



SNEHA Society for Nutrition, Education and Health Action

[REG. NO. E-17858(MUM)]

every woman and child counts.

Topic guide for participants in a focus group discussion

Title of the study: Norms that perpetuate violence against women: a qualitative study in Mumbai.

Seema is an 18-year young girl from the community. She has appeared for her 12th standard exams and is now enjoying her summer holidays. She likes studying and is looking forward to go to college. She lives with her parents, brother, and sister. She also has a boyfriend; his name is Ramesh. She hasn't told her family about him.

- What do you think about her having a boyfriend?
- (Questions about them meeting clandestinely – probe for acceptability).

One day they meet when there's no one at Ramesh's house and have sex. Seema's parents sometimes check her phone. This one day her mother checks her phone and finds out about Seema and Ramesh's relationship, they also discover messages that indicate that they have a sexual relationship.

- Please complete this scenario – what do you think happens next?
- Probe based on their responses.

Seema and Ramesh are now married. He works in a private company. Before getting married she had negotiated with her future in-laws about her education, it was decided that she'd be free to pursue her higher studies after getting married.

Seema doesn't want to have kids right now. However, her in-laws want grandchildren, especially a boy.

- What do you think she should do?
- Probe based on their responses.

Seema and Ramesh now have one child. She continues to want to go to college. She says she can leave the child in her in-laws' care while she is at college.

- What do you think about this?

Seema negotiates with her family and now goes to college. Initially she helps with the housework. However, she gets tired and does not do much housework. Ramesh finds out that she interacts with her classmates, some of whom are male.

- Do you think that Ramesh is likely to be angry with her?

- Why or why not?

They now have two children and she wants to work. She is also offered a job. Her in-laws are not happy about it. However, she starts working and has a decent salary.

Her in-laws want her to give the entire salary to their household. She on the other hand likes to spend some of it on herself; she buys lipstick and make up, sometimes goes out for lunch with her colleagues. One day he buys a smart phone for herself. Ramesh and his family find out that she's been giving a portion of her salary to her parents.

- Complete the story.

One day she comes home late and there's no dinner for Ramesh and the kids.

- What do you think happens next?
- Will Ramesh make dinner the next time she is away?
- Why or why not?
- What would Ramesh's family and friends think if he made dinner and took care of the children?

Ramesh thinks that she's using her smart phone to talk to some other man. One day they fight a lot and the in-laws support their son.

- What do you think is happening here?

Later Seema discovers that Ramesh is having an affair. She confronts him and they have a fight.

- Complete the story.
- What do you think they should do?

Facilitator asks the group if they have any questions. Debrief them if needed.

The observer makes notes during the discussion. At the end he/she asks for suggestions from the group:

- *If they have mentioned something (a norm/an attitude/a belief) that's harmful for women, then ask them what could be done to improve the situation for women?*