SHAHEEN

WOMEN'S RESOURCE AND WELFARE ASSOCIATION • HYDERABAD

ANNUAL REPORT 2025–26

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP · STRONGER COMMUNITIES · A MORE JUST TOMORROW









TOWARDS A SOCIETY WHERE GENDER, CLASS, CASTE AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITY DO NOT RESTRICT RIGHTS, RESOURCES, CHOICES OR FREEDOM.

REPORTING PERIOD | APRIL 2025 – MARCH 2026

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We extend our heartfelt appreciation to Ms Jameela Nishat, Founder-Director, for her continued leadership and commitment to a society in which gender, class, caste and religious identity do not restrict people's rights, resources, choices or freedom. We recognise the social leaders who bring community knowledge into Shaheen's work, nurture relationships with women and young people, and strengthen leadership from within the communities the organisation serves.

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We are deeply grateful to the women, girls, boys, young people and community members who participated, shared their perspectives, questioned restrictive norms and contributed their knowledge. Their participation is more than a tally in a report; it is part of the relationships through which collective learning, trust and community leadership grow. We remain mindful of the responsibility to treat the experiences of people seeking support with dignity, care and confidentiality.

We acknowledge the public institutions, health providers, legal-service personnel, trainers, artists, educational institutions, employers and community networks that collaborated with Shaheen. Particular thanks go to United Way of Hyderabad for partnering in the 2025–26 skill-training project that reached 200 women from marginalised communities, and to the wider network of partners whose contributions are described throughout this report.

With gratitude,
Shaheen Women's Resource and Welfare Association

SHAHEEN
WOMEN'S RESOURCE AND WELFARE ASSOCIATION

FOUNDER-DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

The Journey Continues: Let Every Girl Fly

A message from Ms Jameela Nishat

FOUNDER-DIRECTOR



Shaheen flies high, finding its place in the open blue sky. This flight represents our aspiration for a society in which girls and women can dream, learn, make choices, claim their rights and shape their own futures. Half the sky is our goal, but we know that many forces continue to clip the wings of girls and women. Some are able to fly freely; some continue their journey with clipped wings; and others are still waiting for the opportunities and support they need to take flight.

The journey of Shaheen continues, and a new generation is preparing to carry it forward. We see Generation Z not merely as participants in our work, but as emerging leaders who can renew our efforts towards a gender-just society. For this, learning must remain central to our journey. We must engage with research, document our experiences, learn from the practices of other organisations, and build meaningful collaborations with those working for the rights of girls and women.

Through these exchanges, we hope to nurture a connected chain of leadership among young people. By learning from one another and recognising what works in different contexts, they can develop new strategies, strengthen partnerships and find more effective ways to respond to the challenges women and girls face. We also want them to develop and improve tools for monitoring and learning, enabling them to assess their work, recognise gaps and make informed decisions at the right time.

For Shaheen, the journey has never been only about reaching a destination. It is also about creating the conditions in which others can continue the journey, learn from experience and lead with confidence. Each generation must have the opportunity to carry forward what has been achieved while finding new ways to address the challenges that remain.
As we look ahead, our commitment remains to a gender-just society where gender, class, caste and religious identity do not restrict anyone's rights, resources or freedom. We will continue to work towards a future in which every girl and woman has the space and support to discover her strength, exercise her choices and fly high.

"The journey continues. The sky must remain open."

PART I / THE ORGANISATION/ SECTION 01

About Shaheen and the communities it serves

ROOTED IN THE COMMUNITY, WORKING TOWARDS DIGNITY AND CHOICE

Shaheen Women's Resource and Welfare Association is a women-led grassroots organisation established and registered in 2002 and rooted in Hyderabad's Old City. Its work is guided by the vision of a society in which gender, class, caste and religious identity do not restrict people's rights, resources or freedom. The organisation works across communities, including Muslim, Dalit and Other Backward Class communities, and seeks to create spaces in which women and girls can access information, build skills, recognise their rights and exercise greater choice in their lives.

Shaheen's work is spread across Hyderabad and Rangareddy districts, in the South Zone, covering seven wards and 25 urban-slum areas. It refers to three resource centres that support community-based learning and engagement. Shaheen's approach is gender-sensitive and inclusive: the resource centres provide learning environments in which girls and boys can participate, question restrictive gender expectations and engage with issues affecting their lives and communities.

The organisation has a survivor-sensitive and reintegrative approach to its work. Women who have experienced violence are not understood only through the support they have received; some have gone on to take up organisational responsibilities and become social leaders within the communities Shaheen serves. This emphasis on community knowledge, dignity and leadership connects the organisation's work on prevention and response to violence with its wider efforts in education, health awareness, skills development and socio-economic stability.

PART I / SECTION 02

The vision behind the work

SHAHEEN'S VISION AND PRINCIPLES

Shaheen's vision begins with a clear commitment: a person's access to rights, resources and freedom should not be constrained by gender, class, caste or religious status—whether within the home or in public life. Its mission is to create the conditions in which women can restore their identities, self-dignity and socio-economic stability.

OUR 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.

OUR MISSION

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

A vision for life at home and in public spaces

For Shaheen, equality is not only a principle to be stated; it is a condition to be built. It calls for women and girls to have greater room to exercise choice, pursue education, access health information, build livelihoods, seek support against violence and participate in shaping their communities.

PART I / SECTION 03

How the vision takes shape

FROM COMMITMENT TO PRACTICE

Shaheen's existing reports and public materials show its vision taking shape across everyday relationships, community leadership, access to rights and opportunities for women and girls.

01 Dignity, identity and choice

The mission places women's identities, self-dignity and socio-economic stability at its centre. The work is oriented towards widening the choices women can exercise in their personal, social and economic lives.

02 Freedom from violence

Shaheen identifies the elimination of domestic and social violence as a core intervention. Its work also addresses trafficking and child marriage and includes legal awareness and support pathways.

03 Leadership rooted in community

Shaheen describes a circular rather than linear leadership structure. Social leaders drawn from the communities it works with help guide the organisation, supported by programme, research, finance and wider teams.

04 Equality across communities

The organisation describes its approach as secular and works across Muslim, Dalit and other backward communities. Its stated vision rejects restrictions on rights and freedom based on caste or religious status.

05 Education, health and economic agency

Education and health rights, gender sensitisation, skills development and livelihood generation are among Shaheen's core interventions. Together, these areas address barriers to knowledge, opportunity and financial stability.

06 Culture, dialogue and social harmony

Shaheen uses cultural advocacy, including Qawwali, to communicate women's rights and challenge gender stereotypes. Its public materials also identify communal harmony as an important strand of its work.

A connected approach

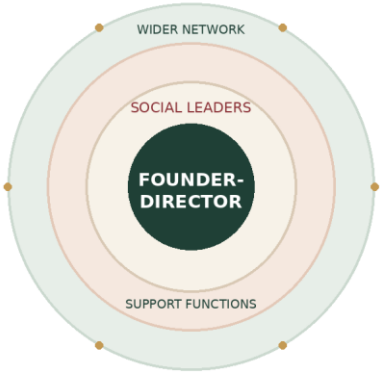
These strands are connected. Rights awareness can help women and girls recognise and exercise choices; education, health information and livelihood opportunities can widen the options available to them; and community-rooted leadership can help carry learning and support across generations. The report that follows will show how these commitments were reflected in Shaheen's work during 2025–26.

PART I / SECTION 04

Leadership that grows from within

COMMUNITY-ROOTED LEADERSHIP

Shaheen's model of leadership is shaped by its relationship with women and communities in Hyderabad's Old City. Rather than a linear hierarchy, the organisation describes a circular organogram: the Founder-Director at the core, social leaders as the next line of leadership, and programme, monitoring and evaluation, finance and administrative functions connected around them. Board members, volunteers, office support and partner organisations contribute to the wider network around this core.



HOW THE MODEL CONNECTS

01 Founder-Director

The organisational core.

02 Social leaders

The second-line leadership team, drawn from communities Shaheen works with.

03 Supporting functions

Operations, Research and Analysis / Monitoring and Evaluation, Finance and Programme Administration.

04 Wider network

Board and Executive Committee, volunteers, office support, partner agencies and individuals.

From receiving support to shaping support

Shaheen's public profile describes social leaders as women drawn from the communities where the organisation works. The previous annual report notes that some members of this leadership group had earlier engaged with Shaheen as people seeking support. Their journeys show how community participation, learning and responsibility can open pathways for women to help shape and deliver the organisation's work—not only access it.

A SHARED LEADERSHIP APPROACH

Community knowledge, organisational support and shared responsibility come together in a model designed to develop leadership from within the communities Shaheen serves.

PART I / SECTION 05

Leadership in practice

EVIDENCE FROM 2025–26

The 2025–26 activity records show leadership development taking place through workshops, young women's collectives and practical exercises that connect community knowledge with local systems.

8	492	6	120
LEADERSHIP WORKSHOPS	WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS	SAFETY MAPPING ACTIVITIES	SAFETY MAPPING PARTICIPANTS

Collective leadership among young women

During 2025–26, Shaheen recorded eight leadership workshops involving 492 participants. The sessions focused on teamwork, community leadership and creating safe spaces for others. The activity summary also reports the formation of new collectives of young women leaders. These collectives offered participants a setting to share experiences of violence affecting them or their communities and to develop collective responses to unequal structures.

COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE IN ACTION

Safety mapping: making local knowledge visible

Six safety mapping activities involved 120 participants. Girls identified landmarks and marked street-harassment hotspots on neighbourhood maps, which were shared with police. Shaheen's 2025–26 activity summary reports that patrolling increased and cameras were installed in identified areas. The exercise illustrates how girls' knowledge of their own neighbourhoods can inform conversations about public safety.

Leadership also depends on learning

The activity records also note staff participation in paralegal-volunteer training associated with the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) and the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA). This learning supports the team's rights-awareness work and its ability to connect community members with formal legal services.

WHAT THIS ADDS TO THE MODEL

Leadership grows through rights knowledge, mutual support, collective action and engagement with institutions.

Leadership in community



Women gather for a community programme at Shaheen Women's Resource and Welfare Association.

Community-rooted leadership also connects local knowledge and collective work with wider public and institutional spaces.

PART I / SECTION 06

The year at a glance

APRIL 2025 – MARCH 2026

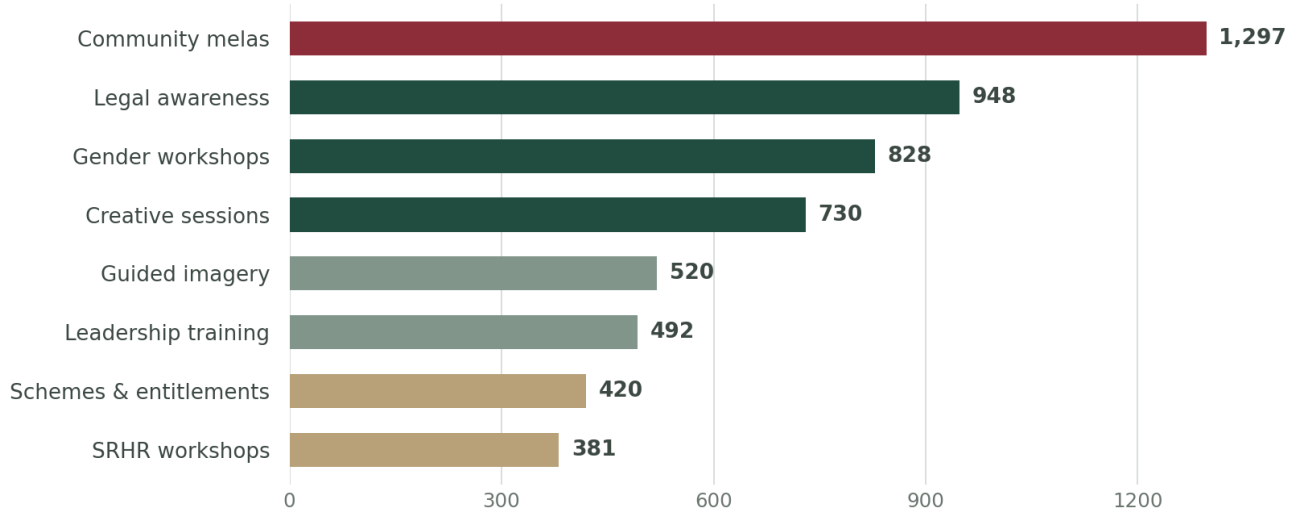
Across the year, Shaheen's work connected awareness and rights education with health, leadership, livelihoods and community life. The figures below present a selection of activities recorded in the 2025–26 activity sheet, alongside key additions confirmed by the team.

136 MENTAL-HEALTH AWARENESS *activities recorded*	**20** HEALTH CAMPS *activities recorded*	**12** LEGAL-AWARENESS SESSIONS *activities recorded*
12 GENDER WORKSHOPS *activities recorded*	**11** COMMUNITY MELAS *activities recorded*	**8** LEADERSHIP TRAININGS *activities recorded*
200 DIRECT BENEFICIARIES *United Way of Hyderabad skill-training project*	**4** SKILL-TRAINING PATHWAYS *tailoring/fashion design · two-/three-wheeler driving · crochet toy-making*	**3** CENTRES *self-defence classes conducted across all three centres*

Between November 2025 and March 2026, Shaheen implemented a skill-training project with United Way of Hyderabad, reaching 200 women from marginalised communities. Training covered tailoring and fashion design, two-wheeler and three-wheeler driving, and crochet toy-making. Self-defence classes were conducted across all three centres and included practical physical techniques, situational awareness and verbal de-escalation.

Participation recorded in selected activities

Recorded participation tallies are shown below; they should not be read as unique individuals reached. The UWH figure above reports direct beneficiaries and is not added to the activity-based tallies in this chart.



Source: Shaheen, "Details for Annual Report 2025–26" activity sheet and team-provided programme details. Activity counts and participation figures should be checked against programme records before publication.

PART II / PROGRAMMES AND PARTICIPATION/ SECTION 01

Creating spaces for agency and change

FROM KNOWLEDGE TO CHOICE, FROM CHOICE TO COLLECTIVE ACTION

Agency is built in everyday settings: when women and girls can name unequal treatment, understand the rights available to them, discuss health without shame, develop confidence with others, and explore choices for their futures.

During 2025–26, Shaheen's records bring together gender and legal awareness, leadership collectives, learning with young people, health and bodily autonomy, mental-health awareness, and information about money and public entitlements. The strands are connected: knowledge can widen choice, while collective spaces can make it easier to question norms and seek support.

12
GENDER WORKSHOPS
828 recorded participants

12
LEGAL-AWARENESS SESSIONS
948 recorded participants

8
LEADERSHIP TRAININGS
492 recorded participants

20
HEALTH CAMPS
Activities recorded

THE THREAD RUNNING THROUGH THE WORK
Agency grows when women and girls can name injustice, access information, and act with others.

Participation figures are activity-based and may include repeat attendance; they should not be added together as unique people reached.



Community members take part in a legal awareness programme.

PART II / SECTION 02

Rights made understandable

GENDER AND LEGAL AWARENESS

Awareness work is most useful when it connects broad ideas about equality with the choices and support available in everyday life. Shaheen's annual activity sheet records workshops on gender and sessions on the laws and public systems relevant to women and girls.

12

GENDER WORKSHOPS

828 participants recorded

12

LEGAL-AWARENESS SESSIONS

948 participants recorded

Questioning gender norms

The 12 gender workshops explored the distinction between sex and gender, the effects of stereotypes, and the ways social structures can reproduce unequal opportunities, discrimination and violence. The activity sheet notes that participants were encouraged to recognise how these norms shape daily life and to question them.

Knowing where to turn

The 12 legal-awareness sessions covered laws and protections including POCSO, the Domestic Violence Act, the Nirbhaya Act, the Child Labour Act and POSH. Sessions also introduced support pathways such as SHE Teams and the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA).

WHY THIS MATTERS

Rights awareness is not an outcome in itself. It can give women and girls language for identifying violence and discrimination, help them recognise available protections, and clarify a possible next step when they or someone they know need support.



Women participate in a community information session.

PART II / SECTION 03

Collectives that make room for leadership

LEADERSHIP COLLECTIVES

Leadership development in Shaheen's activity records is rooted in shared learning rather than individual confidence alone. The workshops focused on teamwork, community leadership and creating safer spaces where others can speak.

8
LEADERSHIP WORKSHOPS
492 participants recorded

The annual activity sheet reports that the workshops helped form new collectives of young women leaders. These groups offered participants a setting to talk about violence they had experienced or witnessed, compare concerns, and consider collective ways to challenge unequal structures. The emphasis is on women and girls building relationships through which knowledge, confidence and responsibility can be shared.



Participants take part in a group activity during a Shaheen programme.

COLLECTIVE AGENCY
Leadership takes root when women and girls can think, speak and act together.

PART II / SECTION 04

Learning, voice and the freedom to choose

EDUCATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE



Young women display certificates after a learning programme.

6
EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS
323 participants recorded

4
UNPAID CARE-WORK WORKSHOPS
240 participants recorded

4
WORKSHOPS WITH BOYS
35 participants recorded

The activity sheet lists six educational workshops involving 323 participants. It also records four workshops on unpaid care work, using the 4Rs—recognise, reduce, redistribute and represent—to make household labour visible and discuss how responsibilities can be shared. The sessions connected unequal care burdens with girls' time, schooling, rest and the ability to take part in community life.

Four workshops with boys created space to discuss masculinity, gender expectations and respect. The stated aim was to encourage boys to become responsible community members who challenge, rather than reproduce, violence and discrimination.



Boys being vulnerable in a session on masculinity

PART II / SECTION 05

Health knowledge belongs to everyone

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND BODILY AUTONOMY

Information about reproductive health, access to check-ups and the ability to ask questions without embarrassment are all part of bodily autonomy. Shaheen's records combine discussions of reproductive health with nutrition sessions, community health camps and a breast-cancer screening partnership.

7
SRHR WORKSHOPS
381 participants recorded

3
HEALTH AND NUTRITION WORKSHOPS
163 participants recorded

20
HEALTH CAMPS
Activities recorded

Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) workshops covered puberty, menstruation, reproductive anatomy, contraception, consent and conditions such as PCOD. The activity sheet says the sessions sought to reduce shame and silence around reproductive health and to encourage women and girls to seek medical support when needed.

Health and nutrition workshops discussed balanced diets, vitamins and minerals, with attention to gendered household routines that can leave women eating late or relying on leftovers. The sessions included practical guidance on affordable, locally available foods.
The activity notes describe community health camps led by gynecologist Dr Sri Lakshmi, offering check-ups, general medicines and a setting where women could discuss reproductive health concerns with a specialist.



Community Health Camps at Shaheen.

A separate 21-day breast-cancer screening initiative, reported as a collaboration with the NAB India Centre for the Blind, screened more than 500 women and adolescent girls. The source notes that participants with symptoms or screening concerns were referred for further assessment.



A Breast cancer screening initiative in Collaboration with NAB.

PART II / SECTION 06

Making mental health speakable

MENTAL-HEALTH AWARENESS



Mental-health awareness workshop with community participants.

The activity sheet records 136 mental-health awareness activities during 2025–26.

Programme notes describe efforts to address stigma and challenge explanations of mental distress that may discourage people from seeking support. Sessions discussed signs of mental-health concerns, ways to support someone who is struggling, everyday self-care, and the importance of professional help.

The team also shared helpline information so community members had a practical route to seek guidance. The activity records place this work across a wide community footprint, including all 25 areas served by Shaheen in a separate narrative summary.

136
AWARENESS ACTIVITIES
Recorded in the 2025–26 activity sheet

25
AREAS SERVED
Reported in the programme narrative

MAKING ROOM FOR REFLECTION AND EXPRESSION

Nine guided-imagery sessions (520 participation tallies) invited women and girls to reflect on how past violence or abuse may continue to affect them. The activity notes describe one-to-one follow-up conversations so participants could speak privately with someone they trusted.

The sheet also lists seven creative sessions with a participation tally of 730. Painting, poetry, story writing and theatre gave women and girls ways to express emotions and personal experiences through shared creative work.

A MESSAGE SHARED THROUGH AWARENESS SESSIONS

Mental health deserves attention and care, just as physical health does.

PART II / SECTION 07

Knowledge for economic choice

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Economic agency includes more than access to work. It also depends on whether women can understand their options, retain control over earnings, make financial decisions and identify public resources that may support education, health or enterprise.



Community members engage with products at an activity display.

3
FINANCIAL-LITERACY SESSIONS
180 participants recorded

6
SCHEMES AND ENTITLEMENTS SESSIONS
420 participants recorded

The financial-literacy sessions covered budgeting, savings and basic information about options such as mutual funds and systematic investment plans (SIPs). The activity sheet also notes discussion of women's control over their own earnings and the importance of using income for health and self-care without guilt.

Six sessions on schemes and entitlements introduced women and girls to resources including subsidised loans, scholarships, the Cheyutha scheme and SC/ST loan schemes. The stated purpose was to help participants identify support that could assist with higher education, health needs or starting and growing small businesses.

Skills training for sustainable livelihood opportunities

Building skills, widening livelihood choices

During the third and fourth quarters of the 2025–26 financial year, from November 2025 to March 2026, Shaheen implemented a skill-training project in partnership with United Way of Hyderabad (UWH). The project directly mobilised 200 women from marginalised communities and offered training across four course areas: tailoring and fashion design, two-wheeler driving, three-wheeler (auto) driving, and crochet toy making.

The range of courses is significant because livelihood opportunities are not the same for every woman. Tailoring and fashion design can support participants interested in garment-related work or taking up stitching orders; driving training can build skills relevant to mobility-linked work and wider access to workplaces and markets; and crochet toy making can develop a creative, product-based skill. By bringing these options together within one project, Shaheen and United Way of Hyderabad sought to equip women with practical, market-oriented skills through which they could explore diverse and sustainable livelihood opportunities.

The project forms part of Shaheen's wider understanding of economic empowerment. Access to skills can be an important step towards employment, self-employment and greater control over economic choices, but the ability to translate training into a sustained livelihood also depends on factors such as access to tools and materials, opportunities to reach customers or employers, available capital, time, mobility and care responsibilities. The initiative therefore adds a practical skills-development strand to the organisation's work on financial literacy, access to public schemes and entitlements, and support for women's socio-economic stability. The project's reported direct reach was 200 women. If further programme records are available, the report could also document course-wise enrolment and completion, access to equipment or start-up resources, subsequent employment or self-employment, and follow-up support. Such information would help show not only the scale of participation, but also how participants used the skills they acquired.

Project partner	United Way of Hyderabad (UWH)
Implementation period	November 2025–March 2026 (Q3 and Q4 of FY 2025–26)
Direct beneficiaries	200 women from marginalised communities
Training areas	Tailoring and fashion design; two-wheeler driving; three-wheeler/auto driving; crochet toy making

PART III / ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND PROTECTION/ SECTION 01

From support to the exercise of rights

SAKHI-2 ONE STOP CENTRE · CHARMINAR · APRIL 2025 – MARCH 2026

Rights become meaningful when women can access information, seek support and exercise protections in practice. During 2025–26, Shaheen worked in collaboration with Sakhi-2 One Stop Centre in Charminar, which responds to domestic violence and other concerns affecting women and girls. The centre's physical report records 588 cases, alongside legal, psychosocial and other forms of support.

588 CASES REGISTERED	**216** LEGAL-AID / COUNSELLING SUPPORT	**804** PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT / COUNSELLING	**19** ORIENTATION WORKSHOPS · 220 PARTICIPANTS

Support takes more than one form

The service record includes 20 instances of medical assistance and 72 cases in which shelter support was required. Six awareness-generation activities were reported. The centre also held five State Steering Committee meetings and five Management Committee meetings to review its functioning. These records point to a response that involves direct support as well as coordination across services and institutions.

20 MEDICAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES	**72** CASES REQUIRING SHELTER SUPPORT	**06** AWARENESS ACTIVITIES	**10** COMMITTEE MEETINGS



Collaboration with sakhi one stop centre

PART III / THE CASELOAD/ SECTION 02

The issues women brought forward

CASES REGISTERED AT SAKHI-2 OSC · 2025–26

The reported caseload covered domestic violence, dowry-related harassment, sexual offences, cybercrime and other situations in which women and girls needed assistance. The category totals below are transcribed from the centre's physical report.

CATEGORY	CASES	CATEGORY	CASES
Domestic violence	**266**	Missing / kidnapping / abduction	**19**
Dowry harassment / death	**159**	Child sexual abuse / POCSO	**5**
Sexual offence / harassment	**94**	Women trafficking	**3**
Cybercrime / cheating / "love affair"	**35**	Child marriage	**3**
Rape	**2**	Other	**2**
Acid attack	**0**		

588	5 + 5	06	03
TOTAL CASES	STEERING AND MANAGEMENT MEETINGS	AWARENESS ACTIVITIES	STATE-OFFICER MONITORING VISITS

The centre also reported 20 medical-assistance services, 72 cases in which shelter support was required, and 804 psychosocial-support/counselling entries. The report lists 216 legal-aid/counselling support instances. Together, these figures describe a range of responses rather than a single service pathway.

Source: Sakhi-2 One Stop Centre, physical report, 1 April 2025–31 March 2026. Categories follow the stated totals in the supplied report; age-wise subcategories are not reproduced here.

PART III / LEGAL INTERVENTIONS/ SECTION 03

When protection has to be implemented

FROM A COURT ORDER TO A SAFER LIVING ARRANGEMENT

A protection or residency order matters only if the person it protects can exercise it in everyday life. The case records supplied for this report describe Sakhi-2 OSC working with Protection Officers, the judiciary and local police to support the implementation of court directions and help reduce the risk of further harassment.

8 DECEMBER 2025 · TOLICHOWKI

A residency order put into practice

A woman who was eight months pregnant sought protection and the right to reside in her shared household. Under a court order, the Protection Officer and Sakhi-2 team coordinated with Tolichowki Police Station and visited the residence. The team explained the order to the respondents and supported the woman's safe entry and settlement. The report records that the order was implemented and that the respondents were warned against further harassment.



A coordinated visit by protection and police personnel helps a woman exercise her right to reside safely.

31 JANUARY 2026 · TIRUMALAGIRI

Protection at the shared household

In a separate case, a woman sought to remain in her matrimonial home without interference from her in-laws. The Sakhi-2 Case Assistant and DVC Legal Counsellor coordinated implementation of the court order with Tirumalagiri Police Station. The team explained the legal obligations, facilitated her entry into the home and worked to prevent an incident during the transition. The report records the order as implemented and the woman settled in the shared household.



Legal counselling and coordination with local police support the implementation of a residency order.

Counselling, mediation and voluntary choice

The supplied records also describe a separate case in which individual counselling and joint mediation helped a couple reach a mutual agreement to resume living together; the woman subsequently chose to withdraw her domestic-violence complaint. This is one documented outcome, not a model for every case. Each response must be shaped by the woman's informed, voluntary choices and safety needs.

Source: Sakhi-2 OSC case records supplied by Shaheen; details are anonymised.

PART IV / SELECTED STORIES/ SECTION 01

Journeys that illuminate change

AGENCY · LIVELIHOOD · SAFETY · EDUCATION

Programme figures show the reach of Shaheen's work; individual journeys can show how women use new information, relationships and opportunities in their own lives. The stories below are adapted from the case notes supplied for the annual report. Identifying details have been omitted to protect participants' privacy.

SAFETY · RIGHTS AWARENESS · INDEPENDENCE

A decision for dignity

During home visits, Shaheen staff met a young woman and encouraged her to join mehndi-design training. Alongside learning a skill, she attended awareness sessions on rights, gender equality, health and violence. She later spoke to the team about domestic violence and asked for support in discussing her situation with her husband. After counselling, she decided that she wanted to live separately and work towards financial independence. The case note records that she rented a room and continued working in a cloth shop. Her decision marked a move towards a life she described as more dignified.

SKILLS · INCOME · CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

From tailoring to a stronger voice

A woman who joined Shaheen's tailoring course described gaining both a practical skill and a stronger understanding of her rights. After completing the course, she began taking stitching orders and earning approximately Rs 300–350 a day. The case note also records a change in how confidently she spoke up for herself, alongside a renewed focus on her children's education: she enrolled them in school and began encouraging her sisters to pursue independence and prioritise their children's studies. Her journey links skill-building with confidence, income and a wider influence within the family.



Tailoring practice can support income generation and open conversations about education and choice.

Based on Shaheen's 2025–26 case notes. Income amounts are reproduced as recorded in the source material.

Turning skills into choices

PRACTICAL SKILLS, FINANCIAL AGENCY AND MOBILITY

TAILORING · SAVINGS · FAMILY CHANGE

A sewing machine, a plan for her daughters

After learning tailoring and attending empowerment programmes, a woman began earning around Rs 500 a day through stitching orders from nearby households. With support from a ten-member self-help group, she accessed a group loan of Rs 15,000 and purchased a sewing machine. She also began saving through a post-office scheme for her daughters' future. The case note records that, following counselling, her husband had started caring for their daughters and helping with household tasks. The story shows how skills, access to tools, savings and shifts in household responsibilities can intersect.

TWO-WHEELER TRAINING · LIVELIHOOD · CHOICE

Mobility that opens a market

A woman who had experienced violence at home developed a trusting relationship with Shaheen through driving classes and later shared what she had been facing. With the team's support, she considered steps towards greater independence. The case note describes her beginning to sell fruits, vegetables and sarees, using her two-wheeler to travel to the market and generate income. She also expressed an aspiration to find a job in the future. Her experience connects mobility with access to customers, income and a wider range of choices.



A participant's mobility and livelihood journey, represented through an approved image of driving or market-based work.

Different journeys, no single template

Across these stories, change does not follow one prescribed route. It may mean speaking more confidently, earning and saving, pursuing children's education, creating distance from violence, or using mobility to reach a market. Shaheen's role, as described in the records, includes offering spaces for learning and support; the decisions and next steps belong to the women themselves.

Building collective futures

CULTURE · SAFETY · PARTNERSHIPS · COLLECTIVE LEARNING

Shaheen's work also takes place in the shared spaces where communities meet: cultural gatherings, public activities, conversations about safety and opportunities for young people to reflect on gender. These approaches make room for difficult topics to be discussed through familiar forms of expression, collective learning and dialogue across institutions.

2 / 212	4 / 128	11 / 1,297
QAWWALI PROGRAMMES / PARTICIPATION	CULTURAL PROGRAMMES / PARTICIPATION	COMMUNITY MELAS / PARTICIPATION

Music as a language for social change

The activity record describes Qawwali as a creative way to raise awareness about violence, discrimination and abuse in public spaces. During the year, the team performed Qawwalis and wrote or composed new pieces on the environment, toxic beauty standards and celebrating mothers. The record notes that girls also sing these tracks at home, carrying their messages into family and neighbourhood settings. Two Qawwali programmes are recorded, with 212 participant attendances.

Cultural celebrations that bring communities together

Four cultural programmes, with 128 participant attendances, were recorded as opportunities to promote peace and social harmony. The activity sheet names celebrations of Ganesh Chaturthi, Iftaar, Christmas and Bathukamma. Shaheen describes these shared occasions as a way for women and girls from different communities to encounter one another's traditions, question stereotypes and build relationships across social boundaries.

A mela as a public learning space

The 11 Community Melas recorded in the activity sheet reached 1,297 participant attendances. Games and creative stalls opened conversations on early marriage and education, beauty standards, women leaders, dowry, street harassment and women in science. The activities also linked community discussion with legal awareness, including information about constitutional rights and protective laws against violence.



A Qawwali performance, cultural celebration or Community Mela creating space for shared learning and dialogue.

Source: Details for Annual Report 2025–26, Activity details sheet supplied by Shaheen. Participation figures are activity-based tallies and may include repeat attendance.

PART V / SAFER COMMUNITIES/ SECTION 02

Making safety visible

SAFETY MAPPING · ENGAGING BOYS · SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Community-level safety work asks whose experiences shape how public spaces are understood and what happens after concerns are raised. The activity record describes two approaches: inviting girls to map harassment hotspots, and making space for boys to discuss masculinity, gender expectations and their responsibilities in preventing violence.

6 / 120	4 / 35
SAFETY-MAPPING ACTIVITIES / PARTICIPATION	WORKSHOPS WITH BOYS / PARTICIPATION

SAFETY · PUBLIC SPACE · LOCAL RESPONSE

Mapping neighbourhoods from girls' perspectives

In six safety-mapping activities, involving 120 participant attendances, girls drew maps of their neighbourhoods and marked places where street harassment occurred. The activity record says that the maps were shared with police; it reports increased patrolling in the marked areas and the installation of safety cameras. The sessions also introduced participants to relevant laws and ways to seek help, including SHE Teams, the HawkEye app and the 112 helpline.

PHO



Girls' safety maps identify local concerns and support conversation with relevant authorities.

GENDER AWARENESS · MASCULINITY · COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

Inviting boys into conversations on gender

Four workshops with 35 participant attendances created space for boys to learn and discuss masculinity, gender awareness and women's experiences. Shaheen's stated aim is to nurture responsible young male leaders who can act as positive changemakers and stand against violence and discrimination in their neighbourhoods. This work complements the development of young women's leadership: building safer communities requires shared responsibility, not placing the burden of change on girls and women alone.



A facilitated discussion with boys on gender, respect and responsibility.

Self-defence classes across Shaheen's centres

Practical learning for confidence and personal safety

Shaheen conducts self-defence classes at all three of its centres. These structured training programmes introduce participants to practical physical techniques, situational awareness and verbal de-escalation skills, with an emphasis on responses that may be relevant to real-world safety concerns. Through guided practice, participants have an opportunity to learn and rehearse techniques in a dedicated setting rather than engaging with personal safety only as an abstract topic.

The classes complement Shaheen's wider work on preventing and responding to gender-based violence. Gender and legal awareness sessions help women and girls understand rights and available support; safety mapping brings their knowledge of neighbourhoods and harassment hotspots into discussions with local institutions; and self-defence classes add a practical, skills-based dimension to this work. Together, these strands reflect an approach that takes women's and girls' knowledge of their own experiences seriously and creates opportunities for learning, preparedness and collective discussion.

Self-defence is one component of a broader approach to safety, not a substitute for prevention, accountability or institutional protection. Women and girls should not be made responsible for preventing violence committed against them. Responsibility also rests with people who perpetrate violence, with communities that can challenge normalised harassment, and with institutions responsible for safety and access to justice. In this wider context, self-defence training can provide practical learning while Shaheen continues to work on the social conditions and systems that shape women's freedom to move and participate in public life.

Coverage	Self-defence classes conducted across all three Shaheen centres
Training focus	Practical physical techniques, situational awareness and verbal de-escalation
Further data to add	Number of classes; participant numbers and age groups; dates; trainers or partners, if recorded



Participants practise coordinated movements during a Shaheen self-defence session.



Participants demonstrate self-defence techniques as part of practical training.

PART V / PARTNERSHIPS AND LEARNING/ SECTION 03

Stronger work through shared learning

PARTNERSHIPS · STAFF DEVELOPMENT · LOOKING AHEAD

The activity records show Shaheen engaging with public institutions, health providers, employers, women's networks, educational institutions, artists, volunteers and other civil-society organisations. The forms of engagement differ, from service coordination and training to job-placement discussions, cultural exchange and opportunities to share learning.

Connections across sectors

Safety and access to rights: the records describe work with Sakhi-2 One Stop Centre, police, the District Legal Services Authority and women's networks including Bhumika and SAWFIN. Health and well-being: collaborations and learning exchanges included NAB India Centre for the Blind, Olive Hospital and MPower, alongside activities related to health camps, screening, mental-health awareness and basic life-support training. Livelihoods: the Confederation of Women Entrepreneurs of India, Godrej, Father and Sons Company and Hyderabad's Women Safety Wing appear in the activity records in connection with job-placement discussions, garment orders and employment possibilities for women and young people.

Learning and cultural exchange: the records also note engagement with Samvada, artists connected with MARAA's Riyaaz programme, students from universities and educational institutions, and AIESEC volunteers. These links provided opportunities to share Shaheen's work, discuss social change and bring different skills and perspectives into the organisation. The activity sheet records these engagements but does not quantify their longer-term outcomes.

Investing in the people doing the work

The staff-capacity record lists eight learning topics: mental health, sexual and reproductive health and rights, "My Voice Is My Power", a session recorded as "Love Jihad" in the source sheet, basic life support, clay art for mental health, leadership and four-panel comic-making. Three paralegal-volunteer trainings are also recorded. Additional learning spaces included discussions on the Protection of Women from Sexual Harassment (POSH) Act, domestic violence, play therapy and working with children, as well as a three-day state-level workshop on institutional mechanisms for preventing violence against women and girls. The records point to staff learning across legal, health, creative and facilitation domains.

Lessons and priorities for the coming year

The year's activities suggest several priorities to carry forward:

- Strengthen documentation and follow-up so the organisation can record what happens after awareness sessions, safety mapping, referrals and institutional coordination.
- Continue using Qawwali, cultural gatherings and Community Melas to make conversations about rights, safety and discrimination accessible, while linking them to clear information on support and legal protections.
- Sustain partnerships with police, legal services, health providers, employers and community organisations so that local concerns can connect to practical responses.
- Invest in staff learning and collective care, and keep creating opportunities for girls, women and boys to develop leadership and share responsibility for safer communities.

The Founder-Director's message reinforces research, documentation, collaboration and monitoring-and-learning as ways to strengthen future community leadership.

PART VI / GOVERNANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS

People and partnerships behind the work

Shaheen's work is sustained by community-rooted leadership, the guidance of its governing members and collaboration with organisations that support its mission.

Governance and leadership

The members below bring experience in women's rights, education, disability studies, health, language and community practice.



Ms Jameela Nishat
Founder-Director

A feminist poet working in Dakhani (Deccani), Jameela founded Shaheen in Hyderabad's Old City in 2002 to create a space where women could feel safe, heal and rebuild their lives. She has led the organisation's work to strengthen women's rights, dignity and socio-economic agency.



Dr Rekha Abel
President

Holds a PhD in Applied Linguistics from the University of Hyderabad. Her work includes education and child-rights programming with Catholic Relief Services, serving as its Deputy Country Representative, and advising the Government of Andhra Pradesh on implementation of the Right to Education.



Dr Shilpaa Anand
Vice-President

Associate Professor at BITS Pilani, Hyderabad Campus, with a PhD in Disability Studies from the University of Illinois, Chicago. Her research addresses disability historiography and culturally different concepts of corporeality; she is also a Distinguished Research Fellow at NALSAR's Centre for Disability Studies.



Shaheda Begum
Treasurer

Associated with Shaheen since its inception, Shaheda has played a key role in responding to domestic violence and harmful Sheikh marriages. A certified counsellor, she conducts guided-imagery sessions and supports the organisation's day-to-day functioning.



Kollati Godavari
Joint Secretary

Joined Shaheen in 2021 as Programme Manager. With a master's degree in History from Delhi University and prior experience in content writing on menstrual health and hygiene, she is committed to women's and girls' empowerment.



Dr Rohina Rajesh
Member

A medical professional whose work in palliative care developed her experience in counselling, advocacy, awareness and care management. She supports an integrative approach to health that attends to the person as well as the condition.



Mythili Nayar
Member

Former Professor in the Department of English at Women's Christian College, Chennai, and a language-assessment trainer for organisations including the British Council and Cambridge Examinations. She has volunteered with Shaheen on translation and language training and is also a published children's-book illustrator.

Current partners

Shaheen acknowledges the organisations listed below as its current partners.

Azim Premji Foundation	Current partner
United Way of Hyderabad	Partnered with Shaheen on the 2025–26 skill-training project, which reached 200 women from marginalised communities.
Rashesh S Vidya Shah Family Foundation	Partner organisation

Together, community leadership, governance and partnerships help connect Shaheen's rights-based work with learning, resources and opportunities for women and girls.