



# The Influencers

Annual Report 2019-2020



**EdelGive**  
Foundation

An Edelweiss Initiative

YEAR 2



# Abbreviations

AALI	Association for Advocacy and Legal Initiatives
ADG	Additional Director General
ASHA	Accredited Social Health Activist
ATM	Automated Teller Machine
CAA	Citizenship Amendment Act
CLAC	Community Legal Aid Centres
DLSA	District Legal Services Authority
FIR	First Information Report
FSW	Female Sex Workers
ILFAT	Indian Leadership Forum Against Trafficking
IPC	Indian Penal Code
KMVS	Kutch Mahila Vikas Sansthan
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
MIS	Management Information System
MPPSC	Madhya Pradesh Public Service Commission
NCR	National Capital Region
NCRB	National Crime Record Bureau
NFHS	National Family Health Survey
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NMIMS	Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies
NRC	National Register of Citizens
NSSO	National Sample Survey Organisation
PLFS	Periodic Labour Force Surveys
POCSO	Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012
RTI	Right to Information
SHG	Self Help Group
SRA	Slum Rehabilitation Authority
UP	Uttar Pradesh
USSD	Unstructured Supplementary Service Data
VAW	Violence Against Women
VRC	Village Rights Committees
WE	Women Empowerment

# Contents

<b>Foreword</b> .....	02
<b>Journey Towards Women Empowerment</b> .....	03
<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	04
<b>The Coalition</b>	
i. The Influencers .....	05
ii. NGO Partners.....	06
<b>Our Journey Together with The Influencers</b> .....	07
<b>The Year in a Glance</b> .....	10
i. Five Key Priority Areas .....	11
ii. State-Wise Spread of Work Under each Priority Area .....	12
iii. Mapping Change.....	13
iv. Progress Towards the Five Priority Areas	
Freedom from Violence and Discrimination .....	14
Access to Legal Justice .....	18
Grassroots Leadership .....	21
Access to Rights and Entitlements .....	24
Economic Independence .....	26
Building Capacities to Enable Action .....	28
<b>COVID-19 Relief Initiatives</b> .....	31
<b>Annexure I: The Influencer Bulletin</b> .....	33

# Foreword

*'People share a common nature, but are trained in gender roles'*

– Grace Farrell

Over the last two decades I have had the pleasure to converse with a diverse range of stakeholders in the development sector. Across all my conversations, whether on skill development, the environment or livelihoods, I have found gender to be a common factor, cutting across sectors and geographies, and permeating deep into our cultural practices across the globe. Perhaps this is the reason that in most of my conversations, I have not felt the need to stress upon the importance of gender equality. It is evident, it is understood, and it is acknowledged as a global challenge across societies.



Pradeep Nair

However, even with such a depth of realisation and understanding, a large gap in the support towards gender related work continues to exist. This is what is most fascinating to me about the gender issue. Why do we continue to realise the magnitude of the challenges, but not work to find solutions that can mitigate them?

I believe if we keep asking ourselves this question, we might be able to understand the psychology behind our contradictions in this space. At the heart of it, I believe there are three major challenges that we need to overcome to be able to enable action towards gender equality. Firstly, we should accept that gender inequality, embedded in lived experiences and social structures, is intangible. If we as funders or CSOs are looking for a measurement or a scale to showcase our 'impact' in this space, it is likely that we will be disappointed. Secondly, our understanding of the various complexities surrounding gender needs to grow. We have to invest in information, behavioural and data-based, to understand the challenges that exist before us. Lastly, I believe as funders, we have to keep our egos at bay when we decide to execute or fund programmes in the gender space. We cannot expect to be applauded for accomplishments because they will be muted in their impact. It will most likely not be as 'visible' as starting a school or building a home. So much of our work in the gender space needs maturity, patience, and a deep level of empathy.

At Ford Foundation, it was this very understanding that allowed us to venture into creating programmes that address gender inequality. Knowing well that this would be very sensitive and would possibly be a very long and arduous journey, we set out to build our understanding around the many challenges in achieving gender equality. We quickly saw the value and the transformational change that gender sensitivity could bring to communities across the world. As our mission progressed, we realised that the task ahead of us would not be successful if we work in silos. So, we partnered with several organisations across the globe and created structures that enabled collaborative action. This helped us not only build our perspectives but also channelize our efforts in the direction required.

Today, this approach has enabled us to create substantial partnerships with organisations and create an ecosystem approach to work towards gender equality. We are fortunate to have found partners along the way who shared our understanding and were aligned with the goals we had envisioned.

As we celebrate another year of the completion of the Coalition of Women Empowerment, I am reminded once again of the power of a collaborative approach and the spirit with which each of the organisations and individuals associated with this initiative are able to work together to achieve collective goals. I also believe that one of the goals of the coalition, apart from its operational performance, will be its ability to inspire other organisations to support initiatives towards achieving gender equality. For all those wondering how such a complex issue should be approached, I have one piece of advice for you – just do it! Take that step forward, learn from your mistakes, recourse, recollect and you will prevail.

Wishing all our partners, CSOs, and individuals who are part of the CWE the very best for this new year ahead.

In solidarity with all those who seek an equal world.

**Pradeep Nair,**  
Regional Director  
Ford Foundation



# Journey Towards Women Empowerment

We firmly believe that the empowerment of women and girls leads to a positive transformation of the society and the consequent development of a nation. We are committed to addressing the chasms created by pressing social and economic inequalities that hinder women from exercising their agency and achieving their full potential.

With partners like **Ford Foundation** and **Chintu Gudiya Foundation**, the Coalition provides flexible, core, multi-year grants and technical support to a collective of NGO partners working on (currently) **five** thematic areas in social and economic empowerment of women and girls.

The Coalition aims to build a strong, feminist Global South narrative:

1. Freedom from violence and discrimination
2. Access to legal justice
3. Grassroots leadership
4. Access to rights and entitlements
5. Economic Independence

## Leveraging the Power of Collaborations

Gender equality remains an uphill battle across the geographies of rural and urban India. This is a deep-rooted problem that impacts the very core of our society; in some parts of the country, even the most basic rights continue to elude Indian women. The void in public and private spending (including CSR and philanthropy) on women's rights further weakens programmes working towards inclusion and justice. Non-profits working in the sector rarely come together to share best practices and imbibe peer learning. This leads to replication and wastage of resources in same or similar programmes and inhibits much-needed exploration of and experimentation with plausible solutions. Aggregating their work requires the facilitation of a structure and process which would provide for collaboration and convergence in action and knowledge building; while retaining their individualities and enable joint capacity building as well as peer-to-peer learning.

The **Coalition for Women Empowerment (CWE)** and the **The Influencers** initiative was born out of this thought.

CWE is a group of committed funder organisations who have partnered through a collaborative, to support small and medium-sized institutions in India, doing rights-based work in women's rights and gender equality. In addition to grassroots level activities towards achieving women empowerment, there is a pressing need for continued focus, awareness and dialogue on the multitude of problems faced by Indian women. These include, but are not limited to, freedom from violence and discrimination, grassroots leadership, access to legal justice, rights and entitlements and economic independence. To ensure that these concerns are brought to the forefront and addressed through appropriate solutions, the CWE also seeks to involve influential voices to evangelise the need and value of investing in women's rights.

One such initiative is **The Influencers** curated by EdelGive. This is a group of iconic leaders and opinion-makers across sectors including business, entertainment, sports, academia and philanthropy. The group is connected by their desire to lend their voice towards enabling millions of nameless, faceless women marginalised by caste, culture, geography, economic status and other barriers, to participate actively in the social, political, cultural spheres of society. Through their identity, networks and resources, as well as the financial support of highly impactful programmes, **The Influencers**, not only facilitate funding towards much-needed efforts, but also spread knowledge about the criticality of this work in their networks enabling the women empowerment work to gain traction.

For information about Women Empowerment & The Influencers engagement, please click [here](#).

# Executive Summary

The Influencers initiative at EdelGive has completed yet another year!

We are now a **15-member strong initiative** – that have brought considerable backing to our work in creating transformative development for women and girls across **11 states** along with the collective strength of **14 high potential grassroots partners**.

The purpose of this group is set to drive the development agenda in areas of gender equality, by bringing women and girls at the centre of change. The coalition is designed as a platform to action this intent, to understand the women space. While we continue to move forward with shared passion and determination, we also see value in working towards an equitable society that recognises gender-specific contribution.

## Partnering for Grassroots Change

EdelGive has invested USD 12 million in India for advancing gender equality under **five priority areas** that address the scale of issues with the aim to reach the last mile. Multiple channels have opened, which allow women's voices to be heard via media, social platforms, promoted interventions which enable women's agency and financial independence, while also nurturing grassroots leadership in the process. The Influencers initiative has bolstered these efforts by facilitating need-based capacity building and sustained funding support to the NGO partners that drive grassroots programmes. Such collaborations are starting to enable grassroots initiatives to move towards, sustainability and impact.

## The Role of Multi-stakeholder Coalitions

Having witnessed the efficacy of working in partnership, today, we initiate and execute special collaborative projects where multiple donors can come together and support large projects for collective impact. Another important mandate that is being sustained with this initiative is **knowledge generation and transfer**. 2019 progressed with cross-learning opportunities; these interactions were facilitated between members, funder ecosystems and NGO partners by using various digital mediums to promote this critical work. The alliance also supported the development of innovative technology tools such as mobile and web-based applications to aid legal case management for the NGO partners.

Such stellar efforts will still face innumerable challenges; however, our partners continue to persist at the grassroots. The nature and depth of these challenges get magnified during crises like pandemics and emergencies; however, emphasise the need for sustained attention towards women's rights. The collective efforts and learnings through these initiatives are beginning to show effects.

## An Evolving Landscape

The COVID-19 outbreak has made new realities emerge, which have created additional vulnerabilities for women and girls. The NGO collective has been providing immediate relief measures through the provision of essential commodities and enabling communities to access their rights and entitlements. Partners also continue to be mindful to the pressing need to address the additional layer of vulnerabilities women and children are enduring currently. Helplines, radio stations, community vigilante groups were some techniques used for outreach and offering counselling and assistance. It is reassuring to see how our grassroots partners have continued to stay connected with the communities they support and deliver their programmes through the best possible means.

Guided with new challenges, we have a larger canvas to fill; this is only the beginning...

"I have always used films to spark conversation and facilitate change by addressing issues of discrimination, prejudice, fear, violence and the need for empathy and equality. I have tried to find ways, beyond films, to engage with issues of human rights and social justice. I am always delighted to find genuine collaborators who have similar intents. I am happy to be a part of The Influencers network enabled by EdelGive Foundation which is committed to a more equal and a just world. I wish them the best for all their endeavours and look forward to growing with other Influencers."

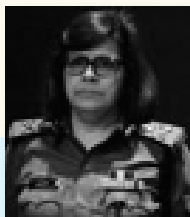
**Nandita Das**  
- Actor, Filmmaker &  
Social Advocate



# The Coalition

## The Influencers

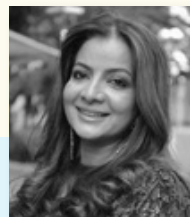
The Influencers are a significant and influential group of women, and men who are iconic leaders and opinion makers across sectors like business, entertainment, sports, academia and philanthropy; with an intent and ability to lend their voice to the concerns of and challenges to women empowerment.



**Anju Gupta**  
Assistant Director General  
(ADG) of Police, UP Police Force



**Anita George**  
Executive Vice-President,  
CDPQ India



**Arathi Shetty**  
Non-Executive Director,  
Allcargo Logistics



**Archana Chandra and  
Amit Chandra**  
A.T.E. Chandra Foundation



**Bala Deshpande**  
Managing Director, Mega  
Delta Capital Advisors



**Nandita Das**  
Actor, Director



**Niranjan Rajadhyaksha**  
Research Director and  
Senior Fellow, IDFC Institute



**Samir Patil**  
Founder and CEO,  
Scroll.in



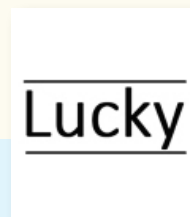
**Shalini Arora**  
Founder and CEO,  
Savannah Wisdom



**Shreevar Kheruka**  
Managing Director, Borosil  
Glassworks Pvt. Ltd.



**Svati Chakravarty Bhatkal  
and Satyajit Bhatkal**  
Directors, Satyamev Jayate



**Sushmita and  
Ashish Kacholia**  
Lucky Securities



**Vidya Shah**  
Chairperson and CEO,  
EdelGive Foundation



**Zia Mody**  
Founder and Senior  
Partner, AZB & Partners



**Team Sankalp**

# NGO Partners



## Coalition Partners



“Given the world’s and society’s focus on the social sector, the choices available to each of us in terms of how we participate or who we participate with has increased manifold. For me, the EdelGive approach and team was an easy pick. Thanks to the clarity of vision, the metric driven execution of this vision and of course the deep passion for creating real and long lasting impact.”

**Bala C Deshpande**  
- Senior Managing Partner,  
MegaDelta Capital Advisors



# Our Journey Together with The Influencers

## Field visits by The Influencers

Immersion visits are one of our constant endeavours to enable our Influencers group members to understand better the programmes and their target communities they are deeply rooted to.

- The first visit was organised in July 2019, to 'Girl Resource Centres' operated by our partner organisation Vacha. Our Influencers group members, Vinay Raizada from Team Sankalp, Sushmita Kacholia and EdelGive Foundation's Chairperson and CEO, Vidya Shah interacted with the girls from Juhu Galli and Gilbert Hill centres in Andheri, Mumbai.
- In February 2019, Sushmita Kacholia visited the Kamothe centre of Mann Deshi Foundation at Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra, where she interacted with women entrepreneurs associated with Foundation's Business School.
- Milaan's seven 'Girl Icons' and 14 peer group members participated in a workshop on Cyber-safety and security conducted by 1,090 Women Helpline in Varanasi facilitated by Ms. Anju Gupta, A.D.G., UP Police and an Influencer group member.

"Great to have met with such an enthused and ambitious group of women. Ambition and aspiration are truly ageless. A very interesting day!"

**Sushmita Kacholia**  
- Lucky Securities



Visit to the Vacha 'Girls Resource Centre'



Sushmita Kacholia visited the Kamothe centre of Mann Deshi Foundation

## Leveraging One's Sphere of Influence

We are proud to be associated with the members of this esteemed group and with pride, bear witness to and celebrate their accomplishments:

- **Rashesh Shah**, Chairman and CEO, Edelweiss Group along with **Amit Chandra**, Chairman and Managing Director, Bain Capital were acknowledged with the 'He for She' pin by UN Women for showing exemplary support to the cause of women empowerment.



"I joined the initiative with a good sense of the problem. Working with the EdelGive team over the past two years has given me insights into the possible solutions. The opportunity now is to make gender equality central to the thinking about the contours of a better post-COVID world."

**Niranjan Rajadhyaksha**  
- Research Director and Senior Fellow, IDFC Institute

- The steadily rising cases of violence against women amid the COVID-19 lockdown has evoked the need for the inclusion of their safety as a critical intervention across relief work. **Vidya Shah**, Chairperson and CEO, EdelGive Foundation shares her perspective on these rising statistics and showcases some successful models being driven on the ground by our NGO partners in the article titled, **‘Will women bear the brunt of COVID-19?’**
- The UP Police’s Women Power Line-1090 was awarded the **‘FICCI Smart Policing Award 2019’** for recognising their efforts under the arena of women safety. The unit is helmed by Anju Gupta, IPS.
- **Zia Mody**, Founder and Managing Partner – AZB & Partners; was awarded Business Today’s *Most Powerful Women* award in September 2019. She delivered the keynote address on the theme, ‘The Glass is More Than Half Full’ at the awards in Mumbai. She said the biggest change happening in India is the recognition being given to women across sectors and economic classes.

- **Nandita Das’** anti-colourism campaign ‘Dark Is Beautiful’ has come a long way. Launched in 2009 by Women of Worth (WOW) and joined later by Nandita Das in 2013, the campaign clocked 10 years recently, which the actress filmmaker celebrated with a powerful video titled [India’s Got Colour.](#)



- India Private Equity and Venture Capital Association (IVCA) organised a panel discussion involving women who have made the Industry stand up and notice in Investing firms and led the paradigm shift. Two of the esteemed group members – **Bala Deshpande** (Senior Managing Partner, MegaDelta Capital Advisors) and the **Anita George** (Executive Vice-President and Head of Strategic Partnerships, Growth Markets, CDPQ India) participated in this forum to share their insights.



ANITA GEORGE



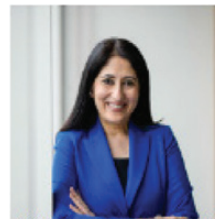
BALA C DESHPANDE



ROSHINI BAKSHI



NUPUR GARG



SHIVANI BHASIN SACHDEVA



## A Year of the Launch of Influencers

To commemorate and celebrate one year to the launch of **Influencers**, EdelGive Foundation organised the screening of the Hindi film 'Thappad' on 1st March, 2020 for members and associates of The Influencers group. The film has inspired a myriad of reflections and subjective responses about violence, forms of consent and agency. It traces the journey of a woman from endurance to dignity.



"It was a very powerful movie with the message delivered without being melodramatic. It evoked a very strong and emotional response on most of the audience – even though probably each of them rejects domestic violence of any kind or degree. We need films like Thappad to make everyone who watches it go back home, introspect and maybe reset their relationships. Happy to be part of any 'women empowerment' initiative like this."

**Amee Parikh**  
- Director,  
Amansa Capital Pte. Ltd.

- **Arathi Shetty**-led Avashya Foundation distributed water wheels to 150 women farmers at the Jeevan Asha Community Centre at Tiware, Karjat. The distribution of the water wheels was envisioned as a unique gifting initiative. Large parts of Maharashtra are reeling under a severe water shortage. With a load carrying capacity of upto 45 litres of water, water wheels are an economic and viable alternative to transport water over longer distances. Helping women engage in economically productive activities, water wheels can be pivotal in helping women farmers to water their fruit bearing trees planted under the Maitree project of the Foundation. Read more about this initiative [here](#).

- Improved sex ratios in Haryana and China hold the promise of a world that could slowly attain greater gender equality. In this article for **Mint**, **Niranjan Rajadhyaksha** examines the change in families' preferences for daughters. Read the article [here](#).

- **Borosil** released a short clip on the occasion of International Women's Day 2020 Watch it [here](#).

"Society becomes inclusive when women feel socially and economically empowered. EdelGive Foundation binds us together with that hope and gives us an opportunity to work together in making women especially from the less-privileged sections of the society aware of their rights and promoting gender equality in every aspect of life."

**Arathi Shetty**  
- Non-Executive Director,  
Allcargo Logistics

## Hilary Pearson's Visit to CORO:

We also facilitated a field visit to CORO India's programme, for Hilary Pearson, President of Philanthropic Foundations, Canada who was visiting India with her husband Michael Sabia, former President of CDPQ (retired in Feb 2020).

Hilary, meets CORO members at the site of the sanitary kiosk that was made possible at Gateway of India, thanks to the Right to Pee Movement.

Read more about her experience in her blog [here](#).



# The Year In a Glance

14

Grassroots  
Partners

11

States

25,199

Women and girls  
equipped to protect  
themselves against  
violence



737

Grassroots leaders  
working on issues of  
women and girls



590

Women and girls  
enabled with access  
to the legal justice  
system



3,206

Women engaged in  
income generating  
activities



1,961

Community members  
enabled with  
capacities to access  
social security schemes



“The challenges and pains faced by hundreds of millions of Indian women are simply alien to the majority of us. If we were to face the same, many would simply revolt. Change must begin with our own actions - be it using gender neutral pronouns, to supporting women in our families, bringing up our boys properly so that they respect women, ensuring proper hiring policies and having great culture at work places, being thoughtful about what products and brands we purchase or role models we follow. Transformation starts with each one of us and from there we will be able to start seeing the change we want to see in society around us”

**Amit Chandra,**  
-A.T.E Chandra Foundation



# Five Key Priority Areas

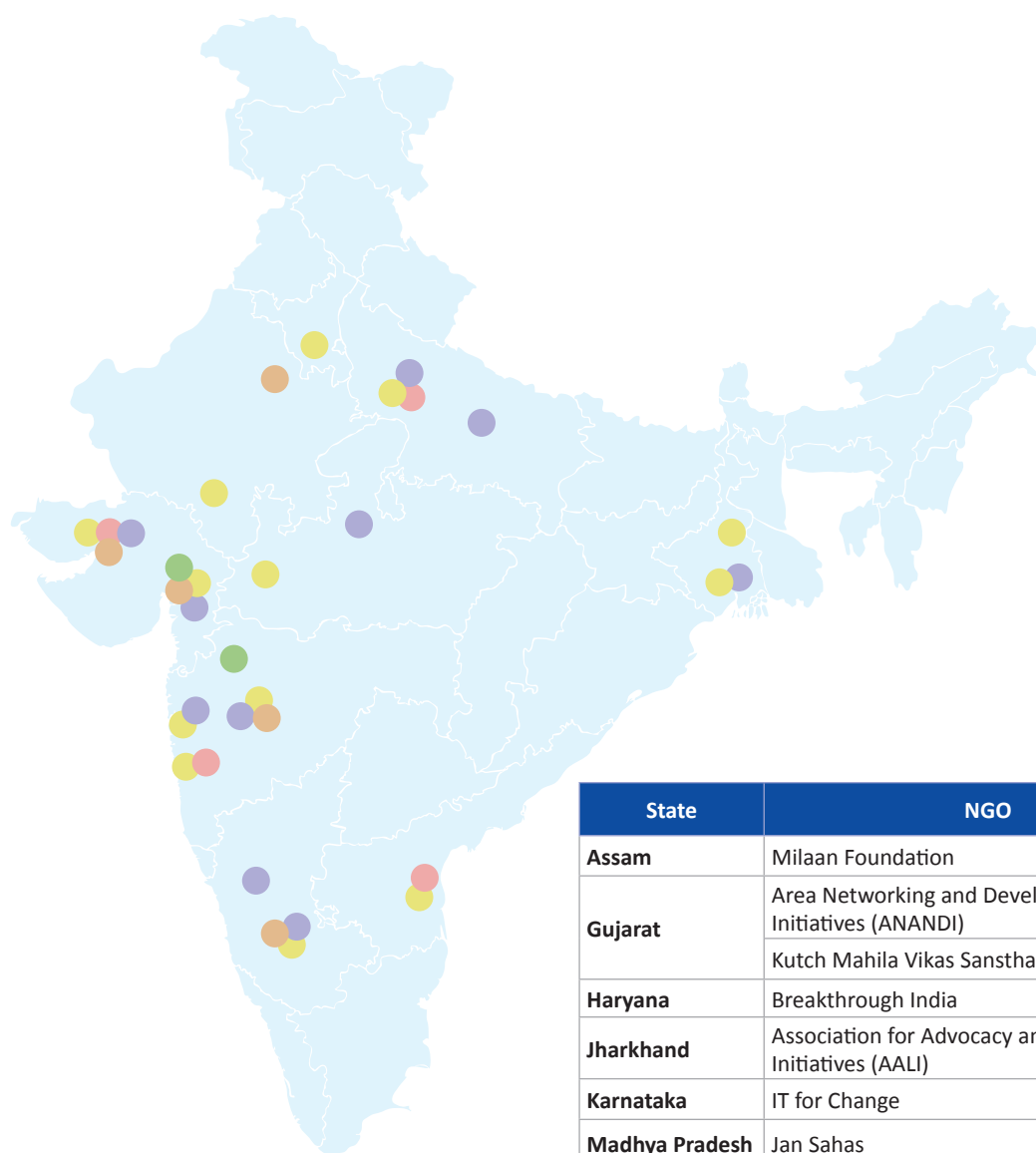
EdelGive Foundation focuses on social and economic empowerment as the key drivers towards gender equality. Along with the collective of NGO partners, we are working towards enabling transformative change for women, in both the areas of empowerment, outlining fundamental needs and consolidating interventions across five priority areas.

Each of the five identified priority areas has its own set of challenges, and the partner NGOs have been addressing these through their interventions. These take into account not only individual and institutional realities but also draw evidence for proposing policy changes at a broader level.

## Spread of Work Under Each Priority Area



# State-Wise Spread of Work Under each Priority Area



- Freedom from violence and discrimination
- Access to legal justice
- Building grassroots leadership
- Access to rights and entitlements
- Economic independence

State	NGO
Assam	Milaan Foundation
Gujarat	Area Networking and Development Initiatives (ANANDI)
	Kutch Mahila Vikas Sansthan
Haryana	Breakthrough India
Jharkhand	Association for Advocacy and Legal Initiatives (AALI)
Karnataka	IT for Change
Madhya Pradesh	Jan Sahas
Maharashtra	Committee of Resource Organisations (CORO)
	Mann Deshi Foundation
	Vacha Charitable Trust
Rajasthan	Ibtada
	Jan Sahas
Telangana	Shaheen Women's Resource and Welfare Association
Uttar Pradesh	Association for Advocacy and Legal Initiatives (AALI)
	Milaan Foundation
	Jan Sahas
West Bengal	Kolkata Sanjog Initiatives
	Nishtha



# Mapping Change

Portfolio NGOs	Freedom from Violence and Discrimination	Access to Legal Justice	Building Grassroots Leadership	Access to Rights and Entitlements	Economic Independence
Association for Advocacy and Legal Initiatives (AALI)	✓	✓	✓		
Area Networking and Development Initiatives (ANANDI)	✓		✓	✓	✓
Breakthrough	✓				
Committee of Resource Organisations for Literacy (CORO)	✓		✓	✓	
Ibtada				✓	
IT for Change	✓		✓	✓	
Jan Sahas	✓				
Kolkata Sanjog Initiatives	✓		✓		
Kuch Mahila Vikas Sangathan	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Mann Deshi Foundation					✓
Milaan Be-the Change			✓		
Nishtha	✓				
Shaheen Women's Resource and Welfare Association	✓	✓			
Vacha Charitable Trust	✓		✓		

# Progress Towards the Five Priority Areas

## Freedom from Violence and Discrimination



Violence against women is a big obstacle in achieving the objectives of equality, development and peace. At each phase of the life cycle, women and girls are victims of violence, which is a manifestation of the historically unequal power relations between women and men. It is perpetuated by traditional and customary practices that accord women lower status in the family, workplace, community and society, and is further exacerbated by social pressures (UN, 2010).

India ranked 112th on the overall Gender Gap Index amongst 153 countries

(World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report, 2020)

We consider 'violence' as any form of deprivation that restricts women and girls to optimise their potential for their development. Adopting a life-cycle approach, we work in partnership with organisations demonstrating impactful model/s addressing the issues of violence against women and girls and reducing the discriminatory practices against them.

### INTERVENTIONS

#### Imbibing Gender-just Values In the Formative Years

The programmes that we have supported were designed to shape gender attitudes and behaviours at a stage when views are still malleable and more progressive, where gender equitable thinking can be instilled. These interventions have increasingly made adolescents and youth realise that violence and discrimination are unacceptable in any of its forms. (*Boys and girls have been taking a stance against discriminatory practices and negotiating with their families for equal treatment of male and female children in the household.*)

A significant proportion of children and young adults internalise stereotypes from observing the experience within their homes and from their peers. Starting as early as possible and using the window of opportunity to intervene before gender stereotypes are reinforced, would be the first step towards making a difference.

- Through its school-based Adolescent Empowerment Programme, 'Taaron ki Toli' (Tkt), Breakthrough has been shaping progressive attitudes and perceptions amongst boys and girls in Haryana, a state characterised for its poor gender equality parameters. These interventions have increasingly made adolescents realise that violence and discrimination are unacceptable in any of its forms. Children have been taking a stance against discriminatory practices and also negotiating with their families for equal treatment of male and female children in the household.

#### Reshaping Power Equations by Engaging Men and Boys

Most women and girls have at some point in time experienced physical, psychological trauma or both inflicted by perpetrators, who are men.

- Our partner IT for Change in Karnataka has been challenging the patriarchal conditioning that assigns men as gatekeepers of women's honour. To help build supportive ecosystems that address Gender-Based Violence, they have included male members of the community along with representatives of the Panchayat through its "Men for model village groups".
- Nishtha has been proactive in organising meetings with youth clubs in its community of West Bengal. The objective of the meetings is to ensure positive deviance and to influence attitudinal and behavioural changes amongst men, against eve-teasing. This will further curtail the issue of restricted mobility amongst the girls, due to this euphemism. Fathers have also been actively involved and are encouraging their daughters to pursue their education and consequently, preventing early marriages.

## CASE STUDY

Ramesh (name changed) is a child in the sixth grade of Government School of Jhajjar, Haryana. When his father did not permit his sister to go for a tour, as she is a girl, he stood firmly by her and gave up his privilege as well, acknowledging the learning he received as part of Breakthrough's initiatives.

\* Name undisclosed to retain anonymity



### Building Supportive Systems to Avert Violence and Discrimination

Very often, home and the community are responsible for the limited agency and resilience for girls. The lack of support renders them to be susceptible to social evils such as early marriage and abuse.

Ensuring supportive networks through peers, along with the community, equips them with the essential and immediate support to counter violence and discrimination. Since the family counts as the first caregiving institution and is also often the source of discrimination or exclusion; its important therefore to involve it while planning any development initiative. This is more important in the case of sexual abuse survivors to heal effectively. In contrast, sometimes a negative reaction is connected to an episode of abuse and the family ends up restricting mobility as well as discontinues their further education.

- Jan Sahas in Madhya Pradesh has been counselling the families along with the survivors to create a supportive environment for them.

### Peer and Community-based Support Systems

Within communities, peers can be role models for other girls and can leverage their influence to promote supportive and gender-just mechanisms.

- Girls at Vacha in Maharashtra have been facilitating educational access for other girls by convincing parents and caregivers; they have also helped with the admission process. An increase in social capital has, therefore, been enabled by them.
- Through peer-based actions, social evils like child marriage have been effectively curbed as experienced by Nishtha in West Bengal, and Milaan in Uttar Pradesh.
- IT for Change has used its trained para-counsellors to condone violence across the community. Acting as the first point of support across 25 villages, these counsellors have been registering cases of violence and addressing the psychosocial needs of the survivors.

## CASE STUDY

15-year-old Asma (name changed) was supported by ASHA workers, local representatives and the Nishtha team in escaping early-marriage. The women and girls also supported her further for by facilitating the exemption of her school fees by the school authorities, allowing her to continue her education further.



## Restoring Dignity Amongst Survivors of Violence

Survivors often have to brave a prolonged period of suffering owing to the hostility and discrimination that comes their way. The urgent need is for these survivors to reintegrate themselves with society and effectively rebuild their lives.

- Jan Sahas has been extending its support to instil a sense of competency and reinstate confidence amongst survivors of violence. Reaching out to the girls, it provided them with at least one form of educational support. Girls have been assisted to rise above caste-based commercial sexual exploitation and they are pursuing coaching for the MPPSC examinations. Having accessed the required skill training, they have been able to pursue different livelihood options as well.

### CASE STUDY

This story is about a 22-year-old woman, learning tailoring at **Shaheen**, our partner in Hyderabad, Telangana. She belongs to a community that has been involved in the archaic, caste-based and inhuman practice of manual scavenging. Since her parents died at an early age, she took over the responsibility of fending for her family, including her sister and five brothers. Despite being interested in pursuing education, she had to forsake it and spent 14 long years being a manual scavenger herself. She was introduced to the Shaheen Resource Centre in her community. It is there that she learnt tailoring, participated in different training programmes and became more aware of her human rights and legal guarantees for women. She used her tailoring skills to begin taking orders from her neighbourhood and today earns enough money to look after her family. With more confidence, she has moved on to a new life of dignity and is also getting married soon.

## Awareness and Advocacy Against Violence and Discrimination

Our partner NGOs steer interventions that focus on building capacity and advocacy networks, integrating women's experiences, their perspectives and addressing violence in all its forms.

The Programmes supported are focused on identifying and providing need-based relief and capacity building of women and girls. In addition to this, they also contributed to strengthening civil society movements, and advocacy and engagement with governments to promote policy frameworks conducive for enabling gender-equality.

- Revisiting the [Beijing Platform Action Goals](#)<sup>1</sup>, ANANDI held a national round table conference discussing the vulnerability of girls and young women on account of discriminatory values, law and customary practices. Agency, choice, and consent were emphasised upon and discussed at great length by means of interactive sessions.
- By using the power of social media, **Breakthrough** attempted to facilitate positive gender norms by bringing out the dichotomy between words and interpretation in our day-to-day conversations. Through a [creative and comprehensive video](#), they effectively showcased how these statements bring out the regression in gender roles in a manner that stays with us.
- Jan Sahas, in collaboration with the Responsibility Forum of Narsee Monjee Institute of Management Studies (NMIMS), hosted a 5 km Social Marathon on 9th February 2020, as a mark of solidarity towards the fight against sexual violence. More than 2,500 people from varied age groups including Svati Bhatkal our Influencer group member, joined the event with immense spirit and exuberance.



<sup>1</sup>Footnote: The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action flagged 12 key areas where urgent action was needed to ensure greater equality and opportunities for women and men, girls and boys.  
Source: UN Women

- Kutch Mahila Vikas Sansthan (KMVS) in Gujarat, has been activating workplace harassment committees at various governmental institutes, colleges, NGOs. They have also conducted feminist dialogues with the staff members of relevant departments such as DLSA and police personnel.
- Milaan's seven 'Girl Icons' and 14 peer group members participated in a workshop on Cyber-safety and security conducted by 1,090 Women Helpline in Varanasi facilitated by Ms. Anju Gupta, A.D.G., UP Police and an Influencer group member. The workshop generated awareness about how they can seek help through this helpline number in case of distress. Representatives from the Cyber Bullying Foundation shared information with the 'Girl Icons' about Cybersecurity and social media bullying along with the possible steps that can be taken to avert the crisis.
- Shaheen screened an 85-minute long documentary '[Pinjaron ki Udaan](#)', a documentary made by Sujith Kumar KV. Based on a few of its survivors, the documentary portrayed gender-based violence against women, harassment, child abuse, marriages with Arabs from the Gulf countries and the resultant survival and struggle. The women featured in the film hailed from various castes and religions with the common thread of sustenance of patriarchy connecting them all. The film is created in the backdrop of tracing the trajectory set by Shaheen as a prominent women's NGO in the Old City of Hyderabad since 2002.

Indicators of change enabled	Achievement
Number of women and girls equipped to protect themselves against violence.	25,199
Number of men and boys involved in programmes to address violence and discrimination against women and girls.	43
Number of women survivors' capacities built to act against violence and discrimination.	5,089

Table 1: Progress against the indicators with respect to freedom from violence and discrimination

## Collective Learnings

- School-based programmes can be an effective platform to inculcate gender-sensitive values. Sensitising boys at an early age with an alternative vision of masculinity that is not dominant, but nurturing can go a long way for ensuring equal rights for girls. School-based programmes are also easier to scale, and there stands a need for more such curriculums to be developed that can integrate gender-based equality from a tender age.
- Girls facing backlash abuse from boys with whom they try to engage on the basis of the negotiation skills they learned from trainings attended, implies the conservative nature of specific segments that is resistant to change. This will essentially necessitate continued orientation and high levels of sensitisation of men and boys, in addition to building capacities of girls to navigate these challenges.
- Girls can be effectively empowered if given supportive systems to attain education and stand up to protect themselves from exploitation. Continuous community engagement and mobilisation, addressing the structural and systemic causes through advocacy will ensure safer, violence-free spaces for women.
- Holistic rehabilitation is essential and especially more responsive to the needs of the survivors. The medical management, investigation process by the police along with other judicial functionaries poses stigma upon the survivors owing to which they are at times forced to relocate from their communities. Since behaviour change is a gradual process, it would necessitate time to change these attitudes and perceptions.

## Access to Legal Justice



The Influencers initiative supports organisations who are working towards providing access to legal justice to women and girls. They offer guidance on the legal recourse process, and systems are also sensitised so that they can execute justice without any prejudice and discrimination. Evidence-based research is used as an advocacy tool to ensure accountability, thereby discouraging impunity as the norm.

76% of cases of women who faced afflicted violence never sought help nor told anyone about it. This highlights a severe under-reporting of cases in India. (NFHS-4, 2015-16)

### INTERVENTIONS

#### Addressing the Unmet Legal Need

Our programmes have also generated insights about how women tend to normalise the violence that they face, lacking perspective and guidance on remedies – legal or otherwise. This can be a very isolating experience in their lives, and further adds to the discrimination they face. With limited knowledge and support, seeking legal recourse is not a measure they often adopt. To this effect, our partner NGOs have been enabling women to claim their legal rights.

Economic factors and social norms play a major role in women being able to make decisions and to come out of their history of abuse. The issues of caste and community power dynamics makes the litigation more critical and complex. We have also observed that most of the survivors of the violence have identified related issues of mental health, economic insecurity and insecurity of their children's future, which prevent them from engaging in the litigation process.

We have also observed that role of women lawyers become more vital in matters such as those involving domestic violence, gender discrimination and child abuse. etc., as women have greater empathy, understanding and acceptance among the victims.

Just over 85% of the reported cases of rape in the country led to charges and 27% to convictions. (NCRB 2018)

- Our partner NGOs, AALI and KMVS through their Community Legal Aid Centres (CLACs) and helpline services 'Hello Sakhi', respectively have been providing immediate response and grievance redressal for women in their communities. Community leaders identified as 'change agents' and paralegal workers have been deployed for raising awareness, advice and mediation for women seeking redressal for their issues. The roles of these community agents have been especially integral to create a support system, support with the fact-finding process, and overcoming the barriers posed by caste-based hierarchies in accessing justice.
- Jan Sahas's barefoot lawyers<sup>2</sup> initiative is aimed at enabling the growth of the victim or survivors of violence and discrimination, as leader and empowerment of communities through capacity and organization building.

#### Integrating a Gendered Perspective within the Legal Systems

Gender inequalities have long been masked and reinforced without access to legal justice. This has been more so applicable for Female Sex Workers (FSWs) who lack appropriate legal protection and are discriminated against.

- KMVS has witnessed police raids hampering FSWS' association with its programme and confidence about their rights. Also, in an instance recorded by AALI, the police refused to lodge a complaint and further any medical examination of rape reported by the survivor because the perpetrator was the husband itself. The survivor was also highly intimidated by the attitude of the police.
- Our partner NGOs have been organising capacity-building workshops for the legal system functionaries like police, public prosecutors, lawyers, judges. The aim is to sensitize and dissuade them from discriminating against women and better understand and respond to such issues of VAW, and gender-based justice cases of women. With this gender mainstreaming, the structural inequalities that have long hindered women from accessing justice have been targeted.

Jan Sahas's barefoot lawyers initiative is aimed at enabling the growth of the victim or survivors of violence and discrimination, as leader and empowerment of communities through capacity and organisation building.

<sup>2</sup>Jan Sahas's barefoot lawyers initiative is aimed at enabling the growth of the victim or survivors of violence and discrimination, as leader and empowerment of communities through capacity and organisation building.





*State level training of police on the Prevention of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and trafficking by Jan Sahas*

## Awareness and Advocacy for Legal Justice

Our partner organisations are promoting reforms that seek to advance women's rights by addressing the inadequacies and nurturing accountable justice systems through active advocacy efforts.

- Breakthrough India and AALI along with groups of women, activists and lawyers, participated in condemning the clean chit given to the Chief Justice of India, Rajan Gogoi in the alleged sexual harassment complaint, held in Delhi and Lucknow respectively.

## Cohesive Structure for Gender Justice through Collaborative Actions

Collective engagement of entities like governments, judicial functionaries and civil society groups are essential in curbing social injustice and reinforcing the constitutional safeguards to protect women.

- For this reason, KMVS has been sensitising the local stakeholders towards ensuring a safe environment for women and girls in the villages. This would ensure more confidence in women for reporting crimes and increase the accountability of state actors to deliver justice.
- Our partners AALI and Shaheen, voiced their apprehensions towards the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2017, which criminalises triple talaq. This was viewed as a liability that would add to the social and legal burden of the women seeking remedial measures for restoration of their rights, and also prod men to choose polygamy over talaq that would add to the misery of these women.
- Nishtha's adolescent girls' groups embarked upon a protest rally after one of their members was sexually assaulted and then brutally injured by the perpetrator. The accused was severely punished. Special security was deployed by the police, and support from the local administration was ensured. The Block Development Officer also ensured dignified conditions which were amongst the girls' demands.

## CASE STUDY

A young 16-year-old (Grade 9 student) hailing from a minority community in Madhya Pradesh, left home one night to relieve herself near the field. She was found dead between the railway tracks, the next morning. The police registered this case as an accidental death. Soon after, her family appealed to the police to file an FIR against a suspect, aged 23, who according to them along with his friend had abducted and raped her.

Not keen on acting against the accused who had a strong political background; the police recorded the wrong age of the suspect, erroneously identifying him as underage, which merits a lesser quantum of punishment. Jan Sahas reached out to her family and supported them with necessary fact-finding for the case. When the investigation did not proceed through the police department, Jan Sahas, also approached the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh and were subsequently able to book charges against the accused.

Indicators of change enabled	Achievement
Number of women and girls enabled to access the legal justice system.	590
Number of barefoot lawyers/paralegals who are supporting the cause of women and girls and responding to violence and discrimination cases.	905
Number of women and community members whose understanding of the legal system has been enhanced.	1,670

Table 2: Progress achieved against the indicators with respect to Access to Legal Justice

### Collective Learnings:

- With legal systems largely inaccessible for women survivors owing to lack of awareness, fear of retaliation, disgrace, other insecurities, and caste-based hierarchies; women and girls continue to lack adequate access to justice. The role of community agents in such contexts remain effective in facilitating access to legal justice, with their ability to engage with the community more effectively. Such interventions need to be therefore scaled and intensified to accommodate legal needs at large.
- Given the social context of the country which stigmatises Female Sex Workers and doesn't view them as victims of abuse; they are particularly in distress, and therefore aligning more support for them stands rationalised.
- Sensitising the legal enforcement authorities towards gender responsiveness has been realised as a component that will necessitate substantial time and effort.

# Grassroots Leadership



Collaborative action goes a long way in initiating change. Grassroots leaders have the ability to assume responsibilities, initiate the essential momentum on a range of issues and create supportive structures towards collective action. The Influencers initiative supports organisations that build this leadership at the ground, further enabling women to uplift and support other women in their journey's ahead.

Only 41% of women in India are allowed to go out alone without anyone's company, highlighting the restricted freedom of mobility that exists for women. (NFHS-4, 2015-16)

## INTERVENTIONS

These networks from the ground are enabling and working towards developing people's movement which can demand state's accountability. This we have seen with single women's, women farmers and sex workers networks that are facilitated by our partners. These networks are not only working towards addressing their own challenges but are contributing largely to ensure policy level shifts that recognise these identities. This in turn is increasing people's participation and empowering the marginalised communities to demand their rights. And in turn is supporting towards deepening the democracy.

Similarly, grassroots leadership inculcation within the communities has anchored changes not only respective to identity and self-image but enabled women to take on long-standing developmental issues. This could be witnessed in instances where persistence and unswerving determination on the part of these women have led to mobilising support and resources for resolving issues like livelihoods, enrolment in education, water crisis, etc.

The grassroots leaders are drawing their strength from their own collectives. Without the support from the collectives these women would not have shown their leadership and would have been pushed back by the societal pressure.

Involving the community also helped draw out stifled voices, creating spaces for action and advancing resilient communities. However, certain issues like child marriage stand profoundly ingrained, influenced by social norms and other determinants. To achieve complete elimination of such issues, will require a lot more time and focused behaviour change interventions.

Societal power structures, personal challenges and stigma in the case of survivors have hindered participation of grassroots leaders. Those who have not submitted to these early challenges in their leadership journeys have remained to be active for long. Various platforms provided to leaders voicing their concerns, is what has kept them motivated so far.

## Increased Abilities for Change

Our partner organisations have shown significant results in using leadership as a tool to identify issues and solutions for change, at a community level.

- An end-line assessment across the centres of Vacha displayed an increase in leadership, self-efficacy skills of girls who are peer mentors. This will not only help advance girls to continue their education but also enable their readiness for the workforce. Reaching out to the community at large, girls used self-expression to highlight their issues and have found various means to express themselves through events like gender fairs, essays, speech, street plays, rallies and flash mobs.



## CASE STUDY

Vanita (name changed), a 14-year-old girl from the district of Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, is resolute towards ending issues of alcoholism in her community, being a tragic survivor herself. Her father in an inebriated state had burnt his wife and was convicted with charges. At the age of 12, she was selected as a Girl Icon with our CWE partner, **Milaan**. Through life-skills, community activism, she discovered the leader within herself. Aspiring to address the misogyny that had taken a toll on her life; she began holding peer meetings in her village discussing issues like discrimination and violence which had never been openly discussed.

### Sowing the Seeds of Resilient Communities

Grassroots leaders being a part of the communities themselves, have been apt in identifying and mobilising requisite support for their communities.

- This can be seen in the way paralegals, from KMVS have been helping women access the *Hello Sakhi* centres and garnering support for the survivors.
- Ibtada, through its *Adhikar Sakhis* along with other Village Rights Committees (VRC) members, has been raising collective voices against social marginalisation of women and girls and ensuring their rights.
- CORO has enabled single women who are members of the *Ekal Mahila Sangathan* since 2015 access government schemes, livelihood activities, enrolment in formal education, securing rights over property along with intervention in cases of domestic violence. Many single women through their collective power have challenged unequal existing norms that undermined the status of females in the community. This is apparent in the ways, widows have remarried, cases have been filed against domestic violence, and educational opportunities have been reinstated.
- Enabling leadership and collectivisation, Sanjog in West Bengal has been enhancing resilience amongst survivors and creating opportunities for punishing traffickers. Consistent levels of support through these networks are facilitated to enable them to lead dignified lives.

## CASE STUDY

In the year 2012, **Sanjog**, facilitated the integration of a young woman into the financial inclusion programme for survivors of human trafficking. When she heard about the State Victim Compensation Scheme from her caseworker, she filed for victim compensation before the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) and received a compensation of ₹1.5 lakh. Struggling with abject poverty and a brother who desired a share in her compensation amount, she decided to conduct a review petition before the State Legal Services Authority. With her determination and the continuous support from her social worker, her order was reviewed, and she received ₹6 lakh, the compensation she deserved.

**\* Name undisclosed to retain anonymity**

## Awareness and Advocacy in Grassroots Leadership

Using awareness and active engagement, grassroots leaders have been able to influence large networks of policymakers, service providers and other experts, towards the rights of women.

- Through the intervention led by KMVS in the Kukma village, Panchayat is now honouring women, who have attained higher education by naming the village streets after them. This initiative was announced in March 2019 and established with the participation of 435 women.
- CORO India and the residents of the Mann taluka addressed the water crisis faced by the community by constructing a dam in the village by mobilising resources from the community and the authorities.
- Milaan and its co-founder Alyssa Newlon (Girl Icon programme), presented the Girl Icon concept at the Social Enterprise Challenge held at the Women Deliver Conference in Vancouver, B.C. in June 2019. This has been the largest conference on gender equality, rights and well-being of girls and women.
- IT for Change's field centre girls organised protests to address the issue of unaffordable fares of private transport and unsafe travelling environment for women. As a result of this, the Karnataka State Road Transport Services had to depute an additional bus service during school hours.
- Sanjog, along with nearly 2,500 human-trafficking survivors from across eight states, came together to launch India's first-ever Indian Leadership Forum Against Trafficking (ILFAT) to end trafficking in all its forms. ILFAT's initial consultative meetings aided in the identification of victim compensation, mental health aid, punishment to the perpetrator and breaking the stigma faced by survivors along with reintegration into the society as areas requiring immediate attention. Currently, NGOs and ILFAT are vigorously lobbying for the re-introduction and passing of Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill in Parliament. NITI Aayog has requested for ILFAT's inputs for the new draft of the Bill.

Indicators of change enabled	Achievement
Number of grassroots leaders (both men and women) working on issues of women and girls.	737
Number of women collectives enabled to promote women's issues.	3

Table 3: Progress achieved against the indicators with respect to Grassroot leadership

## Collective Learnings

- Grassroots leadership inculcation within the communities has anchored changes not only respective to identity and self-image but enabled women to take on long-standing development issues. This could be witnessed in instances where persistence and unswerving determination on the part of these women have led to mobilising support and resources for resolving issues like livelihoods, enrolment in education, water crisis, etc.
- Involving the community also helped draw out stifled voices, creating spaces for action and advancing resilient communities. However, certain issues like child marriage stand profoundly ingrained, influenced by social norms and other determinants. To achieve complete elimination of such issues, will require a lot more time and focused behaviour change interventions.
- In many cases, we found grassroots leaders quitting their roles owing to familial based pressure or caste-based power dynamics. However, despite these early attritions, a majority continue to work against adversities and challenge systematic discrimination.

## Access to Rights and Entitlements



Enabling women with an understanding of their rights and entitlements and ensuring a higher level of engagement is paramount in not only building her social capital but also her ability to advocate for her rights effectively.

### INTERVENTIONS

#### Mobilising Communities Towards Change

Collective action by women has offered the potential to challenge the culture of silence, grassroots mobilisation led by women which acted as accountability mechanisms.

Complex social dynamics like caste have prevented women from local participation and entitlements. The need of the hour is larger community engagement, behavioural changes, and increased advocacy for the rights of marginalised communities.

Local leaders are well-positioned to understand the needs of their communities and have an inherent ability to influence the communities. With this tremendous opportunity, they can best deploy the resources for action.

Women's access to rights and entitlements have generally been mediated through patriarchy that has been long restrictive with its norms. For certain minorities and the marginalized, this gap is furthermore significant.

- The women and girls in the Alwar district of Rajasthan have long suffered social alienation, deprivation and hardly have any voice in the political system. Working for these communities, Ibtada has increased awareness of schemes and facilitated linkages with the local self-government. The community, along with the support from the Village Rights Committee (VRC) members and Self Help Groups (SHG) have submitted their one-year development plan to 51 Panchayat offices which effectively shows their intent and desire towards achieving participatory decision-making processes.

While the number of cases of human trafficking has been reported to be 35,983 between 2011 to 2018 (NCRB), responses obtained through RTI queries from 25 states and seven union territories reveal that between these years only 82 (0.2%) victims were provided with compensation.

(RTI response compiled by Sanjog)

### CASE STUDY

In a case from Mubarikpur village of Alwar district in the state of Rajasthan, an impoverished family whose members are differently abled, comprising of a widow along with her sons, could not avail their liable pensions nor any rations. Being differently abled they were also looked down upon by the villagers and not allowed to fill water from the common sources. Dependent on manual labour for a living, they could not even afford to pay for water from private borewells and were forced to fetch water from the outskirts of the village. The Adhikar Samitis facilitated by **Ibtada**, enabled them to join the Self-Help Group and contributed to their savings for the same. One of the Adhikar Sakhis convinced the Panchayat to sanction the ration card for claiming provisions under the Public Distribution System. They also contributed to the cost of travel and forms for issuing a disability certificate. A hand-pump was additionally installed near their household for their convenience.

#### Influencing Change at the Local Levels

Local leaders are well-positioned to understand the needs of their communities and have an inherent ability to influence the communities. With this tremendous opportunity, they can best deploy the resources for action.



## Awareness and Advocacy for Rights and Entitlements

Issues are brought to the forefront; awareness, understanding and respect for human rights are raised, and through means of these advocacy measures, the accountability of institutions is increased that will enable communities to access their rights and entitlements.

- CORO initiated the Right to Pee Campaign to advocate for free, clean, and safe public urinals for women in Mumbai. A total of 15 vigilance committees comprising of the community members were established. These committees would monitor and take ownership of the sanitation issues across the 15 municipal wards in the city. The NGO's consistent toil led to the setting of not 15, but 22 committees. Workshops were facilitated with representatives from all vigilance groups for peer learning.
- Ibtada's efforts have facilitated regularised work under MGNREGA with effective pressure from the VRC and SHG members on the Government functionaries. SHG members having job cards have been enabled with employment.

Indicators of change enabled	Achievement
Number of community members (men and women) whose capacities are enabled to access social security schemes.	1961
Number of women and girls empowered to access and secure land, housing and other property rights.	19

Table 4: Progress achieved against the indicators with respect to Access to rights and entitlements

## Collective Learnings

- Collective action by women has offered the potential to challenge the culture of silence, grassroots mobilisation led by women which acted as accountability mechanisms.
- Complex dynamics like caste have prevented women from local participation and entitlements. The need of the hour is larger community engagement, behavioural changes, and increased advocacy for the rights of marginalised communities.

## Economic Independence



Realising economic independence for women, is at the centre of achieving gender equality across the globe. This expands the capacity of women and enables the agency to make decisions. To generate responsiveness towards the financial rights of women and to bolster their economic security, the Influencers initiative supports programmes that provide women with income generation opportunities. By increasing access to affordable credit and relevant financial information, women have increased control over their resources and their decision-making abilities. The larger aim is to eliminate the systemic barriers to financial inclusion and unlock the potential of women in the economy.

Female Labour workforce participation in India is at one-third of male labour force participation, at around 23.3% which is lowest amongst its emerging market peers. (PLFS, 2017-18, NSSO)

### Institutional Pathways for Increasing Access To Finance

With more accessible and convenient avenues for credit, women have been able to multiply their efforts in increasing their productivity and effectiveness.

Skill and knowledge transmission can play an effective role in sustaining women's livelihood.

Collectives that come together to either to do collective farming, or as a group for economic activities have helped in reducing the challenges posed by the market competition. This has also contributed towards bringing in better cohesiveness and harmony in the community..

We have also learnt that it is just not the economic models that supports towards income generation. But we have seen our partners work on ground where they have tried to protect the communities from exploitation that restrict them to continue with their livelihood activities. (For e.g. sex workers profession) Steps in that direction also contributes to furthering the economic spaces for women to continue with their livelihood.

Some of the steps that our partners like Mann Deshi and ANANDI have taken to ensure that women to have greater control and access to the productive resources. Therefore, ANANDI's work on facilitating access to land or forest resources for women farmers supports towards contributing with continuing their livelihood.

With more accessible and convenient avenues for credit, women have been able to multiply their efforts in increasing their productivity and effectiveness.

- Mann Deshi Foundation has been ensuring doorstep cash credit to women vendors in Satara and Pune districts of Maharashtra to fund their daily purchases. Forming joint liability groups for availing doorstep cash credit loans has not only consolidated the social capital but also ensured risk division for repayment of loans eliminating the need for collateral.
- Similarly, in another approach ANANDI, has been organising women in Gujarat into collectives and federating co-operatives or Mandalis for formalising their savings and credit activities.

### Advancing Women's Livelihood Capabilities

Sustainable livelihood security, along with access to finance, has built the capacities of women. Our partner NGOs have also enabled knowledge and skill development for them, towards informed decision-making and systematic planning of their investments.

- Mann Deshi Foundation has furthered financial inclusion to address issues of mobility, by training women in digital use of transactions like ATM and mobile App payments. Through mass digital literacy programmes, women provided training on using dummy ATMs with thorough follow-ups to ensure learning retention. Digital Didis, who are representatives of the communities itself, have been facilitating the adoption of these technologies.

## CASE STUDY

Yasmin Attar aged 38 years was forced to drop out of school and get married at a very young age. She enrolled in the cash credit programme, and availed a loan to start a bangle-making business and then a further loan to set a grocery shop. Fetching a decent income for her family, her husband who was earlier not supportive of her decisions of financial investment has now been encouraging her to scale her venture.



### Enabling Economic Empowerment for Survivors

When survivors are provided access to economic resources and opportunities, it allows them agency, ability to negotiate their power within households and escape the cycle of violence. Assuring safety, as well as stability, enables them to reintegrate back into their lives and communities.

- Sanjog has formed Self-help groups (SHGs) with survivors of trafficking and sexual violence to promote their livelihoods and dignity.

### Advocacy and Awareness for Financial Independence

Through shared learnings and experiences, the need for advancing financial inclusion and enabling better livelihoods was emphasised across partners, with a focus on combining efforts and increasing mobilisation of resources.

- Mann Deshi Foundation's founder Chetna Gala Sinha was invited to speak at the first edition of the Women's Forum Asia meeting held in Singapore to share the organisation's journey with more than 1,500 trailblazers and leaders across the globe. Other participants included Helen Clark, former Prime Minister of New Zealand, Anne-Gabrielle-Heilbronner, Director, Publicis Group and similar such luminaries.

Indicators of change enabled	Achievement
Number of women and girls accessing financial institutions	11,562
Number of women engaged in income generating activities	3,206

Table 5: Progress achieved against the indicators with respect to economic independence

### Collective Learnings

- Women have recognised their underlying potential for entrepreneurship and feel a sense of security when they foresee a consistent flow of investment to scale their businesses.
- Acquiring knowledge and skills for consolidating entrepreneurship is a continuous process. There are always new frontiers to explore, and a little investment can go a long way towards building these skills. This is especially true for digital inclusion, which can ease financial management for women.
- The dynamics of credit access and repayment noted different patterns with regards to location. Considering the interests and preferences of women vendors in rural and urban contexts, flexibility was allowed in financial access, while ensuring risk management at the same time.

# Building Capacities to Enable Action

One of the key focus on the Influencers and CWE initiatives have been on handholding of our partner to build their capacities and promoting ecosystem conversations.

In the past year, we identified the capacity needs of the grassroots partners in a consultative process and helped deliver the same with the help of experts. We also convened dialogues with the members of the Influencer group to exchange notes, discuss the updates from the interventions being enabled and discuss on the collaborative work being supported.

EdelGive ensured the Influencers group were informed and involved in any conversation on women's rights and empowerment. The esteemed members were a key part of knowledge convenings and working groups wherein they engaged with aspects of the work being steered by the women empowerment portfolio of NGOs addresses, learn and shared good practices from their experiences and contexts and offered advice and inputs towards strengthening the impact of the collective.

In addition to participating in convenings and conversations, the Influencers initiative also facilitated platforms for the group to interact with the NGO partners; to encourage the sharing of knowledge and facilitating collaboration where possible. At the At the Same Table™, EDGE<sup>3</sup> and the Influencers convenings, the critical work being done at the grassroots was not only presented to a larger audience, it was also evangelised by the Influencers group. In addition to being part of a common conversation (like panels and fireside chats) with NGO representatives, at these convenings, the Influencers could also meet and interact with all the NGO partners of the women empowerment implementing portfolio, from across the country.

## Cross Learning Visits for Members of the NGO Collective

- The NGO collective availed the opportunities to visit the models of work being implemented by their peers in different settings.
- The visits have been fulfilling for exposure of the teams to showcase contextual programme designs, development and strengthening of teams in the organisations, learning from organisation developmental stages, building/preparing for scale, development, and integration of technology, and monitoring and evaluation based on observations.
- To elucidate, the partners working on litigation for addressing issues of sexual violation for women visited their peers working on rehabilitation to explore the further connection to their work.
- The partners in the stage of scaling their programmes visited their peers, which have reached a level of maturity.
- This exchange enhanced each other's view of preparedness for scale. These visits have been anchored by EdelGive Foundation and guided by mutually defined and clear objectives of learning.

<sup>3</sup>EDGE is a collaborative platform initiated by EdelGive Foundation with the aim to connect exceptional non-profit organisations with the funding fraternity, in-turn facilitating conversations on collective impact.



## Building Capacity through Technology Enablement

Team Sankalp, a group of technology leader who are a part of the Influencers group has developed an innovative mobile and web-based application, to automate the current case data capture, recording and reporting processes for survivors of sexual and domestic violence, and trafficking. The aim is to use technology to improve the impediments of their current systems, and save time and effort, which can be reinvested into widening the depth and the breadth of their work with the survivors, and process flow from survivor contact till court judgment. The infusion of technology is meant to bring efficiency for the teams and systems of justice delivery. It will enable them to take on more cases for intervention, support for better tracking of cases, improve conviction rates by better case monitoring and facilitate critical understanding of the gaps in the overall systems and process with the availability of data and reports.

Training for the NGO staff has been organised in January and February for Jan Sahas and AALI respectively. Over 100+ members of teams have been trained on the use of the application at two partner organisations. The application will cater to 100+ caseworkers working across 4 States and help them manage over 10,000 cases. Currently, over 5,000 cases are being loaded onto the application, and the target is to encompass 5000 cases by 2023. It is under customisation for other organisations working with survivors of violence like KMVS.

Team Sankalp is currently in the process of customising the application for other non-profits in the legal rights space, for case recording by Para-legal workers. Development of Vacha's Management Information System (MIS) is currently in progress. The software is developed by Xleap.

## Assisting Strategy and Leadership Development

EdelGive has worked with few partners on building their institutional capacities. Senior members of EdelGive have directly mentored Milaan in developing their strategy and team.

Ibtada has continued to receive resources for critical positions in the organisation they perceived as essential.

## Capacitating the Human Resource

KMVS will participate in Bridgespan Leadership Accelerators programme, which will help emerging leaders broaden their perspectives towards the organisation's growth and expansion. They will be facilitated with requisite tools and support that will assist in furthering the mission of the organisation.

## Supporting Research to Shape Interventions – Final Mile

**Behavioural science study that elicited widely applicable learnings for any organisation working with survivors of violence.** The grant supported a research study undertaken by the organisation Final Mile that analysed in the context of Jan Sahas's intervention – the elements that aid a victim's journey from trauma to her new normal. The learnings from the study that traced the victim's journey across three major stages- Victimhood, Survivorhood and New Normal have been used to design the interactions between Jan Sahas, the victim and her family (ecosystem), in order to strengthen and hasten path to normalcy. The study is expected to be a crucial resource whose insights can be used by any organisation working with vulnerable communities including survivors of any kind of violence.

Final Mile toolkit developed through the study is expected to pave the way for the implementation of victim support for other peer organisations. Over 60+ caseworkers and counsellors of Jan Sahas have been trained. This staff will conduct further training for implementation of the model, which will be used to assess, track and manage victim's progress for future 5000 plus cases by 2023.

## Convenings

The incidents of violence against women and girls has been increasing not only in absolute numbers but also forms, making it challenging to address the issues of violation of rights for women. The narrative of women empowerment needs to revisit its vocabulary; towards widening the conceptualisation of violence and discrimination against women and girls. Civil society on-ground needs collective strength and re-consolidation of its prowess to make the change more relevant and effective.

In this context, a two-day workshop was jointly convened by EdelGive and **Ford Foundation** to discuss the repercussions of currently limiting conceptualisations of violence and empowerment of women. There was an attempt to evolve women-centred, shared funding principles that may be expected to guide and govern funding for women's rights programmes. This brought together partners of our Women Empowerment portfolio (WE), academics, leaders in the field, as well as donors to inform the discussion from their experiences of working on issues of empowerment for women and girls.



*The Convening on Reframing Vocabulary and Reshaping Narratives by Ford Foundation and EdelGive*

- **At the Same Table™** – A platform where we showcased the work of our NGO partners:
  - Using Technology to build grassroots leadership for Women Empowerment with NGO partner IT for Change in Bengaluru (April 2019)
  - Capacity Building as a critical enabler of social development programmes with Bridgespan Group, Archana and Amit Chandra (April 2019)
  - Bold Philanthropy in India with the Bridgespan Group, Amit Chandra and Ford Foundation in Mumbai (September 2018)
  - Investing in Capabilities through Philanthropy with NGO partner Sanjog (August 2018)
- At EDGE 2019, Svati Bhatkal took us through a beautiful tale of emotion, loss and forgiveness. She emphasised on the power that forgiveness and introspection can have in our lives.

At the second Influencers meet, members of the group like Zia Mody, Samir Patil, Vrinda Rajgarhia, Team Sankalp, Svati and Satyajit Bhatkal along with Aparna Uppaluri of Ford Foundation participated in discussions on keeping women, rather than the act of violence as the centre in violence-against-women narratives, the role of technology as an enabler and on the power of women's collectives in tackling women's issues (e.g., Right to Pee campaign).

# COVID-19 Relief Initiatives

In the wake of the on-going pandemic, EdelGive with our network of supporters committed to ensure its organisations working with some of the most vulnerable communities are safe and able to operate with minimum disruptions. We continued to raise and influence commitments to the projects of our partner NGOs and adopted the required flexibilities as funders.

EdelGive has also been founding signatory to the [Common Charter for the Indian Donor](#) and Philanthropic Community, an initiative created to offer collective support to NGOs, signed by some of India's leading philanthropies such as Ford Foundation, Wipro Limited, Rohini Nilekani Philanthropies and Oxfam India, agreeing to abide by a common set of values.

The fragility of our existing systems in the face of this humanitarian crisis has become ever so evident. With the increasing cases of violence against women, particularly in the lockdown, it has become evident that our response as funders and NGOs will require a gendered approach.

Given below are some of the initiatives that our partner NGOs have undertaken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic:



AALI, working in UP, has been running helplines and offering counselling and emergency support to survivors of violence, in response to the increased incidents of the same with the effected lockdown.



ANANDI team in Gujarat has been in coordination with the local administration, working towards ensuring that the state government relief packages reach the most marginalised segments. This was followed with relief for those who have been excluded in this process. To combat the challenge of availability of shelters for domestic abuse victims, it has formed 'Nyay Samitis' (which is a smaller unit within the larger collective – sangathan) to provide support to survivors. The 'Nyay Samiti' members work with panchayats to make sure that the perpetrators are moved out of the house, and not the victim of abuse.



CORO in its relief work for Maharashtra and Rajasthan has been distributing essentials such as food packages, masks, sanitizers and soap to the affected communities, who have no ration cards or other identity cards to avail government entitlements. It has also been running helplines and offering counselling and emergency support, virtually.



IBTADA deployed 160 'Adhikar Sakhis', their community cadres, to support underserved 2,500 families Alwar, Rajasthan. In addition to providing food relief and conducting home visits to generate awareness on COVID-19, it has successfully distributed nearly 20,000 masks among the vulnerable communities to date.



IT FOR CHANGE assured a meal provision for 2,500 wageworkers in Delhi-NCR along with rations to 1,200 urban poor households in Bengaluru. It also supported 600 households in rural Mysore with groceries and other essential supplies.



BREAKTHROUGH has been advocating against increased gender violence through online publications and webinars.



KMVS is topping up mobile talk-time in the phones of its women leaders 'Sakhi Sanginis' who are the bridge between the organisation and any women in the community wanting support in the face of violence. These active mobile phones are crucial if the Sakhi Sanginis need to assist women who complain of abuse. They can connect with the woman to requisite services; like reaching out to 181 women helpline, KMVS helpline and paralegals and counsellors.



NISHTHA has been supporting the community of South 24 Parganas, West Bengal with sanitation kits (soaps, sanitizers, masks, etc.) as protection measures to avert the infection.



SHAHEEN has been running helplines and offering virtual counselling and emergency support.



JAN SAHAS relief and emergency support activities has been operational at Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Delhi (NCR). Supplementing the action of public health department, police and the district administration, it has distributed 10,768 safety kits for frontline staff and 27,837 families have been supported with safety kits along with rations. Along with this, it has been running helplines for counselling and emergency support. Its [Voices of the Invisible Citizens](#) report has brought to light the dismal state of the migrant construction workers and labourers in the face of this pandemic. Through another article "[Making Labour systems work](#)" it has been advocating for the creation of more balanced and equitable systems of labour and profit.



MANN DESHI ensured distribution of food and ration packages that included rice, pulses, biscuits, salt, soap, tea, oil and other essential items to 5,000 rural women in Mann taluka, Maharashtra. The NGO has been disseminating valid and reliable information through its community radio station to curb the issue of misinformation and unfounded rumours about COVID-19 fuelling public fear.



MILAAN FOUNDATION has launched the 'COVID-19 Emergency Support Programme' to tackle the adversities that have emerged with the pandemic at Uttar Pradesh. Through building awareness in the community, supporting local healthcare initiatives and financially supporting field level community workers, majority of whom are women; it has assumed on a responsibility to effectively arise to the situation.



VACHA has been distributing ration kits in the slum communities and Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) buildings of Mumbai with the help of its adolescent girl leaders.



SANJOG has been consistently facilitating helplines to alleviate the psychosocial disturbances and trauma amongst the survivors at North & South 24 Parganas.



# Annexure I: The Influencer Bulletin







## EdelGive Foundation

Registered Office:

EdelGive Foundation, Edelweiss House,  
Off CST Road, Kalina, Mumbai 400 098.  
Maharashtra

✉ [theinfluencers@edelweissfin.com](mailto:theinfluencers@edelweissfin.com)

📞 + 91 9136925863

🌐 [www.edelgive.org](http://www.edelgive.org)

f [EdelGive Foundation](#)

🐦 [@edelgive](#)

in [EdelGive Foundation](#)

📺 [EdelGive Foundation](#)

📷 [edelgive\\_foundation](#)