

Report on Training Programme on Technology Facilitated Gender Based Violence (TFGBV) – Kotagiri (08th January 2024)

Socio-demographics of Kotagiri:

Kotagiri is a hill station in The Nilgiris District, TamilNadu, India. The name Kotagiri means 'Mountains of the Kotas'. The Nilgiris hills has been home of the 'Kota' tribes. The four Gotras or tribes of Nilgiris include Thoda, Kothas, Kurumbas and Irulas. As per 2011 census, Kotagiri has a population of 28,207 with a literacy rate of 86.8%. Kotagiri has a higher literacy rate compared to 85.2% of the Nilgiris District. There are several educational institutions in Kotagiri which provide services to people.

Agriculture, tea factories, embroidered shawls, stoles and cushion cover making are some of the occupations in Kotagiri. One of the major tourist attractions in Kotagiri is the Kodanad viewpoint from which an impressive portion of TamilNadu and Karnataka through the canopy of clouds. Kotagiri is only one hour from Ooty and many people nowadays prefer Kotagiri than Ooty because of its calmness and cooler weather. Two of the major attractions in Kotagiri is Palapetty. St. Catherine's Waterfalls and Kodanad viewpoint. With several scenic locations and hairpin turns Kotagiri is a beauty to visit.

About the Partnering Institution

Nilgiris Adivasi Welfare Association (NAWA) is a charitable non-governmental organization working for the welfare and development of scattered tribes of Nilgiris, TamilNadu. Population of the tribes in Nilgiris and adjoining areas sums around to 30,000. This NGO was founded by Padmashri Dr. S. Narasimhan in 1958. He was a dedicated doctor who helped tribal community and other local communities build a bond of trust among them. Several programs such as educational programs, economic development programs, rehabilitation programs have been done. Over the years NAWA evolved itself to address the needs and priorities of tribal communities and help them grow. Various government institutions and private institutions has also come forward with various health, livelihood and educational projects for the welfare of tribal communities. Training program in Kotagiri was conducted at Community Hall of Nilgiris Adivasi Welfare Association. The sole aim of conducting the training program in Kotagiri was to spread awareness among the woman about the forms of cyber crime and what can be done to prevent them from becoming a victim to it.

Training Program - Kotagiri

The training program was conducted to safeguard people from cyber crime and to provide them with awareness on Gender Based Violence and prevention strategies. They in turn can help other people who become victim of cyber-crime. The Inaugural session begin with welcome address given by Thirumurthy from Nilgiris Adivasi Welfare Association. He gave a brief introduction of how NAWA has helped for the welfare and development of tribal community. He also spoke about the prevalence of cyber crime and how half the people unknowingly become a victim of it. He also gave emphasis on when personal data is being hacked or when people are being blackmailed with it, more than half of the time, they don't know what to do and instead of reporting it or informing about it to a close friend, people end up taking drastic steps and how with awareness on what can be done is important and hence with this program more women can be aware of what can be done to protect themselves.

Next, Dr. M. Priyamvatha spoke about the how this program has come to be and the importance of this training session. The awareness about cyberspace and crimes happening in the virtual space and prevention strategies is crucial for people because it is essential as that can give people idea for how they can protect themselves. Crimes happening in virtual space has been increasing and the anonymity in committing these forms of crimes makes it hard to find the perpetrator. She also briefed about the advantages and disadvantages of internet and how it can be both used and misused. Almost everyone has at least one social media account and almost everyone has a fear of being victimized because of it.

The chief guest of the program was Ms. Jayakumari, Town Panchayat President. She mainly spoke about the importance of reporting behaviour. She spoke about how one should report a crime as it will help catch the perpetrator as well as prevent that kind of crime from happening again. She also quoted a real-life example where a nursing student who ended up taking drastic step by killing herself rather than coming forwards and reporting the crime or informing about the crime to anyone fearing judgment from her own people. She also emphasized about domestic violence and how people don't even know that they are a victim of it. She gave importance to the awareness of cyber-crime, various forms of it and preventive measures can help save many people and can also help them get justice.

Mr. Thomas Gowthaman, a research scholar in Criminology from the University of Madras, proposed the vote of thanks for the inaugural session.



Images 1&2: Inaugural sessional

Training program details

Program Schedule		
10am to 11am	Inauguration	
11am to 12 noon	Session - 1	Introduction to Digital Technology
12 noon to 1pm	Session - 2	Overview of TFGBV
1.00pm to 2.00 pm	Lunch	
2.00 pm to 3.00 pm	Session - 3	Forms of TFGBV
3.00 pm to 4.00 pm	Session - 4	Awareness, prevention, and detection on TFGBV
4.00pm to 5 pm	Session - 5	Response to TFGBV
5.00pm to 5.30pm	Evaluation, Feedback and Closing Remarks	

About the trainers

Two trainers were involved in the training program. First, Mr. Jagedesh Kumar, currently a Research Scholar (Junior Research fellow) and is also qualified as assistant professor and second was Mr. Thomas Gowthaman, who is also a Research Scholar (Junior Research fellow) in Criminology from the University of Madras and is also qualified as assistant professor. The training modules were explained in Bilingual English and Tamil (regional language) by Mr. Thomas Gowthaman and Mr. Jagedesh Kumar.

Profile of the participants

Profile of the participants who attended the training program were students and faculties from Nilgires Planter Association Centenary Polytechnic College, students from District Institute of Educational Training, Avinashilingam University, Dr. NGP Arts and Science College and homemakers from various tribes such as Thoda, Kurumba and Irula. 78 participants were present for this training program. They eagerly participated and interacted very actively during this training program.

Session 1: Overview of Technology

Session 1 started with the basic introduction to technology. Technology has helped us a lot as with advancement came more development. Everything has become easy these days from booking a bus ticket to access to medical information, everything is available online. As good as it sounds there is same level of downside to it. The advantages and disadvantages of internet usage was explained both by trainer and participants. Participants were asked to tell both upside and downside and they discussed it in detail. Participants mentioned some daily convenience because of technology while the trainer discussed the damages caused because of technology. For example, when someone posts a story in social media saying they are travelling with family to some other state it indirectly mentions that their house is vacant and hence is trouble. In this session the necessities to be mindful about what one should post on social media was also discussed in detail.⁶

Session 2: Technology Facilitated: Gender Based Violence

In this session the trainer explained technology facilitated gender-based violence. These days violence has become so casual. Movies these days project couples hitting each other a common thing that nothing seems too harsh. While some boycott movies which shows violence while other take violence against their partner as rights. An eye for an eye is common motto found these days. Leaking personal photos of girlfriend if she breaks the relationship as a revenge is increasing every day; misusing personal data of other people; blackmailing using morphed pictures are all some of the common forms of technology facilitated gender-based violences. Women get scared and instead of reporting, end up taking drastic measures. But society as whole tend to blame women for crimes against them and some if it because they lack awareness of what exactly happened and end up blaming. This session explained how pictures are morphed and

uploaded and also explained the necessary steps to delete the picture if such a thing happens. Trainer also made aware of the public about how one should not share everything online as it can end up badly if misused.

Session 3: Forms of Technology Facilitated Gender Based Violence

In this session, Mr. Thomas spoke about the various forms of violence happening against women. Several examples were provided to explain different forms of cybercrime such as cyber bullying, doxing, phishing, sexting, etc. Participants asked a lot of doubts and by end of the session participants were aware of different forms of cyber-crime. One of the questions asked was what is masked Aadhaar for which the trainer answered.

Group activity was conducted after session 3. The entire crowd can split into four groups and each group was given a topic and one member of the group was told to discuss with everyone. Topic given to group 1 was Acid attack; group 2 was Sexual harassment; group 3 was child abuse and group 4 was domestic violence.

Acid attack: It is a gruesome crime where acid is thrown onto another body with an aim to disfigure, torture or kill. Perpetrators use different methods for acid attack and majority of the victim for such crimes are women, but rarely men also end up being victim. Some of the main reasons mentioned for acid attacks are conflicts in relationship, conflict caused in marriage, vengeance etc. She also spoke about how boys should be made aware to forgive and forget rather than taking revenge and spoiling other people's life. When someone is being attacked with acid, it's not just the victim that is affected, even their families get affected. She also explained how both victim and their parents should be given counselling on how they can come out that trauma and live their life because even the victim will hesitate to step out of their house because of disfigurement. When one is attacked with acid, they should be continuously splashed with water for 20 minutes and only after that treatments and other procedure should be done. When it comes to punishments, 326A of IPC punishes acid attack with 10 years' imprisonment Upto life imprisonment.

Sexual harassment: Women to Children, all age group are being harassed these days. There is no value for consent these days. Many people says that despite saying no, people still are getting sexually assault. When it comes to children, they do not easily come forward with issues like sexual assault. Mainly because either they don't really know what's happening with them or they maybe be blackmailed as not to inform

anyone. Many such cases can be seen where children take 6 months to 1 year to inform their parents. It is because children are scared to tell their parent fearing that they will judge their kid or blame them saying it's their fault. Parents should maintain a good rapport with their children and give a good space to their children so that they can share everything without fear. When a child is sexually abused, they react very differently from normal, parents need to see and question the changes in their kid's behaviour and not just leave it unnoticed. When emotions and cues get unnoticed, the trauma follows them, wherever they go, when they travel in public transport or when they talk to the opposite gender or while wearing a good dress. When it comes to work place, women face torture and trauma of all kind especially in IT companies, where women are emotionally blackmailed. She also spoke about how women don't feel safe after 8pm and how that all should change.

Child abuse: child can be defined as anyone below the age of 18. Child abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional or psychological or neglect of a child or mistreatment of children. Lack of awareness that they are victim of abuse is one of the main reasons why it is not reported. Most of the children not realizing it is abuse, doesn't know what to share or how to share, it goes unreported. Children should be taught from primary itself what good touch and bad touch is. They should be taught to report to parents or friends or teachers. Physical abuse includes abusing private part and knowing what good touch and bad touch will help children to prevent abuse. Emotional abuse includes body shaming, comparing them with siblings or other kids, mocking them are all forms of abuse and that happens mostly in family. Family members joking mock their kid not knowing it is also form of an abuse and creates inferiority complex and trauma. Parents should know what not to say to their children. When it comes to sexual abuse reports says that it is mostly known relatives or acquaintance. When it comes to punishments, POCSO Act, 2012 and JJ Act plays an important role. She also spoke about 1098- child helpline works.

Domestic violence: Domestic violence is a form of abuse that occurs in a marriage or in a situation of couple living together. Physical, sexual, emotional and financial forms of abuse and sometime domestic murder also happen. Killing for honor if their child marries from another caste is also common. Usually women are killed for dowry, either the husband or his parents won't be happy with the amount of dowry received and torture the girl, where the wife either gets killed or commits suicide because even if the wife goes back home, parents advise her to adjust rather than reacting to it. When

wife is financially not independent, the husband tends to emotionally manipulate the wife, setting limits and drawing boundary. Ego of the husband plays a major role when it comes to decision making. Husband always tends to dominate women, when they financially dependent. Sometimes parents forcefully marry their daughter off with so much emotional blackmail threatening to commit suicide and which eventually causes the girl depression, abuse and also rape. She also spoke about how parents sometimes even control their dressing style, friends etc. There are 30,000 domestic violence cases in India. There are many women welfare programs, child welfare programs and lot of policies are introduced to help women who face domestic violence and with help of these schemes and policies women can be financially independent and mentally strong.



Image 3&4: Group Activity

Session 4: Awareness and Prevention of Technology Facilitated Gender Based Violence

This session focuses on careful usage of internet and how one should be mindful about what they are posting on internet and also what they share in social media. Even in social media when people share their daily routine, there are high chances of those posts being misused. This session provided more focus on privacy setting and how one should be careful. If one ever feels unsafe with someone in social media, privacy setting which can be used against them so that there is no problem in future was also explained. The trainer explained a real-life example where one of his friends was talking to a guy in social media and they were good friends and due to some misunderstanding, they stopped talking for more than a year and now that she is engaged, this social media friend figured out her fiancée's number and spoke in a very ill manner. When asked to complaint, the family of the girl hesitated fearing that honor of the family will be tarnished and only after so much convincing that they were ready to complaint so that

appropriate action can be taken so that this kind of crime will not be committed in future. This example shows the importance of reporting behaviour. Another important aspect discussed in this session was software update and using anti-virus and how one should not use all public wi-fi because personal information can be easily accessed if one is not being careful.

Session 5: Legislative Policies and Redressal Mechanism:

Previous session discussed privacy and safe usage of internet and in session 5, the procedure for register a formal complaint was discussed in detail. This was explained in detail because most people do not come forward fearing judgement from her own family or the fear of going to police station or fear of being blamed for the crime. Registering a cyber-crime does not require one to go anywhere or ask anyone's help, if one have internet connection, they can register a complaint in online portal and will mostly get a solution if they complaint within 72 hours of occurrence of crime. Hence in this session step by step procedure of how to raise complaint was given. Different policies and act for different forms of cyber-crime was explained. These acts and policies provide legal help if one falls victim to it. This session also helped people to raise queries via social media as well. The importance of reporting was also mentioned because registering complaint can help them prevent further occurrence of same crime by making preventive measures. Another emphasis given was for security app that women or anyone can use so that they safe when travelling alone. One of the prominent apps in TamilNadu is Kavalan and all they have to do is shake their phone thrice and they will get help. Hence using internet, social media mindfully as well as being aware of the danger that can happen in social media and prevention strategies is important.



Image 5& 6: Sessions

Feedback/Conclusion:

Feedback provided by the participant is that they were unaware of these different forms of cyber-crime. Prevention strategies were informative and useful. As the session was interactive, the examples will help them remember the measures that can be adopted to keep oneself safe. Another suggestion was that this session can be also taken for men as well, because since it has been seen that men are usually the perpetrator, informing them of these legal actions and asking them to be more forgiving rather than being vengeful was one of the suggestions received.



Image 7: Group Photo