

# Gender Study

## History of the Empowerment Project:

- Rebranding Family Support
- Explicitly valorising the "inner" work done with the women in terms of self-confidence...

## Our expectations from the Gender Study:

- Diagnosis of the knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) of the families on gender stereotypes and tolerance to violence
- KAP diagnosis of team members
- Gender training of the teams (not included in the TOR but became obvious)
- Review of our tools, in particular the Empowerment Scale

# Gender Division of Labour

## *Gender Division of Labour: Key Take-away lessons*

Reproductive tasks (household chores, childcare and other care activities) are mostly considered women's responsibility, even if they work. [When they do work, it is mostly within the home and their work holds little value within society](#). Men are held responsible for meeting the family's subsistence needs and carrying out most duties outside the house. These social norms restrict women's access to upward mobility in terms of the work burden they impose on them, the opportunities available to them and in terms of access to information and training and gathering support to carry out more valued and better waged productive roles. The gender division of labour can also represent a burden for boys who have lost their fathers and stop their schooling in order to provide for their family.

### **Project sensitivity towards GDOL**

The project challenges the gender division of tasks carried out outside the home (access to services and documentation, interacting with officials...) thus helping women fulfil their practical and strategic needs. The type of work they access remains however generally within the traditional GDOL. Within the home, the gender division of labour and the burden it represents for women is taken into account (by seeking outside female help) but not generally challenged (by encouraging male participation).

# Challenging Gender Division of Labour

## Opportunities

**Exceptional circumstances can be used to request male support** (illness, extreme tiredness, festivities) - women can be encouraged to request male participation in such circumstances. Some of “women’s tasks” are culturally acceptable for a man to carry out - women could be encouraged to first request support for these chores. Involving men, rather than other female family members, in household chores helps men become more aware of their wives’ workload and need for rest. In Rajasthan, working together as a couple helps question the traditional gender division of labour and increases women’s decision-making power. Reaching a more mature age is an opportunity for women to challenge the GDOL, which can be taken into account during the accompaniment. The GDOL activity (see Appendix 4) was much appreciated during the FGDs and can be re-used to help make male and female youths and adults more aware of the GDOL and encourage greater flexibility.

When case studies are analysed, and objectives are set, teams could conduct an analysis of how the GDOL is taken into account: in what way do the planned actions replicate the traditional GDOL and in what way do they challenge it (both inside and outside the home)?

# Key Take-away Lessons: Factors that Limit / Promote Participation in Decision Making

- **When women express their needs on the basis of the children, their husbands tend to listen to them**
- **When a woman expresses disagreement with her in-laws on the basis of the needs for her children, her husband tries to find a solution that suits everyone**
- It is much more difficult for a woman to get what she wants concerning her own life; some women have decided to disobey and endure the consequences
- **Reduced mobility and access to finances prevent women from partaking in decisions** while building self-confidence, providing information and encouraging savings, help women act autonomously without getting stuck in the decision-making process
- Working alongside each other increases women's participation in decision-making and men's awareness of women's needs; women who manage their husband's salaries also partake more in financial decision-making
- While religion and culture are seen as a barrier to women's participation in decision making, some from Muslim community consider the Quran actually defends women's rights and the need for joint decision-making
- While women and men express the need for joint decision-making, this is not often the case; it does none the less highlight an opportunity for convincing/training husbands to involve women more
- Confronting decisions either through silent determination or questioning
- **Using the leverage of the SW or relatives to confront decisions the woman disagrees with**

# Domestic Violence

## Factors that increase DV or prevent it being addressed:

- **Non-life-threatening domestic violence is seen as normal**
- Being a young bride is often associated with higher levels of physical violence
- **Living close to in-laws tends to lead to higher levels of physical violence**
- Being seen to not, or to badly, perform household responsibilities is a motive used to justify violence – thus highlighting again the importance of working on the GDOL with men
- Going out without prior permission (see the section on mobility) is seen to justify DV
- Limited financial autonomy, emotional stress in women and men surrounding finances means discussing financial matters frequently leads to fighting; **economic dependence on their husbands means women cannot leave abusive relationships**
- Alcohol / drug consumption is a compounding factor
- Prolonged male absences and extramarital affairs often lead to economic and physical violence

## Factors that help reduce DV:

- Moving away from the in-laws – some women find strategies to move away (mostly for economic)
- **Raising awareness amongst women and men of what is acceptable behaviour and what constitutes DV**
- Increasing women's financial autonomy can significantly reduce DV – **advice on savings is a successful and essential first step**
- Social workers also encourage women to talk when things are calm
- **Filing a complaint even if women don't always go through with the procedure can encourage a husband to change; men take such situations very seriously and stop their violent behaviour**
- In one case the SWs set everything up for a woman to be able to escape an abusive relationship without her husband knowing until later
- **When the SW is able to meet the men, this often helps reduce violence**
- SWs proven capacity to identify the different types of DV

# Access to resources

## How to increase women's access to resources

- budgeting and small home-savings have a significant impact on women's levels of financial autonomy
- financial autonomy enables women to cover immediate needs, helps improve access to services and helps reduce domestic violence
- mobility is the second main barrier that needs to be addressed to enable women to access services
- the project helps ensure women have access to information on services
- enrolling the husband's support can help overcome women's resistance to access health services or family planning (several women said their husbands had encouraged them)

*Social workers have motivated the women beneficiaries to start saving even if the amount is small. They ask them to track and analyse expenses and see how they could save more by cutting down on avoidable spending. A majority of the women we met revealed that they started saving on a regular basis only after social workers motivated them to do so.*

*Many women shared with us that before the motivation that SWs provided them with, they were not confident enough to move beyond their familiar surroundings, let alone enter a government office or meet service providers.*

# Access to resources

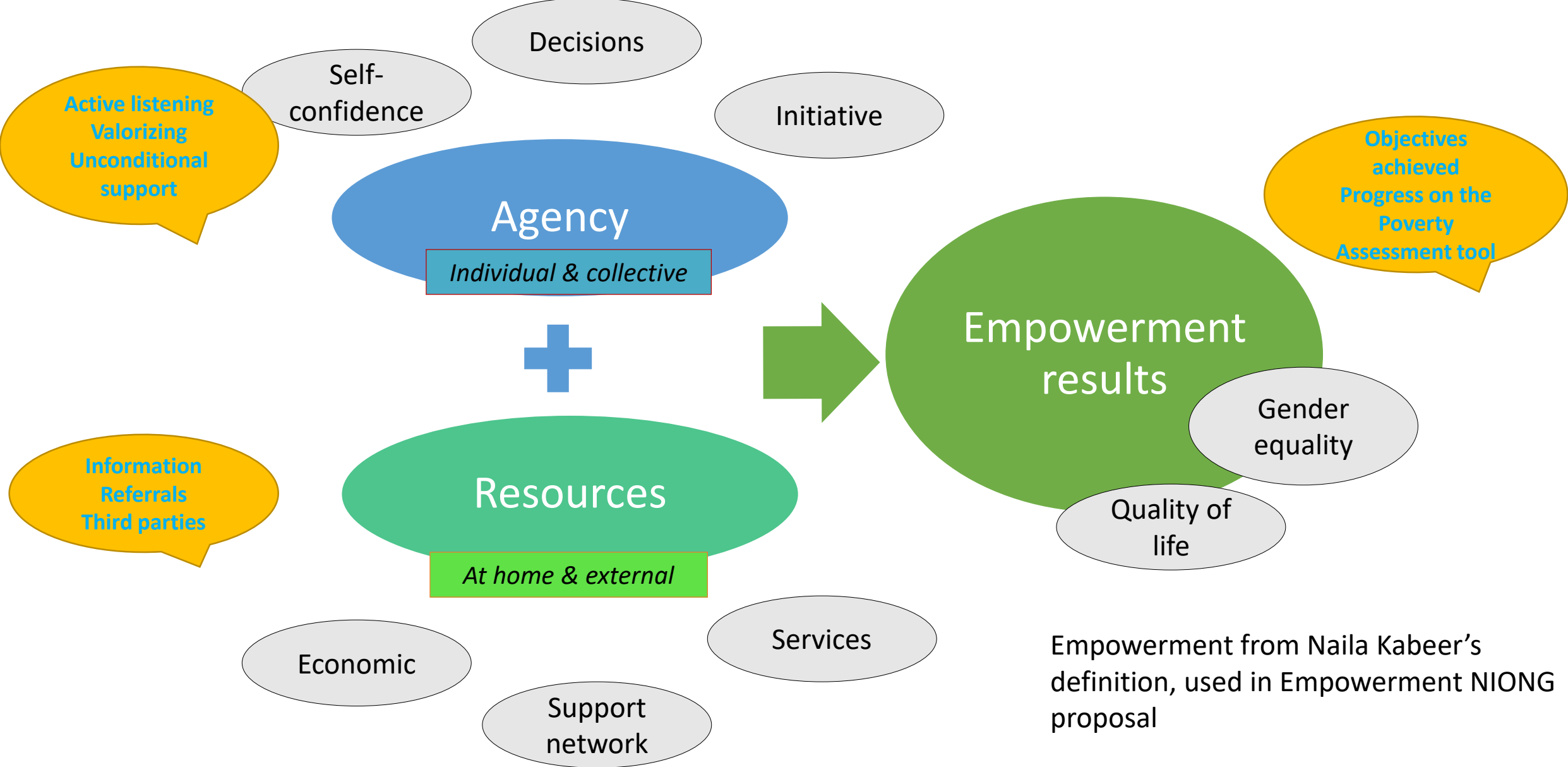
## What to watch out for

- both women and men are ill-informed about local services and gender, caste or disability specific schemes; without overwhelming families, more general information could be provided later in the program; group activities also provide an opportunity to share information on services
- women and men appear to have little understanding of “how things work” in terms of government schemes (portability of ration cards, disability scoring, eSharm card, Health and life insurance, pension schemes)
- information to be provided on services relating not only to needs but also to women’s potential
- being able to refer women **to a specific person** within a service would help ensure women are better received and help women feel more confident in accessing services
- SWs are not known locally, they are not always well received when they accompany DV cases. Having legal support for DV could help make accessing legal and police services more productive.
- **women’s support systems are highly restricted; group activities could help increase networking opportunities**
- the absence of support groups for people with disabilities, especially support groups for parents with children with disabilities, leaves them isolated and emotionally vulnerable; such support groups to be established for regular meetings, exchange of information and collective agency.

# Empowerment in Family Development Program (FDP)



# Empowerment



# Empowerment

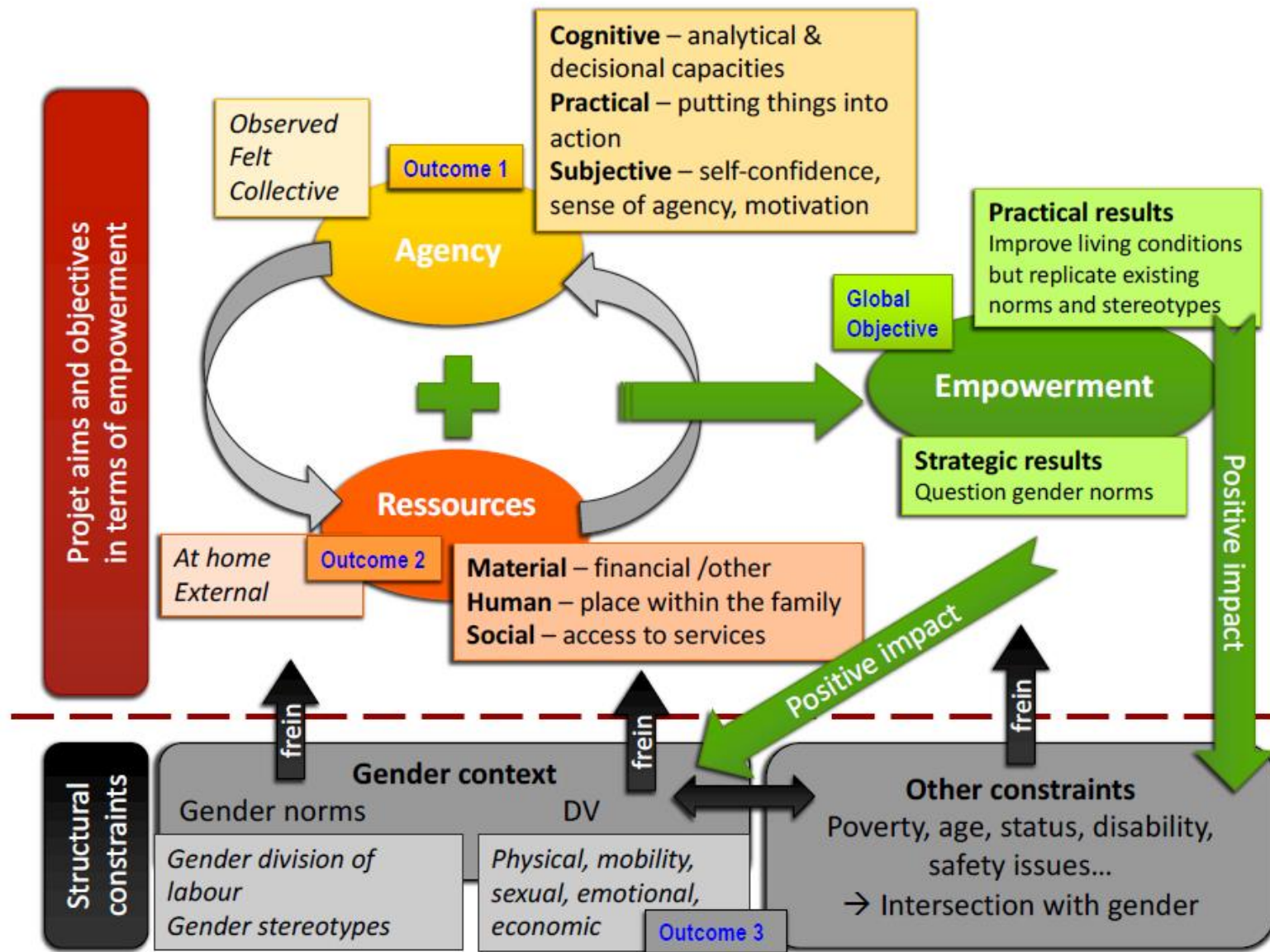
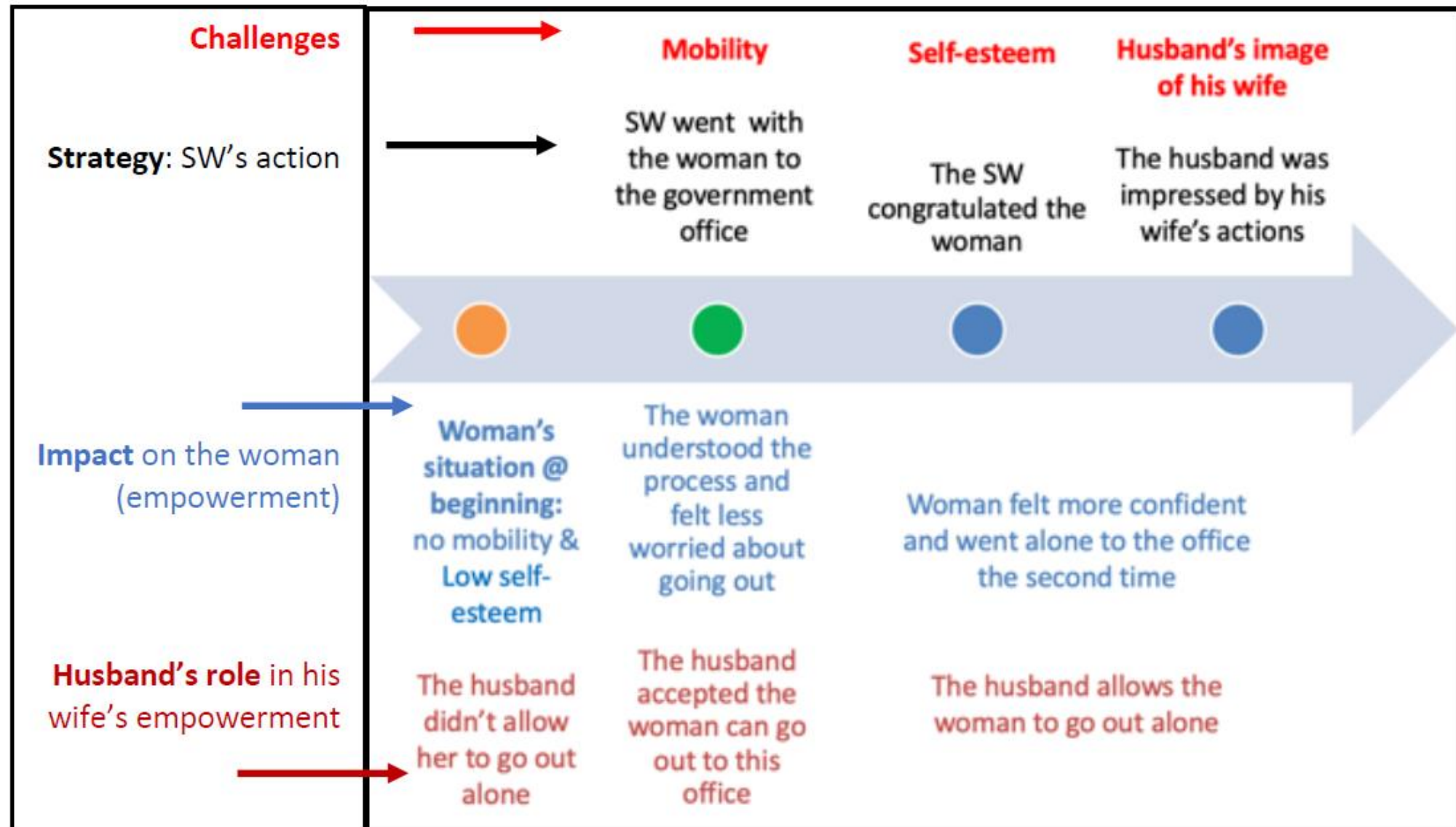


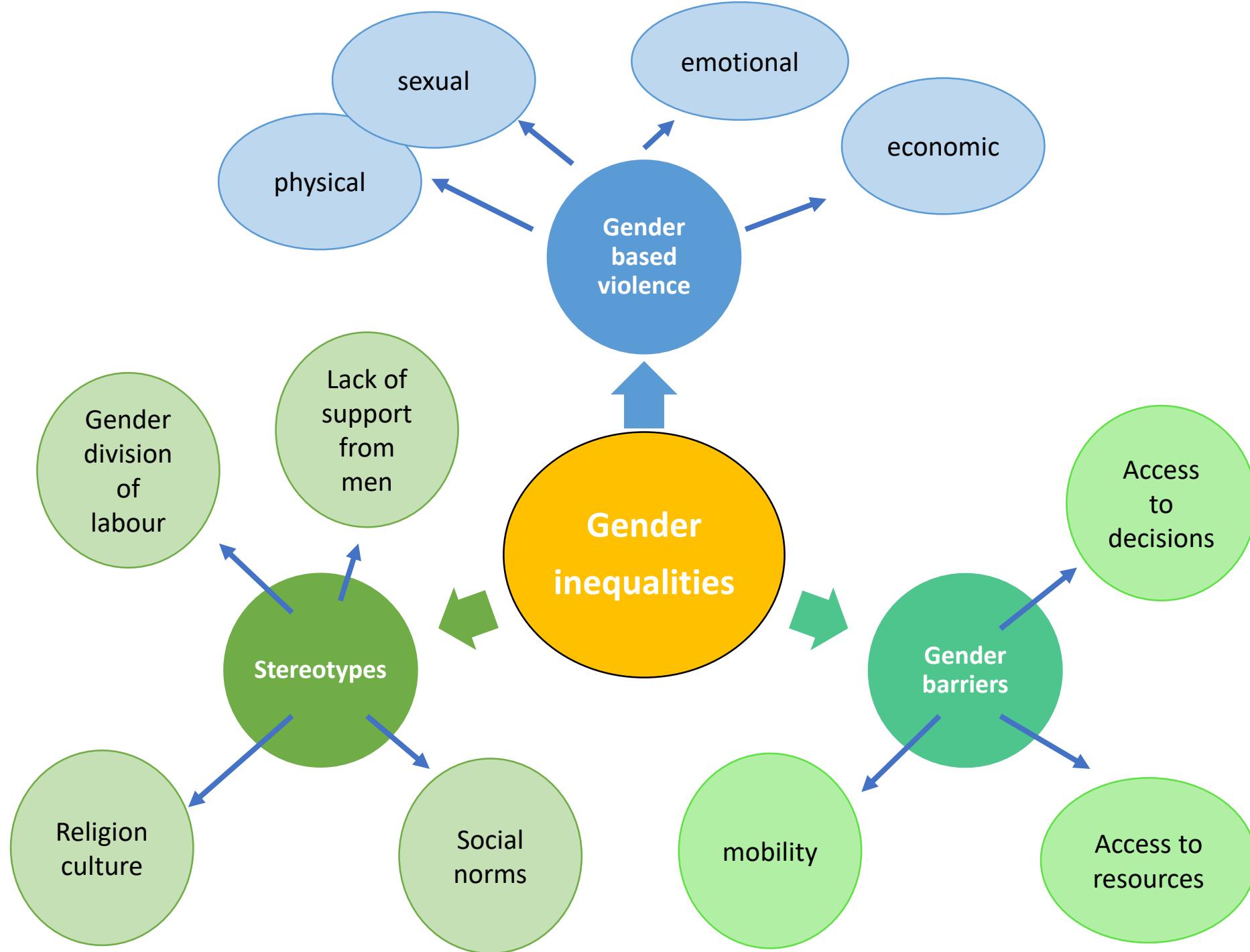
Diagram 2: Project Objectives and Outcomes in relation to Kabeer's Empowerment Matrix

# INDIA – Empowerment Timeline



# 4 Powers in FDP intervention

<b>Power over</b>  Oppression Discrimination Coercion Abuse DV	<b>Power to (do something)</b>  To do : skills To shape your life To imagine To make decisions To access services
<b>Power with</b>  Collaboration Support Solidarity	<b>Power within</b>  Self-worth Self-confidence Motivation & will Emotional skills







# Stages of Empowerment (not strictly in sequence)

Empowerment @ initial level	Empowerment @ intermediate level	Empowerment @ higher level
A low-income home-based job	A decent monthly wage (home-based or not)	A well-paid skilled job
Going to government offices with the SW	Going to the 2 <sup>nd</sup> visit alone	Doing administrative tasks alone
Only giving her opinion about young children	Giving her opinion about the household in submissive tones	Clearly voicing disagreement on any topic
Acting after seeking permission	Acting after informing	Taking initiatives and informing later

# Practically, during families' analysis

## Using the 4 POWERS in your work

### Analyse the situation:

- Which aspect of each power does the woman have?
- Which aspects does she not have?

### Analyse how to achieve the objectives:

- Which powers can be reinforced to help achieve the objectives?
- Which powers can be reinforced to empower the woman?

### Analyse progress:

- Which powers have been reinforced?
- Which powers could be worked on to empower her more?

## Using STEREOTYPES in your work

### Address gender barriers:

- The difficulties women face as women
- Address these right from the beginning

### Question the gender division of labour:

- encourage women to allow/ask men to participate in household work
- encourage women to go beyond gender norms
- encourage gender neutral parenting

### Question your own stereotypes:

- About men
- About women
- About families / MIL
- About empowerment and success

### Include in collective activities

- Activity on the gender division of labour
- Activity on sayings/songs & stereotypes



# Case analysis & follow-up

## Analysis Tools

- 4 powers
- Stereotypes
- Gender barriers : Mobility...
- Male support
- Intersectional issues (disability...)

## How to use the analysis

- Adjust the type and level of support you provide
- Adjust the type and level of empowerment aimed for

## Why?

- Identify challenges and potential
- Achieve the objectives faster
- Achieve lasting empowerment (even if invisible in actions)

## Possible Methods

- Keep it in mind during your work
- Use it to analyse cases
- Display the 4 powers in each office and add your words
- Create a gender/ empowerment checklist

## When?

- Team meetings
- Case analysis (by yourself / as a team)
- Mid-program review

# Case management

- **Work on topics with a strong impact with all women:**

mobility, savings, DV

- **Add a “pause” mid-program**

Explore sensitive topics once rapport has been established

Use the gender/empowerment checklist (4 powers, stereotypes, gender barriers, mobility, DV, addictions, disability, male support...)

- **Involve men in women’s empowerment**

To ensure agency becomes empowerment, the 1<sup>st</sup> visit to an office / service must be a positive experience:

- **Rapport building with officials** for more efficiency and effectiveness
- **Provide additional support** when needed (intersectional issues, difficult cases, DV cases, widows...)

# GENDER NORMS AND BARRIERS

## Avoid replicating the traditional gender division of labour

- *Strength*: Encouraging women to perform tasks traditionally reserved for men (documentation)
- *Strength*: Enabling women to make decisions alone
- *To be strengthened*: **Encourage and value men's participation in reproductive work** to unburden women and give them more time for project goals, productive roles and empowerment, and create a gender equal enabling environment at family level
- *To be strengthened*: Encourage gender-neutral child-rearing techniques (access to schooling, access to higher education, household chores...)
- Build on positive male stereotypes such as the role of men as breadwinners
- Explore what is culturally acceptable and broaden the definition of what is appropriate in terms of productive tasks for a woman and reproductive tasks for men

## Identify barriers that are specific to women

- Share strategies in addressing such gender barriers
- Enrol youth and progressive men in challenging gender norms and barriers (collective activities)

## Where women have found a way round norms/barriers, support them

- Build on women's strategies, especially where they confront norms and work towards strategic empowerment (for example: weighing the situation and confronting men when they disapprove of a decision)

## Avoid stereotypes

- Not all women are unable to access services alone, not all men are able to access services
- Some men can provide support to their women and help them achieve empowerment

**Mainstream gender concerns and barriers** Ensure objectives and tools reflect the specific challenges women face

# EMPOWERMENT

## Make empowerment easier

- Establish contact with government offices/service providers to be able to refer women to a specific person who is already aware of the project and ideally of the women's coming
  - → **to build self-confidence, it's essential women's first experience goes well**
  - → physically accompany women on first visits where there is no contact person or where the woman faces additional challenges (disability, restricted mobility, illiteracy etc)
- When the procedure is more complex or daunting (going to court for example), increase the level of support provided and consider physically accompanying
- **Identify a core empowerment package building on project strengths**
- Access to finances: budgeting and savings advice can have a strong impact on women's agency
- Mobility: working towards objectives, changing husband's attitude towards mobility and women contributing to household needs, building women's self-confidence and motivation
- DV: all women face some form of DV and need to be informed of their rights and recourse to service providers
- *These key aspects of empowerment need to be addressed for all women*
- **Build on women's strengths so they can reach their full potential**
- **Avoid the tendency to focus only on barriers**
- Identify women's skill set, level of education, strengths and capabilities
- Adjust the level of support and the level of empowerment sought accordingly

# DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- **All women and families are affected by DV**
- All the women we met face some form of DV and the level of awareness on rights and recourse to remedies remains low
- All families need to be targeted for DV awareness and information on women's rights, child rights and available services and recourse
- When raising awareness, address harmful stereotypes that belittle women who challenge violence or access recourse
- **Balance empowerment needs and protection needs**
- In physical DV cases, focusing too strongly on empowerment/rights could endanger women and create more resistance from men
- Need for a trained mediator for conflict resolution in different grassroots contexts
- Provision of legal aid on a continuous basis
- Sensitizing the first point of service providers (police) in how to communicate with women complainants with a focus on their dignity and issues
- **Adjust the level of support provided**
- **Challenge:** DV victims are particularly vulnerable, often isolated with little support and authorities are judgemental and not always understanding
- Most women need well-informed additional support and to be accompanied in person
- Legal support could help women and SWs be taken more seriously by the service providers

## WORKING WITH MEN

- **Entry point themes (for women and SWs)**
- *Themes that women can talk without many challenges with men*
- Children's education
- How to access necessary documents from service providers / Awareness on government schemes and ways to avail them
- Women's mobility to government offices for securing necessary documents (Birth and death certificates, Adhar, Ration Card. Etc.)
- Talking about not objecting to income-generating opportunities for women
- Themes related to savings and financial management
- Supporting women in the household chores whenever they can (keeping in view that they are generally engaged in tough manual labour from 8 AM till 9-10 PM).
- Health and hygiene related issues and information, including issues related to addiction
- **Themes that would be better discussed by male staff**
- Contraception and family planning options and persuading them to use them
- Sexual violence and persuading them not to commit it
- Specific issues related to men's health
- Addiction, its harmful impact on their health and household economy, impact on children and marital relationships and persuading them for deaddiction
- GDOL and persuading them to encourage women's mobility and economic empowerment, persuading them also for women's participation in decision making

## WORKING WITH MEN

- **How to meet men**

1. Sometimes men work in the area and can be met at lunchtime
2. Hindu men are more available on a Sunday and Muslim men on a Friday
3. **Recruit male social workers** to work with men to put men at ease and quick rapport building.
4. Male social workers can also meet men away from home and talk
5. Women SWs to continue the remote communication with men and in select cases invite them to the office to talk to them

- **Work on the gendered image of the program**

- Ensure men's issues and concerns are given a space
- Ensure men's participation in supporting their wives' empowerment is encouraged and valued
- Listen to both sides of the story (especially for relationship dynamics and DV)
- Avoid considering men solely as a source of difficulty for women, try to identify their strengths and how women can leverage such strengths for theirs and their children's advantage

- **Work with men for more effective empowerment**

- Work on changing the gender dynamics: encourage male household members to partake in household chores, starting with boys
- Men also need empowerment and their empowerment can help support their wives
- Reducing men's frustrations in life can help prevent /reduce DV
- Encourage more progressive men/boys to act as change agents, rallying others to group meetings and share their own experiences