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RE-VISIONING SHELTER HOMES IN MEGHALAYA

PART OF A FIVE STATE ACTION RESEARCH
STUDY

Re-visioning Shelter Homes in Meghalaya

Part of a five state action research study of shelter homes for survivors of violence in Meghalaya
(2019)

North East Network, Meghalaya

On behalf of

Lamlynti-Chittara Neralu (LCN)

a national Network for Shelter Homes in India

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Part of a five state action research study of
shelter homes for survivors of violence in
Meghalaya

Supported by:

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North East Network

Springside, Jingkieng, Nongthymmai, Shillong- 793004, India

Tel: 0364 252 1221

meghalaya@northeastnetwork.org

www.northeastnetwork.org

Design and Layout by: Pratyasha Ghosh

PREFACE

North East Network, since its nascent stage almost 24 years ago, has been working with women and advocating for their rights. This research is one of the organization's processes to ensure that women who have been unheard are given a right to be heard. This study is a feminist action research where we will hear women talking about their experience of violence, homelessness and seeking a safe space for shelter.

The study was conducted in East Khasi Hills District, West Jaintia Hills District, West Khasi Hills District, West Garo Hills District and Ri-Bhoi District of Meghalaya.

The study begins by establishing the socio-eco-political and cultural context of the universe which is Meghalaya, and helps the reader understand from the context of the information that follows. It then moves to establishing the main themes of the study, that is, female victims of violence and homelessness. In addition, it goes on to detail shelter homes and their existence or non-existence in Meghalaya, access thereto and the experiences of women while availing services from state and non-state agencies for safe shelter. The study attempts to document the roles played by various stakeholders in providing safe space for women who have faced violence.

Finally, the study also tries to capture the true essence of women's experiences and devises recommendations for various state agencies to enable women to live a violence free life. This is part of our resolve to advocate for policy change towards improving the lives of women in the State of Meghalaya.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We at North East Network (NEN) would like to extend our gratitude to the American Jewish World Service (AJWS) for supporting this collaborative action research conducted by eight organisations across five states of India – Assam, Delhi, Karnataka, Meghalaya and Tamil Nadu. It has been an enriching experience to be part of this project which has brought out the voice of those most marginalised.

Our gratitude to Amrita Nandy and Ananya Basu needs special mention. We thank them for all the valuable knowledge and guidance they have imparted us with. A special word of gratitude also to Visthar, Bangalore, for coordinating this project.

We are deeply grateful to the Directorate of Social Welfare, Government of Meghalaya, that granted us the much required permissions to visit different homes across the state. We would also like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to all concerned officials of the Shelter Homes in the State for allowing us to conduct the study and interacting with residents of the respective homes.

This report would not have been possible without the voices of the survivors of violence themselves, those living in shelter homes, women from extremely vulnerable backgrounds and all the respondents who consented to participate in the study. They have been our most significant contributors. So have several other organisations which shared their perspectives and experiences relating to the issue and have helped in building a holistic perspective.

We would like to extend a special thank you to members of the NEN Meghalaya team – Catherine Kyndiah, Suklinsha Paliar, Preety Syiemlieh, Balarisha Lyngdoh and Joy Grace Syiem for seeing this report from its conceptualisation to the final stages. Last but not the least, we are fortunate to have Dr. Monisha Behal, CEO, NEN, to constantly encourage and support us.

FOREWORD

The study on Shelter Homes in the state of Meghalaya conveys the necessity of creating 'congenial and comforting' homes for vulnerable and spurned women in Meghalaya State. Like Assam, the researchers of the Study, Re - visioning Shelter Homes have made a good effort in assessing the status-quo of these homes with the idea of analysing the condition of these women, the problems that the staff might be facing, the efficacy of these Homes. State support systems, private Homes run by the missionary and social organisations in Shillong, are functioning relatively better than those sponsored by the government- the reason being that financial crunch have been a major obstacle in running such Homes.

The principal concern of this study, conducted by our organization, was to assess analyse and recommend certain factors that will minimize the vulnerability scale of women living in the Shelter Homes. It is hoped that the study will become a subject of debate and discussion with a focus on improving the status of the women through support and understanding.

Dr.Monisha Behal

CEO, North East Network

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ABBREVIATIONS

NEN – North East Network

NFHS – National Family Health Survey

HDI – Human Index Report

POCSO - The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012

PWDVA - Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005

DSWO - District Social Welfare Officer

EKH – East Khasi Hills

WKH – West Khasi Hills

SWKH – South West Khasi Hills

EJH – East Jaintia Hills

WJH – West Jaintia Hills

RI-BHOI – Ri- Bhoi district

EGH – East Garo Hills

WGH – West Garo Hills

SGH – South Garo Hills

NGH – North Garo Hills

SWGHT- South West Garo Hills

FGD – Focus Group Discussion

NGO – Non – Government Organisation

GOM – Government of Meghalaya

IDI – In-dept Interview

KII – Key Informer Interview

CEDAW – Convention on Elimination of Discrimination against Women

IPC – Indian Penal Code

NCPCR - The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights

MSLSA - The Meghalaya State Legal Service Authority

OSC – One Stop Centre

DIR – Domestic Incident Report

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. A GLIMPSE OF MEGHALAYA

The state of Meghalaya covers an area of approximately 22429 s¹ square kilometres and is located at the foothills of the Himalayas. The population of the State, in the year 2018, as per estimated data is 3.536 Million.²The state is home to the Khasi, Jaintia and Garo tribes where women make up to about 49percent^[1] of the total population.

According to the Meghalaya Human Development Report (2008), women in Meghalaya are better placed compared to their counterparts in the patrilineal societies. Here women inherit their parents' property - acquired and ancestral, women get the better share as the custodians of property and the keeper of the home and hearth. For women coming from poor or landless families however, these property rights are meaningless. Their responsibilities however, are no less than their landed counterparts.

When it comes to public life, the mindset and long-held biases and attitudes against women still pose a major obstacle for them to enter electoral politics. Authority in its real sense is the exclusive domain of men evident in the running of the local administration. Women have rights over their children by dint of the matronymic principle. They do enjoy property rights, but in most matrilineal societies the men exert control over their sister's or niece's property. Generally, the public-domain is directly under the man's control, but men succeed to traditional political offices via the female line, i.e., brother to sister's son or sister daughter's son.

Thus, even though women in Meghalaya may appear to have a distinct role and status, as compared to their counterparts in the rest of the country, this is a misconception. In actual practice a woman can easily be stripped of her right of inheritance in the event of her failure to conform to the code of conduct accepted by the society or to fulfil her responsibilities to her natal home. The recent Bill–Khasi Social Custom of Lineage (Second Amendment), unanimously passed by the Khasi Hills Autonomous District in 2018, that proposes to deprive Khasi women of their tribal status and all associated privileges if they marry a non-tribal man, is evidence of this social attitude.

¹http://www.in.undp.org/content/dam/india/docs/human_development_report_meghalaya_2008_full_report.pdf pg: 7

²<http://indiapopulation2018.in/population-of-meghalaya-2018.html>

Therefore, the myth of a matrilineal society, celebrating the ‘power’ of its women is not only a cause of concern but a challenge to those who are working towards accessing rights and entitlements for women. Ironically women themselves believe in this myth despite being victims of the universal forms of discrimination against their gender. Human Society’s mindset is patriarchal in nature and this is enforced by the patriarchal customs and traditions followed by tribes and communities across the state.

According to The NHFS Report 4³, only 19 percent of women between the ages of 15-49 in Meghalaya have completed higher secondary education and above compared to 22 percent of men. When we look at women’s ownership of property, 57percent women own a house alone or jointly with someone else, while 47percent of men own land alone or jointly with someone else. Prominent political analyst, Dr. Pascal Malngiang in his seminar paper opines, “Empirically speaking, it will not be wrong to say that such properties are found to be in small quantities..... Thus, the question of inheritance and property rights today can be classified into two categories: the ‘haves’ and the ‘have not.’”

Over one-fourth of women between the ages of 15-49 in Meghalaya have experienced physical violence. Only 12percentpercent of these women have ever sought help. 3/4th of these women have not even told anyone about the violence they have faced.

The Human Development Index (HDI) Report, 2018 gives India an HDI value of 0.64 putting it at 130th place out of 189 countries.

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
HDI Value	0.565	0.584	0.600	0.621	0.641	0.659	0.654	0.654	0.651	0.647	0.650

Table A Meghalaya Human Development Index in the last 10 years⁴

Meghalaya has been increasing in its HDI value with a slight drop in 2015 and 2016 and it has increased again in the year 2017 with 0.650 HDI value putting it on the 26th place out of 36. ⁴ This rise in ranks however means little to the female victims of abuse in the region.

³<http://rchiips.org/nfhs/NFHS-4Reports/Meghalaya.pdf>

⁴<http://www.in.undp.org/content/india/en/home/sustainable-development/successstories/india-ranks-130-on-2018-human-development-index.html>

B. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN MEGHALAYA

Violence against women in India is more than what it may appear to be as a large number of cases of violence perpetrated against women go unreported and are brushed under the carpet due to societal norms, cultural practices and values. The National Crime Record Bureau has reported a percentage raise of 83percentbetween 2007- 2016 of total crimes against women. In Meghalaya, reported cases as per the Police, has increased from 172 in the year 2007 to 594 in 2017. A total of 398 domestic violence cases were reported at lohlynti⁵ between (One Stop Centre) November 2011 to October 2018. These reported cases are only the tip of the iceberg since most of cases go reported as mentioned earlier. The Meghalaya Human Development Report 2008 says that ‘Women in Meghalaya suffer from problems of illiteracy, poverty and malnutrition, male drunkenness and family discord. Cases of domestic violence and sexual crimes also are not unheard of. These problems are universal and the prevalence of a matrilineal system does not guarantee gender equality and absence of gender related discrimination.’

Cases of domestic violence in the state are mostly not reported to the Police, women instead go to other government agencies like the Meghalaya State Commission for Women, District Social Welfare Officers, Meghalaya State Legal Services Authority, Special Cell for Women⁶ and Non-Government agencies like NGOs, CSOs, Women’s Groups, Traditional Institutions (Dorbar Shnong), and Churches. Unfortunately, we could not obtain the number of cases reported to these agencies due to lack of documentation.

NEN, through its engagement with the community and grassroots women leaders, has learnt that survivors of domestic violence do not report to concerned authorities but go to their own clan, the Dorbar Shnong, Seng Kynthei or the Church with the hope of stopping the abuse. This results in a large number of undocumented cases. It is therefore, a paradox that in a society where women are believed to be emancipated, empowered and accorded respect, violence against women, especially domestic violence, is normalised.

⁵lohlynti – a Khasi word meaning “the way”, initiated by NEN, is the first hospital based support centre for women established in NE India on November, 2011. In 2016 it is adopted as One Stop Centre of EKH district and now a joint initiative of NEN, Department of Social Welfare and Health & Family Welfare, Government of Meghalaya.

⁶It is located in Saradar Police Station, Shillong. The National Commission for Women (NCW) in collaboration with Tata Institute of Social Science (TISS) started a pilot project - 'Violence-free Home - A Woman's Right'. For more details see East Khasi District Police Meghalaya: <http://shillongpolice.gov.in/womencell.html>

Even though reported crimes against women are increasing according to the Meghalaya Police Crime Records Bureau (refer 1.1) the state has a long way to go in coming close to registering the actual number of such crimes

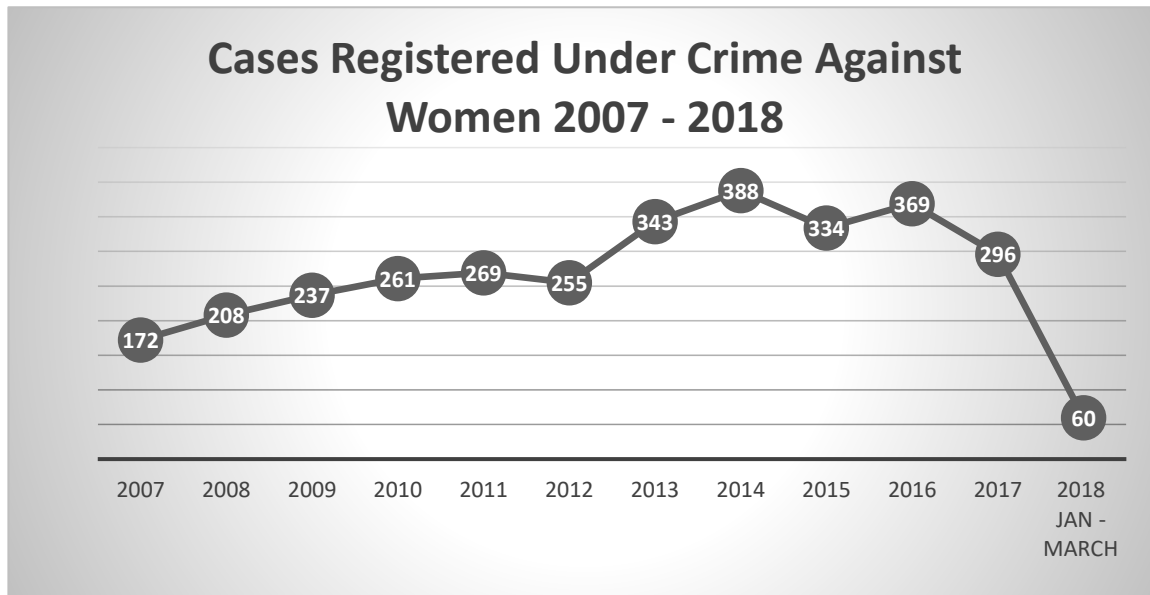


Figure 1 Crimes against women registered with the Meghalaya Police Service

C. FACTORS INFLUENCING INCREASING CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN IN THE STATE

Violence against women and children is a global issue that spares no community, whether patrilineal or matrilineal. History has shown that violence against women is a systemic issue that manifests itself from power dynamics existing in the community. The tribal communities in Meghalaya are no different and this is further fuelled by patriarchal norms and customary practices that have been infused in the matrilineal setup. The forms of violence and crimes may vary in nature, when speaking of women in Meghalaya, though the root causes of such violence and the discrimination that victims face are similar to those in other States of India.

Our examination of the root cause of the increasing rate of crime against women across the State have led to enumerating the following factors.

A Patriarchal Ideology intertwined in the Matrilineal System

Women in matrilineal Meghalaya are seen as the caretakers whereas men have more decision-making powers, be it in the private or public sphere. For example, women do inherit their ancestral property, but they cannot make any decision on this property without the permission of her maternal

uncle. Therefore, patriarchy simply stems from the maternal side of the family as opposed to the paternal side of the family that is the norm in the rest of India. An old Khasi saying goes, “U Rang 12 lama” (literally meaning a man with 12 flags.), metaphorically meaning that a man is culturally acceptable if he has multiple wives.

Lack of awareness on pro-women legislations for the protection of women

Laws such as Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005, The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012, The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act 1956, Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013, etc are not being widely availed by the public due to their lack of awareness of these laws. In addition, most women feel that courts and Police stations are neither approachable nor sensitive to their cause. This lack of awareness can be attributed to the manner in which laws are being disseminated for one. It is not conducive to the layman/woman who is unable to grasp the meaning and the criticality of these laws.

Lack of implementation of Pro-women legislations:

During the course of the study, interviews and Consultations held with stakeholders from the Government revealed that lack of implementation of pro-women laws was due to overburdened officers that hold multiple positions, and do not receive proper training on the laws they are to implement. For example, the District Social Welfare Officer (DSWO) is also the Protection Officer under the PWDV Act. He or she is also responsible for the implementation of multiple schemes for women, children, persons with disability, the aged and the infirm. A study conducted by North East Network on women Police in 2015 revealed that Meghalaya has only a strength of 2.87percentwomen in the Police force. These women Police personnel have specific duties under each criminal legislation and are also flooded with a variety of responsibilities which results in inefficient performance of duties and lack of gender sensitivity.

Slow Judicial processes

Every state in India has its own institutions to implement laws dealing with criminal offenders. Based on the British Judiciary system, in Meghalaya, we have the lower courts at the district level called Magistrates Courts, at the session level we have the Courts of Sessions and finally the Meghalaya High Court at a State level, which was established only on 23rd of March, 2013. The High Court has three permanent judges including the Honourable Chief Justice and one additional judge. The

conviction and punishment rate for rape cases or any offences at present is dismal. In 2014, the overall conviction rate was 6.3 percent with 254 convictions out of 3,983 cognizable crimes reported.

In 2015, the conviction rate was 9.5 per cent with 420 convictions out of 4,406 cognizable crimes reported.⁷ One of the primary reasons for the backlog of pending trials is the usual lackadaisical nature of the courts that often delay the delivery of verdict against the perpetrators and also the fact that Fast Track Courts in Meghalaya have ceased to function due to lack of funds.

Year	Types of cases registered	Conviction rate	Conviction percentage
2014	118 rape cases	12	10%
	38 of kidnapping of girls and women cases	0	0
2015	93 rape cases	8	8.6%
	58 of kidnapping of girls and women cases	0	0
	95 molestation & sexual harassment cases	3	3%

Table B: Conviction rate of crimes against women and children in Meghalaya

S.I.	DISTRICT	DISPOSED CRIME AGAINST WOMEN	DISPOSED CRIME AGAINST CHILDREN
A.	EKH	51	70
B.	WKH	42	94
C.	SWKH	18	25
D.	EJH	43	30
E.	WJH	87	57
F.	RI-BHOI	75	85
G.	EGH	57	7
H.	WGH	20	34
I.	SGH	6	8
J.	NGH	16	22

⁷<http://www.theshillongtimes.com/2017/02/09/conviction-rate-dismal-in-state/>

K.	SWGH	4	10
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Table C: Crimes against women and children disposed at Polices stations in 11 districts of Meghalaya between 2016 - 2018⁸The table above represents crimes reported that were disposed at the Police station in various districts of Meghalaya. The number of pending cases and those taken to court were not available.

Meghalaya, on account of being a tribal state comes under the Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution which gives special provisions to the State to maintain its distinct customs, socio-economic, political and cultural practices. We gained statehood on 21st of January 1972, prior to which it was a part of Assam. This was a result of the Assam Reorganisation (Meghalaya) Act, 1969 that formed an autonomous State of Meghalaya within the State of Assam comprising of the United Khasi-Jaintia Hills District and the Garo Hills District.⁹ As of now, there is the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council, the Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council and the Garo Hills Autonomous District Council in the State of Meghalaya that looks after the tribal administration in the state. Under The United Khasi-Jaintia Hills District (Administration of Justice) Rules, 1953, three classes of Courts have been provided, namely:

- i. Village Courts
- ii. Subordinate District Council Courts and the Additional Subordinate District Council Courts.
- iii. District Council Court and Additional District Council Court.¹⁰

These courts are for the trials of suits and cases between various parties all of whom belong to the Schedule Tribe within the area.¹¹

Impunity of perpetrators over the years: In addition to the social taboo related to violence against women, the impunity accorded to perpetrators of crimes against women has led to low reporting of such crimes. The inability of the Police to file a chargesheet within 90 days, as mandated by the Criminal Code of Procedure, results in a number of perpetrators receiving bail. Interference by the Rangbah Shnong (Traditional Head), in such cases, and settling issues with a fine, absence of a forensic institute for examination of evidence, etc. are some reasons why an efficient system of justice delivery is lacking in the State, a result, clearly of the hurdles that come with the norms that bureaucratic processes follow. This can perhaps be worked upon to minimize delays and see to speedy justice toward the victim of violence.

⁸ Information was provided by the Meghalaya Police, through an application with reference number: NEN/SH/2018/048 Dtd: 13/11/18

⁹Gassah, L.S, The Sixth Schedule and 73rd Amendment: An Analysis, pg. 4-8

¹⁰<http://www.khadc.nic.in/judiciary.html>

¹¹ The Sixth Schedule [Article 244(2) and 275(1)], The Constitution of India

Weaknesses in the Education System: Understanding of gender roles and encouraging non-acrimonious interactions or attitudes between boys and girls are critical to a society that can be addressed through early education. The youth receiving misguided information through their peers or social media has resulted in an increase of gender-based discrimination and also cases of teenage pregnancy and other issues of sexual reproductive health rights in the State. Schools and colleges in Meghalaya do not provide necessary education on gender relations and sensitivity to understand issues of sexuality in their curriculum. This has had an adverse impact on the children and youth of the State as the social maturity of young people is largely dependent on how they are brought up at home and in their educational institutions. Abuse has to be dealt with seriously both in the home and at work so that young people grow up in awareness.

D. VIOLENCE AND HOMELESSNESS

Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) states that ‘Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.’

In the present day, homelessness is an acute problem globally. In 2005, the United Nations estimated homelessness to be at 100 million people worldwide. The Census of India defines ‘houseless people’ – as persons who are not living in ‘Census houses,’ the latter referring to ‘a structure with roof.’ Homelessness thus refers to those who are inadequately housed – without a basic shelter over their head, not even a “kuccha” (unfinished) slum or shanty house. India has approximately 17, 73,040 homeless people according to the 2011 Census report. The last Census report, shows that there is an overall decline in houseless population, with a 28 percent decline in rural areas, but a 20percent increase in homeless people living in cities.

This study defines homelessness as a state in which a person is forced to leave his/her family and live without them and hence is rendered shelterless not by choice, but by situation. Whereas, houselessness is when a person may have a family but does not have a house or a roof over his/her head. Both situations are a violation of one's Human Rights. Violence is one of the major causes of homelessness, especially for women and children globally. Homelessness and houselessness increases their vulnerability to sexual and other forms of violence. A study by the National Law

Centre on Homelessness and Poverty carried out in the United States, found that 100percent of homeless women have experienced domestic or sexual violence at some point in their lives.

During the course of this study, the NEN team discovered and interacted with many houseless women in Shillong. These women take shelter at a Bus depot run by the State Government. They suffer immense and various forms of violence ranging from physical assault to sexual violence. Attempts, however, to meet these women was difficult as they were only willing to meet the team post-midnight. Issues of safety became a big issue for researchers in the city of Shillong because of the absence of logistical support late in the night transportation and the risk of being caught between sudden bouts of street fights that occur more often than not.

It has been well established in International Human Rights Law and its interpretation that a home is not just a physical structure of four walls and a roof. Instead, it is a much broader concept that encompasses various material and non-material elements of adequacy, which are necessary to create a safe living space.

Domestic violence is widely prevalent but it is not treated as a serious concern either by the state or public. This makes women more susceptible to homelessness, especially when women's Human Rights are further denied due to customary practices/rules that are allowed to exist over the laws of the State. Many women who do manage to escape from home become vulnerable to homelessness and consequently may suffer further violence. On the other hand, the fear associated with homelessness can lead some women to stay in abusive and dangerous situations, or return to them if they have attempted to leave.¹² During the course of the study, the team met with young women still living in children's shelter homes even though they have attained the age of majority. They shared that they had nowhere to go to and no place to call home.

The death of a parent or parents is one of the most difficult things that a person has to go through psychologically. Two of the respondents in the study not only lost a mother or a father but the life that they had when their parents were alive. Delfi, a 21-year-old Bengali girl from West Bengal shared how she ended up in a Children's Home in Shillong. *"My parents died in a car accident. I am their only child.they had run away from their families in Bhubaneswar because of some problems and gotten married. Hence, I am actually from Orissa, because of which I don't have any relatives here."*

¹²Report on 'women and adequate housing' by the UN Special Rapporteur on adequate on housing, Miloon Kothari, E/CN.4/2005/43, 25 February 2005

Homelessness, as mentioned earlier, violates the basic of a person. In a study conducted in San Francisco, California, 'sexual and physical assaults are common experiences for homeless and marginally housed persons.' (No Door to Lock, 2003) This was reaffirmed through the course of this research study where it was found that the women living in shelters homes were those who had faced some form of violence at home (marital or natal families). During a focus group discussion (FGD) with female injecting drug users, the latter shared that those of them who are homeless and live on the streets, face an onslaught of sexual and physical violence. One of the participants said: "the risk is for those of us living on the streets; for women who are homeless there is always a possibility of getting raped and being taken advantage of by men who are drunk..... They see a girl living on the street as an opportunity to rape".

E. THE HISTORY OF ALTERNATE SAFE SPACES/ SHELTER HOMES IN MEGHALAYA

According to the Oxford Dictionary, 'shelter' means 'A place giving temporary protection from bad weather or danger' For the purpose of this research, shelter homes are defined as spaces that provide shelter (temporary or permanent) and food specifically to women. These may be state-run or financed, run in partnership with NGOs, faith-based, run by NGOs and also alternate spaces created by different women's rights organisations.

Since the creation of the state of Meghalaya in 1972, there have been no Shelter Homes¹³ specifically for women in distress until mid-2018, when two Swadhar Greh Homes were sanctioned in two districts of Meghalaya – Nongstoin in West Khasi Hills District and Shillong in East Khasi Hills District. These shelter homes are run by NGOs, namely Women's Social Welfare organisation in New Nongstoin and Reach Shillong Ministries in Shillong.

For decades Meghalaya has been providing shelter to the women in difficult circumstances in Homes for Children, Girls Shelter Homes, safe spaces run by missionaries, temporary spaces provided by NGOs that are service providers under Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2015, NGO offices, hospitals, mental hospitals etc. Many survivors of violence have shared that they would often choose to find alternate spaces in homes of friends or relatives when there is lack safe space at home or in situations where they are forced to be homeless. One of the women interviewed shared,

¹³Shelter homes are defined spaces that provide shelter (temporary or permanent) and food specifically to women. These may be state-run or financed, run in partnership with NGOs, faith-based, run by NGOs and also alternate spaces created by different women's rights organisations

“Yes, I have experienced being homeless when I separated from my husband. My daughter and I got help from my friend who has a house and we stayed with her.”

Dr A. K. Nongkynrih, a well-known Sociologist in the state of Meghalaya, in his interview for this study said, *“In the Khasi society where the institution of family and kinship is still strong, the need for shelter homes has hardly come to the mind of the people. This is because the people are still bound by the family ethics and the fear of being disowned or excommunicated from the clan plays an important role.”*

The Joint Director of the Directorate of Social Welfare, Government of Meghalaya, Ms Sandra Ryinga, during an interview, said, *“There was no need for shelter homes in the past, because of the customs and cultural practices in our society, where a woman is always taken care of by her family and clan.”*

During an interaction with an activist, Ms. Hasina Kharbhih, Chairperson of the Impulse NGO Network, she shared that in 2006 the Directorate of Social Welfare, (GOM), had created a space for girls and young women in the Girls Observation Home. They were rescued from a human trafficking racket as a response to the need of the hour. The Directorate of Social Welfare, however, had no documentation on the said space created. Since there were no shelter homes specifically for women in the state, women in need of shelter are accommodated temporarily in other alternate spaces mentioned below.

Timeline of Alternate Safe Space/ Shelter Homes for Women in Meghalaya



F. ALTERNATIVE SAFE SPACES¹⁴

MIMHANS: A Hospital Turned Into a Shelter Home

According to a report in The Shillong Times on 25th July, 2016, at least 45 inmates (25 males and 20 females) of the State-run Meghalaya Institute of Mental Health and Neurological Sciences (MIMHANS) at Lawmali, Pasteur Hills, Shillong, were due to be discharged. But they were allowed to stay longer since they were homeless. Since the State government does not have any shelter homes for the homeless, MIMHANS has now become a safe haven for them. Subsequently, the Police too continue to send homeless people to the hospital. (Reporter, 2016).

Meghalaya Hindu Mission Children's Home

The Meghalaya Hindu Mission runs a children's home under the Integrated Child Protection Scheme of the Social Welfare Department. This children's home is currently housing 4 women above the age of 18 years in their After-Care Programme. Some of these women have crossed the age of 21 years and are worried as to where they will go after they leave the Hindu Mission Home.



Figure 2 Meghalaya Hindu Mission Children's Home



Figure 3 Dormitory Area

Shelter Home for Women and Children, Shillong: This is a shelter home for children run by Integrated Child Protection Scheme, Directorate of Social Welfare, Government of Meghalaya under the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015. Women have been sent to this Shelter Home as there were no Shelter Homes specifically for women in Meghalaya. One of the government officials, who is a Protection

¹⁴In Meghalaya there were no institutions that were specifically catering to provide shelter to women who are in distress until 2018. For the purpose of the study Safe Spaces has been defined as any space formal or informal institutions that provide shelter to women in distress.

Officer, said that as long as the name of the Home has the word 'Women' she will continue to refer women to this Home.

North East India Mission Association (NEIMA) After Care: North East India Mission Association (NEIMA) is an organization which looks after the welfare of orphans and the under-privileged. It was established on 19th February, 2011 at Laitmynreng, Pynursla. NEIMA also runs an 'After-Care' programme for girls who have left the children's home and have crossed 18 years of age under the Integrated Child Protection Scheme. Their main aim is to educate children and make them self-sufficient until adolescence. They also provide vocational training such as tailoring, embroidery and use of macramé thread to make bags, flowers, etc to the girls of 10 years and above since 1st September, 2015.



Figure 4 NEIMA After Care (outside)



Figure 5 After Care Bedroom

Ferrando Transit Shelter Home, Shillong

Ferrando Transit Shelter Home was established in 2007 and is run by Jaan Foundation in collaboration with Missionary Sisters of Mary Help of Christians. It provides care and protection to women and children who suffer extreme form of neglect and violence. In recent years, the implementing agencies have been wanting to make this space an exclusive home for children. They however have found this idea cumbersome and difficult as they have to provide shelter to women as well.

Bombay Teen Challenge, Shillong

Bombay Teen Challenge is a Mumbai based NGO that has been fighting sex trafficking in the red light districts of Mumbai. It established a branch in Shillong in 2016 and has been housing young women and children in difficult circumstances since.

Ganesh Das Government Maternal Child Health Hospital, Shillong

The hospital has housed patients who need a safe shelter even when the patient no longer requires hospitalisation. This has led to operational difficulties for the hospital, as they have limited beds and facilities. Ganesh Das Hospital is also one of the first hospitals in Meghalaya that has an integrated support centre for women who face violence. The centre is called Iohlynti and has been adopted by the Directorate of Social Welfare as the One Stop Centre for East Khasi Hills District, since June 2016. The centre provides counselling and assistance to women in filing of legal procedures. The centre is still working toward building a space, within the hospital, to provide temporary shelter for women.

NGO Offices and Drop-in Centres: NGOs have frequently been used as alternate safe spaces for women who are homeless. Their drop-in centres have often been used for women to rest, cook meals and to maintain hygiene. The social workers working with these groups have expressed an immediate need to have Shelter Homes for women as many of their beneficiaries are homeless.

Shillong Municipal Board - Night Shelter Home: The Night Shelter of the Shillong Municipal Board was inaugurated in 2012. It is funded by the Housing and Urban Development Corporation Limited (HUDCO). The main aim of this Night Shelter is to provide shelter for homeless people i.e., both male and female from 7 pm to 7 am. The Night Shelter does not have any specific duration for the beneficiary to stay. Persons accessing the shelter have to enter their name in a register, provide a passport size photograph and their basic personal information. The facilities available at the shelter are a bed and sanitation facilities. In 2012, there were nine occupants wherein eight were male and one was female. At present, there is only 1 male occupant residing at this place.



Figure 4 Night Shelter Home



Figure 5 Sleeping Area

G. FIRST TWO SHELTER HOMES FOR WOMEN IN MEGHALAYA

Swadhar Greh Home, Reach Shillong Ministries, Laitkor Kynton U Mon

The Swadhar Greh Home in Laitkor Kynton U Mon, approximately 13 kms away from Shillong was sanctioned by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India in East Khasi Hills district in 2018. It was inaugurated on 10th of December 2018. The Shelter Home is run by Reach Shillong Ministries and the home had only one woman resident. However, the team was not given permission to interview this woman.



Figure 6 Sleeping Area



Figure 7 Kitchen Area

Shelter home for women opens in Laitkor

By Our Reporter

SHILLONG: Reach Shillong Ministries officially opened 'Swadhar Greh - a home for women in difficult circumstances' at Laitkor Kynton U Mon in a programme held on Monday.

Chairperson of the Meghalaya State Women's Commission T Phanbuh inaugurated the home in the presence of I Tariang, Asst Director, Social Welfare Dept, Government of Meghalaya, C Lyngdoh, DSP East Khasi Hills District, Rev E L Khar-

mawphlang, village headmen and other guests.

Children from the Lawei Baphyrnai Children's Home for girls also attended the programme.

In her address to the gathering, T Phanbuh congratulated the ministry for taking such an initiative.

"This is a dream come true for the state particularly the East Hills District as now the district has a shelter home for women," said Phanbuh.

She also called upon the ministry to continue to render their services to the needy.

Swadhar Greh Home, Women’s Social Welfare organisation, New Nongstoin

The Swadhar Greh Home in New Nongstoin was sanctioned by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India in West Khasi Hills district in 2018 through the Social Welfare Department of Meghalaya. The Shelter Home is run by Women’s Social Welfare organisation, New Nongstoin.¹⁵ The Shelter Homes have a resident superintendent, a counsellor, an office assistant, a medical doctor and two support staffs but only one women resident. However, the team was not allowed to interview the woman here as well.



Figure 9 Sleeping Area



Figure 10 Office Area



Figure 11 Meghalaya map indicating safe spaces for women and Shelter Homes in Meghalaya state

¹⁵Refer to Annexure X and XI

H. CURRENT CENTRAL AND STATE SCHEMES AND LEGISLATION FOR SHELTER FOR WOMEN

SWADHAR GREH

In Meghalaya, the Swadhar Greh scheme was introduced in mid-2018 by the Directorate of Social Welfare through the Ministry of Women and Child Development. This scheme is meant for women above 18 years of age who are of the following categories: Widow Survivors of Natural Disaster, Women Affected by HIV/AIDS, Women Prisoners released from jails, Victims of Domestic Violence, Trafficked Women/ Girls rescued or escaped from brothels.

It aims at providing aid to women and girls who are homeless due to family discord, crime, violence, mental stress, social ostracism or are being forced into prostitution and are in mortal danger.

This scheme also aims to provide shelter, food, clothing, access to health facilities, economic and social security, legal aid and guidance, emotional support, counselling and vocational training for the women of difficult circumstances and who are in need of institutional support for rehabilitation so that they are able to lead a life of dignity and are able to reintegrate with family/society.

The implementation of this scheme can be done through NGOs working in the field of Women/Social Welfare registered under the Indian Societies Registration Act, 1860 or relevant state Act ("Ministry of women and Child Development GOI", 2017).

So far in Meghalaya merely two homes have been set up under this scheme. Both the homes were set up in mid-2018 however, only one has been officially inaugurated. Our researcher was able to visit these homes before the close of the study. One of the homes had all the necessary amenities but lacked outside space and is currently housing one resident. In the other home, the facilities available were excellent and fulfilled all requirements of a potential resident but currently houses one resident. Post this study, a follow up with these homes will be done in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the Swadhar Greh scheme in Meghalaya having been given enough time for full-fledged operation.

ONE STOP CENTRES, (OSC)

The Government of Meghalaya has adopted the OSC – Sakhi scheme initiated by the Ministry of Women and Child Development. Iohlynti became the first centre in June 2016 when the government adopted it as a One Stop Centre. “Iohlynti” is a Khasi word meaning “the way”. The first hospital-based Support Centre for Women in North East India was set up on the 28th of November, 2011 at Civil Hospital by North East Network, Meghalaya. It had been a long-time vision of NEN as part of its endeavour to counter Violence Against Women and on 26th of June, 2016, the centre was formally adopted as the One Stop Centre (OSC) of East Khasi Hills District as a joint initiative with the Department of Social Welfare and the Department of Health & Family Welfare in Ganesh Das Hospital. Consequently, NEN, the Department of Social Welfare and the Department of Health and Family Welfare signed a MOU with clear cut roles and responsibilities for each party.

The Government of Meghalaya has also opened another OSC in West Garo Hills district. The staff from both the centres have been trained in feminist counselling and are able to effectively assist women in need of protection. However, constraint of funds for effective functioning has impeded the performance of these centres. The Centre in Shillong is still functioning merely for 7-8 hours a day as opposed to 24x7 as envisioned in the scheme. This centre also does not provide temporary shelter to women as it was supposed to, due to the fact that it is housed in a two-room space at the hospital. There is an urgent need for the OSC to have a permanent location with all amenities as provided in the Guidelines of the Ministry. The Centre in West Garo Hills does provide temporary shelter to women but sometimes remains closed. Much still needs to be done for institutionalising these centres by the Department of Health and for violence against women to be recognised as a public health issue.



Figure 12 One Stop Centre, Tura



Figure 13 Sleeping Area

THE PROTECTION OF WOMEN FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ACT, 2005

This Act recognises the right of a woman to live in a violent free home. Prior to 2005, for cases of domestic violence under the civil law, a married woman could only initiate proceedings for divorce or judicial separation. This failed to provide her with any immediate relief or protection. The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 addressed this shortcoming among others.

According to the study conducted by National Family Health Survey- 4¹⁶, 27 percent of women from the age 15-49 years have experienced physical violence and 4 percent have experienced sexual violence. In all, 28 percent of women in Meghalaya have experienced physical or sexual violence. Among those who have experienced physical violence since age 15, the most common perpetrator among married women were the husbands.

Type of Violence	Number of Cases
Domestic Violence	404 cases
Rape	47 cases
Other of crimes against women	230 cases

Table D : Cases registered by lohlynti One Stop Centre from 2011- October 2018

lohlynti Support Centre for Women, has registered 404 cases of domestic violence from November 2011 till date. In Meghalaya, domestic violence is still seen as a family issue and most women do not report their cases. Many such cases are either settled by the family/clan or through the Dorbar Shnong (Traditional Local Governing Body). North East Network, in its work on domestic violence, has seen that women mostly want to share their stories of abuse but not take any legal action, as they fear stigma from the family and community. Women who have had the courage to leave their violent homes have been successful in claiming maintenance for their children through the Meghalaya State Legal Services Authority through lohlynti. In recent years, it has been seen from cases registered at lohlynti that women are also taking recourse to the PWDVA and filing domestic violence reports through the Protection Officers.

¹⁶<http://rchiips.org/nfhs/NFHS-4Reports/Meghalaya.pdf>

I. BUDGETS: THEN AND NOW¹⁷

There has been a considerable decrease in allocations of funds for women's programmes such as the National Mission for Empowerment of Women, One Stop Centre Scheme and Swadhar Greh. The Schemes have a cost sharing pattern of 60:40 between the Central Government and the States/UTs except in North Eastern and Special Category States where the cost sharing ratio is 90:10.

Amount released in 2013-14	Amount released in 2014-15	Amount released in 2015-16	Amount released in 2016-17	Amount released in 2017-18
Information not available	Information not available	Information not available	16.89	Information not available

Table E: Funds released in the Meghalaya State for SRCW between 2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16 & 2016-17 (in lakh)

Financial Year	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Amount released in	13.19	NIL	7.75
Expenditure Statement	5.94	9.68	5.28

Table F: Funds released in Meghalaya for Iohlynti- One Stop Centre in between 2016-17, 2017-18 & 2018-19 (in lakh)

In Meghalaya the Swadhar Greh Scheme was first implemented in 2018

Total Cost of one Swadhar Greh	15.98
Amount released in FY 2017-18 to 2018 - 2019	
Shillong	4.85
Nongstoin	4.85

Table G: Funds released in the Meghalaya State for the Swadhar Greh 2017-18 (in lakh)

The Directorate of Social Welfare gives financial assistance to Ferrando Transit Shelter Home to provide assistance for women in difficult circumstances. There has been a proposed increase in amount for the next financial year, which is yet to be approved.¹⁸

¹⁷Annexure

Financial Year	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18
Amount released	5	5	5

Table H: Funds released to Ferrando Transit Shelter Home, Shillong (in lakh)

Amount released in 2012-13	Amount released in 2013-14	Amount released in 2014-15	Amount released in 2015-16	Amount released in 2016-17	Amount released in 2017-18
30	30	30	30	35	35

Table I: Funds released to Service providers under PWDV Act, 2005, in Meghalaya (in lakh)

J. GOALPOSTS OF THIS RESEARCH

This research attempted to identify and understand the fundamental nature of the part played by various stakeholders in addressing and redressing violence against women, assisting women in difficult circumstances, and understanding the need for women to have a safe space/shelter. The research has taken a feminist action-oriented approach to reach this goal.

This research study strives to enrich the existing body of knowledge around women that live in/approach Shelter Homes so as to:

- Re-imagine Shelter Homes as per feminist ideas
- Redefine homelessness as a socio-political process
- Intervene in the representation of women living in Shelter Homes as agents who engage in the process of knowledge production and change (not deviants/victims)

¹⁸¹⁸Data was receive through the office of the Directorate of Social Welfare, Government of Meghalaya, 2018

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

A. FEMINIST RESEARCH

Women's voices were never taken to be as significant as their male counterparts. Their narratives have often been used merely as data that has no quality. It was only with the emergence of feminist research epistemology and methodology that importance has been given to social context, interactions and social relations. Feminists criticized traditional quantitative research in which people are transformed into 'subjects-like subjects' (Unger, 1983) with the interest and concerns of research participants completely subordinated to those of the researcher (Campbell & Schram, 1995)

According to Depner, the qualitative method is more appropriate for feminist research as it is best suited to reveal and understand experiences of women in contemporary society and absolutely address their needs by allowing subjective knowledge. (Dapner, 1981)¹⁹ The research study is a qualitative research which tries to capture the essence of women's experiences of violence and their journey through their narratives. No one could better explain her experience than the woman herself. This research study has attempted to give women a safe space to express themselves and relive their experiences with utmost respect.

Participants

In-depth Interviews (IDI) with 16 women survivors of violence falling in the three groups were conducted:

- i. women who were current residents in the Shelter Homes²⁰ during the course of the study,
- ii. women who had stayed in Shelter Homes and
- iii. women who needed shelter but chose not to go to Shelter Homes.

¹⁹Dapner, C. (1981). *Towards the further development of feminist psychology*. Boston: Association for women Psychology

²⁰For the purpose of this research, shelter homes are defined spaces that provide shelter (temporary or permanent) and food specifically to women. These maybe state run or financed, run in partnership with NGOs, faith-based, run by NGOs and also alternate spaces created by different women's rights organisations

Age	Marital Status	Class	Caste/ Tribe	Religion	Employment Status
18 to 29 yo – 12	Never married-4	Lower Income – 15	Khasi and Jaintia – 10	Christians - 8	Unemployed - 10
3- to 40 yo – 3	Married/ Living in- 4	Middle Class- 1	General (Nepali) – 3	Hindu - 6	Employed (Beautician, FSW, Tutor, Domestic worker) – 6
60 and above yo– 1	Separated- 7 Widowed- 1		General (Bengali) - 3	None- 2	

Table J: Background of IDI participants

Shelter Home/ Alternate safe spaces that gave access to interview its residents:

- North East India Mission Association (NEIMA), After Care, Pynursla
- Meghalaya Hindu Mission, Shillong
- Children and women Shelter Home, Lawsohtun

Shelter Home/ Alternate safe spaces visited:

- VHAM FIDU Drop-in centre, Shillong
- Lamjingshai Drop-in centre, Shillong
- Reach Shillong Ministries, Drop- in Centre Shillong
- Society for Urban and Rural Empowerment (SURE), Jowai
- Shillong Municipal Board, Night Shelter Home, Shillong
- North East India Mission Association (NEIMA), Pynursla
- Ferrando Transit Shelter Home, Shillong
- Children and Women Shelter Home, Social Welfare Department, Govt. Meghalaya
- Sisters of Charity Mercy Home, Shillong
- Missionaries of Charity, Shanti Bhavan, Shillong

- Meghalaya Hindu Mission, Shillong
- Swadhar Greh Home, Women's Social Welfare Organisation, New Nongstoin
- Missionaries of Charity, Tura
- Sakhi One Stop Centre, Tura
- Iohlynti One Stop Centre, Shillong

B. TOOLS AND TRAINING

Tools

The tools used for data collection was designed by the core research team based in Delhi, headed by Dr Amrita Nandi along with Ms. Ananya Basu and Ms. Surabhi Tandon Mehrotra. After extensive research and pilot testing of the tools, the final tools were decided in order to get variant data that would enrich this study in a feminist perspective.

- In-depth Interview Guide
- Key Informers Interview Guide
- Focus Group Discussion
- Consent Forms for Survivors of Violence
- Consent Forms for Key Informers

In-depth Interview Guide – This tool was used for documenting the experience of women who have stayed in Shelter Homes or alternate safe space, women who were current residents in Shelter Homes and alternate safe spaces during the course of the study and the women who needed shelter but chose not to go to Shelter Homes. It was used to document and understand the individual experiences of the women in their circumstances.

Key Informers Interview Guide– This tool was used to document and understand the background, perspectives and professional knowledge of the various stakeholders who provide services to victims of gender based violence and shelter to women in difficult circumstances.

Focus Group Discussions– This tool was used to gather information about the experience of coping with violence and homelessness from groups of female sex workers, transgender community members, survivors of domestic violence, female injecting drug users and counsellors.

Consent Forms for Survivors of Violence and Key Informers– Receiving consent and maintaining the confidentiality of our participants were the most important ethical practices that were maintained throughout the process of this research study.

Training

At the nascent stage of the study, the NEN team underwent an intensive training on Feminist Research Methodology and Ethical concerns in collecting data. Halfway through the research study, the core team had a meeting with all the participating state research teams where we took stock of the progress made. At the near end of the research study, there was a final review meeting of the team with the research teams of the five participating states.

- North East Team Training on Feminist Social Action Research on January 29 -31, 2018, Guwahati
- Research Stocktaking Meeting on June 19 -20, 2018, New Delhi
- Report Review Meeting on October 26 – 27, 2018, Bangalore



Figure 14 Feminist Social Action Research Training, Guwahati for North East Network by the Central Research Team

C. DATA COLLECTION AND COLLECTORS

North East Network (NEN), Meghalaya started the scoping study on November 1, 2017. The scoping was done through face-to-face interviews, telephonic conversation and emails. The team communicated with the Office of the Directorate of Social Welfare to gather information on the number of Shelter Homes for women in the State and the contact details of the DSWOs (District Social Welfare Officers) of all districts (11). The DSWOs were contacted to get information on the Shelter Homes for women present in their respective district and also on the cases they received that required shelter. The team also visited various Shelter Homes located in Shillong, where shelters are provided for women. Other stakeholders such as the Police, social workers and OSC (One Stop Centre) staff were also contacted for the scoping.

Pilot Testing of the tools:

- Conducted 1 Key Informer Interview with Adv. Rebina Subba
- Conducted 1 In-depth Interview with a survivor of violence who have stayed in a Shelter Home

Scoping for the study began in October 2017, followed by Primary Data Collection which began on 1st of April 2018, and ended on 31st of July, 2018. After a review of the first draft of the report, there was a second round of secondary data collection. The research team was able to visit twelve homes and facilities in various districts in Meghalaya. Access to interact with women was given only in 4 homes namely, NEIMA After Care, Pynursla, Meghalaya Hindu Mission, Shillong, Shelter Home for Women and Children, Lawsohtun, Shillong and Swadhar Greh Shelter Home, Nongstoin.

D. ACTIONS TAKEN

During data collection, NEN was able to engage with various stakeholders that play an important role either directly or indirectly in supporting women who have faced violence and homelessness. Awareness was created amongst the stakeholders on the issues that have resulted from not having a Shelter Home in the state of Meghalaya. Engaging with Government stakeholders of various departments from the Directorate of Social Welfare, Meghalaya Health Department, Meghalaya Police, Meghalaya State Legal Service Authority and the Meghalaya State Commission for Women created a linkage and a two-way channel for communication on the issue of women and homelessness.

Communicating and engaging with women from different walks of life for the purpose of this research helped the NEN team understand the intensity of suffering from violence and homelessness that the women in Meghalaya face. For these women, the engagements have built their confidence in seeking help and support. It has helped in creating an informal support system for them that has enabled them to feel comfortable in talking of their hardships.

Upholding ethical responsibility throughout the research was of utmost importance to the members of North East Network. Consent was taken from each participant who shared her story in trust. Confidentiality was maintained and all participants have been given pseudonyms for the purpose of this research study.

During the course of this study, many cases were being referred to organisations through the network that was built and this is seen as a success to the research team's efforts.

For the purpose of this research study:

In-depth Interviews were conducted with sixteen women:

- Ten women who are current residents of alternate safe spaces/homes
- Two women were residents of a home in the past
- Four women who have faced violence but never stayed/did not go to a home

Fifteen Key Informer Interviews were conducted with Government Officials, Social Workers/ Activists, Police Officers and Doctors

Focus Group Discussions was conducted with five groups:

- Female Sex Workers
- Injecting Drug Users
- Transgender community
- Women Survivors of Violence
- Counselors

E. CHALLENGES/ LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- It was difficult for the team to meet women who stayed at Shelter Homes as there were no Shelter Homes specifically for women in the State of Meghalaya. Therefore, the team had to visit alternate safe spaces and interview residents of such institutions.
- Limited data about the women who have availed shelter in institutions was available from existing safe spaces that were providing shelter for women in the state.
- Delay by various government departments in providing necessary information required for the study.
- The NEN team could not gain access to talk to the residents of a particular Shelter Home as the Director of the home said that the residents would not be able to respond to the researchers' questions.
- The Directorate of Social Welfare Department, Meghalaya was unable to provide the total number of Domestic Violence cases registered under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 with the Protection Officers in Meghalaya.
- The District Social Welfare Officers of many districts were unwilling to participate in the study, stating that they were very busy.
- Data on budgets and expenditure of various state and central programmes were not easily available.
- Identification of potential participants for in-depth Interviews was a challenge as no data was available with service providers of women in difficult circumstances.
- Lack of follow up on women's cases and documentation of information by various service providers and organisations.
- Social instability in the State of Meghalaya from 31stMay, 2018 to mid-June 2018, have caused us to lose a potential respondent for the study. Internet being debarred in the state from 1st to 13thJune, 2018 hampered communication and work.
- Fieldwork in Garo Hills was not successful due to language barrier and lack of networks in the districts.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS

A. FORMS OF VIOLENCE

The United Nations defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."

In Meghalaya, there has been an alarming increase in cases of violence against women. In 2016, the Meghalaya Police reported 398 cases and in 2017, this rose to 594 cases of crimes against women. Iohlynti, the One Stop Centre, which is a support centre for women jointly run by North East Network, the Department of Health and the Department of Social Welfare, Government of Meghalaya has registered a total of 1008 cases of violence from its inception in 2011 to February 2019.

During the study, the participants spoke of the following forms of violence that they faced:

Domestic Violence

The UN CEDAW in Article 14 of its General Recommendation No. 19 (1992) defines domestic violence (DV) as: 'Family violence is one of the most insidious forms of violence against women. It is prevalent in all societies. Within family relationships women of all ages are subjected to violence of all kinds, including battering, rape, other forms of sexual assault, mental and other forms of violence, which are perpetuated by traditional attitudes. These forms of violence put women's health at risk and impair their ability to participate in family life and public life on a basis of equality.'

Domestic Violence in Meghalaya is seen as a family matter, something that can be solved within the family and hence reporting against one's family member becomes a taboo and against the code of conduct of the Khasi society expressed in the phrase '*lah sang dakiew inglie hing saw*'.

The National Family Health Survey- 4 reported that over one-quarter of women in Meghalaya between the age group of 15-49 years have experienced physical or sexual violence. Carona, a 19

year-old young Bengali woman shared, "my mother died of cancer after which I began staying with my father. After 2-3 months he began to torture my younger sister and me. He used to beat us I could not tolerate it". Emily shared "He beat me up for another woman... I waited for my husband to come to the hospital but he did not" she said in a low voice. Hanna, a 28-year-old Khasi lady shared that her husband, "...mistreated me. He even threw me out of the house many times". Bethel shared "I was married to my husband for 8 to 9 years... we are separated now, it's been 4 to 5 months now.... because he got married to another woman."

The NFHS – 4 reports that one in 250 women who have ever been pregnant has experienced physical violence during one or more of their pregnancies. Cora spoke about the abuse she faced from her husband, "I have struggled a lot... especially when I was pregnant with my first child– That's when I was abused badly... I would go and stay at my neighbour's house. I did so continuously for 9 months. Then I went back home but I thought I would die and everyone else thought so to".

Twenty-four percent of married women have reported having been slapped by their husbands and three to eight per cent report being pushed, shaken, or having something thrown at them. In addition to this they reported instances of having their arm twisted or hair pulled; being punched; or being kicked, dragged, or beaten up. ((NFHS-4), 2015-16). Betty a 25-year-old Khasi woman said..." he cursed, hit and scolded me. There have been times when he would beat me 3-4 times and then one day he even hit our son and chased me out. I sat on the roadside that night thinking about where I was going to go". Emily a 34-year-old Nepali girl said, "My husband who is in jail is a devil.... He openly said that he will rape my mother...he directly came and asked me to sleep with him. I denied him. That day my husband cut me with a knife...." look at these big scars" she showed the researcher.

A 32-year-old Jaintia woman called Jane shared, "I told my husband to save some money for medicine for our children. On hearing that he got angry and he slapped me... I was about to leave. He hit me so hard that I just ran away to my friend's house."

The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005, (PWDVA) lays out the forms of domestic violence and clearly defines Physical abuse, Sexual abuse, Verbal and Emotional abuse, and Economic abuse. IPC Section 498A has made matrimonial cruelty by husband or husband's relatives cognizable, non-bailable and a non-compoundable offence. Cora a 29-year-old Nepali woman shared about her experience of abuse from her in-laws, "I found out that I had contracted TB. I did not get proper food to eat... if I don't work who will give me food?..... The days passed like that with grief and

wretchedness." Fanny a 23-year-old Khasi woman shared *"I separated with my husband because my mother-in-law was not happy with me. I am chased like a dog when I want to see my son by my mother-in-law and husband... personally; I really felt that I didn't stay there as a daughter-in-law but as a maidservant."*

Case Study

Emily is a 30-year-old Nepali woman and is separated from her husband for five years. She has an adolescent daughter who is studying in school. She lives with her mother and daughter. She works in a beauty parlour and runs her home with the earnings. Her husband is an alcoholic and was physically abusive. He once cut her with a knife resulting in her being hospitalised for three days. A friend helped her file an FIR against the husband and he was put in jail for 6 months. This was the fourth FIR filed against her husband. The previous three FIRs were not taken seriously enough by people of her community as they felt that she deserved the domestic violence she faced because of the work she was in and the way she dressed. She was asked to forgive her husband. Post previous arrests, he would continue to physically and sexually torture her and demand money from her. She continues to be stigmatised by her community. She has been threatened by her husband that once he is out of jail, he will disfigure her by throwing acid on her. She wants to stay in a shelter home where she can be safe with her daughter and be around other women who are understanding and supportive.

The National Family Health Survey – 4 reported that thirty-seven percent of women believe it is justifiable for a husband to beat his wife under some circumstances. Forty percent of men feel that a husband is justified to beat his wife for one or more reasons.

Sexual Violence

The World Report on Violence and Health (Heise & Garcia-Moreno, 2002; Jewkes, Sen & Garcia-Moreno, 2002) defines intimate partner violence and sexual violence as follows:

Intimate partner violence – *behaviour within an intimate relationship that causes physical, sexual or psychological harm, including acts of physical aggression, sexual coercion, psychological abuse and controlling behaviours.* This definition covers violence by both current and former spouses and partners.

Sexual violence – *any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any*

person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting including but not limited to home and work.

These definitions were adopted by World Health Organization in their report on Preventing Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence against Women – 2010.

Rape is not always the outcome of an intense or obsessive desire for sexual gratification but mostly men employing sexual violence or rape as a tool to exercise their control over women and maintain their positions of power. These men, motivated by the combination of power and anger especially in a patriarchal society prove their masculinity by exerting sexual violence over women (Goonesekere 2004: 111).

In India, sexual violence is legally defined in the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013, however, it does not recognize marital rape as a crime. Furthermore, sexual violence within marriage is taken into consideration only in the scope of domestic violence for seeking legal remedies under the Section 498A of the IPC and the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA), 2005. The PWDVA defines sexual abuse to include “any conduct of a sexual nature that abuses, humiliates, degrades, or otherwise violates the dignity of a woman.”

Carona shared that her father also sexually abused her. *"he started to sexually harass me. He used to touch my body and I never felt good."*

Emily narrated *"he covered my mouth and just pulled me ... Had he asked me out of love I would have accepted him willingly- But that night it was too much- it was like a rape... I could not cry and felt that I was going to die,he abused me so badly. But I didn't tell anyone at home- Nor did I want to speak to anyone as my whole body hurt. I was in so much pain."*

Desertion as violence

Some narratives in the study involved instances where women were either abandoned or deserted by their families. Such cases left the women vulnerable to violence as they had nowhere to go, no family member to turn to and had to live in the streets. In some cases, the women were identified by community members who helped them in accessing temporary shelter.

Gigi a 19-year-old Khasi-Nepali woman said that *"my father sold my elder sister and me to our stepmother"* in a trembling voice.

Kara a 60-year-old Bengali widow, who has been living in a Shelter Home for children, was abandoned by her only daughter *"When I reached home, I found that the house that we used to live in was abandoned by my daughter. She vacated my house, taking all my things from my house...My daughter also added that she cannot take me with her as her husband would not allow it. Till today she has not come back to pick me up."*

Trafficking

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) reported that the states of Manipur, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh were the "source" states in the North East from where children as young as five-year-old were trafficked in the name of free education. As per the National Crime Records Bureau 2015, Meghalaya ranks second in cases of human trafficking in the north east after Assam.

Amy, a 21-year-old woman shared her experience of violence which led to her leaving home and getting involved in commercial sex work as a source of livelihood. She said, *"I left from there and stayed at my friend's house and it was during that period that I started doing this work. She continued expressing her problems about her home with her mother and said "I ran away to Delhi and did this same work. I was told lies that they will give 38000/40000 Rupees but no one paid. I came back here again to do the same thing. I would stay anywhere and almost lost my mind"* Amy then spoke about her meeting with a man whom she started living with for a couple of months. But because his family found out about her already having a child she was chased out. She was also a victim of moral policing, was beaten up and had her head shaved by the community members.²¹

Violence faced due to vulnerable lifestyle ²²

A study published in the Journal of Quantitative Criminology found that 'low self-control and risky lifestyles significantly predict violent victimization across each of the taxonomic groups identified in

²¹<http://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2017/sep/26/outrage-after-meghalaya-moral-police-assault-girls-cut-their-hair-1663189.html>

²² Vulnerable lifestyle – In the study a risky lifestyle is understood as a lifestyle that has high chances of exposure of women to situations and circumstances of being victimised and harmed by external social forces.

the data, suggesting that these causal processes are universal rather than unique to any particular gendered pathway.'(Jillian J. Turanovic, Jun 1 2015)

The women interviewed had not only faced domestic violence but multiple types of violence. Economic, physical, verbal and mental abuse are the most prevalent amongst women. The violent experiences have put them in circumstances where they need shelter and safe spaces for themselves and their children.

During a focus group discussion with female sex workers they shared that many of them, because of the profession they have chosen and the life style they live put themselves in difficult situations every day.

A woman shared that one night while she was on her way home, she was attacked by local men as she could not give them the money that they demanded. Another woman from the same group shared that a youth group from her own community detained her once, beat her up with the objective to change her lifestyle by shaming her in public. These cases shared went unreported and when asked why that was so, they said that being women from a different community living in Shillong they do not have the support system they need. The Police have also never been very helpful in taking up their cases. A case worker also shared a story about a female sex worker who was ostracised from her locality because of her profession.

Johan Galtung in his article "Violence, Peace and Peace Research" (1969) defines Structural Violence as a form of violence wherein some social structure or some institution may harm people by preventing them to meet their basic needs.²³Through the stories shared by the women it is evident that they are facing violence from various social structures and institutions. Their choice of lifestyle and employment to meet their basic needs have made them vulnerable to violence. The increase of violence in the lives of women has been a pull factor in rendering them homeless which increases their need for alternate safe spaces. Social institutions meant to be support systems for women to live a dignified life have only contributed to their vulnerability of being homeless and victims of their circumstances.

²³Galtung Johan; Violence, Peace and Peace Research; Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 6, No. 3 (1969), pp. 167-191
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/422690>

Rape

The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013, came into force on February 3, 2013, following the outrage of the entire nation behind the homicidal gang rape that took place in New Delhi on the night of December 16, 2012, which led to the immediate reform in Rape Laws of the country. The amendment has enlarged the ambit of rape by making certain non-penetrative acts as offence amounting to rape.

The Meghalaya Police has recorded 190 cases of rape in 2016, 119 cases of rape in 2017 and 15 cases of rape from January to March 2018 filed under Section 376 IPC. Lara, a survivor, shared, *"...my brother raped me and threatened to kill me- so I left home"* Lara further said *"While I was working with a family in Sohra, the son of the family also raped me. He came to my room every night to rape me. When I told his parents, they did not believe me."* This is evidence of the hopeless situation that women find themselves in due to the complete indifference of society.

The interviews and discussions with all the women revealed the gravity of marital rape in Meghalaya even though they go unreported. The women prefer not to report such cases as they feel that the process of reporting to government institutions revictimized them. On similar lines, the Centre Manager of Iohlynti- the One Stop Centre said *"We refer cases to the Office of the Protection Officer where they reassess the cases and this further delays the process of providing support and assistance to the women and thus re-traumatizes her"*.

B. CONSEQUENCES OF CO-HABITATION AND EARLY MARRIAGE

Meghalaya is known to be among the few surviving societies to be following the matrilineal system (lineage is followed through the mother's line) in India. Cohabitation is another important feature of the Khasi, Jaintia and Garo community. Horton and Hunt define marriage as "the approved social pattern whereby two or more persons establish a family." In Meghalaya cohabitation is culturally accepted and practised. No religious ceremony or legal bond is required for a woman and man to be considered bound in an institution or unit and only the acceptance of the family and clan is required.

Another common feature that is seen across the tribes of Meghalaya is the practice of cohabitation. Consensual sexual relation or pregnancy out of a relationship leads to cohabitation of the two individuals with the knowledge of the immediate family members and clan. This practice is rampant amongst adolescents. In the NHFS- 4 report, 17percent of women in Meghalaya aged 20-24 years got married before the legal age of 18 and a total of 14 percent men aged 25-29 years got married

before the legal minimum age of 21. Among young women aged 15-19 years, 9 percent have already begun childbearing, that is, they have already had a live birth or were pregnant with their first child.

About 1 percent of women ages 15-16 years have started childbearing, but this proportion increases sharply to 14 per cent of women who are 18 years.(NFHS-4, 2017.)

The laws of the country have prohibited child marriage, but because of tradition and culture, they continue to be practised in many parts, Meghalaya being one of them. The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012, has also made it mandatory for cases of minor children involved in sexual relations to be reported. In Meghalaya this Act has led to a rise in reporting of POCSO cases and young women to be sent to Shelter Homes, when they are below 18 years of age and the accused perpetrator (boy below 18 years old) sent to Juveniles Home. Through the study, it was found that many of the participants' cohabitated before 18 years of age with consent as cohabitation before attaining majority is a common practice in the rural community. However, some participants shared how early cohabitation had altered their lives in negative ways.

Gigi, a 19-year-old young woman recalls, *"Then, I was about 16 - 17 years when I went for the checkup. Had I been 18 years above they would have allowed me to stay with my husband but I was below 18 years, and so they did not allow."*

Euri an 18-year-old young woman said *"I was 17 and I was not allowed to get married and go with him- instead they sent me to the children's home"*

Amy a 21-year-old woman said *"I was 18 years old, my child was very small and my husband and I had separated"*

The young women interviewed felt that it is not wrong to cohabit at an early age and that it was wrong to apprehend their partners under POCSO Act, for they did not feel that they were abused by their partners, as they consented to the sexual relationship out of love. It is in this aspect that the State of Meghalaya is facing a challenge in the implementation of the POCSO Act. Clauses of the Act are in contradiction with the customary practices of the people. In fact, the people believe that this law is leading to broken families and causing their sons to be treated as criminals instead of providing the youth and adolescents with proper sexuality education.

C. CHILDREN'S SHELTER HOMES AND CHILDREN'S HOME BEING MADE TO ACCOMMODATE ADULT FEMALE SURVIVOURS OF VIOLENCE

This study originally was set out to document and understand the experience of women survivors of violence in Shelter Homes. In Meghalaya this led to a different path, as the state did not have state/ NGO run Shelter Homes meant specifically for women until mid-2018. Women who are faced with difficult circumstances and need shelter are accommodated in Shelter Homes for children or in children's homes. This practice has posed as a hindrance to schemes and programmes meant specifically for children while not being able to extend care to women sufferers of violence. During conversations with the staff of various Shelter Homes and children's homes, they spoke about how they have had to manage the situation as far as possible. The presence of the women does pose as a problem when it comes to monthly ration of basic necessities and space. However, the Directorate of Social Welfare department of Meghalaya and its allied departments have an understanding of *managing* the situation until better solutions come along.

While interviewing women survivors who reside in these spaces, shared with children, they shared that the most inconvenient situation in these homes for them is privacy, lack of sleeping space, lack of vocational training, recreation and more importantly someone to talk to. Counselling services is another deficient service in these homes. This has been explored extensively in the chapter Convergence of Services.

D. CUSTODY VERSUS AUTONOMY

Entry:

In all Shelter Homes and alternate safe spaces that provide shelter to women, acceptance of a resident is subject to a referral from a state agency. The women residents who were interviewed for the study were referred through government agencies like the Protection Officers' Office, the Meghalaya State Commission for Women, Meghalaya Police or Child Welfare Committees. No women interviewed had come to these spaces on their own accord. During our interviews, the office bearers of these homes reaffirmed that they accept cases only when referred by state agencies or any other service provider recognised by the state.

Not being able to access these spaces by choice strips a woman of her own agency and poses as a hurdle to her empowerment and building of confidence to come out of the violent atmosphere that she

is subjected to. During emergencies, it becomes inconvenient for a woman to run to the doorstep of these homes to seek shelter and be denied.

Mobility:

Many women in the course of the research study have shared that they do not like staying in the Shelter Home because there, they lack the freedom to go in and out at their own free will, communicate with the outside world and in the homes cannot live the life they would if they lived at home despite the violence. Some women shared that it is very difficult for them to follow the redundant routine every day in the Shelter Homes. Young women living in the homes felt that they would like to go to the market once in a while or go out somewhere pleasant at times but they were not even allowed to be outside within the premises, without supervision. One resident said that she likes being in the home but only wishes she was allowed to go to work so that she could save some money to be able to start a new life for her and her children once she left the Shelter Home.

Kara, a 60-year-old woman who lives in the children's Shelter Home said *"I wish I was allowed to just go out for a walk, go to the temple and talk to my old friends. Here I sit the whole day alone. It makes me miss my grandchildren a lot."* Mobility in the existing Shelter Homes is restricted. The authorities believe in restricting mobility of the residents as it helps them in keeping track of the latter's whereabouts.

Thus, during the course of the research study, it was found that many women who had faced violence did not go to seek shelter in any institution or alternate safe space because it constricted their freedom and did not offer a space for social living.

Lack of secularism, especially in faith based homes:

In some of the safe spaces run by faith based institutions for Women in Meghalaya, a certain religion had to be accepted by the residents of the home. One of the homes for example, followed the Hindu religion and all its residents practiced Hinduism. In other government Shelter Homes for children, where women took shelter, they followed Christianity as the staffs who are in charge of the homes are Christians. When a non-Christian resident of the government Shelter Home was asked if it was mandatory for her to follow the practice, she said it was not. The residents in the After Care homes have to attend all the religious sessions and services that take place in the home. Hence, there were

a variety of experiences that adhering to a religion subjects the female residents of Shelter Homes to and in most cases, they seem uncomfortable if not imposing.

Anari, who stayed at a faith based home shared *“They made us pray four times a day, we were not allowed to dress the way we like or to apply lipstick. How do they expect us to change the way we are over night?”*

Faith-based safe spaces for women practice the religion the organization is under. A Shelter Home that is free from religious practices has been expressed as a need by the women participants.

Separation of the male child from the mother:

In the alternate spaces and Shelter Homes that women are currently residing, male children above 6 years of age are not allowed to reside along with their mothers. They are either moved to children’s homes or stay back at their own homes, if possible.

On this arrangement, a resident of one of the homes shared, *“My grandson is staying in the children’s home and I was told that they have sent him to school this year..... I get so tensed thinking constantly about my grandchildren as I miss them so much.”* Male children above 6 years of age are not allowed to live with their mothers in these spaces because these spaces are meant for female children and not specifically for male children. This has discouraged some women from coming to these spaces at all in times of need because they do not want to be separated from their children. This calls for an instantaneous need to have separate Shelter Homes for women that can cater to such issues.

Case Study

Amy, a 21-year-old FSW who was forced into prostitution since the age of 18 due to poverty and abandonment by her husband, looks after her younger siblings and also has a child of her own. She lived with her mother till her stepfather died, after which she had been forced to leave her child with mother and grandmother while she looked for work. She now makes about 500-1000 a day from local men. Previously, she was promised work in Delhi for 38000-40000 but she was not paid. She then came back to Shillong and fell ill. She however, does not want to stay in a shelter home because she has heard that there are too many restrictions and she wants to keep the freedom to work and visit her family.

Lack of Privacy and Confidentiality:

During the course of our interviews some of the women shared that they are not comfortable staying in a home because there is no privacy and confidentiality maintained by the supervising staff. In fact, there was a sense of regret in coming to the Shelter Homes. They shared that they were made to feel helpless and dependent there. Everyone in the home knows about each other's pasts and sometimes uses this information to tease each other. This has caused some of the residents a lot of hurt and pain. There is also no sense of consent in these homes. A woman, who has a new born child, complained that living in a crowded home made her uncomfortable as everyone touched and picked her child up whenever they wanted to without her consent. She said that no one respected her privacy and personal space.

Thus, there is more of a feeling of being in custody rather than a place of rehabilitation in these homes. One of the women who participated in the study had run away from a home because she felt captured and trapped in the home. 'Rights of a woman' and 'Choice of a woman' in Shelter Homes are often kept in the shadows of the rules and guidelines of these home, which lead to a loss of the true essence of 'shelter for women in difficult circumstances'

E. CONVERGENCE OF SERVICES

Counselling Services

During the course of the research study, the research team was able to have access to three children homes and Shelter Homes for children where women survivors were given a space for shelter. Out of the three homes, only the women in one of the After Care Home had access to regular counselling services. In the Government run Shelter Home for Children, the counsellor was available everyday but did not provide regular counselling to women. They are given a session only once during admission to the home. This is because the counsellor is professionally trained to counsel only children and has no experience in counselling women. As the superintendent of the home shared, *"if we find that the woman needs further investigation or further counselling, we refer the victim to lohlynti OSC or any specialized counsellor we know of who deals with women's issues."*

Shelter Home/ Alternate Safe Space	Qualification of Counsellor	Number of Counsellor
Meghalaya Hindu Mission – After Care, Shillong	Masters in Sociology (has undergone multiple counseling trainings)	Part Time - 1
NEIMA- After Care, Pynursla	M.A. Psychology, Bachelors in Divinity	Full Time – 1 Part Time – 1
Women and Children Shelter Home, Social Welfare Department	M.Sc. Counseling Psychology	Full Time – 1

Table K: Background of the Counsellors

The counsellor in another After Care Home, comes only on weekends to provide counselling services. In the first After Care Home, they also have a part-time male pastor who provides group counselling to the young women living in the home. Fara, one of the survivors currently living in the home, shared, *“a pastor comes to give counselling twice a week for girls from the Children’s Home and for us from the After Care Home and twice a week for the boys from the Children’s Home.”* Lara a woman from the same home also stated, *“he used to give counselling in a group, he talks about God like in the church.”* When Euri was asked about individual counselling services in the home, she said, *“I do not know. I have never received any individual counselling here.”*

Maintenance of confidentiality was also another shortfall in the group counselling services being provided in some of the homes. One of the participants went through a heartbreaking incident that was shared, without her consent, with everyone in the home. Gigi said *“we make mistakes but they should not disclose or spread our stories to everyone that we did this and that. What was done was done, it should have end there, it shouldn’t have been carried to other people.”*

Infrastructure

Lack of infrastructural provisions was evident in all the homes visited. One government-run Shelter Home for children, which accommodates women, had 10 beds which were shared between 19 residents. The residents included children, women and their infants. Fanny, a current resident said, *“I want to leave from here and stay in my own house so that I will be more peaceful. It is suffocating when it is crowded, and while some leave many come in their place”*. The other two homes visited

were After Care Homes. In one of the After Care Homes, the women had a separate structure from the children's home. Four young women shared one room along with the house mother and had a kitchen attached to their bedroom. The other After Care Home had a big dormitory sleeping space shared between the young women and the children.

Grievance Redressal Mechanism

Most of the women interviewed said that there was no grievance redressal mechanism in place. They often kept their grievances to themselves or went to the person in-charge. One woman shared that even if she did have grievances, she dared not speak about it to the in-charge out of fear of being reprimanded.

Recreational and vocational/ skill building opportunities:

There was only one home that had a training centre for residents. In all the other homes the residents had neither recreational nor vocational/skill building activities. The residents, finished their chores every day after which they would sit and chat with each other, till it was time for them to eat the next meal or go to bed. In one of the homes, the residents do not even have access to a television for recreation. Some women shared that they enjoy the peace and quiet they get at the Shelter Home however, others wished that they could learn or do something worthwhile. One woman said that because she has a lot of free time in her hands, she has a lot of time to think and worry about her family, which made her sad and depressed.

F. ROLE OF SERVICE PROVIDERS

Police – Women's issues only for the women Police

In Meghalaya, separate Women Police Stations were set up in 2009 to handle crimes against women and children. In a study conducted by North East Network "Rough Roads to Equality- Women Police in Meghalaya" revealed that Meghalaya was the third lowest state as far as women's representation in the police service was concerned. Officers from Ri-Bhoi district said in our conversation with them that there are only four women Police officers in the entire district, two stationed at Nongpoh Women Police Station, one at Umiam Police Outpost and one at the Byrnihat Police Outpost. The entire Ri-Bhoidistrict has only 5 women constables.

During a discussion with a Women Police Inspector of Women Police Station Tura, West Garo Hills district, it came up that all the seven Police Stations in Tura register cases of women in the Women Police Station Tura. Further on she added that all cases of women as victims are re-registered to the women Police station. Even when it is a case of theft, or cyber-crime it is registered at the women Police station. The Police Inspector shared that they have also provided shelter to women in the past at the women Police station but stopped doing so after a woman committed suicide in the toilet while taking shelter in the women Police station.



Figure 15 Newspaper clipping: December 11, 2018 The Shillong Times

From our conversations with survivors of violence, many women feel that they do not want to approach the Police as they see the latter as hostile and unsympathetic. While having a focus group discussion with a group of trans-women, one of the participants shared that she has been sexually harassed by Police personnel when she was withheld at the Police station for a night.

Multi-tasking Protection Officers

As mentioned earlier in the study, in the state of Meghalaya, separate Protection Officers under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 were not appointed. The District Social Welfare Officer is the Protection Officer under the Act. This responsibility of playing a dual role, in-charge of implementing multiple schemes and services for women, children, senior citizens and persons with disability have compromised the quality of work and accountability of the Officers. The officers are overburdened and over worked in all eleven districts of Meghalaya. While interacting with a few DSWOs they also said that some of them are taking dual charge as District Programme Officers of Integrated Child Development Services for two districts at the same time, as posts are vacant. The DSWOs do not even have assistants who is equipped with the skill and knowledge, as they only have a Lower Division Assistant to assist them. During data collection, the research team approached the DSWOs to participate as Key Informers but none of them were free to participate in the study.

Meghalaya State Legal Service Authority

The Meghalaya State Legal Service Authority has been conducting several

awareness programmes on the availability of various compensation schemes for survivors of violence. One of the schemes available in MSLSA is the Meghalaya Victim Compensation Schemes 2011 and Meghalaya victim Compensation Scheme 2014.

Sl no.	Year	Number of persons
1.	2014	3
2.	2015	20
3.	2016	3
4.	2017	20
5.	2018	23

Table L: Background of IDI participants²⁴

Non-Government Organisations

In Meghalaya, there are many NGOs working on women’s issues at various capacities, but they do not have a feminist perspective. In some organisations the staff is not professionally trained to work on women’s issues. Many of the staff of the organisations visited during the course of study lack the conceptual understanding of gender, power and patriarchy. This has hampered the approach taken by them to assist women survivors of violence.

Staff of Shelter Homes

A common finding across Shelter Homes and alternative safe spaces was that the staff felt that the salary they received was very low. Also, because these Shelter Homes are meant specifically for children, the staff found that accommodating women was a huge burden. The Homes do not have the funds to accommodate women and neither do they have the facilities to provide safety to women.

G. EXISTENCE OF THE ALTERNATE SAFE SPACES AND SHELTER HOMES -A BOON TO SOCIETY

In the state of Meghalaya Shelter Homes specifically for women were not available until the med of 2018 when two Swadhar Greh Homes were established in Nongstoin and Shillong. Before their existence the Directorate of Social Welfare, Government of Meghalaya has been giving financial

assistance to non-governmental organisations to provide shelter to women in distress.²⁴ Along with these organisations the Shelter Home for children in Lawsohtun run by the social welfare department of Meghalaya also provides shelter to women in distress. The One Stop Centre at Tura provided shelter to woman up to a month, after its establishment in 2017. There are other non-governmental organisations that have made arrangements to accommodate women in need of shelter.

Through the study it was found that Meghalaya does not have Shelter Homes as present in other states of India. However, the existence of the alternate safe spaces for women in distress have been seen as a boon to the state and its women. Facilities in these institutions are not up to a mark but

Case Study

Betty is from Ri-Bhoi, village, presently residing in Shillong with her husband and son and is working as a domestic help. In 2017, she stayed at the children's shelter home after she was battered and chased out of her home by her husband.

The night she was chased out of home, she took shelter at a household she worked in. She tried seeking help from her relatives but they did not intervene saying that it was a personal issue which should be kept private. The next morning Betty visited the dispensary for her injuries from the assault, after which she was referred to Iohlynti One Stop Centre at Ganesh Das Hospital. At Iohlynti OSC, she received counselling and was referred to the DSWO's Office from where she was sent to the Children's Shelter Home. Throughout her stay at the Shelter Home, Betty found peace, happiness and was content with the services provided. Betty and her baby left the Shelter Home after 3 months on reconciliation with her husband. Betty shared that after the incident her husband has changed his behaviour towards her and her son. She said that during the time she was staying in the shelter home, her husband reflected on his behaviour and stopped consuming alcohol completely. Betty shared that currently she is living happily with her husband and son and is expecting another baby.

women who have stayed in these institutions shared that they are very satisfied with the basic facilities available and feeling safer than they did as victims of violence.

Betty, one of the participants of the study who had lived in the Shelter Home shared *"Food was good and on time... I was happy at the Shelter Home, I felt safe and secure. With so many people around I forgot my sadness and I felt there was hope for me. At home I was always sad and scared. My hands would tremble when I carried anything because I was very scared that I would upset my husband and he would hit or yell at me."*

²⁴Refer to annexure VIII Lists of organisations supported by Social Welfare to provide shelter for women in state of Meghalaya

Hence not all stories at the Shelter Homes are those of dejection and disappointment. Some women have also found respite from their despicable domestic situations here.

H. THE MOST VULNERABLE GROUP

During the course of this study, a number of women at risk of violence were identified. These women were female sex workers, (FSW), female injecting drug users (FIDU) and Trans-women engaged as female sex workers. They were mostly at risk of facing violence because they are often looked down by society and find it difficult to access basic social security services.

Ms E.W. Warjri, Chairperson of Voluntary Health Association of Meghalaya shared that many Female Injecting Drug Users who access their Drop-in Centre face domestic violence from their partners or husband and thus become homeless. These women have nowhere to go as there is no Shelter Home for Women, they are unable to approach the Shelter Home for Children (that sometimes take in women) and therefore either continue living with their abusive husbands or they take to the streets.

Some women during the FGD have also shared that them being FSWs or FIDUs have put them more at risk to domestic violence at home by their partners or relatives. One Female Injecting Drug User shared that *"my husband forced the me to do sex work; in order for him to buy drugs for himself"* Advocate Rebina Subba, a social activist, working with MSMs and FSWs shared *"We have a young girl just 21 years old.... she goes with a blue-black eye to work. When she returns home at night, she has to give some amount of money to her husband or partner so that he can use it to drink and gamble. If she does not, then comes a very abusive night for her."* Adv. Subba also shared about trans-couples who face domestic violence amongst themselves.

During the FGD with the Transgender Community, one of them shared that a trans-woman would knowingly commit a petty crime to be arrested and be sent to jail in order to have a safe and secure shelter for a couple of months. She does so as she has been disowned by her family and living on the streets. Such cases have instilled in the minds and hearts of the transgender community for the need of safe space as they feel they are most vulnerable to social evils and violence.

During Focus Group Discussions with Female Injecting Drug Users and Female Sex Workers, they were able to share some cases of rape that they have personally faced, witnessed or of friends who have experienced it. One of the FIDU shared that her friend, who is homeless and living on the

streets, is a victim of rape. When the woman complained to the Police, she was neither entertained nor taken seriously because she was considered a homeless drug user. One of the Female Sex workers shared that while she was working, she was gang raped. *"I was in Dam-site (Umiam), I was alone and there were 5 of them (men). I knew and I trusted one of them so I got into the truck... I was raped by all those 5 men and I was left there alone."* Another Female Sex Worker shared that while she was doing her work, she was gang-raped by 2 men and they stole all her money. One Trans-woman shared that she lives alone and a group of boys would come to her home and gang rape her all night. She was also sexually assaulted by Police constables when she was taken to the Police station for questioning. She said, *"the constables took me and the whole night they forced themselves on to me, they abused me physically for sex and detained me for two nights."* For women sex workers who are social outcasts, this is only the tip of the iceberg.

I. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE SHELTER HOMES AND HOMES WOMEN SEEK SHELTER IN

The research team was unable to get access to the list of members of the monitoring committee for the government Shelter Homes for children and children's homes from the Directorate of Social Welfare. When the staff of the home were enquired they said that the officials from the directorate visits the homes when required and they send them reports periodically. The method and protocol for monitoring was not comprehensively shared with the researchers. In one of the recently established Swadhar Greh Home, run by an NGO, the NGO's board has been established as the monitoring committee for the Home.

J. MODEL PRACTICES

Since there were no Shelter Homes for women until mid-2018, best practices have been derived from those that housed children. It is evident by now that children's homes have provided shelter to women too.

In those Shelter Homes for women and children run by the Department of Social Welfare it was found that when the counsellor (who is normally meant for child counselling) is not able to counsel the woman survivor of violence, the case is immediately referred to lohlynti One Stop Centre for effective counselling services. This OSC is equipped with case workers and a counsellor trained on providing care and counselling to women, in particular. They also assist women in getting free legal aid and in

gaining a livelihood. Apart from this, women who visit the centre can also avail medical assistance since the centre is housed in a hospital for women and children.

In this particular Shelter Home, all residents are divided into groups with a group leader and follow tasks according to the time table created by the Superintendent of the home. This is done in order to inculcate life skills, like team work and leadership skills among the residents. This helps the women and children gain some discipline back in their lives and helps to distract their minds by keeping them busy collectively.

In Hindu Mission Children's Home After Care programme, one of the residents interested in accounting has been taken as an apprentice under the Accountant of the home. The woman is receiving regular training on accounting and now works at the administrative office of the home. The woman has also shown keen interest in the development sector so she is sent to attend various trainings on social issues organised around Shillong. This practice adopted by the Hindu Mission is commendable as it looks into providing livelihood opportunities for women in the Shelter Home and trying to get them to gain confidence in standing on their own feet again.

CHAPTER IV

ACTIONS TAKEN DURING THE COURSE OF THE RESEARCH

On May 23, 2018, NEN Meghalaya organized a consultation meeting with various stakeholders to discuss issues of addressing violence against women and the rehabilitative services provided to women in the State.

Objectives of the meeting:

- To provide a platform for stakeholders to share experiences and challenges in providing rehabilitative shelter for survivors of violence.
- Identifying lapses and map actions for interventions to improve rehabilitative services for women survivors of violence.
- To provide a platform for the different stakeholders to discuss their resources provided and how to create well informed proactive rehabilitative service providers, to improve the wellbeing of the survivors of violence

The participants in the convergence meeting were Non- governmental Organisations, service providers and officers from Sub-departments of Directorate of Social Welfare Department, Government of Meghalaya.

Concrete outcomes from this consultation were:

- Mapping of available resources for women in the State
- State Forum was formed to address women's issues.
- A platform was created for networking between activist, organisations and government institutions
- Clarification on sanctioned proposals related to central schemes on Shelter Homes



Figure 16 Consultation Meeting with Government and Non-government Stakeholders

On 5th of November, and 4th of December 2018, NEN Meghalaya organized a two days Capacity Building Workshops on “Basic Counselling Skills for counsellors and staff of Shelter Homes and alternate safe spaces in Meghalaya”. Dr Maribon Viray from Martin Luther Christian University was the Resource person. There was a total of 21 participants who benefited from the workshop. The aim of the workshop was to inculcate a feminist perspective in counselling services provided by



Figure 17 Capacity Building Workshops on Basic Counselling Skills

counsellors/staffs. This workshop also introduced them to feminist counselling skills.

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On 20th November 2018, NEN Meghalaya organized a one-day awareness programme - “Creating a Gender Sensitive Response to Violence against Women to Create Safe Space for Women” in West Jaintia Hills Headquarter, Jowai. The aim was to develop a sensitive response to violence and enhance the knowledge of female survivors of violence to be able to live a life with dignity and optimism. In the programme, 22 women were trained on the concepts of gender, violence against women and basic understanding of pro-women legislations. The women felt that they needed such a platform/space in the community to share their stories. They said that such programmes wherein they come together collectively helps them reflect on their past and hope for a better future.



Figure 18 “Creating a Gender Sensitive Response to Violence against Women to Create Safe Space for Women” in Jowai.

On December 6th, 2018, at the DSWO Office premises in Nongstoin, West Khasi Hills, North East Network, Meghalaya organized a one-day capacity-building programme. The topic was “Creating a Gender Sensitive Response to Violence Against Women to Create Safe Space for Women” for the staff of NGOs, outreach workers and women survivors of violence in West Khasi Hills District. Smt. Bita Majaw was the resource person for the topics on Gender and Violence Against Women. Smt. Kharbhih, the District Social Welfare Officer (DSWO) of West Khasi Hills, gave a talk on the PWDV (Protection of Women from Domestic Violence) Act and how to file a DIR. Smt. D Sohtun, the secretary of DLSA (District Legal Services Authority) of West Khasi Hills, gave a talk on Legal Remedies for Women and Pro-Women Legislations available in the State of Meghalaya. There were 37 participants in attendance, out of which four were men, and there were three survivors among the women participants. At the end of the programme, some of the women approached the NEN staff seeking help for cases of violence faced by them.

CHAPTER V

SURVIVORS REVISIONING SHELTER HOME

During the course of this study participants were asked for essentials that would constitute a shelter, and their response was-it is a house or a building; a physical protection from any danger, a safe place and provides them with meals to fend their hunger.

Many of the women interviewed for the study, said that they preferred not to go to a Shelter Home for various reasons. Amy a respondent who required shelter but chose not to go to one reasoned that *“it is difficult to go in those Shelter Homes because we don’t get to do what we want, like we do at home. I can watch TV, I can take bath when I want, I can eat as I want, I can go out, I can’t simply sit in the Shelter Home the whole day without doing anything”*

The participants of the study felt that a Shelter Home should be a space where they can feel safe and a place where they are not looked at as persons with problems. They felt that a Shelter Home should be a temporary home away from home and not just a concrete building to seek shelter from climatic conditions and physical danger.

During a Focus Group Discussion with a group of Female Sex Workers, the participants provided a range of ideas on how a Shelter Home should function. One shared that a Shelter Home should have restrictions for mobility, in using mobile phones and residents should follow a routine while staying there. Another participant shared that a Shelter Home should be a space where she can build trust and reflect on her life. Some participants said that it would be best to have specific homes for Female Sex Workers and not a general home for women from all backgrounds. Their reason being, that they do not trust anyone easily and do not like to mix with unknown women. A majority of the participants agreed that a Shelter Home should be like a home and not like a hospital or a prison where people are all cramped up in one room.

During an interaction with a group of Transgenders who identify themselves as females, they shared that as they are often misunderstood in society and therefore, they would require a Shelter Home specifically for them with a sensitive staff that can help them advocate for their Human Rights and acceptance in society. They stressed the need for a health centre or clinic within the home, as they face a lot of stigma while availing medical care in hospitals and clinics.

Many women expressed the need for Shelter Homes within the proximity of the city rather than the outskirts, as they would like to continue with their employment even when they are residents of a Shelter Home. The participants also shared that the Shelter Homes should provide skill building and employment opportunities, as that would help the woman rebuild her life again.

Another participant shared *“A Shelter Home is like a jail, we are not allowed to keep contact with anyone or allowed to go out to work.”* Most women residents are of the opinion that this must change for the Home to essentially become a Shelter in the true sense of the term.

Participants have shared that they would want a space where their diversity can be expressed and where they would be looked upon as survivors and not victims of their circumstances. They shared that they want to be respected for being able to come out to seek help rather than as individuals with problems. *“A Shelter Home should be a place where I can become a better person, a place that can help me solve my problems”* said Hana, a current resident of a Shelter Home.

CHAPTER VI

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on North East Network's activities with women in the last twenty-four years and our concentrated effort in assessing the Shelter Homes in Meghalaya, in this past year, the team has consolidated a range of recommendations. These recommendations need the attention of the Government of Meghalaya and other relevant departments for them to act upon, so that the rights of women and girls in the state are heard and protected.

- **Establish Shelter Homes specifically for women in all districts of Meghalaya** – although the predominant mindset is that women in Meghalaya do not need Shelter Homes because of the matrilineal nature of our society, (wherein women stay at their maternal homes), this study has shown that there is existence of a number of homeless women here. There are also women who continue to live in abusive relationships because they have no safe space to go to. Hence, the Government must make it a priority to open more Shelter Homes for women in all districts of Meghalaya.
- **Setup skill/vocational training programmes for women** –women in the study have repeatedly shared that there is need for skills/ vocational trainings in the Shelter Homes. They felt that trainings such as tailoring and pickle making *do not* provide livelihood opportunities for them as such. The skills they need are those that are in demand in the present market, so that these skill sets help them earn a decent living. Examples of what could be done is financial literacy for accounts keeping which the north east region will certainly benefit from. The use of digital media to access a world of information and learning is becoming more of a necessity today and could be taught as an important life skill. The women can then share their training with others through videoclips once the learning is complete.
- **Develop Standard Operating Procedures/Guidelines for Shelter Homes** – The State may want to follow a Human Rights approach as envisioned in the Constitution of India by developing Standard Operating Procedures toward care giving and toward providing holistic and uniform guidelines. The Guidelines should be inclusive of the multiple kinds of women that may be in need of help so that no group faces any discrimination or prejudice in the Shelter Homes.

- **Budgets and timely allocation of funds for women in need of care and protection** – The findings of the study expressed a huge deficit faced by the current Shelter Homes in terms of receiving funds. The State not only needs funds for building of more Shelter Homes but also upgrading the existing Shelter Homes with facilities for the residents to benefit both intellectually and physically. Thus, infrastructure should be coupled with adequate resources for human growth.
- **Redefine Shelter Homes in Meghalaya** – A Shelter Home should not be seen as a jail but as a life-affirming, healing space for giving its residents a hopeful future. Therefore, there is an urgent need for established Shelter Homes in the State to structure themselves in a rights-based manner, a concept that can bring accolades to both the State and the care giving institution. The residents must not be stripped away of their fundamental freedoms, dignity and links with their families/communities. The negative connotations attached to being in a Shelter Home must be done away with. The State must start a dialogue and disseminate a perspective that is gendered and this may contribute towards an attitudinal shift on the understanding of care in shelters.
- **Need to increase the number of personnel that provide services to women in difficult circumstance** – In the findings it has been highlighted that there is a need for more women Police personnel and to have separate protection officers under Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. This will certainly be less burdensome for the officials and make execution of the government's mandate more efficient in return
- **Need for trained counselors providing psychological care in Shelter Homes** – Poor mental health is one of the leading causes of women's susceptibility to violence and homelessness. In Meghalaya, the shortage of Shelter Homes and the lack of quality and regular mental health care by trained professionals have emerged as one of the major findings of this study. Though the Government has counselors in all districts, further training on mental health for female victims of violence is required for these counselors.
- **Gender Sensitisation and Capacity building for all staff of Shelter Homes** – a number of stakeholders involved in this study expressed the lack of relevant and quality training to the staff of shelters homes. Being involved with the day to day functioning of a Shelter Homes requires a holistic perspective on gender and Human Rights.
- **Grievance redressal mechanism at all Shelter Homes**–the Shelter Homes visited during the course of this study did not have any redressal mechanism in place and this posed as a serious concern with a number of staff members and residents. The unavailability of such

mechanism has led to residents running away from the homes and petty conflicts not amounting to any solution. This leaves issues to be unaddressed and creates an atmosphere of animosity between the staff and residents, uncertainty among themselves and managerial problems in the Homes.

- **Create Safe spaces for the most marginalized members of the community** – While conducting the study, a number of respondents of the LGBTQI community and sex workers expressed that accessing a Shelter Home for them was next to impossible in the State. A policy framework must be drawn up with a perspective which ensures rights and entitlements of all, especially the most vulnerable.
- **Monitoring of Shelter Homes through Independent bodies** – Monitoring and periodic assessment of the Home's functioning and qualitative progress can help in addressing certain issues faced by Shelter Homes. Effective monitoring requires committee members who are independent and unbiased, some of whom are from the social sector with good management skills. A member or two from women's organisations could be included too.
- **Service Providers Registered under the PWDVA, 2005 should** be those organisations who have expertise on working with women and related issues.
- **Land and Infrastructure to be provided for opening Shelter Homes** - though the Government has implemented the Swadhar Greh Scheme and the Ujjwala scheme has also been introduced, organisations are unable to avail the schemes for opening Shelter Homes due to the challenges of the land tenure system in the State. The Government must actively look at identifying or providing land for the establishment of Shelter Homes in the State.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

This study is the first attempt made at an action research to bring into narrative the voices of survivors of violence who live in Shelter Homes. The narratives of the study reflect the urgent need for re-visioning Shelter Homes in Meghalaya. Although reported cases in Meghalaya are lower in comparison to other vulnerable states of India, the State should consider undocumented and unreported cases when developing strategies to address violence against women in the region.

In the recent past, the Government of Meghalaya has made concerted efforts in establishing Shelter Homes for women. We have very recently seen the opening of two Shelter Homes for Women in the past year. This is an encouraging step. Alongside increasing the number of Shelter Homes, the Government may need to assess the situation of the residents in the Homes and the challenges that the women face. This study throws light on several such problems and issues such as poor facilities, inadequate future prospects for women unfavourable living conditions and a general negative attitude toward them. Women grapple with these issues everyday despite the good intentions of the authorities. Ground realities convey the serious lack of awareness of the situations that women find themselves in from a gendered lens

Moving forward, the Government of Meghalaya must take on its legal and moral responsibility in providing safe shelter for the homeless women of the State. The notion of a matrilineal society not needing Shelter Homes for women is only a barrier limiting women's rights and agency. Such mindsets must be done away with. Policies and frameworks must be seen vis-a-vis- the ground realities. Shelter Homes need to be envisioned as safe spaces for women that give them an enabling environment to grow to their full potential and regain confidence in themselves and not mere houses for them to sleep in.

Finally, this Study emanates from our view that empowerment of women is not about power structures but about according women is the freedom to follow a life that does not label them as bad people and allowing them to expresses their opinions within their family and their community without any inhibitions. She is empowered when she is valued as an equal member of society who has space to participate in public discourse, has access to justice and the choice of working within or outside the house. We derive this reasoning from the Fundamental Rights of our Constitution.

ANNEXURES

I. Tools:

In-Depth-Interview Guide

WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF SHELTER HOMES

A FIVE-STATE ACTION RESEARCH STUDY

DRAFT SURVIVORS'²⁵ INTERVIEW GUIDE²⁶

(Use for women who are currently living in/have lived in Shelter Homes/did not go to a Shelter Home)

NOTE FOR INTERVIEWER:

- This guide acts as a reminder so you can cover all important topics. Use what is applicable.
- The questions are a *suggested* checklist you may change, add, or delete questions as long as they cover the range of our enquiry.
- You may change the suggested order in which the questions are listed, depending upon the conversation and the situation. Yet, it is best if the interview feels like a friendly chat with a 'natural' flow.
- The participants may be experiencing trauma and difficulties, so we need to be careful with our questioning.
- You may adjust the language according to the respondent's education and age.
- **THIS IS NOT A SURVEY** but an interview which needs longer responses with details.
- The interview must start **ONLY AFTER** the respondent has given you consent-or agreed to participate in the interview.
- All interviews must be held in **PRIVACY**, one-on-one between the researcher and her respondent.
- Tell the respondent that you will come back at a later stage to share the findings of the study.

²⁵The term 'survivor' stands for individuals assigned female at birth as well as transwomen who have all have faced some form of violence that either led them to live in a shelter home or faced homelessness.

²⁶Version:27.01.2018

Details of Interview

Name of Interviewer:

Name of Note-taker:

Place of Interview:

Time of starting interview:

Time of ending interview:

A. Personal details

Is the respondent a resident²⁷ of a Shelter Home/ex-resident of a Shelter Home/ did not go to a Shelter Home? (Tick the appropriate one).

Name:

Age:

Marital status: never married/ married/ divorced/ separated/ deserted/ widowed/living in

Place of residence and/or native place:

Education:

Religion, if any:

Caste (if applicable): OBC/ST/SC/others/ etc.

Do you have any of the following IDs – Aadhar card/voter card/ ration card (If applicable – does/did she have any of these with her at the Shelter Home?)

When did you come to the present Shelter Home? / Period of stay at Shelter Home (if applicable):

Have you ever stayed in any other Shelter Home? If yes, please note the details

Do you have children? If yes, age, gender and location of all children.

Are any of the children with you at the Shelter Home? If yes, age and gender of all children with her

Assets owned by the respondent (please note the details):

Work/education status (For those who are living/have lived in Shelter Home, record details applicable before coming to the Shelter Home):

Employment status before coming to the Shelter Home: employed/non-employed/self-employed/home maker (For those who are living/have lived in Shelter Home, record details applicable before coming to the Shelter Home):

²⁷The word 'resident' refers to those who are living in a shelter home

Income and source (employment/rent/pensions etc.)(For those who are living/have lived in Shelter Home, record details applicable before coming to the Shelter Home):

Do you have a bank account? If yes, single or joint?

(Note: If the survivor hasn't lived in a Shelter Home, please skip the following sections and proceed to section J, at the end of this questionnaire, on experiences of survivors who have not lived in Shelter Homes)

B. Details of Shelter Home

City:

Name of Shelter Home:

C. Experiences of homeless survivors of violence

(NOTE: You may again want to remind the respondent that her name will NOT be used in this exercise and her words kept most confidential, so it would be helpful if she spoke freely.)

What brought them to the Shelter Home?

- Can you tell us (me) something about your family? (Explore).
- Can you tell us (me) about the circumstances that led you to the Shelter Home?
 - Where were you living before you came to the Shelter Home? (home/homeless/any other type of institution).
 - Would you like to share the reasons that made you leave your home?
 - What kind of situation/violence were you facing there?²⁸
 - How did you arrive at the decision to leave? (Explore if it was a self-taken decision or if the family asked her to leave or a combination of factors)
 - Did you know about Shelter Homes? How did you get to know about this specific Shelter Home? (Police/administration/NGO etc.).
 - Can you tell us the details about the persons involved in the process of coming to the Shelter Home/ how you came to the Shelter Home? (Explore if they were former Shelter Home residents/acquaintances/others; which authorities were involved; what permissions/ paper work/ court orders were sought? Please explore the journey to the Shelter Home at length.)

²⁸Some specific questions will have to be added according to the kind of shelter home the respondent is staying in/ or the reason leading to her being in a shelter home – trafficking, domestic abuse, displacement etc.

Experiences of early weeks/months at Shelter Home

- Can you tell us about your initial period at the Shelter Home?
 - What happened once you reached the Shelter Home? Did someone from the staff tell you about the rules or arrangements? Or was it the other residents who told you?
 - Were other residents friendly with you? Are other residents generally friendly towards a new resident? Can you recall your experience?
 - What kind of space were you given? How many people were there in a room?
 - Who were the residents you shared the room with? (Explore if there were residents with similar/different experiences/conditions living together and the issues related to it?)
 - Can you tell us what was given to you, like bed/cupboard/ shelf/bucket/plate etc.?
 - Does a resident continue to stay in the same space that she is allocated in the beginning or can she sleep elsewhere?
 - How many residents were there in your Shelter Home when you came?
 - How many residents are there in your Shelter Home now?
 - Explore if any have left? Why?
 - Are you satisfied with the location of the Shelter Home? Explore.
 - Did you face any kind of difficulty/abuse/violence when you came initially to the Shelter Home?
 - How did you feel on coming here? Relieved/safe/did not like the place – why? Explore.

Life at the Shelter Home

A typical day

- Can you describe a typical day at the Shelter Home? Explore the day with the respondent.
 - Is there a strict schedule?
 - What happens if someone is not able to follow the schedule? (Explore if there is any form of reprimand or penalty.)
 - Is there any time allocated for prayers? Which faith? Are all expected to join? (In this context, explore the different faiths/religions that the residents belong to, the willingness with which they participate in such events, what happens if they are unwilling/refuse?)
 - What do you do in the free time? Where do you all sit? (common space, rooms etc.)
 - Is there an open space inside/outside the building where residents can sit or walk?
 - Is there a television in the Shelter Home? Are there time restrictions to watch TV? How do you decide which channel to watch? Explore.
 - Are there any other ways of entertainment/relaxation?
 - Are you taken for any outings or visits for relaxation?

Infrastructure

- What kind of a building/ structure is the Shelter Home? Are the premises shared with some other institution or separate?
 - How many rooms are there in the Shelter Home? Explore how many are meant for survivors of violence? How many office rooms are there? How many residential rooms for staff members?
 -
 - Does the Shelter Home have continuous/ 24 hours electricity supply?
 - Are the rooms, corridors, toilets and the area near them well lit?
 - How many fans to a room? Are they enough for the size of the room? Is it comfortable to reside there in the summer?
 - How many women are there in a room?
 - Do all have beds/bedding?
 - What kind of bedding, sheets, and towels are provided?
 - Is warm bedding provided? Blankets or quilts, or both? Are they adequate for the winter?
 - Is any kind of heating provided?
 - Who cleans the rooms and how often?
 - Does the Shelter Home have 24 hours water supply? If not, for how many hours? Is it adequate?
 - Are toiletries (bathing and washing soap, toothpaste and brush), and sanitary pads are provided?
 - What is the system of disposal for menstrual waste?
 - Where are the toilets located? How many toilets are there? How many are functional? Are bathing areas combined or separate?
 - What are they cleaned with?
 - Who cleans the areas of the Shelter Home other than the rooms and how often? (Explore about office areas, verandah, common areas etc.)

Meals and nutrition

- How many times in a day are meals provided?
 - Where is the food cooked; in-house or outside? Explore.
 - If in the premises, where is the kitchen located? Explore if there is a specific covered and proper room or a make-shift kitchen.
 - What food do you get?
 - How is it? (Explore quality of food – vegetarian and non-vegetarian.)
 - Do residents get a fixed amount of food or you can eat as much as you like? (Explore quantity of food.)
 - If a resident needs a certain kind of healthy food, does she get it? If a resident requires a special diet due to medical reasons, is it provided to her?

Clothing

- What kind of clothing and footwear is provided? Explore the quality and numbers of clothing provided.
 - Can residents wear personal clothing?
 - What kind of clothing is provided for the winters?
 - What kinds of facilities are provided to wash clothing? (and bed sheets/towels etc.?)

D. Staff and services provided

- How many staff members are there?
- Which staff members reside in the Shelter Home compound?
- Are these male and female staff?
- Where do they stay?
- Are the staff toilets different? For male and female staff?
 - Who cleans them and how often?
- Do they have separate rooms? Or do they share rooms or any other kind of space?
- How often are they there? Explore who is permanent and who is visiting?
 - Administration/ legal/ counselors/ medical/ vocational or skill training.
 - What are the roles they play or what is their work at the shelter?
- What do you think of the staff members?
 - Explore if there are differences in behaviour.(whose/how etc.?)
 - What kind of language is used while speaking to them?
 - Are there any specific terms to address/refer to them?
- How do the staff members treat the residents who are pregnant but not married?
- Where are the children kept after birth? Do they stay with the mothers or are they given up for adoption?
- Do any other authorities/ specialists / NGO staff members visit the homes?
- When do these people visit and why?
- Would you know under which government scheme is this Shelter Home run? (Explore – her understanding of the scheme/ other schemes.)
- Are there phones that residents can use? Or do they have personal mobile phones?
- Would you know if there are any kind of written records kept at the home? Do they write any details about the residents? Explore.
- Have you heard of any incident where a staff member has sexually harassed a resident?
- What is the procedure to decide when a resident can leave the Shelter Home?
 - Since you have been here, how many residents have left? And how many new ones have come in?
 - Do you all keep in touch with those who have left? Explore.
 - Does the staff keep in touch with them to find out whether they are doing fine or not? Explore.

Medical facilities

- What kind of medical services are available at the home? (Explore if a doctor visits/how often/do they have to go somewhere else/male or female doctor/ medical emergencies.)
 - If you ever fell sick, what was the treatment you received and were you satisfied with it?
 - Is there a separate room for sick residents?
 - Is there a separate doctor's room?
 - Who bears the expenses of the doctor's fee, medicine and treatment?
 - How does the patient travel to the hospital? Who bears the expenses?
 - Who accompanies the patient to the hospital?
 - If hospitalization is required, how does it work? Who stays with the patient at the hospital?
 - Is any special care given to pregnant women?
 - Do pregnant or lactating women receive any special services from Aganwadis or ASHA?
 - Are there residents with mental illness/physical disabilities/ infectious diseases requiring short term isolation/substance abuse/ HIV and AIDS.
 - Explore the kind of mental illness/ infectious disease/ disability/ other issues. What are the issues that arise due to their illness/disability?
 - Who looks after them? What kind of medical assistance do they receive? Are there rehabilitation services?
 - Does their presence in the home affect the lives of others? How?
 - How are they treated by the rest of the residents?

Legal services

- What kind of legal services are provided? Explore.
 - Are the lawyers male or female? Does it make a difference?
 - Why did you need to see the lawyer? (Explore if the services were required for cases related to physical violence/ divorce/property/ maintenance/ insurance/trafficking etc.)
 - If you have availed, how were the services?
 - Were you satisfied? Was the issue resolved? Explore.
 - Who pays for the legal fees? (Explore – whether it is provided by the resident, government, voluntary organisations, NGO etc.)
 - Do you have to go to the court? If yes, which court?
 - How do you go?
 - Who pays for travel expenses?
 - If you have not availed the services, would you like to use them?
 - What are the stories/incidents that you hear about the court cases?
 - Do the guilty get punished?
 - How does the survivor feel during/at the end of the case?

- Have you yourself/ or know of any other survivors giving evidence against traffickers?
- Do you know of any survivor who has lost a case?

Counselling

- Do counsellors come to the Shelter Home? If yes, how often?
- What kinds of services are provided?
 - Have you availed of this service? If yes, how was your experience?
 - If no, why?
 - Would you like to avail of it now?
 - How much time does a counsellor spend with each resident?
 - Do counsellors come for regular follow-ups?
 - Do you have to pay any kind of fee?
 - Do you know of any case where the counselling did not help the resident?
 - Are you part of any support group? Who runs it and where?

Education/skill development etc.

- Are any types of educational/skill development/vocational classes held at the Shelter Home?
- Explore the type of education/ training/ where are these classes held / regular or not/ whether the teachers keep changing/fee or charges/ practical experience.
- Who brings the raw material to make any product? Who pays for it?
- Do the residents attending school receive assistance for books and uniforms?
- How do they go to school? Who accompanies them?
- Does the staff provide assistance in finding work? (Explore whether it is employment, or piece work etc.)
- If they go out, what is the procedure of taking permission? How do they travel? Do they carry a meal or a snack with them?
-

Visits by officials and NGO members

- Do officials from government departments visit the home? How often? What do they do?
 - Are any special preparations made for this visit?
- Do NGO members visit the home? How often? What do they do?
 - Are any special preparations made for this visit?
- Have you seen or heard about a conflict between NGO members and a state-run Shelter Home staff members?

E. Other experiences

- Which festivals are celebrated here?
- How are festivals celebrated? Explore – food/prayers etc.
- Do residents face any hostility or problem on account of their religion or caste? Or earlier profession? Problems with other residents or staff members?
- Any specific issues faced by individuals who have left their homes with boys/men/their partners?
- Are the experiences of single residents any different from those of the other residents? Explore.
- Similarly, explore about old residents. Do other residents assist them with their daily activities?
- Have there been any instances of theft? Explore.
- What kind of relationship do you have with the other residents at the home?
- Do you know of any instance where any resident has escaped from the home? Explore.
 - Do you have any idea about their subsequent whereabouts?
- Do you face any form of abuse/violence from other residents?
- Do you face any form of abuse/violence from the staff?
- In what ways has your life changed in the Shelter Home? (Explore what is different/better/worse/ problems /safe/ etc.)
- Were you relieved to have found this space?
- Has the Shelter Home provided dignity to your life? For both yes and no, explore how and why?
- Are there any changes you would like to see here?
- Do you feel safe here?
- Would you like to share any experiences that made you feel unsafe?

F. Contact with family

- Do residents here have any contact with their family? Explore.
- Are you in contact with your family? If yes, explore.
 - Does any family member visit you? Explore.
 - Are you allowed to visit your family?
 - If yes, how do you commute and who pays for your travel?
 - Can you go anywhere else besides visiting your family? Explore
- How does the Shelter Home find the family of the residents here? How do they help them in settling down with the family? (Explore whether natal or marital family.)
- What has your experience been in this matter?
 - Are NGOs involved in this process?
 - Are you satisfied with their efforts?
 - Do you think their efforts can be improved?
- Do the residents feel confident to leave the home in terms of their safety? Or can they face violence/ problems from family/ community/ traffickers etc.?
 - Can this process be on a trial basis and can a resident come back if it does not work out?

- Is any sort of counselling provided to the family of the resident before they are sent back?
- Would you like to go back to your family? (Explore whether natal or marital family.)
 - Otherwise, after leaving the Shelter Home, what options are available to you?
 - What about livelihood?
 - Financial resources?
 - Looking after children?
- During your stay at the Shelter Home, did you have any contact with the outside world other than your relatives?

G. Children

- As of now/while you were there, how many residents have/ had children with them at the Shelter Home? In total, how many children are/were there at the Shelter Home? (Get gender break up).
- Describe their everyday life.
- Do they sleep with their mothers? (Explore clothing/food/education etc.)
 - Do the children who stay with their mothers get special food? Do they get milk or eggs or fruits? Do they get adequate quantity of nutritious food?
- Do these children get any services from Aganwadis or ASHA?
- Are there any problems that these children face while in the Shelter Home?
-
- Are they provided with any counselling once they come to the Shelter Home? (Explore in terms of adjustment and also if they have witnessed violence at home.)
- Are any problems created by the family members? Explore.
 - If yes, how does the Shelter Home staff provide any assistance or make attempts to resolve them.
- What happens when they reach the age where they cannot stay with their mothers?
- In cases where children go back home, do they talk about violence against women in the village/neighbourhood?
- What are the problems faced by mothers in the homes?

H. Miscellaneous

- Has there been any resident in the Shelter Home with acid burns or any other form of burns? Explore.
- Has any resident passed away while you were at the Shelter Home? If yes, was the family informed? Did the last rites happen at the Shelter Home? What arrangements were made for the last rites?
- Have you seen any resident from another country? What kind of treatment were they given? Did they leave or continue to be there? If they left, where did they go?
- Is there anyone here with whom you are close? Or with whom you feel comfortable sharing your feelings with?
- Do you know of any resident who has been violent? Explore.
- Is there any mechanism to complain about the functioning of the home? Explore.

- What is the scope of improvement in the Shelter Home?
- Do you know of any government schemes available for you once you leave the Shelter Home? If yes, please share the details.
- Is there anything else that we have not asked you but you would like to share about your life, your situation etc.?

I. Experiences of survivors who have chosen not to/refused to/could not go to a Shelter Home

- Why did you not want to/ not go to a Shelter Home? Explore.
 - Was it because of something you had heard about the Shelter Homes?
 - Were there issues with the family/ children?
 - Would returning back to the family be difficult?
 - Is it a concern about what others - the society/community - say?
- Have you met a survivor who has lived in a Shelter Home? If yes, what did they share about it?
- Have you ever visited a Shelter Home? If yes, what all did you see and experience there?
- Whom did you consult when debating whether to go to a Shelter Home or not? Was anyone else involved in helping in this decision? (Explore the role of NGOs/ neighbours/ family/ others.)
- Did you go to another place other than a Shelter Home? Explore further with respect to what were the available options and what factors prompted her choice.
- Was the Police or any state agency involved? Explore.
 - If yes, who approached them? What all did they do in your case?
 - How did you address the problem of the violence that you were facing? Explore in terms of dignity/ health/ financial security/ employment/ violence faced.
- What was the reaction of the family when they got to know that you knew about Shelter Homes/ or were considering going there?
 - Did it change the situation? If so, how? (Explore whether the violence increased or decreased)?
- How has this decision not to go to the Shelter Home impacted your life? Explore.
 - Do you think it was a good decision not to go to the Shelter Home? Explore in terms of dignity/ health/ financial security/ employment/ violence faced/ children's life.

NOTE: Please thank the participant at the end of each of the interview/s. Remember to tell them that this was a very important contribution made by her.

Key Informer Interview Guide

**WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF SHELTER HOMES
A FIVE-STATE ACTION RESEARCH STUDY**

NOTE FOR INTERVIEWER:

- This guide acts as a reminder so you can cover all important topics. Use what is applicable.
- The questions are a *suggested* checklist you may change, add, or delete questions as long as they cover the range of our enquiry.
- You may change the suggested order in which the questions are listed, depending upon the conversation and the situation. Yet, it is best if the interview feels like a friendly chat with a 'natural' flow.
- You may adapt the questions according to the respondent's qualifications and profession.
- **THIS IS NOT A SURVEY** but an interview which needs longer responses with details.
- The interview must start **ONLY AFTER** the respondent has given you consent-or agreed to participate in the interview.
- All interviews must be held in **PRIVACY**, one-on-one between the researcher and her respondent.
- Tell the respondent that you will come back at a later stage to share the findings of the study.

Details of Interview

Name of Interviewer:

Name of Note-taker:

Place of Interview:

Time of starting interview:

Time of ending interview:

Respondent's professional specialization and nature of work in a/the Shelter Home

1. Could you tell us about your professional specialization and your association with this/a Shelter Home? (*Note: The questions on employment type and team particulars in the table can be asked at the end of the KI*)

²⁹Version:28.01.2018

Duration of association with Shelter Home	
Work schedule (hours of work; number of days)	
Employer kind (government/NGO/self-employed)	
Employment type (permanent/contractual)	
If respondent is part of a team then size of team	
Vacant positions, if any	

- What are your responsibilities? Explore at length.
- Where do you meet the residents³⁰/ is there a separate space for you to meet the residents? Does it provide adequate privacy?
- Do you work similarly with other homes/ other institutions? Explore.
- Did you receive any training/ attend a workshop on violence against women, gender / their special needs etc. / before joining here? Or are you required to attend such trainings from time to time as refresher courses? Explore.
 - If not, how did you develop an understanding of the work here? Explore.
- Have your responsibilities changed over time?

Violence against survivors³¹ and the support provided by the respondent

- What are the main issues/problems faced by the survivors before reaching a Shelter Home?
- In your experience, how do survivors reach a Shelter Home? How do they get to know about the Shelter Home? What is the process to get a place there?
- What happens once they reach there?
- On reaching the Shelter Home, when do they meet you? How often do they meet you?
- What are the forms of violence that they have faced before reaching there?
- What kind of support do you provide initially?
- How frequently do you see them after your first meeting?
- Does the nature of support change over their period of stay?

³⁰The word 'resident' refers to those who are living in a shelter home.

³¹The term 'survivor' stands for individuals assigned female at birth as well as transwomen who have all have faced some form of violence that either led them to live in a shelter home or faced homelessness.

- In how much time can you see the impact of your support on the residents?
- What is the nature of your work initially with the residents? Does it change over time? How?
- For how long do residents stay at the Shelter Home generally?
- What are the kinds of problems they face over the period of stay at the Shelter Home?

Survivors' children and families

- If a resident has children with her at the Shelter Home, what kind of support do they receive?
- In what ways do you support them if they require visiting some agencies outside the Shelter Home – for example, the courts? Explore.
- What is the kind of support required by them before reintegration with their families?
- What is the kind of support required when their families do not want to take them back? What do they do then?
- Do you also meet their families? What are the issues there?
- Whose responsibility is it to guide them about livelihood/ secure them financially? Explore.

Professional support to the respondent

- In the course of your work here in Shelter Homes, what are some of the challenges you face? Explore both in terms of cases and administrative challenges.
- What are the support mechanisms provided to you to deal with these challenges in the Shelter Home?
- What kind of support do you feel necessary to aid your work here?
- Are there systems for grievance redressals? Are these easy to access?
- In your experience have you come across a Shelter Home that can serve as a model for other homes?

Focus Group Discussion Guide

WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF SHELTER HOMES A FIVE-STATE ACTION RESEARCH STUDY

DRAFT FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE³²

NOTE FOR FACILITATOR:

- **This guide acts as a reminder so you can cover all important topics. Use what is applicable.**

³²Version: 28.01.2018

- The questions are a *suggested* checklist; you may change, add, or delete questions as long as they cover the range of our enquiry.
- You may change the suggested order in which the questions are listed, depending upon the discussion and the situation.
- The participants may be experiencing trauma and difficulties, so we need to be careful with our questioning.
- You may adjust the language according to the respondents' education and age.
- Ensure that everyone gets a chance to express their point of view and participates in the discussion.
- You may have to ask the more vocal participants to allow others to speak, and simultaneously, encourage the quieter participants to share their views.
- The FGD must start **ONLY AFTER** all participants have given you consent-or agreed to participate in the interview.
- All interviews must be held in **PRIVACY**, with no family or community members around whose presence could prevent communication.
- Welcome the participants and briefly introduce the research team.
- As they come in, note the name, age, education, address, religion, caste, work (profession and paid work, if any), of the participant.
- Each FGD should have a group of 8 – 10 participants only.
- Before you begin, briefly explain the objective of the FGD:
 - This FGD will focus on the participants' beliefs and opinions around and suggestions for the state of Shelter Homes across five states in the country (Assam, Delhi, Meghalaya, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu). The purpose of the research study is to highlight issues and concerns of survivors³³ and Shelter Home staff so as to improve the Shelter Home experience for survivors.
 - The research process involves talking to survivors through interviews and all others who are/have been involved with Shelter Homes in one way or another. All these conversations will be anonymously noted/recorded and kept with complete confidentiality. .
 - We are inviting you to participate in this research because we believe that your responses will help to improve awareness about issues related to survivors living in Shelter Homes.
- Take the consent of all participants for the discussion. Read aloud the consent form for the participants. Keep stopping every now and then to check if they are following you. Take verbal consent from them. Seek permission for the audio recording and note taking.
- Explain that confidentiality of the conversation will be maintained and the names of the participants will not be mentioned in the research report. Only fake names shall be used, if at all.
- Tell the participants that you will come back at a later stage to share the findings of the study.

³³The term 'survivor' stands for individuals assigned female at birth as well as transwomen who have all have faced some form of violence that either led them to live in a shelter home or faced homelessness.

Ground rules

- Inform the participants that:
- The duration of the FGD will be between one to two hours
- Participants need to be present for the entire duration of the discussion
- Mobile phones need to be silent
- Only one person should speak at a time
All participants get a chance to speak
- Views of all participants need to be respected
- People whose experiences are discussed need not be named

Details of Interview

Name of Facilitator:

Name of Note-taker:

Place of Interview:

Total Number of Participants:

Time of starting interview:

Time of ending interview:

Section one: Introduction

- Can you tell us about the area where you live? (Area where they live now and not the native place).
- What kind of work do most of the women do here? Explore about household work and any form of employment.
- What do the young girls do? Explore about education, household responsibilities, and employment.
- What are the problems that girls and women face?

Section two: VAW

- What is the kind of violence that women may face on the streets in or near your locality/area/state?
 - Do all girls and women face it or is it more prevalent in certain age groups?
 - Do they belong to a particular community/religion/caste/etc?
 - What forms of sexual harassment or violence do they face? Explore briefly.
- What are the other forms of violence against women that are seen in your locality/area/state? (Explore in terms of physical, sexual, mental, emotional, financial violence etc.)
- What are the options available to women and girls who face violence? Do survivors approach the services themselves or do different service providers (Neighbours, NGOs, Police Helpline, Women's groups, Autonomous councils, Youth groups, Others) intervene?
- Who commits the violence in both situations? (Explore perpetrator with respect to Partner, Spouse, Friend, Family, Employer, Others)
- Have such instances of violence increased or decreased in the last couple of years?
- Are there any laws for VAW? Explore name, provisions, mechanisms

- Explore role of Police
- Do women report to the Police?
- Does it have a negative/positive impact on the family?
- What roles do they play?

Section three: Shelter Homes

Basic Information

- Does anyone here know of Shelter Homes/anyone who has been to a Shelter Home?
- Would anyone like to share what they know about Shelter Homes?
- Is it easy to access the Shelter Homes? Are there any specific ones that come to mind?
- Which officials or other people (Police, NGO, others etc.) were involved in the process?
- What do you know about survivors' experiences in Shelter Homes? What is the kind of environment in them?

Infrastructure/ facilities

- What kind of space/bed/bedding (discuss according to seasonal requirement) were residents³⁴provided with?
 - Did they continue to be in the same space/ bed?
- What kind of toilets are there in the Shelter Home? Are they functional? (Explore: adequate water supply/ cleanliness/ who does the cleaning/ toiletries/ separate for staff/ children/ menstrual waste disposal/ toiletries.)
- Are sanitary pads provided by the Shelter Homes?
- What kind of clothing is provided? (Quality/numbers/ according to seasonal requirement?)
- How many times a day is food provided at a Shelter Home?
- What kind of food is provided? Can we see the menu?
 - Who cooks?
 - Discuss quality and quantity, nutritional needs depending on a health condition or those of pregnant and lactating women.
 - Can/do women keep/ buy some food items for themselves?
 - If yes, where do they get the money from?
- Are residents satisfied with the basic facilities and food provided?
- If residents carry their identity proofs with them, where are these kept in the Shelter Home?
- If residents have bank accounts, how do they operate them while in the Shelter Home?
- Are you allowed to have a mobile phone in the Shelter Home? If not, how did/do they manage communication with those outside the Shelter Home?
- Are residents, made to sign any papers? In case a resident is unable to read is she informed about the content of the document before she signs?
- Is there a grievance mechanism in place? Whom do residents approach to complain about any issue of the Shelter Homes?

³⁴The word 'resident' refers to those who are living in a shelter home

Professional services

- What kind of medical services are available at the Shelter Home?
 - Explore at length about minor and major ailments.
 - What kinds of hospitalization facilities are available?
 - Who stays with the woman in a hospital?
 - Who pays for the expenses?
 - Are residents satisfied with the medical services offered?
- What happens in case if a resident is diagnosed with communicable diseases like tuberculosis?
 - Are they asked to sleep separately?
 - What kinds of options are available to them?
 - What are the options available for a pregnant woman? Are they provided pre-natal and ante-natal care?
- Are there any residents with mental health conditions in Shelter Homes?
 - What kind of problems do they have?
 - Are they provided with any special care?
 - Who looks after them?
 - Does this/do they cause any problems for the other residents?
- Is a counselor available at the Shelter Home?
 - Are residents willing to speak with her/him?
 - How does she/he help the residents? Explore details of frequency and time spent with counselors and issues/procedures/processes covered (Does a counselor see children also?)
 - Are residents satisfied with the counseling services there?
 - Are there support/peer groups in the Shelter Homes?
- What kind of legal services are available at Shelter Homes?
 - How often do lawyers come there?
 - Are these government, private lawyers or are they from NGOs?
 - How often do residents have to fight legal cases? What kind of cases? Do they know about the legal status of their cases?
 - Do these lawyers help the residents to go to the court or do they have to go on their own?
 - Are residents satisfied with the kind of legal services offered?
 - For residents with disabilities, what are the facilities available in terms of infrastructure, legal services etc.?
- What kind of education/ skill development is offered? Explore type of education or skill development provided.
 - Do residents get a chance to practice the skill training they receive?
 - Do they go outside the Shelter Home?
 - Who provides the raw material to practice their skill?
 - Once they have mastered it, how do they sell their products?

- How much money do they make? Did/Do they get to keep this earning with them?

Children

- Are children allowed in the Shelter Home?
 - Discuss in detail about the age, gender etc.
 - What are the options for education available to them?
 - What happens once they cross the permitted age limits?
 - Are children facing any harm or violence of any form?
- If children are not allowed, where do they stay? Explore.
 - How do these residents meet their children? How often?

Life in a Shelter Home

- What is a day like in the Shelter Home? Explore about:
 - Schedules, the rigidity of the schedules.
 - Explore what residents do in their free time:
 - Do they get to watch TV? For what duration? Are there any rules about what to watch?
 - Can they go out? Both for work and/or for casual outings?
 - Are they allowed to communicate/meet their family members?
 - Is there any open space/ground in the Shelter Home where the sky is visible?
- What kind of relationships develop among the residents?
- Do residents discuss the reasons for their stay in Shelter Home? Do they discuss their personal stories?
- Are there any remarks made/ judgments made on each other's stories/experiences?
- Are residents in touch with each other once they leave?
- Are there fights/arguments/differences among the residents?
 - What causes these fights?
 - Are they resolved by the staff? How?
- Are festivals celebrated at Shelter Homes? Explore which and how (prayers/food)?

Staff members

- Who are the staff members with whom one has to interact on a regular basis? (Explore who these are/ their gender/ roles/ ease of interaction/ efficiency etc.)
- Who all live in the premises of the Shelter Home? Their gender and position?
 - Are their rooms and toilets separate?
- Are there any specialists who visit on certain days? Who and how often?
- How is their interaction with/ behaviour towards the residents?

Other experiences

- Do residents face any hostility or problems on account of their religion or caste/tribe/gender/sexual identity/former profession? Do problems arise with other residents or staff members?
- Any specific issues faced by residents who have left home with boys/men/partners or married without their parents' permissions?
- Are the experiences of single residents any different from those of other residents? Explore.
- Have there been any instances of theft? Explore.
- Do you know of any instance where any resident has escaped from the Shelter Home? Explore.
 - Do you have any idea about their subsequent whereabouts?
- Has there been any resident in the Shelter Home with acid burns or any other form of burns? Explore.
- Are there residents who have been trafficked/victims of ethnic conflict/witch hunting/residents from families of devadasis (wherever applicable)?
- Has any resident passed away while you were at the Shelter Home? If yes, was the family informed? What arrangements were made for the last rites?
- Have you seen any resident from another country at a Shelter Home?
 - What kind of treatment were they given?
 - Did they leave or continue to be there?
 - If they left, where did they go?
- Is there any mechanism to complain about the functioning of the home? Explore.
- Would you go back to the Shelter Home if the need arises?
- What is the scope of improvement in the Shelter Home?
- Is there anything else that we have not asked you but you would like to share about the Shelter Home?

Section five: Those who did not go to a Shelter Home

- Why did you not want to/ not go to a Shelter Home? Explore.
 - Was it because of something you had heard about the Shelter Homes?
 - Were there issues with the family/ children?
 - Would returning back to the family be difficult?
 - Is it a concern about what others - the society/community - say?
- Have you met a survivor who has lived in a Shelter Home? If yes, what did they share about it?
- Have you ever visited a Shelter Home? If yes, what all did you see and experience there?
- Whom did you consult when debating whether to go to a Shelter Home or not? Was anyone else involved in helping in this decision? (Explore the role of NGOs/ neighbours/ family/ others.)
- Did you go to another place other than a Shelter Home? Explore further with respect to what were the available options and what factors prompted her choice.
- Was the Police or any state agency involved? Explore.
 - If yes, who approached them? What all did they do in your case?

- How did you address the problem of the violence that you were facing? Explore in terms of dignity/ health/ financial security/ employment/ violence faced.
- What was the reaction of the family when they got to know that you knew about Shelter Homes/ or were considering going there?
 - Did it change the situation? If so, how? (Explore whether the violence increased or decreased)?
- How has this decision not to go to the Shelter Home impacted your life? Explore.
 - Do you think it was a good decision not to go to the Shelter Home? Explore in terms of dignity/ health/ financial security/ employment/ violence faced/ children's life.

Lastly, please share with us how would like the Shelter Home space to be built? Explore in terms of

- Safety and security
- Access to resources
- Personal space
- Recreational activities
- Opportunities for work
- Any other

Please thank your participant/s and appreciate how much their contribution will help. Remind them of the confidentiality aspect and that you hope to share the results of this exercise with them at some stage of this process.

Consent forms

WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF SHELTER HOMES A FIVE-STATE ACTION RESEARCH STUDY

Consent Form (KII)³⁵

INTRODUCTION

Hello. My name is _____. I live in _____ (town/city). Currently, I am playing the role of a researcher on behalf of _____ an organization which works on the issue of _____ (*Feel free to share more about yourself*). This is my colleague (*introduce note taker*).

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

We are conducting this study among survivors³⁶ of violence who have lived or are living in Shelter Homes; as well as with survivors who have chosen to not go to one. We shall focus on the issues and concerns of survivors and find ways to improve their lives. To make these improvements, we must first be able to understand the violence and the range of issues faced by them such as their dignity, health, employment, finances and so on. So we are talking to survivors in five states in the country to understand what they have faced and what they would like to be addressed. We will use these responses to demand better living conditions, employment, medical benefits, access to education for girls and children and all the other benefits that survivors of violence deserve as citizens.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY?

The results of the research will first be used to write a report. The report will then be used for advocacy with the government to demand better living conditions and other rights for survivors of violence.

YOUR PARTICIPATION AND THE INTERVIEW

We are inviting you to participate in this research because we believe that your responses will help to improve awareness about issues related to women living in Shelter Homes. If you agree to participate your opinion will be sought on conditions in Shelter Homes, support and services provided there and

³⁵Version 09.02.18

³⁶The term 'survivor' stands for individuals assigned female at birth as well as transwomen who have all have faced some form of violence that either led them to live in a shelter home or faced homelessness.

changes you would like to see in Shelter Homes. We will talk with you in private at a location where you are comfortable and we can be alone. The interview itself may take approximately an hour or more. However, if we are unable to complete the conversation, we may request you for another meeting. If you agree we will audio tape this interview so that we do not miss out anything you say. This recording will be destroyed after the notes are typed.

CONFIDENTIALITY

If you wish that some part of the information that you share should not be attributed to you, please let the interviewer know.

VOLUNTARINESS AND RIGHTS

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. If you decide not to participate, you can let us know and we will not include any part of this conversation in our report. If you agree to participate in this research, you are still free to end your participation at any time and skip any questions during the interview.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORT, IF ANY

Although we do not foresee any risks because we shall keep this conversation strictly between us and you, if you are concerned about any potential risks, please do share those with us so we can find a way to avoid or minimize it.

BENEFITS

There are no direct benefits for participating in this research but hopefully there would be many indirect advantages. Your participation in this research can help improve the lives of the many residents³⁷ who currently/may live in Shelter Homes.

CONTACT INFORMATION

I, as a field researcher, am willing to answer any questions you may have concerning this research study. If you need more information on the project, need to express concerns, complaints or know the rights of research participants, please contact _____ at this phone number:

Do you have any questions? (If yes, note the questions) Yes No
Are you willing to participate in the research? Yes No
If not, terminate the research with the participant

If agreed to participate,

Date

Name of Respondent

³⁷The word 'resident' refers to those who are living in a shelter home

Signature/thumb

impression

of

the

respondent

Instructions to interviewer:

() If the individual has agreed to participate, but does not want the interaction to be audio-recorded, then check mark.

Please ask the respondent if she wants a copy of the signed consent form. If yes, please give her a duly signed copy.

Interviewer's statement: I, the undersigned, have explained to the participant in a language she understands the procedures to be followed in the research and the risks and benefits involved.

Amrita Nandy

Name of field researcher Name of principal researcher

Signature of field researcher Signature of principal researcher

Date

WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF SHELTER HOMES A FIVE-STATE ACTION RESEARCH STUDY

Consent Form (IDI)³⁸

INTRODUCTION: PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

We are conducting this study among survivors³⁹ of violence who have lived, are living or may be at risk of living in Shelter Homes in the near future. We hope to focus on the issues and concerns of survivors and find ways to improve their lives. To make these improvements, we must first be able to understand the violence and the range of issues faced by them such as their dignity, health, employment, finances and so on. So we are talking to survivors in five states in the country to understand what they have faced and what they would like to be addressed.

YOUR PARTICIPATION AND THE INTERVIEW

We are inviting you to participate in this research because we believe that your responses will help improve awareness about issues related to individuals who have lived/are living in Shelter Homes. Because of your experiences, you can play a very important role in this effort to improve survivors' lives. We would like to listen to your experiences so that we can collect knowledge about the lives of survivors of violence and then use it to demand rights and justice for them. This is why we would like you to take part in this research.

If you agree to participate you will be asked about difficulties and violence you/survivors of violence face before living in a Shelter Home, during your/their stay there or after you/they move out of Shelter Homes. Your opinion will also be sought on conditions in Shelter Homes, support and services provided there and changes you would like to see in Shelter Homes. You will be requested to answer the questions truthfully so that together you and us are able to bring about some positive change in your/their life.

If you agree to take part, we will talk with you in private at a location where you are comfortable and we can be alone.

The interview itself may take approximately an hour or more. However, if we are unable to complete the conversation, we may request you for another meeting.

VOLUNTARINESS AND RIGHTS

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. If you decide not to participate, you can let us know and we will not include any part of this conversation in our report. If you agree to participate in this research, you are still free to end your participation at any time. If you decide to take part, you are free to skip any questions

³⁸Version 27.01.18

³⁹The term 'survivor' stands for individuals assigned female at birth as well as transwomen who have all have faced some form of violence that either led them to live in a shelter home or faced homelessness.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY?

The results of the research will first be used to write a report. This report shall not have any real names of people like you who speak to us.

The report will then be used for advocacy with the government to demand better living conditions and a range of rights for women/persons such as yourself/survivors. Again, the report will not bear your/their real name or other details through which you/they could be identified.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Your name will not be used in the notes that we take. We will give you another fictional name so that we can protect your identity and make this totally confidential. A master list will be made with your real name and the assigned fictional name and only the research team working on this study will be privy to it. All the information gathered via research will be used only and exclusively for the purpose of this research and the information related to it will not be shared with anyone. This discussion will be audio taped so that we do not miss out on anything you say, but we shall record it only if you agree with it.

The notes that we take during the interview and audio recording will be kept private and only with our team. In these too, your name will not be used. Audio recordings will be destroyed after transcription and your name and other identifiers will be removed from the transcripts. The study team will make every effort to protect your privacy and maintain the confidentiality of all the information that you provide. The data will be stored in a computer at the office of _____ (local NGO's name) which can only be seen by their own teams.

If I share information about you with any other person/s outside the research team, it shall harm my own professional integrity.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORT, IF ANY

Although we do not foresee any risks because we shall keep this conversation strictly between us and you, if you are concerned about any potential risks, please do share those with us so we can find a way to avoid or minimize it. However, the best way to avoid risks is for you to not share the content or details of this interview with anyone.

Please do not state your name, the names of others or other information that would make it easy for someone to identify you while we are audio recording. In case someone comes near us to find out what we are talking about we will stop talking until they leave.

If you think that talking to us about certain issues could be risky for you or cause you any discomfort, you are free to not respond to those issues. You can also let the interviewer know if there are issues you do not wish to talk about at any stage of this interview.

BENEFITS

There are no direct benefits for participating in this research but hopefully there would be many indirect advantages. Your participation in this research can help improve the lives of the many

I. List of NGO's for registration of Service Providers under the Protection of women from Domestic Violence, Act, 2015

Annexure-'C'

List of NGO's for Registration of Service Providers under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence, Act, 2005

Sl. No	REGISTERED AS LIST OF NGO's APPLYING FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS	
1.	Sr. Shenly Joseph St. Theresa Girls Mission Home Williamnagar, East Garo Hills	(1) Shelter (2) Family Counselling (3) Awareness Programme
2.	Achik Welfare Society, Tura West Garo Hills	(1) Family Counselling (2) Awareness Programme (3) Counselling for group of people affected by Domestic violence
3.	Sr. Mary Kuthy Abraham Holy Cross Girls Home Nongalbibra, South Garo Hills District	(1) Shelter (2) Family Counselling
4.	St. Francis De Sales Girls Home, Rongare, South Garo Hills District	(1) Family Counselling
5.	St. Perpitina Bara St. Mary's Girls Home, Chokpot South Garo Hills District	(1) Family Counselling (2) Medical Assistance
6.	✓ Seng Kynjoh Shaphrang ki Kynthei, Kyndong Tuber, Jowai	(1) Family Counselling (2) Awareness Programme
7.	W.K. Blah President Nongpoh Area Women Welfare Association (NAWWA), Nongpoh	(1) Family Counselling (2) Awareness Programme (3) Vocational Training
8.	Twentynola Diengdoh, TARABON COUNSELLING CENTRE, Nongstoun C/o. DC's Office West Khasi Hills District, Nongstoin	(1) Family Counselling (2) Awareness Programme
9.	Manbha Foundation Whahthioo Nongthymmai, Shillong	(1) Family Counselling (2) Awareness Programme (3) Counselling for group of people affected by Domestic violence
10.	Wise Social Service Centre St. Mary's Convent Laitumkhrak, Shillong	(1) Vocational Training
11.	NDWM Ferrando transit Shelter Home, Mawlai Mawdatbaki Pata, Shillong	(1) Shelter (2) Family Counselling (3) Vocational Training (4) Awareness Programme (5) Counselling for group of people affected by Domestic violence (6) Psychiatric Counselling
12.	Don Bosco Technical School	(1) Vocational Training (2) Awareness Programme
13.	Bosco Reach Out <i>(changed to "Bosco Integrated Development Society" - 7.5.2014.)</i>	(1) Family Counselling (2) Counselling for group of people affected by Domestic violence

II. Permission to visit and have access to name and contact details of Shelter for women survivor of violence in Meghalaya

GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA
DIRECTORATE OF SOCIAL WELFARE
MEGHALAYA, SHILLONG

No. SW/WW/1/2017/8918

Dated Shillong, the 5th December, 2017

From: Smti. R.M. Kurbah, M.C.S.,
Director of Social Welfare
Meghalaya, Shillong.

To
✓ The Programme Manager,
North East Network (NEN), Shillong.

Sub : Name and Contact details of Shelters for Women Survivors of violence
in Meghalaya a permission to visit the Shelter Home.

Madam,

With reference to the subject above, I am to furnish herewith the
information as below: -

i) Names and contact details of Shelters for
Women Survivors of violence in
Meghalaya

Sr. Teresa Salemthangi
Regional Coordinator
Ferrando Transit Shelter Home
Mawlai – Mawdatbaki Patta
Shillong - 793008
Mobile No. – 9436306728
9863578376

ii) Permission to visit and have access to
existing shelter facilities for women in
Meghalaya

Yours faithfully


Director of Social Welfare
Meghalaya, Shillong.

III. Permission to visit and access all existing Shelter Homes run by government and government aided in 11 districts of Meghalaya

GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA
DIRECTORATE OF SOCIAL WELFARE
MEGHALAYA SHILLONG

No.SW/MISC/47/2016/10377

Dated Shillong, the 17th January, 2018

From : Smti. R.M. Kurbah, I.A.S.,
Director of Social Welfare
Meghalaya, Shillong.

To : ✓ The Programme Manager,
North East Network.

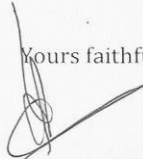
Sub : Request for permission to visit and have access to all existing
Government run and Government aided Shelter Homes in all 11
District of Meghalaya.

Ref : No.NEN/SH/2018/001 dt.04.01.2018.

Madam,

With reference to the subject cited above, permission to visit and have
access to all existing Government run and Government aided Shelter Homes in all
11 District of Meghalaya is hereby approved.

Yours faithfully,


Director of Social Welfare
Meghalaya, Shillong.

IV. Lists of Shelter Homes run by the government and NGOs in Meghalaya (Boys & Girls)

GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA
DIRECTORATE OF SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT
MEGHALAYA, SHILLONG

No. SW/WW/2010/PLI/1193 Dated Shillong the 20th May, 2016

From : Shri. H.M.Shangpliang, I.A.S.
Director of Social Welfare,
Meghalaya, Shillong.

To : The Programme Manager,
North East Network, Shillong.

Sub : Request for information with regard to shelter home for women and
children in Meghalaya.

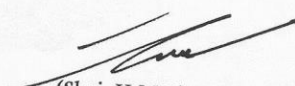
Ref : No. Nil dt. 12th May, 2016

Madam,

With reference to the subject quoted above, I am to forward herewith
the information as desired from your end.

Encl:- as stated above.

Yours faithfully,


(Shri. H.M.Shangpliang)
Director of Social Welfare,
Meghalaya, Shillong.

SHELTER HOME (GOVT. RUN)

Sl. No.	NAME & ADDRESS	DISTRICT
1.	Shelter Home (Girls), Bishnupur	East Khasi Hills
2.	Shelter Home (Boys), Office of the Superintendent Nondein, New Nongstoin	West Khasi Hills
3.	Shelter Home (Girls), Office of the Superintendent Nondein, New Nongstoin	West Khasi Hills
4.	Shelter Home (Boys) Khliehriat West Opposite PWD Office	East Jaintia Hills
5.	Shelter Home (Girls) Lad Sutnga, Khliehriat	East Jaintia Hills
6.	Shelter Home (Boys), Office of the District Social Welfare Officer, Near Mother's Union School, Ampati	South west Garo Hills
7.	Shelter Home (Girls), Office of the District Social Welfare Officer, Near Mother's Union School, Ampati	South west Garo Hills
8.	Shelter Home (Girls) Mendi Babupara, Mendipather	North Garo Hills
9.	Shelter Home (Boys), Office of the District Social Welfare Officer, Baghmara	South Garo Hills

SHELTER HOME -- 2 nos.
(NGO Run)

1. Rilang Shelter Home, Bosco Integrated Development Society, Nongthymmai, Nongshilliang, Shillong.
2. Ri Bhoi Area Welfare Association, Shelter Home for Boys, Umsning.

OPEN DAY SHELTER -- 3 nos.
(NGO Run)

1. Open Day Shelter, MUDA Parking Lot, Mawlong Hat, Opp. Anjalee Cinema Hall, Shillong.
2. Open Day Shelter, Wahkdait Nongmynsong, Shillong.
3. Open Day Shelter, Wahryting, Mawblei, Shillong.

V. List of District Social Welfare Officers in the State of Meghalaya

GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA
DIRECTORATE OF SOCIAL WELFARE
MEGHALAYA, SHILLONG

No. SW/WW/1/2017/10875-86 Dated Shillong, the 7th February, 2018

From: Smti. R.M. Kurbah, I.A.S.,
Director of Social Welfare
Meghalaya, Shillong.

To
The Programme Manager,
North East Network (NEN), Shillong.

Sub : Name and Contact details of all District Social Welfare Officer's in the
State and permission to visit the Shelter Home.

Madam,

With reference to the subject above, I am to furnish herewith the
Names and contact details of all District Social Welfare Officer's in Meghalaya as
below: -

- (1) Smti. Z.J.Lyngdoh,
District Social Welfare Officer, Shillong - 94361-1007
- (2) Smti. W.Nongrum,
District Social Welfare Officer, Nongpoh - 94361-05666
- (3) Smti. J.Synnah, District Social Welfare Officer,
Jowai - 9402507789
- (4) Smti. L.Thongnibah,
District Social Welfare Officer, Khliehriat - 98560-41638
- (5) Smti. M.A.Kharbhih,
District Social Welfare Officer, Nongstoin - 98625-80535
- (6) Smti. P.Suchiang,
District Social Welfare Officer, Mawkyrwat - 94361-03008
- (7) Smti. V.H.Blah,
District Social Welfare Officer, Tura - 98563-80855
- (8) Smti. L.J.Sangma,
District Social Welfare Officer, Ampati - 94363-15657
- (9) Smti. M.Kharkongor,
District Social Welfare Officer, Baghmara - 94021-97203
- (10) Shri. L.Lyngdoh,
District Social Welfare Officer, Williamnagar
- (11) Shri. M.D.Areng, h,
District Social Welfare Officer, Resubelpara - 80147-15584

Regarding permission to visit and have access to the existing Shelter
facilities, you may contact any of the above Officer's from your end.

Yours faithfully


Director of Social Welfare
Meghalaya, Shillong.

M. No. SW/WW/1/2017
Copy to: -

Dated Shillong, the February, 2018

VI. Permission letter from The Superintendent of Police to dialogue with Officer-in-charge of Women Police Station:

i. East Khasi Hills

GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE : EAST KHASI HILLS:
:: SHILLONG ::

Letter No.CB/67/17/422 Dated Shillong, the 22nd February, 2018.

To

The Programme Manager,
North East Network,
Beams End Cottage, Jingkieng Nongthymmai,
Shillong - 793014.

Subject: Permission to dialogue with Officer-in-Charge,
Women Police Station, Shillong.

Reference: Your letter No.NEN/SH/2018/016 dt.20.2.2018.

Madam,

With reference to the above, this is to inform that your request to dialogue with Officer-in-Charge, Women Police Station is hereby allowed. Therefore, you are requested to kindly liaise with WP Inspector Victoria Tariang, O/C Women PS preferably after 3rd March, 2018. Her Mobile No. is +919856822984.

Yours faithfully,


Superintendent of Police,
East Khasi Hills, Shillong.

-X-X-X-

ii. Ri- Bhoi District



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE
RI BHOI DISTRICT ***** NONGPOH

Letter No.RBD/CB-165/2018/ 300

Dated Nongpoh, the 1st March, 2018.

To,

Smti Joy Grace Syiem,
Programme Manager, NEN, Meghalaya.
Jingkieng Nongthymmai, Shillong-14.

Subject : Request for permission to dialogue with Officer In-Charge of Women Police Station.

Reference: NEN/SH/2018/016 dated 20-2-2018..

Madam ,

With reference to the above, I am to inform that this District has no separate Women Police Station. However, WP/S.I J.A.Sangma present Officer In-Charge of Khanapara Police Station of this District may be interacted on the study conducting by you.

Yours faithfully,

Superintendent of Police,
Ri Bhoi District, Nongpoh.

Memo No.RBD/CB-165/2018/

Dated Nongpoh, the 1st March, 2018.

Copy to:-

1. WP/S.I J.A.Sangma for information and necessary action.

Superintendent of Police,
Ri Bhoi District, Nongpoh

iii. West Jaintai Hills

GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE :: WEST JAINTIA HILLS DISTRICT ::
JOWAI

Letter No. CRM/IV-19/19CA)-18/364. Dated Jowai the 6th March, 2018.

From : Shri Vivek Syiem, MPS,
Superintendent of Police,
West Jaintia Hills, Jowai.

To : Smti Joy Grace Syiem,
Programme Manager, NEN Meghalaya.

Sub : Request for permission to dialogue with Officer In-Charge of Women Police
Station in the district.

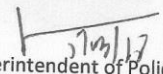
Ref : Your L/No. NEN/SH/2018/016 Dtd. 20.02.2018.

Madam,

With reference to the subject cited above, I am to inform you that your request
for permission to dialogue with Officer In-Charge of Women Police Station in the district is
hereby **Granted**.

This is for favour of your kind information and necessary action.

Yours Faithfully,


Superintendent of Police,
West Jaintia Hills, Jowai.

Memo No.

Dated Jowai the 6th March, 2018.

Copy to :-

- The Officer In-Charge, Women Police Station, Jowai for information and
necessary action.

Superintendent of Police,
West Jaintia Hills, Jowai.

iv. South West Garo Hills



GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE: SOUTH WEST GARO HILLS:: DISTRICT
:: AMPATI::

L/No. SWGH/CB-19/1/2018/186.

Dated, Ampati, the 19th March 2018

From : **The Superintendent of Police,**
South West Garo Hills, Ampati.

To : **Joy Grace Syiem,**
Programme Manager, NEN Meghalaya.
Nongthymmai Shillong- 793014.

Subject: Dialouge with Officer-In-Charge of Women PS of the District.

Ref : Your L/No. NEN/SH/2018/016 Dtd. 20.02.2018.

Sir/Madam,

With reference to the above, I am to inform you that till date, no separate Women Police Station exists in the District . There is only one WPSI in the District currently posted at Mahendraganj PS who is investigating all the crimes against Women registered in the entire District.

In this connection, you are requested to tie up with the Said Officer (M/No. +919862468940) to acquire information on female survivors of violence by fixing a date in advance with an intimation to this Office.

Yours faithfully,


Superintendent of Police,
South West Garo Hills, Ampati.

v. North Garo Hills

GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE::NORTH GARO HILLS
:::RESUBELPARA:::

No. NGH/CB/Misc/2017/108

Dated Resubelpara the 20th March, 2018

From : The Superintendent of Police
North Garo Hills, Resubelpara

To : Shri Joy Grace Syiem
Programme Manager
North East Network,
Meghalaya

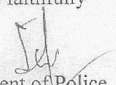
Sub : **Request for permission to dialogue with Officer In- charge of Women Police Station in your district.**

Ref. : Your Letter No. NEN/SH/2018/016 Dtd 20/02/2018.

Sir/Madam,

With reference to the subject cited above, I am to convey my approval regarding requesting for permission to interact with the In- charge of Women Cell, Resubelpara on **female Survivors of violence** for favour of your kind information and necessary action.

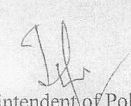
Yours faithfully


Superintendent of Police
North Garo Hills, Resubelpara.

Memo No. NGH/CB/Misc/2016/118-A
Copy to:-

Dated Resubelpara the 30th November, 2016.

1. Circle Inspector (M), North Garo Hills, Resubelpara for information.
2. WPSI. V. Ch. Marak of Mendipathar P.S, North Garo Hills, Resubelpara for information and necessary action along with the enclosures received from the applicant vide L/No. NEN/SH/2018/016 Dtd 20/02/2018.


Superintendent of Police
North Garo Hills, Resubelpara.

VII. Lists of organisations supported by Social Welfare to provide shelter for women in state of Meghalaya

GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA
DIRECTORATE OF SOCIAL WELFARE
MEGHALAYA: SHILLONG

No.SW/SD/23/2016 / 3047

Dated Shillong, the 29th June, 2018

From : Smti. S. Rynga,
Joint Director of Social Welfare
Meghalaya, Shillong.

To : ✓ The Programme Manager,
North East Network (NEN),
Shillong.

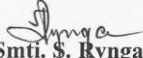
Sub : (1) List of organization supported by Social Welfare to provide Shelter for
Women in State of Meghalaya with their detail contact information.
(2) List of Homes for the homeless in the State.

Ref : No.NEN/SH/2018/032, dt.21.6.2018.

Madam ,

With reference to the above subject enclosed herewith the list of
informations as requested from your end.

Yours faithfully,


(Smti. S. Rynga)
Joint Director of Social Welfare
Meghalaya, Shillong.

(1) List of organization supported by Social Welfare to provide Shelter for Women in State of Meghalaya with their detail contact information

<i>Sl. No.</i>	<i>Name of NGO</i>	<i>Contact No. & Address</i>
a.	Shillong Reach Ministry	9436703760, Laitumkhrah Main Road, Shillong.
b.	Ferrando Transit Shelter Home	9863578376/ 9436306728, Mawlai Mawroh, Shillong
c.	Women Social Welfare Organisation	9436126862, Nondein, Nongstoin, West Khasi Hills.

(2) List of Homes for the homeless in the State -- Not available

VIII. Permission to interview the Superintendent of Meghalaya Institute of Mental Health & Neuro Sciences

GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH SERVICES(MI)
MEGHALAYA::: SHILLONG

NO.HSM/ESTT/TASK FORCE Committee/5/2016/9588, Dated 23/7/18

From : The Director of Health Services (MI),
Meghalaya, Shillong.


To : ~~The Programme Manager,~~
North East Network (NEN),
'Beams End Cottage', Jingkieng Nongthymmai,
Shillong-793014.

Sub : Request to permit the Superintendent of MIMHANS to participate in an
Interview as a Key Informant for a Research Study on "Shelter Home".

Madam,


In inviting a reference to your letter No.NEN/SH/2018/037, dated 12th July, 2018 on the above cited subject, I am to say that permission is granted to the Additional Superintendent, MIMHANS, Pasteur Hills, Lawmali, Shillong to participate in an Interview as a Key Informant regarding a study on 'Survivors Experience of Shelter Homes – An Action Research'.

Yours faithfully,


Director of Health Services (MI),
Meghalaya, Shillong.

MEMO NO.HSM/ESTT/TASK FORCE Committee/5/2016/9589, Dated 23/7/18
Copy for information to:-

1. The Additional Superintendent, MIMHANS, Pasteur Hills, Lawmali, Shillong with reference to letter No.MIMHANS/18-19/GEN/Pt-I/1, dated 13/07/2018.


Director of Health Services (MI),
Meghalaya, Shillong.

User3

IX. List of Administration and Management of SwadharGreh Home New Nongstoin (Staff)

WOMEN SOCIAL WELFARE ORGANISATION
NEW-NONGSTOIN
HQ-NEW-NONGSTOIN, W.K.H.D, MEGHALAYA

ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT
OF SWADHAR GREH HOME NEW-NONGSTOIN(STAFF)

SL NO	NAME AND TITLE	DESIGNATION	QUALIFICATION	RESIDENCE	PHONE NUMBER
1	SMT.BANRIHUNLANG SOHLANG	RESIDENT SUPERINTENDENT	M.S.W	NEW-NONGSTOIN	9485053642
2	SMT.BAKMENHUN HOOJON	COUNSELOR	M.S.W (MEDICAL PYSCHIATRICK)	UPPER-NEWNONGSTOIN	8787350280
3	SMT.SABA LYNGDOH	OFFICE ASSISTANT CUM D.E.O	B.A	NEW-NONGSTOIN	7005397064
4	SMT.BASHANSHISHA NONGRUM	WATCHWOMAN/WATCH MAN	XII	NEW-NONGSTOIN	8259926839
5	SMT.MERYIONA SOHPHOH	GUARDWOMAN / GUARDMAN	IX	NEW-NONGSTOIN	7085212565
6	SHRI.P.LYNGKHOI	MEDICAL DOCTOR	M.B.B.S	TIEHSAW	9856005713

A.K. Syntiew
President,
A.K.Syntiew
Swadhar Greh Home
New-Nongstoin


C.K. Nonglong
Secretary,
C.K.Nonglong
Swadhar Greh Home
New-Nongstoin

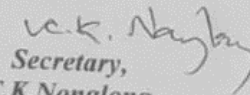
X. List of the Managing Members of the SwadharGreh Home New Nongstoin

**WOMEN SOCIAL WELFARE ORGANISATION
NEW-NONGSTOIN
HQ-NEW-NONGSTOIN, W.K.H.D, MEGHALAYA**

The following members have been unanimously elected as the Managing Members of the Swadhar Greh Home.

SL.NO	NAME	POST	RESIDENCE	PHONE NUMBER
1	SMT.A.K.SYNTIEW	PRESIDENT	NEW-NONGSTOIN	8259870282
2	SHRI.C.K.NONGLONG	SECRETARY	NEW-NONGSTOIN	7005205045
3	SHRI.S.RASHIR	MEMBER	NEW-NONGSTOIN	9436108101
4	SHRI.G.MARBANIANG	MEMBER	NEW-NONGSTOIN	9383304384
5	SMT.TIONARIS NONGSIEJ	MEMBER	NEW-NONGSTOIN	7005688810
6	SMT.SABA LYNGDOH	MEMBER	NEW-NONGSTOIN	7005397064
7	SMT.SELLMODARIS	MEMBER	NEW-NONGSTOIN	7085212565
8	SMT.A.SUNN	MEMBER	NEW-NONGSTOIN	9402194259


President,
A.K.Syntiew
Swadhar Greh Home
New-Nongstoin


Secretary,
C.K.Nonglong
Swadhar Greh Home
New-Nongstoin.

XI. Budget sanctioned by the centre and the state for various programmes/schemes for women

GOVERNMENT OF MEGHALAYA
DIRECTORATE OF SOCIAL WELFARE
MEGHALAYA, SHILLONG

No. SW/WW/5/2017/ 7915

Dated Shillong, the 14th November, 2018

From : Shri. E.Kharmalki, I.A.S.,
Director of Social Welfare
Meghalaya, Shillong.

To : The Programme Manager,
North East Network (NEN)
Shillong.

Sub : Information on the Study "Experience of Female Survivors of Violence
in Shelter Homes – An action Research.


Ref : No.NEN/SH/2018/045 dt.31.10.2018.

Madam,

With reference to the subject above, enclosed herewith the
informations on the above Research as desired from your end.

Yours faithfully

Encl: as above


Director of Social Welfare
Meghalaya, Shillong.

Information for the study 'Experience of Female Survivors of Violence in Shelter Homes – An Action Research'

	<i>Question</i>	<i>Answer</i>																		
1	Total number of Domestic Violence cases reported to Promotion offices of 11 districts of Meghalaya from 2015-2017 (If possible please provide segregated date of types of domestic violence recorded)	2015-16 – 106 nos. 2016-17 – 161 nos. 2017-18 – 97 nos.																		
2	Budget (Release and expenditure statement of):	--																		
a)	Meghalaya State Resource Centre for Women from Financial year 2012-2013 to 2018-2019	<table border="1"> <tr><td>1.</td><td>2012-13</td><td>Rs.38,51,000/-</td></tr> <tr><td>2.</td><td>2013-14</td><td>Rs.13,39,280/-</td></tr> <tr><td>3.</td><td>2014-15</td><td>Rs.15,48,154/-</td></tr> <tr><td>4.</td><td>2015-16</td><td>Rs.26,31,000/-</td></tr> <tr><td>5.</td><td>2016-17</td><td>Rs.9,92,000/-</td></tr> <tr><td>6.</td><td>2017-18</td><td>Rs.33,15,880/-</td></tr> </table>	1.	2012-13	Rs.38,51,000/-	2.	2013-14	Rs.13,39,280/-	3.	2014-15	Rs.15,48,154/-	4.	2015-16	Rs.26,31,000/-	5.	2016-17	Rs.9,92,000/-	6.	2017-18	Rs.33,15,880/-
1.	2012-13	Rs.38,51,000/-																		
2.	2013-14	Rs.13,39,280/-																		
3.	2014-15	Rs.15,48,154/-																		
4.	2015-16	Rs.26,31,000/-																		
5.	2016-17	Rs.9,92,000/-																		
6.	2017-18	Rs.33,15,880/-																		
b)	One Stop Centres in Tura and Shillong from Financial year 2016-2017 to 2018-2019	<table border="1"> <tr><td colspan="3">One Stop Centre, Shillong</td></tr> <tr><td>1.</td><td>2015-16</td><td>Rs.13,19,120/-</td></tr> <tr><td>2.</td><td>2017-18</td><td>Rs.7,75,391/-</td></tr> <tr><td colspan="3">One Stop Centre, Shillong</td></tr> <tr><td>1.</td><td>2016-17</td><td>Rs.28,41,450/-</td></tr> </table>	One Stop Centre, Shillong			1.	2015-16	Rs.13,19,120/-	2.	2017-18	Rs.7,75,391/-	One Stop Centre, Shillong			1.	2016-17	Rs.28,41,450/-			
One Stop Centre, Shillong																				
1.	2015-16	Rs.13,19,120/-																		
2.	2017-18	Rs.7,75,391/-																		
One Stop Centre, Shillong																				
1.	2016-17	Rs.28,41,450/-																		
c)	Swadhar Greh Homes in Shillong and Nongstoin from Financial Year 2017-2018 to 2018-2019	Shillong – Rs.4,84,666.50p Nongstoin -- Rs.4,84,666.50p																		
d)	Financial aid provided to Service providers under Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 of Financial Year 2012-2013 to 2018-2019	<table border="1"> <tr><td>1.</td><td>2012-13</td><td>Rs.30,00,000/-</td></tr> <tr><td>2.</td><td>2013-14</td><td>Rs.30,00,000/-</td></tr> <tr><td>3.</td><td>2014-15</td><td>Rs.30,00,000/-</td></tr> <tr><td>4.</td><td>2015-16</td><td>Rs.30,00,000/-</td></tr> <tr><td>5.</td><td>2016-17</td><td>Rs.35,00,000/-</td></tr> <tr><td>6.</td><td>2017-18</td><td>Rs.35,00,000/-</td></tr> </table>	1.	2012-13	Rs.30,00,000/-	2.	2013-14	Rs.30,00,000/-	3.	2014-15	Rs.30,00,000/-	4.	2015-16	Rs.30,00,000/-	5.	2016-17	Rs.35,00,000/-	6.	2017-18	Rs.35,00,000/-
1.	2012-13	Rs.30,00,000/-																		
2.	2013-14	Rs.30,00,000/-																		
3.	2014-15	Rs.30,00,000/-																		
4.	2015-16	Rs.30,00,000/-																		
5.	2016-17	Rs.35,00,000/-																		
6.	2017-18	Rs.35,00,000/-																		
e)	Financial aid provided to Ferrando Transit Home, Shillong in Financial Year 2015-2016 to 2018-2019.	<table border="1"> <tr><td>1.</td><td>2015-16</td><td>Rs.5.00 lakhs</td></tr> <tr><td>2.</td><td>2016-17</td><td>Rs.5.00 lakhs</td></tr> <tr><td>3.</td><td>2017-18</td><td>Rs.5.00 lakhs</td></tr> <tr><td>4.</td><td>2018-19</td><td>Not yet received</td></tr> </table>	1.	2015-16	Rs.5.00 lakhs	2.	2016-17	Rs.5.00 lakhs	3.	2017-18	Rs.5.00 lakhs	4.	2018-19	Not yet received						
1.	2015-16	Rs.5.00 lakhs																		
2.	2016-17	Rs.5.00 lakhs																		
3.	2017-18	Rs.5.00 lakhs																		
4.	2018-19	Not yet received																		

XII. Information on the Compensation schemes provided from Meghalaya State Legal Service Authority



MEGHALAYA STATE LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY : SHILLONG
(Established under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987)

MATI Building, Additional Secretariat, Room No-120, Meghalaya, Shillong-793001

(Ph. & Fax, 0364-2501051), Email, megshillong@gmail.com

No. MSLSA.10/2012/VOL.I/ 136

Dated Shillong the 14th December, 2018.

From: The Member Secretary,
Meghalaya State Legal Services Authority,
Shillong.

To: ~~The Programme Manager,~~
North East Network,
"Beams End Cottage"
Jingkieng Nongthymmai,
Shillong, Meghalaya.

Sub : Information for the study 'Experience of Female Survivors of Violence in Shelter Homes.

Ref : NEN/SH/2018/049 dt. 19.11.2018

Madam ,

With reference to the subject and letter indicated above ,regarding the Information for the study 'Experience of Female Survivors of Violence in Shelter Homes, I am to state as follows :

1. NALSA (Victims of Trafficking and Commercial/Sexual Exploitation) Scheme,2015

Several Awareness has been conducted from time to time.

2. Compensation Scheme for Women Victims/Survivors of Sexual Assault/ other Crimes- 2018.

Scheme has not yet been implemented.


3. Any other compensation scheme for women survivors of violence.

Meghalaya Victim Compensation Scheme 2011 and Meghalaya Victim Compensation Scheme 2014.

Details enclosed herewith

Encl: As stated

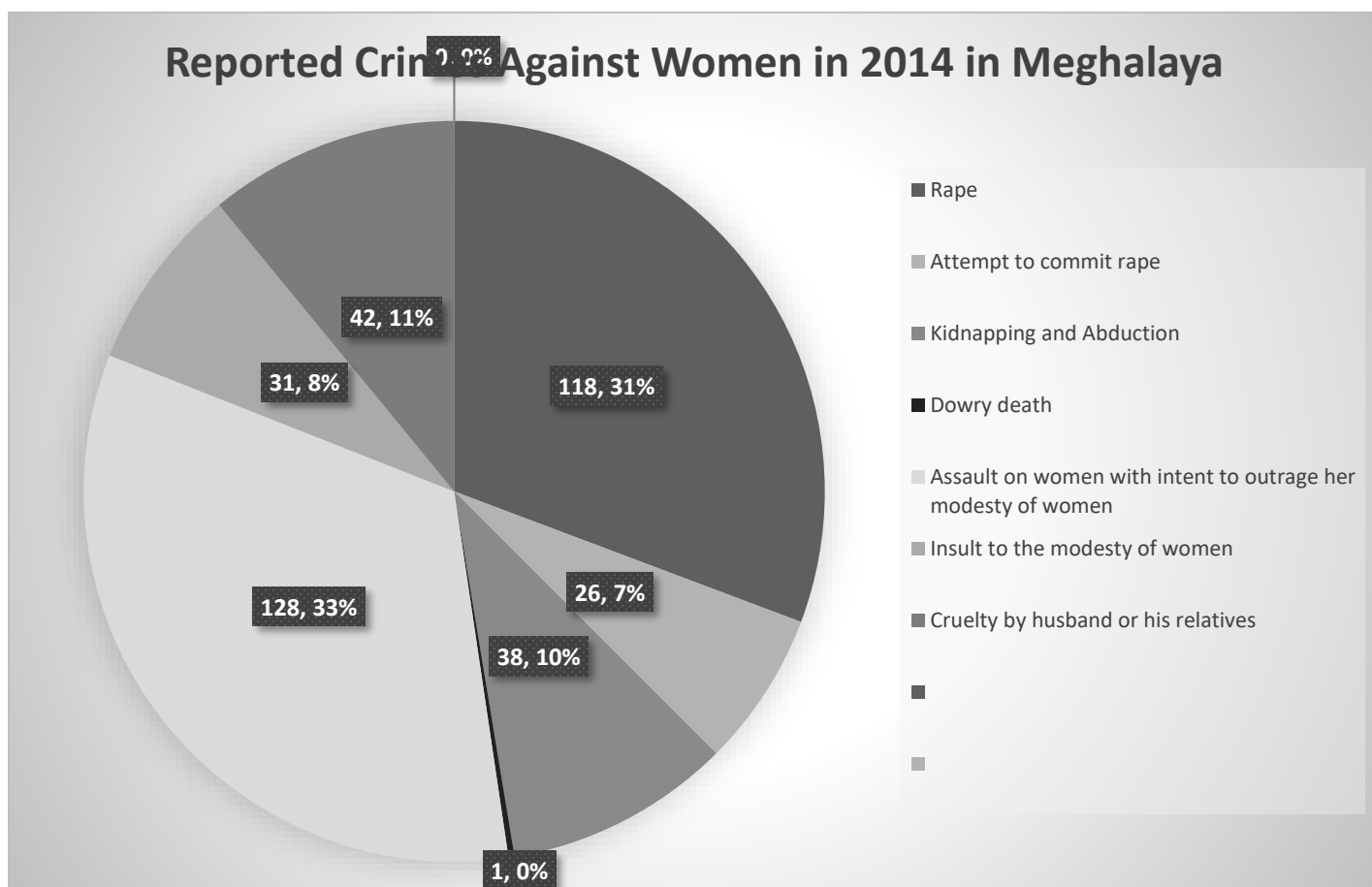
Yours faithfully,


14/12/18
(W. Diengdoh)

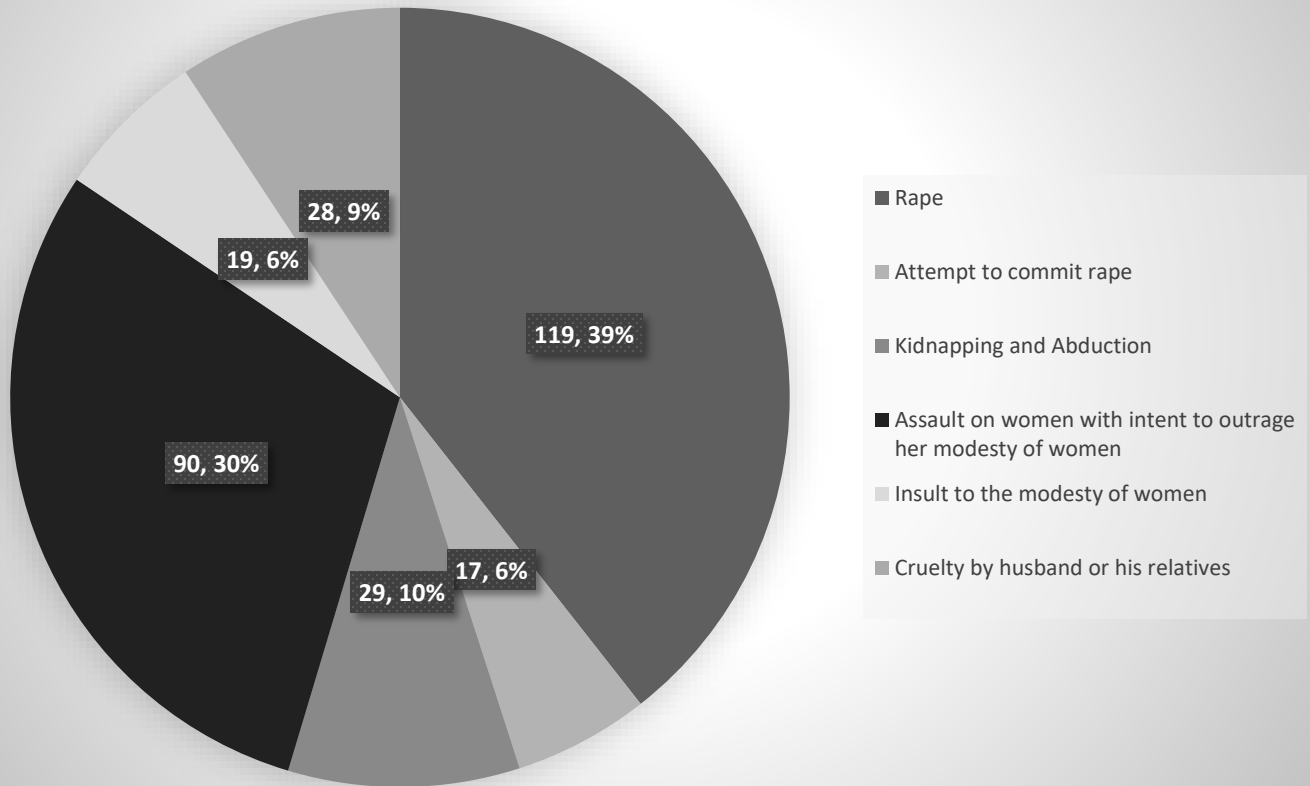
Number of persons and year of availing compensation

Year	Number of persons
2014	3
2015	20
2016	3
2017	20
2018	23

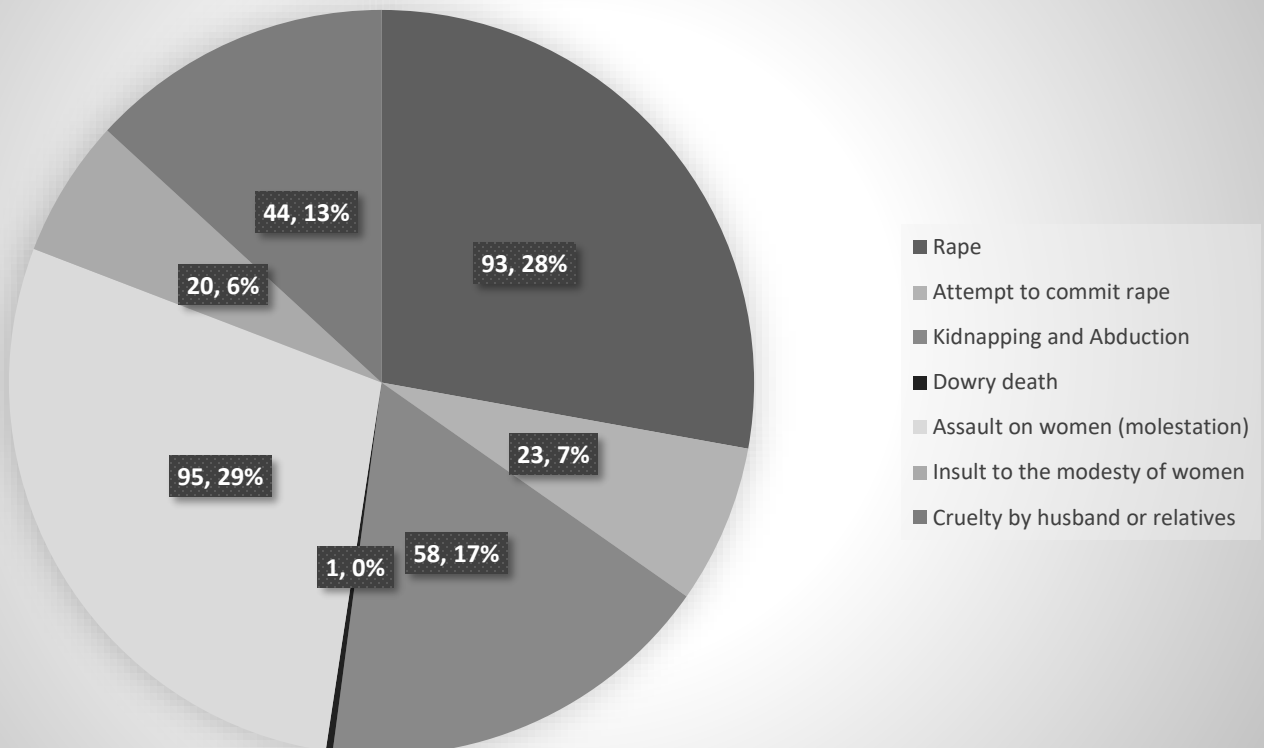
XIII. Crime records Meghalaya State Crime Record Bureau



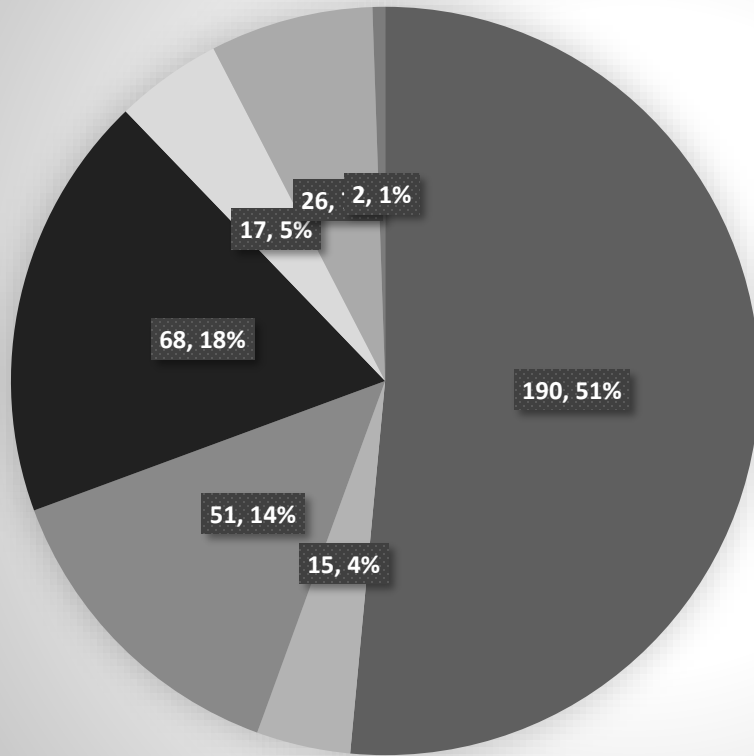
Reported Crimes Against Women in 2017 in Meghalaya



Reported Crimes Against Women in 2015 in Meghalaya

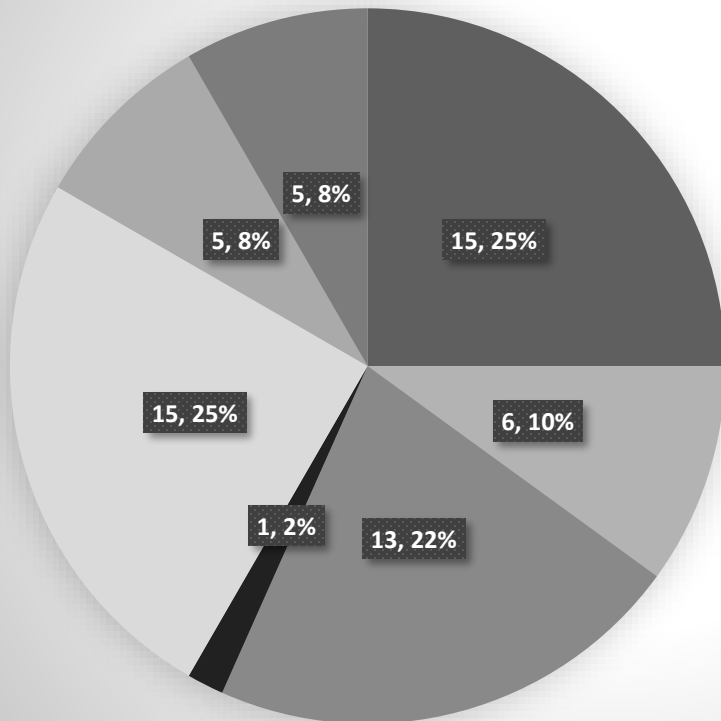


Reported Crimes Against Women in 2016 in Meghalaya

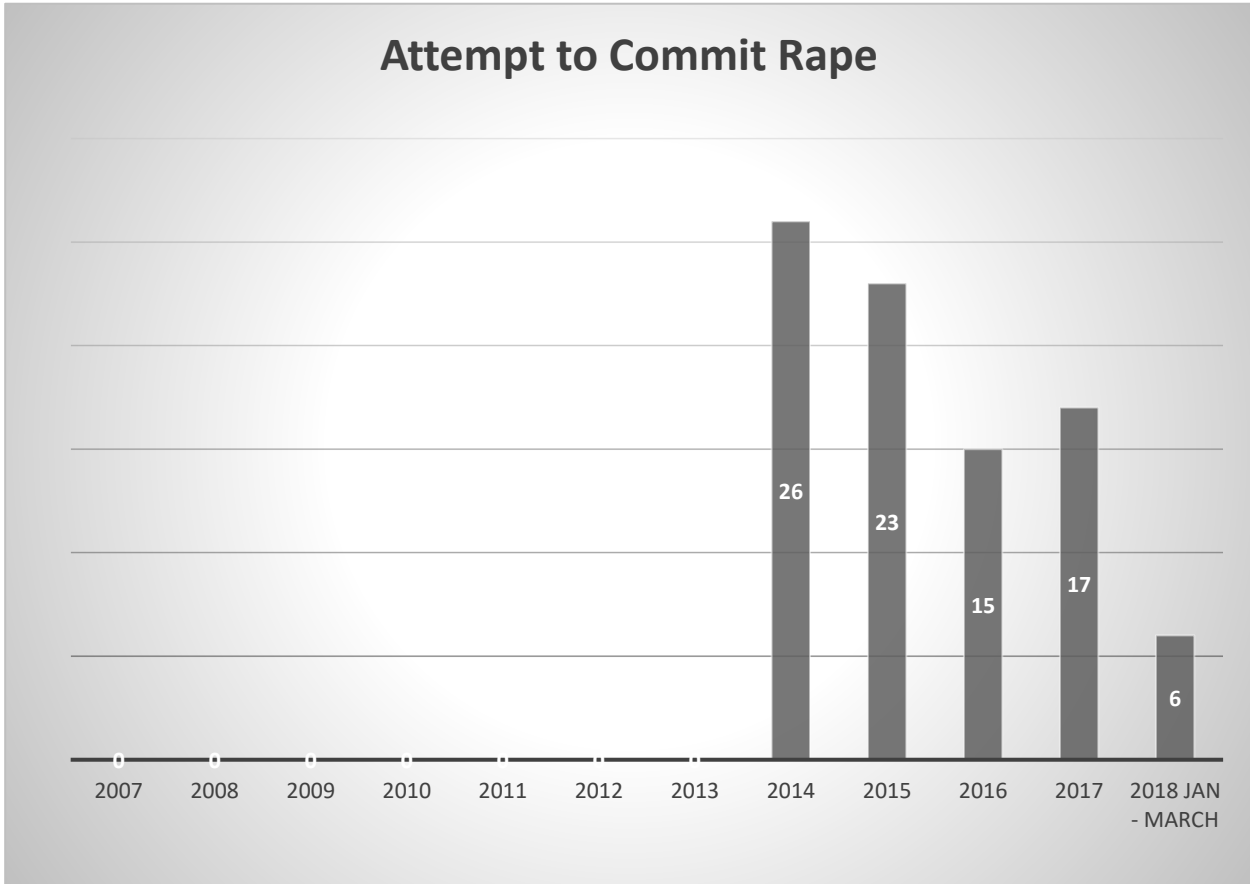
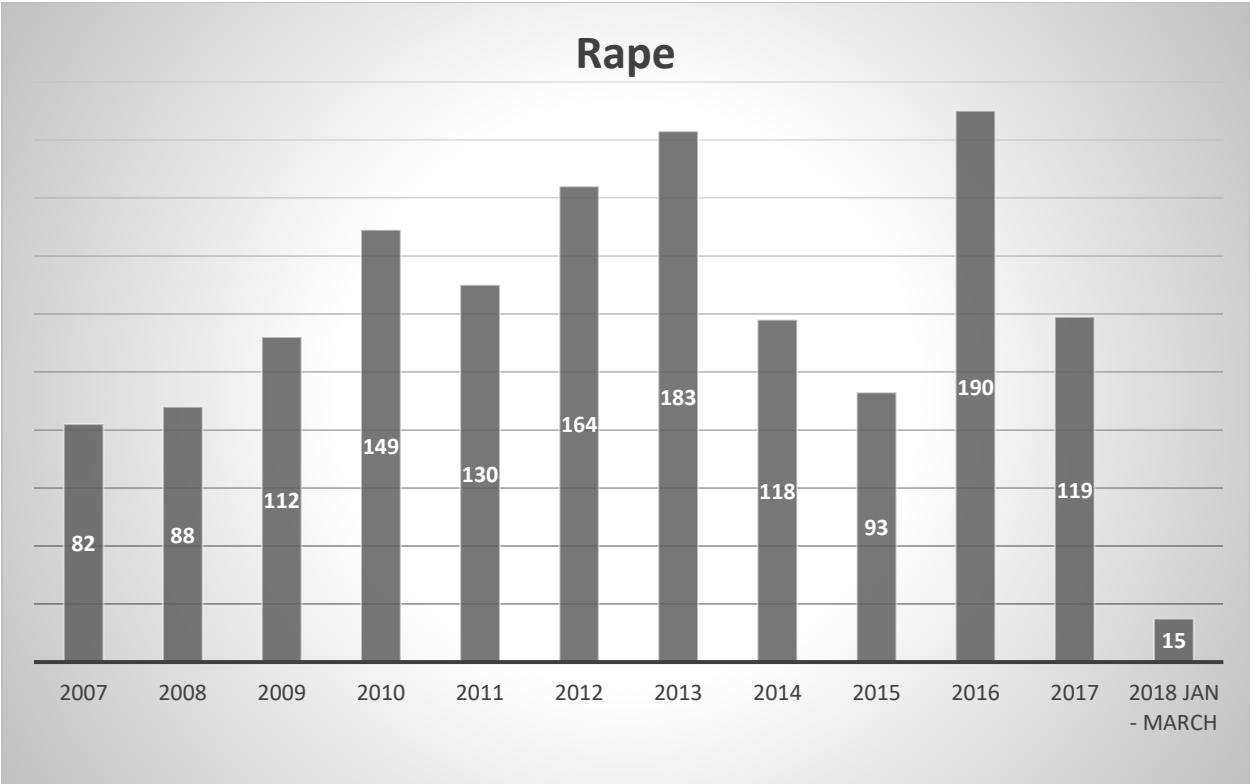


- Rape/ 4&6 POCSO Act
- Attempt to commit rape
- Kidnapping and Abduction
- Assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty of women
- Insult to the modesty of women
- Cruelty by husband or his relatives
- Immoral Traffic Prevention Act

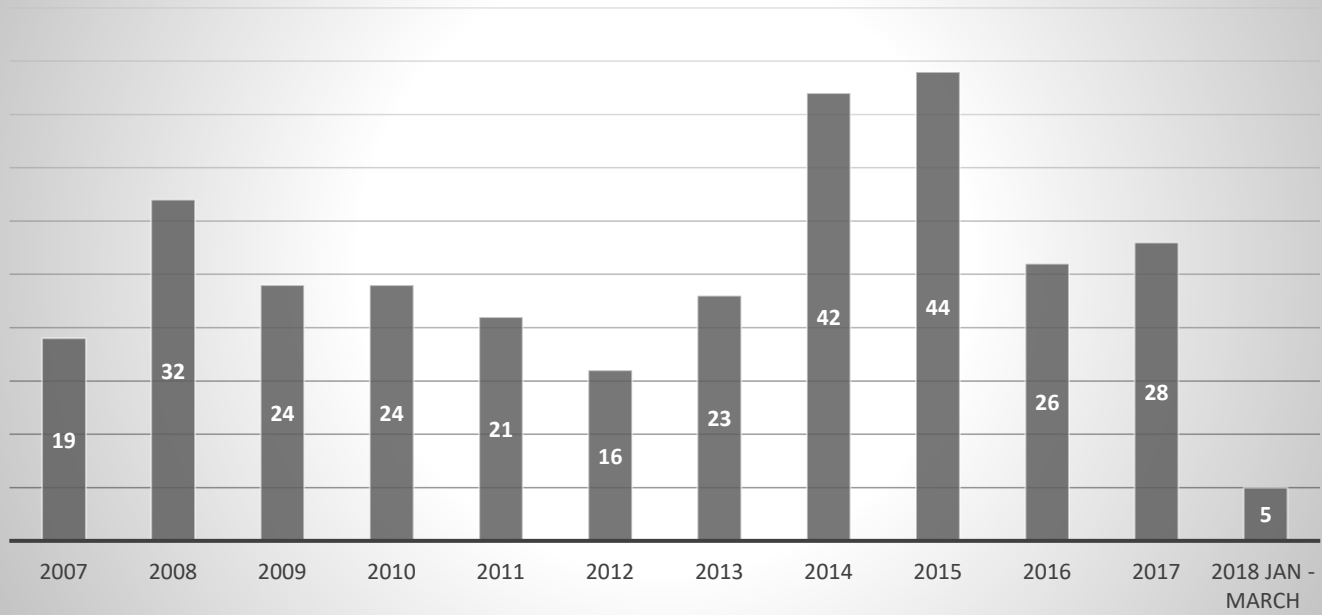
Reported Crimes Against Women January to March 2018 in Meghalaya



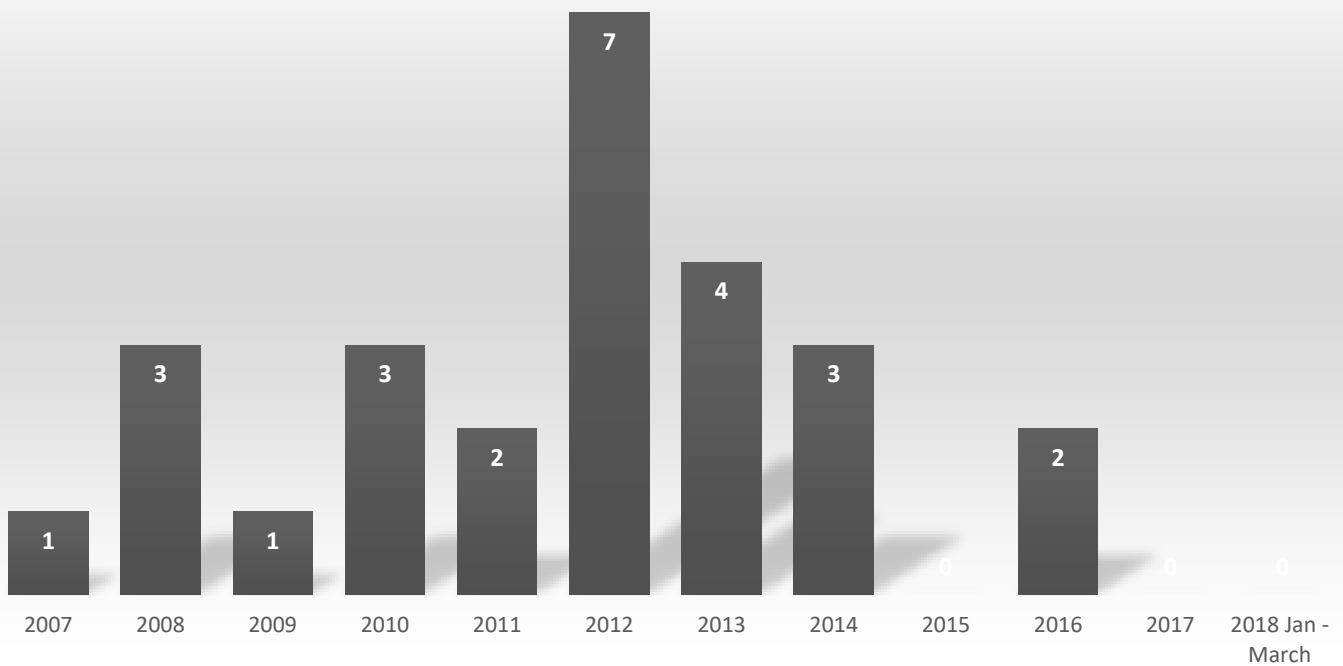
- Rape
- Attempt to commit rape
- Kidnapping and Abduction
- Dowry death
- Assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty of women
- Insult to the modesty of women
- Cruelty by husband or his relatives



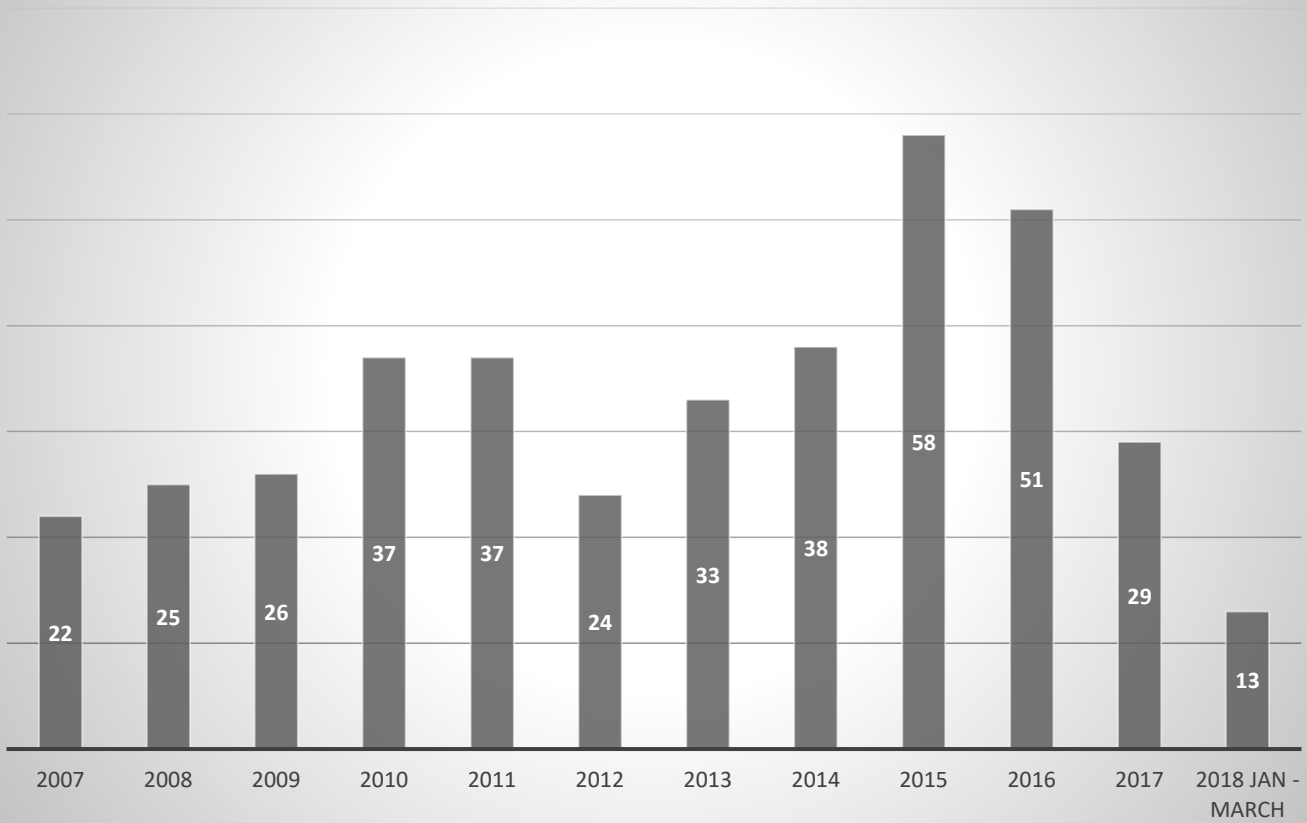
Cruelty by husband or his relatives



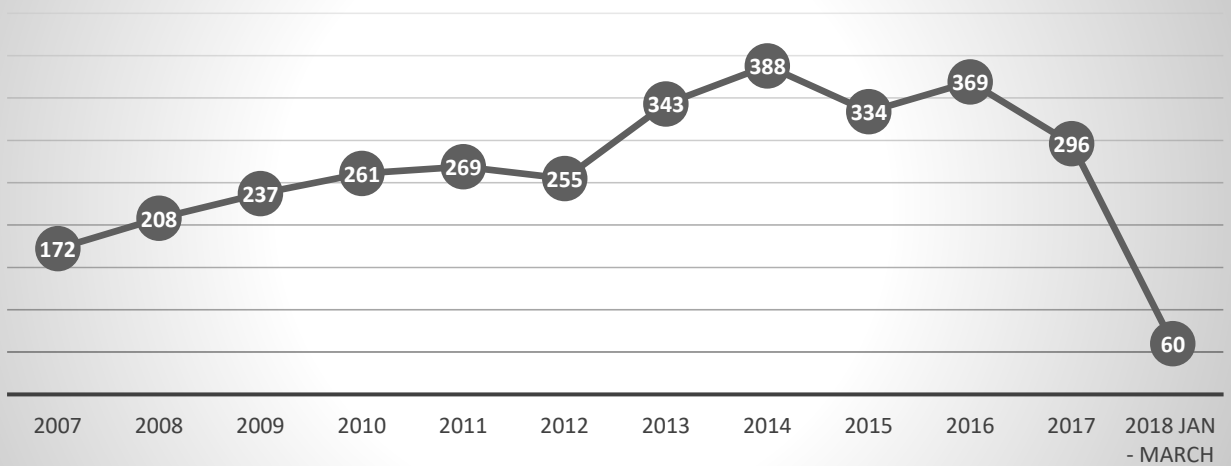
Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act



Kidnapping and Abduction of women



Cases Registered Under Crime Against Women 2007 - 2018



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17. Trend and causes of gender discrimination in Meghalaya. (2013). *VAW DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN* , 78,79,80,.




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 Springside, Jingkieng,
Nongthymmai, Shillong, Meghalaya
793014

 0364 252 1221
