



Midterm Review Partner and

**Caring Father -**

**Working with Men and Boys for Gender Equality and  
Securing Child Rights**

Report of Midterm Review CHSJ

June-July 2017

*....Earlier he never used to play  
with children, now he spends  
time with them, he takes the  
children out, comforts them....  
Wife of Animator*

## **Acknowledgement**

This review would not have been completed without the support of the facilitators from the partner organisations gave their time and shared their experience from their work and interactions in the community. CHSJ would like to thank the facilitators under the programme, members of the network, all the project partners for their untiring support all throughout the duration for the field and most importantly the women observers who gave us their time to interact with them on the various issues in their community.

## Content

I.	Acknowledgement.....	1
II.	Executive Summary.....	3
III.	Background and Objectives .....	6
IV.	Rationale and Objectives of the Review.....	7
V.	Methodology.....	8
VI.	Inputs by CHSJ and Project Activities .....	9
VII.	Findings	10
	Profile of respondents .....	10
	Recognition of Animators and their work .....	11
	Transition among animators and group members at home.	13
	Gender Equality in the community.....	14
	Interaction with Network .....	21
VIII.	Conclusion and Recommendation .....	22

## Executive Summary

Responsible Partner and Caring father project has been systematically engaging men in communities to recognize and reflect on their relationships within the family, make personal changes and affect community social norms. As part of the overall monitoring and evaluation methods, this review was planned to collecting systematic evidence in addition to the ongoing system of MIS and stories for better understanding of the progress of the work and changes that are taking place. This review was undertaken to understand the impact and influence in the community as perceived by women and to understand the functioning of the FEM Network.

The review was conducted in any 3 villages in all the 3 districts- Gumla, Ranchi and Bokaro. The process included a first round of discussion with the facilitators to understand from their perspective the progress in their field areas, resulting in selection of villages. Next, interviews were conducted with the women observers, a few animators and their family members to understand change. Women observers were purposely selected of those who are members of Self Help Groups in the community, also assuming they will be critical stakeholders in assessing change through men's involvement in the village.

Findings from the review conducted has shown that the men's groups as part of the intervention are being recognized by the women but with limited understanding about their work and purpose of the groups. Through interaction with all the respondents, an understanding has been drawn that different issues are being addressed by different mobilisers at different levels across the districts.

Most of the observers interviewed had had some interaction with the animator and were able to tell briefly about their work, but mostly attributing their knowledge to the community campaigns that have taken place in the village. They could recall about the issues like stopping early marriage, non discrimination between sons and daughters and education of girls due to the wall writings that was done as part of the campaign. In addition through activities in the campaign, the facilitators in Ranchi and Bokaro have been able to build relationship with media persons, which has led to continuous reporting of not just the campaigns but also of the group meetings.

In the course of change among the animators in their personal lives, not much was known to the observers, but through other interactions, it was evident that mostly animators, not group members, have begun to contribute in the household and childcare work. Some of the chores mentioned by men were cooking and cleaning in the house, however, these instances have been also mentioned during the baseline at the start of the project. A clear indication regarding

household chores was men have begun to help at home but still see the primary responsibility as that of the woman and even now among group members there is resistance among a few to do due to societies interference and continuous taunts. From the observers, there was a mixed response as some felt it a women who should continue to take the responsibility whereas there were some who understood the importance of men's responsibility at home as a way to recognize women's space and time for doing other work or income generation. In the child care domain we didn't see much change from that of the baseline where women are primary care givers for children and men's contribution reflected only when children were to be taken for treatment when ill or play with them. Even among observers, men are seen as incapable to look after children especially infants, hence not take children for immunisation. One of the observers also an AWW in Bokaro expressed not having seen any man come with their children for immunization.

Interaction with women observers did give a feeling that most of them felt that existing community norms were discriminatory, however have not been able to take action due to various reasons and fear of any rebuke from elders (men) in the community and more so if they were widows. In addition to their experiences actions from the animator or the groups on challenging the norms came upfront during the discussions.

Early marriage prevalence was accepted by observers in Ranchi and Bokaro but not in Gumla (among tribal Christians). A direct relation between delay in marriage due to continued education of the girls could be drawn from narratives of the observers. In Bokaro girls are still seen as a big burden which are to be gotten rid of at the earliest, resulting in 14-15yrs girls dropping out of school to get married. Although delaying age at marriage was agreeable to all the respondents, giving the freedom to choose partners to men and women was not acceptable.

Another area of concern is the prevalence of violence against women at homes and in public spaces, women are still seen as objects on which any kind of harmful act can be conducted, especially when they are alone. In Bokaro, observers reported a high prevalence of domestic violence among OBC communities. In Ranchi, four cases of violence against women were reported of which two were perpetrated among minor girls in public spaces in or around the village raising an alarming question on access to safe spaces for girls. A sense of community solidarity to intervene during cases of domestic violence is not yet established in any of the districts. Unless the situation gets very violent, no one comes forward to stop the man from beating his wife. In addition, women were not consulted on any of the discussion for actions to be taken in regard to the incident at the public spaces, often matter is forced to be closed or dismissed on account of girls honour or as recommended by the elders because the perpetrator is from an influential family. Only is family remains determined, then only the case goes ahead,

as was in the case of a rape incident of a minor girl where the father decided to take action as a result the perpetrators are in jail. In Bokaro, it was expressed that women do not take action against their partners, as they don't see any possibility of shifting anywhere else as women are not accepted in parents' home after marriage. Among all the cases and instances shared, none shared about any action by the animator or the group members.

An overall observation on the change and efforts made by the animators also seen as a result of their previous social standing and relationships in the community. Across the district it was noticed that animators with a higher education level, or have an earlier social standing like a PRI member were more active and accepted by the group members and changes seen in them and their family is more than other animators, similarly an earlier poor reputation of the animator in the village (like being part of dominating groups) had negative impacts on the group evolution. Men who were economically weak are not very active both the animator and the group members, also the association between the group member and the animator is stronger where group members are able to identify with the animator in terms of economic class and religious identity.

## **Responsible Partner and Caring Father Working with Men and Boys for Gender Equality and Securing Child Rights, Midterm Review Report- 2017**

### **1. Background and Project Objectives**

Research on child abuse, as well as on the basic needs, health, education, and participation of children, reveals that the rights of children in India are not yet realised. Despite the Government of India's promises and efforts to ensure child rights, millions of children suffer abuse, exploitation, malnutrition, illness, and mortality. Girls, children of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, and from poor families face additional hardship. While much of the responsibility for guaranteeing child rights and protecting children lies with the government, the family also play a crucial role.

Civil society groups have been at the forefront in efforts to protect child rights in India, both through direct intervention and active advocacy. These efforts have usually focused on rescuing/ rehabilitating children from forced labour or from trafficking for sex or other work, providing educational opportunities to street children, delivering reproductive and sexual health and rights (RSHR) programmes for adolescents, etc.

While much of the responsibility for guaranteeing child rights and protecting children lies with the government, the lack of security/ opportunities that children face are not just an issue of state accountability. If children are insecure at home, then families must accept some form of accountability. In families, with a patriarchal social setup, power is disproportionately in the hands of men. This limits men's concern for their children to just disciplining in the form of control and punishment. The need, then, is to challenge patriarchy and to create new ways for men to express concern for children through caring roles. This need to work within the family and with fathers does not mean that the accountability with the state should be lessened, but that fathers (in addition to mothers) become the first champions and activists for child rights in the public domain.

The Fathers Care campaign is an innovative approach to start initiating a dialogue at the community level, but it needs to be strengthened with a more indepth engagement with men and boys in the community. A closer interaction with the community allows for critical reflection among men which then can enable initiatives aimed at changes in social norms like early child marriage, dowry and trafficking, where family and thus the role of the father is critical within a child rights and gender equality paradigm.

These interplays provide opportunities and challenges and the field level project wants to explore working with the men and boys in the family and community as a unit of intervention, look at the rights of children not just as channels of nation building but seek improved linkages

with and accountability of public services and functionaries at the village level and also build larger discourse with child rights, women's rights, health rights groups, etc.

This intervention thus creates a platform for bringing people from child rights and women's rights and other social rights groups to come together and discuss the issue and build a common consensus for greater social justice with an aim to promote and support the development of new models of engaging men as responsible partners and caring fathers which address caring for children and women with a particular focus on daughters and wives through gender equality and child rights perspective. This project will be implemented in the context of key gender issues in the more socially backward and patriarchal states of Jharkhand and West Bengal.

Core project objectives are

- To develop role model men with an understanding on different aspects of gender equality who will influence other men in the community in Jharkhand
  - Increase men's involvement in caring work at home –child and partner care
  - To address unequal norms in the family and community and establish new norms
  - To ensure the securing of child rights for children in the community
- Strengthen a men's network in Jharkhand and West Bengal who will work for and towards gender equality through their own work and strategic interventions
- Promote alliance building and advocacy for involving men to promote gender equality and secure child rights

## **2. Rationale and objectives of the review**

Responsible Partner and Caring father project which has been systematically engaging men in communities to recognize and reflect on their relationships within the family, make personal changes and affect community social norms vis a vis gender equality and children's rights, field intervention commenced in the 3 districts, Bokaro, Gumla and Ranchi in April 2016. At another level it seeks to strengthen the network of organizations working on men and masculinities in Jharkhand, and work with institutions particularly educational institutions and the media, for making more visible women's and child rights issues, with a focus on men's accountability towards them.

In a span of 15 months of its operationalization in the field in 30 villages, there have been significant changes reported through different processes. Collecting systematic evidence on the processes and outcomes is essential for better understanding of the progress of the work and changes that are taking place in the lives of those part of the intervention which in turn has helped to draw a better road map for the intervention. On this note the midterm review was conducted to understand the current reality.



## Objectives of the review

- To understand, through interviews, the impact or influence in the community as a result of the project implementation
- To understand the FEM Jharkhand Network
  - Its functioning and reach
  - Change made /actions taken by network members/orgs
  - Challenges in the network

This review provides findings collated from field perspectives of the facilitators and the project coordinator, the observations of the observers and the experiences of the partners of the animators.

## 3. Methodology

This review followed a qualitative process. CHSJ has always emphasized on doing ongoing reviews at the intervention sites to understand change and processes that facilitated such change. These explorations are usually done through interactions with different people part of the intervention mainly the animators who are the key agents of change, the group members and the women associated with the both categories of men. However, a new aspect of exploration was introduced in which ‘observers’ were one of the key respondents. An ‘observer’ was identified to be a woman from the community who is associated with any self-help group in the village and has an interest in the gender issues and interacts with men, women and children in the village.



**Facilitators identifying village for interviews**

The person identified as an observer will serve as a voluntary informal informant throughout the period of the intervention.

The review was conducted in any 3 villages in all the 3 districts. The selection process involved first an indepth discussion with the facilitators from each of the organisations and the project coordinator. For every positive testimony on any indicator, a positive mark was given to the village. At the end of the discussion 3 villages from each district was selected based on the better performance and visibility of the animator and group’s work, their interaction with their family members, action taken in the community and availability of an observer in the village considering that selected villages have communities from different caste and tribal composition. In addition to the observers, few animators and their family members were met

as per the felt need during the review and as suggested by the intervention team to get a better understanding of the process and change.

<b>Table 1: Details of the respondents</b>			
<b>District – Villages chosen</b>	<b>Observers (Profile)</b>	<b>Animator(Village)</b>	<b>Animator Spouse/ sister(Village)</b>
Ranchi- (Karanji, Charima, Hutri)	3+1 (3 SHG+ 1 PRI)	1(Hutri)	3(Charima, Karanji, Hutri)
Gumla – (Gurugaon, Jaira, KUdra)	3(2 SHG+ 1PRI)	1(Jaira)	0
Bokaro- Garri, Hanslata, Pondi	3+1( 3 SHG + 1 AWW)	2(Garri, Ponda)	1(Hanslata)
<b>FEM Jharkhand Network Interview</b>			
Network member	Membership type, District		
C A Kumar	Giridih		
Gautam Sagar	District Coordinator, Bokaro		
Shankar Rawani	District Coordinator, Dhanbad		
Rajiv	Ranchi		

#### 4. Inputs by CHSJ and Project Activities

Heading towards achieving the above objectives, a series of activities including capacity building sessions, exposure visit to other field areas and community campaigns have been designed and conducted during the period prior to the review between April 2016- March 2017. Month wise detail given in the table below.

<b>Table 2: Input Processes – Training, Events, Activities, Media engagement, review meetings</b>			
<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>
April 2016	Project Commencement	Jan 2017	Picnic (Bokaro)
May 2016	Village/ Animator Selection	Mar 2017	4 <sup>th</sup> Training- Masculinity
May-June 2016	Exposure Visit of Facilitators	2016-2017	Celebration of Father’s Day, World Pop Day, Girl Child Day, Women’s Literacy Day
Aug 2016	1 <sup>st</sup> Training- Orientation, Gender	Ongoing	Session with students in 2 Schools(1 in project area, 1 outside) (Ranchi)
Aug-Dec 2016	Baseline	Ongoing	Documentary(Nisha)
Oct2016	2nd Training- Violence, Patriarchy	Ongoing	Mobile News (Bokaro)
Oct 2016	Group sessions during meetings	Ongoing	Media News
Nov –Dec 2016	Campaign	Ongoing	Monthly Animator meeting and Quarterly review meeting
Dec 2016	3 <sup>rd</sup> Training- Documentation, Leadership, Advocacy		

These various activities, events, campaigns and exposures have allowed men to reflect and bring out changes at different levels in their personal lives, in the family and in the communities that they live in. The campaigns have given the scope to strengthen the outreach of the intervention where systematic and focused interactions were made with stakeholders, and more community people were reached for awareness on the issues.

In addition to the activities and events, an ongoing support and guidance was provided by the mentors in various capacities-to organize and plan events and meetings, accompany for field visits, support to plan action in the field in challenging norms, etc. which the facilitators have found useful during the intervention.

## **5. Findings**

### **i. Profile of the respondents**

The observers chosen varied across the 3 districts who were currently married women, widowed and an unmarried women between 30- 50 yrs. In each district observers were chosen from 3 villages each, In Ranchi and Bokaro four observers and in Gumla three observers were interviewed. Details of the respondents can be found in Table 1. The women identified themselves as active members of the Self Group Groups(SHGs) for more than 5 years, who have weekly meetings with their group members to discuss about the group financial progress and contribute their weekly amount into their savings account. Each one felt very proud of their association with their group, and credited their ability to speak with confidence with outsiders because of the exposure given by the group and opportunities provided for learning through meetings in the village and capacity building programme outside the village. It was also mentioned that these groups have provided financial assistance and some association income generation programme opportunity to them and to other members in times of financial insecurity and some of the observers proudly expressed their ability to write their names and sign due to the enrollment into the groups. The description provided by the observers painted a view of extreme cohesiveness among their group members and a provision of space to women to come out of their household responsibility and discuss matters of finance and in few instances social issues such as violence against women, early marriage or women's health.

In addition some animators and their female family members were met in Ranchi and Bokaro and animators in Gumla.

## ii. Recognition of Animators and their work

Animators have been visioned to be leaders of the men's group as part of the intervention. This vision turning into reality has been gradual and with much efforts from the facilitator. The initial months left the animators a little confused to understand their role as an animator also few having inhibitions to continue, as explained by the facilitators, however, now most of them have settled and are happy to be part of the intervention and are proactively organising monthly meetings.

As part of their monthly activity as indicated in the monthly reports, animators have taken the initiative to talk to various stakeholders in the community, one of which is the women's SHG members, regarding the purpose of their own work to bring gender equality in their communities.

This meeting between the animators and the observers was validated by the latter, as on enquiring, the observers, across the districts knew the animator as a person who has some association with a 'sanstha' or an organization who conducts meetings with men and occasionally goes for training to Ranchi. The observers were clear that meetings which are held are for men only. The work of the animator was understood by the observers in different capacities across the villages. Of those who were well acquainted mentioned that the work involved gender equality (discrimination between son and daughter), early age marriage, violence against women with specific reference to domestic violence and men's role in domestic work (which they referred to as women's work). Some of them could recall the messages in the wall writing and locate its placement in the village.



A wall writing located by an observer in Ranchi as work done by the animator

In Ranchi, of the three villages, in two, observers (tribal) were well oriented about the work of the animator and the organization. The third observer(OBC) being family member of the animator was not aware about the animator's work. In village Charima, the observers knew the most about the intervention, owing to the fact that in the animator's wife and they were part of the same SHG, which has provided more space for discussion among them.

In Gumla the observers were able to explain about the animator and groups and about a few issues addressed by them like gender equality, domestic violence, others VAW and men's changed role in the house. They were also aware about the monthly meetings in the village.

In Bokaro, the observers knew about the issues as one or other male family member was part of the groups, though one of the observers who was the sister mentioned his brother till date have never discussed with family about the group or the issues, she got to know through other sources. Other knew about the monthly meetings and the gender issues discussed. Another observer mentioned knowing about the issues and also knew the slogans on the wall.

Similarly all the animator's wives who were interviewed were aware about the animators association with the local organisations, wives in Ranchi could elaborate on the various issues that the animator works upon. The animators had discussed about the issues and the trainings with their partners. One animator's wife even knew the members of the group and that a register is maintained for their meetings and that her husband had changed after joining this programme as he thinks of her and they discuss about women's rights. A similar picture could not be seen among family members of the group members, as they had not discussed with their family members regarding the meetings or the issues as observers who were family members of group members mentioned having never discussed about any of the issues which otherwise they were aware about due to interaction with the animator, participation in campaign activities or because of the wall writings. An animator in Bokaro claimed having stopped an early marriage in the village with the help of the group members, however, this incident was not known to the sister (and family members) of the group member. Overall observers who were in some social positions like a PRI member or an AWW had greater interaction with the animator and as a result have slighter better understanding about the intervention.

The activities under the community campaigns have left a mark on most of the observers as they could relate the work of the animator through it. Apart from being known at the community level, the facilitators in Ranchi and Bokaro have been able to build relationship with media persons, which has led to continuous reporting of not just the campaigns but also of the group meetings. In Bokaro, the medium of community radio is being used to send information regarding the different activities. In addition to all, few of the observers related the animator and the group with the film making process, which simultaneously is happening through the filmmaker, Nisha. In Bokaro, one of the animators mentioned that in the initial phases of the intervention the attendance in the group also depended on the presence of the film making session.

### iii. Transition among animators and group members at home

#### Distribution of work at home

The patriarchal set up which prescribes a set of guidelines for gender roles have been talked about in the group meetings. Facilitators expressed that few animators across the districts have started contributing into some of the work in the house which they did not do earlier like cooking and cleaning, however there is resistance among a few to do due to societies interference and continuous taunts.

On enquiring about the same, observers and female members had a different story to share, some of which had men coming into new roles to help women, but mostly indicating that domestic work is still a woman's domain. In Kudra village, Gumla, one of the observers whose husband is part of the group shared that because she has a greater responsibility of doing all the chores and looking after the elders which keeps her busy, she does not find the time to go out of the house and also sees women going out as a waste of time, but also acknowledging that her husband has always helped her in fetching water for the house. She also mentioned noticing the animator of her village contributing in household work, more than other men. On the contrary, another observer from Gumla (widow, PRI) who has had greater interactions with the animator, who also knew more about the project activities expressed that household work is responsibility of men and women in the house and should be inculcated in men at a younger age. At her home level she ensures that her sons (no daughter) to help her, *"I tell my sons to do the household work like cutting vegetables, clean the house."* She also sees men and women go together and sell their agriculture products and expressed that *"Women's participation in the outer world will increase when men start contributing at home"*.

Men's changed role could not be seen in Bokaro, as most of the observers mentioned it still being the primary responsibility of the women. The wives in Bokaro did validate about the changed behavior of their partners pertaining to initiation of few household work being done by them.

In terms of work distribution, apart from what animator's wives and an observer from Gumla validated about men beginning to help, through most of the narratives it was clear that household work is seen as a women's sole responsibility.

Overall the observers across the districts expressed deeply the need to work on the issues with the men and women in the community.

## **Men in Child care**

From our learnings of the baseline study, women have been primary care givers for children in the intervention area, where men's contribution reflected only when children were to be taken for treatment when ill. Although facilitators have claimed that men are participating in child care activities like accompanying for immunization, from the discussions with the observers, the perception still persists, specially in case of infants or babies, that men are not capable to look after/ handle children in that age group. One of the animators' wife in Ranchi did acknowledge that the father spent longer time with his children in comparison to before and also took his infant on his lap, which she had never seen him do so with older children," ....*Earlier he never used to play with children, now he spends time with them, he takes the children out, comforts them*" but on the contrary still feels that taking children for immunization is still a mother's responsibility. Similarly an observer in Bokaro feels that, *"Men can't take of infants because they do not how to handle infants, especially if they were to take their child for immunization and the baby started crying after the vaccine, how would they manage?"*

In Bokaro, the observer, also an AWW expressed that no men in her village had come with their child for immunization even after the onset of the intervention. This underlying perception which still exists among the women show that animators and group members have not done enough to prove that men are equally capable of handling their children which otherwise is their claim.

An overall observation among change and efforts made by the animators also was a result of their relationship with the community. Across the district it was noticed that animators will a higher education level, or have an earlier social standing like a PRI member were more active and accepted by the group members and changes seen in them and their family is more than other animators, similarly an earlier poor reputation of the animator in the village (like being part of dominating groups) had negative impacts on the group evolution also men from those villages which are economically weak are not very active both the animator and the group members, also the association between the group member and the animator is stronger where group members are able to identify with the animator in terms of economic class and religious identity.

## **iv. Gender Equality in the community**

A patriarchal set up in the community has created unequal spaces for women at every sphere starting from their homes, opportunities are not given for women to learn, grow and develop,

and lack of autonomy to choose for themselves. The facilitators expressed about discussing gender inequality in its various forms at different spaces in the villages including that Gram Sabhas.

This unequal set up is seen being challenged through different ways and similar could be seen through some of the narratives of the respondents where they may not have taken action against existing social norms, but beg to differ with the idea of keeping spaces unequal for women.

The observers along with awareness about the animator and groups, also had a say regarding current unequal gender norms existing in their societies. They could identify the issues of the intervention and recognize it as a result of the awareness campaigns that took place in the previous year in their villages. Most of them remembered the slogans which were wall written in different areas in their village and could locate and show them.

There were no instances which show that gender issues were being discussed among women's groups except that in Ranchi, where observers mentioned having discussed with the animator's wife, who is also part of their SHG, about some of the issues.

Even though the norms existing in the villages are recognized to be discriminatory, discussions with the observers show that not much effort or action has been taken by the animator or men's groups on them.

### **Early age marriage and choice**

The prevalence of early age marriage among boys and majorly among girls were acknowledged by the facilitators. When the observers were asked similar questions, observers in Ranchi and Bokaro didn't deny except in Gumla where observers shared that girls getting married was an earlier phenomena and now girls in their villages are not getting married before 18yrs of age. The observer in Kudra, Gumla was aware that there were negative impact on a girl's health if she is married early and therefore girls in her village were not married early. She added saying, *"When young girls are married, they have no say, men are not going to use any contraceptives, and this will lead to her getting pregnant. During pregnancy and child birth young girls have difficulty and oftentimes delivery takes place through an operation and higher changes for child mortality."*

As the observer claimed of no such early marriage, there were no instances of action taken to stop early marriages, however, was open to taking action to stop early marriage if any case was brought to light. This was later also validated by the facilitator stating that the observers identified were from Christian dominated villages where girls are given opportunity to study at



higher levels and also work after pursuing their education, however this may not be the situation in other villages.

On the contrary, early marriage is still prevalent in Bokaro and Ranchi, it is still a norm to get girls married off quickly to avoid other hassles like affairs because of the girl and to finish this big responsibility as parents. Animators do get news about early marriages through different sources and have initiated discussion on the same in the groups and also taken action in a few cases. However, even after animator talking to the concerned parties to delay early marriage, often families secretly and quickly marry their girls off as was the case in Karanji village in Ranchi.

As one unmarried observer from Bokaro puts it as, *“Here the girls are considered a paraya dhan (somebody else’s property) and burden, efforts are made to marry them off at the earliest. There is lot of pressure among the girls to get married while they are still studying”*.

In addition when choice in marriage was asked, across the districts the observers mentioned that marriages are often arranged. The observer from Ranchi clearly said, *“A choice is exercised when girls and boys runaway and get married.”* It was clearly explained by the observer in Ranchi that children aged 14 years and above often runaway and get married because they are in the opinion that parents will never agree to their choices may be because they are still young, may be the couple is from different communities or simply because parents have not arranged the marriage, but if the children have come back after getting married parent do accept them, even if they are inter -caste marriages. Even in Bokaro to make a choice in marriage especially for girls is never thought about, girls have to get married to the one choice made by their parents and continue to be in that marriage even if there is violence perpetrated against her which often is the case so in Bokaro.

The evidence is clear to indicate that more efforts are needed to address the issue of early marriage especially among girls. The efforts mentioned by the facilitators have not reflected in any of the narratives of the observers or the female family members of the animators. Besides the fact that delay in age at marriage is being discussed in groups and has been a major issue in awareness campaigns, actions taken in the community could not be drawn out from interactions with the observers. In addition an important component of choice in marriage is missing from all interactions during the review as focus remained only in delaying age at marriage. Without talking about choice, girls remain only to reach the legal age and thereafter still forced to leave higher education and get married to men without any choice or consent.

In addition to community initiatives, the facilitator in Ranchi initiated an activity in 2 schools in the block (one of which, Lamkhana village, is in the project area) to talk to middle school students on different gender issues including early age marriage.

## Education of girls in the community

The need to give importance to girls' education was universally agreed by all respondents. The observers across the districts claimed that in comparison to earlier decades, girls are sent to schools without any discrimination. There was a felt need for girls to study in order to be self dependent. One of the important observations expressed by the observers is the connection between delayed marriage among girls as result of continued education. Observers across the districts gave various examples of girls pursuing higher education, but it was seen that in Ranchi and Gumla, educating girls was taken in a positive way than in Bokaro.

In Gumla, schools at the village are limited to primary or secondary level, most children go to another village, or a nearby town or at the block in Sisai for higher education either walking, in cycles or by other public transport. Observers proudly shared about girls in the village completing a minimum qualification till the 10<sup>th</sup> standard and many even more. One of the observers(Gurugram) also shared about a new trend of girls doing better in schools and continuing study as compared to boys, which also throws light on the pressure patriarchy puts on boys to become earning members of the family at a younger age, *"Girls are not married early in the village, they study upto 12<sup>th</sup> some are also pursuing graduation and only after that they are married. In the village men don't study further as compared to women, as they start working, they have responsibilities at home. Her sisters in law are studying in 1<sup>st</sup> year college and in final year and one has even applied for a police job. Girls in the village are good and intelligent, they are studying well and going ahead of the boys. Boys drop out early but girls do not."* In another village in Gumla, the observer also emphasized that there was no discrimination done among boys and girls in education as she explained that public schools did not provide good education, hence she and her husband jointly decided to send her daughter and her son to a private school so that they can learn good English. On asking about harassment of girls while going to school, the observers reported that no such cases happened in their village. Overall Gumla had positive response in regard to higher education of girls, however this factor dependent on the ability of the family to afford higher education which is usually expensive, so likelihood of girls dropping out among poor families in Gumla was much higher.

On the other hand, girls in Bokaro mainly studied till 12<sup>th</sup> grade after which they were married off. One of the observers from Bokaro, who had completed her graduation, struggled to get any employment and expressed that that girls in her village have to face many challenges if they want to continue education. Often times people taunt her about her education and her marital status if she tries to raise questions on any injustice happening in the village, *"I am often told that I have studied a lot, so that does not mean I should teach my family members, or give gyaan(knowledge, advice) to women, especially if they are facing some form of domestic*

*violence". She also expressed that it is difficult to find groom for an educated girl as girls often want men who have the similar mindset, which expectation is often not met. Another observer explains hers desire to educate her daughter as much as her son but is worried as she lacks the means to do so," My daughter also wants to go out and study further, but we don't have the means. She tell us that she wants to study further than her brother. She says that because he is son, he's being educated and not doing same for daughter. I am very tensed. I want to educate her child, but can't afford to."*

In Ranchi, the mindset towards girls' education was positive, however, one of the observer expressed that quality of public schools in the village was extremely poor and non functional resulting in families sending their children to private schools. One observer from Ranchi expressed that educational institutes are not equipped to taking care of physically and mentally challenged children as she had to withdraw her daughter from school due to continued ridicule by fellow students. In another village in Ranchi, the school was non functional because of illegal acquirement of land by one of the community members and the issue was left unresolved resulting in the education of so many children in the village.

### **Violence against women**

Violence against women in its various forms, especially at homes, was reported in the baseline across the 3 districts, however, except one in Bokaro, none of the observers and wives across the 3 districts reported any violence in their families and few observers reported cases of violence against women in the homes of their neighbours and other people in the community.

In Ranchi, observers mentioned about four cases, one where a minor girl was molested by boys from another village when she was on her way to the well to take bath, second where an SHG member was beaten by her husband, third where a group members' minor daughter was raped and fourth where the observers' daughter feared some harm. In the three cases some level of action was taken. The observers were aware about the first two cases, in one of which, the observer mentioned having intervened in the case to an extent where she herself was injured by the perpetrator. The observers also shared that it is not common to see men or other community members intervene in cases of domestic violence. However, in the case of the girl, the observers were aware about some action which was taken by the family and elders in the village, which they felt were not adequate, but they were not confident enough to raise concerns, as they are women and more so widows. They also feel that when issue are suppressed in this manner the perpetrators become fearless and further commit similar crimes. The facilitator from Ranchi clarified that the case and issue of violence was discussed in the men's groups meeting, however much could not be done by the group members as the case was dismissed and no action taken as the perpetrators belonged to powerful families because

of which an indirect pressure was created on the father of the survivor which eventually led to no police reporting and the negotiation ended with a signed agreement by the perpetrators mentioning that no such behavior will be conducted by them. However, the women's groups were not aware about the proceedings and action taken in this case nor about the men's groups' discussions and actions. In the case of rape of the minor, the family has taken immediate action and made an FIR. The perpetrators were sent to jail, and there are plans to discuss about the issue in group including the father without hurting his sentiments. The fourth case involved one of the observers' daughter, who when on her way to school alone, who usually went with friends on other days, saw a group of boys, and in fear of some bad incident, came back home. This indicating an atmosphere of lack of safety for school going girls.

Similarly in Bokaro high rate of domestic violence was reported in Bokaro, especially among the OBC community. Women do not want to speak against their husbands or as they fear being kicked out of homes and not having a home to go as once married they are taught that they will never have in their parents' home irrespective of how she is treated by husband or in laws. As explained by the observer " *My sister in law was beaten by her husband and I had to take her up to my terrace to save her from brutally being beaten by my cousin, but the next day she went back and she was doing sewa of her husband. If I object to this violent behavior, I am asked to shut up and told not to spoil other women's minds or plot against their husbands* ". She further added that she has not seen the animator or any men's groups taking action against such cases, nor her brother who is also a group member raising a voice against their cousin.

Though issue of violence against women were being discussed in men's groups as well as adolescent boys' groups, community in general is has not condemned violence against women. All the interactions and experiences of women strongly indicate an environment for women which is unsafe at home as well as in public spaces, where women are not able to enjoy the spaces freely. Above the violence, there is constant fear to speak about the unacceptable behavior by the perpetrator because of not being heard or not having places to go and in addition women's opinions and actions are not welcome, in incidents of violence and otherwise.

### **Political participation by women**

The situation of women participating in the political processes seemed of average status. Observers who were PRI members completed their responsibilities with dedication, stating taking up issues of the people in their ward, however they also talked about lack of scope to discuss women's issues in the Panchayat. One of the observers in Ranchi mentioned being

chosen as a members due to the seat being reserved for women and lack of other women candidates, as women do not desire for political participation. The other observers (widows) went to attend the Gram Sabha, not due to personal interest, but because of fear of being fined as one member from a family is to be part of the gram sabha and since they did not have partners, they were compelled to go.

### **Autonomy of and opportunity for men women**

Observers in Ranchi and Gumla expressed that being part of the SHGs have made them feel confident and able to speak due to the range of information received and to enjoy. However it was observed that the SHGs mostly provided women a space to learn about finance and savings and some form of livelihood, only few observers in Ranchi and Gumla mentioned the likelihood of discussing women's issues like violence against women, early marriage or women's health in their groups. One of them in Gumla said, *"In the group we discuss strictly about money and business, why should women come and complain about their husband and children and it is not a nice thing to discuss about husband's behavior with others."* Whereas in Ranchi, the women were more accepting towards discussing other social issues in their groups, one of the observer who was also a ward member express the need to talk to women with women through SHG platform about taking care of girls' education and hygiene and also provide a space where woman come and share their difficulties. This space can further be explored and tapped for bridging the gap between men's and women's groups and increase interaction between the two groups on different social norms. Even though women's group experience did throw positive light in giving them opportunity there were many instances which indicated that the community is not ready for empowered women.

Two issues that came to light during the start of the project was complete prohibition of women to put tiles on the roof and to plough the field. As said by one of the observers in Ranchi, there is a continued fear among women to try out any of these tasks, even though women have discussed among themselves about their desire to do so, never has one woman attempted so, *"Even after reminding so many times, men don't fix the Khapra, those times women feel they should just go and do it themselves. Women can learn, they know how it is done, they see it being done, but there is a fear from men and community. IF community agrees, that women can do women will go ahead and do it."*

Another issue that was highlighted was lack of work opportunity for women in Ranchi, and men often perceive that women could be problematic if they get to know everything. As an observer shared. *"We were not given assignment of constructing ponds in the village even when our output was better and faster, since it was give to men, it is still incomplete, it should have been given to both men and women"*

#### **iv. Interaction with Network**

A state level network of different organisations has been established. This network comprises groups from different districts working on the issue of women and child rights. This recently formed group have their expertise in each of their domain of work, but are also convinced that working with men and boys are equally necessary as it would catalyse their ongoing efforts. As mentioned by the network coordinator, currently there is a strong state level group and 13 district level groups and block level forums at its nascent stage. Around 402 Samaanta Saathi have emerged or been identified through network associations to be part of adjoining Ek Saath campaign to address unequal gender norms.

##### **Capacity building of network members**

In 2017, the network has given its members opportunity to be part of various activities such as visiting other project sites working with men and boys, meetings, conferences and training programmes to learn from experiences of other groups and organisations working with men and boys. The members who were part of these exposure have expressed their usefulness of the visits.

##### **Incorporating work with men and boys in existing interventions**

One of the key roles of the network is to incorporate the idea of working with men and boys in other existing programmes that they work upon. The network members expressed that the effort has been made at different fronts but all have made the effort to talk about the need to work with men and boys in their respective organisations and with other networks and their partner organisations. The learning from the FEM network has been applied at other interventions wherever possible like in the functioning of a Child Line, or talked about in other forums like in campaigns against violence against women. Some of the network members have tried to initiate institutional discussions on men's responsibility during their visits or trainings in schools and colleges, while dealing with cases during hearings as part of Child Welfare Committee (CWC) and while interaction with police officials.

##### **Engagement with media**

Initiatives have also been taken by the members to engage media in dialogues and a sensitization training on the issues because of which results have been positive as media persons are now reporting in a well informed and sensitive manner. Similarly every event or meeting organized by the FEM members are of interest to the media personnel as regular reporting is seen.

## **Challenge**

It was also expressed that even though they are making efforts to incorporate the idea in other intervention, however it was inadequate and lack of financial resources do not allow them to take up bigger assignments like doing district level sensitization and relationship building meetings with higher officials.

## **Conclusion and Recommendation**

The review has brought in perspectives from women in the community which indeed has shown that the animator has been able to create a space of recognition among the community about the work and issues as addressed in the programme. Interaction have also indicated that animators are in the process of self reflection where each one in their own capacity have brought out change in their discriminatory behaviours. However, apart from taking action in few cases of violence against women, the groups have not taken any concrete actions to ensure rights of children especially girl children. More so, the instances as explained by the facilitator as change or actions, have not be adequately validated by the respondents and on their own have not documented testimonies to show so.

Based on findings from this review, recommendations to be considered in the project implementation are as follows-

- The process of self reflection was seen only among the animators and awareness about the purpose of the group was known by their family members. To see similar change among group members, meetings need to be facilitated with more focus and facilitators and animators should initiate one to one discussions with group members.
- The process of social norm change cannot be done in isolation by men or men's groups alone, active and deliberate actions along with women's groups, service providers and PRI members should be ensured in order to bring out a transformative and sustainable change in the community.
- Community campaigns and other events as part of the intervention has shown lasting impression among women, in any upcoming events or activities, women's participation must be ensured.
- Gender discriminatory norms which negatively impact women and children have still not been recognised as those which are part of the problem, animators need to include in their group discussions on communitising these issues and prepare action plans for addressing them.

- Cases of violence against women and children have been high, groups need to be alert in recognising any form of violence not just in public spaces which are often come in front but also those that take place within homes. Also proactive action needs to be taken regarding the perpetrator and supportive mechanisms for the survivor and the family.
- As each village is at a different level of change, specific plans of action need to be discussed in the team. An enabling environment must be created so that men in the groups identify the gender concerns in their villages and work towards them. A one plan for each village must be avoided.
- Cross learning must be encouraged, either from village to village or one organisation to another.
- In case of the FEM Network, only social media interactions are inadequate to strengthen the overall network. Apart from discussing planned activities, a proactive stand by the coordinator in encouraging the members to share about their work is a must, but more important to take back lessons from the different learnings.