

MAJLIS MANCH
NARRATIVE REPORT 2016 – 17

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The Organisation Structure

Financial Profile

Majlis receives grants from local and foreign institutions. In addition we also raise funds from individual donors, by providing consultations and earn interest on our fixed deposits. The audited financial statement is enclosed herewith.

Certification

At Majlis we are committed to upholding the highest standards of accountability and transparency. We are certified by **Credibility Alliance (CA)** a consortium of Voluntary organisations committed towards enhancing accountability and transparency through good governance. We are also certified by **Guide Star India** Gold certificate for its Transparency Badge and Gold Seals to NGOs that meet the highest standards of transparency and public disclosure.

Organogram

Director – Programme Director – Programme Managers – Programme Coordinators

Internal functioning

We are an all women team of lawyers, support persons and administrative staff. Our staff strength during the year was 25. The teams are divided as per the focus of their work and are headed by a team leader. The team leaders are part of an advisory committee that decides on critical issues concerning the organisation. Every Thursday evening the entire office meets to share their work and discuss contemporary issues. We also invite external experts to address the team on issues of critical concern. The weekly meetings have greatly helped in team building and skill development and in providing an exposure to wider concerns. Our team members also attend various training programmes to enhance their knowledge and increase their capacity.

I. Public Events

Three public meetings were held during the year, focusing on a range of issues which concern the organization. Following is a brief report of the events.

Status of Human Rights in India Today 1st October, 2016, Mumbai

The vintage Darbar Hall of Asiatic Society in South Mumbai was brimming over with young enthusiastic students jostling for space with veteran human rights activists and lawyers gathered to honour Justice H. Suresh. *“My voice will not be heard in these court halls any more, but my voice is my conscience and it will be heard on behalf of the marginalised people of this country”*, he had declared at the time of his retirement. For the next 25 years he remained true to this pledge.

From visiting Manibeli and meeting tribals of a village on the verge of being submerged, within two months of his retirement, his relentless march in defense of human rights continued relentless for the next 25 years – a probe into the causes and consequences of Cauvery riots in Bangalore in 1991, the Bombay riots in 1992-93, rights violations of the coastal fishing communities in Tamilnadu, human rights violations in Kashmir, sexual abuse and torture of children, human rights violations during the Gujarat riots, to his recent travels to the interiors of Bastar to meet families of tribals who had been shot at point blank range ... and it continues.

For the five organisations which came together to organise the event, it was a payback time since each had their own debt to repay for this towering figure for nurturing and shaping their ideology – People’s Watch, Madurai, Centre for Study of Society and Secularism, Majlis, Mumbai, Human Rights Law Network, Delhi and Human Rights Foundation, Chennai.

The theme for the evening was a tribute to Justice Suresh - *Status of Human Right Today*. The audience listened with rapt attention as four eminent speakers - G Haragopal, Soni Sori, Harsh Mander, and Achin Vanaik unearthed the various strands of the complex tapestry of human rights in India from the global to the national down to the local.

While Soni Sori in her quiet and yet confident voice filled with anguish described the pain of the tribal population, where a youth is shot dead on a mere suspicion of being a maoist, Prof. Haragopal made the vital connection of the fragmentation of society and internal conflicts that takes place when we venture into globalisation of our economies. Harsh Mander spoke

about the reign of terror which is spread among the Meo's of Rajasthan as their huge vessels of biryani are prodded with sticks only to humiliate them on Bakri Eid day ostensibly to find out if the meat in their pots is beef, to the recent NHRC report on Kairani village where the communalized institution articulated the concerns of the Hindu majority rather than exploring the human rights violation of the displaced victims of Muzaffarnagar riots. Prof Achin Vanaik asked the audience to ponder over the popular words like "war against terror" 'Islamic terrorism' and 'surgical strikes' which are mere slogans used by state administrations to camouflage the far more lethal state sponsored terrorism.

The spellbound audience listened with rapt attention and also engaged with the speakers through a lively conversation after the presentations.

Negotiating the On-line 18 and 19 March, 2017, Mumbai

A contemporary issue *Negotiating the on Line*, was taken up for our annual conference Negotiating Spaces to explore the on-line space through a gender lens and examine its positive impacts, threats and internal contradictions. Our concept note outlined the concerns as follows:

"The internet is an opening of a newer avenue of knowledge sharing, better and faster communication transcending time and space. For many, the physical space has merged with the digital. For women it creates a new spatial world in which to explore themselves and their sexuality. But it is also a vast terrain of the unknown and the unfamiliar. The space needs to be used with care, caution, control and regulations as it poses dangers far beyond the physicality. The constant supervision and surveillance of the government clash with concerns of privacy. Under the garb of concerns of national security, the privacy of the individual is violated as each person is subjected to perpetual monitoring. The bid for a cashless economy leaves a digital trail of every transaction. All this, while the poor struggle to access clean drinking water, basic education and healthcare. When we enter the realm of law, the online space throws up its own challenges regarding jurisdiction and culpability. Policies of censorship come directly in conflict with the fundamental right to free speech and expression. While this is also an issue in physical space, in the 'online' the concerns get amplified."

Eighty participants gathered to explore these complexities. The conference was conceptualized by Ms. Bishaka Dutta, as it revolved around some of the core concerns of Point of View. Most of our trustees attended this event.

Ms. Usha Ramanathan, the Delhi based expert on law, poverty and rights delivered the inaugural lecture. Ms. Ramanathan has been an active campaigner against making Aadhar mandatory on the ground that it would lead to exclusions of several marginalized communities and the disentanglement of basic necessities that will occur due to this. She dwelt upon the various cases pending in the Supreme Court and narrated how grassroots struggles of the poor transcended into PILs in the Supreme Court. The decisions in the coming months will either decide the issue in their favour or the struggle would have to go back again to the grassroots, she concluded.

Dr. Shilpa Phadke, School of Media and Cultural Studies, TISS, Mumbai presented a paper titled, *Loitering Online: Spatial Reflections on Feminist Possibilities*. The internet space has opened up newer possibilities for women to express their sexual fantasies and desires in the privacy of their homes. However, the internet space is also a public domain where they would have to trade cautiously. Ms. Anita Gurusurthy, Executive Director, IT for Change, Bangalore, addressed the various challenges the internet has raised. In a well-researched and nuanced presentation she brought out the core concerns for women's rights and citizenship in relation to the digital. She explained how data is the new oil for corporates, and without adequate data protection measures, there is a high likelihood of its misuse at the highest government and corporate levels.

Ms. Audrey D'mello, Programme Director of Majlis presented a paper based on the grounded experiences of our clients and the spaces it opened for their free expressions and the thrill they experience while negotiating the on-line. However, many are unaware of the dangers it poses. Summing up the concerns of the earlier speakers, Adv Nappinai, an Expert on Cyber Law listed the challenges this issue has posed within the realm of law. While legal provisions exist, the implementation is very slow for victims who have experienced on-line abuse. So her advice, 'Be Online - Be Safe!' Ms. Nandini Chami, from IT for Change, Bangalore spoke about content regulations within this new media in the wake of the challenges it poses and the need for regulatory measures.

While the first day dwelt upon the dangers and the need for a cautious handling, on the second day the speakers addressed the liberating experiences of the online. Mr. Osama Manzar, Digital Empowerment Foundation, New Delhi set the trend with his keynote address as he addressed the concerns of the 'Unconnected Billion' and the opportunities of knowledge, entrepreneurship and communication which are denied to them. While we need to provide a protective space, it should not deter us from expanding the scope of internet literacy. Adding to this, Dr. Anja Kovacs, from Internet Democracy Project of Point of View talked about her own research and how the government, in the garb providing protection, is trying to constrain this space. Ms. Bishakha Datta, Director, Point of View in her

presentation, *Buried In The Sand: Sexual Expression Online* talked about varied sexual choices the internet provides, be it personal exploration, widening horizons or sexual education for claiming sexual rights.

While opening a new window, the presentations also left the participants with a few core concerns which the participants would have to explore on their own.

Vulnerability of Women and Girls Within a rural context - State Level Consultation - June 1-3, 2016 in Papal Seminary, Pune

A three day state level conference was organized for women lawyers and social workers from rural districts of Maharashtra to assess the impact of law reforms. Six decades after the Indian Constitution, codification of Hindu Laws, and several special provisions, one can see that the gains have not been percolated down to reach the marginalized sections. For these women and children who need protection the most, rights and courts are alien concepts. Despite the progressive sounding reforms, they continue to be burdened not only by patriarchy, but several other vulnerabilities and prejudices.

The 60 participants who attended the event brought in many insights and the constraints on the ground that hinders them in helping women to access their rights from the realities of rural Maharashtra. The following issues were flagged for discussions

- Domestic violence 498A cruelty to wives, 304B Dowry murders and finally the Domestic Violence Act 2005; yet suicides by married women are on the rise;
- Rights of 2nd Wife – codification of Hindu Marriage Act in 1955 brought in monogamy, but what is the impact upon Hindu 2nd wives? A comparative profile of Hindu and Muslim laws;
- Sexual Violence by known persons and its domino effect on girls and women;
- Return of the Devadasi System in the context of the current drought situation in Maharashtra - impact of poverty on young girls;
- Honour killings, Hindu Caste based violence and Love Jihad.

Two extremely thought provoking presentations on the third day were by Yogesh Pawar, senior editor, DNA on the Devdasi system, a telling account of sexual exploitation of lower caste women and intersectional violence inflicted upon them, and by Nitish Navsagare of ILS Law College who spoke about the brutalities perpetrated on the Dalit youth on a mere suspicion of an affair with the upper caste girl.

2. Rahat – Social & Legal Support

The core work of Majlis has always been to provide support to victims of domestic and sexual violence by walking the legal journey with them, and while doing so, closely monitor the system to render it more responsive to her needs. The legal journey which a victim embarks upon is daunting and instead of strengthening her, pushes her several notches down the social ladder. There is no one within the system to allay her fears, provide emotional support and legal assistance. This prevents victims from accessing remedies they are entitled to. While campaigning for new laws, this core area has remained neglected. One of the main obstruction in effective implementation of a beneficial legislation is the lack of support to victims. Our aim is to help her access the social services she is entitled to in order to help her rehabilitate her life and emerge stronger.

Rather than duplicating the services which the state is obligated to provide, our work with stake holders within the system entrusted with the responsibility of protecting women and children – Judges, Prosecutors, Legal Aid, Protection Officers, Police, Doctors etc. has been to constantly engage with them and flag concerns of the victims and point out the lapses, in order to improve the system. This model is cost effective and has a multiplier effect. There is a great possibility of duplicating it in other districts and also in other states.

The Rahat 5-Point programme assists women and children victims of sexual and domestic violence in the following manner:

First Response/Consultation: Inform her of her legal rights and the process of the case

Social Support: Assist her to access services she needs such as shelter, medical, education, vocational training etc.

Legal Support: Assist her during interactions with Police, Protection Officers, CWC etc

Legal Support Help her connect with Legal Aid and Public Prosecutors. (In certain domestic violence cases Majlis' team of lawyers represents the victims in court)

Legal Support Be present with her during court appearances and follow up the case in Court.

First Response / Consultation,

The starting point of the legal journey is ensuring the victim understands her legal rights. Through a committed team of lawyers and social activists, we have provided legal advice and

first response to over 2000 women and children facing violence. Legal advice is provided not just at our office, but at the door step of victims through legal awareness camps. In cases of sexual violence a large number of cases are referred to us through the Police.

Social Support

The aim of this program is to assist a victim to access services she needs such as shelter, medical, education, vocational training etc. During the course of the year, we have provided educational support, skill development and other support to over 100 victims. Our responses are fine-tuned as per the needs of the victim. In some cases, the help is extended much after the legal case has ended. We are happy to share with you that one of our victims (now a survivor) whose father had raped her, will soon be completing her second year of engineering through our support, encouragement and constant supervision. (She has still one year left and we are looking out for various sources to provide financial support to her for this period.)

Legal Support

- **Legal support in cases of sexual violence**

In cases of **Sexual Violence** - **344** cases were carried forward from the previous year. **226** cases were added this year. Total handled were **570 cases**. Of these **112 cases** ended this year. 22 cases ended in Judgement of which 8 were acquittals and 14 convictions.

- **Legal support to PO**

In order to make the state agencies work and fulfill the role assigned to them in a few cases, instead of filing cases directly, we have been helping the Protection Officers to file cases on behalf of women, imparting very imparting practical legal knowledge to them.

- **Representing women in legal proceedings**

Our team of women lawyers, represent women in litigation under the Domestic Violence Act in 10 Magistrate Courts scattered in different parts of the city. In addition cases are filed in Family Courts of Mumbai and Thane. The litigation has helped women secure reliefs such as maintenance, child custody, residence and protection from domestic violence. Appeals are filed in cases where the magistrates' orders are negative and anti-woman.

171 cases were carried forward from last year and this year we filed 102 new cases. So the total number of cases handled by our team was 273. During the year we completed 53 cases. We are carrying forward 195 cases to the next year.

Convictions Acquittals and Judgments

Sexual Violence: Despite the consistent support, convictions are extremely difficult to secure. The national average is only 26% and before our intervention, the average for Mumbai was as low as 12-15%. After our programme was initiated, the overall trends for Mumbai have shown a slight upward incline. However, where we were able to intervene, the conviction rate has vastly improved. It is around 68% and this has been the consistent trend for the last five years since our intervention programme started.

Domestic Violence: The litigation has helped women secure reliefs such as maintenance, child custody, residence and protection from domestic violence. Appeals are filed in cases where the magistrates' orders are negative and anti-woman. We have secured some significant interim and final orders during the year. Attached are profiles of some cases.

Coordination with NGOs to provide support

As part of RAHAT we coordinate with organisations such as Angan, Arpan, Asha Sadan, Shraddhanand Mahilashram, St. Catherine's Home, A.D. Bawla Shelter Home, CORO, Sneha etc. which are involved with either community based or hospital based interventions or in providing shelter to destitute children. Significant among these is our partnership with **Childline India Foundation** who after lodging the FIR and producing the child before the child welfare committee, they refer the case to us for legal follow-up.

Challenges

The aim of this programme is to transform the victims of sexual violence into survivors by ensuring that the system does not re-victimise her. It usually takes around 1-2 years before a case reaches the stage of trial and many times the material circumstances force victims to retract or abandon the legal case. This is one of the primary challenges we face.

Providing long term support for victims to rehabilitate is another major challenge specially the transition from adolescent girls to women where the support structures are sadly lacking.

Another major challenge is to deal with disabilities of different kinds and to resolve conflict between different groups working with specific challenges. This came out strongly at a meeting we held on 30th July, 2016 with a group working with deaf mute children.

3. Learning Centre

Trainings to Implementers of the Law

One of our important areas of intervention has been to provide focused legal technical trainings to various stake holders at the state and local level - Judicial Officers, Police, Protection Officers, Public Prosecutors, Child Welfare Committees, etc. so that they gain an understanding of their duties and responsibilities towards victims and their own role in providing support as mandated by the statute.

The training ensures better implementation of a statute so that the positive impact of the legislation reaches victims from marginalized sections. Training modules are prepared and resource material on statutory provisions, procedural rules and relevant case law is compiled. To make the process interactive, group exercises, quiz, and audio-visual material is used. The trainings are conducted by senior team members – Adv. Persis Sidhva, Adv. Nausheen Yousuf and Ms. Audrey D’Mello, Programme Director, with assistance from junior lawyers and the social support team.

After the training, we provide a **helpline number** so that doubts and confusions which may crop up in the course of performing their duties subsequent to the training can be clarified. This has proved to be extremely useful in helping to reinforce the message imparted during the training.

District-wise Training to Magistrates on Domestic Violence Act

This has been one of our most important interventions with stake holders during the year.

PWDVA is a secular law that protects women and children from domestic violence and provides speedy relief. However, since very often even judicial officers are not aware of their roles and responsibilities cases keep languishing in courts and women are not able to reap the benefits of the Act.

When we received complaints from victims as well as Protection Officers and NGOs helping them to access justice, about their experiences in court, we approached the Chief Justice for permission to conduct district-wise training to all the magistrates in the State of Maharashtra.

Finally we were granted permission to conduct trainings to all magistrates in every district of Maharashtra. We feel highly honoured by this and we are sure that it will yield positive results not only in urban areas, but also in far flung rural districts. However, this is a huge challenge as each district has around 60-80 magistrates and Maharashtra has around 33 districts.

Permission was granted to us on condition that we paid for our own travel expenses, but we didn't mind this as we felt this would be an important area of intervention. However, the expense of holding the workshop as well as local hospitality for us as trainers was provided by the district court. We insisted on this so that the district judges own up the training and be responsible for holding it. The train journeys to far flung districts was an experience in itself.

Travelling to remote districts of Maharashtra to speak to judges who are entrusted with the role of delivering justice to women facing domestic violence has been a truly humbling experience. There was so much to learn and share, as the ground reality of each district is different, the issues they confront are also different. We came across beautiful District Court premises, the last green belts of the rural landscapes, the chillie fields, the tendu leaf forests, the parched lands afflicted by years of droughts and in places extreme poverty.

We realized that in predominantly tribal districts the construction of the family units itself is different, polygamy is accepted and marriage alliances are not rigid. This vastly alters the nature of domestic violence women experience. Also in drought afflicted rural districts, domestic violence takes a different turn and judges are not able to find adequate remedies within the PWDVA which has been created keeping in context the urban realities.

During the year we conducted eight trainings in Pune, Aurangabad, Raigad, Alibag, Ratnagiri, Kolhapur, Nandurbar, Nanded, Nashik, Parbhani, Hingoli, Jalna, Chandrapur, Yavatmal and Gadchiroli 15 districts. On an average, there were 50 – 70 magistrates while some large districts had over 100 -150 magistrates. The meetings were usually presided over by the Principal Judge of the District so they were taken seriously by the magistrates. We learnt various skills of conducting the workshop, particularly tact was critical while addressing tricky issues with judges or else they just clam us and then the training ceases to have any impact. We slowly learnt the ropes of conducting these trainings. The important point was to reach out to the judges. And we had a message to deliver – that if they used the

Act in all its widest ramifications, it will benefit victims of domestic violence who approach them for relief.

The feedback we received from judges has been truly overwhelming. The training helped them internalize the advantages of the DV Act and how they could help women better. They were made aware of several aspects of the provisions within PWDVA that they had never used but could be vastly beneficial to women.

Training Police Officers

During the year we trained around 800 police officers on implementation of the Domestic Violence Act, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act and the recent amendments to rape laws. The trainings were conducted at various levels.

Region wise Training of Mumbai Police on Domestic Violence Act

Women victims of domestic violence approach the Police Station daily for help. Most women are unaware of their rights and look to the Police for assistance. The Police play a crucial role in ensuring that the victim does not suffer further violence and is able to access her rights. Hence, in order to ensure effective response by the Police and enhance their knowledge on the subject, Majlis Legal Centre organised a Region-wise training for the Mumbai Police in association with the Crimes Against Women Cell, Crime Branch on “Domestic Violence Against Women”

Majlis Legal Centre in association with the Crimes against Women Cell, Crime Branch conducted a region wise training for Mumbai Police in this quarter. The training focused on domestic violence against women and role of Police in PWDVA along with violence against women. Over 290 Police officers were trained during this training. 28th April - West, 6th May - North, 7th May - Central, 11th May – East & 19th May – South

- **Training for newly appointed Women Probationary Officers:** The training was organised to provide the newly appointed Women Probationary Officers with knowledge, information and best practices to be followed while handling cases of sexual offences against women and children. The training also aimed at sensitizing the newly appointed officers on the importance of their role and how to effectively respond to victims by overcoming stereotypes and prejudices. **100 Women**

Probationary Officers attended this training and we were able to evaluate their learning based on the pre and post evaluation test administered to them.

- **Region wise Training on Sexual Offences against Women and Children:** This specialized training was conducted in order to address the low conviction rate in cases of sexual offences against women and children in association with the Crimes against Women Cell, Crime Branch, Mumbai Police. The issues covered in the training - registration of FIR, important components of investigation, preparing an effective charge sheet and coordination with other stakeholders. The training included a session by a forensic science expert from the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) Kalina and the Assistant Commissioner of Police, Crimes against Women Cell, Crime Branch. **250 Police Officers (male and female) who deal with cases of sexual offences as Investigating Officers participated in this training.** The methodology of case studies and group discussions was very much appreciated by the participants. 23rd Jan, 30th Jan, 1st Feb Police, 3rd Feb, 9th Feb Police
- **Training for Police Officers in Navi Mumbai:** In our attempt to expand the RAHAT Program to Navi Mumbai, we conducted two-day training for the officers. **This training was attended by five officers from each Police Station in Navi Mumbai (including women officers and investigating officers).** We not only explained the important provisions of the law but also provided the participants with practical understanding through group discussions and case studies. Moreover, also provided them with information on other stakeholders and effective ways to collaborate to ensure holistic support to the victim.
- **Training for Police Officers in Thane Rural:** Our initial work with the Child Welfare Committee in Thane was greatly appreciated by the Chairperson and members so they invited us to conduct a training for Police Officers from Thane Rural jurisdiction to understand their role under the POCSO Act and ways to collaborate with the CWC. This training was attended by 40 Police Officers and the focus of the training was beneficial provisions under the law for children and role of Police and CWC in cases of child sexual abuse.
- Police 19th May DV and SV on Gender Police West Region Farhat

Training to Public Prosecutors

Public Prosecutors are an important link in criminal prosecution as they have to conduct the trial and lead evidence before the court to prove the offence beyond reasonable doubt.

Working closely with cases of sexual offences inside courts in Mumbai has given us a glimpse into the gaps and challenges faced during a trial. Dealing with evidence, cross examination, maintaining dignity of the victim are all very important aspects that a Public Prosecutor has to manage. Also knowledge of pro-prosecution case law and guidelines issued by superior courts helps in the supporting the trial. We were keen to provide these officers necessary training on statutory and procedural aspects of the new legislations, guidelines issued and best practices approved by our High Court which would help them to improve conviction rates.

Department of Law & Judiciary, Government of Maharashtra granted us permission to conduct division wise trainings for Special Public Prosecutors designated to the Special Courts dealing with sexual offence against women and children across the six divisions of Maharashtra.

Public Prosecutors Training on Sexual Offences Against Women & Children

In collaboration with Department of Law & Judiciary, Government of Maharashtra, Majlis Legal Centre successfully completed its training with 40 Sessions Court Public Prosecutors designated as Special POCSO and Women's Court Public Prosecutors from Konkan and Pune (Kolhapur, Pune, Sangli, Satara and Solapur) division on 'Sexual Offences against Women and Children' on 3rd April, 2016 and 26th June 2016 respectively.

During the training we shared the highlights of our report 'Pursuing this thing called Justice' to dispel the anti-women biases which prevent prosecutors from providing quality legal representation to victims. We shared with them the guidelines approved by Bombay High Court for Public Prosecutors and Judges. The training used positive Case Law that PPs could use to substantiate their arguments on issues like delay in filing FIR is not fatal, conviction on sole testimony of the victim etc. Our special session on Medical Evidence enthralled the audience with not only how medical evidence is collected but also explained the limitation of medical evidence in a trial. We look forward to conducting these sessions with PPs in the rest of Maharashtra.

Since the public prosecutors are not usually included in any training programme organized by the state, they really appreciated our efforts to provide them the trainings to enhance their skills.

We hope to increase the sensitivity and capacity of these public prosecutors who will eventually help victims of sexual violence both children and women getting their justice. RAHAT works closely with the Public Prosecutors in the Sessions Court at Fort and Dindoshi by providing regular updates on the survivor's status,

Manodhairya and District Trauma Team Training

The unique Manodhairya Scheme in Maharashtra provides compensation to victims of Rape and Acid Attack on filing of the FIR. It also calls for setting up of District Trauma Teams (DTT) that consists of trained Police, Medical Officers, Trauma Counsellors and WCD Officers who will be support persons so that victims can get immediate response.

WCD Pune conducted the first training of trainers at YASHADA on 6th July, 2016 and the 2nd at Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Training on 27th July, 2016. The role of DTT support is based on Majlis' RAHAT programme an outreach model that provides socio-legal support to victims of rape. We are happy to be part of training the trainers and we hope that the trained and well equipped DTT team will provide timely assistance to victims of sexual violence in all districts of Maharashtra.

Probation Officers from the Department of Women and Child Development: Probation Officers perform a very important role in cases under the POCSO Act. They work closely with the Child Welfare Committee and Children's Home. They can also be appointed as Support Person to assist the child through the investigation and trial. Based on our success of working as "Support Person" with the Child Welfare Committees in Mumbai City and Suburbs, we were invited by YASHADA to conduct a one day workshop for Probation Officers from all districts in Maharashtra on their roles and responsibilities under the POCSO Act. This workshop was very effective as we were able to share the best practices, procedures and SOPs used by us with officers from other districts that did not have such assistance and opportunities. 45 Probation Officers attended this training.

Training of Private Medical Practitioners

Public and private doctors have been mandated under the law to provide survivors with free medical treatment and conduct the medical examination. However, most private doctors are unaware of their role. RAHAT was invited by FOGSI to conduct a ToT for private doctors on their role under the law and procedures to be followed. Pursuant, to the ToT we assisted in finalisation of training modules and resource material. We have also conducted 4 trainings for different groups of private doctors in Mumbai covering nearly 300 private practitioners.

Committees on Sexual Harassment at Workplace

The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition & Redressal) Act, 2013 seeks to protect women from sexual harassment at their place of work. Every organisation having 10 or more employees must constitute an Internal Committee to handle complaints of sexual harassment. This law is applicable to all organizations – Private, Public, Government, NGOs, Schools, Colleges etc.

Non implementation results in fine of Rs. 50,000/- and then cancellation of license. Since the enactment Majlis has been assisting several organisations to implement their policy. Majlis assists in drafting the policy, conducts training for the IC, awareness programme for employees and provides legal support in redressal of cases reported by women employees.

The IC training is a rigorous and interactive 4 hours session. Through the training we ensure that the IC committee members (a quasi judicial body) are equipped with the knowledge of the Act. They are trained to handle cases sensitively and in compliance with the law with an emphasis on documentation. During employee awareness we make an attempt to explain the zero tolerance to SHW by the organisation. Both the policy and the law are explained while emphasizing the benefits of the law to employees and the organization as a whole.

When cases are reported both parties are given an opportunity to represent themselves and Majlis ensures principles of natural justice are followed. We advise the committee on the prerequisite procedures to be followed and documentation to be maintained. We meet every quarter to discuss prevention measures that can be adopted to make women feel safe and secure at the workplace. We also ensure requirements that are mandated under the Act are followed e.g. reviewing the policy, the documentation of cases reported, minutes of meetings, filing of the annual report and any other issues raised.

Over the last four years we have been empaneled with 15 organizations, trained 20 IC committees, have had more than 50 employee awareness programmes and handled 10 cases. Our experience is that most of the organizations feel confident empaneling us as their external Ngo member because we are an all women team of trained lawyers working towards the cause of women. We provide legal support throughout and women feel comfortable and confident to report complaints of sexual harassment.

These are coordinated by Ms. Jacinta Saldanha a senior team member of Majlis.

Policy Level Interventions

Ensuring Stake holder Accountability through Monitoring

Apart from raising issues with the police on individual cases about grave misconduct at the time of filing the FIR, not following procedure of the law, not filing charge sheet on time, we also raise broader concerns with other stakeholders at a higher level - Chief Justice, Bombay High Court, Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Chief Public Prosecutor, District Women and Child Development Officers, legal services authority, child welfare committees, etc.

Some issues taken up during the year:

- Long dates and delay in passing orders in family courts and magistrate courts
- Vacant Courts in family court and magistrate courts
- No time frame for deciding appeals in Domestic Violence cases during appeals in Sessions Courts
- Requirement of filing a Domestic Incidence Report (DIR) not needed if cases filed by a private lawyer or initiated by PO or woman herself.
- Litigant belonging to a community governed by customary laws denied the right to file for divorce in Family Court
- Process Fee and Court Fee charged by court in domestic violence cases
- Lack of convergence by state in handling cases of domestic violence
- Amendment in CPC for women to avail of the for post-retirement benefits of husbands during litigation for maintenance.
- Court to initiate proceedings where the woman resides
- Police not responding promptly to calls on the 103 emergency helpline in cases of domestic violence
- Problems victims of domestic violence face when they approach police to file an FIR
- Shared Parenting plans and joint Custody issues at Family Court
- Case of sexual harassment at workplace on a woman lawyer by a fellow lawyer in a Magistrate court. Complaint to the bar and ensured setting up of the committee.

Public Interest Litigation

We secured an important order in the Public Interest Litigation that we had filed challenging the arbitrary rule imposed by the Family Court, Mumbai that if a deserted woman claims maintenance on behalf of her male child she would have to pay court fee as the exemption from payment of court fee is only for women. Though a woman is claiming on behalf of her minor son, the responsibility of paying the required court fee is only on the woman claiming

as the son is a minor. Initially the government and more specifically the family court representatives did not appear, but thereafter, within five dates we managed to secure an order from the Chief Justice striking down this arbitrary rule. The initiative that we had taken in this regard was well appreciated by litigants and lawyers in the Family Court, Mumbai.

Campaigns

Against enactment of a Uniform Civil Code (UCC)

This has been one of our important concerns over several decades since the demolition of Babri Masjid and the Bombay riots that followed. Majlis has opposed the demand for a uniform civil code as right wing political parties have used this as a stick to beat the Muslim minority community with. Instead, our position has been ‘reform from within’ and reform through judicial interventions. Our theoretical framework is ‘It is important to place gender concerns within the rubric of secularism and minority rights, and not pose one against the other’. It is not our case that women from minority community are not entitled to equal rights. Our concern is the modality of securing these. The issue cannot be posed as gender versus community. The mere enactment of a statute does not ensure rights. What we need is awareness about rights and access to courts and empowerment to negotiate with patriarchal forces, be it in the family or in the community. Our opposition to enacting a UCC is based on this nuanced understanding. We demanded ‘Uniformity of Rights’ through ‘reform from within’ so that women can truly access these rights with the support of their community.

After the 2014 election when the NDA government had the required numbers in the Parliament to bring in necessary legislations, and hatred towards Muslims and other minorities escalated to a new pitch, this became an immediate concern and we started an active anti UCC campaign. In the current political milieu, it is becoming increasingly challenging to hold on to this position, particularly as many feminists (including Muslim women’s groups) have endorsed this demand.

In October 2016, when the Law Commission sent out a questionnaire requesting comments and suggestions towards a Uniform Civil Code by 21st November 2016, which was laden with anti-Muslim bias, the question before us was how best to respond to it. In November 2016 we started an on-line petition, “Women demand ‘Uniformity of Rights not a Uniform

Civil Code' and urged the Law Commission of India to withdraw the demand for a Uniform Civil Code. Each time we added a supporter, the Law Commission of India received a message urging them to withdraw their demand for Uniform Civil Code. At our request, many organisations also sent individual petitions on their letter-heads clearly stating that they oppose UCC and demand 'Reform from Within'.

Our Campaign met with a measurable degree of success when on 16th November, 2016, the Chairman of the Law Commission, Justice B S Chauhan stated in a newspaper interview: "Looking at reform of family laws across religions, not Uniform Civil Code". We thank our 508 supporter who responded to our plea and sent in the on-line endorsement to our petition. <http://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-news-india/family-laws-across-religions-uniform-civil-code-says-justice-b-s-chauhan-4377676/>

The controversy over Triple Talaq

When the issue of triple talaq erupted when an organization working with Muslim women, the Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andholan (BMMA) released the results of a survey done by them as part of a project of Action Aid after interviewing 4710 Muslim women from lower economic backgrounds, it created an unprecedented hype in the media. Rather than poverty illiteracy and marginalized existence, the media projected that instant triple talaq, polygamy and nikah halala are the most crucial issues affecting Indian Muslim women. Soon thereafter two judges while hearing a case of rights of a Hindu woman to ancestral property made a reference to constitute a full bench to hear the issue of lack of rights of Muslim women under their personal laws, though this issue was not before the court. This was followed by many Muslim women filing Petitions in the Supreme Court challenging the instant triple talaq they received from their husbands.

30% of our clients are Muslim women. There is a popular perception that Muslim women are not entitled to relief under the Domestic Violence Act, or that they do not have any remedy if the husband sends them a talaqnama by post or arbitrarily pronounces triple talaq. We have specialized in securing various remedies for Muslim women using the Domestic Violence Act and the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights upon Divorce) Act. Many lawyers practising in criminal courts are now following the example set by us and are filing similar cases.

As we started writing articles on this issue, we realized that the understanding about Muslim women's rights was very superficial and many were unaware of the rights Muslim women

already have. So we initiated a campaign to take this message to communities, colleges and within our own support groups. We also conducted a pre and post survey about the understanding of these groups about Muslim women's rights and realized that our awareness meetings were having an impact in raising awareness among them.

We also coordinated with like minded groups at a national level. Mr. Irfan Engineer, Director, Centre for Study of Society & Secularism, and Adv. Yousuf Muchala, Senior Counsel and Member of AIMPLB, Mumbai, Ms Syeda Hameed, Muslim Women's Forum, Justice Kannan, Farah Naqvi, Manisha Sethi, Adv. Shahrukh Allam and Adv. Nitya Ramakrishnan, Supreme Court - all from Delhi, a women's group from Lucknow - AALI, Sophia Khan and Sheba George from Ahmedabad, Vimochana from Bangalore, Anveshi from Hyderabad, Prof Faizan Mustafa, VC, NALSAR, Hyderabad, Asst. Lecturer M. Reyaz of Aliah University, Kolkota, VC of Assam National Law University, Guwahati, Mr. A. Faizur Rahman, Secretary General of the Islamic Forum for the Promotion of Moderate Thought, Chennai, etc. and had discussions with these groups to build a broad based alliance of people with similar concerns.

We also held meetings with Asma Zehra the newly elected member of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board, and with some Board members such as Mr. Kamal Farouqui and Mr. Yousuf Muchala. We were also invited to speak at the Muslim women's meeting organised by Asma Zehra to explain various court judgements. During the meeting we emphasized on how the community must respond to complaints about domestic violence. Due to these interactions, the Muslim Personal Law Board started a women's forum and also started a helpline number to provide support to women approaching them with family problems.

At our initiative, Prof Faizan Mustafa also held meetings with the Muslim Personal Law Board members who finally came out with an advisory to the Muslim community urging them to restrain from pronouncing instant triple talaq and explaining the Quranic procedure for pronouncement of talaq.

We also drafted a model nikahnama and sent the same to various groups and Muslim women's forums for their responses. i

Adverse Comments by a High Court judge in a case of rape by adoptive father

When we realized that a lady judge of the Bombay High Court had made certain adverse comments about the victim while granting bail to the accused, in one of our cases, we were alarmed. The case concerned a minor girl of 17 years who had been subjected to sexual abuse over a prolonged period, and finally with the help of social workers from the Childline

Foundation, was able to lodge a case under POCSO. As part of our victim support group we had been providing support to this orphan girl who was raped by her adoptive father, who took her under his care after her mother passed away due to AIDS.

While granting bail to the accused, the judge made certain adverse and unwarranted comments about the girl's character and relied upon a purported letter written by the child while at the shelter home at the age of six that she is "*used to doing dirty things*". It is a well settled principle of law that at the time of granting bail, the Judge cannot delve into the merits of the case especially since this letter has not been proved in a Court of Law.

Instead of understanding the multiple vulnerabilities of the child and recognising her courage to register an FIR, the Court passed degrading and discriminatory remarks about her past sexual conduct to justify bail to the accused. The Court ignored the fact that the accused took undue advantage, misused his position of trust and authority and repeatedly committed the offence by threatening the child.

We immediately wrote articles in the newspapers and also organized a meeting of concerned groups and followed it by writing a letter to the Chief Justice signed by all our partner organizations expressing our anguish over these comments. Due to our efforts, these disparaging comments were withdrawn by the judge.

The case of Muslim student prevented from answering exam due to her refusal to remove her burkha

When one of our interns brought to our notice that the SNTD University affiliated Nanavati College in Vile Parle (West) had a rule that girls wearing burkha would not permitted to appear for exams on the ground that this helps the girls to cheat. As per this rule, a girl who refused to take out the burkha was sent home by the college principal, though she had said that she is agreeable to a body check before entering the examination hall. The girl was distraught and contacted her friend who was interning with us.

Since we have a long standing relationship with this college over several years, we immediately took up this issue and wrote a letter to the college principal pointing out the discriminatory nature of their rule and requested the authorities to permit her to appear for the next paper scheduled after two days. Due to our timely intervention, the girl was able to appear for the last paper. Then we took up the issue with the college to bring the required amendments to their rule.

Church SHW Policy

We joined our efforts with a small group of committed Catholic women who have been pursuing this issue for several years and worked along with them to draft a policy for the safety of vulnerable persons who work in church institutions and also for students and teachers in church affiliated schools.

We have also taken up cases of sexual abuse by priest of vulnerable girls. On this issue we held meeting and also met church officials to bring in the policy. The final version of the policy is now ready and it will soon be announced by the Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI) the central body regularizing all affairs of the Roman Catholic Church.

Legal Awareness and Legal Aid Camps

We have partnered with various NGOs who are working with communities and have provided legal advice and also delivered regular legal awareness at programmes organized by them in their communities. This year we conducted 63 legal awareness programmes. Some of the organisations we coordinated with were Archdiocese of Bombay Women's Commission, Childline, Bright Future, Sahasee, Centre for Social Action, Creative Handicraft, MAVIM Selfhelp group, Corp, Nirmala Niketan, Apne Aap Women's Collective, Justice and Peace, Apanalaya, Blue Ribbon Movement, Aangan Trust, St. Joseph, Chuim Community Centre, Fisher folk community, Krupa Community Centre, Sodexo, Committee for Housing Rights (CRH), Pali Church, Alert India, Prayas, YWCA. We also do special training for staff of NGOs on legal rights training.

Reaching out to the Youth

Our aim has always been to demystify the laws and reach it to communities and youth in colleges in very simple language so that they become aware of their rights even before rights are violated. Towards this end we have been working closely with colleges for the past five years, conducting programmes with teachers and students to create awareness about legal rights using various methodologies to engage the youth in debates and discussions around issues of legal rights.

‘Expressions’ is a half day interactive program where students express themselves using verbal (skits, slogans, jingles/songs, speech etc.) or non-verbal communication (posters, banners, charts, rangolis, etc.) expressions to address concerns around a particular theme selected for the year, broadly within the realm of gender concerns. Usually a contemporary issue is selected as the theme.

The topic selected for 2016-17 was, “**Who is an Ideal Victim?**” How does a victim need to look, who deserves our sympathy - those who suffer in silence or the one who fights back - these and other related questions were raised at the event conducted

During the workshops, the participants themselves began to question the ingrained and yet uncomfortable concepts about a 'good' and 'bad' woman that we carry within ourselves. Engaging with over 100 girls from Momin College, Bhiwandi and listening to them challenging these stereotypes gives us hope for the future. We were humbled when B.Ed students from Pillai College, Chembur, came up with creative ideas expressing their notions of an ideal victim, which challenged established notions as they felt every victim fights her battle in her own way. Students of Somaiya College, Ghatkopar endorsed our view that victims of sexual and domestic violence can access their rights only if we are able to provide support at every step of the way. Merely enacting a law is not sufficient, we have to do much more groundwork to actualize these rights.

"My laughter doesn't show my happiness. Am I more than just my body?" these lines were recited by the winner of Expression award held at Vivekanand Education Society Arts, Science and Commerce, Chembur. Students discussed threadbare our expectations and notions of an ideal victim and articulated their thoughts through poems, essays, skits and posters. Undergraduate students of Akbar Peerboy College of Commerce and Economics felt that it was a rare platform to express their angst against violence on women and children. It was heartwarming to see young students talk about the societal pressure a victim has to go through.

Expression is a programme that allows us to interact with youth and helps us to come in terms with the thought process of young students and hopefully break gender stereotypes and encourage them to address issues that really concern them.

Know Your Rights

‘Know Your Rights’ (KYR) is a one-day workshop conducted across colleges to provide youth with information on legal rights of women and children and how to deal with violence. Conducted by majlis’ expert team of lawyers, this is an interactive workshop that equips participants with practical legal strategies and know-how to access their rights. KYR sessions are tailor made to the institutions’ requirement on the following topics -Domestic Violence,

Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace, Muslim Women Rights

‘Know Your Rights’ was successfully organized over the past three years with various colleges in the city like L.S. Raheja, KES Shroff, K.C and Nanavati.

“I am confident I can speak up against violence even if it is at home” - Nikhil Shah (student)
KES Shroff College

“Majlis made me feel more confident about approaching the Police” - Seema Sheth,
(student), Raheja College

“An extremely resourceful workshop, high on information about legal rights” - Dr. Leena
Pujari, K.C. College

“It is better to know your rights than learn them through a bad experience” - Prof. Twinkle
Sanghavi, Nanavati College

KYR is an attempt to reach out to youth as agents of change. Usually after the workshop, a few girls open up and share their personal experiences.

Law and Social Work Majlis has designed a 10 session Law and Social Work – Certificate Course for students and practitioners in the social sector to enable them to make the best use of law to help poor, vulnerable and marginalized communities access justice. Through practical and experiential learning we help students overcome their fear of the justice system and so they are able to confidently engage with implementers of law to demand their rights. Lectures are delivered by experts in the field using adult learning tools. Practical assignments and visits to courts, police stations etc. are also scheduled.

22 students attended the Law & Social work course conducted by Majlis for the current year. This has now become part of the MBA in Social Entrepreneurship course offered by NMIMS College of Management, Mumbai. We are proud to be conducting this course for the 4th continuous year. The course has greatly helped students gain practical understanding about laws related to women, children and human rights. The feedback from students are very encouraging. The course was conceptualized and coordinated by Ms. Audrey D’Mello, with the senior team members participating in structuring the content and delivering the lectures.

Student Feedback

“The faculties were excellent. They made a morose subject like law fun and interesting.”

“Not being from a law background, initially I was scared, but now I know enough to access the law.”

“For the first time I understood the difference between public prosecutor, defense lawyer, plaintiff and defendant.”

“The law assignment was helpful as it gave us a practical experience of visiting a courtroom.”

“Majlis taught us never to be scared of the law”

Interaction with Teachers

We are invited on a regular basis to deliver lectures to participants of the refresher courses conducted by the Academic Training Centre of the Bombay University.

Child Protection Policy

‘Children are the future’ and we are committed to protect them and prevent all forms of child abuse. This is the commitment Majlis has made and is reflected in our work in the area of child protection policy.

On 3rd August 2015 the Archdiocesan Board Of Education (ABE) released its child protection policy promulgated by Cardinal Oswald Gracias. Majlis assisted in the fine tuning this policy as expert consultants.

Majlis has been dealing with a number of cases where a child has been subjected to sexual abuse and harassment in school. In fact our very first case of sexual abuse was of a four year old girl raped by the watchman of her school where through our consistent efforts we had secured conviction. Through our intervention at various levels, we have analysed that though children confide about sexual abuse to teachers, in most cases the teachers are unable to respond in a constructive manner to help the child.

To address this problem Majlis has designed a three hour workshop for teaching and non-teaching staff to help them understand the law and implement the ABE Policy. On 21st July 2016 Majlis was invited to address a large gathering of 150 principals and staff of schools affiliated to the Archdiocese of Mumbai (Roman Catholic) under the aegis of Cardinal Oswald Gracias and Father George Athaide. Ms. Audrey D’Mello and Ms. Jacinta Saldanha attended the event. We explained the law on child sexual offences and the provisions of the

Juvenile Justice Act and the importance of each school implementing the CPP Policy in its letter and spirit to ensure protection of children. After our presentation, Father Athaide urged the principals to invite Majlis to conduct workshops at their schools and distributed the Majlis brochure regarding the same.

On 30th August, 2016 we conducted CPP at the Mary Immaculate Girls' High School, Kalina. Over 50 enthusiastic teaching and non-teaching staff discussed the concept of child protection, what constitutes abuse and how schools can protect children by setting up Child Abuse Monitoring Committees. The case study model adopted helped teachers to talk about actual cases and helped them to gain clarity on how to respond in the best interest of the child. They felt reassured that they could reach out to the RAHAT team in case of any queries.

Thereafter on 13th Oct 2016 at a large gathering of priests at Papal Seminary, Goregaon we were invited to deliver a lecture on sexual abuse especially child sexual abuse and sexual harassment. This was followed by a meeting on 9th February with the priests of the Borivili deanery. Soon we were able to reach to schools beyond Mumbai. On 11th Mar 2016, Ms. Audrey D'mello was invited to Rajkot to address priest and principals of schools on implementing the Child Protection Policy.

On 7th April 2017 ABE issued a letter to all school principals to invite Majlis to conduct workshops on child protection police of ABE. We view it as a major milestone. Our consistent efforts finally met with success. We have prepared ourselves for this by conducting two training of trainers workshops internally for our own team members. Majlis has also created awareness material and resource material for the same.

Collaborations and Networks

We Action Group is a broad network of lawyers, social workers, human rights activists and others collectively working towards addressing issues relating to human rights, women and child rights, rights of senior citizens and rights of other marginalized across Mumbai.

Events are organized around specific themes across the city to spread awareness on violations of human rights. The network partners meet once a month at partner organizations to discuss current issues and conduct trainings. We also conduct awareness and training to spread the

message of Zero Tolerance to Violence against Women, Dignity to Senior Citizens, De-Addiction for Youth, Muslim Women Rights, etc. We empower each other on our journey to secure rights and justice to marginalized groups using the expertise of each partner organization.

We Action Group comprises of the following partner organisations – Aastha Parivaar, Alert India, Apanalaya, Bhartiya Stree Shakti, CORO, CRH, CSSC, Help Age India, Jeevandhara Trust, 1298 Helpline, Kshamata, LEARN, Nirmala Niketan, Majlis, Men Against Violence Against Women (MAVA), Ratna Charitable Trust, Silver Innings, Watch Foundation and YWCA, among others.

We feel that it is important to engage with groups working on the ground to raise local issues as a collective. Since September, 2015, we have been coming together on a monthly basis. During the year we collectively organized a series of programmes. This group provided a forum to discuss important issues such as the Uniform Civil Code debate and the triple talaq controversy with groups active at the grass root.

The group also successfully organized a very impressive celebrations for Women's Day which was held at a Muslim busti, *Behrampada* on 15th March 2015. The participants sang inspirational songs and formed a Human Chain in the heart of Behrampada, a busy local community in Bandra East. Pamphlets with contact details of organizations working for social causes were distributed. A thought provoking street play was enacted by YWCA. The participants imprinted their handprints in colorful paints on a white banner in show of solidarity towards women empowerment and a collective stand against violence. Social activists prominent in the field of women's rights, Chayya Datar, Virginia Saldanah, Shobha Phillip and Flavia Agnes addressed the gathering with motivational messages. Majlis had published *We Action Group Magazine* documenting the journey since 2015, which was released and copies were distributed to all members. Participating organizations were gifted Handmade Cloth Handbags contributed by Creative Handicrafts. The event was photographed by Photomist professional photographers and was covered by local newspapers. The local Nirmal Nagar Police Station provided protection to the group during the entire duration of the celebration.

Orientation visits

As part of our efforts to reach out to various groups not just in Mumbai but also nationally and in the region, several groups visited us to familiarize themselves on our work.

On 12th December 2016 SHOKHI, Bangladesh, legal and health practitioners visited Majlis as part of their visit to India to meet organisations working on similar issues. The project on women's health, rights & choices is implemented by BLAST and its partners - Bangladesh Women's Health Coalition (BWHC), Marie Stopes Bangladesh (MSB) and Amrai Pari: We Can Alliance. SHOKHI combines legal, health and information services delivery through one stop shops in urban slums, with community mobilisation and advocacy for law and policy reform to ensure protection of women's groups and against violence against women (VAW). They were excited to interact with the Majlis team and we shared our longstanding experience of working on women's rights, particularly in the areas of family laws and violence against women.

On 9th November 2016 students participating in a diversity camp organised by Centre for Study of Society and Secularism (CSSS) visited Majlis to discuss the history of UCC, its politicization and consequences. We discussed the concept of 'reform from within' so that women can truly access rights with the support of their community.

On 9th June 2016 BSW and MSW students of Nirmala Niketan, College of Social Work visited Majlis legal centre as part of their orientation.

23 to 25 March 2017 a team from Jan Sahas visited Majlis and spent three days with us to understand our work on sexual and domestic violence and with Muslim women. Jan Sahas works in 12 districts of Madhya Pradesh and deals with eradication of manual scavenging, the inhuman and unlawful practice of forcing Dalits to carry human excreta on their heads. The legal arm of Jan Sahas, Centre for Social Justice and Equality, provides direct legal services to victims. Recently Jan Sahas started a campaign to stop atrocities such as murder, rape and other violence on Dalits, tribals and Muslim women. Jan sahas has developed 400 barefoot lawyers to build victim or survivors as leaders.

During their visit they interacted with our team and also visited hospitals and child welfare committees (CWC) to understand the nature of our engagement with these institutions. The session on Muslim women's rights was an eye opener for them as they had never imagined that Muslim women already have rights. They also liked our social and legal support model for victims. It was a great learning experience for all of us.

A painful reality of their life which they shared with us was that many dalits from manual scavenging communities had converted to Islam in the hope that Islam is based on the principle of equality but their status even after their conversion had not changed and they continued to be shunned by the higher castes in their villages.

Other Events

On 3rd December 2016, Saturday Majlis celebrated its **Maa-Beti Mela** for the third year. The event signifies the immense courage of our clients who are victims of violence and our team of lawyers and social activists who support them in their fight against violence on many levels making them our heroes (She-roes)! Over 200 of us - our clients – mothers, daughters and their loved ones along with our team and our supporters gathered together for this fun mela (carnival). They come from different socio-economic backgrounds but they all find a sense of togetherness in their struggle against violence with Majlis. Their hope, courage and perseverance as they walk the daunting legal journey provides our group members the much needed inspiration for our work. This was a celebration of their contribution to the growth of the organisation.

24th January 2016 Majlis jointly organized its half yearly event, '**Jan Sunvayi**' with the Maharashtra State Commission for Women (MSCW). It provided a unique opportunity to victims of sexual and domestic violence to directly air out their grievances against state officials while pursuing their legal cases. While addressing the individual concerns, the aim was to make the system more responsive to the needs of women. Over 100 participants including several state officials participated in the event.

Being actively involved with the monitoring of the Protection of Women against Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA), we organised a networking **Convergence Meeting** on 6th October 2016 with all the stakeholders in implementation of the Act. The event gave a platform for all stakeholders to come together to discuss the various issues that they face while handling

cases of Domestic Violence. The meeting was a great success as everyone took along solutions to the problems which would assist them in their function. The meeting was organized with the support of IES.

Financial stability and economic independence is one of the primary needs of the women we work with. To address these, Majlis organised a "**Job Mela**" on the 18th of February 2017 to assist victims of violence to achieve financial stability in their lives. The event provided a platform for women and girls to meet potential employers and vocational trainers. Over 50 women and young boys attended the fair who were in search of employment opportunities. We had invited four NGOs providing vocational training and seven potential employers. The event was held in collaboration with IES Management College and Research Centre.

AMAN Network – Two team members from Majlis Legal Centre participated in the AMAN Network's national consultation on domestic violence which was held at Lumding, Assam on 4th and 5th July 2016. Over 20 non-profit organisations from all over the country working on the issue of Domestic Violence participated. The meeting was a great avenue for learning about the approaches undertaken in each state by the state government and the impact on the ground. At the meeting, organizations engaged in discussions on various topics such as the quality of counselling at police stations, delay of cases of domestic violence in courts and compensation of victims. Majlis presented on our experience using the PWDVA and other provisions to secure the rights of Muslim women.

To send out a message that court litigation does yield positive results and women victims of sexual and domestic violence must use the law, we have brought out a publication called Ummeed where every month we send out a positive story where a woman has succeeded in her litigation. They are brought out in three languages and sent out to all stake holders and our community based participants.

In order to reach out regularly to a wider group of concerned people we have developed a mailing list of 10,000 and articles published by us as well as other important news reports are sent out periodically.

Awards and Recognition

Majlis received the first **Martha Farrell Award - "Best Organization for Gender Equality"**. We have received a number of awards for what we do for others but this time it was for what we do within. We are humbled to be selected from 63 applicants and the jury included Shabana Azmi Kamla Bhasin, Justice A P Shah, Anuradha Das Mathur, Sushama Nath and Anshul Tiwari. Martha Farrell's commitment to gender equality and violence against women continues to inspire many of us in our work. Thank you so much Rajesh Thandon, Director PRIA and husband of Martha Farrell and Rizwan Adatia of Rizwan Adatia Foundation for facilitating this.

For her battle against patriarchy, the **Garden of the Righteous**, a worldwide NGO that recognizes heroes who fight genocide and human rights violations, is planted a tree in the name of Flavia Agnes in the Italian metropolis of Milan on Women's Day.

As a measure of recognition of achievements in individual women in the field of social development, the Government of India has instituted six National Awards "Stree Shakti Puruskar". These awards are in the name of eminent women personalities in the Indian history, who are famous for their personal courage and integrity. On December 20, 2016 Flavia Agnes was awarded the **Ahilyabai Holkar Stree Shakti Puraskar** from Amravathi. Since she could not reach the event due to flight delays, the organisers came all the way to Mumbai to honour her. Flavia was nominated by the Ministry of Women and Child Development for her contribution to support and rehabilitating women and children victims of violence.

In her key note address on 14th June 2016 at the 85th birth anniversary celebration of former Orissa chief minister Nandini Satpathy Adv Flavia Agnes, women's activist and lawyer said - "Though the Hindu Marriage Act prohibits polygamy but several Hindu males have multiple partners. Polygamy cases are higher among Hindus compared with Muslims and Christians," She went on to stress that "existing laws if implemented robustly" will bring in a huge difference. "Passing new laws has become a fancy and it won't help," she said.

<http://www.orissapost.com/spirit-of-nandini-satpathy-celebrated-in-eloquence/>

The 2016 Durgabai Deshmukh Memorial Lecture, organised annually by the Council for Social Development (CSD) and the India International Centre (IIC), was delivered by Flavia Agnes, on July 15, 2016. She spoke on, 'Has the Codified Hindu Law Changed Gender Relationships.' Speaking to a packed audience, Agnes' argument explored whether the enactment of the Hindu Code Bill had in any way lead to a social transformation. In her presentation, she revisited the debates that formed the backdrop of enacting these laws, and the compromises and political compulsions that preceded them. Opposed by a conservative nationalist leadership, the Hindu Code Bill, she felt, was in essence a balancing act, its contradictions and lacunae unfolding in subsequent years. She pointed that it was a misconception that Hindus forsook personal laws and embraced a secular, egalitarian and gender code, which, it was felt, should be extended to minority communities. Anti-women biases, felt the rights lawyer, continued to prevail as part of the Hindu cultural ethos, continued to adversely impact women's rights. With strong evidence of discriminatory gender practices still prevalent, had the codified Hindu law, questioned the lawyer, provide the necessary foundation on which a strong edifice of a uniform and gender just family code could be built.

October 21, 2016 "उमलत्या कळ्यांसाठी दोन शब्द कायद्याचे" dedicated to Adv. Flavia Agnes was inaugurated by Justice S. S. Shinde, Bombay High Court, Aurangabad bench, in Aurangabad on 23rd October. The book written by Adv. Nirmala Chaudhary, Nyayadhara (our women district lawyer fellow and later coordinator) talks about the social dilemmas of teenagers today and the laws protecting them. The event was organised by the Bar Council of Ahmednagar and was presided over by Justice S. S. Shinde, of the Aurangabad Bench. The programme was attended by Principal District and Session Judge Shrikant Kulkarni, District Public Prosecutor Satish Patil and City Bar Association Chairman Mr. Lakshman Kachre. Several reports about this event appeared in Marathi newspapers.

On the occasion of Women's day in March 2017 Flavia was featured in **Vodafone's "Women of Pure Wonder"** a coffee table book as a woman achiever that has made commendable strides in her field, and whose success has brought great pride to our country. In its third year, the publication is brought out by Roli Books. The book tells the story of 50 extraordinary women who have undauntedly pursued their dreams, fought to challenge the status quo and most importantly, inspired many others to do the same.

Edelweiss brought out a special edition coffee table book on “**India - This Time...It’s Different!**” The book showcases thoughts from leaders across Businesses, Government & Opinion who express how matters are different this time around. Flavia Agnes was featured for her work on violence against women and ensuring implementation of the law. The book was released at the 12th Edelweiss India Conference, February 8th-10th, 2017. The book was shared with central and state ministries, corporates, industry bodies, business schools as well as marquee global and domestic financial investors.

Internships

At Majlis our interns are an integral part of our team. Local, National and International students apply for a minimum of 8 weeks and maximum of one year. Majlis is the only legal rights NGO that works exclusively on women and children and offers trial court litigation experience. We are very sort after by law, social work and women studies students and students apply almost one year in advance for a slot. Some of our senior programme managers have started their career as interns and hence we give a lot of importance to this programme. We have sometimes got students who have completed their education but are prepared to devote one year towards an internship at Majlis. This year a number of universities have approached us for an official tie up – Azim Premji University, Nirmala Niketn, Carleton University, Ramayya Law College, Bangalore, among others and several others. Our list of interns this year:

Employee Development

Our team is central to our work and various activities are planned to ensure their development and growth. The regular Thursday meetings are a great way to ensure sharing and learning, one way of ensuring. It’s an evening to unwind, share activities of the week and also discuss contemporary concerns. Other team building efforts includes outings and regular training. We have appointed a counselor to help the staff and to avoid burn out. In addition we offer life insurance policy upto Rs. 6 lakhs and medical insurance that covers hospital expenses of upto 1 lakh to ensure security of our team.

Capacity building and learning for our team We conduct regular capacity building learning and training session where we invite external or internal team members to deliver these trainings.

Date	Topic
1 Jun 16	On Right to Information Act
1-June-16	Tech Mahindra, Sailesh presented on their Saral Rojgar Yojna
9-June-16	Training on Family court procedure.
2 nd Jul	Ensuring Effective Communication
14 th Jul	Magistrate Court Procedures to be followed in a Domestic Violence Case
4 th Aug	Priyanka Bhojpuria
11 th Aug	International Justice Mission shared with us your model of holistic and need based after care support to victims
29-Sep-16	Photography session how to click pictures
Oct	Team presented on their training on trauma focused cognitive behavior therapy
3-Nov-16	How to handle cases of Promise of Marriage
9-Nov-16	Providing victim support – walking in her shoes
14 th Nov	Enakshi Ganguli, Haq
22-Nov-16	Filing a Domestic Incident Report on Domestic Violence – Documents required
30 th Nov 16	We celebrated founders day. Happy Birthday Flavia Agnes
1-Dec-16	POSCO and 376 IPC – Provisions and procedures of the law
1-Dec-16	Sodexo our partner who provides jobs to victims of violence presented their model and our collaboration
15-Dec-16	How to deliver training to community women on their rights
19-Dec-16	Domestic Violence cases procedure to be followed in summon and interim stage
22-Dec-16	Arti Rathi an investment planner guided our team on savings and investment
5-Jan-17	Filing a 498A case procedure to be followed
9-Feb-17	Identifying issues to be raised and drafting letters to stakeholders
30th March	Yasmin and Aspi Shroff from 'Possibilities' did a team building workshop we are enriched with the experience.

On 9th Dec the entire *Majlis team* went to Farm Regency in Gorai for a team building exercise. After an interesting session on how stress causes various ailments we discussed simple techniques to reduce stress. We played games that thought us the importance of valuing ourselves. After lunch everyone got in to the pool for some dancing and splashing. We returned home that evening juvinated and ready to take on another year.

Three team members of Majlis attended the *trauma focused cognitive behavior therapy training* that was organized by International Justice Mission in August, October and March.

The training which was divided into three parts was specifically designed to help victims and their caregivers overcome trauma-related difficulties, reduce negative emotional and behavioral responses following child sexual abuse, domestic violence, traumatic loss, and other traumatic events. The training greatly benefited the team and they came back and shared their learnings and experience to the rest of our team. 26 Oct 16, 31 Aug 16, Mar 17

On 12 and 13 Jul 2016 three team members from Majlis attended a workshop on digital security organized by Point of View ‘The Safety Net. The aims was to look at the security needs in the online space for organisations which work on gender and sexual rights to ensure internet use in a safe and secure manner.

Disclosures

Details of staff and their range of salary as on 31st March 2017 (Gross salary + benefits)

Per month	Male	Female	Total
Less than 5000	-	-	-
5000 – less than 10000	-	1	1
10000 – less than 25000	-	10	10
25000 – less than 50000	-	16	16
50000 – 100000	-	4	4
Greater than 100000	-	1	1
Total		32	32

	Gross Monthly Remuneration	Designation
Flavia Agnes	Rs. 75,000/-	Director

Highest paid

Highest	Rs. 1,25,000/-	Program Director
Second	Rs. 85,000/-	Program Manager
Third	Rs. 75,000/-	Program Manager

Lowest paid

Lowest	Rs. 8,000/-	Assistant
Second	Rs. 10,000/-	Peon.
Third	Rs. 12,000/-	Peon.

Remuneration to Trustees: No remuneration has been paid to Trustees.

Audited Accounts and Balance Sheet: Our audited accounts and balance sheet is shared with the public through our website.

Annual Report: The annual report is prepared after completion of the financial year.

Relation between Board members: No members of our board are related to one another by blood or marriage.

Board rotation policy: We have a rotation policy and members retiring or outgoing are eligible to be re-elected to the Board.

Board meetings & AGM held in the year 2016 - 2017

No	Nature of meeting	Date	Members present	Total Strength
1.	Board Meeting	9 th April, 2016	3	8
2	Board Meeting	18 th June, 2016	4	8
3	Board Meeting	7 th August, 2016	3	7
4	AGM	3 rd September, 2016	5	7
5	Board Meeting	3 rd December, 2016	4	7
6	Board Meeting	4 th March, 2017	5	7

Board members as on 31st March 2017

No	Name	Age	Gender	Occupation	Position	Amt paid	Type
1	Ingrid Srinath	54	Female	Advocate and Social Worker	Secretary	Nil	Nil
2	Justice Suresh H.	87	Male	Retired Judge	Treasurer	Nil	Nil
3	Prabha Sridevan	68	Female	Retired Judge	Trustee	Nil	Nil
4	Bishakha Datta	53	Female	Writer & Filmmaker	Trustee	Nil	Nil
5	Shoba Ghosh	58	Female	Professor	Trustee	Nil	Nil
6	Virginia Saldanha	69	Female	Social Worker	Trustee	Nil	Nil
7	Shilpa Phadke	45	Female	Sociologist	Trustee	Nil	Nil

International travel by staff / volunteers / Board members at the expense of the organization

No one travelled abroad at the expense of the organization during the year 2016 - 2017.

Air travel by staff / volunteers and Board members at the expense of the organization

Below air travel was done at the expense of the organization during the year 2016 -2017.

Prabha Sridevan (Trustee) air ticket booked for 3rd Sept 16 AGM from Chennai to Mumbai & back Rs.16094/-

Appendix 1 - Some Case Studies Social Support

(All names have been changed to protect identity)

Uzma is a young girl who faced sexual violence in her home. Her case was taken up by our Rahat team which provides socio-legal support to victims of sexual violence. Uzma comes from a very poor family, her father is an auto-rickshaw driver and her mother is not working. She used to live with her family in a rented house but her home and neighborhood atmosphere caused a lot of difficulties in her life. Since she was seeking shelter, we enrolled her in 'Save The Children' shelter home and also encouraged her to continue her studies by supporting vocational training for her. Throughout this process, the Rahat team has worked closely with her to provide counselling with any issues that have arisen in her home.

Puja is a domestic help, a divorcee and a mother of four. She approached us last year, when she had just filed for divorce. She now wanted to place her third child in the shelter home. Puja approached Majlis for help through our network. Lack of documentation made it difficult to find her child a shelter home. Making sure that the child does not lose an academic year, we set ourselves to the task of getting her documents in place. We were able to get her an identity card and also got her papers for her Aadhar card from Indore. After we got the papers, the child was admitted to the shelter home. The school admission remained. The school laid down some medical tests and aptitude tests that the child needed to clear to secure admission. We got the medical tests done, but the aptitude test was a challenge as the child was not well versed with English. We coached her in basic English and Maths. After weeks of intensive coaching, the child gave the aptitude test and cleared with flying colours! We helped Puja process papers to prove her employment details for school fee concessions. After months of helping Puja and her daughter, we got our biggest victory – the school recently confirmed the girl's admission from this June. Puja can now fulfil her dream of securing a bright future for her children.

20 years old Zara came to Majlis around six months back when she was facing severe domestic violence at her matrimonial home since her marriage. Her husband used to beat her red and blue. She came to Majlis in hope to get out of her misery. Initially we filed a domestic violence case against her husband but as the violence continued Zara filed a 498A case against her husband. She was now staying with her parents. Zara had completed her 12th Standard and showed interest in further perusing her studies to be independent in future while she went through this rough time in her marriage. Apart from providing her support in her case, Majlis team realised that she wants to peruse studies but is not clear about what and how should she proceed. We accompanied her to get information of teaching courses which she can take up. Last month she took admission for DED course to become a teacher. Majlis is also financially supporting her studies. We are very proud of Zara that despite of facing complete adverse situation in her life she is taking another chance to stand on her own feet.

Pushpa spent a whole night at Andhri railway station when her drunkard husband threw her and their 4 years old son and 8 years old daughter out of their house late at night. Pushpa had been going through continuous physical and mental violence by her husband. A police officer on duty contacted Majlis' Rahat helpline early in morning and sent them to our office. Pushpa came to our office along with her children in a complete panic mode as she had nowhere to go. Majlis' team got its resources together and arranged for one month temporary stay for her at YWCA in Mumbai. We are now helping her to file a domestic violence case against her husband.

44 years old Sudha got married to her 47 years old husband over a year back. She had a lot of expectations from her marriage which had happened quite late in her life. Unfortunately, within 15 days of her marriage she realised that she was cheated by her husband and his family. Her husband was mentally not stable and was unable to consummate the marriage. After realising the reality of her marriage out of frustration she left her matrimonial house in 15 days of her marriage. She carried her gold when she left the house. When Sudha came to Majlis, she wanted what was hers by right and wanted to end this quickly. We first sent her husband a notice for settlement asking a lump sum amount of Rs 5 lacs. When it was rejected by her husband, we sent notice for Mutual Consent Divorce (MCD). Meanwhile we also helped Sudha to get back her belonging from her matrimonial house. Majlis support person went with her when she got back her possessions. For now the husband has responded to our MCD notice and we are working on its response.

32 years old Shabana's PWDVA case was handled by Majlis. She recently received a final order of protection and maintenance from her husband. We are now working on the implementation of these orders. Although, even after receiving good orders Shabana came to us saying she wants to get out of this marriage. After consulting with her over her options, she decided to go for Khula (a type of divorce which is initiated by wife). Majlis support person accompanied her when she visited the Qazi for Khula. A legal notice was sent to husband asking for Khula from Qazi. But husband was not ready to give the Khula easily. Qazi called the husband for a direct meeting. Shabana met the Qazi and husband along with Majlis' support person and asserted that she wants a divorce. Finally husband agreed and her khula was accepted by her husband.

Ruby has been subject to physical, mental, sexual and economic abuse all along her 25 years of marriage. Her husband has harassed her all along making allegations of adultery against her. Two years ago when he threw her out of the house she finally approached the court for Justice. Ruby was unprepared for what lay ahead. Because of the constant allegations of adultery in the court by her husband negative bias was formed by the Magistrate Court Judge from the beginning and she was denied any reliefs by passing negative interim orders. Ruby was denied protection, residence, maintenance and custody of the daughter. Ruby had almost lost her faith in the court and the justice she was so keen to seek. On discussing her apprehensions with Majlis lawyer, Ruby was informed about the option of appeal at her

disposal. Learning about the option of appealing against the impugned order, was a ray of hope. Ruby decided to go the extra mile and file an Appeal at the Sessions Court. From then step by step Ruby's case was taken ahead in the court. Her journey in the court was full of difficulties and biases. Her first victory was when she received the maintenance order recently. She still has to cover a long journey to get her justice. During the proceedings she also decided to apply for transferring the case from her previous Magistrate to another Magistrate in the same Court building and then even to transfer her case to other magistrate court.

Through her struggle, Ruby has learned and grown as a person. She has more confidence to enter court rooms and police stations. Ruby feels that her two hard years at three different courts has given her perspective for the rest of her struggle. Ruby knows it will be a long, tough path towards her final order. In the meanwhile Ruby's daughter observed the situation in the past two years since her mother was out of the house and has understood her mother's struggle. The daughter has now decided to live with Ruby, leading to another victory.

Shridha was seeking custody of her son and maintenance from her husband. She had already their house but did not want a divorce. We were able to secure interim orders where she received custody, maintenance of Rs. 10,000 and the husband had agreed to paying their son's educational expenses. During the pendency of the trial, Shridha was diagnosed with breast cancer. Subsequently, she decided that she wanted a divorce. Her husband agreed so we met with his advocate to come to a lump-sum settlement. Her husband returned all of her documents and she was also able to get the divorce.

Vidya and her husband are both government employees. She married her husband against wishes of her parents over 12 years ago. But soon her dreams began to turn sour. Her marriage became full of mental and physical violence. They have a 9 years old son. With the continued violence at home Vidya finally left her house and approached Majlis to get reliefs as wife. She did not want to divorce her husband but wanted to get justice for her and her son. Her husband kept threatening her even after she had left the house. Under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, Majlis helped Vidya to file a DV case first and then filed for protection order and maintenance order. She was granted of interim protection order and her son was awarded Rs. 7000 maintenance.

Vishakha had filed for divorce against her husband and wanted to separate from him legally for over a year now. Her husband stays in Chennai and had not even seen her for past 5 years. She has a 5 years old daughter who has never known her father. Her husband has not responded despite repeated notices sent to him for divorce. Vishakha stays in Mumbai with her daughter. The case was tricky for us being there was no direct proof to be presented in the case besides Vishakha's story of isolation. Along with this, the judge in the court has given consecutive negative orders so there was an added pressure on our lawyer. After preparing a detailed argument for her separation, and giving her confidence, Majlis lawyer was able to

secure a positive order in her case, where her divorce got finalized and she was granted custody of her daughter. We were also able to secure her maintenance of Rs. 10,000.

Megha is a victim of acute physical and mental torture throughout her married life from her husband. She has 11 years old son and for past 3 years she is staying separately. Although he kept harassing her and her maternal family. We helped her to file her Domestic violence case against her husband. This last quarter we were able to get a maintenance order of Rs. 7000 for her son and also got an indenture order to restrain him from taking son.

In 2011, Vidya approached a service provider NGO to complain against her husband when she was convinced that he was having an affair. Her husband is a clerk at a lawyer's office and therefore knew how to handle the situation. He started filing false complaints against Vidya without her knowledge. After some days he threw her out the house giving a reason of renovation. Vidya took her 2 years old son with her and went back to her parents house. Vidya filed a DV case against her husband and her in laws. This time when husband appeared in the court he cited the previously lodged false complaints against Vidya and also filed for divorce. Subsequently Majlis intervened in the case and we advised her to challenge his divorce. While the case was going on he got remarried and returned her daughter to Vidya. Recently we received order of maintenance of Rs 10,000, rent and protection along with educational expenses of both the children till they grow up. Vidya is now managing her life well at her parents house, last year she also got a job.

Sharmin is 54 years old now and has three grown up children – one daughter and two sons. She came to us when her husband threatened to throw her out of their house to sell the house for money over five years back. We filed a PWDVA case against husband. We received interim orders of her protection and orders not to throw her out of the house. After this her husband pronounced a talaq to her without following the proper procedure of talaq. Meanwhile the husband kept filing false complaints against her and we kept rejecting his applications. We then moved to session's court to increase the speed of the proceedings. Recently, we were able to get Sharmin final order of protection, residence and maintenance for children despite her earning status.

Appendix 2 List of Published Articles and Academic Papers

For research papers / articles refer to - <https://flaviaagnes.wordpress.com/>

April 2, 2016 Scroll.in “No, NGOs don’t get corrupted by working with the government to bring change”

April 24, 16 The Sacrament of Pre Nup

May 05, 2016, The Asian Age “Desperate housewives”

May 13, 2016 The Asian Age Every sin must be punished (See also May 13, 2016 UCAN, India “Disrobe priests guilty of sexual abuse of women: Catholic lawyer”

May 14, 2016 EPW Vol. 51, Issue No. 20, pg.13-15 “Muslim Women’s Rights and Media Coverage”

May 25, 2016 Scroll.in “The debate on triple talaq and Muslim women’s rights is missing out on some crucial facts”

June 10, 2016, The Asian Age “Stop this brutality, it shames India”

June 20, 2016 Scroll.in “This Muslim organisation’s campaign for a ban on triple talaq is commendable but blinkered”

June 2016 *Journal of People’s Studies* - Volume 1, Issue 4 (June, 2016) (Section 2 Review) pgs.41-41 “India’s gruesome reality of honour killings”

July 7, 2017 The Wire “The Modi Government’s Hindutva Ideology Could Stall Any Progress on the Uniform Civil Code

Hindustant Times ‘Gender just’ laws can work against women”

28th August 28, 2016 Live Mint “Uniform rights, not a uniform law”

September 5, 2016 Interviewed by Natasha Badhwar for Outlook: ‘Can’t Compare Brutal Gang-Rape With Forced Oral Sex’ - Feminist lawyer Flavia Agnes, on the implications of the new rape law, especially in the context of the Mahmood Farooqui rape case.

September 11, 2016, The Asian Age “What media is not telling us about AIMPLB’s stand

October 19, 2016 First Post Interviewed by Shishir Tripathi “Uniform Civil Code debate focuses on Muslim law but ignores other communities: Flavia Agnes”

October 19, 2016 The Wire Interviewed by S. Naskar “Aim Should Be Uniformity of Rights, Not a Uniform Law: Flavia Agnes on UCC”

October 22, 2016 Catchnews Flavia Agnes interviewed by Praneta Jha “Women don't need a uniform civil code, but better access to courts”

November 17, 2016 The Indian Express “Gender justice, in fact”

February 19, 2017 Scroll.in “ A Bombay High Court judge expunges her comments on a minor rape victim, but the damage is done” “And here lies the history of humiliation rape victims in India are constantly subjected to during court proceedings”

February 12, 2016 The Asian Age - 360 degree: “What porn is doing to Us”

February 16, 2017 The Asia Age “The journey from victim to survivor”

Articles translated into other languages to reach a wider readership

August, 2016 Translation of the article in EPW appeared in Navbharat Times; August 2016 Translation of the talk at the Indian International Centre by Nasseruddin in Hindi Translation of three articles on UCC into Malayalam by P. A. Kabeer

Media Interviews

April, 2016 Conversations with Flavia Agnes, Director, Majlis Legal Centre” - Avani Chokshi, and Mansi Binjrajka, Associate Editor *Journal of Indian Law and Society*

12th April, 2016 About the restrictions on bar dancing by Maharashtra government

Apr 12, 2016 - Deshpande... Flavia Agnes, founder of Majlis, the women's organization that was at the forefront of the battle against the ban

23 April, 2016 Marital rape could soon become a criminal offence. ... Flavia Agnes provides a contrary ...Govt to deliberate on criminalising marital rape

5 May, 2016 - Govt to deliberate on criminalising marital rape.

22nd June, 2016 The Times of Swati Deshpande. Flavia Agnes said, “Salman Khan’s comments about rape victim are unwarranted, silly and in poor taste and according to me, ...

1st July, 2016 Panel Discussion with Rajdeep Sardesai on the perils of UCC for minority communities.

July 14, 2016: Interaction with women journalists at the Indian Women's Press Corps.

July 15, 2016: Interview with Mannika Chopra/DNA

25th July, 2016 Interview by Akshay Mukul in The Times of India. AN ECSTASY OF IDEAS - Flavia Agnes 15th July, 2016 at Council for Social Development, 53 Lodi Estate.

Publications

Pursuing this thing called ‘justice’ co-edit Flavia Agnes and Audrey D’mello to be published by Sage Publications. Work in progress

Academic Papers

“Sexual Violence – Interface between the public and the private” (co-edit Flavia Agnes & Audrey D’Mello) in Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Government of India and Om Prakash Mathur in *State of Urban Poor Report, 2015 - Gender and Urban Poverty*, Oxford University Press, (Feb.2016)

Flavia Agnes, “Chapter 50 - Personal Laws” Choudhry Sujit, Madhav Khosla and Pratap Bhanu Mehta (edit) *The Oxford Handbook of The Indian Constitution* Oxford University Press (April, 2016) pg. 903 -920

Common code, uncommon challenges - Does the debate on the Uniform Civil Code in India uphold a majoritarian value system? *Himal Magazine* 5 January 2016

Muslim Women’s Rights and Media Coverage. *EPW* Vol. 51, Issue No. 20, 14 May, 2016

“Has Codified Hindu Law Changed Gender Relationships?” This lecture which was delivered as Durgabhai Deshmukh Memorial Lecture on 15th July, 2016 and later was turned into an academic paper and published in *Social Change, Journal of the Council for Social Development* (Vol.46 No.4 December 2016 pgs. 611-623) published by Sage Publication and Council for Social Development Studies (CSD) Delhi.

“Muslim Women Negotiating a Historical Moment in their Lives” Contributed an article to the forthcoming issue of **Revue des Femmes Philosophes** (REP) (to be brought out by mid-March) focussing on the contemporary socio-political situation in India: "**Intellectuals, Philosophers, Women in India: Endangered Species?**" edited by Divya Dwivedi.

“Muslim Women Negotiating a Historical Moment in their Lives” essay sent to a volume edited by Dr. Bijayalaxmi Nanda, an Associate Professor at the Department of Political Science, Miranda House, University of Delhi and Dr. Nupur Ray, Assistant Professor at Department of Political Science, Kamala Nehru College, University of Delhi for an edited volume to be published by Routledge publications titled - ‘Taking the Rights Path: Debates and Dilemmas in India’.