

# Annual Report 2023

Hamara Saahas Trust, Jodhpur

NGO of women, by women and for women



Hamara Saahas means in Hindi **Our Courage**. And it is through the courage of a team of dedicated women that cultural biases are being defied and local women and children of Jodhpur are empowered to resist social pressure and confidence is instilled in them.

Through vocational training (sewing, embroidery, block printing, beautician courses) and basic literacy seminars, Hamara Saahas provides women and children the tools and techniques to build courage so that they are no longer dependent on others and can sustain a respectful and dignified life.

In 2014 Tamanna Bhati founded Hamara Saahas as an NGO for women, run by women. She is the first female leader of a women's NGO in Rajasthan. She aims to uplift the status of underprivileged women and girls in Jodhpur. There are a whole bunch of courses, trainings and seminars – given by professional teachers, student and senior volunteers as well as housewives.

## **OUR VISION**

A society where every woman and child leads a life of dignity, self-confidence and equality.

## OUR MISSION

To empower women who belong to the impoverished (???) section of society by giving them tools and techniques to build up their courage, to make them independent and to enable them to lead a healthy and respectable life.

## OUR FOCUS TO CHANGE

- Domestic Violence
- Illiteracy
- Discrimination and Racism
- Female Foeticide
- Dowry
- Child Marriage
- Female Health and Menstrual Hygiene
- Environment issues like Plastic Waste, Recycling, Upcycling, Sustainability

## WHO WE ARE



Hamara Saahas Trust was founded in 2014 by Tamanna Bhati. It was founded as an NGO for women, run by women. Tamanna Bhati is the first female leader of a women's NGO in Rajasthan.

She studied Fashion Design, Sociology and Sanskrit. She also has a teacher's diploma. During and after her studies Tamanna Bhati worked for different NGOs with different focuses and target groups. In these ten years she collected extensive experience in fields like teaching in heterogeneous groups, project design and networking.

By observation, but also by her own experience Tamanna Bhati realized that women and girls in India live mostly in the shadow of men. They don't receive proper help especially when they urgently need it. If women get married they normally live with their husbands' family. For some of them this life can be very difficult. Physical or psychological terror of family members is fairly common: every third woman in India is getting abused by her husband or his family, every tenth on a regular basis and with heavy injuries. There is a high rate of suicides among women who get tortured by the family-in-law.

### **WHAT WE DO AND WHERE WE OPERATE**

Hamara Saahas provides a safe space for women of all communities where they can meet each other, find open arms and open ears to share their stories. They also can bring along their children. Our centre is located in the Old City of Jodhpur, Rajasthan.

We offer short-term free vocational courses in sewing, embroidery, block printing and other handicraft items as well as henna painting. We offer these to women especially from underprivileged backgrounds.

We encourage them to recognize and reclaim their worth. If needed we stabilize them mentally and filling them with confidence. We empower them to become independent, self-sustainable and to lead a life of respect and dignity.

We provide assistance and tutoring to our participants' children for free and sponsor some of their education – particularly if the parents cannot afford to pay the school fees. So while the mothers are learning and working, their children's studies are not affected. We insist that all children, especially girls, attend school.

We operate in a centre in Jodhpur inside Jalori Gate. There we offer two rooms as a safe space, equipped with seven sewing machines. Currently 10 girls and about 20 women – their age lying between 10 and 50 years – participate in our programmes.

### **WHY US?**

We are the only NGO in Jodhpur which is completely run by women themselves. We provide a friendly and safe environment where every woman is more than welcome. It doesn't matter from which community, religion or social background she comes:

*"When all are sitting together - then change will happen."*

Tamanna Bhati

## WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PROJECT



Hamara Saahas involves and supports women by counseling every of them on an individual basis. By doing this we find a way to a good solution – in most cases. Sometimes it is even a question of surviving for the afflicted woman. How do we manage that? For example by

- Listening to their stories
- Empowering and encouraging them
- Building bridges to the families and stabilize them
- Strengthening their self-esteem and self-confidence
- Providing them vocational training like sewing, embroidery, block printing
- Improving their children's education
- Giving them a wage for their work
- Offering Medical Health Care Camps
- Inviting to workshops with Environment Issues

Girls and young women in Rajasthan often don't attend school. Often they drop out again after a short period because they have to help in the household. Without any education they can hardly defend themselves against misogynist (anti-women) rules in society nor find a job to lead a life on their own.

In our NGO Hamara Saahas girls and young women learn English, Hindi, Maths – and if they like also sewing, embroidery and a lot more tools and techniques.

Women of the middle class are often educated, have even an academical degree, but only 24 percent of them are working in a paid job. After they get married most of them put their in-laws' needs before their own needs.

Hamara Saahas offers a space also for these women: by telling the family-in-law that it is a place to learn new skills like sewing the family often allows the women to go out of the house for a few hours. What the families often don't realize: Hamara Saahas is also a place to change the women's mindset and energy. They get empowered, gain confidence and courage....

...and last but not least

## **SOCIAL SKILLS AND SELF-ESTEEM.**

The women sew their own clothes – for their children, for themselves, for family and friends. Hamara Saahas also produces lovely handmade items for private purposes and for shops: cushions, bags, wall hangers, pot holders, dolls, dresses, necklaces, bracelets, key holders and all kind of handicraft. We also work with paper and make post cards of different material as well as diaries.

### **Sewing**

We are known for our expert training that teaches women fine sewing skills through an ingenious 12-weeks-schedule: the women start with the basic techniques of stitching and learn how to make paper patterns for every garment. Then they produce a kid's blouse, increase their abilities by cutting a woman's blouse (princess cut) and ending up with demanding items like frocks and trousers.



### **Patchwork**

It was traditionally used in Rajasthan and developed locally out of necessity. Old clothing and pieces of fabric were patched and sewed together with a running stitch – resulting in colourful quilts. Our patchwork products are inspired from this local craft. We also use this technique to live our zero-waste-philosophy by repurposing scrap cloth into beautiful and practical products. Patchwork cushion covers, bags and place mats are some of our most popular items.

## INTERNATIONAL NETWORK



To practice and show our skills we meet people from all over the world. We call it:

### **MEET LOCALS, LEARN AND LAUGH TOGETHER.**

In this way we build bridges between different cultures and countries. Our grassroots NGO is enriched by visitors and volunteers from Australia, Japan, the US, Canada, Sweden, Switzerland and Germany. They come and see Hamara Saahas' women in action. They spread the word of our work to family and friends. They buy handicrafts. They participate in workshops.

Local women give workshops in cooking, jewellery, block printing, henna – for individuals and small groups. Sometimes there are also special Classes like Computer Skills, Makramee or Dance - traditional and contemporary – and many more.

People from all over the world also volunteer with us – by teaching their skills like knitting or crochet. On the other hand they learn what Indian crafts and culture are like.

## SANITARY PAD PROJECT



It is an important campaign in a country where only 36 percent of its 355 million menstruating females use napkins or pads. Nearly 23 million girls drop out of school annually after they start their periods. Menstruation is generally a taboo topic in India, something that is rarely talked about openly. Menstruating women are still believed to be impure and are still excluded from social and religious events. In some families they are even not allowed to go to the kitchen during their period.

Most of the women in India (64 percent) use old cloth, rags, husk or ash to manage the flow. They have to wash it by hand using only cold water. Because of the poor hygienic conditions many women catch infections.

We organize hygiene- and awareness-workshops on Menstrual Health for underprivileged girls and women in poor areas around Jodhpur.

We donate pads to those who are in need, educate them about their bodies, teach them good hygiene practices and encourage open conversations around menstruation and female health topics.

Hamara Saahas is producing affordable pads. They are made by women for women. Many women don't have access to pads or can't afford to buy them. That's why Hamara Saahas started the production. First we had to find and buy a machine, then get the raw materials and as a third step train women how to use the machine. The women in charge sell the freshly produced pads by word-of-mouth recommendation to women in their neighbourhood. With each produced and sold pad, they earn a wage for themselves and help to improve the hygiene standards.

So Hamara Saahas empowers women to

**BECOME LEADERS OF LASTING SOCIAL CHANGE IN THEIR OWN COMMUNITIES.****KID'S SCHOLARSHIP PROJECT**

People in India generally relate the term scholarship with college or university studies. But the term is as much applicable for students studying at school. Participating in scholarship programmes on school level serves as a major boost in a kid's confidence. But what's more these scholarships will enhance the girls' Curriculum Vitae when they apply for college or even for their first job.

**School has been a right for girls in India since 2009.**

There are some major obstacles for girls attending school, for instance a lack of girls' toilets and other safety concerns . But the most pressing reason why girls have been unable to go to school in India is – housework. To secure the family income underprivileged girls have to shoulder the burden of care and housework. In 2018 the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights had said in a report that around 40 percent of 15- to 18-year-old girls were out of school. Among them almost 65 percent were engaged in household work.

In 2023 Hamara Saahas has supported 5 girls from financially and socially disadvantaged backgrounds with scholarships. That includes school fees, books and school dresses. One of the sponsored girls attends the fifth class, and the fourth one the college.

So Hamara Sahas empowers five girls and young women

**TO CLAIM THEIR RIGHT OF EDUCATION.**



## SAVE ENVIRONMENT PROJECT



### PLASTIC POLLUTION

The reason why plastic is an environmental hazard is because it is one of the modern artificial materials that is resistant to biodegradation. An empty plastic bottle can remain in a landfill for about 500 years. Plastic bags end up as litter that fouls the landscape. In the end they often land in rivers and oceans where they kill thousands of seals, dolphins and whales every year. These animals mistake the floating bags for food.

Plastic bags for food, shopping articles or the very popular crisps get buried in landfills. They will remain there for a long period – it may take up to a hundred years to break down. And what's more: in the process they split up into smaller and smaller particles. These not only contaminate soil and water, they even get over the food chain into our bodies. Furthermore the production of plastic bags consumes millions of gallons of oil that could be used wiser – or left in the earth. Because of Global Warming we anyway have to leave oil and find alternative ways of heating, for transport and for packaging. The average human in India uses 4 kg of plastic per year.

So Hamara Saahas tried to raise awareness about this kind of pollution. To reduce or even stop the use of plastic bags the NGO organized paper bag making classes. Women were taught to produce bags in

different styles – all of them made out of old newspapers. A modern form of Upcycling. That means: we take old material that would otherwise be thrown away and make something new out of it: something that has a practical use in daily life. Thus creating new meaningful products out of rests and old things is a form of not only creative reuse but also enhancement of material.

Hamara Saahas empowered the women...

**...TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR PLASTIC POLLUTION BY CREATING AN ALTERNATIVE.**

Hamara Saahas also designed workshops to create a connection to nature, spare resources and harvest healthy food. The first one was about how to grow seeds, the second one about how to make compost and the third one about how to produce your own cleansing liquid out of natural materials.

The first workshop over one week took place in June around Environment Day. The participants learnt how to prepare the soil, which seed should be put how deep into the earth, how much moisture and compost it needs to let the seeds grow. Seeds were chosen that will also grow in pots, for instance on the roof because most of the women don't have a garden. Afterwards they all got a variety of seeds like Tulsi, Okra, Koriander, Spinach, Black Mustard to take at home – along with information about the ingredients and their effects on the body. Some of the women can't afford to buy pots, so Hamara Saahas also inspired them to use old plastic packages, old plastic bottles or even old jeans to put soil and their seeds in those. A creative way of Upcycling.



The other two workshops were about reducing waste and recycling. The participants were taught how to make compost out of kitchen waste, and in another one how to produce your own cleansing liquid

out of natural materials. The women had to collect and bring the rests from cooking like chili, garlic and orange peels as well as petal flowers from the temple garlands, especially roses. The liquid will in the end not only smell nice, but be able to remove dirt from floors, tiles and sink – and even keep mosquitoes away.

Hamara Saahas raised awareness in the women...

**...TO SPARE RESOURCES AND LIVE MORE SUSTAINABILITY IN THEIR HOUSEHOLDS.**

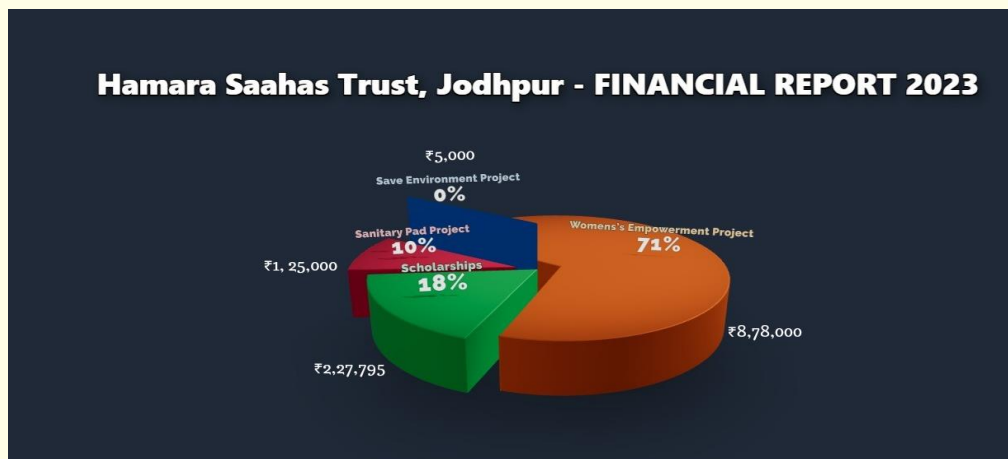
## EXPENDITURE

Save Environment Project- ₹5000

Sanitary Pad Project- ₹1,25,000

Womens's Environment Project- ₹8,78,000

Scholarship- ₹2,27,795



## HOW TO SUPPORT US: VISITS, VOLUNTEERING, DONATIONS

There are many ways to support the work of Hamara Saahas in Jodhpur. We appreciate and welcome every contribution. And please feel free to tell us which project you want to support. Or to make suggestions which projects we should also start. For further details please check our website:

[www.hamarasaahas.org](http://www.hamarasaahas.org)

If you would like to learn more about the culture of an exciting part of India – you are more than welcome to join us for a **VISIT**. You come to our workplace in the Old City and get to know the women in the project. You experience how we are working and what we are producing. This way you can see in

action how Hamara Saahas empowers women and girls and where the funds flow to. Or you drop in and buy some of our products during your visit. If you want to check in advance, which items we produce, please go to our Facebook-site: #desirecreation. Please give us a short call before your visit, then we can pick you up.

**VOLUNTEERING-** It is also possible for you to volunteer with us. This can be everything from 3 hours time to 3 months time or even longer. If you are travelling through Rajasthan or whole India you could make a stop in Jodhpur, do some sightseeing in the Blue City – and join us for 2 to 3 hours a day to support us with your special expert knowledge or skills. That can be for instance anything around Social Media, Marketing or of course special handicraft techniques. But also videography is welcome, self-defense, dancing, Yoga, health care – whatever you are experienced in. We and the women and girls in the project will benefit if you give them an idea what life is like outside their world.

You can also support our work financially. Every **DONATION** – it doesn't matter if big or small – helps to make life better for women and girls in Jodhpur. If you prefer to give money for a special field, please check our expenditure that we need for our work.

