

FINAL REPORT

JANUARY – DECEMBER 2025

Some numbers to show achievement

Mental Health = 2770

Indian Constitution = 904

Islamic Feminism = 484

PMT = 314

Child Sexual Abuse = 14

Total participants in Ubharte Rehnuma – 63

Total outreach = 4549

Collaborations For National And Districts Outreach

Reached out in the districts of Akola, Amrawati, Osmanabad, Thane [Neral, Vangni], Ahmednagar.

Kendriya Prarthmik Shala, Chilwadi Sanjivini School, Nagar Parishad School, Madrasa Jamaitul Taiyeba, Chaitrali hostel in Osmanabad

Schools – St. Peters' School, Purshottam High School, Gulshan School, National Urdu High School, Savitribai Phule School, Madina Urdu High School, Nawab Junior College, Umri Arab Urdu School, Dr. Iqbal Primary School, Anjuman Khairul Islam

Organisations

Gandhi Peace Foundation, Pahal Foundation, Rashtriya Yuva Sanghatana, Save Basundhara Foundation, Asalpha Bachat Gat, Arambh Mahila Federation,

Individuals

Bindu Chaddha, Priti Bhosale, Sonali Mahale, Sonal Seth, Peehu Pardeshi, Kimmaya Abhyankar, Binita Seth, Sharmila Dobhale, Alice, Prerna, Hitanshi, Amrita Bhattacharjee

MPL Reform

- Sent letter and draft to Imtiaz Sarthak, sent draft to Sujata Saunik, Minority Development Department, Law Commission of India, National Women's Commission, met Secretary, MDD in Mantralaya and presented BMMA's Draft Law and recommendations for UCC.
- Also sent BMMA draft law to Vinaya from The Hindu for media outreach.
- Coordination for 3 BMMA members for their participation in Musawah's I-Engage programme

- Reading of Surah Nisah and Surah Bakr helps us to understand what the Quran guides on human and gender values. We began reading this chapter of the Quran which is considered very important and critical in understanding women's rights.
- 2 nikaah were conducted, one by Nasreen and one by Noorjehan. The nikaah was solemnised as per BMMA's procedure. The khutba was also written down based on Islamic values and ethical principles of Islamic marriage. BMMA's nikahnama was used.
- In the beginning of the month, a consultation was held by the National Commission of Women to understand the issues of Muslim women. BMMA made a presentation regarding the codification of Muslim family law. We fervently appealed to the Commission to take forward the issue of codification or ensure that Muslim women's issues are addressed in the proposed Uniform Civil Code.
- BMMA conducted a 6-month long study involving 7 states of Maharashtra, Gujrat, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Karnataka, Delhi and Rajasthan. 2500 Muslim women were interviewed about the impact of polygamy on their socio-economic status as well as its impact on their physical and mental health. A study was published through Notion Press and received wide press coverage. This study will be sent to national women and law commission to demand legislation to stop polygamy in the Muslim community. A short book let has been prepared capturing the summary of the study and is used for training programmes.
- It was also decided that BMMA-trained Qazi names will be sent to the Commission to be included in their portal for gaining validation and approval from the state authority.

International Work

- Have been nominated to go to Germany as a visitor on the theme, 'Islam in Germany'. The visit will be from 4th to 10th May 2025 with discussions, workshops and visits.
- Met Consul General of Canadian Embassy to discuss BMMA's work. Also met Neera Nandy of Dasra. Discussed government policies towards minorities, BMMA's challenge in times of Islamophobia, demand for law reform.
- Visit to Germany from the 4th to the 10th May. Visited approximately 10-12 organisations managed by the Muslim community. Got to understand the issues and challenges of the community as well as the German government. Please see full report. Also met the Consul General personally to share thoughts on the visit.
- Musawah coordinated with BMMA for preparation for CEDAW report. Details for a national consultation was worked out to be done in 2027. The meeting was attended by Syrin and Zulekha from Musawah
- Did a presentation on Child Marriage in a webinar organized by Global Campaign for Equality in Family Laws. The webinar was titled, 'Impact of Child Marriage on Minority Religious Communities in South Asia.'
- To mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, SARIM organized an international webinar titled: **Invisible and Ignored: Minority Women Facing Violence in South Asia**. The webinar explored the compounded

vulnerabilities faced by minority women, the structural and social barriers that perpetuate violence, and policy, legal, and grassroots solutions to ensure justice and inclusion. It will bring together scholars, activists, and human rights defenders from across the region to share experiences and foster meaningful dialogue.

- As a follow up to the engagement of activists and scholars, Musawah wanted to gain feedback from advocates in the region on your own experience engaging with scholars in their work. The aim was to produce an action plan or road map on bringing the two groups closer and bridge the divide. For this end, two roundtables were held where the participants shared about their experience with the religious scholars and how this bridge can be covered through constant mutual dialogues and understanding.
- Attended a 3-day conference organised by GCEFL [Global Campaign for Equality in Family Laws] in Colombo which was a South Asia Regional Convening on Family Laws. The event convened key legal experts, advocates and academics to share lessons learned, strategies and best practices working on family law in Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Malaysia and Phillipines.
- Release of the study on polygamy, 'Breaking the Silence' - Lived Reality of 2500 victims of polygamy. This study was done to highlight the impact of polygamy on women's socio-economic status and on their mental and physical health.
- A programme was held in Shroff College through Avishkar Inter-College Programme where the findings of this report was highlighted.

Training of Trainers:

- All 22 participants gave Open Book exam which are now being corrected. They also submitted their personal essays on their own mental health. Both these submissions will be evaluated for the final certification.
- Two sessions of TOT were held. In one session a demonstration of the mental health session was done for the benefit of the participants.
- Finally 15 were certified as Trainers of Mental Health and 6 were certified to have undergone an Advanced Training on Mental Health.
- This process involved training them on the issue of mental health, taking their oral and written exams. They were also monitored as they did demo of the training. Close mentoring and feedback sessions were held. In the coming year some of the trainers will be accorded fellowships as they conduct mental health training and awareness in the community.

Ubharte Rehnuma

In this year 2 workshops were held with the youth. In June and in December 2025. In both the workshops more or less the same participants participated. The idea was to train young BMMA leaders on various issues so they are able to have a well-rounded personality. The same group also had participants who had finished their Training of Trainers [TOT] programme. 15 were awarded certificates for the same. See the report of both workshops

Community Counsellors Course

In the Ubharte Rehnuma workshop we also introduced this course. We are hoping to have mental health counsellors who will be able to reach out to women, children, men, youth who faced mental health challenges. It was felt that counselling services need to be made more accessible and young people can play an important role in becoming counsellors where they can offer basic counselling services. The course began in December with 2 online and 4 offline sessions. The offline sessions were conducted by Bindu Chaddha, Binita Seth and Kimmaya Abhyankar who were external resource persons. The course will run from January to June 2026. See attached the syllabus and content

Mental Health Counselling

- From August 2024 till 28th February 2025 finished 68 mental health counselling sessions with 10 clients
- In 2025 –35 clients and 133 sessions were held.
- Finished certification from Joining Hands as Facilitator for Family Constellation. The training began in April 2023 and finished in January 2025

Leaders Meeting

leaders attended monthly leaders meeting in which we discussed the issue of drugs. We touched upon the emotional aspect of the problem and looked at it from a mental health perspective. We discussed the importance of LSD in a child's life; Love, Security and Discipline. A child must feel loved and safe in the house followed by a healthy discipline and a set of do's and don'ts. A child who becomes an addict has faced multiple traumas in its life and unless those are addressed, it becomes difficult to overcome the habit. The participants also shared how the drugs are easily available and in more attractive forms to lure even younger children. The state, especially the police are aware of the issue and yet it refuses to address the issue.

23 Muslim women leaders came for the monthly meeting. We discussed the issue of polygamy and how we can take the leadership forward on this issue. A few victims of polygamy also came forward to share their stories. It was decided that in the next few months we will spend time to understand the issue of Muslim family law reform with special focus on polygamy. In the afternoon session, a small mental health process was done with the participants where they could release their long-held traumas through breathing and tapping.

12 volunteers from the Karnataka Bidi Workers Association visited BMMA centre. They spent two days with us to understand BMMA's work. We also decided on a few joint programmes in future. We also discussed the challenges we face as a Muslim women when we raise uncomfortable issues of law reform, especially in a politically vitiated and polarized atmosphere. They interacted with our leaders.

BMMA leaders attended Maharashtra State Women's Commission programme on child and women trafficking along with the leaders.

In all 10 sessions were held in the year and we reached out to 109 women.

Celebrations and Programmes:

- International Women's Day celebration at Ghatkopar, with Aarambh Mahila Federation.
- Women's Day celebration at the Pillai College, gave keynote with 200 students and faculty and 2 hour workshop on PMT with senior students.
- Women's Day celebration called by Consulates of Netherland, Canada, Germany and 2 more countries.
- Inter Faith gathering at Aarey Forest with women from all faiths gathering to celebrate human and nature diversity.
- Eid Milan programme celebrated in the Gurudwara with 60 women from different communities
- Observing Gandhi Jayanti
- Celebration of Children's Day with 25 children
- Discussion on Palestine issue at the Yashwantrao Chavan Pratishthan
- Mohalla committee meeting was held to discuss cyber crime

ASA report

In 2025 19 cases were registered in the Adalat. Out of which 10 were of consultation, 2 of khula, 1 of faskh nikaah, 2 were sent to the court, 4 cases were reconciliation was done, 2 of property and 8 are ongoing. **See detailed report**

Aurton Ki Shariat Adalat

Report 2025

Person who filed the case	Number of Litigants
Wife	14
Husband	2
Others (BIL, MIL, SIL etc)	4
Total number of litigants	20

- 70% of the cases were filed by women against their husbands. Women remain the largest category of persons approaching the center.
- Husbands have filed 9% of the cases.
- The remainder of the cases i.e. 18% had been filed by other i.e In-laws.

Nature of cases	Number of Litigants	%
Husband- Wife disputes	16	80
Disputes with in-laws	4	20
Total number of cases	20	100%

- About 80% of the cases that came to the Adalat were to resolve husband-wife disputes.
- 20% of the cases were disputes with in-laws.

Age of the litigant	Number of litigants	%
21-30	6	30%
31-40	11	55%
41-50	3	15%
Total number of litigants	20	100%

- About 30% of the cases were filed by litigants were between the ages of 21 to 30. This suggests that more of the young population is coming to the ASA.
- 55 % of the cases come from the age group 31-40.
- Only 3 case was from the age group >41-60.

Education level	No. of Litigants	%
Illiterate	2	10%
Till 5th Std	1	5%
6th - 10th Std	4	20%
11th - 12th Std	2	10%
Graduation (13th -15th)	5	25%
Post graduation	2	10%
BHMS	1	5%
Not applicable	3	15%

Total number of litigants	20	100%
----------------------------------	-----------	-------------

- 15% cases litigants were illiterate or education was below STD V
- 20% education qualification of women were between 6th to 10th
- 10% have been to college for higher education where as 25 % have either started or completed graduation.

Age of Marriage	No. of Litigants	%
16-18	2	10%
19-22	4	20%
23-26	5	25%
27-30	3	15%
31-35	3	15%
Not applicable	3	15%
Total	20	100%

- 20% of women have been married between the ages of 19-22, and about 25% have been married between the ages of 23-26.
- About 10% have been married before or at the age of 18. Therefore, a significant number has been married off between the age of 17-18 years.
- 15% have been married between the ages of 27-35 & the age of 31-35.
- 15% of the litigants' age of marriage is not recorded as it is not applicable.

Occupation	No. of Litigants	%
Housewife	12	60%
Service	5	25%
Not Applicable	3	15%
Total number of litigants	20	100%

- Majority of the women, i.e. 60% have been homemakers.
- 25% worked in the service sector,
- 3% litigants' occupation not applicable.

Income of women	No. of Litigants	%
No Income	12	60%
10000-20000	1	5%
20000-30000	2	10%
NA	5	25%
Total number of litigants	20	100%

- Most of the marriage women were housewives, about 60% of them do not have their own income.
- Among the women earning i.e. 15% earn have an income above Rs.10000/- per month.
- 25% of the litigants' income was not applicable

Income of women	No. of Litigants	%
Islam	20	100%
Total number of litigants	20	100%

- 100% of the litigants who approached the adalat practiced Islam

Mehr amount (in rupees)	Number of Litigants	%
786	1	5%
Less than 2,000	1	5%
Less than 4,000	2	10%
Less than 6,000	4	20%
Less than 8,000	3	15%
Less than 10,000		0%
More than 10,000	4	20%
Other (Gold, Jewelry)	2	10%
Not applicable	3	15%

Don't know		0%
Total number of women	20	100%

- The majority about 20% got more than 10,000 rupees in Mehr amounts. About 5% got Rs. 786 as Mehr and about 50% got less than 10,000
- About 10% got gold or jewelry and about 15% was not applicable

Dowry amount (in rupees)	Number of Litigants	%
Not applicable	2	10%
Not given	4	20%
0-50000	4	20%
upto 1 lakh	4	20%
upto 2 lakh	1	5%
upto 5 lakh	4	20%
More than 5 lakh	1	5%
Total number of women	20	100%

- Of the 20 women, 4 women gave dowry worth 50,000 rupees.
- 20% gave upto 1 lakh rupees worth in dowry.
- 25% women gave dowry worth upto 2-5 lakh.
- Upto to 5 % gave dowry worth above 5 lakh
- About 10% weren't applicable for dowry, and about 20% did not give dowry.

Dowry (in Gold)	Number of Litigants	%
15 gms	2	10%
16 gms -30 gms	3	15%
31gms - 60 gms	2	10%
> 60 gms	2	10%
No gold	9	45%
Not Applicable	2	10%
Total number of women	20	100%

- Of the 20 women, 10 women gave 15 gold along with dowry.
- 15% gave upto 16 gms- 30 gms gold other than goods & cash in dowry.
- 20% gave upto > 31 gms gold other than goods & cash in dowry.
- 45 % did not give gold & 10% weren't applicable for dowry.

No of Children	Number of Litigants	%
1 child	6	30%
2 children	2	10%
3 children	2	10%
No children	8	40%
Not applicable	2	10%
Total number of litigants	20	100%

- About 30% of the litigants who came to the adaalat had only 1 child.
- About 10% of the women had 2 children & 10% of the women had 3 children.
- About 40% cases had no children & 2% cases details of children was not applicable.

Age of men (in years)	Number of Litigants	%
21-25	2	12%
26-30	4	32%
31-35	4	36%
36-40	7	12%
> 41	3	8%
Total	20	100%

- According to the data, 44% of the men were in their 30s
- 48% men were in the group within 40 years. This includes all the men involved in the cases and not just the ones who filed cases.
- 8% men were above 41 years
- None of the men involved were younger than 20.

Education level	No. of Litigants	%
Illiterate	1	5%
6th - 10th Std	3	15%
11th - 12th Std	8	40%
Graduation (13th -15th)	5	25%
Post graduation	1	5%
Not applicable	2	10%
Total number of litigants	20	100%

- The majority of the men involved (about 20%) fell in the education bracket of 10th or below.
- Only about 40% of the men education was between 11th -12th Std.
- Only about 30% of the men education pursued higher education.

Age of Marriage	No. of Litigants	%
15-20	2	10%
21-25	4	20%
26-30	9	45%
31-36	3	15%
> 36	1	5%
Not applicable	1	5%
Total number of litigants	20	100%

- Most of the men (about 65%) got married in the age bracket of 21-30.
- 4 men i.e. 20% got married over the age of 30
- Only about 2 men i.e. 10% got married in the bracket 15-20 years.
- This means that child marriage has significantly reduced in males.

Occupation of men	Number of Litigants	%
Driver/Rickshaw	3	15%
Company	1	5%
Service	6	30%
Business	2	10%
Plumber	1	5%
Others	1	5%
Not Applicable	6	30%
Total	20	100%

- 35% work for companies or provide service
- 15% are working as driver and another 10% are self employed.
- Other work in the informal sector.

Income of men (in rupees) Per month	Number of Litigants	%
7,001- 10,000	3	15%
10,000- 12,000	1	5%
12,000- 15,000	1	5%
15,000- 20,000	2	10%
21,000-40,000	4	20%
40,001 and above	3	15%
Not applicable	4	20%
Don't know	2	10%
Total	20	100%

- The majority, i.e.35% men salary is below 20000/- per month of which 15% of men salary is below Rs.10000/- per month
- 20% of the men earn salary in the bracket of Rs 21000-40,000 and above
- About 15% of the men income is above 40,000 p.m.

Number of times the man has married	Number of Litigants	%
Only once	17	85%
Twice	1	5%
Thrice	1	5%
> Three	1	5%
Total	20	100%

- About 85% of the men who approached the adaalat were married only once. 3 cases i.e. 15% cases proves the existence of polygamy.

Religion of men	Number of Litigants	%
Muslim	20	100%
Number of men	20	100%

- 100% of the men who were involved in the cases practiced Islam

Resolution period	Number of Litigants
Within 3 months	Talaq: 1 Reconciled: 3
Within 6 months	Talaq : 2
Over 1 Year	Fasq :1 Khula : 1
Closed cases	1
In court	1
Ongoing	9
Not applicable	1
Total number of cases	20

- Out of 20 cases that were, registered 4 cases were solved within 3 months (About 20 %)
- 2 cases were solved within 6 months. (About 10 %)
- 4 cases i.e. 20% were resolved through Fasq, Khula , Court or not applicable as it was put for safety
- 9 cases are still ongoing. (45%)

Referred by	Number of Litigants	%
Mandal member / Area Leader	14	70%
Khatoon Sheikh	2	10%
Earlier registered case	2	10%
Others	2	10%
Total	20	100%

- 70% of the cases that came to the adaalat were referred through a mandal members or Area leaders.

UBHARTE REHNUMA

20, 21, 22, 23 MAY 2025

Total no. of participants – 43

States Represented – Maharashtra, Gujrat, Rajasthan, Delhi, Karnataka and West Bengal

Participants comprised of senior and second line leaders of BMMA and the youth.

Day 1

Zarina did a revision of all the activities which were done in the last workshop in December 2024. The BMMA Prayer and BMMA song were sung. The revision involved revising topics of leadership, mental health, spirituality and social movement, Islamic Feminism and Muslim family law. The group was divided into 5 groups and each group was asked to revise the past programme and do a presentation. After the presentation BMMA's move called 'Wahadat' was shown. Songs were also sung. A book containing all the 15 songs was given to the group.

In the afternoon session, Zakia Soman, Co-Founder of BMMA spoke on Sufi Islam. She asked the participants about 'who is a Muslim'. The answers varied from someone who is kind and compassionate to someone who believes in the 5 tenets of Islam which is Shahada, Namaz,

Zakat, Roza and Hajj. The sufi focus is on the other 5 important values of Islam which are Justice, Equality, Wisdom, Compassion and Ahsan [beauty and goodness]. It is important as Muslims to also incorporate the later values to be true to the ethical framework of Islam and its universal humanitarian principles.

In the next session the group was divided into 5 groups. Each group was given a set of 4 stories which were parables focusing on kindness, creativity, focus, self-belief, desire to go beyond the comfort zone. These stories were read within the group and each group presented their understanding and learnings. It was also important to link this session with the previous one on Sufism to drive home the humanness, empathy, kindness and love.

In the evening, the polygamy study was discussed with all the participants. The questionnaire was discussed with everyone and their suggestions were incorporated in the questionnaire.

Day 2

In the morning session, a panel which represented all 6 major religions gave short presentations about each one of them. Deepa Bhalerao spoke on Hinduism, Nargis Husein on Islam, Lia Caldeira on Christianity, Sonal Seth on Buddhism, Noorjehan on Sikhism and Jainism. Short note on each is given in the annex.

Feroze Mithiborewala, an activist highlighting the fundamentalism of all communities spoke about the rising fundamentalism in the name of Hinduism and its impact on the Muslims specifically and on the secular fabric of the country. He also highlighted the fundamentalism within the Muslim community and how that acts as a fodder for being targeted on religious grounds.

Sharad Kadam, also an activist highlighted the tradition of saints in Maharashtra. This state has a tradition of Bhakti and Sufi movement. Saints whose tombs are visited by all castes and faiths provide a syncretic cultural environment where you truly connect to the Creator without barriers of rituals, traditions or specific forms of prayers etc. With rising fundamentalism these syncretic traditions are under attack and we are losing out on the fundamentalist who highlight the rigid methods of worship and who are destroying the shared forms of connecting with the Creator. Sharad Kadam also invited us to the joint march of spiritualists dedicated to the Lord Vithoba. BMMA might join the same next year.

In the next session, Khatoon Shaikh, Zarina Khan, Nargis Husein and Noorjehan spoke on sufi saints namely Khwaja Gulam Fareed Darwesh, Rabiya Basri, Kabir Das. All saints have focused oneness of human beings, the universal consciousness, the need to develop kindness, compassion, share love and concern. These saints went beyond the boundaries of class, caste, race, gender, nationality and other divisive concepts.

In the afternoon the film 'Holy Rights' was screened.

Later that evening, Noorjehan did a session on South Asian Women Sufi Saints focusing on how patriarchy works even in the spiritual realm. Women saints across all religions have been ignored and invisibilised. Their life stories, their miracles, their devotion to the creator have all

been diminished or wiped out. This session highlighted their names, contribution and stories and brought in the gender equality in the spiritual realm.

Day 3

The morning was spent on 'Speaking to Soul' facilitated by Insia Dariwala. She is a Family Constellator and a therapist. She did a session to make the practical application of what was discussed last two days about spirituality. It was a practical example of how we can connect to our inner selves, our soul and connect to our soul/life purpose. It was an intense exercise done in pairs. Each person became a soul to the other and revealed the inner most messages which we hold within ourselves. Many faced their souls for the first time. Many were humbled and many were very happy. Some would find resonance with their life purpose, some were lost and some truly felt blessed to have connected with their innermost selves.

In the afternoon, the focus shifted to the Muslim family law reform campaign. It was a tough session as the youth sat through the afternoon to read the draft of the Muslim family law. It was a long session as they had to go through each clause of the draft law. Two groups presented their understanding of the draft law.

Day 4

In the morning, the groups presented the draft law and their understanding of it. Summary of the draft law was given for them to understand the salient features of the law. This was also an opportunity for the youth to prepare themselves to face the press. 4 of them came forward and they read the summary of the draft and practiced their presentation. Some of them prepared the posters, placards etc. A practice session was also held with 4 youth who were going to address the press.

The 4-day workshop ended with certificate and trophy distribution.

The feedback received from the participants:

- This time they expected more games and exercises. The topics were a little tough so that wanted it to be made more interesting.
- They also wanted the workshop to be held at a different place, other than Mumbai.
- Sharad Kadam's session was not very engaging as he spoke from a Maharashtrian context which some participants could not understand.

The Schedule

DATE	TOPIC	TIME	RESOURCE
20 Tues	10 – 10.30	1. BMMA Prayer 2. Tarana	Khatoon Shaikh
	10.30 – 11.30	Revision of last training About BMMA Leadership Mental Health Spirituality and Movement work Islamic Feminism Muslim Family Law	Zarina Through group exercise Show WAHADAT for summary 2 songs 3. Zindagi Apni Sajayenge 4. Beti hoon main Beti
	11.30 – 1.30	Sufism	Zakia Soman
	1.30 – 2.30	Lunch	
	2.30 – 4.00	Tales and Parables of Humanness	Noorjehan [Aspire Stories] 5. Tawheed
	4.00 – 6.00	Polygamy Study	
21 Wed	9.00 – 11.00	Universal humanitarian messages across religions Panel	Hinduism – Deepa Bhalerao Islam – Nargis Christianity – Lia Buddhism – Sonal Jainism – Zarina Sikhism – Noorjehan Zoroastrianism – Noorjehan 6. Ahsan
	11.00 – 12.00	Rising Hindu Fundamentalism and Our Response	Feroze Mithiborewala 7. Chale chalo
	12 – 1	Tradition of Saints in Maharashtra	Sharad Kadam 8. Is liye raah sangharsh
	1.00 – 2.00	Lunch	
	2.00 – 4.00	Sufi Saints and Their Messages of Oneness	Khatoon Shaikh – Shah Latif Zarina Khan – Khwaja Gulam Fareed Darwesh Nargis Tariq – Rabiya Basri Noorjehan - Kabir Das – 9. Jee na paayenge khud
	4.00 – 5.00	South Asian Women Sufi Saints	Noorjehan SN

		Introduction to Meditative Music	
	5.00 – 6.00	Holy Rights	
	5.00 - 6.00	Polygamy Study finalize	
22 Thur	9.00 – 1.00	Me and my soul Me and my life plan Me and my resources	
	1 -2	Lunch	
	2.00 – 5.00	Reading and endorsing the draft of BMMA BMMA's UCC demands Preparation of youth for press conference	10. Chahu main to aisa jahan 11. Iraade kar bulund
		Cultural Event	
23 Fri	9 – 12	Prepping the youth for press conference	Preparation for Press conference 12. Ab ye thaana liya har beti ne
	1 – 2	Lunch	
	4 – 6	Press Conference	

JAINISM

Jainism is a religion that emphasizes non-violence (ahimsa) and seeks to achieve liberation from the cycle of rebirths through a path of self-discipline and ethical conduct. Core principles include non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, non-attachment, and chastity.

Here's a more detailed look at the basics:

Key Concepts:

- **Ahimsa (Non-violence):** The fundamental principle, emphasizing respect for all life and minimizing harm to all living beings. This extends to thoughts, words, and actions.
- **Aparigraha (Non-attachment):** The practice of detaching oneself from material possessions and worldly attachments to reduce karmic bondage.
- **Truthfulness (Satya):** Upholding truth in all aspects of life, both in words and actions.
- **Non-stealing (Asteya):** Avoiding any form of stealing or taking what is not freely given.
- **Chastity (Brahmacharya):** Practicing celibacy, particularly for monks and nuns, but also a principle of restraint for all followers.

- **Karma and Rebirth:** Jains believe in karma, where actions have consequences that determine future rebirths. The goal is to break free from this cycle through spiritual practice.
- **Liberation (Moksha):** The ultimate goal of Jainism, achieved by eliminating karma and achieving a state of eternal bliss.
- **Tirthankaras (Ford-makers):** Jains venerate the Tirthankaras, enlightened beings who have achieved liberation and serve as models for followers.
- **Three Jewels:** Right belief, right knowledge, and right conduct, which form the foundation of Jain practice.

Practices:

- **Asceticism:** Monks and nuns practice rigorous asceticism, including fasting, nudity, and self-mortification.
- **Vegetarianism:** Many Jains practice vegetarianism as a way to minimize harm to animals.
- **Meditation and Contemplation:** Jainism emphasizes the importance of meditation and self-reflection to cultivate inner peace and wisdom.

In Summary:

Jainism is a religion of self-help that emphasizes non-violence, ethical conduct, and the pursuit of liberation from the cycle of rebirth through the practice of the five vows and other spiritual disciplines

Zoroastrianism

Zoroastrianism is an Iranian religion centered on the Avesta and the teachings of Zarathushtra Spitama, known as Zoroaster. It's considered one of the world's oldest monotheistic religions, originating in ancient Persia. Zoroastrianism emphasizes the struggle between good and evil, with Ahura Mazda, the supreme God, constantly battling against the evil spirit, Angra Mainyu.

Here's a more detailed look at Zoroastrianism:

Key Concepts:

- **Monotheism and Dualism:** While primarily monotheistic, Zoroastrianism also incorporates dualistic elements, with Ahura Mazda (the good God) and Angra Mainyu (the evil spirit) constantly battling.
- **Ahura Mazda:** The supreme God, creator of all good and the source of order and goodness.
- **Spenta Mainyu:** The good spirit that is associated with Ahura Mazda and is considered to be present in all humans, representing the Creator's interaction with the world.
- **Angra Mainyu:** The evil spirit or "destructive principle" who opposes Ahura Mazda.

- **Avesta:** The Zoroastrian scripture, containing hymns, rituals, and teachings.
- **Good and Evil:** Zoroastrians believe in a free will and the ability to choose between good and evil, with their actions determining their fate in the afterlife.
- **Afterlife:** Zoroastrians believe in a bridge (Chinvat Bridge) that separates heaven and hell, with the fate of each soul determined by the balance of their good and evil deeds.
- **Fire Temples:** Zoroastrians often worship in fire temples, believing fire to be a symbol of purity and the presence of Ahura Mazda.

Historical Context:

- **Origins:**

Zoroastrianism originated in ancient Persia, with Zoroaster (Zarathushtra) believed to have lived sometime between 1500 and 1200 BCE. Zoroastrianism was the state religion of the Achaemenid, Parthian, and Sasanian empires.

- **Persecution and Migration:**

Following the Muslim conquest of Persia, Zoroastrians faced persecution and many migrated to India, where they became known as Parsis.

- **Modern Practice:**

Zoroastrianism is still practiced as a minority religion in parts of Iran and India, with Parsi communities being particularly significant in India.

Significance:

- **One of the oldest living religions:**

Zoroastrianism is considered one of the oldest religions still in existence. Many scholars believe Zoroastrianism influenced the development of monotheistic beliefs in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

- **Focus on ethics and moral choices:** Zoroastrianism emphasizes the importance of good thoughts, words, and deeds in leading a righteous life.

Sikhism

Sikhism is a religion and philosophy that originated in the Punjab region of the Indian subcontinent around the end of the 15th century. It's a monotheistic faith with about 25-30 million followers, known as Sikhs, making it the world's fifth-largest religion. Sikhism emphasizes spiritual devotion, equality, social justice, and service to humanity.

Key Aspects of Sikhism:

- **Founding:** Founded by Guru Nanak (1469–1539), with nine succeeding Gurus who developed the faith.
- **Monotheism:** Sikhs believe in one God, who is the creator of everything.

- **Equality and Justice:** Sikhism emphasizes the equality of all people and the need for social justice.
- **Service and Charity:** Sikhs are encouraged to serve others and be generous.
- **Living in the World:** Sikhism encourages practicing the faith through everyday life, working, and serving others.
- **Holy Book:** Sikhs follow the teachings of the Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh Holy Book, which is considered the eternal Guru.
- **Guru's Teachings:** The teachings of the ten Sikh Gurus are central to the faith.
- **Community and Gurudwara:** Sikhs worship in gurudwaras (temples), where they read scriptures, offer prayers, and share meals.
- **Simran:** Sikhs are encouraged to remember God at all times, which is called simran.
- **Khalsa:** A group of initiated Sikhs who follow a strict code of conduct and are known as the Khalsa.
- **Five Ks:** Khalsa members are required to wear the five Ks: uncut hair, a wooden comb, a steel bracelet, a sword (or a dagger), and a pair of shorts.
- **Last Names:** Male Sikhs often have Singh ("lion") as their last name, and female Sikhs have Kaur ("princess").

Sikhism is a faith that emphasizes a way of life based on devotion, service, and equality

Christianity

A Christian is someone who follows the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.

Christianity is the largest religious community in the world, with over 2.2 billion followers.

Key belief of Christianity:

- The holy book of Christian is the Bible. The Bible is the word of God. It is the holy book of Christian, comprising the Old Testament (also known as the Hebrew Bible) and the New Testament.
- The acronym B.I.B.L.E. is "Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth". This interpretation emphasizes the idea that the Bible provides guidance and wisdom for life and spiritual preparation for the afterlife.
- Christians believe there is only one God (monotheism), 3 Forms – Father, Son & the Holy Spirit.
- We believe that Jesus Christ, is the Son of God, the Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament.
- Jesus though divine took the form of human, suffered, was crucified, died and most important he was risen from the death and ascended into heaven.

Christianity encompasses various denominations, including Catholicism, Protestantism, and Eastern Orthodoxy. Their practices and beliefs vary among different denominations.

The core values of Christianity are love, faith, forgiveness, compassion, humility, and integrity. These values are exemplified in Jesus' teachings and actions, as well as in the lives of the apostles and early Christians.

Here's a more detailed look:

1. **Love:** 1Corinthians : Ch13 : Love is described as patient, kind, not envious, not boastful, not proud, not rude, not self-seeking, not easily angered, and not keeping a record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things.

Jesus taught that loving God and loving one's neighbor are the two greatest commandments.

2. **Faith:** Matthew 17:20 "Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

We are all called to have faith

- In God, His goodness, and His promises.
- God's word – the Bible
- On Jesus - "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" We believe he is the key to receiving salvation.

3. **Forgiveness:** God is forgiving, willing to pardon those who repent and seek His mercy. Colossians 3:13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Matthew 6:14 "For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."

No of times one must forgive :

Matthew 18: 21-22 ²¹ Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" ²² Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

4. **Compassion:** Compassion is not just about feeling sorry for others; it's about actively seeking to help and alleviate suffering. **Matthew 25:40:** "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these my brothers, you did for me."

5. **Humility:** Is recognizing God's grace, power and authority over all things. Humility is seen as a path to God's favor, as God "opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble".

Jesus has exemplified humility in his teachings and his actions.

- Jesus willingness to accept God's plan to be born as a human.
- Jesus though he was God son, choose to be born in a stable/manger.
- He was baptized by John the Baptist.
- He was led by God's Spirit into the wilderness for forty days.
- Jesus washed his disciples' feet and asked them to do the same.
- Jesus humbled himself by becoming obedient to death.

6. Integrity:

Proverbs 10:9: "Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out."

Being honest and trustworthy to oneself and others. It's about living a life that aligns with one's beliefs and values.

7. Non-violence is another key teaching of Jesus that is not in the Old Testaments.

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount: Jesus taught his followers to love their enemies, pray for those who persecute them, and not resist evil with force. He famously said, "But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also," suggesting a radical approach to non-violent resistance.

Peacemakers: Jesus declared, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God," highlighting the importance of pursuing peace and reconciliation.

Buddhism:

You may be aware that this is a religion and philosophy based on the teachings of Gautham Buddha. Born as a prince, Siddhartha Gautama left his kingdom, wife and newborn child in search of deeper truth of how to come out of sufferings in the world.

He first tried the paths that existed then- Hindu and Jain. On not finding his complete resonance, he set out to explore his own 'reality' and after six years of meditation, attained enlightenment or Nirvana- a state where all suffering ends. He taught others how to escape suffering.

Buddhism emphasizes the path to liberation through understanding the nature of reality, cultivating ethical behavior, and practicing meditation. Buddhism is not focused on a divine creator or a personal god, and it often incorporates various practices like chanting, meditation, and mindfulness, according to Lion's Roar.

Key Teachings/Concepts:

- **Central Teachings:**
Buddhism centers around the Four Noble Truths, which explain the nature of suffering, its causes, its cessation, and the path to liberation. This is a very profound philosophical understanding into all human pains. It starts with acceptance of pain and takes us towards the end of suffering.
- **The Noble Eightfold Path:**
This path provides a framework for ethical conduct, mental discipline, and wisdom, leading towards enlightenment. This is the framework that Buddhism suggests as a path towards well-being and overcoming suffering.
- **Nirvana:**
The ultimate goal of Buddhism is to achieve Nirvana, a state of enlightenment and freedom from suffering. This is primarily attained through one observing one's reality and overcoming one's own cravings and aversions driven by worldly pains and pleasures.
- **Core Values:**
Buddhism emphasizes compassion, wisdom, mindfulness, and ethical behavior as crucial elements of the path to enlightenment.

Knowledge:

- **Origin:**
Buddhism originated in India and spread throughout Asia, eventually becoming one of the world's largest religions.
- **Various Schools:**
Different schools of Buddhism, such as Mahayana, Theravada, and Vajrayana, offer diverse interpretations and practices, according to National Geographic Society.
- **Practices:**
Practices include meditation, chanting, mindfulness, and the study of Buddhist texts and teachings, according to the Province of Manitoba.

Forgotten Sufi Women of South Asia - **Rehman Anwer**

- Historically, South Asia has been a land of Sufis—many eminent Sufis arrived from various parts of the world and settled there. South Asian history provides ample evidence of the lives and contributions of these devotees. However, the focus of that history has tended to be on male Sufis. Where women appear in history at all, they are recorded as relatives or followers of male Sufis rather than Sufi saints in their individual capacity. Their contributions in the development of Sufism are either ignored or marginalised.
- The history of Islam is full of women mystics who achieved high status in the spiritual order. **Rābi'a al-'Adawiyya** (Rabia Basri) was one of the most influential Sufi saints of the eighth century. She was an intellectual who tutored people and left a strong legacy for Muslim women to follow her to attain spiritual elevation. The two most prominent teachers of one of the greatest Muslim scholars, poet and mystic, **Muhammad bin Ibn al-'Arabī**, were women: **Shams** from Merchana and **Fatima** from Cordoba. Some other prominent names of early Sufi women include **Halima** of Damascus, **Rabi'a bint Ismail**, **Lubaba**, **Fatima of Damascus**, **Sha'wana**, **Ghufayra al-Abida**, **Dhakkara**, and **Fātima al-Barda'iyya**. These women had been participating and contributing to diverse activities in Sufi traditions.
- Those early Sufi women in Islam laid the foundations for women's participation in Sufism around the world, particularly in South Asia, where women had been central to the propagation of Sufi traditions for centuries. But history has not been fair in recognising their contributions. As Annmarie Schimmel mentions in her book, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*:
- "Names of women saints are found throughout the world of Islam, though only few of them have been entered into the official annals... the area in which women saints flourished most is probably Muslim India."
- The Sufi women of South Asia were not only practising saints but some of them were also the mothers of the leaders of the major Sufi orders. One such example is **Hazrat Bibi Zulaykha**, the venerated mother of **Shaikh Nizamu'd-Din Auliya** (d.1325), one of the leading Sufi saints of India and the founder of the Chishti-Nizami order. He was

only five when his father died. His mother, Bibi Zulaykha raised him. Mohammad Yasin records in his book, *Reading in Indian History*:

- “It was her who kindled the spark of Divine love in him, which later moulded his entire being and dominated his thought and action.”
- **Shaikh Abdul Haq Muhaddis Dehalvi** also provides some more interesting information about this beautiful mother-son relationship in his Persian work, *Akhbaru'l-Akhyar*. He mentions that **Shaikh Nizamu'd-Din Auliya** used to say about his mother:
 - “*Walida mara ba Khuda Ta'ala asna'I bud.*” (My mother was the way towards the kingdom of God.)
 - On another occasion, he sheds light on her reliance on God or Tawakkal, one of the cornerstones of Sufism.

When the house was bereft of food, she consoled him by saying:

- “*Imroz ma mehman-e Khdayem.*” (Today we are the guests of God.)

Even after her death, Shaikh Nizamu'd-Din Auliya used to visit her tomb regularly.

- Similarly, another prominent Sufi woman, **Hazrat Bibi Fatima Sam**, lived in Delhi in the 13th century. Whatever fragmented information is available about her suggests that she was an adopted sister of **Hazrat Baba Farid** (d.1265) who always admired her piety and sanctity. She regarded Baba Farid and his brother, **Shaikh Najamu'd-Din Mutawakkil**, as her own brothers.

The *Malfuzaat* (Discourses) of **Shaikh Nizamu'd-Din Auliya** (RA) suggests that he was an admirer of her poetry and had memorised a famous hemistich composed by her:

- “A person who is seeker of ‘Dive Love’ and at the same time concerned with the safety and security of his personal life, cannot become a true lover.”

Shaikh Abdul Haq Muhaddis Dehalvi writes about her thus: “Bibi Auliya was one of the most pious ladies of her time.”

Another prominent female Sufi named **Bibi Sahiba Kalan** (d.1803) was a leading scholar-saint of the Afghan Empire. Bibi Sahiba studied theology, Islamic law and medicine and was recognised as a great educationalist and mystic. She travelled to North India, Central Asia and Arabia and built and managed educational institutes and shrines. Only a very limited historical record is available about her life and work. Dr Waleed Ziad from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has recently collected extensive information about her remarkable achievements through his fieldwork across Afghanistan and Pakistan. His forthcoming book, *Sufi Masters of the Afghan Empire: Bibi Sahiba and Her Spiritual Network*, will give a detailed account of the life of Bibi Sahiba as the “most exalted saint” of the age.

Tahera Aftab records in her book, *Sufi Women of South Asia: Veiled Friends of God*, many prominent yet forgotten Sufi women of South Asia. Some of them are mentioned below:

- **Hazrat Bibi Rasti (Bibi Pakdaman)**, mother of **Shaikh Rukn-i-Alam** (d.1335) was the daughter of **Sultan Jamal'd-Din of Farghana**, a state in Central Asia and came to India with her family. She was married to **Makhdum Shaikh Sadaru'd-Din Arif Qattal** (d.1286) son of **Shaikh-ul-Islam Bahau'd-Din Zakariyya** (d. 1267).
- **Hazrat Bibi Raushan Ara** (1279 - 1342), a daughter born into an Indian immigrant family in Mecca, travelled to Delhi in 1321 along with her brother, **Pir Saiyyid Abbas Ali**, and his wife. **Shaikh Hasan Shah**, a Qadri Sufi of Delhi, sent her and her brother to Bengal where she died in 1342 and was buried in the village of Kathulia in Bashirhat district near the Ichhamati river.
- **Hazrat Ma Sahiba Ashraf-i do-jahan** (d.1369) came from Bokhara to Korchi, a town on the banks of river Krishna and subsequently moved to Multan.

The Sufi women of South Asia played a central role in promoting Sufi teachings and traditions as mystics, mentors, poets, patrons, and mothers of male Sufi saints. Gender plays an interesting role in Sufism and several male Sufi saints preferred to have a strong female character in their love stories, such as Sassi, Sohni, and Hir. Similarly, Sufi poets such as **Baba Bulleh Shah** and **Amir Khusrau** always had a dominant female voice in their poetry.

The invaluable contribution of women in the development of Sufism in South Asia is one of the most important and beautiful aspects of Sufism in that region. The remarkable life stories and struggles of those women deserve remembrance and celebration in a comparable manner as the stories of the male Sufis.

- **Bibi Kamalo:**
The maternal aunt of Shaikh Sharaf al-din Maneri, also having a shrine dedicated to her.
- **Lalla Ded:**
A prominent Kashmiri Sufi mystic and poet.
- **Jahan Ara:**
Daughter of Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan and a prominent Sufi poet and writer.
- **Bibi Hayati:**
Composed a divan related to the integration of inner and outer worlds in Sufi thought.
- **Aishah al-Ba'uniyah:**
A renowned Sufi mystic and poet.
- **Impact and Contributions:**
- These women provided spiritual guidance and inspiration to others, particularly within their respective Sufi orders. Many women, like Jahan Ara and Bibi Hayati,

contributed to the development of Sufi literature through their writings and poetry. Their presence and contributions influenced the socio-religious practices at Sufi shrines, especially those dedicated to them. Their participation in Sufi circles and their spiritual achievements challenged prevailing gender norms within Sufi tradition.

INDIAN MUSLIM WOMEN SAINTS

The article first appeared as a full article in Zariya-Women's Alliance for Dignity and Equality

How are we to look at the category of women saints in a country riddled with misogyny?

Yes and narrowing down to Muslim women saints, it is even more unpalatable for many that a community which more often than not demolishes women's rights ensured by God itself, has a plethora of women saints spread across the length and breadth of the country.

Dr. Amina Wadud gives a framework[1] under which we can further explore this issue. While the classical framework envisages[2] the man as the direct receiver of grace and knowledge from the Almighty and hence superior, she gives a framework which supersedes and replaces that framework in consonance with the value of equality.

Going by the new framework, it then is established that women and men both are capable of receiving grace and knowledge from Allah, the universal power. Both are equipped with intelligence, insights and capacities to know and understand the transcendent. Women are no longer dependent on men to know their Creator.

Aren't there many different ways to reach Allah/God?

Institutionalized religion has created structures, frameworks, rituals and prayers to establish a connection with the Creator. While a whole lot of us are comfortable with ritualistic and laid down methods of aligning with God, many find that confining and too narrow a path. There are also many who do not wish to confine themselves to only one religious path. For them all paths lead to the same ultimate reality.

Sufi Islam seeks to align its soul with its origin and source through meditation and prolonged prayers which are more an inward journey of the soul rather than a set of bodily movements or chants. And in spite of its esoteric and mystical orientation and its assertion of being closer to Allah through intense prayers, they have not been able to escape the cruel hands of patriarchy.

How do we use the sacred texts to establish gender equality?

Dr. Amina Wadud, also called the Lady Imaam, says in an interview to Caroline Suineer [www.ruskeattytot.fi], ‘As a Muslim I use the Islamic sacred sources to talk about human beings as persons created by a Creator with the intention of being the khalifa of God on earth. The Khalifa is an agent, the one who fulfills the divine will and the divine will is to live in harmony with all of the creation and creator. So, both women and men are created to be moral agents on the earth.’ It is the duty of women and men to do good and resist evil and spread the word of God which is to live in harmony with one another despite the diversity.

Having said that, should there be any doubt in anyone’s mind that women are incapable of being deeply spiritual? But as we know, history has been written by patriarchs and all experiences of women, spiritual or otherwise have never been duly acknowledged.

What is the feminist perspective of gender equality in Islam?

Islam recognizes the equality of women and men at the very genesis as both having been created from a single cell [4:1 “O mankind! reverence your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single nafs, created, of like nature, His mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women;- reverence God, through whom ye demand your mutual (rights), and (reverence) the wombs (That bore you): for God ever watches over you.”]. This itself establishes the equality of status at the time of creation. Additionally, both are considered as protectors of each other ["They (your wives) are your garment and you are a garment for them" (Noble Quran 2:187)].

What is the status of shrines of women in India?

Chandan Gowda narrates in his article[3] that the city of Bangalore which has shrines of about two dozen sufi saints, hardly knows its own treasures. More regrettable is the lack of acknowledgement of women saints, since the ‘official annals do not easily recognize women as sufi saints. Indeed, the sufi is usually imagined as a male saint’. In his own words, ‘the leadership of the various Sufi orders, where disciples learnt the techniques of attaining the mystical experiences of the divine, tended to reside in men. When women did become, on a rare occasion, the head of a Sufi order, their powers were curtailed in various ways (for ex. they could teach but not initiate disciples, or, initiate only female disciples). The Bektashi order in Ottoman Turkey was the lone exception: men and women had equal rights of spiritual apprenticeship and organizational leadership’.

The Indian subcontinent is replete with shrines of women saints but nearly no records of their achievements exist, although they are known and revered locally. Gowda writes, ‘in his major study, Karnatakada Sufigalu (The Sufis of Karnataka, 1998), Rahamat Tarikere, the literary critic, identifies several women Sufi saints in the state: Niyaamatbi of Gauribidanur; Zarinaabi of Kadur; Bibi Fatima of Gulbarga; Saiyadani of Ramadurga; Mustanima of Harapanahalli Bagur’. And this is only one state of the country.

Hazrat Makhdooma Maa Saheb in Kudchi, Karnataka is a revered sufi saint. She is also referred to as our very own Rabiya Basri. She was a follower [murid] of Hazrat Shaikh Sirajjudin Junaidi Baghdadi. All saints and spiritual souls of the Deccan region have taken blessings from Maa Saheb. She is known as Shahzadi Balkh Makhdooma Hazrat Sayyeda Ma Saheba Ashrafe Do Jahaan RA. She is a revered saint of the Deccan region and is visited by all irrespective of their religion or denomination. She came from the Balkh region of Afghanistan but carried the soil of Baghdad. She was asked to choose that place in India soil of which matched in weight with the soil from Baghdad. The soil of Kudchi matched with the soil from Baghdad. And hence she settled here.

I could find very little information about her life. But interestingly half a dozen qawwali videos are done on her, eulogizing her as a mother, a patron of the poor and someone who fulfills the wishes of all those who visit her and ask for blessings. She was known for her anger for which she was also called Jalali. Coming from my elder sister who in turn heard it from her cousin, Hazrat Sirajuddin had to wash her heart 7 times to calm her down.

And another woman saint from my city, Maa Hajiani

Another women saint who generally is overshadowed by her brother is Maa Hajiani. Given the name it is assumed that she was the mother of Peer Haji Ali Shah Bukhari, but some accounts say that she was his sister. Both were travelling to Mecca from Uzbekistan, their home place. Their ship wrecked and they were found at the exact spots where their tombs were later built. Whatever may be the actual history, the spiritual significance of Maa Hajiani cannot be undermined.

The dargah itself is a site of three tombs, one of Maa and another of Haji Ismail Hasham Yusuf and his son Sir Mohammed Yusuf. The family, which was largely into shipping, trade and philanthropy built this dargah in 1908 in the memory of Maa. The dargah is managed by the Ismail Yusuf Trust. The plaque at the dargah reads, 'This mausoleum was built on the grave of Saint Ma Hajiani in the year 1908 as a token of devotion and reverence to glorify her pious name and sacred memory by Haji Ismail Hasham Yusuf, ship owner and pioneer of Indian shipping who died on 20th September, 1912 and was buried according to his last wishes in the west side of the grave in this tomb'.

There is not much known about the architects, the artisans although the dargah was built just over a hundred years back. Much less is known about the saint herself, her life, her contribution, her piety. All said and done, this dargah is a haven of peace and tranquility and forms an indelible part of memories of scores of Indians and Mumbaikars, including the author.

Day 1

Session 1

Facilitator: Dr. Sunilam

Topic: People's Movement for Social Change

Session 2

Facilitator: Feroze Mithiborwala

Topic: International Affairs, War Politics and Global Power Structures

Session 3

Facilitator: Amrita Bhattacharyya

Topic: Aarey Movement and Climate Justice (National & International Perspective)

Session 4

Facilitators: Bineeta & Kimaaya

Topic: Counselling and Self-Understanding

Day 2

Session 1

Facilitator: Dawishala Giri

Topic: Gender and Sexuality

Session 2

Facilitators: Bineeta & Kimaaya

Topic: Counselling Practice and Role Play

Session 3

Facilitator: Prema Desai

Topic: Political Ideologies and Social Transformation

Session 4

Facilitator: Zakia Soman

Topic: Belief Systems: Caste, Class, Gender and Religion

Day 3

Session 1

Facilitator: Noorjahan

Topic: Introduction to BMMA, Muslim Women's Rights and Law Reforms

Session 2

Facilitator: Mohammed Khan

Topic: Attention, Values, Culture vs Religion, Needs vs Wants

Day 4

Session 1

Facilitator: Bindu Chaddha

Topic: Counselling Skills, Ethics and Role of a Counsellor

Session 2

Facilitator: Shriharsh

Topic: Personal Effectiveness, Leadership and Time Management

Session 3

Facilitators: Noor & Lia

Topic: Healing, Therapy and Mindfulness

Day 5

Session 1

Facilitator: Noorjahan

Topic: Future Planning of BMMA and State-wise Action Plans

2. Day-wise Learning Summary

Day 1 – 29th December 2025

The first day focused on **people's movements, history, and active citizenship**, mainly through interactive lectures, discussions, and question-answer sessions led by **Dr. Sunilam**.

Topics and Activities:

- **People's Movement for Social Change (Interactive Discussion):**
I learned the importance of **asking questions** in a democracy. Questioning authority was explained as a key step toward accountability, awareness, and social change.
- **Current People's Movements (Case-based Discussion):**
Examples such as **environmental movements, pollution-related protests, and coal mining issues in Singrauli (Madhya Pradesh)** were discussed. These cases helped me understand how local problems can become large-scale movements.
- **Why History Matters (Storytelling Method):**
The session explained how past movements guide present struggles and help societies learn from earlier experiences.
- **Indian Constitution and National Symbols (Lecture):**
I learned about the **role of women members in the Constituent Assembly** and the importance of the **Indian National Flag**, designed by **Pingali Venkayya**, as a symbol of unity and freedom.

Activity: How to Start a People's Movement:

- Identifying the core problem clearly
- Understanding challenges such as public participation and sustainability
- Giving a meaningful name to the movement

- Maintaining discipline, unity, and non-violence

Movement Mapping Activity:

- **Pre-Independence Movements:** Champaran Satyagraha (1917), Kheda Movement, Non-Cooperation Movement (1920–22), Quit India Movement (1942 – *Do or Die*)
- **Post-Independence and Recent Movements:** JP Movement, Anna Hazare’s anti-corruption movement, Farmers’ Movement (2020–21), and discussions on CAA–NRC

This day helped me understand that **collective action, discipline, and sustained effort are essential for social change.**

Session Report: International Affairs and Global Power Politics

Facilitator: Feroze Mithiborwala

The session by **Feroze Mithiborwala** focused on understanding **international affairs, modern wars, and global power structures**. The session explained that present-day wars are not fought only through weapons, but also through **economy, media, religion, and political narratives**.

The facilitator discussed global conflicts such as the **Palestine issue**, highlighting land occupation, displacement of people, and the humanitarian crisis. The **USA–Venezuela conflict** was explained as an example of economic warfare, where sanctions are used to weaken a nation instead of direct military action. Australia’s role in global military alliances was also discussed to show how powerful countries influence international decisions.

Another important aspect was the **influence of Israel on American politics**, including both left-wing and right-wing narratives. The session explained how religion, especially Christianity, is sometimes used for political brainwashing to justify wars and policies. The growing power of **corporations and social media control**, including platforms like TikTok, was discussed to show how public opinion is shaped and manipulated.

Key Learning:

The session helped participants understand that global politics is driven by **power, resources, and control**, and emphasized the importance of **critical thinking** and questioning mainstream narratives.

Conclusion:

This session was informative and eye-opening, helping participants connect global events with local struggles and develop a deeper political awareness.

Session 3: Aarey Movement and Climate Justice

Facilitator: Amrita Bhattacharyya

The third session was conducted by **Amrita Bhattacharyya** and focused on **environmental justice and climate change**, using the **Aarey Forest Movement** as a case study.

The facilitator explained the importance of forests in maintaining:

- Biodiversity
- Water cycles
- Climate balance
- Survival of indigenous communities

The Aarey Movement was discussed as an example of resistance against destructive development projects that prioritize profit over nature and people. Issues such as **deforestation, coal mining, denotification of forest land, and loss of biodiversity** were explained in detail.

The session also connected local environmental struggles to global platforms such as **COP 15 and COP 50**, highlighting the failure of powerful nations to take adequate responsibility for climate change. A strong warning was given that the **next major global conflicts may be over water and natural resources**.

This session helped participants understand that environmental protection is directly linked to **human rights and social justice**.

Session 4: Counselling and Self-Understanding

Facilitators: Bineeta and Kimaaya

The final session of Day 1 was conducted by **Bineeta and Kimaaya** and focused on the **basics of counselling and self-awareness**. The session clarified that counselling is not about giving advice, but about **listening, understanding, and supporting individuals in making their own decisions**.

Key aspects discussed included:

- Meaning and purpose of counselling
- Importance of understanding oneself before helping others
- Ethical behaviour, confidentiality, and boundaries
- Appropriate spaces and situations for counselling sessions

The session emphasized empathy, non-judgmental listening, and emotional sensitivity. It laid a strong foundation for later counselling-based sessions in the programme.

Conclusion of Day 1

Day 1 provided a strong conceptual foundation by linking **people's movements, global politics, environmental justice, and personal responsibility**. The sessions helped participants understand how global power structures affect local realities and how self-awareness and ethical counselling are essential tools for social change. The learning from this day set the tone for the rest of the programme.

Day 2 – Gender, Sexuality, Counselling, Political Ideologies & Belief Systems

Session 1: Gender and Sexuality

Facilitator: Dawishala Giri

The session on gender and sexuality focused on understanding **identity, body, consent, and social conditioning**. An introductory activity asked participants to write their name using body parts, which helped reflect on self-identity and bodily awareness. The importance of using the **mother's name** along with the father's name was discussed as a step towards gender equality.

A clear distinction was made between **sex**, which is biological, and **gender**, which is socially constructed. The facilitator explained how society controls bodies, especially women's bodies, through norms, shame, and restrictions. Nature versus society was discussed to show how many limitations are socially created, not natural.

Two case studies were discussed:

1. A 14-year-old girl seeing her naked body in the mirror
2. A 19-year-old girl experiencing physical touch and feeling happiness

These case studies helped participants understand **adolescence psychology, consent, body autonomy, emotions, and victim blaming**, and emphasized that feelings and bodily experiences should be understood without judgement.

Session 2: Counselling Practice

Facilitators: Bineeta & Kimaaya

This practical session focused on **how counselling is done in real situations**. Participants were divided into groups and performed role plays as **counsellor, client, and observer**. The session emphasized:

- Active listening
- Non-judgemental attitude
- Confidentiality
- Empathy and emotional sensitivity

The session helped participants understand that counselling is about **support and understanding**, not giving advice or imposing solutions.

Session 3: Political Ideologies

Facilitator: Prema Desai

This session explained how **political ideologies shape society, governance, and people's lives**.

- **Socialism** was explained using examples like government schools, ration shops, and public hospitals.
- **Communism** was discussed as an idea of a classless society, with examples from the former Soviet Union and its challenges.
- **Democracy** was explained using India as an example, highlighting the importance of active and informed citizens beyond voting.
- **Oligarchy** was explained through corporate control over politics and media.
- **Theocracy** was discussed as rule based on religion, which can limit freedom and diversity.

The **Sarvodaya Movement**, inspired by Mahatma Gandhi, was discussed as a model focusing on equality, non-violence, decentralised power, and upliftment of all.

Session 4: Belief Systems

Facilitator: Zakia Soman

This session focused on how **beliefs are shaped by caste, class, gender, and religion**. Participants were encouraged to question traditions and beliefs that justify inequality and discrimination. The session emphasized critical thinking and the need to separate faith from oppressive practices.

Conclusion of Day 2

Day 2 helped participants develop a **deeper understanding of gender justice, counselling ethics, political awareness, and belief systems**. The sessions strengthened critical thinking and encouraged questioning of social norms, power structures, and internalised biases.

Day 3 – BMMA Orientation, Muslim Women’s Rights, Law Reforms & Values

Session 1: Introduction to BMMA and Muslim Women’s Rights

Facilitator: Noorjahan

The session began with an introduction to **Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA)** and its vision of building a just, democratic, and gender-equal society. The facilitator explained that BMMA works at the grassroots level to empower Muslim women through awareness, leadership, and legal reform.

The key focus areas of BMMA were discussed, which include **education, health, security, law reform, and livelihood**. The session highlighted major achievements of BMMA such as:

- The movement against **instant Triple Talaq**, leading to legal reform
- Opening of **Haji Ali Dargah** for women
- Appointment of **women Qazis**, challenging male-dominated religious authority

The session also addressed how Muslim communities are often viewed as **poor, backward, assetless, and lacking voice**, and how internal patriarchy combined with lack of democracy and justice worsens the condition of women.

Muslim Personal Law Timeline

- **1937:** Shariat Application Act
- **1939:** Dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act
- **1986:** Maintenance rights after divorce
- **2019:** Criminalisation of instant Triple Talaq

These laws were explained in simple terms to show how legal reforms impact women's lives and rights.

Polygamy Study

A detailed discussion was held on polygamy, focusing on **Quranic values of justice, equality, and responsibility**. Six teams performed role plays showing how polygamy often begins and the reasons given by husbands and families. The learning from the study was that polygamy is largely driven by **patriarchal mindset and social pressure**, rather than religious necessity.

Session 2: Attention, Values and Social Understanding

Facilitator: Mohammed Khan

This session used **three interactive games** to teach the importance of **attention, presence, and focus** during learning and in daily life. The moral of the games was that without full attention, understanding and growth are not possible.

Participants were divided into groups to discuss topics such as:

- **Culture vs Religion** – understanding the difference between social practices and religious values
- **Needs vs Wants** – learning to identify real necessities versus material desires

The session encouraged self-reflection, teamwork, and clarity of values.

Conclusion of Day 3

Day 3 strengthened participants' understanding of **BMMA's mission, Muslim women's legal rights, social challenges, and ethical values**. The sessions helped connect law, religion, culture, and personal responsibility, preparing participants for leadership roles within their communities.

Day 4 – Counselling Skills, Leadership, Personal Effectiveness & Healing

Session 1: Counselling Skills and Ethics

Facilitator: Bindu Chaddha

This session focused on developing **professional counselling skills** and understanding the ethical responsibilities of a counsellor. The facilitator explained that counselling is a sensitive process that requires honesty, empathy, and respect for the client.

Key points discussed included:

- The **role of a counsellor** as a listener and facilitator, not a decision-maker
- Importance of **confidentiality, trust, and integrity**
- Maintaining proper **posture, body language, and eye contact**
- Being emotionally present and non-judgemental

A role-play exercise was conducted where participants acted as **counsellor, client, and observer**. Observers gave feedback on communication style, listening skills, and emotional response. This activity helped participants understand real-life counselling situations.

Session 2: Personal Effectiveness

Facilitator: Shriharsh Kaushik

This session was one of the most detailed and practical sessions of the programme, focusing on **personal effectiveness, leadership qualities, and self-management**.

The session began by explaining the difference between a **manager and a leader**. A manager mainly gives instructions and controls work, while a leader inspires, guides with clarity, and takes responsibility. A leader leads by example and creates impact through effectiveness, not authority.

The facilitator introduced the **Four-Quadrant Time Management Model**:

1. **Urgent and Important** – crises, deadlines, emergencies
2. **Not Urgent but Important** – planning, learning, health, relationships
3. **Urgent but Not Important** – distractions, interruptions
4. **Not Urgent and Not Important** – time-wasting activities

Participants were encouraged to focus more on the **second quadrant (Not Urgent but Important)** to build long-term success and balance.

The importance of **daily discipline and continuous learning** was highlighted through simple habits:

- Reading a **newspaper daily** to stay informed
- Reading a **magazine weekly** for deeper understanding
- Reading a **book monthly** for knowledge and perspective

The facilitator also explained two types of people:

- **Reactive people**, who respond emotionally to situations
- **Proactive people**, who take responsibility and act consciously

Participants were guided to reflect on their **strengths, passions, and goals**, and understand how clarity in these areas leads to confidence and direction in life.

Group Activity (Tower-Building Game):

Participants were divided into teams. Only two members were allowed to actively build a tower using lunch boxes, while one member acted as a guide with **limited words**. The task had to be completed within ten minutes.

Learning from the activity:

- Listening to others is important, but **decision-making is personal**
- Everyone may give advice (family, friends, relatives), but the final responsibility lies with oneself
- Leadership requires clarity, patience, and confidence

The key message was: **“Listen to everyone, but shape your life with your own understanding.”**

Session 3: Healing, Therapy and Mindfulness

Facilitators: Noor & Lia

This session focused on **emotional healing and mental well-being**. A mindfulness exercise was conducted to help participants become aware of their emotions and inner state.

A powerful partner activity was conducted where one participant played the role of a **mother**, and the other played the role of a **son or daughter**, after which roles were exchanged. This exercise helped participants express suppressed emotions and unresolved feelings from the past.

Many participants experienced emotional release, including tears, showing how deeply held emotions can affect mental health. The session emphasized that healing is essential for personal growth and effective leadership.

Conclusion of Day 4

Day 4 helped participants strengthen **counselling skills, leadership qualities, personal effectiveness, emotional awareness, and healing**. The sessions emphasized that effective leadership begins with self-discipline, emotional balance, and ethical responsibility.

Day 5 – Future Planning, Leadership Responsibility and State Action Plans

Session: Future Planning of BMMA and Ubharte Rehnuma

Facilitator: Noorjahan

The final day of the programme focused on **future planning, leadership responsibility, and collective action** under the Ubharte Rehnuma initiative. The session aimed to translate learning from the previous four days into **practical action plans** at the state and community level.

The facilitator explained BMMA's long-term vision of strengthening women's leadership through organised, informed, and sustained efforts. Participants from **seven different states** presented their **six-month action plans**, outlining the work they plan to undertake in their respective regions.

The key focus areas identified across states included:

- **Education:** awareness on girls' education, dropout prevention, and legal rights
- **Health:** access to healthcare, mental health awareness, and reproductive health
- **Security:** addressing domestic violence, harassment, and safety concerns
- **Law Reform:** legal awareness on Muslim personal laws and constitutional rights
- **Livelihood:** skill development and economic independence for women

The session emphasized the importance of **collective leadership**, where responsibilities are shared and decisions are made democratically. Participants were encouraged to build local teams, strengthen community networks, and engage with state and national platforms for advocacy.

The facilitator highlighted that leadership is not about position or authority, but about **commitment, accountability, and service to the community**. The session concluded with a strong message that real change happens when learning is followed by consistent action.

Conclusion of Day 5

Day 5 provided clarity on **direction, responsibility, and future action**. It helped participants understand their role as emerging leaders and reinforced the importance of planning, collaboration, and long-term engagement for social justice and women's empowerment.