Survivor Speak

Call for Action

Survivor Speak

Call for Action

Synthesis report
of the five states' action-research study on
'women' survivors of violence and shelter homes

TERMS IN THIS REPORT

"Women" signifies cisgender persons and transwomen.

"Survivor" refers to cisgender persons and transwomen who have experienced violence, discrimination, abuse and/or harassment. Our use of "survivor" is based on the debates on the politics of labelling women who experience violence. We recognize that calling women "victims" implies that they are weak, helpless and incapable of fighting. It erases the junctures of resistance they put up. On the other hand, calling them "survivors" can cover up how they remain victims of a negligent and callous society. The third alternative of calling them "agents" does not reveal that many are barely surviving, not living fully or realizing their potential.

We chose "survivor" with the acceptance that although it lacks the shades of meaning we want to convey, it is closest to the term that would have been ideal to use—victim-survivor-agent – but for its hyphenated verbosity.

Terms such as "homeless", "destitute", "disabled" or even "poor" are used to refer to the conditions – not identity – of certain persons. The intention is to contribute to making these conditions temporary.

How to read this report

Survivor Speak (2019) is the latest of a set of three reports commissioned by LCN. It reflects the findings from a five-state action-research study conducted by LCN members, and is best read together with:

I.   Time for Overhauls (2017), the inaugural report from LCN that collates findings and recommendations from existing research studies by LCN's members from across the country (link: http://www.jagori.org/sites/default/files/TIME%20FOR%20OVER-HAULS_1.pdf), and

II. The relevant state-specific report, which can be accessed online at:

1. Voices from the Fringes (North-East Network; Assam) http://www.jagori.org/sites/default/files/VOICES%20FROM%20THE%20FRINGES%20-%20NEN%20Assam%20final%2015%20march%202019.pdf

2. Beyond the Roof. Rights, Justice and Dignity (Action India, Jagori and Nazariya; Delhi) http://www.jagori.org/sites/default/files/BEYOND%20THE%20ROOF%20-%20STUDY%20OF%20SHELTERS%20IN%20DELHI%20July%202019.pdf

3. Re-visioning Shelter Homes in Meghalaya (North-East Network; Meghalaya) http://www.jagori.org/sites/default/files/REVISIONING%20SHELTER%20HOMES%20IN%20MEGHA-LAYA%202019.pdf

4. Towards Re-Visioning Shelter Homes (Visthar and Sangama; North Karnataka) http://www.jagori.org/sites/default/files/TOWARDS%20REVISIONING%20SHELTER%20HOMES%20IN%20NORTH%20KARNATAKA%202019.pdf

5. A Refuge of Hope (Vimochana; Karnataka) http://www.jagori.org/sites/default/files/A%20REFUGE%20OF%20HOPE%20-%20WOMENS%20EXPERIENCE%20OF%20SHELTER%20HOMES%20IN%20SOUTH%20KARNATAKA%202019_0.pdf

6. In Search of a Dignity Restoring Safe Space (Ekta; Tamil Nadu) http://www.jagori.org/sites/default/files/IN%20SEARCH%20OF%20A%20DIGNITY%20RESTORING%20SAFE%20SPACE-%20Tamil%20Nadu%202019.pdf

CONTENTS

Sl. No.	Research Partners	State
1	Action India	Delhi
2	Ekta	Tamil Nadu
3	Jagori	Delhi
4	Nazariya	Delhi
5	North East Network	Assam, Meghalaya
6	Sangama	Karnataka
7	Vimochana	Karnataka
8	Visthar	Karnataka

Study across 5 states by 8 organizations

147 Survivors

78 Shelter Homes

89 Key Stakeholders

32 Focus Group Discussants

INTRODUCTION AND THE CONTEXT

This report culminates a process of collective reflection and action, and yet is the beginning of a new phase of advocacy and intervention. The process started in 2016 when individuals and organizations from across the country – women's and human rights organizations, LGBTQI groups and other civil society networks – joined efforts to form Lam-lynti Chittara Neralu (LCN)[1], a national network to work towards improved and rights-based shelter services for women survivors of violence. To generate up-to-date knowledge and evidence about experiences of survivors of violence with regard to shelter homes for 'women in distress', eight organizations collaborated to conduct state-level action-research. Each state has its own research report.

This document encapsulates the research carried out in Assam, Delhi, Meghalaya, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu by researchers and staff members of women's rights, LBT and queer organizations. It presents 145 first-hand accounts on the lived experiences of survivors (above 18 years) from the states, including former and current shelter homes residents and those who were going through domestic violence and may require a safe space in the near future. It is also based on interviews and discussions with key informants and informal conversations with a range of stakeholders.

Semi-structured field guidelines were formulated for each state that were similar to maintain uniformity yet distinct to reflect each state's particular context. Making the guidelines was a collaborative, participatory and iterative exercise that included the researchers, case workers and activists from participating NGOs as well as a research advisory committee and ethical advisor. Women's rights activists from the participating women's groups and NGOs were trained in feminist methodology and research ethics before the field work commenced.

This report is a contribution to the continuum of research and analyses on the state of shelter homes, such as that done by AALI, Anandi, Bhumika, CBGA, Jagori, Peace and Equality Cell and SWATI earlier. It adds to the corpus of feminist knowledge and studies such as the one done by the National Commission for Women on status of widows in shelter homes (2017) and the Supreme Court-appointed group for empowerment of widows (2017). Members of LCN hope that this evidence will be used by different government agencies and groups working on human rights and ending violence against women to advocate for urgent policy reviews and interventions.

---

[1] In Khasi, Lam-lynti means 'to lead the way'. Chittara is a Telegu word that means 'star' and Neralu in Kannada refers to 'shelter'. Together, the expression means 'to lead the way to shelters under the vista of stars'. This assortment of words reflects regional diversity and collaboration within the network, and an aspiration to assist in making shelters positive and empowering spaces that offer rights-based support system for women and girls.

MAJOR FINDINGS FROM THE STATES

Even as each of the five states and their respective contexts and experiences led to specific findings, many findings are common to them all. This section encapsulates both these sets of findings on the basis of first-hand accounts of 145 survivors, 89 key stakeholders and 32 focus group discussions from 78 shelter homes across five states. Survivor-participants of the research cover a spectrum of survivors (a) who are current or former shelter home residents, (b) who may require or are considering moving into a shelter home and (c) who refuse to live in shelter homes or did not know about these spaces. They also represent different age, class, sexual orientation, marital status, class, caste and religion.

LITTLE/NO ACCESS TO SHELTERS FOR RESEARCHERS/ WOMEN'S RIGHTS WORKERS

Researchers in all five states faced much resistance from shelter home management and staff in seeking access to survivors living there. In cases where access was granted, survivors could not always speak freely because of the lack of privacy during the interview. Government-run shelter homes were particularly inaccessible to the research teams, and shelters run by women's rights groups were more open to participation in the study.

LOW NUMBERS, POOR SPREAD OF SHELTER HOMES

Districts that are highly populated or have high crime rates against women were found lacking shelter homes for 'women in distress/difficult circumstances'. The number of shelter homes is few, including those for specialized categories of women such as those with mental health issues. This leads to congestion within existing homes, which further impacts the quality of the living experience of the survivor.

Shelters were found to be unevenly distributed within cities, while in rural areas they were either absent or scarce. For example, In DELHI, not every district has a shelter home for women in distress. Even a single home per district may not be adequate, especially in the largest districts toward the north and west. In MEGHALAYA, there were no state or NGO-run shelter homes specifically for women until mid-2018, when two Swadhar Greh homes were set up in two districts of the state – East Khasi Hills and West Khasi Hills.

SURVIVORS-RESIDENTS YOUNG, POOR

A majority of survivors living in shelter homes were in the most productive years of their lives – between 18-45 years. They represented General Category, Scheduled Caste, and Other Backward Classes. Most survivors found living in shelter homes belonged to economically underprivileged families, and were asset-less or without control over any assets. This indicates greater vulnerability of these women to discrimination and violence at various levels, and challenges in access to services and justice.

Caste category	Assam	Delhi	Meghalaya	North Karnataka	Tamil Nadu	South Karnataka	Total
General	25	5	6	6	-	1	43
SC	2	4	-	6	24	4	40
ST	2	-	10	1	1	2	16
OBC	4	2	-	5	10	5	26
No data	-	17	-	-	-	3	20

PERVASIVE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Marriage-related and natal-family domestic violence were the primary cause of the short and long-term homelessness and eviction of women. This got further aggravated when women stepped out of their homes to seek alternate living arrangements. Women were also abandoned by or felt compelled to leave their families because of sexual assault, old age (including widowhood), opposition to women's choices, abuse related to their sexual orientation and/or physical/mental health issues.

Marital status	Assam	Delhi	Meghalaya	North Karnataka	Tamil Nadu	South Karnataka	Total
Never married	10	7	4	5	6	6	38
Married/live-in	2	5	4	11	20	2	44
Abandoned	-	4	-	-	6	-	10
Married but separated	14	9	7	-	-	5	35
Widowed	5	3	1	-	3	1	13
Divorced	2	-	-	2	-	1	5

In ASSAM, 31.4 per cent of rural women in the age group of 15-49 years have faced spousal violence, as against 28.8 per cent which is the national average for spousal violence (National Family Health Survey IV, 2015-16). This study found that in Assam's shelters, 47 per cent of residents had faced domestic violence. Of the most vulnerable women in Assam are street vendors, migrant workers, those displaced due to ethnic conflicts, and queer persons, among others. Even as they lack knowledge about provisions such as shelter homes, there is a dire need for alternate safe spaces.

Trafficking is a raging issue in certain pockets of Assam (Dibrugarh, Baksa, Tinsukia, Udalguri, among others) where women working in and around the tea gardens or from the border areas are trafficked into sex or domestic work. If and when these women reach shelter homes, shelter home staff may not facilitate their re-integration with their families so as to continue receiving grants in the names of these residents.

In DELHI, there is an increasing concern on lack of autonomy and choice for girls/ women imposed by their natal families. Of the 28 respondents spoken to, nine women had experienced abuse of some form in their natal families, including child sexual abuse; four of these nine survivors had come to Delhi to seek shelter away from their families.

POOR/LACK OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THEIR RIGHTS

Most survivors were unaware of the right to residence under the PWDVA, and about the existence of shelters and their right to it, about provisions of free legal aid, as well as legal support processes they can seek assistance from and are entitled to.

CONCERNS REGARDING ADMISSION TO SHELTERS

Shelter homes are not always inclusive spaces, especially in the context of certain 'women' such as the LBTQI community. The research found apprehension on both sides – LBT and transgender individuals were unsure if they should at all approach these homes for 'women' and shelter homes management was wary of their presence with other residents.

> "We are not even thought of when schemes for shelter homes are designed. Even if we were to approach shelters, they give us only alms, not the shelter space. Living there would be more traumatic for us as neither all residents nor staff are sensitive to our needs." – Transgender person, Karnataka

In KARNATAKA, during a Focus Group Discussion, Devadasi women reported being denied admission by the shelter homes.

> "The first question they ask us is: 'Which community do you belong to?' Once we answer, we are denied access to the shelters. Due to caste prejudices and discrimination by the dominant community, we are sometimes accommodated in certain small temples dedicated to the goddesses." – Devadasi, Karnataka

QUALITY OF LIFE WITHIN SHELTERS

Due to lack of adequate and/or regular funds, many shelter homes had poor infrastructure (few toilets, for example) and dismal living conditions. Lack of privacy due to paucity of space is rather common. Almost all shelter homes visited lacked a private vehicle for use especially to deal with emergencies.

Survivors in shelters experienced no/limited mobility outside the shelter home. Employment-related mobility was possible and negotiable at shelters that allowed employed women to continue living in shelters.

> "If I had a job, I could earn something and pay for my court proceedings. So, shelter homes should allow us to work outside." – Survivor, Karnataka, who is seeking a speedy legal process.

Some survivors who encountered offensive or discriminatory behaviour by the staff of the shelter homes felt disempowered and further victimized.

> "It is like discrimination here. The staff have their own cups to drink water and chai from. We cannot use those cups. They also have their own washroom. We cannot use that washroom. All of us residents have to share one washroom. It is pretty difficult."
> – Survivor, Delhi

Mental health care for survivors was a dire need expressed by shelter home staff/management. In-house 'counselling' services, if at all available, reflected diverse understanding and approach of counselling, with no uniformity and standards in training and practice. The overlaps between emotional and legal counselling and mediation processes were frequently observed.

In TAMIL NADU, the counsellors were largely untrained in counselling skills or women's rights. The primary focus of the counselling was to re-settle women survivors with the family – as marriage was seen as the ultimate goal by the staff of shelter homes and women's families. And, only four out of the fifteen shelter homes visited allowed survivors to return if they experienced violence after re-integration within their families/communities.

In ASSAM, only five respondents out of a total of 32 revealed that they had access to legal aid at their respective shelter homes.

Vocational training offers limited and stereotypical options (stitching, beauty and make-up, for example) that are most often financially unviable.

> "We cannot be here forever, so we must try and acquire some skills so we can go out and be independent. I want to start a beauty parlour. There are many like us who need shelter, so only if we move out can others find place." – Survivor, Karnataka

SHELTERS, THE LAST RESORT

Unless it was the only option they had, survivors preferred not to move to shelter homes, because of reasons of curbs on their communication, mobility, separation from children/relatives and a sense of alienation they experience therein.

> "My son is 13 years old and hence he cannot stay with me. It is very difficult for me to eat and sleep. Whenever he comes to see me, he cries. I need a place where I can stay with my son." – Survivor, Tamil Nadu.

> "I wish I was allowed to just go out for a walk, go to the temple and talk to my old friends. Here I sit alone the whole day. It makes me miss my grandchildren a lot." – Survivor, Tamil Nadu

ISSUES REGARDING SHELTER HOME STAFF

The Management and staff of shelter homes often possess limited/out-dated knowledge and training about laws related to women's rights and they also reflect a problematic, patriarchal view about survivors of violence, on gender, sexuality and sexual orientation issues.

Employees/contractual staff of most shelter homes (across the funding/management spectrum) received poor remuneration, which directly affected their performance, motivation and commitment.

SHELTER HOMES' CONCERNS

Exceptions aside, all shelter homes flagged issues of lack of funds, inadequate funds and irregular disbursal of funds as their pivotal and continuing concern.

In DELHI, the only Ujjawala shelter home for trafficked women had to be shut down six months after it started in 2012 primarily because of lack of funds.

Post-re-integration/rehabilitation follow up is rare or erratic in nature, and shelter homes point to the lack of human resources and budgets for such an exercise.

Further there is ineffective and irregular monitoring and evaluation, and oversight of shelter homes by external authorities/government officials and others.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents key recommendations that have emerged from the multi-state, action-research study. Even though issues of violence against women and violations of human rights are and must be the concern of every citizen of the country, these recommendations are specifically directed towards a spectrum of government institutions/bodies whose work intersects – directly or indirectly – with ending violence against women, besides a range of non-government organizations that have been engaged in/around these issues.

ENHANCE AWARENESS, IMPLEMENTATION OF PWDVA

Public knowledge building and monitoring the implementation of pro-survivor laws such as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (2005) can safeguard women's rights in natal/marital homes and forestall circumstances that leave them roofless and at risk. Schemes/programmes that have Hindi names (Swadhar Greh, Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao, for example) need vernacular/English translations for easier awareness across different regions.

Issue of public notifications about existing shelter homes (as per the provisions of the PWDVA) to facilitate survivors' easy access to information and admission.

RE-ENVISION SCHEMES AND THEIR INTENTION

The framework and tonality of the schemes/guidelines on shelter homes, as also the articulation of stakeholders who work with survivors reflects that there is a benefactor-beneficiary/victim relationship in place, and not one of advancing rights and equal citizenship. The schemes must be imbued with humanitarian principles, dignity and respect so as to make survivors feel valued and empowered.

INCREASE BUDGETS

Budgetary allocations to be aligned with State Action Plans and followed by timely disbursal of funds – this is an urgent requirement that will help re-start stalled work such as hiring of skilled employees, upgradation of infrastructure, and so on.

CUSTOMIZE SOPs

Just as shelter homes for specialized survivors need to tailor-make their Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to suit the needs of their respective residents, shelter homes that house survivors with varying circumstances, needs, abilities and requirements should consider doing away with standard/common rules and requirements from all survivors and adopt a graded approach. In other words, from guided and protected living to a more autonomous space, survivors need a range of differential services such as immediate to long-term medico-legal care, psychiatric care to psycho-social counselling, vocational training to accessing a job, and so on.

RULES WITH RIGHTS

Admission and living in shelter homes should be flexible and voluntary, and custodial only when required. Moreover, while rules and regulations for residents of shelter homes are necessary for its smooth management, their compliance – especially in the name of protection and safety – cannot come in the way of/at the cost of women's rights, freedom and autonomy. SOPs (standard operating procedures) of shelter homes need to be re-conceptualized with a rights-based outlook towards the survivors.

RELAX IDENTITY PROOF-BASED ADMISSION PROCESS

Shelter homes' demand for Aadhar/other identity-related documents as a strict pre-requisite, while understandable, cannot be used to deny admission to roofless survivors of violence. Leaving survivors at risk without accommodation is both unsafe and unethical. In cases where the survivor does not possess a photo identity, the shelter home must facilitate linkages to local authorities for creation of such documents for their inclusion, including relevant social protection schemes/mechanisms.

ACCESSIBLE AND QUALITY HEALTHCARE

Survivors – often with little/no family support – and susceptible to body-mind ailments, should have priority and easy access to health care, including psycho-social health and regular counselling.

INVEST INTO CRECHE/BALWADI SERVICES

The authorities must not just encourage but also mandate shelter homes to have functional crèches for survivor-residents with dependent children, or links to such services in the neighbourhoods. Women's reluctance to seek employment or avail of shelter homes is strongly caused by their concern for the lack of child care and their separation from the child.

DIALOGUE/INTERFACE WITH SELECT STAKEHOLDERS

Shelter homes and their survivor-residents can benefit by being open to tailored and strategic engagement with certain individuals/groups – artists, for example – so as to initiate a healing process, enrich and empower women's lived experiences within the homes and infuse more transparency in these institutions.

REHABILITATION AND RE-INTEGRATION OF SURVIVORS

Develop state-specific and comprehensive policy for rehabilitation and re-integration of survivors. Encourage vocational trainings that challenge stereotypes about women's work, and design them in accordance with the duration of their stay. Ensure survivors have a

choice with regard to their rehabilitation with individuals and families that have been the source of such violence.

Develop a national policy on internal displacement with special mention of gendered needs of women who are affected by natural disasters and ethnic conflict.

LONG-TERM ACCOMMODATION

For survivors who are capable of living independently after their shelter home stay, the state must support access to low-cost housing and hostels. For those who need assisted living, half-way homes that offer community living need to be built. These would not only be safe spaces for the survivors but could help boost income generation for shelter homes.

MANDATE INTER-SECTORAL TRAININGS, WORKSHOPS FOR STAFF/MANAGEMENT

The knowledge, perspectives and capacities of staff and management of shelter homes must be regularly updated especially vis-à-vis laws, rights, entitlements, counselling approaches and techniques, gender and sexuality. A standardized curriculum (developed by women's rights workers and professionals) will ensure a common understanding and approach for orientation and refresher trainings and workshops.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

There is need to mandate due diligence mechanisms for the shelter homes at multiple levels. Regular monitoring and evaluation, periodic audits of shelter homes, setting up of Advisory Committee with members of rights' based NGOs, women's groups will help enhance transparency and effective functioning. Coordination between multiple service providers and agencies of the state that deal with the issue of violence against women – shelter homes, District Legal Service Agency, One Stop Centres, health facilities, skill development centres, women's organizations – must also be a subject of monitoring and evaluation.

INTERVENTIONS SO FAR

To do justice to the 'action' part of this action-research and lend it a sustainable after-life, the five research partners have started a series of interventions. These range from advocacy at the local and international fora, to healing, perspective and capacity building, networking with shelter homes, and involve engagements with the management/staff of shelter homes as well as their survivor-residents. The aim is to continue these engagements beyond the schedule of the research by embedding them in the organizational objectives of stakeholders. The following is a brief outline of the national and state-wise actions-taken or outcomes so far.

JANUARY-OCTOBER 2018: Built research capacities of staff members of participating NGOs – they were trained in qualitative research methodology and ethics.

DECEMBER 2018: Applied for participation at the 4th World Conference of Women's Shelters to be held in late 2019, so as to network with other shelter homes and learn about international best practices from exchanges at such fora.

MARCH 2019: Advocated for women's better and inclusive access to shelter homes as well as housing rights (as part of other essential citizenship rights) for survivors of violence, along with grassroots' Muslim women and groups from more than 10 states.

STATE-WISE INTERVENTIONS

ASSAM
FEBRUARY 2019: Utilized the public dissemination of the Assam state research report to facilitate a dialogue between 53 participants representing Social Welfare Board officials, shelter home staff including from Swadhar Greh and Ujjawala Homes, One Stop Crisis Centre, 181 helpline, women's cell, counsellors and women's rights activists on the issue of upgradation of services offered to survivors of violence.

FEBRUARY 2019: Organized a day-long consultation on schemes for shelter homes, and a capacity-building workshop on gender-based violence and legal responses to it, for 41 staff members of shelter homes from different parts of Assam.

DELHI
APRIL 2018: A state-level consultation was organized by the Delhi-based research partners to inform shelter homes about the action-research study, invite their participation and inputs towards alliance-building for reimagining shelter homes as spaces of rights, justice and empowerment.

JULY 2018: Invited and hosted a staff member each from two shelter homes for a self-care and burnout prevention workshop conducted by members of the Delhi team.

AUGUST/ SEPTEMBER 2018: Offered inputs for (a) the methodology for the social audit of shelter homes for girls and women in the National Capital Region by the Delhi Commission of Women and (b) the formulation of guidelines and tools for the national audit of 500 Swadhar Grehs by the National Commission of Women.

OCTOBER 2018: Published an analytical article for The Wire on the caveats and concerns around the spate of simultaneous social audits being conducted by various state agencies.

OCTOBER 2018: Offered assistance to a runaway, lesbian couple (who were under threat of violence from their families) after the Delhi team was contacted by a human rights organization to provide them urgent shelter. On the intervention of the Delhi team, a shelter home that participated in this research study opened its doors to the women.

DECEMBER 2018: Conducted a perspective-building training on issues of gender and sexuality for 28 staff members of a shelter home. This is an outcome of the Delhi team's mobilisation among shelter homes for greater engagement with these critical issues.

FEBRUARY 2019: A 10 member team visited Ma Dham, a Guild of Service-run shelter home for widows in Vrindavan. The team included researchers from Delhi, staff members of Jagori, Nazariya and North East Network, members of Jagori's community-based support group, and a staff and management representative each from two of Delhi's shelter homes for women. The trip was a successful lesson on possibilities and practices that can make shelter homes empowering sites.

KARNATAKA
FEBRUARY 2019: Conducted two peer-review meetings, including for 14 staff members of six shelter homes, to examine critical issues that emerged from the research and identify short/long term actions such as emergency health services and inclusive admission criteria among others.

MEGHALAYA
MAY 2018: Organized a consultation with various stakeholders, including the Social Welfare Department, to discuss plans for action to curb violence against women. This led to (a) the creation of a state-wide resource directory for survivors of violence, and (b) the formation of a state forum against violence against women that includes different shelter homes, women's and civil rights organizations.

NOVEMBER 2018: Organized awareness programmes on gender-sensitive responses to violence against women in West Jaintia Hills, Jowai, for 22 women survivors of violence and another edition of the same programme in West Khasi Hills for 37 participants from NGOs, outreach workers and survivors of violence.

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2018: Organized a two-day capacity-building workshop on feminist counselling skills, for 21 participants who were counsellors and staff of shelter homes and alternate safe spaces.

MARCH 2019: Disseminated findings of the state's research study in the presence of important stakeholders such as the Meghalaya State Commission for Women, police personnel and partners of the North East Network.

TAMIL NADU

FEBRUARY-MARCH2019: Organized a stakeholders' peer-review meeting in Madurai for participants of the research study from the southern districts. It was attended by 37 people including representatives of nine shelter homes, two Protection Officers, a coordinator of a One Stop Crisis Centre, a counsellor from the Special Police Cell for Women, two members each from the District Child Protection Unit and Family Counselling centres, representatives from three colleges and two NGOs. A second meeting was held in Chennai in March, to finalize recommendations for the national synthesis report.

MARCH 2019: Ekta organized a Women's Day event at the Madurai-based Holy Cross shelter home for women. Thirty participants learnt about the context and significance of Women's Day and participated in a discussion on violence against women and safety in private and public spaces. Residents and staff of the shelter home also participated in games that had been arranged for them as part of Ekta's intervention.

IN THE PIPELINE

- **Submission to CEDAW:** To flag concerns of survivors of violence and shelter homes as key sites for redressal, service provision, healing, rehabilitation and reintegration, the LCN network will make a contribution for the shadow report for India's 6th Periodic Report to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

- **Resource Directories:** Organisations from each of the five states that participated in the action-research are creating/updating a directory of shelter homes in their respective states. All teams faced difficulties in accessing information about shelter homes, their contact numbers, addresses and other services offered. The directories hope to address this critical information gap in the public domain.

- Translation, publication and dissemination of the state reports

- Knowledge and perspective building workshops for survivors on their rights and entitlements, gender, violence against women, legal literacy

- Knowledge and perspective building workshops for shelter home staff on subjects such as gender, violence against women, laws related to women's rights and self-care
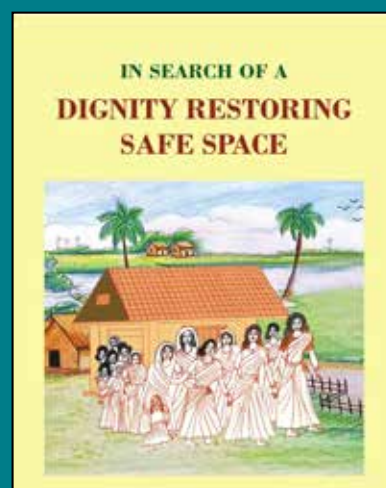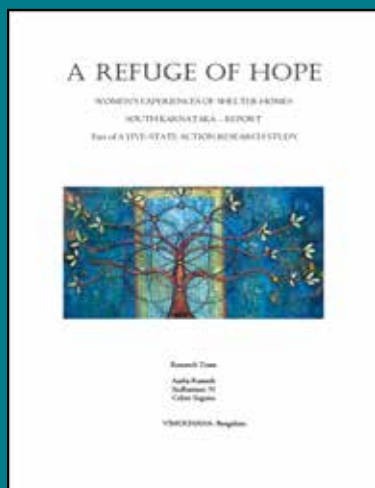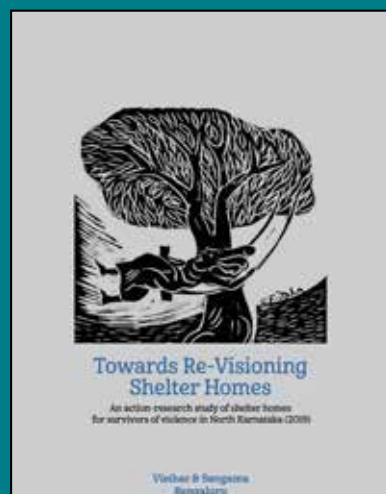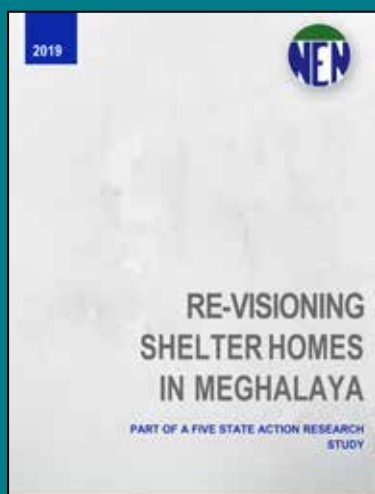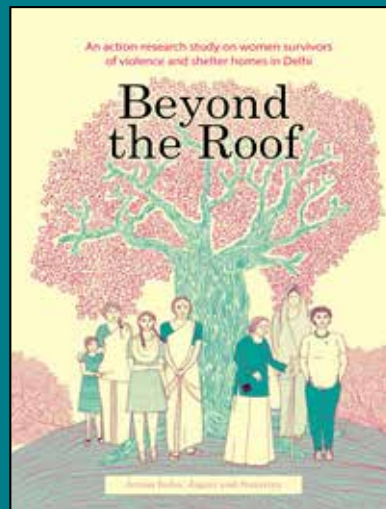
A MODEL SHELTER HOME

Across all five states where the research was undertaken, survivors and members of staff and management of shelter homes shared thoughts and ideas to improve services and empower residents. Based on their re-imagining of a shelter and LCN network's understanding of best practices (borrowed from the team's visits to shelter homes), here is a 'wish list' of non-negotiables that characterize a model shelter home for survivors – one that shifts from a 'social service' frame to a 'human rights' practice.

- Is inclusive vis-à-vis most marginalized and vulnerable survivors' rights to safety and protection

- Offers non-judgemental support to survivors

- Practices non-custodial admission and stay, unless required by law

- Ensures dignity of survivors via greater voice and choice in personal decisions

- Promotes rights of women to autonomy and self-expression

- Facilitates holistic healing, especially psycho-social care and resilience building

- Childcare friendly via crèche support

- Has a robust prevention, feedback and grievance redressal mechanism

- Establishes/strengthens multi-sectoral linkages with service providers

- Builds interface between the shelter and neighbouring community

- Cultivates dynamic and strong relationships with (parent) state agencies and departments

FOR EMPLOYEES OF SHELTER HOMES

- Offers better remuneration to its employees

- Offers opportunities for training and advancement; as well as avenues for healing and rejuvenation

"VOICES FROM THE FRINGES"

EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE SURVIVORS
OF VIOLENCE IN SHELTER HOMES
ASSAM STATE ACTION-RESEARCH STUDY

NORTH EAST NETWORK
2018

An action-research study on women survivors
of violence and shelter homes in Delhi

Beyond
the Roof

2019

RE-VISIONING
SHELTER HOMES
IN MEGHALAYA

PART OF A FIVE STATE ACTION RESEARCH
STUDY

Towards Re-Visioning
Shelter Homes

An action-research study of shelter homes
for survivors of violence in North Karnataka (2019)

Vimochana & Sangama
Bengaluru

A REFUGE OF HOPE

WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF SHELTER HOMES
SOUTH KARNATAKA – REPORT
Part of A FIVE-STATE ACTION RESEARCH STUDY

Research Team
Aarthy Ramesh
Sudharani N
Celine Suguna

VIMOCHANA, Bengaluru

IN SEARCH OF A
DIGNITY RESTORING
SAFE SPACE

Lam-lynti Chittara Neralu (LCN) [National Network on Shelter Homes] means "to lead the way to shelters under the vista of stars" and derives from three Indian languages:

In Khasi, Lam-lynti means to "lead the way"
Chittara is a Telugu word that means "star"
Neralu in Kannada refers to "shelter"