



**ASSOCIATION FOR  
ADVOCACY AND LEGAL INITIATIVES  
TRUST (AALI)**

**ANNUAL  
REPORT**

**April 2022-March 2023**





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# *Executive Summary*

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"Feminism isn't about making women stronger. Women are already strong, it's about changing the way the world perceives that strength." G.D. Anderson

AALI's ideology resonates with this quote, which believes that women are complete individuals, and equal human beings, who have the capacity to make independent choices and excel in any field they choose, given equal rights and opportunities are provided to them.

Last year (2022-2023), AALI worked towards achieving gender equality, and justice for women and children, especially from marginalized sections of society. Through its various programs and initiatives, AALI tried to achieve justice for survivors of VAWG as well as to enable women, children and people belonging to the marginalized communities to ascertain their rights and entitlements. AALI also undertook a research project in collaboration with UN Women on 'Strengthening response and service provisioning for Gender Based Violence in Uttar Pradesh'. The objective of the study was to assess the effectiveness of One Stop Centres in twenty-three districts of Uttar Pradesh. The research study aimed to document the best practices, gaps, and challenges in the working of One Stop Centres. During this year, AALI also got an opportunity to present its comments on the bill drafted in the cases of 'right to choice in relationships' in India by Centre of Law and Policy Research.

Crimes against women are one of India's most serious social issues. According to the National Crime Records Bureau, as many as 4,28,278 cases of crime against women were registered during 2021—an increase of 15.3 per cent over 2020 (3,71,503 cases). This can also be substantiated by the number of such cases registered with AALI. There were many cases where survivors faced brutal forms of violence (be it sexual, physical, emotional, or economic) inside their homes inflicted by their family members. In one of many such cases registered with AALI, the injuries inflicted by a woman's husband and her in-laws were such that she succumbed to death.

According to World Bank's 'Women, Business and the Law 2023 Project', the analysis of five decades of reforms shows that though countries around the world have adopted more than 2,000 laws to enhance legal gender parity, however, at this pace, it will take another 50 years to close the legal gender gap. Currently, we are facing a critical moment in the fight for gender equality around the world. Thus, gender inclusivity has emerged as an important leitmotif in global policy dialogues. India's gender divide has been a matter of extensive debates and discussions. As per the Global Gender Gap Report 2022 of the World Economic Forum, India ranks 135 out of 146 countries. Achieving higher economic growth with subpar performance in gender equality is reflected in many indicators on the status of women in India. These are outcomes of a lopsided development process, which gets perpetuated, if not addressed as a policy priority. Hence, prioritizing areas, for narrowing the existing gender gaps is essential for development to be more inclusive.

As we embark on this annual report, we celebrate the unwavering commitment of AALI to challenge the status quo, dismantle oppressive social systems, and create a social structure where every woman thrives. Through AALI, we ignite the flame of change, and champion the rights and voices of women everywhere.



# About AALI

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After the Beijing conference in 1995, AALI's founders realised that there was a lack of women leadership in the state of Uttar Pradesh. As a result of this realisation, Association for Advocacy and Legal Initiatives Trust (AALI) was established in 1998, by a group of feminist women. AALI's founders were of the opinion that they did not have the authority to empower anyone, but they did believe that if women were equipped with the skills required to claim their constitutional rights and were made more aware about women's human rights, then the conditions of women could be improved. This ideology came from an understanding that women are equal citizens of the country, who are entitled to every right provided by the Constitution of India.

AALI's ideological framework is rooted in the United Nation's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). AALI envisions an egalitarian social system that recognizes women as complete individuals and equal human beings through advocacy for women's rights. Our organization undertakes research, activism, and direct response with a strong focus on violence against women and the right to choice and decision-making in relationships.

As an organization, we also recognise that the structural inequalities that exist in the Indian society as a result of the patriarchal social system, are the cause of the inequalities that place women and girls at the brink of various types of marginalizations. And despite various laws and international instruments, the cases of violence against women and girls in the country are at a constant high.

AALI believes in using law as a tool for social change and works with a rights-based and feminist approach. Economic disparities and financial dependence are the most significant aspects that cause a hinderance to a woman's ability to access justice delivery systems and navigate them effectively. As a result, many women are left without the means to assert their rights, resulting in a denial of justice and perpetuating cycles of inequality. For more than two decades AALI has been working in the field of access to justice that includes providing pro-bono legal aid to women and children for the realization of their rights and entitlements. To this effect, AALI has a three-pronged approach- Access to Justice, Active Citizenship, and Addressing Knowledge Gaps. The purpose of this multipronged approach is to tackle the problem of gender based and identity-based discrimination and violence at every level of society and by holding every citizen accountable. Through this holistic mode of intervention, AALI aims to work towards an egalitarian society by catalysing a gender transformative change, right from the grassroots.



# AALI'S Strategies

## Access to Justice

Women face numerous obstacles in seeking justice, be it due to social norms, cultural stigmatization, lack of awareness of their rights, or limited access to legal resources. This highlights the gender divide in the justice delivery mechanisms, and despite there being numerous laws and constitutional guarantees available for women, the percentage of women who are aware of these and have the ability to access the legal systems for claiming these rights still remains low. It is in recognition of this blatant shortcoming that AALI strives to ensure affordable and quality legal aid and support to survivors of gender-based violence and discrimination

**Direct Intervention-**  
2894 cases of VAWG (21% more than the last financial year)

**Lawyer's Coalition**  
218 Lawyers from 4 states are a part of AALI's Lawyers' Coalition

## Active Citizenship

### **Community Intervention and Leadership Building Programme**

40,350+ community women and adolescent girls were reached.

### **Youth Engagement Programme**

5100+ girls and youth from schools and colleges were reached.

### **Survivors' Rehabilitation Programme**

30-35 survivors from Lucknow and Ranchi are a part of this currently.

Women have been facing discrimination and marginalization for years, due to internalized patriarchy and gender bias. These challenges are compounded by factors such as class, caste, and religion. It's crucial that we raise awareness about these issues and work towards creating a society where women are treated with the respect and equality they deserve. AALI believes that change can be brought about by making women, children and marginalized sections of society aware of the discrimination they face as well as about their rights. Through Active Citizenship, AALI encourages community participation in creating an egalitarian and rights-focused social ecosystem. AALI collaborates with women from marginalized communities to strengthen their knowledge of rights and empower them to become agents of change for their communities.



# AALI'S Strategies

## Addressing Knowledge Gaps

The challenges faced by survivors of gender-based and identity-based violence are further compounded by the discriminatory practices and biases within the State and Judicial institutions, creating an environment where women's voices are silenced, and their grievances go unheard. Fear, intimidation, and societal pressures discourage survivors from seeking support, trapping them in cycles of violence and injustice.

AALI is working to address these challenges by conducting research studies, evidence-based fact-finding, filing writ petitions in court, and organizing meetings with stakeholders on specific issues. By addressing gaps in the implementation of laws and the approach of state and non-state stakeholders, AALI is enabling the survivors to access justice in a complex and biased system.

### Stakeholders' Engagement Program

22 sensitisation workshops with various stakeholders from the states of UP, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh.

1 State Colloquium was held in Ranchi on Right to Mobility

### Coalition for Women's Rights

2 coalitions with 150+ participants in each

### Research & Evidence Building Programme

One research was conducted and 29 fact findings were done.







# Programme Insights

## Access to Justice

- Case Work Intervention Programme
- Lawyers' Coalition Programme

## Active Citizenship

- Community Intervention and Women Leadership Programme
- Youth Engagement Programme
- Survivors' Rehabilitation Programme

## Addressing Knowledge Gaps

- Stakeholders' Engagement Programme
- Coalition for Women's Rights
- Research & Evidence Building Programme

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
MEERUT, JANUARY 20

A 32-YEAR-OLD teacher at an inter-college in Aligarh district was arrested for allegedly raping a class-7 student after holding her captive at his house on Wednesday night.

of hours, the girl's family... search for...

Aan kills 15-yr-old girl for rejecti...

Relationship proposal in Bhadohi

adoni (UP). A 15-year-old girl was on Wednesday shot dead by a...

a case of unrequited love in Survaya area of Bhadohi, police said. The...

...cused is on the run, po... girl was returning home from a...

...FIR after six

Disabled BHU girl faces

sexual assault on campus

Girls Hostel to the Arts Facul...

...cused youth, identified as...

...added, "He has been...

...having with her with the in...

...When she raised an alarm, the people present ne...

...Lanka inspector Brijesh...

...Rohit Singh Rathod and Ros...

...her last on July 6, 2022. "They...

Faiz.Siddiqui@timesgroup.com

Kanpur: A civic worker of the carriage and wagon department of the Railways has been arrested for allegedly raping a minor schoolgirl in a train standing at the railway station in Etawah. The incident which took place on January 15, came to light after the girl's parents lodged an FIR at Etawah GRP on January 17. Subsequently, the police swung into action and arrested the accused.

The girl, a native of Jhansi, after being scolded by her parents, had left her house to reach her grandfather's house in Mahoba. However, by mistake she boarded the train to Etawah. When the train reached Etawah at night, all the passengers got down and the girl student remained sitting there. Later, a civic worker who came to clean the train, over the pretext of helping her raped her in the train.

The police said, "The girl, a class

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# Access to Justice

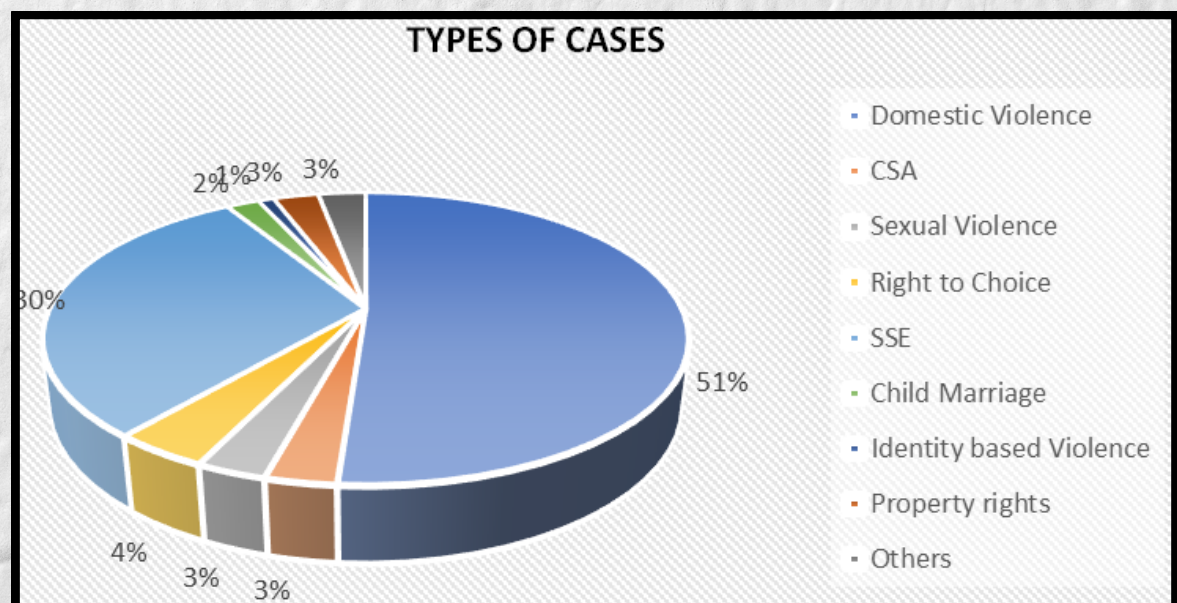
*On 21st January 2018, an 11-year-old survivor was sexually assaulted by the son of her landlord. Despite threats from the accused, Imran Ansari, the survivor's family registered an FIR against him. The survivor's family, who did not have the resources to hire an advocate or access the criminal justice system, approached AALI for legal aid. AALI intervened and ensured that the medical examination of the survivor was conducted with her consent and her statement was recorded before the magistrate. AALI actively represented the survivor before the session's court and regularly updated her about the proceedings of the case. After four years, on 25th May 2022, the accused was convicted and sentenced to 20 years of imprisonment with a fine of Rs. 50,000.*

The above-mentioned case is one of the many cases in which AALI intervened and tried to access the justice system for ensuring that the rights of survivors are not infringed upon.

## CASE WORK INTERVENTION PROGRAMME

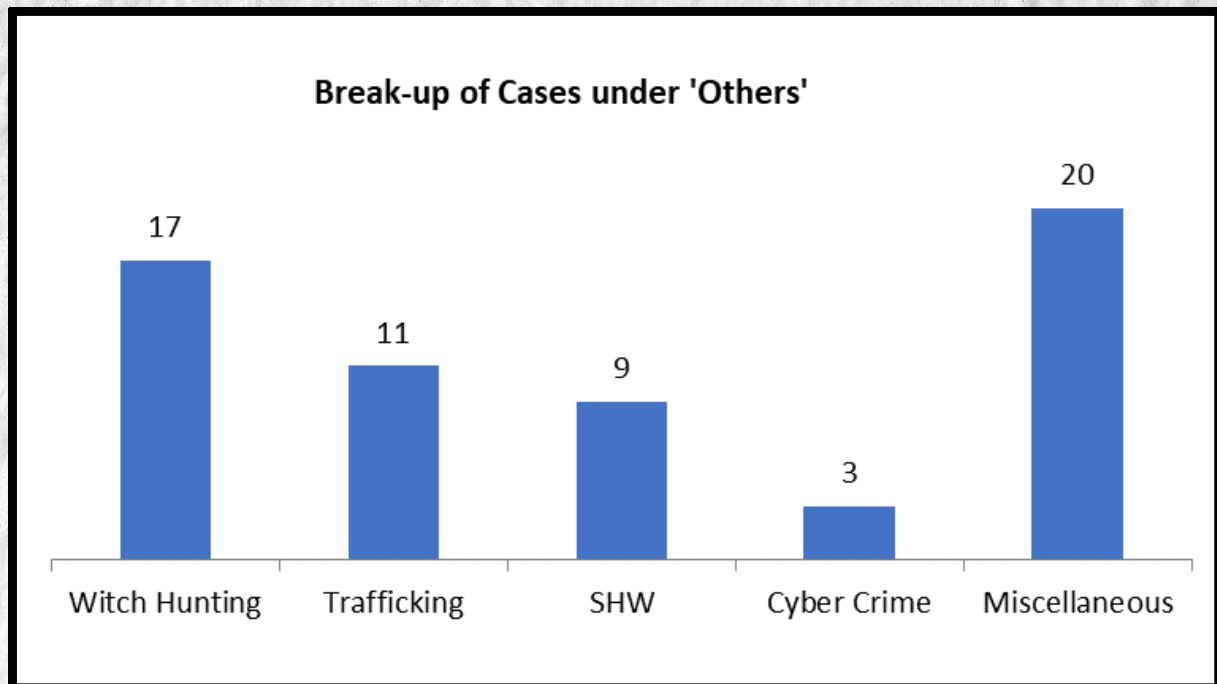
AALI is dedicated to fighting for the rights and safety of women and persons from marginalised communities facing gender and identity-based violence. Our team in Lucknow and Ranchi, along with our paralegal caseworkers across 52 districts in Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, and Bihar, work tirelessly to intervene in cases of violence and provide support to the survivors. In the past year, we have intervened in 2244 cases across these four states, addressing issues such as domestic violence, child sexual abuse (CSA), sexual violence, right to choice (RTC), child marriage, identity based violence, property rights, and social security entitlements (SSE). The graph below shows the category wise breakdown of cases. Our commitment to justice and women's human rights drives us to continue our work and ensure that the needs of the survivors are the priority of our interventions.

Other issues include 17 cases of witch hunting, 11 cases of trafficking, 9 cases of Sexual Harassment at Workplace (SHW) and 3 cases of cyber crime. The analysis of the data from casework centres also shows that apart from violence, caseworkers have also intervened in matters of property rights and social security schemes to enable women to lead violence-free lives as well as become economically independent.

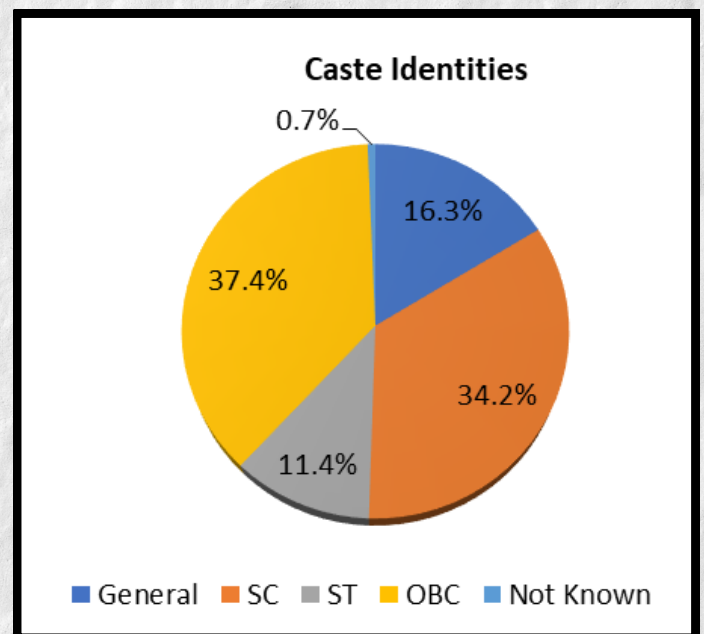
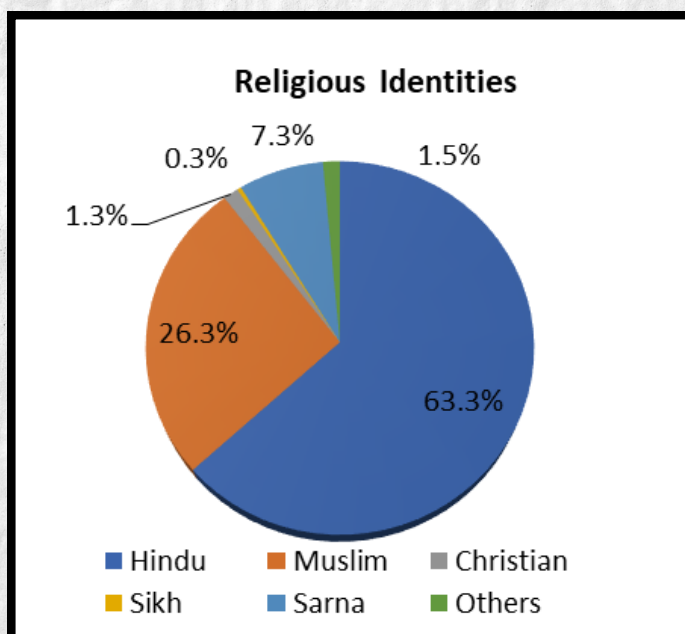




## Access to Justice



Those cases which are of violence against women but do not fall in any of the selected categories fall under 'Miscellaneous'.



While the majority of cases were from the Hindu community, we also saw substantial representation from other religious communities, including the Sarna community, a prominent tribal community in Jharkhand. In terms of caste identities, more than 80% of the cases registered with AALI were from survivors belonging to SC, ST, and OBC communities.



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## *Access to Justice*

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### **LEARNINGS OF THE YEAR**

- AALI's legal team has learnt to navigate through complex court procedures by designing strategies and approaches which have helped the team to expedite justice process for the survivors. AALI's legal team goes 'by the book' and follows all the procedures mentioned in any act which in turn has helped AALI in establishing good practices in the court. Few major strategies developed in the past year by AALI team are –
  1. To serve notice to the opposite party using electronic media. This has helped in ensuring that the notice is delivered and accepted on time, which helps avoiding unnecessary delays from the defence side.
  2. To request the court to impose costs on the opposite party in cases, where the opposite counsel lingers on the court procedures with malafide intentions, for example by not conducting cross-examination of prosecution witnesses on time.
  3. To try to expedite the court processes in cases where the defence does not file the required papers on time with an intention to hold the process, by convincing the courts to strike off the opportunities of defence party. Striking off defense is a great tool to push the case forward and tackle the malicious tactics of the opposite party.
  4. To write applications to the courts to expedite hearings in cases like divorce, which take a long time, citing poor economic conditions of the survivors. And courts have taken cognisance of such applications and taken required steps to expedite the processes.
- From the past experience, AALI has realized that there are different practices related to property rights among different tribal communities in Jharkhand and therefore AALI needs to improve the team's knowledge on these issues, so as to better handle matters involving property rights.
- AALI regularly conducts capacity building sessions for caseworkers and young caseworkers, through which, they are made aware of various laws related to women, girls and marginalised communities and are trained on how they can effectively handle such cases. During the past few training sessions, it was realised that the agenda for every training session needs to be thoroughly worked upon with lesser number of topics covered. This would help in developing better and in-depth understanding of each topic among the trainees. Another need is to categorise the participants on the basis of experience, knowledge, and exposure so that trainings can be made more effective for all the participants considering their individual capacities.
- Case workers have identified another gap, especially in districts of Jharkhand, that in most of the cases, decisions are taken by the Gram Pradhan and in very few cases, survivors approach the judicial system. However, the 'Gram Pradhans' lack the required skills, understanding and perspective to deliver justice in cases of women's rights violations. Thus, CWs need to make a strategy of how to make sure that justice is rendered, in keeping with the rights based approach.



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## *Access to Justice*

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### **SUCSESSES OF THE YEAR**

- Our efforts have led to numerous successes:
  1. We have succeeded in securing interim maintenance of up to Rs. 3,50,000 from the courts in 14 cases filed under various legal provisions. We have also secured convictions in child sexual abuse cases, with the accused being sentenced to imprisonment and ordered to pay compensation to the survivors.
  2. We have also intervened in cases where technicalities were delaying justice, for example, a POCSO case that was pending due to a delay in the submission of the death certificate. Through our intervention, the court agreed to proceed without the certificate.
  3. In another POCSO case, the accused was sentenced to 10 years in jail and ordered to pay restitution to the survivor. We have also had an investigating officer suspended, who was working under the influence of the opposite party and was not conducting timely investigation in a sexual violence case.
  4. In one case, a survivor obtained a Certificate of "Khula"[1] within one week through our initiative. We have also successfully registered an FIR in a dowry death case despite reluctance from both, the police officials and the complainant's family.
  5. Our team even rescued a minor girl from illegal police custody.
  6. Many survivors who had been facing physical and sexual violence have also been successfully linked to One Stop Centres across various cities in the country (like Lucknow, Noida, Delhi, Chennai, etc) for urgent shelter.
- During our visits, we saw the community's growing confidence in the casework centres. These centres have become beacons of hope - safe havens where survivors can share their experiences without fear. It's heartening to see the caseworkers being recognized by government stakeholders as paralegals, further cementing their role as pillars of support for those in need.
- Another major success in respect to supporting the casework centres was seen in districts of Bihar. Providing legal training and technical advice to two Casework Centers in Bihar has enabled the caseworkers to engage in cases of VAWG, more efficiently and with a rights-based approach. This has also inspired other organizations in different districts and about 6 districts have shown interest in collaborating with AALI.

### **CHALLENGES FACED**

- Despite developing many successful strategies, one of the major challenges which AALI team continues to face is that the procedures of courts are time taking. This takes a toll on the mental and physical health of the survivors and in addition to this, financial instability causes reluctance in the survivors and they do not want to pursue their cases in the court despite facing a lot of violence. Even if they start the process, they drop their cases after a considerable period of time.

[1] Khula is an Islamic legal term referring to the dissolution of a marriage initiated by the wife, allowing her to obtain a divorce from her husband through a court or mutual agreement.



## *Access to Justice*

- During case intervention, it has been observed that stakeholders actively intervene in matters of those survivors who are either influential or aware about their rights. Those who come from marginalized sections and/or are not aware of their rights, have to struggle to get access to the justice system.
- Another challenge which AALI has faced in the last year and which has also taken us one step backwards in our efforts of improving access to justice for women is that the 'Pre-litigation mediation' has again been approved by the courts and has started being implemented since July' 22. This has unnecessarily delayed the process wherein survivors want divorce from their husbands in cases of extreme violence.

### **LAWYERS' COALITION PROGRAMME**

The Lawyers' Coalition Program is a vital component of AALI's strategy to increase access to justice. Through district and state-level workshops, AALI assists lawyers to champion the rights of women and children with a feminist and rights-based approach. The formation of this coalition has been a game-changer for AALI, expanding our reach and bringing us closer to our goal of ensuring justice for all - especially for women and children from marginalized communities.

Last year, there were around 218 lawyers (around 140 in UP, 68 in Jharkhand, 6 in Uttarakhand, and 4 in Bihar) who were part of AALI's Lawyers' Coalition Program. These dedicated lawyers provided invaluable support to our caseworkers during court proceedings and legal interventions at the district level. Their expertise and commitment are instrumental in ensuring that justice is served and that the voices of the most vulnerable are heard

**18 State and District level lawyers' workshops (with a total of 218 participants) were held in UP and Jharkhand on topics such as Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, marriage and divorce laws under various acts including Hindu Marriage Act, Muslim personal law and Special Marriage Act, 1954.**



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# Access to Justice

## LEARNINGS OF THE YEAR

- AALI has learnt to use technology to connect with lawyers and strengthen our coalition. Learning from our past experiences, AALI has revived the lawyers' WhatsApp groups in a way that now there is a separate WhatsApp group for each state. With this, AALI team also started sharing new judgements on these groups, inspired by which other lawyers have also started sharing relevant judgements and important notifications in the group.
- The need to build a lawyers' coalition, has been assessed in the districts of Bihar, as a gap has been witnessed in terms of legal support for AALI's caseworkers in Bihar.

## SUCCESSES OF THE YEAR

- Through the workshops conducted by AALI under this programme, lawyers have been able to collaborate and devise more effective strategies for implementing the laws discussed. They have started quoting relevant judgments in the courts which has helped them in making their cases stronger. They have also found the resources provided by AALI to be incredibly valuable and have shared them with their colleagues.
- As a result of participation in these workshops, many lawyers have made a commitment to incorporate their newfound knowledge into practice, with some even taking on cases related to women on a pro-bono basis.
- After attending Lawyers' workshops, many 'Public Prosecutors', have started referring cases to AALI. This shows their confidence in AALI as a legal support for survivors and also the increased reach of AALI. Last year the public prosecutor of POCSO court referred a case to AALI.
- Another success of the coalition and lawyers' workshops is that wherein earlier the lawyers were inactive and lost touch with each other, once the workshops were over, now these lawyers have started contacting each other through the WhatsApp group and regularly share relevant case law with the group members. They have also started referring cases to each other. This has also helped in getting legal support for survivors from other districts, who are from economically weaker sections, by connecting them to the lawyers belonging to AALI's coalition.

### 7 District-level Lawyers' Workshops

were held in Bahraich, Fatehpur, Azamgarh, Allahabad, Muzaffarnagar, Sultanpur, and Pratapgarh districts of UP on the 'Challenges faced by Lawyers during Covid'19 Pandemic'. A total of 105 lawyers attended these workshops.





# Active Citizenship

*Zoya Fatima, a 50-year-old woman from Mangrawa village in Azamgarh district, faced regular mistreatment and abuse in her two marriages. After her second divorce, she was left with two children and no support from her family. Determined to create a better life for herself and her children, Zoya rented a room in a village in Azamgarh and started rebuilding her life. Around this time she started attending community meetings organized by AALI on a regular basis. Recognizing her potential, AALI provided her with additional trainings and appointed her as community leader. She rebuilt her life and became an active participant in AALI's community work. Through her role as a community leader with AALI, Zoya emerged as a prominent figure in her village, opposing violence against women and educating local women about their rights. Despite facing educational barriers, Zoya pursued her education. Additionally, she fought for her rightful share in her husband's property and secured ownership of property. Zoya's transformative journey serves as an inspiration for all women, empowering them to assert their legal rights and find their voices.*

*Note: At present Zoya is living in Mumbai due to her health issues*

## COMMUNITY INTERVENTION AND WOMEN

### LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

AALI initiated its community initiative and women leadership programme to empower marginalized women at the grassroots to claim their rights and prevent exclusion. The program aimed to expand AALI's efforts to the community level through capacity building and legal assistance for women's rights. AALI recognized that women from religious and caste minorities face additional challenges due to their limited access to social mobility and education. The program aims to build the community's knowledge on law, and its usage, raise awareness on constitutional rights and duties, and develop leadership among community women. Since last 14 years, there have been various inspiring stories of leadership where the Community Leaders (CL) and Young Community Leaders (YCL), after getting associated with AALI, not just transformed their own lives but transformed lives of many community women and youth in their villages.

**During the financial year 2022-2023, AALI had 56 Community Leaders and 35 Young Community Leaders working in 21 villages of Varanasi and 35 villages of Azamgarh.**

**493 women claimed for various social security schemes (like Ration card, Aadhar card, Vridhha Pension, Family Benefit Scheme, MGNREGA, etc.), and availed the same.**

In line with the idea of creating leadership among community women, AALI started to develop a second line of leadership last year, under which the community leaders identified few community women who demonstrated leadership qualities and worked with them in organizing community meetings. AALI team organized a training session with these women, during which they were trained on various issues like understanding on gender, patriarchy, various forms of violence against women and girls, and how to identify them. This has demonstrated an increased participation of women at the community level.



## Active Citizenship

“सरकारी योजनाओं में न मिड -डे मील मिलता था न महिलाओं को पोषाहार मिलता था। किसी को कोई जानकारी भी नहीं थी। पहली बार जब आंगनवाडी गए तो वहां पूछने लगे कि क्यूँ आई हो? तुम्हारा क्या अधिकार है? बहुत परेशानी का सामना किया पर हम जाते रहे। अब महिलाएं अपने आप जाति हैं और पोषाहार लेती हैं, नहीं मिलता तो शिकायत भी करती हैं।” - नसरीम (गाँव जंसा)

Encouraged with the success of community intervention and women leadership in the districts of Azamgarh and Varanasi, AALI started intervening in communities through its casework centres as well. Post Covid, CWs have also started organizing community meetings and linking women to Social Security Entitlements in their respective districts. This has helped in increasing AALI's reach by working at the grassroots.

### LEARNINGS OF THE YEAR

- Even after more than 16 years since Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005 came into effect; women were not actively applying for their job cards and accessing job opportunities. They believed that it was only a man's right to apply to MGNREGA for job opportunities. Thus, Community Leaders made the community women aware of their rights under the scheme and as a strategy, the leaders themselves applied for the scheme, got their job cards made and started working under MGNREGA. This motivated the community women and many women have started working under this scheme.
- After the intervention it has also been observed that earlier women used to approach the stakeholders verbally, which was very difficult to follow up, but now women are paying more attention to written complaints. Also, they now follow a proper step by step process of approaching the stakeholders.
- Since 2021, AALI's case workers have also started holding community meetings in their districts in order to make women aware of their rights and social security entitlements. Before that caseworkers were only involved in handling cases of VAWG. Thus, the need to hold training sessions on how to conduct community meetings was realized, which would help caseworkers in effectively conducting meetings.
- Another major learning of last year was that there is an identified need to have separate training modules for the caseworkers, young case workers, community leaders and young community leaders. Currently, there is a common module which is used during training sessions which is held on a regular basis with them.





## *Active Citizenship*

But reflecting on the varied socio-economic & educational backgrounds from which the caseworkers and community leaders come, it was found pertinent to have different training modules for each of these groups

- During the last financial year, AALI's caseworkers made a strategy of developing leadership among the community women in order to enhance the effectiveness of the community level programmes. With the constant support of AALI team, the CWs have been successful in developing women leaders from the community, who now, ably support the caseworkers in their work. This has also helped in taking forward AALI's vision of developing women leadership within communities.

### **SUCCESSES OF THE YEAR**

- One of the major successes of this year is that while earlier women used to consider the social security schemes as benefits provided to them by the State, now they have started viewing them as their rights and have started claiming them as well.
- Selection of community women as a second line of leadership has been a successful initiative since this has increased the trust between the organization and the community, and these women have also emerged as active and aware citizens in the community.
- In this reporting period, women from various villages have successfully advocated for their rights and improved their communities, as can be seen in the instances mentioned below:
  1. In Lohra village, women with AALI's assistance filed multiple complaints and were able to stop the construction of a police chauki on village land.
  2. In Chandapur village, women, with the support of AALI's caseworkers, applied for the housing scheme. These applications were approved and their houses were constructed.
  3. In Naraicha village, a cleaner was hired to clean the school after community leaders identified and complained that Scheduled Caste children were being made to do the cleaning in school.
  4. After becoming aware of their entitlements under MGNREGA through community meetings, more than 130 women from Barawan Patti, Sathiywan, Kukursanda, and Deoli villages of Azamgarh and 105 women in Varanasi district have got their job cards made and have started working under MGNREGA for the first time.
  5. In a village in Auraiyya district, the women after getting aware about the MGNREGA scheme, together made a list of the names of those who wanted to work in MGNREGA and submitted an application to Panchayat Office and Block Development Officer. After 15 days of submitting the application, all the women were called for the job and they also received wages equal to men.
  6. Through AALI's community intervention through the caseworkers, young caseworkers, community leaders and young community leaders, 43,450 women and adolescent girls were reached and were made aware on issues related to fundamental & constitutional rights, various acts for the protection of women's & children's rights (like Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005 (PWDVA), Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, (POCSO), The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 (PoSH, etc), child sexual abuse, women's health rights and social security schemes, etc.



## Active Citizenship

गाँव की महिलाओं ने कहा की इतने साल हो गए, आज तक ऐसी ग्राम सभा कि बैठक नहीं हो रही थी और नहीं हम कभी बैठक में गये थे परन्तु इस बार बैठक करने की बात किये और भाग लिया, इस ग्राम सभा की बैठक में जाकर बहुत अच्छा लगा, वहाँ पर हम बात को रखे तो वहाँ आए अधिकारी हमारी बात सुने। अब हिम्मत आई अब हमारा काम नहीं होगा तो हम ब्लॉक पर भी चलाए जाएंगे।

संजरपुर गाँव की महिलाएं

### YOUTH ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME

AALI aims to aid young people to become change makers through its youth engagement program. This program includes the Young Case Workers Program, Young Community Leaders Program, and Youth Workshops and Meetings. The goal is to build perspectives on constitutional values, inclusion, and gender equality and promote collaborative action among young people. By providing training and support, AALI hopes to transform youth leaders into effective advocates for themselves and their communities. Together, we can build a more inclusive, just, and equitable future.



**During the financial year 2022-2023, AALI had 56 Community Leaders and 35 Young Community Leaders working in 21 villages of Varanasi and 35 villages of Azamgarh. 493 women claimed for various social security schemes (like Ration card, Aadhar card, Vridhha Pension, Family Benefit Scheme, MGNREGA, etc.), and availed the same.**

### SUCSESSES OF THE YEAR

- After participating in youth sessions led by young caseworkers and community leaders, girls in the communities have become more confident and have started making decisions that affect their lives. They have started taking a stand for their right to choose, when and to whom they would get married. They also started to raise their voices against violence in their marital homes and started working towards financial independence to take control of their lives.
- As a result of these community-level meetings, there was an increase in the enrolment rate of girls in schools between classes 6th-8th, reversing the usual trend of increasing dropout rates among girls.
- Through these community meetings, young women and girls got aware of the various helpline numbers (112, 181, 1090, 1098) and have started using them to call out for support. Among those who attended the community meetings, 24 young women and 4 girls in Varanasi district have called on these numbers to ask for help in case of violence at their homes.



## Active Citizenship

- The youth workshops conducted in educational institutions equipped young people with an understanding of feminist and rights-based approaches, effective communication, conflict resolution and problem-solving skills. As a result, young people were inspired to collaborate with other youth groups and organizations to promote community-based initiatives and drive positive social change.



- One of the successes of Youth Engagement Program is that the Young Case Workers are not just supporting other youth in claiming their rights but are also recognising their own rights and are fighting for them. One such example is of one YCW from Palamu, Jharkhand, who was being forced into marriage. When she realized that it is her right to choose, whether to get married or not and when to get married, she fought for her right and stopped her family from forcing her to get married.

## SURVIVORS' REHABILITATION PROGRAMME

For the past 25 years, AALI has been intervening in cases of violence against women and girls. Over the course of our work, we realised that legal intervention is only a small part of the battle for survivors and hence, have started a survivor rehabilitation program to address this realisation. This programme aims to reintegrate women into their communities through vocational trainings, job opportunities, community integration, and psychosocial / mental health counselling. The program supports women who lack financial resources, and are unable to meet their basic survival needs. AALI has already targeted 100+ women from 2018 to date through this program.

## LEARNINGS OF THE YEAR

- With a regular involvement with the survivors through Survivor meetings, the team realized that there are mental health issues with many of the survivors due to the adverse familial, social, economic and physical conditions they go through in life. Realizing this issue, AALI has started focusing on the mental well-being of survivors. If need arises, AALI links the survivors to the mental health professionals. In a few cases, AALI has linked survivors to the Psychiatry department of King George Medical University in Lucknow. In the past year, AALI has also held sessions with survivors where the focus was on how to effectively handle mental health concerns. Through these sessions AALI was successful in raising awareness about the importance of mental health among the survivors.
- Despite all these efforts AALI has come to realize that there is still a lot to be done towards rehabilitation, to provide a holistic support to the survivors, like looking out for employment schemes, to which survivors could be linked, etc.



## Active Citizenship

### SUCCESSSES OF THE YEAR

This year, under the survivor rehabilitation programme, AALI has:-

- Profiled around 60 survivors to assess their socio-economic status and mental well-being. Crisis counselling has been provided to survivors to help build their confidence, enhance their decision-making capacity, and reduce feelings of isolation.
- Drafted about 12 RTIs, to gather information on status of various compensation schemes like Rani Laxmi Bai Mahila Evam Bal Samman Kosh Compensation scheme, etc. from 2019 - 2022.
- Connected survivors of child sexual abuse and sexual violence to government schemes for financial assistance, mental health support, and vocational training.
- Supported survivors in getting financial assistance under various government schemes for small businesses, widow pensions, and health insurance.
- Assisted survivors with registering online applications for E-Rickshaws, driving licenses, and Unique Disability IDs. The organization has liaised with various organizations and government departments to provide support to survivors.
- Connected 41 survivors to an NGO for health insurance.

### CHALLENGES OF THE YEAR

- Though AALI has started focusing on the mental health concerns of the survivors since last year, it has been observed that the survivors find it difficult to accept that they have any psychological or mental health issue, which makes it even more difficult to provide the required support.
- Two other challenges faced by the team towards survivors' rehabilitation is that, one there are very limited government schemes for the survivor rehabilitation, that too with very specific conditions, second the process of applying to these schemes is very complex and time taking. In fact, when the team started looking out for relevant schemes, it was found out that many of the schemes have been discontinued.





# Addressing Knowledge Gaps

*In July 2022, a landmark judgement was given by the Hon'ble High Court of Allahabad in the case of Prabha Tyagi vs. Kamlesh Devi in favour of women facing financial difficulties due to the unavailability of a Domestic Incident Report (DIR) at the time of granting Interim Orders. The case was brought by Deepika (name changed), a survivor of domestic violence who approached AALI for legal aid. Deepika was married to Yogesh in 2017 and faced harassment and torture from her husband and in-laws. Despite seeking help from the police and women's helpline, she was unable to take action against her abusers. In January 2021, Deepika approached AALI for support. AALI's team assisted her in filing a case of domestic violence against her husband and in-laws. However, the Magistrate rejected the application for an Interim Order, stating that no Interim Order could be granted without a DIR. AALI's counsel pleaded before the court to proceed without a DIR, citing a previous judgment by the Hon'ble Allahabad High Court. Still, due to the opinionated attitude of the Honorable Magistrate, the application again got rejected and Magistrate also threatened AALI's Counsel that if such kind of application was filed again, an appropriate action would be taken against her for contempt of court along with the imposition of fine. Taking cognizance of this serious challenge, AALI decided to file a writ petition before the Hon'ble High Court of Allahabad, Lucknow Bench. For this, the data of domestic violence cases filed by AALI was compiled, so that it could be emphasized to the Hon'ble Court that in how many cases and for how long the Domestic Incident Report was pending and as a consequence, the Interim order was not being granted by the court. It was ascertained that in about 15 such cases DIR was pending for more than 1 year.*

*Later, in the said petition, the Hon'ble High Court gave judgment in favour of the whole community of women, who were facing financial difficulties due to the unavailability of DIR report at the time of granting Interim Orders.*

## STAKEHOLDERS' ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMME

AALI's stakeholder engagement program aims to work with government and non-government stakeholders to advance its mission of addressing knowledge gaps and increasing sensitivity of stakeholders towards issues related to violence against women, girls and marginalised communities. The program intends to build the capacity of government stakeholders for better implementation of laws and to promote active citizenship among non-government stakeholders. The goal is to amplify AALI's efforts through strategic engagements across sectors.

**A State Colloquium was held in Ranchi on the topic of Right to Mobility. It was attended by 67 people including Ms. Mahua Manjhi, the Hon. Member of Rajya Sabha, Labour Commissioner and Tribal Commissioner of Jharkhand and a representative from JHALSA as chief guests. The objective was to accelerate state action, promote right to mobility and access to justice for a violence free life in Jharkhand and to ensure accountability of state and non-state actors towards gender sensitive implementation of the laws.**



## Addressing Knowledge Gaps

### LEARNINGS OF THE YEAR

- AALI has planned to design training sessions for the One Stop Centre staff across 15 districts in Uttar Pradesh in the next financial year. This need for training was identified after the research study conducted in One Stop Centres across 23 districts, the findings of which will be used to design the training module.

Through bilateral meetings, AALI's caseworkers are getting recognized at the district level and are being invited to participate in programs like 'Mission Shakti' to talk about women's rights.

A caseworker from Kaushambi was given the responsibility of making observations in the Juvenile Justice Board under the PLV (Paralegal Volunteer).

### SUCCESSSES OF THE YEAR

- During this reporting period, AALI conducted 22 sensitization workshops with stakeholders in UP, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. These workshops empowered stakeholders such as Police Officers, CWC members, Medical College students, JSLPS Women Federation, One Stop Centre staff of Lucknow and Raipur, Public Prosecutors, Sub Divisional Magistrate, Officers of SIDBI and others, with knowledge on laws like Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace, 2012, and safe mobility and rights of LGBTQIA+ group.
- During these workshops a few of the stakeholders also committed to take required actions towards ensuring women's rights. One such example, is of an official of Labour Department, who after attending the workshop on safe mobility, committed that he will ensure that the survivors of trafficking are taken into account and linked to the compensation schemes run by the State.
- For the past 3 years, AALI has been regularly invited for trainings to various departments and government training institutes. Last year too, institutions like NABARD, NIPCCD, BIRD, UPAAM and IHAT had invited AALI to conduct workshops on various laws such as the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2015, Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Protection, Prohibition & Redressal) Act, 2013, POCSO Act, 2012, etc. Thus, AALI contributed in enhancing the capacities of 450 participants from various departments last year.
- After a lot of follow-ups, AALI was able to organize a sensitization workshop with the medical students of the King George Medical University (KGMU), Lucknow. The workshop was held on medico-legal aspects in sexual violence cases and the importance of consent therein, which is a very important women's right issue. This workshop was successful in increasing the sensitivity of the medical students regarding the issue, wherein they also raised their concerns regarding the involvement of medical practitioners in cases of sexual violence.





## Addressing Knowledge Gaps

- Another major success of the stakeholders' workshops is that it brings various stakeholders on one platform and this helps in creating a liaison between them for providing comprehensive support to the survivors.
- The trainings & workshops held with One Stop Centres and District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), have also helped our case workers in getting legal support from them, because of their enhanced knowledge and sensitivity towards cases of VAWG.
- AALI's CWs & CLs also conduct bilateral meetings with the village and district level stakeholders to discuss on various issues related to rights of women & children which need to be addressed by them. This also helps AALI in building a liaison with different departments. Last year, AALI's caseworkers got recognised in their districts and were invited to be a part of various committees. Two CWs were selected to be a part of Internal Committees of government departments, 1 CW was selected as a paralegal volunteer by District Lawyers Services Authority, 1 CW was selected as a member of Child Welfare Committee, 1 CW was selected as a member of Kinnar Social Welfare Committee and 1 CW from Kaushambi, as a PLV (Para Legal Volunteer), was given the responsibility of preparing observation report in Juvenile Justice Board (JJB). In 1 district, Kinnar Social Welfare Committee was formed because of the efforts of CW.

"आज की इस कार्यशाला में बहुत ही महत्वपूर्ण जानकारी मिली और मुझे उम्मीद है कि आप सब इसी आगे ले जाओगे, हम सब 'Medico-Legal' पार्ट को सिर्फ 20 नंबर का पेपर समझ कर एग्जाम पास करने के लिए पढ़ते आए हैं, लेकिन इस सत्र के बाद समझ बनी कि ये 20 नंबर की बात नहीं बल्कि एक जीवन का सवाल है और हमें पूरा विश्वास है कि आगे आप सब बहुत ही संवेदनशीलता और समझदारी के साथ इस विषय को पढ़ेंगे साथ ही इससे सम्बंधित केसों को भी पूरी गंभीरता से देखेंगे।"- Faculty of KGMU Medical workshop, August 2023

## COALITION FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS

The Coalition for Women's Rights is a platform for women's rights activists and lawyers working towards the complete realization of Women's Human Rights in four states: Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar and Uttarakhand. Its purpose is to protect women's rights, particularly of those who belong to the marginalized and deprived communities. The coalition intervenes in a wide range of women's human rights violations and endeavors to enhance the understanding of women regarding the constitutional framework and relevant laws. It works towards ensuring women's access to the justice system and better implementation of laws for the protection of women's rights. The coalition also focuses on building women's leadership and engaging with other women's rights activists and women's groups at regional and national levels.

**AALI attended meetings organized by AMAN, CHILDLINE India Foundation, and Ehsaas Foundation. In these meetings, AALI committed to providing free legal support to 'children in street situations'.**



## Addressing Knowledge Gaps

### SUCCESSES OF THE YEAR

- The Coalition for Women's Rights (CFWR) organized a meeting with civil society organizations and caseworkers to discuss the risks and challenges and to plan strategies to implement the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 and the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 in their respective districts. The CFWR set targets for the upcoming 6 months and formed 9 committees to focus on issues such as direct case intervention and resource development. A total of 28 reports were compiled and analyzed to map the trend of crimes against marginalized communities and sexual harassment of women at the workplace.
- It has been seen that the organizations which are part of the coalition, support each other in cases. For example in about 12 cases related to violence against Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribe communities in Sonbhadra district, organizations supported each other. Similarly, other organizations supported in 4 cases in Allahabad district.
- The CFWR also organized a two-day program, 'Inclusive Voices' on the 1st day and 'Humare Haq Humari Zubani' on the 2nd day, which was attended by 166 participants. The program included panel discussions, movie screenings and the release of AALI's documentary showcasing its journey of the last 25 years. The objectives were to discuss inclusive and safe spaces for the LGBTQIA+ community in educational institutions and workplaces, formulate recommendations for equal opportunities, inclusivity, diversity and representation, and discuss the lived experiences of the LGBTQIA+ community.
- As a result of these efforts, recommendations were made for media coverage and proper documentation of crimes against the LGBTQIA+ community, raising awareness about their rights, NALSA judgement and Transgender Persons Act, 2019. Additionally, there was a call for sensitization and formulation of a comprehensive policy for the inclusion of LGBTQIA+ community in educational institutions and workplaces.





## *Addressing Knowledge Gaps*

### **RESEARCH & EVIDENCE BUILDING PROGRAMME**

The research and evidence building program aims to identify and address the challenges in implementing laws and acts that protect our rights. By understanding, how stakeholders perceive these laws and assessing their reach and effectiveness, we work towards improving their implementation. Through this program, we gain insights into the notions that stakeholders have about laws and policies and identify ways to overcome the challenges in implementing them.

Fact findings also play a crucial role in building evidence for our interventions. By conducting fact findings, we gain a more accurate understanding of cases, which enables us to provide better support to survivors. This includes, linking them to concerned stakeholders and offering other forms of assistance. During this period, we conducted 29 fact findings.

### **SUCSESSES OF THE YEAR**

- During the reporting period, AALI conducted a mapping study named 'Strengthening response and service provisioning for Gender Based Violence in Uttar Pradesh' with support from UN Women India Country Office. The study assessed the effectiveness of One Stop Centres (OSCs) and helplines attached to the OSCs, along with the provisions of legal support, psychosocial counselling and shelter homes. It aimed to capture the experiences of women and other women organizations who have tried to access the OSC system, to ensure the rights of women. The study documented best practices, shortcomings, and challenges in providing service, in order to enhance institutional capacities of government institutions to prevent and respond to all forms of violence against women.
- AALI shared its research studies on the implementation of the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act- 2005 in UP & Jharkhand and the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 in Jharkhand, with other civil society organizations. The objective was to share the findings and recommendations to raise awareness about the actual status of implementation of these laws at the ground level.
- As a result of sharing these findings, some organizations from states other than UP and Jharkhand were surprised by the results and requested AALI to conduct similar research studies in their states.
- In one case where a fact finding was conducted, the survivor registered the case with AALI. The case is currently being heard in court and the perpetrator is in jail. This demonstrates the impact of our fact findings in supporting survivors and holding perpetrators accountable for their actions.

### **CHALLENGES OF THE YEAR**

- Due to the lack of resources and funds AALI had to drop the research study on the "Status of Women Practicing Lawyers of Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand".
- Lack of coordination and inter departmental linkages have been observed while conducting the mapping study for UN Women India Country Office to assess the effectiveness of One Stop Centers in 23 districts of Uttar Pradesh.



# *Organizational Insights*

- **Financial Dashboard**
- **Recognitions**
- **Communications**
- **Media Coverage**
- **Social Media**
- **Team Building**

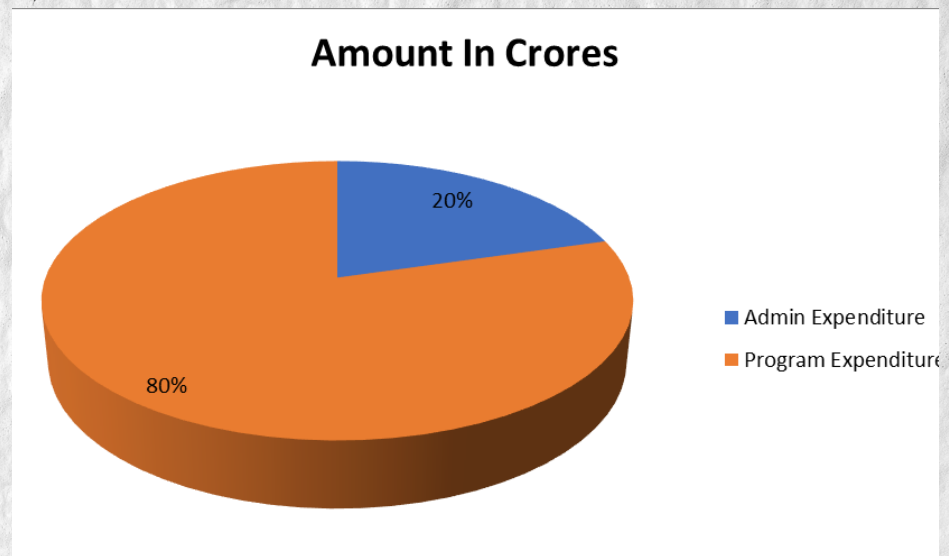


# Organizational Insights

## FINANCIAL DASHBOARD

For the Financial Year 2022-23, AALI has received funds from 3 sources- Funder Agencies, Family Foundations, CSR initiatives as well as from individual donors.

The total expenditure for the Financial Year 2022-23 amounts to Rs. 4.49 Crores, out of which administrative expenditure amounted to Rs. 0.92 Crores and the total program expenditure amounted to Rs. 3.57 Crores.



## RECOGNITIONS

1. AALI received the 1st prize for the 'Stories of Change' challenge organized by Azim Premji University. AALI had participated in the challenge and submitted a case study on the Case Work Program of AALI for which AALI won the 1st prize. AALI's story will also appear in the Annual Compendium of Azim Premji University.
2. AALI received a 'Certificate of Appreciation' in which AALI has gained a special mention of last year's Solutions for Digital Society, 2022-2023, e-NGO Challenge Award.
3. AALI got an opportunity to present its work at an international conference held in Seoul by UN Women in collaboration with Korean Women Development Institute (KWDI). The conference was to understand the impact of pandemic on the community and also to understand the strategies adopted by the various community-based organizations.

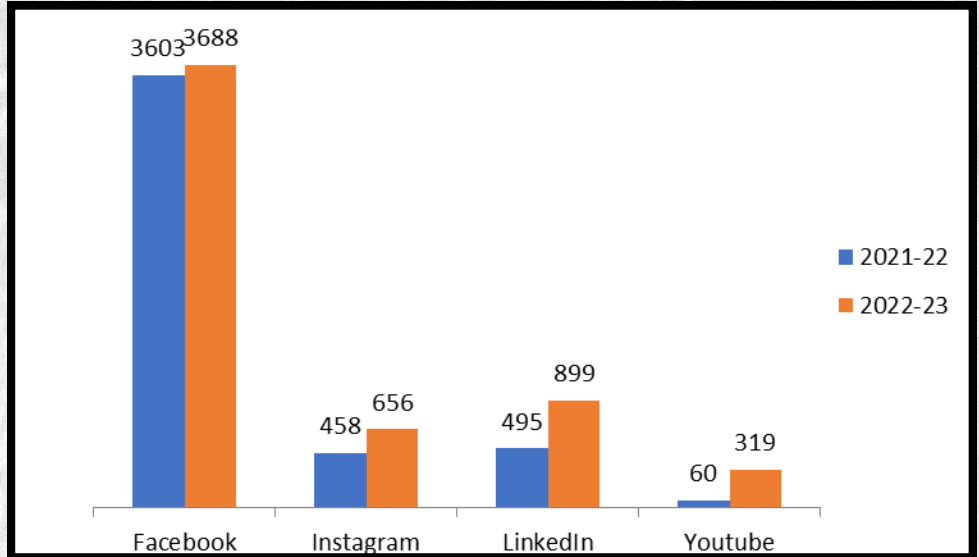




# Organizational Insights

## COMMUNICATION

Increase in outreach during last one year-



## DOCUMENTARY

AALI released its documentary 'Triumph against Unprecedented Challenges' based on history of AALI. It was released by AALI's founder trustee Ms. Tulika Srivastava during the meeting 'Humare Haq Humari Zubani' which was organized under AALI's program 'Coalition for Women's rights'.

## MEDIA COVERAGE

AALI organized State Colloquium on 'Right to Mobility' & 'Access to Justice' in Ranchi, Jharkhand in October, 2022, which was attended by Rajya Sabha MP, Dr. Mahua Manjhi & other dignitaries from the state.





# Organizational Insights

A 'Consultation' was organized in Lucknow in which the findings and recommendations of a research study undertaken by AALI in collaboration with UN Women on 'Strengthening response and service provisioning for Gender Based Violence in Uttar Pradesh' were shared, with State representatives and members of civil society organisations. The study attempts to assess the effectiveness of One Stop Centers in twenty-three districts of Uttar Pradesh.

'Humare Haq Humari Zubaani'- an awareness program organized by AALI to sensitise people on gender, inclusivity and diversity focusing on rights of LGBTQAI+ community. The program was covered by Times of India.



## SOCIAL MEDIA

AALI's social media posts are created keeping the youth in mind because it is the younger generation who spends a lot of the time on the various social media platforms. It is made sure that the content is informative along with being creative and interesting. Topical issues are covered and it is ensured that the content which is created is aligned to feminist and rights based perspective.

Indian Laws Protecting Women



Orange the World

16 days of Activism to End Violence Against Women and Girls



World NGO Day



"Yaadon Bhari Shoaam"  
In remembrance of  
Saleem Kidwai and Kamala Bhasin



# Team Building

AALI gives due weightage to the capacity and team building activities in the organization. Considering that not all of the team members are from a legal background, activities which help in enhancing their knowledge and awareness on laws related to women and other marginalized communities were undertaken, on a weekly basis. Apart from laws, weekly discussions were also undertaken on topics like- constitutional framework, importance of sex education, effective documentation, counseling of survivors and various topical issues like censorship, same sex marriage, etc.



Apart from weekly sessions, every year an organizational development (OD) activity is conducted with the team. During the last financial year, the entire team went out for a visit, where sessions were undertaken to develop their perspective on various issues like gender with focus on LGBTQIA+ identities, dismantling of powers & patriarchy, stereotypes, prejudices and equality. Since many new employees had joined AALI during the last few years their clarity on AALI's vision,

mission & values, AALI's strategies, professional ethics, social responsibility, & accountability towards the organization were developed during this OD visit.

The senior leadership team also met twice during the last financial year for a review and strategic planning and to evaluate the impact and outcome achieved by the organization. This process empowered the senior team to build a better understanding of the current scenario and to reflect on the successes and learnings of the past year. Collaboratively, the team formulated strategies for advancing the programs in the future.

AALI is sensitive about the health of its employees and to ensure that all employees are aware of their health condition, a full body health check-up was provided by the organisation and an in-person session with a physician was also held to develop a basic understanding on health care.



# Conclusion

AALI has made significant strides over the course of the past year in its journey of enhancing women's ability to access justice and facilitating them with the legal knowledge and skills required to claim their rights. The organization plans to expand its institutional collaborations with schools and colleges to engage and educate more youth. In the future, AALI will also liaise with various stakeholders to connect survivors to vocational/employment training, mental health programs, and social security entitlements. The organization will continue its efforts with the Chief Justice of Allahabad High Court and other associated courts, as well as the Commissioner of Police, to improve the implementation of laws and ensure quick registration of FIRs in crimes against women. AALI will also provide pro-bono services to women prisoners in matters pertaining to bail and rehabilitation. The organization's approach goes beyond mere access to legal resources and aims to bring about social change and reconstruction by addressing the question of sufficiency of laws and the legal system. AALI's efforts are focused on supporting survivors to access justice and claim their rights, thereby enabling them to live more aware, and positively impacting their socio-economic existence.

