

INDIA*

Rising together: strengthening feminist leadership of young women and gender-diverse persons from Dalit and Muslim communities

DURATION: 03/2025 – 02/2027

In India, young Dalit and Muslim women and gender-diverse people face systemic discrimination, exclusion, and underrepresentation in political and civic life, despite constitutional protections.

This exclusion exists amidst an increasing restrictions on community engagement, reflecting the broader global trend of shrinking civic space and diminished civil liberties. While women and gender-diverse people from both Dalit as well as Muslim communities have been organizing, their voices remain sidelined. These young leaders often challenge both societal norms and state structures, yet are rarely seen as agents of change. Structural barriers continue to hinder their leadership. Supporting a new generation of young Dalit and Muslim women leaders is crucial for inclusive, representative policymaking.

This project aims to build a 'learning and solidarity platform' of young women and gender-diverse leaders from Dalit and Muslim communities, grounded in co-leadership and collective power, to serve as catalysts for gender equality in policy and public life. It centers intersectional feminist strategies to amplify voices and leadership. Key strategies to implement this project are:



Strengthening political consciousness and leadership skills through feminist popular education, mentorship, and intergenerational exchange.



Building the organizational resilience of grassroots collectives led by young women to enable sustained advocacy and collective action.



Fostering cross-community solidarity and connecting local efforts to national and global feminist movements, enabling participants to influence policy and challenge systems of gender, caste, and religious oppression.



Photo: UN Women/Soumi Das

*States of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh

KEY TARGETS INCLUDE

150

from Dalit and Muslim communities with strengthened capacities to lead

**YOUNG WOMEN
AND GENDER-DIVERSE LEADERS**

100

actively advocate or promote intersectional gender equality within policymaking spaces

**YOUNG WOMEN
AND GENDER-DIVERSE LEADERS**

300

provided to young women and gender-diverse leaders from Dalit and Muslim communities to deepen community leadership and strengthen advocacy skills

**HOURS OF
MENTORING**

10

conducted through the Community of Learning on Feminist Leadership, Policy and Governance

**LEARNING
SESSIONS**

PARTNERSHIPS



All India Dalit Mahila Adhikar Manch (AIDMAM), a recognized grassroots movement aligned with UN Women GEWE goals.

KEY ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Conduct capacity development workshops centering gender justice and feminist approaches to policy making, to deepen community-led leadership, foster advocacy campaigns and movement building, hone organizing skills, and enable inter-generational and inter-state learning among leadership cohort members.
- ▶ Facilitate structured dialogues between young women leaders and seasoned feminist activists to foster solidarity, knowledge exchange, and collaborative leadership across caste, religion, and regions.
- ▶ Build an informal national network and online learning community for peer support, storytelling, knowledge sharing, and collective strategizing among young Dalit and Muslim women leaders.
- ▶ Develop a unified, intersectional national advocacy agenda for feminist policy-making, addressing key issues that emerge from consultations, workshops and webinars with young Dalit and Muslim leaders. These could include gender-based violence in the home and in the workplace, exclusion from the workforce and from policy-making, and political representation of women and gender-diverse persons from Dalit and Muslim communities.



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