



SHAHEEN WOMEN'S RESOURCE
AND WELFARE ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL REPORT 2021





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FOUNDER-DIRECTOR'S VOICE



"Our work is not a fight - it is a journey. The people who join us are from the grassroots, the streets. The same streets that women avoided after rioting. The same streets that they're out on, today, moving forward. As long as we exist, this journey will continue."

Jameela Nishat
(Shaheen Collective)

Winner | Martha Farrell Award 2021
for 'Best Organization
for Gender Equality'

ABOUT US

Shaheen Women's Resource and Welfare Association (also known as Shaheen), established and registered in 2002, is a women-led, grassroot level organisation based in the heart of Old City, Hyderabad.

Marginalised women from the Muslim, Dalit and other backward communities, facing different forms of violence, walk into the organisation every day in the hope of support and intervention.

Our core interventions include the identification and elimination of domestic and social violence among women and girls through regular home-visits, gender sensitizing programs, individual counselling. We also work against trafficking and child marriages, building awareness on the issue through various activities. Promotion of education and health rights; skill development and livelihood generation are also among our key interventions. We take special efforts to promote cultural advocacy and communal harmony as well.

VISION

A society in which gender, class, caste or religious status do not impinge upon one's resources, rights or freedom – whether inside the home or in public spaces.

MISSION

To enable a conducive environment for women to restore their identities, self-dignity and socio-economic stability.

OUR TEAM

Most of our team members are survivors of violence and change-makers themselves. They are inspirational figures to the women and young girls in the community where they belong.

The broad categorisation of our team includes – Executive Committee, Administration, Research & Analytics, and Operations.

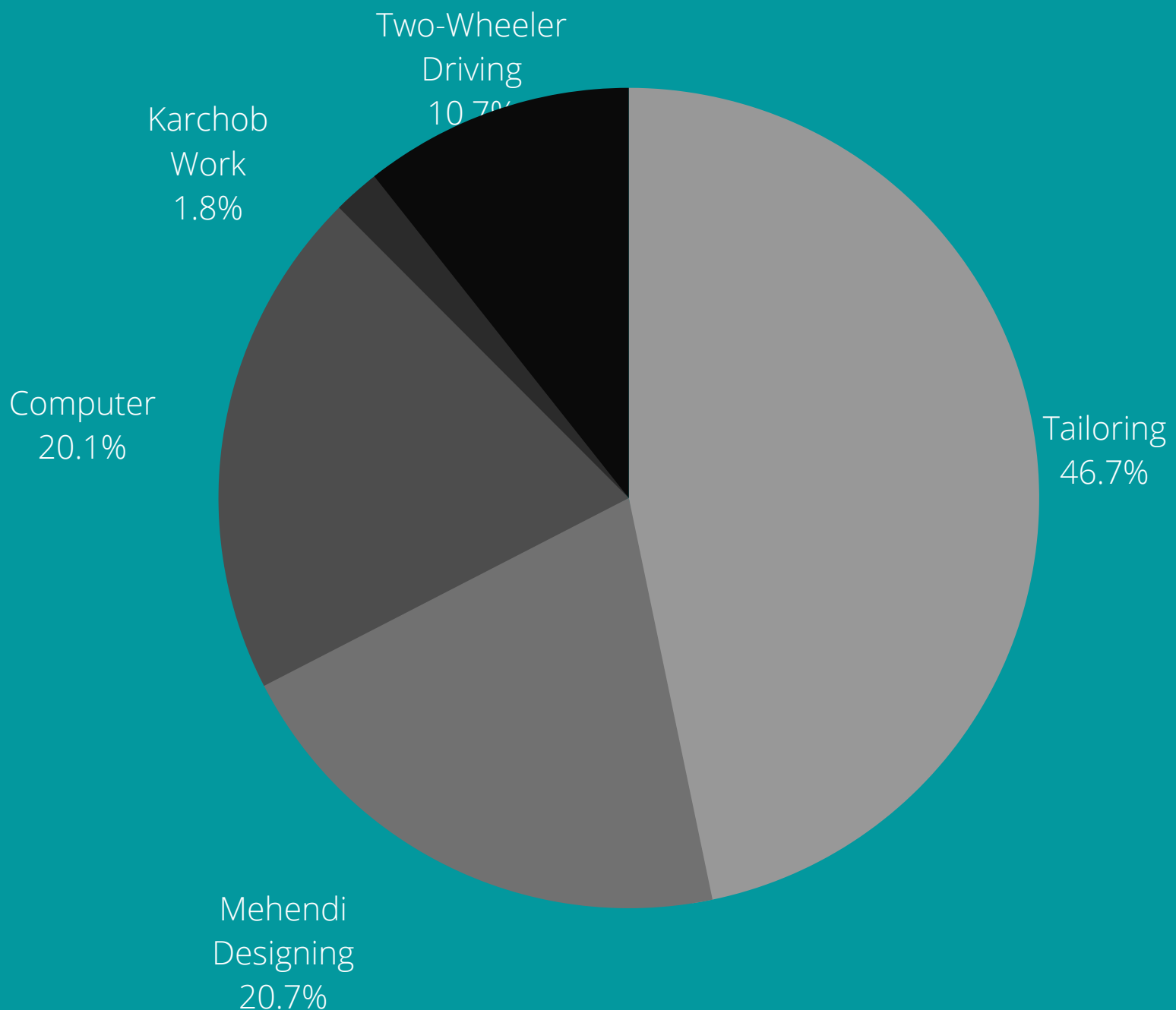
OUR PARTNERS



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 01

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT & VOCATIONAL TRAININGS

Enrolment in Vocational Skills



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 01

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT & VOCATIONAL TRAININGS

Over the years, Shaheen has continued to offer the afore-mentioned vocational courses to the marginalised women and young girls in the community. These skills enable the students to gain self-confidence, economic empowerment and the will to become financially stable in life. Many of them engaged themselves into self-employment opportunities, teaching profession, sales management jobs and so on and so forth.

**97 girls have found
employment in 2021**

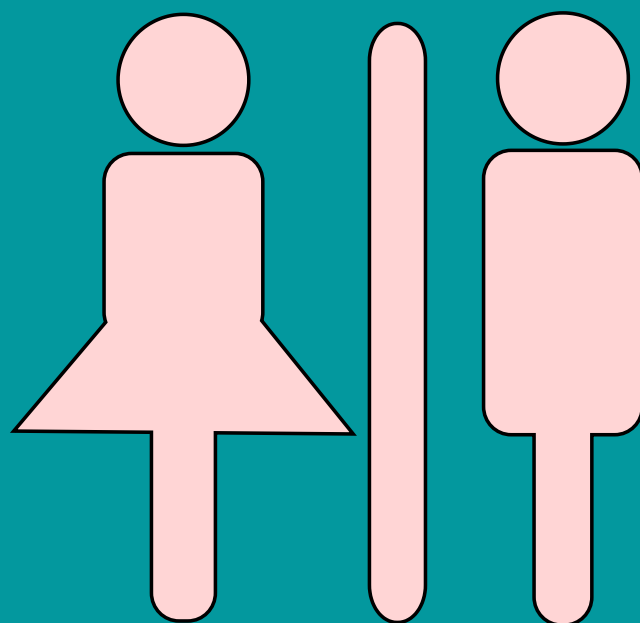


STRATEGIC PRIORITY 01

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT & VOCATIONAL TRAININGS

In order to achieve economic empowerment, 9 livelihood programmes were conducted throughout the year wherein different companies were invited to interact with the applicants; 6 workshops on the topic were facilitated; 27 financial literacy classes were held in which topics like banking, interest, KYC knowledge, loans, EMI, net banking, banking for women entrepreneurs, cyber crime and about opening of bank accounts.

Out of 70 students enrolled in 2-wheeler driving course, 40 of them were young women.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 01

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT & VOCATIONAL TRAININGS

Struggling towards Solopreneurship

Anisha Begum (name changed), 36 years old woman residing in Bhawani nagar with her husband and children has been struggling with economic crisis since her marriage. Her husband was a construction labourer who became paralysed three years back after a fatal accident at his workplace. Since then, Anisha has become the sole bread earner in the family, often juggling with her other household responsibilities.

16 years ago, Anisha got married into a very poor family. While daily living was a challenge, a son was born to them after a year of marriage. Then soon she got pregnant for the second time. When her delivery time approached, her 8-month-old son fell ill. Due to poverty, she neither had any money for her delivery nor for the treatment of her ailing son. Her son succumbed to his illness. With much difficulty, they arranged the money to perform the last rites of their baby and since they did not have money for the delivery, Anisha delivered the baby all by herself at home. Years passed but their socio-economic status remained stagnant. Then, 3 years back, the bolt struck and her husband met with the accident. He lost his job and the family was left with no earner. Anisha searched for work in many places but she could not find work anywhere. Eventually, the COVID pandemic caused nationwide lockdown. Anisha was finding it very difficult to take care of the house. She was somehow making a living by the ration distributed in the communities.

Meanwhile, Anisha started working as a cook in a canteen. One day, she made some papad (papadam) and took them to the canteen, which was very well-appreciated by the people there.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 01

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT & VOCATIONAL TRAININGS

This was a breakthrough for her! The idea of preparing and selling papadam dawned upon her and that was the beginning of her solopreneurship. However, the canteen was far away from her house and it was challenging for her to commute to the canteen.

Then she got information about Shaheen and the two-wheeler driving training that is offered there. She started coming to Shaheen to enroll herself for the course. Ayesha started working as a cook in a canteen. The canteen was far away from his house and he was facing a lot of trouble in commuting. One day she made some papads and took them to the canteen, which was very much liked by the people there. So she realized that why not make papads at home and sell them. In this way he started making papad at home.

Then she started making papad at home. She was finding it difficult to sell papads and supply them to the shops. During this time she came to know about the two wheeler driving taught in Shaheen. She felt it as a great opportunity. And she started coming to Shaheen to learn two wheeler driving. After visiting Shaheen regularly, she participated in Shaheen's awareness generating programs, due to which she gained knowledge and learnt life skills. She gained courage and self-confidence to make a difference. She learned driving and now she makes papad at home and self-delivers them on her two-wheeler. She also supplies goods in shops and sells her papads in the weekly market. Learning to drive a two-wheeler has changed her life completely. She is able to save more time and energy, earn a living to support her family and has become a successful solopreneur.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 01

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT & VOCATIONAL TRAININGS



Vocational Training Courses



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. There is a dearth of proper health-care facilities in the area.

Shaheen organised 5 Health Camps, 7 workshops on SRHR and mental health and 18 awareness programs on health and nutrition throughout the year.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 02

HEALTH AWARENESS

Will to Win: Across Gender Boundaries

Shaheen first met Tabasim (name changed, 25 years old) during a home visit. Tabasim and Abhiraj (name changed, 26 years old), who was biologically born as a female have been close friends and lovers since childhood. They met in school and were classmates. Tabasim's family assumed that Abhiraj was a girl and did not have an issue with their friendship. A few years ago, they were both employed and decided to marry each other.

When Tabasim's family knew the truth about Abhiraj's transgender identity, they began opposing their relationship and began physically assaulting Tabasim. They put her under house arrest and, as a result, she stopped going to work. In the meantime, Abhiraj underwent gender reassignment surgery and continued working in Bangalore.

They had years of non-communication during Tabasim's house arrest and the subsequent coronavirus lockdown restrictions. During this time, Tabasim's resolve to marry Abhiraj was strong but she lacked confidence. Her family would look for marriage proposals but Tabasim would refuse them all. When they reconnected recently, they decided to get married. With the help of Shaheen's intervention, they finally got married — in Hindu tradition — at Arya Samaj (under the Special Marriage Act).

Even though the families will have objections to the union, the human rights violations cannot be ignored. Tabasim endured house arrest and being held against her will. Tabasim and Abhiraj are consenting adults and Tabasim says: "We have to be together. My parents will not accept me and my marriage now but I will wait for their approval."

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 03

GENDER SENSITISATION ENSURING VIOLENCE-FREE LIVES

Promotion of gender equity in the Old City is a challenging task. Mobility of women is highly compromised, with forced early marriages of girls being predominant.

Shaheen's gender-transformative activities revolve around building and promoting gender equity, creating safe spaces for young girls and women, eliminating gender stereotypes and fostering women leadership among many others.

Group discussions on significant gender-related topics, developing safety maps to identify and mark unsafe zones in the community, conducting exposure visits to the High Court, District Legal Service Authority office, Women and Child Welfare Department office etc., developing community maps on child marriages, legal awareness programmes, community melas, dump box activities to understand the importance and worth of unpaid care work.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 03

GENDER SENSITISATION ENSURING VIOLENCE-FREE LIVES

International
Women's Day
Celebrations



150 students enrolled
for self-defense
classes held weekly

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 03

GENDER SENSITISATION ENSURING VIOLENCE-FREE LIVES

Rise and Shine: An Empowering Tale

Farhana Begum (name changed) lives in a joint family in Hassan Nagar. Her mother is a home-maker and her father is a carpenter by profession. She is the eldest among 5 siblings. All the children are school-going and Farhana is in 6th standard. Farhana's family shares their house with one of their relatives. Her uncle has a very good relation with her parents and sometimes he drops Farhana and her siblings to school.

When Farhana was 8 years old, her uncle called her in his room and started to sexually abuse her. He threatened the child and continued to abuse her regularly. Sometimes he also used to bring her chocolates and ice-cream so that she remained silent. However, Farhana did not like her uncle's behavior and informed her mother. Instead of helping the child, her mother slapped her and asked her to never talk about it again. Farhana feared her father's temper and therefore, could not share the incident with him. She also felt that if she told anyone, her aunt would have to suffer. Meanwhile, the abuser gained more courage and began raping the child every night in his room. This was not all! Farhana was also being abused in school by the watchman. The child suffered in silence for 4 years, blaming herself for her condition. Eventually, she stopped seeking for help.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 03

GENDER SENSITISATION ENSURING VIOLENCE-FREE LIVES

When Farhana was in 6th class, she came to know about Shaheen. During the pandemic lockdown, she started learning mehendi designing. She also started participating in Shaheen's activities like mela, workshops, group meetings, gender workshops, etc. She gained awareness on various rights and laws, gender, learnt the importance of education, became aware about sexual harassment, and so on. After attending guided imagery sessions, she started sharing about her abuse. Shaheen's counsellors held one-to-one conversations with her many times and engaged her in training.

After attending several counselling sessions, she started avoiding her uncle and whenever he called her, she made an excuse to get away from him. She also started to understand the meaning of 'Saying No' and her fear began to evaporate away. Shaheen team helped her file a report against the abuser at the Police Station. Her uncle got scared and stopped abusing her. Farhana was able to put an end to the abuse she had been facing for years. She is a changed person now – more confident, assertive and happy individual. She also encourages other suffering girls in the community to visit Shaheen, so that they can also find an opportunity to change their lives like her.

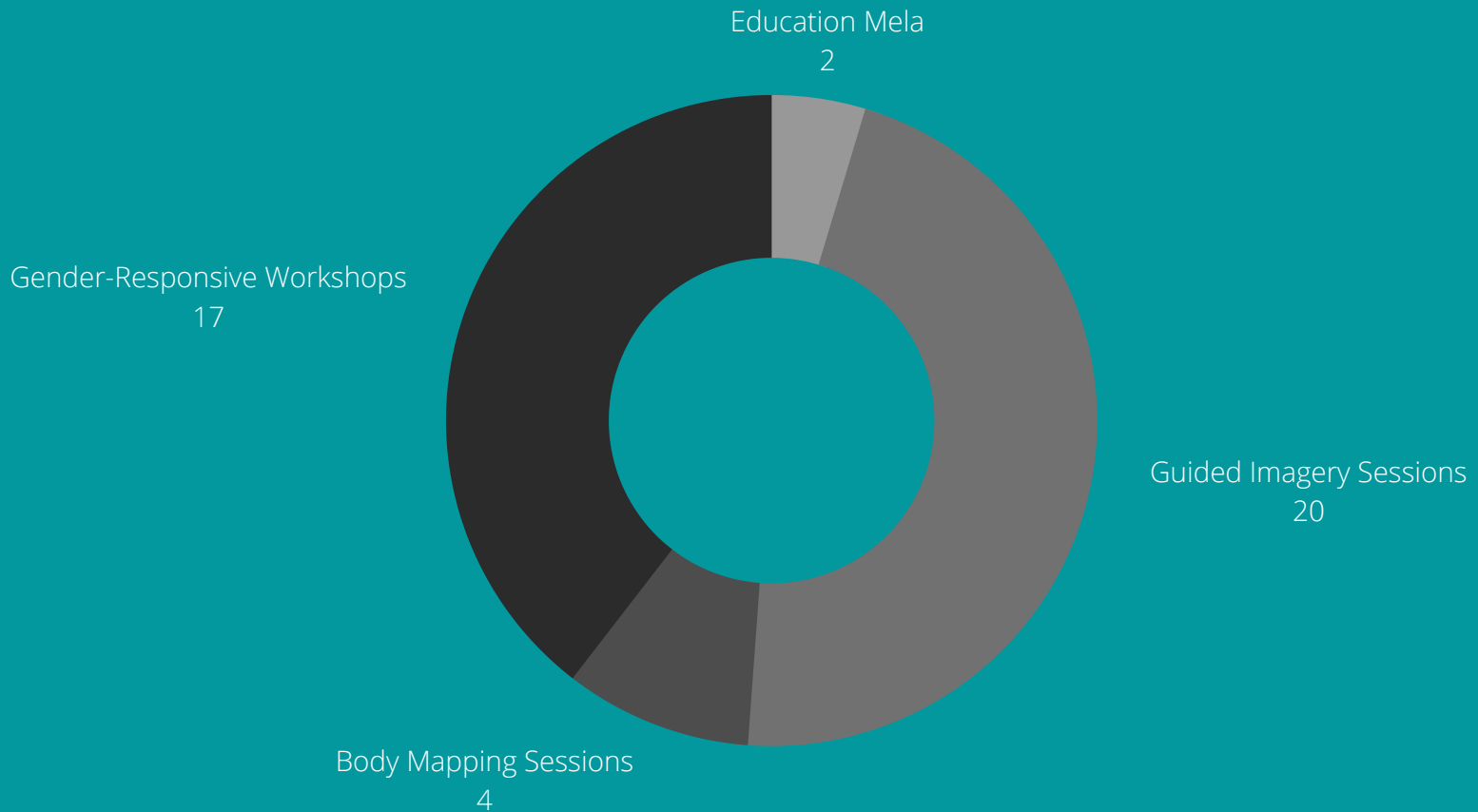
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 04 WORKING WITH CHILDREN



At the Education Mela

Several activities were conducted with adolescent girls and adolescent boys throughout the year. These included guided imagery sessions to identify violence in the lives of the adolescents, gender-responsive workshops which covered issues like education, forced early marriages, career choices, leadership qualities, sexual and reproductive health rights, dealing with sexual harassment at home and in public spaces.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 04 WORKING WITH CHILDREN



The following days were also celebrated by the organisation:

International Day of the Girl Child

International Women's Day

National Girl Child Day

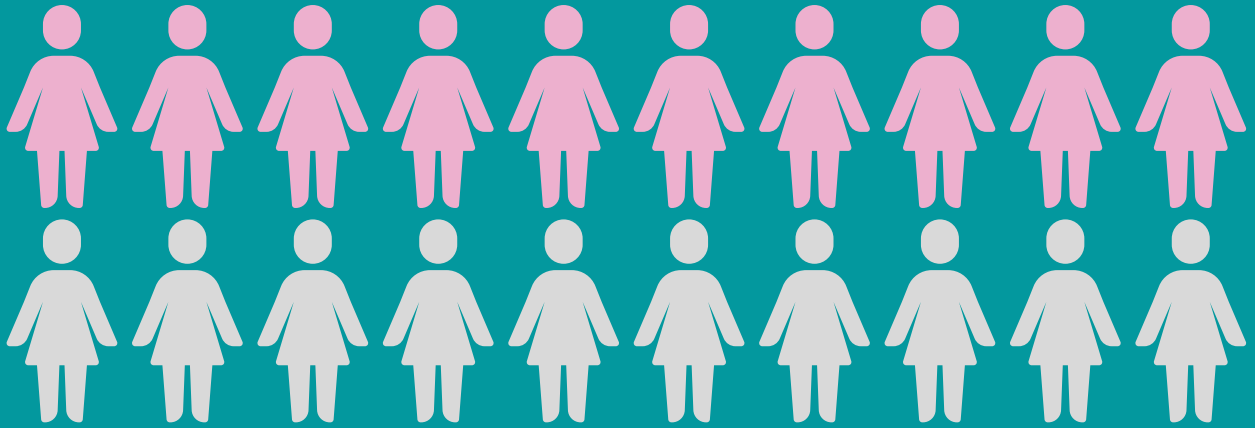
100 Thousand Poets for Change

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 04 WORKING WITH CHILDREN



**Women's Scooter Rally at Charminar on
International Women's Day**

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 04 WORKING WITH CHILDREN



20 Minority Girls were given Scholarship

-  For Graduation
-  For Post-Graduation

76 students were enrolled in open schools

- 66 girls
- 10 boys



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 04 WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Support for Study: Embracing Life

Samina Fatima (name changed) resides in Mehdipatnam with her guardians and her younger brother. She lost her father to tuberculosis when she was 4 years old and her mother passed away when she was 7. Thereafter, her uncle took the responsibility of the children. Samina's uncle is an AC technician by occupation. Samina and her brother are fortunate since their guardians support their education. They even encourage Samina to pursue higher studies.

When counselled by Shaheen team, Samina confided that she had been emotionally unstable and often misses her parents a lot. At such early age, she had lost all hope. The only thing she wanted from her life was to take her back in the time to the days when her parents were close to her. She said that when her mother died she was very depressed. However, she feels blessed to have such supportive guardians. Her uncle often faces financial problems because he works on daily basis, therefore, she decided to continue her studies from government college. Then, her professors informed her about the scholarship offered by Shaheen, so she applied for it. She feels grateful to the organisation for the scholarship that has helped her family.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 05

ADVOCACY WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Throughout the year, Shaheen team held 8 interactions with different governmental bodies to strengthen their rapport. Exposure visits with young girls to these offices were conducted in order to build awareness.

District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Office
Labour Department
Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) Centre
Police Department
State Waqf Board
Women and Child Welfare Department (WCD)
High Court



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 06

COMMUNAL HARMONY & CULTURAL AWARENESS

Nottingham Mela Online
"Song of the Caged Birds" (Focusing on Dalit
Voices)

Date: 11th September 2021

Streamed by: Ms. Nichoel, Ms. Judith, Ms. Uma
Sridhar, Ms. Jameela Nishat and Ms. Pooja

"Song of the Caged Birds" is a Qawwali performance presented by Shaheen. It focuses on the issues faced by young girls in the urban slums of the Old City. It encourages parents to educate their daughters instead of marrying them off.



(1) NOTTINGHAM MELA
ONLINE: 'Song of the Caged
Birds' - YouTube

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 06 COMMUNAL HARMONY & CULTURAL AWARENESS



**5 Qawwali Performances by Shaheen team members
were recorded and uploaded on Youtube**



ACHIEVEMENTS

Shaheen was awarded the prestigious Martha Farrell Award for “Best Organisation for Gender Equality”



On International Women’s Day, Shaheen was awarded the “Aatyaunnat Seva Puraskaram” by the Government of Telangana for empowering women in the Old City

ACHIEVEMENTS

**Shaheen made a documentary film
“Lockdown mein Shaheen ke Badte Kadam”**

**Mirage Media, a production house based in
Hyderabad working with Shaheen
made a series “Qubool Hai” which is based
on Sheikh marriages and the phenomena
of ‘One-day Brides’**



ACHIEVEMENTS

Shaheen assisted with research for a project called **"Organizing Digitally: Opportunities for Collectivization among Informal Women Workers"**, which aims to understand the working conditions and experiences of women in the informal economy. Since one of the sectors of interest in the project is home-based artisanal crafts, **Shaheen staff were requested to interview some of the women engaged in bangle making.** Ten interviews were conducted and these interviews will form inputs into a digital storytelling initiative that aims to raise awareness and sensitise the public about the challenges faced by this group. Some of the early analysis has been showcased on the project blog, which can be accessed at this link:

There's little shine on these bangles for those who make them – FemLab.Co



There's little shine on these bangles for those who make them

[By Usha Raman] The touristic imagination of Hyderabad city is marked by a few dominant images: the aromatic and spicy biryani, the 15th century structure known as...

WAY FORWARD

Through a range of programs and initiatives, Shaheen has set the motion to help reach the desired goals. The incidences of communal related violence have drastically plunged in the area, while other parameters like education, health, and sanitation are now being considered as peak priorities. The organisation has also played an instrumental role in tackling the menaces of child trafficking, child marriages, and child labor in the region. Thousands of women and children are benefiting 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 themselves and others. Their dreams once crushed have started shaping up, and Shaheen will not stop unless the last person is freed from this vicious cycle of oppression, discrimination, and hatred.