

## **Domestic Violence against Women in Rural Udaipur:**

**Findings from a Household Study in Seva Mandir's Work Area**

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This study sought to investigate the magnitude of domestic violence against women in the rural areas of Udaipur district. It aimed to elucidate a better understanding of how women perceive and respond to acts of intimate partner violence. This research gives contextual knowledge on domestic violence necessary in informing Seva Mandir's work related to empowering women at both an individual and collective level. A randomized survey interviewing 302 women and 100 men in twenty rural villages in Seva Mandir's work area. It revealed an alarmingly high rate of violence in the home (61.3%). This rate of violence is attributed to the combination of alcohol use by the husband and the perception of disobedience of the wife. The high rate of reported violence contrasts sharply with respondents' (both male and female) stated disapproval of acts of violence between husband and wife. It is concluded that this violence threatens to undermine Seva Mandir's work for women's empowerment and demands attention and programmatic intervention. Given Seva Mandir's uniquely respected history of development work in the Udaipur district it is suggested that the Women's Empowerment unit needs to take an explicit stance against violence against women. Specific suggestions include employing a fulltime staff member to work directly on the issue, encouraging a peer education awareness programme with Youth Leaders, formalizing a strategy for victim support and strengthening the capacity of women within existing Seva Mandir programmes to tackle the problem.