


by Sexuality&Disability 3 years ago

Sexuality workshop for VI women at Pune Blind Men's Association

Second in the series of our workshops in Pune, we landed up at PBMA's Technical Training Institute where we met 17 women with visual impairment who learned everything from giving massages to call centre training.


A total of 15 girls attended the workshop and two joined in the second half. The participants were shy at first, didn't wholly absorb when we asked for their consent for taking and publishing their photos, so we asked for a second time later. They replied confidently "you can take our pictures, just please don't publish pictures of our faces with the body models" (which we as it is never do).



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Yo tweeps, we are in Pune again for a workshop at Pune Blind Men's Association. Live-tweeting at 1 pm. Watch this space for more! #sexdis

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Before beginning workshop we always ask the participants if we can take their pics & use for social dissemination. #Consentiskey #sexdis

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The ice breaker worked well, typically the way it has in the previous workshops. Most common aspirations were learning English and getting a job. Many of them listed two things, in a combo of work and play. Wishlists also included visiting Goa, teaching, becoming a telephone operator among others. The two most unique aspirations were: Priyanka said she wants to visit Japan to see all the progress there which is particularly done for the benefit of visually impaired people. Jayshree said that she wants to write a book titled "The Struggles of My Life"



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.@rajuness starts with our ever green ice breaker, introduce yourself and tell one thing that you have never done but want to do. #sexdis

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Some want to go to Goa, some Japan, some want to become a teacher while some want to learn languages. [#sexdis pic.twitter.com/VkdSifRITQ](#)

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Nidhi Goyal
@saysnidhigoyal

[#sexdis](#) workshop begins at Blind Man's association Pune- shy girls begin to talk abt their dreams

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We heard some very interesting aspirations, one wants to write book titled 'Struggles of Life'. [#sexdis](#)


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While another wants to visit Japan to see the progress of VI people there. [#sexdis](#)


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We have started live-tweeting our fifth workshop in Pune. Follow our feed, tweeps [#sexdis](#) [@genderlogindia](#) [@theladiesfinger](#) [@CRPD_India](#)


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Like the last time, Nidhi asked after everybody's turn about nobody mentioning the desire to get married. The girls giggled which broke the ice and made them somewhat comfortable to talk. This also made way for Nidhi to describe the workshop and its purpose.

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[.@saysnidhigoyal](#) very smartly drives the conversation from aspirations to personal dreams & asks them about desire to be married [#sexdis](#)

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 **Japleen Pasricha**
japna_p@japna_p

So much interesting stuff happening at [@dis_sexuality](#)'s timeline: they are live-tweeting a sexuality workshop. Go follow [#sexdis](#)


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 **Nidhi Goyal**
[@saysnidhigoyal](#)

[#sexdis](#) loss of sight doesn't mean a thing- girls share dreams of becoming banker, teacher, musician, physiotherapists!!!


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Hemlata started her session on body, menstruation and sexual organs. She mentioned clitoris which is a first for SexDis workshops. She used the Marathi word “shisnika” for the same and described the pleasure one can experience by touching and stroking it. She explained about how or why we menstruate. Nidhi asked the participants if one of them could summarize it for their Hindi speaking friends, also to see how much they have understood. Anita explained it really well. Though, she used the word husband for man while talking about the sperms.

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Now we start with our first session on body. Hemlata, our resource person, asks if anyone knows about the menstrual process? [#sexdis](#)

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 **Nidhi Goyal**
@saysnidhigoyal

#sexdis Hemlata Pisal talks about menstruation and the process

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Hemlata: "VI people exp body through touch and smell. So how do you when the menstrual flow is less or more?"


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Hemlata explains why or how women menstruate. @saysnidhigoyal asks one of them to summarize for their Hindi-speaking friends. #sexdis


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While explaining menstruation and the taboo around it she said, "If gods were also born to women who menstruated, how can menstruation be bad?"

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Hemlata explains the uterus, menstrual cycle and menopause. She also busts myths around washing hair, going to kitchen/temple, etc. #sexdis

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We need low cost accessible urine pregnancy homekits for blind women. Why don't we have them yet? #sexdis

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It is imp to change your sanitary napkin at least twice a day even during light bleeding to avoid infections. #sexdis

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Hemlata busts the 'log kay kahenge' myth and says dry your cloth sanitary pads properly under the sun and not in corners. #sexdis

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Think of strength of our uterus, it is made up of elastic muscles and can expand to the size of a football during pregnancy: Hemlata #sexdis

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Hemlata asks, do you know how women get pregnant? The participants giggles! #sexdis

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Hemlata: we are attracted to men, like their presence, touch. Then sometimes man & woman come closer. They make love. #sexdis

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@saysnidhigoyal

#sexdis Counsellor talks about attraction and desires and the girls giggle!!! quiet but eager to listen more

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"Did you know: One drop of semen fluid contains one and a half lac sperms?" Hemlata #sexdis

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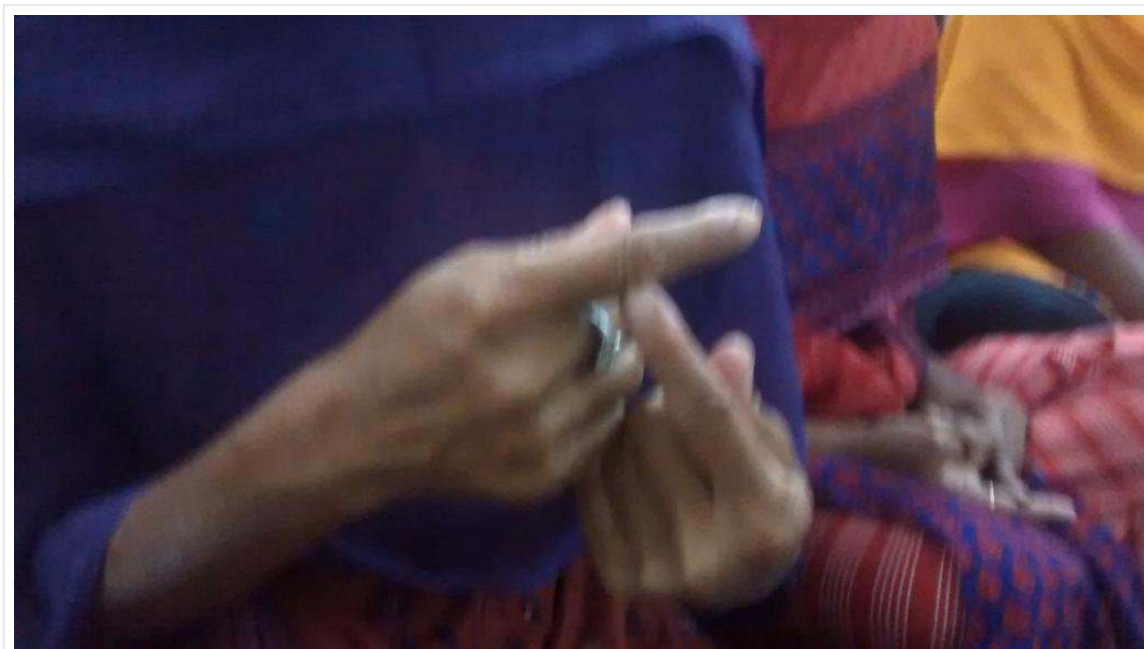
This is the first time we discussed female masturbation during our workshop and focused on pleasure and enjoying one's body.

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Hemlata: If you touch and rub your clitoris, you'll experience pleasure and it is perfectly okay to do so. [#sexdis](#) [#femalemasturbation](#)


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Hema gave examples and made the girls understand various things through hand movements. Like she explained CopperT contraception and the different sizes of penis before and after arousal. Hema said, “penis is generally small (half of our middle finger) but when it is erect it enlarges (if we open our hands from tip of thumb to tip of middle finger)”




Hemlata now talks about contraception and tells girls about Copper T. [#sexdis](#)
pic.twitter.com/0aN09mcU3f

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 **Nidhi Goyal**
@saysnidhigoyal

[#sexdis](#) counselor: have you heard about HIV? Girls: yes! wonder how ppl give HIV training without talking abt sex

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To explain white discharge, Hemlata says its like spoiled curd. To explain the smell during infection, she says its like bad fish. [#sexdis](#)

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Hemlata now talks about abortion and says we can have a MTP till 20 weeks and it is safer to abort within 12 weeks. #sexdis

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She also talks about gender-biased sex selection and says don't let anyone force you to have an abortion. #sexdis

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Questions by the girls: “Is there any effect of mala-d on our body?”, asks Ritu

She also asked later during the body model observations: “Is it true that condoms reduces the man’s pleasure?”



The favourite part of our workshop is here: the tactile charts and models are out! :) #sexdis
pic.twitter.com/ODfs6wDAu

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This time we also have uterus models! :) #sexdis pic.twitter.com/aCSwfIRuB

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The group with the penis model giggles the most. Always! :) #sexdis pic.twitter.com/GCtzFUZcl0

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Inner and outer lips, clitoris, urinal opening, vaginal opening and anus, @saysnidhigoyal explains all. [#sexdis pic.twitter.com/m50zt55Lkl](https://pic.twitter.com/m50zt55Lkl)

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Its break time and all of us are having cream rolls. @rajuness asks, what is the shape of cream roll? Rooms erupts in laughter! #sexdis

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One of them responds, its the same. The only difference is cream roll has a design on it. #sexdis #supersmartgirls

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Then we started the role play. Topics were:


- V.I. girl likes sighted boy and is warned against it by her V.I. friends the topic was wonderfully explored. A story was carved around the relationship: how they met, how the sighted boy behaves and how the V.I. girl has ensured that she trusts him with full reason. They discussed court marriage, being a couple in public, the relation between their families etc.
- Pressure on a V.I. girl to get married to a person she doesn't like: The group did well in bringing out the structural violence of keeping the girl away from her friends and her education in order to force her into marriage. But at the end, the girl gives in to the pressure according to their performance. Nidhi questioned this later and even Kranti discussed it, the group members then changed their view.
- Boyfriend pressurized a V.I. girl to have sex. he has promised marriage, but girl unsure: The topic drifted from consent and

comfort to pre vs post marital sex. In the debriefing the discussion was aimed to bring to notice consent, agency of the V.I. girl and also marital rape.

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We are now divided into groups: Goa, India and Japan. Each group receives a situation which they have to later role-play. #sexdis

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 **Nidhi Goyal**
@saysnidhigoyal

fantastic role plays - confident, progressive. very few internalised prejudices of disability.bt strong reflection of gender roles! #sexdis


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.@saysnidhigoyal says like ppl have diff disabilities, ppl also have diff sexual orientations & to consider while choosing a partner #sexdis

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Kranti's session was the final session. She began by driving a narrative of patriarchy at home through inquiry and questions. The girls were completely absorbed and involved in the session, as Kranti would not lecture, but inquire and discuss. She described the situation of a working daughter and an alcoholic son to describe gender roles and privileges.

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Now Kranti, a legal counselor and POCSO expert , has taken over and discusses harassment and violence in relationships #sexdis

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#sexdis counselor Kranti: problem is girls aren't asked but are told that a boy is coming to see u for marriage

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#sexdis girl: if we work after marriage we will be independent- that always helps!

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@saysnidhigoyal

if v r unmarried...and not working... then mostly people taunt us, v r left to take care of our sibblings kids- say girls #sexdis

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There was a discussion on girls being paraya dhan, and Kranti beautifully deconstructed the whole notion, along with breaking the idea of “property” being it paraya or apna. She made sure the discussion about violence is not limited to hitting, but covers all kinds of injustice at the familiar home space.

 **Nidhi Goyal**
@saysnidhigoyal


#sexdis girls and boys are born from the same place. yet girls 'paraya dhan' and boy 'apna dhan-gharka chirag'

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Kranti asks, where do we feel unsafe? Girls: society, streets, neighbours. #sexdis

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Girls tell, men follow, send letters, give blank calls and touch inappropriately without permission. #sexdis

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@saysnidhigoyal

#sexdis boys send letters to harass us- bt we cant read it right said I jokingly.no nidhi tai they send it in braille too-reply girls


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She then began a discussion on a-surakshit-ta i.e. feeling unsafe and where all do we feel unsafe. Once it was thoroughly discussed, she talked about trusting the survivors of violence and the importance of speaking out.

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Kranti asks: would we ever lie about being harassed? People might not believe us, but it is vital we speak out! #sexdis

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@saysnidhigoyal

#sexdis just proves that ungendering of disabled male doesn't work... they too can be the abusers

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#sexdis when ppl touch us inappropriately we feel frustrated that if v could c, we would have stopped them and slapped them

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"Does this happen only on streets or homes, colony as well?" asks Kranti. "We must tell people we trust about it." #sexdis


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Help can be available with good or bad intentions to V.I. women. We must wait till we get the appropriate kind of help, said Kranti.

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There are people with good intentions on the street as well. We should understand the difference between good touch and bad touch. #sexdis

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"To prove love, sex is not the only way." Kranti. #sexdis

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Nidhi Goyal
@saysnidhigoyal

#sexdis very usual pressure tactics- boy says to prove ur love for me, y don't u sleep with me.

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#sexdis girl- sex is ot the only way to prove ur love!

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Kranti asks, is it necessary to marry the one you have sex with? Girls: yes. Kranti: Even if he is an alcoholic, beater, womanizer? #sexdis

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Kranti: The link between sex and marriage is not important but it is necessary to take care of unwanted pregnancies. #sexdis

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Kranti: if you exp harassment at workplace, will you leave the job? Girls: NO! We will raise our voice! #sexdis

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Nidhi Goyal
@saysnidhigoyal

#sexdis kranti: even if the abuser is your father u must take action- go to the police or NGO.

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.@saysnidhigoyal is back again and talks about the sympathy POV that people with disabilities, esp women are seen with. #sexdis



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.@saysnidhigoyal stresses on imp of self-mobility, asks if everyone has sticks and have been trained. Loud YES! #sexdis



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We end the workshop with a loud thunder of applause from the girls. Watch this space for the Storify soon :) #sexdis



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