

MAJLIS MANCH
NARRATIVE REPORT 2017 – 18

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I. Organization Structure

Financial Profile: Majlis receives grants from local and foreign institutions. In addition we also raise funds from individual donors, by providing consultations and trainings. We also 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 organizations committed towards enhancing accountability and transparency through good governance. We are also certified by **Guide Star India Gold** that provides a Transparency Badge and Gold Seals to NGOs that meet the highest standards of transparency and public disclosure.

Organogram

Founder - Flavia Agnes **Director** - Audrey Dmello

Programme Managers - Nausheen Yousuf, Persis Sidhva, Jacinta Saldanha

Programme Coordinators - 30 Programme Coordinators, 3 Support Staff & 20 Interns

Internal functioning

We are an all women team of lawyers, support persons and administrative staff. Our team strength during the year was **37**. The teams are divided as per the focus of their work and are headed by a programme manager. The programme managers are part of an advisory committee that decides on critical issues concerning the functioning of the organisation. Every Thursday evening the entire office meets to share about the highlights of their work during the week and to discuss contemporary issues. We also invite external experts to address the team on issues of critical concern and to provide our team with exposure to wider concerns.

II. Social and Legal Support to women and children victims of violence (RAHAT)

Majlis provides support to victims of domestic and sexual violence by walking the legal journey with them, and while doing so, we closely monitor the system to render it more responsive to the needs of victims. The legal journey which a victim embarks upon is daunting and instead of strengthening her, the system pushes her several notches below 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 to which they are entitled. **Our aim is to help victims access social services to which they are entitled, in order to achieve effective rehabilitation.**

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

First Response and Consultation: Inform victims about their legal rights, court procedures and other processes of the case.

Social Support: Assist victims to access other services they need such as shelter, medical, education, vocational training, counseling, and others.

Legal Support: Assist victims during interactions with Police, Protection Officers, Child Welfare Committee and other stakeholders.

Legal Support: Help victims connect with Legal Aid Lawyers and Public Prosecutors. In certain domestic violence cases our team of lawyers represent victims in court.

Legal Support: Accompany victims during court appearances and follow up with the case in the Court.

Response and Consultation

The starting point of the legal journey is ensuring that the victim understands her legal rights. Through a committed team of lawyers and social activists, we provided legal advice and first response to **over 1500** women and children facing violence in the past year. Legal advice is provided at our office and also at legal awareness camps in communities across the city.

In cases of sexual violence we reached out to **over 100** victims by providing a first response. This includes meeting the victim and her family for the first time, visiting their home, understanding her case and her vulnerabilities, explaining the course of the case to her, identifying social support and providing immediate assistance as required. These cases were referred to us by the Police, Child Welfare Committee, Children Homes, Court, NGOs and community based organisations (CBO).

Litigation in Domestic Violence Cases

Our team of women lawyers represent women clients in their cases filed under the Domestic Violence Act. We represent survivors in **10 Magistrate Courts** across Mumbai. We also represent our clients in divorce cases in Family Courts at Mumbai and Thane. Our lawyers help our clients secure reliefs from court such as protection from further violence, safety to stay in their marital residence, maintenance for daily expenses, custody of children, and compensation for injuries and other medical treatments. We also help our clients in Appeals in case the orders passed are unsatisfactory.

Of the total women who approached us, over 100 women made the decision to proceed to court to access their rights and seek justice. We helped **19 victims execute court orders** that were breached and violated by husbands and in-laws.

Legal support to Protection Officers (POs)

We have continued to help Protection Officers to file cases on behalf of women, and we have been observing the quality of the DIRs filed by them. We support them whenever required. This year, we helped the POs file **31 DIRs**. Due to our support **28** women were helped by POs to apply for **Legal Aid Lawyers** and 19 obtained lawyers within the same year. We accompanied all our clients to the District Legal Services (DLSA) Office for the application process. Due to our support **POs referred 70 women to other service providers**. They **provided information to victims about the law and their rights** and served **Court Summons and Notices** in all 31 cases filed by them.

Legal support in Sexual Violence case

In cases of Sexual Violence we had **carried forward 458 cases** from the previous year. **115** cases were added this year. Total cases handled were **573 cases**. Of these, **92 cases** ended this year. **36** cases ended in Judgement of which **24** were convictions. We got acquittals in 12 cases. 56 cases were ended for other reason like the victim was not in touch or did not want our support. We are carrying forward **481** cases to the next year.

Legal support includes briefing the Public Prosecutor on the case, follow-up of the case with the Police for filing of the charge sheet, assisting during bail hearings and framing of charges. It also includes preparing a victim for recording of her statement before the Magistrate and being present with her in Court for the same, preparing a victim for recording of her evidence in Court and being present with her in Court or her deposition (examination-in-chief and cross examination).

We prepared 143 victims for their evidence in Court and were present with them in Court while their evidence was recorded. This is the most important legal intervention of the case. It is also a daunting experience for the victim and our prior preparation and presence is critical to ensure that her dignity is maintained at this stage. In addition, we also provide legal assistance to the public prosecutor. We drafted **Written Submissions/Arguments in 11 cases and provided case law / citations in 12 cases which were produced in court by the public prosecutor.**

The Child Welfare Committee (CWC) appointed us as “Support Person” to the children in need in 48 cases. We are present before the Child Welfare Committee in Mumbai City and Mumbai Suburbs every week. These regular visits help us to secure immediate shelter and rehabilitation for children who are in need of care and assistance. We also provide legal advice to the CWC on cases of child sexual abuse. We submitted detailed Home Investigation Reports, Care Plans and Follow up Reports to the CWC in all **48 cases**.

- **42 victims have received monetary compensation under the Manodhariya Scheme** due to our efforts and follow-up with the Police and Dept of Women and Child Development.
- Several NGOs, CBOs and Child Care Institutions refer cases to us for legal support. Some of these are Aakash, Aangan, Childline, Creative Handicrafts, SNEHA, Awaaz E Niswan among others.
- To ensure holistic support and a coordinated approach, we had **41 meetings** with partner organisations on case work and case management.

Social Support

We strongly believe that to get a victim out of despair, legal support alone does not suffice. Various other factors burden a survivor and cloud her decision making. Due to this pressure she requires added support to continue her journey to obtain justice. The assurance of continued support helps a great deal in building her confidence. We inform the survivor about her rights and the reliefs and options available to her. This helps them to think through clearly about their options and prioritize their needs. We provided social support to over **500** victims this year.

We guide victims to collect documents, file NCs and FIRs. We accompanied them to hospitals for urgent treatment and arranged for urgent accommodation at local shelter homes. We also referred them to other services and encouraged them to apply for vocational training, skill development and for regular employment in organised sector. We helped them with applications and legal notices and also helped them with their children's education and helped some of them study further and complete their own education. We encouraged many victims undergo counselling and also arranged to have a counsellor visit our office weekly for convenience.

Convictions Acquittals and Judgments

Domestic Violence: The litigation team has helped women secure reliefs such as maintenance, residence, child custody and protection from domestic violence. Apart from urgent orders of protection, residence and maintenance for women, we obtained orders for issuing distress warrant for arrest of erring husbands so that maintenance orders can be implemented urgently. We obtained orders for regular access to children and orders for our clients to live in the same house and not to be dispossessed from their residence. **We secured 100 interim and final orders during the year.**

Sexual Violence: 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%. When we began to intervene, the conviction rate vastly improved in Mumbai. It is around 68% and has been consistent

for the last six years since our Rahat intervention programme started. **This year 36 of our sexual violence cases ended with a judgement. We secured a conviction in 24 of these cases. We got acquittals in 12 cases.**

Coordination with NGOs to provide Additional Support

We coordinate with organizations like Angan, Arpan, Childline, Asha Sadan, A.D. Bawla Shelter Home, Shraddhanand Mahila Ashram and St. Catherine's Home as they provide support and shelter to children in need and we train NGO staff and their community leaders on sexual violence against women and children. Some of the organizations we trained were:

- Aangan, Apnalaya Bal Haq Childline
- CORO Creative Handicrafts Sakhya Sneha
- The Foundation World Vision

We also partner with Indian Education Society, Kohinoor Business School, Indian Insurance Institute and Edelweiss to conduct meetings at their premises to address a large number of stakeholders to discuss challenges and improve support to women and children.

Legal Aid Camps

Apart from clients coming to our office for Legal Advice, we reach out to communities to impart legal awareness to women and provide legal advice to women in need. Our team of lawyers and social activists collaborate with community based organizations (CBOs) to conduct Legal Aid Camps. These camps provide legal awareness to women from marginalized sections and provide an opportunity to seek accurate legal advice through consultations in their own local area. This year we reached out to over 1000 women through our legal aid camps organized in association with the following Community Based Organizations.

- Apnalaya Awaz-e-Niswaan Bharat Nagar
- Bright Future CORO Creative Handicrafts
- CRH Dhyanashram MAVIM Pali Hill Church
- Sahasee World Vision YWCA
- Apne Aap Women's Collective Justice and Peace Commission

Challenges

We aim to transform victims into survivors. We support victims on their journey and ensure that the system does not re-victimize them.

- It usually takes 1-2 years before sexual violence case reaches the trial stage and 3-4 years for a Domestic Violence case to be completed. During this period, other circumstances force victims to retract their statements, lose faith in the system and abandon the legal case. This is one of the primary challenges we continue to face.
- Providing long term support to rehabilitate victims is another challenge as government facilities are lacking, from safe shelter homes, to affordable counseling and income generating options.
- Many victims return to their families and face financial and other problems at home.

Nonetheless our endeavor is to provide all-round support to victims and ensure that she secures her rights and obtains justice as per her own articulation. We name this journey, *transforming victims into survivors*.

III. Policy Level Interventions

Ensuring Stake holder Accountability through Monitoring

Majlis has always been working towards bringing women's rights and their challenges with the state and non-state machinery on Public Policy Agenda. Policy changes are possible when ground realities are analysed and appropriate solutions are suggested for the problems observed. Problems can be observed only when the system is used. We encourage victims to use the existing systems, procedures and processes of the state machinery. We then address the problems faced by them by flagging them and by bringing them to the notice of the appropriate authorities for bringing in systemic changes.

Campaign Letters

During the course of our work at the grass root level we are constantly faced with obstacles and challenges. A majority of these issues are due to the lapses by stakeholders under the Act itself. We address these issues by writing Campaign Letters and by any other method that would best resolve the issue. We reported several key issues with respective authorities and managed to resolve many of the issues over the past three years. We addressed **50** such campaign issues last year. Some of the key issues were as follows:

1. **Delay by courts in Domestic Violence cases:** We wrote a letter to the Chief Justice of Bombay High Court to resolve a challenge of long court dates in a domestic violence cases. This is a common challenge faced by litigants. Long court dates delay a victim's case indefinitely and she loses confidence in the system.
2. **Need for improvement in court facilities for women litigants:** In order to render courts more congenial and responsive to the needs of women and to ensure that the system effectively responds

to them, we flagged a number of issues and brought them to the notice of the higher authorities. Some of the issues we have raised and achieved some degree of success are space for women to sit, matters to be heard in the morning, court fee stamp not to be charged to women and other similar issues. There are also other issues like delay in passing orders, long dates, order copies not given free of cost, execution of orders, verification needed in courts and other such issues which we have taken up and are waiting for a positive response from the High Court.

3. Lapses on the part of court staff: A judicial clerk at Kurla Court denied filing a case from a woman as she did not have a lawyer. The woman had filed the case though PO. The clerk insisted for affirmation through a lawyer. We wrote letters to concerned authorities in court to address this matter. Action was taken against this clerk who later met us personally and apologised. We have been hearing such cases in Thane and Vasai courts. A letter was sent to Deputy Commissioner of Konkan division to look into such cases.

4. Language barriers in issuing summons: We wrote a letter to a judge for using too technical language in summons. There was also a delay in passing the order issuing the summons. This caused further delay in the case. Both these concerns were brought to the notice of the higher judiciary.

5. Sexual Harassment at Workplace: We had written to the Kurla Court Authorities about a Sexual Harassment incident at Kurla Court. We later wrote to the High Court about constituting sexual harassment committees in court. Audrey D'mello, Director of Majlis, was appointed as external member to committee of Sessions Court.

6. Lapses by the State Commission for Women: We wrote letters to the Maharashtra State Commission for Women (MSCW) as they delayed a critical case involving severe physical violence on the pretext of counseling. When the counseling did not materialize the client suffered near fatal injuries due to further violence. As soon as we were informed we visited the victim and helped her file an FIR u/s 498A immediately. We also wrote to the MSWC pointing out their lapses.

7. Delay by Protection Officers and unethical and unprofessional attitude of Protection Officers: We wrote letters to address the delays by protection officers in domestic violence cases. In one of the cases a Protection Officer also sent the victim to a private lawyer where the victim was charged money. We wrote a complaint against this PO and the matter was then enquired into by their authorities.

8. Police Helpline Numbers inaccessible: Another critical issue reported to us by victims is that the Police Helpline Numbers, 100 and 103 are inaccessible very often. Victims are therefore unable to seek urgent help during an incident of violence. As this issue affects not only our clients but any victim in need or urgent help, we wrote a letter to the Commissioner of Police, Mumbai to bring this issue to his attention.

Campaigns

We also campaign publicly through our partners and networks to address pressing issues that affect the public at large. Some of the campaigns we supported and undertook this year are mentioned below.

- 1. Problems faced by women while accessing the courts across Maharashtra** - After rigorous follow up and advocacy, we obtained permission from Bombay High Court to conduct Training of Judges across all districts in Maharashtra. We reached out to 535 Judges, 100 Protection Officers and 85 Legal Aid Lawyers this year.
- 2. Lack of coordination between stakeholders in Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence cases:** We organized a Convergence meeting with Maharashtra State Women's Commission to address gaps and challenges faced by stake holders under the DV Act such as Police, Protection Officers, Medical Officers, Shelters Homes, NGOs, Legal Aid Lawyers and others. The Stakeholders had an opportunity to share the challenges they face and interact with NGOs and other Stakeholders to find solutions and plan a way forward. We wrote letters to concerned authorities like Commissioner of Police, MSCW, DWCD and others, about the issues faced by women while working with the stakeholders to obtain justice. The Authorities assured us that the matters will be resolved at the earliest.
- 3. Lack of support from Free Legal Aid Lawyers:** We have been highlighting cases of lapses from legal aid lawyers such as not appearing for matters, delay in courts, asking money from clients, and other issues. We sent letters to secretary of District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) highlighting these obstacles. We had regular meetings with DLSA which led them to investigate into these issues. They asked us to send the concerned clients to their office for further investigation. We also organised a Consultation meeting with Legal Aid lawyers for them to share their challenges along with practical suggestions and solutions to facilitate better coordination between victims of domestic violence and the Legal Aid lawyers.
- 4. Delays and lapses by Protection Officers:** Campaign letters have been sent to point out the delays and lapses from POs. These letters were initially sent to District Officer of WCD, and we have now also approached Deputy Commissioner of Konkan division for overall improvement in the functioning of POs.
- 5. Lack of awareness of medical officers (DV matters):** Several stakeholders such as Medical Officers are unaware about their role under the Domestic Violence Act and that they have to file a DIR on meeting Domestic Violence victims. Based on our letters to hospitals we have begun conducting Training of Medical Officers on their role and responsibility under the DV Act.

6. **Awareness about Rights of Muslim Women:** We have been working extensively on imparting awareness and clearing misconceptions about rights of Muslim Women. We have been engaging with various audiences and drawing them into critical discussions through our articles, awareness programmes and through our networking meetings. We have been actively opposing the criminalizing of Triple Talak.

7. **Opposing the criminalizing of Triple Talak:** Muslim Women do not seek incrimination of their husbands and actually seek reliefs as already provided for under the DV Act. After the Triple Talak case in the Supreme Court, where we had filed an Intervenor Application, we continued to oppose the criminalizing of Triple Talak through articles in newspapers, awareness sessions with NGOs and networking meetings. When the government introduced a bill in parliament to criminalise Triple Talaq we started a Campaign on Change.Org called 'The Bill Criminalizing Instant Triple Talaq is against Gender Justice'. We received over 15,000 signatures towards this campaign. The bill was passed in Lok Sabha but with all the campaign we managed to oppose the bill in Rajya Sabha. We also continued our campaign on our NGO networking page on Facebook termed as 'The Triple Talaq Ban is Discriminatory' wherein NGO members, Lawyers and lay persons posted pictures with messages against the Triple Talaq Ban.

8. **Uniform Civil Code:** Women demand 'Uniformity Of Rights' not Uniform Civil Code It is important to place gender concerns within the rubric of secularism and minority rights, and not pose one against the other. We demand 'Uniformity Of Rights' through 'reform from within' so that women can truly access these rights with the support of their community. Majlis started an online Petition to protest against the enactment of UCC by Law Commission of India. We received over 5000 signatures which were delivered to the law commission and law minister of India.

9. **Church Abuse Cases:** We have been successfully conducting Child Protection Policy trainings in church schools for teachers, support staff and parents, based on the policy we drafted with the Archdiocesan Board the previous year. We also worked extensively with the Board and advocated for a Sexual Harassment at the Workplace Policy at Churches. We drafted the Policy and distributed Informative Posters to over 100 churches in Maharashtra.

10. **Manodhairya Scheme PIL:** Recently, the Government of Maharashtra made several changes in the "Manodhairya Scheme" a victim compensation scheme in cases of sexual violence and acid attack. The amended scheme has several provisions which are contrary to the best interest of victims, their protection and rehabilitation. Several victims will be denied compensation according to this amended scheme and the process to apply for compensation has been complicated. We believe that the essence of the scheme has been completely lost with these amendments. We therefore filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in the Bombay High Court challenging various

amendments in the scheme to ensure adequate compensation for victims in a timely and effective manner. As a result of this PIL, the High Court, after consulting with various NGOs drafted a new scheme and the situation for victims became slightly better due to this amended scheme.

11. **Not in My Name:** With the current socio-political scenario where people are getting targeted because of their religion, caste, class and gender; we strongly believe that we should be loud enough to show the dissent opinion and hence we participated in 'Not in My Name' rally in Mumbai.

12. **NILSA Exhibition:** We participated in the Exhibition organised by NILSA in March, to spread awareness about services by government and non-government organisations. We shared a stall with the Mumbai Police to assist participants with their queries.

13. **Farmer's March:** We supported and joined in the Farmer's March to express support and solidarity with Farmers in Maharashtra in March.

IV. Legal Awareness

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, and others, 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 trainings are conducted by senior team members, Adv. Persis Sidhva, Adv. Nausheen Yousuf and Adv. Audrey D'Mello, along with assistance from junior lawyers and the social support team. The Reports are disseminated to the High Court, District Courts, Women and Child Development department, Commissioner of Police Office, Protection Officers and other key stakeholders.

Magistrates Training

This year we conducted Trainings at **Amravati, Ahmadnagar, Buldhana, Bhandara, Dhule, Latur, Jalgaon, Nagpur, Gondia, Washim and Satara** and completed a two-year project of training all Magistrates across Maharashtra. We focused on the Bombay High Court guidelines under the Domestic Violence Act. The role of Protection Officers and other Stakeholders were also explained. We discussed various case studies and examples to provide a practical understanding of the provision under the Act. Many of the Magistrates shared with us that they are eager to apply the information they learned during our sessions in their cases when they hear domestic violence cases when return back to work the following week.

Police Trainings

Women Probationary Police Officers Training

We conducted two training sessions for a batch of over 200 young women probationary Police Officers on the laws, amendments and best practices to be followed while handling cases of sexual and domestic violence 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.

POCSO Special Cell - Region Wise Training for Mumbai Police

Crimes Against Women Cell - Crime Branch requested us to conduct region wise training for Police Officers and Staff of “POCSO Special Cell” to build the capacity of officers and staff appointed as members of the POCSO Special Cells at every Police Station.

| Date | Region | Participants |
|--|------------------|-------------------------|
| 14 th November 2017 (<i>2 sessions</i>) | South | 153 |
| 18 th November 2017 | Central | 152 |
| 23 rd November 2017 (<i>2 sessions</i>) | North | 118 |
| 6 th November 2017 | East | 137 |
| 24 th , 28 th , 30 th November 2017 (<i>3 sessions</i>) | West | 208 |
| Total | 5 Regions | 768 Participants |

Lawyers Trainings

Feminist Legal Approach

We started an initiative to train women lawyers on a Feminist Legal Approach to meet the growing need for lawyers with a gender perspective who are dedicated to use innovative legal practices to defend women’s rights. A diverse group of 10 lawyers attended this 5 day training in April.

Maharashtra State District Legal Aid Lawyers Consultation

We organized a Consultation with Legal Aid Lawyers handling Domestic Violence (DV) cases, in collaboration with the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) to improve coordination between Legal Aid Lawyers, Protection Officers, NGOs and victims of Domestic Violence. Our co-founder, Flavia Agnes and DLSA Secretary, Mr. Game, were on the panel to help improve the working of Stakeholders to provide reliefs to victims of Domestic Violence.

Training Medical Practitioners

Medical Officers, doctors, nurses and hospital staff are quite often the first point of contact of the victims of violence both sexual and domestic. Due to lack of awareness they are unable to perform their legal duties effectively. To address this we had started an initiative to train Medical Officers on their medico-judicial duties under the law. We conducted trainings for over 150 highly experienced doctors and nurses at Nair Hospital and KEM Hospital in three separate trainings this year.

Training Shelter Home Staff

Through our consistent efforts and after a great deal of persuasion, we got an opportunity to conduct an awareness at Bapnu Ghar and Shraddhanand Mahila Ashram. Awareness on domestic violence, access to laws, and sexual harassment of women at the workplace. Through this innovative and first of its kind approach, we reached 50 women and girls.

Training Institutions and Corporates on Sexual Harassment at Workplace

Since the enactment of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (SHW), we have been assisting organizations frame their policy, form their Internal Complaints Committee (ICs) and are empanelled with some of them on their IC, as external, NGO representative. We also conducted training for their internal committees and employees. These trainings are headed and coordinated by Ms. Jacinta Saldanha, a senior team member of Majlis. We had **15 trainings** this year and imparted awareness on the Act to over **250 persons** in organizations across Mumbai. Some of the organizations we trained this year are listed below:

- A.T.E Enterprises Pvt Ltd
- BG Exploration and Production India
- Foundation For Mother And Child Health
- India First Life Insurance Company
- Karl Mayer India Pvt Ltd
- Liebherr India Pvt Ltd
- Magic Bus NGO
- Mahanagar Gas Ltd
- National Insurance Academy
- National Securities Depository Ltd
- Pheonix Mills Ltd
- Prerna NGO
- NMIMS, Core MBA Students

Training and Awareness – Community

NGOs and CBOs

We have always aimed at reaching out to community level women and girls to help them to demystify laws and provide them awareness about laws and rights. This is because we find that due to the lack of knowledge and awareness about the various laws and rights under them, women and girls get deprived of their crucial rights. We partner with NGOs working with local communities to conduct regular legal awareness camps in their communities. We also provide legal advice to the

participants after these sessions. This year **we imparted awareness to over 1000 girls and women in communities** through our partnerships with NGOs and CBOs. Some of the organizations we partnered with for trainings this year are listed below.

- | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| ▪ Action Aid | ▪ Karunya Trust | ▪ Sakhya Women's |
| ▪ Apnalaya | ▪ Pali Church | Guidance Cell |
| ▪ Awaaz E Niswan | ▪ Justice and Peace, St. | ▪ Suraksha Community |
| ▪ Bright Future | Pius College | Centre |
| ▪ Creative Handicrafts | ▪ MAVIM | ▪ World Vision |
| ▪ CRH | ▪ Nirmala Niketan | ▪ YWCA |
| ▪ World Vision | ▪ Sahaasee | |

Orientation Programme for NGOs

In order to increase our outreach and provide immediate support to the victim in her community, we conducted a 5-day extensive training programme for selected staff from three NGOs - Apnalaya, Creative Handicrafts and Sakhya. These organisations have a strong community presence and have been working with us for the past several years. Through this extensive training, they have been able to equip their staff to provide first line of support at the initial stage itself. After the training, we started working on cases in a collaborative manner and have been providing weekly legal support at their centres.

PLUS Course

The **Para Legal Understanding for Social Workers (PLUS)** is another one of our successful initiatives. This 10-session practical course aims to help women leaders in local communities negotiate the legal system to help victims of Domestic Violence access their rights. **25 enthusiastic women leaders from CORO and 19 from Chuim Community Centre** undertook this course this year. The course at Chuim Community Centre is under way while the participants from CORO successfully completed their course earlier this year were awarded certificates on successful completion.

Child Protection Policy

The Archdiocesan Board Of Education (ABE) had released a Child Protection Policy for all Church Schools in Mumbai and encouraged schools to invite us to conduct workshops to provide more clarity on the policy. Since then we have been training teachers and support staff at schools across Mumbai to ensure that they adhere to the policy. We conducted the training in **15 schools and reached to over 1200 participants** during the year. We have also tied up with Cathedral School and Aditya Birla School to implement CPP. We have conducted sessions on implementation of CPP

at World Vision Community Centers, Bal Haq and partners of Action Aid. In February this year we conducted a session for brothers at the Seminary Goregaon on Protection of Minors and Vulnerable adults.

Training and Awareness – Youth

We have also aimed to impart awareness about relevant laws youth and students in colleges so that they are aware of their rights even before the rights are violated at their homes, in relationships, in marriages and at workplaces.

Expression!

As part of our youth initiative, we engage with students from colleges across Mumbai by conducting an intra-college competition ‘Expression!’ This competition provides students with a platform to share their views on current issues through poems, skits, slogans, jingles, speeches, songs, posters, rangoli and other creative outlets. The students express their concern pertaining to the theme provided by us. The themes are contemporary and within the realm of safety and gender issues. This year the theme was ‘**Consent**’ – **What is your Yes and What is your No?**

By encouraging students to voice their concerns, we help them to clarify doubts, clear misconceptions, break gender stereotypes and address issues that affect them. We organized this event in **25 colleges and reached over 1300 students** during the year. Some of the colleges are listed below:

- Akbar Peerbhoy
- Don Bosco
- HR College
- K.C. College
- MOMIM College
- MVM College
- Nanavati
- Nirmala Niketan
- Patuck Gala College
- SIES College

Know Your Rights (KYR)

We also conduct one-day workshops in colleges across Mumbai to provide students with information on legal rights of women and children and methods to deal with violence. This interactive workshop conducted by our team of lawyers, equips participants with practical legal strategies to access their rights. The sessions are on the following topics: **Domestic Violence, Sexual Violence, Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace and Muslim Women Rights.**

We aim to increase the legal consciousness of young minds, especially girls, and to enable them to know their rights. We conducted **10 KYR sessions and imparted awareness to around 1000 students**. Some of the colleges where we conducted KYR are listed below:

- Kohinoor Business Sc
- Nirmala Niketan
- S. N. College
- Guru Nanak College
- NMIMS
- SIES
- MOMIN College
- Public Night College
- St. Xavier's College

We also partner with **Bright Future** organization to provide similar training and awareness to youth undergoing pre-employment preparatory courses. We had **3 sessions this year and imparted awareness to around 150 youth** on relevant laws and rights with special focus on marriage, domestic violence and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act.

Law and Social Work

In a **10 session Certificate Course** designed by us **for students, social workers and other working professionals**, we enable them to use the law to help poor, vulnerable and marginalized communities access justice. Through practical and experiential learning, we help the participants overcome their fear of the justice system to confidently engage with implementers of law and demand their rights.

We have been conducting this course as a subject in the MBA in Social Entrepreneurship course offered by NMIMS Institute of Management, Mumbai. We are proud to be conducting this course for the 5th consecutive year. **26 students participated in this course at NMIMS during the year**. We also introduced this course at **Nirmala Niketan College of Social Work** in which **31 students, including working professionals, signed up and 24 successfully completed the course** and were awarded Certificates.

Students' Feedback from Training and Awareness Sessions at Colleges

- The session gave me an insight into the legal aspect that I hardly knew or would have feared to carry out due to lack of knowledge of the same. It was definitely an eye-opener and gave me a whole new perspective to think upon. *Shreya Bhave, St. Xavier's College*
- It was a very informative session, where we were all exposed to the reporting of an FIR and other amendments to the law. Thank you for you for helping us and giving us a great exposure. *Pooja Koyarde, St. Xavier's College*
- It was very informative. A lot of misconceptions were broken and I feel much more confident about approaching the police if any kind of sexual abuse happens with me or my acquaintances. *Nidhi Vartak, St. Xavier's College*
- I thoroughly enjoyed the session. As a girl the only thought in my head is often "Will I be the next victim of sexual violence?" Hence, through such sessions there is a reassurance that there is help and all is not lost. The session was helpful in understanding the complexities of Indian law. More often than not, we are ignorant because despite our privilege and access we refuse to read the law in depth. Myth breaking of Muslim women being merely passive in their religion was much required. *Evita Marie Macques, St. Xavier's College*
- I love the part in the last videos when the narrator said that, "sexual harassment at workplace is not the same as sexual attraction." But that it is power dynamics. The session proved to be informative and helped me understand and know my rights in a simplified way. *Sanjana Powell, St. Xavier's College*
- Very well organized and highly informative. A great eye opener to the prevailing laws and amendments that have been made. *Leander Deranza, St. Xavier's College*
- It gave us information which we were not aware about. It should be conducted again, specially for Muslim girls so that they learn more about their rights. *Tasleen Bobal, Guru Nanak College*

National and International Sessions

We have continued to address audiences nationally and internationally on topics of our expertise. Some of the noteworthy sessions are listed below.

1. Our co-founder, Flavia Agnes addressed a seminar on 'Media and Marginality: Situating the Minority in Popular Narratives'. The seminar was organized by the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication of Aliah University and Association SNAP in **Kolkata** in April 2017.

2. Our Director Audrey Dmello visited Germany as a special guest of the German Ambassador, Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany for the theme Women's rights and civil society from 29th October to 4th November.
3. On 3rd May 2017 we spoke at The Foundations Stakeholder's Conference on Child Sexual Abuse on the topic Sex offenders' registry: Fear versus function
4. Our Director was a speaker at the National Forum for Survivors of Rape, Sexual Abuse, Trafficking and Violence, organised by Jan Sahas and Rashtriya Garima Abhiyanat Samanvayak Bhavan, **Bhopal** in August, 2017.
5. In September 2017 We spoke at the orientation of new members of Maharashtra State Commission for Protection of Child Rights on POCSO Act and role of MSCPCR members organized by UNICEF.
6. On 24th February 2018 we were featured in the Dasra report 'Tipping the scales: enabling universal access to justice in India' Our Director spoke on a panel on the need for collaborative action towards achieving universal justice.
7. We completed a research study for MAVIM on Kayda Sathis in 6 districts of Maharashtra and released the report in January, 2018
8. We were on the panel at Maulana Azad National Urdu University **Hyderabad** for a discourse on Understanding Equal Opportunity Concepts and Practice in January, 2018
9. Our co-found, Flavia Agnes, delivered a lecture on Secularism in Indian and Minority Rights at Papal Seminary, **Pune**, in February, 2018
10. We attended a Women's Day March in Shimoga, **Karnataka** along with multitudes of women, to voice our concerns about the plight of women in the district.
11. We spoke at the event organized by Prerana Aarambh 'POCSO On the Ground' on 16th June 2017 to give an Overview on the Manodhairya Victim Compensation Scheme experiences, challenges and successes
12. We conducted a one day training of police officers (DGP and SI rank) on gender equality organize jointly by State women Commission in collaboration with Oxfam on August 21st
13. On 9th October World Vision initiated a campaign to end Child Sexual Abuse. Our founder Ms. Flavia Agnes delivered the key note address at this event and she spoke about Majlis experience of dealing with child sexual offences case and the need for support to victims.
14. Our trustee Ms. Virginia Saldanha and our Director Ms. Audrey Dmello spend three days in Orrisa with the Sambalpur Diocese from 15 to 18 November on the invitation of Rev. Bishop Niranjan Sualsingh. We seminar covered CBCI Gender Policy and Child Protection and sexual harrasmet of workplace policy.

15. On 8th November our Director spoke at the Edelgive seminar Edge a collaboration of philanthropist and grassroot Organisation growing together.
16. We were on the Panel at '**Where's the DNA?**', a Seminar for experts from Judiciary, Law Enforcement, Forensics and others fields connected with cases based on DNA, organised by Ogilvy to discuss and present methods to strengthen Investigation in Sexual Assault Cases and Casework in India by using DNA to solve crime, in March, 2018
17. Our Founder and Director both spoke at a consultation organised by Advanced centre for women studies TISS on Question of citizenship in India. While our founder gave the key note address our director spoke about Uniform Civil Code its inclusions and exclusions.
18. On 6th Feb our director spoke at a National Seminar on Gender Norms and Gender Equality coorganised by CWS and Oxfam in Raipur on Domestic Violence and Sexual Harassment at the Workplace implementation of laws.
19. On 16th Sept we were invited to speak at a One-Day Seminar on Women's Empowerment organised by Men Against Violence and Abuse (MAVA) with Ruia College NSS Unit.
20. On 28th Sept our director spoke at the UGC Teacher Refresher Course at Mumbai University
21. Our Programme Manager Nausheen Yousuf spoke at at Legal Round table on 28th of September at Government Law College, Mumbai
22. Majlis team attended and addressed the audience at the roundtable multi stakeholder consultation in Jaipur and Ahmedabad organized by Unicef.

V. Public Events

Status of Human Rights Today

We organized the annual event, Negotiating Spaces, along with Centre for Society and Secularism (CSSS) on 24th October, 2017, to honor human rights activist, Mr. Harsh Mander for successfully completing the month long pilgrimage of love, Karavan e Mohabbat across eight states, despite the odds. The event was aptly titled “Status of Human Rights Today” The audience comprised of academicians, journalists, students and concerned citizens. The event was held at the majestic Durbar Hall of Asiatic Library and was packed to capacity. Mr. Mander, a former IAS officer shared that these events meant a lot to the grieving families and he hoped that this would start the process of healing.

Convergence Meeting

We organized a meeting on Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 in collaboration with Government of Maharashtra, to have a platform to share, understand and improve the co-ordination between Protection Officers, Police officers, Shelter Homes, NGOs and

Legal Aid Lawyers. Mr. Rahul More, Divisional Deputy Commissioner, Women and Child Development, Konkan Division, Mumbai; Mr. Ajy Padole, DWCD Mumbai Suburbs; Dr. Padmaja, Doctor and Head of Gynecology Department, KEM Hospital; Smt. Aparna Mane, Social Worker, Sharaddhanand Mahila Ashram; Smt. Sujata Lawande, Program Co-ordinator CORO; Ms. Audrey D'mello, Director, and Ms. Nausheen Yousuf, Lawyer and Program Manager of Majlis were on the Panel to help improve the working of the Stakeholders. The Stakeholders agreed to have a Directory of stakeholders and also agreed to have meetings of such nature at regular intervals. **Over 150 participants** attended this meeting. **NGO Participants:** Aawaaz-E-Niswaan, CORO, CRH, Divya Prabha, Family Service Centre, Halwa, JeevanDhara, Sakhya, Silver Innings, Stri Mutki Sanghatna, SNEHA, Vatsalya Foundation, Watch Foundation, YWCA.

Job Mela

Job Mela is our endeavor to provide a Financial Stability Platform to women and girls who are victims of violence. We had our 3rd Job Mela in September, to provide opportunities to survivors of rape, sexual violence, domestic violence, single mothers and women and girls who are not able to access the job market due to other vulnerabilities; to achieve financial stability and economic independence which will help them lead safer lives ahead. We had **70 participants** from different NGOs across Mumbai and with diverse backgrounds. They had the opportunity to interact with **6 Employers and 4 Vocational Trainers**, who had varied placement opportunities across Mumbai.

Employers and Placement Providers: Salaam Bombay Foundation, Sodexo, Tata AIA, WhiteCrow Research, Reboot, Shefali Dani **Vocational and Skill Development Providers:** Bright Future Foundation, Kotak Education Foundation, Yuva Parivartan, YWCA

Maa-Beti Mela

We celebrated Maa-Beti Mela in December, for the fourth year in a row. **Over 250 people** associated with us, our clients and their families, our lawyers and social workers and our external partners came together for a fun evening of music, snacks, games and prizes. We had **a Tattoo, Mehndi and Balloon artist, a photo-booth, a Magician, and a Self Defence and Dance workshop**. This relaxed evening of fun and games helped our clients bond with their support persons and with each other. These bonds motivate us to go further on our individual journeys. Some of our trustees also attended this event.

5 years of POCSO On 8th November we held a networking meeting of NGOs and other stakeholders in collaboration with Child Welfare Committee to discuss the challenges faced at the time of implementation.

Public Networks and Collaborations

We Action Group is a network of lawyers, social workers, human rights activists and other public-spirited individuals collectively working towards addressing issues relating to human rights, women and child rights, rights of senior citizens and rights of other marginalized across Mumbai. We collectively organize events 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 empower each other on our journey to secure rights and justice to marginalized groups using the expertise of each partner organization.

The network had 13 meetings this year and used its forum to discuss important issues such as the GST for NGOs, Uniform Civil Code and Triple Talaq to enlighten each other on both sides of the debates, the legalities and the challenges in the practical working of these topics. Some of the important topics addressed this year are listed below:

- ❖ Police Reforms by CHRI
- ❖ GST for NGOs by an expert CA
- ❖ Rights of accused at the time of Arrest, Bail and Rights of Prisoners
- ❖ Triple Talaq debate and Muslim women's rights awareness
- ❖ Uniform Civil Code
- ❖ Women's Day Celebration

1298 Helpline, CORO, CRH, HALWA, Jeevan Dhara, LEARN, LMKS, Majlis, Silver Innings, Watch Foundation and YWCA were regular participants at the networking meetings.

The network continued with its Women's Day tradition of having a Celebration while drawing attention to women's issues. Over 300 persons from over 16 NGOs and Colleges across Mumbai came together and formed a Human Chain and had a Peace Rally to spread awareness about Women's Issues and awareness about NGOs working in across Mumbai and Thane. This year the event was held at Kalina and Jamlipada, after having it at Chembur Naka and Bherampada in 2016 and 2017, respectively. The participants were colour coordinated in white and purple along with White, We Action Group Caps. The event ended with the participants getting together to imprint Hand-prints in various colours on white banners, in show of Solidarity.

Participants: 1298, Creative Handicraft, CRH, HALWA, ICDS AanganWadi, JeevanDhara, Justice and Peace Commission, LEARN, LMKS, Majlis, Mumbai Mobile Creches, Pukar, Sahasee, Sakhya, Silver Innings, YWCA and SIES College.

Visits to Majlis

Core members of Ankuram family counselling centre spent three days in April with Majlis team to understand our programmes and our work on implementation of laws and addressing violence against women and children. Ankuram was established as a collaborative project by the Rachakonda Police Commissionerate and Ankuram at Kushaiguda police station in October, 2016.

On 18th April five students of University of Virginia visited Majlis. The students are working on projects (on gender and public space, gender and violence). The programme was coordinated by Geeta Patel, Director, Program in Women Gender & Sexuality Studies

12th September 60 BSW II students of Nirmala Niketan college of social work met Majlis for a session on domestic violence, and sexual violence, personal laws and the Uniform Civil Code.

Various organisations visit Majlis from time to time. This year too we had a number of visits from members of Sneha, Awaaz E Niswan, Safe City, World Vision, Pukar, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, St Josephs, HALVA, US Consulate

On 19th February Dr. Lebel IDRC President, Ms Patricia Corrigan, the Chief of Staff, IDRC, and the Regional Director, Dr. Anindya Chatterjee were keen to meet the Majlis team and visit a police station to talk to the officers about the rape protocols developed by Majlis

Majlis went through lengthy project and financial evaluation by the team from Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiatives and Edelgive Foundation. Chief Executive Officer of Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiatives (APPI) Ananth-padmanabhan visited Majlis as part of the evaluation.

Nasreen Badat, Senior Foreign Affairs Officer in the Office of South and Central Asia in the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor visited Majlis on March 12 to gain a perspective on the triple talaq debate and how women rights and minority rights are playing out in India presently. She was accompanied by Kristen Svarczkopf, Political Officer, Mumbai Consulate Ayesha Khan and Arundhati Mundlay

Hiroko Ito associate professor at Center for Asian Legal Exchange Nagoya University, JAPAN met with the Majlis team. She teaches family law of Asian countries. She was impressed with some of the articles she had read by Majlis and wanted to know more about our activities.

VI. Awards and Recognition

- ✓ We received the first **Martha Farrel Award** for Excellence in Women's Empowerment - Best Organization for Gender Equality in April, 2017
- ✓ We were awarded the **Guide Star India Advanced Level - Gold Award** in June 2017
- ✓ Our co-founder Adv. Flavia Agnes's book '**My Story ... Our Story**' is a ray of hope to many women facing domestic violence and though it was first printed in 1984, it continues to be relevant event today. It was **updated and re-printed** in July 2017.
- ✓ We filed a **Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in the Bombay High Court challenging the amendments in the “Manodhairya Scheme”** for victims of sexual violence and acid attack, to ensure adequate compensation for victims in a timely and effective manner, in September, 2017.
- ✓ We organized the annual event “Status of Human Rights” along with Society and Secularism (CSSS) to **honour human rights activist, Mr. Harsh Mander** in October, 2017
- ✓ Our founder Flavia Agnes received **the Parivartan Inspire Award by Britt World Wide** for her inspirational work in the field of women's rights, in November, 2017.
- ✓ We **completed our Research along with MAVIM at the community level in Nagpur** in January, 2018
- ✓ We published a handbook on Monitoring the implementation of the PWDVA Act, 2005 a framework document for Oxfam partners.
- ✓ We developed the content for an app that SNTD, University will be launching for its students to help them understand their rights and agencies they can approach when faced with violence or harassment.
- ✓ We were on the **Panel to meet with Canadian first lady Sophie Grégoire Trudeau** at Sophia College to discuss women issues, in February, 2018.
- ✓ We **completed the Magistrates Training programme** where we trained Magistrates across the districts of Maharashtra on the Laws and Practical Workings of the Domestic Violence Act. This project spanned across two years and was completed in March, 2018.
- ✓ We **prepared a Resource Directory** with contact details of Service Providers across Mumbai so that NGOs and other stakeholders can easily refer victims to urgent services.
- ✓ We worked on a **short film to introduce our work** to other organisations and women in need, March 2018. **Sonal Sachdev**, GMSP Foundation, **Shalni Arora**, Savanah Wisdom and **Vidya Shah**, Edelgive Foundation helped us brainstorm the concept. **Kahane Wali** our production partner executed the production of the film.

VII. Team 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. It is 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 sessions with internal or external resource persons to enlighten our team on various topics.

| Date | Topic |
|--------------------------|---|
| 6 th Apr, 17 | Improving Client Interaction at Majlis. An interactive session was conducted by a volunteer from Australia who used creative methodology and thought provoking activities to highlight the concept of originality and how services could be improved to provide a better experience for clients. |
| 13 th Apr, 17 | Self-Defense Workshop by SKASA: Self Defence tactics including punches, kicks and other simple techniques were explained and practiced to equip the team with basic techniques of self defence and to increase their confidence. |
| 7 th Sep, 17 | A Documentary Film 'Tales of the Night Fairies' Snippets from the lives of sex workers in Sonagacchi, Kolkata was presented to the team to spread awareness and to discuss about the lives of women in the sex trade. |
| 28 th Sep, 17 | Marital Rape: A discussion was initiated by our Director to impart awareness about marital rape laws. It was clarified that new laws are unnecessary in the presence of already existing laws, namely the Domestic Violence Act. |
| 05 th Oct, 17 | Female Genital Mutilation: Sahiyo organisation conducted a presentation on the practice of Khatna or female genital mutilation, to spread awareness about the practice and to discuss ways to end the practice. |
| 15 th Mar, 18 | Inter-sectionality: Professor Vandana Sonalkar was invited to share her views on the topic due to the current hype surrounding it. She highlighted how laws work differently for different races and classes. |

1. Besides these session held at our office, we also encourage our team to attend capacity building sessions at external locations. One member attended an Accelerated Learning Workshop organized by iVolunteer, two members attended a Design Thinking Workshop, one member attended an Art Based Therapy Course organized by Guidance and Care

Foundation and two members attended an Accounts Compliances Workshop in Delhi organized by Ford Foundation.

2. We also had our Annual Team Outing to Durshet Forest Lodge where our team attempted adventurous activities like the Zipline, Burma Bridge, Tarzan Swing, Laddering and Net Climbing before relaxing in the pool at the end of the day.
3. In January 2018 we moved into our newly renovated Golden Valley office of Majlis. The renovation was undertaken to accommodate our expanded team and its current requirements. This is the first time the office was renovated since we acquired the property in 1995.
4. In February 2018 we launched the online reporting system for Majlis. The online system was developed with the help of our partner Edelgive and is now being maintained by Digital Empowerment Foundation. The team is slowly getting used to the system.

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 internship with us. We are the only NGO that works for women and children's legal rights and offers students with legal and trial court litigation experience and are very sought after by law students, social work students and women and gender studies students. Some of our senior programme managers started their career as interns with us, and hence we place a lot of importance to this programme. **We had 18 interns from 9 colleges last year.**

- Amity Law School, Delhi
- ILS Law College, Pune
- Jindal Global Law School, Sonipat
- KSP Women's Study Centre, Pune
- National Law University, Bopal
- Rizvi Law College, Mumbai
- Strathmore University, Nairobi
- Symbiosis Law School, Pune
- West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences (WBNUJS), Kolkata

VIII. Disclosures

Salary Range of staff as on 31st March 2018 (Gross Salary + Benefits)

| Monthly | Male | Female | Total |
|-----------------|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| Less than 5,000 | - | - | - |
| 5,000 – 10,000 | - | - | - |

| | | | |
|-------------------|---|-----------|-----------|
| 1,0000 – 25,000 | - | 15 | 15 |
| 25,000 – 50,000 | - | 17 | 17 |
| 50,000 – 1,00,000 | - | 5 | 5 |
| 1,00,000+ | - | - | - |
| Total | | 37 | 37 |

Gross Monthly Remuneration Designation

Highest Paid

| | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Rs. 1,00,000/- | Director |
| Rs. 85,000/- | Program Manager |
| Rs. 75,000/- | Program Manager |
| Rs. 70,000/- | Program Manager |

Lowest Paid

| | |
|--------------|------|
| Rs. 10,000/- | Peon |
| Rs. 12,000/- | Peon |

- **Remuneration to Trustees:** No remuneration has been paid to Trustees.
- **Interns/Volunteers:** No remuneration has been paid to Interns/Volunteers.
- **Annual Report:** The annual report is prepared after completion of the financial year.
- **Audited Accounts and Balance Sheet:** Our audited accounts and balance sheet is shared with the public through our website.
- **Board Rotation Policy:** We have a rotation policy. Retiring or outgoing members are eligible to be re-elected to the Board.
- **Relation Between Board Members:** No members of our Board are related to one another by blood or by marriage.

Board Meetings and AGM held in the year 2017 - 2018

| | Nature of Meeting | Date | Members Present | Total Strength |
|---|-------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1 | Board Meeting | 15 th July, 2017 | 4 | 7 |
| 2 | AGM | 9 th September, 2017 | 5 | 7 |
| 3 | Board Meeting | 16 th December, 2017 | 4 | 7 |

Board members as on 31st March 2018

| | Name | Age | Gender | Occupation | Position | Paid | Type |
|---|-------------------|-----|--------|-----------------------|-----------|------|------|
| 1 | Ingrid Srinath | 55 | Female | Lawyer, Social Worker | Secretary | Nil | Nil |
| 2 | Justice Suresh H. | 89 | Male | Retired Judge | Treasurer | Nil | Nil |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|----|--------|-------------------|---------|-----|-----|
| 3 | Prabha Sridevan | 69 | Female | Retired Judge | Trustee | Nil | Nil |
| 4 | Bishakha Datta | 54 | Female | Writer, Filmmaker | Trustee | Nil | Nil |
| 5 | Shoba Ghosh | 59 | Female | Professor | Trustee | Nil | Nil |
| 6 | Virginia Saldanha | 70 | Female | Social Worker | Trustee | Nil | Nil |
| 7 | Shilpa Phadke | 46 | Female | Sociologist | Trustee | Nil | Nil |

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

No one travelled abroad at the expense of the organization during the year 2017 - 2018.

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

Our Trustee, Ms. Prabha Sridevan, travelled from Chennai to Mumbai for our Annual General Body Meeting on 9th September 2017. Flight Return Ticket cost Rs.8495/-

IX. Case Studies

All names have been changed to protect identities

Zeenat was shown a rosy picture of marriage however, soon after marriage reality struck and the rosy picture began to melt away. Differences arose and harassment from his family began. Zeenat and her husband were asked to live separately. She soon realised that her husband was not 'well settled' in fact he did not earn enough to maintain their needs. Her life was filled with drudgery, despair and loneliness and she finally left and went to live with her mother. She approached a SNEHA NGO who then referred her to Majlis.

We advised her to get her belongings and Mehr from court as both were legally and rightfully hers. We filed her case under the Protection of Women under Domestic Violence Act, 2005, through a Protection Officer. We argued for interim maintenance and return of her belongings and Mehr. The husband claimed he was not earning and hence could not pay maintenance. We produced bills of his treatment at Jaslok hospital and pointed out to the court - if a man can afford an expensive hospital for his own treatment he could definitely pay maintenance to his wife. Zeenat was then granted interim maintenance. The Court also passed an order for the release of her Mehr and her belongings. The Protection Officer was ordered to help Zeenat obtain the same.

But her relief was short-lived. Her husband appealed against the maintenance order in the Sessions court and filed a case in family court under "restitution of conjugal rights" asking her to return to him. In the Sessions Court we placed all facts before the judge and explained that Zeenat did not want to go back to her violent husband and wanted a *Khula* (Divorce). The Judge was supportive of her decision and convinced the husband to settle the matter. Her husband finally agreed and Zeenat not only got her Mehr but also got a lumpsum settlement amount of Rs.2,75,000/-. We then approached a Kazi and obtained a divorce by *Khula*.

"It is so much more than I expected. I wanted to get out of a bad marriage but everyone told I would have to give up my right to Mehr. Majlis helped me secure my dignity and my rights" says a much relieved Zeenat. Today she is working and is negotiating her own life.

Geeta's mother passed away in 2004 after a long battle with Tuberculosis. At a tender age of 8 she became the victim of sexual harassment at the hands of her own father. He threatened to kill her siblings if she complained. She was scared. The neighbors began to notice and intervened but the father protested saying "आम का झाड़ मैंने लगाया है तो फल भी मैं ही खाऊंगा. ("If I plant a mango tree

then I have the right to taste its fruit!”). Neighbours were stunned at his inhuman response and socially ostracized him.

After 7 years of continuous torture she finally narrated the entire story to her tuition teacher who phoned the Childline Helpline 1098. An FIR was registered and the father was arrested. They realised that Geeta’s younger sister was also being sexually harassed by the father. The Child Welfare Committee then enrolled her along with her siblings in a shelter home for her safety but within a month, Geeta and her siblings were sent to live with their uncle and he soon announced her marriage with an elder man from the village in exchange of business. She then mustered her courage and ran away to Mumbai.

We immediately applied to the court to expedite her case however, she was extremely scared of court. We gave her a court orientation however, when her father was brought to the court she was crushed and just sat there and cried. The judge gave us another date. This time we made her see how far she had come and assured her that her siblings will soon be there with her. She understood, gathered herself up and spoke fearlessly in the court. She cried later but this time the tears were those of relief. She had finally spoken against her father after 8 years and he was then convicted for 10 years.

During this entire ordeal we visited her regularly and boosted her confidence. Soon, she showed her true spirit and excelled in her S.S.C examination. She then also gave her 12th examinations. She had told us she wants to open her own Beauty Parlour so we had enrolled her in a beautician course at a private shelter home. She is now working at a good salon in Mumbai city.

X. Articles, Academic Papers and Publications

All Research Papers and Articles are posted on <https://flaviaagnes.wordpress.com>

Publications and Academic Papers

1. **Let's talk about women's rights.** The concept of a dissoluble contractual marriage is the contribution of Islamic law to the world. 23rd May, 2017
<http://www.asianage.com/opinion/oped/230517/lets-talk-about-womens-rights.html>
2. **Half measure:** Triple talaq-forbidding marriage contract may not do Muslim women much good. To really empower them, address poverty and illiteracy. 28th May, 2017
<https://scroll.in/article/838518/half-measure-triple-talaq-forbidding-marriage-contract-may-not-do-muslim-women-much-good>
3. **Whose fight is it anyway?** The polar positions taken in the Supreme Court hearing on the triple talaq matter obfuscate a question fundamental to the issue: Women's agency. 12th June, 2017
<https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/triple-talaq-hearing-supreme-court-nri-couple-muslim-divorce-4699316>
4. **In Wake of Lynching of Muslim Men, BJP's Resolve to Empower Muslim Women Rings Hollow.** With its engrained anti-Muslim agenda, the current political regime may find it problematic to hold up its image as a champion of Muslim women. 11th July, 2017
<https://thewire.in/law/triple-talaq-muslim-lynching-bjp>
5. **Victims of violence face judicial bias.** The few cases that get registered are those of women who approach the police with a written complaint. 8th August, 2017
<https://www.deccanchronicle.com/opinion/op-ed/080817/victims-of-violence-face-judicial-bias.html>
6. **Why it's time to amend the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1971.** 11th August, 2018
<https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/up-front/story/20170821-child-sexual-abuse-rape-pregnancy-termination-medical-termination-of-pregnancy-act-1028929-2017-08-11>
7. **It's a balanced verdict.** The long awaited Triple Talaq verdict is finally out. 23rd August, 2017
<https://www.mid-day.com/articles/flavia-agnes-its-a-balanced-verdict/18525181>
8. **Revisiting activist's model nikahnama.** 23rd August, 2017.
<http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-revisiting-activist-s-model-nikahnama-2538572>
9. **A wake-up call for the Muslim clergy.** The three other judges on the bench gave a clear verdict that triple talaq is invalid. 25th August, 2018
<http://www.asianage.com/opinion/oped/250817/a-wake-up-call-for-the-muslim-clergy.html>
10. **Help those marred by marital rape.** Sexual assault is not confined to penetrative sex. It comprises a range of violations. 27th August, 2017

<https://www.deccanchronicle.com/discourse/270817/help-those-marred-by-marital-rape.html>

11. **Are Women Liars?** Supreme Court's Judgment Ignores Lived Reality of Married Women. 31st August, 2017 <https://www.epw.in/engage/article/women-are-liars-says-supreme-court>
12. **The abuse of India's triple talaq verdict.** Triple talaq, like the made-up 'Love Jihad', has become yet another anti-Muslim tool in the hands of the far right. 4th September, 2017 <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2017/09/abuse-india-triple-talaq-verdict-170903080437641.html>
13. **Justice for Hadiya.** Indian Express. 7th September, 2017 <https://flaviaagnes.wordpress.com/2017/09/07/justice-for-hadiya>
14. **Are courts also favoring those who say 'love jihad'?** *This Article has been published at BBC and has been translated into several Indian languages.* 11th December, 2017 <https://www.bbc.com/hindi/india-42267217>
15. **The Politics behind Criminalising Triple Talaq.** 6th January, 2018 <https://www.epw.in/journal/2018/1/commentary/politics-behind-criminalising-triple-talaq.html>
16. **The narrative of misuse and ground reality of victims.** The acute violence which Christian women suffer is seldom addressed; even the Church looks the other way. 8th March, 2018 <http://www.asianage.com/opinion/oped/080318/the-narrative-of-misuse-and-ground-reality-of-victims.html>
17. **Is Hindu society ready for pre-nups?** Introducing the notion of pre-nuptial agreements will transform the sacramental Hindu marriage into a purely contractual obligation. 31st March, 2018 <http://www.asianage.com/opinion/oped/310318/is-hindu-society-ready-for-pre-nups.html>

In order to reach a wider group of concerned people, we have developed a mailing list of 15,000 persons where we share articles published by us as well as important news, reports and newsletters, at regular intervals.