



Bembala  
Foundation

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024



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# Table of Contents

Introduction .....2

Vision and Mission .....3

Reach and Impact .....3

Events and Trainings .....4

Advisory Committee .....9

Financials .....9



# Introduction

Safety, both in private and public spaces, has emerged as one of the most pressing concerns in our society. With alarming incidents of harassment and violence making headlines and countless untold stories of distress, it is clear that fostering a culture of safety is not just desirable but essential. This year, Bembala Foundation dedicated itself to amplifying awareness around this crucial issue, weaving it into the fabric of our activities and initiatives.

Statistics underline the gravity of the situation: estimates published by the WHO indicate that globally about 1 in 3 (30%) women have been subjected to either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence (IPV) or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime. Most of this violence is IPV, with almost one-third (27%) of women aged 15-49 years who have been in a relationship reporting physical and/or sexual violence by their partner. Additionally, nearly four out of five women (79%) in India have experienced some form of harassment or violence in public spaces, according to research by ActionAid UK. These figures emphasize the urgent need to challenge patriarchal mindsets that perpetuate violence and ensure safe spaces at home, work, and in public.

At Bembala, our mission is clear: to support women and children facing abuse or distress in any form. This support extends to anyone who reaches out to us for help, whether through our toll-free helpline, community outreach programs, or at our center located at Vydehi Hospital in Whitefield, Bangalore. The center serves as a sanctuary for survivors, offering them a safe space to share their stories, access resources, and take their first steps toward recovery.

Our 2025 calendar and notebook encapsulated this theme by showcasing the perspectives of young minds. Through vibrant artworks by children aged 8 to 15 from Deens Academy in Whitefield, and Government Higher Primary and High School (GHPS), Ramagondanahalli, we were offered a window into how the next generation perceives safety in their everyday environments. Their art serves as a poignant reminder of the responsibility we hold in creating a safer world for them and ourselves.



**WE PROVIDE FREE & CONFIDENTIAL SUPPORT TO WOMEN AND CHILDREN EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, ABUSE OR DISTRESS.**

Bembala's blogs also brought this topic to the forefront, sharing the narratives of three brave women who opened up about their experiences of harassment in both public and private spaces. Additionally, some senior children from GHPS Ramagondanahalli shared their own perspectives of how gender inequality made them feel unsafe in some instances. Their stories underline the increasing need for safety measures and the importance of organizations like Bembala that provide a safe space for survivors to seek help and healing.

This growing need for safety has shaped our awareness programs throughout the year. The Bembala team has tirelessly worked to educate communities about recognizing and addressing safety concerns while ensuring that individuals know where to turn for help.

As we reflect on 2024, we are profoundly grateful for the unwavering support of our donors, whose generosity has enabled us to sustain and grow our initiatives. To our incredible volunteers, your dedication and compassion are the backbone of our work. And to Vydehi Hospital and the Chairperson, Dr. D.A. Kalpaja, thank you for your continued generosity in providing us with the space and resources to operate our center pro bono.

Bembala Foundation remains steadfast in its mission to empower women and children and to create a world where safety is a reality for all. Together, we can ensure that no one suffers in silence and that every voice is heard, supported, and uplifted.



# Vision and Mission

Bembala's Vision is a community with zero tolerance towards violence; a community that supports survivors of all forms of abuse/distress regardless of socio-economic, cultural or religious background. We aspire to create an easily accessible network of support services across Bangalore.

Our Mission is a coordinated and well-informed approach to violence, abuse, and distress faced by women and children, with sufficient interventions that lead to safe communities and families in Bangalore.

## Reach and Impact

In 2024, Bembala Foundation witnessed significant growth in its reach and impact, reflecting the increasing awareness and demand for our services:

**Helpline Support:** Our helpline calls rose by an impressive 53%, with a total of 201 calls received this year. This includes 76 individual cases where survivors sought direct assistance and guidance.

**Center-Based Services:** Cases at our Vydehi Hospital center grew by 60%, reaching 85 individual cases. This underscores the critical role our physical center plays in providing survivors with a safe and supportive environment.

**Direct Interventions:** From 15 police station visits (repeat visits for some survivors) and two rescues to two court visits and one shelter referral, we have supported survivors at every step of their journey. One of our proudest milestones this year was our first-ever solo rescue operation, showcasing our team's readiness and capability to act decisively in critical situations.

These achievements demonstrate not just the growing trust in Bembala but also the urgent need for continued support and resources to meet the rising demand. Each call, case, and intervention reflects a life touched.

Fig 1: Nature of Service

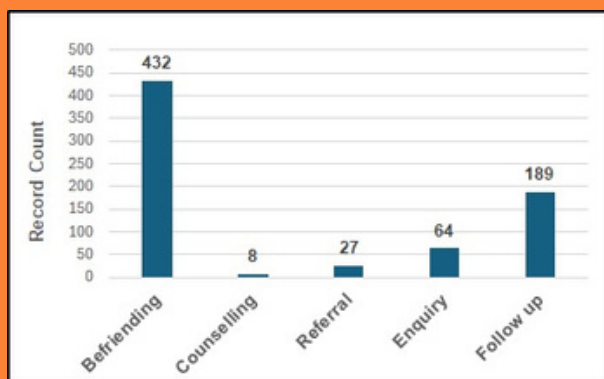
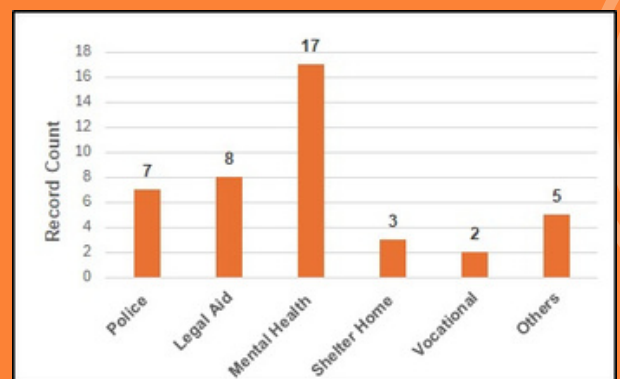


Fig 2: Referred To



In 2024, the Bembala Foundation delivered vital support through befriending, counseling, and referral services, as illustrated in Figure 1. Across more than 720 sessions—conducted in person at the center, via our helpline, or at various community venues—we extended assistance to women, children, and men in need.

Figure 2 provides a detailed overview of the number of individual survivors we connected with additional resources, including law enforcement (police), legal aid, mental health professionals, shelter homes, vocational trainers, and other partner organizations.

Fig 3: Nature of Abuse

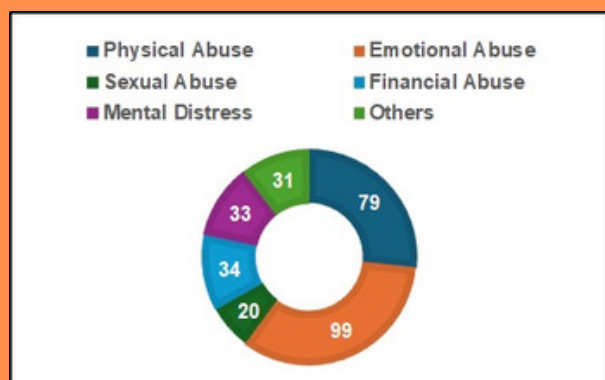
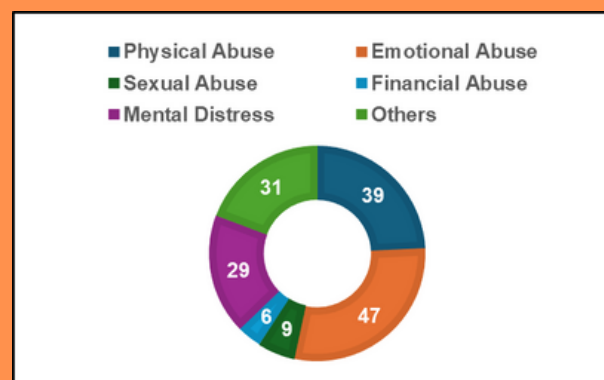


Fig 4: Primary Presenting Problem



In this edition of our annual report, we've enhanced the representation of our data on the "nature of abuse experienced." Figure 3 highlights the various types of abuse reported by 161 individual survivors. Many of them experienced multiple forms of abuse simultaneously, resulting in a collective total of 296 instances captured in the chart.

To better understand their circumstances, the primary presenting problem for each survivor has been separately identified and visualized in Figure 4. Together, the data reveals that emotional abuse was the most commonly reported. Additionally, nearly 20% of survivors were in significant mental distress, requiring further professional support.

## Events and Trainings

### Awareness Sessions at Government Primary School, Vijayanagar, Whitefield

January 19 and 23, 2024

Bembala Foundation conducted two awareness sessions on "Good Touch and Bad Touch" and "Feelings and the Need to Express Them" for children aged 6-10. The sessions focused on personal boundaries, emotional expression, and seeking support when necessary. The sessions were engaging and well-received by the students, with active participation and insightful feedback.



### Meeting at the Police Commissioner's Office

February 1, 2024

Bembala Foundation was invited to a meeting at the Police Commissioner's Office, intended to introduce NGOs working in the space of women and child safety. The session provided an excellent opportunity to connect with other organizations and discuss collaborative efforts to address key issues.





## Women's Day Run with NEB Sports

March 3, 2024

Bembala Foundation collaborated with NEB Sports for their Women's Day Run themed "Inspiring Inclusion." Team Bembala proudly participated in the 10k, 5k, and 3k runs wearing Bembala shirts, showcasing solidarity and support for women's empowerment. The event also featured inspiring interviews with notable figures, including Reet Abraham (Asian Medalist and Director, NEB Sports), Nirmala R. Kamath (Director and Co-founder, CHIE Media Pvt Ltd), and Naina Lal (Co-founder, Runner Girls India).

## Recognition - "Excellence in Action" for Women Safety and Empowerment

March 16, 2024

Bembala Foundation was honored with the "Excellence in Action" recognition at the SHE ARISES\_ Join the Womomentum event organized by B.PAC. This recognition, part of B.PAC's B.SAFE Constituency initiative, acknowledged organizations working towards women's safety and empowerment. The award was presented to Bembala Foundation for its tireless efforts in advocating for zero tolerance towards violence, abuse, and distress faced by women and children since its inception. The event was held at the Rangoli Metro Art Center on MG Road.



## Bembala at Varthur PHC Free Screening Camp

March 15, 2024

Bembala Foundation participated in the Vikasa Tarangini free cervical and breast screening camp held at Varthur PHC. We engaged with over 30 attendees, including ASHA workers, to spread awareness about our services, and to foster connections with the community.

## Lecture at CMR University of Legal Studies

March 28, 2024

Bembala delivered a lecture on the "Social and Legal Implications Faced by Victims of Abuse" for 4th and 5th-year students at CMR University of Legal Studies. The session, led by Lawyer Sumithra Acharya along with Bembala volunteers, provided an overview of Bembala's work and insights into the challenges faced by victims of abuse. Sumithra Acharya delivered an impactful presentation on how societal norms and gender roles contribute to the normalization of violence, as well as the legal and systemic hurdles encountered by survivors.



## Awareness Session at Vydehi Nursing College

August 30, 2024

Bembala Foundation conducted an awareness session for nursing students at Vydehi Nursing College. The session aimed to educate medical students on the increasing issues of abuse and harassment, providing them with the necessary knowledge to handle such situations effectively. It also highlighted the importance of being aware of available resources, as victims of abuse or harassment often reach out to medical professionals for support.

Over 100 students from the 1st and 3rd-year nursing programs engaged actively in the discussions, making the session insightful and impactful.



## Donation (by) and Orientation (on Cyber-abuse) for Deens Academy Students

October 1, 2024

Bembala Foundation welcomed students from Deens Academy, who visited our center to donate the funds they raised through stalls organized by Rotary. During their visit, the students were given an orientation about Bembala's work, including a discussion on cyber abuse and its impact. The students actively participated, and their donation further contributed to supporting our cause.

## Antenatal Care Program at Vydehi OB-Gyn Department

December 2, 2024

In collaboration with the Gynecology Department at Vydehi Hospital, Bembala Foundation launched an Antenatal Care program for pregnant women, held every Monday. The program not only provides essential guidance but also teaches relaxation techniques to help manage stress and distress, ensuring that expectant mothers are mentally relaxed and supported throughout their pregnancy journey.

Additionally, the program raises awareness of the various services Bembala offers. We have seen a promising start, with an average of 9 patients attending each session.



## Awareness Sessions highlighting Domestic Violence and Abuse

These sessions typically covered key insights about domestic violence, abuse, and available support mechanisms. They sparked meaningful engagements, with participants sometimes sharing their personal experiences of domestic violence and abuse. Often, post-session interactions highlighted prevalent challenges, including cases of abandonment and protracted legal battles, and sometimes participants expressed interest in volunteering with Bembala. Many attendees sought guidance and reassurance, showing interest in reaching out to Bembala for further support. Here is the list of sessions of this nature conducted by Bembala through the year.





**June 22, 2024:** Bembala conducted an awareness session at **Milana**, a family support network for people living with HIV and AIDS.



**July 13, 2024:** Bembala conducted an awareness session for 110 matrons from various branches of **Deens Academy, Whitefield**. The session was delivered primarily in Kannada.



**August 3, 2024:** Bembala conducted an awareness session for approximately 90-100 matrons and administrative staff at **Deens Academy, Gunjur**. It was delivered in Kannada and Hindi to accommodate the diverse audience.



**10th December, 2024:** Bembala had the opportunity to spread awareness about its services at a meeting with **APSA members**.



**August 28, 2024:** Bembala conducted an awareness session for **Dell employees**, with around 25 participants attending in person and approximately 120 joining online.

**19th December, 2024:** Bembala Foundation conducted an awareness program on domestic violence in **Dommasandra**, with around 100 women in attendance.



## Art Therapy Sessions

Bembala collaborated with Art therapists to bring sessions to college lecturers, PU students and women from the local community at HAL. These sessions were designed to alleviate stress, help shed inhibitions and in general offer them a creative outlet from their normal routines. Additionally, we took the opportunity to talk about the work done by Bembala.



**December 7, 2024:** As part of the International 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based-violence campaign, Bembala Foundation conducted an art therapy session for **PU College lecturers at Hoodi PUC**. This was facilitated by Bembala volunteer Deepika Gupta.



**December 12, 2024:** This therapy session at HAL, facilitated by Rashmi, was an engaging and interactive experience that helped the women shed their inhibitions, promote self-expression, and relieve stress. Laughter and joy filled the room, and the participants conveyed their heartfelt thanks for such a refreshing and empowering session.



**December 13, 2024:** Bembala Foundation conducted two art therapy sessions at **Hoodi Government PU college**. The first, for female students, focused on music-related activities, and the second session, for male students, involved dance and other activities, offering a refreshing break from their usual classes.

## Student Orientation Sessions

Bembala Foundation conducted several orientation sessions for students from various colleges as part of their curriculum requirements for NGO visits. Each session, attended by 7-8 students, introduced them to the work of Bembala, focusing on issues related to domestic violence, abuse, and the support services available for survivors. These sessions provided an opportunity for students to engage with Bembala's initiatives, deepen their understanding of social issues, and promoted active participation and awareness.

## Forensic Department Intern Orientation at Vydehi

Bembala Foundation regularly hosts 10-15 interns from the Forensic Department of Vydehi Hospital. These interns, as future medical professionals, are likely to encounter individuals in distress. The sessions aim to equip them with the skills to handle such cases and raise awareness about the resources available through Bembala for providing necessary support.

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Walk

14th December, 2024

As part of the 16 Days of Activism campaign, Bembala Foundation collaborated with Rotary for the Bangalore Midnight Marathon on December 14th. Our team participated from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm.



The evening featured a powerful “Take Back the Night” walk, during which Bembala members carried placards promoting safety and inclusion, as well as candles to symbolize solidarity. The event, hosted by Rotary Bangalore IT Corridor in collaboration with DEIB Innovations and Bembala, focused on diversity, equity, inclusion, and creating safer public spaces for all.

## Advisory Committee

Bembala’s advisory board comprises eminent citizens as well as some of our partner- representatives.

**Dr Jagadeesh N** is a Professor and HOD of Forensic medicine at Vydehi Institute of Medical Sciences Bangalore.

**Dr Vidya Sathyanarayanan** is currently a Consultant Clinical Psychologist, after being Professor of Clinical Psychology in the Department of Psychiatry at St John's Medical College Hospital, Bangalore.

**Christy Abraham** has in 30 plus years, worked in the areas of gender and women’s rights, and with people with disabilities.

**Nitya Ramakrishnan**, a Certified Public Accountant (US) and Cost & Works Accountant (India), is a founder of the citizen movement called Whitefield Rising

**Sumithra Acharya** is an established lawyer who works with women facing abuse, and is involved with victims of acid attacks.

## Financials

Following is the summary of Bembala’s financials from 1st of January 2024, to 31st of December 2024.

Donations/ Receipts (in Indian Rupees)	9,15,715
Operational Costs (in Indian Rupees)	7,40,298



## Bembala Foundation

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### HELPLINE NUMBERS:

Police/ All Emergency 112

National Commission for Women  
7827170170

Elder Helpline 14567

NIMHANS/ TELE-MANAS 14416

Safety Apps



My Safety Pin Suraksha

### OUR PARTNERS:

