

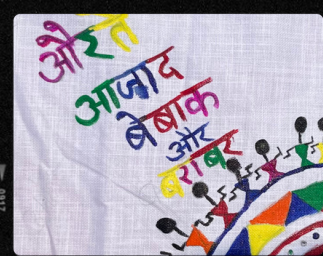


ASSOCIATION FOR ADVOCACY AND LEGAL INITIATIVES TRUST (AALI)

# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2023-24

### WOMEN LEADERSHIP AT THE GRASSROOTS



CANVA STORIES

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*The drawings on the cover page are handmade by our survivors and community women. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to them for their beautiful and inspiring contributions.*

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# From the Desk of the Executive Director

On the 10th of November, 2023, we marked a significant milestone in the journey of the Association for Advocacy and Legal Initiatives Trust (AALI) – our 25th anniversary. As I reflect on this journey, I'm reminded of the remarkable evolution and impact we've had. On this day, we marked a milestone, not just in time, but in the hearts and lives we've touched.

Reflecting on our journey over the past quarter-century, I am struck by how far we have come and the remarkable evolution of our organization. From our humble beginnings as a resource center and think tank in Lucknow, we have grown into a dynamic force for change, expanding our reach and scope of work to address the evolving needs of the communities we serve.

One of the most valuable lessons we have learned is the importance of responsiveness to the needs of our communities. As we witnessed the growing demand for socio-legal advice and support, particularly among women facing VAWG and being financially dependent on their partners or families, we recognized the urgent need for pro-bono socio-legal support.

This realization prompted us to expand our programs and embrace casework, ensuring that those in need could receive support regardless of their financial circumstances.

Furthermore, we recognized the critical importance of socio-legal awareness and empowerment, especially among marginalized communities in rural areas and small cities. Many women were unaware of laws meant for their own protection. In response, we expanded our presence to 72 districts across Uttar Pradesh and three additional states – Bihar, Jharkhand, and Uttarakhand – conducting thorough needs assessments to identify areas where our support was most needed.

Our journey has been guided by a commitment to grassroots engagement and empowerment. We believe that true transformation begins at the local level, and our efforts are dedicated to nurturing women leaders who are equipped with the knowledge and skills to stand for themselves and those of their communities. These women are the heartbeat of our organization, and their voices inspire us to strive for greater impact every day.

As we celebrate this milestone year, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated staff, volunteers, partners, and supporters who have been instrumental in our success. Together, we have achieved remarkable progress, but our work is far from over. As we look to the future, let us reaffirm our commitment to equality, and empowerment for all.

Thank you for your unwavering support and partnership as we continue our journey towards a more just and equitable society.

“Grassroots leaders rise,  
Young girls' voices pierce the sky;  
Justice blooms anew.”



–Renu Mishra

# The journey so far...

In the milestone year of AALI's 25th anniversary, our focus remained steadfast on empowering women leaders at the grassroots level. Throughout the year 2023-24, AALI spearheaded transformative programs aimed at advancing women's empowerment, combating violence against women and girls (addressed as VAWG henceforth). Our initiatives were designed not only to end violence but also to empower grassroots women as leaders and adapt strategies for progress.

From the outset, our efforts were guided by a commitment to creating a more just and equitable society. Major events such as the Capacity Building of Grassroots Leaders and the State Colloquium on 'Right to Mobility' provided platforms to tackle identity-based violence and sexual harassment of women in the workplace. Workshops and specialized training sessions were held for the case workers, young caseworkers, community leaders, and young community leaders, equipping them with the tools needed to bring meaningful change.

Engagement with the government stakeholders was a key aspect of our work. We expanded our reach by our engagement with 53,621 community women. We also supported in 2657 instances of VAWG. Currently, we are directly present in 94 districts of the four states.

Throughout the year, AALI's interventions and community support proved indispensable, underscored by the urgency reflected in the instances that reached us.

This year, our focus on grassroots leadership emerged as the central theme of our annual report. We witnessed firsthand how women at the grassroots level have embraced leadership roles, bearing the feminist flags as caseworkers, young caseworkers, community leaders, and young community leaders. Their dedication and passion have been instrumental in driving positive change within their communities and beyond.

In addition to our ongoing initiatives, we embarked on new endeavors to further our impact. Notably, we initiated engagement with One Stop Center (OSC) staff in 75 districts of

Uttar Pradesh, aiming to build their capacities in supporting survivors of VAWG. Furthermore, our survivors' rehabilitation and reintegration program prioritized a holistic approach to empower survivors.

In a concerted effort to foster a culture of equality and inclusivity within our organization, we took decisive action to dismantle hierarchies. The merger of the post of junior program officer and program officer signifies our commitment to creating a more equitable environment, where all staff members are valued equally.

Notably, the year was marked by significant successes, including favorable judgments in instances of violence against women and the establishment of linkages to social security schemes for marginalized groups. This report provides a comprehensive overview of our activities, achievements, and the challenges we encountered, all of which underscore our unwavering commitment to advancing the entitlements of women and marginalized communities.



# Our Strategies and Programs

## Access to Justice

This aims at demonstrating a feminist model of pro-bono socio-legal support to survivors of VAWG, and identity-based violence through a survivor-centric perspective. For the same, AALI has also started a program to enhance capacities of lawyers and is working towards developing their capabilities, and increased sensitization, so that they may support in instances of VAWG with a feminist approach.

### Programs

- Socio-Legal Support Program
- Casework Strengthening Program

## Active Citizenship

Under this, AALI engages with women from marginalized communities to strengthen their knowledge about the various laws and entitlements, and developing women as leaders. We also work with women leaders at grassroots, youth, and educators so that they become agents of change for their communities.

### Programs

- Community Initiatives & Feminist Leadership Development Program
- Youth Engagement Program
- Rehabilitation & Reintegration Program

## Addressing Knowledge Gaps

AALI collaborates with government stakeholders like the Police officers, Protection Officers, Child Protection Officers, Medical Officers, JJ Board Members, Child Marriage Prohibition Officers, Public Prosecutors, Judicial Officers, CWC members, etc., for the enhancing legal literacy and raising sensitivity for women-centric laws and policies, and focuses on amplifying voices of women at the grassroots level. We also conduct research to shed light on issues faced by women.

### Programs

- Research & Evidence Collection Program
- Stakeholders Engagement Program
- Capacity Building Program for Change-makers

# Access to Justice

*“Tannu's (name changed) life took a dark turn when she was married off at 15. Her husband's alcoholism and her family's inability to provide the demanded dowry resulted in a cycle of abuse and domestic violence. Her parents' inability to provide a car and 50 thousand rupees as dowry resulted in regular violence after which she found herself regularly thrown out of her own home for several hours, after which her husband would bring her back. As the violence escalated, her first born, a girl became a victim, leading Tannu to make the decision of sending her child to live with her parents for safety. However the second child, who was a boy, was treated well by the in-laws.*

*In June 2017, the violence reached a horrifying peak when her husband attacked her with a knife. Despite severe injuries, Tannu had to seek medical attention on her own.*

*Seeking refuge at her parents' home, soon after which her in-laws kidnapped her daughter and coerced her into signing unknown documents. After multiple failed attempts to bring her daughter back, she called the child welfare committee, but they were also attacked when they went to rescue the child. Having lost her children and unsure of reclaiming them, she wanted to take legal action against her husband and in-laws but lacked the financial means to do so. Feeling defeated and lost, Tannu discovered AALI in 2018.*

*At AALI, she found a platform and a safe space to voice her pain and tell her entire story. She was also provided socio-legal counseling by AALI. Eventually in 2018, she filed a case of Domestic Violence and Maintenance against her in-laws and husband. Currently, the cases are still underway, and the trial under Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code (1860) has started. This is one of the numerous cases in which AALI has intervened; this year, we have intervened in 2,657 instances of violence against women and girls (VAWG).*

## Snapshot of Figures

**2657 instances of VAWG**

**39 participants from One Stop Centers of 18 districts trained under Casework Centre Strengthening Program**

# Highlights of Achievements in Support Extended

**256** number of cases were taken up in the court by the empanelled lawyers.

**46** number of cases were disposed off.

**10** final orders were obtained

**25** interim orders were obtained

*In various legal proceedings, final judgments included sentences of imprisonment ranging from 5 to 20 years, along with fines ranging from ₹10,000 to ₹1.5 crores.*



## SOCIO- LEGAL SUPPORT PROGRAM

### **Socio-legal Support**

Under this AALI provides pro bono socio-legal support. This includes working with the justice delivery system to facilitate women\*'s access through a multi-stakeholder coordinated response.

Under this we have also established 56 casework centers with trained paralegals in 56 districts. Through this program, AALI intervened in 2657 instances of VAWG between April 2023-March 2024.

Notably, a significant proportion of instances originated from phone calls and emails received from other cities and states across India seeking socio-legal advice.

This underscores the extensive reach of AALI in providing socio-legal support nationwide.

### **What did we learn?**

Notably, the majority of these instances revolved around domestic violence and sexual assault, collectively constituting 75% of the total intake, indicating the pressing need for continued intervention and support in these areas. The intake of instances of domestic violence has increased from the previous year from 51% to 68.7% along with an increase in instances of identity-based violence.

### **Key Insights**

- 75% of cases involve domestic violence and sexual assault, highlighting the need for continued intervention and support.
- An increase in instances of identity-based violence has been noted.
- Most survivors are financially dependent: non-earners (68.3%) or students (13.12%).
- 82.5% of instances involve survivors from Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Castes.

# CASEWORK STRENGTHENING PROGRAM

## Enhancing Capacities of Caseworkers and Young Caseworkers

Throughout the year, we've focused on enhancing the capacities of our caseworkers and young caseworkers to effectively address instances of violence against women and children. This included capacity building sessions for 44 new caseworkers from 15 districts of Uttar Pradesh, and ongoing online support sessions tailored to their specific needs. Additionally, we conducted two four-day refresher training for 25 and 32 caseworkers, respectively, aimed at deepening their understanding of feminist leadership principles.

## Handholding visits

This program is aimed at assessing the functioning of casework centers and documenting the challenges faced by caseworkers during their field interventions.

## What did we learn?

During district visits, it was found that young caseworkers have significantly increased outreach, especially in tribal areas of Jharkhand, despite mobility challenges due to inadequate transport, with survivors from nearby communities seeking support and new requests for awareness programs.



**Challenge**  
Infrastructural deficiencies in Dumka, Garhwa, and Palamu, such as poor roads and lack of electricity, hinder the smooth functioning of casework centers.

## Enhancing Capacities of One Stop Centres

AAI, the legal mentor of One Stop Centres in all 75 districts of Uttar Pradesh, initiated its Enhancing Capacities of One Stop Centres program this year. In February 2024, AAI organized a four-day capacity-building program for 32 staff members from One Stop Centres across 18 districts of Uttar Pradesh which was supported by Harish and Bina Shah Foundation (HBSF)

Structured into three phases, the program aimed to clarify the objectives of One Stop Centres and the roles of Centre Managers, Counsellors, and Caseworkers. It focused on enhancing the effectiveness of One Stop Centres in addressing VAWG by improving survivor-centric support services such as counselling, legal aid, medical assistance, and rehabilitation. Additionally, the training deepened participants' understanding of women's issues, covering gender dynamics, socialization processes, patriarchal structures, constitutional principles, constitutional rights and duties, and the nuances of domestic violence, along with the responsibilities of One Stop Centre staff.



Role play activity

### What Next?

We plan to develop a cadre of lawyers from 15 districts of Uttar Pradesh who will strive for social change by using law as a tool while working with a feminist approach, thereby enabling survivors to access justice delivery mechanisms. They will be young lawyers' belonging from marginalised communities and we aim to building their capacities in the issues related to VAWG. We aim to sensitise them on gender and patriarchy. Through this, we will achieve our outcome of creating a group of empaneled lawyers who can support our caseworkers in various districts regarding legal proceedings.

- **In pre and post knowledge assessments, participants' correct responses increased from 54% to 72%.**
- **Participants developed a comprehensive understanding of women's entitlements, including legal frameworks and societal implications.**
- **21 participants pledged to improve their performance within the OSCs, focusing on creating a safe environment for survivors to discuss their concerns.**

18 वर्ष से पहले शादी करना एक अपराध है,  
पढ़ना, लिखना यह तो मेरा मौलिक अधिकार है।  
हर माता - पिता से यही है कहना, कम उम्र में शादी  
न करना।

जो बाल - विवाह करवाएगा,  
वो अपराधी कहलाएगा।  
उन बच्चियों से पूछो जिनकी शादी जल्दी हो जाती  
है, वो अपने अधिकारों से वंचित रह जाती हैं।  
बाल - विवाह अधिनियम के बारे में सबको  
बतलायेंगे,  
इसके द्वारा हम बाल - विवाह रुकवाएंगे।

Song written by Young Caseworkers during a  
refresher meeting

# Active Citizenship

*While her case was in progress, adjusting to life alone in Lucknow marked a new beginning for Tannu. She actively participated in AALI's survivor meetings, finding solace and strength in the sense of sisterhood and realized her own potential. In this supportive environment, she gained the confidence to start a life on her own. Her understanding deepened as she learned about various government schemes and entitlements, reflecting on the disappointment from 2014 when her husband forcefully took 35 thousand rupees from the first installment of the Indira Aawas scheme intended for housing.*

*A pivotal moment occurred in Tannu's life when a representative from Zila Udyog Kendra attended one of AALI's survivor meeting as a resource person. This meeting opened doors for Tannu and she realized for the first time that she could get her own auto rickshaw and drive it and make a living out of it.*

*Tannu, accompanied by an AALI team member, visited the Zila Udyog Kendra to discuss possibilities of loans and realizing that she was eligible for a 35% subsidy on the loan. Despite initial challenges with documentation that led to some initial inhibitions, Tannu did not give up. Eventually, after numerous visits to the banks and government departments, after a few months, documentation hurdles were resolved, and her loan application was accepted. Throughout this journey, AALI's unwavering support and guidance played a crucial role. Tannu navigated the complexities of government schemes with newfound knowledge and a determination to assert her entitlements. Tannu's ability to claim her entitlements and the support she got through the survivor meetings is a testament to the work that AALI is doing in transforming women into active citizens.*

## Snapshot of Figures

**4,619 meetings with 61,553  
community women and youth**

**Linked 1,248 community  
women to social security  
entitlements**

**143 meetings with 1374  
parents in the community**

# COMMUNITY INITIATIVES & FEMINIST LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

## Community Intervention

Community Initiatives and Feminist Leadership Development Program, wherein AALI's community leaders along with young community leaders engage with the women of marginalised communities in Azamgarh and Varanasi with various activities and dialogues aimed at fostering empowerment and positive social change within marginalized communities. Along with them, the caseworkers and young caseworkers follow a similar process in the marginalised communities in their districts.

In the past year, we conducted three refresher training sessions with 44 community leaders and 24 young community leaders from Azamgarh and Varanasi. The objectives of these sessions were to enhance knowledge and skills for effective community intervention, improve decision-making and community participation, and promote inclusive development.

The most significant impact that we have seen as a result of the Community Initiatives and Feminist Leadership Development Program is that the mobility of the leaders themselves has significantly increased and awareness of other women of their communities about their right to mobility has also increased. Especially among the young caseworkers and young community leaders, many of whom have fought in their homes to continue their education.



"तोड़-तोड़  
के बंधनों को  
देखो बहनें  
आती हैं।"

## What did we learn?

- Songs and role plays have a larger impact on understanding of the laws for the community women.
- The use of tools like the "Snake and Ladder" game proved particularly effective in developing understanding of issues like domestic violence during community meetings.
- Awareness on social security schemes is a tool that empowers the women of the community to live with newfound dignity in their families and within their communities as well, where they are no more mere spectators but also individual with knowledge that can contribute to the household.

# YOUTH ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

Our Youth Engagement Program, spearheaded by young caseworkers and young community leaders, operates within marginalized communities, raising awareness on critical issues such as The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, (POCSO), The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, and The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (PWDVA). We also extend similar interventions to educational institutions.

Our young caseworkers (YCW) and young community leaders (YCL) are actively involved in community outreach, promoting education and addressing social issues. Following community meetings, dialogues with families emphasize the importance of education, especially for girls. It also helps prevention of child marriages in the communities as they make the families and the girls themselves aware of the consequences of such marriages.

Our team has also conducted youth awareness programs on gender equality, discrimination, and women's entitlements at various educational institutions. These sessions cover issues from constitutional rights and duties to legislation such as The Protection for Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (PWDVA) and The Special Marriage Act, 1954.

Additionally, sessions aim to sensitize youth on laws like the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO) and women's helpline numbers like 1090.

## What did we learn?

- One key learning is the increasing demand for LGBTQIA+ sessions, indicating a growing interest in inclusive education.
- Consistency is important with youth to bring about change.



## What next?

After analyzing our learnings, we are introducing a new initiative. We have identified several educational institutions where we will establish regular engagement activities. Following the signing of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs), we will work to enhance the capacities of youth with a schedule of planned workshops regarding issues related to Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and relevant laws.



## REHABILITATION & REINTEGRATION PROGRAM

The real life experiences of various forms of mental, emotional and societal trauma that the women are subjected to, led AALI to realise the need to start not just a survivor group but also a survivor rehabilitation and reintegration program.

The Survivor Rehabilitation and Reintegration Program is committed to empowering survivors of gender-based violence through crisis counselling and interventions, facilitating their journey towards independence and self-sufficiency. Through regular profiling, survivors are linked to various support schemes, ensuring comprehensive care and support.

22 new survivors joined the group, making it a total of 158 members, fostering a sense of community and support among survivors. Sessions facilitated understanding of gender as a social construct, challenging prejudices and promoting inclusivity.

### What Next?

We aim, through our continuous interface meetings with the stakeholders, to provide some resources to ignite the means of livelihood at home for our survivors as most of them have certain obligations and responsibilities that hinders their mobility.

The tapestry on the right was made by the survivors for commemorating 25 years of AALI's work.





“नारी जाति के चलने को बतलाती हूँ मैं बात,  
बढ़ो मेरी बहनों खूब बढ़ो दिन रात।  
आली द्वारा ट्रेनिंग का ये नया सवेरा आया है,  
आदरणीय आली जन ने हमें ये समझाया है।  
यही हमारा ज्ञान है बहनों यही हमारी सौगात,  
बढ़ो मेरी बहनों खूब बढ़ो दिन रात..”

This song was written and composed during the capacity building workshop of the OSC staff. It was composed by Nishi who is the counselor at OSC Baghpat.

# Addressing Knowledge Gaps

*Tannu, refused to be defeated by the paperwork and hurdles that documentation can cause, engaged in interface meetings with various government and bank officers along with the support from AALI, and secured paperwork for her dream - owning an auto-rickshaw. In this journey Tannu received continued support from AALI and the representative from Zila Udyog Kendra also supported her well. Despite hurdles, Tannu persisted for almost a year, overcoming documentation related challenges and securing the necessary approvals for her auto-rickshaw. She went to all the banks and government departments, applied for a loan and filled out the forms on her own, reflecting the impact of AALI's continuous counselling and empowerment efforts. Today, she proudly owns her vehicle, as a resilient woman who despite all the adversity she was faced with, did not give up.*

## Snapshot of Figures

**28 external trainings with  
1653 participants**

**10 meetings with 641  
Government Stakeholders**

**Research study with 62  
lawyers from Uttar  
Pradesh, Jharkhand and  
Bihar**

## RESEARCH & EVIDENCE COLLECTION PROGRAM

AAI's research and evidence collection programme analyzes law implementation, identifying gaps between mandates and execution. By pinpointing these gaps, we facilitate targeted interventions, ensuring laws align closely with objectives and positively impact society.

AAI conducted extensive research on the implementation of PWDVA, 2005 in Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand, focusing on court remedies, DIR submission timelines, and order enforcement. A total of 540 cases were filed, with Uttar Pradesh accounting for 440 and Jharkhand for 100, indicating potential regional disparities in utilization.

In another study, AAI examined Section 498-A IPC implementation in Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Bihar. Sixty-two lawyers participated, reporting 1,389 cases, with Uttar Pradesh leading at 1,070, followed by Jharkhand (301) and Bihar (18). Two lawyers did not file any FIRs under Section 498-A.

AAI also conducted 22 fact-findings on issues like Right to Choice, sexual autonomy, and violence against women and children in various regions, revealing disturbing trends of increased violence. The focus was on providing pro-bono socio-legal support to survivors of VAWG and implementing measures to combat violence and uphold entitlements.

**A total of 1,389 cases were registered by lawyers, with Uttar Pradesh leading at 1,070 cases, followed by Jharkhand (301) and Bihar (18), indicating potential regional variations in utilization influenced by awareness, legal practices, or socio-cultural factors.**

**Uttar Pradesh exhibited a higher caseload, with 440 filings, underscoring the frequent utilization of the PWDVA within the state. In contrast, Jharkhand contributed fewer cases to the overall count, totaling 100.**

एसोसिएशन फॉर एडवोकेसी एण्ड लीगल इनिशिएटिव्स ट्रस्ट (आली)

**“चलो अब बात करें,  
बाल विवाह को समाप्त  
करें”**

**बाल विवाह प्रतिषेध  
अधिनियम, 2006**



## STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

AALI conducts sensitization workshops for protection officers, police officers, judges, medical officers, Probation Officers, Child Welfare Committee members, Juvenile Justice Board members, etc. to raise awareness about gender and identity-based violence. In 2022, in partnership with UN Women, AALI assessed the effectiveness of One Stop Crisis Centers (OSCs) across 23 districts in Uttar Pradesh. As the legal mentor for OSCs in all 75 districts, this year, AALI curated the structure for a capacity-building program focused on training two caseworkers and one center manager from select districts.



### What did we learn

- During a workshop, our discussions promoted a shift in members of panchayats from a welfare-centric to a feminist approach in connecting women with social security entitlement schemes.
- During a training, where AALI's member went as the resource person, young girl who had experienced early marriages learned about their legal entitlements under The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, including the option to annul their marriages at 18, empowering them to fight inequalities.
- At the Uttar Pradesh Academy of Administration and Management (UPAAM), Local Committee members were educated on implicit sexual advances, such as gender-discriminatory songs, enhancing their understanding of what constitutes sexual harassment.

# CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM FOR CHANGE MAKERS

## Lawyers' Workshop

Under this program, AALI focuses on developing capacities of lawyers on women\* related Legislations and Acts which in turn enable them in handling the instances of violence through a gendered lens. Through this we also aim to bring women lawyers into focus.

This initiative resulted in the expansion of the group, welcoming five new lawyers from Bihar. Through engaging discussions, role-plays, and case studies, participants gained a deeper appreciation of constitutional principles such as equality and non-discrimination, crucial in providing legal support to survivors.



## Capacity Building Program for Grassroots Leaders

The program aims to enhance the capacities of Grassroots Leaders to collaborate on issues related to gender equality and women's entitlements and provide pro-bono socio-legal support to women who are survivors of violence against women and girls, discrimination, and other forms of inequality.

In the reporting period, AALI spearheaded a series of four meetings as part of the Capacity Building Program for Grassroots Leaders. These meetings focused on critical issues such as the implementation of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition & Redressal) 2013 Act, along with fostering women's leadership at the grassroots level.

The impact was substantial, with participants committing to a tangible 6-month plan. This plan encompassed organizing community awareness sessions, offering support in instances of atrocities against SC/ST communities, establishing Local Committees at the District level, conducting media scans, and providing comprehensive training for teams on both Acts.

- **A youth competition that facilitated the sharing of innovative solutions to combat VAWG attracted 140 participants.**
- **Additionally, in Aligarh district, a participant was invited by the Food Craft Institute to conduct a session on the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013,**



### What did we learn

- Tailoring capacity-building efforts to address specific legal frameworks and contextual challenges surrounding women related acts can lead to more impactful outcomes. By providing targeted training and support, practitioners can better navigate complex issues and voice meaningful change within their communities.
- Collaboration between various stakeholders, including grassroots' leaders, government departments, educational institutions, and youth, proved to be instrumental in driving change. This collaborative approach not only enhances the effectiveness of interventions but also promotes ownership and sustainability.

# Building for Tomorrow: Initiatives Driving Growth and Wellness

**OSC Engagement:** This year marked the commencement of our engagement with One Stop Centers (OSCs) in Uttar Pradesh. Recognizing the pivotal role OSCs play in supporting survivors of violence, we launched a comprehensive capacity-building program for OSC staff. Spanning four phases, these sessions delve into the intricacies of staff roles, elucidate pertinent laws pertaining to women, and foster sensitivity towards gender-based violence and discrimination. By equipping OSC staff with essential knowledge and skills, we aim to enhance their efficacy in providing holistic support to survivors.



## **Rise, Revise and Rejuvenate:**

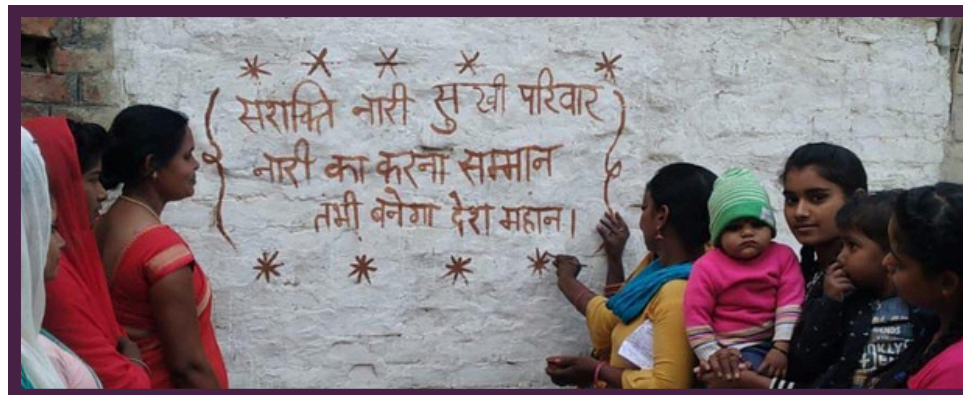
Recognizing the toll that our work with survivors of violence and within grassroots communities can take on the mental and physical health of our team members, we embarked on a rejuvenating journey to prioritize their well-being. An initiative was undertaken to pause office operations and embark on a collective retreat. Against the serene backdrop of nature, the team immersed themselves in rejuvenating yoga and meditation sessions. This retreat served as a respite, offering much-needed solace and revitalization to our dedicated team. By investing in the mental and physical health of our team members, we strive to promote a culture of holistic wellness and sustainable work practices within our organization.



**Let's PAUSE:** Instituting a culture of personal and professional development, we introduced the "Let's PAUSE" initiative within our organization. Every alternate Friday, office operations come to a halt as staff members engage in capacity-building sessions. These sessions serve as platform for discussions on feminist issues, exploration of trending issues, and participation in activities geared towards enhancing mental well-being. Through these deliberate pauses in routine work, we endeavor to cultivate a nurturing environment that fosters team cohesion, personal growth, and holistic well-being.

# Successes

1. Legal successes include securing convictions under IPC and POCSO Act, obtaining rejection of bail in child abuse cases, and mediating for alimony and return of belongings in domestic violence cases. Similarly, efficient court proceedings ensured timely cross-examination, promoted for survivor entitlements, and obtained favorable orders for interim maintenance.
2. Community empowerment involved supporting survivor autonomy in marriage, resolving disputes, and advocating against local authority misbehavior.
3. Empowerment initiatives registered women for government schemes, facilitated education access, and provided legal framework training.
4. Rehabilitation efforts included distributing sewing machines, linking women with livelihood schemes, and fostering economic independence.
5. AALI collaborated with UN Women x Ford for a story of women leadership at the grassroots, where the story of one of the team members was selected and published. The magazine was disseminated nationally.





# Voices from the Grassroots

“

For me, AALI isn't just an organization; it is a family. The support and encouragement I received were like threads binding me to a community of kindred spirits. And with their guidance, I dared to dream bigger. I envision reviving my sewing training center, not just for myself but for other women like me in Lucknow, offering them the same lifeline that AALI had extended to me.

-One of the survivors at the Survivors' Meeting



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AALI's training was uniquely skillful for me. We knew about the constitution but we gained a deeper understanding. I also learnt the difference between gender and sex, along with forms of gender based discrimination and violence. The training also shattered the stereotype 'aurat hi aurat ki dushman hoti hai' (a woman is another woman's worst enemy).

-Participant of Capacity Building of OSC staff

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Any part of this report can be used with an acknowledgement to the source.

To contact us:

Phone: 0522 278 2060

Email: [aalie@aalilegal.org](mailto:aalie@aalilegal.org)

Website: <https://www.aalilegal.org/>

Follow us: @aalilegal

