



Folding Change, Origami-ing Hope

Annual Report 2024-25

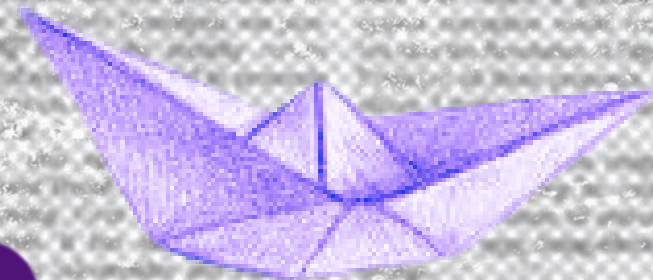
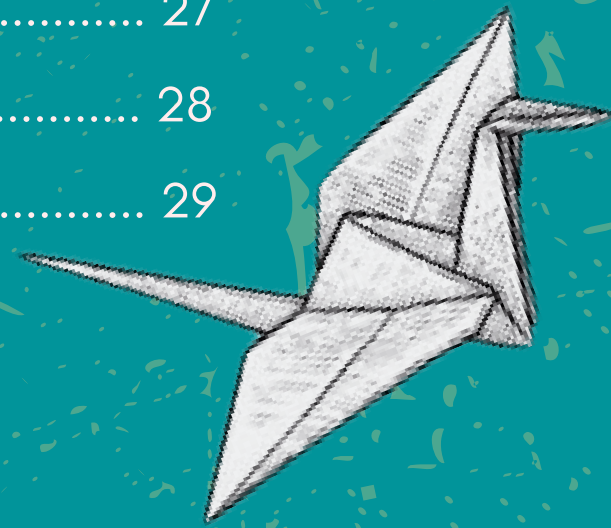


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NOTE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S DESK

The past year has been challenging due to media focus on a few cases where women were accused and men were victims, while widespread violence against women and girls (VAWG) was side-lined and underreported. This skewed portrayal led many men to question our gendered approach, repeatedly referring to those specific cases. We had to explain that while feminism stands for the rights and dignity of all individuals, there remains a critical need to centre women and children, who face systemic and historical marginalisation that cannot be ignored.

Addressing the challenges, we anchored ourselves in a simple, yet powerful belief — that an awared community is the strongest foundation for lasting change. Our efforts focused on building spaces of learning, through trainings that were not only about sharing knowledge, but about unfolding potential.

Like origami, each fold of learning shaped something new- a spark of understanding, a bond of solidarity, a voice raised for equality

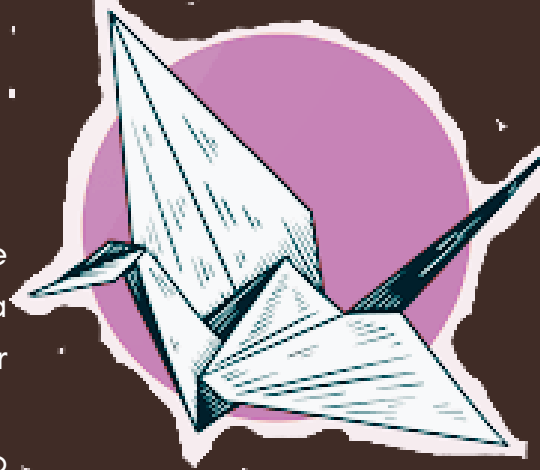
and strength. Every session was a deliberate fold towards resilience, each conversation a crease that strengthened the fabric of our collective dreams.

As we reflect, we see a community that is no longer waiting to be changed — it is crafting change, shaping hope with its own hands. At the heart of it all, remains our core belief: that transformation begins small — with a single fold, a single spark, a single hand reaching out to another.

Our only aim is to shape a beautiful piece of art from raw paper, and watch it take a shape so unique and so creative.

**कागज़ की तहों में उम्मीद पलती रही,
हर मोड़ पे नयी कहानी चलती रही।
हार्थों ने सपनों को आकार दिया,
औरत ने अपने हिस्से का आसमान लिखा।**

– Renu Mishra
Executive Director



ABOUT US

The Association for Advocacy and Legal Initiatives Trust (AALI), a feminist organization founded in 1998, has always stood firm in its belief that gender equality is not just ideals but actionable goals. Rooted in the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), AALI's work centers around feminist values and the notion that the law is both a tool and a site for transformation. With a survivor-centric approach, AALI works tirelessly to address violence against women, children, and marginalized communities, including trans individuals*.

AALI envisions an egalitarian social system that recognizes women as complete individuals and equal human beings through dialogues for gender equality.

To ascertain the organisation's vision, AALI works in a tripartite framework. The three strategies of the organisation are: **Access to Legal Aid, Active Citizenship, and Addressing Knowledge Gaps.**

Headquartered in Lucknow, AALI has a field presence in **94 districts of Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, and Uttarakhand.** Apart from this, AALI has been providing technical support to various grassroots' leaders across India.



INTERSECTIONAL FEMINIST APPROACH

At AALI, our work is grounded in an intersectional feminist approach that recognises how multiple forms of marginalisation—such as caste, religion, class, gender identity, sexuality, and disability—intersect to shape women's lived experiences. Rather than viewing gender in isolation, we engage with women across the full spectrum of identities and contexts, with a strong focus on those who are multiply marginalised. This commitment informs every aspect of our work, from community mobilisation to leadership development, where we intentionally prioritise women facing layered discrimination. By centring the voices and leadership of such women, we challenge dominant narratives and ensure that their experiences are not only acknowledged but drive transformative change.

Our survivor-centric approach means we engage with individuals across a broad spectrum of gender and sexual identities, including LGBTQIA+ persons who often face heightened vulnerability and systemic neglect. We have taken up cases involving LGBTQIA+ survivors and actively support them through legal and emotional aid, reinforcing our belief that equality and dignity must be inclusive. Whether in our crisis intervention work or long-term community engagement, we hold space for complex identities and work to dismantle the barriers that prevent marginalised individuals from accessing support, asserting agency, and leading change within their communities. This is also why our scaling has been more vertical than horizontal. Rather than applying a one-size-fits-all.

model, we go deeper within each community we engage with—taking the time to understand their specific realities, challenges, and aspirations. We believe that the experiences of all identities are different, and our work must reflect that complexity. By focusing on depth and specificity, we are better able to develop nuanced, sustainable responses that centre the lived realities of the most marginalised, ensuring that no voice is left unheard or overlooked.



AAI's Theory of Change

AAI envisions an egalitarian social system that recognizes women as complete individuals and equal human beings through dialogues for gender equality. Our organization undertakes research, capacity building, and pro-bono socio-legal support through our caseworkers and empaneled lawyers, with a strong focus on violence against women, children, and marginalized communities including trans*.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Deep-rooted patriarchal norms and societal structures continue to hinder women's ability to recognize, resist, and challenge violence and discrimination. This inequality is further exacerbated by limited access to justice mechanisms, creating barriers to legal recourse and perpetuating cycles of injustice. As a result, women and marginalized communities remain excluded from decision-making spaces, reinforcing structural inequalities and delaying progress toward a just, egalitarian, and equitable society.

RISKS

- Changes in the socio-political environment.
- Resource crunch
- Burnout
- Lack of physical/social security
- Ingrained patriarchy
- Resistance to change- cultural norms, beliefs and rituals.

BELIEFS

- Feminist and survivor centric approach.
- Law as a tool for social change.
- Developing women leadership.
- "जिसकी लड़ाई उसकी अघवाई" *"let those who have experienced it, lead the fight"*.
- Accountability at each level.
- Women raising their voices to claim their entitlements leads to gender equality.

VALUES

- Non-discrimination
- Integrity
- Equality
- Transparency
- Dignity
- Accountability
- Passion
- Inclusivity (Non-Judgemental)

STRATEGIES

- Access to Justice
- Active Citizenship
- Addressing Knowledge Gaps

SHORT TERM/ MID TERM GOALS

- Women will embrace individual identities.
- Lawyers will take pro-bono cases with a feminist approach.
- Women recognize discrimination, and raise their voice.
- Stakeholders start fulfilling their duties to support women's empowerment.
- Women organize as leaders and change makers.
- Increased women's participation in the justice systems.
- Improved access to justice delivery mechanisms for women.

LONG TERM GOALS

- Society is discrimination and violence free.
- Entire civil society is aware of their entitlements and those of others.
- Law is accessible to all and justice system is equally efficient.

STAKEHOLDERS

Survivors, Community, Youth, Police officers, Lawyers, Child Welfare Committee members, Medical Officers, Grassroots Leaders, Educators, Protection Officers/District Protection Officers, Block Development Officer/Village Development Officer, Anganwadi, ASHA, Gram Pradhan, Anti Human Trafficking Unit, Public Prosecutors, One Stop Centre, Department of Women and Child Development. Child Development Project Officer, Judicial Officers, HRI, etc.

OUR STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS

ACCESS TO LEGAL AID

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
- Enhancing Capacities of One Stop Centre
- Enhancing Capacities of Lawyers

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

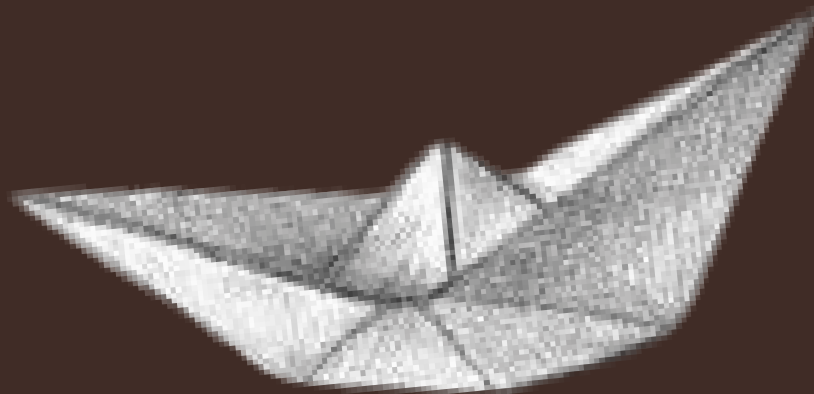
ADDRESSING KNOWLEDGE GAPS

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 grassroot 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 LEGAL AID



Reeta (name changed), a brave 7-year-old girl from a village near Lucknow, faced a traumatic ordeal that could have shattered her innocence and hope. On 17th March 2018, while her parents were away working as farmers, her life took a dark turn when neighbor Awadhesh lured her into a jungle under false promises of guava and assaulted her. Her cries for help were heard by a compassionate villager, Mainku, who saw the accused fleeing and promptly informed her mother.

Despite community pressures to hush the matter and societal stigma, Reeta's parents showed remarkable courage by filing an FIR on 19th March 2018, seeking justice for their daughter. However, financial hardships and fear of social backlash made it difficult for the family to pursue legal action confidently.

In 2021, recognizing their vulnerability, Reeta's family reached out to the organization AALI. With unwavering dedication, AALI stepped in to provide not only legal support but also vital psychological counseling for Reeta and her family. This comprehensive support helped them stay resilient amid ongoing court proceedings.

AALI's team meticulously coordinated the case, ensuring it moved forward without unnecessary delays and stood firmly by the family during every hearing. Their intervention empowered Reeta and her family to face the legal process with courage and hope.

On 8th February 2023, justice was finally served. The court sentenced Awadhesh to life imprisonment and awarded ₹1,00,000 as compensation to Reeta—an acknowledgment of her suffering and her right to a brighter future. With timely legal and emotional support, Reeta's healing journey has begun, and she has now started studying, dreaming of a future filled with hope and promise.

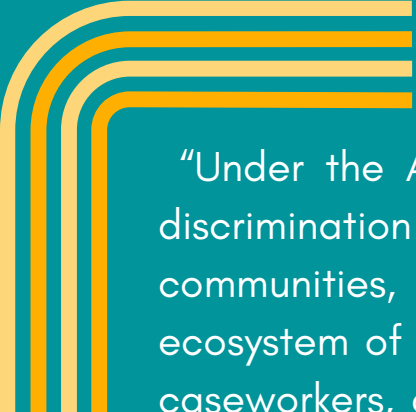
This case exemplifies how dedicated support systems can transform lives—empowering survivors, strengthening families, and reinforcing faith in the system.

SNAPSHOT OF FIGURES

1,685 instances of VAWG
approached AALI

Six Lawyers Workshops
were held with
106 participants from
57 districts from **4** states

Five OSC staff workshops were
held with
75 staff members from
64 districts of UP



“Under the Access to legal aid program, we provide pro bono socio-legal support to survivors of discrimination and violence against women and girls (VAWG), children, and other marginalized communities, including trans* individuals. A cornerstone of our approach involves strengthening the ecosystem of legal response through capacity building and sustained handholding support for lawyers, caseworkers, and One Stop Centre (OSC) personnel. We conduct regular trainings on survivor-centric legal practices and provide on-ground mentoring during court proceedings and district-level support. As a result, survivors are better represented, **delays in results** are reduced, and the overall quality of pro-bono legal aid is improved.

This past year, we saw how much people’s trust in AALI has grown. People from many parts of India reached out to us—through calls, messages, emails—just to get support from AALI’s Casework Unit. In fact, even the opposite parties in some cases have referred survivors to us, saying that AALI is known for its expertise.

We also saw a big change during our trainings. In the first phase, some OSC staff and young lawyers did not take the sessions seriously. But by the second phase, they were more involved, interested, and eager to learn. Many OSC staff now come to us not just for support with cases, but also for personal support in their work. They trust us. Young lawyers, too, have changed. Many who once had very patriarchal views now take up cases pro bono and regularly support our caseworkers in their areas. They are committed and ready to stand with survivors of VAWG.

These moments give our team the strength to keep going. When survivors, OSC staff, and lawyers come back to us for support, it reminds us that what we are doing matters. Their belief in AALI pushes us to continue with even more energy and hope.”

*-Aalima Zaidi
Coordinator- Casework Unit*



SOCIO- LEGAL SUPPORT PROGRAM

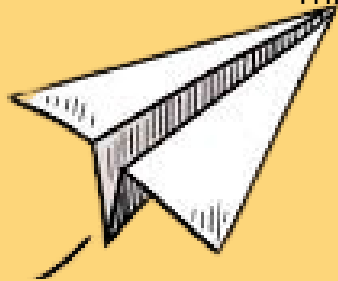
Socio-legal Support

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

Under this we have also strengthened 37 casework centers with trained caseworkers in 37 districts. Through this program, AALI intervened in 1685 instances of VAWG between April 2024-March 2025.

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 78% 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 68.7% to 73%, following the same trend as the year before, 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.
- 27% of the survivors had absolutely no formal education, highlighting the need for comprehensive support.
- 71% of the survivors were financially dependent on their husbands or families which makes them even further vulnerable to speak up.

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, children and other marginalised communities. This included visits to Kaushambi, Baghpat, Fatehpur, Kannauj, Banda, Jhansi, Chandauli, Amroha, Gorakhpur, Raebareli, Bahraich, Shravasti, Balrampur, Auraiya, Ambedkar Nagar districts of Uttar Pradesh, along with visits to Godda, Pakur, Deoghar, Palamu, Koderma, Hazaribagh, Lohardaga, Chaibasa districts of Jharkhand, and Nainital and Tehri Garwal in Uttarakhand.

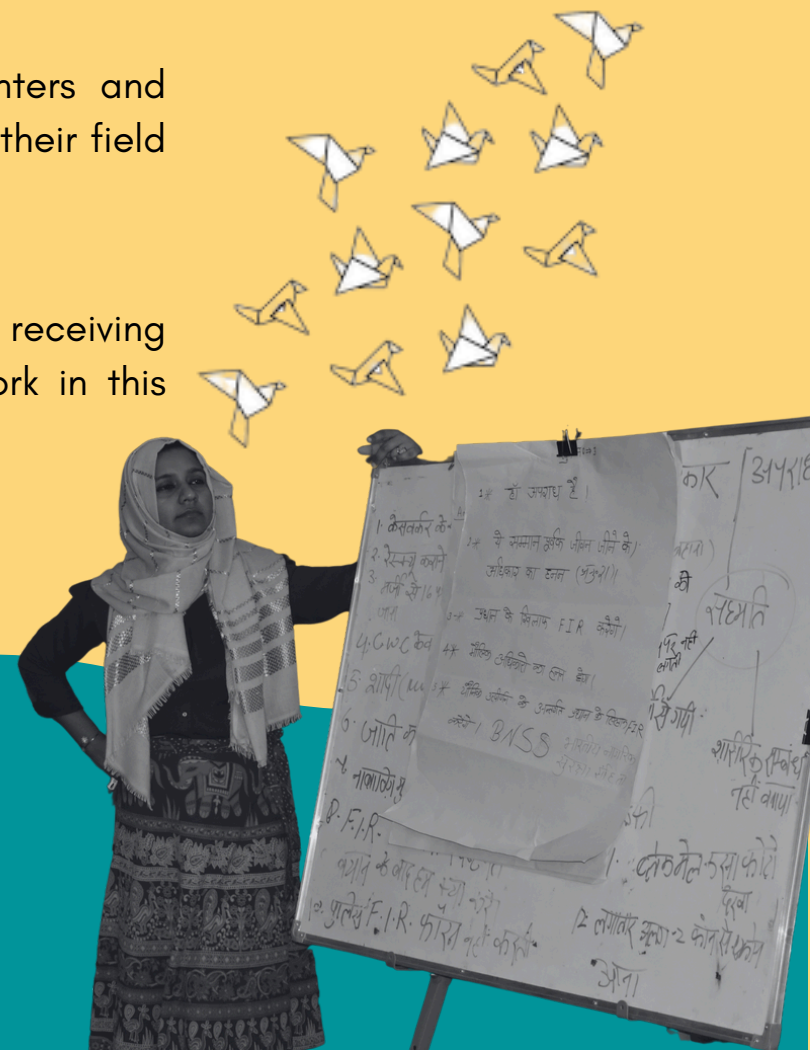
Handholding visits

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

What did we learn?

Following the training of the OSC staff, many caseworkers have started receiving support from the OSCs in their districts. This shows how all of our work in this strategy is helping build a supportive and survivor centric environment for the survivors of VAWG.

***A key focus of visits
this year was to facilitate
interface meetings with
stakeholders, ensuring
that caseworkers could
dialogue effectively with
government institutions.***



ENHANCING CAPACITIES OF ONE STOP CENTRES

AALI, 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. Over the past year, AALI conducted a comprehensive, multi-phase capacity-building program for One Stop Centre (OSC) staff across Uttar Pradesh. These sessions brought together participants from over 64 districts of UP and focused on strengthening their ability to respond to cases of violence against women and girls (VAWG) with a survivor-centric, feminist approach. Each phase of training built on the last, gradually deepening the participants' understanding of legal frameworks, psychosocial support mechanisms, and inter-institutional collaboration. The trainings covered relevant legislation such as the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012, the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013, and the Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023. Participants also learned to engage with compensation schemes and navigate challenges faced in the field through collective strategizing.

What Next?

We plan to take this initiative forward by moving into other states of our direct reach where we aim to building their capacities in the issues related to VAWG. We aim to sensitise them on gender and patriarchy. Along with this, we will conduct three refresher trainings with the existing lot.

Key Insight: A notable shift was observed across the year. Participants who initially approached the trainings casually gradually became more engaged and responsive. Many OSC staff returned to later phases with renewed commitment and actively sought support from the AALI team in their ongoing professional work. This growing trust and transformation have been deeply motivating, affirming the significance of sustained, values-based engagement in building responsive, empathetic support systems for survivors of violence.



ENHANCING CAPACITIES OF LAWYERS

AALI initiated its Enhancing Capacities of Lawyers program with a motto to develop a cadre of young lawyers who will build a survivor-centric supportive environment in the districts where team AALI is not directly present.

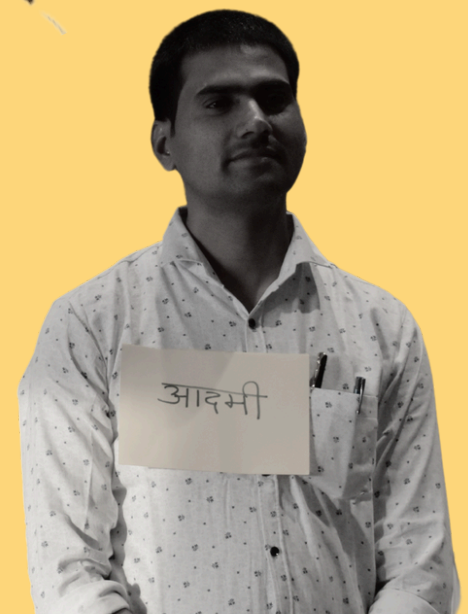
In 2024-2025, AALI trained 106 lawyers across four phases to strengthen survivor-centric legal responses. These lawyers were from 57 districts of the four states. The trainings covered feminist lawyering, ethical practice, gender identities, courtroom strategies, and various laws related to women* and children under evolving legal frameworks, including the BNSS 2023.

Workshops addressed real-world challenges—such as survivor hesitation, and lack of resources—while equipping lawyers with courtroom strategies like legal drafting, trust-building with survivors, and collaboration with support systems.

What Next?

We plan to conduct the last phase of the trainings in the upcoming year, along with one refresher workshop. We will also conduct two district level lawyers' workshop.

Our main aim this year will be to organise a national level lawyers' workshop where we build a bigger and more diverse cadre of lawyers, who are sensitised and are connected to each other for peer support in the cases of VAWG nation-wide. This will create a system of change and supportive environment for survivors of VAWG.



ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP



In November 2024, a 17-year-old girl from Sathiyav village, Azamgarh, contacted AALI seeking help to prevent her forced marriage. Despite her efforts to resist — including cutting her hair and injuring her eyes with Madar plant milk — her family remained adamant about proceeding with the marriage, scheduled for April 20, 2025. Under severe emotional distress and facing coercion, she threatened to take her own life if the marriage was not stopped.

Upon receiving the case, the AALI team immediately provided counselling and developed a strategy for intervention. Formal complaints were submitted to the District Magistrate, Child Welfare Committee (CWC), Child Marriage Prohibition Officer, and other concerned authorities. Home and village visits were conducted, and the family was sensitized on the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006.

Key legal steps were taken, including drafting an undertaking and affidavit, filling out Form 17 under the Juvenile Justice Act, and presenting the girl before the CWC. Her father signed an undertaking before the village head, and the CWC recorded statements and issued an order prohibiting her marriage until she attained adulthood, ensuring her right to continue her education.

Follow-up confirmed that the girl has resumed her studies and is regularly attending college, coaching classes, and the library.


SNAPSHOT OF FIGURES



6292 meetings with
100,887 community
women and youth

2679 community women
claimed social security
entitlements

1242 community women
received social security
entitlements



“Under the strategy of Active Citizenship, we organized meetings and workshops to raise awareness among women and young girls in the community about their entitlements. This strategy focused on important issues such as social security schemes, violence against women, the right to education, and fundamental rights. As a result of these efforts, women have started actively participating in panchayat meetings, expressing themselves openly, and taking leadership roles at the village level. Many adolescent girls who had previously dropped out of school have now re-enrolled.

To make the meetings more engaging and inclusive, we introduced new methods like storytelling, visual tools (such as charts, posters), and participatory games and role plays. These approaches make the sessions more relatable and helped break down complex information into something easy to understand and act upon. This also helped increase attendance, especially among women who initially hesitated to participate.

We also observed that whatever issues we identify and discuss during these community meetings, such as domestic violence, child marriage, or access to pensions, cases related to these concerns begin to surface more prominently from within the community itself. For instance, we received a significant number of cases of domestic violence after focused discussions on the topic. It showed that when issues are named and made visible, survivors feel more supported and come forward.

An important change we have noticed is that when women write formal complaints themselves, the process not only becomes quicker but also creates a sense of accountability. The written word empowers them. We have also seen an increase in access to social security entitlements as women learn to track applications, follow up regularly, and demand timely action.

When women and girls were informed about legal remedies for addressing domestic violence and were made aware of helpline numbers (such as 1090, 112, and 181), they stepped forward, raised their voices, and filed complaints. Women who used to remain silent are now not only speaking up but are also spreading awareness among others. They have recognized their issues and taken initiative toward finding solutions. This change clearly shows that when women are given knowledge and a platform, they don’t just transform their own lives but also empower and awaken their community. This is a strong and positive step forward in the direction of active citizenship.”

-Anshumala Singh

Coordinator – Women’s Leadership and Community Engagement Unit

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES AND FEMINIST LEADERSHIP 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, AALI conducted one three-day refresher training session with Community Leaders (CLs) and Young Community Leaders (YCLs), focusing on consent and sexual offences under the Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023. The objective of the training was to demystify myths around consent, challenge ingrained social expectations, and strengthen understanding of sexual offences, fundamental duties, and their practical application. The sessions also covered issues like gender, patriarchy, discrimination, violence against women and girls like domestic violence in both marital and natal family, child sexual abuse, sexual violence, violation of their rights, and

awareness about various government run social security schemes related to housing, education, health, pension, and retirement, ensuring women and girls are informed about their entitlements.

One of the most significant impacts observed through the Community Initiatives and Feminist Leadership Development Program has been the considerable increase in the mobility of the leaders themselves, along with a growing awareness among other women in their communities about their right to mobility. Along with this, the decision making power of the women has increased. These change have been particularly evident among young caseworkers and young community leaders, many of whom have challenged resistance within their own families to continue their education. Additionally, they are actively standing up against violence faced by them and are spreading awareness within their communities.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

Youth Workshops conducted by AALI Team -

AALI strengthened its commitment to legal awareness, gender equality, and youth leadership by conducting youth workshops across institutions such as Lucknow University, La Martiniere Girls' College, and others, reaching **1,046 participants**. Sessions focused on the issue like constitutional values, gender-based discrimination, sexual and reproductive health, mental health, financial literacy, Sexual harassment of women at Workplace, and recent legal amendments including the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) 2023. AALI developed modules to encourage dialogue and societal change, with notable workshops at Integral University and Isabella Thoburn College. MOUs were signed with Lucknow University and RMLNLU to strengthen legal awareness among youth. Following successful engagement, La Martiniere Girls' College expressed in future interest with AALI to promote gender sensitivity. These efforts continue to empower youth to question and challenge harmful social norms and culture.



Youth Workshops Conducted by YCLs and YCWs-

Young Caseworkers and Young Community Leaders conducted a total of 893 meetings, engaging 28,785 youth across schools, colleges, and communities. These sessions focused on gender discrimination, child marriage, sexual violence, fundamental rights, and social security schemes like Kanya Sumangala Yojana. AALI also facilitated the admission of four adolescents to Kasturba Gandhi Residential Balika Vidyalaya and provided INR 5,000/- each to two adolescents under Kanya Sumangala Yojana. In total. These initiatives have raised awareness and empowered youth, laying the foundation for future leaders.

REHABILITATION AND REINTEGRATION PROGRAM



Survivor's Meeting

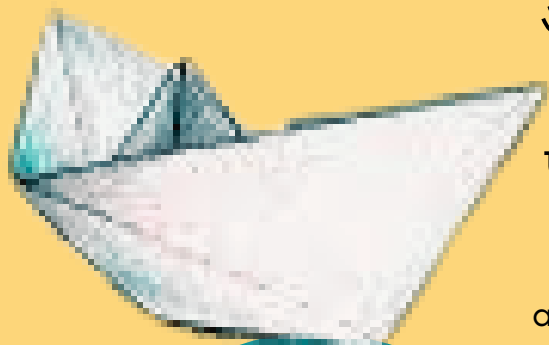
AALI organized a total of **6 survivor meetings** this quarter, engaging **99 participants**. These meetings focused on empowering survivors by emphasizing financial independence, women's autonomy, and agency. Discussions centered on overcoming violence, asserting voices, and pursuing education and employment opportunities. In these meetings, survivors shared personal experiences and learned about their legal entitlements, and financial independence. Guest speakers from various organizations provided valuable insights into skill development and employment opportunities, reinforcing themes of empowerment and gender equality. These meetings continue to provide survivors with the tools and knowledge to reclaim their autonomy, challenge societal norms, and work toward a future of egalitarian society.

Rehabilitation & Reintegration Program

AALI's Rehabilitation and Reintegration Program is making significant strides in empowering survivors by offering holistic support through crisis counselling, connections to social welfare schemes, and financial stability. Over the past year, the program conducted several key activities, including a visit to the District Probation Office (DPO) to discuss compensation and pension for survivors, and a visit to the Union Bank of India regarding compensation processes. The team also connected **20 survivors** with psychological counsellors, supporting them overcome trauma and gain clarity for the future. Additionally, survivors were assisted in submitting applications for government schemes, including the Family Benefit Scheme, and **18 survivors** were profiled for connections to vocational training and mental health programs. The program also facilitated visits to the DCP office for follow-up on a child sexual abuse case and prepared legal documents for court proceedings. AALI's efforts continue to ensure that survivors receive the necessary legal, psychological, and financial support to rebuild their lives and reintegrate into society, empowering them to make independent decisions and take charge of their futures.

ADDRESSING KNOWLEDGE GAPS





“आवा दीदी समझल जाई आपन अधिकार हो,
आवा बहिना समझल जाई आपन अधिकार हो,
मौलिक अधिकार में मिलल अधिकार हो,
पढ़ने, लिखने, खेलल का मिलल अधिकार हो।”

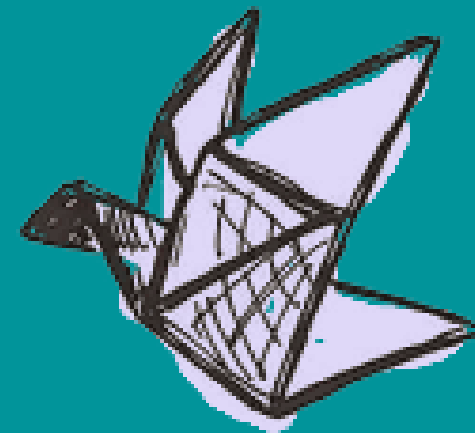
- A song written by the community leaders on
awareness about constitution during cross-learning
workshop


4,697 interface meetings
were conducted

SNAPSHOT OF FIGURES

1,376 government and non-
government stakeholders
were trained

19 Fact Finding missions
were carried out.





Over the past year, under our strategy of Addressing Knowledge Gaps, AALI has made significant strides in creating a more sensitive and informed ecosystem for survivors of violence. One of the most impactful efforts has been our Stakeholder Engagement Program, where we've conducted regular trainings and meetings with key government and non-government actors. These include police officers, protection officers, public prosecutors, child protection officials, medical officers, judicial members, and others who play a direct role in survivor support. Through these sessions, we've seen a shift in attitudes—many stakeholders now handle their roles with greater empathy and understanding. Survivors approaching police stations, block offices, or legal service authorities are met with more care, and this has led to visibly better outcomes in several cases.

Alongside this, AALI has been focused on collecting evidence and conducting research to monitor how laws related to women are being implemented on the ground. This work has not only helped us understand systemic gaps but also positioned AALI as a trusted ally in accountability processes. We are now actively part of over 26 Internal Committees and one Local Committee under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013—ensuring that processes are survivor-centric and legally sound.

Another major component of this strategy has been our Capacity Building Program for Grassroots Leaders. We have worked closely with women, children, and trans* persons at the community level, helping local leaders understand feminist values and respond to issues of violence with more sensitivity. This growing leadership at the grassroots is slowly shaping a more supportive environment for survivors, rooted in equality and dignity.”

*-Neetu Gupta
Coordinator- Partnership and Intervention Unit*

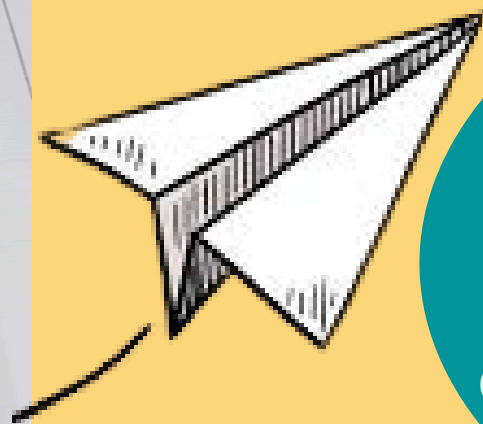


RESEARCH & EVIDENCE COLLECTION PROGRAM



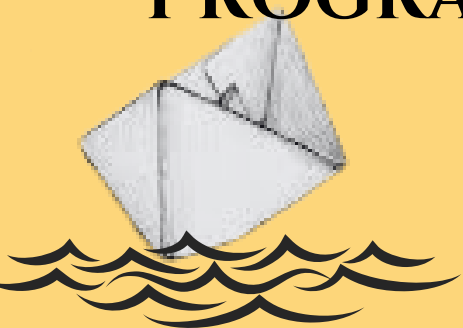
Under the Research and Evidence Collection strategy, AALI undertakes fact-finding missions and media scanning to document and respond to violence against women and children. In the past year, AALI conducted **19 fact-finding** across Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand. These included cases of child sexual abuse, sexual assault, honour killings, trafficking, witch hunting, and other forms of violence. The findings revealed systemic gaps in survivor support, societal bias, and institutional responses, prompting timely legal and psychosocial interventions.

Alongside this, AALI monitored media reports by scanning regional newspapers across four states—Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, and Uttarakhand—tracking 798 reported incidents of violence. These included sexual violence, child sexual abuse, honour killings, acid attacks, trafficking, cybercrime, and identity-based violence. The analysis informs AALI's work and strengthens its community interventions with evidence-based insights.



The analysis of media reports and fact-finding data revealed critical patterns in the nature of violence faced by women and children. In 55% of child sexual abuse cases and 46% of sexual assault cases, the perpetrators were known to the victims. This underscores the disturbing reality that violence often occurs within familiar settings, making it harder for survivors to speak up or seek immediate help.

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 this program, meeting with the government stakeholders are carried out by the AALI team, caseworkers, and the community leaders.

AALI, in collaboration with the Department of Women and Child Development, organized a state-level workshop focused on the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013. The event attracted 94 participants, including members from Internal Committees of various government institutions, such as the Department of Women and Child Development, Sashastra Seema Bal, and Local Committees from multiple districts.

Outcomes of the Program

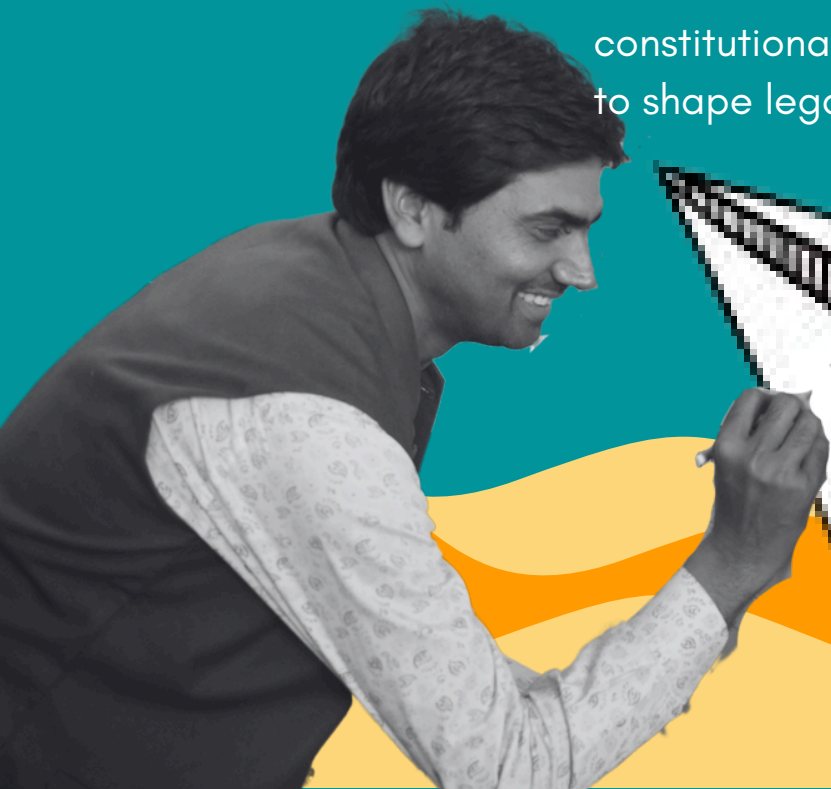
- AALI conducted a total of 4697 interface meetings with various stakeholders, resulting in tangible outcomes such as improved service delivery in Anganwadi centres benefiting over 200 women and 800 children in Azamgarh, and 36 women in Bhojpur gaining employment under MGNREGA. The District Probation Officer in one district also acknowledged the extra-legal practice of mediation under the domestic violence law, leading to critical institutional reflection.
- 1,376 government and non-government stakeholders were trained across topics such as gender discrimination, patriarchy, and key legal frameworks (SHW Act, 2013; PWDVA, 2005; POCSO Act, 2012). These capacity-building efforts reached stakeholders across multiple Indian states and 22 countries, enhancing cross-regional and international understanding.
- Strategic engagements led to a MoU with the Legal Aid Centre, Lucknow University, and participation from the Director of Prosecution in AALI's Lawyers' Workshop, deepening institutional partnerships and sharing of real-time challenges in prosecution.
- A two-day training with Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) on gender sensitization and the PoSH Act led to direct case referrals from SSB staff, reflecting increased responsiveness and trust in AALI's support mechanisms.



CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM FOR CHANGE MAKERS

Lawyers' Workshop- State and District level

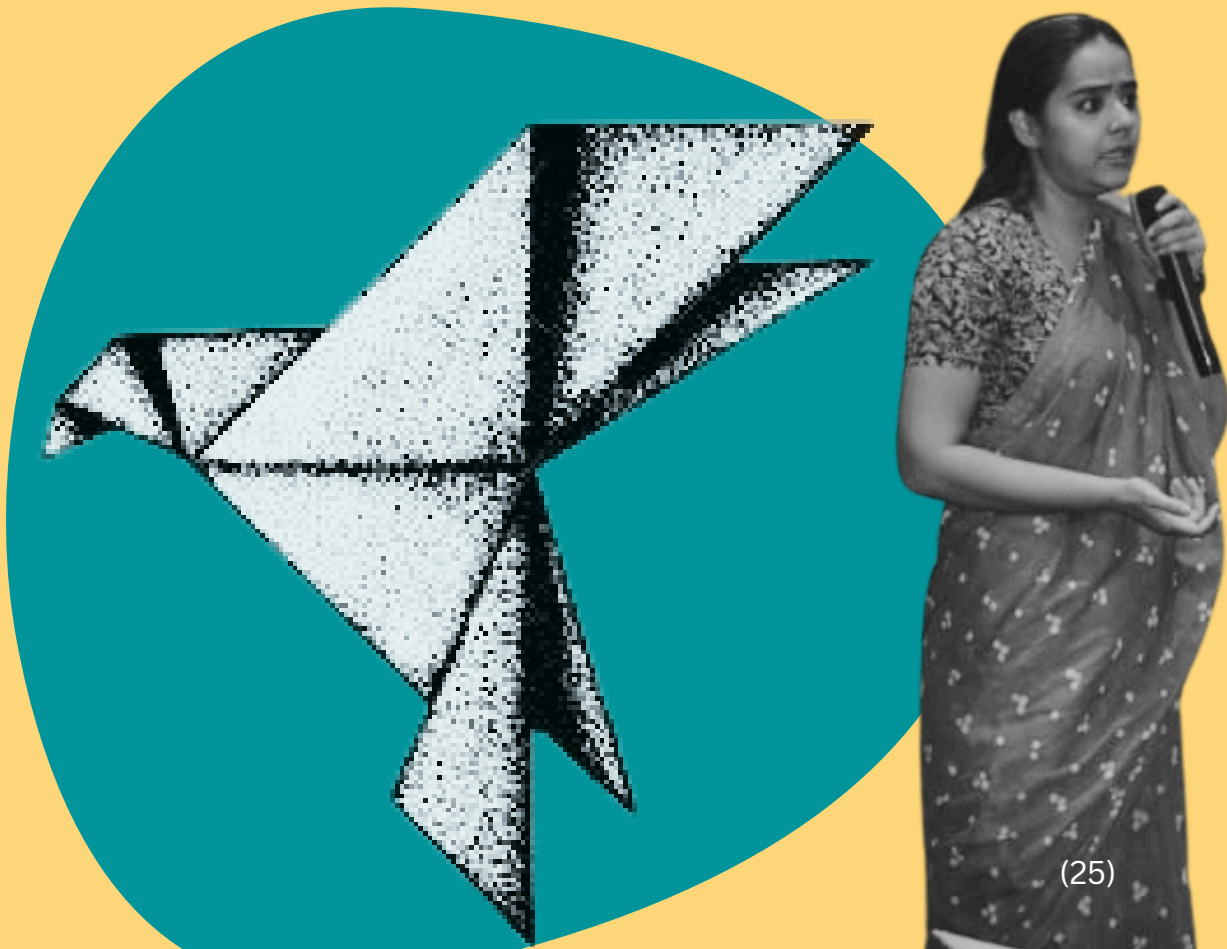
Under this program, AALI focuses on developing capacities of lawyers on women* related Legislations and Acts which in turn enable them in handling the instances of violence through a gendered lens. In the past year AALI conducted 2 State Level; and 1 district level workshop with 130 lawyers in total. Through this we also aim to bring women lawyers into focus. The State-Level Lawyers' Workshop on "Constitutional Values in the Gender Spectrum" was designed to deepen legal practitioners' understanding of fundamental constitutional principles such as democracy, equality, liberty, and fraternity. Recognizing the limited invocation of constitutional values in legal arguments at the district level and its broader deficit in society, the workshop aimed to bridge these gaps by fostering a nuanced comprehension of the constitution and its application in legal practice. By equipping lawyers with a constitutionally informed perspective, the workshop sought to strengthen their ability to shape legal interpretations and contribute to social equality.



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.

Under its Capacity Building of Grassroots Leaders program, AALI organized multiple engagements throughout the year, including an in-person meeting in Lucknow with 150 leaders from 66 districts across Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand, and Bihar, and two online meetings with 40 and 80 grassroots leaders respectively. These meetings focused on reviewing commitments, sharing updates on district-level interventions, and deepening understanding of laws such as the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013. The program has played a pivotal role in equipping leaders with the tools to challenge systemic violence and promote gender equality.



What did we learn

- Discussions helped the participants better understand legal mechanisms and their role as external members in redressal committees.
- Participants committed to raising awareness by creating educational resources and conducting community discussions.
- The meetings emphasized the need for collective, sustained responses to address rising cases of gender-based violence.
- 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.

CROSS LEARNING PROGRAM

The five-day residential training brought together 73 grassroots participants—caseworkers, young leaders, and community organizers—from across four districts for an intensive and participatory capacity-building experience. A key focus of the workshop was the development and performance of Nukkad Nataks (street plays) around nine critical gender and social security themes: disability rights, public space reclamation, patriarchy, sexual abuse, youth-led change, domestic violence, trafficking, entitlements, and witch-hunting. Sessions included script development, technical skills such as digital literacy, community messaging through songs and jingles, and collective reflection through activities like the Tree of Change. Discussions on constitutional values were woven throughout, reinforcing the grounding of these issues in fundamental rights.



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For many women, the act of traveling to the training was an act of courage and transformation. Leaving home—often for the first time—challenged not just physical boundaries, but emotional and social ones too. Train journeys became metaphors for flight and freedom, and shared laughter over meals or music sessions symbolized new forms of solidarity. The space not only enabled skill-building but also redefined visibility and mobility for participants who are routinely denied both. As one participant said, “If we only pray at home, it’s just for ourselves. But coming here, we prayed for the whole community.”

BUILDING FOR TOMORROW: INITIATIVES DRIVING GROWTH AND WELLNESS

To foster alignment and innovation, AALI organizes annual Strategic Review and Planning Meetings in serene locations. These meetings provide a dedicated space for teams to evaluate progress, refine feminist strategies, and develop actionable roadmaps while strengthening collaboration. The tranquil settings—nestled in nature—encourage reflection, creative problem-solving, and team bonding, aligning with AALI's values of mindful leadership and inclusivity. By stepping away from daily routines, participants return with clarity, renewed energy, and cohesive plans to advance gender justice.



On the occasion of International Women's Day 2025, AALI organized a collective day out with its team members to reclaim public spaces and engage in meaningful dialogue around the global theme for the year: "Accelerate Action." The outing was designed not just as a commemoration, but as a powerful assertion of women's right to access and enjoy public spaces freely and safely. During the outing, team members came together to sing songs of women's empowerment, courage, and resilience, creating an atmosphere of solidarity and strength. These songs served as a medium to honor the struggles and achievements of women, while also inspiring continued action toward gender equality.

"I learned about the expenses of complainants and witnesses (under Section 312 of the Cr.PC) and the Victim Compensation Scheme for the first time. I gained clarity on the benefits available to women under the Domestic Violence Act (DV Act), as well as maintenance and other remedies for women in laws like the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 (HMA), Family Courts Act, 1984 (FCA), and Special Marriage Act, 1954 (SMA), beyond Section 125 of the Cr.PC. I understood the complexities of marriages and divorces in different religions and how the law helps address these issues. Case studies and case laws helped strengthen my understanding of legal processes. The materials and books provided by AALI were very helpful, for which I am thankful. I am deeply grateful to the AALI team for their supportive environment during the program. They explained things with patience and sometimes necessary strictness."

Advocate Ali Faraz, Jalaun

"I have learned many things throughout the trainings, but the most important for me was understanding the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act, 2005. Many survivors of domestic violence come to our center, and earlier I didn't know the detailed provisions under this law. Now, with my new knowledge about the various reliefs available—especially the provision for compensation—I feel more confident in supporting survivors. This will support them access their entitlements and move towards living a life of dignity."

-OSC staff, Ayodhya

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

- 132 girls who had previously dropped out of school have resumed their education, with many agreeing to continue their studies while staying in hostels, out of which 27 had dropped out very early, right after primary classes.
- Girls interested in extracurriculars and sports are also being encouraged in community meetings. One notable example is a girl who resumed playing kabaddi and went on to participate in a district-level tournament outside her home district.
- In a village in Varanasi, women from the community directly raised a complaint with the District Magistrate about respiratory issues caused by a rice mill operating in close proximity to residential areas. Following their intervention, the mill was shut down.
- 15 Caseworkers have been chosen in various committees and government bodies like Internal Committee, Local Committee, Juvenile Justice Board, Child Welfare Committee, and District Legal Services Authority.
- AALI was invited 72 times in the past year to facilitate trainings on laws related to women and children, reflecting growing recognition of its expertise.



ENGAGEMENT WITH GOVERNMENT STAKEHOLDERS

AALI engaged with the Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD) to initiate trainings for all One Stop Centres (OSCs) across districts.

NABARD conducted five levels of gender trainings—from clerical staff to officers—with AALI as the facilitating partner.

BIRD, during its international exchange programme, invited AALI to train foreign executives on laws related to women and children.

NIPCCD included AALI's members as a resource persons in its Internal Committee (IC) orientation programmes.

DWCD has asked AALI to support the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for relevant institutions.

After sustained efforts to build awareness around the Sexual Harassment at Workplace (SHW) Act, DPOs from five districts invited AALI to conduct specialised trainings in their regions.

Internal Committees

AALI is a member of several Internal Committees (ICs), including many within government institutions. While such cases are often overlooked or expedited due to administrative overload, AALI's presence and consistent engagement have led to improved outcomes. In the past year, seven cases saw interim relief granted and final judgments delivered.

Lawyers Engagement

Lawyers trained by AALI have started applying gender-just principles within their own families and legal practices, reflecting deep personal and professional transformation. For example, A lawyer fought for his sister's right to education and employment at home.

Judgements

With the support of our empaneled lawyers and caseworkers, 11 cases were resolved in favour of the survivors, including 1 case of mubarat divorce, 3 contested divorces, and 4 mutual divorces. A tribal survivor from the Oraon community secured an ex-parte divorce and a one-time alimony of ₹50,000, despite facing significant legal and social barriers. In 2 of Section 125 Cr.P.C. cases, survivors were awarded monthly maintenance of ₹5,000 and ₹4,000 respectively, and in another instance, ₹12,000 per month was granted—₹8,000 for the survivor and ₹4,000 for her daughter.





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