

Impact Report

Saksham

Legal Aid and Economic Empowerment Project
Project Period - June 2025 to August 2025



Project Summary

Saksham initiative aims to empower women facing domestic violence (DV) and economic marginalization through a combined approach of legal aid and economic rehabilitation. The project will provide legal services and case documentation to at least 25 women survivors, create income-generating opportunities through Scooty driving training for 15 women (linked to Rapido taxi services), and catering/food cart business training for 5 women. A key focus was also on community-based legal awareness generation to build preventive resilience among vulnerable groups.

Objectives

- Provide free legal aid and case management support to 25 women facing domestic violence and related issues.
- Train and certify 15 women in Scooty driving and connect them to Rapido and other services.
- Train 5 women in food preparation and entrepreneurship and equip them with food carts.
- Conduct legal awareness programs on women's rights and domestic violence laws with support of legal firms and lawyers providing legal aid.

Target Group

The Saksham project primarily reached to:

- Women survivors of domestic violence, sexual violence, abandonment, and economic marginalization.
- Women between the age group of 18–40 years, who are in the most vulnerable stage of economic and familial responsibility.

Project Implementation and Achievements

1. Scooty/Bike Driving Training



Under Saksham, 15 women were selected for Scooty driving training in Bhopal. This training, organized from 15th July to 21st July 2025, equipped them with safe driving skills and official certification. The initiative's purpose was to challenge gender stereotypes in mobility and create new employment opportunities. Out of the trained group, 5 women have already started taking small rides, initiating their linkages with Rapido and local delivery services. This early adoption demonstrates both the demand and feasibility of women entering the transport sector. By enabling women to move confidently in public spaces, this training also symbolized women's right to mobility and independence, beyond just income generation. In addition to practical Scooty training, the participants were given **awareness sessions on traffic rules and safety**

protocols. These sessions aimed to ensure that the women not only learn to ride but also become responsible and aware riders. The goal is to prepare them to be **role models** and to inspire others in their communities by setting an example of safe and confident driving.

Another key activity was the successful completion of 2 **bakery training program** for 38 **adolescent girls** one in **Balika Griha**, Bhopal and one in Shelter Home in Nehru Nagar, Bhopal. The training focused on skill development in baking, where the participants learned to make **cakes, cookies, muffins**, and other baked goods. For most of the girls, this was their **first**

experience in professional baking, and they expressed great enthusiasm and joy in participating. This training not only imparted them with a new skill set but also helped boost their confidence and aspirations for the future. The girls responded actively, and many have expressed interest in starting small bakery units or seeking internships in bakeries after turning 18.



2. Food Cart and Catering Entrepreneurship



To support livelihood diversification, 5 women were trained in catering and fast-food preparation in July 2025. Following the training, 4 food carts were distributed – three to individual women and one jointly to a pair of women. These carts were branded under the name “**Gauravi Food Cart**”, representing strength and visibility for women entrepreneurs.

This model not only generated income but also created a sense of ownership, recognition, and dignity in entrepreneurship. Additionally, one training program was conducted in a Balika Shelter Home, where 20 adolescent girls participated, learning basic cooking and entrepreneurial skills. This early exposure is expected to inspire younger girls to see food business as a viable pathway.

Case Study 1: Savita Raikwar



Savita Raikwar, a resident of Ishwar Nagar, Bhopal, lives with her two children from her second marriage. She has been associated with Gauravi for the past four years. Initially, she worked as a domestic helper, but during orientation sessions, she expressed her desire to start her own business. With the support of the Saksham Project, Savita received a food cart. This opportunity has enabled her to earn independently, provide for her children, and move towards a more dignified and self-reliant life.

Case Study 2: Jayshree Barku Mali

Jayshree Barku Mali, from Saket Nagar, used to work in households as a cook. However, the lack of consistent work often pushed her family into financial crises. Through the Saksham Project, she received proper training and guidance to start her own business. Today, Jayshree is preparing to launch her own Manchurian food cart with project support. This new venture not only promises her stable income but



also strengthens her confidence to become financially independent and support her family sustainably.

Case Study 3: Chanda Bhosale

Chanda Bhosale, a resident of Annan Nagar, lived with her husband and one child. However, due to continuous domestic violence, she returned to her maternal home and registered a case of domestic violence at the One Stop Centre. With legal support, her case for domestic violence and maintenance is ongoing in court. Chanda's journey reflects the harsh realities many women face but also highlights the role of legal empowerment. The Saksham Project is supporting her to reclaim her dignity and secure justice.

Case Study 4: Vandana Gajbhiye & Pooja Dhanak—A Journey of Shared empowerment



Vandana Gajbhiye, 43, from Gautam Nagar, Bhopal, faced hardships after marriage while raising two children. To sustain her family, she worked as a domestic helper. Her life changed when she attended an awareness meeting and enrolled in cooking training. With determination, Vandana successfully started her own food cart, creating a stable livelihood.

During this journey, she met 20-year-old Pooja Dhanak, a neighbour from Gautam Nagar. Pooja's parents worked as daily wage labourers, and financial struggles forced her to leave school after the 10th grade. Vandana motivated her to join the food cart initiative. Together, they now run a thriving small business, supporting their families and inspiring other women.

This partnership highlights how shared opportunities, and mutual support can empower women to rise above challenges and build sustainable livelihoods.

Case Study:5 - Yashoda Suryawanshi



Yashoda Suryawanshi, 32 years old, resides in Kolar Guest House, Durga Nagar. She was married in Bhopal through traditional customs and has two children. Five years into the marriage, conflicts began between her and her husband, leading to mental distress. To support herself, Yashoda started working in bungalows as a domestic help. During a community meeting organized she came to know about Gauravi - the *One Stop Center*. She visited the center where counselling sessions were held for her and her husband. Yashoda also learned about cooking training

opportunities. After completing the training, she set up her own food cart. Today, she is self-reliant and leading a dignified and empowered life.

3. Legal Aid and Case Management



The legal aid component proved to be one of the most impactful aspects of Saksham. Over the reporting period:

- 12+ cases were forwarded to court, with 11 formally filed and 3 in process.
- Survivors were supported with case documentation, counselling, and referral services, ensuring that they could pursue justice effectively.
- Paralegal support was enhanced through collaboration with legal experts, ensuring survivors received accurate guidance and timely intervention.

This direct assistance strengthened survivors' confidence in the legal system and reduced the barriers that typically prevent women from reporting or pursuing justice.

4. Legal Aid Camps and Community Awareness

To expand outreach, Saksham organized 8+ legal aid camps with active participation from lawyers and legal advisers. These camps allowed direct dialogue between women and legal professionals, bridging gaps in knowledge and trust.

One major highlight was the launch of the "Gauravi Abhiyaan" on 16th June, with the core themes of Nyay (Justice), Suraksha (Safety), and Sehat (Health). Under this campaign:

- 15+ camps were conducted in Anganwadis, schools, and colleges, reaching 2000+ people.
- Women and girls were sensitized on legal provisions, rights, and safety measures.
- The campaign also helped generate 12+ new cases, later processed in court.



5. Legal Trainings on Key Legislations



Awareness sessions were conducted on multiple legal frameworks:

Domestic Violence Act (DV Act), POCSO Act (Protection of Children from Sexual Offences), PoSH Act (Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace). More than 10 sessions were organized, covering 280+ participants across schools, slums, colleges, and government institutions. These sessions contributed to building preventive resilience by informing both women and men about rights, responsibilities, and protections under law.

6. Collaboration with Madhya Pradesh Police – Anti-Drug Campaign

One of the most noteworthy achievements in July was our collaboration with the **Madhya Pradesh Police** for the state-wide campaign titled "**Nashe Se Duri Hai Jaruri**" (Distance from Drugs is Necessary). As a partner organization, we integrated our **Gauravi Abhiyaan** with this campaign and executed it intensively across Bhopal with the active support of **9 police stations**.



Key activities carried out under this campaign included

- 14 Street plays (Nukkad Nataks)
- 48 community awareness sessions
- 12 awareness sessions in schools and colleges
- 2 drawing competitions
- 2 rallies on drug awareness



The campaign reached over **3,500 individuals within just 15 days**, creating widespread awareness about drug abuse and its negative impact on youth and society. Our creative use of street theatre and interactive sessions made the campaign accessible and relatable to local communities. In recognition of our work, the **Madhya Pradesh Police awarded our organization** for outstanding collaboration.



A major milestone was achieved when this campaign was **officially recognized and registered in the World Book of Records**, with our NGO listed as a key implementation partner.

7. Interns and Volunteer Engagement



A strong volunteer base amplified the project's reach. With support from 4 colleges, more than 50 interns were engaged over a three-month period.

Interns contributed to:

- Community orientation programs.
- Documentation and reporting.
- Mobilization for awareness campaigns.

This partnership built youth ownership of women's rights issues while providing Saksham with additional human resources for outreach.

Celebrations and Milestones



The Saksham project celebrated several milestones that created collective joy and strengthened solidarity:



Graduation ceremonies for Scooty trainees, where certificates were distributed in the presence of community leaders, creating visibility and pride. We celebrated **11 years of Gauravi.**, Inauguration of the Gauravi Food Carts, marked by a community fair, where women entrepreneurs showcased their cooking skills and served their first customers. Campaign launches, like the Gauravi Abhiyaan, were celebrated with street plays, songs, and marches that brought together women, men, youth, and institutions.

Such celebrations fostered confidence among women, strengthened community ownership, and showcased women's empowerment as a collective achievement.

Impact Evaluation

The Saksham project created significant social, legal, and economic impact:

1. Legal Empowerment
 - Survivors reported increased confidence in approaching courts and institutions.
 - More than 12 legal cases were taken forward, creating precedent and trust.
2. Economic Independence
 - 15 women trained in Scooty driving broke gender stereotypes in mobility.
 - 5 women trained in the food business initiated entrepreneurial ventures.
3. Community-Level Change
 - 2000+ community members sensitized on rights, safety, and health.
 - Youth engagement through 50+ interns created multiplier effects.
4. Institutional Collaboration
 - Strong partnerships with Madhya Pradesh Police, legal firms, and colleges enhanced legitimacy and sustainability.

Social Indicators Observed

- Shift in Gender Roles: Women entering Scooty driving and food cart businesses challenged stereotypes and gained public recognition.
- Improved Confidence Levels: Survivors shared increased self-esteem and reduced fear of stigma.
- Community Responsiveness: Growing participation in legal aid camps indicated higher awareness and willingness to report cases.
- Youth Participation: Engagement of interns highlighted an attitudinal shift in younger generations toward gender justice.
- Increased Case Filings: The number of legal cases filed showed that survivors trusted the system when supported by Saksham.

Conclusion

The **Saksham** project demonstrated that legal empowerment and economic independence are inseparable in addressing women's vulnerabilities. Survivors who received both legal and livelihood support were better positioned to pursue justice and rebuild their lives. The combination of direct legal aid, skill training, community awareness, and institutional collaboration ensured that the project was not limited to individual beneficiaries but influenced broader community norms.

Moving forward, scaling up such initiatives, particularly expanding Scooty-driving linkages with formal platforms and creating larger women-led catering collectives, will strengthen sustainability. Continuous legal awareness campaigns and partnerships with state institutions will further build resilience. Above all, Saksham's success lies in the courage of women who chose to step forward. Their stories are the true impact of the project – inspiring, challenging, and transforming communities.

Whether it is a survivor preparing her legal case, a woman learning to ride a Scooty for the first time, or a girl baking cookies in a shelter home—the seeds of empowerment are being sown. The journey ahead is long, but these steps mark a significant shift toward **women-led resilience and social justice**.

Domestic violence survivors to ride to independence with delivery jobs

Our Staff Reporter
BHCPAL

Women survivors of domestic violence will soon take on roles as delivery agents and bike taxi operators under the Saksham Project—a joint initiative by ActionAid Association and Mukul Madhav Foundation (MMF). This effort aims to empower survivors with training and employment in a sector traditionally dominated by

men.

Initially, around 30 women associated with Gauravi One-Stop Crisis Centre will be trained to ride scooters and prepared for work with leading companies such as Blue Dart, Zomato, Swiggy, and Rapido. The initiative will first be launched in Bhopal, followed by Indore.

"The initiative not only provides sustainable livelihood opportunities but also breaks

Helping hand

■ **30 women to be trained as delivery agents and bike taxi riders**
■ **First launch in Bhopal, then Indore**

gender stereotypes by supporting women to become delivery executives with reputed delivery platforms," said Soumya Saxena of ActionAid India.

■ **Partners: ActionAid Association & Mahila Manch Foundation**

■ **Companies onboard: Blue Dart, Zomato, Swiggy, Rapido**

Training will cover scooty riding, road safety and soft skills, helping women reclaim mobility, confidence and independence. The first batch will include around 15

women, with a trainer for two-wheeler riding currently being selected. An open space will soon be finalized for conducting the sessions.

Soumya said that earlier experiments with training women to drive auto-rickshaws and taxis for ride-hailing services didn't meet expectations. "Women feel uncomfortable driving autos and cab services," she said.



Representative pic