



For Just Futures

Annual Report 2022-23

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ActionAid Association (India)

About ActionAid Association

ActionAid Association is a nationally registered organisation working with the poor and marginalised people in India since 1972. We are working across 25 states and three union territories through our 13 project offices. Together with communities, supporters, institutions and the government, we strive for equality, fraternity and liberty for all.

Since 1972, the poor and the excluded have been at the centre of our discourse and actions in India. Over the past four decades, we have extensively worked with socially excluded communities, Tribals, DNTs, the urban poor, people living with HIV/AIDS, small-scale farmers, fisher communities, people affected by disasters and persons with disabilities, with a focus on the most marginalised and dispossessed amongst them, including women and children.

ActionAid Association is an organisation that works in solidarity with the most marginalised communities to further social and ecological justice. We believe in equality and justice for all and support the leadership and empowerment of the marginalised communities in their pursuit for a life of dignity as equal citizens of India. We draw inspiration and guidance from the Constitution of India and international covenants that envision a just and equal world.



Introduction

ActionAid Association finds the efforts for change made by the marginalised and vulnerable very inspiring. We are encouraged to collaborate with these vital and collective voices and action towards social and ecological justice. We have strengthened marginalised people's awareness to advance localised actions and engage and support the administration on their issues.

ActionAid Association strongly believes that children are ambassadors of change from the vulnerable sections in the communities and hence, we strive to build a socially just and sustainable future for the children of the most marginalised. In all our interventions we strive to ensure that children have appropriate access to free, compulsory and quality public education and safety from violence, abuse and any kind of exploitation. Our community interventions resulted in identifying and mainstreaming of 1,20,135 out-of-school and dropout children (57,389 boys and 62,746 girls) in 12 states in India. Similarly, we covered 11,870 public schools across the states. A total of 2,500 child marriages (girls and boys) were prevented with the support of volunteers and government officials in 5 states. In Odisha, 12,407 villages were declared Child Marriage Free by the Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD). We facilitated the formation of 791 Child Protection Committees in Bihar and Rajasthan. We also facilitated the linkages of 100 child labourers to the schemes under the Chief Minister Relief Fund in Bihar. In Jharkhand we engaged in the development of 10 districts' district action plans (DAPs) which were adopted by the Jharkhand government for adolescent empowerment.

ActionAid Association has been focussing on uplifting women's conditions and was involved in formulation of women's policies with a special focus on single women in Uttar Pradesh. We also focussed on the women's policy formulation in Madhya Pradesh and interacted with elected representatives in Gujarat on this issue. We also prepared the advisory for witch branding.

Post pandemic, as it became important to support persons from marginalised communities to rebuild their livelihoods, we supported more than 2,900 individuals, mostly women, in vocational training and strengthening livelihoods. We linked many to various social security schemes and entitlements across the states. We ran 7 facilitation centres to ensure that the workers had access to information and were able to claim their entitlements and get covered under government schemes. On addressing bonded labour, detailed case studies and documentation of each case was prepared and shared

with NHRC and the local administration for each rescue across Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. In the last year, 57 bonded labourers got release certificates, and 23 bonded labourers got a compensation of Rs 20,000 each.

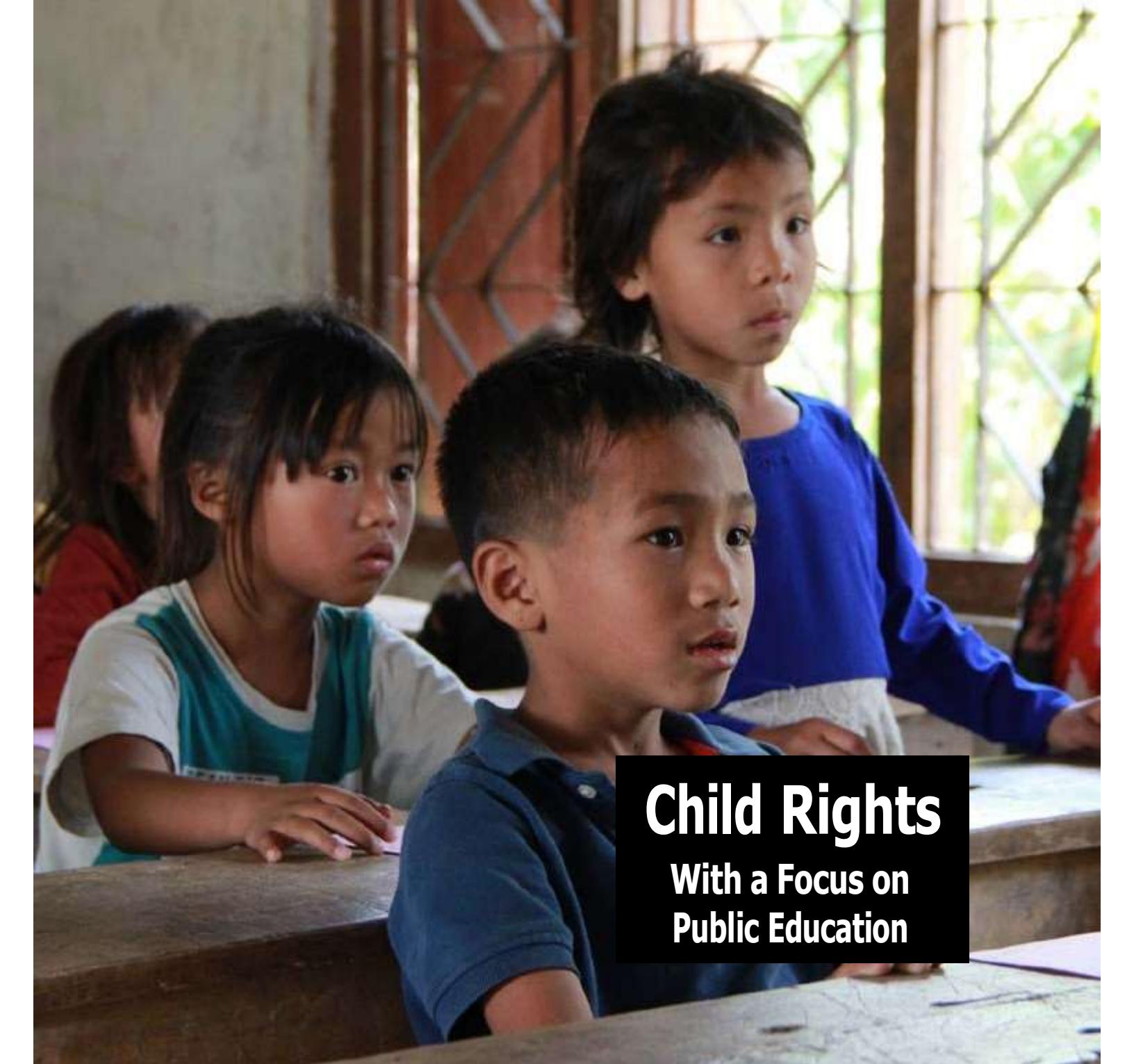
ActionAid Association organised campaigns to promote sustainable agriculture which is in sync with the ecology and local climate. A total of 6,221 families across various states were sensitised and 2,435 people learnt how to use indigenous methodologies in agriculture. We supported farmers' groups collectivising them for collective entrepreneurship through 3 farmer producer organisations (FPOs), having a membership of around 4,000 farmers. Basant is the first women-led FPO in Bundelkhand and she has moved forward for getting a license for seed production.

We have been working for the protection and improving the water quality of around 200 lakes. Community interventions led to the preservation and rejuvenation of around 100 water bodies across various states. We conducted campaigns for awareness across 12 states and facilitated applications for land under the Forest Rights Act (FRA). Community efforts facilitated the filing of 586 IFR and 117 CFR applications by the community, strengthening the understanding of 815 forest Rights Committee members and community leaders on FRA provisions. A total of 389 families received homestead land titles.

ActionAid Association responded to various disasters with humanitarian support and helped more than 17,000 families with relief support across various states. Many states suffered from floods during the year. We carried out relief distribution in the flood affected states – Assam, Gujarat, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. The landslide in Joshimath caused a huge problem for the people. ActionAid Association supported the affected families with relief who had to leave their homes and live in alternative shelters.

ActionAid Association celebrates the leadership and agency of community-based leaders who defend social and ecological justice not only for their own people but uphold these constitutional values and hope for the whole humanity.





Child Rights
With a Focus on
Public Education

At ActionAid Association we strongly believe that children are ambassadors of change in the communities from the vulnerable sections, so we strive to build a socially just and sustainable future for the children of the most marginalised. We strive to ensure that children have appropriate access to free, compulsory and quality public education and safety from violence, abuse and any kind of exploitation. We have ensured the identification and

mainstreaming of out-of-school and dropout children in public schools across the country. The ActionAid Association team has also focussed on school infrastructure development, SMC strengthening, ensuring attendance and children transition to public schools. We are also engaged on the issue of gender in the National Curriculum Framework and have been involved in state level as well as national level workshops.

Impact in Numbers	
Out-of-School Children Brought to School	1,20,135 62,746 girls and 57,389 boys
Public Schools Covered	11,870
Child Marriages Prevented	2,500
Child Protection Committees Formed	791

Strategic Engagements

National Level

Since early 2022 ActionAid Association has been engaged in developing a base paper for discussion on a gender just curriculum vis-a-vis 'the New Education Policy 2020' for engagement at state and national levels. This focusses on context, gaps and needs with respect to girls' education, gender equality in education in the global and national context

(education policies, programme and schemes), status of girls' progress in education made towards achieving gender parity in education. We have also been supporting systemic steps for sustaining the progress made and provisions of the right of children under the RTE Act, 2009. Some areas that we investigated include curriculum for description, standards for learning, teaching learning material, classroom transactions, evaluation assessment (how it will be measured if a student has learned; pattern of QPs and exams) and other areas like time management in school, involving local artisans

and community members, project based/ game-based / play-based learning and partnerships.

State Level

Our support and engagement with the local administration was successful in drawing attention to the reality of a large number of out-of-school children (OoSC) in Uttar Pradesh (including children affected by seasonal migration and children with disabilities/abilities), who neither get enlisted in enrolment registers, nor are drawn back to the fold of schooling. Strategic engagement through the Nai Pahal Initiative resulted in a large jump in enrolments and attendance and sustainability of the new process. As a result of the intervention, several other policy changes and refinements in implementation were noted at the state level in Uttar Pradesh. Each of these is expected to have a sustainable impact on the enrolment and attendance of children in the years to come in the state. This was firmed up with the development and sharing of guidelines (such as for identification and mainstreaming of OoSC) from time to time. Overall, a system of evidence-based state level engagements with authorities was planned and executed in a steady manner. All this played a pivotal role in issuing the SHARDA (School-Har-Din Ayen) circular and triggering policy level changes. Identification and mainstreaming of 1 lakh OoSC children including children with disabilities was successfully completed in Uttar Pradesh.

In partnership with the Women and Child Development Department and different administrations and UNICEF, ActionAid Association has been leading from the front in Bihar, Odisha, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Rajasthan on adolescent empowerment and ending child marriages. Our ground efforts on strategic engagement in five states brought remarkable results as 12,407 villages in Odisha have been declared Child Marriage Free by DWCD with prevention of 2,500 plus child marriages across the country. In Odisha, 12,407 villages have been declared Child Marriage Free by DWCD with prevention of 1,855 child marriages across state. In Bihar, the team has regularly engaged and facilitated the formation and strengthening of 449 Child Protection Committees in 8 districts. They have successfully facilitated linkages of 100 child labourers with the schemes under the Chief Minister Relief Fund. In Jharkhand the team successfully engaged in the development of 10 districts' DAPs for children and adolescent empowerment. In this regard a government notification has been issued for government officials so that a district can implement the intervention as per the DAP.

In Rajasthan, the team has successfully facilitated the formation and strengthening of 262 village level Child Protection Committees and also successfully linked 8,548 orphans with the state government's Palanhar programme.

We have been working to facilitate and engage with state governments in recent years to promote and protect child rights, with a particular focus on improving public education and child protection. ActionAid Association is also focusing on increasing the enrolment, attendance and transition of vulnerable children to government schools in these states. Mapping and mainstreaming OoSC and dropout children (including children affected by seasonal migration and children with disabilities/abilities) have been done in 14 states (UP, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Odisha, Rajasthan, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kashmir, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab). In Uttar Pradesh we have launched several programmes to address specific challenges in public education, including development of school infrastructure in rural and urban areas with the aim of providing basic amenities such as drinking water, toilets, school boundaries, playgrounds and community kitchens. In Maharashtra, Gujarat, West Bengal and Goa we have also engaged with government schools to promote STEM education, where computer and other devices for SMART classes to schools in remote areas have been provided thereby improving access to education for children in these areas.

Studies and Research

Several rapid assessments in states (Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal) have been done to understand the availability of basic

facilities in government schools as per the Right to Education Act, 2009. We have also had consultations to assess the National Curriculum Framework (NCF), which brings to light the aims and commitments of the National Education Policy. In this regard state level consultations \ on the gender equity component in NCF were also held after the assessments in several states in India.

During the assessments, the teams found that the three waves of the Covid-19 pandemic adversely affected the lives of vulnerable communities and their children. These waves directly impacted the children's education. The situation led to many instances where the children became child labourers and girls got married before they turned 18. Children also lost their interest in education. Some children lost their parents too during Covid-19, making them even more vulnerable.

National/State Campaigns

Back to school campaign on education: The campaign 'Back to School' or 'School Chalo Abhiyan' or 'Yes to School, No to Child Marriage/ Labour' across the country focused on in-school learning and mainstreaming of out-of-school children including dropout/pushed-out children through various awareness generation activities. The campaign reached out to 11,34,420 people comprising 2,35,165 boys, 3,02,450 girls and 5,96,805 adults. The campaign emphasized 'ensuring preparedness of schools for the safety



of school children, encouraging members of SMCs, PRIs, parents and guardians to enrol or send back their children to school, motivating children to attend the school on a regular basis and mobilising government officials at various levels to ensure mainstreaming of children particularly children trapped in child labour and child trafficking.

Several weeklong activities like awareness walks, marathons, wall writing, drawing competitions and social media and signature campaigns were undertaken and interactive sessions were held with the special participation of more than 2,000 SMCs, 2,500 teachers, 5,000 plus government officials and 25,000 parents of families of dropouts and out-of-

school children. Through our initiatives we covered 11,870 government school across Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Maharashtra, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Telangana, West Bengal, Odisha and others. We also trained 2,500 active volunteers on RTE compliant schools. The aim was to gain local support for strengthening the schooling system and identification and mainstreaming of OoSC including children with disabilities. We also strengthened the volunteer networks at village, block and district levels to redress school related grievances at the panchayat and tehsil levels so that they can contribute to increasing enrolment, attendance and transition of children to government schools.

Campaign on scholarships: A campaign on act on scholarships was also conducted across the country. It reached to 2.5 lakh children and finally 52,688 children successfully received the pre-matric and post-matric scholarships. ActionAid Association along with community volunteers reached 2.5 lakh community members in 120 districts in 11 states (Gujarat, Kashmir, Bihar, Bangalore, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, Punjab, Maharashtra and Rajasthan) across the country. In Delhi, career counselling was provided to 714 young girls and 246 students were helped in filling forms for scholarship schemes.

Campaign on child protection: We organised a campaign on child protection issues to sensitise

the local community on child protection issues (legal age of child marriage (boys and girls), dowry, child trafficking and child labour) with the support of the district child protection department. During the campaign several activities were taken up to orient the local community and parents. In Rajasthan, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, UP and West Bengal, we were intensively engaged in ensuring many activities in the intervention areas. We successfully reached out to 12 lakh adolescents and sensitised them on child protection issues like child marriage legal age, child trafficking, child labour and bad effects on health. We also reached out to 25 lakh people in six states. A total of 2,500 child marriages (girls and boys) were prevented with the support of volunteers



and government officials in five states. These state teams also engaged frontline workers, Child Protection Committee members and task force members during the campaign in the districts. In every state the vehicles for the awareness campaign were flagged off by the district magistrate, the district development commissioner, collectors, sub-divisional magistrate and the labour commissioner.

Community Engagements

Mapping and Mainstreaming of Out of School Children (including children affected by seasonal migration and children with disabilities/abilities): ActionAid Association has closely worked with concerned government departments to ensure children's enrolment, attendance and transition from one class to the next. We engaged with teachers, government officials, frontline workers, community volunteers, SMC members and community leaders for identifying and mainstreaming OOSC and dropout children. We also strengthened the frontline workers, SMCs, PRI representatives and various community structures to ensure that 100 per cent of the children are in school. Along with volunteers we completed the mapping of OoSC and dropout children and jointly identified 1,20,135 out-of-school and dropout children including those affected by seasonal migration and children with disabilities (57,389 boys and 62,746 girls in 12 states- Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Hyderabad, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya

Pradesh, Delhi, Punjab, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Odisha.

Community Meetings: Across UP, Bihar, Odisha, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, we successfully arranged weekly meetings with community members and various community level structures to mobilise them on issues like quality education, girl enrolment, children's attendance, SMART classes in school, school infrastructure development and child protection issues (child marriages, child trafficking and child labour). Our interventions also worked for developing partnerships among the government schools and the communities for strengthening school functioning.

Interface meetings with Government officials:

Several meetings were organised with the concerned government officials to ensure awareness programmes at all levels across the state. We had several meetings with the education department at the district, block and panchayat levels to ensure that the activities under the intervention were carried out. We did timely sensitising of government officials to ensure the functional committees, task forces and management committees were able to perform their roles in the respective departments.

Celebration of Child Rights Week: On the occasion of Children's Day, a two-week long campaign was carried out to celebrate childhood and child rights across the country. Several activities were designed where children and adolescents directly shared their voices and views on issues which affected them with the various stakeholders. In this series, at the Bihar panchayat level a Bal-Darbar was organised in which 311 panchayats across the state were covered. Bal-Darbar was meant to engage with children and adolescents and educate them about their right to participate in all matters that they were concerned with, their needs, aspirations and giving them due respect in all decision-making processes.

Assessment of Government Schools: ActionAid Association conducted rapid assessments in government schools in Bihar, Kashmir, Hyderabad, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Telangana. This rapid assessment was done to understand the basic facilities available in government schools as per the RTE Act, 2009. The rapid assessment in Bihar was conducted in 25 and 400 public schools including Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas and madarsas, to understand the basic facilities as per RTE Act, 2009. One rapid study was done in 25 government schools in 3 districts (Samastipur, Muzaffarpur and Patna) on the National Curriculum Framework (NCF). A state level consultation on the gender equity component



and NCF at the A N Sinha Institute of Social Studies, Patna. Other rapid assessments were done in Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Kashmir.

Training and Capacity Building: ActionAid Association trained about 80,000 children/adolescents on financial literacy skills, child protection, health and hygiene and the Covid-19 pandemic issues across the country. We also engaged project volunteers in orienting adolescents and children in several states. The AA team also built the capacities of the frontline workers and 5,000 government officials on their important role in addressing child marriages, child trafficking and child labour.

The team also capacitated 3,000 faith leader and PRI representatives on child protection issues through regular interface meetings across the country. In several states, we also strengthened the members of the school management committees on their role in the school's day-to-day functioning and management; 500 teachers were trained on curiosity-based learning using the Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) method and 5,96,805 community members (1,27,864 men and 4,68,941 women) including traditional leaders were oriented on the impact and prohibition of child marriages through various strategies such as movement of caravans reaching the village level, gram panchayat Child Protection Committee, SHG meetings, village health nutrition day and observing national and international days ensuring Covid-19 norms such as social distancing, wearing masks and small group gatherings.

Activation of Child Protection Committees:

ActionAid Association facilitated the formation and strengthening of 5,000 plus Child Protection Committees, 9,056 task forces on child marriages and dowry across various state (Rajasthan, Odisha, Bihar, West Bengal and Jharkhand). These committees and task forces were formed and strengthened to ensure the reduction in percentage of child labour, child trafficking and child marriages across the country. ActionAid Association provided technical and monitoring support to concerned government officials in

developing the implementation strategy for regularly addressing children's social protection issues in their respective states.

Linkages with Government Schemes: The teams facilitated the linkage of vulnerable children and adolescents with government schemes. A total of 40,302 children/adolescents were linked with government schemes across the country. The teams also facilitated 52,688 children in getting scholarships in several states. A total of 12,250 adolescent girls and boys were encouraged to take the Covid-19 vaccinations through model vaccination camps. They were also sensitised on Covid-19 appropriate behaviour and successfully took two doses of the Covid-19 vaccine. 8,548 children (no parents and single parent) were identified and linked with the Palanhar programme.

A total of 30,343 girls and boys were provided financial assistance amounting to Rs 32,19,87,000 from the Building and Other Construction Workers (BOCW) board and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) linkages in Odisha for access to education, vocational /technical education and skill training. A similar exercise was done in Rajasthan.

Formation and Strengthening of Adolescent Group:

2,350 adolescent groups were strengthened. These have a membership of 35,250 boys and girls from marginalised hamlets. The groups were formed for developing a local



level mechanism for addressing the various child protection issues so that they can address these issues locally.

A total of 2,62,435 (1,39,620 females and 1,22,815 male) adolescents and youth were reached out to with targeted messages and information on prevention of Covid-19 through field functionaries, teachers and partners in platforms like Advika, Village Health and Nutrition Day, Kishori Mela, state and district adolescent conventions, Gaon Kalyan Samitis.

Systematic selection, capacity building and engagement with volunteers: Approximately 10,000 volunteers were identified and selected across the country. They were particularly

capacitated on RTE compliant schools and child protection issues. Handholding support was provided to volunteers in holding community meetings till they were able to do so independently. Soon after their selection, the volunteers underwent capacity building. In villages, we often hold meetings with the community at Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) and try to identify proactive people to work as volunteers. Local youth, literate people or people showing an inclination to impact education were selected. Often 2-3 interactions are required to engage each volunteer. We try to find innovative ways to engage and motivate them. In addition, they are added to School Management Committees (SMCs), wherever possible.



Women and the World of Work

ActionAid Association's work and understanding of issues of workers, urban spaces and access to social justice, has greatly evolved across India in the last two decades. Our work has focused not only on furthering people's access to social security and entitlements but also pushing for their access to housing, insurance, healthcare, education for children and civic services. ActionAid Association recognises that building the most deprived, among them the informal workers, in governance is essential for nation building. At the same time, improved participation of the most deprived communities, including women, in decision making may alleviate certain inequalities. Thus, building strong community leadership and its agency and supporting the leadership towards a life of dignity is a sustainable strategy. It is this strategy which helped us to bring the attention of various stakeholders on issues of workers like construction workers, domestic workers, manual scavengers, beedi workers, home-based women workers, brick kiln workers, street vendors, fisher folks, bonded labour, artisans, blacksmiths, weavers and tea garden and coffee estate workers. We engaged with these communities to ensure social security, decent wages, decent work, abolition of forced labour and caste-based menial occupations, and address exclusions in the labour market with focus on women workers.

We worked towards strengthening the collectives of informal workers through a

series of meetings, workshops and awareness campaigns that helped them know about addressing their issues and accessing entitlements. Leadership training was imparted to the identified leaders with focus on women workers to help sustain their efforts in addressing gender-based inequalities and discrimination.

The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in severe dislocations in the lives of workers, especially the poor, neglected and women workers. We concentrated on rebuilding livelihoods post the pandemic, carried out campaigns to link the communities to various social security schemes, conducted research and engaged with the government at the district and various other state levels.

Strategic Engagements

ActionAid Association is part of the core CSO group constituted by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on bonded labour. Recommendations submitted by ActionAid Association have been issued as advisories by NHRC, key amongst which are delinking of compensation with conviction in addition to others like including newer forms of bondage under the definition, provision of land for agriculture, housing, livelihood and enterprise building support under rehabilitation.

On December 29, 2022, ActionAid Association organised a national consultation on gender-



based violence against women workers in the informal sector in India. There was representation from various community-based organisations working with street vendors, construction site workers, domestic workers, and other informal sector workers, besides the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), journalists, activists and leading women's rights organisations such as Jagori. The objective of the consultation was discussing the various forms of violence faced by women in the informal sector and to find mechanisms to tackle it at the institutional as well as community levels.

In Odisha, ActionAid Association and Asanghatit Shramika Mancha (ASM) have been engaging with the government for increasing the wages for workers. The efforts of our engagement led to:

» Increase in the minimum wages from Rs 333 to Rs 345 (unskilled), from Rs 373 to Rs 385 (semi-skilled), from Rs 423 to Rs 435 (skilled) and from Rs 483 to Rs 495 (highly skilled).

» Announcement by the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) and department of labour regarding provision of rest rooms, urinals, safe drinking water facilities and Aahar Kendras for labour at various labour posts across the city. These had been some of the key asks by ASM for the last few years.

» A special notification was issued by the State Urban Development Agency for the protection of homeless people in Odisha which was ASM's longstanding demand.

In Rajasthan, ActionAid Association with Kachi Basti Mahasangh, Rajasthan Mahila Kaamgar Sangh, Rajasthan Nirman and General Mazdur Sangh and Ghumantu Shajha Manch, organised a public meeting in Jaipur on the issues of workers in Jaipur and across Rajasthan. Recommendations like the regulation of employment conditions, registration of both employers and workers and social security measures for domestic workers were made to the Chief Minister and labour minister of Rajasthan.

In Tamil Nadu, there was significant progress in addressing the longstanding concerns of salt-pan workers due to the continuous engagement of ActionAid Association. One major achievement was the substantial increase in wages for both men and women. Previously, workers were earning Rs 400 and Rs 390, but now their wages have been raised to Rs 490 and

Rs 500 respectively. Moreover, in recognition of the challenges faced during the rainy season, the Tamil Nadu government has provided salt-pan workers with a compensation of Rs 5,000, benefiting 543 members of the Working Women's Federation. Another significant development is the inclusion of salt-pan workers in the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, a longstanding demand of the salt-pan community. As a result, 106 women have now been linked to MNREGA, enabling them access to employment during the lean season.

Through sustained engagement with the government, ActionAid Association facilitated support to 160 fisherwomen. They received aid in the form of essential equipment, including dry mats, vistas, umbrellas, weighing machines and plastic trays. In another positive development, the government covered 60 per cent of the cost for ice boxes, while the workers contributed the remaining 40 per cent.

Additionally, the persistent issue of limited access to public distribution system (PDS) shops in Rajapandi Nagar, Thoothukudi, has been addressed by introducing mobile ration shops. These mobile shops will now visit Mudukkukadu, Veeranaickenthattu and Rajapandi Nagar 14 once a month, ensuring improved access to essential food supplies for the salt-pan worker community. Residents of these villages had lacked access to PDS outlets over the last few

years. They had to travel long distances to a nearby hamlets to obtain sustenance for their families. The previous year, the government established a mobile PDS shops in Mudukkukadu and Veerayakkanthattu villages as a result of our engagement with the concerned authorities and people's representatives. Currently, the residents of Mudukkukadu and Veeranaickenthattu villages receive monthly rations via a mobile vehicle. This year, the government resolved a longstanding issue regarding the establishment of PDS in Rajapandi Nagar village. Further the collectives have been engaging with the local administration for leasing salt-pans to women salt-pan workers' collectives and resolving the challenges in transportation of fish by public transport.

We extended our support to state governments in drafting policies:

- » We supported in drafting of the state homeless policy in Rajasthan
- » We supported the state government of Chhattisgarh in drafting the state scheme for Urban Employment Guarantee and the Slum Redevelopment Policy

In Karnataka, we worked with National Law School, Bengaluru for policy development for choultry workers.

Studies and Research

National Level

A study was conducted to understand the nuances of the existing **urban employment guarantee schemes** in the country. This study was undertaken with a comparison of the provisions of these schemes in 7 states - Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Odisha, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. To understand the intricacies, nuances and the status of schemes, primary discussions and consultations were also organised in 3 states – Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand and Tamil Nadu. Case studies and provisions of urban employment guarantee schemes from other countries were also studied to guide us in reaching a set of recommendations for an ideal scheme.

Study on cooperatives and economic democracy

- In the context of precarity faced by the informal workers the solutions have to be multifaceted, which can include land reforms, support for climate resilient small-scale farming and solidarity economy. Also having observed the immense suffering of informal workers in the wake of the Covid-19 lockdown, there has been a rethink of the solidarity economies rather than individual livelihoods. In this context, AA undertook this study which tries to understand the practices of four cooperatives including 2 national and 2 international ones. Through this effort we tried to understand the role of



cooperatives in achieving social and economic justice for workers, through control over own income and participation in governance.

A study to understand the impact of structural adjustment policies on the frontline workers.

The study in India focused on livelihood conditions and labour rights of community health workers, sanitation workers and burial ground and crematorium workers in the neo-liberal policy ecosystem which guides India's public health outcomes. The study was undertaken in 5 states – Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. It aimed to study the role of the neo-liberal policy ecosystem, specially post the structural adjustment programmes in the informalisation of the labour force and the impact of informalisation of the labour force on the working conditions and rights of frontline workers engaged in public healthcare delivery in the country. It also aimed to study ways for ensuring dignified living and livelihood conditions for marginalised frontline workers in India.

State Level

We worked with various state governments to carry forward the issues that emerged out of the various studies and research that we undertook across the states.

We conducted a **study on the status of choultry workers** and brought out a report titled, 'Shadow: Ensuring Dignity and Security in the Lives of Choultry Workers.' These workers, largely women, do the cleaning and sometimes assist in cooking in choultries or marriage halls for events such as weddings, birthdays, death ceremonies, mass feeding and religious and social functions. Drawn from communities living in poverty and exclusion, these workers are susceptible to gender, class and caste discrimination and exploitation - low wages, long working hours, unsafe work conditions, insecure work environment and lack of social security and dignity, besides the stigma they face at the family and societal levels. During the meeting for sharing the findings of the study, the dignitaries elaborated on the various government schemes relevant in the context of this sector of workers and assured them of full support from their respective offices. A letter was submitted by the choultry workers collective to the commissioner, labour department on the issue of introducing a category of choultry workers in the e-shram portal.

In **Karnataka**, we also initiated a study to understand the plight of sugarcane workers on the Maharashtra borders. We also undertook documentation of the living conditions of women oppressed by the devadasi system.

We undertook a study on the status of migrated communities in **Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur** and **Mizoram**.

Publications

We brought out the following publications on the issues of workers:

- » Cooperatives and Decent Work – The Kerala Experience
- » Social Security and Informal Workers

Workshops and webinars

We took part in a panel discussion on 'Challenges and Prospects Before the Labour Movement in India' in the 62nd ISLE Conference at IIT Roorkee.

The following webinars were organised during the year:

- » Relooking at the Issue of Homelessness – Present status and the future options
- » Listening to Refugee Voices
- » Towards a Policy for Gig Workers

Campaigns

Kaam Mango Abhiyan

Through our efforts in **Uttarakhand** 913 people got work under MNREGA in which 281 were women and 69 were single women. Twenty-two women worked as MNREGA mates. Similar campaigns were organised in **Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Bihar, Jharkhand, Gujarat and West Bengal**.

Issues of women's safety and facilities for crèches, work-site sheds for children and childcare services for women MNREGA workers

was raised in 5 districts in Haryana – Sonipat, Panipat, Kaithal, Hisar and Fatehabad. The issues were put forward to the block and district authorities during the Kaam Mango Abhiyan. The authorities responded positively on ensuring facilities for women as per the MNREGA Act. The initiative reached out to 9,830 women MNREGA workers to apply for work demand applications. Similar efforts were taken up in **Himachal Pradesh**.

In **Karnataka**, we initiated a campaign to enhance the pension of erstwhile devadasis.



Campaign on Social Security Schemes

We have been working for ensuring social security schemes for the informal workers through the campaign mode. This was carried out across the states of Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and in the UT of Kashmir. Through the campaigns in these states, we facilitated access of 18,049 persons to e-shram cards. Through our efforts in **Rajasthan**, we were able to link 2,100 informal sector workers to the e-shram portal.

Our team and volunteers organised campaigns on social protection and livelihoods of unorganised workers and landless labourers in 250 villages which reached out to 80,000 people and we facilitated e-shram registration of 10,000 informal labourers in **Uttar Pradesh**. We used e-rickshaws, yatras, ratri chaupals and community meetings to create awareness about the e-shram portal. Our team opened its own free of cost 'Jan Sewa Kendra' and registered labourers at their doorstep. We organised 510 meetings with community members to create awareness and inform them about the benefits of accessing social protection schemes. Another campaign for awareness on BOCW schemes and labourline was conducted jointly with the efforts of Dihari Maazdoor Sangha, Vigyan Foundation and ActionAid Association. It covered informal workers engaged with 60 labour posts in 5 districts – Lucknow, Kanpur, Varanasi, Meerut and Shahjahanpur in **Uttar Pradesh**. Around 10,000 construction workers participated in the campaign. In **Delhi**, 121

women were helped in filing applications for social security schemes.

In **Gujarat**, 6519 persons were registered under e-shram through 42 registration camps organised. Thus, we were able to link 30,049 informal sector workers to the e-shram portal including 10,000 workers registered in the portal in Uttar Pradesh, through our intervention



A full-fledged campaign was run by the AA **Kashmir** team to ensure access to social security schemes for informal sector workers, particularly women workers. These programmes were carried out in collaboration with the labour department and other departments. A total of 1,700 registrations were done for accessing old age schemes. A total of 1,530 was registered under e-shram thanks to our efforts; 350 registrations were done under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) and 345 registrations were done under IAY.

In **Rajasthan**, we also helped register 5,571 informal workers under BOCW and through our efforts we were able to provide 11 families with death claims of informal workers/ migrant

workers under BOCW work for Rs 55 lakh. We were able to link 3,876 informal workers with government social security schemes and issues of 49 informal workers related to wages and harassment were addressed. We were able to link 731 families to food schemes and convince 210 mining workers to undertake silicosis test. Of them, 34 tested positive and we facilitated the linkage of these workers with silicosis related government schemes.

Campaign on Minimum Wages

A campaign aimed at creating awareness on the significance of minimum wages and government welfare schemes was launched in Dabhoi, Sinor and Waghdia - three blocks



Ansh Singh

in Vadodara district, Gujarat. The campaign focused on sensitizing the informal workers on the minimum wage rates set by the government, using street plays to make the campaign more engaging and effective. Rural dwellers were also educated on MNREGA's provisions. IEC material on government schemes and minimum wages were shared with the people for a better understanding.

Community Engagements

The last few years have been quite challenging for all of us, with the impact being disproportionately higher on marginalised sections. The socioeconomic distress caused by the loss of livelihoods among people living in precarious circumstances has been tremendous.

Towards workers' enterprises

In all our operational areas we have encountered the hardships faced by persons from vulnerable communities while struggling to run their households as their access to income was adversely hit because of the pandemic.

We realised that it is important to build collectives particularly of women who have faced the adverse impacts of the pandemic more acutely. The basic objective of these collectives is to bring people together such that they can collectively solve the problems they face and engage with market mechanisms together, which would otherwise prove to be overwhelming for any individual. A feminist perspective is needed to make the efforts truly transformative and impacting all spheres of society. The promotion of women's livelihoods and feminist solidarity economies through women's collective enterprise could create new avenues to sustainable incomes and build gender equality.

- >> In Bihar, we initiated goat farming by women's collectives in Nalanda and Muzaffarpur in which 14 members were involved. Local breed of goats with all the infrastructure and handholding support for 6 months were provided to the collectives.
- >> Agricultural tools were provided to 200

Impact in Numbers	
Number of individuals who underwent skill building and vocational training	2,900
Number of families provided input support for livelihood	590
Number of farmers producer organisations (FPOs) formed	3 FPOs with 4,000 members

women working under MGNREGA and doing agriculture work.

- » 23 street vendors from Patna were supported for sustaining livelihood in the aftermath of the Covid-19 lockdowns. They were provided with 4-wheeler vending carts, digital weighing scales and fruits/vegetables.
- » ActionAid Association engaged with women informal workers in urban slum areas of Bengaluru and supported them with livelihood opportunities. 75 women were provided support for individual livelihood activities such as petty shops (grocery, snacks, food, readymade garment shops), vending (fruits, vegetables, fish) and tailoring support in the form of sewing machines.
- » The ActionAid Association running 2 groups of women making organic cleaners and 1 group in mushroom cultivation in Bengaluru.

Uttar Pradesh

- » 3 women's collectives from marginalised families came together to be trained as tailors which helped them in increasing their earnings. ActionAid Association provided these women with training on how to use sewing machines and taught them various sewing techniques. Once the training was complete, ActionAid Association distributed sewing machines to the 30 women to start their own small sewing businesses.

- » We supported 4 women collectives of marginalised and Musahar communities in Ghazipur and Jaunpur for fishing. The initiative helped increase the availability of fish as a source of protein in the communities, which improved their food security. This created opportunities for the communities to sell their fish and received orders worth Rs 5 lakh.
- » We also supported vegetable cultivation amongst the Musahar communities in Maharajgunj and Kushinagar. The support involved providing seeds, fertilisers and technical training to the collectives to enable them to grow and sell vegetables for income generation among women. They were able to earn a sustainable income, contribute to the local economy and improve their families' nutrition.
- » In Ghazipur and Jaunpur districts of UP, we provided training to the Musahar and minority women on goat farming techniques and best practices. The training covered various aspects of goat farming, including goat breeding, feeding and healthcare. We provided people with 52 goats and necessary equipment to start their own goat farms.

Uttarakhand

In Uttarakhand, 114 women and 37 single women were linked with various skill building

programmes in which around 59 women started their work to prepare papads, pickles and chikki and sell these to the local vendors and through NRLM.

Madhya Pradesh

- » 20 units of vermicompost were set up in 15 villages for women to initiate vermicomposting as an alternate livelihood option.
- » Our teams facilitated 618 people to apply for subsidised loans Between Rs 10,000 and Rs 50,000 to start new livelihoods through camps and the online process under Chief Minister's Public Service campaign run by the government. Till the end of the reporting period, 213 people had received the amount. Through this financial assistance, people have started new initiatives or expanded their existing livelihood options like animal husbandry, purchased sewing machines, started beauty parlours, vegetable vendors and readymade clothes shops.
- » Our team in Rahatgarh, Sagar mobilised women into 4 self-help groups and helped them to get a loan of Rs 20,000 from the government to take up income generating livelihood activities. With this financial assistance, they have started making disposable cups and plates, cones for henna and incense sticks. They have a profit of Rs 13,000 to Rs 15,000 per month.
- » In Bhopal we trained 200 women in vocational training to attain skills for getting

gainful employment. Fifty-six women were helped to attain gainful employment in various sectors like offices, organisations, factories, beauty salons and home based lucrative small businesses like tailoring and salon-based activities.

- » Around 50 young women members were linked to the Nagar Nigam vocational course on computers and driving courses. The Nagar Nigam is also paying them Rs 2,500 per person each as stipend for the course. Another 35 young women are taking handicraft training (Macramé) at present.

Maharashtra

In Mumbai, 104 young women were provided various skill and vocational training such as bridal mehndi application, handicrafts training and chocolate making.

Odisha

We focussed on provision of livelihood support to single women, one of the most vulnerable constituencies we engage with. We supported single women from marginalised communities to start grocery shops, starting bangle shops, setting up poultry businesses and 4 women were supported by the horticulture department for vegetable cultivation. Twenty-five single women were linked to different government schemes and programmes like rations, widow pensions and fruit plantation under MGNREGA.

We also engaged with the young women in urban poor locations of Bhubaneswar and some of them were supported with sewing machines. Thirty-five adolescent girls learnt tailoring during this period. A total of seventy adolescent girls are now engaged in different private sector activities. 200 young urban women were linked to the skill building programme.

West Bengal

In West Bengal we prioritised our work with the agricultural women's groups where one economic model was experimented with the agricultural labourers in the form of 'Farmers' Producers' Company' and effort was made to build a sustainable resilient livelihood model to ensure that farmers had control over their product, marketing and the overall mechanism of the company. They became the shareholders and board of directors and women got a decisive role.

In East Midnapore and South 24 Parganas districts, AA worked towards ensuring the livelihood of the small and marginal farmers and engaged with 2,974 farmers directly to strengthen their collective, the Farmers' Producers Organisation (FPO) through different grassroot level meetings, leadership building and accessing the entitlements. To strengthen the programme, AA also involved volunteers in 4 blocks of the districts. A resource centre was formed to support the farmers to ensure

that they ran their FPOs smoothly. Also, AA engaged with 4,500 fish workers and fish farming communities directly to ensure their right to water, small scale fish vendors' right to access saleable fish and fish market and protecting and claiming women fish workers' rights and entitlement. In North 24 Parganas district, AA worked with 2,000 farmers directly to strengthen their collective and ensure their identity as farmers so they could avail of all the schemes. 197 farmers' interest groups (FIGs) in 2 districts (South 24Pgs and East Medinipur) were supported. 7 FIGs were given chicks and goats to support their group business at Khejuri I, and 100 farmers of Canning –II were given traditional seeds. Workshops and meetings were conducted with the groups to strengthen their capacity in managing a group business. We also supported the groups by linking them to schemes. 7 FIGs have received one incubator from Khejuri-I Block office. 40 FIGs have benefited from this support. This was a result of the engagement between the block office and FIGs. Formation of 1 FPC in East Medinipur, Khejuri-I. All FPC members were given training on FPC management. The FPC conducted its annual general meeting in which ActionAid Association also participated.

Livelihood regeneration support to landless and single women headed families- 200 families to revive self-economic ventures like poultry farming, tailoring business, vending with mobile cart and sanitary napkin production.

- » 175 single, economically vulnerable tribal / minority women started poultry farming and could earn a profit of Rs 6,000 in a month.
- » 24 women initiated self-economic venture through sewing machine support and mobile van / cart support and 2 opened petty shops in their locality.
- » 35 tiger widows initiated poultry and duck farming.
- » 10 women of the most deprived communities of South 24 Parganas, Namkhana Block received support under the livelihood support programme. They were trained and encouraged to initiate start-ups by setting up a sanitary napkin unit. These women lost

their livelihood in the cyclone in the block and did not have any means to re-establish it. The support for the manufacturing machine and raw materials along with training has transformed their lives. Women started producing eco-friendly sanitary napkins as well as initiated awareness promotional activities for menstrual hygiene. Their village Ganeshnagar did not have any pharmacy, where the women of the village could access sanitary napkins. They had to depend on using clothes. So, this initiative has not only helped these 10 women to be economically independent but also enabled around 300 women of the village to access sanitary napkins and maintain menstrual hygiene.



Linking with government social schemes for informal sector workers

We have been working through the workers facilitation centre in some operational states to reach out to migrant and informal sector workers to help ensure linkages to government schemes better - the key services that we provide include registration of workers; legal aid for workers; their linkages to financial services and social security schemes; facilitating migrant workers' access to healthcare facilities; creating awareness among the migrant population on social security services and labour welfare-related laws; ensuring immediate response to cases of bonded and child labour; follow-up of cases of accidents of labourers and violation of compensation-related provisions; and running a labour helpline.

Through Workers Facilitation Centre-Gaya, Bihar

- » 376 cases of minimum wages of informal labourers were supported through liaison with government departments and meeting employers.
- » 369 individuals supported in MGNREGA registration.
- » 82 labourers (55 families) rescued from bondage (inter-state and inter-district) from brick kilns, hotels and bangle factories.

- » In 4 cases of death at the workplaces, families of those who passed away were supported in getting the dead bodies.
- » 3,659 labourers linked with BOCW. 97 families were supported in accessing PMAY, 380 received PDS cards, 62 got land pattas under Abhiyan Basera and 573 under Lohiya Swachh Bihar Scheme.

Similar workers facilitation centres were supported across other states.

In **Kashmir**, 3 workers facilitation centres are functional in Kupwara, Bandipora and Pulwama and we were able to link these women with schemes of Mahila Shakti Kendra for start-up loans and other benefits. We formed 6 women collectives, among these 3 women collectives belong to informal workers and were linked with NRLM as well as the Women Development Corporation in Srinagar district.

In **Uttar Pradesh**, we established 3 workers facilitation centres. Through these centres, around 3,150 construction workers registered under Uttar Pradesh Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board (UPBOCWWB) and out of these 500 workers benefited under different welfare schemes of the UPBOCWWB. More than 10,000 informal sector workers were linked with the social security board through e-shram, and many of them got financial assistance of Rs 1,000 in instalments 2022.

A total of 3,585 workers linked with the government's welfare schemes including 1,265 domestic women workers.

Thirty-five government shelter homes across 5 districts made functional through AA's continuous efforts. Regular health check-up camps are being organised for workers at the shelter home.

Through continuous efforts ActionAid Association, Vigyan Foundation and Dihari Mazdoor Sangh managed to address more than 1,000 cases of wage theft out of which 240 cases were resolved in which Rs 35 lakh due to the workers was recovered from the employers.

Issues of Sugarcane workers

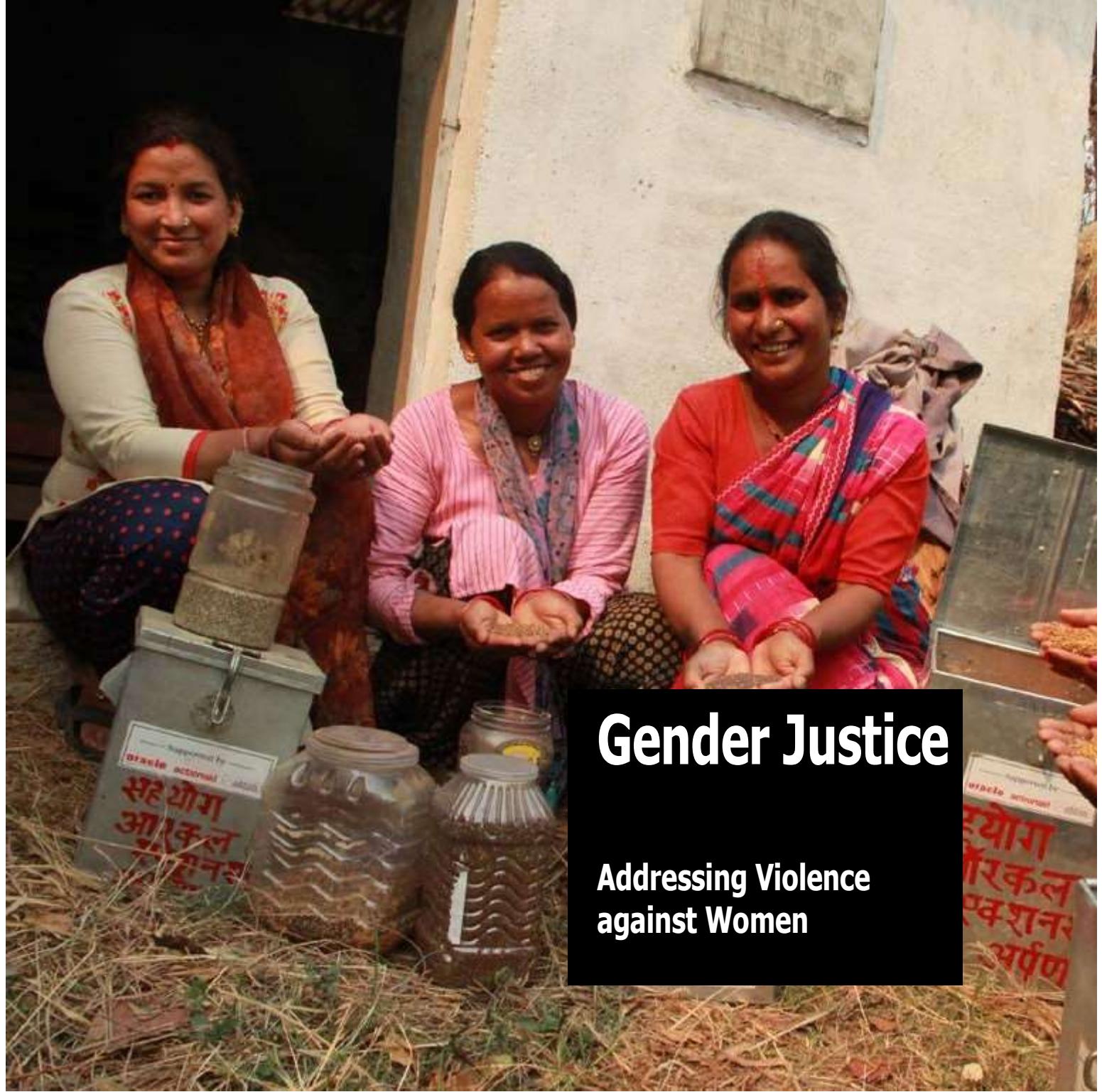
In the reporting period, we helped in highlighting the issues of the women sugarcane cutter workers in Maharashtra before the policymakers. Women sugarcane workers face a double burden- handling household chores along with strenuous work in the sugarcane fields. Due to non-availability of basic amenities such as sanitation and water, there has been severe

health impact on women sugarcane cutter worker. A charter was prepared and shared with various stakeholders in Beed districts and at the Maharashtra state level on the issue of relief to sugarcane cutter workers.

Addressing Issues of Bonded Labour

Over the last three years, ActionAid Association helped in the release of about 1,500 bonded labourers working across 6 states of Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka.

In the last one year, we supported release of 205 bonded labourers from Rajasthan and Haryana; the labourers were from Uttar Pradesh. Detailed case studies and documentation of each case was done and shared with NHRC and the local administration for each rescue. In the last year, 57 bonded labourers got release certificates; 23 bonded labourers got a compensation of Rs 20,000 each; 72 bonded labourers were registered under e-shram portal and 30 bonded labourers were registered for the BOCW Scheme.



Gender Justice

Addressing Violence
against Women

ActionAid Association works to protect and promote rights of women and these find focus across all its engagements.

During the year, we continued to support leadership building programmes for women to enhance their skills and decision-making powers. We worked with feminist organisations with expertise in gender issues within religion, family and society. We campaigned for equality of opportunity for girls from marginalised communities with special focus on their education and livelihoods.

Strategic Engagements

With our long standing work with women who are branded as 'witches', we had drafted a protective framework for prevention of witch-branding and hunting. Mr Sujeet Kumar, Member of Parliament submitted a private member bill in Parliament referring our work on this subject which was done in collaboration with the State Commission for Women, Odisha. We also prepared the advisory on the issue of witch-branding and presented it to NHRC.

State Level Engagement with Witch-Branding

In Odisha, after our study on witch-hunting, the Women and Child Development (WCD) department released more than Rs 30 lakh to district administrations for witch hunting prevalent districts for awareness generation

programmes against such a heinous crime. The AAA Odisha team members were invited as resource persons to the training. In addition, our study's findings were independently cross verified by the members of the State Women's Commission who visited the field to the districts and conducted meetings (<https://www.actionaidindia.org/publications/witch-hunting-in-odisha/>).

Engagement with women's policy and single women's policy formulation

ActionAid Association has been closely working with the State Women Commission of Uttarakhand to develop a 'Women Policy of Uttarakhand state.' Work was started in 2019-20 with collaboration of the State Women Commission. ActionAid Association is one of the core committee members for drafting the State Women's Policy. The second draft of the policy was shared with all the officials in a state level consultation. This policy draft is special as it is different from the other policies as it has a separate chapter for inclusion and empowerment of 'Single Women.'

Sharing the Single women Policy and draft legislation on Witch-Branding with Member of Parliament, Mandla – We have been working on the issue of single women and witch branding in Madhya Pradesh. A meeting was conducted with Member of Parliament Ms Sampatiya Uikey to apprise her about the need

for a Single Women Policy and legislation on witch-branding at both the state and central levels. She agreed that the number of single women who are abused as witches is increasing at both the state and country levels due to various socioeconomic conditions prevailing in the society such as the Covid-19 pandemic and economic inequalities. She accepted the fact that due to absence of policies on these issues, these women are facing acute poverty and various forms of discrimination and exploitation. She assured that she will raise these issues with parliamentary and state assembly committees. The copies of policy and draft legislation were shared with her.

In November 2022, Ekal Nari Shakti Manch hosted a series of meetings on a mission to empower women from seven districts at the village, state, and block levels in Gujarat. The meetings were aimed at producing a memorandum of grievances to be presented to the state assembly representatives across the political spectrum. The women engaged in lively discussions and shared their issues to come up with a comprehensive memorandum. The initiative was a resounding success, as Anant Patel, an MLA representing Navsari district, took their appeal to the legislative assembly.

We were invited to revise the Nari Gaurav Niti, 2005 which will now include the issues of single women.

Studies and Research

During the year, we initiated a study on Gender Based Violence on women workers in the informal sector of India. The study aimed at generating evidence on gendered norms which push women into informal workspaces and increase their exposure to violence and harassment in these spaces, to document the various form of violence women face in informal workspaces and assess their awareness and access to protective legislations such as the POSH Act. This study has been undertaken in three states with different set of informal workers – West Bengal – domestic workers, Bihar – farm workers and other migrant workers, Delhi- home based workers. The discussions were held on the issue of discrimination in wages, sexual harassment at the workplace and access to social security. The participants included social workers, lawyers, experts on local committees, women helpline members, women working in the unorganised sector and community members.

Campaigns

Campaign on the Rights of Single Women

In a significant move towards promoting dignified lives and livelihoods for single women, ActionAid Association launched a powerful campaign across 10 districts in Gujarat on October 18, 2022. The objective was to sensitise local communities and generate

awareness on various issues faced by single women. The initiative also aimed to strengthen community support mechanisms and advance their access to rights and entitlements. This campaign saw an impressive turnout, with the support of the Ekal Nari Shakti Manch, and covered 98 villages and urban locations across 19 blocks in Ahmedabad, Botad, Dang, Kutch, Navsari, Patan, Sabarkantha, Tapi, Vadodara and Valsad, running successfully till December 10, 2022. Working hand in hand with community-based human rights defenders, several village-

level meetings were held to increase awareness about single women's struggles and the rights that they are entitled to. To further boost our reach and impact, Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials were disseminated. Arrangements were made to facilitate village and block-level conventions, including meetings with panchayat officials and government representatives to help shape a much-needed support system for single women. Through this campaign, over 1,100 single women were empowered to break free from long-



standing traditions that had been holding them back. By stepping up and taking leadership roles, nearly 350 single women supported other women in need by building community support mechanisms. The intervention provided vital process and documentation support to 836 single women, helping them access necessary government schemes and entitlements. To top it, the process of facilitating access to property rights began for 28 single women, further empowering them on their journey.

Campaign on violence against women

As part of the 16 Days Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, this campaign was carried out in all 12 bastis of Madanpur Khadar for raising awareness about gender-based violence and discrimination. Information was disseminated among the community women about the provisions of laws, policies and schemes protecting women's rights and how they can approach concerned authorities if they face any gender-based harassment, atrocities, or violence in their family, working place or in public. Similar campaigns were carried out in Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi and Punjab. Our meetings were attended by 24,790 persons.

A similar campaign covered 11 blocks of Sabarkantha, Dang, Navsari, Valsad, Kutch, Ahmedabad and Botad in Gujarat was also

undertaken. In this campaign Ekal Nari Shakti Manch and the young women from urban locations organised different awareness-raising and capacity building programmes against the social issues faced by women from multiple societal segments. The programmes were also aimed at highlighting the importance of education in strengthening the social footing and further struggle in addressing and challenging the status quo regarding the various inequalities and discriminations faced by single women. To draw attention to the condition of women and contribute to the creation of an essential support structure for them, meetings with panchayat representatives and government officials were conducted along with conventions at the village and block levels. The primary concerns were the numerous regressive practices and forms of abuse experienced by women, particularly witch hunting, early marriages and hindering their social security and property rights.

In **Kashmir**, a full-fledged signature campaign was carried out to eliminate gender discrimination and gender-based violence. A total of 930 women and young girls were made aware of gender-based violence in Kupwara, Bandipora, Budgam, Uri and Baramulla.

In **Rajasthan**, a campaign was inaugurated on 14th November 2022 by the district collectors of Barmer, Tonk, Bundi and Alwar by flagging off the awareness chariot. The chariot had banners,

flex and other media to make the campaign successful. During the event officials from DCPU, CWC and Child Line were present.

In Madhya Pradesh we have been working consistently to address violence faced by women and girls in the state. Over the reporting period, we intervened through capacity building of officials, providing counselling and medical assistance to help women and girls.

We imparted training to 500 police personnel who were trained on handling cases of GBV.

» 9,152 women who approached Gauravi - a one stop crisis centre to fight VAW, were supported.

- » 7,655 women received counselling through Gauravi.
- » 731 women survivors of violence were rehabilitated in families, permanent shelter homes and skill-based vocations.
- » 95 missing girls were traced with the help of the police and were rehabilitated either in families or in hostels as per their choice.
- » We extended medical support to 249 women and provided shelter to 401 women.

Campaign on menstrual hygiene

Mahavari Swachhta Jagrukta Abhiyan- Myths, stigma and harmful gender norms around menstruation exacerbate the difficulties for



young women. In Delhi, young women leaders in urban locations carried out a campaign to make the young women and girls aware about myths and stigma of menstruation, menstruation cycle, hygiene practices and menstrual hygiene management. The campaign helped women and girls counter taboos and misconceptions about menstruation.

Kolkata police in collaboration with young urban women groups, initiated a campaign on menstrual hygiene to address the fear that women in going to the police stations for accessing napkins in West Bengal. As an outcome of the consistent campaign on menstrual hygiene and SRHR, sanitary napkin vending machines were set up at the police stations by Kolkata police to increase access

rates and availability of napkins to the young girls and women. Free bio-degradable napkins were distributed to young urban women to increase usage rates and bring changes in their practice levels. The activists reported usage of sanitary napkins, improved changing habits and consciousness about health and hygiene.

Campaign on Gender Responsive Toilets

Young urban women started a campaign on a 'Gender Responsive Public Toilet' in 2018. In 2019 they were engaged in preparing a study on the status of public toilets in respect to access, availability and safety which was conducted and designed by ActionAid Association. The young urban women captured the status of



toilets in their localities and interviewed various stakeholders to show the mindsets and gaps in rendering services. During the reporting period, in Kolkata, West Bengal 500 young girls and women were mobilised and organised a silent walk with placards and festoons was organised. Specific demands were submitted to Mr Swapna Samaddar – Member, Mayor-In-Council, Slum Development of Kolkata Municipal Council and to Dr Shashi Panja – Minister, Women and Child Development. As an outcome of their long struggle, in this reporting period, the Kolkata Municipal Corporation announced the setting up of 150 women specific toilets in all wards of Kolkata along with one rest room for the women (especially for lactating and pregnant women).

Young Urban Women organised campaigns around 16 days activism against gender-based violence; menstrual hygiene; workers day; One Billion Rising and the International Women's Day in slums in 13 cities. These campaigns covered more 15,000 persons, where they organised different awareness programmes like a post card campaign and a signature campaign. A suggestion box follow up was done through a door-to-door awareness campaign by pasting stickers on gender-based violence and the demands were submitted to the state women commissioner's office to create a safe city for women. In this campaign young urban women also involved their community stakeholders like ASHAs (Accredited Social Health Activists), ICDS workers and slum presidents and secretaries.

The community was also made aware of gender issues, patriarchy and different women rights aspects. Information on legislations to protect women were also discussed in the community.

This year, 7 trainings were organised to build their capacity to use digital devices and online modes for filing applications, complaints and RTI and how they can raise community issues and get these issues redressed by using their digital devices such as phones, computers and laptops. During the training, participants were oriented on state government's online portal, PGMS (Public Grievance Monitoring System), process to lodge grievances through PGMS, tracking the status of grievances lodged and process to appeal further in case of action not taken by the authorities. Participants were also oriented on the online RTI portal of the government and about the steps to file RTI applications, first appeal and second appeal as per the provisions of the RTI Act, 2005. 438 leaders from young urban women collectives/basti groups underwent capacity building through this workshop. Later, young urban women collectives' leaders filed 139 complaints through PGMS and 38 RTI applications were submitted using the online portal.

Each of the 13 cities focused on organising skill-based training for young urban women on computers literacy, bakery & confectionary, driving, artificial jewellery making, fashion designing, mushroom, hand embroidery, water hyacinth product

making, home care, nursing training, training for making jute bags and training for 2- and 4-wheeler driving. More than 800 women have been trained so far. We have built networks with local and national organisations/ foundations/ companies for these short-term courses.

ActionAid Association organised a programme in collaboration with the **Ahmedabad Police Department in Ahmedabad on Safety and Security of Women & Adolescent Girls and Issues of Police Perception Among the Community.** At the event, a Compendium on Government Services for Girls and Women drafted and published by ActionAid Association was released by the ACP Ahmedabad in presence of police personnel and other stakeholders.

Linking Young Urban Women with government schemes: Making Safe and Secure Public Places for Women & Girls: A delegation 11 young urban women put a demand draft to the Delhi Commission for Women for women's safety – eve teasing, stalking and snatching and for domestic violence. As a result of their engagement with DCW, CCTV cameras were installed in, police patrolling during the day and night increased and streetlights got repaired.

More than 240 YUW from different slum pockets interacted regularly with different line departments and authorities like the State Commission for Women and Bhubaneswar

Municipal Corporation (BMC), City Mayor, Water Corporation of Odisha (WATCO), Ward Corporator and gave applications on different public services issues like- street lights, dustbins, drainage and public transport. This finally resulted in 10 streetlights getting installed in different slum pockets. Mo Safei Gadi (My garbage collector) regularly comes to the slums to resolve their dustbin issue and WATCO has started the work for providing 24 hours water facilities to different slums under the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation.

Community Engagements

Empowering Women's Safety through Community Mapping

In October 2022, a community mobility mapping initiative was undertaken by 41 members in the Perumbakkam resettlement site in Tamil Nadu. The primary objective was to gain insights into the community and identify safe and unsafe areas based on the experiences of three specific groups of women: single women, flower sellers and college students. Following the completion of the mapping activity, the residents collectively composed a letter addressed to the Chief Minister, which was given to him during his visit to the resettlement site. The letter highlighted the identified issues and concerns regarding women's safety.

As a direct response to the residents' concerns, within a remarkably short span of 20 days,

officials from the commissionerate of police responded and initiated an inquiry into the matter. Commencing from December 16, 2022, police personnel have been diligently conducting regular patrols and recording their activities in the register placed outside the ActionAid Association's women's resource centre.

Overall, our interventions during the last year saw 308 city/ district/ state consultations and 52 capacity building workshops and campaigns.

Various recommendations drawn through the consultations were submitted by Young Urban Women (YUW) leaders to various government departments. The focus in the year was to create a national platform of YUWs and strengthen city collectives in every city. Further these city efforts were to focus on government linkages and sustainable support to women informal workers, through which we were able to reach a greater number of women who are now part of our YUW groups.

Meetings with the labour department were held for the registration of more than 5,000 young women informal workers under e-shram portal. Sixty-three trainings on skill enhancement and economic empowerment were organised by ActionAid Association, either independently or in collaboration with technical training institutes operated by the Government of India/

civil society organisations. Young women who needed livelihood support, particularly in the post Covid-19 scenario were identified. An awareness programme was also conducted about government schemes for women.

The programme focused on raising awareness among community members and facilitating them in linking with schemes and services through micro campaigns. It built the capacity of YUW leaders on issues of gender responsive public services, sexual reproductive and health rights, leadership building, making plans for micro campaigns and redressal of community issues specific to girls and women. The efforts resulted in installation of CCTV cameras and streetlights, YUW collective members were linked with the institutions and authorities at district and state levels such as the State Commission for Women, District Magistrate, One Stop Centre and officials at local police stations. YUW leaders are now planning to expand the work to other cities/districts in the state to build a state YUW collective. During regular awareness raising meetings young women were encouraged to share the difficulties that they faced at workplaces. 255 cases were identified across 13 cities (especially during the 16 days activism against gender-based violence and awareness on legal rights of women) where young women opened up and recognised that there is exploitation in their workplaces and that they have opportunities to upgrade their skills to get out of the exploitative forms of employment.

More than 1,740 young women were empowered who shared and narrated stories of exploitation during the Young urban women study circles, which are organised at the city collective level in each of the 13 cities. The study circles are physical spaces (hired or community centres) equipped with learning materials, used for city collective awareness meetings and capacity building workshops.

As National Youth Policy, 2021 came up in the public domain for further recommendations and feedback as it was felt that understanding the changing need and vision of the youth on the ground was vital. As the draft NYP outlines a 10-year vision for youth development and it is oriented towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) discussions have been held with the young leaders of the communities to highlight their opinions and recommendations around health, protection, education and sports. These were shared with the ministry.

Anganwadi Centres for Working Mothers made functional

In a floor meeting at Block 97 in Perumbakkam relocation site in Tamil Nadu, a need ranking and problem tree exercise was conducted by interns from the Department of Social Work (Aided), Madras Christian College which highlighted the problem of non-functional anganwadis in the block.

Concerns were raised about the safety of children and the women's inability to attend work due to traditional caregiving responsibilities. In a community mobilisation meeting, all the women decided to approach the authorities for the establishment of an anganwadi centre. Members of YUW collectives approached various authorities including MD of the division office of the Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board. As a result, 2 ICDS centres were inaugurated on November 26, 2022, benefiting the community. Fifty-five children have been enrolled in both the centres, addressing the childcare needs of working mothers.

Another petition was collectively submitted by young urban women in Perumbakkam relocation site, **Chennai**, highlighting the need for improved security measures. Subsequently, in response to these efforts, CCTV cameras were installed in some blocks of the community, enhancing overall security and safety.

In **Delhi**, young girl leaders intervened on the issue of safety on streets roads and parks during the night and took up community led actions and efforts to ensure installation of CCTV cameras and repairing of streetlights in 9 sub-areas of Madanpur Khadar in Delhi. Sessions on girls' safety and gender responsive education were conducted in 2 schools and school management committees of those schools were roped in for the continuation of such discussions in schools.

Young Urban Women and access to better infrastructure

The YUW groups in various areas of **Lucknow** have been struggling for basic infrastructure facilities in their areas such as toilets, safe drinking water and roads. These impacted their daily life severely. A few of them had made some efforts in the past but without success. The issues of broken roads, open defecation due to non-functional public toilets, lack of drinking water came up during meetings. The YUW groups prepared a collective plan to resolve these issues and followed it up with community meetings, mapping and signature campaigns, meeting the representatives of the city corporation and facilitating their visits to the slums. As a result of their efforts, road construction was done in the Hardasi Kheda, sewer line repair work was carried out and the toilets became functional benefiting more than 50 households. Supply of clean drinking water started in Takrohi.

Addressing Violence Against Women

In **Uttar Pradesh**, women from marginalised communities are particularly vulnerable to gender-based violence, including sexual assaults, domestic violence and human trafficking. We provided legal assistance, counselling, support groups and medical care to survivors of violence, as well as working

to prevent violence against women through community mobilisation and education. We intervened in around 58 cases and resolved them through community dialogue and support groups. We have 500 support groups across districts at the village level to prevent gender-based violence and creating awareness about women's rights.

Training on women's rights was organised in Gaya, Nalanda, Muzaffarpur and Samastipur districts in Bihar for women leaders, PRI members, informal sector workers, especially women farmers and frontline workers. More than 200 participants attended the training. A training on Gender Discrimination and Violence in Family and Society was organised in Gaya and Nalanda districts in Bihar in which more than 100 men and women participated.

Through Gauravi, the one stop crisis centre in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh we trained 150 women in leadership and women rights. A total of 350 women were trained in new vocational skills such as auto/ bus drivers, beauticians, computer operations, catering, mushroom cultivation, and others. We ensured jobs to 276 women who were placed through this centre during the reporting period. The centre completed 3 celebration events / meetings reaching over 2,700 women to raise awareness about gender-based violence. We dealt with 139 domestic violence cases and the centre handled 1,350 cases of violence against women, thus bringing the total number of cases handled to 1,408 in this year.

Public Finance



Strategic Engagements

National Level

National level engagement played a pivotal role in addressing critical issues affecting diverse communities nationwide. These efforts involved collaborating with government bodies, NGOs and stakeholders for strategic engagement and influencing practices on a broader scale.

Campaigns

ActionAid Association organised campaigns across multiple themes to highlight the issues of concern and bring about a synergistic approach to the issues that led to positive and good results for the vulnerable communities. A number of such campaigns were organised across the states during the year around the theme of public finance:

A Scholarship Campaign in Bihar achieved notable success, resulting in the submission of 163 scholarship applications. This underscores the organisation's unwavering commitment to education and empowerment of students through essential financial aid. Similarly, Rajasthan's Scholarship Campaign proved impactful, reaching over 12,000 students across five districts, with 9,716 applications submitted.

The Social Security and Livelihood Campaign registered 4,073 beneficiaries from various districts. The Act for Scholarship Campaign

extended coverage to about 16,364 individuals, encompassing districts in Rajasthan, villages and schools. ActionAid Association's interventions in Tamil Nadu led to noteworthy ground actions. Facilitation efforts enabled 543 women engaged in saltpan work to receive compensation of Rs 5,000 each for the rainy season. This accomplishment underscores the organisation's dedication to the well-being of vulnerable workers. Volunteer efforts effectively raised awareness and encouraged student participation in state government scholarship programmes.

Our activities in Rajasthan encompassed essential resource support for marginalised communities. Families received ration cards, pension registrations and pending MGNREGA payments. Moreover, communities secured homestead land pattas, ensuring stable housing options for those in vulnerable circumstances.

ActionAid Association's work in Madhya Pradesh yielded impactful ground actions. The Chief Minister's Public Service Campaign extended benefits to eligible beneficiaries, granting access to various schemes and programmes. Facilitation efforts aided individuals in applying for subsidised loans, encouraging new livelihood ventures and economic empowerment. Ground actions in Delhi focused on aiding women in filling applications for social security schemes. Furthermore, career counselling was provided to 714 young girls, and 246 students received

assistance in applying for scholarship schemes, enhancing access to education and skill development.

Odisha's ground actions made significant contributions to education and livelihoods. Over 30,000 girls and boys received financial assistance for education, vocational training and skill development. Additionally, policy level engagements against witch branding and hunting catalysed awareness generation and critical discussions on women's safety and rights. Ground actions in Hyderabad centred on providing social security cards, including ration cards, old age pensions and labour cards, to workers. These efforts contributed to enhancing the well-being and livelihoods for vulnerable individuals.

As a result of our engagement with the local administration in Odisha, 11 informal workers started petty businesses like tea stalls, grocery shops, egg shops, shoe shops and fish shops with support provided by ActionAid Association. Each informal worker was provided Rs 10,000 as livelihood support. Thus, a total of Rs 1,10,000 was provided to 11 informal workers as livelihood support. Besides, 5 informal workers from the urban slums of Bhubaneswar were provided support for poultry. Each informal worker was provided Rs 4,000 and in total Rs 20,000 was provided for starting poultry in their respective areas. In addition, 10 informal workers engaged as construction workers were provided with support to purchase safety tools

and equipment. Rs 20,000 was provided to 10 informal workers, Rs 2000 to each, as support for purchase of safety tools.

Community Engagements

Linkages with Government schemes

We have been continuously engaged in linking with government financial schemes and arranging the scholarship campaign in respective states in India and in this regard, the team mobilised volunteers and members to develop a concrete plan to ensure the linkages of children/ adolescents to government schemes. In Bihar we linked 15,827 adolescents with the cash plus services and schemes and scholarships. Around 100 rescued child labour were linked with the Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

Along with community volunteers we facilitated a number of awareness generation programmes and as a result 368 women successfully availed widow pension benefits, 303 elderly individuals availed old-age pension benefits, and 1,279 workers successfully registered with the welfare board. 256 families were enrolled in the CM Free Housing Scheme, 250 children were provided scholarships, and 598 women benefited under the Livelihood Restoration programme. 543 women engaged in salt-pan work received compensation of Rs.5,000 each for the rainy season due to long term efforts. Moreover, 223 individuals successfully renewed their

membership with the welfare board, ensuring their continued access to various welfare schemes and benefits, 73 bank accounts were successfully opened, enabling individuals to access financial services and participate in the formal economy, 92 domestic workers were enrolled in social security schemes, 110 individuals were enrolled in the Chief Minister's Health Insurance Scheme, ensuring their access to quality healthcare services, 70 individuals received scholarships for higher education specifically aimed at supporting women, enabling them to pursue their academic goals and empowering them to excel in their chosen fields, and 27 differently-abled persons received access to various schemes aimed at supporting their specific needs and ensuring their inclusion and participation in society.

In Rajasthan 226 families got ration cards, 199 registered for the pension schemes and 315 got pending payments under MGNREGA. 100 DNT communities also received homestead land pattas (titles) in Bharatpur, and 467 DNT families in Tonk and 2,153 families were linked to various social protection schemes in Rajasthan. 200 women were linked to government livelihood schemes and team has also facilitated 9,716 students' application registration for scholarships. The team also linked 8,548 children (no parents and single parents) from the Palanhar programmes, 226 families got ration cards and 119 registered under pension schemes.

In Uttarakhand 65 women were linked to the Janani Suraksha Yojana and 69 women were linked to the widow pension schemes and 533 (303 in Tamil Nadu and 230 in Hyderabad) elder people were linked to old age pension schemes from which they benefitted. The AA team in Uttar Pradesh facilitated 10,000 people in accessing various social protection schemes. During #Actforscholarship campaign, the team along with community volunteers reached out to 3 lakh people and facilitated 10,000 students. It also covered 5,000 schools and colleges through 650 awareness meetings.

In Tamil Nadu, 73 bank accounts were successfully opened, enabling individuals to access financial services and participate in the formal economy. 27 differently abled persons received access to various schemes aimed at supporting their specific needs thus ensuring their inclusion and participation in society.

The Gujarat team facilitated the registration of 4,073 people in different social security schemes in 9 intervention districts. The team mobilised 4,940 children in 49 schools and facilitated 493 children for pre-and post-matric scholarships.

In Madhya Pradesh, financial assistance support was provided to 213 people for start-ups for animal husbandry, some purchased sewing machines for sewing clothes, some started beauty parlours, vegetable vending

and readymade clothes shops. 500 members of YUW collectives were linked to the Ayushman Card, the Sambal Yojana card and the labour card. 4 young urban women, as small-scale entrepreneurs set up their stalls in the Raksha-Bandhan Mela organised by WCD. 400 of the 250 women received loans for start-ups for their livelihood.

In Odisha 30,343 girls and boys were provided financial assistance of Rs 32,19,87,000 through

BOCW, Odisha Rural Development and Marketing Society (ORMAS) and CSR for linkages with education, vocational /technical education and skill training.

The Hyderabad team also intensively engaged with community volunteers in establishing community linkages to social security schemes and as a result the team ensured 60 new ration cards and 70 labour cards and 230 people were linked to old-age pension schemes.







**Land, Forest,
Agriculture
and Water**

ActionAid Association has been working on the issues of land, water, forest and commons across the states. In 2022-23, we strengthened marginalised people's agency to advance community engagement conservations of commons – land, water, forest. Training and capacity building programmes were organised for community leaders, youth and women to develop their understanding on the issues of land – agricultural, homestead, commons – grazing and pastoral, procedures of filing applications and engaging with the local authorities.

We conducted campaigns for awareness and facilitating applications for land under FRA in 12 states. Fresh claims of 586 IFRs as well as 117 CFRs were filed by the eligible people. We engaged with Forest Rights Committees and strengthened their understanding of FRAs and their role, as these play a significant role in processing the claims at the village level. A total of 815 community leaders and young people were oriented on the provisions of FRA. Around 500 landless families were facilitated to apply for homestead land. Among these and the earlier ones, 389 families received homestead land titles.

Campaigns were organised to promote sustainable agriculture and sensitising communities to adopt farming practices that enrich soil quality and are in sync with the ecology and local climate. Skill building

training on sustainable agriculture benefited 6,221 families across various states. 2,435 people learnt about usage of indigenous methodologies such as mixed farming, indigenous pest control practices, producing organic manure, conservation and use of indigenous seed varieties and multi-layer farming models. Seed banks and grain banks were facilitated among the marginalised communities that can help them in the conservation and exchange of indigenous varieties and access the food grains during lean periods.

During this period, ActionAid Association supported farmers' groups collectivising them for collective entrepreneurship through 3 farmer producer organisations (FPO), having a membership of around 4,000 farmers. Basant is the first women-led FPO in Bundelkhand which has moved forward in getting a license for seed production.

Further advances were made in the direction of protecting and promoting ecology. Capacity building of Human and Ecological Rights Defenders on the issue of climate change and ecological justice was done across states. Through community volunteers and Human and Ecological Rights Defenders were engaged in monitoring and raising a voice for the protection and improvement of water quality of around 200 lakes. Our interventions led to preservation and rejuvenation of around 100 water bodies across various states.



Forest Rights Act Strategic Engagements

Continuous follow up by CBO members in **Karnataka**, with the forest department, ITDP, revenue and RDPR helped in expediting the process. As a result, the survey related to 22 CR claims was completed by the authorities in HD Kote taluk in Mysore district. In Mastigudi 177 tribal families were able to access 531 acres of forest land which they are using for cultivation of Jowar.

In **Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand**, 3 training sessions were organised to strengthen the understanding of the community leaders on FRA in Dharchula, Askot and Bagad Jauljibi. A total of 130 people, including 83 women, members of our CBO and van panchayat and 12 government officials participated in the training. The DM participated in one of the training sessions and gave an order for the formation of a micro-plan for each van panchayat. The forest department, members of the van panchayat along with the community developed a micro-plan for 70 van panchayats. The Raji community suggested the

plantation of the trees such as bay leaf, oak and reetha and the construction of a protection wall. The micro-plan of Kalika van panchayat has been completed and the forest department has started its work. The local community also got wage work in the plantation and construction work.

A district level interface on the issue FRA implementation was organised in **Chamba, Himachal Pradesh**, in which 84 people participated, including 36 people from the local administration. This resulted in the formation of a committee to facilitate and monitor the process of filing FRA claims. As a result, 5 CFR claims expected to benefit nearly 100 families were filed. Thirty-three meetings in 10 gram panchayats were organised on the issue FRA claim applications.

The Gujjar and Gaddi communities move to various parts of the Chamba district, Himachal Pradesh in search of grasslands to graze their cattle. They were facing administrative challenges in the movement of cattle and accessing grasslands. Our engagement with the local administration along with CBO leaders helped in resolving the issue. After assurance from the community leaders on the protection of the tree plantation, an order was issued by the forest department allowing movement and grazing for the cattle of pastoral communities Gaddis and Gujjars in Chamba district.

Campaigns

The FRA campaign was organised in Banswara district, **Rajasthan** to create awareness among the community for the assertion of community forest rights. The organised efforts of the community-based organisations at the grassroots and strategic engagement helped to take forward the issues of forest management and forest conservation under forest rights including both IFR and FR. A total of 96 community rights claims were filed in Bagidaura and Gangadtalai blocks. Among these 18 claims have been approved and the remaining are in process at the Sub Divisional Level Committee (SDLC) and District Level Committee (DLC).

In **Andhra Pradesh and Telangana**, we organised awareness campaigns on the importance of protection and conservation of natural resources including forests and water bodies. The campaigns reached out to more than 5,000 people among the Gond, Kolam, Koti and Pradhan tribal communities in Telangana and Yanadi communities in Andhra Pradesh. An awareness campaign was organised on the Forest Rights Act in Adilabad district, Telangana. It reached out to 450 members of 22 villages.

Campaigns were organised for effective implementation of the Forest Rights Act in 50 villages of **Bahraich** district in **Uttar Pradesh**. As a result of this campaign 5 forest villages have been converted to revenue villages. Seventy

tribal families got possession over land under FRA in Bahaich district.

A forest rights campaign was conducted in **Mandla and Balagat districts in Madhya Pradesh** to make the community aware of the provisions and procedures of filing claims. The process of filing CFR claims continued in 51 villages. Gram sabha resolutions were passed and mapping for the forest area was completed. In Birsa block of Balaghat district over 200 village panchayat and janpad (block) panchayat members were trained in the PESA Act and FRA.

Community Engagements

In **Dang district, Gujarat**, awareness meetings were organised with tribal communities on FRA provisions. The communities and FRCs were made aware of the procedures and the documentation required for land claims under FRA, reaching out to 300 people in 18 villages. As a result, GPS mapping and other formalities have been completed for 236 people seeking land titles. The appeals of 160 people got approved, entitling them to IFR and the remaining applications are under review.

In **Sambalpur district, Odisha**, 8 Forest Rights Committees were strengthened to take forward the process of community forest rights claims (CFRs). Seven community claims were submitted. Apart from this, 130 IFR have been approved

and soon these families will get titles to their lands.

In **Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand** 33 Raji families filed IFR claims. Among these 28 families received the possession letter from the chairman of the tribal commission and the officer of the social welfare department. Landless families from 35 villages filed 44 claims for homestead land. Thirty-one families received the claims covering a total land area of 3.002 hectare. Accessing land claims under FRA, 2006, still remains a challenge due to the attitude due to structural issues. Till now 29 families from 5 villages have received claims out of the 35 claims filed.

We engaged in generating awareness and strengthening the community groups actively working for the implementation of the Forest Rights Act in **Jharkhand**. Seventy-two claims for IFR and 4 for CFR claims were filed in Giridih district.

The rate of rejection of forest rights claims has increased after adoption of the Van Mitra App that was launched to expedite land allotment and check corruption in **Madhya Pradesh**. Resolutions were passed in gram sabhas to stop the review process through the Van Mitra portal and reverting to the process through Forest Rights Committee (FRC), SDLC and DLC as per the act. Along with the request to re-examine the rejected cases, the resolution and memorandum to end the use of the portal were

submitted to the Chief Minister through the block and district administration in 10 districts. Around 20 community trainings and meetings were held in 51 villages across 10 districts in Madhya Pradesh by community volunteers and leaders. A total of 950 community leaders were oriented on FRA in these trainings and meetings.

In Akole block, **Ahmednagar**, Maharashtra our teams facilitated the community for filing CFR claims and helped the community to follow it up at SDLC and DLC levels. Among these 5 villages received CFR approval in 2022 for 1067.08 hectares of forest land. This is an inspiring achievement and has encouraged other villages to follow a similar process.

A Three-day long awareness programme was organised on FRA in **Jharkhand**. Around 200 people from the tribal community participated from Madhupur and Giridih districts. In Deoghar district, 138 IFR claims were filed and submitted to the sub-divisional level committee for further action. In Giridih district, 72 IFR applications

were received and 3 IFR claims were accepted and patta issued by the sub-divisional officer, the other claims are under process. Panchayat level meetings on forest rights were conducted in Madhupur block and Musabani in Deoghar district of Jharkhand.

A training manual on the process to claim community forest rights was made in Hindi. It introduces the forest rights act, provisions of community forest resources in the act, what are the rights protected by the act, different authorities under the Forest Rights Act, their constitution, powers and duties, the process to claim Community Forest Rights, the evidence need for the determination of forest right, and the grievance and appeal mechanisms. We also annexed samples of various application formats and communications which are useful in the process of claiming CFR. The training manual helped our community leaders to understand the steps and facilitating community leaders and volunteers training on the issue and taking the claim process forward at the village level.

Impact in Numbers	
Number of Individual Forest Rights (IFR) applications filed	586
Number of Community Forest Rights' (CFR) applications facilitated	117
Number of FRC members and community leaders trained on FRA	815
Number of applications filed for homestead land	500
Number of families who received homestead land titles	389

Commons and Homestead Land Strategic Engagements

In **Maharashtra**, a campaign in partnership with people's organisations across 11 districts collectivised thousands of Gairan Dharak (people accessing grazing land/commons) to submit their demand for grazing land to the Chief Minister through the district administration. The campaign helped in continuing the status quo and people's access to gairan lands.

In Belgavi district, **Karnataka**, the houses of 120 families in Chikkodi and Athani taluk were affected by floods in 2019 and 2021. Their continuous efforts and meetings with the authorities and the housing corporation resulted in the allocation of Rs 5 lakh for the 120 families for constructing new houses. Fifty marginalised families of Shankarahatti village, Athani taluk were helped to get back their land records from the gram panchayat. Till now 35 families have got their land records, whereas for 15 families the process is being pursued with the land revenue officers. In Chikkodi taluk around 175 marginalised families were facing the issue of burial land. The applications were moved to the land revenue and social welfare department and follow-up is going on to access the land.

Campaigns

In Haryana, a campaign for homestead land – **Bhu Adhikar Abhiyan** – was done that reached out to 47 gram panchayats in Sonipat district. A total of 417 families were identified and supported in submitting their applications to the gram panchayats for allotment of 100 square yards residential plots to them under the Mahatma Gandhi Gramin Basti Yojana. As part of this campaign, we identified 85 potential community leaders, organised two training sessions for their capacity building on the issue of land, housing and entitlements, and engaged them with the campaign. In Panipat 30 families were supported in applying for housing related schemes.

Community Engagements

In **Rajasthan**, we organised a state level workshop on the issue of the marginalised community's access to land with CBOs and community leaders in Jodhpur. Around 60 participants from 7 districts participated and discussed challenges and strategies to prevent land alienation and ensure the community's access to land. They also prepared an action plan for the state level campaign on the land issue.

In **Sambalpur district, Odisha**, 160 landless families were identified in 15 villages for homestead land. Out of these 80 families have

received the land pattas. Applications have been processed for the remaining 80 families.

13 training sessions were organised on the issues of land and related aspects including gairan land and commons in **Maharashtra** in the districts of **Sangli, Usmanabad, Beed, Parbhani, Hingoli, Jalna, Nanded, Ahmadnagar, Nasik, Nandurbar and Nagpur**. A total of 545 community leaders, youths and volunteers attended the training to strengthen their understanding of laws and strategies on land related issues.

In **Punjab**, capacity building training of 125 volunteers was done in the districts of **Mansa, Jalandhar, Amritsar and Tarn Taran** on the issues of common land and the 5 Marla Scheme. In 2021 the Government of Punjab had announced the 5 Marla scheme, under which plots of 5 marla (1 marla = 272.25 square feet) were to be distributed to marginalised landless families. The community leaders and volunteers organised a month-long campaign on the issue of shamlat land in Tarn Taran. The gram panchayat of Koharka had passed a resolution to allot 5 marla plots to marginalised families in the village and sent applications to the district magistrate who marked them to the concerned BDPO (Block Development and Panchayat Officer). But in the meantime, with the formation of a new government in the state, the fate of the 5 Marla Scheme became uncertain.

In Bharatpur, **Rajasthan** 100 De-Notified Tribal community members received homestead land pattas. They have been making continuous efforts and following-up with the local administration after the submission of applications.

In Pithoragarh district, **Uttarakhand** 35 families including 13 single women raised the demand for homestead land. The community leaders of their villages supported them in raising their demand in the panchayat, and the district magistrate in the district level meeting held on 1st August 2022 in Pithoragarh. Among these 28 families including 13 single women got the homestead land. These families also got benefits under the PM Awas Yojana. Agriculture land was transferred in the name of 3 single women as a part of the inheritance process after raising the issue with the local administration.

Urban Homestead Land

In **Karnataka**, the efforts of the CBO Slum Janara Sanghatane ensured that a Government Order was passed on the issue of land titles filed for 125 families residing in Gottigere area, Bengaluru City. The engagement with the state resulted in a considerable reduction of registering the land title document from Rs 2,000 to Rs 450. Similarly, the land purchase cost for 600 sq. ft has been reduced from Rs 10,000 to Rs 2,000 for SC communities and Rs 4,000 for people from the general category.



In **Bengaluru city**, community efforts resulted in getting approval for housing allotments and the process of allotment is in progress for 25 families in the Chennasandra (Kadugodi) slum. In Vinobha Nagar, the request for land allotment for 68 families and housing allotment for 13 families in Kalasipalyam area is in the process.

Ecological Farming

We have been actively working towards promoting ecological farming in several districts of **Odisha, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Assam and Manipur**. The ground actions in Sambalpur,

Odisha included community meetings with the farmers focusing on awareness generation on ecological farming and benefits of cultivating indigenous crops and conservation of seeds. Farmers were oriented on preparing organic manure and pest control using indigenous practices. Campaigns were organised across these states to sensitise farming communities about the ill-effects of chemicalised farming and generating awareness about ecological farming. The farming communities are engaged in conservation of indigenous varieties of seeds through seed banks. To strengthen food security and eliminate malnutrition, grain banks and kitchen gardens were promoted in the project villages across states.

In **Giridih, Jharkhand** 50 people were provided training on sustainable agricultural practices that include cultivation of indigenous crops, preparing and using organic manure, using traditional methods of pest control and conservation of local seed varieties. They were oriented in the formation of a farmer producer organisation, to help them to work collectively and market their products.

In East Medinipur, **West Bengal**, the farmers' collectives called farmer interest groups (FIGs) were oriented, strengthened and advanced as farmers producers organisation. One such farmer producer organisation (FPO) was formed in East Medinipur district. With 30 new members

the total number of FPO members has gone up to 836. The FIGs of East Medinipur were provided saplings that helped them develop one orchard to rebuild their livelihood. Forty-five FIGs were trained in integrated farming and pond management to continue practicing sustainable agriculture. Our regular engagement with the block administration helped 4 FIGs in receiving one incubator from Khejuri I Block office. It has enhanced the income of farmers engaged in poultry farming. Three nurseries were prepared by the FIG with sapling support provided to them, benefitting around 300 farmers. In East Medinipur and South 24 Parganas adolescents were oriented on organic farming. They took the lead in developing a nutritional kitchen garden in the school premises. Eco-clubs were formed in schools in both districts for promoting sustainable agriculture.

The Farmer Producer Organisation in Jharkhand has around 1,000 farmers associated with it who are engaged in ecological farming. Another collective of 600 women farmers is also practicing and promoting ecological farming in **Nalanda, Bihar**.

In **Madhya Pradesh**, 10 women farmers' groups and 4 SHGs comprising 190 women as members, got seed money of Rs 2,50,000. The two groups received Rs 40,000 as an award for their remarkable work. Around 20 units of

vermicompost were set up in 15 villages for women to initiate vermicomposting as an alternate livelihood option.

Livelihood promotion for Tribal women -- sustainable agriculture practices and other livelihood options -- broom making, apairy and kitchen gardening training was organised. Three hundred women have developed organic and kitchen gardens in their backyards.

In Adilabad and Asifabad districts of **Telangana**, ActionAid Association has been working with several initiatives of Telangana government including the Haritha Haram programme for promoting afforestation and increasing the green cover by engaging the communities in their socioeconomic development and their basic needs of health and nutrition.

Fifteen nutrition gardens have been initiated in the homestead land of 15 families in **Banswara, Rajasthan**. Minimum 10 types of crops are included in the kitchen garden to ensure food security and nutrition for the family members and children. We also initiated a collective of migrant workers on agriculture in Banswara, Rajasthan. This helped in engaging the workers in agricultural production. We also provided training to 32 women on agriculture and entrepreneurship.

ActionAid Association has been promoting climate-resilient sustainable agriculture

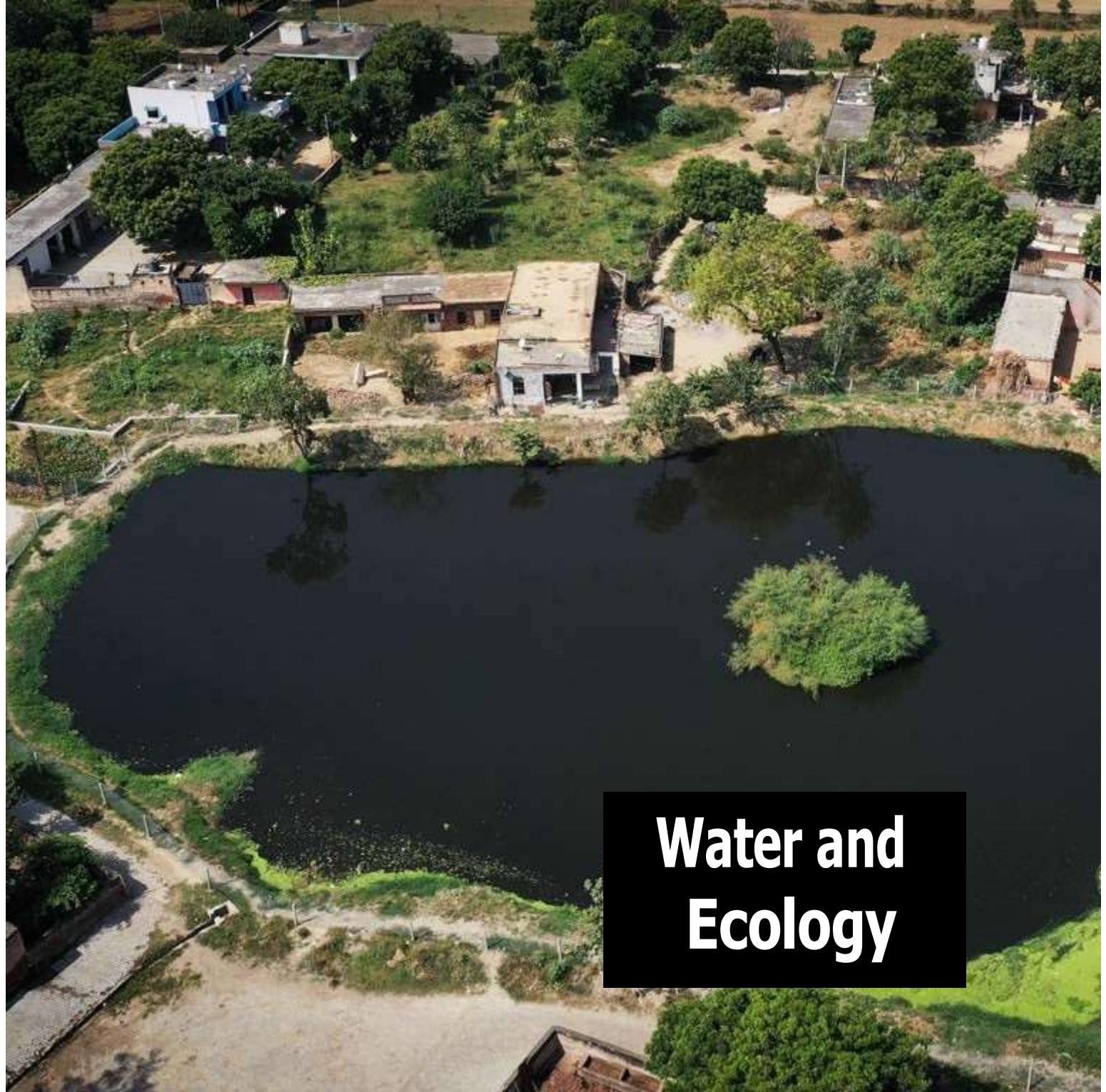
and non-farm-based livelihood models for community resilience in **Bundelkhand, Uttar Pradesh**. The region is affected by climatic extremities – droughts, erratic rains resulting crop failure and increasing vulnerabilities. The livelihood programme in Bundelkhand aimed at enhancing livelihood opportunities among marginalised communities in the three districts of Jhansi, Lalitpur and Mahoba in Uttar Pradesh and it started 7 livelihood models - poultry farming, vermicompost, nutrition garden, seasonal agriculture, multi-layer farming for vegetable cultivation, goat rearing and horticulture for fruit production. Besides conducting capacity-building, we also supported the communities in terms of technical inputs, material, insurance and marketing to promote their livelihoods. So far, our livelihood intervention has been able to reach 2,000 households in 40 villages – 10 villages in one block in Jhansi, 15 villages in one block in Lalitpur and 15 villages in two blocks in Mahoba. Training was organised for 2,000 women farmers involved in different models which focused on how to prepare organic compost and pesticides, which apart from being an environment friendly substitute will also reduce input costs and are easy to prepare as the materials are locally available. Plastic drums with a capacity of 35 litres has also been provided so that the organic pesticide can be stored safely. In the winter crop cycle, seed production units using a local variety of drought resistant seeds of wheat and green peas was taken up by 150 women farmers. The women farmers received

technical training including on biopesticides and organic fertilisers. The Uttar Pradesh State Seed Certification Institute, Lucknow, provided certification during this period to 18 farmers of Lalitpur and Jhansi districts, for production of 'wheat seed of 1,317 variety' on 30.95 hectares of land. Training programmes on preparing vermicompost manure were organised across 40 villages in Mahoba, Lalitpur and Jhansi districts. One hundred and eighteen women farmers were supported for multi-layer farming, helping them to cultivate three types of vegetables simultaneously.

ActionAid Association facilitated and registered the first **women-led FPO in Uttar Pradesh in Bundelkhand** for promotion of rural women entrepreneurship. The FPO called BASANT has 1,950 women members. The process of obtaining the license from FSSAI has been initiated. the

BASANT FPO is in the nascent stages and requires quite a bit of strengthening and forward linkages to become profitable. A training programme was organised for the board of directors of the FPO in Mahoba district. A formal collaboration has been established with the premier Indian Grassland Research Institute, which is providing technical support and offering solutions to problems arising in the field. A stall linked with the BASANT FPO was set up in three districts - Jhansi, Mahoba and Lalitpur - as part of a programme organised by the government's Krishi Vigyan Kendra (Agriculture Research Centre) in collaboration with the Indian Council for Agriculture Research and Banda Agricultural University. Nearly 899 households who have animals such as cows, buffalo and goats were supported in accessing services from the veterinary hospital Khailar, Babina, following engagement with the local administration.





Water and Ecology

Strategic Engagements

A biodiversity conference was organised by ActionAid Association in collaboration with the Botany Department of Guwahati University on the critical subject of shrinking biodiversity in the Northeastern region of India. ActionAid Association brought together a group of resource persons, academicians and practitioners who have been working with such issues for a long time in the Northeastern states. In this 2-day event, more than 15 resource persons and 150 participants participated and discussed the impact of shrinking biodiversity on the livelihoods of communities whose lives are inextricably tied to the state of the environment. The Northeastern region is marked as one of the biodiversity hotspots of the world. Yet, we all know its vulnerabilities, and that a combination of climate change and environmental insensitivity permeates the region's development agenda has caused great concern, particularly in recent decades resulting in a sharp decline in its biodiversity. The impact is already visible and evidenced on the ground. It calls for urgent measures to be taken to repair and correct the situation to avoid a possible disaster. The impact and repercussions on farmers, jhumias, fisherfolk, pastoralists and others whose lives, livelihoods and vocations are woven into the fabric of the ecosystem and climate will be very considerable. However, it does not take long to understand that climate

change and biodiversity are intrinsically connected both by cause and effect.

To generate awareness on climate change and addressing the ecological crisis ActionAid Association organised a convention of the agricultural labourers and fisherfolk in **East Medinipur, West Bengal**, in the context of climate change and the ecological crisis. Around 1,000 fish workers who were engaged in fish collection, catching-selling and vending of fish in the market as well as agricultural labourers participated to discuss the impact of climate change on their lives and livelihoods. Another **convention of women informal labourers on the theme 'Climate change, Gender and Labour'** in Cooch Behar along with Gitaldaha Bikas Samity (GBS) and Pramila Bahini, a local women's collective was also organised. Around 800 women from 5 blocks of Cooch Behar joined the discussion on climate change and its effect on women. Women workers' representatives spoke on issues like impact of climate change issues of availability of work, wage disparities, unfavourable working conditions and absence of social security to address disaster and climate change related work loss.

Studies and Research

A study titled 'Lost to the Sea' was initiated by ActionAid Association with the objective of understanding the vulnerabilities of communities affected by seawater intrusion and

will look at the loss of natural buffer zones, forest barriers and mangrove ecosystems due to salination, sand intrusion, deforestation and increase in unsustainable, unregulated prawn cultivation for the export market and loss of river and sea-based fishing livelihoods for small fisherfolk.

The marginalised communities can play a major role in mitigating the impact of climate change by providing ecological services and protecting the ecosystem. In the context of climate change, the Report titled 'Troubles in the Sundarbans: A study of social and ecological issues in Hingalganj Block, North 24 Parganas, West Bengal' was published. This report presents the results of a study that ActionAid Association undertook to understand how communities dependent on ecological resources can be transformed into environmental workers. The Sundarbans have great significance, being the single largest mangrove forest in the world. The area is rich and productive with plant and animal biodiversity, and the forests acts as a shield against storm surges and gusty winds that often occur in this area prone to cyclonic storms. Vast majorities of landless agricultural labour, small peasants, pastoralists, Tribal and other forest dwellers and small-scale fish workers are the natural custodians of ecological resources. As wetlands have a remarkable capacity to sequester carbon, their role in the Sundarbans can be especially crucial.

displacement. It was also meant to understand the existing adaptive and coping strategies used by the communities and analyse the government schemes and policies meant to provide support to the displaced groups. The study covers displaced villages in costal districts such as Puri, Bhadrak, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapada and Balasore. The study

A study on 'Fishkill in the Lakes of Bengaluru' was also done. The study covered 5 years and was based on secondary research. The report highlighted the death of fish due to non-conducive environments in the lake waters. It was submitted to the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board. The report was referred to by news organisations widely.

Rainwater harvesting opportunities at Metro Yellow Line:

Yellow Line: A study on rainwater harvesting opportunities was conducted to assess the opportunity to collect rainwater at the new metro station (yellow line) and submitted to the Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL). We are yet to see the outcome of this study.

Biodiversity Documentation in Lakes:

In the last 12 months, 23 visits were made to 13 lakes as part of monitoring and biodiversity documentation on ebird.org - a free, online platform that allows birdwatchers to record their observations and share them with researchers, scientists, and conservationists. During the visits to the lakes, we were able to identify issues in terms of structure, water quality and the lake ecosystem, and shared it with various stakeholders for awareness and sensitisation.

Campaigns

In **Jharkhand** a campaign on water rights was organised by jal mitras. The campaign covered

2 blocks - Madhupur and Margomunda – in Deoghar district. The participants included PRI members, jal sahayaks and community members. The community members were informed about rainwater management through jalkunda, change in crop patterns and controlling chemical fertilisers for safe groundwater, mulching practices, zero tillers and reducing water usage.

Lake Walks for children were conducted to introduce children to the lake ecosystem as a part of environment education. Through this campaign school children were introduced to the biodiversity – trees, plants, shrubs, birds and butterflies in the lakes. Five lake walks were organised in Agara, Madiwala and Chunchaghatta lakes in which 122 children participated.

Community Engagements

ActionAid Association has been engaged with the communities to orient them on water and ecology and work for the conservation of natural resources. With the efforts of volunteers and Human and ecological rights defenders water bodies were rejuvenated. In Sambalpur, Odisha a pond was renovated in Rantal village and a dug well was constructed in the Meghpal village panchayat.

In Gautam Budh Nagar, Noida, **Delhi NCR** we are engaged in rejuvenating 4 ponds in villages Bagpur, Navada and Talda. Along with these

another 10 ponds which were rejuvenated earlier, are being maintained on a regular basis. The 10 ponds are located in 6 villages - Kot, Luharli, Nangla Nainsukh, Beel Akbarpur, Khatana Dhirkera and Anandpur.

The ponds were desilted to increase the water retention capacity, and the bunds were strengthened. The cleaning of the surrounding areas and plantation was carried out along the ponds to increase the green cover and prevent erosion. Water user groups or youth groups take care of the ponds in the villages. They were oriented on the importance of water conservation and management of water bodies. Mass awareness was carried out using IEC materials and wall paintings. Engagement with local stakeholders ensured keeping a check on garbage dumping and encroachment at pond sites. The capacity of the ponds has increased to store 28,050 cbm water after rejuvenation.

In Pithoragarh, **Uttarakhand** the people of 7 villages were facing a water crisis as the water bodies (*khal-chal*) had been damaged and some water taps were non-functional. The community leaders raised this issue at the panchayat and block level and in the district level meeting held in Pithoragarh. They submitted their complaints in writing with all the evidence. The water pipeline work was repaired in 3 villages and one water tank was constructed under MNREGA; 53 water bodies

were rejuvenated in the 7 villages impacting around 3,500 families.

ActionAid Association has been striving towards improving the water quality of the lakes in **Karnataka**, with specific focus on Bengaluru. Since our last year report, based on the water quality in 176 lakes of Karnataka, momentum has been growing on improving water quality in the lakes and has been highlighted in the news. The water quality of three lakes in South Bengaluru - Doddakallasandra Lake, Chunchunghatta Lake and Kothnur Lakes -- has been regularly monitored in association with the local community and RWAs. Issues like pollutants entry into the lake waters were raised regularly with the concerned authorities. Monthly water sample test reports of three lakes from Karnataka State Pollution Board were accessed and studied to keep the water quality appropriate for wildlife and fisheries.

In Karnataka we have been able to support lake groups in highlighting issues of water quality in lakes, rejuvenation, fishkill, fencing and torching plants which has been highlighted by the newspapers. ActionAid Association facilitated internship for 40 students on the issue of water commons. They were sensitised on conservation of lakes and importance of water quality in improving biodiversity and they have contributed immensely to taking forward the agenda of water commons.

In Bengaluru, a survey of 156 pillars in the stretch between MG Road and Swamy Vivekananda Road metro stations was done, and the 'Rainwater Harvesting at Namma Metro,' was brought out. It was submitted to the managing director, Bangalore Metro Corporation Limited. It was well covered in the news in Bengaluru.

Within weeks BMRCL started initiatives to correct the lacunae identified in the report. Within a week, the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited officials called to update on the cleaning work undertaken and shared pictures of the progress in harvesting rainwater.



**Working with Human
& Ecological Rights
Defenders**

ActionAid Association has a long history of supporting people's organisations and building people's leadership to help them pursue a life with dignity as equal citizens of India. National level consultations were organised with the leaders' collectives.

Strategic Engagements

Several state level consultations were held to bring together ground leaders and to discuss people's issues. Our teams across states supported 100 Social and Ecological Rights Defenders and developed detailed action plans with them. The intervention initiated the National Academy for Social Movements to build capacities and skills of community leaders and their organisations. More than 125 training sessions and workshops were organised on perspective and knowledge building, skilling on documentation, conducting meetings and leadership building. Also 10,345 community leaders were identified and oriented on various social issues. Women's issues, gender-based violence, education, social security schemes for PWDs, single women, Child Protection Committees and other social issues were taken up by across the states.

Recognising the Contributions of Human Rights Defenders

ActionAid Association organised a national event to celebrate community-based human rights defenders from across states working with the most marginalised communities and promoting social and ecological justice. Individuals and organisations who are doing exemplary service to society were felicitated at the meeting held on December 14, 2022, on the occasion of Human Rights Day at India International Centre, New Delhi. The programme was graced by Shri Devendra Kumar Singh IAS, Secretary General, National Human Rights Commission; Dr Lalitha Kumaramangalam, Former Chairperson, National Commission for Women; Dr Shantha Sinha, Former Chairperson, National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights; and Shri Shivaji Sarjerao Dhavale, Chairperson, Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority.

Training and Capacity Building of community leaders

National Academy for Social Movements organised trainings, orientation and leadership development programme in each state. Trainings were scheduled in clusters and participants from each state attended the capacity building training and workshop. The main purpose of the training was to train participants on the concept of

constitutional roles and responsibilities so that these ground leaders can better contribute not only to the development of their own communities but overall to the nation building efforts.

Creating spaces for dialogue on social and ecological issues

The trained leaders have created spaces for discussions on social and ecological issues and initiated dialogues in their communities on policies and practices where people's issues are at the centre. Also, as governments and industries develop plans to transition to cleaner development alternatives, community leaders were also trained on climate and sustainable aspects to build green economies.

This aimed at protecting not only the local environment and ecology but also creating decent and dignified work within the framework of just green transitions as a way to mitigate the impact of climate change and enable adaptation for impacted communities. The trained community leaders developed outreach plans in their respective catchment/ local communities and committed to identification and further training of more than 6,000 community leaders in their areas,





Disaster Response



Community Engagements

The poor and marginalised communities struggled in emerging from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the weather extremities brought new challenges as 2022 witnessed major emergencies due to floods across the country. The communities were severely hit by the economic downturn caused by the pandemic and families encountered a fierce challenge of restoring their livelihoods and household economies. The exodus of migrant workers back home meant the remittances that many communities depended on were no longer available, and a critical buffer to the states' economies was no longer available. While the government programmes for ensuring the availability of free foodgrains and other core services like health and nutrition for targeted vulnerable populations helped stem an even larger crisis, the attempts to recharge the economies were insufficient to restore them to pre-pandemic levels. This sustained decline increased the vulnerability of the communities, especially the most marginalised and difficult to reach. The beginning of 2023 saw headlines related to land subsidence in Joshimath, leading to cracks in houses and buildings. ActionAid Association intervened in major emergencies with humanitarian support and supported more than 17,000 families.

Dima Hasao, Nagaon, Hojai, Morigaon, Darrang and Nalbari districts in Assam were devastated,

causing a humanitarian crisis displacing millions of people from their homes and destroying property and public infrastructure. There was also a rainfall deficit in many parts of the Northeastern region affecting food production which is critical for communities dependent on subsistence farming, pastoralism and artisanal livelihoods. There was a substantial response in the mountainous district of Dima Hasao in Assam as the habitations cut off without supplies and humanitarian aid for weeks as road, railway and telecommunication infrastructure was destroyed by torrential rain that caused multiple landslides. ActionAid Association played a very critical role in supporting the government in reaching out to isolated communities with food and hygiene kits and in supporting the most vulnerable families to build shelters and facilities for drinking water. We were one of the first to respond in the district and involved a large contingent of volunteers belonging to organisations of students and youths in Dima Hasao, to reach aid to areas inaccessible by road. A total of 3,007 severely affected families across 51 villages were supported and 850 families were assisted in reconstructing their homes and 150 temporary toilets were built for common use. We initiated similar humanitarian responses in the districts of Darrang and Nalbari in Assam which were inundated with flood waters. The affected populations were provided with food aid to each family for a month, along with hygiene kits and other essential non-food items like

Impact in numbers (Number of families supported)	
Floods in Assam	7,972
Floods in Gujarat	1,269
Floods in Odisha	2,174
Floods in Uttar Pradesh	1,315
Floods in Bengaluru	570
Floods in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh	3,021
Landslide in Joshimath	907

tarpaulins, buckets and mugs, mosquito nets and torchlights. A total of 4,965 families in the worst affected areas of Darrang and Nalbari districts were supported.

Heavy rainfall in **Gujarat** in western India caused severe flooding in at least 7 districts, affecting over 10 million people. We identified the marginalised among the flood affected communities for support. These included Tribal, Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups, Tribal Groups, women (widowed and single women), De-Notified Tribes and the marginalised. Seven hundred and sixty nine families were supported with ration kits. These included 150 in Ahmedabad, 239 in Navsari, 150 in Kutch and 230 in Vadodara. Similarly, 500 families were provided with tarpaulins for immediate shelter. These included 75 in Ahmedabad, 150 in Navsari, 75 in Kutch and 200 in Vadodara. These included 12 persons with disabilities and 5 orphans. Ration kits were also provided to

30 transgenders. During the flood response in Gujarat, we reached out to women focusing on the issues of women and oriented all team members regarding the safeguarding policies of ActionAid Association including Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA). Community meetings and orientations were conducted for women on the policy provisions and complaint mechanisms in the local language. Policy provisions were displayed on banners at all the distribution sites.

Floods wreaked havoc in 13 districts in **Odisha**. About 10 lakh people were affected due to floods in 2,489 villages. ActionAid Association responded to the two worst affected districts Puri and Balasore in Odisha. Through this response, we reached out to 2,174 most affected families with relief support. A total of 2,174 families from Gop block in Puri district and Bhograi block in Balasore district were provided with humanitarian support – hygiene

kits, water and clothing support. Among these 1,309 families also received dry ration kits and tarpaulins for temporary shelter. The vulnerable communities, particularly marginalised families, women, children, persons with disabilities, widows, single women, elderly, sexual minorities and women headed households were prioritised in our response. We mobilised the support of the women and youth groups while working in the flood affected areas. They were also part of the process of the need assessment that was undertaken in the affected areas. During the distribution of humanitarian support, the affected communities were informed about the price and quantity of the materials. Continuing

our practice of transparency, boards, banners containing the details of the relief material, price and quantity were displayed at the distribution sites.

Flooding in **Uttar Pradesh** affected over 8 lakh people according to state government's data. The extent of damage was quite high as many of the blocks and villages lost road connectivity. Based on the needs assessment conducted in 64 panchayats, 1,315 families severely affected by floods were provided dry rations and non-food items in 6 districts in Uttar Pradesh -- Kushinagar, Balrampur, Bahraich, Shravasti, Siddharth Nagar and Ghazipur. The dry ration kit included rice, flour, lentils, cooking oil, sugar, tea,



salt, turmeric powder, coriander powder and chili powder. Non-food items included bathing soap, washing soap, anti-bacterial liquid, toothpaste, toothbrushes, sanitary napkins, dish washing bar, bucket and mug. Tarpaulin sheets were given for temporary shelter. These 1,315 families belong to the most vulnerable communities particularly, marginalised, single women, PWDs, old aged and children. Along with this, ActionAid Association continuously engaged with the affected communities and organised community meetings and orientations for their physical and psychological well-being. Due to unprecedented heavy rains in Uttar Pradesh in September, farmers in Bundelkhand experienced crop loss in their farms. ActionAid Association has been supporting 2,000 households to seek compensation under the government relief programmes. The government compensation is limited (up to 2 acres of land and Rs 6,500 per acre) and cannot cover all the losses incurred by the farmers.

Bengaluru received excess rainfall in 2022. The rapid assessment survey conducted by ActionAid Association identified around 570 most marginalised families of Schedule Castes, Schedule Tribes and informal sector workers severely affected by excess rains. We supported 563 families with ration kits and 579 children with education kits in and around Kacharakanahalli, Dodda Gubbi and Vinoba Nagar areas of the city.

There were incessant rains during the third week of July 2022 in **Telangana and Andhra Pradesh**.

The rains from upper catchment tributaries and streams from Maharashtra, Telangana, Chhattisgarh and Odisha, caused floods in Andhra Pradesh and affected more than 3.6 lakh people in 468 villages in 12 districts in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. We identified the severely affected families and supported 3,021 families with dry ration kits in 27 villages of V R Puram and Kunavaram blocks in ASR district.

In the first week of January 2023, the incidence of land subsidence of sub-district Joshimath in district Chamoli in **Uttarakhand** drew the attention of people. The entire town was on the verge of collapse as cracks were developing in the houses and other construction in the area. As per a rough estimate around 20,000 people were directly affected by this disaster. The affected families faced the problem of livelihoods that resulted in food scarcity. Similarly, the families who had cattle had a problem of fodder. The government announced a relief package for housing repairs. The poor and vulnerable families could not access this due to the lack of proper documents. ActionAid Association conducted a rapid damage-assessment survey in the affected wards of Joshimath. The relief workers found Dodil, Gandhinagar and Singhdar wards, where people needed support for ration kits and fodder. The relief workers prepared a list of the most vulnerable families in these 3 wards with the support of community members and 632 families were identified for support through ration kits and 275 families identified

for fodder support for livestock. With the help of community volunteers, ration kits were provided to 632 families and livestock fodder was given to 275 households. Each ration kit contained rice, flour, lentils, sugar, cooking oil, tea, spices, biscuits, and hygiene items like sanitary pads, bathing soaps and detergent. Our relief workers organised meetings in the community and also met the people in the relief camps. They helped them in filling the forms and submitting their documents for compensation announced by the government. They also met government officials regularly to ensure inclusion of affected families from the marginalised communities in the compensation process.

Disaster Risk Reduction and Community Resilience Building

Jagatsinghpur, Puri and Bhadrak districts in **Odisha** are major disaster-prone districts in the state. These districts witnessed major disasters after the super cyclone of 1999. Considering the need we focused on building leadership of women, youth and persons with disabilities from the most marginalized communities on disaster risk reduction and public health safety. A total of 1,023 women, youth and PwDs from the most disaster-prone areas of Jagatsinghpur and Bhadrak districts were provided with orientation through organising 24 training programmes at the community level by trained DRR experts.

A curriculum that includes various aspect of disaster risk reduction, resilience building, and public health safety was developed and used in the leadership building efforts. The participants were facilitated by the resource person to do a risk analysis of the different types of disasters and impact on the vulnerable groups in the community. Beside the process emphasised linking the most vulnerable households with different social security schemes, programmes and entitlements provided by the government.

Humanitarian support to stateless people

During our regular course of work across states, our teams come across stateless people (people of concern) and looking at the vulnerability and marginalization of these populations, ActionAid Association, with support from UNHCR provided humanitarian relief to around 3,600 families in **Uttar Pradesh, Delhi and NCR, Punjab and the Northeast**. In Uttar Pradesh, we reached out to 352 Persons of Concerns in Mathura and Aligarh districts. These families were supported with dry ration kits, sanitation kits, NFI and health and hygiene kits. Eighty children were admitted in government schools and 100 children were enrolled in accelerated learning programmes – remedial classes and tuitions. In both the districts vaccination of all eligible people was also supported.

Pregnant and lactating mothers and elderly members of the community were supported to access healthcare facilities from the nearby government hospital.

In Punjab, a total of 487 children were provided school uniforms and bags.

In **Mizoram** and **Manipur**, 1,550 vulnerable households were reached out with humanitarian support. It comprised food and hygiene kits

and some limited essential non-food items like mosquito nets, plastic mats, buckets and mugs, lamps and tarpaulins. Children were provided with learning and play materials. Medical camps were organised with the support of locally positioned medical professionals and local organisations.





ActionAid Association (India)

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ActionAid Association is an Indian organisation working for social and ecological justice in 25 states and three Union Territories. Together with supporters, allied organisations, communities, institutions and governments, we strive for equality, fraternity and liberty for all.