

2023-24

REFLECTING OUR ACHIEVEMENTS, GROWTH, AND
PROGRESS IN OUR COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE AND
TRANSPARENCY



SHIVI DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY



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SHIVI DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY

We believe every voice matters. When people come together, big changes can happen. In our journey toward gender justice and equality, we walk hand in hand by lifting unheard voices and dreaming of a fair and equal Society for all.





MESSAGE FROM CHIEF FUNCTIONARY

It's been a truly special year for Shivi Development Society. We've seen women lead with confidence, young people bring fresh ideas, and entire communities come together to grow and support each other. Every step forward shows how powerful we are when we work as one team, with hope in our hearts.



A big thank you to everyone who's been part of this journey. As we look ahead, I send my warmest wishes to all our team, partners, and communities. May the next year bring us more strength, togetherness, and positive change.

NARENDER KUMAR

**Chief Functionary
Shivi Development Society**



Welcome to Shivi Development Society's Annual Report.

As we look back on 2023, we are thrilled with pride and thankfulness for the tremendous progress we have accomplished this year. It has been a year of significant transformation for our company and the communities we serve. We've worked together to achieve our common vision of a more inclusive, equitable society in which everyone, particularly those from marginalized communities, has the opportunity to succeed.

Shivi Development Society believes that collaborative effort is the key to true and enduring change. Our dedication to values such as inclusivity, gender equality, human rights, and social justice has led us as we worked relentlessly to empower women and children, allowing them to reach their full potential and create brighter futures.

This year has been one of remarkable milestones. We've worked with survivors of domestic violence, helped women find their voice, and offered countless livelihood opportunities through our Shivi Nari Shakti initiative. This program has been particularly close to our hearts, as it's given women the skills, tools, and confidence they need to become "livelihood warriors" in their own right. We've witnessed firsthand the strength and resilience of women when given the right opportunities, and their stories continue to inspire us.

We are extremely grateful to everyone, our donors, partners, funders, stakeholders, volunteers, and the communities we serve for their unfailing trust and support. Without you, none of this would be possible. Together, we're creating a society in which everyone, regardless of background or circumstances, may live with dignity, purpose, and hope.

Thank you for being such an important part of our journey. Let's keep working together to create significant, long-term change.

Warm regards.
Shivi Development Society Team





SHIVI DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY

**An NGO in Special
Consultative Status with
United Nations ECOSOC**



INTRODUCTION

Since 1995, our civil society organization has resonated as a beacon of hope for the social upliftment of the downtrodden and impoverished. At the heart of our mission lies a commitment to sponsoring positive changes for the improvement of the underprivileged.

Our focus follows the critical pillars of child development, human rights, good governance, and inclusive participation, with a burning emphasis on gender equality. We sow the seeds of awareness through empowerment by nurturing communities with insightful trainings, workshops, webinars, and direct outreach programs.

Our eco-system holds grassroots-based action in high regard-empowerment of the whole community through methodologically participatory research, sharp analytical skills, and meaningful interventions. We avidly believe in community-driven solutions-centric to our work is social development, enhancing livelihoods, and ensuring healthy childhood for all.

Beyond and above the direct connection between citizen aspirations and well-thought-out public policies, we seek to plug the gap by innovating research on policies and working together with the public sector. In other words, to galvanize the enactment of policies and strengthen capacities through strategic advocacy and effective lobbying.



OUR VISION

We dream of a society where every individual, irrespective of background or identity, stands on equal ground. Picture a world where human dignity, justice, and gender equity are not just ideals but lived realities. Our vision is a tapestry woven with the threads of inclusivity and respect, where basic human rights aren't a privilege but a fundamental entitlement for all. We in painting this canvas of a pluralistic society, where every stroke embodies the essence of dignity, justice, and gender equity.

"We stand not just for some, but for everyone. We believe in the inherent dignity and rights of every human being and work towards eliminating barriers to opportunity."

OUR MISSION

We believe in a transformative approach, by placing human rights at the heart of development. We're dedicated to nurturing the potential of our partner communities through a rights-based strategy. We're talking about empowerment specifically focusing on marginalized groups like women, children, and youth. We're on a mission to unlock their capabilities, enabling them to not just survive, but thrive in the long run. After all, lasting well-being is more than just a goal—it's a fundamental right!



Being the catalysts for change, challenging discrimination, dismantling injustices.

Amplifying voices and realizing rights through unity.

OUR VALUES

Empowering communities to shape their destiny.

Igniting awareness and demanding accountability.

Building solidarity and convergence across diverse sectors.

We're to make a difference in the society, challenging unfairness, tearing down obstacles, and opposing injustice. By uniting folks from all backgrounds, we build meaningful relationships. This has to do with giving communities the power to shape their own tomorrows getting their opinions out there, and bringing shared hopes to life for good.



OUR COMMITMENT TO SDGS

Our mission is in sync with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These 17 goals and 169 targets guide progress worldwide. We've picked out certain SDGs that match our strategy and aims best. These chosen SDGs show what matters to us and prove we're serious about building a future that's fair and lasts.



SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

We promote community health through awareness programs, health camps, and access to essential services.



SDG 4: Quality Education

We ensure children and youth have access to education, fostering knowledge and confidence for their futures.



SDG 5: Gender Equality

We empower women and girls by strengthening their voices, safeguarding their rights, and creating opportunities.



SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

We build sustainable livelihoods through skill development and economic empowerment initiatives.



SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities

We address disparities and promoting inclusivity by uplifting marginalized communities.



SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

We advocate for human rights and governance reforms to build equitable and resilient communities.

OUR ORGANIZATION FOOTPRINT



OUR PROJECTS

Chhattisgarh

Promotion of Women Human Rights Defenders in Chhattisgarh

A new chapter opened itself for us in Chhattisgarh during April **2012**. Our journey born out of years of intensive effort with WHRDs in the Northeast now expanded its horizon. Sensing the unsavory echoes of socio-political unrest in Chhattisgarh as similar to those experienced in the Northeast, the need to stretch out our efforts to Chhattisgarh became paramount.

This region is a land scarred by violence and the degradation of rule of law, a damage that has fallen most heavily on women's lives, much like what we have witnessed here in the Northeast. Increasing militarization had put WHRDs in danger, vulnerable to threats from various fronts: Naxals, state security agencies, and the entrenched structure of the society. Our mission work in Chhattisgarh has involved building strong capacities and conducive spaces where WHRDs have the courage to fight for human rights.

From these initiatives, we are not just confronting the issues, but indeed creating change. We build a Chhattisgarh that strengthens the voice of every defender, protects rights, and enables democracy to bloom so free of even the semblance of fear and oppression.



*Primary Stakeholders of the
Projects:
Women of all groups, from our
project area irrespective of their
age*

Rajasthan

Promoting peace and gender justice in Bundi district of Rajasthan through women led community institutions



This project embodies our conviction that women have the transformative power within human rights protection. At SDS, this initiative falls roughly into our core idea – where gender equality ranks high amongst priorities in the alleviation of poverty as well as sustaining long-lasting peace.

It is with pride that, in collaboration with Vista Hermosa Foundation, we lead the movement in Rajasthan. Our aim is women empowering themselves, strengthening their voices, and developing their agency to claim their development. Together, we are igniting a sustainable women's rights movement that amplifies the call for gender justice and co-existence in harmony.

Through this journey of change, with the support of Vista Hermosa Foundation, SDS launched a novel Women's Leadership Program in October **2021** which is a platform for change – planting seeds of change by incubating women's leadership, generating solidarity, and continuity toward gender fairness and sustainable peace.

CHHATTISGARH

Active Women Human Rights Defenders benefitted from district-level training	283	48	Domestic violence cases solved at the organizational level
Active WHRDs benefitted from state-level training	50	45	Active WHRDs participated in exposure visits to government departments
Community meetings conducted with women, youth, and men.	600+	2	Group-based livelihood activities initiated.
Community women engaged	5000+	3	Reclamation of Community Resources
Community men and youth engaged	1000+	900+	Individuals benefitted from 4 public free health medical camps
Active WHRDs identified	200	2000+	Sanitary pads distributed for free
Active youth and men volunteers identified	60	20+	Guest lectures conducted in government schools
Domestic violence cases filed at One Stop Centers (OSCs)	37	700+	Government school students benefitted from sensitization sessions

RAJASTHAN

Active Women Human Rights Defenders benefitted from district-level training	283	12	Domestic violence cases solved at the organizational level
Active WHRDs benefitted from state-level training	90	75	Active WHRDs participated in exposure visits to government departments
Community meetings conducted with women, youth, and men.	300+	9	Individual women supported
Community women engaged	3000+	6	Reclamation of Community Resources
Community men and youth engaged	1000+	500+	Sanitary pads distributed for free
Active WHRDs identified	200	10+	Guest lectures conducted in government schools
Active youth and men volunteers identified	60	200+	Government school students benefitted from sensitization sessions

WE TALK. WE UNDERSTAND. WE ACT: COMMUNITY MEETINGS COMMUNITY GATHERINGS AS A ROUTE TO JUSTICE, DIGNITY, AND RIGHTS

Over 600 community meetings in more than 500 villages in Chhattisgarh, where women learned about their rights and found the courage to speak up against domestic violence.

Since the beginning of our efforts toward community empowerment, our approach to community meetings has remained simple, yet deeply rooted in a fundamental principle: we talk, we understand, and we act. These are not just words; they form the foundation of every community gathering we organize whether in Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, or any other part of India.

We don't just conduct meetings, we create safe spaces where women feel seen and heard. We listen to their problems, help identify solutions, build collective understanding, and, when necessary, mobilize movements for change. Everything we do is grounded in three core values: gender justice, equality, and a rights-based approach. When we say "we talk," it means we

create inclusive spaces where women feel free to express themselves without fear or hesitation. "We understand" means we listen with empathy, trying to go beyond what is said aloud, to grasp the deeper social and cultural challenges that women face in their everyday lives. And "we act" is about translating this understanding into real change whether that's through legal literacy sessions, linking women with local support systems, or empowering them to speak up for their rights.

This year alone, we organized more than **600** community meetings in Chhattisgarh, engaging over **8,000** women across **500** villages in three districts. These meetings were not just about spreading awareness, they became platforms for transformation. Women began to speak openly about domestic violence, which many had previously accepted as "normal" or "ghar ki baat." For most of them, this was the first time they realized that what they were experiencing was not just wrong, it was a violation of their rights. Slowly, through continued engagement, they began to understand, seek help, and fight back with the strength of knowledge, support, and solidarity. This is why we firmly believe that empowerment begins with awareness. For many women we work with, learning that they have the right to safety, the right to property, or even the right to be heard is a turning point in their lives. That's why we ensure that information whether related to laws, government schemes, or available support is shared in a culturally sensitive, accessible way that truly resonates with them.

In Rajasthan, we reached more than **1,000** women through over **100** community meetings across **50** villages. And while numbers give us a sense of scale, for us, it's not just about the figures it's about the real empowerment and movement these women have become part of. We have seen a visible rise in awareness, participation, and leadership among women in these areas. More and more, women are stepping forward not just as survivors, but as agents of change in their communities.

We are proud of the shifts we're witnessing, not just in individual lives, but in the larger community mindset. And we remain committed to ensuring that every woman we work with has the knowledge, the tools, and the support she needs to live with dignity, make her own choices, and stand up for her rights.



In Rajasthan, over 1,000 women attended the meetings, gaining confidence and knowledge that empowered them to make a difference in their communities.

We rise with every woman's voice, empowering her to turn struggles into stories of strength and change. This is what we believe women empowerment is all about

WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS AT THE FRONTLINES: THE VOICES OF RESILIENCE



The most transformative change happens when women rise, not just for themselves, but for one another. This year, we had the privilege of working with **200** active Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) in Chhattisgarh, spread across three districts, and **90** WHRDs in Rajasthan. We formed small groups of **10-15** these evolved WHRDs in each area, united as voices for the women in their communities. Through community meetings and capacity-building trainings, these women became catalysts for change. Each of these women is a powerful voice in her community. They're not just resolving individual problems—they're creating ripples of change. Their courage encourages others to speak up, their knowledge empowers entire communities, and their actions challenge the deep-rooted norms that support injustice. Every WHRD becomes a spark for social transformation, showing that personal bravery can lead to collective action.

They don't need titles or formal positions to make a difference. These women are mothers, daughters, farmers, teachers, and homemakers—ordinary women who decide to speak out when others stay silent. They stand against discrimination, abuse, child marriage, and domestic violence. They push for essential government services to reach the most vulnerable. They are the bridge between rights and reality. What makes them so impactful is their deep understanding of the local context. They know the power dynamics, the cultural sensitivities, and the history of their communities. This insight allows them to act wisely, build trust, and create change from within. Their bravery motivates others to speak up, while their knowledge empowers entire communities.

But becoming a WHRD doesn't happen overnight. It all begins in our community meetings, safe, open spaces where women learn about their rights and rediscover their strength. The women who return, ask deeper questions, and support others are the ones we recognize and nurture. Through our "Talk, Understand, Act" approach, we walk alongside them, first listening, then building understanding, and finally empowering them to lead.

In Chhattisgarh, we have Chetna, known as the "Didi who helps." She guides women through domestic violence complaints, pension claims, and health issues with both courage and compassion. Chetna also volunteers in a government initiative that supports women facing domestic violence, where she offers counseling—she's become the trusted counselor for other women in her community. In Rajasthan, Kali Bai, who was once too shy to speak in public, now leads awareness campaigns on gender-based violence and trains other women to raise their voices.

We don't just find WHRDs; we walk with them every step of the way. We invest in their growth by providing training on laws, rights, and entitlements, as well as creating spaces for peer learning. Exposure visits, leadership workshops, and local partnerships help them face challenges with resilience and clarity. Being a WHRD isn't easy. It means challenging systems, facing social resistance, and sometimes risking personal safety. But these women continue, driven by their resilience, a sense of purpose, and the support of a growing sisterhood that spans villages and districts. With standing for each other, they've worked to end violence, connect hundreds of women to vital resources, and encourage communities to confront long-standing injustices. The impact they've made isn't just something we measure, it's something that is deeply felt, both emotionally and socially.

290 WHRDs in Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan became strong voices in their communities, helping fight problems like domestic violence, unfair treatment, and child marriages. They are now leading the way in making their communities safer and fairer for everyone.

PROTECTION OF WOMEN FROM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE: BREAKING THE SILENCE, RESTORING DIGNITY



In the heart of rural Chhattisgarh, under the shade of an ancient banyan tree—its roots firmly planted in the earth, mirroring the strength of the women gathered there our regular community meeting took place. The sun blazed down, but the warmth of unity among the women offered comfort. Some had walked kilometers barefoot, others came quietly, their children by their side, holding onto their mothers' sarees. This day, however, was different. It wasn't about ration cards or school admissions—it was about something far deeper: the hidden violence that takes place behind closed doors.

Among the women was Asha, a quiet woman in her thirties, who had silently endured years of domestic abuse. For a long time, she had accepted it as an unfortunate part of marriage. "Yeh toh har ghar ki baat hai," she often whispered, as though it were a simple fact of life. Her bruises were hidden under her saree, and her tears concealed by a well-rehearsed smile. Everything began to change when she attended one of our awareness sessions, led by a local Woman Human Rights Defender (WHRD). The session wasn't full of legal jargon or abstract statistics. It was a conversation about dignity, personal agency, and the right to say no.

One sentence struck Asha deeply: "Domestic violence is not your destiny; it's a violation of your rights." For the first time, something inside her sparked. She began questioning the silence she had accepted for so long, and a new hope ignited within her. Asha isn't alone in her journey. Kavita, a woman whose husband despite his prominent position as a government official betrayed her and subjected her to physical and emotional abuse, found herself at a crossroads. Her husband, who held a seat meant to help the public, had abandoned his own family and was unfaithful. Yet, he continued to hold his position, all while mistreating her. Through our intervention, she regained her confidence and strength to seek justice. Minu, a widow raising her young daughter alone, endured daily abuse from her in-laws who objected to her education and independence. Her daughter, however, has big dreams of becoming a teacher—a vision Minu is committed to making a reality despite the struggles she faces.

From Rajasthan, we learned of a woman from a lower caste who was mentally abused by fellow women in her village. She was not allowed to sit with others or be included in gatherings simply because of her caste. Initially silent, she found her voice with the help of a WHRD. Today, she sits proudly in the same space as others, advocating for equal treatment and respect. In addition, we also encounter cases where the cycle of violence and injustice extends to the whole family.

In all these cases, our team follows a clear and respectful process. We don't rush straight to the police or legal systems. Instead, we take the time to understand each woman's situation and give her the space to choose her path. Our survivor-centered approach includes four key steps:

- We speak to the woman first—in a private, safe setting. We listen to her story with empathy and without judgment.
- Next, we talk to the family and even the accused, trying to resolve the issue through open conversation and respectful dialogue.
- If needed, we involve the local panchayat or community elders to mediate and help hold the abuser accountable.
- And only if the matter remains unresolved or the survivor wants it, we took the case to One Stop Centres or police authorities with the consent of the victim. In these cases too, we walk alongside the survivor at every step till the case solved, and do follow-up as well.

We don't just talk about laws like the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA)—we make sure women understand how to use them. We explain, support, and walk with them through the process.

This process has resulted in **36** domestic violence cases being filed at One Stop Centres (OSCs) across Chhattisgarh, with **48** community-level resolutions in Chhattisgarh and **12** in Rajasthan. Each case represents not just a number, but a woman who reclaimed her life. Our team provided legal aid, emotional support, and when necessary, access to safe shelters. Each step of the way, we ensured these women had the tools they needed to rebuild their lives.

Central to this success are our Women Human Rights Defenders. Many of them are survivors themselves, now trained in legal frameworks, crisis response, and community leadership. They bring unmatched empathy and trust to the women they serve, acting as lifelines in moments of crisis. Their presence in the community ensures that women are never alone. They are there when women need to go to the police, negotiate with local authorities, or navigate the complex legal systems.

Their efforts extend far beyond case management. WHRDs educate their communities on gender equality, mediate disputes, and even prevent violence before it happens. Their work is not just about responding to incidents of violence but about creating lasting change within communities. Sangeeta, our active WHRDs, who legally separated from her abusive husband, is now one of the many women who guide others, showing them that a better future is possible.

This year, over **300** women have stepped up as WHRDs, spreading awareness, educating families, and reshaping the norms around gender, power, and justice. Their leadership is not just about changing individual lives—it's about changing the very fabric of their communities. In our community efforts, we've also encountered cases where caste-based discrimination continues to harm women. For instance, women from lower castes have been excluded from community gatherings and subjected to mental abuse simply because of their background. With the help of WHRDs, these women have found their voices, rejected the violence they endured, and are now leading the charge for social equality.

In our regular, inclusive gatherings, women share their stories, offer support, and stand by each other. These spaces of trust have become critical to fostering a culture of dignity and respect. With each story shared, each woman who steps forward, we are building a community where women are no longer victims—they are leaders, advocates, and changemakers. Looking forward, our vision remains unchanged: every woman deserves to live free from violence, to know her rights, and to have access to the support she needs to claim them. The path to justice is long and difficult, but every woman who reclaims her voice, every WHRD who takes a stand, and every community that opens its heart to change brings us one step closer to a world where no woman has to suffer in silence.

Note: The stories shared are real, but the names have been changed to protect the privacy of the individuals involved.

When one woman finds her voice, a community begins to heal and when many rise, a culture of silence breaks forever.

Understanding Domestic Violence in India

- 29% of Indian women (15–49) experience domestic violence (NFHS-5, 2019–21)
- Types: physical (86%), emotional (52%), sexual (25%), financial (38%)
- Gender-based power dynamics: 52% of Indian men believe wife-beating justified
- Rural prevalence (32%) exceeds urban (24%) by significant margin
- Only 14% of victims seek institutional support (NFHS-5)

Impact of Domestic Violence

- Health: 62% report physical injuries, 73% mental health issues
- Children: 63% of DV-exposed children show developmental issues
- Intergenerational: 33% higher likelihood of becoming perpetrators/victims
- Social: Isolation, inability to work, education disruption (40% dropout)

Support Services Available in India



WOMEN LEADERSHIP TRAINING: EMPOWERING CHANGE THROUGH KNOWLEDGE AND ACTION



True leadership begins with knowledge, confidence, and the ability to make informed decisions. At Shivi Development Society, we don't see women merely as beneficiaries—we see them as potential changemakers. Our work is rooted in a simple but powerful belief: when women are equipped with the right tools, access, and opportunities, they don't just lift themselves—they lift their entire communities.

That's why our Women Leadership Training Programs are not just about information-sharing, they're about creating real, lasting empowerment. We don't treat leadership as a short-term activity or a one-time workshop. For us, it's a long-term investment in women's strength, resilience, and ability to influence systems that affect their lives.

This year, we reached **283** active Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) in Chhattisgarh through district-level trainings and another **180** women in Rajasthan through cluster-level programs. These women come from rural, tribal, and socially marginalized backgrounds. Most of them have grown up navigating layers of systemic exclusion—based on caste, gender, poverty, or location. Our trainings are designed specifically for these contexts: practical, relevant, and rooted in lived realities. Our sessions cover a wide range of essential topics—legal rights, government schemes, livelihood options, health services, and community mobilization. But what truly sets our model apart is who delivers these sessions. We bring in real decision-makers—officials and professionals from various government departments and institutions: police officers, One Stop Centre staff, lawyers, political representatives, health officials, and social welfare officers. This isn't accidental—it's intentional. We want these women to directly engage with the people who hold power. We want them to ask questions, challenge procedures, seek clarity, and establish relationships with the very systems that often felt distant or intimidating. By bridging the gap between grassroots women and state institutions, we make rights more accessible and justice more achievable.

And this access works both ways. While women get a chance to learn and connect, officials and service providers get to hear directly from the ground—stories, barriers, and ideas that they might otherwise miss. This two-way dialogue helps build accountability and trust, which is crucial for long-term systemic change.

In Chhattisgarh, **50** WHRDs took part in advanced, state-level training, where they interacted with senior bureaucrats and resource persons. In Rajasthan, **90** women joined similar platforms. These sessions were not just educational—they were gateways to opportunity. Women asked about how to file cases of domestic violence, how to access widow pensions, how to get ration cards re-issued, and how to report negligence in government schools. For many, it was the first time their voice reached someone in authority—and was heard. Leadership, for us, is not a title. It's action. And we saw that action begin to unfold almost immediately. One example is Sunita from Rajasthan, who used to feel helpless watching women in her village suffer in silence. After our training, she not only gained legal knowledge but also the confidence to act. She now organizes health awareness drives and has helped over a dozen women access free legal aid and government entitlements.

We also place a strong emphasis on building peer support networks. Women don't walk this path alone. They build connections with each other, forming small local groups where they share information, lend support, and organize community actions. These bonds often become lifelines—especially in times of crisis, like domestic violence, eviction, or loss of livelihood. We don't just train, we follow up, mentor, and stand beside these women as they put their learning into practice. Our team ensures consistent hand-holding, exposure visits, and planning sessions to help women transform their ideas into actionable plans. Whether it's starting a village-level grievance cell or organizing a rights awareness march, the women lead the way.

What makes this journey so powerful is that it changes how women see themselves. Many come in believing they are not capable. They leave realizing they are leaders. They start asking new questions. They challenge injustice in families, panchayats, and schools. And slowly, their community starts to change too.

Over time, these women become key anchors of social justice. They become the go-to person in their hamlet for government schemes, legal help, or crisis support. They ensure that state services actually reach the last mile. And that's the real transformation—we are no longer talking about women as "receivers of help" but as active participants in governance and development.

This year, over **300** women have emerged as strong leaders. They've spoken at public forums, negotiated with local authorities, and led campaigns on sanitation, education, and gender justice. Their actions are shaping the communities they live in—and inspiring others to do the same.

To us, that's the heart of the change we believe in: a world where women don't wait to be saved, they take the lead in saving themselves and others. Where they are not just trained, but truly empowered to challenge structures, influence policy, and hold institutions accountable. At Shivi Development Society, we are proud to be part of their journey. And we are committed to walking with them—one leader, one village, and one breakthrough at a time.

REACH OUT TO DECISION-MAKERS AND INSTITUTIONAL NETWORKS



LEADERSHIP TRANSLATED INTO REAL ACTION AND ADVOCACY



STRONG PEER NETWORKS A SOURCE OF STRENGTH AND SUSTAINABILITY



A total of **550** women benefited from various levels of capacity-building and leadership training programs in Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan.

LIVELIHOOD AND RECLAMATION OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES THROUGH WOMEN LEADERSHIP



In the communities we work with in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh, women have not only accessed rights-based support but have also gained economic independence. They are now supporting their families and standing on their own feet. Through our livelihood initiatives, these women have reclaimed their rightful place in society—overcoming barriers and creating new possibilities for themselves and those around them.

In Chhattisgarh, women have taken the lead in a unique entrepreneurial journey: making dishwashing products. What started as a small, hands-on skill has grown into a sustainable business. Most of these women had never earned an income before, but this initiative gave them a chance to become successful entrepreneurs. By producing and selling affordable, high-quality dishwashing products within their villages, they not only contributed to their household incomes but also strengthened the local economy. What makes this initiative even more special is its flexibility. It doesn't require the women to work outside their homes for long hours. With just two hours of effort in a week, shared among a group of **15** women, they manage to keep the business running smoothly. Currently, two such groups in Chhattisgarh are actively carrying forward this work with our ongoing support. But this initiative is about much more than just income. It's about dignity, agency, and women taking control of their economic futures. You can hear the pride in their voices when they talk about their products. They haven't just learned a skill—they've stepped into the role of confident business owners. Their success has inspired other women, and slowly, a culture of shared learning and collective growth has started to take shape. What began as individual efforts is now becoming a movement of women supporting and uplifting one another.

In Rajasthan, too, women are leading the way in building their livelihoods. Whether it's cultivating organic vegetables, growing medicinal plants, or running small farms, they are using traditional knowledge to build sustainable ventures. These efforts have improved local food security and created jobs. Women have also ventured into tailoring, food production, and retail—areas once considered male-dominated. We also support Self-Help Groups (SHGs) in Rajasthan and provide financial assistance to individual women from these groups through microfinance loans. But our approach is different—we do not charge interest. As a non-profit, we simply recover the loan in small installments so that the same funds can be used to support other women. This year, we supported eight individual women through this model. This change isn't just about earning a livelihood. It's about gaining respect, recognition, and a voice in communities where women were traditionally confined to household roles. These women are now essential contributors to the local economy.

Beyond income generation, we are also supporting women leaders in reclaiming community resources—such as temples, community halls, and handpumps—which were often neglected or misused. This year, we were able to reclaim some of these shared resources through the efforts of women leaders, helping strengthen the sense of community ownership and participation.

The stories of women in Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan show that with the right tools, training, and support, women can lead real and lasting change. Today, they are not only entrepreneurs but also leaders—advocating for their rights, creating opportunities for others, and challenging long-standing social norms. Their journey is a powerful reminder that women's leadership is key to reclaiming community spaces, reshaping local economies, and breaking barriers that once held them back.

When women are given the right support, they don't just change their own lives, they uplift entire communities, turning challenges into opportunities and gaining respect along the way.

INCLUSION OF MEN AND YOUTHS FOR THE RIGHTS AND SAFETY OF WOMEN

We believe that women alone cannot carry the responsibility of achieving gender equality and ensuring safety and rights for all. Real and lasting change needs the active involvement of men and youth. They are not just supporters—they are an essential part of the solution. That's why we've focused deeply on including them in our work, especially when it comes to ensuring the safety and rights of women and adolescent girls, who are the future strength of our society.

Over the past year, we've worked across rural and semi-urban areas of Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, holding over **200** community meetings with more than **1,000** men and youth. These weren't just awareness sessions. They were real, honest conversations, spaces where people could talk openly, reflect, and understand the daily struggles that women face. Many men shared that it was the first time anyone had explained these issues in such a simple and relatable way. We talked about things like domestic violence, gender roles, consent, respect, and the importance of equal opportunities for women. We used stories, data, examples, and community experiences to help break old thinking patterns and build empathy. Slowly, we started seeing change—not just in words, but in mindset and behavior.

As part of our efforts, we also linked these conversations to relevant events and real-life issues. For example, on World No Tobacco Day, we worked with men and youth to understand how tobacco use often leads to financial stress and aggressive behavior at home, both of which affect women deeply. It became clear that health issues like tobacco are also linked to women's safety and dignity. We celebrated National Youth Day by encouraging young boys and girls to take a stand for equality and respect. We also made menstrual hygiene a key part of our work, especially with adolescent girls. We marked Menstrual Hygiene Day in schools and villages, holding open sessions, distributing sanitary pads, and talking about periods without shame or discomfort. These sessions helped build confidence among girls and taught boys to respect natural processes instead of making fun of them.

The change has been visible. Many of the men and boys who once stayed silent now speak up when they see injustice. Youth have taken the lead too—we now have **60** active youth volunteers in both states who are organizing local campaigns, leading school sessions, supporting women's groups, and becoming strong voices for equality in their own communities. One powerful story comes from Chhattisgarh, where a group of youth volunteers started a campaign to raise awareness about domestic violence. They involved local men in the discussion and helped them understand how their behavior affects the entire family. In Rajasthan, youth volunteers organized workshops in schools and colleges, making sure young people begin these conversations early in life.

What sets our approach apart is that we don't just talk about what men shouldn't do, we focus on what they can do. We make them part of the change. We believe in shared responsibility—where men and women stand together, not in competition but in collaboration, to build a safer, stronger, and more equal society.



EXPOSURE VISITS: WOMEN'S FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCES



Exposure visits as a key initiative to empower Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs). These visits provide a unique opportunity for women to experience firsthand how government and community institutions function to protect and promote their rights. This year, **45** active WHRDs in Chhattisgarh and **75** in Rajasthan had the chance to visit important support centers, such as One Stop Centres (OSCs), Spirituality Centres, District Legal Services Authorities (DLSA), and local police departments. The purpose of these visits was to create a direct connection between women and the systems in place to support their rights and welfare. Rather than learning about these systems in the abstract, women were able to engage with them directly, ask questions, and witness how these institutions work on the ground.

At the One Stop Centres, for example, WHRDs learned about the comprehensive support these centers offer to survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, including legal, medical, and psychological services. This exposure helped them understand how these centers operate and how they can guide women in their communities to access such services when needed.

Visiting Spirituality Centres provided another dimension of learning, showing how spirituality can contribute to women's empowerment and well-being. These centers led discussions on how spiritual practices, such as meditation or community rituals, can enhance inner strength and promote a sense of equality and self-worth, equipping women to navigate challenges in their advocacy work.

Through their visits to both the District Legal Services Authorities (DLSA) and police departments, women gained firsthand knowledge of the legal frameworks, and the steps involved in seeking justice. Meeting legal experts and police officers directly, they learned how these systems can support women in their fight for equality, and how they can better guide others through these complex processes.

For many women, these visits are eye-opening. They left with a clearer understanding of how they can use existing systems to their advantage, whether it's by helping a survivor of violence access legal aid or guiding someone through the steps to report a crime. These interactions strengthened their confidence and leadership abilities, as they realized that they are not alone in their fight for justice; there are entire systems in place designed to support them and the women they serve.

What makes these exposure visits truly powerful is that the women are not just passive listeners. They are active participants—asking questions, building networks, and learning by doing. They return to their villages not just with information, but with real stories and lived experiences they can share with others. These visits have become a driving force for change. Women who once hesitated to approach government systems now speak with confidence. They advocate more strongly for themselves and for others. They've seen how support structures work, and now they know how to use them. Strengthened with experience, knowledge, and a renewed sense of purpose, these WHRDs return as empowered leaders, ready to transform their communities, one step at a time. They don't stop there—they pass on what they've learned, inspire other women, and motivate them to stand up, speak out, and take charge of their rights.

HEALTH IS RIGHT: CONNECTING COMMUNITIES TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH

Health is essential to empowerment. Without proper healthcare, people struggle to grow, work, or contribute meaningfully to their families and society. At Shivi Development Society, we believe that healthcare is not a luxury—it's a basic right for all. This year, in Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, we focused on supporting marginalized communities by providing them with essential healthcare services and hygiene products. Our belief is simple: a healthy community is an empowered community. When people—especially women—have access to healthcare, they can thrive, learn, and lead.

In Chhattisgarh, we organized four free medical camps in collaboration with the Public Health Department. These camps reached over **900** people in underserved areas. For many of them, it was the first time they had access to professional medical care. The camps provided general health check-ups, free medicines, treatment for chronic illnesses, and preventive health education. For communities living in remote locations with limited transport or financial means, these camps were a lifeline. As one woman shared, "We usually visit a doctor only when we are bedridden. Even then, getting to a hospital is a challenge." Another major focus for us this year was menstrual hygiene, an issue that often goes unspoken but affects millions of women, especially in rural areas. In Chhattisgarh, we distributed over **2,000** sanitary pads free of cost to women who could not afford or access menstrual products. A simple sanitary pad might seem small, but for many women, it's the difference between staying at home or going to work or school. Access to menstrual hygiene helps protect women's health, preserves their dignity, and gives them the confidence to move freely without fear or discomfort. Through this initiative, we not only addressed a basic health need, but also broke the silence around periods, encouraged open conversations, and created safe spaces for women to speak up about their needs.

In Rajasthan, we continued this effort by distributing sanitary pads to over **500** women in remote villages. For many, it was the first time someone had openly spoken to them about menstrual health. Women shared how this small support helped them carry on with daily tasks and reduced the shame and anxiety they once felt during their periods. One woman said, "For the first time, I didn't have to hide or feel embarrassed during those days."

But our work didn't stop at distribution. Our approach to public health is holistic. It's not just about providing supplies—it's about educating and empowering people to take control of their health. By combining access to healthcare, menstrual hygiene products, and health awareness, we've helped break down barriers that have long stood in the way of basic well-being. The impact is real. In both Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, we've seen women step forward with more confidence, young girls attending school without interruption, and families becoming more aware of health practices. These efforts reinforce our belief that health is a right—not a privilege—and everyone deserves access to care and support.

Our mission is simple: to ensure no one is left behind in the journey toward better health and dignity. Every step we take toward improving public health not only strengthens individuals but uplifts entire communities. When people are empowered with knowledge, resources, and support, they live healthier, more confident, and more dignified lives.



TEACHING RESPECT, RIGHTS, AND RESPONSIBILITY IN SCHOOLS



Change doesn't happen overnight—it begins in small classrooms, with curious eyes and eager hearts, where ideas take root and grow into actions. With this belief, we began conducting sensitization sessions in government schools across the districts of Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, aiming to equip children and adolescents with awareness, empathy, and the courage to speak up—for themselves and for others. Over the past year, more than **700** students in Chhattisgarh and **200** in Rajasthan took part in over **30** guest lectures held at their schools. These sessions weren't just another period in the school timetable—they became spaces of connection and trust, where stories were shared, questions were encouraged, and life skills were introduced in a warm and respectful way.

The focus wasn't just academic—it was deeply awareness. We spoke about topics children rarely find in their textbooks: menstrual hygiene, gender justice, discriminatory norms, child rights, and personal safety, including the important topic of good touch and bad touch. Each session was adapted to the students' age and understanding, using stories, visuals, games, and interactive discussions to make sure every child could connect with and understand the message. In many communities, menstruation is still wrapped in shame and silence. But in our sessions, young girls said they felt truly seen and heard—often for the first time. Many shared that this was the first time someone had explained the changes in their bodies in a way that felt safe, respectful, and empowering. And just as importantly, boys were part of these conversations too—learning how to support, empathize, and respect. The taboo was being broken—not just for girls, but for the entire community.

Our discussions around gender justice and societal discrimination also left a mark. Through relatable stories and real-life examples, students were encouraged to reflect on what fairness looks like in their homes, schools, and daily lives. We saw genuine surprise when children realized that their sisters were expected to do chores simply because they were girls—something many had never questioned before. These moments helped spark new ways of thinking and imagining a more equal world. Talking about good touch and bad touch; a delicate but crucial topic—was done with care, empathy, and warmth. For many children, this was the first time they were told they had the right to feel safe in their own bodies. They learned how to recognize unsafe situations and, most importantly, who to turn to—teachers, parents, or helplines—if something didn't feel right. This conversation gave many the courage to break the silence around abuse.

We also introduced students to their basic rights—not through heavy explanations, but through stories, role-play, and open dialogue. The right to education, safety, self-expression, protection from child labor and violence became real, relatable, and empowering. These weren't just legal terms—they became truths that every child could hold close. Teachers began noticing changes soon after. Students were more engaged in class, more confident, and more willing to speak up. They began challenging discriminatory words or actions and building small support systems among themselves. In some schools, girls who had always stayed quiet started raising their hands. Boys began asking how they could help make things more equal. A shift had begun—subtle, but powerful.

Our goal is simple, we just to build confidence, awareness, and critical thinking in children so they can grow up not just as informed individuals, but as compassionate citizens. These sensitization sessions have planted seeds that we believe will keep growing—in dinner table conversations, in classroom friendships, and in the choices these children make as they step into the world.

STRENGTHENING OUR NETWORKS WITH STAKEHOLDERS AND SUPPORTERS



Change is never the work of one voice alone. It echoes louder and travels farther when many voices come together especially those rooted in the everyday struggles and hopes of ordinary people. This year, our commitment to gender justice and community empowerment was deeply strengthened by the meaningful relationships we built with various stakeholders such as government, non-government, individuals, in the districts of Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, where our programs are being implemented.

Local NGOs are often the first to respond to the real needs of communities. They work with compassion, grounded in cultural understanding and long-standing trust built through years of presence on the ground. We understood that to bring lasting, meaningful change especially for women and children living on the margins we needed to stand alongside these organizations. So, we focused on building real partnerships and relationships based on mutual respect, shared learning, and common purpose. Throughout the year, we actively took part in and co-organized joint planning meetings, exposure visits, community events, campaigns, and district-level review forums with fellow NGOs. These collaborations were not just about avoiding duplication of efforts – they helped create synergy and a sense of shared ownership over our interventions. Our partners supported us in identifying active Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs), mobilizing communities for awareness sessions, and expanding our reach in legal aid, livelihood promotion, and public health programs.

In Rajasthan, we closely worked with women-led grassroots groups already engaged in the fight against gender-based violence. Their experience helped us strengthen our case referral systems, introduce trauma-informed care, and create safer spaces for survivors to speak up and seek help. In Chhattisgarh, we partnered with youth-focused NGOs that played a vital role in mobilizing young people for sessions on gender equality, safe spaces, and community vigilance.

These partnerships also became powerful platforms for collective advocacy. With support from our partners, we organized district-level convergence meetings that brought together civil society organizations, legal service authorities, One Stop Centers, and police officials. NGOs were instrumental in bridging the gap between government stakeholders and women from the community, many of whom found the courage to share their stories, demand accountability, and claim their rights. Importantly, our networking wasn't just about program implementation. It was also about creating safe, energizing spaces for the frontline workers themselves. Women leaders from different NGOs came together to reflect, learn, and simply be there for one another. These moments became sources of healing, strength, and solidarity. It was common to see a community leader from one district cheering for a peer from another during a training, or generously sharing materials and experiences. These bonds reminded us that collaboration is far more powerful than competition.

We also made room for mutual learning. Several of our NGO partners took part in our state-level trainings and exposure visits to government offices. In return, we learned from their ground realities, strategies, and models of empowerment. This exchange of knowledge was natural – driven by trust and a shared vision.

Looking ahead, we see this NGO network as the backbone of our long-term mission. These partnerships are not just helpful, they are essential. As we continue working toward safer, more just communities for women and children, we remain committed to strengthening these bonds growing the circle of trust, inviting more voices to the table, and walking shoulder to shoulder with those who believe in the same dream.

Because real change; the kind that transforms lives and systems happens when we act together, stand together, and rise together.

FROM GRASSROOTS VOICES TO ADVANCING RIGHTS THROUGH ADVOCACY



We approached advocacy not as a top-down activity, but as a shared process led by the voices of women and communities we work with. Our goal was to ensure that the everyday issues faced in the remote corners of Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan were heard at district forums, state consultations, and policy tables. Through regular trainings and campaigns, we supported Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) to speak up with confidence. Many who once stayed silent are now sitting across from government officials, raising concerns on delayed police responses, gaps in the Domestic Violence Act, the need for stronger One Stop Centers, and more livelihood support for survivors.

Throughout the year, we engaged with key government departments – Women and Child Development, Legal Services Authorities, Health, Police, and Panchayati Raj Institutions – to improve coordination, speed up grievance redressal, and ensure more gender-sensitive responses. We also used our field research to strengthen advocacy. Data collected through community surveys, testimonies, and case documentation helped us highlight gaps and push for better services – including more shelter homes, regular medical exams in rural areas, and easier access to microfinance for women survivors. This evidence made our policy recommendations stronger and rooted in lived realities.

Our advocacy was amplified through state-level consultations on critical themes like CEDAW, women's security, the role of spirituality in women's development, and the **16** Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. These platforms helped us connect grassroots concerns with broader systemic issues and push for urgent, practical solutions. We also built strong alliances, working with lawyers, doctors, NGOs, spiritual leaders, and journalists. These coalitions gave us strength, shared knowledge, and greater impact. Together, we organized joint campaigns, petitions, and awareness drives to create public pressure and keep gender justice on the agenda. Importantly, we started engaging with faith leaders and local influencers to challenge harmful norms and encourage community-led change. Advocacy for us is not just about laws, it's also about shifting mindsets and building a culture where equality and dignity are shared values.

Our journey continues, led by women who once whispered their stories in silence, but now raise their voices to demand justice. Their courage gives us hope and direction, and we remain committed to making sure they are not only heard, but respected and responded to.



WOMEN SAMMELAN

An impactful Women's Sammelan was held in Bundi District, Rajasthan, with the theme "Make Women Leaders: Empower Them, Inspire Them, and Support Them." The event brought together over **250** women to engage in meaningful discussions on leadership, empowerment, and community support.

A standout moment was the creation of a powerful charter addressing key women's issues, passionately supported by a signature campaign led by the participants.



THE WAY FORWARD: 2024–25

As we conclude the impactful year **2023-24**, Shivi Development Society looks ahead with renewed commitment to deepening its efforts for inclusive and sustainable change. Our experiences and learnings this year have laid a strong foundation for the future.

In **2024-25**, we aim to scale up our efforts, reach more people, and deepen the impact of our work.

- 1.** We will continue to support women in becoming leaders within their families and communities. Through more trainings, exposure visits, and handholding support, we will help them take the lead with confidence.
- 2.** While we already include young boys and men in our conversations around equality and respect, we will now expand this work to more villages and colleges, creating safe spaces for open dialogue and awareness on women's rights and safety
- 3.** We will increase our sessions with children and teenagers in villages and schools so they grow up understanding their rights, their health, and the importance of treating everyone equally. We will hold fun, friendly sessions in schools and communities.
- 4.** Building on our existing efforts, we plan to expand livelihood activities like sanitary pad production, tailoring, and other income-generating skills, so more women can become financially independent and self-reliant.
- 5.** We will support more community members, especially women, to reclaim access to shared resources such as water, land, and common spaces; ensuring everyone benefits equally.
- 6.** We will continue to strengthen our network with civil society groups, local leaders, and government departments. Together, we can raise stronger voices and create lasting change.

With hope, energy, and the support of our communities, we are ready to step into another year of meaningful work.





Been with Shivi Development Society for a long time, but this year's focus on spirituality in women's empowerment really stood out. Attended their first consultation in Rajasthan such a fresh and meaningful perspective on inner strength, which many often misunderstand or miscommunicate. All the best, Shivi team.

Dr. Saroj Khan
Secretary, CFHRWS, Rajasthan

Every year, I get to be a resource person at state-level women's leadership trainings in Chhattisgarh. I've met many Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) there, and I was truly amazed. When Shivi says they empower women, they really mean it. These women speak with confidence, know their rights, and support each other. They even talk openly about issues like domestic violence and really understand what's going on. It's so inspiring to see such strength in communities that often face so many challenges. Keep going, Shivi.

Ms. Mamta Mishra
Senior Legal Consultant, CG, State Govt.



WHAT OUR WELL-WISHERS SAY



I proudly call myself one of Shivi's WHRDs not just in name, but in spirit. Shivi didn't just tell me about my rights, they walked with me as I claimed them. I still remember meeting them for the first time in 2016. With their constant support, I stood up for my right to my parents' property in 2021. Since then, I've been helping other women in Kondagaon, known lovingly as a 'Shivi Saheli.' Shivi has been like a true friend to us and now I try to be that friend for other women around me.

Ms. Vinita
WHRDs, Chhattisgarh

I had nothing but the will to work. Shivi didn't just listen, they helped me by giving an atta chakki machine, no loan, just pure support. That one act helped me stand on my feet. Today, I earn with dignity. I pray Shivi keeps growing and supporting many more women like me. They gave me more than a machine, they gave me belief in myself.

Kanya Bai
WHRDs, Rajasthan





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