



# POWER OF BODY VOICE AND MIND FOR EVERY GIRL

MukkaMaar  
Impact  
Evaluation  
2021



# Acknowledgement

MukkaMaar would like to thank the all our stakeholders in our stakeholders in the 3 year journey. The Municipal Corporation for Greater Mumbai for their relentless faith, Education Officer, Private Partnership Cell, Principal, Teachers, Sports Director and Physical Educators. We would also like to thank our donors, supporters and volunteers for their support. Most importantly our girls and parents, who have worked with us directly and form our biggest source of inspiration.

The cooperation of the interviewees included in this study has been invaluable.

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## PUBLICATION INFORMATION

Publication Date: October 2021

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# Foreword

## **Restoring Agency. Nurturing Dignity. Enabling Choice.**

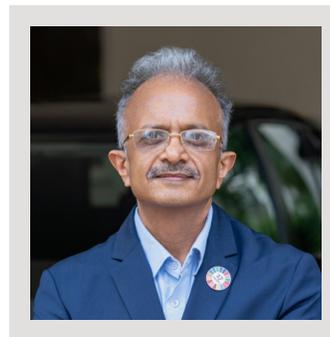
It was drizzling in Mumbai that morning. The air was moist with anticipation. As we entered the school premises, I could hear the sharp cries of girls, in rhythm and unison. After a short corridor, we entered a large square courtyard. Now I could see the trainers standing on a raised platform and the girls following their moves. Their *dupattas* tied firmly around the waist. They were practicing self-defence techniques. Their faces were gleaming with perspiration, their firm expressions revealing resolve, concentration, determination and confidence.

I stood there in awe. Watching. Observing. Learning. These innocent faces summarised many stories. Painted on a dark canvas of patriarchy, threat of sexual abuse, daily discrimination and potential violence, each girl in that courtyard represented a movement. A movement towards empowerment, towards restoring the agency of girls such that they could act in their interest on their own will. A movement towards nurturing their dignity, such that they could break through the dreary normal and pursue their ambitions. A movement towards opening the world of possibilities and choices that they could understand and exercise. That day, I could see that Mukkamaar was not a mere program, or an add-on extra-curricular project, it was an idea, a paradigm shift, that would scale as these girls grow. They were Mukkamaar.

This impact study in your hands is an attempt to learn from their stories and strengthen our resolve to enable every child with agency, dignity and choice! Through the pages, infographics, datasets and verbatim emotions that follow, you would see the foundations of this movement, you would perceive the pillars of a better future for every

girl. Through the stories of children, parents, teachers and administrators, you would encounter the possibilities that behove our time, attention and action. I urge you to join this movement, and #fightlikeagirl.

**Sanjay Purohit**  
**Mentor**  
**The/Nudge Centre for Social Innovation**  
**October 2021**



# About MukkaMaar

MukkaMaar is a not-for-profit organisation that removes vulnerability and restores agency of body, voice and thought in adolescent girls through an empowerment self-defence\* and awareness curriculum.

MukkaMaar's training program removes physical, emotional and social vulnerability, by creating a mindset shift through the physical body using martial-arts, fitness, verbal self-defence, activity-based learning, poems and integrating a critical gender-free consciousness.

**Self- defence\* is not just a set of techniques, it's a mindset; and it begins with the belief that you are worth defending.**

- Rorion Garcie



**A world with gender equity.**



**Every girl to have agency of body, thought and voice.**

Empowerment self-defense is an evidenced-based primary violence prevention system. It teaches individuals how to interrupt violence by listening to their intuition, assessing their options, asserting boundaries, using de-escalation strategies, and provides tools for a range of mental, verbal and physical responses.

## PROBLEM

India has slipped 28 places to rank 140th among 156 countries in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021, becoming the third-worst performer in South Asia.

Patriarchal culture trains girls to be quiet, tolerant, adjusting, dependent, that are shackles for girls and bestow upon them a life of subjugation.

Girls accept the restrictions and discrimination designed to keep them subservient because of an internalised feeling of physical inadequacy from a perceived 'biological difference' in sexes. We break these barriers by helping girls find the strength within and giving them skills to use that strength in the most effective manner to make better life decisions and have greater agency.



## SOLUTION

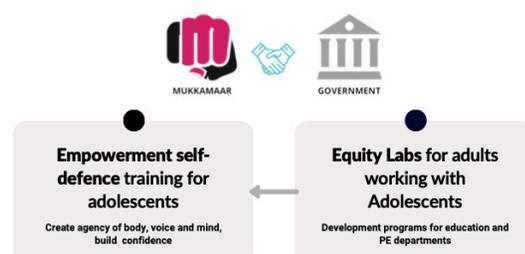
The emphasis on being soft, gentle, and ladylike has discouraged them from developing their physical potential, or expressing anger or aggression in any active or physical way. Females have thus been trained to be good victims. **(Searles and Follansbee, 1984)**

Gender Inequality continues because we train girls to be good victims.\*

Further, the fear of sexual assault forms an ever-present backdrop for women's lives, (Gordon & Riger, 1989; Hollander, 1997, 2001; Stanko, 1993).



MukkaMaar partners with Government bodies and work on bringing internal transformation in adults working with adolescents, to provide a gender equitable environment to children. These people could be MukkaMaar trainers, school PT teachers, Police Staff, school teachers or principals. For people who have a background in physical activity, we train them in the MukkaMaar curriculum and pedagogy and equip them to deliver MukkaMaar classes with their stakeholders/students.



# Executive Summary

No matter what the subject, getting people to adopt new behaviors or ways of thinking is always an uphill task. We are conditioned to see life 'as is' rather than 'as we would like it to be' reinforcing status quo in the process. The more we see a certain behavior, the more we think of it as normal, not always thinking about the implications of it.

**We at illumine, started this research with a few questions in mind:**

- What has been the impact of the MukkaMaar program on the girls who do the program? How dependent are they on parental support especially when faced with conflicting beliefs that they are exposed to outside home vis-à-vis dominant beliefs heard at home?
- How do parents feel about their daughters doing the program? Do they even know what MukkaMaar does? Does what MukkaMaar teach, conflict with their beliefs? Do they think it will impact their life decisions for their daughters? What changes have they seen in daughters?
- What are some of the immediate and lasting changes trainers have observed in themselves during and after the Trainer Development Program in MM?
- Is what MM teaches, needed in the schools? Why?

Through the research we learnt **that one of the most significant influences of the program has been, not the physical strength, but on developing the mental strength of the girls.** It has helped them recognize practices and beliefs that limit their growth and movement as individuals, sensitized them towards becoming more aware of their capabilities and the environment around them and empowered them with information on how to defend themselves and where help and support could be sought. Many of the girls we spoke to mentioned they did not always find support within their families though this did not make them feel defeated. They had actively started questioning adults

in their family when they tried to impose stereotypical norms. MukkaMaar has besides imparting training, also created a **safe space for them to talk about issues related to gender, equality, freedom etc.** The sessions do not take a top-down approach towards dispensing information. Instead girls are encouraged to talk, express their opinions, think and discover the truth for themselves during the sessions. It helps them internalize what they have learnt and connect it to their contexts. Perhaps this is why when asked what would happen if the MukkaMaar program were to come to a close, girls mentioned they would miss the program though what they had learnt would stay with them and continue to inspire them.

Most parents we spoke to, were aware of the details of the program and how it was beginning to transform beliefs in their family not just for the girls but also from themselves as individuals. Having found this program and experienced it, they did not present conflicting beliefs. We hypothesize based on our conversations with the individuals whose children were not part of the program, that **conflict beliefs remain if parents cannot think of how to get past their fear with respect to the safety of their girls and hence they tend to hold on to and perpetuate the societal norms around gender stereotypes. Fear cripples their judgment to think of solutions and they remain fixated to the problems hoping that curbs on movement would keep their girls safe. This in fact is one of the biggest illusions that parents live with** since restrictions and fear make girls feel under confident and vulnerable and more susceptible to crime or misdemeanours against them. Hence the cycle of crime leading to confinement leading to vulnerability leading to crime becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

By contrast, **the parents who girls do the MukkaMaar programs have been able to break out of the fear cycle.** Perhaps this has not been a conscious or deliberate effort on

their part, but the change in thinking has happened subconsciously and over time. Since the MukkaMaar programs have reached the girls via their schools, parents would have started to see the subtle effects of the program on their girls, perhaps inferred some more about it through their conversations over time and in the recent past due to the online sessions as a result of the pandemic would have been exposed to the teachings of MukkaMaar first hand. These set of parents feel reassured that MukkaMaar has taught their girls how to protect themselves.

They do not regurgitate the arguments around fear and protection and in fact **their perspective has become more solution oriented**. The fact that crime exists in society is a given, though when one is empowered with knowledge and skills to tackle crime it becomes less of a monster in the mind. Some parents mentioned their girls are now more confident of stepping out on their own, while others mention they find their girls more confident in expressing themselves verbally even in their everyday life. They see the **freedom from fear as an important stepping-stone in girls being able to fulfil their career aspirations** since it is not always possible for parents to shadow their girls as they grow older and leave home for pursuing their education or career.

Trainers and PE teachers mentioned that the **MukkaMaar training make them aware of their own beliefs and compromises**. They were able to **identify their own biases in language and actions and think about the implications of those**. Many a time it limiting beliefs that we hold on to as individuals seem harmless to us – for instance if a boy is engaged in housework he is discouraged from doing so or when children try to talk, they are subtly told they do not have the capacity to think about what is right / wrong. These statements are internalized by impressionable minds and remain with them for a long time to come. **To some extent**

**being aware of their own shadow side felt liberating to the trainers and PE teachers. At other times conducting the program and shaping young minds felt cathartic to the trainers** who had in their own childhood felt victimized by restrictions.

**Is a program like this needed in a school context?** Yes and for more reasons than one. The school is the second place where the child spends the most amount of his / her time apart from home. **The school therefore is like a microcosm of society for a child. To a large extent the child in the school environment experiences the same societal norms that are dominant in the world outside.** Adults whether the school principal or the teacher, who are not exposed to an alternative way of thinking subscribe to and reinforce the same limiting beliefs onto children. Literacy has very little to do with this since most cultural beliefs are ingrained and subconscious. Trainers, PE teachers and students endorsed this point of view and spoke about prejudices and biases they experienced at school. Teachers who did not believe girls when they complained about boys bullying them, girls students who were not given equal opportunity to play sport and sometimes the school principal being discouraging of initiating such programs at school. Given this context the **MukkaMaar intervention at school would be a very important factor in influencing the culture at schools.**

**One of most valuable aspects of the MukkaMaar program is that it sets realistic expectations amongst children about the idea of 'self defense.'** Self defense as defined and **propagated by MukkaMaar is not just about 'fighting' using one's body but also about knowing other ways of defending oneself i.e. using one's voice, using one's mind.** It is as much about knowing when not to fight or how to and where to call for help.

Another thing that makes the change effort deeper is that during the research all the

individuals mentioned **MukkaMaar trainers never ask any of them to change their behaviour. Instead they are given information about change and think about the implications and benefits of the change themselves.**

Though MukkaMaar has made a start in this direction, stakeholders involved are aware of the fact that this change will come about slowly. Changing 10-12 years of conditioning does not happen overnight. Nevertheless the signs of change are beginning to surface as detailed in the research findings.

Showing how norms are changing can give people a perspective on how they can change too. People start to accept that change is possible and it is warranted and that with momentum building in this direction the future for their girls can be different from their own past.







**WHAT  
LED  
TO THIS  
RESEARCH**

The  
Societal  
Context

# The Societal Context

For as long as we can remember, gender stereotypes have influenced our beliefs about ourselves in context to others.

Appending *'like a girl'* to any action perpetuates the stereotype that the way women do things is inferior to the way men do them and almost *makes it sound like an insult*. The feeling of self-doubt and insult gets accentuated at puberty since it is a time when girls are trying to grapple with the changed in their own body and at such times oblique statements about their capacities can easily undermine their confidence.

Stereotypes get reinforced not just due to the social conditioning and the continuous chatter that girls hear inside their homes and consequently inside their heads on what they can and cannot do but what is worse is such stereotypes are glamorized by media, popular culture, brands which make the gender stereotypes seem aspirational.

Assertion or even expression in women is still met with raised eyebrows in most societies whether developed or not. Expressions of assertion whether verbal or non-verbal conflict with societal norms surrounding the concept of a 'good girl'.

It is no surprise then that girls in general irrespective of the class of society they come from develop **inhibitions around their bodies and their beliefs about their own capacity to do things or their sense of freedom.**

**3** years ago  
**MukkaMaar decided to change this Narrative starting with a few girls...**



# MukkaMaar

## The Context of the mission

Today, the program MukkaMaar has empowered and touched the lives of a **3,000 girls across 47 schools** in Mumbai, in a span of a year.

MukkaMaar has **collaborated with schools** across the city with the help of the **Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai (MCGM)** to train girls in self-defence. The drill is included in the school curriculum, wherein sessions are held for **two-hours every week**.

The program has been designed in a unique and holistic way and focuses on building strength inside-out. The **three-year, free-of-cost engagement program** trains girls not just on physical fitness but also on emotional stability, sensitization towards abuse, solidarity, and legal counsel.

It has been three years since the inception of the MukkaMaar program. MukkaMaar has been keen on objectively understanding the impact their program has had on the lives and mind of the end-beneficiaries i.e. the girls themselves and also on the families they belong to.

# About the research ?

MukkaMaar commissioned a primary research, which was undertaken by illumine in August 2021. **The purpose of this research** was to understand first hand from the beneficiaries of the MukkaMaar program **to what extent and in what ways the program has impacted their life.**

This report contains the findings from the research that was conducted in August – September 2021 amongst the beneficiaries and stakeholders of the MukkaMaar program i.e. the trainers, PE teachers at schools and also the parents of the girls who do the program.

The research sample also included a set of individuals demographically similar to the beneficiaries and stakeholders of the MukkaMaar program though who have little or no exposure to the program to contrast their thinking with the MukkaMaar audience and understand their needs and mind-set which would become relevant as the MukkaMaar expands their scope of work.

This report documents the detailed findings from the primary research and has been divided into two parts.

## 01

Deconstructs the societal mind-set and societal norms around issues like equality, freedom, gender-based violence, the compromises that a girl has to make because of gender etc. While we understand the beliefs around these issues, the report also compares and contrasts the beliefs of the MukkaMaar audience around these issues and how that thinking is beginning to sound different as compared to those who are not exposed to the program.

## 02

Deep-dives into the program experience, associations, relevance and impact and offers a more direct commentary on what the MukkaMaar program has achieved and what could be done going forward.

# Research Methodology

## **The interview method and approach to the discussions**

The research was conducted using a mix of semi-structured interviews with adults (trainers, PE teachers and parents of the girls who did the program) and focus group discussions (amongst the girls) to assess impact based on self-reported attribution.

The qualitative research approach placed the end beneficiaries' voices as key to the evaluation, ensuring they share their experiences in a non-judgmental and respectful context. The focus was on gathering evidence of the MukkaMaar project's impact through conversations and anecdotes giving us context-rich information about the beneficiary's life and how the program connects with it. In many instances, individuals recalled a clear pre-post difference in their thinking and behaviour and traced back what had caused a change.

**The aim of this research was to gather evidence about the causal processes of change, not to quantify impact** and hence a qualitative method was adopted which would allow the researcher to deep dive into issues and the beneficiary's context and understand nuances around the program and the changes it has caused.

The research was conducted in the local language in a conversational style, allowing plenty of time and encouraging individual stories to emerge, even in the context of group discussions.

We tried to conduct the group discussions at a time and in a space where the girls felt uninhibited to share their stories without the pressure of being judged. However, due to the pandemic, whenever the girls felt challenged to express themselves freely due to the presence of others, they were encouraged to use the chat box on the online platforms to share anything that they felt would lead to strong reactions.

Though the discussion guide was detailed and comprehensive to do justice to the scope of the research, the line of questioning adopted included open-ended questions, with supplementary prompts in the form of visual images that acted as conversation starters.

The questions were designed to reflect all areas of people's lives assumed to be affected from the project's theory of change. The questions were framed in such a way to gather outcomes along with inputs to understand the cause-effect process holistically. This also ensured the landscape was open enough to allow for unintended and unexpected outcomes to emerge.

## **The data analysis methods**

Data that was largely textual in nature was analyzed in two ways: a) Using deductive reasoning to support predetermined themes and b) Using inductive reasoning by spotting repeated patterns and drawing conclusions. Both approaches allowed us to give equal weightage to the depth and breadth of the stories uncovered.

The thematic analysis involved:  
A) extensive human coding of each minute of the interview or group discussion conducted to ensure comprehensiveness of the data captured and no data loss. B) Allocating data under pre-determined themes using the Excel software for each interview. C) Identifying wider themes and patterns by reading the views of different stakeholders on a particular issue / theme. D) Comparing different data points mentioned by the same individual on different issues to identify consistencies / inconsistencies.

The data capture and analysis was conducted by a set of individuals who were not involved with conducting the interviews and group discussions. This not only served as a quality check but also helped gather an objective viewpoint *sans* any researcher bias creeping in about what changes took place for whom, how and why.

The report pulls out all the relevant quotes from the source narrative data to illustrate and elaborate on key findings. We have used the OCED DAC evaluation framework parameters as a basis for evaluating the impact of the MukkaMaar program.

### Sampling considerations

The approach to sampling that was adopted was to select cases through rigorous purposive sampling, rather than seeking a large representative sample. This meant attempting to sample to 'saturation', where each new interview added little to the existing set of information. Our experience from past research design indicated that 3-4 interviews per homogenous segment of respondents met the goal of saturation beyond which we often heard repeated stories. Hence we recommended starting the research with that number as a thumb rule and expanding the research sample only if required. The other guidelines followed for the impact research was that the sample number of direct

beneficiaries (girls) represented approximately 2% of the core target group who were part of the MukkaMaar program.

We also spoke to a demographically similar set of individuals with little / no exposure to the MukkaMaar program and this was done for two reasons : To explore the contrast between how stakeholders involved with MM think vis-à-vis those who are not exposed to the program and establish if at all and to what extent the MM program has been able to transform the thinking and behaviour. This was also done to help MukkaMaar understand the mindset of the non-beneficiaries and what they might value in a program like MM in the future.

Lastly budgetary constraints were kept in mind while keeping the sample size optimal. MukkaMaar being a not-for-profit organization, it was critical to think carefully about the incremental cost of additional research as opposed to the incremental value derived from it.

	GIRLS (8 girls joined each group discussion at a time)	TRAINERS	TEACHER	PARENT
MukkaMaar BENEFICIARIES	5 Focus Group discussions	3 INTERVIEWS	3 INTERVIEWS	4 INTERVIEWS – 2 MOTHER: 2 FATHER
NON MukkaMaar RESPONDENTS*	1 Focus Group Discussion	2 INTERVIEWS	2 INTERVIEWS	2 INTERVIEWS
Total	6 Focus group discussions	5 interviews	5 interviews	6 interviews

# FINDINGS

## Section 1

– the dominant beliefs around gender and equality and the new narrative that is heard amongst the MukkaMaar beneficiaries (Children and their parents, teachers and trainers).

## When we spoke about the social issues that contribute to the differentiated status of women in society, we observed that



### RESIDUAL CODES

An earlier set of cultural values / codes that are steadily weakening as they become increasingly outdated.



### DOMINANT CODES

Codes are the codes of the present day, and often difficult to spot as codes because they are all around us.



### EMERGING CODES

They are not yet fully formed, so to speak, they are signposts to the future as are now appearing over the cultural horizon.

Those individuals **who are not exposed to the Mukkamaar program** speak about these issues **using the lens of the dominant codes.**

Those individuals **who are exposed to the Mukkamaar program**, speak about these issues **using the lens of the emerging codes.**

# Notions About Equality

## Perceptions on equality

### Those who do not do the Mukkamaar program feel

The inequality of opportunities is not meant to discriminate against girls but to 'protect their interests'. They believe that **equality is very conditional. Equality can come but at your own risk.** This attitude has nothing to do with literacy since school teachers and principals can also do feel this way.

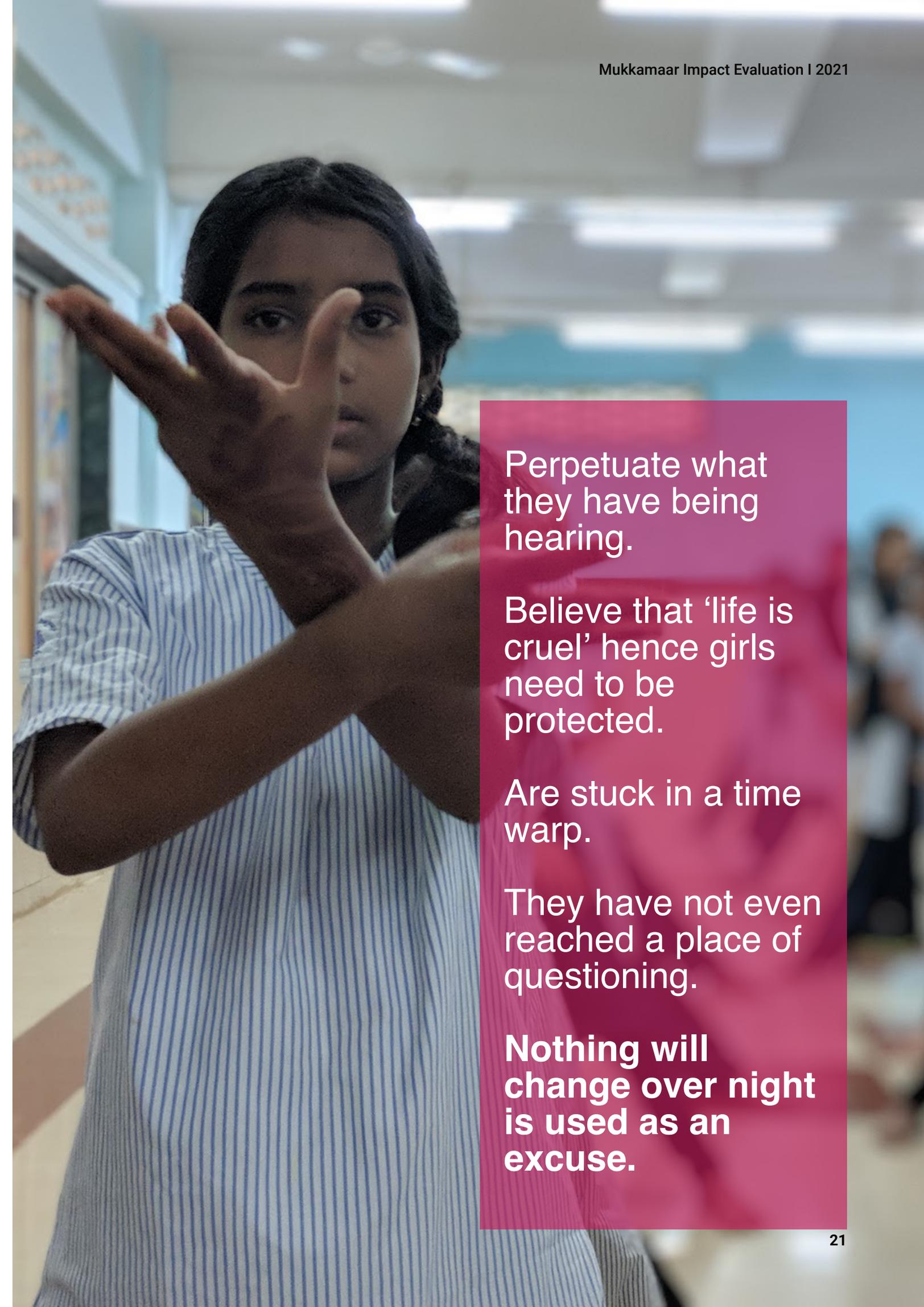
They take the view that **someone other than the individual (in this case the girl) is the best judge of what is / is not good for her.** Keep reinforcing to themselves and the girls of how difficult it is to keep a girl safe.

Some who do not subscribe to these beliefs in theory, acknowledge that there is a difference between theory and practice. **Irrespective of one's values, the constraints of real life take over.** If the girl goes out and something goes wrong – it is she who is putting herself in a vulnerable place. This does not even cross their mind as 'girls not having equal opportunity'.

Girls and boys are corrected (theory) but if boys falter they are not reprimanded and girls are not extended the same courtesy as boys (practice).

What is worse is that social conditioning over the years, has created a mindset amongst **women and girls** themselves about what is 'appropriate v/s inappropriate' or what is 'possible v/s not possible' for them. They **have accepted these social mores as absolute truths, forgetting in the process that what seems like a rule is nothing but someone's point of view.**

**It is like the cacophony of voices from others around them drowns out their inner voice that could give them a sense of judgment about their capacity.**



Perpetuate what they have been hearing.

Believe that 'life is cruel' hence girls need to be protected.

Are stuck in a time warp.

They have not even reached a place of questioning.

**Nothing will change over night is used as an excuse.**

# Notions About Equality

## Perceptions on equality

### Those who do not do the Mukkamaar program



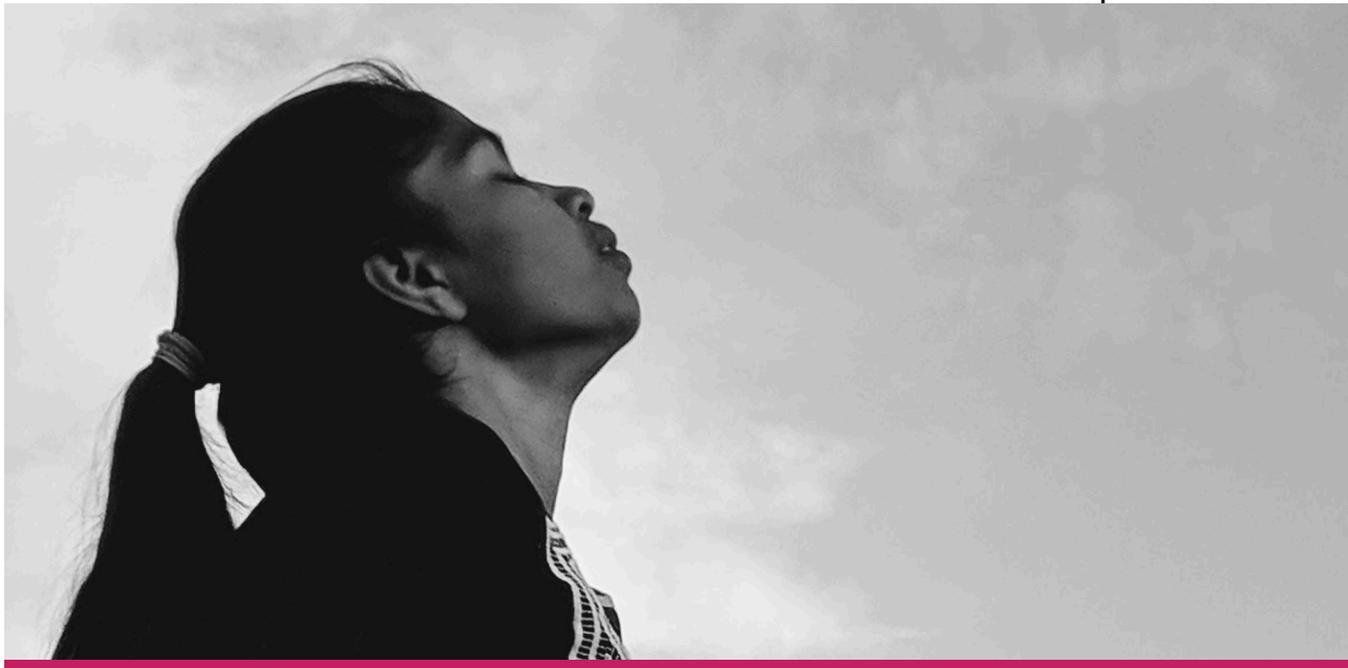
**Going out to play. Boys can go. Girls cannot. But its not really inequality, its for their own protection.** This is anyways not the right age for them to go out or for us to teach them all these things. They can go out after they finish school when they go to college. When they are 16-17, then we can tell them whats good and whats bad for them.

There is equality, **its not like girls have not got anything. Women are progressing in different fields. They are getting educated, working. But yes, they should not stay out late, wear whatever they feel like. They should not try to be like boys in such matters.**

When girls grow up, I don't think they should wear shorts, short skirts. When we go out there are a lot of people and they look at us...so we should be a certain way. These days girls wear anything!

**Women today are highly qualified / have progressed in every field/ even surpassed their male counterparts at times. However, irrespective of her socio economic strata/ her role- daughter/girlfriend/ mother etc. it is the female gender who has to make compromises to nurture her relationships.**

**Female = compromise;  
needs to give in.**



## “ Teachers & Trainers

**However much we progress as a generation, we live in India. This is how our culture is.**

Yes when something bad happens to the girl, its wrong to blame her. But if we understand what we can wear where, what we can do where, then it's good. **Staying out late/ speaking loudly - See all this parents say for our own interest.** Because they worry and there's a certain way of behaving decently also.

*(Woman Trainer, Karate coach and sports teacher, Black Belt in Karate)*

**Our traditions are not rooted in equality - women have been victimized (soshit ) even family members play a role in letting the woman down ( family politics chal..kapat).** Girls have to worry about what society will say "samaj kya bolega." They aren't allowed to stay out late and sometimes in the morning too they don't get permission. We are stuck in our thinking; even in urban cities there is inequality. Females are not encouraged to put forward their thoughts / views right from their childhood. **Even at their mother's place; Starting se kabhi aadat nahi**

**lagayi jaati.... Mayke se aadat lagayi jaati to shayad baad mein bhi karte.**

*(Trainer)*

All children are not same physically, mentally in all ways. In a lot of households, its different rules for boys vs. girls. Even today, there are many houses where people discriminate between boys and girls. So many times the elder daughter has to stay back at home to help care for younger brother, help mother with housework etc. Then housewives vs. working man...if someone is a housewife, its like they're doing nothing. Its not that there are tasks that girls cannot do, but realistically ladies are physically weaker than men. Men are stronger physically. So **if its some work that's to do with physical exertion, then it may be difficult for the ladies, but there shouldn't be a rule that women should not do it at all. Everyone has his or her own capacities.**

*(Woman PE Teacher)*



# Notions About Equality

## Perceptions on equality

### Those who do not do the Mukkamaar program



When I go to meet my friends, then I'm asked to return within half an hour to one hour. We aren't allowed to meet friend's post six o'clock, we are allowed to play between 4:00-6:00pm.

**Parents wouldn't misguide their children, and definitely there would be some reason behind their restriction, though I feel sad I cannot play.** Then I tell myself that parents wouldn't restrict us when we turn 25yrs. These restrictions are only for now that we are children. When we grow up we will have all the freedom. It has never happened that I had a clash over difference of opinion with my parents.

**Parents advice us to take our brothers along, because there are many boys outside.** My mother asks me not to play with boys and that I should play with my brother.

According to me **my parents can't be wrong and they would tell only for my well being,** probably I would feel bad at that instance, but later I realised that it was for my interest. I don't feel anything wrong in parents restricting girls, by telling them not to go out, or not play with boys.

I study in CBSE school and during physical education classes thrice in a week, **teachers would be partial with boys and they would give the basket ball to boys,** and girls would be made to stand in the ground or made a substitute so that she would not get a chance to play, **as they believe that girls aren't interested in playing and just idling away. People feel that that girl's wouldn't be able to play, and hence you don't get a chance to play.** Recently we had boys vs. girl's volley ball competition in school, and girls won that match so it is not true that girls aren't capable of playing. We tried talking to the teacher, but as there were just 4 girls willing to play from my class we didn't stand a chance.

# Notions About Equality

## How MukkaMaar changes the discourse around equality?

### Those who do the Mukkamaar program

Acknowledge that even though people talk about equality it is only at surface level.

**Have a far more nuanced understanding of the issues** surrounding equality or inequality than the those who do not do the MukkaMaar program.

**Are slowly beginning to question these norms and become aware of their own behaviour** when they have been subconsciously reinforcing these beliefs.

**Are sensitized to these truths but they are dependent on the elders at home and the prevailing atmosphere. Sometimes they see alignment between what their parents think and how they feel. The others who don't see alignment are trying to navigate their way.**

**Are aware of the fact that there is another truth beyond what they have been hearing.**

A young girl is captured in a dynamic pose, performing a high kick on a sandy beach. She is wearing a vibrant t-shirt with a cartoon pattern and dark shorts with a purple and black pattern. Her right leg is extended high into the air, and her left leg is planted on the ground. The background shows a sunset sky with soft clouds and a distant building. A semi-transparent pink box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing white text.

Want to break the dominant chain of thought.

Believe that 'life is cruel' hence girls need to be made self reliant.

Actively question and juxtapose what they hear to their own experience.

Are living in the future.

**Feel nothing will change over night but the momentum is starting to build**

# Notions About Equality

## How MukkaMaar changes the discourse around equality?

### Those who do the Mukkamaar program

## “ Parents

For parents, both are equal, but when they get married, one stays (boys) and the other goes (girls). **But there's no equality in society. But a lot has changed from the time I was younger.** These, girls are given a lot of respect and importance. **People are ok having just 1 daughter and no child after that. It is still not equal now, but it is possible in future.** Girls are not given as much freedom and their mistakes are not pardoned so easily because parents worry that their daughter will not get married. But this kind of worry and tension is not there if the boy makes the mistake.

Constitution gives everyone equal rights ; historically the female gender has been subjected to restrictions. Before constitution there were lot of social restrictions for not just female / even males. **Even if the parents don't allow the female can have a right because the constitution of India gives her the right.** Though the situation has changed relatively, males still do not encourage females.

In majority of the urban cities - females travel/ attend classes/ take up part time jobs; they need to travel for work and education - cities like Mumbai/ Pune/ Gujarat - you will see both males and females going about their routines even late in the evenings or nights; some of them have multiple classes and schedules due to which they need to stay out till 10 too.



These days ladies are moving ahead in different fields. But it cannot become 100% equality. Maybe 80-90%. These days men do help their wives with household work. 100% not possible because of society and our culture, this is how things have been running for long (parampara). It cannot become full 100, maybe 90-95%. In the end, there is a thing called ego.

Believes **equality for girls is not just in terms of property rights. Could also be equality in small rights - right to play for example** - why were girls not allowed to play certain sports for e.g. "marbles, pehle cricket nahi khelti... ab khelti hai" " girls ko marbles / gilli danda nahi khelne dete". You wont see males in local trains cleaning veggies and prepping for home chores - however women despite going to office will have to do it. There are inequalities even in urban cities like Mumbai. Equality doesn't exist ; even in middle class cities like Mumbai. Equality exists for those whose minds are open/developed . Their thinking has opened up, they are evolved and they wont differentiate. Rules are slightly more relaxed for boys; certain jobs have gender specific tags - cooking is for girls / household chores like hanging/ folding clothes are for girls /no freedom to stay out long.

**Freedom is real equality.** From what I've seen with teaching children, mothers often want their daughters to get or have the same things as their sons. But the fathers always stop them and make rules that its a girl and she can't get out. So I feel its 50-50. Things are changing, but it will take time for equality.

**Abilities of boys and girls are measured differently ; Goals for women are less ambitious / lower expectations compared to boys. There are smaller targets for women.** Not much has changed in our society. As a trainer, I need to go to the gym and train with other males/ females ; however, if our trainer needs dumbbells, he will request the boys to go and fetch it; although he is aware that I too can lift it and will eventually be training with the same guy; perhaps they don't trust me enough that I too can lift it swiftly. The amount of acknowledgement I get for lifting 10kgs is huge vs. the guy has to work harder - even if he lifts 15kgs its not thought of as a big deal. The fact that I'm lifting weights in itself becomes an achievement.

**Gender roles/ responsibilities / expectations are so deeply entrenched in our psyche - even little kids tend to mirror these in their role play games - young female kids designated home based roles to themselves and assigned the male playmate the task of going out to work;** its a game but that's the mindset that girls will do home chores and the boy will explore the outside world. Despite women stepping out for work/ taking on more than house chores it is deeply ingrained that the home front is her primary domain. This is largely true even in urban cities like Mumbai.



# Notions About Equality

## How MukkaMaar changes the discourse around equality?

Those who do the Mukkamaar program

“ Girls

**I feel really bad, as such differences shouldn't happen** and they should treat both boys and girls equally. I feel that boys are respected more than girls.

**They differentiate between boys and girls and say that a girl can never achieve what a boy can do, but I don't agree with that** and I feel that girls can do what a boy can. Girls and boys are treated equally in the present generation, and if people discriminate then **they are wrong as girls can do much more than what a boy can and they are leading in all fields.**

**I get angry when they treat us inferior, but there is no point in being angry at them** as we can't do much to change their thinking. **If we have a training in self defence, then we can escape from being treated so.** We can fight in future, if we are trained.

Boys and girls are equal, but they are not treated equally. Boys are treated superior to girls. People believe that girls can't achieve anything. Boys are treated superior because they earn and continue living with their parents even after marriage. Girls are treated

inferior as they leave their house upon being married. **Actually there would be no difference it's just the opinion that people have framed.** I believe that boys and girls should be treated equally, as both boys and girls are capable to earn and support their family, a girl can continue supporting even after she is married.

There is another reason for not being treated equally, as people are of the opinion that boys help them to carry the legacy forward 'vansh badhana'. **I do have this question, what if girls don't exist then how will boys be able to extend their legacy. But my parents don't answer and they shut me down.** They tell me I'm too young to discuss all this.

All humans are different because each has their own strength, like some may be good in drawing, dancing, and singing. There is no difference between a boy and girl, but many create a difference between them. Boys are permitted to go out at any time, whereas a girl isn't allowed to go. As they feel that because she is a girl, something wrong can happen to her. **This is what it has been told about girls for generations. But I wouldn't pass this on to the next generation.**

# Notions about freedom

**Non MukkaMaar adults seemed to actively infringe on the rights of the girls.**

**MM parents do it to a lesser degree – the girl is suddenly not allowed unbridled freedom.**

**MM families / parents might allow somethings and give up others.**

## We live in a big bad world...

Adults who are not exposed to the MukkaMaar program have a 'problem focus' that dominates most of their conversations.

**They believe the girls can be kept safe from the evils of society by keeping them confined to home and limiting their movement.**

Adults who are exposed to the MukkaMaar program are trying to focus on the solutions, which is evident through the conversations.

**They believe that girls need to be taught 'how to take care of themselves' against the evils of society.**

# Beliefs and behaviour that perpetuate the constraints faced by girls

## LIMITING BELIEFS

1. Adults believe and (girl) children are often told that - the dignity of a family rests on the girls of the house. *Ghar ki Sanskriti ladki ke haath mein hai*. Girls feel burdened by this responsibility and crippled in their movement. They are shamed into believing that anything that potentially goes wrong would be because of something wrong they did.
2. Girls = (can and should) compromise. Whether it is sibling fights or relationship issues, there is a subtle but consistent pressure on the girl to give up her stance and accept what the boy/ man says.
3. The benchmark (in terms of desirability) is always the son. When there are only girl children in the family it is not uncommon to hear 'my daughter is like my son'. *Meri beti hi mera beta hai* . Though when there are two boys in the family, the reverse is never heard.
4. Women are elevated to the status of goddesses. References like *ghar mein laxmi aaye hai, saraswati ka roop hai* etc. creates a pressure on the girls for perfection or for upholding the virtues.
5. We live in a world of fear . People believe that social conformity will keep their daughter's safe. Though 'social conformity will result in safety' is the biggest illusion people live with all their lives. It only makes an individual more vulnerable.
6. World at large is still living in a time warp and many a time the fear cripples their judgment to think beyond. People feel – even when individuals change or the family changes, it is not possible to change the world and hence feel forced to comply or conform.
7. Parents believe what/ how the child is reflects poorly or not on them. The fact that a child is an independent individual with his or her own thoughts and values and his or her own life trajectory or choices doesn't cross anyone's mind. It is like the moon reflects the light of the sun.

# Notions about freedom

## Beliefs and behaviour that perpetuate the constraints faced by girls

### BEHAVIOUR THAT REINFORCES THE BELIEFS

1. Girls don't have anyone advocating for them. Many a time the women adult in the house (the mother) is not financially independent and in her behaviour to conform she could be trying to not jeopardize her own situation. Teachers at school are also coloured in their perceptions and judgment.
  - When adults speak, children don't talk – chup raho. (Children internalize = my word is less important than that of another).
2. The larger societal discourse is around dependence of a woman. Girls are often told not to go out alone. They are asked to take a male member of their family along. There is retribution – curbs on movements, getting beaten up if girls falter which creates a fear amongst girls.
3. Parents don't think about implications of early parenting values. Girls are not encouraged to speak up or speak out, made to believe they are incapable of thinking for themselves which impacts their self-esteem in the long run.
  - Tumhara bhala bura tum nahin soch sakti. Adults have the life experience to guide you (children internalize = whatever an adult does is with some good intent. I cannot think for myself).
  - If something bad happens to you, don't come back to me like a cry baby, deal with it. (Children internalize = by speaking about my troubles, I trouble my parents).
4. Parents do not realize – by regurgitating societal norms and evils everyday– they prematurely abort the voice of judgment and reason inside their children and perpetuate the feeling of inability and fear.

# What creates the boundaries ?

## LIMITING BELIEFS

Ghar ki Sanskriti ladki ke haath mein hai.

### NORM

**If something bad happens, we cannot blame others. My children are girls, so I worry.** Have to think about study, marriage and so many other things. We live in a local area and the atmosphere here isn't good and all sorts of people roam around. **We keep hearing about awful things happening, but how long can we also tie them to the house? They do need activity, but it is scary to send them out.** My husband is very strict about not sending the girls out unless they are accompanied by an adult. This is made for all children at home, but the boys do go out, they don't sit at home, and they are not so strict with them. But we definitely don't send our daughters out. At 6 & 8, they don't understand much and some thing bad can happen with them.

**Girls should be given freedom but this is a fact that Ladki ghar ki izzat hoti hai** and it is my responsibility as a parent to make my girls aware of that.

*(Non MM Parent)*

### NORM SHIFTING

If a girl is shut inside the bubble, she has to get out. She'll have to become strong and not rely on others to help her. I think she only should break the bubble and come out. Once she comes out, she will feel strong.

**The bubble can be considered safe only if she's kept herself there. If anyone else has kept her in a bubble forcibly, then its trapping her.**

*(MM PE Teacher)*

# Notions about freedom

## What creates the boundaries ?



### LIMITING BELIEFS

Girls = (can and should) compromise.

**There is attraction, can't blame just the boy if something goes wrong.** We can't say we are empowering our girls if we are only giving them liberties and freedom - we should also instil a sense of responsibility- be a girl and do everything well.

Where it comes to compromise, always a girl has to do it whether it is with respect to the father or the brother. **You take whatever relationship – whether it is the husband and wife or girl friend and boy friend, when it comes to compromise, who makes the compromise – it is always the girl. This is almost stamped on the girl – that compromise = girl.**

*(Non MM Parent)*

Its not nice to hear these rules, but there're different groups of people that treat girls differently. So we have to behave according to the area. And **a lot of the rules are tied to religions also, so girls are oppressed.**

*(Non MM Trainer)*

# What creates the pressure to conform ?

## NORM

Lot of females are unable to fulfil their dreams as they don't have supportive parents. **If suppose the male needs to shift cities for work - people laud him for his efforts and say he is self made ; however, if the female leaves , she is viewed as a self centred person.** Society points fingers saying look at her upbringing, she's left her family for her career.

*(Non MM Parent)*

**While I was going to school and when boys used to tease me or touch inappropriately, my teacher never trusted me when I complained about such incidents to her. Teacher would say that nothing of that sort had happened and it was my misunderstanding.** I used to get angry and felt like thrashing those boys but my teacher had an opinion that boys can never be wrong.

*(MM Student)*

## NORM SHIFTING

In India females have heard about Ramayan/ Vishnu Puran/ Girls observe fasts in Shravan etc. Females are not aware of the constitution - to get a job the constitution doesn't want to know how many fasts you've observed but demands to know how many degrees you have earned. **Girls are not aware of their rights as per the constitution.** Hence restrictions are laid on them and they keep observing / following those restrictions. **If girls are made aware of their rights - this will be revolutionary** – (unke upar pabandiyan lagayi jaati hai aur wo unko aramse jhelti hai)

*(MM Parent)*

# Notions about freedom

## What creates the pressure to conform ?

### Larger societal discourse around dependence of a woman

#### NORM

The truth is that a woman is stronger than a man. God has given women the power that no matter what the struggle, no matter what the situation, the woman always tries to find a way out of it and move ahead. But because **society always eulogizes the boys (sab ladka ladka boltein hain, toh ladkiyaan toot jaati hain aur haar maam jaati hain). A girl is her own strength but she needs to be made aware of this.**

*(Non MM Parent)*

#### NORM SHIFTING

She's been kept forcibly inside, within a boundary. She's stuck inside. She wants to come out. Once she comes out, she'd be able to move ahead in life. She'll feel very happy when she comes out.

**Bubble can break if people around her understand and support her.** If she's a little older, she can with her confidence, decide what she wants to do and break free. **Education is a way for the girl to break free.**

*(MM PE Teacher)*



# Notions about freedom

## What creates the pressure to conform ?

**The benchmark is the son – shallow / hollow thinking.**

**Meri beti hi mera beta hai.**

While people say, there is no difference between a boy and a girl but this is at surface level. Many people think if they have a boy in a family, their family would be complete. Dikhaawe ke liye FB aur instagram pe post kartein hain – **jin gharon mein do yaan zyada beti hoti hai wahan aksar bola jata hai 'meri beti hi mera beta hai'.** **Why do they still compare daughters to sons. If she is born a daughter, why not accept her as she is.** If there are two boys in a house, people do not called the second born boy – mera beta hi meri beti hai. They accept the boy for what he is.

*(Non MM Parent)*

**Women are elevated to the status of Goddesses.**

Samaj ne aurat ko humesha se ek achha darja hi diya hai. Aurat ko ek Laxmi ka roop mana jaata hai. Devi ki hum puja kartein hain. **If they earn, they are considered Laxmi. Ladies are always equated to God. Hence it becomes the responsibility of the parents to impart good values to their girls and to correct the girls.** There are families who are affluent who believe that if they have money, they do not need to correct their girls at all in the name of modernity. If my girls make demands on me, unko tokna bhi mera kaam hai.

*(Non MM Parent)*



## We live in a world of fear and social conformity could keep daughters safe.

**Many girls are kept confined for their safety, but if we forcibly confine someone for their safety, then they're still trapped. It's not called being safe. Education, self defence, behaviour will all help her to break out of the bubble.** She has to try to break free by herself, but she will need some support from outside.

Even if my sister goes out in the evening, she will be told to come home before a particular time ; parents fear for her safety. I do support my sister - **As a male there are no such restrictions on me. Society is not safe. There is no fear of Law. The perpetrators of such crimes often roam around freely, often they go scot free as the cases take so long.**

*(Non MM Trainer)*

She's kept in the bubble to keep her safe because the world is an unsafe place. But the girl will not feel good. Obviously, she will be feeling trapped if she's been kept like that. **Elders in the family make rules only for the protection of the girls. It's for their own good and safety.**

*(Non MM Parent)*

## Fear cripples their judgment to think beyond.

Our safety is in our own hands. We've been taught this from the time I was young, but yes, boys don't have to think about all this. It is a male dominated society. If a boy gets teased, it doesn't matter much to him, but if the same thing happens to a girl, then it is very troubling.

**Things should change, but how? It won't happen from one person. India is becoming modern, but a lot of the old beliefs remain.**

*(Non MM Parent)*

# Notions about freedom

Parents believe what/how the child is reflects poorly / not them.

I will give my girls all the freedom expect that they respect norms around attire. Girls should be aware of the kind of clothes they wear and their surroundings. Many girls watch it on TV and try to emulate that behaviour - they don't realize it is their profession. I will let my girls wear shorts / party with friends / choose their life partner etc. but i will also tell them to be responsible. I wont let them wear revealing clothes for a night party. I will let them wear it to a resort when I'm with them. **Girls should be aware ; there are things which happen in cities like Delhi - its not safe. Girls need to respect their modesty. Many parents in the garb of not discriminating the girl child give her too many liberties.**

**When parents do not correct their girls and the girls then go out dressed in a certain way or conduct themselves in a certain way, people do talk. It is a parent's responsibility – parents ladkiyon ko bigaad rahein hain. Koi ladki apne aap toh kuch galat nahin karti. Shuruaat kahan se hoti hai ? Ghar se hi? Where does a child learn to talk – from the home and the parent. Parents say – bechare maa-baap – but that is not true. People often say – some cities are not good – but it is not the city – it is a lack of values taught at home. If the girl doesn't care about her modesty, she will be looked at in a certain way by society.**

*(Non MM Parent)*

## What creates the pressure to conform ?

Parents don't think about implications of early parenting values.

### NORM

**Some things its ok to speak up about, if something bad has happened. But other times, its better to just sit quietly. When our parents or teachers are speaking to us, we should not argue, or answer back.** Even elders in the house they should listen to. You can speak when things have settled down. There is not need to answer back immediately. You wont lose anything by waiting for a while. Because for a lot of older people, they just don't want others to speak when they are speaking, only they should speak and no one should speak before them. **We also make so many mistakes, our parents don't throw us out of the house. So we also can do this for them. Whatever parents say, its for our own good, but this generation is such that they cannot understand that.** There's a way to speak to elders, girls should speak properly with elders. Parents tell us because we're younger and they've seen the world.

*(Non MM Trainer)*

## NORM SHIFTING

Girls sharmati hai feel shy when they have their period but it is a natural phenomenon . They feel bad about it as if its not a good thing. They fear how to tell others, hesitate and get conscious. I was shocked they aren't allowed to go visit temples etc. during periods. Didn't know so much . **An incident wherein I told my cousin, to get something from the temple - she insisted she could not go. This hesitation / being conscious / fear is affecting other aspects of their life. They grow up feeling that they are constantly doing something wrong or inappropriate.**

( MM Trainer)





# Notions about freedom

**Parents regurgitating limiting beliefs and prematurely abort the voice of judgment and reason inside their children and perpetuate the feeling of inability and fear.**

Girls should be equipped to fight if something goes wrong. Parents cant be present all the time- they need to learn to protect themselves. If kids learn self defense right from their childhood - they wont fear if there in such a situation since their practice would have given the fitness and knowledge of how to react. Even without learning self defense , if she is mentally strong she can take them on/ tackle problems. **We have to make our girls mentally strong " mann se majboot" banana hai. Physically , training/ gym etc. will make them strong but for their minds have to be strong.**

Don't just teach the practice of self defense, but also having presence of mind. Its not like if you learn it, then you can just be safe and get an attitude. Must always know how to use it. This should all be taught when they are young.

*(Non MM Trainer)*

What will bring change is changing the narrative from vulnerability to strength.

**MukkaMaar has started to creating a new narrative for the girls and their families.**

***(At first the perspective is)***

A girl is protected from the outside world if she is in a bubble. No specific reason...she is inside so she is protected.

***(On second thoughts)***

**She could also be trapped. Someone has trapped her. She wants to come out, raise her voice and come out. She has to feel from within that she has to get out, then she can act accordingly.** She should get a helping hand like MM, that would help break the bubble from outside as it will change her thinking. She'll feel free and confident after coming out.

***(Non MM PE Teacher)***

If a girl is trapped inside the house she will want to get out. **If she's had the MM training, then she will have confidence in herself and won't feel trapped, she'll be able to get out. Normal girl without MM training will not be able to get out.**

***(MM Parent)***

# Notions About Freedom

## How MukkaMaar changes the discourse around freedom?

### Those who do not do the Mukkamaar program



A girl who is confined... is sitting inside a (daayra) boundary. She isn't feeling good because she is confined within a radius. She wouldn't be able to get out of it.

**Society has created the boundary for the girl. Her parents have drawn the boundary for her. She has a fear to achieve her freedom. She has fear of the allegation that the society would set on her. Most of the children believe that parents would decide only for the benefit of their child, and definitely there has to be some good reason for them to form that boundary. She needs courage and confidence to come out of the circle. Girls who are confined are told not to study and told to learn house chores and get married. The girls do have their ambition but then they are compelled by their parents to sacrifice their ambitions and get married. The girl shouldn't get married, when she is being insisted by her parents.**

**Boundaries are formed when they insist that we agree to their opinions and thoughts.**

Boundaries are formed because of people talking crap and making stories about us.

If society has formed the boundary then it doesn't matter, whereas if it is formed by parents then the boundary really matters.

**It doesn't matter if the boundary was formed by parents or society, getting out of the boundary is difficult. It is very difficult to change people's line of thinking.**



# Notions About Freedom

## How MukkaMaar changes the discourse around freedom?

Those who do the Mukkamaar program

“  
Girls

If a girl is made to sit inside a bubble, she will not feel good. Because she would get bored, as she can't talk to anyone and she is sitting inside. She would feel like she has been locked inside. If there is no boundary, then she would be free and happy. **She has to be trained if she wants freedom. She does need her families support too. She has to gain her self confidence and stand up for herself.**

She needs to be strong and believe in her that she can do it, and then she will be able to come out of the bubble.

**The bubble can be busted from outside as well. If someone is there outside to help then the bubble can be busted.**

I had experienced being helpless when my father wanted to discontinue my studies and my mother was helpless, I felt I was alone and in need of someone who could support me.

She would feel good and confident if she was able to come out of the bubble. She would feel good because she could gather the strength and get out of the situation. If

she wants to come out of the bubble and not be struck inside, then she needs to build her strength and get out of it. **There is a saying 'himat karne wale ki kabhi haar nahi hoti', so if she is alone then she will have to gain all the strength to come out of it** and if someone is there to help her then she can seek their help to come out. **If we have phone, then we can call on the helpline number and seek their help. If she fears then she would be struck inside the bubble.**

**We can call on an emergency number and seek help from that too. We have an idea about all these through MM sessions. They have told us that whenever we are struck in a trouble, then we shouldn't fear and should fearlessly try to think and act to get out of it.** We were taught by MM trainers, that we can call on helpline, child helpline. We might need to use the emergency numbers when in a trouble, or been surrounded by goons.



While in a trouble can use the teachings of MM to come out of it, example – when we are out with friends (mm students) and be surrounded by goons, then we can tell the MM slogan ‘fight fight we are MM’ and **if we keep repeating this slogan, then our confidence would build and we would be able to protect us.**

A girl who is confined might feels safe inside, as she is protected inside because she hasn’t experienced any bad episode. **If that bubble bursts she would feel sad as she was safe earlier and now she is unsafe. Our life is different from hers, as we are safe outside the bubble but she isn’t.** I have mukkamaar and my parents to protect me and I can protect myself with the techniques that mukkamaar has taught us. **Those who live in the bubble feel scared when the bubble bursts. And if we are outside the bubble, then we can defend us.**



# What is lost because of gender

**Right To make own decisions.**

**Right to judge their own capability – weight lifting, playing a sport.**

**Right to education. Right to choose a career of her choice.**

**Right to freedom of thought and speech** - to judge what is appropriate v/s inappropriate social conduct (how loudly to talk, what is appropriate dressing at home v/s outside, what is appropriate dressing at a certain age, looking down and walking, not making eye contact).

**Right to free movement - of feeling safe while going out.**

**The obligation to follow religious codes and rituals is imposed on girls. Rituals are binding on girls and entrap girls in the process.**

**The right to be an individual – to think for herself.**

**Imposing such beliefs has nothing to do with the literacy if the people in society.**

**Culture can be and often is invisible to its natives.**

# What is lost because of gender

## Those who do not do the Mukkamaar program feel



**I don't think girls should play like this (referring to girls playing Kabbadi in shorts) after they grow up.** Girls should be allowed to play. I'm ok with my daughters playing like this now, can't say about future. **Maybe they can play inside the house, how can they play like this outside the house after growing up, if they go out and wear such clothes and play then how can we be ok with it?**

If girls are told something, its for their own good. I was told all this when I was in college and it used to irritate me. But **when I grew up and had my own daughter, I realized they were right. If something bad happens, cannot blame others.**



After marriage the woman has to make adjustments in a new home and live adapt to their thinking and way of life. **Her life depends on how they treat her. As she is making a new start - she has to adapt and accept has to go with their thoughts , "unke hisaab se"**. There are very few instances where you can see the girls being able to openly voice her opinions / put forward their views.

In a lot of houses, they don't listen to the girls and think that what the son is saying is only right. **When we don't have an option, its better to be quiet at that moment until we know someone is going to listen to us. Its not necessary to always give a response immediately either.**

Girls also should understand... there's a thing called self respect that girls maintain that. Their dignity (READ SAFETY) is in their own hands. Education helps. **Girls should try to emulate their mothers, behave how their mothers do then its good. A lot of girls don't listen to their parents or ignore them. That shouldn't happen.**

## Impact of breaking rules

They follow rules as they are dependent on their families - financially / emotionally. They are rebuked for not obeying "gharwale maarte hai." **Don't question their parents/ adhere to rules and regulations laid for them, they don't want to upset their elders "mann rakne ke liye."** She fears being abandoned by the family "gharse nikal denge." If she wants to break rules she has to be able to fend for herself (use saksham hona hoga); financial independence will give her that courage. She needs to be independent / skilled in something that will give her a source of income for e.g. art / have a decent job. **With constant restrictions across various aspects of her life, girls begin to grow up with a "guilt factor" - "rok tok se apradhi mindset hota hai"**



The same rules would be applicable to boys too, but they are advised to go out as it would help them in understanding the world better and girls are asked to stay indoors.

**The girls who have learnt to live within the boundaries, in future when they have daughters, they would teach them to live confined within the boundary marked for them.**

**According to me the thoughts of the society takes precedence over the the girl's thoughts.** I feel because mothers have been always telling us to learn house chores as when girls are married girls will have to do the chores at home and the boys would earn for the family. **What the society thinks is given more priority because everyone follows them.**



What is  
lost  
because  
of gender

How MukkaMaar  
changes the  
discourse around  
gender based  
compromises?

Those who do the Mukkamaar program

“ Parents

Telling girls not to come home late is for their own safety. There's nothing wrong with that. Parents say all this because they fear for the girls safety. **MM training makes the child brave, not the parents.**

All these rules are only for girls. This is wrong. Whatever respect is given to boys, that should be given to girls as well. **When children are treated with trust and respect, they don't do wrong things.**

**What a girl loses by being a girl is her agency, her freedom.** At her parents house, she has to listen to parents. When she gets married, she has to listen to in laws. Then she'll have children and her life will become all about those children.

**Girls can do everything that boys do, in fact more and better.** These days, girls are ahead of boys. If girls get education, there's nothing that they cant do or shouldn't do.

In remote villages and also certain towns/ cities - where there is limited development, restrictions for girls in terms of going out and pursuing education do exist. **Females often have to give up on education if it involves longer travel. The daughter wont be allowed to pursue high school if she needs to travel to a town close by as they fear for her physical safety. Parents are** wary of anti social elements causing harm. "Agar school pass mein hai, bhejte hai. Hamare U.P gaon mein, high school door hai, isliye ladkiyon ko bhejte nahi ...unko lagta hai , chedkhani hogi; school jungle ke rasste se jana hota hai."

When a educated/ aware girl talks about her rights and **if I impose restrictions on my daughter who is being educated in a good school, it is my mistake - I shouldn't educate her. It won't be of any use even she receives education/ questioning and is aware of rights, if elders in the house impose their will on her.**

What is  
lost  
because  
of gender

How MukkaMaar  
changes the  
discourse around  
gender based  
compromises?

Those who do the Mukkamaar program

“ Parents

Many girls grow up believe getting a good life partner is the ultimate life goal. For this they get involved with religious rituals without really emphasizing on their education. People don't really understand how education can open up their minds. **They don't realize that they too have the potential to be independent and take on jobs/ have careers etc .**(Unko shivling ke saath phere lene hai, unki soch utni hai hi nahi. **They will keep following their rituals and tying threads around trees on festivals. I ask some of the women in my family – why are you making the girls do all these things – will tying these threads open up door for her career. They have no answer** (unka chera bigad jaata hai)

Why are there expectations from girls  
- An integral part of ancient holy books - Ramayana / Mahabharata/ saints like Tulsidas reinforced that females have be indoors/ unequal status. Females have for long subconsciously imbibed an unequal, lower rank for themselves without being aware of it. We were leading a backward life before the constitution. Today females are leading a respectful life - today when a female is walking in jeans and tee shirt - the people who point fingers at them are the ones with old thoughts. **Constitution of India has made it possible for a female to be the president of India.** We were made slaves by the invaders. **We are probably not even following a culture which is ours (sanskriti hamare hai bhi nahi/ hampe thopi gayi).** Brahmin kids are studying for IAS / MBBS whereas SCSTs, OBCs and other castes kids will be involved with some religious activities - obviously they wont get jobs. Education will give you jobs - not relying on god.



## Those who *do the Mukkamaar* program



During my training days, our coach wouldn't let us train in shorts - only during fights we were allowed to wear shorts. **Over 3-3.5 years of training under her subconsciously I too started feeling the same that girls shouldn't wear shorts for training** ; but when I look around I realize that shorts are common and there is nothing wrong in wearing them. In fact shorts are more comfortable. **I tell my MM children to wear whatever they feel comfortable in; its up to them. Whatever we teach our kids, we begin to reflect on our own thoughts and actions.** I feel if I expect my kids to take certain actions, the same is expected of me. **I have been guilty of making choices and compromises in the past despite being a fighter.**

I used to feel it was because of illiteracy - parents are not literate. This is true to an extent. But instances of qualified teachers sharing similar beliefs. Ingrained in their mindsets that this is a sort of "culture". It is part of their value system.

*(MM Trainer)*

**Society will pass judgements about girls who take on societal norms - they get labelled as headstrong/ self centred/ one who doesn't care.** "apne man ka chalati hai, apni masti karti hai, khudki sochti hai." **Irrespective of what society says , women can choose to live their lives without paying heed; however one needs to make herself strong - mentally and physically to not get affected by what the society says /thinks.** For e.g. if the girl wants to stay out late, she must be equipped to take on any anti social elements, must be responsible and in a position to fight dangers involved. **Whether or not one desires to breaks rules solely depends on their mentality.**

Girls should be able to lead a stress free life – without feeling anxieties about periods. They should have the liberty to be able to step out freely. **Girls should not be confined / limited. Girls should not think of themselves as weak.**

# What is lost because of gender

# How MukkaMaar changes the discourse around gender based compromises?

## Those who do the Mukkamaar program

“ Girls

Girls from the earlier generation, didn't have freedom, and they weren't allowed to study and work, but now it has changed.

It is not good for girls to do all the housework, boys get to study well and they don't have to do any work apart from studying and this is wrong.

Girls should always stay strong and fit. It not good for girls, to be unfit, because if she isn't fit then she wouldn't be able to work and will not be able to stay focussed. They have to be fit to focus on studies.

How would a girl be able to fight for herself if she is harmed by anyone, she would be able to defend herself only if she is fit. There are chances that a boy or anyone can follow a girl when she is in a public place. **Girls should be strong and healthy, as if they are weak and if someone teases them in a public place then they would start crying and wouldn't be able to fight for her.**

**I feel like thrashing people who differentiate between a girl and a boy.** Even though we have been trained by MM, we are hesitant to reply as that might hurt our elders. If we try

telling them then they tell us that kids should behave like kids and not to act smart. **We get angry when they tell us, but we are helpless.**

**I feel at times that why I wasn't born as a boy, but later thank god for being born as a girl. We are losing to live our life by giving importance to what others think. We are losing our self respect because of this.**

I feel that something is missing in what MM has taught us. We are trained in MM to answer back at people who hurt us and I'm not convinced with this. It isn't possible to answer back in all situations. **There is a saying 'ki agar pani sar ke upar se chala gaya toh kuch na kuch karna hi padta hai' and hence in those situations we answer back.**

I have seen in school, as boys are stronger, and when they have to lift something then teachers call boys to lift them. **They think that we would not be able to lift them. It may be possible that few would be able to lift and few wouldn't be. All girls cannot be alike, and some may be strong.**

# Beliefs about what girls should and should not do.

## Non MM Adults

- Cant go out
- Should not stay out late
- Cant wear short clothes
- Girls should always be dependent (people say this)

## MM Adults

- **Girls should not be shy**
- **Girls should always study well**
- **Girls and Boys should get together and work**
- Girls should know martial arts
- Its not good for girls to not be allowed to do what they want (should be given freedom)
- Girls should always be strong

**NMM adults believe when girls are given the freedom to act and be how they wish to be, they could fall prey to problems that exists in the world outside.**

**When girls speak up they attract trouble.**

**MM adults believe When children are treated with trust and respect, they don't do wrong things.**

**When girls speak up they ward off trouble.**

# What is lost because of gender

## The good girl tag.

### NORM

Parents are not always right, but the girls should also know how to speak / discuss things with her parents. Explaining why something is right or wrong, if its said in the right way, even elderly people will listen. **If our way of communicating, speaking is wrong, then no one will listen.**

*(Non MM Trainer)*

### NORM SHIFTING

**Society has labeled demure/ naive / shy girls as "good girls "** - it is a thing of the past. Such girls won't stand up for themselves even if there is something wrong. "Apne raste se jayegi, kisi se kuch matlab nahi, ki raaste mein kuch bole to bhi kuch nahi bolti, bina jawab diye nikal jaati"

**Not really relevant in today's times.** The girls have to be strong, they should be vocal; if boys try to cause trouble - they must be in a position to speak up and question their intentions. **Not being vocal would encourage anti social elements - they would try to cause more fear and overpower them at a psychological level.** Girls have to be forthright and not engage in mindless quarrelling." Unko datt ke jawab dena hai" "hum sharminda hogaya aur nahi bole to wo haavi ho jayenge"

*(MM Parent)*



## NORM

**A good girl would be well cultured. She should be polite when speaking; she should know all the house chores. A good girl should have values in her. She should have good discipline.**

A good girl is one who is cultured and has good upbringing, as society points out at the upbringing given by parents, so parents teach their daughters on how they should speak and behave with everyone.

The girl who is not cultured would hang out all night, and would be rude while she speaks, she would use abusive words while talking, her way of dressing, she wouldn't be disciplined and would speak disrespectfully, for example, she would address with 'tu' and not with 'aap' while talking.

*(Non MM Girl)*

## NORM SHIFTING

**According to me a good girl is can take decide about her life and achieve what she wants, and she should be able to put forth her decision about her future. What people think of a good girl is that she should be at home, shouldn't go out alone and also shouldn't talk much to boys. According to people a good girl shouldn't be independent. According to me a good girl is, one who is independent.** People of the older generation think that if the girl is independent then she wouldn't respect them. This thought process still persists in our society and hasn't changed yet.

**People feel that the girl is spoilt, if she is independent then she would go out and would speak to boys, they blame her parents for their upbringing because of which the family's dignity is affected. I think it's normal and she is a friendly girl if she goes out and talks to boys, but people don't approve this and have a good opinion on her. Our thought process cannot connect with people's thought process.**

*(MM Girl)*

# The silence around gender based violence

## NORM

While all individuals we spoke to believed that 'the ability to fight and self-defense is a girl's super power that would keep her safe.

While the dominant code and reaction to violence is often silence and brushing up the issue under the carpet or worse still blaming the girl.

JUST PAIN

## NORM SHIFTING

Those exposed to the MM program believed it is not just physical strength but also mental strength and self-esteem that are key factors that influence the possibility of crime against women.

The emerging code is about shaking them out of their inertia and passive acceptance which often leads to internal conflicts. The MM training gets girls and people to at least start questioning the status-quo.

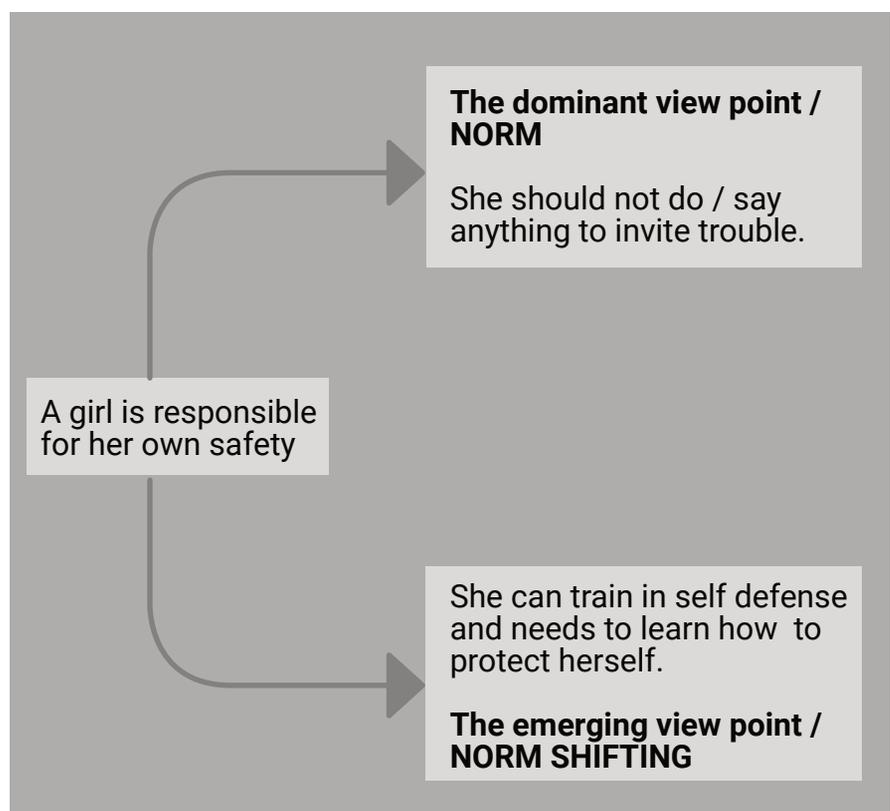
PAIN + REFLECTION

WILL EVENTUALLY LEAD TO PROGRESS



Some say teaching girls all this is not in their best interest. "ladkiyan bigad jayengi, tum theek nahi karrahe ho... ladki badboli hogayi hai". Even teachers say sometimes. As girls begin to get more vocal / talk. Some believe girls shouldn't talk much. When we were to start a program in a new school the principal madam wasn't there, the sir said no need for girls to do all this, whatever happens like rape / eve teasing "ched khani" happens because of the girls itself. Girls are responsible for what happens to them. When we asked them what is the girl's fault, they said they wear such clothes, they give "line" ...(making themselves "available" ). There are some teachers too who have this mindset.

**(Non MM Trainer)**



Most people think their daughters are safest at home, they are not very educated, aren't interested in their daughter experience the world. **Lots of people don't understand that not letting children out means reducing their confidence.**

**(MM PE Teacher)**

# The silence around gender based violence

Those who do not do the Mukkamaar program feel



**There are dirty minded people in society, we cannot do anything about that. We cannot predict how they think. If girls go out and some sick minded man does something to them, who can we blame?** The man is anyway dirty minded, in such a situation, who should we blame? Him or ourselves? Whose fault is it? What should we do in such a situation? We don't know everyone...why give that person a chance to do something bad.

*(Non MM Parent)*

This should definitely not be tolerated. If some mama or cousin or someone at home does something, girls should definitely raise their voice. Should not keep quiet if someone is harassing them on the street. **In a lot of houses, they don't listen to the girls and think that what the son is saying is only right. When we don't have an option, its better to be quiet at that moment until we know someone is going to listen to us.** Its not necessary to always give a response immediately either.

*(Non MM Trainer)*

**Society takes advantage of a child's vulnerability - young girls often fall prey as they are unaware and innocent.** Crime shows reveal that culprits are closer home - known to the family/ neighbours. Younger girls become easy targets for males - they are driven by lust ; gullible hence easier to lure / trap. Kids in the age groups of 3-4 years or even 12-14 years. It would be slightly more difficult for the abuser to lure older girls - they would need to be kidnapped which would be more difficult. The modus operandi would require more effort and planning.

*(Non MM Trainer)*

These crimes against women keep happening, its unfortunate. A big % of it can be stopped with such training initiatives. **Girls are made to shut up using words like parampara as excuse...these sort of things are very intimidating for girls.**

*(Non MM PE Trainer)*



## The silence around gender based violence

How MukkaMaar changes the discourse around the silence around gender based violence.

Those who do the Mukkamaar program



Girls who are extremely reserved / naive are often subjected to eve teasing ; **Not that the man is physically stronger - but he is aware that the girl won't speak up/ take action ; he overpowers her psychologically.**

Do girls talk - some girls do tell their problems at home ; some girls fear the society. Why should I take this forward? They tend to ignore it. Ideally should not be done. **If they don't complain or take action - the wrongs will continue ... more girls will be victims - females must take action/ raise their voice against it. Why do girls fear ? It is because of the inferior status given to women since ancient times.**

*(MM Parent)*

**A lot of girls don't see it as silence, its just the conditioning they've received in their households about this is how a girl is supposed to behave.** Sometimes if the girl turns back they'll say 'shobha nahi deta ladki ko". Or they may impose more restrictions on her.

*(MM PE Trainer)*



## Those who do the Mukkamaar program



**MM talks about a concept that is absolutely new for the girls - many a times there is confusion or less clarity w.r.t to understanding fundamental issues - what is right v/s what is wrong, what is acceptable v/s what is not acceptable etc. Girls have been following rules, "obeying" without questioning - so when MM tell them they can have a point of view, they tend to reflect over it but are not sure if they should put it into action- as the latter is not in line with their conditioning.** At times girls aren't even aware that if a teacher touches them inappropriately they have the right to tell them to stop, speak up or complain and that taking action is not a mistake. They have been told by their mothers to be silent( tu chup reh, koi kuch bhi boleگا.) Is this a good habit? So they are anxious about society's attitude towards this newly taught, learnt behaviour - will I be labeled wrongly as a "bad girl"; is this a good habit? The conflict exists. I wore this I was called besharam so I shouldn't wear? If I say no - I may be bad, I want to be good/ cute. These are very real conflicts and questions that our girls face.

*(MM Trainer)*

I am a mixed martial arts fighter by profession, earlier I was just a trainer but after MM training, whatever we teach our kids, we begin to reflect on our own thoughts and actions. I feel if I expect my kids to take certain actions, the same is expected of me. **I have been guilty of making choices/ compromises in the past despite being a fighter. MM has created transformation in my life as a trainer too.**

*(MM Trainer)*

# FINDINGS

## Section 2

–  
A deep dive into the experience with, relevance and impact of the MukkaMaar program.

The evaluation criteria that we have used to understand the effects of the MukkaMaar intervention have had is the one developed by The OECD DAC Network on Development Evaluation (EvalNet).

This framework uses six evaluation criteria to evaluate an intervention.



## Relevance

How clearly an intervention's goals and implementation are aligned with beneficiary and stakeholder needs. It investigates if target stakeholders view the intervention as useful and valuable.

## Coherence

Coherence goes up to the next level and looks at the fit of the intervention **within the broader system**. While **the intervention may achieve its objectives (effectiveness) these gains may be reversed by other (not coherent) interventions in the context.**

## Effectiveness

Effectiveness helps in understanding the extent to which an intervention is achieving or has achieved its objectives. It can provide insight into whether an intervention has **attained its planned results. It can also signal unintended consequences** – exacerbation of conflict dynamics.

## Efficiency

Efficiency evaluates: the extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way. Efficiency is about choices between feasible alternatives that can deliver similar results within the given resources.

## Impact

The impact criterion encourages consideration of the big "so what?" question. This is where the ultimate development effects of an intervention are considered. Is the intervention transformative – does it create enduring changes in norms – including gender norms – and systems, whether intended or not? How did the intervention cause higher-level effects. How will the intervention contribute to changing society for the better? Is the intervention leading to other changes?

## Sustainability

There are two aspects to sustainability. Actual sustainability (i.e. the continuation of net benefits created by the intervention that are already evident) and prospective sustainability (i.e. the net benefits for key stakeholders that are likely to continue into the future).

## Associations with MukkaMaar and the expectations it creates spontaneously.

The obvious connotation is that of 'protecting oneself'.

There is an underlying association that it fuels up individuals to not get cowed down in submission by sensitizing them to their own power.

MukkaMaar makes people feel they are not alone in their beliefs or struggle. There is a microcosm of society that is aligned to similar values.

However, the visibility of MukkaMaar and its work is limited.

Apart from the immediate beneficiaries, their families and the school staff where the MukkaMaar program is conducted, not much is known about them.

People in my neighbourhood go to Shri Ram school, so they don't know much about it. They don't speak about it. That is a private school, so there's no MM training in it.

*(MM Parent)*

# MukkaMaar In Essence

# MUKKAMAAR POWER OF BODY, VOICE AND MIND FOR EVERY GIRL

Develop an independent point of view, aspirations for the future.

Recognize practices and beliefs that limit their growth and movement. Know their rights.

Education on where and how to find support outside of home.

Break out of the fear cycle. Solution orientation.

Power of MIND



Use it as a first line of defense.

Power of VOICE



Power of BODY



How to fight – when to kicks, punch, block.

Speak with a strong voice. Reduce vulnerability.

Enhance physical strength.

Know their strength and physical capability

Creates a safe space for girls to talk about gender, equality, freedom.

Encourages girls to talk, express opinions, think and discover the truth.

Sets realistic expectations & gives practical strategies towards 'self-defence'.

Give information about change rather than enforcing change.



## Associations with MukkaMaar and the expectations it creates spontaneously.

- **Punch**
- **Self defence**
- **Confidence**
- **Strength**
- **Fitness**
- **Independence**
- **Self Respect**
- **This word in itself is a confidence booster.**
- **Countering unwanted behaviour/ attention.**
- **Equality of genders is the emphasis.**
- **A proud feeling.**
- **A powerful feeling.**
- **A feeling of freedom.**
- **Raise one's voice against what is wrong.**

“

**Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed it's the only thing that ever has.”**

- Margaret Mead

MukkaMaar sunte hi sari duniya ki taquat mere me samayi; I feel strong.

(MM Parent)

**They want you to change your thinking from within.** After the training sessions I too reflected on some of my own actions - like I used to serve my son first. If some boy helped with chores like hanging clothes -we would say arre tu ye kyu karre ? **Post MM training i realized - I'm simply emulating what I saw my mother doing without questioning /realizing the implications of it.**

(MM PE Teacher)

## What is MukkaMaar associated with & the expectations it creates

I think MukkaMaar is an organization that will teach girls to attack, self defense. At our Karate institute we teach techniques around hand/ how to react in a rape scene / what to do if there is chloroform involved etc. So this would also be similar.

*(Non MM Trainer)*

Punch, picture of a punch, a strong feeling, a feeling to do something without fear, a daring feeling, **if some injustice is happening, we should raise our voice against that.**

*(Non MM PE Teacher)*

It is a fight or punch against injustice and wrong doing.

*(Non MM PE Teacher)*

When the 5 fingers come together then anything can be achieved. People who get people together and can take everyone ahead as well.

*(Non MM Trainer)*

**Self defense** and safety for girls, teaches them **self respect**.

*(MM Parent)*

Its an hour class. Both my kids attend it. It comes on the mobile. Whatever they teach, they say what to do for you safety etc. MM trains girls in self defence - build their fitness levels / makes them strong / effective techniques to take on trouble mongers by use of hands/ legs. **They also teach them the modus operandi- how to attack / where to hit / how to use your legs and hands effectively.** (kaise maarna hai ... suppose samnewala ched raha hai, usko kaise jhatkakar mareng , pehle mukka marna hai to kaise marna hai, paav se marna hai to kaha marna hai."

*(MM Parent)*

## Relevance

How clearly an intervention's goals and implementation are aligned with beneficiary and stakeholder needs. It investigates if target stakeholders view the intervention as useful and valuable.

A program like MukkaMaar that teaches self defense addresses several needs across the different life stages of a girl. From being able to step out for personal routines to being able to pursue their career aspirations or tide over difficult phases. Movement without fear is critical every step of her way.

Also, the program focuses on teaching life skills such as building an independent point of view, decision making, understanding one's own strengths and using it to one's advantage, handling pressure – all of which are important building blocks in creating a healthy self-esteem:

- A feeling of personal and interpersonal security
- A sense of social belonging
- A sense of purpose
- A feeling of being capable
- A feeling of having trust and being trusted
- A sense of contribution to society
- A feeling of influence over one's own life and outcomes
- A feeling of self-control
- A sense of reward
- A sense of family pride

What is MukkaMaar associated with & the expectations it creates

## Relevance

- No matter how much a girl is educated, she has to work within the framework of her family. MukkaMaar helps girls become self reliant and to start thinking for themselves.
- Parents of MukkaMaar students mention they no longer have to worry about their girls going out. The girls themselves feel confident about stepping out on their own that further reassures parents.
- It is the need of the hour. Comparative crime ratio data reveals females are at a greater risk compared to males. Hence MM focuses primarily on girls.

Girls will become self reliant - at times when a girl is in trouble/ onlookers may not help. **Her safety rests in her hands ; parents can't be around 24/7.** MM will ensure girls are prepared to take care of themselves. I work as a driver and I'm away from home ; when I'm away they can continue their routines - going to school/ classes etc. without any fear. Even I'm assured they can manage well.

MM sessions are a must for girl's safety ; its not about mindless fighting. Girls will be able to protect themselves. **They will be able to get out of difficult situations** "museebat aayi to wo udar se nikal sakti hai.

**In remote villages , girls have to travel at off hours for their personal routines too ;** there can be dangers lurking - in any such event, she would be able to take on the offender. They will be more self assured / more confident.

**Can fuel their daughter's aspirations** without worrying. Even young girls have their goals - they want to pursue certain courses/ careers etc. We can let them pursue it without fear- we know if she needs to step out / she will manage without fear.

**The girl will be equipped to face/overcome any adversities in life.** Even if the girl is married into a well to do family and if something goes wrong, she needs to step out to work and earn - she won't fear stepping out and facing the world. She will be confident to earn a living and look after her family in a respectful manner.

*(MM Parent)*

Awareness of rights, enabling the thinking skills to make a choice, identifying strengths and a feeling of worthiness that comes along with it addresses a need that is fundamental and universally applicable to children anywhere in the world.

**MM teaches girls that she has the right to make choices about what she wants to do.** Girls have dreamy notions of getting married/ becoming a bride. **At MM we teach the girls that if you don't want to get married you can take a stand and say no you can study further.**

*(MM Trainer)*

Girls will be able to make choices.

**MM empowers her with the knowledge around her rights**

**If she has an abusive /physically violent husband - she would be aware that she has the right to complain.** Awareness that this behaviour is not acceptable/ illegal despite the fact that he is her husband. MM training empowers her to make the choice - whether to complain or to live with it. (sehna hai to sahiye, bolna hai to bolniye; however they will be aware that domestic violence is unacceptable / not right... unko pata hoga ki husband hai lekin wo maar nahi sakta.

*(MM Trainer)*

In normal life/ non confrontational settings - their confidence levels impacts their personal lives in a very positive manner. It plays a huge role. Whether it is her career/ love life / through various challenges - she will be independent.

*(MM Trainer)*

**MM helps one identify their skills w.r.t self defence , helps them to work on them and hones them.**

*(MM Trainer)*

Everyone has skills, but someone has it point it out to you.

*(MM Trainer)*

This course has to be done for their children - this skill is a necessity. They can teach / can Pursue it as a career / they can protect themselves outside home. They will be good examples for their next generation.

*(MM Parent)*

What is MukkaMaar associated with & the expectations it creates

## Relevance

MukkaMaar program encourages girls to express (and not suppress) what they are thinking and what they are going through. It provides a safe space where girls can open up and talk. This helps build the feeling of 'trust' and a sense of control over their own life.

The girl needs to imbibe the thinking **that she is her own strength. We should never let the female child feel she is inadequate. She is strong and powerful - she needs to gain her strength from within and not look for strength in her relationships.** We must take this responsibility. We must encourage our daughters to follow their dreams/ pursue their interests / careers. we have to teach them certain things about her life so that she won't find it a burden.

*(Non MM Parent)*

This should all be taught when they are young, As they grow older, they're more interested in phones and their thoughts are more fixed, **its easier to influence them when they're young.** If they are walking on the street with headphones in and anyone can come upto them and do something while they're distracted. **So we tell them how they need to be in which place, more aware of their surroundings.**

*(Non MM PE Trainer)*

**MM emphasizes the need for girls to open up; put forward their thoughts freely "apne andar daba ke mat rakho, khulkar bolo".** They also drill into the girls that there should be no difference between genders - have to focus on equality.

*(MM PE Parent)*

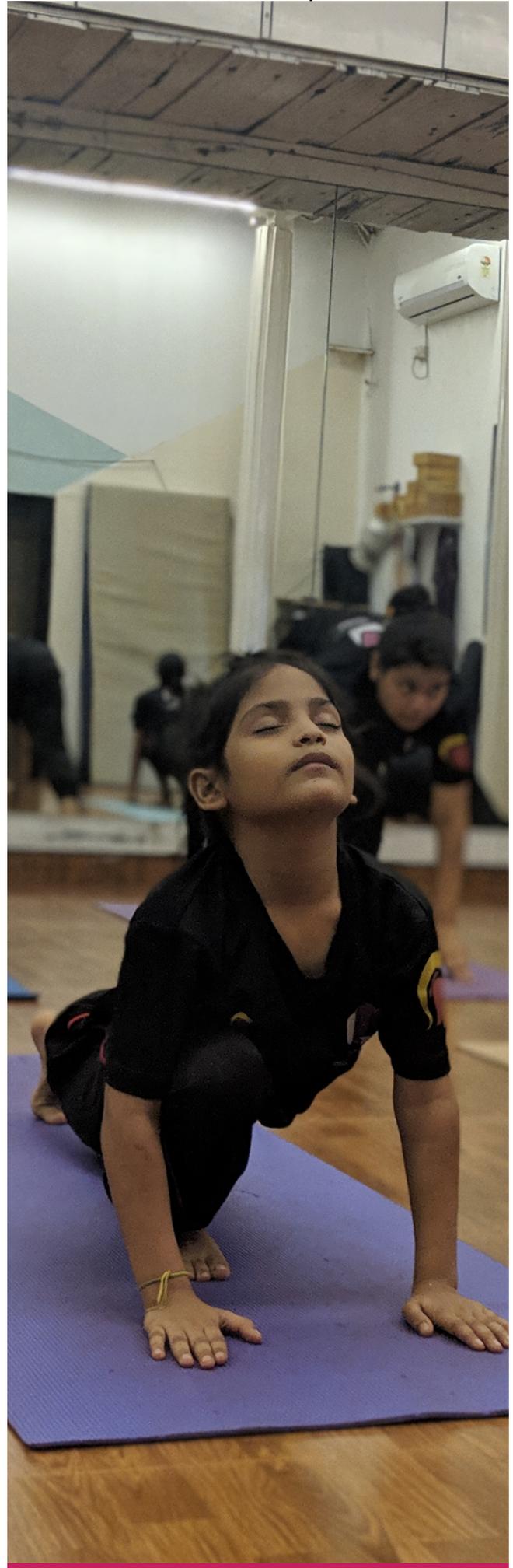
Training was very good, motivational. The way they explained...it was all very good. **You get to understand different types of thinking, ways to see things from different perspectives.**

**Whatever is being taught through MM, I don't think they can learn all this from any other place. These children live in slum area, I don't think their parents or relatives are talking to them about these sort of things at home. They can learn all this only if they join something like this.**

*(Non MM PE Teacher)*

In India, young kids are being raped - feel MM will train girls. Showcasing Police number/ Helpline number is indicative of this. **Too many restrictions lead to girls growing up with a "guilt factor" - rok tok se apradhi mindset hota hai.**

*(Non MM Trainer)*



## Efficiency

Efficiency evaluates: the extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way. Efficiency is about choices between feasible alternatives that can deliver similar results within the given resources.



MukkaMaar offers its program to girls via their school. This increases the reach and access of the program and also the likelihood of adoption since individual parents who could be reluctant due to their mindset are more accepting if the program reaches via school.

Also a program like this at school helps influence the mindset of the school staff, leadership and the large student community towards new ideas in gender, equality and makes them indirectly aware of older regressive beliefs without being overtly assertive.

Since MukkaMaar is dedicated towards this mission – the continuity and focus is maintained and there are no disruptions in the learning which are more likely to happen with school PE staff who have multiple roles to play.

Given the context of the pandemic MukkaMaar has transferred their program online via live sessions on Zoom / YouTube and creating modules delivered via WhatsApp which girls can access at their own pace and time. This not only ensures continuity but is a step in the direction of scaling the reach and access of this program.

## What is MukkaMaar associated with & the expectations it creates

It's a good initiative, they're doing great work, children like their sessions a lot and enjoy a great deal. They are able to do more than what we are able to do at our school. We cannot devote all the time to that as we have many activities. And the way they can convey the message and the materials they have, all of that is very good and works well.

*(Non MM PE Teacher)*

We found out about MukkaMaar because course started in school and they were told about it. They teach everything about body fitness and what to do in time of trouble. Its an hour class. Both my kids do it. It comes on the mobile now.

*(MM Parent)*

All the school children who are a part of this say that the classes are great and they love it. Because we used to be very regular with our schedule and teaching.

*(MM Trainer)*

Underwent online MM training during lockdown a year ago. Got introduced to the organization for the first time. Other organizations train on different topics vs. MM train us on how to make kids open up / how to get to the root of the matter / how to help kids put forward their point of view "jo bolne wale nahi hai, wo bhi bolte hai." How to make them speak. Another organization also spoke about gender equality; it was a 1 day session. MM training was longer and a variety of topics were covered and we had in depth discussions on various topics.

*(MM PE Teacher)*

Yes, I was told by Neha, that we would have Mukkamaar assistant, where we need to chat for 5-10 with the automated chat window. It tells us what is self defence and we are sent questions which need to answer. There are various levels and while we cross each level we get recharge as bonus and we need to send our videos on it. This chat window is very useful when we aren't able to get in touch with the Mukkamaar team because of the online classes then at that time we can utilize the chat option for our queries. Some might have network issues or their siblings might have an online class and due to which they wouldn't be able to attend Mukkamaar classes, so in such cases the chat window can be used for 5-10 mins to understand.

*(MM Students)*

## Effectiveness

Effectiveness helps in understanding the extent to which an intervention is achieving or has achieved its objectives. It can provide insight into whether an intervention has **attained its planned results**. It can also **signal unintended consequences** – exacerbation of conflict dynamics.

MukkaMaar interprets self-defence in a holistic way. It is not just enough to learn how to fight but also know how when not to fight, know how to use the self-defence techniques and most importantly feel prepared and confident to use them when in need. Children are also aware of the possible sources they can reach out to for help.

MukkaMaar empowers their trainers and children also with knowledge and information. MM training works on mitigating the fear factor amongst girls so that they are aware of the dangers however also know that they are in a position to take action. News media often showcase crimes on women - which create fear factor. MM girls are able to overcome this fear - they know if something happens, they can make an attempt to try and get out of such a situation.

Information about what makes girls more vulnerable and susceptible to crime, that familiar and known people could be perpetrators increases a sense of 'preparedness' such that if faced with the eventuality the shock they feel is relatively lesser than what it would be if they were caught unawares.

Trainers find teachable moments that connect back to the life of these girls rather than following a fixed agenda / curriculum. The modules give some degree of freedom to the trainers to keep the discussions relevant.

## What is MukkaMaar associated with & the expectations it creates

Instead of 'teaching' the approach is to lead the girls to think, discover more about a topic and make their own connections via conversations or information seeking.

When the child discovers for herself – she internalizes things at a deeper level and in the process also makes a connect between what is taught and the context of her life.

MukkaMaar believes whether to take an action or not is the girl's her personal choice. Interactions with MM trainers are limited to school hours. Girls feel obliged to choose family views as opposed to an external view and many a times girls go about with their parent's views. However as a result of the MM training girls are definitely more aware if they have been subject to something wrong - a wrong thought or action.

Poems and games that are part of the modules – make the learning enjoyable. It is something that girls look forward to. Not only does it come as a welcome break from online classes but more importantly it also helps learn about serious issues without feeling burdened by the seriousness of them.

# What is taught as part of MM program?

# How to defend Oneself.

## Physically

MukkaMaar teaches about self defence for girls, **they teach punches, kicks and physical fitness so that our body is strong and we are able to fight for ourselves when needed.**

We can fight for ourselves with what they teach us. A girl needn't necessarily call out for help as if she is strong enough then she can fight for herself and defend her.

*(MM Girls)*

## Non-physically

**They teach us we should shout first for help, and if it's a lonely place we should run fast from that place and the moment we find someone, we should call in the helpline number and then inform parents or anyone we trust.**

If something wrong happens with us then we should dial 1098, we should call on this **child helpline number.**

**I can get an image of how to fight back against eve teasers, when I think about MM.** A MukkaMaar girl will defend herself and wouldn't depend on others.

*(MM Girls)*

## Where the possible threats lie?

Generally people who take advantage and touch us inappropriately would be **90% people known to us** and then strangers.

If someone tries to snatch from us then we can use the MM self defence techniques like, we **can yell at them, or push them down, or can thrash them to protect us.**

Apart from martial arts, our MM trainer had also told us that **whenever there is a need to travel alone, we should carry a safety pin, whistle and should scream loudly.**

*(MM Girls)*

What is taught as part of MM program?

Life skills.

### Confidence

MukkaMaar teaches us on how to defend ourselves and **build our confidence and handle any situation.**

When she learns MM for a longer period like 6 months, then **the fear factor would be erased and she would feel confident** about defending herself.

*(MM Girls)*

### Self esteem

MukkaMaar has a website called as mukkamaar.org, where on they have a quote mentioned on top of the page " **self defence is not a technique, it's a mindset and it begins with the belief that you are worth defending.**"

MM teaches us that **we are no less than others.**

People who talk ill about the girl feel that 'sharm aurat ka gehna hota' (modesty is a girl's priced possession). **As we keep our jewellery in locker we should keep shyness in locker too.**

*(MM Girls)*

### Ability to question/ think and go beyond conventions

**When boys roam around freely and parents don't raise doubts on them, then why should they doubt on a girl?** They don't really get spoiled; it's just that the conservative parents feel so. It's a wrong opinion which people have.

**Our honour is far more important than what people think of us.**

*(MM Girls)*

## What is taught as part of MM program?

## Effectiveness of what is taught.

- **Parents and children themselves reported they felt less fearful and more confident of stepping out on their own without worrying about someone troubling them.**
- **The child knows who to reach when she needs help. The non-physical ways of trying to overcome a problem set realistic expectations in the mind of a child about what should be done when confronted.**

MM Trains kids in self defense / teaches **physical and non physical techniques in self defense . Non physical self defense techniques include use of verbal means - like shouting out for help/ look to complain - who should you approach.**

*(MM Trainer)*

I like the idea. It is important. They will learn how to protect themselves, we cannot teach them so much. **If they learn all this, it will help a lot in their future. They will be independent and not have to rely on someone else to protect them.** Less tension for parents.

*(Non MM Parent)*

**As a father I am assured that with MM training , daughters will be equipped to protect themselves** if ever they are caught in such a situation. I do believe they will take action in reality based on what they have been taught.

*(MM Parent)*

Its very good. It is good for their safety. If someone is teasing - talk and tell or else u will have to fight. They show how to fight ; how to hit; **first try and understand what is the problem, if they continue to trouble then teach them a lesson. Peecha kiya to sabak sikhao.**

*(MM Parent)*



Girls became strong, brave because of MM. They have activities. **They don't hesitate to go out** and become brave. They will feel like they can go out independently. They will feel strong and believe that if someone came to harm them, they can take care of themselves.

*(MM Parent)*

**I was very shy and used to walk with my heads down but now I'm confident and can look at people and talk to them and this makes people know that I attend MM.**

*(MM Student)*

Kids too discuss they feel stronger, don't fear if its dark or to be alone. "Bahar nikati hu to dar ti thi, andhera hota hai to dar lagta tha... jaise koi peecha karega". **A kid was being harassed / touched inappropriately - in a way she was being made to feel uncomfortable. She resorted to shouting at the offender and created a ruckus; her elder sister reported it to the teacher.**

*(MM Trainer)*

We feel good now, as we used to fear earlier but now after learning techniques from MukkaMaar I have no fear.

*(MM Student)*

My daughter has been going since 2 years. She enjoys it a lot. She's very active on it She practices at home. **She goes out bravely by herself...before she used to hesitate, she would always insist on taking me along. Now she doesn't need me to go with her.** Now she's brave and doesn't want me to accompany her.

*(MM Parent)*

Before when I used to send her to the market, **she would be scared, would be unhappy about some boys that used to hang out in that area. Now she doesn't hesitates, she goes bindaas.** She's more confident and her fear has gone away. **This has taken away a little bit of my fear too.**

*(MM Parent)*

## What is taught as part of MM program?

## Effectiveness - of the pedagogy.

The lessons do not take a top-down approach of dispensing information, since that goes against the 'spirit of agency or enquiry'. Trainers work with the children to help them discover things and make connections for themselves.

We often have these exercises where we ask them – which is the strongest animal - sabse strong animal kaunsa hai? Girls mention elephant / lion / monster. In the jungle Lion is the king - but actually its the lioness who is the strongest. Then we have discussion around how the lion and the lioness are different. The Lion fights only invaders to protect his territory. But the Lioness needs to hunt and get food for the family. She needs to work hard . The Lioness may need to go outside her territory to hunt, she faces different challenges, but she achieves what she sets out for.

Whilst the MM training was in progress, a young girl was uncomfortable in her dupatta (stole) trying to adjust as she continued her practice. The teacher spoke about the topic of modesty. There is a saying modesty is a girl's treasure - so i asked the girls- where are treasures kept - in the safe was the

unanimous response; made the girls repeat- where do we place modesty - they repeated in the safe ( sharam kahan rakhna hai? tijori mein!). After that exercise, the girl simply took off her dupatta and went about the training routine. This gave me a sense that yes, children are understanding what were are trying to explain; they are able to apply it in their lives without needing my intervention. So its impacted her mind/ action very powerfully. If the girl was forced to take off her dupatta, perhaps she would have questioned my actions mentally - is she trying to harm my religious beliefs? Even if she is not taking action, now she knows what is wrong.

*(MM Trainer)*

We often have discussions around topics for instance. Once they discussed women athletes - we told them about these sports women and told them to research about them - which sport do they play etc. Kids read about them / some girls wrote about them - they made charts. They got interested - got inspired. I want to be Mary Kom, P.V.Sindhu. We tell them to read lives of these women athletes who have been achievers .



Not only do they feel more confident about handling a trouble-maker, the girls mentioned they were now more sensitised and aware of where the trouble could come from due to the MM program and hence were better equipped to deal with it.

Helps them understand serious issues in a child-friendly way.

When he tried to touch me inappropriately initially I pushed his hands away, and when he still tried to come near and touch me, I caught his neck and pressed it hard with my fingers, he fell down and ran away, then my mother came and I told my family about what had happened and they thrashed him, he then apologised and left the place and never returned again. The offender was none other than my family member.

*(MM Student)*

When I am not able to attend the MM program I miss the games, and the good things that they teach us.

I wouldn't feel good if MM decides to end their programs, as they have helped us by teaching and I would definitely miss how deeply they used to explain each topic and they used to repeatedly explain until we were able grasp. We would also miss MM trainers.



## What differentiates MukkaMaar from other physical training programs.

They are teaching life skills like presence of mind, handling problems, how best to approach a situation etc.

The emphasis is not on fighting but protecting oneself. MukkaMaar girls are as cued into kicks and punches as they are into when not to fight, what other ways to use to get out of a difficult situation – how to make a tamasha, use your voice, when to run, when to call child help line.

BMC too trains us on various issues/ new ideas which we can impart to the children on and off. There were programs on gender equality too not under the banner of MM. **But MM is unique because of its focus on "opening up" especially for girls.**

*(MM PE Teacher)*

**I can share my feelings or an experience with a MM trainer, which I may not be comfortable sharing with my parents.**

I don't feel comfortable to talk about this to my parents. I don't know the exact reason, it's just that I don't like to discuss on such topics with them. As I haven't heard about such discussions at home, I'm not comfortable.

*(MM Student)*

# What differentiates MukkaMaar?

Girls feel a definite sense of confidence / awareness that they are capable of ensuring their personal safety. It makes girls fit through self defense. Girls also learn to communicate more confidently - able to express themselves better. **MM teaches them to get over their inhibitions ; brings about a positive change in their thinking / opens up their mind. They teach kids to talk.** "Dimaag bhi badlta hai". Girls learn to speak as well

MM is making self defense / overall personality development / fitness and exercise accessible to low incomes families. **Girls learn to express themselves openly and won't hesitate to put forth their views** "Khul ke baat karegi – apne vichar batayenge" –

*(MM Parent)*

Traditional PE is more about sports and activities. Its about physical strength. **This is about mental and physical strength.**

*(MM PE Teacher)*

Its not sports, **it's a change in the way of thinking,** defense and behaviour.

*(MM Trainer)*

In MM, its not just about learning to strike / hit . **We teach the kids to observe and to identify what is wrong ; when not to hit and when to hit. Even if there is something wrong, we don't need to hit ; sometimes you can simply shout.** Identifying abuse raising a voice and strike if need be.

*(MM Trainer)*

Other academies focus on imparting techniques w.r.t judo/karate/ taekwondo to - gain strength. **However the mind is the most important contact point in a fight - and MM focuses on making them strong mentally and physically. Many girls have black belt, they can kick at any height but lack in confidence. My brother is a MMA expert too, his training is far superior however he loses his matches as he is not confident.** MM works on a child's confidence.

Our techniques are devised around training and strengthening the body, voice and mind. **Training girls in physical fitness/ teaching them techniques / strengthening their bodies is relatively easier.** Trainers get them to practice plus girls are involved with physical activities at home too. **Training them to speak up is difficult, we reinforce the need to speak out / force them to shout etc. The toughest part is working on strengthening the mind.**

*(MM Trainer)*

## The persona of the MukkaMaar girl

Both sets of individuals i.e. those who had experienced the MukkaMaar program and those who had not experienced it first hand though were exposed to some information about it were consistent in their views of how the persona of the MukkaMaar girl would differ from one who does not do the program.

MM girl was perceived to be confident, would not hesitate to talk, would be able to answer any question posed to her. She would know what to do if she got into trouble, she would be able to think on her feet. She wants to be independent like the trainers she sees as role models.

She would be an aware individual with an alert mind.

Survival skills are important for all humans, in fact most living beings understand survival instinctively. Only in case of human beings, survival skills are influenced by social conditioning. MM sessions help girls connect with their instinctive survival skills.

# Persona of a Non-MM girl v/s that of a MM girl

# Body language and ability to tackle problems.

## NON MM GIRL

The Non MM MM girl may not be as quick/ may fumble.

Will speak like a village girl, defenceless and dependent.

Non MM girl will be scared, hesitant, not open to speaking much.

*(MM Parent)*

Non MM girls success depends on her set up.

Girls often tend to contract/shrug their shoulders- inhibitions around their breasts make them conscious. Mothers too reinforce these actions / inhibitions - this becomes a habit. We teach them to walk straight/ broad shoulders / chin up.

## MM GIRL

MM girl will be faster in her responses / will be able take actions / respond to a situation faster.

Will be street smart, confident and fearless.

MM girl will behave differently. Will be brave. Will be active and speak bravely and not hesitate to speak or move about.

*(MM Parent)*

MM girls will be successful in life irrespective of their surroundings/ society.

Crime perpetrators are usually on the look out for girls who seem conscious /scared / won't speak up ; for e.g. if he nudges / knocks you over and sees that you've not raised an alarm - he knows you are a good victim. However the MM girls will give out signals that indicate she won't be an easy victim. In a problem solution set up, she will be equipped to look for a solution.

# Feelings towards self, society and ability to express.

## NON MM GIRL

A non MukkaMaar girl would feel a sense of sadness, fear, guilt.

She is sad and shy, because she has faced some untoward incident.

The mistake is of the abuser but she is shy because she is worried about what people would talk about her. Most of them think the victim and abuser both are at fault.

A non MukkaMaar girl has a fear as she is not able to defend herself.

A non MukkaMaar girl would be angry on herself as she was helpless and couldn't defend herself.

Non MM girls won't open up about their problems / even if someone is troubling her she will hesitate to talk about it to her parents - will hesitate/ scared to inform parents - hence may not be able to get the right help/ advise giving the trouble makers an upper hand "wo apni parents ko bolegi bhi nahi , isse samne wala jo chedta hai, uska honsla bad jaata hai aur inko takleef badti hai "

## MM GIRL

A MukkaMaar girl would feel a sense of happiness, pride, faith.

A MukkaMaar girl is happy in every way as she is safe.

She is happy because she has a freedom to do what she wishes to.

A MukkaMaar girl is proud because she can defend herself and also help others when needed. A MukkaMaar girl feels proud as she has the power to think differently.

She has a faith that she can protect herself.

A MukkaMaar girl is angry on the abuser.

MM girls will confide in their parents / openly discuss their issues- parents can also guide/ advise them.

MM girl would never be able to accept this happening to her, girls can approach help line numbers and talk to them and ask them to help as family isn't supporting.

## Persona of a Non-MM girl v/s that of a MM girl

## Feelings about her future.

### NON MM GIRL

Non MM girls could be anxious about what is in store for me - will I get what I desire - she will be trapped/lost in her thoughts / anxieties.

### MM GIRL

After 10 years in school with MM training, once they set out for college / work - she won't be shy/ will know her rights.

MM girls will pursue their choice of career. She could even become a trainer in the future and teach what she has learnt. MM girl will find a way of getting the support of her parents and / or in-laws to do what she wants.

## Impact

The impact criterion encourages consideration of the big “so what?” question. This is where the ultimate development effects of an intervention are considered. Is the intervention transformative – does it create enduring changes in norms – including gender norms – and systems, whether intended or not? How did the intervention cause higher-level effects. How will the intervention contribute to changing society for the better? Is the intervention leading to other changes?

MukkaMaar has made all stakeholders (Students, Trainers, Teachers and Parents) aware of their own conversations and actions.

- Girls have started to notice things – injustice, inequality.
- They feel self aware and more aware of environment.
- They have started questioning norms that do not make sense or express their anger. Also understand it is not possible to confront everything all at once.
- The program has helped them create an independent point of view about things unlike most children parrot whatever they hear around them.
- These girls have clear aspirations for their future.
- Know that education is the path to empowerment.
- Understand the importance of financial independence (as opposed to just accepting marriage as an option) in their journey towards asserting themselves.

Girls are not fearful or do not feel crippled of crime stories shared in the media or by neighbours. Instead feel prepared.

Parents of girls who do the MukkaMaar program talk about rights as opposed to rituals. Parents are beginning to break away from the fatalist narrative of ‘society is evil and we cannot do anything against what is prevalent.

Teachers and trainers who do the MukkaMaar program mentioned that it has made them aware of the shadows in their own thinking – whether it was perpetuating stereotypes or accepting compromises and are consciously breaking the ‘chain of pain’ for the children who come into contact with them whether at home or at school.

# Impact – the ‘higher level’ effects of the intervention

## SHORT TERM IMPACT

When girls become articulate, are able to talk freely and are vocal about their feelings and can express their thoughts freely - they create an impression of a strong and confident personality. This serves as a barrier for anyone with wrong intentions. The girls creates an impression of a strong confident girl who can't be easily defeated.

MukkaMaar girls feel they must put in all efforts and escape from falling prey. **MM training gives them a fighter's attitude - they won't give up easily in such situations.** Their thinking reflects there is a sense of preparedness/ can take action. They know that the onus lies on them to take action/ will put up a fight.

"TV mein dekhte hai, to bolte hai, ladki ne aise kyu nahi kiya.. kyu nahi mara etc ...aisa sochti hai "; When they watch a crime report on TV, they question, why didn't they hit and run,

ladki ki kami reh gai, kuch bhi karke nikalna tha". She should have done something and escaped. Why didn't she try harder. MM girls will be prepared with their techniques - they will be able to escape, they will have the presence of mind to bite or do something and run off unharmed.

*(MM Parent)*

Earlier before enrolling into program, **I was very hesitant to express myself and would think about what others would say, but not anymore** and I speak my mind. A MukkaMaar girl would have a modern thinking.

*(MM Student)*

If u make a women aware ; the abuse (atyachar) wont happen; in most cases of atyachar /abuse, women feel it is normal/ this is life.

*(MM Trainer)*

**MukkaMaar girls have an awareness about different things, what's right and wrong or not right, speaking up or what are the avenues open to them.** Many times, the child is not aware at all that what's happening to them is wrong.

*(Non MM PE Teacher)*

The by-product of mitigating fear and being able to speak up or think for oneself is one is able to chart one's course and make use of opportunities whether those are about learning or career advancement. Like playing a sport teaches one 'sportsmanship' that is useful even outside the stadium, in the same light the MukkaMaar training over time builds a person's character apart from strength.

When you see sportspersons, you know that they're athletes even if you don't see them practicing any sport. Same with police in plain clothes....from their behaviour and mannerisms, you know they're the police. That's how it'll be with MM girl. Their behaviour and how they conduct themselves will be different. More confident. Aware of self and surroundings. **Don't just teach the practice of self defence, but also having presence of mind.** Its not like if you learn it, then you can just be safe and get an attitude. Must always know how to use it.

*(Non MM Trainer)*

She'll be independent. If she has to go to work or work late, she will not be fearful or wait for us to go get her. She can come back

by herself and we also well feel comfortable. **Her opportunities will not be limited...she doesn't have to just sit at home because she's scared.**

*(MM Parent)*

**MM girl wouldn't accept getting married if she doesn't wish to be married.** She can do what she is interested and has the capability to achieve. She would put forth her wish of studying and having a career and that she doesn't wish to get married. If my parents insist I get married, I would tell them that I shall get married to a person who would allow me to have a career.

*(MM Student)*

**Daughters are able to express themselves better - even at school; They have learnt to communicate better;** Also benefitted their education - able to answer teacher's questions, don't hesitate. **Their voices are stronger/** they are able to talk with confidence. "awaaz bulan hogayi hai." **They don't need to be persuaded to talk or answer.** They are not meek anymore - don't shy away from answering questions by teachers etc. **When she talks without hesitation, she is able to gain better knowledge / is able to clear her doubts / is able to converse and express herself well.**

*(MM Parent)*

## Impact – the ‘higher level’ effects of the intervention

Will girls change in their attitude overnight? No. It would need several months of reinforcing the thought to mitigate the effects of years of conditioning. However the MukkaMaar program does sensitize a girl / women to the fact that her mind is her biggest weapon along with making them aware of their rights.

**MM is involved with work that is seeking to create a deep impact in the society. I feels the work done won't yield instant results; a gradual change which will take place over the years to come and impact the society positively.**

*(MM Trainer)*

**This has the potential to change the girls life. She will not back down from facing any situation.**

*(Non MM Trainer)*

**We teach them their rights - areas where their consent is a must/ areas where they can say NO / areas where it is safe to say yes. If our efforts brought about instant results it would be great/ ideal; however it is not a realistic expectation. It is impossible to change/ take on thoughts that have been**

**conditioned by our society over past 10-15 years of the children's lives.** Physical training requires students to invest time - takes 6 months atleast to perfect a punch and kick. Only knowing the technique or the "how to" of it is not sufficient - they should be in a position to actually apply this technique / use it if they ever find themselves in such a situation. Need to build a sense of confidence in them - not an easy task for the girl child. Simply learning punch/ kick/ defend/ attack techniques per se doesn't necessarily build in a sense of confidence in the girl ; it is only when she has internalized the confidence will she be able to use it / apply the self defence techniques she has learnt. Girls are not motivated enough - they have been taught to stay quiet / they have been conditioned to be sensitive by the society or reinforced by their background and set up. They are aware they can raise hands too but give up without trying " ladkiyon ko sensitive banake rakha gaya hai , kyuki itne saalon ki soch hai, itni logon ki baatein unko sunayi deti hai. "

*(MM Trainer)*

## Sustainability

There are two aspects to sustainability. Actual sustainability (i.e. the continuation of net benefits created by the intervention that are already evident) and prospective sustainability (i.e. the net benefits for key stakeholders that are likely to continue into the future).

Though students of MukkaMaar mentioned they would definitely miss all the fun and engagement they experienced as part of the program, if the program ended, many students felt it would not take them back to square one with respect to their self-confidence.

The reason being once awareness develops about rights and wrongs, about negotiation and coping strategies, about aspirations and capabilities develop around physical and mental strength – it is very difficult to reverse the effects of the same unless the individual is in an extremely vulnerable situation.

Given the context of the pandemic and that in-person training had to stop, MukkaMaar has explored alternative platforms to continue with their training – both in the synchronous and asynchronous format. Though students and parents miss the engagement, they appreciate the continuity.

# Sustainability - will benefits last?

**If the training stops mid way, its not like the children will forget what was taught** If they have learnt something or got to know something that they didn't know before, then they will not forget it. They will be able to think as the training has impacted their thinking. **They wont go blank or how they were before the training.** Today's generation is very smart.

*(Non MM Trainer)*

**The older students may still remember what they've learnt and it would have changed them. But the younger once will miss it.**

*(MM Trainer)*

If their training stops, we would still not forget what we have learnt during their training. **We wouldn't feel the confidence would be reduced as we shall practice every day through the WhatsApp chat that we have on our phone.**

*(MM Students)*

These are all valuable things to learn. Because they've already learnt all this, they will decide to be brave in their life.

*(MM Parents)*

**Even after 25 years, the girl who has attended a MukkaMaar program would be able to handle any situation and defend herself,** whereas a non MukkaMaar girl wouldn't be able to defend her. A girl who has attended MukkaMaar would have learnt many techniques, so when she is married she would be able to do the chores and have a career of her own. She would be able to fight back when someone teases her. The girl who hasn't MukkaMaar wouldn't be able to fight for her freedom and would be submissive after marriage.

*(MM Students)*

## Coherence

Coherence goes up to the next level and looks at the fit of the intervention **within the broader system**. While **the intervention may achieve its objectives (effectiveness)** these gains may be reversed by **other (not coherent) interventions in the context**.

MukkaMaar program through its intervention had resulted in creating a dichotomy between the attitude of girls and the societal norms they have to comply with.

When norms and attitudes are misaligned, sustaining change might first warrant a change in the attitudes of a core group of individuals (as MukkaMaar is doing with the girls), and then help become local change agents, reaching out to the larger groups.

This might involved motivating other actors in the system to join their movement for change. The two sets of individuals who are closest to the problem and also the solution are a) the parents of the girls and b) boys who are young since their beliefs can also be moulded like in case of girls.

# Coherence

Parents should be made a part of the conversation as that's the source of beliefs and a lot of how the girl grows in terms of freedom given to her, upbringing and culture, depends on her parents.

Training should also be there for parents. **Everyone is talking to children only, but parents play a big role. In a lot of schools, it doesn't matter how much the teacher works hard or motivates, explains or talks to the child, ultimately it's the environment and training at home that matters the most.** So if parents are bought on board, that will be better. That also should happen apart from children.

*(Non MM PE Teacher)*

Even she wants to make her career in it- if parents don't approve / she won't progress. she will have to kill her dreams - "sapnon ko kuchalna hoga". **MM girls also have to give in to these pressures - there is a gap in our thinking and actions. Soch khul gayi hai... but unable to translate into action.**

*(MM Trainer)*

Institutions are reaching out to the fruits - making them aware of their rights/ roles/ responsibilities . **We need to focus on the roots .... parents are central to bringing about this change.** Training the kids alone won't be effective. Along with kids we have to explain the parents. **This will ensure the movement gains momentum/ speed of the change will increase.**

*(MM Trainer)*

**Girls may get confused because of different views from their home environment** - some things that kids learn in school -they trust their teacher's word.

*(MM PE Teacher)*



If a training like this comes via the school, then including boys as part of the training program aids the collective norm shifting. Also boys can many-a-time benefit from such training if they are victims themselves.

**Feels boys need to be taught to work hard, develop etiquettes and skills** - how to talk to girls, what to talk to girls, how to treat them respectfully and how to behave with them as they lack this basic understanding. **Given their backgrounds - they see their father/ other males in the society behave and talk in a similar fashion with their mother/ other females.** They feel this is the only way to behave with the female gender. **They don't see it as "wrong behaviour" but a way of life.** Have told MM about a possible initiative for boys in this direction. We can do it as a future initiative.

*(MM Trainer)*

Train boys - etiquette training - **they have to unlearn their conditioning - difficult to teach grown up kids as this is all they know. Boys need to be groomed right from their childhood.** Girls will be open to this idea as it is their need. Need to introduce 'respect' as a subject - emphasis on respecting the female gender, her importance in the society, value education, **before the mind is exposed to the biases prevalent in the society.**

*(MM Trainer)*

MM training for boys - they don't have separate training for males. Discussions remain same - boys also understand - they too realise girls have to be treated on par "ladkiyon ko samman dena hai." **Need to take them along "unke saath lekar chalna hai."**

*(MM PE Teacher)*

**CONCLUSION**

**& Action  
Steps**

Social change especially the one that is about correcting imbalances in society is a slow arduous process. People hold on to beliefs because there is a pay-off associated with that belief for the individual. There other aspect that makes norms so sticky is as social animals, the perceptions about these norms matter i.e. **what most others in a group believe or do to guide our behaviour.** That said, **norm shifting with concerted focused effort is possible.** In the recent past the pandemic is a case in point that created a collective norm shifting with respect to hygiene habits and mask wearing across the globe. **This research shows that even when the trigger is not external as it was in case of the pandemic, norm shifting is possible. The work that MukkaMaar has done has been a step in that direction.** Though the new thinking is only beginning to bubble up to the surface, for new norms to be acknowledged by a wider society, more actors would have to get involved.

As concluding thoughts to this research we outline some action steps for any organizations working in this direction.

A **community level change** involves not just working on individual but on creating new social expectations. **Religion** is a big influencer in India and brings the community together. Also many a time people hold on to limiting beliefs citing religion. Given this context religion could be leveraged to showcase new norms like spread news about these issues through Ganapathi or Durga Puja pandals.

Social norms exist within reference groups. Engaging the proper reference group is critical for effectively changing a social norm. **Schools are important channel to dispense information,** correct beliefs and spread the word since the teacher and the principal become the influencers for parents and children. Health workers and brands anyway target schools to hold discussions about Menstruation, Nutrition etc.

**Parents should be made an active part of the conversation as change agents. One set of parents become an important reference group for another set parents thus building the momentum of change and showing what could also be 'another normal'** So far, our research indicates that parents have picked up information passively. Early childhood conditioning starts with parents and a lot of how the girl grows in terms of freedom given to her, upbringing and culture, depends on her parents.

**Sensitizing parents to the long term implications of seemingly normal practices** - rebuking girls all the time or not letting them express themselves makes them mentally weak and affects their confidence and self esteem. In the long term it also dents their ability to be vocal about their needs and issues they are facing. Parents need to take their kids along - discuss and gain their trust so they are able to confide in them.

Over time the **ubiquity of certain behaviours make them seem normal. There are certain strategies that can help break this pattern or conditioning.** **1. Thinking about possibilities that are fall in between the extremes i.e. going all out or complete avoidance.** **2. Being aware of over generalizations and the tendency to magnify the negatives.**

*Girls should never go out in the dark can be replaced with If a girls needs to step out at night for something important, she can keep herself safe by her presence of mind and by learning self-protection techniques.*

In this light, strength is not an obvious trait associated with the female gender when considered physically. Hence establishing the connect between physical strength and women might involve overcoming several mental barriers. **However 'mental and emotional strength' is a relatively more intuitive and realistic connect. It is also a fact that mental strength is an important building block for physical strength and achievement in general.**

When **beliefs are rooted in a community's value system and are in integral part of our identity, labelling those as negative creates strong mental resistance.** Besides these beliefs beyond on a point become part of our subconscious and hence ingrained and habitual. On the flip side – adopting new thought patterns is possible with awareness and a little effort and can actually influence the reality of our lives. **By and large replacing older patterns with new patterns is relatively easier than trying to correct them.**

*Our Sanskaars (cultural values) teach us to respect our elders, following our religion, set of rules laid down by the society. However, times have changed- we have to be cognizant of the fact that there are anti social elements who don't hesitate to break rules, who don't really bother about societal norms per se. Even teasing, crimes on girls is a reality today. Along with our traditional practises, we need to ensure daughters are strong and safe. **Taking care of our daughters is also part of our Sanskaar.***

**What is needed and brands like Tanishq are already doing this is, to change the narrative around Sanskaar. You can't tell people apke sanskaar galat hai (your values are wrong) – since that would be pointing a finger at someone's identity. It is however possible to change traditions in a non offensive way.**

**Naye zaamane ki nayi sanskriti – it is far easier to replace a new thought than to try and uproot an existing one.**

Norm shifting also warrants **creating opportunities for reflection.** Small group intimate conversations that get the discourse going around why and in what contexts the issue occurs or the implications and possibilities going forward.

For instance - what is the implication of passive acceptance that adults thrust on to children? The deeper and more serious impact is we regress further as a society. It leads to more restrictions. These sort of rules are only the starting point.

Change in such matters is usually slow, happens in pockets and sometimes subtle. Hence **norm-shifting also warrants establishing that although the change is gradual, it is happening.**

What is dominantly seen by children in mainstream media i.e. advertising, movies, television content is the dominant discourse around gender. Kids passively watch what their mothers see on television - large joint families with overdressed women engaging in kitchen politics. Such stereotypes seem not just normal but aspirational to the children. Even cartoons for kids show the female cartoon character as sensitive and in need of a male character to take decisions (Doremon/ Chota bheem ).

What children need to see more of is that **there is a different set of people who live by a different set of rules and that is another normal. Inspiring stories of women protagonists. Not just super stars but everyday heroes.** Back in the 80's television content like *Udaan* showed the journey of a regular girl from a regular family who overcome societal restrictions and became an IPS officer.

In a world where projection has become as important or perhaps more important than reality, show casing every little will go a long way.

To reframe the words of Armstrong

*These small steps taken by women, could add up and become a giant leap for womankind.*

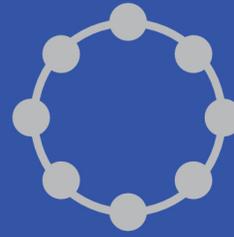
SOCIETY

INSTITUTION

COMMUNITY

INTERPERSONAL

INDIVIDUAL



Societal norms become part of identity hence correcting norms backfires. Replacing older patterns with new patterns is relatively easier. Creating a narrative around Naye zaamane ki nayi sanskriti (new values). 2. Establishing that although the change is gradual, it is happening. Show change and progressive stories through TV, Music, Social Media, Blogs, and advertising content.



**SCHOOL AS AN INSTITUTION**

Teacher and school leader are important reference groups. Training at schools creates a new culture at school. Sensitizes boys on gender respect.

**SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS - creating opportunities for reflection and fireside conversations.**



Creating new social expectations using religion as an influencer at community events. Showcase new norms, dispense information about issues at pandals.



Encourage parents to become active change agents. Show 'another normal' is possible through progressive beliefs and behaviour. Highlight the long term implications of seemingly normal practices of rebuking girls. Thinking about possibilities that are fall in between the extremes i.e. going all out or complete avoidance.



Being aware of over generalizations and the tendency to magnify the negatives – perpetuates counterproductive thinking. Recognize that mental strength and self esteem is as important as physical strength.

# ACTION STEPS FOR NORM SHIFTING



# Appendix 1

## Scope of the research and areas of enquiry.

### Understanding the respondent's context and mindset :

- The family context – composition, gender based comparisons between children / siblings, peers in school, if any, gender roles they see at home between parents, teachers at school, trainers male v/s female, how they feel about those?
- Beliefs about equality, where equality is good and desirable, where if at all equality is not needed?
- Extent of freedom v/s limitations experienced. Expectations / wishful thinking. Their role models, women they look up to.
- Their concerns, hopes, aspirations and stress-points in everyday life.
- Beliefs about what a girl can and cannot do, should and should not do
- Reactions to girls who have stepped out of the code – is it too aspirational and out of reach, too aggressive, is collective norm shifting over time possible?
- What would be the impact / outcome of questioning accepted gender based norms in society – positive v/s negative?
- Self image explored through a visualization v/s an external viewpoint on the imagery.

### Knowledge about MukkaMaar

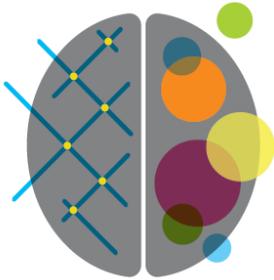
- Spontaneous associations with MukkaMaar.
- Word-of-mouth.
- Perceptions about who it is meant for – the perceived MukkaMaar girl and her imagery.
- Program perceptions – any tangible differences that can be noticed in the children, in themselves as adults associated with the children beneficiaries.
- Is MM training critical v/s nice to have – why?
- What could be triggers and barriers for and against the MukkaMaar program
- What differentiates it from the rest?
- Experience of doing the session? What do they like? How do they feel when they training?
- Expectations from MukkaMaar – what else do they want? Wish list, if they could change one thing about MM program what would that be.
- Reactions to concepts / new ideas.
- Ideating on their own future / future of the children - outcome exploration- the difference in situation between what would have happened without the intervention.

# Appendix 2

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**illume**  
insights from the subconscious

## About illume

illume is a specialist research and consulting firm based in Bangalore co-founded by Reshma Bachwani and Ravi Paritosh who bring together their skills in consumer insight, design research and visual communication to work on issues that involve decoding any aspect of a brand idea, a consumer behaviour or a cultural phenomenon.

### About the author

#### **Reshma Bachwani**

Has spent almost two decades exploring consumer insights and advising companies on their marketing & communication strategies.

With a post graduation in Marketing & training in clinical Hypnotherapy, Reshma has created a unique process, which involves understanding subconscious consumer behaviour that goes beyond the rational and obvious to the deeper emotional decision-making.

She is the author of two award winning research papers (on subconscious research & design research presented at the Market Research Society of India seminar in the year 2008 and 2010) and has contributed to several research publications.



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