
PATRIARCHY IN INDIA

**A GLIMPSE TOWARDS TRANSFORMING WOMEN'S
IDENTITIES TO DISMANTLE PATRIARCHY**

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ABSTRACT

This Matura paper is about how patriarchy in India manifests itself in different subcultures such as law, politics, economy, education, family, social structures and religion, which results in discrimination and lower social status of women. It also discusses how these subcultures influence women's identity. Law and social norms don't change at the same pace. To solve this issue, there has to be an agency from women and men to dismantle patriarchy. The paper highlights personal stories of women from a village in the West and a village in the South of India, on how they perceive themselves and what barriers and limitations they face as women. The stories also highlight how the woman's identity can be transformed, when they create agency to change patriarchal norms. The paper closes on a positive note that a lot has been achieved and much more needs to be done not only at an institutional level, but also at an individual level so that gender equality does not remain a dream but becomes reality.

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PREFACE

Being a woman who lived in India most of my life and having the privilege to intern with the organization Video Volunteers (VV), inspired me to write about the different approach the NGO has to solving issues in India.

I would like to thank Amrita Anand for helping me find this topic about a year ago during my internship in VV in Goa and for being an amazing translator during Rohini's interview. I would like to thank Rohini Pawar for answering my questions with pride and passion and Jessica Mayberry for making it possible for me to intern at VV last year. Another thanks goes to Rashmi Hegde and Shahida Noori from Maya Health for helping me conduct the interviews with Mangala and Kokila. And last but not least, thanks to my parents for supporting me during this long process.

1 INTRODUCTION

I had the privilege to be an intern with a Goa based NGO called Video Volunteers in December 2019. There I learnt how marginalized communities in India face injustice and discrimination. I was particularly intrigued by their Khel Badal (Change the Game) campaign, which seeks to dismantle patriarchy by creating a safe space for women to understand and challenge patriarchy in their daily lives. Living in India for most of my life has made me realize that patriarchal norms shape the identity of women and men and their role and behavior in their family and community. Although equal rights for women and men have been promoted in the Indian Constitution since its existence (1949) and significant progress has been made, discrimination and inequality between men and women continue to prevail, as shown by the SDG gender index, where India's rank is 95 out of 129 countries (Equal Measure, 2019).

Law and social norms don't change at the same pace. It not only requires policies and institutions to change but also a safe space and networks for women to understand and to build capabilities to stand up for themselves and for the rights of women in general. Women's agency to change is particularly effective, when the perception of themselves is questioned and redefined. Discussing an approach on dismantling patriarchy will be the main topic in this research paper.

I narrowed down the scope of the topic, since India is a large complex and heterogeneous country, which is shaped by class, caste, traditions, regions and religions. In the practical part of my paper, I have interviewed women from 2 villages, one in the West and one in the South of India. The cases that I have looked at do not necessarily represent the whole situation of women in India. This paper is a glimpse of situations of Hindu women in two different villages.

1.1 Method

For my paper, I reviewed literature and Internet sources related to the topic, which helped me narrow down my research question leading to my hypothesis. To discuss my hypothesis, I conducted 2 types of interviews: One to identify how women perceive themselves, and one to set an example on how agency can be developed through women's empowerment with VV.

1.2 Structure

After the introduction, the Matura Paper follows the theoretical part of this paper (chapter 2), where I define patriarchy and discuss how it manifests itself in India. Chapter 3 is the practical part, where I discuss the findings of the interviews I conducted. Chapter 4 summarizes my findings and reflections. Chapter 5 is the Bibliography. Since I was restricted by number of pages and wanted to give priority to the findings of the practical part, I put some information into the Annexure (Chapter 6).

2 THEORETICAL PART

The theoretical part starts with a brief definition on patriarchy and gender equality and follows with a description of how patriarchy manifests itself in 7 different subcultures.

2.1 Patriarchy and gender equality

Patriarchy has over the years been widely discussed and is broadly defined as “male hierarchical ordering of society... in which the male possesses superior power and economic privilege. The sexual division of society produces structural limits on the activities, work, and aspirations of women. Patriarchal systems, which were enshrined in law, are preserved through marriage, the family, and the sexual division of labor and society....” (Social Research Glossary, 2020)

Patriarchy is deep-rooted in most societies all around the world, since many centuries. This has led to women being oppressed and discriminated against by their own communities.

At the heart of patriarchy is power according to the UN SDG Goal 5 on Gender Equality (UN News, 2020). Men and women are equally affected by patriarchy and act according to their specific stereotypical roles which have been defined by society. Women have internalized patriarchy so deeply since their childhood that they do not question the status quo, resulting in women accepting discrimination and having lower aspirations than men.

Dismantling patriarchy according to Kamala Basu is reaching gender equality, which is a slow and sturdy process (Shadia Rahman, 2020).

2.2 Where patriarchy manifests itself: the current situation in India

Patriarchy in the case of Indian society is even more complex, given the size and diversity of the subcontinent when it comes to class, religion, caste and region. Institutions and families have been shaped by patriarchal ideologies over thousands of years. Many women in India are still facing inequality today.

Patriarchy manifests itself in all subcultures of contemporary societies including politics, law, economy and labour market, education, family, religion, social structures and in the woman's identity itself.

In the following section, I will briefly talk about 7 different subcultures where systemic discrimination against women manifests in India, which shape the identity of women and men and influences their behavior (see for more information Annexure 1).

2.2.1 Law

When India gained independence, the Indian Constitution introduced Article 14 in 1949 that guarantees “*the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.*” (Advocate Khoj, 2020) This Act was the beginning of change when it came to discrimination against minorities and women. Besides the constitution, there were other Acts in favor of women overcoming

discrimination and violence against women, including the Dowry Prohibition Act (1961), Protection of Women From Domestic Violence Act (2005) and Hindu Widows Remarriage Act (1856).

2.2.2 Political Participation

Since women take up around 50% of the world's population, it is very important to include women when making political decisions for a country. This has not been the case for a very long time in almost all countries.

Women's suffrage: India was one of the first countries to allow women's suffrage. After India gained independence from Britain, the Indian Constitution officially granted universal suffrage in 1950 (Wikipedia, 2020). This was very early, in comparison to other countries. In Switzerland for example, women won the right to vote in federal election in 1971. The country that granted women the right to vote only recently was Saudi Arabia in 2015 (Miller, 2020).

There is a growing trend in women's participation in state elections. During the 2014 parliamentary general elections, the women turnout was even higher than that of the men in 16 out of 28 states (Wikipedia, 2020).

Running for public office: While women increasingly vote, their political representation remains low. The Lok Sabha or "the House of the People" is elected directly by the people through adult suffrage. (Parliament of India, 2020) In 2019, 14% of the House consisted of women, which still shows a significant underrepresentation of women.

India is ranked 132nd with 12.5% of women in ministerial positions and ranked 142nd for women represented in parliament (UN WOMEN, 2020). The comparisons of women representation in parliament with other countries are shown in the Annexure 1, section 1.2.

In the following text, I discuss the main problems women still face in India regarding all subcultures of contemporary societies and how changing the law does not necessarily change the mindset and behavior of society.

2.2.3 Economy and labour market

Women's economic empowerment can be defined as *"the process, which increases women's real power over economic decisions that influence their lives and priorities in society."* (Törnqvist/Schmitz, 2009). India's female workforce participation stands at 23.4% in 2019 according to the World Bank (Dhillon/Singh 2020), which is very low when one compares this internationally. This is surprising, given the fact that the growth of girls enrolling in higher education is continuously increasing.¹

Indian women do almost 10 times more of unpaid and invisible work than men. These statistics are three times the global average (Time, 2020). Financial dependency on the husband ensures that women cannot escape marriage and cannot speak up for themselves. Economic pressure in poorer families however is more important than the social stigma of a working woman, this phenomenon leads to many rural women working more than their husbands do (Venugopal, 2018).

¹ Accentuating the disadvantage for women are the social restrictions on their mobility that prevent an educated woman from entering the labor force and offering support to her household. The educational gender gap, therefore, is not only a reflection of the low economic returns to female education but is also a symptom of the entrenched biases that discourage the aspirations of women and other marginalized groups." (Chandra, 2019).

Financial independence strengthens women's confidence and provides them with mobility, which automatically leads to women having more freedom (Gram, 2018). The idea of the husband being the sole breadwinner in the family and the wife staying at home is sadly not so antiquated in most countries (ibid., 2018).

2.2.4 Education

Literacy rate: Despite the government's effort to ensure equality for women in education, the literacy rate, especially in rural areas for women still remains low. In 2017-2018 the adult male literacy rate surpassed the female literacy rate by 17%. This wide gap is not only a clear sign of female oppression, but also has a huge negative impact on population stabilization efforts, because female illiteracy leads to a lack of contraception usage (Chandra, 2019).



Fig.1: Girl studying in Bodhgaya, India.

Access and Enrolment: According to the World Bank, around 77% girls enrolled in secondary education in 2018, but most of them drop out (Trading Economics, 2020). Community social norms are often a barrier in rural/semi-rural India, for girls to remain in school. In the BIMARU (Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh) states, it is perceived that investing in a girl's education won't bring as much "outcome", as investing in a boy's education. Other reasons for dropping out are school proximity and lack of toilet and period infrastructure for women. (See annexure 1, Section 1.3.)

2.2.5 Family and Marriage

Family and marriage: Most families in India, value family integrity, loyalty and unity. Many life changing decisions like the career path and marriage are not decided independently like in most western European societies, but are decided within the family (Family Jrank, 2020).

Like in most societies all over the world, the Indian family has a patriarchal structure. Male members of the family (usually the father) make the important decisions for the family like buying/selling properties. The daughter-in-law usually moves into her husband's house and has the lowest status in the family. (More information about the preference of brides for many families in India are mentioned in the annexure 1, section 1.4.) This of course is slowly changing in the educated, urban middle-class community and in some rural set ups as well (ibid., 2020).

India, particularly in poor and rural areas, is pronatalist, which means that it is encouraged to bear many children mostly for financial security, when the parents grow old. *"The desire for a male child is greatly stressed and is considered by some to be a man's highest duty, a religious necessity, and a source of emotional and familial gratification."* (Kalsekar, 2015: p.124)

This leads to female children being brought up differently by the parents and the community. *“While male children are raised to be assertive, less tolerant, independent, self-reliant, demanding, and domineering. Females, in contrast, are socialized from an early age to be self-sacrificing, docile, accommodating, nurturing, quiet, submissive, altruistic, adaptive, tolerant, and religious, and to value family above all.”* (ibid., 2015: p.124)

Child marriage: Child marriage is still an issue in some rural parts of India, despite the progress made during the last decades. The legal age of marriage in India is 18, but in practice, almost 30% of women in rural regions marry before they reach their legal age. Local authorities rarely take action, because it is accepted in many rural communities (UK Essays, 2018). The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act (2006) sadly did not make child marriage void ab initio either. Reasons why child marriage is still practiced in some parts of India are because of the dowry system, traditional customs and social stigmas related to puberty and virginity. (see Annexure 1, section 1.5 for more information)



Fig.2: Child marriage in India.

Girls at such a young age are not physically and mentally prepared to give birth, which leads to many deaths during pregnancy and delivery (UK Essays, 2018). Child marriage also hinders the development of girls by interrupting her education and her vocational training or career (UNICEF, 2019).

Widows: In many conservative Hindu rural communities widows are *“...accused of being responsible for their husband’s death, and they are expected to have a spiritual life with many restrictions which affects them both physically and psychologically...”* says Mohini Giri, a women’s rights activist. (Corbacho/ Barrera, 2012). They are expected to mourn their husband’s death till the day they die. To do so they are not allowed to wear colorful saris and jewelry, they have to shave their heads, eat bland food and are not allowed to take part in festivals (Corbacho/Barrera, 2012). See Annexure 1, section 1.6 for more information on the social status of widows.



Fig.3: Widows living in the shelter cook their own food using the money they earn by either begging or singing devotional songs at temples.

Dowry: Dowry is money, goods or estate that the woman’s family have to give to her husband and his family when they get married. One of the functions of dowry is the prevention of the possibility of sexual/mental/physical abuse

by the husband or his family. The bigger the dowry is, the better off the wife is. The dowry system creates a great financial burden on the bride's family (Britannica, 2020).

The Dowry Prohibition Act (1961) prohibits dowry in any religious marriage (Lodhia, 2017). Although dowry has reduced, because of the awareness in more educated families in urban areas of India, change has been less effective in rural areas. Dowry violence and deaths continue to occur all over India due to weak law enforcements. In 2017 National Crime Bureau of India recorded nearly 7000 dowry deaths (Gupta, 2020).

2.2.6 Religion

Caste System in Hinduism: The caste system is over 2000 years old and is based on the ritual purity of social groups (Human Rights Watch, 2020). With 3000 castes and 25000 sub-castes in India, each caste defines a specific occupation. There are 4 basic varnas (social classes): Brahmins (priests), Kshatriyas (warriors), Vaishyas (traders) and Shudras (laborers) (Elliot, 1997). Caste divisions influence a person's occupation, wealth, the rituals practiced, dietary habits and interactions between people from another caste. More information about how caste defines the daily life of Hindu's is mentioned in Annexure 1, section 1.7

Women in upper castes have more political and career opportunities, but are still at the bottom of every social group, no matter what caste they find themselves in. Dalit women (women from the lowest caste), however are discriminated and exploited the most by the Indian society as a whole. Inter-caste and inter-religious marriages are rare and highly politicized. They are usually tolerated only in urban areas where certain anonymity may be possible (Elliot, 1997).

2.2.7 Social Structures

Female feticide: Most patrilineal families prefer to have more sons than daughters, because of the male offspring being the sole breadwinner and because of inheritance, which will be passed on to the sons of the family (Asian Centre for Human Rights, 2016). This preference is also mostly present in lower class families, because having a daughter means that they would need to pay dowry when she gets married, which is a financial burden on the family (Down To Earth, 2020).

This preference leads to a high rate of female infanticide. The girl population of the age group 0-6 reduced from 78.83 million in 2001 to 75.85 million in 2011. The child sex ratio for this age group was 945 girls to 1000 boys in 1991 and reduced to 914 to 1000 in 2011 (Venkatanarayanan S., 2020).

Sexual violence: Sexual violence against women is still a major problem globally, as well as in India. Recent government data says that 32,500 cases of rape were filed to the police in 2017 (Mishra, 2020). Many communities in India consider rape a violation of the purity of a woman, which puts the victim in a worse light than the perpetrator. This leads to most women not reporting sexual assault. According to the data from NFHS 2015-16, 99.1% of sexual violence cases are unreported, not only because of this social stigma that it is the woman's fault but also because the perpetrator is usually a family relative of the victim (Venkatanarayanan S., 2020).

Domestic violence: Domestic violence in India is still a huge issue and usually occurs under the influence of alcohol. As alcohol is a mood enhancer that heightens emotions, it leads to many women being physically and sexually abused by their intoxicated husbands. Since this issue takes place in private spaces and within the family, it rarely gets reported, which leads to few official statistics on domestic violence (Berg/Kremelberg, 2010).



Fig.4: An Indian woman who fled her home from domestic violence.

Section 375 of the Indian Penal Code defines

rape as sexual assault involving nonconsensual intercourse with a woman. But exception 2 in Section 375 states, “Sexual intercourse or sexual act by a man with his wife, the wife not being under 15 year of age is not rape” (Legal Services India, 2020). India is one of approximately 50 countries that have not yet criminalized marital rape (Wikipedia, 2020).

Socially, marriage is seen as the husband’s entitlement to have sexual intercourse with his wife. This leads to many women not being aware that rape is also possible in marriage (Feminism In India, 2020).

Menstruation: Despite menstruation being a natural phenomenon, it has been considered a taboo to speak about. A sense of embarrassment about the topic is present, because of the perception that menstruation is a pollutant. In some rural areas still today, women are expected to avoid contact with anything in the kitchen and are not allowed to step foot in some temples either. In some extreme cases they are not allowed to sleep in the same bed as their husband while menstruating. (Tripathi, 2019). The taboo on menstruation also leads to a lack of educating young women on the topic. In most cases in rural areas, young girls who menstruate for the first time, don’t know what is happening to them (Garg/Anand, 2015).

3 PRACTICAL PART

The practical part discusses the research hypothesis and the empirical part of the paper. The empirical part describes two types of interviews, which were conducted to underline the hypothesis.

3.1 Research Hypothesis

Based on the literature review and facts mentioned above, the hypothesis is stated below:

Most women in rural India are not aware of their rights and equal status, because their social upbringing is influenced by social and patriarchal norms, which they have internalized. These norms are rarely questioned, because they are part of daily life and women have never seen or experienced an alternative way of living as a woman who is free and equal.

But if women have access to resources like a safe space and networks, learn about patriarchy and understand that women have the right to freedom and learn how to take agency, there will be change in those communities.

Therefore, I asked myself the following questions. 1) How do Hindu women perceive themselves in the family and in their community? To find this out I conducted 2 interviews on gender identity with 2 rural Hindu women in south India. 2) How can an external organization catalyze change in the identity of women in rural areas? To find this out I interviewed a community worker, who is part of an Indian NGO called Video Volunteers.

3.2 Interviews on Women's Identity

The main goal was to find out how rural Hindu women perceive themselves, how much they are aware of gender equality and in what situations they are confronted with patriarchy through direct primary sources, instead of secondary sources like books and the internet. Another reason why I decided to conduct these interviews was to add a more personal touch to my paper, so that the reader can really identify with the situation women in rural India are in.

The interview questions were divided into 5 parts, which refer to the subcultures mentioned earlier: Roles and rights, politics and leadership, work, sexual violence and menstruation. All these sub-cultures influence the self-perception and behavior of women and men (see Annexure 2).

3.2.1 Background Information

Two project coordinators from the organization MAYA Health in Karnataka, Rashmi Hegde and Shahida Noori, helped conduct interviews with 2 Hindu women. The interviewees both come from a small town called Channapatna in the State of Karnataka, which is located in the South of India. Both of them are health navigators from the NGO MAYA Health.

MAYA Health helps empower local women to be health navigators/entrepreneurs to educate rural communities on healthcare and to provide them with health services at their doorsteps (MAYA, 2020).

Kokila, who is 40 years old and has 2 children, has completed her Bachelor of Adult Education. Her typical day starts by milking the cow and then preparing breakfast for the family. She cleans her home, washes the clothes and then works as a health entrepreneur by testing the blood sugar and blood pressure of the people in her community. Afterwards Kokila comes home to milk her cow once again and prepares dinner for her family. Her hobbies are reading books and knitting.



Fig.5: MAYA health navigators.

Mangala, who is 36 years old and has 2 children, completed her 10th standard. She wakes up at 5:30 am to wash the clothes and to prepare breakfast. She works as a health entrepreneur till noon. She then picks flowers from her garden and sells them at the market. Afterwards she cooks dinner for her family and helps her children with their homework. Her hobbies are helping people and reading the newspaper.

3.2.2 Analysis and results

The interviews were analyzed following the 5 parts of the questionnaire and are discussed as a combined summary of Kokila and Mangala's interviews below (see Annexure 2b for more detailed interviews).

Roles and Rights: Kokila and Mangala think that women and men are equal. And that women are able to do anything a man can do. Mangala also said that in most cases women work more than men do.

Both Mangala and Kokila said that their mothers lived a different life than they do today. Kokila's mother was very dependent on her father. She was not allowed to go out and work, even though she completed a training to become a nurse. She was also exploited by her in-laws (footnote with message). Mangala's mother had 6 children including Mangala. They were very poor and her father did not allow her mother to take any decisions for the family. Mangala clearly sees, that she has more opportunities than her mother had.

"...but now in my family I can take decisions and convince my family to listen to my opinion." -Mangala

Their opinion of what role women play in their community was also similar. Mangala's view was that women play a vital role in the community. But most women are still not comfortable to leave their houses, because of the unsafe environment women have in their community. Kokila said that the role of women in the community needs to become more active.

When it comes to the question, to what extent they are not treated as an equal to men in their community, Kokila answered that even though people say that men and women are equal, there are still many issues that women face in her community. For example, widows remarrying are frowned upon in the community. Mangala talked about women not being allowed to talk to men who are not a part of the family, because people would think “weird things”. Another issue that women face in the community in Mangala’s opinion is that it is not considered appropriate for women to travel alone.

Asking the question how they would wish to be treated in their community and their family, Kokila would wish that all her family members are treated equally, irrespective of their sex. Mangala, on the other hand, would ensure that her daughter is provided with a higher education.

Political participation and Leadership: Mangala and Kokila vote frequently and independently from their husband’s. Women leadership in their community does not exist, but both of them think it is essential to have women leaders, so that women specific problems are taken more seriously.

“Women are the ones who are affected the most with any kind of problems in the society. If they would take leadership in the community, they could address most of these issues.” -Mangala

If Kokila could change something within her community, she would construct toilets for each house in her village, because the lack of toilets results in many women and girls going into the open fields, which affects their personal safety. Mangala too would like to make her village safer for women.

Work: Kokila and Mangala are both financially independent, since they are working as health entrepreneurs and earn an income through other means as well. Both of them take financial decisions in the family. They also agreed that they can take more decisions than women who are not financially independent.

Sexual violence and harassment: Sexual violence and harassment are not just taboos to talk about, but are also traumatic for women who have faced it. Kokila and Mangala did not want to share any personal details about it. Mangala said that sexual violence is the reason why women are scared to come out of their homes. But silence is also an answer: Both Mangala and Kokila have probably faced some sort of sexual harassment. If not outside, then in their homes from their husbands.²

Menstruation: Both Mangala and Kokila do not perceive menstruation as something unclean. But they are both not allowed to do certain things while menstruating. Kokila said that “It is an age-old practice to avoid women who are menstruating to go to places like the kitchen and temples so that their body can rest during the period.” Both women did not answer to the question “how would your husband react if he saw blood on the bed?” and “do you think it would be better if the people around you would normalize talking about menstruation?” This is probably, because menstruation is also a big taboo to talk about in Indian society.

² As will be shown in the next interview, it is possible to talk about such issues with women who have faced sexual violence. But to do so there has to be some level of trust. Since the women never met me personally and don’t know me at all, it was quite clear that they didn’t share anything regarding sexual violence.

End statement: In conclusion, both were asked what they would do if they were a man for a day. Mangala would stop unethical relationships between men and women, while Kokila said:

“I would live a life with lots of guts, boldness and fearlessness.”

3.2.3 Summary

Kokila and Mangala are two strong and hard-working women, who are aware that they are in a better situation than their mothers were. Unlike their mothers, they are economically independent and take decisions for themselves. However, the household and family work remain their first priority and they don't see themselves as the main bread-earners of the family. Even though they think that women and men are equal, they are not aware of the fact that gender stereotypes and cultural norms are present in their daily life. The main changes that Kokila and Mangala wish to see is more political participation and leadership for women to take decisions in the community and to address any form of violence against women to ensure their personal safety and well being.

3.3 Interview on NGO Campaign Khel Badal

The goal for this interview was to find out how an NGO catalyzes change in the identity of women in rural areas. Not just by enabling access to rights, resources and opportunities for women (like most Feminist NGO's do), but by empowering women to question gender stereotypes and social norms that are related to patriarchy. And to support a shift from submissive and quiet women to strong and confident women, who challenge gender stereotypes in their families and community.

I divided the questionnaire into 5 parts. The overview and method were added to the questionnaire to understand the structure and function of the discussion clubs. And the impact and women's identity sections of the interview were to see how the Khel Badal campaign helped change the identity of the 8 women in her discussion club (see Annexure 3a).

3.3.1 Background information

The NGO Video Volunteers (VV) trains Community Correspondents (CC's) to make videos on issues taking place in the area (and surrounding area) they live in. The CC's report these issues to the local municipality and use their videos as evidence. They also launch campaigns on issues, which are relevant in the community. Approximately 1 in 5 videos manage to solve the respective issue. By making different resources available in rural communities, VV makes it possible for the issues of marginalized people in India to be heard loud and clear. (Video Volunteers, 2020).

One such campaign is Khel Badal Change the Game, which makes resources accessible for women in rural areas to change the way they perceive themselves. For this campaign VV selected 13 different CC's in 8 different states to conduct discussion clubs, to challenge patriarchy in their respective and surrounding villages. CC's set up a discussion group of their choosing and meet up once a month. Each session starts with a video on an issue related to discrimination against women and is followed by discussions. After the sessions the members of the discussion club are asked to apply a solution to these problems in their daily life.

The interview candidate, is Rohini Pawar, a CC from Walhe, a village based in Maharashtra. She created a discussion club with 8 ASHA workers (community health workers). Amrita Anand, program coordinator and mentor in VV, translated and supported Rohini during the interview.

3.3.2 Analysis and Results

The analysis of the interview follows the structure of the questionnaire (see Annexure 3b for more detailed interview).

Overview: Khel Badal's main goal is to make women understand and challenge patriarchy in their daily lives, to induce systemic change.

“Patriarchy is a blind faith. It is like that invisible god that everybody is supposed to accept and believe in.” -Rohini

Method: Khel Badal starts a session with a video that addresses a certain issue. They use video as their main medium to visualize certain forms of patriarchy so that people start understanding how it manifests in their community. People in the village are conditioned to follow patriarchal norms all their life without being aware of the discrimination it leads to. Therefore, anything that does not follow that norm they grew up with will be criticized. When Rohini talks to women about women empowerment



Fig.6: The discussion club during a session.

and gender equality, women usually do not perceive themselves as being discriminated by their community, because of their sex. But when she shows them a video about a particular theme, it clearly states the issue, which helps them understand a certain pattern and is therefore very difficult to counter.

“Videos evoke emotion and starts conversations.” -Rohini

After watching the video, the women discuss and share stories and similar experiences made regarding the topic. Following the discussion, they develop a strategy on how to change the particular issue in their daily life. At the end of the session the women also reflect on the issue, which they discussed in their last session and how successful they were in applying it in their life.

The most challenging part while preparing the sessions was to find a safe space for the women. If they had a session in one of the member's houses, their own family or neighbors could hear what the women were discussing about. Since some sessions became quite emotional, the women had to have a private space where they could cry and openly talk about anything. This is why Rohini decided to hold the sessions in the fields.

According to Rohini the most important characteristic for a CC to have is the eagerness to identify, address and solve issues that are present in her/his community, no matter what the consequences are. Another important characteristic is that the community really trusts their CC's. An example that Rohini gave was that the women in her discussion club shared their incidents of domestic violence that they have experienced, even though they are reluctant to talk about those memories. This would only occur if there is a great amount of trust present.

Impact: The videos that provoke the deepest discussions were videos that were based on real-life experiences that the women faced. Once Rohini showed a video of a man who came back home drunk and beat his wife up till she died. One of the women in the group became very emotional and told Rohini that her sister passed away like that. A video on domestic violence also triggered a lot of emotions within the women and made them share stories about their experiences.

Rohini shared many successful stories of the women changing social norms within their family:

The first daughter of one of the discussion group members married while she was still a minor. After watching a video on child marriage and discussing a lot with the group on the topic, she prevented her second underage daughter from marrying and made sure that she can decide when she wants to get married. Her second daughter has not married till this day.

Another story that Rohini shared was on gender role division in the family. In Rohini's village the gender role division is so segregated that if a man would want water, the wife would have to go get it for him. After watching a video about this topic, Rohini and 3 other women talked to their husbands and told them to do some household work, like cutting onions and making chai.

“Some of the women came back really excited and told me that after 30 to 40 years of marriage, this was the first time they saw their husband making tea by himself.”-Rohini

The last story that Rohini shared, is very close to her heart. The members of the discussion club have had to wear saris and salwar kameez (traditional Indian clothing) for their whole lives. The women asked Rohini if they could all wear jeans, skirts and tops for the first time in their lives. One day they all lied to their families and told them they were going to Rohini's house to sign some documents for the discussion club. The women stayed at Rohini's place for the night and woke up early in the morning to go to the beach close by to the village. They wore jeans, tops and sunglasses for the first time. They played in the water and had a lot of fun. This trip meant a lot to the women.

“Later on, some of the women cried and told me that this was the first time they lived for themselves.” -Rohini



Fig.7: The women in action.

Despite the success stories, Rohini also said that in many cases the women are not successful in changing patriarchal issues within their family. In the end the women are dependent on their husbands because of numerous reasons.

A big issue in Rohini's village is alcoholism. Women can't raise their voices when it comes to this topic, because they are dependent on their husbands and their community doesn't support them either. If they would raise their voices, they would become targets to more violence at home.

Many husbands complained to Rohini that their wives used to be quiet and compliant and now, because of her, are complaining about every small issue. Patriarchy is so deep-rooted into the society, that it won't change after one try.

"Patriarchy is something that will not change in a day. We need to keep trying and eventually things will change." –Rohini

The difficulty that Rohini faces during the sessions is the fact that the women have only seen one way of life and are confronted with questions that are taboo in their community. This led to a lot of confusion for the women at first and hindered them from speaking up during the first 3 sessions. Some of the videos led to heated arguments between the women and Rohini. Rohini had to explain, with a lot of patience, that the automatic logic of most people is that the norm is the right thing.

"But what if the norm is not always the right thing?" -Rohini

According to Rohini, what women in rural areas need to understand is that they need to know their rights and entitlements, which are enshrined in the Constitution and laws of the country. They also need to understand that they have the right to be respected in the community, like a man is respected and that they have the right to be heard and to speak up for themselves.

Women's identity: The most submissive and oppressed women in Rohini's village are the ones who work as farmers and do the household work. There are also women in her village who have started their own business or work independently from the family. Even though they are financially independent to some extent, they still don't have the freedom to do what they want and are constantly faced with difficulties in their community, because of the lack of support they receive. It is as if a woman is owned by her parents when she is born and then owned by her husband and in-laws when she gets married. They can never really live freely and take their own decisions, in their village.



Fig.8: The gender discussion club in Walhe, Maharashtra

The perfect woman for Rohini, before she joined VV was a woman who takes care of her family, wears a sari all the time, covers her head with the back of her sari in front of her father-in-law and doesn't talk to men outside her family. A woman who doesn't talk back and doesn't share her opinion, was a good woman. After Rohini started working for VV, her perception of what a perfect woman is changed completely. Now she believes that a perfect woman is someone who follows her dreams, takes her own decisions and lives by her own rules. Whether it is choosing what clothes she wants to wear or whether she wants to have children or not.

When she first joined VV, she was very quiet and never really thought about herself. She came out of the village and took the train for the first time in her life, when she went for a training by VV. She lied to her parents and told them that she was going on a religious pilgrimage. She was so scared during the whole train ride, since she had never travelled anywhere. But now even though she is not well read and



Fig.9: Rohini Pawar

doesn't have a proper education, she can tackle any issue related to discrimination against women that she is confronted with in her community. Rohini says that she manages to solve all these issues solely because of her self-confidence! Because of that and her motivation to dismantle patriarchy she has also gained a lot of respect from her family and her community, even though it has been a challenging route for her. Many people in her village look up to her and her family is very proud to see that Rohini has solved so many issues in the community.

"I never thought I could have my own identity" –Rohini

End statement: "The fight is ongoing. We all need to fight patriarchy in our own homes first, only then can we expect an equal society in the future. Men have to show courage to support women and change the norms that we are used to. That would make things much easier." -Rohini

3.3.3 Summary

Through the discussion clubs Rohini managed to not only make the women from her group understand how patriarchal norms are problematic for the rights of women. She also managed to help them change those norms and perspectives that were present in their families and their community. In addition, she herself changed from a shy and submissive woman into an independent and self-confident woman, who does not shy away from challenging and potentially conflictive situations. To change the self-identity of women in rural areas according to this example, it is important to create awareness and discussion opportunities on patriarchy within a safe space, so that women can feel empowered to change stereotypical patriarchal norms in their community. And as Rohini mentioned, persistent efforts and equal support from both men and women is required to do so.

4 CONCLUSION

Despite significant progress made over the last decades to achieve gender equality, overcoming patriarchy remains a big issue in rural India. The examples of Kokila and Mangala show that women who are financially independent and educated, are still influenced and caught in a traditional nurturing and reproductive role. This taught me that the situation of women in India is not black and white and that there are many grey areas when it comes to women empowerment. The interviews on women's identity clearly reflected this pattern even though I was not able to interview Mangala and Kokila face to face due to language issues and COVID. This resulted in a less detailed insight than I hoped to get on how their identities are influenced by patriarchy.

Khel Badal taught me that awareness of women can lead to their empowerment, which results in agency of their community and family. Rohini showed me that when a woman is confident of her own self and assumes agency, she can overcome many challenges in her community. She showed me that patriarchal norms are still present in the society, because they shape and make the women's identity submissive. And a submissive identity does not lead to agency. Which is why resources need to be accessible for women but even more importantly, women need to know how to apply them. There is a need for laws and societal norms to facilitate the transformation of society that is more egalitarian, however the inner drive to take responsibility for oneself by oneself and have the agency to change is pivotal for a society that can be free of patriarchy.

As a woman, it hurts to see the difference between the few privileges rural women in India have and the many I have. But it also gives me hope, to discover organizations that approach new solutions, to ensure women empowerment. Everyone plays an important role in overcoming patriarchal norms.

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Figure 2: Child marriage in India. From: <https://borgenproject.org/child-marriage-india/> (08.10.2020)

Figure 3: The widows living in the shelter cook their own food using the money they earn by either begging or singing devotional songs at temples.
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Figure 6: Rohini Pawar. From: Rohini Pawar

Figure 7: The gender discussion club in Walhe, Maharashtra. From: Rohini Pawar

Figure 8: The discussion club during a session. From: Rohini Pawar

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6 ANNEXURES

Annexure 1: Theoretical Part: additional information

Annexure 2 a: Questionnaire Women's identity

Annexure 2 b: Interviews Women's identity

Annexure 3 a: Questionnaire Video Volunteers

Annexure 3 b: Interview VV

Annexure 1: Theoretical Part: Additional Information

- 1.1) The Dowry Prohibition Act, enacted in 1961 intends to prevent the giving and receiving of dowry. The main reason, for which this act was introduced, was not because of dowry but because of violence against women linked to failure in meeting dowry demands. Dowry and dowry related violence still occur within several socioeconomic groups of India (Lodhia, 2017).
The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act in 2005 was introduced later on to criminalize domestic violence against women. This Act makes it possible for women who are victims of domestic violence to get adequate medical facilities, free and accessible legal aid and counseling and shelter homes for them and their children when required (Wikipedia, 2020).
Hindu widows were considered as the unluckiest people in the family. They were treated (and still are in some rural communities) like a person bringing bad luck to the family. The enactment of the Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act in 1856 was a major advance for widows in India (Singh, 2020).
- 1.2) In comparison to India, Nepal (43rd), China (75th), Bangladesh (98th) and Pakistan (106th) are making much more progress when it comes to representation of women in the parliament (UN WOMEN, 2020).
- 1.3) Another problem that results to less female participation in secondary education, is the proximity of the schools. Parents usually feel more comfortable sending their son alone to school, than their daughter. The lack of toilet infrastructure in rural schools is also a problem, which makes it easier for boys to attend. Menstruating adolescent girls also keep them away from schools, because of the lack of period infrastructure (Arora, 2020).
- 1.4) Many families prefer a bride who is less educated than her husband, so that the preservation of a male-based hierarchy and the male being the sole breadwinner is maintained. Men in many Hindu conservative families also feel more threatened or intimidated if his wife is more educated than he is. An innocent and submissive bride often symbolizes purity and is considered a blessing for the household. Women making decisions in the household is very restricted. The wife has to live the lifestyle that her husband and his family want her to live. A study by R C Mishra says that over 80% of women in the BIMARU states need to ask for permission before they leave the house (UK Essays, 2018).
- 1.5) Child marriage is still an issue in some rural parts of India, despite the progress made during the last decades. It is practiced more commonly among poorer households, because less dowry is expected from younger brides. Traditional customs based mainly on religion are also a reason for child marriage in rural communities. There is an enormous social pressure within certain castes that girls should marry when they reach puberty. Virginity is also a requirement for many Indian families, so marrying off girls at a young age ensures that they don't get "corrupted". (Girls Not Brides, 2020)
- 1.6) In Punjab, a state in northern India, widows are called prostitutes. An estimated 40 million widows in India are called "it" instead of "she". The women become "de-sexed" creatures. Some widow's try their best to find a husband, because being "owned by a man" is one of the best ways to hinder being raped and sexually harassed. Vrindavan, also known as the city of widows, is where many north Indian widows go to live and

seek spiritual salvation from the Hindu god Krishna. The primary source of income for many widows there is prostitution. (Corbacho/Barrera, 2012)

- 1.7) Caste divisions don't only define what occupation a person can have, but also the rituals they need to practice during marriage and also during daily life, their dietary habits and the interactions they are allowed to have with members of another caste. While people from an upper caste enjoy more wealth and opportunities for a good occupation, people from lower castes eat the most under nutritious food and work in the worst possible conditions, performing occupations such as garbage removal and cleaning the sewage (without any protection) (Elliot, 1997).

Annexure 2 a: Questionnaire Women's identity

Interview

Date:

Dear *name of interviewee*, because I don't live in India right now and because of corona, I sadly cannot personally be a part of this interview... My name is Tara Solomon. I am 18 years old and I was born and brought up in Bangalore, but live in Europe now. I am doing a study about women's rights in India.

I would like to have an interview with you, to hear about your life and circumstances as a woman in India.

With your consent, I will be sharing your story with your name and photo through my research study. It is also perfectly fine, if you want your story to be shared anonymously.

I would really appreciate it, if you would try to be completely honest with me and try to answer the questions as detailed as possible.

Thank you so much for taking part in this interview!

Information about interviewee
Name:
Age:
Mother tongue:
City/Town:
Hobby:
Education:
Profession:
Marital Status:
Children: Yes/No Number of children:
Do you live in a joint family? Yes/No

Photo

Describe your typical day:

**If there is not enough space to write your answer please use a separate sheet of paper.
The longer and more detailed your answer the easier it is for me to share your story!! ☺**

Role and Rights:	Answers:
1. Do you think women are equal to men?	
2. What is your role as a woman in your family?	
3. Do you live a different life than your mother? (Do you have more rights than your mother and what rights?)	
4. Do you agree with the role women have in society?	
5. Do you think that you are equal to your husband?	
6. To what extent are you not treated as an equal to men in your community?	
7. What is the meaning of being independent for you?	

8. If your community and family would support all your decisions, what decisions would you take for your family?	
Politics and leadership:	
9. Do you vote frequently?	
10. Do you vote independently from your husband?	
11. What do you think about women leaders in the community?	
12. Do you think there should more women who take leadership?	
13. If your community would support all your decisions, what would you change within your community?	
14. What do you think will change if more women would take decisions in the community?	
Work:	
15. Do you make financial decisions for the family? a. If yes, give an example. b. If no, what do you think will change if you could make financial decisions for the family?	
16. Are you financially independent? a. If yes, can you take more decisions in the family than a woman who is not financially independent? b. If yes, can you take more decisions in the community than a woman who is not financially independent? c. If no do you want to be financially independent?	
Domestic violence:	
17. Have you ever experienced sexual harassment?	
18. Do you feel like it is the woman's fault, if she gets sexually assaulted?	
19. Do you think your husband has the right to have sex with you even if you don't want to?	
20. Would you file a report to the police, if you were sexually harassed?	
Menstruation:	
21. Do you perceive menstruation as something unclean?	
22. If yes why do you think it is like that?	

23. Are you not allowed to do certain this, when you are menstruating? e.g. sleeping in your bed, going to a temple, going into the kitchen.	
24. How would your husband react if he saw blood on the bed?	
25. Do you think it would be better if the people around you would normalize talking about menstruation?	
End statement:	
If you were a man for a day, what would you do?	
Do you have anything else you want to share?	

Annexure 2 b: Interviews Women's identity

1.Kokila

Interview

Dear *name of interviewee*, because I don't live in India right now and because of corona, I sadly cannot personally be a part of this interview... My name is Tara Solomon. I am 18 years old and I was born and brought up in Bangalore, but live in Europe now. I am doing a study about women's rights in India.

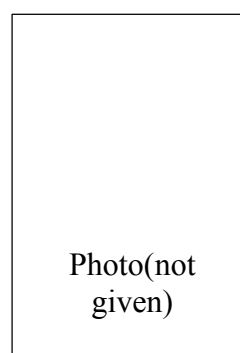
I would like to have an interview with you, to hear about your life and circumstances as a woman in India.

With your consent, I will be sharing your story with your name and photo through my research study. It is also perfectly fine, if you want your story to be shared anonymously.

I would really appreciate it, if you would try to be completely honest with me and try to answer the questions as detailed as possible.

Thank you so much for taking part in this interview!

Information about interviewee
Name: Kokila K.
Age: 40 years old
Mother tongue: Kannada
City/Town: Channapatna, Karnataka
Hobby: reading books, hand work (knitting etc.)
Education: BA. Deg
Profession: Health entrepreneur
Marital Status: Married
Children: <u>Yes</u> /No Number of children: 2
Do you live in a joint family? Yes/ <u>No</u>



Describe your typical day:

Wakes up at 5am to mil the cow, prepares breakfast for the family, washes the cooking vessels and clothes and cleans her home etc. till 10 am, eats breakfast. From 10:30 to 3:00 she works as a health entrepreneur (tests people for blood sugar and blood pressure). She eats whatever breakfast food is left and rests till 4pm. She milks the cow once again.

Then prepares dinner at 6:30 and cleans the cooking vessels. She watches T.V and finishes dinner with the family at 10pm and goes to bed at 11pm.

If there is not enough space to write your answer please use a separate sheet of paper.

The longer and more detailed your answer the easier it is for me to share your story!! 😊

Role and Rights:	Answers:
26. Do you think women are equal to men?	Yes Women are equal to men and share their strength in every field. There is nothing a woman can't do that a man can.

27. What is your role as a woman in your family?	To educate my children and to make sure they have a bright future. And to take care of the wellbeing of my entire family.
28. Do you live a different life than your mother does? (Do you have more rights than your mother and what rights?)	Yes, my mother was completely dependent on my father. My father didn't allow my mother to go out and to work. She had to stay at home even after completing her nurse training. My mother was also exploited by her in laws. But I'm definitely living a better life than my mother did.
29. Do you agree with the role women have in society?	Most of the women still hesitate to come out and face some challenges in the society. Women's role in society needs to become more active.
30. Do you think that you are equal to your husband?	Yes, we both are equal. We both work, earn and take care of the family. We contribute equally to the family. I don't think that one is inferior or superior to the other.
31. To what extent are you not treated as an equal to men in your community?	Even though people say that men and women are equal, there are many issues that women face in the community. For example: The community does not allow widows to marry a second time. And if she manages to marry a second time, she has to face a lot of issues.
32. What is the meaning of being independent for you?	Women should be able to move around freely without any fear and should also be able to go out and work if she wants to.
33. If your community and family would support all your decisions, what decisions would you take for your family?	I would immediately decide that all my family members are equal, no matter what gender they are.
Politics and leadership:	
34. Do you vote frequently?	Yes
35. Do you vote independently from your husband?	Yes, I vote on my own, irrespective of my husband's choice.
36. What do you think about women leaders in the community?	I have not seen any women leader in my village.
37. Do you think there should be more women who take leadership?	Yes, if there were more women leaders in the society, it would encourage more women to not be scared to come out of their homes. And women leaders would help to solve women's issues.

38. If your community would support all your decisions, what would you change within your community?	I will decide to construct toilets for each house in my village, as there are no toilets, which results to women and girls going to the open fields.
39. What do you think will change if more women would take decisions in the community?	All women related problems may get solved and women will feel more empowered.
Work:	
40. Do you make financial decisions for the family? a. If yes, give an example. b. If no, what do you think will change if you could make financial decisions for the family?	My husband and I discuss whatever is best for the family and we both take the decision.
41. Are you financially independent? a. If yes, can you take more decisions in the family than a woman who is not financially independent? b. If yes, can you take more decisions in the community than a woman who is not financially independent? c. If no do you want to be financially independent?	Yes, I am a. I can take more decisions than women who are not financially independent. b. I cannot take decisions for my community
Sexual violence	
42. Have you ever experienced sexual harassment?	-
43. Do you feel like it is the woman's fault, if she gets sexually assaulted?	-
44. Do you think your husband has the right to have sex with you even if you don't want to?	-
45. Would you file a report to the police, if you were sexually harassed?	-
Menstruation:	
46. Do you perceive menstruation as something unclean?	No, if women maintain personal hygiene during their period, there is nothing unclean about it.
47. If yes why do you think it is like that?	-
48. Are you not allowed to do certain things, when you are menstruating? e.g. sleeping in your bed, going to a temple, going into the kitchen.	It is an age-old practice to avoid women who are menstruating to go to such places so that their body can rest during the period.

49. How would your husband react if he saw blood on the bed?	-
50. Do you think it would be better if the people around you would normalize talking about menstruation?	-
End statement:	
If you were a man for a day, what would you do?	I would live a life with lots of guts, boldness and fearlessness.
Do you have anything else you want to share?	Everyone should live an equal life without any discrimination in the society.

2.Mangala

Interview:

Dear *name of interviewee*, because I don't live in India right now and because of corona, I sadly cannot personally be a part of this interview... My name is Tara Solomon. I am 18 years old and I was born and brought up in Bangalore, but live in Europe now. I am doing a study about women's rights in India.

I would like to have an interview with you, to hear about your life and circumstances as a woman in India.

With your consent, I will be sharing your story with your name and photo through my research study. It is also perfectly fine, if you want your story to be shared anonymously.

I would really appreciate it, if you would try to be completely honest with me and try to answer the questions as detailed as possible.

Thank you so much for taking part in this interview!

Information about interviewee
Name: Mangala H.
Age: 36 years old
Mother tongue: Kannada
City/Town: Channapatna, Karnataka
Hobby: helping people and reading the newspaper
Education: 10 th std.
Profession: Health entrepreneur
Marital Status: Married
Children: <u>Yes</u> /No Number of children: 2
Do you live in a joint family? Yes/ <u>No</u>

Photo (not given)

Describe your typical day:

I get up at 5:30 am. I wash the clothes, prepare breakfast and lunch for my children and husband. I eat my breakfast and leave home to go to work at 8 am. I conduct blood sugar tests as a health entrepreneur till 11:30 am. At 12 pm I reach home and clean the house. I eat lunch and then go to my garden to pluck flowers. I sell the flowers in the market and come back home at 6pm. I cook dinner and if my children need help to complete their homework, I help them. We eat dinner at 8 and talk till 9:30 and then go to bed.

If there is not enough space to write your answer please use a separate sheet of paper.

The longer and more detailed your answer the easier it is for me to share your story!! 😊

Role and Rights:	Answers:
51. Do you think women are equal to men?	Yes, because women are doing the equal amount of work that men are doing. Sometimes women work more than men do.
52. What is your role as a woman in your family?	Educating my children and taking care of my family. Packing their lunch, looking after their school bags etc. To support my family in all the good and bad times.

53. Do you live a different life than your mother does? (Do you have more rights than your mother and what rights?)	Yes, at my age my mother faced a lot of issues, because we were very poor and had to earn to have food for the day. We are 6 siblings, my parents faced lots of problems to raise us. My brother did not allow me to go out and to work. Earlier women hesitated to come forward and take responsibilities, they only did the household work. Now the situation has changed, women including me are going out of the house and working. My father used to make all the decisions for the family, but now in my family I can take decisions and convince my family to listen to my opinion.
54. Do you agree with the role women have in society?	Women play a vital role in every field. But most of the women are still not able to come and show their true potential because of security and safety issues.
55. Do you think that you are equal to your husband?	Yes, we are equal, because we support each other during difficulties and we contribute equally to the well-being of the family.
56. To what extent are you not treated as an equal to men in your community?	There is no work women cannot do, but there are lots of hinderances for women to live in the society. For example: a woman cannot talk to an unknown person/ or a man who is not a part of the family. Because people will start thinking weird things. Another problem is that women cannot travel alone. There are many such small problems which create a lot of trouble for women.
57. What is the meaning of being independent for you?	Women should live the life they desire, including buying certain material. Women should also be financially independent so that they can take decisions of their own choice.
58. If your community and family would support all your decisions, what decisions would you take for your family?	I would provide a higher education for my daughter.
Politics and leadership:	
59. Do you vote frequently?	Yes
60. Do you vote independently from your husband?	Yes
61. What do you think about women leaders in the community?	If there is no support from the family, it is difficult for women to take a leadership role in the community.
62. Do you think there should be more women who take leadership?	Yes, women are the ones who are affected the most with any kind of problems in the society. If they would take leadership in the community, they could address most of these issues.

63. If your community would support all your decisions, what would you change within your community?	Address all women's problems, including women's safety.
64. What do you think will change if more women would take decisions in the community? Please specify	Women can live safely in the society without any fear.
Work:	
65. Do you make financial decisions for the family? a. If yes, give an example. b. If no, what do you think will change if you could make financial decisions for the family?	Yes, most of the financial matters are decided together in the family, but financial control is usually in my hands.
66. Are you financially independent? a. If yes, can you take more decisions in the family than a woman who is not financially independent? b. If yes, can you take more decisions in the community than a woman who is not financially independent? c. If no do you want to be financially independent?	Yes, I am c. Yes, if a woman is financially independent she can take bold decisions I her life. d. Yes
Sexual violence	
67. Have you ever experienced sexual harassment?	This is a major reason why women are scared to come out of their homes.
68. Do you feel like it is the woman's fault, if she gets sexually assaulted?	Sometimes it could be the woman's fault (about 25% of the time). For example if a woman has a good life , where her husband and children take care of her well but she has an affair with someone.
69. Do you think your husband has the right to have sex with you even if you don't want to?	-
70. Would you file a report to the police, if you were sexually harassed?	-
Menstruation:	
71. Do you perceive menstruation as something unclean?	No
72. If yes why do you think it is like that?	-
73. Are you not allowed to do certain things, when you are menstruating? e.g. sleeping in your bed, going to a temple, going into the kitchen.	Yes
74. How would your husband react if he saw blood on the bed?	-

75. Do you think it would be better if the people around you would normalize talking about menstruation?	-
End statement:	
If you were a man for a day, what would you do?	Stop unethical relationships between men and women.
Do you have anything else you want to share?	-

Annexure 3 a: Questionnaire Video Volunteers

Interview Video Volunteers- Khel Badal

Overview:

- What is Khel Badal's main goal?
- What problems does Khel Badal try to address, when it comes to gender identity of women?
- What is the position of Video volunteers on patriarchy?
- How do you approach patriarchy in Khel Badal?

Method:

- Why does Video Volunteers/Khel Badal choose video as their main median of storytelling?
- What are the most important characteristics for a community correspondent to have?
- "Those trying to break the system": How are the participants of the discussion groups selected? Are all the participants open to discussion or are some sceptical?
 - Are the women in the discussion groups aware of their right to be equal to men in the beginning?
- How do you prepare a session?
- What are the criteria of selecting a video, to show to the members of the discussion groups?

Impact:

- What kind of videos provoke a deep discussion among the members?
- What is the difference between working with discussion groups with only women, only men and mixed groups?
- What impact do you see in a group only with women, only with men, mixed groups?
- What difficulties do you face when you work with the groups?
- What are some obstacles that women face, when they try to dismantle patriarchy within their family or their community?
- What are the most important things women in the villages need to understand so that they take the first step in dismantling patriarchy?
- What impact do you wish to see in the village you live in regarding dismantling patriarchy?
- At what point would you say that "khel badal" is happening?

Gender Identity:

- What makes people take part in these discussion groups?
- *The first step towards dismantling patriarchy, is the awareness of the fact that women should be equal to men in the community.*
What is your opinion on this statement?
- Because patriarchy is deep-rooted in the society, women are treated differently than men since the day they are born. This leads to women having a low opinion about themselves. This is one of the biggest barriers to dismantle patriarchy.
 - What do you have to say to this statement?
 - How do women in your community perceive themselves? Dominant, Submissive, proud to be a woman
- What are the biggest challenges you face from other women regarding gender identity? Name some experiences.
- How do you change the gender identity of women through the discussion clubs?
- What impact do you wish to see in the village regarding the gender identity of women?
- Have you seen a change in your self-confidence, since you've worked in video volunteers?
- Have you seen changes in your relationship with your family?

Annexure 3 b: Interview Interview Video Volunteers- Khel Badal

Overview:

- What is Khel Badal's main goal?
Most of the women did not even know what patriarchy was.
To introduce patriarchy (most of the women did not even know what patriarchy was), to understand patriarchy and to challenge it in rural areas so that problems that are caused by patriarchy can change. Khel Badal was launched for a long-term systematic change.
- What problems does Khel Badal try to address, when it comes to gender identity of women? Gender roles, remarriage of widows, women can't use their husband's name.
Women started recognizing that they are someone who should be respected and because of that they gained the confidence to speak up for their rights. The members of the gender discussion club used to face domestic violence at home and it stopped for them because they started standing up for themselves.
- What is the position of Video volunteers on patriarchy?
The tagline of Khel Badal "Change the Game" is Dismantle patriarchy
We try to recruit as many women as possible on purpose, because Video volunteers knows that women are underrepresented and their voices are not heard.

Method:

- Why does Video Volunteers/Khel Badal choose video as their main medium of storytelling? / Why do you think video helps bring out the point in the discussion club?
In a rural setting, if a woman talks about patriarchy or about her dreams to go out and work, she will be name called in the village. People will call her shameless, a woman with loose character etc. Everybody is trained from the moment they are born to do things that are connected to patriarchy. Everyone is trained to follow it even though they are not really aware they are following it.
Because it starts so young, anything that does not follow that norm will be criticized.
Therefore, if a video is shown (instead of directly talking about the issue) at the beginning of a discussion club, it evokes emotion and starts conversations. Videos become a medium to start conversation. If you generally talk with women about women empowerment and gender equality a lot of people will say they are getting equal rights and that there are no problems regarding women empowerment. But if you show a video about a particular theme it shows clearly what the issue is and is therefore very difficult to counter. Video is there to clearly show what we mean when we say equality and to actually show what is happening to women in day to day situations.
- What are the most important characteristics for a community correspondent (CC) to have?
CC's really want to change the situation and they would go to jail for it (some have gone to jail)
The eagerness to solve issues no matter what the consequences are defines community correspondents. Cc's show issues from areas where mainstream media doesn't reach. They show problems in videos that many don't necessarily see as a problem. They have a certain way of looking at the problems and recognizing what is really hurting the community.
The community usually trusts their CC from all their heart. For example: Women in Rohini's discussion club talk about the domestic violence that they have faced even though they are reluctant to talk about those things. It is only because they trust her completely, that they speak about such things with such ease.
Another characteristic that defines a CC is that they make videos that solve problems which most of the mainstream media doesn't do.
- How are the participants of the discussion groups selected? When she was trained to run the campaign "Khel Badal" video volunteers told all of them that they can choose the discussions club members as they wish. Rohini decided to choose Asha workers (accredited social health activists) from 8 different

villages. She wanted to see if the issues are the same in different villages. Since ASHA workers go door to door to work, they usually know what is happening in their villages. (Which wife is getting beaten up by their husband, who got raped but has not reported it etc.)

Rohini wanted to understand how patriarchy works. (Does it work differently in different villages?)

- Are all the participants open to discussion or are some sceptical?
When Rohini started the discussions club the women were confused and did not share wholeheartedly, because it was very new to them and the kind of questions posed were the kind of questions that were never spoken about (and never questioned) in the community. For example: Why does the woman have to move to a male's house after marriage and not the other way round?
After 3 sessions the women started talking, because they started looking at it in a new perspective. When they started talking, they also started applying these issues in their daily life.
- Are the women in the discussion groups aware of their right to be equal to men in the beginning?
No, they were not aware. They heard about patriarchy for the first time in the discussion club. And she also heard about it the first time after she joined video volunteers. In her daily life she saw how girls and boys were treated differently. Rohini's brother would get different food than what she got. The work would be divided accordingly as well. There was no concept of women and men being equal. No one questions this, because it is the norm.
The family and the society were/are just passing down the patriarchal stereotypes to their children.
- How is one session prepared?
The major part of preparing for a meeting was to find the right location to hold it. Where the women could share whatever they wanted to, without fearing that anyone could hear them. If they were having a session in one of the members houses, they could have been a neighbour or their own family that was listening to what they were talking about. Therefore, most of Rohini's sessions happened in the fields. Rohini had to make sure that the women were in a safe space, where they could share anything and cry. Rohini shows a video that is sent by the video volunteers office and she shows it to them in the fields. In the end of the sessions they also talk about the video they saw last time and if they tried to apply it in their life. Some videos like rape case videos or a video about why only women go through sterilization (even though it is riskier for women) are not applied in daily life, but other videos about gender roles, taking the husband's name, wearing the clothes you want, widow remarriage, girls pursuing an education etc. were applied by the women in daily life.

Impact:

- What kind of videos provoke a deep discussion among the members?
The videos create very intense discussions, when they are related to an issue that they have faced in their life.
For example: A video on domestic violence was showed
While the women watched a video on domestic violence, some of them started to cry, because they were facing it in their own life. After the video, some of the women shared their whole life story. How some of them were beaten up when they were young girls by their fathers, or they saw their mother being beaten up by their father.

Once Rohini showed a video of a husband who came back home drunk and he beat up his wife till died. One of the group members cried for half an hour when she saw the video, because her sister was killed by her drunk husband as well.

She asked Rohini what the need is to show them this video, because it happens all the time.

Alcoholism is a very tricky topic, because 80% of the people drink. And even if the women would raise their voice against alcoholism, they wouldn't have anywhere to go. Women can't raise their voice when it comes to this topic (to close down the liquor store etc.), because they are dependent on their husbands and the village doesn't support them either.

If women would raise their voice, the men will tell the husbands of the women to control them. And these women will become a target to more violence at home, because she raised her voice on alcoholism.

Rohini showed the video to her own family and discussed it with them, before taking it to the discussion club, so that no one in the village (including the women in the discussion clubs) can tell her that she is not trying to change things in her own home but expects other women to do so. People told Rohini's husband that Rohini is going out of control, that she is making too many meetings, that she's making too many videos on issues in the village (which gives the village a bad name).

What impacts have you seen, while working in the discussion club?

- 1) Child marriage: The first daughter of the women from the discussion club was married as a minor. The mother decided to not get her 2nd daughter to get married as a minor (stood up for her daughter) and decided that her daughter can get married when she wants to get married.
- 2) Gender role division: In Rohini's village gender role division is so bad, that if the husband wants water he will not go and take it.
After a video about gender role division Rohini's husband and 3 other husbands of the members started doing some household work like cutting onions or making tea by themselves, which is a big step already.
Some of the women would come back really excited and tell Rohini that this is the first time ever in their marriage of 30 or 40 years where their husband has made tea by himself.
- 3) Clothes: This story is very close to Rohini's heart.
One of the videos was about clothes that women are allowed/not allowed to wear. The women in her discussion club saw pictures of Rohini when she goes to Goa for Video Volunteer trainings, where she wore a skirts and jeans.
The women told Rohini that they want to wear jeans and t-shirts for the first time, because the daily clothing of women in rural areas is a sari or a salwar. So, all the women lied to their families and told them that they are going to a discussion club.
They all went to Rohini's place for one night and early morning next day they all went to a beach close by and wore jeans, tops and sunglasses that Rohini collected from different women. It was a lot of fun, they laughed a lot because the clothes were not their size. They played in the water and ate outside. This trip really meant something to the women. Later on, some of them cried and told Rohini that this is the first time they lived for themselves.
- How do women change something if they are dependent on their husbands and can't raise their voice because of that?
This is what happens most of the time. Women are not successful in changing an issue. But the whole point of patriarchy is that it's so deep-rooted into the society that it won't change after one try.
Many husbands of the group members call Rohini and tell her that every time their wife comes back from a discussion club, they have something new to say.
They said they their wives used to be silent and happy and now they are complaining about so many small things and they are not behaving like the other women in the village. Patriarchy is something that will not change in a day, we need to keep trying and eventually things will change.
- What is the difference between working with discussion groups with only women, only men and mixed groups? Rohini only has sessions with women.
The discussion clubs in the Khel Badal campaign were conducted by 50-60 community correspondents. Some of the groups were only men groups run by male correspondents. Some were mixed groups and some like Rohini's group were only women. The community correspondents could choose how they want to make their discussion group.
- What difficulties do you face when you work with the groups (after the 3 sessions)?
In the first few sessions the women were. not speaking a lot. Rohini wondered why and then she realised that it is because some of the members are 40+ years old.
These women have seen only one way of living all their life, and now everything they knew was questioned in the discussion club. This leads to a lot of confusion in their minds, which makes it hard for

them to share anything at first. Even Rohini needed time to adapt to the whole idea of questioning norms in the society at the beginning of working with Video Volunteers.

The women sometimes don't understand how Rohini can show such videos and would argue quite a lot with her.

For example, a video on stereotypical gender roles was shown in one of the sessions. The women were asked to make their sons wash some cooking utensils.

One woman couldn't imagine asking her son to do something like that, while he was studying in 10th grade. She wondered what her mother in law and her neighbours would say if they found out about this. Rohini had to explain with a lot of patience. She had to explain that the automatic logic of most people in the village is that the norm is also the right thing. But what if the norm is not always the right thing?

- What are the most important things women in the villages need to understand so that they take the first step in dismantling patriarchy?

Firstly, they need to understand their rights in the constitution and their entitlement.

In Rohini's village a woman is like an object. She is there to do all the work and does not have her own life. Freedom for a woman is a very flung dream.

In most villages the women don't only do the housework, but work as well. Usually the women take care of the cattle or do farming work on the field and then go home to do all the household work. While the husbands go to the community space to have tea, smoke and to drink alcohol after they finish working. This also happens in urban areas of India. 50% of farming in rural areas is done by women, as well as cattle rearing.

- What impact do you wish to see in the village you live in regarding dismantling patriarchy?
Rohini would like to see that men and women are treated equally. That there is no child marriage in the village. And that women are given the opportunity to have their freedom.

Woman's identity:

- What makes people take part in these discussion groups? / How did you convince them to join these discussion groups?

Even before starting the discussion club, Rohini's image in her village was of someone who would always solve issues related to gender. The women knew about her (saw her photos when she went for training to Video Volunteers) and wanted to be like her. When Rohini organized any other events, she never had problems getting women to come. Rohini told the women that she wants to tell them everything that she has learnt so far and that these discussions groups could help them find their own identity.

- Because patriarchy is deep-rooted in the society, women are treated differently than men since the day they are born. This leads to women having a low opinion about themselves. This is one of the biggest barriers to dismantle patriarchy.

What do you have to say to this statement?

Patriarchy is definitely deep rooted into our society. It is like that invisible god that everybody is supposed to accept and believe in. Patriarchy has become like a tradition that has to be followed and should not be questioned or one should not break the chain. A lot of women are not just affected by patriarchy, but also practice it themselves and teach it to their own children. For example, treating their son differently from their daughter, or telling Rohini that what she is doing is shameless. Patriarchy is a blind faith.

- How did you perceive yourself as a woman before Video volunteers?
Rohini never thought she could have her own identity. She never thought about herself before joining Video Volunteers.
- How do women in your community perceive themselves? Dominant, Submissive, proud to be a woman...

In Rohini's village there is a mix. The most submissive and oppressed women would be the ones who work at the farms and do their household work.

At the same time there are women who have started their own business or have started working by themselves. But that does not mean that they have the freedom to do what they want. They usually face difficulties with their family or with the community. The community will pressure them and call them names, which leads to the women not being able to exercise their freedom to the fullest.

- What was a perfect woman for you before coming to VV?
A perfect woman takes care of her family, wears a sari all the time, covers her head in front of her father in law, doesn't talk back and talk about her opinion and she doesn't speak to any man outside her family.
- What is the perfect woman for her now?
A perfect woman would be someone who follows the dreams in her heart and lives accordingly. She takes her own decisions. Whether it is choosing what clothes she wants to wear or whether she wants to have a child or not. A woman who can live by her own rules and can take her own decisions. She can go anywhere she would want to in the night without any fear, sadly the atmosphere in India is not so safe for women to go out in the night.
- What are the biggest challenges you face from other women regarding gender identity? Name some experiences. answered
- How do you change the gender identity of women through the discussion clubs? answered
- What impact do you wish to see in the village regarding the gender identity of women? answered
- Have you seen a change in your self-confidence, since you've become a community correspondent/worked in video volunteers?
When Rohini joined Video Volunteers she was very quiet and she came out of her village for the first time. She saw the train for the first time when she went to Goa for the training and she didn't sleep for the 3-day train ride, because she was so scared.
She never thought about herself before Video Volunteers.
But now she can tackle any issue that confronts her and she not scared to do so. Even though she is not so well read and hasn't had a good education, she can still overcome any issue based on gender inequality in her village, just through her self-confidence.
An example: a video she made regarding the entry of women in a particular temple. This was not at all supported by the community, because it had to do with god and tradition that was 400 years old. But she managed to solve the issue, only because of her self-confidence and what also helped was that many women were confident that Rohini would solve the issue, which made her even more self-confident.
- Have you seen changes in your relationship with your family?
Rohini's role has massively changed. Earlier she had no confidence and was scared all the time. She didn't talk a lot.
Now when issues come up in the family, she consulted about how to solve it. She can also take financial decisions for the family, which is not usual in other rural families.
Rohini's family feel proud of her that she helps so many people in the community.
But it has been a challenging route for Rohini to reach the state that she is in today.

End statement:

The fight is not over. We all need to fight patriarchy in our own homes first, only then can we expect an equal society in the future. This fight is ongoing. Men can have to show courage to change the norms that we are used to. That would make things much easier.

Rohini looks at everything with a gender perspective. She sees it everywhere. In urban setting as well.

All her life she saw her mother, her sister and herself being discriminated due to their gender and this deeply hurt her. But she never knew why this was like this and how one could change it. But now since

she works with Video Volunteers, she can recognise gender discrimination everywhere. The only hope to succeed in dismantling patriarchy is to challenge it in your day to day life.

An example of looking at things in a gender perspective: this morning for example Rohini was going through books of her young son. In one of the books she saw a woman doing household chores, while the man was reading the newspaper and playing cricket. This is where patriarchy starts.

The community tells the children what role they play in the society according to the gender norm. The book is reinforcing gender stereotypes by assigning these specific roles.

Or yesterday Rohini (who is also an ASHA worker) was being briefed about different types of contraception's to avoid pregnancy. Rohini asked the woman who was briefing them, what contraceptives were there for the men. She said that there is only sterilization for the men.

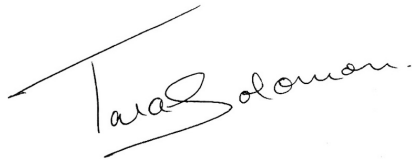
Rohini said that if AIDS wouldn't have affected the worldwide population, even condoms wouldn't have been invented. How has technology gone so far, but hasn't seriously found any contraceptives for males yet? Because in society it is the woman's business when she gets pregnant and when she has a baby. This also has to do with patriarchy.

If Rohini documented from morning to evening, she would be able to write 100 to 200 incidents that have to do with discrimination based on gender.

SELBSTSTÄNDIGKEITSERKLÄRUNG

“Ich erkläre hiermit, dass ich die vorliegende Maturaarbeit eigenständig und ohne unerlaubte fremde Hilfe erstellt habe und dass alle Quellen, Hilfsmittel und Internetseiten wahrheitsgetreu verwendet wurden und belegt sind.”

Tara Solomon, Bern, 12.10.2020

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Tara Solomon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending from the top of the "T" and a large loop for the "S".