

SAHELI



2024-2025

REPORT ON THE
ACTIVITIES

1. Introduction

SAHELI completed 20 years of existence in 2024 as an organization of poor rural and tribal women and 16 years as a registered charity, got registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. The organization has registration with the Ministry of Home Affairs under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 1976. This registration was renewed till 2025. It has exemption under sections 12A and 80G of the Indian Income Tax Act. It holds a PAN card and has got registered with the competent authorities for the payment of professional tax and TDS. It has fully complied with statutory requirements as a legal entity. The organisation got registration with Niti Ayog too. It is a member in the Mayurbhanj District Child Protection Committee, Block Child Protection Committees of Basta (Balasore), Rasgovindpur, Morada, Betnoti and Baripada (Mayurbhanj), and the state unit of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)

2. Organisational Affairs

The Governing Body of SAHELI met twice this year and five members were present in these meetings. The annual meeting of the General Body held once in this year, and it was attended by 11 members. The team of Governing Body elected during the annual meeting of the General Body in the year 2024 continued to remain in the office with a few changes. Mrs. Anitha Antony, Mrs. Santhilata Ram and Mrs. Jayanti Khatua were newly elected to the Governing Body.

Given below is the list of the members of the Governing Body now in the office.

Sl. No.	Name	Designation
1	Ms. Dalia Antony	President
2	Mrs. Madhusmitha Mohanty	Vice-President
3	Mrs. Sonali Sahu	Secretary
4	Mrs. Santilata Ram	Joint-Secretary
5	Mr. Shaju V. Joseph	Treasurer
6	Mrs. Anitha Thomas	Member
7	Mrs. Jayanti Khatua	Member

The organisation, in the year under report, developed Conflict of Interest policy; and Governance manual. Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) and Child Protection (CPP) policies and Financial and Human Resource management manuals were revised. The decisions to develop these documents was taken in the meeting of the Governing Body and the same were approved in the subsequent meeting of the Governing Body and ratified in the meeting of the General Body. Subsequently, these were shared with the staff. It constituted separate internal committees to take actions on violation of POSH and CPP.

3. Projects with SAHELI

3.1. Field (implementation) Projects

There are three field (implementation) projects with SAHELI in the year under report.

- (1) The project titled “Prevent the Child Marriage and Gender Based Violence in Mayurbhanj District” was being implemented with the support of MANOS UNIDAS, Spain continued its operations in the second and the final year in the year under report. This project gets concluded in December 2025.
- (2) MISEROR and KZE, Germany sanctioned the third phase of the project that was being implemented by the organisation from 2018 onwards. This was sanctioned after holding an evaluation by a team of external experts during July – August 2024 and getting satisfied by the report on the same. This is the first external evaluation in the history of SAHELI and it is happy to report that the same was a grand success. This report puts on record the gratitude of the organisation to all staff members who worked hard to make it a success. The new project from MISEREOR and KZE titled “Ensuring the Rights of Children and Women in Mayurbhanj District, Odisha” is for three years from 2024 to 2027 and it started operations in October 2024.
- (3) Another project is being supported by Azim Premji Foundation. It is Titled “Enhanced Life Skills Among the Adolescence in Mayurbhanj District” has a duration for three years from 2024 to 2027. The implementation of this project commenced in October 2024.

The year under report witnessed a few important changes in the case of projects: (i) for the first time in the history of SAHELI, it was succeeded in accessing local funds or funds from Indian organisation, Azim Premji Foundation. It can be considered as a beginning of diversification of resource mobilization; (ii) another shift in the paradigm of modus operandi in the case of addressing child marriage and GBV took place with the new project from MISEREOR and KZE. The project endeavours to shift this responsibility to the local governments meaning SAHELI will gradually withdraw from frontline players and increasing the role of local leaders; and (iii) moving into the other areas of adolescent lives rather than confining to child marriage and opening up the interventions to result in the overall empowerment of adolescent girls. Therefore, the year under report will be considered in future as a critical one in the trajectory of the organisation.

3.2. Organisational Development Activities

The year under report witnessed two endeavours for organizational development. Azim Premji Foundation introduced SAHELI to the Dhvani Foundation, a capacity strengthening organisation with special skills in organizational development of NGOs, SAHELI was enrolled in the Niranthara Classic programme. The contract with Dhvani Foundation was entered into in January 2025. This project is for 28 months and it is expected that after 28 months SAHELI will get vigour and efficiency by improving systems and practices of NGO management. The leader (Director) members of the Governing Body in turn, one of the staff members designated as Compliance and Finance Manager and one of the members of the Governing Body designated as Fund Raising Manager will be given special training to strengthen SAHELI. Another venture is the partnership with CPA for improving the financial management system of SAHELI. This partnership began in January 2025. These efforts will help SAHELI to catch up with the changes in the programme portfolio cited above.

3.3. Improving Office Facilities

The work on the new office space was partly completed in the year under report. This includes furnishing of conference room to accommodate 15 to 20 participants, installing air condition machines, installing more toilets and making temporary partitions in the office. With these improvements, SAHELI can hold residential training for 20 – 25 persons at a time. A few additional IT facilities such as Interactive Panel and Picco were also made available. Thus, the organisation is progressing in equipping itself with better work environment. The project office opened in Baripada continued to remain functional in this year.

3.4. Inter Project Coordination

When the organisation was sanctioned three project a mechanism for inter-project coordination was institutionalised. This mechanism is named Project Management Committee (PMC). All senior members of staff – two Project Coordinators, one Assistant Project Coordinator, two Admin and Finance Officers under the chairmanship of the Director is the composition of the PMC. All matters pertaining to project management shall be discussed in the PMC. It is expected to meet at least once in a month. The PCs in turn shall function as the convener of the PMC. The convener maintains records of the PMC. A separate procurement committee has been constituted with one each member from the departments of finance, administration and programme.

3.5. Other Developments

Other worth mentioning events are the external evaluation held in July – August 2024 of the project titled “Ensuring the Rights of Children and Women in Mayurbhanj and Balasore Districts, Odisha” and supported by MISEREOR and KZE, and the launching in March 2025 of the new project supported by APF

4. Area of Operation

Sl. No.	Project Title	Districts	CD Blocks	Villages
	Field Projects			
1	Ensuring the Rights of Children and Women in Mayurbhanj District, Odisha	Balasore and Mayurbhanj	10	244
2	Prevent the Child Marriage and Gender Based Violence in Mayurbhanj District	Mayurbhanj	1	35
3	Enhanced Life Skills Among the Adolescence in Mayurbhanj District	Mayurbhanj	1	16
	Organisational Development Projects			
1	DHWANI FOUNDATION	Balasore	Basta	0

2	CPA SERVICE PRIVATE LIMITED	Balasore	Basta	0
	Total	2	11	295

5. Population Under Coverage

Sl. No.	Project Title	Households	Population
1	Ensuring the Rights of Children and Women in Mayurbhanj District, Odisha	64033	320166
2	Prevent the Child Marriage and Gender Based Violence in Mayurbhanj District	11338	56690
3	Enhanced Life Skills Among the Adolescence in Mayurbhanj District	7469	33802
	Total	82840	410658

6. Visitors

Ms.Margarita López Acosta and **Miguel Carballo** from MANOS UNIDAS visited the project areas and project office on 14-11- 2024. The visitors interacted with the project staff and the members of target communities in Bhudhikhamari and Gopalpur villages in Baripada CD Block. The visitors were impressed by the progress made by the project and agreed to the suggested revisions in the project activities and budget as well. Mr. Suryakantam Sahoo from Azim Premji Foundation (APF) visited SAHELI in June 2024. The visit was undertaken to facilitate the implementation of the project being implemented with the support of the APF. The visitors expressed their full satisfaction in the preparations made by SAHELI to start the new project.

7. Major Achievements

Presented below is an overview of the achievement of the organization during the year under report. Major Achievements of the organization are presented under two broader heads, viz. immediate results, and overall results of all activities.

7.1. Immediate Results of the Activities Undertaken

1. Promoting and Strengthening Community Based Mechanisms

The project put good amount of effort in strengthening and activating community-based mechanisms or arrangements to ensure community responses to early marriages and gender- based violence. A paradigm shift was effected in the previous years and it was put into practice since the project approved by MISEREOR for 2021 - 2024. Instead of SAHELI directly promoting community-based groups (CBGs) such as SHGs, VVC, AGGs, ABGs, and YCs, it was decided to work with similar groups already in operations. SHGs and AGGs working under the aegis of the ICDS and

attached to Angan Wadi Centers shall become one clientele group. The specialized community bodies promoted by government to protect the rights of women and children at the levels of local bodies constituted another clientele group. These groups replaced the VVCs in the earlier projects of SAHELI. The third clientele group consists of block and district level government and government related departments and organizations working to protect the rights of women and girls. The basic strategy of stimulating community responses remains the same. But the modus operandi and allies got changed. In the new strategic shift, AnganWadi Workers (AWW) become key personnel instead of Community Mobilisers whereas the role of the latter got changes as facilitators. This changed strategy continued during the period under report.

1.1. Village Level Child Protection Committees (VLCPCs)

The organization had promoted VVC as community responses to child marriage and gender-based violence with a mandate to intervene in such situation to prevent the same. The roles played by the VVCs during the previous years were shifted to Village Level Child Protection Committees (VLCPCs)-cum- Village Task Forces (VTF) consequent to the strategic shift referred to above. There were 124 VLCPCs when the year under report commenced. SAHELI took up promoting the same and there were 159 VLCPCs when the activities got concluded. SAHELI took up the role of capacity enhancing of these VLCPCs and tried to ensure regular meetings as per the periodicity suggested in the scheme. Thus, SAHELI facilitated the formation of 159 VLCPCs with 2097 members in the year under report.

1.2. Gram Panchayath Level Child Protection Committees (GPLCPCs)

GPLCPCs were already promoted by Block Level Child Protection Committees (BLCPCs). But these were in dormant condition in all Gram Panchayat. SAHELI, in the capacity of member of BLCPCs volunteered to activate all GPLCPCs focusing on holding meetings, capacity strengthening, guiding on how to go about with the cases of child marriage and GBV reported to these GPLCPCs. The organization has activated 38 GPLCPCs, facilitated holding of periodic meeting often GPLCPCs and extended guidance to intervene in 120 reported cases of child marriage and gender-based violence.

1.3. Block Level Child Protection Committees (BLCPCs)

SAHELI has been inducted as NGO representative in Basta, Rasgovindpur, Betnpti, Baripada, and Morada BLCPCs. SAHELI attended eight meetings in Basta, six meetings in Rasgovindpur and two meetings in Morada in the year under report. Besides attending the meetings, SAHELI was a part of five joint visits to various villages in connection with reported child marriages and GBV. It was in the team to visit various schools and shops to identify child labour.

1.4. Youth Club (YC)

There were, when the year under report commenced, 21 YCs with 304 members. These YCs continued to function during the year under report. No new YC was promoted in the year under report. But they were made part of VLCPCs.

1.5. Adolescent Girls' Group (AGG)

SAHELI had ceased to promote new AGGs. Instead, it decided to work with the Kishori groups promoted by the ICDS. But the 45 AGGs with 503 members continued to function. And new 50 AGGs with 712 members were promoted under the new project commenced in October 2024 with Azim Premji Foundation because this project is aiming at the empowerment of adolescent girls, bow in two Gram Panchayaths in Rasgovindpur CD Block.

1.6. Adolescent Boy's Group (ABG)

SAHELI ceased to promote new ABGs. But the 30 ABGs with 412 members promoted by the organization continue to operate in the year under report. No meetings of ABGs were held during the period under report. However, they were made to involve in the public meetings organized for adolescent girls,

1.7. Self-Help Group (SHG)

There had been 174 SHGs with total 1842 members when the year under report began. No new SHGs were promoted during this year.

All these CBGs and CBOs helped the organisation in addressing the child marriages and GBV in the villages where the project operated till June 2021. There after these community groups and organisations were made members of VLCOCs and they continued to identify cases and support in addressing the same. Apart from that, these were effective vehicles for dissemination of information.

2. Awareness Generation

2.1. Discussion Sessions

Discussion sessions to increase awareness of the target population were organized at different locations. Altogether 642 such sessions were held and these sessions were attended by 122226 persons.

2.2. Mid-media Activities

As part of public awareness generation 168 mid-media cultural programmes were held and the same were viewed by 12420 persons. Themes of public interest including RCH GBV etc. were presented in the mode of street plays. The organisation continues to engage the same team of folk artists to hold these sessions.

2.3. Legal Awareness Sessions

The organisation organized six sessions of legal awareness and these sessions were attended by 230 persons. External legal professionals led the sessions. These sessions were organized with the intention of imparting legal information pertaining to child marriage and GBV as well as sharing cases with the participants.

2.4. YouTube Channel

SAHELI had started its own YouTube channel by name SAHELI Media. The staff persons manage YouTube programmes. So far 35 videos have been broadcasted by it.

2.5. Learning Site

The organization has opened learning sites in two villages and set up a facility in its office for disseminating its learning to other villagers elsewhere. Selected villagers (members of VLCPCs from new villagers pay visit to both office and learning site villages to understand the process adopted by the organization to control child marriages and GBV. Fifty persons in five batches visited the learning sits and the office during the year under report.

3. Home Visits

As a part of one-to-one sensitization and to prevent both early marriage and gender-based violence as well as to promote education and health in general, especially of the adolescent girls, the field staff visited 1045 homes. They visited all community-based organization for motivating them.

4. Intervention in CM and GBV

The organisation continues to address child marriages and gender-based violence cases in the year under report too. As pointed out earlier the VLCPC was the platform for discussing such cases. The AWWs and PRI members were made to lead and involving the CDPOs, the DCPO and the police as required. They took the initiatives in documenting the contracts or agreements. The staff of SAHELI set the context, supported the processes and maintained complete documentation. The PRI members and the AWWs started showing more responsibility on resolving child marriages and GBV and consequently instances of planned or arranged child marriages are under control.

5. The Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO)

The organization had in the previous years initiated works to start Women Cultivators Collectives. After the successful operations for three years, the active members of these collectives created an FPO by name the LAMP. It was incorporated as a company in the year under report. Thus, it has become a separate entity and is an off shoot of SAHELI

6. Linking women with Social Welfare Schemes

With a purpose of strengthening linkages with government schemes, 126 women were supported to apply for various social welfare schemes.

7. Capacity Enhancement

6.1. Staff

Two types of activities were organized by the organisation in the year under report to enhance the capacities of the staff. One was residential programme for three to five days. These sessions were attended by 19 staff persons and were facilitated by external resource persons. The other was the regular monthly capacity enhancement for the staff in staff meeting. There held – such sessions attended by – persons. Resource persons for these sessions were Project Coordinators only.

6.2. Adolescent Girls

Adolescent girls were given residential capacity enhancement sessions for 50 persons in two batches for the duration of five days each; Both external as well as in house resource persons facilitated these sessions. The topics relevant for the empowerment of adolescent girls were transacted during these visits, Regular ongoing sessions for enhancement of the capacity of adolescent girls were held in their routine meetings in villages. There held 298 such sessions attended by 3150 adolescent girls. These sessions were facilitated by the Field Organisers of the organisation.

6.3. Exposure Visits

An exposure visit was organized for five days from 21 to 26 in January 2025. This programme was attended by four staff members. This visit was coordinated by APF and the Gazipur in U P visited by SAHELI is a partner with APF in the empowerment of adolescent girls

8. Participation in other programmes

9. Supporting Adolescent Girls

9.1. Leadership formation

SAHELI once again started forming adolescent groups. It has promoted 50 AGGs and identified 50 adolescent girls to lead these groups. A few sessions of discussion with these 50 adolescent girls with a view to mold them as leaders were undertaken in the year under report, The process of leadership formation is progressing. They demonstrated their leadership skill in the event of the project launch,

9.2. Skill promotion

The regular meetings of AGG were made platforms for developing the physical, artistic, literary and aesthetic skills of adolescent girls. They were given opportunities for demonstrating their skills by performances.

9.3. Retention in studies

Drop out from upper primary classes was found to be affecting the schooling of

adolescent girls and thereby their possible employability. The organisation made special efforts to bring back the adolescent girls dropped out of schooling. Discussions with adolescent girls, their parents and school authorities were held for this. Thus, five children were brought back to schools in the year under report.

9.4. Making documents

It has been found that many children do not have basic documents such as birth certificate, Aadhaar, residence certificate, and community or caste certificate which are essential for them to access their entitlements including scholarship. The organisation supported such children and their parents to get those certificates. Then they can be supported to access their entitlements. SAHELI identified 49 such cases, intervened in 23 cases, succeeded in obtaining certificates for nine persons and helped four persons to access their basic entitlements.

9.5. School interventions

The organisation established relation with 34 schools in the operational area and held 34 consultations with teachers and authorities of schools. These consultations were attended by 160 teachers and school authorities and the staff of the organisation led the discussions. The question of child marriage and the roles that can be played by schools were the major points of discussions in these sessions. Subsequent to this, 69 seminars for school children on preventing child marriage were organised and nearly 2000 children and teachers attended these seminars.

9.6. Other services for adolescent girls

Net Results of All Activities

1. Enhanced staff Capacity

The staff became more efficient as reflected in their work. They started taking up more administrative and programmatic responsibilities

2. Increased visibility of SAHELI

SAHELI gained more visibility because activities were held simultaneously in more than 500 villages and locations and involving AWWs, Supervisors, CDPOs, PRI members, school authorities, and police. Many activities of SAHELI were covered by local media. Following this many people from outside the area of operation started contacting SAHELI for various purpose.

3. Imparted better awareness of target communities

It has been found from the responses of the community members that they secured more and better awareness on the key themes in which the organisation is involved.

4. Gender based violence

SAHELI intervened through VLCPCs and directly through its own project staff in 425 of the instances of reported gender-based violence and successfully settled 297 cases.

5. Child marriages

The organisation intervened in 440 of the 555 reported instances of early marriage of Adivasi girls and 334 of these were successful because no marriage among these cases was reported.

4. Rapport with other stakeholders

The rapport already established by the organization with the Police, the DSWO (ICDS), the ICPS (DCPO), local governments, local educational institutions and rural media CDPO continued with more active collaboration with all.

6. Recognition by the local governments

The local governments duly recognized SAHELI and inducted into CD Block level and district Level committees to prevent child marriage and reduce gender-based violence.

7. Recognition by the local population

The organisation continued to enjoy a very high level of recognition by local population. People rightly identify SAHELI as the defender and protector of the rights of women and girls.

8. Staff Position

The staff size of SAHELI increased when new projects were added. All requirements for new staff members and replacement of staff members were met by proper recruitment process starting with advertisement or head hunt and followed by telephonic interview, physical interview, recruitment and Induction. There are, in the year under report, 19 staff members including three (3) Project Coordinators, one Assistant Project Coordinator, two (2) Finance and Administration Officers, ten (10) Field Organisers, one driver and two (2) Project Assistants. All staff members were given periodic training for enhancing their capabilities.

9. Programme Tracking

Currently there prevail separate MIS for each project. This works very well and the reports, both organisational and project, are drawn from the individual MIS.

10. Summary of Finances

The organization operates separate bank account for foreign funds. The bank account receiving foreign funds was with the State Bank of India (SBI), New Delhi branch. Three utilization bank accounts are being maintained for three projects in Kamardiha branch of Canara Bank. The receipts for the year under report was an amount of Rs.89,34,129.85 and the payments for all activities including organizational governance was an amount of Rs.39,54,435.00. The closing balance at the end of the year under report was an amount of Rs.49,79,694.85.00 including balance with banks (Rs. 4975654.85) and cash in hand (Rs. 4040.00)

11. Audit

M/s NPSM and Associates continued to function as the statutory auditor for the organization taking care of the audit of two projects besides organizational audit, M/s NRSM and Associates was given contract for auditing the project titled “Ensuring the Rights of Children and Women in Mayurbhanj District, Odisha” supported by MISEREOR. However, the audit for the period under report was conducted by M/S Sahoo & Co. The organisation is contemplating over recruiting internal auditors from the next year onwards.

12. Future Directions

SAHELI has emerged as an organization for defending the interests of women and girls, especially women and girls among tribal population. It was focusing on gender-based violence and child marriages during the last few years. The ideas for further strengthening its involvement in this sector were pursued by the organization. Comprehensive empowerment of adolescent girls was initiated in the year under report and the same shall be continued in the years to come. Different elements of empowerment and hurdles to realize those elements shall be addressed in future ensuring better future of adolescent girls and boys. The factors to ensure security of adolescent girls such as better housing, enhanced nutrition, improved hygiene, and conducive home environment etc. require to be ensured in the coming years. The difficulties to get admissions, access scholarships and other educational support constitute another area to deal with in the coming years.

Though it was been planned by SAHELI to extend its operation to the entire district of Mayurbhanj, this was partly achieved in the year under report. SAHELI shall in future ensure the complete coverage of Mayurbhanj district with sub-offices in different locations of the district.

On the lie with the paradigm shifts indicated in the beginning of this report, SAHELI shall pay more attention to enhance collaboration with local governments. Lobbying with district authorities to ensure positive disposition among the local level functionaries of the ICDS, Panchayathi Raj, Social Welfare, Women and Child Development, and mass education departments has to be undertaken in the coming years. SAHELI would like to hand over the functions that are currently managed by it to community groups supported by the frontline functionaries of local governments to ensure sustainability.

SAHELI has to identify resources to meet expenditure for core expenses of the organisation such as continuing work to increased office facilities, strengthening

governance, up-skilling the members of the Governing Board and contribute to make LAMP profitable to get contribution from pts net profit.

SAELI requires system in prevalence for tracking the project progress. All MIS shall be merged together to make an organizational MIS and a tracking sheet applicable for the entire organisation shall be developed in future. Based on that, the reporting arrangements should be strengthened. Similarly, the arrangements for documentation will be strengthened.

13. Acknowledgement

SAHELI acknowledges the financial support received from MISEREOR and KZE Germany, MANOS UNIDAS Spain and APF Bangalore. The support that SAHELI received from Dhwani Foundation and CPA is also acknowledged in this report. The services rendered by Ms. NPSM and Associates in auditing the overall accounts of the organisation and Ms./S. Sahoo & Co in auditing project accounts are worth mentioning. All officers of the banks, ICDS, ICPS, Police, education department and CD Blocks whole-heartedly cooperated with SAHELI. Leaders of Gram Panchayats and local media persons too supported all activities of the organization. SAHELI places in record its deep-felt gratitude to all those who supported during the year under report.

14. Conclusion

The year under report was challenging with attempts of SAHELI to diversify, expansion and paradigm shifts. The organisation faced the task of addressing problems that aroused out of this situation. At the same time, the year under report provided many exciting instances too: new partnership, expansion of area of operation, opening a project office in Baripada, opportunity for capacity enhancement for the leader, staff and the members of the Governing Body, getting introduced to other NGOs and expert persons, and recognition from various corners. The year under report witnessed the progress made by the organisation in the areas of statutory compliance and policy making.

Basta,

20/06/2025

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