

# Impact: Women Leverage the Reforms to Participate, Make their Voice Heard and Make a Difference

**On October 25, 2024**, women from Kishangarh and surrounding villages gathered at the Panchayat Samiti Auditorium in Silora for Mahila Chaupal, a platform to share their struggles and explore solutions for their community. These women, determined to transform their lives, openly discussed personal battles, inspired one another, and sought guidance on pressing issues.

## Stories of Resilience

Monika Mali led the discussion with her compelling story. Stuck in a marriage with a non-cooperative husband, Monika bravely chose to speak out. After seeking advice at a previous Mahila Chaupal, she filed an FIR, marking a pivotal moment in her life. Within months, she received a legal notice for alimony, gaining the independence she craved. Addressing the group, she urged, "Do not hide your problems; sharing leads to support and solutions. Together, we can live happier lives."

Guddi Sharma, a dedicated Suraksha Sakhi, highlighted a village woman facing a tough divorce. Despite her husband's reluctance, she found strength through community support. Guddi shared how legal advice led to mediation, giving the woman a fair chance at securing her rights and financial independence.

A young girl from Salemabad bravely shared her experience of being abandoned by her mother and left in the care of an abusive uncle. The community listened intently, offering empathy and encouragement. Her story inspired others to stand against injustice, reminding them that support is available for those who seek it.

Another woman discussed the situation of a mentally challenged girl, neglected by her in-laws while caring for her young son. The community committed to helping the young mother obtain mental health support and, when ready, to file an FIR to secure the care she and her child deserve.



Empowerment Through Legal Awareness and Support.

These personal stories provided a backdrop for insights from Honorable Mahendra Kumar Dhabu, Additional District and Sessions Judge and Secretary of the District Legal Services Authority. He emphasized the significance of legal protections in their lives, discussing laws like the Child Marriage Prohibition Act and the Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act. "Your voices are powerful," he asserted, "and the law is here to safeguard that power."



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## Women-Led Initiatives: Saathins and Community Champions

The event also highlighted the essential work of Saathins, local champions working with the Women Empowerment Department. They connect women to government schemes, prevent domestic violence, and foster a supportive community. Payal Chaudhary, a Supervisor, from the department, outlined initiatives aimed at enhancing women's livelihoods, education, and economic opportunities. Through these programs, women like Guddi and Monika become advocates for themselves and others, creating a wave of empowerment in their villages.

## A Community Pledge to End Violence

The event concluded with a powerful pledge led by Mr. Dhabi, where attendees committed to ending violence against women. Each woman signed a declaration affirming her commitment to nurture a safer, more just community. This pledge represented a shared determination to transform their lives and uplift each other.

As Mahila Chaupal wrapped up, around 90 women, including Gram Saathins, Suraksha Sakhis, and Para-Legal Volunteers, left with a renewed sense of purpose, recognizing the challenges they face and the collaborative efforts needed to dismantle barriers.

