

Access to Justice for Marginalised People GOI - UNDP



A Compendium of Case Studies

November 2012

Preface

Development Alternatives and its CSO Partners have implemented the Access to Justice for Marginalised People Project in Tikamgarh District of Madhya Pradesh from 2010-2012. The road to women's empowerment started back in the nineteen nineties by engaging in the Bundelkhand Region in both Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Madhya Pradesh (MP) with Self Help Group (SHG) formation and encouraging women to access alternatives means of livelihoods.

Women in the Bundelkhand region live in a society of extremely oppressive social values, most of them are illiterate, forced to cover their faces with purdah and often married off as children. The target group in Tikamgarh District exemplified the poor social, economic and cultural status. Over 60% of them belong to the Other Backward Caste (OBC) increasing their susceptibility to marginalisation. Additionally, 66% of the target group is illiterate and more than 50% of them are considered Below Poverty Line (BPL). The baseline survey conducted at the start of the project also outlined the extreme lack of awareness on basic rights by women in the region. For example, almost 80% of women were not aware that men and women are entitled to equal wages, nor were they aware of the reservation law for women's participation in local Governance at Panchayat level. Additionally, the majority of women were not aware of basic justice systems provisions including the use of an FIR, the concept of a lawyer and local justice systems of legal aid through the DLSA or Lok Adalats.

In order to address the basic lack of rights and entitlements knowledge, the main project activities were designed to raise awareness on the rights and entitlements of women in the community as a whole. A variety of project activities including interfaces between SHG groups and village and block level authorities, street plays and community radio programs were able to reach out to a large audience. Most importantly, the training of over 300 women and men community level volunteer Paralegal Workers (PLWs) to serve as a link between their communities and justice service authorities. The formation of Community Legal Assistance Partners (CLAP) committees in each block to served as a resource for those PLWs. CLAP committee members include judges and lawyers from the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) or Tehsil Legal Services Centres (TLSC), members of the local media, police, and rights activists. Development Alternatives directly implemented trainings and project activities focused in the Niwari block while its partners; Darshana Mahila Kalyan Samiti concentrated in Jatara Block, Baldevgarh Block was handled by New Action for Social Welfare Organization (NASWO), Palera block by Shailja Sewa Sanstan, and the two remaining; Prithvipur and Tikamgarh Block by Vikalp Madiya

A total of 328 Paralegal Workers with 215 of the total number who are women, have been trained by DA and its partners in all six blocks of Tikamgarh. Two trainings in each block for a total of twelve trainings over five days focused on the established key issues; MGNREGS, RTI, Violence against women (including domestic violence, dowry and harassment), equal wages, the public distribution system, social security schemes, and accessing legal aid through the DLSA and TLSC. Refresher courses were organized in the second year of the project in the months of May and June of 2012, based on inputs and regular meetings with PLWs on the type of issues they were engaging in. It was concluded that in addition to a refresher on topics covered in the original training, the refresher course material demanded further detail of how to address serious concerns of domestic violence, harassment cases, how to file an FIR and how to more effectively use an RTI application to end corruption.

The case studies presented herein are examples of the exceptional work done by the PLWs on their own initiative. The PLWs have addressed cases that DA and its partners had not expected them to actively address but the PLWs shouldered initiative on their own to make a much larger impact on their community. These are successes that have been won against the constraints of deep rooted social norms and taboos. These are cases of women taking up the cudgels on behalf of their own kind and of men speaking up against oppression of women. However, each case does not have the perfect outcome and many are still in progress towards the final verdict, each case is a representation of change. This change can happen through the efforts of just one person who feels empowered enough to stand against the norm of accepting injustice and social oppression. The status of the cases presented below is as of September 1st 2012.

With the support of the Government of India- Ministry of Law and Justice and the guidance of the United Nations Development Programme in India, Development Alternatives has introduced the women of Bunelkhand to their rights and entitlements. There is a long way to go for true realization, however the cases studies from the field have shown that there is a want for such initiatives for empowerment of women in one of the most backward regions of India. Only with further interventions and continued support at the community level can there be hope for the women in Bundelkhand and for truly sustainable development to take place.

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Acronyms

APL	:	Above Poverty Line
DA	:	Development Alternatives
BPL	:	Below Poverty Line
CSO(s)	:	Civil Society Organization(s)
CLAP	:	Community Legal Assistance Partners
DLSA	:	District Legal Services Authority
DPIP	:	District Poverty Initiatives Project
FGD	:	Focused Group Discussion
FIR	:	First Information Report
HH	:	Household
MGNREGA	:	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
MP	:	Madhya Pradesh
NASWO	:	National Action for Social Welfare Organization
OBC	:	Other Backward Class
PHE	:	Public Health Engineering Department
PLW(s)	:	Paralegal Worker(s)
PRI	:	Panchayati Raj Institutions
RTI	:	Right to Information
SC	:	Scheduled Caste
SHG	:	Self Help Group
ST	:	Scheduled Tribe
TLSC	:	Tehsil Legal Services Committee
UP	:	Uttar Pradesh



Poola Devi Ahirwar

Action against corruption in local governance

Poola Devi is an SHG leader in her village and has been for more than 8 years, since SHG formation efforts have been going on in her village in Niwari Block. She has grown into the role of a motivational leader as well and writes her own songs about the empowerment of women through the SHG movement.

Now, as a trained PLW, she composes and sings songs about women demanding their rights. Poola Devi is one of the few women her age who are literate, even though she ended her formal education at an early age and finally only passed the 5th standard. Now, she, her husband and children live together on their small farm where they grow food for their own consumption.

Additionally, she and her family fall under the BPL category and receive benefits of ration according to that classification. Poola Devi's family, like many others with very low levels of income, greatly depend on the benefits and food aid they receive with their BPL card. However, the issuing of BPL cards in her village was actually not always based on economic status and many of those who were issued a BPL card for extra benefits do not actually have the need and subsequently deprived those who were truly entitled to the benefits. Poola Devi noticed these discrepancies; she also knew that there were some families in her village who have abused their power to receive more benefits, including Panchayat members.

However, only after her PLW training Poola Devi had the knowledge and the tools to address this issue. She rallied her fellow SHG women and made a complaint during a Gram Sabha meeting and publicly spoke out against corruption and violations of law. She took further action and brought it to the attention of block level authorities and prompted a reassessment of the BPL distribution. The reassessment of the BPL card allocation in her village found that there were discrepancies as she had identified and with the supervision of the block level authorities' reallocation and distribution was completed according to the correct socio-economic parameters.

Poola Devi's work has not ended there; she has taken an interest in addressing even more controversial issues and working to instigate a change in social mindsets about the girl child. She talks to women in her village regularly about the importance of keeping baby girls and the types of benefits they can received from the government to support their babies. She hopes that she and the other women who support her can bring a change and influence the existing practices.



Pushpa and Misha Sen

Ensuring the rights of the girl child

Pushpa lives with her husband and two children; a young girl and boy in a village in Niwari Block. Her husband is a teacher in the local government school and has always supported her adventurous nature. Although Pushpa has only studied until the 8th standard herself, her daughter Misha is finishing the 12th this year and is planning to attend college to become a doctor.

Misha is a very energetic tomboy who has an equally adventurous and determined attitude to not only empower herself but to give back to her community as well. Misha regularly attends SHG meetings with her mother and feels so socially empowered that she can openly claim that she has no intentions of getting married and all she wants to do is become a doctor, take care of her parents, and provide treatment for those in community who are less fortunate than she is.

Pushpa and her husband fully support their daughter's ambitions and Pushpa herself wants to set an example of an empowered woman who can make a difference in her community. As an SHG member Pushpa had the opportunity to take part in the PLW training in June 2011 that took place in Niwari block, organized by Development Alternatives.

Pushpa claims that the trainings have enlightened her to many aspects of demanding justice that she had little understanding of before. It has also given her the tools to fight against the violation of girl child rights that she has been working to stop in her village for so many years but before did not have the legal tools or access to resources to prevent a child marriage or female foeticide that she has now. After her training she could confidently advise women on the rights; explain to them the processes of protecting them and protecting their daughters. She also felt more confident because she could now state her authority as a community PLW. Pushpa has two specific examples that she is particularly proud of.

Her first instance, was that of a young girl from her village who had come to Pushpa requesting her assistance in protecting her unborn baby girl from the pressures of abortion by her in-laws. Pushpa was able to explain to them the legal ramifications and also give them an understanding of the benefits they can receive to support their grand-daughter.

Additionally, Pushpa was called in by a fellow SHG member to stop a child marriage. Pushpa went to the family who was intending on marrying their daughter and again by explaining the legal restrictions was able to stop the marriage and ensure that the young girl be further educated until she is old enough to be married.

Misha, Pushpa's daughter is especially proud of her mother for preventing the illegal marriage of her school friend and encourages her other classmates to speak out against child marriage. Pushpa's role as a PLW and resilience to social pressures has only increased her reverence in her village.



Saroj Varma

Action against corruption and demanding justice through collective action

Thirty-two year old Saroj Varma belongs to middle income family of Niwari Block. She falls under the Schedule Caste category and has completed her education until the 10th standard. She is an active SHG member.

Like many other families in her village Saroj and her husband own a small farm and engage in extra income generating activities, she makes large quantities of chuna tubes daily, adding an income of about 200 Rs. per day. She also takes an extra initiative to engage with the women in her community by working as an Aaganwadi secretary as well. She works hard to send her two young sons for higher education, including one who wants to attend medical school.

Through her involvement in the local SHG group, Saroj found the opportunity to participate in the Paralegal Training Program organized by Development Alternatives in May 2011. The last day of her training focused specifically on the entitlements that both men and women are guaranteed to under the PDS system. During the training itself, she was able to identify misconduct in the practices of her village distribution centre and inequities with what is guaranteed under her APL card and what was actually distributed.

She was encouraged by DA staff members to bring this issue to the next Gram Sabha meeting in her village. During the meeting she was able to publicly voice her claim against those running the distribution centre, claiming that they do not provide the right amount of kerosene to those holding an APL Card. The coordinator made efforts to refute her claim, but could not maintain his stance when she requested his statement in writing. The next day a group of women lead by Saroj went to the ration distribution centre and received their full amount of kerosene that they were entitled to.

Saroj, as a community leader is motivated and willing to take the extra effort to realize rights for herself and the women in her village, however she was previously unaware of entitlements guaranteed under the law but now she has the tools to demand them efficiently. She has gone further to address cases of female feticide and child marriage in her village as well, where she has advised families by explaining to them the laws that protect girls from these violations and encouraging them to avail government schemes that promote the education of girls.



Pushpa Ahirwar

Access to justice for domestic violence and instigating change in society norms

Pushpa is about 35-40 years old and falls under the BPL and Schedule Caste category. She lives in Prempura village in Tikamgarh block and is an active SHG member. When she heard about the opportunity to train as a community PLW in the summer 2011 she was very eager to participate, but Pushpa did not meet the requirements. Pushpa, like many women in her village and region is illiterate.

However, Pushpa's illiteracy did not daunt her. Puspha convinced her husband to attend the PLW training sessions with her. He, in full support took time away from his labour job, attended all of the 5 days of the training with her and made sure she was able to understand what was being written on the board in front of her and what information was available to her in the training manual as well.

It did not take long for Puspha to start taking up cases on her own. With a few months of training she took the initiative to address a domestic violence case in her village. Her own village Sarpanch's daughter was married into a neighbouring village not more that a year before. She was thrown out of her home and her husband moved away to Delhi with his new wife. The girl was forced to return to her family. Traditionally, a married girl is not welcomed back to her village after a separated marriage; they are often socially outcaste and made to feel like a burden on their families. Pushpa fought against this norm and took up the case to not only access legal rights for the girl but to also change the mindset of the community. The Sarpanch's daughter now lives a more secure life at home with her parents and has become village Asha, a community health care worker, to contribute to her community and family.

Puspha has helped another girl her village file a case against her husband with the DLSA who has taken a second wife with out a legal divorce. Through her efforts she has been able to secure regular financial support for the girl who is now living with her parents and has taken the next steps to ensure that she is given her right to a legal divorce. Pushpa has created a large impact in her village, her village Sarpanch has publicly endorsed her work and has highlighted her achievements to the community. She has set an example for women and defied the limitations of her education. Through support in her village Pushpa has been able to also address corruption and irregularities in her villages ration distribution centres. She has ensured that those with BPL cards are allotted the full amount they are entitled to. She and her husband hold regular information sessions and read from the manual in their village for women members. All three of her daughters have copies of the manual that was given to her during her trainings and are well versed on their rights.



Parvathi Mishra

Collective action against domestic violence

Parvathi Mishra has been in a position of leadership in her village for more than ten years. In her own way she has always been an advocate for the empowerment of women not only in her village but also in villages surround her own. In these villages of Jatara Block, she oversees the progress of women SHG groups under the government of MP DPIP program as the Gram Joyti.

She is an earning member of her family and contributes Rupees 2,000 per month to her family income as an SHG leader. She and her husband also have a small farm where the land is registered on her name. She has four school going children, 3 boys and 1 girl who she intends to educate until college.

Her role as Gram Joyti puts her in a position of authority with local women; they respect her as a leader and often come to for advice on a range of issues. She attends many SHG meeting regularly where she participates in discussions and problem solving.

Darshana Kalyan Samiti recruited her as a volunteer PLW in early 2011. She underwent the training and found it extremely empowering not only for herself but for her SHG women as well. She immediately brought rights and entitlements issues to the discussion of local SHG meetings and took the time to go through the manual with each group, ensuring her role as well as the link to demanding justice when these rights are violated.

In winter of the same year, Parvathi was attending an SHG meeting in her own village when a member confided to the group that she was suffering from violence and abuse from her husband regularly especially after he has consumed alcohol. She also learnt that she was not the only women who suffered due to alcohol abuse from a male family member. Men in her village have easy access to alcohol because it is illegally sold in the village itself.

Upon identifying the cause Parvathi immediately made a plan to take action against this violation of rights. She rallied the SHG women in her village and went straight to the local police station. More than 50 women collectively went to demand the police take action. The local police officials did not hesitate to respond to their request especially since it was the first time they received an order from the community as a whole. The police authorities immediately ordered a raid of the shop, which put an end to the sale of liquor in her village permanently.

Parvathi did not stop her own efforts there; she guided the women who had suffered from abuse and violence to file cases against their husbands with the police as well. Parvathi had full support of the women in her village and was able to stand against any opposition by village elders and Panchayat members. She has been able to ensure that domestic violence is no longer an issue in her village and that the SHG women she leads are able to demand their rights with out fear of the police or any other authority.



Komal Ahirwar

Ending corruption in the Public Distribution System

Komal Ahirwar lives with her two sons and two daughters with her husband and in-laws in Palera Block. She and her family have a small farm and her husband migrates to Delhi to work in the off-season. Since she has seen the disadvantages of illiteracy first hand, she has ensured that her own daughters have had access to a complete education, including college.

She enlisted them to help her become a PLW. She took the 5 day training and each day would ask them to review with her the teaching through the legal training manual that was given to each participant. She is proud of her new role as a PLW and has been able to be an example of empowerment to her daughters.

To make a difference in her village, Komal lodged a complaint against the improper management of the ration store at the block level office when Panchayat level authorities did not respond to her claim. She was able ensure that rations were given out according to rules as per the law. She has also been able ensure that women in her village do not have to fight for the entitled ration.

Women in her village now come to her for her support on other issues as well. In cases of domestic violence she has tried to settle by explaining to families the implications and of the laws protecting women. She acknowledges that women are not willing to lodge many household related cases due to various reasons like social pressures and family stability.

Komal however is very fortunate to have a husband who fully supports her even though he has not received any training. She and her children together organize fortnightly meetings and read out the manual to those who could not attend the trainings. She has also helped organize narrowcasting of the radio programmes on laws related to women in her village. Her Sarpanch is very supportive and involves her in village development project as well.



Shanti and Mamta

Collective action against corruption

Shanti and Mamta are both members of the same SHG group in their village in Prithvipur Block. They have spent a lot of time together and know each other well. Shanti was elected by her SHG group to represent them in the PLW trainings that was organized by Vikalp Madihya.

During the trainings Shanti did not only get a clear understanding of rights and entitlements for herself and her fellow SHG members but also gained a sense of confidence and the value for collective action and teamwork for demanding justice in their lives.

Shanti shared all her learning closely with her friend Mamta and they worked together to ensure that the other women in their village were aware of their own rights and could address violations through the correct channels. Shanti and Mamta helped women in their village gain access to pension and social security schemes and made sure they were all aware of their rights through SHG meetings.

During one of their meetings a fellow SHG member brought up the issue of her children's schooling and how she felt that the teachers and school administration were abusing their power and not managing the school properly. She claimed the teachers and headmaster would close the school at will, arrive late for classes and generally create an environment of poor education standards.

Shanti and Mamta and their SHG women took a step towards rectifying the problem by talking to village level authorities and the Panchayat. However, they did not see the change they were looking for. Remembering her inspirational teaching on collective action and standing against injustice as a group, Shanti and Mamta organized over 100 women in their village to go over to the school one day and protest against its mismanagement by locking the gate of the school grounds and calling the police. Those teachers who had not arrived for school on time were locked out while the police came to inspect the situation. The police then ensured that the local block level authorities and Revenue Inspector in charge of monitoring the school took action.

The village has seen a dramatic change in the way the school functions and the women of the village now claim that they are happy with the way school is managed and the quality of education their children are receiving.

Shanti and Mamta have gained increased respect in their village for their ability to inspire so many women to take action against issues that affect them the most. Shanti and Mamta continue to work together and want to make sure that the women in their village come together to address all issues of injustice and continue to empower themselves.



Kiran Yadav

Engaging local police authorities for ensuring community law and order and instigating changes in social norms

Kiran Yadav was educated until 12th standard and then married into a neighbouring family at the age of 18 in Niwari Block. She is now in her late twenties and in some shape or form has always stood up for the women in her village against violence or discrimination and she has always wanted to be more than just a wife and daughter-in-law at home.

About two years ago Kiran joined Development Alternatives to become a community field worker and lead women to form SHG groups, gain access to credit and develop their own enterprises. Then, in 2011 Kiran participated in the PLW training that took place in her block through her role as a community field worker.

Kiran has been active in other Access to justice project activities as well. After her training as PLW, she organized village interfaces between her village Sarpanch and the local SHG women to ensure their access to pensions, social security and work under MGNREGS. She has also ensured that the SHGs in her village have understood the types of rights and entitlements she was educated on during her trainings and also has ensured that they all have copies of the legal manual that was given to her during her training.

Kiran no longer stands for any injustice nor is complacent about problems that women face in the village. For example, she identified that men spend most of their day gambling with card games outside their homes instead of assisting their families and often jeopardizing the household income to provide food for their wives and children. To address this issue, she organized a small group of women to publicly voice the difficulties they faced and went to the village Panchayat in hopes of putting an end to it.

When the gambling persisted Kiran took the help of local police authorities and the Niwari Block CLAP member Police Inspector to ensure that it stops. With the help of local police authorities she was able to change social norms that were set by men who did not take into account the impact that it had on women. Additionally, Kiran had to go against the wishes of her own husband and family members who initially did not support her because of the risk to their social status, but Kiran persisted and was able to resolve the conflict in her village and prove to everyone the benefits of standing up against injustices.

Now, with her family's support Kiran is addressing other issues including encouraging women to speak out against domestic violence and alcohol related abuses.



Kunyan Rai and Rekha Rai Yadav

The use of the RTI Act and property rights for women

Rekha Yadav is about thirty years old and living with her parents and two young daughters in a small village in Niwari Block. As a girl, Rekha was able to complete high school up to the 10th standard, until she was married at about the age of 16.

Rekha lived with her husband's joint family in neighbouring Palera Block until her husband's death in 2009. After the death of her husband, Rekha was forced to leave her in-laws' home with no financial support. With little education and limited options, Rekha could not find employment to support her two girls.

Fortunately, Rekha was encouraged to return to her parents' home by her mother Kunyan, despite the increased financial burden. When Rekha returned to her parents' home she began to engage in employment and livelihood enhancement activities with her mother by joining an SHG. They participated in a variety of training activities and were given access to credit through bank linkages.

Additionally, they had the opportunity to participate in legal rights and entitlements training through the implementation of the Access to Justice Project. Rekha was able to utilize her training on the uses of the RTI in order to identify a claim she may have to the wages her husband used to receive through his position in local government. She had previously tried to gain access to this information but was unsuccessful; however after submitting an RTI application she was informed within 30 days of the status of employment that her late husband held.

Although his position would not provide her with financial assistance after his death she was able to successfully demand information regarding her own entitlements and is now able to take her efforts further by registering for a widow's pension and engage in efforts to receive support from her husband's family for her daughters.

As of July 2012 Rekha and Kunyan have taken further steps to ensure access to Rekha's and especially her daughters' rights. Rekha's father-in-law had passed away in June of 2012 and a division of his property was to be conducted. Rekha's daughters have a right to that property, so Rekha and her mother wanted to ensure that her in-laws honour the law.

Kunyan through the support of Development Alternatives' community field workers and CLAP committee members filed a case with the DLSA to ensure that the right legal processes are in place for them to demand the right division. Kunyan's supports for her daughter has been relentless and defying social norms Kunyan has taken care of her and while Rekha is soft spoken and shy, her mother continues to ensure that her daughter does not give up her fight. Additionally, Kunyan works to help other women in her village as well by ensuring their access to old age, widow, and other social security schemes.



Meena Tiwari

Demanding justice for domestic violence

Meena Tiwari lives in a remote village in Niwari Block and has been active in the SHG movement in her village for more than five years. However, even as an SHG member she did not feel she had the tools and understanding of rights and entitlements to demand any rights or justice for herself or the women in her community.

Her husband and in-laws have supported her participation in and activity as an SHG member but they did not initially support her interest in attending the trainings related to access to justice. They restricted her from travelling outside her village. Despite the resistance of her family members Meena persisted and engaged her community field workers from Development Alternatives to convince her family.

She took her own independent initiative and attended interfaces, discussions and trainings through her SHG group and eventually won the support of her husband to attend the PLW training as well. Meena claims now, that she has never felt so empowered, she says how she would spend all day at home with her face covered under her purdah and confined to her household responsibilities and now she walks outside with her head uncovered and unafraid, displaying her level of empowerment and confidence to demand her rights.

Meena has not only empowered herself, but helped women in her community as well. Meena took up a highly sensitive case in her village and was able to educate others. She encouraged the parents of a young girl who was murdered about 3 years ago by her alcoholic husband to file a case with the TLSC in Niwari. With the support of Meena and guidance of local lawyers and DA staff members the girls parents were able to successfully file in their local courts and while they were not successful in accessing justice for the murder due to the lack of evidence they were successful in securing financial aid for the grandson she left behind and is in their care.

She not only promoted demanding justice for the girl and her parents but has educated her community in understanding rights violations and the processes for demanding justice. Her work has made her community understand that incidents like this should not be hidden and the women should speak out against domestic violence to protect themselves.

Now with the support of her husband Meena has also done work to improve her village infrastructure and make sure that women in her village have easy access to safe water through the installation of hand pumps.



Jambai Kuwar

Demanding justice for Sexual and Gender Based Violence

Jambai is soft spoken, but confident. She attributes her new found confidence to PLW training. She lives a very modest life with her husband and two small children in a village in Niwari Block. She is in her mid twenties and has been educated until the 8th standard.

Before she became an SHG member and a PLW she never had any real aspirations of becoming anything more than a good wife and mother, she never thought she would become a leader in her community for women's rights. Her development as an SHG member and then a PLW has changed her outlook on life and her determination to change the lives of others. So much so that she has been one of the few PLWs to address the highly sensitive issue of rape.

In mid 2012, almost a year after her training Jambai became aware of a young girl, considered mentally ill who was raped by a man from a neighbouring village. The girl's older sister came to Jambai seeking her advice and assistance on what she could do for her younger sister. Jambai had recently learnt about how to address this issue through the refresher training she had participated in where the legal actions that could be taken against rape and molestation were discussed.

Jambai immediately went to the parents of the girl and encouraged them to file a police case against the man. However, the girl's family was not ready to make their daughter's case public. Instead they took the aid of local Panchayat and went through internal processes to punish the man who committed the crime.

Jambai feels that her society is not ready to deal with the public acknowledgment of these incidents as yet, but that she will continue to encourage the family to demand justice for their daughter and will continue to be a resource for advice and support for other women in her community through increasing their awareness on rights and entitlements.



Dinesh Yadav

Demanding rights for women and girls against violence and harrasment

Dinesh is a 31 year old trained PLW and community field worker with Shailja Sewa Sansthan. He is a farmer with a decent amount land of 5 acres. He lives with his wife and children in a village in Palera Block.

Dinesh has always been interested in methods of fighting injustice in his village and even with out formal training has attempted to defy social constraints and village level authorities when he has identified a violation of someone's rights. After his PLW training, Dinesh has gained increased confidence in addressing issues and is no longer daunted by roadblocks in the Panchayat system. He now understands his own rights and ensures that others are educated as well.

Dinesh was able to identify a case of a girl who committed suicide two years ago, and after his training he found the tools to effectively address her case. Rekha Yadav was a girl from his village married off at a young age. Within a few years of her marriage Rekha had committed suicide. It is known that her husband and in-laws were abusive; most of the community had suspected their abuse to be the cause of her death. Dinesh who regularly interacted with Rekha's parents and the two children she left behind in their care persuaded them re-open the case and demand rights for their grandchildren.

Dinesh facilitated the family for reopening of the case through the DSLA, and while there was not enough evidence to address her suicide, they were able to ensure property rights for not only Rekha's son but also her daughter who is now 7 years old. The court also prohibited the father from sharing any of his property with children from a second wife.

Dinesh's passionate nature encouraged him to continue to fight against other instances of injustice in his community. He helped a girl whose brother-in-law was harassing her. With Dinesh's guidance she filed an FIR and her brother in-law was taken to jail. The "Police does not bother me, I bother them" he claims. He has gained immense respect in the community and wishes to take on more cases and help out as many people with his newly acquired knowledge and confidence. He says people in his village have lots of questions for him all the time and he loves to help.



Poonam Yadav

Demanding justice for domestic violence and access rights under the Hindu Marriage Act

Poonam Yadav was married 17 years ago at a young age into a village not far from hers in Tikamgarh District. She faced domestic violence in the form of physical and mental abuse from the beginning and three years into the marriage, her husband illegally took a second wife and sent Poonam and their two year old child to live with her parents in Baldevgarh Block.

Poonam was forced to return to her parents' home with no financial support and no divorce. At the time of the separation from her husband she was only able to go as far as the village level Panchayat system to secure any rights for herself and her small son. However, she was not able to obtain any support and was forced to accept a separation with out divorce, without monetary assistance from her husband.

For the past 14 years, with the help of her parents Poonam adds to the income of her family by contributing to the family farm and taking on small labour jobs to support her son's education as well.

She became an SHG member through the help of the local CSO project implementation organization NASWO. During one of her SHG meetings the project block coordinator discussed access to rights and entitlements and the opportunity to participate in a community PLW training to further empower the SHG members. The training struck an interest in Poonam, although she was not sure what to expect or even if she would really gain anything. However, she realized in the first day of the training that there was much that she didn't know about her own rights.

Poonam went to the trainers after the first training session and explained to them her own case. She wanted to know how she could file a case against her husband. The Project Block Coordinator and other community field worker trainers took her to the DLSA office and had her meet with an empanelled lawyer who agreed to take up her case. While Poonam was not satisfied with the help of the DLSA lawyer she collected the resources to hire her own private lawyer in the area. It took Poonam one year to secure her rights to financial support and maintenance which she now gets on a monthly basis from her husband. Additionally, she is taking her case further and filed for a proper divorce based on domestic violence and abuse in order to make sure that her son has access to his father's property as well.

Ever since her separation from her husband Poonam has always felt like she has been a burden on her family, especially her parents. Now, Poonam does not only have the means to financially support herself and her son but has also gained new respect in her village as a women who 14 years after separation still has gained the knowledge to fight for her rights and actually achieved justice through her own efforts.

Poonam has inspired her brother Ram Milan to engage further in PLW activities, he took a special training from NASWO trainers and actively engages with them providing support for his sister's case and assisting other women in his village as well.



Pooja Mishra

Empowering women to fight against domestic violence

Pooja Mishra is one of the few young girls in her village in Prithvipur Block who have been educated beyond high school. She lives with her parents and is their only daughter. She is famous in her village for being the only girl who can ride a motorcycle on her own. She recently completed her degree in social work, but wanted to come back to live in her village and make a difference in her own home.

Pooja is soft spoken, but strong and determined. She joined the local project implementing organization Vikalp Madhiya to serve as a community field worker and engage women in the formation of SHGs and helping them through the processes of credit linkages and enterprise development. In the summer of 2011, not long after she joined Vikalp Madhiya, she had the opportunity to become a community PLW as well. Even after her schooling and her time spent working in the community she had never felt so empowered or so capable of helping women to make a real change.

Pooja helped a young woman, Anita Ahirawar, who had been married into her village a couple years ago and who was also a victim of domestic violence. Upon convincing Anita to take legal action and demand her rights Pooja went with Anita to the local police station where they filed a report against her husband. Unfortunately, Pooja and Anita were not well received by the police, who encouraged them to resolve the matter internally and refused to file her case.

Undaunted Pooja and Anita through the advice of Vikalp colleges went to the Prithvipur's CLAP committee member; the local protection officer. The protection officer in the area took up her case and encouraged first that they go through a round of family counselling before Anita takes on further action. Anita and her husband went through counselling and he was informed of the consequences he would face if he continued to abuse his wife.

Pooja continues to work with other women in her village to inform them of the rights they have and has taken it upon herself to specifically bring out issues related to domestic violence, dowry abuse. She makes it a point to give the women in her SHGs an opportunity to discuss rights related issues at every meeting so that not one of them accepts a violation of rights in their community.



Siya Kevat

Filing an FIR to demand justice for a crime

Forty-two year Siya Kevat belongs to low-income family of Kuvarpuara Khas village in Niwari Block. She falls under BPL category and has completed her education until the 5th standard and has basic literacy skills.

Like many other families in her village Siya and her husband are entirely dependent on their small farm for livelihood and food security. Siya's main commitment is to the production of her farm and care of her family, however she is also actively engaged in her SHG group and serves as a supervisor of the Jai Bhole Baba Tejesyawani group.

Through her involvement in the local SHG group Siya found the opportunity to participate in the Paralegal Training Program organized by Development Alternatives in May 2011. Siya was exposed to the importance of taking legal action and standing up to injustice through the use of the police system and process of filing an FIR.

Siya had the opportunity to utilize her new understanding of her rights to seek justice for her daughter-in-law who was mistreated by an auto driver when she requested assistance to reach the local hospital when she went into labour. The conflict resulted in violent threats and abuse by the auto driver who was not willing to take her to the hospital and because she was not able to reach the hospital on time both mother and newborn suffered further complications and extensive medical expenses for Siya and her family.

In response, Siya filed an FIR against the auto driver and had him arrested for endangering the life of her daughter-in-law and grandchild. The police did take action and arrest the driver subsequently. However, under the encouragement of village elders and panchayat members Siya was convinced to revoke the charges and to accept a personal apology and monetary compensation from the driver for his misconduct.

Despite the fact that the case did not go through the entire legal processes, Siya as a trained paralegal was aware about her right to file an official complaint and was able to engage in the right processes for demanding justice. She was praised by her SHG group members for her initiative and has inspired others to seek advice from her in matters related to demanding justice.



Mohindra Singh Bose

Addressing domestic violence through rights awareness

Mohindra Singh Bose has always thought of giving back to his community. He is well known in his village for being enthusiastic and always willing to help the elderly. He completed his high school education when he was 18 and went on to earn a Bachelors of Arts in a local college.

At 25 Mohindra began looking for opportunities to make a difference in his village in Jatara Block. He has a large plot of land which he shares with his brothers and has enough resources to provide for his wife and new born son, but he wanted to do much more that work on his family's land.

He approached Darshana Kalyan Samiti for a job as a community field worker. He wanted to participate in the different types of projects that the organization managed, especially with the empowerment of women through SHG formation.

Upon joining as a community field worker he had the opportunity to train as a PLW for increasing his understanding of rights and entitlements and accessing them through formal justice systems and local government bodies.

Through his work with local women and creation of support systems for SHG women, he was able to educate them about their rights and explain to them the processes of accessing justice just as he had learnt during his training. He began with small initiatives such as ensuring that those who were entitled to pension schemes and social security benefits were able to avail them and it didn't take long for them to open to him on larger and more sensitive issues, including domestic violence. Mohindra came to the aid of an SHG member whose husband, on one particular instance beat her through. He personally called the police and supported the woman in giving a statement to the police about the incident.

Mohindra has not worked with out opposition. Mohindra lives in a very remote village that has strict traditional value systems. He felt the pressure of village elders and Panchayat members and has expressed his difficulty for being able to openly address sensitive issues. Despite the pressures from village authorities Mohindra uses his role as community field worker to continue to educate women on their rights and does his work through SHG meetings and other platforms where he has the support of his organization.

Additionally, Mohindra has gone further to work to especially empower women who are victims of wife buying practices and have been brought in from other states such as Orrisa to marry local men due to the intense gap in the number of girls born in the area. He identified these women in the villages he works in and has taken extra initiative to get them involved in SHGs. They are often isolated in their own village for various reasons including their inability to speak the local language. Additionally, their marriages are often unregistered and therefore increase their vulnerability to abuse and often times their "resale" once they have fulfilled their purpose in one family.

Mohindra found that many of them are educated or at least literate and could contribute significantly to the SHGs through account keeping etc. He wants to continue to empower these women specifically so that they have a chance at protecting their rights, gaining access to their entitlements and accessing justice when their rights have been violated. Mohindra, at this young age has been able to position himself as a leader in his community and set an example for his peers and make as serious progress on the rights of women in his village as well.



Bati Kushwa

Enhancing village development by accessing entitlements

Bati Kushwa is a young confident woman, she lives in a village in Prithvipur Block with her husband and two year old son where they have a small farm.

Bati was one of the first women in her village to become an SHG member and has since worked to encourage other women to form groups as well. She has seen the benefits of women working together for their empowerment and says that they have to help each other in order to make the best for their own future.

Bati has always looked for opportunities to learn more and empower herself. That is why when she heard about the opportunity to learn more about her rights and entitlements she did not hesitate to attend the PLW training.

After her trainings, she has made many accomplishments in bettering the lives of the women in her village. She collected a group of women to demand that their village Panchayat and Sarpanch properly maintain the hand pumps and roads so that women are able to collect water and travel safely. She leads a group of women who regularly speak out at Gram Sabha meetings and has accomplished the task of ensuring that the infrastructure of her village was improved through the installation for more hand pumps, 2 check dams and a road leading to the remotest parts of the village as well.

Bati claims that before her PLW training she was afraid to speak to the village level authorities and now she is confident enough to demand her rights from them. Apart from leading rights realization in her village, Bati runs her own little boutique shop in the village. She is especially proud of her ability to go to the bank all by herself and manage her money on her own. She enthusiastically refers to herself as a PLW and is seen as a resource to the women in her village.



Bhagwat Raitwar

Demanding access to entitlements and combating corruption

Bhagwat inherited his tea shop from his father at a young age. He completed his schooling until the 12th and then started his family. He hadn't dreamt of accomplishing much more in his life than supporting his family in their shared farm land contributing a little extra through running his tea shop. He and his family fall under the OBC category and hold a BPL card as well. His shop is located on the highway not far from his village.

Niranjan Yadav, the block coordinator in Jatara from the implementing partner Darshana Kalyan Samiti often came by in the afternoons for a quick cup of tea on his way in and out of the neighbouring villages. One particular afternoon in April 2011, Niranjan stopped by for a cup of tea and he and Bhagwat began speaking a little more about the type of work that he does in the area. Nirajan explained that he has started a new project that focuses on local women's access to justice through empowerment on right and entitlements. He also explained that he was collecting volunteers who would like to participate in PLW trainings in the coming months.

Bhagwat was inspired by the objective of the project and saw that it related to the well being of his family and village community as well. He inquired about his own participation in the trainings in hopes that he could find a way to better the lives of his own wife, daughter and son. Although, the PLW trainings are designed to increase access to justice for women SHG members the project mandate included the training of men from the community as well to ensure support for the empowerment of women.

Bhagwat went through the PLW training held in Jatara block in June of 2011 and it didn't take him long to start making a change in his community. In September 2011 he fought for the right for government assistance for housing rights for his own family and two others in his village. He wanted to register for benefits under the Indrawaas Yojna Scheme. The scheme guarantees funding for building small houses for BPL families.

Although he clearly had the right, Bhagwat's village Sarpanch was not willing to put his application forward without a bribe. Bhagwat had been educated on the ways of addressing corruption in government systems through the use of an RTI application. He explained to his Sarpanch that if he did not put his claim through he would file an application to demand information on why his entitlements had not been delivered.

Bhagwat was able to use his knowledge of access to entitlements to avail a government scheme not only for him self but for three other families in his village as well. After experiencing the benefits of his trainings he has taken extra initiative to organize rights awareness interfaces in his village with women SHGs and panchayat level authorities. He has made sure his wife who is an SHG member herself has read the legal manual that was given to him and that she has shared it with her SHG members as well.

Through his other efforts he has helped eight women avail the old age pension scheme and two women avail the widow's pension scheme.



Rangvir Singh Dhodi

Ensuring village development with a gender-sensitive perspective

Rangvir is a 32 old farmer and a community field worker with Shailja Sewa Sansthan, living in Palera. He is a father of 2 girls and a boy and his wife is a member of an SHG in their village.

Rangvir attended the first round of PLW trainings organized in summer 2011. Rangvir claims that he wanted to know how he could better help the women in his village and neighbouring community.

Rangvir was taught in his training about the right to safe and clean drinking water, and how local government must ensure this access through hand pumps and other village infrastructure. Rangvir was able relate this issue to women in his village who walked far every day to collect water for their families because the hand pumps in the village were not maintained and there was no pipeline to increase the number of hand pumps available.

He knew about the village's right to this service under the MP government Bundelkhand Package. When the Panchayat level authorities would not take action, Rangvir went straight to the block level officials to file a complaint, he waited more than a month before he decided to take his claim to the state level authorities and went to Bhopal himself to bring the issue to the attention of the PHE. He submitted an application there and with in 8 days a team was sent to his village to make the assessment on installing the pipeline. A month later the PHE came and installed a pipeline in his village and in the interim time made sure all existing hand pumps were working.

Rangvir has been able to ensure that over 400 households have access to water. Ragvir did not stop there, with his efforts. His village had an electricity problem as well. Women in the village were extremely vulnerable at night when there was no electricity. Rangvir again went through the local authorities but finally ended up filing a complaint at the state level, his village was sanctioned to have an electrical pole installed.

Rangvir's successes have raised him to a high level of respect in the village. He says his next step will be to run for the Panchayat and has gained leadership status in his village.



Ramubai

The use of the RTI Act to demand access to entitlements

Ramubai is about 70 years old. Women her age rarely know their exact birthdays and often measure their time through the seasons or specific major events in their village. Ramubai was married at a young age before she turned 18 years old. She has spent her entire life as a devoted mother, wife and now grandmother in her village in Jatara Block.

While she has always felt cared for and supported by her family members she did not understand that being able to access her own right and entitlements she could contribute to her family's livelihood as well. Ramubai became an SHG member about three years ago. As an SHG member she learnt about her opportunity to avail benefits under the Bundelkhand Package, an MP government program that amongst other opportunities provides families with livelihood options including resources for engaging in goat rearing.

Ramubai applied those benefits under her own name in late 2010. However, after many inquiries and applications by mid 2011 she had still not received her goats from the local veterinary hospital that was authorized sanction them to her.

In one of her SHG meetings a community field worker from Darshana Kalyan Samiti who had been recently trained as community PLW, informed her that filing an RTI application could help her accessing information on why her application for benefits under the Bundelkhand Package were not being honoured. Ramubai and her community field worker went to the local block level administration office and filed a petition under RTI ACT. With in a month she was informed by the local authorities to collect her goats at the local veterinary hospital.

Ramubai had never heard of RTI before, she would have never thought to go to the block level authorities to demand her entitlements, but through the help of a community field worker who was educated on demanding access to rights and entitlements, she was able to demand rights for herself. The opportunity for Ramubai to have her own livelihood resource at her age is extremely important for her own empowerment. Women who reach old age in the villages and in the area are often seen as a burden to their families and are often abused and ostracized because of their dependency.

She not only has the means to support herself but has the means to contribute to the income of her family as well. Her ability to continue to be an essential part of the family and not just a burden in her old age is very important.



Mukesh Ahirwar

Ensuring access to entitlements and combating corruption with the use of RTI

Mukesh Ahirwar is a community field worker with the project implementing organization Vikalp Madiya, a contributor to his family farm and now a PLW. He lives with his 4 brothers, wife and children in his village in Prithvipur block.

He attributes his education on RTI processes through his legal rights trainings as a major factor for change in his community. After his training he was able to identify many instances of corruption or misguidance of his community members by local government officials. For example, families in his village were being charged exorbitant amounts of money for the issuing of cards for Kapildhara Yojna, a government scheme which aims at increasing irrigation facilities to poor farmers and also for providing employment to the rural people.

He decided to submit an RTI at the block administration office to understand how the officials were regulating selectively who should receive assistance. The Block Level CEO refused the RTI application and subsequently Mukesh was threatened by the local political figures in the area. Mukesh then took his RTI application to the District Collector's office who then took it upon himself to see that any mishandling of the scheme would be stopped. Unfortunately, Mukesh had to deal with extended pressure and threats from local authorities and even by his own village Sarpanch.

He sought the help of his colleagues at Vikalp Madiya and they advised him to make sure he had community support. The local authorities who had pressured him filed a simple criminal case against him and he was arrested within a month of his RTI application. The police were not able to hold Mukesh for long, his entire village came to support him and had him released from police custody.

While Mukesh continues to fight against corruption in his community he also engages in other project activities including organizing street-plays on domestic violence and helping women gain access to pension and social security schemes. He claims that the women in his village are empowered and he provides support to them in any way he can include making sure the resources they rely on the most such as hand pumps for water are available to them.



Ashvani Pathak

Access to justice for Sexual and Gender Based Violence and RTI for demanding rights

Ashvani is the middle child of 5 brothers; he is 27 years old and has completed his Masters Social Work from Bundelkhand University. He came back to live in his village in Baldevgarh Block with his family after completing his degree and began looking for opportunities to help his community.

In early 2011, he engaged with the project implementing partner NASWO on ways he could be involved in their initiatives in the area. Since then he has worked with the organization as a community field worker to help create, support and monitor the development of women SHGs.

In July 2011 he participated in the PLW trainings that were organized by NASWO and gained a new understanding of access to rights and entitlements for his community members. He found specifically, that his new knowledge of the RTI Act and its role in combating corruption in local governments could help him make a change.

In his own village, he identified an intense water shortage due to the lack of accessible hand pumps. He realized that the women of his village were most affected by this shortage since it is their primary responsibility to collect water for consumption. Women in his village had to travel long distances and at times compete with each other for water. He filed an RTI at the block level administration office when he realized his Panchayat was not fulfilling its responsibilities for the maintenance of the hand pumps. Within a couple weeks the Public Health Engineering Department (PHE) authorities came and ensured that all hand pumps in the village were functional.

Ashvani has gone further to ensure that the SHG women he works with are aware of their rights and are able to avail schemes and pensions and jobs under MGNREGS. He has used the provisions under the RTI Act to file petitions at the block office against the illegal distribution of BPL cards and has also filed a case against a local school's head-master who was not maintaining standards of education.

Ashvani Pathak is also one of the two PLWs who have addressed a rape case. He has helped Susheela Vishwkarma and her family engage in demanding justice through official legal systems. Fifteen year old Susheela Vishwkarma belongs to large extended family categorized as BPL in Baldevgarh Block, in the Tikamgarh district of MP. She and her family fall under the OBC category as well and she has completed her education until the 8th standard. However, Susheela is also been classified as mentally ill. Her father supports Susheela and her 6 brothers and sisters as the village blacksmith. He and her mother work hard to keep their family going but are often suffering due to their social status and low-income.

Since, Susheela does not attend school and she is often left alone in her home to play outside in her family's farm. A local man of higher caste and economic status in the village was able to take advantage of her when she was alone and raped her while she was playing. Susheela was left there and only hours later when her family realized she was missing did her younger sister find her and take her home. Susheela was unable to describe to her family about what happened although her sisters were able to understand when Susheela met her rapist in the market the next day.

Susheela's mother who is an SHG member approached her community field worker Ashvani Pathak about the situation because she felt that the issue would not be handled fairly at the Panchayat level. Ashvani has guided the family to file an FIR at their local Police Station and had them meet directly with the Chief Inspector where they filed a report. Additionally, Ashvani took them to the DLSA where they were able to file a case and were assigned a lawyer to take their case further.



Jumna Ahirwar

Demanding justice for domestic violence

Jumna Ahirwar is now 18 years old. She was married 3 years ago well before the legal age of marriage. She stopped going to school when she was around ten years old. Her parents told her that they didn't have enough money to send her to school and education was not of much significance since her future in-laws would not be looking for an educated girl.

At the age of 15 she was married into another village not far from her own in Tikamgarh Block. Jamna would spend her days at home cooking, cleaning and working around the house while her husband finished school and eventually went off to college as well. Jamna was left alone with very abusive in-laws who mistreated her so badly that she eventually ran back to her parents.

When she was sent back to her in-laws' home after few weeks she found that the in-laws had brought a new wife for their son from Rajasthan. They allowed Jamna to stay in their house, however they treated her like a servant and were extremely violent with her, in one case attempting to set her on fire and demanding more dowry from her parents.

Jamna was afraid of returning home because she did not want to be a burden to her parents. She believed it was wrong for girls who are married to return to their parents and her village community would not accept her. Instead, Jamna took refuge with her aunt and uncle.

There, she had the opportunity to attend SHG meetings and village interfaces under the Access to Justice Project. Her aunt and uncle approached Vikalp Madihya, the project implementation organization in their area. The community field workers encouraged them and assisted them in filing a case of domestic violence and dowry abuse with the DLSA. The case status as of September 2012 has not been resolved and Jamna is still engaged with the DLSA lawyers in guiding her through the proceedings.

She hopes to receive monetary support from her in-laws and the right to the property she is entitled to as well. In the mean time, Jumna is looking ahead by working on improving her employability skills; through her SHG with her aunt and are engaging in enterprise development and access to credit activities in her village as well. She has also returned to school to improve her literacy skills



Balram Ahirwar

Taking legal action against domestic violence

Balram Ahirwar has been working with Shailja Sewa Sansthan as a community field worker in Palera Block for many years. He is respected in his village and is known as sincere and good hearted man.

Balram married his eldest daughter Seema in 2011 after turning down many families; he has always wanted the best for his daughter and wanted to make sure she was married into a family that would take care of her. At the time of her marriage Balram had taken loans in order to pay the dowry demanded by her in-laws. However, even after the marriage was complete her in-laws were not satisfied with the amount given to them and began to harass Seema and Balram. Seema was subjected to physical and mental abuse in her home, all her possessions were taken away and her activity and movements outside the house were severely restricted. During this time she also gave birth to a baby girl which increased her subjugation to verbal and physical violence. After more than two years of marriage and suffering, Seema left her husband and in-laws to return to her parents' home.

Balram had the opportunity to learn about legal protection against domestic violence and dowry through the PLW trainings offered by Shailja Sewa Sansthan. He decided to engage in legal action to protect his daughter. In May 2012 Balram and Seema filed a case under the Domestic Violence Act for dowry related abuse in the local block level court. However, social constraints and the inability of Balram to fight against Seema's in-laws because of their position and level of power severely hindered Seema's access to justice. Seema was afraid of returning to her parents home because of the social shame it would cause her family and Balram was unable to stand up against her in-laws and demand she be sent home.

In August 2012 Seema and her husband and in-laws appeared at the district level court for their hearing. The court order demanded that Seema's in-laws no longer demand a dowry, that they must end all acts of violence and let her communicate regularly with her father. If she reports further instances than her husband will be sent to jail. Balram no longer feels that his daughter is mistreated and she comes to regularly visit him. Balram acknowledges that he his daughter has not been able to completely access justice because of his own inability to defy social constraints and traditional values in his community.



Ramlal Chara

Access to rights under the Hindu Marriage Act

Ramlal works doctors at a local dispensary in Tikamgarh Block, he rarely takes a day off and works hard to support his wife and two children; a girl and a boy both who he wants to send to college. He is about 31 years old and has completed his education up to the 10th standard. Ramlal met the block coordinator of project implementing organization Vikalp Madhiya in June of 2011 when he came to his village to meet with the SHG women to recruit participants for the PLW training program.

Ramlal's wife Janki, is a member of one the SHG groups. Janki was immediately interested in attending the trainings, but did not feel that she could leave her household responsibilities. Ramlal, recognizing the benefits the training could bring to his family decided he would take the training on behalf of his wife and share his learning with his her. Ramlal and his wife starting discussing the issues they were educated on through the trainings with the SHG groups and other community members and over time they were able to help specific women gain access to rights through pension schemes and MGNREGS.

Ramlal and his wife helped a woman from their village who was married in 10 yeas ago but was forced to leave her house by her husband. She had been staying with her parents since her separation with no financial support from her husband. Ramlal took her to the DLSA where she filed a case under the Hindu Marriage Act for compensation and property. The case was decided in her favour and with a month of the decision she began to receive financial support from her husband. She is additionally perusing a case for her right to his property as well. Ramlal and Janki have not only been able to educate themselves but have educated their entire village on their access to rights and entitlements.



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