

WOMEN'S WORLD

How do Panchayat Women perceive Violence? A Survey Report

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Introduction

Persistence of structural violence has been culturally ingrained against women in all stages of their life-cycle and in everyday life both in the family as well as in the society at large. This is mostly due to the value system of patriarchal belief in apparently less valued division of labour sanctioned by the *Dharm Shastras*. Recently due to rising consciousness regarding gender equity several international and national laws have been implemented to increase the prospects of women's education, dignified labour, income and safety as well as to raise the political and social visibility.

In the case of India, two major policies, namely, political representation and micro-credit programme (in 2013 it became a law and is known as the National Livelihoods Mission applicable to both urban as well rural areas) have been formulated since 1990. Rural and urban women have been given political representations in the local government system since 1993 to raise their status in the society. Easy loans are given to women self-help groups to earn some additional income. Both these legislations were also initiated with an aim to reduce all forms of violence against women. The policies had twin objectives, namely, by giving space in the political field, so far excluded to rural women, it was thought that their image in the public would change from that of objectification to decision-maker at the grassroots level. Secondly, it was also visualised that as leaders they could take active part in conflict resolution along with developmental work. These noble objectives would get more teeth because of easy loan to augment an additional income. Thus being empowered with political and economic power, women's social power would increase, it was presumed. But in reality the statistics on violence show that the incidence of violence against women is on the increase in spite of the presence of more than one million women leaders in the local government system.

The Institute of Social Sciences, during its annual Women's Empowerment Day Celebrations, 2015 conducted a random survey on the 'Perception of Violence through the Lenses of Panchayat Women'. The following report, based on a survey with 260 respondents, the elected panchayat leaders, revealed some social reality. They came from Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Manipur, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Odisha, Jammu and Kashmir, and Uttar Pradesh.¹

Socio-Economic Composition of the Respondents

THE percentage-wise respondents comprised 32 ward members, 24 Sarpanches, 16 Block Panchayat presidents/members and nine Zila Panchayat members respectively. Since violence is endemic among all sections of women due to the existing traditional social moorings, it was justifi-ed for taking them as the target groups. (Table-1)

Table 1: Position/designations of respondents

Position/Designation	Percentage
Ward member	32

Sarpanch	24
Panchayat Samiti member/ President	16
Zilla Parishad member/ President	9
Others (NGO workers/ activists)	3
Total	100

So far as the age-composition of the respondents was concerned, most (33 per cent) of the respondents belonged to the age-group of 31-40 followed by the group of 41-50 years or above 50. Only 13 per cent of the respondents belonged to the age-group of 18-30 years. (Table-2)

Table 2:

Age	Percentage
18-30 years	13
31-40 years	33
41-50 years	29
Above 50 years	22
Not stated	4
Total	100

Education

AS compared to the previous such surveys conducted by the Institute, this year's survey revealed that literacy levels had gone up considerably. Amongst the literate majority (23 per cent of all) had secondary-level education. Elected women representatives having graduate degree turned out to be 15 per cent. Lastly four per cent of the total respondents held post-graduate degrees though simultaneously the data revealed that a significant number of respondents (24 per cent) declared themselves illiterate which is a shame in the twentyfirst century. (Table-3)

Table 3: Educational Status

Level of Education	Percentage
Illiterate	24
Literate, but no formal education	4
Below primary	4
Primary	13
Middle	5
Secondary	23
Higher secondary	8
Graduate	15
Post Graduate/ professionals	4
Total	100

Religion

WITH regard to the religious composition of the respondents, 13 per cent were Muslims. They came from Jammu and Kashmir, West Bengal and Haryana. The rest (see Table 4 above) were Hindus. It was interesting to hear one of the Zilla Parishad members from West Bengal speak at length about national integration and describe how she won the elections by simply identifying herself to the villagers as 'a daughter of the village' rather than as belonging to any particular religion.

Table 4: Status of religion of respondents

Status	Percentage
Hindu	81
Muslim	17
Others	2
Total	100

Social Composition

IN terms of social composition, the majority of the respondents belonged to the OBCs (Other Backward Classes) (41 per cent). Most respondents were from Haryana, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh, followed by the general castes (27 per cent). Next to them were the SCs (Scheduled Castes), namely, 25 per cent. Most of the ST respondents were from Odisha and Manipur. The presence of representatives from the Scheduled Tribes (ST) category was low, that is, only about six per cent. (See Table-5)

Table 5: Social categories of respondents

Social Category	Percentage
SC	25
ST	6
OBC	41
Others	27
Total	100

Marital and Occupational Status

AS Table-6 shows, 90 per cent of the respondents were married, of which six per cent were widows. (Table-6) Their professional or livelihood status was difficult to gauge. Only 12 per cent of the respondents said they were cultivators even though it was well known that generally the land title was not with women. It was not clear whether they were engaged in the family occupation or were cultivators themselves. An important fact that emerged was that 57 per cent of these women leaders declared themselves as home-makers. Only seven per cent of the respondents were self-employed which was surprising given the popularity of micro-credit programmes. Those who did not understand the meaning of 'occupation' constituted 16 per cent. (Table-7)

Table 6: Marital Status

Status	Percentage
Unmarried	4
Married	90
Widow	6
Total	100

Table 7: Status of occupation

Occupation Status	Percentage
Cultivator	12
Wage labour	4
Self employed	7
Regular salary/ wage employees	3
Attending domestic chores (Home-makers)	57
Others	16
Total	100

Experience in PRIs (Panchayati Raj Institutions)

IN order to understand their experience as elected women representatives, questions about the duration of her term was asked. It was disappointing to note that a whopping 73 per cent of the respondents said that they were 'first-timers'. Of course, this percentage is down from 85 per cent as revealed in the last decade. But it is still quite high. Only 13 per cent were not first-timers. The survey further revealed that 72 per cent of this 73 per cent had entered public life through reserved seats. This demonstrated that even after 21 years of reserved seats for women, they were still resorting to reservations to get into public office. (See Table-8)

Table 8: Status regarding contest for panchayat elections

First time contested	Percentage
Yes	73
More than once	13
Total	100

Next it was asked if any member of her family had contested for the same post or not. Interestingly, 65 per cent of the women answered negatively; only 28 per cent answered in the affirmative. (Table-9) For the latter category, it was usually husbands who had contested for the same post, and 49 per cent of them gave up the seats in favour of their wives. Next, in descending order of relatives to contest for the same seat were the respondents' in-laws. Others constituted 16 per cent. (Table-10) In other words, the accusation that women keep the post warming for the husbands may not be univer-sally true. Further, the third-tier democracy has opened up new avenues for a large number of people.

Table 9: Status regarding contest/election of family members in panchayat elections

Status	Percentage
Yes	28
No	65
Total	100

Table 10: Persons in families contested/elected in panchayat elections

Contestant	Percentage
Husband	49
Father	7
Father-in-law/Mother-in-law	19
Mother/Father	4
Others	16
Total	100

How do Elected Women Representatives perform in Politics?

THERE was a strong allegation, backed by different studies, that women were saddled with domestic drudgery and thus less familiar with the language of politics. Therefore, they were hesitant to take charge of governance, and depended heavily on their husbands to help them out. This was how the term 'proxy woman' originated and gained currency. To assess how credible this allegation was, we asked the respondents if they depended on anyone's assistance either for decision-making or for execution of their panchayat duties, or for both.

Like that of earlier surveys, this time also a majority of the women (77 per cent) responded that they took decisions themselves. Merely 15 per cent said that they sought help of their husbands. (See Table 11) However, it had also been empirically established that because of a variety of reasons, women were generally less aware of the rules and regulations than their

male counterparts. Further, the Block level and other functionaries of the Line Departments tended to ignore women representatives. So, they had no other alternative but to depend on the family members. However, even if the responses were not entirely true, it revealed the aspirations of the respondents to be decision-makers. This is a positive sign and proves that women are coming out or desire to come out of the shadow of their husbands and assert independence in decision-making in their capacity as elected women representatives.

Table 11: Persons who undertake duties of elected panchayat representatives

Person	Percentage
Self	77
Husband	15
Father	0
Father-in-law / Father	0
Mother-in-law / Mother	1
Others	4
Total	100

In order to avoid confusion and ensure more accurate data gathering we followed up the above question with another direct question: who assisted the women in the discharge of their panchayat duties? At least 36 per cent of the women said they did not take any help from anyone, while 49 per cent said that they did take help. It was interesting to note that more women were taking the help of their husbands which seemed to be contradictory to the previous answer though the gap between the two was only 13 per cent. Others constituted just eight per cent.

Table 12: Persons who assist elected panchayat representatives in their duties

Person	Percentage
Manage myself	36
Husband	49
Father	1
Father-in-law / Father	1
Mother-in-law / Mother	2
Others	8
Total	100

Image of Women as Real Leaders

ONE of the main objectives of the survey was to find out how were the elected women representatives in the villages perceived by others. Did the villagers perceive them as leaders?

So our next question was whether villagers sought any advice from the women representatives. As Table 13 below illustrated, a whopping 80 per cent replied that people did consult them. It was also true that people did need their signatures for completing various certificates and pension, etc. Merely 11 per cent pointed out that their husbands were sought after. But in reality it was well known that in most cases their husbands were sought after.

Table 13: Status regarding solicitation of suggestions from elected panchayat representatives

Status	Percentage
Yes	80
No	11
Total	100

We were also keen to know if villagers along with the line departments sought advice from them or not. As Table 14 showed, a significant percentage, namely, 70, said 'Yes', while only

16 per cent said 'No'. This response might well have been more emblematic of a deep-rooted desire rather than conveying the reality.

Table 14: Status regarding reactions of police, lawyers and administrative staff to issues raised by panchayat representatives

Officials take issues seriously	Percentage
Yes	70
No	16
Total	100

When asked as to what kind of activities in which villagers sought advice from them, they reeled out all the relevant activities which were devolved to panchayats, such as development works, agriculture, widow and old age pension, ration card as well as that of jobs for MGNREGS and Aadhaar etc., opening bank accounts, work on Anganwadi centres and schools etc., The percentages were quite even, namely, 18, 22, 16, 10, 25, 25, 19, 6, 15, respectively. It reflected that women leaders have become aware of the nature of activities which were routed through the panchayats and they are indeed involved in those activities. (Table-15)

Table 15: Nature of help rendered by panchayat representatives

Example	Percentage
Development work (water tank, road construction, electricity, public toilet etc.)	18
Agriculture and allied activities	22
Domestic violence	10
Widow, old age pension	25
Ration card, Aadhar card, BPL card, MNREGA, ID card etc.	25
Opening of bank account and other savings scheme, Gold card, Insurance policy, Indira Gandhi Awas Yojana, SHGs etc.	19
Work on school, Anganwadi center etc.	6
Others	15

Violence and Safety

SHOULD a husband beat up a wife if she did something wrong? It was revealing to note that those who disagreed constituted 43 per cent, the highest, followed by strongly disagreed 20 per cent. Both of these came to 63 per cent. Equally disturbing was to find out that the percentage of those who agreed came to 31 per cent and strongly agreed to 10 which is not insignificant. In other words, every third woman panchayat leader seemed to be in agreement with the situation where 'husbands beat their wives if they do something wrong'.² It was indeed a good sign, nonetheless, that at least majority of women were trying to assert their human rights in the twentyfirst century. In other words, they had perhaps come out of the influence of the sanctions given by the *Dharm Shastras*.

Similarly, those who strongly disagreed to the beating of parents to discipline children came to 37 percentage followed by the disagreed ones, namely, 18. Further 37 per cent women leaders disapproved of the action of disciplining students by the beating of teachers followed by strongly disagreeing to 23. But 23 per cent women agreed with teachers followed by five per cent who strongly agreed. Surprisingly, one out of every ten (10 per cent) was strongly agreeing to this form of violence. About 40 per cent of women panchayat leaders also accepted the situation where parents beat their children if they did something wrong and 28 per cent were comfortable with school children being beaten up for disciplining. (Table-16)³

It was further asked if a husband was justified to beat up the wife under certain so-called wrong-doings of a woman or not. In Table 17 it was asked if a 'wife burns food' or 'goes without telling', neglects children' or 'argues with him', was he justified to beat her up or

not? The answers were consistent with the first one. As, for example, women in all the circumstances disagreed in largest percentages such as 44, 49, 44 and 51 followed by strongly disagreeing in 28, 25, 27 and 30 respectively. But not all of them disagreed; in similar situations the percentages were 7, 4, 3, and 2 and 17, 15, 17 and 9 respectively. In other words, every fourth woman panchayat leader opined that husbands were justified in beating their wives if they went out without telling them. Nearly 20 per cent of women panchayat leaders felt that husbands beating their wives if she argued with them was justified.

A question was also asked as to what kind of activities constituted crime? Table 18 reflected the nature of answers which showed the women in the positive light of concerned citizens. For example, they were asked if children were subjected to any form of violence, should it be treated as a crime? The answer was strongly: yes. The percentages were 48 per cent and 40 per cent who agreed and strongly agreed respectively. But the percentages of those who strongly disagreed and disagreed came to five and three respectively. Similarly to the question on violence against women the answers were really thoughtful. Those who agreed and strongly agreed constituted largest percentages, namely, 48 and 39 respectively reducing the percentages of those who agreed to the minimum! In other words, with regard to various perceptions on violence against women and children, more than 85 per cent of women panchayat leaders feel that violence against women and children is a crime.

To the question 'Will the legal system protect the victims who suffered from violence?' the answers strongly confirmed faith in the legal system. The percentages were 52 and 28 respectively again reducing the disagreement to insignificant percentages. It showed that women are not only aware of the legal system but also had faith in it in spite of its inefficiency.

When asked if claims by women and children of having been beaten were rarely false, 21 per cent disagreed, while 32 per cent agreed. On the other hand only five per cent strongly disagreed, nine per cent strongly agreed. Twentynine per cent remained neutral. This suggests a worrying trend. Either there exists a tradition of false claims made or social conditioning makes claims difficult to believe by a significant section of rural population, which includes the elected women representative. To the question that a child or woman who has been hit will not go to the police in fear of what the people will say, 22 per cent disagreed, while 34 per cent agreed and 14 per cent strongly agreed. Ninetten per cent of the respondents remained neutral. This again is not a healthy trend, reflecting that the actual number of cases of violence against women and children may go unreported. (Table-18)

Table 16: Opinion regarding violence

Nature of violence	Opinion						Total
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	No response	
Husbands beat their wives if they do something wrong	20	43	2	23	10	2	100
Parents beat their children if they do something wrong	18	37	4	31	8	2	100
At school children are beaten to be disciplined	23	37	10	23	5	2	100

Table 17: Opinion regarding grounds for justification of violence perpetrated by husbands

Situations under which husband is justified in	Opinion						Total agree
	Strongly beating wife	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	No response	
If she goes out without telling him	28 100	44	2	17	7	2	
If she neglects the children	25 100	49	4	15	4	3	
If she argues with him	27 100	44	6	17	3	3	
If she burns the food			30 4	51 100	4	9	2

Table 18: Perception on violence against women and children (percentage)

Statement	Perception					No response	Total
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree		
Violence against children is a crime	5	3	2	48	40	2	100
Violence against women is a crime	5	4	2	48	39	2	100
The legal system will protect a child or woman who has suffered violence	4	6	7	52	28	3	100
A child or woman who has been hit rarely makes false claims	5	21	29	32	9	4	100
A child or woman who has been hit will not go to the police in fear of what the people will say	7	22	19	34	14	4	1

In other words, with regard to various perceptions on violence against women and children, more than 85 per cent of women panchayat leaders felt that violence against women and children was a crime. A significantly high proportion (80 per cent) of women panchayat leaders felt that the legal system would protect a child or woman who had suffered violence, which was an encouraging sign. However, at the same time, close to 50 per cent of them also felt that a child or woman who had been hit would not go to the police for fear of what people would say.

Do the women leaders take part in conflict resolution? So it was asked if women and children were subjected to physical and sexual violence, did general women seek advice from the leaders? In case of physical violence 53 per cent women came to them to report but not in the case of sexual ones! In the case of sexual violence against women as well as children the response was overwhelmingly negative, that is, 68 per cent and 75 per cent respectively. Further in the case of physical violence against children, 55 per cent felt that women would come to them. In case of child trafficking however, 68 per cent replied that it was not being reported to them. That could be due to the nature of violence, namely, it was hard to define.

Less than 20 per cent of women panchayat leaders felt that sexual violence against women (16 per cent) and children (12 per cent) are brought to the notice of panchayats. Only 17 per cent of cases of child trafficking are reported to them. (Table-19)

Regarding methods of dealing with the victims, 58 per cent felt that counselling was the way. But 46 per cent responded as mediation. In fact both mediation and counselling constituted largest segment of the means of settling the village conflicts. Our field study in Jamonia panchayat, Madhya Pradesh had also revealed the same phenomenon. However, 41 per cent agreed that the violence should be dealt with by reporting it to the police or any other legal authorities. It is mostly the physical violence against women (53 per cent) and children (35 per cent) which are reported to panchayats or to panchayat representatives. In a nutshell, counselling and mediation are the two most frequently used methods of dealing with violence against women and children followed by reporting to police or other legal authorities. (See Table 20)

Table 19: Status regarding reporting of incidents of violence to panchayats or to panchayat representatives

Incidents	Yes	No	Don't know	No response	Total
Physical violence against women	53	38	6	3	100
Sexual violence against women	16	68	13	3	100
Physical violence against children	35	55	6	3	100
Sexual violence against children	12	75	10	3	100
Child trafficking	17	68	9	6	100

Table 20: Methods of dealing with violence against women and children

Methods	Percentage
Counselling	58

Report to police/other legal authorities	41
Mediation	46
Others	7

Knowledge of Different Legislations

THE elected women representatives were equally divided regarding knowledge of various laws for addressing violence against women and children. These include Domestic Violence Act, Protection of Children against Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and the Indian Penal Code. While 34 per cent respondents knew of the Domestic Violence Act, only 28 per cent knew of the POCSO Act and 24 per cent of the Indian Penal Code. More than 60 per cent of the women were ignorant of the Domestic Violence Act, equally more than 60 per cent remained ignorant of the POCSO Act while 73 per cent did not know of the Indian Penal Code.

This finding made a very important point: it not only demonstrated that women continued to remain ignorant of gender-protective legis-lation but also that capacity building and panchayat training was woefully inadequate, considering that one of the women representatives usually remained the first and often only point of reference for rural women to seek redressal from domestic and other forms of violence. Recently the Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi's field study in two tribal districts of Odisha revealed that the tribal elected women representatives are not at all aware of those Acts. On the other hand, lack of knowledge regarding laws that make violence against women and children illegal and punishable was a serious cause of concern. (See Table 21)

Table 21: Knowledge regarding laws that make violence against women and children illegal and punishable

Laws	Yes	No	Don't know	Total
Domestic Violence Act	34	25	38	100
Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act	28	27	42	100
Indian Penal Code	24	31	42	100

What Kind of Action can a Panchayat take at the Village Level?

AN overwhelming number of respondents did not have or wish to have any suggestions as to what actions a panchayat could take to tackle violence against women and children. Table 22 neatly reflected the small numbers that felt that the panchayat could take some measures to raise awareness of the different kinds of violence prevalent in society, and steps to deal with them. On the other hand, 58 per cent of them did not want to take any action regarding violence against women and children.

This should be very instructive for stakeholders in training, capacity building and women's empowerment programmes. This data was also a continuum of the above data. When women were not aware of existing legislations for their protection, they could hardly then impart information to others. It was indeed shocking that women did not want to create an awareness on female foeticide though it has been rampant in almost all parts of rural area!

Table 22: Actions that panchayat can take to tackle violence against women and children

Actions	Percentage
Awareness for Female feticide	2
Provision of counseling for domestic violence	12
Punishment charges	1
Awareness on women and child right issues and law	11
Work on women safety	2
Other (Women Council, village level conflict,	18
Don't Know	58

On the other hand, the information that emerged from the question as to how important the women panchayat leaders' opinions among the family members are, was found to be

encouraging. At least 90 to 89 per cent respondents reported that their views regarding good education and healthcare of the girl child was heeded to by the other family members. Since the survived girl child was the chosen one, the gap between girl and boy care had been reduced a lot than before as per the Sample Registration System (SRS) data. Table 23 illustrates the point.

Table 23: Importance attached by family members to opinions of women Panchayat Leaders

Matters on which family members value opinion	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	No response	Total	
Sending daughter to school	1	2	1	54	39	3	100	
Sending daughter to school of same/ similar quality as son	1	2	3	51	40	3	100	
Spending income on 100 education/health of daughter			1	2	5	50	39	3

On a question on the kinds of recommendations the women panchayat leaders could make to make their panchayats into zero violence zones, 63 per cent had no suggestions. Only 14 per cent felt they could take some action like build old-age homes, increase Sarpanch's salary, provide veterinary hospitals, focus on below-poverty-line people, take measures to extend all government facilities to all, spray for mosquitos, employ female teachers for girls in schools, provide 50 per cent reservation for female, promote organic farming, battle corruption and unemployment. (See Table 24)

Table 24: Suggestions given by respondents

Suggestion	Percentage
Orientation on Panchayat Raj programme	4
Women candidates should do their job transparently without interference	2
Work on health, education, safety and early marriage	4
Equality between male and female	5
Development work like road construction, drinking water facilities, sewage, electricity, railway station, bus depot, toilet, etc.	6
Review of Panchayat activities to improve functioning	3
Women and child protection	1
Others	14
No recommendations	63

Others included opening of veterinary hospital, focus on below poverty line people, all government facilities should be given to all, spray for mosquito, female teacher for girls in school, 50 per cent reservation for female, promoting organic farming, corruption and unemployment. May be they failed to understand the question!

Conclusion

THE persistence of structural violence has been prevalent against women in all stages of their life-cycle and in everyday life both in the family as well as in the society at large. We wanted to find out in what ways the elected women representatives being leaders perceive violence faced by them in the public as well as in the family.

A survey conducted by the ISS, New Delhi team in 2015 among 260 elected women representatives from the rural areas of India, almost all literate and generally in the age group of 31-50, comprising a large number of Dalits and OBC women from 11 major States showed vastly increased awareness among women. It was also revealed that a majority of them had realised that committing any form of atrocities by husbands was a crime and under no circumstances the men were justified to inflict violence against them. At the same time, however, some elected women representatives felt husbands were justified in inflicting crime against them.

On another level, a majority of them were also aware of the fact that the legal system would protect them. In public space women felt that the villagers respected their views and they were the decision-makers. They wanted to resolve the domestic/village conflicts through reconciliations.

At the same time in reality the statistics on crime against women showed that incidence of violence against women was on the increase in spite of the presence of more than one million women leaders in the local government system in India. Further, women were being subjected to all forms violence in spite of their leadership position and villagers and line department personnel never considered them as real leaders. In other words, women were still subjected to both direct and indirect forms of violence. It was mostly because the societal value still remained unchanged.

In order to rectify that situation the proactive gender policies should be given more teeth in terms of conferring real power through local government, secure income, and recognition of the value of the domestic work. Along with gender-friendly policies, the government, and civil society should aim at changing the cultural attitude of society. Only then dignity and equality would accrue to women to fulfil the Sustainable Development Goals.

ENDNOTES

1. On April 24, 2015, the Institute of Social Sciences (ISS), New Delhi conducted a survey among 260 elected grassroots women leaders of rural local government institutions of eleven States such as Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Manipur, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Odisha, Jammu and Kashmir, and Uttar Pradesh with a view to find out about their perception of what constituted violence. I profusely acknowledge the contribution of the UNICEF Staff of the Communication Section, young researchers from the ISS, New Delhi, and last but not the least, Aditijan for her editorial help. Finally, I am grateful to Dr George Mathew, the Chairman of the ISS, New Delhi, who encouraged me again and again to reformulate my ideas by pointing out at the errors. I also thank the investigators who took pain to collect data and the data tabulators who made it possible for me to write such a report.
2. It would be indeed quite heartening if it was true since violence was endemic in the rural context and women had to bear it in the hope of preserving family honour, and shame and also socio-economic dependency. In fact, in one of the focus group discussions with a group of rural women in Odisha it was revealed to the author that if husbands beat them up then they were reassured of the husbands' loyalty to them. Otherwise they might go to some other women leaving them high and dry. Thus they kept on tolerating the drunkard husbands. On the other hand, a group of 30 to 40 village women in Nam Tara village in Kendrapada District of Odisha broke the liquor shops located in the village. They also sat on *dharna* in front of police office. When the administration showed lukewarm attitude, they tried to break the gate of the police and were injured. The author went to one of the meetings which they had organised last year to gather solidarity.
3. This goes contrary in part at least, the views expressed by the authors Sinha, Anubha Shekar, Milind Padalkar and Sreevas Sahastranaman, 2016, 'Domestic Violence and Effectiveness of Law Enforcement Agencies', *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. LI, No. 3, pp. 63-70. The authors point out that village women don't reveal the crime to the police people and tolerate those silently. Our Survey Report showed that they feel that the violence committed by the husbands is a crime and most of them wanted to report it to the police as well. But of course, it needs to be seen as to whether in reality they do carry it out or not given the risk of losing face and family honour/shame and last but not the least, economic comforts.

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