

Samajdar Jodidar – Men for Gender Equality



“Enhancing Male Participation for Improving Gender Equality - An intervention with Men in Maharashtra, India” (Samajdar Jodidar) was initiated in 2010 and has vigorously attempted to address a range of issues from gender discrimination to gender based violence by enhancing and increasing men participation for gender equality. Centre for Health and Social Justice (CHSJ) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) are jointly implementing this project in 100 villages of Maharashtra state (India) through five partner organizations in the three districts of namely Beed, Pune and Solapur.

Goal and Objectives

GOAL: Advocate for including interventions with men and boys in violence prevention and crisis support programmes at the state levels and also in NGO interventions with government agencies.

Objectives: Mid-term:

- To reduce gender discriminatory behaviors at the family level related to parenting, partner responsibilities and decision making.
- To improve knowledge, attitude and behavior of men and boys on issues related to gender equality and violence against women in selected communities in Maharashtra.

Long term:

- To increase number of women who experience the right to decision making.
- To increase male participation in reproductive health issues.
- To decrease domestic violence against women.

Strategies and Processes: Community mobilisation and awareness generation, interventions with villages level men groups, capacity building, supporting community actions, campaigns and advocacy are the main strategies of the this project. In the 100 villages two platforms will be formed, one will be the men’s group and the other will be adolescent group and these groups will receive intensive capacity building. Animators (village level community volunteers) lead at the village level with a prime responsibility on formation of men and boy adolescents groups, strengthening community groups comprising of men, adolescents as well as community structures i.e. PRIs, Mahila Gram Sabha, SHGs, health workers and service providers. The focus is on creating an understanding on men and women’s reproductive health,

patriarchy, family planning, Violence against Women, adolescent health, education and their rights, early marriage, early pregnancy, gender equality and social justice.



Mobilization and awareness through community campaigns in the villages



Capacity building

- The men's groups have started petitioning the government for services to single women – widows and women whose husbands have left them
- Transparent Mahila Gram Sabha (village women's council) is now taking place
- Gram Sabha (Village Council) which was not functional in the villages have now started functioning in 70 villages with ensured women's participation

5 women have been elected to the Gram Panchayat and two of them have been elected as the Sarpancha due to the persistent focus of the project on women's participation in the political process

- 'Karate' classes have been started for the adolescent girls for teaching techniques of self defence
- Male sterilisation is on the rise, and discussions around it has already been started by the Animators
- Underage girls approached Animator to stop her marriage. Parents of underage girls expressing their gratitude to prevent underage marriage of their daughters

Community process taking place:

- The men's groups have started raising the issue of domestic violence in the village and addressed it in many families, having campaign against sex selective abortions, for girls' education and its relation with child/early marriages, equal property rights, violence against women (VAW) and men's role in bringing equality
- Men have started examining issues of gender, masculinity and sexuality together which they earlier considered normal or taboo, caste and cultural sanctions and their impact on women's position in society
- Women now have greater mobility and greater economic opportunities as many more women now have bank accounts
- In households having petty shops or small business, wives are now participating and running the shops independently



An animator's wife sharing behavior change story during annual symposium

Currently the focus is on developing the perspectives of Adolescent Boys Group around project issues and already one group of adolescent boys has been formed in all 100 villages covering around 1500 adolescent boys

Testimonies

"My husband has started taking care of the children when she goes to the anganwadi centre. She also has access to money now."

Manisha Bokade, wife of a community volunteer, Bhore (Pune)

"My husband does chores like washing utensils, sweeping the floors and cooking now. He takes her to the district along with him also. He has also given up drinking."

Kanta Bai, wife of a group member, Akkalkote (Solapur)

For further information please contact:

Centre for Health and Social Justice (CHSJ)

Basement of Young Women's Hostel, No 2, Avenue 21, Saket, New Delhi

Website: www.chsj.org, email: chsj@chsj.org

 Centre for Health and Social Justice