

The Society for Agriculture Health Environment Literacy Innovations (SAHELI)

VILLAGE VIGILANCE COUNCIL

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

1. Introduction

The idea of creating Village Vigilance Councils (VVC) in the area of operation of the SAHELI emerged in the context of increasing instances of violence against women, early marriages, poor responses from the victims, apathy of the law enforcing agencies and delayed intervention owing various reasons. The past experience was that the information on violence against women (VAW) and child marriages reached the organization much late and by the time such information reached the District Juvenile Justice Board (DJJB) or the Child Welfare Committee (CWC), the District Child Protection Officer (DCPO) the instances would get over and the perpetrators would get away. Hence, the best idea to prevent the instances of the VAW and early marriages is to intervene at the earliest and at the source or location of the instances. The villagers where such instances take place are best suited to intervene effectively to control or prevent the same. Based on this past experience of the SAHELI, it has been decided to promote VVCs in the target villages.

The National Community Police Programme has been launched to involve community in prevention of crime. The SAHELI has decided to incorporate this programme into the proposed VVC. The VVC will have Community Police (CP) also. As the CP has statutory backing and linkages with the police department, the arrangement will give more credibility to the VVC. The SAHELI proposes to promote 60 VVCs in the target villages.

2. Objectives

The objectives of the VVC are:

- Reduce the instances of GBV including early marriages of girls
- Ensure the involvement of community in preventing GBV and early marriages of girls

3. Structure

The VVC will consist of upto 15 members. One representative each from the SHGs in the respective village, five adolescent girls and youth identified as community police, one adult men and the Ward Member constitute the VVC. The ASHA, the AWW, ANM and the Animator responsible for the village will be ex-officio members. One SHG leader will be the Head of the VVC. A team consisting one the Head, one adolescent girl and one youth will constitute the leadership team of the VVC. The VVC will meet at least once in a month or whenever required with available quorum. But the decision taken in each meeting should be communicated to all members.

A federation of VVCs will be created at CD Block levels and these federation of the VVCs will be linked with the statutory mechanisms for protection of children and prevent GBV. The leaders of the VVCs and the federation will be trained in prevention of GBV and early marriages of girls.

The Animator will facilitate the functioning of the VVC and ensure its reporting.

Functions

- Keep vigilance on the instances of VAW and early marriages
- Make the villagers aware of the need to prevent VAW and early marriages
- Counsel girls and boys of the ill-effects of early marriages
- Intervene in the instances of GBV and early marriages
- Report the instances of VAW and early marriages at the earliest to the existing statutory mechanisms and the local police
- Provide follow up counseling and emotional support to the girls prevented from early marriages

4. Documentation

The VVC is expected to maintain two registers: (1) Minutes of the meetings; and (2) the register of interventions made. The VVC will submit monthly report on the interventions to the Project. One file for the copies of intimations sent to the statutory mechanisms and the correspondence received from various sources will also be maintained.

5. Support

The SAHELII project staff will extend support to the VCs in their proper functioning. The support of the local bodies and others will be encouraged.

6. Linkages

The VVC is expected to maintain linkages with the Gram Panchayat, the CD Block, the ICDS, statutory mechanisms and the District Legal Service Authority (DLSA).