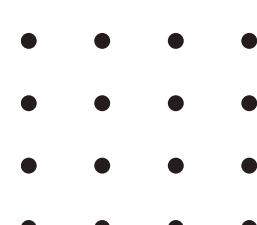




# ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

"I raise my voice—not so I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard."

– Malala Yousafzai



# **DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD**



I am pleased to present the Annual Report of Sakhya Women's Guidance Cell, for the year ending March 2024. There has been a change of leadership at Sakhya during this period. So this is the first time that I bring to you this annual report.

Sakhya has been addressing women's issues for the last 37 years!

Time and again, we realize that changing mindsets to bring about a gender-just society, is a continuous, ongoing, and tireless task. From the home to public forums, women face several challenges every day; violence is seen not only in homes and in familial situations but in public and corporate life too.

In the past three decades our work has centered primarily on strengthening the support systems for the survivors of violence in their communities, accessing legal aid, sensitising local self government representatives, legal and law enforcement professionals, to ensure that these women can get their rights in their marital homes.

Sakhya began its work in Mumbai and is currently also working in Thane and Palghar districts of Maharashtra.

The recently concluded year has seen a few new initiatives. These include; collaboration with the Vasai-Virar Municipal Corporation to start counseling centres at D M Petit Hospital, Par Naka, Vasai and Jivdani Devi Rugnalay, Chandansar, Virar. A counseling centre has also been opened at Zilla Parishad Palghar with their collaboration and a legal advisor appointed by Sakhya for this centre. These initiatives will certainly contribute in providing legal aid and support to victims of violence from these areas.

We strongly believe that women can experience a true sense of empowerment provided they are financially independent. Hence Sakhya has initiated a livelihood programme for the women in Saphale, Palghar. This programme provides resources and funds to women from tribal areas for various commercial activities which are a source of livelihood that they are engaged in.



We hope that this support motivates them to become successful entrepreneurs in the near future.

Organising skill development programmes for survivors of violence is another step in this direction. For this we are collaborating with organisations who have been successfully working in this field for a long time. Successful completion of the programme will mean better job opportunities and a salary in hand.

The Palghar district where we began working just a few years ago, has a sizable tribal population. Here the socio-economic conditions are harsh in comparison to the urban areas. Therefore the focus has been more on community development in addition to assistance provided to individual victims. In these tribal communities small and marginal farming is prevalent. Hence we have begun assisting them in increasing their agricultural yield. The challenge to this initiative is in the traditional practices of farming and limited water availability. They are also being encouraged to increase yield from the forest plots that they have acquired after a long struggle with the government.

Moving forward Sakhya wishes to focus on gender development in communities so that women can become more vocal, raise their issues in the gram sabha and also claim their share of funds and resources in the panchayat. The ultimate goal is for the entire village/community to look at issues through a gender lens.

The successes achieved thus far give us renewed strength to continue our journey for a more equal world. This would not have been achieved without the support of our Management, funders, volunteers and supporters. I wish to thank them all for their contribution and support. This report aims to provide insights into the significant moments we have experienced, as well as those that influence and enlighten our approach.

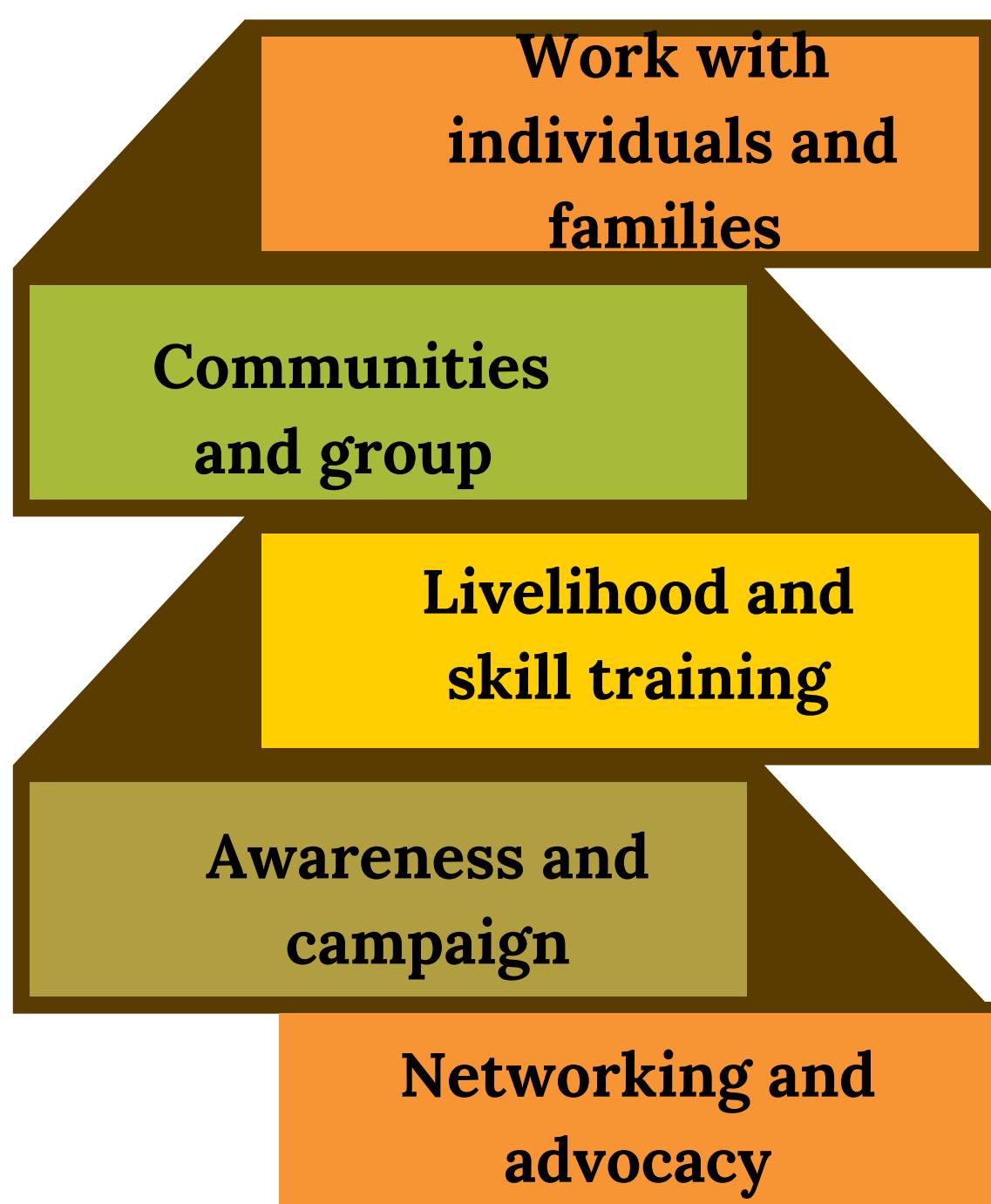
## **Highlights of the year**

- Shree Jeevdani Devi hospital, Vasai-Virar Municipal Co-operation, Chandansar-Virar.
- D M Petit Hospital, Parnaka Vasai
- Z P Palghar – counseling center with
  - ( legal advisor and counselor)
- CSR grant from **Slice** till September 2023 for **financial literacy** program
- CSR grant from **Fourth Signal** from November 2023 to March 2024 for livelihood program
- this year sakhya extended its community work to SAFALE region of palghar.
- **India Punjab National Bank** Officer Association has **awarded Director of Sakhya women& guidance cell**, which is part **Nirmala Institute** on the occasion of **International women's day celebration**



# **OUR INTERVENTION STRATEGIES**

Sakhya's intervention and services are based on the following five interconnected and interdependent strategies that aim to provide a comprehensive and holistic intervention model for gender-based violence.



Whether things are good or bad, we openly and honestly convey information to people, whenever a situation requires it.

## **CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS SDGs - SUSTAINABLE GOAL**



At Sakhya, the intervention strategies are based on the broader framework of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Our projects are designed to contribute towards achieving the SDGs, driving positive change and a sustainable growth for our organization.

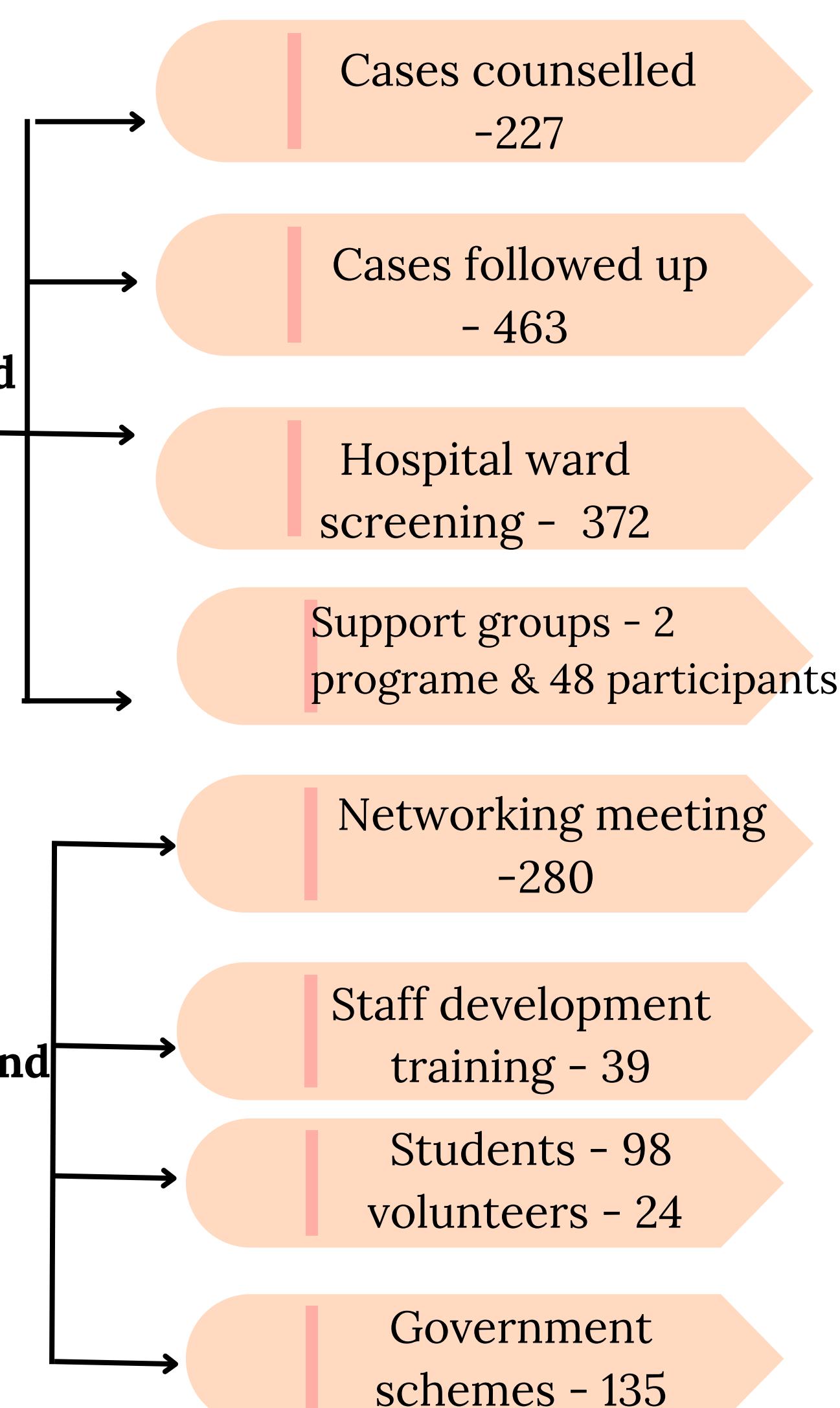
# **OUR IMPACT IN 2023- 24**

## **The Year at a Glance:**

The year 2023-24 was a remarkable period for Sakhya, marked by significant milestones and successes. We are thrilled to highlight our achievements and progress during this time.



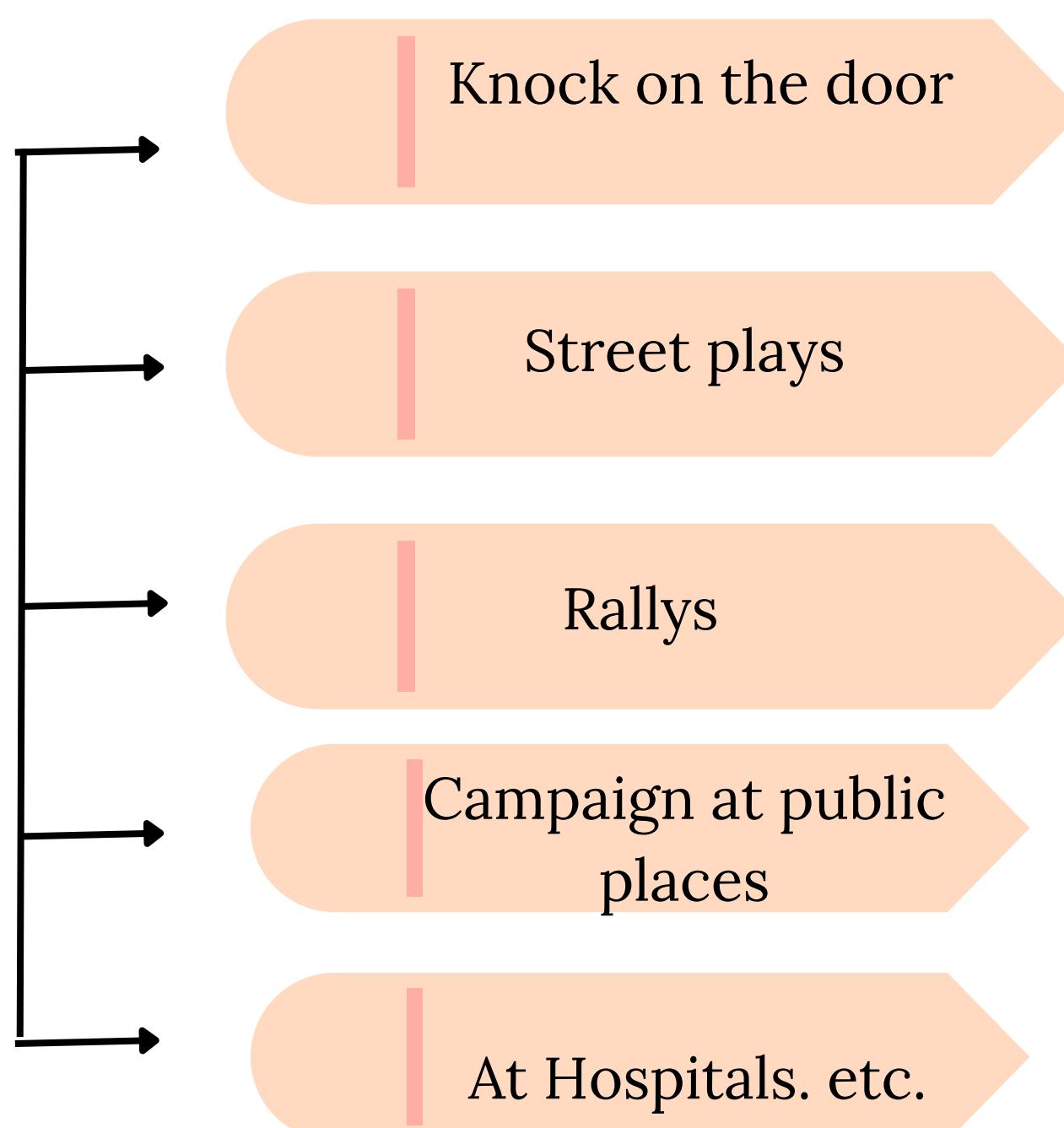
### **Individuals and families**



### **Networking and advocacy**

## Awareness campaign

27682



## Groups and communities

- Meetings and visits - 3649
- Community sessions - 2393
- sessions with kids - 1234
- Kitchen garden project - 46
- Para Legal Volunteer (PLV) training - 3 to 46
- Training sessions - 285
- College and school sessions - 2457
- Sessions with hospital staff - 671
- ICC meetings and cases - 315
- SHW workshop - 352
- police training - 998
- Other programs - 2006

- Skill training - 3 to 131
- Exposure visit - 5 to 102
- TOT - 137
- Women's Day celebration - 750
- Sport day celebration - 187
- Diwali celebration - 52
- Makarsankariti celeberation - 110
- Finance literacy workshop - 75
- Government officers training-63

# **OUTREACH AND OUTCOME**

## **WORK WITH INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES**

"Out of your vulnerabilities will come your strength." - Sigmund Freud

Type of cases counseled	
Domestic violence - DV	169
Intimate Partner violence	6
Sexual harassment	2
Threats by neighbour	2
Invalid marriage of daughter	8
Child custody issues	4
Divorce	5
Mental harassment	1
Family issues	28
Property matters	1
RCR (Restitution of Conjugal Rights)	1

Awareness campaigns on women's rights, Para legal training for volunteers which included nurses of Achole UPHC and Training of Trainers for community leaders had a positive impact and helped in addressing traditional biases regarding gender as well as participants becoming more aware of women's rights. This resulted in the formation of community support groups for victim's of violence. The IEC material like pamphlets distributed during the campaigns led to increase of self referrals or referrals of victims by acquaintances and relatives.

**Below are descriptions of some of the cases handled by SAKHYA, illustrating our active interventions and counseling efforts.**

### **CASE STUDY: 1**

Rani (Age 39) was married in 2005 and came to reside in Palghar, Maharashtra with her husband. She completed her BE.d after marriage and became a teacher. She has 2 children. In 2015 she got to know that her husband was having an affair. His affair led to a change in his attitude towards her and he began beating her, harassing her physically and mentally. He even threatened to kill her. He refused to pay for any household expenses claiming he had taken a loan. She finally lodged a complaint against him in the police station but his attitude remained the same. This case was referred to Sakhya by the protection officer in November 2023.

She and her husband were called for a joint meeting and counselling session. During the session both were counseled by the legal advisor and agreed to a 1 month trial period. Follow up was done during this period. The victim herself then informed the legal advisor that all was well and her marital relationship with her husband had improved. Being a teacher in a school, she put up a pamphlet of the organisation on the school notice board. This actually led to a parent of a school student approach Sakhya for assistance in January 2024.

### **CASE STUDY 2**

Riya (Age 36) was referred to Sakhya by an organization that is part of our network. Riya got married to a police officer in 2011 and has a 7-year-old son. Her mother-in-law would harass her and force her to do household work throughout the day. She had become weak and anemic since she did not eat well. Fortunately for her, her husband was transferred to Palghar and she began staying there with her husband and son. She even got her son enrolled in the local school. Things were looking brighter.

However, her husband suddenly decided to seek a transfer back to Mumbai where his parents resided. She refused to accompany him owing to his son's school and also the fear that the mother-in-law would harass her again. Her husband was upset by this decision. This was when she was given Sakhya's contact.

After meeting her and understanding her problem, the legal advisor asked her husband to come for a joint meeting. Both a letter and a phone call were made but he refused. He told his superiors that a false case had been registered against him and he would not attend the meeting. His Superior got in touch with the legal advisor, who then explained that the whole idea of the meeting was to hear both sides and try for an amicable settlement. After this, the husband agreed and turned up for the meeting. He agreed to let the son continue studying in the Palghar school and for his wife to stay with him. But he said he would stay with his parents and visit Palghar once a week. He also agreed to get his wife treated for Anemia. This case was registered in November 2023. After 4 months the husband got himself transferred to Palghar again and acknowledged that his mother's attitude was not right. Hence he had decided to be with his wife and son.

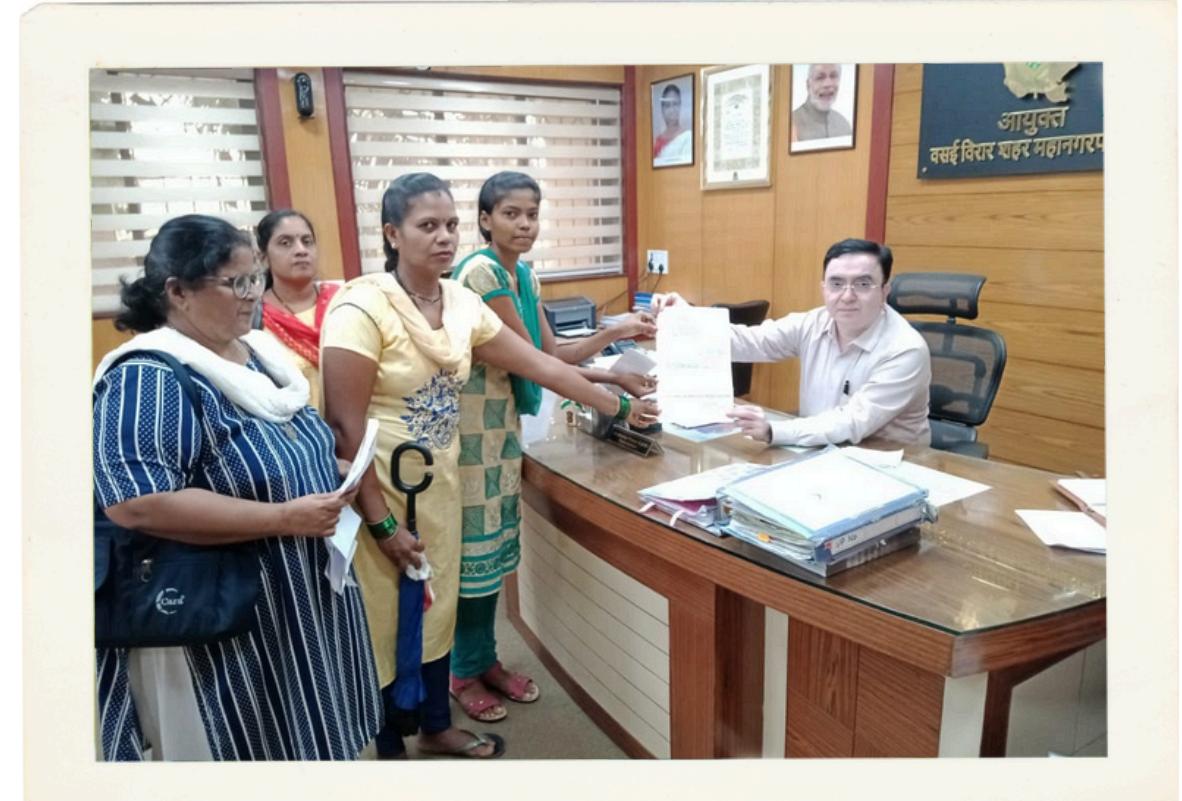
## **INTERVENTION WITH COMMUNITIES**

### **EMPOWERING TRIBAL WOMEN**

A toilet was provided by the government but it was in bad condition with brick walls not plastered, and wooden doors which eventually broke. Hence women were not using the toilet during that time

Savitri Santosh Vavre has been living in Bhadale Pada, Girij, for the past many years. The life of women residing in this tribal hamlet (pada) is difficult. For daily household chores like washing clothes, they have to walk half a kilometer to a nearby lake. But the most critical problem of all was the toilet.

Matters became worse when a labor colony came up opposite the toilet and women feared using the toilet with so many men around. They used wooden planks instead of the door and would always ask other women to accompany them. Sakhya is working in this hamlet. During one of the monthly meetings, they shared this problem with the Sakhya team. The Director and the Community Organiser met the Municipal Commissioner of Vasai-Virar Municipal Corporation, Mr. Anil Kumar Pawar who promised to assist. Within 2 days the toilet was repaired, the walls plastered and the doors replaced. A water tank was also provided and a proper drainage system was put in place. Thus Sakhya's intervention helped in solving a major problem faced by the women in this hamlet. Women are now able to use the toilet 24 hrs a day when they need to and thanked Sakhya for this initiative.



## **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: STRENGTHENING OUR CONNECTIONS**

"The progress of any society can be directly measured by the empowerment of its women." - Michelle Obama

### **COMMUNITY WORK DATA**

<b>Programme details</b>	<b>No of participants</b>
Community sessions- 122	2393
Community visits and meetings	3649
NO of Sessions with children-43	1234
Exposure visits-5	102
Training of trainers-1	137
Other skills training- 3	2006
celebration of Environment Day- 5	65

The work in communities is aimed at making the residents aware of the issue of violence against women, The laws meant to provide justice to these victims and the rights of women. In addition information regarding various government schemes is also provided so that individuals and families in need can seek assistance under these schemes.

The coverage includes around 16 communities which consist of tribal hamlets, urban slums and gram panchayats.

### **COMMUNITY MEETINGS AND SESSIONS**

In our community services and initiatives aimed at education, awareness, and empowerment, we have integrated various programs to address critical needs. Here's a glimpse of our efforts:

- **Financial Literacy:** workshops were conducted on financial literacy within the community, including sessions on budgeting, savings, and understanding financial schemes to empower women and families towards economic independence (based on 122 awareness sessions). **Financial Literacy Workshops:** Over the course of 75 workshops, we engaged participants in discussions on budgeting, savings, and understanding financial schemes. These sessions, provided women and families the knowledge needed for economic independence.
- **Domestic Violence and Legal Rights Sessions:** Through 177 sessions, we made women aware of

domestic violence laws and their legal rights, providing vital information for safeguards against abuse and injustice.

- **Women Empowerment via SHGs and Skill-building Workshops:** With 3 sessions focusing on Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and skill-building workshops such as Basic Beauty Parlour courses and housekeeping staff training, we created avenues for women to enhance their livelihood opportunities.
- **Family Life Education:** Across 165 awareness sessions, encompassing both children and adults, comprehensive education on family dynamics, reproductive health, and family planning, was provided which can contribute to informed decision-making within households.
- **Menstrual Hygiene and Health:** Through 4 specialized sessions, we addressed menstrual hygiene and its impact on women's health and promoted practices that contribute to their overall well-being.
- **Nutrition and Government Schemes:** During 5 community events, sessions were conducted on breastfeeding, nutrition, and government welfare schemes, for health and welfare of families.
- **Child Rights and Education:** Over 43 sessions with children we raised awareness about child rights, facilitated discussions on good touch/bad touch, and emphasized the importance of education as the foundation for a brighter future.

These initiatives have been supported by a range of activities, including 3649 meetings, visits, and various celebrations. along with 2393 community sessions. Additionally, we engaged with schools, hospitals, and law enforcement agencies, conducting specialized training sessions tailored to their needs, fostering a holistic approach to community development.

## **PROUD MOMENT - FELICITATION & AWARD TO DIRECTOR OF SAKHYA**

The Director of Sakhya Women's Guidance Cell, a part of Nirmala Institute, was honored by the All India Punjab National Bank Officers' Association during a national-level celebration of International Women's Day at The Fine Arts Society in Chembur, Mumbai.





## **PROGRAM WITH CHILDREN**

In our engagement with children we have worked with more than 1200 children belonging to slums as well as tribal hamlets. These children were from 2 slums in Thane, 7 tribal hamlets and 1 slum of Nalasopara.

We conducted sessions covering important topics such as understanding good touch and bad touch, developing good habits, celebrating Children's Day and Adivasi Day, participating in summer camp activities, learning about child rights, discussing social media impacts, and sharing safety rules.

These sessions aimed to provide children with essential knowledge for their well-being and growth.

The variety of topics included: teaching personal boundaries, promoting healthy habits, honoring cultural celebrations, fostering creativity through summer camp activities, raising awareness about child rights, discussing responsible social media use, and emphasizing safety guidelines.

Our goal is to equip these children with the tools and awareness they need to navigate life confidently and safely, contributing to their overall development and resilience within their communities.



## **EDUCATIONAL EXPOSURE VISIT**



5 educational exposure visits were conducted for women in the community and for staff and students placed in Sakhya to seek information on various themes related to Sakhya's work.

On one such visit we took 30 adivasi women from Thakurpada, Manpada-Kapse, and Naroda in Saphale to an NGO runed by vivek pandit. In Bhalivali. This visit showcased successful alternative income generation and agricultural practices, boosting their confidence and sparking innovative ideas suitable to their own contexts. It also facilitated networking among peers and potential partners, enhancing community support.

9 Sakhya Women's Guidance Cell staff including 2 community animators, explored livelihood programs at Yusuf Meharali Centre in Tara Village, Panvel, and learned community engagement strategies at Jeevandhara Social Service Centre in Kolad, Raigad.

## **Nurturing Our Environment**

The Gasdongari and Bandarpada communities in Nallasopara, as well as Thane, came together to celebrate Environment Day with a special initiative focused on distributing plants and promoting environmental awareness.

During the event, plants were distributed, emphasizing the importance of greenery and sustainability. Various institutions were invited to share insights on cleanliness, waste management, and related topics, enriching the community's understanding of environmental stewardship.

This collaborative effort among the communities of Gassdongari, Bandarpada, and Thane underscores the collective commitment to taking small but significant steps toward a greener future. It serves as a reminder that every action counts in preserving and protecting our environment.



## **WORK WITH GROUPS**

These initiatives involved comprehensive sessions covering safety rules, menstrual hygiene, child sexual abuse, understanding good and bad touch, and the impact of social media. A total of 30 sessions were conducted across schools and colleges, reaching 2457 participants.

A significant few sessions included, a compelling play on the POCSO Act by Abhaya, viewed by 140 students of Aachole Zilla Parishad school. Another session was conducted for 150 students of std 11 and 12 of Notal Vidyalaya, Nalasopara East on Self- Defense.

As part of ongoing collaboration with the Zilla Parishad Palghar and ICDS, programmes were conducted covering 1000 participants, from Palghar and Vasai areas. This also included local self government representatives like members of panchayat samitis, gram panchayats and zilla parishad.

A range of topics such as adolescent girls' issues, women's rights, relevant laws, menstrual hygiene, domestic violence awareness, the importance of breastfeeding, leadership development, and the use of social media for advocacy and outreach were discussed. This initiative aims to promote awareness of critical issues affecting Women's well-being and rights within communities. Through this joint effort, we seek to educate and inspire positive change for women's health, safety and effective engagement through social media platforms.

### **'Suchita's Journey'**

Suchita is a member of one of the Self Help Groups in Wagholi. She is a survivor of Domestic Violence and lost her husband at a young age. She worked at odd jobs including domestic work and as a shop assistant.

After becoming a member of the Self Help Group she decided to choose a different path and sought loan from the group and a bank to buy an autorickshaw. As an autorickshaw driver, she found independence and respect, becoming a role model for others in her community. Suchita's story exemplifies courage and the transformative power of support and determination. It is also an example of how women can defy traditional gender roles.



## **TRAINING SESSION WITH HOSPITAL PERSONNEL**



The Vasai-Virar Municipal Corporation has permitted Sakhya to collaborate with Tulinj Hospital located on the outskirts, DM Petit Hospital, Parnaka, and partner with Jivdani Devi Hospital in Chandansar. At Tulinj Hospital, we operate a counseling center alongside Jivdani Devi Hospital in Chandansar and other Urban Primary Health Centers (UPHC).

Over 600 hospital personnel including nurses, ayahs and ward boys were sensitised on women's issues with special reference to Domestic Violence Act and Sexual Harassment At Work Place Act. This is critical since they come across many cases of violence and abuse during their work in the hospitals.

## **TRAINING SESSIONS WITH POLICE OFFICERS**

3 police training programs were conducted for 998 personnel including new recruits at Balasaheb Thakre ground, Bhayandar (E), and Police constables and Inspectors of Thane Shree Nagar police department.

The first program focused on gender sensitization, gender-based violence, and related laws, aiming to create an empowered police force capable of performing duties effectively without prejudice.



The key message emphasized the harmful effects of patriarchy on both men and women in society, underscoring the importance of working together for equality.

**Sakhya serves on the Internal Committee tasked with addressing workplace sexual harassment of women:**

According to the Act on sexual harassment of women in the workplace, passed in 2013, organizations with more than 10 employees are required to establish a complaints committee. The law stipulates that instances of harassment, including sexual harassment, gender issues, and gender discrimination, should be addressed either by NGOs or by the internal complaints committee. Sakhya serves as an internal member on 17 such committees.

**RBI: Fort, Nariman  
bhavan and World  
Trade center**



**Indian leather  
company**



**Kunal  
kitchenware**



**Nexon omniverse  
limited**



**Q&Q Research  
Insights**

**Cardinal Gracia's  
hospital**

we have collaborated with these institutions where we conducted 7 workshops (SHWs), IC meetings, and 50 case consultations, reaching out to 667 people.



## Capacity building of Government officers



### **Training of Government personal on Team Work and Group Bonding**

A training on group bonding and team work for 75 government officers was organised by Zilla Parishad, Palghar and held at their office hall. The CEO of the Zilla Parishad delivered the address, and Mr. Bhavsar, the Officer for WCD, Zilla Parishad, introduced Nirmala Niketan and Sakhya Women's Guidance Cell. Rushila Rebello a trained social worker was the resource person. She conducted the session through various games and exercises emphasising the need to improve workplace dynamics.

### **DIWALI CELEBRATION AND SUPPORT GROUP PROGRAM**



Sakhya Women's Guidance Cell hosted a festive Diwali celebration and Support Group Program at Samaj Seva Mandal Hall in Nirmal.

The Diwali festivities began with a prayer. The event commenced with a welcoming speech from the Director of Sakhya Women's Guidance Cell. Professor Mr. Ramesh Crasto delivered an insightful message on the "Importance of Light in Our Life" and emphasized education as crucial for development and satisfaction, essential for our happiness.



## FINANCIAL LITERACY

Attaining financial independence can significantly enhance women's decision-making power and confidence, contributing to Sustainable Development Goal 8 (Decent Work and Economic Development). Financial literacy underscores the importance of equipping oneself with the skills to make informed financial decisions, enabling pursuit of personal and professional aspirations and providing a safety net during unexpected challenges.

- **4 SHG groups**
- **Atal Pension scheme**
- **Schemes – RD, PPF, Sukanya Samruddhi**
- **Health insurance**

On September 8th, 2023, Slice, QFPL collaborated with Sakhya Women's Guidance Cell to organize a workshop on financial literacy at Samajseva Mandal, Nirmal. The workshop aimed to raise awareness among women about the importance of savings and make informed financial decisions. Rachana Rande, a CA and well known resource person, provided valuable insights on various financial products and schemes offered by banks and government institutions to around 50 participants. This practical knowledge will help them to manage their finances effectively.

As part of this initiative we formed 4 Self Help Groups in Nirmal, Wagholi which includes 86 members. These women have opted for Atal Pension Scheme, Recurring Deposit (RD) , Public Provident Fund (PPF), Sukanya Samruddhi Yojana and Health insurance based on the inputs provided to them which will help secure their own future and that of their children.



In keeping with the same theme, Mrs. Priti Telang conducted online sessions for 44 women of Thane and Nallasopara. Mrs. Telang's sessions focused on enhancing participants' understanding of banking systems and digital financial tools, which will help women to navigate banking services confidently. These initiatives highlight a concerted effort to advance gender equality, economic development, and financial inclusion. By equipping women with the knowledge and tools necessary for financial independence, the program aims to support women fulfill their aspirations and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

## **Supporting Families Affected by Heavy Rainfall**

Sakhyा Women's Guidance Cell extended support to 25 families affected by heavy rainfall in Khadipada Arnala on August 19, 2023, by distributing essential household materials. This initiative aimed to assist families impacted by adverse weather conditions, providing them with necessary resources during a challenging time.

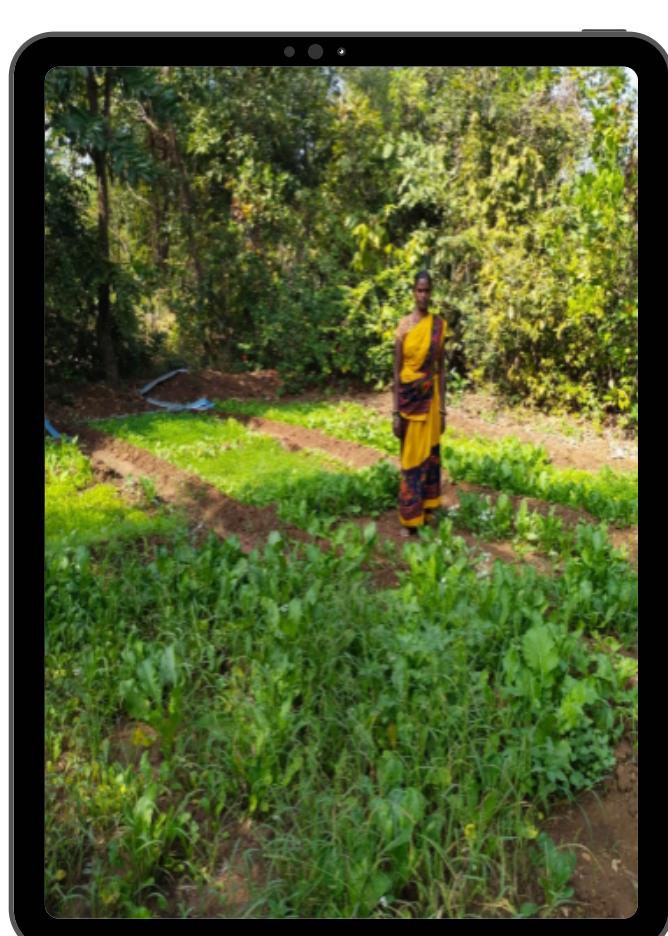


## **LIVELIHOOD PROGRAM**

### **Empowering Tribal women in Saphale through our Livelihood Project at Sakhya!**

We are dedicated to nurturing entrepreneurship and sustainable livelihood programs among Tribal women. Through our initiative, we foster economic independence by providing support for various ventures, including fish selling, idol and artefact colouring, tailoring, agriculture , grocery selling, food stalls, and the provision of motor pumps.

By offering funding and resources for these diverse activities, we are sowing seeds of change and enabling these women to cultivate their dreams. This initiative not only supports their businesses but also promotes financial stability, improved nutrition, and community resilience. Each enterprise represents a step towards a brighter future for these women and their families.





## SKILL DEVELOPMENT

### **Rehabilitating survivors of violence through training on Housekeeping & caregiving**

We are thrilled to share the impact of our recent initiatives aimed at empowering individuals and communities through skill training and educational programs. In collaboration with Tech Mahindra, we completed a healthcare professionals' skill training program designed to empower survivors of domestic violence.



Sixteen enthusiastic women participated in this program, and we congratulate the seven participants who have received their certificates, marking a significant milestone in their journey toward professional development. Notably, six of our graduates have already secured employment, demonstrating how education and empowerment can lead to meaningful job opportunities.

These success stories underscore the transformative impact of skill training in empowering individuals to rebuild their lives and pursue fulfilling careers.

Furthermore, we are pleased to share that two additional survivors of violence recently joined our 3-month healthcare personnel training program and successfully secured employment upon completion..



Their achievements exemplify the resilience and determination of survivors to overcome challenges and thrive in the workforce. In addition to our healthcare training initiatives, we are also making strides in education and technology accessibility. LED TVs have been installed at Kapase and Thakurpada Z.P. School in Safale, Palghar, enhancing interactive learning experiences for students and expanding access to quality education in rural areas. Moreover, we have launched computer skill training classes for children in surrounding Padas, focusing on computer literacy and essential skills to equip young learners with the knowledge and confidence needed to thrive in the digital age.

Through the skill training programs for survivors of domestic violence, educational enhancements in rural schools, and computer skill training for children—we are committed to empowering individuals and communities by providing essential skills, opportunities, and resources for sustainable employment and personal growth.

## **Breaking Boundaries**

Sakhy works in a slum in Thane which has residents primarily of the Valmiki community. They are mostly involved in cleaning and collecting garbage in Housing Societies. 2 women from this community however decided that they wanted to give up this traditional work and acquire skills that would provide upward mobility and a decent profession.

They therefore enrolled in the Beauty Parlour Course offered as part of the skill training programme by Sakhy. One of them quit her job and attended the course. The other continued to work which meant that she had to leave home early, finish her work and attend the course. She often had to skip meals to make it in time for the class. But she completed the course with all determination.

## **AWARENESS CAMPAIGN**

"With awareness comes the opportunity for change." - Tara Brach

The outpatient (OPD)/casualty/emergency department serves as the initial point of contact for women and girls who have experienced assault, violence, or abuse. Our institution actively participated in the international campaign against violence towards women (VAW), raising awareness through methods such as rallies, distributing flyers, conducting street plays, and organizing door-to-door campaigns. These efforts were aimed at spreading awareness and offering support to those affected by such acts of violence. We have reached around 27682 people through these campaigns.



## **Publication**

The calendar aims to raise awareness about government schemes for various groups, including children, adolescents, women, and seniors.

The quarterly magazine, Hunkar, focuses on financial literacy, which is vital for empowerment. It aligns with the international Women's Day theme, "Count her in," promoting inclusion and recognition of women's contributions.



## **STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

Staff development and capacity building are essential for organizations like Sakhya Women's Guidance Cell, dedicated to community service and empowerment. Investing in staff training serves critical purposes.

Firstly, it enhances the competence of team members. Targeted sessions, like those on the 'Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013' conducted by Adv. Rushila Rebello equips employees with essential knowledge and skills to address critical issues professionally.

Secondly, capacity building fosters continuous learning and improvement. Workshops on community mobilization and rapport building provide new perspectives and approaches, leading to improved services for communities.

Moreover, investing in staff development demonstrates a commitment to employee well-being and career growth, enhancing job satisfaction and retention.

In addition to core training, topics like CSR support, effective social media use, stress management, and report writing further enhance team capabilities, supporting the organization's mission and sustainable community empowerment.





## **NETWORKING AND ADVOCACY**

Advocacy and networking are a basis to our approach and integral to all our initiatives. Effective networking allows us to establish and sustain partnerships, influencing policies that impact our community.

Currently, SAKHYA collaborates with We Action, CHARI, Tech Mahindra, and other professional contacts to extend our reach and impact. Our network extends across district, state, and national levels, engaging partners such as Networks, Feminist Group Networks, and NGO Networks including Oasis India.



We participated in a state-level meeting, engaging with Zilla Parishad Palghar, for highlighting women's issues on various fora. We also conducted a training session for their officers which included 110 participants who were from various districts of Maharashtra.

This collaborative effort strengthened our partnership and knowledge exchange, enhancing our collective ability to address critical women's issues in Maharashtra. Working closely with VVMC (Vasai Virar Municipal Corporation) at DM Petit Hospital in Par Naka, Vasai and Jevdani Dev Rughnalya Chandansar, Virar SAKHYA has launched a counseling center to meet pressing community needs. In addition, we provide counseling services once a week to the Bharosa Cell, further supporting women in need within our community.

Furthermore, Sakhya engages in regional consultations for CBOs at the national level, addressing issues of preference for sons. Through amplified voices and fostering collaboration, Sakhya and its partners strive to create lasting impact and positive change for women in Maharashtra.



## **EVENTS AND CELEBRATION**

### **WOMENS DAY**

International Women's Day is celebrated each year on March 8th to honor women's achievements globally and promote gender equality. The day is marked with various events like, discussions, and speeches focusing on issues like equal rights, education, healthcare, and ending violence against women.

It is a reminder of progress made toward gender equality and the work still needed. In 2024, special celebrations were held in the Maanpada & Takurpada communities of Kapase Village, Safale, and at St. Teresa Church in Virar. These gatherings brought women together to celebrate, honor achievements, advocate for rights, and work towards a more just and inclusive world for all genders.



### **SPORTS DAY**

A Sports Day was held to celebrate Makarsankrati for the women's groups. The event was held on January 23, 2024, at Manpada-Thakurpada, Kapase Village Safale.

Additionally, we also commemorated Ganesh Chaturthi by hosting a Sports Day at the Ganesh Mandal in Nehru Nagar & Walmiki Pada, Thane, alongside community women on September 27, 2023. These events brought together community members in joyful and active celebrations.



## **ANNUAL DAY**

The 37th Annual Day Celebration of Sakhya Women's Guidance Cell, on the theme 'Count Her In', took place on February 24, 2024, at Jeevan Vikas Patpedhi Hall in Nirmal. The esteemed guests included Dr. Prabha Tirmare, retired Professor, Nirmala Niketan College of Social Work; Ms. Aplonia Rebello, Counselor from Pragati Vidyalay Dadar; Mr. George Dabre, Director of Bassien Catholic Bank, Girij; Ms. Regina Almeida; Ms. Linda Crasto, along with women members from Jeevan Vikas Patpedhi.

Dr. Prabha Tirmare emphasized the significance of gender equality in cultural and social settings like Vasai, praising Sakhya's work in Thane and Palghar districts and encouraging greater male involvement in their initiatives. Ms. Aplonia Rebello stressed the importance of starting inclusion from within families, advocating for women's participation in household decisions and financial planning.

The chief guest, Mr. George Dabre, Director of Bassien Catholic Bank Girij, commended Sakhya's extensive efforts in women's financial empowerment through training initiatives. He highlighted the need for women to recognize their strengths and become financially independent, pledging support from his bank toward this cause.

The program concluded with a Vote of Thanks, marking its success thanks to the wonderful audience, guests, volunteers, and dedicated staff.





## Student's placements And Volunteers

Every year, students from various colleges engage in fieldwork to gain practical training in the development sector. This hands-on experience equips them with social work skills, knowledge, and valuable information. Simultaneously, the organization benefits from their contribution, utilizing their manpower and resources to expand its outreach and undertake additional tasks, thereby serving a larger population. This mutually beneficial collaboration enhances learning opportunities and strengthens community impact.

NAME OF COLLEGES	NO. OF STUDENTS
Nirmala Niketan College of social work	06
Nirmala Niketan college of Home science	12
SNDT social work	2
St. Teresa D'Ed College, Santacruz	62
St. Xavier's college	11
Sophia college	1
Don Bosco College, Vidyavihar	4
Volunteers	24



## **Our dear Funders !...We appreciate your partnership & Support**

- Manos Unidas
- Fourth Signal
- Slice
- partners from Germany
- Local donors and Well Wishers

### **Student Insights**

Working with Sakhya, an organization focused on educating underprivileged children and promoting gender equality, was a rewarding experience. Guided by Sr. Natty, I led three STEM education sessions in Nirmal, Wagholi, and Gass Dongri, using models to explain science and technology concepts.

I also discussed gender equality in the workforce. At first, the children were skeptical, but sharing stories of women breaking gender norms changed their views. I encouraged them to share their dreams and addressed their doubts about gender barriers, emphasizing that skills and passion matter more than gender. We explored the benefits of workforce diversity, and I witnessed their confidence grow as they realized their potential.

**~SATISHA**

**ST. XAVIER'S COLLEGE, MUMBAI**

Volunteering at Sakhya Women Guiding Cell was an eye-opening experience. This organization helps women and children in need, showing how learning can be fun even in tough times. I admired the hard work of the staff and volunteers, who provide educational opportunities, healthcare, and advocate for women's rights.

My time there deepened my understanding of social issues and inspired me to contribute positively. I'm grateful for the opportunity to be part of such meaningful work and encourage anyone looking to make a difference to get involved with Sakhya.

**~IRIS DABRE**

**SOPHIA COLLEGE, MUMBAI**

During my internship at shakya, I conducted English-speaking and computer-learning sessions for young adolescents from tribal hamlets. This was a truly perspective-expanding experience.

The children, although poorly acquainted with the language and not completely comfortable with operating the laptop, showed a very strong and quick grasp as well as curiosity. I realised that both genders show an equal extent of openness to learning and curiosity.

Continuing these initiatives will provide for an equal playing ground of opportunities shortly and result in the long-due homeostasis in gender status and gender role.

**SUJAL DABRE, ST. XAVIER'S STUDENT**







## **Board of Trustee**

NAME	Board Position
(Ms.) Philomena Sequeira	President
Ms. Cherril machado	Secretary / Treasurer
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Ms. Greta Lopes	Committee Member
Ms. Evelyn Menezes	Committee Member
Ms. Shaila Crasto	Committee Member
Ms. Noella Dias	Committee Member
Ms. Nancy Rodrigs	Committee Member
Ms. Clera Gonsalves	Committee Member

### **Farewell**



We thank our former Director Ms. Shaila Crasto We wish her all the best for her future mission.



We thank Ms. Mary Vanmali We wish her all the best for her future endeavors



## **Network with NGO's from Palghar health issues**



## **meeting with women at suleshwarpada**



## **Training for widows of talasari region**



## **working with kapase school at saphale**



## **Training for nursing students and staff**



## **Networking with the youths of vasai diocease**



## **Livelihood Projects**



## **Our team**

