



BREAKTHROUGH

Bell Bajao! Campaign

Report based on stories collected for monitoring and evaluation of social change, using the Most Significant Change Technique (MSCT).

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Bell Bajao! A framework of understanding

[Bell Bajao!](#) is an evaluated, integrated multi-media, mobilization, training and advocacy campaign to end domestic violence, launched by [Breakthrough](#) in the year 2008, implemented across two states of India, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh. In the three years of the campaign:

- 240 million people have been exposed to the PSA multi-media component (130 million in the first phase 2008-09 and 110 million in the second phase 2009-10)
- 7.5 million people reached by the video van media-on-wheels activity
- Over 25000 youth and community leaders have undergone trainings on DV, Gender, HIV and Human Rights.
- 76000 and more experienced engagement with BB community rights advocates.
- The total no. of visits on the Bell Bajao site since the campaign site went live has been approximately 60,000 with an average of 116.5 visits per day and 2 minutes 30 seconds spent on the site, from the (Google) analytics of an average monthly trend.
- On Facebook, the [Bell Bajao cause](#) is 'Liked' by over 3000 people and on [Twitter Bell Bajao](#) has over 2000 followers.

The success of the campaign has led to a new phase in its evolution, and as of 2011 the campaign goes global as a Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) commitment, with the support of UN Women and in support of the UN Secretary-General's Campaign UNiTE to End Violence against Women and Girls.

Breakthrough, a global human rights organization, uses the power of media, pop culture and community mobilization to inspire people to take action for dignity, equality and justice.

In the year 2000, Breakthrough released a music album in India, '[Mann ke Manjeere](#)' – [An album of Women's Dreams](#)', which revolves around a character based on a real woman and her life story, and uses the music video format to present a social message. A hit with the mainstream audience, the album remained one of India's top ten albums for six months. This proved to be the beginning of a pathbreaking journey into human rights territory and a passionate engagement with social change. In 2005 Breakthrough launched '[What kind of man are you?](#)' its first campaign on HIV/AIDS that called on men to use condoms and in 2007 was launched '[Is this Justice?](#)' which presented the issues faced by women within the HIV/AIDS context. This was India's first multimedia campaign to bring attention to the stigma and violence faced by women living with HIV/AIDS (WLHA).

As a consequence of the experiential learning from these previous campaigns, Bell Bajao! has been conceived of as a 360 degree campaign, driven by the belief that social change is the key to ending DV (Domestic Violence) and social change may most successfully be brought about through synchronised efforts on two parallel tracks:

- Seeking to change the individual's awareness, knowledge, perceptions, attitudes, intentions, engagement capacity and behaviour;
- Intervening in the social environment within which the individual functions and from which the individual draws values and support.

According to¹ India's [NFHS 3 \(National Family Health Survey 3\) of 2005-06](#) :

One-third of women (age 15-49) have experienced physical violence.

About 1 in 10 (age 15-49) have experienced sexual violence.

¹ <http://hetv.org/india/nfhs/nfhs3/NFHS-3-Domestic-Violence.pdf>

Nearly 2 in 5 (37 percent) married women have experienced physical or sexual violence (from the husband).

1 in 4 married women had experienced physical or sexual violence by their husband in the 12 months preceding the NFHS 3 survey.

1 in 10 married women have experienced sexual violence (from the husband).

1 in 6 (16 percent) married women have experienced emotional violence (from the husband).

("Acts of physical violence by the husband against his wife include: pushing, shaking, throwing something at her, slapping, arm twisting, hair pulling, punching, kicking, dragging, beating, trying to choke or burn her on purpose, and threatening her or attacking her with a weapon. Acts of sexual violence by the husband include physically forcing the wife against her will to have sex or perform other sexual acts that she did not want to perform.")

("Acts of emotional violence by the husband against the wife include: saying or doing something to humiliate her in front of others, threatening to hurt or harm her or someone close to her, or insulting her or making her feel bad about herself.")

16% of 'never married women' have experienced physical violence since the age of 15 (generally by a parent, sibling, or teacher).

Only 1 in 4 abused women sought help to try to end the violence.

2 out of 3 women never sought help, and never spoke about the violence.

Only 2% of abused women ever sought help from the police.

54% women and 51% men think it justifiable for a husband to beat his wife under some circumstances.

In a country where more than half the population of women and more than half the population of men believe that a husband can beat his wife under some – under any – circumstances, it is safe to assume that there is a crippling, silent, acceptance of violence against women at the physical, emotional and mental level by individuals, families, communities and the larger macro layers of society.

It is within this context that Bell Bajao! campaign interventions unfold; the focus is on connecting with the individual at a level of feelings, attitudes, knowledge and action, as well as on changing systems and social environments through working with communities and across sectors / industries (Government, NGO, Corporate, Media etc.)

A critical element identified through research and study is the need to involve men and boys as partners in the fight to end violence against women. Working towards a change in perception and behaviour of men and boys is a campaign entry point across the board, most particularly evident in the PSA component of campaign media and messaging.

Breakthrough has evolved an integrated strategy for Bell Bajao! that comprises many layers of intervention. A snapshot look at the key features and the connections between them:

- **Media and messaging** – The communication running through the campaign is anchored by a PSA series that calls upon men and boys to take action against DV. *The suggested action takes the form of 'interrupting' an episode of DV in the neighbour's home via a simple, consciousness generating, non-violent method that involves ringing the doorbell with an ordinary excuse for one's presence.*

[\(Click here to view a Bell Bajao PSA.\)](#)

Communication extends further to the creation of resource lists and educational and training toolkits that support IPC (inter-personal communication) interventions such as trainings, workshops and community mobilization events.

Media vehicles and dissemination methods comprise more than one media mix, designed to address different target audiences where regional and socio-cultural variations are constantly being taken into account to achieve maximum impact. Traditional mass-media including television, radio and print are strongly supported by experimental and new media and technologies. These include a high impact combination media and community mobilization vehicle, literally a vehicle, the video van intervention, where video vans with teams of trained volunteers travel pre-mapped routes across urban and rural districts. The vans are kitted out with displays, A/V equipment, awareness, educational and resource materials on DV for distribution, while van teams and program partners put up mobilization and engagement events that include music, theatre, puppetry, discussions and presentations on DV.

[\(Click here to watch the van in action in Mumbai.\)](#)

New media and ICT including mobile phone technologies and the internet build and extend the engagement across a different generation and population profile, with blogging, tweeting, social networking and web-surfing adding to the 'conversations' that help people break the silence around DV.

(Take a look at [Bell Bajao's Facebook page here](#))

[\(Bell Bajao tweets here\)](#)

- **Community mobilization and training** – This component of campaign strategy addresses the aspect of changing knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) in communities, the socio-cultural environment, implementation of the law (specifically the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005) and service delivery. Breakthrough works with population groups including youth, community leaders, women and girls, students, grassroots NGOs and their target populations, government officials and across sectors and industries, thus making DV everybody's business, ensuring that a common language of rights pervades the conversation and informs the understanding of an expanding circle of diverse populations. The full spectrum of mobilization activities covers local events at the one end, such as rights 'mela's (fairs) in rural areas, and at the other end has Page 3 events involving high profile personalities and glamour industries, such as a fashion show and endorsements of the cause by celebrities.

[\(Click to view community mobilization a/v – Koppal Oct 2011\)](#)

Primarily, three levels of interventions through training and capacity building programs are undertaken:

- Trainings for the end beneficiaries of the program, including women, marginalized youth, HIV positive people, dalits and other impoverished communities - to enable participants to recognize and improve their access to rights and to create the sense of self-efficacy critical to change.
- Trainings with men, government field workers like ANMs, Asha Behens, and community members to create an enabling environment in the community so that women can access their right to a happy, self-fulfilling and violence free life.
- Trainings with service providers, CBO's and senior government functionaries such as IAS and IPS officials, PO's (Protection Officers under the PWDVA 2005) to improve their service delivery mechanism to promote faster, easier and gender sensitive access to legal and government resources.

Breakthrough has evolved the Rights Advocates Program (RAP), a capsule curriculum on Human Rights and recognising and dealing with rights violations. This program provides rights based training to youth and community leaders, non-profits and also has a certified curriculum segment for university students. Rights advocates

are drafted in for further campaign activities, they become spokespersons and resources working with their communities and also taking up the responsibility for mobilization activities that support the Bell Bajao! campaign (such as the video van intervention).

When Breakthrough trains grassroots partners (CBOs / NGOs), staff persons who receive the training are then expected to pass the training on by working with at least 20 members (per staffer trained) of their community on gender violence and rights issues.

- **Cross-sectoral partnerships** – Breakthrough has built strong partnerships across sectors with diverse partners, including NGOs and CBOs as well as media partners and celebrities. The integrated nature of the Bell Bajao! campaign is manifest through these partnerships. For example, the community mobilization and training component of campaign strategy rests on Breakthrough's partnership process with grassroots organisations that may or may not be working directly with issues related to DV, HIV and sexuality and gender rights, but who recognise and articulate a stake in these issues and are willing to partner with the Bell Bajao! campaign. The exchange and give and take of these partnerships ensures a positive take home for both; Breakthrough achieves campaign sustainability with campaign and cause invested human resources to train and work with, who will then help implement further trainings and interventions, and the partner's target population as the audience for engagement, while campaign partners find an increase in their visibility as well as in the demand for their services. It was a partnership with the government, through the Ministry of Woman and Child Development, which ensured that PSA messaging in the first year of the campaign was aired on all prime time channels, while in so supporting Bell Bajao! the government was able to credibly demonstrate a commitment to end VAW and also raise the level of visibility of the new legislation, PWDVA 2005, within government structures and in the public domain.

Four primary partnering modes are adopted by Breakthrough, depending on the purpose of the partnership and the skills and capacities of the partners with respect to issues related to women's rights and DV. As a partner therefore, Breakthrough may be a facilitator / trainer, an implementer, a collaborator, or a 'leverager' of resources.

- **Shared Learning** –

Efforts are focused on parallel tracks of documentation and recording, monitoring & evaluation (M & E), and advocacy:

- (i) Documentation of the work done across programmes, for the purpose of analysis, new learning and impact assessment. This is shared with different stakeholders including funders, peers/organisations who do similar work or intend to, or find a resonance with their own work agenda, and micro and macro communities spanning a range that could include a single family unit (micro-community) or children in a school, or women in a village SHG or government departments and officials under the PWDVA 2005, academicians and others.
- (ii) A robust M & E ensures critical feed in to planning and strategy across all phases of the campaign, with benchmarking of the situation as it exists using baseline data, and assessment of impact and changes brought about by Breakthrough intervention at mid-line and endline of campaign phases. M & E also captures best practices while at the same time pointing out gaps within the campaign or in the environment of campaign operations, helping to identify challenges, problems, possible approaches and solutions.
- (iii) Such information is shared internally and externally with the aim of ensuring that interventional processes and systems continually evolve to meet new or increasing demands and requirements.
- (iv) Advocacy focusing on the law, implementation and service delivery – At the time that Bell Bajao! was launched, the Protection of Women from Domestic

Violence Act (PWDVA) 2005 was a new entrant to the existing legislation in the country. Commitment to implementation of this law is hampered at multiple levels including a wide-spread general lack of information and awareness about the Act, difficulty in accessing services under it, and a lack of understanding and capacity among those who are meant to implement the provisions of the Act.

*(One of the findings of the Baseline research that was conducted prior to launching the Bell Bajao campaign - "although 25 percent of the respondents knew of 'some law' to deal with domestic violence only **3.3 percent** of the respondents over various locations reported to have heard about PWDV Act 2005. While **9 percent** of females from Karnataka are aware of this Act none of the UP women have heard about it." (Report of the Baseline Survey on Domestic Violence and HIV/AIDS submitted by the Centre for Media Studies (CMS) to Breakthrough, 2008.)*

Monitoring and Evaluation – An overview

Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) is a distinct area of focus for Breakthrough. Social change is by its nature a complex phenomenon with multiple indicators, not always easily measured by quantitative means. Any campaign or set of interventions that aims to create social change is operating in an existing environment that may not necessarily be homogenous, in fact is often not so. The environment within which individuals and communities function and where human rights are upheld, ignored, protected or violated comprises diverse cultures, lifestyles, capacities, norms and values, and practices. This implies differences in:

- (i) The profile of target populations across socio-cultural and regional categories.
- (ii) The kind of intervention that is likely to have greater and sustainable impact.
- (iii) The strategies that need to be evolved to implement those interventions.
- (iv) The benchmarks by which significant change may be assessed.

It is therefore critical to plan a campaign in such a way that the effectiveness of that campaign may be continuously monitored and evaluated based on specific indicators that have been defined and measured prior to launching the campaign

The social change goal of the Bell Bajao! campaign may be described as the achievement of changed attitude, perception and behaviour as manifest in individuals as well as the larger community and increased knowledge of DV and the PWDVA 2005, with the aim of ending domestic violence.

[\(Jump to presentation on the PWDVA 2005 on the BB website.\)](#)

Breakthrough's team in-house focuses on M & E as research based processes that are an integral part of all campaign activities, while at the same time, M & E has also been outsourced to professional research organisations – to CMS (Centre for Media Studies) in the first phase, 2007-2010 of Bell Bajao! and to ICRW (International Centre for Research on Women) in the second phase, 2009-2011.

Research Design, 2007-2011

Bell-Bajao, 2007-2010	Bell-Bajao, 2009-2011
Baseline Survey, 2007-2008	Baseline, 2009
Rapid Assessment Survey I (2009), II(2010)	Participatory Research, 2009-2011
Most Significant Change Technique	Most Significant Change Stories
Endline Survey, 2010	Endline Survey, 2011
<i>Research Agency: Center for Media Studies(CMS)</i>	<i>Research Agency: International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW)</i>

Bell-Bajao, First Phase, 2007-2010 :

Conceptualizing research for the Monitoring and Evaluation of the Bell Bajao campaign:

“The research has been conceptualized as a process which has three components of i) Baseline; ii) Monitoring; and an iii) End line. The indicators or ‘markers’ chosen for measuring the level of knowledge, the attitude that the audience has towards the issue, and the practice will be measured at the baseline to create a benchmark, monitored at an interval after the launch of the campaign and finally will be evaluated at the end line to see the impact of the campaign as a whole.

For Baseline and End line an operation research design has been adopted to see how leadership training programme as an intervention adds value to the mass media campaign taken up by Breakthrough. The design essentially will be comparing two sites exposed to various intensities and modalities of Breakthrough intervention activities.

For Concurrent Monitoring - in built monitoring through ‘most significant change technique’ and quantitative rapid assessment after each media bursts have been planned.”

(Source: Report of the Baseline Survey on Domestic Violence and HIV/AIDS submitted by the Centre for Media Studies (CMS) to Breakthrough, 2008.)

Baseline, midline and endline research using qualitative and quantitative techniques were used before, during and after campaign intervention; this helped to assess the normative picture, by allowing people’s perceptions, attitudes and behaviour changes as well as stories from the field to be expressed and documented. At the same time, a statistical picture emerged of knowledge / information levels, attitudes and practices, key differences between men and women over DV, HIV/AIDS and negotiations for safe sex, media habits and numbers reached and impacted by the campaign. So Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) is a Bell Bajao! campaign component that began at the beginning, from the time of planning and conceiving the design of the campaign, and runs through the campaign enabling course correction, re-visiting strategy and re-deployment of resources as and when necessary.

The geographical areas where the campaign was to be conducted provided the sample population. Though three states were initially chosen for Bell Bajao, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, the campaign could not be conducted in Maharashtra. Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh provided the population samples for the Endline.

Keeping in mind that Breakthrough had two strategic campaign components Media and leadership training programme, and it was important to understand the effect of both as against the impact of media without the support of the leadership training interventions, at Baseline stage (Bell Bajao! Phase I):-

- The concept of a control group / district where only media intervention would take place and a case group / district where Breakthrough intervention through leadership training programmes would support media was used as a framework within which differentials could be measured.

Demographic data comprised age, sex, marital status, role / status as opinion leader / influencer (local self-government representatives) education levels and occupation profiles.

The intention behind the Baseline for Phase I, was to collect information on the situation as it was, thus enabling later research to measure and assess the extent of shift.

- It was important to articulate what was expected from the target groups or community after the campaign. These expectations are indicators of change over a period of time.

Among some of the key parameters expected to indicate significant change are:

- Increased levels of knowledge, dialogue and community action against domestic violence

- Awareness and knowledge of the PWDVA 2005
- Reports (stories) of individual change in attitude, behaviour and action taken against domestic violence
- Building leadership through the training and leadership programme
- Mobilising communities

The objectives for the Baseline were identified²:

1. To benchmark the knowledge and awareness about domestic violence, Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (PWDV Act), and HIV/AIDS.
2. To explore the current attitudes towards issues of gender, condom use and negotiation, inter-spousal communication, HIV/AIDS, and domestic violence and practices on the same.
3. To identify the source of information on these issues and
4. To understand the media habits of the target audience for future campaign plans.

[\(Click here to access the CMS Baseline report for Bell Bajao.\)](#)

For the Endline of Phase I, indicators of change within the community and the impact of advocacy were measured. The same set of indicators was tested in the Endline with the addition of a few questions on campaign exposure.

The objectives for the Endline were identified³:

1. To record the changes on knowledge and awareness about domestic violence, Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (PWDV Act), and HIV/AIDS in comparison with the baseline.
2. To explore the existing attitudes towards issues of gender, condom use and negotiation, inter-spousal communication, HIV/AIDS, and domestic violence and practices on the same and compare the shift in them from the baseline as an impact of the campaign.
3. To identify the source of information on these issues.

Between the beginning and the end of Phase I of Bell Bajao! monitoring processes concurrent to implementation were built into campaign activities.

For concurrent appraisal CMS suggested two designs – 1) built in monitoring system within the program and 2) rapid assessment by CMS. The rapid assessment was essentially a quantitative one done in waves after each media burst and was conducted by CMS. Two rounds of Rapid Assessment Surveys have been conducted. The built in part is a continuous monitoring of changes taking place and identification of best practices by the programme implementers. This process has been captured through using the Most Significant Change Technique for monitoring and evaluation.

² Source: Report of the Baseline Survey on Domestic Violence and HIV/AIDS submitted by the Centre for Media Studies (CMS) to Breakthrough, 2008.

³ Source: Report of the Endline Survey on Domestic Violence and HIV/AIDS submitted by CMS Communication to Breakthrough, 2010.

CMS was responsible for training the selected team on most significant change technique, for stories collection, selection further editing and producing case studies from the same.

(Source: Report of the 'Most Significant Change Stories' 2009 - 2010 submitted by CMS Communication to Breakthrough.)

The sample population for the Rapid Assessment Surveys (RAS) was also drawn from the same states that the Baseline was conducted. The Bell Bajao RAS surveyed respondents to measure indicators that comprised:

- Medium of exposure
- Frequency of exposure
- Last exposure to the campaign
- Recall of TV spots
- Content recall of Radio, Video vans and Posters / print advertising
- Learning
- Most liked Ad
- Action taken after exposure
- Awareness about PWDVA 2005 and its benefits

"The main aim of the Rapid Assessment Survey (RAS) was to assess the exposure to and the impact of the campaign on the audience. More specifically the objectives of the rapid assessment survey are:

- To assess the recall and comprehension of television, radio spots, print advertisements and the video van.
- To understand the impact of the campaign on the target audience on their knowledge, attitude and practices."

"A filter questionnaire was used to identify eligible respondents in the intervention area. To identify 241 respondents (79 in Karnataka and 81 each in the other two states) a total of 2044 contacts had to be made. The survey was intended to take place both in rural in urban areas. However, with difficulties in finding eligible respondents purposively respondents were randomly picked up from locations where video vans have moved. The respondents were equally distributed by sex, were literate and about 50 percent were in the age group of 26-35."

(Source: Report of the 'Rapid Audience Assessment submitted by CMS Communication to Breakthrough.)

[\(Click here to read the downloadable pdf RAS II Report for Bell Bajao\)](#)

The other key component of the built in monitoring system is the Most Significant Change Technique (MSCT). This is discussed in detail in the section(s) ahead.

Bell-Bajao, Second Phase, 2009-2011 : ICRW took the evolution of the Monitoring & Evaluation process further by adopting an approach to measuring nuanced social change that incorporated, along with the traditional quantitative and qualitative methods, a reflective, self-analytical process involving those who grew with the *Bell Bajao!* campaign into key change agents.

There are two major objectives of the proposed evaluation:

1. To assess to what extent has the breakthrough program contributed to the capacity of CBOs, NGOs to promote and support an enabling environment and reduce violence against women and social exclusion, particularly of HIV positive women and what is the quality and magnitude of this impact. In other words, the proposed evaluation will try and answer, have CBOs, NGOs and other transforming agents internalized the

change process and are they facilitating these changes in their day to day experience, what are the challenges in doing so and how does an individual and organization addresses these challenges? What are the strategic partnerships and networks that these organizations and transformative agents have succeeded in establishing? And

2. To assess to what extent and of what quality has the breakthrough program created an awareness and attitudinal change among men and women in the general population around the issues of violence against women and stigma and discrimination against HIV positive women. More specifically, what has been the ripple effect of transformative agents on the population around them and communities in general?

Impact and Outcome measures

Overall impact of the program assessed in terms of reduced tolerance to gender based violence and HIV related stigma and discrimination at the population level. The following are the major domains of changes at different levels of program impact as outlined below:

At the level of CBOs/NGOs/Organization:

1. Capacity and readiness to undertake and sustain violence and HIV risk reduction programs including stigma and discrimination against women.
2. Ability to network and build strategic partnership for creating enabling environment to prevent violence and reduce stigma and discrimination.
3. Evidence of seeking services and networking with CBOs and NGOs on issues of gender based violence and HIV stigma and discrimination (through monitoring data).

At the level of transforming Agents:

1. Knowledge, attitude and behaviors on issues of gender based violence and HIV related stigma and discrimination.
2. Ability to question and challenge prevailing gender inequitable norms within the family, peer groups and community at large
3. Ability to mobilize and conduct advocacy programs among young people
4. Ability to perceive and analyze change to inform their ongoing mobilization/ advocacy

At the population level among men and women:

1. Knowledge and attitude on issues of gender based violence and HIV related stigma and discrimination.
2. Ability to take actions(self reported) such as protesting against an act of violence, taking action to resolve conflict, talking about any of these issues in a public forum

Evaluation Design and activities: Overall, the evaluation involved measuring changes across sites--- a site with training with youth only versus a site with training youth plus HIV positive network women⁴; and over time.

Multi-media message will be common feature in both the sites. The evaluation activities restricted in two Breakthrough states namely Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka⁵. These two states are selected for their geographical and cultural diversity and also diversity in HIV prevalence rates with Karnataka being high on HIV prevalence than UP. Breakthrough's current

⁴ Both sites will have CBOs /NGOs as the common factor, as they will be Breakthroughs implementation partners.

programs are located in the following districts that are tentatively proposed to be the sites for evaluation.

States and Districts for the Evaluation

States	Multi-Media and training with youth only	Multi-Media and training with youth plus training HIV+ women network
UP	Lucknow	Varanasi
Karnataka	Dakshin Kannada	Gulberga

A key process in the methodology is the participation and involvement of youth in both qualitative research and select program activities. In consultation with Breakthrough, and their selected partner local NGOs, few male youths and women living with HIV have been identified, trained and involved in conducting FGDs and KIIs, analysis of data and module development. They formed the core group of Transformative Agents (TAs) and responsible for implementation of outreach activities in the field. The proposed steps of the research process are detailed in a Table 1, at the end of the note.

Evaluation activities: In order to meet the evaluation objectives outlines above, following activities have been taken up during the project period-

1. Baseline survey –A baseline survey carried out with men and women in the community to get the benchmark around attitude towards gender norms, gender based violence and Stigma and discrimination towards PLHIV. A sample of 500, 250 men and 250 women, selected in each district for the survey
2. FGD with men and women – A total of 16 FGDs – 2 with men and 2 with women in each of the districts – carried out to understand the perception and behavior of people at community level towards gender based violence and people living with HIV.
3. Key Informant Interviews – A total of 20 KIIs – 5 from each district – carried out with community leaders, people living with HIV, health service providers and other stakeholders working on HIV/AIDS. These will be administered by the TAs as part of the qualitative research. Additionally, 4 KIIs per district conducted by ICRW with heads of organizations that are Breakthrough partners.
4. Module development workshop with TAs – Findings from FGDs and KIIs along with baseline data inform the development of additional modules on the engagement of men and boys to address issues of gender based violence and Stigma and discrimination towards PLHIV, to be included in the larger Breakthrough training. Separate workshops organized in each district with TAs to come up with the final modules.
5. Reflective workshop with Transformative Agents (TA) – To track the change in their own attitude and behavior and challenges they face in implementation of intervention, reflective workshop carried out with TAs. In each of the district, 2 workshops were carried out – first, after the process of qualitative data analysis and module development, to capture their experiences and learnings from the processes thus far. The second, after a period of five months, to capture the experiences and interactions with the community.
6. Monitoring of field activities – Regular field visits observations and interaction with NGO heads done to track the quality and quantity of field level activities.
7. Endline survey – After the completion of intervention, end-line survey carried out in the community with 500 men and women to assess the impact of the intervention.

- **Most Significant Change Technique (MSCT)**

MSCT aims at concurrent appraisal of a campaign and is a participatory monitoring and evaluation process that relies on in-depth close interactions with the communities, and with individuals within the community, who have been reached by the campaign.

The belief underlying this technique is that stories of change affecting an individual, change in attitude, knowledge and behaviour, are the stories of 'impact' at the level where it matters the most.

Also critical is the fact that pulling together these stories from the field, reading them for a variety of inputs including new learning and consolidation of ongoing learning, is a way of recording and documenting a process of change, challenges in the field and strategies that may be applied across similar situations in the future.

The 'collecting' of these stories was undertaken by people who were identified by Breakthrough along with their campaign partners in the field, and who were trained by CMS in the process.

These stories go through a second layer of study, by story selectors, who attempt to identify the value of the change represented by the story. The heads of the organisations that validate the stories, were chosen to be the story selectors.

15 volunteers / story collectors and story selectors were chosen from each district and CMS conducted two training programs of two days each in Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka.

(5 of the best stories were selected from each state and after a process of analysis and discussion of all stories between the selectors, Breakthrough and CMS, 10 stories were presented from both states in the CMS report for MSCT Phase I and II as best representing significant change.)

Two schedules of MSCT were conducted, the first schedule in 2009 and the second schedule in 2010.

[\(Click here to view Most Significant Change Stories of women\)](#)

[\(Click here to view Suresh's Change in Attitude towards Women\)](#)

The MSCT training conducted by CMS focused on:

"The technique – and its significance,
The Process - how to collect stories, selection, validation, filtering, putting under domains etc.
The Collection of Stories- Steps, questions, reasoning, selection
Pointers for documentation - name of the story teller and collector, location, gender, consent, problems they faced and what change happened, what was the impetus for change?
Do's and Don'ts
Defining the reporting period- at what frequency the stories are to be collected.
Mock practice of the process in front of the trainers of CMS
Selection of story selectors

Leaders of the organizations involved were identified as story selectors who would verify the stories and select the best stories from those collected."

(Source: Report of MSCT I 2009-2010, submitted by CMS Communication to Breakthrough.)

Over 75 stories have been collected using MSCT between 2007 and 2011; all these stories have been presented here, all of them translated into English and edited into a reader friendly

capsule, that aims to stay true to the spirit of the story and the individuals involved. Based on these stories, we have attempted to study the changes they appear to represent within and across the two states, and present findings and implications to inform future strategies and interventions.

- **Approach to assessment**

- MSCT requires a nuanced approach to analysis and reflection.
- Unlike the approach adopted with quantitative and statistical techniques, each individual MSCT story represents a unique qualitative dataset contributing to the larger pool of learning.
- At the same time, across stories there are commonalities and differences that emerge and this cross-cutting perspective is of equal value, critical to monitoring progress and course correction, or even re-visiting strategy during the campaign.

Each story presented ahead ends with a brief offering of key reflections that appear to be the most critical take-home from the story. These reflections are sometimes a reinforcement of assumptions underlying the campaign strategy and emerging from Baseline research. Quite often they provide additional information to process and keep in mind, or even possibly a new point of learning / experience.

- The two MSCT rounds are treated as two distinct story groups.
 - Stories are grouped according to state within each round of the MSCT exercise.
- Areas of impact and change common across stories have been identified and reflected upon.
- Across the two MSCT rounds and across states too, there are differences and shifts that have emerged and these have been separately articulated.
- Emerging trends have been identified from a reading of all of the above.

MSCT has helped focus on impact, and has provided some critical feed-in of data for regular monitoring of changes, situational / needs assessment and identification of best practices by the programme implementers.

MSCT - stories

Compilation and reflections on MSCT stories collected in two phases, across 2009-2011, from Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka.

Notes:

Anganwadi - A government sponsored child-care and mother-care centre program, catering to children in the 0-6 years age group.

FPAI – Family Planning Association of India – An organisation that works on sexual and reproductive health, women's empowerment, and issues of population, family planning and gender equality.

PLWHA – People Living With HIV/AIDS.

- **MSCT I (2009)**

In the first phase, there are about 15 stories from Uttar Pradesh and 17 stories from Karnataka. These stories, with comments and reflections, are presented state-wise ahead.

Uttar Pradesh

MEENA / KAMAL RIZVI

Meena works as one among thousands of domestic employees in urban India. Stories like hers are common, and many households employing female domestic workers will be familiar with it. The difference in her case was that Kamal, her employer, decided to intervene and help her access her right to life and security.

Kamal Rizvi from the FPAI (Family Planning Association of India) wanted to share the impact of Breakthrough training on him. He said that his domestic help Meena who has been working in his house for three years has been facing domestic violence. Her husband married another woman but would still come and beat her and take away her earnings.

Before the Breakthrough training, Kamal recalls being oblivious to such problems. After the Breakthrough training, and especially after seeing the Bell Bajao campaign, he started noticing changes in himself. He started sharing his new awareness, information and growing beliefs about justice, injustice and rights with his family and friends. Motivated by the campaign he wanted to take action against Meena's abusive husband.

Kamal called the man in one day and spoke to him about domestic violence, ensuring that he told him about the PWDVA 2005 as well. He also told the man that if he beat his wife again, Kamal would take action against him. After that, Kamal continued to monitor the situation and Meena reported that she was no longer physically abused by her husband.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Breakthrough trainings help create a situation where participants attempt to bridge the disconnect between what is and what ought to be, problem and solution, justice and injustice.
- A key result of this is the realization that each individual including oneself, counts, and everyone has the power to change something in the life or circumstances of a more vulnerable person.

ANUJ GOPAL DUBEY

A shy young man from a middleclass background stays away from social interactions and does not engage with issues of any kind. His experience of change within himself was followed swiftly by his experience of himself as catalysing change for others.

Anuj belongs to a middle class family. He has a post-graduate degree in population studies and rural development and an "O" level computer certificate. He started working soon after completing his studies. His elder brother and sister are also studying as well as working part time to sustain the family financially.

Anuj explains that he has always been a shy person. He would hesitate to talk to people and was unable to hold or initiate a conversation with any degree of comfort. In September 2007, he heard about Breakthrough training in his college. Initially he was not comfortable about taking part but he was encouraged by his friend and his brothers to participate.

On the first day of training, Anuj was quiet and introverted but on the second day he changed; suddenly he opened up and confidently participated in all the activities.

He speaks of how he has started analyzing social norms from a different perspective. He is more confident dealing with issues and expressing his opinion on various things. With the urge to make a difference becoming stronger in him, he even went to the neighbouring villages and spread awareness about superstitions related to untouchables, the caste system and other such problems that are a part of the fabric of life in many such areas.

He has started working for Breakthrough as a volunteer. He manages this with his day job. He is particularly interested in working on issues like domestic violence as he has come across many cases of domestic violence and now helps those affected or vulnerable to deal with their situation. His sense of pride and agency is increasing with every experience of catalyzing change.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- There is often a finely nuanced impact of interventions such as the Breakthrough trainings.
- In the case of Anuj, he was at a point where a small but critical shift in personal capacity cleared the way for determined and sustained action with the aim of contributing towards social change.

RAJJAWATI/ REKHA SINHA

A poor, dalit woman being beaten and harassed by her in-laws has no way of fighting back or demanding respect and justice, until she encounters Breakthrough outreach. This changes her life.

A fieldworker shared the story of Rajwati, the daughter of Mahavir, a dalit residing in Kumhrava Village. Rajwati was married of to a labourer from a poor family, and her in-laws would often treat her badly, harass and abuse her. This forced Rajwati to return to her parents' house.

A Breakthrough meeting was organised in Kumhrava, which focused on domestic violence. Rajwati attended the meeting and spoke about herself. This resulted in the fieldworker meeting Rajwati's husband. Rajwati's husband said that it was his brother who harassed Rajwati, but he felt powerless to take action against him. Even Rajwati's in-laws refused to speak to the brother about his treatment of Rajwati.

The fieldworker then took the matter up with the brother-in-law and told him that there were many organizations like Breakthrough, which were working to stop violence against women, and that if he continued to misbehave with any woman, including his sister in law, he would be punished. He went on to tell him that Rajwati should be treated with the same respect as his mother. After this conversation Rajwati's brother-in-law stopped treating her badly.

Rajwati and her husband also decided to move out and live separately and now they live peacefully without the domestic violence and discord of the past.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Informed, trained and dedicated external intervention is often the only way of getting the attention of those who are habituated to perpetrating violence.
- In this case, the fact that the violence and injustice was being put under the lens by an external agency willing to take up the matter further on behalf of Rajwati, was enough to change things and stop the violence.
- The fact that the couple later moved out to live on their own shows that the intervention had more than the emergency value, it had a long term effect on the family structure and relationships.

URMILA/ REKHA SINHA

'Kuch banne ki ichha' (I want to do something with my life) – This is the story of a woman who is defying the pressure put on her and despite physical abuse, is determinedly holding to her course.

Urmila is working as an Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA). Unfortunately she does not get paid any salary for her work. She is educated up to the Intermediate level. In addition to her educational qualification, her parent's support helped her secure a job as an ASHA worker. However her in-laws are against her going out to work. They want her to stay at home and 'obey' them. She says that often conversations around her job lead to physical abuse. Despite the fact that she does not get paid for her job, she wants to continue working because she wants to build a career outside the household.

Rekha Sinha (FPAL staffer) has advised Urmila to get in touch with Breakthrough and Humsafar, as they can be of some support to her.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Stories from the field often require that the story collector be able to offer help and support that can balance the unequal power equations in the lives of women like Urmila.
- Due to deep rooted socio-cultural norms, support from a woman's natal family is often not a deterrent to abuse from the marital family.

MADHU/SUDHA TIWARI

When there is alcoholism, drugs and abuse within the family, other family members speak in hushed whispers and leave it to the individuals directly concerned to deal with it. Madhu decided to take action.

Sudha Tiwari, a teacher by profession, shared a story with Breakthrough about her relatives. Her cousin was an alcoholic and drug addict who abused his wife (Madhu), causing her severe mental trauma. Other family members too were extremely disturbed by his behaviour. They had consulted a doctor who had suggested medical treatment, but her cousin had flatly refused to be treated.

So Sudha took the Breakthrough resource materials on domestic violence and talked to her cousin to make him understand the consequences of his behaviour. It was after this talk that he agreed to undergo treatment. His behaviour towards his wife has improved significantly, and he continues to keep up his medication, which may be seen as indicative of his desire to effect and sustain change.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Reinforces the fact that as long as abusive behaviour is allowed to remain hidden behind the safety of the term 'personal relationship', nothing changes.
- The moment someone outside the safety of that 'personal relationship' takes up the issue and points out the fact that it is not a personal issue but a human rights, social, even legal issue with damaging consequences for the abused and possible action against the abuser, something begins to change.
- Again, one individual armed with information and conviction, can start a chain of change, beginning with her own family.
- Resource materials play a critical role in bridging the possible gaps in a person's new found knowledge or abilities to explain or communicate these concepts.

MITHLESH/SUDHA TIWARI

A daughter-in-law being thrown out of the marital home for having given birth two girl children one after the other is a familiar story in some parts of the country. In this case, Mithlesh decided to fight for her rights with the support of her parents.

Mithlesh, a resident of Bhijipur Village, is currently working as an Anganwadi worker.

She was married but was thrown out of her in-laws house because both her babies turned out to be girls in a family and a social environment which insists on boys and places no value on girls.

So Mithlesh went back to living with her parents and with their support filed a case against her husband and her in-laws. The court awarded her alimony of Rs.1200/- (approximately \$24) per month. However, at the time of writing this she had not yet received any money from her husband or in-laws. Unfortunately she now feels that even her parents consider her a liability, which is making her anxious and depressed. Sudha Tiwari, who underwent Breakthrough training, counselled Mithlesh and also referred her to an organization "Humsafar" which deals with cases of domestic violence. Currently, case proceedings are underway.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- As in many other such cases, the gap between a legal verdict awarding compensation and the actual follow-up on payment of that compensation poses a huge challenge.
- Such gaps are roadblocks to change as they reduce and impoverish the pool of confidence that may otherwise be created by social change interventions that aim to empower individuals and communities.
- These gaps are key areas that require investment of focussed attention, energy and resources to improve the actual 'delivery' of justice into the hands of the person fighting for it.

INDERJEET KAUR/MANJEET KAUR

When the marital home becomes a place of physical and mental captivity, it takes courage and the support of others in the community to escape and recover freedom and independence.

At the young age of twenty Inderjeet Kaur was married off into a well settled and educated family. Soon after her marriage, she had two baby boys. Initially everything was fine, but gradually her husband's behaviour towards her changed. He became increasingly suspicious of her relationships with others, and started ill treating her. She was barred from even stepping out of the house.

Finally, one day she got a chance to sneak out of the house. She reached the gurudwara at Charbag. The head of the gurudwara, Rajendra Singh Bagga helped her get temporary shelter there as well as some work. However after some time she was told she would have to leave and find another place to shelter. She contacted her brother, but being unwell himself, he was unable to support her. Thereafter she approached two NGOs, which were working on women's rights--Humsafar and Sahyog Sanstha. Seeking to provide support to Inderjeet, a few women from these organizations visited her home but they were turned away with threats of an acid attack. Now Inderjeet is living as domestic help with a salary of 300/- p.m.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Community support in tandem with organisations working at the field level on issues of DV and women's rights are both critical in the process of fighting back, and tackling injustice and abuse.
- When the home is not a safe space, the community must rise to support the individual.

ASHISH GOPAL DUBEY

Ashish, a Breakthrough rights advocate, came up against a community held perception of DV as being a problem associated with some specific castes and classes of people. This perception shared by so many was very hard to shake.

Ashish Gopal Dubey, a rights advocate working with Breakthrough shared an interesting experience. He had once visited Aligarh for an awareness campaign on 'Bell Bajao'. When the villagers were told that the campaign was about domestic violence, they were against the idea of holding the campaign. They denied that there were instances of domestic violence in the village, and claimed that it was not an issue for them.

They told the campaigners to visit the next village which had a significant number of what they referred to as 'lower caste' population. They were of the opinion that an issue like domestic violence was limited to those belonging to particular socio-economic classes and castes.

After much persistence on the part of the Breakthrough team, they eventually allowed the campaigners to conduct the workshop. It was after this workshop that villagers actually admitted that acts of domestic violence, which takes many different forms, occurred in the homes and households of their village as well.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- This experience reflects a very wide and commonly held belief that DV is a caste / class specific phenomenon; those who consider themselves of a higher 'caste' or sophisticated 'class' remain in denial of the fact that DV cuts across class, caste, socio-cultural and economic categories.
- Breakthrough workshops and outreach teams bring human rights issues home in a way that makes it hard to ignore their presence.

KAMLESH

An anxious, scared woman in a district of Kanpur remained silent despite all efforts to reach out to her. Her story - that she, her husband and their daughter are all HIV positive and her in-laws had been torturing her and threatening to throw her out of the house. Her husband, struggling with his HIV positive status, did not stop his parents from threatening his wife.

The story of this woman is not unusual and represents the circumstances and vulnerabilities of many others like her. However, there was a difference made in her life, a positive impact, due to another woman, Kamlesh. In 2007, Kamlesh started the 'HIV Positive People's Network (PPN)' in her district of Kanpur. It was while working with members in this network, that she came across this woman, too scared and too anxious to even share any information about herself. Meanwhile, Kamlesh herself was a participant of Breakthrough training sessions on gender and HIV, and women's rights. She learned that there are legal provisions protecting the rights of an HIV positive woman under the PWDVA 2005.

This learning raised Kamlesh's level of confidence in her own capacity for intervention. She took it upon herself to work with this person across several sessions of formal and informal meetings and counselling sessions which led to the story finally emerging.

Kamlesh then shared her experience and learning with the Breakthrough training and explained the concept of the rights of women. Kamlesh assured this woman that she would help her to fight for her rights and to receive medical treatment. She also shared the story of her own struggle and her journey being HIV positive. Kamlesh had received the support of her parents for a while when her in-laws abandoned her, but later she moved out, started living independently and began to work on this issue.

Kamlesh constantly counselled the woman and her family (including the husband) about HIV/AIDS and violence against women. The process took about four months. The result was a massive change in their lives, as the woman and her husband and daughter started living together in a separate house. The husband took up a job in a factory and the family is now leading a peaceful and dignified life.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Access to support and to information from Breakthrough and its field partner HIV PPN led Kamlesh to act for change.
- She was able to work from her own insight, her sense of self-agency, to reach out most effectively to her 'client' and use her new-found knowledge of the law as a tool of empowerment to change the life of this family.
- The effect on the woman, her husband and daughter was a positive and sustainable change in their own circumstances and increased confidence and courage.

SAVITRI / AVDESH

Her husband died of AIDS. Tested for HIV, Savitri tested negative. Despite this, she was harassed by family and shunned by society. Breakthrough and the HIV Positive People's Network intervened not only to support Savitri with information and access to justice, but the trainers helped her convert a dream of independence into reality.

Savitri, a postgraduate, attended the community meetings organized by Breakthrough's partners and HIV Positive People's networks in the villages, and spoke about her problems. She is a widow who was constantly being harassed by her family and neighbours after her husband died of AIDS. She was tested for HIV and tested negative. Despite this, due to the prevailing myths and misconceptions surrounding the disease, she faced discrimination.

The trainers and counsellors approached her several times and convinced her to attend meetings regularly. After regular counselling Savitri gained confidence. She expressed her

desire to start a beauty parlour but she needed financial help. The trainers, despite their own financial constraints, pooled together the money to support her. This money, together with her own savings, helped her to start the parlour.

Today Savitri is running her beauty parlour successfully and independently. She enjoys engaging with her clients and seizes the opportunity to actively educate women about domestic violence and HIV/AIDS. She continues to attend the monthly meetings and contributes financially.

Initially the community created problems for her, but as the HIV Positive People's Network worked with the community on these issues, things have changed for the better and Savitri has been able to regain her confidence and self-esteem... and recreate her life.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Support from multiple sources and in diverse ways is often required for the successful re-integration into society of someone who is vulnerable, discriminated against and marginalized.
- The individual in the space of vulnerability must be helped to reach a point of desiring to change their own situation, strengthen their own capacity and empower themselves.

KALAWATI YADAV/ANITA

In an Uttar Pradesh village, a man dies. His wife Kalawati who is now a widow raising two daughters earns her living as she always did as a cook in the canteen of a school nearby. There is some talk of a secret, now no longer hidden as the news spreads, that the man died of AIDS and she is HIV positive. The community shuns her and the school fires her. She now has no support, no family but her two girls and no income.

In Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), Anita, a volunteer with Breakthrough, is becoming an increasingly more informed and self-confident person. Her belief that she can help catalyse change is becoming stronger. Every month she organizes a support group meeting and in her discussions she educates men and women about HIV/AIDS. She tries to reduce the stigma and discrimination faced by HIV positive people.

A Breakthrough workshop was organized in Kalawati's village and it was at this workshop, that Kalawati talked about the discrimination she had faced because of her HIV positive status. Due to the fear of HIV/AIDS in the community, her husband had been taking his medicines in secret and it was only after his death that his family members and the villagers came to know about their HIV positive status. After the school authorities fired her, Kalawati approached the Varanasi Network of HIV Positive People for help. The counsellors met the school authorities and the village head and talked to them about Kalawati and her issues for almost four months.

Meanwhile, Anita Maurya who had at this point been involved with Breakthrough for three years holding counselling sessions with HIV positive people, met Kalawati at this workshop. She decided to meet the headmaster of the village school.

As part of Breakthrough's leadership intervention program, Anita conducted a series of HIV/AIDS awareness programmes amongst the teachers, students, school authorities and with the village head. She also organized counselling sessions on a one to one basis with people.

As a result of this multi-point effort, the school authorities gave Kalavati her job back and she now cooks food for the primary school children. Anita and the other trainers continue to meet Kalavati during monthly meetings.

This story is particularly memorable for Anita as she feels that their intervention helped Kalavati to gain confidence and self-esteem and made a real practical difference to her life's circumstances.

The impact on Kalawati is perhaps even greater. After the workshop, not only has she got her job back, but she now also motivates other women in her neighbourhood to articulate and fight for their rights. She is a regular participant at Breakthrough meetings.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- The individual will to act and to stand up for self and others has a powerful multiplier effect.
- Information sharing and counselling is a process that takes its own time, but can lead to positive community action.
- Every positive change achieved acts like a vindication, encouraging the ripple effect of that change.

GARIMA YADAV/ANUJ GOPAL DUBEY

Garima has never spoken up before family or friends about issues like domestic violence, sexuality or gender inequality despite being affected by them. In the safe space provided by a Rights Advocate Program workshop, she was able to learn more about these subjects and form and articulate her own thoughts about them.

Garima Yadav, a second year student at Lucknow University, participated in a RAP (Rights Advocates Program) training workshop run by Breakthrough. She says that before this experience, she was uncomfortable discussing issues related to sex or sexuality and domestic violence even with her friends. After the exchange of ideas, views and opinions on these subjects at the RAP workshop, she realised that despite her own personal problems related to these issues, she had been reluctant to discuss them with anyone.

The discussion on gender equality has also empowered her. She feels it has helped her realize her inner power, and has made her confident enough to think of strategic interventions that she can make when required. Previously she was reluctant to speak up, but after the training she has started voicing her opinions even in front of her parents.

She says that the information on the PWDVA 2005 has made her realize that violence is not a private matter, but a public matter. She wants to spread this awareness to others as well. She even tried to initiate a talk on the issue with a relative who occasionally physically abused his wife after drinking. Although Garima had tried to stop him earlier, she feels talking to him about the Act was a deterrent for him. She feels that the Breakthrough training has helped her substantially and made her sensitive to many important issues.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Girls often find it hard due to the socio-cultural environment around them, to initiate or participate in discussions around sex, gender and violence, despite the fact that they probably have personal experiences of problems in these areas.
- Creating a safe space for thought and discussion, exchange of ideas and shared experiences helps dilute the anxieties associated with engaging with these subjects.

HINA/ASHISH GOPAL DUBEY

Hina, a young girl, a student in Lucknow, is a shy person. Her shyness has been a key aspect defining her personality for family and friends. She would never have dreamt that one day she would actually think of and speak of condoms and sexuality. Or intervene in the unhappy 'personal' life of a relative in a domestic violence situation.

Hina attended Breakthrough training on just the subjects that are likely to cause a shy young woman to shrink with embarrassment, and on much more, women's rights and DV. The impact was such that after the training Hina started sharing the information she had learned with her peers. She didn't stop at this. She took action against violence too. One of her relatives experienced regular domestic violence and was unable to take any action as not only did she lack the confidence to protect herself, but she was also unaware of her legal rights.

Hina shared her experiences as a participant of Breakthrough training and educated her relative about DV issues and the law. Along with other volunteers who were trained by Breakthrough, she offered continuous support to her relative converting the silence around the issue to engagement with the issue, beginning the slow process of change.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- The silence around the issue of VAW is a layered silence, as the capacity of individuals, families and communities to engage is in itself a critical factor that allows or represses discussion.
- Being self confident and vocal is part of the individual's toolkit for change.
- This works in combination with external interventional support, awareness, information and the will to cause change.

BHANU PRATAP SINGH/SHIVANI PANDEY

Bhanu is a young man, a university student, one who has no sense of any connection with some of the key issues challenging the world around him. Sexual health, HIV/AIDS, VAW and DV are just words to him. He has never heard before this, engaged with the reality of these issues in any way.

Bhanu Pratap Singh is a second year student at Lucknow University. He spoke of the impact that the Breakthrough training had on him. Before the training, he was not particularly concerned with other people's feelings or sensitive to their circumstances and would often make fun of his peers. Girls were the focus of his jibes and comments. As for issues of rights, sexuality, AIDS or DV, he knew about these things but hadn't cared to think too much about any of these things because he felt they didn't concern him.

After the Breakthrough training he is aware of a change in himself. His perceptions and attitude towards others, including girls has also changed. He understands the concept of equality as relating to girls and boys and that both must be treated with equal respect. He speaks with clarity and thought about issues related to HIV/AIDS, sexuality and using condoms. He also feels that he recognizes the need to be sensitive to the problems of those who are infected / affected by HIV/AIDS.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Often an individual who is neither a perpetrator of violence or injustice nor at the receiving end, or affected by it in any way, may not even be aware of the violence and injustice around him. This is adding to the silence and the lack of focus on these issues.
- Concepts of social change and justice just remain theoretical words and concepts until people actively engage with them.

ABOUT SCHOOL / MANISH

Whose son or daughter are you?

On behalf of the Mahila Samakhya Kendra, Saharanpur, an NPEGEL program is being conducted at the Primary and Secondary schools of Maniyaran and Baliyakhedi blocks. This program aims to promote gender equality, awareness on adolescent health both among the girl students as well as their teachers, curtail drop out rates of girl children and create a 'Meena Manch'.

A workshop was conducted with teachers at the school. During the workshop, the teachers were asked to write down the answer "to whose son or daughter are you?" All the teachers without exception, wrote down their father's name. The facilitator pointed out that we never write the names of our mothers, which means we don't acknowledge them. Not acknowledging them means negating their identity. This has been the norm in society and this needs to change.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Tackling the generations together is essential to catalyse change; working with young people, or with schools, involves also training and sensitizing those who play a key role in their lives, teachers for example.
- Such a strategy also helps build the involvement and participation of those key influencers who may potentially play a large role in driving change in their communities.

- **MSCT I (2009)**

Karnataka

SAVITA/PREMANAND KALMADY

Tribal regions receive the least of the infrastructural resource pie and Gubiga village was no different; roads, electricity and drinking water were not available to the people who live here. Then one individual from the village came forward and began the process of changing things.

This individual is Savita. She is a widow. She mobilized an entire village and the local government officials, and with the help of Breakthrough and a local community based organisation, her village now has roads and other infrastructure development work is under way.

Savita is a widow belonging to a tribal community, a resident of Gubiga Village, Chickmagalur District, Karnataka. She came across a volunteer of Breakthrough who worked in her area and spoke about the problems of her area, of how people in her area lacked basic infrastructure and amenities. She asked the volunteer how she could address these issues. The volunteer, who promised support, discussed the process with her, guided her and encouraged her to fight for her rights.

So Savita came in for a Breakthrough training session, representing a local community based organization which works on tribal rights and women's empowerment. After the training she organized a meeting in her village and tabled all the problems they faced. She shared the problems with the Tahsildar (a government official responsible for collection of land revenue). The Tahsildar promised to visit the village and do what was necessary. He then sent some officials to assess the situation.

Breakthrough assisted with all follow-up action, sending letters to relevant departments and meeting officials. The entire process took about six to eight months but now electricity poles have been laid out and roads have been built. The development work continues.

Savita is living with her 5-year-old child in her village and looks after a piece of agricultural land that she inherited. Through this entire process Savita has gained in experience, confidence and courage and is held in high esteem by her community as well as Breakthrough volunteers to whom she is an inspiration.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- This story reflects a citizenship game-changer. Savita challenged the accepted roles of women and widows in society, as well as the socio-economic marginalization of tribal communities. As a citizen, she stood up for her rights and helped mobilize an entire village to do the same, engaging with government departments and local administration on civic and village infrastructure.
- The strategy and outreach of Breakthrough, in partnership with grassroots organisations and trained and committed volunteers provided the individual the enabling power and support that was needed to create change.

SARASWATI NAYAK/ PREMANAND KALMADY

A man regularly tries to molest a woman who keeps quiet about it; she is poor, she has no support, she does not know how to deal with the situation. This is the picture 'Before'. One day the same man tries to molest this woman and she grabs his arm and twisting it behind his back warns him to stop. This is the picture 'After'. In between, there was Breakthrough.

Saraswati Nayak, a beedi (indigenous leaf cigarette) roller by profession participated in Breakthrough training. During training, she spoke of her problem. A man tried to molest her on a daily basis in the bus, but she did not know what to do. She was really irritated by this and wanted to do something to end it.

The trainers gave her several options, for example, staring back at the molester to embarrass him or making other people aware of his actions so that he stops behaving badly. The trainers particularly emphasized that everyone has to fight for their rights. They discussed the importance of Saraswati complaining against the way she is treated, and taking a stand, without which it is difficult for help to come her way.

In the following training session, Saraswati told everyone what she had done. The next time that she was molested, she turned around, grabbed the shocked man's hand, twisted it and warned him about his behaviour. After that incident, she has never seen him in the bus again.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Confidence building can go a long way towards driving simple actions that speak clearly for a person who has decided to take a stand.
- In this case, the physical self-defence route that the individual resorted to was just enough to make a point publicly and her confidence helped her carry it through.

SURESH/UDAY

In the village of Stritady, in Dakshin Kannada, the roles and rules for men and women are clear and neither men nor women can question or change an extremely unequal and unjust gender equation. Women do the housework and they wait on the men who do not help with domestic chores no matter how hard or heavy. If a boy decides he does not want to marry a girl, he can break off a proposal and the humiliation and misery is heaped on her not him. When a boy does marry a girl, the girl's side is expected to kowtow to the boy's side and at the time of the wedding there is a socially accepted sense that the groom's party is higher in a hierarchy over the bride's party. In fact, the groom is higher in hierarchy than the bride for the rest of their lives.

Suresh learnt by his own experience that this was not the only injustice entrenched in the community's value system. He decided to change things. He began with himself.

Suresh was born and brought up in Stritady, Dakshin Kannada, Karnataka. He was educated until class VI and started working in Mangalore as a young boy. He was 25 years old when he was diagnosed HIV positive. Initially he was very depressed and could not accept his diagnosis. Fear and anxiety were fuelled by the very real prospect of discrimination and marginalization in a world where AIDS and the HIV infection are little understood and strong reasons for the sufferer and the family being treated as an outcast.

Gradually, with some help and after participating in the Breakthrough training programme (held in conjunction with the Hongirana Network of Positive People) he developed a new attitude to life.

After the training, he was determined to bring about changes in his life and those of others around him. He speaks of an incident that made him realize he had become more sensitive towards women. While working in a lodge he came across a young couple who had been having an affair for a long time. He witnessed them breaking up and discovered that the boy had got married without a second thought for his previous long-term girlfriend. Suresh understood the humiliation that the girl experienced in a society that perceived her unhappiness as in some way her responsibility and her shame. Suresh realized that this was

unfair and made sure that the girl was not harassed anymore. He feels that this sense of understanding came about as a result of the Breakthrough training.

Suresh's personal breakthrough went a few steps ahead, and impacted his own home and family. He started realizing the burden of household chores on women. He saw his mother putting in extra effort to prepare special meals on Sundays, while the men of the house sat back and relaxed. He started sharing the domestic work with his mother, not only on weekdays, but especially on Sundays.

Then when Suresh's brother got married, Suresh took extra care to ensure that the bride's family was treated with respect. He sang a song on the day of the marriage which was about 'how a groom should treat his bride with equality and justice'. He says that he could feel the impact of the song on his relatives and neighbours who ended up congratulating him. He says that it takes a lot of courage and strength on the part of an individual to take such steps in community gatherings. He reiterates that all this was possible because of the Breakthrough training he received.

He participated in Breakthrough's Bell Bajao campaign, in particular as part of the video van media and mobilization effort and travelled across two districts of Karnataka, Dakshin Kannada and Mandya. He continues to disseminate information on domestic violence and HIV/AIDS.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Men as drivers of change have a strong chance of finding acceptance of something new that they openly advocate among their families and local community. Men can put the issue up front just as they too can use indirect methods to call attention to violence or injustice.
- Personal experience of injustice is a powerful tool for constructing empathy towards others experiencing injustice. Rights violations and discrimination in society take on a personal meaning for those who have been able to face their fears and fight back these issues in their own lives with the help and support of external, trusted interventions.
- Personal role switch from recipient of support from a trusted source to becoming a trusted source of support to others is a change process with deep and firm roots.

UDAY

'Condom!' 'Condom!' aloud rings out the cell phone of a man sitting in a bus loaded with passengers in rural Karnataka.

Uday was born and raised in the village of Jyothigudde. One day he was on a bus to Mangalore, which is about 45 kms from his village. On the way, his cell phone rang. The ring tone rang out "Condom, Condom". Uday purposely delayed taking the phone, although he could sense that his co-passenger was extremely uncomfortable with the ring tone.

He finally took the call, on his co-passenger's insistence. After the call ended, he was asked why he had chosen such a ring tone. Uday said that despite the fact that it was one of the most severe problems facing the country, most people did not want to discuss HIV and AIDS and most people tended to avoid the issue or be too embarrassed to talk about it instead of addressing it. As a result of this attitude, large sections of the population did not even have basic information about HIV and AIDS.

This little strategy to start a conversation on one of the subjects that Uday works on, often leads to his successfully engaging complete strangers on a subject that they may not otherwise reflect upon at all.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Disseminating a social message does not always require event management and logistical planning. Creating a habit of engaging people 'along the way' and on a daily basis through simple conversations and interactions has powerful possibilities.

HAREESH/UDAY

Hareesh wanted to cook, but the only cooking he ever did was limited to wanting to cook. Cooking was such an out of the normal course of things for him that he just never did it. Until he did it.

Hareesh is a student who took part in Breakthrough training. He was interested in cooking, but had not pursued his interest further due to many reasons that he didn't think through. He had never even worked in a kitchen before. After the Breakthrough workshop, he not only took up cooking seriously, but also invited his friends over for a meal!

He says that it was his engagement with Breakthrough that gave him the courage to think about and proceed to do what he wished to do.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- It is possible that people can be stuck in routine and prescribed ways of living and being and do not explore the options that do not fit into that prescription because they don't think about it. Breakthrough trainings do make participants think about themselves in relation to the larger issues of rights and justice and gender stereotypes.

WOMAN/UDAY

The birth of a girl child is still an unwelcome event across India. This has deep roots in the country's socio-cultural fabric and is so easily accepted a fact that many people do not even think twice when a family expresses sadness at the birth of a daughter. To reject this easy acceptance of injustice and attempt to discuss it can be a shift in itself and create a shift of great value in the pursuit of women's rights.

One participant of Breakthrough training (the sex of the participant is not known) spoke of how they was visiting a relative in hospital. There upon hearing a stranger, a woman, sobbing inconsolably the participant went to her and asked her why she was so upset. The woman said that she had just delivered her baby that morning but her husband who was hoping for a male child was extremely upset with her because the child was a girl.

The participant spoke to the woman at length and told her many positive aspects of having a daughter. The conversation helped the woman gain some confidence and she was able to calm down. Despite the realization that this conversation might not have provided permanent solutions to the woman's problem, the participant was happy to have tried to help the woman come to terms with her situation.

The participant also acknowledged that prior to the Breakthrough training, such intervention would not have been an easy thing to undertake.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- To walk up to a complete stranger and attempt to engage with her over the issue of discrimination against the girl-child is not a very common occurrence.
- People may think what they will and be on either side of the debate, but it is when they engage consciously at a deeper level with these issues due to training and campaign interventions, that many actually step up to start a dialogue.

SHIVA/KANMANI

Shiva is an adult survivor affected by extreme domestic violence at home which resulted in the death of his mother. He was 5 years old and effectively orphaned when he had to leave home and find work to survive.

Shiva took part in a Breakthrough training event. The music video *Mann ke Manjeere* was screened at one of the sessions. During the post screening discussion, Shiva shared his personal story with the group and told them that his mother was a victim of domestic violence. He was five years old when his mother died as a result of the constant violence she faced from her husband. After his mother's death, there was no one to take care of Shiva and his brother and even their relatives refused to take care of the two siblings. Shiva had no other option but to leave home in search of work and, at the time of telling his story, he has never gone back. Today, he works as a labourer at Bangalore Railway station.

For many years he had been unable to speak about his difficult childhood. The Breakthrough training helped him revisit his traumatic early years in a safe and protected environment, with the support of people willing to listen to his story.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- A survivor of early childhood trauma whose earliest experiences revolve around extreme domestic violence and who has never had the opportunity to speak of or process the impact for themselves, faces a critical barrier to growth until something changes.
- Breakthrough's work with individuals and communities is creating a growing pool of grassroots social change professionals who are integrating concepts from across sociological and psychological disciplines.

SHAMSHAD & SHATAJ/KANMANI

The story of Shamshad is an unfortunate indicator of the failure of existing systems to protect even those who make the attempt to resist abuse and fight to survive.

Shamshad, mother of two, was married to a man, a painter by profession who repeatedly and violently abused her both physically and mentally. This led to her attempting suicide. (She poured kerosene on herself and set herself alight.) Her husband and the neighbours put out the fire and her sisters Dilshad and Shataj took her to hospital. Text from her statement to police reads:

For the past 4 years I have been living in this rented house with my husband, elder son Mubarak 7 year's old and younger son Sabas 4 years old. I got married to Noorulla according to our customs in presence of my mother, sisters and uncles. It was a love marriage and my husband is a painter. Three years ago my husband stated beating and abusing me. He tortured me mentally and physically. In this regard my uncle and sisters advised him not to torture; in spite of this he continued the same.

On 1.12.2009 evening as usual the fight started between us, he beat me and repeatedly taunted me to go and kill myself. I was unable to tolerate the abuse so I drenched myself in kerosene oil and set myself ablaze at 4.30 p.m. on same day. Then my husband and neighbours tried to put off the fire. My sister Dilshad and Shataj took me to Victoria hospital near my house; they put me in burns ward. My husband's violence is the reason for all this. I request you to legally take action against him.

Shamshad did not survive – she died of her burn injuries and now her sister Shataj looks after her two children along with her own. Shataj herself works as a daily wager in Bangalore. She has been living with her two children and is separated from her husband. However with her meagre income, she was finding it very difficult to sustain her family. So she decided to approach her brothers for a share in her father's property. Her brothers refused to help her out in any way. It was at a Breakthrough training, that Shataj came to know about her legal rights in particular about her right to a share of family property. With the information she received at the training session, Shataj has filed a legal case to fight for her share of her father's property. After the training, she had also helped her sister register a case against her abusive husband under the PWDVA 2005.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Domestic Violence kills more women, and more often possibly than is reported.
- There are grave issues of capacity and attitudes at the level of the implementing officials including Protection Officers and the police, coupled with issues at the level of the Department of Women and Child Development and these issues are responsible for the failure to protect those vulnerable to abuse.
- Implementation of the PWDVA 2005 is at low levels of capacity and far greater attention and investment needs to be made to improve the provision of services and the capacity of officials and service providers under this act.
- It was only recently in India that property inheritance laws were amended to be more just to women in the matter of ancestral property; many women are unaware of such laws as well, relating to economic justice and rights.
- Economic violence against women is an invisible form of violence that strikes at the core of her ability to live an independent life.

CHAMUNDESHWARI/KANMANI

Pressure of personal circumstances and information and support through trainings, enabled a woman from an urban slum, pregnant with her second child, to take a decision about walking out of a prolonged abusive situation.

Chamundeshwari, based in Bangalore, married for five years at the time of this account, with a three year old son and pregnant, attended her first Breakthrough workshop. Raised by a single parent, she is semi-literate and has not had much exposure outside the slum community where she lives.

During the first workshop, she did not participate much in the activities. She was pregnant at that time. Subsequently during a follow up workshop, when her delivery date was approaching, the trainers observed that she looked extremely unhappy. During one of the review sessions she said that she was being harassed over dowry. Having learnt about the PWDVA 2005 during the first training session, she said that if need be, despite her pregnancy and personal circumstances, she was now open to the option of leaving her husband and living independently.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Socio-economically vulnerable though a person may be, this may not be equated with the individual's capacity and will to walk out of an abusive situation on the strength of some help and support.
- Armed with information, awareness and a sense that things can be different, the individual can choose to stand up against being abused.

GIRIJA/KANMANI

Girija's father neglected his family completely and her mother had no concept of her rights and no access to support. Breakthrough intervention encouraged Girija to demand their rights.

Girija, a participant in a Breakthrough training event, said that her father had always neglected his wife and children. They had no concept of demanding their rights and did not even know that they had any.

Armed with the information that she received at the Breakthrough training, she took up the matter legally and was eventually awarded compensation of Rs.15,000. (Approximately \$300). At the time of writing this story though, she and her mother had still not received the money.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Despite legal provisions that protect rights, it is a huge challenge to access those rights. Implementation is an issue and follow-up on court awarded compensation poses another set of issues.

YESHASWANI/KANMANI

Yashaswani's husband's family abused and threw out her sister-in-law. Unhappy with the situation but unable to do anything, Yashaswani asked for help.

A participant in a training organized by Breakthrough, Yashaswani warily shared a story - that her sister-in-law had been thrown out of her house by her husband and his family members. Before the training, she was not aware of the concept of women's rights. Now she asked the Breakthrough team if they could help.

A field worker subsequently referred her to HRLN (Human Rights Law Network) and a counsellor.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- The very real ignorance of rights and protection against violation is one of the biggest reasons why such violations continue.
- Not just the victims of rights violations, but often witnesses and observers, just don't know what to do or whom to ask for help.

KAMINI/KANMANI

An alcoholic man in an urban slum creates a nuisance, scares those living around him with threats of violence, smashes his empty liquor bottles on the road on a daily basis and challenges anyone to stop him. Nobody takes up the challenge. Until a small group of women led by Kamini decide that the danger to other people and particularly to the children of the area is too great to ignore. The problem posed by the man must be dealt with.

Kamini has participated in Breakthrough human rights training. She is married and lives in a Bangalore slum with her two children.

She reported that every night in her area, a man would throw empty bottles of alcohol on the road and these broken bottles often injured the children. The man had been creating a problem for quite some time, making the area extremely unsafe for the women and children. Although the neighbours were disturbed and annoyed by his behaviour, no one had the courage to report him to the police.

Kamini, along with a few girls from the neighbourhood who had also participated in Breakthrough training, took the initiative to report the matter to the police. However, since the man was from a minority community, the police refused to take any action as they felt it could cause communal violence problems. The area where Kamini lives had experienced incidents of communal violence in the past.

The parents of the other girls opposed this action of complaining to the police, saying that the girls should stay at home, not raise their voice in public and certainly not involve themselves with the police. Despite this, Kamini and the girls persistently demanded their right to protection of their life and security. It took almost four months but eventually the police agreed to take action against the man.

Kamini and the others mentioned while sharing this story that before the training, they used to think that this kind of action was a man's job. After the training, they were confident that they too can take action against any violence or rights violations happening around them. Through their collective action they are no longer facing any problems and have gained the respect of their community.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Challenging violence was achieved with a combination of rights training and awareness, individual will, community mobilization and collective action.
- The lack of support from the police was not treated as a dead-end. Continuous follow-up with the police became a regular part of the struggle. This did ultimately have the desired effect of police action.

RAJESHWARI/KANMANI

A man has a long-term extra-marital affair and when his wife finds out he tells her to accept the situation. When she refuses to do so, he beats and abuses her and she returns defeated to her parental home. Meanwhile her younger sister has been a participant at a Breakthrough training and is full of information and excitement about human rights, justice and the PWDVA 2005. Everyone is at the cusp of change.

Rajeshwari married for love with the blessings of both sets of parents. The wedding was an expensive and grand affair; since her in-laws were wealthy, her parents spent far beyond their means on the wedding to match their style. For a while life was peaceful but gradually Rajeshwari's husband started becoming less attentive, aggressive and began putting in long hours at work. One day he did not come home. Eventually after a couple of days he returned and said that he had had to take a sudden trip out of town. Such incidents were repeated and Rajeshwari eventually found out that her husband had been having an affair for ten years.

She tracked down the other woman and one day decided to visit her. At her house, Rajeshwari spotted photographs of the woman with her husband. She also discovered that the woman was a widow with two sons who were looked after by her husband.

Later that day Rajeshwari confronted her husband. He did not deny the affair and said that he had married Rajeshwari only because he needed a wife who was socially acceptable. He was aware that his mistress would never be welcomed in his home but had hoped that Rajeshwari would learn to accept the affair. Rajeshwari refused to accept the situation and her husband started beating her. At this point Rajeshwari was pregnant, but this did not stop her husband from abusing her. After a couple of months she returned to her parent's home and her husband refused to support her.

One day when Rajeshwari's younger sister came home from a Breakthrough training programme, she talked about human rights / women's rights, HIV/AIDS, gender and started telling Rajeshwari about the PWDVA 2005. She urged Rajeshwari to demand her rights. So

Rajeshwari went to the police and filed charges against her husband. She did not want a divorce but told her husband that if he did not return to their marital home, she would take action against his betrayal of her trust.

Rajeshwari reports that initially her husband resisted and the other woman too refused to let him go. After several counselling sessions and talks with his parents, Rajeshwari and her husband were reconciled. Their newborn baby also helped bring them together. He has ended the affair and has stopped abusing Rajeshwari.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Information is the first step to the possibility of action.
- It takes one determined person in a family to receive, assimilate and disseminate critical information about legal recourse, to shake up a situation and help anyone in the family fight against a rights violation.

JYOTHI/KANMANI

Multiple abuses have a compounded effect and Jyothi's story reflects this. A widow who was forced to move out of her marital home with her children because of the way her in-laws treated her, the twists and turns of her story include moving back into the in-law space and being sexually abused by her brother-in-law. In such cases, Breakthrough intervention has to take a multi-pronged approach beginning with working on the trauma of the individual.

Jyothi shared her story during a Breakthrough training session. After her husband's death, she and her two children moved out of her in-laws' house, because her in laws wanted her to remain confined to the house and not to venture out at all. This was unacceptable to Jyothi so she decided to move back in with her parents. With the help of the village leaders, she was able to get monetary support of Rs.2000 (less than \$50) per year from her in-laws, although her in-laws refused to give her a share of her husband's property.

During a follow-up programme, the Breakthrough team visited Jyothi again in her village. She was working as an Anganwadi teacher (Anganwadi is a government sponsored child-care and mother-care programme, focusing on children in the 0-6 years age group).

Jyothi said that while initially, her in-laws had rejected her claims to her husband's property, they later told her that if she wanted a share in the property, she would have to move into her brother in-law's house. She agreed to this demand. Thereafter, she started living in her brother in-law's house. Then one day in the absence of his wife, her brother in-law sexually abused her. In a state of shock, Jyothi did not know how to deal with this. According to her, it was the discussions at the Breakthrough training and listening to the inspirational stories of other women that became a source of great strength for her, enabling her to face her personal trauma.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Campaigns and trainings are not one-way flows of information. There is engagement and stories from the field often indicate the need to intervene because of rights violations and criminal offences. Campaign and program teams need to be prepared for this and prepare local governmental, non-governmental and enforcement resources as well.
- Follow up on individual cases is critical since often a vulnerable person may be exploited even further.

- In complex cases, intervention may require pulling together multiple agencies and efforts, social, legal, government services and organisational support.

SUREKHA/MANJULA

Surekha was at the receiving end of physical abuse from her husband, but when she finally spoke about it, she gained the strength to face up to it.

A Breakthrough training session on human rights was held at Meremajalu, Bantwal, in Karnataka. Surekha, a participant in this training session, shared that her husband would often physically abuse her.

Unfortunately after the training session, another participant who happened to know Surekha's husband, called him and told him what Surekha had said during the workshop. After a month, when the group met again, Surekha shared this with the Breakthrough trainers.

The trainers felt terrible that such a breakdown of the safety that a training space attempts to create had taken place and were extremely worried and apologetic. However, Surekha responded by saying that she was not worried because she had only shared the truth. The Breakthrough training had given her the strength to face the situation, '*Domestic violence is no more a personal issue. Women can take this issue to the public for justice*', she said.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- The value of admitting and talking about one's own experience of abuse is sometimes visible as a sudden leap forward in the personal strength to face it.
- To create and protect the safety of spaces such as training workshops is an enormous challenge; the flip side is that the participants at such events are already aware that they are no longer keeping their experiences of abuse cloaked in silence. The decision to take the risk of talking is the first, firm step towards changing something.

SHAMEENA/MANJULA

Shameena's husband was unfaithful to her, left her and their children to marry the person he was having an affair with, changed his mind about staying in the second marriage and wanted to return to his first marriage despite having also refused to financially support Shameena or the children during the in-between period of his second marriage. The pressure on Shameena to accept him back was tremendous from all sides.

Shameena lives in Bajpe, Permude. Her husband had an extra marital affair with their housekeeper and eventually married her. Her husband's infidelity and subsequent marriage to another woman shattered Shameena. Eventually she came to terms with it but she was clear that her husband must take care of not only household expenditure, but also continue to pay their children's school fees. This was objected to by her husband's second wife.

Shameena's husband soon began to feel uncomfortable with his second marriage and thought that his second wife was only after his money. Now he wanted to reconcile with Shameena.

Shameena however decided to remain firm in her decision that she would not allow him back into their home; she was not willing to forgive him for his past deeds, especially his reluctance to financially support his own children. Now her struggle revolved around getting the monetary support and compensation to which she was entitled.

Shameena's decision not to take her husband back was not taken well by her husband's family or by her own parents. They pressurised her, saying that it seemed she too was after her husband's money and as a woman she was supposed to forgive her husband.

Unhappy about the stance taken by her family Shameena was beginning to question her own decision not to reconcile with her husband. It was at this point, that she participated in a Breakthrough training session on human rights.

Now she says that the training has helped her see things clearly. She says, '*I was worried about the step I was taking, but now I am very clear that I have taken the right step. Compensation is my right and my children's right. I also knew that my heart would not permit me to forgive my husband. Until today, I was carrying that guilt, but now I feel very proud and relieved.*'

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Despite the will and the capacity to resist the violation of one's rights and fight for justice for oneself, it is often the case that a woman does not receive support from her own family if it is her husband she is fighting against, and so, without support, she may back-down from her stance.
- It is important for program staff to identify and highlight the desired positive attitudes and action that is already being taken since, in a difficult situation, without such acknowledgement and reinforcement, it is hard to sustain a challenging resolve.

JACINTA/MANJULA

Jacinta's earliest experiences of her place in the world taught her that she didn't matter and that she wasn't worth much. This was her childhood, this was her marriage and this was how she entered motherhood. Perhaps things would not have changed much for her ever, had Breakthrough not reached out to her.

Jacinta was one of the participants in the Breakthrough training on human rights held at Meremajalu, Bantwal, in Karnataka. The trainers observed that Jacinta had a very subdued and timid personality. They found out that as a child she had been neglected because she was a girl and later on she was married off to an alcoholic man. Her whole life she had meant very little to anyone at all and now her own life held little value to her.

In a follow up meeting, one of the trainers sought Jacinta's feedback on the training sessions she had attended. Her reply indicated a huge shift in her life. She said, '*The training has built up my self-esteem. I even took part in a drama for our federation's Annual Day Celebration. Although the drama was a flop, I enjoyed myself thoroughly!*'

Now that the training interactions and experiences have helped her gain confidence she wants to raise her children as confident human beings, who can face any challenge or obstacle.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- The belief that every individual matters is not a belief every individual holds, even sometimes about themselves. This is a breakdown of the human being more basic than a violation of human rights.
- The greater the sensitivity and capacity to understand where another person is at in their self-perception, the clearer the estimation of the change that is required to be effected with that person.

- **MSCT II (2010)**

In the second phase, almost 50 stories were collected from Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka. These stories, with comments and reflections are presented state-wise ahead.

Uttar Pradesh

MOHINI KUMARI/KRATI

A young girl has taken up the cause of DV and women's rights seriously, integrating them into her daily life with no room for tolerance of violence or injustice.

Mohini is a 19 year old from Kanpur, a cheerful, sociable person, easy to talk to, but when it comes to women's rights she means business. It was her interest in women's issues that led her to participate in Breakthrough training and to continue to work on these issues after the training. She has become a role model for girls in her community.

Once Mohini heard a couple (tenants in her house) fighting. She decided to intervene. She went to their room and rang the bell. When the woman opened the door, Mohini lied to her and told her that her mother-in-law was waiting outside for her. The woman went outside and when she returned, she told Mohini that there was no one there. Mohini replied that the mother-in-law must have got tired of waiting and left. Mohini says that after that day, she has not heard any violent disagreements from them.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Strengthening the capacities and skills of an increasing pool of committed citizens who advocate against DV and rights violations in their daily life is critical to the long term, sustained achievement of campaign goals.
- When 'everybody' who lives 'next door' to somebody has an alert awareness towards human rights and domestic violence and the intention and capacity to intervene in case intervention is necessary, incidents of violence will reduce.
- As reflected in this story as well as many others, Breakthrough interventions with young people are well received and effective.

DIVYA CHADHA/SHIVANI PANDEY

Growing up without ever thinking about or challenging the unwritten rules and roles for girls, Divya has never thought of herself as an important part of society with the right to discuss, debate and engage with social issues. Breakthrough provided the opportunity to use a lens on herself and reflect on multiple issues and the part she plays in the world around her.

Divya Chadha is a student at Lucknow University. She has lived her life following the unwritten prescription for girls in which shyness, taboos and minimal levels of interaction with boys plays a big part. In November 2008 she attended Breakthrough training co-organized by FPAI (India's largest reproductive and sexual health organization).

Divya believes that she learned a lot from the training. Previously she lacked confidence and would not mix with members of the opposite sex. Since taking part in the training, she has

become more comfortable with her own sexuality and this in turn has made her more comfortable in the company of boys. She has even been able to overcome her reluctance to discuss taboo subjects like HIV/AIDS in public. At the training she also learned about the PWDVA 2005. She believes that violence should not be tolerated and the Constitution of India gives people the right to raise their voices against it. She has reached a point where she believes that we all have a responsibility to each other as members of society.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Information and awareness on sensitive, difficult and taboo subjects provided in an engaging, safe and interactive way helps people come to grips with issues that are affecting society, and that are therefore the legitimate concern of everybody.

TABBUSUM NISHA/ASHISH GOPAL DUBEY

This story may be read from the point of view of the impact of a woman on the lives of her daughters. Tabussum has always believed in equality, justice and human rights long before she became acquainted with the concepts as they are studied or advocated today. She is a teacher, but her mother who was illiterate and came from an extremely conventional, male dominated family structure is the one responsible for Tabussum's achieving her goals.

Tabussum is a teacher by profession. Even while pursuing her education, she had the desire to do something more, in addition to her studies. A friend told her about Breakthrough and encouraged her to attend one of the workshops. At the workshop, Tabussum was inspired by what she learned about human rights and domestic violence.

Since taking part in the workshop, she has started talking to her husband, family, friends and neighbours about these issues. She feels that if we want to stop domestic violence in society, then we first have to change things within our own homes. Every time she hears about an instance of domestic violence in her neighbourhood, she attempts to intervene and tries to stop the violence.

She feels that young people can play an important part in stopping domestic violence. They are the ones with the will and enthusiasm to bring about change in society, therefore it is important to educate and create awareness amongst them about these issues.

It is equally important to make everyone aware of their rights. She feels that the family will become a happy and safe space only when men as well as women are aware of their rights.

Tabussum said that she is one of five sisters and has one brother, but her mother never discriminated between her son and daughters - all of them had equal rights and all of them were educated. This was so, even though Tabussum's mother came from an extremely simple family. She was illiterate and belonged to a community where traditions and customs played a very important role in people's lives. Tabussum's mother was married off at the age of 12 years to Tabussum's father, who was not more than 16-17 years old himself. Like his relatives, Tabussum's father felt that his daughters must be married off early, but her mother resisted. Even when it came to employment, her father was against the idea of his daughters working. It was Tabussum's mother who intervened and convinced her husband that both boys and girls must be allowed to work, and there should be no discrimination between them.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- This story points to the immense importance of that voice in the family that challenges the norm in shaping an individual's sense of justice and rights.
- Children learn their values from their parents; convention may be overturned by one parent who despite their own limitations fights to change something for the next generation.

ANAMIKA/ASHISH GOPAL DUBEY

A schoolgirl rings her neighbour's doorbell if she hears sounds of domestic violence from the house. She can discuss issues of sexual health and HIV/AIDS and she knows these are huge challenges before society. She credits Breakthrough for her ability to do these things.

Anamika is a school student. Her father owns a small business, and is the sole breadwinner in the family. Anamika has never been comfortable discussing issues related to gender and sexuality and HIV/AIDS, lacking the confidence to do so and perhaps being shy as well.

Post participating in Breakthrough training she finds herself being able to openly discuss these critical issues with her friends and family. The Bell Bajao! campaign has also struck a chord with her, so much so that she has gone up to a house and rung the bell if there has been an incident of domestic violence in her neighbourhood.

Now she plans to create a group of volunteers along with her friends, in order to stop domestic violence. Due to her open engagement with these issues, even in her neighbourhood, people feel that everybody should undergo Breakthrough training.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Girls growing up in an environment where talk of sex and violence simply does not happen despite many commonly experienced problems associated with these subjects, find it easier to break the silence with the interventional support of an external agency. This support begins the process of change.

SUNITA/SUDHA TIWARI

A gambler and alcoholic regularly beats and abuses his wife confident in the belief that nobody will stop him. His wife decides to seek help and approaches Breakthrough.

Sunita works as a domestic help. Her husband occasionally works as a rickshaw puller, but he is an alcoholic and spends all his money gambling. At times he forcibly takes money from Sunita and if she resists, he beats her. Once when she had gone to work, her husband stole her silver anklet and sold it. When Sunita asked where her jewellery had gone, he told her that he sold it to repay a loan. This led to an argument and he beat her badly.

Sunita spoke to a Breakthrough fieldworker, who went and met Sunita's husband and spoke with him about women's rights and the law relating to domestic violence. He also warned him if he continued to harass Sunita, a complaint would be filed with the police. The fieldworker also told Sunita about her rights, and encouraged her to take her own decisions. Since this episode, there has been no more domestic violence in Sunita's life.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Immediate follow-up and effective response to someone seeking support strengthens the creation of an environment enabling the protection of rights.
- The greater the visibility and awareness of legal recourse against perpetrators of domestic violence, the violence decreases.
- Most perpetrators are afraid of legal and social consequences of their behaviour once it is under an external scanner.

LAJJAWATI/REKHA SINHA

Living in a rural village community, married to an abusive alcoholic, Lajjawati thought she could escape by sheltering with her parents, but she was wrong. One option was to tackle her husband directly.

Lajjawati lives in Habibpur village. Her husband is an alcoholic and would beat her and her children almost every day. She tried to escape by moving back in with her parents but unfortunately her parents did not want her back. Her relatives too, saw her as a liability and would insult and humiliate her.

A Breakthrough field worker suggested that Lajjawati should try and catch her husband when he was sober, speak to him and make him understand the consequences of his behaviour and the effect on her. Following the field worker's advice, Lajjawati spoke to her husband. She says that things have become a little better now, and even her husband has become more responsive to the needs of his family.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- It is possible that the general lack of communication, sense of inequality and level of silence between a couple make it easier for abuse to be perpetrated by the man. A possible solution within the capacity of the individuals concerned is just to break that silence and start a dialogue. Even this requires external intervention.

NEHA CHAUDHARY/SHIVANI PANDEY

A girl's place in this society is in the background, to do as told, her aim is to get married and again to do as told. Neha understands this picture, it is familiar to her as it reflects the socio-cultural values of the society she has grown up in. However, she has determined that her life is going to be different.

Neha Chaudhary is a student at Lucknow University. She lives with her family, her mother and two younger brothers. Her brothers are also students, and her mother is a housewife. Neha's father died recently, he was a bank employee and following his death, one of her brothers became eligible to take on employment at the bank.

Neha trained as a Human Rights & Domestic Violence advocate with Breakthrough's Rights Advocates Program (RAP). Before the training she was introverted and shy in social and public situations, but the training has helped her change. Now she feels confident about her interactions with people. Neha engages with her family, friends and with others in her community about human rights, gender and sexuality, HIV/AIDS and about using condoms.

Neha is also a part of Breakthrough's street play activity along with some other Rights Advocates. They have all been trained as part of a *Nukkad Natak* (street theatre) team. She plays the role of a rigid mother who has a young daughter. Through the street play she spreads awareness about human rights and domestic violence in society.

Neha's family was against her pursuing her studies. They wanted her to marry as soon as possible, but after the Breakthrough training, she spoke to them about the way she felt and the things she wanted to do and convinced them to allow her to study further. She says that

she has a new sense of self-respect and she is now independent. Presently she is working with an NGO and wants to continue expanding her sphere of interests and activities.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- The combination of training and support along with the individual's will and desire to effect change in their own lives is a powerful building block of large-scale sustainable social change.

LAXMI RATHORE/SHIVANI PANDEY

Laxmi Rathore is an educated woman, married, has the backing of an extremely supportive family – and she has chosen to use these things to the advantage of furthering a gender, sexuality and rights agenda in her own sphere of work and influence.

Laxmi Rathore is recently married and lives with her in-laws in Lucknow. She completed her Masters in Social Work from Lucknow University. Her family is very supportive and progressive considering the social environment that they live in and they feel that it is completely her own choice whether she works or not.

While pursuing her Masters degree, Laxmi became associated with Breakthrough. She participated in training on human rights and domestic violence issues. Initially, she was not comfortable talking about these issues and felt inhibited discussing them, but the Breakthrough training helped build her self-confidence and capacity to engage with these issues.

After the training she has successfully incorporated some of the things she learned into her own life, for instance on family planning and reproductive health. She does not hesitate to talk about these issues with the elders of her family. This has helped her gain their respect, and her supportive father in law encourages her continue to think for herself and take decisions for herself. Her husband is also very supportive and admires the fact that she is independent.

Laxmi is a volunteer with FPAI (India's largest reproductive and sexual health organization). She frequently participates in all the competitions and training sessions that are run with Breakthrough. She has said that she will continue to do so in future as the training sessions have been the major source of change and inspiration for her own work and life.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- The impact of gender and rights training on someone who has the advantage of a supportive background and progressive family is not the same as the impact on those struggling against adverse circumstances.
- A different lens for viewing must be used here; the value of Laxmi's story lies in understanding that the human resources to drive social change can be sourced from across social and personal circumstances.

PHOOLMATI/ANITA MAURYA

An HIV positive woman faces discrimination at a hospital at the time of her pregnancy and delivery. A Breakthrough worker brings together multi-pronged support from government and non-government sources to help her and follows through to change the local system as well.

Phoolmati was diagnosed as being HIV positive during her pregnancy. She and her husband faced a lot of difficulty during the delivery. They had to fight with the doctors and the staff at the hospital who were not providing adequate care to her and were treating her badly.

At one stage, when she needed blood, the Breakthrough worker who was trying to help Phoolmati was not allowed to meet with her doctor. After repeated attempts, the worker finally managed to meet the doctor who guaranteed that the blood transfusion would be done. However, that night the couple were told to move out to another hospital.

In the suggested hospital, treatment was more expensive. Unfortunately the couple could not afford to move to this new hospital, so the Breakthrough fieldworker contacted the Uttar Pradesh State AIDS Control Society, Gazipur, and other organizations and officials to help Phoolmati.

Finally the Additional District Magistrate visited the hospital to ensure that Phoolmati was not discriminated against and her treatment was given the focus it needed. Phoolmati eventually delivered a healthy baby girl and now she and her family are doing fine.

After this incident the Breakthrough worker convinced the Chief Medical Superintendent to provide appropriate training to doctors and nurses so that they can deal with HIV positive patients with care and sensitivity.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Immediate and urgent intervention during an emergency situation, must also be followed by planned strategic intervention that can change attitudes, practices and systems in the long run.

USHA GUPTA /ANITA MAURYA

Usha has two children to raise; she did not complete her schooling. She lost her husband to AIDS and she is HIV positive. Like many other women in her situation, discrimination and prejudice from family, friends and society ensured that Usha had to contend with abusive circumstances which included difficulty in earning a basic livelihood.

Usha is 30 years old and studied up to class VIII. Her husband was HIV positive and died three years ago. Usha too is HIV positive. She has two children, a son and a daughter.

Usha attended a Breakthrough support meeting during which Anita Maurya, the trainer conducting the meeting, used the training resources which included videos like Baabul and Mann Ke Manjire, which speak to the viewer at the level of strong feelings and then provide the springboard for discussion and reflection. This was the catalyst that allowed Usha to share her own life story with the group and speak of the vulnerability of her children and herself in a situation where she has no support and no means to earn a living.

Through her advocacy efforts, Anita Maurya was able to get Usha a sewing machine from a club in Gazipur and this was handed over to her by the Superintendent of Police. Anita has continued to support Usha, and Usha has seized the opportunity to rebuild her life independently and raise her children.

She has converted her personal experiences into a purpose; so she works on women's rights issues with the organisation, conducts family counselling sessions, trainings and field visits, and has been appointed at the Out Reach Worker level.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Outreach strengthened by a steady grassroots presence that can give consistent support provides the 'client' of outreach both information and access to resources.
- It also creates an enabling environment where the individual's confidence and capacity help lead or further spread the desired change.

- The importance of the individual trainer, volunteer or other field worker in the engagement with the client is high; these stories of change are as much about this engagement as about any other informational or material resource.

REKHA (Not her real name.)/KAMLESH

Married eight years, at the age of thirty two Rekha discovers that she and her husband (thirty five) are both HIV positive. Rekha is in a state of panic not just related to their health and anxiety with the diagnosis. Her husband remains very unwell and she fears that if he dies, his family will throw her out on to the streets.

Rekha's fears and panic are a familiar situation and easily understood by thousands of women in a similar situation in India. Yet in her case, help came through Kamlesh. Kamlesh founded the organisation PLHA (People Living with HIV/AIDS) in 2007 and has since continued to work in this field. In March 2008 she was a participant at Breakthrough training where among other VAW and DV issues, she became acquainted with the provisions of the PWDVA 2005. In November 2008 she met Rekha and her husband while on another case for which she was at Lucknow's ICTC centre.

Deleted: acquainted

Seeing Rekha's obvious panic, she spoke with her and heard her fears. She was immediately able to tell Rekha about the new law (the PWDVA 2005) that has provisions to protect the rights of women and specifically the right of a married woman to live in her marital home. She also counselled the childless couple to not have any children since they are HIV positive. This counsel was even harder for Rekha to accept since her in-laws had been after her to have children and blamed her for the fact that they didn't have any.

Then in 2009, Kamlesh met the couple again at the ICTC centre. Rekha's husband was very ill and his father was also with them. Seizing the opportunity, Kamlesh initiated dialogue with Rekha's father-in-law about Rekha's situation. The father-in-law simply said that Rekha was of no use to him if his son were to die. Kamlesh addressed the issue with him and after a prolonged discussion was able to convince the man that he had a legal responsibility towards Rekha and she had a legal right to residence with her marital family.

Kamlesh followed up on Rekha's case, told her and her husband to come in for the support group meetings of the PLHA, and helped them both recover a measure of confidence and re-create their life. Rekha's husband was soon able to take up a job as a driver and the couple are now in a much better position at home and also better able to deal with their HIV positive status.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Information is critical; information about the PWDVA 2005 in the hands of a grassroots social activist has a far reaching impact and consequence on the lives of individuals in local communities.
- Knowledge that there is a law against rights infringement is often by itself enough to deter potential rights violators.

KAMLA (Not her real name.)/KAMLESH

Married 14 years, Kamla and her husband discover that he is HIV positive. This explains his long bouts of ill-health that caused him to lose his job as a truck driver. Their family has been unsupportive and abusive prior to this and after this new diagnosis they are overwhelmed with anxiety knowing that they have no help and also two children aged eight and twelve to feed, clothe and educate.

At Lucknow's ICTC Centre, as Kamla sits with her husband who is lying flat on the floor frozen with fear, unable to deal with the shock of the diagnosis, they are approached by Kamlesh, who has seen their state of panic. Kamlesh, founder of PLHA (People Living with HIV/AIDS), has been working with HIV positive and AIDS patients for some time now and is also armed with new knowledge of the law having been through Breakthrough training a few months ago.

Hearing their story, Kamlesh offers to help and Kamla and her husband accept; they go with Kamlesh to Lucknow Medical College for his treatment. Here it is discovered that Kamla too is HIV positive. They put their faith in Kamlesh who continues to follow up with them and counsel them on dealing with HIV as well as about their rights with regard to family property and resources.

As a result, Kamla's husband and Kamla herself have learnt to accept that they have rights, and speak about these rights to their abusive family members. Her husband has taken his share of family property and moved out with Kamla and their children to live independently, free of harassment and abuse.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- DV can sometimes manifest against entire families, in this case husband, wife and their children.
- A little support and sustained efforts at capacity building of the individual can lead to positive turnaround of a life situation.

ASHALESHA/MANJEET KAUR

In 2009, Anganwadi workers are attending a meeting organised by an FPAI staffer on DV and women's rights, when a man storms in and begins to hurl threats and vile abuse at one of the female participants. This is Ashalesha's story.

Ashalesha is educated and got married at the age of twenty, to a man who was far less educated and belonged to a family of conservative and narrow-minded views. He himself began to become abusive, could not hold down a job and resented the fact that Ashalesha was not only educated but was working and earning a living as an Anganwadi worker. He threatened her with dire consequences if she continued to work, he would abuse and scream at her no matter who was present. He took away the money she earned and yet he and his family were also against her working. They resented the independence and identity this gave her.

Meanwhile, FPAI (Family Planning Association of India) staffer Manjeet Kaur who had also attended Breakthrough trainings on DV, Human Rights and HIV/AIDS, would conduct regular trainings and capacity building workshops for Anganwadi workers which Ashalesha would regularly attend. It was at one such, that Ashalesha's husband stormed in and made his threats.

Then Ashalesha shared her story – that as a result of the abuse at home she had filed for divorce in 2007 and moved out into the neighbouring village with her daughter. That her husband would continue to stalk, abuse and threaten her and this included the threat of taking away the daughter. He even tried to spread stories about her in the village where she had shifted and with her Anganwadi supervisors. He also made her an offer that she could return to the marital home if she gave him all her earnings. (Ashalesha refused.)

Despite all this and with the increasing support of her Anganwadi peers and women from the local community – Ashalesha continues to hold her head high and fight for her right to security and a life free of violence.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Often the threat to life posed by a violent husband can manifest as physical, economic, emotional, psychological and social violence against a woman. This is abuse of a sort that tries to trap the victim with no possibility of escape or support.
- In such case, the aggressor may only be tackled with a combination of tools and resources, of which the foremost is the capacity of a woman to resist and fight for her right to security across dimensions, physical, economic, social and psychological. Along with this, it is critical that an environment be created that is understanding and supportive of a woman who is actively resisting the threats and violence in her life.
- The ability of a woman to resist violence against herself and look after her children as a single and independent mother, may be expected to have a long term impact on the next generation.
- A child who grows up knowing that her mother is fighting for her rights and does not accept violence is likely to grow into an adult who (having been exposed to this attitude and mindset), may also have a good chance of sharing such a mindset.

RANI/MANJEET KAUR

The husband is a lawyer - the wife is a graduate. He beats her, abuses her, keeps her financially dependant and answerable to him, ensures that she and their children are terrified of him and also makes sure there is no outside intervention by threatening to involve anyone who 'interferes' in legal trouble.

In 2009 neighbours hear a particularly terrible fight, far worse than usual, in the home of the lawyer and his wife Rani, and some do step up to intervene. As he is beating her, their eldest child opens the door and lets in the neighbours who manage to stop him and end this episode.

As it happens, Rani, who is Manjeet Kaur's neighbour – and Manjeet is an FPAI (Family Planning Association of India) staffer who has also attended Breakthrough trainings on DV, Human Rights and HIV/AIDS and conducts regular trainings and capacity building workshops on these subjects. So a day after this incident, Rani is approached by Manjeet who tries to speak to her about legal recourse available to women against Domestic Violence. However, Rani believes her husband has his knowledge of the law and position as a lawyer on his side and she tells Manjeet that if anyone tries to help, he will involve them in some legal mess. Manjeet does tell Rani that the only way to put an end to this situation and change life for herself and her children, is to pick up the courage to make a stand.

A year later, there is another incident over something trivial. The children want mangoes to eat, but 'the lawyer' refuses to part with any extra money. Rani tells him she will leave if he continues to ill-treat her and the children, and he tells her to go. This she does, to stay with her parents for a month.

However, Manjeet has not lost sight of Rani's case. This time she, along with the help and support of Rani's parents, convinces her to speak up for herself and do something with her life to increase her own capacity and independence. As a result, there is a shift in Rani's perceptions and attitude. She begins to stand up to her lawyer husband – and in the face of his opposition, she goes ahead and fills up a form to apply for a B.Ed. course. Manjeet has advised her to do this, so that after completing the course she can take up work as a school teacher.

Rani has taken her first step, with help and support, to change life for herself and her children and confront her abusive husband.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Changing attitudes, perceptions and deep rooted fear / acceptance of injustice is often a slow process – there may not be a way of foretelling the particular point,

- episode or event in a person's life when support will be welcomed and used to make a choice to change.
- Working on the issue of DV in a woman's life does not stop with her reluctance or fear of addressing the issue; the 'case' remains open and sustained follow-up is required – until something changes.

SARITA/SARITA

This is the story of another young woman who internalised a human rights lesson and went on to help another, many others, change their life circumstances.

Sarita from Kanpur attended Breakthrough training and learned about human rights, domestic violence, and issues of gender and sexuality. During the training she learned about freedom of speech and decided that this gave her the right to confidently challenge men who would stare or pass lewd comments. The training also helped her to overcome her fears and to become more self-assured.

She went on to organize similar training programs in her college and received enormous support and appreciation from her teachers and the participants. She also conducted workshops with groups of women, training them on issues such as gender, domestic violence, and human rights.

During one such the training session, she met Neha (not her real name) who was at the receiving end of domestic violence. Sarita referred her to Sakhi Kendra (a women's organization) and even suggested that she (Sarita) file a complaint with the police. Sarita recalls how after a little bit of intervention from Sakhi Kendra, together with a visit from the police, Neha's situation and relationship with her husband improved. Neha then moved to her native village along with her husband.

Sarita firmly believes that thanks to the Breakthrough program, not only has she been able to understand and protect her own rights but she has also been able to help women like Neha to change their own lives and their relationships with the people around them.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- The individual does not act in isolation and help and support is most effective when it comes from multiple sources.
- Police action, even at the level of counselling and undertaken in partnership with ordinary citizens and citizen's groups is critical to change. It adds the enforcement and implementation angle to what may otherwise just be perceived as interference in personal life.

PINKI/ASHISH GOPAL DUBEY

Shyness, silence, taboo subjects, change and young people in action are recurrent themes in the stories of individual change leading to engagement with DV. Yet once in a while, there is a story reflecting a creative attempt to practice what is advocated in a way that is hard to forget. This is one of them, where Pinki co-opted her dog into the proceedings!

The basic idea of interrupting domestic violence, as in the 'Bell Bajao!' campaign PSAs, has been well received by most people. Many have thought of creative and innovative excuses for knocking on the door and interrupting ongoing violence.

Pinki, a girl from an urban middle class family in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh got an opportunity to participate in a Breakthrough workshop on gender, sex, domestic violence and human rights in November 2009. Before the training, like many other girls, Pinki considered discussions about gender roles, sexuality, and domestic violence to be taboo. Post training, Pinki felt very

differently about these issues and her relationship with them. She started sharing what she had learned from the training with her friends, and others who would listen.

One day she heard a women screaming in her neighbourhood. With the idea of 'Bell Bajao' in her mind she and her dog went to the house and she released her pet, letting him run into the grounds of the house. She then went and rang the bell. Someone opened the door and Pinki said that she was looking for her dog. The dog meanwhile had wandered off and gone home. Pinki pretended to search for him and then left after some time. Everything seemed to return to normal and she did not hear any further noises of violence, nor has she heard any since. She feels that the Breakthrough training made her confident enough to take such a step and call a halt to DV via an innocent interruption that she hoped would go a long way.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Breakthrough is achieving a socio-environmental goal where DV is becoming more accepted as an issue that is everybody's business.
- With awareness, sensitization and training, individuals find themselves in a position to do something in their own unique way.

NANKI /MUNNI DEVI

"I married into this family, I'm not a runaway, I have rights here – to live, to eat, to stay!"
Strong words from a woman, asserting her right to security, residence and freedom from domestic violence after 16 years of staying in an abusive marriage, with an abusive husband and in-laws.

Married sixteen years, with two daughters and two sons, Nanki is an uneducated woman married to a maker and seller of folding cots. For years she has borne emotional and physical abuse from her mother-in-law and then her husband under his mother's influence. Her mother-in-law needed no excuse to abuse her, but the fact that she had two girl-children gave her more ammunition for verbal assaults. Her husband went on to beat her as well.

Nanki has a neighbour, Munni Devi. Munni is an Anganwadi worker who has also been associated with Breakthrough. On her advice, Nanki participated in Breakthrough training and as a result there was a massive shift in her perception of her own situation and her right to a violence free life. At the training she shared her story and learnt about the law and women's rights. She also said that her mother-in-law was beginning to trouble her even more since she would attend these trainings but she had decided to stand up to her and not take the abuse silently any more or ever again.

This was not all. At a later training event, Nanki with her new found confidence was able to support another participant facing DV at home, share her own story and life changes and encourage the other to take action against her abuser. At a public event in which Breakthrough participated with a stall, Nanki even went up on stage, shared her life story and encouraged the audience to look at these issues and take a stand against DV.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- The self-confidence that comes with taking a stand and successfully fighting abuse in one's own life, often comes with a justifiable sense of pride and achievement – helping to encourage and motivate others in similar situations to fight abuse in their lives.

NEELAM (Not her real name.)/ MUNNI DEVI

A married woman, with two small children, who is used to unquestioningly listening to her husband, has a problem with a stranger harassing her with messages on her mobile phone.

Her husband thinks she's hiding something from him and refuses to listen to her or believe in her. He blames her, not the stranger.

Neelam is an Anganwadi worker and her husband works in the private sector. They live in Kanpur with their two children and her in-laws. Her husband once gifted her with a mobile phone.

Meanwhile, through another Anganwadi worker Munni, Neelam heard about Breakthrough and attended Breakthrough trainings. Just a few months after, she got messages addressed to her on her mobile phone from a stranger. Her husband saw them and was convinced something was going on, got into a rage with her and suspected her of some sort of infidelity.

Meanwhile, due to her experience at the Breakthrough trainings, Neelam has become more confident as a person and has a growing sense of her own agency in her life. She believes that if there is trouble, she can take steps to do something about it. So she went with Munni to meet a local police beat constable, who tried to help them by calling the number from where the messages had come to Neelam. The man at the other end denied having made the calls. A few moments later the constable got a call on his mobile from another number and the caller abused him and cut the call. So the constable advised Neelam and Munni to file a complaint with the SHO. This they tried to do, but the SHO was quite indifferent though he did offer to tell Neelam's husband that this was a common problem and not necessarily one Neelam was responsible for.

However Neelam's husband refused to go and speak to the SHO. Finally Munni too met Neelam's husband and together they were able to convince him that the messages were not due to anything Neelam had done and as the SHO had said, it was a common problem. They had to turn his perception of the problem as something Neelam was to blame for to the realization that it was not her fault.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- The tendency to blame a woman, a wife, for the misbehaviour or abuse directed at her or at members of her family, is deep rooted in society and in the individual psyche.
- It is important for a woman to not buy in and accept the common attitude that everything is her responsibility and her fault, but to question other people's perceptions of her role and responsibility. Such a shift in perceptions of self helps increase the capacity to act for oneself.

KIRAN GUPTA/RASHMI

An alcoholic out of work married man, sells off household things and steals his wife's grocery money to pay for his addiction. He beats, abuses and threatens to kill her when and if she tries to question, confront or stop him. Married for 17 years, they have two children and she does not earn enough to make ends meet by herself.

At an Anganwadi workers meeting, Kiran who looks sad and is silent confides in a co-worker, Rashmi, and tells her the whole story of abuse by her husband. Rashmi offers help and support and accompanies Kiran to a 'Sakhi Kendra', where they are to wait awhile. Rashmi has to leave, and in her absence the Sakhi Kendra staff ask Kiran for money, so Kiran leaves since she can't afford to pay.

A month later, Kiran participates in a Breakthrough training where she shares her story and everyone extends support, understanding and the offer to help. However, a week later Rashmi gets a call in the middle of the night from Kiran who is in a terrible state and says that her husband might kill her. She also tells Rashmi though that her brothers are coming to help – which they do, bringing police with them.

However, the incident does not change anything. Kiran is still living with her husband who continues to abuse her while pretending to others that all is fine and well with them.

Rashmi, along with Munki a co-worker and also familiar with Breakthrough, have attempted to convince Kiran to get out of her situation, but Kiran, till the time of collecting this story, refuses to leave her husband out of fear and anxiety that she will not be able to manage life on her salary without him. This is despite the fact that her husband neither earns nor in any way actually supports her or the children.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Change in the life of an individual requires the person most affected to take a decision choosing that change.
- DV and human rights work often requires the active agent of change, or the social worker, to respect the right of the vulnerable, or the abused, to make a choice for themselves. In such a situation, support, options and solutions can at best be offered repeatedly, but may not be forced upon the other.

ANURADHA

The sounds of violence behind closed doors are disturbing for most people and very few think through the option of intervening and then actually intervene. Some do intervene. Such of the ones who do are not always unusually brave, outspoken or daring. Sometimes it is an ordinary, perhaps shy young person, like Anuradha, who has internalised a human rights lesson and who has learnt to believe that they can make a difference.

Anuradha, a student from Kanpur heard about Breakthrough training from an Aaganwadi worker named Sushila. Before attending the training she was very shy, even reluctant to leave her own home or voice her opinions. The training helped to build Anuradha's self confidence and she started talking about it to her peers and her parents, sharing information about HIV/AIDS, domestic violence and especially the 'Bell Bajao' campaign. She spoke before an audience for the first time and her teachers and friends understood the nature of this achievement for someone who had been shy their whole life. More importantly, they were proud and amazed by her understanding of the issues she spoke about. Later with the help of a Breakthrough volunteer, Anuradha organized a training session at her school as well.

Her story really begins here. The 'Bello Bajao' advertisement inspired her so much that using the same model she succeeded in bringing a halt to the ongoing violence next door. One day when Anuradha heard the noise of scuffling and beating coming from her neighbour's house, she went and called out to the woman inside saying that there was a phone call for her. Initially her neighbours ignored her, but when Anuradha shouted, the woman came out to Anuradha's house to take the call. Meanwhile the husband left the house. Since in reality there was no phone call, Anuradha gave the flimsy excuse that call must have been disconnected because of network problems.

In another incident, Anuradha was going to the market with a friend when she heard some raised voices coming from a shop. She immediately went and calmly rang the door bell, even though the possible consequences of her action petrified her. An elderly man came to the door and Anuradha pretended to ask for directions. The man told her the route and she after some little conversation, she walked ahead. On her way back home, she stood near the shop for some time and realized that all the noises coming from the shop had stopped.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Two incidents of violence interrupted through intervention by an ordinary citizen who appears to have made a conscious decision about her role and responsibility vis-à-vis the issue.

- Word of mouth works for Breakthrough as often as campaign publicity – an Anganwadi worker put Anuradha on a track that changed her life.
- The support of friends, family and significant persons such as teachers can leverage a training resource, making it far more effective as the relationship of the individual with themselves and with the world around her (or him) begins to change.

NILIMA/SAROJ SHARMA

The bell rang in the middle of a fight between Nilima, her husband and her mother-in-law.

Saroj, an old friend of Nilima's and a participant at Breakthrough trainings was in the neighbourhood when the sounds of domestic violence came from the house. Nilima was being accused of interacting with strange men on the road. This kind of fighting was not uncommon in their house, it certainly was not the first time. Mother of four children, married to a 'safai karamchari' (one who is employed as a cleaner/sweeper etc.) Nilima had lived with domestic violence for years.

When Saroj therefore rang the bell, it was to ask for Nilima; first the mother-in-law appeared at the door and then the husband, and when finally Nilima appeared, Saroj said she came to tell her to attend a Breakthrough training program that was to be held in a few days. She refused. Three days later Saroj was back. She asked her if the fighting had stopped that day after she rang the bell.

Nilima said that it had – and Saroj told her it was a technique she learnt at a Breakthrough training. Upon hearing this Nilima immediately agreed to participate in such training herself.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- The most impactful techniques for sustained social change depend on the ripple effect.
- Ringing the bell at the right time may not only stop a specific incident of violence but has the effect of mobilizing greater numbers of individuals who see and buy-in to the possibility that simple behaviours and actions can impact complex problems of DV and VAW.

JYOTI GUPTA/KRATI

A young school teacher encounters new concepts at a women's rights and gender training event, and discovers that the reality of her life and the lives of many women is very different from the freedom, independence and excitement she experienced at the training. Now she wants to bridge the gap.

Jyoti teaches at Saraswati Bal Vidhya Mandir in Kanpur. She is also pursuing her masters degree. She lives with her parents and her two younger brothers. Her father is a fruit vendor. On her way back home one day, she saw a group of girls engaged in hot debate and discussions on women's issues at a neighbour's house. Curious and wishing to be a part of the excitement, she went up to find out more. The group leader Shivani told her to put her name down on a list so she could be contacted for the next training event. Just three days later, Jyoti met Saroj, an Anganwadi worker who told her about another such event being organised at an Anganwadi centre nearby. Jyoti signed up for this training workshop.

In her own words "*Vahan par main apne aap ko swatantra mehsoos kar rahi thi*" (There I experienced a feeling of being independent and free).

This training catalysed a whole new train of thought and attitude in Jyoti. Her perception of the reality of women's lives as they were as against what they could and should be made her question her own life and the values and norms her family subscribe to.

This change did not go unnoticed, Her mother began to get irritated with her, wondering where all the talk of women's rights was suddenly coming from; as she had always done, when her daughter wanted to go to the market she told her to take someone with her – but Jyoti shot back a swift reply, confidently telling her she can do these things alone and nobody will eat her up if she goes to market. This angered her mother.

The changes didn't stop here. A few months later, a young man she had known for a few years, met her mother to tell her he would like to marry Jyoti. Jyoti herself was fine with the proposal but her mother, citing caste considerations, refused to agree to the match. Unable to deal with the changes in her daughter, she tried to tell her she was going to get her married off soon and that Jyoti must immediately stop going to work. To both these things Jyoti has put up a determined resistance. She continues to go to teach and she has not married anyone yet.

As she says, her mother tries emotional blackmail since nothing else is working – but Jyoti is determined to bridge the gap – beginning with her own life and attitudes.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- The emotional impact of a rights workshop that creates an environment enabling participants to actually experience a sense of personal independence, freedom of expression and the joy of engagement with others on equal terms – is a critical catalyst in the change process.
- These workshop engagements and group interactions play an affirming role in the life of an individual who is motivated and determined to effect change.

MAYA/KRATI

A Breakthrough training workshop provides a participant with new tools in the form of information about new legislation on DV. She uses this to renew efforts on an ongoing domestic violence case on behalf of her sister-in-law. Her activism begins at home and swiftly moves out into the wider community.

In May 2010, Breakthrough organized a training program on gender, human rights and domestic violence in Shivajinagar, Kanpur. Maya was one of the participants. She is a 40 year old housewife with two children. Her husband is a businessman. At the training, Maya shared the story of her sister-in-law Padma, who had been suffering domestic abuse for the last 15 years. Her husband was involved in a relationship with another woman. He would often physically abuse her, and tell her that if she wanted to stay with him, she would have to deal with this life. Her husband was in the police department and this added greatly to the threat he posed. When the violence became unbearable, Padma left him, and returned to her parents' house. Her brothers filed a case under 498A. Maya shares that at that time, the Domestic Violence had not come into force, and therefore the case was not yet settled, and continued to drag on.

Four days after the training, Maya went to the Sakhi Kendra, where she registered Padma's case. The staff at the Sakhi Kendra is continuously monitoring the case. Maya has also joined the Sakhi Kendra as a volunteer. She wants to share the learnings from the workshop, with as many women as possible.

In August 2010, the [Kavita Rawat case](#) rocked Kanpur. (*This is a case of the rape and murder by a ward boy of a patient admitted to a nursing home that is under investigation and appears to involve the complicity of doctors and nursing home staff as well.*) The city witnessed major

protests. Maya took part in these protests. She is perceived as being one of the most valuable assets of the Sakhi Kendra.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Often individuals are stuck attempting to tackle issues of DV and rights in their lives or in the lives of people close to them due to a lack of knowledge and support resources. Information about both, the perceived presence of external intervention and an opportunity to participate in the fight for social justice can enable the individual to discover their sense of agency in creating change.

RASHMI/KRATI

45 years old, a mother of three, attends a Breakthrough training and after Day One, brings her daughters along to participate in the rest of the workshop together.

Rashmi is a 45 year old housewife from Kanpur. She has two daughters and one son. Her husband works in another town.

In May 2010, she participated in a Breakthrough training program on gender, human rights and domestic violence. She was so enthused by all she experienced the first day that the next day she brought both her daughters to the training. Her elder daughter is 18 years old, and the younger is 16. All three of them attended the training together.

After the training, Rashmi decided to be a volunteer at the local Sakhi Kendra. She wants to use her learnings from the training to help other women in distress.

During the August 2010 [Kavita Rawat case](#) and the aftermath of events in Kanpur, Rashmi got involved and actively took part in these protests. *(This is a case of the rape and murder by a ward boy of a patient admitted to a nursing home that is under investigation and appears to involve the complicity of doctors and nursing home staff as well.)*

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Knowledge and discussion about gender justice and women's rights when shared across generations can have an entirely different impact on a family. A mother and her daughters engaging with these issues and dialogues together in a workshop may be expected to have a long term impact not only on them but on all the other people and relationships in their futures.

- **MSCT II (2010)**

Karnataka

SANTHOSH NAIK/PREMANAND KALMADY

Santhosh is a survivor of human rights violations perpetrated upon him when he was a child, that resulted in harassment during police custody and injuries that required hospitalization. The memory and the anxiety still lives in him, but he has been able to channel his trauma into actively working on human rights issues in his area.

Santhosh Naik is a resident of a rural village in Udupi district, Karnataka. His parents work at the local granite quarry. He is eighteen years old and studying for his Bachelor of Arts degree from the government college at Udupi. In 2009 Santhosh took part in a day long human rights awareness programme organized by Breakthrough.

Santhosh has a traumatic past. He was falsely accused of a crime when he was only 15 years old, taken into custody and harassed by the police and other officials. As a result he suffered both physical and mental trauma and had to be hospitalized for a few days. He was finally released when human rights activists from the area intervened.

It was because of this experience that he decided to participate in the Breakthrough training. He learned about human rights, that everyone is equal before the law, and no one can be tortured, degraded or punished without reason. The experience of participating in this training helped him deal with his own traumatic past. He is now one of the most dynamic human rights activists in the area.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- The reality of rights issues hits those people the hardest who have experienced extreme violations.
- Working with survivors is a challenging possibility that may require to be explored at some point in time as an independent program activity.

RAMESH KAMBADA KONE//PREMANAND KALMADY

Ramesh proves that it is never too late and a person may always learn a new attitude and adopt new behaviours. This head of a grassroots development organisation took the teachings of a 'Training for trainers' course to heart - and home, and to the workplace as well.

Ramesh Kambada Kone is a forty year old resident of Kundapur Taluk, in the Udupi district of Karnataka. He is an agriculturist and runs his own NGO called *Prakrathi Grameena Vikas Trust* of which he is currently the Director and Chief Executive.

In 2009 Ramesh participated in a two day long 'Training of Trainers' course organized by Breakthrough. The training was on human rights, gender and domestic violence. The training had a great impact on his life. It helped him understand the importance of a human rights culture not just in the public sphere, but also within the confines of one's home and in one's own family.

Before the training, Ramesh was the typically patriarchal head of the household, exercising total control and taking all the important decisions unilaterally. After the training, he changed his attitude and started involving his wife in family discussions. Now all important decisions are taken by the two of them together. There is much more mutual understanding and respect between them.

Ramesh also stresses integrating gender concerns in the office space. He says, '*Women are more hard-working than men, still they are usually paid less than men.*' He has introduced the concept of gender equality and rights to his office staff. Currently all programmes and activities of his NGO focus on building a human rights culture in society. He also works as a district trainer, where he trains school children, parents and teachers.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- The choice of constituency is critical to leveraging training efforts and campaign resources. Here, the head of an organisation is able to increase the impact of his own new awareness and sensitivity by pushing through changes in his own life and in the lives of those who work with him.

GIRIRAJ METI/UDAY

The move from one end of the spectrum 'stereotypical male holding fast to patriarchal norms and values', to the other end of the spectrum, 'unconventional male, sensitive to the vulnerabilities of those around him' is a long journey. Giriraj made the distance, carried friends and peers along with him and initiated and sustained change within himself, within his family and within the larger village community that he comes from.

Giriraj Meti is a 23 year old from Yelamgeri Village. He holds a pre-university college qualification and lives with his mother and sister. He considered himself to be a 'typical village guy.' He was disrespectful and dismissive of women; he believed that men were superior; he did nothing to help around the house, and did not support the women in his family, even his sister, who is divorced.

At a Breakthrough training session on human rights and domestic violence Giriraj learned about concepts of gender roles, sexuality and HIV/AIDS, as well as rights. Influenced positively by this new learning, he decided to incorporate what he had learned into his own life. The training made him sensitive to his sister's problems. He first spoke to his sister and then his brother-in-law to open up communication between them again.

In his neighbourhood, Giriraj came across some parents who were preventing their daughters from attending school. He met and spoke to them about the necessity of sending their daughters to school and that girls had a right to education and they must not be denied their rights. He was able to convince the parents so that they started sending their daughters to school again.

At one point, he heard of an instance of child marriage in his village. A young girl had been married off at the age of five. The girl was now fourteen years old but her husband had died and she was living as his widow without support from her parents. Giriraj along with his associates went to visit the girl's parents. He told them that child marriage was an offence under the law but, having said that, he also suggested that they should think about remarriage for their daughter rather than leaving her in her current situation. After a long discussion, he finally managed to convince them to get their daughter married again. The girl is now married, is living happily with her husband and they recently had a child.

Giriraj and his associates have gone on to start a village level forum on safe motherhood called the *Thaythana Rakshana Vedithe* (TRV). He works with his friends to fight against village superstitions and tries to encourage families to ensure that women rather than giving birth at home go to the government hospital, which provides a much safer and more hygienic environment. He also gives out information about a 24 hour ambulance service that they can use to get to hospital. This has been a great achievement for all involved.

Giriraj has developed a human rights perspective on life. He is now more confident and comfortable talking about all these issues. He says that Breakthrough training has been a

turning point in his life. He continues to be associated with Breakthrough and feels proud to be a change maker in society and in people's lives.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Some stories of change are reflective of high impact at the individual level because they speak of a complete attitude turn-around such as this one, proving that it is possible.
- A highly motivated person with leadership capacity and the right support has enormous potential to mobilize others and create local interventions and grassroots teams focusing on the desired social change.

KUMARA NAIK/UDAY

Kumara's story is another one in a series of stories about men within who change has not been a subtle shift, but has been more in the nature of a giant turnaround, questioning long cherished patriarchal values, attitudes and behaviours.

Kumara Naik is 24 years old. He lives with his mother, sister and brother in Yelamgeri Village and holds a pre-university college certificate. Kumara believed that male dominance was necessary for a stable society. He was dismissive of women's rights and their problems. Whenever the community workers from the Gender and Health Equity Project (GHE) visited his village, he would tease them and trivialize their efforts.

Breakthrough conducted training for the local community in Yelamgeri and Kumara was one of the participants. Post the training, Kumara's attitudes and beliefs have changed completely. Most visibly, he has become more sensitive to women and their concerns and has started helping his mother around the house. His younger brother Shanker on seeing these changes joked that perhaps Kumara has attained *Jnanodaya* (spiritual awareness)! On a more serious note, Shanker liked this new side to his brother and the challenge to the value systems they were brought up in and he too has been inspired to start helping with domestic chores.

Currently Kumara is working as a government civil contractor. He is also a social worker and organizes the logistics for the people who attend community trainings. He arranges access to critical medical services for pregnant women such as blood donations when required and has also bought an auto-rickshaw, a vehicle he uses to provide free services to transport pregnant women to the government hospital.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Personal turnaround such as is reflected in some of these stories of change seem to automatically translate into a desire to give visibility to that turnaround through action.
- Perhaps a key part of such complete turnaround is the realization of one's own self-agency in life.

MARISWAMY/UDAY

A farmer learns to view the role of the women in his life and in the world around him from a lens that is different from the traditionally patriarchal one he has used his whole life. As change takes hold of him, he takes every opportunity to share and spread his new learning and new world view within his community.

Mariswamy is a 26 year old farmer from Kodhadala Village, living with his wife and three children. His education is barely above the primary level. He considered his life as a farmer was hard and the focal point of his family and gave little importance to his wife's work in looking after the home and their cattle. In fact he mistreated his wife.

Mariswamy learned many new things from Breakthrough training on human rights and gender. He admitted that prior to the training he would hesitate and feel shy about talking about any of the subjects that were covered. Since the training, he feels more confident in dealing with such issues and now talks to people in the community, including his friends and his family, about human rights, gender and sexuality.

There has been a significant change in his attitude to family and society. His view of housework has changed. He has started helping his wife with household work, takes care of the cattle and even helps his wife with sweeping, washing utensils and clothes and other domestic chores normally considered 'woman's work' in the world that he inhabits.

He has started working with programs assisting pregnant women in his neighbourhood, especially in helping them use the 24 hour ambulance service. Currently he is working for *Surakshitha Taytana Andola* (The Safe Motherhood Campaign).

Mariswamy says that Breakthrough training has been a major source of change and inspiration in his life.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Men who are introduced to the concept of rights and gender issues in a way that enables them to inspect the application of these concepts in their own lives in a safe and empowering way, rather than in a way that threatens or denigrates, are more receptive to change.
- Men have the power to more easily create change and act towards change not just within their own families but within their communities.

HANUMANTHA CHENDOOR/UDAY

Hanumantha, a young farmer, stereotypical male, even worked on a campaign for safe motherhood with little to no sensitivity or empathy for women, their lives and their concerns. Then one day he engages with gender and human rights training.

Hanumantha Chendoor is a 22 year old farmer from Vadratti. He has completed his schooling and lives with his parents. He was a stereotypical male with attitudes to match. His mother would complain that although he was a hard worker, he would pay no heed to what she said and did not even help or support his sister when she was pregnant.

He worked as part of TRV (Tayithana Rakshna Vedike - a committee for safe motherhood), but he did not take his responsibility seriously. He had undergone training on HIV/AIDS a long time ago, but there had been no refresher and he had received no training or information on concepts of gender and rights.

Breakthrough conducted training for the local community and Hanumantha took part. After the training, people noticed a significant change in him. He began to try and understand women's concerns and needs. Since the training the quality of his engagement with TRV has changed and he has become more sensitive to the difficulties women face during pregnancy. In the last TRV meeting, he stood up and spoke with conviction about safe motherhood for which he was applauded by all present.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- The presence or absence of an opportunity for engagement with issues that are not often spoken freely of, gender, women's rights, violence, is critical to shaping the individual's response or even the ability to recognise that there are such issues.
- The recognition of the importance of your 'self' in the scheme of things, becoming self-aware, in this case created the will to change.

ALLAH BAKSHI/UDAY

A man and a woman marry according to parental will in a rural society where both have little choice as per the value systems of that society and in fact the woman has even less possibility of exercising any choice than the man. The man has been forced into the marriage and his anger and retaliation takes the form of emotional abuse of his wife. Finally he sends her back to her parents and decides that he will divorce her and marry somebody else. Before this series of events unfolds, he happens to find himself in a Breakthrough training workshop.

Allah Bakshi, a farmer from Bheemanur village Koppala District, Karnataka got married four years ago. He did not accept his marriage or his wife since his family had forced him into marriage. He would often find fault with his wife, be suspicious of her and blame her for no reason. This continued for two years and eventually one day, he asked his wife to go back to her parents. Allah planned to divorce his wife and marry another woman.

As things happened, before his plans materialized, Allah attended a Breakthrough training programme. During the three day training session lots of issues such as the problems being faced by men and women, women's rights, and the issue of chastity were discussed. Those sessions triggered something within Allah that made him rethink his plans to divorce his wife. The Breakthrough trainer kept in regular touch with Allah and counselled him as well. As a result Allah accepted his marriage, and realising that he had wronged his wife, he called her back home and the couple started living together and building a new relationship. At the time of writing this, they were expecting their first child. Allah takes care of his wife and even helps with the household chores. He has joined TRV (Tayithana Rakshna Vedike - a campaign for safe motherhood) and actively participates in all the activities undertaken by the committee.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- An individual is as often the product of the environment as of the personal awareness and capacity for empathy and for distinguishing between right and wrong, justice and injustice.
- The aim of training for social change purposes goes beyond imparting information and creating awareness; it must use the opportunity to engage with feelings and attitudes that drive behaviour.

KALAVATI/UDAY

Sometimes, change achieved at a personal level is as powerful a change as that achieved at the level of community and social development. For Kalavathi, change brought the ability to undertake gender and women's rights trainings on her own, using the Breakthrough model. Change also brought the ability to tell her sons to help around the house. Finally it pushed her to break the silence around a taboo subject and initiate dialogue with her husband - about condom use.

Kalavati, an Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA worker), from Irkalagada cluster, Koppal district, Karnataka is working as a community motivator with the Gender and Health Equity project (GHE). She completed her school education and has two children.

Kalavati had taken part in Breakthrough training a year ago. She planned to disseminate the information she had learned to her local community, as part of her duties and responsibilities as a motivator in the GHE, so she started organizing Breakthrough training herself. After her third training session as a co-facilitator, she started facilitating training sessions on her own. She said that her major achievement was to facilitate the training for her own colleagues. Within a year, Kalavathi had coordinated 20-25 training sessions in the Irkalagada cluster.

Kalavati subscribed to the value system that believed that men never do household work, so she never asked her sons to help out around the home. Breakthrough training changed her mindset and now she asks them to contribute around the house. In the past she was scared to speak her mind in front of young people and men of her age, but now she has learnt how to communicate effectively and proudly says that she can convince them to think differently.

She started a dialogue with her husband about condom use, a subject strictly taboo and off-limits for the majority of women in her socio-cultural milieu and is amazed by this, her own personal milestone. Kalavati now feels that in GHE meetings or in doctors' meetings she can speak and express her opinions without any fear, nervousness or hesitation.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Empowered by information and support interventions, an individual can recreate their relationships at all levels, with the community and colleagues, and also within their own homes and immediate family.

MARUTHI AND PAMPAPATHI / UDAY

Two girls, studying for a Diploma in Education, unconvinced about the value of education for girls, engage with issues of rights and gender roles due to a Breakthrough workshop. For the first time in their lives they are motivated to do things differently, to see things differently.

Maruthi and Pampapathi are good friends. They are both 19 years of age and live in Irkalgadha Village in Koppal District. They are both studying for a Diploma in Education in Koppal. Maruthi has one sister, while Pampapathi has two sisters. Neither of the two ever helped out much around the home and at the same time they did not really see any value in educating girls.

They took part in Breakthrough training in their local community and this significantly changed their lives. Apart from changes in their attitudes and beliefs, the training has helped them develop good communication skills. Post the training, both girls started to work for a campaign for safe motherhood in Irkalgadha and at the same time they try to educate parents about the importance of sending their teenage girls to schools. They have also started taking up a share of the household chores.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Friends and peers share and discuss their values and lives; they can support each other and learn from each other. Most importantly, they can help each other re-create their own identities and roles within home and society.

LEENA D'SILVA/MANJULA

'On demand of Sparsha SHG, Naralpadav.'

This is what passengers read every time the bus they're in stops at Naralpadav. A quiet, unassuming housewife and her friends and peers decided that they were tired of waiting or walking - and that the bus stops here.

Leena D'Silva is a housewife. She is part of the Sparsha SHG formed by the Shubhada Trust, Suralpadi. Breakthrough conducted a training session where Leena was one of the participants. Leena was one of the more silent participants at the training. Then one day, when the Breakthrough team had completed the training session, Leena suddenly almost abruptly stood up to say, 'We got a bus- stop!'

She went on to explain that although there were a lot of houses in her area, there was no official permission for a bus-stop so 'Express' buses would never stop.

Her training experience made her realize that her community had the right to demand a bus stop. So she got the women together and they put in an application with their local Panchayat for a bus-stop at Naralpadav.

The Panchayat rejected the application thinking that it would end the matter. The women however refused to quit; they insisted and relentlessly followed up on what they knew was their right to demand. Their action was ultimately successful and the Panchayat agreed to sanction the bus-stop.

On the bus stop board it says, '*On demand of Sparsha SHG, Naralpadav.*'

KEY REFLECTIONS

- One individual's realisation of a possibility, and a sense or knowledge of the action required to achieve that possibility, is often the beginning of an achievement.
- Community mobilization towards an event or a single purpose (such as submitting an application in this case) must be sustained by maintaining the purpose and the group that comes together for it.
- The need for change must evolve from within a community, then action initiated, owned and sustained by them, rather than be an external imposition for the 'good' of the community.

TABASSUM/MANJULA

To challenge one's own family structure and its unwritten rules and laws and to be the first and only person to do so takes enormous courage and determination. The story of nineteen year old Tabassum reflects a mix of factors that helped her change things for herself.

Tabassum, a 19 year old girl from Tumkur District in Karnataka, attended a training programme organized by the Aware Trust on behalf of Breakthrough. She told the trainers that a marriage had already been arranged for her, but she did not want to get married so soon. Tabassum had seen the unhappiness of her cousins and other female relatives after marriage and early pregnancies. She wanted her life to be different. She wanted to pursue her interests, such as in social work, and she wanted the freedom to experience more such trainings and workshops.

After completing the first phase of training, Tabassum did not attend the second phase but the trainers were excited to see her return in the third phase. She explained that it had taken her some time, but finally she had been able to convince her parents not to marry her off at an early age. She said that initially her parents were reluctant to even listen to her and that they had not allowed her to attend the second phase of training. However, Tabassum was determined to convince them. She asked her parents to make background enquiries about the groom's family before finalizing anything. After doing some background checks, Tabassum's parents realized that the groom's family were very orthodox and were not well regarded in the community, so they called off the wedding.

In conclusion Tabassum said, 'After undergoing Breakthrough training I understood that marriage is not the only thing in life, there is a lot more to be done.'

KEY REFLECTIONS

- A trainer draws upon the skill and ability to identify and respect the difference between building the capacity of a person, supporting and enabling them to think and make choices for themselves and intervening to make choices and act on those choices on behalf of a person.

- Sustained dialogue within a family initiated by one member of the family convinced or driven to change can lead to change.

MANJULA/MANJULA

This is a deceptively simple story about a woman whose take-home from Breakthrough training was the deep and sudden realization that she had the right to be happy.

Manjula, 33 years of age, is a married woman with two children, living in Gubbi Taluk, Tumkur district.

Breakthrough, in collaboration with Aware Trust, had conducted a training event in Tumkur district amongst the local community women. Manjula was one of the participants and the trainer noticed that she was very serious during the first phase of training. Although she was attentive and asked a lot of questions, she seldom smiled.

When participants were being selected for the second phase of training, the trainers asked them whether the first phase had helped them. Manjula responded by saying that this was the first time in her adult life that she had been given the opportunity to dance, play, and even sing a song. Before the training, she believed that as a married woman, as a responsible housewife and daughter-in-law, she was supposed to be very serious. The training experience helped her realize that living happily was her right; that she too could sing, laugh and play with children. *'I have started singing with my children... I have learned to be happy, and be what I am. I need not change myself.'*

Happy that she had attended the training, she spoke of this being her first experience learning about concepts of human rights and the importance of identifying and accessing one's rights.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Change means different things to different people across a great variety of contexts and each story of change has its own unique value.
- Sometimes a seemingly small ability or realisation of personal possibility is the foundation of a new life, attitude and action.

JAYAMMA/MANJULA

Jayamma, a local community health care worker from a small village in Karnataka's Tumkur district shares a powerful story of impact and change. The villagers of Gubbi, Suregenahalli, did not have clean drinking water and illness was a constant issue. After having participated in Breakthrough training, 70 women of this village got together, hired a tractor and a goods carrier to travel in and stormed a Panchayat meeting to ask for access to a basic right, clean drinking water, clean water tanks.

Breakthrough conducted a series of leadership training sessions with local community women in Tumkur district, Karnataka. This was done in collaboration with the Aware Trust.

Mrs. Jayamma, an Anganwadi (community healthcare) worker from Gubbi, Suregenahalli, shared her story of how the Breakthrough leadership training empowered women to know about their basic human rights and gave them the courage and skills to identify rights violations and to demand their rights. After the first phase of training, the participants gathered for their usual SHG (Self Help Group) meeting in the village. In the group they shared what they had learned, *'We will not get our rights until we demand them!'* and encouraged other members to join them to take action.

For a long time the women had been complaining to local leaders about non-functioning street lights which made the streets unsafe, and about the unhygienic, dirty water tanks in the

village that resulted in people falling ill frequently. However nobody did anything about their complaints. So the women came up with a plan.

They collected information about the next Panchayat meeting and the availability of the Panchayat president, then 70 self help group members got together, hired a tractor and a goods vehicle and went to the Panchayat office. When they reached the Panchayat office a meeting was in session. One of the local Panchayat members came out to see what the commotion was about, and seeing the group of women, the meeting was stopped. The Panchayat president came out and listened to the women's complaints. After making some enquiries, he promised the women that the tank would be cleaned within fifteen days. With this assurance from the Panchayat president, the group returned home.

The Panchayat president did not keep his promise and it was only after repeated meetings when the group threatened that they would not re-elect the Panchayat members, that finally the water tanks were cleaned and repaired.

After this success, the self help group members feel more confident. According to a Panchayat member, '*When the women came in such a big group we had to give importance to their problems and it was nice to see them united for a cause.*'

Today the women members have managed to use that experience and the respect it gained them in their community, to convince the men of their community to attend Breakthrough trainings on gender and prevention of violence against women.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Collective action is the key to systemic change.
- Interpersonal communication opportunity as is possible in trainings can empower individuals to mobilize their communities.
- Change begins with identifying a problem and creating a strategy for action; a beginning and a successful achievement becomes a first step for multiple other achievements.

SADHANA/KANMANI

A married woman who appears to have a reasonably settled life with a daughter, and a husband in a well-paying white collar job, shows keen interest in a workshop focussing on issues of gender and sexuality and DV. Despite appearances being kept up for a while, the content and experience of the workshop are in themselves an enabling environment allowing her to speak of the violence in her own life, and then over a period of time to address it. As well as force her husband to address his role as perpetrator of violence. This is Sadhana's story.

Sadhana from Bangalore, Karnataka is a housewife, mother of a 10-year-old daughter and a well-educated woman. Her husband works for a private concern. Sadhana knew that CARDTS (a Breakthrough partner) and Breakthrough were working on domestic violence and HIV/AIDS and she came in to talk about these issues and test and improve her understanding of them.

One day the Breakthrough team got a call from her. She told them that her husband was in an extra-marital affair and she wanted support to get her husband tested for HIV. Finally she also told the team that her husband was physically abusing her.

Sadhana was told about the PWDVA 2005. The Breakthrough team also asked her whether she could leave her husband and live on her own. She did not feel this was a possible option as she did not have any other support and she was also financially dependent on her husband. A few days later she called again and told the team that the abuse had increased. She sought Breakthrough's help to stop the beatings and gave the team her husband's office

telephone number. The Breakthrough team spoke to her husband politely and asked him to stop the abuse. He agreed and his behaviour towards his wife improved, but only for a while.

Then one night Sadhana telephoned and told the Breakthrough team that she was ready to leave her husband, taking her daughter with her, as she could not tolerate the abuse any longer.

Even as she was talking to the team, her husband pulled the phone away, and told them that he blamed them for encouraging her to leave the house, as she had never dared to do so before. He threatened the team saying that if anything happened to his family, he would hold them responsible.

At this point, one of the team members explained to the husband that they were social workers and were not a threat to him. The team member explained that nobody has the right to beat anyone and that they simply wanted Sadhana and her husband to work on their relationship. After a long discussion, the team member persuaded Sadhana's husband to think about changing things and taking care of his family. The couple went in for regular counselling and things have improved between them.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- DV and the silence around it cut across economic and socio-cultural demographics.
- The vulnerabilities inherent in the situation of a woman who may or may not have family (or any) support, knowledge of and access to legal recourse, children to protect keep her in her situation of violence.
- Sometimes it is possible to effectively address the issues of violence within the home by bringing the issues to the fore, discussing them, allowing room for external intervention such as counselling / therapy.
- Information, awareness, support, knowledge of the PWDVA 2005, self-work, self-agency and counselling intervention all play a significant role in this case.

SARITHA/KANMANI

A little girl growing up in a village is about to lose out on school at the primary level itself; her family doesn't consider education for girls deserves thought or energy. Then Saritha steps in; she is a part of this same family, but she is educated and she has the advantage of Breakthrough training. She steps in and stands up to protect this child's rights.

Saritha, 18 years old, is a first year degree student. She lives with her parents in Yermal village, in Udupi district. In 2009 Breakthrough organised a Human Rights awareness programme in Udupi. Saritha was one of the participants, and actively involved herself in the training.

Some time after taking part in the training, Saritha met some relatives who had a daughter studying at primary school. The couple had decided not to educate their daughter further as they felt that her education was an unnecessary burden on the family. During the course of the Breakthrough training, Saritha had learned about the right to equality and the right to free education for all. She spoke to her relatives about the importance of sending their daughter to school and the child's right to be educated, and she managed to persuade them to continue sending their daughter to school.

The Breakthrough training contributed an awareness of human rights to Saritha and she passed on her new found belief and knowledge to her relatives with the clear intention of standing up for the rights of a child.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Most young people have a great ability to un-learn and re-learn, then translate that learning into action in their own lives. They remain a key constituency for social change intervention.
- Families and dynamics within families are a microcosm representing the larger world; they are a testing ground for those who seek to experiment with their ability to move, shift and change things.

NARAYAN/KANMANI

Narayan did something he had never done before. He interrupted an escalating fight between a couple who were complete strangers to him.

Narayan is a 19 year old college student. He is from Lakanehalli, Tumkur district, Karnataka, where he lives with his parents. He took part in training sessions conducted by Breakthrough.

After the second phase of training, all the participants were asked how the Breakthrough training had helped them. In response Narayan shared his story. Early one morning, he and his friend were jogging near the forest when they came across a couple fighting.

The boys watched for a few minutes, but the couple continued and their fight escalated. Narayan and his friend wanted to interrupt the incident and approached them. The couple mistook them for forest officers and suddenly stopped fighting. Narayan then actually pretended to be a forest officer, and shouted at them asking what was going on. The couple got scared and said they would never fight again. The boys gave them a warning and went away.

Narayan explains that for him this experience of interrupting a fight was his first achievement but he knows there is a lot more to do to tackle issues of domestic violence and rights.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Stories like this reflect the importance of observers of domestic violence taking up the role of active interveners, so changing the profile of DV from being a 'personal matter' to everybody's problem.

AYESHA/KANMANI

Ayesha stopped a child marriage in her own family, despite being a young person herself; her strategy was to convince her mother to do something to stop it. To her the important thing was not who intervened directly, but that there was effective action.

18 year old Ayesha is a student from Nagavalli Village, Tumkur District where she lives with parents. Having attended Breakthrough training she became aware of issues around domestic violence and HIV/AIDS and her understanding of these subjects created the confidence necessary to speak about them.

She shared an incident which took place after the training. Her cousin was getting married, but she was just 16 years old. Ayesha was against marriage at such a young age, but being a young girl herself, she knew she would not be successful in convincing the older members of her family. She decided to ask her mother to convince the girl's parents to stop the marriage. She sat her mother down and told her all that she had learnt about human rights and also that the legal age for marriage was 18 years. Her mother listened, and thought through the things her daughter told her. As a result of these dialogues, Ayesha's mother spoke to the young girl's parents. Although hesitant at first, they finally agreed to postpone the engagement. So the marriage has been called off for now.

Ayesha's sense of pride and personal achievement has increased her self-confidence and her capacity to intervene in such situations when they occur.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- The change process could be visualized as a networked chain of engagements between people willing to discuss and share ideas of change.
- While not all the links in the chain are equally receptive – it is possible that this receptivity depends on who introduces the idea of change to whom.

MALINI/KANMANI

An alcoholic, aggressive and abusive father, patriarchal head of the house, is a difficult circumstance for the rest of the family to deal with, and in particular for a daughter to deal with. This is a story of a young person so used to an environment of abuse and humiliation, where a woman's place was one of quiet and menial service to the men of the family that it seemed to her to be the way the world should be. Until she re-visited that world view, with a little support.

Malini, a college student from Moodar Karkala, Udupi District in Karnataka had been brought up in an environment where patriarchal norms were deeply rooted in the culture and it was believed that doing household chores was only the responsibility of women. Malini's alcoholic father would constantly harass and embarrass Malini and other female members of her family, verbally abusing them in front of relatives and neighbours. Her father's behaviour affected Malini badly and she reacted to her situation by becoming negative and responding negatively to ideas that were different from her experience at home and with her family.

Malini got the chance to attend one of Breakthrough's training programs. During one of the training sessions she got into an argument with the trainers, holding on to her point that doing household chores was the responsibility of women only. The trainers counselled Malini and discussed with her the rights of women within the context of gender roles and social norms. Malini's long held beliefs about the role of women in society began to shift and change. She regularly and attentively participated in the training sessions.

After the first phase of training, Malini started sharing what she had learned with her friends and decided to organize similar training sessions for college and school students. With the support and encouragement of CARDTS members, (CARDTS is a Breakthrough partner), this group of friends formed a small association called the 'Sarvodaya CARDTS Sanghatane'. They started organizing training sessions in schools and colleges and they adopted the Breakthrough training model. CARDTS is now supporting their association in organizing similar training programs. One of the issues that Sarvodaya wishes to train youth on is gender equality. In its initial phase, the association focused on gender rights, especially rights of women. Later, they included HIV/AIDS in their training as well, since they found that the two issues were closely related.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- The emotional and psychological impact of growing up in an abusive home environment is critical and shapes the world view of the individual.
- Change under such circumstances is a process of self-work with trained counselling intervention.
- Inter-personal communication is an important part of training programs and these are windows of opportunity where skilled and experienced trainers can attempt to create shifts at a deeper level, the place where individuals decide their role or re-visit their relationships and value systems.

KARPAGAM & GOVINDAMMA/KANMANI

An alert woman from a Bangalore low income community, though illiterate, is happy to have the informational tools and support from Breakthrough to use to help others. She actually does act as a bridge connecting other women in the community to information and support resources.

Govindamma lives in Bangalore, she is a 35 year old housewife with two children and her husband works as a daily wagger. She is illiterate.

In 2008, Breakthrough organized training for women from the local community which Govindamma attended. During a discussion on human rights, participants were informed that any kind of torture or abuse (whether mental, sexual, or physical), may be labelled as a violation of human rights. The training facilitators mentioned that people facing such abuse could contact Breakthrough for help. Since the training, Govindamma has been engaged in generating awareness about human rights, HIV/AIDS and violence against women in her locality.

A year after the training, she came across a woman called Karpagam. She received a phone call from Karpagam who told her that her husband was beating her severely. He often abused her, and she wanted the violence to stop. Govindamma immediately referred Karpagam to 'Vimochana Bangalore', an organization which works specifically on the issue of domestic violence. They immediately initiated support activities for Karpagam who still continues to receive help from them.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Just as DV is spread across socio-economic classes, so also the will to help create a more just society is spread across socio-economic classes.
- Breakthrough in this case armed a motivated woman not just with information but also the promise of support when needed. The combination helped another woman who had absolutely no direct contact with Breakthrough or gender, rights and DV training.

ASHA RANI/KANMANI

The boy shouted 'Snake! Snake!' (though there wasn't any snake), and interrupted an episode of wife beating. This was the result of his sister Asha bringing home her synthesis of the Bell Bajao! campaign.

Asha Rani is a student. She is 19 years old and lives with her parents in Tumkur district of Karnataka. She took part in Breakthrough training and after the first phase was over, she shared what she had learned with her family. Her younger brother in particular, was very impressed by Breakthrough's Bell Bajao! campaign.

One day a couple was fighting in the neighbourhood and the husband began beating his wife. Recalling the Bell Bajao! campaign, Asha's brother decided to stop the fight. He started screaming "Snake! Snake!" On hearing the shouting, the husband stopped beating his wife and started looking for the snake. By using this creative trick, Asha's brother was able to interrupt the violence.

Asha is very proud of this and her role in her brother's action. She has developed a new outlook on life. She says, 'I am very confident and capable of stopping violence in different ways.' She is also spreading awareness about these issues amongst her friends and neighbours.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- This story is a simple reflection of the layered impact of the Bell Bajao! campaign on the individual, the family and the community.
- There is almost a joyful embracing of the creativity behind 'interrupting' violence, something that is possible for everyone to do, and many people report stories where the strangest, almost quirky versions of 'ringing a bell' have been thought up.

RAMYA U/KANMANI

What does one do when one hears constant fighting next door between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law? Ramya chose to step in and talk about it.

Ramya U is a second year computer studies student at a pre-university college. She is 18 years old and lives with parents and brother in Seenapanahalli, Tumkur District. She participated in a Breakthrough training session and after the first phase of training she was enthused by the possibilities that she saw and decided to create awareness amongst her family members and neighbours about human rights and related issues.

She shared an experience of this; in one of the families in her neighbourhood, the mother-in-law and daughter-in-law would always fight. The mother-in-law would harass her daughter-in-law and because of this, there was no peace in the family. Ramya decided to intervene in the matter. She went to them and spoke to them about rights – that everyone had equal rights and that women's rights are human rights and also that the world is now changing and society is seeing things differently. She was able to get the mother-in-law to listen and engage without feeling insulted or threatened.

The mother-in-law, being a teacher, understood these concepts well and actually stopped harassing her daughter-in-law. She went a few steps ahead and even shared what she had learned about human rights with her students at school.

Ramya's position and value in her own family and with the neighbours changed and her sense of self-esteem, the realization that she could be responsible for changing things have strengthened her growing confidence.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- The courage that comes from conviction helped Ramya intervene in what most people would consider was a 'personal problem' of the neighbours.
- On the other side, the receptivity of the neighbours may have been due to the simple fact that someone stepped in to talk about things, which meant that their behaviour and activities were not going ignored, but very much in the spotlight.

RAMYA VS/KANMANI

Ramya is a young person who adopted the Bell Bajao! technique and made it her own. She stops fights at home by simply shifting focus on something harmless and humorous.

Ramya is a 19 year old student living with her parents and younger sister. Her father is an agriculturist and her mother is a housewife.

She attended Breakthrough training and feels that she gained tremendously from it both in terms of overcoming her personal inhibitions and shyness as well as in terms of the real knowledge she now has about serious social issues, particularly domestic violence. Her parents support her and they too see and like her new found confidence.

After the first phase of training, Ramya spoke of her personal experience attempting to stop violence at home. Her father and mother would frequently fight and this would upset her. On

one occasion when there was a fight, Ramya decided to try and stop it in some indirect way and so she pointed out something funny and cracked a joke. This made her parents laugh and they stopped fighting. Ramya says that her little trick and similar ways of shifting focus helped her stop their fights. She has resolved to 'stop violence no matter where it happens.'

KEY REFLECTIONS

- The Bell Bajao! PSA call to action has found wide-spread acceptance and understanding both in terms of it's strategy to interrupt violence and the fact that it gives the 'interrupter' a wide leeway to be creative as per the demands of the situation and their own abilities.
- DV takes many forms and there are many degrees of violence. Sometimes domestic violence is not necessarily a conscious or practiced choice by a perpetrator of violence on a victim of violence, but is an unconscious response, an inappropriate expression of aggression or attempt at control while dealing with a situation or another person. In such cases, simple tactics stand a strong chance of being successful.

MANJULA/KANMANI

Sometimes, as Manjula has learnt, a little innocent emotional blackmail in a family that needs to learn how to handle conflict and disagreement can go a long way.

Manjula is a 19 year old college student from Tumkur District, where she lives with her parents and brother. While participating in Breakthrough training, she was most interested in concepts of human rights, sexual abuse and HIV/AIDS.

During follow up training she spoke of her first experience trying to stop a fight at home. Her mother and her brother were constantly, loudly and aggressively at conflict with each other. She was unsure how to stop the fighting, until she remembered a trick shared during Breakthrough's first phase of training. Manjula threatened her mother and brother that if they did not stop fighting, she would not go to college. The trick worked because both her mother and her brother care enough about her and so the fighting between them came to an end.

Manjula now says she feels extremely confident and is willing to try and stop violence when she comes across it, if she can.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Every individual knows somewhere within themselves what strategy will work best to interrupt violence and aggression in family situations that are familiar to them.
- Sometimes families make good testing grounds for a young person trying out new skills.

AKKAMA/KANMANI

In a village of Karnataka, a mother is worried about her daughter who is being abused in her marital home. A group of women from the local community decide that the issues faced by mother and daughter are their own, so they stand up for them, stand by them and negotiate peace and safety for the daughter in her marriage.

Breakthrough has been actively working on the issue of domestic violence and putting it on the public agenda through its 'Bell Bajao' campaign and intensive community mobilization activities. As a part of leadership and capacity building workshops, Breakthrough (in collaboration with CARDTS and Saadhana Trust) conducted a gender and rights workshop

with twenty-eight women in rural Bangalore. This workshop was conducted with members of a self help group for women who belong to low income agricultural families.

One of the women, Akkama, spoke of her daughter Mahadevma, who had been abused by her husband and in-laws for a number of years and had therefore come back to her parents to escape the abuse. Mahadevma was with her mother for over eight months and they had not been able to sort out this issue. Breakthrough's training gave the women the courage and ability to negotiate and take a stand against violence.

The women SHG members got together and decided to negotiate with Mahadevma's in-laws. So when the in-laws came to take Mahadevma back to her marital home, they found themselves in a situation where they faced opposition from a large group of women of the local community who said that they did not want to send Mahadevma back to a house where she is abused and her rights violated. The in-laws said that they would not abuse her, but the women were not convinced as promises had been made and broken in the past. So they asked Mahadevma's husband and in-laws to sign an agreement saying that they would never humiliate or be violent towards Mahadevma in the future. They also negotiated that the husband and wife would live separately from the in-laws.

Today Mahadevma and her husband are living together peacefully in a separate house.

KEY REFLECTIONS

- Underlining the point that DV is everybody's business, it is not a private matter within a family, leads to high level impact through collective action.
- The fact that in this case the mother spoke up for her daughter and supported the collective decisions taken by the group allowed the action to be taken in the first place.

- **Key findings across stories**

These have been organised ahead according to:

- Areas of Impact and Change
- Shifts across MSCT I and MSCT II observed against State specific considerations and findings
- Trends

The numbers of stories - across MSCT Rounds, States and disaggregating on the basis of Sex :

MSCT I:

Total stories 32

UP stories 15

- Women centred stories – 11 stories
- Men centred stories – 2 stories
- Village group and School teachers – 2 stories

Karnataka stories 17

- Women centred stories – 13 stories
- Men centred stories – 4 stories

MSCT II:

Total stories 48

UP stories 24

- Women centred stories – 24 stories

Karnataka stories 24

- Women centred stories – 16 stories
- Men centred stories – 8 stories

Possible inferences based on this profile and the stories are discussed ahead in the MSCT / States segment.

- **Areas of Impact and Change**

The findings listed here have been drawn from the documented changes and learning points that emerged out of each MSCT story; they represent the familiar themes that appear across experiences of change directly connected to Breakthrough work and the Bell Bajao! campaign interventions. Other findings less common, but listed here, point to some new learning or a critical reinforcement of campaign strategy.

Findings & key points have been grouped thematically as below:-

- The change process
- Silent invisibility changes to taking action on DV, rights and gender
- Breakthrough intervention & the individual
- Relationship between the environment & intervention
- Experiences with perpetrators of violence & rights violations
- PWDVA 2005, legal intervention and challenges
- Outreach matters
- Women & citizenship
- Men as a constituency
- Young people as a constituency
- Spotlight on the Breakthrough trainer
- Survivors

THE CHANGE PROCESS

Change has meant different things to different people impacted by Breakthrough work across a great variety of contexts; each story of change has its own unique value. In some cases change has focussed on a small shift in attitude or ability within an individual, in other cases change has been a visible, powerful impact on a situation where a person, a family or a community have demanded and received their rights / justice.

The two most memorable stories of a small shift contained within the individual are the story of Manjula, from Gubbi Taluk, Tumkur district, the woman who learnt after a Breakthrough workshop that it was ok for her to smile, laugh, play with her children and be happy – and the story of Hareesh, the boy who always wanted to try his hand at cooking but never did, until a Breakthrough workshop that probably helped him revisit notions of gender roles and the gender construct, following which he not only cooked up a meal but invited all his friends over to eat it with him!

At the other end of the spectrum, reflecting a vast scale of change – is the Tumkur watertank story (Jayamma) when women from a village SHG demanded clean water and clean water tanks and stormed the Panchayat when they found they were not being given a hearing. They got their water tanks and clean water. Another example of impact on a large scale is reflected in the story of Giriraj Meti of Yelamgeri. Change rippled into expansion mode, beginning with personal change in his own attitude, perception and behaviour with his own family and moving on to his active intervention in the lives of neighbours and the community touching issues of girl child education, child marriage and many other community health and gender issues. He and his friends and peers started Thaythana Rakshana Vedike (TRV) a village level forum on safe motherhood which is active in the area.

Access to support and to information from Breakthrough and its field partners resulting in an increase in knowledge and change in attitudes has been the most critical, most acknowledged factor, common to all these stories of change.

The largest number of stories deal with some personal change in a participant or caused in an individual's life due to intervention by a participant: –

** 7 stories from UP and 14 from Karnataka in Round I (Total: 21 stories of personal change)
* 12 stories from UP and 16 from Karnataka in Round II. (Total: 28 stories of personal change)*

Another large segment of the stories deal with change in the life of a violence / DV affected Breakthrough (or Breakthrough partner) training program participant (who may be a perpetrator or at the receiving end of violence): –

** 10 stories in Round I, 9 of them women and the single 1 story focusing on a man, being the story of Shiva who is an adult survivor of childhood DV that resulted in his being orphaned, abandoned and displaced.*

** 11 stories in Round II, 9 of them focusing on men from Karnataka – with 6 of these 9 men having been conscious or unconscious perpetrators of abuse prior to intervention, who changed post intervention. 1 of the balance 3 stories focusing on men is about Santhosh, a survivor of childhood violence and trauma caused by illegal detention and torture by police, who after the engagement with Breakthrough and the support he received from the team was able to come to some terms with his past and is now a committed human rights activist.*

These two categories of stories of specific and particular personal change account for a majority of the stories in MSCT Round I and MSCT Round II.

Breakthrough trainings have helped create a situation where participants have attempted, often for the first time in their lives, to identify and bridge the disconnect between what is and what ought to be, problem and solution, justice and injustice. ***In a majority of the stories, this has led to positive changes in behaviour and taking action against rights violations.***

Information and awareness on sensitive, difficult and taboo subjects provided in an engaging, safe and interactive way has helped people come to grips with issues that otherwise cause discomfort and anxiety.

At the same time, discussing gender, sex, rights, DV and related issues has also been done by individuals after Breakthrough training simply and informally - by creating a habit of engaging people 'along the way' and on a daily basis through simple conversations and interactions.

SILENT INVISIBILITY CHANGES TO TAKING ACTION ON DV, RIGHTS AND GENDER

The silence around the issue of VAW is a layered silence, because there appear to be degrees of silence, as the capacity of individuals, families and communities to engage with the issues differs.

On the one hand is the story of Rashmi from Kanpur, who attended the first day of a Breakthrough training event and from the next day she brought her daughters along to attend the rest of the training with her.

On the other hand is the story of Nanki, who was in an abusive marriage for 16 years, harassed by her mother-in-law, often beaten by her husband. N finally, after engaging with Breakthrough training decided she was going to stand up to her abusers and fight for her rights. "I married into this family, I'm not a runaway, I have rights here – to live, to eat, to stay!"

Or the story of the village near Aligarh as shared by Ashish Gopal Dubey, where villagers absolutely refused to entertain the notion that there was anything such as DV in their village, and suggested that another village near by, whose inhabitants are of a different caste / class, have 'such problems'. (They admitted that they were wrong post the Breakthrough event that was finally held with them.)

Often an individual who is neither a perpetrator of violence or injustice nor at the receiving end, or affected by it in any way, may not even be aware of the violence and injustice around him. This adds to the silence and this has been seen to change, bringing more focus on these issues.

DV and the silence around it cut across economic and socio-cultural demographics; the umbrella approach of intervention at multiple points of the social system is helping create conversations across the spectrum.

Breakthrough training participants are responsible for word-of-mouth spread of awareness about rights and the PWDVA 2005 in informal as well as more structured ways.

Some of the stories are about successful intervention through interruption of DV at the neighbour's house. When 'everybody' who lives 'next door' to somebody has an alert awareness towards human rights and domestic violence and the intention and capacity to intervene in case intervention is necessary, incidents of violence will reduce.

Underlining the point that DV is everybody's business, it is not a private matter within a family, has shown, in some of the stories, to lead to high level impact through collective action.

Being self confident and vocal is part of the individual's toolkit for change and is a key take-home for the individuals in many of the stories. This works in combination with external interventional support, awareness, information and the will to cause change.

Resource materials play a critical role in bridging the possible gaps in a person's new found knowledge or abilities to explain or communicate these concepts. Breakthrough and Bell Bajao! campaign resource materials are being used by people to explain concepts and share information.

BREAKTHROUGH INTERVENTION AND THE INDIVIDUAL

Some stories of change are reflective of high impact at the individual level because they speak of a complete attitude turnaround, proving that such turnaround is possible.

In every story, increase in the individual's confidence and sense of self-agency have always led to personal, often internal and attitudinal changes, and very often resulted in extending support to at least one other person.

Sometimes a seemingly small ability or realisation of personal possibility appears to have cleared the way for a new life, attitude and action.

The individual in the space of vulnerability must be helped to reach a point of desiring to change their own situation, strengthen their own capacity and empower themselves. This has been reflected in most of the stories where significant steps have been taken by many individuals to change a personal situation or a situation for somebody else, or even an entire community of people.

There are tremendous challenges in catalysing behaviour change in an individual. Sometimes efforts meet with an almost immediate success, but at other times a challenge can remain unresolved despite all efforts and follow up. One such is the case of Kiran Gupta, whose story is told in the MSCT II UP collection. Married 17 years to an alcoholic, abusive husband, often in life threatening situations due to the danger he poses, she refuses to leave, her panic and anxiety at the thought of living independently and alone and attempting to raise her children by herself on a meagre salary, keeping her captive to her situation – despite offers of help and support.

The individual will to act and to stand up for self and others has a powerful multiplier effect. Many individuals become role models for their communities and it is seen in these stories that they become a source of information, support and guidance to others.

The impact of gender and rights training on someone who has the advantage of a supportive background and progressive family is not the same as the impact on those struggling against adverse circumstances. A different lens for understanding may be used here; the human resources to drive or effect change in existing perceptions of gender, rights and DV can be sourced from across social and personal circumstances.

Many have connected well with the Bell Bajao! PSA and with awareness, sensitization and training, many individuals attempt to 'interrupt' DV in their own uniquely personal and creative ways.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ENVIRONMENT & INTERVENTION

The environment within which the interventional activity is underway clearly affects the final result and impact. Support of friends, family and significant persons such as teachers can leverage a training resource, making it far more effective as the relationship of the individual with themselves and with the world around her (or him) begins to change.

Families and dynamics within families are a microcosm representing the larger world; they are seen in many of these stories, to be a testing ground for those who seek to experiment with their ability to move, shift and change things.

Stories such as those of Hina, Pinki, Saritha who intervened with relatives for another girl's education, Ayesha or Madhu who used Breakthrough training resource materials to counsel an alcoholic cousin, represent the dimension of family and socio-cultural environment within which a participant at an intervention program has been able to set in motion some change.

Breakthrough is achieving a socio-environmental goal where DV is becoming more accepted as an issue that is everybody's business; changing the profile of DV from being a 'personal matter' to everybody's problem.

EXPERIENCES WITH PERPETRATORS OF VIOLENCE & RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Informed, trained and dedicated external intervention is often the only way of getting the attention of those who are habituated to perpetrating violence.

The greater the visibility and awareness of legal recourse against perpetrators of domestic violence, the violence has been seen to stop or decrease. Most perpetrators in the stories collected here have shown fear of legal and social consequences of their behaviour once it is under an external scanner.

Kamal Rizvi intervened in the DV situation his domestic worker Meena was in, by speaking to her husband about the legal consequences of his abusive behaviour among other things; Akkama received the help of an entire community of women, a Self-Help Group that stood together to confront the abusive in-laws of her daughter Mahadevma; Rajwati of Kumhrava village in UP finally got help to deal with her in-laws, particularly her brother-in-law's and husband's abusive actions against her due to a Breakthrough field worker who spoke to all members of the family and warned them of the fact that their abuse of Rajwati was under the scanner and violating legal provisions that protect women from DV.

The stories reinforce the fact that violence is a complex phenomenon as is the response to violence from all who may be involved, either as perpetrators, victims, witnesses or interventionists.

Police action, even at the level of counselling and undertaken in partnership with ordinary citizens and citizen's groups is critical to change.

PWDVA 2005, LEGAL INTERVENTION AND CHALLENGES

Implementation of the PWDVA 2005 is at low levels of capacity and far greater attention and investment needs to be made to improve the provision of services and the capacity of officials and service providers under this act.

The stories of Mithilesh, Shamshad and Girija all represent key challenges posed by gaps and issues in implementation of law. Mithilesh and Girija have not received (at the time of the collection of these stories) the court awarded compensation they are due – while Shamshad died due to torture and abuse.

Despite legal provisions that protect rights, it is a huge challenge to access those rights.

Implementation is an issue and follow-up on court awarded judgements and compensation poses another set of issues.

These gaps are key areas that require investment of focussed attention, energy and resources to improve the actual 'delivery' of justice into the hands of the person fighting for it.

OUTREACH MATTERS

Outreach strengthened by a steady grassroots presence that can give consistent support provides the 'client' of outreach both information and access to resources. In many of the

stories Breakthrough partnerships with grassroots organisations have proved to be effective, initiating or supporting action taken to change a situation.

Follow up support and outreach effectively enabling change have been particularly relevant in many of the stories in UP.

MSCT I:

4 stories (woman focussed) (UP)

1 story (woman focussed) (Karnataka)

MSCT II:

7 stories (woman focussed) (UP)

1 story (woman focussed) (Karnataka)

Immediate follow-up and effective response to someone seeking support strengthens the creation of an environment enabling the protection of rights.

Despite the will and the capacity to resist the violation of one's rights and fight for justice for oneself, it is often the case that a woman does not receive support from her own family if it is her husband she is fighting against, and so, without support, she may back-down from her stance. This is the support from Breakthrough reflected in some of the stories.

Campaigns and trainings are not one-way flows of information. There is active engagement and stories from the field often indicate the need to intervene because of rights violations and criminal offences. Campaign and program teams need to be prepared for this and prepare local governmental, non-governmental and enforcement resources as well. This reinforces Breakthrough's strategy of advocacy and training and sensitization work with government departments and officials under the PWDVA 2005.

The story of Yashaswani is an example of such a situation where a participant at a training requests help from the Breakthrough team on a DV issue, where her sister-in-law has been thrown out of her marital home and legal intervention is required. (The team put her in touch with HRLN (Human Rights Law Network)).

WOMEN & CITIZENSHIP

Breakthrough outreach has helped many women come into their own as citizens, standing up for their rights and mobilizing entire communities to do the same, engaging with government departments and local administration on civic and village infrastructure.

A fascinating story celebrating citizenship is that of Savita, from the MSCT I Karnataka collection. A widow, belonging to the tribal village of Gubiga, Savita sought the help of Breakthrough team members to mobilize the local tribal community and demand infrastructural and development works for their village – basics such as road and electricity. Her efforts were successful and much of these works are even currently underway in that area.

Leena D'Silva who 'got a bus stop', Jayamma and the women of Gubbi in Tumkur who got their clean water, Kamini who organised action in her slum community against the menace posed by the local drunkard, Kalavathi of Koppal, now working as a community motivator with the Gender and Health Equity project (GHE) engaging with doctors and other professionals

on equal terms – these are all examples of stories that reflect impact and improvement in the status of women as active participants in the citizenship process.

Community mobilization towards an event or a single purpose (such as submitting an application to a local administration / government department) must be sustained by maintaining the purpose and the group that comes together for it. This capacity has been shown in the stories of collective action.

[\(Click here to view how the women of Tumkur in Karnataka identified, demanded and attained the basic right to clean drinking water.\)](#)

MEN AS A CONSTITUENCY

Men as drivers of change have a strong chance of finding acceptance of something new that they openly advocate among their families and local community.

Men can put the issue up front just as they too can use indirect methods to call attention to violence or injustice.

[\(Click here to view Rights Advocate Suresh at work.\)](#)

All the stories that are focussed on men across states and in both rounds of MSCT reflect change in attitude and behaviour impacting self and family – and often community.

More men in Karnataka than UP appear to have responded to intervention though – and in MSCT II UP – there are no stories of men catalysing change in the community.

YOUNG PEOPLE AS A CONSTITUENCY

The emotional and psychological impact of growing up in an abusive home environment is critical and shapes the world view of the individual. Change under such circumstances is a process of self-work with trained counselling intervention and this has been visible in the stories of Breakthrough work with young people.

Change is not always a large, loud or visible force; it is also a subtle shift in a young person that helps her take a step in the right direction despite her deep fears, anxieties and long held attitudes.

The support and opportunities provided to young people sets the direction and the process by which a thinking and motivated generation acts constructively to create large scale social change.

Girls often find it hard due to the socio-cultural environment around them, to initiate or participate in discussions around sex, gender and violence, despite the fact that they probably have personal experiences of problems in these areas. This shows change and significant improvement of engagement capacity in every MSCT story where girls have been connected to Breakthrough.

It is interesting to note that the actual technique of interrupting episodes of DV (Bell Bajao!) has been adopted and adapted quite specifically in MSCT II across both states and primarily by young women. The stories shared by or of them are creative variations on the Bell Bajao! concept and include a variety of excuses for interruption ranging from snakes, runaway dog, asking for tea leaves to false phone-calls and asking for directions.

Only one interruption story is not a strictly Bell Bajao! adaptation and this comes from a young man, Narayan, who did however interrupt a fight between a couple by posing as a government / forest official!

The fact is that Bell Bajao! has given everyone a simple tool, neither confrontational nor personally or socially embarrassing, to immediately interrupt DV and to continue to do so till regular episodes decrease or some other intervention is planned.

[\(Click here to meet the All-girls puppet theatre group in Lucknow.\)](#)

SPOTLIGHT ON THE BREAKTHROUGH TRAINER

The importance of the individual trainer, volunteer or other field worker in the engagement with the client is high; these stories of change are as much about this engagement as about any other informational or material resource.

To create and protect the safety of spaces such as training workshops is an enormous challenge and in one story this safety was breached by another participant; the flip side is that the participants at such events are already aware that they are no longer keeping their experiences of abuse cloaked in silence. The decision to take the risk of talking is the first, firm step towards changing something and this is visible in these stories.

The story of Surekha who had to deal with the fact that another participant at a workshop she was attending reported back to her husband telling him Surekha had spoken in the group of his abuse of her, highlights some of the risk involved in this work. However, in this case, Surekha herself had gained a measure of confidence after the first workshop and this enabled her to take this episode in her stride with a rebellious approach to it all.

Inter-personal communication is an important part of training programs and these are windows of opportunity where skilled and experienced trainers have attempted to create shifts at a deeper level, the place where individuals decide their role or re-visit their relationships and value systems.

In many of these stories, a trainer has often had to identify and respect the difference between building the capacity of a person, supporting and enabling them to think and make choices for themselves and intervening to make choices and act on those choices on behalf of a person.

Sometimes the solution or possible solutions to rights violations and abuse have neither come swift nor easy; it is important to be prepared for the fact that the person most affected by the violence perpetrated on her also has the right to decide how she wishes to deal with it, after she is informed of her rights and her options.

Breakthrough's work with individuals and communities is creating a growing pool of grassroots social change professionals who are integrating concepts from across sociological and psychological disciplines.

SURVIVORS

Working with survivors is a challenging possibility that may require to be explored at some point in time as an independent program activity.

There are 5 stories of adult survivors of childhood domestic or other violence, all from Karnataka, 3 in MSCT I and 2 in MSCT II. Specifically these are of Shiva (his mother died due to his father's abuse of her), Girija and Jacinta (both victims of neglect as children), Santhosh (child victim of human rights violations by police) and Malini (in whom the sense of a woman's 'inferiority' to men and prescribed gender role was so strong, she fought with the trainers at her first workshop.)

- **Shifts across MSCT I and MSCT II observed against State specific considerations and findings**

(a) Context setting - A brief review of the situation relating to DV in UP and Karnataka:

As per India's [NFHS 3 \(National Family Health Survey 3\)](#) of 2005-06, state rankings for Spousal Violence⁶:

1. Bihar
2. Rajasthan
3. Madhya Pradesh
4. Tripura
5. Manipur
6. Uttar Pradesh
7. Tamil Nadu
8. West Bengal
9. Assam
10. Arunachal Pradesh

Karnataka ranks 21 out of India's total 29 states, indicating lower incidents of spousal violence. UP is in the top ten at number 6. Comparatively, UP has a much higher prevalence or reported prevalence of DV than Karnataka to begin with.

In its definition of domestic violence, the NFHS-3 includes⁷ violence by spouses as well as by other household members.

"Women's experience of the different types of violence varies greatly by state. In all states, however, physical violence alone tends to be the most common form of violence. Sexual violence rarely occurs without physical violence. Any sexual violence (with or without physical violence) ranges from 1 percent in Himachal Pradesh and Meghalaya to 16 percent in Tripura, 17 percent in Bihar and Rajasthan, and 18 percent in West Bengal."

- Over 30% of women in UP have experienced only physical violence and over 38% have experienced physical or sexual violence. Over 16% of women in Karnataka have experienced only physical violence and over 19% have experienced physical or sexual violence.
- Over 16% of women in UP have experienced emotional violence and 45% have experienced physical or sexual or emotional violence. Over 8% of women in Karnataka have experienced emotional violence and over 21% have experienced physical or sexual or emotional violence.
- The highest percentage is over 60% in Bihar - women who have experienced physical or sexual or emotional violence.

(b) Key points of observation and reflection:

- The majority of the stories in MSCT I are woman centred stories of change.
- The proportion of woman centred stories goes up in MSCT II with many more of the stories being woman centred.

⁶ <http://hetv.org/india/nfhs/nfhs3/NFHS-3-Domestic-Violence.pdf>

⁷ <http://hetv.org/india/nfhs/nfhs3/NFHS-3-Chapter-15-Domestic-Violence.pdf>

- In UP, in both Rounds together, there are just 2 stories that are men centred.
 - However, one of these stories is about an entire village where there is a change in perception after Breakthrough intervention. (*Ashish Gopal Dubey's story of the village near Aligarh.*)
- In Karnataka, in Round II, while the absolute number of stories of women increased a little (by 1/4th), the absolute number of stories of men doubled.
 - The larger overall increase in number of stories in Round II is from UP where the number of woman centred stories has doubled.
- Looking at the sex differentiated data across the two states and MSCT rounds, possible inferences that may be made:
 - Considering UP's dismal DV record (#6 on the NFHS 3 list) – more women have grasped at the opportunity and support they have perceived as presented by Breakthrough trainings and the Bell Bajao! campaign to try and change their own situations and often that of others in their families and communities.
 - UP men remain an area of challenge; further investigation and efforts are required to effect a more impactful strategy for working with men and boys in that state.
 - Alternatively, greater efforts are required to find and document stories of change focusing on men in UP.
 - In Karnataka, the number of stories centred on men shows a 50% increase in Round II.
 - Karnataka ranks at 21 out of 29 states in the NFHS 3 spousal violence listing. The record is either far cleaner than UP or else there is far more hidden/invisible DV than in UP. Whichever be the case, the impact of Breakthrough intervention on men appears to be greater in Karnataka.
 - It is worth exploring the thought that the socio-cultural environment of Karnataka (as against UP) is more conducive to social change; leveraging strategies that may not be as resource intensive as required perhaps for UP could help sustain and widen the impact of Breakthrough intervention.
 - While 6 stories in Round I and 7 stories in Round II particularly and specifically mention the impact of information and awareness creation about the PWDVA 2005 – 10 out of these 13 stories are again from UP.
 - In the Baseline survey undertaken by CMS for Bell Bajao! it had emerged that in UP none of the respondents had heard of the PWDVA 2005; it is a point of achievement that the majority of the stories that articulate a PWDVA focus are from UP.
 - A most interesting observation here is also that all of these stories without exception are women centred. (The Meena story shares equal weight between Meena, who is impacted by the intervention – and Kamal Rizvi, who is responsible for the intervention.)
 - There are many indirect references or else it is safe to assume that an idea of the PWDVA 2005 has been seeded across training participants or those in contact with Breakthrough.
- Across both states, the impact of information and the fact of there being significant personal change to varying degrees as a result of Breakthrough information, is visible in almost all of the stories.
- About 25% of the stories from UP have a mention of community related action, activity or mobilization related to having participated in Breakthrough training or come into contact with Breakthrough staff.
 - Most of this action is seen in stories focussing on women.
 The corresponding figure for Karnataka is about 37%.
 - These stories from Karnataka are equally divided between women focused and men focused, with 8 stories each.

(Community related action as referred to here has a wide spectrum, spanning intervention with a neighbour to mobilizing the women of a self-help group or village to come together and act upon an issue.)

- There are 4 stories each in MSCT I and MSCT II relating to HIV infected / affected persons and all but 1 of these stories is from UP. This particular observation requires further investigation as to the attendant circumstances as relating to story collection as well as the situation for HIV/AIDS infected or affected persons in the two states.

• Trends

- UP men are far less represented in these stories (2 out of the UP stories in MSCT I, not including the village group story and the school story - and none out of the UP stories in MSCT II) than Karnataka men (4 out of the Karnataka stories in MSCT I and 9 out of the Karnataka stories in MSCT II). This could point to certain possibilities that include:
 - Story collection and documentation challenges.
 - A call to increase the investment of time and resources for working with men and boys in UP.
 - Re-visiting strategy may be required for UP – also to see if greater support is required to sustain the responsiveness of women to the campaign and interventions.
- A large number of stories across MSCT I and II specifically reflect or articulate a personal change and shift in knowledge, attitude or behaviour; however, within this overall picture, it is observed that:
 - In Karnataka, the number of personal change stories that are men-centred goes up quite significantly in MSCT II (2 stories in MSCT I to 7 stories in MSCT II). This does have to be read with the absolute numbers of men-centred stories in Karnataka (4 stories in MSCT I and 8 stories in MSCT II).
 - In UP, the number of personal change stories that are women-centred goes up significantly too in MSCT II (3 stories in MSCT I to 12 stories in MSCT II). Read with the absolute numbers of women centred stories (9 in MSCT I and 24 in MSCT II)
 - Yet, in Karnataka, the numbers of women centred stories of personal change actually drops across the two rounds.
- In a closely related category of stories, that is change in the life of a violence / DV affected participant (affected also intending to include conscious / unconscious perpetrator of violence) after Breakthrough / partner organised workshop – a finding of significance is that men from Karnataka again emerge as strongly represented / representing themselves in MSCT Round II, while in UP again, due to the overall lack of representation of men-centred stories there are no stories of men in this category.
 - It would however be fair to consider that in a majority of these stories of women, the perpetrator(s) of abuse (primarily men), have been forced to contend with change in the behaviours they have been used to manifesting.
- Another interesting trend with significant differentiation, relates to the category of stories (all of them woman-focused), that show intense intervention and follow up by a Breakthrough volunteer / staffer / partner staff:
 - Out of 5 such stories in MSCT I, 4 are from UP and out of 8 such stories in MSCT II 7 are from UP again. So the majority of intense follow-ups to achieve successful intervention are all from UP.
 - This could be due to any of the following reasons:
 - (i) Story collection – the ‘world’ or pool may include more staff / organisations undertaking active follow-up and intervention in UP.
 - (ii) The significantly higher need for sustained follow-up and intervention in the life of a DV affected woman in UP as against the situation in Karnataka. This would possibly be in

- line with the better ranking of Karnataka (in the bottom 5 – least DV) and the higher ranking of UP (in the top 10 maximum DV) on the NFHS 3 listing of states vis-à-vis spousal violence.
- (iii) Environment less conducive to change in UP, more conducive to change in Karnataka.
- Overall, there is a sense that across the two states, men in Karnataka have been far more responsive to intervention, far more forthcoming and open to change. In UP, men remain an area of challenge and their stories of change are either invisible or yet to happen.
 - Women in UP appear to have seized the hope and opportunity of intervention and support with both hands; women in Karnataka – either in terms of representation in the stories across the two rounds or in terms of actual change catalysed by themselves, for themselves as individuals / communities – show a steadiness in the impact numbers graph, without the dramatic vertical growth of their counterparts in UP or the men in Karnataka.

In conclusion

The Bell Bajao! campaign with its 360 degree approach provides a single window entry point to information, resources and support activities spanning a wide spectrum – while interventions across multiple target group constituencies provide a multi-point intervention system that is attempting to create an enabling environment to support change in people's perceptions, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours around issues related to domestic violence, gender and human rights.

Information and workshop / training engagement has in almost all the stories, resulted in a feeling of empowerment, attitude change and an attempt to act in defence of one's own rights or the rights of another, sometimes even driving individuals to mobilize their communities towards collective action. M & E Baseline research held that measuring KAP (Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices) and proceeding to monitor and measure changes in KAP with the progress of the campaign is critical to assessing impact. Given this context, it is safe to conclude that these MSCT stories indicate significant positive change due to Breakthrough's Bell Bajao! campaign interventions.

The engagement profile as seen in the MSCT stories is at a deep level of work with the individual and connects emotionally, psychologically, intellectually, visiting and questioning values, norms and long-term prescriptions of behaviour. At the same time, engagement with local communities using grassroots partnerships as leverage, as well as empowering the individual to act as a change catalyst within the family, the neighbourhood and other micro-communities such as school, college, SHG, work place, health centre, community support centres also runs deep. This combination is reflected in all the stories.

The challenge that has been taken up in some cases successfully and in some spaces continues to face the campaign is to bridge the gaps between the individual's / community's attempt to change and the receptivity or helpfulness of the environment, implementation of laws, service delivery and access to services.

At the level of the organisation, Breakthrough workers and work processes are in a constantly evolving and expanding mode as the demands made upon them continue to increase, both in terms of the existing and also the new demands that emerge. The personal growth curve of Breakthrough workers too is in a dynamic state as new experiences, emergencies and urgencies, challenges and also some failures, and the need to continuously develop new skills in unforeseen new situations all contribute to change.