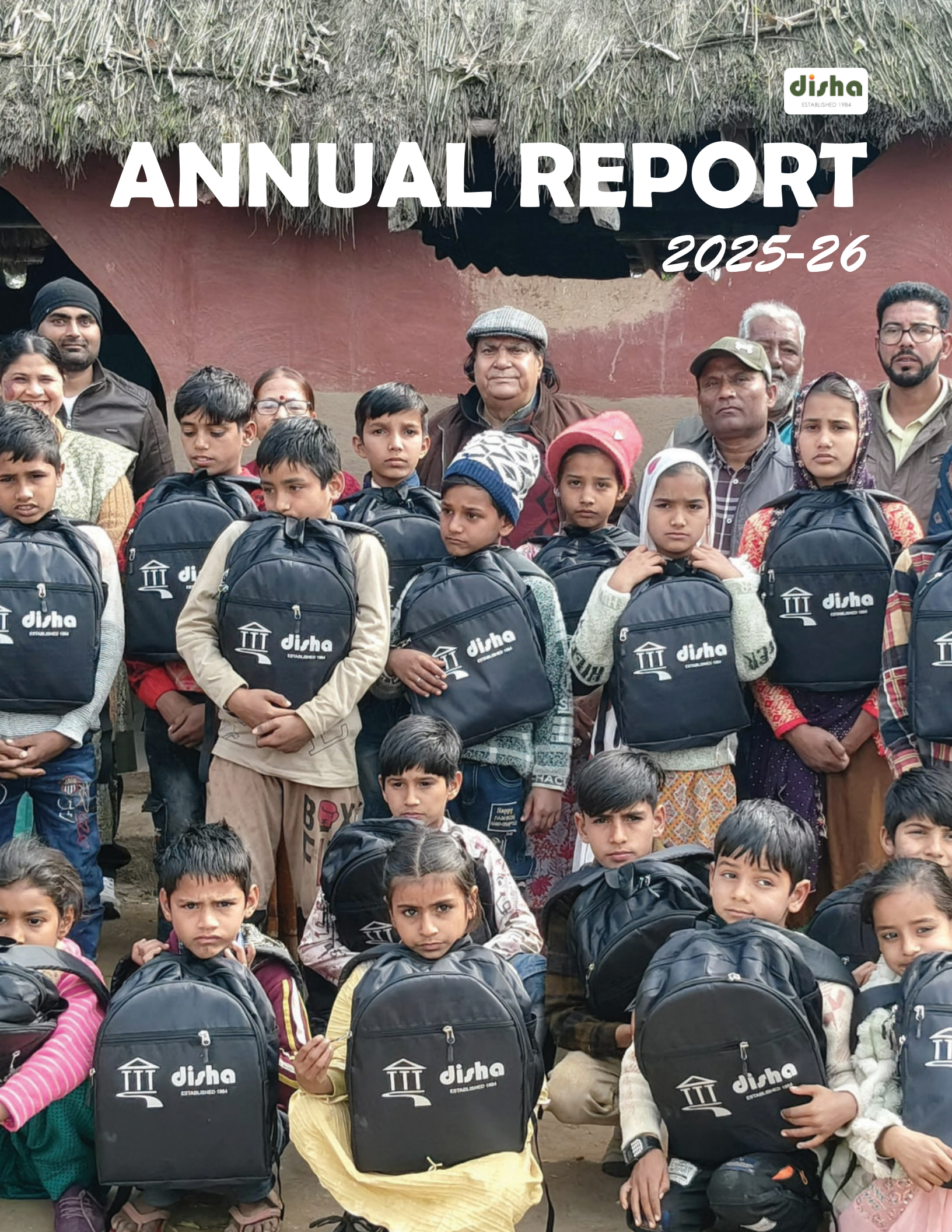

disha
ESTABLISHED 1984
ANNUAL REPORT
2025-26

Vision

To establish a society without inequality

Mission

To dismantle systemic barriers and empower disadvantaged individuals, enabling every person to realise their full potential

Target Group

Women, minorities, backwards and Dalits

On the Cover

Children from Van Gujjar community in Haridwar district with school bags containing stationery kits.

Van Gujjars are semi-nomadic tribals who reside inside forests and move to higher altitudes in the Himalayas with their buffaloes during summers. Slowly they are being settled. For them the world outside the forests is more challenging than that inside the forests.

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Map not to scale; only for representational purpose

Disha works in five districts: Saharanpur, Shamli, Muzaffarnagar, Haridwar and Dehradun.

Though divided by two states, these districts form a contiguous area

Message from Chairperson

I AM pleased to present the Annual Report of Disha Social Organisation for the year 2025-26.



The year under review brought a number of important socio-economic and political developments that touched the lives of people across the country. Rapid technological changes, shifting employment patterns, growing concerns about inequality, climate-related challenges, difficulties faced by rural communities and an uncertain global environment created both challenges and opportunities. These developments reminded us that lasting progress is possible only when communities are empowered to shape their own future.

As India continues its journey towards becoming a developed nation, there is increasing focus on employment generation, skill development, entrepreneurship, social inclusion and sustainable development. At the same time, many people still struggle to access quality education, livelihood opportunities, healthcare and economic resources. Women, young people, rural communities and other marginalised groups often face the greatest barriers. Through our work, we seek to ensure that these individuals are not left behind and are able to participate fully in the country's growth story.

At Disha Social Organisation, we believe that every person has strengths, abilities and aspirations that deserve an opportunity to flourish. Our role is not merely to deliver programmes but to support people in discovering their potential, building confidence and creating better opportunities for themselves and their families. Through education, training, community engagement and capacity building, we continue to work alongside communities as partners in their development journey.

During the year, we strengthened our efforts in livelihood promotion, women's empowerment, community awareness and youth engagement. We placed particular emphasis on encouraging entrepreneurship and supporting community institutions that nurture local leadership and collective action. As digital technologies and

artificial intelligence continue to transform the world around us, helping people acquire new skills and adapt to changing realities has become more important than ever.

The discussions taking place across the country on equity, representation and inclusive growth served as a powerful reminder that development must reach every section of society. We remain committed to promoting dignity, equal opportunity, social harmony and meaningful participation so that every individual can contribute to and benefit from the development process.

The work highlighted in this report would not have been possible without the dedication of our staff members, volunteers, community leaders, government departments, corporate partners, donors and well-wishers. Their trust, encouragement and partnership have strengthened our efforts and enabled us to reach many more people than we could have achieved alone. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all of them.

As we look ahead, our commitment remains the same. We will continue to work towards an inclusive society where every individual, especially those from weaker and disadvantaged sections, has the opportunity to realise their full potential, become self-reliant and contribute meaningfully to the nation's progress.

The stories and achievements shared in this report remind us that meaningful change often begins with small steps taken by determined individuals and supportive communities. Together, let us continue building a future that is fair, sustainable and full of opportunities for all.

With sincere gratitude and best wishes

Geeta Gairola
Chairperson

Message from Director

IT IS my pleasure to present this Annual Report of Disha Social Organisation for the year 2025-26 and to reflect on another year of learning, growth and meaningful community engagement.

This year marked an important transition in the journey of our organisation. After more than three decades of dedicated association and service, our Chairperson Mrs Poornima Jain and Executive Body Member Mr Rajive Jain stepped down from their responsibilities due to advancing age. Their contribution to Disha Social Organisation has been immense. Through their vision, commitment and guidance, they helped shape the organisation during its formative years and supported its growth into a respected development institution. On behalf of the entire Disha family, I extend our heartfelt gratitude to both of them for their years of service and wish them good health and happiness in the years ahead.

At the same time, we are pleased to welcome Ms Geeta Gairola as Chairperson and Dr Ankur Upadhyaya as Executive Body Member. Ms Gairola brings with her rich experience from her long association with Mahila Samakhya, Uttarakhand, while Dr Upadhyaya is widely respected for his professional service and commitment to the welfare of society. We look forward to benefiting from their guidance, experience and fresh perspectives as the organisation enters its next phase of growth.



During the year, our efforts towards strengthening local resource mobilisation and community-based fundraising continued to move forward. Developing local support systems remains an important priority for us, as it helps build stronger ownership of development initiatives within the communities we serve. While this is a gradual process, we are encouraged by the progress made so far and by the possibility of several promising new associations that are beginning to take shape. We are hopeful that these relationships will contribute to the long-term sustainability of our work.

Our ongoing programmes and projects across different thematic areas continued to make

steady progress during the year. The dedication of our staff, volunteers and community partners ensured that activities were implemented effectively and continued to benefit individuals and communities. We also had the privilege of beginning a new association with Collegiate Path, whose support and shared commitment to social development open up new possibilities for collaboration in the future. We warmly welcome this partnership and look forward to a productive journey together.

As always, the achievements described in this report are the result of collective effort. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to our governing body members, staff, volunteers, community leaders, partner organisations, donors, well-wishers and the communities we work with. Their trust, encouragement and support continue to inspire us and strengthen our work.

I invite you to go through this Annual Report and learn more about the initiatives, achievements and experiences of the past year. We hope it provides a meaningful glimpse into the work being carried out by Disha Social Organisation and the positive changes made possible through collective action.

Warm regards

KN Tiwari
Director

Gender Issues



Workshop on gender issues and violence against women at a local police station

DURING the year under review, significant efforts were made to prevent and address violence against women through community-based interventions and institutional support mechanisms. A total of 192 cases of violence and discrimination against women were successfully addressed. Of these, 112 cases were resolved through counselling, mediation and the intervention of Nari Adalats, helping women secure timely support and justice within their communities. The remaining cases were referred to the police, courts and village panchayats for appropriate legal and administrative action.

In addition to case resolution, extensive awareness-building initiatives were undertaken to challenge gender discrimination and promote women's rights. Through training programmes, workshops, awareness camps, street plays and community events, 1,468 individuals were sensitised on issues related to gender equality, domestic violence and women's empowerment.

The details are:

- **Workshop with ASHAs and ANMs** on 12 September 2025, with the participation of 34 people. The workshop addressed gender discrimination and various forms of violence against women, equipping participants with practical knowledge to respond effectively.
- **Workshop on gender issues and violence against women with police personnel** on 12 November 2025. Thirty-five police personnel attended the workshop. This







(From top left in clockwise direction) A glimpse of district level workshop of media persons on gender issues, a workshop of teachers on the same issue in a school, and teachers with their certificates of participation.

initiative enhanced their sensitivity towards gender issues, strengthened their legal knowledge, and improved their capacity to respond effectively, thereby fostering safer communities and improving access to justice for women.

- **Youth workshop at Saint YK Das Inter College, Dasa Marja village**, with 42 participants. The workshop focused on addressing gender discrimination and preventing gender-based violence. Participants engaged in meaningful discussions on the vital role of youth as catalysts for social change.
- **District-level media workshop** on 16 December 2025, with the participation of 46 media representatives and Disha staff. The sessions highlighted the critical role the media can play in addressing violence against women and promoting women's rights.
- **Training for community-based organisations** on 16 January 2026, focusing on violence against women, gender discrimination, and related issues. The 45 participants gained practical knowledge and confidence to act as community leaders.
- **Orientation for School Management Committee (SMC) representatives** on women's equality and violence against women on 14 February 2026, with the participation of 31 people. The programme enhanced participants' understanding of gender concepts, including the distinction between biological sex and socially constructed gender roles.

From Silence to Strength: Radha's Fight Against Domestic Abuse

Radha, a resident of Sadoli Bhud village under Behat police station in Saharanpur district, belongs to a poor Kashyap family. She has four sisters and no brothers. Throughout her childhood, she and her sisters were subjected to taunts from relatives and neighbours because there was no son in the family. Despite these challenges, Radha dreamed of continuing her education. However, financial constraints and prevailing social norms led her parents to arrange her marriage at a young age.

After marriage, Radha moved into her husband's joint family. Her husband worked as a jalebi maker. The first few years of marriage passed without major problems, but gradually her husband and in-laws began harassing her. She faced regular taunts, domestic violence and demands for dowry. Whenever Radha informed her parents about the abuse, they attempted to intervene. Instead of resolving the issue, her marital family humiliated her parents and intensified their mistreatment of Radha.

The situation worsened after Radha gave birth to a daughter. Rather than celebrating the child's birth, her in-laws subjected her to further discrimination and harassment. Over time, Radha became increasingly isolated and fearful. When she became pregnant for the second time, the violence continued. At seven months of pregnancy, she was physically assaulted by her husband and in-laws. Concerned for her own safety and that of her unborn child, Radha decided she could no longer remain silent.

She contacted her sister Arjana, who was associated with Disha and aware of the support available for women facing violence. After learning about the situation, the legal aid team assessed the case and developed a strategy for intervention. Anticipating resistance from the family, the team informed the local police and sought their support before visiting Radha's marital home.

During the intervention, Radha's husband and in-laws initially denied the allegations and created a hostile atmosphere. However, with the support of the police and legal aid workers, Radha was able to speak openly about the abuse she had endured. Following counselling and mediation, the family acknowledged their wrongdoing, apologised and assured the team that such behaviour would not be repeated. A written settlement was prepared and submitted to the local police station for future accountability.

Follow-up visits later revealed encouraging results. The violence had stopped, Radha was being treated with greater respect and harmony had returned to the household. The case demonstrates how timely intervention, careful planning and coordinated support can help vulnerable women secure justice, dignity and a safer future.

Livelihood Promotion



Village women re-writing their destiny: An SHG meeting underway in one of the villages

Project Aarohan

DURING the year under review, 15 new Women's Self-Help Groups (SHGs) were formed, providing a supportive platform for 161 rural women to come together, share aspirations and work towards economic and social self-reliance. Eight newly formed SHGs opened savings bank accounts during the year, taking the total number of SHGs with active bank accounts to 515.

Savings continue to play a vital role in the functioning and sustainability of women's SHGs. Even modest monthly contributions of ₹100 or ₹500 from each member gradually accumulate into a substantial collective fund. This shared financial resource not only helps members meet their immediate credit needs but also strengthens their economic security, contributing significantly to financial stability and poverty reduction.

During the reporting year, 5,941 active women members demonstrated remarkable financial discipline and collective strength by generating total savings of ₹69,62,700. As a result, the cumulative savings of all SHGs reached an impressive ₹5,48,30,255, reflecting growing financial empowerment and solidarity among rural women.

Women members availed internal loans amounting to ₹81,33,100 from their groups' savings. These loans were utilised for a variety of purposes, including medical treatment, mar-

riage and other family ceremonies, education expenses for children, home repairs and renovation, purchase of milch animals and investments in various income-generating activities.

Promoting Livelihoods and Enterprise Development

During the year, 91 new income-generating activities (IGAs) were initiated by SHG members. These enterprises included broom making, operation of beauty parlours, dairy farming and small retail shops. Of these, 42 women received revolving fund support of ₹18.40 lakh under Project Aarohan. In addition, 14 women accessed Cash Credit Limit (CCL) loans amounting to ₹4,70,000, while 34 women availed loans of ₹10,55,000 from their respective SHGs.

With these additions, the cumulative number of enterprises established by SHG members has reached 4,543 among 5,941 women, demonstrating the steady expansion of women-led livelihoods and entrepreneurship.

Capacity Building and Skill Enhancement

To strengthen leadership, management capabilities and confidence among SHG members, 20 capacity-building training programmes were organised during the year.

The following enterprise development training programmes were also conducted to enhance livelihood opportunities:

- Terracotta product-making training for 12 SHG members.





(Top) Trainees look at terracota product making demonstration, and (bottom) trainees with their jute bags after the training



Training of Master Trainers in progress

- Jute product-making training for 20 SHG members.
- Two broom-making training programmes covering 66 SHG members.
- Two sanitary pad production training programmes covering 31 SHG members.
- Vermicompost production training for 26 SHG members.

Access to Government Schemes

SHG members and their families continued to benefit from various government social security and welfare schemes during the year:

- 51 women enrolled under the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana.
- 51 women enrolled under the Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana.
- 40 girls were registered under the Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana.
- 67 families were enrolled under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana.

Aaroh

Master Trainers' Training

A two-day livelihood training for 50 Women Farmer Master Trainers from 25 villages was organised on 27 and 28 February 2026. The training focused on strengthening participants' knowledge and skills in sustainable agriculture, livestock management and livelihood promotion. Through technical sessions and practical discussions, participants gained insights into improved farming practices, animal health and nutrition, risk-management measures and diverse income-generation opportunities. The programme enhanced their capacity to serve as resource persons within their communities, strengthened local leadership and promoted the adoption of sustainable livelihood practices. It also contributed to improving household resilience and creating pathways for greater economic self-reliance among rural families.



Trainees on an exposure visit to the Krishi Vigyan Kendra

Women Farmers' Training

A two-day training programme for women farmers was organised on 21 and 22 August, with the active participation of 42 women farmers. The programme provided an opportunity for participants to strengthen their knowledge and skills in sustainable agriculture and allied livelihood activities. Expert sessions were conducted by a resource person from Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Saharanpur, who shared valuable insights on improved farming practices and rural livelihoods. As part of the training, participants also undertook an exposure visit to Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Saharanpur, where they gained practical learning through field demonstrations and direct interaction with agricultural experts.

Rising Garden Initiative

Under the Rising Garden Initiative, seeds were distributed during October to 381 women farmers across 25 villages, enabling them to establish and expand kitchen gardens at their homes. The initiative encouraged the cultivation of seasonal winter vegetables, helping families improve access to fresh and nutritious food throughout the year. By promoting kitchen gardening, the programme strengthened household food security, reduced expenditure on vegetables and encouraged sustainable farming practices. The initiative also enhanced women's participation in nutrition-sensitive agriculture, contributing to healthier families, greater self-reliance and improved livelihood resilience within rural communities.

Exposure Visits

During the reporting period, two exposure visits for women farmers were conducted. The first, involving 25 women farmers, took place on 17 December 2025 at Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Saharanpur, while the second, involving 23 women farmers, was organised on 21 February 2026. During the visits, participants gained



Training of self-help group office-bearers in progress

practical knowledge of traditional manure preparation, horticulture, improved vegetable varieties, poultry and fish farming, vermicomposting, mushroom cultivation, and improved wheat and sugarcane varieties.

SHG Training

On 17 October 2025, a one-day training programme for SHG office bearers was organised at the training centre with the participation of 32 members. The programme helped participants better understand their roles and responsibilities within the group, strengthen their leadership skills and improve record-keeping practices. Discussions also highlighted livelihood and employment opportunities, encouraging members to take a more active role in their SHGs and contribute to their growth and effective functioning.

Capacity-building training were organised for 10 self-help groups across 10 villages, reaching 181 participants. The trainings focused on strengthening the knowledge and skills of SHG office bearers and members to improve group management, governance and participation in decision-making. Sessions discussed common challenges faced by SHGs, clarified the roles and responsibilities of members and provided practical guidance on conducting effective meetings. Participants were also oriented on maintaining records, registers and passbooks, which are essential for the smooth functioning of the groups.

The trainings encouraged members to identify and address local issues collectively and inspired them to explore income-generating activities that could enhance household incomes and strengthen self-reliance. By the end of the programme, participants had a better understanding of how to manage their groups effectively and contribute to their long-term sustainability.

How Self-Help Groups Are Changing Women's Lives

Access to affordable credit, collective support and regular guidance can transform the lives of women living on the margins. Through Disha's livelihood programme, SHGs have become a platform for women to build confidence, overcome financial hardships and create sustainable livelihood opportunities for their families.

Take the case of Sudesh of Dasa Majra village. She struggled to support her family of five through irregular daily wage labour. After joining the Sagar SHG, she began exploring ways to strengthen her household income. With a group loan of ₹10,000, she helped her unemployed son start a ready-made garment vending business. The venture quickly gained momentum and now earns him around ₹500-600 per day, bringing stability to the family and reducing their dependence on uncertain wage work.

For Gyano of Nalheda village, financial insecurity was a constant challenge as both she and her husband relied on irregular labour work. Through the Aanchal SHG, she accessed a loan of ₹40,000 to purchase a cart for transporting construction materials. This enabled her husband to secure steady work and earn ₹500-700 per day. After successfully repaying the loan, she took another loan of ₹30,000 to buy a buffalo and started selling milk. With income now flowing from multiple sources, the family is able to support their children's education.

Sangita from Bakaraka village faced persistent financial difficulties due to irregular employment opportunities. Her participation in the Ekta SHG and livelihood training inspired her to pursue entrepreneurship. Through a loan of ₹50,000 from the group, she helped her son establish a shop selling sand, gravel and cement. The business has grown steadily and now generates around ₹8,000 per month, providing a dependable source of income for the family. The venture has not only improved their economic condition but has also earned them recognition within the village and nearby communities.

Nazma of Bahadra village once struggled to support her four children through manual labour while carrying the burden of high-interest loans from moneylenders. After joining the Kamal SHG, she gained access to affordable credit and new opportunities. A loan of ₹10,000 enabled her to cultivate vegetables on her small plot of land, increasing her income and involving her children in productive work. After repaying the loan, she borrowed ₹15,000 to purchase a sock-sewing machine and started a small home-based manufacturing activity. Today, Nazma earns from both farming and sock production.

These stories demonstrate the transformative power of women's collectives in creating pathways to economic security and social empowerment. By providing access to credit, practical support and a platform for mutual learning, SHGs have enabled women to move beyond survival and invest in their families' futures. As more women gain confidence and opportunities through these groups, they are improving their own lives.

Educational Interventions



Girl students demonstrating their skills during inter-centre visit

Adolescent Girls' Education

DURING the reporting period, 10 education centres were established to provide learning opportunities to adolescent girls who had never enrolled in formal schooling. To create a child-friendly learning environment, the centres were equipped with durries, blackboards and teaching aids.

Books and stationery were distributed to 325 learners across all 10 centres, ensuring access to essential educational resources and supporting their continued learning. The initiative helped create a stronger foundation for participation, growth and academic progress.

A three-day teachers' training programme was organised at the Training Centre from 25 to 27 September 2025, with the participation of 10 teachers, programme team and resource person. The training focused on strengthening skills for managing education centres effectively through participatory approaches.

Monthly teachers' meetings were held on the 30th of each month, bringing together 12-13 participants regularly. These meetings provided an opportunity to review progress, address challenges, exchange experiences and strengthen collaboration among educators, contributing to improved management and learning outcomes across all centres.

An inter-centre visit was organised on 11 February 2026 at the Lodhipur Kishori Centre in Sadholi Kadim block, Saharanpur. Girls and



Girl child students presenting a performance during the programme aaghaz

parents from Ibrahim Pura and Gathera centres participated, bringing the total attendance to 141. Community leaders and ASHA workers also joined the programme.

Independence Day and Republic Day were celebrated enthusiastically across all 10 education centres, with active participation from adolescent girls, their families and community members. Activities included flag hoisting, singing of the national anthem, patriotic songs and cultural performances that promoted a sense of national pride and collective responsibility.

Girl Child Education

Disha continued its commitment to improving the educational status of girls in rural communities through a network of nearly 90 education centres across Saharanpur and Haridwar districts. During the reporting year, 211 girls successfully completed and exited the programme, while 205 new girls were enrolled, maintaining a total outreach of approximately 2,600 girls. Educational activities continued uninterrupted throughout the year with a strong focus on learning outcomes, life skills and community participation.

Academic Assessments and Learning Improvement

To monitor and enhance learning levels, quarterly assessments were conducted at all centres. Answer sheets were carefully evaluated and individual learning gaps were identified. Based on assessment findings, targeted support was provided to help girls strengthen their academic competencies and progress to higher learning levels.

An Endline Oral Assessment was conducted in March 2026 across all centres. Girls were assessed in Hindi, English and Mathematics. The assessment helped identify subject-specific

learning gaps, enabling teachers to undertake focused remedial interventions to improve academic performance.

Innovations During the Year

A significant innovation introduced during the year was the "Aarambh Manch" initiative, implemented across all education centres. Sessions were organised with alumni girls to expose participants to life skills, career opportunities and educational pathways. Discussions covered career planning, vocational and higher education options and future goal setting.

CMC Meetings

Community Management Committee (CMC) meetings were organised regularly to strengthen parental engagement in girls' education. During these meetings, child profiles and updated learning levels were shared with parents. Quarterly assessment results were discussed and parents were sensitised to the importance of regular attendance and continued education for girls.

Parents were encouraged to ensure timely attendance of their daughters at education centres and active participation in community meetings. Information regarding centre operations and the use of AI-enabled learning tools was also shared with families.

Mathematics and Science Fair

On 25 January 2026, Disha organised a Mathematics and Science Fair at Talhapur. Girls presented projects on topics such as water sources, solar and lunar eclipses, circles and mathematical formulas. Participants explained their exhibits confidently to visitors and guests, demonstrating both conceptual understanding and communication skills.

Mother Literacy Programme

A Mother Literacy Programme was conducted from 1 December 2025 to 28 February 2026 with the objective of improving functional literacy among women. Participants were taught foundational reading, writing and numeracy skills, including alphabet recognition, basic arithmetic and writing their names. Upon successful completion of the programme, certificates were awarded to all participants, acknowledging their learning achievements and encouraging lifelong education.

Co-curricular and Cultural Activities

Various co-curricular and cultural activities were organised throughout the year to promote holistic development and awareness among girls. These included:

- National Girl Child Day (24 January)
- Republic Day (26 January)
- National Science Day (28 February)
- International Women's Day (8 March)
- World Environment Day (5 June)
- Teachers' Day (5 September)
- Independence Day (15 August)
- Children's Day (14 November)
- International Day of the Girl Child (11 October)

Community-based Organisation



A glimpse of village level camp at Topri village in Punwarka Block

THE central meeting of the community-based organisation (CBO) Mahila Mazdoor Evam Laghu Kisan Sangathan continued to be held on the 24th of every month across CBO villages, with regular participation of 60-70 members. The meetings reviewed organisational progress, discussed local issues and challenges and identified collective solutions. Members were informed about government schemes, welfare programmes and relevant legislation, enabling communities to access entitlements and make better use of available services.

A village-level camp was organised on 22 December 2025 at Topri village in Puwarka Block, bringing together nearly 120 participants from 20 villages of the Badgaon CBO cluster. The camp encouraged collective action and community participation while raising awareness about women's social, economic, educational and cultural rights. Participants also received information on key welfare schemes and legal provisions available to them.

To strengthen grassroots institutions, 40 village-level committee training were conducted, reaching 1,881 members from 40 village committees. A capacity-building training for Steering Committee members was organised on 19 March 2026 at the Training Centre, with the participation of 33 members. A one-day training programme for Area Level Committee (ALC) members was organised at the Training Centre on 27 December 2025, with 32 participants. The training helped improve the capacity of committee members to support community initiatives and address local issues.





(Left) Disha director KN Tiwari addressing the gatherning during annual sammelan of Mahila Mazdoor Evam Laghu Kisan Sangathan and (right) women worker raising slogans during International Women's Day celebration

International Women's Day

International Women's Day was celebrated on 8 March 2026 with great enthusiasm. Around 500 women participated in the event, raising slogans, singing songs and presenting cultural performances highlighting women's rights and empowerment. Founder Director KN Tiwari extended greetings to all women, recalling the origins of International Women's Day in 1908.

Senior Coordinator Jahnavi Tiwari urged women to step forward for their rights, stressing the importance of education and leadership roles. Programme Coordinator Tasneem encouraged women to take initiative and remembered the struggles of Clara Zetkin, Fatima, and Savitribai Phule.

This vibrant celebration reflected the organisation's ongoing commitment to women's empowerment, education, and equality, while honouring the historical struggles that paved the way for today's progress.

Annual Sammelan

The 35th annual sammelan of Mahila Mazdoor Evam Laghu KIsan Sangathan was held on 29 March 2026. The sammelan witnessed participation of about 450 women and men, including labourers, small and marginal farmers, artisans, agriculture labour and women. The programme began with sloan raising and overview of the activiites of morcha and Disha by the Disha Director KN Tiwari. many present and former staff members of Disha, social workers and village level morcha representatives. A 22 point charter of demands was read out and later handed over to the officials concerned.

Towards Better Citizenry



A fellow making a point during a cross-learning workshop

DISHA worked with 26 fellows on constitutional values to promote responsible citizenship. Spread across five districts, namely Saharanpur, Shamli, Muzaffarnagar, Haridwar and Dehradun, these fellows worked with communities in and around their places of residence to promote constitutional values and encourage collective action to address pressing local issues. Through this intervention, nearly 1,500 people were reached during the year.

During the reporting year, two cross-learning workshops were organised for the fellows. The theme of the first cross-learning workshop was "What Does It Mean to Be Human and Empathy in Human Behaviour?" The primary objective of the workshop was to provide a platform for participants to learn from each other's experiences, particularly in understanding how empathy influences human behaviour. The workshop also sought to deepen participants' understanding of social inequalities and constitutional values while enabling them to articulate the meaning of being human within a broader social context.

The second workshop, held later in the year, was the final cross-learning workshop for the current cohort of fellows. The workshop reflected on activities that had fostered stronger connections among people in the field areas, highlighted the social changes brought about through the fellows' efforts and planned ways to complete unfinished initiatives. Special emphasis was placed on documenting and recording stories of change and exploring ways to strengthen local governance in the future.

Komal's New Flight Beyond the Threshold

For 16-year-old Komal of Khatkahedi village in Saharanpur district, life once mirrored the ordinary rhythms of adolescence. As the eldest among five children living with her parents and grandparents, she attended Class eight, played with friends and nurtured quiet aspirations. That stability shattered overnight when she was summoned home from school only to discover that her mother had passed away.

Suddenly, the weight of an entire household fell upon her young shoulders. Relatives declared that caring for her four younger siblings—including an ailing younger sister—was now solely her duty. Nobody paused to consider the grief or aspirations of a 16-year-old girl. Her schooling ceased, and for three years, domestic chores and caregiving defined the boundaries of her existence.

A turning point arrived in January 2024 during a meeting of adolescent girls at the village anganwadi centre. While discussions centred on equality, freedom and constitutional rights, Komal sat in silence. When gently questioned, she whispered, "The doors of school have closed for me."

That admission sparked sustained dialogue. As Komal attended subsequent sessions, she voiced her enduring desire to study alongside the suffocating burden of domestic expectations. Recognising her right to education and personal dignity, facilitators engaged directly with her father, Suresh. Initially hesitant, he worried about household management and social judgement regarding an older girl stepping outside the home. Through patient counselling, he was encouraged to reflect on the fact that neither relatives nor society had shared the family's burden over the past three years—and that denying Komal an opportunity to learn was unjust. Eventually, his resistance softened, and he agreed to enrol her in the nearby Janheda school.

In 2024, Komal returned to formal education in Class nine. Balancing household duties with academics was demanding, yet she persevered with steady encouragement from anganwadi worker Rajesh Devi and peer support from older girls in the group who helped her catch up on lessons.

Internalising the constitutional ideals of liberty, equality and scientific temper transformed Komal from a hesitant bystander into an assertive decision-maker. She began encouraging other out-of-school adolescents to reclaim their education. More remarkably, she challenged deep-rooted superstition within her own home. Today, Komal is a Class 11 student actively acquiring new skills to build an independent future. Her journey exemplifies how constitutional values cease to be abstract ideals when realised in everyday life—empowering a young woman to step beyond the threshold of domestic confinement and claim her rightful place in society.

Organisational Development



Group photo during Masterclass on Advanced Fundraising held in Hyderabad

Local Resource Mobilisation

THE first workshop was held in Bangalore on 24 and 25 April 2025. The highlight of the workshop was a masterclass on fundraising by the Founder and CEO of Kohmorehbee, a startup formed with the intent of supporting the philanthropic and no-profit ecosystem. The attending Disha team members had an opportunity to meet and interact with two CSR heads at the workshop. The workshop had a very interesting keynote address scaling sustainable development: insights, innovation and impact, followed by discussion and plenary scaling sustainable solutions through strategic philanthropy.

A masterclass on advanced fundraising was held in Hyderabad on 25 August 2025 by Prof Gary G Hoag. The biggest takeaway from the masterclass was how to prepare concept note. In a time when people are bombarded with information glut and have decreasing inclination to read a 'lot', one-page concept notes are the trend. Gary suggested each organisation to have such concept notes ready and share them with the prospective donors as whenever they get a chance to interact with them.

Another workshop was held in New Delhi on 3 and 4 November 2025. The two-day event began with a comprehensive review of the partner organisations' progress to date and concluded with a practical session on building effective fundraising teams. A key highlight of the programme was exploring how Artificial Intelligence tools can streamline workflows, improve donor outreach and accelerate the or-



Participation in Module 3 Training on Safeguarding; mentoring visit by IndiaDonates; and visit from Misereor, the oldest donor of the organisation

ganisations' overall fundraising and communications operations.

A mentoring visit from the anchoring organisation IndiaDonates took place on 27-28 November 2025. During this visit the resource persons facilitated formulation of communication and fundraising strategies to be followed by Disha over the next few years. Another mentoring visit took place from 23 to 25 March 2026. During this visit a few concept notes and proposals were prepared.

Training on Gender

This year Module 3 of Workshop on Strategising Safeguarding Policy was organised in Bhubaneswar from 28 to 30 January 2026. This was the last module of the capacity building of selected organisations across the country on Strategising Safeguarding Policy spread over the last three years. During this capacity building initiative three modules were held in-person at different places in the country and there were many online sessions as well. At the end of the module 3 the participants were given certificates of successful completion of the course.

Donor Visits

Representatives of donor organisations continued to visited Disha and its coverage area on regular intervals. They gave valuable suggestions on organisational management and field activities, helping us to perform better.

Major visitors were:

- Harsh Gupta, Maitreyi Shankar, Devika Mishra, Gitanjali Prasad, Pashupati Jha and Jogindra Meher from Azim Premji Foundation. They gave participated in workshops, visited field and helped us with improving



Christian Maywurm from Misereor (third from left) during visit to Disha

reporting systems

- Christian Maywurm from Misereor, the oldest donor of Disha. He gave extremely useful insights into the financial reporting
- TS Hassanwalia, Estate Head of AIS India Glass Ltd., visited the Aarohan Project area

Documentation

Documentation forms the cornerstone of organisational development and accountability, serving as a vital tool for preserving institutional memory, ensuring adherence to legal and donor requirements, and promoting transparency. Its practices strengthen operational integrity, enhance credibility and empower the organisations to make meaningful impacts on their communities.

In this context, all project reports were submitted to donors promptly, adhering to prescribed schedules and demonstrating commitment to donor expectations. Training sessions and events were meticulously documented, maintaining a consistent record of organisational activities. Furthermore, efforts to capture transformative stories have been undertaken, reflecting the positive changes brought about by the organisation's initiatives. These narratives, currently in the process of being published, aim to inspire, inform, and showcase the tangible outcomes of its work.

By prioritising sound documentation practices, the organisation continues to build trust, foster transparency and underline its dedication to driving impactful change in society.

Website and Social Media

During the intervening period, the organisation's website was updated nine times, reflecting all events held during that time. Additionally, the organisation maintained an active social

media presence, publishing 12 posts each on Facebook and Instagram, eight posts on LinkedIn and five Tweets. These updates played a key role in keeping stakeholders informed, engaging a wider audience, and showcasing the organisation's ongoing efforts and achievements effectively across various platforms.

Folk Media Communication

Folk Media Communication Team, comprising 17 dedicated members, focuses on issue-based plays to raise awareness among communities about pressing social concerns. The team participated in a five-day street play workshop from 25 to 29 August 2025 at the training centre. During the workshop a new play on girls' safety was prepared.

Following the workshop, street plays were performed at about 15 different locations, attracting approximately 1,800 viewers. The performances successfully engaged audiences, leaving a lasting impact on their perspectives toward these crucial issues.

Other Events

Regular events included celebration of:

- Ambedkar Jayanti (14 April 2025)
- Independence Day (15 October 2025)
- Gandhi and Shastri Jayanti (2 October 2025)
- New Year (1 January 2026)
- Republic Day (26 January 2026)
- Roza Iftari (14 March 2026)
- Id Milan (21 March 2026)







(Top) A group photo during street play workshop; (middle) a play performance in progress and (bottom) a glimpse of Id Milan

Resource Providers and Networks

Our Resource Providers

- Misereor
- Youth Reach and AIS Glass Ltd.
- IIMPACT
- Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiative
- Collegiate path

Our Networks

- Voluntary Action Network of India (VANI)
- Uttar Pradesh Voluntary Action Network (UPVAN)
- Women Power Connect (WPC)
- VAMA Network
- Sahyog Network
- Sa-Dhan
- Sustainable Agriculture Network, Uttar Pradesh
- CIVICUS
- CWLR

Knowledge Partners

- IndiaDonates
- Edelgive Foundation

Governing Board

Geeta Gairola, Chairperson
She has served as director of Mahila Samakhya, Uttarakhand. A storyteller par excellence she is a feminist to the core.

KN Tiwari, Secretary
Founder and director of Disha, he has more than four decades of experience in social work. He is nationally and internationally famed for his contribution to the empowerment of small farmers, women, dalits and religious minorities.

Mohit Mittal, Treasurer
He is a postgraduate in commerce and an MIS expert. He is the organisation's treasurer for the last four years.

Dr Ankur Upadhyaya, Member
He is a medical doctor with deep interest in social work.

Anit Aggarwal
He is an account professional and is associated as a member of the governing board for the last two years.

Rajjo Devi, Member
She is a local activist and has served in the local council and is associated with Disha for about three decades.

Riyasat Ali, Member
He is a local farmer and is associated with the organisation since its inception. He is one of the founder members of the organisation.

Numbers Speak

1.	Reducing violence against women	192
2.	Promoting gender equality	233
3.	Livelihood promotion	986
4.	Education	2,925
5.	Government entitlements	1,587
6.	Coverage through fellows and change leaders	1,500
7.	Folk media communication	1,800
8.	Community events	1,500
	Total	10,723



"Disha Training Centre is a place of hygienic, natural and healthy atmosphere, with boarding and lodging facilities for 60 people. You are invited to organise your meetings, workshops and training"

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