



# STREE MANORAKSHA NEWSLETTER

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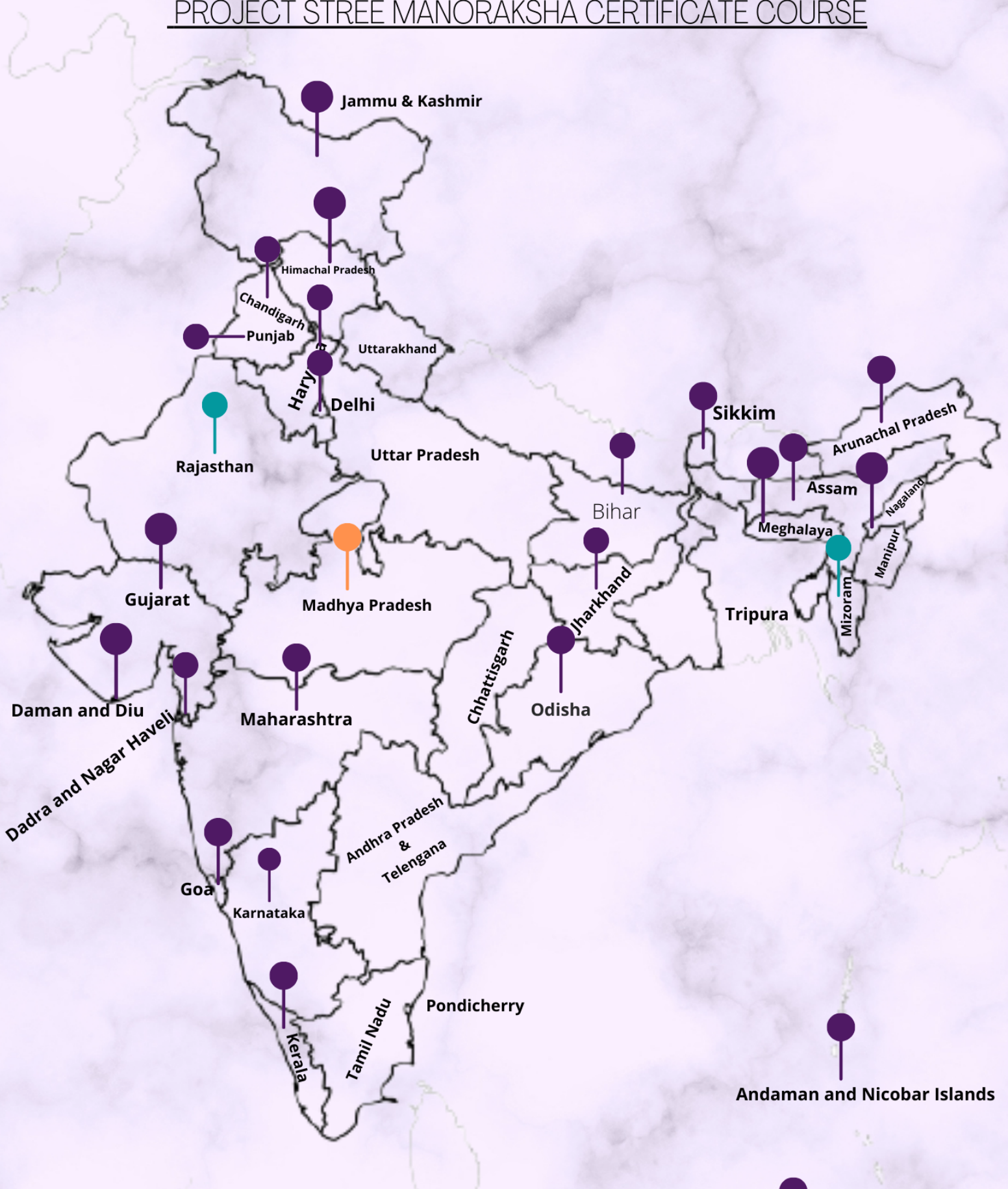
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# ON THE MAP:

## PROJECT STREE MANORAKSHA CERTIFICATE COURSE



States and UTs with completed certificate course

States and UTs with ongoing certificate course

States and UTs with upcoming certificate course

# ACTS OF RESISTANCE:

MOVING FROM VICTIMHOOD TO FORTITUDE

BY DEVANSHI GORADIA

RESISTANCE CAN BE



COVERT



OVERT

In the patriarchal society in which we live, the concepts of "ways to avoid abuse" and "passivity" are always associated with women experiencing abuse. Such tactics (such as don't walk alone, don't be out late at night, and don't wear revealing clothing) frequently restrict women's options, interactions, and liberties.

There is a wealth of literature that details violence against women globally. Much of this literature represents women as "victims of patriarchy," neglecting how women resist violence and reconstitute empowered subjectivities. This article provides a new perspective that enables us to shift from victimhood to fortitude, which we can accomplish by identifying and sharing stories of acts of micro-resistance in the face of violence to strengthen one's agency.

## STRENGTH, RESISTANCE, AND RESILIENCE.

Women in abusive relationships display immense strength, resistance, and resilience. However, when we consider what women can do, these scripts conclude with the options and resources (clinical, medical, legal, and political) available to women to react and recover from the assault.

The changes began through the work of Gondolf and Fisher (1988). They were the first researchers to challenge the stereotypical image of passivity and learned helplessness associated with survivors. According to their "survivor theory," women in abusive relationships actively seek assistance. They do not remain passive. The institutions that woman turns to for help, though, frequently fall short of her requirements.



# UNDERSTANDING RESISTANCE STRATEGIES



There is ample evidence associated with women feeling guilt and shame because they feel like they did not resist enough, blaming themselves for not doing enough. We primarily judge resistance based on overt behaviours, oblivious that resistance can take many different forms. Women in abusive relationships can retain a sense of self by entering what Stark (2007) calls "safety zones." Safety zones can be considered concrete objects as well as abstract thoughts. This idea of abstract safety zones can be in the form of engaging in covert resistant actions instead of overt acts. As counsellors, it is essential to identify and acknowledge the little acts of resistance while at the same time respecting the client's pace and readiness to act. It can be challenging to spot resistance in some situations. It is essential to refrain from imposing a viewpoint on the client.

## COVERT ACTS OF RESISTANCE

Covert acts of resistance can be seen as storing away personal objects or thinking about something else during an abusive incident. These are covert actions that occur without the abusive partner knowing about them. Covert and Overt resistance allows the woman to experience a sense of accomplishment. It could be in the form of



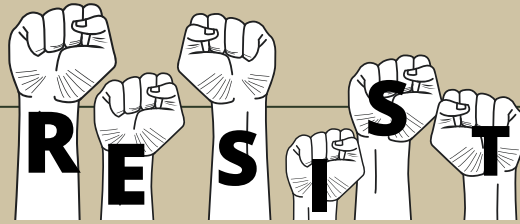
- A physical (a movement, gesture, or physical contact with a person)

Other types of action (taking a picture with a cell phone, texting a friend or the police, flickering the lights to attract someone's attention, taking legal action)

-A verbal (saying something, yelling, shouting, making sounds)

- A thought (imagining oneself in a safe place)

## SOME EXAMPLES OF COVERT ACTS OF RESISTANCE BY WOMEN SUBJECTED TO VIOLENCE



*"I clutched my sari in my fists. I had shut my eyes. My body would not stop trembling, though I willed it to. Suddenly, I was in a garden. There were swans in a lake, a tree that arched above, dropping blue flowers, and the sound of water falling as though the world had no end. The wind smelled of sandalwood. "Let them stare at my nakedness, I thought." "Why should I care? They, and not I, should be ashamed for shattering the bounds of decency."*

***Excerpt from "The Palace of Illusions" by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni.***

*A 21-year-old displays acts of resistance when she speaks about how she resisted her abuse and the cycle of violence in her family. "Once I woke up, I was sleeping, and I felt someone (referring to her mother's boyfriend at the time) touching under my sweater. "This stupid guy is trying to do these things to me. He doesn't control me. I was not going to be the victim... It will not change my life that that guy touched under my sweater. He did it because he was a sick man.*

***Excerpt from Gordon, S. F. (2017). Narratives of resistance and resilience: exploring stories of violence against women Agenda, 31(2), 34-43.***

*"When I leave school to walk home, I don't feel safe because I know I will meet them on the road because they know the route that I take from school to home.... Valerie's decision to walk two hours instead of 30 minutes to reach home is a form of resistance on the part of Valerie, as it may help her avoid her rapist."*

***Excerpt from Gordon, S. F. (2017). Narratives of resistance and resilience: exploring stories of violence against women Agenda, 31(2), 34-43.***

# How does the amplification of acts of resistance help collectively?

As resistance narratives become more familiar and accessible, women are more likely to recognize and accurately describe their acts of resistance.

## Resistance narratives make resistance accessible to women

By providing women with information about what other women have accomplished, amplifying these stories aids in constructing ideas and notions of resistance.



## Importance of Resistance Narratives

Resistance narratives are valuable for the women who tell them and those who hear them. This data is critical for ending victimization and ending violence against women.

"I raise up my voice-not so I can shout but so that those without a voice can be heard...we cannot succeed when half of us are held back."

-Malala Yousafzai, Activist



### References:

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- Crichton-Hill, Y. I. (2016). Stories of resistance: women moving away from intimate partner violence