

ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020



*Shaheen Women's
Resource and Welfare
Association*

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THE FOUNDER-DIRECTOR SPEAKS...



"Shaheen is a bird which flies high above in the sky. Our goal is to set this caged bird free."

The community we work with is extremely sensitive to external intervention. Accordingly, Shaheen has devised a transformative model of community-based intervention wherein we work with the community to make the interjection and further, develop our programs in line with the requirements of the women and children living in the community without having any impact on their ability to be a part of the community. This aspect is crucial given the extremely parochial attitude of the community. Despite our limitations, we have been successful in gaining acceptance within the community and yet being effective at delivering our goals and forming a huge team of strong headed women volunteers who have ensured successful implementation of our programs.

In this report, we have sought to provide you a glimpse of our model of work and achievements in the year 2019-20, and have set out our agenda for the coming year.

Ms. Jameela Nishat

ABOUT SHAHEEN

Shaheen Women's Resource and Welfare Association is based out of Old City of Hyderabad committed to the cause of women's rights and communal harmony. It was established in the year 2002 with an aim to work with women and children from the most orthodox and backward communities, such that they are able to break/challenge their social and economic barriers in their environment.

It engages with women across age groups ranging from adolescents to middle-aged women helping them to break social barriers, gain control over economic resources and exercise leadership at multiple levels.

Shaheen is also uniquely positioned to simultaneously support three backward minority communities including Muslims, Dalits and Other Backward Classes (OBC).



OUR VISION

Shaheen envisions a society in which gender, class, caste or religious status does not impinge upon one's resources, rights or freedoms - both in the private and public sphere.

OUR MISSION

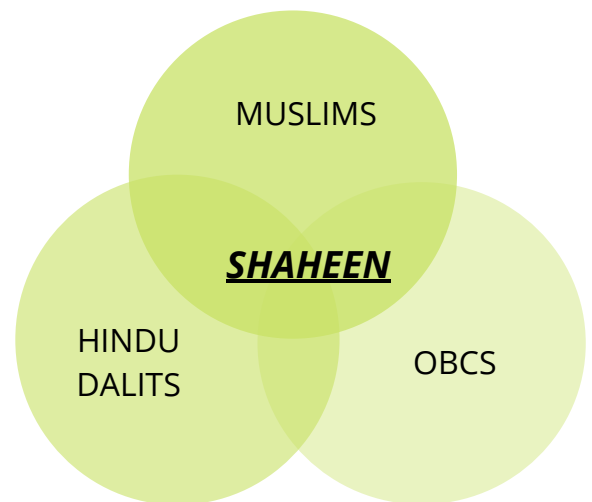
Our mission is to create a conducive and enabling environment for women to regain control over their minds, bodies, and resources.

We thrive to create greater consciousness of gender and promote socio-religious harmony in the society.



WHERE WE WORK

We work in and around 20 slums in the Old City of Hyderabad. The area Sultan Shahi where the main office stands is known for communal disharmony and is also amongst the poorest settlements in the Old City area. The public infrastructure is abysmal and most of the people are employed in the unorganised sector. The area is overpopulated with high levels of illiteracy and school dropout rates. Child and women trafficking, forced early marriages, sexual abuse and incidences of incest are predominant in the area. We work at the interface of three distinctly vulnerable communities - the Muslims, the Hindu Dalits and OBCs - which makes the area easily prone to rioting.



Sultan Shahi
Valmiki Nagar
Gowlipura
Hassan Nagar
Siddique Nagar 1
Siddique Nagar 2
Mecca Masjid

Chacha Garriage
Patel Nagar
Ambika Nagar
Aman Nagar A
Aman Nagar B
Bhavani Nagar A
Bhavani Nagar B

Jahangir Nagar
Hanuman Nagar
Murad Mahal
Nasheman Nagar 1
Nasheman Nagar 2
Kaveli Kaman

WHY WE WORK HERE

We work in the Old City area of Hyderabad on the issues of women and children as we feel that there is a pressing need to significantly improve the lives of women and children. The women in the area have been victims of structural violence embedded in the institutions of the religion, gender, caste, and State, and are insecurely placed in a conservative and patriarchal family.

Gender-based abuse and oppression range from sexual and physical violence to the deprivation of resources and opportunities and the absence of making choices. This is synthesized in a communally charged atmosphere of the Old City area, leading to issues of security to life and the state interface itself becoming suspect and violent.

It is here that we wish to contribute to accomplish our vision and mission and intervene with the communities and with stakeholders at multiple levels.

We work with women and adolescents on gender sensitisation, skill-based training, training on sexual and reproductive rights, organise health camps, organise workshops on leadership and life choices. We also work on violence against women, provide counseling and para-legal support to women.

We work with multiple stakeholders including family and community members, the state including the Police, WCD Department, Municipalities, DLSA and also religious authorities such that women and children are able to exercise their rights.



OUR SUPPORTERS



OUR TEAM

A brave and spirited team is sine quo non for our endeavours. Shaheen is a community-based organization endeavour to work from within the communities to achieve sustainable transformation and enabling strengths. Our community mobilizers (field officers) are the pillar foundations upon which multiple interventions are woven. These field workers who are the representatives of the communities of Old City are informed, motivated and sensitive. Over the years, they have trained themselves to develop leadership qualities, and have become role models for other young girls and women in the communities. Their continuous efforts to foster capable women leaders in the community has been truly unwavering and praiseworthy.

Some of our interventionists have themselves been victims of domestic and communal abuse and many of them still confront hostility from anti-social elements, but we instead, draw our strength from such incidents which further fuel our dream of a more integrated society.



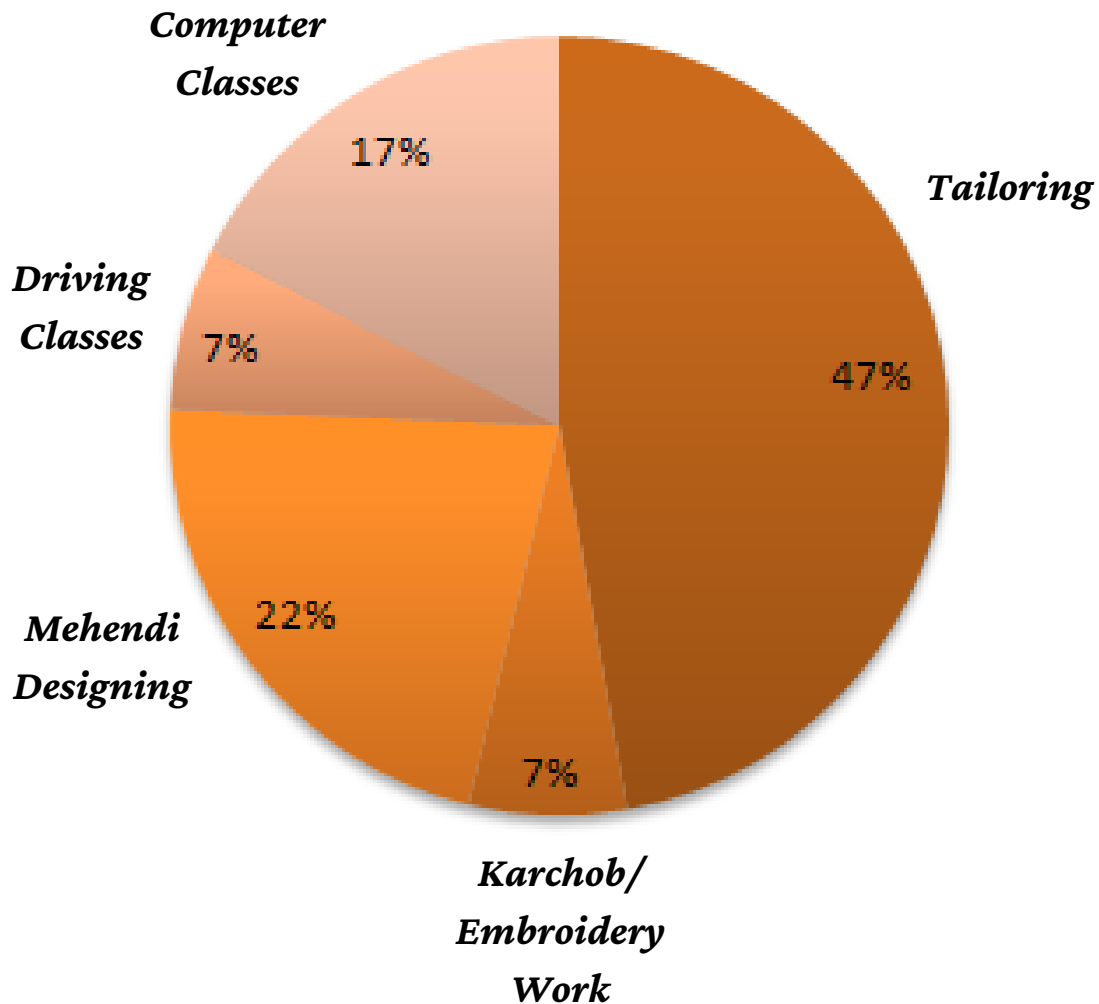
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 01

Economic Empowerment and Vocational Trainings



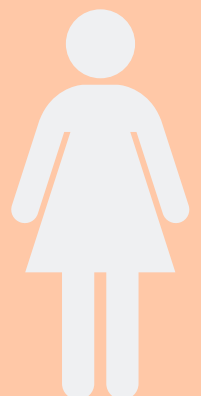
Shaheen has been actively employed to build a support system for young girls and women to take control of their resources and become self-reliant and economically empowered. A number of training camps on various economic activities, traditional and new generation vocational skill training workshops, and meetings with placement cells were organized by Shaheen to realize the women of our community to achieve economic independence.

Training for diverse courses is being held across five resource centers of Shaheen which includes Tailoring, Mehendi designing and Embroidery work or Karchob classes. Driving lessons for four wheelers have also been introduced in 2019, that are already yielding successful results. Language classes in Urdu and English, along with Computer education classes are also being organised at Shaheen's various resource centers across the area.



Percentage of Students Enrolled

411 young girls and women were enrolled for the various vocational skill courses offered.



Breaking The Wheel

Victimised to child marriage, Mariyam Begum (pseudo name) was compelled to drop out of education at an early age. She had a hard life; she grew up as an orphan with her brother and penury loomed over their existence. After her marriage, she was frequently subjected to domestic violence. She faced tremendous mental and physical agony. However, one fine day, she decided to file a complaint against her husband at Shaheen. Both of them received couple's therapy from Shaheen. After regular counseling, there was visible change in Mariyam's husband.

Her children are now enrolled in a government school with the help of Shaheen's intervention and are getting the benefits of government schemes. Meanwhile, she has become a full-time member at Shaheen. She has got herself enrolled in the tailoring course. Apart from tailoring, she attends many awareness sessions on sexual reproductive health rights, legal rights, and decent work. Over time she has become an important person in the community. She is a Basti Vikas Manch (BVM) leader and works on issues related to the community. She also became the member of Mahila Mazdoor Sangam. She is also learning to drive a car. When asked about the reason behind her immense success, she credits Shaheen for helping her break the wheel of misery and also acknowledges her love for her children as the impetus behind everything.

3-Day Workshop on Art and Crafts

At the end of February 2019, Shaheen conducted a three days workshop on arts and craft for young girls and women. They learnt fabric painting, tie and dye art and how to make decorative items using waste material and Pedilite moulding clay. There were 36 participants in the workshop.



Upwards! Onwards!

Parul (pseudo name), a 26-year-old married woman and mother of three girls has been in an abusive relationship since the time of her marriage. She belongs to an economically backward region in the Old City of Hyderabad. In April 2019, Parul approached Shaheen requesting necessary intervention in her case. She demanded that her husband, who hardly lives with them, should be called for counseling and should be willing to give her and the children the much-needed maintenance.

However, irrespective of Shaheen's efforts, her husband refused to co-operate and attend the counseling sessions. The case was then forwarded to the District Legal Service Authority (DLSA) for further action. He refused to co-operate with DLSA as well. At this stage, Parul approached the local police station along with Shaheen interventionists. He was summoned and made to pay the regular maintenance. From the commencement of the case, Parul resides with her children at her parental home. She is a confident woman who is carving new dreams for herself with the help of Shaheen's assistance. Today, she steps out to learn the four-wheeler with the hope that she can be a breadwinner for her parents and three daughters. She has also enrolled her children in a government school and participating in the SMC meetings at school herself.

1 Month Workshop on Self-Defence

Shaheen organised for self-defence classes for young women and girls so that they can take care of their safety themselves. The workshop lasted for a month, starting from the 15th of May 2019. It was attended by 30 participants.



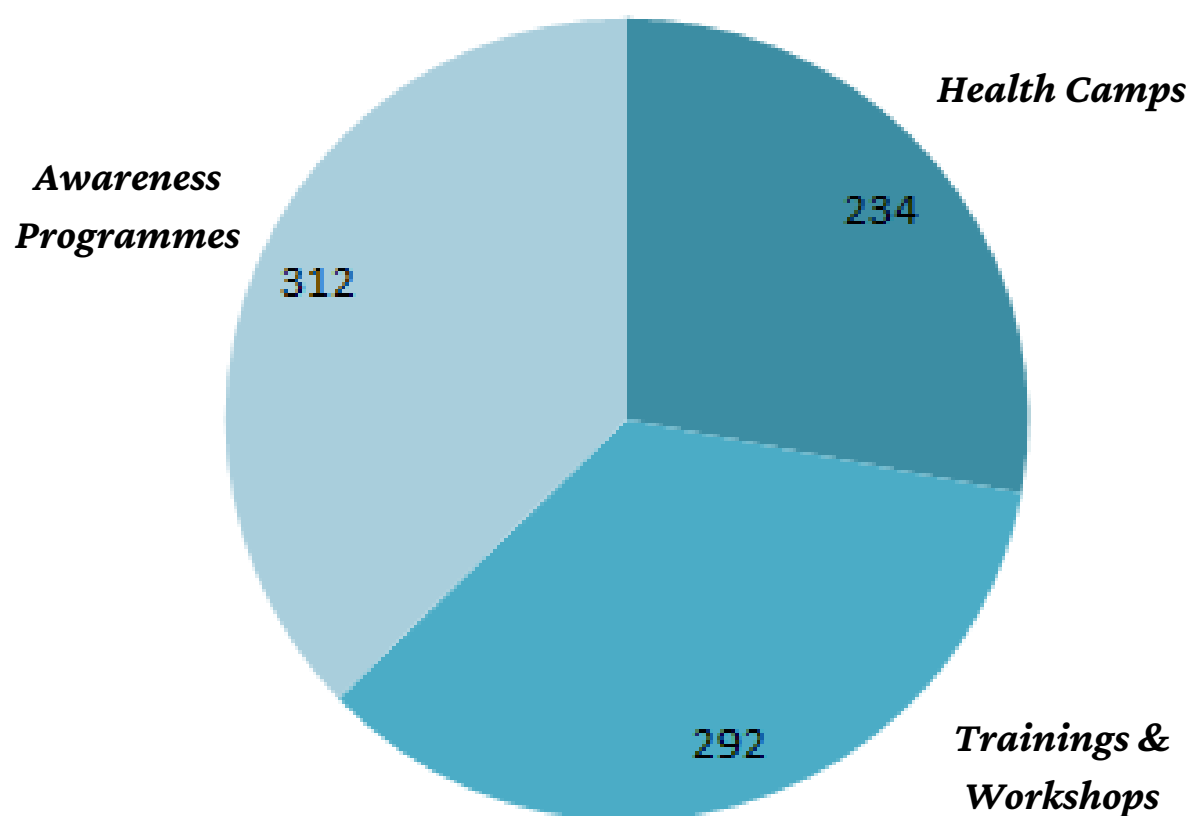
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 02

Health Awareness



The women in the Sultan Shahi and surrounding areas suffer from prevalent and recurrent health problems which are a result of poverty, deprivation and gross neglect. The problem is exacerbated for women in the age group of 18-35 years who not only record the highest level of anaemia but also the lowest levels of immunity and nutrition levels. Other common illnesses faced by the women in the area include upper respiratory infections, diarrhoea, menorrhagia, amenorrhea, dysmenorrhea, white discharge, early arthritis, osteoporosis, urinary tract infections and other bacterial diseases.

With the dearth of proper health care services in the area, Shaheen frequently organises for health camps and awareness programmes, where young girls and women are probed to discuss on issues like maintenance of proper sanitation, preventive measures against mosquito-borne diseases, sexual and reproductive health rights, including the myths about menstruation, gaining knowledge about HIV AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases. Through these initiatives, Shaheen is not only able to reach out to the people in the community, but also to the authorities of the Health Department, Mental Health Organisation and ICDS Supervisors.



Number of Participants Attended

A total of 2 Health Camps, 6 Trainings & Workshops, 8 Awareness Programmes on Health were conducted.



Becoming the Voice

19 year old Arpita (name changed) belonging to a middle-class family works as a sales person. She resides in an area where community mobilisers from Shaheen visit frequently. Eventually, she joined in for the tailoring classes and attended several awareness programmes and workshops on health rights, legal rights and the like. The field officers continued to visit Arpita's school as part of their mobilisation project. They conducted one to one counseling sessions with the students as well as interacted with them through workshops on sexual and reproductive rights (SRHR). The facilitators noticed a change in Arpita - while her classmates felt shy and awkward to discuss about menstrual health and reproductive organs, Arpita seemed quite open about it. Infact, she began thanking Shaheen for the change she felt in herself.

She realised the importance of discussing about SRHR with friends and family and understood that it was not a social taboo or something to be secretive about. Therefore, she decided to become the voice of spreading awareness in her community. She took on leadership qualities and started encouraging her friends, neighbours and family members to openly talk about these issues. It was not easy, especially in such a conservative area that she resides in, but Arpita is not someone who will give up easily. Her efforts to mobilise her community with the help of Shaheen's support continues.

Health Camp

Shaheen organized a health camp on Cervical Cancer Awareness, in collaboration with D.S.Research Centre and MNJ in the month of January 2019. They provided free checkup and distributed free medicines to the 108 participants who attended the camp.

Mental Health Training Programme

Shaheen organised a mental health training programme in the month of October, in collaboration with Pause for Perspective for young women and girls and created awareness on ANGER (Window of Tolerance), Moods, emotions, behaviour, and so on. The training programme was attended by 35 participants.

Workshop & Exposure Visit on SRHR

Shaheen conducted a special workshop building awareness about 'Sexual Relationship With Consent and Without Consent.' It proved to be a very successful workshop and was beneficial to young adolescent girls who attended the workshop.

With 76 participants, Shaheen organized an exposure visit to Niloufer Hospital in April 2019. The aim of the visit was to make the young girls and women aware of the facilities provided by the hospitals and also to create awareness about their health. Two of the doctors spoke to the girls about menstruation, puberty and the myths related to them.



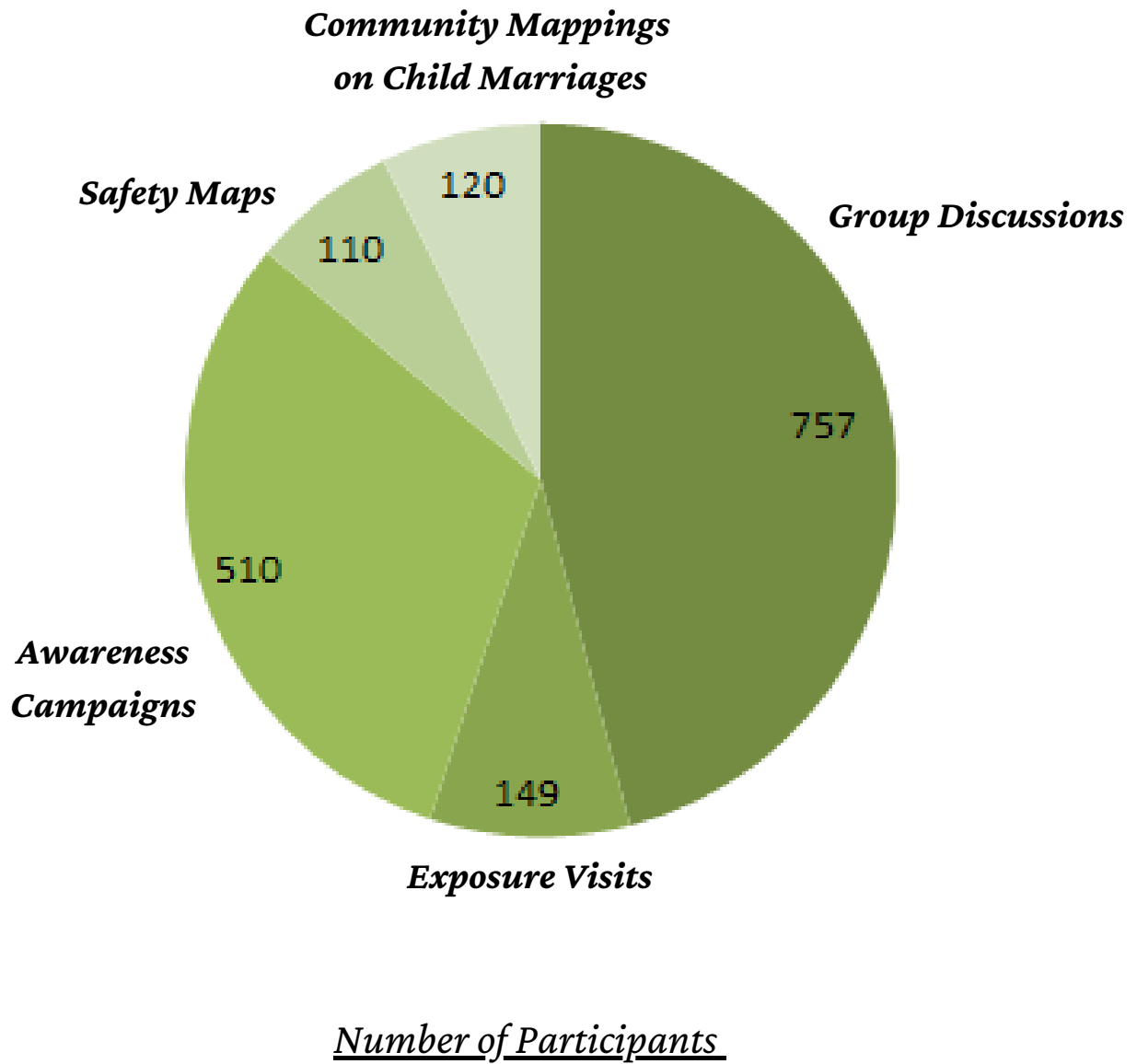
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 03

Gender Sensitization Ensuring Violence-free Lives



The primary focus of the work at Shaheen is a dedicated commitment towards gender sensitization. Shaheen aims to construct a relationship of faith and confidentiality that provides space for the marginalized women to open up and share their grievances. Its members actively strive for gender justice and their interventions at multiple levels and are geared up towards achieving a more pluralistic and integrated society. They have now created communication channels within the communities which are both holistic and participatory.

The activities geared towards gender sensitization have also become more inclusive with young boys of the community stepping in and talking to the men of the community about the various atrocities faced by the women. Although it is hard to reach the men of the community who are impregnable and unresponsive, but Shaheen has wedged into closed areas and is now beginning to spread its influence in the community. Their community dialogues have become more inclusive and integrated and the evolution continues as Shaheen discovers newer areas of communication and transformation by reaching out to a larger ambit of beneficiaries.



***56 young girls were able to
stop Child Marriages
at home or in the community.***



Changes in Perspective

13 year old Shafiya Alam's (pseudo name) story is an inspiring one, brimming full of confidence and conviction. Shafiya grew up in a joint family in a small village in Bihar, where the men had ingrained prejudices against women. There was strict sexual division of labour and education and free mobility of girls was highly discouraged. Eventually, her father decided to migrate to the city for better opportunities. It has been 6 years since Shafiya and her family of 6 shifted to Old City of Hyderabad, her father finding a job in a bangle shop. Shafiya and her sister were both enrolled in a government school, and in 2012, under a project, Shaheen happened to sponsor Shafiya's education.

Under the sponsorship, Shafiya received a small stipend, that rendered a positive impact on her father's attitude. He began questioning his own patriarchal notions. While at Shaheen, Shafiya continued to attend several awareness programmes and workshops. She encouraged her sister to attend several sessions with her on leadership, nutrition, safe touch, gender equality, discrimination and importance of education. They started sharing their knowledge with their proud parents too. Both of them performed Qawwali with Shaheen team and at school, making everyone around them proud. Shafiya's parents have now entirely changed and are supportive of their daughters. When Shafiya's elder sister featured in the cover page of a book titled 'Wonder Girls' edited by celebrated author and photographer, Ms. Paola Gianturco, her father had no bounds to his joy. He visited Shaheen to express his gratitude, and during his conversation with the executive director of Shaheen, Ms. Jameela Nishat, he referred to his daughters as more than sons.

Gender Responsive Youth Fair

In the month of March 2019, Shaheen organised a Gender Responsive Youth Mela at MANU University, in collaboration with their Social Work Department. A total of 420 participants, including both male and female students and professors attended the fair, and were sensitized on issues of gender discrimination.

Sting Operation Against Sheikh Marriages

Shaheen received information from its sources and conducted one sting operation against Sheikh Marriage. With the help of media, police personnel and/or survivors of these gender crimes, Shaheen was able to rescue girls and women from being trafficked to Arab states and falling prey to Sheikh marriage.

Meet to Sleep Campaign

Shaheen conducted a Meet to Sleep campaign at Nehru Zoological Park, where they raised awareness on public space. The female participants were made to sleep in the public sphere without any hesitation or fear, thus breaking the social stigma.

Recognition of Solidarity Rights

In the month of March 2019, commemorating International Women's Day Celebrations, Shaheen organized a panel discussion on 'Interrogating Patriarchy.' Eminent feminists, social activists and authors joined the event as speakers.



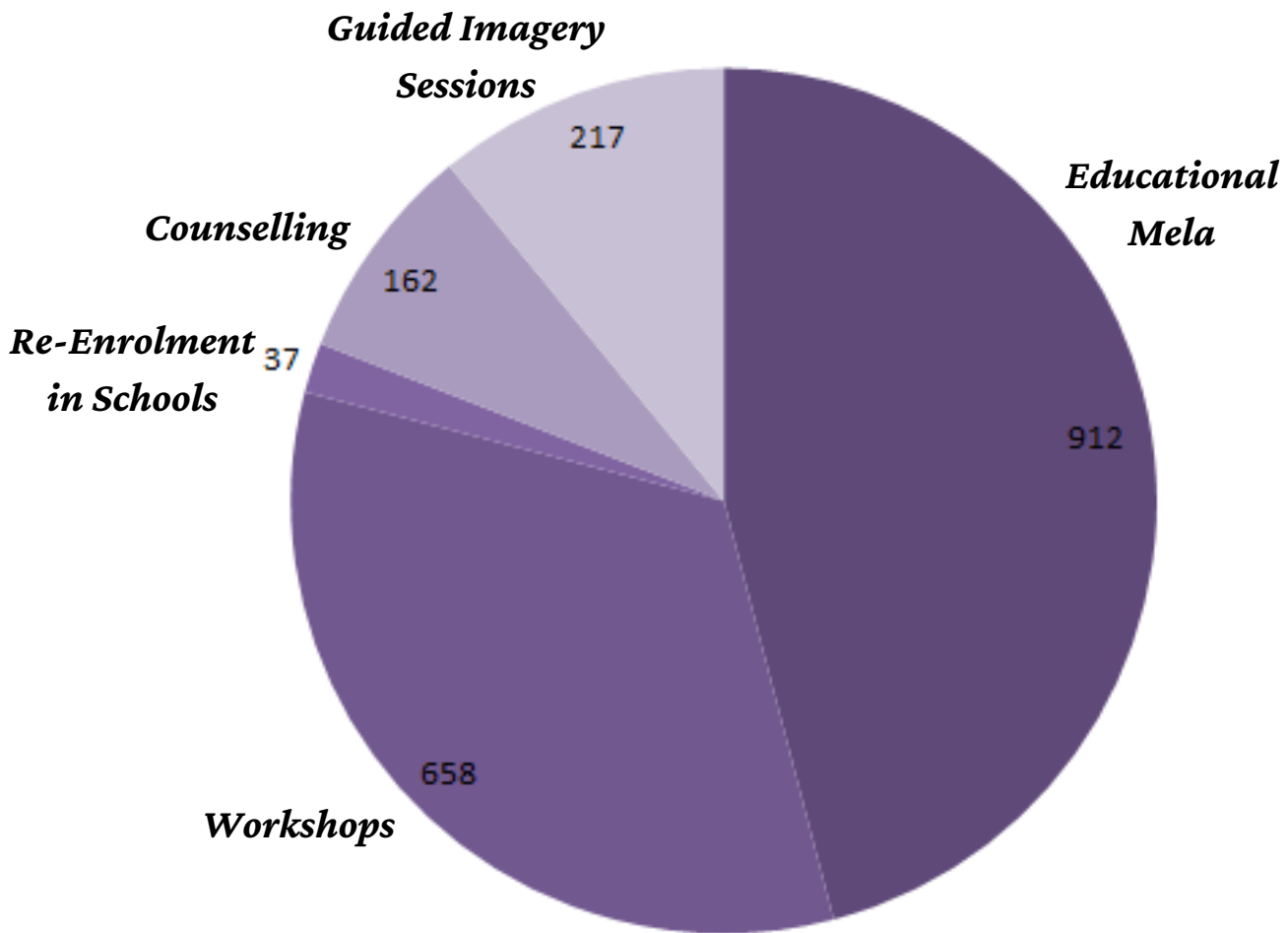
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 04

Working With Children



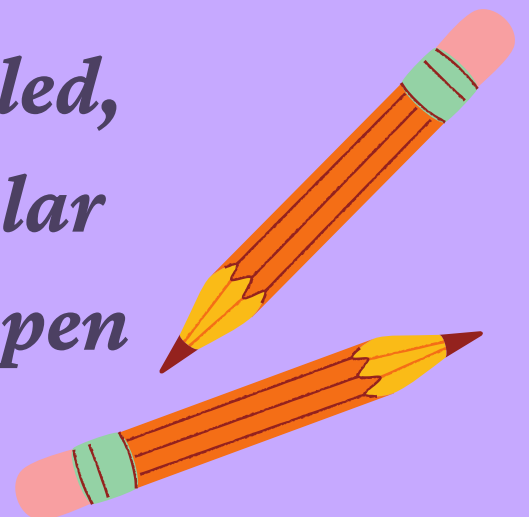
Children are the future of the nation. They are, in fact, the foundation on which a strong, energetic and dynamic society shall be built. Children are exposed in their formative years most to their parents and community, who have a tremendous responsibility towards inculcating in their young minds a sense of values, discipline, dedication, and commitment to the nation.

Shaheen works with adolescent girls and boys, sensitizing them on gender disparity, conducting workshops on education, legal entitlements, providing one to one counseling sessions, and the like.



Number of Participants

***Out of 37 students re-enrolled,
26 were admitted in Regular
Schools & 11 admitted in Open
Schools.***



Unmuting Oneself

This is a spine-chilling journey of a mother-daughter duo, and how both of them chose to speak up and ultimately came out of their abusive environment. The 12 year old daughter was continuously being subjected to an act of incest. Finding her alone at home, twice her father (in a state of intoxication) tried to inappropriately touch and assault her. When the mother returned home from work, she found her daughter crying on the staircase. The daughter confided in her and both the times, the mother beat up the father.

Eventually, the mother shared her concerns with her female employer at work, who referred her case to Shaheen. Shaheen helped them both to file a case against the father/husband. took the child for a medical examination to Bharosa Centre, and counseled her regularly. Currently, the father is in prison serving his sentence and the child is living with her mother. She is attending regular school and both the mother and daughter are happy together.

Taking the Stand

Nazneen Begum originally hails from Maharashtra. Her family migrated to Hyderabad when she was younger, and had enrolled her in a school from where she dropped out after her 9th standard. The community mobilisers from Shaheen met her 2 years back on a home visit. Since then, Nazneen has been visiting Shaheen regularly - she enrolled herself for Mehendi lessons, and attended several training workshops and awareness campaigns. She learnt about the importance of education, career and life choices, gender equity, leadership roles, and so on. The challenging part however was yet to come.

She often visited her relatives back in Maharashtra, with whom she started sharing what she learnt at Shaheen. The family members regarded her as a rebel, and eventually compelled her to drop out of school. Her father refused to support her too. However, Nazneen was not ready to accept this, and took her stand. With Shaheen's support, she fought for her rights in a dignified fashion. She re-enrolled herself in school and will soon be appearing for her 10th board exams. She is a true leader and has become an inspiration for many. She is determined to pursue higher education and become financially independent.

Read A Poem to a Child

Shaheen organized a programme titled 'Read a Poem to a Child' commemorating the '100 Thousand Poets for Change Programme' in which 180 students participated from different schools and recited their poetry on their dreams and education and 7 students received prizes.

Regional Level YUW Consultation on Youth Policies

In the month of August 2019, commemorating Youth Day Celebrations, Shaheen organized a Regional level YUW Consultation on Youth Policies with 75 participants. The topic discussed was 'Education, Health and Employment.'

Recognition of Solidarity Rights

Shaheen organised a public meeting on safety measures in collaboration with Women & Child Development Department on the occasion of Children's Day.

Shaheen also celebrated International and National Girl Child Day with the children of the community.



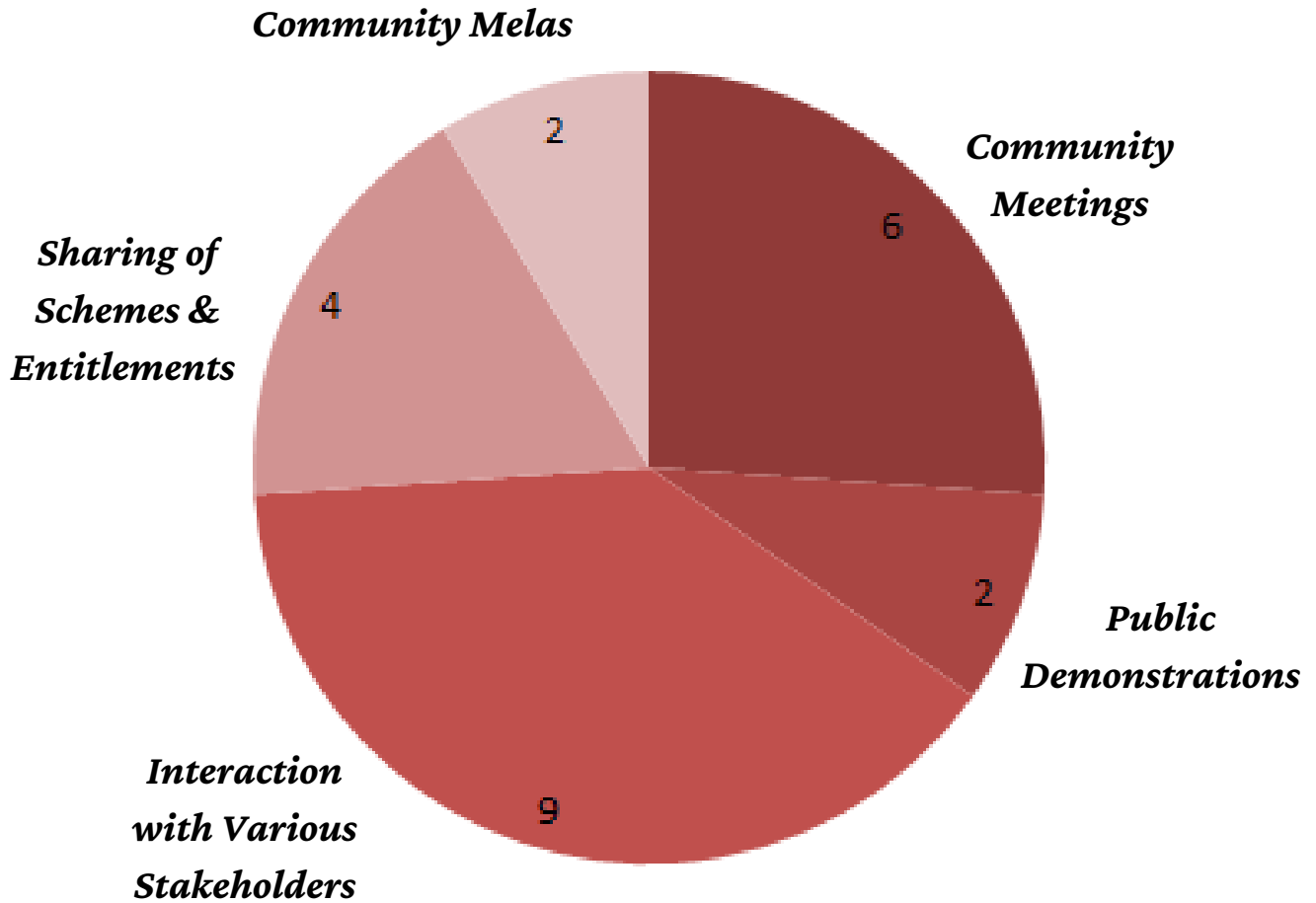
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 05

Advocacy With Stakeholders



Advocacy works to improve the system to the benefit of individuals. Advocacy helps to define the problem, identify and map the concerned stakeholders to resolve the problem. It also helps to develop the message and strategies by engaging the stakeholders and to influence them in a very effective way. Over the years, Shaheen has put in efforts to built its relationship with the stakeholders. Apart from catering to the needs of young girls and boys, creating awareness among men and women in the community, Shaheen has also essentially approached the Government Departments and other stakeholders for their support in bringing forth a positive change in society.

In this light, Shaheen has worked closely with multiple stakeholders - the Central and State Government bodies - the Police personnel, District Legal Services Authority, Department of Women and Child Development, Labour Department, Education Department, Health Department, ICDS Centres, Bharosa Centres, SMDCs, other concerned religious leaders, basti leaders, and so on and so forth.



Number of Activities Conducted

A total of 219 people
(including men, women
& children) attended
the Community Melas



Meeting on Triple Talaq

In January 2019, Shaheen organised a meeting with religious leaders and social activists discussing on the triple talaq issues.

State Level Meeting

In the month of March 2019, Shaheen organised a State level meeting with 300 participants, discussing at length about the rights of domestic workers and the importance of public toilets.

Interaction with SMC Members

In the month of January, 2019, Shaheen organised a meeting with 41 teachers and principals from different schools. In this meeting, it was decided that Shaheen will be working with the schools for the next 3 years, conducting melas, workshops and group discussions with the students and staff towards awareness generation. At the end of the meeting every one took the following oath,

"We will encourage girls toward further education and will stop child marriage."



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 06

Communal Harmony & Cultural Awareness



Although Old City of Hyderabad is a Muslim dominated area, there is a mixed population of Dalits and other regional identities occupying these communities. Shaheen secularly works with all individuals, adhering to each and everyone's needs and requirements. Shaheen celebrates all the important festivals irrespective of caste and religion with an aim to promote communal harmony and peace. The celebrations have also witnessed the active involvement of all the community members.

Qawwali is a Sufi form of music wherein the soul of the singer and audience ecstatically becomes one with the Almighty. Shaheen has successfully adopted *Qawwali* for its activities for twin reasons – firstly, to break the stereotype of *Qawwals* (singers) to be only men and secondly, to create awareness in the community through *Qawwalis* on women's rights. *Qawwalis* are focused to protect and educate girl child, discrimination against girl child & child marriage among a host of other women and child rights issues. The lyrics of the *Qawwalis* that are performed by the Shaheen team members have been poignantly penned down by Ms. Jameela Nishat, who is an activist and poet herself. The children are also actively participating in these cultural programs. Shaheen found 9 opportunities around the year to spread cultural awareness through their unique performance, attracting more than 3000 audiences.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

Shaheen has been working tirelessly for the upliftment of the most vulnerable section of the society in the area of Hyderabad. We have hit several road-blocks on our way but our team has continuously reflected perseverance, commitment and dedication to overcome any challenge which obstructed our way towards a more egalitarian society. Shaheen's work has gained notable visibility in the past few years, both tangibly and intangibly. The following information pertains to the few achievements we have been able to achieve in the past one year. We realize that the path is long and deterring but these contributions keep us fueled and dedicated towards our greater goal.

- Mass Media - A documentary film titled 'Pinjraon ki Udaan' was directed by Mr. Sujith Kumar .K.V. The film captures the veiled reality of intense violence, struggle and survival of women in the Old City of Hyderabad, India. The film was screened several times around the city throughout the year.
- New Generation Vocational Skill - Four wheeler driving course has been introduced in Shaheen's curriculum since April 2019.
- Report on POSH - In collaboration with Action Aid, Shaheen conducted a study with 100 urban poor women in Hyderabad on Sexual Harassment at Workplace. The report was collated by Ms. Nilika Dutta, one of Shaheen's team members.
- Journey Journals - Shaheen released a Journal that contains the personal struggles and victories of 45 beneficiaries. The case stories were collated by Mr. Subhramaniam.
- Increased Patrolling - Through Shaheen's advocacy efforts, new CCTV cameras were installed in the area, with increased patrolling by police personnel and introduction of bike patrolling.
- Placements - After receiving training from Shaheen, many women applied for jobs and qualified as women constables.
- Advocacy with Religious Leader - The Chief Qazi has started to formally approach the issue of *Khulla* (divorce from wife). Women are now being counselled by Qazis.
- 'Story of Survivors' Podcast - Shaheen's achievers were chosen for podcasts to share their success stories with the rest of the nation.

Staff Achievements

- 2 of the young field officers, Tasleem & Pooja visited an NGO in Kolkata.
- 3 of the field officers, Sultana, Amreen and Pooja participated in the 'Feminist Participatory Action Research Workshop' held in Mumbai, and gathered a lot of experience.
- Sultana has been selected as a mentor for a research study on POSH.
- 6 of the staff members, namely, Archana, Pooja, Tasleem, Zehra, Amreen and Soma have learnt the four wheeler, and have already received their licenses.
- The staff has become well trained in handling technical data, digitising data and documnetation.



WAY FORWARD

Shaheen has come a long way since its inception in 2002. We could engage in only awareness led campaigns in the initial years due to lack of resources, community assistance and an absence of credibility in the area. Additionally, we were subjected to hostility from the anti-social elements in the community who wished to continue their oppressive regime while trampling upon the liberties of young women and children in the society.

In the later years, we began to diversify our areas of work to not only bring a variety of people under our realm but also offer diverse activities for overall enrichment of our members. Today, Shaheen is making huge stride towards its twin goals of gender justice and communal harmony.

Through a range of programmes and initiatives, we have set the motion to help reach the desired goals. The incidences of communal related violence have drastically plunged down in the area, while other parameters like education, health and sanitation are now being considered as peak priorities. We have also played instrumental role in tackling the menaces of child trafficking, child marriages and child labour in the region we work in. Thousands of women and children are benefitting through our interventions – breaking away from social barriers and stereotypes, while asserting rights and liberties over their resources.

Shaheen has today emerged as a beacon of hope for the vulnerable population of society. The people of Sultan Shahi are finally waking up to realise their rights and freedoms and respect for self and others. Their dreams once crushed have started shaping up, and we will not stop unless the last person is freed from this vicious cycle of oppression, discrimination and hatred.