



SAMPADA GRAMEEN MAHILA SANSTHA

# ANNUAL REPORT

2024-25



# SAMPADA GRAMEEN MAHILA SANSTHA

Sampada Grameen Mahila Sanstha (SANGRAM), founded in 1992, operates as a series of groups empowering marginalized communities across three districts in Maharashtra. Led by women, it challenges gender norms and addresses issues like gender-based violence, resource access, and health rights for communities like sex workers and transgender individuals.

As a registered non-profit, SANGRAM concentrates on preventing GBV and HIV while providing essential care and support to its members. Its approach revolves around community involvement in programme planning, fostering collaboration, and combating stigma. The organisation's core belief lies in empowering communities to find their own solutions, fostering a sense of agency among people to champion their own rights and not just relying on a select few activists.



# BOARD MEMBERS

# SANGRAM

2024-25

**SANGRAM** Sanstha would like to acknowledge its board members for their unstinting support.

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**President**



**SUJATA KULKARNI**

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**Vice-President**



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**SAEE PATIL**

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# **CORE PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES**

# **HIV/AIDS Prevention Targeted Intervention (TI) Programmes in Sangli, Satara, and Kolhapur districts of Maharashtra**

**April 2024 to March 2025**

Six community-led HIV/AIDS prevention TI programmes were implemented in the districts of Sangli, Satara, and Kolhapur with Female Sex Workers (FSW), Men who have Sex with Men (MSM), and Transgender (TG) sex workers. Under this program, SANGRAM implemented 3 TI projects in Sangli, Satara, and Kolhapur. SANGRAM mentored Veshya AIDS Muquabla Parishad (VAMP), a community-based organisation (CBO) for implementing three similar interventions in the towns of Miraj, Ichalkaranji, and Sangli.

**All interventions increased access to condoms, including achieving 100% condom use amongst paying clients , and increased access to accountable healthcare services for FSW, MSM, and TG communities, thus firmly establishing community-centred STI prevention and care.**

## **Ensuring need-based availability and distribution of condoms**

In Kolhapur TI Project, 100% condom availability was ensured via a lodge-based distribution. In Sangli TI Project, 100% condom availability to MSM and TGs was ensured via condom depots in high-risk areas identified and monitored by peer educators or other staff. In Ichalkaranji TI Project, 100% condom availability for FSW, MSM, and TGs was ensured via peer-based distribution as well as a condom depot; the volume of demand for condoms were noted every quarter to ensure the demands are met. Since TGs engage in sex work at night, care was taken to ensure that condom distribution and health services are provided to them at night by peers. Together, different strategies based on locations and requirements delivered sustained access, responsive supply, and measurable prevention outcomes.

# Condoms Supplied in TIs: 27,16,266

under the 6 HIV/AIDS Prevention Targeted Intervention (TI) Programmes

17,69,865



- Female Sex Workers (FSW)
- Men who have Sex with Men (MSM)
- Transgender (TG)

Purchased by  
the Community:  
24.23%

Total  
Demand:  
35,85,341

Supplied by  
TIs: 75.76%

1,27,337 1,39,744



Kolhapur

1,17,430 1,02,020 43,280



Satara

## Structuring health services to increase access and improve trust

Timely and regular health check-ups as well as counselling services were provided. In all TIs, effective counselling on the importance of testing and safe sex practices led to more sex workers to seek regular HIV and STI screening. Those testing positive received prompt treatment and support. In Kolhapur TI, regular medical check-ups (RMC) and STI testing was done at lodge-based clinics women working in different shifts (morning, afternoon, and night), with special planning to ensure health services in the night shift as well as outside working hours. The number of women reached was successfully increased to 25 per day) by holding weekly clinics in different lodges on the same day of the week (Wednesday) instead of a different lodge per week. Since MSM and TG communities were more active at night in Kolhapur, special efforts were made to ensure that community members could access health services at night, in addition to accessing them during the day. Women's feedback on inadequate treatment from certain doctors was taken into consideration to ensure the availability of a dependable doctor, which increased uptake of services as more women availed treatment and also brought in other women.

In Sangli TI, MSMs mainly work in the mornings and afternoons, and TGs mainly work at night. Therefore, testing and regular medical check-ups were facilitated through careful planning that guaranteed they could access services according to their availability and convenience. These responsive measures built trust, expanded reach, and strengthened the continuum of care.

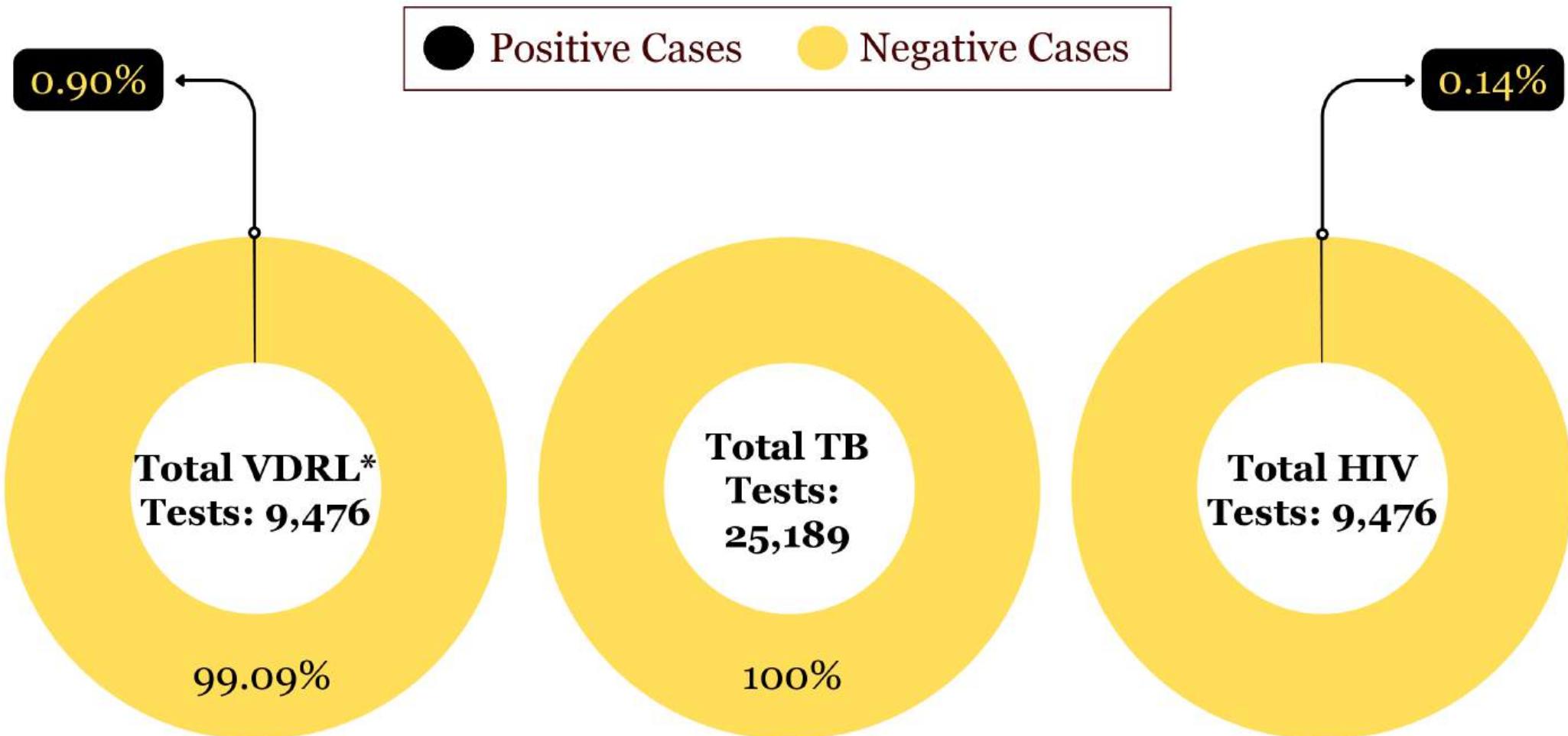
**These coordinated approaches strengthened reach across diverse schedules, ensuring equitable access and improved continuity of healthcare services.**

## Expanding reach to integrate new members

Across, all TIs, new members were registered and encouraged by peers and outreach workers to join the local communities as well as access all services and facilities available under the TI projects. A broader reach enabled increased coverage of services and trust in the community, thus growing treatment coverage and advocacy.

# Total Tests Done

under the 6 HIV/AIDS Prevention Targeted Intervention (TI) Programmes

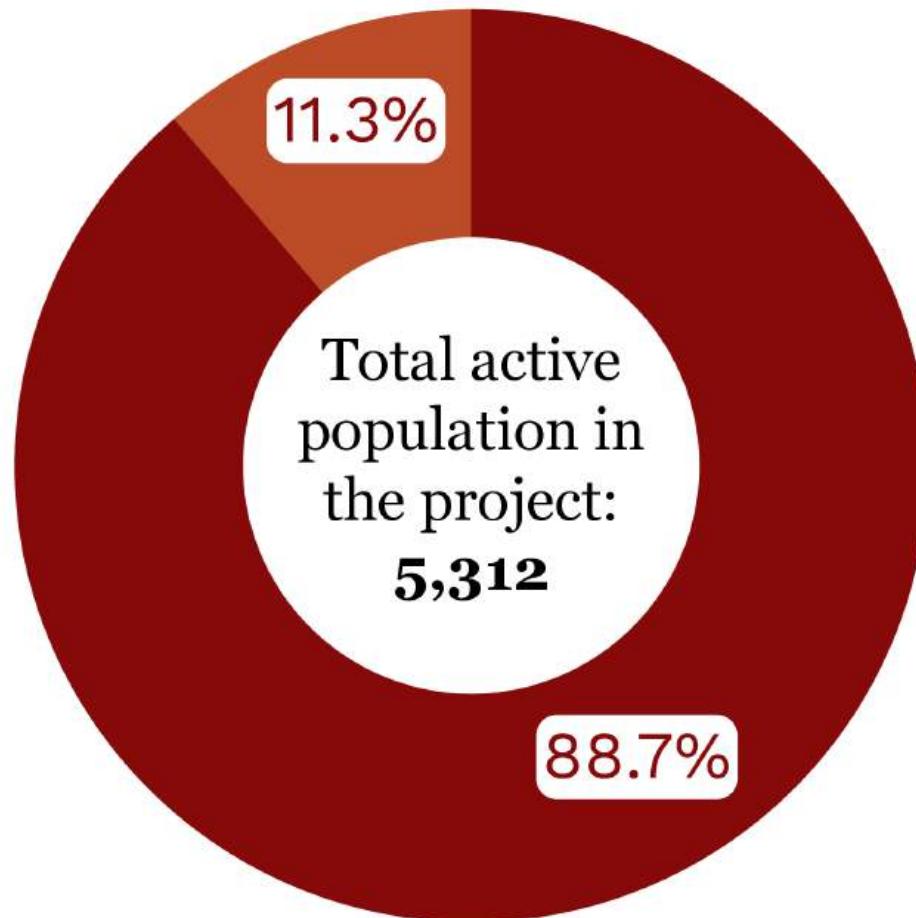


\*VDRL test (Venereal Disease Research Laboratory test) is a screening tool for syphilis

\*\*All positive cases were registered at the ART (Antiretroviral Therapy) center.

# Details of Sex Workers' Communities

under the 6 HIV/AIDS Prevention Targeted Intervention (TI) Programmes



Total active population in the project:  
**5,312**

62,577

Sex Workers regularly contacted

19,697

Sex Workers who regularly attended STI Clinics

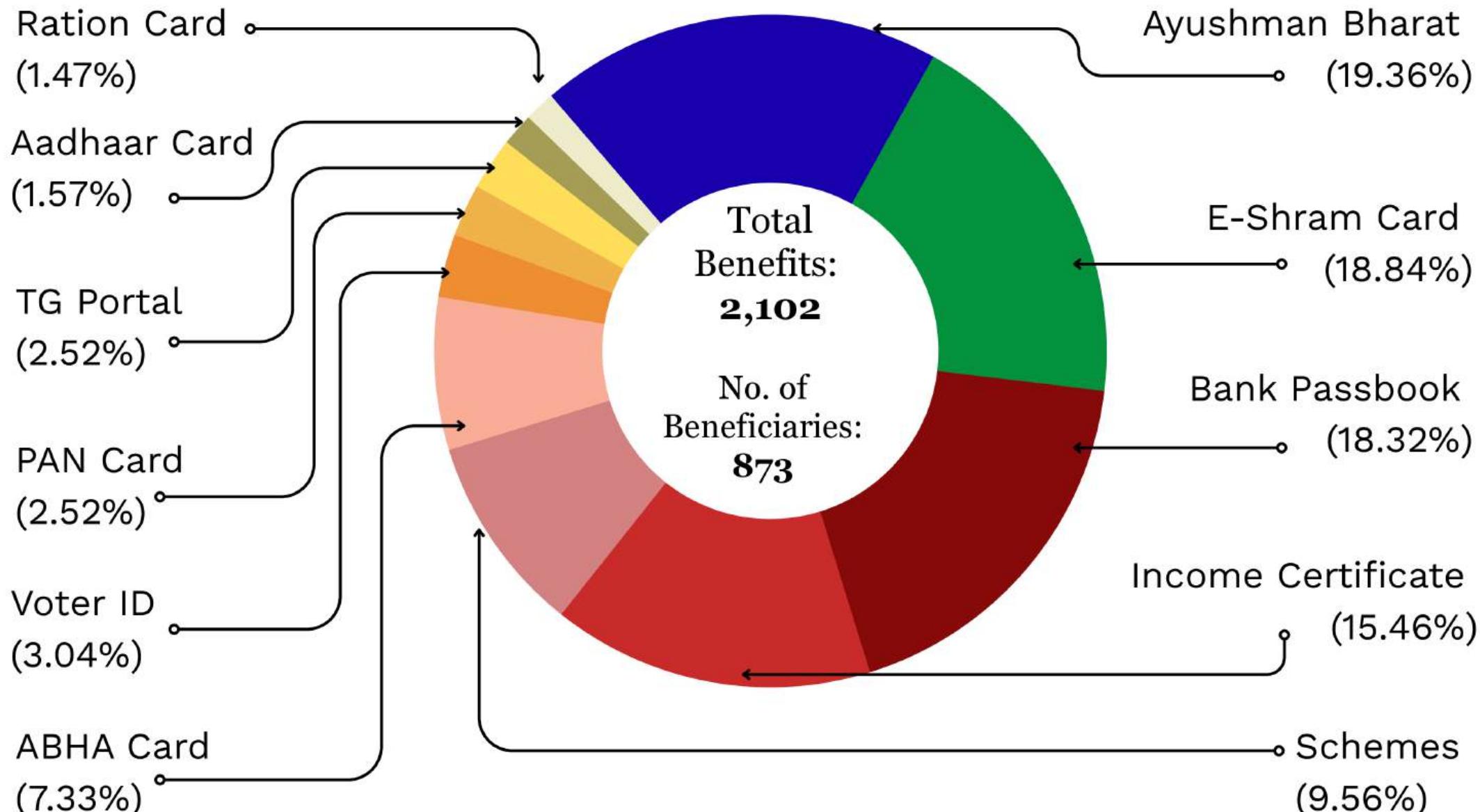
## Increasing access to government schemes and benefits:

In all TIs, assistance was provided to help FSW, MSM, and TG communities get relevant IDs, including caste certificates, ration cards, voting IDs, PAN cards, and Aadhaar cards. Having IDs, enabled them to open bank and post office accounts for savings as well as access benefits under various government schemes, including Sanjay Gandhi Niradhar Yojana, Shravan Bal Yojana, Ayushman Card, and Mukhyamantri Ladki Bahin Yojana.



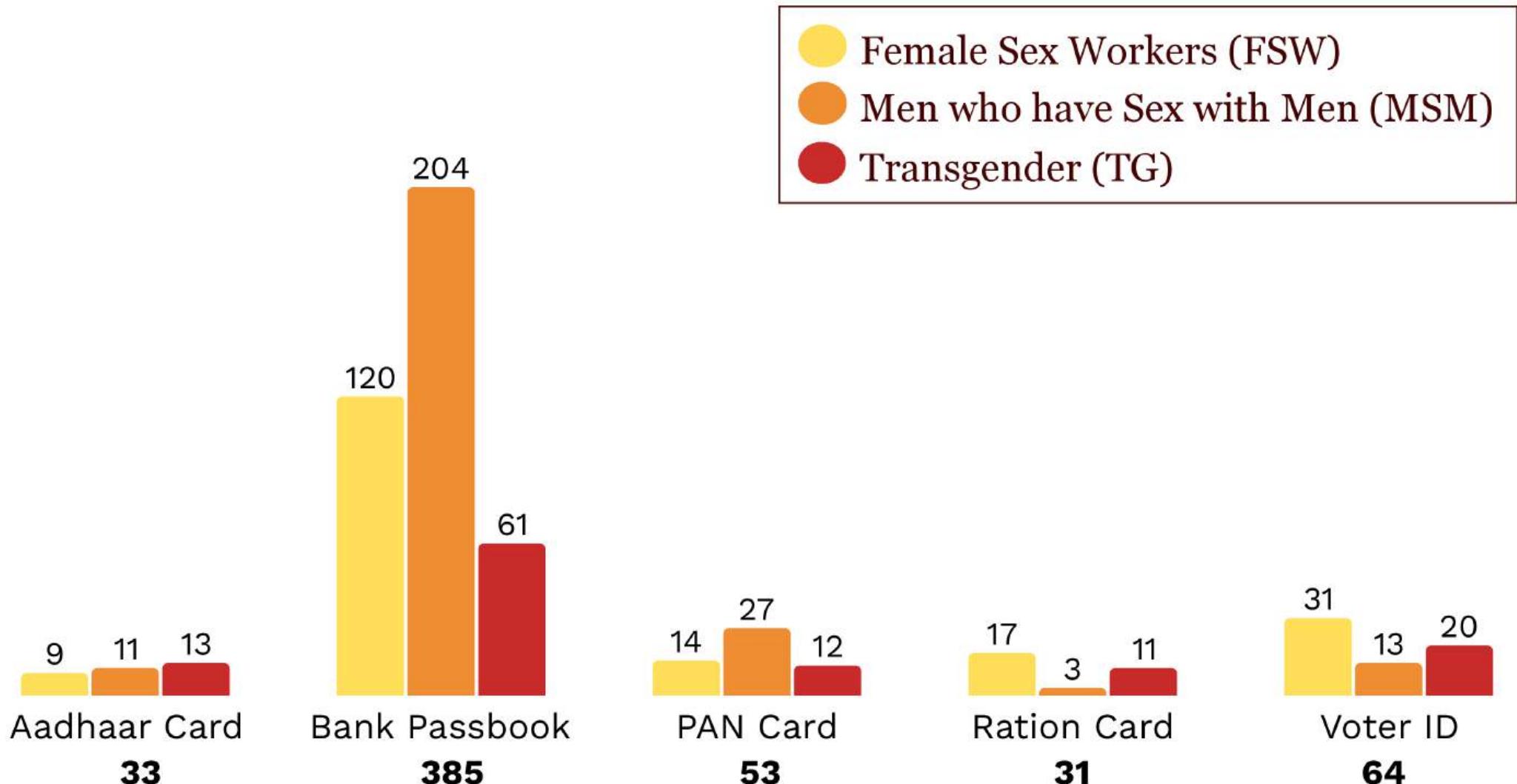
# Access to Benefits (IDs and Schemes)

under the 6 HIV/AIDS Prevention Targeted Intervention (TI) Programmes



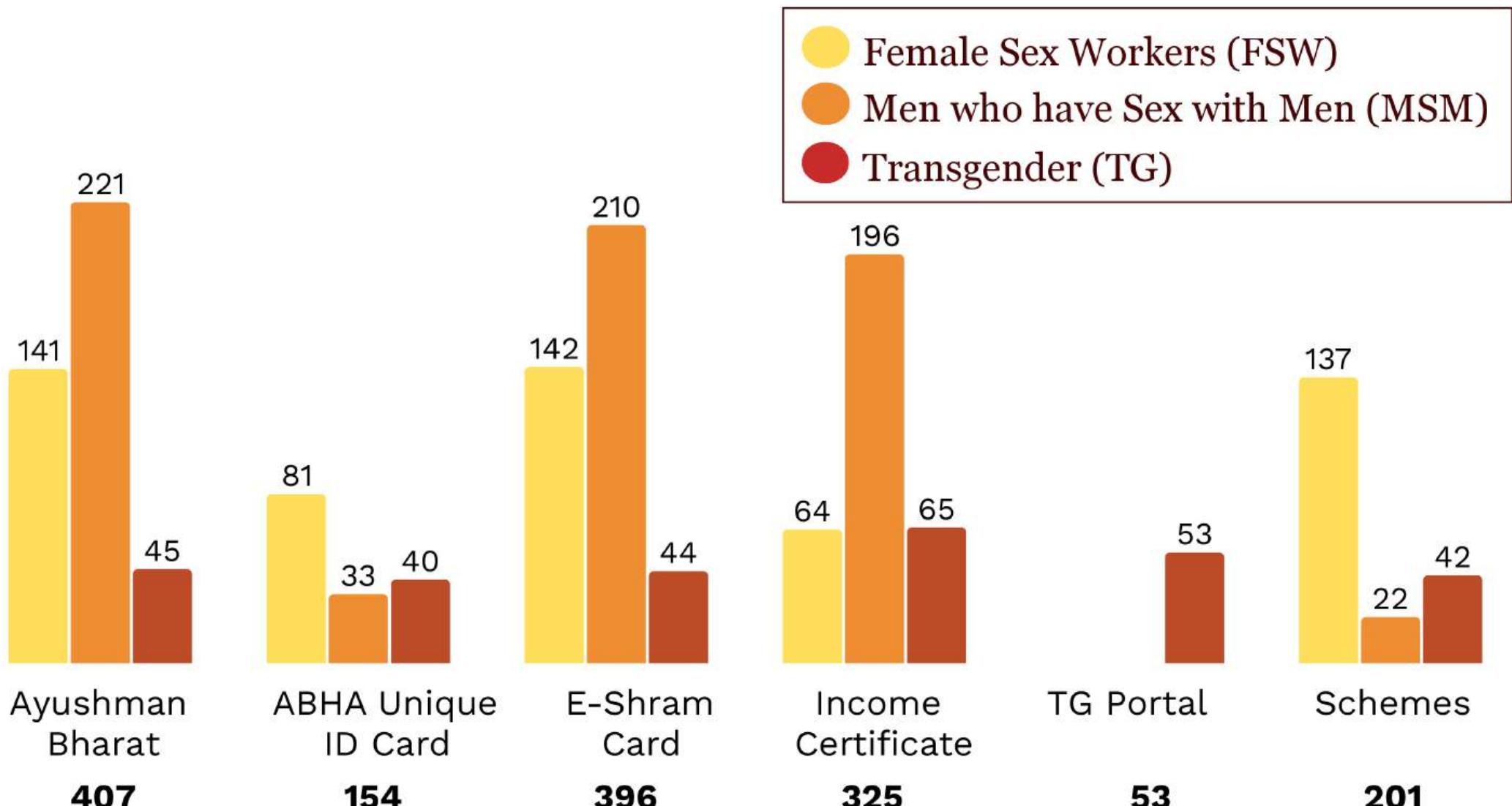
# Details of Access to National IDs and Documents

under the 6 HIV/AIDS Prevention Targeted Intervention (TI) Programmes



# Details of Access to Schemes and Relevant IDs

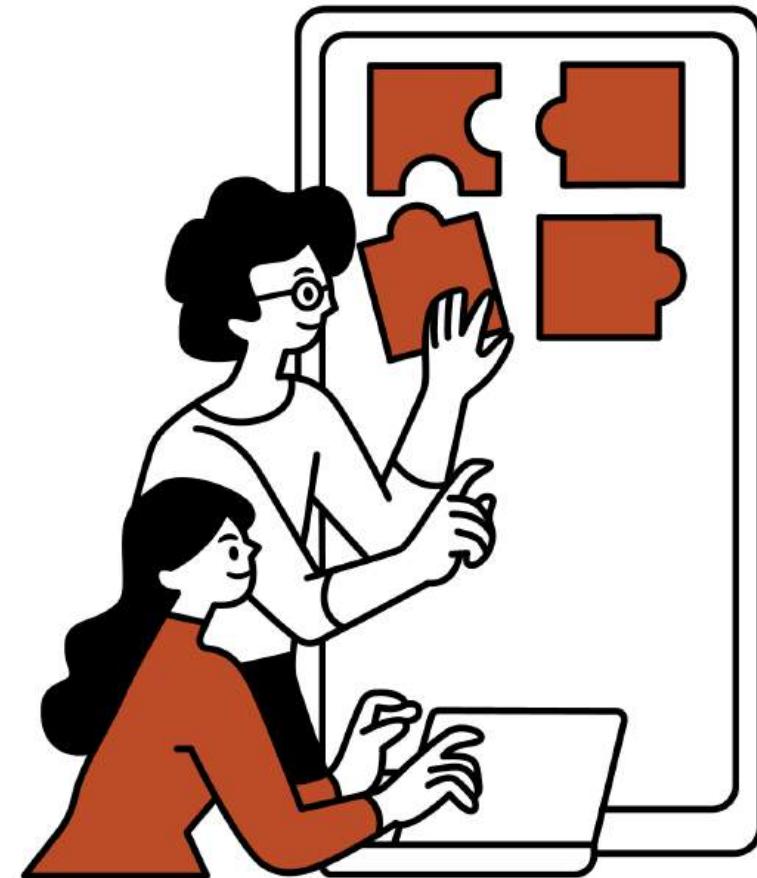
under the 6 HIV/AIDS Prevention Targeted Intervention (TI) Programmes



## Resolving disputes and strengthening communities:

Sex workers often face harassment, violence, and systemic discrimination from police, local goons, and society. In all TIs, dispute redressal mechanisms, such as Tanta Mukti Samitis, were instituted to discuss and negotiate concerns and ensure safety.

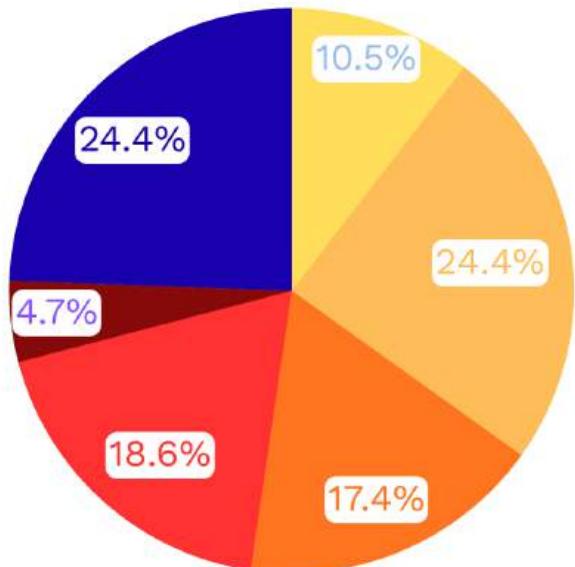
Community-led crises management, thus, emerged as a crucial mechanism to resolve conflicts affecting FSWs, MSMs, and TGS, including disputes with the brothel owners, clients, sex workers, and/or the police.



# Total Dispute Resolutions: 122

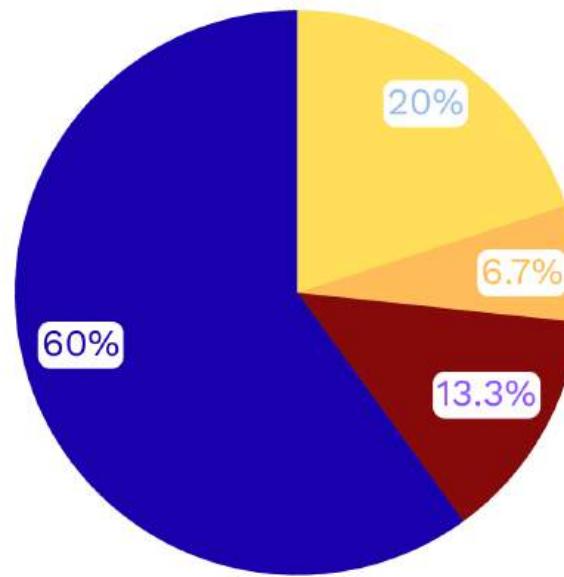
under the 6 HIV/AIDS Prevention Targeted Intervention (TI) Programmes

● Goons      ● Customers      ● Police      ● Partner  
● Family Members      ● Internal Disputes



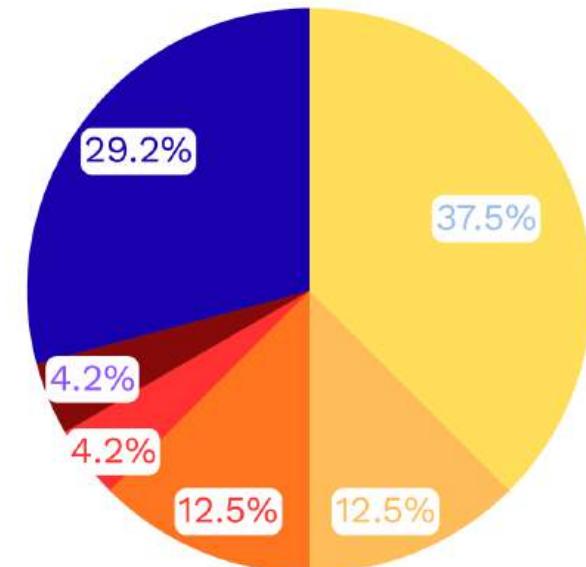
Female  
Sex Workers

86 Dispute Resolutions



Male  
Sex Workers

13 Dispute Resolutions



Trans  
Sex Workers

23 Dispute Resolutions

# Mitra, Scholarship Programme Supporting Children of Sex Workers

**April 2024 to March 2025**

**Under the Mitra project, SANGRAM has been providing scholarship support for ensuring education, nutrition, and preventing dropouts amongst children since 2009. This is an important continuing programme of SANGRAM, which first started providing supplementary education in the brothels in 2000. Mitra also provides material support or fosters support for orphaned children who are with guardians who are unable to care for them.**

Children of sex workers often face challenges in admission to schools as well as retaining their enrolment in mainstream education. Among these, children whose mothers were in sex work and died of HIV/AIDS or other causes, especially face tremendous challenges in access to higher education, such as professional colleges to pursue their undergraduate (or bachelors') degrees. In addition to the stigma associated with having a parent who is a sex worker, having documents essential for enrolment in education institutions is a huge hurdle. The basic documents required for admission include a

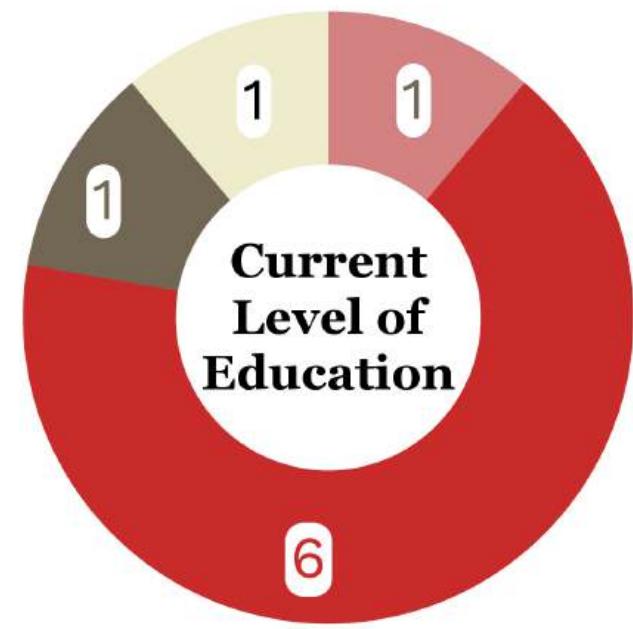
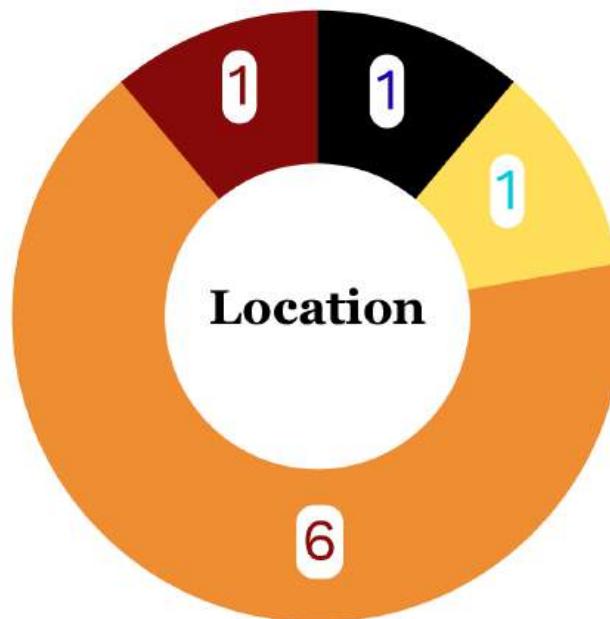
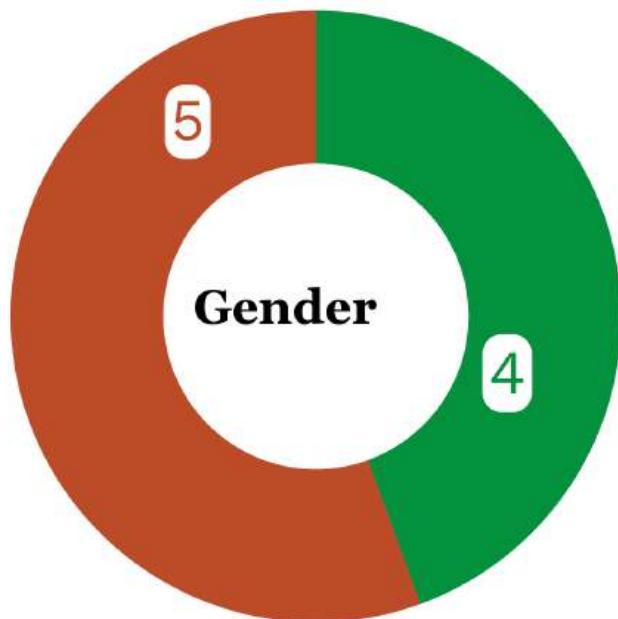
child's birth certificate, death certificates of parents (if mentioned on the birth certificate), orphan certificates, caste certificates, ration card, and Aadhaar card.

An important part of SANGRAM's work has been to help sex workers and their children secure these documents, especially ensuring that children can access the benefits they are entitled to and have equal opportunities for education. The scholarship programme strengthens the education of children of sex workers through brothel-based education systems as well as scholarships for higher education scholarships.

In 2024-2025, SANGRAM provided full support for nine orphan children for higher education. Of the nine scholarships granted, four were awarded to female students and five to male students. Geographically, the recipients came from Sangli, Kolhapur, Pune, and Satara. In terms of academic level, six scholarships supported students, who are now pursuing their bachelor's degree, while one each was awarded to a postgraduate, high school student and another to a secondary school student.

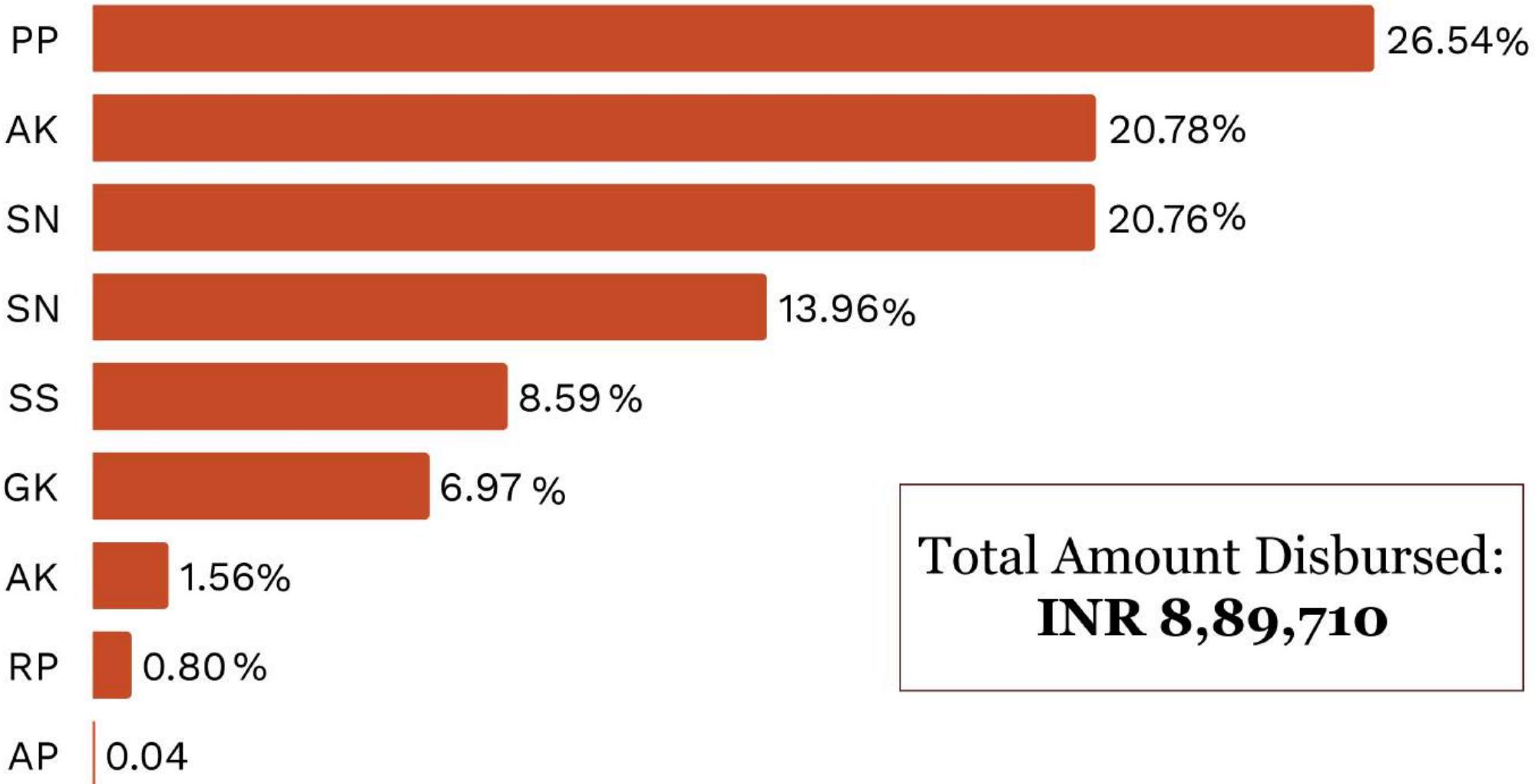
# Mitra: Scholarships for Children of Sex Workers

## STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



# Mitra: Scholarships for Children of Sex Workers

## AMOUNT OF FUNDS DISTRIBUTED



Note: Only initials of students' names are used to protect identities.

# From getting an orphan certificate to securing a seat in an undergrad/bachelor's course: the journey of SN

## CASE STUDY

When SN, now a first-year graduate student in Sangli, first decided to pursue higher education, she had not anticipated that lack of documents would be one of her biggest hurdles. She did not have an orphan certificate, without which securing admission to higher education and availing scholarships was extremely difficult.

This is when SANGRAM, the National Network of Sex Workers (NNSW), and the Women and Child Development (WCD) Department, Maharashtra initiated efforts to secure this certificate. The journey was not easy as new challenges arose at every stage.

The first step was to get the mother's death certificate. This was challenging because when inquiries were first made at a local hospital, they said that the mother had been referred elsewhere. After checking everything, including records at the second hospital as well as the cremation receipt, the official death certificate was finally obtained with the help of NNSW partner, Saheli Sangh, Pune.

After getting the death certificate, the next step was to approach the Women and Child Development office, which issues an orphan certificate and a domicile certificate for orphans who want to avail the reserved opportunities in education. The initial response from the authorities was not supportive and thus required further efforts, like a personal visit from the SANGRAM team to convey the seriousness of the case and clarify the situation. The team supporting SN had to continuously communicate and coordinate with different offices to ensure the process was moving forward at all stages and not put on hold. Meanwhile, SN's academic documents, which included her marksheets for grades 10 and 12, were submitted along with recommendation letters from SANGRAM and VAMP. Incorrect details, which were later corrected, in the Aadhaar Card, a unique national ID was another hurdle in the application for the card being rejected at first.

# From getting an orphan certificate to securing a seat in an undergrad/bachelor's course: the journey of SN

## CASE STUDY

When the staff at the WCD Department started working on the file, they asked SNSN to write a letter by hand and give them a story about the times she changed schools. Then, the staff moved on to the next step, which was a home visit.

During the home visit an officer went to SNSN home [SANGRAM office] to check and verify her circumstances. The SANGRAM and VAMP teams, along, with SN went to the WCD Department office a number of times to make sure everything kept moving forward. In fact, the persistent follow-ups, led the officer to quip, “When you sit in front of me, I feel pressured.”

It was precisely this persistence that finally paid off, and the orphan certificates for SN as well as a few other students were obtained after many trips with NNSW partner Saheli Sangh to the Sub-Divisional Commissioner's office in Pune and Mumbai.

Though the journey was full of obstacles like missing information, document errors and official delays, it ended successfully through persistence, coordination, and collective efforts.

The one big problem that was making it difficult for SN to get higher education and financial support was finally solved when she got the orphan certificate.

SN's journey highlights how accurate and complete documentation are crucial and arduous processes can be navigated successfully with persistent and trust-building communication with officials as well as collective efforts and consistent follow-ups.

# From getting an orphan certificate to securing a seat in an undergrad/bachelor's course: the journey of SN

## CASE STUDY



“

**SN**

There were many questions going around in my head: “Where will I go?” “What will I do?” “What will happen to me.” “What will the outside world be like?” “Who will take care of me if something bad happens to me?” But having an organization (SANGRAM and the collective VAMP) backing us and helping us at every step was a very fulfilling experience. They helped us through all kinds of documentation required for our higher education, and stood by us as if they were our own family.

”

# Mitra: Scholarships for Children of Sex Workers

## STUDENT VOICES

“

PP:

Before SANGRAM supported me, I constantly worried if people would judge me because of the work she (my mother) was doing. I received financial assistance for my education as well as mental support. With SANGRAM, I have gained a lot of confidence in my life.

AK:

I have been very lucky that SANGRAM has supported me since my birth. It may seem like such a basic thing, but it was only with their support that I learnt to dream. When I was young, I did not understand the importance of education or what my rights were. I struggled a lot to build my personality. Today, whatever I am, it is because of SANGRAM. I have seen them strive more for my education than I myself have. My (positive) outlook and perspective are due to their support for my education.

SaN:

When my mother passed away, my sisters and I did not know what to do. I struggled to imagine our plight. After receiving help from SANGRAM, I felt that there was someone on our side who would help us stand us on our feet. When we face any difficulties, SANGRAM always stands with us, just like our mother would have.

SS:

I was depressed to the point where I wondered whether I would be able to study further. However, my experience of receiving help and support from Sangram was comforting, positive, and courage-building. Sangram understood me, supported me, helped with my academic and financial situation and listened to my problems. And I am proud that Sangram has increased my courage.

”

# Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria (GFATM) COVID-19 Response Mechanism (C19RM)

April 2024 to March 2025

SANGRAM was selected by the National Network of Sex Workers (NNSW) as a sub-recipient to implement the KP Residual – CBO Strengthening and Legal Literacy Project across its member organizations. Between January and December 2024, SANGRAM led this initiative in nine states—Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, and Delhi—working in close collaboration with 18 sub-sub recipient partners of NNSW. The project had two main components: (i) Social Protection (SP) Services and (ii) Key Population (KP) Residual.



\*These two states were part of the KP grant only; while the other states were a part of both SP and KP Grant.

# SP Grant: Strengthening Social Protection (SP) Services

The SP services component aimed to increase access to and uptake of social protection and HIV services. Lack of identity or other mandatory documents often prevents sex workers from accessing healthcare and HIV services tied to such IDs or benefitting from financial inclusion such as bank accounts, savings schemes, or social protection benefits. This leaves sex workers vulnerable, especially during crises like COVID-19.

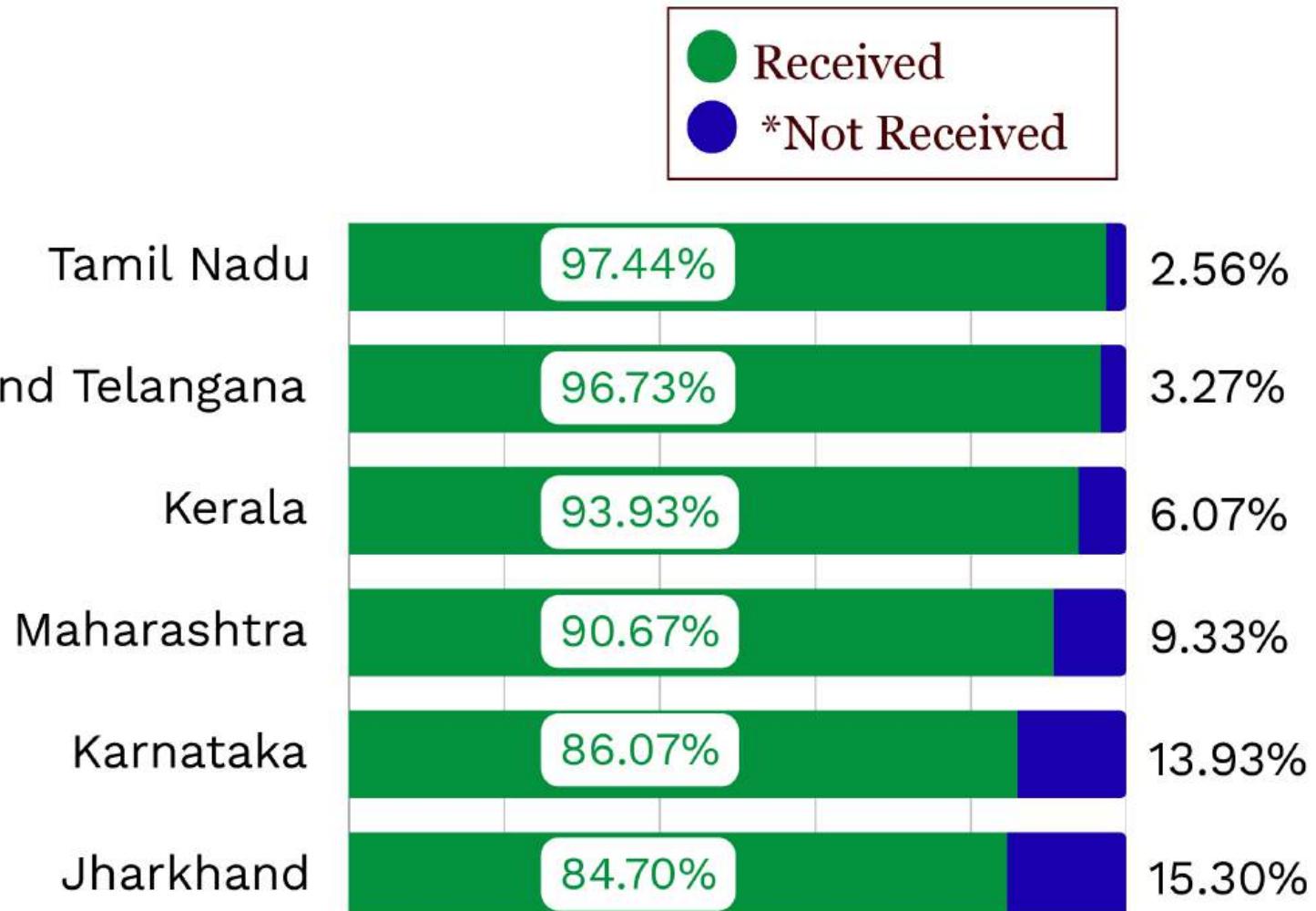
The project reached 19,0172 sex workers (female, male, and trans). Equipping sex workers with the necessary documents, the project created pathways to financial inclusion and strengthened their ability to claim entitlements and protections.

By the end of the grant SANGRAM and its partners had reached over 19,000 sex workers in 43 districts in 9 states; 1,015 community facilitators were trained in accessing identification documents, social entitlements. Over 45,000 services were applied for and over 41,000 services were received at the time of closing the initiative.

The project was implemented by working through a strong network of community-based organizations (CBOs) of sex workers to ensure peer-to-peer outreach and support. A core group of sex workers was identified and trained as community facilitators (CFs) to lead the initiative, with a specific focus on reaching the most marginalized within their communities; CFs were incentivized with INR 200 per application and INR 800 per successful completion.

**Overall, most states achieved above 90% success rate in securing IDs, accounts, and scheme benefits. Tamil Nadu recorded the highest success rate (97.44%), and Jharkhand the lowest (84.70%).**

# Total IDs, Bank Accounts, and Benefits from Schemes Received Across Locations

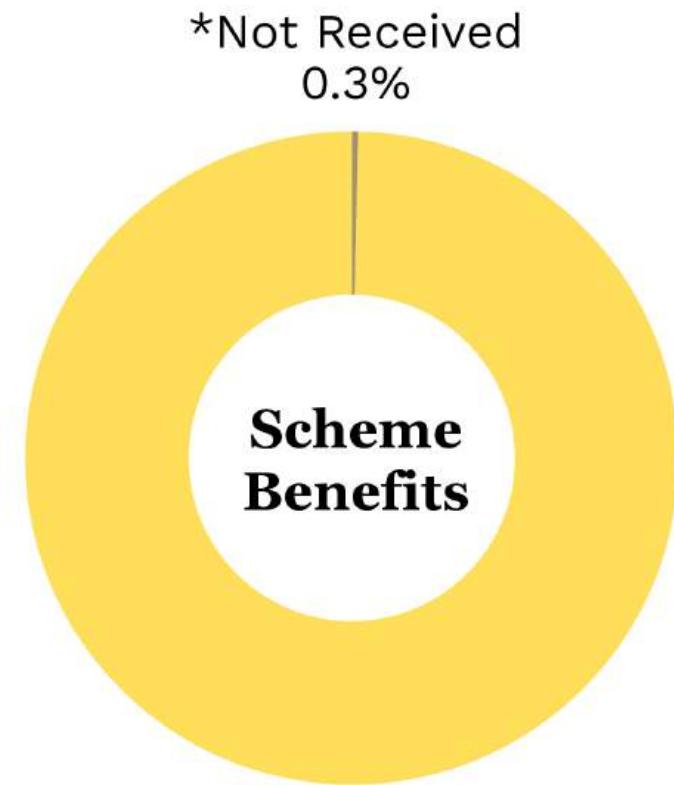
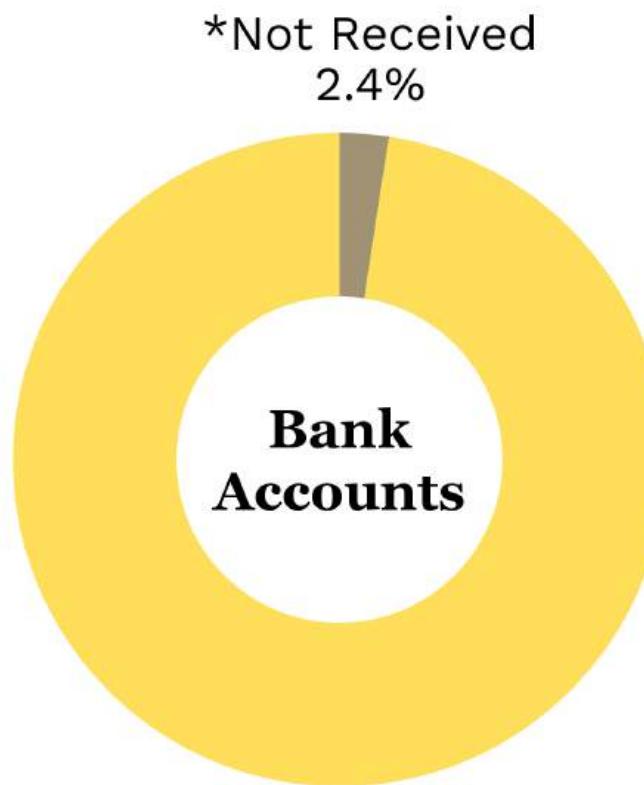
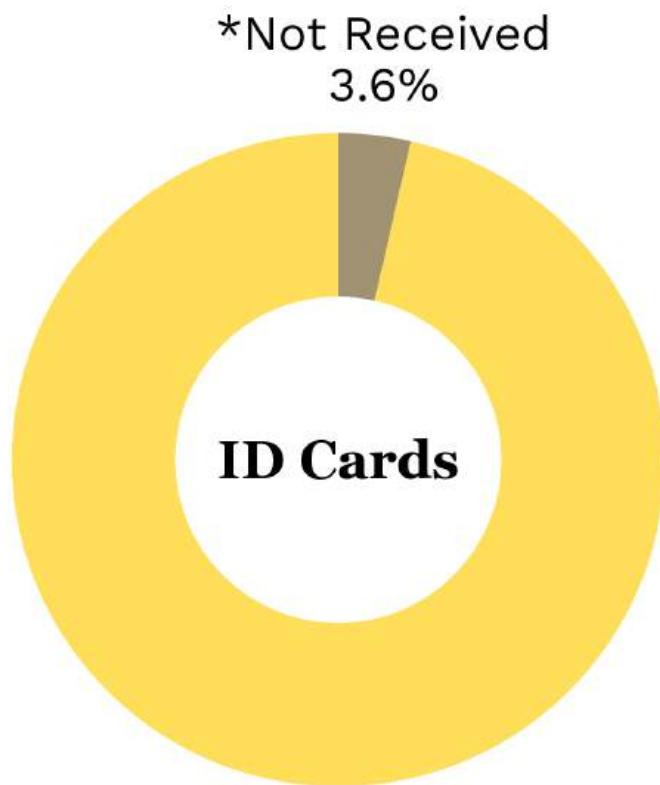


Total services applied for **45,406**

91% of the total services were received: **41,456**

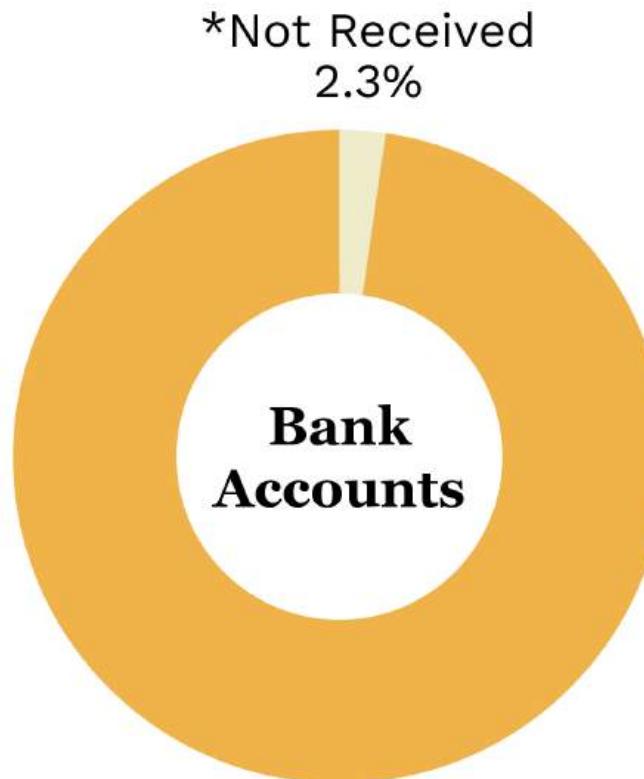
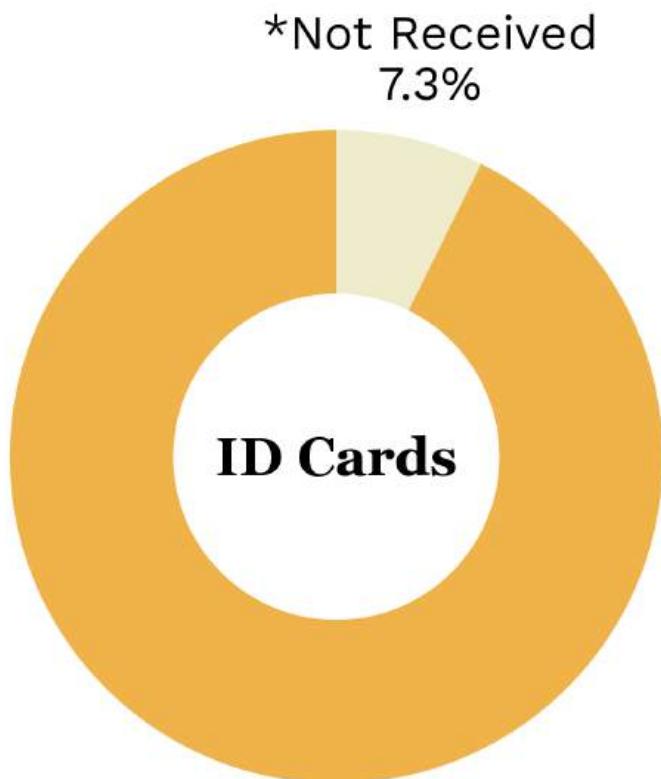
\*Status at the end of the project date

# Consolidated Data of SP Services Provided, Tamil Nadu



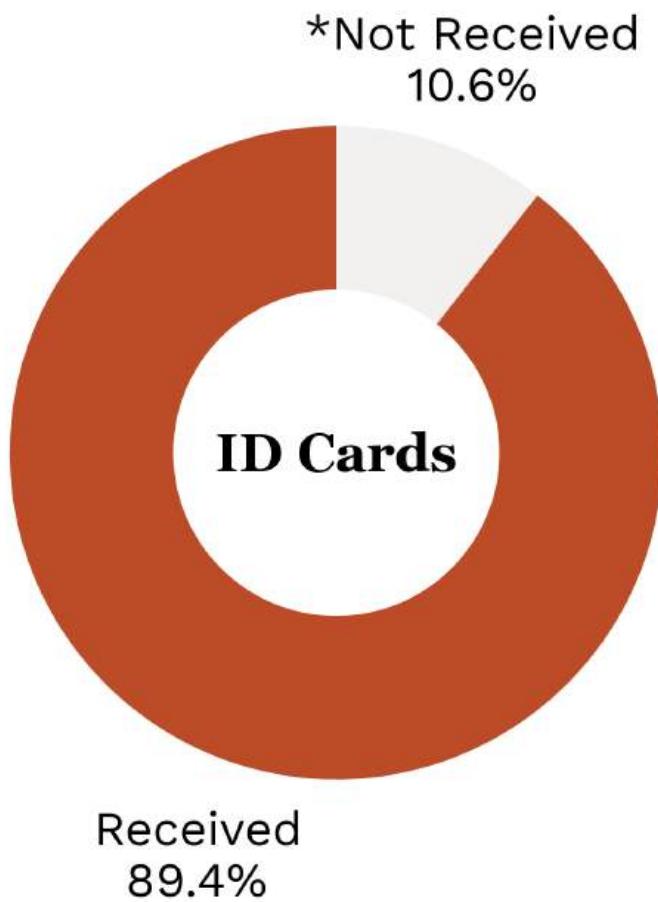
\*Status at the end of the project date

# Consolidated Data of SP Services Provided, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana



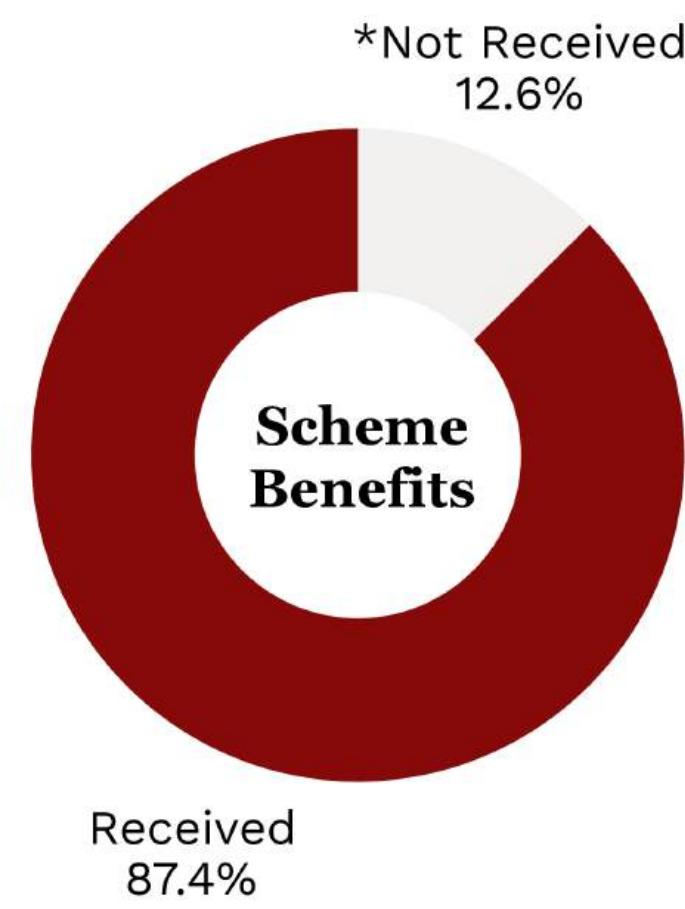
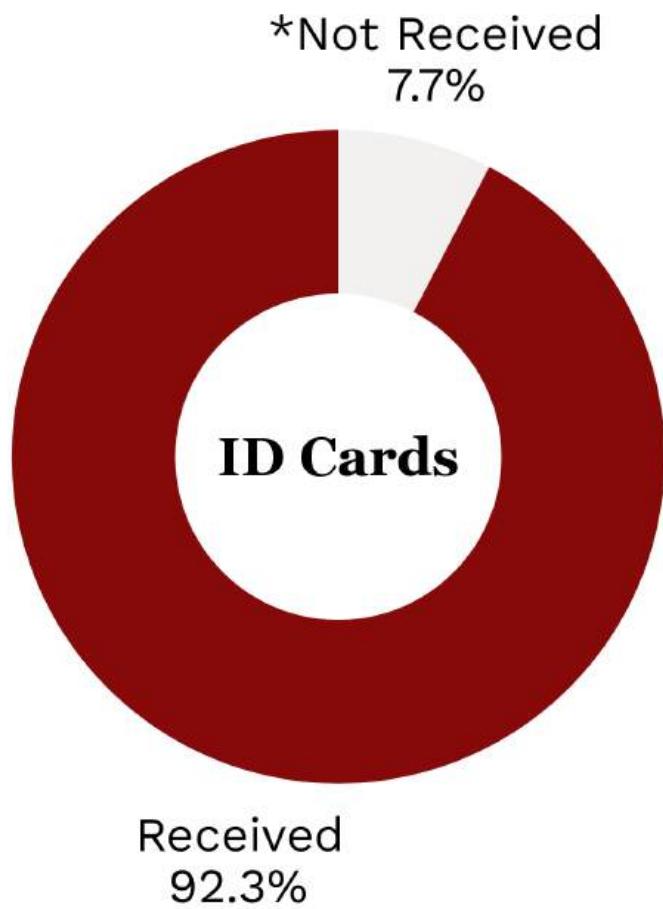
\*Status at the end of the project date

# Consolidated Data of SP Services Provided, Kerala



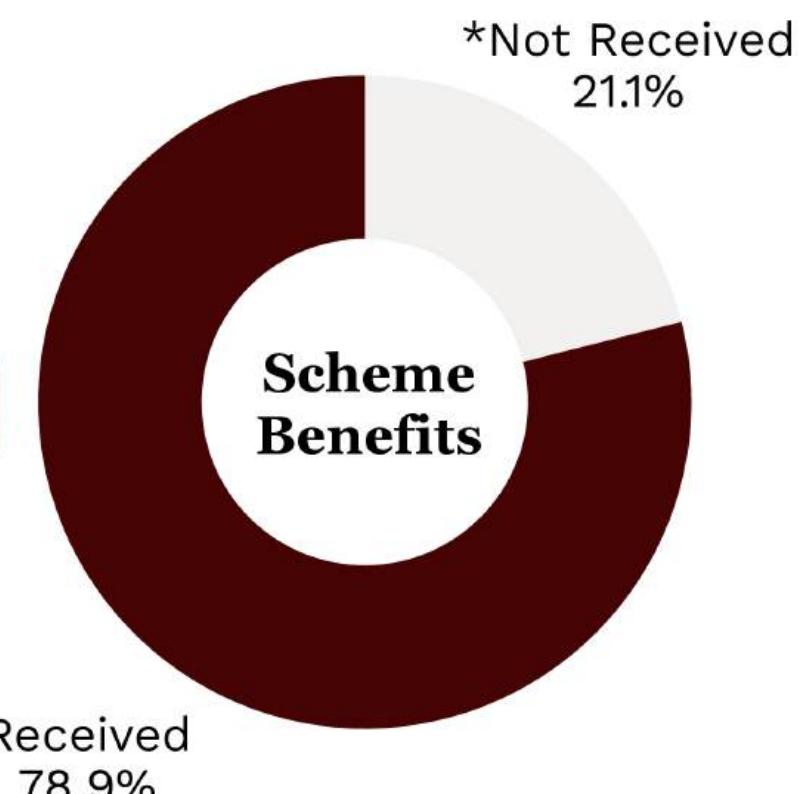
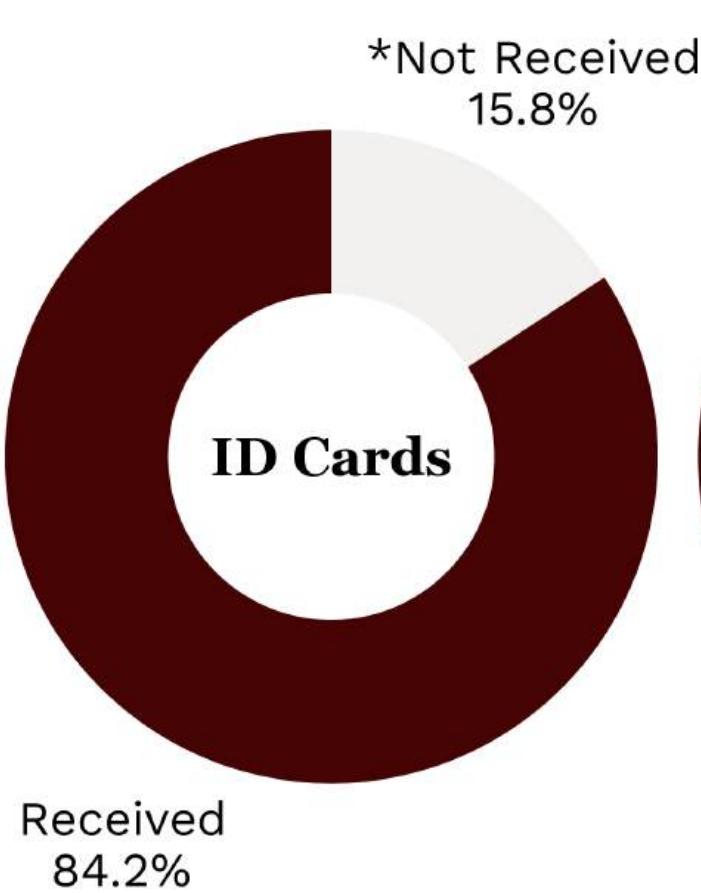
\*Status at the end of the project date

# Consolidated Data of SP Services Provided, Maharashtra



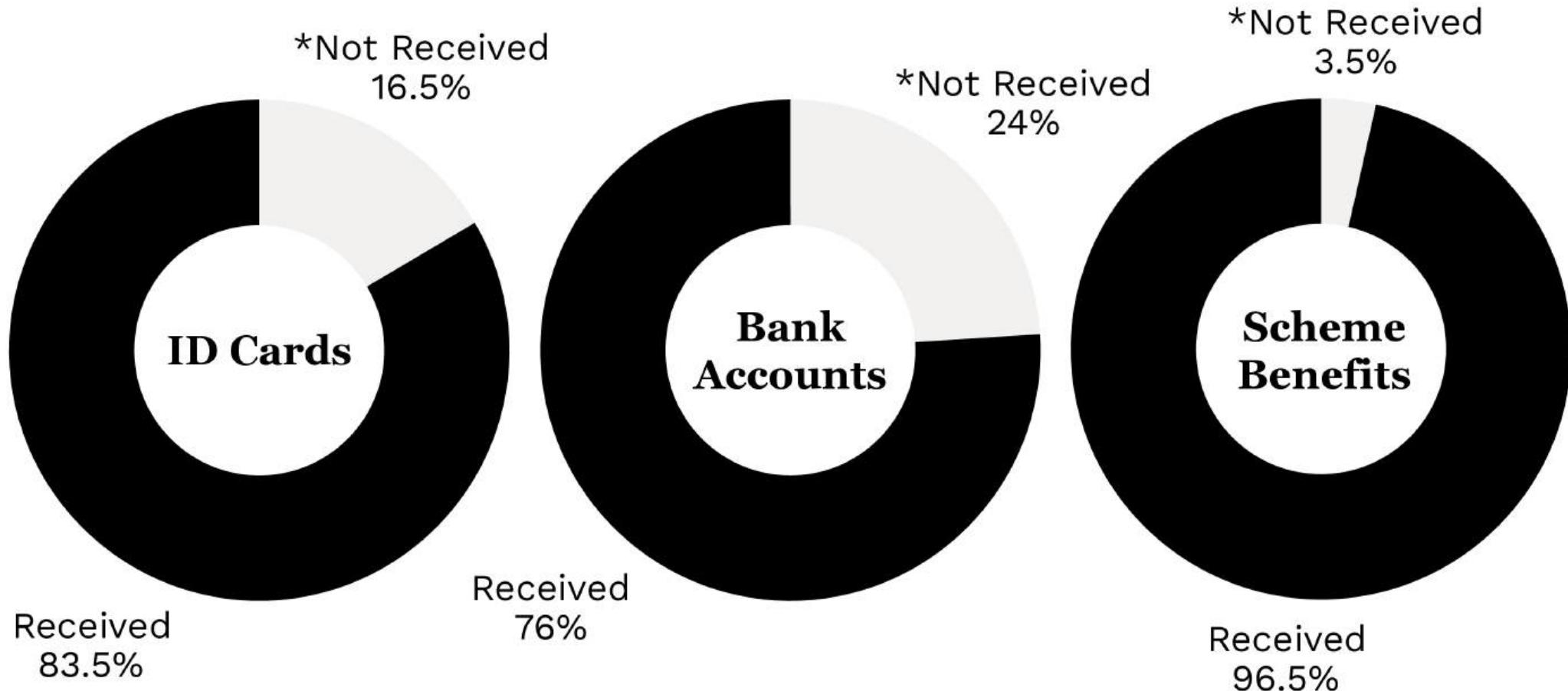
\*Status at the end of the project date

# Consolidated Data of SP Services Provided, Karnataka



\*Status at the end of the project date

# Consolidated Data of SP Services Provided, Jharkhand



\*Status at the end of the project date

# KP Grant: Key Population (KP) grant for strengthening capacities of community-based organizations (CBOs)

The KP component of the project focused on strengthening the capacity of 70 community-based organizations (CBOs) of sex workers, encouraging sustainable community mechanisms that promote resilience and the right to live with dignity. It also aimed to enhance legal literacy and empower sex workers to claim their rights and entitlements through peer-led strategies and inclusive outreach.

The three main components of the KP grant were Legal Literacy (LL) Trainings, District Legal Aid and Advocacy Meetings (DLAMs), and Organisation Development (OD) Trainings. The Legal Literacy Trainings equipped sex workers with knowledge of Supreme Court orders, anti-trafficking laws, and rights frameworks. The DLAMs created inclusive platforms for sex workers to engage directly with institutions, strengthening accountability and access to legal, health, and social support. The OD Trainings built skills in governance, financial management, advocacy, and resource mobilization, preparing community organizations to operate sustainably.

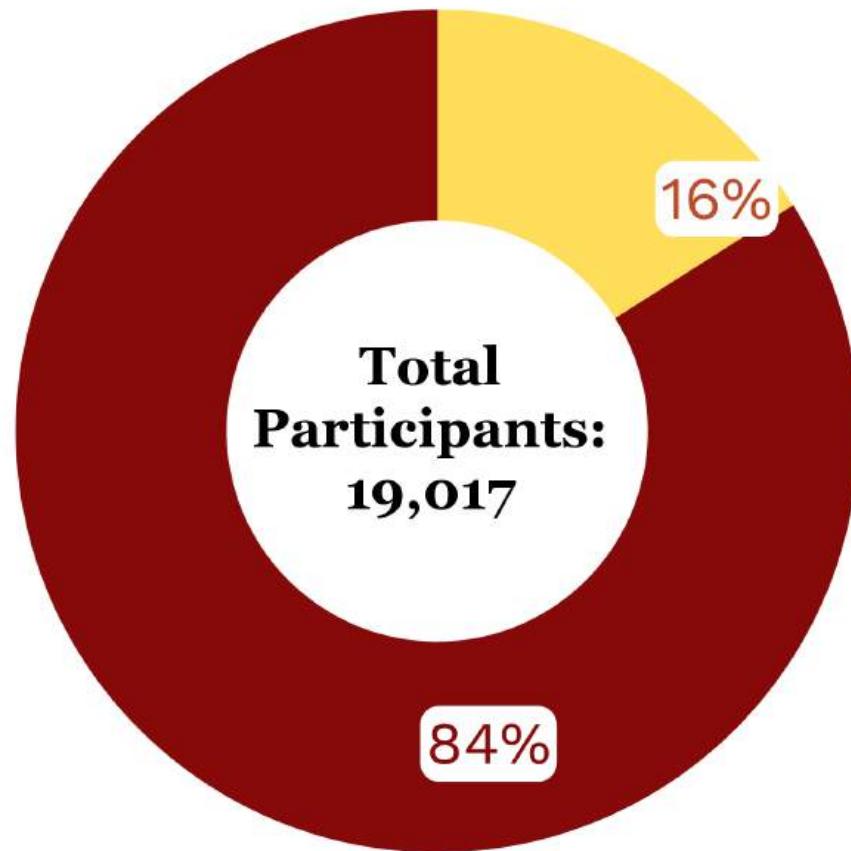
## Impact of Legal Literacy Trainings

From August 2023 to November 2024, the Legal Literacy component implemented by SANGRAM reached sex workers across 10 states through a strong community-led model. Fifty-two peer educators (also known as help desk coordinators) from the community were appointed and trained, who played a key role in scaling the intervention. 5,592 legal literacy sessions were conducted, including 2,548 group sessions and 3,044 individual sessions, reaching 19,017 sex workers with information on Supreme Court orders on sex workers' rights, anti-trafficking laws, cyber laws, domestic violence, and transgender rights.

Several planning and briefing sessions were held in 2023 at the beginning of the project. A three-day training for 15 project officers was held in Bangalore in February 2024 on two legal literacy modules—the Supreme Court Order on the Rights of Sex Workers and Trafficking Laws—and their application on the rights of sex workers. The training had three main goals: providing information of the law (SC Order, ITPA, and Section 370), developing the skills of project officers as trainers of the material; and practical training sessions on training communities.

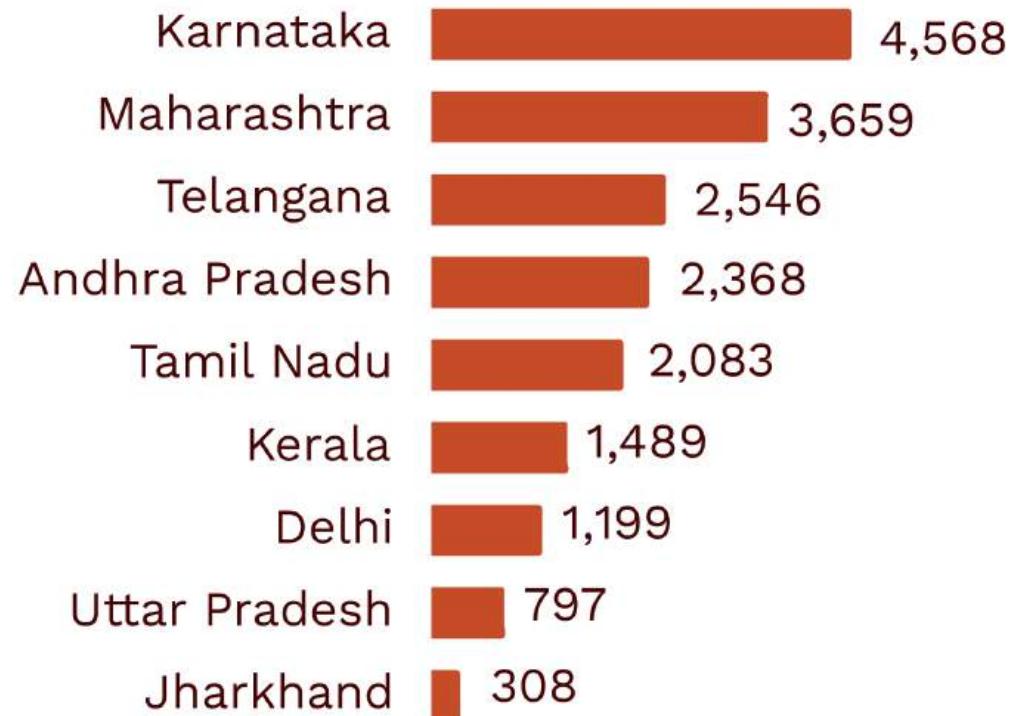
# Participants in Legal Literacy Training

## Participants in Individual Sessions



## Participants in Group Sessions

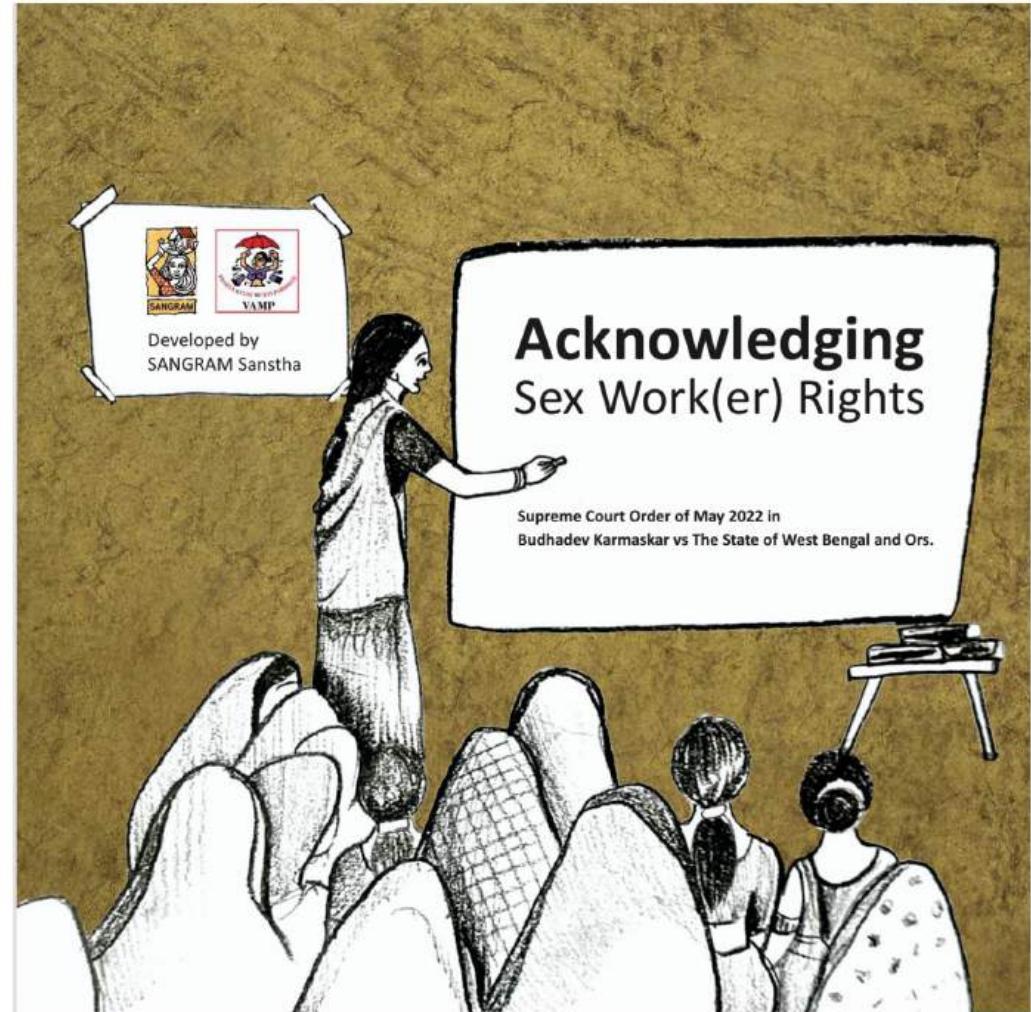
### State-Wise Distribution of Participants



# KP Grant: Key Population (KP) grant for strengthening capacities of community-based organizations (CBOs)

**Training Help Desk Coordinators:** Peer educators led the sessions, demonstrating strengthened community ownership and leadership. In addition, 15 program officers and consultants were trained as master trainers to support quality implementation. Following the orientation, project officers trained 52 help desk coordinators (HDCs), who came directly from the key population on sex workers' rights and legal approaches. These HDCs went on to train a total of 19,017 community members from the months of January 2024 to August 2024 [SR1] [AP2].

**Training Material:** For the Legal Literacy component, SANGRAM developed and finalised eight training modules after pre-testing with a core group of sex workers. All modules were translated into local languages before distribution at the trainings. In practice, the 8 modules provided the conceptual framework and were expanded into 11 sessions to allow deeper coverage of specific laws and broader issues. This ensured that participants not only engaged with the core modules but also explored additional relevant and practical legal contexts.



**Acknowledging Sex Work(er) Rights, a graphic book designed by SANGRAM for training**

# KP Grant: Key Population (KP) grant for strengthening capacities of community-based organizations (CBOs)

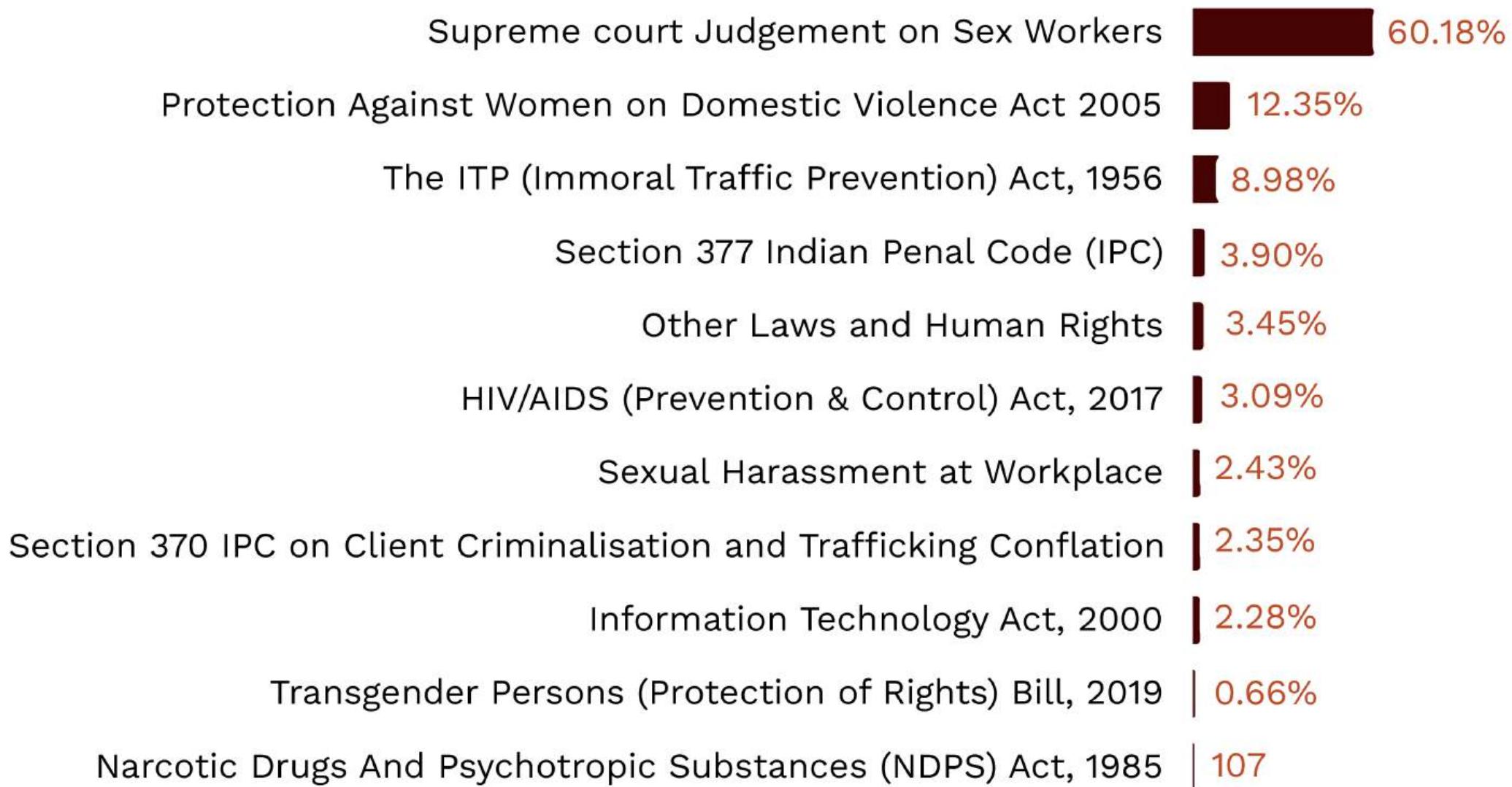
## Innovative practices in training

Acknowledging Sex Work(er) Rights, a graphic book designed by SANGRAM, was used to train the community members. The graphics book was easy to engage with due to the real-case scenarios in the story telling format. Case scenarios are a powerful tool in training programs, offering several benefits, especially a context that learners can relate to that makes the learning experience more applicable.

In a fit of anger, Karmaskar assaulted Buri. He banged her head several times, kicked and thrashed her and smashed her hands and legs. Buri fell down to the first floor. Karmaskar again dragged her by her hair and banged her head against the wall.



# Participants in Different Modules of Legal Literary Trainings



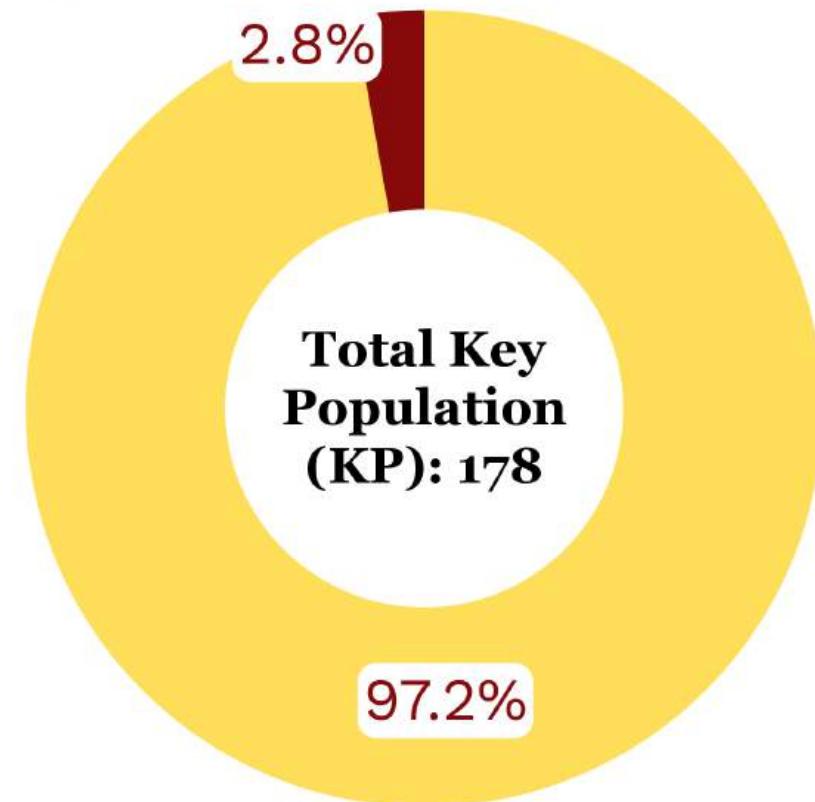
# Members facing violence and/or harassments in the past year

## Disputes Resolution

The program also enabled effective crisis response, with over 170 crisis cases successfully resolved through legal linkages, police engagement, and CBO support.

Further, 58 District Level Advocacy Meetings were conducted with police, judiciary, and district officials, resulting in improved dialogue, increased institutional sensitivity. Overall, the initiative led to improvements in legal awareness, confidence to engage with authorities, timely crisis intervention, and strengthened community mechanisms for sustained rights assertion.

- KP who did not need to be linked to legal services



- KP who were successfully linked to legal services as required

# Outcomes of Legal Literacy Trainings



**Addressed Cyber Harassment and Digital Safety:** Legal literacy on cyber laws provided tools to tackle online abuse. Participants applied this knowledge to file complaints and resolve harassment linked to leaked videos or stolen property.

**Increased Awareness of Legal Rights:** Community members gained knowledge of key laws such as the Domestic Violence Act, ITPA, the HIV/AIDS Act, and transgender rights. They also developed a clearer understanding of the Supreme Court's 2022 order, which helped them challenge police violence and stigma.

**Empowerment and Self-Advocacy:** Training equipped members with practical skills to engage with the legal system confidently. Many reported success in addressing discrimination and crises, including filing police complaints and advocacy with authorities.

**Reduced Fear and Increased Confidence in Engaging with Authorities:** Community members now approach police stations independently and seek redress for grievances.

**Crisis Interventions:** A notable outcome of the training was that, following the training, participants were also able to identify those in need of legal support and successfully link all such members to legal aid services. Over 170 crisis cases were successfully resolved. Linkages with health and legal services, collaboration with DLSAs, and strong community networks ensured swift and effective crisis resolution.

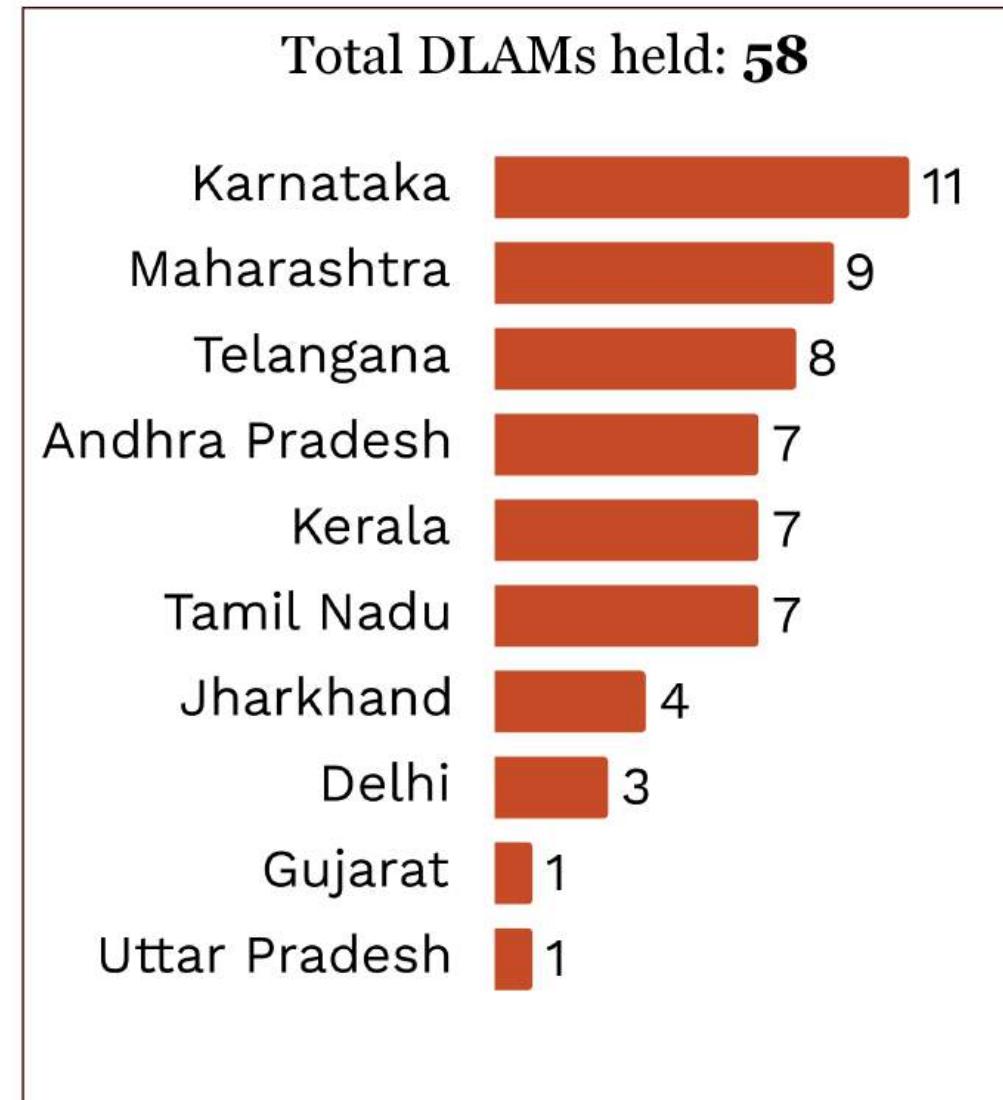
**Enhanced Crisis Response:** Peer educators improved their ability to assist in crises, including cases of theft, harassment, and digital abuse.

**Improved Advocacy Efforts and Community Engagement:** Training sessions created safe spaces for dialogue, enabling participants to share experiences and collectively address police harassment and stigma. Members of CBOs now actively advocate for their rights, engage with authorities, and support peers in resolving issues.

# District Level Advocacy Meetings (DLAM)

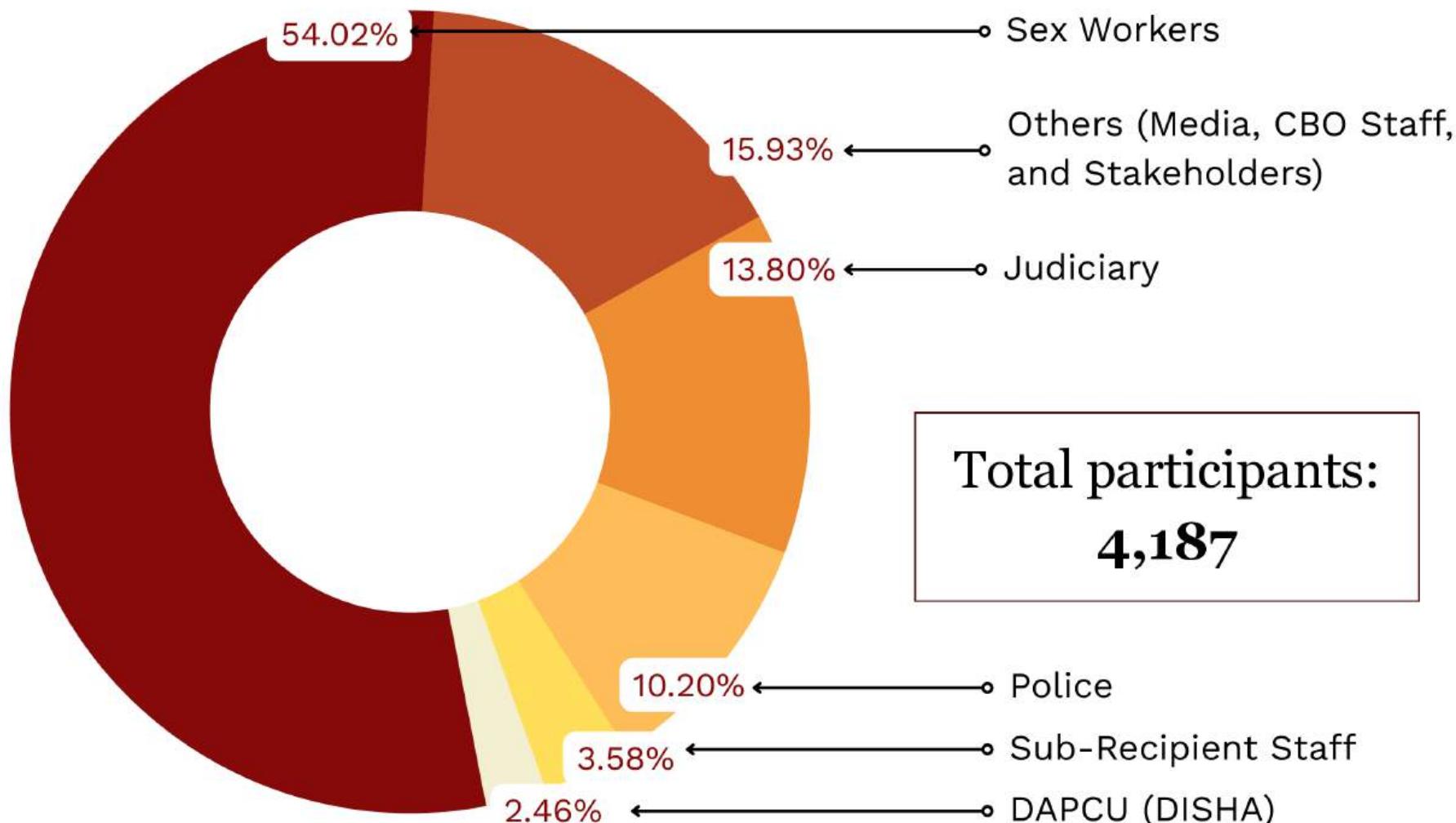
**From the months June 2023 to September 2024, 58 District Legal Aid and Advocacy Meetings (DLAMs) were conducted across nine states.**

The DLAMs created vital platforms where sex workers (the key population) could openly voice their concerns and engage directly with diverse stakeholders, including police, judiciary, sex workers, District AIDS Prevention Control Units (DAPCU) (now known as DISHA units), SR staff, media, CBO staff, and other stakeholders—ensuring broad-based dialogue and collaboration. These meetings created inclusive spaces where key population could voice their concerns directly to institutions, while authorities pledged legal, medical, welfare, and social support. The multi-stakeholder participation strengthened accountability, promoted dignity, and reinforced commitments to uphold rights of sex workers and improve their access to essential services.



## Participation in District Level Advocacy Meetings (DLAM)

There was strong community participation as sex workers made up 54% of the total attendees, demonstrating active community involvement, along with participation by a notable number of other stakeholders.



# Key Commitments and Outcomes of DLMs

Across all states, diverse stakeholders—including police, legal bodies, welfare officials, medical offices, and advocacy groups—committed to strengthening legal protection, health access, safety, and awareness for sex workers and transgender communities.

- Police and District Legal Services Authorities (DLSAs) pledged respectful handling of complaints, improved legal aid access, reduced wrongful arrests, and stronger crisis-response mechanisms.
- Health and welfare departments agreed to support stigma-free physical and mental health services, with linkages to specialised programmes.
- Stakeholders also addressed cyber safety, privacy concerns, and media responsibility, while committing to regular police sensitisation and training under evolving legal frameworks.
- Education support and public awareness initiatives were emphasised as cross-cutting priorities to improve long-term inclusion and protection.

**Together, these actions reflect a multi-sectoral effort to uphold dignity, rights, and access to services for sex workers and transgender individuals.**

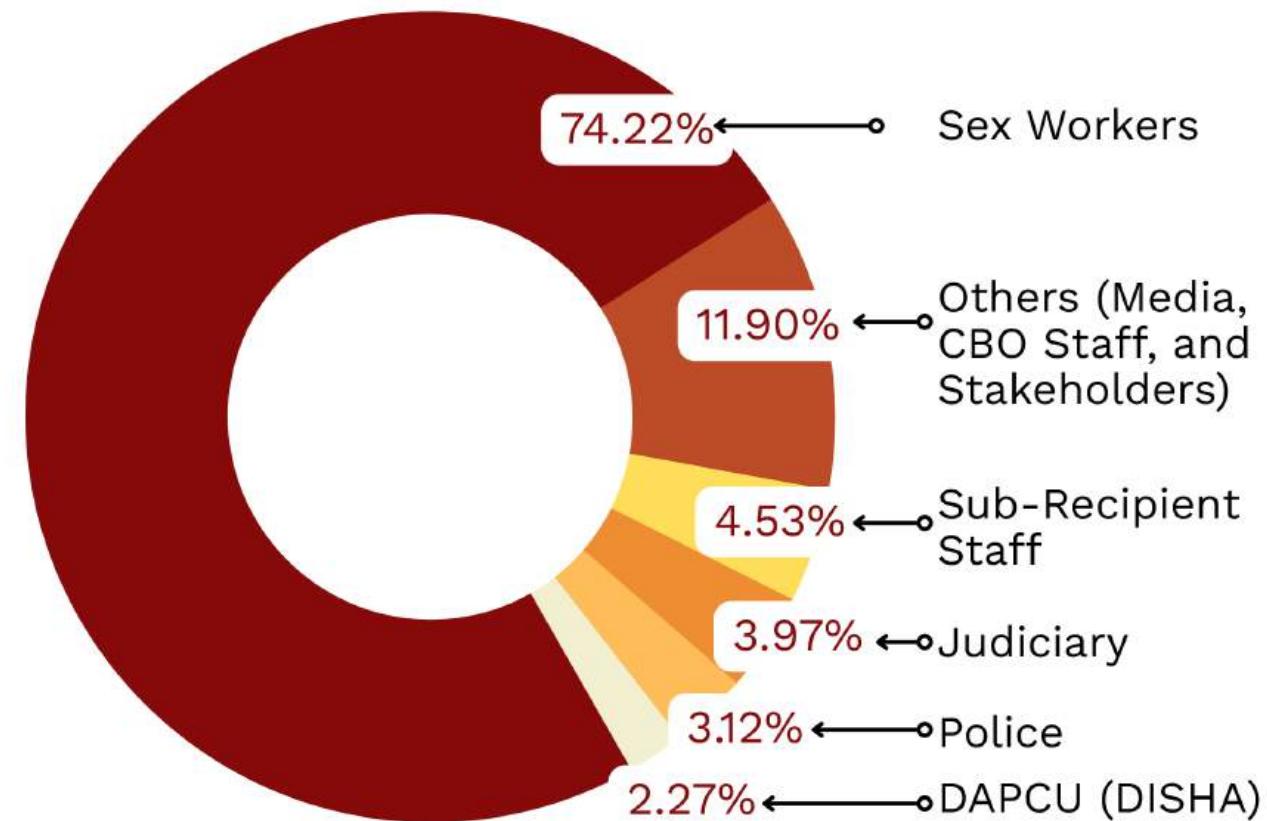
## Organisation Development Down Trainings

In June 2024, Organisation Development Down Trainings were conducted for 91 CBO leaders in Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Telangana. The training equipped CBOs and their leaders with skills in organizational development, legal and financial management, communication, advocacy, strategic planning, and resource mobilization. The sessions covered building strong foundations through vision and mission setting, compliance with statutory requirements, effective documentation, financial systems, leadership and governance, proposal writing, monitoring and evaluation, and fundraising strategies, ensuring that CBOs are better prepared to operate sustainably, access resources, and advocate for their communities.

# District Advocacy Workshops in Satara, Sangli, and Kolhapur on Sex Workers' Rights

The District Level Advocacy Meetings (DLAMs) in Satara, Sangli, and Kolhapur, were held in June–July 2024. These DLAMs were attended by over 350 participants, including more than 250 members of the key population (sex workers) and different stakeholders such as police, judiciary, media, and CBO staff. All stakeholders at the meeting such as state governments, law enforcement, healthcare providers, and media committed to better collaboration with the community to foster trust and transparency, while ensuring better outcomes for the community.

The discussions focused on the Supreme Court directive to state governments and union territories to implement recommendations accepted by the central government on sex workers' rights. The central aim of the directive was to guarantee that sex workers be entitled to the same constitutional rights and dignity as all citizens.



Total participants:  
**353**

# District Advocacy Workshops in Satara, Sangli, and Kolhapur on Sex Workers' Rights

## Supreme Court Recommendations

The recommendations ordered that survivors of sexual violence receive prompt medical care under national medico-legal protocols, and that adult women detained against their will in rescue homes be released. Police must treat sex workers with dignity, avoiding abuse or coercion, and the media should not reveal identities during raids or arrests. The Supreme Court clarified that condoms and health products cannot be used as evidence of crime, and mandated workshops to educate sex workers about their legal rights and access to justice. It also ensured that Aadhaar cards be issued without discrimination. Reaffirming Article 21, the Court stressed that all persons, regardless of occupation, have the right to live with dignity.

## Health

Speaking of health interventions, community members shared their experiences of how they used to be unaware of how STIs or HIV spreads and were misinformed that condoms spread HIV. However, with regular trainings, they are more aware now and are careful to use condoms as well as attend regular medical check-ups. They also shared that they are vigilant to ensure that no children work as sex workers.

## Media

When it came to the role of media, community members questioned why the media continued to use words such as “prostitution” or “exposed” that continue to undermine the dignity of sex workers. Agreeing to this, an editor and leader said they were mindful of the language they use and added that no one should be treated with contempt. Another leading editor added that media should take care to ensure that all media guidelines should be followed to ensure that no one is wronged, especially children; their identities should not be revealed.

# District Advocacy Workshops in Satara, Sangli, and Kolhapur on Sex Workers' Rights

## Legal Support

Lawyers in the DLAMs said that they are available to ensure that justice is served, and community members should take advantage of the free help and advice that can be obtained from the government. A lawyer said that sex workers should not be discriminated against and government should provide all possible help to those who want to get out of sex work and also help the children of sex workers. An important point was made regarding sexual orientation to say that one should not be discriminated against based on their gender and/or sexual orientation. The president of the Satara Bar Association said they conduct weekly guidance workshops for all lawyers.

## Committed Support from Various Departments

Members of different departments—including those from the District Caste Certificate Verification Committee, District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), Social Justice Department, Maharashtra Police, and District AIDS Prevention and Control Units (now DISHA Units), Social Welfare Office, Women and Child Development Department, District Hospitals—were present at the meetings.

- All department members said they were committed to protecting sex workers' rights. Relevant staff reiterated the importance of documents such as caste certificate, Aadhaar card, PAN card, and so on and assured community members that they will be provided all the necessary support.
- A staff of the DISHA Unit assured community members of the unit's commitment to fully contributing to and supporting the recommendations.
- The assistant commissioner of the Social Justice Department, a department aimed at ensuring equal opportunity and social justice for underprivileged groups, appealed to transgender people to take advantage of the schemes available.
- A staff of the DLSA department added that those providing sexual services were not treated with sensitivity even though the Constitution has given every individual fundamental rights, such as the right to speak freely and the right to express their opinion freely.

# Monitoring and Analysing Reportage of Sex Work in Media

**December 2024-Now**

SANGRAM Sanstha, VAMP and NNSW launched this monitoring and analysis project to document research-based evidence of the prevalent bias and misrepresentation of sex work in the media. The research aimed at supporting the development of guidelines for fair media coverage of issues related to sex work and sex workers. The background to this project was the interim order in May 2022, of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India in the matter of Budhadev Karmaskar Vs. Union of India, where amongst others, the Court recommended that media guidelines must be developed to ensure that sex workers are depicted in a just manner.

The two-day meeting held in December 2024 comprised 30 participants from 7 states (Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and West Bengal). Over a series of engaging sessions, the meeting focused on (i) the Supreme Court Order and the recommendations that were accepted and not accepted; (ii) stereotypes and dominant media narratives; (iii) the impact of media on sex workers; and (iv), key decisions made on ethical guidelines, research tools for the monitoring process, and the media outlets to be analysed.

At the end of the meeting, participants reported improved understanding of sex work and the sex work community and harmful media practices such as sensationalism, privacy violations, and inaccurate portrayals, and the sessions reinforced awareness of the media's impact on sex workers' lives.

# Monitoring and Analysing Reportage of Sex Work in Media

## Stereotypes and dominant media narratives

One of the most engaging sessions was the first session where participants discussed a set of 15 questions, which represented dominant narratives, stereotypes, and contested frameworks that shape public opinion, policy, and advocacy around sex work. Participants responded to these and critically analyzed how narratives are constructed, how they affect public perception, and how advocacy can respond. Disagreements brought forth diverse perspectives that made the discussions richer.

## Impact of media on sex workers

A significant part of the meeting was the session where participants shared their first-hand experiences of case studies that showed how the media negatively portray sex work and sex workers and how it impacts the community members. Media journalists shared their observations and concerns as well. The sessions enhanced the understanding of media's role in shaping opinion, judicial orders, government policies, and regulatory bodies.

## Design of the media analysis and research

The final sessions focused on the key component of the project, which is the design of the media analysis and how the research would proceed. It was decided that (i) all media elements would be covered: from print media to digital and electronic media, including social media platforms; and (ii) eight languages would be covered (Tamil, Malayalam, Hindi, Bangla, Kannada, Telugu, Marathi, and English). Ethical guidelines for media research—such as confidentiality, informed consent, voluntary participation, accountability, effective communication, and safety mechanisms—were agreed upon, and research tools were finalized.

# Leadership Development for the Core Group and the Collective

**February 2022 to January 2025**

From 2022 to 2025, SANGRAM worked to build a second line of leadership through the Born to Win leadership development initiative, aimed at strengthening its core group and collectives. Born to Win, is a team that works as a catalyst to help organizations grow and develop their human resources.

The six collectives—Veshya Anyaya Mukti Parishad [VAMP, female sex workers], Muskan [Male and TG sex workers], Vidrohi Mahila Manch [VMM, Rural women], Nazariya [Muslim women], Mitra [Adult children of sex workers] and VAMP+ [Women living with HIV]—SANGRAM works with each have their own established hierarchical leadership structures rooted in community mobilisation. The programme identified leadership challenges and developed a three-year leadership plan. The different sessions established reflective monitoring processes, created institutional memory through documentation, formulated five-year strategic plans for SANGRAM and each collective, and identified changes required to achieve those goals.

Over three years, the initiative successfully responded to increasing organisational and compliance demands, as well as leadership attrition within collectives due to burnout and lack of structured support. The programme emphasised developing a leadership mindset, effective communication for building strong teams and networks, and aligning collective efforts with a shared vision. The methodology was designed as an active learning process using simulations, case studies, group activities, and information sharing.

# Leadership Development for the Core Group and the Collective

February 2022 to January 2025

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“I learnt that when we split the work, we split the burden and tensions with each other. When we work together, it is possible to achieve [our goals], regardless of the barriers we face together. The burden is not felt that heavily for one person since we divided the burden. Another learning [was] we need to understand each other in a team and trust each other.” - **Kiran**

“From the BTW sessions, I learned what my role is in the match of life and where I am, as a player or as a viewer, or reader in the newspaper...When we work together, we get things done...I have started changing small things in my personal life as well. From constant arguments and bickering, I have now begun to spend more time with my wife, discussing, teasing, talking: we speak as friends. There has been a change and that is impacting our lives positively.” - **Kallapa**

“Before BTW sessions, my style of working was very different. I used to think, ‘Yes – work is given to me and it will be done.’ But now, I have learnt that being conscious about wasting time is essential.” - **Rahul**

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# CELEBRATING CONNECTIONS AND COMMUNITIES

# SWASA Village

**May 2024**

The SWASA Village, held during the @Renew: South Asia Sex Workers Summit by CREA from 29 to 31 May 2024, at Arboretum Park, Park Village Resort, served as a crucial platform for advocacy for Sex Workers and Allies South Asia (SWASA); SANGRAM is a member of SWASA.

The SWASA village brought together grassroots activists to engage in meaningful discussions, share experiences, and form lasting connections. Over the three-day event, a total of 300 participants visited the village. The primary objectives of the SWASA Village were to advocate for the rights of sex workers, provide updates on relevant developments, and foster a sense of solidarity among participants. The themed sessions at the SWASA Village, covering “Sex Work University,” “River of Submissions,” and “Cross-movement Adda”, along with the all-day Mandi (marketplace) and Village Plaza, contributed to a dynamic and engaging environment. These activities facilitated focused conversations and strengthened the community’s network, achieving the village’s advocacy and community-building goals.



# SWASA Village

May 2024



# Sex Workers and Allies South Asia (SWASA) at AWID Forum 2024

December 2024



At AWID Bangkok, 2–5 December 2024, SWASA hosted Sex Workers' Conversations with Feminist Allies at the AWID Forum 2024. This dynamic space provided an opportunity for feminists from across the world to visit the SWASA Lounge, which created a dedicated space for dialogue and allyship-building, strengthened cross-movement solidarity, and amplified sex workers' voices and highlighted sex workers' rights as feminist and labour rights issues.

By facilitating these discussions, SWASA created an inclusive environment where sex workers and feminist allies could listen, learn, and critically reflect on each other's perspectives. Over 400 Visitors had engaged with several thought-provoking questions on sex work through the "Be an Ally" toolkit, which created space for reflection, exchange, and solidarity.

# Shramik Sanman Yatra

9–15 February 2025



Sex workers joined the Shramik Sanman Yatra (Workers' Dignity March) organised by the Working People's Coalition, a broad platform for informal worker unions. Community members from Sangli travelled through Maharashtra till Vadodara, Gujarat, walking alongside other worker groups and voicing their demands in public meetings. The Yatra then continued its journey to Delhi, carrying forward the shared demands of sex workers and informal workers across states.



Alliances were built with trade union federations, domestic workers' unions, construction workers' boards, hawker and street vendor associations, waste picker unions, auto-rickshaw drivers' collectives, fisherfolk communities, and transgender collectives. In many locations, women workers led the discussions. Together, demands were raised for legal recognition under the Trade Union Act, access to social security, minimum wages, priority in housing and welfare schemes, and protection against unlawful eviction. Over 110 activists, union leaders and community participated in 12 dialogues around worker rights.

# Shramik Sanman Yatra

9–15 February 2025



# Zabardastit Kasli Mardangi? (ZKM)—Reimagining Masculinities Campaign

**January 2025-NOW**

The campaign “Zabardastit Kasli Mardangi?” (ZKM)—Reimagining Masculinities is being implemented by SANGRAM Sanstha and Vidrohi Mahila Manch, Sangli. Over the decades, SANGRAM’s work has shown that toxic masculinity severely restricts rural women’s access to health and justice, manifesting in violence, exclusion, and systemic gender disparities that undermine their rights and quality of life. The campaign has, thus, been designed to tackle the impact of toxic masculinity on the lives of women in Sangli district. The campaign collectively counters injustice, violence, and coercion faced by all sections of society by challenging toxic masculinity and standing up to the powerful elite in the district, such as the police, village panchayat leaders, politicians and upper-caste villagers.

During the preliminary launch in January 2025, ZKM mobilized rural participation, based on elected representatives, Zilla Parishad and Panchayat Samiti members. In total, 75 villages were visited and 508 individuals were met directly. The responses to ZKM were mixed: high response showing a strong interest, moderate response, and low response, which offered minimal participation. Prior to the launch in Sangli, ZKM was active in other districts before COVID-19 lockdowns.



# Zabardastit Kasli Mardangi? (ZKM)—Reimagining Masculinities Campaign

## January 2025-NOW

On 12th March 2025, the campaign in Sangli was officially launched in collaboration with Jijaau Brigade and SANGRAM Sanstha, Sangli. Representatives of government, semi-government institutions, civil society organizations, and community groups participated in the event. In January 2025



# **CREA learning exchange visit to SANGRAM and collective**

**August 2024**

In August 2024, 22 CREA team members from the countries of Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, and Tanzania visited SANGRAM as a part of the South-South learning exchange. The team learnt about the workings SANGRAM and visited the key population area to understand more about the work. During the interaction, the visiting members engaged with the team at SANGRAM as well as the community members in discussions, through questions-answers, to understand existing mechanisms, challenges, and community practices.

## **Report Launch at Kink Con**

**September 2024**

As a part of “Kink Con: A National Convention in Celebration of Kink, Consent, Queerness and Acceptance,” 13–15 September 2024, the report “Conversations on Kink and Sex Work: Consent, Desire, and Power” was launched.

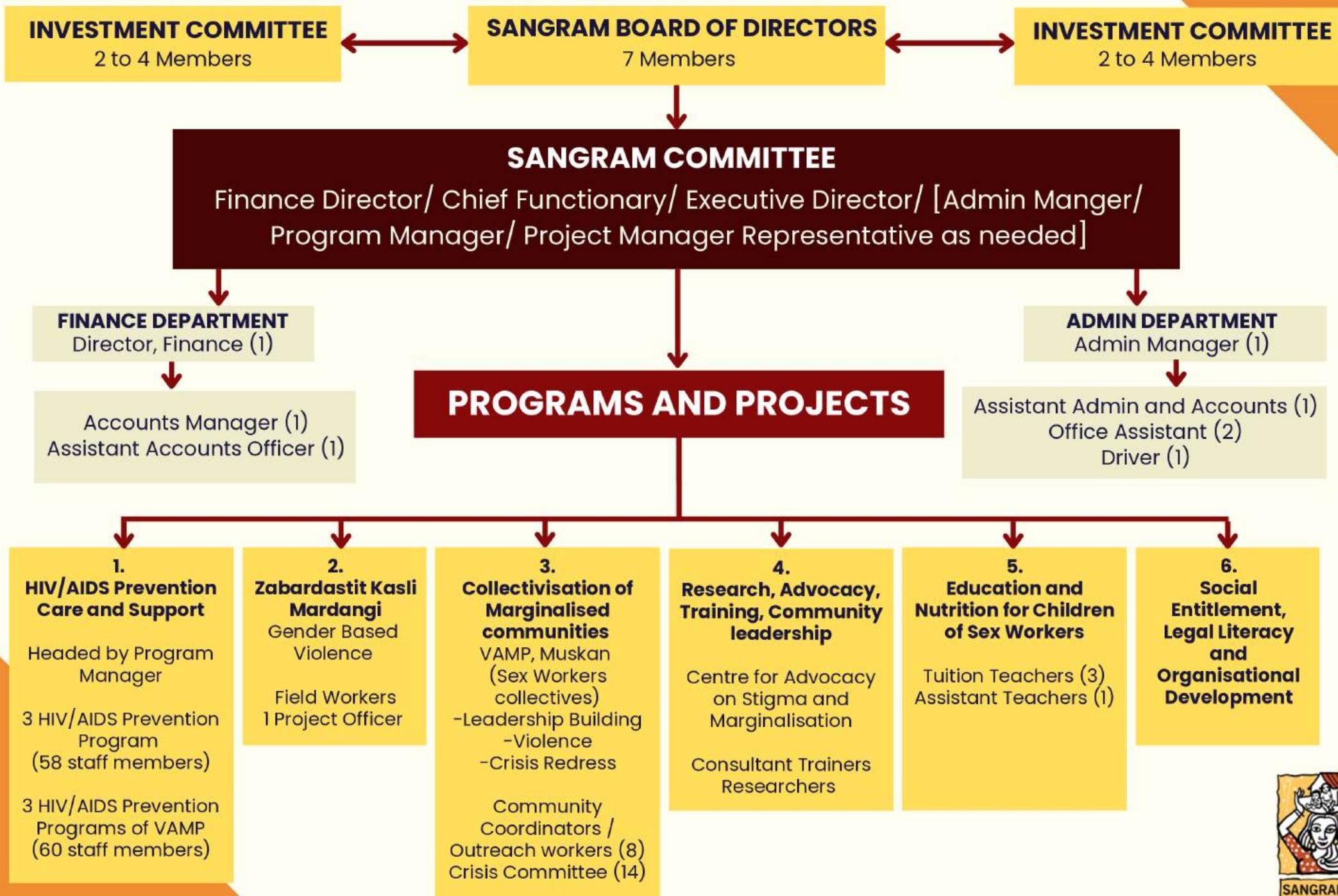
Kink Con was organized by Kinky Collective in collaboration with VAMP (Veshya Anyay Mukti Parishad) and supported by SANGRAM. Kinky Collective (KC), a non-funded group which seeks to raise awareness about kink in society as well as to strengthen the community in India. Members of VAMP, SANGRAM, KC, and the community were present on the panel. The launch highlighted the alliance between sex work and kink, centering consent, pleasure, and rights. The report summarized workshops and dialogues between kink practitioners and sex workers, which was conducted in October 2022 at Sangli by KC and VAMP. The discussion highlighted parallels between kink and sex work in terms of agency, boundaries, and safety practices and helped frame the report within broader rights-based movements.

# **SANGRAM**

## **SAMPADA GRAMEEN**

### **MAHILA SANSTHA**

# ORGANOGRAM



## General Information

Name: Sampada Grameen Mahila Sanstha (SANGRAM)

Date of Establishment: 27th March 1986

Registered Office: Near Vikas Bhavan, Kundal Road Vite, District Sangli

### Sangli Office:

1. Aarohan, Ghanshyamnagar, Madhavnagar Road, Sangli, Maharashtra, India 416416
2. Flat no 401, Surekh Apartment, Lovely Circle, Kupwad Road, Sangli, Maharashtra, India 416416 Telephone: +91-233-4063274
3. 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Kalyankar Building, Zulelal Chouk, Sangli Maharashtra, 416416

### Bangalore Office:

1. #189, 38<sup>th</sup> Cross Road, 5<sup>th</sup> Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore, 560041
2. 16/6 Nandi Gardens Phase 2, J P Nagar Phase-9, Bangalore

### Kolhapur Office:

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Laxmi Tower, C-Ward, Near Punyanagari, Konda Ol, Laxmipuri, Kolhapur

### Karad Office:

Katkar Building, Mangalwar Peth, Near Old Post Office, Karad, Pin 415110

## Registration Details

(i) Registered As: Societies Registration Act .1860. No- Mah/1502/Sangli on 27th March 1986 and Bombay Public Trust Act- 1950 F/1456 on 9th May 1986. Place: Sangli Maharashtra, India. Area of Operation: India

(ii) Registered: 12 A and 80 G, Income Tax Act, Income Tax Department, Ministry of Finance, Government of India  
 PAN No: AAAAS1569B  
 TAN No: KLPS06904C

(iii) Registered: Foreign Contribution (Regulations) Act 1967 Amended 2010 Registration Number 083960057 Date: 7th May 1987

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 Website: [www.sangram.org](http://www.sangram.org)

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# SEX WORK

*is work*

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