

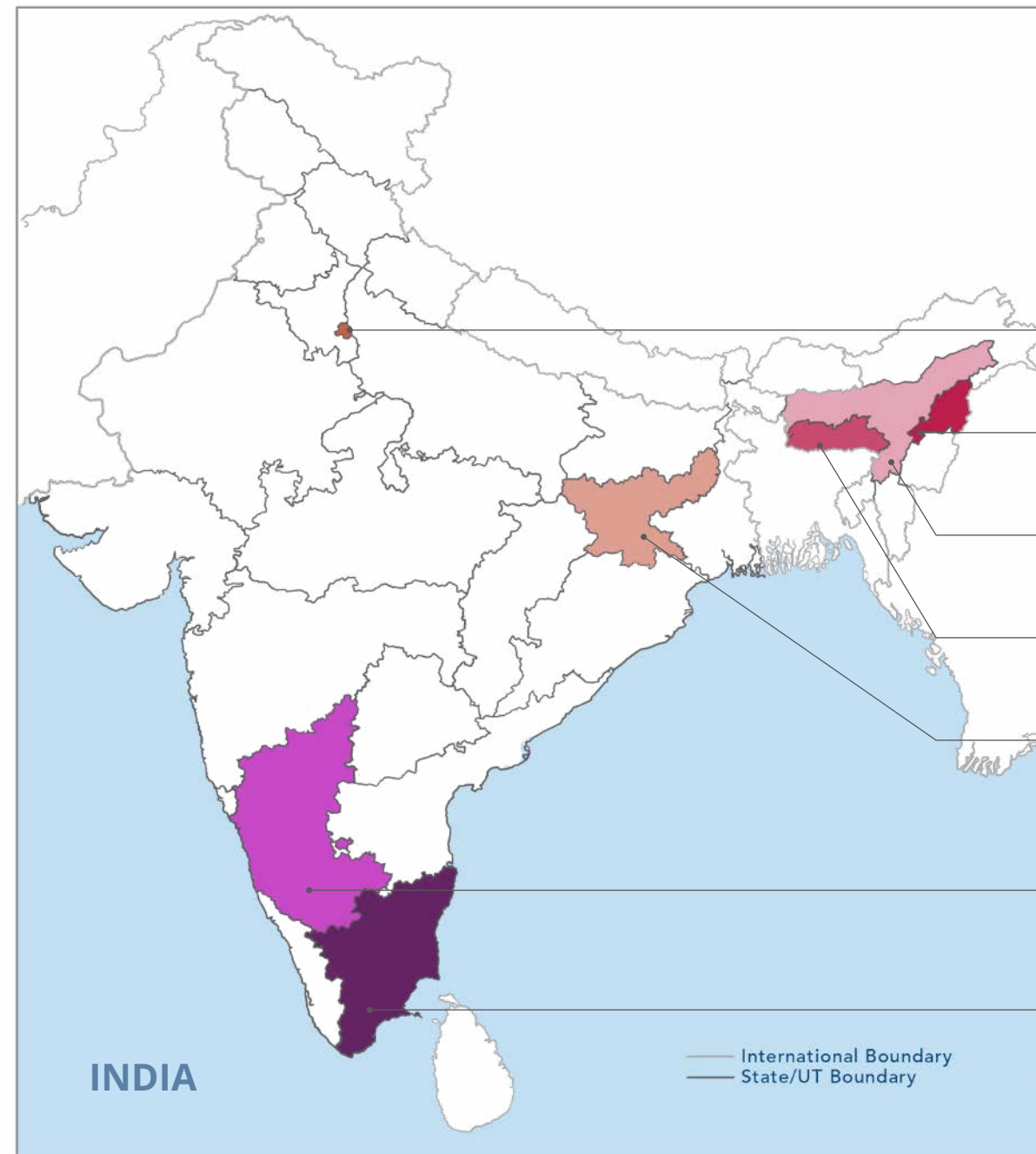
~~STAY HOME. STAY SAFE.~~ AT HOME. AT RISK.

A Rapid Survey Series across
7 states on the Domestic Violence Redressal
Ecosystem during COVID-19 Outbreak

1/10

SYNTHESIS PART 1 INSIGHTS FROM SHELTER HOMES

AT HOME, AT RISK is a series of rapid surveys to understand how the redressal ecosystem for domestic violence has functioned during the COVID-19 pandemic. The surveys are conducted by eight member organisations of Lam-lynti Chittara Neralu (LCN) across 7 states. They are based on phone interviews with women and transgender survivors of domestic violence, and the staff of a range of service providers such as shelter homes, helplines, One Stop Crisis Centers, women's rights organizations, among others.



**SHELTERS COVERED
IN THE SURVEY: 43**
Government-funded
shelters: 30

Delhi	7
Nagaland	1
Assam	6
Meghalaya	3
Jharkhand	6
Karnataka	10
Tamil Nadu	10

THE HOME OF VIOLENCE

The family can be a site of violence,
and is not always a safe space



MOST NAMED PERPETRATOR

Husband/partner

In-laws

Natal family

“Domestic violence has increased as women are trapped with their abusers. Home is not a safe place for everyone. But we have not received many cases of domestic violence. Perhaps it is because there is a total restriction on the movement of people”.

Employee of a
Swadhar Greh,
Assam

DENIAL OF ADMISSION

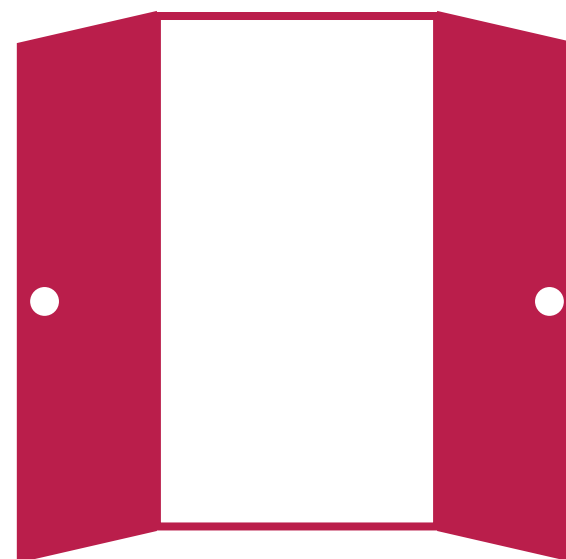


In April 2020, the Supreme Court **directed*** women's shelters to avoid overcrowding so as to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Nearly all shelter homes spoken to refused to admit survivors of domestic violence, **unless they were forced to or felt compelled.** Reasons: fear of COVID-19, lack of space and no quarantine facility.

*<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/coronavirus-sc-extends-preventive-guidelines-to-include-women-shelter-homes/article31396433.ece>

JHARKHAND

Two government-supported shelters for men opened their doors to women workers who were stranded during the lockdown.



"A 28 year old pregnant woman and her 2 little daughters had been abandoned by her husband during the lockdown. She was taken to two shelters but both refused. It has been 3 days but we have not found her a shelter".

A Delhi-based
social worker

"We have a capacity of 25 seats but we are accommodating 45 women".

Government-funded
shelter in Ranchi,
Jharkhand

FUND-STARVED SHELTERS

A majority of shelter homes reported running on little or no funds; some struggle to cover expenses or salaries.

“We have not received our salaries from the last 18 months. Because of no funds, our residents are malnourished. The hemoglobin level of pregnant women here is between 9.5 and 11.5”.

Government-funded shelter in Ranchi, Jharkhand

Shelters that responded

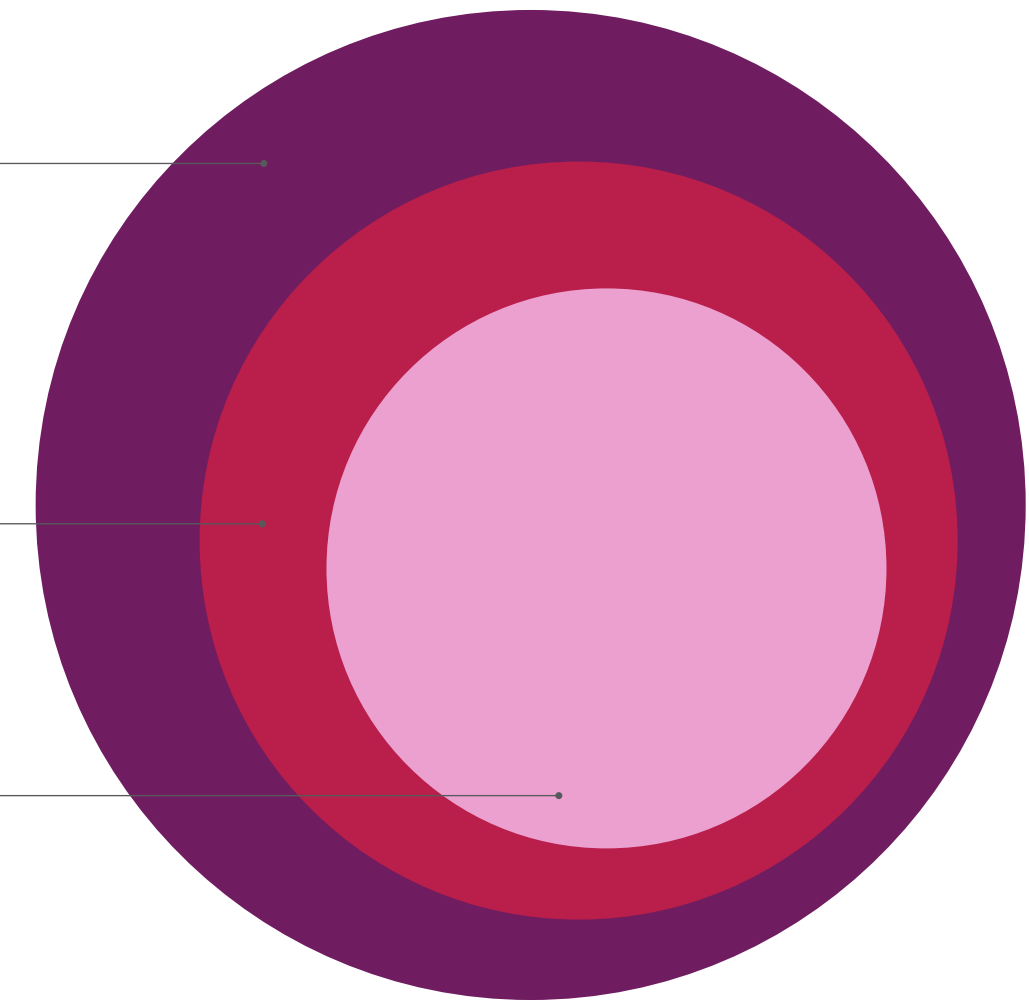
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Shelters facing poor and/or delayed funding

21

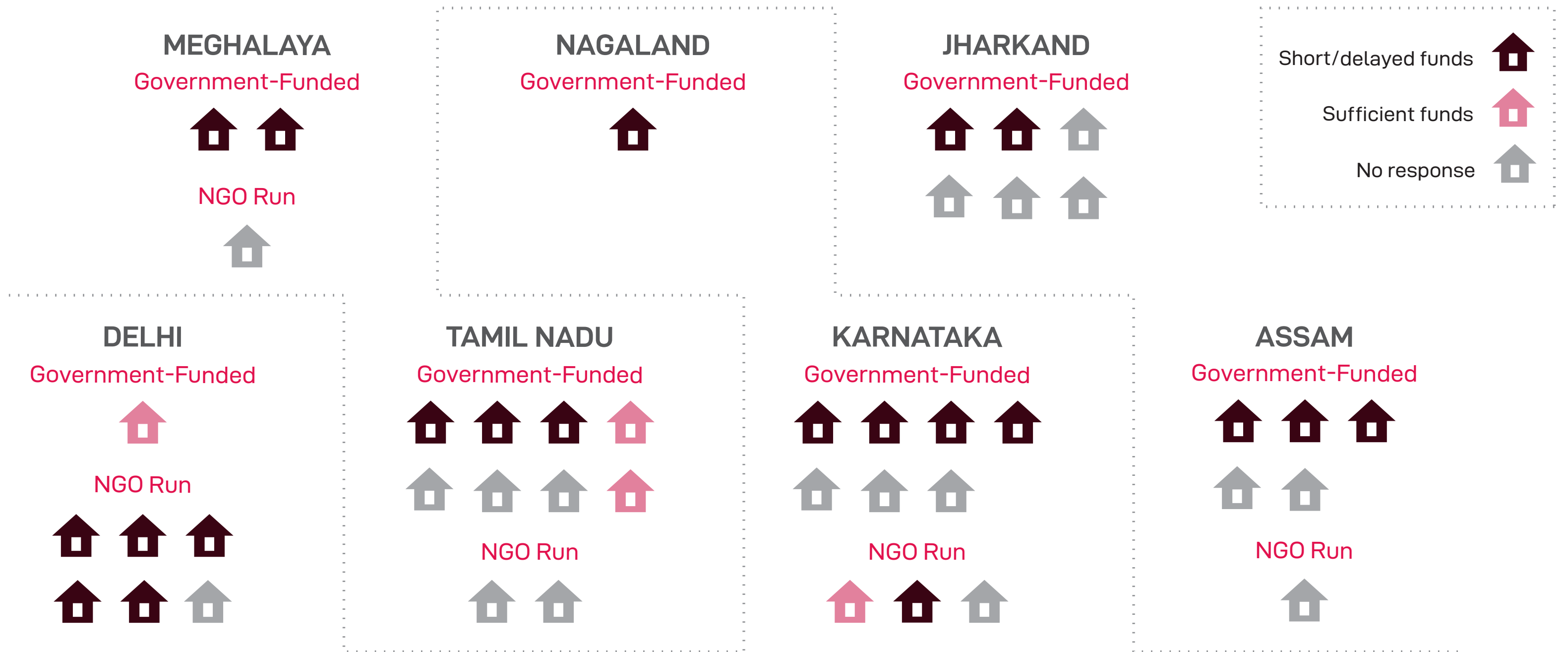
Government-funded shelters

15



21 out of 25 shelters said funds were short, delayed or irregular - of these **15** were government funded

Shortage of funds: reported by 80% of shelters that responded



NO PANDEMIC-RELATED STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP)?

Except shelters in Assam, those in the other 6 states either had no knowledge of SOPs or had not received any. Most scrambled for information about safety measures or received virtual instructions, without monetary or PPE assistance.

ASSAM

The SOP is the result of pressure from women's rights groups including NEN (NorthEast Network), an LCN partner.

4 out of 6 shelters said they received the SOP
2 out of 6 shelters were not aware of the SOP



STRANDED

Staff members in **7 out of 20** shelter homes were stuck without transport. 1 shelter home asked its staff to move in to keep it running



2 residents could not return to the shelter during the lockdown



POLICE'S ROLE

Most shelters found the police responsive; they helped with transport, groceries, medicines and COVID-19 testing. However, 2 shelters found their attitude towards survivors to be insensitive



TOUGH ACCESS TO MEDICINE

In the absence of systemic arrangements from the government, shelter homes struggled to access health services while relying on their own resources.

“We have 60 women with moderate to severe psychiatric conditions. We could not get their medicines because the Out Patient Department at the hospital was closed. We need prescriptions from the doctor there to buy those special medicines and that could not happen”.

Shelter for women with mental disabilities, Delhi

“The lockdown was tough because the daily physiotherapy sessions of the disabled stopped”.

Home for women with physical disabilities, Tamil Nadu

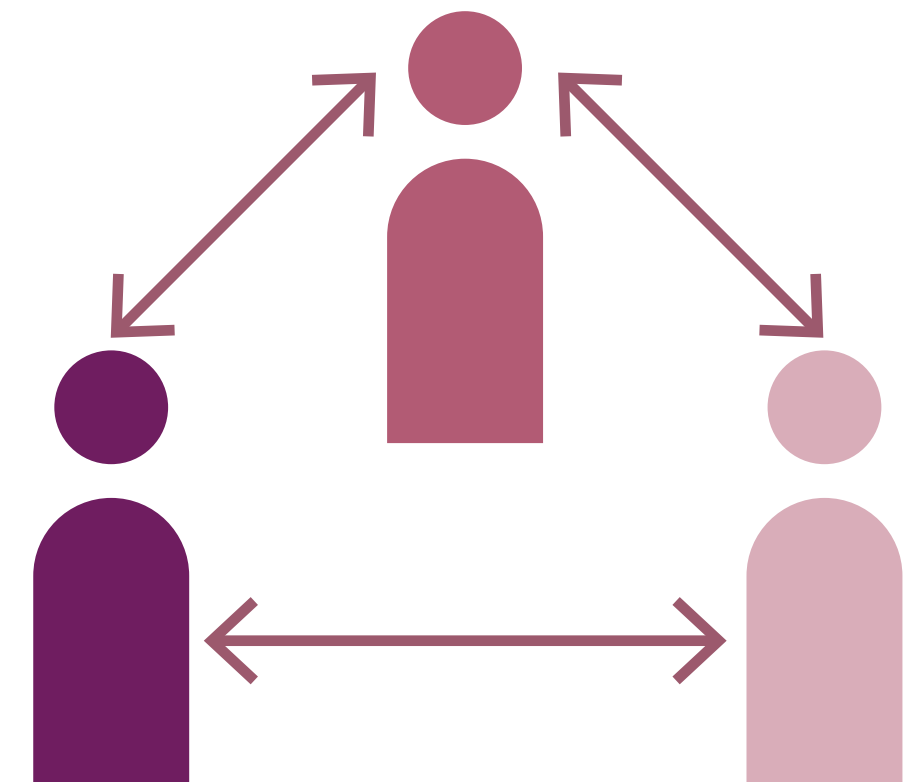
“Taking residents to the hospital was risky. Private doctors refused service. The District hospital was converted to a COVID-19 facility. No doctors were available”.

Karnataka Swadhar Greh

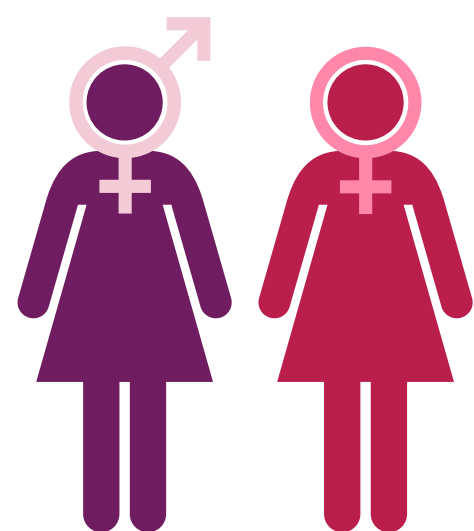
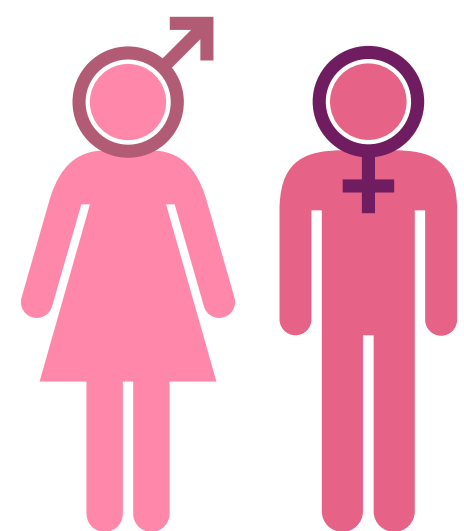


LITTLE PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Small and overcrowded shelters are unable to implement physical distancing, especially those with mentally or physically disabled residents



SURVIVORS BEYOND THE BINARY

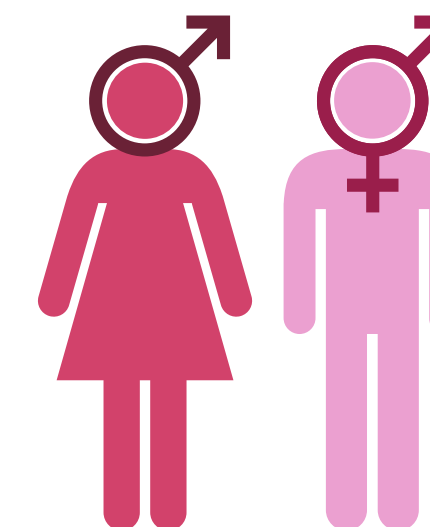
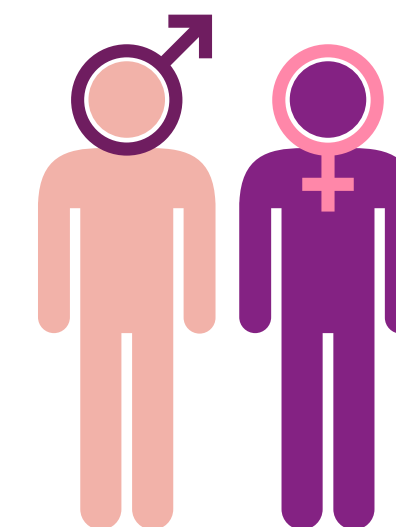


“We received calls from many queer and transpersons during the lockdown, asking for shelter or safe spaces. Some could not leave home because of the lockdown; those who could leave had no safe spaces to go to. Our calls went up from 1 (on an average) call per week to 7 (on an average) calls every week during the lockdown. Most callers from across the country reported emotional and mental violence by the natal family”.

A queer feminist resource group

“Before the lockdown, the calls we received were enquiries about the process of Gender Affirmative Surgery and possibilities of a safe space in the city. We handled ‘distress calls’ made by transmen facing abuse or violence and wanting to escape”.

An organisation working with transmasculine people

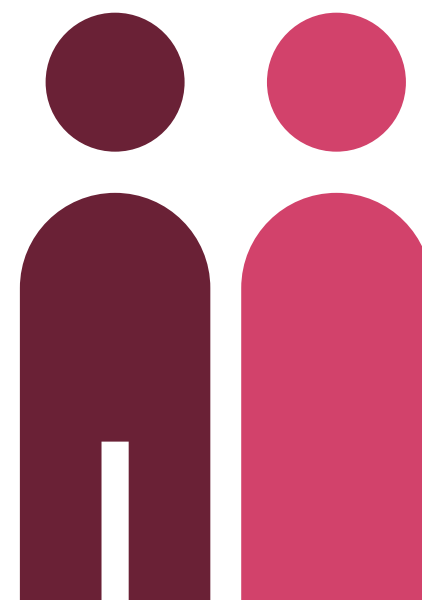


ANECDOTES

THE INVISIBILIZED FEMALE WORKER



67 years old B had worked for and lived at a women's hostel since the last 8 years. When COVID-19 reached Chennai, women residents of the hostel started to leave. All of a sudden, B was fired and asked to leave immediately, leaving her no time to her pick clothes or savings. The police later spotted her crying at a bus shelter. So traumatized was B that it took her a few days to narrate this.



Delhi has no state-funded shelter homes for couples under threat from their families. Couples did not seek help from police as they feared they would be separated, and courts were not accepting such cases during the lockdown.

JHARKHAND

A privately-run women's shelter with all-male staff has no knowledge of the One Stop Centre or the Women's Helpline.

~~STAY HOME. STAY SAFE.~~
AT HOME. AT RISK.

SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS:
SHELTER HOMES 10/10



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action india

N a z a r i y a
A Queer Feminist Resource Group



LCN (LAM-LYNTI CHITTARA NERALU) IS A NATIONAL NETWORK THAT WORKS
TOWARDS IMPROVED AND RIGHTS-BASED SHELTER SERVICES FOR SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE.

Contact: lcnsecretariat@jagori.org