Work on Gender Based Violence

Under this project, Ekjut in collaboration with SNEHA, DASRA and University College of London-Institute for Global Health, UK implemented an exploratory project on prevention of gender based violence (GBV) in Jharkhand, with strong focus on research and advocacy. This pilot project was implemented in both rural and urban settings to demonstrate the feasibility and acceptability of an intervention in rural and urban contexts with the community and the government to prevent gender based violence in the state.

The initiative draws cue from the Government of India’s NFHS-4 survey of Jharkhand, where around 40% of married women aged 15-49 years have experienced some form of violence by their husbands. Violence against women is a highly sensitive issue which elicits polarizing reaction from both communities and government. Given the prevailing patriarchal attitudes in the society, which often sanctions discrimination against women, it is best to tread cautiously, understand various stakeholders and their perception, willingness and receptivity.

The approach:

As part of the initiative, Women’s Groups in 20 villages of West Singhbhum district of Jharkhand were engaged to discuss on issues relating to gender based violence (GBV). A formative research in Ranchi was done to understand the relatively unknown GBV landscape in the urban context of Jharkhand. SNEHA’s experience of working with Prevention of Violence against Women and Children program (PVWC) with proven impact of reducing violence and empowering women was adapted to Ekjut’s PLA model of community engagement to breach the issue of GBV in rural Jharkhand. Government and non-government institutional actors were also engaged to explore the context of GBV in Urban and Rural Jharkhand along with gauging the ability and the resource of state and non-state to tackle this issue.

One of the challenges faced by organizations that want to work on gender based violence is the lack of precise understanding of how practice of gender based violence can be prevented. Hence, the project has drawn experience from SNEHA, a Mumbai based charitable organization working in Dharavi slums on the issue of gender based violence. The project sought to engage with relevant stakeholders towards creation of government-supported systems and processes in addressing the issue and also to understand prevention programs of the government and draw an actionable program by engaging with government departments, the police, local NGOs, women’s groups, panchayati raj institutions and frontline workers.
Implementation Strategy:

Rural (West Singhbhum): 40 Women’s Groups in 20 villages of West Singhbhum district were covered and local ASHAs (Sahiyas) facilitated the group meetings using the PLA methodology. Local state actors (police, hospitals) were also involved to create mechanisms to tackle GBV.

Ekjut has conducted a study to assess prevalence of gender based violence in the area where they had already implemented its health and nutrition module under one of its earlier projects. Data on gender based violence was collected through a surveillance questionnaire.

Additionally, a Baseline & End-line study in 20 villages and its adjoining hamlets was conducted with 2126 women who attended PLA meetings, to get an idea about the impact of the PLA on acceptability and the feasibility of prevention of gender based violence in the community.

Urban (Ranchi):

In Ranchi city, a formative research through focused group discussions and semi structured interviews was conducted with around 100 daily wage women workers commuting daily to the city from suburbs and villages, to understand the situation of gender based violence in the urban context. Ekjut also engaged with different stakeholders like police, department of health, department of women and child development, civil society organisations and urban local bodies to jointly design an effective program to address the issue of gender based violence.

One THEME
- Prevention of Gender Based Violence

TWO GEOGRAPHIES
- Urban & Rural

THREE - INTERVENTIONS
- Participatory Learning and action (PLA) with group members
- Counseling to survivors
- Strengthening of Referral system

FOUR - FINDINGS
- 83% reported that violence was unacceptable
- More women reported violence
- 46% & 60% sought help for violence by husbands and family members
- 44% reported less societal violence