

REPORT ON

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM, 2018

“End Gender-based Violence in the World of Work¹”

OBSERVED BY JAGORI

IN COLLABORATION WITH

AMAN NETWORK, BREAKTHROUGH, SHAKTI SHALINI, ACTION INDIA, CBGA, EKAL NARI ADHIKAR MANCH AND WOMEN AND YOUTH COLLECTIVES FROM BAWANA, MADANPUR KHADAR AND BADARPUR (TAJPUR PAHADI AND BILASPUR CAMP)

INTRODUCTION

Ever since they met up in 1991 at the first Women’s Global Leadership Institute (WGLI) convened by the Center for Women’s Global Leadership (CWGL), women’s rights organizations have engaged in extensive organizing. It has strengthened women’s voices across the globe. All the 23 WGLI participants from 23 different countries had sought to build awareness about gender-based violence and facilitate networking among women leaders². They then established 16 Days of Activism (16DOA) against Gender Violence Campaign, choosing to symbolically link November 25th (International Day against Violence against Women) and December 10th (International Human Rights Day). Over a decade, it led to a worldwide movement against gender based violence so much so that United Nations, in 1999, declared November 25th as International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women.

Therefore, 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence is an international campaign to challenge violence against women and girls. The campaign runs every year from 25th November to 10th December since its initialisation in 1991. With a new theme each year, events are organised across the globe by thousands of women’s organisations influencing a large number of population.

Jagori participates every year in this international campaign by collaborating with NGO alliances in communities and other partner organisations. This year a range of events were organized in Delhi and Jharkhand³.

¹ Source: <https://16dayscwgl.rutgers.edu/about/the-annual-themes>

² Source: <https://16dayscwgl.rutgers.edu/about/activist-origins-of-the-campaign>

³ Source: <https://16dayscampaign.org/event/16-days-of-activism-to-end-gender-based-violence/>

With this year's theme “**End Gender-based Violence in the World of Work**”, Jagori sought out to create awareness among communities regarding violence that affects women in public spaces and work places (formal as well as informal sector).

Under this theme, a dissemination workshop was held on 28th November, 2018 in Hotel Raj Residency in Ranchi, Jharkhand. This was focused on disseminating key findings from the collaborative study led by Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA) and Jagori on “Women's Safety in Public Spaces in Ranchi and



Hazaribag: Governance and Budgetary Challenges”. The workshop was attended by 30 representatives from 19 organizations working in Ranchi and Hazaribag; they provided their inputs. The study analyses

government interventions for enhancing women's safety in public spaces in two cities of Ranchi and Hazaribag through the lens of governance and budget, key mechanisms in place for survivors of



violence and looks into services in urban areas that have a bearing on women's safety; identify priorities in public spending in the state and scope for increasing public spending on enhancing women's safety in public spaces in urban areas of the state.



In Delhi, as per the theme, a street play was prepared on breaking silence against sexual violence and harassment at workplace and to take forward the #MeToo movement to communities. The play was performed at **7 communities in Delhi** – Bawana, Madanpur Khadar, Tajpur Pahadi, Bilaspur Camp, Nehru Nagar, Dakshinpuri and Sangam Vihar; **11 locations**, outreach of **over 1000 people** and in **collaboration**

with 3 other organizations from Delhi Aman Network – Action India, Breakthrough and Shakti Shalini.

About the street play:

The play portrayed four instances of sexual harassment at the workplace. The first narrative talked about a young woman who aspires to be a film actor and goes for an interview with a famous director in the industry. This scene showed how women are objectified in films; how the director wants a heroine with the ‘perfect body’, to fit into a bikini and other skimpy clothes and expose her body. This narrative showed that women are sexually exploited when men in positions of power feel the entitlement to ask them for sexual favours.

The second narrative showed the sexual harassment of a construction worker by her employers at her workplace. Harassment is garbed under wanting to modestly support the female worker. When the woman raises her voice and resists the act by saying that she will complain at the local complaints committee, she is threatened by her employers that she will lose her job.

The third narrative showed sexual harassment of a domestic worker by her male employer. Here also, the woman resists the act and threatens the harasser by saying that she will file a complaint to a woman’s rights group or some other organisation. Her female employer tries to coax her out of it because women are conditioned that the honour of the family is their responsibility irrespective of any situation.

In the last narrative, the employer attempted to ask sexual favours from his female employee by incessantly pursuing her with uncomfortable comments and touch. When she raises her voice in protest, she has the support of her co-workers; even then the employer denies all accusations and threatens to fire her from her job.

Bawana:

The first event was held in Bawana. The street play on #MeToo was performed in three areas in the Bawana – in **D-block**, in front of **Police beat box** and at the **Jhanda Chowk**. The team rallied the area shouting slogans and singing. It covered four blocks with more than **150 households** in the area. Each of these three places had an approximate crowd of **100 people each**. The audience comprised women of all ages and some boys and men bystanders. At the end of the play, Jagori team engaged with the audience for understanding their views on the play and the issue.

The team asked the spectators to reflect on the play and share the rights that they were aware of. The team also asked people if they could now think of any actions they could take in case of sexual harassment at the work place.

There were some positive responses from men who came up to us to ask about our organisation, our work, and any questions that they had about the law or reporting of the said crimes. There was an overwhelming response from women, especially the teenage girls. In one instance, in fact, one of the girls in the audience raised her voice and called out a man, during the play, for making inappropriate comments. The man was immediately reprimanded for his behaviour and the girl was applauded for having the courage to stand up for herself.



Madanpur Khadar:

The third event was held in Madanpur Khadar on 3rd December, 2018. The street play on #MeToo was performed in two locations – **Jalebi Chowk** and near **Police beat box**. There was a crowd of around **250 people** in these two places. There were women and girls of all ages. There were some men as well, especially near the Police beat box;

they were keenly engaged with the play. People watched ardently and recognized the sexual harassment and exploitation portrayed in play. Women seemed to understand how gender works in certain spaces (like, when class difference is not important, but gender is). They could also see that violence perpetrated on women at workplace is based on gender; they seemed to understand power dynamics between genders. The long cultures of silence and shame associated to harassment were recognisable to them; women's plight of being scared and fear of losing their jobs which makes them to choose silence, was also shared by the audience. Thus, our responsibility was to reiterate the importance of speaking up against the perpetrator and to together facilitate the creation of a safe space for other women to speak up against sexual violence.



Tajpur Pahadi and Bilaspur Camp:

The fourth event was held in Tajpur Pahadi and Bilaspur Camp on 5th December, 2018. The street play on #MeToo was performed at two locations in Tajpur Pahadi– **Society Camp** and **Community Centre**. The event gathered of around 200 people. The women were more in number, present in all age groups. The other location was in Bilaspur Camp, at the **Sapera Basti**, or better known as Molarband Park. Since it was an enclosed space, it had a smaller crowd of about 80 people.

After the play, there were some interesting conversations with the crowd, especially in Tajpur Pahadi when the audience engaged with Jagori team. One of the women said, *“I would rather die than have some sexually or physically harass me”*; it is terrifying that women would rather choose to die than face any kind of sexual harassment. This also gives a glimpse of women’s experiences that they have to face different types of violence at the workplace and home, or on the streets every day! Some of them spoke about the issue of sexual harassment, and even went on to say that we should immediately take action against it, saying, *“Jab sar se upar paani chala jaata hai, tab hi action lete hain”* (When the situation is completely out of hand, that is when we think of taking actions). However, when asked about whether they ever had to face any such incident, they were quick to deny it, saying, *“No, no, no! Such thing has never happened to us, how can it?”*

There was a girl, however, who spoke about an incident of street harassment and how she stood up to the man who had harassed her. Some older women talked about other kinds of harassments that happen at the workplace. They shared incidents about how they do not even get the minimum wage-

“At a construction site, there are different kinds of job that one takes up. Whether we do all those jobs together, or just do one of those jobs, we still don’t get minimum wage that we owe. If we will say anything, we will lose even that job!”



Aman Network Events:

To fulfil the aim of 16 DOA, we invited include local stake holders to join the campaign to lead and create leadership of women and youth in their area and help them create safe environment for a safer city. In collaboration with the **Aman network**, a series of events were held in three communities – Nehru Nagar, Dakshinpuri and Sangam Vihar on 7th December, 2018, with a total participation of close to 200 people in these locations.

The street play on #MeToo was performed at **Pehchaan, the shelter home by Shakti Shalini in Nehru Nagar**, where around 50 women had gathered to watch the play. A few elderly women who had come to watch the play said, “*Sirf aurat nahin, purushon pe bhi hinsa hoti hai*” (Not only women, violence happens to men as well). At this point, the play organisers had an important dialogue with them. It was explained that while the violence against men is also a concern, but it could not be done as a response to violence against women. Women’s denied agency over centuries that led the voice to become silent against any kind of harassment faced was highlighted. It was shown as a reason why it is of utmost importance that women are encouraged to come forward and share their experiences without the fear of being judged or silenced by men. There were also conversations around the audience that the reason women refrain from speaking up against their employer is because they are afraid of losing their jobs. Thus, a consciousness emerged that a safer work environment for women requires immediate measures to form efficient ICCs at workplaces with more than 10 employees. The girls at **Pehchaan** had made beautiful posters on the #MeToo movement.



With **Action India** the street play next reached the Sanjay Camp. It was an enclosed space with around 50 women in audience, most of whom were young girls. At the end of the play, it was refreshing to hear two young women talk about sexual harassment in films and media. They shared that while it is difficult for women to come forward with their experiences of abuse due to fear of losing the project and forces them to maintain a certain image for the media, the #MeToo movement has made it easier for them to speak up and stand up for themselves and create a safer space for all women. **During the play, there was a man who insisted on being a part of the audience and passing inappropriate comments about the play. After a few warnings, few women among the audience asked him to leave the premises.**

While we were talking about what can be done to report such incidents, one of the older woman said that this was the first time she was hearing about something called a “Mahila Panchayat”. Another woman shared her experience of domestic violence perpetrated by her husband-

“Aisa sunte to bahut hain, lekin mera aadmi bhi chain se jeene nahin deta hai. Ghar mein teen teen ladkiyan kunwari padhi hain. kamake ghar mein koi kharcha nahin deta hai. Maango toh, maarta hai” (I have heard about such incidences, but my husband also does not let me live in peace. We have three unmarried daughters at home. He earns money but does not give a penny at home. If I ask him, he beats me).

While it was encouraging to see women find the voice to speak up about their own experiences of violence, it is equally important that they get support from bystanders and the communities in their accomplishments against sexual harassment.



In Collaboration with **Breakthrough**, the street play reached another location- Sangam Vihar. The play was performed at the Sunday Bazaar in the middle of a bustling road. Kids aged 7-17 years who work with the Breakthrough helped mobilize the crowd for the play. With more than 80 people in the audience, the event took place smoothly. The response here was especially overwhelming; while crowd had some understanding on gender and gender based violence, they seemed eager to learn.



Some quotes from the audience who watched the street play performances in the communities:

“Kayi logon ki samaj main unki pehchan iss tarah se hai ki vo apne saath hone wali hinsa ko kisi ke saath nahin bant sakte par nukkar natak ek accha jariya hai. Apni bat logon tak pahunchane ka.” (A young girl, Madanpur Khadar)

“Mujhe apne karyesthal main suraksha chahiye asurakshit karyesthal main mujhse kaam nahi ho payega.” (A middle-aged woman, Bawana)

“Mujhe abhi tak pata nahi tha ki #me to kya hai par aaj pata chala ki aap apni awaz utha sakte hain” (A young girl, Dakshinpuri)

“ Kabhi kabhi aisa hota hai jab kam par niklo to gunde type log raaston par khade hote hain. Main peeche mud jaati hoon, tak kam par to pani fir hi jaata hai. Jab puccha gaya to jawab mila aisa hota hai” (An old woman, Society camp, Badarpur)

Meeting of Ekal Nari Adhikar Manch at Vishwa Yuva Kendra, Chanakyapuri, Delhi:

The National forum for single women's rights organised national advisory committee meeting at International Youth Hostel, Chanakya Puri, Delhi. Sarita, Heerawati and Shruti presented Jagori's work with single women in Madanpur Khadar at the meeting of the National Forum for Single Women's Rights. Around **100 women from 7 States** (Ekal Nari Adhikar Manch, Jila-Bilaspur, Tehsil-Sadar, Himachal Pradesh; Ekal Nari Shakti Sansthan, Rajasthan; Astha Sanstha, Udaypur; Peshok Ekal Maila Sangathan, Darjeeling, West Bengal; Ekal nari manch, Uttrakhand, Punjab and



Jharkhand) participated in this meeting. They shared about their work for demanding monthly pension, minimum wages, women's safety and single women's other rights.

A Charter of Demands was shared by National Forum for Single Women's Rights in this meeting.