



Story from the Field

Tipping Point: Digging Up the Roots of Child Marriage to Replant the Future

A Story of Positive Deviance: A Daughter-in-Law and Mother-in-Law Duo Challenging Norms and Inspiring Others

The Mother-in-Law

During lunch at a training organized recently by DSDC, CARE's partner organization in Kapilvastu district for the Tipping Point Project, I noticed a woman in her 60s sitting at one of the lunch tables waiting for her food. I had not seen her during the training session so I was a little surprised and was wondering who she was. Soon I noticed, Sabnam Begam, one of the Tipping Point group facilitators from a Muslim community of Kapilvastu was accompanying her. Curious, I gently moved over to Ms Begam and whispered in her ear. Later on, I got to know that the woman was Phulbani Musalman, Sabnam's mother-in-law.

Phulbani Musalman was there to take care of Ms Begam. "Her husband doesn't allow her to come out of the house unless I accompany her", Musalman said. Sabnam's in-laws want Sabnam to go out of the house and earn fame since she is one of the few daughter-in-laws in her community who has completed her school education. Phulbani is trying to balance the interest of her son and daughter-in-law. "My son wants Sabnam to stay inside the house and Sabnam wants to go out of the home to work", she said. And so she talked with her son about Sabnam's interests and potential, and negotiated with him to let her work. "Finally, he agreed to allow her to work as a Group Facilitator for the Tipping Point project, but only on the condition that I, her mother-in-law, accompany her on overnight trips outside the home", said Phulbani. And so here she was, accompanying Sabnam while she attended a training away from home.



The Daughter-in-Law

"My husband wants me to be in "burkha" and take my mother-in-law when I travel out of the community and have overnight trips" Sabnam had shared the first time I had spoken to her. Her joining the Tipping Point project as a Group Facilitator is a matter of pride and source of inspiration for local Muslim girls. "Since I joined the Tipping Point project as a Group Facilitator, seven Muslim girls have joined the adolescent girls' group and some parents in my neighborhood (Muslim Community) are sending their daughters to the group" Begam said.

The Husband

I met Nasib Akhtar Musalman one day when Sabnam brought him to the DSDC office. "I brought him to the office to show him what kind of work I am doing. Few people in our community had misinformed him about my work", she said. Nasib has just returned from Mumbai. I talked to Nasib and he was happy to know that his wife has received appreciation from team members and supervisors. "I feel proud of Sabnam," he said. "She earns as much as I do in Mumbai..."



This story was originally documented by Umesh Pokharel, former Advocacy and Communications Officer, Tipping Point, CARE Nepal.