

ANNUAL REPORT

SHAHEEN WOMEN'S RESOURCE
AND WELFARE ASSOCIATION

20
23



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FOUNDER-DIRECTOR'S VOICE



Gender equity and social justice are the key drivers of our organisation. Equity eventually leads to equality. Women's economic rights and empowerment are the most persistent and significant goals of Shaheen. In the post pandemic era, we witness new challenges to deal with. Increasing mental health issues among the marginalised women and children we work with, has been identified as a pressing issue.



JAMEELA NISHAT



ABOUT US

Shaheen Women's Resource and Welfare Association, commonly referred to as Shaheen, is a women-led grassroots organisation situated in Hyderabad's Old City. The organisation is wholeheartedly dedicated to addressing the pressing needs of marginalised women hailing from Muslim, Dalit, and other underprivileged communities. Since its establishment in October 2002, Shaheen has been unwavering in its commitment to serving the community.

Shaheen's approach is deeply rooted in community engagement and re-integrative strategies. Shaheen's tireless efforts are concentrated on assisting adolescent girls and women who turn to them daily, seeking support and intervention as they grapple with various forms of violence and adversity. Shaheen's remarkable work exemplifies its dedication to empowering and uplifting the lives of marginalised women, striving for a more inclusive and just society. Through its community-based and rehabilitative approaches, Shaheen provides a lifeline to those who need it the most, making a meaningful impact on the lives of countless individuals.



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.

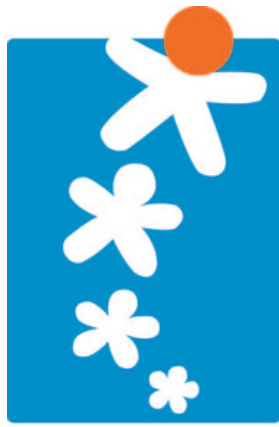


OUR TEAM

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 CURRENT PARTNERS

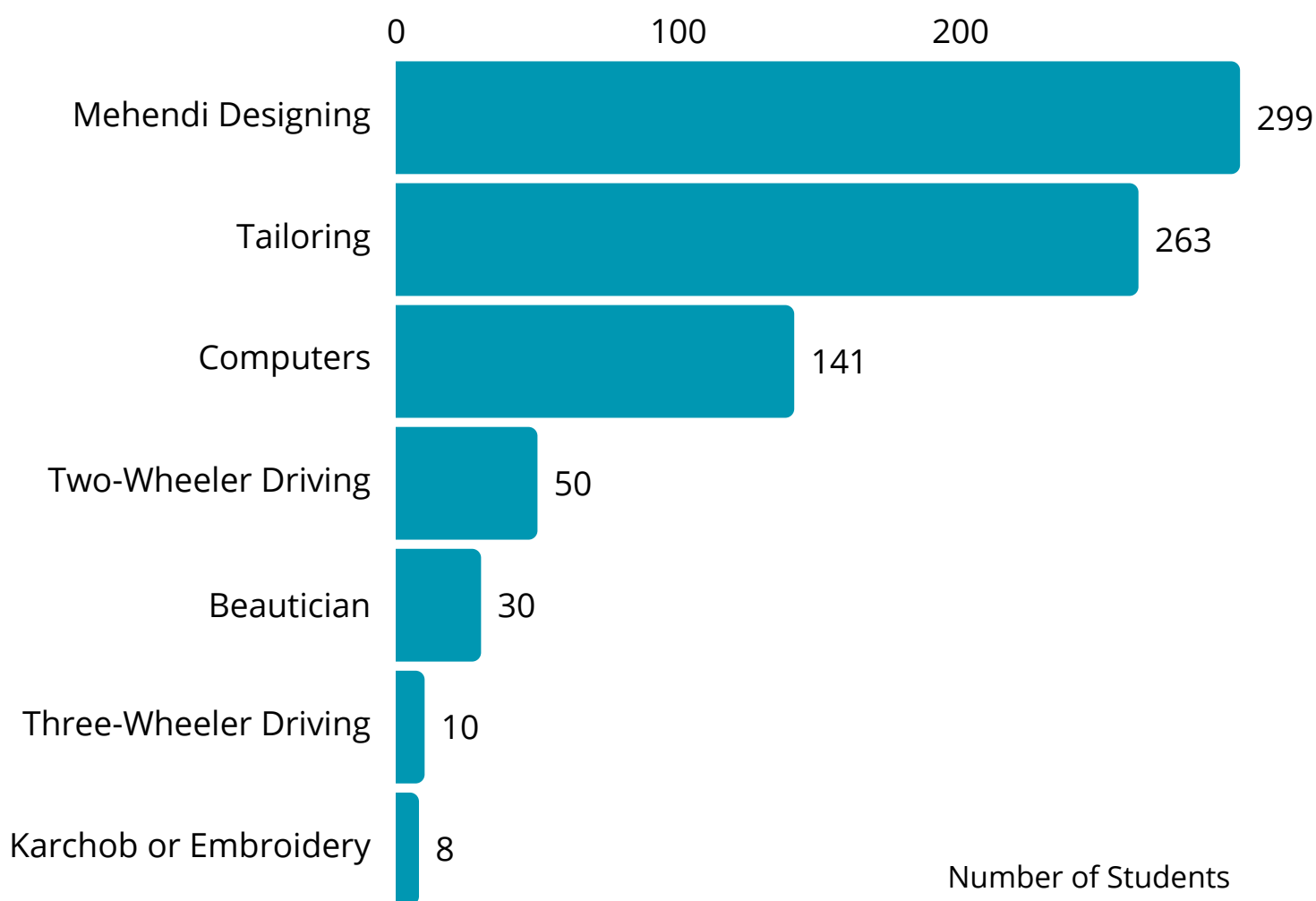


Azim Premji
Foundation



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 01

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT & VOCATIONAL TRAININGS



Shaheen conducted 6 livelihood programs that included meetings with several job placement cells like IKEA, Rapids, Dominos, ETO Motors, Learning Link Foundation for young trainees.

12 workshops were conducted on schemes and entitlements.

Shaheen conducted 2 purse activities for young women, demonstrating effective methods of finance management.

The organisation also conducted 8 financial literacy classes, thus creating awareness about banking and stock market.

38 women have found employment in 2023



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 02

HEALTH AWARENESS



Shaheen organised 9 health camps on breast cancer, cervical cancer, thyroid disorders, polycystic ovarian syndrome. These health camps also included those organised for disabled children.

8 workshops were conducted on sexual and reproductive health rights, focusing on menstrual health and hygiene, pregnancy, breastfeeding and mental health.

A total of 12 awareness programs on health and nutrition, diet and importance of exercise in daily life were conducted throughout the year.



Mental Health Workshop by Dr Anita Rego, a mental health counsellor by profession, facilitated a 3-day workshop for young girls. 70 adolescent girls attended this innovative workshop.

Vitamin Angels: Distribution of Vitamin A and Albendazole dosage to around **1000 children** in 2023.

Stories From the Field

Overcoming Adversity Through Knowledge

Shaheen Women's Resource and Welfare Association Telangana

In low-resource settings in India, a woman often faces the double challenge of poverty and gender discrimination. Soney was no different.

The 17-year-old girl from Sultan Shahi, Gowlipura, in Hyderabad in the south Indian state of Telangana comes from a big family – parents, three sisters, and four brothers. Soney's father

works as a vegetable vendor, while her mother manages the household. Income is extremely limited. At home, she experienced the harsh reality of a patriarchal society where boys were favored over girls in every aspect of life, from education to necessities like food and healthcare. The female members of the family ate after all the male members, much like many impoverished households in the country.

Due to the family depending on the single income from her father, Soney could not take care of her health properly.

Despite the challenges, Soney's determination and eagerness to learn led her to our partner, Shaheen Women's Resource and Welfare Association, a women-led, grassroots-level organization that works to improve the lives of marginalized women from the Muslim, Dalit, and other backward communities facing different forms of violence. Here, she discovered a supportive community and opportunities to enhance her skills and knowledge.

Life took a positive turn for Soney when, in September 2023, she learned about a health awareness program being organized by Shaheen as part of the Vitamin Angels' pan-India Poshan

Maah (National Nutrition Month) campaign. Led by Dr. Asiya, a nutritionist, the program provided crucial insights into healthy eating habits and the importance of a balanced diet.

Armed with this newfound knowledge, Soney embraced the diet chart recommended by Dr. Asiya. She realized that proper nutrition was not just about eating enough but also about eating right. Gradually, Soney's health began to improve.

Through education and support from programs like the Poshan Maah campaign, Soney not only improved her health but also empowered herself to strive for a better future. Her journey is a reminder that with access to the right knowledge and resources, anyone can overcome adversity and break barriers.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 03

GENDER SENSITISATION ENSURING VIOLENCE-FREE LIVES

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. The organisation has also started conducting projects with adolescent boys as well, in order to secure gender justice and equity.



258 students were trained in the self-defence course in 2023.



9 group discussions were conducted on significant gender-related topics like child marriage, sheikh marriages, domestic violence, gender-based violence, safety of girls, youth policies, cyber crime, time used for unpaid care work and paid work.

6 therapeutic creative sessions were held.

20 workshops on legal awareness that included topics like POCSO Act, Child Marriage Act, Sexual Harassment at Workplace, PWDVA, fundamentals rights, cyber crime.

5 community melas were organised to create awareness on gender equity, life choices, importance of education & nutrition, safety of girls, legal laws, SRHR, and inner beauty.

4 exposure visits to police stations, DLSA office and IKEA showroom.

7 gender sensitisation workshops explaining the difference between gender & sex, talking about gender stereotypes and gender-based violence were held.

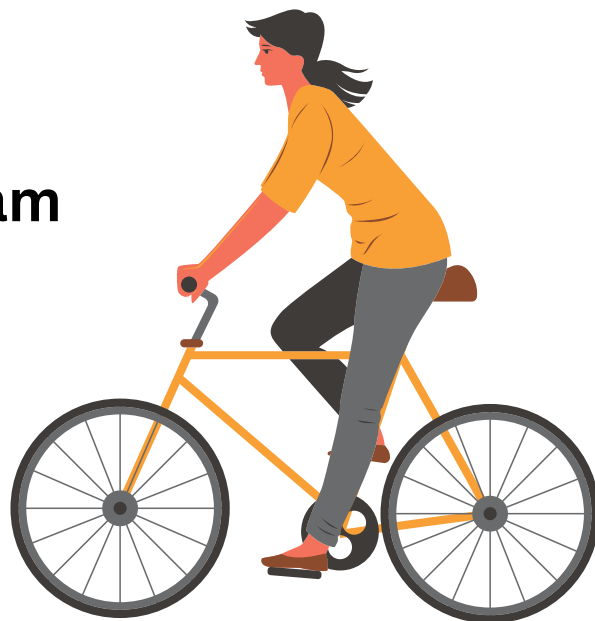


6 safety maps were prepared to identify and mark unsafe zones in the community, 1 public demonstration took place in solidarity with the Manipuri women.

7 guided imagery sessions were conducted to identify violence and traumatic incidences. Apart from these, activities like 11 dump box activities to understand the importance and worth of unpaid care work.

7 creative sessions where girls expressed themselves through artwork were also organised.

Eco-friendly cycling program on International Girl Child Day



**Talk on women safety, Hawk-eye app
and cyber crime by police personnel
on Human Rights Day**



**Celebration of International
Women's Day with District Legal
Services Authority**



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 04

WORKING WITH CHILDREN



Shaheen believes in gender equity and gender transformation. While the organisation emphasises on the girl child, it also focuses on sensitising young adolescent boys in the community, adopting a gender neutral approach. The activities and intervention methods designed for boys are gaining a lot of popularity in the area and more boys are showing interest in becoming part of these programs.



7 awareness campaigns were conducted on significant gender-related topics like importance of education, career and life choices, child rights, POCSO, cyber Crime and child marriages.

15 workshops on health and nutrition were conducted. Additionally, 5 workshops were also conducted on mental health issues.

5 workshops on sexual and reproductive health rights and 8 body mapping sessions were held.

20 gender sensitising workshops were conducted with adolescent girls.

16 guided imagery sessions to identify violence and 15 creative sessions were organised for children.

**10 child marriages
were directly stopped
in 2023**





105 students were re-enrolled in schools

- 79 girls**
- 26 boys**





Stories From the Field

Reviving Ruhi's Childhood

Shaheen Women's Resource and Welfare Association

Telangana

A malnourished mother will give birth to a malnourished child, who will grow up to be a malnourished teenager, and then a malnourished mother – leading to an intergenerational cycle of poverty and poor health. However, timely intervention and collective effort can create brighter futures for children where they have an opportunity to grow up healthy, happy, and full of potential. Three-year-old Ruhi Begum is a great example of it.

Ruhi lives in a community with limited resources with her parents, three sisters, and a brother in Sultan Shahi in the Old City area of Hyderabad in the south Indian state of Telangana. There's no playschool or playground in her area. There's also no Primary Health Center or access to essential government services and Integrative Child Development Services (ICDS) programs either. Her family is also unregistered as they don't have an Aadhaar card, a mandatory government identification card.

Her mother works as a domestic helper, while her father is currently unemployed due to an accident – and income is just not enough. To add to their hardships, one of Ruhi's sisters suffers disabilities, requiring extra care and attention.

Ruhi's early years were marked by health struggles. She suffered from stomach pain from the age of two, which affected her ability to eat, play, and enjoy normal childhood activities. Her mother, Asma Fatima, faced difficulties in breastfeeding Ruhi for more than five days due to her health issues, including anemia and breathing problems caused by inadequate nutrition.

Hope arrived when Asma took Ruhi to a vitamin A supplementation and deworming (VAS+D) camp

organized by our partner Shaheen Women's Resource and Welfare Association, a grassroots organization led by women, committed to empowering marginalized women from Muslim, Dalit, and other disadvantaged communities who experience various forms of violence. At the camp, the service providers from Shaheen administered Ruhi a 200,000 IU vitamin A capsule and an Albendazole deworming tablet – both provided by Vitamin Angels.

Following the treatment, Ruhi excreted a few small worms. Her stomach pain subsided, and she regained her energy and appetite. With her health on the mend, Ruhi is now able to play freely and enjoy being a curious and active child.



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 05

ADVOCACY WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Throughout the year, Shaheen team held 11 interactions with different governmental bodies to strengthen their rapport.

District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Office
Labour Department

Impact NGO

Police Department

US Consulate

Women and Child Welfare Department (WCD)

Centre for Women Development Studies



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 06

COMMUNAL HARMONY AND CULTURAL AWARENESS



A total of 5 Qawwali Performances by Shaheen team members was organised.



100 Thousand Poets for Change:

Shaheen celebrated 100 Thousand Poets for Change program at Sultan Shahi. They celebrated the occasion with three objectives in mind - equality, sustainability and social justice. The event was dedicated to Mr. Michael Rothenberg who had started this 100 thousand poets for change movement and dedicated his life for social change.

Shaheen created a creative space for young women and girls to express their feelings, thoughts and emotions through different art forms. They shared their poems on violence, change, empowerment, freedom and few participants also exhibited their paintings.



Staff Capacity Building

Dalit Sensitisation: 16 Shaheen staff participated in a capacity building workshop at Telugu University. They learnt about the rich, diverse cultures of Dalit musical communities in Jangoan and Adilabad districts of Hyderabad and heard about some experiences of a musical group from Karnataka as well. The disappearance of historical musical instruments and song techniques has resulted in the erosion of Dalit art.

Communal Harmony: The staff members attended the workshop to understand strategies to build peace and harmony in their communities. They learnt about inter-faith religion, challenging stereotypes, social cohesion, peace-building and ultimately community development.

Artificial Intelligence: An awareness building activity with staff members was organised to raise awareness about a virtual course on AI (artificial intelligence) awareness and AI appreciation that describes the differences of AI and their impact on various industries.





An Initiative by Amazon India: Distribution of ration kits to 380 households



One at a Time

Fida Begum lives in Hassan nagar community with her family. Her father is an auto driver and mother is a home maker. She has 2 younger brothers and they are studying. Fida is 16 years old and she is studying in 10th class. Shaheen conducts different activities in her school that she used to participate in. Through Shaheen's intervention, she became aware of her rights. Her family fixed her marriage with her cousin who is perusing his education (Medical). Fida did not want to get married. Her dream is to become a doctor. She spoke to her parents and tried to stop her marriage but her parents said that she could continue her education after marriage. They fixed a date for the marriage and started buying items (For Dowry). They also stopped Fida from going to school. Fida however, managed to inform Shaheen about her marriage through a relative. Shaheen's staff went to her house and spoke to her parents. Shaheen staff explained to them about Child Marriage Act and warned them that if they forced her to get married and she filed a complaint against them, then they would have to go to jail. After counselling they agreed to stop her marriage and also signed a paper in which they wrote that they will not force Fida for marriage. They also spoke to Fida and she was very happy because she can finally continue her education. Shaheen was also happy that they were successful in stopping a child marriage.



But again after 10 days, Shaheen received the information that Fida's parents had booked a function hall for her marriage. Staff members rushed to her rescue. First Shaheen staff members went direct to Fida's school to get her birth certificate and admission details. It was found that Fida was only 14 years old. The Principal was in support of her parents so he informed them that Shaheen staff members are enquiring about her real age. Knowing this, Fida's family members came to school and began creating a fuss. Shaheen involved the police at this stage. Fida's family showed fake documents to the police but Shaheen produced the original document copy. The police also warned them. Fida's marriage was finally called off and Shaheen had been able to stop a child marriage.



**SAY NO TO CHILD
MARRIAGES**



ACHIEVEMENTS

- Shaheen was awarded the **Vocational Excellence Award** from the **Rotary Club of Jubilee Hills** in recognition of their remarkable work and selfless service in the field of women's empowerment in the Old City.
- Ms. Jameela Nishat's story joins the **75 Stories of Women's Leadership** book published by **UN Women India**.
- Ms. Jameela Nishat featured in an exclusive interview on the **iDream Women YouTube channel**, garnering over 130K views. During the discussion, she addressed topics such as violence against women, human trafficking, and the prevailing gender discrimination in the Old City.
- Ms. Jameela Nishat was honoured with the **Naari Shakti Award** in recognition of her remarkable work against sheikh marriages from **Zee Telugu**.
- Ms. Jameela Nishat was honoured with **Vishisht Mahila Puraskar** from the **Child Welfare Department**.



- Four young women learnt **three wheeler (auto) driving** and one of them is currently driving an auto to earn a living.
- **Visit of U.S. Consulate General** Ms. Jennifer Larson to Sultan Shahi Resource Center as a result of strides Shaheen has made in women empowerment initiatives.
- **4 Shaheen staff members received para legal training** at the DLSA.



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.

