

**smart**

SEEKING MODERN APPLICATIONS  
FOR REAL TRANSFORMATION

# HINSA KO NO

An Initiative by SMART and Radio Mewat

# The Context



- Mewat (now Nuh), Haryana is the most backward district in India
- Largely a Muslim community that subsists on seasonal livelihoods
- Literacy rate is 34% among women and 54% among men
- Very conservative in outlook

# Position of Women

- Devoid of agency
- Very low literacy rate
- Not allowed to study after a point
- Not allowed to be employed
- Married off at an early age
- Forced to bear multiple children
- Frail health
- Poverty



# Radio Mewat – A Community Radio



- Started in 2010 and licensed to SMART
- Local issues, to local people in local language
- Run by the community so total awareness of the developments
- Credibility and Trust
- Maps the community and their need
- Works closely with the local administration as well as the people of the area

# Radio Mewat's Focus



Deeply invested in women-centric issues, especially:

- Women's Security
- Health & Nutrition
- Education
- Strengthening women's participation in local self-government
- Digital Literacy
- Radio Tuition for children
- POSCO

# The Need & The Beginning

- During regular interactions with women on field for women-centric programs, the team realised violence against women was extremely common
- Started a program series on domestic violence in 2018 called Hinsa Ko No
- Narrowcasting of programs among women listener groups led to them coming out with their stories
- Some of them would break down and approach the team for help
- Realised the need for a field-based broad approach on the issue



# The Initiative



- To start conversations around violence against women
- Establish DV as a problem in the area
- To form safe spaces for women which allow them to share their stories and grievances
- To document stories of DV victims
- To engage with multiple stakeholders who can do something about the issue
- To create Ambassadors of Change from within the community who can make a difference

# The Approach

- Creating groups of 20-22 women across 25 Panchayats of Nuh
- Sensitise them about various aspects of DV and encouraging them to share their stories
- Recording their stories
- Making regular programs on various aspects of DV, and highlighting stories from Mewat
- Engage with Panchayats, Police, Lawyers, WCD, One Stop Centre, Media, Local NGOs and work holistically towards resolving this issue
- Empowering women to take the baton forth
- Engaging with 10 other CR Stations to work on this issue in their communities



# Progress

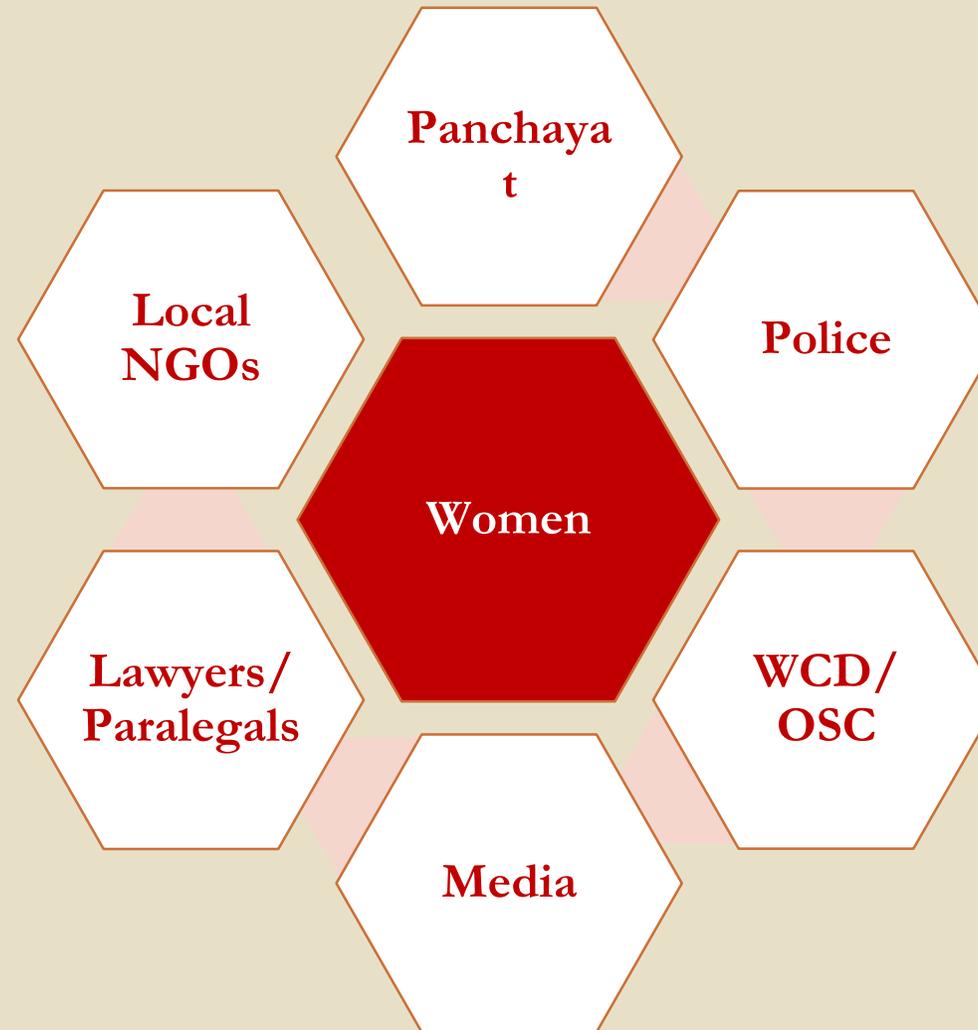
## Women's Trainings



- Actively engaged with over 700 women across 27 Panchayats in Mewat
- Over three sets of trainings conducted in their respective villages over 3 years, sensitised them about various aspects of violence as defined in the law
- They are aware of the provisions under DV Act, 2005 and the help available to them, such as OSC, Mahila Thana, PO
- Have recorded over 205 cases of violence from Mewat
- Act as a bridge between the victim and the authorities to get resolutions on cases



# Stakeholders' Engagement in Mewat



# Stakeholder Engagement

- About 306 Panchayat Members from 25 Panchayats trained on DV and the role of Panchayats
- Over 75 Police Personnel sensitised on DV and how to interact with victims of violence
- Interactions with over 25 local media and NGO personnel on media-representation of DV cases and integrating messaging on GBV during other social interventions
- Over 72 lawyers and paralegals from DLSA trained on DV and sensitised on how to interact with DV victims
- 60 ASHA, Anganwadi, OSC and WCD Department personnel sensitised on DV and their role in helping the victims
- About 622 students sensitised on DV



# Programming & Narrowcasting

- 144 Fresh programs produced and broadcast on Radio Mewat
- About 7613 people reached via 289 Narrowcasts. Narrowcasts also being conducted in mixed groups of men & women



# Cases & Counselling



Over **209**  
cases of DV  
registered  
and  
Counselling  
facilitated



# Partner Stations

- Conducted a 3-day residential workshop of representatives from 10 CR stations across 5 states
- Conducted training sessions with over 300 women across 5 states on various aspects of DV
- Regular programming by partner CR stations on DV
- Documentation of DV cases







# Challenges

- Breaking the normalcy of accepting violence in marriage
- Building an understanding of violence other than physical abuse
- Acknowledgement of violence – They accept violence does take place with women, but always exclude themselves from that category (“*Hinsa hoti hai, par yahan nahi hoti/ humare saath nahi hoti*”)
- Gaining the trust of mother-in-laws and other family members that no “anti-family” or “family-breaking” conversations are held in the group meetings

# Other Challenges: Mewat

- In a workshop for police, the session sparked an interesting debate among the male and female police personnel. While the men said that there are certain “benefits” that their female counterparts enjoy, the women highlighted how they still have to struggle in a male-dominated force to be taken seriously, as well as balance their work and domestic front. This exposed the gender disparity as well as a certain level of disconnect among colleagues within the institution.
- During one of the workshops with local media, one of the pertinent outcomes of the discussion was the realisation of the fact that in Nuh, the newsrooms of the local newspapers and channels are mostly all-men and how coming from the same community, they are also wired to think in patriarchal ways and sometimes reflect the male-dominated notions of the society.
- During the training of WCD, OSC and Anganwadi workers in Mewat, we realised that most of them did not seem to have undergone any kind of gender-based sensitisation earlier and some of the responses by them reflected that they have also been influenced and conditioned to think in regressive and patriarchal ways. While the members of WCD were more educated, their feedback to the statements was also quite loaded with the usual judgement practiced against women.
- Most of the ASHA workers during a workshop were unaware of even the basic concepts with regard to domestic violence and did not have knowledge of government institutions such as OSCs, which have been set up to help victims of violence. Many of them could not answer as to how they, in their capacity as ASHA workers, could help a DV victim.
- Disinterested attitude of stakeholders towards the issue

# Success Story: Impact in Mewat

The work being done on the ground in Nuh has gained momentum and is also being recognised across the district. While we have so far registered over 205 cases of domestic violence against women in Nuh, the impact of the work can also be adjudged from a recent incident when a police constable stationed in Nuh contacted one of our team members. He said as we are working on the issue of domestic violence, he would like to discuss a “personal problem” with us and sought “advice” for the same.

When asked about the problem, he elaborated that his wife had filed a complaint of domestic violence against him in Panipat. He was worried about losing his job due to the same and asked if our team could “help him out in some way”. While the team member explained that as our area of operation is Mewat, we will not be able to do anything about a case in Panipat. However, when the team member pried for details leading up to the incident, the constable accepted that he had slapped his wife and had also verbally abused her.

The team member then explained the implications of his action as per the DV Act and the rights that his wife is entitled to according to the provisions of the act. This incident proved to the team that their work is making waves enough to be seen and heard about in the area.

# Success Story: Kanpur Dehat (1)

One heartening result of the meetings and interactions with the women have been the actions taken by them. One example is the women's group of **Ludhaura village in Kanpur Dehat**.

During our first training session with the group when the conversation came to sexual violence, they narrated the story of an **18-year-old young woman** in their village who had been brutally sexually abused by her husband for almost a year. The husband, a year older than her, watched porn videos and subjected her to very violent sexual acts, as a result of which her vaginal and anal cavity had fused. The women of recounted how the girl had discussed the same to her mother and mother-in-law, seeking help, but both of them had told her that “some pain during sex is normal” and that sex “is one of the reasons why people marry”.

The government hospital had refused to admit her after looking at the nature and state of her injuries and had told her to go to a private hospital. However, due to lack of funds, the 18-year-old was at home and “nearing death” due to a lack of treatment.

## Success Story: Kanpur Dehat (2)

Though the entire village knew of the story and the plight of the young woman, it was the first time that they all discussed the issue collectively. The at-length discussion on sexual violence with reference to this particular case stayed with the women and they decided to act upon it. They mobilised, pooled in money and also collected funds from everyone in their village. Through that money, they got the victim admitted to a private hospital, where she received treatment. The women also filed a police complaint against the victim's husband as a result of which a legal proceeding against him has been initiated.

Someone or the other from the group regularly checks up on the young woman and also maintains a constant communication with her in-laws as well, to ensure that the domestic environment does not become hostile for her.

# Other Positive Outcomes (1)

**1. Acknowledgement of violence:** One of the most significant and visible aspects of the interactions with women through the meetings has been the acceptance and acknowledgment of violence in their homes and lives. In each of the meetings, at the beginning women deny being subjected to any kind of gender-based violence. The common narrative among the women at the beginning of the meetings is, “Yes, domestic violence happens with women, but not with me or in my family.” Or “It used to happen earlier, now it doesn’t happen anymore.” Our endeavour is to break this notion by interacting with the women and soliciting stories/instances from their own lives. Usually, this approach is successful.

**2. Building trust among women:** While one of the most important reasons for creating the women’s groups is to build a safe space for them, it is very important for the women to trust each other in order for that to happen. Being from the same village or community, while the participants are familiar with each other, they do not completely trust each other. Our endeavour from the very first meeting is to forge bonds of respect, trust and relatability among the women.

With more and more women sharing their personal stories during the group meetings, we know we are headed in the right direction.

## Other Positive Outcomes (2)

During a group meeting in Ghaseda village of Nuh (Mewat), **Rizwana** shared the story of her two daughters Rukaiyya and Sameena. Both of them are married in the same house to two brothers. During the meeting, Rizwana recounted how both her daughters are being physically and mentally abused by their respective husbands and in-laws. She recounted incidents where her daughters were shut by the in-laws in the cow-shed and given one roti a day. She also shared details of the physical abuse the daughters have been put through during their pregnancies. This was a revelation to most women in the group. Despite being from the same village and part of a close-knit community, Rizwana spoke of this publicly for the first time in one of the meetings. Since then, other women in the village have also shared their stories.

**3. The demand for involvement:** In Nuh as well as in the area where our partner stations have been working, many women who were initially not a part of the women's groups have joined it or started coming to the meetings regularly after hearing about it from someone.

# Mask-Making Initiative in Mewat



With increased reports of violence against women recorded across India during the lockdown, we needed a way to stay in regular contact with the women during this period and to provide them a source of livelihood to manage their basic household expenses.

**Over 60,000 masks**  
**made by around**  
**300 women**

The team involved the women in a mask-making initiative. The cloth and stitching material was provided by us. Women were trained on how to make the masks and during these meetings, conversations around DV were also held. They were compensated for the masks made and these were distributed free across Mewat.

