

THEME 3**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IS THE BIGGEST OBSTACLE
TO SAFE AND HEALTHY SOCIETIES**

- E** When Nasreen (name changed to protect confidentiality) joined one of CEQUIN's Self Help Groups, she had been married for 14 years and had 6 children. She was constantly being subject to marital rape as well as being forced to engage in unnatural sex. As her awareness and self-worth grew, along with a sense of sisterhood of the collective, she was able to share these problems with her group members. As a result, CEQUIN was able to provide her with legal and family counseling. After this mediation, her husband changed his behaviour and now treats her with respect. Nasreen shares that she would never have had the courage to address her problem, if not for being a part of a collective and building her self confidence. She is now happy and lives a dignified life.
- F** Asma, was married off at a very young age and lived in Himachal Pradesh with her husband. Post-marriage her husband, who was involved in an extra marital affair, would often abuse her. She had a daughter and son from the marriage. Due to neglect and abuse, her son died at the age of three. Soon after, her husband threw her and her daughter out of the marital home. She went to live with her parents who were very poor and not ready to support her. Finally, she moved to Delhi and took up work as a domestic help in order to sustain in the city. During this time, she joined CEQUIN's vocational training course in cutting and tailoring. Seeing her skill and commitment, she was recommended by the instructor to a nearby boutique for a job. Upon joining there, her earning and working conditions improved. She was able to save money and rented a small flat for her daughter and herself. She has been working for years now and has enrolled her daughter in a nearby school.