
**Project Director**  
**Special Cell for Women and Children**

# FOREWORD

Since the Special Cell for Women and Children was started in 1984, when I held the office of Commissioner of Police, Bombay, I am privileged to write the foreword to this compilation.

In the thirteen years since the cell came into existence, it has come a long way and established itself as an indispensable part of the City's police administration. When Prof.(Mrs.) Meenakshi Apte, who conceived this project, proposed its introduction in Bombay, I was delighted to be working with a prestigious institution like the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. The importance of inducting committed social workers into grassroots policing can never be underestimated by police leaders.

In fact, a good policeman should himself be a social worker. A policeman is in a unique position to work for the society he polices. He has immense scope to fight injustice of all kinds-injustice to the poor and the defenseless, injustice to the deprived and backward, injustice to women and children.

By associating with young student social workers from TISS, the city's police have surely benefitted and learnt how to deal with victims with sympathy and compassion.

This compilation of some of the typical cases handled by this cell will provide students of sociology, women's rights activists, professional police officers and magistrates a good insight into the problem of violence against women. The study begins with the definitions of violence, the various theories on what prompts men to use violence on their women and the response of the social workers and police in such situations. It must be noted, however, that these experiences are limited to the complaints received by the police or directly by the cell. There are countless other cases of violence that are not reported to anyone. The victims suffer in silence

accepting their fate as God-willed. The truth is that God never wills such atrocities. They are the work of men who should be dealt with appropriately.

It is gratifying to note that in this fiftieth year of our Independence many more women have mustered the courage to fight for their rights. With the spread of education and awareness this menace will be faced more vigorously and effectively.

**Julio Ribeiro**



# INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

"Because Personal is Political", the search based on a decade of the Special Cell's work in the area of violence against women is a valuable contribution to the field of social work as also women's studies. The Special Cell for Women and Children, a field action project of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, began its work in 1984, around the time when the issue of domestic violence was on the political agenda of the women's movements in India. The Special Cell, as a joint venture between the TISS and the Bombay police, was established as an experimental project to demonstrate one type of approach in dealing with the problem of violence against women which come to the notice of the police.

Locating the Cell, within the police system with a group of professional social workers who were, themselves, not a part of the system itself, was a conscious decision to explore the strategy of working within the State system on the issues of violence against women. This step has added to the complexity of functioning as a social work agency in a secondary system, the police, where social work practice is not a primary function. The case studies presented in this book present some of the conflicts and dilemmas as well as the advantages of this factor. The book spans the breadth and intensity of the Special Cell's work with women who have suffered the consequences of violence. Most importantly, from its inception, the Special Cell has placed the principles and values of social work in a pro-women frame. This document is the translation of these principles into practice.

The introductory chapter of this book analyses the phenomenon of violence against women as both a mechanism and a manifestation of the patriarchal society, to control and subjugate women. The book defines violence against women from a women-centered perspective. The statistical analysis is an overview of the nature and extent of violence against women. This analysis of agency records gives a glimpse of the pervasive-

ness of crime against women within their families and in the society. The study findings pertain to the police perception of the Special Cell's work and illustrate its legitimacy and credibility. The interviews with the past Cell workers throw up important insights into the process of organisation building in such a setting.

Through its detailed incisive analysis, this documentation also projects areas of future work, such as focus on sexual violence, especially against children, and women's rights to matrimonial property. Another important area is the examination of the role of existing caste and community panchayats as mediating bodies, along with the break-down of these structures and the replacement of these by institutions such as the police. Such contemporary issues, as well as newer areas and constituencies, should be very relevant to organisations working in similar areas. In the future, this work will be an important resource material for gender sensitive social work teaching and training.

The documentation also demonstrates the challenges waiting for the professional academic institutions to reach out beyond their walls to identify emerging issues and to develop new models of practice or strategies to work on those problems. Universities and their departments have a responsibility to the people of this country to contribute from their expertise as also learn from the community so that the experiences can be conceptualised to go back into teaching or in identifying the new areas of research. Documentation of the experiences of the Special Cell will help many others in seeking ways to work on an issue which attacks the basic human rights of one half of this humanity.

**Dr. Armaity Desai**  
**Chairperson**  
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# PART I

# **SPECIAL CELL FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN: AN INTRODUCTION**

## **RATIONALE OF SETTING UP THE SPECIAL CELL FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN**

Family violence, although a rampant phenomenon, has always been viewed as a 'private affair' and not acknowledged as a social evil. The targets of such violence are children, the girl child, adult women, elderly, women from lower castes, tribes and minority communities, women belonging to poor families, physically or mentally disabled women, pregnant women, immigrant and refugee women. In short, women and children are made hapless victims of extensive abuse with little support forthcoming from any quarter. More often than not, the first institution from which help is sought is from the local police station. The Bombay police had set up a Social Service Branch, which attended to complaints pertaining to the family. It was felt that, besides police intervention, additional services through a full-time trained social worker would help in offering effective services to the victims of family violence. Thus, the rationale behind setting up such a cell, then, was to make available professional help to women and children who are inflicted with family violence and atrocities.

The Special Cell was established on July 2, 1984. The initiative of approaching the Commissioner of Police (C. P.) Bombay with the idea of the Special Cell was that of Prof. (Mrs) M. Apte, the then Head of the Department of Family and Child Welfare, Tata Institute of Social Sciences. The cell began its work with the appointment of two social workers, Ms. Anjali Dave and Mr. Ashutosh Dharmadikari, both with a degree of Master of Arts (Social work) from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences.

## 2 BECAUSE THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL

The objectives of placing social worker at the Special Cell *were* as follows:

1. To review the kinds of complaints received and processed at the social service cell, in 1982-1983 to obtain an idea of the nature of work involved and outline the strategy of the work to be evolved.
2. To offer immediate services in cases of violence and atrocities against women in the form of:
  - Counselling.
  - Placement in institutions or referrals to family agencies.
  - Referral to other services including medical, psychiatric, educational, vocational and other services.
  - Legal aid.
  - Police assistance in registering criminal complaints or assistance in any other related matter.
3. To be a liaison between police and organisations working for women and children.
4. To create awareness among women themselves, among professional groups and the general public of the humiliations and atrocities against women and children.
5. To document the work of the Special Cell and create indigenous training material for social workers, the police and social work students.

Initially Prof. (Mrs. ) M. J. Apte and Ms. Anjali Dave discussed with the then Commissioner of Police, Mr. J. F. Rebeiro, their ideas on the role of the Special Cell. Having heard them, he suggested that they draw up a proposal clarifying the objectives and the role of the Special Cell. Subsequent to discussions with the C. P. , a meeting was held with the concerned officials. It was decided to have the cell as a pilot project, and the necessary permissions were granted.

### **THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SPECIAL CELL**

The police commissioner's response was quick and positive. A collaboration in the form of a Special Cell to help women in distress was set up. This cell was located in the office of the Commissioner of Police at the Police headquarters in the city. Its detailed structure and functions were to be allowed to evolve, as work took shape, but some major decisions were made to define the immediate course of action. These were as follows.

1. The Commissioner of Police (C. P.) was to refer relevant applications to the Special Cell, thus giving it official sanction to look into the matter. This in turn would give the Special Cell some formal standing and help to reduce the hesitation that would come from the clients, censure of the "authority" and "rights" of the social worker.

2. The workers at the Special Cell were to sit with the Commissioner every day at the "darbar" at which the C. P. met the public. This would help the social worker understand the varied problems of people approaching the police, and also enable the C. P. to refer cases directly to the social workers.
3. The workers of the Special Cell were to be given a letter of authority to visit and seek assistance from police officers, police station or lockups and to get the necessary information on crimes against women. (Dave and Dharmadikari, 1987)

The office of the Special Cell was located in the Annexure building in the premise of the Police Commissioner's office on the ground floor, with a cabin each for the two workers.

Initially, the workers did not lay down any clear cut operational terms of functioning. They decided to look into both kinds of cases; those which formally came within the purview of police department, as well as those that did not fall within the purview of the police. One of the major concerns was to assist women who came for help to the police station. Subsequently, they realised that their complaints were of non cognisable in nature, but such cases still needed help such as legal advice and other supports which were provided to them.

### **GAINING FAMILIARITY WITH THE POLICE DEPARTMENT**

At the outset, the workers visited police stations in Bombay to familiarise themselves with the working of police stations. These visits also aided them in gaining an insight into the kinds of complaints that women came to the police stations with, and thereby be better equipped to help women in distress. Simultaneously, the police officers also got an opportunity to understand the objectives of the cell and the scope thereof. Needless to say, the exercise went a long way in establishing rapport with the police officers at the station level, elicit their support and cooperation and establish guidelines for referral of cases to the cell.

The social workers also acquainted themselves with the structure of Maharashtra Police, its Commissionerate, the zonal divisions of Bombay, the hierarchy, and the job description of each category of officials. They also spent time seeking information on various laws, which fell within the purview of their work.

### **COMMENCING WORK**

Over a period of time, the role and the function of the Special Cell vis-a-vis the police, evolved. The workers gained insights into understanding the police as an organisation, their functions, roles and methods in which they

conducted their activities. As referrals to the Special Cell increased, the case load heightened, and a third social worker was appointed in the second year of its inception.

In June 1986, the Additional Commissioner of Police (Crime), initiated the "Dowry Committee". The Special Cell has since been a member of the committee. The dowry committee has the Additional Commissioner (Crime) as the chairperson, to look into cases of dowry/bride burning and cases of mental and physical cruelty (case of 304B IPC, 498A IPC, 406 IPC). A brief note on these cases from police stations all over Bombay were prepared by the investigation officers, and circulated among the members viz. Social Service Branch, Juvenile Aid Police Unit, one member of a voluntary women's organisation and the Special Cell. Monthly meetings were held to review, monitor and follow up the cases. Dowry committees also known as the Social Security Cell or *Mahila Dakshata Samiti*, were also set up at the district level with the superintendent of police as the chairperson and the local women's organisation as members.

### **PROJECT HELP**

In **July** 1987 the Special Cell initiated Project Help. The Special Cell, social workers co-ordinated the effort to bring the police, medical social workers and voluntary social workers together to assist victims of bride burning. The experience at the Special Cell had shown that both parents and organisation's felt that the dying declaration/statements made by the women were often misleading, the truth of the situation was not often narrated by the victim in presence of the police. The social workers recorded statements of these women and acted as independent witnesses in court.

The experiment was initiated for six months, at Sion hospital, to minimise allegations and defaults as well as to be support to the burn victims and her family. In the six months of the experiment, Project Help at Sion hospital received seventy-two cases of burn victims.

Due to lack of personnel and other factors, the women's organisations decided to discontinue with the experiment. The women's organisation which participated in the experiment were, Forum Against Oppression of Women, Mahila Dakshata Samiti, Stree Mukti Sanghatana, Women's Centre and Swadhar.

### **STARTING ANOTHER SPECIAL CELL**

In April 1988, a need to expand the work of the Special Cell was felt and another unit at Dadar Police Station was set up. Initially one social worker was appointed and within a year, two social workers were appointed at Dadar Police Station. Presently, the Special Cell has been functioning for



ten years at Crawford Market, and seven years at Dadar police station. Each cell has two social workers.

The Special Cell is operationally under the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. The appointments of social workers, their salaries, leave are governed by the rules of the Institute. Prof. (Mrs.) M. Apte, the then Head of the Department of Family and Child Welfare and later Ms. Anjali Dave have been project co-ordinators.

The police department provides the administrative support, office space, telephone, postage and stationery, service of a typist cum clerk, vehicles for making visits (twice a week on Tuesday, Thursday) and other infrastructural facilities.

### **RESEARCH STUDY**

Three students placed at the Special Cell conducted a study on the 498A cases registered in Bombay Police Station. Case papers from sixty police stations all over Bombay, were prepared by the concerned investigating office and sent for scrutiny at the "monthly dowry committee meetings" which were analysed for this purpose. Cases from June, 1986 to December, 1988 numbering 331 formed the sample. The objectives of the study were to understand the nature of harassment as in cases registered under Sec 498A, to understand factors affecting such harassment, to examine the consequences of such harassment and to understand the attitudes of the police towards these women.

A request to this study, was a compilation of three case studies, of women who have registered a 498A IPC. Each case belongs to a different police station, and the women interviewed belong to the lower middle class socioeconomic background. The objectives of this study have been to follow up registered cases of 498A IPC and study their present situation, to understand the woman's perception of police attitudes as per her experience, to elicit her experience leading upto the moment of actually registering a case and its consequences concerning the husband, in-laws and natal family.

### **COMPILATION OF A DIRECTORY**

In January, 1990, the Special Cell, jointly with the Bombay Police Department, compiled and published a directory of legal, medical, psychiatric service, health homes, sponsorship agencies, deaddiction agencies etc, entitled "We Care." This directory circulated among the city police, can now be readily used by the police to make referrals to social service organisations.

## **PRODUCTION OF A DOCUMENTARY FILM**

In June 1991, the Special Cell jointly with the Audio Visual Unit of Tata Institute of Social Sciences has produced a film on demystification of police procedures for women, entitled "Sudha Police Station Gayee Thee."

The film is in Hindi and seeks to identify common crisis situations that women face, laws pertaining to the same and procedures that can help them. It also gives an insight into the structure of police machinery and its specific functions addressing women's needs in particular. The film is about Sudha, a woman facing domestic violence who approaches the police for help. At the police station, a social worker familiarises her with the basic procedures and police personnel involved in registering cognisable and noncognisable complaints. In the process she begins to appreciate the possibilities and limitations of police interventions.

The film aims at addressing issues facing common women. It can be also be used by students of social work, voluntary agencies and women's organisations.

## **THE SPECIAL CELL WORK THUS INVOLVES**

1. Co-ordination with the police department in cases of crimes against women.
2. Working with individuals, families and groups and communities.
3. Co-ordination with women's organisations, collateral agencies and other professionals.
4. Conducting training programmes.
5. Undertaking research and documentation.

Details of these activities are given in the ensuing chapters.

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# **OBJECTIVES, METHODOLOGY AND TOOLS**

## **RATIONALE FOR THE DOCUMENTATION**

Over a period of ten years of the Cell's existence, it has been increasingly felt that the learnings from the experiences of the cell could have a much wider use to practitioners and academicians alike. Hence, the need to document the work undertaken, focussing on the different aspects of the issue of family violence against women. Another reason for documenting the efforts is to attempt at generalised indigenous study material and the perceived utility of such an effort to all concerned like police officers, social workers, students and women.

Implicit in this effort is an objective to chalk future directions through a rigorous documentation review of the work. Therefore, an analysis of agency records is sought to determine the areas of research, modification, expansion and evolve an understanding of the phenomenon of violence against women.

## **OBJECTIVES**

1. To review the types of cases that have been registered at the Special cell, over a period of six years.
2. To understand the phenomenon of violence against women.
3. To study the police officials' perspectives of the cell's interventions in cases of women in distress.
4. To understand the problems and difficulties faced by the workers in the cell.
5. To generate learning material for social work students.
6. To present details of the kinds of interventions undertaken by the cell to cater to the varied types of cases.

## METHODOLOGY

The study has been conducted in three phases:

1. The first phase of the study is the analysis of case records. Cases registered at the Special Cell for women at the Commissioner of Police head quarters, Crawford Market, as well as Special Cell for women and children at Dadar Police Station, from their inception till June 1990 have been considered for this analysis. The cases indicate the trends in violence within the family. It also gives basic information about the age, education, socioeconomic strata and the types of atrocities committed against women.
2. The second part consists of studying the effectivity of the programme as perceived by the Special Cell social workers, police officers and other social workers, working with women in distress.
3. A typology of cases has been developed after analysing the cases selected. These focus on the intervention made by the social workers in different types of cases such as wife battering, attempted suicide and harassment for property. These case studies form the third phase of the documentation and the sample used is a purposive sample.

## TOOLS

The tools used are different for each part, of the documentation process.

1. In the first part, the content analysis of the agency records(from the intake register and client application), has been done with the aid of a coding schedule and the data has been computerised.
2. For the second part, partially structured interview schedules have been used to interview the Special Cell social workers, personnel of social work organisations and police officers.
3. For the third part, the content analysis of agency records have been coupled with interviews of the clients and the Special Cell social workers. Partially structured interview schedules have been used for this.

## KEY DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of this document, the key definitions have been derived from the field experience at the Special Cell.

### *Domestic Violence*

This term is used to indicate any act of physical or mental violence to women/children by their husband or in-laws as reported by the women. Physical violence is defined as any act intended to harm, injure or inflict pain on the women. Forms vary from slapping, kicking, pushing to murder. Cases of sexual violence committed by the husband is also termed as

physical violence. Sexual violence is any act of non-consensual sexual activity. It may range from unwanted sexual attention to rape. Mental violence is any behaviour or the lack of it, by the husband and in-laws intended to undermine women's confidence, or lead to a lowered or a negative self esteem. Such behaviour may lead to stress, jeopardise women's health and lead to a state of disequilibrium. Acts such as taunts, use of abusive language, demeaning women, their family and social relatives, controlling behaviour, neglect, denial to have a sexual relationship, are some examples of mental violence. Cases of harassment for dowry are also included in the category of domestic violence.

#### *Desertion*

When a husband abandons his wife, by leaving his home himself or by forcing his wife to leave the matrimonial home, it is termed as desertion. The reverse situation i. e. a wife abandoning the husband, is also included under the term desertion .

#### *Refusal to Give Maintenance*

A woman is considered socially and legally to be dependent on the man. Hence, it becomes his duty to provide for his wife and children physically and also in economic terms. Consequently, the term refusal to give maintenance is, when the husband deserts his wife and thereby does not maintain his wife and children or when within marriage, residing in the same house, the husband is either incapable of or refuses to provide for his wife and children.

#### *Eve-teasing, Molestation and Rape*

Eve-teasing, molestation and rape these concepts are used in this study as per their legal definition. Eve-teasing refers to a situation wherein a man causes annoyance to a woman by singing or uttering any obscene song or word or by indulging in obscene gesture in or near any public place. When eve-teasing is accompanied by assault i. e. intentional use of criminal force on any woman, it is termed as molestation.

Rape is a forced sexual intercourse by a man with a woman without her consent, or with her consent when the consent has been obtained by threatening her and/or when she was unable to understand the consequences of the consent due to unsoundness of mind, intoxication or because of any stupefying unwholesome substance administered to her by the offender.

#### *Infidelity and Bigamy*

Infidelity, refers to having voluntary sexual relations with a person other than the spouse. When a person contracts another marriage when the first

marriage is still valid, and the second marriage is void according to the personal law of that person, the situation is referred to as bigamy.

#### *Fraudulent Marriage*

1. A marriage has to be solemnised in accordance with the personal law of the parties or the statutory law. When a person, with dishonest intentions, goes through the ceremony of being married and has the knowledge that he is not lawfully married by the ceremony, it is fraudulent marriage.
2. Where the financial condition, employment status, education, salary details, caste, religion and other relevant information such as the physical/mental health of the person, siblings, the marital status, staying arrangement of siblings, the accommodation of the couple; are either concealed or wrongly revealed prior to marriage, by either partner, it is termed as 'deceit in marriage'.

#### *Unwed Motherhood*

When a woman conceives outside marriage either through voluntary sexual relations, or through forced sexual intercourse, that is rape, it is termed as unwed motherhood.

#### *Breach of Trust*

1. When a man or a woman, after promising to get married to a person, breaks the promise without satisfactory reasons is termed as 'breach of trust' as in this document.
2. Also termed as breach of trust is any act which involves deceitful use of a person's money, belonging or resources, by another person who has been entrusted with it. It is manifest in personal and professional relationships. Its forms include withholding, misappropriation, embezzling etc.

#### *Parental Abuse*

This refers to the physical and/or mental harassment of a parent, by other family members.

#### *Child Abuse*

The committee constituted by the National Seminar on Child Abuse has defined child abuse as the intentional, non-accidental injury or maltreatment of children by parents, caretakers, employers or others including those individuals representing governmental/non-governmental bodies which may lead to temporary or permanent impairment of their physical, mental and psychosocial development, disability or death (Rane 1991).

# VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: AN INTRODUCTION

This chapter attempts to understand violence against women and the various explanatory approaches to it. It reflects the conceptual understanding or the ideology of the Special Cell.

Broadly defined, an individual or a group is subject to violence when it faces the threat of coercion or actual coercion or is disciplined to act in a manner required or wished by another individual or group which is dominant. Seen in this light violence against women could be defined as, "female gender (gender being the social construction of sex based on expected behaviour and specific roles assigned) facing the threats of coercion, actually experiencing coercion or being subtly disciplined in a manner required by the male gender or to comply to the wishes of the male gender which has a legacy of being and continues to be, dominant (Shaikh, 1993).

The draft of the United Nations Declaration on the elimination of violence against women defines violence against women as :

. . . any act of gender based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty whether occurring in public or private life.

The key to these definitions is the concept of domination or power and control. How this sense of control is readily translated into violence is at the centre of our considerations.

## PREVALENCE OF VIOLENCE

Despite research on violence against women there are only estimates of its prevalence. Besides other factors, the typical mainstream definition of violence emphasises on the tangible to the exclusion of the intangible, on the visible and quantifiable as against the diffused. A major part of violence experienced by women, thus goes unrecognised. Women, who are socialised

## TYPES AND FORMS OF VIOLENCE

Violence against women is manifested in various forms; a few have been mentioned here but they are not exhaustive.

### *Physical Violence*

It is defined as any physical act intended to harm, injure or inflict pain on the victim which endanger her health, limb or life. It could vary from pushing or slapping to murder. We are purposely avoiding the term 'continuum' to say that all acts of violence are serious.

### *Sexual Violence*

All acts of non consensual sexual activity are defined as sexual violence. Any attempt to reduce women as an object to gratify desire and lust is included. It includes language that demeans women's sex and sexuality and uses it to abuse human beings. It also includes acts that invade women's privacy and make their relationship with their bodies difficult or demeaning. It could include unwanted sexual attentions to rape.

### *Mental Violence*

Mental violence is any act which, when committed or omitted, results in undermining women's confidence, causes lowering or formation of a negative self image, stress, and leads to a state of disequilibrium or jeopardises health. Acts such as taunts; use of abusive language; wilful and unjustifiable interference in the life of the other spouse; cessation of sexual relationship; demeaning a woman, her family and social relations; and neglect and controlling behaviour are a few examples of mental violence.

### *Spiritual Violence*

It is the erosion of one's cultural or religious belief systems through various mechanisms. It includes exclusion of women from key positions in religious institutions and limiting a woman's means to practice her spirituality.

Ritual abuse is systematic abuse of women using symbols, ceremonies or any other activities that have religious, magical or supernatural connotations: for instance Sati, Bhutali, and so on.

### *Financial or Economic Violence*

Economic violence includes all acts of withholding, misappropriation and deceitful use of a woman's money, resources or belongings. It also includes economic deprivation which threaten or disrupt a woman's sense of financial security.



*Reproductive Abuse*

Reproductive abuse is reducing a woman's control over reproduction or procreation. It could also be with the use of reproductive technology.

*Individual Violence*

Where the perpetrator of the violence is an individual and an individual is being violated.

*Group Violence*

The perpetrators of violence are more than one person. Violence may be inflicted upon an individual or a group.

*Instrumental Violence*

In this case, the assailant and the victim are not directly related there is hurt and damage caused as a means to maintaining one's self interest for example in the case of the Army and professional murderers.

Often, a woman faces severe psychological or mental violence before being physically violated. Once the physical violence has started, it is unleashed with increased intensity and severity with a reduced time interval between the episodes of violence. Invariably, psychological violence is coupled with other forms of violence or a palpable fear of physical violence.

## APPROACHES TO VIOLENCE

Ahuja (1987) classifies theories explaining violence into three categories. These are:

1. Theories giving a psychiatric or psychopathological analysis of violence, in which the assailant's personality characteristics are critical in understanding violence.
2. Theories which analyse violence as a socio-psychological phenomenon. Here, the assailant in interaction with the external stress creating environmental factors is the focus.
3. Theories that analyse violence as a sociological or sociocultural phenomenon. Violence is seen here as a product of socially structured inequality and cultural norms regarding anti-social behaviour and interpersonal relations. Besides these, sociopolitical theories and anthropological theories have also been proposed. An attempt to describe these theories is made in this chapter.

*The Psychopathological Theory*

1. The theory explains violence against women as arising out of the assailant's psychological problems i. e., the assailant is a mentally ill/

abnormal person and therefore is violent. Violent men are seen as weak, insecure, inadequate or dependent, infantile, having poor impulse control, less developed egos and a deprived childhood.

2. The second explanation for violence being directed at women is seen as arising out of the victims'/women's psychological problems. This explanation holds that women are responsible for the violence meted out to them. They provoke or invoke violence and probably are masochist.

The proponents of this theory lose sight of the power differentials which enable a man to invoke violence as and when he sees fit. Violent men range from a politician, an IAS officer, a lawyer, a clerk to a labourer, could we say that since violence against women is widespread and all pervasive, all or majority of men in our country and across the globe are maniacs, sadist perverts or mentally abnormal? The Nobel prize winner and former Prime Minister of Japan was accused of being a wife beater by his wife in public. Can we also call him mentally abnormal? If women who are violated behave strangely it is much more a consequence of violence rather than a cause.

#### *Frustration Aggression Theory*

Dollard (1939) coined this theory based on Freudian Theory. The activities of an individual are goal directed. When the individual experiences a block or obstacle in reaching the goals frustration is the result. This in turn leads to aggression towards the source of frustration. The theory also opines that aggression is an innate drive. The theory recognises that frustrations could be cumulative' and could remain active for a long period. Today the theory also takes into account the fact that external control or norms could inhibit actual display of aggression and that frustrations that are perceived as arbitrary or unreasonable are most likely to trigger aggression.

The theory has been criticised for its over emphasis on aggression as the only response to frustration which could invoke a wide variety of responses. Other responses to frustration are dependency, achievement, withdrawal and psychosomatic illness. Under enormous stress women do not beat men in large numbers. Under stress many men do not turn violent. There is no innate relation between frustration & aggression. The theory does not examine why men in general act violently towards women (who are specifically targeted) within the specific context of their families. Frustration does not cause violence but men rationally and adaptively choose to deal with frustration and stress in specific violent ways. The belief in one's right to use violence and dominate women is what causes violence against women. Aggression is very rarely directed at the source of frustration, for example in non fulfillment of dowry demands the source of

frustration are the parents but violence is directed against the wife the woman as parents are perceived as 'potentially dangerous'. In case of a loss of job the broader economic & political forces are the source of frustration but the violence is directed at the wives/women.

### *Perversion Theory*

The psychoanalysts regard violence as resulting from perversion i. e. intra psychic inadequacies. An assailant is a pervert or an adult retaining infantile instincts and behaviour. According to this view, perversion develops from instincts. Thus violence is a "product of strong inborn drives or pathological experiences in infancy or early childhood"(Ahuja, 1987:170).

In the pervert, the traits of infancy do not undergo the normal process of integration into adulthood. Their aims, objectives and appropriate feelings towards objects and relations do not change and are a direct carry over from infancy. For instance, the inter relation between sexes as aggressive and sadistic may be learnt in infancy or early childhood. Pleasure might have been seen as a negative process which remains unchanged. "Klein suggests that a good object is idealized by the pervert while he uses aggression towards a bad object" (Ahuja, 1987:170). Two explanations are given for this phenomenon. One suggests that ego in perverts is 'split'. The other suggests that the ego mechanisms are such that the object is split.

Feinchel as cited in Ahuja (1987 :170), consolidated the approach that "aggression arises from castration fears which in turn are derived from earlier oral sadism". The theory was supported by clinical evidence of higher rates of perversion amongst males than females.

This theory has been criticised on grounds of ignoring environmental factors in the production of violence. As Ahuja (1987 : 170) puts it, "wife beating, rape, abduction.... cannot be the result of a mere primary instinctual component of a personality or a means of solving psychic conflict. Though aggression is a basic element in personality structure, its origin and direction in social relations, specially between the sexes, cannot be explained only as a result of pathology of personality". Also, it is necessary to keep in mind that primary experiences do not always shape all other experiences. Unlearning and relearning are also real phenomena which cannot be ignored.

### *Self Attitude Theory*

According to this theory, in a society, culture or a group that values violence, the persons of low self esteem may seek to enhance their image in themselves or others by being violent. Society makes it difficult for some people to achieve an adequate level of self esteem and therefore they resort to violence as it is valued in that particular group or society or culture.

The theory does not adequately explain violence against women and empirical data negates the contention that most wife beaters hold a low self esteem.

### *Motive Attribution Theory*

According to this theory an actor i. e. an assailant attributes malevolent intent to the actions of other individuals i. e. the victim. The actor resents these perceived actions of the victim and unleashes aggression at the victim.

It is our firm belief and experience that violence against women is not stimulated, aided or abetted by the victim but it is the result of the actor's attitude, the social structure and the widespread belief in men's use of violence coupled with the power available to them to use violence.

### *Structural Theory*

Every society is structured in a particular way. Various groups are formed and these groups can avail of resources for themselves in differing capacities. These groups vary in their level of stress, frustration and deprivation, if a group does not have resources at its disposal to prevent stress and frustration, fulfill its needs, achieve its ambitions and aspirations, then the propensity for violence is high in that group. Therefore more a person, and by extension in an individual, is integrated into the system the less violent he will be. .

This theory ignores the individual's responsibility in the violent act. It doesn't take into account the beliefs, attitudes and values of the actor. Violence can not be described in terms of conflict and domination alone. It also omits the fact that an individual makes a rational choice for using violence.

### *System Theory*

This theory developed by Straus (1973) explains intra-family violence. He views the family as a social system which is goal-directed, dynamic and adaptive. Violence is the output of this system. System operation can maintain, escalate or reduce levels of violence. The "positive feedback" gives rise to violence and 'negative feedback' reduces or maintains the level of violence. The input being stress, strain, frustration, aggression deviation from the norm, conflict, competition, upheaval, suppression and destruction, which are all manifestation of tension. A person constantly meets with situations which he cannot cope with or experiences blocks in his movement which results in tension or stress and disturbed by it he attempts to reduce tension. In this process he has direct impulses to take recourse to violent action and thus violence is produced.

This theory over emphasises the social forces to the exclusion of individual responsibility to violence

### *Anomie Theory*

Merton (1938) developed this theory. Anomie has been described a state of normlessness where deviation from the norms is most frequent. There are needs, goals and aspirations which are institutionalised by the society as the social need/goal/aspiration. At the same time, there is restricted access to the means to achieve this goal. Then, individuals try any means to attain these institutional goals. An innovator is the person who uses illegitimate but effective means to attain goals. Some social structures pressurise certain persons to be nonconformist rather than be conformist. Thus, violence is used as an adaptation to attain these overemphasised institutional goals.

This theory cannot adequately explain violence against women, sexual deviance and violent aggressive behaviour. According to Ahuja (1987) the theory only helps us question the unquestioning acceptance of and validity of assuming the dominant value system.

### *Theory of Sub Cultures of Violence*

According to this theory, some groups face such pressures in life that violence becomes a relatively common or acceptable outcome of interpersonal or social interaction. While the values and norms of such groups provide meaning and direction to violent acts they also specify situations which should be responded to violently. Thus "violence becomes a response consistent with norms supporting its use" (Ahuja, 1987:174)

Such groups are found to be centralised in urban slums. Poverty, an unstable community organisation and disorganised family life lead to creation of certain norms, values and focal concerns Miller identifies two important concerns of such groups one is 'trouble' i. e. suspecting and anticipating difficulty from others such as police, fellow citizens and school. The other concern is excitement which involves pursuing act with the chief aim of pleasure (Ahuja, 1987)

The theory explains the criminal violence of lower class adolescent boys in gangs or lower class male delinquency. However it does not adequately explain violence against women.

Another concept developed is that of the "culture of poverty" by Lewis (1959; 1961; 1966), which explains violence as arising out of life conditions and learned ideas. This theory has been criticised for its classist bias. Generally the poor are found to be more law abiding than the affluent.

*Resource Theory*

Goode (1971) developed an approach explicitly explaining family violence. It proposes that violence is resorted to as a last means when a person with high ascribed status (a husband in this case) fails to obtain a corresponding high achieved status to legitimise his superiority. If a person can command and avail for himself greater resources they wield more force and since they have more force or power they don't actually (have to) deploy violence. Those with fewest resources tend to employ force and violence the most. Thus violence becomes a resource to further the self interest of an individual or a collective.

The theory cannot sufficiently explain all forms of violence and crimes committed against women.

*Social Learning Theory*

Bandura (1973) proposed this theory According to the theory aggression and violence are learnt either by direct experience or through observation of others or visual media. An individual identifies with a model, picks up the behaviour patterns and imitates. The behaviour of aggressive models has been found to be readily imitated and tucked in the repertoire of social responses. Actual or anticipated reward increase the likelihood of repeating the behaviour and the attitude whereas punishment, actual or anticipated, reduces the likelihood of the behaviour being repeated.

The theory thus takes into account the past experience, reinforcement through reward and punishment and cognitive patterns. Thus person and situation both are taken in interaction with each other.

Individuals who have experienced or been exposed to violence often understand that violence cannot and should not be used towards the weak. This is a very simplistic and unicausal view of violence. Many children who saw their father's beat their mothers do not beat their wives.

*Symbolic Interaction Theory*

People interact with each other using symbols which have meaning. The meaning of these symbols is shared or understood by the people. Through such interactions a person's self image is formed. The person views self as others perceive. The authors thus describe the process by which "violent acts acquire individually and socially shared meanings".

Human beings do not depend on environment to provide stimulus for them to take action or respond to it. Individuals can initiate action on their own. An individual's activities are goal directed and it can be deliberative as well as creative i. e. Individual thinks about what he wants to do what are the various alternatives available, chooses from them and revise his plan

of action according to the changes in the situation. Violence is a preplanned means to an end. Men decide to act violent so as to maximise their effectiveness.

The idea of rationality ignores the social situation that restricts an individual's options and it does not provide information about motivation for men to inflict violence on women consistently. The theory however rejects the idea of provocation by the victim for violent acts as it sees violence as a preplanned means to an end.

### *Exchange Theory*

According to this theory personal interaction is "guided by the pursuit of rewards and the avoidance of punishment and costs" (Ahuja, 1987; 179). There is a reciprocity or an exchange of rewards which are most often intangible such as esteem, liking, assistance and approval. The process is such that an individual offers rewards and obliges the other to return the reward in another form. Till the time reciprocity or exchange of rewards continue the interaction continues and when the former ends, the latter also is broken off. The reciprocity is considered as the principle of distributive justice and when this principle is violated an individual is resultantly angered, frustrated, aggressive, hostile, and violent. The theory thus expects that people will be violent in familial relation if the costs are less and rewards are more.

The familial interactions are not seen as being practised on this basis of exchange. For instance, parents do not usually discontinue caring for a child if their rewards are not returned. A wife is unable to stop interacting with her husband if he does not return love, affection and is being violent. It is important to note that there are a multitude of factors which make it difficult for people to stop performing their prescribed social roles.

Ahuja (1987) finds that some cost is involved in the family for being violent. It could be in terms of resultant victim aggression, imprisonment, loss of status, loss of love, care and affection. The theory doesn't fully explain the phenomenon of violence against women. Again it leaves the important question unanswered that is, why are men in general violent towards women. The proponents of theory ignore the "power differential available to a man to invoke violence as he sees fit" (Schechter, 1982: 212). For these theorists, husband and wife are equals with problems and there are no power dynamics involved. This however is far from reality.

### *Social Bond Approach*

Ahuja (1987:182) has developed this approach to describe all types of violence against women. The approach is based on the analysis of:

- a) "The social system

- b) The personality structure
- c) Cultural patterns"

In the social system, 'Status frustration, life stresses and career crisis' are included. The personality structure includes the personal characteristics of the violent man and the inter personal characteristics: 'adjustment' (in status), attachment (to groups) and commitment (to values and roles). Cultural patterns encompass both traditional and modern values and norms which operate as a means of social control in a group, community or society.

The theory looks at the innate and the acquired behaviour of an individual. The author proposes that the violent man often feels disadvantaged with women, is demanding, jealous or has doubts about his sexual proficiency. At an interpersonal level he is not able to get praise and appreciation, from others and is at the receiving end of verbal threats, words of dislike. He traces the origin of these anxieties in;"(1) inappropriate upbringing(2) hindrances to childhood social development (3) unfortunate incidents in their life that serve to aggravate rather than ameliorate the tendency to irrational and unrealistic attitudes towards women"(Ahuja, 1987:181)

Attachment has been defined by Ahuja as a bond of 'affection between an individual and other person' (Ahuja, 1987:182). Depending on the care and love that exists between the two people, opinions, feelings and expectation of the other person would be valued. If the individual values the other's opinion and feelings and is more attached he is less likely to be violent. Commitment to a particular goal or cause restricts an individuals freedom of choice and the number of alternatives available to the individual. Commitment becomes a bond between the individual and social norms. Consequently, if the individual is more committed, he is less likely to be violent. Adjustment is defined as 'smooth switch over from one status to other' (Ahuja, 1987:183). If the adjustment is high an individual is less likely to resort to violence.

Maladjustment, unattachment and non commitment lead to relative deprivation which is the perceived gap between opportunities and capabilities. The manner in which a man perceives deprivation will affect the perception of the targets at which frustration will be directed and the form of violence. All this will rest largely on the value orientation of the man.

The theory does not explain violence by a group against a group or an individual. It ignores the historical legacy of men being dominant and women's suppression. When violence is a universal phenomenon which cuts across age, caste class and national boundaries can we blame it on individual sickness ?



*Cycle Theory of Violence*

This theory, proposed by Walker, tries to explain wife beating or women battering. Research has found that all victims of violence experience a definite cycle abuse, in other words that of battering is not constant nor a random phenomenon but a cyclical one. It has three distinct phases :

1. "Tension building phase
2. Explosion or acute battering incident
3. Calm loving respite" (Walker, 1979: 55).

These three phases vary in time and intensity for the same couple and between different couples.

*Tension Building Phase*

In this phase a woman attempts to cope with minor battering incidents that occur. She accepts the legitimacy of the man's abuse directed at her to prevent the assailant's anger from escalating. "She denies to herself that she is angry at being unjustly hurt" (Walker, 1979:56). She identifies with the assailant's faulty reasoning. The woman makes herself believe that she has some controls over the external situation that will upset the balance and result in acute battering. As the tension builds, whatever limited control she had is gradually lost and each time a minor incident takes place there is a residual tension building effect. Many battered women recognise this and go to a great length to control as many external factors as possible, for instance being more careful in cooking and cleaning, avoiding the batterer. They may even manipulate the behaviour of other family members towards the batterer, make excuses for him, cover up for him and in the process often alienate themselves from people who could help. Many couples are adept at keeping this phase at a constant level for a long period of time.

The woman recognises the batterer's capability of inflicting further harm or brutality as he threatens her during verbal harassment. Towards the end of this phase, coping techniques fail to work. Each time the woman grows more frantic, minor battering incidents are more frequent and anger lasts for longer period of time. The woman is less able to defend herself and regain her equilibrium. She withdraws and when every move she makes is subject to misinterpretation, tension becomes unbearable.

*Explosion/Acute Battering Incident*

This phase is characterised by uncontrollable discharge of tension. The battering precipitated by an external factor/event is both uncontrollable and majorly destructive. The batterer accepts that his anger is out of control; is unable to justify his own behaviour to himself and keeps it as private

affair. The woman occasionally provokes the explosion as she can no longer bear the stress and anxiety. If she provokes the incident, then she has control over when and where the incident occurs. Anticipating the severe battering creates severe stress. During such a violent explosion the woman tries to stay calm and does not resist. She feels and believes that whatever she does will not prevent acute battering. Feelings of a psychological trap are greater in the battered woman, often the woman dissociates herself from the attack. The acute attack is followed by initial shock, denial and disbelief. Both assailant and the battered woman justify the seriousness of such attack. The woman does not seek help in this period unless for medical attention. There is a general emotional collapse for the next couple of hours.

### *Calm and Loving Respite*

This phase is welcomed by both the parties. The batterer repents his act and tries to make up by showing affection towards her, asking for forgiveness, promises of no repetition of the act, of controlling his behaviour or my probably give up a few habits such as drinking. The batterer's reasonableness supports her belief that she will no longer have to suffer what was earlier unbelievable. She is made to realise how fragile and insecure her batterer is and she senses the assailant's loneliness and isolation from the rest of the society. This period is also a little long but it eventually paves way for the tension building stage.

### *Theory of Learned Helplessness or Battered Women as Survivors*

The theory of learned helplessness is coined by Sleigman (1967). Walker (1979) has adapted it to the women victims of violence. It proposes that a battered woman becomes passive in the face of intermittent abuse. The battered woman becomes immobilised amidst the uncertainty of when abuse will occur and feels that she has no control over her experience. The theory proposes that severe abuse fosters learned helplessness. Exposure to violence as a child and neglect of help sources intensify helplessness. As a consequence, a woman is severely victimised. The woman experiences low self esteem, self blame, guilt and depression. The only way for her to feel in control is to change herself in hope of improvement but when it doesn't work she becomes psychologically paralysed and if she seeks help it is very tentative and she may choose to reconcile. A woman is conditioned to tolerate abuse also the community does not respond to abuse and she is held responsible for violence. Such processes keep her firmly embeded in the family.

Though originally the concept of learned helplessness was not to implicate masochism, it has been explicitly extended to mean so. Therefore

battered women as survivor theory was developed. It proposes that severe abuse prompts innovative coping strategies from battered women who seek help to reduce violence. The woman is seen as a survivor who is aware of her strength in enduring abuse, she desires to live and attempt to improve the situation. The woman as a survivor may experience anxiety or uncertainty over the prospect of leaving the batterer as there are lack of options, a lack of know how and financial problems. Therefore instead of leaving she tries to change the batterer. With increased violence help seeking increases. The help given may not be adequate so the woman reconciles. The community services are limited in their resources and probably have a piece meal approach. These community resources need to be co-ordinated and the woman's access to these ensured for them to become mobilised. "The shift in perception begins to occur after any one of a variety of catalysts. A change in the level of violence, a change in resources, a change in the relationships, severe despair, a change in the visibility of violence and external interventions that redefine the relationships. Any of these prompt a rejection of the previous rationalizations of denials of abuse" (Gondolf, 1988:16-17).

### **PATRIARCHY**

Sociopolitical critique interpret wife abuse as a manifestation of patriarchy which structurally excludes women from politics, business, legal and religious leaderships. "An ideology is a doctrine or a way of thinking that justifies or rationalises certain beliefs, behaviour patterns and practices existing in a given culture or society. In due time these rationalised and justified responses are crystallised and codified so as to become enshrined in religious, philosophical, political, social and economic superstructures of the society. A codified ideology is potent enough to permeate all levels of social and interpersonal relationships.

Patriarchy as an ideology is seen to control women's fertility, sexuality, labour and mobility at the material and ideological levels. It accords men a superior status over women and enable men to arrogate for themselves all avenues of power... The patriarchal ideology thus structures society on the axis of gender and further divides it on the basis of class, caste, religion, ethnicity, age, and so on. The power is located with the persons ranking high on the axis. The patriarchal ideology presents its own notion of female gender approving and upholding certain virtues, values and attributes over others and permits use of violence on those women deemed to be deviants or who do not fit into the socially accepted mould of a woman.

Male violence against women thus serves the function of maintaining existing status quo in the social order. It at once controls the woman and perpetuates subordination of all women. Violence against women is now

perceived as a manifestation of the unequal relationship between women and men in a society characterised by inequality. This is further maintained and strengthened overtime by the socialisation process that embeds women strongly within the familial structure such that women have little or no independent status and transgression outside the family and male authority expose them to swift retribution and confirm their vulnerability.

The patriarchal ideological system divides social life into public and private arenas. Family and marriage are put into the private arena, that is personal with a high emotional value attached to it for an individual and specially so far the woman. It has also ascribed a sacrosanct status to these institutions and put them above public scrutiny. This was achieved through the use of religion, legal and social norms which bind wives to their husbands. Thus the family is surrounded with constraints so that decision to establish, terminate or alter family units are very difficult to make and weighted with long lasting & far reaching consequences. Love is the justification or socially sanctioned explanation for the accommodations that members make to one another and even for the exercise of authority within the family. A power equation is thus created within marital relations in which the man is the more powerful and this subjugation of women at the level of family necessitates that this subjugation be complemented, reinforced and strengthened by forces operating outside the family system. It thus perpetuates control and oppression at the broader structural level" (Perewé, 1993).

Women are thus forced into subordinate roles through two processes:

- Discrimination which blocks them from obtaining influential positions in the work force.
- An ideology of inferiority that justifies their lack of opportunity with notions of their innate inferiority.

Women consequently adopt a false consciousness in which they believe that it is right for them to be subordinate. Patriarchy thus has two elements: structure and ideology. The structural aspect of the patriarchy is manifested in the hierarchical organisation of the social institutions and social relations. Thus, selected individuals or groups hold power and privilege positions. The structure is thus made acceptable to all/most by the ideology and it is maintained by denying women or subordinate legitimate means to change or manage the institutions that define and maintain their subordination. Socialisation is used to regulate the complaints of most subordinates (women). Any challenge to patriarchy meets with external restraints in the guise of social pressure to conform (Dobash and Dobash 1979).

The ideology is clearly manifested in the responses of the men or 'the abuser'. Two visible trends are: excuses i. e denial of responsibility for violence or sharing the responsibility for violence; with substance abuse or

the victim for provoking violence. Justifications are denial of wrongness. The abuser denies or minimises the injury thus trying to neutralise his unacceptable behaviour. The second category of justification is where men claim that women are exaggerating the severity of the violence. Through these responses men deny the significance of their violent acts in spite of women's evidence to the contrary. These responses are in a language that is socially sanctioned and culturally approved. It allows the men to go scot free by accepting their reasons and violent behaviour.

Thus we see the manifestations of this ideology as violence in the victims, that is women. One of the forms taken is 'patriarchally propelled self victimization' and another is 'victim propelled victimization'. 'Mother-in-law/daughter-in-law violence is an example of the latter. Purewal (1993:135) states, the 'deliberate blanking out of women as aggressors from our discussions, has continued to create a distortion which may well decide why our efforts to grapple with violence per se have been thwarted'. She further states, "It is all the more absurd because the reality of most women especially Indian is more firmly rooted in a female rather than a male atmosphere. Many of us grew up in all girls schools and protective conclaves which were women dominated. The standards, interplay and nuances were in fact absorbed from an all female world first. These standards were internalised more deeply than the real world of male aggression. . . . Within the family male dominance and abuse was often routed through or endorsed by female complicity"(pp. 136 )The line between the oppressor and his network is very thin (pp. 137).

## CONCLUSION

While working at the Special Cell with the women victims of violence we have found 'Patriarchy', 'Battered Women as Survivors', and 'Cycle Theory of Violence' as important and most satisfactorily explaining violence against women. Most of the theories that examine, "Why are Men Violent" and consider it synonymous with asking why do Men beat Women"?are found dissatisfactory. As Schechter (1982:210) put it, "Many assert that they are analysing what causes violence, yet unwittingly they focus on why a particular man beats his wife and what makes a particular woman a victim. Instead of developing a social theory, they analyse individuals and call the sum of their insights about these cases social caution... but it is not the same as designing a theory of why men as a group direct their violence at women.

The debate on the causes of violence against women needs to go on as theoretical explanations are not mere intellectual exercise but suggest the direction in which a movement should proceed to stop it.

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# LITERATURE REVIEW

## INTRODUCTION

The principle of equality of the sexes has received total acceptance in the Indian constitution (Article 15 (1)). At the same time women are recognised by the Indian Constitution as a 'weaker section' and special measures to protect their interests have been provided (Article 15 (3)). Accordingly, the Government of India has enacted various laws such as, the Equal Remuneration Act (1976), Dowry Prohibition Act (1961) and The Hindu Succession Act (1960). Efforts to enhance the status of women had in actuality, started long before independence, when Raja Ram Mohan Roy launched the movement for abolition of sati (more than a century ago). Other reformers such as Keshav Chandra Sen, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Mahatma Phule, and Ranade had also agitate against social practices victimising women such as child marriage, the practice of disfiguring a widow etc. The ban on sati and restrain on child marriage are the results of these agitations.

Despite the efforts of these reformers and the legal safeguards available to women today, women in Indian society continue to be oppressed, and vulnerable to various forms of violence at home as well as outside. Earlier reforms do not seem to completely have eradicated evils such as 'sati' and social menaces such as dowry and female infanticide, which continue to be practiced. Even though no precise statistics on violence against women is available, crimes against women show an upward trend (Singh, 1981). Reported cases of dowry deaths have more than doubled in the last few years, (Desai and Krishnaraj, 1987; Kulkarni, 1988; Lata, 1990; Sakhare, 1988; Suswala, 1988; Dandawate, 1988, cf: Sriram, 1991). Incidence of rape in India has gone up from 2,919 in 1973 to 6,019 in 1986 (National Crime Bureau, cf: Singh, 1991).

The reality of the deplorable situation of Indian women in the post-independence period was brought into focus after 1974. The report prepared by the parliamentary committee on status of women, presented a dismal picture. The International women's year 1975 stimulated activities such as seminars and conferences on women's issues, and led to formation of women's autonomous groups. These women's groups gave voice to the atrocities on women.

The last two decades have witnessed efforts made by different groups, at different levels, to tackle the problem of violence against women. These **include:**

1. Efforts to raise awareness among the masses regarding the rights of women, and atrocities on women, initiated by the women's groups. These efforts have been received support from the media and patronage by the government.
2. Agitations to bring about changes in the law, which were found to be inadequate to protect the rights of women and agitations to reform the law-enforcement machinery.
3. Attempts by the social scientists to study the phenomenon of violence against women. (These will be described in detail later on in this chapter).
4. Formations of centres to help women in distress started by the Government, voluntary organisations and the women's groups. The Special Cell for women is one such centre.

Given below is a brief review of literature pertaining to the topic under study. Here, we feel it may be appropriate to mention that the literature review comprises of an overview of the various studies undertaken by a number of people at different points in time. Therefore, the various subjective parameters have not been standardised and have not been dwelt upon here, at length. The Cell's experiences may not always necessarily corroborate with the same.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Most of the Indian studies on women in distress, conducted in the last decades, have concentrated on the phenomenon of family violence, probably because it has only recently been recognised as a social problem. Other areas of study include rape, desertion and child abuse.

#### *Domestic Violence*

Most of the studies conducted on 'Domestic Violence' are exploratory studies, and have taken into consideration different aspects of the phenomenon such as nature and intensity of violence, characteristics of the victim and offender, causes or antecedents and consequences of violence



and assistance sought and received in the cases of domestic violence. Some researchers have attempted to evolve a theory to explain this phenomenon, or to test existing theories against empirical evidence.

### *Definition and Nature of Domestic Violence*

Before discussing any other findings of research on family violence. It must be made clear that the concept of 'family violence' has been differently defined/operationalised by different researchers. Their findings have also revealed a wide variety in the modes, intensity and chronicity of violence.

Ahuja (1987) defined violence against women as "wilfull striking of wife by a husband with or without injury" thus limiting it to acts of physical violence. After studying sixty self reported cases of this type, he found that methods used in battering were mainly pushing, punching, hitting, kicking and threatening. A quarter of the victims experienced such beating at least once in a week and a quarter suffered major injuries such as fractures, internal injuries and injuries of serious and complicated nature.

The cases of dowry death were studied separately by Ahuja. After analysing records of thirteen dowry death cases, he found that several forms of harassment take place before actual killing of the victim. The methods used to harass the women included sarcastic remarks and insults, denial of food and starvation and restrictions on socialising. Burning, poisoning and strangulating were the methods employed in killing the victims.

In her study of twenty-five cases of wife battering from lower and middle class background, Agnes (1988) has considered only the cases of physical and sexual violence. The forms of violence encountered in this study included beating with hand and fists, sticks, and iron rods, as well as with utensils and knives; throwing women against objects or bashing their heads against the wall, burning of breasts, vagina; excessive sexual demands and sexual perversion. Injuries suffered through such violence included deep cuts, broken bones, miscarriages, and nervous breakdowns.

Sriram and Bakshi (1988) defined family violence as "any form of mental and physical cruelty to married women by family members". They studied case records of victims of family violence, from Government and voluntary organisations, and corroborated this data with primary data from interviews with the staff of the organisations as well as the battered women. Physical violence in this study was found to take such forms as slapping, hitting with fists, punching, dragging the women by their hair, kicking on the stomach when she was pregnant, assault by instruments which ranged from a piece of glass to an iron hammer and sexual torture. Mental torture was inflicted through insults and abuses and heavy demands of work, dowry, forced acceptance of immoral attitudes or behaviour of family

members towards the women. Other methods of harassment were restrictions on wife regarding socialising with friends, relatives or parents, unwillingness to spend for children's basic needs, and depriving them of food clothing and shelter, and/or driving them away from home. Death, grievous physical injuries, poor mental health, disease or abortion were the same of results of such violence.

Bhatti (1990) defined family violence as an "act performed by a family member to achieve the desired conformity which carries a negative emotional component". He interviewed couples from high, middle and low income groups, matched for religion and age, to ascertain whether wife battering was related to culture, to status of women in the family and to family dynamics. His definition of family violence included physical violence i. e. beating, biting, kicking, pushing and injury, verbal violence such as use of abusive and filthy language to hurt others, social violence i. e. demeaning, disparaging and belittling others. Emotional violence which included deprivation of love affection, concern, sympathy and care, and intellectual violence which referred to non submission of oneself for confrontation and discussion even with regard to pressing issues.

Kaushik (1990) has studied 176 cases of marital discord, reported in Family Welfare Agencies of Bombay and Pune. Although no definition of 'marital discord' is given in the report of this study, the analysis of the nature of the problems presented in the study indicates that it included cases of sexual, behavioral as well as personality problems.

Laxmi (1990) has studied cases of family violence registered in the police stations of Bombay under 498A IPC. This section has defined 'cruelty on married women' as "(a) any wilful conduct which is of such nature as is likely to drive a women to commit suicide or to cause grave injury, danger to life, limb or health of the women or (b) harassment of women where such harassment is with a view to coerce her or any person related to her to meet any demand for property/valuable security or is on account of failure by her or any person related to her to meet such demand. "The study showed that most of the cases of 498A IPC were of severe harassment, same even resulting in death. Harassment was often physical and mental harassment was found to be prolonged and severe.

According to Mahajan (1990) family violence is abuse of power which is vested in the hands of a husband. 'Abuse' is further defined as a situation where a more powerful person takes advantage of a less powerful one. He studied different dimensions of family violence in a stratified sample of seventy-two scheduled caste and thirty-seven nonscheduled caste couples in a village in Jalandhar. For the purpose of the study, he confined the definition to physical acts such as slapping, punching, kicking and throwing objects carried out with an intention of injuring the spouse.

While analysing the ninety cases of family violence reported at Nari Samata Manch, Pune, Maydeo (1990) has given a definition of domestic violence. As per this definition, 'domestic violence is the violent victimisation of women within the boundaries of family, usually by men to whom they have been married or with whom they have marriage a like relationship. Violence can be both physical and psychological indicating aggressive behavior toward not only the physical well-being but also the self respect and self confidence of women'.

Maydeo found that types of physical violence included beating, burns, denial of food, shutting up in a room, being forced to eat chilli powder, and so on. Psychological violence included insults, lack of verbal communication, threat of murder or second marriage, suspecting chastity of the wife, restrictions on contact with parents, while sexual violence took the form of denial and perversity.

Devi Prasad (1991) reported that victims of dowry death underwent several forms of harassment by the husband or in laws, which included beating, branding, disfiguring, keeping the women confined without food and threats of desertion before being murdered or driven to suicide. Burning after dousing with kerosene was found to be the most frequently used means in cases of suicide (40%) as well as homicide (46.33%).

To conclude, the phenomenon of family violence has been differently looked at by different researchers. All accept physical violence as a form of family violence, and all research findings reveal its existence even in the most brutal forms; also other subtle methods that wound the psyche rather than the body of the victim are also acknowledged by some researchers as forms of family violence. (Sriram and Bakshi, 1988; Bhatti, 1990)

It is common knowledge corroborated by research findings (Ahuja, 97) that women seek help from outside agencies only when problems go beyond their endurance. Thus it is no surprise that those studies which have used case records in welfare agencies or reported to police or newspaper as their sample, reveal severe and brutal forms of violence.

#### *Demographic Data of the Victim*

Most studies on family violence have endeavored to retain the demographic data of women victimised by the violence.

Most of these studies have looked at family violence against women as 'wife-battering' (Ahuja, 1987; Agnes, 1988; Bhatti, 1990; Mahajan, 1990; Kaushik, 1990; Maydeo, 1990). Even the few that have not taken this approach found the husband to be the main batterer followed by the mother-in-law. (Sriram and Bakshi, 1988; Devi Prasad, 1991). The researchers have also considered the demographic data of the batterer, that is the husband.

Ahuja (1987) found that wives under the age of twenty-five and wives younger to their husbands by five years, had a greater risk of victimisation. Though no definite relationship existed between family income of the victims and violence, women in low income families were more likely to be victimised. Education level of the victims as well as family size and composition were found to have no significant relationship with wife battering in his study.

Regarding the cases of dowry death, the mean age of the victims at the time of death was found to be twenty-two to twenty-six years. On an average, the death had occurred within two years of marriage. No correlation existed between the level of education of the victim or the offender and occurrence of dowry victimisation. Dowry death showed no pattern or trend in terms of income. Dowry death was found to be an upper caste problem, a majority of offenders were staying in a joint family and had an income between Rs. 500/- to Rs. 1000/-per month.

According to research findings of Bhatti (1990) and Laxmi (1990), family violence and wife battering was prevalent in all socioeconomic classes. But they found that physical violence and harassment was more in low income groups. Bhatti also found that social/verbal violence was more in middle income group and emotional violence was more prevalent in high income groups.

Laxmi's study (1990) revealed that a majority of victims of wife battering were young and also that the occurrence of the incidents began to happen soon after the marriage. She also found that the presence of children did not make a difference to the incidence of harassment. Nor did the employment status of the husband. In Kaushik's study (1990), a large number of battered women were found to be in the age group of twenty-one to thirty years.

The study conducted by Maydeo (1990) indicated that education and earning capacity of the victims had no direct relationship with the incident of wife beating. However, being trained and employed proved to be very beneficial in their rehabilitation at a later date.

The content analysis by Devi Prasad (1991) revealed that a majority (70%) of the victims were young in age and the crisis had taken place within three years of marriage. More than 75% were house wives. A majority (85.6%) of the victims were Hindu. A significant number of the families of the bridegroom belonged to middle and lower income groups. The occupational background of husbands showed a concentration around lower level jobs.

Thus, an overview reveals that victims of family violence are found to be young and recently married (Ahuja, 1987; Agnes, 1988; Sriram and Bakshi, 1988; Kaushik, 1990; Laxmi, 1990; Devi Prasad, 1991). That education of

victims was not significantly related to incidence of family violence (Ahuja, 1987; Agnes, 1988; Sriram and Bakshi, 1988; Maydeo, 1990) and that family size and composition also had no significant relationship with family violence (Ahuja, 1987; Agnes, 1988).

The phenomenon of family violence was prevalent in all classes and castes (Ahuja, 1987; Agnes, 1988; Sriram and Bakshi, 1988; Laxmi, 1990; Bhatti, 1990; Mahajan, 1990). Physical harassment, however was more prevalent in the lower classes (Ahuja, 1987; Bhatti, 1990; Laxmi, 1990). However, in cases of dowry related violence an overwhelming majority of violent homes were found to be joint families (Ahuja, 1987).

Though not statistically significant, Ahuja (1987) noticed dowry related violence to be more common in middle class while Devi Prasad (1991) found it to be so in middle and lower classes. Dowry related violence was more prevalent in upper caste rather than in lower castes (Ahuja, 1990). Presence of children was not found to make much of a difference to the incidence of family harassment (Agnes, 1988; Laxmi, 1990).

### *Motives/Instigators of Violence*

The immediate antecedents of violence, the apparent causes that spark off violence as different from the basic underlining motives have been studied by many researchers. Agnes (1988) reported the immediate cause of violence, as told by the victims, as including arguments over money, jealousy and suspicions of the woman's character, instigation by in laws, women's desire to work outside the home, disputes over children and extra-marital affairs on part of the husband. Alcoholism was not the prime factor in beating.

As per the study of Sriram and Bakshi (1988) instigations of wife battering included dowry demands, alcoholism of the husband, suspicion of character, extra marital affairs, arguments over housework and financial stress.

Kaushik (1990) found alcoholism and wife battering to be coexistent in a majority of cases (68%). Laxmi (1990) however found that alcoholism of the husband appears only in 12% of the cases of wife battering. In cases where in it did appear, it was chronic and severe. Demand for dowry featured most prominently among instigations for harassment in her study. Other reasons included suspicion of character of the wife and failure to produce a male child.

In the study by Mahajan (1990), a majority of the women (60%) victims named alcoholism of their husband as a major cause of violence. Frustration due to poverty, instigation by in laws, suspicious nature of the husband and quarrelsome children were some other causes of violence. Instigators

identified by the husbands were bad temperament of the wife and her failure to carry out her role tasks including proper care of the in laws.

Alcoholism was not found to be a commonly stated causes of violent behavior in the study by Maydeo (1990) as only 11% of the cases revealed its existence.

In a nutshell, the main instigators of violence identified by different researchers are demand for dowry (Sriram and Bakshi, 1988; Laxmi, 1990); suspicion regarding the wife's chastity; (Agnes, 1988; Sriram and Bakshi, 1988; Laxmi, 1990; Mahajan, 1990); extra marital affair of the husband; (Agnes, 1988; Sriram and Bakshi, 1988) instigation by in laws (Agnes, 1988; Mahajan, 1990); and failure by the wife to carry out expected tasks (Agnes, 1988; Sriram and Bakshi, 1988; Mahajan, 1990; Devi prasad, 1991). Other reasons include failure to produce male child, desire of the wife to work outside the home and financial stress. Alcoholism of the husband was found to be coexistent or causally related to wife beating by Sriram and Bakshi (1988), Kaushik (1990) and Mahajan (1990) while it was not found to be so by Agnes (1988) Laxmi (1990) and Maydeo (1990).

### CONSEQUENCES OF VIOLENCE

Consequences of violence in terms of nature of physical injuries received by the victims were reviewed in the earlier section on nature of violence. In this section, an attempt has been made to understand the consequence of family violence revealed by scientific studies in terms of methods of coping used by the victims and assistance sought and received by them.

Ahuja (1987) found in his study of wife battering that a few of the victims had contemplated or attempted suicide. A majority of battered wives continued to stay in the violent home. Even from among those who had left the husbands home, many had returned. A majority were found to be unwilling to report the matter to the police for fear of social disgrace or of aggravation of violence.

In his analysis of cases of dowry death, Ahuja found that parents of dowry victims were either ignorant of the ill-treatment of their daughter or had ignored it completely. The few efforts at intervention by the parents (in 13% of cases only) consisted in giving more money / gold to the husband. Only in one case out of thirteen, parents try to persuade the husband to establish a separate household. After the death of the victim, however, the parents/relatives had lodged the complaint with the police. A majority of the parents (67%) expressed dissatisfaction over the role of police, which seemed to have ranged from being apathetic to actually fabricating evidence in collusion with the offenders.

## RESPONSE OF HELP GIVING AGENCIES

The experience of Agnes supports Walker's (1979) three phase theory of battering. A woman leaves the house during phase two to seek aid. But when the counsellors, social workers have met the husband, he is in phase three and thus they get misled; counselling the women to return home. Some social workers accept the fact that the man is at fault, but they attribute this to his mental condition, and the woman is given the responsibility of looking after him.

Agnes (1988) found that most battered women had to find some kind of assistance at some point of time such as staying with parents, or with friends, staying alone, seeking advice of religious heads, and going to counsellors, shelter homes or police.

However, most of the times they were told to return to their violent homes. According to Agnes after such repeated attempts to escape from violent situations, women exhibit 'learned helplessness', that is they became passive, submissive and fail to respond even when help is available.

Her survey of existing shelter homes in Bombay revealed them to be woefully inadequate to help these women. Some of the problems identified by her were:

1. Lack of awareness among women regarding such homes;
2. Emphasis placed by some of the homes on reconciliation with the husband;
3. Restriction on movement of the women which prevents them from going in for further education or from taking up a job.
4. Lack of vocational training facilities within the home.
5. The policy of the homes preventing admission to children of battered women, except in cases of infants and toddlers.

Thapayal, Rani and Ruth (1987), studied twenty cases who had come for assistance to the Delhi police cell to help women. Their findings revealed that eight out of the twenty victims of family violence wanted reconciliation with the husbands. The remaining, who did not desire to return to their husbands, wanted assistance in terms of getting their dowry returned (seven cases) or getting a share in property or desired maintenance. The cell was not found to have succeeded in reconciliation, nor in securing maintenance. The cell had only managed to get a part of the dowry back in some cases (four out of seven cases)

Sriram and Bakshi (1988) also found the assistance available to victims of family violence to be inadequate. He noticed that in most cases of family violence most welfare agencies had tried to bring about a compromise between the couple but such compromises often proved to be transient in

nature often resulting in greater torment to the women. Cases took a long time to be resolved, and dropping out, as withdrawal of cases was common. Free legal aid was provided to many women; but only a very small percentage (less than 1%) of offenders were convicted. Help to secure employment, shelter or police assistance was given to some women.

According to the findings of Kaushik (1990) a large percentage of battered women (46.30%) continued to co-habit with the husbands. Her findings indicated that the wives resorted to suicidal threats, attacking, separation, police action, or the use of another helping agency in order to create crises for the husband, rather than to find out other alternatives for themselves.

Maydeo (1990) reported unsympathetic attitudes of police personnel in most of the cases of wife battering. The parents of the victims were also not found to be as supportive or understanding as expected. Only in 31% of the cases parents had extended complete support. Shelter homes for women were found to be unable to provide a viable alternative to women from violent homes, because of rigidity of rules etc.

Devi Prasad (1991) also found that women repeatedly returned to their violent homes due to absence of support systems, social constraints, lack of adequate skills and self confidence. Even after they fell victim to the violence and complaint of dowry death was made, the police seemed to take an unusually long time in bringing the offenders to book or assisting the court during trial.

Thus it appears that victims of family violence either continue to stay with their husbands or engage in a series of leaving returning cycles. (Ahuja, 1987; Sriram and Bakshi, 1988; Kaushik 1988; Devi Prasad, 1991). This happens because of inadequacies of self support system (Mahajan 1991; Devi Prasad, 1991) and/or existing extended support systems, (Ahuja, 1987; Devi Prasad, 1991). Parents were not found to be as supportive as expected (Ahuja, 1987; Maydeo, 1990). Researchers have noted the limitation of welfare agencies to provide assistance (Thapalyal, Rani and Ruth, 1987; Sriram and Bakshi, 1988) and failure of shelter homes as viable alternatives to violent homes (Agnes, 1988; Maydeo, 1990). Indifferent, apathetic and even antagonistic attitude of the police have also been noticed by most researchers (Ahuja, 1987; Agnes, 1988; Maydeo, 1990; Devi Prasad, 1991).

### DESERTION

Desertion is another rampant phenomenon that has been studied by quite a few researchers. When a husband abandons his wife, either by leaving home himself, or by forcing the wife to leave his home, the wife is termed as 'deserted'. Apart from the humiliation involved, the deserted wife is



deprived of her right in her husbands income/property and her right to stay in the matrimonial home. As she legally remains married, she cannot consider remarriage. The extent of the problem of desertion, especially in Maharashtra and the plight of deserted women has been studied only recently. Given below is a brief literature review on the same:

Shivurkar, (1991) has reported findings of a sample survey of 621 deserted women carried out by Samata Andolan in Sangamner Taluka. According to this report, a large majority of the deserted women were married between eleven to sixteen years of age. A majority (56%) were deserted within the first year of marriage. Husbands of 59.5% women had married again, without divorcing their first wives. Causes of desertion included adultery and alcoholism of husband, dissatisfaction of the husband regarding dowry given, husband being suspicious of wife's character, wife giving birth to a girl child, instigation by in-laws especially by the deserted sister of the husband. The researcher has observed that the practice of girls being married off to considerably older men was common in the Taluka that and the child bride was often deserted as she was not found to be able to satisfy physical needs of the adult bride groom. The fact that most deserting and bigamous husbands did not receive any social or legal retribution seemed to encourage growth of such crime.

Datar (1992) has reviewed studies on deserted women conducted by other activist groups. Mahila Dakshta Samiti studied characteristics of 775 desertion cases and found that except for 2%, all others were Hindu. A large majority (85%) of the deserted women were less than 35 years of age, and deserted within and before three to four years of marriage. A majority had studied upto the secondary standard, but were economically dependent (60-65%). Many of the women had middle class parents. A few (10%) were orphans. Most of the women (90%) did not want to go in for legal divorce, though some husbands (20%) were known to have married again, or had marriage like relationships.

Findings of another group, Mahila Nyaya Samiti, reviewed by Datar revealed that out of the population of 1,200 of the sample village, 100 women were deserted. Mahila Hakka Sanrakshan Samiti, Nasik, had come across 310 cases of desertion. A majority (57%) were from middle class backgrounds, having an age range of 18-25 years and were educated upto the secondary standard.

Thus, studies on desertion are far from adequate. However, they do indicate that as in case of wife battering, young and recently married women are vulnerable to such crime. Lack of education and employment worsens their plight. This phenomenon appears to be less prevalent in the lower socioeconomic stratum, in which divorce and remarriage of a woman are comparatively easy. More research needs to be done on this

phenomenon specially with regard to rehabilitation needs of the deserted women and extent or outcome of police /legal action initiated against deserting husbands.

### CONCLUSION

It appears from this review that the phenomenon of wife battering has received the attention of many Indian researchers. However, other atrocities or distressing situations that women face like rape, harassment at work, abuse of elderly women in the family-remain relatively unexplored.

Most of the studies reviewed here have relied only on agency or police records as the source of data. These could lead to misleading conclusions, owing to the researcher's bias as agency records are often incomplete. Such data would be more reliable if used in combination with data obtained by interviewing the clients and/or agency workers.

Many of these studies have used very small samples, and hence their findings cannot be generalised. Generalisations are risky also because all these studies using self reported cases as their sample have essentially used a biased sample; women who come forward to voice their grievances are in some way different from those who suffer in silence.

Probably because of their exclusive reliance on case records, most of these studies have also confined their findings to demographic familial characteristics of the victims and offenders as well as to the nature and apparent causes of violence. Very few studies have taken into consideration the psychosocial effects of violence on the victims and coping methods used. Some researchers have studied rehabilitation needs of the clients vis-a-vis results of agency intervention, but the process of intervention has not received much attention.

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# PART II

# **ANALYSIS OF AGENCY RECORDS — I**

The result presented hereunder is based on an analysis of the agency records. Two main sources have been used for this purpose; the applications of the clients and the intake register wherein the Social workers have recorded basic information; such as address of the client, age, socioeconomic status (SeS), education, concerned police station referee, and the kind of help sought by the client.

## **SECONDARY SOURCE OF DATA**

Secondary sources of data are limited in their validity, gaps in information cannot be filled, and all aspects relevant to a certain case may have not been adequately covered by the source. The data in this study too, has its missing elements. Certain details have not been recorded by the social workers during registration of the case or have not been mentioned in the clients' applications. In the earlier years of its inception client applications have not been received. The procedure of intervention only after receipt of the client's application, too, has evolved gradually, over a time period.

Many aspects and other relevant factors are either omitted or not uniformly covered in the client's applications, largely because no set format has been set up; to be filled in by the clients. Thus at times, the applications may be too brief and concise, rendering much information uncovered.

The pattern of recording information too, has evolved over the years; thus less information is available for the cases during the earlier years; whereas additional data such as employment status, particulars of previous intervention sought by the client is available for the later years.

*Broad Areas*

The chief areas included are:

1. Identification data
  - Year wise distribution of the cases
  - Zonal distribution
  - Referee
2. Demographic data
  - Age
  - Education
  - Employment
  - Socioeconomic Status.
3. Marital details
  - Age at marriage
  - Period of marriage
  - Residence after marriage
4. Other details
  - Residence at the time of coming to the Special Cell.
  - Person against whom the complaint is made, as reported by the client.

**Table 1**  
**NUMBER OF CASES REFERRED YEARWISE**

<i>Period</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
1984 Jul-Dec	88	3.8	3.8
1985 Jan-Dec	325	13.9	13.9
1986 Jan-Dec	315	13.5	13.5
1987 Jan-Dec	415	17.8	17.8
1988 Jan-Dec	508	21.8	21.8
1989 Jan-Dec	407	17.4	17.4
1990 Jan-June	276	11.8	11.8
Total	2334	100.0	100.0

The above table gives information on number of cases referred year-wise for six complete years. Of the 2334 cases as many as 2018 cases have been registered at the Special Cell at the office of the Commissioner of Police; and 316 cases at the Special Cell's office at Dadar Police Station. Of the total of 2334 cases, 87 such cases have been registered, wherein the person against whom the complaint is made i. e. the husband, son or other concerned party is employed within the police department. Apart from, the

cases registered, a large number of persons seek referrals, advice, and consultancy of the social workers at the Special Cell. Considering that the Special Cell is only one of the agencies that intervenes in cases of violence against women the above reported cases form only a tip of the iceberg.

*Zonal Distribution of Cases*

**Table 2**  
**ZONEWISE DISTRIBUTION OF THE REPORTED CASES**

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Zone 1	112	4.8	5.9
Zone 2	200	8.6	10.5
Zone 3	237	10.2	12.5
Zone 4	352	15.1	18.6
Zone 5	226	9.7	11.9
Zone 6	145	6.2	7.6
Zone 7	146	6.3	7.7
Zone 8	114	4.9	6.0
Zone 9	149	6.4	7.8
Zone 10	44	1.9	2.3
Thane	99	4.2	5.3
Out of Bombay	72	3.1	3.9
INA	438	18.8	
Total	2334	100.0	100.0

*Note : Information Not Available (INA)*

The above table highlights the reporting of cases from the above zonal areas and it is not an attempt to pinpoint the incidence of violence in the zonal areas. As is seen in the above table, zone wise distribution; shows a relatively high percentage of cases reported from zone two to five; of these zone four has registered the highest number of cases (352 cases; 18.6%). This may be explained by the proximity of the Special Cell at Dadar Police Station situated in zone four. The high concentration of cases, in zones 2, 3, 4 and 5 may be explained by the location of the Special Cell unit proximate to these zonal areas.

The low concentration of cases in the other zonal areas; does not indicate, that the incidence of violence is low. To gain an understanding into such a low reporting, one needs to relook at the areas; the presence of industrial, commercial or residential units; the existence of other voluntary

organisations in these areas; the awareness level among the groups and communities in these areas and various other factors. One of the causes of low reporting could be the reluctance of the women to commute long distances and spending time and money thereon.

**Table 3**  
**CASES REFERRED BY**

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Other Voluntary Organisations	510	21.9	26.6
Police	368	15.8	19.2
Media	242	10.4	12.6
Self	234	10.0	12.2
Others	196	8.4	10.2
Exclient	143	6.1	7.5
Adv/Judge/Coun	125	5.4	6.5
Political Org	52	2.2	2.7
Relatives	47	2.0	2.5
INA	417	17.9	
Total	2334	100.0	100.0

In the above table, it is seen that referrals through other voluntary organisations and police is high — 26.6% and 19.2% respectively. The large number of cases; referred from voluntary organisations; can be explained by the fact that the cell, has essentially served as a liaison between the voluntary organisation and the police, in cases of violence against women. Cases wherein police help is sought the voluntary organisations, co-ordinate with the Special Cell, and either jointly handle the case; or refer the case to the special cell to be solely handled by the cell.

The number of cases referred through the police to is significant Firstly, this highlights that the utility of such a service has been recognised among police officers. Table 4 illuminates the available options exercised by the police officers, when the clients first reported to them. Before, approaching the Special Cell; some clients had approached the police station (accurate number of clients who had sought police intervention is unavailable; information is available for 199 cases).

In Table 4 out of 199 cases, who had sought police intervention before approaching the Special Cell 25.6% of the clients, have stated that the police officers were uncooperative; in 21. 6% cases the police officers had registered an NC. In 11. 6% of the cases, a criminal case had been registered,



(criminal cases are registered specific to the reported problem, not necessarily a 498 A IPC), in 4% cases the officers had tried to compromise and in 37.1% of the cases (in 74 of the 199 cases) the police had referred the clients to the Special Cell. Though 37.1% is not high it is nevertheless a significant number highlighting the recognition of the effectivity of the Special Cell by the police officers.

**Table 4**  
**REFERRAL FROM POLICE OFFICES**

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Refereed to Cell	74	3.2	37.1
Refused to Co-operate	51	2.2	25.6
Registered NC/Temporary	43	1.8	21.6
Locked Up/Warned Registered Cr. Case	23	1.0	11.6
Tried to Compromise	8	.3	4.0
INA	2135	91.4	
Total	2334	100	100

**Table 5**  
**YEARWISE DISTRIBUTION OF CASES AND CASE REFERRED BY**  
**(IN PERCENT)**

	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
	Jul-Dec	Jan-Dec	Jan-Dec	Jan-Dec	Jan-Dec	Jan-Dec	Jan-June
Self	5.7	4.0	8.3	5.8	16.1	19.2	2.2
Relatives	1.1	1.8	1.6	2.4	3.1	1.2	1.4
Other Vol. Org.	21.6	19.1	25.7	21.2	23.6	22.6	17.4
Political Org.	2.3	6.2	2.5	2.2	1.6	1.0	.4
Police	52.3	22.2	16.2	16.6	10.6	11.3	10.9
Advocates/judges	4.5	5.8	5.4	6.5	5.5	4.4	4.3
FCC Counselors							
Media	3.4	23.1	8.6	9.9	8.9	4.7	11.6
Ex-Clients	1.8	4.8	7.0	4.7	7.4	14.1	
Others	5.7	9.2	14.6	11.3	6.1	4.4	6.9
INA	3.4	6.8	12.4	17.1	19.7	23.8	30.8

The referrals through the police have reduced by as much as 40% from the time of inception. This explains the need of renewed contact, that is necessary with the police officials. A large number of transfers, and the lack

of awareness regarding the work of the Special Cell, on behalf of the newly appointed officers (referrals to other voluntary organisations in the area) are some of the reasons that explain this feature.

There is a percentage increase in self referrals and cases referred by ex-clients in the later years. The percentage increase in the cases referred by ex-clients, is by and large, because awareness of the Special Cell, has spread in certain communities. Caste panchayats and the Special Cell have co-ordinated while intervening in many cases.

The feed back of these customary panchayats, as also the women, (amongst the community who have availed of the Special Cell services) vis-a-vis the effectivity and methodology of the Special Cell, and the impact the Special Cell services have created thereon is an area for further research.

**Table 6**  
**LIFE STATUS**

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Dead	24	1.0	1.0
Living	2310	99.0	99.0
Total	2334	100.0	100.0

Of the cases registered, 24 cases were of the parents, relations of women; who had expired; either had committed suicide or in a case of alleged murder by husband/in laws. The purpose of them approaching the Special Cell, has been to enquire into certain police procedures, to seek information on how far the case has progressed to the police station; court level. It has been observed that to most relations the gravity of the situation strikes home only after the demise of the woman; and it is only at this stage that the parents/relatives desire to bring the husband/in-laws to book. The parents/relatives of the deceased women may also approach the Special Cell to retrieve the "stridhan" articles of the woman, given at the time of marriage (particularly when such a death has occurred within a short span after marriage). Another reason is often, to decide on aspects such as "custody of the children of the deceased woman" and/or the property and maintenance right of the children.

One hundred and eighty-four cases registered are complaints of males. In spite of it being the Special Cell to help women, men of approach the Special Cell complaining that they have been deserted by their spouse; and either wish to reconcile the matter, or aspire for a joint meeting to enable them to decide on the further course.

**Table 7**  
**GENDER**

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Male	184	7.9	7.9
Female	2150	92.1	92.1
Total	2334	100.0	100.0

*Demographic Factors***Table 8**  
**AGE OF THE CLIENT**

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Less Than 18	33	1.4	2.1
18-24	476	20.4	30.1
25-34	665	28.5	42.0
35-44	246	10.5	15.5
45-54	90	3.9	5.7
Above 55	71	3.0	4.6
INA	753	32.3	
Total	2334	100.0	100.0

The table above gives the age distribution of the clients at the time when they approached the cell. The concentration of a large number of cases is in the age group of 25-34 years (42 %).

**Table 9**  
**SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS OF THE CLIENT**

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Low	706	30.2	46.7
Low Middle	628	26.9	41.6
Upper Middle/high	176	7.5	11.7
I.N.A	824	35.3	
Total	2334	100.0	100.0

The socioeconomic status is recorded by the social worker, depending on the perception of each social worker and determined by the direct or indirect information as forwarded by the client, the indicators being the client's general profile, nature of employment, residence location, and so on. No standardised format has been set up.

**Table 10**  
**EDUCATION**

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Illiterate	191	8.2	14.1
Primary Level	339	14.2	25.1
Upto Matric/HSC/Tech	651	27.9	48.3
Graduation/Post Grad	167	7.2	12.5
INA	986	42.2	
Total	2334	100.0	100.0

As far as reporting is concerned, there is a large proportion of poor and lower middle class women. But this cannot be taken as the indication of the actual incidence of violence. Violence against women in the higher class, is comparatively low and it is common knowledge that a women from the upper class may find it difficult to register a police complaint, as she may stand to lose more thereby in terms of family social prestige, and may chose to suffer in silence, rather than bring to fore private matters in public. Secondly she might have got other support systems or may seek legal redressal and may not turn to the police station for help. It is also to be noted that violence exists in families of all classes.

**Table 11**  
**EMPLOYMENT**

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Not Earning	269	11.5	37.8
Earning	443	19.5	62.21.
NA	1622	69.5	
Total	2334	100.0	100.0

As seen from the above table, violence against women may be suffering by illiterate to post graduate women. It is significant to note that in spite of

education even graduate women are harassed. Their representation is low here which corresponds to their low percentage in the total population. A large number of women (48. 3%) who have registered cases at the Special Cell are educated upto S. S. C/H. S. C. Formal education acquaints a woman with available supports, agency resources and possibly equips her, to have access to such resources.

As is seen in Table 11, a larger percentage of women (62. 2%) who approached the Special Cell were earning. The problem of violence against women cuts across all classes; and exists irrespective of the age, education, and working status of the women.

*Marital Details*

**Table 12**  
**MARITAL STATUS**

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Married	1874	80.3	84.0
Unmarried	147	6.3	6.6
Widowed	121	5.2	5.4
Illeg. Married	48	2.1	2.1
Divorced/Separated	40	1.7	1.8
INA	104	4.5	
Total	2234	100.0	100.0

A large "concentration" of the cases is around problems of married women. The Special Cell has had cases of unmarried women. These pertain to harassment by parents or by compelling young girls to get married cases of elopement or of breach of trust, that is refusal to get married after promises, cases of unwed motherhood, cases of young women being physically and sexually abused by male members of the family; or harassment by brothers over property matters, forcibly driving out the sister to establish claim over property, and so on. Widowed, divorced and separated cases form 7. 2% of the total cases. The problems largely center around economic problems, refusal to give maintenance, withholding stridhan, dispute over custody of children and other matters.

The majority (53. 6%) of clients who have come to the Special Cell have been married young before the age of 22. The cases reported of women married at a later age, are lower since the trend is that of early marriages. The explanation that late marriages reduce the incidence of "marital violence" is by far too simplistic.

**Table 13**  
**AGE AT MARRIAGE**

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Below 18 Yrs	147	6.3	19.2
18-22 Yrs	264	11.3	34.4
23-28 Yrs	169	7.2	22.0
Above 28 Yrs	44	1.9	5.7
NA *Since Not Married	143	6.1	18.7
INA	1567	67.1	
Total	2334	100	100

\*N. A. is not applicable

**Table 14**  
**PERIOD OF MARRIAGE**

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Upto 2 Years	331	14.2	30.0
2 To 7 Years	369	25.8	33.5
7 To 14 Years	249	10.7	22.6
14 To 21	102	4.4	9.3
21 To 45	51	2.2	4.6
NA Since Not Married	146	6.3	NA
INA	1086	46.5	
Total	2334	100.0	100.0

Almost one third of the cases are reported within two years of marriage. The other one third are reported wherein the period of marriage has been seven years. A large proportions of cases (63.5%) reported are those where the period of marriage is upto seven years, the proportion of cases reported in the next seven years is only marginally less. Harassment to women exists irrespective of the length of the marital union, though a large number of cases in the earlier years of marriage are now being reported.

The reluctance of women to verbalise their problems in the later years of marriage (after having stayed in the martial union for long) could be explained by the fact that the woman has been "conditioned" to the violence, and has adapted to it in terms of her coping she may stay on as she perceives

a responsibility towards her grow up children who at times act as supports, to the mother.

However at the Special Cell cases of physical and mental harassment by the husband are reported after fifteen to thirty years (and above) of having remained within the marriage.

**Table 15**  
**RESIDENCE AFTER MARRIAGE**

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Husband's Parents	852	36.5	73.8
Separate	276	11.8	23.9
Wife's Parents	26	1.1	2.3
N. A. Since not Married	143	6.1	NA
INA	1037	AAA	
Total	2334	100.0	100.0

About 36.5% of the women reported having stayed with in-laws while 23.9% have stayed in nuclear households. The significance of cases (23.9%) reported, wherein the married couple has resided separately (i. e. in a nuclear household), breaks the myth that domestic violence, exists solely in joint families, when the women reside with the in-laws. Also, significant is that 2.3% of the cases registered are wherein the couple has resided with the wife's parents.

#### *Other Details*

As seen in Table 15, 97.7% of the clients resided in their matrimonial home, immediately after marriage, either with in-laws or separately. However at the time of coming to the special; 30.3% of the clients (Table 16) resided in their matrimonial homes while 50.4% of the clients; resided with their parents; 10.9% of the clients stayed independently, 44.4% stayed with friends and relatives and 2.4% in shelter homes.

Table 17 enlists the person against whom the complaint is made, those primarily responsible for harassment as stated by the client. The husband and in-laws as the persons against whom the complaint is made form the largest percentage (69.7%) of the cases. This is largely because a large percentage of the cases referred are those marital problems. The category of others includes 17 cases of harassment by tenant/houseowner, 13 cases of harassment by colleagues, 13 cases of harassment by local, anti-social elements and 3 cases of harassment by the police.

**Table 16**  
**RESIDENCE AT THE TIME OF REPORTING**

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Staying with Parents	763	32.7	50.4
In Matrimonial Home	459	19.7	30.3
Staying Independently	165	7.6	10.9
With Friends/Rel/Oth	66	2.8	4.4
Staying in Shelter Home	36	1.5	2.4
NA Since Not Married	26	1.1	1.1
INA	819	35.1	
Total	2334	100.0	100.0

**Table 17**  
**PERSON AGAINST WHOM THE COMPLAINT IS MADE**

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Husband	1292	55.4	58.0
In-laws	223	9.6	10.0
Husband and In-laws	185	7.9	8.3
Wife	119	5.1	5.3
Son, Daughter and In-laws	77	3.3	3.4
Male Friend	66	2.8	3.0
Neighbours	52	2.2	2.3
Parents/Chil	35	1.5	1.5
Ex Hus/Bf	25	1.1	1.1
Tenant/House Owner	17	0.7	0.7
Boss/Col	13	0.6	0.6
Local Gundas	13	0.6	0.6
Police	3	.1	.2
Others	107	4.6	4.6
NA	37	1.6	1.6
INA	70	3.0	
Total	2334	100.0	100.0

## CONCLUSIONS

Before presenting a detailed interpretation of cases of domestic violence and other cases reported (in the following chapters), presented herewith are **the** major findings.



The number of cases reported at the Special Cell have increased till December 1988. Thereafter the number of cases have marginally declined. The zonewise distribution shows a relatively higher number of cases reported, from zones two to five. A sizeable number of cases from other zonal areas, Thane and out of Bombay, suggest the importance of replicating the Special Cell services at other police stations. Police referrals have largely reduced from the time of its inception and self referrals through ex-clients have increased.

With regard to demographic details, a concentration of a large number of cases is in the age group of 25-34. The phenomenon of violence exists in families of all socioeconomic classes, however a relatively higher percentage of cases from the lower economic class are reported. The problem of violence against women ranges from illiterates to post graduates. A large percent of women who have registered cases at the Special Cell are educated upto SSC/HSC technical training; and a relatively large percentage are women, working outside their household.

A large concentration of the cases registered are of married women. The age at marriage is between 18-22 years, a large percentage of the cases registered have been where the period of marriage is between two to seven years. The majority of clients have resided in joint families after marriage. At the time of reporting at the Special Cell, the larger number of clients stayed at their parent's residence. The maximum number of prime accused have been the husband, followed by the in-laws.

# ANALYSIS OF AGENCY RECORDS — II

Of 2334 cases, 1732 cases registered at the Special Cell, pertain to cases of "domestic violence", "desertion", "refusal to give maintenance" and "financial problems in the family". Given below is the number of cases registered under each category.

Cases registered of mental harassment	1465
Physical harassment	1226
Desertion by spouse	700
Refusal to give maintenance	616
Financial stress in the family	129

The reporting of mental harassment as a problem is relatively high. However, it must be noted that the dimension of violence can take many different forms, and the problem may be experienced either in isolation or in combination with other problems.

As is seen in the Table 1, the largest number of problems reported are, of physical and mental harassment (667 cases), all the four problems excluding financial problems (246 cases) physical and mental harassment and desertion; (136 cases), physical and mental harassment and maintenance, (112 cases), mental harassment (110 cases) desertion by spouse (102 cases), desertion by spouse and refusal to give maintenance (93 cases); have been taken up for detailed analysis. The occurrence of all the five problems (10 cases) too have been included for detailed analysis.

**Table 1**  
**KIND OF PROBLEMS FACED**

<i>Value table</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Valid Percent</i>
Financial Problems	28	1.2	1.2
Physical Harassment	3	0.1	0.1
Mental Harassment	110	4.7	4.7
Financial Problems & Mental Harassment	8	0.3	0.3
Physical & Mental Harassment	667	28.6	28.6
Physical & Mental Harassment & Financial Problems	21	0.9	0.9
Refusal to Give Maintenance	22	0.9	0.9
Maintenance Problem and Financial Problems	6	0.3	0.3
Maintenance Problems & Mental Harassment	22	0.9	0.9
Mental Harassment and Financial Stress and Maintenance	7	0.3	0.3
Maintenance Problems and Physical and Mental Harassment	112	4.8	4.8
Financial And Physical and Mental Harassment and Maintenance	26	1.1	1.1
Desertion	102	4.4	4.4
Financial Problem and Desertion	3	0.1	0.1
Mental Harassment and Desertion	33	1.4	1.4
Desertion & Physical and Mental Harassment	136	<b>5.8</b>	5.8
Physical Problems, Financial and Desertion	5	<b>0.2</b>	0.2
Maintenance & Desertion	<b>93</b>	<b>4.0</b>	4.0
Financial Problems, Maintenance and Desertion	10	<b>0.4</b>	0.4
Mental Harassment & Refusal to Give maintenance & Desertion	57	2.4	2.4
Financial Problems Harassment Maintenance & Desertion	5	0.2	0.2
Desertion & Physical, Mental Harassment & Maintenance Problems	246	10.5	10.5
All Five	10	0.4	0.4
Total	1732	100.0	100.0

Table 2, enlists the above seven broad categories which have been analysed in detail in this chapter

**Table 2**  
**CATEGORIES OF HARASSMENT**

<i>Problem</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Total Column %</i>
Mental Harassment	<b>10</b>	8. 5%
Physical & Mental Harassment	667	44. 4%
Physical & Mental Harassment & Desertion	136	10. 4%
Physical & Mental Harassment & Maintenance Problems	112	7. 4%
Desertion by Spouse	102	6. 7%
Desertion by Spouse & Refusal to Give Maintenance	93	5.5%
Desertion and Physical and Mental and Harassment Maintenance Problem	246	16. 3%
MI the Four Including Financial Stress in the Family	10	. 9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1476</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

In view of the fact that all five problems which includes all four and financial stress in the family, is a marginal number of ten, it has been merged with the category of all four for further discussion. Before statistically analysing the above data, given below is typology of cases of physical and mental harassment registered at the Special Cell.

### **PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HARASSMENT SUB-TYPES AND MANIFESTATIONS**

#### *Physical Harassment*

1. Murder
2. Attempt to murder by
  - Burning
  - Throttling
  - Poisoning
  - Throwing out of window
  - Assault with knife
3. Causing Grievous hurt by:
  - Beating till the woman bleeds
  - Cutting with knife, injuring sensitive parts; eyes, nose or lips.
  - Beating with belts/iron rods, sticks /chain /sharp instruments
  - Throwing of hot oil and acid bottles.
  - Burning with cigarettes or iron.
  - Causing multiple injuries to limbs, fractures.
4. Battering severely, slapping, pushing, kicking, boxing with fists and hair pulling.
5. Beating and kicking during pregnancy, leading to miscarriage.

6. Starving/withholding medical assistance.
7. Over-burdening with household work.

### *Sexual Harassment*

For the purpose of this document, sexual violence committed by the husband; is also termed as physical violence. Cases of sexual harassment reported are:

- Sex without the woman's consent.
- Sexual demands at increased frequencies.
- Sex during menstrual cycle/pregnancy/immediately after child-birth.

### *Mental Harassment*

1. Physical confinement.
2. Isolating by putting restriction on socialising with family/friends/neighbours.
3. Preventing wife from
  - Breastfeeding the children
  - Meeting her children.
4. Threats to
  - Kill the woman
  - Desert the woman
  - Divorce
  - Batter
  - Rape the daughter
  - Remarry
  - Threats to abscond with children.
5. Husband constantly telling wife to take her own life or leave the house.
6. Constantly demanding money, extort the client's salary, demanding an account of every paisa spent.
7. Demanding dowry.
8. Swearing and abusing.
9. Suspicious of character of the woman.
10. Denial of paternity of child.
11. Humiliating in public.
12. Allegation of psychiatric illness/sexual disease.
13. Compelling the client to practice prostitution.
14. Compelling the client to write fabricated stories of herself and sign on a blank paper.
15. Neglect, apathy and frequent quarrels.
16. Harassing her at her work place and pressurising her to resign.

17. Keeping the client out of the house, frequently during nights.
18. Forcing the client to stay where she does not want to, with in-laws, in the village.
19. Having sexual relations with another woman in presence of the wife.
20. Husband ignoring and expecting wife to tolerate sexual advances made by other family members.

Some cases of financial stress in the family that have been registered at the Special Cell are wherein the husband has expired thus putting the family in a severe financial crises, or the husband has lost his job, or has received a set back in the business and when financial assistance to the client from her (deceased) husband's office has been stopped.

The seven categories as in Table 2, have been crosstabulated with:

1. Demographic factors
  - Age
  - Education.
  - Economic state of the client.
  - Employment status.
2. Marital details
  - Age at marriage.
  - Period of marriage
  - Residence after marriage
3. Other details
  - Residence at the time of reporting to the cell.
  - The prime offender, as perceived by the client.
  - Perceived causal factors of the problem.
  - Kind of help sought.

#### *Demographic factors*

As is seen in Table 2, the age group of twenty-five to thirty years form the largest percentage (47. 4%) of the 1476 cases reported at the Special Cell. The age group of eighteen to twenty-four also forms a sizeable percentage of cases registered (33. 8%).

Physical and mental harassment, have been reported by all age groups (except the age group of above fifty-five) as the most prominent problem. The problem projected as the most important in the age group of above fifty-five, is that of physical harassment, mental harassment and refusal to give maintenance (16. 7%).

Those between eighteen and forty-four years, have marked a sizeable incidence, of all the four problems. In the age group of forty-five to fifty-five and above fifty-five, desertion and maintenance feature as important problems.

**Table 3**  
**AGE OF THE CLIENT**

	<i>Less Than 18</i>	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	<i>Above 55</i>
Mental Harassment	—	8.0	8.6	11.0	5.1	—
Physical & Mental Harassment	87.5	48.2	42.0	40.4	48.7	16.7
Maintenance	12.5	4.7	8.9	7.4	7.7	33.3
Desertion	—	3.3	8.0	9.6	10.3	16.7
Physical & Mental Harassment & Desertion	—	14.8	8.2	10.3	2.6	—
Desertion & Maintenance	—	2.7	7.0	4.4	15.4	16.7
Physical & Mental & Maintenance & Desertion	—	18.4	17.3	16.9	10.3	16.7
Frequency	8	338	474	136	39	6
Percent	.5	33.8	47.4	13.6	3.9	.6

Information not available (INA): 475

**Table 4**  
**EDUCATION OF THE CLIENT**  
**(IN THE PERCENT)**

	<i>Illiterate</i>	<i>Primary Level</i>	<i>Upto Matric &amp; HSC</i>	<i>Grad/Post Graduate</i>
Mental Harassment	5.6	5.9	10.2	12.0
Physical & Mental Harassment	39.5	37.2	47.7	49.6
Physical & Mental & Maintenance	6.5	9.6	8.3	5.1
Desertion	4.0	7.9	6.3	6.8
Physical & Mental Harassment & Desertion	11.3	14.6	9.3	9.4
Desertion & Maintenance	10.5	5.9	3.9	3.4
Physical & Mental Harassment & Maintenance & Desertion	22.6	18.8	14.4	13.7
Frequency	124	235	432	117
Percent	13.6	26.2	47.4	12.8

INA: 564

As is seen in table III, 47. 4% of the clients, have been educated upto matric/HSC level, and 26. 2% have been educated only upto the primary level.

The occurrence of physical and mental harassment as the single largest common problem among all the categories ranging from illiterates to post graduates is observed.

The existence of all the four problems too occurs in all the categories; it is higher amongst the illiterates (22. 6%) and clients educated upto the primary level (18. 8%).

Mental harassment as a problem, reported among the graduates/post graduates and clients educated upto matric/HSC, is almost twice as much as that reported by the illiterates and clients educated upto the primary level.

**Table 4**  
**ECONOMIC STRATA**  
**(IN THE PERCENT)**

	Low	Lower Middle	Upper Middle
Mental Harassment	.6.0	9.2	10. 1
Physical & Mental Harassment	38.9	46.7	50. 5
Physical & Mental Harassment & Maintenance	10.2	7.3	9.2
Desertion	6.4	7.0	2.8
Physical & Mental Harassment & Desertion	11.6	10.2	6.4
Desertion & Maintenance	6.9	5. 6	3.7
Physical & Mental Harassment Maintenance & Desertion	20.0	14.1	17.4
Frequency	481	413	409
Percent	48.0	41.2	10. 9

INA: 473

As is seen in Table 4, the highest reported cases are of the lower economic class, (48%), followed by the lower middle economic class (41. 2%)

Clients belonging to all the three categories of low, lower middle and upper middle economic classes, have reported the problem of physical and mental harassment; amongst which the largest proportion of cases, (50.5%) belong to the upper class.

A relatively greater proportion of clients reporting all the four problems, are from the lower class (20%), followed by the upper middle



economic class (17.4%). Also reflected in the above table, is a comparatively higher incidence of mental harassment reported among the upper middle economic class (10.1%).

**Table 5**  
**EMPLOYMENT STATUS**  
**(IN THE PERCENT)**

	<i>Unemployed</i>	<i>Employed</i>
Mental Harassment	10.0	5.0
Physical & Mental Harassment	45.3	48.9
Physical & Mental Harassment & Maintenance	7.6	8.9
Desertion	2.9	8.2
Physical & Mental Harassment & Desertion	6.5	7.5
Desertion & Maintenance	7.6	7.1
Physical & Mental Harassment Maintenance & Desertion	20.0	14.3
Frequency	170	280
Percent	37.8	62.2

INA: 1026

As is reflected in Table 5, 62. 2% of the clients, who have registered a complaint at the Special Cell were employed.

Physical and mental harassment, is reported as a common problem, irrespective of the working status of the client. However the gravity of the problem, i. e. clients reporting of the existence of all four problems is comparatively higher in the unemployed category (20%). Also the occurrence of the problem of desertion is strikingly higher among the employed category (8. 2%).

As is seen in Table 6, the clients married in the age group of 18-22 years form the largest category (42. 2%) of cases reported at the Special Cell. The client married in the age group of twenty-two to twenty-eight form 27.1% of the total cases, while the clients married below eighteen are 24.4% of the cases registered.

#### *Marital Details*

Physical and mental harassment is markedly the most important problem featured, among all the categories. The existence of all the four problems in a relatively higher proportion is observed in cases where clients have been married below the age of 18 years (28. 3%). In the age group of eighteen to twenty-two years, the problem of physical and mental harassment and desertion is projected as the prevalent problem (14. 5%).

**Table 6**  
**AGE AT MARRIAGE**  
**(IN THE PERCENT)**

	<i>Below 18 Years</i>	18-22 Years	23-28 Years	<i>Above 28 Years</i>
Mental Harassment	6.7	8.7	12.8	6.5
Physical & Mental Harassment	43.3	50.2	36.8	41.9
Physical & Mental Harassment & Maintenance	4.2	8.7	7.5	9.7
Desertion	4.2	2.4	14.3	16.1
Physical & Mental Harassment & Desertion	10.8	14.5	8.3	6.5
Desertion & Maintenance	2.5	3.9	5.3	6.5
Physical & Mental Harassment Maintenance & Desertion	28.3	11.6	15.0	12.9
Frequency	120	207	133	31
Percent	24.4	42.2	27.1	6.3

INA: 985

Desertion is noticeable in a sizeable proportion in the category of clients married above twenty-eight years (16.1%) and married within twenty-two to twenty-eight years (14.3%). This is almost four times as much as that reported by the earlier two categories.

As is seen in Table 7, a relatively larger percentage of clients (35.1%) have been married for a period of seven years or more years. 29.5% of the cases registered are wherein the period of marriage has been upto two years. As is seen in the above table, as the marriage span has increased the proportion of cases registered has declined.

However, irrespective of the length of marital union, physical and mental harassment is manifest as the most prevalent problem, wherein clients married for twenty-one years and more represent a larger proportion (52.5%). The occurrence of all the four problems too is prominent in all the categories. It is highest wherein the length of the marriage is between seven to fourteen years (26.9%).

As is reflected in the above tables, desertion, as a problem by itself by and large reduces as the span of marriage increases. In the category of twenty-one and above, the problem of desertion features in a lower proportion (2.5%) but the problem of desertion and maintenance figures in a relatively higher proportion of 7.5%.

**Table 7**  
**PERIOD OF MARRIAGE**  
**(IN THE PERCENT)**

	<i>0-2</i>	<i>2-7</i>	<i>7-24</i>	<i>14-21</i>	<i>21 &amp; above</i>
Mental Harassment	19.1	4.8	4.1	3.3	5.0
Physical & Mental Harassment	44.5	44.7	40.6	42.3	52.5
Physical & Mental Harassment & Maintenance	4.6	7.3	12.2	10.3	12.5
Desertion	8.4	7.7	4.6	5.1	2.5
Physical & Mental Harassment & Desertion	13.3	12.1	6.6	12.8	5.0
Desertion & Maintenance	3.8	4.2	5.1	5.1	7.5
Physical & Mental Harassment, maintenance & Desertion	16.4	19.1	26.9	20.5	15.0
Frequency	263	313	197	78	40
Percent	19.5	35	22.1	8.8	4.5

INA: 585

**Table 8**  
**RESIDENCE AFTER MARRIAGE**  
**(IN THE PERCENT)**

	<i>Husband's Parent</i>	<i>Wife's Parent</i>	<i>Nuclear</i>
Mental Harassment	6.9	4.5	5.3
Physical & Mental Harassment	48.3	40.9	34.2
Physical & Mental Harassment & Maintenance	6.2	13.6	13.7
Desertion	3.9	13.6%	7.9
Physical & Mental Harassment & Desertion	10.6	4.5	6.8
Desertion & Maintenance	2.6	9.1	11.6
Physical & Mental Harassment & Maintenance & Desertion	21.4	13.6	20.5
Frequency	695	22	190
Percent	76.6	2.4	20.9

INA: 569

As is seen in Table 8, 76.6% of the clients, have stayed with their husband's parents immediately after marriage; while 20.9% of the clients have stayed separately in a nuclear household.

The apparent problem, among all the three categories is that of physical and mental harassment; which is slightly lower when the client has resided in a nuclear household (34. 2%). There is a marginal variation in the occurrence of all the four problems among clients staying with husband's parents (21. 4%) and those staying in the nuclear household (20. 5%).

Desertion, as a problem, is reported in a higher proportion when couples have resided with the woman's parents immediately after marriage (13. 6%). Where the women have resided with their in-laws immediately after marriage, physical and mental harassment together with desertion is a noticeable problem. In the category of couples residing in a nuclear household immediately after marriage, physical mental harassment and maintenance (13. 7%) and desertion and maintenance (11. 6%) feature as evident problems.

*'Other Details*

As is seen in Table 9, 56. 6% of the clients, at the time of approaching the Special Cell, resided with their parents while 28. 4% resided in their matrimonial home.

**Table 9**  
**RESIDENCE AT PRESENT**  
**(IN THE PERCENT)**

	<i>Matri- monial</i>	<i>With Parent</i>	<i>With Friend Relative/ Others</i>	<i>Shelter Homes</i>	<i>Indep- endently</i>
Mental Harassment	12.2	4.9	8.3	4.0	1.1
Physical & Mental Harassment	64.0	37.7	44.4	48.0	32.2
Physical & Mental Harassment & Maintenance	17.1	6.1	5.6	-	4.4
Desertion	0.7	3.5	2.8	4.0	25.6
Physical & Mental Harassment & Desertion	2.1	15.1	8.3	8.0	7.8
Desertion & Maintenance	2.1	5.1	2.8	12.0	10.0
Physical & Mental Harassment & Maintenance & Desertion	1.7	27.7	27.8	24.0	18.8
Frequency	286	571	36	25	90
Percent	28.4	56.6	3.6	2.5	8.9

The clients who resided in their matrimonial home, while registering their complaint at the Special Cell, had as the most prominent problem that of physical and mental harassment (64%).

The incidence of all the four problems is high among clients who have stayed independently or resided with their parents with relatives, friends and in shelter homes at the time of approaching the Special Cell. Among the clients staying separately desertion is evidently a major problem (25. 6%).

**Table 10**  
**THE PRIME OFFENDER AS PERCEIVED BY THE CLIENTS**  
**(IN THE PERCENT)**

	<i>Husband</i>	<i>Husband &amp; In-laws</i>	<i>In-laws</i>	<i>Wife</i>
Mental Harassment	7.1	5.8	13.0	—
Physical & Mental harassment	44.7	57.2	60.3	—
Physical & Mental Harassment & Maintenance	10.0	1.7	2.1	—
Desertion	2.2		1.4	93.7
Physical & Mental Harassment & Desertion	10.3	9.8	6.2	—
Desertion & Maintenance	7.7	1.2	2.1	6.3
Physical & Mental Harassment & Maintenance & Desertion	18.1	24.3	15.1	—
Frequency	1061	173	146	79
Percent	72.5	12.0	10.1	5.4

INA: 17

The prime offenders reported most of often are the husbands (72. 5%), husband and in-laws (12 %) and in-laws (10. 1%). Complaints by men wherein the perceived prime offender is the wife, form 5. 4% of the cases.

Where the husband has registered a complaint, the main problem appears to be that of desertion by the wife (93. 7%). In the other three categories, physical and mental harassment is the prominent problem. The incidence of physical and mental harassment is relatively high wherein the in-laws (60.3%) and the husband and in-laws (57. 2%) are reported as prime offenders. The occurrence of all the four problems is higher (42.3%) wherein husband and in-laws are reported as prime offenders.

**Table 11**  
**PERCEIVED CAUSAL FACTORS**

	<i>Dowry Demand/of</i>	<i>Alcoholism/of</i>	<i>Infidelity/of</i>	<i>Suspicion/of</i>	<i>Instigation/of</i>	<i>Property Disputes/of</i>	<i>Other factors</i>
Mental Harassment	6.1	1.1	9.0	14.6	8.9	21.6	19.0
Physical & Mental Harassment	47.6	51.5	30.6	37.5	44.	43.2	41.4
Physical & Mental Harassment & Maintenance	5.7	16.9	10.8	6.3	2.2	5.4	3.4
Desertion	0.4	1.5	6.3	2.1	11.1	10.8	6.92
Physical & Mental Harassment & Desertion	11.8	9.9	9.5	14.6	6.7	-	12.1
Desertion & Maintenance	1.3	.7	14.0	8.3	8.9	2.7	5.2
Physical & Mental Harassment & Maintenance & Desertion	27.1	18.4	19.9	16.7	17.8	16.2	12.1
Frequency	229	272	222	48	45	37	58
Percent	25.1	29.9	24.4	5.3	4.9	4.1	6.3

INA: 565

\*Note: of other factors

Alcoholism of the spouse (29.9%), dowry demand (25.1%) and infidelity (24.4%) are the three most predominant factors responsible for abuse, as perceived by the client.

The factors as visible in the above table do not operate singly but in combination with other factors. However the primary factor as stated by the client is highlighted herein.

Physical and mental harassment is the predominant problem, in all the categories. The occurrence of this problem is relatively high where alcoholism has been stated as the perceived causal factor (51.5%). The existence of all the four problems is apparent in a higher proportion where dowry demand is the perceived causal factor.

The magnitude of the problem of physical and mental harassment and maintenance is also noticeably high, where alcoholism is featured as the perceived causal factor (16.9%). The problem of desertion is apparent in a higher proportion (11.1%) in the category where instigation is the prime

factor. The problem of desertion and maintenance as reported is higher (14.0%) in cases wherein infidelity of the spouse is the perceived causal factor.

The extent of the problem of physical and mental harassment and desertion is comparatively high in cases where dowry demand and suspicion are reported as the prime perceived causal factors (11.8% and 14%)

Information is not available for almost one third of the cases. One of the reasons for this could be that many clients are unable to pinpoint any sole reason for the abuse, and have no explanation, or rationalisation for the existent problem.

The problem, often is "I don't know why", "I cannot explain it" and "it is just that he hit me". An understanding of the theories of violence - as given in the introductory chapter, offers an insight into the phenomenon of abuse within marriage.

It has been the social workers' experience at the Special Cell that inclusion of the term 'dowry harassment' may be a deliberate effort on part of the client, so as to seek attention. Dowry harassment is most often reported in the clients application as the factor responsible for abuse, since there is a wide awareness and understanding of dowry as a reported crime.

The social workers have observed that often what is stated in the clients application, may vary from the worker's assessment of the problem. Clients application may report a few factors, but the clients may not pin point the reasons responsible for the abuse. Much of this depends on the literacy level, skills, writing and the inability to articulate. It has also been observed that details of the causes of the problem is not often stated in the application.

The category of 'other factors' includes, conflicts over housework, gambling of son/husband leading to financial stress, physical mental illness of children/spouse, personality problems, adjustment problems, childlessness, inability to bear male children etc. . Many of these factors could be predominant factors, leading to a "marital conflict". However, they do not feature as important factors in the table above, as these may not be recorded as a problem in the intake register or may not be reported in the clients' applications.

Counselling for reconciliation and legal help feature as the prime help sought by the client at the time of reporting to the Special Cell (32.7% and 33% respectively). Many clients register complaints at the Special Cell unsure of the further course of action, which perhaps explains why 16.6% of the cases have not specified the kind of help sought.

The category of other kind of help sought includes help in seeking financial assistance from parents, help to secure a job in the husband's firm in case of his demise, help to seek referral to other agencies for employment, education and help to seek shelter. Legal help includes help in filing petition

for divorce, maintenance and child custody, help to file a mutual consent divorce deed, help claim a share in the husband's property and help to seek an injunction. Police help includes assistance from police to register an NC or to file a case and to seek police help retrieve *stridhan* articles.

**Table 12**  
**WHAT KIND OF HELP WAS SOUGHT BY THE CLIENT**

	<i>Counse Cling For Reco- ciliation</i>	<i>Legal Help</i>	<i>Police Inter- vention</i>	<i>Help To Stop Hara- ssment</i>	<i>Not speci- fied</i>	<i>Other Reas- ons</i>
Mental Harassment	7.2	6.8	9.8	4.6	9.5	4.8
Physical & Mental Harassment	33.5	45.0	53.6	70.6	54.5	40.5
Physical & Mental Harassment & Maintenance	6.0	9.2	5.4	11.0	7.0	7.1
Desertion	13.3	3.5	.9	5.4	16.7	
Physical & Mental Harassment & Desertion	13.3	8.6	8.9	6.4	5.0	2.4
Desertion & Maintenance	7.0	7.6	2.7	6.6	7.1	
Physical & Mental Harassment & Maintenance & Desertion	19.6	19.3	19.7	6.4	12.0	21.4
Frequency	483	487	112	109	242	43
Percent	32.7	33.0	7.6	7.4	16.4	2.8

The above categories enlisted in the table are not mutually exclusive, since for any case at any point of time access to more than one agency may be sought.

70. 6% of the clients facing the problem of physical and mental harassment, have merely stated 'help to stop harassment', without specifying what course of action needs to be taken. Few clients may be specific of the help sought at the first instance itself. This is possible when there is clarity of the role of the Special Cell, or when the client is referred by another agency, for a specific purpose. Also the thought given to the problem, the consultations held prior to coming to the Special Cell and the gravity of the problem determine whether the client is clear and specific over the kind of help sought.

At times, the clients may specify a certain plan of action, initially but as the case progresses, may change their minds and seek other alternatives. For example a client initially seeking counseling for reconciliation may later decide to seek legal redressal for divorce, child custody and maintenance



and police **intervention to** register a case for retrieval of stridhan, and so on.

## CONCLUSIONS

The reporting of mental harassment as a problem is relatively high. However, it must be noted is that dimension of violence can take many different forms, and the problem may be experienced either in isolation or in combination with other problems.

The existence of all the four main problems is observed in all the categories irrespective of age, education, socioeconomic or employment status. However, it is marginally high in the age group of eighteen to twenty-four years, is relatively higher among illiterates, among clients of the lower class and among the unemployed category.

The existence of all the four problems is also observed in a higher proportion, where clients have been married below eighteen years, marginal variation in the occurrence of all the four problems, among clients staying with their husband's parents and those staying in nuclear households is observed. The occurrence of all the four problems is high where dowry demand is the perceived causal factor.

Mental harassment reported as a problem is relatively higher among the graduates/post graduates and clients educated upto SSC/HSC. A comparatively higher incidence of mental harassment is reported among the upper middle class.

Desertion as a problem by itself is observed in a higher proportion in the age group of forty-five to fifty-five and above fifty-five, the magnitude of this problem being strikingly high among the employed category. It is observed in a comparatively higher proportion in the category of clients married above twenty years, and married within twenty-two to twenty-eight years and is also reported in a higher proportion where the couple has resided with the woman's parents immediately after marriage. Desertion, as a problem by itself reduces as span of marriage increases. Above twenty-one years of marriage, maintenance and desertion are the evident problems.

# ANALYSIS OF AGENCY RECORDS — III

Presented in this chapter are some cases problem sub-types and a look at the social workers intervention in some of the cases. Given below are the number of cases registered under each category.

Parental abuse	80
Breach of trust	56
Fraudulent marriage	39
Unwed pregnancy	30
Eve teasing	26
Rape	18
Harassment by houseowner	13
Child abuse	14
Harassment at the workplace	13

The number of cases as enlisted above, are relatively few under each category and the quantum of information available is limited. The problem is presented with its manifestation coupled the demographic details of the client, and the role of the social worker.

What is included here is the abuse of the parents by their sons, sons and daughters-in-law, abuse by other members within the family over matter such as property and dispute over financial matters with brothers-in-law, brother, etc. Largely reported cases are that of harassment by the son; over financial matters, over property matters. At times the perceived causal factor also is the delinquency of the adolescent son, cases of substance abuse resulting in violent, uncontrollable behaviour and physical assault causing mental trauma and stress to the client.

**Table 1**  
**DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF CLIENTS WHO HAVE**  
**COMPLAINED OF PARENTAL ABUSE**

<b>Age</b>		45-54 20	Above 55 38	INA 22	Total 80	
<b>Education</b>	<i>Illiterate</i> 14	<i>Primary level</i> 12	<i>Upto matric/HSC</i> 12	<i>Gradu/ Part G</i> 2	INA 40	Total 80
<b>Socio-economic Status</b>	<i>Low</i> 15	<i>Lower middle</i> 29	<i>Upper middle High</i> 10	—	INA 26	Total 80
<b>Employment status</b>		<i>Not Earning</i> 38	<i>Earning</i> 18	INA 24	Total 80	

This problem has broadly manifested itself in the form of:

1. Physical/Verbal abuse
2. Financial problems
  - refusal to give maintenance
  - refusal to pay medical bills of an ailing parent.
  - extorting money, transferring money and/or property in self's name.
3. Psychological abuse
  - threats to abandon
  - deserting the elderly parents
  - turning parents out of the house
  - verbal abuse, taunts, etc
  - neglect or refusal to look after an ailing parent
  - maltreatment or not treating the elderly person as a "family member".

Given below are a few case illustrations.

*Case of Mrs. Ahuja*

PERSON AGAINST WHOM THE COMPLAINT IS MADE: Son

PROBLEM: Delinquent Behaviour of Son

Mrs. Ahuja complained that her son, Raunauk (19 years), was a school drop out and unemployed and had fallen into bad company. He was into the habit of "smoking", "drinking", gambling and committing "theft". He was uncontrollable because any attempt to explain to him, resulted in him getting enraged and assaulting the mother.

Mrs. Ahuja expected the social worker, to call Raunauk to the Special Cell and "counsel him". She also expected the social worker to help him seek employment.

In cases such as these, the social worker, generally pays a home visit to speak to the 'son'. The client's son is counselled, a joint meeting held and the appropriate referrals made.

In other cases of parental abuse the son, daughter-in-law, neighbour or relative or the other concerned party is called to the Special Cell and "mutual settlement" is attempted upon.

Given below are two case illustrations of "harassment by son" over property and financial matters.

### *Case of Lata*

Lata Shinde, a widow, aged 50 years was staying along with her son, Jitu, 27 years, in a small room, which was owned by her. Lata worked as a domestic help and had some money in the bank, which she had received from her husband's company after his death. Her son, was unemployed and constantly harassed her, demanding money that could be spent on gambling and alcohol.

When Lata refused to give him money, Jitu worked out a strategy. He took a deposit of Rs. 10,000/- and a rental amount per month from a family; and put them up in his mother's house as paying guests without his mother's permission.

Lata thought that the paying guests (a large family of six) were intruders in her house and should leave. However, the paying guests refused to leave till Jitu returned the deposit amount that had been taken from them.

Lata approached the Special Cell expecting the social worker to talk to her son so that he would return the deposit amount to the paying guests who would then leave her house.

The help of local police station was sought in resolving this case.

### *Case of Sandra*

Mrs. Sandra D'sa, a widow, stated that her younger son, Joey, wanted his partnership share in the shop. He insisted that the shop be sold, so that he could get his share. When his demands were unheeded, he would go to the shop drunk, ransack the shop and create a 'scene'. He also physically abused all the family members.

Sandra approached the social worker to help her to stop harassment from her son, and resolve the matter peacefully at the Special Cell.

**Table 2**  
**DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF CLIENTS WHO HAVE COMPLAINED OF**  
**BREACH OF TRUST**

<b>Age</b>	>18 1	18-24 23	25-34 11	35-44 5	45-54 2	INA 14	Total 56
<b>Education</b>	Illiterate 7	Primary level 11	Upto matric 16	Graduation 5	-	INA 17	Total 56
<b>Socio-economic Status</b>	Low 22	Lower middle 14	Upper middle 4	-	-	INA 16	Total 56
<b>Employment Status</b>	Not Earning 7	Earning 10	-	-	INA 29	Total 56	

This problem has broadly manifested itself in the form of

1. Male friend absconded with money.
2. Male friend promised to marry but arranged another marriage for himself.
3. Married a male friend and then lived together; but the man later denied that he had ever married the woman.
4. Male friend wanted a 'live in' relationship, but refused marriage.
5. On the wedding day, the groom did not come.
6. Engagement broken; refusal to return gifts.
7. Fiance promised not to take any dowry, but demanded large sums on the day prior to the marriage.
8. Others.

Refusal to return stridhan to the woman by the husband and in-laws, as and when the woman demands it, or when she desires to separate is the most common case of "breach of trust" by in-laws and husband as encountered at the Special Cell. However, it is not often enlisted as a case of "breach of trust" *per se* since the client may register her case with a varying problem definition by seeking help on different aspects and the issue of stridhan retrieval may surface at a later stage except in some cases where the client may approach the Special Cell, exclusively seeking help to retrieve stridhan.

Some cases of breach of trust that have been registered are:

*Case of Ratna*

PERSON AGAINST WHOM THE COMPLAINT IS MADE : Husband's Friend

**DETAILS: Absconded with Money**

Ratna was widowed at the age of 32, when her husband expired in a train accident. She had two young children to be looked after. Being illiterate, and not having adequate support, she sought help of her husband's friend to enable her to file claims for PF, Insurance, etc in the company where her husband worked. Her husband's friend, Sudhakar did recover the money from the company, but pocketed most of it. It was later, that she suspected his act, and approached the Special Cell to recover the money from Sudhakar.

*Case of Radha*

**PERSON AGAINST WHOM THE COMPLAINT IS MADE : Male Friend**

**DETAILS: Swindled Her of Money and Refused to Marry as Promised**

Radha and Vivek courted each other for six years. During this period, Vivek made demands for money, often stating that he urgently needed money, to meet some or the other demand—at times, to meet his personal expenses, at times to meet his family's expenses, for the purpose of business, etc.

Radha, placing faith in him, gave him as much as he demanded even if it meant, selling off her jewellery items. Later, she realised that Vivek had swindled her of all her money . As promised, neither did he return the money, nor did he marry her. At this juncture, she approached the Special Cell.

*Case of Gauri*

**PERSON AGAINST WHOM THE COMPLAINT IS MADE : Fiance**

**DETAILS : Broke Engagement, a Week Prior to the Marriage**

Gauri, about 18 years, educated upto Std X and residing at Pune was engaged to Ravi, 24 years, a B. Com graduate working as a sales executive in a private company. The marriage had been arranged by common relatives. A month prior to the marriage, Gauri's family came to Bombay, to make the required arrangements.

After all the arrangements were made, invitation cards printed and circulated, Ravi announced a week prior to the wedding that he was not interested in getting married to Gauri. The marriage was not held and Gauri along with her family approached the Special Cell, to claim compensation for the expenses incurred, and the damages caused by Ravi.

Some other case of breach of trust that have been registered are :

1. A client loaned Rs. 2,000/- to a trader on the faith that he would return the money after a stipulated number of days. The client had no written

document and the trader subsequently denied having received any money.

2. A client gave ornaments to a moneylender, without any written document in support. The moneylender did not return jewellery after the principal amount with interest was fully paid.
3. A client gave Rs. 25,000/- to a travel agent (after taking a loan by mortgaging her jewellery) who promised that he would send the client's son to Dubai. However, even after six months had lapsed, the travel agent had made no such arrangement.
4. A client gave Rs. 5,000/- to a detective agency to enquire into and furnish complete details of the client's husband's property and income. The client had filed a suit for divorce and had been required to furnish further details about her husband's property and income, to claim "alimony" to the proportion that she had sought. The client had knowledge that her husband owned vast agricultural land and earned substantial income thereof. However, she had no documentary proof thereof. The detective agency gave her a report stating that her husband owned no land and he earned a negligible income.

The client said that the trust she had placed in the agency's competence to conduct a "fair and reasonable enquiry" was lost. The client further stated that she was merely swindled of Rs. 5,000/- which she demanded back from the agency. In cases of breach of trust, the social worker meets the other concerned person. Police help, if and when needed, is sought and compensation been arranged in some cases.

**Table 3**  
**DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF CLIENTS WHO HAVE**  
**COMPLAINED OF FRAUDULENT MARRIAGE**

<b>Age</b>	> 18	18-24	25-34	35-44	INA	Total
	-	9	14	4	12	39
<b>Education</b>	<i>Illiterate</i>	<i>Primary</i>	<i>Upto Matric</i>	<i>Grad</i>	INA	Total
	2	7	14	15	39	
<b>Socio-economic Status</b>	<i>Lower</i>	<i>Lower Middle</i>		<i>Upper Middle</i>	INA	Total
	10	11		-	18	39
<b>Employment Status</b>	<i>Not Earning</i>	<i>Earning</i>			INA	Total
	7	7			15	39

Some of the cases registered of fraudulent marriage, are those wherein the marital status i.e. the previous marriage of the man is concealed,

resulting in a bigamous relationship, rendering the second marriage null and void.

### *Case 1*

Seema (25) met Rajesh (29) at her workplace. Both were working in a garment manufacturing unit—Seema as a daily wager and Rajesh as a tailor. Both were educated upto Std V. Within six months of knowing each other the two got married and registered their marriage in the City Civil Court. Rajesh revealed his status as that of a widower. The two resided together. Seema quit her job, and took up the role of a homemaker and Rajesh, found another job with better prospects in a private limited company.

For two years, the two stayed together as husband and wife. One day, having left for work, Rajesh did not return home. An endless wait later, a frantic search and rounds of Rajesh's workplace, brought to her knowledge, the fact that Rajesh had quit his job and left for his native place.

Seema managed to get the address from his workmate, and corresponded with his village residence (presence of a family at the native place was unheard of by Seema previously as Rajesh had always put up a front of being a person without a family: stating that his parents had expired and he maintained no contact with his siblings or relatives).

For six months Seema wrote letters, but received no reply. Then she approached the Special Cell. A letter to the local police station by the Special Cell social worker (at the taluka level) met with a positive response. The duty officer (of the concerned police station conducted a social enquiry) and in his letter revealed that Rajesh was living with his mother and his wife. This letter was a revelation to Seema, who later decided to move to court to file a case of deceit and claim a compensation.

Attempts at settling the matter at the Special Cell level did not work; since Rajesh (pursuant to the police officer's intervention); did not co-operate with the social worker after the initial visit to the Special Cell and further work in this connection, at the Special Cell did not seem possible.

In Seema's case, the marriage was registered in court, and documentary evidence of a marriage certificate was existent. Her case is still pending in court.

However, in most of the cases, where the women are deceived, one observes that there is no documentary evidence regarding the marriage ceremony. The absence of photographs and/or certificates render it difficult to approach the court, in the absence of such evidence. The marriage may have been performed in a temple where the couple garland each other, but both consider it as a valid marriage. Given below is case illustration.



*Case 2*

Alka, 27 years educated upto Std VII, was working as a class IV employee in a government hospital when she met Ram, 28 years, through an acquaintance (who was working in another firm). After a brief courtship they married in a temple and went to Nashik for a short holiday.

After fifteen days of staying together, Alka discovered that Ram had been previously married, with three children. Having heard of the Special Cell, through an ex-client, she approached the Special Cell claiming that Ram pay her a compensation for having deceived her and sexually exploited her. Ram acknowledged his fault and through the Special Cell gave Alka the compensatory amount which she demanded.

## DECEIT IN MARRIAGE

*Case 1*

Aradhana (24 years) would often accompany Sudhir (32 years) during her courtship period to an apartment in a posh locality which he claimed was his. His lifestyle was lavish; he portrayed the image of a rich upper class business person. After marriage (through vedic rites), the couple moved into "his" apartment; but a month after marriage, Sudhir absconded.

Aradhana came to understand that Sudhir had rented the house, for a short period but had failed to pay the rent (which was due in instalments). Since his cheque had bounced, the flat owner asked Aradhana to vacate the flat immediately. The cars that he had proudly displayed were borrowed,

It was only later, when he was traced through the effort of the Special Cell and the Social Service Branch that it was recognised that by using similar strategies and by portraying a false image of himself, Sudhir had deceived many women in the past.

Also under the category of "deceit in marriage" are cases wherein women have complained that drug addiction/alcoholism of the husband has been concealed. Women and men have approached the Special Cell, stating that either spouse's mental/physical illness or illness-handicap of the siblings is not revealed before marriage or that the impotency of the husband and the wife's inability to conceive is not communicated to the other spouse before marriage.

Cases of unwed pregnancy reported at the Special Cellare of

1. Pregnancy as a result of having a sexual relationship with the promise of an eventual marriage.
2. Cases of man and a woman, sharing a 'live in' relationship and pregnancy/child birth thereof.

3. Cases of pregnancy/child birth as a result of rape (few cases have been reported wherein the women have a low mental IQ and have delivered a child as a result of rape).

**Table 4**  
**DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF CLIENTS WHO HAVE REPORTED THE PROBLEM OF UNWED PREGNANCY**

<b>Age</b>	18 1	18-24 14	25-34 6		INA 8	Total 29
<b>Education</b>	Illiterate 1	Primary 7	Upto Matric 10	Grad/ Post Gr. 1	INA 10	Total 29
<b>Socio-economic Status</b>	Low 13	Lower Middle 6	Upper Middle		INA 10	Total 29
<b>Employment Status</b>	Not 10	Earning 2	Earning		INA 17	Total 29

In certain cases, of unwed motherhood, women have approached the Special Cell, seeking a joint meeting with the putative father so that he may eventually get married to them. Police support and/or legal help to claim maintenance for the child is the kind of help sought in such cases. In certain cases of unwanted pregnancies, women have sought referral services for medical termination and in case of unwanted child births women have been referred to adoption centres.

**Table 5**  
**DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF CLIENTS WHO HAVE COMPLAINED OF THE PROBLEM OF EVE TEASING**

<b>Age</b>	> 18 2	18-24 4	25-34 4	35-44 4	INA --	Total 14
<b>Education</b>	Illiterate 1	Primary Level 3	Upto Matric 5	Graduation 3	INA 2	Total 14
<b>Socio-economic Status</b>	Low 6	Low Middle 5	Upper Middle 3		INA --	Total 14
<b>Employment Status</b>	Not Earning 10	Earning 4			INA --	Total 14

What is clear here is that eve-teasing cuts across all ages, education, economic and employment strata. Most of the clients have reported that obscene songs and gestures are made by local gundas and, at times, by strangers. There have been cases registered by women who have reported that next door neighbours and, at times, persons known to them, have made attempts to pressurise them to become friends with them or to marry them. When such remarks have been unheeded the men have, at times, turned violent and have even attempted to molest the women.

It has been observed of the cases reported at the Special Cell, that eve teasing:

- is not an offense that is solely committed by strangers. Ex-boy-friends and ex-husbands have often indulged in the act to mentally harass the women, sometimes with the intention of renewing the relationship.
- Eve teasing may not be initially the reason for referral to the Special Cell, but may, at times, surface as a grave problem later.

Given below is one such case example

#### *Case 1*

Sunita came to the Special Cell, stating that her husband was physically abusing her and sought a divorce. Both Sunita and Mohan, her husband, were young—18 and 21 years respectively. They were married about six months earlier. Sunita was clear that she wanted to separate, but Mohan insisted that she stay back, promising to improve his behaviour. After wavering a number of times, Sunita finally decided to separate and moved with her bag and baggage to her mother's house. She also filed a case in the court for divorce. Yet harassment continued. Mohan, along with his friends, chased her wherever she went. After carefully noting the time of her going to and coming back from work, he made it a regular practice, to pass cheap remarks, sing film songs, attempt to hold her hand, persisting that she revive the relationship. The help of the local police station was sought and a written word was taken from Mohan to put an end to his nonsensical behaviour.

Though these cannot be strictly termed as "eve-teasing", cases such as blackmailing, sending obscene letters, making phone calls, chasing and following that have been reported at the Special Cell by the clients are also worth looking at.

#### *Case 2*

PERSON AGAINST WHOM THE COMPLAINT IS MADE: Friend

PROBLEM: Sending Obscene Letters

Nikita (19 years) complained that her school friend, Rajiv after having heard of her engagement to another person had been sending two letters per day, threatening that if she did not break the engagement he would kill himself, the client and her fiance.

Apart from the letters, he wandered around her house and her place of work, attempting to personally meet her, follow her wherever she went, try to physically hold her to convey how much he "loved her, and that she should marry none other than him".

Nikita approached the Special Cell to stop the physical and mental harassment, caused to her by Rajiv.

### Case 3

PERSON AGAINST WHOM THE COMPLAINT IS MADE : School Peon  
PROBLEM : Sending Obscene Letters/chasing

The client, Mrs. Kalambkar, approached the Special Cell, stating that her granddaughter, Asha (13 years) studying in std VIII, in a private school, was being harassed by a peon in the school.

The peon, Mr. Suryakant Jadhav (25), had been sending letters to her since a month stating that he was interested in her and if she did not respond he would commit suicide. Mr. Jadhav also followed her on the road which intimidated the young Asha resulting in her not attending school altogether. The client approached the Special Cell stating that Asha would henceforth stay with her parents and be transferred to another school. Yet she wanted to ensure, that Mr. Jadhav, did not harass her anymore.

**Table 6**  
**DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF CLIENTS WHO HAVE**  
**REPORTED OF THE PROBLEM OF RAPE**

<b>Age</b>	>18 4	18-24 4	25-34 4	35- 44 1	INA 5	<b>Total</b> 18
<b>Education</b>	Illiterate -	Primary Level 2	Upto Matric 5	Graduation	INA 11	<b>Total</b> 18
<b>Socio- economic Status</b>	Low 6	Lower Middle 3	Upper Middle 1	-	INA 8	<b>Total</b> 18
<b>Employment status</b>	Not Earning 7	Earning 1	-	-	INA 10	<b>Total</b> 18

The social worker at the Special Cell, handled the case jointly with the Social Service Branch. In such cases; the social worker called and had

"individual" and "joint" meetings at the Special Cell, with all those concerned. If essential the support of the local police station or Social Service Branch has also been sought. In such cases, whenever possible, the Special Cell, has meetings with the other person to curb such physical and mental harassment to the women. At times, referrals to police station or the Social Service Branch too is sought while intervening in such cases.

Due to a number of missing variables, the above table appears distorted. The trend that the incidence of rape committed is less among the "upper middle" class and among the "educated" and employed women, is too simplistic an explanation, since common knowledge has it that "rape" is committed on women irrespective of the class, education, employment status, etc. Many a case of rape that have been reported at the Special Cell, have sought support on "other aspects of work" rather than "counselling for rape" *per se*.

#### *Case 1*

Kalpana (married for about six months) resided along with Ravi, her husband. Her older brother-in-law, Suraj resided in the adjacent room along with his wife, Sushila (the two rooms being separated by a wooden partition).

When Suraj's wife Sushila was away to her maternal residence for a month, Kalpana visited her brother-in-law's house to perform all the household tasks of cleaning, cooking his meals, etc. Once when as usual she visited him and was conducting the routine duties at his house (while her husband had left for work), Suraj, raped her.

Kalpana, along with local community support, then registered a criminal case against Suraj. She also approached the Special Cell along with her husband five months after the occurrence of the incident. She sought support on what was apparently a "property dispute" between the brothers. Suraj had dismantled the wooden partition and occupied their "portion" of the room refusing Kalpana and Ravi entry into the house.

As is seen in the above case, sexual harassment and sexual exploitation by the male members in the family is rarely verbalised and may not always be stated as the initial problem as is seen above. The initial problem statement of the client may vary.

In the above case, it was initially difficult for the social worker to comprehend Suraj's hostile and vengeful behaviour towards Kalpana and Ravi. It was only later, when Kalpana, voiced the incident of rape and what followed subsequently that the social worker gained clarity over the "root cause" of the problem.

Kalpana explained to the social worker, that when she registered a criminal case against Suraj, he had become antagonistic and tried ways and

means, to "put her in her place". Accusing her of being immoral and responsible for the act, Suraj called a meeting of his family members including Kalpana's parents ordering that Kalpana be taken back to her maternal home.

Kalpana's husband, Ravi, being the younger brother, had no say in the matter and obliged his brother's wishes. For three months Kalpana stayed with her parents, but Ravi decided to get her back home. When Suraj saw that Ravi was supporting his wife, he sought to the means of refusing them "entry in the house".

At this stage Ravi and Kalpana had approached the social worker.

The social worker, with the help of the local police station, negotiated for the couple to reconstruct the partition and transfer Ravi's share of the room on his name. Also, out of police and community pressure, Suraj was compelled to sell his share of room and leave the vicinity, thereby offering Kalpana mental peace and security.

Thus, at times, the underlying cause of a 'problem', may grossly differ from what is overtly stated.

Given below is one more case illustration, of 'rape', by the client's brother-in-law. Herein the client approached the Special Cell' eight months after the 'incident'.

### *Case 2*

Ranju was married to Ramesh and resided along with him and his younger brother Anand in a "chawl" in the city suburbs. A year after being married, Ranju's husband went out, for official work, for about a month.

In the absence of his elder brother, Anand (who was about 20 years) behaved in a fashion that perplexed Ranju. Daily, he bought her "accessories" like "gajaras", "bangles", "neckpieces" and so on and would insist that he himself would adorn Ranju with them. Initially, Ranju resisted such efforts but Anand stated that these gestures were out of his love for her as his "younger sister".

Little did Ranju realise that these were attempts to 'seduce' her. After having been physically intimate, Anand demanded that she have sexual relations with him. Though Ranju was reluctant, Anand sexually exploited her (he forcibly had sex with her without her consent).

After Ramesh's return, Anand instigated his brother stating that his wife was "immoral" and not "chaste" and she should be abandoned. However, Ramesh decided to be on his wife's side and chose to forget the past as an "accident".

Then, Anand used the strategy of publicising the act among the "chawl" residents. He also informed Ranju's parents, his parents and relatives in the

village, Ramesh's workmates in the factory: all this with the sole purpose of ostracising Ranju.

Ranju found the social stigma unbearable—everybody pointed fingers at her, blaming her for the act. When she approached the Special Cell, the social worker observed that she displayed depressive symptoms that called for urgent psychiatric attention. She was accordingly referred to a psychiatrist.

Yet, when she first approached the Special Cell, she sought help to cease Anand's indiscriminate and nonsensical behaviour that had caused tremendous anxiety to the couple. Herein the social worker jointly handled the case with the duty officer at the police station and undertook a contract from Anand to halt his behaviour of constantly 'defaming' Ranju.

As is seen in both the above cases, help was sought not immediately after the incident but much later. Also, what is observed is that the offense of "rape" may not always be committed by strangers, but by persons known to the women.

Apart from support that has centred around "other related aspects", in a case of rape, the social workers have also, extended co-operation to lodge a criminal complaint, in the police station when the police has been hesitant to do so.

Given below is one such example.

### *Case 3*

Saeeda, a young girl of less than 16 years, came to the Special Cell stating that Nizam had had a sexual relationship with her, but was now refusing marriage. A child had been born out of this relationship and the child had been given to foster care. Saeeda's prime demand was that Nizam should marry her, but when he refused, she sought recourse to the criminal procedure and decided to lodge a complaint of rape.

Considering the long time gap between the occurrence of the incident and the time to register a complaint at the police station, the police officers were reluctant to entertain this complaint. The social worker at the Special Cell met the concerned officer and bearing in mind "the age factor"; a criminal case of 'rape' was lodged against Nizam.

## **HARASSMENT BY HOUSE OWNER**

Cases of harassment by homeowners have been registered when:

1. The landlord has attempted to forcibly evict the clients.
2. the rent receipt is illegally transferred in the name of other family members (when the property is disputed of amongst the family members themselves).

3. When the houseowner has refused to return the deposit amount after the expiry of the contract.
4. Any other.

Given below is one case illustration, of a client's complaint of harassment by the "developer" of the property.

### *Case1*

Preeti, a legal tenant of the ground floor, of a single storeyed building, resided alone after the expiry of both her parents. She was 30 years and was holding a senior managerial post in a private firm.

The developer of the property, Mr. Sanghvi was interested in demolishing the existing structure and constructing a multi- storeyed building. He chose ways and means of harassing Preeti, so that she would quit place out of desperation. Firstly he sent her a notice, stating that the building had to be repaired and that she was obstructing repairs. When she replied stating that she had no intention of doing so, and that he could freely carry on with the work, Mr Sanghvi approached Preeti, for a discussion without prior information. Since Preeti lived alone, she asked Mr. Sanghvi to come on another day, so that her advocate friend would be present. Mr Sanghvi threatened to break open the door, if she did not let him in. By the time, her friend could come, Mr Sanghvi left.

The next time he came with the contractors & they began the repair work. Next day, to her amazement she found that the taps on the first floor flat (which was vacant and belonged to the developer) were left open and water seeped into her house from eight to ten places. Her room was totally flooded and the fire brigade had to be summoned to break open the first floor flat and shut the taps.

Apart from this, the developer had appointed a watchman in the garden who locked the door and refused to grant her entry within. Not only did the watchman abuse her, he also used the area in front of her window, as a "bathing" place, merely to embarrass her.

Preeti was thus being intimidated (she was in a vulnerable position since she was staying alone) so that she would vacate the house. Preeti approached the Special Cell, and the help of the local police station was sought to stop the immediate harassment. To tackle the other issues, Preeti sought help of an advocate.

Whenever possible, the Special Cell social worker, has interviewed the other concerned party (the tenant/houseowner) and has tried to restore the matter at the Special Cell level. Where it has not been possible, a referral to a legal aid centre has been made.



## HARASSMENT AT THE WORKPLACE

Some complaints of harassment at the workplace have been registered by women at the Special Cell. There are complaints of:

- Eve-teasing or molestation by the employer or workmates.
- One case of rape by the employer.
- Non payment of salary and the dues of the clients.
- Cases wherein the means of income of the client (tailoring machine for example) has been confiscated by the employer following dispute over "dues".

Given below is one case illustration of harassment at the workplace as reported by a client.

### *Case 1*

Manda, about 30 years and a B. Com graduate is a clerk in a government concern. She was working since eight years and was a competent and hard working person. She was also apparently next on the list of promotions. To curb her future prospects, her work mates, played a cruel game on her.

Circulars defaming her and alleging her moral character, accusing her of having sexual relations with Mr X or Mr Y from the workplace itself, were typed and displayed on every notice board in the office premises.

Coping with such false allegations become difficult for Manda. Everybody in the workplace became suspicious of her "morality" and humiliated her. The psychological pressure built to such an extent that she stopped attending work altogether.

She later approached the Special Cell seeking help. The Special Cell sought help of the Social Service Branch in dealing with the case. Manda opted against registering a case of defamation; also the specific persons, who were guilty could not be traced. Later Manda, sought a transfer and resumed work at another branch.

## CHILD ABUSE

Cases of child abuse have been reported, wherein the children are physically abused by their parents or other elderly members in the family. The women clients often reveal that their husbands physically assault the children and also make use the children a target of their anger and frustration. Some cases of severe beating of the children have been registered.

This problem, is covert and exists in a higher proportion than has been recorded at the Special Cell. The number of cases registered appears marginal because it is uncommon that the client, will report the problem of "child abuse" *per se* as the initial complaint. Cases of sexual abuse, particularly of the girl child, have also been registered at the Special Cell.

# PART III

# **RESPONSE OF SOCIAL WORKERS WHO HAVE WORKED AT THE SPECIAL CELL**

Ten social workers who had worked at the Special Cell from its inception upto June 1992, were interviewed. The social workers had worked for a period of one to three and a half years at the Special Cell (two of them were still working at the Special Cell at the time when the interviews were conducted). All the social workers had done their professional training at Tata Institute of Social Sciences and had a masters' degree in Social Work (five of them from the Department of Family and Child Welfare; three from the Department of Criminology and Correctional Administration one from the Department of Medical and Psychiatric Social Work, and one from the department of Urban and Rural Community Development).

The purpose of the interview was to understand from the perspective of the social workers, the detailed procedure involved in case handling; as well as their perception on the strengths and limitations of the Special Cell and suggestions for further improvement. Presented below is the summary of the responses of the social workers.

## **TYPES OF CASES THAT COME TO THE SPECIAL CELL**

When asked about the types of cases that come to the Special Cell the social workers stated that apart from cases of physical a mental abuse of women by their husband/in laws cases of desertion marital discord, breach of trust, fraudulent marriages, cases of unwanted pregnancies, women seeking legal help, help to seek employment, shelter; cases of retrieval of stridhan and custody of children, are some of the problems in which cases the social workers intervened.

Besides, parents of adolescents had approached the Special Cell in case their children had eloped, or wished to marry partners of their choice (against the parents wishes); women had approached the Special Cell; whom their parents had opposed to their choice of a partner; young couples who wished to marry but faced opposition from their parents; cases of young men, women who though reluctant were compelled into marriage, etc are some other kinds of cases that came to the Special Cell. Elderly women who had faced harassment from their children, cases of property disputes and neighbourhood fights are other categories in which the Special Cell had intervened.

Persons who had (difficultly in) seeking co-operation of the police, pertaining to obtaining a No Objection Certificate or in criminal matter or persons who needed further clarification on police procedures had also been supported by the Special Cell social workers. Men clients too, had approached the Special Cell in cases of martial discord; in cases where they had been deserted by their spouse, or when they needed legal help; advice etc;

The first two social workers, who worked from the inception of the cell for the first three years have stated that they had intervened in cases of rape, eve teasing, molestation and harassment of women at their workplace. The two social workers have also stated that they had co-ordinated with the vigilance branch and with JAPU (JUVENILE AID POLICE UNIT) to rescue women from brothels. The social workers have also stated that the high court directed them to conduct enquiries for writ petitions in juvenile matters. They had also worked in the area of child marriages.

### **REFERRALS**

When asked about who referred cases to the Special Cell, the social workers stated that cases were referred by voluntary organisations, hospital social workers, advocates, police officers, women-clients, customary panchayats, etc; many clients have been self referrals'who have gained knowledge of the Special Cell from the media.

### **PROCEDURE INVOLVED IN CASE HANDLING**

#### *Basic Principles of the Work of the Special Cell*

The basic principles of the Special Cell work are derived from social work practice are

- Individuality
- Respect of human worth and dignity
- Non-judgmental attitude
- Confidentiality

- Client self determination

Emphasis is given to the principle of client self determination. As quoted by Dave and Dharmadikari (1987), "When we started our work, we were committed to the principle of self- determination. We had decided that our clients would be encouraged to take their own decisions. None of us would enforce our decisions or analysis on them. Therefore, while talking to the clients, we tried to understand what the clients felt about their situation, what they were inclined to do and what they expected from us. At the same time, we were cautious to ensure that the decisions would not be taken out of ignorance or because of a feeling that there were no other alternatives. We have tried to ensure that decisions are carefully reasoned and not purely emotional. We struggle to make sure that by reasoning through their problems, clients will understand their own thoughts, values and opinions better, we avoided making any judgement about the opinions and values of our clients.

This has been extremely difficult. We have realised that, in our society, right from her childhood, a women is hardly given any opportunity to take a decision for herself. She is required to depend on somebody else to make decisions for her. She is never allowed to express her views, thoughts or opinions on any issue. This diminishes her sense of self-worth and destroys her self- confidence. Therefore, it takes conscious and determined effort to make them self-reliant.

The social workers ensure that the clients decide for themselves; these decisions being carefully reasoned and not just purely emotional. The social workers consciously try to encourage clients to implement their decisions and to practice what they have decided without "condemning" or "judging" their efforts as successes or failures.

#### *Procedures Involved in the Initial Assessment of a Case*

The social workers said that the assessment of the clients is generally paced over a number of interviews. The questions vary from client to client though largely they are concerning the demographic data of the client, nature of the presenting problem, details of any previous intervention to solve the problem, history of marriage, parental and other supports. It is an attempt to explore the client's strengths, her self perception and the future course of action (if envisaged)

#### *Techniques Used During Interviews*

Practically all social workers agree, that in the first meeting with the client it is essential to make the client comfortable to enable her to voice her feelings. Attentive listening, use of silence, observing cues, use of monosyllables, nodding; permitting the client to set her own pace; being non- directive;

are some of the techniques used to facilitate ventilation and express concern for the client. Some other techniques are universalisation and reassurance.

Often the Special Cell function is misunderstood, as that of the police and the client expectation too are such. (She may expect the social worker to act coercively against the other person). Herein the social workers have stated that care needs be exercised, so that the two agency's roles, Special Cell and police are not confused. The roles, functions, strengths, limitations of the Special Cell are clearly spelt out by the social workers, to deal with any unrealistic expectations. Having established a comfortable wavelength with the client and having sought clarification on the nature of the problem, the social worker discusses the plausible alternatives available; to enable her to take the next step in the light of available options.

The social workers encourage self-analysis and reiterate the principle of client self determination. The client may approach the agency often seeking advice or further direction, from the social worker. That she will herself have to take her decision, may get difficult for her to grasp and she may also feel disappointed with such a response. It is only through working with the client, constantly, over a period that she may gain the confidence and skills, to formulate her own decision. It is important, as the social workers state, to make the client feel accepted and be non-judgmental, though the views of the social worker; may differ with those of the client regarding the future course of action.

After the first interview, having been informed about the scope of the Special Cell some clients may seek a referral service while some others may return with a written application (wherein the case would be registered). The above mentioned techniques and principles are applied through the problem solving process and are not specific solely to the first interview.

### *Techniques Used During Intervention*

One cannot chalk a comprehensive list of techniques used but some of the often used techniques as mentioned by the social workers are, acceptance of feelings, relating to feelings, reflecting possible feelings, clarifying, facilitating ventilation, humour, interpretation, summarizing, reassurance, encouragement, advocacy, accreditation, universalisation etc.

Besides education, anticipatory guidance, reality orientation, correcting perception, modifying environment, modeling, motivating, constructive use of guilt feelings, etc, are some of the other techniques used during intervention.

## **EFFORTS OF THE WORKER IN BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP**

Addressing clients by their names, talking about issues that the client is comfortable with, maintaining appointments, pulling the chair alongside the clients, physically reaching out to the client, escorting her to the door, offering water, tea and snacks (at times), were some gestures expressing concern for the client. Techniques such as demonstrating warmth, empathising with the client, relating to and reflecting possible feelings, respecting client individuality, her right and her ability to make her own decision, offering positive strokes are some techniques used to build a relationship.

An additional effort is to build a relationship with the client's children as stated by one social worker, who occupied the children with arts, crafts, play material, gave them sweets; etc while the parents were being met. Making home visits, too contribute significantly in relationship building, affirm all social workers. Sharing from personal experiences (using social worker self disclosure), is also often done. A male social worker has stated that he has used "self-disclosure", with male clients to question their attitudes and to re-look at their responses towards their wives.

Regarding the table chair arrangement at the Special Cell, some workers view that such an arrangement as depictive of formal authority that hinders the process of building rapport with the clients while one social worker has opined that such a "formal structure" is essential.

## **STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY SOCIAL WORKERS IN ELICITING RESPONSES OF THE HUSBAND OR THE OTHER CONCERNED PERSON**

The social workers have stated that even after sending repeated call letters, if no response is received, they then pay a home visit. If despite the home visits, no response is received from the husband, it is then inevitable to seek police help or the help of the Social Service Branch in calling the husband to the Special Cell.

Since men have difficulty in coming to the Special Cell on working days, consideration is shown in fixing appointments. Most workers have stated that during the home visit and the first meeting, with the husband; showing concern is a must. In fact, an individual meeting with the husband is held to convey this. During the first meeting with the husband, there is no emphasis on the women's grievance. The social worker listens to the man's perception of the problem. The focus in the first meeting is on listening, not on confronting the man.

One social worker has stated that the husband is also a victim of the larger social environment, he may be afflicted with problems of housing,

employment, economic constraints, and so on. Another social worker (male), in compliance with the above view, has pronounced the importance of building a relationship with the husband. "It is important" he emphasises to see him as an individual, who must not be judged, but must be given a patient listening, must be empathised with". One social worker has dissented with this view, stating that men are better off and more powerful than women and building a strong relationship with them is not crucial. Overall, the view expressed by most of the social workers is that at the Special Cell there is a bias towards women. However a certain balance must be maintained while dealing with the male clients.

Persuasion, appealing to his emotional self, cajoling, skillful negotiation are some of the strategies that may sometimes be used to elicit his co-operation. Clarification of the role of the Special Cell, educating the husband on criminal/civil laws and its implication has helped in many instances. If a positive response of the husband is not received, police help may be sought where the use of authority needs to be used. "But use of authority is only a short cut, with no long standing effect," asserts one social worker, "It is only through building a relationship with the husband that a favorable response may be elicited", he adds.

Differing strategies and approaches may be used in different circumstances in dealing with the male client. But one thing is certain the social worker does always communicate to him, that his aggression, towards his wife cannot be accepted under any circumstance.

One social worker has aptly said, "The focus on the intervention with men is to eliminate violent and controlling behaviour, by confronting the many ways in which they attempt to deny or minimise violence. The attention is directed towards the attitudes, the belief system of the male, by focusing on the expectations and feelings that have accompanied such violent behavior. Our society provides explanations and justifications for male violence against women. At the cell, we attempt to create a counter culture, so that violence is not excused or justified but is considered as non-acceptable."

The social worker adds "the intervention of the Special Cell is to challenge deeply held cultural and social beliefs, sexist role expectations, directed towards enabling men to see their use of violence as a choice, not an uncontrolled reaction to their anger or lack of skill to contain it".

### **ROLE OF JOINT MEETINGS IN THE PROBLEM SOLVING PROCESS**

Having had an individual meeting with the client and the other concerned persons, the next step is to hold a joint meeting firstly with the couple and



later along with all the concerned members as and when the situation demands.

In order to gather facts clearly, the social workers have stated that they may meet as many persons as are involved in the case as possible, the effort being to understand how they are placed in the situation, their attitude towards the problem. One of the social workers highlights how the joint meetings prove helpful in most situation. "First of all, they make the client face and realise the facts. Secondly they provide an opportunity for individuals involved in the issue, to present their views and become aware of each others responses and reactions. Many a times if the client has false or excessive expectations from the others, such meetings help restore a more realistic perspective".

In the joint meetings a conciliatory attempt is made, aspects such as reconciliation, separation, divorce, mutual consent divorce, customary divorce amicable settlement of issues such as return of belongings, child custody, compensation in cases of cheating, deceit, and so on are discussed.

#### *Impediments in the Communication Process in a Joint Meeting*

When inquired about the impediments during the joint meeting, one of the common problems that most social workers encountered was when others spoke on behalf of the woman. Herein the social workers had to be firm and allow the woman to speak for herself. At the Special Cell the effort was made to create an environment, where men and their "co-conspirators" did not dominate the discussion, interpret the facts or keep the woman away from speaking. By gestures, shifting of eye contact, directly shifting the focus of attention to the women, by asking questions, she may be encouraged to speak up.

In a joint meeting the woman, speaks in a permissive atmosphere, often surfacing her repressed emotions and verbalising her feelings against her in-laws and her husband. This catharsis is often encouraged. Sometimes though she may be inhibited in the presence of other. At such times the social worker would be patient, move from general to specific, be directive etc. In case the woman is still uncomfortable, other members during the joint meeting may be asked to leave the room.

Initially in the joint meeting, all would be given a fair opportunity to surface their view points. The past may be surfaced. The clients may become agitated while addressing each other, the conversation may seem goalless this may be permitted to an extent, because it reveals certain communication patterns and relevant dynamics within the structure. After a point of time, it may become essential for the social workers to become directive, to together; chalk out, some framework, some guideline and a goal to be achieved in the joint meeting. The workers may have to make a conscious

use of authority to bring a certain sense of discipline to proceed with the joint meeting.

Similarly in case the clients ramble, they may be allowed to do so initially. Then the social workers would rephrase, clarify the thoughts/feelings and the implicit client messages and channelise or summarise the discussion. If clients used abusive language, most workers have stated that, they would clearly not permit such usage. One worker stated, rather than merely disallowing its usage, he would explain to the clients why not. One social worker has stated that she did not think it helped, to educate the clients on the use of good language, since they would not be expected to use it after reverting to their original environment. If the husband came drunk for the joint meeting, the meeting would be postponed if they continued to come drunk, police help may be taken.

A very high caseload (with few social workers) is very tiring as most workers have stated and prevents efficient functioning. Because of the heavy caseload, a time limit may be set for each joint meeting, this two hampers effective functioning. A joint meeting at the end of the day may be difficult, comments one social worker. Another social worker has stated the importance of avoiding stereotyping and slotting of cases as typical.

### **ROLE OF HOME VISITS IN THE PROBLEM SOLVING PROCESS**

The social worker have drawn out varied reasons for paying home visits. The specific purpose is to call the husband or the other concerned persons when no response to the call letter is not received. The social workers may also make home visits to retrieve stridhan from her matrimonial home or to seek custody of her minor child. One social worker has stated that a home visit may be done to escort the client to her matrimonial home after the decision to reconcile is taken in the joint meeting (this is not often encouraged, yet may be done in certain cases).

Visit to the husbands place of work may be done to meet his employer, find out his income details etc in cases where maintenance is the issue. At times the company welfare centre or union leaders too can be approached through the home visit.

Besides the above specific reasons, the social worker have given varied other reasons highlighting the significance of home visits. Above all it shows concern for the client and helps to build a positive relationship. Meeting the client in her social milieu, establishing rapport with other family members, assessing family structure, dynamics and communication patterns, etc; are cases where home visits helps. A home visit may at times, bring to fore, a certain dimension of the family problem (which may have not been voiced by the client) but may need attention. A home visit also

helps in suggesting modifications to the physical structure of the house so that the violence can be contained.

One social worker has cited an example of how a home visit made by her was revealing in a case of bigamy. She states "The first wife, Rita, a client of the Special Cell, was deserted by her husband, Pradeep. He later remarried without seeking a divorce . A meeting with the second wife, Sunanda, at her residence in Pradeep's absence was revealing. Sunanda readily co-operated with the social worker and disclosed all relevant details of her marriage to Rita's husband. She readily displayed the marriage invitation card and the marriage photographs of her marriage with Pradeep. A fact that Pradeep had constantly denied to admit his second marriage at the Special Cell office was confirmed after meeting his second wife".

### **SOME FACTORS THAT AFFECT THE BUILDING OF A RELATIONSHIP**

When questioned whether the gender age and marital status of the social worker affected the building of a relationship with the client, some stated in the positive while some disagreed stating that it is the personality of the social worker and her ideology that largely affect the building of a relationship.

The gender of the social worker certainly makes a difference according to some social workers. Empathising with and building rapport with women clients is spontaneous and much simpler while the same with the men is a relatively difficult and deliberate effort. Besides no matter how balanced a woman social worker is the male clients tend to believe that the social workers efforts as being solely on the woman's side. The social worker have also stated that for a male social worker it is easier to build rapport with the police, as well as the male clients. A male social worker has affirmed the above statement. Some social workers have disagreed stating that a woman is by no means disadvantaged or has any problem in building a relationship with the police and the male clients.

"It is the one who approaches the Special Cell, first that the social worker can build a better relationship with", one social worker has stated; while "a man-woman team of social workers works best and is most effective", states another social worker

Two of the social workers have stated that older persons could do a better job since the clients do not take young social worker seriously. The other social workers think that the maturity of the worker and her ability to communicate with clients does not depend on age or marital status. The social workers have stated that it is not the marital status of the social worker per se, but the ability of the social worker to be at ease while discussing "sexual problems and so on", of the clients is what matters most.

Some social workers have stated that they lack the skills to intervene in cases of sexual problems and training to deal in the area of sexual abuse must be imparted. While some of the female social workers have stated that they do feel a gap, in communicating with male clients, regarding "sexual aspects". One of the male social worker has stated that he has had no such difficulty in communicating with women clients.

The social workers have expressed that, speaking in the language of the client is effective in building a relationship. "Also sensitivity to the cultural, religious background of the client is essential, remarks one social worker.

### **VARIABLES THAT AFFECT THE PROBLEM SOLVING PROCESS**

The social workers have stated that variables attributive to, the client that affect the problem solving process, are the clients personality, her employment status, general awareness, perception of self and the supports available largely determine her ability to take a decision and abide by it. "With a low educational level presence of children and lack of adequate supports, the clients decision to leave her husband may not be an easy one", observes one social worker. "It is also the class of the client that affect the problem solving process. While middle class men are scared of the police, men from the upper socioeconomic class, have access to advocates and may not readily accept the social worker's intervention or readily co-operate with the police", comments another social worker.

The other vital factor as stated by the social workers is the client's culture, religion and socialisation patterns that affect problem solving process. One social worker elaborates with an example of stating common acceptance of the term "Kanyadaan" in Hindu parlance. "The social worker's task herein", he states is to challenge such terminology and highlight how religious teachings have sanctioned male dominance, (in the above case); dehumanising a woman as a commodity to be donated". "Deeply held beliefs and rigid attitudes do affect the problem solving process, agree all the social workers".

The variables affecting the problem solving process attributive to the social workers are the worker's personality and ideology as stated by most of the social workers. The workers must possess confidence, should be calm, polite and ready to build relationships. The worker must like to work with people and must be aware and capable of handling her own feelings, which must not be reflected by a dull/fatigued look. In short, the social worker must possess a cheerful and a pleasant disposition.

The social worker should be clear about the Special Cell's ideology to enable her to effectively intervene in the problem solving process. As one social worker, has stated "There must be a conviction, within the social

worker, to struggle against the patriarchal social order, where women have been assigned a secondary status. The social workers effort must be channelised towards building an egalitarian society, the social worker must be committed to human rights".

### **RESPONSIBILITIES ASSIGNED TO THE CLIENTS**

One of the prime task, as stated by the social worker, that is now established as a set procedure is writing the application. The Special Cell, assigns the first task to the client to write an application. There is no set format offering the client flexibility to write in any language so far as details such as name, address, nature of the problem and the kind of help expected from the Special Cell worker is mentioned. This application serves as a document for the Special Cell. Besides, writing the application is the first step towards acknowledging the problem and denotes the clients own commitment towards the problem solving process. It also helps the client gain clarity of the problem and the intervention sought from the social worker. The social workers have also stated that clients are encouraged to keep appointments and the main responsibility of making follow up visits rests with the client

### **MAJOR GOALS TO BE ACHIEVED THROUGH THE PROBLEM SOLVING PROCESS**

#### *Building the Self Image of the Women*

Enhancing the self esteem of the client is the focus. As one of the social workers stated, "The Special Cell believes in developing, strengthening and consolidating a woman's resources even in a crisis situation. The Special Cell's focus is on seeing her as an individual in her own right, not in any of her roles or the functions thereof that she is expected to perform. "The intervention process at the Special Cell is directed at enabling women build her own political strength. It is also directed as helping the women be critical and assertive by developing her self confidence, enhancing her self worth and the growth of a positive self image". As the social workers have stated, building up client self confidence is a gradual process and happens because of the knowledge that somebody is backing her.

Dependence of the client is discouraged and they are encouraged to perform tasks on their own. Encouraging her to make phone calls, write an application, come unescorted to the Special Cell, go to the police station or another agency alone; gather details/documentary evidence and do the ground work in case of having to lodge a civil/ criminal case are some other responsibilities assigned to her. Women do feel much more confident when they are able to make use of an important community service. The social workers have stated that through accreditation, acknowledging and

verbalising her achievement and helping her explore her skills and potential; the social workers gradually work towards building self-esteem.

### *Bringing about Attitudinal Change*

Some social workers think that, at the Special Cell working towards this dimension in a one-one situation is limited. Attitudinal change involves simultaneously working at the larger level, to bring about systemic change. Nevertheless, the social workers have stated that they would continue to question certain held attitudes. At the Special Cell an attempt is made to break gender stereotypes. The male feeling of superiority may be revealed in his asserting his right to beat his wife.

### *Working towards Behaviour Change through Contracting*

The social worker may facilitate behavior modification through contracting (a contract is a written assurance given by the client that makes him feel accountable to himself as well as answerable to the organisation). Contracting may be used, particularly in cases of marital discord where reconciliation has been worked upon. Certain tasks like homework may be listed by the couple themselves for example to alter certain modes of behavior, communication patterns, sharing of responsibilities, and so on. Such contracting makes them responsible for their behavior towards each other as well as the organisation.

Contracting may also be used to confront alcoholism, to assign the male client regular home-work to visit the psychiatrist or AA groups, and so on. Such written assurances are often taken from the clients to retrieve Stridhan, to recover maintenance from the husband or to recover compensation from the other party in case of bigamy, cheating, cases of deceit, and so on.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SPECIAL CELL COORDINATION WITH POLICE IN COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

While responding to the above question, most of the social workers felt that the police is an important agency and is often tapped by women victims of violence. It is the only perceived visible force that can give justice and is the only service available twenty four hours a day on a comprehensive, geographical basis, with an emergency telephone system, moreover the services offered are free of charge. Many a times women may not have knowledge of other agencies that can offer support during a crisis situation and may approach the police station seeking help. The existence of such agencies is far from adequate, except in some cities like Bombay.

The social worker stated that women who approach the police station expect a considerate and empathetic listening. She may appeal for emotional support and expect that the police can offer protection at times of

acute threat. She may seek temporary relief from the offender or at times, even need immediate protection and shelter.

The women have these expectations while approaching the police and on the same, the social workers, shared some experiences and observations. Most of them agreed that the interest and effectivity with which a police officer intervenes in a case, is influenced largely by his attitudes. Since the response of each officer differs, what is stated hereunder by the social workers, is by no means to be generalised.

### **POLICE RESPONSE IN CASES OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS VARIABLE**

Police action at the scene of violence is expected to listen to her grievances, reassure the women that she has in fact experienced criminal violence, stop the present violence and deter instances of future violence. The social workers have observed that police response in cases of domestic violence against women is unpredictable. It depends on subjective factors such as the officer's own perceived notions on gender stereotypes, his emphasis on conventional role definitions of women, his own notion on what is the cause of and who is responsible for the violence, his own notion of "justice" and "injustice".

The social workers have observed that women are often judged from the standpoint of the officers own beliefs, values and attitudes and being part and parcel of the larger patriarchal social order police officers are no different. The police, though expected to perform a socially neutral role are in fact not doing so, with not much sensitivity displayed towards the vulnerable sections.

The police officers do often overemphasise the importance of the conventional "status and role" of women. Such conventional stereotyped attitudes, offer justifications. Thus, "food not cooked on time" or "a chore not efficiently performed by the wife", may be perceived as a valid ground for abuse the wife by the husband to check her "irresponsible behaviour" and "keep her well under control". One comes across such responses from police officers also.

Matters of domestic assault are looked upon as extraneous and are not looked at as "real police work". The police officer is hesitant to intervene in these matters' which are often considered as a "waste of time". Besides intervention in such cases hardly earns the officer any recognition nor is rewarded as "successes" by their seniors. Being overloaded with other work, most of the time with the maintenance of law and order and the prevention and detection of crimes, matters of domestic assault don't really figure on their "agenda". The police officer would seldom perceive an act of domestic violence, "as an act being an infringement on the

individual woman's rights, freedom and security" it may not be viewed as a crime deserving police attention. To the police officer, domestic violence, may be looked at as a private matter, which can at best be dismissed by "amicable settlement", success of the case depending on the police officers ability to suitably "patch up". Herein too, the police officers would find their role limited, being often frustrated with the "time and effort" settling an issue, or bringing about reconciliation, may be termed as "wasted", when called back again within a few hours or a few days.

### **COVERAGE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IN POLICE TRAINING**

Apart from this, the police training focuses no attention or gender sensitivity. Dealing with problems of violence against women within the family and outside intervention in crisis situations in cases of domestic violence, rape, suicide, incest, drug abuse etc. are complex and multifaceted and demand the knowledge a skills of specialised persons, trained to handle such situations. These areas demand some knowledge in family sociology, psychology or psychology which is not covered in police training. The police are thus confronted with problems that they are neither trained nor equipped to handle.

#### *The Importance of Police Co-ordination With a social worker*

Some social workers have commented that though some officers may be insensitive & indifferent to problems of women in cases where they are willing to help; no matter how sincere their intentions, they are constrained by their role in this matter.

Firstly the police definition of crime, emphasises the visible and quantifiable' aspects, Mental trauma and harassment of women, being invisible and diffuse fail to figure in the police agenda. Secondly, the police often concern themselves only with the legalities of the case. A case of "domestic assault", may only be recorded as an NC. A case of simple of grievous hurt u/s 324 IPC 326 IPC may or may not be recorded or at times she is told to independently approach the court. The woman may need support on many counts and this is the kind of support that the Special Cell is committed to give.

The police may at times chose to exercise the option of 498A IPC. Herein too, the social workers have observed that there may be times, when a women victim of assault, may experience helplessness, confusion, apathy and fear being unclear and undecided over the future course of action. It is at such times, that a momentous decision by her may not seem possible. Her psychosocial state would demand prime attention she may seek emotional and social support and simultaneous decisions on other aspects of



her life (custody of her children, shelter, and so on, for instance) need to be worked out.

She may have come for varied reason; an empathetic listening, referral service or access to another service may be the immediate need rather than only looking into the legal aspects of the case. The Special Cell social workers have time and again emphasised, that there is a need to create a body which would, "focus on the non penal aspects of the problem", in such cases. If intervened in the initial stages at the level of the police station there are fewer chances that the problem will take a grave turn later.

By no means, is it being said that the police, should not, register the cases as and where relevant. What is being emphasised, is that the while the legal processes continue, the social workers at the Special Cell continue to "look into" the socio-psycho dimensions of the problem, that demand attention.

Given below is a case illustration emphasising the importance of co-ordination of the police and a social worker.

#### *Case of Margaret*

Margaret was assaulted by her husband who had injured her with a knife. The police took cognizance of the case and recorded a section 498A IPC. While her husband was arrested Margaret was sent to the hospital and later returned home the same day. Her husband was released on bail after 24 hours and went back home and attempted to kill her, this time by choking her. Luckily once again Margaret escaped and sought shelter at her friend's place along with her 13 year old daughter, living in confinement, fearing that her husband would trace her and kill her.

She came to the Special Cell, six months later to enquire about the progress of criminal case that was lodged against her husband. The social worker observed that Margaret was very disturbed, was unstable, inconsistent in her speech and kept recollecting the past events. The social worker did explain to her about the criminal case that was lodged against her husband and the procedures thereof. It was after meeting Margaret, that the social worker states "I realised the importance of the Special Cell being proximate to the police station".

In Margaret's case, the local police station did not have a social worker. Besides registration of the legal case, other problems that she was confronted with remained unattended.

- (a) Perhaps other women like Margaret need legal help to file an injunction.
- (b) Need an explanation in an open and permissive atmosphere on certain laws and procedures and their repercussions. She may need to clarify certain doubts and expectations.

- (c) A referral to legal services, psychiatric services, shelter home, are needed. Above all the need is of emotional support and to get in touch with a "community support group".

Proximity to the police station is essential so that such multifaceted problems, the cases defined by the police as "marginal" and disposed as NC matters, can be brought to the attention of the social worker for professional intervention. The intervention of the social worker at the Police Station facilitates the problem solving process, enabling the clients to go to the cause of the problem, thereby: to some extent alleviating the possibility of it taking a grave turn further. Also social workers help women to lodge an NC or register a case as a when she seek to do so. To elucidate the nature of co-ordination between the Special Cell and the police further examples have been presented.

The following case illustrations illustrate, broadly, the nature and scope of the Special Cell work vis-a-vis the police. The responses of the officers may vary depending on the case. These cases are not any standard responses also the following case examples only highlight the collaborative effort of the Special Cell with the police and offers no details of other aspects of work with the individual client or the process of intervention.

*Case 1: Susheela*

### THE PROBLEM

Susheela, (27 years) and married for 9 years, had left her matrimonial home, located in a village in Nasik district along with her two children, one son,(7 years) and daughter,(3/2 years) and returned to Bombay to her maternal home. Tired of mental & physical harassment by her husband & her in laws. Being a city based girl, she could not adjust to the difficult and hard life in the village, of having to work in the fields day long. She was given inadequate food to eat, her children were maltreated by her in-laws. Being tired of the physical & mental harassment, she decided to separate & continue to live in Bombay along with her parents. Having been married in Bombay, she was entitled to file a case u/s 125 Cr P C for maintenance. Yet, before turning to the court, she wished to talk to her husband; also she wished to inquire to see whether any immediate financial help could be sought.

### SPECIAL CELL INTERVENTION AND POLICE CO-ORDINATION SOUGHT

The social worker sent her husband, Mr. Waghmare, three call letters. Each of the letters were responded with an advocates notice, asking his wife to return to the village. Later, a letter to the local police station, as well as to

the Superintendent of Police (S.P.) (Nashik district) was sent. On the scheduled date, (as mentioned in the letter), Mr. Waghmare came to the Special Cell.

A joint meeting was held between the couple. He came for the subsequent meetings on the scheduled dates and the maintenance amount of Rs. 750/- per month, was fixed which he regularly sent for six months, before the case moved to court.

In this joint meeting the maintenance amount received, not only rescued her from the financial crunch; but in her meeting with her husband and his responses elicited; therein enabled her to revalidate her experiences; take a firm, clear and a confident decision of moving to court. Besides, she also had the money order slips which could be furnished as documentary evidence in court.

(The Special Cell had also helped her gain employment and had made referrals to pursue a vocation, & seek such sponsorship for her children).

### *Case 2: Aradhana*

#### THE PROBLEM

Aradhana, was married to Mr. Jain. Both lived in a rented apartment. Within a week of the marriage; Mr. Jain was absconding leaving behind Aradhana to pay the rent and repay the other several debts that he had incurred. Aradhana felt lost and cheated. She approached the Special Cell, having heard of it through a friend.

#### SPECIAL CELL INTERVENTION AND POLICE COORDINATION SOUGHT

The Special Cell social worker sought help of the social service Branch and local police stations to trace Mr. Jain. The social worker, sought the help of police officers to speak to him and seek clarification on his act. Subsequently a joint confrontation at the Special Cell took place.

The above are only some examples of how police co-ordination would be sought, to call reluctant/adamant husbands (or the other concerned persons) to the Special Cell. (Generally calling the client's husband or any other concerned person is not met with much resistance, since the call letter specifies the address of the police station or CP's office the Special Cell; its identified with that of the police and persons do respond usually. Being housed in the CP's office or the police station is an advantage. If despite, repeated call letters and home visits, within city limits no response is received, then police support in this matter is sought. Also, it has been very effective when one of the persons concerned is residing outside Bombay.

There are no jurisdiction worries at the Special Cell and the Special Cell with police co-ordination have handled cases, from all over Maharashtra and in some from other states too. The police co-operation sought (particularly when the police inquires into the social aspects of the case) and the social investigation role adopted by the police, particularly in outstation cases have only strengthened the organisation in its endeavour, to fight against injustices against women.

### *Case 3 : Kiran*

#### THE PROBLEM

Kiran Pal, left Bombay along with her ailing husband and her three children two daughters age eight and six and one son age four, for her native place, Dist Jaunpur, (U.P.), where she resided with her younger brother-in-law Jaiwajit Pal and his family. A week after, her husband expired and her relatives as also the village customary panchayat decided that Kiran Pal would continue to stay with Jaiwajit Pal and his family and hence forth he would maintain her and her children.

Kiran Pal and her children were mentally and physically abused by Jaiwajit Pal and his family and whenever Kiran Pal had attempted to leave, she was restrained from doing so. Following an attempt of sexual abuse by her brother-in-law Jaiwajit Pal, Kiran Pal sneaked out of the house and came to Bombay, leaving her children behind.

#### SPECIAL CELL INTERVENTION AND POLICE CO-ORDINATION SOUGHT

Her main concern, when she came to the Special Cell, was the welfare of her children, who she thought should be immediately rescued from Jaiwajit's Pal custody. The Special cell social worker wrote to the S.P. (Superintendent of Police) of Jaunpur requesting him to enquire into the matter and escort the children to Bombay. Since no reply was received for a month, Kiran Pal decided to go to the village and get her children to Bombay. Initially Kiran Pal was skeptical about police action, expressed fear and reluctance to go alone to her village; however, with the social worker's reassurance and the referral letter, Kiran Pal felt emotionally stronger, confident to approach the District Superintendent of Police, an act which she would perhaps, have otherwise not attempted.

She returned after a week with her children, expressing joy and was content that the police officers had extended available support to her, listened to her grievance's summoned her brother-in-law, questioned him and had also arranged for her and her children's temporary accommodation, making sure that they should be protected, till they boarded a

train for Bombay. This act, on the part had established her faith in the police.

Police machinery is mobilised besides seeking custody of or access to children, to help women retrieve her stridhan articles from the matrimonial home.

#### *Case 4: Supriya*

### THE PROBLEM

Supriya Sen's natal family resided in Calcutta, she was married in Bombay to Mr Akhil Sen. A large sum was spent on a lavish marriage. Besides gifts to the members of Akhil's family, she received furniture, jewellery, personal wear am about Rs 1 1/2 Lakh at the time of her marriage.

Within six months, there were problems in her matrimonial home. Not only was she badly treated by her in laws due to greater demands for dowry, she also discovered that her husband had deviant ways; he belonged to a local anti-social gang.

Supriya herself was highly educated and wished to either study further or work outside, but was not permitted to do so. Out of despair and frustration, under the pretext of going to her parents house for a festival; she chose to stay back at Calcutta and did not return for over eight months.

### SPECIAL CELL INTERVENTION AND POLICE CO-ORDINATION SOUGHT

When she came to Bombay, she first came to the Special Cell, having heard of it through a friend. She wished to primarily recover all her articles given at the time of marriage before pursuing a legal case for divorce.

The social worker accompanied her to the police station and explained the facts to the officers. Mr. Sen, was summoned to the police station and clarifications sought. He denied totally that he had any of the articles in his custody stating that Supriya had taken them along with her when she left.

Since Mr. Sen was uncooperative and did not part with the articles, the social worker explained to the police sub inspector (PSI), the applicability of Section 406 IPC. However, the officer was not aware nor convinced of this section, being applied to retrieval of Stridhan.

On that day itself, since the Senior Police Inspector (Sr.P.I.) was not available, the social worker met the Assistant Commissioner of Police (A C P) and explained the case to him, restating the facts as she had done to the P.S.I.

The ACP spoke to Supriya, to seek clarification. A 406 IPC and 498 A were immediately registered, Supriya's statement was sought, the FIR made, the Police seized the articles. Supriya, received these articles through

the court, after producing documentary evidence; confirming her ownership of these articles.

As is seen in the above case, at times the Police Officers may be unaware or may need to be updated on the amendments, certain sections of laws related to women etc. In such circumstances, the social worker having imparted legal knowledge to the client, on the pertinent sections, may accompany the client, advocate on her behalf (if she is unable to do so by herself) and help her register the case if she so desires.

In cases where stridhan articles are to be retrieved, a list of articles to be collected is fixed by mutual consent of the concerned persons. This helps to avoid any dispute at the time when the social worker and the client visit the matrimonial home to collect the articles. The process is generally smooth, since a consensus is reached upon at the Special Cell office of the items to be collected etc. Yet, if the client and the Social Worker meet with resistance from the clients husband and in laws, support of the local police station may be sought. With the intervention of the police recovery of the articles is done, subsequently a station diary is made to that effect.

Section 406 IPC has been effectively stretched to provide for the recovery of "Stridhan" and retrieve articles from the women's matrimonial home. A police notification para (PN para), which mentions the role of the Special Cell, as also about Section 406 IPC to recover Stridhan, has been circulated to all police stations in Bombay. In case beyond city limits a copy of the PN para and a letter from the Special Cell has elicited, the clients and the voluntary organisation, co-operation from the local police station, to help her retrieve her stridhan articles.

#### *Case 5: Cheryl*

### THE PROBLEM

Cheryl D'sa approached the Special Cell stating that she was in a severe financial crisis. There was a previous history of marital discord, she had also been abused by her husband on many instances - she had lodged police NC's on such occasions, however her husband had never been called to the police station. This time, in the span of four months that he was in Bombay, their situation took a grave turn. Abuse & torture of Cheryl and her children increased. Also Cheryl could foresee a severe financial problem. Her husband, who worked in the gulf; was scheduled to return to the Gulf within two days and had stated he could not maintain her and her four children any children.

## SPECIAL CELL INTERVENTION AND POLICE CO-ORDINATION SOUGHT

The Special Cell, social worker had only a day in between to act. Sending a call letter was not possible, the social worker co-ordinated with the Sr PI of the local police station to work out the case jointly.

The Sr PI took keen interest in the case, he interviewed the woman and readily took up the work, he thought the case deserved attention because of the urgency of the case, also because the issue of maintenance of school going children was involved, he interviewed Cheryl and clarified facts for himself.

Then, the Sr PI summoned Mr. D'sa and the social worker and the Sr PI held a joint meeting with Cheryl and Mr. D'sa. While Mr. D'sa, chose to defend his act, blaming Cheryl and justifying his behaviour, the Sr PI concentrated on the here and now of the situation, rather than "digging up the past". In the joint meeting that lasted an hour and a half, the Sr PI was predisposed in favour of Cheryl and her children; Mr. D'sa then agreed to give a lumpsum amount as maintenance for the next six months also promising to later send the amount, regularly, the failure of which would authorize his wife to liquidate his bank FDRs and utilize that amount. This he gave in writing on a stamp paper.

The social worker immediately accompanied Cheryl to withdraw the amount from the bank, against the cheque he had issued; also submitting the authority letters as signed by Mr. D'sa to the Bank Manager.

Thus we see, how a positive and favorable police response; rescued Cheryl from her severe financial crunch. This would have not been possible without a keen and active interest of the police in the case. In front of the police inspector, Mr D'sa put down his defenses and felt obliged to perform his moral duty of providing adequately for his wife and children. If the police officials speak to the person; to the concerned persons it implies serious business. By itself, a single interview can act as a deterrent, to such further acts of violence against women.

The Special Cell's intervention is important and effective because it works with the police and helps individual women to get effective policing in the event of violence against them, the police being more attentive to crimes against women. The police may use its discretionary power and detain the concerned person in the police station or arrest the concerned person. The law enforcement machinery and the cell working as partners are together able to effectively say, "No, violence is not accepted or tolerated".

*Case 6: Kunda***THE PROBLEM**

Kunda (19 years) married for a year, due to incompatibility with her husband, had decided to seek a divorce and began residing separately. A petition seeking divorce had already been filed in the family court. The Special Cell had intervened in this case of marital discord; from the first month that the couple was married. After wavering a number of times Kunda had finally made her decision to seek a divorce in court. Yet, Sunil, her husband continued to harass her, waiting for long hours outside her house; waiting at the street side corner, along with his friends and passing obscene remarks, singing songs; chasing her wherever she went; attempting to hold her; and so on. He was behaving thus, only to pressurize her to return to the marriage relationship. Presently, coping with his behaviour was getting difficult for Kunda.

**SPECIAL CELL INTERVENTION AND POLICE COORDINATION SOUGHT**

Working at the police station level, the social worker had built credibility with the police officials. Therefore it was easier to validate the experiences of the women. With the intervention of the duty officer, the harassment stopped.

Had the Special Cell, not been in close proximity to the police station, the contact and rapport not been built with the PSFS this act would have passed of as a perfectly 'ordinary event'. Divorce had not been sought, Sunil was still Kunda's husband, perhaps the attempt would have been to mediate, Kunda's mental trauma, would have gone unrecognized. Perhaps, Kunda would have not got the attention, she did, get; her case would have been disposed off, just as another case of "family dispute", not demanding police attention.

While the Special Cell social workers seek police advice, consult them on the legal aspects of a particular case, the police too do, refer cases of women complainants to the special cell who could be helped by the social worker. Especially in cases of marriage counselling, counselling of young adolescents, cases of rape, unwed motherhood, potential cases of suicide, cases of bigamy, adultery etc. The Special Cell has also effectively handled cases of cheating, black-mailing, eve teasing, cases of breach of trust of fraudulent marriages, etc. in co-ordination with the police or the Social Service Branch.

**ROLE AND RELATIONSHIP OF THE SPECIAL CELL  
VIS-A-VIS THE POLICE**

In their work with the police, the social workers, emphasised that the Special Cell played a supportive and supplementary role to the police. At



no point of time, have they attempted to act as an alternative or a substitute. Maintaining a distinct identity has been essential. The social workers have often conveyed that they are trying to join hands with the police, because they believe that the established and institutionalised authority and power of the police would reinforce and give strength to the effort of the Special Cell. While the superior legal knowledge & experience of the police is respected; the social worker's have nevertheless firmly conveyed their conviction that professional social workers have a significant contribution to make; they can reinforce the work of the police and together; with mutual support, the needs of "women in crisis situation could be effectively dealt with" (Dave and Dharmadikari, 1987) In essence, the interface of the Special Cell with the police ensures, that further discrimination of the victimised women does not occur at the police station on grounds of gender, caste, or class.

The social workers have displayed an enquiring mind and eagerness to constantly learn from the police. Clarifications from both ends are often sought, sufficient trust and respect for each other is held. The social workers have been careful not to interfere in police matters, or superimpose their thoughts & opinions on them; not to condemn, criticize, judge the officers or be directive. Communication is always open & two ways; the process has been of a constant dialogue. Viewpoints may be shared there is an interchange of thoughts & information to bring about mutual understanding, most often than not there are amiable and prudent discussions.

Since its inception, the social workers have maintained complete freedom and distinctiveness in its work. There is no interference from anybody, including the police; the social workers are rarely ever questioned as to why they do certain things in a certain way. The social worker's have made a cautious effort that none of them take any personal advantage of the cell's relationship with the police. The police see the social worker's at the Special Cell, as 'professionals'. The police have gained an understanding that the Special Cell social worker's are not 'touts' motivated by self-gains nor are they politically affiliated. Because of this open communication, mutual sharing and respect, an identity and credibility the Special Cell has been established.

### **IS THE CELL BETTER THAN COURT?**

When asked the above question, most social workers stated that both are third party arbitrations. The methodology of the two differed, the court moved strictly by law, the Special Cell, can work without the long drawn out procedures of the law; avoiding the time and money that would be spent on litigation. Certain cases need state intervention and the court procedures becomes inevitable. The Special Cell does pre-litigation work.

Also, as some social workers have remarked, amongst all the cases referred to the Special Cell, not all needed legal intervention.

Nevertheless the social workers, have stated that the Special Cell has certain advantages over the court. To illustrate, a few cases have been cited below:

*Case 1: Fraudulent Marriage •*

THE PROBLEM

Aruna, 27 years, educated upto std.X working as a class IV employee in a government firm, met Shiva (who was 30 years) after a brief courtship; the two married and resided in a rented house in Central Bombay. After about 6 months Aruna discovered that Shiva was previously married and his wife and children resided in Nashik. This fact of his marriage had been concealed and Shiva had deceived Aruna.

AT THE SPECIAL CELL

Aruna approached the Special Cell and demanded that she be compensate her monetarily. She decided that she did not want to stay with him anymore. She could not approach the court, she had no documentary evidence regarding her marriage, her marriage was not registered, she was "married" in a temple; in the absence of any witness and though she could have filed a case she had no documentary evidence regarding her marriage. Legally speaking her second marriage was "null and void" and she could not claim maintenance too.

The intervention of the social worker at the Special Cell enabled her get, a compensation of Rs. 10,000/- which would not have seemed possible in court. The compensatory sum could enable her to begin life afresh. This was to be couriered as seed money to start life afresh. (For this the social worker had interviewed Shiva, who though, he admitted his fault, was initially reluctant to give Aruna, monetary compensation, but later did give, he also gave a contractual assurance stating he would never again interfere in Aruna and her personal affairs) The approximate time taken to settle this case was about eight months!

*Case 2: Property Dispute*

In the case of a property dispute between two brothers, Rajan and Sunil. Sunil, the younger brother, and his wife approached the Special Cell.

THE PROBLEM

The adjoining room in which they lived, though originally belonging to their mother was later transferred on Rajan , the older son's name. There

was a partition in between the rooms and both families stayed as separate households.

Yet, in Sunil and his wife's absence when they had gone for a holiday of about 2 1/2 months, Rajan dismantled the partition and occupied the adjoining room (which belonged to Sunil) along with his room.

#### AT THE SPECIAL CELL

At the Special Cell Rajan, refused to reconstruct the partition, claiming that the room was on his name and he was, the sole owner. The Special Cell social worker's intervention, the mediation process and the co-ordination with the local police station, enabled Sunil and his wife to get their due share in the house. Not only did Rajan, reconstruct the partition; he also transferred Sunil's share of the room, on Sunil's name and Sunil and his wife were allowed to occupy their house once again.

Had both the parties moved to court for litigation it may would have taken years before some decision settlement who take place, rendering Sunil and his wife homeless in the meantime.

#### *Case 3: Breach of Trust*

#### THE PROBLEM

Gauri about 18 years, educated upto std. XII residing at Pune, was engaged to Ravi, a graduate working as a clerk in a private company in Bombay. The families got to know each other through a common friend and the "match" was arranged. After the engagement, they met a few times and the marriage was to be held within eight months of their engagement.

The marriage invitation cards were printed and all arrangements done in Bombay. This had cost Gauri's family a substantial sum, yet Ravi giving no specific reasons, decided that he did not want to marry Gauri.

#### AT THE SPECIAL CELL

When Gauri approached the Special Cell she expressed wished that Ravi should marry her; she was afraid of being defamed and her further marriage prospects being hampered. Ravi simply stated "no", Dowry was not the issue. He thought that they were incompatible and in any case, he stated, he had the freedom to change his mind about his marriage partner.

However after the social worker's intervention, he did agree to compensate her a sum of Rs. 12000/- towards that the cost of the expenses that he family had spent towards the arrangements and also gave on assurance in writing that he would not interfere in her future marriage prospects. This arrangement did not totally satisfy Gauri (she still wished he should have been married to her and the social worker worked with Gauri individually

over a couple of interviews) Nevertheless they stated that this arrangement was a "compromise". This case neither fell in the purview of the court, nor could anything have be expected on that end.

*Case 4: Case of Embezzling*

## THE PROBLEM

Ratna a young widow, about 32 years of age, with two young children, was constantly making rounds of her husband's company (who had died a sudden death) to collect his Provident fund, Insurance dues. Not being very educated in these matters and not very conversant, with formalities, paper work etc, she sought help of a young man Sudhakar, who too was a employee in the same company and claimed to be her husbands friend and offered his assistance.

Placing faith in him, since he seemed a nice and a helpful person, she said, she signed on the documents etc. as he asked her to; little did she know that she would be swindled of, a sum of Rs. 15000/- which she received as compensation/fund from the company. What was given to her by Sudhakar was a meager sum.

## AT THE SPECIAL CELL

Unsure, yet suspicious that Sudhakar had cheated her, she approached the Special Cell seeking clarification on his act. The social worker inspected the documents and Sudhakar too confessed that he had cheated Ratna and promised to return the money though in monthly instalments which he did eventually.

As is elicited above by the social workers at the Special Cell the atmosphere informal, the settlements quicker. While people may be apprehensive of court procedures, getting into litigation, consulting advocates, the fees etc. the Special Cell involves a simpler procedure, only a written application need be given.

As stated by the social workers, the person-centered approach at the Special Cell creates little anxiety in the woman's mind. Not much documentary evidence is needed at the Special Cell while in the courts the verdict would depend upon the availability of evidence. At the Special Cell jurisdiction too is no problem and cases from all over Maharashtra, as well as other states have been handled.

In cases, where legal intervention may be needed subsequent to Special Cell intervention, the social workers have stated, that the clients can be educated, guided about court procedures. They may also be supported to do the groundwork, i.e. the woman client may with the help of social

worker find her husband's employment details, salary details (where maintenance is the issue); etc. which may further help the woman client in court.

At times, for instance the husband may, on a legal stamp paper give an assurance, stating that he will regularly send an approximate sum as maintenance to his wife. At times he may continue the process of sending maintenance for over a couple of months or years in which case the receipt; the money order receipt etc may be preserved and can be later produced in court to facilitate the process of litigation.

Also, in custody matters, the Special Cell may seek the help of a police station to transfer the custody of a minor child to the mother. This can be an interim arrangement before a suit for custody is filed by either parent.

Mutual consent terms and condition can be laid down at the Special Cell with the social workers mediation and subsequently a mutual consent deed can be filed.

Also the Special Cell does work in collaboration with caste panchayats and work at divorces under customary laws. Also the courts may not have the sufficient time or personnel to accompany clients in cases of retrieval of Stridhan, but the Special Cell workers are also more resourceful work out co-ordination with other agencies, thus making referrals etc where the need occurs. While, the courts may not have the time or personnel to accompany clients, in cases of Stridhan.

### **REFERRALS MADE BY THE SPECIAL CELL AND CO-ORDINATION SOUGHT WITH OTHER AGENCIES**

Most of the social worker have expressed the view that in case of quarrels between neighbors, a mutual understanding, may be worked upon, though not much can be done given their proximity. However, some social worker have successfully intervened in such cases.

Similarly, as stated by the social workers certain case of property disputes have been mutually settled between the concerned parties; while in certain others a referral to a legal aid center is made to seek help in filing a case, referral to the social service branch or the police station may also be one of the exercisable options.

Police help is sought when the use of authority needs to be exercised or when certain matters have to be recorded at the police station level, such as in cases of extreme violence etc., also as a precautionary measure the police may be approached when a further problem is anticipated (such as subsequent to the restoration of Stridhan, a station diary or an NC may be filed etc.) A police referral is also made, where clients may want to pursue a criminal case.

At times, male clients (generally from the higher socioeconomic class) may approach the Special Cell along with their advocate and express their

reluctance to pursue the matter through the cell, stating that they would rather pursue the matter through court.

In such circumstances, the worker may co-ordinate with the advocate explain to him the woman's perspective and thereby attempt to seek his and the client's husbands co-operation. In case the husband persists to move to court and mutual agreement cannot be worked upon the client too may be referred to an advocate or a legal aid centre.

In addition at the Special Cell, referrals are made to sponsorship agencies, agencies offering medical and psychiatric help, shelter home, hostels, adoption centers, employment bureaus and agencies offering education and training or some other community based services etc.

The social workers stated that they had co-ordinated with and made referrals to agencies offering legal and psychiatric help, sponsorship agencies, Alcoholic Anonymous groups and addiction centers etc. Community based programmers have at times been conducted jointly with other women's organisations, further clients have been encouraged to participate in "gatherings" competitions etc. held by other women's organisations and have also been referred to women's centers where reading material etc. on women's issues is available.

### **THE WORK OF THE SPECIAL CELL WITH GROUPS AND COMMUNITIES**

The social workers have stated that their work with groups and communities is in the form of holding orientation talks about the Special Cell or giving information about police procedures, laws related to women or creating sensitivity on the issue of violence against women and the needs and problems of the women victims of violence. The effort has been broadly towards raising consciousness, questioning attitudes and creating supports for women.

Though some social workers have made efforts to work in communities, to mobilise community support groups, for battered women, the effort has been limited, with no far reaching consequences group work and community work though termed as essential, have not received the desired attention mainly due to the workers time effort being mainly concentrated on casework. Also attempts at group work and community outreach programmes, depend mainly on the individual social workers own interest and initiative. Yet, work with individuals is in itself limited; it requires a simultaneous effort at working with communities and at establishing/creating a support structure for women admit all the social workers.

There is further scope, to build community supported shelter services, to initiate self support groups in post divorce cases, to work in groups with abusive men to organise group work activities with young girls and boys,

to mention some of the few group work activities. For the Special Cell to engage itself in group work activities and community outreach programs needs in more personnel, it also requires extensive networking with the available services, as well as initiating newer services and reaching out to diverse settings such as schools, colleges, courts etc.

### *Work with Caste Panchayats*

The work of the Special Cell with the caste panchayats, generally speaking comprises of calling the members to the Special Cell and advocating for the women victims of violence. The Special Cell, social worker may challenge the institutionalised norms that are set up by the community (which perpetuate women's subordination). Working with women, in her context, (in collaboration with the caste panchayats) does to some extent gradually help to build her acceptance within the community there by eliciting support from within the community to respect her own decision.

The support of the customary panchayats is also sought to work out customary divorce in setting up mutual settlement deeds regarding exchange of articles, custody of children, maintenance and other issues.

### **COMMENTS ON THE ADEQUACY OF THE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING AT POSTGRADUATE SOCIAL WORK LEVEL AND THE INCLUSION OF ADDITIONAL COMPONENTS TO ENABLE SOCIAL WORKERS TO WORK AT THE SPECIAL CELL**

Responding to the questions on whether the professional course at the MA social work level was useful and the additional inputs needed, most social workers shared the feeling that the course is a stepping stone to the learning process, that it had offered them an opportunity to work at the Special Cell and it had helped in questioning certain attitudes; besides the principles and techniques in casework were useful.

Yet at the MA social work level, some social workers expressed the view that sufficient knowledge and skills are not imparted to intervene in the types of cases that come to the Special Cell. Hence 'on the job training' or 'an orientation course' needs to be imparted, to the Special Cell social workers. The Family and Child Welfare course lacks the women's perspective comments one social worker.

Some social workers have stated, that an adequate knowledge of law, psychology and psychiatry and practical aspects of work with the courts should be imparted at the MA social work level to enable social workers to function at the Special Cell, a course in marriage counseling and sexual therapy also ought to be included in the syllabus. Another social worker visualises the need for introducing civics and an understanding of the

government education structure, etc, in the course material and stresses the need to make the CO course practice based.

To enhance skills on counseling, crisis intervention, marriage therapy etc and to gain an insight into women's issues, most social workers have resorted to reading as a mode of self learning, some have sought guidance of senior colleagues, professors and to attending workshops/training programs.

### **STRENGTHS OF THE SPECIAL CELL AS PERCEIVED BY THE SOCIAL WORKERS**

The social worker have stated that a flat, non- hierarchical structure at the Special Cell, the freedom and flexibility given to the workers to experiment and learn, the opportunities offered for attending seminars and workshops etc; make the work environment conducive to the professional growth of the social worker

The acceptance of the Special Cell by the police department, the infra-structural facilities offered, proximal location of the Special Cell office to the police station utilization of the police vehicle for home visits are indeed some of the strengths of the Special Cell

### **LIMITATIONS OF THE SPECIAL CELL AS PERCEIVED BY THE SOCIAL WORKERS**

The work at the Special Cell often result in the workers getting mentally exhausted, thus adversely affecting the efficiency of the social worker. After a period of two years states one social worker "the workers suffers from a burnout symptom, wherein continuing work becomes impossible or the efficiency of the worker drops". A high turnover of social worker also attributed to this factor which pointed as a major drawback. Due to lack of funds, more workers cannot be employed; thus limited man power with a high caseload, is pointed as another limitation by some social workers. Some social workers have stated that the Special Cell social workers do not have the status of a permanent employee, there are no promotions and they are not entitled to sick leave, other perks etc.

Lack of proper records and documentation are the limitations as pointed by the social workers. Yet some others have voiced difficulty in functioning when almost everything is left to the social worker without adequate guidance and direction from the supervisors. This has been done but not on a sustained basis. Another aspect of the Special Cell work highlighted as a drawback by one social worker is the lack of credibility of the workers analysis and reporting at the family court level.

Also the social worker who are currently working at the Special Cell have stated the contact of the social worker with the police is somewhat



loosening and efforts need to be made for improved contacts. Initially, the contact was kept constantly.

### SUGGESTIONS

The social workers in the course of the interviewed have suggested certain modifications to improve the present functioning of the Special Cell and shared certain ideas on further work that can be undertaken by the Special Cell

1. The social workers have emphasised that the supervisors come to the Special Cell to hold evaluative meetings with the social worker, offer consultation and have regular case presentations and discussions on relevant issues, have book reviews and have a yearly evaluation of the social worker as well as the Special Cell work. Ideally the social worker express that case records must be maintained and the Special Cell. Till date except for two social worker who have maintained case records other social worker have expressed their inability to document the work due to high case load. One social worker has suggested that research and documentation ought to be or ongoing process at the Special Cell and a person specifically in charge of documentation needs to be appointed at the Special Cell. In a nutshell, the social worker have strongly expressed the need to have consultative meetings with project director and a need to undertake research and documentation on an ongoing basis.
2. Orientation and training to the Special Cell workers, particularly in the area of marriage counseling and dealing with cases of sexual abuse, is seen as a must by most of the social workers.
3. To prevent the high worker turnover the social worker suggest that they be given the status of a permanent employee with adequate scope for promotions to work in senior, supervisory capacities.
4. Most social workers have strongly expressed that ex-clients of the Special Cell, who share the ideology of the Special Cell can be appointed as para-professionals after orientation and training. The task of such para-professionals would be largely to pay home visits, follow-up visits, facilitate group work and community work and support networking. A para legal petition drafter too could be appointed, to aid the clients, to pursue legal matters etc.
5. Though the social workers have maintained contacts with advocates for advisory purposes this has largely depended on the personal initiation of each social worker; setting up of a formal system; whereby a legal adviser can be appointed to pay weekly, biweekly visits to the Special Cell, to advice and support clients, in legal matters is a need as expressed by the social workers

6. The social workers do not possess adequate skills to deal with certain dimensions of a problem that may need specialised attention. For effective functioning an integrated effort with other professionals for a multi-dimensional and holistic approach is viewed as essential by most of the social workers. They suggest the setting up of a panel of psychiatrists, psychologists, medical social workers for consultation at the Special Cell.
7. Some social workers have visualised the Special Cell as a 24 hour hot line service, offering telecounseling and shelter facilities to the clients.
8. Some social workers have pointed that networking efforts of the Special Cell need to be strengthened with other women's organisations and contact consistently maintained.
9. The social workers have also complained that despite scope for extending the work of the Special Cell, efforts have not been made in the direction of outreach programs. The social workers have suggested that the Special Cell should initiate preventive and development work and conduct FLE programs in schools and communities. Working with other women's organisations on issues of gender conscientisation, undertaking research and documentation, developing training and Audio visual material for police framing; are some of the other activities envisaged by the social workers that could be taken up at the Special Cell.

To conclude, orientation and training of the Special Cell worker, consultation, evaluation by supervisors and project directors, ongoing research and documentation, appointment of para-professionals, appointment of a legal advisor, setting up a panel of consulting professionals, networking with other organisations, development of training material and diversification of the Special Cell work by working on the preventive aspect in other settings; are some areas highlighted by the social workers for greater efficiency in the Special Cell functioning.

### **SCOPE FOR REPLICATIONS OF THE SPECIAL CELL**

All the social workers felt strongly about the need to replicate the Special Cell, at the zonal levels (within the city) and at the district levels. Some social workers have suggested that the Special Cell (at the district level) should work in co-ordination with the Sanjay Surakhsha Samitis (dowry committees) which are already functioning at the district level. Perhaps as suggested by some social workers training programme for the voluntary workers, of the dowry committees, can be held to enable them to work on the model, as based by the Special Cell.

While some social workers think that the police department, should take over, the functioning of the Special Cell, others argue that the Special

Cell though replicated at police stations should continue to maintain its autonomous status.

### **HOW HAS THE SPECIAL WORK AFFECTED YOU ?**

Given below is the response of one of the social workers that sums what the social workers had to say about their experience and work at the Special Cell and how it affected them as a person, "overall, my work at the Special Cell, has been an enriching experience personally as well as professionally. It has offered me an exposure to a range of human relationships; through my work I have unlearnt certain things, learnt through practical experience the Indian culture; its diversity and its nuances".

"I have learnt to relate theory and practice. As an individual, I have drawn from my professional experience into my personal life; the work has offered a better understanding of human relationship, it has helped me to improve personal communication patterns and deal effectively with people. It has made me more realistic and my sensibility and maturity have certainly grown over the years of work at the Special Cell."

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# RESPONSE OF SOCIAL WELFARE ORGANISATIONS

## INTRODUCTION

In Bombay, there are many organisations which provide assistance to women in distress. Some of them are support centers established by autonomous women's groups. These centers give emotional support as well as legal and medical help to women suffering different types of violence. 'Women's Centre' 'Stree Mukti Sangathana' 'Mahila Dakshata Samiti' at Dadar, 'Swadhar', 'Stree Chetna' and 'Majlis' are the agencies that we visited for feedback on the Special Cell work. Apart from individual counseling these centers also undertake other activities. Most of them work for creating awareness regarding women's issues through small group meetings, exhibitions, skits, street plays, and so on. Stree Mukthi sangathana runs creches and play groups for children of working mothers and conducts functional literacy programs. Stree Chetna also has balwadis and conducts awareness programs for police in chamber zone. Bharatiya Stree Shakti provides Vocational guidance for school dropouts. Swadhar runs a Balwadi teachers training center and other ad hoc programmes to generate employment for women in distress. Organisations like Majlis and Maitreyi conduct research on women's issues.

We spoke to representatives of other organisations such as Help, a support group at Bandra, which provides counseling on telephone to women in crisis situations, Bapnu Ghar at Worli, which is a shelter home for married women over 18 years of age and Asha Sadan which offers shelter to court committal destitute girls under 18.

We also interviewed Ms. Kalpana Gavaskar who specialises in women's cases and we interviewed a family court counselor. The psychiatric social worker from Sion hospital, where clients of the cell requiring

psychiatric help are referred, was also interviewed. 'Sakhya' an anti dowry cell started by Nirmala Niketan College of social work, also formed a part of the sample.

The criteria for selecting these organisations or individuals was that the cell should have had some contact with them or should have worked in collaboration with them at some point of time. Availability of the respondents during the particular time phase of data collection was another criteria for selection.

#### *Status and Experience of the Respondents and Level of Awareness about the Cell*

More than half of the respondents (eight) interviewed were founder members of the organisations. Most of them were activists (six), One was a lawyer and one a professionally trained social worker. Nearly one third of the respondents (four) were employed as social workers/counselors by the organisations. Another two respondents were working as superintendents, one was an advocate who specialised in women's cases.

A large majority of the respondents (ten) were active in the field of social welfare for more than ten years. The remaining had also an experience of more than six years. A majority of the respondents (nine) were aware of the cell's existence and functioning since its inception in 1984. The other organisations had heard about it not later than 1988.

Seven respondents (seven) had heard about the cell either through Prof. Apte project director of the Special Cell, or through one of the cell workers (five). The rest gained knowledge about the cell through other women's organisations or colleagues. A majority had visited the cell at one point of time or the other, either with a client or as a participant of the programme organised by the cell. One of the respondents was initially a client of the cell.

Almost all the respondents knew at least some of the cell workers personally, although many were not familiar with the workers, who had joined recently.

Since most of the respondents had several years of experience in the field and were fairly aware of the Special Cell, we felt justified in eliciting their feed back regarding functioning of the Special Cell.

#### **CO-ORDINATION WITH THE CELL**

One third of the organisations (five) had a two way relationship with the cell. They accepted referrals from the cell as well as made referrals to the cell. Some Organisations (four) only send cases to the cell workers while some others only supported the cell workers when they approached them. One organisation had worked jointly with cell in some cases either because a client had approached both organisations simultaneously for help or both

parties involved in domestic dispute had approached these two organisations separately. Two respondents said that they had referred cases to the Special Cell in the past but had stopped doing so recently as they did not personally know the newer workers in the Special Cell. Some others (three) revealed that over the years there was a change in the type of cases referred to the cell. Cases of property disputes, and cases of excessive domestic violence which were referred in the past are no longer referred to the cell. It appeared that with experience voluntary agencies have developed skills and confidence to deal with such cases on their own, in coordination with the police.

### **SUPPORT OF THE SPECIAL CELL SOUGHT BY OTHER ORGANISATIONS**

A majority of the women's organisations in the past as well as at present seemed to need the support of the Special Cell for cases wherein the police machinery has to be mobilised for stridhan recovery, for child custody, for protection and for lodging a complaint against the offenders. Cases of battered wives of police personnel are also sent to the cell. Because of their contacts with police at various levels, cell workers are perceived to be in a better position to help, particularly when the abusive husbands did not respond to the call letters sent by their agency. It was experienced that, those husbands would promptly respond as the call letters of the cell, bearing the address of the Police Commissioner's office carried more authority. Sometimes agencies referred to the cell, those clients who resided or worked in nearby areas.

### **SUPPORT OF OTHER ORGANISATIONS SOUGHT BY THE SPECIAL CELL**

The cell had sought the help of other organisations for various purposes. Almost one third of the respondents (nine) had received referrals from the cell. The reasons for referrals included shelter for minor girls and battered women as well as legal and psychiatric help, specialised marital counseling or vocational guidance to the client. Sometimes agencies were requested to do home visits if the address was close to their area of functioning.

Apart from the referrals women's organisations have collaborated with the cell for many other activities. Cell workers were invited by some agencies as resource persons for awareness programme (two) or for giving training/orientation to their voluntary workers (two), some of these organisations had participated in the Project Help initiated by the Special Cell. Cell had also co-operated with agencies for research projects related to family violence. Being a project of the "Tata Institute" the cell did not have provision for raising funds for its clients. Hence, the cell workers worked

out an arrangement with one organisation whereby they helped the organisation to collect donations and referred to it clients in need of financial help and sponsorship for children.

### **FEEDBACK OF FUNCTIONING**

From amongst the agencies which referred clients to the cell, very few were found to keep a regular follow up with clients (three) or with the cell workers (In fact, one respondent said that she did not feel the need to do so, as she had complete confidence in the ability of cell worker) It was found that many organisations (six) expected the workers to keep them informed regarding the progress of the case referred by them. As one of the respondents explained, voluntary women's organisations were deficient in manpower and infrastructure and perceived the cell as having better resource hence this expectation. When inquired whether cell workers insisted on a follow up, the response of most of the organisations was in the negative.

### **STRENGTHS OF THE SPECIAL CELL AS PERCEIVED BY THE RESPONDENTS**

It was the experience of many respondents that referred clients returned to the organisation only if they did not receive help. From this premises, and from whatever little follow up they had been able to maintain, most of the organisations inferred that the cell was able to work efficiently in cases referred by them. The location of the cell in police headquarter/ station was perceived as an advantage by many respondents (eight). According to the respondents, because the cell was located in a police station/headquarter, the clients felt more confident, while the other party felt obliged to respond to call letters and mutual agreement if required could be better worked upon. The location of the Special Cell and the formal atmosphere created tension in the mind of the other concerned party and the cell workers could also get immediate help of the police when necessary. One respondent pointed out that home visits played an important role in resolving family disputes. She felt that it was easier for the cell worker to conduct home visits, as two days of the week were specially set aside and a police vehicle too was available for this purpose.

The fact that the cell was manned by professionally trained social workers was perceived as an advantage by some respondents (three) who felt that the Special Cell workers were efficient and competent in their work (three). One respondent expressed that the cell was more efficient in implementation and enforcement than the court. Another two respondents were not able to pinpoint the reason for efficacy of the cell.

### **LIMITATIONS OF THE SPECIAL CELL AS PERCEIVED BY THE RESPONDENTS**

One respondent who was not happy with the functioning of the cell said that the clients felt confused due that to high turnover of the workers and those cases were not being followed up properly.

Respondents who had expressed satisfaction about the functioning of the cell were also asked to point out its shortcomings, and suggest modifications. A few of them (two) said that the high turn over of workers was a drawback, but felt that it was inevitable considering the emotional and exhaustive nature of work.

According to one respondent, a lot of people were still unaware of the cell, and understood the cell workers as the police, in the opinion of another respondent, the cell was not very effective in providing long turn relief. High cases load, young and inexperienced workers and lack of a lawyer attached to the agency were some other disadvantages mentioned.

A majority of the respondents (eight) complained that the cell was increasingly getting isolated from other women's organisation. There was no contact with new cell workers and a lack of effective communication between cell the and other women's organisations was experienced.

According to some respondents (two) there was deliberate unwillingness on part of cell workers to collaborate with other women's organisation.

### **OPINIONS ON THE IDEOLOGY OF THE SPECIAL CELL AND OTHER FACTORS**

The respondents were asked their feedback regarding the ideological thrust of the cell and factors which affect the efficacy of cell workers.

The cell workers strongly believe in the right of self determination of the clients: a majority of the organisations (eight) were in complete agreement with the ideology. One respondent however pointed out the necessity to be flexible in this regard. According to her sometimes workers needed to take action even before the client admitted the existence of problem, so that her confidence and courage could be built up.

We identified gender, age marital status and personality as factors which could affect the efficiency of cell workers. A majority of workers however did not feel that gender (eight) age (nine) or marital status (ten) were factors of any importance. A few respondents believed that women clients may not confide in male workers (two) while one respondent was of the opinion that a male worker might have a patronising attitude. Some respondents believed that one male and one female would be an ideal choice (three). A few respondents commented that experience, rather than age made an impact on the worker's efficiency. While some respondents



firmly believed that an older, mature person would do better in a setting such as the cell, respondent who opined that a married person would be more effective than an unmarried worker in cell were very few. Several personality factors were mentioned by the respondents which they felt were essential for the worker to be effective. These included patience, maturity, assertiveness and outspokenness; confidence in self and ability to inspire confidence in others (two); and empathy and non-judgmental attitude. Perspective and knowledge about women's issue and problems and the worker's previous participation in social movements were also considered important.

In a nutshell, a majority of the respondents expressed faith in the effectivity of the cell to help the clients, due to the Cell's close co-ordination with the police being perceived as its major strength. However, its high turnover, lack of a legal advisor/consultant, its decreasing contact with other women's organisations were pointed out as major drawbacks.

### **SUGGESTIONS FOR MODIFICATION, EXPANSION AND REPLICATION**

The respondents were asked to suggest ways in which to overcome the drawbacks of the cell.

A respondent pointed out the need to have more staff and more space at the cell, since presently the workers were overburdened and the place over crowded. In order to reduce the case load, few of the respondents suggested employment of para-professionals or volunteers to assist the cell workers. According to one respondent after the crisis intervention at the cell the client could be referred to other voluntary organisations for long term counseling. Some other respondents suggested referring a client to other women's organisations located near their area of residence.

In the opinion of one respondent, increased payment and opportunities for promotions for the workers would induce the workers to stay on at the cell for longer duration. As per another respondent close supervision and in service training were essential to prevent the high rate of burnout of the workers.

Different ways of improving the collaboration between the cell and voluntary agencies were suggested. One respondent thought that the cell workers should participate in protests and demonstrations organised by other women's organisations and also to hold protests demonstrations with the help of other agencies for clients who find counseling to be ineffective to solve their problems. It was opined that the cell could start taking initiative for organising meetings of women's organisations on issues of common concern. According to another respondent, opportunities for vocational rehabilitation of the women in distress was the issue needing

immediate attention. Another respondent believed that the cell should take responsibility for creating a dialogue between the police and other women's organisations. A third organisation thought that the cell should allow its voluntary workers to remain in present during the counseling sessions of the cell, in order to give them an opportunity to learn the techniques of counseling. Some agencies insisted that the cell workers should keep them informed regarding the help given to the clients referred by them, (four) one of them suggested having monthly meetings with referring agencies.

While suggesting other areas for expansion of the activities of the cell some respondents emphasised (three) the need to increase awareness about the cell among the police as well as general public regarding the work of the cell. One of them felt that the cell could start conducting awareness programs for the families of police personnel. Another respondent pointed out the need to have awareness programs for men's groups in order to sensitize them regarding women's issues.

A few (two) organisations opined that the cell could complement the work of the family court provided it got investigative power and legal recognition. Working with children suffering from trauma of violence in the family was another suggestion for co-ordinating with family court.

One respondent described the plight of runaway girls/destitute women found by JAPU. Apparently these women were simply sent to Reception Center without any counseling and employment as a housemaid was the only avenue of rehabilitation open to them. Therefore it was felt that the cell should intervene in such cases .

### **OPINIONS ON REPLICATION OF THE SPECIAL CELL**

When questioned about the need for replication of the cell most of the agencies were found to feel that it was essential. One respondent wanted a cell in every police station. Some of them (three) felt that there should be cell in each zone, (there are ten zones in Bombay), while a few (two) felt that four to six Special Cells in Bombay would be ideal. The requirement for having Special Cells outside Bombay (including Thane) was pointed out by two respondents. One respondent expressed a different opinion. According to her rather than having replications of cell, women police officers , constables could be trained to handle cases of domestic disputes at police station level. To conclude referrals to other agencies expansion of staff and space were suggested to reduce workload of cell workers while improved job benefits and on the job training were expected to reduce the staff turnover. It was thought that better collaboration with other women's organisation could be achieved through regular meetings with them and participation in agitations on issues of common concern. Cell workers were expected to create a better dialogue between police and other women's

organisations. Conducting awareness programs for different groups - specially the police and their families regarding women's issues; complementing the work of family court and working for rehabilitation of runaway girls destitute women were some other areas identified for expansion of activities by the cell. The need for replication of the Special Cell in Bombay was expressed by most of the respondents.

# **RESPONSE OF POLICE OFFICIALS**

## **INTRODUCTION**

We opted to interview Bombay city police officials, to get their feed back about the Special Cell with the assumption that since the cell works in close co-ordination with the police they would be well aware of its functioning. We visited 48 police stations in Bombay and spoke to a total of 55 police personnel. Out of these, 15 were not aware of the cell at all either because they were fresh recruits or because they had served only in the technical branches of the police. The remaining 40 though they were aware of the cell did not always know its methodology so well as to evaluate it. Therefore, all our respondents were not able to answer all the questions as enlisted in the interview guideline.

Out of the 40 respondents who had some awareness of the cell, 10 were police inspectors and 15 were senior police inspectors in charge of the police station. There were 10 Police Sub Inspectors (PSIs) among the respondents. In two cases we came across constables who were very well aware of the cell and we had interviewed them too. We had also spoken to three Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACPs) who were willing to comment about the functioning of the cell.

Many of these police personnel (seven) had come to know about the cell because they had worked in the premises of the office of the Commissioner of Police at some point of time in their career. They used to encounter cell workers in the office, see the waiting crowd in the cell, and getting curious would try to obtain information. After the cell was started in 1984, a notice was printed in the Police Notification para to communicate this fact to the police. The workers in the cell had made a round of all the police stations in Bombay when the cell was started. A few police Inspectors

(three) recalled their visit. Some of the police officers had come to know about the Special Cell when they attended training programmes in Tata Institute of Social Science (five) or when they were approached by the cell workers to seek help for a client (five). Workers at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (CST) cell operated in very close co-ordination with the police in Social Service Branch (S.S.B.). Similarly, workers in Dadar Police Station have a good rapport with the officers in the station house. Therefore the respondents who were serving in S.S.B or at Dadar police station (four) were found to be knowledgeable about the cell. Other respondents had heard about the cell from colleagues or senior officers (two) or acquaintances (three).

In case of one Police Inspector, during one of his 'Janta Darbars' some women in his jurisdiction informed him about the existence of the cell and put forth the necessity of starting a similar cell in their area.

A majority (63%) of the respondents had referred cases to the cell. The remaining (37%) had different reasons for not sending cases. Some respondents did not know the details, that is the type of cases that could be sent to the cell or the days on which the workers were available in the office. Some of the police officers used other resources available to them, some sent cases of family dispute to students of Nirmala Niketan or Tata Institute who visited their police station, (two); one had sent clients to Stree Chetna (a voluntary women's organisation working in his jurisdiction) while another one referred them to S.S.B. A few policemen had simply not come across any cases for which outside intervention was required. A few others (two) said that they felt quite competent to handle cases of family discord on their own. One of the respondent had not heard about the cell at all after the initial notice in Police Notification Para (P.N. Para) in 1984. Hence he thought that the cell might have been discontinued and did not bother to refer clients.

The cell workers had sought the help of these police personnel on a number of occasions (16 for example, in cases of stridhan recovery, when a women refused to come to the cell when called, in cases of alcoholics who proved difficult to handle, and in other cases in which influence of police authority was required. In most of these instances police seemed willing to be of assistance to the workers. However a few grumbled that the women for whom the workers had asked help were not 'genuine'.

In a nutshell we had interviewed a mixed sample of police officials which included assistant commissioners of police, police inspectors, sub inspectors and constables. Many had come to know about the cell either because they were working in the same premise, at the Commissioner of Police office (specially the social service branch) or the Dadar police station. Others had heard about it through the cell workers, Tata Institute of Social

Science workshops, colleagues and even from the women who had come to seek help. A majority had referred cases to the cell a number of times though very few had managed to keep a follow up of referred cases. Thus though they were well aware of the objectives and methodology of the cell, very few were in a position to evaluate its work.

### **FEEDBACK ON METHODOLOGY: POLICE VIS A VIS SPECIAL CELL**

We asked the opinion of the respondents regarding the difference between their way of handling the cases of family dispute and the way in which cell handled such cases. Many of the respondents (nine) stated that the cell workers gave much more time to the clients than they did or could give. "Unlike the police, cell workers go to the root cause of the problem" was the comment made by one respondent. Of course the reason for this was that "unlike the cell workers, the police have lot of other responsibilities and attending to clients is not their only job".

Many respondents (nine) said that women did not confide their problems to the male police officials, specially the young duty officers who they normally meet when they came to a police stations, social workers, being mostly women, could establish better rapport with women clients and the clients could even come out with their 'sexual problems' when speaking to the cell workers.

Some respondents pointed out that as per law the police were not allowed to do anything in cases of non-cognisable offenses but the cell workers had no such limitations.

One respondent brought out the fact that intervention by the police in the matter of domestic dispute was considered a blow to the prestige of a family. According to him the gap between a couple would widen, if the police tried to intervene. Cell workers were free from such social stigma, and therefore proved to be more effective in setting cases of marital discard. For the same reason, said another respondent, women could approach the cell more easily rather than the police station.

The difference in the approach of the police and the cell workers was described by one respondent who said that the cell had a 'gentle approach' as opposed to the 'rough handling' by the police. A few other respondents (three) also agreed that in the cell the emphasis was more on counseling, on making people understand their problems and helping them to arrive at a mutually agreeable settlement, while the police relied on threatening locking up an errant husband, or other such measures to put an end to harassment; according to some respondents (three) these methods brought only temporary relief, whereas more lasting solutions were possible through the intervention by the cell.

One of the police officers opined that police, even those in the social service branch were not as effective as social workers because they lacked the training in psychology. Only one worker was perceptive enough to point out that there was a difference in the attitude of the police and the cell workers towards women; the police did not believe in the equality of the sexes like did the cell workers.

The remaining respondents (eight) expressed inability to answer this question since they were not very familiar with the way in which the cell handled cases.

### **OPINIONS REGARDING FUTURE STATUS OF THE SPECIAL CELL**

Opinions of police officials were sought regarding the future status of the Special Cell - whether it should be a part of police or whether it should remain an independent project. A majority of policemen (24) felt that the cell should retain its present independent status. All of them were convinced that if the cell became a part of police it would suffer from all the drawbacks and limitations of the police department. The cell workers would then become a part of the hierarchy, senior officers and other influential people in society would be able to exert pressure on them. Thus they would lose their freedom and therefore efficiency would suffer. Some of the respondents said that after becoming state government employees the cell workers might lose their motivation and commitment to work. One respondent acknowledged that the image of the police in the public eye was very poor and being a part of the police would prove to be a disadvantage to the Special Cell.

Some policemen (seven) were of the opinion that the cell should become a part of police. One of them wanted it to be like the Special Cell in Delhi, which is manned totally by police officers. Another opined that the co-operation of other police personnel would be more readily available, if the cell is absorbed by the police. According to others, the cell would then have more authority and greater impact. One respondent wanted the cell to be a part of the police, so that they would have something to be proud of.

With some of the respondents we discussed the possibility of employing women police officers (w.p.o.) or women police constables (w.p.c.) in the cell. Three out of the five respondents thought that their presence would help to bring pressure on violent husbands. The remaining three were not in favor of the idea, because according to them the w.p.c./w.p.o. lacked the professional ability required for this work, they suffered from all the drawbacks of the police force since they were part of the system, moreover

their strength was less (only one or two for each police station) and they were needed for other duties such as 'Bandobast'.

### **LIMITATIONS OF THE SPECIAL CELL AND SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT**

A major limitation of the Special Cell pointed out by the respondents was inadequacy of space and manpower (30) Only two cells for the whole of Bombay, each personnel by two workers was thought to be too less. Those respondents who were aware that the cell got at least one/two new cases per day, and the workers had to speak to a minimum of ten in a day, felt that the case load was very high and it might be affecting the quality of work. Some respondents (two) who had visited the cell had witnessed the large number of people waiting for their turn to speak to the cell workers. They admitted that there was not even adequate space for them to sit while waiting.

A majority of the policemen therefore felt the necessity to start more Special Cells in Bombay. However opinions differed as to where such cells could be started Some respondents had no specifications to offer. Some wanted the cell to be opened at each police station so that women coming to the police station would get immediate help. Police officials in Deonar and D.N.Nagar police stations with large slum pockets had experienced that even after knowing about the existence of Special Cell, women from poor communities could not approach the cell as they lacked the money to spend on traveling. Therefore they insisted that cell should open branches in those police stations. Senior Police Inspector of V.P. Road put forth the same demand because prostitution is practised on a very large scale in the jurisdiction of that police station and a center to help these women was very much needed. Some respondents opined that there should be a cell in each division while others thought one in each zone to be the ideal. According to some policemen in addition to the Special Cell at CST and Dadar one more cell in central suburbs, one in western suburbs and one for harbor line, were required. A few respondents (two) who had observed the waiting crowd at the cell, strongly believed that increasing the number of workers at Dadar and CST was more important then increasing the number of cells.

The fact that the cell functioned only in the day time was found to be a limitation by one respondent. He suggested that in the night at least some telephone services should be available to give guidance to women in crises situation.

Cell workers are available at the cell only for three days in a week. The other days are reserved for making home visits. However one respondent felt that the cell should remain open for all days of the week.



One respondent opined that expert legal advice should be made available to the cell workers by having a panel of lawyers. According to another respondent having elderly workers in the cell rather than young-fresh graduates would create greater impact.

Some respondents (two) complained that in a few instances, even when the women were in the wrong, the cell workers had pampered her. Some other respondents (five) also cautioned us about the 'false' cases of 498A IPC in which women after a minor quarrel at home registered a complaint against their husbands and in laws. In their opinion, these women later on wanted to reconcile with the husband but this proved impossible because of the police action against the accused. The respondents therefore wanted the cell to make the women aware of the exact provisions of the section 498A IPC in order to prevent its misuse.

From our discussions with the police officers many other suggestions regarding the expansion of activities of the cell came up. Some respondents wanted the cell to conduct meetings in the community, and create awareness about the work of the cell as also the work, role and limitations of the police.

As one of the respondents said that by creating awareness about the help available for battered women, suicides could be prevented. Therefore, having more programs with mothers in law and daughters in law to prepare them for their role and help them see the other point of view was also believed to be necessary. Girls in municipal schools and families of police constables were identified as major target groups for such programs.

One respondent emphasised that sensitisation programs for police personnel for teaching them to behave in their own homes were very much required. According to this respondent alcoholism and drug addiction was spreading among the police force at an alarming rate, and some programs to tackle this problem could also be taken up by the Special Cell.

Rehabilitation of battered women and other problem groups was another area of concern. Some respondents (4) wanted the cell to undertake income generating activities for battered women. One of them suggested that the cell should work towards ensuring reservation of seats for battered women in Government jobs. One respondent wanted the cell to work specially for rehabilitation of the prostitutes and to establish support network for single, separated women who, because of loneliness and frustration were found to be more prone to suicide.

Police often encounter the problem of unwillingness of neighbours and relatives to give evidence in cases of death of a women in suspicious circumstances. Therefore one police officer suggested that social workers could help the police by persuading the witnesses to come forth for giving evidence.

In short, inadequacy of space and manpower was the major limitation of the Special Cell as pointed out by the respondents. A majority of the respondents were in favour of starting more cells in Bombay. Inadequate communication facilities and lack of legal sanction to the cell were some other limitations mentioned. The police wanted the services of the cell to be available on all days of the week and at least telephone service during the night. Having a panel of lawyers and employing elderly workers was thought to increase the efficacy of the cell.

Awareness programs on violence against women and help available for them as well as family life education programs for preventing domestic conflicts were identified as important areas of work for the cell to undertake. Girls in municipal schools, police personnel and their families were the suggested target groups. Economic Rehabilitation as well as shelter homes for battered women and prostitutes, establishing support network for single or separated women were some other suggestions for expansion of activities of the cell. Programs to prevent alcoholism/drug addiction among the police and persuading neighbours relatives to give evidence in cases of death of women in suspicious circumstances were suggested as other ways in which the cell could be of help to the police.

### **FEEDBACK OF THE EFFICACY OF THE SPECIAL CELL**

Among the respondents who had some contact with the cell and those who were in a position to evaluate it, one gave a negative feedback. According to this police officer clients he had referred to the cell had come back to inform him that they did not receive help from the cell. He however could not give us details for further inquiry such as the names of clients, approximate dates of referral or the worker concerned etc.

With this sole exception these, were distinctively positive strokes from the rest of the respondents. According to them the cell was effective in handling cases (six); the cell workers had a good relationship with the women clients as well as their husbands and they made an attempt to understand the man and helped him improve (three); they handled each case individually, cell always extended co-operation to police when required (two), they helped to reduce the work load of the police (two); the pre-litigation work of the cell as well as the ex-legal help given to women was very important (two) and the workers in the cell were efficient, knowledgeable as well as committed (four) Before ending the chapter, we present here some of their comments verbatim.

"Something good is happening there young people with training and background are handling very sensitive issues very well."

"Cell workers are my 'Guru' learnt a lot by observing them" Sr.P.I. Bandra police station.

"Nobody has ever complained about the cell to us I never found any drawbacks about their work", "women come back to me and say that they were helped" P.I. Dadar police station.

"I have observed cell workers they really put their heart in it". Sr.P. I. M IDC.

"Cell workers are highly committed they treat their job as a vocation and not as a profession" P S I Gamdevi.

# PART IV

# CASE STUDIES

## INTRODUCTION

In working with battered women, the social worker is often confronted with situations in which what the social worker defines as best for the client i.e. an escape from the violence is not what the client necessarily wants for herself. Her definition of her problem may be different what may be "too bad" for one client may be "tolerable" for another and another woman may not even visualise "battering as a problem", to begin with. It is important in such cases to respect the woman's "individuality", understand her threshold understand her preparedness to take a certain decision, understand her personal power and the strength that she has come with. The social worker has to move by her decision; the basic principle of self-determination. Empathising with the client at each stage, helping her to ventilate, listening, paraphrasing, validating her experiences and emotions as real, are some of the techniques a social worker uses in work with battered woman.

In attempting to concentrate on the present and moving at the client's pace, the social worker greatly runs the risk of reinforcing the feeling of dependency; trying to "rescue" the woman all the time. The process of empowering the women through intense counselling, building on her strengths and helping her to assert herself. The worker has the responsibility to also simultaneously build group and community support systems to strengthen the women's search for help.

The social worker must bear in mind, that besides the emotional and psychological trauma that the battered woman undergoes there is a web of moral and social factors which inevitably form a tangle. The implications of the same therefore need to be considered before the client takes a decision to terminate the (marital) relationship. This process is a long and tedious one with no easy and quick solutions. It must be viewed in a spatio-temporal context, the problem may even stretch over years.

## CASE OF KUSUM

### *Introduction*

This case examines the stages a battered woman undergoes before her decision to separate and the social worker's role and responses in each stage. It also examines the responses of the wife-assaulter in light of the social learning theory of violence and the plausible responses, and the different areas for social work intervention.

### *Problem at Onset*

Kusum first came to the Special Cell along with her mother and brother; she was clear about wanting to continue to live with her husband, provided that he be warned to alter his behaviour and stop violence against her. She was hopeful that matters could be sorted if Deepak gave up his drinking habit. She thought it was her moral duty to look after him, and be with him during his difficult times. She chose to be forgiving of his deviant behaviour and attributed his violence to his job tensions. "Perhaps his long hours of work, fatigue, his preoccupation with his job are the cause of his anger and excessive drinking," she rationalised. She had left her husband and gone to her parents for the first time in eight years of being within an abusive relationship. It was a bold step, yet she chose to reconcile within ten days, when he threatened her that he would otherwise commit suicide. Kusum, carried within her a sense of confusion, shame and guilt for her act (whether or not she had taken the right decision to leave and return to her husband). She stated that she certainly wanted to now live within the marriage and had no further intentions to leave.

### *Kusum's Family and Personal Background*

Kusum is twenty-five years of age, was married when she was about seventeen years and had completed Std. IX. She had a five year old son, Mahesh. Her widowed mother supported two college going sons (Kusum's younger brother's) and is working as a peon in a municipal school.

### *The First Assault*

She recalled the first time when Deepak had come home drunk, a few months after her marriage. He first abused her for not cooking food that matched his palate, grew violent, threw aside the dishes and severely hit her. After this assault she was in a state of shock, and did not reveal this incident to anybody, but and continued to silently tolerate his behaviour.

### *Her Family's Response towards the Violence*

His behaviour got worse day by day. He suspected her moral character, and was intolerant of her interaction with another male; he accused her of having sexual relations with her mother's brother (who is thirty year older

than her). This incident had disturbed her greatly, and she had consumed sleeping pills but had survived; her family hushed up the matter and she was advised by her relations to reconcile; also telling her not to ever again carry her marital burden's to her mother's house.

*Kusum Starts Living in Accordance to  
Deepak's Expectations of Her*

"I was adjusting in every way I could, confined to the house cooking, cleaning, looking after my son, Mahesh. He confined me at home, restrained my movements, not permitting me to visit friends or relatives. If I left the house, I was made accountable for every minute I spent outside the house. No matter how much I changed myself to please him, over some trivial matter, he would be enraged, it would trigger off, verbal and physical abuse, sometimes under the influence of alcohol sometimes without".

*Deepak's Dual Personality as Perceived by Kusum*

After a violent attack whenever I demanded an explanation, he would say 'Sorry, I won't repeat it' and life would be normal and peaceful again. I had got adjusted to my life at home, doing household chores; at times Deepak would take us out to the cinema or to the restaurant, my married life then seemed so ideal, as if he was the best husband, he used to be so loving, so good. I don't understand, yet, which is the real him; the violent abusive one or the loving husband and father".

*The Financial Position of the Family*

"Deepak controlled the financial aspects and the day to day running of household expenses which were increasing; with his great culinary demands, the cost of Mahesh's education and medical bills. All this had to be managed with his meager salary of Rs.700/-. I was confident, that I could work and get in extra income, I also applied for the job of a peon in a school, but my husband, stated he would not allow me to work, particularly not to do job of a peon. I wished to pursue further education, complete my SSC and then do D.Ed., yet because of financial constraints and also lack of support from Deepak I could not pursue my studies".

"I had no say in the financial aspects of the household, could not ever reply back. He turned a deaf ear to my demand of contributing money to the home rather than drowning it all on alcohol. Severe financial constraints, particularly towards the latter half of the month led to conflict with Deepak, he would usually get enraged and target me. Out of no choice I would concede to his demands, and I have handed over all of my jewellery items to him (which are now mortgaged) so that he could pay for the household bills as well as tobacco and alcohol".

*Previous Police Intervention*

"I initially resisted going to the police, but only a year earlier, when I was severely battered, I reported to the police and lodged a police N.C. for my own security but prevented the duty officer from summoning my husband to the police station fearing that it may lead to another severe assault. The second time, he was called to the police station and detained for twelve hours. That, however, did not refrain him from coming home and hitting me again".

*Kusum's Mental State Following the Physical Assaults*

For a long time, following the attacks, particularly lately, Kusum stated that she would become depressed and mentally unstable and found herself becoming inconsistent in her activities, restless and had a tendency to "lose memory". With limited or rather no option available, she had found herself isolated, often under a dilemma whether or not to permanently separate and go to her mother's place. It was at this juncture that she had sought shelter at her mother's and come to the Special Cell.

*Meeting with Her Husband*

Since Kusum had wished to reconcile, the social worker called her husband, to the Special Cell, by sending a cell letter. Deepak, sounded bitter, troubled and unhappy. He spoke about the past being let down by his family members and deprived of due share in the family business. Unlike his brothers and cousins, who were partners in the business and shared the profits (the business being manufacturing of cosmetic products); Deepak was employed in his family business as a supervisor in the packing department; on a salary of Rs.700/-per month. (Reasons for such a discrimination were unclear and could not be ascertained by the social worker in the first interview) Deepak was a matriculate and twenty-eight years of age. He manifested an extreme dependency on Kusum, who, he stated was an anchor to him. Yet, he justified his behaviour towards her on moral grounds, stating that her "unacceptable behaviour" had to be checked by him. He undermined the problem, overlooking the psychological and emotional trauma that the violence had caused to his wife, holding no sense of personal responsibility. "It is she", he stated, "who annoys me with her constant nagging, loud and aggressive personality"; projecting the problems as if it was solely Kusum's fault.

*Social Worker's Assessment of the Problem*

Deepak was an alcoholic and often got drunk before an assaultive incident. Besides alcohol, many other factors had led to his assaultive behavior. Firstly there was the question of relative deprivation. Using his father's



family as a referral point, he witnessed his brothers and cousins as very well off, feeling inferior and powerless at being unable to alter his own situation and being confronted with the basic question of survival.

He had a low self esteem and used his wife as a target to ward off his own frustration. His violence and his authoritative behaviour was a manifestation of his own insecurity there by he established a sense of personal control and dominance over his wife.

To Deepak, his wife's subjugation, was his definition of greater intimacy within the relationship. Being unable to maintain such an intimacy caused within him feelings of rejection and jealousy, increased vigilance, rage, aggression towards Kusum. While he spoke, he expressed his own insecurity, extreme dependence on Kusum, his perceived superiority and his reluctance to "own up" for the problem.

### *Social Worker's Intervention*

First and foremost, Deepak had to undertake personal responsibility for the problem and acknowledge the psychological and emotional repercussions that his aggression had caused Kusum. The other dimensions of work with Deepak enabled him to work towards acquiring alternate modes of behaviour to contain his anger. Also, it helped him to gain a sense of personal adequacy and a better self image to enable him to work out differences with his family members and resolve his work tensions.

Intervention to solve the deep seated problem was a long process that called for an active participation by Deepak himself. However, in the first meeting, the social worker communicated to Deepak that violence was not acceptable and warned him of criminal implication if the violence did not stop. Deepak gave an oral assurance that henceforth he would not assault his wife. By this, the social worker was attempting to construct a safety net; wherein Kusum's pain could be alleviated. The social worker also motivated Deepak to take treatment for de-addiction and for T.B. (which he had earlier discontinued) and referred him to the concerned agencies.

### *Kusum's Understanding of the Violence and Worker's Role*

The social worker had consistently in the course of her intervention with Kusum helped her re-look at her "self", as distinct from her relationship. It was a process of consciousness raising and helping her to re-define her relationship with her husband. For instance, the social worker by using techniques such as insight giving, reflection, reaffirming and paraphrasing and observing cues, was helping her understand her own response to his violent behaviour. Her submissive attitude, "conceding to his demands", was in itself an intrinsic reward for Deepak, a reinforcement making him feel in greater power and control of the situation. Kusum had to

understand and acknowledge this before she could alter her behaviour. The social worker had to help her ward off her feelings of guilt, and worthlessness that her husband was constantly instilling in her, see herself as a worthwhile person and respect herself, to better her own self-esteem and image. Talking about her interest, helping her explore herself, her potential was a process that had gradually begun.

However, Kusum's focus continued to be her relationship with her husband, the direct link between alcohol and his violence, the violence and his job tensions, all this continued to be defined by Kusum as the central problem area.

After Deepak's assurance that he would take treatment for alcohol and not hit her again, Kusum was positive about a better situation at home. Not that he had not given such assurances earlier, but this time it was, in an agency to a social worker which was important. A follow up date for the couple was fixed after two weeks.

### *Kusum Leaves the Abusive Relationship Again in Search of Help*

For six months there was no contact, with Kusum and Deepak as they did not approach the Special Cell and no follow-up visit was made by the social worker. When Kusum came to the Special Cell, after leaving her husband with her brother, this is what she had to say.

"Deepak took treatment for alcohol and continued treatment for T.B. only for two months after we went from here. Then, he stopped at his will. He began drinking excessively and was fired from his job, with no income at all, I started a tiffin service and thereby sustained the family". He has been unsympathetic to the strain and pressure of my work, his behavior has continued as before. Even requesting him to take treatment has resulted in blows. On a few occasions, he has been sensitive towards my work, and helped me in my chores, of cooking and taking care of our son. But these occasions have been very rare".

### *Kusum Returns to Her Marriage*

"I had left him in disgust once again, my brother and mother have been supportive, yet within ten days he approached my mother, promised to improve, give up alcohol, he had also promised to allow me to study and work outside the house; and had told me that he feels sad and lonely without me, expressing regret and asking for forgiveness for what has happened.

After all we had lived together for eight years and shared an ultimate relationship. He said that I was a wonderful wife and a home worker, and he could not live without me. Besides, I too could not live at my mother's place forever. I had younger brothers their marriage prospects would be

hampered, above all I would be stigmatised so I returned to my husband, believing him and all that he had said".

A month had passed, since Kusum had returned to her matrimonial home, yet the situation had continued to be just the same as before. Again, Kusum wished that her husband should be called to the Special Cell and warned once again.

### *Social Worker's Role*

The social worker, did concentrate on the present, moved at Kusum's pace, by paying attention to what was of utmost importance to her in the present thereby calling Deepak and speaking to him. However, the social worker, also had to simultaneously move, helping Kusum to broaden her life goals rather than centering her life solely around her marriage relationship.

### *Second Interview with Deepak*

Deepak's responses and behaviour towards the social worker his justification of his behavior towards his wife were the same as in the earlier meeting. He outright stated that he did not see the need and would not come to the agency again. He was arrogant and non-cooperative and further work with him didn't seem possible.

Yet, Kusum, insisted that her husband give in writing that he would alter his behaviour; thereby expressing her perceived hope in her marriage. Due to fear of criminal implications and under pressure, Deepak gave in writing that he would henceforth not hit his wife, allow her to work, not confine her to the house and undertake treatment for T.B. and de-addiction.

Though the assurance was a short termed arrangement, it was only a moral binding (not a legal one); writing and signing the assurance made him acknowledge the problem besides promising to alter it.

### *Kusum's Questioning of Her Marriage Relationship Yet the Perceived Hope*

Though Kusum was still considering staying in the marriage relationship she was evolving as a much stronger and assertive person. She had ceased being forgiving towards his unacceptable behaviour and had begun questioning her husband's attitudes towards her and the meaning of her relationship. Like, she remarked, "even if his job tensions were a factor that had led him to assault me, how can I explain his violence towards me now that he has not been working for the past four months? Can I trust him anymore when he says he will take treatment for T.B. and for de-addiction"? These are the questions she had begun reflecting upon.

*Shift in Kusum's Goals Exploring Alternatives to Leave the Relationship*

Kusum returned to her husband three months later (after the written assurance). She began meeting the worker regularly. Now coping with the abusive relationship was becoming increasingly difficult for her and she was reflecting upon the possibility of an eventual separation. She had started re-looking at herself and at the futility of her existence (had she to continue being within the relationship). A strong urge to get away from her husband was visible, she stated her desire to live as an independent person not enmeshed with her husband.

*Phase of Ambivalence and Increased Stress*

This was a trying phase for Kusum when she had begun questioning herself about the meaning of her relationship, yet not taking any clear and concrete step to alter the situation. Her ambivalence was understandable; the fear of being in society by herself the stigma attached to a single woman; the response of her family and relatives, the future of her son, Mahesh, all these were the questions uppermost in her mind. When considering the risks and consequences of her actions, in the course of her separation, she displayed a feeling of helplessness, fear and uncertainty, loss of control, at times getting immensely frustrated, giving up the efforts as futile, feeling hopeless about change at all. This phase of increased ambivalence had resulted in conflicting feelings within herself and she experienced emotional turmoil.

Kusum moved almost in cycles, considering alternatives, but deciding to stay on, planning for the future, but not clearly and concretely deciding to re-settle in the relationship, convincing herself that life had returned to normal and her husband's behaviour had improved.

*Social Worker's Role*

The social worker had to be non-directive, again moving at her pace, not advising on what the further step should be. By being supportive, by using techniques such as reassurance, setting realistic goals and anticipatory guidance. The social worker gradually helped her lay down clear plans for the future. It took Kusum a period of two and a half years to decide to leave the relationship.

The social worker educated her on her legal rights on divorce, maintenance and custody.

The social worker helped her re-establish the support of her mother and brother (who at a point of time had almost withdrawn their support since Kusum was vacillating and indecisive) by explaining to them Kusum's viewpoint and allowing them to empathise with Kusum.

### *Chalking Clear Plans*

Kusum's mother helped her to secure a job at the municipal school where she was working. The job would commence from the beginning of the next academic year, which also offered her son an opportunity to complete his academic year, before a transfer to another school (closer to her mother's residence) could be taken.

With the social worker's referral, Kusum was admitted to a hospital, where she underwent an abortion (since she had decided she did not want to continue the relationship further) and from the hospital she directly went to her mother's house (her baggage had already been shifted earlier).

### *After Her Separation*

The focus of the discussion with the social worker, shifted to 'herself rather than her marriage or her relationship with her husband. The social worker's role was to reinforce positive feeling about herself, support her in the struggle to now reshape her life. Also, her sense of guilt and fears about the future needed to be alleviated.

### *Presently*

It's a year now, Kusum speaks with great confidence, looks much more cheerful and healthier, is very optimistic about herself i.e. simultaneously pursuing her education for matriculate class, and plans to do D.Ed. She is also enterprising and plans to begin a catering service. Her mother and brothers have been supportive, her relationship with them are healthy and positive. However, Kusum is reluctant to pursue the legal option of divorce.

Kusum states that her husband has again returned and apologised, planned and wept for her to return home. But she says "he cannot continue to play on my emotions, this time I am positively not going back". However neither does she intend to return nor will she be reluctant to pursue the legal option of divorce.

### *Points for Discussion*

1. The case is an example of looking at victims of violence as survivors of life threatening experiences and building upon their potentials and strength.
2. Post separation/divorce needs and problems of women need to be looked at and understood how these can be addressed by the social worker and the agency.
3. The case could be looked at keeping in mind the socio- legal, moral and cultural explanatory system that our society provides for abusive men.

## CASE OF KIRAN

### *Introduction*

Kiran had been in an abusive relationship for six months of her marriage. She was disillusioned with the relationship, which according to her "had lost its romance and was merely laden with conflicts and abuse". The social worker's intervention strengthened her decision and supported her to exercise her choice of terminating the relationship. The following case highlights the areas of conflict that arose in the marriage and explores the social worker's role in working with Kiran.

Kiran first came to the Special Cell with her employer Mrs. Chitale at whose residence she was working as a maid servant. Mrs. Chitale, her employer showed concern for Kiran and said that Kiran's relationship with her husband, Mahesh, was an extremely abusive and exploitative relationship, and that Kiran needed help to break the marriage bond. Mrs. Chitale spoke most of the time while Kiran sat in a corner, merely nodding and affirming what her employer said. The worker spoke to Kiran alone, but she wasn't very vocal. She only stated that what her employer had said was all true and that she wanted a divorce immediately.

Kiran returned to the Special Cell after three days with a written application, accompanied by her mother and Mrs. Chitale. The worker asked Mrs. Chitale to wait outside, while she spoke to Kiran. Initially Kiran was a little uncomfortable; the worker assured her that the agency would try their best to help her in the present situation and she could openly state what the matter was. Gradually Kiran relaxed and settled down. In this meeting the worker learnt about Kiran's family back ground.

### *Family Background*

Kiran stated that she was educated upto Std III and was working as a maid servant for the past ten years since she was eight years old. Kiran had started work at Mrs. Chitale's a week back, she earned about Rs. 600/- working and residing in Mrs. Chitale's house and had heard of the Special Cell from her. Mrs. Chitale encouraged her to approach the Special Cell. Kiran's mother is working as a maid servant, but had a house on her name. But Kiran's brother does not allow her to reside in her maternal home, since he had still not reconciled to the fact that Kiran had married against his wishes. Kiran was thus forced to reside with Mrs. Chitale, though she did occasionally meet her mother at her residence.

*Previous Intervention and Kiran's  
Perception of the Problem*

Before coming to the Special Cell, Kiran stated that she had lodged two police N.C's; also had held a meeting with relatives from both sides, but neither of these had served as a deterrent to Mahesh's behavior. Kiran remarked "He hits me, he doesn't work"; he traces me wherever I go and confines me to the house". "Last time he came to my employer's house dragged me out and insisted I go home with him"; he doesn't let me work. I don't want to live with him". Kiran appeared emotionally very upset, she spoke in a loud tone and was agitated when relating her past experiences. The worker listened attentively and allowed her to ventilate.

*Kiran's Relationship with Mahesh before Marriage*

A series of meetings followed, a rapport was established with Kiran (who now started coming alone); Kiran was now much more open about her feelings and her relationship with Mahesh. The worker displayed verbal and non-verbal attentiveness, reflected the client's feelings and implicit client messages. The worker observed that while talking about Mahesh, Kiran's face lit up, she blushed with a twinkle in her eyes, and spoke of the rosy coloured relationship that they shared before marriage. She stated that they were working in the same firm and got to know each other the past four years, fell in love and married in a temple, in the presence of some friends and the immediate family. The marriage was hastened', she said, because she had undergone an abortion, and was coerced by her mother and friends to marry him for reasons such as 'security' and 'morality'. The worker asked Kiran how she was presently feeling about Mahesh and she stated - "Actually I love him and I know he loves me. I don't mind going back if he behaves himself".

*Worker's Assessment of the Problem*

After meeting the client and reading her application the worker assessed that,

1. Kiran was disillusioned with her marriage; yet was willing to continue if her husband ceased his unacceptable behaviour. Mahesh she said, was very suspicious about her character which in turn led to his expectation that she should be confined at home or he would demand an explanation about each and every movement. Before marriage he took up ad-hoc jobs, but since marriage he had stopped working altogether, he had not performed the 'provider role', he had not earned a penny and was totally dependent on her. "Unlike other husbands", Kiran stated that Mahesh would not buy her any gifts or take her for an outing.

2. Kiran was married for six months and in the course of her marriage she had separated on many occasions, but would keep on going back to Mahesh.

Kiran was confronted with dual roles, that of performing household tasks to match Mahesh's expectations while she single handedly shouldered the responsibility of earning the family income, running the house, arranging for loans and repaying debts. Her husband Mahesh was idle, willfully unemployed, having quit his job after marriage; and whiled away his time at the roadside playing cricket carrom or just loafing around, and was totally depended on her for food, clothes and his pocket money. Kiran was unable to cope with increased responsibilities; coupled with her husband's violent behaviour towards her. Following a violent incident, she had attempted suicide by consuming sleeping pills.

Were these reactions and her attempt to commit suicide an expression that she was tired of his violent behavior and that her threshold had broken, her patience lost? Was it a fear, a fear of rejection, a fear that he would leave her, he didn't love her any more, with Kiran's exaggerated idea of his necessity to her life? The worker interpreted that her reactions were a "mixed feeling" of both.

#### *Meeting with Mahesh*

The worker spoke to Mahesh, the client's husband. Mahesh was about a year older to Kiran, looked defeated and had a low self-image. He admitted that he would hit Kiran, but justified his behaviour according to male conventional terms, stating that Kiran had not performed her role of a wife adequately, she would not do as told and would not stay at home when asked to and would not cook what he liked.

In the joint meeting, the worker observed that Mahesh deliberately placed his chair very close to Kiran, and tried to hold her hand (which she resisted), he apologised and asked her to go back with him. Initially the worker was non-directive and allowed them to communicate, Mahesh apologised and made promises, while Kiran deliberately ignored him (as if reinforcing) Mahesh spoke about the past and how much he cared for her. In an immature and childish manner, he told her that he was going away with another woman, if she didn't return, (only to provoke Kiran), but Kiran did not seem to care.

#### *Setting Limits, Changing Attitudes*

The worker assumed a more directive role, and set limits for Mahesh's behavior if he wanted the marriage to continue. Kiran was very assertive, and clear about her expectations from Mahesh, which she put across to him. The worker facilitated discussions on 'changing roles in a marriage



relationship', but Mahesh defended himself with rigid and conventional definitions and role expectations. Later he promised to go to work and not to interfere in Kiran's daily work schedule.

### *Mahesh's Possessive Addictive Nature*

After a week, the couple came back to the worker. Kiran stated that Mahesh's behavior was the same as usual and that this time she was positively leaving. Mahesh begged her to stay on, apologising, expressing guilt and threatening that he would kill himself if she didn't return making promises again. His behaviour suggested that Kiran and only Kiran was his whole world. He kept pleading saying "I cannot survive without you, please come back". He had continued his behaviour of meeting Kiran at her work place, waiting for her, demanding an explanation about every thing she did and her availability at his whim and fancy. His imagination that Kiran was interested in another person and that he had been rejected often resulted in increasing threats, anger and violent behaviour.

### *Kiran's Wavering Attitude*

Kiran was very assertive; she was finding it difficult to manage dual roles but Mahesh's violent behavior was unacceptable to her. She collected all her articles from her matrimonial home (he physically resisted her exit, which she fought back, and began residing with Mrs. Chitale once again. According to Kiran, she resided separately for two days, met Mahesh on the street side, when he persuaded her to go back with him, and she decided to go back.

The client was apparently fluctuating, leaving him after three months and rejoining him, and the next time she met the worker, after three months, the worker helped her to clarify her feelings and correct her perception about Mahesh. Reflective discussions followed - (which continued over four meetings). The worker confronted Kiran. Was Kiran redefining Mahesh's possessiveness as love? Was her relationship an intimate one or merely addictive? The worker helped her recognise that she was trapped in an addictive relationship which was being further reinforced by her giving into his demands. Mahesh had started imposing his will. He was brainwashing her into focusing her total attention on him, and was demanding her availability as if it was his right.

### *Kiran Determined to Leave*

Kiran realised that her other activities had started assuming less importance, in the pursuit of pleasing him, her social life, her job was at stake. Her vision towards life was narrowing down. "No", she said. "I am not going to

risk my freedom and my happiness merely to please Mahesh. it is not worth it". She decided to get out of the emotionally abusive relationship.

### *Social Worker's Role*

The worker gave Kiran emotional support, helped her ward off her guilt feelings, referred her to a legal aid center, educated and guided her of her rights and family court procedures. Even after filing a divorce petition, according to Kiran, Mahesh continued to wait outside her place of work, passed remarks, and pleaded that she reconcile. But Kiran said that she was firm. The worker helped Kiran with official formalities, (meeting the duty officer and explaining the case to them) who later called Mahesh, and threatened him not to misbehave with Kiran. (Mahesh has since stopped harassing Kiran on the streets) Kiran is now working at a private firm, awaiting her divorce judgment. According to Kiran, Mahesh has not attended court on a single occasion and she may soon seek an ex-parte divorce.

Mutual consent divorce could not be worked out, since Mahesh refused to co-operate in this matter. Mahesh met the worker a couple of times, and kept saying "Please sent her back, I cannot live without her". Now, he said, he was confronted with the basic question of survival, since he did not have many friends or relatives to support him. He was staying with his brother, who later sold off the room, and gave him half the share. Mahesh stated that he had kept this money with a relative who in turn would allow him to reside and eat at his residence. The worker motivated Mahesh to take up a job, and also offered guidance to invest the sale proceeds and be independent but Mahesh did not appear to be interested. The worker told Mahesh firmly that Kiran was determined to separate and had approached the court, reconciliation was not possible and he too should accept this fact now. Mahesh has stopped seeing the worker since.

### *Issues*

A large number of cases of elopement, unwanted pregnancies, and short span marriages of young adults are registered at the Special Cell. Kiran's is one such case. The marriage relationship, with a "rosy coloured" vision, one which later leads to conflicts when confronted with reality.

The need to have family life education and pre-marital counselling for young boys and girls at the school and community level is largely felt, pa

## **CASE OF SARITA**

### *Introduction*

This case highlights the social worker's interaction with Sarita and her observations, over a period of four and a half months during her visits to

the hospital, as Sarita progressed from stage two to stage three of the battering cycle.

### *The Problem*

Sarita's father, Mr. Khate, approached the Special Cell, stating that his daughter had been flung from the third floor staircase, by her husband, with the motive to kill her, but she had survived and was undergoing treatment for a backbone injury at a government hospital. His complaint was that his daughter's husband Mr. Godbole, had been arrested for a short period, and released. Mr. Khate stated that the police were negligent in the case and least sympathetic towards his daughter, who was being willfully harassed by the police officers and being pressurised to sign on certain documents, because of their biased attitude towards Mr. Godbole. Mr. Khate stated that a deaf ear was being turned towards him, at the local police station and he expected that the social worker should clarify matters from the police end to support Sarita, his daughter.

Mr. Khate also stated that his daughter needed financial support to undergo treatment, and he being the only earning member of a family of six (besides Sarita, he had three daughters and one son), could not afford to pay her medical bills. He insisted that Mr. Godbole should pay her bills, and sought support of the Special Cell, to call Mr. Godbole and seek financial aid for Sarita. It was in this connection that the social worker met Sarita, who was undergoing treatment at Bombay Purb Trust hospital (her husband was an employer of B.P.T., she had been transferred from the government hospital to the B.P.T. hospital, cause that would entail subsidised treatment).

### *First Interview with the Client*

When the social worker first met Sarita, she was in severe pain and could barely speak. She affirmed that she had been flung from the third floor staircase by her husband, and these facts had been recorded in the police statements, which was read out to her and had been signed at her will; she had not encountered any act of misbehavior by the police; in fact she stated they had been very cooperative. She sought clarifications from the social worker about FIRs and *panchanamma*, stated that she had no grievance against the police, and was unaware that her father had submitted applications at the Special Cell, alleging the police role.

### *Family and Social Background*

Sarita was an attractive young woman, twenty-six years of age, married to Mr. Godbole, and had a daughter aged seven. She had met Mr. Godbole when she was sixteen, and studying in Std IX; they had fallen "in love", she

said, and she was married to him two years later, (her parent's had not initially supported the marriage). Sarita had completed Std. IX, and Mr. Godbole was SSC qualified and had a job at B.P.T.

### *Police Role*

The social worker had also met the concerned investigating officer and the senior police inspector of the concerned police station. The social worker had discussed the case with them and the Investigating officer, had revealed the relevant documents; they had acted in accordance with police procedures. A case of attempt to murder and a 498A IPC had been registered against Mr. Godbole he had been arrested and later released on bail.

Why then, had Mr. Khate, given a contradictory version of the police role? His doubts, his queries were unclear to the social worker; Mr. Khate, after the first brief meeting with the social worker, did not return to the Special Cell.

### *Precipitating Factor that Led to the Assault*

The worker met Sarita, again at the hospital. She was depressed, and could not accept her handicap, (she was now a paraplegic) and the fact that she would be confined to the wheel-chair for the rest of her life. The episode was a month and a half old now, fresh in her memory as she recalled the argument she had with her husband, and left him along with her daughter to stay with her parents', a week before the incident had occurred.

That evening she had left her friend's house, (on the third floor of that same building). While she was descending, she encountered her husband and an argument, with him, who then slapped her, held her and flung her out of the staircase window. When she had regained consciousness she found herself in severe pain in the hospital, she said.

Sarita would burst into tears while relating the memories of her marriage with her husband, and her child. She was hurt and disbelieved that her husband who loved her, would have attempted to murder her. She often indulged in self-blame and was angry and frustrated over her present condition. Gradually, as rapport was established with the social worker, she revealed that her husband suspected that she had a relationship with another man, who was to her only a friend. This she had clarified to him, but he was unwilling to understand. Besides this, at times, trivial matters too would lead to arguments followed by violent attacks usually he would hit her with his fist. Once he had struck her on her head with a stick resulting in hospitalisation, and the case was disposed off as an accident. (Perhaps the couple suffered from an addictive-possessive relationship wherein Sarita's sociable and extrovert personality was interpreted by her husband

as infidelity. He was jealous and suspected that Sarita was being unfaithful which was probably the main cause of repeated assaults).

### *Meeting the Client's Husband*

When Mr. Godbole met the worker, he was defensive and denied the whole act. He refused to spend a penny for Sarita's treatment, he had neither met her nor did he inquire about Sarita's condition and showed no inclination to do so. It appeared as if his advocate had cautioned him on every move, and he acted accordingly.

(Mr. Godbole had come to the Special Cell under the order of his superior whom the social worker had visited. He had been suspended from work, received a marginal salary until the outcome of the criminal charges against him).

### *Affective Bond Persists*

As Sarita spoke, she displayed a soft corner for him, and desired that he should meet her at least once. "In the past too my husband would apologise after the "assaults" and our life would be normal again. Why then, had he stayed away for so long ? Her husband had not visited her in the past three months nor had she seen her little daughter. Her parents rarely visited her; The only regular *visitor was* her younger sister. She did not share a healthy relationship with her parents because earlier conflicts were not yet resolved. Sarita was not keen to go back to her parents, she was unsure whether her husband would accept her. In her present condition, she visualised no available alternative, and expressed feelings of fear, loneliness and insecurity.

### *Planning for the Future*

The hospital social worker along with the Special Cell social worker, explored alternatives to financially assist and rehabilitate her. Over the weeks her psychological condition improved, she became more accepting of her physical condition, the focus now shifted to the future. Four months had passed and she would be discharged in a month's time; she had now begun planning for the future. She was very creative and would occupy herself in the hospital, doing embroidery and bead work (making toys, dolls and other items) and she planned to embark on a small scale business to financially support herself, "No I do not want to return to an uncaring and unloving husband", (who had not yet visited her), she would state with anger *and* bitterness in her tone, seeking guidance from the social worker, about the legal options available for divorce, and custody and maintenance.

*Ambivalence*

After a week, when the worker met her, she proudly displayed a few gifts that her husband had given her. Since the last two days she said, he had visited her, they had not spoken much, yet his presence had rejuvenated her.

*The Balance Shifts*

She was ambivalent about her future, her marriage and her relationship with her husband and continued to further explore her rehabilitation plans. In the next meeting, she told the worker, that her husband had come along with her little daughter, whose birthday they had celebrated in the hospital. She stated she had decided to go back to her husband and withdraw her case against him, since she had nothing to gain, if he was dismissed from work and held behind bars.

A few days, before she was discharged, Sarita told the social worker, that her husband had regularly met her and whenever he could not make it to the hospital, he would send his friend, along with a gift, (food stuffs, utility items and flowers). He had promised to look out for a ground floor room, so that moving about in a wheelchair would not be a problem. He had also stated that her handicap would not affect their relationship. Sarita was eager to return to her husband and stated with conviction that for her, for her child and her husband's future, she was returning to her marriage.

In the above case, Mr. Godbole had taken advantage of Sarita's vulnerability. He used the strategy of being emotionally supportive and loving perhaps only temporarily, to serve his ulterior motive of withdrawal of the case against him and restoration of his lost job. But to Sarita, his "loving presence" warded off the fear and insecurity, and once again fulfilled her need of her "fantasy husband" - "happy marriage henceforth" and she decided to return.

*Study Questions*

1. Explore the above case in the light of the 'cycle theory of violence', 'theory of traumatic bonding', 'theory of learned helplessness', and other theories of violence.
2. Examine the economic and social factors in the case and the woman's subjective perception of her life, alternatives within the marriage relationship and outside the marriage relationship.

**CASE OF RITA***Introduction*

This is a case of Rita Jamani and the cell's intervention in a pre-litigation case, where the worker helped Rita to reach an agreement over issues, which would otherwise have been contested in court.

### *Problem at Onset*

Rita had heard of the Special Cell from an ex-client and she approached the cell with the intention of retrieving her jewellery (*stridhan*) from her in-laws, claiming a house and maintenance for herself and her eight year old daughter Reshma. Rita was skeptical that these immediate questions could be sorted out, since with the purpose of seeking an out of court settlement, she had previously approached the police station and had also sought help of her relatives and friends in settling the matter with her in-laws, but neither of these interventions had helped. The social worker interviewed Rita and gathered relevant facts. Initially, the social worker was unsure about taking up Rita's case since Rita's husband Mohan was not in Bombay but in Jamaica. Nevertheless she decided to explore the possibility of a settlement with Rita's in-laws.

In her interviews with Rita, the worker observed that Rita was emotionally charged, frustrated and felt helpless at being unable to confront her in-laws over property matters and thus assert her rights. The social worker allowed Rita to ventilate, she empathised with Rita; explained the cell procedures and reassured her that the cell would do its best in helping her in the present situation. In a permissive environment Rita spoke about her past, her relationship with her husband and her in-laws.

### *Rita's Past History*

Rita was married at the age of nineteen, in Bombay to a businessman from her community and soon after marriage, the couple shifted to Hong Kong front where they migrated to Jamaica. Rita stayed with her husband in Jamaica for six years, (the couple would visit Bombay for short holidays). Since the past three years, Rita, along with her daughter, was residing in Bombay; for the initial two and a half years with her in-laws and since the past six months, with her parents. Though Rita had financially maintained herself at her parents, by giving tuitions, Rita was ambitious and keen on pursuing a career in fine arts. While she spoke about herself and her career plans, the worker observed no trace of insecurity; Rita appeared very confident and had tremendous zeal and courage to prove herself.

### *Rita's Past in Her Words*

According to Rita, "I was engaged and married within a period of twelve days, that hardly gave me time to know him well before marriage. I did not even know that he is an alcoholic; it was only after our reception at Hong Kong that I saw him drunk". "He used abusive language when drunk, and otherwise he consciously saw to it that I be kept under his foot, I couldn't raise my voice in front of him and had to do as he said". "Mohan is a very immature, egoistic, possessive and suspicious person, he tried to mould me like his mother,

because according to him, only she is the perfect woman". "He tried to lower my self image by passing remarks such as 'you are stupid', 'you are dumb', 'you have no brains', and there came a point when I had started believing that I was incapable of doing anything right." "I had no control or decision making power in the household matters, (my sister-in-law with whose family we resided was in charge of the house). Mohan would consciously ignore me and leave me alone at home, while the rest of the family socialised. I was naive then, I had learnt to passively accept everything.

"All this continued for a long time; I did not realise that he was playing on my psyche until one day, when I watched a television programme on wife battering, then it clicked, that Mohan's behaviour too was a subtle torture of which I was unaware so far.

"I started reading about women's issues. I decided to be assertive henceforth. But whenever I put my foot down over certain matters, I would get in return, a blow, a slap; sometimes he would even physically corner me; I would find it difficult to resist him. Physical abuse worsened, I had no friends to talk to, nobody to share my anxiety with. Gradually the tension worsened to the extent that I began suffering from somatic disorders.

"One day while sleeping, I was getting breathless. I asked Mohan for a pillow, so that I could raise my head. He refused to give it to me and when I snatched the pillow from him, Mohan sat on my stomach and tried to choke me. That was the day I decided that I must separate. Under the pretext of coming to Bombay for a holiday, my daughter and I left him".

#### *Rita's Relationship with Her in-laws in Her Words*

"It was not any better at my in-laws' place. My in-laws expected me to live like a typical 'bahu', and follow their customs, not allowing me to socialise, expecting me to return home by 7.00 p.m. constantly nagging and taunting me over everything I would do and suspecting my moral character. When my husband came down to Bombay for a holiday, I was willing to forget the past and patch-up but our relationship did not improve. It remained the same, 'emotionally and physically abusive. I realised that Mohan was totally under his mother's thumb. I thought to myself 'our relationship cannot continue any further'. However, I continued to live with my in-laws even after he returned to Jamaica.

"The strategy of my in-laws was to keep calling up my ailing mother and complain about me. My mother is very sensitive and weak. She would get emotionally disturbed and would keep explaining to me to 'behave' myself at my in-laws' house. I adjusted, put up with my in-laws behaviour for two years, until I could not take it any more.

"I had by now started cooking separately, mentally, I began preparing myself to leave. I tactfully took over control of my jewellery (apart from the



jewellery in the locker) which was in my mother-in-law's possession and I started practicing shorthand at home. In the month of August, I asked my father-in-law to give me my monthly pocket expenses of Rs.500/-, which was long overdue. He stated, 'daughter-in-laws in our house don't go out to work, if you are planning to, then forget your plan'. I didn't listen any further. My father-in-law had withheld the money, it was his strategy to throw me out of the house; I packed all that I had (including the jewellery I had taken possession of) and I left the house with my daughter."

### *Social Worker's Assessment*

Rita is intelligent, educated upto Std. XII in an ICSE school, is articulate and speaks fluent English. Rita is ambitious and her potential needs to be tapped. But Rita's past has sustained her from achieving her goal. Her marriage at a young age, discontinuity in education and being caught up in 'an abusive relationship with her husband and 'with conventional in-laws, she was unable to tap her potential and channelise her energy constructively. Her in-laws were intolerant of her good looks, smart sense of dressing, sociable and friendly personality, and according to Rita, they had at times, confined her to the house. The worker also observed that Rita had a philosophical nature; according to Rita her faith in religion and daily meditation had made her strong and helped her cross all hurdles and survive. Rita was firm in her decision to leave, she told the worker "I have taken too long to take this step, it should have come much earlier, now there is no question of reconciliation".

### *Social Worker's Intervention*

The social worker had to work at two levels:

1. To focus on the client-worker relationship, emotionally support Rita, advice her, guide her, help her explore alternatives while she addressed herself to future issues of job, shelter, education; help Rita to control her feelings, improve her capacity to cope with stressful situations and encourage and credit Rita's efforts and her performance.
2. To meet Rita's in-laws and decide upon the retrieval of Rita's *stridhan*, maintenance, and related property matters. The social worker's role here being that of a mediator.

### *Interview with Mr. Jamani, Rita's Father-in-Law*

Rita's in-laws were called to the cell, but only Mr. Jamani came. The social worker explained the purpose of the meeting, of Rita's decision to leave and stated that the practical aspects had to be worked out. Initially, Mr. Jamani defended himself and his son, blamed Rita, and said that "Rita had an

ex-marital affair which was her prime motive to leave and not any ill-treatment in the house, which she had only used as a cover-up story". Mr. Jamani refused any discussion related to property, since he didn't accept the idea of Rita's separation (he told Rita in a patronising manner, that they would still accept her, if she wanted to go back with him). The social worker stated that since his son was not in Bombay, he could not decide or take any responsibility for his son.

The worker observed that there was a striking class difference between Mr. Jamani and Rita's family. A visit to Rita's maternal home had suggested that Rita's family was not in a comfortable financial position, while Mr. Jamani's conduct suggested that they were very well off.

Mr. Jamani appeared to be a manipulative, shrewd person. He controlled Rita's *stridhan* and seemed to be the central figure in deciding the family property matter. Mr. Jamani had the option of resisting the settlement outright and consulting an advocate. Coping with Mr. Jamani's resistance and convincing him to "settle" the dispute was a difficult task for the social worker. She confronted Mr. Jamani, told him of Rita's determination to separate and informed him about criminal proceedings (406 Cr.P.C.) and its implications if he would fail to reach an agreement at the cell level.

#### *Social Worker's Role as a Mediator*

Throughout the process of mediation, communication between Mr. Jamani and Rita was minimal. The social worker's role was directive, chairing the discussion and containing conflict that arose between Mr. Jamani and Rita. While they centered their discussion around the past, the social worker's task was to focus their attention on the present future.

Rita had given the social worker the following facts:

1. Her jewellery, was in the bank locker, which was in the joint name of herself, her husband, and her mother-in-law. Her mother-in-law refused to give her the key to the bank locker. Though the *stridhan* was Rita's, it was in the control of her in-laws.
2. Her bank FDRs (Fixed Deposit Receipts) and her passport were in Mr. Jamani's possession. The social worker displayed authority and competence while eliciting specific information from Mr. Jamani regarding the above matters. His facts appeared distorted, his list had omitted many items, he denied being in possession of the jewellery according to Rita's list. It appeared to the worker that Mr. Jamani could simply not accept the idea of parting with the jewellery, (which they had gifted to Rita), which according to him was only a family investment and not Rita's exclusive right. The question of 'ownership' and 'control' of *Stridhan* property arose time and again.

Throughout the process of mediation, Rita was in an unequal power position, thus the social worker supported Rita and spoke from her point of view. She persuaded Mr. Jamani into giving a value equivalent to the jewellery that he had withheld. After negotiating, a mutually agreeable sum was set up. Mr. Jamani was initially reluctant, but later agreed to hand over Rita's FDRs and her passport. The maintenance figure too was arrived at after bargaining and at times even persuasion by the social worker. Mr. Jamani used all kinds of delaying tactics; at times the social worker wondered whether Mr. Jamani was only buying time and postponing the final settlement or whether he wanted to 'settle the matter' at all. The social worker had to support and calm Rita, when she got too upset and frustrated. At times Rita got revengeful, she sought short-cut options to punish Mr. Jamani. The social worker, had to then clarify the role and functions of other official agencies, such as the court and the police, and their limited intervention in her case (since the major difficulty was that Rita's husband, Mohan, was not in Bombay).

Of all the issues taken up for mediation, it was *stridhan* and maintenance which consumed most of the time at the cell. Settling the issue of buying Rita a house could not be worked out, since Mr. Jamani was reluctant to discuss this topic. It was not on his agenda, he had stated.

The mutual consent terms and conditions regarding maintenance, *Stridhan* property, compensation, the child custody and access to her daughter, were finally laid down, after Mr. Jamani consulted his son Mohan, over the phone. An advocate (whom Mr. Jamani and Rita jointly consulted) helped them draft the mutual consent divorce deed, which was later sent to Jamaica and signed by Mohan, in presence of the counsel and has been now filed in the family courts at Bombay.

After exploring various avenues, Rita is now planning a career in fashion designing. Presently Rita is working in a private firm, earning Rs. 2,000/- per month.

#### *Rita's Feedback on the Special Cell Intervention*

"The Special Cell is genuine in its approach and unlike other agencies, seeks no consideration in return for its services. It has certainly helped me during my phase of emotional breakdown and presently I feel much better, emotionally".

"But I have made compromises. The compensation sum of jewellery is Rs. 2.5 lakhs, where as Mr. Jamani has agreed to give only Rs.1.25 lakhs. The maintenance amount has been settled for Rs. 2,500 instead of my requirement of Rs. 5,000/-. I am also upset about the issue of a house remaining unsettled, but I suppose I must settle for whatever Mr. Jamani has agreed to give".

*Study and Question*

1. A final agreement could be worked out at the Special Cell in the absence of Rita's husband. Whereas some agencies may not have pursued the matters except in the presence of Rita's husband. Yet the settlement depended mainly on what Mr. Jamani was willing to give rather than what Rita's rights were. Was Rita's attitude towards compromise, in terms of settlement, merely practical or should she have pursued litigation to assert her right to her matrimonial home and file a suit for maintenance? Discuss.
2. It has been an observation at the Special Cell that though *Stridhan*, in principle, belongs to the woman, rarely does its control truly rest with her. The wife/daughter-in-law, is not perceived as an equal partner in family property matters. If perceived so, only till she lives with the family. If she decides to separate, all the rights are terminated. Discuss.
3. Examine this case in the light of the joint family system, family dynamics such as control, authority, decision making patterns, power structure, role and status of the women and the spouse sub system.

**CASE OF SALMA***Introduction*

This case highlights the co-ordination aspects of the Special Cell social worker with the police, advocate and the caste panchayat.

*Referral*

Salma, along with her mother, met the social worker at the "open house" (an informal get-together of the Special Cell ex-clients). According to her, she had approached the Special Cell three years earlier wherein she had reconciled with her husband and returned to her matrimonial home. Her problem, she stated, was unresolved. After she returned, physical and mental torture had continued, she had then left her matrimonial home and was residing at her parents' resident for the past two years.

*Past Intervention*

Salma, along with her mother, was eager to pursue the matter again through the Special Cell, since the other agencies tapped had not been of much help. She had virtually given up at the government legal aid center, where after repeated call letters, her husband had not responded. At the local police station, they had been advised to go to family courts; but they had neither the inclination nor the resources to pursue the matter through the court.

### *Family and Social Background*

Salma presently lived with her brother, his wife and their children, along with her widowed mother. Her mother was a maid servant, earning Rs. 600/- per month and her brother was a daily wage laborer in an abattoir earning Rs. 40/- daily. Salma was educated upto Std. IV and was married five years ago to Yusuf when she was sixteen years old. After marriage, she lived in an extended family, with her parents-in-law, her husband and her younger unmarried sister-in-law. Yusuf along with his father ran the family business and owned a butcher's shop, and they were in a financially comfortable position.

### *Past History*

The period she spent at her in-laws, was "sheer torture", she had stated, she was treated like a slave, was made to do laborious household chores, was not given food by her mother-in-law, and was physically abused by everybody in the family, including her husband, Yusuf. Her unbearable ordeal compelled her to return to her maternal home, several times. But, every time, her father-in-law along with his relatives and friends gave assurances to her family, and with the hope of a "better married life", Salma would return to her in-laws. Even then, the attitude of the husband and in-laws did not change and the same situation continued. When, the last time she had left the house with her two year old daughter, her mother-in-law and sister-in-law went to her residence and forcibly took the child away from her. She said that she was under a long spell of shock, after being separated from her child while her family members tried to work out a reconciliation. They heard of Yusuf's remarriage to his own cousin and Salma decided that she would not return to the same house.

### *Expectations from the Special Cell*

She sought her *Stridhan* back, the amount of her *meher*, maintenance and a divorce. She appeared to have reconciled to the reality that her little daughter (four years old) was residing with her father and grand parents, and expressed no desire to dispute over her custody of the child.

### *At the Special Cell*

For over about a month, there was no response from Yusuf to the repeated call letters. It was only after a telephone conversation by the social worker, explaining to him the role of the cell, and the purpose of his meeting, that Yusuf responded. In the joint meeting there was no communication between Salma and Yusuf. Salma's decision to get a divorce and her expectation were revealed to Yusuf by the social worker; to which he was outright defensive, and said that Salma should reconcile. After his second marriage,

Salma laid down the precondition of buying her a separate house, but Yusuf stated his incapacity to do so. Yusuf's denial tactic made evident his reluctance to continue his marriage; since, according to Salma, he was in a financially secure position, had a considerable income and could well afford to buy a house. The social worker, communicated to Yusuf, the legal options available to Salma, if Yusuf failed to comply to her demands, the worker particularly highlighted Sec 406 IPC and its implications. After the initial meeting, Yusuf stopped seeing the Special Cell social worker and only responded through his lawyer's notices. The lawyer's excuse was flimsy demanded an original copy of the list of articles signed by Jamaat (customary panchayat) members, wherein a photocopy to that effect had already been given to them.

*Client's and Social Worker's Meeting with the Advocate*

Under this pretext, the advocate was buying time and evading the subject. The social worker spoke to the advocate from Salma's point of view and explained the facts of the case, whereby the advocate decided to co-operate with the Special Cell, in resolving this case.

A list of articles to be returned was enumerated by the advocate and Yusuf. This list was merely about one-fourth of the list as laid down by Salma, (the furniture i.e. bed, tables, chairs, radio, essential kitchenware such as pressure cooker, and other steel items, his wrist watch were withheld by Yusuf under the pretext of these items being lost or broken and he denied totally that Salma had got these articles during her marriage.) The settlement reached upon was overt. It left Salma and her mother dissatisfied, (because according to Salma's mother they had spent over Rs. 20,000/- on Salma's marriage, her articles were worth about Rs. 15,000; and Yusuf was returning articles worth Rs. 3000/- (approximately) only, and giving her mangalsutra (which was legally hers), in lieu of Salma's meher. Yet they compromised, and conceded to Yusuf's demands, with a surrender, rather than risk losing all altogether.

The date of exchange of articles was not fixed, neither was the advocate, nor did Yusuf got back to the social worker. Yusuf was being protected under the shadow of his advocate. The social worker confronted the advocate on this subject. The advocate assured the social worker and Salma, (when both had met him at his office) that he would convince Yusuf, to settle the matter soon. Yet, there was no response for over six months and the client was now skeptical about the Special Cell's work.

*Visit to the Local Police Station: (To Call YUSUF)*

To make Yusuf understand the seriousness of the situation and pursue the matter further, the social worker approached the local police station. The

validity and credibility of the Special Cell had been established in the concerned police station. The duty officer, after listening to the facts of the case, readily extended support; and sent a constable to Yusuf's residence, asking Yusuf to meet him.

### *Some Observations at Yusuf's Residence*

Yusuf was not at home and his father spoke to the constable. The constable explained that Yusuf was called to the police station. Since Yusuf was soon expected, so the social worker, Salma and the constable waited outside Yusuf's room. It was a chawl system, and the neighbours were curious and inquired about the constable's visit. Salma had gone there after two years, and she met her neighbours and friends.

The social worker meanwhile observed that Yusuf's other wife had delivered, and was feeding her baby, while Yusuf's mother, was helping Salma's daughter eat her lunch. Salma's daughter, Shabnam, was a cute, healthy kid, about four years old, well groomed, and shared a good relationship with her grandparents. Salma kept looking at Shabnam, but didn't attempt to speak to her, fearing that she might not recognise her, Shabnam too was not aware of the fact that Salma was her mother, and ignored Salma while playing around. After about half an hour, the constable and the social worker and Salma left the house since Yusuf had not returned.

### *Yusuf's Visit to the Special Cell after Police Intervention*

However, the same day in the evening, Yusuf had met the duty officer, and after the police intervention, Yusuf met the worker on the very next day. The term and conditions were reinstated and he showed readiness to promptly solve the matter. He fixed a date when he would return her articles and the '*talaqnaama*' could be signed at the *Qazi's* office.

### *At the Qazi's Office*

On the scheduled day, Yusuf along with his friends, relatives and elderly members of his community met the social worker. Salma and her mother and her cousin, went to the Qazi's office, where the Qazi and the advocate were already waiting. The '*talaqnaama*' was read out and translated first by the advocate and then by the Qazi.

It was decided to first move Salma's belongings to Salma's vehicle (which she had hired), before the two parties could sign the '*talaqnaama*'. The articles, lay in a handcart, in a street behind the Qazi's office, and were all in a damaged, throwaway condition. Salma and her mother were disappointed over the deteriorated state of the showcase, cupboard, table, wall clock, fan and some vessels and clothes which were not in a usable

condition. Nevertheless they decided to go ahead with further proceedings and transferred the articles onto the handcart.

### *Salma's Decision to Return to Her Husband*

In the meantime, while the social worker spoke to Salma's mother, one of Yusuf's friend, who Salma was acquainted with began conversing with Salma. Later they were surrounded by Yusuf, his other friends and the '*jantmat*' members, and in a corner of the large room they were all compelling her to return to her marriage which she was resisting. Within a span of twenty minutes she told the worker, "I don't want a divorce, I am going back with my husband".

Arriving at the decision to terminate a marriage is a major life crisis, when moods become mercurial. Salma's ambivalence in this case was understandable. Yet in the social worker's office she had expressed resentment and a lack of respect for Yusuf and his family; they were constantly battling, their marriage relationship held no meaning, with no care, respect or concern for each other, yet Salma had decided to reunite with her husband. It would be naive on the part of the social worker if she wouldn't be aware that separations and reunions do take place, often in a cycle, till the decision to finally divorce is taken.

The worker spoke to Salma individually. Salma stated that Yusuf had promised to spend time equally with her and his second wife, though he had disagreed to buy a separate house. The relatives/*jammats* members had stated that they would stand as a guarantee of Yusuf and her in-laws behaviour, and positively she said, the situation would improve. Besides, at least for my daughter, I must return, she said. The social worker, asked her to think rationally, in the light of her past experiences and not to act in a hurry. But she stated, she had made up her mind about going back. The social worker also offered to talk to the *jammats* members, but Salma didn't see the need and declined it.

Why was it so difficult for her to arrive at a decision of freeing herself from the bondage? Unlike her earlier experience when she had returned to her husband's, under the moral pressure of the '*jammats*', what had occurred in the Qazi's office was different. She had actively participated in her decision making process, it was a confident and bold decision that she had taken to separate, after considering alternatives, after consistently declining, the option of reconciliation, at each step; at the advocate's office or the police station, Salma had articulated her grievances and asserted her grand. A shy non-confident young Salma had begun experimenting in newer directions, widening her horizons. She had started working (embroidering in a garment unit and making cane baskets at home) and was earning Rs. 30 to Rs. 40 per day; and had plans to continue working and had opened a



bank account to save her income. Now, she expressed self-doubt about her decision to divorce and decided to relinquish the independence that she had so far been battling for.

After conversing with the '*jammata*' members, uppermost in her mind lay her feelings regarding her marital status, mother's role and her future about she felt insecure. Her own feelings of anger and hostility that she had earlier voiced against Yusuf and his family were now suppressed. It was not her own wish but her social obligation that compelled her to take this decision. Rather than trusting herself, she depended on the advice of the '*jammata*' members, and sought to act on their faith (and did not sign the '*talaqnama*'). However, she was not too sure of her step, and still raised conflicting feelings about her in-laws attitude and behaviour towards her, and asked the social worker to preserve the divorce deed; she might need it sometime in the future, she told the social worker silently. Yusuf and Salma stated that they would regularly meet the worker and Salma said she would, get back to the worker in case any further guidance was needed.

### *Study Questions*

1. In Salma's case, the conventional values and attitudes of customary panchayat, conflicted with the ideology of the Special Cell. It highlights the need to work on a larger level, with communities and caste panchayats, on women's issues. This has been experienced with all caste panchayats regardless of religion, caste or class.
2. Individual counselling/casework by itself had limitations and Salma's case clearly highlights the need to have developmental groups clients, as well as the Special Cell.
3. In the above case, discuss the principle of self-determination. Salma's decision to return to Yusuf was only a social adjustment expressing her reluctance to break from a group norm. Discuss.

## CASE OF MALAN

### *Introduction*

The case study focuses on the problem solving process in a crisis situation and there by highlights personality development of the client.

### *Referral*

Malan Kamble appeared tired, frightened and depressed when she first approached the Special Cell. The problem as stated by her companion (Ms.Sangeeta, the local community social worker) was that Malan was being severely harassed by her brother-in-law, Ashok; and was on the verge of committing suicide, when she was rescued by Sangeeta, and together, they had approached the Special Cell for help.

*Previous Police Intervention*

Malan was desperate and complained of the impossible situation at home. She stated that two days earlier, her brother-in-law, Ashok, had severely battered her. With her nose and mouth bleeding, out of anger and frustration she had approached the local police station for the first time, seeking help. A police N.C. was lodged, and Ashok along with her husband, Mr. Vijay were summoned to the police station, warned by the police, of serious action if such an act recurred. However they were released within two hours.

*Precipitating Factor*

"It was for a trivial cause that he beat me up", she stated. While cleaning the house she had disposed off some scrap papers at a neighborhood shop and the lot had also contained a calendar (which her brother-in-law had bought); which was mistakenly disposed off. "The matter could have been sorted out peacefully", she stated, with Malan promising to go to the shop and get back the calendar, but her brother-in-law did not listen; he alleged hers was a purposeful act, he verbally abused her and her parents and threatened to kill all of them; while she further attempted to reason out with him, he lifted his hand, and severely beat her. The other members of the family only joined in, abusing her and encouraged Ashok in this act. The police intervention had not controlled the tense situation at home, and at 10.00 p.m., she had left her house along with her children, for her sister's place; the environment had not "calmed", when she returned the day after, and she felt out of control of herself and helpless, visualised no alternative but to end her life. As she carried the onus of her body towards the railways tracks, she met, Sangeeta, and along with her approached the Special Cell for help.

*Social Worker's Intervention*

Malan sobbed while she spoke of her immediate past. By showing acceptance, in a permissive atmosphere allowing her to ventilate, using techniques of effective listening, demonstrating warmth and concern, empathising and reflecting client feelings the social worker brought "calm" to the intense situation and allowed Malan to feel in control of her self.

*Family and Social Background*

Malan returned the next day with an application, this time accompanied by her husband. The social worker, explored the dimensions of the problem, inquiring about the past experience, her previous coping mechanisms, about her family and social background. Malan was married eight years ago, when she had completed Std IX at fifteen years of age. When she was

married, her husband was unemployed and was nineteen years, and she resided in a joint family of six members with her parents-in-law, her brother-in-law and his wife. Malan had two children both sons of seven and six years. According to Malan, her father-in-law was a respectable member of the community and progressive in his attitudes. He encouraged her to attend school and complete Std X, after which she did a diploma course in typing and telephone operating. Conflicts in the family began after her father-in-law's death three and half years ago. Then, her brother-in-law, Mr. Ashok, was the sole earning member of the family, educated upto Std IX, employed as a supervisor in a factory, grossly earning about Rs. 3000/- per month. His wife and mother-in-law were non-earner, whereas Malan earned about Rs.500/- by taking up contract typing work, and was employed in a *balwadi*. This amount she utilised for her children's milk and to repay her loan and interest that she had taken for the bank to purchase a typewriter. Her husband was a part-time rickshaw driver, earned Rs.350/- which he whiled away, gambling.

#### *Conflicts in the Past*

According to Malan, Ashok her brother-in-law could not tolerate her financial independence. He hampered her income generation, by arguing with her clients (she was doing contract typing work) and driving them out of the house. The sound of the typewriter would disturb him, and he would at times order that the work be immediately stopped. Of course, this was only one of the reasons of conflicts, at times it would be over her little children, household matters, food, cooking. Just any trivial matter would trigger off anger, verbal or physical violence. She was driven out of the house many times, and gone to her parents, but usually returned within a week. She had a friend in the neighborhood in whose house she would, at times temporarily seek solace and write down and read out to her pages from her diary. She read out pages from her diary to the social worker, wherein she had meticulously recorded each act of her brother-in-law and the incident that triggered off the violence. This she did, because that was the only way of relieving her pent-up feelings. Her brother-in-law had no children, and he had often expressed the wish of legally adopting her son, which she had categorically denied. This too, led to a conflict at home, particularly with her husband, who had suggested that they must give one of their sons to Ashok - in adoption.

#### *Lack of Adequate Support Systems*

"My husband never supported me, or understood my points of view, he would often look on when Ashok would hit me, at times he would ignore the act, and go to his gambling den; sometimes he would join in with his

brother and hit me. My parents were initially supportive, but when I sought shelter at their residence regularly and at shorter intervals; they insisted that I return to the in-laws. Dissolution of the marriage was for them out of the question, because I had younger siblings, yet to be married. I was preached that I must learn to adjust; "After all, a woman must learn tolerance and patience and respect for elders in the family". I felt trapped and with nowhere to go, previously, too, I had purchased a bottle of Tik-20, about eight months ago, and just when I was about to consume it, I saw my children's innocent faces, hung to them and cried", she said.

### *Social Worker's Role*

Discussions centered around social attitudes towards women, socialisation patterns, patriarchy, and social learning. The client being articulate and readily offering her own case examples social worker with techniques such as modeling, social worker self-disclosure, the social worker worked towards changing Malan's self-perception, and re-building her confidence and assertiveness and re-activating her problem solving capabilities.

### *Interview with Vijay, the Clients' Husband*

He was a timid, submissive person who did not speak much and displayed a helpless and fatalistic attitude towards the whole situation, he wished at times, that he could avert the violence, but found himself incapable of doing so. he lacked assertiveness, and also displayed a deep respect and concern for his elder brother who was to him near God, At times he justified his brother's violent behaviour towards his wife, "because she would ask for trouble, by way of her loud and assertive nature and her disrespectful behaviour towards his brother" he stated.

### *Interview with Ashok, the Client's Brother-in-Law*

Mr. Ashok did not respond to the Special Cell call letter. It was only after the social worker paid a home visit, that he came. As rightly expressed by Malan, he had a rugged look, an overbearing personality, and spoke arrogantly to the social worker. He too, justified his act and blamed Malan for being aggressive, not within the norms of the family, and provoking and enraging him, which triggered off violent acts. As Vijay and Ashok spoke, the worker communicated through techniques such as reality orientation and paraphrasing, that their justification was unacceptable. The social worker also communicated in clear and certain terms that Malan was not powerless.

### *Social Worker's Assessment of the Problem*

Ashok, being the only supporting member and also the male head of the family, he **had** greater control and held a relatively powerful position and

authority in the decision making matters in the household. The community respected him, partly because of his father's prestigious past; but also feared because he himself was a notorious person.

His brother, Malan's husband, was dependent on him for his family's survival. He displayed a sense of powerlessness, at home. Being traditionally bound, he displayed immense faith, deep loyalty, closeness and an unquestioning attitude towards his brother, which Malan didn't appreciate. By itself, the spouse subsystem, had no power or status in matters pertaining to the household.

Malan was an intelligent, assertive and ambitious person. Her present physical emotional and mental state was a result of an interplay of complex social and cultural factors in her environment, and her inability to adapt to pressures created by such interactions. This inability arose out of an unwillingness to be subservient. Malan wished to break loose from Ashok's dominant and authoritarian style of ruling the household in search other own individuality and exploration other creative pursuits.

#### *Exploring and Examining Alternatives*

The possible solutions were explored and examined after the social worker's interview with Mr. Ashok. One of the alternatives of buying a separate house was not feasible because of financial limitations. The social worker thought, to which the client too agreed, that Ashok was non-cooperative, so holding a joint meeting between the client and her brother-in-law would not make a dent. Altering the interpersonal relationships and communication processes, between the family members would be a difficult task, because the cultural factors was predominant and could not be overlooked or minimised. Signing an assurance would amount to a superficial arrangement, the client thought; a long term approach had to be looked into such as environmental change. So building a wall in between the house, so that Vijay and Malan's independent household could be set up seemed a viable and a practicable solution.

#### *Implementing the Alternative*

In the clients words; "Initially, I hesitated to implement this alternative. I encountered a number of problems, my brother-in-law threatened me that he would get gundas, if I laid the first brick for partitioning the house. I kept getting back to the social worker, who encouraged me to go ahead with my plan and promised to extend support if the need arose. As a precaution I gave an application to the local police station and went ahead with my task. I convinced my mother-in-law (in whose name the house is), that partitioning was the only alternative to end conflicts in the house. I think it was because of my assertiveness at home and determination, that matters

worked out. I took a bank loan and amidst threats; the partition was finally done. I extended the waterpipe and electric cable connections to my house and now my family along with my mother-in-law, we live separately. There is no more interference in our affairs; and no conflicts or harassment from Ashok".

*Client Feedback about the Special Cell Intervention*

"I remember how skeptical I was when Sangeeta had taken me to the Special Cell. After I spoke to the social worker, I initially burst out crying, but the social worker gave me a silent listening. She tried to understand my view point and she did not blame me or hold me responsible for the problem. The social worker's supportive and understanding attitude brought back a ray of hope. I felt comfortable, after talking to her and gained strength. I then thought to myself "everybody in this world is not so bad". Yes, women are capable and have the potential of achieving; they are not weak, to be treated as dirt. I began believing in my capability to achieve and decided to take charge of the situation. The social worker instilled in me a zest. I understood that if I had to reorganise my life, I would have to face obstacle that come my way. The partition was finally done. In the joint household, the tension and my preoccupation with petty household matters and the conflicts at home would have never allowed me to tap my potentials, and awaken the dormant talent in me. now I re-look at myself and feel more confident, more relaxed and certainly much more productive."

*Presently*

Malan has taken a bank loan, and installed six typewriters, and embarked upon a typing institute. Besides, contract typing work. She is a *bahuadi* teacher, and a bank commission agent (for small saving). She earns well over Rs.3000/- per month, (her husband is a rickshaw driver, earning Rs.800/- per month). Malan makes it a point to intervene in any case of domestic violence that she comes across. Many times, accompanying clients to the Special Cell. She has formed a local '*mahila mandal*' and plans to soon embark upon an income generation activity for the group.

"Many victimised and traumatised women are not as lucky as I was, to get timely help, and stay alive to experience this beautiful world, for women to be prepared to and willing to approach the police station, there must be a social worker at every police station, to listen and support the woman", she emphatically states.

*Study Questions*

1. Explore the above case in the light of theories of suicide prevention and counselling skills.

2. The case study could also be used to examine the family dynamics such as decision making patterns, power structure, role and status of woman.

## CASE OF BHARATI

### *Problem at the Onset*

Since the past eight days that she was married, Bharati Panchal had threatened to commit suicide, which had led her husband, Mr. Arun Panchal, to bring her to Dadar Police Station to lodge an N.C. complaint. She was later referred to the social worker at the Special Cell by the duty officer.

Bharati was about twenty years, educated upto Std IX, was extremely good-looking and dressed like a newlywed in a silk saree with gold jewellery. When the social worker interviewed Bharati, she was open about her feelings and stated that she was reluctant to reside at Arun's and wished to separate. She stated that her parents resided at Pune, and she had come to her uncle's residence two months before her marriage, where her cousin Sunil and herself had shared an intimate relationship and she had revealed this fact to her husband and in-laws the day after her marriage to Arun.

The social worker observed that Bharati sensed the loss of her separation from Sunil which according to her was a significant and valued relationship. She had a sexual relationship with Sunil and was very clear that she wanted to marry Sunil and her prime aim was to be separated from Arun or else she threatened she would commit suicide. After being persuaded by Arun, Bharati agreed to stay on for a few days, till her parents arrived from Pune, on the condition that she would not be compelled to have a sexual relationship with Arun.

### *After a Month*

Bharati returned to the Special Cell accompanied by her parents, husband and in-laws. After a spell of silence, she told the worker emphatically, "No, I am not going back this time". She brought out her application which was well thought out and written. She read it out to the social worker. It affirmed what was stated in her first interview with the social worker and she added that she was morally wedded to Sunil. She had no courage to reveal it to her parents before marriage, and she was married to Arun under compulsion. She was not harassed by her in-laws and her husband, they were willing to forget her past and accept her, she said. She was not interested in reconciliation, since she thought, thereby she would deceive herself as well as her husband.

According to Arun, their marriage had not been consummated, Bharati had not accompanied Arun for social outings, at home she was withdrawn

and listless, her communication minimal, she had lost her appetite and her behaviour was a cause of concern for Arun and his family. Arun stated that he, along with his wife, had met Sunil a couple of times, and Sunil had outright denied that he had an affair with Bharati. Sunil's parents had stopped entertaining Bharati at their residence and it clearly appeared to Arun that Sunil was not interested in marrying Bharati. According to Bharati's parents, marriages within the family were a taboo. Besides Sunil was seventeen years and at that point of time Bharati's marriage to Sunil was not practical. Herein, the social worker observed that Bharati had symptoms of severe depression, she appeared dull and physically exhausted and was shabbily dressed. (She had voluntarily returned her jewellery to her-in-laws). There was increasing conflict within Bharati regarding her role expectations as Arun's wife and her role acceptance. This conflict, resulted in poor role performance, a high degree of anxiety and tension, leading to a state of disequilibrium. According to Arun she had continued her suicide threats over the past two weeks, when her parents had not replied to her letters. This time, Arun stated that they were summoned by a telegram.

Bharati was not prepared to discuss the legal aspects of marriage and divorce. The immediate question that confronted her was a shift from the environment (i.e. Arun's residence), where she was constantly reminded of her role as Arun's wife. Alternatives of shelter homes were discussed, but Bharati decided to accompany her parents despite their pre-condition that after fifteen days, Bharati would have to return to her in-laws in Bombay. Though Bharati was clear within, that she would not return, yet joining her parents seemed to her the best possible alternative at that point of time.

The social worker explained to Bharati's parents the-urgency for her psychiatric treatment, but her parents attributed her behaviour to superstitious factors and said everything would be fine once Bharati went back to Pune. Her parents seemed more concerned about her marriage rather than Bharati herself and took a commitment in writing from Arun, that if Bharati wanted to return, she would be allowed to do so, by her in-laws and husband. How were the parents projecting confidence that Bharati would certainly change her mind within fifteen days? Was that the best place for Bharati in her present state? The social worker wondered.

The value that Bharati's parents had placed on her marriage and confidence that they had projected to make her "change her decision", suggested that it was not necessarily a place where an understanding could be reached and a relationship established to make Bharati feel mentally secure and emotionally stable. Bharati was no more a daughter to them, she was Arun's wife and she must have been constantly pressurized into accepting that role; the social worker thought. A week after Bharati left



Bombay, her husband received a letter from Bharati (which was signed as Bharati, but not in her own handwriting), which stated that she had forgotten the past. It expressed guilt and shame, and sought forgiveness from her in-laws and husband and their permission to rejoin them.

#### *Returned from her Parents*

Two weeks later, after returning from Pune, Bharati said in a dry, low tone, not looking at the worker in her eyes "Yes, I want to go back". This affirmation was only verbal, there was no enthusiasm, her facial expressions suggested her reluctance. Other alternatives were decided and Bharati accompanied Arun to her matrimonial home.

In the light of what must have occurred at her parents', had Bharati reconciled, and was obliged to accept her role change as Arun's wife?

Or was this only a cosmetic solution to a deeprooted problem? Was her acceptance of this alternative only highlighting the absence of any other available support?

The alternate that Bharati had sought, could not be further evaluated with her, nor alternate solutions discussed, hence the worker too did not make any follow up visit.

#### *Two Months Later*

Arun, Bharati's husband, met the social worker. He stated that his wife had left him and gone to her parent's house a month ago and had not yet returned. Arun stated that everything had appeared normal for the initial fifteen days, Bharati had adjusted well and had led a normal sexual life. When the situation appeared normal, suddenly after fifteen days, Bharati was affected with convulsions. The social worker assessed that the conflict within Bharati had remained unresolved, her tension had magnified and she had resorted to intrapsychic defense mechanisms to repress the reality of the situation. Bharati was referred for psychiatric treatment. The treatment was discontinued since she had accompanied her brother to Pune and not returned since.

On the other hand, Arun had always attached great importance to his role as a husband. He was patronising in his attitude towards Bharati, he greatly valued his marital status. While he spoke, the social worker observed that he was disturbed over the past events, and was very keen that wife should return. At times, he expressed his guilt and his inadequacy as a husband and could not come to terms with the fact that Bharati had left him. Over a period of time, Arun's anxiety and discomfort mounted. According to him, he had not attended his job, (for the past few days) and had fared badly in his departmental exams. (Arun was a graduate, employed in a government job).

The social worker's intervention focussed on assisting him to explore and recognise his unventilated feelings. The social worker helped him locate and define the cause of his tension and oriented him towards the reality of the situation and Bharati's inability to accept her role as his wife. But Arun did not perceive the event realistically, he attributed his condition to Bharati's absence and took the further step of going to Pune and getting Bharati back.

### *Back at Pune*

Back home, Bharati had attempted suicide by consuming sleeping pills, Bharati was in a depressed state when she left Bombay, she had gone to Pune for support, maybe Bharati had found herself isolated, her relationship with her parents had ceased to be supportive, a feeling of inadequacy had left her in a vulnerable position and she had attempted suicide.

After Bharati's suicidal act, her parents had not sought psychiatric help. Preservation of her marriage seemed to be their priority. Bharati had been taken to a family guru, and the guru had stated that Bharati would be normal and lead a happy married life soon. According to Arun, Bharati's parents acting on the tip off of the guru most willingly asked Arun to take Bharati along with him to Bombay.

Arun, at this stage, was unaware of the fact that Bharati had attempted suicide and had been hospitalised.

Arun met the social worker after returning from Pune. He stated that Bharati's non-communicative behaviour (At Pune as well as during the journey to Bombay), made it difficult for him to comprehend her implied messages. Her suicidal attempt had evoked excessive anxiety in Arun, who when he returned to Bombay, sought immediate psychiatric help. However when Bharati was asked to wait outside the psychiatric clinic while Arun was being interviewed, within a span of ten minutes, she was reported missing. (This fact was mentioned on her case-paper). She had boarded a bus to Pune without informing anybody.

Arun met the social worker and stated that he had heard that Bharati was in Pune. He would not accept this separation and expressed his wish that his wife should return. The social worker evaluated the result of his past act, and worked with him towards finding other solutions. The social worker educated him about legal proceedings but it seemed that he was reluctant to redefine the problem and change his goal.

After a year and a half when the social worker met him, he told the social worker that a mutual consent divorce had been taken. The process of divorce was initiated from Bharati's side. Arun had not defended the divorce, but it didn't look as if he had accepted the divorce either. With the divorce, his role as a husband had ceased and also the position and status

that went with it. He appeared dull, depressed and spoke in a low tone. He felt rejected and accused Bharati of being irresponsible and misled. The loss had left him humiliated, personally destroyed and he displayed depressive symptoms. He stated that he was aware of his condition and was practicing yoga and meditation to relax, but his state had not improved and he would soon seek psychiatric help to cope with his present condition.

#### *Points for Discussion*

1. Discuss skills to handle a potential case of suicide to handle cases of crisis intervention.
2. Bharati was at all times being made to act on others' will. Her own behaviour was not being recognised by her "supports", to whom their own purpose seemed more important than Bharati's need. If the attitude that her parents held towards her marital status was a contributory factor towards Bharati's condition then can her parents be held responsible for her suicidal attempt?
3. How do people's belief in superstitions, reliance on religious leaders and godmen influence the families and their decisions?

### **CASE OF BEENA AND SHREENATH**

#### *Introduction*

This case aims at understanding the family structure, and family background that have influenced the decision of the individual and the social worker's role in acting as an interface between the individual, his family and community.

#### *Client's Expectations when She Approached the Special Cell*

Beena came to the Special Cell, along with her husband, Shreenath. She was anxious and stated that Shreenath had remarried a year and a half ago, to Shiloo; and though he had not cohabited with Shiloo in the past; presently he was being pressurised by her family and the community, particularly the customary '*panchayat*'; who wanted him to live along with his second wife, Shiloo.

Beena was intelligent, well-read and well educated of her legal rights. She articulated her need to stay with her husband, Shreenath. She stated that in the event of her husband deciding to live along with his second wife, Shiloo; she was prepared to sue him for bigamy. She would separate along with her one year old daughter Anu and demand alimony.

#### *Brief Background*

Beena was about twenty-nine years, educated upto Std XII, came from a Maharashtrian Brahmin family. Her father and older brothers were

care-takers (*pujaris*) in a temple, her younger brother was working as a supervisor in a garment manufacturing firm, and her younger sisters were schooling. The average family income was about Rs.2,000 per month.

Shreenath was about twenty-six years, the eldest son in the family. When married, he was a non-matriculate, but had cleared his SSC and HSC and presently enrolled for B.Com, through the open university. His family belonged to the weaver's class and came from Andhra Pradesh. His father was a retrenched mill worker; (his only source of income was Rs.800/-; being the rent of his leased house) and was residing in his native village along with his younger son, who was a supervisor in a beedi factory; earning about Rs.700 per month, and his younger daughter who was schooling.

Beena and Shreenath got to know each other in the process of their work, (both were working in a garment manufacturing unit) and had eloped and married two and a half years back; in the presence of friends, in a temple; first according to vedic rites; and later had registered their marriage at the civil court. Presently, Shreenath had no regular job and he took up ad-hoc jobs, earning grossly Rs.750 per month, while Beena had discontinued her work after marriage. They had rented a house; which was located beyond the area where Shreenath had previously resided with his family; amongst his community members.

#### *Of Shreenath's Marriage to Shiloo*

Shreenath's parents were unaware of his marriage to Beena. Being anxious to get his eldest son married, Shreenath's father; (when he came down to Bombay for a brief period) asked him to get engaged to Shiloo; a young girl of seventeen years, from his community. Shreenath revealed to the social worker; that as per his father's will, he got engaged to Shiloo. Though at that point of time; his wife, Beena was pregnant and was to deliver a baby within four months, Shreenath had no courage, to reveal about his first marriage to his father; and he was incapable of turning down his father's wish.

Shreenath stated that he could not reveal his first marriage since Beena was previously known to the family and his relatives as his "sister", and, he had his doubts about her acceptability as the daughter-in-law of the house, since "courting" was not culturally accepted in the community. He didn't meet Shiloo even after the day of engagement. After the birth of his daughter, Shreenath revealed to his father through correspondence about this fact along with the fact of marriage to Beena and expressed his wish to break off the engagement. His father's reaction was shock and disbelief and knowledge of this fact affected his health adversely. 'He was a prominent person in the community; henceforth, how would the community react

towards him if the engagement broke up? And what would happen to the marriage of Shreenath's siblings?', these were the questions in his mind. He was not prepared to accept Beena as his daughter-in-law and questioned his son's decision on making his own choice in selection of a marriage partner. Through letters, Shreenath's father conveyed to him, that his breaking of his engagement to Shiloo, would not be possible and was "socially non acceptable". He conveyed to his son that preparations for marriage were on and that he should get married a second time.

Shreenath was a passive, non-confident person. Just as in the past, once again he submitted to his father's will and was married in Bombay, among much pomp and splendour in the midst of his community members. On the very day of his marriage he left for his native village along with his family and his second wife, Shiloo. Shreenath stated that his marriage to Shiloo had not consummated, and his communication with her had been minimal.

Back in Bombay, his wife Beena, after much exploration following his long absence; heard about his second marriage and sent repeated letters to his family, Shiloo's family and her relatives. The secret of his first marriage was thus gradually broken. Out of anger and the feeling of being deceived; Shiloo's parents took Shiloo along with them to their residence; much to the relief of Shreenath, who returned to Bombay and began residing with Beena and his daughter Anu. Except for the month he had spent with Shiloo, he had not seen her for the past fourteen months; and he was now being pressurised to allow Shiloo to reside with him and give her the status of his wife.

While he had gradually unfolded the past to the social worker, he had also expressed his fear, his dilemmas about an uncertain future. It appeared as if he was not prepared to take any decision on his own; and had left it entirely to family and the panchayat members to decide for him in the next panchayat meeting. It was this panchayat meeting, that his wife, Beena dreaded. She was worked up about Shreenath's submissive and unquestioning attitude towards his father and she expected that he should be able to assert his stand of saying, "No", to the panchayat's decision, of his reconciliation with Shiloo.

*Assessment of the Family Structures,  
Practices and Community Norms*

The social worker, gained an insight into family structure, practice, and community norms. Shreenath, was reared in a patriarchal family, where power lay with the male head of the family that is his father. His father had been authoritative and had denied Shreenath the right to make his own decision in selection of a marriage partner. Marriages within the

community were a norm, inter caste marriages were unwelcome. Also, in the community marriages were usually arranged and mates selected by the parents. Hence, socially, Shreenath's first wife was unacceptable.

Being socialised in a pattern where obedience and respect for elders was the rule, Shreenath had found himself unable to deviate from the established rules to assert his own right.

He was trapped between roles, that of a son and of a husband. In order not to "displease or disobey" his father, he stated he had given into his second marriage, allowing his father to control and decide for himself, thereby subordinating his own interests to maintain the interests of his family. He stated that just as in the past, presently, too, he was being coerced; thus time to cohabit with Shiloo.

He expressed his ignorance about criminal repercussions regarding bigamy, since he was himself exposed to a culture where polygamy was both permissible and prevalent. So conditioned was he by his family and community members, that he was unable to exercise any alternative that deviated from the established norms. So strong was his commitment to his father and his second wife, that he wanted to draw up an equation whereby he could give Shiloo, the status of his wife and also obey his father; even if it meant being penalised for bigamy; so long as he would have done justice to both. Due to his subservient attitude he had almost reconciled to the thought of now residing with two wives. In the process, he had great expectations, that his wife Beena would understand, co-operate with and bear with him.

### *Social Worker's Role and Intervention*

With Shreenath, the social worker played the role of a guide, educator and advisor. He was imparted legal education, both the criminal and civil laws, in case of bigamy, the rights of his first wife and the legal stand and nullity of his second marriage.

The social worker helped Shreenath to chalk out the feasibility of the situation in the light of his present income and capacity, in the event of his having to support two wives, or two households. He also helped him to clarify his understanding of his marriage; and how he viewed his relationship with Beena and with Shiloo. The social worker helped him surface what his decision was, irrespective of the family and community decisions. It was apparent that he wanted to live only with his wife Beena and his daughter Anu.

After a long time and repeated discussions, Shreenath began warding off the guilt feelings that he had felt towards Shiloo, redefining his sense of justice towards her. He perceived an alternative, rather than having to reside with her and decided to compensate her for his wrong act. He was

gradually gaining confidence, to stand up against his father and the panchayat and not allowing their decision to be thrust upon him. His wife's assertiveness was another crucial factor, due to which he viewed things in a different light. He was now aware that Beena had found a support system and was in the process of exercising her legal option. (The social worker had referred Beena to a legal aid cell, where she had a preliminary talk with an advocate. She had also started exploring in terms of finding employment or undertaking education).

### *Work with Family and Community*

Herein, the social worker largely played the role of an advocate and a mediator. The social worker acted as an interface between Shreenath, his father and the community members. The panchayat members were called to the Special Cell. The social worker initially listened to their perspective; and later raised their awareness by imparting knowledge about civil laws regarding marriage and the criminal repercussions in cases of bigamy. The members were extremely defensive; they safeguarded their norms and expressed disregard for secular laws, stating that only the marriage that had occurred in their presence was a valid marriage. They also asserted Shiloo's status as Shreenath's wife, justifying bigamy as a common occurrence in their community.

The social worker confronted the panchayat members, clearly expressing the commonality of the Indian Penal Code, the Hindu Marriage Act and the Cr. PC, which did not distinguish or set up different laws for various sub-groups but encompassed all Hindus. The social worker helped the members gain an understanding of Shreenath's view point and his decision and how Beena and her daughter Anu would be further victimised if their decision was enforced on Shreenath.

The social worker also explored the possibility of calling Shiloo to the Special Cell and understanding her view point. However, neither she nor her family members responded to the call letter.

A month later Shreenath informed the social worker that in the panchayat meeting it had been decided to give Shiloo a lumpsum payment of Rs.16000/- as compensation, for the expenditure that Shiloo's parents had incurred on her marriage. The amount was fixed by the panchayat members who had themselves dissuaded Shiloo's parents from sending her to reside with Shreenath. A divorce deed had been subsequently drawn up and signed by both the parties and in the presence of the panchayat, the compensatory amount was paid by Shreenath's father.

*Study Questions*

1. The family is a reflection of its community's, cultural, ethnic background. To alleviate the conventional attitudes and belief systems within the family, it is essential to intervene at the community level. Discuss.
2. Importance of legal education at the community level, with emphasis on the customary panchayats, to create a check on the established norms that are biased against women.
3. Discuss the power structure and decision making in Shreenath's family.

**CASE OF SWAPNA***Introduction*

In this case, prior to the Special Cell intervention, the police had been accessed. The police had been unable to offer substantial help or support to Swapna and the police intervention was limited to merely lodging a non cognisable offense (N.C.). The police coordination with the Special Cell was effective; because the social worker's intervention by way of counselling and emotional support helped Swapna to withdraw from a "romantic-love relationship".

The importance of the cell at the police station, is thus obvious, where easy referrals of such cases which would otherwise be dismissed as an N.C. matter or be registered as a criminal complaint is possible.

*Problem at the Onset**Case Referral Through Police Station*

Dr. Anil Jog had applied to Dadar Police station stating that his younger brother, Anuj, was being pressurised by a young girl, Swapna and by her family members, in order that he should marry Swapna. Mr. Jog had asked the police to intervene in the matter and ensure his family's security.

After registering in the TR (Transit Register), the appointed PSI spoke to the social worker at the Special Cell, and it was decided that the case would be jointly handled by the PSI and the social worker. The social worker observed that this case was taken up immediately for perusal by the Department, since it was an application made by a doctor from an upper class, caste background. After ascertaining facts on his end, the PSI referred Swapna and her family members, to the social worker.

*Family and Socioeconomic Background*

Swapna was about twenty years, and came from a well-to-do Brahmin family. Her parents were both Central Government employees holding key



positions, earning grossly Rs. 15,000/- per month. She had a younger sister who was schooling. Swapna, herself came from a well-known vernacular school, and was currently studying in a reputed Central Bombay college doing her Bachelor's in Science. She was a meritorious student, with a brilliant academic record, she was good looking, a soft spoken and a shy person.

#### *Interview with Swapna's Parents*

Swapna's parents stated that their daughter had been deceived by Anuj, who with promises of marriage had courted her for, two years; but had presently refused to get married to her. Since a year, he had declined seeing her totally. His behavior towards Swapna had psychologically disturbed her, and she had been unable to appear for her final year B. Sc. examination. They had approached Anuj's family only to seek clarification; for his past act. No positive response had been received from Arun's family; and they had instead, dishonoured and humiliated them and accused Swapna of having an immoral character. Pursuant to this incident they assumed that a complaint against them must have been lodged, by Anuj's family and such a complaint against then held no valid ground, they stated.

#### *Interview with Swapna*

Swapna was a shy and introverted person. The worker was directive and had to encourage her to verbalise her feelings. Gradually, a rapport was built, Swapna began revealing her past and her relationship with Anuj. While she spoke of her budding relationship with Anuj, she blushed; they had both studied in the same school and had known each other since. Although they both stayed in the vicinity, it was only three years ago, that their relationship had graduated from being friends to close companions. From a group of common friends, the two drifted and began meeting regularly at parks and beaches.

Anuj had visited Swapna's parents often, who knew that the two were 'having a close relationship', and had permitted the same. However, Swapna had never visited Anuj's residence. Swapna would be invited to Anuj's college campus, where he would initiate her into having sexual relations with him. Though, Swapna stated that she would resist initially, Anuj would gradually overcome her resistance, by making promises of marriage, stating that they were a progressive and liberated couple and pre-marital sex was no sin. He would also exhibit porn pictures, books and literature, thereby initiate and induce her into the act.

Suddenly since the past year he had stop seeing her. Her repeated attempts to meet him had failed. He would humiliate her in the presence of their friends, and the incidents she narrated underlined that he was

discarding her as an object which was no longer useful. His attitude towards her had created tremendous anxiety in her in the past; she had been unable to cope with it for a long time, and she had lost one academic year.

Yet, she was simplistic, naive and placing faith in Anuj, she often sobbed as if being unable to bear the separation. She rationalised that it was not out of his own will, but only due to his elder brother's pressure that he had declined to marry her. She wished that Anuj be called to the Special Cell where the social worker could question him on what his personal decision was.

In her interview with Swapna, the social worker had demonstrated acceptance, universalisation had and helped her ventilate in a permissive atmosphere where there was no fear of being judged. Helping her to facilitate repressed emotions had alleviated the overpowering feeling of stress and anxiety.

#### *Interview with Anuj*

To facilitate the social worker's own understanding and clarification of Anuj's relationship with Swapna, the social worker interviewed Anuj, who had been summoned to the police station by the PSI. Anuj was about twenty-one years, good looking, and a meritorious student in school and college, doing his final year engineering in a well known educational institution. He came from a highly educated, well to do Brahmin family, his brother and sister-in-law were doctors, and his mother, a school principal.

Anuj was a conceited person, conscious about himself and spoke fluent English (as if to impress the social worker). Anuj admitted the facts as stated by Swapna, and said that he was not interested in getting married to her, and this he was stating out of his own will and not under pressure from anybody. He expressed no guilt about the past and justified his act stating that having a sexual relationship did not entail getting into any kind of a marriage bond. Besides he said "I have not had an intercourse with her, so I haven't damaged her permanently, she can go ahead and marry anybody".

It appeared as if calling young girls to the campus and using them for his pleasure was his regular business and he too reiterated it by saying "I have had many such flings earlier and no woman has ever created a scene over it, the way Swapna has". He degraded her as being unworthy of him, somebody who could never be a life partner, who could accompany him to USA (Where he was planning to go for further studies). His brother supported his stand, and constantly accused Swapna of having wronged.

The social worker communicated to Anuj the unacceptability of his act. The worker helped him analyse his own feelings, his values - and brought

to fore the issue, that he had cheated Swapna, indulged in a criminal act by wrongly seeking her consent for the sexual act, under the pretext of marriage promises. Yet, somehow, this didn't make a dent. He defended himself and his rationale behind the act, and refused to get into an alliance with Swapna.

### *Social Worker's Role*

Anuj held on to his excuses and justifications in the joint meeting with Swapna and her family members. In the joint meeting it was decided that Swapna's family will not visit Anuj's residence again; so that the immediate problem for which the transit register was made, could be sorted out.

### *Social Worker's Assessment of the Problem*

Though Anuj had explicitly stated his reluctance to get married to Swapna, Swapna could not come to terms with this reality. Through subsequent interviews as the relationship developed further, the social worker gained an insight into several other facts. Swapna was an isolated, introverted, asocial person; had spent most of her childhood and her adolescence with her grandmother, with whom she had lived. She did not share a close, communicative relationship with her parents or her younger sister.

Her need to be loved, her vulnerability was used by Anuj for his own pleasure. Anuj's own idea of general liberation as well as the influence of peers permitted pre-marital sexual relations. To him, sex life was not linked with emotions; it was a body-centred unaffectionate behaviour; it was only a measure of obtaining sexual release without guilt or inhibitions.

To Swapna, the overall relationship with the man she loved; was more important. It was a person centered affectionate behaviour. It was mutual sharing, trust, caring and concern that assumed the sole importance; not sexual release. To her, she has romanticised her physical love in terms of a craving for an eternal relationship with Anuj. While she idolised Anuj, she undermined her own self-worth she was complexed about her inability to speak fluent English, about her academic career not being at par with his. Swapna perceived her self-image through his eyes, tried every way to appease him; including going in for stylish, mod outfits and haircuts. Despite such attempts, much to her surprise, Anuj had started ignoring her; resulting in her confusion and feelings of being let down and rejected by him. On one hand she desired to get back those "romantic" moments with him, on the other she displayed anger, hostility towards him and wanted to avenge him for his behaviour towards her. The conventional norms and orthodoxy of society, the unacceptability of pre-marital sex, had instilled in Swapna a fear of being labelled as a deviant. Apart from this fear, not sharing an open and cordial relationship with the parents; and not having

any friends; she had found herself unable to ventilate; to reveal about her past and her intimate relationship with Anuj to anybody. It was only after she displayed symptomatic behaviour, could not give her examinations; that her parents sensed a problem.

During her crucial phase, when she underwent a depression, her parents had offered emotional support; and had been understanding; by facilitating open communication. They had shown acceptance of her past behaviour, not judging her by moral standards; there by they had helped her to gradually overcome her depressive state of mind. However, due to Swapna's insistence they had assured her that her marriage to Anuj would materialise, and they had been trying to pursue the same.

#### *The Police Inspectors Response to Swapna's Problem*

The social worker also observed the role of the police in this case. It was limited, They were supportive and were concerned; about settling the matter peacefully. Herein, what is important is that the police were in her favour and not biased against her. It was her innocence that they were convinced of; and they believed that she had been cheated, molested by Anuj. All through they were supportive towards Swapna and did not judge or brand, Swapna as being 'immoral'.

#### *Social Worker's Intervention*

Swapna stated that she wanted to meet Anuj, once before taking any concrete decision. This she stated pinning hope that her marriage could still effectuate. The social worker used techniques such as reflective discussion, orientation to reality and helped her see herself in an independent light; not weigh herself in view of what Anuj thought she was. Yet, since she persisted, the social worker accompanied her to his campus. Besides the campus, Swapna took the social worker along with her to each spot where she and Anuj had been previously meeting. The physical presence of the worker served an important purpose; since while the social worker was with Swapna, she revealed certain facts once again bringing to the fore, repressed emotions. When she verbalised how Anuj had physically behaved with her at each and every spot she was letting go her fear of that place and the anxiety that had been created thereupon.

#### *Visit to Campus*

Swapna and the social worker's visit to the campus, served as turning point in her decision. There the social worker together with Swapna, met few of his friends; who ascertained that Anuj was a Casanova, and had previously had such relationships with many other women. The talks with his friends, almost convinced her of his false, hypocritical character. She lost her trust

in him that she had held so far, his idolized image was shattered. Swapna now saw Anuj as a worthless person unfit for herself, and she expressed the same to him when she met him in the college canteen. Anuj was arrogant towards Swapna and demeaned her. His behaviour towards her enraged Swapna, who physically projected her anger towards him, by kicking and punching him and slapping him. The social worker intervened to avert her violence towards him and left the campus.

Swapna's hostility towards him mounted. She wanted to avenge him, defame him, and sue him for his wrong doing. The PSI and the social worker explained the facts that a criminal case of molestation would be technically weak and not stand in court. After taking the decision to lodge a criminal case was ruled out, in the presence of the police officers, Anuj and Swapna exchanged photographs, letters, articles and gifts, and Anuj signed an assurance stating that he would not jeopardise Swapna's marriage prospects and the two would not henceforth meet each other.

By signing the assurance Swapna had come to terms with the reality; that their relationship had broken down.

#### *Emotional Support and Building a Positive Self Image*

She had to sublimate her feelings of revenge; and create strength for herself. Through the process of motivation, encouraging her and reassuring her, the social worker gradually helped her build her self-confidence. Her attention was drawn towards her studies, she began contacting her professors and attending classes to appear for her final year examination. After she successfully cleared her examination, she began preparing for GRE and joined Karate classes.

#### *Constructive use of Guilt Feelings*

By making constructive use of her guilt feeling, the social worker helped her to understand her sexual needs and responses; imparted knowledge regarding sexuality, helped her to become conscious of her feelings within this developmental phase to cope with and understand such situations in the future.

#### *Work with Swapna's Parents: Building Bridges*

The social worker worked with Swapna's parents explaining to them the importance of developing a positive attitude to establish healthy mechanisms of communication towards Swapna. The social worker emphasised that Swapna needed to feel secure within the family and the parents played a crucial role in enhancing her, self image and her confidence. It was important, the social worker reiterated, not to overprotect her or to make her feel as if she had wronged.

The social worker by way of her discussions with Swapna and by role modeling would time and again affirm, the importance of giving herself time and space to be independent and create a relationship on an equal footing and not get into a passive, subservient relationship.

Initially for about two-three months, Swapna would meet the worker regularly, and discuss her relationship with men friends. She had just about begun to use her discretion, to analyse her relationships and not be too trusting and get to swayed by anybody, who showed any interest in her.

### *Study Questions*

1. To look at the distribution of pornographic materials; the exposure to movies and other media in the erotic description and their effects on the sexual behaviour of adolescents.
2. The degree of acceptable premarital sexual permissiveness in a courtship group, varies with the degree of autonomy of the group and the degree of acceptable pre-marital sexual permissiveness in the socio-cultural setting of the group. Discuss.

## **PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED WHILE WORKING AT THE SPECIAL CELL**

We would be partial if we did not document the problems that we encounter while working at the Special Cell. Most of the problems that workers face have already appeared in the chapter titled.

"Responses of the social workers" and suggestions have been made. Here we attempt to tackle only those few which have not got a specific mention and which are the most important considerations for all social workers.

Working at the Special Cell, one realises that the dividing line between legal and illegal is very thin. One is walking on a tight rope to confine the work within legal boundaries. For this, great care and caution has to be exercised. We have found it very important to keep interpreting the law in an innovative fashion which should be in keeping with the spirit of the law and stretch the boundaries of the law to offer protection to all vulnerable sections including women.

When working in the area of women's rights, one has to be very conscious not to over step the boundaries by violating citizen's rights, human rights and democratic rights. The balance is very delicate and requires a fine eye for detail in order to retain the balance.

Often, workers face a dilemma where the community's indigenous practices are in contradiction to the law and public policy. The dilemma of whether to uphold the law or the practice, then comes to the fore. Though, women have the final word in the matter, one cannot overlook the workers'

intense involvement as facilitators in the decision-making process. Consequently, it then becomes important to muse over long-term consequences of this kind of support and directions that it ought to take.

Workers who belong to minority communities face another kind of dilemma. One is constantly exposed to the ideas of majority community about their own community and consequently about themselves. The stereotypes and biases are all brought forward be they of police or public. Thus for them it is a hostile environment to work in. There is scope to say that one is siding with one's community. One debates the idea of why does one continue to work?

The battering that workers have to face causes tremendous stress and pressure among the workers. At the Special Cell one is constantly facing the gloomier side of intimate relationships. The worker's ideas and dreams about family and marriage, blood or marital relations are shattered. One requires tremendous inner strength, family support, support from the colleagues, intellectualisation and analysis power to cope with it.

However, the problems encountered are forgotten in the joy of seeing a woman gain freedom from harassment and violence and become independent. When one sits in a women's collective and is able to see one's contribution in one's own life as well as that of the women; the effort does seem worthwhile.

# PART V



# REPORT ON THE TRAINING PROGRAMMES HELD FOR POLICE PERSONNEL

## INTRODUCTION

The social workers at the Special Cell for women and children, in its work at the office of the Commissioner of Police came in contact with a large section of the Bombay city police and gained a varied exposure into their handling of cases of "women and children" that came to the police stations. Some observation of the social workers, had been that the police by and large hold the conventional stereotyped image of women and their intervention in such cases too, is influenced by such "preconceived notions".

A complaint of domestic assault may not be looked upon as a crime deserving police attention; the effort of the officer may be directed solely towards "reconciliation". Upholding the family harmony and preserving the family unity thus assumes paramount importance in dealing with a case of domestic violence. The police may dismiss such a case as a "marginal one", not deserving police attention or may start identifying with and intervening on behalf of the husband. With such attitudes the "efficiency and enthusiasm", with which the officer would deal with "matters pertaining to women", is bound to be low despite legislation that guarantees equality. The reality within which the laws are implemented and translated into practice is grossly different.

Ideally, while performing the police role the officers ought to perform their jobs bearing in mind the social purpose of their activity understanding the philosophy as laid down by the constitution and working with the "spirit" to preserve social justice. If the police have to be responsible for upholding individual rights, security and freedom and prevent the infringe-

ment of the right of one individual over the other greater sensitivity and understanding towards the vulnerable sections, demands police attention.

Yet what is observed is that the police support in each case is conditional, the police use its discretionary power to decide the "deservedness" of each case. The focus of the work of the Special Cell is to bring the issue of "crimes against women" on the agenda of the police. The expectation being that they go beyond the strictly defined role of maintaining law and order, and respond sensitively to the problem of crimes against women. For legislation to be effective, support from the law enforcing authorities is a must. The police need to be familiarised on issues of atrocities against women and children, since the police is the foremost intervening agency when these groups face crisis.

The Special Cell started feeling the need to increase their inputs in handling this issue. This resulted in adding of a new dimension in the Special Cell's activities, that is, training police personnel on the issue of "Atrocities against women". Thus, the decision to conduct training programmes for them came about. However the Special Cell is conscious that the police cannot tackle the issue effectively by themselves that the simultaneous support of other groups and agencies too in recognising and responding to the needs of women is essential. Initially the Special Cell had envisaged, holding awareness programmes and training for the community at large; however the Special Cell has now restricted itself to conducting training for the police.

Training that is imparted to the police is technical in nature and lays heavy emphasis on physical fitness. The police training at the constabulary level does not include many elements of training in humanities, basic communication skills and skills in dealing with people. It is by and large focused on criminal investigation. It is ironical that though the police are expected to perform a "socially neutral role" yet the component on sensitisation on social issues, on the unequal power relationships, specifically the gendered power relationship, is almost negligible. Orientation programmes and refresher courses are hardly ever imparted, the emphasis being solely on the job training.

### **BROAD OBJECTIVES OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMMES**

The rationale of holding the training with the police officers, was to create sensitivity on issues related to women and children, to acquaint them with the basic tenets of law and the change in the laws related to women and children. It was also to acquaint them with basic skills in dealing with cases of women and children, such as effective investigation and intervening.

In view of these objectives, the following training programmes were organised by the Special Cell:

1. A training programme for women constables of JAPU (Juvenile Aid Police Unit) (December 1986).
2. Four training programmes for police officers at the zonal level in Bombay (January 1987).
3. A national level workshop for senior police officers (IPS officers) (December 1987).
4. Two training programmes for police officers at the zonal level in Bombay (June 1989).
5. One training programme for the district level police officers from Marathwada and Vidharba at Nagpur (March 1991).
6. One training programme for the district level police officers from Western Maharashtra at Kolhapur (April 1991).
7. Series of thirteen lectures for constables at the police training school, Marol (July 1991).
8. Training programme for police inspector and sub inspector held in 27 districts of Maharashtra (from November 1991 to June 1992).

Given below is a brief account of the participants, specific objectives, content and the feedback received from the police officers at the training programmes.

*Training Programmes of the Women Police Constables of  
JAPU (Juvenile Aid Police Unit)*

*Objectives of the Training*

- To sensitise the women constables about family conditions of children exhibiting deviant social behaviour.
- To sensitise them about various other problems related to children.
- To heighten awareness which will further help in improving their role in dealing with children.

*Held from*

October 20-24, 1986

*Number of Participants*

Thirty-four.

*Subjects Covered*

1. Child development, with physical and psychological reference and emphasis on adolescence.
2. Effects of family and school environment and peer influence on the child.
3. Causes of juvenile delinquency-concept types and manifestations.
4. Handling and treatment of problematic children, school social service.
5. Case presentations.

*Resource Persons*

Academicians and practitioners from the Tata Institute of Social Science and Nirmala Niketan.

*Training Material Used*

Besides the lecture method, films and audio-visuals were also used.

*Feedback*

The feedback received was positive. Most of the participants have stated that the training programme was useful and the information would help them in their work, and such programmes should be arranged periodically.

*Suggestions*

One of the suggestions received was, that the WPCs should have an opportunity to dialogue with juvenile courts and other collateral agencies and a platform for dialogue should be arranged in the training programme.

*National Workshop with IPS Officers on "Atrocities Against Women and Family Violence"*

The workshop was held to create a forum for police officials, experts from judiciary, law, social workers, those involved in the women's movement to come together to give thought to the issue of "Atrocities against women" and how suitable help can come from the police machinery.

*Objectives*

- To sensitise police officials on the issue of the status of women and family violence.
- To bring attitudinal change in viewing crimes against women.
- To explore possible alternatives of work with collaterals.
- To acquaint police officers with available supportive services for women in distress.

*Date*

December 1-5,1987.

*Number of Participants*

The workshop was targeted towards at least one IPS officer from each state. However, twelve IPS officers attended the programme, while others expressed their inability to come.

*Training Content*

1. Status of women in India, subordination in family life and community.
2. Nature of violence within the family.
3. Institution of marriage and family and the changing demands of these institutions and its relevance to the police officials.

4. Atrocities against women in communal riots.
5. Laws pertaining to women its implications and lacunas, with reference to laws related to offenses against women.
6. Other crimes against women including amniocentesis and rape,
7. Methods of helping women through existing community services.

Besides a conceptual understanding on the above issues, a session on "Dialogue with women's organisations" a session which offered an open platform for women's organisations and the police to share experiences, and a session on "Reflecting of experiences", a session that focused on self-analysis of the police officers were also included.

#### *Resource Persons*

Fifteen to twenty resource persons from the Tata Institute of Social Science, judges, lawyers, distinguished women's activists and practitioners attended the workshop.

During the workshop the police personnel expressed the following problem situations faced by them.

1. Ignorance of laws and procedures on the part of the people create false expectations from the police. Procedures, relevant sections from the laws as well as police powers need to be explained to the people.
2. The existing system and training of the police has created a very brutal image of the police for the public. In dealing with criminals they do respond brutally. The police find it difficult to switch roles and respond with an understanding attitude when dealing with enforcement of social legislation.
3. State power today is utilised to protect the interests of the powerful (for example VIP security and handling property disputes). Cases of domestic violence, mental and physical harassment to women are low priority. When judging the performance of police, the manner in which crimes against women are handled by them is not given so much importance.
4. The present administrative culture does not encourage employees to go beyond what they are bound to do. Thus, instead of responding to a problem situation with an attitude of seeing what best can be done, the matter is not even listened to if it does not fit into ones jurisdiction, in the strict sense of the word.

The women's organisations discussed the following situations in which they need co-operation from the police in functioning effectively:

1. Prompt action if taken by the police could help in preventing may crimes against women.
2. If the attitude of the police in responding to problems could be one of more understanding, it would be easier for women to approach the police stations with less or no hesitation.

3. Frequent transfers of police officers makes follow up of cases difficult for women's organisations handling cases of individual women. Some method of maintaining continuity needs of be worked out.

*Suggestions Made in Course of the Workshop*

1. The demands being made of the police in the area of social legislation have to be accompanied by training of police at all levels. Introducing new perspectives, emphasising responsibility and humane attitudes into the curriculum regarding issues concerning women is necessary. Introducing an understanding of the philosophy and objectives behind new legislations are important rather than the technicalities in the law itself.

However, training once and for all will not serve the purpose. New processes to help bring about an attitudinal change need to be worked out. As the women in distress often approach the local police station, the police concerned have a major role to play in preventing crime against women. If necessary action is taken at the initial stage, it could go a long way in preventing a crime.

2. If women's organisations need to work in co-operation with the police, the women's organisations should be given some locus standi, if need be and the brutal image the police needs to have been changed. The police of today are the creation of the British rule. The police read not to preserve the existing autocratic foreign rule culture and create fear.

In order to make the police more approachable, informal meetings of the police with the public for discussions may help. The police of today are being called upon to go beyond law and order and help check social disorders. If a small unit consisting of one constable, two head constables and one representative of a woman's organisation be set up in every police station areas, to specifically handle problems of harassment to women, it may help.

3. Number of crimes against women could be prevented if the problem is tackled effectively at the initial stage itself. Conviction of the offender is not the only indicator of success.
4. More useful and developed technology can and needs to be introduced to collect relevant, satisfactory, cogent evidence when conducting investigations. Video cameras and tape recorders could be used when recording declarations.
5. Women should be interrogated in surroundings in which they are familiar and comfortable.
6. The police expressed the need for linkages to be created between the various state institutions and women's organisations. If all police stations kept a directory of local women's organisations along with

their contact telephone number with them co-operation could be sought whenever needed. An all-India directory of active women's organisations would also be useful.

7. More women need to be recruited into the police force. Each police station should have at least one woman police who would be helpful in talking to women who approach the police station and wish to talk to a woman on duty. However, this suggestion in no way implies leaving the task to women police alone. Continuous efforts have to be made at sensitising the whole community. However, the fact remains that it is not the responsibility of the women alone or the police alone. The problem will not be solved by introducing social police or special police.
8. Most of the women's organisations do voluntary work. The government should encourage and support such efforts by providing free public transport passes and telephone facilities to such organisations.

*Training Programmes of Police Inspectors and Police  
Sub-Inspectors on "Atrocities Against Women "*

*Objectives of the Training*

- To sensitise the police officials on the issue of status of women and family violence.
- To acquaint officers with available supportive services for women.

*Date*

One day training programme held for Police Inspectors on January 24, 1987 and January 31, 1987. One day training programme held for Police Sub-Inspectors on February 7, 1987 and February 14, 1987.

*Number of Participants*

Forty participants attended each training programme (each zone nominated certain police officers to attend the training). A total of 160 police inspectors and sub-inspectors attended the four training programmes.

*Content*

The subjects covered in this training programme included,

1. Situation analysis of women and its implications for the police as professionals.
2. Family violence and case presentations.
3. Laws for women, its implications and lacunas.
4. Review of work with women's organisations.

This session offered, a platform for a dialogue between the women's organisation and the police.

*Resource Persons*

Mainly from the Tata Institute of Social Science and other voluntary women's organisations.

Members of women's organisations in Bombay, also attended the session "Dialogue with the Police" and "Sharing of Experiences".

*Training Programmes Held In Bombay City for Police Inspectors and Police Sub-Inspectors*

*Objectives of the Training*

Besides the objectives of the earlier programme held in January, February, 1987, namely,

- To sensitise the police officials on the issue of status of women and family violence.
- To acquaint officers with available supportive service for women.
- To acquaint the officers with the process of social investigation required for crimes against women.

*Dates*

June 17-18,1989 and June 24-25,1989.

*Number of Participants*

Thirty-four participants including police inspectors and sub-inspectors attended the training programme held on 17th and 18th June 89. Thirty-six participants including police inspectors and sub-inspectors attended the training programme held on 24th and 25th June 89.

*Content*

The subjects included in the training programme were:

- Status of women in India.
  - Family violence A conceptual framework.
  - Women and law.
  - Dialogue with women's organisations and sharing of experiences.
- Besides the above, these were sessions on "Effective Investigation in Crimes against Women" and "Effective Prosecution in Crimes against Women" was included.

*Resource Persons*

Apart from academicians and practitioners, a senior police official, the C.P. or the additional C.P.(crime), was the effective resource person for the session "effective investigation in crimes against women"; an eminent jurist was invited, to discuss the session on "effecting crimes prosecution in against women"



Members of women's organisation in Bombay attended the session. "Dialogue with women's organisation and sharing of experiences with police".

*Training Programme on "Atrocities Against Women and Family Violence" for Maharashtra State Police Officers  
Held at Nagpur and Kolhapur*

Since 1986 the Special Cell to help women, had organised workshop for police personnel at different levels on the said subjects. The response to these programmes at the city level had been encouraging. It provided the police a forum to exchange thoughts in an informal atmosphere. The Special Cell workers too, found this experience a significant one to evaluate their own experience while working with the police.

In consultation with the Directorate Inspector General (D.I.G) of Maharashtra State , Mr. V.K. Saraf, it was decided to hold the training programme for Pi's and PSI's of various districts in Maharashtra. The rationale behind having it at a state level was basically to extend the focus from the metropolis to the district level officers who get a comparatively lesser exposure to such issues. Keeping the above in mind, the training programmes were held at Nagpur and Kolhapur.

*Objectives*

The objectives of the training programme were:

1. To sensitise the police officials on the issue of status of women and family violence.
2. To acquaint the officers of social investigations required for crimes against women.
3. To acquaint officers with available supportive services for women.

*Date*

The duration of the programme was extended from two days to three days. The programme was held at Nagpur between March 19-21, 1991 and at Kolhapur between April 22-24,1991.

*Number of Participants*

Nagpur twenty-seven participants.

Kolhapur thirty-two participants.

*Content*

The subjects covered were:

- a. Status of women in India.
- b. Family violence - A conceptual framework.
- c. Socialisation of women; topics such as dowry and changing role of the family were also included.

## d. Women and law.

Besides the above, the following sessions were held:

- e. "Effective investigation in cases of atrocities against women".
- f. "Effective prosecution in case of atrocities against women".
- g. "Dialogue with women's organisations and police".

A new component of "communication with people" was added.

#### *Resource Persons*

Resource persons are academicians and practitioners from Tata Institute of Social Sciences and social worker active in the said field. For the session "communication with people" resource persons from an agency working in the field of "Media for Social Development", were invited. The district judge conducted the session on "effective prosecution" and the superintendent of police conducted the session on "effective investigation" in cases of in atrocities against women respectively. Members of the local women's organisations participated in the "dialogue with women organisation and the police".

#### *Training Material Used*

Lectures, audio visuals and films were used. Posters, charts, newspaper clippings were also displayed. Reading material, relevant to the topic, was circulated among the participants.

#### *Feedback of the Participants*

The respondents in both these training programmes found the sessions informative and useful in their day to day work, particularly in the area of dealing in "crime against women". Most of the officers also stated that the platform for interaction with women's organisation helped them gain clarity about the role of the organisation and misconceptions were cleared. The officers have also stated that the training programme, helped them gain an insight into issues pertaining to "Crime against women". The session on communication, too; was stated as "useful by most of the members.

#### *Suggestions of the Participants*

Most respondents, have suggested that the duration of the programme should be five days instead of two days. Suggestions to include other topics, such as, effective investigation in rape cases; role of media in depicting women's roles, problem of rural and tribal women, focus on social issues such as child marriage, amniocentesis problems faced by deserted women; and while many wanted inclusion of information on various acts/legislation like MTPA, SITA and JJA, other related topics. The time span of three days was found to be inadequate by the officers to cover the range of topics, besides the inclusion of other topics it was suggested by most of the respondents that the duration of the programme should be five days. Some

other views expressed in the training programme were, that it should be held more frequently at the taluka level; that other training methods besides to the lecture methods should be used and more reading material should be circulated.

*Training Programme Held for Police Inspectors and  
Police Sub-Inspectors in the Districts of Maharashtra from  
November 1991 to June 1992*

Being encouraged by the response received from Nagpur and Kolhapur training programmes; it was decided in consultation with the Director Inspector General of Maharashtra State, Mr. V.K. Saraf to conduct training programmes for police inspectors and Police sub-inspectors's in the other districts of Maharashtra.

With similar objectives and programme content as in the Nagpur and Kolhapur training programmes

Eleven training programmes were held as follows:

<i>Training held at</i>	<i>Districts covered besides host district</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>No. of Participants</i>
Aurangabad	Jalna	20-22 November 1991	38
Latur	Beed	12-14 December 1991	29
Sholapur	Thane, Osmaiiabad	5-17 December 1991	24
Chandrapur	Gadchiroli	12-14 January 1992	23
Nagpur	Bhandara	15-17 January 1992	35
Akola	Parbhani, Buldhana	29 Feb.to 2 March 1992	42
Yavatmal	Wardha, Amravati,	13-15 March 1992	47
Ratnagiri	Raigad, Sindhudurg,	5-7 April 1992	19
Satara	Sangli, Dhule	20-22 April 1992	45
Nashik	Jalgaon	27-29 April 1992	38
Pune	Ahemadnagar	2, 3 July 1992.	41

*Resource Persons*

Resource person here from Tata Institute of Social Sciences, practitioners in the field of "violence against women", social activists, members of local women's organisations, Special Cell workers, the district judges, and the superintendents of police. In some training programmes an additional components of "Intervention in cases of suicide and other psychiatric problems", was the subject included, which was conducted by psychiatrists and psychiatric social workers.

*Training Material Used*

Lectures, audio visuals and films were used; posters, charts, newspaper clippings were also displayed. Reading material relevant to the topic was also circulated among the participants.

*Feedback of the Participants*

Almost all participants have stated that the training programme was useful. The participants also stated that the training programme had added to their knowledge base and that they understood more about laws pertaining to woman and about civil laws. Since it was the first time they were directly interacting with a district judge, they stated that they had understood the judge's, perception and how effective prosecution depended upon minute technicalities during investigation, of which they needed to be more conscious henceforth. The "Effective Investigation" and "Effective Prosecution" sessions had helped them to comprehend cases of 498A, 306, 304B, and the dowry act in a better perspective. They also stated that they gained a better understanding about civil laws on marriage, maintenance, divorce and custody, which could help them in their day to day work. Many participants stated that they were unaware of article 406 IPC and how it could be used to retrieve the stridhan property of the women. The copy of the Supreme Court judgment in this regard that was circulated was also of great use, they stated.

Besides just law and judiciary, the training programme had also thrown light on issues, such as the secondary status of women and the atrocities committed on women and other allied subjects. The participants stated that these sessions had helped them to clarify their own stand on women in their personal and professional lives, The exposure to the problem of women and children in depth had made them sensitive to women's issues and they stated that the process of framing their attitudes towards women had already begun and they had started perceiving problems of women from a different angle.

The participants stated that they encountered experiences with women in their day-to-day work and this knowledge and skills would help them to be more aware of their little mistakes made while handling cases of women, and subsequently they would handle these cases better. Many participants stated that they got to know more about the "Special Cell for women" and its work. Their own dialogue with women's organisation had helped them to reduce the gap between the two and cleared misunderstandings. They also stated that they now understood what were the expectations of the women's organisations and how they could co-operate in a better manner. Also increased interaction between them would facilitate further co-ordination in the future.

*Suggestions Given by the Participants*

The participants desired the scope of the programme to be broadened. The participants wanted a range of topics to be covered in depth like child marriage, widow remarriage, inter-caste marriages and its repercussions, Muslim personal laws, working with women criminals, problems of old people, prostitution, child abuse, role of media in today's world and changing roles of men

and women in today's society. Some have even suggested that separate training programmes be arranged to deal with problems of juvenile delinquency and laws for children. Their interest in this subject had been sparked and the participants expressed the need to know more about social change and social upliftment, status of women worldwide, women and health, women and superstitions, economic policies and its impact on women, vocational training for women, women and politics (particularly with regards to 30% reservations) and problems of single women.

Some participants stated that more emphasis should be laid on skills, while handling such cases, while some felt that the learning should be experiential. Some of the participants have stated that the time allotted for the training programme was not sufficient and have said it should be extended to five to seven days.

Some participants wanted some sections on law to be covered in depth (Section 228A IPC and section 327 Cr.PC etc) and also wanted local issues of rural and dalit women to be discussed. Here the organisers felt that the senior officials of the concerned district should be a part of the planning team so that their opinions can be considered while planning the programme, hence not eliminating any issue that is area specific. Also their help can be sought for tapping local resource persons.

These kinds of training programmes offer a permissive atmosphere for free and open discussions where the officers can express opinions question and discuss without any inhibitions, even in the presence of their senior officials. This is the environment which helps them to gain more knowledge (as many of the participants have stated) and as such 97% of the participants felt that these types of training programmes for police officers if arranged regularly, would be vary useful.

The other suggestions which are worth considering are participants have stated that such training programmes be held more frequently (most have stated every six months) and tat follow-up of such programmes be held also. These should be held at the village and taluka level, where in overall, a greater number of PI's and PSI's will get an exposure to such issues. Since it is the head constable (at the village level), who is in charge of filing reports, panchanamas and FIR'S and since it is he who also encounters experience with women in the day-to-day work, the participants have suggested that he too be included in such a programme. A separate programme for the head constables on the same lines but some what simplified could be held in the future. (As for the training programme per se, the participants have suggested that they should be made speakers. It was observed that in district where male speakers were invited, the speakers point of view got across easily and the participants were less defensive then, where female speaker spoke.) Some participants have also

recommended that greater involvement of the participants be sought either by way of an exam or by asking the participants to present on certain topics.

Having been acquainted with the role of the "Special Cell for women", working in collaboration with Bombay police, the overall response has been that there is a need to set up a Special Cell at each police station at the taluka level, and in cities at the zonal level. To co-ordinate effectively with the members of the voluntary organisations, participants have expressed that a) *Mahila Suraksha Samiti* be nominated at *Taluka* levels, b) The members of the *Mahila Suraksha Samiti* be trained in counselling skills and to do pre-litigation work c) monthly meetings of the members of the Samiti be held with the police officers to discuss cases of violence against women. Presently, such meetings are being held with the senior officials and not with the duty officer). Here the organisers too, think that training programmes can be held for the voluntary workers whereby ignorance of laws and procedures which create false expectations from the police can be cleared and role of police could be clarified.

The community at large also need to be conscientised to elicit a more deliberate and responsible role, for which the participants have suggested a) camps and awareness programmes be conducted for rural women b) family life education programmes be conducted for young boys and girls, c) sensitivity training on women's issues should be held at school, college level d) the media should play a more responsible role in projecting images of women and e) training programmes with voluntary groups, medical personnel, senior police officers, district judges, lawyers, members of the legal aid committee, *samaj suraksha samiti* members, social welfare department officers, police prosecutors, political workers, and S.E.M.S. should be held to sensitise them on the issue of "atrocities against women".

Since the police is often pre-occupied with law and order, criminal investigations, remand and other routine work, they have expressed that they cannot do enough justice to these cases. Hence, many have stated that a separate department be set up to investigate cases of atrocities against women. Many have also recommended that at least one women police officer should be appointed at each police station, who would be solely in charge of handling cases of violence against women. They thought that a w.p.o. would do a better job than male officers. Further they have also stated that presence of women medical officers will also make the process of investigation 'simpler', particularly in rape cases.

Some participants have proposed that literature in Marathi, copies of laws, amendments, judgments pertaining to women's cases, books on violence against women and reading material on this subjects be kept in every police station, so that every officer can have access to the material. The participants have recommended that such training programmes be

held during recruitment and refresher courses at the police training college and police training school. Some have also stated that the subject on women's issues be included in the syllabus during police training.

*Training Programme on Atrocities against Women and  
Children for Police Constables (New Recruits) at  
Police Training School, Marol*

*Introduction*

The Special Cell to help women had been conducting training for police officers at the zonal level in Bombay city. Six such programmes had been held. The need was felt to inculcate an element of training in "gender sensitivity" at the level of constabulary training itself. As such it was decided to organise a training for new recruits at the police constabulary at the time of their training period at the police training school Marol.

*Objectives of the Training*

1. To familiarise the new recruits of the police constabulary about issues regarding status of women and children in Indian society.
2. To create sensitivity in the participants and help them to develop unbiased attitudes to help women and children in distress.
3. To explain the role of police in helping these groups at the police station level.

*Programme Schedule*

The Marol police training school has 700 recruits at a time. They were divided into two groups of 350 each. Each group was further divided into seven classes of fifty each.

The training programme was divided into 4 lectures which were spread over two Saturdays. The first group of 350 would be covered on the first two Saturdays and the same programme would be repeated for the second group of 350 in the next two Saturdays. There were seven speakers speaking on the same topic to the subgroups of fifty each thus covering one topic for 350 students at a time.

*Programme Schedule*

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>
29 June, Saturday 1991	Status of Women and Children in India
29 June, Saturday 1991	Violence against Women and Children, Part I
6 July, 1991	Violence against Women and Children, Part II
6 July, 1991	Role of the Police as Interveners

The same schedule was repeated on 29th June and 6th July 1991 and on 13th July and 20th July respectively.

### *Resource Persons*

The resource persons were academicians and practitioners from Tata Institute of Social Science and practitioners from other voluntary women's organisations.

### *Method of Training*

The lecture method was followed and reading material on this issue in the form of articles was circulated.

### *Feedback of the Participants*

Since the lectures were illustrative the participants could identify with real life situations and discussion at the end of each lecture were held. Yet the capsule of four lecture and that too successively on each day, was found too cumbersome for dealing with such a vast issue. The general suggestion received was that, the training on this issue should be given enough time, so that a longer schedule and further breaking of the issues into more lectures is possible. Also the need to have audio visual aids, to support the lecture method was felt.

### *Future Plans*

Emphasising humane attitudes, introducing new perspectives like self analysis and communication, sensitivity training regarding issues concerning women is necessary and needs to be included in the curriculum. The training needs to be imparted during recruitment and during refresher courses, besides having on the job training for the police. Since the demand being made of the police in the area of social legislation has to be accompanied by training the police at all levels; to make such a training a regular feature of the police department, the need is

1. To evolve a formal policy to include curricula concerning atrocities against women and gender sensitivity issues in police training at constable/PSI/PI/and service levels as a regular phenomena.
2. Tap agencies in each region,
  - To work with the police personnel to develop trainers among the police department who could in turn train the police.
  - To work in co-ordination with these trainers, and develop training modules and training aids.



# PART VI

## FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

The Special Cell for women and children had begun in 1984 as a crisis centre, for women victims of violence. So far we have concentrated on the violence against women and children. For the next few years the direction that our work should take is attempted to be penned in here. The priority areas for future work are:

1. To work towards encadrement of trained personnel such as social workers and so on in the criminal justice system. It could begin with the police and then move on to the courts and the prisons. This cadre of trained social workers and other personnel could then take on the promotive and preventive work on a more vigorous and sustained basis besides the presently under taken curative and rehabilitative approach.

In future thus we would like to focus our attention in the area of child abuse and especially girl child abuse. We would also like to be a part of the criminal investigations that are being asked by the courts from time to time. This cadre could also undertake consciousness raising or conscientisation and creating, developing, tapping and pooling resources. Attention will be focused to create a Hotline for women and children.

2. To continue the existing training programmes, special attention will be focused on training of police personnel in police schools, colleges and academy, as fresh recruits as well as training of trainers. Attention will also have to be directed at the curriculum so that Gender issues become an important part of it. Gradually efforts will be made to start training programmes with the other functionaries of Criminal Justice system. The ground work for such training would have been paved by the cadre working at the level of courts and prisons. Such programmes could be in the form of Gender sensitivity for judiciary etc

3. To develop "out reach" programmes in specific areas, such as creating self help groups for women, developing programmes for abusive men, working with the community, with police families, in police lines etc. A possibility of creating, developing and maintaining vigilance committees will have to be worked out which will be performing the functions of a watch dog. Working with health agencies to identify violence and refer victims to appropriate sources of help would be an important part on the agenda. Special attention will also be directed at working with other social work agencies, community organisations etc to put violence against women on their agenda of intervention.
4. To carry out research projects and documentation, Certain specific areas that we feel are of priority to us for research are listed here,
  - 498A IPC cases in all aspects
  - Incest or sexual harassment cases.
  - Mental violence.
  - 406 IPC cases
  - Child abuse.
  - Community or caste panchayat's role and importance in the lives of women, varying customs of the community whether they are pro or anti women.
  - Judgments of the various courts on issues relating to women. Documentation of the Special Cell's work should continue on an ongoing basis. Efforts could also be directed at creation of an information management cell,

The Special Cell has a live and enriching data available with it on the issues of violence against women such as responses of the community, natal and conjugal family, religious institutions, etc. Attention will be given to conceptualise and theorise on violence on the related issues.

This is where we would like to focus our attention, direct our energies and efforts in the next couple of years. We would be continuing the existing work of the Special Cell as we realise that there are not many agencies doing this kind of work. As also after a decade of working in this specialised field we feel confident to work with women victims of violence.

# ANNEXURES

# ANNEXURE 1

## **SOCIAL WORKERS WHO HAVE WORKED AT THE SPECIAL CELL FROM JULY 1984 TO JUNE 1994**

Ms. Anjali Dave

Mr. Ashutosh Dharmadikari

Ms. Doris Rao

Ms. Shubhada Ranadive

Ms. Janine Almeida

Mr. Dilip Gaikwad

Ms. Ashwini Jog

Mr. Girish Gurkhe

Ms. Ujjwala Pendse

Ms. Anita Mehta

Mr. Sanjay Raut

Ms. Pourichisti Sethna

Ms. Gayatri Oak

### **PRESENTLY WORKING AT THE SPECIAL CELL**

Ms. Trupti Panchal

Ms. Ranjana Gaikwad

Ms. Nahida Sheikh

Ms. Gopika Solanki

## ANNEXURE 2

# COMMISSIONERS OF POLICE: GREATER BOMBAY

- |    |                   |                      |
|----|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1. | Mr. J.F. Ribeiro  | 25-02-82 To 1-05-85  |
| 2. | Mr. D.S. Soman    | 2-05-85 To 31-07-87  |
| 3. | Mr. V.K.Saraf     | 1-08-87 To 31-12-89  |
| 4. | Mr. S.V.Bhave     | 31-12-89 To 30-09-90 |
| 5. | Mr. S.Ramamurti   | 10-90 To 31-08-92    |
| 6. | Mr. S.K.Bapat     | 1-08-92 To 10-01-93  |
| 7. | Mr. A.S.Samra     | 30-01-93 To 16-11-93 |
| 8. | Mr. Satish Sahney | 16-11-93 To          |

# ANNGXURE

## DEPUTY COMMISSIONERS OF POLICE — ZONE 4

- |     |                      |                      |
|-----|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1.  | Mr. Rakesh Maria     | 21-12-87 To 7-10-88  |
| 2.  | Mr. S.D. Pardhi      | 7-10-88 To 18-11-88  |
| 3.  | Mr. P.V. Joshi       | 18-11-88 To 17-12-88 |
| 4.  | Mr. V.D.Joshi        | 18-12-88 To 2-01-89  |
| 5.  | Mrs. Meera Darwanker | 23-01-89 To 17-01-91 |
| 6.  | Mr. H.K.Karkare      | 7-01-91 To 2-02-91   |
| 7.  | Mr. V.S.Lokhande     | 2-02-91 To 6-07-92   |
| 8.  | Mr. V.L.Ingle        | 6-07-92 To 29-01-93  |
| 9.  | Mr. Y.C.Pawar        | 29-01-93 To 17-02-93 |
| 10. | Mr. Rakesh Maria     | 17-02-93 To 22-04-93 |
| 11. | Mr. A.L.Varma        | 22-04-93 To 4-06-93  |
| 12. | Mr. Surinder Kumar'  | 4-06-93 To           |

Office of the Commissioner of Police  
Greater Bombay.  
November 5,19984

# ANNEXURE 4

## AUTHORITY LETTER

Ms. Anjali Dave has been deputed by the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay, to work in the Special Cell set up by the Greater Bombay Police to help women in distress. In cases of distress, harassment over dowry, physical and mental violence, etc. she would give assistance by way of legal aid, family assistance, etc. to women and children including those in lock-ups.

I hereby authorise Ms. Anjali Dave to visit police stations, lock-ups and other police offices of Greater Bombay police force to collect information.

I request the Judiciary, other government departments and institutions which cater to the needs of the above mentioned category of women and children to extend the necessary co-operation to her.

J.F.Ribeiro  
Commissioner of Police  
Greater Bombay



# ANNEXURE 5

## LETTER HEAD

SPECIAL CELL TO HELP WOMEN & CHILDREN

Dadar Police Station  
Bhawani Shankar Road  
Saitan Chowky  
Dadar (West)  
MUMBAI-400 020

Tel: 414 6660 Ext. :559;430 3654,422 7229

To,  
Mr./Mrs.

Sir/Madam,

You are requested to meet us at the above address on\_at\_\_\_\_\_regarding an application received by us.

Thanking You,

SEPCIAL CELL TO HELD WOMEN & CHILDREN

SPECIAL CELL TO HELP WOMEN & CHILDREN

Office of the Commissioner of Police  
Annexe-III Building, Ground Floor,  
Near Crawford Market  
MUMBAI400 001.

TEL:- 262 0111, Ext.: 285

214 BECAUSE THE PERSONAL IS POLITICAL

Mr./Mrs.

Sir/Madam,

You are requested to meet us at the above address on  
\_\_\_\_\_at\_\_\_\_\_regarding an application received by us.

Thanking You,

(SEPCIAL CELL TO HELD WOMEN & CHILDREN)

SPECIAL CELL TO HELP WOMEN & CHILDREN

Office of the Commissioner of Police

Annexe-III Building, Ground Floor,

Near Crawford Market

MUMBAI 400 001.

TEL: 262 0111, Ext.: 285

# SOME APPLICATIONS FOR HELP

Reproduced here are three applications to the Special Cell asking for help. These have been presented here verbatim without any editorial changes, except for names and places, to protect the identity of our clients.

1

To,  
The Social Worker  
Special Cell for Women Children  
Office of the Commissioner of Police  
Bombay 400 001

Sub: Application for Legal Help

Dear Madam,

I am hereby applying for legal aid with regard to my problem told to you on Wednesday, December 8, 1996.

I married Mr. Junaid Hussain on the 31st July, 1968 by the Muslim 'nikah' ceremony after converting to Islam as his mother refused to let us live with her and we had not other accommodation. I soon realised in that house that my husband was unemployed and his married sister was supporting the family. Subsequently when my daughter was 8 months old I took up a teaching post to support us as no financial aid was given to me by my husband. Since then we have been having marital problems as my husband used to go out for parties practically every night without me. During this time he repeatedly asked me to leave the house and would harass me. The then Principal of my school, Fr. S. D'Costa advised me to get married again to Junaid Hussain by the Special Marriage Act which would protect me and my children's any future problems. In October 1970 we got married again by the Special Marriage Act and the following year my second child, a son, was born. When he was 11 months old, my husband gave me a Muslim divorce on an exercise sheet of paper witnessed by his maternal uncle, an aunt and Mr. Vakil, a maulana of the Bandra Station Masjid and kept my two kids with him as a hold over me.

After a period of one and a half months, he came to the place where I was staying and asked me to return saying that his mother was not looking after the children very

well. I did so because of my children, but my life resumed the same pattern with my husband. I was the sole support of my family, paying all the monthly bills, including food, education and clothes for my children. Life continued to be a mental torture with my husband using me like a puppet on a string, but I stuck through it because my children were young and I loved and cared for them.

About one and a half years back I stopped cooking food or sleeping with my husband or making his yearly snacks during the time of Ramzan. This I did because he was giving me evidence of having plenty of money to replenish his wardrobe, entertain his friends and going for his usual annual holiday with his friends to his school at the ex-students visit during the Diwali vacation.

So now he was having all his meals next door with his mother and started harassing me throughout the day with filthy abuses in Hindi (some of which I do not even know the meaning). He used to do that in front of the servants employed by me and the neighbours. Calling me 'ayah' or 'prostitute' etc. When I could bear it no longer, I shifted to my married daughter's paying guest accommodation, with my youngest son Mohsin, aged 10 years. After 3 months of mental peace and rest, my husband one evening stopped me after school and asked me to read a paper and sign it, which he said, 'would be good for me as well as for him'. When I ignored him he came to my school the next day and spoke to my Principal, who requested me to meet him after school and hear what he had to say. On my way home that evening, I saw him across the street but as he did not approach me, I walked straight home. The next day, he once again went to meet my Principal but was unable to do so as she was not on the premises.

On Saturday, 4th December, my daughter and older son went to pick up the remaining articles of clothing etc. of mine but was told by my mother-in-law that he was not at home and to come the next day. The next evening when they went, they met their father who told them to come on Monday at 10.00 a.m. (the next day).

On Monday, my daughter was handed over the paper which he wanted me to sign. In it was stated that I was the one giving him the 'talaq' (which is not done). According to Muslim rule the man gives the woman the talaq and I have been given to understand that today, the word 'talaq' cannot be said three times together on one day. When my daughter stated this fact saying that I, her mother, would do things legally and in the proper way, he got angry and threatened to stop me on the street, anytime, anywhere and say the three talaqs. Then when *my* son intervened and told him not to do that or to go anywhere near the school, he again threatened to make 'a tamasha' in front of the parents, students and staff at my school. As my reputation was at stake (which is very good, if I may so myself), I went to the Bandra Police Station and made an N.C. The Inspector on duty, Mr. Nanda More, sent a havaldar to bring him in but he was not there. So a message was left at his house to meet the Inspector as soon as he returned.

The Inspector told me to go to school that day and not to be afraid. He gave me the Station Phone Number and told me to ring him up if my husband came there and made a ruckus. He would then send the cops to pick him up.

I then went to Mrs. S. Pandit, a High Court Lawyer (who knows my whole story as her daughter and mine study together and she lives on the next street behind my husband's residence). She had advised me sometime back to file a case under 498 A against my husband for mental cruelty, but as I had a 10 year old son to consider I dropped the idea. Now she has just returned from hospital after a major stomach operation and is advised complete bed rest so is unable to find where she has filed the divorce papers which I had given her for checking the validity of it. Since this matter is urgent and I do not want any more delay, I have come to the Special Cell for counsel as well as to settle the divorce, if he so wishes it mutually and amicably with only one stipulation that my third child Mohsin Ali aged 10 years be given into my sole custody as he has always been in my care till date. My husband's family coming from a film industry background will not be able to give my son the moral education which is

essential today. As in their family the women folk have had affairs with other men and the men folk have been married and divorced not less than three to four times (from the maternal side). In point of fact they will manipulate and exploit my son for their benefit as they care only for money and a life of ease.

Please consider my case minutely and help me to legalise the divorce so that my husband does not turn up a couple of years later stating that I am still married to him or claiming custody of my son. As a fact many a times he has denied being the father of my three children.

Yvonne Hussain

2

**To**

The Officer-in-charge  
Special Cell to Help Women and Children  
Office of the Commissioner of Police  
Annexe - III Building, Ground Floor  
New Crawford Market, Bombay 400001

Dear Madam,

I, the undersigned, Mrs. Jennifer D'sa, approach you *for* help to rescue me from my husband, whose home I have left on 5-6-90. I stayed at my friend's place with my children for 3 days. As their school was about to reopen and I did not want to spoil their school career, I went to Vikhroli and put my children in the bus route No. 397, which would take them to the stop near our residence. Out of fear, I did not accompany my children to my home.

I am married for the last 13 years and having three children in the age group of 12 years (girl), 10 years (boy) and 6 years (boy). I wish to separate from my husband on the grounds of harassment and assault. He consumes alcohol and then starts assaulting me late at night when the children are in deep sleep. I am a graduate and not in service as my husband did not grant me the permission to work after my marriage.

Given are the points on which I was harassed.

1. Suspicious grounds - like having an affair with another man which he is not able to prove.
2. Certain points on housekeeping - like keeping the refrigerator dirty etc.
3. Jealousy on my family members - when my sister purchased a plot in Goa he assaulted me.
4. I am not allowed to move freely and visit my family people.
5. Seldom visits from my sisters was not approved by him and hence he used to harass and assault me after their visits.
- 6) He wants me to be in good relationship with his family but not with mine.

The kinds of assaults made on me in the last 13 years are the following:

- 1). Beating on the face till swollen and black eyes.
2. Closing me in the toilet overnight in the dark.
3. Burning of lips with a lighted cigarette.

4. Choking of the neck and kicking
5. Banging my head on the wall and windowsill thereby giving me deep cut on the head.
6. Beating with leather belt and poking with the knife on my private parts.

After the last assault, I produced him before the Police, whereby he promised and gave in writing in the complaint book that he would not harass or assault me, but yet he repeated the same. I have undergone all the above tortures silently but can bear no more. Hence, I wish to live separately and ask for police protection as he has given me the threat of acid throwing or doing something drastic to my family people by hiring goondas etc. So, Madam please understand my situation and kindly help me, so that I can live freely without any fear. He has also threatened to kill the children too.

Thanking you in anticipation,

Mrs. Jennifer D'sa

Yours faithfully,

*N.B.:* Given below is my husband's home address.

### 3

I Mrs.Sushmita Bhattacharjee, am married to Mr .Manish Bhattacharjee, an Assistant Technologist of \_\_\_\_\_ Ltd., who is a resident of Flat No.\_\_\_\_\_, Near \_\_\_\_\_ Corner, Badlapur (E). Dist. Thane, M.S. Before marriage I was Sushmita Sensharma. My father's name is Late Sri \_\_\_\_\_Kumar Sensharma, Engineer. My Grandfather Sri Arun Sensharma was an advocate in Calcutta High Court. My mother is Smt. Sudha Sensharma, granddaughter of \_\_\_\_\_ Indian Chief Justice Late Mr. Suren Sen of \_\_\_\_\_ High Court. We are five brothers and sisters. I am the youngest of my family. My guardians are residing at \_\_\_\_\_, 24, Pgs (North), West Bengal. The proposal of my marriage was made by Manish Bhattacharjee, in the name of Kavita Bhattacharjee in response to our advertisement published in The Times of India. The marriage was settled by consent of both parties. My marriage took place on 4th of February, 1991 at Ambernath M.S.

Before settling the marriage, my guardians went to Badlapur to talk with them at their request. Besides Manish Bhattacharjee's proposals, there were other proposals made by the parents of other grooms, to attend to. But somehow Manish Bhattacharjee guarded my brother and sister by making various excuses and thus obstructed them from attending to other proposals. He took full four months' time from October '90 to January '91, to have full enquiry of me and of my family. He went to my parent's house and said that he and his family was fully satisfied with the proposal and the following conditions and promises were made by Manish and Kavita which proved to be false and untrue later after my marriage.

### FALSIFICATIONS

Before marriage I was residing with my elder sister at I.I.T. Kanpur, to pursue a computer course. Both Manish and Kavita promised my guardians to give me all the opportunity to complete my computer course after marriage at their own expense in Bombay. He further made it clear that he is not at all material minded and he does not want any kind

of dowry. He told that he is an Executive, drawing above six thousand as salary, in N.P.L. and was fully capable to maintain his wife and family.

But all these promises are falsified by Monish, Kavita and their family. Manish and Kavita denied me of my computer training course immediately after my marriage. Instead Manish and Kavita insisted me day and night to take Rs. 14,000/- cash from my brothers and threatened me to drive away from the house if the money was not paid. Manish further told me that he was in debt upto his neck and so he was unable to sustain me. They compelled me to do all household work and slaved me. In fear of more torture, my elder brother gave Manish Rs.4,000/- in cash and deposited Rs.5,000/- in my name in Canara Bank at Kulgaon Branch on 31st March '91. Kavita immediately took the 4,000/- cash from Manish and did not admit me in the computer course. I repeatedly requested my in-laws to give me opportunity for further studies. They said that the money was spent and demanded more money from my brothers. They taunted me by saying that "ask your rich brother to pay the loan of Manish, if you want a comfortable life". On repeated insistence of Manish, I gave him 1,000/- on 18th April '91. In the month of May '91, when Manish came to see my sick mother to Calcutta, my mother gave him 5,000/- cash in hand. On June, 1991, my elder brother deposited Rs.1,500/- in State Bank of India, Kulgaon, on self and gave Rs.2,500/- cash in my hand. Then on 6th July '91, I gave 1,100/- to Ms.Meena Chakraborty, the youngest sister-in-law due to the treatment of my illness caused by their physical and mental torture. On the same day they took 2,000/- from my almirah without telling me. On 26th July '91 I gave a cheque of Rs. 2000/- on the demand of Manish. On 31st July '91 my elder brother's friend gave Meena Rs. 2,000/- in cash. Besides the above said amount, Manish took money from time to time amounting to several thousands. My guardians spent about 3 lakhs on my marriage. But my in-laws are not happy and they extracted, Rs.25, 000/- from my brothers within one year. They tortured me immensely when the flow of money from my guardians stopped.

Manish told at the negotiation of the marriage that he has three sisters. The eldest sister Miss Kavita had decided not to marry. The second elder sister Savita's marriage was in April '91. The third sister who is younger to Ashish, is married and has a child.

He further revealed that his father was the only child of his grand parents, the maternal uncle and aunt were residing in Calcutta, whom they had not seen in their life time. They are all expired at present. He had some distant relatives at Bombay with whom they had not very close connections.

False Statement: After my marriage I came to know that Savita's marriage was a pure bluff and the youngest sister, had a separation case from her husband, Sudhir Chakraborty of Ulhasnagar, which is running for 6 years. Meena and her son were a burden on Manish. The eldest sister-in-law had many diseases, so she could not be married. All these three sisters-in-law live with their brother and take revenge on me for their unsuccessful unmarried life. When we did not see any of Meena's husband's side at my marriage, they told my guardians that Meena's husband had developed drinking habit recently, therefore, Meena had quarrelled with him and was staying with her brother temporarily.

3. A proposal of medical check up was made by my guardians for both me and Manish. Manish Battacharjee and Kavita Bhattacharjee became very angry at this proposal and told that her brother had a very sound health and assure that it was an insulting proposal. Manish and Kavita asked my guardians whether I have any chronic and contaminating disease. My guardians informed them that I had had bronchitis during winter in the year 1986 and in the year 1990 I had a 'Calcutta Fever'. I had sometimes the problem of acidity which is caused by the stomach upset due to the long gap between the meals. And I had dust allergy.

After my marriage, I found that he was avoiding physical connection. He slept with his nephew (Buddo) and I slept on floor. That continued for many months. After that I

had discovered that he had some disease, a wet sore in his male organ, and this sore discharged fluid all the time. He has wet sore in between his hips too. He did not give any satisfactory explanation for it. He refused to go to the doctor, instead he was taking homeopathy medicine prescribed by himself. When I asked the name of this disease, he did not answer me. He also threatened me not to say to anyone outside. I also contaminated this disease in hand. This disease of Manish has affected our conjugal life. I did not conceive child.

One day while Kavita was abusing me on some trivial matter, she told that Manish will never reproduce a child, because in childhood he had a very bad accident with a mirror glass and there had been operation in his male organ. The doctor had said at that time that after this operation he would be unable to reproduce a child. The sister further told 'We all know it very well. That is why we did not give Meena's child to her husband, Manish will bring up this child as his own son'. I felt myself cheated and betrayed. But Manish consoled me by saying that he would cure his disease.

Besides Manish had breathing trouble, ulcer, dust allergy and sinus and all these diseases were hidden and not reported at the time of marriage. His sister Kavita had acute asthma, very high blood sugar, high pressure. These were not disclosed to us by them at the time of marriage. Meena, his youngest sister, had acute kidney problem, high pressure, periodic mental insanity and other diseases which are secretly treated and not disclosed to me. My guardians requested Manish Bhattacharjee and his family to fix the marriage date in April 1991, because by that time, I would be able to complete my computer training. But my in-laws did not accept the proposal as they said that Savita's marriage is due in April 1991.

In the beginning Manish and Kavita told that they did not want any kind of dowry, but just before the few weeks of my marriage Manish very politely expressed his wish that he wants a double bed, one almirah, one dressing table, one box type clothstand and a refrigerator. And he further expressed his wish that they should be of good quality and we should bring them from Calcutta. He requested us to make furniture for his friend Mr. Sujit Bhattacharjee also. He assured us that the furniture of S. Bhattacharjee *would be paid, but it was not paid till now,*

Manish told us that he has many friends (above hundred) who wished to attend his marriage as *baraatis*, so the marriage should take place in Bombay and in that case he would make all the arrangements at Bombay. On repeated requests, my guardians accepted the proposal. Manish knew very well that if we are married at Bombay, I won't be able to register any case from Calcutta. He made this wicked plan from the beginning that he would take all my ornaments and everything, go to the Court and manipulate the witness as Bombay is his birth place, and my guardians are totally new in Bombay.

My guardians arranged for a flat in Thane for marriage purpose but Manish very cleverly persuaded us to leave this flat and arranged for a flat of his friend so that he would be able to keep an eye on how much riches my brothers have and how much we are going to spend. From 29th January 1991 to 3rd February 1991 Manish and his sisters sat for hours in morning, noon and evening and watching very minutely what my brothers are giving to me. Wherever my brothers and relatives went out Manish fixed some of his friends to follow them.

I and my elder sister came to the flat of *Mr. S. Bhattacharjee* from Kanpur on 29th January, 1991 for marriage purpose. My guardians came from Calcutta on 30th January 1991. Manish gave our guardians the return tickets to Calcutta only after the marriage ceremony. This behaviour of Manish vexed us and we became doubtful about his good intentions which always pretended.

My guardians requested Manish Bhattacharjee and Kavita Bhattacharjee to make a list of ornaments and everything presented to me by my guardians, relatives and friends during my marriage, as according to the Bengali marriage custom which is called 'Patti Patra'. But Manish and Kavita did not accept the proposal and said that the marriage is



based on mutual faith and there is no need of any such list. Now I became sure that they were making plans to take my things from the very beginning.

Before four days of my marriage, Manish came to Mr. S. Bhattacharjee's flat, where I and my elder sister were staying for marriage purpose, and asked if there were any gold ornaments with us. We had gold ornaments worth Rs. 15 lakhs with us but we did not disclose the fact to him. But he had some suspicion that we had gold with us. So S. Bhattacharjee, his wife Mrs. Purnima Bhattacharjee, and Manish persuaded us to give the gold to them. They threatened that there may be robbery around, and we will be responsible for grave consequences. Thus he took all the ornaments from my sister and went to Dombivli Nagari Sahakari Bank Ltd. in Ambemath branch where he has opened a locker on his own name and deposited the ornaments on his name on 30th January, 1991. On repeated requests he gave *my guardians* few ornaments on 3rd February, 1991 for marriage purpose which were immediately taken back by Kavita from me on 5th February, 1991. On 14th February, 1991, soon after the departure of my guardians to Calcutta, Manish took the ornaments from Kavita and told me that he would keep it in the Locker. After that I did not get, even did not see the ornaments except one gold chain, one shankh bangles and two ear tops, which I am wearing. On the occasion of marriage party of some friends or relatives he did not bring any of my ornaments. I have repeatedly requested him to open the locker on joint name, but he refused it at point blank. In the month of January, 1992 when I had suspicion that he is selling my ornaments, I insisted him to go to the bank and show me, my ornaments, he played a very clever trick by giving me the key of the locker and saying that "keep the key with you, your ornaments are safe". I came to know afterwards that this is a pure eye wash, as the locker is in his name, I don't know even the number of the locker, my name is not put while opening the locker, so I cannot operate it. Thus Manish got full *freedom* to take away all my ornaments and use it at his own purpose and deprive me from what I legally possess.

7. Manish and Kavita further informed vis that their economic conditions had been very poor as their father was sacked from Ordinance Factory, Ambemath, because he was the Trade Union Leader. We became very much doubtful about this statement, after my marriage *regarding his father* because trade union is not prohibited in any factory. He was sacked by the management for some other reasons, which they purposely did not reveal to us. He did not get any job anywhere for his bad reputation. I have heard that he had tortured his wife to death. Manish and Kavita further furnished us with wrong information about their dwelling place. They told us that they lived in a room of some friend in Ordinance Estate in Ambemath after many hardships they made a small house is Subhash Nagar at Badlapur, Kulgaon, in 1986. They informed that there had been robbery on 2nd April, 1990. After that they bought flat in Swapna Building in Kulgaon, Badlapur (E).

In fact, Manish and his family lived in a slum (Vendipara) in Ambemath for 30 years. If my parents had known that they had lived in that slum for such a long time, they would never had accepted this proposal of marriage. Because my husband's family believed only in the culture of slum dwellers and has slum mentality. There is a vast difference of culture between me and my husband's *family*. Because I have been brought up in a highly cultured, educated and liberal tradition which Manish knew very well, he married me for money.

### *Physical and Mental Torture*

On 5th February, I came to Badlapur as the wife of Manish, the atmosphere there was not encouraging. All the three sisters were very unhappy with me. They told me one by one that Manish is a very selfish and greedy man. He married me for money. He did not try for the marriage of the sisters, instead he married himself, for this offence he

would never be forgiven by the sisters. Kavita told me that 'you don't know me I will drive you away from this house, this flat is mine'. On 6th February they did not give me any food till 1.30 noon. When my guardians came with sweets etc. they behaved very badly with them. At night after the reception party, the three sisters and the brother quarrelled and abused and fought with each other whole night. On 10th February, 1991 Manish told me he is in debt upto neck, so I have to earn money or take money from my guardians. He told that 'you are totally dependent on Kavita for your food, so you must obey her. They might abuse you, but you should bear with me. Because after six months, my loan will be paid.' He told me give the key of my almirah and the suitcases to Kavita, so they will be free to enjoy your things, and in this way you will win their heart.' He gave the keys to Kavita. The three sisters used my things at their own will. The three sisters used to wear only petticoat and blouse and sometimes they moved nude, they forced me to do in the same way as themselves. When I protested they began to utter vulgar abuses, which are unbearable. They always abused by saying that your whole family is prostitute. They abused me 'Haramjadi Kutti' 'Chutia magi; 'Pros', 'Shali' 'mathorchod', 'Bahanchod' 'gandu'.

The second device of their bride torturing is to keep the bride starved. So they did not give me any food upto 1.30 noon. Meena always kept an eye on me that whether I was taking food in between. If I happened to eat a single biscuit at my own will, she used to say her brothers and sisters in the evening that this bride has come from a dirty family, always steals food. At 1.30 Meena served me dal and rice. Most of the days I could not eat them, because Kavita has taught Buddo, the son of my youngest sister-in-law to spit on my plate, or kick it. They had inflicted physical injury to me through Buddo. They child had been taught to kick me in my lower abdomen, hit me on the chest, hit me with an iron rod on my neck. Kavita used to say that one day Buddo would hit you in such a vital portion of your body, that you would immediately die. And since Buddo is a child there would be no punishment, in this way we would get rid of you.

On 27th March my elder brother came to see me in Bombay. Manish told me in confidence that I should not say to my brother about the debts of him, and also about the vulgar behaviour of the three sisters, because everything would be okay after six months. He further asked me to demand money from him.

ON 6th April evening a shocking incident happened which I think worth mentioning before the justice. I requested my sister-in-laws to go away from my room for few minutes on 6th April evening, as I wanted to change my clothes. The sisters-in-law ordered me to do it in front of them. When I protested they directed Buddo to tear my clothes and make me nude, Buddo jumped over me and tore my 'blouse', then immediately I hold tightly Buddo's hands, seeing this Kavita, Savita and Meena began to abuse me, when their brother came they told packs of lies, and Manish ordered me not to touch the boy, even if I had to become nude, and further ordered that for this offence, you would not be given food tonight and I starved whole night. In the early morning Manish told me that he was doing such acts to please the sisters, so I had to be patient and promised me that after sometime everything will become normal. He uttered these words in such a sincere manner that I was always betrayed by his words and believed him and tried to adjust with them wholeheartedly.

Manish had always told me that he was in debt upto neck, so he could not provide good clothes and food. And for my studies, I must bring money from my brother. But I have found that he used to bring chocolates and sweets costing 15 to 20 rupees everyday for Buddo. The sisters-in-law used to bring Samosa and sweets everyday, they used to eat them all and never left a single sweet either for me or for Manish. I have also seen that Manish and Kavita to bring Rs. 14000/- to Rs. 15000/- cash sometimes in the house and after 2 or 3 days they used to take the money out. On asking that from where the money has come and where it has gone, he always kept silent.

After the marriage, I realised that whenever my guardians or friends of guardians came to visit me, one of the sisters or my husband himself guarded me as long as they were present at that house, so that I would not be able to say anything about their misbehavior to my parents. Besides Manish had strict orders on me that I should not disclose anything of the house. On 7th February, 1991 my elder sister came to meet me, they did not allow me to talk to her in private. On 9th February, 1991 when my brothers came to see me, I could not talk to them in private. On 27th March when my elder brother came to visit me, I was allowed to talk to him only in connection of demanding Rs. 14,000/- cash for the computer course. On 29th April, my elder brother came to give me the news of my mother's illness. On 12th June, 1991 my brothers came to again to Bombay and he stayed at my house upto 18th June, 1991. The whole family of my in-laws took leave from their job stayed at home 24 hours and guarded me from any private talk to my guardians. In the month of July, August, September, October, November, December, 1991, and January 1992 whenever my parents or any of the friends came to see me, I strictly ordered not to talk to them in private. I managed to write 2 letters to my elder sister at Kanpur, stating some of the tortures with great difficulty, sometimes I wrote few lines in bathroom, sometimes in corridor, sometimes outside the doctor's chamber, waiting in queue, I managed to write few letters to my parent stating the injustice of my in-laws.

In April 1991, my mother became very ill in Calcutta. My elder brother came to Bombay on 29th April, 1991 and on 30th April, 1991 we caught Bombay Mail. We reached Calcutta on 2nd May at 12.00 p.m. night. I was very tired, and could speak very little of my in-law's family, knowing that there is much time to say everything. But on 3rd May 1991 Manish reached to Calcutta in the evening. He showed very little concern to my Ma, and all the time cross questioned me with regard to what I said to my parents. He instructed my brother to get return ticket to Bombay as soon as possible, and also expressed his wish to travel in A.C. Sleeper. My brother bought tickets in A.C. sleeper in 'Gitanjali Express'. My mother gave him Rs. 5000/-. He purchased many things for his sisters and asked me to take out all the money deposited in my name from the bank of my home town. I did not want to go back with him but whole night he told me that 'the atmosphere has changed there. Now one maid-servant will be kept, and you will be admitted to computer course. You do not have to stay at home all the time, you will be spared of heavy working'. I believed his words. We got in train on 9th May, 1991 and reached to Bombay on 10th May, 1991 at 10.30 p.m. I had fever at that time. From the morning Manish, Kavita, Savita and Meena began to abuse me because I refused to give them my gift cheques. Due to their quarrel my body temperature became very high and I became unconscious. They took me to Dr. Patwardhan. On 26th May, 1991, all the members of the family were present. I was preparing lunch, Buddu, who is playing with a lighter, brought lit lighter near my open hair, my hair caught fire immediately. I put out the fire. All of them took the incident very lightly and enjoyed it and said Buddu is a child, he did it innocently. I had to cut my hair about 6 inches, and when in June my elder brother came, asking about the short hair, Meena immediately replied that Bhabiji is becoming modern, she had cut her hair short.

In June the summer vacation of the three sisters-in-law started and the torture increased to double. Kavita made very careful plans to give me rotten left over food of the previous day. They cooked fresh food and they themselves ate it. The refrigerator was given to me by my parents and Kavita locked it so that I could not use it. They did not give me a single moment to sit beside or talk to my husband in private. The days started with vulgar abuses and ended with vulgar abuses. When I asked about the cruel means, vindictive nature of Kavita, Manish always replied that she is a sick lady and I must be patient with her.

On 7th June there had been heavy shower and thunder storm. There was no water that day. Water supply began only on 8th June at 12.00 p.m. Kavita ordered me to fill

the water in buckets, clean the two day's utensils, wash their clothes. I finished my household work when it was 2.30 p.m. at midnight. I could not wake up early in the morning on 9th June. Instead I woke up at 7.30 a.m. As soon as I came out of my room, Savita slapped on my face. Manish did not utter a word. On 9th June, I almost starved the whole day. On 12th June 1991, my elder brother came to Bombay for his own work and stayed at Badlapur. He used to go to Bombay early in the morning and came back at 12.00 p.m. But the three sisters-in-law and Manish took leave from their duties to guard me lest I should talk to my brother and describe him about their torture. They stayed on leave upto 18th June, 1991, as long as my brother stayed. In this month I went to Manish's own maternal aunt's place who told me that Manish's mother was tortured by his father and died at the age of 44. In the mean time due to the starvation, hard work and mental agony my health deteriorated day by day. I began to suffer from very high blood pressure. Manish took me to Dr. Patwardhan. He gave me medicine for high B.P. But it did not work. I met him again on 25th June, 1991. The doctor repeatedly asked me to bring Manish. Manish avoided the meeting. The doctor advised me to take bed-rest and to take only boiled food. As soon as Kavita heard it she chained me to the household work like a slave. Kavita always provoked me to commit suicide.

On 5th July, 1991 Kavita gave me rotten chappati full of fungus and a very spicy and hot curry, red with chillies (my guardians told Kavita at the time of marriage that due to acidity problem, I cannot take spicy food). After taking the food on 5th July, 1991, I vomitted severely. On 6th July, 1991, I began to bleed from my nose. In spite of seeing my health condition, Manish went to his office. There was no one at home to look after me. Meena came at 12.30 p.m. I requested her to take me to Dr. Patwardhan. He immediately gave me injection and admitted me in the hospital. Manish and Kavita came in the evening and instead of showing any sympathy, they began to abuse me and said that this was your old disease'. In the morning I gave Meena Rs. 1,100/-. Manish took 2,000/- rupees from my almirah and said that these money will be spend for your treatment. They used to give me rotten and spicy food even at hospital, never any nutritious food. One day while they were abusing me, one of the patient's father complained about their abusive language to Dr. Patwardhan. The doctor might have told Manish something. After that Manish threatened me that the result of this complaint will be grave. I was taking very spicy food hot with red chillies for six months, after that I developed blood dysentery and acute stomach ache. Dr. Patwardhan said that I had high blood cholesterol which may be due to mental stress.

The doctor informed them that if the blood pressure remained so high, I might have cerebral attack at any time. Manish used to come at 8.00 a.m. in the morning and then 12.00 at midnight to give me food. Dr. Patwardhan strictly advised me for bed rest. I stayed in hospital from 6th to 12th July, 1991. When I came to my house after the release from the hospital, I found that my room was filled with rain water, I had to clean the rain water in weak body. That night also Manish instructed me to sleep on the floor. I could not sleep on floor due to dampness and ants, so I spent whole night siting on floor. On 14th July, 1991, Buddo hit me on my neck with an iron rod. I cried with pain, then the three sisters-in-law again started abusive language and beat me. On the night of 14th July, Manish again asked me to sleep on floor to which I protested. Manish told that I was jealous of the child, and his sisters were very right to beat me, I was rightly served. He further told me that I was a burden on him, and now I should die. I waited for him upto 2.30 midnight. There was severe chest pain in me. All the hopes of life began to fade. I began to hate such a hateful life. One day I became unconscious due to their severe torture. When I got consciousness, I found myself on the bed and Manish is spraying something in my mouth, as a result of which I had great difficulty in breathing. When this breathing trouble became acute, they took me to the hospital, and repeatedly said that I must not say about the incidence to the doctor. The sisters-in-law took leave in turn and I was guarded by them always, so that I would not be able to speak the truth

either before the doctor or before the police. In fear that I might take help from the doctor, Manish slept at night in the hospital. I repeatedly requested them to call my parents. But they did not inform them. Kavita threatened me that if any of my brothers came to my request, they will be killed by the gundas, who are Kavita's friends and if your sister came from Kanpur she will be raped and sold at middle east because she knows the leaders of flesh trade. With great difficulty I wrote two letters to my parents with the help of a Punjabi gentleman, but told my parents not to come, as I was afraid for their life. I was in the hospital from 15th to 17th July, 1991. I came home on 18th July, 1991 morning.

The doctor asked them to give me saffola, but they used to buy cheap oil for me, and everyday gave me oily and spicy food and made me work the whole day. They did not give a single grain of nutritious food, instead they beat me one by one. On 23rd July, 1991 my chest pain again started, and I was hospitalised for the third time. Before hospitalisation, Manish gave me some injection, I don't know, the name of the injection as a result I immediately started breathing trouble. This time I told the doctor a few words of their torture. I was released from the hospital on 25th July, 1991. On 26th July, 1991 Manish took Rs. 2,000/- from me on 29th July, 1991. One of my guardian's friend came to visit me, Meena behaved very badly with him I could manage only to say that I had no money, and tell my brothers to send some money. On 30th July, 1991 Manish took me to Dr. Neglur. He spoke packs of lies such as 'I am a lazy woman, do not do any work, I inject myself. On 31st July, 1991 my brother's friend gave Mala Rs. 2,000/- in cash in hand.

In July, 1991, there was heavy rain. The doctor had advised me not to stay in the damp. Knowing it very well, Kavita forced me to wash everyone's clothes. If they are not happy they ordered me clean the same clothes twice and all the wet clothes were dried in my room. Kavita knows the method to kill a human being in cold blood. Meena used to open doors and windows, whenever the cold wind blew. I used to cook a less spicy item for myself with less oil. Kavita instructed Buddo to eat that item, so at lunch or dinner I did not get my curry. Knowing the results, I did not dare to say anything to Buddo. This continued upto whole January, 1992.

After receiving my letter in August 1991 my letter, my elder sister became very much worried, and she requested Mr. R.B. Sule, Advocate (Ex-session Judge) to visit me. He came and saw himself that I was washing heaps of cloths in the morning. He requested Manish to send me to Kanpur for a short while but he did not agree. Manish did not allow me to speak and instead he spoke all the time. When Mr. Sule left, Manish said if Sule dared to come again, I will kill him, by gundas.

Manish and Kavita had made their house a fort. They have fixed iron door in front, an electric wire is connected to it, and it is always charged with electric current. They did not allow me to go outside, they told each friend, each neighbour, that I am a sick girl, that is why I laid down whole day.

One Mr. Indrajit Pal, whose economic conditions are not good and always sought monetary help from Manish, and the next door neighbours Mr. Rai's wife always provoked them for bride torturing. In the month of August, I happened to go to the market alone once or twice. My in-laws gave me a time limit of 15-20 minutes. I came to know later through some person who knows my husband's family for long that their father was a very meanminded person and irresponsible towards the family. He had dragged his daughters in all kinds of anti-social activities. Kavita is the most dangerous member of her family. She had intimacy with the famous gundas of Vendipara, Ambernath. After Meena gave birth to a child, Manish and Kavita brought all false charges against Mala's husband, and appointing a good lawyer they managed a separation between them to have that child. I was very much confused and frightened after hearing these statements. I could not sleep for many nights. I could not disbelieve it also. For Meena had cried many times by saying that she wanted to go back to her husband, but the sisters

and the brother forcefully detained her, to have her child as dada (Manish) knew very well that he would not have any child of his own.

Kavita and Manish told everyone in Badlapur, even in hospital that I am a sick and mad woman. My guardians have cheated them by concealing my disease at the time of marriage. They repeatedly said to me 'You have asthma problem before marriage, you had to confess it, otherwise we would torture you to death'. I repeatedly told them that I had never suffered like this before marriage. But Manish was making very clever plans to drive me away from the house, so he did not believe me willingly.

On 15th August, 1991 Kavita, Savita and Meena asked me to demand money from brothers and pay the loan of Badlapur flat. I flatly refused their demand. Kavita became like a poisonous snake and began to bite me. She said, 'You are a black ugly woman, we never accepted you as my brother's wife. Manish has married you only for money. He loves a beautiful doctor girl, and he will marry her. If you refuse to give us money, there is no need to keep you alive'. Then they closed the door, windows, and threw a piece of cloth over my face, and began to beat me by hands and legs. They also said, 'We will kill you, and will say the doctor that you had a heart attack. The Badlapur police will not do anything to us, they are Manish's friends. With the help of gundas, we will hush up your case. The doctors also can be purchased by Rs. 500/-.' I got very sick after their beating and lay unconscious. In the evening the three sisters went to Badlapur station, and as soon as Manish got down from the train the sisters told him that I quarrelled and beat them in the afternoon on some trivial matter, so they had to beat me in protection. Seeing me lying in bed Manish did not say or ask me anything. He believed every word of his sisters.

Manish, Kavita, Savita and Meena did not allow me to come before any friend or relative who visited our house. They always misguided the visitor by saying that Sushmita was not well and lying down. Usually Sundays were more terrible than the other days. On Sundays, Manish, Kavita, Savita and Meena started quarrelling and abusing me from the early morning to late night. Kavita beat me with broom stick and kicked me on my waist. These torture increased day by day.

On 19th September, 1991, Manish and Meena had a quarrel over the court case. When Kavita came in the evening, she began to abuse me and at dinner time she said, 'Ask the bitch to take food'. I became angry, and wanted to go to Mr. R.B. Sule, a friend of my sister's family. On hearing it Kavita, Savita and Meena hit me on my neck and I became unconscious. At night Manish apologised for this incidence and even wept at his ill fate. He said, 'These sisters have remained unmarried, they would not let us lead a happy life. I will sell this flat, and arrange marriage for them. You please go to Calcutta and find out a suitable groom for them.'

On 30th September, 1991, my elder brother rang up Manish that he was bringing gifts for them from Durga Puja. As soon as the sisters-in-law heard it, they began to pressurise me to demand a colour T.V. and a washing machine. I refused to demand. My brother brought costly sarees for all of us, many varieties of sweets, fruits, dry fruits, fish and curd. They finished everything in a single day and did not give a single piece of sweet or fruit to me. My brother went to Calcutta on 11th October, 1991. Not a single moment I found with him in private so that I could say about the torture of the in-laws. I was always guarded by them. As soon as my brother turned his back, the sisters-in-laws jumped over me like mad dogs and abused me for my refusal to demand money, colour T.V. and washing machine.

During Durga Puja, I requested Kavita and Manish repeatedly to give me few ornaments. Kavita said that all my ornaments belonged to them. I would not get any of them. On 15th October, 1991, a family friend asked me in the Puja Pandal, why I did not wear any ornaments, as she had seen my parents giving me lot of ornaments. Hearing this Manish and Kavita forbade me to go to the Puja Pandal.

On 15th October, 1991, Manish went for the Visarjan of Ma Durga Meena forced me to watch cultural function on the stage. Manish took us home at 12.30 and scolded Meena for staying so late at night. Meena immediately complained in my name that I was talking with the wife of Mr. Sarbadhikary ( an enemy of this family) which was a total lie. Then Manish beat me cruelly. I did not want to stay for one minute in that house. I told them to inform my brother. Kavita said that if I dared to step outside I would be murdered. The son-in-law a famous ruffian leader was Manish's friend. If my brothers dared to step in Bombay, they will be killed. In the morning Manish took an apology from me and promised me that he would try to make me happy. I hoped against the hope, but this happened again and again.

On 2nd November, 1991, Meena got the news of her husband's heart attack. She became very anxious and wanted to go to her husband. Manish, Kavita and Savita beat her badly and left her alone. She cried to me and said that these people had forcefully detained her from her husband. They wanted a child. They would ruin my life as they have ruined her. But after sometime she realised that she should not have told such things to me, so as soon as Kavita, Manish and Savita came back, Meena complained that I had told all these things to her. Immediately vulgar quarrel started and then all the four members of my in-laws family beat me one after another and continued this for day.

Kavita threatened me that she would make me mad by giving me poison as did Mr. S. Bhattacharjee to his first wife, a friend of Manish and family.

On 12th November, 1991, my elder brother rang my husband that he was coming to Bombay. After hearing it my husband and in-laws began to make plans secretly when I went to bed for sleep, Manish left bed and joined the sisters in secret planning. I became very much scared as I could not know their plan. From 14th November, 1991 they began to pressurise me to demand a colour T.V. and washing machine. I refused it again and asked them to return my ornaments. The three sisters complained to Manish that I have accused them as a thief. They beat me cruelly in front of Samir Ray, the watchman of the house of Belauvli. I became unconscious. Later, I came to know that Samir was paid Rs. 100/- to keep his mouth shut. This Samir is Manish's accomplice in all his wicked plans regarding Subhas Nagar Society. Manish instructed me to demand T.V. and washing machine from my brother in front of his sisters and suggested that later in their absence he would say to my brother that he did not Want it. I refused this false play. As a result the quarrel started from November 17,1991. The three sisters-in-law left the house and they threatened their brother that until he drove me away, they would not return. When my brother came to see me, Manish abused him and cursed in him vulgar language and told him to take me away. My brother was ready to take me away. But Manish did not allow me to leave. Instead he forced me to go to the sisters and take apology. He forced me to bring them back. At that time some ruffian looking men and women in Vendipara threatened me to kill my brother. On 24th November, 1991 Kavita took a few photographs of my brothers and sisters and showed them to the hooligans and informed them about the hotel where my brother stayed. Seeing all these things I became very scared about my brother's life. I asked him not to come.

On 28th November, 1991 a person came from the guest house, where my brother was staying, Meena was at home, he informed her that my brother had been suffering from fever for four days. Meena pushed the man outside the door and abused him. The man felt insulted and went away. When Manish came in the evening he told me that neither of us would go to see my sick brother. He had purposely married a girl like me from distant state, so that the bride's family should not interfere with Manish's family. If my brother dared to step in Bombay, he would be killed.

On 2nd December, 1991, I went to Shradh Ceremony of Manish's aunt. I came to know that Manish's family had spread all bad words for me. One of the ladies told me, 'Do you know Manish's wife is a wicked lady?.' Another old lady talked with me for 1-2 minutes. When we came back, Manish slapped me on my face, for talking with her.

On 4th December, 1991, Manish, Kavita and I myself went to Ambernath, from there Manish and Kavita went to Kalyan. I had to come back to Badlapur.

### *The Involvement of Manish and his family in Rowdism and Ruffianism*

At the time of my marriage, Manish told me that due to the drinking habit of Meena's husband, Meena had quarrelled with him and was staying with her brother temporarily. After my marriage I came to know that a separation case was going on between them for six years. They told me the reasons of separation case as dowry taking and bride torturing. But I did not find Meena as a woman wronged by her husband. She is a cruel, vindictive, jealous, mean minded and selfish woman. She knows herself and to satisfy her own whims. Sometimes she beats her only child so cruelly that I feel she does not love her child also. Sometimes she became insane and roams about nude and talks sexual things. If I happened to object to such behaviour, she beats me also. She had tremendous body power. Once when she beat me, I warned her that I would go to the police. She became very angry and said 'I have beaten Montu's (her husband) mother and drove her away, I have beaten my brother-in-law, sister-in-law. They could not do me anything. My brother has so much power that he went to Montu's house with police and took them into the jail. We have lodged F.I.R. also against Montu. In the same way I would beat you and drive you away from the house. Manish would go to the police station and would lodge an F.I.R. against you that you have beaten me and ran away.'

On 30th November, 1991, Manish hit an old lady with a stone in Subash Nagar Society meeting. An F.I.R. has been lodged against Manish.

Manish fought and hit some Mr. D. Chakraborty regarding some dispute over Subash Nagar Society. After some days, Manish lodged an F.I.R. against him, and brought some ruffians to kill him on 22nd December, 1991. He did this planning of lodging an F.I.R. and planning to kill with some ruffians at home. He misguided some gentleman who are the members of Subhash Nagar Society and took help of them in this matter. Thus by his gentle appearance and some good words he succeeded to misguide some gentleman, the Subash Nagar Society and the police. But at home, I have seen all his false pretence of gentility shades off. He used to make vicious plans against his enemies, very cleverly hide his intentions, and trap his enemies by hook or by crook.

In anticipation I will like to say that I had done my best to please my husband and his family. I did not let my parents to take any actions against Manish's family in the hope that I may be able to change my husband's criminal life and cruel heart by my good behaviour. And hoped against hopes that I would lead a happy married life with the sisters. But now I realised that what a mean and vicious conspiracy was made against me. All the modest behaviour and false promises are the part of this game, so that Manish gets sufficient time to chalk out the master plan and at the same time, I may not take any steps against his torture, until he finds a golden opportunity to produce his master plan. He took the opportunity of my mother's serious illness. Now I came to realise that all the mental and physical torture are master planned and operated by him through his sisters. The plan was made very carefully from the beginning of the marriage to take away my things, ornaments, and extract money as much money as possible from my brothers and then drive me away bare foot from their house.

Due to above reasons, I seek divorce from Manish Bhattacharjee from the judiciary.