



शालोभाली  
SELF-ESTEEM • UNITY • INDEPENDENCE

ANNUAL REPORT  
2018-2019





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# Letter from the Founder

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Khamaghani Friends,

The last year has been one of developments and sadness at the same time. Firstly my dear friend, Margrit Nobs, from Switzerland passed away in the summer after a long illness. Margrit has supported Sambhali Trust in many ways for over 10 years. She has provided financial donations for various projects as well teaching all the girls in the Jodhpur Empowerment Centre to knit woolly socks and hats for the cooler winter months! We are all inspired by Margrit and we will always remember her warmth and appreciate her amazing support.

We have also learnt a lot through PADEM, one of our main partners. In 2018, they asked us to carry out a mid-term evaluation for their projects and so after going through a short-listing process we managed to hire the services of the Centre for Environment and Development Studies in Jaipur, who carried out their surveys and reports and were very helpful. This has been a great learning process for us and in helping to improve our services.

One of our success stories this year, is seeing the first of our Sheerni Boarding Home girls complete her education at secondary school and is now studying for a BA at the local girls' college, for the next two years, to be followed by a degree in Law. Priya is a wonderful role model to the other girls and now we have another girl, Vimla, who wants to follow in her footsteps as she completes her secondary education in April 2019. Also, Monica Jod, once our star students from the original group back in 2007, is also studying for a Law degree and has taken on her first role at Sambhali as co-collaborator of the Aadarsh Project whose aim is to educate teenagers in schools in Jodhpur the effects of puberty, relationships, influence of media and the consequence of anti-social behaviour.

I was fortunate to be able to travel to Europe again in 2018. Again, I would like to say a big thank you to you all for hosting & supporting me during my stay and trying to help spread the Sambhali word further.

Looking ahead, with a huge amount of effort from Ernestine Badegruber and together with the Sambhali Associate organisations in Europe, we have made our first concrete steps to purchasing Sambhali's own space, next door to Sambhali's present HQ. This is still 'work in progress' and we hope to improve our workspace a lot within the next 2 or 3 years.

I would like to also thank my team and to all the volunteers for the tremendous work they have done throughout the year in all aspects of teaching, administration and fundraising. Without them we would not be able to develop and move forward in the way we have.

Warmest regards,

*Govind Singh Rathore*





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# Our mission

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*Sambhali Trust is a non-profit organization founded by Govind Singh Rathore in 2007 in Jodhpur, in the state of Rajasthan in India. Sambhali Trust's primary objective is to promote self-esteem, economic and social independence, education, and vocational skill training for disadvantaged women and girls in Rajasthan.*

The focus of Sambhali is within the lower socio-economic sector, where women experience discrimination and oppression based on their caste, status and gender.

Indian girls' educational needs are often overshadowed by families' financial burdens. Sambhali is working towards the goal of gender equality and is providing English, Maths and Hindi lessons in the empowerment centres and primary education centres as well as a Scholarship Programme to enable children to attend school. In addition, Sambhali implements workshops in schools and colleges throughout Jodhpur.

Other approaches to challenge society's perceptions and to enhance the lives of girls and women include skills training particularly in sewing and embroidery and microfinance activities, eventually supporting the women in breaking the cycle of poverty.

# Problem analysis

**72.1%** of Rajasthani girls between 15-17 years attend school, which is worst in the whole country

**19.4 years** is the mean age for a Rajasthani girl to get married

**45.3%** of Rajasthani women are working outside the home

**52.1%** of Rajasthani women are literate

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# New projects 2018-2019

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In August 2018, we opened a new women empowerment centre: Sakhi centre. 52 adolescent girls and women currently go to this new centre. With Sakhi centre, we now have 8 women empowerment centres in total, run by local staff and supported by our volunteers.

With the establishment of one more centre and additional teachers at our boarding homes, we have increased the total number of our local staff: Our team now consists of 41 dedicated and passionate people.

A few centres plan to change their location in the following months, to provide space for more children and women and to ensure a better and more productive learning experience for everyone.

A new venture was founded this year, called the *Aadarsh Project* which is designed to teach adolescent girls and boys about topics relevant to them, such as the body change in puberty, sexual harassment, and the dangers of the Internet. We intend to take this workshop to all schools in Jodhpur, that we have connections with through our *No Bad Touch Project*. The first workshop was held in February 2019 at Sambhali's Sheerni Boarding Home.

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# New projects 2018-2019

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In the Sambhali Graduate Sewing Centre, we have refined the responsibilities of the supervisors posts, so that the new graduates now have their own supervisor, Anita, whilst Pushpa and Praveen supervise implementation and quality checking of orders.

The establishment of a garden for both boarding homes is planned for the end of 2019 – the garden should be a place where the children can grow their own herbs, fruits and organic vegetables, which would give the children valuable skills in farming and nutritious food. An extra plus is that the garden would reduce the costs for food in the boarding homes.

Furthermore, art exhibitions are organized both by British and Canadian volunteers, including members of Sambhali UK who came in February and March 2019 to do workshops with the sewing classes. We hope to exhibit the art pieces by the end of the year.

We also try to connect with newspapers and magazines more to increase our outreach and expand out public audience, to raise funds as well as awareness about our work.

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# Current projects

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# Women Empowerment Centres

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# Women Empowerment Centres

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The Sambhali empowerment centres are the core projects of Sambhali Trust. The centers provide women and adolescent girls from lower caste and impoverished areas in both an urban location - Jodhpur - and a rural location - Setrawa - access to education and vocational skill training.

Hindi, English and Maths lessons as well as classes in Sewing and Embroidery appear on the daily agenda. The number of volunteers in each centre fluctuates between two and four throughout the year. The women and girls are divided into smaller Beginners, Medium and Advanced groups based on their prior educational experience, to ensure a productive learning and appropriate attention. Wednesdays are Workshop days, covering a wide spectrum from Geography to Health, Nutrition as well as Yoga or cooking.



Most importantly, these centres are a safe and inclusive environment, as many of the girls and women carry a background of severe discrimination in the family and wider community. Therefore, we encourage self-esteem, confidence and self-expression in each of our classes. There are 7 empowerment centres now all across Jodhpur and one in Setrawa, ensuring access to everyone -- Hindus, Muslims including those from Scheduled Castes.

The women and girls attend a 12 month course after which the aim is to provide each graduate with a sewing machine to enable them to continue their work and progress further at home and to offer the potential to earn an income.

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# Empowerment centres: What is new?

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This year, we have increased both the numbers of women and children we can reach and the quality of the lessons within the centres. While our existing centres continue to flourish, we have opened a new empowerment centre: Sakhi Empowerment Centre, opened in May 2018 and supported by our teachers Shenaz and Hawlesh. It had its first volunteers in January 2019 and is targeting women and adolescent girls in the local community.



We have also collected valuable feedback from some of our international sponsors and volunteers over the year regarding the content of our lessons. With a greater focus on testing as well as dividing the groups according to levels, we are making it easier for our teachers and volunteers to track each student's progress and see who needs additional help. Each centre has re-designed their timetable for the teachers, volunteers and students.

Furthermore, we started encouraging the girls and women to think and reflect more about the topic “women empowerment”, what it means to them personally as well as for society in general. In our workshops, volunteers have introduced female leaders around the world and cultivated critical thinking through reading and writing activities as well as group discussions. A whole week before International Women's Day was dedicated for these types of workshops.

On 22nd May 2019, the one-year course came to an end, and 166 women and adolescent girls graduated from their ECs, being gifted with their own sewing machine, so that eventually they can start working from home or open their own tailor shop. His Highness Maharaja Saheb of Jodhpur was present for the presentation of the 166 sewing machines and certificates.



### Jodhpur Empowerment Centre

JEC is Sambhali's main base since 2007 and provides a vocational training programme for 33 women and girls as well as tuition in Hindi, English and Maths and workshops.

### Abhivyakti Empowerment Centre

Abhivyakti has been offering women vocational and skill training since 2014. One hour of English lesson is also taught on a daily basis. Abhivyakti has 30 students aged 16-40.

### Fatima Empowerment Centre

Established in February 2013, this centre has been providing a vocational training programme and tuition in a slum area of Jodhpur.

Fatima has successfully reached 31 women this year.

### Abhaya Empowerment Centre

Abhaya opened in 2014 to expand Sambhali's accessibility to more women and children. We have moved to a new location in August 2018. This centre also houses one of our primary education centres.

Abhaya has reached 33 women this year.



### Laadli Empowerment Centre

Laadli first opened in January 2016 & moved to a new location in April 2018. It is open for women in the mornings and children in the afternoons. This centre has successfully reached 35 girls and women aged 14 to 40 this year; all of them are Muslim.

### Shakti Empowerment Centre

Shakti was opened in 2015 and offers women training in sewing and embroidery as well as tuition. In the last year, Shakti educated and trained 32 women.

### Setrawa Empowerment Centre

Opened in 2007, the centre in Setrawa focuses on training in sewing and embroidery. There is an additional afternoon programme for children of scheduled castes. The centre also operates as a base for the successful Sheerni microfinance project. 25 women currently go to our centre in Setrawa.

### Sakhi Empowerment Centre

Sakhi was opened in May 2018. It is supported by two teachers: Shenaz, who is the sewing teacher – she graduated from Sambhali last year – and Hawlesh. Volunteers started coming in January 2019. For now, the Sakhi Empowerment Centre is for women and adolescent girls only, providing lessons in Hindi, Maths, and English as well as sewing and embroidery. 52 students in total are coming to Sakhi empowerment centre every day – 25 women in the morning, 27 women in the afternoon.



## The Story of Sunita (Shakti EC)

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Sunita (*woman in pink*) lost her husband last year on International Women's Day, due to a heart attack. After that, she could no longer go to Shakti Empowerment Centre for five months - the centre that her husband had always encouraged her to go to for learning English and Sewing. Since she had been one of the most experienced students at the centre, and her parents-in-law are unable to make an income, she was given training at the Graduate Sewing Centre for two weeks to learn all the skills necessary for being a sewing teacher.

Sunita started her job as the sewing teacher at Shakti Empowerment in March 2019, feeling grateful she is now able to contribute to her family's well-being financially. Manju, the English teacher at Shakti Empowerment Centre, is glad to have Sunita's creative support. Sunita's three children - 2 sons and 1 daughter - all go to school, sponsored by Sambhali Trust. Hindu widows like Sunita are often shunned from any participation in community life. Sunita, however, is lucky to be treated better than the majority of other Hindu widows. Her parents-in-law treat her well, and Sunita is an essential member of the Sambhali family.



## The Story of Parveen (Laadli EC)

32-year-old Parveen, who lives in a Muslim slum in central Jodhpur, lost her husband five years ago due to cancer. Ever since, she has had to borrow money from her neighbours and friends, as her parents-in-law refuse to support her in any way. She hardly sees the doctor for her worsening problems with anaemia, as she cannot afford to pay the medical fees. Ever since Parveen's husband's death, she has to suffer mental abuse coming from her in-laws on a daily basis – they see her as useless in the household, thus sent her to study at Sambhali Trust.

In Laadli Empowerment Centre, Parveen has the opportunity to express herself through creative activities and to learn English and the skill of sewing and embroidery. She graduates from Laadli Empowerment Centre in April 2019, being gifted with her own sewing machine. This will allow her to continue working on making clothes at home, thus being more independent and self-confident.



“My name is Gulfasa. My father was a labourer but now he is no more with us. I have two brothers and one sister. Our whole family felt the lack of support without my father as we didn’t have many skills to make an income. I felt so lost. But now that I joined Abhaya centre of Sambhali Trust, I am happy again. I love to make embroidery of different styles here. Here we have three teachers, one is Sangeeta who teaches basics of Hindi and Maths, Seema who teaches Sewing and Embroidery and Maya, the volunteer, for the English lessons. In the Sewing classes I learned how to stitch my own clothes in different styles. We get all materials and sewing machines for free here to learn sewing and embroidery. We have workshop classes once a week, and extracurricular activities every Saturday. I have lots of friends here to talk to, to laugh with and to share my feelings with. I feel happy here and enjoy embroidery making for supporting my family in their daily expenses.

My family is very proud of me.”



“My name is Najiya. My father works in a cloth factory and my mother is a housewife. I have been to school till 10th grade but couldn't speak English very well. Now I understand English and learnt other skills at Abhaya centre of Sambhali Trust. I get full support from my parents to come to this centre. Earlier I used to be at home, in a conservative environment, but now I even celebrate parties here with my friends. I have stitched a beautiful pink dress for myself recently.”



“My name is Tabbasum. I have joined Abhaya centre of Sambhali Trust where I get lots of opportunities to learn and study for my growth. I feel so confident here, because my English improved a lot. Sometimes, I teach English to my friends here as well. We celebrate so many festivals here together and feel comfortable and united with each other.”

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# Laadli Boarding Home

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Laadli Boarding Home opened its doors in April 2017.

23 young girls aged 7 to 14 now have the opportunity to access education and good health care, and to live in a safe space apart from discrimination and devaluation. Coming from the desert village Setrawa, their families are too poor to keep money aside for their education, leaving the girls severely disadvantaged. In these two years, the girls have not only mastered their Hindi and learned English, they have also learned how to express themselves through the creative workshops that we organize for them on a regular basis. Two tutors, Rajshree and Gunjan, are there from 2:30-6.30pm to teach the girls and support with the volunteers' activities. Saturdays are for self-defense classes, where the girls learn how to stand up for themselves and fight to have their voices heard.

The mothers of these girls take part in the Sheerni microfinance programme in Setrawa.

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# The Story of Mumal

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“My name is Mumal, I am nine years old. I was born in Setrawa and I have five sisters. Our mother used to dress us as boys and cut our hair short so she would not have to worry about men treating us badly. That is the only way our mother allowed us to go outside alone. Nobody is earning money in our family - Our father left his job as a stone miner seven years ago. He suffered a bad form of asthma. In the village, we could not go to school. Now, since I live in Jodhpur, I can read and learn new things every day. When I grow up, I want to be a teacher.”

- Mumal (Laadli Boarding Home)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xWUu\\_b0Br20](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xWUu_b0Br20)



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# Sheerni Boarding Home

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Sheerni has been the home for 25 girls, currently aged 6 to 19, since 2012. During the year, Rajshree and Kailash, the tutors, have been spending time helping the girls with extra tuition along with Nirmala, the housemother. We also provide necessary counselling and advice for the girls in guiding them towards their futures. The girls received the results of their half-year exams in January and in general all the girls did very well.

Friday afternoon is play day at the park nearby, the other days are reserved for critical thinking as well as general knowledge workshops - nutrition, menstruation and female leaders around the world are only some of the topics our girls are interested in. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays, the older girls are getting sewing classes as well, enabling them to be creative and to express themselves while learning an important skill that could be useful for them in the future.

Priya, our oldest girl at Sheerni Boarding Home, is now going to a nearby girls' college to do a BA - she loves learning there and is studying hard to fulfill her dream to become a lawyer. Two other girls, Vimla and Santosh, are graduating high school this summer and are excited to join Priya at college afterwards.

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# The Story of Aasu

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“My name is Aasu, I am 14 years old, and I am studying in class 9. I will tell you my story now. If you will like it or not, I don’t know. I was born in Setrawa, in the desert. I have four sisters and two brothers.

I like drawing, painting, dancing, stitching and designing, as well as sports. I have many things I love.

I have a big family – and we had many financial problems. My father arranged for three of my sisters to get married when they were really young. One day, I don’t really know what happened to my father. He vomited a lot, and there was a lot of blood. We went to the hospital immediately and the doctor brought him to another room. After some time, the doctor came back and said he is no more. My father died. After his death, all of the responsibility was in my mother’s hands.

A few weeks later, a centre of Sambhali Trust was opened in my village. I learned that they teach children and women there for free. I started going to the centre every day to study there in the afternoons. I liked going to the classes. I didn’t like school that much, the teachers didn’t teach very well and didn’t pay attention to our needs. But the teachers at Sambhali Trust were really good. And they gave us biscuits every day too! My teacher back then was Usha, she was very kind and her classes were so much fun. Sometimes I had to stay at home to help my mother – and that’s when the teacher came to our house and told me to come to the centre every day. She said: “If you go and study, you will become a good person in the future”. Sambhali has helped my family a lot - They gave my mother kitchens supplies and other gifts every time they came to our house. That time, in 2012, they opened a girls’ boarding home in Jodhpur, and the Sambhali team selected me to go there to have access to a better future. Now that I am here, I learn many good things. I get a good education, and learn about good habits. I have many friends here too - I love the other girls at the boarding home a lot. We are a big community.

After school, I want to work in a government-run office or as a fashion designer – and I think my mother will be happy about that too. I remember my mother was very sad when we had so many problems, and I said to her: “Please, don’t be sad. I will become a good person and I will study hard to get a job, so I will be able to support our family”. My mother smiled. When I have a job and my own income, I will do something for Sambhali Trust. I want to give back to those who have given me and my family so much, and I want to support other girls who have had similar struggles.“





"Women empowerment means that a woman can decide what she wants to do in her life, and set her own rules. She can do anything for herself.

To feel empowered, girls in India can go to school and study, and it is their decision to do everything they want to feel freedom."

- Aasu (Sheerni Boarding Home)



"Malala Yousafzai is an example for women empowerment. She is a brave girl. Also Mother Teresa was a powerful woman. I know that girls can do anything, they can do any jobs. We can dream of becoming teachers, doctors, or politicians. Women are so strong - and we all are bright too. To feel empowered, we need to learn English first, and learn that we can defend ourselves. I can do everything."

- Leela (Sheerni Boarding Home)





# Primary Education Centres

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The primary education centres belong to the newest projects of Sambhali Trust, marking April 2019 as their second anniversary. These centres are offered to young girls and boys who are often illiterate and have not accessed other educational institutions. Sambhali's aim is to make sure that all children in the centre go to school and to provide scholarships if necessary. The primary education centres offer a foundational teaching programme in English, Hindi and Maths, supported both by local teachers and the volunteers.





# The Scholarship Programme

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The Scholarship Programme has been running since the beginning of Sambhali in 2007. Originally sponsoring 25 students, it was designed in order to ensure them education in a private school and thus a brighter future.

In 2018-2019, we have now been sponsoring 265 children through our Scholarship Programme in total – an increasing number compared to the previous year. The majority of these children are being supported by Sambhali Germany, Sambhali Switzerland, Sambhali UK and Sambhali Austria.

The vast majority of our students are from Jodhpur itself (246), and a further 19 children are sponsored to attend the private school in Setrawa. We support a huge range of ages through our programme, with our students ranging from 3 years old to 23 years old.

We also continue to support young girls in their college studies. Alongside their studies, many of the students in our scholarship programme also benefit from extra-curricular lessons with our staff and volunteers.



# No Bad Touch

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The *No Bad Touch* programme was designed and created in 2014 to tackle the taboo subject of child sexual abuse and harassment in Rajasthan. Our staff member Vimlesh Solanki, together with the volunteers dedicated to this programme, have provided workshops to over 13000 students, parents and teachers, in schools and colleges in Jodhpur, numbering 2515 students and 408 adults in the past year alone. The workshops for children include the explanation of a Bad Touch, the three dangerous body parts (chest, between the legs and bottom) and the three steps to follow when they receive a bad touch (shout NO, GO away from this person and TELL a safe adult about it).



For the parents and teachers we have some additional information about the characteristics of perpetrators as well as how to protect and support victims. When giving the workshop to teenagers and adults, we emphasize that it is important for children to have a safe adult to tell if they are abused.

We tell adults that they must believe the child and take them seriously. Workshops for adults include a discussion session at the end instead of the role-play exercises.



# Aadarsh Project

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The *Aadarsh* Programme was designed this year to educate adolescent boys and girls in schools in Jodhpur about several issues that arise in puberty. It has been initiated in the Sambhali Trust's own projects and centres.

Topics such as the sexual organs and body changes including menstruation are often not covered properly in the school curriculum, so we feel it is of even greater importance to talk about this multifaceted topic with as many adolescents as possible.

Sexual harassment and abuse as well as the dangers of the Internet are also addressed in separate lessons, aiming at educating the girls about appropriate behaviour in such vulnerable settings and situations.

The first *Aadarsh* lesson was given at Sheerni Boarding Home in February 2019, another was held shortly afterwards in Jodhpur Empowerment Centre, which focused more on sex education.



# The SOS-Project & Nirbhaya Helpline

The Helpline is accessible for women all over Rajasthan from 7:00am to 11:00pm - Immediate counseling and advice is provided, and is followed up by referrals in the community to long-term support. This support can take the form of providing legal support if applicable, or accompanying a woman to the police station to ensure access to assistance. Through the Emergency Provision Fund, the Trust provides emergency financial support for local women who call the helpline for emergency medical care, diagnosis, emergency medication, ambulance transport as well as emergency shelter and other critical needs.

This not only provides financial support but also emotional support. Shyama Tanwar is responsible for the Helpline and the SOS service.

In the last 12 months, we counted:

470 calls in total

80 cases of domestic physical abuse

8 cases of sexual abuse

107 cases of verbal abuse

60 cases of medical emergency

4 forced marriages

2 calls for need of legal support

93 others





# Sheerni Microfinance

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Sheerni microfinance was founded in 2009 in the rural location of Setrawa and extended to Jodhpur in 2016. This microfinance project offers women access to loans in a secure way so that they can develop business opportunities.

104 women in Setrawa are currently divided in 6 groups, coming together on a regular basis to discuss problems and to find solutions by deciding who is in need of a loan for goats, cows, medical help, sewing machines or for setting up vegetable or tailor shops.

Every woman pays approximately 200 Indian Rupees per month into a common fund – and by the end of each month, the total amount is counted and the receiver of the loan is chosen.

In Jodhpur, in 2018, 21 women received loans for school fees, electricity bills, wedding preparations or other personal needs.

The microfinance project ensures access to loans at an interest rate that is catered to their income. This microfinance project is accompanied by a self-help group in which the participants can confide within each other for all kinds of support.

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# Sambhali Boutique & the Graduates' Sewing Centre

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The Sambhali Trust Graduate Sewing Centre is the workplace for 27 women living in Jodhpur, whose products are then sold in the boutique. The Centre is an opportunity for them to earn their own income - up to 10,000 Indian Rupees per month.

The Fatima Graduate Centre moved in April 2018 to join the Graduate Centre at Sambhali Headquarters. The move happened to make it easier to coordinate all the work in one place. So, 12 women from Fatima Graduate Centre joined the Sambhali Graduate Centre. In November 2018, 6 new graduates from Fatima Empowerment Centre joined us. Lots of orders came in for Christmas decorations, so we decided that we needed to train more women to work in the Graduate Sewing Centre. They received another 6 months training upon graduation before finally joining the Sambhali Graduate Sewing Centre, where they will learn how to make all the items that are produced for the boutique.



The Sambhali Boutique, located in the old town of Jodhpur, provides an outlet for the clothes, accessories and handicraft items produced by the women in our Sambhali Graduate Sewing Centre. We ensure that only products of exceptional quality are sold in the boutique – from Indian and Western-style clothing and animal toys to shoulder bags and purses. Each product is handmade and unique in their own special way. Every item has a name tag on it as well, showing who has made the product.

Sambhali Trust is a non-profit organisation, so any profit accrued from the sales of items through the boutique, after paying for raw materials, wages, and shop overheads, goes directly back into the organisation supporting its many projects and activities.



In March 2019, it was decided that two supervisors – Parveen and Pushpa – should have their own groups to work with in the Graduate Sewing Centre, whilst Anita teaches the new graduates.

This year, Kavita – the Manager of the Graduate Sewing Centre – and the women have worked on several new designs and product ideas and have taken on many big orders from France and the US.

According to Pooja (*seen left in the photo*), who has been working in the boutique for two years, scarves are the bestseller – and the majority of all customers are from France, although a great number of travellers are from all over the world as well as locals who are interested to buy the products and to learn about Sambhali too.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wo-Xg-w5SJo&t=40s>



“Sambhali Trust is my whole life”, says Praveen. An illness was responsible for her husband’s death in 2011.

Before she joined the Fatima Empowerment Centre of Sambhali Trust about two years after her husband’s death, she did not know how to hold the needle that she would need for the piece of embroidery she was going to work on.

Now she is one of the supervisors in the Sambhali Trust Graduate Sewing Centre, making sure that all products made by the graduates are finished on time with exceptional quality. She assigns tasks to the graduates and helps them when problems arise.

“Before I joined Sambhali Trust, I was living at my husband’s house. My mother-in-law and sister-in-law were always fighting with me. They used bad words all the time. Not only against me, but also against my three children”, explains Praveen.

“My parents-in-law did not support me in any way, and they did not grant me any rights for our property”. In the rare times that Praveen was angry with her children, the mother-in-law told them that their mother didn’t care about them, that she never wanted them, that she just wanted to find a new husband – which was not true. “They blamed me for my husband’s illness, and eventually, for his death. I thought that this is my destiny now”.

Praveen started putting her life in her own hands in 2013, when she finally decided to move back to her own parents’ house, after two years of living with her in-laws. It was also that time when she heard about Sambhali Trust. Anju Choudhary and Vimlesh Solaki, both Sambhali staff, were investigating the area Praveen was living in – a Muslim slum in Jodhpur. 120 ladies immediately signed up for joining the newly opened Fatima Empowerment Centre. “I didn’t have any skills. I had never been educated”. Praveen was eager to start learning. It was not an easy start at Fatima Empowerment Centre. “I slowly learned sewing and embroidery, but when we had this big order of bracelets, I made a major mistake. All the 305 bracelets that I had been doing had the wrong measurements and wrong stitches”. But Praveen continued, and after a year, she graduated from the centre, being gifted with her own sewing machine. She wanted to open her own tailoring shop, but the profit from that would never be sufficient for a single mother of three children. So she joined the Graduate Sewing Centre of Sambhali Trust, where she is making a good income.

“Yet, when I wanted to pay the tuition fee for my children, I needed to borrow the money. It was 600 Rupees. Somehow, I lost the money. I cried a lot, desperately trying to find it on the streets that I had been walking on. I couldn’t find it. I knew I would need to make three more elephants at the Sewing Centre to have these 600 Rupees back. The father of three children living in the Sheerni Boarding Home of Sambhali Trust saw me looking for the money, and he told Sambhali Trust about my needs. A few days later, I was offered the job of a supervisor at the Sewing Centre. It would give me 3,500 Rupees extra per month.”

Praveen was not sure whether she could handle the big responsibility that comes along with the job of the supervisor. But she did find a way to work with it – very successfully. Sambhali Trust now also sponsors her three children’s education. Recently, her youngest boy suffered an eye injury and needed to be sent to a clinic in Ahmedabad, which Sambhali Trust offered to pay for.

“Everyone around me is supportive. My father and my brother’s wives are still giving their bad comments sometimes, but I have the love and support from my mother, my children, my neighbours and the Sambhali Trust family”. Praveen loves to spend time with her friends at the Graduate Sewing Centre. Kavita, the manager of the Sewing Centre, explains that all women working in the centre have similar stories to Praveen. “All of them have pain in their hearts, but they keep wearing smiles on their faces”. Praveen loves producing elephants as well as Christmas decorations. “My children, now 8, 13 and 14 years old, know they have to study hard. It is what Sambhali Trust is offering to our family. If Sambhali is not helping us anymore, they don’t get education anymore. They all have dreams they are willing to fight for – jobs as a doctor or policeman”.



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# Special events

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## Women empowerment ceremony 2019

In January, we held an empowerment ceremony to celebrate and understand what empowerment feels like for the women who attend our various centers. We also offered a breast cancer screening informative workshop and invited two interns to talk about their findings on women's rights.

265 women from the centers joined in with our staff and volunteers and together we sat, laughed, and listened in to what different women had to share. Over 20 women got up to share what empowerment means to them- for most of them, this was the first time they ever spoke into a mic and in front of a crowd.

Empowerment meant something different for each of our speakers, and that made it all the more beautiful.





“Women empowerment refers to the capabilities of a woman that enable her to take every decision of her life. Every year, we celebrate International Women’s Day on 8th of March. That day, Narendra Modi has stated that for the nation’s progress, Indian women need to be empowered. When a woman decides to take the first step towards empowerment, it is benefiting the family, the village, and eventually, the entire country makes progress. In India, for empowering women, we need to change the backward thinking of the people.”

- Rekha (Abhivyakti Empowerment Centre)



## Diwali 2018

The girls from Sheerni Boarding Home and Sambhali volunteers gathered at the Guesthouse for Diwali prayers and celebrations on 7th November.

Everyone had the opportunity to offer candles to Lord Ganesh, the God of intelligence; the Goddess Lakshmi for wealth; and the Goddess Saraswati for success in education. Following prayers, we enjoyed the excitement of sparklers and fireworks in the street, then a delicious dinner with a variety of sweet treats.





## International Women's Day 2019

In line with this year's theme for International Women's Day "Think Equal, Build Smart, Innovate for Change", all our women, girls, staff and volunteers came together to call for change and raise awareness. We want to show the world that girls and women are powerful and strong, have courage and determination and all the rights to grow in their lives just as much as men do. All of us have proved that our voices should no longer be silenced and that our achievements should always be recognized.





“International Women’s Day“ is important. Here in Rajasthan, people think that women are weak. But together, we showed that women are indeed powerful. When we were shouting “long lives the power of women” (“Navi Shakti Zindabad”) in unity, I felt even more empowered. I am proud to be a woman, a mother, a daughter. I can do anything I want, any job I want. I was sick on International Women’s Day, but it was still important for me to go. I wanted to show: If I take a stand for myself, all of us can.

- Multana (Fatima Empowerment Centre)

आज हम साथ में  
मजबूत हैं

Together  
we are  
Stronger





“During the Women’s March, we were screaming an Indian poem which could be translated to ‘As long as the sun and the moon shine, women should be respected’. This is the core problem of Indian society. Men do not respect women. Before I joined the Fatima Empowerment Centre of Sambhali Trust, I was not allowed to go anywhere on my own. Now, my parents trust me, and they believe in me. Four of my sisters got married already, but we now know that I should wait. I went to school for seven years, but I had not learned any English, and my Maths was bad too. Through Sambhali, I am able to pursue a much better education. My dream is to become a policewoman.”

- Shamma (Fatima  
Empowerment Centre)









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# UN Women Statement

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The 63<sup>rd</sup> session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women took place in UN HQ in New York from 11-22 March 2019.

Sambhali Trust was granted Special Consultative Status in 2015, and as such we were invited to submit a Written Statement for the 63<sup>rd</sup> session on the theme of:

*“Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls”.*

Please follow this link to read the whole document:

<https://undocs.org/E/CN.6/2019/NGO/54>



We are grateful to our dedicated volunteer Leah Field, who worked very hard on the compilation of this important document. Leah also attended the UN Women Session in New York in March 2019 (*photo above*).



# Letters of the volunteers

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I was a volunteer in Setrawa for two months. We trained women on how to develop self-confidence, something which is not easy to acquire when you live in a patriarchal society in the middle of the desert. The tool of education can be one of the most powerful ones in this case. I had to live like the women I worked with daily, to be able to understand their lives and how to give those women chose to slowly change their conditions.

India is a beautiful and complex country, one that balances traditions and modernity. You have to be flexible and open-minded to be helpful. Before I arrived in India I had no expectations at all. I hope I have left a little bit of myself in the small village of Setrawa in the Thar desert. Being able to forget myself for few weeks has been one of the most beautiful things I have ever done. I believe that we all have the capacity to change things and we have a lot to learn about the people around us.

- Fanny, from France, December 2018-January 2019

## Sambhali: Stitching the Self of Sisterhood

When I began at Sambhali, all I knew was that as a committed strident feminist, I was passionate about women's empowerment. Fresh out of school, with no teaching experience, the first time I stood up in front of a group of 15 girls all looking up expectantly at me, I was terrified. However, this was a feeling I grew to love. The feeling that you have the ability, the privilege, to really make a difference to these women's lives.

Before I came to Sambhali I had a very different perception of how volunteering with Sambhali would help empower women.

I was narrow-minded: I saw literacy and English as core means by which these women would gain strength. This meant I was easily frustrated when I did not feel I was fulfilling this duty. We all have days when the class just don't seem to want to listen, or look at you blankly when you explain to them the formation of the future tense for the fifth time. It is very easy at these moments to feel utterly useless. However, something I have only recently come to realise is that this is not what the Sambhali Trust is about. Allowing yourself to get bogged down in the minutia of grammar, or lamenting the impossible idiomatic nature of your own language seems insignificant when you consider the real ethos of Sambhali: Empowerment.

The sisterhood these women create through joking, laughing, interacting with one another is, I have learnt to be the essence of the Sambhali Trust. As they sit embroidering, these women are stitching a sisterhood. A bond that means they look out for one another, that has led them to rebel against controlling in-laws, or march abusive husbands down to the police station in mobs. Sarah Harrington, president of Sambhali UK enlightened me further when she said 'Some of these women have no sense of self when they come to us'. This is something that you see first-hand when a new girl joins the group, shy, looking at the ground and barely making eye contact. When I compare this to the cheeky, bumptious, witty, women who may not be able to conjugate a verb or use comparative adjectives, but who have, through sisterhood, gained a personality, a sense of self. It is in realising this that I found volunteering with Sambhali to be one of the most fulfilling experiences of my life.

- Emily, from England, January 2019-March 2019



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v = volunteer

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 Fieldworker Meera Khatri

**Education**  
 Manager: Shyama Tanwar and Vimlesh Solanki

**Education**  
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**Sambhali Sheerni Boarding Home**  
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 Tutor Rajshree R. & Kailash R.  
 Sewing Teacher Dhapu Choudhary  
 Cook and Helper Laxmi and Kanta

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**Sambhali Fatima Primary Education Centre**  
 Tutors Gulapsha Bano, Kritika Bihal

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 Tutors Shano Bano, Salma Bano

**Sambhali Laadli Primary Education Centre**  
 Tutors Anju Sharma, Manju Solanki

**Sambhali No Bad Touch Project**  
 Coordinator Vimlesh Solanki

**Sewing Centres & Sales**  
 Manager: Kavita Bihal and Corinne Rose

**Sambhali Studio**  
 Product Developer Kavita Bihal  
 Assistant Pushpa Kanwar

**Sambhali Graduates' Sewing Centre 1**  
 Supervisor Anita Gharu

**Sambhali Graduates' Sewing Centre 2**  
 Supervisor Praveen Bano

**Sambhali Boutique**  
 Sales Assistant Pooja Shukla  
 Sales Assistant Shravan Bhati

**SOS Project**  
 Manager: Shyama Tanwar

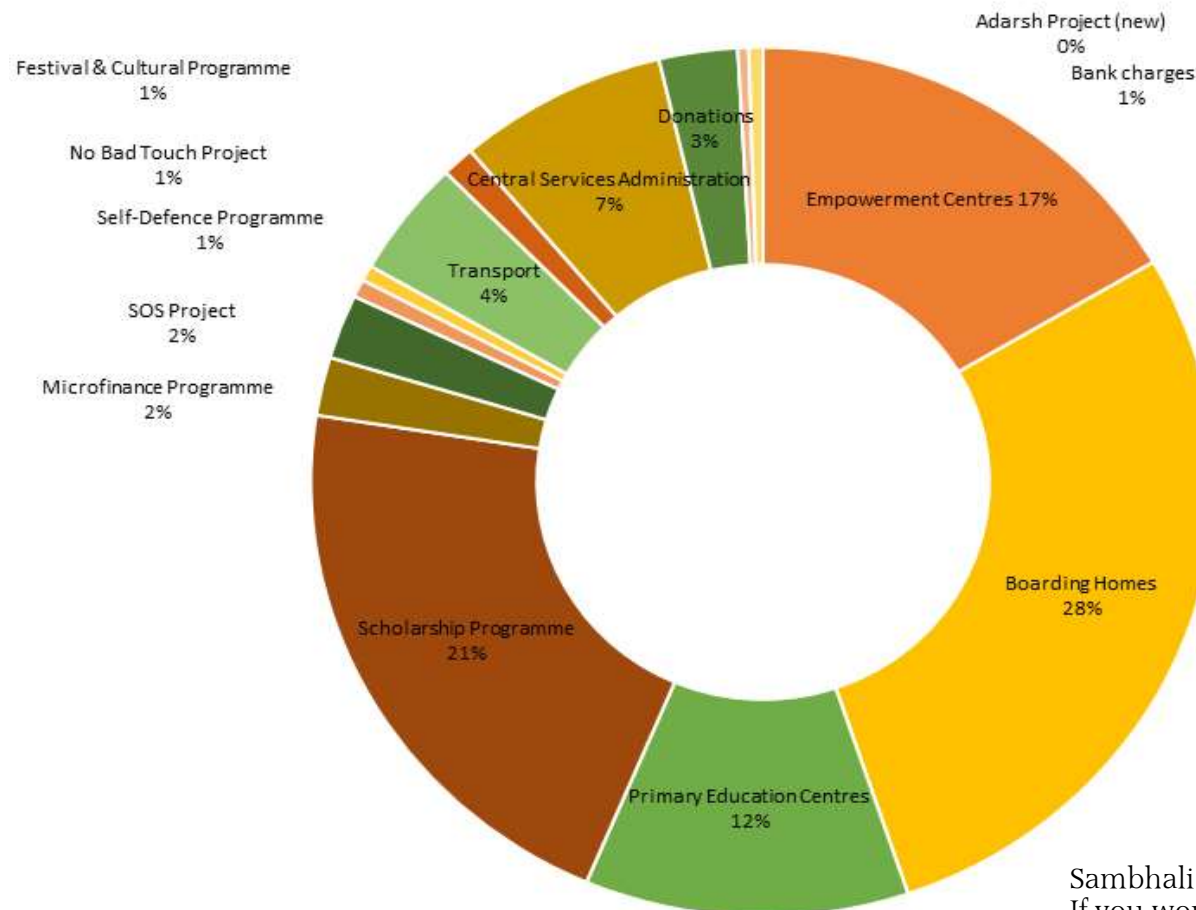
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# Finances

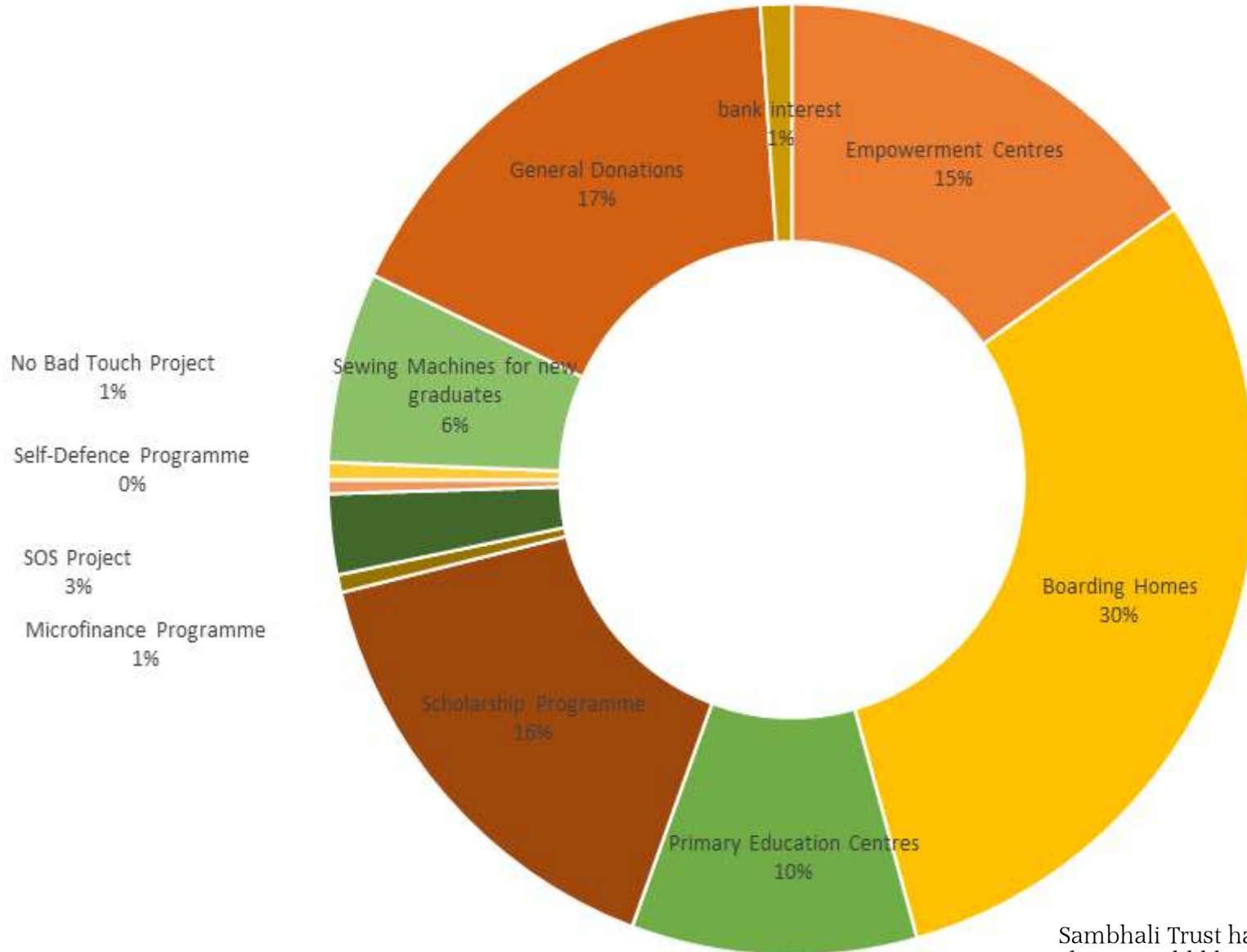
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## Sambhali Trust Expenditure Financial Year 2018-19



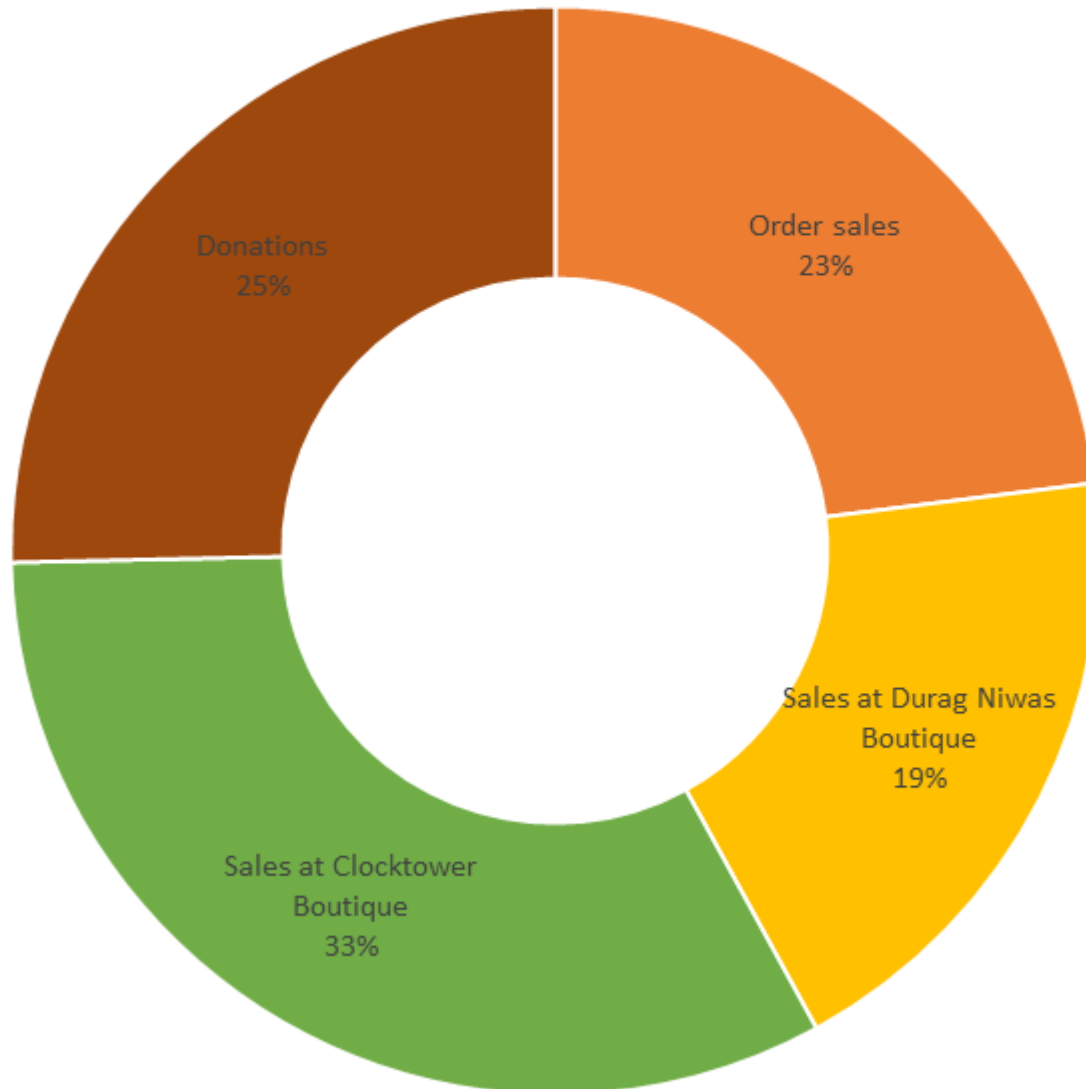
Sambhali Trust has annual audited accounts. If you would like to see these please E-Mail [info@sambhali-trust.org](mailto:info@sambhali-trust.org)

# Sambhali Trust Income Financial Year 2018-19



Sambhali Trust has annual audited accounts. If you would like to see these please E-Mail [info@sambhali-trust.org](mailto:info@sambhali-trust.org)

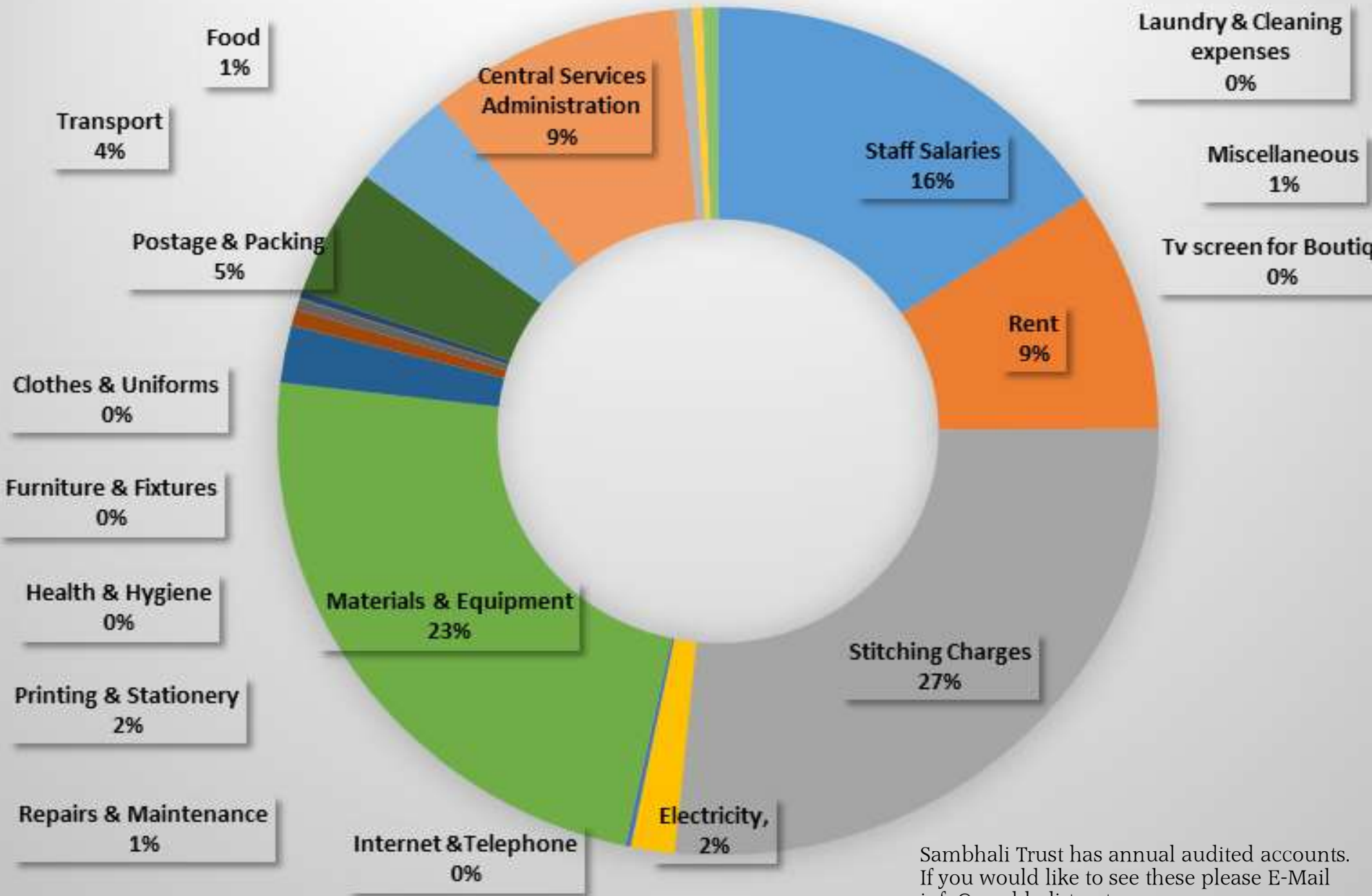
# Sambhali Boutique & Sewing Centre Income



Sambhali Trust has annual audited accounts. If you would like to see these please E-Mail [info@sambhali-trust.org](mailto:info@sambhali-trust.org)



# Sewing Centre & Boutique Financial Year 2018-19



Sambhali Trust has annual audited accounts. If you would like to see these please E-Mail [info@sambhali-trust.org](mailto:info@sambhali-trust.org)

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