

महिला व मुलांकरिता सहाय्य कक्ष

SPECIAL CELL FOR  
WOMAN & CHILDREN.

दिवस- सोमवार, बुधवार, शुक्रवार  
मंगळवार, गुरुवार भेटीसाठी बाहेर  
वेळ- १०-३० ते ५-३०

# TISS RCI-VAW Overview

TISS pioneered the **Special Cell** model in partnership with the Mumbai Police in 1984, as an innovative response to the issue of violence against women. After a successful partnership with the Government of Maharashtra to implement Special Cells across the state, the **Resource Centre for Interventions on Violence Against Women (RCI-VAW)** was set up in 2007 to strengthen and propagate Special Cells across states and to continue to innovate and nurture effective interventions on VAW with different stakeholders through training and research. RCI-VAW functions as an independent field action project of TISS' School of Social Work.

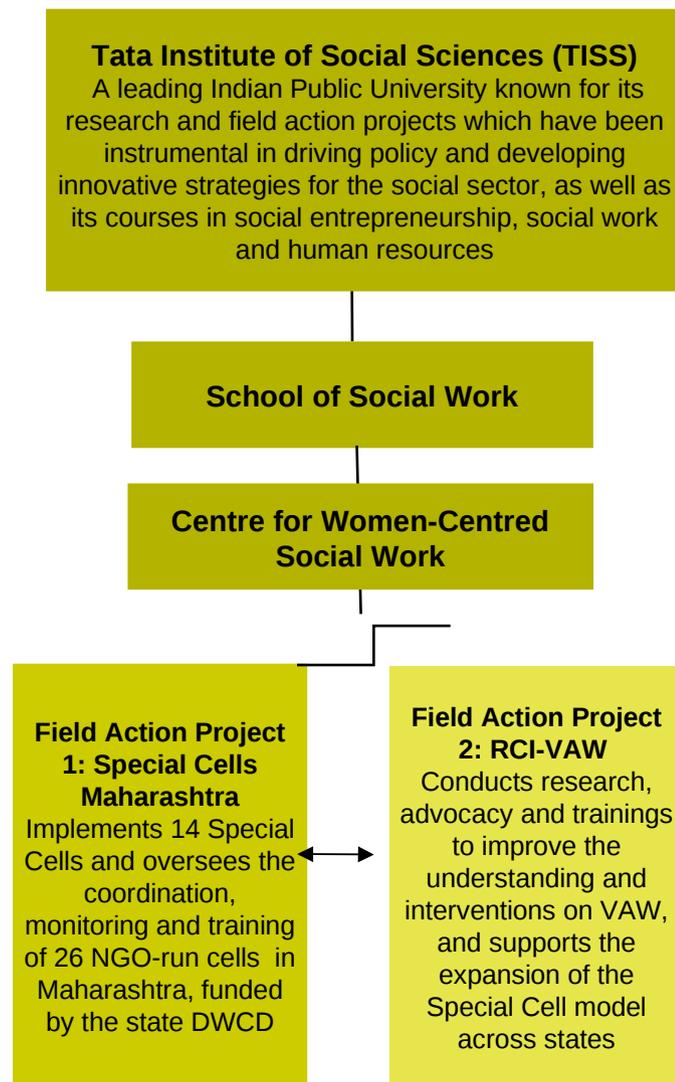
**Special Cells Thrust:** Women need to be recognized as individuals, with equal rights and opportunities in society, including the right to live a violence free life.

- **Special Cells are units with trained social workers within police stations, providing psycho-socio-legal services and serving as a nodal point for women facing violence.** The key features of the Special Cell model include:
- **Working within the police system:** The location of Special Cells helps them gain legitimacy, increase accessibility for women, and better coordinate the police's response to violence; the police being the first point of access for the survivor in the criminal justice system
- **Providing a holistic response to VAW:** The cell workers address a victim's immediate needs in a crisis, and work with the woman to empower her to take action and protect herself from violence in the future; they also provide the necessary referrals for other services
- **Applying a pro-woman approach:** Special Cells provide a much needed alternative to the pervasive patriarchal attitude and apathy that a woman faces whether she approaches her family, community, police or other groups for support
- Each Special Cell typically provides at least 150 women with extensive one-time intervention and guidance, and registers about 250 new cases per year, where it works with women over a longer period to address their needs.

**RCI-VAW Thrust:** Violence against women is a crime against both her and society, and it is the State's responsibility to prevent and counter it.

**RCI-VAW's key role is to strengthen and propagate the special Cell model in new states, and mobilize the government to take on ownership of this model.** Based on its work thus far:

- **236 Special Cells** are being operated (or recently sanctioned) by four state governments
- **12 pilot Cells** are being run in three states
- TISS has been recently approached to implement the model in **four more states**



Other Field Action Projects include:

- **Prayas**, established in 1990, works on the rights and rehabilitation of persons that come through the criminal justice system
- **Childline**, established in 1996, now an independent NGO

# Context of the Woman that Special Cells Work With

*The domestic violence survivor faces severe abuse; Special Cells enable her to build herself and her resources to transform her life for the longer term*

Statistics below are from an evaluation<sup>1</sup> of ten Special Cells in Maharashtra for the year of 2003

## Who is She?

- The profile of the woman coming to the Special Cell is about 25 years old and is married with a child (30% had child marriages)
- She has had some exposure to education, contributes to family income in some way but **has almost no assets** (over 90% with no savings or house)
- She **has already approached her family**, network or community before she comes to the Cell
- Most women have either been **referred to the Cell by ex-clients** and word of mouth (36%) or **police** (25%)
- 20% of the women were non-literate and 30% came from rural areas

## How Does the Special Cell Help Her?

Special Cells provide women with a much needed support system, **listening to the woman, engaging her in the problem solving process** and directly interacting with the perpetrators of violence

Women felt '*emotionally understood and light*' (75%) and '**strengthened**' (50%) to deal with future incidents

In most cases, **cell workers met with the husbands (74%)** and also met in-laws (28%)

Women felt empowered; they were prepared to contact the cell (56%) or the police (42%), while others referred women to the cell (54%)

A year later, **violence had stopped or reduced for 20%**

## What Kind of Violence Has She Faced?

- Women coming to Special Cells have faced severe abuse from their husbands and families
- 92%** of women visiting Special Cells had faced physical violence; **32% got medical help for their injuries**
- As a result of violence, 78% of women coming to the Cell were not living with their husbands
- Domestic violence was the overwhelming reason for which women came to the cell, **80% were beaten by their husbands** while 36% were beaten by their families
- 9% of women had attempted suicide**, and **the husbands of 25% had attempted to murder them**

## What are Her Expectations?

- On their first visit to the Special Cell, a majority of women are looking for the cell worker to **intervene with their husbands (75%) and expect a non-violent reconciliation (62%)**
- Over 90% expected some kind of relationship intervention while 9% came for information
- Despite severe violence, 20% wanted divorce** and only 5% wanted to prosecute, while many wanted help in getting their legal rights such as maintenance income or their own property and belongings
- Over 30% of women wanted police intervention to stop violence

<sup>1</sup>Evaluation Study of Special Cell for Women and Children within the Maharashtra State Police System', by Ms. Vidya Apte, 2004

# Special Cell Process

*Special Cells provide for a holistic pro-woman response to the issue of domestic violence; it employs a joint problem solving approach to help address violence in the short and long term, provides a support system and serves as a nodal point for the victim*

## Woman is Referred to the Special Cell

By the police, by word-of-mouth and ex-clients, by women's organizations

## Interventions by the Special Cell Social Worker

Provided in varying order based on a woman's unique needs

### One Time Information

The social worker spends 2-4 hours with every woman who approaches the cell to fully understand her situation and needs, and explain all her rights and options to her

### Case Registration

The social worker helps the woman seeking help to fill out a detailed application regarding the problem and her expectations of the Special Cell

### Individual Meetings

The cell worker works with the woman to increase her self-confidence, provides emotional support, helps her understand her options and prepares her to assert her own rights; they also provide safety planning and pre-litigation support

### Police Support

Cell workers engage the police as needed: to act on court orders, serve summons notices, crisis interventions, FIR registrations, etc.

### Joint Family Meetings

Joint meetings are held with the violent man and family to provide counseling for behavior change, and to create an opportunity for the woman to assert and negotiate for her rights (including her right to property, financial assistance, etc.)

### Community & Home Visits

When needed, cell workers visit the survivor's home for outreach work like follow-ups, crisis interventions, serving call-letter to the family or violent man for joint meetings, and also to harness the support of community leaders and groups to end and prevent violence

### Referrals to Other Services

The cell connects the woman to other resources she may need, such as legal aid, medical help and shelter homes

## Case Remains Open

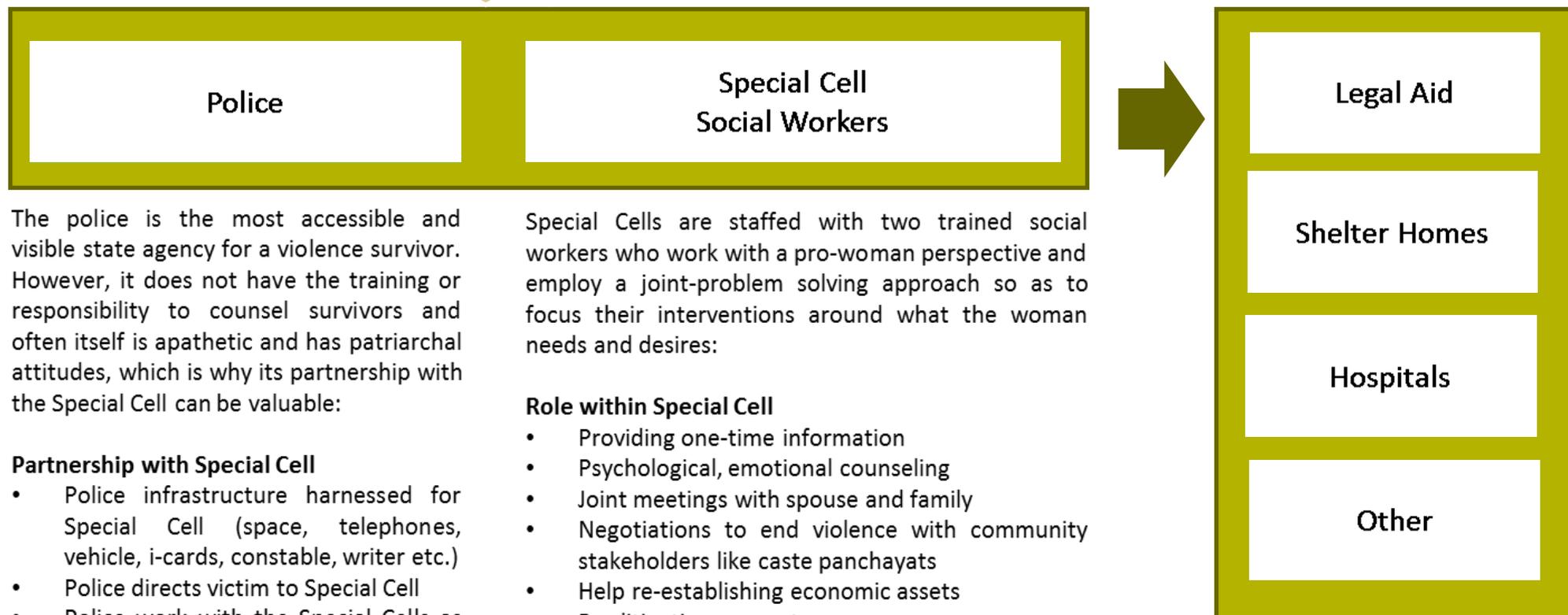
A woman's case is never closed; she is welcome to return to the cell at any time though if she returns after over a year, a detailed case registration is done again to ensure that it is up to date

# Special Cell Approach<sup>1</sup>

*Special Cells are strategically located in police stations, as a result of which it is able to better collaborate with the police and serve as a nodal point for the survivor; it thereby looks to ensure a coordinated multi-agency response to violence against women*

Woman Approaches Special Cell in Police Station

Provided Referrals to Other Stakeholders



The police is the most accessible and visible state agency for a violence survivor. However, it does not have the training or responsibility to counsel survivors and often itself is apathetic and has patriarchal attitudes, which is why its partnership with the Special Cell can be valuable:

## Partnership with Special Cell

- Police infrastructure harnessed for Special Cell (space, telephones, vehicle, i-cards, constable, writer etc.)
- Police directs victim to Special Cell
- Police work with the Special Cells as needed: to act on court orders, serve summons notices, crisis interventions, FIR registrations, etc.

Special Cells are staffed with two trained social workers who work with a pro-woman perspective and employ a joint-problem solving approach so as to focus their interventions around what the woman needs and desires:

## Role within Special Cell

- Providing one-time information
- Psychological, emotional counseling
- Joint meetings with spouse and family
- Negotiations to end violence with community stakeholders like caste panchayats
- Help re-establishing economic assets
- Pre-litigation support
- Home visits when needed
- Facilitate coordination with POs and the police

• Goal: Coordinated Multi-Agency Response to Violence Against Women

<sup>1</sup>The Special Cell ' goes beyond a standardized approach and can be adapted and evolved for specific contexts and regions

# RCI-VAW's Work

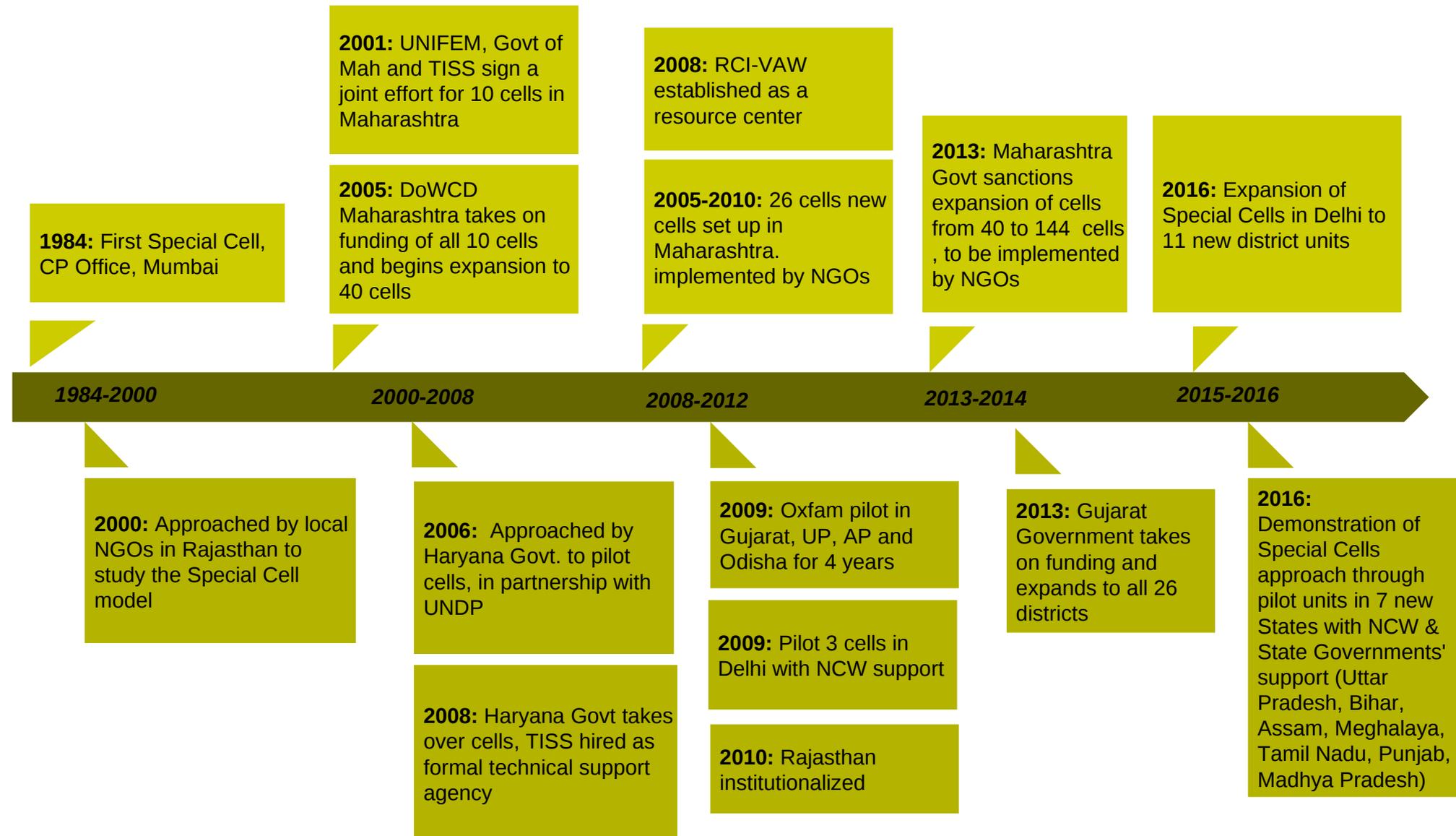
*RCI-VAW supports implementation of a few Special Cells in Maharashtra, and strengthens on-ground work through interventions research, which in turn drives advocacy; these together support expansion to new states and strengthening of existing cells; it then leverages its sector experience to train and sensitize other stakeholders*

Activities	Description	Examples
Implement & Innovate VAW Interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implements 14 Special Cells in Maharashtra, leveraging on-ground experiences to drive innovation</li> <li>• Designs new and context-specific intervention strategies for VAW, in partnership with other stakeholders</li> </ul>	Eg. Introduced new interventions within Special Cells; Designed the 181 Emergency Response Service Helpline in Gujarat
Support Expansion of Special Cells	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hands-on support for the piloting<sup>1</sup> of Special Cells in new states, adapting the model for regional context</li> <li>• Strengthen existing cells through trainings, monitoring, handholding, and advocacy</li> </ul>	Eg. Piloted Special Cells in Haryana from 2006-2008, adapting the model by combining the PPO and cell worker role; served (2008-14) as a consultant to the State for monitoring and handholding
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluations to drive improvements and expansion of cells, and documentation of best practices</li> <li>• Research assignments for the government, and analytical papers and policy briefs to drive advocacy and reform</li> </ul>	Eg. Study on the implementation of PWDVA in 4 states (GoI funded); Study on effective interventions in Maharashtra Special Cells , PCMA study in Haryana
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviews state action and policies to provide suggestions for reform, and advocates for women friendly policies</li> <li>• Advocates with the government to strengthen and mainstream Special Cells – to increase budget, have more coordinators and cell workers, and state monitoring bodies</li> </ul>	Eg. TISS met with government officials in Maharashtra to get social worker salaries increased; intervened with High Court to ensure integration of Special Cells with police stations
Training Other Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trains police as well as other stakeholders like NGOs, community groups, academic institutions, and judiciary</li> <li>• Involves skill building, building a pro-woman perspective and providing information such as legal knowledge</li> </ul>	Eg. Trained Senior IPS officers on Women's Human Rights and the Special Cell model; also for mid-level police, health and WCD officials

<sup>1</sup>Pre-pilot advocacy and set up, along with hands-on support for pilot demonstration spans at least 15 months

# Key Historical Milestones

*The Special Cells model gained momentum throughout the 2000s, with the Maharashtra government taking over and successively expanding cells from 10 to 144, and pilots implemented in five states between 2006-2009*



# Structure within TISS: Link with Academia and Government

*RCI-VAW is a field action project of TISS' School of Social Work and is led by TISS faculty; this differentiates it from other non-profits working on the issue of violence against women in several ways, and is core to its model, scalability and success.*

## Characteristics of being a Field Action Project (FAP) of TISS

### Education

FAPs are extensions of the School of Social Work, generating from coursework to pioneer new services, strategies and models in the development sector and feeding back into the curriculum

### Resources

Being a part of TISS, RCI-VAW is given office space and finance and administrative support, and draws on up to 40% of the TISS faculty-in-charge's time.

RCI-VAW largely relies on government and other external funding, which is routed through TISS as it has all the required registrations for charitable grants

### Governance

RCI-VAW largely functions autonomously, with faculty-in-charge driving key decisions; however, all projects do require approvals from the Director of TISS and the Centre is in principle accountable to the TISS governing board

## Strengths and Benefits of Being a Part of TISS

### Partnership With Government

TISS' partnership with the government as a result of being a public university, as well as its reputation and experience in the field of social work allow RCI-VAW to **gain access and credibility among government bodies** and other civil society stakeholders, **which drives its success in training such stakeholders and mobilizing government resources**

### Research and Innovation

RCI-VAW is able to combine the academic strengths of TISS in research and education with working on the ground and providing public services (which is usually undertaken by NGOs); this **integration of learning and doing allows it to continually innovate and improve its services**

### Rich Academic Ecosystem and Resources

Grounded in research and innovation, **it focuses on developing models that can be taken over by the State**, thereby driving intervention scalability and sustainability

Based in the TISS Mumbai campus, RCI-VAW benefits from the **rich academic ecosystem** of TISS graduates with strong backgrounds in research and social work, **experienced TISS faculty which can be leveraged** to conduct various training sessions around women's issues, and TISS' other field action projects (9 others in the Mumbai campus alone) for peer learning from their leaders

# Executive Summary (1/2): Overview of Organization and Future Plan/Vision

## The Organization – TISS RCI-VAW

- The Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) developed the Special Cell intervention in 1984, to ensure a coordinated multi-agency response to the issue of violence against women (VAW)
- The Resource Centre for Interventions on Violence Against Women (RCI-VAW) was formed in 2007 as a Field Action Project of the TISS School of Social Work, to support the expansion of Special Cells and develop innovative interventions on VAW
- Special Cells are units with trained social workers within police stations, providing **psycho-socio-legal services and serving as a nodal point** for women facing violence
- The Special Cell **model gained momentum throughout the 2000s**, with the Maharashtra government taking over and expanding cells from 10 to 144, and **pilots implemented in five states between 2006-2009**
- RCI-VAW has played an instrumental role in this expansion, **conducting research, advocacy and trainings to strengthen the model and mobilize state governments** to take on funding and administration of Special Cells

## Proposed Project

- RCI-VAW plans, over the next 3 years, to leverage resources for three key areas:
  - **Strengthening existing government supported Special Cells in 4 states**
  - **Expanding Special Cells in 3 existing pilot states and in 7 new states**
  - **Building a larger team that can carry out its expanded activities**
- Its key activities will include conducting evaluations in existing states, trainings to strengthen existing Special Cells, demonstrating pilots in new states, and conducting advocacy across all states
- With this plan, RCI-VAW expects to reach **over 2 lakh women through Special Cells in the next three years**, and over 1.7 lakh annually in the longer term across 14 states
- The proposed resource mobilisation is expected to **leverage substantial funding from the 7 to 14 State Governments** in the longer term, towards the institutionalisation of provision of quality psycho-social-legal services within the State system for

*In the long term, RCI-VAW aims to ensure state ownership of its responsibilities in the protection, rehabilitation and justice for women facing violence. Survivors will be supported to access their legal, economic and human rights, and empowered to transform their lives in the longer term to live violence-free*

## BASIC FACTS

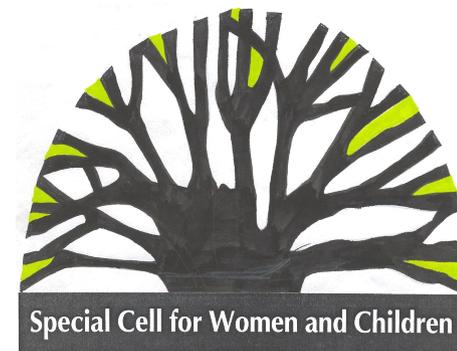
Website:	<a href="http://www.tiss.edu">www.tiss.edu</a> (under Field Action Projects)
Legal status:	Deemed University, Public Trust & Society
Current and legacy funders:	Trusts, UNIFEM, State Governments, UNDP, GoI, Oxfam India

## Current Status: 2012-2013

Geography of impact:	7 States in India
Total outreach:	36,000 Women



Tata Institute of Social Sciences



## **Executive Summary (2/2): Strengths & Highlights**

- **Highly scalable model supported by team's strategic vision to scale; demonstrated track record of expansion across states**

The Resource Centre has demonstrated the **ability to innovate and modify the model for regional contexts**; for example, engaging the State to implement in Haryana which does not have a lot of civil society organizations, and the proposed plan to leverage women's federations in Bihar

- The **team has the vision and desire to scale**, and is preparing to push for a national scheme to ensure the existence of Special Cell in police stations in at least every district

- The pace and time period over which the model can be scaled are also favorable; in the past 10 years Special Cells have increased from only 10 in Maharashtra to almost 236 across 4 states, and the **proposed plan is to expand to at least 7 more states within the next 3 years**

- Its scalability is driven not only **by leveraging government infrastructure** (police stations) but also by its **ability to mobilize government funding** after a pilot demonstration; this also enables sustainability since Special Cells become a government scheme once taken over

- **Strong relationship with both academia and the government**

- Being a part of a **premier academic institution with social work education**, RCI-VAW has the advantage of developing innovative models driven by research, and the on-ground practice feeding back into the research and education; this is a common model in the West, where universities leverage their strengths to develop and implement strong models for the social sector, but also have strong donor support to do so

- TISS being a public university **enables the Resource Centre's ability to engage and work with the government**

- **Experience and leadership in the field/area of Violence Against Women (VAW) Interventions**

- TISS **pioneered the Special Cell model in 1984**, which was one of the first examples of feminist social work in Asia; both the faculty in charge have extensive experience with Special Cells, having grown through the implementation on ground as social workers

- Recognized as a leader in the sector: the faculty in charge contributed to the drafting of the PWDVA in 2005 and the role of a Protection Officer was derived from the role of Special Cell workers; the team has trained Magistrates, High Court Judges, and Senior IPS Officers

- Can leverage experience working with survivors to increase gender sensitivity of the police and judiciary, and leverage experience working with the state and police to train NGOs and other civil society institutions

- **Transformative impact of Special Cells on survivors of domestic violence**

- **Dire need for social services and counseling** in the context of **pervasive patriarchy and lack of individual women's agency and knowledge**

- High level of engagement between the social worker and women helps build the capacity of the survivor for the long term and leads to transformative change; a woman who has suffered severe abuse is able to build her confidence, her ability to make choices and build her resources to prevent or counter violence in the future