

REPORT

Script Development Workshop

Under Stepping Stones: Engaging with Youth in South Asia on Sexual Violence and Impunity & Body of Evidence Projects

A Zubaan Workshop for Theatre Practitioners and Performing Artists

Date- 14-15 March 2019

Venue- Sahbhagi Shiksham Kendra, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh

Zubaan's Script Development Workshop on Sexual Violence and Impunity was held for two days in Sitapur Road, outside Lucknow city, to bring together theatre practitioners, Dalit activists and nursing staff from different parts of the state. This workshop was an attempt to take the conversation on sexual violence and impunity away from academia and open it through various other channels, like theatre, art, poetry, etc.; to start the conversation with other NGO practitioners, lawyers, and health professionals regarding the kind of impunities imposed by the State, the society, by communities and by families, and how women's bodies often become sites of these violence.

For this workshop we had a diverse group of participants. We had three people who were practicing as nurses in government hospitals in Fatehpur or pursuing nursing for an education, six participants from the organization Mahila Swarojgar Samiti (or MSS), Varanasi, six participants from Kranti Foundation, Fatehpur, six members from STF India, Mainpuri, one practising lawyer, one freelancer and one professor from Aligarh Muslim University. There was a total of 24 participants. Theatre practitioner Mallika Taneja was the resource person for the workshop.

Day 1:

We began with an introduction and ice breaking session, using theatre warm up techniques to introduce ourselves. This activity involved expressing through movement exercises which involved participants walking randomly in groups, stopping on cue and having a conversation with the person next to them . This helped break boundaries



among the diverse group of participants, and oriented them into the kind of material they had to engage within the coming sessions. In the second session, we introduced the project,

talked about sexual violence, talked about the concept of impunity including examples of state, family impunity and shared thoughts from our earlier work at the SVI project. This was proceeded with lunch.

In the next session, we had active discussions with authors and feminist activists Urvashi Butalia and Farah Naqvi, who opened the conversation about State impunity with the participants. The mass rape and violence at the twin villages of Kunan and Poshpora in Kashmir was discussed and the idea of the nation state is put to question against the violence that plays on women's bodies. They also discuss the moving story of Apenyo and her mother Libeni, as penned by Temsula Ao in the chapter *The Last Song*, in one of the SVI series publications *Breaching the Citadel: The India Papers I*. The Q&A session was quite animated as participants, especially younger students, who questioned the stereotypes of Muslim communities and Kashmir Statehood from the standpoint of popular narrative / culture.

Farah talked about the aftermath of the gangrape of Bilkis Bano and the murder of her daughter, in the Gujarat riots of 2001. The State apparatus, which includes the police, the doctors and the courts, that put a lot of effort into protecting the persons accused and the kind of impunity that the state provided. Bilkis's struggle for justice was a long and exhausting one, and poses a number of challenges and questions on sexual violence on bodies of women and the idea of 'justice' to women as imagined by nation States.

We broke into four groups in the final session, and using the minimal theatre techniques that were used in the morning, the participants were encouraged to work on their own productions around the topic of sexual violence, state violence, family and impunity. Taking into consideration the differences in language and the general comfort level, it was decided that the teams would not be broken up and continue with their own groups, barring the nursing team, the lawyer and the professor who were grouped together.



Day 2:

The teams worked on these productions until the next afternoon and the first half was allocated for practice for the same. Mallika, Raihan and Bidisha moved around the groups, discussing the stories and the questions of impunity emerging from the chosen stories. After lunch, we had presentations from the groups. The first group comprising the STF team did a production on the story of a child's sexual abuse, where the community came together to



force the police to register a complaint, thereby opening the conversation on alternating communities of support that can challenge the impunity by the State bodies. The second group, Kranti Foundation, did a piece on impunity within the family, where the family puts pressure on not reporting an instance of sexual violence. The MSS team,

which comprised the third group, used a devised performance of children's games to question what protection of women materially means, where it ends, and how it mostly results into controlling the mobility and sexuality of women. The fourth group put up a demonstration on Suzette Jordan's daughter's struggle to come in terms with their mother's battle, and their journey to understand and accept it.

There was a short feedback session by Mallika and Bidisha, where several suggestions were made and discussions on religion, ethics, portrayal of victim vs perpetrator, etc. were the focal points.. For example, the performance by Kranti Foundation was recommended to be cognizant while portraying a patriarchal Muslim family, as the community is already subjected to hate, control and regulation, mostly on the pretext of naming their traditional culture markers as patriarchal manifestations. The participants responded to the performances with connection to their personal lives and their experiences of sexual violence and the unspeakability of it within their own communities. The workshop ended by breaking into informal conversations and participants were really keen to continue the engagement further, with follow up workshops.





AGENDA

Script Development Workshop

March 14-15, 2019, Lucknow; Organised by Zubaan, New Delhi

Day 1: 14 March

10- 11 am- Introductions + Background of Project (Stepping Stones & Body of Evidence)-
Bidisha + Rehan

11-11.15 am- Tea

11.15 am- 1 pm- Introducing the SVI project- Urvashi + Farah

1- 2 pm- Lunch

2- 3.30 pm- Theatre work with Mallika

3.30- 3.45 pm- Tea

3.45- 5 pm- Continue earlier session

5 pm- Break up into groups and discuss

Day 2: 15 March

10- 11.30 am- Theatre work with Mallika- Day 2

11.30- 11.45 am- Tea

11.45 am- 1.30 pm- Continue earlier session

1.30- 2.30 pm- Lunch

2.30- 4 pm- Presentation of group ideas

4- 4.15 pm- Tea

4.15- 6 pm- More presentations+ going forward- Mallika + Bidisha

Participants List

NAME	Age	Profession	Qualification	Address	Organisation
Hemanshi Singh Chauhan	23	Staff Nurse.	Diploma Nursing.	In Distt. Hospital Nurses Colony Fatehpur	None
Urmila Yadav	26	Staff Nurse.	Diploma Nursing.	In Distt. Hospital Nurses Colony Fatehpur	None
Mohammad Urooj Siddique	22	Freelancer	Post Graduate	368, Azad Nagar Colony, Fatehpur - 212601	None
Ratna	27		Intermediate	Village : Bairwan, P.O. : Gangapur, Dist : Varanasi	MSS, Varanasi
Anita	19		Intermediate	Village : Mahendiganj, P.O.: Rajatalab, Dist : Varanasi	MSS, Varanasi
Soni	21		Intermediate	Village : Mataldai, P.O.: Kashipur, Dist : Varanasi	MSS, Varanasi

Amrita Bharti	22		Intermediate	Village : Todarpur, P.O.: Rajatalab, Dist : Varanasi	MSS, Varanasi
Arti Barti	27		Intermediate	Village : Todarpur, P.O.: Rajatalab, Dist : Varanasi	MSS, Varanasi
Jyoti	18		Intermediate	Village : Mahendiganj, P.O.: Rajatalab, Dist : Varanasi	MSS, Varanasi
Zubair Idris	1/28/1990	IDBI Bank B Com	M.A.	Village: Maswani, Dist: Fatehpur	Kranti Foundations
Saumya Singh	21	Singer	B A 3rd* Year	Awas Vikas*	Kranti Foundations
Ravi Sharma	18	Acting	Intermediate	Village: Krishna Nagar, Dist: Fatehpur	Kranti Foundations
Madhuri Kashyap	35	Advocacy & Acting	B.Sc., M.A., L.L.B.	Anupam Nagar, Badaun Road, Near Shanidev Ki Mathiya, Post Kareilly District Bareilly	
Ananya Singh	18	Animation Designing Studen	BFA, I Year		Kranti Foundations
Avichal Dubey	16	Student	10 Pass		Kranti Foundations
Mohd Ragib	21	Social Work	Persuing Graduation	Dhaunra Tanda, District Bareilly	WAYVE Foundation
Sangya Gautami	18			Mo Chaudhary Bhongaon Mainpuri	
Sarayu	23	Nursing	B.A	Bichhola Badaun	STF India
Amit Kumar	31	Social Worker	M.A.Sociology	Dugawali, Etawah	STF India
Madhuri Shakya	29	Dancing	B.A.	Naviganj Mainpur	STF India
Neeraj Shakya	30	Social Work	M.A	Naviganj Mainpuri	STF India
Sujata Gautami	30	Social Work	M.A. Sanskrit	Bhongaon Mainpuri	STF India
Rachit Sahu	22	Student	Persuing Graduation	Chaudhrana Fatehpur	Kranti Foundations

Tauseef Fatima	34	Teaching	Ph.D,BALLB[Hons]	Tar Bangla, English House, AMU Aligarh	
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