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Ahmedabad women push charter of demands into local govt bodies

DNA / Kinjal Desai / Wednesday, December 21, 2011 20:34 IST

“We stand up in embarrassment when a car passes by and then squat again to answer nature's call. Men in our village drink and violate our dignity, sometimes even rape women and young girls. We want an end to this alcohol abuse.”

These are just two instances of the many problems that women in Surendranagar are facing today. This, however, hasn't cowered them into submission. The women stand united and are pushing their charter of demands into local government bodies and gram panchayats.

Helping these women voice their opinion on Violence against Women (VAW) is Society for Women's Action and Training Initiatives (SWATI), which has been working on this issue for a decade now.

“We started a pilot project of dealing with VAW at the governance level as having a multi-dimensional approach was the only solution. At the medical level, 28% of casualties are cases of domestic violence while 48% of them (casualties) are possible cases of domestic violence,” said Poonam Kathuria, founder and managing trustee - SWATI.

Kathuria further stressed on existence of a helpline for women, a necessity that hasn't yet seen light of day. “There is no specific centralised helpline number for women, like the one in Mumbai. We intend to introduce the concept of safety for women that will curb and eventually stop violence against them,” added Kathuria.

Safety audits and gramsabhas have been held in 22 villages of Surendranagar district to cater to women's demands relating to safety in public places and building an environment sans violence within their homes.

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