



Impact of Anti - Trafficking Laws on rights of sex workers

4-6 June 2015, Panhala, Kolhapur, India

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Donor Support

Rights For Change, OAK Foundation
South Asia Women's Fund (SAWF)

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Introduction

OVERVIEW

The sex worker rights movement in India and the rest of the world has been demanding for the recognition of sex work as work and the dignified treatment of sex workers. While that is yet to be fulfilled, laws that counter trafficking, although essential, often violate the human rights of sex workers without ending trafficking, assisting its survivors and penalizing/punishing its perpetrators. To demonstrate these realities to the law and policy makers and other stakeholders, the Veshya Anyay Mukti Parishad (VAMP) has decided to undertake a research study among various sex workers that will document the human rights violations that they experience particularly because of anti-trafficking laws. Consequently, a three day training programme on "Assessing the Impact of Anti-Trafficking Laws on the Human Rights of Sex Workers" was held in Panhala, Maharashtra from 4th to 6th June 2015 to understand human rights and pertinent research methods.

This report captures the essence of the above training conducted by the Centre for Advocacy on Stigma and Marginalisation (CASAM) of the Sampada Grameen Mahila Sanstha (SANGRAM), Sangli Maharashtra and Rights for Change Foundation, Netherlands. SANGRAM provided the travel, stay and logistics related to the training with support from the South Asia Women's Fund (SAWF).

The training consisted of around 20 participants (whose ages range between 22 and 50 years and some) from various non-profit, non-governmental organizations across India which work with sex workers of different socio-cultural identities. The participants included women sex workers, men whose mothers have been sex workers and a few social workers whose primary responsibility was to interpret the discussions in the language spoken by the sex workers and vice versa. The participants hailed from 2 states, Maharashtra (Karad, Miraj, Nippani and Sangli), Jharkhand (Ranchi and Dhanbad). (*For details of participants See Page 34*)

Participants were seated at tables as per their language familiarity (to facilitate translation) but could mingle with and share thoughts, experiences and ideas with each other. Members of the sex worker community were encouraged to talk more. They were assured that the audio and video recordings, text and photo documentation would be used only for reference by VAMP and not shared outside. The arrangement of tables could be redone or the tables were removed if the participants wished. While all the sessions had a mix of presentation, discussions, questions and answers, a few also had group work and role play. The presenters/speakers were requested to provide material that they planned to use during the training and a brief idea of the session flow in advance, to enable framing of the agenda and translation. As the participants comprised of semi-literate people in sex work, Hindi and Marathi versions of most presentations and handouts were made available to them apart from simultaneous translations. (Throughout this document, the words "we," "us" and "our" refer to sex workers).

TRAINING OBJECTIVES

Aarhi Pai, Director, CASAM and one of the facilitators of the training whose work in CASAM is centred round the laws and policies affecting women and the sex worker community, listed the following as the overall objectives of the training and the primary topics that would be dealt with during it.

1. Understanding the significance and types of human rights.
2. Overview of the Right Guide process.
3. Introduction to HRIA and proposed research on impact of anti-trafficking policies on human rights of sex workers.

PARTICIPANT EXPECTATIONS

At the beginning of the training, the participants listed the following (in Marathi, Hindi and English written on colourful sticky notes pasted on a soft board) as their reasons for attending the sessions and what they hoped to gain from it:

- To discuss trafficking
- How we understand trafficking and women as being part of it
- Understanding any link between sex work and trafficking
- Make the government understand difference between sex work and trafficking in the context of current political environment
- How to help my sisters who face police violence
- Training to do ethical research
- How to do advocacy for sex work
- Clear confusion between brothel, sex work, agent and understand and change relevant laws
- How to understand current issues of sex workers in South Asia strengthen their rights and ally across countries in the region

OPENING THOUGHTS

The training began with VAMP president Durga Pujari paying tribute to Kamlabai and Bheemavva, VAMP activists who had passed away four months ago. She said, "They were with us throughout and dreamed of such trainings, work and activities. It is a tribute to them especially if this training and the planned research is taken and done seriously as a response to all false accusations and misrepresentation of sex work".

Welcoming everyone, Aarhi stated, "Trafficking and sex work are very different. It is important to have strong laws to counter trafficking but that violate the rights of sex workers. To determine that anti-trafficking laws impact the rights of sex workers adversely, needs evidence and data which we must gather."

Marjan Wijers, founder and director, Rights for Change Foundation, Netherlands and the primary trainer, mentioned, "I work on the of rights of sex workers and the legal provisions for them, extensively in Netherlands. I can speak English and we will work together for next three days and also enjoy ourselves".

Lin Chew, the co-trainer, said, "I was born in Singapore and worked in Netherlands for 25 years against trafficking of women. I got tired and went to Hong Kong to work on women their human rights, leadership and empowerment. I keep getting confronted by sex workers and deal with their rights. I resumed working with Marjan. To understand a situation, we must analyze it. You will talk a lot about yourselves over the next three days and understand various topics. You already know many things and should do the work and we can help you. Three days are less but we will do our best".

Lin then called on the participants to choose a picture post card kept from a set kept at the back of the conference room and introduce themselves after sharing why they selected that specific post card. (*For details of Participants responses and introduction, see Annexure 2*)

Understanding Human Rights

The first day was devoted to strengthening the participants understanding of human rights. The sessions were facilitated by Marjan who started with a session on getting participants to share their perception of human rights.

Defining Human Rights

Marjan began the session by asking participants to discuss "What are Human Rights?" Participants responded as follows:

- The right to life.
- We need the right to life so that we can live well – the right to freedom, dignity and self-respect.
- Society sees us as sex workers rather than as women. We need the right to equality, equal participation in society, liberty.
- Recognize sex work as work and sex workers as workers
- Sex workers have the right to vote but must be allowed to run for public office.
- Right to the freedom from exploitation.
- The right to be free and be developed for the children of sex workers and themselves.

Marjan: You mentioned many rights. There is also the right to mobility and free movement. Policies and laws made by the government should be framed after participation and consultation with us.

Source of Human Rights

Following this Marjan asked the participants to discuss "*Where do human rights come from?*"

- We obtain from society, lawmakers and the constitution.
- We get some rights from birth itself while we must obtain others by fighting for them.
- People who are in power like those at the UN impose their ideas or beliefs on us. Language is of rights but funds are given to anti-trafficking or HIV and AIDS work rather than for the rights of sex workers. The Swedish model of reducing the number of people in sex work, legally, is questionable.
- Any law that states that sex work or prostitution is violence is wrong. Sometime back, we returned funds for a specific project as we were forced to sign a pledge that we oppose sex work (*Meena*)

Marjan asked if such imposition of laws as above was actually human rights and why they felt it was a violation, the participants responded as follows.

- We work on migration issues. However, forcing people to stay home as they 'may' attract harm violates migration and mobility rights.

- We work with home based workers. Domestic workers earn around 120 rupees daily while sex workers get 500 rupees. Hence, denying anyone the right to do sex work is a violation of human rights.
- Forced rehabilitation of sex workers denies them the choice of occupation.
- When a man asked me if we did 'good' or the 'right' work, I retorted that if one pays well, he would get satisfactory service. This is similar to paying a doctor for being treated.
- If anyone is being moved forcibly or trafficked, she should have rights to refuse that. When a person in our area was forcibly locked up and starved we asked for help. A shopkeeper opened the lock. If we ask for help we will get it. We should continue to fight until we are able to. Trafficking is non-consensual and forced.
-
- Payment of fair wages fetches good service. Forced, non-consensual movement of anyone is wrong. Paying poor or no wages or to someone else for service provided by a person is also bad. (Marjan)

Defining Forced Movement

Marjan's question "*What is 'forced movement'?*", elicited the following responses:

- A 14-year old girl who was trafficked bore two children who are now being sold openly. A 16-year old was lured by a man for love who took her to Goa from Jharkhand. He left her when pregnant after having sex with her in Goa for a year. No person should be moved without consent or telling her or him the destination or reason for movement.
- People across states should learn that sex work is work. We should learn from each other through sharing our experiences and realities.

Pushpa raised two questions:

When I migrate for sex work and am deceived, is it trafficking?

If many men have forced sex is that gang rape?

The following responses emerged from the participants.

Trafficking is also for forced labour like factory, construction and domestic work. Why should only sex workers always respond to trafficking issues? (Raju)

If I agree to service a client but am force with more people for free, that is rape. (Neelavva)

If I agree to service two clients for a rate but find five who pay, it is not rape. (Renu)

Consent and Negotiation in Sex Work

Marjana stated "If I agree to service clients at my rate, it is not rape. But non-consensual sex is rape."

Meena gave another perspective from research with sex workers "Sex workers who provide sex service to police for not being arrested use it as bribe. It is not rape as per sex workers as they negotiate the deal. This emerged from a South Asia study of how sex workers negotiate power."

- As a sex worker, I negotiate with a client but if I find him abusive and violent and withdraw consent and if he forces himself, it is rape. (*Shashikant*)
- I agree with Meena that negotiating for my safety in a custodial situation through sex work is legitimate. I do not see it as rape. (*Shabana*)
- Sex workers sometimes say that they think their work keeps people who are not sex workers safe. I find this problematic as it is power play of rape. Sex work is not social work. (*Anisha*)

Meena: We feminists have always considered forced sex in custody as rape and a power construct. Sex workers have used the sexual service in similar situations as a negotiation of that power and therefore do not look at it as *jabardasthi* [force].

Marjan: Custodial rape (forced sex) is misuse of power and must be punished. We could strategize on how to escape arrest by paying money, sexual service or other means. We can negotiate as we choose. But let us discuss this briefly among ourselves now and share thoughts. Please note that we cannot resolve this easily.

Meena: What happens to human rights in a highly criminalized environment?

- As sex workers we are anyway discriminated. In a police station, an officer does not recognize my rights. So, when I negotiate it is not rape as I am on the wrong side of the law (as per the police). (*Shabana*)
- When a policeman asks for sexual favours and I do not consent, it is rape. (*Shantila*)
- Laws applied to us are wrong as they criminalize sex work. So, this discussion of rape or not should not arise. Regulation of sex work is wrong and not a solution. (*Raju*)
- We have women police stations where we are not asked for sex. Actually, at such places, we cannot give sex even if we wish. (*Anita*)
- A Jharkhand policeman demands 500 rupees every month from sex workers. We refused as he does nothing for us. A young sex worker gets 1200 rupees per client but a woman over 35 or 40 years earns very less. We also tell him that he should let us stand and not force us to move. (*Radha*)

Summing Up

Marjan summed up the discussion as follows

I hear similar stories from sex workers in other countries about police harassment. Power is not abused much when an individual has and knows her rights I was introduced to sex workers through my work against trafficking and learnt about their issues and realities. Trafficking victims, sex workers, women and illegal migrants have no rights. They live in fear and traffickers and police can abuse them. Illegal migrants can be trafficked. Worldwide, denial of rights of sex workers and abuse is high and often done by police. Rights are not given but must be demanded or taken. Women, black people and sex workers are among those who lack human rights and must fight for them. The human rights discourse is only sixty years old. The first document on human rights is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which was released in 1948 after the second world war.

What can we do to prevent violating human rights of others? We should not discriminate against anyone irrespective of their identity, disability (if any), race, age, faith or religion, gender, ethnicity, language, region, occupation, country, caste, occupation, class, belief or ideology and other socio-cultural, political and economic attributes. Article 1 of the UDHR states that all humans are born free with equal dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of sisterhood.

As you said, human rights are necessary to live. They are fundamental to survive comfortably with housing, food, etc. As per you, rights must not be denied as they are present from birth. They are universal irrespective of the individual and group attributes mentioned earlier. Human rights are equally important and interconnected. For example, the right to life, liberty, education, housing and food are interdependent.

Dignity and Human rights

Along with human rights, there are values and self-respect. Even the women's movement has denied dignity and acceptance to sex workers. A little girl can say that her dignity is important despite her age, size, etc. Sex workers say that our dignity is our right and decision and no one can deny it or decide about it. Someone else cannot set boundaries for sex workers, they define their own boundaries.

Sex workers experiences of exclusion

At a women's day rally on March 8 in Delhi, when I introduced herself as a sex worker a few people walked out. I said that I am a woman first and can choose her profession. (*Sangita*)

Can we imagine how insulted Sangita felt in the above situation? Sadly, we sex workers tolerate such insults. (*Shabana*)

Sashi responded that the onus of being strong is on the marginalized and there is no accountability of society and the state. In fact, the burden is internalized.

I was a construction worker when the contractor refused to pay me if I did not sleep with him. To feed my children, I did that but my family threw me out on moral grounds. But when I started earning well, my family apologized and accepted me. My dignity comes from my being a leader of my collective. We accord respect and support to other sex workers. (*Radha*)

Our gold, money or sex are not considered bad. Our family members take money from us but ignore us during the day as we do sex work which is immoral, apparently. (*Shabana*)

In a National Network of Sex Workers (NNSW) meet I could say that I am a sex worker who supports her brother. (*Sangita*)

Marjan: We are all equal as per human rights values although we are denied that. Autonomy which means that we can decide for ourselves and none can say or decide what we do or how we live. Also there is solidarity which brings different people together. There are cross cutting principles like non-discrimination which means equality before law and equal protection by the law. This implies that you should get justice through law even if you are sex workers. This is written into law although the reality may be different.

Construction of Justice

When Marjan asked, "You have told many stories of injustice but what does justice mean to you?", the following were the responses.

Getting dignity and fair wages without violence or abuse is justice to me.

When police or ruffians (*goondas* or anti-social persons) who abuse me are penalized and punished, I get justice. Sex workers fear police as they abuse or hurt when we approach them for help.

Anisha raised a question: "Can we know what justice is outside the context of injustice?". Participants and facilitators replied as below:

All should have equal opportunity to access justice and collectivize.

We must discuss if sex workers obtain justice in court as almost all of them have visited it at least once.

We must not have to cover our face or called by derogatory terms.

The mere structure of courts, lawyers and judges does not guarantee human rights to sex workers especially. Lawyers or judges are not biased can ensure justice.

Marjan summed up the discussion as follows

Access to assistance by the police, state, judiciary and legal systems without discrimination irrespective of occupation, gender or class is justice.

"You should know your rights and how to access them. The right to participation is important. Of course, gender equality is crucial. The state must take action so that all can enjoy their rights. We must protect the individual from interference by the state's laws, policies and measures in interfering with the exercise of a right like the right to privacy." Some rights state can give like reservation, free services or subsidies based on caste faith ability gender. But the state cannot interfere in my private life through instruments such as IPC section 377.

Aarthi and Meena did a role play of people with disabilities and able bodied people in a race which was won by the latter. The audience and participants opposed the result as the winner had advantages. The facilitators emphasized the need to provide equal opportunities to all. They also highlighted that when a participant representing a wealthy, dominant caste person is pushed back while a Muslim, Dalit sex worker was helped people said that it was unfair on the caste person who managed to win the race again. In reality, privileged people manage to survive and succeed while people with reservations still struggle although others say they are given benefits.

Accessing Rights

Marjan: Who decides if you have human rights? The first is your government. You are responsible to pressurize your government to protect human rights. If that does not happen, then approach international rights bodies. But we know the large gap between what is and what must be in terms of human rights. It is insufficient if the government says that laws exist to provide and safeguard human rights and does nothing. We all know that human rights and justice are not given. Fighting for them is tough but necessary. We should also monitor laws that protect rights and policy implementation by the government. You are stronger together than individually in demanding rights from the government. It is better to have evidence and data when demanding rights. This training is about knowing and understanding our rights, tracking if the government is giving our rights and collecting evidence of how rights are violated. Tomorrow we will talk about where and how many times rights are violated which can be presented to the govt. during dialogue. Some rights are conflicting. There is your right to liberty and privacy which may not let journalists write certain things in a specific way. How do you resolve this?

- When an issue involves more than one person then the right to privacy of an individual cannot be violated by another.
- A police officer is a public servant who is paid by our money. His actions must respect human rights and if they do not we can complain because he is abusing power and loses his right to privacy.
- We or police officers can protest against any news article publicly or in court. A policeman or any man beating his wife cannot say it is his private matter.

Aarathi: Current jurisprudence in India says no violence is personal and it is punishable. Stringent laws against domestic violence exist.

Marjan : Rights must be balanced against each other. But sometimes one is more important than the other. Journalist must report rather than be silent.

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights - A DISCUSSION

Marjan introduced the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) 1966 (1976). Treaties may be of different types. Some countries agree to let their citizens cross each other's borders without a visa. Similarly, some countries have mutual understanding about grants and aids. Human rights treaties are larger and complex. When countries sign human rights treaties they should not be violated in their respective countries.

Aarathi: Our constitution or laws are inapplicable to other countries. Only a treaty between specific nations can govern the aspects mentioned in it. They are accountable to their respective citizens. UN was formed in 1948 to prevent future world wars. Most nations are individual members and have a representative. Only the government goes there through its nominee. Members of the UN felt that while UDHR is good it is better to have a treaty and understand its intricacies. One such treaty is the ICCPR. As per the ICCPR, citizens have the right to take part in politics. A citizen has the right to life, liberty, self-respect, choice of partner, freedom of association, mobility, free movement, freedom from police violence. The current Prime Minister of India may not have allowed this covenant to be signed as the right to political participation and freedom of association are strong rights and many national governments dislike them as they give power to people.

Marjan gave an example of the right to fair trial and its elements. "What is the right to fair trial? It is without prejudice where all are equal before law. The police cannot arrest anyone randomly because of personal bias. You can defend yourselves against the police if you know your rights. You also have a right to know why you are being arrested and also entitled to a lawyer within 24 hours even if you have committed a crime. Further, judges must be unbiased."

Aarathi : If an under trial prisoner cannot afford a lawyer, they are entitled to a free government lawyer who should be unbiased. This is different from a public prosecutor who represents the state.

- During a court hearing, when a sex worker chose to continue her profession, a judge proclaimed that she wants to continue living in the gutters. That was very biased. When a client was dining inside a brothel, I objected to the police summoning him as no sex work was happening. Additionally, I demanded an arrest warrant. (*Sangita*)
- When six sex workers were sitting under a tree, police tried arresting them. They opposed that as they were not bothering anyone. When police asked if sex workers would change their immoral

ways, they told the police that have also not reformed themselves. They added that they would live and do what they want and wherever they chose. (*Radha*)

- When police tried beating a sex worker in Karad, I opposed him as he has no right to do so although an older sex worker told me not to confront a police officer. We must know the law and our rights, to demand them. We have understood all this through multiple trainings, meets and discussions. (*Sangita*)

Learning from the Day

Marjan requested the participants to summarize the day's learnings in a sentence or word to which they responded as below.

I learnt about how treaties can be binding on various nations. (*Shabana*)

The government can give us free lawyers if required and also about multilateral treaties between nations. (*Meenakshi*)

We can file a case against a government officer or a policeman if they harass us or violate our rights and dignity. (*Anita*)

I understood how laws are made through the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. (*Renuka*)

We should beware of the fascism of Modi (the current Prime Minister of India). (*Shabana*)

I learnt about how to access and use rights. However, when we lack rights, whom, what and how do we fight? (*Radha*)

I thought that privacy was limited to one's personal space and not about body integrity and also applicable in public spaces. (*Shashikant*)

We have one representative in the UN. How can we trust that our voice will reach there? (*Raju*)

International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural rights - A DISCUSSION

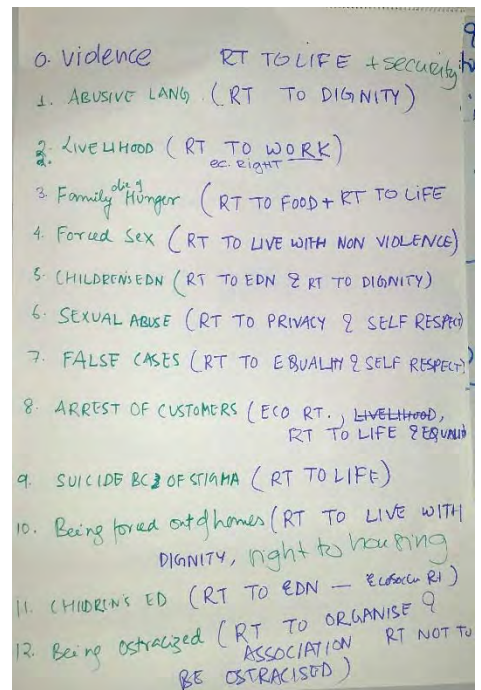
Following this Marjan took a session on Economic and Cultural rights and what they meant for the participants

- I have a right to earn a living and eat.
- The right to equal education.
- The right to health
- The right to form a collective.
- The right to self-respect, move freely and do sex work and to express my views.
- The right to freedom from discriminatory laws especially those that oppose sex work.
- I have the right to follow my religion. (Civil and Political Right)

- The right to live (Civil and Political Right)

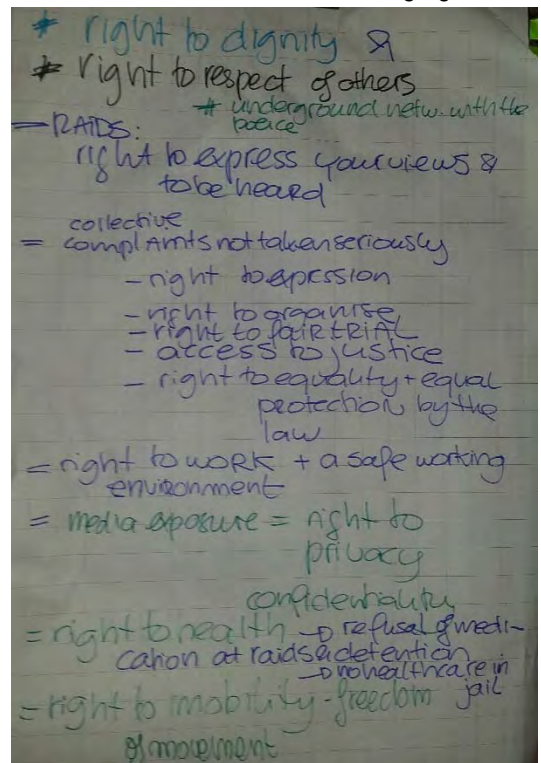
Marjan corrected the participants stating that the freedom of religion, right to liberty, security and life are civil and political rights. The latter three rights are closely linked. The right to express views is also a political right as it is automatically entitled to a citizen.

Are civil and political rights entitled to a human being by default? Yes all rights civil political social cultural economic are at the same level of importance to any person. The right to move freely means you can leave and enter your country whenever you want. It also implies that you can live wherever you want in your country. Further, if you want to migrate to another country and if that country allows you to, you can live and work there. Free movement between countries is possible when there are relevant treaties.



Aarthi: Though the Indian constitution guarantees the freedom of movement and choice of work anywhere in India, the reality is different especially for internal migrants and sex workers. For instance, the government of Goa prevented migrant sex workers from carrying out their trade.

- Such assurances are mere platitudes. We are treated like animals. I as a sex worker am not allowed to stand for over 15 minutes at a public place. Other women can stand anywhere for as long as they want and no one has the power to ask them the reason for that. We can train and sensitize the police if we are invited to. (*Shabana*)
- 115 homes were bulldozed over 20 years ago, before our collective was formed. Our belongings were thrown into a jungle. We had to plead for water. We used saris to cover the entrance to our temporary homes. (*Durga*)
- These rights are ornamental and on paper. They mean nothing to us. On the street I am asked to vanish, in a very disrespectful manner. The greatest abuser of our safety is the police which is supposed to guarantee our security. The burden of knowing and demanding rights is on us. Is the police ever trained and sensitized about our rights and their responsibilities? (*Sangita*)
- When we went to Kolkata for a meeting, we were arrested under false charges of being involved in a blood donation racket. (*Radha*)
- What is the scope of right to privacy. Can we ask the police about how and what they are trained on? Will we



be denied the information under the right to privacy? (*Shashikanth*)

Marjan: A major gap exists between what the government promises and reality. You should learn and fight and we will support you. After this training, we will try to do a study among sex workers about the violation of rights of sex workers. We will try to spread this information. This is one of the methods of creating awareness and bargaining for rights. You are correct in stating that the state is the biggest violator and ironically, we have to go to it to complain and seek redress. You can also go to international committees to report against your government. The multilateral treaties also help in monitoring the situation as every country is supposed to submit a report every four years on these conventions. Civil society can object to the content of the report that does not reflect the real situation. In fact, the individual reports by independent non-governmental bodies can be sent directly. The pertinent committee reads both government and other reports and asks critical questions of the government. The committee can give recommendations to the govt. based on the civil society report but it cannot force the country to implement them.

VAMP experience with CEDAW

VAMP members were involved in providing inputs to the 2014 Convention to Eliminate Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) status of women report from India. No country wants its image tarnished internationally and hence it agrees to act on them. The special rapporteur on VAW said that India should amend ITPA so that it does not harm sex workers. This happened for the first time on an international platform that a separation between sex work and trafficking was recognized and emphasized. We took that to the SC special committees on VAW. The Supreme Court cannot ignore such developments although it cannot enforce its views.

Marjan: You are human rights defenders. You can gather evidence, go to the police, court, government or the UN. You are right in believing that is all tough. But remember that your government signed these treaties and is accountable if they are violated. Your right to form collectives is a part of your civil, political and also social, economic and cultural rights. The right to equal education, food, earn a livelihood, health and to choose your work, are also economic, social and cultural rights. It is the responsibility of the government to provide food, healthcare facilities and not deny you that. Health also depends on access to food, water, etc. The right to choose your work is a complex right but you are entitled to it.

Participants intervened thus:

- In Maharashtra, labourers from other states who come to work have been attacked. People from Bangladesh are also trafficked for jobs.
- When people are brought for work forcibly, they are abused and lack rights. Sometimes, their situation is different from that of organized sex workers. Also, when the trafficker who sits elsewhere is not controlled in any manner in terms of how much they pay and for how much they are sold for. This intermediary sits in Bengal or Bangladesh or elsewhere. Due to the ITPA, sex workers and trafficked people are treated similarly.
- A trafficked person who is arrested does not get justice while the intermediary is not arrested.

Marjan stated "The right to work does not specify your choice of profession. Further you cannot be forced to do any work you dislike. Similarly the state or police cannot arrest or forcibly move or institutionalize you or force you into another profession. Also, you can get a free government lawyer if you need one but are unable to afford the person's fees. Laws in Canada criminalize soliciting. Sex workers went to court saying that this is unfair and violating our rights to health, food, etc. And they won the case. All international rights apply to everyone. The rights of citizens in India, visitors, legal migrants and workers are different. However, a foreigner cannot be forced to do anything."

Sex workers face human rights violations worldwide although they must not be denied any rights. You should document and publicize your human rights violations. Further, complain to the government, police or international bodies. Apart from civil, political, economic, cultural and social rights, there are conventions like CEDAW, Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, (CPRD), Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) to address specific communities who are excluded. Securing human rights is similar to a building that is under construction. We must learn and strengthen it continuously.

Ratification of a treaty means that the government must respect, protect and fulfill the treaties and relevant rights. Respect must not interfere, curtail, undermine or violate rights. It should not let others also do that and protect from any violation or also punish perpetrators and assist survivors or victims. The State must also take steps to ensure that everyone in the state can enjoy human rights set out in the treaty.

How do we ensure that the state keeps its promises? The primary responsibilities of the state are below:

- Ensure that its laws and policies comply with its human rights obligations
- In case of violations people must have a real possibility to file a complaint (access to court, fair trial, stop the violation, reparation and compensation, national human rights institution)
- Complaints must be taken, read and seriously investigated as all are equal before law. Anyone can complain about human rights violation.

No world human rights police but states must periodically report to the committees. Civil society can also file shadow reports. There are non-treaty mechanisms in UN such as Special Rapporteurs who are for the various conventions

- Appointed on behalf of the UN
- Mandate to investigate, monitor and recommend solutions to specific human rights problems
- Temporary mandate must be renewed
- Independent
- Thematic (41) or specific countries (14)

Aarthi: India has only signed CRC (Child Rights Convention), CEDAW (Committee for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women), CRPD (Convention of Rights of People with Disabilities) but not on Racial Discrimination (CERD). Special rapporteurs at the UN are fifty-two in number. They work

voluntarily on various issues, meet with survivors of violence based on gender, religion et al and present annual reports.

- CEDAW has been effective since 1979 but only in 2014 were sex workers able to speak as women. Women's groups also took long to accept that we are women facing violence and invite us to discuss and present our issues for inclusion in the report. [Raju]
- Only a few feminists believed in sex workers rights and started to advocate for them in various spheres.[Maya]

Meena: CEDAW came about as the result of the feminist movement through the sixties and seventies. In 2014 for the first time in India, two sex workers from VAMP appeared before the special rapporteur on VAW. Until recently, people who had access to this person kept sex workers out as they believed that sex work was VAW. But we said that there is much violence in sex work and anti -trafficking laws violate the human rights of sex workers. We used the special rapporteur's recommendation in our case to the Supreme Court (SC).

Activity

Following the sessions on understanding human rights Lin conducted a small exercise as described below. She said:

“We should calm down. We learnt much since yesterday. We discuss and analyze. Our daily work is hard and we must go a long way. The human rights house will take a long time to build. It will take long to sustain ourselves. We must understand our rights. Also, our work involves using our mind, body and emotions. Some of my colleagues, women's groups and I feel we must find another way to get our rights such that we are not shattered and weakened. There are many ways to do that with minimal monetary and other resources. You also may know different techniques to sustain yourselves in an economically affordable manner. We cannot learn all methods in a day and a half but we will do a simple activity and reflect on it and analyze and discuss it from the heart. Let us all stand in a circle. I will make some statements which we will apply to our lives and move forward if it is true. You can choose not to react or respond in a different way than is applicable to our lives”.

1. I often neglect my health when I have a deadline at work.
2. I have experienced harassment in public.
3. I have been harassed due to my work and activism.
4. I often worry about my safety and that of my family.
5. I have been detained and put in jail due to my work.
6. I feel passionate about my work and activism.
7. I feel i cannot trust anybody.
8. I cannot let myself cry.
9. My anger scares me.
10. I have experienced depression.
11. I judge myself and feel I am not good.
12. My family criticizes me for my work.
13. I worry about the consequences of my work on my family.
14. I experience violence within my family.
15. I feel that I must take responsibility for others before me
16. I get support from my family and friends
17. I feel there is no end to my sadness
18. I cannot share my work with others.
19. I feel supported by my colleagues.
20. I feel rejection because of who I am or the work I do
21. Every day, I do something that will calm me down.

Everyone sat down in the earlier circle. Lin asked if anyone wanted to share about their experience. Some responses were as follows: it was a reflective exercise.

- I am confused about a few aspects regarding myself. (*Sangita*)
- I was ready to give my life for Nippani. I am a free bird. I do my work daily so that I enjoy it. (*Shabana*)
- When I was not in sex worker I liked the glamour associated with it. But after I entered the profession, people called me names, disrespected me and were violent, sadly. I learnt that as a sex worker I also have rights and it has made me see myself as a strong woman. I am at a stage where I do not care about what the world thinks of me. I will teach others about their rights and how to access them. 20 years ago I felt weak. But collectivization has helped me and I have changed completely. When we have support, it is easy to advance but tough otherwise. (*Minakashi senior*)
- I recalled how I go forward for work when called and how I sit with HIV+ sisters and support them. I understand the importance of motivating people to go to the ART centre as my health is affected. (*Malavva*)
- When she talked about going forward I recalled the first time I visited a police station to fight for my sisters. In the last five minutes, I recalled the entire work that we have done through collectivization and supporting sex workers. (*Durga*)
- I used to be secretive about my profession. However, I now tell my friends about my work and have learnt to deal with stigma. (*Anita*)
- I was confused about going forward or backwards. I now wonder whether thinking about community rights means putting yourself before others. (*Shashikanth*)
- When she went to the police station for herself and her friend, I recalled that I suffer as I am often in a situation of conflict between two people. My needs are high which none of my sisters or their families can provide for my children. They used to tell me to exit but now stay with me. (*Renuka*)
- This work has become my identity. When you asked what you do for your inner peace I was angry with myself and could not put my foot forward. (*Meena*)
- I was confused whether to put my foot forward or not. We face struggles but we can get strength from others. (*Reshma*)
- I realize my privileges and feel that I can use them to help others. I have never done this activity before and it helped me understand how much I get support from my family and friends. (*Babli*)
- I am missing Kamla *mausi* (aunt) greatly. She used to return from such meetings and discuss with us what she heard and learnt. Whom do I share my knowledge, questions and ideas with, now? She never abused us and told us about laws and rights. For me, it is the first time at such a meeting. She was like my family. Society and nation have devalued us. The collective is my identity and has had a good impact on me. Kamla *mausi* She selflessly took care of our collective and now we seem to have to do it. (*Tayyavva*)
- My family did reject my gender identity initially. Now, they have accepted me partly and I have come to terms with that although it has been tough. (*Ritu*)
- If I was asked these questions 15 years ago, I would have disliked them, but now I liked the activity. (*Raju*)
- I have never asked myself some of these questions, earlier. (*Pushpa*)
- I did not see it as an exercise but a reflection. (*Nillavva*)

Analysing Problems - The Problem Tree

The second major theme of the training was to develop skills of the participants to analyse problems that they confronted – its causes and impact through the Problem Tree exercise. The session was led by Shashikant and Shantilal from Sangram. They started by asking the participants to list the problems that they faced in their work.

- Police personnel harass, threaten or shoo us. They demand money and if we refuse, they jail us.
- The behaviour of police personnel is the problem.
- The police terrorize us and arrest or beat us without reason.
- Ruffians also terrorize us and demand free sex.
- *Goondas* also ask us for new girls.
- Shopkeepers, auto drivers and the general public also do not let us stand in public spaces.
- Police register FIR's but do not act on them or investigate them properly.
- Lawyers, judges and media also stereotype us.
- Some Dalit activists reject us and turn our children against us.
- Sex workers are arrested while clients escape easily.
- Politicians also do not support us.
- Where we are active, brothel owner harassment is absent. But in Mumbai and Pune, exploitation and violence is high.
- Sex work is not considered work.
- Our partners also restrict and harass us.
- We can handle an abusive partner with our support networks but not the police.

Following this listing of issues, participants were asked to choose one issue that they would like to further analyse. The participants named police violence as a key challenge. The participants were asked to split up into groups and list what are the causes and symptoms of the violence. Following the group work, the participants pasted their observations on causes and symptoms as a tree where the leaves represented the symptoms and the roots represented the cause.



- POLICE VIOLENCE**
- 1 - The Law criminalises sex workers
 - 2 - The Police implements the govt. policy
 - 3 - Police impunity = no action taken ag. police violence
 - 4 - Sex workers are target of any "cleansing" actions of govt/police
 - 5 - Cultural image/notion of GOOD vs BAD women + "transgression"
 - 6 - Pressure from govt. Dept. of Women & Child to implement ITFA
 - 7 - Feminists who consider SW as "violence ag. Woman" and support ITFA
 - 8 - All funds are directed to Anti-Traff. therefore creating pressure for police violence
 - 9 - Police lack knowledge + culture of rights-based policing methods
 - 10 - Anti-Migrant attitude, Policy of Indian govt + Society - (Violence ag. migrant sexworkers)
 - 11 - Lack of avenues for redress.
 - 12 - Lawyers don't want to represent sexworkers; expensive, & are not diligent in their work
 - 13 - Negative attitude of courts towards SW who want to remain in sex work
 - 14 - BIRs of Judiciary: Judgements require supervision of family to release sexworkers from jail
- Soliciting
- Standing on the roadside
- Sex work near temples, schools, public
- ~~Public~~ No right of appeal

Lin remarked, "You decided that police violence is the main problem. Let us list its symptoms and fallout". These were the responses from the participants:

- Suicide because of stigma
- Demand for bribe
- No livelihoods
- Homelessness
- No education for children without money
- No dignity
- Raids without reason
- Extortion money from customer and arrest them
- Sexual assault and molestation

- Catch children not in sex work and publish their photographs in the media
- Family dies without basic necessities
- Oral abuse and ostracization.

Lin urged participants to discuss more deeply, **"Are all the points the result of police violence or some other issue or a combination of reasons? I understand that suicide and isolation due to stigma are tough but do they result from police violence?"**

- If we stop sex work due to police violence, we will have no alternate means of livelihood.
- When our pictures are published in the media, we do not get other work. I have tried other work unsuccessfully. Other workers also stigmatize us.
- If someone sees us arrested they tell our families who also ostracize us. Similarly our immediate neighbours and community also isolates us.

In the next step Lin asked the participants to discuss the causes of police violence.

Participants opined;

- Law criminalizes us. Further, it gives impunity to police whatever it does.
- Sex workers are the first target of any 'cleansing drive' as we are suspected of murder and other crimes. When they arrest considering us as criminals they use violence against us. That is their natural behaviour. However, we usually do not know why we are arrested.
- We do not know the law and often wonder why they arrest us.

Marjan opined, "A lack of knowledge about the law could cause police violence".

- If we do not know the law, how can we fight back?
- Knowledge of the law may not reduce violence but we can use the language of rights.

Lin observed, **"If you know the law you can resist. Whether you succeed or not depends on your collectivization, support, etc. But will police violence reduce if you know the law?"**

- Our culture defines a good woman as one who remains within boundaries and law is based on that. Any transgression has bad consequences.
- When you talk about the collective, please remember that I am arrested alone usually and am often powerless.

Marjan posed the question "What do you mean by law?"

Shabana: Standing on roadside, soliciting near government offices, educational institutions, places of worship or bus stops are illegal per ITPA and the sections pertaining to public order under the IPC.

Durga: Now we know only policewoman can arrest us.

Raju: The law denies us the right to appeal as per ITPA.

Sashikant: The department of Women and Child Welfare pressurizes police to implement ITPA.

Raju: Feminists who accept live-in relationships and free sexual activity also consider sex work as VAW and pressurize government to enforce anti-trafficking laws and policies.

Shabana: Funds are routed to anti-trafficking efforts. Sex workers who do HIV/AIDS prevention and counselling are not considered partners in any work. This rhetoric also causes police violence.

Babli: Police do not have a culture of accountability to the public.

Tayavva: It is very tough for a woman who is Nepali or Bangladeshi and a sex worker in India as migrants cannot negotiate their rights.

Meena: The constitution of India is weak on the rights of migrants. Hindu Nepalis are not mistreated like Bangladeshi Muslims.

Pushpa: No action against police that brutalizes us.

Babli: No avenues to redress our problems. Our abuser is also law enforcer.

Lin: What are the views of lawyers or judges about sex workers?

Shabana: Lawyers hesitate to take our cases, charge high fees and do not fight our cases sincerely.

Pushpa: Judges are biased against us and stop us from approaching them despite the violence we face.

Lin: Judiciary, lawyers and the police are all part of the same system that opposes sex workers.

Meenakshi: Even a 50-year old sex worker arrested in Kolhapur was asked to bring her parents for her release. Judges do not give sex workers any agency to defend themselves.

Aarathi: We must use this problem tree method in our communities and collectives to research our challenges. It is a powerful tool to collect evidence and does not end here. It can be used for analysing and resolving any of our problems.

Marjan: Tomorrow we will link the problem tree depicting issues, causes and effects with human rights.

Sangita: If police comes to arrest us in the brothel, we should sit and create this problem tree.

Durga: We should make a book on this and give it to the police.

Marjan: We can surely plan to convert this into a book

Lin: You can make a poster.

Shabana: Posters, leaflets and books are insufficient to discuss with the police. Nowadays, email based campaigns are in vogue. We should spread awareness about our realities, challenges and activism and garner support for our work through such means.

Raju: Let us remember that the current government in India is very tough to deal with.

The next session began with a recap of what was learnt the previous day. Below are the inputs from the participants.

Minakshi senior: Lin's game was good. We learnt about the importance of human rights. It takes us a step ahead.

Renuka: I learnt that I should tell truth about myself to the community.

Pushpa: I learnt about the classification of human rights. Also, the problem tree helped in going into the root cause.

Anita: I learnt how to deal with police violence.

Radha: I understood that knowing our rights helps us counter police and that is possible.

Shabana: I liked recalling past events. Also, I have memories about our fights for rights. We are not just criers of the world and we have made others cry. There are new Internet based methods which we can use to spread our message. The current and new generation can benefit from new techniques. We cannot help but deal with the current fascist government for our rights

Durga: I enjoyed writing about rights. I also liked the computer on our table with material in different languages. The game should reach the community. I learnt about rights and how to use them to handle our challenges collectively.

Sashi: We spoke about linkages between human rights. The problem tree showed that causes and impacts are linked too. The cause may be the same but impact may be huge.

Marjan: We saw the problem tree, cause and effect. Please list what rights are violated for each impact and present it group wise.

Responses summarised as follows;

- When police abuses us, our right to dignity is violated. When we leave our work due to police violence, our right to work is violated. Thus our family members are hungry and their right to food is violated. When police raid and arrest our children, their right to education and self-respect is violated.
- Forced sex by police violates the right to liberty, self-respect, right to live and work without violence. Police abuse violates our right to security and privacy and dignity. False cases compromise our right to equality, self-respect, dignity. Arresting our clients violates right to life, livelihood, equality and economic rights. Violation of any right hurts our self-respect.
- Why is self-respect so important but not dignity from society? Should you not demand respect from others?
- I care more about my rights than respect from others.
- Stigma leading to suicide violates economic rights and the right to life with dignity. Police violence violates the right to education for our children, right to collectivization, right to association, right not to be ostracized, right to livelihood, right to housing and the right to food.

- Police raids disrupt and disturb the community and our children's right to education. Adults are also arrested but what they say is ignored denying their right to liberty and freedom of expression.
- When we visit the police station to complain, we are asked why we have come in a group violating our right to collectivization. When abused, our right to dignity and expression is violated. We visit the police station to complain but are not heeded due to our occupation, class, gender, etc. while a politician or associates, family or any other dominant caste person is serviced. This violates our right to equality and the right to access justice. An underground negotiation network with the police must be built through the collective.
- We consider sex work as work but police do not. During raids, when clients are arrested, it impacts our earnings. Also, the police specifies that we should do our work during specific timings. That also violates our right to work and right to life.
- When the police raids and arrests sex workers, HIV medication or ART are discontinued, at least temporarily. Reassessment is done and it takes a minimum of eight days to resume treatment, which is unacceptable and unjust. If any arrested sex worker requests for a medical examination, she is labelled as acting or lying or exaggerating and often denied the service.

Marjan: Violence and other challenges all hurt the right to life, security and liberty. In fact, the last two are tied to right to life strongly which was mentioned earlier. The right to association and collectivize also emerged from this discussion. Similarly, the right to food, housing and education were mentioned. The right to equality and non-discrimination exists throughout. The right to livelihood, dignity and self-respect and access to justice and the right to fair trial are important and interlinked. Media exposure could violate the right to privacy. The right to movement and migration is essential.

Anisha: We must remember that all people are entitled to the right to a safe working environment.

Human Rights Impact Assessment

Marjan began this subject with the question, “What is a Human Rights Impact Assessment? It measures the gap between human rights in the books and human rights in practice”. We have analyzed human rights, identified violations their impact, cause and linkages. We must also gather evidence of violations and assess them. All this is important to ensure human rights violations are stopped. Of course there is a gap between what the government should do and actually does. Hence we must collect data about how the situation is not like what it should be. You must frame necessary questions to gather evidence, the method of asking them and whom to approach. This is provided in the Right Guide. It will help you demonstrate that human rights violations exist. Empower, a sex workers organization in Thailand created a report on how anti-trafficking laws impact sex workers using the Right Guide. In HRIA, you assess:

- The situation on the ground and the problems which affect human rights of specific groups
- The impact of state laws, policies and measures or the lack thereof on the human rights of those groups (as above)
- Compliance of state interventions with human rights obligations and principles
- Changes needed to improve human rights situation and compliance

Document the difference between what the government should do and the ground situation in terms of the HRIA steps listed above, map them to human rights and present that to the government and other relevant forums so that it is strengthens your struggle and demand.

The Right Guide is to help you research your rights. It helps you to collect evidence step by step using specific rules and methods. There are questions to study each aspect so that you can systematically build up your evidence. There is an explanation for each question along with examples. There are a number of fact sheets that tell you more about different human rights. There is information about ITPA, government policies, responsibilities and measures, international covenants and compensation for trafficking victims. The government must understand that all have rights and must protect them. When your rights are violated due to trafficking, you should be compensated. The key principles of HRIA are:

- State accountability
- Knowledge/evidence based action
- Participation of the groups affected
- Bridging movements and building alliances

You should collect and present your issues and evidence and not anyone else. During evidence collection, you should also ally with other movements, networks so that you are strengthened and also others understand your challenges. It is important to involve other groups of sex workers as people from Nepal or Bangladesh or Jharkhand as also street, brothel, home, lodge based sex workers as their problems and views may be different. It is important to give them a voice and also to understand and present the issues of all and the depth of their problems. This will help you and the government.

Next Steps, Using the Right Guide.

We will measure the real situation and the legal impact on lives of sex workers. We will work on this in Satara, Miraj, Sangli and Nippani. (The Jharkhand team members were supposed to be observers. We will have more training with them. VAMP will be doing the research in its area). (Aarthi)

- Our work for the CEDAW commission involved a lot of ground work across India. We need should strategize and enter at an opportune time and avenue. For CEDAW which did not prioritize sex work as it is not recognized, we used the subject of VAW. (Raju)

Lin: It is tough to get different groups of sex workers together, hear, document and present their stories but it is important to project such evidence directly from the people themselves. The state is the only one that makes laws and cannot be ignored even though we blame it or it abuses us. We cannot use news stories or media reports as journalists could be biased or do incomplete or incorrect work

- Some news reports are reliable and can supplement our research but we cannot not rely on them alone. (*Reshma*)

Lin: I agree with Reshma that we must find reliable journalists. We should have strategies to find supportive allies.

- We should collect evidence that is not conflicting as state police is not convinced and keep questioning us about reports and information. (*Shabana*)
- Remember the "do no harm" principle. (*Meena*)
- How will a brothel based worker who does not trust a home based sex worker share her story. Then we should collect consent and be ready for its withdrawal and hence suppress the data. (*Pushpa*)
- Some sex workers operate stealthily. If we approach them, their identity may be revealed or we also may be branded as sex workers. (*Radha*)
- If we lack grassroots presence to collect evidence and also work, it is useless. Further you know that local negotiation skills are vital. (*Minakshi Senior*)
- I was not brothel based but home based and secretive. Now that I am open since I joined VAMP, i am trying to convince others to speak and support them. (*Renuka*)

Marjan: In my experience, trafficked and other sex workers have the same rights and entitlements. They should be able to continue or exit their work when where how they want. The government is responsible for them. Trafficking is high as sex workers lack rights. We may feel we lack support and we human rights defenders are threatened and accused of being pimps and traffickers. This book was created by migrant

workers, sex workers and anti-trafficking activists. Since police and others accuse us of lying, if we collect and present evidence they must hear us. We can collect such evidence using the RightT Guide and use it for advocacy. After all we are not asking anything new. The highlights of the process in the RightT Guide are:

- Focus on evidence based research
- Arguments are based on human rights commitments that state already made
- Leads to clear and focused recommendations
- National and international lobby
- Informs a large group of stakeholders
- Methodology helps to focus and to structure

Over the last two days, we discussed human rights, problem tree, etc. As per, the tool (RightT Guide) at the high level, you should do the following seven steps:

1. Preparation: make yourselves ready.
2. Policy: Identify and research the laws and policies that interest you and are applicable to you.
3. Try to understand the legal, political and social environment.
4. List the human rights obligations of your state.
5. Impact: Identify and document the human rights violations.
6. Accountability: then see the gap between state obligations and list them.
7. Action Plan: List the recommendations you will give the state and how will you track them.

You should know who will collect the information. Please check if you know enough about human rights or know someone with the adequate awareness. Strategize about how you will inform and network with other communities that back you. Also, check if you have enough financial and human resources. Then make a work plan. In the seven large steps, there are many small steps which we need to take slowly. After doing your preparation, go to step two. To research the law, you should know more about it. We should understand what and whom laws such as the ITPA criminalize. But we should also know the public order law and other similar laws which criminalize us. We should know who is implementing the law, where, why and how and be aware of the police, judge, legal system. We should know every small aspect of the law and whatever is associated with it and vice versa.

Raju: We must acquire knowledge of the process and environment and collect data/details. We should know about the policies pertinent to laws like ITPA like legalization being considered as an alternative. We should know our perspective to be able to suggest changes.

Marjan: Perspective is vital but it is in step seven. You should see how various sections of the law violate human rights like those of women sex worker, migrants, etc. We did this very quickly today. But during your research, you can find many details by talking to more people. All this will help us strategize and move to the next step. We should also be aware of our environment, what people, religious groups, local, regional, international organizations say about sex work. Some may favour us, others could oppose. Next you should

know about what your government promises or signs nationally or internationally. Then you should know what your constitution says especially with relevance to you. Step 5 is the most important step. The impact of the policy and what happens in practice is important. Until now you have done repetitive work. You must see if the law does what it says. For example, in ITPA, you must see if it really protects and compensates the trafficked women and punishes the traffickers and prevents and combats trafficking.

Reshma: We usually discuss women but how about men?

Marjan: Also, there is trafficking for other reasons. Trafficking is linked to domestic work and migration but that is a vast subject. Your specialty is about sex work and how trafficking impacts it and also the specific laws that affect sex work.

Raju: Trafficking victims are not often allowed to speak. We have a book on issues with ITPA.

Sangita: ITPA does not aid trafficking victims.

Marjan: To strengthen your case against ITPA, you need proof. Talk to victims, families and agents. Also find out if those arrested are really due to ITPA violations. Investigate if it violates rights or helps victims. We must show our evidence on a large platform and can refer older documents if required. How do we collect evidence?

Raju: We know cases of many girls by perusing relevant court orders et al the girls were arrested without being informed why. We have pertinent testimonies, films and interviews.

Meena: We are sometimes stopped from gathering evidence.

Marjan: You are experts in your work, your issues and your research. If you are blocked from working, you should document the person(s) involved, the manner, location and time you were stopped at and use it as evidence. Does the law facilitate access to justice for sex workers and trafficking victims? I have heard from you that the law blocks access to justice. ITPA says that we are participants in the law but in reality, we are not. We can say that the law or its amendments or new ones are made without consulting us and also prove that the law discriminates against us. Much exciting work can be done on this aspect.

In step six of the tool, you must check if the state is accountable. Does the state protect you from those in government, judiciary, legal profession and other groups? The government should address human rights violations. NGO's that work on other issues must respect your rights. An individual, group, organization or institution that tries to rescue sex workers is violating your rights. You can hold them accountable. The government is also involved in rescue and can be held accountable. For all steps, you or someone must write what you found. You should know who will write, what, how, when and where and strategize this well. After writing your book, you should strategize your action plan which is the last step in the guide. You know so much already and can do it. I will wait to see where you will be after one year.

Evaluation

Lin conducted an evaluation game in which all participants sat in a circle. She said, "Hold the ball of jute string and throw it towards whoever you think should speak. Then, the recipient should share what was good and what was not too good about the training and also anything specific about which you want to know more. I am starting. You all spoke very well, smartly, sharply and frankly. We could have simplified the content of the training so that it was more interesting. I want to know more about what you will do with what you learnt here".

Anita: I learnt that I could take the police court and how that can be done. I want to know how to communicate this to others on the field.

Renu: I liked the game, introducing myself before everyone, the problem tree and everything taught here.

Raju: I understood that people who research should know anything about who and what they are researching. Three days are less for this. Sex workers who have never been to schools cannot easily sit for long. I learnt that evidence is important but collecting it is tricky and need more clarity on how to do that.

Durga: I learnt a lot in three days and got clarifications on law and fair trial. Marjan said that ITPA protects sex workers but it is untrue. I wonder how we can find someone who is protected by the law. I want to know more about free legal aid.

Mayavva: I want to know more about the UN and liked everything you taught us. I want to know how to collect case studies as it is time consuming.

Shabana: I liked knowing about the UN. We filled up so much in the tree but we lack confidence that we will get enough evidence to prove it. We need to learn more about it.

Ritu: I liked how you all questioned so much and articulated issues. Usually, that does not happen during trainings with women. I feel that the UN specifics could have been taught in a more creative way using film, stories and fun. I want to know more about the seven steps and how they will help other marginalized groups.

Radha: I liked coming here and learning so much. Usually we face and tolerate so much from police society. It is tough for me but I do sex work for my children. I am now proud of servicing and earning as a sex worker. The construct of sex work as work gives us strength to fight back.

Tayavva: I liked and have absorbed everything here and must plan how to share it with others. I want to know more how to include other communities in our discussions and struggles.

Shantilal: I liked learning about how anti-trafficking issues affect sex workers and sitting with them was a first time. However, i felt my participation was less. There is discomfort and strength in sharing. The collection of evidence and research is daunting and bothering me now.

Minakshi junior: I liked the session on human rights and how it impacts us and how to take it forward. The problem tree was the best and understanding the links between human rights, cause, effect and how to handle them.

Minakshi senior: I learnt many new things, liked knowing about UN, etc. This string game is good. I feel bad that I am learning these laws when I am old.

Nilavva: I like learning about the structure of governance and the bodies above and beyond them. I also learnt that there are actually laws and police for our protection.

Pushpa: I liked that we could participate here and hearing about how VAMP has been fighting for the rights of sex workers. I learnt about human rights earlier and this has strengthened my knowledge about its intricacies. I have done the problem tree at a macro level but will share with my colleagues about how it was done at the micro level here. We need to learn more about how to implement the steps in the Right Gudide. For us as first timers, the sessions were sometimes heavy in language and content. Group work and other activities could have helped us more. Translation of certain terms into Hindi and making persons who are fairly new to the subject of human rights needs time as they must understand and absorb the content.

Sangita: I still am confused about the difference between self-respect and dignity. I attended earlier trainings on trafficking and have learnt much but am still unclear on some issues. I used to yell at police personnel who came to brothels at night. Now with new information I will be more aggressive. I can share all this information with other sisters and tell them that we can fight back even when beaten. I liked and learnt much from problem tree. I thought that police are trained to abuse and assault us. Now that I know our rights better, I can use that against the police.

Sashi: I liked Marjan's way of training and moving. We must develop strategies and the strength to fight human rights violations. The content of the training was very heavy could be longer and more creative.

Reshma: I liked everything and the active participation from everyone. Training was conducted well with information extracted from us rather than being told to us. It is great that the community will be doing research. After gathering evidence, I think we should discuss the direction we should move in. We should have prepared better for this training in advance by interacting with our colleagues. We could have shared more about ourselves and translation could have been better.

Anisha: I liked learning from the experts and also hearing so much from everyone especially for so many days and even informally. We must see if we can use and create other resources like films or graphics as

they would be more fun and easy to remember and understand. As allies, we must learn more from you on how to support you and others in the region.

Malavva: I liked the training. SANGRAM has taught us much about laws. We should transfer this knowledge to the next generation. I liked how Marjan moved. I wish I was formally educated and my children should study in school.

Babli: I liked the content and Marjan's way of training. I liked the problem tree as we always know about the effect of a problem but not its cause. I need to become more understanding of people and break my stereotypes. I felt that the overall training duration was short. I like and know the law as a lawyer but learnt how it affects people adversely. I wish we could discuss the other forms of trafficking.

Marjan: I liked the problem tree and how sex workers value themselves. I am angry when women say that their dignity and self-respect are affected by sex workers. I want to dwell on the issue of dignity and fight more for it. I would love to find ways of conveying human rights knowledge in a simpler and creative way and also obtain your inputs for that. I want to find methods of simplifying the Right Guide and making it more practical.

Meena: Human rights and we are not friends for long. No one is willing to hear about recognizing sex work as work. But now I am glad that we have reached this stage. However, we are scared that despite the research our evidence will be rejected. We should know that it is going to be tough but we must keep pushing and have no other choice. This cannot be made simpler but we were either ambitious or need more time. Translations take time and simultaneous translations do not work. I want to know more about international strategies about anti trafficking and also about strategizing more about sex work in itself.

Pushpa: I liked coming here, learning and sharing. We can discuss about how the media can be an ally of sex workers and writing realistic articles about sex workers which could supplement research by and them. I would like to know more about how this study will be done what is found since a lot is known from different perspectives.

Lin: The binding strings wound around our fingers symbolize our network.

The training ended with Marjan, Lin and Meena distributing certificates to all participants. Meena shared, "We decided to give certificates to participants based on the suggestion of participants from Jharkhand in a previous training programme".

Annexure 1. List of Participants

	NAME	ORGANISATION
1	Anita Saga	Srijan Foundation, Jharkhand
2	Radha Devi	Srijan Foundation, Jharkhand
3	Pushpa Sharma	Srijan Foundation, Jharkhand
4	Babali Singh	AALI, Jharkhand
5	Reshma Singh	AALI, Jharkhand
6	Mallava Nadgeri	VAMP, Sangli
7	Nillava Sidhreddy	VAMP, Sangli
8	Sangita Manoji	VAMP, Sangli
9	Meenakshi J Kamble	VAMP, Sangli
10	Meenakshi G Kamble	VAMP, Sangli
11	Renuka Kale	VAMP, Sangli
12	Maya Gurav	VAMP, Sangli
13	Tayavva Kepad	VAMP, Sangli
14	Durga Pujari	VAMP, Sangli
15	Shabana Kazi	VAMP, Sangli
16	Raju Naik	VAMP, Sangli
17	Shashikant Mane	SANGRAM, Karad
18	Shantilal Kale	SANGRAM, Sangli
19	Meena Seshu	SANGRAM, Sangli
20	Aarthi Pai	SANGRAM, Bangalore
21	Marjan Wajero	Right4Change
22	Lin Chew	Right4Change
23	Anisha Chugh	SAWF, New Delhi
24	Pushpa Acchanta	Rapporteur
25	Rituparna Borah	VAMP/SANGRAM, Delhi

Annexure 2. Participant Perspectives

Introduction by Participants

I assumed that my idea of trafficking is correct. But I have learnt otherwise and now focus on the human rights perspective. Hence I chose burning candles to represent something new and bright. *(Reshma, AALI, Jharkhand)*

I look forward to working and learning together (for three days) as represented in this picture. *(Durga, VAMP, Karad, Satara)*

I like freedom as this card shows. *(Shabana, VAMP, Nippan)*

I have been working with sex workers for 10 years. We will learn together for 3 days. *(Anita, Jharkhand)*

I chose this card showing flowers because sex workers use flowers. Sex workers from everywhere should remain like fresh flowers. *(Neelavva, VAMP Satara)*

This visual has a boat and river which I like. *(Tayavva, VAMP, Sangli)*

I have been working for the social justice and human rights of sex workers for 13 years. *(Meenakshi K, VAMP, Miraj)*

I have chosen the image of a dog as it is carefree. We sex workers have problems but should strive to be free like dogs. *(Radha Devi, Jharkhand)*

I have been in VAMP for 20 years and am a sex worker. *(Meenakshi J, VAMP Miraj)*

My parents were poor while my husband tried to confine me behind a veil (*ghoonghat*). Sex work liberated me like this picture which depicts freedom. *(Renuka, Peer Educator, VAMP, Miraj)*

I am a sex worker and used to be confused about myself earlier. However, now, I am as peaceful as the calm lady in this picture. *(Maya, VAMP, Sangli)*

I am a sex worker who has been a part of SANGRAM and VAMP for 10 years in Sangli. *(Sangeeta, VAMP, Sangli)*

I am from Jharkhand who has been a lawyer for five years and am with AALI for the last 10 months. This bird portrays freedom which I wish for myself and others *(Babli Singh, AALI, Jharkhand)*

I am the son of a sex worker who has been with SANGRAM for the past 15 years. I believe that everyone should have freedom and the right to live as they choose. *(Raju Naik, Mitra, Sangli)*

For 17 years I have been working with SANGRAM. Alcohol does not suit me. I feel It is bottled up as in the photo. I drink water instead. I now work a lot with children of sex workers who seem bonded or bound due to parents. They seem to be forcibly compromising their identity which is an issue that we must address. *(Shashikant, SANGRAM)*

I have been working with Srijan Foundation for many years on women's rights. (*Pooja, Srijan Foundation, Jharkhand*)

I am with SANGRAM for seventeen years. I have different professional relationships with various collectives like Mitra, VAMP, Muskaan on their individual and group perspectives. We are trying to ally with the Dalit movement. We must unite with others as this card depicts. (*Shantilal, Sangram, Sangli*)

I am with SAWF. There is a snowy mountain in the card. As the climate changes, our challenges will reduce and we will see *achche din* (good days in Hindi), hopefully. (*Anisha Chugh, SAWF*)

I like cats and am like a cat. (*Rituparna Borah, Consultant, VAMP*)

The church in this visual reminds me of the town where I live on a boat due to a lot of water being present. I dislike the cold in the Netherlands. There are many ducks and ducklings around us and people, of course. (*Marjan, R4C*)

I am a lazy person. Ritu chose the card for me. It shows a naked woman. Can we live like this? I do not know. Maybe it is tough. (*Meena Seshu, Sangram*)

Three years ago, I met 200 sex workers at a conference. I realised I must learn more which I am doing with SANGRAM and VAMP. I am like the rabbit on this card that is trying to emerge quietly and understand new subjects. (*Aarathi Pai, Sangram*)

I chose a post card with flowers which wither and bloom regularly. I am old but feel that I must continue working. (*Lin, R4C*)