

Newsletter of MSSK Alwar (Raj) – December 2019

Introduction of MSSK

Since December 1, 2008, SAPNA is partnering with local police and Department of women and Child in Alwar, Rajasthan to run a guidance and protection centre for women known as the Mahila Suraksha evam Salah Kendra (MSSK). The MSSK is a holistic redressal centre for women providing support to women facing violence by way of:

- Assisting them to negotiate their way through the Criminal Justice System;
- Settling disputes through alternative dispute resolution mechanisms;
- Providing rehabilitation to women survivors of violence;
- Providing medical and legal aid, psycho-social support, shelter, economic rehabilitation and any other relief required.

The concept underlying the centre is that of providing a comprehensive strategy of redressal for women who come to the centre for support. The single window assistance can range from mediation to legal aid, to intervention within the police system and the judiciary, to economic rehabilitation, to trauma counselling, to shelter and care.

The coordinator and team of social workers listens patiently to survivor's problem. Every case is unique which requires different resolution strategy favoring survivor which probably leads to solution for survivor's problem. Every strategy depends on the gravity and nature of grievance. Need of survivor and confidentiality are two main core values on which our work is based.

Confidentiality of each case is maintained as we understand that the victim is telling something which is very personal and close to her heart. Her trust has already been broken by the other party and she has mustered lot of courage to come to the centre.



How to go about resolving the problem?

Where do women, as a mother, as a wife, as a daughter in law, as a daughter or as a mother-in-law go when they face problems at home? Sometimes the problems are marital discord, disharmony at home and at times serious cases of sexual harassment and abuse.

Most women do not know how to go about seeking redressal of their grievances. Some are not serious enough for civil or police action? They are unaware of their rights and alternatives.

Our team listens to survivors' problem patiently with non – judgmental attitude, then explains them alternatives open in each case, which can be joint meetings, consultancy, compromise, police assistance, shelter and legal remedies. After the survivor chooses the course of action the center tries its best in its implementation. Assistance can vary from case to case but the main focus is the requirement of victim.

Seven non-negotiable that determine the intervention

- No compromise on the issue of violence against women
- Principles of self-determination for clients
- No political or societal pressures of any kind
- Creating a democratic environment
- Accountability is towards the violated women
- Confidentiality in cases to be maintained
- Free services

Defusing Tension.

Joint Meeting and single meetings are organized by the center. Domestic disharmony, harassment and marital problems are complex and sensitive. Usually one or both parties take unassailable positions. Each case requires multiple sittings, phone discussions, counselling or meetings with both parties together and separately.

In the present social set up, women opt for reconciliation. Our social workers follow up in such case with the woman client through visits or discreet enquiries to ensure she is safe and secure. Apart from handling case work, our team also tries to reach the community through many outreach activities like meetings in the community, awareness sessions in schools and colleges, organizing legal aid camps in community as well as schools and colleges, participating in trainings and workshops where our team gets a chance to introduce center to other participants.

To spread awareness about the center, networking with other stakeholders and outreach at community level is done in which center organizes District Support Group meetings, school and college sessions on various topics dealing with VAW, meetings in villages with the help of other organisations working for the same cause, police station visits to help those women who couldn't reach center etc.

Representatives of women organisations and other civil society representatives assist the centre regularly on a voluntary basis. The centre has set up referral services with other organisations in order to provide effective relief to the women seeking assistance from it.

CASE STUDY

Pawan vs Indira

We received the Parivaad of Pawan from SP office. According to him, his wife and sons were mistreating him. He wanted a divorce from his wife or some kind of settlement. Counsellor spoke to Pawan about his grievances. Then counsellor called his wife on 2/12/19 for joint meeting. Next day wife came to the centre. Counsellor heard out the woman. She found that since many years he is troubling her financially as he is not working. He earns his living by selling properties he owns. After talking to his wife, counsellor spoke to both. Client showed his reluctance in continuing with any kind of relation with the lady. After discussion, he agreed that he will stay separately and provide her Rs. 5,000 cash. Counsellor gave client some time and fixed another joint meeting on 9/11/19.

During the second joint meeting lady told that the client has given her 5,000. When the counsellor spoke to client it was realized he is not happy. He wanted to divorce her. Counsellor asked him to think before taking such a step.

After two days the counsellor went to client's house. He had brought his things from Machadi. He started speaking about the arrangements for living. Counsellor told him to come to the centre. On 14/11/19 lady and client came to the centre. Client told the counsellor that he wanted the permanent solution of this problem. After discussing with the client and lady, it was decided that client will give lady 5 lakh rupees and 4 thousand monthly expenses for younger child. After this he will not give a single penny to his wife. His wife agreed to this arrangement. A date was fixed for giving the amount.

After due date both client and lady were called, and lady told the counsellor that client has given the whole amount. Client promised that he will give monthly allowance every month on 1st.

The agreement was signed by both the parties.

Sunita vs Madhav Singh

The client came to the centre on 15/11/19. She told us that her husband beats her and even uses abusive language. She even told the counsellor that her mother-in-law stays with her and regularly invites my co-sister-in-law to my house. She demands money from my husband. The date for joint meeting was fixed.

On 22/11/19, both parties came to the centre. Counsellor spoke to the husband separately. He said he doesn't have any issues with her, only when she misbehaves he spoke rudely but denied beating her. He told that even if there is a small issue she runs to her home. This time she left her small child behind.

After speaking to the client's husband, the counsellor called the client and first asked her the reason for leaving the child behind. Then she spoke to them together. After a small discussion they both agreed to give their relation one more chance. The counsellor spoke to mother-in-law, listened to her and even tried to sort out the differences between them.

SCHEMES

1. Mother and Child Tracking System (MCTS)

When a mother dies, children lose their primary caregiver, communities are denied her paid and unpaid labour, and countries forego her contributions to economic and social development.

A woman's death is more than a personal tragedy--it represents an enormous cost to her nation, her community, and her family. Any social and economic investment that has been made in her life is lost.

More than a decade of research has shown that small and affordable measures can significantly reduce the health risks that women face when they become pregnant. Most maternal deaths could be prevented if women had access to appropriate health care during pregnancy, childbirth, and immediately afterwards.

Mother and Child Tracking System (MCTS) is an initiative of Ministry of Health & Family Welfare to leverage information technology for ensuring delivery of full spectrum of healthcare and immunization services to pregnant women and children up to 5 years of age. It is an innovative, web-based application, developed by NIC, to facilitate and monitor service delivery as well as to establish a two-way communication between the service providers and beneficiaries. Generation of work plans of ANMs, sending regular alerts to the service providers as well as beneficiaries about the services due and a user-friendly dash board for health managers at various levels to monitor delivery of services will go a long way in ensuring quality service delivery, micro birth planning, ensuring universal immunization and will have positive impact on important health indicators like Infant Mortality Rate and Maternal Mortality Ratio. It will also help in evidence based planning and continuous assessment of service delivery to pregnant women and children.

2. Support to Training and Employment Programme

The Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP) Scheme aims to provide skills that give employability to women and to provide competencies and skill that enable women to become self-employed/ entrepreneurs.

Sectors include Agriculture, Horticulture, Food Processing, Handlooms, Tailoring, Stitching, Embroidery, Zari etc, Handicrafts, Computer & IT enable services along with soft skills and skills for the workplace such as spoken English, Gems & Jewellery, Travel & Tourism, Hospitality, etc.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) had revised 'Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP) Scheme Guidelines in December 2014. The Ministry has been administering STEP Scheme since 1986-87 as a 'Central Sector Scheme. The STEP Scheme aims to provide skills that give employability to women and to provide competencies and skill that enable women to become self-employed/ entrepreneurs. The Scheme is intended to benefit women who are in the age group of 16 years and above across the country. The grant-in-aid under the Scheme is given to institutions/ organizations including NGOs. The assistance under STEP Scheme will be available in any sector for imparting skills related to employability and entrepreneurship, including but not limited to the Agriculture, Horticulture,

Food Processing, Handlooms, Tailoring, Stitching, Embroidery, Zari etc, Handicrafts, Computer & IT enable services along with soft skills and skills for the work place such as spoken English, Gems & Jewellery, Travel & Tourism, Hospitality.

The maximum duration of the project is 18 months and the maximum number of beneficiaries in a project shall not exceed 200. The financial assistance to meet a maximum of 90% of the project cost can be sanctioned by the Government of India. The remaining 10% will have to be borne by the implementing agency from its own resources.

Applications were invited from the eligible organizations for financial assistance under the revised STEP Scheme, 2014. Twenty-three project proposals have already been approved for financial assistance under this Scheme.

JUDGEMENT IN FAVOUR OF WOMEN

Section 497 of IPC

Adultery—Whoever has sexual intercourse with a person who is and whom he knows or has reason to believe to be the wife of another man, without the consent or connivance of that man, such sexual intercourse not amounting to the offence of rape, is guilty of the offence of adultery, and shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to five years, or with fine, or with both. In such case the wife shall not be punishable as an abettor.

An offence under Section 497 is bailable, which means the accused can obtain bail as a matter of right. The husband would be the complainant, and the accused cannot be the wife, but rather the man who has had sex with that lady. And mere proof of adultery is not enough for prosecution under Section 497, but rather it has to be proved that the person who had engaged in sexual intercourse with a married woman, did it with the knowledge that she was already married. Section 497 is an archaic law that was enacted by the British way back in the year 1860. It reflected the mindset of people in that bygone era. Today such a law might be considered draconian. There might have been decided cases, but they would be few and far in between, considering the fact that no one would deem it proper to institute a criminal case under this section of the Penal Code.

Adultery law in India is defined by the Indian Penal Code Section 497. The adultery law has come under the scanner of the judiciary several times in the past but the courts including the Supreme Court held Section 497 valid. But in the latest case, the Supreme Court bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra called the adultery law "anti-women" while hearing a petition that challenged Section 497 for being anti-men and giving leverage to women. The petition was filed by non-resident Keralite, Joseph Shine, who challenged the constitutionality of IPC Section 497 read with Section 198(2) of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPc). The CrPc Section 182(2) deals with prosecution for offences against marriages.

IPC Section 497 states, "Whoever has sexual intercourse with a person who is and whom he knows or has reason to believe to be the wife of another man, without the consent or connivance of that man, such sexual intercourse not amounting to the offence of rape, is guilty of the offence of adultery."

The Supreme Court on August 2, said, "The law seems to be pro-women but is anti-women in a grave ostensible way. As if with the consent of the husband, wife can be subjected to someone else's desire. That's not Indian morality."

Each partner of the marriage has equal responsibility. Why should the woman take more load than the man? That is the reason we call it archaic," the Supreme Court said.

The Supreme Court's observation followed an affidavit by the Centre, which said, "Adultery should remain an offence. Diluting adultery law will impact the sanctity of marriages. Making adultery legal will hurt marriage bonds."

The Supreme Court has struck down 158-year-old Section 497 of the Indian Penal Code, which criminalizes adultery, as unconstitutional. "Any provision of law affecting individual dignity and equality of women invites wrath of constitution. It's time..."

ACTIVITIES

Aganwadi workers

A group of Aganwadi workers visited our centre. The coordinator spoke to them about the role of MSSK in solving the grievances of women. She told them that how centre ensures the confidentiality of each case. After discussion the women left.

Management Development Institute

On 30th November, 30 people of MDI, Gurgaon came to the centre where the coordinator spoke to them about the role of MSSK in solving the problems of sexual exploitation of girls, problems in work place and women suffering from domestic violence. Some clients were also invited where they shared how the intervention of MSSK solved their problem.



OUTREACH

Mssk regularly visits various villages to conduct an outreach programme. Ibtida, A Self-Help Group NGO gave us platform to address women about our role in solving the problem of women. As a women-oriented centre, we ensure that the confidentiality of each case is maintained. Each outreach helps us to connect with women of villages and saving many families from breaking up. The list of out-reach done in the month of December is:

Name of the Manch	Place	Date	No of women attendees	Problems faced
Sangharsh Mahila Manch	Kerwajaat	9/12/19	70	Liquor
Kranti Mahila Manch	Khedla	10/12/19	90	Liquor
Kranti Mahila Manch	Jhopri	12/12/19	80	liquor
Savera Manch	Shalpuri	14/12/19	100	-
Sangharsh Mahila Manch	Desula	16/12/19	70	-
Savera Manch	Kerwada	21/12/19	85	-



DISTRICT SUPPORT GROUP MEETING - 07/12/2019

AGENDA OF THE MEETING

- Discussion on working of different NGO's active in Alwar district
- How these agencies can help us in providing employment to females of weaker section.

- To conduct workshop in many colleges and schools regarding various laws made for safety of girls.
- To make DSG's meeting more informative and effective.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

The DSG meeting was conducted at Police Anveshan Bhavan. It started with welcoming different agencies working for women and child welfare by Chief Coordinator of MSSK.

- The agenda was read out to the members.
- Different agencies and colleges provided an insight about the working of their NGOs.
- Nai Disha informed us how they can help us in empowering women. Though they emphasized that this NGO is working for the upliftment of women doing menial work by providing them training in the field of papad making, mats weaving, beautician course etc. but women of BPL class can also take benefit. They have to pay only minimum amount.
- Jain B.Ed. college lecturer spoke about MSSK's role in educating the women about their rights and how their institution has benefitted from this.
- Parivaar Sewa Kendra spoke about various problems related to unwanted pregnancies etc. which they come across. They also work towards educating the girls about their personal hygiene during periods. They informed that they do a free health check-up which includes hemoglobin, BP, weight, etc. I invited them to come and conduct a free health check-up for the girls of Shikshalaya and Pankhuri.
- Child Welfare Samiti spoke about their role in providing education and vocational education to destitute children and mentally challenged and disabled people. Recently, they'd send their disabled boys' cricket team to Jhalawar. They also informed us about the Mahila Ashraya Grah centres which are operational in Alwar. Destitute women can be sent there for stay.
- Sehgal Foundation informed us about their work in the field of computer literacy, education and agriculture.
- Advocate Seema Saini told the agencies about Domestic Violence Act and also offered her help to these agencies.
- Childline spoke about their role in protecting children from abuse which they faced from their parents or providing help in relocating the children to their homes. They even help women to get their children back from their marital homes.

Meeting concluded with vote of thanks from Chief Coordinator to different agencies who participated and with the information that next DSG Meeting will be held in February. This was followed by refreshment.

The minutes were typed in Hindi by Constable Indu and the minutes were then mailed to all the participating agencies along with the photos.



ADINATH PUBLIC SCHOOL – 17/12/2019

As part of the District Police Awareness Programme, a talk was given to the children of Adinath Public School in the assembly about Good Touch and Bad Touch and to make them aware about various kinds of sexual offences. The Assembly began at 8 am. Students sang a welcome song, followed by MSSK talk. Students were told about good and bad touch, it's significance and how to distinguish between the two and what action should be taken if they experience Bad Touch. Awareness about various kinds of sexual offences was also generated. Later SP told them the legal perspective of each sexual offence.



IMPORTANT PHONE NOS.

Rajasthan Mahila Aayog :- 0141-2779002, 0141-2779003

Police Control Room :- 100

Child line No. :- 1098

MSSK :- 0144-2702565

Women Helpline No. :- 181