



Towards Re-Visioning Shelter Homes

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

Visthar & Sangama
Bengaluru

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On behalf of

Lamlynti-Chittara Neralu (LCN)

a national network for shelter homes in India

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for survivors of violence in North Karnataka (2019)

Supported by:
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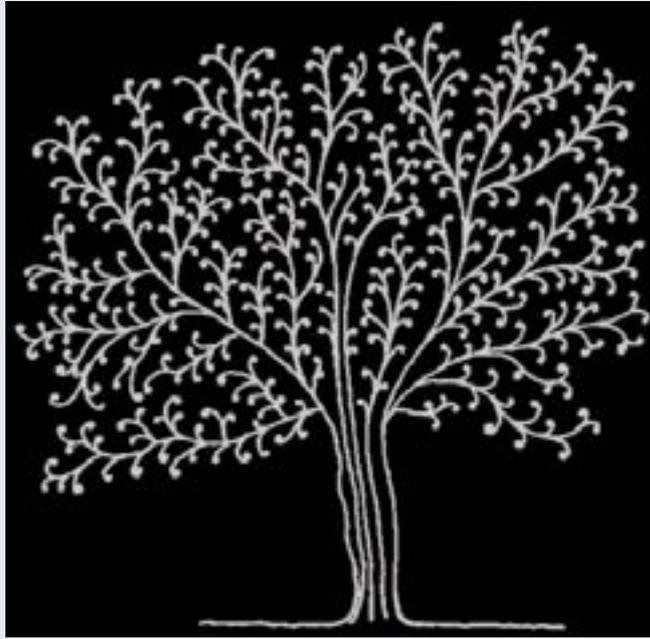


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Lam-lynti Chittara Neralu

A national network working towards improved and expanded shelter services for women. The name of the network means 'to lead the way under the vista of stars'. The expression is derived from three different Indian languages. In Khasi, Lam-lynti means to lead the way. Chittara is a Telugu word that means star and Neralu in Kannada refers to shelter. This assortment of languages reflects regional diversities and collaborations within the network. The intent is to re-imagine shelters as open, positive spaces that offer care and ensure a rights-based support system for women and girls. The name captures the collective vision of the network.

The main objectives of Lam-lynti Chittara Neralu are to:

- Review the conceptual underpinning of shelter homes for women and girls;
- Produce evidence-based knowledge on the operational conditions of and services by shelter homes including challenges and best practices and
- Demand accountability of the State via evidence-based advocacy and outreach for optimal functioning of women's shelter homes.

http://www.jagori.org/sites/default/files/publication/Shelter_Home_Consultation_Report.pdf

Preface

The action-research study of Shelter Homes for Survivors of Violence in North Karnataka was undertaken by Visthar and Sangama. This study is part of a five state research initiated in October 2017, undertaken by eight organizations in Delhi (Jagori, Action India, and Nazariya), Assam and Meghalaya (North East Network), Tamil Nadu (Ekta), and Karnataka (Vimochana, Visthar and Sangama). The collaborative action-research is based on the experiences of female survivors of violence who are currently living, have lived or are at the risk of living in shelter homes. The study aimed at re-imagining shelter homes from a feminist framework, redefining homelessness as a socio-political process and intervening in the representation of women living in shelter homes as agents who engage in the process of knowledge production and change.

Objectives of the study included:

- Enriching the existing body of knowledge around shelter homes and the women that approach them.
- Gathering evidence on the current state of shelter homes, identifying gaps and advocating for improvements .
- Enhancing perspectives and capacities of the participating organizations, former and current shelter home residents and the staff at shelter homes.
- Recording survivors' understanding about their experiences of violence to transform their perceptions of victimization.

- Enhancing survivors' knowledge and agency with respect to their rights and entitlements.

This report presents the experience of survivors of violence in short stay homes in North Karnataka and perceptions of heads of the institutions and other stakeholders. Despite the challenges of not having written permission from the Director, Women and Child Welfare and an air of mistrust and suspicion on the part of some, we were able to access several shelter homes, listen to the survivors and collect relevant data.

The study hopefully will contribute towards re-visioning shelter homes through a process of critical appreciation of existing shelter homes, documentation of practices, and formation of net works among women's groups and survivors. Awareness building among survivors on their rights and entitlements and advocacy at policy levels are important to bring about changes.

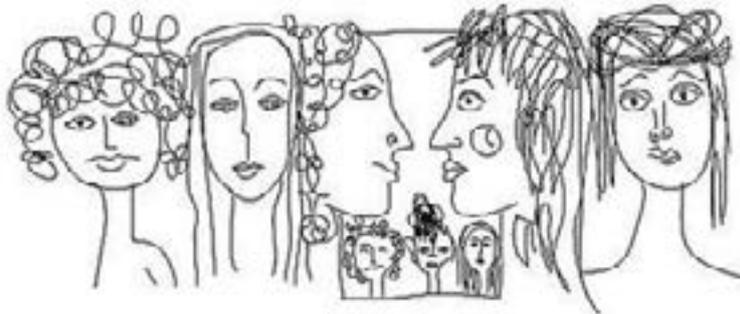
We thank AJWS for supporting the study and Amrita Nandy and Ananya Basu from the central research team for their expertise and guidance in facilitating the study. We also thank Geetha Nambisan (Jagori) for coordinating the process, Lam-lynti Chittara Neralu (LCN) and Vimochana for inviting us to be part of the network. Thanks also to Rebekah Eve Daniel for assisting with the literature study. Most importantly, our sincere gratitude to the residents and staff of shelter homes and all the friends and colleagues from community based organizations in north Karnataka for their support and cooperation.

Mercy Kappen

(On behalf of the Research Team)

We all move forward when
we recognize how resilient
and striking the women
around us are.

–Rupi Kaur



Violence against women

“Violence against women is a manifestation of historical unequal power relationships between men and woman and that violence against women is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which women are forced into a subordinate position compared with men” (Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations, 1997 - 2006)

The latest (2018) Thomson Reuters Survey classified India as the most dangerous and unsafe country for women on three counts - the risk of sexual violence and harassment against women, the danger women face from cultural, and traditional practices, and the danger of human trafficking including forced labour, sex slavery and domestic servitude. Though the Women and Child Development Ministry and National Commission for Women had rejected the report stating that the

methodology used for the poll was incorrect, the survey is a pointer to the fact that violence against women in India is increasing.¹ According to author and activist Rita Banerjee, within a span of three generations, India has systematically targeted and annihilated more than 50 million women from its population.² National Crime Records Bureau reveals that, registered rape cases in India have increased by almost 900% over the past 40 years. NCRB records 2016, show that crimes against women have gone up, including cases of rape. Cyber-crimes have registered a sharp increase of 6.3% from 11,592 in 2015 to 12,317 in 2016. Cases under “Crimes against women’ category reported an increase of 2.9% in 2016 over 2015. Majority of these cases are “cruelty by husband or his relatives” (32 %) followed by “assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty” (25%), kidnapping and abduction of women (19%) and rape (11.5%).³

Majority of violence against women occurs in the private sphere of the family or in the community. Women and girls are subjected to beating, rape, incest and traditional practices such as ‘honour’ killings, dowry related violence, and early marriages. Women are also targets of violence in the community such as rape, sexual abuse and trafficking. Dalit, Adivasi and homeless women are particularly vulnerable to violence, and experience intersecting layers of oppression arising out of caste, class and gender power relations.

The silence around domestic violence: Domestic violence in India is under-reported. The common perception of domestic violence is that it occurs most commonly amongst poor communities, lower castes, and in slums. Educated and working women are more likely to experience domestic violence, and this form of violence is not unique to any specific region, caste, socio-eco-



Francoise Bosteels: The Dolls Speak

1. <http://poll2018.trust.org/country/?id=india>
2. <http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue22/banerji.htm>
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/10/delhi-gang-rape-india-women>

conomic group, or religion. It is not lack of education that makes women more susceptible to violence, but rather the widespread acceptance of violence towards women. The “culture of silence” and accepting attitude towards violence are the most problematic parts of tackling this issue. A dramatic attitudinal change amongst both sexes is required.

Homelessness: Survivors of violence are worst affected by homelessness. Conversely, women without housing and living on the streets suffer the most severe kinds of abuse and violence. Though homelessness violates the most basic of human rights for all populations, State response to the needs of homeless is grossly inadequate and a majority of homeless women are left to fend for themselves. The interlinkage between violence against women and women’s right to adequate housing is well established around the world. Lack of adequate housing can make women more vulnerable to various

forms of violence and, conversely, violence against women can lead to the violation of women’s rights to adequate housing. The widespread prevalence of gender-based violence is a central thread in the fabric of human rights violations faced by women. Women also suffer from forced evictions and homelessness as both situations subject them to greater violence as well as violation of personal dignity and health.

Shelter homes for female survivors of violence: The Indian constitutional framework

Article 21 of the Constitution of India, provides for protection of life and personal liberty. Article 19 provides the right to freedom. Human rights are framed to achieve the objective of giving assurances to humans that to her/him will be made available all the facilities to develop freed from inhibitions to growth. The right to live, therefore implies food, water, decent environment, education, medical care and shelter. Shelter could not be reduced to mere protection of life and limb. The umbrella of shelter must be expanded to a home for opportunities. The Supreme Court has listed out the facilities that the right to shelter includes,

“...adequate living space, safe and decent structure, clean and decent surroundings, sufficient light, pure air and water, electricity, sanitation and other civic amenities like roads etc. so as to have easy access to his daily avocation. The right to shelter, therefore, does not mean a mere right to a roof over one’s head but right to all the infrastructure necessary to enable them to live and develop as a human being.”⁴

In the landmark Olga Tellis case, ejection of slum dwellers from the pavement near their work was held to be equivalent to deprivation of their life, an integral component of right to life was observed to be that which alone makes it possible to live leaving aside that which makes life livable.⁵ Article 21 was observed to encompass the right to live with dignity, that carried with it bare necessities as well as facilities- nutrition, clothing and shelter, writing, expressing oneself in diverse forms and interacting with fellow human beings.⁶



Francoise Bosteels: The Dolls Speak

4. Chameli Singh v. State of UP, 1995 Supp (6) SCR 827.

5. Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corporation, 1985 (2) SCC 545

6. Francis Coralie Mullin v. Administrator, Union Territory, Delhi, 1981 (1) SCC 608 : 1981 SCC(Cri) 212.

The human need of shelter was observed by the Supreme Court of India to be “a suitable accommodation which would allow him to grow in every aspect, physical, mental and intellectual.” Nonetheless, the court noted that it is not essential that every citizen be guaranteed a well-built comfortable home but every citizen must be guaranteed a reasonable home.⁷ To translate this right to shelter for the poor, the State was obligated to provide facilities and opportunity to build houses, holding the right to shelter to be a fundamental right under Article 19 (1) of the Constitution.⁸

Directive principles of state policy

Enshrined under the Directive Principles of State Policy, the State is directed to ensure state policies for shelter and homes for its citizens. Under Article 38, the state must strive to promote the welfare of its citizens informed by social, economic and political justice. Article 39 (1) directs state policy to be directed in order to secure for both men and women, equal right to an adequate means of livelihood. Article 42 provides for provisions to be made by the State for securing just and humane conditions of work and for maternity relief. Article 47 highlights the duty of the State to raise the level of nutrition and the standard of living and to improve public health.⁹

Swadhar Greh

The Ministry of Women and Child Development had been previously administering two schemes, the Swadhar and Short Stay Home schemes, providing shelter and other assistance to women in difficult circumstances. In 2011, it was decided that both these schemes will be merged into the Swadhar Greh Scheme.¹⁰

Launched by the Union Government in 2012, this scheme seeks to cater to women in difficult circumstances. The Scheme targeted to set up one or more than one Swadhar Greh in every district with a holding capacity for 30 women which could be increased to 50/100 depending on the necessity. The Scheme intended to provide the basic necessities of shelter, food, clothing, medical treatment and care of the women in distress and who are without any social and economic

support. The Scheme also aimed to strengthen its residents emotionally, provide legal aid, rehabilitation, become a support system and enable women to start life anew with dignity and conviction.

‘Beneficiaries’

The official documents use the term ‘beneficiaries’ though we do not agree with the term which reduces the survivors to objects of state charity. They need to be seen as rights holders who should have access to rights and entitlements. The ‘beneficiaries’ of this scheme are women above the age of 18 years without social and economic support who have been:

- deserted
- survivors of natural disasters
- prisoners from jails
- victims of domestic violence, family tension, discord, made to leave their homes
- trafficked women/girls rescued or runaway, provided that they first avail the Ujjawala Scheme
- affected by HIV/AIDS

The women from all above categories are allowed stay upto five years (rule amended in February 2018, from one year for victims of domestic violence and three years for other categories).¹¹ Older women above 55 years of age can stay for a maximum period of 5 years after which they will be transferred to old age homes. The facilities also allow accompanying children, girls up to 18 years and boys upto 12 years of age; boys above 12 years of age will be shifted to Children Homes (amended from boys upto 5 years of age in 2018).

The strategies for carrying out this scheme are listed below,

- Temporary residential accommodation with the provision of food, clothing, medical facilities etc.
- Vocational and skill upgradation trainings for economic rehabilitation of such women through the Vocational Training Institutes recognized by Directorate General of Employment and Training under the Ministry of Labour and Employment.

7. Shantistar Builders v. Narayan Khimalal Totame, AIR 1990 SC 630

8. State of Karnataka v. Narsimhamurthy, 1995 (5) SCC 524

9. Part IV, Constitution of India

10. http://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/Karnataka_0.PDF.

11. <http://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/Modificatio%20in%20the%20guidlines%20of%20Swadhar%20Greh%20Scheme%20reg..PDF>

- Counseling, awareness generation and behavioral trainings.
- Legal aid and Guidance through the District Legal Services Authority, or alternative suitable legal assistance.
- Counseling through telephone.¹²

Ujjawala Scheme

This scheme provides for the rehabilitation of victims of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation. It aims to prevent trafficking, facilitate the rescue of victims, provide rehabilitation both immediate and long term and basic needs like food, shelter, clothing, medical treatment, counselling and legal aid, reintegration of victims with their families and repatriation of cross border victims.

The scheme provides shelter during the interim period between rescue and production before the concerned authorities. Rehabilitation must provide details of set up protective and rehabilitative homes, and ensure that the rescued survivors are housed separately, by the implementing agency undertaking rescue.¹³

Current status

In the year 2016-17, the President sanctioned Rupees Two crore sixty six lakh eight thousand and two hundred (Rs.2,66,08,200) for the Swadhar Greh scheme. The Government of Karnataka is also required to contribute its share for the implementation of the scheme in a 60:40 ratio. In 2016-17 the details of the 32 Swadhar Homes in Karnataka were listed, along with the location of the project. The directory of short stay homes included 29 homes in Karnataka.¹⁴

The Punjab High Court passed various orders taking serious note of the allegations of torture and abuse of inmates in a shelter home in Rohtak, in 2012.¹⁵ A special CBI court in April 2018, convicted 9 out of 10 accused of

rape, abortion without consent, assault, unlawful compulsory labor and other charges and over 100 residents of the shelter home were rescued by the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights.¹⁶

Shelter Homes under Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Rules, 2006

The scheme of the Domestic Violence Act is such that, not only are the police, protection officer and service provider obligated to approach the court for redressal but also to ensure that the aggrieved person is made available a safe home for shelter.¹⁷

Rule 16 relates to shelter for aggrieved persons who allege to have been subjected to domestic violence by an adult male/ relative of husband or male partner with whom a domestic relationship is shared. The rule provides that,

1. A request must be made to the Protection Officer/ Service provider.
2. Protection Officer/Service Provider then, makes a request to person in charge of shelter home under Section 6 of the Domestic Violence Act.
3. Request is accompanied by domestic incident report, provided that shelter cannot be refused on the grounds that a domestic incident report had not been lodged prior to the making of a request for shelter.¹⁸

Aasra, is a home for destitute and abandoned Muslim women in Karnataka, trying to break the patriarchal domination in the Muslim community. On losing funds from the funders of the Muslim community, the wakf foundation, the shelter home continued to function with support from the Women and Child Welfare Department. The shelter provides a culturally familiar atmosphere, legal and psychological counselling and basic working skills.

12. Swadhar Greh, Government of India Ministry of Women and Child Development, http://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/Guidelines7815_2.pdf.

13. Ujjawala Scheme, Government of India, Ministry of Women and Child Development, <http://www.wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/Ujjawala%20New%20Scheme.pdf>.

14. http://wcd.nic.in/sites/default/files/Karnataka_1.PDF.

15. Utsav Singh v. State of Punjab, CWP No. 10318 of 2012 (O & M).

16. How the ApnaGhar Sexual Abuse Case unfolded, April 27, 2018

17. Section 9, The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005.

18. Shanbhu Prasad Singh v. Manjari, MANU/DE/2152/2012

North Karnataka – Socio economic background

North Karnataka, officially known as Uttara Karnataka, is a geographical region consisting mostly of semi-arid plateau from 300 to 750 meters (980 to 2,400 ft) elevation that constitutes the northern part of the South Indian state of Karnataka. The main river that flows through is the Krishna and its tributaries the Bhima, Ghataprabha, Malaprabha and Tungabhadra. North Karnataka lies within the Deccan thorn scrub forests eco region which extends north into eastern Maharashtra. North Karnataka consists of 12 districts of Belagavi, Vijayapura, Bagalkot, Bidar, Bellary, Gulbarga, Yadgiri, Raichur, Gadag, Dharwad, Haveri and Koppal.

North Karnataka is the birth place of Basava, also known as Basavanna (1106-1167) who was a philosopher and a social reformer, who fought against social evils of his time such as caste system and the ritual practices of Hinduism. His followers are the Lingyaths who are the dominant caste in North Karnataka. Much has been said and written on Basava and his valuable service to humankind. One, among his manifold contributions towards the rejuvenation of the contemporary tradition-ridden society, was his recognition of women's individuality and their rights. There is no denying the fact that the position of women in any society is a significant pointer to the level of culture of that society. In a progressive society as women's position improves, subjection diminishes. The ideal society envisaged by Basava and the Sharanas in the 12th century was a significant step towards the emancipation of women. However, the followers of Basava, who form the dominant caste in North Karnataka remain conservative in their views on women.

Some parts of North Karnataka are also areas known for the Devadasi practice. Two temples, situated at Saundati (Belagavi) and a temple at Neer Manvi (Raichur) were two places which were well known for dedicating young girls to the deity. The social movements related to the Devadasi system may be classified into two categories - reformative and revivalist movements. The former was comparatively progressive and resistive in nature. After the Karnataka Devadasi (Prohibition of Dedication) Act was passed in 1982, the Devadasis' were rendered homeless, and continue to face violence

Major Concerns in the north Karnataka region:

- Forced migration from rural areas due to distress



conditions: North Karnataka is a drought prone area. This affects agriculture which is the main occupation of majority of the population there. Women bear the worst brunt of natural disasters like flood and drought. When men migrate in search of livelihood, women are left vulnerable and homeless.

- Lack of affordable housing: In the absence of public housing and low cost housing schemes in cities and towns, the poorest of poor are forced to live on the streets, as even "slums" are beyond their economic means. Accessing housing is even more difficult for women, especially single women. In India, the 11th five year plan estimated that India was in need of 2653 million dwelling units for the economically weaker sections and low income groups.
- Domestic Violence: Domestic violence increases women's vulnerability, especially when they lack protection by law enforcement officials, or by the legal system itself. Many women who manage to escape violent homes become vulnerable to homelessness and consequently face further violence. As stated earlier, domestic violence is one of the reasons for homelessness of women. On the other hand, the associated fear of homelessness can compel women to stay in abusive and dangerous situations.
- Devadasi System: Devadasi is a woman who is considered given in marriage to God. These women, dedicated to God, once held high social status and



were well respected. But now they are deprived of their rights and dignity. Almost all of them are Dalits, with a majority belonging to the Madiga and Valmiki castes, two of the most underprivileged castes in India. The Devadasis of modern India are largely concentrated in parts of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Maharashtra. According to the National Human Rights Commission, in 2013, there were as many as 450,000 Devadasis in India. Official figures suggest that there are 23,000 Devadasis in Karnataka. These figures are based on the number of Devadasis registered to receive benefits. Other sources suggest that there may be as many as 100,000 in Karnataka.¹⁹

- “No one wants to marry a Devadasi,” she said staring blankly at the floor. “The practice may have stopped. But it won’t leave us. Not for a very long time. The superstition still persists. If you marry a Devadasi, you will be cursed for the rest of your life. Your village will suffer. Your crops will not. “I’d wonder why was I dedicated? Why did we become like this? I’d ask God these questions. The married women would go home and rest. Their husbands would take them out. I never rested. Not for a day. I toiled hard day and night. Who else will feed my children? Why did she choose us? Why was I born this way. I have no place here. Not amongst humans, not amongst Gods.”²⁰



History and evolution of short stay homes in Karnataka

Short Stay Homes for women and girls were introduced in Karnataka by the then Department of Social Welfare in 1969. The scheme was meant to provide temporary accommodation, maintenance and rehabilitative services to women and girls rendered homeless due to family discord, crime, violence, mental stress, social ostracism or being forced into prostitution and are in moral danger. Another scheme with similar objectives namely, Swadhar, - A scheme for Women in Difficult Circumstances was launched by the Department of Women and Child Department in 2001-02. In 2007, Centre for Market Research and Social Development,

19. <https://yourstory.com/2017/04/devadasis-india/>

20. (<https://www.thehindu.com/society/history-and-culture/the-goddess-of-small-things/>)

New Delhi conducted an evaluation to assess the performance of both the schemes. On the report of the evaluation committee, it was recommended to merge both the schemes for better functioning and outcomes with lesser administrative burdens and procedures. It also recommended that the new scheme should focus on establishing one such home in every district.²¹

The Centre Social Welfare Board ran the Short Stay Home with grant-in-aid to NGOs till the year 2016. In the year 2016, the merged Swadhar Greh was given to the Department of Women and Child Development run by the state government. However the Reception Centre and the State Home for Women continue to be run by the Department of Women and Child Welfare. A directory of Shelter Homes in North Karnataka is provided in the annexure.



Table 1: District wise data - Violence Against Women in North Karnataka²²

Sl. No.	District/ Area	Rape	Attempt to Rape	Kidnapping & Abduction_ Total	Dowry Deaths	Assault on Women with intent to outrage her Modesty_ Total	Insult to the Modesty of Women	Cruelty by Husband or his Relatives	Abetment of Suicides of Women	Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961	Total Crimes against Women
1	Bagalkot	12	1	12	2	153	0	43	0	30	254
2	Belagavi District	14	0	47	2	173	6	149	14	14	425
3	Bellari	15	0	32	13	106	1	57	1	69	306
4	Bidar	9	0	15	10	88	14	126	11	30	305
5	Vijayapura	22	1	32	10	140	0	134	13	3	360
6	Davanagere	14	2	45	4	182	2	77	6	49	385
7	Dharwad	4	0	21	2	34	0	34	0	0	95
8	Gadag	7	0	2	0	49	0	21	0	4	85
9	Kalaburgi	16	1	35	10	139	11	109	8	39	374
10	Haveri	15	0	17	2	47	0	30	8	14	135
11	Hubballi Dharwad City	7	0	21	3	32	2	60	3	0	135
12	Koppal	12	0	25	3	52	0	39	0	0	133
13	Raichur	17	2	11	8	223	2	150	6	60	480
14	Yadgiri	7	1	9	2	138	0	59	8	15	240
15	Belagavi City	3	0	13	3	73	4	71	7	25	201
16	Total District(s)	174	8	337	74	1629	42	1159	85	352	3913

Note: Figures are in number; The districts are police districts and also include special police unit. Therefore, these may be different from revenue districts; Source: Crime in India 2014, National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).

21. <http://www.cmsd.co.in/2014/07/project-evaluation-of-swadhar-short.html>

22. <http://ncrb.nic.in/StatPublications/CII/...> Source: data.gov.in/catalog/district-wise-crimes-committed-against-women

Table 2: Government of Karnataka Women and Child Welfare Department Schemes for Women and Girls

Scheme	Objectives	Beneficiaries	Eligibility
Karnataka Mahila Abhivrudhi Yojane	To ensure gender equality and to integrate women into the mainstream of development	Women	All Women
Kittur Rani Chennamma Award	To encourage women and voluntary institutions/individuals who work for the development of women's welfare	Individuals & Institutions	Individuals and institutions working for women welfare and development
Scheme of assistance to women for taking up job oriented courses	The scheme is being rebuilt to provide modern courses that provides job opportunities	Women/girls	All women/girls
Santhwana Scheme	To assist women who are victims of domestic violence, rape, sexual abuse and dowry harassment	Women	Women who are victims of domestic violence, rape, sexual abuse and dowry harassment
Skill Development Programme	To empower women	Women	Financial assistance to a maximum extent of Rs.10,000/- per inmate for individual training. Children who have passed SSLC are eligible to pursue diploma courses in industrial training institutes
Scheme of financial assistance for re-marriage of destitute widows and marriage of Devadasis	To empower women	Widows/Deva-dasis	Age between 18-35 years. Domicile of Karnataka for more than 2 years Suitor should be above 21 at the time of submitting the application and should have a permanent source of income of not less than Rs.500/month
Stree Shakti Programme	To strengthen the process of economic development of rural women and create a conducive environment for social change	Women	Revolving fund of Rs. 5000/- Kit materials worth Rs. 6000 consisting of registers, trunk for keeping registers and other documents of the group.

Alternative safe spaces for survivors of violence

A number of NGOs provide privately run shelter homes for women. Most of the organizations which run shelter homes in North Karnataka are headed by Lingayath men who are also powerful politically. Some Christian organizations also provide temporary shelter for women in distress. In Dharwad, Isabella Xavier, runs a short home stay without government funding. The religious sisters in Manvi run health programmes for women, but also help women by accommodating them at the time of distress. However, in the FGDs in North Karnataka, women spoke about the community playing a very important role in rehabilitating women who are victims of domestic violence, especially in the rural areas. The women had no idea of the concept of Short

Stay Homes. They explained that they would approach the village elders who would reconcile women back to their families. North Karnataka is also an area where child marriage is rampant. "My husband was beating up my daughter, and I thought the best way to put an end to it was to get her married" said Sunandamma when we asked her why she got her daughter married at the age of 11.

Women are becoming aware of One Stop Crisis Centers which are now gaining priority in All Women Police Stations. Sub Inspector Hafisa (name changed) spoke about the crisis centre as 'a centre which will look at all problems that women face when they are out of home.' They will get medical aid and a safe place with counseling and emotional support. They will get enough support until they decide how to go about in their life"

Table 3: Alternative Safe Spaces In North Karnataka

Name of the organization	Address	Service
Pavithra Hrudaya Samaja Kalyan Sangh	Sacred Heart Church Mudgal, Raichur	Crisis intervention for women, Old age home.
Aasare Angavikalara kshemabhivruddhi Samsthe	Kappattanavara building, Billatti Road, Shirahatti Taluka, Gadag District.	Home for physically challenged girls, Crisis intervention for women.
Bhuvaneshwari Seva Samasthe	Kireshur Building, Near Gandhi Circle, Gadag. 582101	Crisis intervention , temporary shelter for women for women
Aarathi Vikas mahila Samithi	Plot No. 24, Channabasava Nagar, Bidar	Old age home.
Aasara Social Welfare & Education Society	Plot No. 28, Behind Parsi Cemetry, Sadashiva Nagar, Belgaum	Counseling for women, crisis intervention.
Rahat Women & Child Welfare Development Association	Asar Galli, near Roshan Gate, Bijapur – 586 101	Temporary shelter, old age home
Janapara Rural Development Society	Raghunath Nilaya Shejwada Kaiga Road, Karwar	Crisis intervention, temporary shelter, old age home

Aims and scope of the research

1. Enrich the existing body of knowledge around shelter homes and the women that approach them.
2. Gather evidence on the current state of shelter homes, including from the residents' lived experiences of these homes, identify the gaps and advocate for improvements thereof.
3. Build/enhance perspectives and capacities for better access to rights and entitlements:
3. Survivors' understanding about their experience of violence
4. Survivors' knowledge and agency about their rights/entitlements

The research was conducted in about 75 shelter homes across 5 states and included:

- Qualitative interviews with survivors of violence
- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with shelter home staff, police, judiciary, policy makers, One Stop Crisis Centre staff, counselors, other NGOs doing referrals, legal aid services
- Focus Group Discussions with youth, men, construction workers, sex workers, middle class women, domestic workers, counselors, family members, LGBT etc.
- Engagement with former and current shelter home residents as well as staff of shelter homes

Key Activities

The following activities were undertaken by the central research team and the state teams as part of the research:

- Tool designing (ethical protocols, consent form, questionnaire for women survivors, questions for KIIs, FGD guidelines, case study format and reporting format)
- Engagement with ethical committee
- Pilot testing (including sharing with shelter home residents and incorporating their feedback)
- Designing modules and training of researchers
- Scoping (identifying SH, obtaining permissions, locating different categories of women)
- Literature review (national , state reviews)
- Field work engaging with SH staff and residents
- Interviews, KIIs, FGDs
- Data analysis, report writing and review meetings

Expected results

1. Knowledge and perspective

- Evidence-based knowledge on the services, conditions and infrastructure of at least 150 female survivors of violence in 75 shelter homes in 5 states of India
- A map of linkages of female survivors of violence in shelter homes to a range of entitlement-based services

- A compilation of national/international best practices at shelter homes for women
- Publication of 5 states' reports and a summary report.

2. Collaborations and partnerships

- Between women's groups and networks working with survivors and shelter home residents
- Community town-halls with survivors of violence and other relevant stakeholders
- A blueprint for sustained engagement by women's groups - with stakeholders like shelter home staff, current residents, women's groups etc. that can be measured through workshops/ trainings/ meetings/ dialogues etc. held with them.

3. Advocacy

- Rights-based and gender-sensitive approach, among policy makers and implementers, to shelter home services
- Greater awareness among survivors of violence on their rights/entitlements
- At local and national levels for institutions of Standard Operating Procedures/ Protocols in Shelter Homes
- Presentations of the recommendations from the study at relevant platforms in the respective states and at the national level.

(Source : Research design developed by the central research team, for the Shelter Study).



Francoise Bosteels: The Dolls Speak

Taking My Power Back

I am a woman, proud and strong
 I refuse to remain a victim
 I will not be silent anymore

For

I am holding my head high
 And I am taking my power back
 I am becoming a butterfly
 emerging from a cocoon
 I am ready to spread my wings
 I have found my voice again

For

I am holding my head high
 And I am taking my power back !

<http://www.verahouse.org/survivors-poetry>

Research perspectives

The research followed feminist methodology which facilitated spaces for women's experiences and voices. The ultimate aim is to raise consciousness and enable and empower the survivors to take charge of their lives with control over their sexuality, bodily integrity and entitlements. The methods employed were meant to challenge hierarchies and dichotomies.

Training in methods and tools

Research tools were developed by the central research team and a training was conducted by Amrita Nandy, the principal researcher, in January 2018 at Bangalore. The following tools were presented and discussed in detail:

1. Questionnaires for in-depth interviews (IDIs) with survivors
2. Key informant interviews (KII or interviews with stakeholders)
3. Focussed Group Discussions (FGDs)
4. Consent form

5. Ethical guidelines

6. A short note on feminist research.

The Ethics in field research, privacy and confidentiality, consent forms, understanding issues through FGDs, FGD guide KII guide, note taking etc were explored in detail. Some of the tools like IDIs were taken up for demonstration through role plays.

After the research training in January 2018, the data collectors initiated a process of building rapport with the shelter homes in the five districts of Koppal, Gadag, Hubli, Dharwad and Bagalkot. The districts and the Shelter Homes were first identified. The districts are Koppal, Gadag, Dharwad, Bagalkot and Belgaum. The organizations were approached for permission and the data collectors also conducted programmes to build rapport with the organizations.

Data collection and analysis

Data Collection: The data for the study was collected through both primary and secondary sources.



FGD with Visthar, Koppal



FGD with Sadhana, Dharwad

Primary data

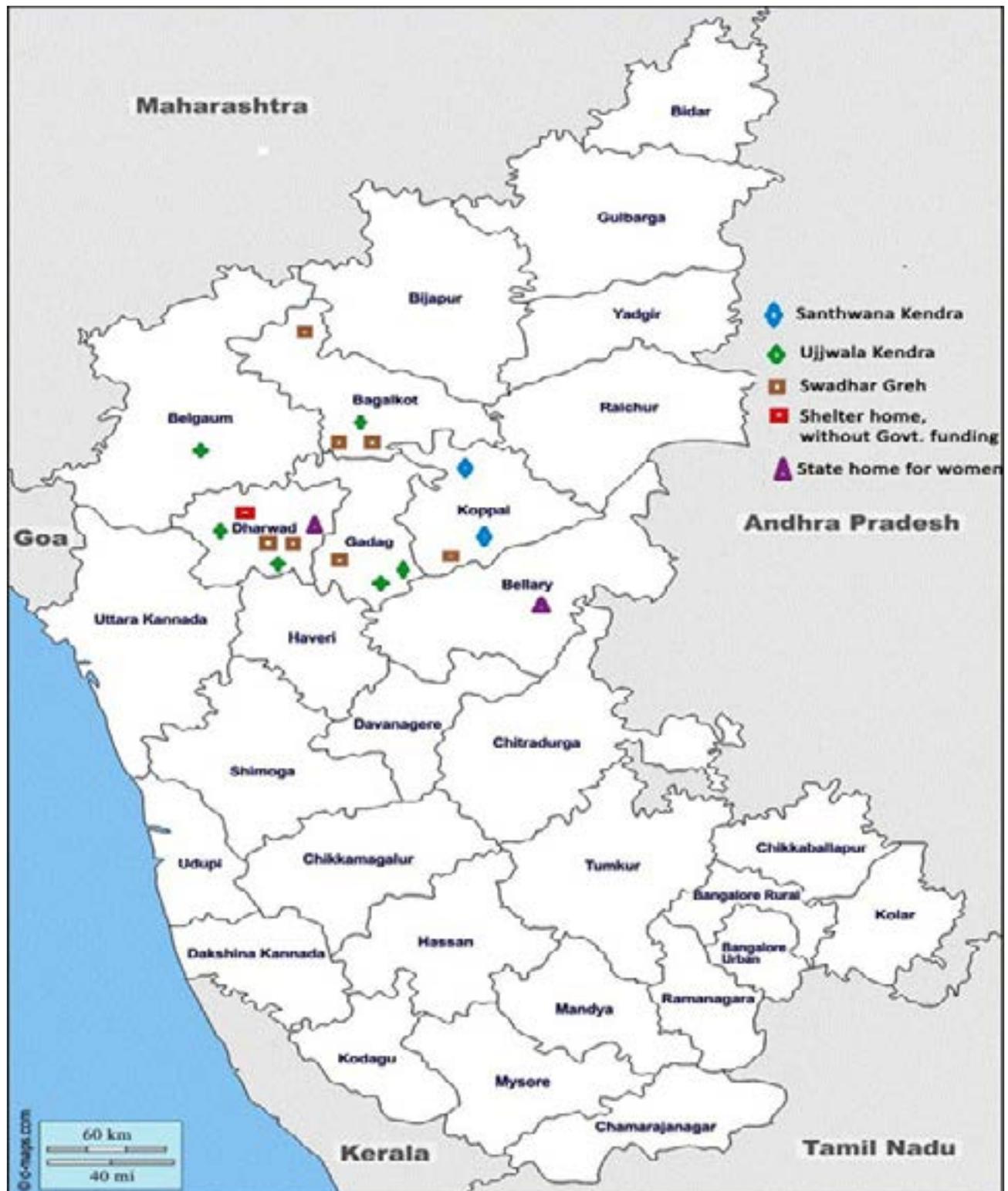
- A semi-structured questionnaire was administered separately to women in distress staying in the homes and the staff working in the centers.
- Interviews of support services used by these institutions such as the police, counselors from Family

Counselling Centres, and other centers who refer women to these homes.

Secondary data

- Publicity materials, progress reports, evaluation studies and records.
- Opinions of NGOs and community based organizations in the districts who have used the services.

Shelter Homes taken up for the study



- Presentation by each state team on information about violence against women and shelter homes in the state/districts.
- Review/critique of state/central shelter schemes functional in state.
- Findings from research (based on IDIs, KIIs and FGDs).
- Action' initiatives and recommendations
- Sharing by each state team on challenges and progress.

The comments and suggestions from the central research team and fellow researchers were of great help in finalising the report.

Table 4: Profile of Participants

Research activity	Participants	Violence faced by participants
In-depth interviews	18	Domestic violence Polygamy Trafficking Homelessness Denial of education Child marriage Desertion Physical & verbal abuse Gujjar marriage
	Details/ role of the Key Informants	
Key Informant interviews	8	SH-Counsellors Case workers Founder-NGO PSI-Mahila Project Officer-Shelter Home Counsellor of Santhwana Kendra
Focus Group discussions	3	Devadasi women NGO -Staff Transgenders

Table 5: Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

Sl.No.	Designation of person interviewed	Organization
1	Case worker	Sunitha Welfare Association, Gadag
2	Counsellor	Hunasemarad Rural Development society, Gadag
3	Project Director	Sneha Educational & Developmental Society, Hubli
4	Social Worker	Sneha Educational & Developmental Society, Hubli
5	Founder	Sadhana Women & Child Development Society, Dharwad
6	Police Sub-Inspector-Mahila	Mahila Urban Police station, Hubli
7	Counsellor	Santhwana Kendra, Kushtagi, Koppal District
8	Project Officer	Women Welfare Society, Belgaum

Table 6: Profile of IDI participants

Sl. No.	Assigned Name	Age	Religion	Caste	Class
1	Zabeena	32	Muslim	NA	Poor
2	Mumtaz	19	Muslim	NA	Low income
3	Kanaka	20	Hindu	Maratta	Lower middle class
4	Sunitha	20	Hindu	Madiga	Poor
5	Gangamma	32	Hindu	OBC	Low income
6	Chaitra	23	Hindu	SC	Poor
7	Eshwari	25	Hindu	OBC	Poor
8	Mahalaxmi	35	Hindu	SC	Low income
9	Renuka	32	Hindu	NA	Poor
10	Shobha	20	Hindu	SC	Poor
11	Meharunnisa	20	Muslim	NA	Poor
12	Huligavva	25	Hindu	Kuruba (OBC)	Poor
13	Shakuntala	24	Hindu	Lambani (ST)	Poor
14	Rasheeda	18	Muslim	NA	Poor
15	Surekha	32	Hindu	SC	Low income
16	Saraswathi	30	Hindu	SC	Poor
17	Anitha	23	Hindu	OBC	Poor
18	Nikhat Fathima	28	Muslim	NA	Low income

Challenges

Challenges faced: One of the biggest challenge was to enter the shelter homes without a permission letter from the Women and Child Welfare Department, Karnataka State. We have not been able to enter and interview survivors staying in government run institutions like the reception centre and state homes. Even the police officers talked to the researchers informally and were not willing to sign consent forms. Another challenge was privacy during interviews. The shelter home staff was present during most of the interviews inhibiting the interaction.

During KII, the staff were hesitant to divulge information. Either they were new to the post, or did not have permission of the head of the institution. Hence

researchers could not access and assess documentation and case records of the survivors. We could not meet survivors who have left the shelter homes as they had no track of them after they left the institution.

Research Stocktaking Meeting: A stock taking meeting was held on 19-20 June in New Delhi. The agenda included sharing of progress made so far in terms of application of IDIs, FGDs and KIIs, and an analysis of findings and recommendations thus far. The meeting also discussed challenges and ways forward. Timelines for completion of the research were also drawn up.

Research review meeting: A 2-day review meeting of all involved in the shelter home research was held in Bangalore on the 26th and 27th of October 2018.

Forms of violence

Data was collected from short stay homes in Gadag and Koppal districts and the twin cities of Hubli & Dharwad and Belgaum. Three of the organizations which ran the Swadhar Greh project also ran the Ujjwala project. Domestic violence, devadasi system, trafficking, physical and verbal abuse, denial of education, polygamy, child marriage and desertion are the types of violence prevalent in the districts taken up for study. There were also women who were abandoned by their family because of mental illness. Most women who were at the shelter homes were survivors of domestic violence.

North Karnataka, especially districts of Raichur, Belgaum, Koppal, Gadag and Dharwad were centres where the Devadasi system was practiced. There is also a huge Muslim community, which lives in poverty and we found a number of Muslim women in short stay homes who have been rendered homeless because of polygamy. We also came across young girls who came

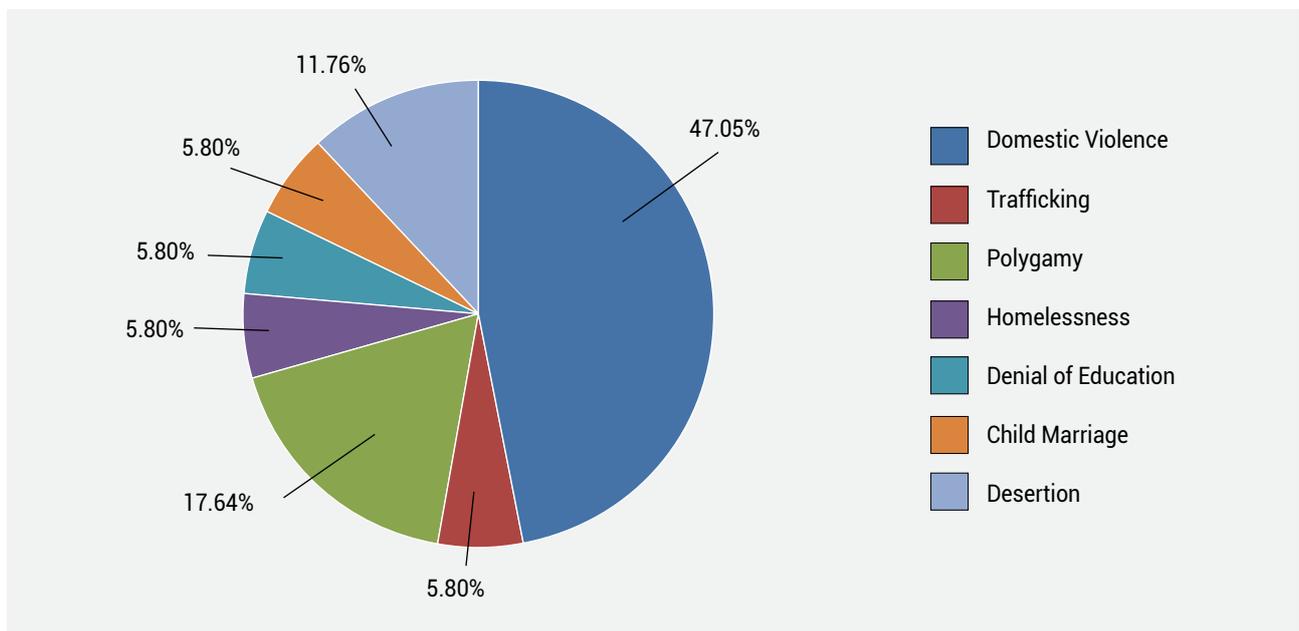
to the shelter homes because they had eloped with Hindu boys. They were in the shelter homes after a brief stay at the children’s home.

“Here there are many instances where Hindu girls elope with Muslim boys and Muslim girls fall in love with Hindu boys. We are against both. We separate them and see to it that they go back to their respective communities. We believe that Love jihad is real from our experience”, said the Director of an NGO in Gadag. His NGO runs both the Swadhar Greh and Ujjwala Schemes for women.

Shelter homes - a refuge for survivors

Women access short stay homes for relief from the violence they face at home. The two major kinds of violence that women face in North Karnataka are domestic violence and trafficking, and trafficking.

Fig.1: Types of violence



The myth of 'love jihad'

Girija, aged 16, belongs to the Madiga community. Her father worked in a local rice mill. She was the eldest of two siblings and studied in the local Kannada school. Girija was in love with Amir, a Muslim who lived in the same locality with his parents and two brothers. When Girija's father got to know about it, he warned her against continuing the affair and stopped sending Girija to school.

Girija and Amir eloped to Bangalore, with the little money he had saved from his daily earning. Amir, his father and his brothers used to earn by sewing torn gunny bags. After a few days in Bangalore, they decided to come back since they had no money left. They surrendered at the local police station seeking help.

The police sought the help of the NGO running the Swadhar Greh in the area, to shelter Girija after they filed a complaint on Amir for "kidnapping" Girija. Girija refused to stay in the home, saying that she wanted to be united with Amir.

The NGO, run by a powerful man from the dominant community, believed that Muslims in the area are converting Hindu girls by feigning love and marrying them ('love jihad'). He along with his counselors tried to convince Girija to give up Amir and marry someone from her own caste. Girija attempted suicide, and in the hospital, she complained that she is under the pressure of the staff of the shelter home and her parents to forget Amir.

Today, Girija is married to another man from her own community and is pregnant. Amir is still in jail. Her parents are willing to withdraw their complaint on Amir, provided Amir, his parents and brothers jointly give in writing that they will not disturb Girija in future.

The women spoke about physical, psychological, sexual and economic abuse they have faced. During data collection we spoke to young girls who said they had no choice as to whether and how long they should stay in the shelter homes. "I do not know when I will be let out" said Sara who was referred by the Child Rights Committee (CRC). Mumtaz, a Muslim, was 15 years old when she was sent to the girl's home. After her 18th birthday, she was referred to the shelter home because she was not eligible to stay back at the girl's home. "I miss my friends" she told the facilitators.

Zabeena (32) walked out of home after her husband blamed her for not adjusting to his second wife. Zabeena feels that there is no other way but to go back to her husband and adjust to his second wife. Zabeena left her four children behind when she left home. Her eldest son who is 13 years old works with his father who collects old gunny bags and sells them. Her other children also don't go to school.

"My parents want me to be reconciled with my husband. How long can I stay here. My children need me, and I am willing to adjust to my husband's second wife", says Zabeena.

Women and girls rescued under the Ujjwala scheme are also 'beneficiaries' of the short stay home. The Ujjwala scheme is funded by the central government for women and children who are vulnerable to or are victims of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation. Renuka (32) feels that her life changed after the police brought her to the shelter home. It has been two years now and she feels hopeful of a positive future.

Accessibility

Most of the short stay homes are located in Taluk headquarters and are not accessible to women in rural areas. Women in the rural areas are not aware of the presence of the short stay homes. When Mahalakshmi, 35 years returned to her village after a fight with her husband, the villagers could not track her parents who had migrated to Bengaluru in search of work. "We kept her in our homes for some time, but she left, not wanting to be a burden to any of us". When her parents came back, they found that she had not returned to her husband. "We would have sent her to a short stay home if we had known", Says Somamma, Lakshmi's neighbour and Panchayat member.

Gujjar marriage

23 year old Anitha was happy to marry Gaja through a Gujjar Marriage. Her mother received Rs. 50,000/- from Gaja's parents. She was glad to be married. "My mother need not worry about my dowry or marriage expenses", she thought. Girls in her community hardly got married without paying some money, and she was glad that her parents could marry her off without spending much. Gaja did not speak the local language and she did not know Hindi. But she was full of hope that she can learn and adjust to Gaja's life style. People murmured that her marriage was a "Gujjar" or "Gujara Maduve". She grinned, without knowing that "Gujjar" does not refer to any community, but a practice, tradition and style of marriage across North Karnataka and Uttar Kannada Districts, where impoverished girls, deserted women, widows and single women from lower castes are sold under the guise of marriage.

After marriage, she was taken to Mumbai, where her husband and brothers owned a hardware shop. After a few days, she was shocked when her husband's elder brother entered her bedroom. He told her that this was a normal practice in their community. Anitha refused and was beaten up. She was locked up in a small room which was located behind their hardware shop, and denied food for many days.

Her husband also started sending other customers to the room. She managed to contact her father through a customer and he came to Mumbai and brought her home. After a few months, her parents sent her to the short stay home in Vijayapura, where after extensive counseling, Anitha decided to continue her studies. She finished her B.Sc. and is now employed as a Counselor in the Ujjwala project run by the same NGO. She wants to continue her post graduation in social work and the NGO has also decided to support her.

Gujjar marriages are still taking place in the villages in north Karnataka. Their target is poor and alcoholic families. Some women have accepted that life and during festival seasons, they come back to the village. Some do not come back. Anitha has taken life as challenge and wants to continue in this field by providing support service to women in distress.

Even in the Taluk headquarters, the shelter homes are located in remote areas, far from hospitals, schools and market place. The staff find it difficult to answer questions raised by neighbours, especially when the police come to the shelter homes referring women for shelter.

Some short stay homes demanded identity cards from women who came to seek shelter. "We do not know if their need is genuine" said Maheshwari, counselor of the shelter home. However, the shelter homes did not deny shelter. "We keep an eye on them".

In an FGD with Devadasi women, the women reported being denied shelter. The first question they ask us is "Which community do you belong"? said Huligamma. "And once we tell them that we are from the Devadasi community, we are denied shelter". These women, who are now thrown out of their homes, find shelter in small temples dedicated to the goddesses. "However, we are not allowed into the Renukamba temple in Neer Marvi". Clarified Huligamma, trying to make us understand the caste dynamics enforced by the dominant community.

"We are not even thought of, when such schemes are evolved", said Neelamba, from the transgender community. "Even if we approach, they will only give us alms, not shelter. Moreover, it would be more traumatic because not all residents or staff would be sensitive to our needs".

In some of the homes, Aadhar cards were a criteria for admission. The staff were sympathetic, and did not refuse admission, but stressed on the need for some kind of identification card.

Facilities

Most of the shelter homes did not have adequate infrastructure. Some were run in small houses with inadequate facilities. The Swadhar Greh sanctions a rent of 50,000 or 30,000 per month depending on the area, but most short stay homes were in dilapidated buildings with minimum facilities. Though women spoke of positive experiences in terms of getting good food and other facilities. They were happy to share space even when there were fifteen women in one room.

Sexual violence

32 year old Surekha was married at the age of 12 years to her maternal uncle, Suresh. He was 24 years old at the time of marriage. Suresh's brother's marriage was also held at the same time. Her co-sister was about 18 years old. Her mother is an Anganwadi teacher at Muddebihala, Bijapur district and father is a small farmer. She has 3 brothers and 2 sisters.

6 months after her marriage, she attained puberty. She was studying in 7th class then. On attaining puberty, Surekha was sent to her husband's house at Basavehwara, Belgaum district. She was asked to continue her study and also take care of her grandparents, who were sick. Her husband's brother was an Engineer who works away from home. His wife used to stay back. During that time, Suresh developed a relationship with her and started ignoring Surekha. She was beaten up whenever she raised questions about his relationship with his sister in law.

Suresh was working in a wine shop. After 4 years of their marriage, he got a job as a conductor and shifted to Bangalore. Surekha was staying with her parents. In Bangalore, he had relationship with other women. So, her mother sent her to Bangalore. He used to bring many women home and Surekha had to cook and serve them. If she refused to do so, she was beaten up and subjected to sexual torture. Meanwhile, she became pregnant and gave birth to a baby boy and after two years one girl child.

Earlier her parents had a discussion about marrying her to her elder uncle. This became a problem later; he started torturing her though he got married to Surekha's sister. She was being sexually tortured by her husband as well as her uncle. "My husband inserted chapati rolling pin into my vagina", she said with tears flowing down her cheeks. She could not any more tolerate the horrid sexual violence. Her left eye and left ear were damaged due to the violent attacks by her husband. One day he poured kerosene on her to set her on fire. Somehow she escaped from there.

Once while watching a TV show which support women in distress, she noted their phone number and contacted the counselor there. She spoke to them. When her husband tried to set her on fire, she contacted the counselor and they sent police personnel to her house in Bangalore and took her to the Commissioner's office.

After counseling her, she was sent to a shelter home at Wilson garden in 2014. She stayed there for 8 days and her husband and her mother took her back. Surekha's mother wanted her to continue with her husband to protect the family honour. She even tried once to kill Surekha "My mother hit me on my head with the rolling pin". She was sad and could not stop crying while recounting her experience. For 18 years she tolerated the torture from her husband and natal family members and decided to put an end to it. She decided to walk out of her home with Ramesh, her husband's friend. Ramesh took her to his village and married her. Her mother came to know about this incident, and told her husband to kill her to safeguard their family honour. Ramesh and his family admitted her in the Ujjwala Kendra till she gets divorce from her first husband. They felt this is a safe place for her. If she stays out side, she would be killed by her family members.

Now her son is doing Engineering and daughter is in 9th class. For the last 2 years she is staying in the Ujjwala home. Here she feels supported. Periodical counseling is taking place. She is not sure of getting divorce from her first husband. She is worried whether Ramesh (second husband) will wait for her till she gets divorce. She wants to take up a job to earn money to fight her case.

Surekha feels that women survivors, who live in shelter homes should be allowed to take up jobs. Government should make speedy redressal mandatory, she says. Because, now she is confused as to whether she will get divorce from her husband. If she goes out from here she will be killed. She also said that TV programme on women's issues, should be in regional language. Then only women like her could easily access such services.

In the name of God: The Devadasi system

Renukamma, aged 39, was dedicated to the temple deity at the age of 9 in Sindanur, Raichur District. Her partner, Nanjappagowda a rich man in her village was very fond of her and took care of her initially. After the birth of her daughter, Hulgamma, her partner left her and she had to beg for a living. Tuesdays and Fridays people gave her some food with which she managed the whole week.

When a social worker who visited her village, pressurized her to send her daughter to school, she shut her door on her, 'My daughter is to be dedicated to the goddess' she retorted. "Curse will befall on me!". But the social worker returned everyday without fail and some days even shared her lunch with Renukamma. One day the social worker came home and told her that an act has been passed and the custom of "Devadasi" has been banned. She also told Renukamma, that dedicating her daughter was now an offence. "Now, send your daughter to school"

When Renukamma, could not pay the rent of Rs. 250 for her small house, the owner threw her out. Renukamma and her daughter were on the streets. She was so scared about where to stay at night. That day, when the social worker returned home, she took Renukamma and her daughter with her to an institution where they stayed for a while. Her daughter was admitted to "Bandhavi" a residential care for the girl children of Devadasis like her. "Now there is no need to dedicate her to the temple". Renukamma sighed a breath of relief.

In 2008, the social worker, Mokshamma, from Nava Jeevana Mahila Okuta (NGMO), applied for a house for her under the Rajiv Gandhi Housing Scheme. Thanks to her social worker friend, 380 Devadasis like her have a small house to live in. Her daughter now goes to college with the help of a scholarship. Renukamma gets a small pension and works as an agricultural labourer in the neighboring fields.

As Narrated by Mokshamma (NGMO)

Choices and options

The shelter homes serve the purpose of accommodating women in distress. However, the women do not have a "choice" of leaving the shelter home. "But I don't want to stay here" says Chetana who was rescued through the Ujjwala scheme, but the staff would not allow me to go. She felt isolated as she was kept in a separate room. 'They gossip about me' Mahalakshmi 35 years says, and does not feel comfortable in the shelter home. Mahalakshmi misses her son, who was sent to a boarding school. They refused to keep my son. Now I am trying to get a job in his school. The women in the shelter home, do not understand why their children are separated from them and fear prevails.

Though some of the shelter homes have skill training, it was basic tailoring and carpet making, which does not fetch much money. "It keeps us occupied, but I don't think it will fetch us money" says Chaitra, 23 years who is aspiring to take up maintenance job in her son's residential school. There are no job placements in the short stay homes. Nor do they network with other organizations with regards to job placements or training.



Francoise Bosteels: The Dolls Speak

Shelter homes for Trans Women: A distant dream ?

Singaraj was ten years old when his school complained to his parents about his peculiar behavior. His parents were agricultural coolie (daily wage workers) at the land lord's farm. His parents did not know how to handle him. His mother stopped him from school and took him with her to the farm and that was the end of Singaraj's schooling.

He lost his mother 3 years later. His sisters were married and his father took him to stay with his sisters. His uncles told his father that they cannot keep Singaraj with them and his father was forced to put him in the boy's hostel. Singaraj had to continue his school which was compulsory if he were to stay at the hostel. Singaraj was mocked by his classmates who also used to sexually abuse him. One day he escaped from the boy's hostel and took a bus to Mulbagal, where he did odd jobs, and slept in the corridors of the government school. The villagers took pity on him and allowed him to stay in the village.

It was time for the village festival and a cultural troop landed up in the village. It was there he met Smitha who was like him. Within five days friendship grew between the two and Smitha told him about how she wanted to be recognized as a female and had her name changed. Singaraj was happy to meet Smitha and wanted to accompany her to Bangalore. After the village festival, Singaraj accompanied Smitha to Bangalore. It was Smitha who suggested that he take the name of Suma. "Suma is my sister's name" she explained to Singaraj. Singaraj (Suma) felt comfortable with Smitha and soon learnt to dress up like her.

Though Suma took shelter in some organizations initially and worked on HIV/AIDS prevention programmes and earned money, shelter was always a problem. There were times when friends accommodated her but there were also times when she slept in quiet corners of the streets of Bangalore. It was difficult to accompany Smitha everywhere she went with her cultural troop. "I don't want to be a burden to her", she said.

Once, when she landed up in Bangalore late night at the Satellite Bus stand on Mysore Road, the police would not allow her to remain or sleep at the bus stand. She was told to go to an orphanage nearby, but the NGO, did not allow her to stay inside, though it sheltered women. They were kind enough to allow me to sleep in their compound". They even gave me a mat. " This place is only for women!!" "There are shelter homes in Shivajinagar and Banashankari, but they don't accommodate us. They refuse to recognize us as women. We should have shelter homes specifically for transgender community and it would be good if they allow us to run these shelter homes".

Narrated by Suma (name changed), who now works with an organization in Bangalore. She is yet to take a house for rent and continues to stay with friends.

Shelter Homes lack an interdisciplinary approach to Providing livelihood options and continuous counselling. Women residents recount their experiences of working as domestic workers, or living on the charity of temples or mosques, or being forced into begging for subsistence.

Most of the short stay homes, as discussed earlier, are run by dominant Lingayat community and do not serve meat. Almost all Hindu festivals are celebrated, and though some residents were Muslim, Muslim festivals were not celebrated.

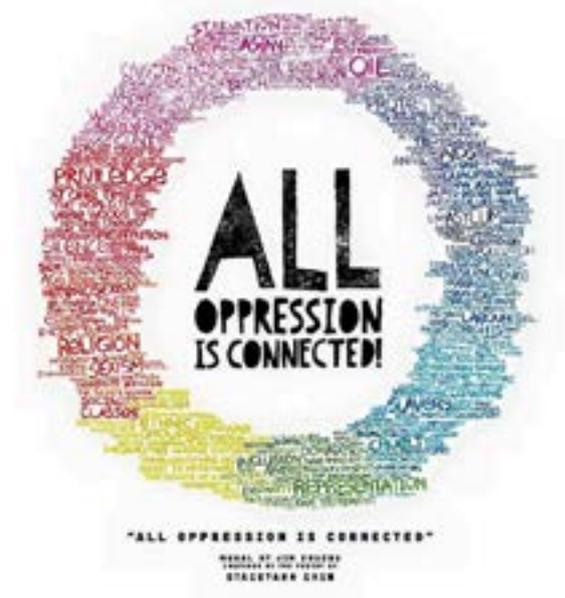
Stereotyping of survivors

The staff of the shelter homes has stereotyped ideas about what is good for the survivors. They think that sex work is immoral and most of the time, the notion is to free these girls and rehabilitate them either through marriage or back into their family. They see the survivors as victims and beneficiaries and not as persons with agency. The staff were keen on the safety of the women who came to the shelter homes, especially those rescued under the Ujjwala scheme. However, most of the counsellors were young and lacked feminist counselling skills.

A day in the life of a shelter home resident

We wake up at 6 am in the morning. After the personal cleansing rituals, we do prayer, yoga and exercises. This is followed with tea and breakfast. Daily around 10 am, they take our photographs to give to DC's office. Till 1.00 pm we attend tailoring classes. After lunch, till 4.00 pm some of us take rest, others watch T.V. Evening we will have cultural programme or watch TV. We need these kinds of shelter homes for women. If one woman is sent out from her house, she needs a safe place to stay. Nobody understands women's problems.

– Mumtaz, 19 years



Intersecting oppressions

The Short Stay Homes are not receptive to the needs of neither the Devadasi nor the Transgender community. After the enactment of the Karnataka Devadasis (prohibition of Dedication) Act 1982, one of the problems faced by them was that of shelter. In an FGD with the Devadasi women, they reported that they are denied shelter if they disclose their caste and community status. Most of the short stay homes look at Devadasi women as sex workers and refuse to accommodate them.

In another FGD with the transgender community, the members said that they are not even thought of when it comes to shelter. They are sure that they will be discriminated when it comes to seeking shelter, though they have not approached the shelter homes yet. In most of the shelter homes, residents who are rescued from trafficking through the Ujjwala scheme are kept separately as they are thought to be “influencing others to indulge in ‘immoral’ activities.

Convergence of services

There is no convergence of services except for the Ujjwala and Swadhar Greh. Women and girls who are survivors of trafficking and rescued under the “Ujjwala” scheme were rehabilitated. Referrals from the Child Rights Commission and girls were shifted from the girls’ home to these centers after the age of 18. However there is no networking with other government or private organizations.

Rehabilitation strategies

Most of the short stay homes did not have concrete rehabilitation strategies. The homes sheltered the women, and if provided with the address of the family, they tried to reconcile them with the family. In one shelter home, they conducted marriages for the girls who have no parents. “Since they have no parents and nobody is there to take care, we will search for match and conduct marriages” said Sneha (name changed), Project Director. In some cases where Hindu girls were involved with Muslim boys, the NGO tried to get the young women married to Hindu men and avoided inter religious marriages. The staff claimed that it was for the “good” of the women because Muslims did not have a consistent livelihood.

The short stay homes had short term vocational courses, like carpet making and tailoring, but the women were not sent out to work. There was a feeling that these short courses were done as per requirement of the scheme and not with the purpose of rehabilitating the women. There were no placements after the women finished their course. There is also no community involvement in the functioning of these short stay homes. “If I have a job, I could earn something and pay for my court case process. So, Shelter home should allow us to work outside”, said Surekha, who is seeking speedy legal process.

Safety versus autonomy

Most of the Shelter Homes imposed restrictions on the residents. The residents were not allowed to go out without the accompanying staff. There were young girls in these centers, who had to be produced in the local courts and were kept in these homes. The staff are very particular about the safety of these girls. The facilitators found that the approach of the staff of the shelter homes was not rights-based, and the survivors had

no say in their rehabilitation. The women and girls who were rescued under the Ujjwala scheme, had to wait until their cases were decided in court.

Residents of shelter homes lack suitable avenues for making complaints regarding the bad functioning of shelter homes, making shelter homes akin to prisons for residents, leading to loss of personhood and autonomy.



Fully Alive

I will not die an unlived life.
I will not live in fear of falling or catching fire.
I choose to inhabit my days,
to allow my living to open me,
to make me less afraid,
more accessible,
to loosen my heart until it becomes a wing,
a torch, a promise.
I choose to risk my significance;
to live so that which came to me as seed
goes to the next as blossom
and that which came to me as blossom,
goes on as fruit.

– *Dawna Markova*

This study has helped us gain better and deeper understanding of the concerns of shelter homes and the survivors who seek shelter. These include understaffed facilities, irregular and improper fund disbursements, unavailability of qualified service providers (health/counseling/legal) and emergency services, absence of a rights based counselling approach, inadequate documentation, poor referral and rehabilitation, absence of coordination with the state for communication of guidelines and administration of the homes and restricted avenues for relationship building with the neighboring community .

The shelter home residents had several concerns with regard to admission, stay and release. Several survivors are refused admission without a referral. Mother- child separation deters survivors from seeking shelter. No communication about the duration of stay, non-recognition of survivors' freedom of mobility as right, inability to earn a living during stay at home, discrimination and harassment by staff, social stigma, police attitude denying shelter homes on the pretext that it would encourage women to abandon households, denial of shelter to those with mental illnesses/health issues, lack of facilities to provide healthy food, vocational training, preparation of exit plan without considering the future of the survivors, lack of confidentiality, and indoctrination of young girls to marry on the basis of caste thus depriving them of choice, are the several issues faced by current and former residents, and those that could not access shelter homes.

Based on these findings, we make the following recommendations to the state and civil society organizations:

1. Awareness building: The study revealed that Government officials lack awareness on various laws and policies concerning women. So, Governments and civil society organizations should take necessary measures to raise awareness on gender based violence against women and the existing laws and schemes and the procedures to avail them. Besides, there needs to be a

clear understanding among the public and the survivors about the procedures related to the shelter home schemes of the state government.

2. Facilities and accessibility: In most of the short stay homes taken up for the study women were housed in buildings with inadequate infrastructure and facilities even though the rent for these houses ranged between Rs. 30,000 - 50,000 per month. Most of the shelter homes had just 2 toilets and 2 bathrooms for 40 women staying in the home. A small room had 4 beds with no place for luggage. There were no fans (the average temperature in North Karnataka ranges between 42 -48 degrees celsius). Most of the homes did not have a separate room, where counseling could be done confidentially. In a home where there were 3 rooms, one room was occupied by the resident superintendent. There is no provision for a cook in the revised Swadhar Greh project.

3. Counselling and other support services: Shelter Homes should offer support in all matters including psychological counseling, legal assistance, and employment opportunities . If the survivors are capable to do work, they should be allowed so that they can earn during their stay in shelter homes.

4. Rehabilitation Strategies: The vocational training offered in shelter homes should challenge stereotypes. Residents should be provided with trainings like mobile repair, driving and basic computer skills. Ensure that residents have a choice in relation to their own rehabilitation. Reconciliation with family may not always be in the best interests of survivors of violence. The staff should be empowered to look for new avenues to rehabilitate the survivors based on their need. Vocational training for survivors should be designed keeping in mind the nature and duration of their stay for it to be useful. It appears that the same kind of training gets repeated. If the survivors are capable to do work they should be provided opportunities so that they can earn during their stay in shelter home.

5. Perspectives and skills of the shelter home staff: The staff should be updated regularly on counselling skills, especially feminist counselling and legislations. It should be mandatory for staff capacity building on gender and other laws. The approach of the staff of the shelter homes towards survivors should be “rights based” and the survivors should be allowed to choose the way ahead. We found that the staff force survivors to adhere to the decisions taken by them. As reported earlier, in one case the staff decided themselves that the survivor is a victim of ‘love jihad’.

6. Right to choice : Some short stay homes do not allow visitors on regular intervals. Homes cite practical problems as the need for restrictions. Homes should not be mandated to function as jails and women who come in due to difficult circumstances in their lives should have the freedom to leave when they choose to.

7. Child care facilities: Almost all homes allow children to stay with their mothers up to a certain age. They are separated from their mothers at the age of 8. This needs to be relooked as women’s lives are intrinsically linked to their children’s lives and vice versa.

8. Identity and inclusiveness: Some shelter homes demand Aadhar or any other identity card (like the voter’s ID) as a prerequisite for admission. The guidelines/instructions for the admission policy says that the woman should be issued a photo ID card and attempt should be made to obtain her Aadhar later. This is because they do not trust the survivor. However, it is not possible that every woman will carry her identity card with her. Hence women should be allowed admission even in the absence of an identity card. Aadhar being mandatory for admission into shelter homes should be done away for LBT and Devadasi survivors. Their right to right to access shelter homes to be recognized and implemented.

9. Community campaigns: Civil Society Organizations and the Government departments should undertake sustained campaigns against violence on women involving all stakeholders.

10. Legal redressal: Speedy legal redressal mechanisms to be in place. Survivors should be made aware of the procedures and implications.



Dolls Speak on Violence against Women. Exhibition by Francoise Bosteels at the review meeting in Bangalore

The concerns brought to light by the study will be the foundational ground for taking future steps of enhancing awareness and capacities of stakeholders, ensuring survivors better access to rights and entitlements, and addressing gender based violence in the domestic sphere and the community.

As a next step the study also expects to form alliances between women's groups working with survivors and shelter home residents and create awareness among survivors on their rights and entitlements. Our next steps include the following :

- A north Karnataka region sharing with survivor-participants of the research and women's organizations.
- Translation, publication and dissemination of the report
- A state-level consultation bringing together women's groups, shelter homes and organisations that run 'safe spaces' to reimagine shelter homes
- A shelter home' envisioning exercise by/with survivors using art and theatre
- Further research especially focusing on Devadasi women and sex workers
- Perspective building and skills development programmes for survivors with sessions on their rights and entitlements, gender sensitization, legal literacy, art therapy and so on (at both shelter homes for women in distress and for survivors living outside shelter homes)
- Trainings for shelter home staff to enhance perspectives and skills in gender and rights, legal literacy, self-care and so on
- Build solidarity with state authorities through consultations
- Connect with and revitalize the larger LCN community.
- Exposure visits to model shelter homes and documentation of best practices in Karnataka.



Francoise Bosteels: *The Dolls Speak*

I Rise

Out of the huts of history's shame I rise

Up from a past that's rooted in pain I rise

I'm a black ocean, leaping and wide,
Welling and swelling I bear in the tide.
Leaving behind nights of terror and fear

I rise

Into a daybreak that's wondrously clear I rise

Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.

I Rise. I Rise. I Rise.

– *Maya Angelou*

Shelter Homes try to provide female survivors of violence with safe shelter with programs that intend to empower them. However, the organizational need to maintain order and discipline is often in conflict with the goal to enable women to realize their personal dignity. Deeply entrenched patriarchal and casteist paradigms, structures and culture reaffirm popular notions that women are dependent and lacking power. When women are admitted into shelter homes they become subjects of control and surveillance, though these are the conditions that women seek to escape. Shelter Homes tend to replicate controlling environments that women are attempting to flee. This can be addressed by sensitization of the staff and survivors and capacity building for counselling which do not take away the agency of women.

Along with the recommendations given above, there is a need for a sustained community campaign to resist violence against women and ensure their entitlements. We need to break the cycle of perpetration and victimhood by transforming shelter homes from mere safe havens, to playing an active role in resisting violence and violations of the rights of women. This expands the reach of shelter home programs into engagement with systemic issues to evolve as sensitive and rooted institutions. Towards this, we need to re-vision and re-establish shelter homes as spaces for women to live with dignity, finding their voices, choices and rights.

Scream

So that one day
A hundred years from now
Another sister will not have to
Dry her tear wondering
Where in history
She lost her voice

- Jasmin Kaur

North Karnataka - Participant Profiles

Sl. No	Assigned Name	Age	Marital status & children	Class/Caste/ educational background	Violence faced	Current residence and employment status	Duration of stay in shelter home (at the time of interview)
Current SH Residents							
1	Zabeena	32	Married; 4 children	Poor family; Muslim Community, no schooling	-domestic violence -Polygamy -Torture from husband	Living in Ujjwala Centre	2 ½ months
2	Mumtaz	19	Child marriage- Love marriage	Lower income family, Muslim community, 9th class discontinued	Natal family: Filed a case against her by parents Marital family- threat due to inter religious marriage	Living in Ujjwala centre	Since 1 month
3	Kanaka	20	Not married	Lower middle class family, Hindu Marata; Completed PUC and pursuing Para-Medical Course	Natal Family: Against her love and forcing her to get married to another boy, not sending her to continue study	Living In Ujjwala centre	1 month
4	Sunitha	20	Not Married	Poverty; Madiga(SC); Completed PUC and pursuing Para-medical course	Natal Family: Parents against her marriage	Living In Ujjwala centre	7 months
5	Gangamma	32	Married	Lower income family; OBC, Not studied	Deserted by husband, torture by husband not having children; abandoned by natal family	Living in Ujjwala Centre Cooking in the centre	10 months
6	Chaitra	23	Married; 2 children	Poor family; No schooling, SC	Deserted by husband, doesn't know where he is now, abandoned by siblings	Staying in Swadhar Greha	10 months
7	Eshwari	25	Married; 2 children	Poor family; Completed schooling; OBC	Domestic violence; deserted by husband, torture by brother	Staying in Swadhar Greh	5 months

contd..

8	Mahalaxmi	35	Married, 3 children	Lower income family; SC, 3rd Std.	Marital Family: Suspicion, wife beating, house arrest and Life threat by husband	Staying in Sadhana shelter home	1 month
9	Renuka	32	Married; 2 children	Poor family, belongs to Hindu Community, no schooling	Domestic violence, Survivor of Sex trafficking.	Staying in Ujjwala Centre, working as cook in the same shelter home.	2 years
10	Shobha	20	Not married	Poverty; SC, no schooling	Sex trafficking; street child; homeless before coming to shelter home	Staying in Ujjwala centre-want to work –searching for employment	1 year
11	Meharunnisa	20	Not married	Poverty, belongs to Muslim Community, no schooling	Sex trafficking; street child; homeless before coming to shelter home	Staying in Ujjwala centre, working in a factory	1 year
12	Huligavva	25	Married, 1 child	Poverty, belongs to Kuruba, schooling up to 3rd std.	She was child labour, love marriage, domestic violence and deserted by husband, filed a case against her husband.	At present staying in Swadhar greh	2 months. Before coming to swadhar greh, she was referred to Santhwana Kendra.
13	Shakuntala	24	Married, 3 children	Poverty, Lambani, no schooling	Domestic violence, health problem, torture by husband for divorce.	Staying in Swadhar Greh	2 months. Before coming to Swadhar home, stayed at Ujjwala centre for 6 months .
14	Rasheeda	18	Not married Poor family	Poverty, studied up to 7th std.	Torture from father, raped by her paternal uncle's sons raped		
15	Surekha	32	Married, 2 children, waiting for divorce	B.A	Torture from husband, parent's threat to her life. Married to another man, waiting for divorce from the 1st husband	Staying in Ujjwala, Protection & Rehabilitation centre for women in Belgaum.	Before joining Ujjwala centre, she stayed in one more Shelter Home at Bangalore for 8 months.,
Former SH Residents							
16	Saraswathi	30	Married; 1 child	Poor family; SC, no schooling	Domestic violence, wife beating, Not allowed to go to natal home	Staying in Sadhana shelter home	2 months
17	Anitha	23	Married & Divorced, no children.	Poor family, Completed BSW and here itself working as Case worker	Domestic violence, torture by husband and his family members. Her marriage was gujjar system	Now she has gone back to her family and	
Refused to live in a SH							
18	Nikhat Fathima	28	Married; 3 children	Lower income family; Muslim Community, completed graduation	Domestic violence, torture by husband, extreme physical and mental abuse by husband	Staying in a rental home	

Directory of Shelter Homes in North Karnataka

Sl. No	Name of the Organization	District	Address	Contact Details	Service provided
1	Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Education & Human Resource Development Organization	Koppal	3rd Floor, Divitor Circle, Jawahar Road, Koppal Town.	Girishananda Ph: 9972762642	Santhwana (short stay for 2-3 days only), Legal Aid, Counseling and Referral service
2	Vinutana shikshana Samsthe	Kushtagi	Hiremutt building, Opposite bus stand, Kushtagi	Ph: 9448192428	Santhwana (short stay for 2-3 days only), Legal Aid, Counseling and Referral service
3	Vinootana Shikshana Seva Samsthe	Koppal	Sadashiva Nagar, Gadag Road, Koppal-583231	Sidhdhalingayya Hiremath 9448192428	Swadhar Greh, Vocational training
4	Supreme Vidya Samsthe	Bagalkot	Near Veerabhadra Temple, Sec. No.42 Navanagara, Bagalkot		Ujjwala Scheme, referral and short stay for a few days
5	Supreme Vidya Samsthe	Bagalkot	Near I.B. Saraf Building, Behind Venkatesh Talkies, Hunugund, Bagalkot district, Karnataka	Mr. Mohan Chawan Ph: 9880840090	Swadhar Greh
6	Sanjeevini Swayam Seva Samsthe	Bagalkot	Near Rural Police Station Extension area, Lakshmi Nagar, Bagalkot	08354 - 22107	Swadhar Greh
7	Bagyashri Mahila Mandali	Bagalkot	Post Hunnur, Kachri Road, Gavali Galli, Jhamkandi – 587301, Bagalkot District	Smt. Sarita A. Azoor. Ph: 08353-224560 9945951359, 9448335528	Swadhar Greh
8	SCPC/RDS	Gadag	SCPC/RDS, Sidhalinga Nagar, 3rd Cross, Mulugunda, Sirahatti Road, Gadag	Mr. Rachappa Hunasemarad Ph: 8762018469, Ms. Renuka 8105051672	Ujjwala, Swadhar Greg. Shelter home, counseling, referral, Domestic Violence, trafficking.
9	Sunitha Welfare Association	Gadag	Hubi Road, Near Zoo Cross, Gadag - 582103	Sheela Uglat, 08372 -220490, 8748891973, 9591159025 Kavitha : 8548048030	Shelter Home, Counseling, Referral, Re-integration, Legal service, health services, vocational training
10	Sri. Balaji Khadi Gramodyoga Kaigarika Sangha	Gadag	Shanta Nivas, Vivekananda Raod, 1st Cross, Near Railway Station, Gadag	H.G. Hire Gowder Ph: 9482087463	Swadhar Greh, Vocational training
11	Sneha Educational & Development Society	Dharwad	No. 23, Shivananda Nagar, 2nd Main Road, Gamanagatti Road, Navanagara , Dharwad	M.C. Ramesh Ph: 9343207349 Shankaramma Ph: 8088054109	Swadhar Greh, Vocational training.
12	Sneha Educational and Development Society	Dharwad	Kariyamma Temple, Opp. Murali Flour Mill, Veerapura Oni, Hubli	Ms. Asha, Ph: 0874816513 0836 - 2225665	Ujjwala Scheme, short stay, shelter for homeless women picked up from railway stations
13	State Home for Women	Hubli	Patrakartha Nagar, Hubli	Ms. Rafeeka 0836-2373872	Long term shelter.
14	Sadhana Women and Child Development society	Dharwad	Tejasvi nagar, last bus stop Dharwad-580001	Isbella Xavier 994525473	Feminist counseling, shelter for homeless women, rehabilitation for women and girls in distress, risk etc.

contd...

15	Rudalf Stainer Education and Welfare Society	Dharwad	Near Observation Home, D.C. Compound, Dharwad	Ngaratna Ph: 0836-2747353	Santwana Kendra
16	Sri Maithri Association	Hubli	At Jigaluru, shivappa building, Near Bypass Road, Gabbur post, Hubli, Dharwad district, Karnataka	Ph: 08192-320914 srimaitri@gmail.com	Swadhar Greh, Vocational training, counseling
14	United Social Welfare Association	Belgaum	At Plot. No.57, A.P.M.C. Road, Sangameshwar Nagar, Bauxite Road, Belgaum	Ph: 0831-4215634	Swadhar Greh, Vocational training.
17	Samrudhi Service Society	Belgaum	Spoorthi Rehabilitation Centre for women, CCB-211. 2nd Main, 6th cross Last bus stop, Sadashivanagar, Belgaum-590010	Ph: 9448111921 samruddhibgm@yahoo.co.in	Swadhar Greh, Vocational training.
18	Women Welfare Society	Belgaum	CTS No.1008, Bharath Colony, Kanabargi Road, Belgaum-16	Ms. Kavitha Ph: 0831-2403261 9964870777	Swadhar Greh, Counselling, Employment opportunity, health & Vocational training.
19	Women Welfare Society	Belgaum	NSS Trust Building, Devaraj Urs Extension, Belgaum-591124	Ph: 0831-2436351, 0821-2403261, PD, Ph: 9448446353 Coordinator, Ph: 9880431016	UJJWALA, Protection Centre for women



Research team at the review meeting at Visthar, Bangalore, October 2018.

A Five-State Action Research Study

Survivors¹ Interview Guide²

(Use for women who are currently living in/have lived in shelter homes/did not go to a shelter home)

Note for Interviewer

- This guide acts as a reminder so you can cover all important topics. Use what is applicable.
- The questions are a suggested checklist you may change, add, or delete questions as long as they cover the range of our enquiry.
- You may change the suggested order in which the questions are listed, depending upon the conversation and the situation. Yet, it is best if the interview feels like a friendly chat with a 'natural' flow.
- The participants may be experiencing trauma and difficulties, so we need to be careful with our questioning.
- You may adjust the language according to the respondent's education and age.
- THIS IS NOT A SURVEY but an interview which needs longer responses with details.
- The interview must start ONLY AFTER the respondent has given you consent-or agreed to participate in the interview.
- All interviews must be held in PRIVACY, one-on-one between the researcher and her respondent.
- Tell the respondent that you will come back at a later stage to share the findings of the study.

Details of Interview

Name of Interviewer: Name of Note-taker:

Place of Interview:

Time of starting interview: Time of ending interview:

A. Personal details

Including gender, caste, class, bank account and assets, if any.

(Note: If the survivor hasn't lived in a shelter home, please skip the following sections and proceed to section J, at the end of this questionnaire, on experiences of survivors who have not lived in shelter homes)

B. Details of shelter home

C. Experiences of homeless survivors of violence

(Note: You may again want to remind the respondent that her name will NOT be used in this exercise and her words kept most confidential, so it would be helpful if she spoke freely.)

- **What brought them to the shelter home?**
- **Experiences of early weeks/months at shelter home**
- **Life at the shelter home**
 - A typical day
 - Infrastructure

[1] The term 'survivor' stands for individuals assigned female at birth as well as transwomen who have all have faced some form of violence that either led them to live in a shelter home or faced homelessness.

[2] Version:27.01.2018

- Meals and nutrition
- Clothing
- Staff and the services they provide/facilitate:
 - Medical facilities
 - Legal services
 - Counselling
 - Education/skill development etc.
 - Visits by officials and NGO members

D. Experiences within the shelter home

- Interaction/relationship with other residents
- Interaction/relationship with staff
- Were there challenges/struggles?
- Any mechanism of grievance redressal/
- Whom did they speak with if they had issues?

E. Contact with family

- Do residents meet their family/friends/relatives while at the home
- How is contact established with the family if at all/involvement of the shelter home in this
- Safety concerns if any and how are they addressed?
- How are decisions around leaving the shelter home taken/experiences

F. Children

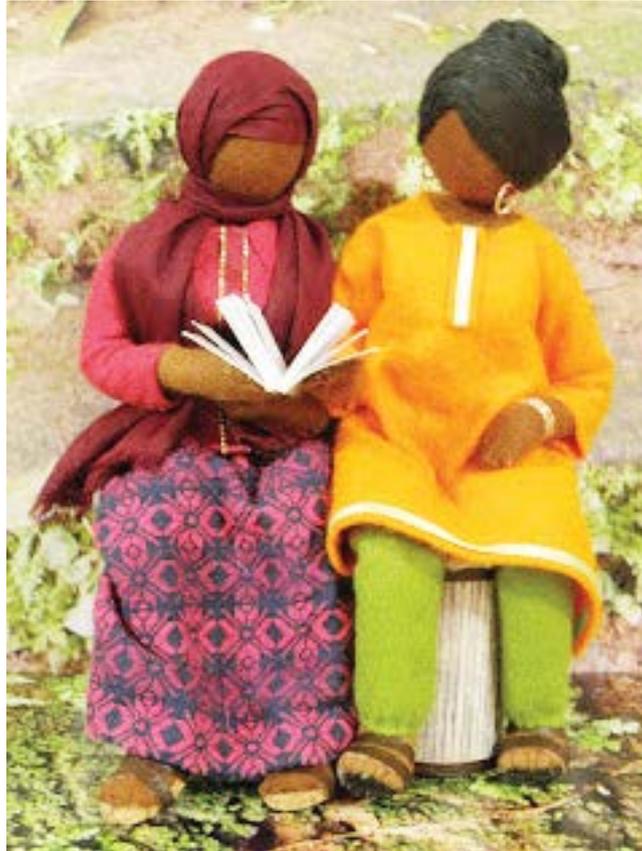
- Issues faced by /concerns if any of mothers

G. Miscellaneous

H. Experiences of survivors who have chosen not to/refused to/could not go to a shelter home

- Reasons for not accessing a shelter home
- Do they know about/heard any stories about shelter homes
- General knowledge and perceptions around shelter homes

Note: Please thank the participant at the end of each of the interview/s. Remember to tell them that this was a very important contribution made by her.



Awake, arise and educate.
Smash traditions – liberate.

- Savithribai Phule



Sandra Torrijos/Isis International Manila

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