

National Meeting
Forum to Engage Men (FEM)
CHSJ Meeting Room, 12th December, 2013

Introduction

On 12th December FEM members gathered to have another meeting to take forward the FEM network in India. In total there were 35 members from various states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra, Jharkhand West Bengal and Delhi. Five members could be present due to some last minute cancellations because of unavoidable conditions.

Minutes

The meeting started with a warm welcome by Satish Kumar Singh, who is the convener of FEM. Considering that this was the third meeting of FEM, a small brief of the past events, activities and decisions were explained followed by the purpose of the meeting and it being held consecutively after the meeting of global symposium. Then there was a round of self introduction followed by selection of a chairperson for the meeting. It was proposed and seconded that Mr. Subhash Mendhapurkar would be the chair for the meeting.

Representing FEM secretariat, Mr. Satish Kumar gave a brief on the meeting's agenda. Discussions were to be done on the following-

1. Last meeting Recap
2. FEM network organizational review – regional co-ordination and state updates
3. Review of action points decided during FEM meeting in Pune
4. Global Symposium- FEM and its participation, and India organising country process
5. Anti sexual harassment at workplace- Mr. Edward Premdas to share the draft made in his previous organisation – Role of FEM
6. Men engage code of conduct on principals for members ship
7. Representation in Men Engage South-ASIA in steering committee
8. FEM website review and update
9. Review regional co-ordination

A copy of the meeting minutes were distributed to all after which the key points were discussed which was facilitated by Mr. Satish Kumar.

- National identity- Responsibility taken by CHSJ
- All member organisations were supposed to give a one page CV – It was discussed that very less organisations/ individual members had given their CVs and was requested that all organisations need to submit their CVs along with a photo within 15days by 5th or 6th January, 2014. The important things that should be mentioned in the CV are:
 - a)Name, email and telephone number of the contact person
 - b) Languages one can speak and understand

- c) If possible to also attach a photograph of the concerned person who's CV it would be.
- Dr. Santosh, from Kolkata mentioned that gender should also be mentioned in the CV to which Mr. Anand, from Maharashtra added that an option should be given whether one wants to mention their gender or not.
- FEM website- Mr. Satish Kumar mentioned that FEM website had very little content of what FEM and its members do and has become more CHSJ centric. There is no material coming from the members to be put up in the website due to which CHSJ has to put their own matter. If FEM website is not updated and taken ownership by the FEM members then people will stop visiting the website and soon it would die out. The chairperson suggested that each member organisations/ individual could give a one/ half page write-up about the organisation and the challenges members face while working, if the member organisation already has a website then briefly one can write about the organisation and put the link of their existing webpage. He said that this should be sent to the secretariat by 25th January. Dr. Mangesh from Maharashtra suggested that one could also put-up papers and reports. To this Mr. Subhash added that organisations could also put-up details regarding their upcoming programmes too.
- It was also discussed whether the group wanted to have individual or organisational CV/information. It was decided that as an individual one has specific skills which can be mentioned in the CV whereas in the organisational profile one can mention the kind of work done. Also that a person's CV should be submitted from the organisation who is a regular attendee of the FEM meetings.
- It was also discussed that each state has been involved in various activities which the members shared in the meeting which are to be documented and uploaded in the FEM website.

Activities reported by FEM members and deliverables as decided state wise/individual-

- a. UP-MASVAW- The network has spread across 21 districts. Many stories of change have been sent from these areas. Some work is going on with Juvenile Justice Board and Child Welfare Committees and moving towards common planning with both the bodies.
- b. Gujarat- A small enquiry has been made with adolescent boys. Many FGDs were conducted to explore aspects of masculinity among boys and what restraints them from coming out of the normative box. Stories are available that can be written.
- c. Maharashtra- *Bapanchi Shala* is now spread across 200 villages in 8 districts and in partnership with 10 organisations. This has been trying to work with fathers and their relationships with their children. A campaign was held on 25th November to 10th December, 2013 reached 4-5 thousand population. Pledges were taken by men in the campaign and were also written on the walls. Some work has also been done on corporal punishment in schools. Training manual and posters were developed and competition of articles was organised.
- d. West Bengal- In 2011 there was a campaign against gender based violence at the time of Durga Puja. Campaign against violence named as 'Zero tolerance' is going-on. Workshops were conducted, need was felt for workshops to be conducted with conservative organizations at large scale.
- e. Madhya Pradesh- work was initiated since last one and a half year in the state which is monitored by a core group having representation from 16-17 districts. The father care project is taking place in 16 districts. A state level resource group has been formed which would cater to provision of resources/ skills on demand. Participated

in OBR. Election manifestoes were prepared by FEM and MAGE, *SHAPATH PATRA* was taken from the different parties candidates fighting local assembly election against the fulfilment of women health if they got successes in the election.

- f. Delhi- 'Azad Foundation' is working on livelihood and dignity with women through 'Sakha' a cab service in Delhi. Sensitisation of men and families of 150 women working as Sakha drivers can be done against violence and masculinity. Post cards were distributed in the slum area during OBR to mobilise men against violence and give their commitment to stop it. 550-600 youth/ young men responded on it. Follow up is being done to include more men. Working with Must Bol, Commutinee and Jagori. Working in the slum area with the support of Jagori to raise the voices of men against violence.
- g. Members from Tamil Nadu mentioned about their participation in the One Billion Rising Campaign in Madurai where they motivated huge crowds. The students of criminology and communication also participated from two different universities and made a short film which can be uploaded in the FEM website. Also as part of 16 days of activism they ran a mobile van which distributed around 20000 handbills and had poster exhibitions. A one page note on this will be given for the website.
- h. Jharkhand- FEM has been spread across 10 districts with partnerships from 16 organisations. There have been many challenges in working with men. They have been successful in establishing relationship with PRIs, School Management Committees. 250 people participated in the campaign where different materials were disseminated, feminist groups participated and media participation and coverage was felt.
- i. Rajasthan- They have been initiated working with men in a programme called 'Naye Mard ki Naye Soch' five year back. Working with school going young boys in two districts, 10 villages each on redefining masculinities with the support of 8 NGOs. Work will be initiated with NSS youth in 7 districts.
- j. In Uttarakhand – work going-on with panchayats targeting PATI PRADHAN as panchayat election will be held soon there. A meeting was held with the local NGOs to address the FEM issues.
- k. In Himachal they have been working with seven partners in five districts on reproductive rights and role of PRI, working towards strengthening Ekal Naari Shakti Sangathan at state and national level. Provided services for review work of Mahila Samakhya in Bangalor and had a dialog on working with men. A discussion session is may be held in Jan-Feb with the police (IPS officers) in Himachal.
- l. University level- In Kashi Vidhyapeeth gender sensitisation classes have started in other colleges. In Pune University though the subject Political Science is very masculine and has less scope for to work on changing the syllabus an extra course has been added on Masculinity. This course is conducted by Mr. Bindumadhav Khire, who is a subject expert and the students have shown an overwhelming response. Dr. Mangesh volunteered to write a two pager on masculinity which he explored in his recent visit to Banaras.

The chairperson requested that any updates done on the website should be updated to all members of FEM.

- FEM network and its membership and institutionalising process- It is important that FEM be represented as a member network so when new organisations join the membership increases.

Mr. Manodeep also mentioned that members have not yet started contributing their membership fee and until it is not done there is no sense of accountability within the members and also in holding the secretariat accountable. In the last meeting it was decided that this membership fee would be adjusted in the travel allowances but it has not happened. The chair mentioned that more discussion needs to be done on whether FEM network moves ahead with or without a structure.

- In concern with the membership fee, there was a discussion on the need for a separate bank account for the network where receipts would also be given as collection of money without receipts could be tricky as NGOs are being minutely scrutinised. For organisations the membership would be Rs.1000 and individual membership would be Rs.250.
- Dr. Santosh from Kolkata added that a deadline can be made even for submitting the membership fee and as of now instead of receipts an email can be sent as acknowledgement on receiving the fee.
- Mr. Kalyani mentioned that as the purpose of the network is to reach out to people working on or interested to work on gender, men as responsible partners, violence against women, based on this a membership criteria is needed to be defined. Mr. Anand added that institutionalising FEM at the moment would limit its membership. Mr. Arun Tyagi from Gram Sudhar Samiti (MP) mentioned that how would the collected money be expended. The chairperson concluded by saying that institutionalisation is yet a debatable issue and few members, Dr. Sanjay, Mr. Rajdev and Mr. Shishir should prepare a note on institutionalisation of FEM.
- Code of conduct- A draft of code of conduct for FEM was given to all members. Mr. Satish proposed all participants to add/ edit the code of conduct (COC).
- Mr. Manodeep said that the COC cannot be static and also asked what the process would be for holding people accountable in case of breach of conduct. Mr. Satish explained an old incident where a member of MASVAW was removed from the group due to breach of conduct. Mr. Anand said that the qualitative process and mechanism for maintaining code of conduct should be elaborated. Ms. Poonam added that all points mentioned in the draft were not acceptable to her and that a set of few non-negotiable points should be there in the public domain where as other points should be flexible as per situation and context. Dr. Sanjay from Kashi Vidya Peeth suggested that there could be a peer monitoring system.
- Generate resources- Mr. Satish explained how funders are not ready to support networks. Above all OAK Foundation has agreed not to support FEM directly but as a part of the project that they would be funding. As of now the funding is adequate for two meetings.
- Implementation of key decisions- The chairperson put forth the issue that many decisions and action points are decided in every meeting but are not implemented. In one of the previous meetings it was discussed that FEM members would submit a short write up about how they feel about their fathers and how their children feel about them. Dr. Santosh mentioned that this information was not circulated among all members as he would have loved to write about his father. The chair apologised as the above example was for those members who are implementing the Father Care project, but also said that if FEM members would want they could take it up.
- An accountability system was emphasised where planned tasks would be completed, at the moment CHSJ is doing a lot of pushing but the FEM members need to ensure commitment to completing planned tasks.
- Mr. Satish talked about FEM's scope of work as
 - Provide editorials

- Develop manifestos
- Violence free campus campaign
- Provide stories of change – ITVS
- Global Symposium- FEM and its participation – In continuation to the discussion done before an open discussion was done on the contribution of FEM for the global symposium.
 - Academic Seminar- Dr. Mangesh suggested that the academic seminars should be done in the regional languages as this will also help in developing vocabulary about the subject and also all members need not attend all seminars. Satish said that all places need not have a similar seminar, it could differ region wise and the themes for the regional symposium can be taken as per the choice. Dr. Santosh suggested that paper presentation should be in easy language so that all can understand specially those in the field as eventually work is going to be done in the field. Mr. Subhash suggested that in the South region there are various regional languages so it would not be applicable there.
 - Mr. Satish said that the regional symposiums should be completed within the time frame of March-September 2014. Dr. Sanjay said that they have workshops from Jan-March, 2014 so it would not be possible for them to do it in March, 2014.
 - As the discussion on the design of the regional symposium progressed members wanted more clarity on the whole process. It was explained that all people can't be a part of the global symposium so regional level consultations are needed in order to feed in to the larger national matter. The regional level consultations could have practitioners, academicians, workers, consultants and many more. Mr. Satish added doing regional resources have the benefit of more participation at the local level which would increase the quality of discussions whereas doing the same at the national level would need more resources.
 - Young researchers- Dr. Mangesh suggested that there are many budding researchers who should be given opportunities to do some study on masculinity. One such researcher is Mr. Romit Choudhary. The chair requested that the interns (MSW students or other) who come in most of the organisations can be asked to do areas specific studies on Masculinity as part of their assignment. This study can then be sent to the editing committee. Compiled there could be a total of 25-30 studies. This will also help the students to develop and understanding on Masculinity. Mr. Subhas suggested if a study about those men's feelings and perspective that have only girl children. Mr. Anand pointed out that but this could make them feel 'pitied for not having a boy child'. Srinivas from Azad Foundation said that they have a plan to do an action research but need to work it out with CHSJ. Dr. Sanjay said that a template and guidelines for doing these studies can be sent and each organisation can carry them out. Ms. Prarthana from Sangini also said that a concept note and a set of guidelines are needed so that the same message is passed on and with the same objectives.

Vimal- UGC paper presentations, Mphil, Phd- Dr. Mangesh commented that since they have a lot of funds they do the studies in a very mechanical way.

Mr. Satish ji suggested that a region wise group should be formed to discuss what they intend to do in their respective regions. Mr. Anand suggested that three main things can be decided of which two should be done by all.

 - A distinction was made on the various regions- (as per the FEM brochure)
 - South- to include Pondicherry and Ms. Bandana
 - East- Kolkata and Jharkhand and Ms. Promita Chawdhary (Academic)

- West- Rajasthan, Gujrat and Maharashtra
 - North- as it is
- Dr. Santosh pointed out that Swayam organisation is looking into the east region but they never participate in the meetings or any activities and he wanted to know why Kolkata Rishta was not given that opportunity. After discussion among members it was decided that those present in the meeting at that time would be responsible for their specific regions- North- Mr. Shishir and Mr. Rajdev; East- Mr. Kalyani and Dr. Santosh; South- Vandana; and for academic responsibilities Ms. Paromita, Dr. Sanjay, and Dr. Mangesh would look into as of now they can make a concept note along with the budget and share it with Ms. Bimala.
- Mr. Subhash pointed out an important issues about participation of religious minority in FEM. He also said that this was one of the weak points of FEM. Even in the Global symposium there will be no religious diversity which would be unequal representation. Also there is a need to explore religious minority and construction of masculinity. Satish also asked the group though it is a Hindu majority how many are open and are taking pro active responsibilities. As member organisations how does it reflect in our own organisations, are we open to LGBT.

Involve Asunta Parde- need to explore possibilities.

- Anti sexual harassment at workplace -On 9th December a law has been passed for anti sexual harassment at workplace. Mr. Satish said that even as an organisation we think very broadly and forget the specifics things, as we always thought that we will talk on gender discrimination rather than sexual harassment. But we found that it was not according to law as committee should be exists with visible names. Ms. Prarthana from Sangini also added that though the Vishaka guidelines were in place how many organisations implemented it, it is needed to ensure that as members we need to have something at the policy level. Mr. Subhash differed by saying that it is not about making policies but about implementation of an act. Ms. Bimala added that they are part of the committee to create awareness on the Anti sexual harassment law and are waiting to see how things are dealt with.
- Subhash- we need to check that this act being enforceed at the educational institutes around us. Because maximum sexual harassment happened there. Ms. Bimala added that our maximum staff comes from outside and if something happened than how do we respond.
- Mr. Anand also shared that they had always thought about his organisation being a small one there is no need for implementation of the law, but with time they realised that they were only being lethargic and now they are working on a draft and are also doing assessment of risks. Mr. Shishir shared that Sahayog had tried to explore the implementation of the Vishaka guidelines in universities. With the help of the RTI they found out what was the status in the universities. Very few of them had implemented it and now after the RTI many universities have formed the committee. Mr. Manodeep added that many organisations would also back up by saying that grievance redressal mechanisms are in place and will serve the same purpose.
- Mr. Subhash added that the moment you put a legal language the spirit is gone, it can also be said that the law is a tool to create a spirit. Mr. Satish said that there is a need to implement the new law and to educate about the new law. Mr. Subhash added that there is a need to re-check it and to translate the law into Hindi and other languages. By December end it should be analysed. Mr. Rajdev said that the copy of the rules had come so it can be put it the website.
- Men Engage Regional Alliance- A discussion took place on re forming the committee of Men Engage South Asia. Earlier the members were Mr. Subhash, Mr. Satish and Mr. Runu them Ms. Bimala was asked to join. It was proposed that Mr. Anand, Ms. Bimala and Mr. Subhash be the next committee members. Mr. Anand said that he has not been formally appointed but has been a

member in a supporting role and would want to remain in that role. He said that this is the first time a formal discussion is taking place as earlier there was no formal procedure. Mr. Subhash then suggested that an academician could also be a part and proposed Dr. Mangesh for the same instead. Dr. Mangesh gave consent and is now part of the committee.

The meeting was concluded by Mr. Satish by thanking all the members for their participation and emphasising that contribution of money should be done as soon as possible and that in future diversity among members should be reflected.