

Atkar

Social Ventures

ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear Partners, Friends, and Supporters,

The year 2024-25 marked a period of deep learning, expansion, and meaningful transformation for Aakar Social Ventures. Across Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana, West Bengal, Sikkim and Bihar, our team worked closely with schools, communities, institutions, and CSR partners to ensure adolescent girls can manage menstruation safely, confidently, and with dignity.

Through sustained menstrual hygiene awareness programs, our Training of Trainers (ToT) models, and access to sustainable period care, we reached thousands of schoolgirls many of whom attended menstruation sessions for the very first time. We also strengthened the capacity of teachers, nurses, and community leaders to become long-term menstrual health champions.

Our focus has remained rooted in awareness, behaviour change, sustainability, and creating a support ecosystem that extends beyond classrooms from families to communities. As we look ahead, we remain committed to building a future where every girl has knowledge of menstrual health and access to safe, hygienic, and sustainable menstrual care, free from shame or barriers.

With gratitude,
Sharmila Chowdhury
Executive Director
Aakar Social Ventures

ABOUT AAKAR SOCIAL VENTURES

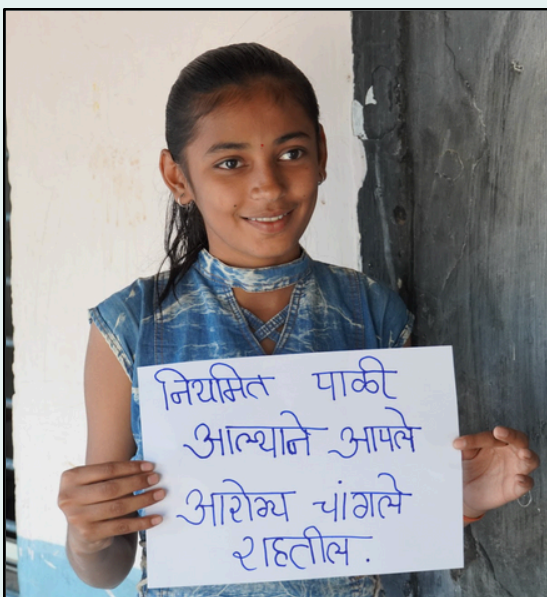
Aakar Social Ventures is a Section 8 non-profit organisation leading menstrual health education, behaviour change programs, and sustainable menstrual practices across India. For over a decade, Aakar has worked toward making menstrual health:

- Inclusive
- Sustainable
- Environmentally responsible
- Accessible to girls and women from underserved communities

We collaborate with state governments, corporations, development agencies, and local institutions to create long-term menstrual health solutions.

OUR MISSION

To empower women and girls through comprehensive menstrual health, hygiene awareness, behaviour change initiatives, sustainable practices and community-led awareness efforts that promote dignity, improve health and well-being, and foster long-term social and environmental transformation.



OUR VISION

We envision a world where menstruation is understood and managed with dignity and informed choice. They're creating a future where every girl and woman has the knowledge, life skills, and access to sustainable period care. Through their work, they build ecosystems of change that transform awareness into action, and equality into an everyday reality.

OUR APPROACH

- **Training of Trainers (ToT)**
Teachers, staff nurses, and DIET faculty trained to deliver ongoing sessions independently.
- **Activity-Based MHM Program**
Designed for adolescent girls, culturally sensitive, in local languages.
- **Behaviour Change Communication**
Myth-busting, stigma reduction, and confidence-building.
- **Sustainable Menstrual Practices**
Promotion of compostable pads and eco-friendly disposal.
- **School & Community Engagement**
Sessions for girls, inclusion of boys/parents where appropriate.



OVERALL IMPACT (2024–25)

Direct Impact

➤ **1,296 Schools Reached**

Schools across Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana, and Bihar actively participated in Aakar's menstrual health programs, embedding awareness and dignity into everyday school culture.

➤ **1,74,274 Girls Directly Benefitted**

Girls received structured menstrual hygiene education, safe period care, and stigma-free guidance enabling them to manage menstruation with confidence and continue attending school regularly.



➤ **1,341 Personnel Trained**

Aakar strengthened institutional ecosystems by training: 301 Staff Nurses and 1,040 Teachers & DIET Faculty Members. This Training-of-Trainers (ToT) model ensures ongoing delivery of menstrual health sessions, even after the project ends.

➤ **3,47,24,556 Sustainable Pads Distributed**

Over 3.47 crore compostable pads ensured safe menstrual care access while reducing plastic waste improving both health and environmental outcomes for communities.

Indirect Impact

➤ Families & Communities Reached

Through school-led discussions, ripple effects, and increased awareness, thousands of families indirectly benefitted as girls shared knowledge with siblings, mothers, and peers helping shift community attitudes toward menstruation.

➤ Enhanced School Environment

Trained teachers and nurses fostered open, supportive school environments. Improved MHM understanding led to:

- Reduced stigma
- Better communication
- Increased trust between girls and school staff

➤ Sustainable Behaviour Adoption

Eco-friendly menstrual practices sparked long-term awareness among:

- Household members
- Village communities
- School management teams

Indirectly influencing attitudes on hygiene, waste management, and environmental responsibility.



➤ Peer Learning & Ripple Effect

Every educated girl became an advocate. As girls shared their learning:

- More peers adopted safe and hygienic practices
- Myths were reduced
- Confidence and self-esteem improved

The impact extended far beyond the original beneficiari

Building Confidence

Ranjana's Journey To Menstrual Awareness

In the small village of Kegave, located in Maharashtra's Palghar district, lives Ranjana, a 7th-grade student at Zila Parishad School Kegave. Partially blind, Ranjana has faced several challenges, including the loss of her mother at an early age and no support from her alcoholic father. With poverty compounding her struggles, Ranjana often found herself navigating school and life with little guidance or confidence. Quiet by nature, Ranjana stayed away from her classmates and rarely engaged in conversations. When she got her first period in 6th grade, she was completely unprepared. A stain on her dress led to tears, as she didn't understand what was happening to her. She couldn't express herself and believed she was the only one experiencing this, leaving her scared, confused and hesitant.



A change happened. Sonali Shamrao Ghule, her schoolteacher, attended Training of Trainers (ToT) program on menstrual hygiene management and sustainability and initiate awareness sessions at Ranjana's school. The sessions that followed transformed the lives of Ranjana and other girls who could now learn about menstruation, ask questions, and understand that it was a natural part of growing up. Particularly for Ranjana, the sessions made a big difference. She gradually became more comfortable discussing concerns and asking questions about menstrual hygiene and the pads provided through the program. Ranjana saw that she wasn't alone and took away hesitation and embarrassment.

Her classmates who were now equally well informed became more understanding and supportive. Some even helped Ranjana manage her periods, creating an environment of care and cooperation. This small yet significant shift has allowed Ranjana to approach menstruation with more confidence. Right support and proper interventions do bring meaningful change, helping young girls like Ranjana navigate challenges with greater ease and understanding.

Breaking Barriers

A Male Teacher's Journey Towards MHM Awareness

At ZPHS Pankanergaon, Nitin Ramachandra More, a science teacher, had always understood the science of menstruation but had never addressed the topic with his students or female family members. That changed when he attended the Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) Training of Trainers (ToT) Program under the Infosys Foundation Girls' Wellness Program.

The training equipped Nitin with practical tools to tackle menstrual myths using logical and scientific explanations. Initially, he found it difficult to encourage rural girls to talk about menstruation openly. However, with the support of female colleagues, he created a safe and comfortable space where students could ask questions and share their concerns without hesitation.



Nitin's sessions emphasized key aspects of menstrual health, including maintaining hygiene, choosing and using menstrual products properly, following a healthy diet, and building compost pits for eco-friendly disposal. His practical and inclusive approach helped students overcome taboos and misconceptions. The impact has been significant. Students no longer feel the need to hide their periods or lie about their situation. The training not only enhanced Nitin's knowledge but also shifted his perspective, making him more empathetic and confident in addressing menstrual health.

Future Outlook (2025–26)

In the coming year, Aakar Social Ventures aims to deepen its impact and expand its reach by strengthening partnerships across additional states and collaborating more closely with government institutions and CSR partners. A key focus will be to reinforce our Training of Trainers (ToT) model so that teachers, staff nurses, and community leaders continue delivering menstrual health sessions independently, ensuring long-term institutional continuity. We also plan to scale sustainable disposal practices. In line with our commitment to inclusivity, we will explore opportunities to gradually involve boys and parents wherever appropriate to foster a supportive environment that reduces stigma around menstruation. Enhanced monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems will further enable data-driven insights and stronger program management. With these efforts, Aakar is positioned to emerge as a national leader in driving sustainable, stigma-free menstrual health solutions and behaviour change across India.



Gratitude

Aakar Social Ventures extends its sincere appreciation to all our partners, donors, government departments, schools, teachers, staff nurses, community organisations, and volunteers whose support and collaboration made this year's progress possible. Your trust has enabled us to reach thousands of girls with knowledge, dignity, and sustainable menstrual choices, while strengthening the institutions and ecosystems that support them. Together, we are building a future where every girl can manage menstruation safely, confidently, and without stigma in school, at home, and in her community. We look forward to continuing this journey of empowerment and impact with your continued partnership.