

# *an* **Unprecedented** *year*



2020-21  
Breakthrough India Annual Report

Breakthrough   
Act. End Violence Against Women.

**The** global pandemic began in early 2020, catching the entire world off-guard. People and organisations scrambled to adjust to a world where working from home was the norm and physical public spaces were no longer available easily.



Over the course of 2020, there was a dramatic rise in cases of violence against women. The National Commission for Women reported a sharp spike in the reporting of domestic violence cases within the first few months of the pandemic induced lockdown. This was not unique to India; across the world, **domestic violence against women and girls** were rising as many were abruptly and often without warning trapped inside abusive homes with violent partners.

Apart from the violence, **women's domestic labour** (already outsized compared to men's) grew with the addition of the care of children and spouses who were suddenly at home all the time. The care work of the whole household, as well as potentially juggling careers doubled many women's share of domestic labour.

And not just that. In the months of economic uncertainty after the lockdown, cases of **early marriage** of girls are on the rise. 10 million additional early marriages are projected to happen as a consequence of this, before the end of the decade.

It is against this backdrop that Breakthrough, like many others, also swung into action.

The goal was the same:

**To create a world where discrimination and violence against women and girls was unacceptable.**

It was a matter of changing how to go about it...







## A Note From Sohini Bhattacharya, CEO of Breakthrough



**Dear** Friends,

What a whirlwind of a year this has been! A year of personal suffering and loss in many different ways for countless people.

**For us at Breakthrough, the pandemic brought into sharp focus how fragile and unequal our world is and how frequently women are at the centre of injustice;** women had to deal with greater burdens in every area - financial, health, education, and most devastatingly, violence. We were concerned that the progress we had made with women and girls up to this point—delayed marriageable age, girls asserting their rights, and extending their education—would reverse itself. We saw that instead of achieving gender equality, there was a widening of inequalities.

In the midst of this crisis, **Breakthrough seized the opportunity to collaborate with the Punjab state education department, to build a gender transformative school system through gender sensitive curricula, teachers and school staff.** We felt that since schools help form students' foundational views about gender-equity, this could be an important place for preventing and overcoming violence in the long term.





We had this chance because the National Education Policy in India, 2020, addresses gender, inclusion, and diversity. It gives the structure we are trying to create more legitimacy. State leadership in changing the curriculum or how instructors are incorporating new ideas becomes crucial when the central education strategy is translated into state curriculum frameworks. The aspirations of girls, their capacity to finish education and postpone marriage, as well as the development of women's and girls' leadership in positions of decision-making, can all be significantly improved if gender equitable behaviours can be demonstrated in schools.

We expect that **by working together with the state-level government education department to integrate a gender lens into the curriculum and provide teachers with training on how to promote gender equitable behaviour in the classroom**, our initiative in Punjab will achieve precisely that goal. The school plays a significant role in helping people socialise. As long as it guarantees that the entire school system may directly act in appreciation and promotion of a gender-bias free, violence-free environment, it can also be a crucial location for avoiding and overcoming violence. In the long run, this ensures that teenagers realise their full potential and lead violence-free lives.

This is what we have set out to do over the next 5 years. **We are just at the beginning of this journey, and we hope that each and every one of you will join us!**

Warmly,  
Sohini Bhattacharya



*Breakthrough*  
**Moments**



## Breakthrough's Response To COVID-19 And The Lockdown

During the pandemic, it quickly became apparent how vital it was to continue to remain in contact with young people Breakthrough was already working with during this period, so that there was no loss in the work already done with the adolescents and the community stakeholders.



**The challenge was to tackle the communication problem**, especially given the lack of internet connections in the rural areas and the lack of access for women and girls to mobile phones. In order to begin tackling this, we modified the content of our gender-equity curriculum (Taaron Ki Toli) to suit a 20-25-minute session that could be conducted through Whatsapp groups and community developers were trained so that they could conduct these sessions.

Breakthrough teams also identified **800 families across 3050 villages** who needed help with their basic needs during the lockdown and connected them to organisations providing these kinds of services. They helped these families with access to sanitisers, masks and ration cards.

Two **recommendation notes**, one on domestic violence to Niti Aayog and another on migrant workers to the National Commission for Women, were also submitted.

Once the lockdown was lifted, community developers began to return to officially sanctioned green zones where they were warmly welcomed back by the community. Here are some notable quotes from adolescents who were thrilled to meet them again!



Bhaiya (Brother), times are so unpredictable. Don't know when you will come again. So I prepared this bouquet of paper flowers myself to give you as token of my gratitude and appreciation.

**Varsha, Amoliya village**



Didi (Sister), I am feeling today as if I have met my best friend after a very long time. Today I only want to share all my bottled up thoughts and feelings with you because I was missing a person like you with whom I can unburden all my stress caused due to COVID challenges.

**Shivani, Saraiya village**



## Taking The Discussion Online

Breakthrough's response was twofold: on the ground and online. Adapting to the new digital space, **Breakthrough organised a number of webinars to talk about the many challenges the pandemic created, especially for women and girls.** The Another Pandemic series of webinars was created in particular to deal with the silence around women's issues in the wake of the lockdown and the pandemic. This includes topics such as adolescent wellbeing, digital abuse, domestic violence and more.

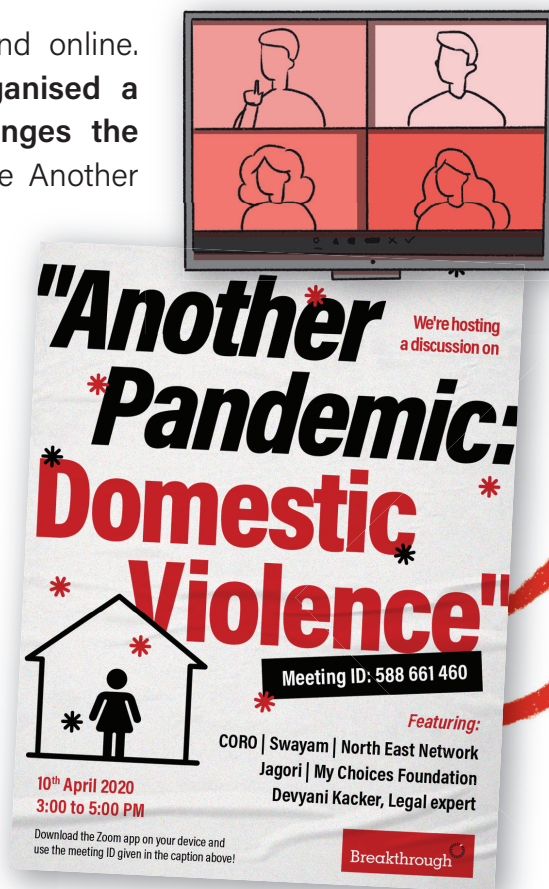
We also organised two **digital town halls**: One on mental health - The Suppression of Mental Health - with Pavitra Jayaraman (White Swan Foundation), Lasya Nadimpally (Belongg), Kavita Bundelkhandi (Khabar Lahariya) and Sukanya Ray (TISS). The second was on violence against women, which was attended by more than 300 people including Rekha Sharma, chairperson of the National Commission of Women.



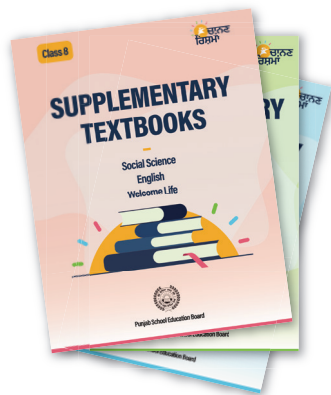
Breakthrough **collaborated with influencers** such as

MissMalini to host online discussions such as #TribeTalk: Tackling Domestic Violence During The Lockdown to talk about COVID-19 and its impact on women.

We were also one of 72 participants in Milaan Foundation's webinar, organised on the issue of networking and its benefits in the light of its program Girls Icon.



## Collaboration with the Punjab and Haryana Governments



On International Women's Day, Breakthrough was excited to announce **collaborations with two state governments!**

The Government of Punjab's Department of School Education announced its partnership with Breakthrough and J-PAL South Asia to integrate a gender sensitization curriculum for adolescents into the syllabus for all government schools in the state. The partnership was launched by the Honourable Chief Minister of Punjab on the occasion of International Women's Day!

At Chandigarh, the Department of Women and Child Development, Haryana and Breakthrough also exchanged a MoU for collaboration where Breakthrough will contribute in trainings, designing campaigns to address issue of violence and discrimination against women.

## Stories of Change

Young people from Breakthrough's communities really took the spirit of resilience to heart, as demonstrated by their actions. For example, **Aditya was a young man from Gorakhpur who, on realising that girls around him were desperately lacking access to much needed menstrual hygiene supplies during the lockdown**, took it upon himself to learn how to make sanitary napkins from Breakthrough peer educators and then helped educate others around him!

Savita's story is also one which stands out: having attended Breakthrough Taaron Ki Toli sessions, she decided to team up with her friends and help **make and distribute masks during the COVID-19 lockdown**. They didn't just do it alone either, they reached out to community leaders such as the sarpanch, teachers and more to ensure that their campaign had the desired reach.

These are just a glimpse at the stories unfolding behind the scenes, which are proof that empowered young people make change possible.





## Collaboration with Khabar Lahariya: COVID-19 Impact on Women

Breakthrough collaborated with the grassroots feminist media channel Khabar Lahariya to create visibility on **how COVID-19 has impacted the lives of rural women** including their education, workspaces, income, family lives, physical and mental health.

A total of 8 articles were published on these topics on Breakthrough's blog and each article was also accompanied by a discussion with the Khabar Lahariya team on Breakthrough's social media.



## GiveIndia Campaign

In collaboration with GiveIndia, Breakthrough launched a fundraising campaign centred around domestic violence, under the hashtag **#UniteAgainstDV**.

Breakthrough reached out to celebrities and influencers to spread the message of the campaign. These included major actors and influencers like Divya Dutta, Nakuul Mehta, Ahana Kumra, Mithila Palkar, Sucharita Tyagi and more, who then went on to become the faces of the campaign.

## Women's Helpline Number List

In response to the rising cases of domestic violence, Breakthrough, in collaboration with Gender at Work, put together **an exhaustive list of helpline numbers** for women across India which were divided zonally: North, South, East, West and Central. This list was widely disseminated across social media.



## Each One Reach One with Twitter

In May 2020, **Twitter invited Breakthrough India to use the spotlight space for a day.** The purpose of this was to bring focus to the increase in domestic violence during the lockdown.

Over 24 hours, Breakthrough put out 235 tweets, which received a **combined 3.8 million impressions** and as a consequence of which Breakthrough gained 1500 followers on Twitter.

We also planned and executed 4 tweetchats along the day which were joined by people from diverse backgrounds. The topics for the tweetchat were:

- *The status of domestic violence during the lockdown and post lockdown*
- *A 101 on The Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act*
- *What does a post pandemic world for women look like?*
- *The culture of violence and role of media*



## #IgnoreNoMore with Uber India

Breakthrough in collaboration with Uber India launched the #IgnoreNoMore campaign on 8<sup>th</sup> of March on all our digital platforms. Through this campaign, we aim to **motivate bystanders to intervene if they witness violence against women and girls in public spaces.**

At the tail end of the #IgnoreNoMore, Breakthrough India released two films, Bas! Stop and Kaam Se Kaam Mat Rakho which was shared across social media platforms.



## Action Coalition on Gender-Based Violence

UN Women announced the names of the Global Leaders of the Generation Equality Action Coalitions to accelerate gender equality. Of them, **Breakthrough is one of the CSOs leading the action coalition on Gender Based Violence.** The Action Coalitions' will focus on six themes that are critical for achieving gender equality: gender-based violence, economic justice and rights, bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights, feminist action for climate justice, technology and innovation for gender equality, and feminist movements and leadership.



## 16 Days of Activism

Breakthrough, along with the Centre for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL), organised a one-day consultation with participants from 8 different organisations. The objective of this was to **understand how the 16 Days Campaign has been run by the leading organisations in India, their focus, the type of activities and impact.**

And for this year, Breakthrough also wanted to take conversations beyond the 16 days themselves, especially because of the surge in violence against women, both globally and in India, created in wake of COVID-19. Breakthrough and CWGL collaborated to organise a webinar titled: **Post-Covid World: Prioritisation and Accountability in Addressing VAW.** The webinar was moderated by *Yogita Verma, Head - Resource Management* and included the following panelists: Dr Abiola Akiyode Afolabi, Executive Director of Women Advocates Research and Documentation Centre (WARDC), Roula Seghaier, Strategic Program, Coordinator at International Domestic Workers Federation, Bama Athreya, Senior Advisor on Gender, Equity and Inclusion at Laudes Foundation, Priya Varadarajan, Lead for Gender Justice and Persons with Disabilities, Clusters within Azim Premji Philanthropic Initiative

## Collaboration with Arthan

Breakthrough in collaboration with Arthan organised a 2-Day Digital Seminar titled **'Making Technology Gender Inclusive'** on 22 and 23 September 2020. During the pandemic, when almost all spheres of life have shifted to digital platforms, the gendered access to technology becomes very apparent. The seminar was thus aimed at understanding the nuances around gender and technology, with a focus on girls and women. The seminar had **328 unique attendees** over the 2 days.

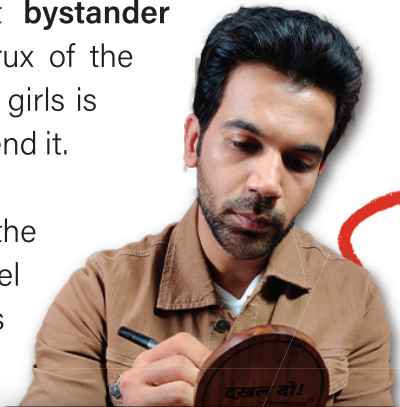
At the end of the seminar, recommendations were collected in terms of making technology and digital platforms accessible to women and girls. Breakthrough will be working on these recommendations as a way forward for possible policy interventions with respect to making technology gender-friendly.

## Dakhal Do

Breakthrough launched the 'Dakhal Do' campaign to talk about **bystander intervention** in cases of violence against women and girls. The crux of the campaign was to promote the idea that violence against women and girls is everyone's problem and that intervention is the tool by which one can end it.

Breakthrough partnered with renowned actor Rajkumar Rao for the larger #DakhalDo campaign. Rajkumar Rao also took part in a panel discussion with NDTV in which he shared how he intervened in cases of violence during his early days.

Dakhal Do was also carried to the community in the form of folk music. Geet Aapne Gaon Ke - a collection of folk songs on everyday issues that women and girls face - **reached 56,000 community members across Haryana.**



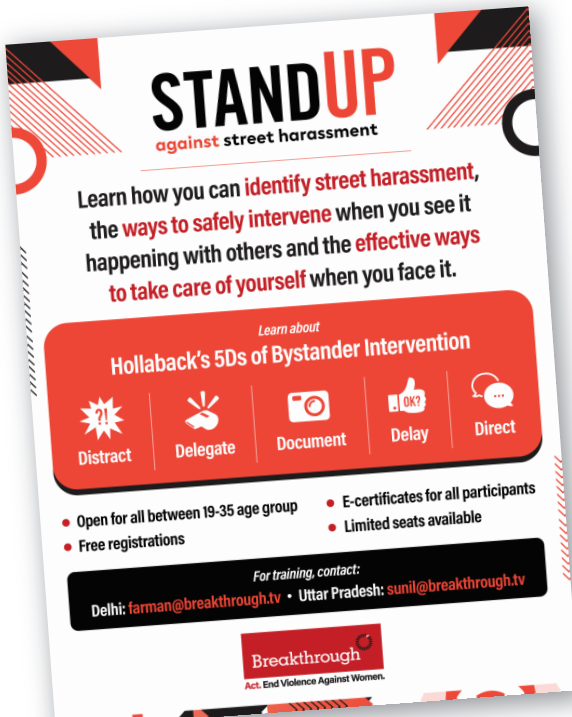
**दखल दो!**  
by Breakthrough

जब आवाज़ उठे, तब हिंसा रुके।

## Stand Up

Breakthrough partnered with Hollaback and L'Oréal India for 'Stand up Against Street Harassment', a global initiative on **encouraging bystander action to end violence against women.**

As a part of this, Breakthrough takes on 20 participants under a fellowship and trains them on bystander intervention 10 in each state. These trainers then themselves will go forward and conduct bystander intervention training of their own and take the message of being an active bystander forward.

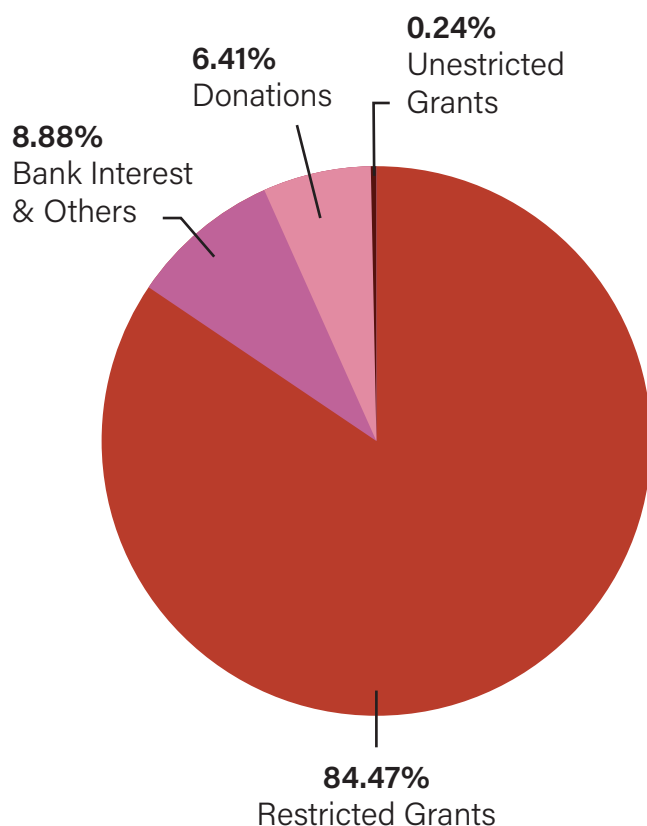


# *How Your Money Is Used*

2020-21

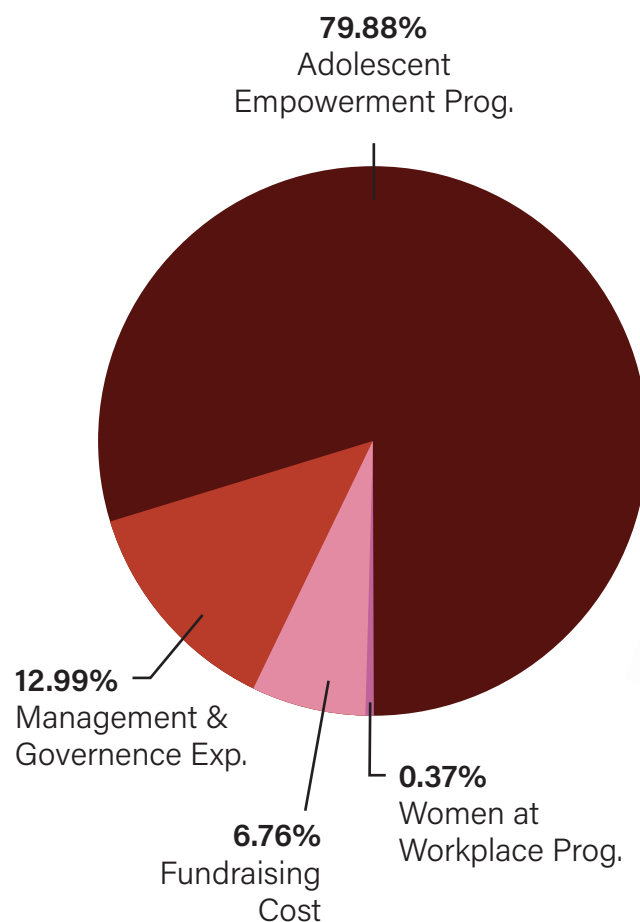
## Income

**INR 21.88 Crores**



## Expenditure

**INR 21.88 Crores**







**Breakthrough** 

**Act. End Violence Against Women.**

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

+91-11-41666101-06 | [contact@breakthrough.tv](mailto:contact@breakthrough.tv)

Plot 3, DDA Community Centre, Zamrudpur, New Delhi, Delhi - 110048

Breakthrough India @ 