



2022-2023



ANNUAL REPORT

SHAHEEN WOMEN'S
RESOURCE &
WELFARE
ASSOCIATION

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FOUNDER-DIRECTOR'S VOICE



It's time for us to stand together for peace, justice and sustainability and work together to exchange ideas from different languages, cultures, geographical regions, ethnicities, creeds, beliefs and religious affiliations. In the process, we may face oppressions, exploitative practices, biases and abuses of many kinds. These are real troubles that wrack our world; there are distinct and often mortal consequences to these regimes of tyranny and persecution, but we need to strive forward courageously towards peace- building and rendering justice.



JAMEELA NISHAT

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

Our family comprises of the CEO, who is also the Founder-Director of the organisation. She forms the core, immediately followed by the steerers for the organisation – the second-in-line management team of Social Leaders. These women, who are from the community Shaheen works with, have undergone colossal self-development in order to empower themselves and become inspiring figures. Many of them are violence survivors themselves and have been once part of the primary stakeholders receiving intervention at the organisation. Since Shaheen has a huge contribution in re-shaping their violence-free lives, the organisation has gained their trust and gratitude over the years. This core team is connected and supported by the Operations Team Head, the Research and Analysis Team Head and the Finance Team. Additional support and assistance are provided by the Executive Committee comprising of the Board Members, the various volunteers, the office helpers and the other agencies and individuals positioned in the periphery.

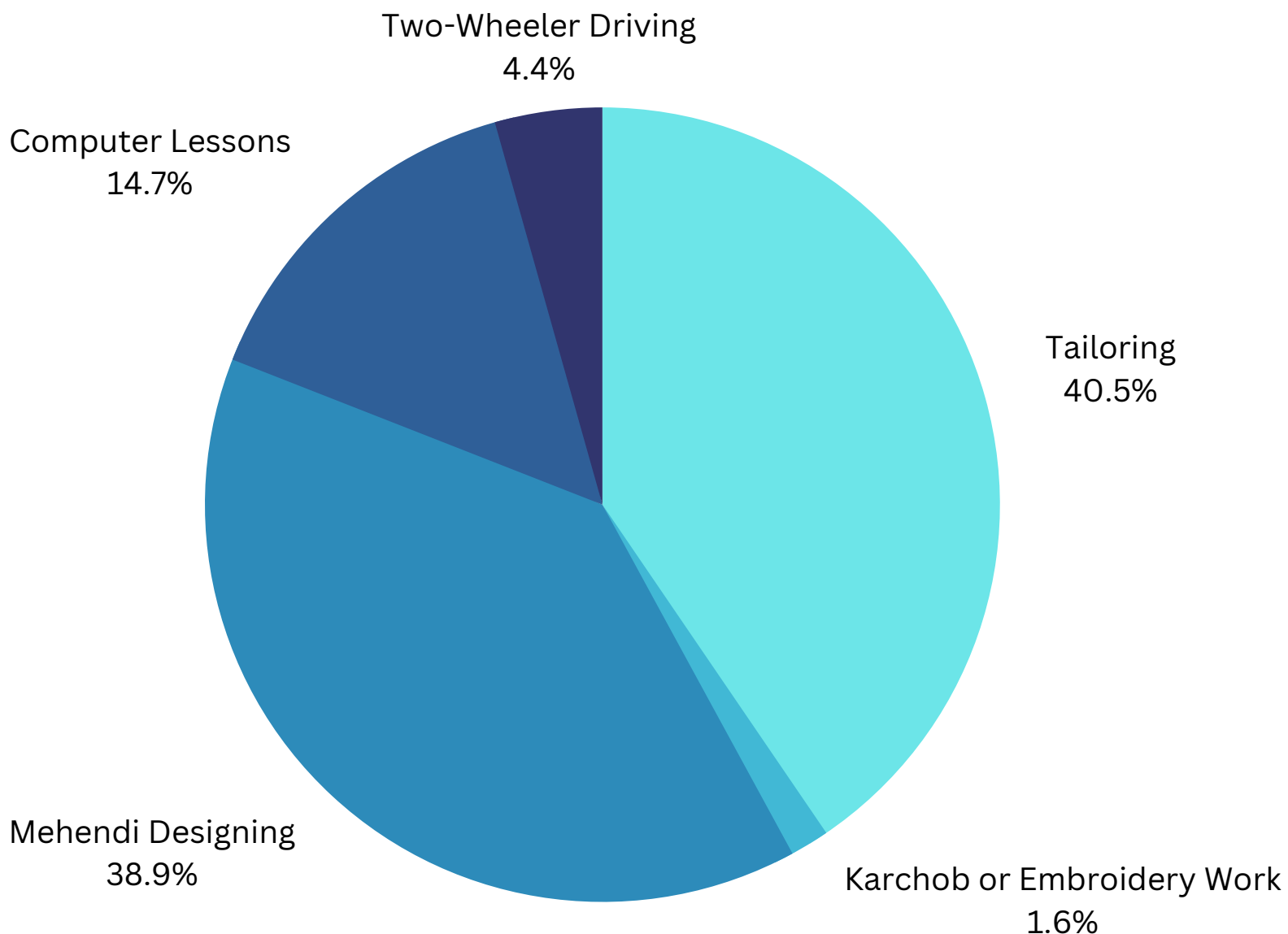
OUR PARTNERS



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 01

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT & VOCATIONAL TRAININGS

PERCENTAGE OF ENROLMENT IN VOCATIONAL SKILL COURSES



Over the years, Shaheen has continued to offer the afore-mentioned vocational skill 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.

44 women have found employment in 2022



In order to achieve economic empowerment, several livelihood programmes were conducted throughout the year wherein different companies were invited to interact with the applicants, like the Mother Teresa School of Nursing for those interested in nursing as a career, Unicorn Travel Company for those women who have learnt driving and so on; 6 workshops on the topic were facilitated; 12 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. In addition, Shaheen conducted around 6 sessions of purse activity to show how young women can efficiently manage a budget as well as add to their savings.



A Journey of Holistic Empowerment

A 21-year-old woman named Zara Fatima lives in Murad Mahal with her family. When she was very young, her father passed away. After her father passed away, her mother Sabaa Begum took responsibility of the entire household and her five children. She worked as a domestic worker to earn a living. Soon, financial issues emerged since she was the only earning member in the family. As a result, Zara and her siblings had to eventually drop out of their respective schools.

Zara came to know about Shaheen and enrolled herself for the tailoring course. Simultaneously, she educated herself by taking part in workshops on gender issues, legal issues and focus group discussions through which she learned about her legal rights, gender rights, SRHR rights, and so on. Shaheen helped her and her sister enroll in Open School so that they could finish their education. Zara completed her studies till the 12th grade. Later, Zara began working and became self-reliant. Her elder brother got married and started living separately while she was attending tailoring classes at Shaheen. After a few months, her mother and another brother began to look for a match for Zara, as she was the eldest among her other sisters. Since her brother was in a hurry to marry himself, he claimed to have found Zara a suitable partner. She soon got engaged but the man began harassing her early in the courtship. She broke off the engagement and told her mother not to worry about her because she is a strong woman.

“When I have a solid financial foundation, I will get married. If my brother wants to get married and go, let him.”

Today, Zara is an emotionally and economically empowered woman.

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 10 Health Camps on dementia, thyroid disorders and polycystic ovarian syndrome. Awareness generation as well as provision of free check-up and medicines were arranged for. 11 workshops on sexual and reproductive health rights, pregnancy and mental health and 13 awareness programs on health and nutrition were conducted throughout the year.

Program on Menstrual Hygiene with National Women Commission & Telangana State Women Commission to spread awareness about Menstrual Health & Hygiene

A **Street Play on Menstruation** was also conducted that had **young adolescent boys as participants**. This was a progressive change that the organisation encouraged to undergo.



True Gender Sensitisation

Samay (name changed) is 15 years old, residing at Ambika Nagar with his parents and younger brother. He is in 9th standard and studies in Government Boys High School. His mother is a home maker and father works as a watchman. Samay's senior in school used to learn computer at Shaheen. Thus, he too came to know about the course and joined Shaheen as a student. Earlier Samay was very shy and never spoke to anyone, especially because he used to stammer while speaking. He was afraid of being ridiculed and laughed at. However, Shaheen gave him the space he needed, where he felt safe and comfortable, thus gaining self-confidence.

He began participating in gender workshops, SRHR workshops, body mapping activities and other awareness programmes. He became informed about sex and gender, gender roles, gender discrimination, bodily changes, puberty, and so on. He thought of introducing these concepts to other peers and therefore, started bringing his younger brother and friends to computer classes with him. They attended different activities and gained on various issues. On Menstrual Health and Hygiene Day Celebrations, Shaheen asked adolescent girls and boys to enact a street play on menstruation. Samay and his friends willingly participated in the play with other adolescent girls.

Without any form of hesitation, they rehearsed the portion with the fellow girls and attended sessions on menstruation. They attended group meetings, discussing with the girls the various problems they face during menstruation. During this process, Samay behaved very sensibly and helped in maintaining a comfortable space for the adolescent girls while discussing menstruation with the boys.

They performed the play in front of Telangana State Women's Commission, other government stakeholders, guests, and other women students. Through this play, they passed on the social message that menstruation and menstrual health is a normal and natural process and that it is important to talk about it openly with girls and boys. Menstruation is not a social taboo.





Vitamin Angels: Distribution of Vitamin A and Albendazole dosage to around 1000 children in November 2022.

Mental Health Workshop by Dr Anita Rego for the staff.

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.

In 2022, 14 Group discussions on significant gender-related topics, 15 workshops on legal awareness, 6 safety maps to identify and mark unsafe zones in the community, 6 community melas, 21 gender sensitisation workshops, 2 public demonstrations were conducted. Apart from these, activities like 13 dump box activities to understand the importance and worth of unpaid care work and 7 creative sessions where girls expressed themselves through artwork were also organised.

Shaheen also arranged meetings with media personnel regarding issues of Muslim women seeking divorce and maintenance from their husbands.

The meeting with ASHA workers that was organised by Shaheen was a productive session in which the women participants were made aware of the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS).



The following days were also celebrated by the organisation:

- **International Women's Day:** On 3rd March, a health camp for young women and girls in collaboration with DS Research Centre (with the theme 'let us promote a healthy future for women, let us #Embrace Equity') was organised. On 6th March, in collaboration with DLSA, Shaheen organised for a public meeting and created awareness about legal laws. On 15th March, a Book release was conducted. The book on Godavari Dange was translated in Urdu by Shaheen. The program was attended by 350 participants.
- **International Human Rights Day:** Shaheen organised a meeting with 85 participants at Sultan Shahi with key person, Ms. Elsa from United Nation's Agency - The International Organisation for Migration (IOM). She mentioned how the state of Telangana constitutes of 17% female migrants. IOM is keen on working on a research project in collaboration with Shaheen.
- **International Day of the Girl Child:** Shaheen celebrated with 146 participants, where the school-going children used their creativity to create awareness on gender issues. The chart papers were exhibited and well appreciated.

- **National Girl Child Day:** Shaheen celebrated this day at Urdu Ghar with 200 adolescent girls and young women. The program started with Qawwali performance by the staff. The dignitaries on the dias addressed the gathering one by one, enlightening them on gender issues and gender equity. The program ended with a performance by the primary stakeholders. The young girls put up a play based on the importance of education for girls. They also gave demonstration of self-defense and two of them did a dance performance.
- **Independence Day:** Joint Rally of 260 participants with DLSA and City Civil Court to raise awareness about constitutional rights and freedoms.

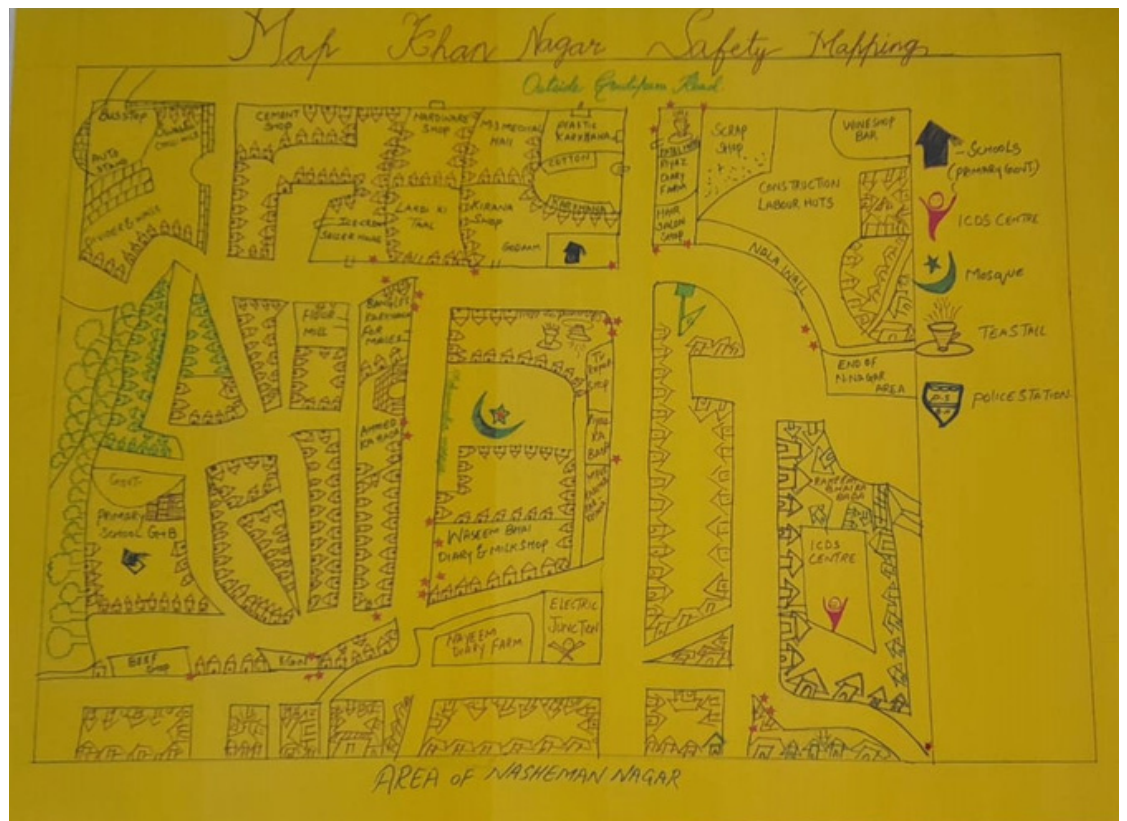


**187 students were
trained in self-
defence classes in
2022.**



Self- Defense Class

Safety Mapping Activity



The Liberating Self

Sana Begum lives in Aman Nagar community with her family. She completed her intermediate. Through Shaheen's home visits, she came to know about the vocational skill courses that Shaheen offers. She joined Shaheen and started learning tailoring at the Aman Nagar resource center. She is a very happy and energetic girl who loves to live her life freely. She participated in awareness programs and training workshops and became aware of her rights and laws. After the training programs, she became more confident and started taking decisions for herself. One day she went to her cousin's wedding and someone there liked Sana and asked Sana's mother to marry her to his son. Sana was already in a relationship with her cousin, so she decided to marry him. However, her parents were not happy but she ultimately convinced them. Unfortunately, her boyfriend refused to marry her. Sana was hurt and agreed to marry a man of her family's choice. Sana got married to Mustafa Pasha, whose mother liked Sana at her cousin's wedding. Sana was shy in nature and her breakup caused her to cocoon herself more. After few days her mother-in-law started forcing her to talk and adjust according to their families' lifestyle. Sana was mentally disturbed and because of this pressure, it was getting difficult for her to adjust. Her mother-in-law also started complaining about Sana's behavior with her husband and his behavior towards Sana also started changing. Somehow Sana's husband came to know about her past relationship, and he started harassing her mentally.

Sana came to her maternal house to meet her parents and shared about her situation. Her parents got angry and refused to support her. They claimed spending a lot of money for her marriage; therefore, her father told her that she can't come back to them because they spent lots of money for her marriage and sent her back. Her mother-in-law started spreading rumours about her being possessed. Her mental condition deteriorated, and she started having seizures. She went back to her maternal family and this time her family supported her because of her illness. She filed a complaint against her husband with Shaheen. Shaheen staff intervened and counselled her. After few counselling sessions, her condition improved and she decided to take khulla form her husband. Then Shaheen called her husband and her parents for counselling and finally, she took khulla form her husband within 6 months of her marriage. Now she is single and regularly visits Shaheen.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 04 WORKING WITH CHILDREN

Children are the future of every nation - how we bring them up, what we inculcate in them - contributes to the sustainability of our future generation and resources.

The area where Shaheen works is extremely orthodox and bound by strong patriarchal practices. The level of gender discrimination within the domestic boundaries is unfathomable. While the male child is gifted with education, his female siblings are often forced into child marriages. Shaheen takes immense efforts to change such mindsets and secure the future of the girl child.

140 students were re-enrolled in schools

- 96 girls**
- 44 boys**



Shaheen organised for 7 Educational Melas, 10 Health Camps, 29 Workshops with adolescent girls, 13 Guided Imagery Sessions, 10 Creative Sessions, and 5 Body Mapping Sessions that create awareness about the internal and external body parts and their functions.

The organisation arranged for meetings with police personnel to encourage young girls and women to report violence, complete their education, be career-oriented and empower themselves.



Changing One's Destiny

Amreen Begum (name changed) is 17 years old and lives with her family in Shaheen Nagar. She has a brother and a sister with disability. Her mother is a homemaker, and her father is an auto driver. She dropped out of school because of financial issues. Amreen always wanted to study but couldn't continue her education because of family problems.

Through door-to-door home visit, Shaheen staff met Amreen and motivated her to learn vocational skills. She enrolled herself for tailoring classes. This led her to eventually participate in various awareness programs and workshops organised by Shaheen. she gained awareness on the importance of education, gender rights, legal laws, health, and so on. She completed her tailoring course and started earning money. She also used to share about her learnings with her mother. Slowly she started supporting her family financially and created her own space. She explained to her mother that she does not have to face violence and that she should speak up for herself.

Now Amreen teaches tailoring to her mother, and both are earning money through self-employment. She also took admission in 10th class through TOSS. She has become resilient and independent and has been helping her mother come out of violence too. She is currently continuing her education and supporting her siblings. Amreen's life has changed after reaching out to Shaheen.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 05

ADVOCACY WITH STAKEHOLDERS

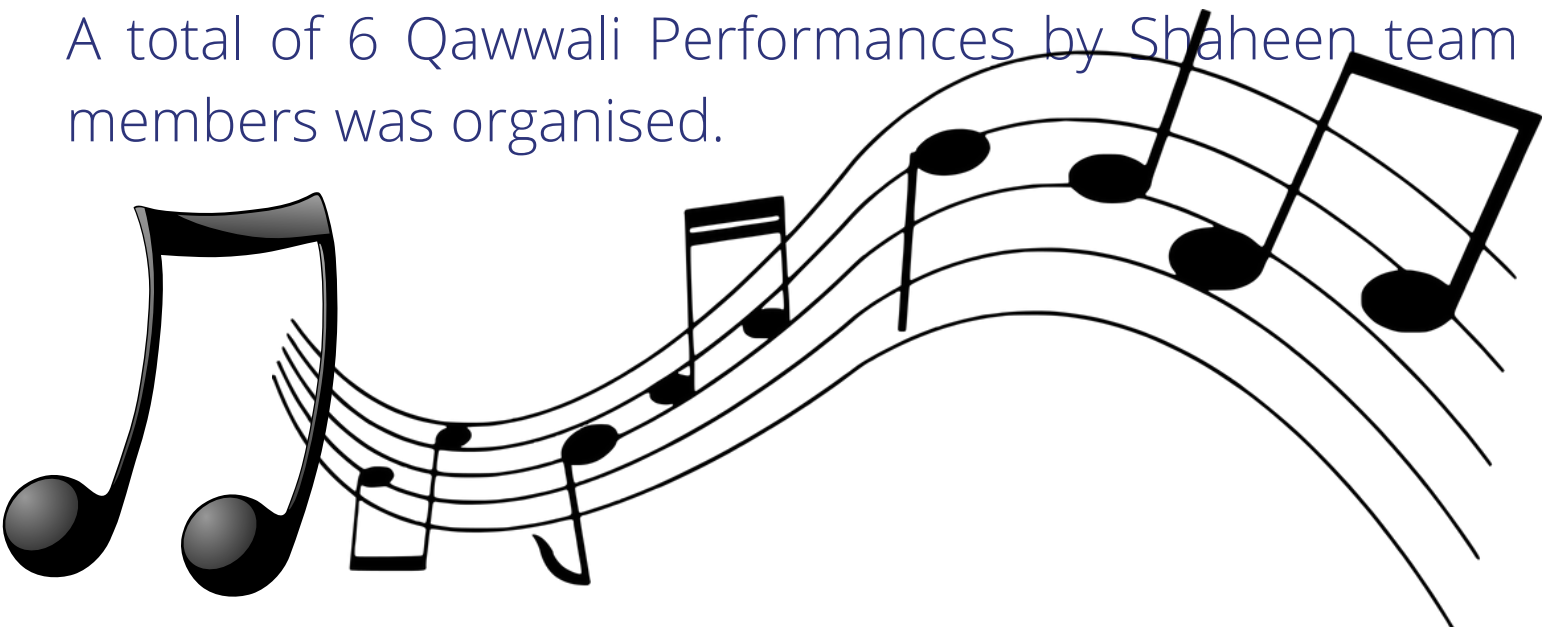
Throughout the year, Shaheen team held 14 interactions with different governmental bodies to strengthen their rapport. Exposure visits with young girls to these offices were conducted in order to build awareness.

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)
Women Commission
International Organisation for Migration (United
Nations Agency)
High Court

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 06 COMMUNAL HARMONY & CULTURAL AWARENESS



A total of 6 Qawwali Performances by Shaheen team members was organised.



100 Thousand Poets for Change:

A worldwide event on poetry, writing and music composed towards the cause of peace, justice and sustainability. This event was organised by Shaheen to provide a platform for young urban women to creatively express themselves and the changes they wish to bring in society. The event began with poetry session as a form of self-empowerment followed by **screening of the film 'Other Kohinoors, The Rocks of Hyderabad' which was directed by Uma Mangal**. The film highlights the disappearance of Hyderabad's prehistoric rocks and the city's changing landscape due to unchecked and rampant urbanisation. The program was attended by 230 participants. A lot of documentary filmmakers also graced the occasion.

In November 2022, in collaboration with Yakshi Organisation, Shaheen organised CADAL FEST at Lamakaan. Yakshi Resource and Creative Centre presented a play titled 'Iddi Inthena?' (Is that it?) directed by Madhusudhan Nadempalli. The music composer and pianist, Nirvan **performed a song that they conceptualised and co-created with the singers from Shaheen.** The Telugu poet, Joopaka Subhadra and the Urdu poet, Jameela Nishat read their poetry (with translations into English).

The event began with a video introduction of CADAL FEST by Nicole Thiara and Judith Misrahi-Barak.

Under the title of 'Flying Embers,' Katharina Holstein-Sturm, a visual artist from Germany and Hyderabad-based activist-poet, Jameela Nishat collaborated for a unique project. **The Artist's Book with Katharina's drawings and Jameela's Hindi/Urdu poems translated into English were displayed at the Hyderabad Literary Festival 2023.** Combining art and poetry, they have addressed conflict, female foeticide, abuse, exploitation and forceful marriage of young girls.

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Shaheen has been able to enhance its presence in the national forum - filmmakers from Dehradun came down to make a **documentary film on Shaheen.**
- In an interview with the **National BBC News Channel**, Ms. Jameela Nishat discussed 'Triple Talaq: Indian Muslim women in limbo after Instant Divorce Ruling.'
- Shaheen participated in **CADAL FEST, a two-day international event** that gives voices to the Dalit and Adivasi communities. Ms. Jameela Nishat attended the event in October 2022 at Nottingham, UK and read some of her Urdu poetry and talked about Shaheen's unique approach on Qawwali. She mentioned how Qawwali is traditionally a genre dominated by men and the lyrics are of divine nature. Therefore, Shaheen subverts the narrative and challenges patriarchy in a creative and peaceful protest.
- **Training on Artificial Intelligence** for both the staff and the primary stakeholders held in March 2023 was a new addition that was well appreciated and benefitted from.

- Ms. Leena Kejriwal, a photographer and installation artist, visited Shaheen for a photoshoot of the Qawwali group at Shaheen. Her project titled 'An Untold Story' was **exhibited at the Hyderabad Literary Festival 2023**. The photographs were dedicated to the female Qawwali singers of Shaheen.
- **Film screening:** Moving images and Shaheen presented **"Pinjaron ki Udaan"** on 31st July, at Guruswamy Center, Maredpally.
- Two of the young staff members, Pooja and Bushra were **part of a research on masculinity**, organised by MARAA Collective, from July 2022 to March 2023.
- One of the staff members, Amreen, participated in a **10-days' feminist leadership training** held in **Gujarat** in November 2022.
- Two of the young staff members, Amreen and Bushra participated in a **5-days' workshop on 'Samvidhan'**, held in **Ahmedabad** in September 2022.

Some social media links to Shaheen's achievements:

- <https://youtu.be/bH0qkcIVp3E>
- <https://www.thehansindia.com/news/cities/hyderabad/flying-members-by-jameela-nishat-and-katharina-holstein-at-hyderabad-literary-festival-779583>
- <https://youtu.be/U-vbgJVI7Cw>
- <https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/hyderabad/2022/nov/27/cadalfest-to-be-held-sunday-2522540.html>
- <https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/hyderabad/2022/nov/29/cadalfest-shares-theses-of-the-oppressed-2523105.html>

WAY FORWARD

Through a range of uniquely designed programs and initiatives that fit the needs of the community, Shaheen has set the motion to help reach the desired goals. The incidences of child marriage and violence on women had peaked during the pandemic, however, the organisation has been on its toes to tackle the menaces of women and child abuse. Thousands of women and children are continuing to benefit through our interventions – breaking away from social barriers and stereotypes while asserting rights and liberties over their resources.

Shaheen has been growing its wings, spreading its wings across international borders too. For the last 20 years, it has been serving as a beacon of hope for the vulnerable population of society. Shaheen will continue its journey for as long as it takes to eradicate violence against the human race.