IWWAGE
Institute for What Works to Advance Gender Equality

LEAD LEVERAGING EVIDENCE FOR ACCESS AND DEVELOPMENT
KREA UNIVERSITY

SWAYAM PROCESS EVALUATION
A YEAR LONG ETHNOGRAPHY STUDY
MADHYA PRADESH & ODISHA

Learnings From DAY-NRLM's Gender Programming Initiative

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MESSAGE

I am delighted to present this research document to the readers that take an in-depth view and valuable insights on gender interventions under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission in the two States of Madhya Pradesh and Odisha. The research employs ethnography methodology to reflect on the nuanced changes in the lives of the women. The DAY-NRLM flagship scheme of the Government of India addresses multidimensional poverty through a multi-pronged strategy, premised on the principle of building and nurturing institutions for women that facilitate better access to entitlements, services, livelihood opportunities and formal financial linkages for them. The DAY-NRLM has adopted a gender integration strategy focusing on capacity building of staff and community institutions to develop gender-responsive institutions and practices. The nucleus of this research document lies in identifying the key strategies and processes required to build the capacities of community resource persons to emerge as community leaders. These leaders are vital to leading, facilitating and supporting the work of community institutions in advancing the rights and entitlements of rural women. The document successfully highlights the strengths and opportunities of different training approaches and emphasises the importance of linking training to action by involving community resource persons as trainers and facilitators of social action.

I congratulate the Institute of What Works to Advance Gender Equality (IWWAGE) in undertaking this study and the valuable insights it offers to strengthen the program's gender interventions and ensure that rural women get better access to their rights and entitlements.

3/12/24

[Shailesh Kumar Singh]

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MESSAGE

The Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) aims to alleviate rural poverty by building sustainable community institutions for the poor. It seeks to mobilize about 10-crore households into SHGs and link them to sustainable livelihood opportunities by enhancing their skills and enabling access to formal financial institutions, entitlements, as also services from both the public and private sectors. The program envisions the continuous capacity building of impoverished rural women to ensure their socio-economic and political empowerment and well-being.

Over the past few years, community resource persons involved in the program have evolved into leaders who advocate women's concerns, successfully securing their rights and entitlements. They have led initiatives that protect not only their rights but also those of their families and communities. Through various capacity-building programs, these communities have gained access to vital information, tools, and skills. This unique ethnographic research study highlights an increase in awareness, knowledge, confidence, self-esteem, and the courage to speak truth to power among these women. Additionally, they have developed skills as trainers and problem solvers.

The research offers valuable insights from the field, giving policymakers access to critical data-driven and evidence-based information to help revaluate and improve the implementation of the DAY-NRLM program, thereby creating a significant and life-changing impact at the grassroots level.

I would like to congratulate IWWAGE for conducting this research study and for sharing these invaluable insights.

13/12/2024

(Charanjit Singh)

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Foreword

I am pleased to introduce the report of the SWAYAM Process Evaluation: A year long Ethnography study conducted in Madhya Pradesh and Odisha by IWWAGE. IWWAGE, as a crucial learning and technical partner of the DAY-NRLM, plays a pivotal role in strengthening the mission's gender strategy through the SWAYAM initiative. This collaborative partnership aims to institutionalize gender across all levels of the program. Their technical assistance encompasses designing and testing scalable gender institutionalization models, providing strategic national and state-level support, capacity building, and MLE and knowledge management support.

SWAYAM's core objectives include addressing gender barriers, building institutional processes to improve women's representation, and advocating for progressive gender norms. The study, which focuses on Madhya Pradesh and Odisha, sought to evaluate the impact of SWAYAM's scale-up efforts. It aimed to assess changes in knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding gender, explore experiences of community members, and identify patterns of empowerment and change.

The findings from the research study states that the SWAYAM program has significantly impacted gender dynamics within communities, fostering increased awareness and commitment to gender equality. The study emphasizes that women leaders, particularly those with prior experience in gender advocacy, have played a pivotal role in driving change. Through the concerted efforts of SRLMs, CSO, and the community federations, the program has deepened discussions on gender and rights. The study emphasizes the importance of in-person training for sustained impact and identifies distinct groups of women with leadership potential, highlighting the need for tailored interventions to maximize program effectiveness.

The findings from this evaluation provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of SWAYAM's implementation and highlight areas for improvement. As we move forward, it is essential to leverage these insights to refine our approach, enhance community engagement, and ensure that gender programming continues to drive meaningful change.

I extend my gratitude to all stakeholders involved in this study and look forward to our continued efforts in advancing gender equality and empowering women in rural India.

(Smriti Sharan)

PREFACE

It is with great pleasure that I present the research report, which encapsulates the findings of an extensive ethnographic evaluation conducted by IWWAGE in collaboration with Anthropie under the SWAYAM programme. The evaluation, conducted over the period from 2021 to 2022, sought to measure the impact of SWAYAM's scale-up in Madhya Pradesh and Odisha by examining shifts in knowledge, attitudes, and practices, as well as the lived experiences of community members.

The IWWAGE is a technical partner to the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India for Strengthening Women's Institutions for Agency and Empowerment (SWAYAM). SWAYAM aims to strengthen the demand-supply linkages and create a robust gender-responsive ecosystem integrated into the development planning process to achieve the objective of increased agency of women. The IWWAGE through SWAYAM, assists the mission and its implementing partners by generating knowledge and learning about the progress of gender mainstreaming. The IWWAGE builds upon existing research and generates new evidence to advocate for women's economic empowerment in India. This research study is one such knowledge product from the collaborative joint effort with the DAY-NRLM.

The study's findings reveal a marked increase in gender awareness and commitment among community cadres, Self-help group (SHG) members, and leaders of Village Organisations (VO) and Cluster-Level Federations (CLF). Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the SWAYAM initiative has made significant strides, demonstrating the importance of sustained, direct interaction with trainers to ensure the program's long-term success and sustainability.

This report represents a significant contribution to our understanding of gender programming within rural livelihood initiatives. These insights will guide the development of tailored outreach strategies, ensuring that the interventions are responsive to the unique challenges faced by various groups.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the research team at IWWAGE and Anthropie for their rigorous and insightful evaluation, as well as to all partners and stakeholders who have supported this vital work.

We continue to look forward to a long-term engagement with the DAY-NRLM on mainstreaming gender and bringing lasting changes in the lives of women.

Radha Chellappa
Executive Director, IWWAGE

ABBREVIATIONS

ANANDI	Area Networking and Development Initiatives
ASHA	Accredited Social Health Activist
AWC	Anganwadi Centre
AWW	Anganwadi Worker
BK	Bookkeeper
BMMU	Block Mission Management Unit
BPM	Block Project Mission
BRP	Block Resource Person
BSKY	Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana
CCL	Cash Credit Loans
CIF	Community Investment Fund
CLF	Cluster Level Federation
CSA	Child Sexual Abuse
CRP	Community Resource Person
DAY-NRLM	Deendayal Antyoday Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission
DCC	District Counsellor cum Coordinator
DCPO	District Child Protection Officer
DLSA	Department of Legal Services Authority
DMMU	District Mission Management Unit
DPM	District Project Manager
DV	Domestic Violence
EC	Executive Committee
FLW	Frontline Worker
GAM	Gender Analysis Matrix
GBD	Gender-Based Discrimination
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GCRP	Gender Community Resource Person
GFC	Gender Facilitation Centre
GFM	Gender Forum Meeting
GJP	Gender Justice Program
GOS	Gender Operational Strategy
GP	Gram Panchayat
GPLF	Gram Panchayat Level Federation
GRC	Gender Resource Centre
GF	Gates Foundation
GS	Gram Sabha

GSLP	Gender Self-Learning Program
GTM	Gender Transformative Model
IDI	In-Depth Interview
IRB	Internal Review Board (Clearance)
IWWAGE	Institute for What Works to Advance Gender Equality
KII	Key Informant Interview
LAK	Lok Adhikar Kendra
LCC	Local Complaints Committee
LEAD	Leveraging Evidence for Access and Development
MBK	Master Bookkeeper
MLE	Monitoring, Learning, and Evaluation
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
MP	Madhya Pradesh
MPSRLM	Madhya Pradesh State Rural Livelihood Mission
NAK	Nari Adhikar Kendra
NLSA	National Legal Services Authority
NMMU	National Mission Management Unit
OBC	Other Backward Classes
OLM	Odisha Livelihood Mission
OSC	One-Stop Centre
PALS	Participatory Action Learning System
PCI	Project Concern International
PLV	Paralegal Volunteer
SAC	Social Action Committee
SC	Scheduled Caste
SHG	Self Help Group
SLSA	State Legal Services Authority
SRLM	State Rural Livelihood Mission(s)
ST	Scheduled Tribe
SWAYAM	Strengthening Women's Institutions for Agency and Empowerment
TRI	Transform Rural India
TSU	Technical Support Unit
VAW	Violence Against Women
VPRP	Village Poverty Reduction Plan
VO	Village Organisation
WCD	Women and Child Development

GLOSSARY

Biju Swasthya Kalyan

Health insurance scheme in Odisha that provides INR 10-lakh insurance to women, in comparison to men (INR Five lakh)

Cadre/community cadre

For the purpose of this report, indicative of a range of resource persons, including CRPs, financial inclusion coordinators, praani, krushi, bank mitras, & bookkeepers

Didi

'Sister' term used referentially to CRPs, GCRPs & other community cadres

Gender Samvaad

Joint attempt between DAY-NRLM and IWWAGE to create a common platform for awareness building on gender-related interventions and the impact of its gender operational strategy across states

Jeevika

Livelihood

Ladli Behena Scheme

Scheme launched by Government of Madhya Pradesh in 2022 giving women INR 1,000 per month

Ling Bhed

Gender discrimination

Mahila Hinsa

Violence against women

Mantri

Secretary or assistant to the sarpanch/panch

Kiska Palda Bhari

ANANDI's training tool on gender division of work and decision-making

Mera Haq, Meri Pehchaan

ANANDI's PALS training tool on women's rights and entitlements

Munna Munni

ANANDI's PALS training tool on gender socialization and discrimination between girl and boy child

Prerna Didi

Gender CRP in Odisha

Prerna Kendra

GFC in Odisha

Samta Sakhi

Volunteer GCRP in Madhya Pradesh

Samta Samanvayak

GCRP Supervisor at cluster/federation-level in Madhya Pradesh

Samuh

SHG

Sarpanch

Head of panchayat

Sukanya Scheme

Girl Child Investment Scheme in Odisha

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

'Clean India Campaign' being implemented since 2014-2015

Swasthya

Health

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IWWAGE, through its SWAYAM (Strengthening Women's Institutions for Agency and Empowerment) program, undertook the study "SWAYAM Process Evaluation - A Year-Long Ethnography Study: Learnings From DAY-NRLM's Gender Programming Initiative in Madhya Pradesh & Odisha". SWAYAM is a National Technical Assistance program to the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) focusing on strengthening gender responsive implementation through informed policy making, using the reflections from evidence and advocacy.Through this in-depth ethnographic research, the SWAYAM program gathered valuable insights on the experiences of the cadres and collectives under knowledge, attitude and practice which has the ability to influence on changing gender norms in India.

IWWAGE extends gratitude to the teams at DAY-NRLM, and the Odisha Livelihoods Mission and Madhya Pradesh State Rural Livelihoods Mission (MPSRLM) for their unwavering support and guidance which was central to SWAYAM's evaluation in Odisha and Madhya Pradesh.

We are grateful to the implementing managers and teams in the State Rural Livelihoods Mission in both states, especially Dr. Babita Mahapatra, Additional Chief Executive Officer, Odisha Livelihood Mission', Ms. Bharati Mohapatra, Technical Expert-CBCI, and the teams at Project Concern International (PCI) at Bhubaneshwar and New Delhi; Ms Anita Vatsalya, State Program Manager, Social Inclusion and Social Development (SISD), Madhya Pradesh State Rural Livelihood Mission (MPSRLM); and Ms Monica Sharma, Gender Expert, MPSRLM.

The team received formative guidance from Ms P Usha Rani, Former Lead, Institution Building Capacity Building, Social Inclusion Social Development (IBCB SISD) and Human Resources (HR); Ms Sunandita Banerjee, Consultant – Gender, National Mission Management Unit (NMMU); and Ms Madhulika Chaudhury, Consultant – Gender, NMMU. Our research team was welcomed in Deogarh district, Odisha, by Ms Smoronika Mohanty, District Project Manager, Odisha Livelihood Mission (OLM) and colleagues at the District Programme Manager (DPM) office, and Ms Rashmi Rekha Sahu, District Coordinator cum Counsellor (DCC), Gender Transformative Model.

IWWAGE also thanks the DPM, Deogarh for introducing our team to Ms Reena Dwibedy, Master Bookkeeper, Tileibani block, who not only warmly hosted our team in her house in Palkudar village, but also closely facilitated rapport building with the community, organised learning and co-design workshops, and ensured our team's well being.

IWWAGE also extends gratitude to Mr. Arpit Tiwari, Block Project Manager (BPM), Petlawad block for facilitating our researchers in Jhabua district, Madhya Pradesh. We also thank SHG president, Ms Jema Baria, who with her colleague, Ms Anita Maida, Financial Inclusion Coordinator, Nari Shakti CLF, provided insights to the research team about Petlawad's cultural context as well as introduced us to local functionaries and community leaders, assisted in designing and conducting workshops, and aided our team with mobility by lending us a scooter. We are grateful to Ms Rano Kharadi who graciously hosted the research team leads in her house and shared essential design inputs for the research.

In ethnographic research, building rapport is crucial; but our experience was made seamless by the support extended by our hosts and the larger SHG cadre. SHG members in Tileibani and Petlawad shared with us deep insights on transforming gender norms, and our time with the SHG networks has enriched us with valuable and cherished experiences for a lifetime.

Lastly, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Anthropie team for their incredible and collaborative work throughout this project. We thank Ms. Sharon Buteau, Ms. Radha Chellappa, Dr. Sona Mitra, Ms Rashmi Mohanty and Mr. Neeraj Upadhyay for their unwavering support especially during the toughest moments of this project. Additionally, we thank Dr. Yamini Atmavilas and former IWWAGE members Ms Ammu Kaliat Sanyal and Mr Aniruddha Brahmachari for launching our ethnographic study. For over two years, the research team has been in the company of women of India who are replete with courage and talent, and we are deeply grateful for everything you do.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Missions (DAY-NRLM) is a flagship program of the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, aimed at addressing poverty through institutions of poor women and enabling them to access formal financial institutions and ensure livelihoods opportunities efforts have been made to integrate gender into the program framework since 2016, IWWAGE (Institute for What Works to Advance Gender Equality) provides technical assistance and knowledge support to the DAY-NRLM through the Strengthening Women's institutions for Agency and Empowerment (SWAYAM). which was based on the following core principles:

- Identifying and addressing gender barriers and building institutional processes to enhance women's participation and representation in citizen and governance spaces
- Enhancing capacities of program cadres and staff to implement gender-focused initiatives effectively
- Advocating for and promoting changes in gender norms through outreach programs targeting communities, staff, and relevant stakeholders

The program is implemented by the State Rural Livelihoods Mission, civil society organisations, as well as women's community institutions and their federated structures. Gender transformative models - like Gender Resource Centres - were demonstrated in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, and Odisha states through SWAYAM to institutionalise gender programming within SRLMs and empower rural women to assert their rights and access entitlements by leveraging community institutional platforms.

In 2022, Anthropie, a Delhi-based anthropological research consultancy, was contracted to conduct a year-long ethnographic evaluation of the impact of SWAYAM's scale-up efforts in Madhya Pradesh and Odisha by focusing on:

- Changes in knowledge, attitudes and practices post-gender programming given entrenched social and gender norms in each study site, especially since gender programming is relatively recent, and
- Experiences of community members, including leaders of change within Self-Help Groups (SHG), Village Organisations (VO), and Cluster-level Federations (CLF) with regard to enhanced empowerment from being exposed to gender programming since late 2021. Can these experiences be identified and plotted through causalities/impact maps or larger determinants linked to change and empowerment that DAY-NRLM and partners could explore in supporting the program implementation?
- How linear (or dynamic) is the target groups' impact and change journeys? Are typological patterns (or archetypes) emerging from studying individual change journeys?

This study aimed to track and assess the impact of training programs on community change and empowerment, particularly among Self-Help Groups (SHG), Village Organisation (VO), and Cluster-Level Federation (CLF) leaders. Researchers also interviewed district and block-level functionaries from Madhya Pradesh State Rural Livelihoods Mission (MPSRLM) and Odisha Livelihoods Mission (OLM) to understand how line departments engage, address and resolve complaints in collaboration with community-level institutions.

Previous assessments and evaluations have shown notable interest in gender programming within MPSRLM and OLM, percolating down to the district, block, and community levels. The study highlights the positive impact of gender programming within community cadres, CLF, and SHG members, which has led to increased awareness and commitment to gender equality. Women who have experienced gender parity in their own lives have played the role of catalysts in the SWAYAM program. In both Madhya Pradesh

and Odisha, women who exhibited an inclination towards achieving gender parity before or early in their SHG membership have shown the most positive transformation.

It was also observed that marriage (in the mid-to-late 2000s) into communities that had one or more successfully active *samuhs* linked to an NGO or the local Anganwadi Centre was a turning point for many cadre members. This early-stage exposure to SHGs and microfinance paved the way for many current members to join the government-supported SHG framework as Community Resource Persons (CRPs). This new-found access to finance, as well as women-led community institutions, helped them to overcome barriers like lack of knowledge/information, low self-confidence, lack of mobility, or missing familial or spousal support.

This study finds that process of collective empowerment had already begun prior to the introduction of gender programming and SWAYAM. Irrespective of when they first joined an SHG, longstanding cadre members have successfully accessed micro-finance, repaid loans (some more than once), and made positive changes in their lives; more importantly, they have helped advance gender empowerment in their communities significantly.

The introduction of a gender transformative approach through SWAYAM has sparked recurring conversations around the broader concept of 'gender'. The SWAYAM initiative provides a platform that facilitates deeper conversations on gender, entitlements, and empowerment; it also contributes to disseminating greater awareness on women's rights and gender equality (between the demand and supply side) for a shared mandate of women's empowerment.

However, a distinct disparity in the knowledge, attitude and practices (KAP) of those who discuss gender and those who do not or have difficulty grasping the concept of gender empowerment was observed as a result of active discussions on gender concepts. This ability to conceptualize gender issues and gender-inclusive solutions is a clear indication of the impact of gender sensitisation trainings. However, it is not necessary that everyone – like CRPs and other cadre members like Krishi Sakhis, Bank Praani Mitras, etc. - should have been directly involved in gender transformation efforts. It would have sufficed they were made aware of the SWAYAM initiative and received gender sensitisation training from gender-trained cadre members. Field visits reflect this exceptional ability of sensitized SHG and cadre members to deliver services effectively. It was also observed that women often sought the assistance of gender-trained cadre members – either directly at the nearest gender resource centre (GRC), or at other venues – thus validating the impact and significance of gender sensitisation trainings in empowering individuals to address gender-related issues within their communities.

The study also demonstrates that SWAYAM has shown significant impact and change in its implementation blocks only 18-months following its scale-up in late 2021. This progress is most noticeable within community cadre members despite the challenges faced in the initial two years of implementation of SWAYAM due to COVID-19. While individual SHG members may be aware of gender programs within their CLFs or gram panchayats, they are more likely to recollect personal interaction with a Samta Sakhi or Prerna didi whom they look up to for assistance, especially in the event of a crisis. Many SHG members, however, are yet to recognize the value and role of the gender cadre in the two states in facilitating support for women; many, in fact, may not even be aware that the gender cadre is working for women. Towards this end, the State Rural Livelihood Missions (SRLM), the gender cadre as well as community-based institutions will have to put in concerted effort to raise awareness across villages and gram panchayats over the next few years, including building a robust referral system that links the cadre with community members and the authorities.

Given that SWAYAM's success relies on effective communication and trust-building through this outreach and information dissemination, it is

important to conduct frequent in-person trainings for the community cadre – both gender and non-gender cadre - in the first two-three years of implementing any gender program. The study finds that frequent interpersonal communication and trust building between trainers, program functionaries, and gender cadre trainees has resulted in improved outcomes and response, especially in terms of case registration and resolution by the gender cadre.

The study highlights that changing gender dynamics make it crucial for trainers and program functionaries to be present in-person in the early years of implementation for gender interventions to become community-driven and self-sustaining in the long run. The study's findings suggest that there is a strong demand from the community cadre and SHG members for in-person and frequent interaction with the trainers. In fact, irrespective of the cultural context and individual capacity, community cadre and SHG members still see themselves in need of guidance that goes beyond rote-topic training. This is best demonstrated by the fact that gender-trained cadre members fondly recalled the external resource persons they have worked with, and credited their in-person interaction during the training for bringing about visible change, both at home and in their work, thus highlighting the value of in-person interaction. In addition to in-person training and discussions, games and drama-based techniques were employed during the training, which have proven to be very successful in reinforcing the messaging on gender inequality. Feedback and insights from both states suggest that in-person training and discussions - along with games and interactive-based training - have been extremely effective in helping visualize gender and rights-based concepts, not only for general audiences but also in engaging SHG group members directly and more creatively.

It was also revealed during the study that an SHG group holding regular meetings and fostering strong interpersonal bonds amongst its members is more likely to engage with their Village Organisation (VO) representative as well as local gender champions to discuss issues related to gender. The success in bringing about change – whether in attitudes or in practice – and the pace of change both depend both on the number of resource persons present at a site, along with adequate financial resources to ensure effective training, monitoring, and on-ground logistics. Despite the evident passion for gender transformation among senior cadre members, it is nevertheless important to recognise that the position of the community or gender cadre has great appeal, not only because it is seen as a steady source of income but also because it is viewed with respect in the community. This can translate to greater parity and equality for them at home.

Field researchers in Odisha and Madhya Pradesh frequently observed community cadres effectively use storytelling techniques to narrate their journey of personal transformation and their experience of gender-based violence and discrimination as conversation starters to inspire positive behaviour change and community action.

We conclude this report by identifying key areas for potential new solutions. These solutions focus on training and pedagogic approaches, logistics, and engaging adolescents and men in target communities to accelerate the pace of change. In fact, a key recommendation of the study is the exploration of archetypes among SHG women in intervention sites and use these archetypes to develop targeted communication and outreach strategies. The study identifies distinct 'types' or personas among SHG women, which includes both cadre and non-cadre members.

Overall, the study has identified three broad personas across the two study sites, which are described below:

- **The In-charge Potentials:** This smaller group of women consist of women who are better educated, mobile, and independent. They have overcome significant barriers in their life and grown both personally and professionally through these experiences. Often, they currently serve as bookkeepers or financial coordinators and educate other members in the group to strive for socio-economic stability.
- Given their experience, these women are looked up to for leadership and guidance and offer advice to other SHG members. They

are often referred to by other members as mentors or advisors and work closely with district officials, and enjoy similar levels of mobility and access. Despite the challenges they face, which can include communication skills, societal perceptions and self-confidence, they nevertheless continue to work towards bringing about positive change in their communities.

- **The Fortune-makers:** Similar to the 'In-charge Potentials' in their speaking abilities, the 'Fortune-makers' face more significant personal challenges: they are often widow ed, divorced or separated, and work very hard to ensure economic stability for themselves, their children and their families. Both the 'In-charge Potential' and the 'Fortune-makers' strive to raise awareness on gender and SHG programs and have developed a strong understanding of issues like gender, rights, and entitlements. Both show potential to become 'In-charge' or leaders in their own right, but face constraints such as time, health, confidence, financial resources, and functioning effectively.
- **The Complacents:** 'The Complacents' are SHG members who participate occasionally and fairly regularly in SHG meetings and are likely to be less educated than the 'In-charge' archetype. They also display less passion or interest in discussing or challenging gender norms in their lives. Typically, these women are married and enjoy relative economic stability at home, with limited experience in overcoming major financial, health, or personal struggles.

In conclusion, the study finds variations in emerging personas/archetypes in both the states, though both sites also have 'In-charge' and 'In-Charge Potential/Fortune-maker' archetypes. This group includes women who have experienced vulnerability and have a strong personal understanding of women's issues and rights. The archetypes identified in the two states provide a basis for adopting customised outreach strategies to further deepen knowledge, which can be achieved by developing and delivering training content and pedagogy tailored to the needs of these different groups.

1

DAY-NRLM & SWAYAM-PARTNERSHIP FOR GENDER INCLUSIVENESS

Originally conceptualised in 2011 to focus on poverty alleviation by generating livelihood options and financial inclusion of women through self-help groups (SHG), the Deendayal Antyoday Yojana-National Rural Livelihood (DAY-NRLM) has progressively integrated gender programming in its SHG framework, institutions, and processes since 2016. The DAY-NRLM has also supported the State Rural Livelihoods Missions (SRLM) in preparing the Gender Operational Strategies. These strategies underscore a commitment to building spaces and processes for gender training, sensitisation, capacity and agency building within SHGS, while also ensuring integration of gender across all verticals.

Through SWAYAM (Strengthening Women's Institutions for Agency and Empowerment) initiative, the Institute for What Works to Advance Gender Equality (IWWAGE) plays a crucial role as a learning and technical partner of the DAY-NRLM. IWWAGE's collaboration aims to support and build the DAY-NRLM's gender strategy and help institutionalize gender across all verticals of the mission.

IWWAGE's technical assistance on SWAYAM encompasses several key areas, including:

- Designing and testing scalable models for institutionalization of gender with SRLM federations
- Providing strategic national/state-level technical assistance and capacity building support; and
- Providing Monitoring, Learning & Evaluation (MLE) and knowledge management support

More than a decade since its inception, cadre members such as community resource persons, bookkeepers, bank mitras, praani mitras, and krishi mitras have highlighted the transformative impact of their involvement with the state SHG network under the DAY-NRLM. It has not only led to income diversification, income stability, and parity at home but also to greater exposure, fostered self-reliance, improved communication skills and boosted confidence. Since 2016, the DAY-NRLM has pursued a gender integration strategy to mainstream gender within its federated structure. This strategy has involved:

- Capacity building of staff, cadre, and community institutions on gender concepts as well as actions and interventions
- Using institutional platforms like Social Action Committees (SAC) and Gender Resource Centres (GRC) at block levels to facilitate discussions and interventions

Introduction of the SWAYAM initiative came when the SRLMs had developed a large cadre and SHG member base, and were willing to strengthen gender programming within these community institutions.

A. 'Strengthening Women Institutions for Agency and Empowerment' (SWAYAM) initiative

The Strengthening Women's Institutions for Agency and Empowerment (SWAYAM) initiative under IWWAGE focuses on creating gender-transformative models through capacity building of the National Rural Livelihoods Mission staff and cadre. The emphasis is on setting up robust, standardised institutional mechanisms through testing and innovation of approaches that are supported by data, research, and empirical evidence. The approach combines evidence-based findings from the field with insights into policy space and helps in developing sustainable and contextual frameworks. Through SWAYAM, the DAY-NRLM is working to mainstream gender programming in its operational framework and systems to improve the quality of life of both its SHG members and the communities they reside in.

B. Process Evaluation

This document represents a qualitative process evaluation conducted from July 2022 to August 2023 in selected scale-up blocks in Odisha and Madhya Pradesh. The evaluation aimed to track the incremental changes occurring in women – both individually and in collectives - as SWAYAM's gender programming is scaled up in these states. Findings from both states have shown significant changes and led to insights that will be crucial to inform not just their own effort but also other states looking to implement gender programming through the SHG framework. The study focused

on analysing changes in the knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) of community leaders and SHG members in one scale-up block in each state.

The research team used a structural approach for this study, utilising a range of qualitative methods such as unstructured (ethnographic, semiotic, and participant observations) to semi-structured (in-depth, key informant interviews) to structured (qualitative surveys and journey mapping as part of the design research). The team used this process to examine the dissemination of gender justice information and training, access to rights and entitlements provided to SHGs, cluster-level federations (CLF), as well as village organisations (VO). It also explored how this information is received, processed, and disseminated within the members' social networks. While not an informational ethnographic assessment, the research team employed an inflow-outflow observation process (figure 1) to design specific impact-related questions for later stages of the research.

C. Approaches (Models) Adopted in Odisha and Madhya Pradesh

Four gender transformative models were piloted in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, and Odisha as part of the SWAYAM initiative, with local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) partnering with SRLMs. In each state, the overarching elements and design of the information/training flow have been carried out by CSOs working in partnership with SRLMs.

SWAYAM's broad implementation approach included standardising capacity-building inputs for gender training to staff and cadres across different levels.

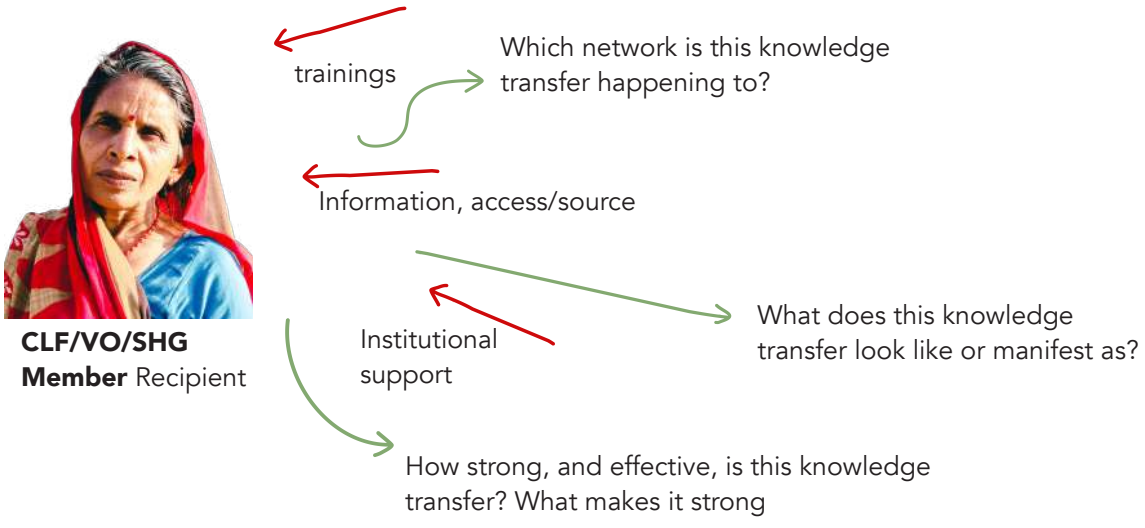
The focus of the capacity-building training included:

Developing feminist leadership

- Target groups: Community resource persons, Master Book-keepers (MBKs), community leaders at Cluster Level Federations (CLF), Village Organizations (VO), and SHGs.
- Trainers: These trainings were imparted by Gender Community Resource Persons (GCRP), block and district-level trainers, and trainers from CSO partners. Whenever needed, National Resource Persons (NRP) and State Resource Persons (SRPs) were mandated to train new GCRPs and MBK cohorts and undertake advanced training sessions.
- Objectives: To develop gender champions from individual capacity-building.

Figure 1:

Another perspective: this study asks, with incoming awarenss efforts, what is the impact in the intervention site? specifically:



Institutional strengthening

- Target groups: Training of SHG members, members of SACs, Village Organizations, cluster-level federations, and Executive Committee (EC) members.
- Trainers: GCRPs and block or district-level trainers identified by SRLMs.
- Objectives: Institutional strengthening

Gender mainstreaming for SRLMs

- Target groups: SRLM staff
- Objectives: Capacity Building of SRLM staff to ensure the development of gender-responsive budgets and Annual Action Plans.

Partner organisations in Madhya Pradesh and Odisha collected evidence to understand whether gender programming can be successfully institutionalised in the DAY NRLM. The International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) was responsible for the assessment in Madhya Pradesh. At the same time, ID Insight conducted process evaluations in four SWAYAM pilot states (Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha). Evidence from pilots in both states suggests that gender programming is well-received by communities, particularly SHG women.

1.1. Gender Justice Program (GJP) In Madhya Pradesh

- Objective: Since 2019, empower rural women to access their rights through MPSRLM-supported community institutions at block/CLF-level and panchayats so as to strengthen women's agency and response to issues around women's rights.
- Implementation: MPSRLM collaborated with several local CSOs to implement gender training and support Samta Samanvayaks and Samta Sakhis.
- Training Framework

  o *Samta Samanvayaks:* Working under MPSRLM, Samta Samanvayaks supervise and train Samta Sakhis in respective CLFs

  o *Samta Sakhis:* Trained volunteers from various CLFs help women raise issues on gender, access rights/entitlements as well as resources within the community, block or/and district-level

- Support System: Samta Sakhis refer women with grievances to the Lok Adhikar Kendra (LAK- community institution at the block level) to register complaints. In case of a private resolution being sought (as in cases of domestic violence or polygamy-related complaints, etc.), they support the women to call a 'gram baithak', which is also attended by their village panch.

If the complaint is made at the LAK, the Samta Samanvayak registers the case and refers it for review during monthly inter-departmental convergence meetings held at the LAK, or to the One-Stop Centre at the district level for resolution.

It's important to note that there has always been support for the GJP program in MPSRLM and community institutions in Madhya Pradesh. The impact of the program - implemented jointly with MPSRLM - is evident in the Petlawad block of Jhabua district (study site) in Madhya Pradesh.

1.2. Gender Transformative Model (GTM) in Odisha

- Design: The design is based on the original Kudumbashree model of gender programming in Odisha.
- Initial Phase: Implemented by Project Concern International (PCI) and Odisha Livelihood Mission (OLM), the pilot phase was from 2019 to 2021, alongside Kudumbashree.
- Current Status: GTM has been scaled up across 20 districts in Odisha (at the time of the study) since late 2021, under OLM in Mission Shakti and PCI
- Objective:

  o Develop the Gender 'Self-Learning' Program (GSLP) by splitting it into four remote learning modules run over four (non-consecutive) days for community cadres.

  o Leveraging the gender 'self-learning' program, provide essential learning to the community cadre on gender-related issues specific to Odisha

o Through the GSLP, the community cadre (specifically, community resource persons and master bookkeepers) are made aware of linkages with government schemes/ entitlements as well as legal services so as to help women access government schemes and entitlements effectively and/or legal services

o Educate cadre on resources available to women facing violence by enabling Gender Community Resource Persons (GCRPs) to render effective assistance to women lodge complaints and seek resolution in matters of rights, entitlements, gender-based violence, etc.

- Roles: GCRPs - also known as Prerna didis in Odisha - are available all day in Gender Facilitation Centres (GFCs) in the Gram Panchayat Level Federation (GPLF) office for two days a week to register cases.

The GTM program educates the cadre on resources available to women facing violence. The program looks to strengthen a special cadre of resource persons – GCRPs, who then serve and assist women from their Gram Panchayats (GPs) in the process of raising complaints on matters of rights and entitlements and Gender-Based Violence (GBV). In the GTM model, the Gender Resource Centres (GRCs) are placed at the Panchayat level. The GTM model allows for quicker resolution of complaints by converging stakeholders at the community level - like SHG Presidents and Secretaries and members of the Social Action Committees, for example – so that they can refer cases to relevant government departments. The Samta Samanyavaks in the GJP model follow a similar system at the block level.

Both programs show a positive affirmation by the community, indicating that gender programming is well-received by the community. The success in Madhya Pradesh's Petlawad block and the scaling up of the GTM across 20 districts in Odisha is proof of the potential for broader implementation.

Key Program Elements

Three key elements support the implementation, testing and scaling of the GTM and GJP models in each state:

1. Dedicated gender champions

o Specifically, gender CRPs or GCRPs (Samta Sakhis & Samanvayaks in Madhya Pradesh, Prerna didis in Odisha)

o Gender point persons (GPPs) supported by the Village Organization, Social Action Committee and/or Executive Committee (EC) for SHGs

2. Gender Resource Centre (GRC)

o Called Lok Adhikar Kendra (LAK) at block level in Madhya Pradesh and Gender Facilitation Centre (Prerna Kendra) at Gram Panchayat level in Odisha

3. Capacity-building training

Training Cascade Model:

o First training given by trainers from CSO partners, NRP/SRP, and/or block-/district-level trainers to the community cadre, including selected GCRPs

o GCRPs then deliver gender training to SHG members in SHGs, VO, and/or CLF meetings

o GCRPs also train Executive Committee and Social Action Committee members through specially designed Gender Forum meetings held once a month

o Training of Livelihood Mission staff members implemented by non-community cadre/GCRP trainers

2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY – *ADOPTING A STRUCTALIST APPROACH TO GENDER PROGRAMMING*

The project conducted a comprehensive, year-long immersive ethnographic study with researchers based within communities in the states of Madhya Pradesh and Odisha over weeks. The Odisha team began field work in the third week of October, 2022, whereas the Madhya Pradesh team began field work in April, 2023, and data collection by both teams continued till mid-August, 2023.

Details of the field sites in Odisha and MP are presented in Figures 2 and 3 respectively

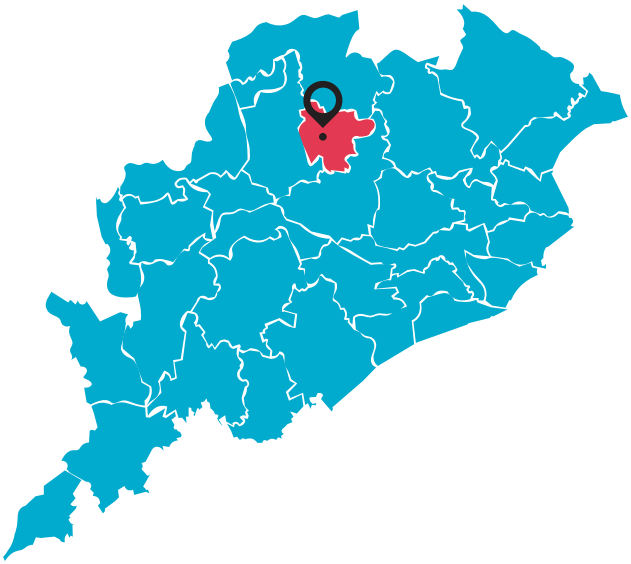


Figure 2: Study Site - ODISHA

Study Geography

- **District -** Deogarh
- **Block -** Tileibani
- **GPs:**
  Palkudar
  Kansar
  Dhalpada
  Kendeijuri
  Talkundi
  Dudhianali

Figure 3: Study Site – MADHYA PRADESH

Study Geography

- **District** Jhabua
- **Block** Petlawad
- **Sample area Covered:**
- Nari Shakti, Bharat Mata and Mahimata CLFs in Petlawad district
- *Nari Shakti GPs:* Kodli, Kalsadya, Naharpura, Unnai, Dulakhedi,
- *Mahimata GPs:* Ratamba, Raipurya, Gopalpura, Jhavlaya

To evaluate and assess SWAYAM's implementation and efficacy, IWWAGE along with the research partner, identified specific questions to be addressed as part of the long-term ethnographic evaluation of impact of gender programming within communities.

These questions are enumerated as follows:

- **Pace of change:** What is the pace of change in attitudes, social norms, knowledge, and practices around gender following information dissemination and sensitization, given entrenched social and gender norms?

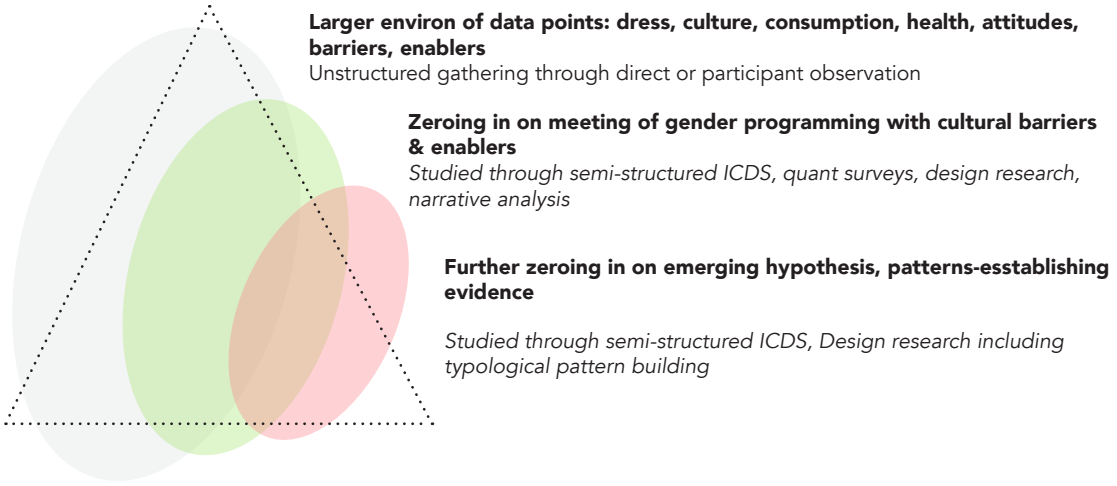
- **Experience of leaders:** What has been the experience of leaders of SHGs, VOs, and CLF regarding change and empowerment over the last two years or more? Are there any causality or impact maps identifying the larger factors and determinants linked to change and empowerment?
- **Impact and change journeys:** Is there linearity (or non-linearity) in the target groups' impact and change journeys? Are there potential typological patterns that emerge from a study of individual change journeys? The team identified a structuralist approach to answering the above questions. Our review of gender programming by organizations like Kudumbashree (in Kerala) and ANANDI (in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh) led us to conclude that incremental changes appear first at home and/or in non-formal spaces. To identify changes and the impact of SWAYAM gender programming in the two sites, we used what is referred to in academia as a mixed method grounded approach (MMGA).

The grounded theory approach is advantageous in identifying behavioural changes organically - i.e. letting the data from the ground speak for itself. This method involves systematically gathering and analysing field data, and is typically implemented using semi-structured, thematically-focused interviews. These interviews have a fixed set of determinants (or indicators) that are used to build insights.

Traditional ethnographic research requires building a contextual foundation over several weeks before identifying determinants. It also focuses on single-site studies, deeply exploring emerging narratives from the site. However, when studies are conducted at multiple sites and examine similar programs in different contexts, the ethnographic narratives must consider individual contexts and collective experiences.

A grounded approach resonates with the core principles of ethnographic research. For this study, the approach involved an initial phase of unstructured data gathering on women, gender relations and exposure to gender issues in our sites in Madhya Pradesh and Odisha. Researchers prioritised building trust with the community members before they were able to gain access to study any site for gendered behaviours and cultural norms. The method of observation included capturing a wide range of daily practices and cultural elements like artifacts (tools/household or traditional items used in daily life), religious or communal rituals (observation of women's participation in religious ceremonies, rituals etc. as well as their roles and responsibilities, etc.), cultural practices (observation of norms and traditions to understand participation levels of women), as well as the aspirations (hopes and dreams of women explored through interviews and conversations), or anything else that was regularly used by or referred to by the women that shed light on gender dynamics in the community.

Figure 4: Structuralist Approach: Gradual Methodological Extension



The observations were collated by a team of two ethnographers in each site using ethnographic, semiotic, and linguistic methods. These methods were first discussed as a larger group to identify our own biases around gender, and then identify recurring patterns in the data that corresponded to the research questions posed to us by IWWAGE.

Drawing from French anthropologist Claude Levi Strauss's interpretation of structuralism, we used unstructured observations to gather data that would inform semi-structured interviews and, eventually, structured qualitative interviews with various respondents across stakeholder groups. These stakeholder groups included SHG members, both community and non-community cadre, spouses, friends and family members, as well as acquaintances within the SHG framework. Also included were government functionaries and departments associated with SWAYAM initiatives tested and scaled up in 2022. It is important to recall that under the grounded theory, the sampling approach cannot be defined by gender, ethnicity, caste/class, or any other community identifier other than geography/region/site.

In this study, we focused on studying women within the SHG framework while cognisant of the fact that the respondents had identifiers. For example, women were primarily married and belonged to Schedule Tribes, and were likely Hindu or Christian. To mitigate bias, we initially used purposive sampling in the first two to three weeks of entering the study site, and then gradually expanded our networks to observe practices and events regardless of participants' identifiers. This approach evolved as we progressed to semi-structured and survey-based interactions.

Another key aspect of this study was visualization of community members as 'users' receiving 'services' from community-owned institutions, government departments, and the Gender Resource Centre with its gender cadre (GCRPs) personnel. Women seeking their rights and entitlements, or relief from violence and discrimination were seen as being on the demand side, while those associated in community-owned institutions who were in a position to offer relief, information, capacity building, etc. as being on the supply side.

To understand the different pathways through which women received responses on the matters/ complaints they raise, design research methods - particularly service design – were employed to map the interactions within the gender transformative approach.

In this study, we utilised design research methods, particularly journey map building, to longitudinally analyse change as perceived by complainants or community cadre leaders in experiences of increasing empowerment, or delivering solutions to women. This enabled us to explore questions about the nature of change, how incremental it was and whether respondents identify with this change, and whether there are common patterns in their journeys.

By carrying out journey mapping, we were able to:

- Synthesize and visualize a large amount of raw data on emerging caseload details, daily observations and in-deep interviews with multiple respondents
- Identify the step-by-step process of how individuals experience change, be it spiritual, socioeconomic, or change towards relief and/ or resolution
- How women experience change before and after gender programming interventions
- How complainants register and then find resolutions in service journeys
- Identify barriers and motivations in the above journeys as well as patterns across different journeys

Although the design research follows five broad steps, we focused on a truncated version of the process that included identifying the context and key questions, building a greater understanding of the user perspective (empathizing), and establishing broad patterns to make programmatic recommendations and key areas of interest.

Figure 5: Truncated Design Research (to be integrated into Structuralist Research)

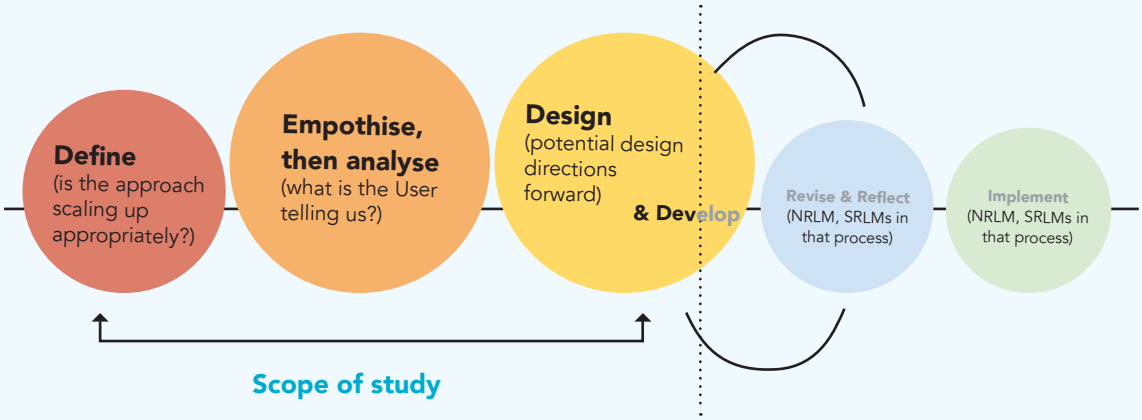
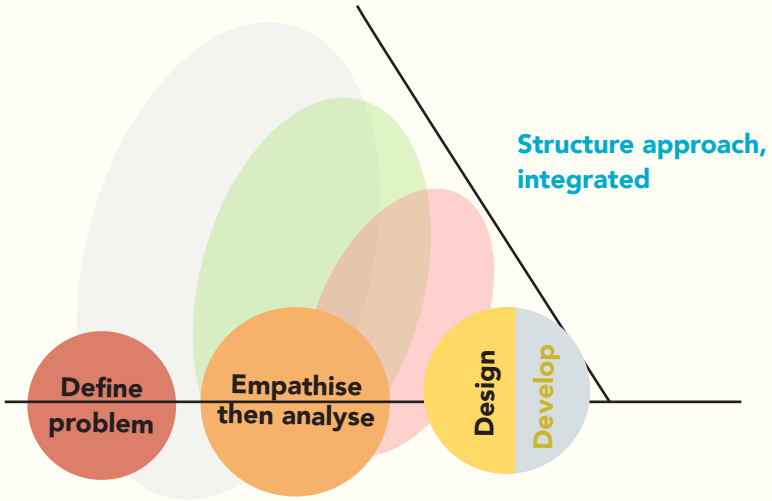


Figure 6: Truncated Design Research (to be integrated into Structuralist Research)



2.1. Breaking up Research Questions

As part of answering the overarching questions, we outlined specific research probes as well as the flow in which they might be deployed. These were tested and refined in our initial workshops with IWWAGE and partner organizations also.

A. Step 1: Understanding the Person and Building Context

We used unstructured, participatory methods to gather contextual information about our respondents.

The questions included:

- Assessing the respondent's demographics, and experience of change (for example: what are the key moments in the family's life together, and how have they experienced change as a result)
- What was a seminal, life-changing behaviour or attitude-changing event for the respondent at the start of the study?
- How and where does the respondent engage with people in her family and social network? (includes mapping spaces according to types of conversations, nature, tone, etc.)
- Where do intervention spaces figure in the respondent's life, how significant are they, and how frequently do they participate in SHG meetings?
- What is the level of the respondent's engagement (engaged, active during meetings, etc.)?

B. Step 2: Zeroing-in on the Experience of Training

We focused on the experience and impact of gender training provided by DAY-NRLM institutions.

The questions included:

- How are institutions like the CLF and VOs trained on gender transformation and sensitization?
- What shape does this training take on the ground (conducted by gender facilitation centres, for example)?
- How does training translate into empowering of women?
- Have gender transformative training modules had an impact on SHG members' attitudes to VAW: If yes, how? If not, why not?
- Is information exchange during and after training adequate to build knowledge and awareness? From which sources does the information flow?
- How do SHG women pass on the knowledge they have gained? How long does it take?
- According to the trainees, is the training adequate or are there training gaps that could have been addressed during the sensitization process?

C. Step 3: Understand the Experience of Dissemination of Messaging and Change Amongst Gender Champions

We examined how messaging and change were disseminated among the Gender Champions, viz. GCRPs, SHG members, etc.)

The questions included:

- Are SHG women able to affect change if they are attending meetings regularly? If yes, how? How does it reflect in their understanding of support systems - institutional and social - for women?
- Is there an impact on gender norms in terms of a foundational change in the woman receiving the training/sensitization? If yes, how is this foundational change reflected on the woman?
- What are the tangible and intangible effect of the training provided to women leaders on gender? What are the specific measures for this impact (for example, change in awareness, knowledge, motivation, resources, practices, etc.)?
- Have gender transformative training modules had an impact on SHG members' attitudes to VAW? If yes, how? If not, why not?
- Is 'the family' of the SHG member or a recipient of her knowledge transfer changing? Is their social network changing?

To understand how the team approached and recruited respondents in the field, expanded gradually on sample size, and worked to mitigate biases that might emerge from long-term qualitative data collection, please see Annex 1: More on Approach & Methodology, under 'Evolving Ethnography to Mitigate Bias: From Solo Venture to Buddy System'.

2.2. Research Design and Implementation: Longitudinal Approach in the Field

Our process evaluation method was structuralist and iterative, combining several qualitative research methods to allow for an in-depth exploration.

Some of the key features of the research process included:

- It was grounded and longitudinal, using qualitative, mixed methods for analysis
- Used a combination of ethnography methods:

  o **Constructivist ethnography:** We identified context using broad, subject narrative-based note-making protocols.

  o **Idealist ethnography:** We identified aspirations and ideals for individuals, communities, and gender empowerment among the subjects.

  o **Materialist ethnography and semiotic observations:** We studies visual cues as well as non-personal observations of materials important for the different gender programs and approaches.

  o **Linguistic ethnography:** We identified the linguistic preferences amongst our subject groups, including the use of keywords, terms/phrases/verbiage to describe key issues, the ability or inability to recall messaging verbatim, and the ability to conceptualize concepts shared within training materials in Odisha (GSLP) and Madhya Pradesh (PALS). We also observed non-verbal, haptic or body language cues related to the training material.

  o **Semi-structured in-depth interviews:** Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with community-based members/institutions, government departments and CSO partner(s) over multiple engagements to establish responses.

  o **Journey mapping:** This design research method was used to map moments of change, growth, inactivity or regression, specifically focusing on mapping change, gradual empowerment, or legal resolution, and the challenges to it.

  o **Typology assessment or archetype building:** Addressed question number three (3) on emerging typological patterns, while also identifying variations of personas within homogenous samples based on their daily motivations, aspirations, enablers, and barriers, and their knowledge, attitude, and practices (KAP) on livelihood, interpersonal relationships, gender issues, and gender programming.

  o **Simultaneous analysis:** Conducted for iterative sensemaking and hypothesis building, alongside direct observation and data collection.

  o **Collaborative data gathering:** This method encouraged participants to build rapport with our primary research teams and share their own data points, opinions, and observations at their own pace, prioritizing their daily needs.

  o **Community-adjacent/situated researchers:** Utilised community-based ethnographers for quick ice-breaking and building rapport, while supporting teams worked remotely to handhold them through the research (described in the following segment) so they understand their own biases, motivations, and challenges to gender norms. These researchers also received quarterly visits and refresher training programs in ethnographic, semi-structured and design research methods.

For this study, we focused on capturing nuanced narratives from SHG members as well as community and gender cadre on:

  o Gender-based roles and duties in daily lives, adherence to these roles, and ways in challenging and setting up new norms within households and SHG collectives. We also

examined the influence of gender programming in mediating shifts in thinking and practice.

o Channels of disseminating information from gender training to women (non-SHG), men, and children among family and peer networks.

o Trainees' experience of training and sensitization sessions as part of the gender programming.

We paid particular attention to gathering perspectives on gender from other SHG and trained cadre members, including spouses, extended families, non-SHG friends, and acquaintances to see if they received feedback from SHG members exposed to gender training under GTM or district-run gender campaigns.

In our final quarter, we sought additional feedback on the need for gender empowerment and gender programming from male respondents. This was especially significant since the emerging hypothesis suggested a lack of understanding and appreciation amongst male leaders and SHG member spouses regarding the progress their families have made post the introduction of SHG frameworks in their communities (this insight will be elaborated upon in the "Findings & Insights" chapter). Additionally, we conducted key informant interviews with some expert respondents at the district and state levels in each state. A detailed list of sampling and stakeholders is presented below in Table 1 (MP) and Table 2 (Odisha)

Table 1: Sampling and Stakeholders - MP

States	Stakeholders	Interaction Type	Samples Covered
MP	Community Cadre, SHG Cadre Members (including gender & non-gender trained cadre)	IDIs, Ethnographic Observations, co-design workshop	35
	Family, Friends, and acquaintances of GCRPs and including 12 Men respondents	IDI	18
	Government/Project Officials	KII	9
	Service Journey Respondents/ Complainants	Service Journey Mapping	10
	SUB-TOTAL		72 (of these 27 are multiple engagements/ deep dives)

Table 2: Sampling and Stakeholders - Odisha

States	Stakeholders	Interaction Type	Samples Covered
Odisha	Community Cadre (Including GCRPs)	IDIs, Ethnographic Observations, co-design workshop	18
	SHG Women	IDI	22
	Family, Friends, and acquaintances of GCRPs and GSLP-trained cadre	IDI	18
	Government/Project Officials	KII	13
	Service Journey Respondents/ Complainants	Service Journey Mapping	10
	SUB-TOTAL		81

3

FINDINGS & INSIGHTS FROM THE FIELD

3.1 General Observations on Gender Programming & Change

Despite the diverse contexts and programmatic methodologies, several overarching observations and responses to critical inquiries have emerged from both Madhya Pradesh and Odisha. These findings are summarized as follows:

Pace of Change in KAP and Social Norms

Demonstrating the pace of change has been difficult for us in this study, barring a few changes in attitude and practice that our teams witnessed in individuals

- There is reluctance for significant shifts in attitudes on issues like violence, gender-based discrimination, and gender attitudes – they remain resistant to change despite vocal community members
- This being said, the SWAYAM program provides women in the SHG framework a platform to discuss gender roles, challenges, and the significance of the SHG framework to make their lives easier ever since they joined SHG (many of them joined in the last decade)
- Women who meet regularly are exposed to gender training sessions and programming conducted by SRLMs but also line departments, particularly The Women and Child Development and the local District Child Protection Office (DCPO) office. Conversely, SHG members who do not meet regularly can struggle with gender messaging. However, they still retain key information such as referring victims of violence to the local Community Resource Person (CRP) or recalling the '181' local helpline number for women in crisis

3.2 The Gender Transformative Approach: Enhancing Gender Empowerment and Equality

The study asserts that despite the rapid pace of societal transformations, the Self-Help Group (SHG) framework remains one of the most significant drivers of empowerment for women across diverse communities. This model provides a structured platform for women to come together, facilitating collective engagement that enables the sharing of vulnerabilities, the articulation of shared challenges, and the exploration of new opportunities. By fostering a sense of community and mutual support, the SHG framework empowers women to navigate complex social and economic landscapes and to actively participate in transformative change. It has offered women the opportunity for socio-economic empowerment and gender equality within their homes. This, in turn, has led to the spiritual empowerment in women who, after more than half a decade of engagement, credit the SHG framework for catalysing positive change in their lives. This includes everything from accessing pucca housing and income diversification to putting their point across to government or police functionaries. Spiritual empowerment in the context of the study refers to empowerment for women within the SHG (Self-Help Group) framework in relation to the profound sense of inner strength, self-belief, and purpose that women developed as a result of their collective efforts and achievements. While the SHG model primarily aims to support women in overcoming socio-economic challenges, as understood, the empowerment goes beyond material gains and financial independence.

The gender transformative approach has further added to this sense of empowerment in women by providing them access to multiple platforms (opportunities) to reflect on what it means to be a woman in their community. In both Madhya Pradesh and Odisha, SRLMs and CSO partners assessed site-specific vulnerabilities before initiating discussions on issues that were both contextual and relevant to women in those geographies, viz. child marriage, health insurance, domestic violence, gender discrimination, etc. This has given the community and gender cadre an opportunity to not only discuss but also refine their own concepts of gender.

Despite cultural differences, there is unanimous agreement among community members in both states that gender should involve an equal partnership with individuals of other genders, but also means 'equality or inequality' or 'socio-economic parity'.

The findings of the SWAYAM ethnographic study offer us a comprehensive understanding of the perspectives and experiences of community members – particularly SHG members – regarding gender roles and expectations. The two field sites, Tileibani and Petlawad in Odisha and Madhya Pradesh, respectively, offer contextual insights into the role gender transformative approach has played in empowering women and promoting gender equality at the grassroots.

The findings and insights section below describes how our research team uncovered new insights and understanding into gender programming in the two states of Odisha and Madhya Pradesh. The research in Odisha was carried out from mid-October, 2022, to mid-August, 2023, and in Madhya Pradesh from April 2023, to August 2023.

3.3 Findings & Insights from Odisha

Our first phase of research in Odisha from mid-October to December, 2022, focused on building an ethnographic context by developing an understanding of the local geography and social norms. The primary objectives included identifying potential factors influencing gender and women's agency, such as enablers, motivators, and barriers to change, and to identify individuals who had undergone training in the gender module developed by PCI.

We used direct observations and interaction with women community members to gain insights into challenges that were hindering the flow of gender awareness and resource-related information. In the Tileibani block of Deogarh district, we selected five SHG members as our study subjects to follow closely. During this phase, our research team from Madhya Pradesh also travelled to Odisha to support the Odisha research team in understanding the gender transformative approach and assist with the data collection.

Our contextual findings revealed key motivators for individual empowerment, including a desire for self-growth, alternative livelihood options, enhanced power within the community, training for education, and breaking away from traditional gender roles. Conversely, we also identified key barriers to change, which included excessive workload, time management, limited mobility, struggle to balance tribal identity with professional image, and issues around alcohol production/ consumption.

Within this cultural and contextual background, we observed that active participation in SHGs played an important role in mediating change for these women, both at the socio-economic level and personal, developmental level.

Our preliminary contextual findings suggested that:

- Gender transformation and mainstreaming aimed for by DAY-NRLM suggest that it will take time for attitudes and beliefs to evolve
- Training sessions offer valuable exposure to new ideas and perspectives, while technological platforms facilitate fast exchange of information
- The language used in pedagogic events - training sessions, meetings, discussions - can be challenging, including terms that might be 'Sanskritised' or are in English
- Leaders who focus on self-improvement gain community trust, while the availability

of childcare affects women's participation in leadership positions

- Women actively involved in farming or holding important roles often require assistance in managing household responsibilities

The insights we developed in Tileibani between October '22 and March '23 include the following, broad ideas:

- **Position of authority:** Certain women leaders can secure and hold onto positions of authority within the SHG framework due to being more educated and privileged, regardless of caste reservations
- **Time poverty:** Time poverty is a double-edged sword for many community cadre leaders: it is both a badge of honour because it helps them feel needed and increases their social capital, but is also a constraint in meeting their various personal and professional commitments
- **Empowerment through GCRP status:** GCRP status has helped empower CRPs to engage in public speaking and exhibit greater awareness of gender-based issues, particularly domestic violence, discrimination, and child marriage
- **Impact of early marriage:** Emotions and experiences encountered shortly after marriage can impact the personal growth journey of a woman/SHG leader.
- **'Othering' within SHGS:** The 'Othering' of women within SHGs can hinder promotion of gender transformation and empowerment. The study asserts that questions related to the quality of knowledge transfer include the following: Knowledge transfer to other groups often transforms into discussions that challenge the lack of gender parity. However, this can also devolve into gossip and the marginalization of other women, including those who are complainants. Additionally, the transfer of knowledge may be limited to information that aligns with traditional beliefs regarding caste and gender. The quality of knowledge transfer is often weaker at home, and it may start to dissipate or even stop entirely when men are unsupportive, indifferent, or violent. This situation can lead to negative talk surrounding the challenges of the job, breaches of case confidentiality, gossip, and the othering of women. Furthermore, men and women who are not involved in self-help groups (SHGs) may adopt and spread this negative messaging.

From January to March 2023, the Odisha research team returned to the field and spent about 11-weeks gathering data from five SHG leaders and an additional 16 respondents. They used ethnographic observations and semi-structured interviews to collect data from the original respondent group's family, friends, acquaintances, community cadre, and supply-side respondents.

The team identified key insights on knowledge, attitude, practices, collectivism, and social norms. Gender CRPs in Odisha discussed gender rights and entitlements with SHG women after training sessions.

Some key findings, including emerging insights and iterations of earlier preliminary findings, are discussed below.

Key Findings

Active Participation

- GCRPs speak up at convergence meetings and share knowledge with the new Community Resource Person (GTM) cadre.
- SHG cadre vocalize their understanding and challenges around domestic violence.
- GCRPs balance time spent on household chores and professional commitments.

Encouraging Independence

- GCRPs encourage independence in their daughters and take pride in helping women experiencing violence.
- GCRPs encourage non-SHG women to understand their gender rights and report Domestic Violence (DV) cases.

Mobility

- Community cadres passionate about their work aim to increase their mobility by buying scooters or cycles.

Guidance for survivors

- GCRPs provide clear guidance to survivors about registering cases, approaching the local police, calling the '181' helpline, or visiting the One-Stop Centre

- Some GCRPs have used their position to dissuade perpetrators of violence to refrain from it and have successfully registered several cases of ration card and Sukanya Yojana applications

Collectivism and Local Counselling

- Collectivism is more frequently discussed in the context of livelihood issues
- GCRPs work together to counsel perpetrators locally

Support from Master Book Keeper (MBKs)

- MBKs support GCRPs in motivating women on gender issues
- Large-scale change in social norms is expected to take at least ten years

3.3.1 Overarching Cultural Insights

- Following three research sprints conducted over a period of eight to nine months, our team in Odisha identified several overarching cultural insights. These study findigs merit further exploration in analogous cultural contexts within Odisha and potentially extend to other regions of India as well.
- In discussions surrounding gender-based violence, it is frequently observed that community responses—particularly those of community health workers—tend to reflect a prevailing narrative that "survivors or victims do not ask for help", and thus are not offered any help "since help was not sought", thereby resulting in a lack of support extended to them. These practices further isolate women experiencing domestic violence, especially those who are looking to reshape their identities outside of the first marriage, including widows, separated or divorced women, or those wishing to marry for love.
- The research reflects that religious and caste-based societies are rigid and resistant to change. We observe that the panchayats play a pivotal role in responding to community-based needs while also informing communities in Tileibani on the legal, developmental, and entitlement-related state initiatives. In the SHG framework, women discover a space for discussion that, even if occasionally, challenges patriarchal norms. In these discussions, some of the most influential women, while advocating on gender issues, continue to uphold traditional values around marriage, inter-caste unions, and balancing professional and domestic identities rather than prioritising the latter.
- The study reveals that when women experiencing violence or seeking to redefine their identities do not receive support—whether due to hesitation in seeking help or the absence of proactive community intervention—they become increasingly marginalized and vulnerable. This lack of support may lead to restricted access to essential entitlements, particularly regarding land and housing rights, and they often face denial of assistance from community leaders. Additionally, these women may face custody challenges and are at a heightened risk of sexual violence for aspiring to live beyond conventional societal expectations. The findings indicate that in such situations, Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and community cadres, including Gender Community Resource Persons (GCRPs), lack a structured protocol to ensure that either the survivor or a support resource initiates the process for securing entitlements, leaving these women without a clear pathway for redress and advocacy.
- Evidence from several testimonies and several service journey tracking exercises suggests that Gender Facilitation Centres (GFC) are viewed as being relatively more accessible than the One-Stop Centre (Sakhi Centre) in Deogarh. However, awareness about the existence or location of GFCs was found lacking in many women.
- The GFC does not offer privacy to victims of domestic violence or women facing challenges in their communities. In some cases, GFCs are located in the Gram Panchayat (GP) office. though the rooms assigned to them do not provide private entrances.
- Findings from multiple IDIs, observational engagements, observations of entitlements case complainants, and victims of violence suggest that GCRPs are approached directly, preferably at home or on their phones, bypassing the GFC.

- Male responses in interviews and observational interactions suggests a lack of appreciation for the significance of women's empowerment and the community changes brought about by Mission Shakti's activities in Deogarh. Statements made by male spouses of cadre members and observations by the research team suggests that male project functionaries sometimes do not recognise the significance of changes experienced by women's collectives. In other instances, the research team has observed derogatory and misogynistic behaviour from male livelihood program functionaries, and even female functionaries within the program. Despite observing derogatory and misogynistic behaviour at multiple levels, the research team nevertheless also found that there are occasional male functionaries who are respectful of their own accord, and not necessarily because of POSH or have received gender training.

3.3.2 Key Facilitating Factors for GTM

As Mission Shakti and Odisha Livelihoods Mission (OLM) scale up the Gender Transformative Model, key facilitating factors identified include:

- The GTM program is being implemented on scale. In the Tileibani block alone, there are 20 Gram Panchayats where the training program is active. According to PCI, the implementation of GTM has expanded from 61 GPs (not including the 20 GPs in Tileibani) to over 1100 GPs across 20 districts in Odisha between late 2021 to mid-2023. This outreach means that GCRPs have been identified across multiple parts of Odisha, providing a strong organizational foundation for gradual program scale-up over the coming years.
- Older GCRPs show that with more case handling experience, particularly in domestic violence and entitlements cases, GCRPs can respond more confidently to complicated situations.
- Experienced GCRPs or well-trained CRP or GPP substitute are more likely to engage with remote refresher training more enthusiastically because their practical experience allows them to visualize scenarios where technical information is required, and even ask more advanced questions during training sessions.
- While discussing domestic violence in-depth can be difficult for community members, it is encouraging that other community cadres - CRPs and Mitra cadre (bank/krushi/praani mitras) - have shown interest in being trained in the GSLP modules. This shows broader interest in spaces that offer gender-specific discussions.
- Participants in Gender Self-Learning Program (GSLP) training are responsive to training, particularly around land and property rights. These discussions also engage non-community cadre and SHG audiences, highlighting a general interest in understanding how women's socio-economic interests can be protected, especially in the event of loss of a spouse or family discord.
- The SHG space is valuable for community members, especially those elevated to the community cadre. It plays a crucial role in diversifying livelihood programs and socializing information. Many conversations on gender, gender-based discrimination, rights, and entitlements happen informally outside SHG meetings.
- In Deogarh, consistent technical guidance from OLM has enabled many SHG members to diversify their income sources, including crop diversification, testing new crops, and starting small businesses. Over the last decade, many women who were poor or marginalized earlier have significantly mitigated their socio-economic vulnerabilities. Positive change, especially in socio-economic empowerment, started before 2019-2020 and motivated many SHG members to apply for roles like CRPs, MBKs or Mitra cadre. These members also show motivation to improve their communication skills.
- The positive change journeys seen among SHG women, particularly community cadres, in places like Deogarh were often supported by external factors like spousal/familial support or childcare support. For these women, the implementation of the Gender Transformative Model represents a significant enhancement in their journey towards empowerment. Here,

socio-economic empowerment has already led to spiritual empowerment. Gender training enables cadre members to collectively reflect on what it means to be a woman, identify their rights, and articulate issues like gender imbalance more effectively.

- Comparatively, women who are not directly linked to SHGs struggle to explain or understand the concept of 'women's empowerment' and how to address gender concerns.
- In addition to mapping changes and service journeys, we created visual timelines of significant events in their personal and professional lives. These change journeys highlighted barriers and enablers to their growth and empowerment. (Change Journey is at annexure 2). We also mapped and tracked multiple cases of domestic violence using the service journey analytical tool (Annexure 3). Some of the responses to our primary research questions were established through this exercise.

3.3.3 Changes in Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices, Collectivism and Social Norms

The study indicates that engagement with gender-focused programming and shifts in sociocultural norms have contributed to notable changes across various domains, including knowledge, attitudes, practices, collectivism, and social norms. These observed shifts are detailed in the following sections.

Changes in Knowledge:

- Discussion of gender rights and entitlements
  - Some GCRPs are able to discuss gender rights and entitlements with SHG women after training
  - Some GCRPs can speak at convergence meetings and discuss the GTM initiative effectively
  - More experienced GCRPs can share knowledge and experiences with new GCRP cadres, possibly providing informal 'training' to them

Changes in Attitude:

- Change in mindset
  - GCRPs have become more vocal against domestic violence since the introduction of GTM, providing more opportunities to discuss gender issues, identity discrimination, and violence
  - Community cadre and GCRPs continue to juggle their household responsibilities with their roles in the SHG framework, adding to their already demanding responsibilities
  - Despite facing taunts from men, community cadre choose to engage only with those directly involved in domestic violence-related cases or members of the Gram Panchayat Level Federation (GPLF) office
  - The most active GCRPs and community cadre can prioritise their schedules over domestic responsibilities, delegating responsibility to other family members if possible
  - Perhaps the most significant change in attitude: women who are able to make a difference for other women, especially survivors of violence, take pride in being able to do so, and show this in their own responses

Change in Practices:

- Creating an understanding of gender rights
  - GCRPs, along with supportive MBKs and CRPs, are actively encouraging non-cadre and non-SHG women to understand their gender rights and report cases of domestic violence
  - GCRPs and community cadre with supportive spouses or families are demonstrating agency in travel by taking initiatives like taking SHG loans to buy a scooter for better mobility. This initiative may or may not be linked to the SWAYAM approach, but the thought process behind it is definitely the result of better knowledge that programs like GTM provide, additional outreach by GFC or GFMs (Gender Forum Meeting), and field outreach
  - As a reflection of the training given to GCRPs by the DCC, GCRPs are providing clear instructions to survivors to call '181' and report

domestic violence cases to functionaries at the district Sakhi Centre

- Some GCRPs, empowered by their training, are using their position to pressure or threaten perpetrators to stop violence against women
- GCRPs are effectively handling entitlement cases like ration cards, Sukanya Yojana registrations, and pensions, reflecting their ability to register and resolved such issues
- GCRPs are using their negotiation skills to consciously resolve conflicts

Observations on Collectivism:

- Collective counselling to resolve local issues
  - Collectivism is more common in livelihood issues than in gender issues
  - There is a collective effort to counsel perpetrators to locally resolve cases
  - MBKs support GCRPs in motivating women on gender issues beyond their job responsibilities

Observations on Changes to Social Norms:

- Discussion and support to victims of violence, child marriage and child abuse
  - Strong patriarchy still influences collectivism when it involves issues like domestic violence, women's work preferences, and systemic redressal of domestic violence cases
  - Despite this, there are noticeable changes in the willingness of GCRPs and other community cadre to discuss and support victims of violence, child marriage, and child abuse

Based on the findings from the January to March 2023 research sprint, the Odisha team conducted a third research sprint in April 2023, which lasted till mid-June 2023. This research sprint helped identify emerging factors, leading to crucial insights for the scale-up and implementation of a large-scale gender program like GTM.

3.4 CASE STUDY

ODISHA

Kavita
Odisha

Kavita, 40, is one of 18 GCRPs appointed in early 2023. However, familial issues forced her to miss the first gender training session which was conducted remotely. Not deterred by her circumstances, she requested the most experienced GCRP in the block to explain the module to her instead.

Her confidence in her abilities as a GCRP means she is not shy of approaching women in her gram panchayat; in fact, she has often stopped people on the streets to explain gender rights to them - not only gender rights, Kavita is not hesitant to speak on other issues that are of interest to people, like the state and national-level entitlement schemes being implemented by the government, etc. In fact, her passion for her work often takes her far and wide – even to the more remote and interior regions of her gram panchayat –to spread awareness about initiatives like the Gender Facilitation Centre. She takes extra measures to outreach and generate awareness.

She has shown tremendous understanding in approaching victims of domestic violence to speak up and register complaints. She understands the challenges faced by these victims, which include fear, shame, lack of time, or privacy concerns. To address these issues, she tries to build trust with the victims by being available and approachable. This is why she often gets calls from victims of domestic violence on her phone, many of who tell her they were referred to her by a neighbour who is an SHG member. Her availability, empathy and approachability have made her popular in her community, and she developed a reputation of being trustworthy and supportive of victims.

Kavita says, "*A domestic violence victim often calls me after she's been assaulted at home, up to a point she has finally had enough or is scared for her children. She will likely have sneaked across to a neighbour or a sympathetic family member, who willingly offer the use of their phone so that she can call me, or '181' directly*".

When faced with these circumstances, Kavita has to quickly assess the situation the victim is facing, if she's safe, and her location. Her first step involves calming the victim, followed by advising her to call '181' or the police directly. For good measure, Kavita also follows up these cases herself and if she has the consent of the victim, registers an official complaint/case at the GFC.

3.5 Insights on GTM Implementation, and Correlating Changes, Impact

The Gender Transformative Model was to be scaled up in the Tileibani block in Deogarh after being piloted in select districts and blocks, and the learnings are used to inform the more effective dissemination of gender messaging.

Of the challenges, the fewer number of trainings - approximately six between October 2022, and August 2023 - for various stakeholders including DCC, GCRPs, SHG members, Executive Committee (EC), Social Action Committee (SAC) members, and Gender Point Person (GPP) in Tileibani block meant that messaging on gender did not trickle down adequately, i.e, top to bottom from: DCC to GCRP; GCRP to GPP, EC & SAC members and down to SHG members.

Trainings on Gender Transformative Model in Tilebani block (October 2022 to August 2023)

Trainings included a three-day in-person training on Gender Transformative Model in February 2023 at the block-level for Tilebani; pre-GFC inauguration orientation, refresher training in October, 2022, for one GCRP appointed during scale-up in November, 2021, second in-person training on Gender Transformative Model in August, 2023, and training on use of m-Forms as an MLE tool, part of a larger review meeting.

The limited exposure to the Gender Transformative Model modules among stakeholders in the Tilebani block hindered the effective implementation of gender messaging initiatives - only DCCs and GCRPs have thus been exposed to the GSLP modules, and even among them, the number trained in all 13 modules is limited: As of August 2023, only one GCRP in Tileibani's 20 gram panchayats has been trained in all the 13 modules of the GSLP program as well as two rounds of orientation on the GTM program. The remaining 19 GCRPs, because of a delay in their appointment in February 2023, were still receiving GSLP training remotely.

While it is important to acknowledge that there are many newly-appointed DCCs for Gender Transformative Model in Odisha in 2022, staggered training has meant that as of August 2023, a majority had not received complete training in the GSLP modules. To illustrate: the DCC in Deogarh, appointed in August 2022, received training in four out of 13 modules only by August 2023. Through multiple rounds of discussions and observations, researchers observed that DCCs relied on their intuition and quick research skills on most occasions when answering impromptu questions to which she did not have answers.

The DCC in Deogarh is in charge of training and monitoring 70 GCRPs across three blocks in the district; additionally, the DCC is also responsible for the training of 13 new GCRPs in the neighbouring district of Sundergarh as of June 2023. The training and monitoring of 83 GCRPs is a monumental task, in addition to regular monitoring and coordination activities, and the lack of physical and mental bandwidth to provide several in-person training sessions only exacerbates the strain on the DCC. This also highlights the overwhelming workload and responsibilities that they have to juggle, compelling the DCC to conduct training sessions remotely via phone.

In response to the pressure on DCC's, the 2023-2024 Annual Action Plan approved the appointment of block and district-level trainers to help the DCC manage training workloads, and is seen as a positive step in alleviating the workload on DCC's. Once this happens, the community cadre, EC and SAC members, as well as GPPs should benefit from the personalised support and guidance to each GCRP.

The challenges and insights provided from the field in sheds light on the various complexities in implementing the Gender Transformative Model effectively. Some key observations include:

- **Importance of In-Person Training and Discussions with Trainers:** GCRPs express the need for in-person and refresher trainings to confidently disseminate information and implementation of the Gender Transformative approach. The introduction of the block and district-level trainers in the latter half of 2023 is expected to provide the necessary support to enhance the training process.

- **Support to GCRPs to Become Independent Trainers:** GCRPs require additional support in addition to pedagogy to become self-sufficient trainers of GSLP modules and to be able to train other program cadres. This includes role plays, visualization, public speaking and creative case handling. This assumes greater significance since EC, SAC members, and GPPs depend on well-trained GCRPs to support them effectively.
- It has been observed that even GCRPs who have received GSLP training in the scale-up phase hesitate in training their peers, who are yet to receive gender training but are expected to facilitate activities at the GFC or Gender Forum. The introduction of block and district-level trainers by OLM is expected to provide the necessary support to enhance the training support in the scale-up blocks in the coming months.
- **Increased Exposure of Executive Committee and Social Action Committee Members to GTM:** During the research team's interactions, some EC and SAC members who have demonstrated a significant belief in patriarchal norms and misogyny, unlike the community cadre who have adapted change and socio-economic empowerment due to exposure to the SHG framework. To ensure their support and understanding of the gender messaging, frequent training programs and formal/informal interaction with trained cadre as well as block and district-level trainers can not only help sensitise them on gender messaging but they can also be a useful resource in helping to sensitize incoming EC members as well.
- **Improving Retention of GSLP Module Information:** Participants find it challenging to remember and recall Information from GSLP modules after the first trainings. Because of large-scale use of posters and published material during training, the participants find it difficult to recall written text over time. Thus, improving retention strategies and materials can enhance the effectiveness of these trainings.
- **Localisation of Language and Dialects in GSLP Pedagogy:** Community cadre have expressed the need for the GSLP training to be contextually relevant, more so in the case of language and dialect used during the training. English words like 'gender' are often used during training and discussion, but are difficult to explain to SHG members who are unable to conceptualize gender beyond physical descriptors, clothing, etc. Using local language and dialects in the GSLP pedagogy can improve understanding and engagement amongst community cadre members and facilitate better communication and effective dissemination of messaging.
- **Strategically Using Information on Government Schemes by Community Cadres:** Community cadres strategically use information on government schemes and entitlements to address gender-based discrimination within their communities. For example, they may use information on financial entitlements for widows to discourage remarriage or withhold information from inter-caste couples to discourage such pairings.
- **Limited Collectivization in Gender-based Issues:** Collectivization by SHG groups or community cadre in addressing gender-based discrimination and/or domestic violence is limited to certain areas in Tileibani block. Only occasional cases, like child marriage or molestation, generate interest in taking collective action, indicating the need for more effort in promoting collective action.
- **Reliance on Girl Children for Household Tasks:** So that the adult women in the house can focus on earning their livelihood, community cadre and SHG members often rely on the girl child to help with cooking, laundry, fetching water and firewood, etc. This gender stereotyping poses its own challenges and underscores the importance of gender equity within households.
- **Knowledge Transfer in SHG Meetings to Family Members:** The transfer of information on topics discussed in SHG meetings - like gender and health - is often not shared at home, which means that many family members and spouses of SHG members are unaware of concepts like the GTM program or that topics related to gender are discussed in SHG or GFM meeting. This inequity in knowledge transfer can have serious ramifications: for example, information on government entitlements for vulnerable young couples or marginalised individuals could be denied to them by community cadres desirous of maintaining status quo in traditional hierarchies and segregation. This is a pointer to the need for serious efforts in enhancing information sharing and awareness levels within households.

3.6 CASE STUDY

ODISHA

Tulsi
Odisha Livehood Mission, Odisha

Tulsi, 30, has been working as a MBK in Odisha with the Odisha Livelihood Mission (OLM) since the early 2010s.

She has seen vulnerability first hand: she was married against her will to keep a sick brother happy. To make matters worse, her husband's family was deeply conservative and believed in traditional family roles, especially where women were concerned.

Tulsi tried to return to her parent's home, but there was no escaping her marriage. Forced to come to terms with a deeply conservative household where she had no friendships or support, she discovered that she was also responsible for all household chores. To add to her mental pressure, she was made to understand in no unmistakable terms that she also held the key to the family's fortunes in terms of ensuring their financial stability. Her husband's siblings were settled in Bhubaneswar and they made no secret of their disdain for her husband, considering him incapable of managing even the family farm.

However, Tulsi was educated and confident. She leveraged her entrepreneurial spirit to learn about agricultural schemes, produce and modern farming techniques that the government offered using her phone. Using this knowledge, she began diversifying the crops planted on her family's land - long before anybody else in her local SHG or even in her village did.

When the position of the Master Bookkeeper opened in her Gram Panchayat, she called the other candidates and convinced them not to apply. In return, she promised to help them in any way she could using the SHG framework.

Today, Tulsi enjoys great repute in Tilebani block – she is someone that both women and men in her community reach out to – from information on crops to advice on farming or meeting with technical advisors on agriculture in the state. Tulsi even has her own group comprising about 20 women, mostly cadre members but with a few SHG members also, who attend every workshop or training she organises for OLM in the district, who come not only for the exposure that these trainings offer, but, more importantly, to spend time with Tulsi.

Recently, Tulsi advised an informal group of people about the need for young widows to 'be careful' when looking to remarry, since the widowed women could never tell whether the men were marrying them for their (widow) pension or because they expected to receive compensation from the state government for widow remarriage.

4

FINDINGS & INSIGHTS FROM MADHYA PRADESH

Our first research sprint in Madhya Pradesh was from April to June 2023 - a relatively shorter time for primary research on understanding local socio-cultural norms and community dynamics. Semi-structured interviews were held with government functionaries, community members, and local stakeholders to gather insights into potential enablers, motivators, and barriers to change in gender and women's agency. We also identified potential study subjects trained in the gender module developed by ANANDI being implemented by MPSRLM, which were facilitated by the current CSO partner, TRI.

Taking a leaf from our work in Odisha, our research team focused on understanding the social, cultural and economic context of not only SHG members and community cadre, but also their families, friends, and peers. In the first month (April 2023), in-depth interviews and observations helped identify eight community cadre and SHG members to observe multiple times between April and August, while snowball-sampling helped in the identification and observation of 11 non-SHG family members and their peers.

Our focus on the Nari Shakti CLF using observations and unstructured interviews paid rich dividends: observation of CLF meetings across the three CLFs (Nari Shakti, Mahimata, and Bharatmata) as well as other subjects recruited during the second research sprint revealed the transformative power of the SHG framework in promoting women's empowerment, fostering collective behaviour, and challenging traditional gender norms. Interestingly, we discovered that despite notable differences like geography and the socio-economic and cultural milieu, there was nevertheless striking similarity in factors influencing SHG and community cadre members. These included work overload, time management mobility, and balancing professional and domestic identities. Just like in Tileibani, we found that those who are active within the SHG framework acknowledge its significant impact on their lives, leading to socio-economic and spiritual transformation, especially among dedicated community cadre and SHG members.

4.1 Preliminary Contextual Findings

Our preliminary contextual findings highlighted the following key factors influencing SHG behaviour:

A. Factors influencing SHG and Petlawad collective behaviour

- Proximity to several important city and industrial centres like Indore, Vadodara, Ujjain, Ratlam, and parts of Rajasthan, drives an increased movement for education, work, medical assistance, and religious pilgrimages. This proximity also helps eloping young couples, as will be explained at the end of the analysis for Madhya Pradesh.
- Perceptible increase in access to education for locals within the last decade, with Indore and Ratlam as preferred places for migration . Many opting for courses like nursing, BSc Agriculture, and Masters in Social Work (MSW), though with the caveat that these degrees may not lead to skilled or white-collar opportunities.
- Increased use of social media on smartphones, particularly Facebook and YouTube, for self-expression by older individuals and parents.
- Shifting from agriculture to business or service – like kirana (grocery) shops, tyre shops, food stalls, etc.) was the preferred livelihood option. Some preferred working as disc jockeys and DJ stations in weddings as a source of income.

B. For dedicated cadre and SHG members, there is value to be found in the SHG Framework and the formal space it offers for women to be trained, and to gain information but also very importantly, to socialize. This is where there is an important exchange of social currency, including the transaction of formal and casual information (including gossip) - which happens inside the formal space but also on the boundaries of the formal SHG space. Socializing outside the house, to build information sources also helps women build an identity outside that of wife, daughter-in-law, and mother.

C. There's an intermixing and transition of cultures, drawing influences from the world outside, and is manifest in changing food, and alcohol consumption, changing dress customs (especially amongst tribal women who look to work outside the home, and are encouraged to wear the sari as a homogenous symbol and professional dress). The only custom that is left largely untouched is that of marriage rituals, for first and following marriages included.

D. Over the last two decades, Petlawad has seen greater religious pluralism in the local population, with more tribal community members adopting new faiths and religious philosophies. There isn't any overt animosity or change in attitudes between the communities or community cadres as a result of this religious pluralism.

E. The increasing prevalence of consumerism at the Panchayat level has catalyzed significant tensions, exemplified by the controversy surrounding the burgeoning DJ culture within the studied gram Panchayat in Nari Petlawad. This phenomenon highlights the intricate interplay between cultural practices and evolving social norms in local governance.

In the first half of 2023, the studied Gram Panchayat (GP) Petlawad—was compelled to address a proposed ban on hiring disc jockeys (DJs) for weddings, referred to as the "DJ ban". This proposal was initiated by active members of the SHG from the said GP, who highlighted issues such as noise pollution, the departure from traditional values, and the exposure of young children to inappropriate behaviors and ideas associated with modernism, particularly regarding 'love marriages' and anti-family values. Ultimately, the SHG members succeeded in their efforts, and the GP implemented a ban on hiring DJs for family weddings. Other SHG members have praised this action during their discussions with us, particularly commending how the women came together and effectively presented their case at the Panchayat level.

This controversy underscores important takeaways that include:

- The rising demand for DJs at weddings signals greater ostentation in the community, but for many women, especially SHG members, this poses a troubling challenge to their effort to build socio-economic security. Hiring a DJ can cost almost INR 50,000, leading many women to take huge loans that are difficult to repay, undermining their economic stability.
- The increasing prevalence of consumerism has been perceived by numerous stakeholders within the community, encompassing both male and female participants—as well as a considerable cohort of older Self-Help Group (SHG) members—as a potential threat to traditional values. Many of these older individuals articulate concerns that this burgeoning trend is indicative of a decline in respect for established norms, equating it with behaviors perceived as "disrespectful" and inconsistent with "good values." Notably, they identify practices such as alcohol consumption, manifestations of "urban rudeness," and tendencies towards "self-absorption" as contributing factors to the erosion of these valued principles among the youth.
- As our researchers began introducing themselves to community members—not only the Self-Help Group (SHG) cadre but also their families and those not involved with the SHG framework—they observed multiple discussions about "disrespectful behavior" exhibited by younger individuals in their communities, particularly among youth and adolescents. During their introduction to the Petlawad Cluster Level Federations (CLFs), the researchers also noticed several organic conversations highlighting concerns that

adolescent girls and boys were "pairing up" at lively events, such as weddings with DJs. Regarding the impact on gender relations, the older generation identified a "changing set of values" among younger individuals that extends beyond mere "city-like rudeness." There is a significant fear that adolescent young men and women might form romantic connections in social settings, defying caste, class, and communal norms, potentially leading to elopement. This increasing trend of young individuals eloping to marry adversely affects their families' ability to negotiate higher dowries for their sons, as dowries are traditionally paid to the girl's family.

F. The community and SHG members are apprehensive about their children interacting with people from different castes - and potentially eloping with them. DJ parties are seen as a platform for the youth to meet, which further challenges established caste/class and cultural boundaries, only heightening anxieties around younger persons pairing up and looking to elope.

- Our research indicates that for women at risk of domestic violence or displacement due to a husband's second marriage, the social and economic vulnerabilities of being an "abandoned" first wife, often without property or land rights, pose even greater challenges than remaining in an abusive household. However, such women tend to receive heightened empathy within Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and Cluster Level Federations (CLFs), where these collectives and friendships act as crucial support networks, particularly during cases of expulsion. Occasionally, our team observed "gatekeeping" practices within SHGs—led by members or even secretaries who have endured similar experiences—preventing second wives from joining the collective.
- The research team found that the children, especially girl children, occupy multiple roles throughout various stages of their lives. These roles include functioning as sources of assistance, and contributing labor. As these children mature, they are increasingly regarded as contributors to the family income, either through engagement in agricultural work on familial land or via matrimonial arrangements.
- Families also resort to child marriages as a way to prevent inter-caste marriages and protect their family's reputation.
- Domestic violence case referrals often start as 'Udti Khabar' or hearsay. Neighbours and friends spread the word, either to alert others in a well-meaning manner or simply as hearsay, about victims who may either may be reluctant to speak directly to their families or the Panchayat. Community cadres typically hear about "a woman's situation" through this grapevine before a 'case' is discussed. If the victim is not an SHG member, information about a potential case is usually passed on by concerned extended family members or friends during VO meetings, or directly to SHG members and Samta Sakhis.

G. During the interactions with the community cadre, we note that among active SHG members, there is a clear desire to break free of misogynistic gender norms. Through multiple deep dives, service journey tracking, and IDIs, our team has been privy to the women's fears on three key moments of change:

- Women often discuss the fear of elopement since it frequently leads to domestic violence or neglect in their maikka (parental home). This fear extends to upcoming arranged marriage also.
- The initial months and years after marriage is marked by household conflicts, restrictions on movement, the threat of domestic violence, and a long-standing fear of expulsion or displacement by a second or subsequent marriage, and

4.2 Overarching Cultural Insights

Our findings reveal that women frequently neglect their own health, which is often compromised. Culturally, pregnant daughters-in-law (bahus) are expected to work through their pregnancies, which often includes heavy manual labour on the family land or carrying heavy loads. Women are required

to manage their pregnancies alongside household chores without much help and without nutritional support, even in cadre households.

Our research highlights that newly-wed brides in these communities frequently become pregnant within months of marriage, facing a range of challenges that impact their health and nutrition. Many women develop irregular eating patterns due to the demands of household chores, often having a heavy breakfast, skipping lunch, and only eating at the end of the day. Additionally, women tend to drink minimal water to avoid bathroom breaks while working in the fields. Despite health concerns and the burden of medical expenses, many continue to invest in supplementary foods like coconut water, lemon water, or fruits to address their nutritional needs. However, while some women understand the importance of supplementing their diets to meet the demands of physical labor, the high cost of nutritional foods is prohibitive for many. Cadre members, in particular, express guilt about purchasing these supplements for themselves when they are unable to provide them for the rest of the family.

The overarching cultural insights (Madhya Pradesh) are as follows:

A. Our research found that women cadre face significant challenges in maintaining household cleanliness and hygiene to the expected standard ("tareeqe se"), as they receive no support from other women in the household, and male members generally do not assist with these tasks.

B. Many women express concerns about violence, a lack of resources, and the pressure to adhere to community norms, which often drives them back to their abusive husbands. Our findings indicate that women reporting domestic violence are keenly aware of prevailing patriarchal norms and often fear community judgment. When cases do not involve issues such as new wives or the loss of land or property, women tend to prefer resolving matters locally rather than reporting to formal institutions like One Stop Centres (OSCs). This reluctance to involve OSCs has led to frustration among OSC functionaries and Samta cadre members who work to address gender-based violence.

C. Our findings reveal frequent tensions between Self-Help Group (SHG) members and the gender cadre regarding communal norms and entrenched patriarchal values ("pitra satta"). Observations show that SHG members often confront gender cadre members and trainers, perceiving their guidance as external "lecturing." In SHGs with a high number of migrating members, reinforcing messages on gender and women's rights proves particularly challenging. Even when a quorum is met, cadre members frequently encounter indifference or apathy from SHG participants, complicating consistent engagement on these issues.

D. For the gender cadre, coming together to work on gender is a source of livelihood. Those drawn to the gender program do so because they are keen on the issues, with older cadre members showing increasing passion about issues like violence against women and promoting women's empowerment. The Samta Sakhis, on the other hand, see their role as volunteers mostly as a source of income. The travel allowance provided to them by the program to travel for ten days to work on gender outreach, case registration and closure, is often used to supplement their family income. This allowance, seen as a fixed monthly 'income', helps the Samta cadre achieve a sense of financial independence and influence in their extended families.

Samta Sakhis express interest in a fulltime work and enquire about formalising 'CRP work' to receive monthly payments for their contributions. It has been seen that case developments increase with the number of days they spend in the field. On the other hand, Samta Samanvayaks who receive higher financial support from the TSU and TRI report a lack of travel allowance (TA) and compensation for additional survey work (meant for CRPs) impacts their motivation. Our team finds that while the Samta cadre is increasingly passionate about working on social and gender empowerment, their primary motivation stems from limited opportunities and options. Some cadre members have found alternative options and transitioned to working with other CSO partners or NGOs, thus leveraging their new-found skills and experience to work in jobs that are both full-time and pay better.

E. A significant concern can be the flow of negative information to family members in a community where both men and women share very traditional and patriarchal views on women's empowerment. This can result in a breach of confidentiality when information is shared with family members, especially by caseworkers.

In numerous engagements with gender cadre, participants articulated their experiences with complex cases, expressing frustration towards women who hesitated to pursue legal action, remained in abusive relationships, or appeared to take insufficient measures to protect their children from familial abuse. Such discussions frequently occurred in the presence of family members, friends, co-workers, and local Panchayat representatives. Over time, these dialogues often expanded to include sensitive revelations about specific instances of abuse, private matters concerning women from surrounding villages, and critical assessments of their values and beliefs. Phrases such as "how can she be so weak?" were indicative of the prevailing attitudes.

Moreover, instances of sharing confidential information and making judgments within familial contexts prompted reactions of derision, including laughter and smirking, particularly among family members (husbands, mothers, sisters) and even among fellow gender cadre. These interactions led to consensus statements like "the women/people in this area can't be helped; they're useless." Upon further reflection with the cadre, it became evident that no training or sensitization had been provided regarding the imperative of maintaining confidentiality in casework. This lack of awareness raises significant concerns about ethical practice in the context of gender-based issues.

F. Weary community cadre members may bring home the frustrations from their fieldwork, which can include:

- Resistance to collectivising SHG members
- Frustration with colleagues and inter-cadre rivalry
- Travel-related frustration
- Dealing with cases of domestic violence and entitlements
- Family members, husbands, and friends selectively focus on negative aspects of discussions on frustrations over the positive ones. Discussions on domestic violence can turn into rants, leading to a breach of confidentiality, leading to salacious gossip and the alienation of the victims

G. Self-Help Groups (SHGs) within the same village may demonstrate varying behaviors as distinct collective entities. Field observations conducted in Petlawad reveal notable disparities in activity levels, efficacy in conducting meetings and managing SHG-related tasks, and responsiveness to the local project office across different localities (falias). This behavioral diversity, even within a demographically homogeneous context, indicates that specific collective dynamics may significantly affect the rate of change in gender-related knowledge, attitudes, and practices among SHG members.

H. Key factors that influence collective behaviour in SHGs can include:

- Geography
- Predisposition to migration
- Infrastructure (availability / access to water in the summer, etc.)
- Mentorship, or lack thereof, within SHGs
- Agency, or lack thereof, within individual SHG members
- Reliance on private samuhs (over DAY-NRLM SHGs)

This is reflected in MIS systems which show the saturation of self-help groups in a gram panchayat or block. Conversely, it can also be seen through registered SHGs, categorising them as active and non-active, respectively.

Individual 'collective' behaviours can dictate program info dissemination, and gender messaging efficacy, and eventually even if the SHG Samuh is sustained

Impact of Migration on Family Stability, Women's Empowerment, and the Functioning of Self-Help Groups in Petlawad

Our findings suggest that migration, driven by multiple factors, significantly impacts family stability, participation in Self-Help Groups (SHGs), village organizations, and, ultimately, women's empowerment. Although migration is often seen as a means to increase income, this strategy does not always yield sustainable financial benefits. Families who migrate to locations such as Dhar, Ujjain, Indore, or Vadodara often spend their earnings quickly, with the funds frequently directed towards supporting struggling businesses, farms, or completing unfinished homes. Entire families may migrate for extended periods—six to twelve months or longer—before returning, reflecting the complex economic dynamics and pressures behind migration choices.

Some other significant insights on migration and its impact on the stability of the family are discussed below:

- Newly-married brides in Petlawad are often compelled to work on farms as labourers immediately after marriage to recover the bride price
- A competitive drive to build bigger and pucca houses, vehicles and electronic goods is another significant factor forcing people to migrate to fund this expenditure. This disrupts the participation of women in SHGs and other collectives, and eventually, their ability to pay back Cash Credit loans or invest in the Community Investment Fund.
- Migrating SHG members increase the burden of repaying larger loans disproportionately on remaining SHG members, which can even push back the status of the SHG to the initial days of its formation, or render it non-functional.

In Petlawad, the migration of women, especially SHG members, has a considerable impact on both their socio-economic status and the sustainability of the SHG framework. When SHGs become non-functional due to the migration of their members, the remaining women lack motivation to engage socially, interact, or share experiences. This disconnect also results in missed opportunities for regular engagement with the gender cadre and trainers, which is essential for reinforcing messages on women's rights, empowerment, domestic violence, and child marriage. Consequently, migration weakens the support network that SHGs aim to provide for women in these communities.

A key challenge for the SHG framework and MPSRLM is the entrenched perception that **SHG women are not 'professional' farmers.** This is because farming here is viewed more as something to be performed as a routine chore rather than as a professional skill. Women are expected to perform the household chores as a 'good wife' and 'good mother', which also includes labouring on the farm and taking care of cattle and other animals, to help feed the family.

This perception persists despite the technical guidance offered by the Madhya Pradesh State Rural Livelihood Mission's district project management and their CSO partners on improved farming techniques and crop diversification. Surplus produce from the land is typically sold in the local markets, though commercial crops like kapas (cotton) are now being grown solely for sale, indicating a gradual shift to commercial farming. Sometimes, women also go to the market by themselves to make these sales.

Our research findings indicate that women are often not recognized as farmers, but rather as individuals engaged in household chores, as farm work is frequently viewed as an extension of domestic responsibilities. Furthermore, the necessity for these women to migrate during non-farming months, dictated by the male head of the household, significantly hinders their ability to engage in farming, manage associated businesses, and develop skills and knowledge in agricultural practices. This dynamic underscores the barriers women face in achieving recognition and empowerment within the agricultural sector.

4.3 Key Facilitating Factors for GJP

As the Madhya Pradesh State Rural Livelihood Mission (MPSRLM) scales its program, key facilitating factors have emerged that can enhance the effectiveness of the GJP (Gender Justice Program) initiative to overcome challenges, optimize resource utilization, and ensure that the benefits reach the intended communities, particularly women in rural areas.

These include:

a. The Participatory Action Learning System (PALS) training toolkit is one of the most significant components of the Gender Justice Program. Developed by ANANDI and later TRI, the response to the trainings conducted with the help of the toolkit by multiple trainers, has been positive and encouraging. An example of this ownership of the training is the recall and the pride shown by the community towards the trainer because of the quality training imparted by them. There GJP modules also have a high recall because of the manner in which they use local jargon, visualisation, drama and entertainment to help visualize problems and concepts.

The Gender Justice Programme training is held using the following six modules:

- Pehchane apne adhikaar mahila kisan
- Meri pehchaan
- Mera haq, meri pehchan
- Kiska palda bhaari
- Dana Kothi khali kyun
- Mahilayen ke vikaas sansthaan

While all modules are important, 'Mera haq, meri pehchan' and 'Kiska palda bhari' are the two most recalled modules for many respondents. An important factor aiding their recall value is the element of physical activity, visualization and brainstorming which form a crucial aspect of the overall training exercise (an example of which is games like 'Munna Munni ka Khel').

The modules are particularly exciting and memorable because of the manner in which simple visual metaphors have been incorporated into the overall design to explain difficult or complex concepts. For example, lentils and rice (representing male and female chromosomes, respectively) are used as metaphors to explain how the male chromosome determines the sex of the child. This method helps women not only explain the biology of sex determination to their husbands (they are not responsible for the conception of a girl child), but also gives them agency to communicate a difficult subject scientifically and with confidence, which is empowering.

b. The Lok Adhikar Kendra (LAK) was set up in Petlawad in 2022 to function as a community resource centre to facilitate the resolution of multiple cases. So far, between its inauguration in 2000 till August, 2023, it has been instrumental in providing support and legal assistance to women from the three focus Community-level Federations - Nari Shakti, Mahimata, and Bharat Mata – in sittings facilitated by Samta Samanvayaks.

Registration Process: The Lok Adhikar Kendra has regular sittings every Monday and Thursday of the week, with the sessions being facilitated by Samta Sakhis from the three focus Community-level Federations. The Samta Sakhis assist individuals in registering complaints with the Lok Adhikar Kendra. For more complicated cases – like cases of domestic violence – the Lok Adhikar Kendra refers the complainants to the One Stop Centre (OSC) in Jhabua. The OSC functionaries then carry out counselling session for all parties involved.

The Samta Sakhis and Samanvayaks provide support to victims throughout the OSC process. This includes not only offering advice but even accompanying the victims to the OSC for their first meeting, and ensuring they receive the necessary counselling and legal support.

After the resolution of the case, the Samta Sakhi takes feedback from the complainant to measure the effectiveness of the resolution and whether the woman is satisfied with the outcome.

c. In Petlawad block, women face mobility issues, with an average travel time of two hours to

reach Jhabua from any village. They thus need to prioritize travelling to the Lok Adhikar Kendra instead at the OSC, especially when it comes to cases of domestic violence.

For their part, the Samta cadre has played a crucial role in conducting awareness and outreach activities in remote parts of the Petlawad block to make sure SHG members and women are aware about the services offered by the Lok Adhikar Kendra at the block level. Many women, living in remote parts of the three scale-up CLFs in Petlawad block, were not aware of the Lok Adhikar Kendra and had hence tried approaching OSC and the district court directly. Lok Adhikar Kendra's weekly Task Force (TF) meetings in convergence with various different government departments enhance its efficiency and effectiveness by facilitating the processing of multiple fresh applications for redressal and ensuring quick action.

Some common facilitating factors that can help mediate case closure include:

- Survivor's agency and empowerment
- Family support and awareness of women's family members
- Regular follow-ups by LAK and coordination with authorities
- Convergence at Task Force meetings
- Administrative work like approvals, etc.
- Samanvayak commitment, and
- Counselling services at OSC

With time, as the proficiency in dealing in domestic violence cases increase, so does the Lok Adhikar Kendra response in quickly and efficiently processing the cases.

Conversely, some common obstacles and systemic lacunae identified by our team include:

- Complainant's desire to resolve issues locally
- Husband's non-cooperation
- Lengthy duration of cases
- Political events that influence functioning of Lok Adhikar Kendras
- Inability to resolve cases that are deeply rooted in tradition and culture
- Lack of initiative, delay at the panchayat level
- Issues around travel allowance for cadre, and
- Migration

d. The Gender Justice Program has shown synergy in aligning the efforts of both the Nari Adhikar Kendras (NAK) and the NAK GCRPs (Gender Crisis Response Points) cadre.

NAK refers relevant entitlement cases, especially those involving rights and violence, to the Samta cadre to process at the Lok Adhikar Kendra. In case of overlaps, NAK refers these cases to the Samta cadre, for handling at the Lok Adhikar Kendra/block level. It must be noted that the work of TRI-supported trainers also train the Samta cadre - their work over the last few years merits documentation and inclusion in the best practices emerging from Madhya Pradesh's implementation of GJP.

e. The success of the GJP program is largely due to the enthusiastic response and commitment of the Samta cadre and the supporting community cadre. Their commitment to redressal of issues related to land and property rights, disenfranchisement, domestic violence and gender-based discrimination in Petlawad/Jhabua, as well as in neighbouring districts like Alirajpur, Dhar, Ratlam, Indore and Dewas – even before the introduction of SWAYAM - has significantly impacted the community. The GJP program, along with its trainers and the PALS toolkit, has shown the effective functioning of the LAK and facilitated a new norm - conversations around domestic violence and property rights can lead to positive outcomes.

Some key factors impacting the journey towards positive change in Petlawad include:

- Desire to live a better life
- Experience of vulnerability (loss, poor health, restrictions on mobility, financial stress)
- Self-confidence
- Commitment to their work

- Willingness to learn
- Fostering a strong bond with co-workers
- Demonstration of agency when challenged with traditional roles, norms

Similarly, some common barriers in the journey towards positive change in Petlawad include:

- Financial instability
- Poor family support
- Health challenges of family members
- Being primary caretaker for those sick in the family
- Imposition of traditional conventions, norms

f. The gradual scaling-up of the GJP program has helped the implementors focus on key components such as training outcomes, outreach to SHGs, counselling by the Samta cadre, and the case resolution process at the Lok Adhikar Kendra. This approach has helped Samta Samanvayaks develop a deeper understanding of counselling and information dissemination related to the gender program in other CLFs (where a gradual expansion of activities is being carried out).

4.4 Changes in Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP)

Analysing changes in KAP observations on collectivism, as a result of exposure to gender programming and potential shifts in sociocultural norms, reveals a nuanced landscape in Madhya Pradesh:

- **Changes in Knowledge:** The pace of change in KAPs post-GJP implementation is limited when it comes to SHGs, but significant among the community cadre. In fact, evidence shows that change is faster in those already looking to resisting violence, discrimination, disenfranchisement particularly in Madhya Pradesh. MPSRLM has leveraged the success stories and practical examples of women who have successfully turned their lives around in their outreach to amplify this positive change, with particular emphasis on stopping domestic violence and financial/familial support to the estranged wife.
- **Changes in Attitude:** Changes in attitude has been difficult to map in the non-community cadre in Petlawad. It suggests that while SHG and non-SHG member women are acting on issues like domestic violence, child abuse, traditional beliefs and patriarchal norms continue to hold sway and influence behaviour, especially amongst the non-community cadre. Our inference is that while changes in attitude are indeed afoot and resources like the LAK can help in facilitating changes in practice and attitude for a lot of traditional women. However, changing deep-rooted mindsets will take longer and require targeted efforts.
- The varied experiences of SHG groups and their VOs reflect illustrate the impact of the individual on the collective behaviour, which in turn is determined by factors like migration and the collective interests of the group. As discussed earlier in this chapter on contextual insights, there may be many SHGs not in compliance with the SHG framework: for example, they may not meet regularly, repay their loans, or look to escape responsibility and accountability, and generally display poor user behaviour towards the SHG framework. These SHGs also do not send their adhyaksh (secretary) to their VOs (thus missing the training to strengthen their knowledge and skills), nor the introduction to their CLF's Samta cadre for valuable resources and support in promoting social change, or being aware of the presence of the LAK in Petlawad so they can access assistance and information in resolving issues important to their communities. The changes in attitude, however, is reflected mostly in committed SHG members such as Samta Sakhis, who are invested in the SHG framework's theory of change and keen to build on their knowledge.
- It is important to recognise that rapid changes can be seen in women who are already inclined towards change, show strong agency, a desire to earn their own livelihood, exposure and have been recognised even before training. At the same time, it is important to recognise that familial and spousal/male support plays a significant role in women's empowerment

(cadre, SHG members, and non-members alike) and should be considered in future program design.

On Collectivism in Petlawad

Collectivism shown by SHG groups or community cadres in addressing gender-based discrimination and/or domestic violence is an important development in the Petlawad block. It can be further enhanced where there are active SHG members wishing to engage with the gender cadre and talk about issues within their villages. Collectivism is strong amongst community cadre who regularly show up for each other, it will nevertheless take more time for this collective instinct to become a norm amongst SHG members. To that end, this report also discusses emerging archetypes of women within/close to the SHG framework, in Annex 4.

4.5 Research Insights on GJP Implementation, Correlating Changes, and Impact

a. **Gender messaging in SHG meetings is not overt (deliberately):** Our study indicates that gender messaging is not always given high priority or discussed explicitly in SHG meetings. This makes it important for trainers, Samta Sakhis and Samta Samanvayaks to find ways to strategic ways to integrate messaging on gender into these discussions while also continuing to keep the focus on issues land rights, financial empowerment, and loan eligibility, etc.

b. **Understanding of 'training' and general discussions:** It has been observed by our research team that SHG members not engaging with their SHGs proactively or failing to attend meetings regularly find it difficult to comprehend the term 'training'. While they may be able to recall informal discussions (baat-cheet) around issues like livelihoods, they nevertheless fail to recall the content of these discussions nor are able to retain the outreach material (kagaz, samagrih) given to them during these discussions. In contrast, members who attend their SHG meetings regularly are able to make the distinction between regular SHG activities ('len-den', or give and take) and the specific, topical sessions on issues like health, sanitation, finance, livelihood, gender, etc.

c. **Promoting land and property rights through GJP training:** Pucca houses are seen as a sign of affluence in this region. With training sessions on entitlements driving change by stressing the importance of ownership of property in the woman's name, more and more SHG women are striving to acquire pucca houses by enhancing their skills - as tailors or vegetable vendors, etc.) - to achieve financial independence, sometimes even without the support of their families.

d. **Training on land and property rights:** Training sessions on land and property rights are listened to in rapt attention and see the active engagement of SHG women attending them. To illustrate: our ethnographers have witnessed numerous discussions, both in formal training settings and informal contexts, where the issue of land rights is a recurring theme. Both the trainers and community cadres alike emphasise the importance of leveraging schemes like 'Do Bigha Zameen' by the first wives to secure their entitlements.

e. **Strategic recommendations on leveraging knowledge on land rights**: The Madhya Pradesh State Rural Livelihoods Mission employs trainers like Samta Sakhis, and Samta Samanvayaks to educate women about the importance of leveraging knowledge on land and property rights. However, they also advocate with the women to avoid taking a confrontational tone in their families. Instead, the trainers recommend using information like the provision under the 'Do Bigha Zameen' scheme, wherein each land title is entitled to INR 2000, to advocate splitting the titles so that the family stands to receive INR 4000 instead of INR 2000.

f. **Request for regular refresher trainings:** Trainees have requested regular refresher training sessions as they tend to forget the topics covered initially. Although SHG members have undergone training on gender issues, the recall value of this information can be low. Many members have thus expressed the need for refresher trainings to revisit the initial material in these modules. This suggests a need for ongoing support to help the SHG members retain and apply the information they have learned about gender issues.

g. **Paradoxical but encouraging male responses:** The response of men in interviews and observational interactions depended on the roles they played. For example, men in non-influential or non-leadership positions, or husbands of SHG and cadre members, viewed SHGs negatively, believing that the work their cadre-member wives do is "pointless".

- In contrast, men in leadership roles such as sachivs, sarpanchs, and mantris have a more positive view of SHGs and women's empowerment initiatives, who both recognise the impact of Madhya Pradesh State Rural Livelihoods Mission trainings in bringing about change, and clearly articulate this change in statements like "*auraton ko sarkari office bhejo toh kaam karwa dengi*" (send the women to government offices; they will get the job done), etc. Samta cadre or women livelihood cadre or CLF officials, especially those women who have actively visited villages, attended gram sabha meetings, shown active interest in the GPDP (Gram Panchayat Development Plan), or have raised developmental issues with district functionaries in Jhabua.

h. **Impact of men's presence in SHG meetings:** It has been observed that the presence of men in SHG meetings often discourages women from either actively participating in or speaking up in these meetings. Men sometimes argue with the women and the trainers, disrupting the meetings and making it difficult to achieve any tangible outcome. Significantly, women are forced to adopt the ghoonghat/parda in front of men - especially if they are elders or senior government functionaries - forcing them to cover their faces and retreat to the corners of the room, making it difficult to discuss sensitive issues like domestic violence candidly. Our inference from these observations is that women trainers may find it difficult to discuss gender-based issues at home when participants are present.

i. **Important note:** Some male nodal program and line department functionaries may inadvertently create challenges in their interactions with the community cadre. This can be particularly daunting for newer and younger members of the community cadre, who may find these dynamics intimidating. Older cadre members who speak up about issues like pay or time spent on fieldwork often find themselves cut short and asked to "leave if they want to".

- That said, there are also male who show patience and respect to cadre members; it is these functionaries that cadre members value, look up to and prefer working with over other male functionaries.

j. **Difference between trained and untrained women:** Our findings reveal that trained women demonstrate enhanced communication skills and a stronger sense of solidarity among themselves. They possess a solid understanding of land and property rights and actively advocate for these rights within their communities. Ethnographic observations indicate that trained community cadres play a significant role in making key financial decisions within their households. Notably, as cadre members gain experience, their families increasingly rely on them for financial tasks, such as banking activities and purchasing valuable items like silver.

k. **Collectivisation around domestic violence by trained cadres:** Trained cadres display greater confidence and collectivization when confronting abusive family members or spouses of SHG members. For example, a CRP-Samanvayak shared an incident wherein a drunk man disrupted their meeting and verbally abused her. The bookkeeper recorded this incident, and the next day, the CRP-Samanvayak, supported by the SHG women, challenged his actions. A stamped notice by

the CLF warned the man to never speak to the CRP-Samanvayak or to disrupt any meeting in the future. For trained cadre members, being able to achieve this level of collectivization in support of victims of domestic violence is also a matter of great pride.

l. **Samta Cadre's commitment to motivate victims of violence:** Samta cadre members are deeply committed to supporting victims of domestic violence, child abuse or abusive marriages. They can leave no stone unturned in order to identify and uncover cases of abuse and discrimination, as seen from in the incident from Mahimata where CLF, senior cadre and SHG members repeatedly came together to tackle potential cases of child abuse.

- VO functioning is impacted by migration, which affects gender messaging: Samta cadres have reported challenges like the poor functioning and lack of independence in working with SHGs and VOs, especially in executing tasks that otherwise fall to CRPs but also when it comes to their gender messaging. Irregular SHG meetings can disrupt the functioning of VOs, where the Samta cadre often meet SHG secretaries and/or their representatives. COVID has further exacerbated the functioning of VOs; additionally, the misconception among SHG members that loans will be forgiven ('loan forgiveness') can lead to SHG members to a lack of accountability and commitment to repaying the collective.

m. **As one Samanvayak told us:** "Didis are prepared to pay an EMI of INR 2000 every month on the private loans they have taken, but will not pay INR 100 every month to their SHG as repayment for loans taken…it is extremely difficult to convince them otherwise". Cadre members have even observed male family members discouraging SHG members from attending meetings or repaying loans. As mentioned in the section on cultural insights from Madhya Pradesh earlier in this chapter, user behaviour – whether it is the CLF, SHG, or VO - differs from group to group. The Mahimata CLF has shown very poor user behaviour: it is not rare for the cadre to find SHG members "pretending not to be SHG didis or GPPs, so that they don't have to attend meetings, or build relationships with cadre who might press them to repay CCL loans".

n. **Trust in MPSRLM built on loan-taking and repayment:** Gender empowerment has been underway since the introduction of the SHG framework in the late 2000s or early 2010s, when modern concepts of gender identity gradually became driven by various state livelihood missions. The MPSRLM provides loans to SHG and community cadre women for their empowerment and improvement of their socio-economic status through diversified livelihood options. However, issues like migration and poor loan user behaviour continue to pose a challenge to the livelihood mission that have to be overcome. The MPSRLM efforts to initiate mixed cropping and modern agricultural techniques have not found much traction, according to Petlawad-based members. Despite the availability of mobile apps like the Freedom app developed by the DAY-NRLM - which provide access to numerous children's tutorials as well as technical training videos on modern agriculture practices - the app has not found much favour among SHG members. On the contrary, it has been observed that some users prefer to pay for the training sessions rather than use the Freedom app. This kind of user behaviour suggests that SHG collectives are looked at more as a source of easy loans, socialization and informal gossip rather than a serious platform for long-term gender empowerment. These determinants have an impact on the gender training imparted to new SHG members vis-à-vis those members only interested in accessing loans, since members interested in only accessing loans could result in a limited understanding of gender issues and empowerment among SHG members.

o. **Relooking the definition of 'Marginalised', 'Vulnerable' and 'At Risk' Women:** The study findings indicate a necessity to broaden the definition of vulnerable populations and families to include factors such as land ownership, destitution, and a more comprehensive understanding of gender vulnerability. This includes considerations of relationship status and marriage trajectories, women's

land ownership, access to legal resources or those provided by the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), child custody issues, and the risk of domestic violence perpetrated by both men and women. Enhancing access to various public sector schemes is essential, including safety nets, wage employment, and self-employment programs.

p. **Important to note:** Our research highlights that even newly-empowered women, such as the Samta cadre, can experience vulnerability and require support. Although their increased awareness enhances their ability to advocate for gender rights within their families, it can also provoke feelings of threat among male family members. In response, these men may resort to verbal or physical abuse. Without land or property rights, these women often perceive their income from livelihoods as their primary source of leverage. Consequently, providing support for diversifying their livelihood and income streams is essential for fostering their long-term empowerment.

q. **Power struggles within communities impacts gender program outcomes:** Kinship can play an important role when it comes to the identification and selection of qualified community cadres. In other scenarios, cadre for LAK and Nari Adhikar Kendra (NAK) can either form strong bonds or experience rifts within their groups on issues related to women's rights, like if a cadre member is caught having an affair, or if a cadre member refuses to help the second wife in the family with SHG membership, etc.). This can lead to mistrust and tension and can result in the ousting of hardworking sensitive cadre members, apart from affecting case confidentiality, closure, and outreach targets over a long period.

4.6 CASE STUDY

MADHYA PRADESH

Jyoti
SHG Member,
Madhya Pradesh

Jyoti, in her mid-30s, married around ten years ago and is the proud mother of two children. However, it hasn't been easy for her ever since the day she got married: throughout these years, she was forced to endure daily physical and emotional abuse at the hands of her husband. When her husband began an affair with another woman and threatened to bring her home, Jyoti realised this was the last straw for her. She went back to her maternal home, a decision that was supported wholeheartedly by her family, and especially her father and brothers. She also demanded a formal divorce from her husband and ensured she received an alimony. But all this came at a great cost to her: she lost custody of her daughters to her husband. Since this happened, Jyoti has seen able to see her daughters sparingly and though this must hurt her deeply, she refuses to show her real feelings to anyone. On the contrary, she has realised that custody of the girl child is essential to most families in Petlawad for the free labour they bring with them.

Since her divorce, Jyoti has focused on becoming increasingly independent: she has joined an SHG in her village and has used the access to loans to help her parents and brothers build their fortunes by borrowing and repaying money on time. today, her once-kutcha house is now a pucca one. She is also amongst a handful of women farmers who is acknowledged by her community as a professional farmer, even though this shift in people's perception has happened gradually over time. As such, an empowered and informed Jyoti has taken to mushroom farming on her land, with the technical guidance coming from the MPSRLM office. And even though the test crop failed, she has not given up - she launched two new businesses in partnership with a neighbour and a friend – and hopes to diversify her family's income using these businesses.

Jyoti's family has been supportive of her entrepreneurship. Though she has yet to receive gender training officially, her proximity to gender champions and her CLF's Samta Sakhi cadre ensures that she has access to information like the PALS (Participatory Action Learning System) toolkit, core messaging, and how it is being implemented, mostly learning from the games and role plays during SHG meetings to visualise gender discrimination. She is aware that the Samta Sakhi and other SHG cadre assist women in crisis, something that she is very supportive of given her experience.

5

RECOMMENDATIONS & WAY FORWARD

This chapter discusses different ways to expand the SWAYAM program by replicating the successful implementation models not only in Madhya Pradesh and Odisha but also across different states in India, especially with regard to the systemic and pedagogic responses.

Systemic Response

A. **Reviewing the design of the top-down approach of training:** Currently, the impact is strongest with community cadres, who already receive messaging on gender through regular Government campaigns and convergence activities. Mechanisms to be in place for understanding the impact of gender training through various studies. However, the transfer of information to families and non-SHG members tapers significantly; strategies must be devised to improve the transfer of messaging to non-SHG community members. Exploring synergies between other training platforms of non-SHG members on relevant topics and context-specific issues for deepening gender impact. Disseminate key messages during the SHG training to create awareness in neighborhoods on rights and entitlements.

B. **Scale-up of the gender program should be strategically carried out to demonstrate quick impact:** scaling up of programs that demonstrate behavior change/KAP change via information transfer needs to be systematic and regular.

C. **EC and SAC Members and GPPs need more intensive and frequent training in gender programming (more than gender cadre)**: Executive Committee (EC) & Social Action Committee (SAC) members and Gender Point Persons (GPPs) don't necessarily get any exposure to gender training or messaging, but together are important members of the ecosystem who must support gender cadre and help refer DV cases and support complainants. Currently, EC and SAC members can even demonstrate patriarchal beliefs; GPPs either don't know they are GPPs or refuse to acknowledge their responsibility (especially if they are part of a non-functional SHG).

D. **Leveraging the SHG informal space for enhanced gender dialogue:** Informal spaces provide scope for SHG members to receive a break from their day-to-day routine and form friendships, building strong social relations. Strategic messaging as informal information shared casually can be leveraged in these spaces and influence KAP faster. (for ex, information on new businesses, stories on how a GCRP addressed a complex DV case creatively and successfully, and impressive change stories).

E. **Adolescent girl engagement can become a very important trust-building strategy and sustainable pathway going forward with convergence with WCD:** Girls under 18 often perform gendered tasks at home, in some community cadre and SHG member homes too, and don't necessarily receive information on gender programming, or resources. Adolescent SHG- platform could be designed for unmarried young women and adolescent girls starting at age 14, to spread information on reproductive healthcare, legal provisions on child care and abuse, financial planning and decision-making, and career counseling/ planning. The community cadre recommends using this to monitor girls vulnerable to abuse and child marriage, and creatively transfer messaging on health, gender, and financial planning faster, to parents and others in the community.

F. **Male engagement approach could be considered to be pilot tested by DAY-NRLM and local SRLMs in Odisha and MP:** Community cadre particularly asks for:

- Couple engagement approaches on financial planning for young couples
- Engagement of fathers in gender meetings to sensitize them on equitable household roles, childcare responsibilities, and support for women's empowerment.
- Sensitizing men on legal provisions around gender and DV
- Engaging an influential male figure from the village to head discussion sessions with other men. Leveraging male Panchayat

leaders who already support the community cadre and are recognized as male allies.

G. As the Gender cadre expands the role, the ground referral process will need strengthening. It will be important to:

- Provide support and protection to gender cadre, especially for DV, Child Sexual Abuse (CSA), and trafficking cases by EC, SAC, and Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs)
- Build strong linkages with police, legal authorities, Child Protection Officer (CPO), one-stop centre/sakhi centre, Panchayats
- Conduct a mapping of vulnerable households for protection in new blocks/ districts/states
- Strengthen confidentiality measures to protect victims from misinformation while also building mechanisms for people to pass on information to persons who might be vulnerable to abuse
- As recommended by trainers and ToTs (including legal/DLSA appointed trainers), integrate strategic messaging on gender-based rights and entitlements and regular follow-up with victims who may need assistance or motivation to come forward

Pedagogic Expansion

A. An expanding Pedagogic Methods for Greater Participation and Stickiness of Messaging: use more games, dramatic tools from Theatre of the Oppressed, local jargon, and local stories of change or conflict.

B. Some topics influence greater recall and interest, and there's demand for more: implementors should explore developing specific modules on the following topics:

- Land and property rights
- Rights in marriage
- Child marriage - how to counsel/Training of Trainers Module

6

CONCLUSION

The impact of the SWAYAM program on community cadre and gender champions in Tileibani and Petlawad in Odisha and Madhya Pradesh respectively, has been significant, complementing the already significant changes brought about by the SHG framework in these blocks. While it is widely accepted that gender KAPs cannot change 'overnight', it must be said that our observations in the field say otherwise: gender KAPs cannot change 'overnight' on a mass scale, but individual community members can and do experience rapid change, pushing back against traditional gender norms. Friends and peer supporters of community members as well as their families testify to both the rapid change and the pace of change in these members due in large part to the SWAYAM program.

Both the Odisha Livelihood Mission and the Madhya Pradesh State Rural Livelihood Mission have successfully leveraged leaders of change within their SHG frameworks. We strongly recommend that SRMLs identify leaders with strong livelihood and gender change journeys within their own SHG frameworks.

Between the Gender Justice Program and the Gender Transformative Model, IWWAGE and DAY-NRLM have two different, uniquely iterative approaches to draw learnings from for community cadres and SHG members. These include:

- Violence against women
- Livelihood sources
- Land and property rights and entitlements
- Girl child security, and
- Maintaining secure male figures in their lives

Cadre and SHG members strive to balance traditional and modern identities, and the more engaged they are with their local SHG and its activities, the more they are able to away from home and traditionally gendered roles. There is also notable interest in training modules around land and property rights in both states; we suggest that expand such training by DAY-NRLM, MPSRLM, and OLM could serve as a catalyst for change for empowering women through bequeathal and increased land and property ownership. Conversely, it could also invite more violence against them but by then, the gender cadre in both states would be well-equipped to ensure not only the delivery of legal services for women, but also implement successful deterrents to violence in their communities.

ANNEXURES

Annex 1: More on Approach & Methodology

Evolving Ethnography to Mitigate Bias: From Solo Venture to Buddy System

Traditionally, ethnography is conducted over months or even years, as a solo venture, and in India, is done more for academic purposes. Commercial ethnographies and design ethnographies can be shorter and more focused, but these exercises also tend to be conducted independently at the data-gathering stage. This makes ethnographers vulnerable to their own biases, particularly selection, conformation, and sometimes halo biases. The more time spent in the field, the more time ethnographers have to navigate past a respondent or subject group's initial, idealistic presentations of their narratives, to capture more nuanced aspects of their behaviors, attitudes, and practices. But with more time in the field, there is also the risk of (what past anthropologists have crudely termed as) 'going native': with greater immersion and empathy for a subject group there is lessening objectivity towards the narratives and data ethnographers gather. Solo ethnographers are typically supervised from afar by senior academicians or managers, but that process doesn't always help in mitigating or checking biases in the field, in key moments. As a result, the risks of independent ethnographic research and analysis include:

- Mitigating personal bias increasingly becomes a challenge
- Additionally, selection and performance biases, along with research exhaustion, can make the raw data capture of more than 10-15 respondents difficult for a solo ethnographer to carry out alone; for a long-term qualitative research exercise such as this one, it was imperative that we have a larger sample
- Data processing and analysis, and the intellectual burden involved in the process, increases over time, making the process doubly challenging for lone researchers

The COVID crisis in 2020-'21 further pushed social scientists and development sector researchers around the world to review their existing approaches, methods, and accompanying ethical considerations, and forced us all to consider the need for greater community collaboration and indeed, ownership, in the process of data collection. As part of this, we identified researchers, all women, two for each site who spoke the local language and were closely familiar with tribal cultures and contexts, having either studied or else worked in either of the two states. In each site - the Tileibani block in Deogarh district, Odisha, and the Petlawad block in Jhabua district, MP - we situated a pair of trained, women ethnography and design researchers, to live for several weeks at a time within the villages and clusters they were to study. Anthropie refers to this as a 'buddy system': each researcher was constantly paired with another, and tasked with making contextual, semiotic, and informational flow-based observations together, post-internal analysis and discussion. Their observations on the day would include both researchers' insights, even differences or variances in ideas, so as to capture an observation as holistically as might be possible. All observational events would then be discussed with a back-end support team made up of remotely based ethnographic and design research specialists. In this way, each ethnographic observation was analyzed at two levels, and more queries were posed for the primary researchers - the community-based ethnographers - to take back to the following days' observational practice. The same process was carried out for the initial phase of unstructured observation, as well as the following phases of semi-structured and survey-based data collection.

(The ethnographers who worked on the field to gather insights for this report, also developed a book of monographs/case studies accompanying this report. This booklet can be found in Annexure 5.)

Annex 2: CHANGE JOURNEY MAPS

What is a change journey?

What is a change journey?

A visual timeline of significant events in the personal and professional life of a person, marked with barriers and enablers to their growth and empowerment.

Why do we need change journey?

The linear account of events tell a subject's story to the reader through data points as mentioned by the subject. It allows readers to understand the subject's intrinsic qualities, their motivations and decision making, and draw inferences around how these paired with programatic inputs are linked to their ability to take ownership of their professional role in GTM and drive Gender Justice initiatives in their communities. The change journeys on this document are supplemented with three additional types of information:

- The subject's identity
- A count of cases of Gender Based issues registers
- An analysis of key factors attributing to change in the subject

How to read the change journey maps?

Below is a code sheet for the different elements used in the change journey map that will tell you what type of information each element represents.

SUBJECT CODE
OLM Position
Age ST/SC
The subject's identity; how she portrays & identifies hereself
No of gender based cases registered by GCRPs
Factors attributing to change in subject's empowerment status, identified through analysis of their journey
Quotation or phrase said by subject
Quotation or phrase said to by subject someone else
Year
2007
2008
2009
2010
Key events
Key events
Key events
Key events
Indicator markets
K Indicator of change in knowledge
A Indicator of change in attitude
P Indicator of change in practice
Enables & positive outcomes
Barries & negative outcomes
Debatable outcome

SUBJECT CODE #05
GCRP 33 years ST

Community Infuencer

She is part of a group of influencial women driving the OLM mission in the district

Community members indentify her as someone who can take action for mistreatment of women

Business Woman

She has been able to identify and enterprise of opportunities to start two small businesses; tailoring and a shop, to increase her family's income

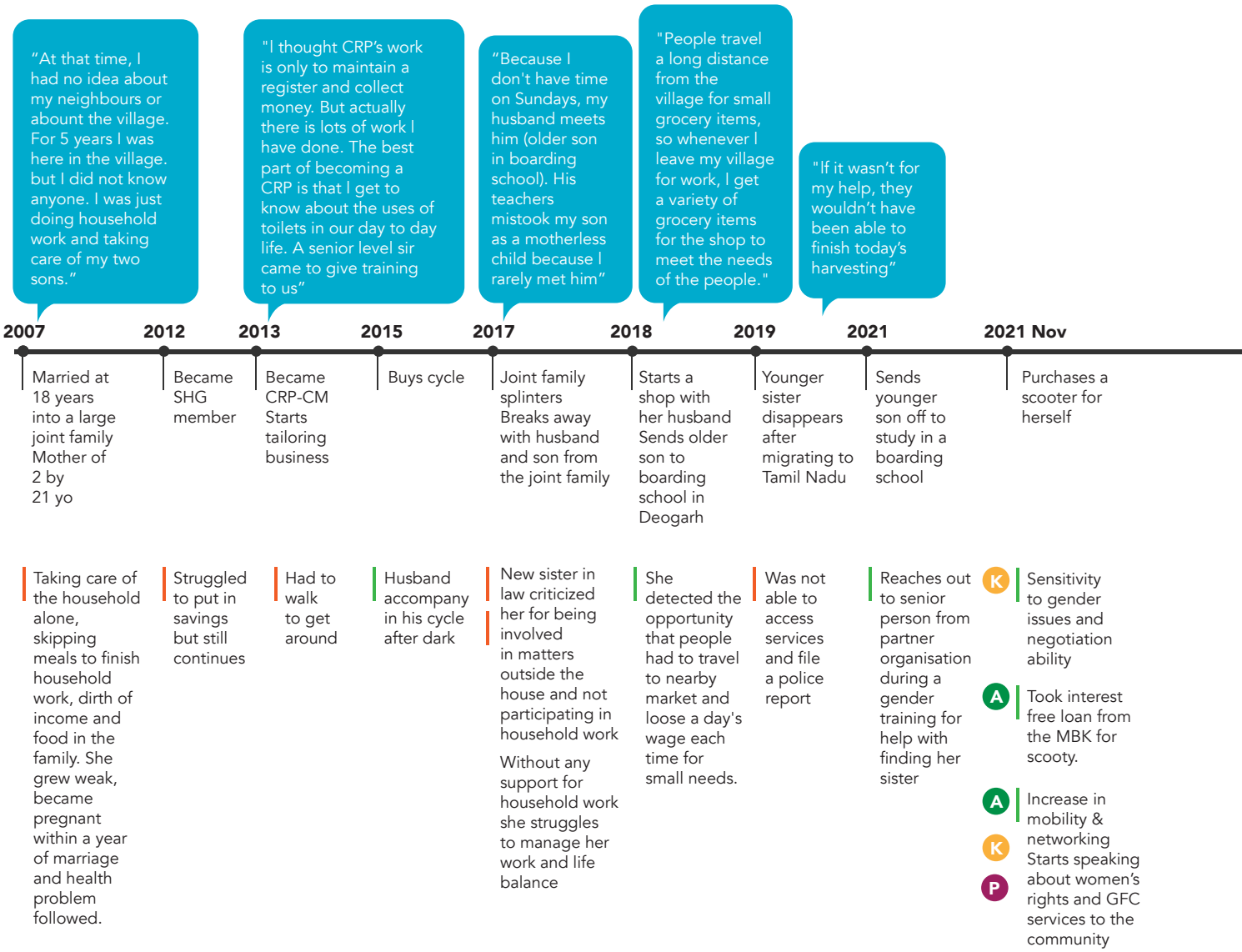
GCRP Kendeijuri

She was part of first batch of women to become GCRPs and has been actively supporting women to express gender based issues and demand justice

Keeper of family ties

Although she and her husband separated from his family, she maintains healthly relationships with her family in-law. She shares an equitable and respectful realtionship with her husband.

She took initiative to resolve a misunderstanding between her natal family and her differently abled younger sister who had estranged them



56 Total no. of cases registered

Entitlement Cases	50
Domestic Violence Cases	06
Locally resolved & closed	02
FIR registered	04

Most cases came from BPL ST women

Factors attributed to change

- **Aspiration for better quality of life**

  Strong will to breakout of condition of poverty and hardship in a joint family set up

  Got involved in SHG as soon as she was informed about it Stuggled to put in money due to poverty but still continued

- **Additional income from OLM**

  Being able to earn some money independent of the family's assets and trade inspired the couple to want better quality of life

- **Strong spousal partnership**

  Works hard to earn own income Runs the shop together with her Helps in kitchen and household work

  Helps her in commuting for work Concerned about her professional image Shared responsibilities for caring for children

- **Children's education**

  Aspiration for children to go to good schools and complete schooling

- **Entreprising attitude**

  Multiple small businesses; tailoring, shop, paper plate production

- **Self Efficacy**

  Inquisitive and determined to find opportunities for learning/training and work Motivated & hard working

- **Ability to build social network**

  X as a mentor Collaboration with other cadres Approachable and reliable

- **Ability to learn new skills**

  Self taught tailoring Shop management Household finance management Offical paperwork Phone use

- **Loss of motivation to resolve DV cases**

  Lack of support from external stakeholders Limitation of GCRP's role Loss of survivor/ community's trust

"The concept of gender itself was new for us. Initially, people thought that was more related to the third gender or to Hijra/Chakka."

"I was afraid then but now I'm not afraid of approaching the police personnel."

"Men in the village say, "don't tease/ say anything to women otherwise they'll complaint to Sushama Didi about us and she will send us to police station""

2022

Finds her sister who had estranged her and her family, angry about some gossip

P

She was able to find her sister on facebook and used her negotiation skills to resolve their family conflict

2022 Jan

First domestic violence survivor reaches out to her for help

A P

Survivor was her neighbour and she wanted to help immediately

Able to collectivise community members to counsel the husband and resolve the cases locally

2022 Apr

Second survivor of (long term) domestic violence reaches out

A P

Actively tries to find a house for the SC woman who wants to live separately from her abusive husband.

No one wants to rent to an SC woman with abusive husband. Survivor continues to live with abuser.

2022 Sept

Third survivor of (long term) domestic violence reaches out

A P

She was aware that this woman has been abused over many years

Unable to close this case because of systemic obstructions & limitation of GCRP role. Woman is still being abused at home

2023 Feb

Attended GTM training to share her experience of being a GCRP with new candidates

2023 Mar

GCRP from another GP reaches out to her for advice regarding a domestic violence case

P

Provides instructions to call Sakhi Center

2023 Apr

Second survivor is violated again and reaches out to her. she calls Sakhi Centre,181 and 112 Helpline

Provides instructions to call Sakhi Center

"I feel that Sakhi Center is not responding sometimes accurately to the type of case I'm receiving. I'm here to help people and follow the process so that people can get their way out of the situation but because of sun unresponsive nature in their work people are not believing in my work."

SUBJECT CODE #05
MBK
35 years ST

Community Infuencer

She is part of a group of influencial
women driving the OLM mission in the district

Community members indentify her as someone who can take action for mistreatment of women

Oraon Woman

Her's is the only Oraon family residing in her village. She attends weekly traditional community prayer event with her family in the next village.

MBK Kendeijur

She has been active in her role as MBK and after the introduction of GTM she has been voluntarily supporting the GCRP in he GP in spreading awareness on women's rights and about the GFC's services in gender justice.

Family Oriented Person

She shares a healthy relationship with her husband's large joint family. She proudly mentions that one of her sister-in-law is like a mother to her daughter.

Farmer

Helps her family run their farm which is their main source of livelihood. She is not involved in physical farm labour but helps her family manage hired farm land.

"We celebrate all festivals together and we all do a lot for each other's children."

"If husband does not support, nobody can have professional aspirations"

2008 — Married to a large joint family.

She is proud of the fact that the sisters in law are very united and help each other when need be. They have always lived like sisters even if there was any discord between them.

2008 — Joins college to do B.A.

Elder brother in law encouraged her to pursue higher studies as she has passed HS. His wife is a teacher at a Government school.

2011 — Son is born Graduates college

2013 — Joins SHG

2014 — Becomes CRP Became pregnant with her daughter

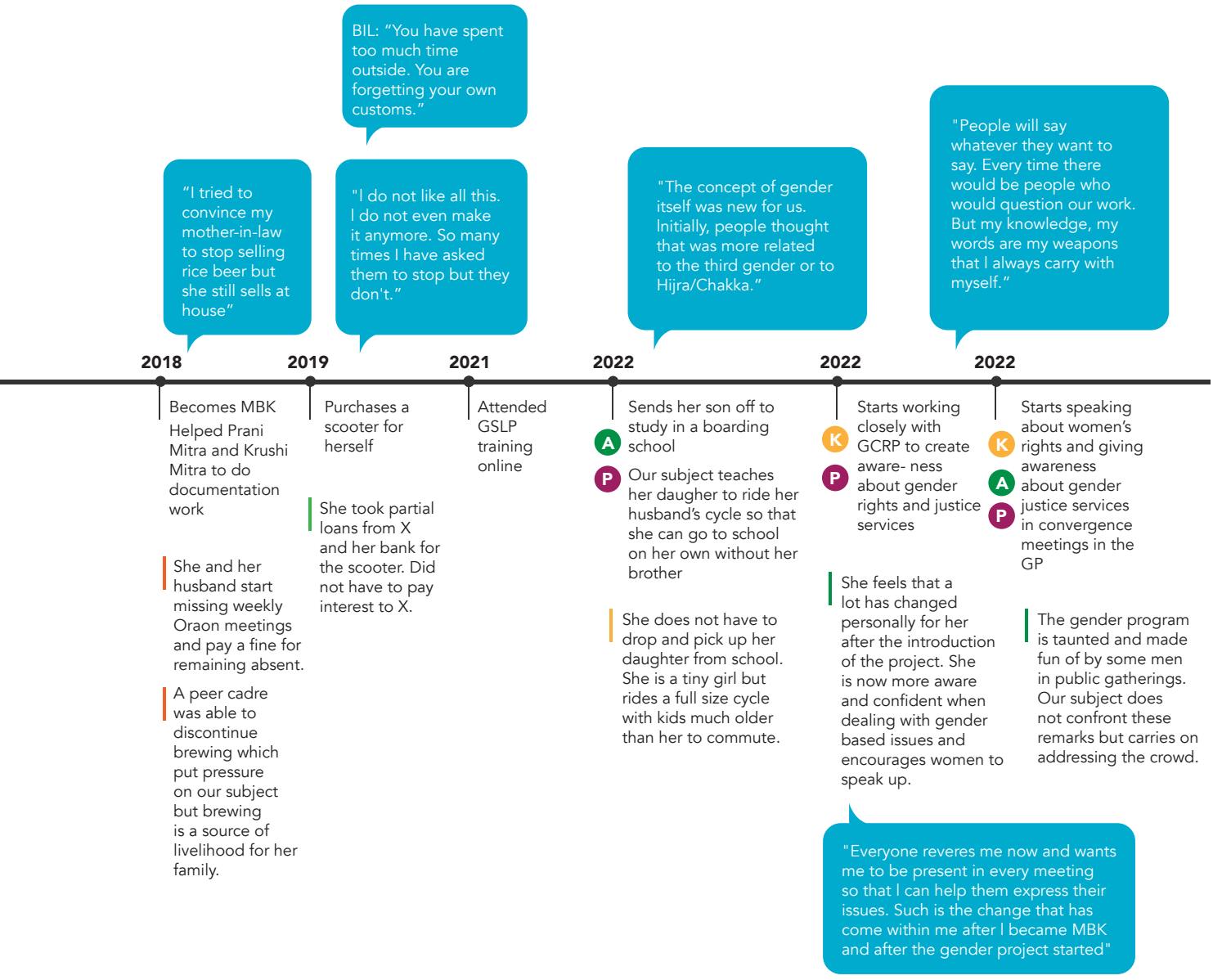
She would take her children with her to meetings while she was a CRP.

Her sister-in-law would sometimes look after them if she had to leave them at home.

2014 — Starts telling her family members to stop brewing beer liquor but they do not listen

Conflict with her family around the practice of brew- ing which is critisized widely by OLM members.

- **Spousal & familial support**
  Encouraged by in-laws to pursue higher education
  Support in household and childcare
- **Ability to build social network**
  X as a mentor
  Collaboration with other cadres
- **Additional income from MS-OLM**
  Able to save and purchase own vehicle
- **Identity Conflict**
  DIschord with her tribal identity for social acceptance due to the practice of brewing
- **Self Efficacy**
  Volunteers to help other cadres
- **Self confidence**
  Public speaking
  Able to answer back to taunts
  Motivates other women to speak up



SUBJECT CODE #03

GCRP
40 years SC

Community Infuencer

Community Influencer
She has good relations with other influential women in her own and neighbouring villages but issues of mobility hinder her networking.

Farmer

Helps her husband farm their small peice of land. She does most of the physical labour and ensures that the plot is farmed optimally and sells produce to middle men.

CRP Palkudar

Although she is a GCRP now, she identifies more as a CRP and is proactive in doing her official duties. She has helped several women with accessing entitlements.

Housewife

Her husband being a Government school teacher brings in big income and she dutifully supports him by shouldering household work alone and carring out most of the farm work.

"My father-in-law left us nothing except a little land and those date trees that he had planted. Rest everything, we have done on our own. We also made this house ourselves."

"I started farming in the land behind my house when I saw others doing the same. My husband does very little around the farm and most of the physical labour is done by me. My husband and I are only able to consume so much so I sell most of my produce to businessmen and middlemen, the money that I get in return is nothing compared to the effort that I put in."

2001
- Married to an unemployed man. Lived in kuchha home of joint family
- She is proud of the fact that the sisters in law are very united and help each other when need be. They have always lived like sisters even if there was any discord between them.

2002
- Joint family divides.
- Join SHG
- Daughter is born

2003
- Husband gets Government job as teacher in neighboring GP

2005
- Son is born

2012
- Daughter goes to residential school

2014
- Became CRP
- Does not own any vehicle and has to get around on foot. Husband drops her on his bike occasionally when he is around.

2015
- Son goes to residential school

2020
- Son passes 10th and enrolls at ITI
- 20 year old daughter is married
- She is concerned about his future as he is not very interested in studying and did not finish higher secondary

2021
- Attends GSLP Training online

2022 Oct
- Selected to become GCRP
- Son finishes ITI training
- Feels the need to buy a scooty to be able to do her work but her husband does not allow it.

Factors attributed to change

Total no. of cases registered

13 **of entitlements mostly ration card**

Most cases came from BPL ST women

- **Low Spousal support**
  No help from spouse in household work
  Discouraged to buy vehicle by husband.
- **Burdened with work**
  Solely responsible for household
  Does most of the farm work.
- **Lack of mobility**
  Having to rely on husband for commute Traveling on foot reduces emciency
  Hinders ability to socialise.
- **Higher income of husband**
  Husband's needs are given priority over her own because he has a government job.
- **Shadowed by more influencial women professionally**
  Not able to own her professional responsibilities as others make decisions for her.
- **Self confidence**
  Carries out her duties as CRP despite challenges in personal life and with little support

"I tried to convince my mother-in-law to stop selling rice beer but she still sells at house"

BIL: "You have spent too much time outside. You are forgetting your own customs."

"I do not like all this. I do not even make it anymore. So many times I have asked them to stop but they don't."

"I feel like I am constantly dealing with patients at home."

"This girl herself knows who the father is but is not telling anyone. She is also of a bad character as she always keep calling younger men to sleep with her. She must be charging money for sexual favours."

2022 Nov

Daughter gives birth to a girl

Our subject travels to meet her in Sambalpur

Our subject was not able to visit her daughter during the course of her pregnancy because she was busy with household, farm work and MS-OLM duties

2022 Nov

Her mother passes away

She travels to Angul to attend the last rites

Our subject was not able to visit her mother for a long time before she passed because she was busy with family and work.

2022 Nov

Attends online meeting conducted by DCC to give new GCRPs an overview of SWAYAM project

GFC inaugarated in Palkudar but our subject is away

Not able to grasp the training because of internet issues and she found the training too fast and overwhelming in content.

2022 Dec

Her husband is injured severely in a motorcycle accident

Load of domestic and farm work increase on her as her husband is not able to work.

She started giving awareness about the gender project and how anyone can seek help & support from her at various CLF & SHG meetings

Started registering entitlement cases; 13 cases of Ration card & Sukanya Yojana till date.

Follow ups: Visited BO twice for ration cases. Visited Bank Mitra 3-4 times for Sukanya cases.

2023 Jan

Her daughter comes to stay with her baby

2023 Feb

Attended GTM training at CMTC

K

Got to under-stand her role as a GCRP theoretically

Tries to learn about her role & duties from the GCRP of a neighbouring GP

2023 Mar

Two cases of GBV arrise in her area

P

Reached out to DCC and MBK to take advice on how to handle a case. Together they decided that the nature of this particular case won't come under the jurisdiction of the project

The MBK being more influencial and active at work is involved in complex cases but our subject is kept out.

SUBJECT CODE #01

CRP Samanvayak
31 years ST

Problem-solver of her family

She helped in upgrading her house by getting the SHG loans and brought initiatives like selling cow's milk to pay off the loans. After the subject's SHG training over the years, her family trusts her and listens to her advice when it comes to house finances and big decisions.

Adaptive and growth oriented

She resumed her studies after her marriage and is still pursuing her master's. She has been evidently upgrading her and her family's life by first getting a teacher's job to now being a pivotal part in NRLM's Nari Shakti CLF.

An influential leader

Women of the SHG listen to her and assemble whenever she requests a meeting. She engages with the personal issues of many SHG women she knows and looks for solutions for them when monetary hurdles come their way.

A beloved friend

She has maintained a strong relationship with a group of cadre women of the Nari Shakti CLF. Getting together for parties, arranging for quick picnics and going around on scooty with them is her usual leisure. In the CLF meeting, it was observed that her friends supported her and even fought for her.

"Main challenges started when I started to study again; such as arranging money for room rent, private school fees (Rs 12,000 annually at that time), and there was nosupport from my sasural. They were very poor. They had only two bigha zameen; one bigha for my husband and another half for his elder brother. My mother-in-law and father-in-law always used to be away for palaayan, so my parent, took care of these expenses, On the 1st of every month, when my father would come to Petlawad to get his salary, he would give me some money."

"Whatever happened during my childhood, we don't have this mentality of discrimination. We never let it happen in our house, not even In our neighbourhood or village. If this happens somewhere, we try to make them understand that both boys and girls are equal, whatever a boy can do, a girl can also do the same. Mostly, in our community, it is seen that people nurture the male child appropriately with this thought that they (male child) will take care of his parents in their old age, but this doesn't happen. The daughter is the one who takes care of her parents, even though she gets married."

2009

Got married opposing her parents at the age of 17

With water scarcity, she struggled to walk around 2km daily to get water. A month after marriage she moved to the nearby city and rented a room with her brother to continue her education.
Resumed her 10th standard from a private school in the city
With her father's support she paid the school fee (1200 Rs) and received a monthly allowance of 2000 Rs.
Lived separately from her husoand as he joined a diploma course.

2010

Became pregnant with her first child

She wrote her class 10th final exam when she was 9 months pregnant.

2011

Supported her husband's education by taking loans

She loses her beloved sister due to multiple child birth and lack of care.

2012

Started receiving her first salary of Rs 1200

Walked 5km on foot daily while she worked as a primary school teacher

For two years she Kept her son with her mother while she worked worked

Switched to a betterpaying job after a year

2014

Second son was born

2015

Adopted her brother's 4-year-old girl.

Factors attributed to change

- **Determination to attain education**
  Subject and her husband married early by their own choice but both were determined to continue studying and building careers. Continued studies and giving exams despite pregnancy
- **Being a Good and fair leader results in her gaining community's support**
  From the women of the CLF for her empathy and efforts to understand their problems.
- **A supportive husband**
  Keeping her focused on her work, her husband has supported her and keeps himself engaged with the children's growth.
- **A supportive family**
  Constant help from her natal family throughout her struggle where they provided economic help and childcare while she worked.
- **Developed empathy for women suffering abused because of lived experience of oppression**
  There lossof hersister had an impact on the subject leading her to sympathise with women undergoing abusive. Now she motivates women to talk about their personal problems in VO meetings

LAK was inaugurated in 2021

After joining SHG, we decided to build our own house. I used to get Rs 100 for bookkeeping in the SHG, some money from GramSangathan book-keeping and my mother-in-law and I after taking some loans from SHG and even some private loans, gradually started buildinq our house"

'(Yes, NAK and LAK necessary because change takes time and may occur gradually over many years. For instance, if a woman's husband is an alcoholic, it is unrealistic ro expect him to stop drinking suddenly as this could have negative consequences. Therefore, fhe gender program is needed to facilitate slow and steady progress.

2016

With a B. A degree, the subject joined an SHG

Moved back to her husband's house

Inherited 2 bigha land and a half-built kutcha house

Took loans from the SHG and earned rs. 100 per meeting for bookkeeping.

With her mother-in-law's I help, she started building a pucca house.

Started a two-year B.Ed course

2018

Pucca house was made

Started a one year computer diploma course

Bought a buffalo and earned 5-6k a month with which they repaid the loans taken from private businessmen.

Bought their first bike.

2019

Stated a two year B.ED course

Bought herself a scooter

2021

Started a two-year MSW course

Upgraded the scooty by selling the old one

LAK was inaugurated

2022

Became a CRP in Bamaniya, Rani Lakshmi Bai CLF

Disheartened to lose her post, the subject prepared for other CLFs

2023

Bought land in her name by taking a loan from SHG

A P She was elected as. the CRPSamanvayak in Nari Shakti CLF where cadres supported her with their votes and spoke of her hard work against the contender.

Shifted to a room in Petlawad for eldest son's education, She disliked the space and the conditions but feels obligated to live there as her husband too disliked it.

A P Helped in solving a DV case along with her colleague by guiding the victim to the LAK in a VO meeting.

A P Motivates women to speak up and voice their concerns in VO meetings.

SUBJECT CODE #02

Samta Sakhi
45 years ST
(Christian)

A driven activist for women's rights

Moving beyond her role as a Sakhi, she believes that even if it wasn't her job, she would help women get aware of their rights and entitlements.

People's leader

Managing various roles liKe that of a CRP, a Sakhi and a Panch, the subject has earned trust and assurance amongst people.

A progressive mother

The subject has often worked alongside her daughter. Within various organisations, the subject hones her daughter's skills as they grow with each other.

A speaker and influencer

Despite being uneducated, she has gained popularity of being a speaker from the crowd who is verbose and confident while making her points.

A self-willed fighter

Despite constant pushback from her in-laws and traumatic past to bear, the subject's journey is revered by her peers as she makes her own is paths with a positive approach and strong strides

"They got me back only because the property was separated and there was no one to stay with him while he was sick."

1999

- Got married at the age of 17
- Settled in Unnai from Indore
- Converted to Christianity
- Living in a join family for two years.

2001

- Beginning of repeated abuse
- First fight with husband because of his alcohol consumption when they migrated for work
- Five months pregnant with her first daughter at that time.
- Left for her mother's house in Indore.

2002

- First child (girl) was born in Indore by the subject's Dadi, a wet-nurse
- Her in-laws got her back from Indore after a year and separates them to another house.
- Husband gets sick and she moves to the hospital with her 1-year-old daughter
- Finds her first job while staying with husband in the hospital.

2003-09

- The subject's mother and young daughter helped in taking care of her sons
- Her husband's sickness and abuse repeatedly displaced her from one space to another
- Despite his failing health her husband denied to use birth control when her mother suggested it. One son in 2003 and another in 2006
- Two priests at a Mission School near the hospital helped her first by giving her wage work at a farm and later a job at the school as a cook. She enrolled elder two children in the Mission school.

2011

- Husband dies
- Her husband's treatment left a debt of 2-4 lakh rupees
- The hospital denied giving the body because of the debt. With the help of an acquaintance, she called CM in Bhopal and got him discharged.
- She closed her theka shop and focused on her 6 bigha farmland.

2014

- Joined SHG
- Built a pucca house and registered land under her children's name.
- In-laws started to blackmail seeing her gain mobility within the village
- She called her brother to stay with her

Factors attributed to change

- **Empathy for women's issues from own experience of oppression**

  Her experience of oppression has helped her understand other women's pain, she often shares her experience in helping other women stand for justice with her.

- **Support from the trustworthy few**

  Her mother's help in childcare helped her manage her house, whereas the Missionary school father's support in providing her with their farm to till and later a cook position in the school helped her to stay afloat.

- **Children's progress encourages her**

  With her children working with her in tandem, the subject remains motivated and ambitious for their future.

- **Burden of a sick husband and lack financial support from in laws**

  She was the sole caretaker of her family even though her in-laws were financially strong.

- **In-laws pressure tackled with people's power**

  Fought her in-laws' repeated mental harassment with courage, thanks to people's trust and love for her. "I asked them that if they promise to give my children the best education without any scarcity of food or good clothing, then I would stop going out, I will live in a room alone. but they got scared, they were never challenged before this."

LAK was inaugurated in 2021

"Earlier men used to think that taking ghunghat means respect, but I knew its hassle and just stopped taking it, some time went by and the people mocked me, but later as they needed help, men would come to me and appreciate how I focus on Work more than the Pratha"

"At that time Roshni was rhe Samanvayak and I was the Sakhl. Since the training used to happen so far away, both of us would take the bus to get there and I would take the bus back alone to come home to my sons, I 'couldn't leave them alone since my daughter would stay there for the three days of the training. On the last day of the third month of training I got so sick that I couldn't travel and the authorities told me they wouldn't give me the job because of it. I was furious,first they demanded that I work for them and then suddenly because I missed one day they said I can't work. It was unacceptable. I asked them to give me their reasons for removing me in writing and they got scared and had to keep me."

''I have been trained earlier on various thingsj not just gender after joining SHG. I was comfortable to talk to others. But after receiving gender training, initially, I used to feel a bit hesitant to talk about women's rights, especially on land ownership. Then I started giving examples rather than telling them directly. A girl generally doesn't own any land from her maternal family and after getting married also she doesll't own any land from her sasural. If the she faces any issues in her sasural and is forced to leave the house where she has no ownership, she goes to her maika. Now if her maternal family also doesn't allow her to stay there,, where will she go?"

2015

- Gains community's support
- Formed 12 SHGs within a year
- Started getting praised as 'Indore vali ladi' among villagers
- Seeing the community's support, her in-laws stopped disturbing her
- Received CRP training; trained in Bhopal, Andhra Pradesh and Anuppur for 10-15 days each.

2016

- Rises as an activist for women's rights
- (P) Becomes the first woman to stop the practice of Ghunghat and inspires others to follow.
- Went to Barhwani, Dewas and Mandsaur to give training on SHGs
- Gained popularity and support from the community, as people started recognizing her and men started respecting her

2021

- (K) Got trained as a Samia Sakhi
- LAK got inaugurated
- Got trained as a Samia Sakhi 25km away from her house.
- Started getting paid 3000 for her Sakhi work
- (A) (P) Volunteered to work as a Panchayat Badlav didi. Went to Patna for demonstration
- (A) (P) Started solving domestic violence cases and gained trust to receive more such cases

"Although women are becoming more empowered and aware, many still hesitate to speak up, particularly in cases involving land rights and gender-based violence. This hesitation may stem from the involvement of the police and the legal system. Change in this area is a slow process and cannot be expected to happen suddenly. However, many such cases have been succeefully resolved. Our goal is to encourage women to speak up about injustices."

2023

- Went to Delhi for receiving an Award
- Her daughter worked as a CRP- Samanvayak and now prepares for a police job
- (A) (P) (P) Manages entitlements cases within the Panchayat level to save women's time.
- (P) With her children's support at home, she gives priority to the cases and visits her old cases for review

SUBJECT CODE #03

FI Coordinator
30 years ST

Role Model

Other women consider her as an inspiration, as she was the first SHG woman in their CLF who was able to built her own house.

Business-woman

She has experimented with many businesses in an effort to supplement her income and extend it by exploring new opportunities.

Family-oriented

Though she never got financial support from her family, she has always looked forward to improve her family's living condition and also her relationship with her parents.

A compassionate Comrade

She often gathers with the members of her cadre since she has a close relationship with them. She has also begun investing in real estate, which she purchased with an associate from her cadre.

"They got me back only because the property was separated and there was no one to stay with him while he was sick."

2010

- Compelled to drop out of school
- Leaves her studies after class 6 as had to give fees in the school
- Started with daily mazdoori in other's farms to earn money.
- Parent's used to fight a lot and their was financial instability at home.
- Father did not provided financial help for her studies.

2012

- Resumes school
- Resumed with her studies I after saving money from her daily wage work.
- Would go for palayan during her summer vacations to nearby cities.

2014 Nov

- Joined SHG
- Selected for book-keeping and would go to attend SHG meetings with other cadre to learn the from framework.

2015

- Trained for book-keeping by the officials in every 2-3 months for 5-10 days at block level
- Went for palaayan to nearby cities for 1-2 months
- Brother along with his wife and Children separated from the family

2016

- Started working as a book keeper at different villages, I got Rs 40 for working 2 hours; covered around 2-3 SHGs per day.
- Opened a kirana shop by taking loan from SHG Sister-in-law gossiped about her character for her going her out to work.
- Selected for training of Bookkeeping with 44 other candidates from MP and went to Andhra Pradesh for 15 days.

2017

- Went to other district (158 km far) to form SHG and give training for SHG framework and book-keeping.
- Niece and nephew, kids of her sister) started living together with her as their parents were indulged in work.
- Seeing the community's support, her in-laws stopped disturbing her
- Took a loan of Rs 2 lakh from SHG: bought cow to pay off the debts, also started building her pucca house
- Bought a scooty on EMI.

2018

- Started her BA (private education) from a government college of her block.
- Started her BA (private education) from a government college of her block.
- Construction of house completed

LAK was inaugurated in 2021

Factors attributed to change

- **Financial Instability**

  Education was interrupted and to work as a laborer at a young age.

- **Desire to live a better life**

  With a strong determination to escape poverty, pursue her education, construct her own home and buy a scooty of her own

- **Self-confidence**

  Public speaking and the capacity to challenge rumours about her inspire other women to speak up.

- **Passion for work**

  Her abilities at work helped to advance her professionally and make her a better trainer.

- **Bond with coworkers**

  The ability to work together for new tiusiness chances was made possible by the colleagues' friendship and trust.

- **Willingness to learn more**

  Despite living in poverty, worked hard to save money to pursue higher education.

- **Low family support**

  Had to deal with poverty alone because of ongoing disagreements and lack of help from her siblings.

"Since 20221 I got ta kno,v about the gender modules, although I was aware of the rights and entitlements because I have read it in school and in colJege, but I was not sure about them until the gender modules. Surely this made a change as now all didis go out and even men aloow them to do so."

2019

- Selected as FI coordinator of her CLF
- Went to nearby block for 5 days to give training on bookkeeping; got around Rs 400 per day

2021

- Went to her district for training on the working of FI Coordinator for 15 days
- Inauguration of LAK took place
- Completed her graduation.
- Applied for MSW (distance learning mode)

2022

- Got to know about gender module in the CLF and VO meetings which were discussed by the Samta Samanvayaks as a meeting agenda.
- K A Learns about 'Mera Haq, Meri Pehchaan' module and decided to get her share from her father's property.
- P Started discussing about women's rights, entitlements and functioning of LAk to the SHG women during meetings.
- Closed the shop as there was no one to manage it.
- P Bought a property (land) with another cadre woman who is her close friend. She is thinking of build another house and open shop for her parents so that they do not work more on the fields.

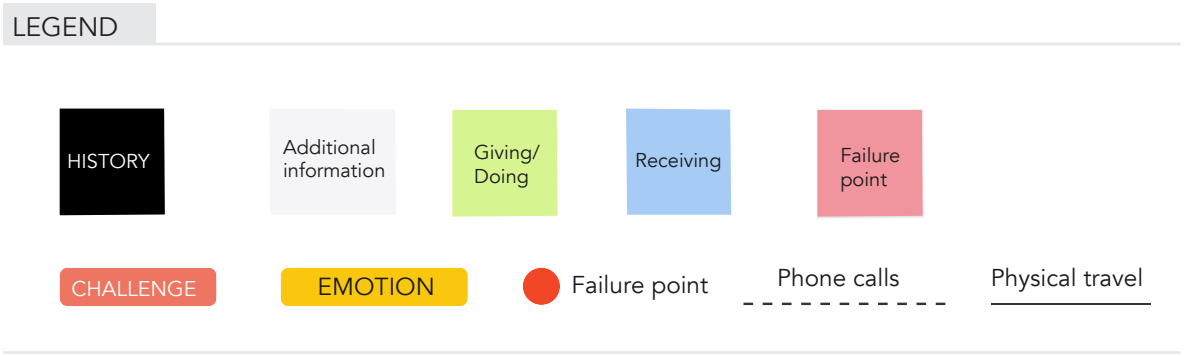
2023

- P A Bought soybean in large amount with 5 other people, to sell it at a higher price in the market
- P Helped a victim of DV from other GP to report a case in LAK against the victim's in-laws.
- P Thinking to start another business of spice packaging with other cadre member of her own GP, applied for loan.

"My favourite is the mera haq mera adhikar, the whole element of zameen and makaan is very crucial. Take for instance the practice of second marriage here; where will the first wife go if she has no security in her house and in her in-law is house. With this support, even if he gets a second wife, at least the first wife will have her land and her entitlements."

Annex 3: Service Journey Maps
Odisha and Madhya Pradesh

Instructions to read the service journey maps



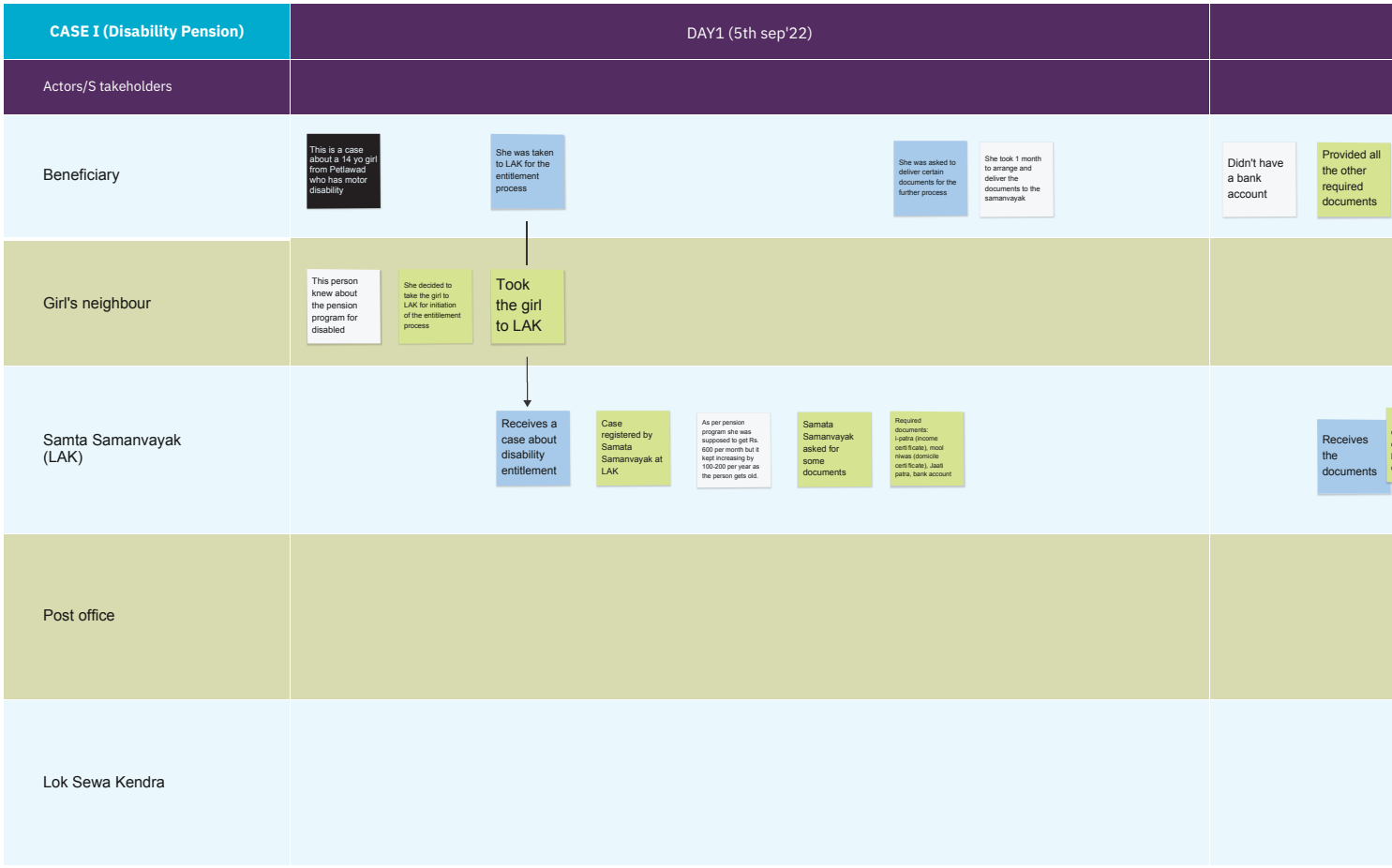
CASE #	Day #	Day #	Day #	Day #
	Case Stage	Case Stage	Case Stage	Case Stage
Stakeholder 1				
Stakeholder 2				
Stakeholder 3				

STAGES OF A CASE

- INCIDENT & FIRST RESPONSE
- SURVIVOR MOBILISATION FOR SAFETY
- REPORTING CRIME
- LOCAL RESOLUTION
- FOLLOW UP

Service journey maps - Madhya Pradesh

1. Case:1 (Disability Pension)



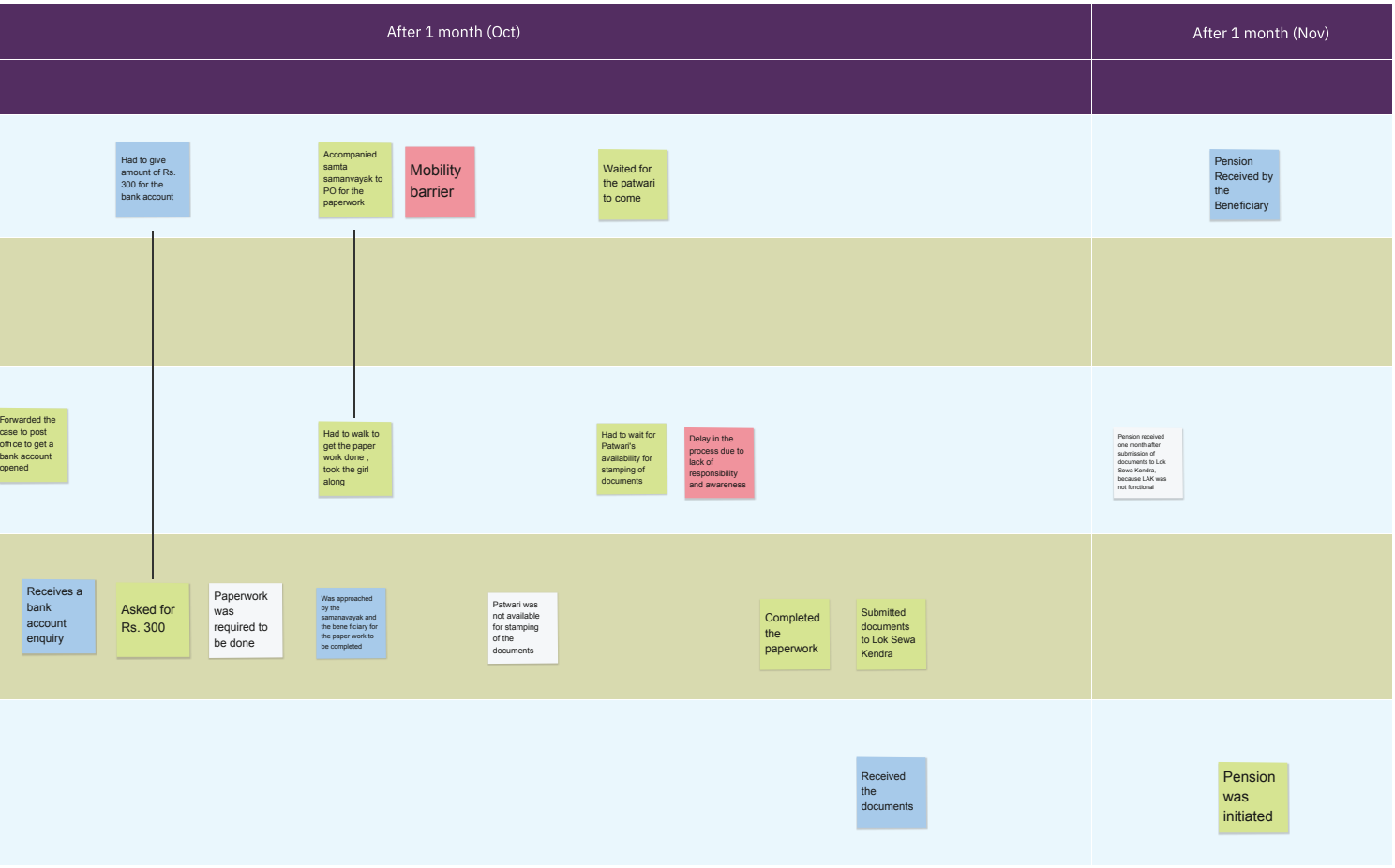
Survivor's Background:

The survivor is a 14- year- old girl living in Petlawad, who has a motor disability. She was introduced to a member (From ANANDI) by her neighbour, who was aware of the disability pension. That member took the initiative to help the girl access the pension and took her to the LAK (Lok Adhikar Kendra) to register her case.

Summary Points:

- That woman assists the girl in registering her case at LAK on 5th September 2022.
- The girl is eligible for a disability pension, which is initially supposed to be 600 rupees per month but increases gradually as the person gets older.
- The necessary documents for the pension include i-patra (income certificate), mool niwas (domicile certificate), Jaati patra (caste certificate), and a bank account. The girl faced some challenges in getting the paperwork done, including the need to visit multiple offices and officials for signatures and stamps. The Lok Sewa Kendra (LSK) was not fully functional initially, leading to delays in receiving the pension. The girl had to make several follow- up visits to different offices to complete the paperwork and get the necessary signatures.

1. Case:1 (Disability Pension)



Barriers:

- *Delays due to Initial LAK Functionality:* The LAK was not fully functional during the initial days, leading to delays in processing the case and providing complete written documentation.
- *NPA Preoccupied with Elections:* The Nagar Palika Adhyaksh (NPA) was preoccupied with Nagar palika elections, which caused further delays in getting the necessary signatures.

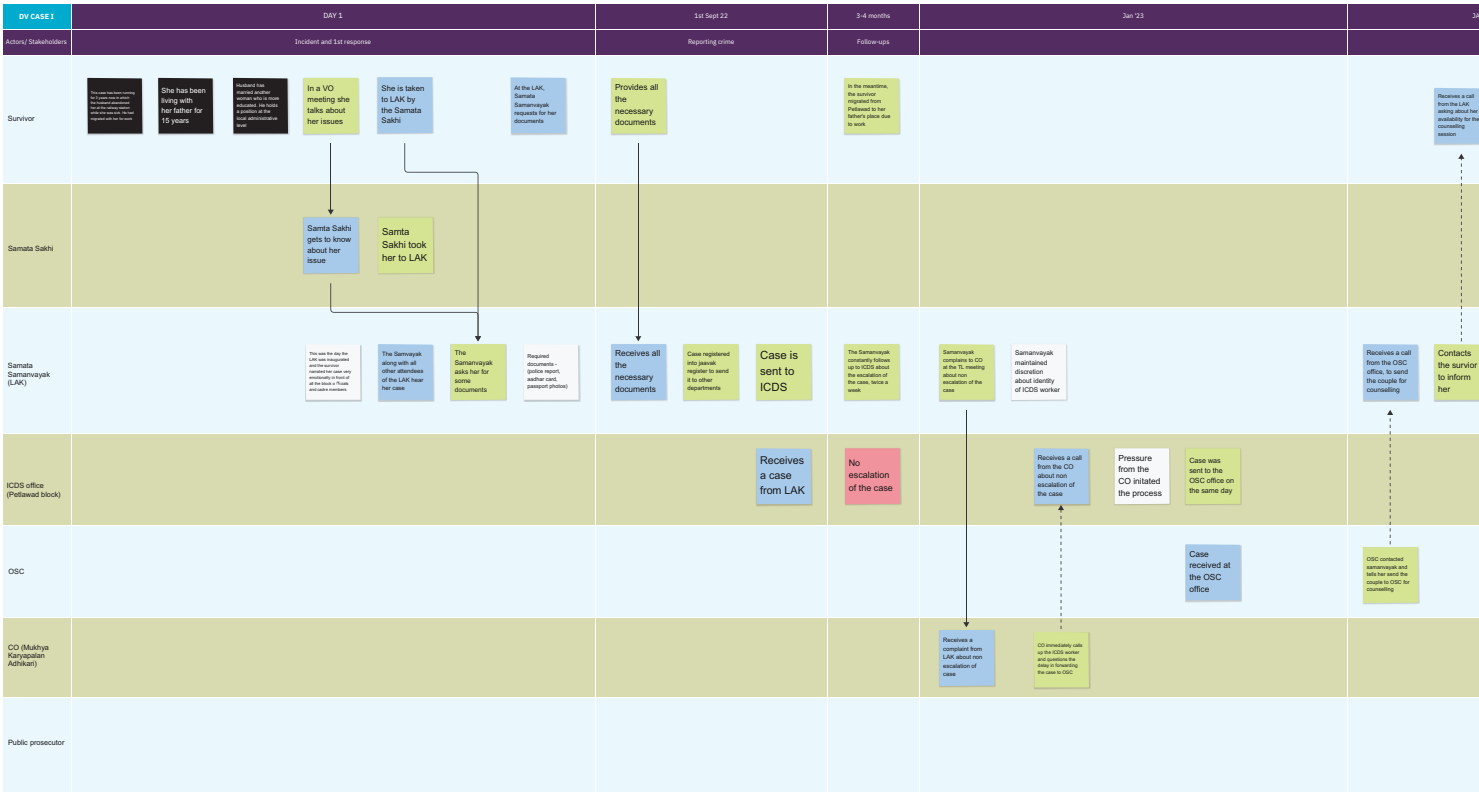
Enablers:

- *Awareness of Pension Scheme:* The girl's neighbour, was aware of the pension scheme for disabled individuals, which led to the identificationof the potential beneficiary.
- *Timely Registration and Documentation:* The case was registered promptly on 5th Sept 2022, and the necessary documentation, including i- patra, mool niwas, and Jaati patra, was obtained for the girl within one month.
- *Coordination with Different Authorities:* The Samta Samanvayak coordinated with multiple authorities, including Tahshil, Patwari, SDM, Nagar Palika Adhyaksh, and others, to obtain the necessary signatures and paperwork.
- *Partial Written Documentation:* Although LAK was not fully functional during the initial days, the partial written documentation ensured that the girl's case was not overlooked, and necessary actions were taken
- *Efficient Process for Signature Work:* The girl did not have to personally visit different offices for signatures, as the Samanvayak managed the process effectively by making necessary visits.

Summary Points:

- That woman assists the girl in registering her case at LAK on 5th September 2022.
- The girl is eligible for a disability pension, which is initially supposed to be 600 rupees per month but increases gradually as the person gets older.
- The necessary documents for the pension include i-patra (income certificate), mool niwas (domicile certificate), Jaati patra (caste certificate), and a bank account. The girl faced some challenges in getting the paperwork done, including the need to visit multiple offices and officials for signatures and stamps. The Lok Sewa Kendra (LSK) was not fully functional initially, leading to delays in receiving the pension. The girl had to make several follow- up visits to different offices to complete the paperwork and get the necessary signatures.

2. DV CASE -1



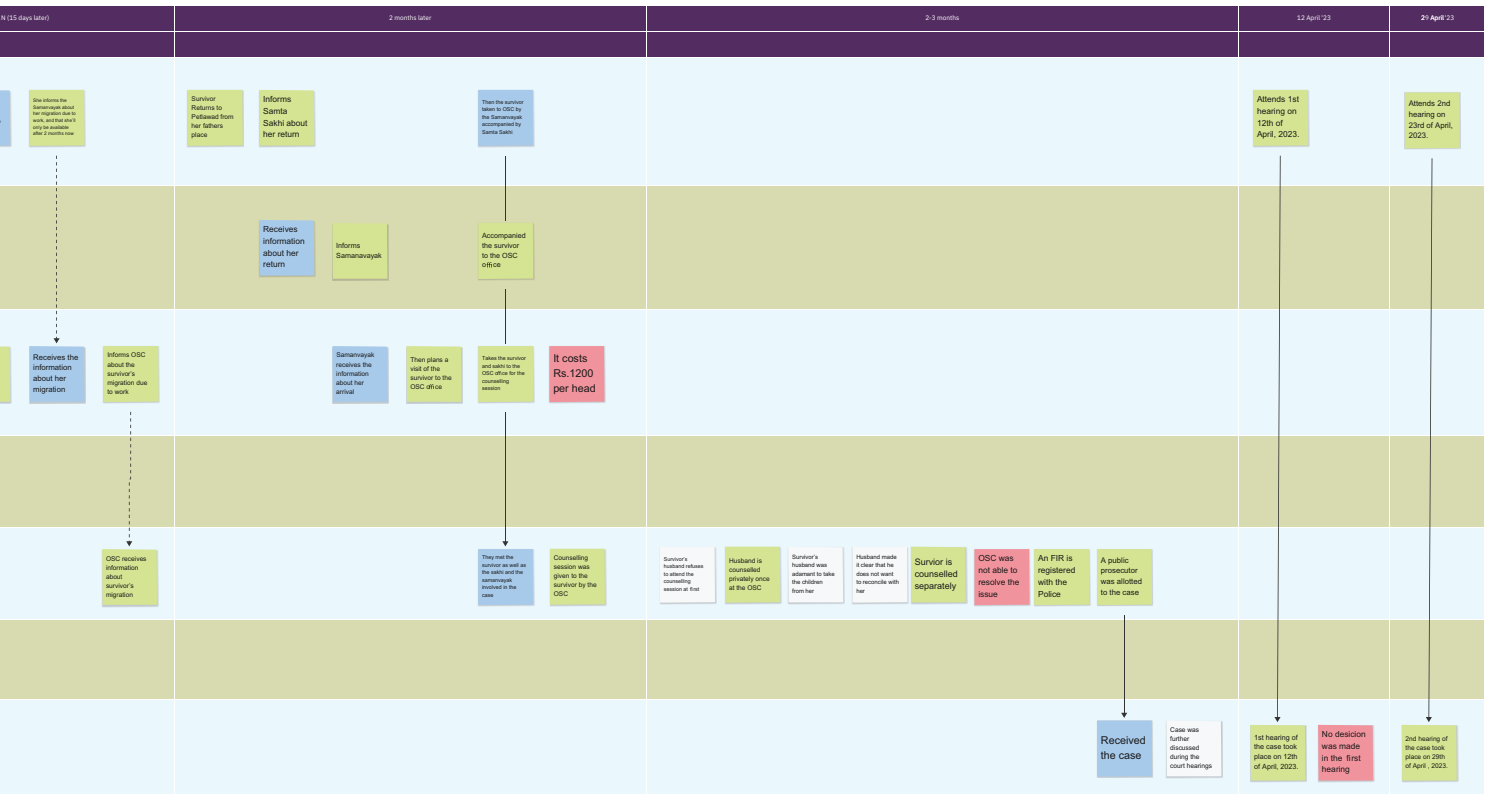
Survivor's Background:

This is a woman who has been facing a challenging situation for the past three years. Her husband abandoned her and remarried, leaving her in a difficult position. Currently, she lives with her father and is seeking alimony and custody of her children.

Summary Points:

- This case has been running for three years, during which she sought support from Asalya Gram Sangathan, a support group, to address her issues.
- With the assistance of a Samta Sakhi, Kanchan's case was taken to the Lok
- Adhikar kendra (LAK) on its inauguration day.
- The case was registered in the Jaavak register and then forwarded to the ICDS department, which oversees integrated child development services.
- After some follow- ups by LAK, the case was escalated to the OSC (possibly a family court or relevant authority) for counseling.
- Due to Kanchan's temporary migration for work, counseling sessions were delayed for two months.
- After her return, Kanchan attended counseling sessions at the OSC, but her husband refused to participate fully.
- Despite attending a few counseling sessions, the issues between the couple remained unresolved, leading to the registration of an FIR with the police.
- A public prosecutor was assigned to the case, and court hearings began on 12th April and 29th April.

2. DV CASE -1



Barriers:

- *Lengthy Case Duration:* The case had been ongoing for three years, indicating delays or complexities in its resolution.
- *Husband's Refusal to cooperate:* The husband's unwillingness to actively participate in the counselling sessions created a barrier to resolving the issues.
- *OSC's Inability to Resolve:* The OSC was not able to resolve the marital issues despite counselling attempts, which further prolonged the case.

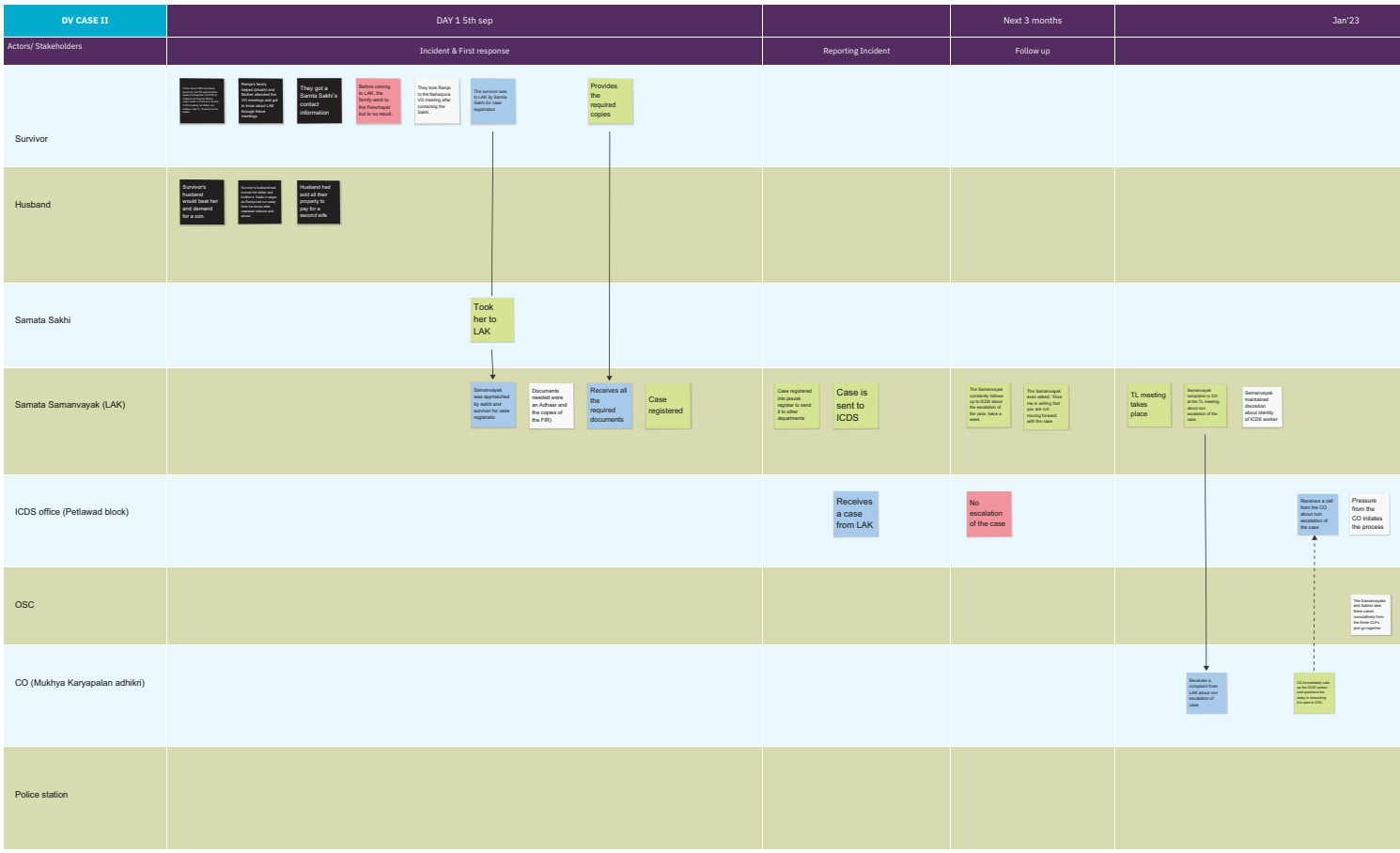
Enablers:

- *Prompt Action by S. Samanvayak and CO:* The S. Samanvayak's complaint to the Chief Officer (CO) about the non- escalation of the case and the CO's immediate intervention to question the ICDS worker resulted in the case being forwarded to the OSC promptly.
- *Follow- ups by LAK:* LAK diligently followed up with the ICDS department twice a week to ensure the progress of the case.
- *Provision of Counselling Services at OSC:* The OSC offered counselling sessions to the couple, which allowed them to address their issues and concerns.
- *Public Prosecutor Allotted:* Allocating a public prosecutor to the case ensured that legal representation was available to the survivor and her case received appropriate attention.

Failure Points:

- *Delay in Escalation:* The case ran for three years before being escalated to the OSC, suggesting initial delays or inefficiencies in the process.
- *Inability to Resolve Issues:* Despite counseling attempts, the OSC was not successful in resolving the underlying issues, leading to further legal action.

3. DV CASE - II

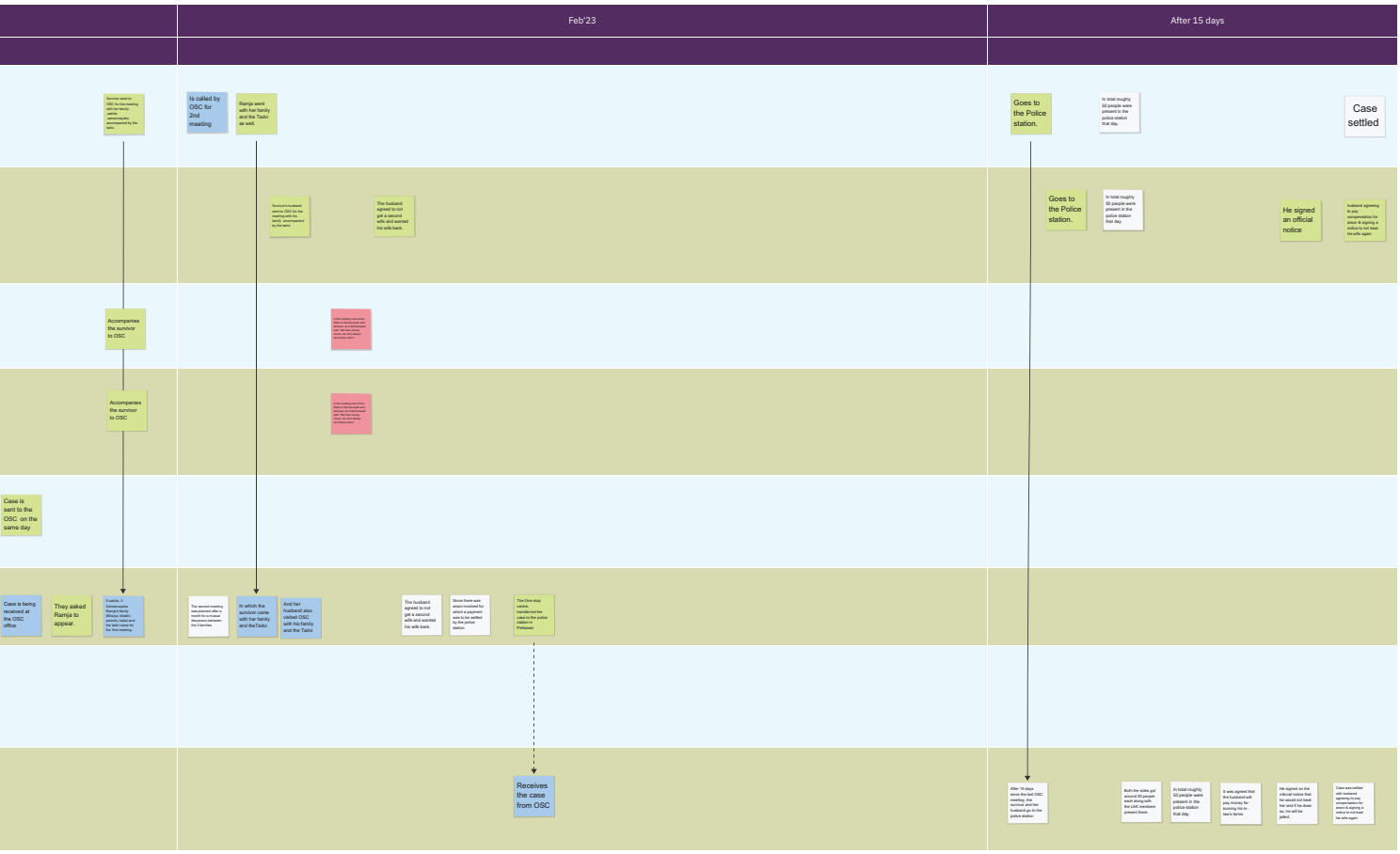


Survivor's Background:
This is a woman who faced severe abuse and violence at the hands of her husband, who would beat her and demand a son. Despite having five daughters, her husband was unsatisfied and continued to abuse. The situation escalated when her husband burned her father and brother's fields in anger after she fled from his house due to repeated violence and abuse.

Summary Points:

- Survivor's family registered three FIRs against her husband for keeping their three daughters and not returning them, burning her father and brother's farms, and violent behavior, being alcoholic.
- Initially, they sought help from the PanchayatHowever there was no change
- They were introduced to the Lok Adhikar Kendra (LAK) through their association with Naharpura VO meetings and Samta Sakhi.
- The case was registered on 5th September 2022, and the required documents were
- Aadhar card and FIR copies.
- The case faced delays at the ICDS for three months until a complaint was lodged in a TL (team lead) meeting.
- The case reached the One Stop Center (OSC), where a discussion session was held involving both families and representatives.
- The husband agreed not to go for a second wife and wanted survivor back. As the case involved arson, it was transferred to the police station for settlement.
- After a meeting at the police station involving LAK members and representatives from both sides, an agreement was reached, and the husband signed an official notice committing to not harm survivor.

3. DV CASE - II



Barriers:

- *Delays in escalation from ICDS:* The case faced a three-month delay at the ICDS, possibly due to administrative issues or inefficiencies. Insufficient travel allowance of gender cadres: The lack of funds hindered regular representation of the survivour by S. Sakhis and S. Samanvayaks at the OSC meetings.

Enablers:

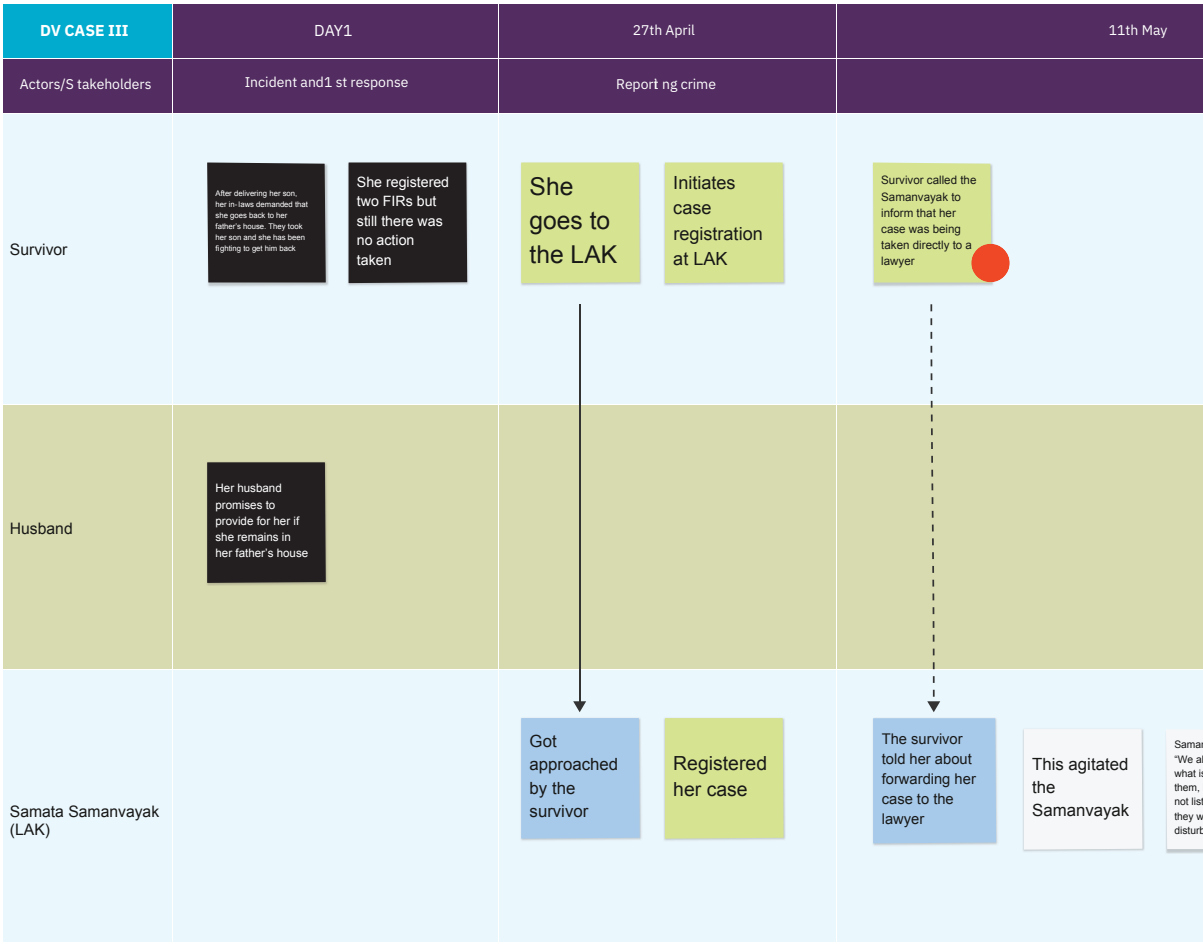
- *Team Effort at OSC:* The collective efforts of Sakhis, Samanvayaks, and survivor's family members helped facilitate discussions at the OSC and reach a mutual understanding.
- *Complaint in TL Meeting:* When faced with delays in the case, the Samanvayak escalated the issue by complaining in the TL meeting, which led to immediate action and forwarding of the case to the One Stop Center (OSC).
- *Support from Family Members:* Survivor's family, including her bhabhi and mother, actively participated in the process, attended VO meetings, and collaborated with the Samta Sakhi and S. Samanvayak, which contributed to the effectiveness of the intervention.
- *Mutual Discussion Session:* The mutual discussion session at the OSC involving both families, Survivor's family, and the husband's family, allowed for open communication and negotiation, leading to an agreement between the parties.
- *Agreement and Signing Official Notice:* The husband's agreement not to marry another woman and signing an official notice stating that he would not harm survivor, under the risk of being jailed, helped in bringing a sense of assurance and safety to the situation.

Failure Points:

- *Lack of initiative by Panchayat:* The Panchayat's inability to resolve the issues effectively led to a delay in seeking further support and legal aid.

Overall:
The case of this survivor demonstrates the importance of legal support and intervention for survivors of domestic violence and abuse. The collaborative efforts of various support organizations and family members played a crucial role in resolving the issues and reaching an agreement with the husband, leading to the eventual closure of the case in February

4. DV CASE - III



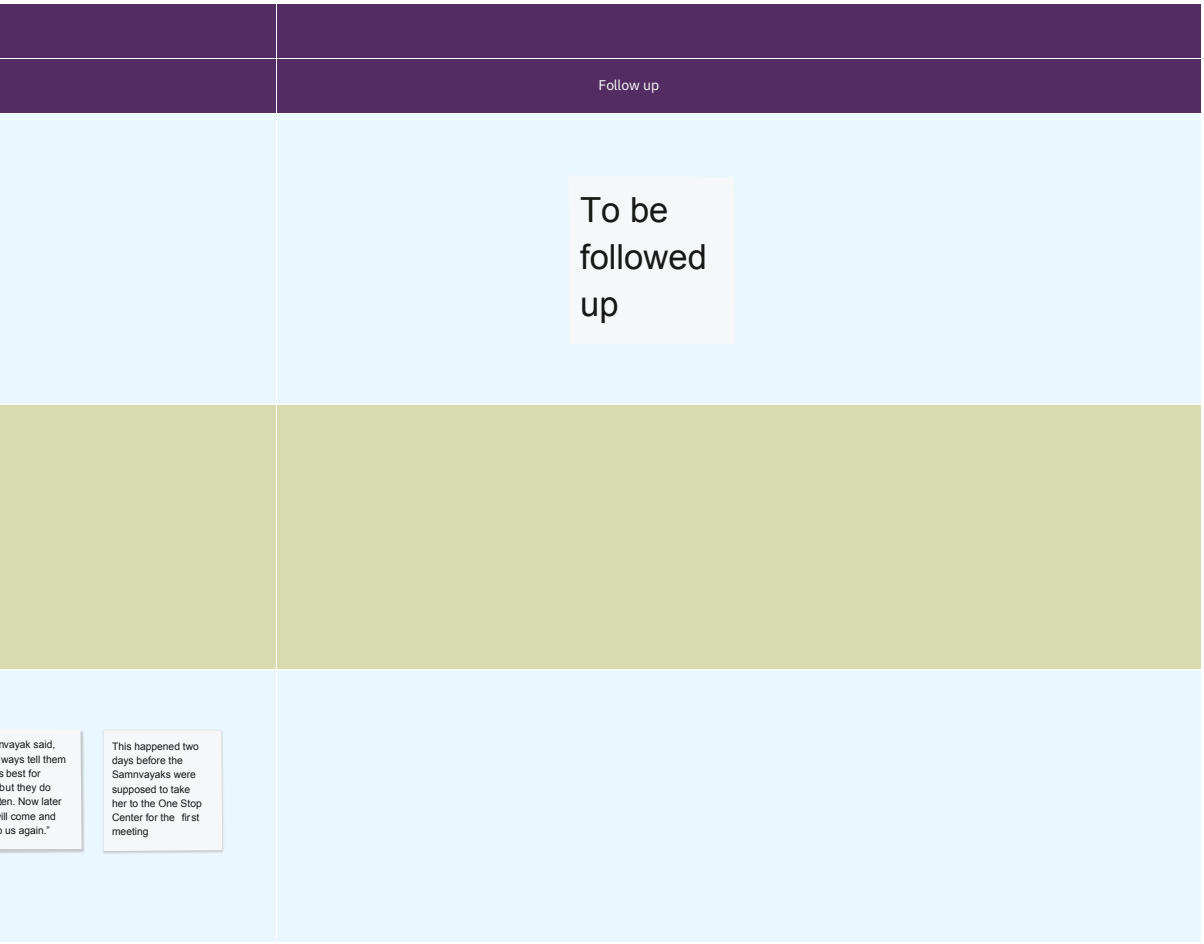
Survivor's Background:

She recently gave birth to a son. However, her in- laws demanded that she returned to her father's house and took her son away from her. She fought to regain custody of her son. Her husband promised to provide for her if she remains at her father's house. Despite registering two FIRs with no results, survivor sought assistance from the Lok Adhikar Kendra (LAK) to address her situation.

Summary Points:

1. Survivor's in- laws demanded that she leaves her husband's house and take her son with her.
2. Her husband offered to support her financially if she stayed at her father's house.
3. Two FIRs had been registered previously, but no progress had been made, leading her to approach the LAK for help.
4. The case was registered with the LAK on 27th April but is still in process with no resolution yet.
5. Survivor expressed her intention to take her case directly to a lawyer, agitating the Samanvayak, who felt that their advice is not being heeded.

4. DV CASE - III



Barriers:

1. **Family and In- Laws' Opposition:** Survivor's in- laws are demanding that she leaves her husband's house, which led to the custody dispute over her son.

1. **Legal Delays:** The case has been ongoing since April without any significant progress, indicating possible legal complexities or inefficiencies.

Enablers:

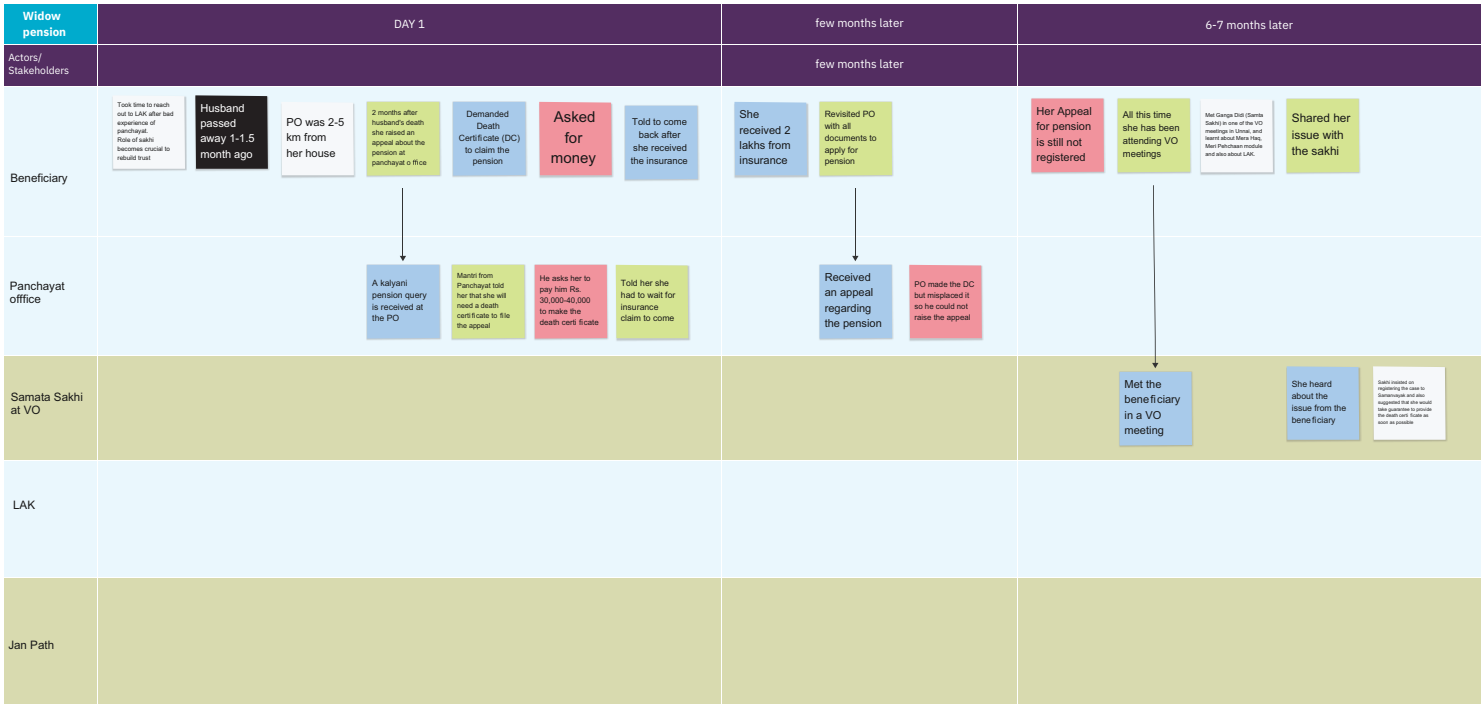
1. **Seeking Legal Support:** Survivor's decision to reach out to LAK showed her initiative in seeking legal support and guidance to address her situation effectively.

2. **Communication and Follow- Up:** The Samanvayak's communication with survivor and the plan for a first meeting at OSC illustrated proactive efforts to follow up on the case and provide support promptly.

3. **Agency and Empowerment:** Survivor's decision to consult a lawyer and assert her preferences showcased her agency and empowerment to actively participate in her case.

4. **Openness to Communication:** Despite the initial agitation expressed by the Samanvayak, her willingness to follow up further indicated an openness to communication and continued support for survivor.

5. Entitlement - Widow Pension



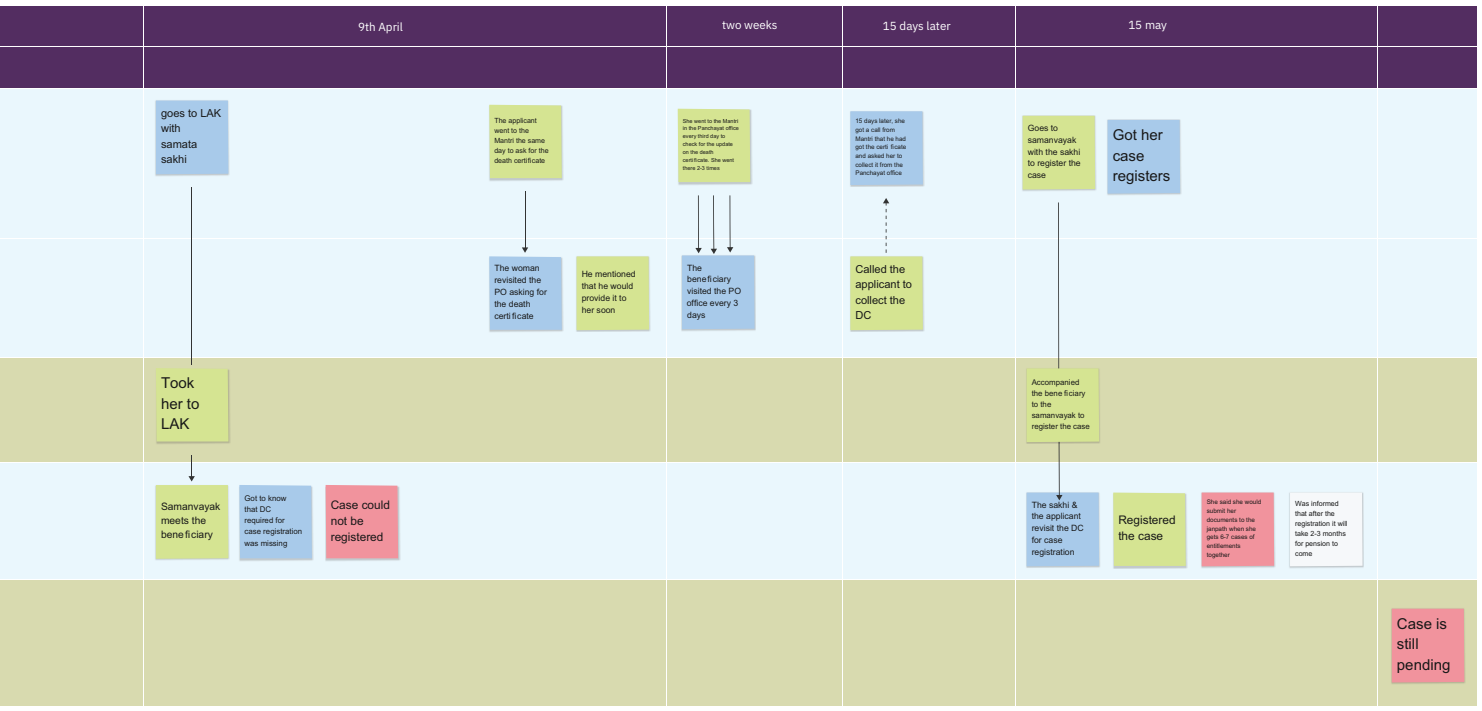
Survivor's Background:

She applied for the Kalyani pension after the death of her husband. However, she was informed that the pension would only be available after she receives the insurance money from her husband's health insurance policy. A local administrative official took a significant amount of money to prepare various documents. After receiving the insurance money, beneficiary reapplied for the Kalyani pension but faced delays and challenges in the process.

Summary Points:

- Beneficiary's husband passed away, and she applied for the Kalyani pension a month or two after his death, but she was told to wait until she receives the insurance money.
- A local administrative official took a substantial amount of money (Rs. 30,000-40,000) from the beneficiary to prepare the required documents.
- After receiving 2 lakhs rupees as insurance money, beneficiary reapplied for the Kalyani pension.
- Despite waiting for 6-7 months, no further progress was made in her pension application.
- Beneficiary learned about Mera Haq, Meri Pehchaan module, and the Lok Adhikar Kendra (LAK) from Samta Sakhi during a VO meeting.
- With Samta Sakhi's assistance, beneficiary visited LAK in April to register her case.
- The case couldn't be registered initially due to incomplete documents, specifically the death certificate.
- The Sakhi insisted on registering the case and assured that she would arrange for the death certificate.
- Beneficiary frequently visited the Panchayat office to inquire about the death certificate's status.
- After 15 days, beneficiary received the death certificate, and on 15th May 2023, she returned with the Sakhi to register the case at LAK.
- The Samanvayak mentioned that the process of obtaining the pension might take 2-3 months, and the case is still pending.

5. Entitlement - Widow Pension



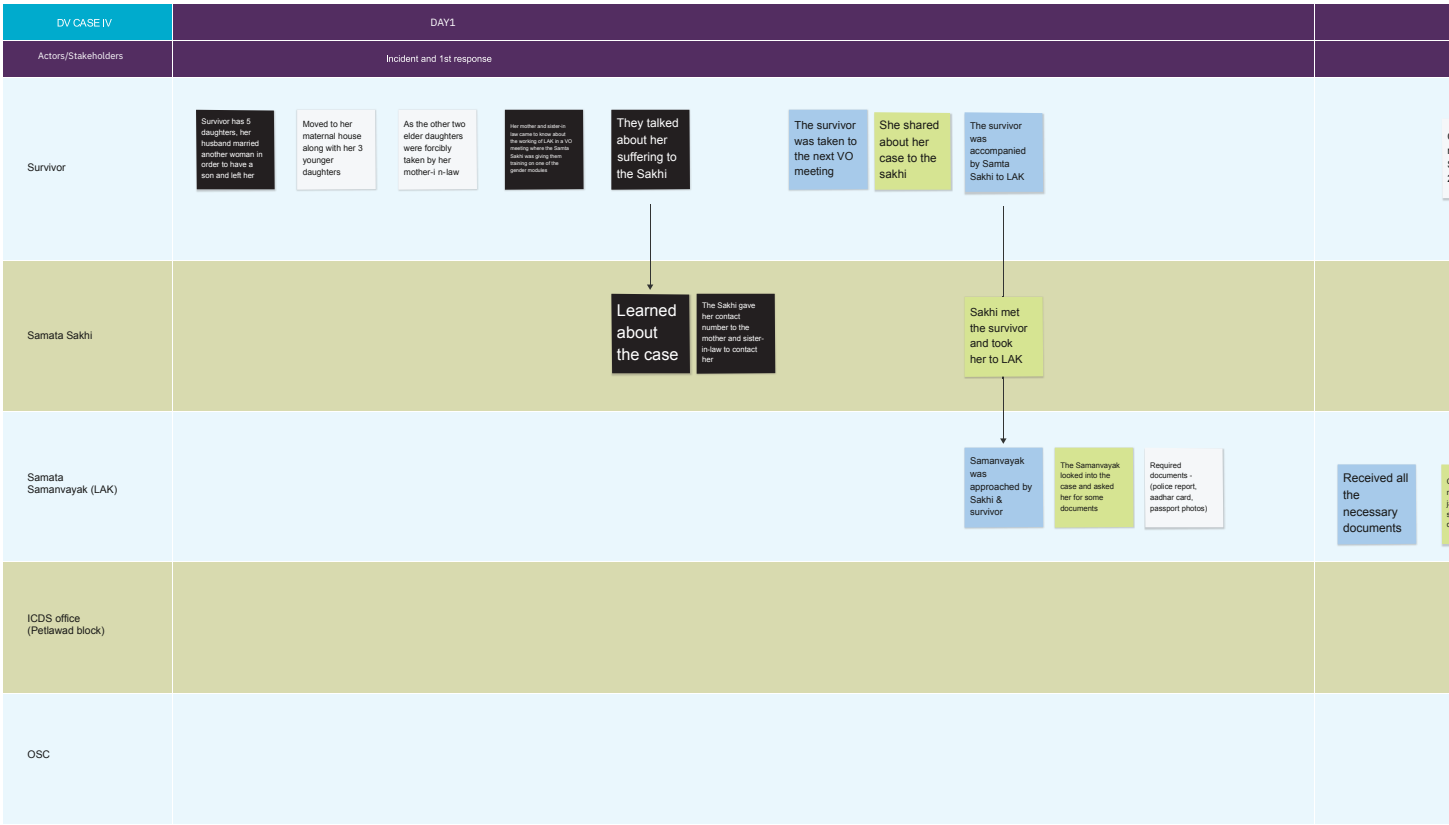
Barriers:

- Lack of awareness about Samata Sakhi: Beneficiary looses time and money going to the official for assistance instead of the Samata Sakhi.
- Unavailability of Death Certificate: The unavailability of the death certificate initially hindered the case registration process.
- Official's Unethical Practices: The official's unethical actions, taking a substantial amount of money for document preparation, created difficulties for beneficiary in the pension application process.

Enablers:

- Follow ups by Sakhi: The Sakhi and beneficiary regularly followed up with the official at the Panchayat office to get the necessary death certificate. They showed perseverance in checking for updates and ensuring that the process moved forward.
- LAK's Coordination with Authorities: The Samanvayak at LAK informed beneficiary about the registration process and assured her that she would take the case to Janpath. This coordination with the concerned authorities facilitated the processing of the pension application.
- Ownership of the case by Samanvayak: The Samanvayak took the responsibility to handle the registration process and informed beneficiary about the time frame for the pension application. This level of accountability instilled confidence in the beneficiary.

6. DV Case - IV



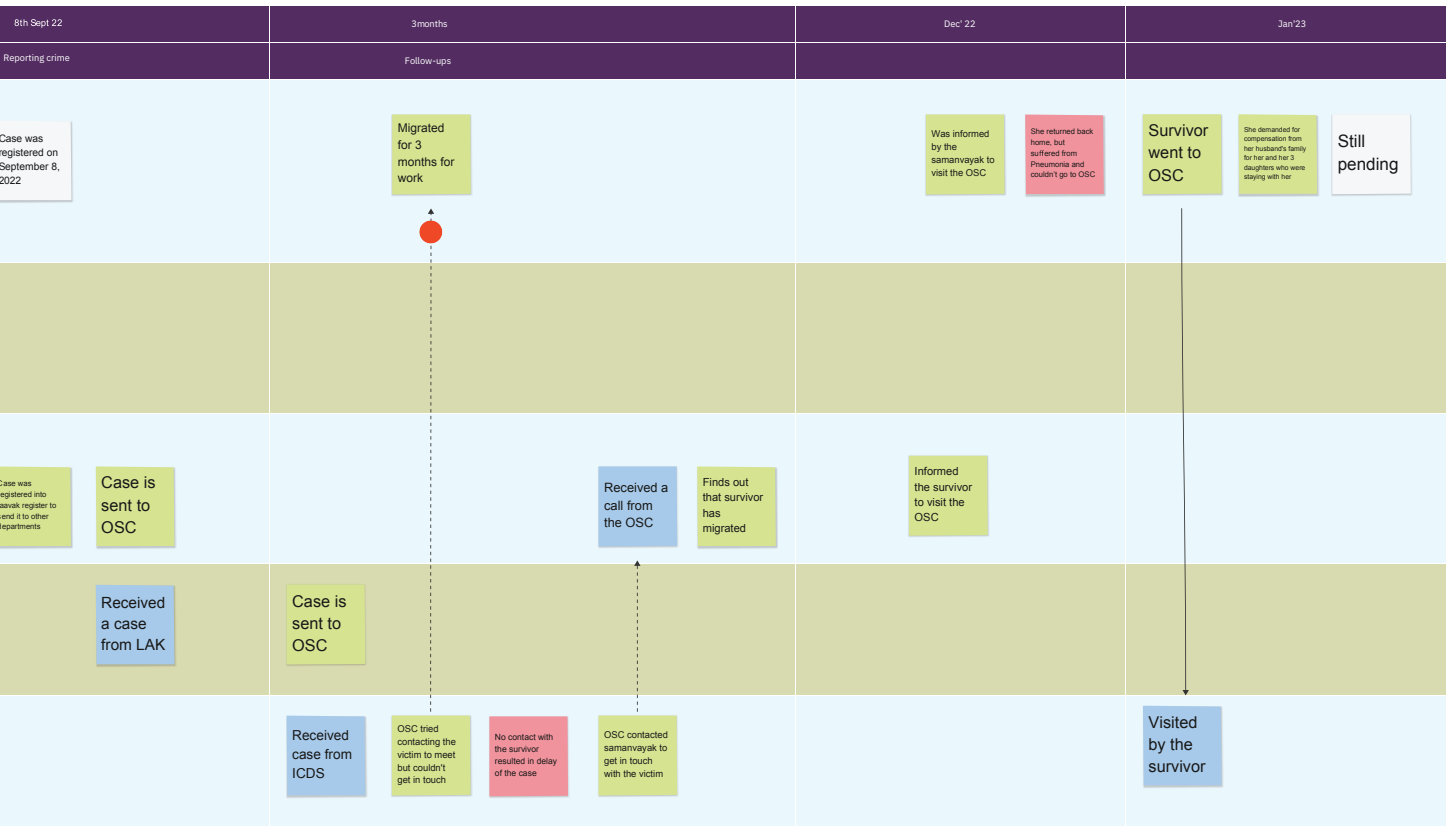
Survivor's Background:

This is a woman who faced severe domestic violence and discrimination due to her inability to give birth to son. She has five daughters, and her husband married another woman with a hope of having a son. As a result, he threw the survivor out of the house, and she sought refuge at her maternal house with her three younger daughters. Her two elder daughters were forcibly taken by her mother-in-law. The suffering of survivor came to the attention of her mother and sister-in-law during a VO meeting in Naharpura, where they learned about the services provided by LAK through a Samta Sakhi.

Summary Points:

1. Survivor's husband married another woman to have a son and subsequently threw Kamala out of the house.
2. She sought refuge at her maternal house with her three younger daughters, while her two elder daughters were taken by her mother-in-law.
3. Survivor's mother and sister-in-law learned about LAK's services during a VO meeting in Naharpura, where they shared Survivors's story with a Samta Sakhi.
4. The Sakhi provided her contact number, and survivor was brought to the next VO meeting, where she discussed her case.
5. The case was registered on September 8, 2022.
6. Survivor migrated to Surat, Gujarat, for three months, during which OSC tried to contact her but failed.
7. When survivor returned in December 2022, she suffered from pneumonia and couldn't visit OSC.
8. In January 2023, survivor went to OSC and demanded bhugtaan (compensation) from her husband's family for her and her three daughters who were living with her.

6. DV Case - IV



Barriers:

1. **Survivor's Seasonal Migration:** Survivor's seasonal migration to Surat hindered OSC's initial attempts to contact her and progress with the case.

2. Survivor's illness: Survivor's pneumonia further delayed her ability to visit OSC and address her case.

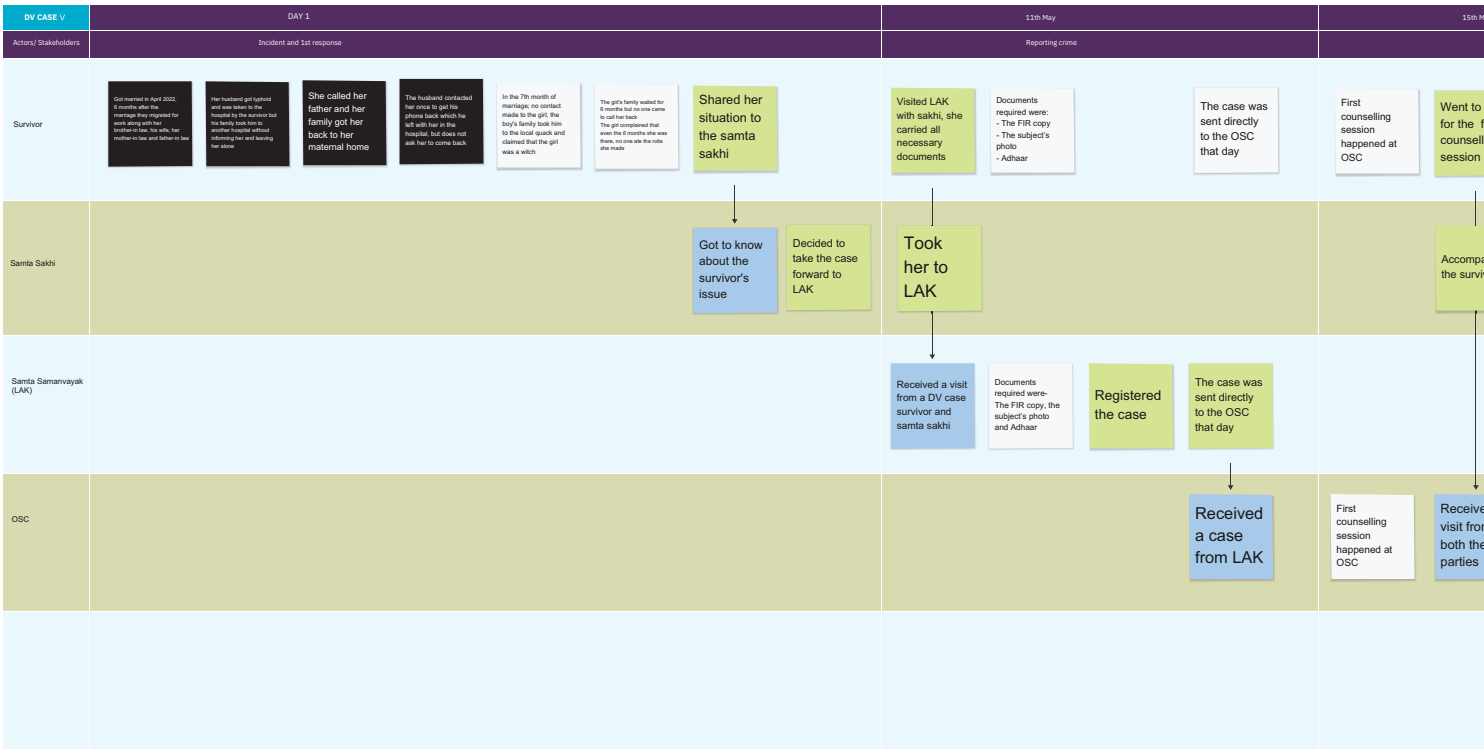
Enablers:

1. **Active Participation in VO Meetings:** Survivor's mother and sister-in-law actively participated in the VO meetings, discussed survivor's suffering with the S. Sakhi, and brought Kamala to the next VO meeting to share her case directly.

2. **Prompt Case Registration:** The case was registered on September 8, 2022, shortly after survivor's family connected with the Samta Sakhi, indicating a prompt response and action from the (LAK).

3. **Samanvayak's support to OSC in reaching beneficiary:** The Samanvayak discovered that survivor was not present in the village during the OSC's attempt to contact her, indicating an understanding of the victim's circumstances and willingness to accommodate her situation.

7. DV Case - V



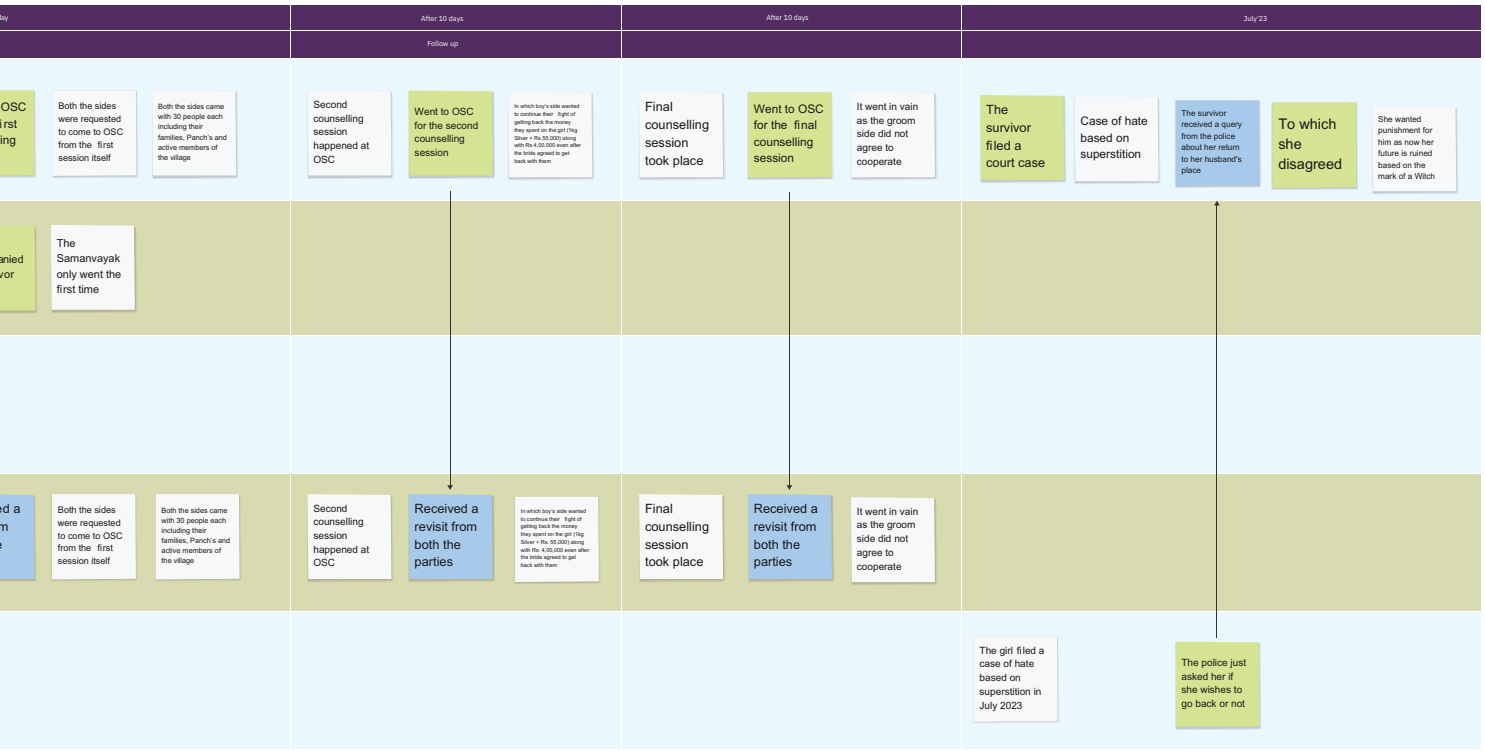
Survivor's Background:

- The survivor got married in April 2022. After six months of marriage, they migrated for work along with her in- laws and other relatives.
- Her husband fell ill with typhoid and was taken to the hospital, but his family took him to another hospital without informing her and left her alone.
- She returned to her maternal home after her husband's family did not come to get her for six months, claiming she was a witch based on superstitions.
- The girl files a case of hate based on superstition in July 2023, wanting punishment for her husband's family.

Summary Points:

- The survivor's husband falls ill, and his family leaves her alone at the hospital and migrates without her.
- The survivor's family waits for six months, but no one comes to call her back, and she is accused of being a witch.
- The girl files a case of hate based on superstition in July 2023 and wants punishment for her husband's family.
- The case is registered in LAK on 11th May, and the documents are sent to the OSC the same day.
- The first counseling session at the OSC takes place on 15th May, with both sides accompanied by 30 people each, including their families and village members.
- After 10 days, the second counseling session happens, but the groom's side insists on
- getting back the money they spent on the girl and additional demands.
- The final counseling session happens after 10 days, but the groom's side refuses to cooperate

7. DV Case - V



Barriers:

- The survivor faced superstitious beliefs and accusations of being a witch, leading to her separation from her husband.
- The groom's family demanded money and made additional demands, creating a barrier to resolution

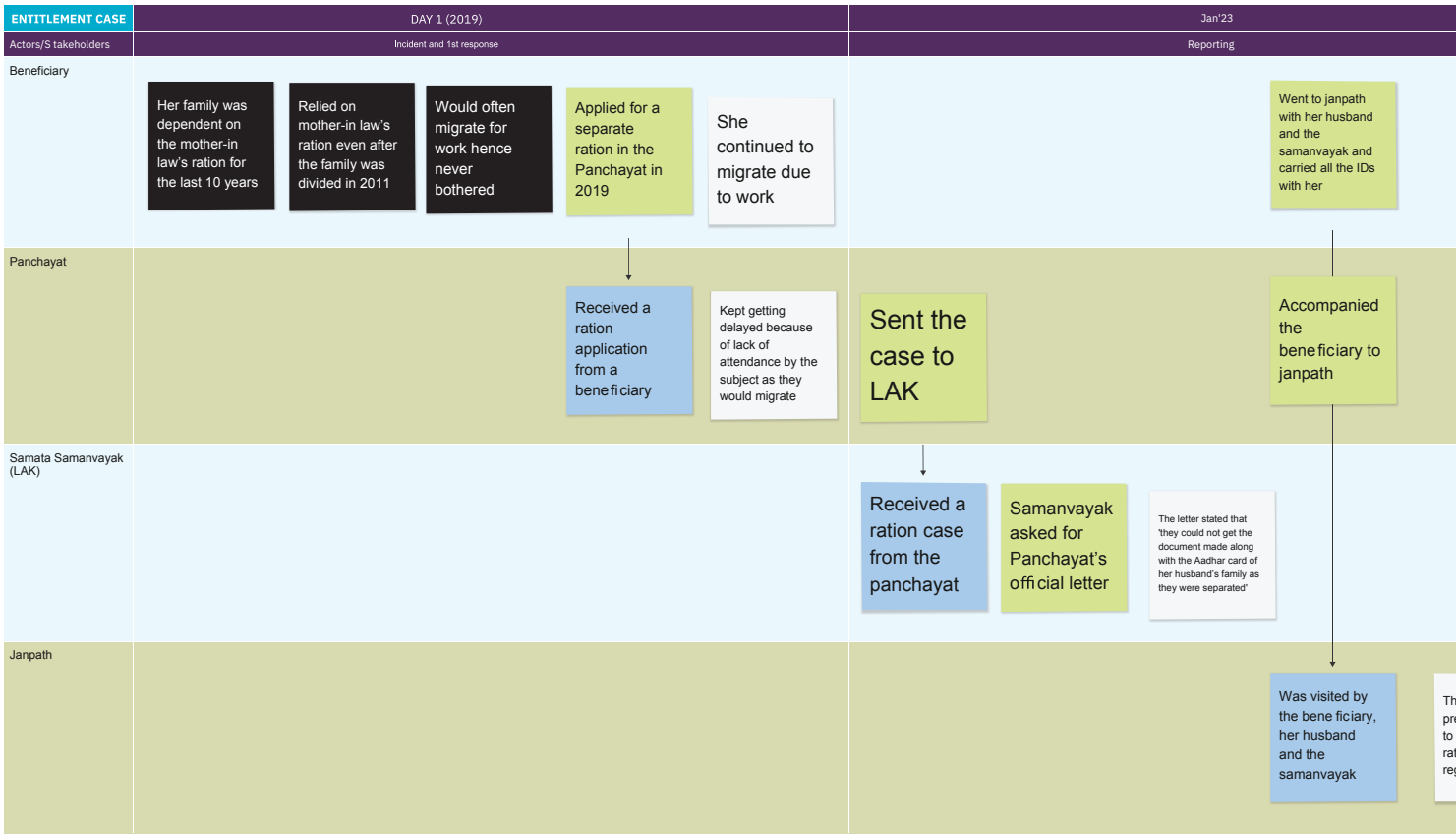
Enablers:

- The survivor took prompt action by filing a case of hate based on superstition, seeking justice for her situation.
- The survivor's family stood by her, supporting her throughout the process.

Failure Points:

- The groom's family's refusal to cooperate in the counseling sessions hindered the resolution of the case.

8. Entitlement - Ration Card



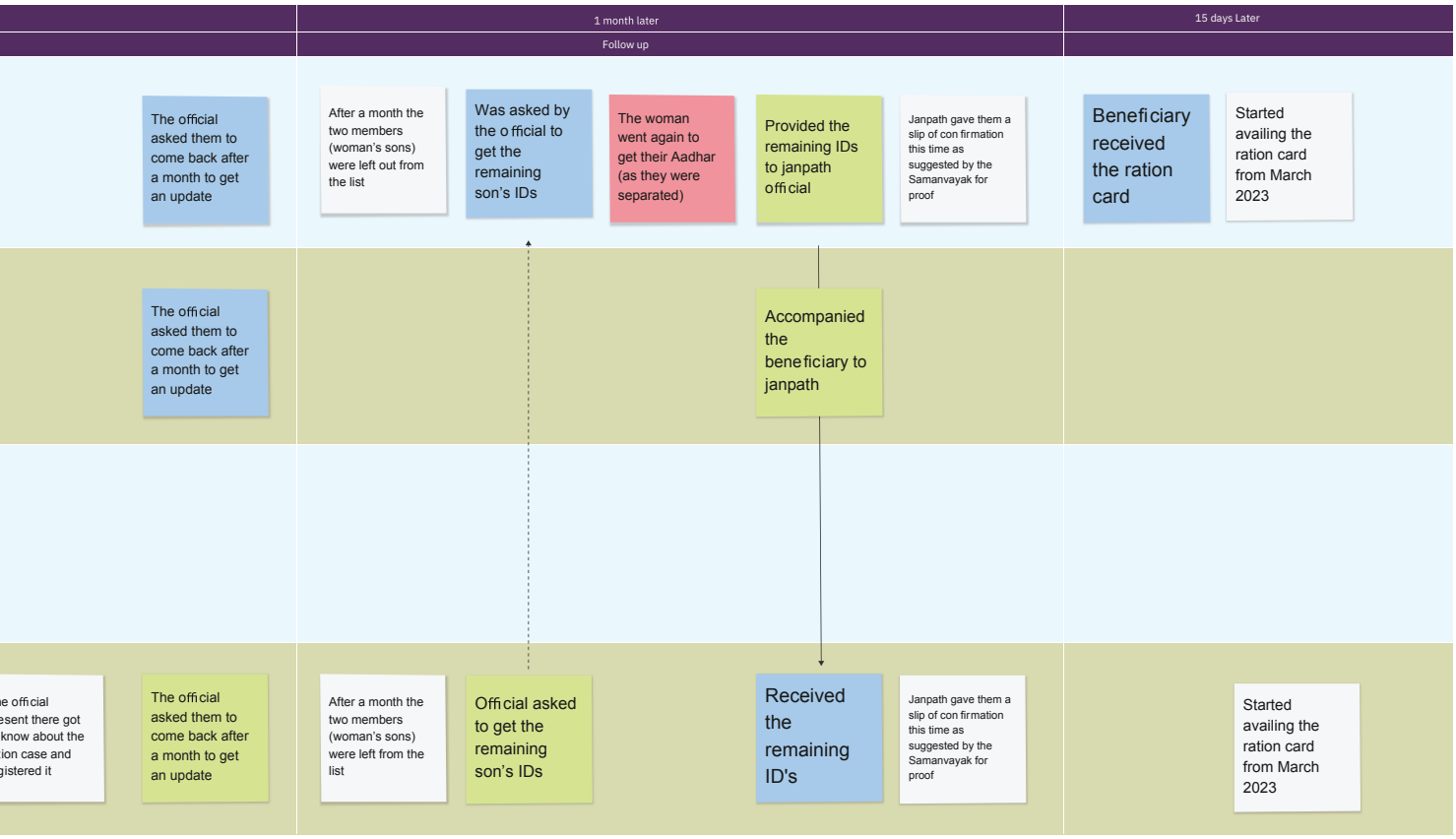
Survivor's Background:

- Beneficiary and her family were dependent on her mother- in- law's ration for the last 10 years.
- Even after the family divided in 2011, they continued to rely on her mother- in- law's ration.
- Due to frequent migration for work, they never bothered to apply for a separate ration and card.

Summary Points:

- Beneficiary applied for a separate ration in the Panchayat in 2019, but it kept getting delayed due to migration and lack of attendance.
- The case was registered at LAK in Jan 2023, where they were asked to provide an official letter from the Panchayat stating the reason for not obtaining the ration earlier, along with the Aadhar card of the separated family members.
- The Samanvayak accompanied beneficiary and her husband to Janpad with the required IDs and documents. They were asked to come back after a month for an update.
- After a month, two members from beneficiary's family were left off the list. The official asked for the IDs of the remaining son.
- The woman obtained the required IDs and received a slip of confirmation from *Janpad* as proof.
- 15 days later, beneficiary received the ration card and started availing it from March 2023.

8. Entitlement - Ration Card



Barriers:

- Frequent migration and lack of attendance in the Panchayat delayed the process of obtaining a separate ration.

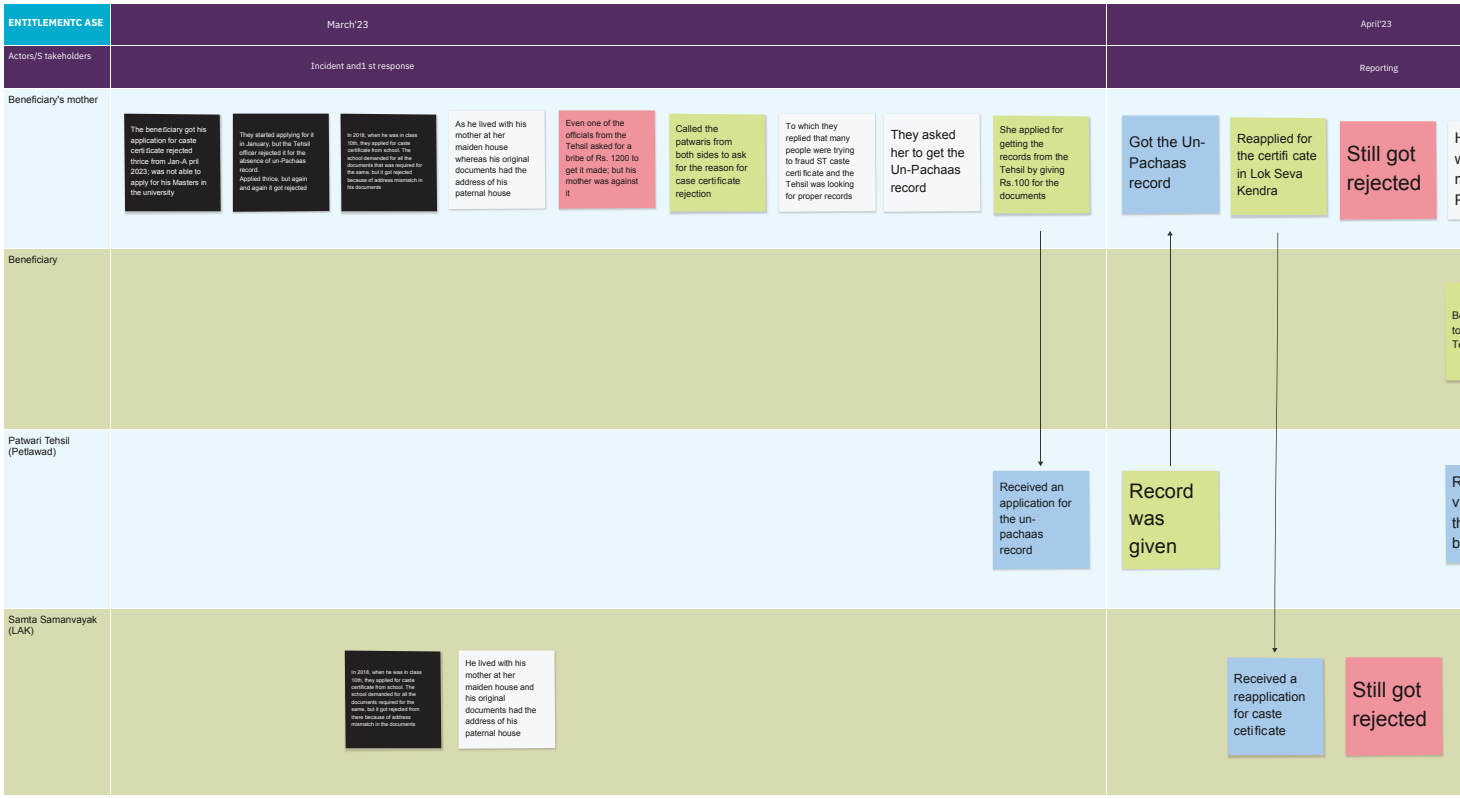
Enablers:

- The case was registered at LAK, providing support and guidance to benficiary and her family.
- The S. Samanvayak accompanied them to Janpad, ensuring proper documentation and assistance in the process.
- Obtaining the required IDs and providing the slip of confirmation as proof facilitated the successful acquisition of the ration card.

Failure Points:

- The frequent migration and lack of attendance became a barrier in the initial process of obtaining a separate ration card.

9: Entitlement - Caste Certificate



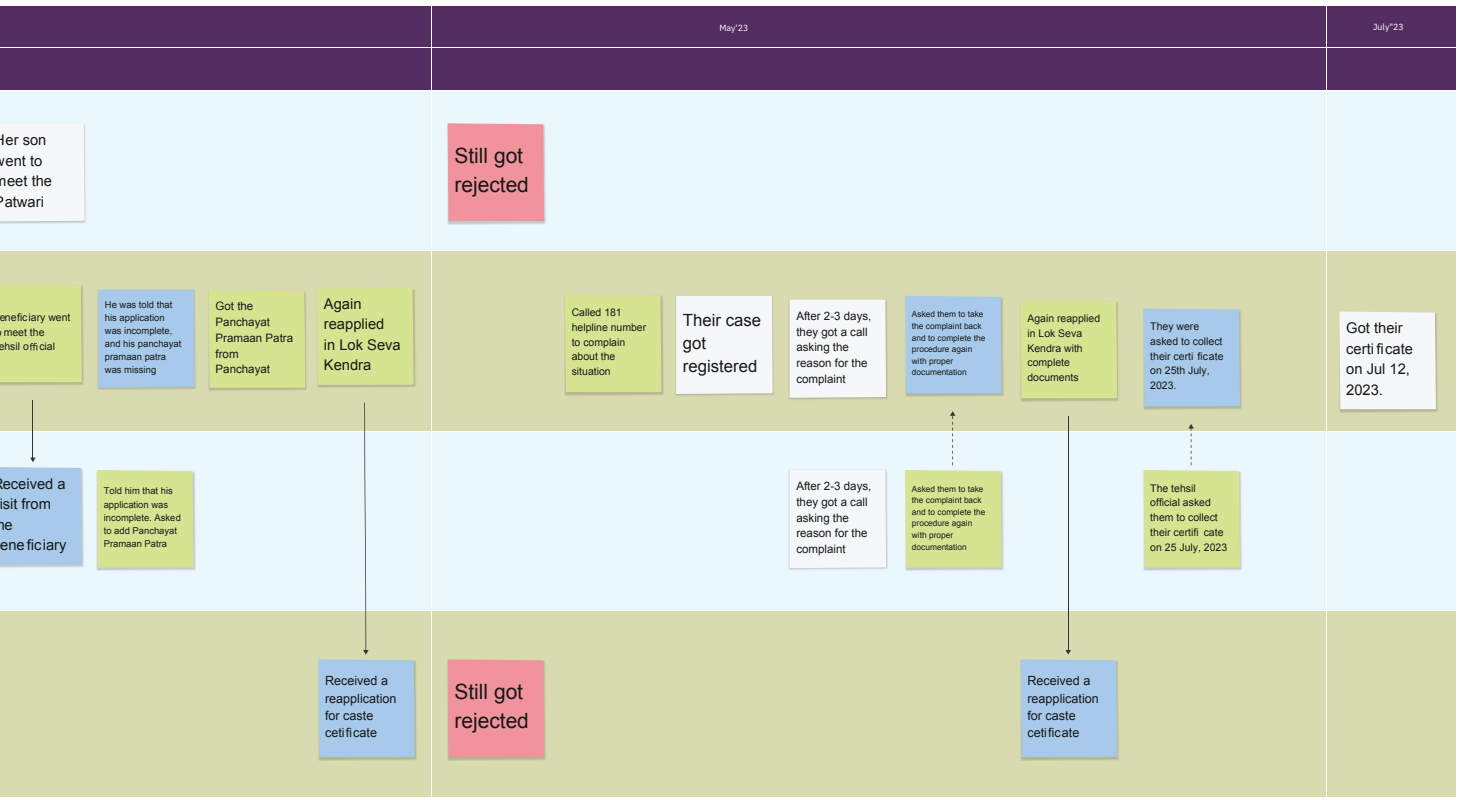
Survivor's Background:

Beneficiary is a 24- year- old young man who faced multiple rejections for his caste certificate application. His mother, has been trying to get the caste certificate for him since 2018 when he was in class 10.

Summary Points:

- Beneficiary's caste certificate application was rejected thrice between January to April 2023 due to the absence of *un-Pachaas* records.
- In 2018, when he applied from his school, the application was rejected because his original documents had the address of his in- law's GP, while he was living in his mother's maiden house.
- A Tahasil official asked for a bribe of 1200 rupees to expedite the process, but beneficiary's mother refused.
- In March, beneficiary's mother obtained the *Un-Pachaas* record by paying 100 rupees and re- applied for the certificate at Lok Seva Kendra, but it was still rejected.
- After getting the Panchayat Pramaan Patra, they applied again, but it was rejected once more in May.
- They registered a complaint at the 181 helpline number in Bhopal, which led to a callfrom the Tehsil, asking why they complained.
- Beneficiary's mother re- submitted the complete documentation at Lok Seva Kendra after clarifying the procedure and documents required.
- Finally, the Patwari asked them to collect the certificate on 25 July 2023.
- The caste certificate was received by beneficiary's on July 12, 2023.

9: Entitlement - Caste Certificate



Barriers:

- Repeated rejections due to the absence of *un-Pachaas* records and discrepancies in address details.
- Attempted bribery by a Tahasil official, which they refused.

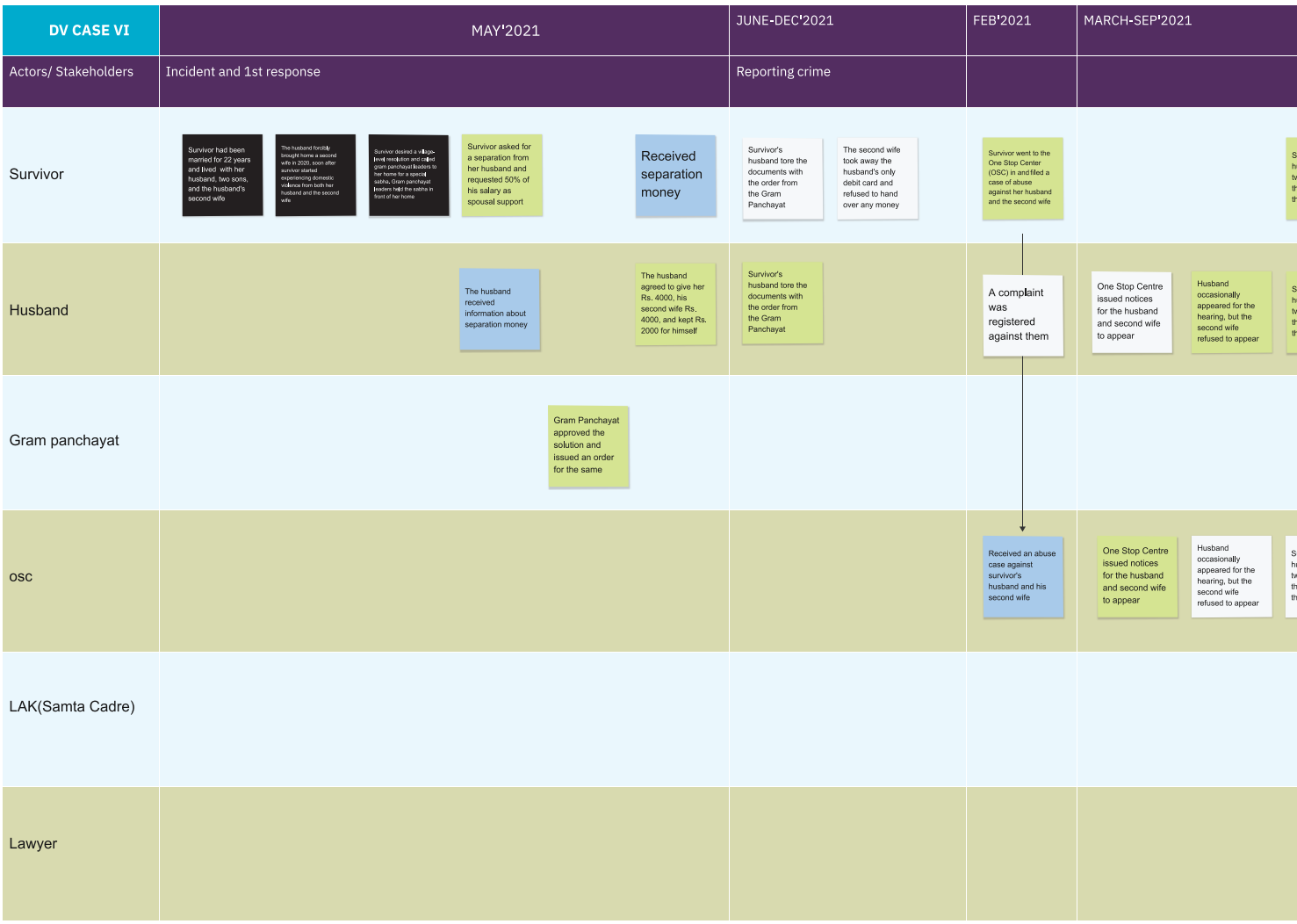
Enablers:

- Persistence and determination of beneficiary's mother to secure the caste certificate for her son.
- Registering a complaint at the 181 helpline number in Bhopal to raise the issue.

Failure Points:

- Lack of proper guidance and information from the authorities during the initial application process.

10. DV Case - VI



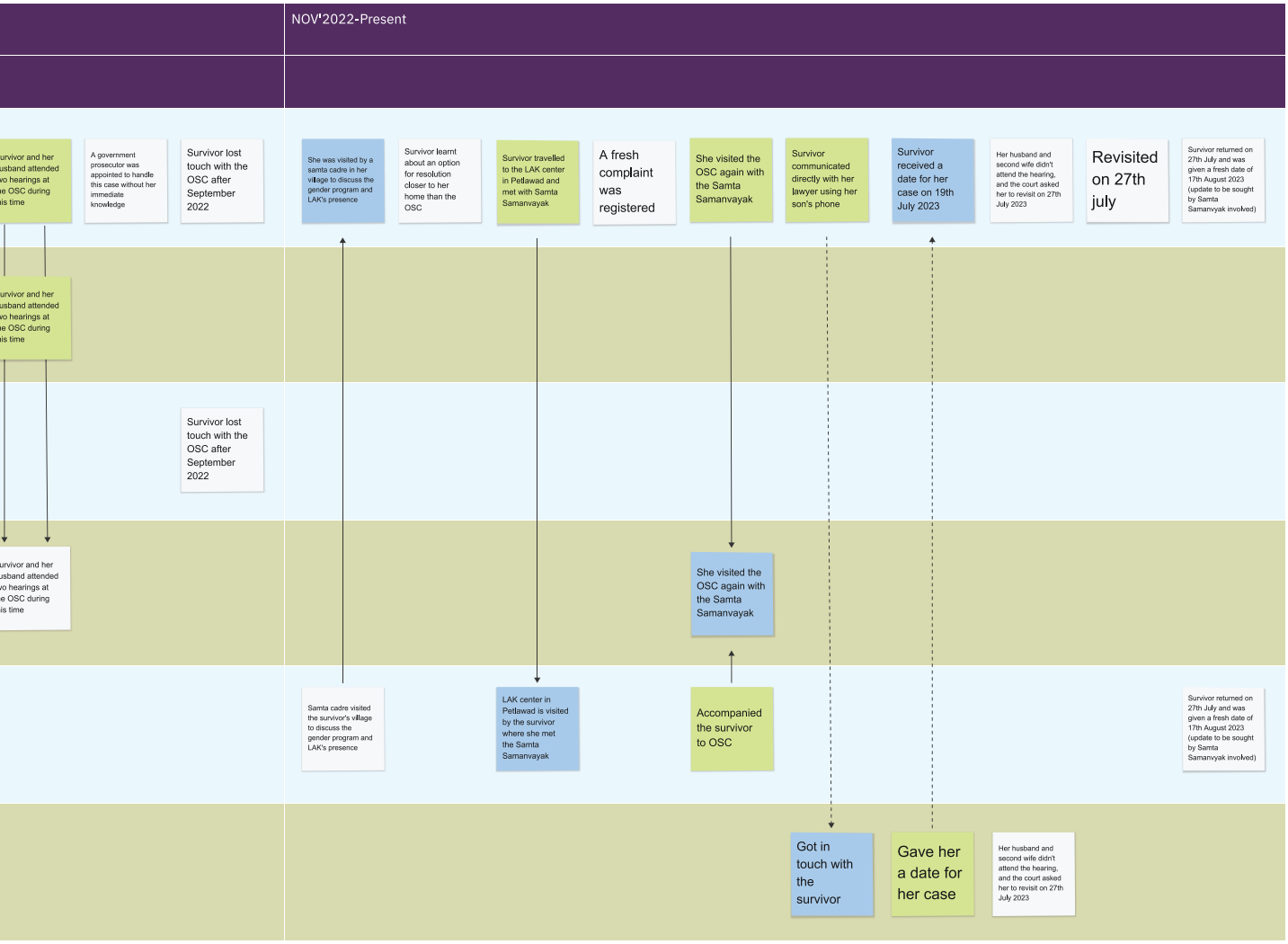
Survivor's Background:

Survivor is a woman in her 40s from the ST Christian community. She is a housewife and a farmer, living near Mohankot with her husband, two sons, and her husband's second wife. She has been married for 22 years and has faced domestic violence since her husband brought home a second wife in 2020

Summary Points:

- Survivor faces domestic violence from both her husband and the second wife.
- She seeks a village- level resolution and holds a special sabha in May 2021, where she requests separation from her husband and 50% of his salary as spousal support.
- Gram Panchayat leaders hold the sabha in front of her home, where an agreement is reached: Survivor is to receive 4000 rupees, the second wife is to receive 4000 rupees, and the husband keeps 2000 rupees.
- The Gram Panchayat approves the solution and issues an order for the same.
- However, her husband tears up the documents post- May 2021, and the second wife takes control of the finances.
- Survivor is unable to leave the abusive environment andcontinues facing violence..

10. DV Case - VI



Barriers:

- Survivor faces resistance from her husband and the second wife, who tear up the initial resolution documents and take control of finances.
- The second wife's refusal to attend OSC hearings creates a barrier to the resolution process.
- Lack of awareness about available options and resources initially prevents Survivor from seeking help sooner.
- The abusive environment at home and lack of support make it difficult for Survivor to take actions against her husband and second wife.

Enablers:

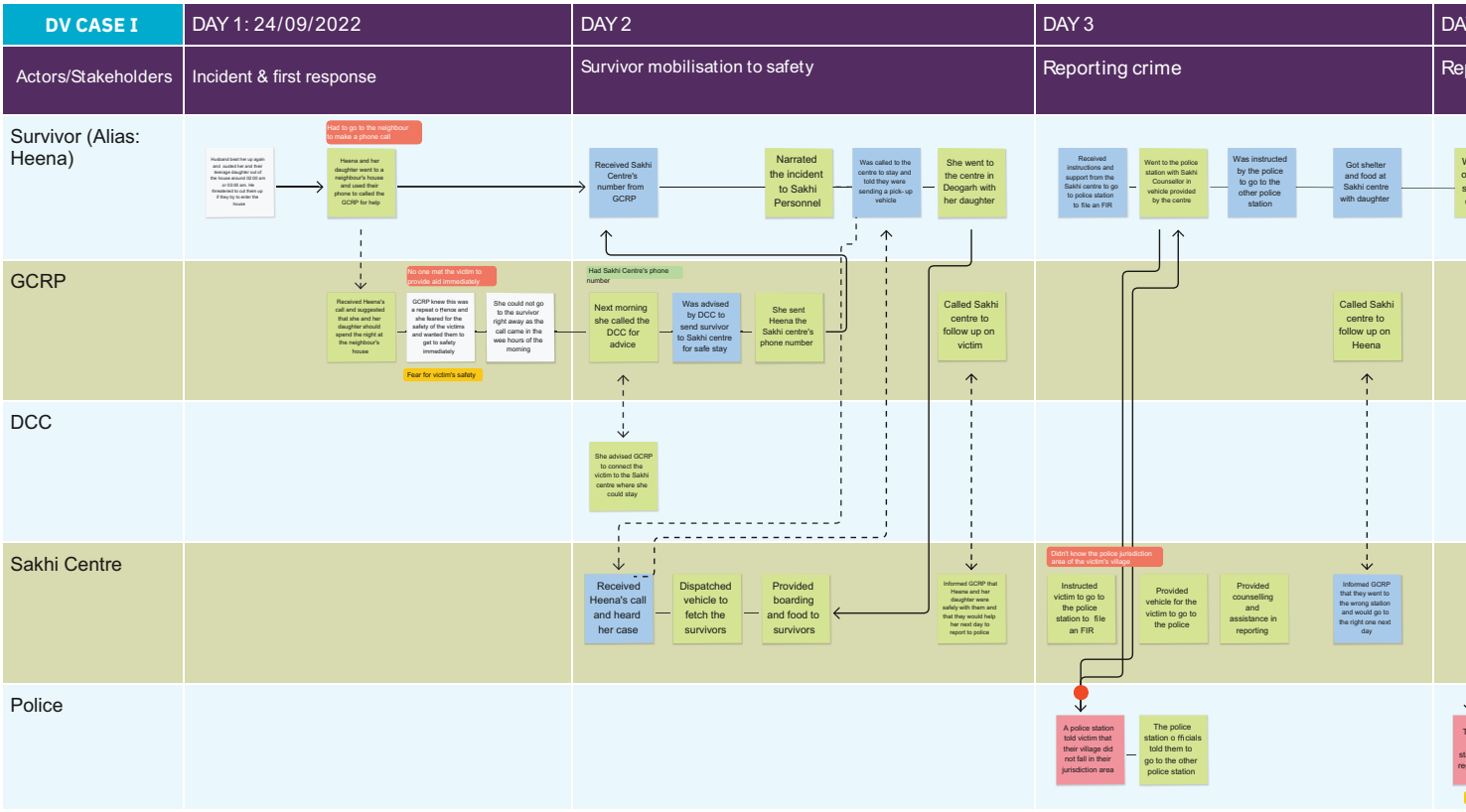
- Survivor seeks help at the One Stop Center (OSC) in Jhabua town in February 2022 and files a case against her husband and the second wife.
- The OSC issues notices for the husband and second wife to appear, and a government prosecutor is appointed to handle Survivor's case.
- Samta cadre visits Survivor's village in November 2022, creating awareness about the gender program and options for resolution closer to her home.
- Survivor visits the LAK center in Petlawad with the help of Samta Samanvayak, who registers a fresh complaint for her.
- Survivor learns about her government- appointed lawyer and starts direct communication using her son's phone.

Failure Points:

- The initial village- level resolution fails as Survivor's husband and the second wife disregard the Gram Panchayat's order.
- Despite attending OSC hearings, the second wife's non-cooperation hinders the progress of Survivor's case.
- The lack of timely communication from OSC about the Government- appointed prosecutor leads to
- Survivor losing touch with the center. Survivor's inability to move out of her abusive household hampers her efforts to seek help and justice.

Service journey maps - Odisha

1. DV CASE - I



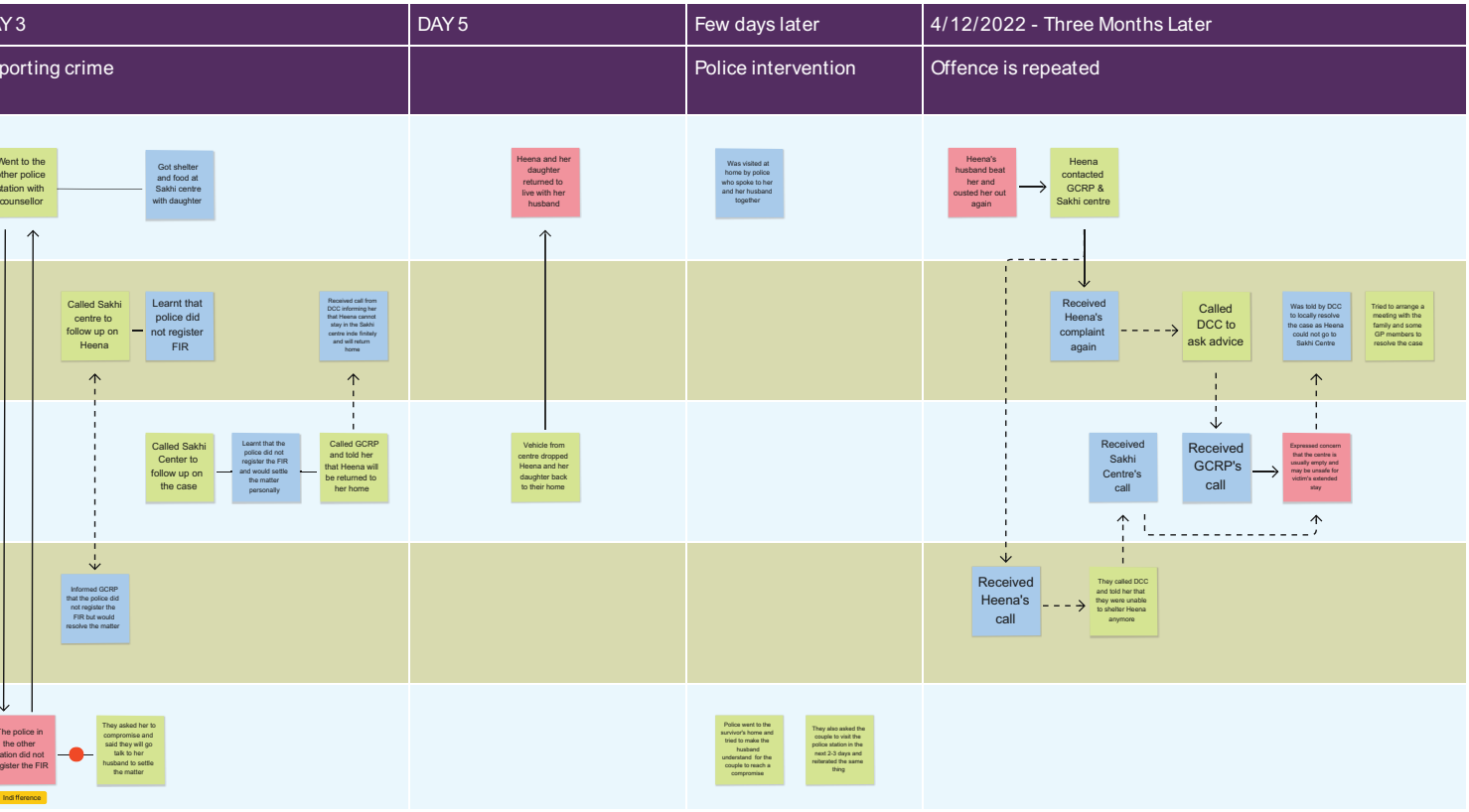
Survivor's Background:

- Case of long term domestic violence.
- Survivor was certain they want to register a police case GCRP is able to connect survivor to
- Sakhi Center
- Sakhi Center provides vehicle forsurvivor mobilisation and reaching police station
- Struggles in accessing the correct police station through Sakhi Center
- Police refuses to register FIR and counsels the husband informally
- Survivor continues to suffer abuse

Barriers:

- SGCRP does not have an official register to record cases. She buys registers and copies a format given to her and enters cases. It is a cumbersome process.
- Sakhi Centre did not know the police station for the survivor's jurisdiction area
- Police felt the incident should be handled internally by them without registering the FIR

1. DV CASE - I



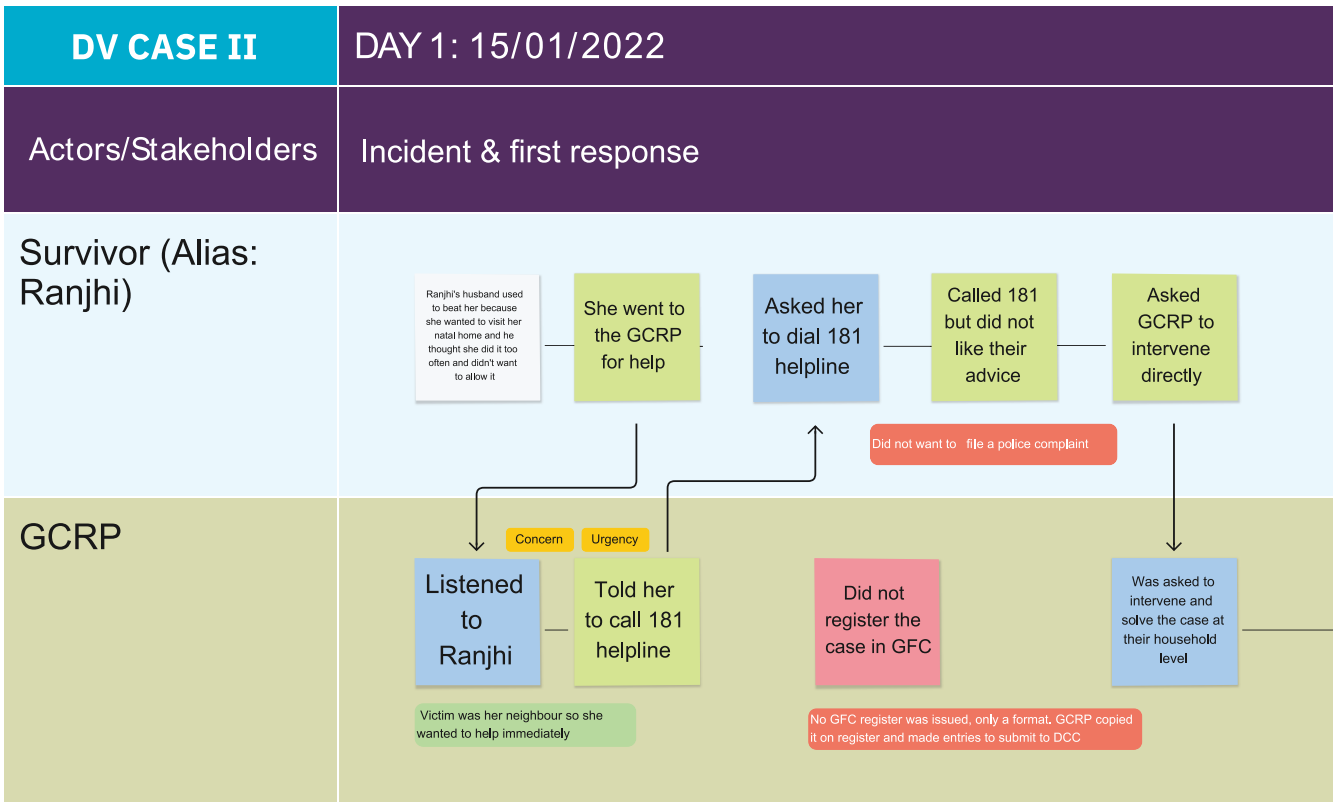
Enablers:

- CGCRP had Sakhi Centre's number and shared it with survivor.
- Sakhi centre responded quickly and provided transport, boarding and food to survivor and her children.
- Sakhi centre's counsellor assisted survivor in going to the police.

Failure Points:

- Survivor did not receive first response counselling when she reported the incident.
- Survivor was sent by Sakhi Centre to the wrong police station to report the crime.
- Police did not register the FIR. No effort was made to try again.
- The survivor was sent back to live with the offender, her husband when the police refused to write an FIR.
- The incident occurred again and the Sakhi centre was unwilling for the survivor to return to the centre.

2. DV CASE - II



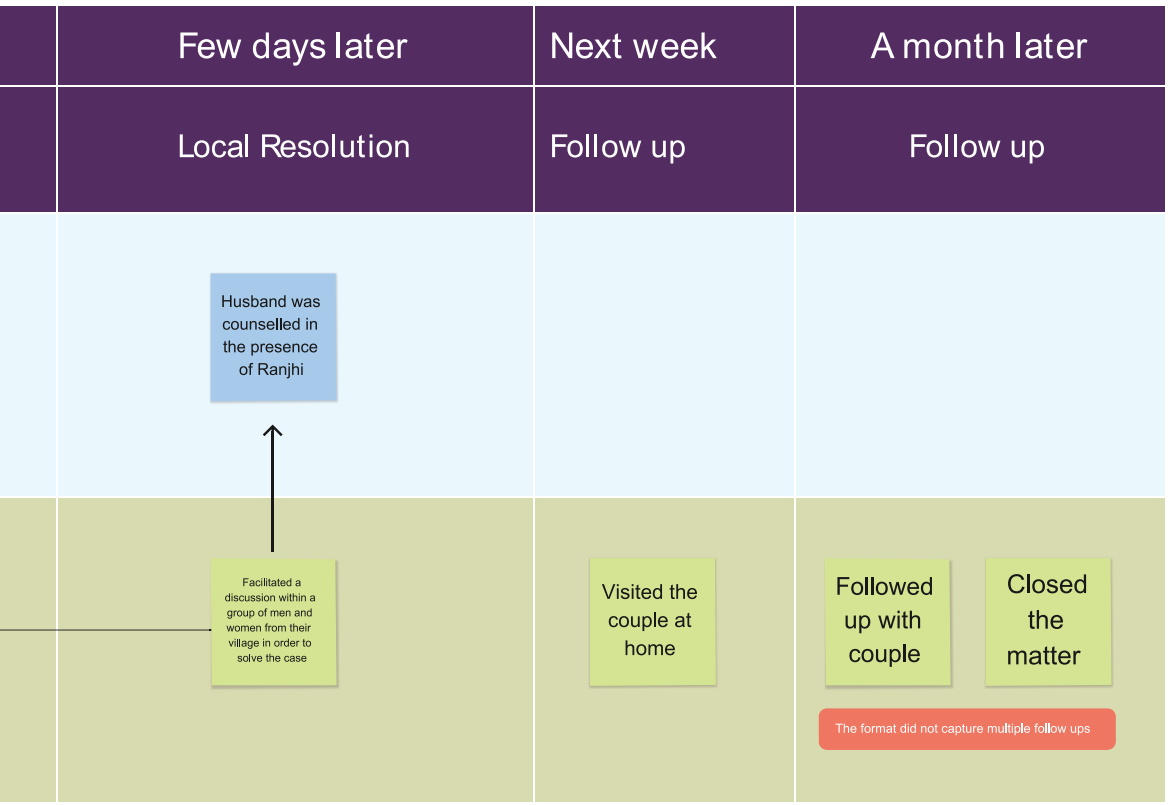
Survivor's Background:

- One off incident of violence in the couple over a disagreement
- Survivor is told to call 181 by GCRP
- Survivor does not want to go to the police and wants a local resolution
- GCRP facilitates a counselling session for the husband with local men and women from the village administration
- GCRP carries out follow up visits and closes the matter

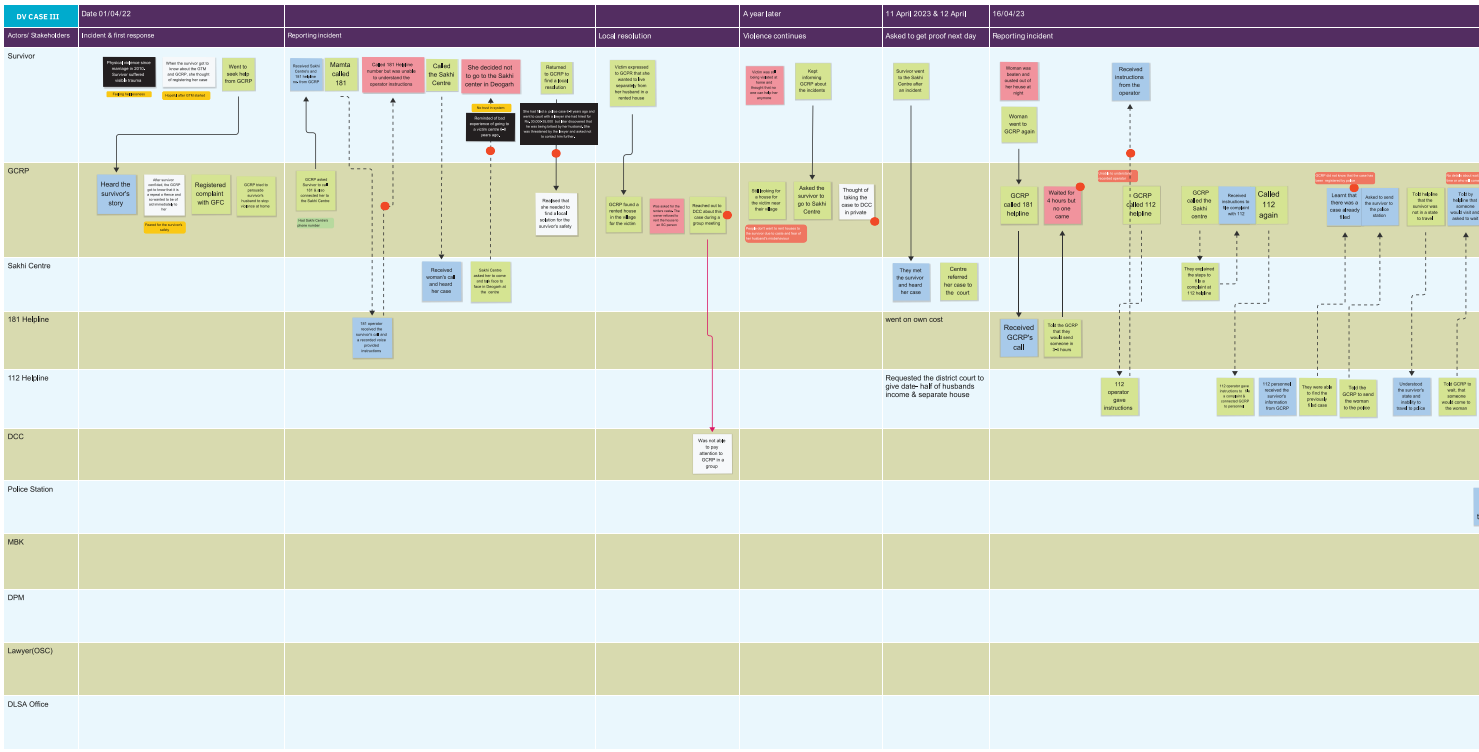
Barriers:

- SGCRP was not able to register the case at GFC immediately due to issues with register format.
- Survivor did not know what to expect when she called 181

2. DV CASE - II


Few days later
Next week
A month later
Local Resolution
Follow up
Follow up
Husband was counselled in the presence of Ranjhi
Facilitated a discussion within a group of men and women from their village in order to solve the case
Visited the couple at home
Followed up with couple
Closed the matter
The format did not capture multiple follow ups

3. DV CASE - III



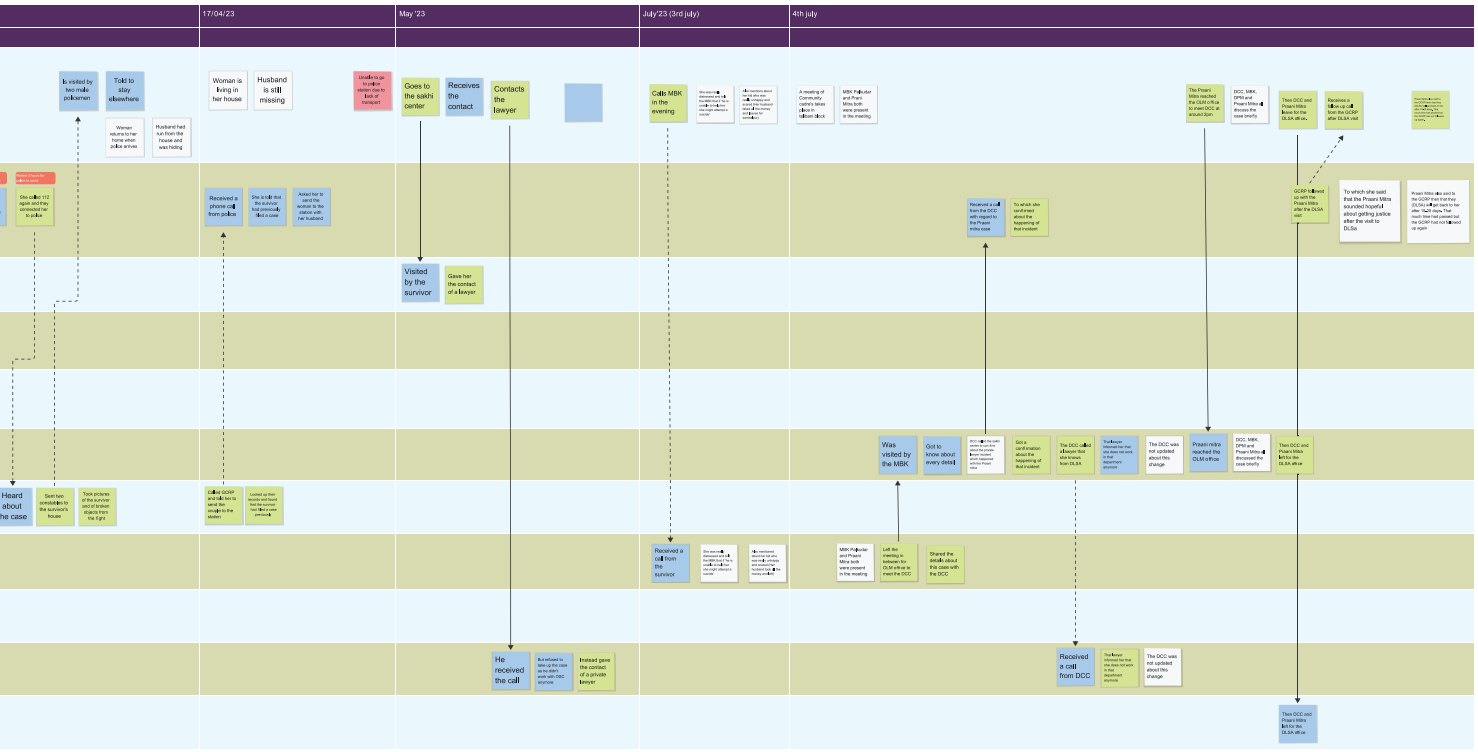
Survivor's Background:

- Survivor is Praani Mitra. Has her own income. Does not take money from husband. Supporting her 10 year old son with her income.
- Husband is habitual alcoholic. Does not support family financially. He is a teacher at nearby school. He was suspended few days before the incident was reported.
- Husband often fights and breaks things.
- Survivor is cooking and serving food to her husband but does not communicate with him for anything else.
- She is from SC caste. Lives in Jotuk Pada.

Summary points:

- Abuse of woman over several years
- Survivor had attempted seeking justice previously but had a bad experience
- Survivor wants to separate from her abusive husband and live in a different house.
- Survivor was directed by GCRP to 181 and Sakhi Center even though she did not want to involve the police.
- GCRP unable to find a rental for survivor due to caste based discrimination in the community.
- Case was not escalated to DCC effectively.
- Survivor continues to suffer abuse and eventually goes to Sakhi Center who refer her case to court.
- Survivor continues to live with her abusive husband.
- She reaches out to GCRP again after an incident of violence.
- GCRP calls 181, 112 and even contacts police directly
- Police send a team to investigate and tell GCRP that a complaint has been filed previously for this case.
- The abusive husband had run away before the police arrived. Police tell GCRP to send the couple to their station.
- Survivor is traumatised, in- cohesive and expresses suicidal thoughts.

3. DV CASE - III



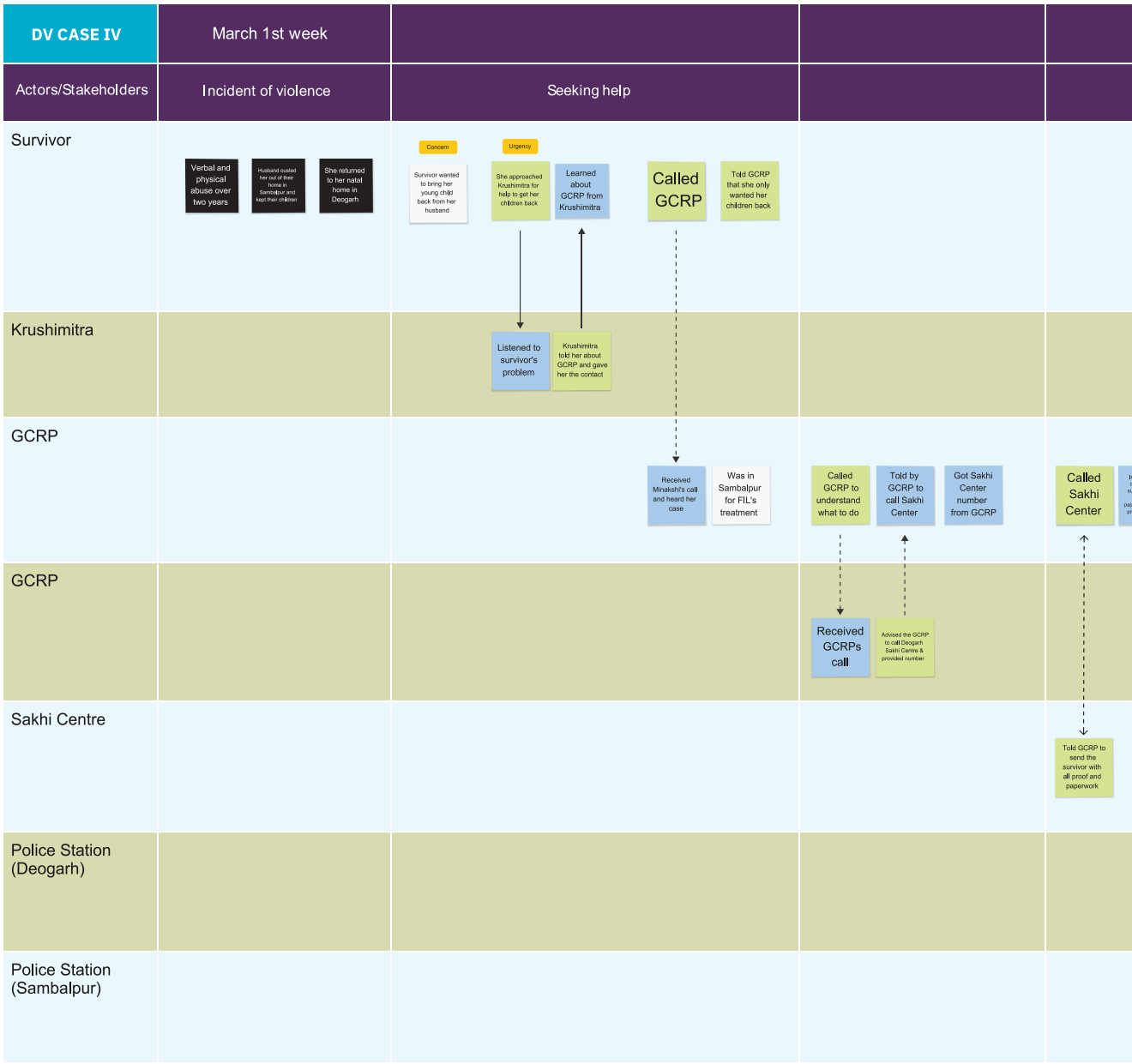
Barriers:

- GCRP advices survivor to cal 181 & sakhi centre without understanding the survivor's pervious experience with the justice system
- Caste based discrimination against SC survivor hinders local resolution for the case
- No collective action by community women to ensure survivor's safety.
- Poor communication about the status of the survivor's legal case between GCRP and Sakhi Center.
- Survivor does not have vehicle or money for transportation to go to police station.

Failure points:

- Survivor unable to understand 181 operator's instructions
- Survivor does not want to go through the Sakhi centre or police because of a bad experience with the system in the past
- 181 does not send help in the promised time.
- Instead of finding the accused who has run away, the police has asked the survivor to bring him in to their station.

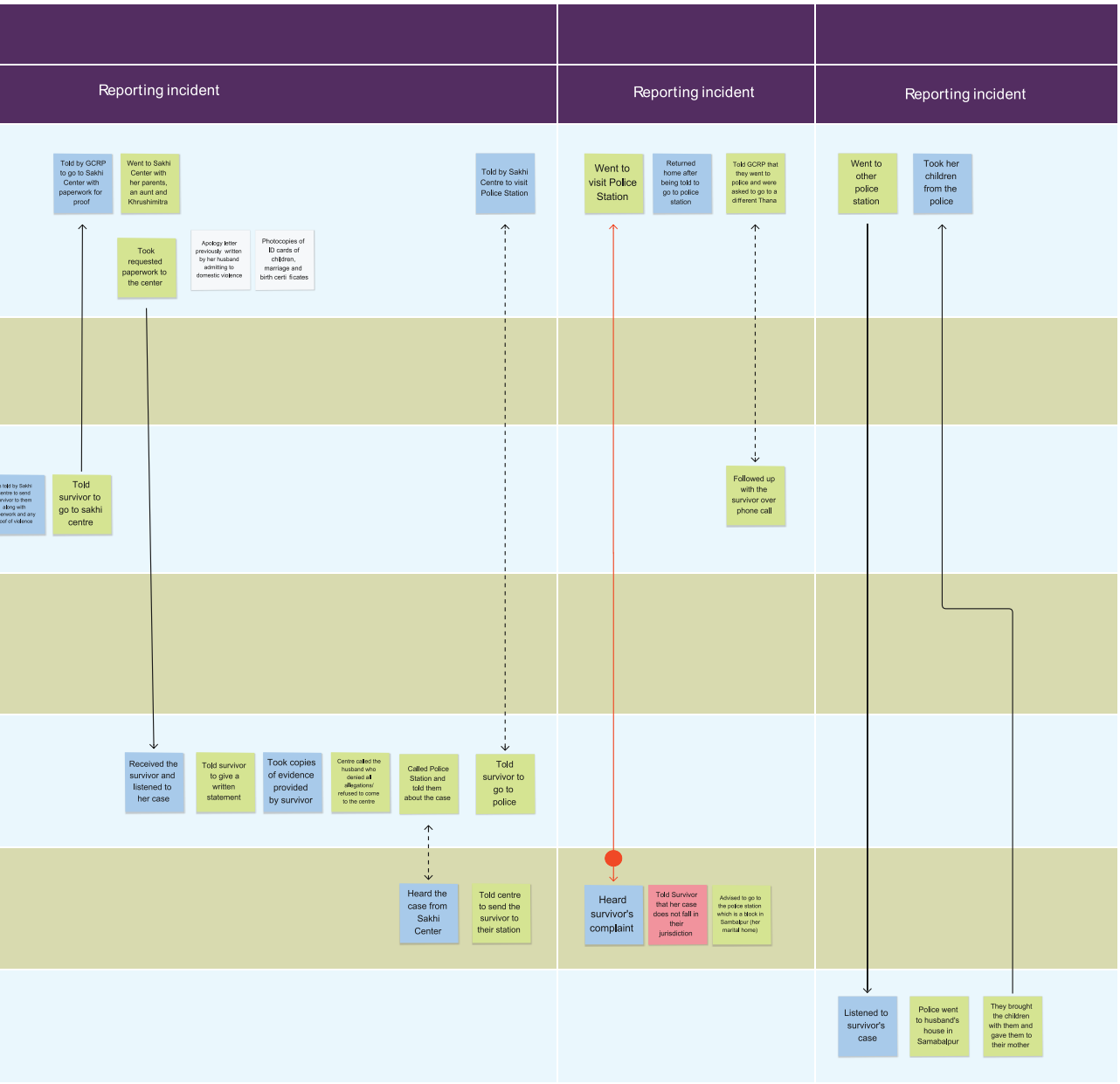
4. DV CASE - IV



Survivor's Background:

- Woman is beaten and abandoned by her husband. He keeps their young children with him in his house in Sambalpur.
- Woman returns to her parent's home in Deogarh and reaches out to her neighbour, a Krushimitra to help her get her children back and learns about GCRP from her.
- GCRP Khulana's first case so she asks Sushama who is a more experienced GCRP for advice.
- GCRP Khulana calls Sakhi Center in Deogarh and tell them about this case. They ask her to send the woman to them.
- Survivor is accompanied by her family members and Krushimitra to go to the Sakhi Center.
- Sakhi Centre calls Reamal police station and tell them about the case.
- Reamal police tells Sakhi Centre to send the woman to them.
- When the survivor gets to the Reamal station, they tell her that their village does not fall under their jurisdiction and point them to the Rengali station.
- The survivor goes to Rengali police station. They hear her case and immediately send a vehicle to the husband's house in Sambalpur.
- They bring the children from the husband and hand them to their mother.

4. DV CASE - IV



Enablers:

- Krushimitra who is the survivor's neighbour was able to connect her to the GCRP.
- The new GCRP was able to get advice and help from another experienced GCRP.

Barriers:

- Survivor was not provided with transportation to commute to Sakhi Center.
- Survivor was sent to the wrong police station the first time.

Failure points:

- The Reamal Police invites the survivor to their station without inquiring about their jurisdiction area from the Sakhi Center.

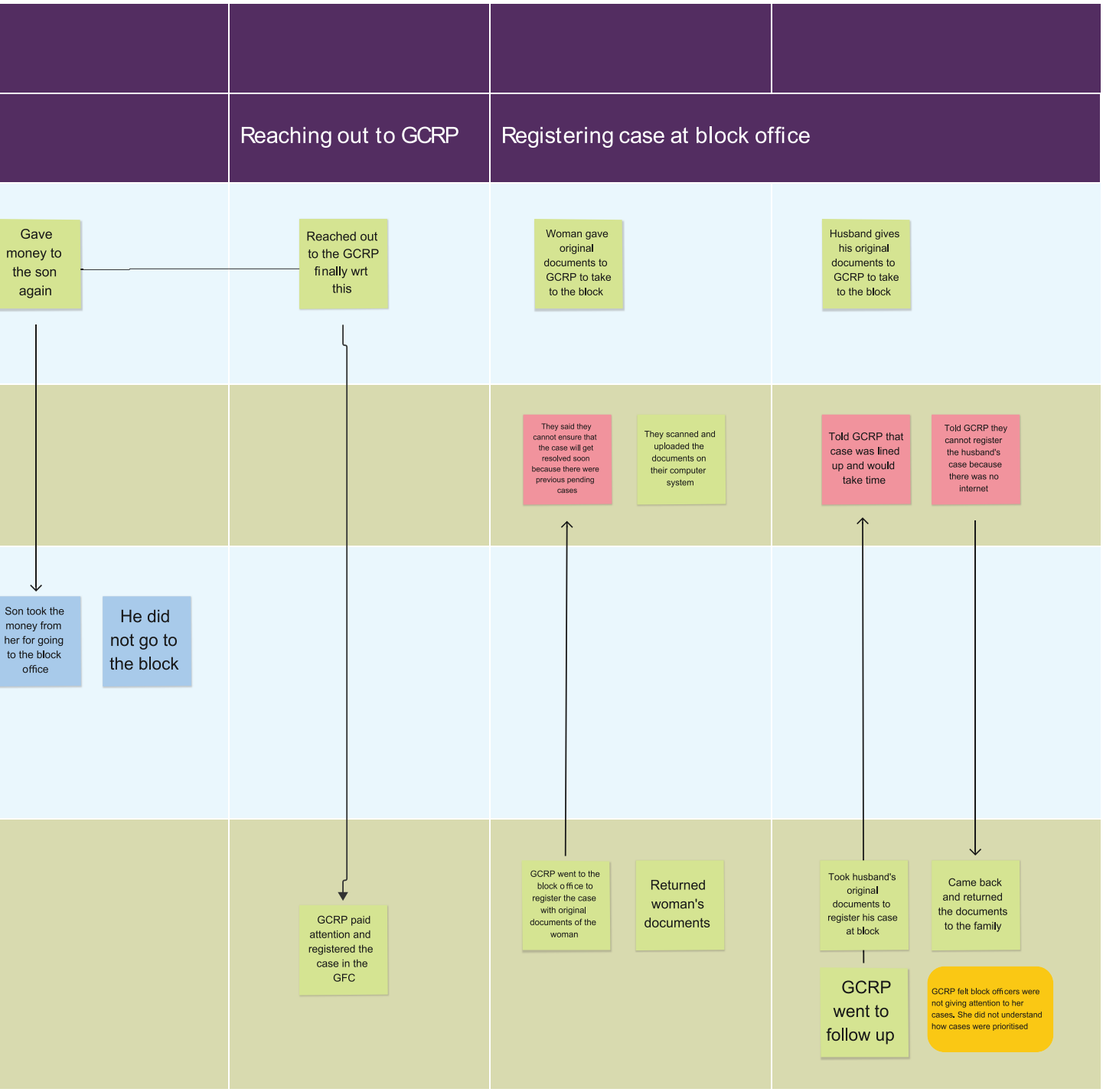
5. Entitlement - Old Age Pension

Case V - Old Age Pension	DAY 1		
Actors/Stakeholders	First response	Local Resolution	Follow up
A 62 yo woman and her husband (68 yo)	Concern: The woman needed old age pension as she was above 60 years of age Urgency: She went to the block to make a demand for it She and her husband were both old, they did not have time to go to the block office again	She asked her son to get it done Gave money to son	Followed up with son
Tileibani Block Office	Block officials listened to her They told them that they have other pending cases that needed to be resolved first and to come back again later		
Son		Son took the money from her for going to the block office He did not go to the block	He kept telling her that he was getting it done
GCRP			

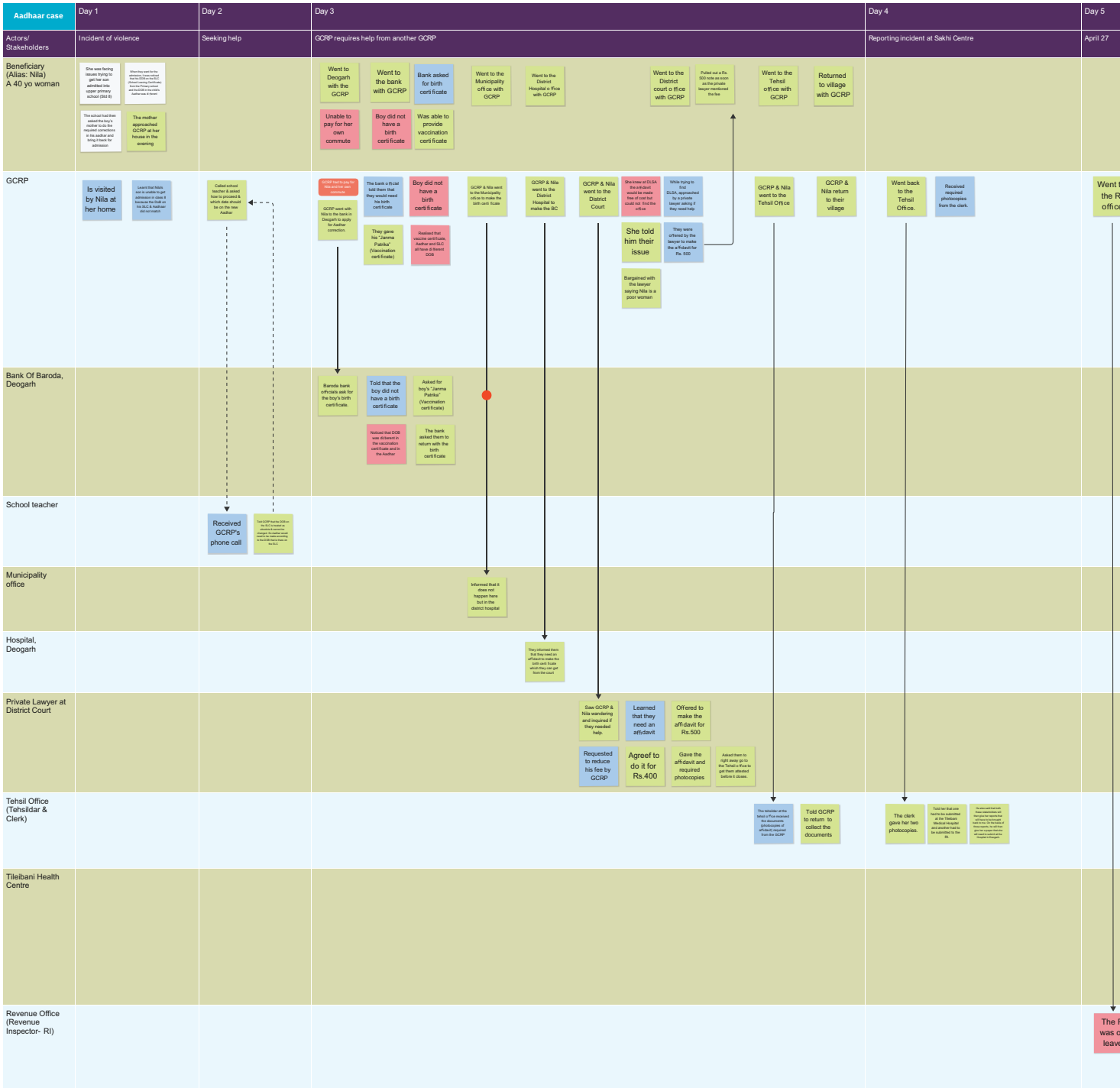
Survivor's Background:

- Beneficiaries paid for informal and alternate routes to get paperwork done.
- GCRP took the woman's documents to the block office. They took copies of her documents but told GCRP that the case will take time to get resolved. Block office was burdened with many cases that were already lined up.
- Slow follow up as GCRPs did not go to block office only for one case but waited for work to accumulate before visiting block office.

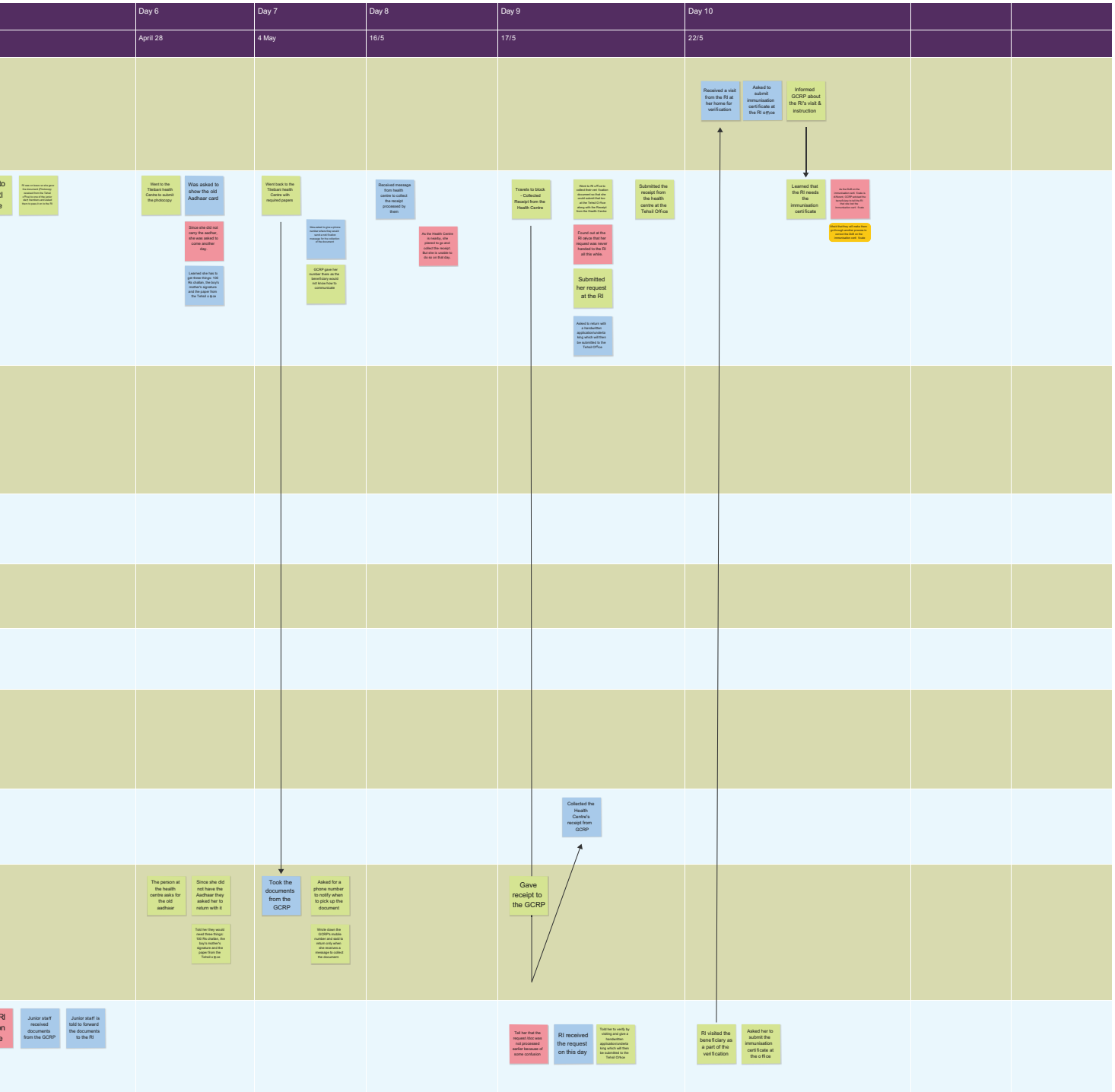
5. Entitlement - Old Age Pension



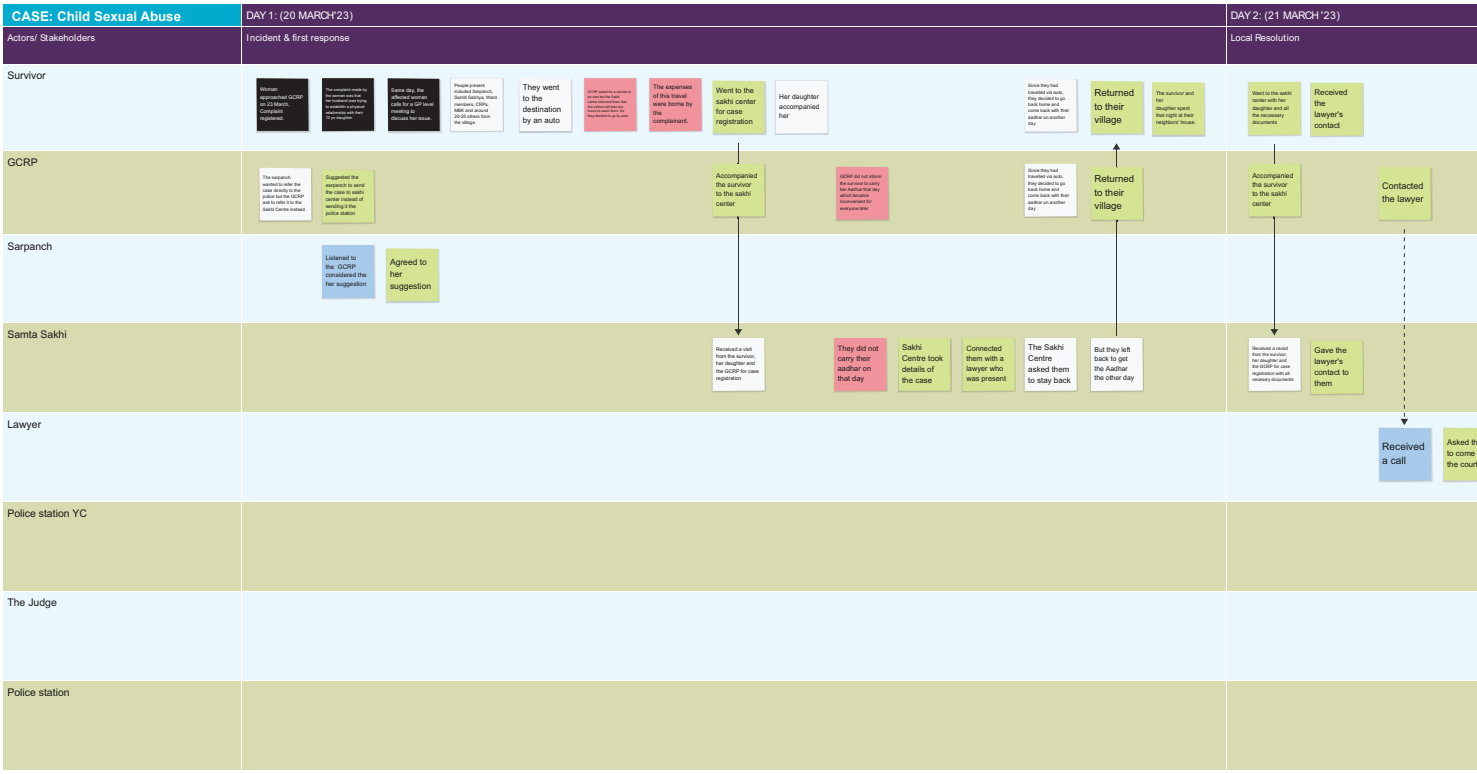
6. Entitlement - Aadhaar Card



6. Entitlement - Aadhaar Card



7. Child Sexual Abuse



Survivor's Background:

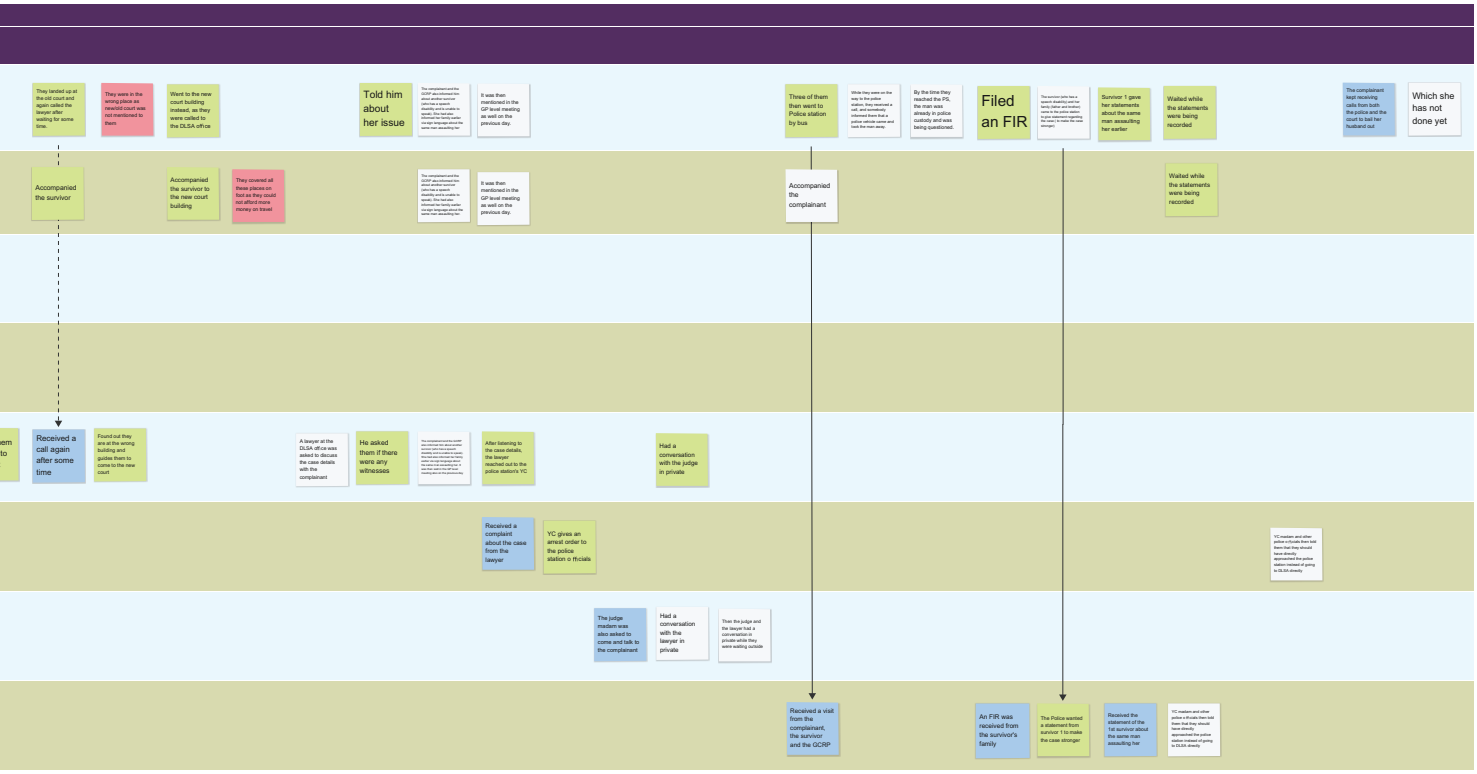
Survivor 1: A woman who has a speech disability and is unable to speak. She informed her family through sign language about the same man assaulting her. This survivor's case was also brought up during the GP (Gram Panchayat) level meeting.

Survivor 2: A woman who approached the GCRP (Grievance and Complaint Redressal Platform) to report that her husband was attempting to establish a physical relationship with their 12- year- old daughter. She had earlier learned about the harassment faced by another woman, which was the first survivor in this case.

Summary Points:

- Survivor 2 reports the issue to the GCRP on 20th March 2023, and they decide to refer the case to the Sakhi Center instead of directly to the police.
- On 21st March 2023, Complainant, her daughter (survivor), and the GCRP travel to the
- Sakhi Centre with necessary documents but had to go back due to not having Aadhar cards.
- They travel to Deogarh again on 21st March 2023, meet a lawyer, and go to the new court building.
- The lawyer discusses the case and contacts the Reamal police station, which issues an arrest order.
- The man is taken into police custody before they reach the police station, and an FIR is filed.
- Survivor 1 and her family give statements, and they are asked why they didn't approach the Reamal police station directly.

7. Child Sexual Abuse



Barriers:

- Lack of information about the correct procedure and locations caused confusion during their visits.
- The speech disability of Survivor 2 made communication challenging and required additional effort to involve her and her family as witnesses.
- Financial constraints led to difficulties in arranging transportation for travel to various offices.

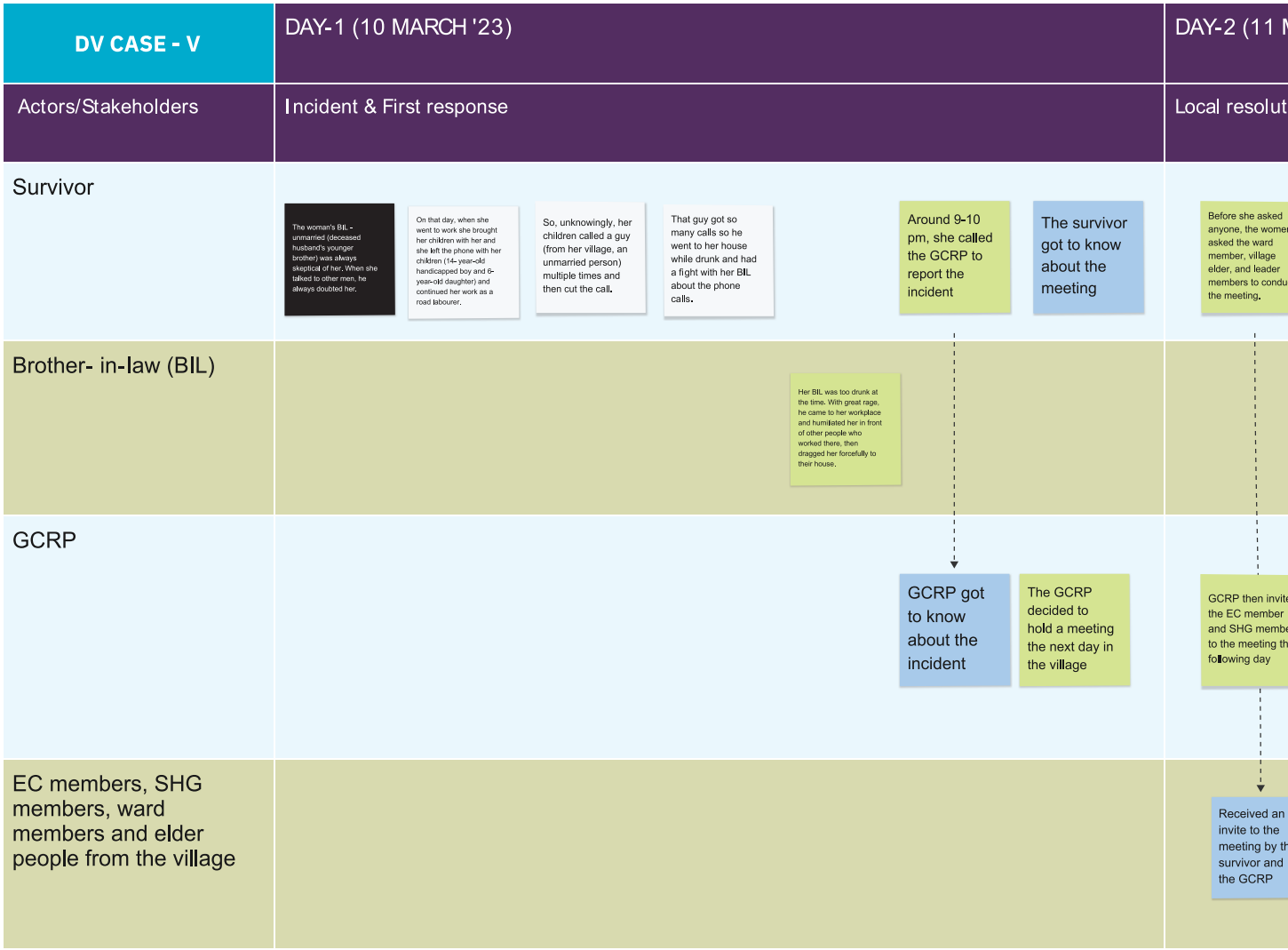
Enablers:

- The lawyer, took prompt action after hearing the case details and contacted the Reamal police station, leading to the man's arrest.
- Survivor 2's courage in coming forward and reporting the abuse contributed to the swift action taken by the authorities.
- Survivor 1, communicated the abuse through sign language, enabling her family and the community to support her as a witness.

Failure Points:

- Survivor 2 and her family were initially unaware of the correct locations and procedures, causing them to go to the wrong court building.
- There was some lack of mobility, leading to confusion regarding travel arrangements.
- The police and court officials call for bailing out the husband after the arrest could create pressure on Survivor 2, potentially jeopardizing the legal process.

8. DV CASE - V



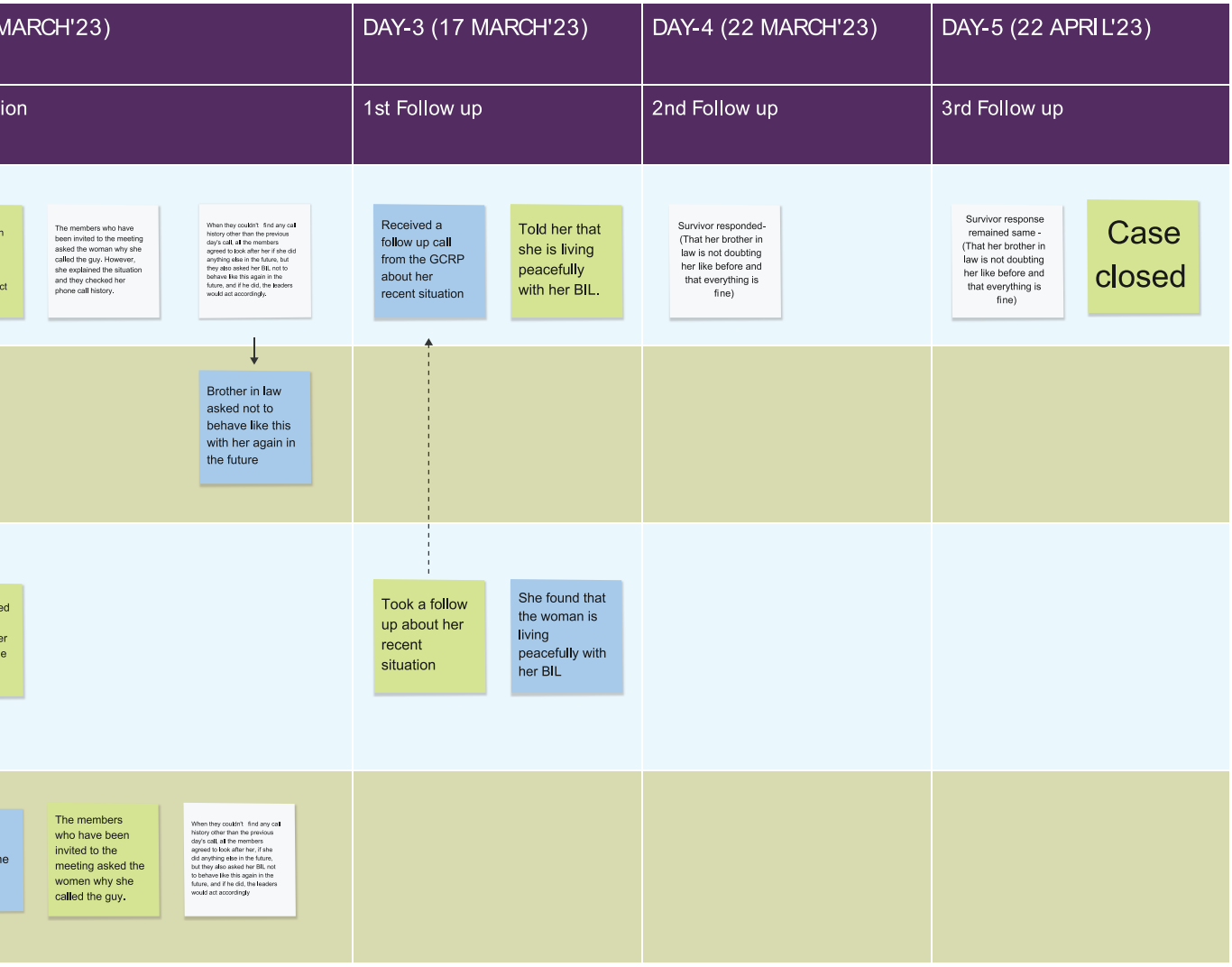
Survivor's Background:

The survivor is a woman who works as a roadlaborer and is a mother to a handicapped 14- year- old boy and a 6- year- old daughter. She is a widow and faces skepticism and doubt from her deceased husband's younger brother (BIL) regarding her interactions with other men.

Summary Points:

- On March 10th, 2023, during her work as a road laborer, the survivor's children inadvertently called an unmarried man from the village multiple times and hung up.
- The man, who was drunk, confronted the survivor's BIL about the phone calls, leading to a heated argument.
- The BIL, fueled by anger, visited the survivor's workplace, publicly humiliated her, and forcibly took her home.
- Around 9-10 pm, the survivor contacted the Gender-based Crime Response Program (GCRP) to report the incident.
- GCRP organized a meeting the following day in the village to address the situation, involving ward members, village elders, leader members, EC member, and SHG member.
- The survivor explained the situation and presented her phone's call history, showing only the previous day's calls.
- The invited members acknowledged the situation and resolved to monitor the BIL's behavior and take action if necessary.
- The BIL was cautioned not to repeat his behavior, and the leaders assured the survivor of support.

8. DV CASE - V



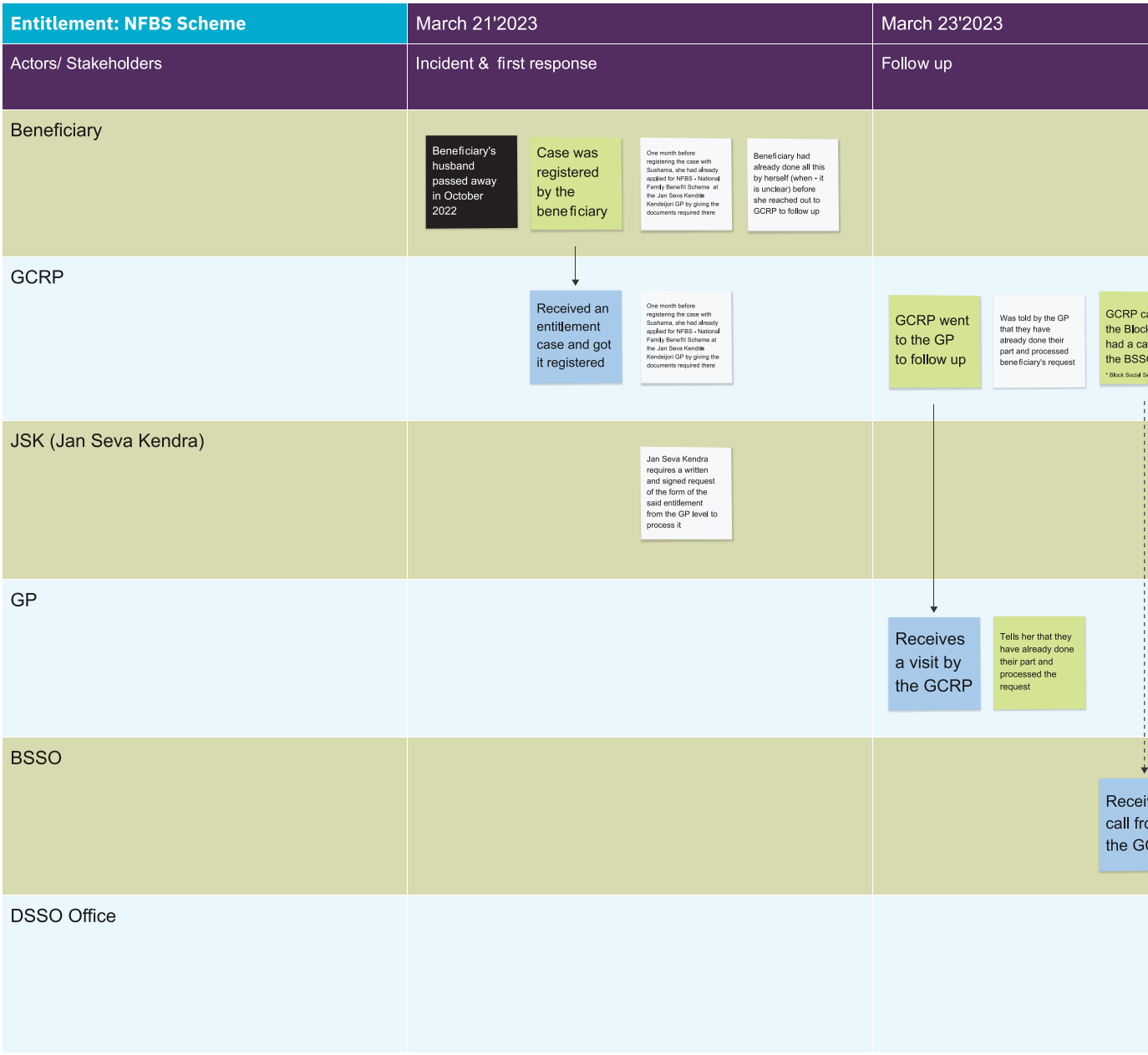
Enablers:

- The survivor's proactive action in reporting the incident to GCRP highlights her awareness of available support systems.
- GCRP's quick response in organizing a meeting involving various community members demonstrates the effectiveness of their intervention.

Important Points:

In this case, there seem to be enabling points and a lack of major failure points or barriers as the community members, including GCRP, actively addressed the situation and mediated the conflict. However, ongoing monitoring and support may be necessary to ensure the survivor's longterm safety and well- being.

9. Entitlement - NFBS Scheme

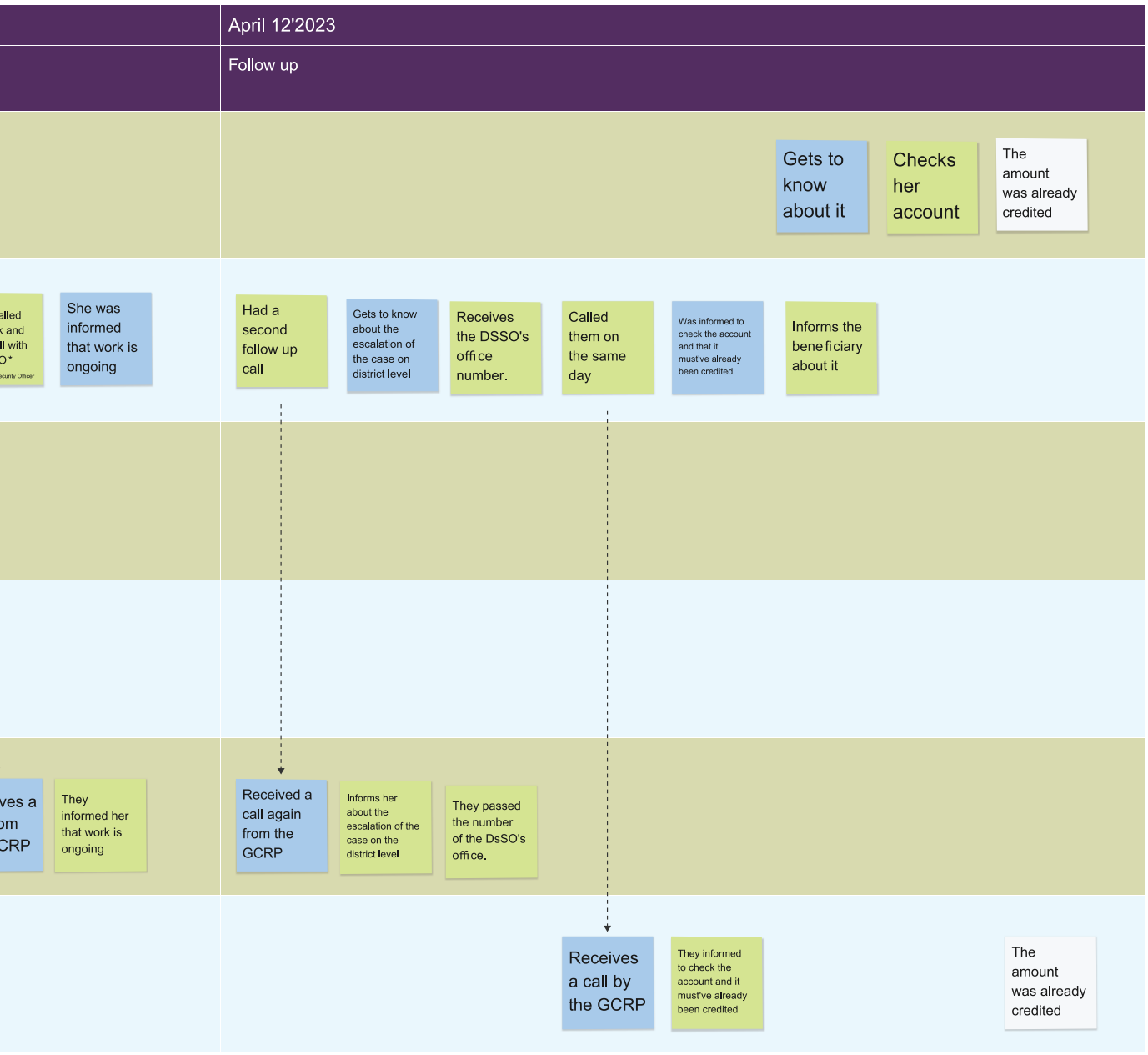


Survivor's Background:
Beneficiary is a woman who lost her husband in October 2022. She had taken the initiative to apply for the National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS) - a lump sum amount of 20,000 rupees that is given to the beneficiary when the primary breadwinner of the household passes away. She sought assistance from GCRP to follow up on the processing of her application.

Summary Points:

- Beneficiary's husband passed away in October 2022.
- Beneficiary applied for the NFBS at the Jan Seva Kendra in Kendeijori GP about a month before registering the case with GCRP.
- Jan Seva Kendra required a written and signed request from the GP level to process the entitlement, which beneficiary had already submitted. GCRP was approached by the beneficiary to follow up on the status of her NFBS application.
- GCRP visited the GP on March 28th to inquire about the application's progress and was informed that the GP had completed their part and processed beneficiary's request.
- GCRP contacted the Block office, had a call with the Block Social Security Officer (BSSO), who informed her that the work was ongoing.
- GCRP followed up again on April 12th, and the Block office informed her that they had escalated the matter to the district level.

9. Entitlement - NFBS Scheme



- GCRP called the District Social Security Office (DSSO) on the same day. They suggested beneficiary to check her account as the amount might have already been credited.
- Beneficiary checked her account and found that the amount had indeed been credited.

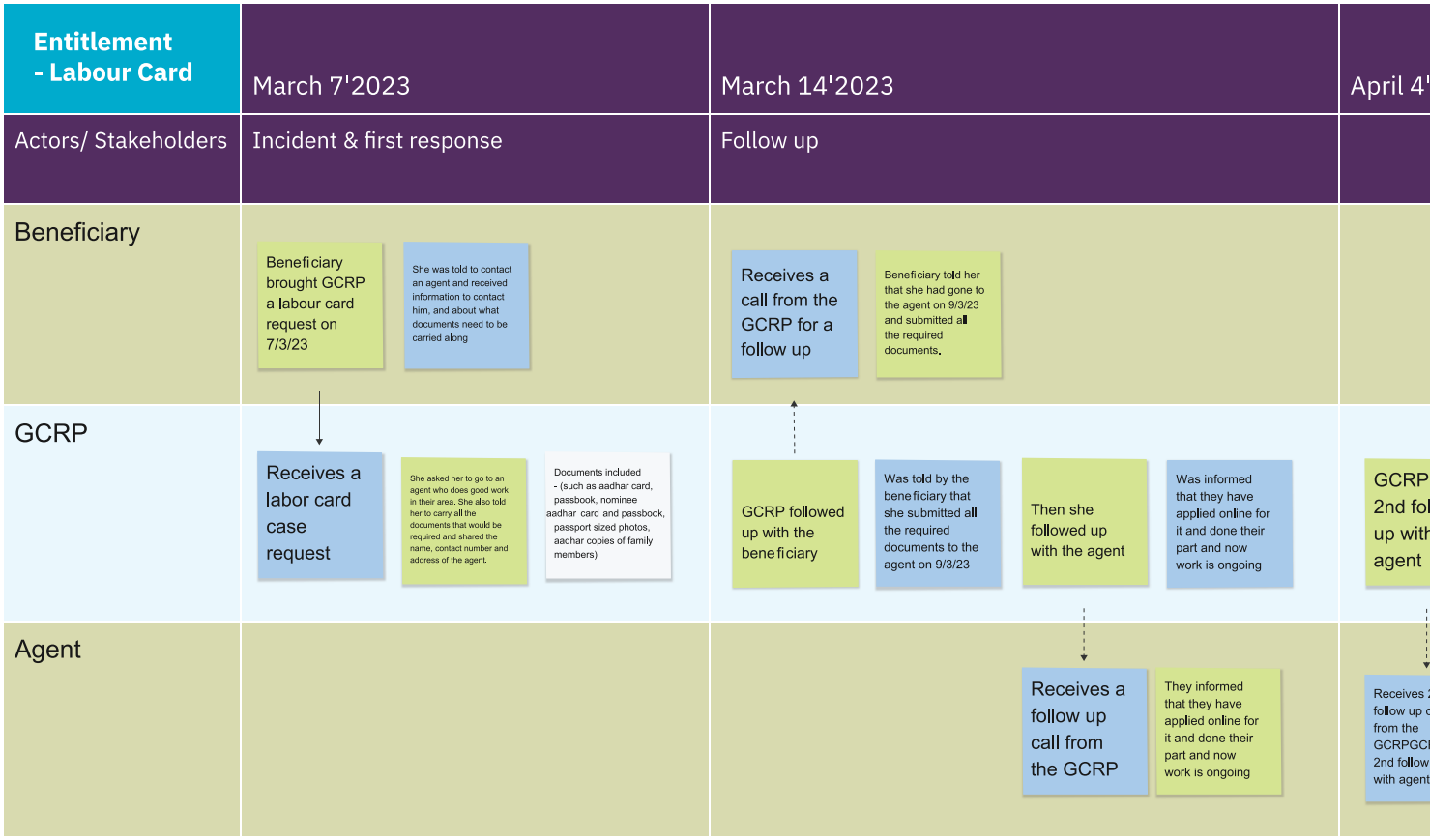
Enablers:

- Beneficiary took the initiative to apply for NFBS to access the financial support provided by the scheme.
- GCRP's involvement and follow- up helped expedite the process and ensure beneficiary received the entitledamount.

Important Points:

The case seems to have proceeded smoothly, with the survivor and support worker actively seeking assistance from the relevant offices. However, a potential failure point could have arisen if the different offices involved were unresponsive or inefficient in handling the case.

10. Entitlement - Labour Card



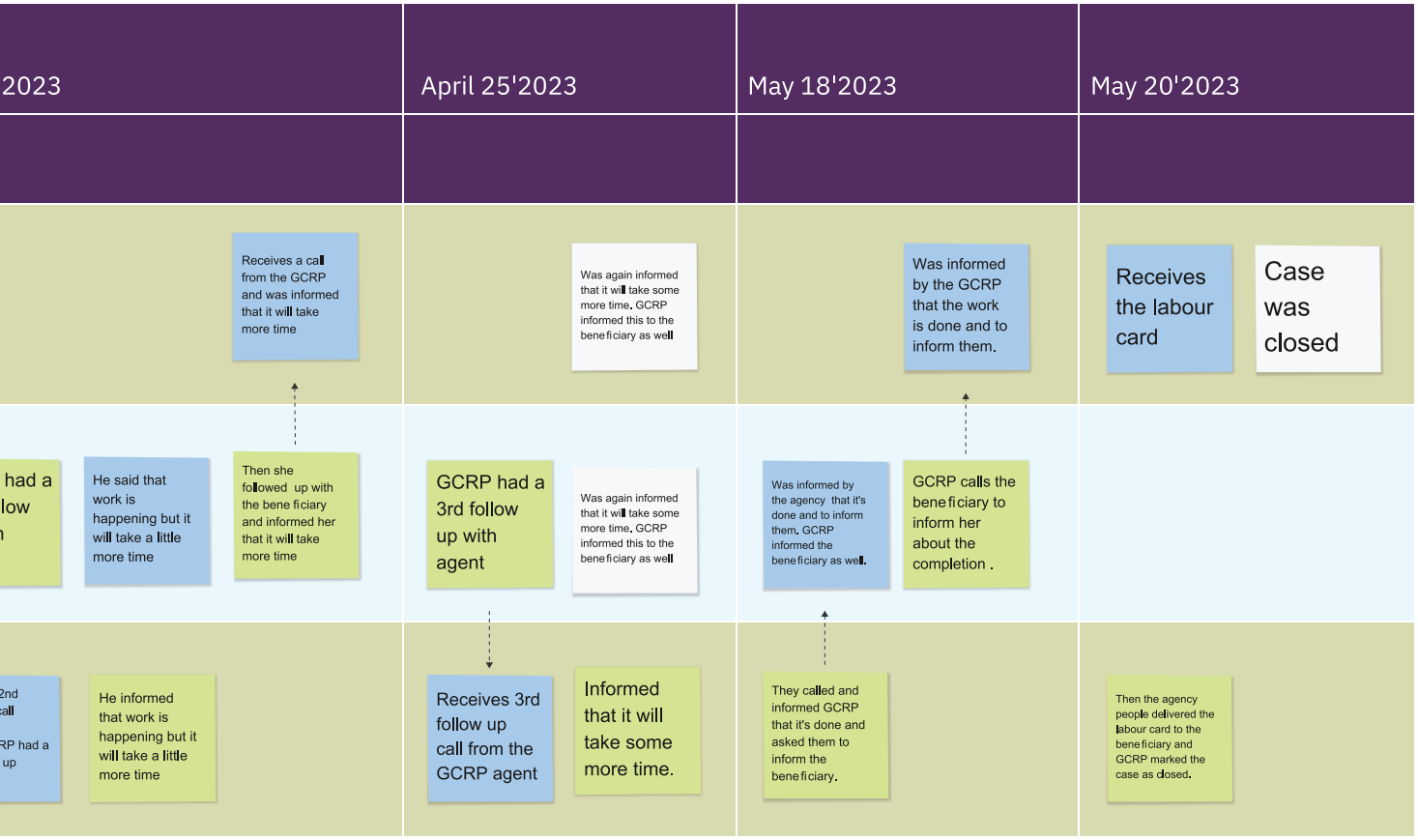
Survivor's Background:

Beneficiary is a person seeking assistance with obtaining a labor card. The nature of Beneficiary's employment or occupation requiring the labor card is not specified in the provided information.

Summary Points:

- On March 7th, 2023, Beneficiary approached the (GCRP) for a labor card.
- GCRP advised beneficiary to visit an agent who is known for facilitating labor card requests in the area.
- Beneficiary was instructed to carry all the necessary documents, including Aadhar card,
- passbook, nominee Aadhar and passbook, passport- sized photos, and Aadhar card copies of family members.
- On March 14th, GCRP followed up with beneficiary, who had visited the agent on March 9th and submitted all the required documents.
- The agent informed GCRP that the application had been submitted online and their part was completed, indicating that the process was ongoing.
- Subsequent follow- ups on April 4th, April 25th, and May 18th revealed that the work was still in progress, and it would take more time to complete.
- On May 20th, 2023, the agency contacted GCRP, informing them that the labor cardwas ready, and the agency delivered the card to Mani.
- GCRP marked the case as closed after the successful delivery of the labor card.

10. Entitlement - Labour Card



Enablers:

- GCRP guided beneficiary through the process of applying for a labor card, providing the necessary steps and information.
- The agent identified by GCRP helped facilitate the application process, submitting the required documents and monitoring the progress.

Barriers:

The nature of the agency/organization helping with the labor card application is unclear to GCRP. This lack of clarity about the agency raises questions about its legitimacy and government affiliation.

Annex 4: Archetypes in the Gender Transformative Program Framework

- Typology is the study, or more definitely the process of studying and identifying types of persons, objects, behaviours, even physical or environmental factors in a bounded geographical region. 'Types' are studied in the social sciences, advertising & marketing communication, design research, psychology and archaeology. More recently, typology has been employed to determine factors in environmental studies and climate change.
- With a study of 'types' of 'persons' - archetypes or personas -
- we look to understand varying behaviours and life (change) trajectories emerging within a limited geography.
- The data we have collected through our ethnographic deep dives, semi-structured interviews and surveys confirm that there are varying archetypes to be found within the SHG networks in Jhabua, Madhya Pradesh and in Deogarh, Odisha. In implementing the gender transformative approach here or in other parts of these states (and other states), the DAY-NRLM, State livelihood missions and CSOs can identify and leverage similar archetypes and possibly even design further expansions in the transformative approach for the same.

Starting from a unstructured deep dives, to then our semi-structured and qualitative interviews, we've identified that the following determinant groups are key to develop accurate archetypes within the SHG framework, including SHG members and community cadre:

- Expression of Agency
- Experience of Change & Discrimination
- Experience of Vulnerability & Marginalization
- Sources of Support
- Mobility & Exposure
- Self-Identification
- Aspirations
- Presence of Mentors/Guides/Gurus
- The above determinant groups have been further broken down into sub-determinant groups, against which the team has mapped further indicators. The sub-determinants are listed in the following pages.

Expression of Agency

Strong

Moderate

Weak

Experience of Change & Discrimination

Bias & discrimination in childhood, adolescence

Bias & discrimination in marriage

Bias & discrimination in workplace

Sources of Support

Familial support

Support from male persons

Peer support

Sources of emotional support

Experience of Vulnerability & Marginalization

Conditions of marriage & relationship status

Food security

Living Conaditions (Past & Present)

Disability

Mobility & Exposure

Education level

Learning of own accord

Entrepreneurship

SHG Meeting attendance

Presence of Mentors

Professional

Personal

Religious

Self-Identification

Traditional Vs. Modern

Compliance w/ patriarchal, social or familial norms

Professional Vs. Domestic Identity

Conception of Gender, Identity

Aspirations

Professional

Income/Commercial Interests Diversification

Familial (not including those for children)

For children

Personal

Personal Asset Growth (Mindset to Develop)

From July to August 2023, we built qualitative surveys to identify typology, integrating questions to test for the aforementioned determinant groups.

We gathered 35 typology determining interviews in Madhya Pradesh, and 36 in Odisha. These interviews were gathered with women across the SHG framework - some interviews were conducted with previously recruited respondents of ethnographic observation, and some were recruited afresh.

Data gathered in MP and Odisha led us to insights that suggest that there are

a range of archetypes or personas within the SHG framework. They vary from region to region. But there are three broad personas can be expected in each region:

- The Incharge Potentials
- The Fortunemakers
- The Complacents

These are archetypes that mirror sociologist Max Weber's discussion on leadership (the charismatic aristocracy framework). Our findings further emphasize that characteristics of leadership, as seen developing post the introduction of an SHG and messaging on gender empowerment, can be positively driven by external factors and experiences of vulnerability.

Drawing on Max Weber's Structure of Charismatic Authority

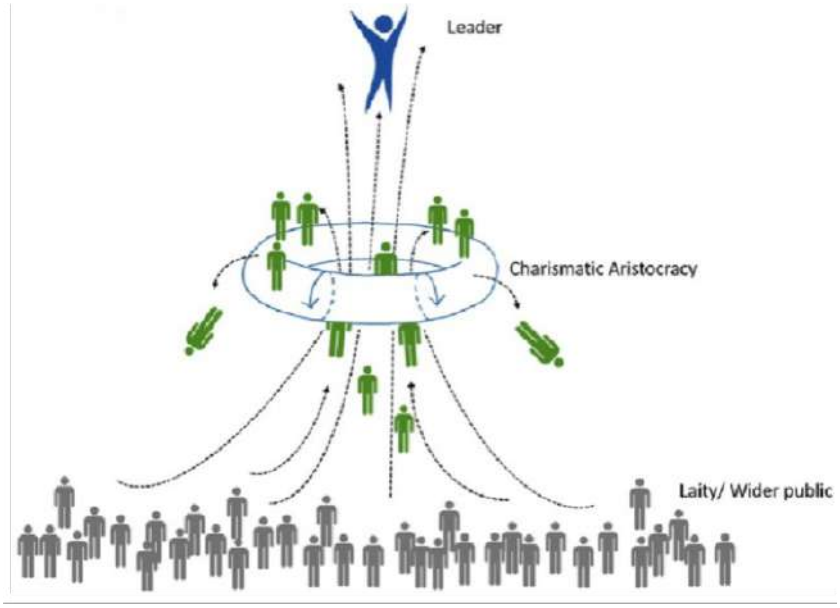
In his study of social organizations, sociologist Max Weber argued that movements, social orders and grassroot organizations tend to be organized around a hierarchy that is determined by charisma.

Weber identified that in any grassroots organization grows due to the development of a few 'charismatic' leaders and a larger group of followers or audiences who surround the charismatic leader(s).

Charismatic leaders are strong speakers, draw from stories of vulnerability and great personal struggles, and can demonstrate positive change while promising the same to their followers. Weber observed that such demonstrations could help make followers in the wider public more positive, and could even help change people's practices, attitudes and eventually values and belief systems. Charismatic authority, as Weber observed in the 19th and 20th centuries, was revolutionary and unstable - when an authority figure failed to follow through on 'promises' or was caught fabricating stories, the movement around them faltered.

In our own observations in Odisha and MP, we find that where there is a strong SHG presence, key cadre members (bookkeepers, GCRPs, financial inclusion coordinators etc.) who have moving stories of struggle and empowerment to tell, mimic the behaviours of the 'charismatic authority'; other SHG members flock to them like followers would. The SHG network and its leaders in the community, supported and guided by VOs, CLFs and strong SRLM programs, is much more stable than the organic charismatic authority-led movement.

Sociologist Max Weber's understanding of archetypes within any organisation or movement



Our parallel understanding based on emerging patterns from the field

Type A: The In-charge Potentials

(invested in others 'below' her, identified as a leader by others, has more facilitating factors in her journey but has also struggled with vulnerability and has that story ready to share)***Close to 'Weber's Leader***

Type B/C: The Fortunemakers Vs. the Comfortable Kind

(the fortune-maker struggles with inadequate support at home and may be widowed or have an unsupportive, violent spouse. Still demonstrates great agency, and vocalizes vulnerability, has risen to community cadre level or keenly applying, and work pay and association with the SHG framework helps her attain parity - even so, is vulnerable to single major external factors, poor health; the comfortable kind has more support at home, but also has fewer resources, and lesser aspirations. A single external incident can propel her into fortunemaker territory.) ***Equivalent to the charismatic aristocracy***

Type D: the Complacents

(this is a wider number of women, in each state, and is either vulnerable to patriarchal norms or poor external support from family. May or may not experience violence, but doesn't acknowledge day to day discrimination. May try to rise to aristocracy level in order to provide for family/for livelihood purposes) ***Equivalent to the wider public***

EXAMPLE

The Incharge Potentials

(enablers highlighted in green, barriers in red)

Descriptors: Above 30, married, educated. Dresses in sarees, wears paraphernalia of Hindu married women, dresses crisply, to impress whether attending SHG/VO/CLF meetings or cadre trainings. Smartphone owner, uses for communication and content consumption. Parity 1 - 3. Nuclear family. Likely has access to private transport.

Context & Behaviours:

- most likely community cadre, or interviewing to become cadre
- Attends SHG, VO and CLF meetings regularly; remembers key messaging
- Doesn't migrate seasonally, other family members may
- Engages with other cadre and SHG members, unafraid of being loud, develops rapport, self-aware, (developing) public speaking skills.
- Education varying from 8th grade to bachelor's degree (with some outliers)
- Brother's education or wishes prioritised; respondent made to drop out or her education stopped to be married, expresses resentment towards parents on this
- Keen to self-educate, watches videos on youtube, FB, Instagram; can be 'glued' to her phone, whatsapp
- can travel long distances, sometimes at personal cost and to exhaustion.
- Prefers audio-visual to text communication
- Invested in lives of friends, other cadre members
- Tries to or attends GP meetings, set ideas of village development issues, identifies gender equality as an issue because of her own experiences with discrimination, marginalization.
- Spousal support can vary from indifference to extremely supportive ('allowing' her to attend meetings outside, facilitating mobility, & in putting lesser pressure on performing household duties, not causing conflicts).
- Can sometimes have alcoholic husbands, unsupportive family members, or face regular verbal conflicts at home.
- Seniority in cadre framework and incomes insulate her from serious conflict at home.

Personal Goals/Aim: greater social currency, income diversification, greater gender power balance, security at home, to be recognized as community leader who juggles and professional and home spheres successfully.

EXAMPLE

The Fortunemakers

(enablers highlighted in green, barriers in red)

Descriptors: Above 30, could be married. Very occasionally, could be an unmarried woman in late 20s - early 30s. If married, dresses in sarees, Dresses frugally, with minimal paraphernalia or makeup. If unmarried or widowed, could revert to wearing salwar kameezes. Smartphone owner. Parity varies 0 - 3. Family size varies; could be living with parents, brothers and their families as well as her own children. Unlikely to have access to private transport, takes lifts, public transport.

Context & Behaviours:

- Most likely community cadre, or interviewing to become cadre
- Likely experiencing challenges in married life (husband's alcohol abuse, adultery, demise or else separation/divorce), and financial instability as a result
- Is either sole provider or joint provider, contributes to decision making.
- Fortunes of extended family linked to her SHG membership
- Attends SHG, VO and CLF meetings regularly; remembers key messaging, listens/consumes content more keenly than other personas
- Engages with other cadre and SHG members, unafraid of being loud, develops rapport, self-aware, (developing) public speaking skills
- Doesn't migrate seasonally, other family members may
- Education varying from 5th grade to bachelor's degree; won't let poor education stand in the way of her progress, self-education
- Experienced vulnerability and turbulence from childhood
- Keen to self-educate, watches videos on youtube, FB, Instagram, preferring AV to text communication
- can travel long distances, sometimes at personal cost and to exhaustion.
- Tries to or attends GP meetings, identifies gender equality as an issue because of her own experiences with discrimination, marginalization.
- Vulnerable to sickness, accidents, abuse in family; such events can push her back into inactivity within SHG, if not supported or protected by SHG 'family'

Personal Goals/Aim: financial stability, independence, greater gender power balance at home, security at home, a pucca home. May or may not have aspirations to be recognised as a leading voice on gender and development in her community.

EXAMPLE

The Complacents

(enablers highlighted in green, barriers in red)

Descriptors: Anywhere between 20 - 50, married. In Odisha wears sarees, in MP wears three-piece ghagra choli. Either Hindu or Christian ST. Literate, can sign her own name, struggles with sanskritised or english words. Attends SHG meetings infrequently (more so in MP) - when yes, does so in between household & farming activities. Not worried about how she dress es for SHG meetings. Uses normal mobile phone, can be shared with other family members. Parity not specific. Nuclear family. Vehicular access limited.

Context & Behaviours:

- Education: varying from none to 7th grade
- Cannot recall messaging on non-SHG or development issues, likely hasn't received much training
- If habituated to seasonal migration, SHG or VO likely failing, and draws from private lender, bank samuhs
- In SHG has rapport with select members, tends to sit with them, but may not see them as sources of support in times of personal conflict
- Has at best few close friends within immediate neighbours, likely members of extended family (in same falia)
- Brother's education or wishes may have been prioritised but to limited extent; respondent sees this as natural fallout of stressed socio-economic conditions of parents
- SHG meetings only source of formal information or training, but doesn't recognise it's value as such
- Possibly has one guide who is SHG adhyaksh or village CRP who she might consult on matters of violence, entitlements
- Doesn't attend GP meetings
- Sees her role as being that to support husbands & in-laws, make peace with them irrespective of their behaviour
- Can sometimes have alcoholic husbands, face regular verbal conflicts at home
- More likely to have a DV or complex entitlement case than other types

Personal Goals/Aim: managing marital home requirements, educating children to the fullest extent possible, building pucca homes, if possible familial income diversification.

Male engagement with archetypes in households

Male central figures who can provide financial, physical and emotional support to women at home are an acknowledged requirement for women across archetypes. We could hypothesize at this point that women's archetype development within the SHG framework is in part a response to the behaviours and attitudes the central male figures in their lives exhibit. For example, take some of the following testimonies from the typological surveys:

"My father chose to educate my brothers over me …. I wish I had completed my education… if I'd had access to an SHG early on, maybe I could have too." (This respondent is adamant on educating all of her children, including her daughters, up until college).

"My husband was nice after marriage, but he has started drinking all the time, he has a leg injury, and has broken 2-3 phones so far…it makes me angry." (This respondent started taking loans to pay for household expenses, but has taken a CRP position in order to improve her family's financial stability.)

Male engagement with archetypes in households

Needless to say, male figures are expected to procreate, protect, and provide, but as is common in agricultural households, alcohol abuse and domestic violence can also influence behaviours, conflicts, and eventually influence change for some women.

Of the women personas discussed previously, the men in their lives can be:

- Indifferent to their progress within the SHG framework
- Unsupportive of their wives' work outside the home or with the SHG framework (anything that "takes women away from their rightful place, at home")
- At times, dependent on the money and access to microfinance that community cadre have
- Mostly ignorant of how the SHG framework works
- 'The Fortune-Makers' and 'The Complacent' personas tend to be vulnerable to alcohol abuse and domestic violence at home.

Annex 5: Monograph Book

About this booklet?

This booklet contains a collection of monographs and case studies, built over several months of ethnographic observations gathered in Tilebani, Deogarh district (Odisha) and Petlawad, Jhabua district (Madhya Pradesh).

The major output of any ethnographic study is an extensive, novel-length, holistic description of a cultural group or groups of people, customs, and/or behaviours. In the following series of write-ups, we aim to summarise some of our key observations. These are combined with a few interesting and inspirational stories - that we came across 'in the field' : stories of women working actively to change their lives and shape more secure futures for themselves and their families by actively being part of the local SHG, VO or CLF.

This work, along with our extensive research, analysis, and reports of IWWAGE and DAY-NRLM, has been made possible only because of the kindness, guidance, and support of our hosts, Reena Dwibedy in Deogarh and Jema Baria in Madhya Pradesh, and the SRLM project officers in Bhopal, Jhabua, Bhubaneshwar, and Deogarh. Our eternal gratitude and sincerest wishes are reserved for you.

Photographs accompanying write-ups are representative of the Odisha and MP field sites.

FIELD REFLECTIONS

LOPAMUDRA NAYAK

From Vulnerability to Agency

Lopamudra Nayak

Maya Angelou published the poem 'Caged Bird' in 1983, exploring comparisons between the free and the trapped. In 2022-23, I spent nearly ten months living in Deogarh, Odisha, working as an ethnographer and tasked with documenting the incremental change experienced by SHG members living here. When I finally returned home and found time to reflect on my experiences, I couldn't help but think back to allegories with caged birds and what happens to them when freed.

Most women in rural Odisha are linked to a Self Help Group (SHG). As an ethnographer, I spent a considerable quality time conversing with SHG members - many talked about the positive influence their SHG had on their lives. Some also spoke about how, if their family had been linked to an SHG earlier in life, there might have been more financial stability at home. More financial stability would have meant more mobility, chance to study further instead of dropping out, and more opportunities early on in life.

Many women attributed a weak start in life to early marriage, lack of education, a lack of knowledge of reproductive health and rights, difficulties during and after childbirth, and a constant lack of money. They followed traditional norms and beliefs from childhood to motherhood. They would perform much of the agricultural work that contributed to their family's incomes but were left out of marketing or other financial activities. However, when SHGs were introduced to their community, they finally found a platform that helped them assert their agency in a patriarchal society.

In Deogarh, men do not typically migrate for a livelihood – they are usually homebound, working on their farms or as daily wage labour. Not surprisingly, alcohol consumption is a common feature across farming households, and domestic violence is a norm. Living alongside many of the respondents in the Tilebani block, I witnessed alcohol-related conflicts. Mostly, conflicts at home were spoken of in whispers and second-hand narratives; very few were reported to the local Gender Facilitation Center in the form of a complaint. My understanding is that it will take more time for women to move past the norm of not reporting gender-based violence. (Of course, men alone cannot be blamed - caste, socio-economic disparities, digital inequalities, systemic barriers, and more continue to oppress women.)

In such families, women worked to earn and to ensure financial stability with the help of their SHG. These women would also aim to send their children to boarding schools, presumably away from the disruption caused by conflict and violence at home. Undeniably, they have challenged traditional roles. I personally witnessed what I had previously learned in theory: domestic violence can transform women into primary breadwinners, reversing the long-standing patriarchal expectation that men are the sole financial providers. This shift is often accompanied by increased vulnerability, highlighting the crucial role of support networks like local SHGs.

I realised that, for a journey of change to become exemplary, it is also essential that women acknowledge the discrimination they have faced and the opportunities that were denied to them as they were growing up. In my time in Deogarh, I found that some women wouldn't (couldn't) acknowledge the barriers patriarchy and inequality had positioned in their way. Support networks like the SHG framework and gender programming initiatives like SWAYAM can play an important role here. By providing women with a safe space to discuss their struggles and be surrounded by other women who have had the same experience and can relate, the gender-informed SHG inevitably mediates a thought-provoking path to agency. Some of the most enthusiastic members of the SHG framework are also women with heart-wrenching stories; their journeys of positive change are challenging to recount and inspirational to observers like me and other women in their community.

I am unsure if my neighbourhood ladies from Tilebani would all describe themselves as once-caged birds. I do know, though, that every one of them works daily to be a little freer with each other's help.

CASE STUDY

SITA

Sita's Empowerment Through SHGs:
A Decade of Transformation

When Sita, in her mid-30s, joined a local SHG in her village in Odisha back in 2012, she had just undergone a difficult pregnancy. Her husband was good to her and very supportive, but the family did not have enough to eat then. This was despite the fact they had their own land and potentially enough resources to grow food for themselves. Joining her local SHG was a major risk for Sita - to be able to commit to contributing ten rupees per month was a difficult prospect. In the decade since she joined her SHG, Sita - who comes across as shy and reserved most of the times - has gone from strength to strength, taking a loan and repaying it successfully to buy her own cycle and then a scooter. Since then, she has built her agricultural income security and repaid loans to start a grocery business with her husband.

Since 2021, she has been trained and has gained more experience as a gender CRP in her block. She uses her scooter to travel back and forth between her home and multiple key centres around Tilebani and Deogarh. She has also been increasingly aware of some of the most difficult domestic violence cases around her. She has been forced to think on her toes and think to offer solutions to women in distress within the Gender Transformative Model (GTM) framework and outside of it. For example, in one case, she talks about how she had to exercise her influence as a known cadre member to an unknown man - something she would not have dreamed of doing a decade ago:

"Recently, an incident happened in the village where a man attacked his wife (I call her kaaki) with a sickle on her back. Since it was already evening by then, I did not go to her, but I made sure to rush there the next morning and confront the husband. I told him to take my kaaki to a good hospital and that I would do everything in my capacity to not spare him if something happened to her. He got scared and did what I asked. Kaaki has now mostly recovered from the injury.""

CASE STUDY

AARTI

We aren't starting a revolution here, just quietly, casually, ask for what's right for you - An anecdote of a Gender Trainer

Aarti has worked as a trainer for multiple projects in Madhya Pradesh for over five years. In her early to mid-20s, she started working as a trainer in the social development sector when she was barely 18 years old and has worked on health and reproductive health messaging; however, for most of her short career, she has worked as a gender trainer. This was a livelihood choice - the money she brings home as a trainer helps foster a sense of confidence and gender parity at home for Aarti. She lives with her family in Petlawad and has had experiences of discrimination growing up. She worked to become a trainer only so that she could help support her family while gaining an element of independence.

Being from the Jhabua district, she is among a handful of female trainers attached to the local government. Aarti has had a lot of experience talking to women about gender, especially SHG members who themselves struggle with conceptualising gender or seeing themselves as meriting support from government interventions like the Gender Justice Program. On most training days, when she speaks with hesitant or suspicious SHG members, Aarti is cheerful in her approach and playful in her tone, using metaphors and drawing from local stories of women who have changed their lives using their Gender Justice Program's resources. She uses the strategy of the playful, informal tone: keep things light, and when passing on important information on rights and entitlements, ensure to convey:

"We aren't starting a revolution here, just quietly, casually, ask for what's right for you… drive home that what's good for you is good for the family too".

Aarti is an experienced trainer, and her messages and key names of schemes and entitlements that she makes people aware of stick around days after the training. However, Aarti has had bad experiences and continues to experience them now and then. Child marriage a sensitive topic still, even in well-performing Cluster Level Federations (CLFs) with high SHGs attendance. As recently as April 2023, Aarti was verbally attacked by an older woman at a gathering meant to reintroduce former SHG members to the framework and reinvigorate the local village organisation in a nearby village. Aarti used this opportunity to talk about gender rights, too. Unlike her cheerful and playful approach to handling matters diplomatically, Aarti raised direct questions to SHG members: How can you let child marriage in your neighbourhood slide? Why won't you raise your voice against it?"

The sharp retort came quickly, like a jolt from reality:

"You don't live here, do you? You'll leave this place and return to your home's comfort. We are the ones who have to live with this problem, afraid that if we raise it, we won't have anywhere to go tomorrow?

CASE STUDY

SELF-HELP GROUP

The Male Response to Women's Work, their "Abilities"

Communities in Madhya Pradesh and Odisha that ascribed to traditional and patriarchal norms have gradually started to experience change and transformation through the Self-Help Group (SHG) movement. The SHG framework has become a platform beyond socio-economic and women's inclusion. On reflection, it has also turned into a platform that provides women with the space and the power to make decisions in the interest of their communities. For this reason, the SHG group has become an exciting site of change for Indian women. While the SHG framework primarily serves as a tool for women's empowerment in their communities, an exciting and essential response to this framework is that of men. Men are both intrinsically supportive and disrespectful; these responses spill over into their communities. This monograph seeks to analyse the male response to the livelihood framework by exploring both men in the family and male livelihood program officials, as responses from these two stakeholders manifest pretty differently.

Some responses by men in the community are relatively negative; men hold resentment towards women and speak dismissively about women's work. They are unable or unwilling to verbalise the value the SHG framework provides to their community or the benefits they have availed, such as getting a loan to make a 'pucca' house or an increase in the family income. They believe that through SHG, women have permanent positions, security, and power that are not justified and, therefore, resent them for it. The resentment stems from patriarchal beliefs about their education, qualifications, and their rights and abilities to step out of homes and work. They believe that women are not necessarily learning anything and would fare better if they were part of a similar structure, given that women do not work on the ground much and do not know how to envision a change in their community. However, our field observations are contradictory; during the season of paddy cultivation, there is evidence of women performing demanding physical labour in field visits while men primarily operate machines, not engaging in manually intensive labour. These (often misplaced) beliefs manifest in both familial and work settings, where women often deal with disrespect and abuse. At the workplace, male officials at the CLF level bullied qualified and competent Samta Sakhis; another cadre member was at the receiving end of physical violence because she was making a video as part of her job. Furthermore, at home, these power negotiations can result in some men abusing their wives.

At the same time, there is a certain degree of commodification of women who are part of the livelihood framework, regardless of whether men and their families can appreciate the work and role of the SHGs. If the wife starts earning and can provide a consistent income to the household, it influences her status in her marriage, cements her role in the family, and changes the power balance. Working women are perceived as people who can bring in more money, sometimes more dowry, and generally more stability; they are seen as people with a little more power, who are a little less controllable, and people worth treating fairly. Some men also presented the idea of women working as a catalyst to make work happen faster. If a woman goes to the authorities and makes demands or requests, these are usually attended to immediately.

Lastly, men also tend to lean on their wives and their power in the SHGs when they struggle to repay loans (that their wives enable access to), which makes SHGs unstable, especially when money is borrowed collectively. Overall, SHGs as a tool for the progress of women is not the main focus of men in the community; the two lenses through which they view SHGs are either their unwillingness to let the women grow or viewing women as an easy means of getting the village's work done (achieving village development outcomes or targets) quickly. However, there are a few supportive voices in these communities. While men as a group tend to behave indifferently, there are more individual cases of men being supportive. This support often takes different forms, such as help with housework, help in collectivising and outreach to village members, and dropping them off at and from their workplace. For instance, one SHG worker in Odisha shared, "My husband is my support system. We have an appropriate division of labour in the house. My sons also see this and help with the chores whenever they visit. My husband even comes along with me and other influential people of the area when I receive requests from survivors to resolve domestic violence cases locally, as close to home as possible." However, it is essential to note that such instances of support are few in these communities, and the collective voice and response are still largely negative.

The initial journey for a woman in an SHG can be pretty challenging, but over a period of time, acceptance grows, easing their experience. However, patriarchal beliefs tend to underlie men's behaviour and attitudes towards the SHG framework across these journeys. Women's rights to work are questioned; women are not traditionally owners of property in their communities, their labour often goes unacknowledged, and they are also targets of disrespect and abuse. Therefore, the fact that women participate in the SHG framework is radical. However, there should be an effort to understand and establish the role that men's support or the lack of plays in SHGs existing or collapsing. Additionally, men's negotiations with power need to be consciously examined and addressed so that women can adequately support their efforts in the livelihood framework.

CASE STUDY

TULSI

Tulsi: *The Catalyst for Change in Tilebani Block*

Tulsi has been working with the Odisha Livelihood Mission (OLM) since the early 2010s. She has lived through many moments of vulnerability in her own life, not in the least because she was married off against her will to keep a sick brother happy. On marrying into a conservative household, Tulsi tried to return to her parent's home, but there was no escaping the hold of marriage. Forced to settle into a rural, conservative household where she had no friendships or support, she discovered that she must manage all household chores and help build the family's fortunes (ensure their financial stability). Her husband's siblings were settled in Bhubaneswar, and they deemed her husband incapable of managing the family's farm competently.

Tulsi is an educated and confident woman. She used her entrepreneurial spirit to gain access to the local district programme management in its early years and started drawing information on new agricultural schemes, techniques, and agricultural produce the state was promoting. She researched these on her phone and began diversifying crops on the family land, long before anybody else in her local SHG or even in her village. She is a leader in her spirit. When the position of Master Bookkeeper came up for her Gram Panchayat, she reportedly called other potential candidates. She convinced them not to run but promised to help them in different ways, using the SHG framework. Tulsi is an influential force within Tilebani block - someone both women and men reach out to for information and advice on expanding one's fortunes and connecting with technical agricultural advisors within the state. Tulsi has a strong influence on most cadre members, and even a few SHG members regularly attend the OLM workshops she organizes in the district. Interestingly, some of these attendees seem more interested in spending time with Tulsi than the actual training content.

Recently, Tulsi advised an informal group about the need for young widows to 'be careful' when looking to remarry - the message being: you have no idea if they're in it for the widow's pension or compensation from the state government you bring with you. In attendance was a widowed CRP who is currently looking to remarry and who has received limited support, if at all, from her SHG.

CASE STUDY

JYOTI

Overcoming Adversity: *Jyoti's Path to Self-Sufficiency*

Jyoti got married around ten years ago and has two children. Throughout these years, she has endured daily physical and emotional abuse at the hands of her husband. When her husband started seeing another woman romantically and proposed to bring her home, Jyoti realised this was the last straw for her. She returned to her maternal home, where her family supported her, especially her father and brothers. She demanded a formal divorce from her husband and received alimony from him after its finalisation, but she also lost custody of her daughters to him and his family. Since then, Jyoti has seen her daughters sparingly - if this hurts her, she has hesitated to demonstrate that. Instead, she accepts that girl child custody is essential to most families in Petlawad and that losing their custody is just a part of life.

Jyoti has become increasingly independent since her divorce. She joined one of her village's SHGs and has helped her parents and brothers build their fortunes, borrowing and repaying money to turn their kutcha house into a pucca house. She is also amongst a handful of women farmers who acknowledge their identities as professional farmers - even if it's a gradual shift. She has explored mushroom farming on her land with the technical guidance of the Madhya Pradesh State Rural Livelihood Mission (MPSRLM) office. She has an entrepreneurial stride, even though the test crop failed - she has launched two new businesses with a neighbour and friend. She hopes to diversify her maternal family's income sources using these platforms.

Jyoti's family has been supportive of her different ventures. She has yet to receive gender training officially. But her proximity to gender champions and her CLF's Samta Sakhi cadre ensures that she is exposed to information on the PALS (Participatory Action Learning System) toolkit, the core messaging, and its implementation, i.e. the games they play in SHG meetings to visualise gender discrimination. Jyoti has observed the Samta Sakhi cadre and other SHG cadre assist women in crisis for a cause she's very supportive of, given her experience.

CASE STUDY

MOBILITY, AND THE ART OF MANAGING DAILY CHORES

Mobility, and the Art of Managing Daily Chores

Mobility was one of our Primary Research Team's (PRT) biggest challenges in the field. Within each site, one week into their stay, each PRT - MP and Odisha alike - found themselves trekking long distances, sometimes stuck at bus stops for long durations, or trying to find shelter in thunderstorms or in peak summer. If they were following senior cadre members on a given day, the team would sometimes either ride pillion with them on their scooters or cycles; otherwise, they would trek to their destinations the best they could and hope to make it to meetings they had to observe and review on time. After the first two months in Odisha, the PRT decided to bring a scooty to the field. The MP team followed suit only a fortnight into their stay in Unnai-Naharpura, leasing a bike for four months from a community cadre member who had an extra vehicle to spare.

Throughout the report, we have addressed mobility, which is still a significant challenge in parts of rural India, such as Deogarh and Petlawad. Both places are rich in agricultural produce and have enough money to sustain households. However, commuting is difficult and can be incredibly taxing for women who work as community cadres. As part of their job, cadre members either travel to the Gender Resource Centre (for gender cadre twice a week) or at least once a month to a local, licensed Jan Seva Kendra to process complaints regarding entitlements. The work they put into registering and resolving an entitlements-related complaint on the spot or over two visits is not necessarily physically demanding. However, travelling back and forth physically and mentally exhausts the cadre members, especially if the case complainant requires assistance at home or one of the centres.

Cadre members travel on foot, via bus or shared auto during the day; they have a constant burden of pending household chores, and this physical and mental exhaustion leads to poor water consumption and no mid-day meals (MP). Our hosts in Tilebani and Petlawad - some of the most active in the field, and therefore most in demand, too - would experience these exhaustions but also had help at home (including from the PRT).

The burden of some undone chores is acceptable at home. But cooking daily meals is non-negotiable, requiring much standing and walking around the house. For other SHG members who cannot make it home in time to complete all their evening chores, cooking and utensil washing are inevitable, but other things like cleaning the floors are excused every other day. Perhaps the most guilt-inducing chore that is forgivable only to a point, even in the most 'tolerant' household, is clothes-washing and cleaning the house. The cadre members deliberate that the key is not to let it burden your conscience and to let it slide confidently. In most active cadre member houses, a precarious balance is maintained through small but consistent arguments and negotiations. When the arguments become unmanageable, the cadre member must revisit how much she can do for the programs she is supposed to drive.

CASE STUDY

A GCRP's Battle Against Domestic Violence

Kavita was appointed a Gender Community Resource Persons (GCRP) in the Tilebani block, along with 18 other GCRPs, in early 2023. Issues at home compelled her to miss the first gender training session (which was conducted remotely). She demonstrated her agency and requested the most experienced GCRP in the block to explain the missed module. Kavita is a confident GCRP; she approaches women in her Gram Panchayat (GP) - sometimes even people on the street - to talk about gender rights and the Odisha state's and national governments' entitlement schemes. Kavita travels as much as she can to more interior parts of her GP to spread awareness about the Gender Facilitation Center (GFC). She takes extra measures to reach out and generate awareness.

Even so, Kavita finds that it can be challenging to motivate victims of domestic violence (DV) to speak up and register a complaint or make a demand for what is due to them. Kavita gets requests from DV victims cases on her phone - they inform that they got her reference from a neighbour who is an SHG member. She is popular in the community and has gained the reputation of an approachable and good GCRP. Kavita often gets calls after 6 PM or mostly after dark from DV victims.

"A [DV] victim will often call after she's been assaulted at home and has finally had enough or is scared for her children. She will likely have sneaked across to a neighbour or a sympathetic family member, who will give her their phone to call me or call 181 directly."

In such instances, Kavita has the challenge of assessing what has gone wrong and whether the victim is safe where she is. She usually calms the victim down and advises her to call 181 or the police number 112 directly. Kavita follows up on these cases on the phone and, if consented, registers them as an official case at the GFC.

Some DV Victims say: "They are unable to find the time or the discretion to come to the GFC".

CASE STUDY

BELA'S STORY

The Transformative Power of Gender Training: Bela's Story

When *Bela*, now in her mid-30s, was an adolescent, she was told that she must drop out of schools so that her parents could fund her younger siblings' studies. She knew something was wrong about that - perhaps even more so when her oldest brother, older than her by over a decade, announced to her that she should "take care of the home" because that's all women are fit to do. When she married her husband and found him to be abusive, she says, "this sense of dissatisfaction grew further in me".

Bela received the first gender training in late 2021; it seemed obvious that she must come home to fight for her rights and beliefs with her husband and brother-in-law.

"I came home and told them exactly what I had learned about women's empowerment and emancipation, and announced to them that I would be interviewing to become a Samanvayak the first chance I got. It did not go down well; instead, my husband beat me up even more the next chance he got."

A lot has changed in Bela's life since. She was already a member of an SHG in her village, and she'd been working with her SHG to secure Cash Credit Limit (CCL) loans so that she could help fund the conversion of her home from kuchha to a pucca one and start a grocery store in the front room of her house. In 2022, Bela became a Samanvayak (Master Trainer) with a monthly fixed income.

The day I stop earning and bringing a fixed amount home, he will start behaving badly with me again."

Bela gradually found that the physical abuse abated significantly. Her newfound provider capacity, combined with her knowledge of the systems and the people who run them in local government, gave her more importance, external validation, and confidence. In her own eyes, the ultimate success of her story lies in whether she can continue maintaining this provider capacity and greater parity at home. To continue, she should have support from the Cluster Level Federation (CLF) and the Lok Adhikar Kendra (LAK) to regulate her husband's behaviours towards her.

CASE STUDY

ASALYA GRAM PANCHAYAT

Why Women in the Asalya Gram Panchayat Wanted (and got) a 'DJ Ban' Instituted in their GP

Why is the disc jockey (DJ) the most popular feature of the Petlawad wedding - and why has it become so reviled amongst some SHGs? How does the conversation around DJs reflect how culture is changing in Petlawad block, MP?

DJs are synonymous with weddings, music, and loud celebrations. In Asalya, Madhya Pradesh, however, DJs are symbols of much more. They are one of the few expressions of creativity that are economically viable, a symbol of modernity and a move away from traditional art forms. DJs are a celebration and a site of rebellion. It is a double-edged sword that creates opportunities and fear in different groups in Asalya. A few months ago, SHG members from Asalya joined to protest 'DJ culture'. They demanded a ban on DJs in their gram panchayat, and the GP leadership followed their cue to ban DJs in Asalya. This story is viewed as a positive example of collective power and women's power amongst other SHG members across the CLFs in the Petlawad block.

For many women here, the new norm of hiring DJs represents growing consumerism. While discussing excessive usage of phones by children during vacations, women respondents would express concerns about children being reluctant to work and having 'multiple distractions'. They also shared that DJs are often played at weddings in tandem with exams, resulting in their children running away to wedding parties instead of studying. The women we spoke to also expressed frustration that some families usually take hefty loans to pay for DJs despite not having money for the basics. As one respondent put it:

"Some people take SHG loans and don't repay them for months and years, claiming they don't have money...but they have money to pay exorbitant DJ fees."

Alongside excessive consumerism, women also fear alcohol and substance abuse among younger men and women and the repercussions of that. Many SHG members view the shift from traditional shehnai to DJs as reflecting

a more significant change from traditionalism to modernity. For them, their villages are sites of churning change, rebellion, and experimentation in their culture. Big celebrations provide younger people with access to cheap, imported alcohol, a space to mingle with people of the opposite sex, as well as a space for inter-caste mingling. Issues linked to familial and caste honour, child marriages, influence of substances, distractions from what is deemed 'important', and financial insecurity are often attributed to DJs. DJs can become objects of disdain, frustration, and fear and are even directly responsible for the root of many worrisome social evils.

That said, the conversation around DJs is also paradoxical in Asalya. People's desire is demonstrated to move from agriculture and small businesses, such as 'kirana' (grocery shop) stores, tyre shops, food stalls, and other utility shops. DJing offers people opportunities to move away from traditional occupations and a way to monetise a specific kind of creative and artistic expression. Such opportunities are quite rare, and becoming a DJ and earning large sums for one night's work becomes aspirational. In some cases, providing the service of facilitating disc jockeys and DJ stations at weddings has become an additional income source. Our ethnographers discussed this with a woman whose husband owns a DJ console. While she was not a part of the SHG, her in-laws were part of the SHGs. Families have contrasting feelings and priorities on what modern ways can be adopted and what should be shunned.

The conversation around the DJ ban suggests that this has been a small but significant cultural moment for Petlawad. The frequency and the nature of discussions around the ban also hint at a collective pride that the ban was enacted at the behest of SHG members. Different SHGs refer to this development, and most neighbouring GPs know about it. Members of SHGs who have protested DJs are commonly married women who also demonstrate a perceived responsibility towards their villages and communities. Although women do not typically exercise power or influence, stories of SHG members and cadre members speaking up at their GP sabha or getting a vital village development task done invoke a sense of collective pride among SHG members across Petlawad. While the ‘traditional versus modern values’ debate isn’t black and white, women collectivising to take action on shared concerns can evidently go a long way to establish themselves as new, confident figures of authority and inspire others in the process.

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