

***Summary Report of the XII Kanta Marwah Memorial Event  
National Conference and Workshop: Combating Violence  
against Women (19-20 February 2010)***

***Organizer:*** Ajmer Adult Education Association

***Consultation:*** Directorate of Women Empowerment, Women and Child Development, Rajasthan Government

***Resource Organizations:*** pandies' theatre, Shaktishalini, New Delhi, UNIFEM, New Delhi, Vividha, Jaipur

***Delegates:*** Kavita Srivastava (National Secretary, PUCL); Renuka Pamecha (President, Vividha, Jaipur) Sanjay Kumar (President, pandies', New Delhi) and 4 actors Sanyukta Saha, Diksha Lamba, Swapnapriya and Siddharth Singh (pandies' theatre); Bharti Sharma (Secretary, Shaktishalini, New Delhi); Sudha Tiwari (Shaktishalini, New Delhi); Sister Mariola (Reader, Sophia College, Ajmer); Vijayalakshmi Joshi (Regional Head, ActionAid, Jaipur); Indira Pancholi (Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti, Ajmer).

***Objectives of the Conference and Workshop on 'Combating Violence against Women'***

The conference and workshop was intended as an exercise in raising awareness about violence against women. The objectives included

1. Uncovering and recognizing violence against women
2. Recognizing the effects of violence against women
3. Discussing practical remedies against violence
4. Making the participants aware of laws against violence
5. Distribution of resource material like handbooks for legal redress
6. Preparing the participants to hold further workshops against violence

***Technical Outcomes***

1. Training and sensitization of Protection Officers under PWDVA
2. Training and sensitization of NGO representatives (about 25)

3. Training and sensitization of teachers and lecturers (about 25)
4. Training and sensitization of grassroots workers of AAEEA (about 20)
5. Distribution of material on legal redress from violence in Ajmer city and villages

### **Achievements**

*We were able to achieve most of what we set out to do and, as far as participation and technical outcomes are concerned, go way beyond our targets:*

*Participants: There were 135 participants in the two-day conference and workshop from the following government departments, Voluntary Organizations; and Educational Institutions:*

### **Hosts**

- *Ajmer Adult Education Association*

### **Government Departments**

- *Department of Women and Child Development, Ajmer District (Protection Officers: CDPO, Prachetas and other officers)*
- *Parivar Seva, Ajmer*
- *Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS), Ajmer*
- *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan, Ajmer*

### **Voluntary Organizations/NGOs**

- *Jagori, New Delhi*
- *PUCL, Ajmer*
- *Saswika Sangathan, Bandanwara*
- *Vishakha Jaipur*
- *Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti, Ajmer*
- *Khilti Kaliyaan, Alaripu*
- *Dalit Adhikar Kendra, Ajmer*
- *AID Action Sansthan, Ajmer*

- *Apna Theatre, Ajmer*
- *Hind Mazdoor Sabha*
- *Antyodaya Saakh Seva*
- *Shiksha Sashaktikaran Pariyojana*
- *Vikalp Seva Sansthan*
- *Youth Forum and Women's Groups, Sarwar (Supported by AAEA)*

### ***Educational Institutions***

- *Govt. College for Women, Ajmer*
- *Naraina B.ed College*
- *IIHH, Ajmer*
- *INFR, Ajmer*
- *Sophia College Ajmer*
- *Govt. Engineering College for Women*
- *Govt. Polytechnic College*
- *Shramjeevi College, Ajmer*
- *D.A.V. College, Ajmer*
- *Government College Ajmer*
- *JPNPT, Ajmer*

### ***Proceedings of the Conference and Workshop/ important issues***

- *Exhibition of Resource Material obtained from UNIFEM, New Delhi; Vividha Jaipur; and Mahila Jan Adhikar Samiti.*
- *Release of AAEA souvenir 'Combating Violence against Women' and a poster bearing Kanta Marwah's poem about an adolescent girl by the newly elected first woman Zila Pramukh of Ajmer.*
- *1 Session on Women and Law focusing on the importance and the provisions of PWDVA 2005*
- *Discussion on family relationships; women's right to property; and PWDVA 2005*
- *Interactive forum theatre on rape in marriage and romance; transgender rape*

- *Discussion on rape laws and the plight of the woman trapped in a man's body*
- *Role play of the victim and oppressor by the audience (8 people)*
- *II Session on Experience and Effects of Violence*
- *Presentation on custodial and domestic attitude towards women prisoners*
- *Presentation from a gender perspective on the experience of running a project for adolescents and supporting women's groups in 50 villages.*
- *Recounting of their problems and the story of their achievements via the project by 3 women beneficiaries of AAEEA.*
- *III Session on Activist Intervention in Combating Violence*
- *Sharing of experiences of running a shelter home for battered women in New Delhi*
- *Presentation of 2 case histories via theatre - love between two girls and their persecution by family, community and the police and successful activist intervention; story of exceptional courage and fortitude shown by a young girl sold into prostitution by her aunt*
- *Discussion on the role of the activist and cultural acceptability of alternate sexualities*
- *IV session workshop.*
- *Suggestion for further action by 4 groups in the workshop*

#### ***Regarding AAEEA's role***

1. *AAEEA should function as a nodal agency for an awareness campaign for combating violence against women*
2. *JSS Ajmer is in touch with almost 3000 women. AAEEA can work through JSS to involve them*
3. *A shelter home for women is required in Ajmer. AAEEA should explore the possibility.*
4. *Many participants had expressed the concern that women exploit women especially in families. A conference on the issue needs to be organised.*

#### ***Regarding the role of Educational Institutions***

5. *More information on legal remedies needs to be included in the curriculum.*
6. *Work needs to be done in educational institutions via sexual harassment committees and women cells.*
7. *Adolescent girls and boys should be the target group for all such initiatives.*

#### ***Regarding cultural interventions***

8. *Cultural groups need to be encouraged to come up with programmes designed to spread awareness - following the strategies of pandies' theatre.*
9. *2 groups highlighted the crucial role theatre can play in sensitization.*

#### ***Suggested areas of intervention***

10. *Protection Officers need several such ongoing sensitization and orientation programmes.*
11. *Training and sensitization programmes like these are important for the judiciary as well.*
12. *Elected representatives too need to be sensitized. Material on violence against women should be included in their training programmes. Indira Gandhi Panchayati Raj Institute should be contacted for this.*
13. *In the meetings of the gram panchayats, VAW should be put on the agenda.*
14. *At the block level there should be a committee to combat violence against women - that should meet every two months.*
15. *Work in villages is essential, especially in remote areas.*

#### ***Suggested group initiatives***

16. *We need to function as a pressure group to ensure speedy justice in cases of violence against women.*
17. *Continuous documentation and research projects are essential in the area that would assess the work being done by protection officers and NGOs; and also look at court judgements.*

*18. Elected representatives, advocates, retired judges, Media people and MSSK activists should be included in our initiative*

#### ***Follow-up by AAEEA***

- 1. Documentation of the conference (video-recording/detailed report available)*
- 2. Networking with other NGOs and institutions doing similar work in Rajasthan (in progress)*
- 3. Holding and supporting similar workshops in villages and educational institutions in Ajmer (Gender sensitization and theatre training programme by Pandies' theatre for 41 rural adolescents was conducted from 21-25 February 2010)*
- 4. Information dissemination about PWDVA 2005 (in progress)*

*To initiate a platform for like minded individuals and organizations regarding VAW and to work collectively towards women's empowerment in Ajmer, AAEEA will hold a follow up meeting for all participants in May*

*Report prepared by Anuradha Marwah, Secretary AAEEA, Convener: Organizing Committee, Conference and Workshop.*