

ADAPTATION &  
RESILIENCE IN  
THE FACE OF A  
PANDEMIC

Azād Foundation

Annual  
Report

2020-21

PRODUCTION TEAM  
Research, Advocacy and Communications team

DESIGN  
The Other Design Studio

PRINTING  
Drishti Printers

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ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE  
IN THE FACE OF A PANDEMIC

**annual report**  
**2020-21**

FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S

# NOTE

## Dear Friends,

It is my pleasure and honor to share the Annual Report of Azad Foundation for the year 2020-21; a year that has put to test global humanity. The crisis created by the pandemic has been compounded around the world by climate disasters, with forces of terror and violence displacing and killing hundreds and thousands. Yet, there has been light – individuals and organisations who have withstood the onslaught and have continued to work with the poor, the displaced, oppressed women, men, transgender persons and people of all ages, and gender identities.

Azad Foundation has in its own way, stood in solidarity with the communities it works with and responded by adapting and being resilient; the theme of this Annual Report. You will read about it in the following pages. Despite all the odds, we have been able to ensure food security for the very vulnerable families and provide support to women survivors of violence. In a year marked with a historic downturn in economic growth, employment and labour force participation, we have been able to, not just sustain a majority of the women drivers in employment, but also ensure new employment opportunities for women drivers, thus enabling them to lead more empowered lives. We have also made use of this time to craft our new strategic vision, revisit our theory and understanding of change and develop action plans that will respond to how the world has changed drastically for us all. To enable these, and to allow Azad to continue to grow



Leadership workshop of senior team members of Azad with J.M.Radhakrishna to bring in the new strategic leadership change

while deepening its roots, creative ways of working have been envisioned that will unleash the leadership potential at multiple levels. To begin with, I will be handing over the baton of leadership to a National Leadership Team in a phased manner. We will be spending much of 2021 as a transition year, to prepare ourselves, support the changing roles and programmes, build capacities, address anxieties and lay the ground for new initiatives. You will be hearing more from us on these changes over the year.

We have been blessed with support from friends and family, from all our partners – civil society organisations, individual and institutional donors and Corporate Partners. You have helped us through our ups and downs, as we piloted, experimented, learnt from our mistakes and persevered in our journey towards “a world where all women – in particular women from under privileged contexts – enjoy full citizenship, exercise control over their lives and bodies, earn a livelihood with dignity and generate wealth and value for all”.

Personally, I have received immense love and support from you all, and I look forward to your continued love and support to the National Leadership Team and to Azad.

In Solidarity

**Meenu Vadera**

Founder & Executive Director

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM'S

## NOTE



## Dear Friends,

Another year has gone by and what a year it has been! A year that will definitely become part of the history of humankind, as we all continue to learn to live in and with a pandemic, supporting each other, building a collective resilience, and hopefully, building back better.

Covid-19 has infected 209 million people and killed about 4.4 million people globally. Here in India, the virus has infected 32 million people and killed over 400,000 people. Today, as we write this, these are not just figures or data, for many of us have lost our near and dear ones. Lockdowns, restrictions on mobility, travel and general everyday life have pushed women and men, especially those who are resource poor and from underprivileged backgrounds, towards unemployment and reduced incomes. It has affected each one of us with the fear and uncertainty even as we emerge scathed from the “second wave” and are hearing predictions of a “third wave”.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) estimates<sup>1</sup> that 93% of the world’s workers are living under some form of workplace restrictions. 8.8% of global working hours were lost in 2020, an amount equivalent to 255 million full-time jobs. (In Asia it was 7.9% of working hours).

In India, women’s labour force participation rate (LFPR) has halved over the last decade from 37% to 18%; evidence that women are being excluded from opportunities to have access and control over financial resources. The pandemic has made this situation worse. According to the Centre for Indian Economy (CIE), from May to August 2020 the LFPR for women was 9.3% and for men it was 67.4%. The BBC estimates that 1 in 4 women lost their jobs during this pandemic<sup>2</sup>. The “shadow pandemic” of violence particularly affects women as reported by the National Commission for Women (NCW), with domestic violence rising 2.5 times during the year<sup>3</sup>.

At Azad, we responded immediately with a relief programme, that was informed by community needs and what we kept hearing from our community leaders.

In April and May 2020, when the first lockdowns were in place, the communities we worked in suffered from loss of jobs and incomes as well as limited physical access to basic groceries, sanitary napkins, baby food, soap, medicines, information, etc. As an organisation, we had not done a needs assessment and distributed relief material before, but we could see clearly that we just had to do it.

We worked with our community change agents – young women, girls, young men, boys and young people of all genders– our drivers and trainees, to conduct a survey using a live digital platform that was mobile based, to understand the immediate needs of the communities they live in. Feminist Leaders helped women acquire their identity documents so that they could access State aid packages. We ensured that the communities we worked with did not have to go hungry. Where we could not connect them with State or other civil society efforts, we provided relief directly. Through the year, we reached out to 19,765 families through some form of support.

<sup>1</sup><https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R46270.pdf> - In a report prepared for the January 25-29, 2021, World Economic Forum, the International Labor Organization (ILO) is quoted.

<sup>2</sup><https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000vvpk> – Talking Business in Asia – BBC Programme

<sup>3</sup><https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/ncw-records-sharp-spike-in-domestic-violence-amid-lockdown/article31835105.ece>

We collaborated with other NGOs to help survivors of violence with information and support to take action. Our feminist leaders and team members accompanied 108 survivors on their painful journey for justice, to counselling centres, police station, legal aid, etc.

Information about the virus was shared to allay the wild rumours and fears. Many of our community change agents were publicly recognised for their efforts during the lockdown. Our supporters, partners and donors helped us generously by accepting and contributing towards our changing activities in the short term. Our synergies with our partners made us stronger and better. Together, we could build a solidarity network to fight the pandemic.

As we started getting used to living differently in the “new normal” we restarted the Women with Wheels programme to train women drivers. We moved to a blended mode of working – part online and part offline. Detailed process guidelines were worked out to minimise the risk of infection. This included picking up and dropping off trainees, as needed. We provided mobile phones and paid for the internet connectivity to bridge the digital divide.

Despite the very challenging context, we enrolled 141 women and ensured 78 new placements and sustained 45 women in employment, thereby ensuring jobs for 123 women across Delhi, Jaipur, Kolkata and Indore, enabling them earn a cumulative income of INR 1.8 Crore. These include women employed as chauffeurs and as delivery persons in the e-commerce industry on 2-wheelers. Azad recruited a team for its new office in Chennai just as the lockdown was announced and has managed to successfully establish operations in the city as well. We are looking forward to ensuring our first cohort of 7 women find employment in next few months.

We have also used this time to revise Azad’s strategic plan. In 2020, the world has changed in many irreversible ways at multiple levels. It is our understanding that the uncertainty, the volatility and the challenges it poses socially and economically, will stay with us in our immediate future. For civil society in India, the policy context is ever more challenging. And so we have decided to consider the Strategic Plan as a “guiding document” that has ‘phased plans’ that will respond to this volatility to the best of our ability.

Institutionally as well, we have always invested in our people – they make plans which take shape as reality on the ground. Many of our team members have developed as leaders as Azad has grown over the years. In keeping with our understanding of Institution building and feminist principles, the leadership baton needs to pass on, to a collective rather than to an individual. The National Leadership Team takes charge beginning 2021.

We are grateful to the Board of Trustees and the Advisors for always being there for us, supporting us in myriad ways big and small. Our deepest gratitude to our donors, who have been partners in this entire journey, empathetic to the rapidly changing realities on the ground and supporting us to remain relevant. We remain grateful to our partner organisations and solidarity networks that continue to strengthen our efforts further. And we would not be where we are, if it was not for the enthusiastic support, participation and contribution of the community change agents – women and men. We look forward to your generous partnerships as we look to the future to be able to act, reflect, learn collectively and remain relevant and effective in this rapidly changing world.

With love and hope for a better future,

**Anita Mathur, Dolon Ganguly and Shrinivas Rao**  
National Leadership Team  
Azad Foundation

**OUR VISION**

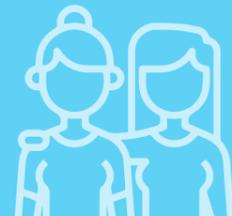
We envision a world where all women- in particular women from underprivileged contexts- enjoy full citizenship, exercise control over their lives and bodies, earn a livelihood with dignity and generate wealth and value for all.



# OUR WORK

**BUILDING A SUPPORTIVE ECOSYSTEM WITHIN COMMUNITIES**

TRAINING COMMUNITY CHANGE AGENTS AND FORMING COLLECTIVES OF YOUNG BOYS, GIRLS AND WOMEN



Young men and boys 14-20 years, through **Men For Gender Justice Program**

Adolescent girls 14-20 years, as leaders through **Azad Kishori Program**

Young women 18-25 years as Feminist Leaders through **Parvaz Feminist Leadership** program



**Outreach and Mobilisation** to inform support and enroll young women in **Women With Wheels**

**OUR MISSION**

Our mission is to enable women disadvantaged by gender, caste, class, ethnicity, religion, race, colour, sexuality, so that they are able to empower themselves with knowledge and skills to build a gender just society and earn a livelihood with dignity in jobs and markets that have traditionally been closed to them.

**OUR VALUES**

- Inclusive:** lens of intersectionality
- Secular:** As per constitutional rights
- Dignity and Respect:** For one and all
- Responsibility:** For learning and action
- Professional:** In commitments
- Transparent and Accountable:** In all processes

RESEARCH, ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATIONS

Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of all programs

Advocacy to build gender sensitive markets for women in transport

Advocacy for enabling social infrastructure to sustain women's workforce participation



TRANSFORMATIVE CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM FOR LIVELIHOODS WITH DIGNITY IN TRANSPORT

**Transformative rights**-based training to resource poor women for employment in transport -2 and 4-wheelers

Expanding **Women With Wheels** through **partnerships**

Ensuring Employment Opportunities through **Sakha Consulting** (strategic livelihood partner)

# We learnt, adapted and synergized to build resilience in the face of the pandemic

The year 2020 has been a difficult and testing year for humanity, but a year that has reiterated the strength of collectives, of resilient communities and the indomitable human spirit.

Azad got into action right after the pandemic induced lockdown was announced. We nurtured our relationships with the Women With Wheels trainees, drivers, Azad Kishori leaders, Men for Gender Justice participants and Feminist Leaders and the communities they live in. Our teams across locations were connected with communities, which helped us understand multiple community needs via a virtual survey and ensure targeted relief-immediate support with medicines, food or health care...so that we could go on... **TOGETHER**

BUILDING AN ECOSYSTEM AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL



We began by understanding multiple needs of our communities



**24584**  
COMMUNITY NEED ASSESSMENT SURVEYS

- 2574 by FLP Leaders
- 3165 by MGJ members
- 3371 by Azad Kishori Leaders
- 474 by WWW trainees and Sakha drivers.

- 271 by FLP leaders
- 8 by Azad Kishori leaders
- 135 by WWW Trainees and Sakha drivers

**414\*\***

**GENDER BASED DISCRIMINATION SURVEYS**

**3309**  
FOOD SECURITY MONITORING SURVEYS

- 1069 by FLP Leaders
- 458 by MGJ members
- 80 by Azad Kishori Leaders
- 1702 by WWW trainees and Sakha drivers

The COVID-19 needs assessment survey developed in three languages viz. Hindi, English and Bengali was carried out using a mobile based application \*Mform. The survey conducted between May 2020 and October 2020 enabled Azad to reach out to the most vulnerable households for their immediate needs.

\*MFORM is a platform of Dhvani RIS with whom we collaborated for this survey

\*\* Gender based discrimination includes physical, mental violence, increased care and domestic work, restrictions on mobility and nutritional discrimination reported by women



## WHAT WE FOUND



In Chennai, where Azad began operations in 2020; We worked with women auto drivers who were given ration kits during the lockdown.

**50%\***

households had food supply for less than a week  
32% households did not have a ration card;  
**33%\*\*** individuals had lost their jobs.

**81%\***

households had no information on social security schemes or relief support announced by government

**59%\*\*\***

women reported facing different forms of gender based discrimination

**41%\***

households did not have masks or sanitizers

\*Out of 24584 household surveys

\*\* Out of 3309 household surveys

\*\*\*Out of 414 cases of gender based discrimination

Sakha drivers distributing ration kits to communities in Delhi.

## MULTIPLE APPROACHES ADOPTED FOR NEED BASED SUPPORT



**14,014 MASKS**

were made and distributed by our community members ensuring income opportunities for them.



**3253 HOUSEHOLDS**

were given dry ration kits - groceries + soaps + sanitiser - by Azad.



**2691**

HOUSEHOLDS were linked with social security schemes and assisted with citizenship documents.



**5529**

HOUSEHOLDS were given information on government schemes like jandhan, ration card, pension.



**5140**

INDIVIDUALS were provided with sanitary napkins.

BUILDING AN ECOSYSTEM AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

12

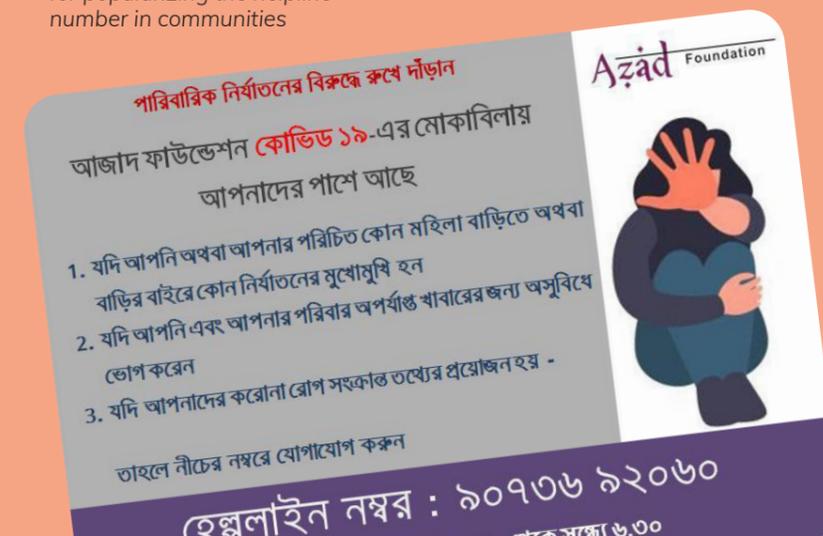


## HELPLINE



We also set up a helpline across Delhi, Jaipur and Kolkata. The helpline was managed by Azad team members with previous experience in counselling and popularized in the community through trainees, drivers and leaders using text messages, phone calls and follow-ups.

Poster designed by Kolkata Azad for popularizing the helpline number in communities



TOTAL CALLS RECEIVED

**507**  
DELHI

**284**  
KOLKATA

**124**  
JAIPUR

## >> 35 PARTNERSHIPS



Partnerships with 35 Civil Society Organizations and networks, local police stations, councilors and government functionaries helped to expand our outreach, and reiterated the principles of solidarity.



A Feminist Leader in Kolkata with sanitizers for distribution in the community

Through these linkages, we reached out to **8292** households for ensuring food security.

Facilitated **108 women survivors to access counselling or legal services.**

Helped Municipal Corporations with sanitization of community spaces - **In 65 areas of Kolkata and 11 areas of Jaipur.**



Men For Gender Justice team raised donations in kind and cash from local organisations and transport ministry to set up community kitchens providing cooked food to communities

## NATURE'S FURY IN KOLKATA



Cyclone Amphan devastated homes of trainees, chauffeurs and feminist leaders, as seen in the picture.

45 trainees and chauffeurs, who reported extensive damage to their homes due to Amphan in May 2020 were supported by Azad to reconstruct their homes.

# uilding AN ECOSYSTEM AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

THE PANDEMIC REINFORCED THE RAISON D'ETRE OF AZAD'S VISION

# ADOLESCENT LEADERS AZAD KISHORI PROGRAM

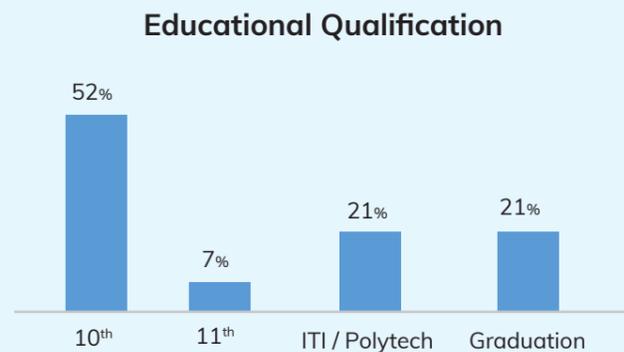
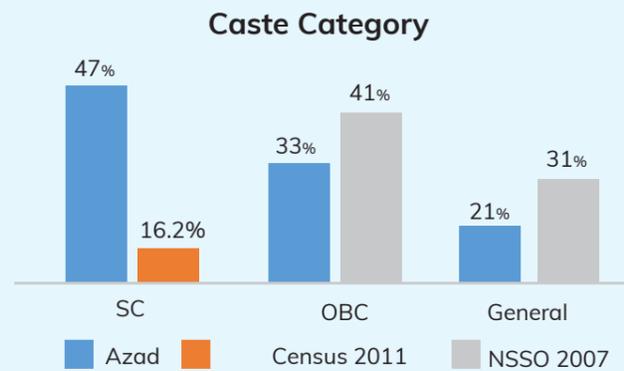
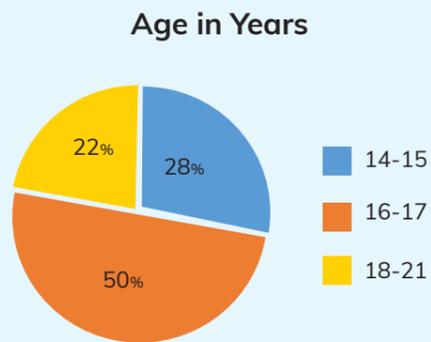


Azad Kishori Leaders receiving Smartphones to continue their education and engage in communities

## BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

Access to individual smartphones helped the leaders to continue their engagement with the Azad Kishori program as well as with their education.

The Kishori leaders were trained on digital literacy and cyber safety so that they used the smartphones responsibly.



BUILDING AN ECOSYSTEM AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

The Azad Kishori leadership program is being implemented as the next step to the school program for classes 9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup>, with **58 selected Azad Kishori leaders**. These leaders work in their communities with other adolescents and their families. Under-privileged adolescent girls faced new changes during this pandemic – increased unpaid care work, limited access to mobile phones, pressure to stop their education and get married – all contributing to reduced agency. The Azad Kishori program evolved in both approaches and methods to enable the leaders to mitigate the challenges in their personal lives while helping others.

\*Kishori means adolescent



# 58

**Kishori Leaders continued their education.**



# 22

**Kishori Leaders appeared for and passed their Class XII-19 scored 1<sup>st</sup> Division.**



# 58

**Kishori Leaders and Peer Group members enrolled in higher education 22 joining technical institutes and 16 joining under-graduate courses.**



## Peer Engagement

Reached out to 750 adolescent girls or peer members from 50 'Addas'

Kishori leaders form a peer groups, 'Adda'. Monthly meetings of each Adda is held by the leaders supported by mobilisers 'Sanginis'. Discussions are held on topics like Higher Education and non-traditional livelihoods, Unpaid Care Work and prevention of early marriage.



450 COVID-19 compliant Adda-peer group meetings have been conducted

## Mentorship

9 Mentors  
58 Mentees

The mentorship program is designed to ensure that each Kishori leader receives individual support and leadership growth. Mentors have been trained from amongst the mobilisers 'Sanginis' and Azad team members, who are assigned Kishori leaders as 'Mentees'.



Mentor with a Kishori leader, holding a one-on-one session.

From February 2021, mentors have started holding one-on-one meeting with their mentees either telephonically or through home visits.

“The mentoring process has helped me understand the importance of listening and constant communication with the Azad Kishori leaders.”  
MAYA, Mentor

In 2020-21, a baseline survey\* was conducted digitally with 30 leaders from the second batch and their family members. The survey enabled us to understand the positive potential of these leaders and areas of action as we progress.

87% of the Kishori leaders want to pursue higher education.

90% Kishori leaders wanted to marry after the age of 21 years and 57% shared that they will stand by their decision if pressurized into early marriage. This validates our efforts to engage with parents to build an enabling environment within the family for leaders.

53% Kishori leaders say they cannot talk about sexual and reproductive health and menstruation at home.

63% shared they have not opposed any form of violence on themselves or others.

These indicate areas of programmatic focus needed in future.

## Engagement with Parents

100

Community Sessions

522

Home Visits

971

Phone Calls



COVID-19 compliant Choupal in progress

To ensure Kishori leaders continue to receive support from their families in these testing times, constant communication was maintained with parents through Choupal i.e community meetings (held once in 3 months), house visits and phone calls.

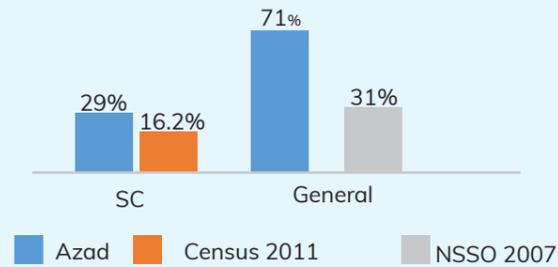
\*The baseline survey was developed in partnership with Social Lens



FEMINIST LEADERS

# PARVAZ FEMINIST LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

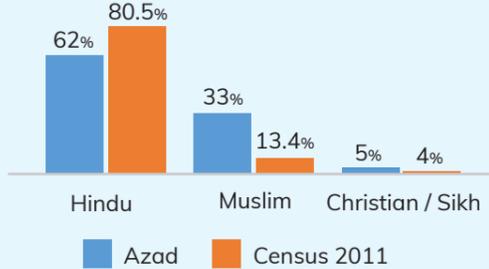
Caste Category



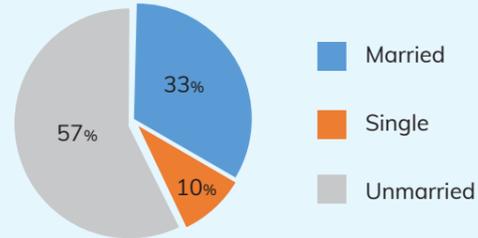
Educational Qualification



Community



Marital Status



BUILDING AN ECOSYSTEM AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL

## The Spirit of Collective Action In The Face of The Pandemic

The Feminist Leadership Program is being implemented in Kolkata with 36 active leaders who have come together to provide community support during COVID-19. This includes linkages to schemes and documents, organizing health camps, sanitization of their areas, raising awareness around COVID-19, linking with livelihood opportunities like making paper bags and facilitating survivors of violence to access legal services, counselling and gender sensitive infrastructure building. Despite their own families being impacted by socio-economic losses during COVID-19 and the Cyclone AMPHAN, the importance of having community level leaders was reiterated by the multilayered support that the Feminist leaders have been able to provide.



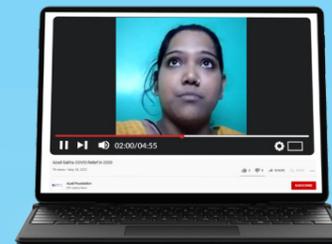
**5123**  
women directly reached for relief, awareness and information

**483**  
people facilitated to obtain citizenship documents

**534**  
women helped to access social security schemes

**10560**  
people reached through 299 community projects on infrastructure\*, health camps, livelihood

**40%**  
Enrolment of women (29) to Women with Wheels training in Kolkata have been facilitated by feminist leaders



**CAPTURING STORIES DIGITALLY**  
Feminist Leader Sujata Haldar shares her experience of working with communities during COVID-19.  
<https://youtu.be/or663Tm2laA>

\*Collaborated with local authorities in 8 resettlement colonies to ensure water supply, sanitation services and street lights



2 Family health camps and Eye check-up camps were Organised by Feminist leaders in community spaces



426 Women assisted by Feminist leaders could register to the swasthya -saathi scheme a cashless health insurance cover for the vulnerable initiated by government of west bengal



Sanitization work done by Feminist leaders in their own communities. 64 households were covered in these drives for sanitization against COVID-19, Dengue and Malaria

# A Virtual Graduation Ceremony

A virtual graduation ceremony was held on January 28th 2021 for the second batch of 21 feminist leaders who graduated formally from the year long fellowship. The virtual ceremony was participatory with each FLP leader sharing their journey and personal changes they experienced, depicted through their personalised poster. Some of the stories are captured below.



Feminist Leader **Afsari Begum** says that the leadership program has helped her unfurl her wings and fly. She has been able to support her neighbours with food, information and access during COVID-19. When a neighbouring slum burnt down, she worked with the FLP network for medical and relief support.



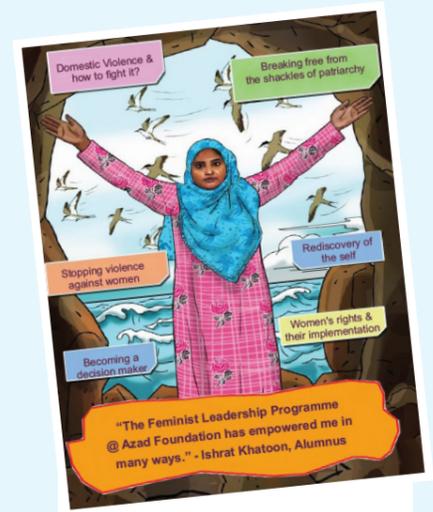
Feminist leader **Tanushree Sarkar** shared that becoming a feminist leader has helped her break free and challenge gender norms by opposing the marriage which was fixed against her will. She has also chanelised this energy to collaborate with police to get relief support for senior citizens in her community.

Feminist Leader **Asghari Khatun** became aware of her social responsibility, helping her to act, to ensure access to basic facilities like water and sanitation in her community.



During the pandemic, and as a leader, **Mousumi Nath** used an online app (Mform) to conduct 78 online and 110 door to door surveys to assess the need of community in the difficult times. She also distributed ration to 10 households.

The Feminist Leader Program is not just a program that makes one a leader, it inspires one to introspect and reflect, to bring out the strength from within, nourishes it and molding it to serve and lead, aspire, and inspire. Our leader **Ishrat Khatoon** is a personification of this belief.

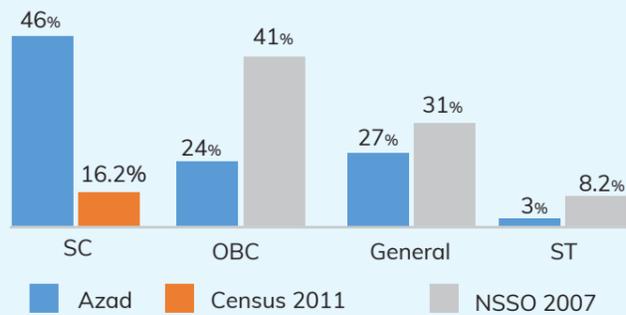


What does empowerment mean? Numerous definitions emerge, the crux remains freedom; freedom from bondages and barriers; the ability to fly and to empower and hence change lives for the greater good. **Afsari Begum** rose to the occasion and extended support to her neighbours during the difficult times of Amphan cyclone and pandemic with medicines and ration.

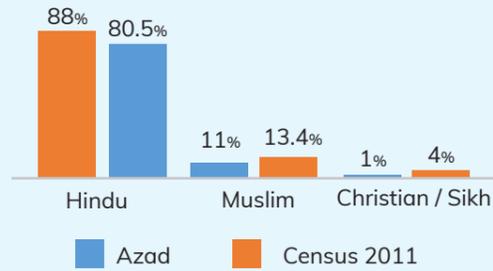


# YOUNG MEN CHANGE AGENTS MEN FOR GENDER JUSTICE PROGRAM

Caste Category



Community



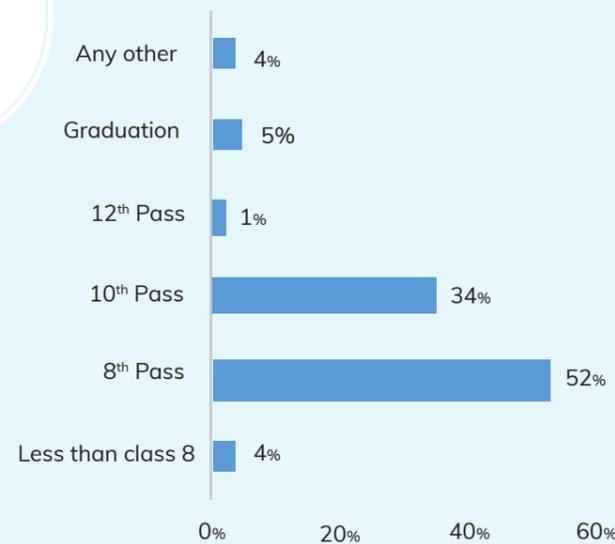
## Socially distanced community meetings with men participants

283 'Pakhwada' i.e fortnightly meetings were held across Delhi and Jaipur to discuss about masculinities, household and care work participation and awareness on gender based violence.

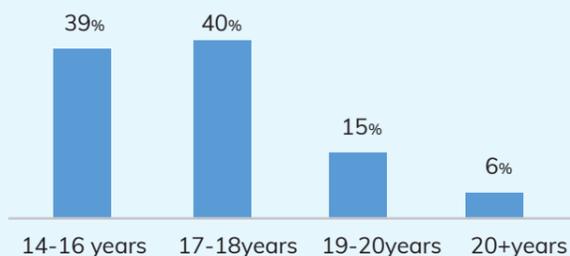
## Making Every Drop Count towards Gender Equality

As the world witnessed a push back on progress towards gender equality, the Men for Gender Justice Program (being implemented in Delhi and Jaipur currently) took meaningful strides in their communities to ensure men share household work and raise their voice against gender based violence through their community work, socially distanced training sessions and virtual meetings.

Educational Qualification



Age IN YEARS



BUILDING AN ECOSYSTEM AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL



**360**  
young boys and men participants  
180 each in Delhi and Jaipur

**18**

peer groups  
9 each in Delhi and Jaipur

**54**

leaders\*  
27 each in Delhi and Jaipur undergoing leadership training

\*54 leaders were selected from amongst 360 participants



295 participants attended capacity building and demonstration workshops to promote young men's participation in household work and care work.





54 Leaders (27 from each city) underwent a three day leadership development training between the 5-15<sup>th</sup> of February 2021 focusing on understanding power, privileges, masculinity, gendered division of unpaid care work and groups & social changes, negotiation and communication skills.

## Participation and learning through virtual trainings



Abhimanyu, Program Officer - Men for Gender Justice team, participated in 5-day training program on Gender Equality, Men and Masculinity by MITRA in February 2021.

These were capacity building sessions for practitioners to understand different contexts of working with men, new realities brought about by the pandemic and seeing such work in relation to building resilient communities.

Veerendra & Ashutosh, mobilisers from Men for Gender Justice team participated in Samvaada: Youth work for inclusive and sustainable development, a 6 month training course that started in November 2020 to equip young professionals about the role of youth in national development in today's context.



Encouraged to practice what they learnt- young MGJ participant from Jaipur washing household utensils. 167 young men across Delhi and Jaipur now participate in household work

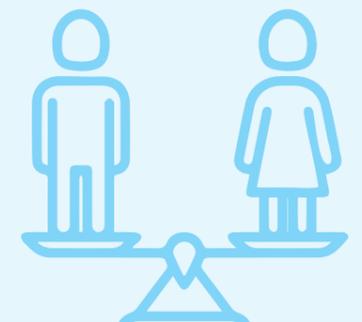
## » THE IMPACT

**POSITIVE IMPACT\* - GENDER ROLES**  
**21% positive change in perception on Gender Roles as men questioned norms such as men should work outside & women at home.**

**RETHINKING VIOLENCE**  
**11% Increase from baseline in respondents who shared that men do not have the right to beat or abuse women.**

**MEN DOING UNPAID CARE WORK**  
**76% respondents shared that they will do household work and motivate others as well.**

\* To assess the impact of the Men for Gender Justice program, a Knowledge Attitude and Practice based survey was administered to 360 young men at the beginning of the program (baseline) December 2019 followed by mid-line assessment in June 2020 with the same set of questions and same participants.



BUILDING SOLIDARITY THROUGH IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL CAMPAIGNS

# OUTREACH & MOBILISATION FOR WOMEN WITH WHEELS



Pamphlet distribution in communities of Delhi



Canopy in the community in Delhi



Pamphlet distribution and in-person mobilisation in Kolkata

Azad Foundation continued its mission to support resource poor women gain skills and enable access to remunerative livelihoods with dignity through its Women With Wheels program.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought the world to a halt but it did not deter the mobilization and outreach team from reaching out to women to create awareness about citizenship documents, social security, including COVID-19 related information and support. As the pandemic induced lockdown ended the teams also ensure women were enrolled into the women with wheels training to access decent livelihoods in the transport sector.

Despite COVID-19 restrictions that limited face-to-face activities, being connected with women, supporting them with information and access helped the team strengthen the trust of communities. The collective efforts of the team led to 88% enrolment s against their yearly target even in the face of a pandemic.

**Azad's mobilization team reached out to 18,431 persons across Delhi, Kolkata, Chennai, and Jaipur in 203 settlements.** The work in Chennai began during this year of uncertainty which was a challenge that the new team faced with vigour.

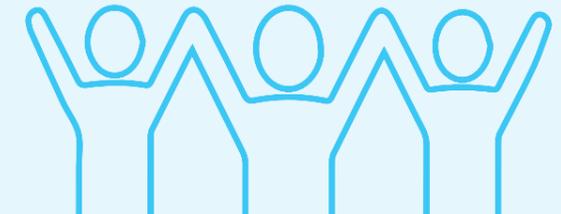


Canopy in the community in Kolkata

## ROUTE TO RESILIENCE

During the first half of the year, mobilization activities were restricted to connecting on the phone for follow-up, needs assessment and relief work. Working in a co-ordinated way, the field team were on the ground, responding to the needs arising from women in the community. This included getting them citizenship documents, so that they could access social security schemes, information on schemes and providing relief directly.

October onwards, there was some relaxation in the lockdown measures. We were able to do mass mobilization activities such as community meetings, campaigning from an auto-rickshaw with a loud speaker, and awareness campaigns. All mobilization activities have been adapted to follow COVID-19 compliance – small groups, wearing masks, sitting at a distance.



**141**  
women enrolled  
in Azad 2020-21

**25**  
Delhi

**20**  
Jaipur

**73**  
Kolkata

**23**  
Chennai

## EMERGING STRONGER

The Kolkata team secured the highest enrolment of 133% of the target for the year. Azad thanks the team and mobilization partners who continued their efforts to build trust in the communities, standing with them during the twin crisis, COVID-19 and the cyclone Amphan.

For the new Chennai team beginning its work, the network of many civil society organizations, helped them make an entry in 22 settlements.

Despite of the challenges and restricted field activities, the team could enrol 23 women in women with wheels.



Pamphlet distribution in Chennai

With safety measures and COVID-19 compliance, the outreach and mobilisation team strived to achieve its mission and fight back each obstacle on their way.

# 7460

Surveys have been the most effective activity conducted across locations

6230  
Delhi

887  
Jaipur

114  
Kolkata

229  
Chennai



Mobilization became quite a challenge during COVID-19. Firstly, we had to ensure that all precautions were taken for our safety and safety of people we interacted with. Despite these challenges engaging with the communities through door-to-door survey and follow ups on phone we have been able to bring women for the program.

UDAYARANI  
Mobilizer, Chennai



Sharing about Azad during Milan Mela in Kolkata

## INFORMATION ON NEW LIVELIHOODS DURING COVID-19

Assessing the increase in the demand for delivery executives with e-commerce companies, the women with wheels program adapted its training to expand to the 2-wheeler segment.

Modified pamphlets were developed and used to create awareness about this new opportunity and mobilise women in Delhi, Jaipur, Kolkata and Chennai for the 2-wheeler training.



# 122

COVID-19 compliant community meetings have been conducted



COVID-19 compliant community meeting in Jaipur



Azad Delhi team at One Billion Rising campaign community meetings on redistribution of household work

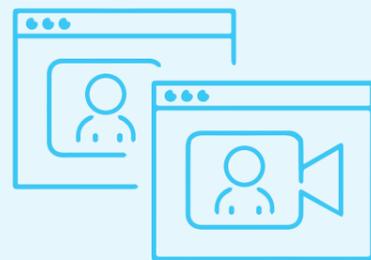


Azad Jaipur team gathered together with adolescent girls to form a Long Human Chain for peace and harmony holding plants to symbolize their commitment to preserving the environment, while maintaining safety precautions.

**800**  
participants joined during One Billion Rising Campaign across Azad teams and community

# Building solidarity through in-person and virtual campaigns

norms enabling the teams across Azad, trainees, feminist leaders, Azad Kishori leaders and men change agents relate to the collective solidarity. The theme this year was "RISING GARDENS" - a call for revival, restoration and transformation. Azad also focused on love, equality and solidarity through redistribution of household and care work at home. Two online campaigns #SamantaBandhan, celebrating the Indian festival of Rakshabandhan as a festival of equality rather than a commitment of protection made by brothers for their sisters and #ChauffeurbyChoice, celebrating women's choice on Independence Day brought virtual solidarity. The team also joined solidarity movements condemning the Hathras incident, standing with farmers' and came together during Women's Day.



The pandemic has not dampened our solidarity!

Like every year, the Azad team participated in the One Billion Rising campaign against gender based violence from November to February, with adequate social distancing



Azad Kolkata team joins the solidarity march condemning the Hathras incident. Teams across Delhi and Jaipur also joined in similar socially distanced events



Men from gender justice team in Delhi sorting spinach before cooking to understand the importance of participation in household work

## EXPLORING VIRTUAL CAMPAIGNS DURING THE PANDEMIC

#SamantaBandhan was a social media campaign celebrating Rakhi as a promise of equality rather than protection. The campaign received 1347 pledges - in the form of videos, photos and personal stories or thoughts across Delhi, Jaipur, Kolkata, Indore and from other partner organisations.



The campaign #ChauffeurByChoice was launched in August on Independence Day to celebrate women's choice in entering a male dominated sector such as transport. 360 chauffeurs and trainees and 40 customers of Sakha participated in this campaign across Azad and partners, Jan Vikas and Samman.

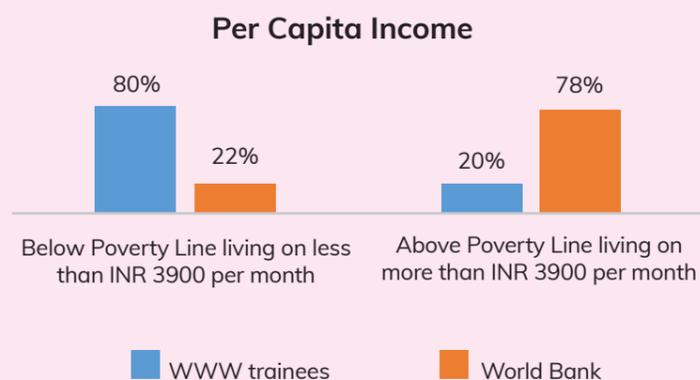
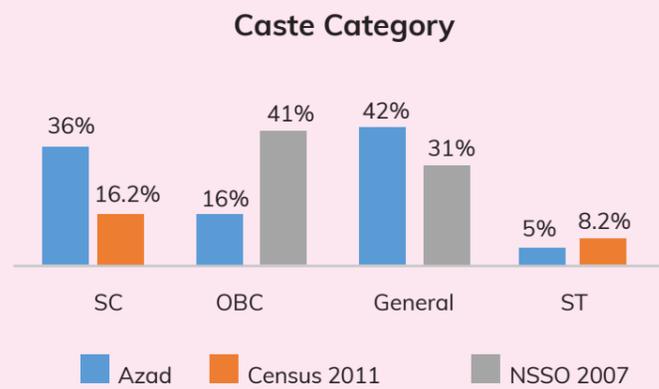
Celebrations happen on 8<sup>th</sup> March every year; during the pandemic our teams gathered to raise their voices against the increase of gender norms during the pandemic. We participated in solidarity marches in Kolkata and Delhi to claim social, economic, political rights of women and marginalized groups. In the picture on the right, a team event was organised in Jaipur where hand imprints were taken on a cloth with the message "Hamara Haath Hamara Vaada" a pledge to raise our hands and voices against violence.



## WOMEN WITH WHEELS TRAINING AND PARTNERSHIPS

**volving**  
IN THE FACE  
OF CRISIS

# PROFILE OF TRAINEES ENROLLED IN WOMEN WITH WHEELS 2020-21



## WOMEN WITH WHEELS TRAINING EVOLVING IN THE FACE OF CRISIS

One of the biggest challenges during the year was the four-month hiatus to the technical driving training program. Azad team engaged with trainees through the period of lockdown and subsequent restrictions by adapting to virtual trainings on existing self-development and empowerment modules. The direct technical trainings could only resume from July 2020 onwards. The training was started in a phased manner; starting with trainees who had obtained their permanent license or were getting ready for their employability test prior to the lockdown. This helped them complete the training quickly and secure employment. As each challenge came up, it pushed us to innovate and evolve. Thus, we moved to blended training – both online and offline; and introduced 2-wheeler riding training in addition to 4-wheeler driving.

We adapted to the challenges presented by the pandemic. The number of trainees who could be in the vehicle at one time was reduced from four to one or two, pick up and drop of trainees from their house was ensured as public transport was a challenge and to ensure their parents support, maintaining COVID-19 compliance during and after the training like gloves, masks, regular sanitization of the car etc.

“Our classes started during COVID-19. We maintained social distancing. Sanitization of car before use, wearing masks and gloves were some of the precautions we ensured.”

ARADHANA  
Trainee, North Delhi

**107**  
trainees became employable\*

**36**  
Delhi

**18**  
Jaipur

**46**  
Kolkata

**7**  
Chennai



**108**  
trainees cleared their employability test\*\*

**41**  
Delhi

**17**  
Jaipur

**50**  
Kolkata

\*Employable means women who got their permanent license and have attended their transformative trainings.

\*\*Employability test is a technical driving test taken by Sakha our livelihood partner.



Two wheeler training in Kolkata



Two wheeler training in Chennai

### TWO WHEELER TRAINING IN KOLKATA

Adapting to the need of the emerging e-commerce segment this year, we expanded to 2-wheeler training along with 4-wheelers. As the e-commerce sector flourishes under the new normal, many job opportunities opened up because of the lockdown. Some of the trainees who had passed their employability test and were waiting to be employed and some of the trainees who showed an interest, were trained to ride 2-wheelers. We also enrolled women especially for 2-wheeler training across locations.

### ADAPTATIONS IN CHENNAI

In the initial phase of the pandemic a re-strategized approach was adopted in Chennai 11 women with valid three wheelers licence and driving autos were enrolled and trained in self-empowerment and self-development modules thus up-skilling them. COVID-19 compliant non-technical training sessions were held along with virtual ones.



**AS THE WORLD SHIFTED TO DIGITAL MODES OF COMMUNICATION AND LEARNING, SO DID WE.**



Screengrab of a video showcasing COVID-19 compliant trainings:

<https://youtu.be/HIYZAKfCoTc>

This year all empowerment modules were delivered virtually using tools such as the Zoom video conferencing app and the Quest App\* for English. The trainees were given complete support to move to this new way of learning, from downloading apps on their phones to using their different features.

Most of our existing training modules were modified to be taught virtually. The modules have been made concise. Towards the end of the year, blended curricula were adopted for certain practical trainings like first aid and self-defense.

**31**

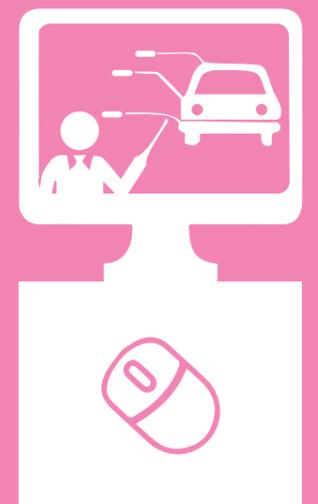
**trainees in Jaipur were linked with online videos of the self-defense academy**

**14**

**trainees received training on first aid through videos**

**20**

**trainees in Kolkata received self-defense sessions virtually using pre-recorded videos**



# Partnership

Partnership is an integral part of Azad strategy to expand the idea of women with wheels. Azad Foundation works with partners – Janvikas in Ahmedabad, Centre for Youth and Social Development in Bhubaneswar, Samaan in Indore and Humsafar in Lucknow. In 2020-21, virtual connect, solidarity through networking, sharing resources for relief and learning strategies to combat the COVID-19 crisis, such as mobile based community need assessment, expansion to 2-wheeler training formed the highlight of our partnership. Like us, our partners faced similar challenges in their operations and training women in WWW. All four organizations stepped into relief work as soon as the lockdown was announced. CYSD faced the additional challenge of Cyclone Amphan which hit both Odisha and West Bengal in May 2020.

## OUR PARTNERS

**JANVIKAS**  
A Quest for 'Just' Human Development

Jan Vikas worked on food security, supporting migrants with cash transfer and legal help, capacity building of community leaders and para legal and sanitation drives. WWW was restarted in 2020 with 21 new trainees.



Samaan worked on food security, GBV for relief work, re-starts WWW 30 new trainees, Kanooni Sakhi and Women Mechanics program 'Yantrika' resumed too.



CYSD worked with the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) Govt. of Odisha to provide food relief and sanitation drives. Restarted WWW in August 2020 and have employed six drivers with BMC.



Humsafar re-starts the WWW program with training in both E-rickshaw and linking drivers with Mudra loan. Trainees were reached out with relief primarily for food security and gender based violence.



The yearly Partnership Meet was organized in the context of COVID-19 focused on challenges and strategies adopted by partner organizations and Azad during the lockdown for relief work as well as WWW program. The meet further focused on what is the way forward specifically for WWW program.

All partners and Azad held rich discussions sharing their experience of relief work. Other topics on which partners exchanged knowledge and experiences were 2-wheeler training, employment opportunities in the e-commerce sector and safety precautions needed for COVID-19 compliance in WWW.



# oving

WOMEN WITH  
WHEELS  
DURING THE  
PANDEMIC

As the Travel and Tourism industry came to a standstill during lockdown, **Sakha** engaged its drivers in capacity building, relief work and getting ready to resume work with covid compliant norms. Even in these trying times Sakha is grateful that it could sustain livelihoods of its drivers through online crowdfunding, donations and negotiations with employers. Sakha Cabs began COVID-19 compliant services after the lockdown ended. Trained 2-wheeler riders were placed with e-commerce companies and in the logistics sector.



Ensuring safety and hygiene of drivers and passengers and active communication on COVID-19 compliant cabs #SafeRides through social media



Fundraising through Milaap.org – for Sakha drivers through which we raised INR 10,96,466 lakhs

## #NOTURNINGBACK

Adapted to the pandemic by providing each driver with protective gear, masks, gloves, shields and sanitisers. An isolator was fixed between passengers and the driver in all cabs. The cabs were sanitised after each ride.



**78**  
new placements  
across e-commerce  
and transport

**34**  
Delhi

**12**  
Jaipur

**32**  
Kolkata

MOVING  
WOMEN WITH  
WHEELS

**UPSKILLING  
OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR DRIVERS**

**12**  
drivers undertook  
a rigorous 3  
months training  
and obtained their  
heavy vehicle license  
during this period



**Digital Skilling  
opportunities were  
enhanced** as drivers were  
involved in online mapping  
of vulnerable communities  
during COVID-19 and online  
access of English Speaking  
modules using the \*Quest  
Application

**YOUR FAVOURITE CHAUFFEUR BABLI  
WAS LIVE ON  
ALL INDIA RADIO 106.4 FM (1:45 AM, 24TH JUNE 2020)**

"I had never even  
cycled and now I drive  
myself.  
I believe dropping each  
passenger safe is not  
only my job but its my  
utmost responsibility."

**BABLI, SAKHA CHAUFFEUR,  
TRAINER & TEAM LEADER, DELHI**

Sakha on air - Sharing stories of change

\*Azad-Sakha thanks the Quest Alliance team for enabling access to the Quest App for English modules during the pandemic

**WHAT DO SAKHA DRIVERS  
WANT?**

- 50% WOMEN** demand opportunities in PUBLIC AND PRIVATE TRANSPORT
- 25% WOMEN** want SAFE & HYGIENIC PUBLIC WASHROOMS
- 25% WOMEN** demand SAFE ROADS & RESERVED PARKING FOR WOMEN DRIVERS

\*Survey with 360 sakha chauffeurs conducted during the #ChauffeurByChoice campaign

What Women Drivers Want? Responses during the #ChauffeurByChoice campaign from 360 chauffeurs

**PARTICIPATION IN CAMPAIGNS AND CELEBRATIONS**



Sakha drivers in Kolkata celebrating the partnership with Bandhan that introduced a "Pad Box", a sanitary napkin box in all their cars ensuring safety and hygiene

This year, celebrations for Women's Day was a momentous occasion as it marked the celebration of Sakha emerging thorough troubled times. As the transport industry was opening up, Sakha took this opportunity to offer 25% discount to all customers and an additional 10% Referral Discount on their next ride to ensure both women drivers and customers celebrated their achievement.



Sakha counter at Delhi Airport decked-up for Women's Day



Between all our four locations in Delhi, Jaipur, Kolkata & Indore, we provided **65 SAFE RIDES** in our COVID-19 compliant cabs

# Research advocacy AND COMMUNICATIONS

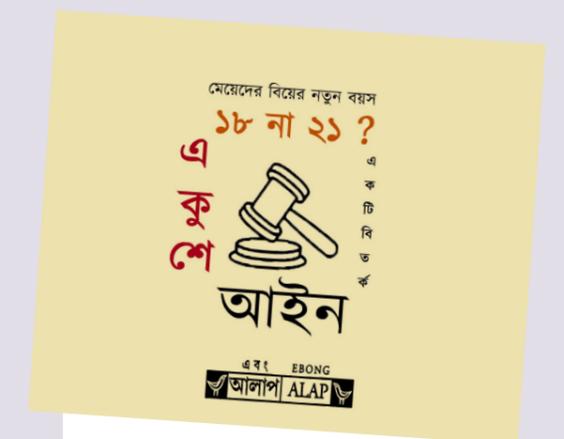
ADAPTING TO THE FAST  
CHANGING VIRTUAL REALITY

In tune with the ethos of adaptation and learning, research, advocacy and communications has also adopted to fit in the new normal (virtual) ways of operations. Whether it was adapting our data collection to e-formats using google forms, virtual and call based data collection and training teams at the community through Zoom and other virtual mediums or use of virtual tools like Padlet, Mentimetre for engaging webinars, we continued to learn and evolve. Going virtual was a boon for our advocacy as we have been able to ensure more inclusive online presence of not just Azad staff members but even community leaders and Sakha drivers on multiple national and international forums. Our communications also got a boost as Azad Foundation won The Purpose Project, an initiative of media agency, ON PURPOSE to support an organization every year on a pro bono basis for building their communications capability and we on boarded a strategic communication consultant as well. The year, which began on an uncertain note thus brought new learnings for effective presence in the virtual world for Azad.

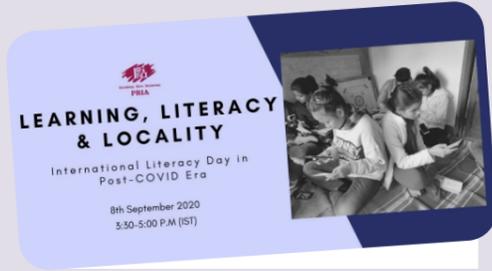
## SHARING OUR COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCES ON IMPACT OF COVID-19 THROUGH VIRTUAL WEBINARS AND CONFERENCES



Meenu Vadera, Founder & Executive Director - Azad & Sakha, shared her views on impact of COVID on adolescents at a webinar by EMpower on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2020.



Dolon Ganguly, Program Director - Azad Kolkata, shared her opinion on the new law regarding increasing age of marriage for girls at a conference organised by Ebong Alap on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2020.



Kiran, Sakha Chauffeur - Jaipur, participated as a panelist and shared her story at the storytelling session on Learning, Literacy and Locality organized by PRIA on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

Shakuntala, Mobilizer, and Shuchi, Program Officer from Azad Kishori program, shared their thoughts on Domestic Violence During COVID-19 in a webinar organised by the Ministry of Empowerment and UNFPA on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2021 to incorporate voices from the ground and get recommendations to address the increasing cases of domestic violence in Rajasthan.



Azad participated in the 8<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of INDIA NATIONAL CONSULTATION, undertaken towards Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education organised on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2020. Meenu Vadera, Founder Director - Azad & Sakha, and Amrita Gupta, Program Director-RAC, attended the session where the impact of COVID-19 on structural inequalities, policy gap, non-inclusive education and impact of reverse migration on labour, child marriage, increased dropout, and unequal access to digital platforms were discussed.



Jyoti Pandit, Azad Kishori Leader - Jaipur, was one the panelists at the Young Leaders Conclave - Insights from the Community: Creative Approaches & Outlook for the Future organized by Medha in collaboration with Ibteda and Antarang on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2020.



On the occasion of Women's Day, Dolon Ganguly, Program Director -Kolkata, and Sakha driver Shankari talked on "Women in Leadership: Achieving an Equal Future in a COVID-19 World". The program was organized by Environment Management Division, Steel Authority of India Limited on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021.



Ms. Meenu Vadera, Founder and Executive Director - Azad & Sakha, and Sakha drivers Jyoti fom Delhi and Shankari from Kolkata, talked about wheels of change & empowerment at the International Women's Day event organized by Center of Publishing and School of Human Studies - Ambedkar University on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

Dolon Ganguly, Program Director-Kolkata, spoke on e-mobility initiatives of Women with Wheels at a webinar on E-mobility - Infrastructure, Business Readiness Strategies and Green Jobs organized by The Bengal Chamber of Commerce and Industry on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

Meenu Vadera, Founder and Executive Director - Azad & Sakha, spoke about the Evolution of CSR in a Post-Pandemic World – Exploring The Ways Forward at the Virtual Livelihood India Summit on January 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> 2020.





Amrita Gupta & Paridhi Yadav from Research Advocacy and Communications team were panelists at two panels of the Women and Transport Africa Conference organized by Flone Initiative in November 2020. They shared about Women in Transport as Investors and the impact of COVID-19 on transport in India using video testimonies from Sakha drivers across three cities.

RESEARCH ADVOCACY



Shanti, Senior Mobilisation Coordinator from Azad-Delhi, who was part of the Beijing Conference in 1995 journey and thoughts for next generation leaders was recorded in the e-book “My Memories and Message for the Next Generation” by UNWomen to commemorate Beijing +25 in April 2020

### WEBINARS HOSTED AND CO-HOSTED BY AZAD

Azad co-organized three consultations to initiate civil society dialogues on the Social Stock Exchange Working Committee Report by Securities and Exchange Board of India: national on the 6<sup>th</sup>, Tamil Nadu on the 11<sup>th</sup>- and West Bengal on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2020.

Feedback and recommendations from these consultations were shared with the National Committee working on the Social Stock Exchange constituted by the Hon. Finance Minister, SMT Nirmala Sitharaman.



A young participant from Men for Gender Justice team sharing about his experience after joining the program at the webinar series “Building Bridges - Approaches of Engaging Men & Boys in Gender -Transformative Programs” organized by EMpower’s The Emerging Markets Foundation and co-hosted by Azad.



Know Your Neighbour and Azad organized a webinar on Dec 10<sup>th</sup> Human Rights Day, showcasing experiences of friendship, trust and solidarity by women community workers, activists and teachers who have emerged as agents of change in the face of adversity. The webinar had voices of Azad’s community leaders and was moderated by Deetima Choudhury, Program Officer-Kolkata.



Hemlata, Mobiliser - Azad Delhi, shared her views on the need for infrastructure like crèches at the consultation on Youth Voices for Delhi Master Plan 2021-24 organized by National Institute of Urban Affairs. Azad has been an active member of the civil society initiative Main Bhi Dilli Campaign advocating for inclusive infrastructure in the Delhi Master Plan.



Azad Foundation organised a Virtual Parallel Event at the 65<sup>th</sup> Commission on Status of Women (CSW). The session titled “Engaging with Men to Advance a Gender-Just Society” was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020. The session was moderated by Christina Furtado, Executive Director of Equal Community Foundation, with a global panel - Aapta Garg, Senior Program Officer at Promundo, Wessel van den Berg,

Children’s Rights and Positive Parenting unit manager at Sonke Gender Justice, and Shrinivas Rao, Chief Operating Officer - Azad Foundation. This session engaged through local narratives of ongoing global engagement with men and masculinities in Africa, Asia and America to understand its potential to impact women’s full and effective participation and decision-making in public life for a more gender-just recovery.

## NATIONAL AND GLOBAL ADVOCACY ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### Virtual Participation in Regional SDG FORUMS

Dolon Ganguly, Program Director-Kolkata, presented a civil society statement from Azad at UNESCAP in Dec 2020 on the need for decent livelihoods, social protection schemes and spaces for building alliances.

Amrita Gupta, Program Director-RAC, was part of regional UNESCAP Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development in March 2021 sharing inputs on how to make monitoring of SDG 8, 10 and 17 more inclusive.



Amrita Gupta, Program Director - RAC was a panelist at a webinar on SDG 4: Towards a Better Normal. The event was conducted on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020.



Amrita Gupta, Program Director - RAC, participated as a panelist in a Webinar on SDG4: Quality Education organized by National Council for Education on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2020.

## STRENGTHENING SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS



### COVID-19 newsletter showing Azad's interventions

The newsletter highlights the findings of community based survey form along with relief efforts undertaken by Azad till mid August 2020.

<http://azadfoundation.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Azad-COVID-Relief-Report-Sept2020.pdf>



Our Better World is a digital storytelling initiative of the Singapore International Foundation. They partnered to capture and popularize the Women With Wheels story including the recent COVID-19 relief work and testimonials from ground.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H9SJ4seeJ0w&t=5s>



The Azad research team developed a video documentation of Adaptation to COVID-19 and Moving On, in collaboration with Azad and Sakha team. The video which was presented at the Women and Transport Africa Conference can be accessed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ixK5V6o6dY0>



### Impactful Communications on Social Media using Hashtags

Azad thanks On Purpose for their strategic inputs on our social media strategy. A key impact has been the launch of #MainHoonAzad series which features stories of Azad team members, community leaders and their action on the ground.

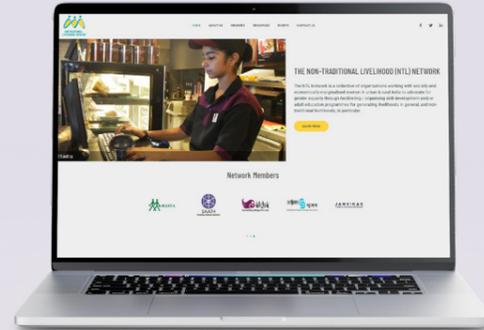


Firdos, mobilizer from Azad Delhi has been selected as the National Youth Gender Activist representing India at Asia Pacific in the UN Generational Equality Forum

## VIRTUAL NETWORKING DURING COVID-19 Non-Traditional Livelihoods (NTL) Network

Azad had seeded a NTL network in 2016 and currently holds its secretariat. In 2020-21 the network increased its strength to 35 members, increased its virtual footprint and was able to participate in local and global advocacy to promote inclusive education, skills and challenging gender norms regarding women and work.

The NTL Network marked the World Youth Skills Day July 15<sup>th</sup> 2020 with the launch of its e-brochure and its virtual presence on LinkedIn.



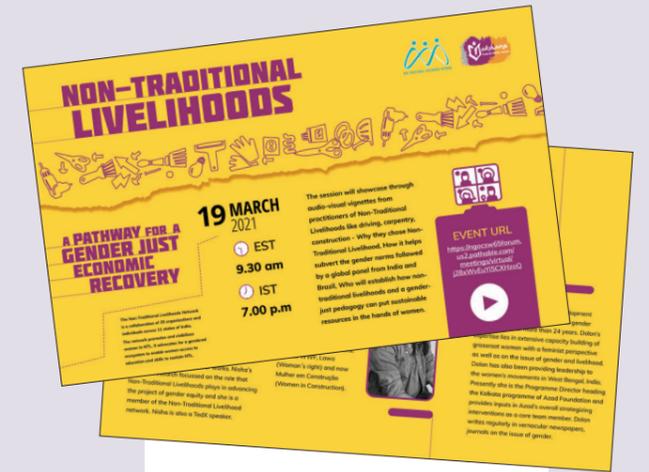
The NTL website was finalized in March 2020 and is up and running. <http://ntlnetwork.in/>

The NTL network members (17 participants) came together for 2 virtual discussion sessions during this period. An initial call was organised with members in April 2020 to understand their activities during COVID-19 which led to bilateral collaborations and the Network Annual General Body Meeting in October 2020 (33 participants) which resulted in our future plan of action.

In the pursuit of evidence based advocacy on inclusive implementation of the National Education Policy, network partner Nirantar will undertake a study on review of skill curriculum of government technical institutes using a gender and inclusion lens for the section on vocational education.

## Virtual Foray into National & International Advocacy

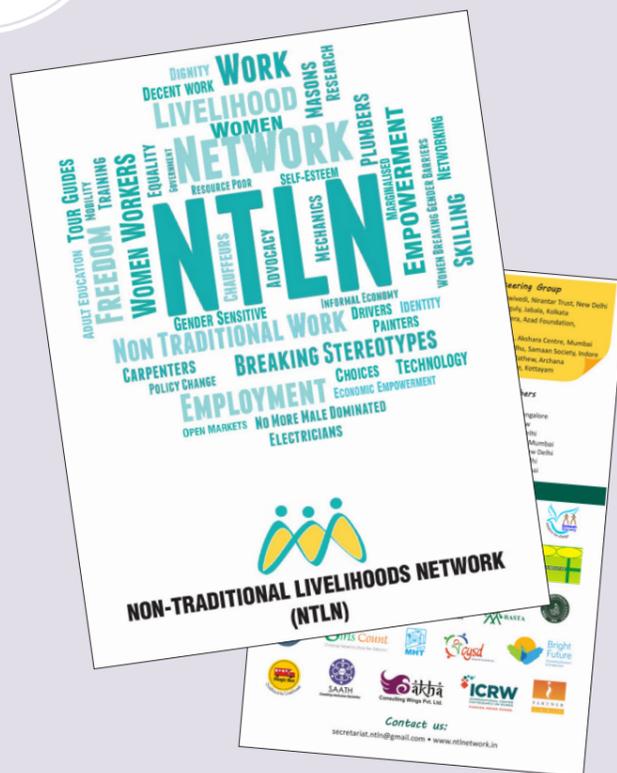
The Non-Traditional Livelihoods Network and Akshara Center co-hosted a virtual parallel session on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at Commission on Status of Women 65. The session titled Non Traditional Livelihoods - Pathway to a Gender Just Recovery - showcased an audio-visual vignette from practitioners of non-traditional livelihoods titled 'Limitless Boundaries'\* followed by a global panel discussion. The panel was moderated by Meenu Vadera, the Founding Member and Executive Director - Azad Foundation and Sakha Consulting and NTLN Steering Group Member. The panelists were Dr. Nisha Dhawan, the Country Director for India at EMpower – The Emerging Markets Foundation, Camila Alhadef, Marketing and Fundraising professional with Mulher em Construção (Women in Construction)



Brazil, Dolon Ganguly heading the Kolkata programme of Azad Foundation and Dr. Nandita Shah, co-founder of Akshara Centre, Mumbai, and Steering Group Member of the Non-Traditional Livelihoods Network. The panel had 71 attendees and was webcast live on NTL Networks Facebook page crossing 3500 views.



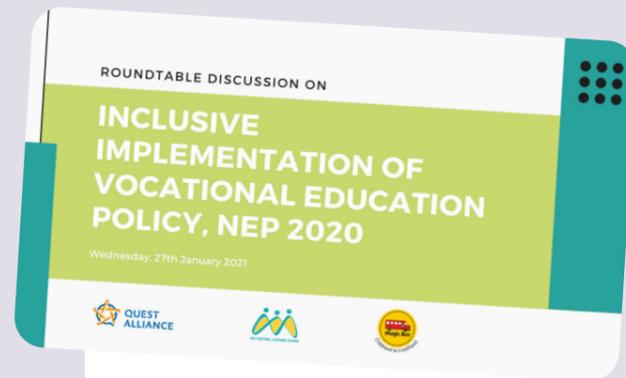
Screengrab of the film 'Limitless Boundaries' that was shared at the CSW65 conference. Thank you to all the participants and collaborators from the network and our creative partner Kriti. The video can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PsVV-puaRUA&t=4s>





### Virtual Webinar on COVID-19 and the World of Informal Work with Action Aid June 2020

The network participated and co-hosted the webinar series with Action Aid on challenges of women workers during COVID-19. In the session on housing and construction on June 17<sup>th</sup> our member Mahila Housing Trust was a panelist and in the Session on workers in new arenas, and on June 18<sup>th</sup> which the network co-hosted, Archana Women's Center Azad Foundation and the Network Secretariat were panelists.



In January 2021, a roundtable discussion was organized with partners Quest Alliance and Magic Bus India Foundation by NTL Network for reflective engagement to ensure an inclusive implementation of vocational education proposed in the revised National Education Policy 2020. 25 participants attended the meeting from academia and industry, along with 17 network members.

# institution BUILDING

ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE OF TEAMS AND INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIES 2020-21

## ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE OF TEAMS & INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIES 2020-21

The COVID-19 pandemic brought multiple shifts in our strategy and we reprioritized our work according to the needs of our community and ensured safety and sustenance of the entire team. The sudden announcement of the lockdown in March 2020 and its many extensions, made us relook at the way we worked. We let go of some of our office infrastructure, learnt how to work

yet another year of uncertainty, we are grateful that we have been able to sail through this difficult time with our full crew. We are grateful that we were able to sustain our women drivers at a time when the transport industry, their livelihood, had paused due to repeated lockdowns. We are grateful to have made the journey so far with all our teams and supporters on board.

### STRATEGIC DECISION MAKING

A Change Management Team (CMT) with 6 members including the Executive Director, the Chief Operating Officer, Programme Directors of Jaipur and Kolkata, Director Finance and the HR consultant was formed. The CMT was responsible for steering the organization as the pandemic situation changed, keeping updated on developments, and ensuring that we responded accordingly. The CMT developed and monitored

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Guidelines on work from home, sanitising office spaces, distributing groceries in communities, response to a team member reporting fever or Covid-19 symptoms, etc. The policy on working from home was revised mid-year with inputs from the teams to ensure a better work-life balance keeping the uncertain context in mind.

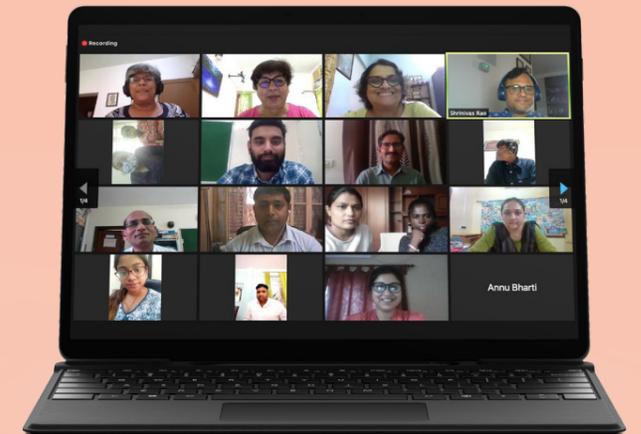
A wellness committee was formed with 3 members including Director-Finance, Human Resource Manager, Chief Operating Officer along, with a location based team to follow-up and ensure constant communication and updates with any team member who suffered from COVID-19 or any other illness. Among the key initiatives, a 20 day additional leave policy was instituted for those suffering from physical and mental effects of COVID-19 on self and family. To ensure support for mental health for the entire team in this distress situation, the wellness committee provided free online counselling numbers. Also, medical insurance cover for self and families for all including contract staff and mobilizers was ensured. As we emerged from lockdown, the sanitation policy and COVID-19 compliant seating and space sharing policy was developed and monitored by the team.

First townhall in April 2020- Sharing the strategy during Lockdown



### VIRTUAL TOWNHALLS keeping the feeling of collective alive

2 virtual townhalls were conducted during the year 2020-21. The first townhall was conducted in this period April 2020 and March 2021 to build a feeling of connectedness and keep the entire team abreast with strategic decisions taken on health and wellness, work from home, protocols for office use and on-field and online community work and trainings.



Second Townhall-March 2021- Team bonding activity in progress



Office sanitization in progress in North Delhi

effectively from home, went digital on all fronts including in our trainings and made sure that we kept the virus at bay when we did go back to office. Along with worrying about our physical health, we made sure to focus on mental health and work balance, so that all team members were comfortable with the new way of working. As we end one year and enter



**LEADERSHIP BUILDING  
RESILIENCE TO STEER THROUGH CRISIS**

**Virtual Training in  
Compassionate Counselling**

10 programme officers from Azad participated in an online session, based on the principles of mindfulness and compassion, designed to focus on building mental health and resilience of development sector professionals, especially trainers and facilitators, organized by Antarang Foundation in partnership with Sadia Saeed and supported by EMpower for practitioners in the development sector.



*The session has given me in-depth knowledge and helped me in understanding how mindfulness helps in bringing the mind back to the present without shutting out thoughts or emotions. I also learned not to control the thoughts which come to me, or the feelings that I experience.*

**BIDYA**

*Training Coordinator, Delhi  
Participant in the Compassionate  
Counselling Session*

**Virtual Training with Indian Society  
for Applied Behavioral Science Labs  
for self-development**

6 members from Azad participated in the ISABS UDAAN 2020 virtual labs across December and February 2020. This Human Process Laboratory helped them learn and discover more about self, strengths, styles, interpersonal and group interactions.

**STRENGTHENING  
GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS**

The Internal Complaints Committee for Sexual Harassment at Workplace did not receive any complaints in 2020-21.

**strategic  
PLAN  
2021-25**

# Strategic Plan 2021-25

An essential step towards organizational development this year has been planning for and developing the new strategic plan for Azad for the coming five years viz. 2021-25 as the previous plan comes to its completion. Virtual consultations were held with community members, team members and representatives from the civil society organizations and partner organizations of Azad, along with an external perspective in the form of a potential market scan and technical inputs on theory of change and impact indicators. The findings from these are integral to drafting a strategy for the next five years.

## Azad Team & Community

### PROCESS

Google Form surveys for feedback from 688 community representatives

Three virtual sessions with 82 community representatives across 4 cities

Three virtual sessions with 65 members (90% of all employees) from Azad across programs and 4 locations

### SUGGESTIONS FOR NEXT 5 YEARS

**Expand Azad's community engagement programs across all centres**

**Expand presence across transport-two wheeler bus and auto.**

**Expand to other non-traditional livelihoods example: Electrician, Masonry, Mechanic, Electrician and House Painter.**

## Civil Society Partners & Institutional Leaders

### PROCESS

Two consultations with 29 representatives from 24 civil society partners

Key informant Interviews with institutional leaders, who are familiar with Azad

### SUGGESTIONS FOR NEXT 5 YEARS

- **Azad to establish its position as a policy advocate**
  - on women in non-traditional livelihoods
  - on gender sensitive infrastructure-creches, safe roads, toilets, and create community led resources like day care centres
- **Build collectives of women in transport and non traditional livelihoods**
- **Expand presence across the transport sector-two wheeler bus and auto.**
- **Expand to other non-traditional livelihoods: Electrician, Masonry, Mechanic, Electrician and House Painter.**

We wish to thank Ms Gouthami, Mr Gagan Sethi, Mr Rajesh Tandon, Ms Ranu Bhogal and Ms Suneeta Dhar and all our civil society partners for their valuable suggestions.



## External Market Scan

Conducted in November 2020-January 2021 to understand opportunities in non-traditional livelihoods in the context of COVID-19 and changing world of work

**Opportunities exists in few sectors but these are limitations, which need long term efforts and planning**

### LOGISTICS

Growing sector in which Azad is already expanding in e-commerce

### AUTO ANCILLARY MANUFACTURING UNITS, ELECTRONIC MANUFACTURING AND HEALTHCARE

Potential of employing women but requires higher education i.e. diploma or 12 years of schooling with science

### FURNITURE FITTINGS AND PAINTING

Keen on employing women but hiring is based on apprenticeship with contractors and carpenters.

The market scan was conducted by Ms Veronica and guided by board member Ms Ritu Mal. Azad thanks them both for their guidance and inputs.

## Advisory on Theory of Change and Impact Indicators

### REFINING THE AZAD THEORY OF CHANGE

Amalgamating impacts across Azad programs and defining key outcomes at the level of individuals, community and ecosystem through virtual sessions across teams using tools like Miro to create a draft theory of change.

### SHARPENING IMPACT INDICATORS

Align outcomes that showcase our impact to external donors and strengthen the teams understanding of synergies.

### SHARPENING DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

For better reporting on impact indicators, this process is still ongoing in the form of a monthly advisory session and will be concluded in November 2021.

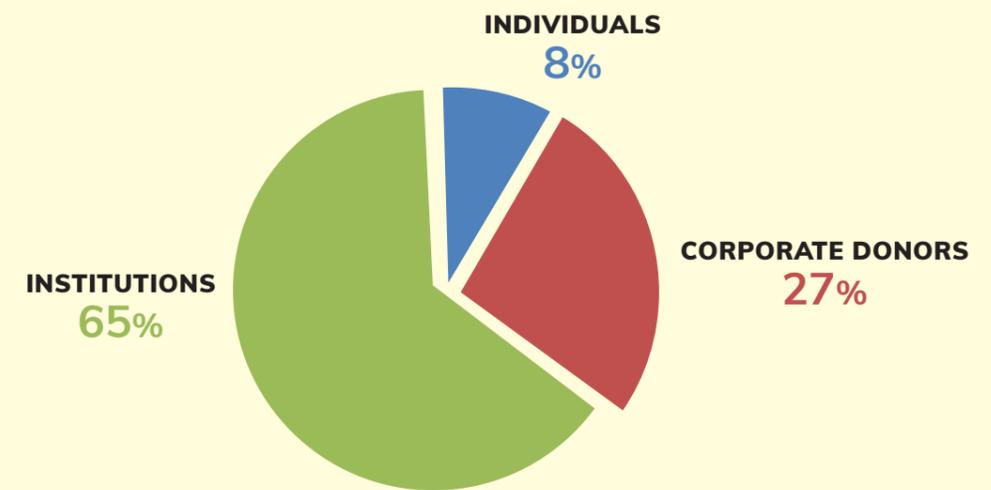
The technical inputs were provided by ID INSIGHT- a global advisory, data analytics, and research organization that helps development leaders maximize their social impact. We are grateful to our donor Cartier Philanthropy for making this possible.



# Finance AND DONORS

## INCOME

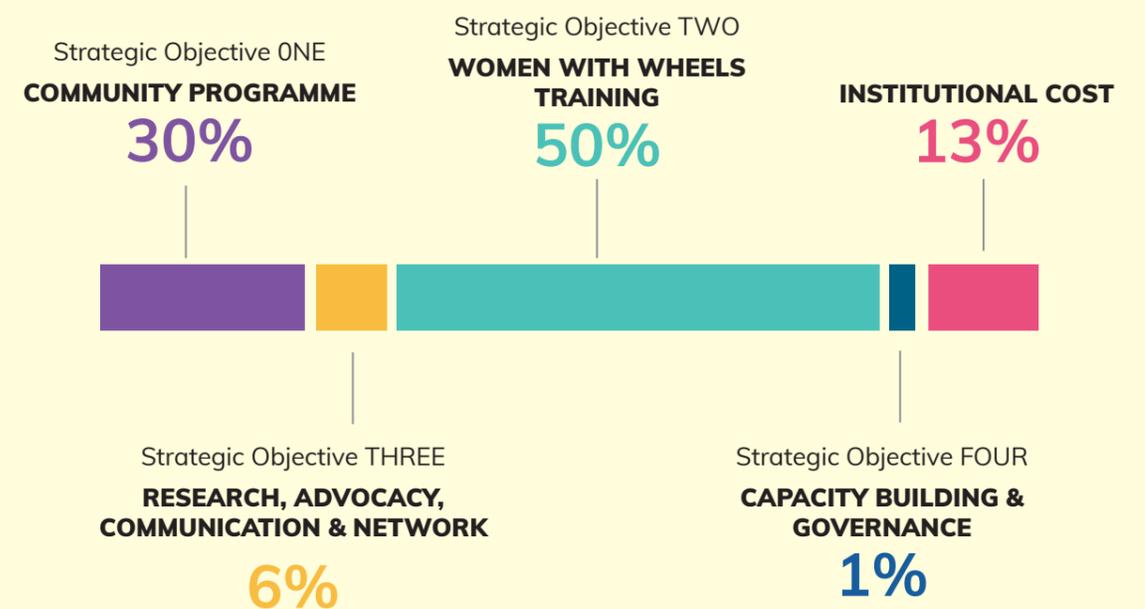
WHERE THE MONEY CAME FROM ?



Gross income of Azad Foundation in 2020-21 was INR 6.69 crores

## UTILIZATION

HOW THE MONEY WAS USED ?



The gross utilization of Azad foundation in 2020-21 was INR 6.57 crores

THANK YOU, Anonymous Donors!  
THANK YOU, Donors who gave through Benevity!

THANK YOU, Azad Foundation and Sakha team members who donated last year!

## INDIVIDUAL DONORS

Aastha Dayal	Madhu Jayakumar	Sehjo Singh
Alok Bhargava	Mala Srikanth	Semanti Ghosh
Alpana Parida	Manan Mehta	Shraddha Mirajkar
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Amlan Jyoti Lahon	Naga Nandini Dasgupta	Shrinivas Rao
Amol Sharma	Nandini Narula	Siddhant Jayakumar
Anirban Chattopadhyay	Nandini Saha	Sivaranjani Ivaturi
Anita Agnihotri	Nari Nirjatan Protirodh Mancha	Snigdha Chakraborty
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Indrani Ghose	Saqib Usmani	Xavier Pereira Memory Fund Batch of '85
K.K.Chaudhary	Sarmistha Dutta Gupta	Yashodhara RayChaudhuri
Laxmi Verma	Saurabh Narain	Yvonne Logan
Lopamudra	Sayantana Saha	

## INSTITUTIONAL DONORS



## CORPORATE DONORS



We are very grateful to our donors who assisted us additionally by making reallocations and separate donations to support COVID relief work.

# MEDIA

**Azad Foundation**

**We are in the news!**

The crux of Azad Foundation's work lies in empowering women, across boundaries and barriers. We are pleased to share with you a coverage of our work featured by the French Paper 'Liberation', an English translation of which has also been shared alongside this post.

We thank you for your never-ending support and hope to touch and transform many more lives.

ARCHANA MUNDA from Kolkata had an opportunity to share her story and life experiences with the Steel Authority of India.

শোভা ড্রাইভার  
সম্পাদনা: জয়াবতী শ্রীবাস্তব  
৩৫০.০০  
স্বাভ্য প্রকাশন

পনেরো বছরে প্রেম, বোলো বছরে বিয়ে। মামুদার মা ছ'হাজার টাকা আর নাকের ফুল দিতে পেরেছিল শুধু। সেই থেকে স্বশ্রবণভিত্তিক গঞ্জনার শুরু, কন্যা হওয়ার পর গায়ে হাত তুলল বর। মেয়ের বয়স যখন বাবো, তখন মারধর, তালাবন্দি করে রাখা আর সেইতে না পেয়ে মেয়েকে নিয়ে ঘর ছাড়ল মামুদা। আয়া সেন্টারে নাম লেখানো, মায়ের চায়ের দোকানে হাত লাগানো। এ গল্প পরিচিত। মোড় ঘুরল এর পর। একটি স্বেচ্ছাসেবী সংস্থা মেয়েদের গাড়ি চালাতে শেখায়, ড্রাইভারের কাজ দেয়, জেনে সেখানে নাম লেখাল মামুদা। সেই নির্খাতিত গৃহবধু আজ 'লেডি ড্রাইভার'। নিজের রোজগারে মাথা উচু করে বাচতে শিখেছে সে, মেয়েকে স্কুলে পড়াচ্ছে।

ভারতের নানা শহরে এমন চোদ্দোটি মেয়ের পেশাদার গাড়িচালক হয়ে ওঠার কাহিনি নিয়ে এই বই। গাড়ি চালানোর ট্রেনিং নিতে এসে তারা শিখেছে আত্মবিশ্বাসী হয়ে কথা বলা, চলাফেরা, আয়-ব্যয়ের হিসেব আর সঞ্চয় করা, সবই। অনেকে মাতৃভাষা ছাড়াও এখন সড়গড় হয়ে উঠেছে হিন্দি, ইংরেজিতে। পুলিশ এবং আইনের সাহায্য নিতে শিখেছে। ড্রাইভিং মেয়েলি পেশা নয়, ট্রেনিং নিয়েও বেশ কিছু মেয়ে টিটকিরি আর হিংস্রতা সেইতে না পেয়ে কাজ ছেড়ে দিয়েছে। আবার মামুদার মতো অনেকে রয়েছে গিয়েছে। তাদের কেউ আজ নিজে ট্যাক্সি কিনে ভাড়া খাটতে চায়। কেউ মুক্ত বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে পড়ছে। কারও বা স্বপ্ন, একটি মেয়েকে দত্তক নেবে। জীবনের স্টিয়ারিং এই মেয়েদের হাতে।

KHUSBU from Delhi was felicitated by the Gautam Buddh Administration for running a heavy vehicle under Nanhe Parinde- Education Mobile Van, a joint initiative of Gautam Buddha Nagar Police & HCL Foundation that was implemented by Chetna NGO.

In Delhi, Sakha driver GEETA was interviewed by Doordarshan, DEEPA's home was visited by a French Journalist and ANJANA had an interaction with German Radio.

अंतरराष्ट्रीय महिला दिवस  
**जयपुर की दो बहनें उबर ड्राइवर**

ज्यादा से ज्यादा महिलाएं कैब ड्राइवर के रूप में मोबिलिटी उद्योग से जुड़ी

जयपुर निवासी गंगा महल, 33 साल, पिछले दस साल से उबर कैब चला रही है। गंगा की माई 14 साल की आयु में हो गई थी और उबर उसके पति ने उसे जोड़ दिया, जो गंगा ने अकेले अपनी दो बहनों का पालन पोषण किया। गंगा ने घर नहीं मानी। उसके अपनी बहनों के लिए बड़े सपने हैं।

उबर के साथ काम करने से पहले उसने कई घरों में काम करने, सुखा याई, बेबी रिटर और नर्स बनें कुर्मी में हैबर जैसे कई कामों में अपना हाथ आजमाना। हालांकि इनमें से किसी भी काम में उसे सलुटि प्रबल नहीं हुई। उसने ड्राइव करना सीखा वह अब अपना काम पसंद करती है। उनके घरों में कि उबर और आजाद फाउंडेशन ने मेरा जीवन बदल दिया और मुझे रोजी रोटी कमपार अपनी बहनों की शिक्षा पूरी करने का सपना सब करने में मदद की। गंगा की बड़ी बहन, कंचन विरमास, 40, भी जयपुर निवासी है और अपने दो बेटों को पढ़ाई के साथ करती है। उसके दोनो बेटे अभी पढ़ाई कर रहे हैं और उसके बड़े बेटे का सपना एक सफ्टवेयर इंजीनियर बनने का है।

का काम करती थी, लेकिन वित्तीय समस्याओं के चलते मायों की दायें उस पर पर कोई काम नहीं बना। उस उसकी बहन, गंगा ने उसे दुर्भाग्य सीखने को कहा। कंचन अब पिछले कुछ महीनों से उबर के साथ ड्राइव कर रही है। सपन ही अपने इस काम से किसी स्वार्थीय एवं लवलीपन का भी पुरु आनंद ले रही है। यह दोनों महिलाओं अपनी सामंजस्य उदघोषण स्थान बनने के साथ साथ अन्य महिलाओं के लिए

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5EG7o8dVHBQ&t=18s>

Proud to share our Executive Director Meenu Vadera features on Apolitical's Ist of 100 Most Influential People in Gender Policy 2021

KIRAN KANWAR from Jaipur shared her story and the positive changes that happened after her training with Azad Foundation and subsequent work with Sakha at a function organized at Ashokpura.



REBA KAYAL from Kolkata was felicitated as one of the women achievers by Third Eye Entertainment and Media on 9th March 2021.



**OUR HEARTWARMING THANKS TO OUR COVID-19 WARRIORS**



### **NORTH DELHI**

B 5/2, Model Town-1, Near Model Town  
Metro Station, New Delhi 110009

### **SOUTH DELHI**

R-10, Flat No.7, Kalkaji,  
New Delhi 110019

### **EAST DELHI**

A-6, Block A Red Light,  
Jagatpuri, New Delhi 110051

### **JAIPUR**

4, Mohan Nagar, Gopalpura Bypass, Near  
Riddhi Siddhi, Jaipur, Rajasthan 302019

### **NORTH KOLKATA**

P282/A, CIT Road, Scheme 4,  
Kolkata 700054

### **SOUTH KOLKATA**

11 A/3, North Road, Jadavpur,  
Kolkata 700032

### **CHENNAI**

Abinesh Garden, 1st Flr, 168, VGP Nagar,  
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