



## SAKAR ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23

Address: SAKAR, Flat No.1, First Floor, Galaxy Homes, Rajendra Nagar, Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, India,  
PIN - 243001; Mob: 91400 89573/94575 37809; Email id: sakar.s@rediffmail.com



*Sakar (Social Action for Knowledge Building and Awareness Raising), established in November, 2005 has been working on areas such as development, rights and gender inclusion in a sustainable manner.*

**This is our story for the financial year 2022-23.**

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### ***Our Vision Statement***

SAKAR's vision is a society built on the pillars of knowledge, awareness, justice, and gender equity; where the marginalized, especially women and children, are greater stakeholders in their change process, making them more empowered and their lives more meaningful.

We strive to do this through planned processes that enable them to fulfil their information needs, develop unity and cohesion and build their capacity so that may take structured decisions and motivated action for their rights and betterment.



### ***Our Mission Statement***

The mission of our organization is to provide a platform to marginalized girls/women (mainly the Dalit and Muslim girls/women and other socio-economically vulnerable girls/women), develop women leadership, especially with rights based approach and promote an empowered network of these adolescent girls/women. The voice of the unheard and vulnerable needs to be raised, so that equal opportunities are available and imbalances of caste, discrimination and gender reduced.

### **From our Desk**

We completed 17 years of our journey invested in the advancement of women and adolescent girls, working on issues related to gender-based discrimination, reproductive health, mobility, education, right to play, right to legal age consensual marriage and advocacy on different issues related to identity, dignity and security of adolescent girls and women.

With women collectives we have focussed on capacity building of the sangathan/organized group, revisiting their vision, mission and their structure. Work with the women elected representatives was also deepened. Besides this, effort was made to spread the network to other blocks. Thus, a more structured approach, intensification as well as making the effort more extensive, were all part of our mandate, which we have addressed with fair success.

During this period, our work with the adolescent girls has deepened and we are working with girls in the five blocks. We worked on a variety of issues such as reproductive health issues, mobility issues, access to public spaces, right to education of girls, sexuality issues etc. Thus overall, we touched upon diverse dimensions that strengthened their self-awareness, life skills and imbibed a sense of reclaiming their space with a focus on gender inclusion.

We also worked with different stakeholders and advocated on different issues related to women and girls. Access to government schemes was important in this overall journey. Thus, we took into our plan and intervention, stakeholders, who could impact or were interlinked to inclusion, rights, privileges and entitlements of girls and women.

In the next year we plan to further expand our work related to adolescent girls, in the district. We will also work with the schools, highlighting sports intervention in the school by also involving girls from the community in the schools. We will closely work with the stakeholders and service providers in advancing the rights of the adolescent girls. Our work related to violence against women and strengthening the sangathan/organized group of women will continue with definite intent.

Our journey has seen its ups and downs in the intervention arena as well as in the organisation. Post Covid the world has seen the new normal in terms of work strategies, life of the community, team and organisation. The sector itself is going through a transformation phase.



However, with the support from the board of SAKAR, our team, association with donor organisations and networks, we have gradually prevailed over most of these odds.

### MEET OUR BOARD

Sh, Ashok Singh- President

Ms. Nitika Pant- Secretary

Ms. Shilpi Agarwal- Director

Mr. Harish Vshishth- Member

Ms. Hameeda Khatoon-Member

Ms. Sahroj Fatima-Member

MS Rekha Chauhan- Member

### Our Core Objectives :

- ✓ To develop leadership potential in women to increase their involvement in decision-making processes, primarily centred on their political, social, and economic empowerment.
- ✓ To advance gender equality and equity by putting an end to stigmas and taboos against women and girls connected to health, education, and employment, promoting equality and inclusivity for both the sexes.
- ✓ To address challenges that are socially relevant and unique to the context in which they arise in the areas of health, sanitation, education, and the structural mechanisms.



- ✓ To design holistic and long-lasting transformation processes in which the target populations are active participants rather than spectators.



**Our Program Focus Areas have been:**

**Sensitizing society and Empowering Collectivized Women's action to rise against Violence against women**

**Empowering adolescent girls to be leaders and change makers, deepening their self-awareness, bodily autonomy, right to space and movement and understanding of legal rights and privileges**

**Facilitating holistic development of adolescent girls in diverse areas such as health including sexual and reproductive health, education and life skills**

**Improving participation of women, especially from the marginalized sections, to participate in local self-governance, especially at the Gram Panchayat and Block levels**

**Improving analytical and leadership skills and access to information and create sustainable development through greater access to government schemes and benefits and various other available opportunities and entitlements**



**SAKAR has essentially been working in the Bhojipura, Kyara, Nawabganj, Meerganj and Bhuta blocks in the district of Bareilly.**



## Our Board of Contents

Our Outreach

Our Donor Partners

Our Registration and Legal details

Our Interventions

Happy to be recognized

Our Capacity Building Initiatives

Our Team and Team Structure

Audit Report



## Human Outreach and Collectivization:

Over the years, we have reached out to:



6200 direct beneficiaries

Approximately 10 000 indirect beneficiaries

6000 households benefitted as a result of the intervention, either directly or indirectly

More than 10 000 girls, whose lives have been impacted positively through our efforts

More than 2000 women, engaged in CBOs, called 'Mahila Shakti Sangathans' that are relentlessly striving towards women's empowerment

## Our Donor Partners and Networks

Over the year, we have been partnered by a good number of donor national, international and individual donors. They have faith in us and have supported as well as acknowledged our work.

Besides working with various partners, we have also collaborated with organisations like CREA, Sahbhagi Shikshan Kendra, Uttar Pradesh Coalition for Empowerment of Girls etc. Our Partners and Networks are certainly our strength.

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## Our Registration and Legal details

<b>Establishment in</b>	November 2005
<b>Registration in/ Regn. No., tax benefit</b>	12 (A) and 80(G) registered
<b>Registered under</b>	Societies Registration Act, XXI. Of 1860 RENEW0221002850
<b>FCRA no.</b>	136300033 (renewed till 2028)
<b>TAN No.</b>	LKNSO9605B
<b>Darpan Id</b>	Up/2017/0165239
<b>CSR no.</b>	CSR00021022





## Our Interventions

1

### Holistic Development of Adolescent Girls, with focus on Violence against Women Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights and Right to Consensual Marriage

SAKAR has been working with adolescent girls centred on 18 villages of 5 blocks. We worked with nearly 600 girls in these villages. Strong girls' collectives have been formed in these villages as a consequence.

SAKAR has held rigorous sessions on issues like sexuality, gender based violence, patriarchy, rights and laws, reproductive health, right to choice and consent for marriage, family planning, homosexuality and attraction etc. with these girls.

Meetings between the SAKAR team with the sangathan/collectives have been regular during the year. Discussions on these core topics have regularly taken place during these meetings so that gradually some behaviour change may be ensured among these girls in this positive direction.

Besides this, the girls have also been taken on exposure visits to places like Health centre, bank, ATM, block and district, Women and Child Welfare department, one stop crisis centre etc.

*As a result of their understanding and sensitivity to rise against violence against women, the girls also held a 16 days' campaign on violence against women. Approximately 550 girls participated in this campaign, which was spearheaded by the SAKAR team. Overall, a greater interest in helpline numbers towards reducing violence against women has been noted in the community.*



Sunita and Rajkumari from Bhojipura well understood the meaning of right to consensual marriage.

Sunita, whose marriage had been fixed with a man, refused to marry him after he started demanding dowry and started creating undue demands and tensions in her life. She also returned the mobile phone and the minor gifts that she had received from him.

Likewise, the girls' collective, created by SAKAR, helped Rajkumari in marrying the partner of her choice through, court marriage. An active role was played by Sunita in this regard.

*The strength of the girls' collective has turned out to be one of the biggest outcomes of the organization's efforts. In the collective, there is complete communal harmony and support between the Dalits, the Muslims and the marginalized from the other sections.*

*For example, Ilma from Tanda village was prevented by her family from further studies because they did not like that her elder sister who had completed class XII had started taking decisions.*

*However, the girls from the girls' collective got together and started persuading her family. Today, her family has allowed her to continue her studies.*

*As many as 30 cases of Domestic violence and 10 other cases of violence has been taken up by the collectives.*



## Developing Adolescent Girls as Leaders and Community Change Agents

SAKAR has also been working with more than 600 girls in the intervention belt to develop leadership qualities in them. They are also being constantly hand held and sensitized to understand their roles as community members and change agents. Regular meeting with the girls and the girls' collectives are being held in the belt by the SAKAR team members and interactive discussions and sometimes, action plans on these issues are being chalked up in these meetings.

Besides this, our organization also held Leadership camp for girls and provided issue based training on legal literacy, leadership and action plans in these camps. Selected leaders from the girls' collectives were sent to the state to get training on gender, patriarchy, sexuality and such topics.

### Achievements

*This helped in developing deeper understanding of the girls on various issues, rights and leadership roles.*

*As a result, the leaders of the girls' collectives have started taking strong leadership roles and supporting other girls in the collective on different thematic issues such as the right to choice, the right to decision in dressing choice, the right to play sports etc.*

*In the past one year the girls and women have started taking up their issues at the Panchayat, block and district levels. They have also started working on access to government schemes. In this process, they have played a pivotal role in filling 25 forms for ration cards, out of which 10 have been received. As many as 40 cases of access to government schemes have been taken up by the girls' collectives.*



Today there are approximately 60 girls in emerging leadership roles, who are motivating the other girls in the collectives and trying to take up common issues.

**More than 50 girls are spreading awareness among their collectives on various issues related to gender equality and overall rights and entitlements.**

**Through the efforts of these girls, 2 beneficiaries have been linked to the Sukanya Vidyadhan Scheme & 2 beneficiaries have been linked to the Vidhva pension scheme**

As a result of the collectives' efforts 2 beneficiaries have received ration cards and 2 of them have received labour cards.

The girls are taking visible action in leadership roles in campaigns. For example, they assumed leadership roles in taking out rallies, school events and organising the block level and district level opening as well as closure event for campaign against violence against women.



3

Through our efforts, the adolescent girls in our target geographical areas have greater mobility now and have started breaking gender barriers

The regular interactions, training, capacity building, leadership development and exposure visits and also the collectivised strength of the girls have paid off.

Today, these girls are breaking gender barriers through their mobility, dress code and reclaiming public space. They not only do yoga for their good health but also play games of their choice and in clothes that suit the need of the game. This was unthinkable a few years ago.



SAKAR has provided the girls with sports equipment, so that they can play football and other outdoor sports. Sports camps for these girls have also been organized.

*However, bringing the girls out to the sports arena was not an easy task. However, today these girls are empowered enough through our interventions and could negotiate at home and gradually many of them came to the forefront to play football. This was challenging for them, as they faced comments on their playing a 'boy's game' and also dressing up like them.*



4

*But overall, the parents and villagers are now more sensitised and have accepted this.*

### **Sensitisation on Right to Education and Education Support to Adolescent Girls**

SAKAR has always believed in holistic multi-pronged intervention. Our effort was to make the girls aware of their right to education and to motivate them to continue their education, enter into mainstream education and live their life with dignity.

With this approach, we are also providing educational and coaching support to 30 adolescent girls in Bareilly so that they may do even better in their studies. As part of this endeavour, we have also set up 4 learning and bridging centres; two in rural areas



and two in urban slums of Bareilly town. In these centres, we are working with 150 girls and about 30 alumni. Some of the core activities that we are doing towards the education of adolescent girls in these 4 learning centres are:

- \* Motivating the girls, their parents and guardians towards the right to education of girls
- \* Setting up informal education centres for the girls who dropped out from school.
- \* Making learning visits, sports, library, collective reading etc. an essential part of the program.
- \* Meetings and idea exchange with the alumni.
- \* Regular assessment of students including base line survey and intermittent assessments, to know how the girls are progressing.
- \* Providing nutritional supplements to the learners in the centre.
- \* Holding meetings and interactive sessions, though provoking film shows with a message, campaigns and special day celebrations at the centres with the community.



The org this new geographical area that we have included in our work efforts.

participation is steadily growing too.



**The girls in the centres are actively participating and eager to learn. They say that they look forward to coming to the centres.**

A better acceptance of the need of education for girls is now visible in the community. Parents are relatively more invested in their girls' education.

**Approximately 80 percent parents are showing intention to support the centres in some way or the other.**

A better understanding of some of the important days' celebrated and the values and aspirations these days stand for, is now perceptible among the girls and also among the community members, who participate in such celebrations.

**There is a greater demand among the community for such centres.**

In a very short while 4 girls have been mainstreamed. More than 60 girls are progressing exactly as per work plan and gradually reaching age appropriate learning levels, for mainstreaming.

Sonam belongs to the Gaddi community in Jogi Nawada. Her mother says that the girls from their community are detested if they use phone or spend much time watching TV. Things in Sonam's household were such that she used to get chastised even if she stood in front of their door for a while.

While she was initially enrolled in a school, her parents took her off the school on the insistence of her uncle, who pointed out that girls from their family were not seen outside. He made it clear to the family that it is disgraceful that a girl from their family should be 'loitering' outside.

Gradually with visits of the SAKAR team, the centre teacher's regular insistence with the family, the general atmosphere of change that out interventions was bringing in the region, and also peer pressure from the girls' collectives, Sonam's parents became more lenient and started taking a stand for her education. tried to convince the family.

Today, Sonam's mother regularly brings her to the learning centre near their house. Both the mother and the daughter are happy by the change of the situation.



Sabia was stopped from going to school by her family, while her brother continued going to school. Her father was of the mind-set that girls should not study and their job is to support in the household chores. But Sabia wanted to study and finally approached the centre teacher, seeking her intervention.

The centre teacher finally managed to motivate her family to send her to the centre but on the condition that she would go on every alternate day. Sabia was practically illiterate and this coupled with her irregular presence, made learning every difficult for her.

However, with much encouragement and effort of the centre teacher, she learnt all the alphabets and numbers. Overjoyed, Sabia read all the alphabets in front of her family, once she reached home. This made her family and even her father, happy. Today, they encourage her to go to the centre every day.



5

**Working towards Collectivisation and Empowerment of Women**

Our program in 15 villages in Bhojipura block of Bareilly essentially focuses on the empowerment of women, especially through collectivized strength, so as to make the effort sustainable. Here we have gradually sensitized women and formed their collectives, which are led by elected representatives. **This collectivised group is called the Mahila Shakti Sangathan. Our core objective is to develop an understanding on the issues of women and strengthen understanding of gender discrimination and foster mind sets and actions towards gender equality.**

*The collective and its leaders work on issues related to domestic violence, abuse of adolescent girls and children, education and health as well as access to government schemes. To further empower the women and reinforce their roles in local level decision making, we focus so that the elected representatives or other members can also become Pradhans and Panchayat members.*

SAKAR team facilitates monthly meetings among the women to make the discussion and reflection on their core issues a regular part of these women's lives. SAKAR has also facilitated training with elected women representatives of their collectives on the issues related to violence, leadership, feminism etc. Besides this, interface with government officials at block, tehsil and district was organised which helped in increasing their knowledge base and outreach.



## Achievements

As SAKAR sees a strong outcome oriented potential in the intervention and the story of the women's collectives spread, demand for such intervention has increased. The collective in Bhojipura block is now gradually expanding to other blocks.

The women have started raising their voice against domestic violence. As many as 20 cases have been filed, of which 2 have already been ruled in their favour.

They have also raised their voice against 5 cases of eve teasing, ruled in their favour.

50 cases for the Sukanya Vidya Dhan Yojana have been filed and benefits have been received in 33 cases.

6 cases of Disability Certificate have been filed and benefits of 4 certificates have already been received.

Demands for Ration Cards for 20 families were filed and benefits of 12 cards have already been received. Besides this, ration cards for 14 members was demanded in different cases, of which 12 have been sanctioned.

The Sangathan/collective has dealt with 30 cases of various types for women.

The women have filed for 7 cases of widow pension and received it in each case. They have also filed for 7 cases of Sumangala Yojana and received it in each case.

The women and in general, the community, is more sensitised to the role of women elected representatives in Panchayats.

Women's elected representatives have started participating in the Gram Panchayat and Gram Sabha meetings.

The women are working systematically to strengthen their collectives, with more emerging leaders and proactive women coming to the fore.

The women's collective leaders have prepared an action plan for the block and district level administration. This action plan covers infrastructure aspects like road construction to areas of rights and entitlements and access to various government schemes etc.

There is definite awareness among the women on issues pertaining to gender and gender-based discrimination.

The entire villages are today aware of the women's collective and have started considering it with some respect.



Story of Change



Ishrat, 39 years, lives in Karampur Chaudhary village in Bhojipura block. She has 5 children and was subjected to violence. She could neither raise her voice for her daughters' education, nor participate in meetings and trainings. Even her mobility was restricted and she could only visit her relative's house.

However, members of SAKAR read stories from Neelam ki kahani, which motivated her to break her silence and move forward. At the same time, the collectives also opened dialogue with her husband. As a result, her daughters have started receiving education.

Ishrat is now also a member of the Self-help Group, a ward member, and an active member of the women's collectives, who takes up issues along with other women. She has now even received training from the block and is more aware of her rights.

Her husband is still not too supportive but at least the violence has stopped, her daughters are getting education and she is able to leave home and participate in women's issues.



**Recognition and Felicitation from the Government**





SAKAR was facilitated thrice this year, by the district administration for the work it is doing in the field of women and adolescent girls' rights and empowerment, focussing on identity, dignity and safety.

It feels good to know that the work of the organisation has been recognised by the administration over the years. We have been facilitated thrice this year, by the district administration for the work it is doing in the field of women and adolescent girls' rights and empowerment, focussing on identity, dignity and safety.



### Our Capacity Building Initiatives

Capacity building of the team has always been an integral part of our organization development. As such, SAKAR has systematically invested in capacity building of its team so that it can deliver power packed, efficacious programs.

Our capacity building initiatives have ranged from in house trainings to sending our team members to different capacity building programs and on exposure visits. Some of the core focus areas during these capacity building initiatives have been:

- thematic understanding of issues
- technical know how
- accounts training
- Legal literacy training

Here is a glimpse of some of our capacity building initiatives for our team:

- ∞ Reporting Writing.
- ∞ Team building and leadership workshop.
- ∞ Program review and monitoring workshop.
- ∞ Thematic input on Violence against Women and POSCO Act.
- ∞ Accounting practices and changes in FCRA.



## Our Team and Team Structure

SAKAR has a core team along with a field team and finally, volunteers. Majority of its team members are women. Here is a picture of our organogram:

