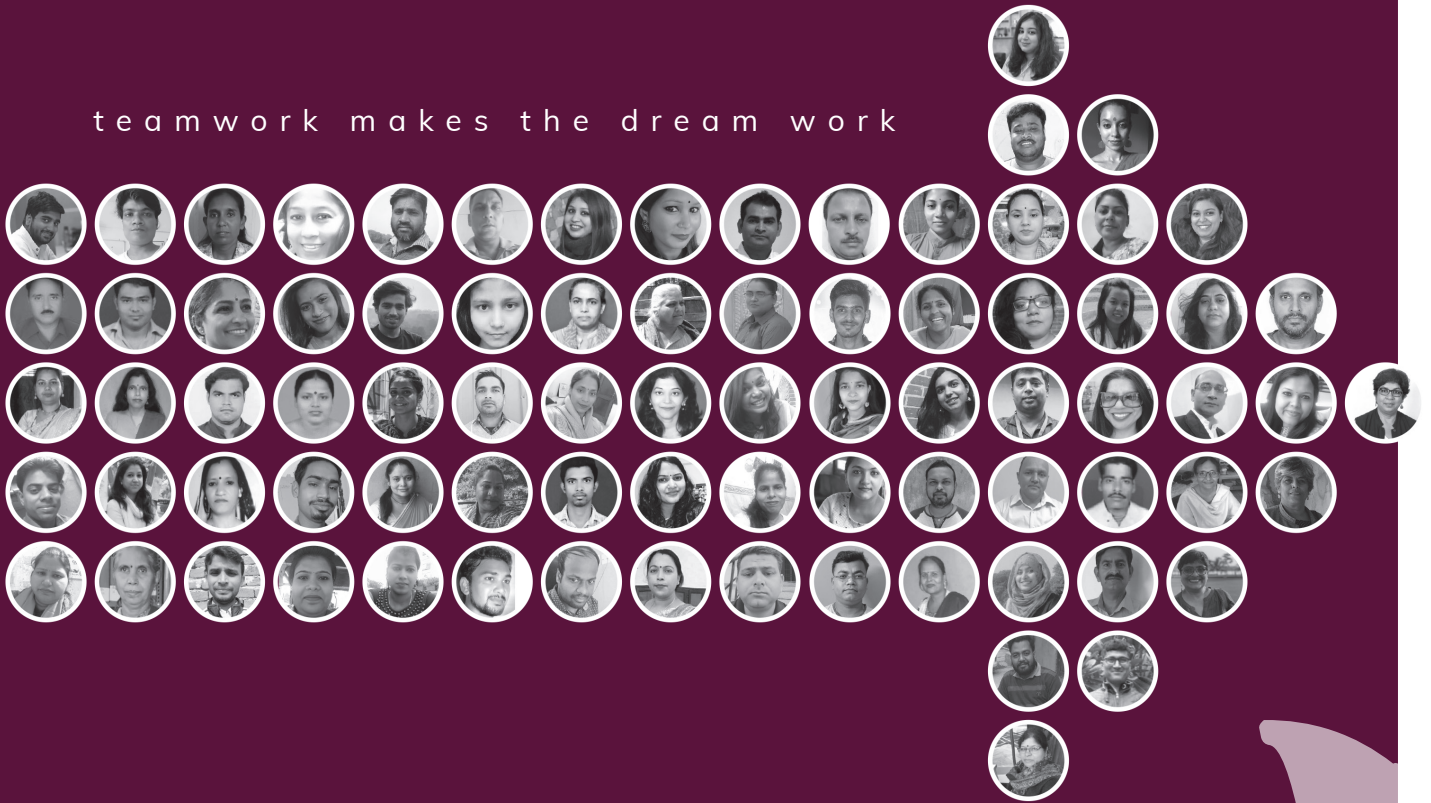


ANNUAL REPORT 2019 - 20

teamwork makes the dream work



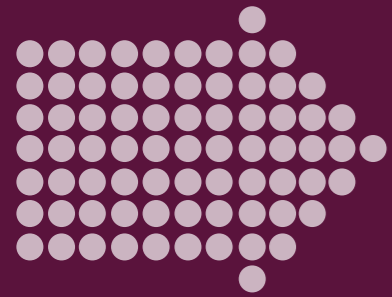
Azadi

Foundation



teamwork makes the dream work

ANNUAL REPORT 2019 - 20



Azād Foundation

PRODUCTION TEAM
Research, Advocacy and Communications team

DESIGN
The Other Design Studio

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Drishti Printers

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S message



Dear Friends,

These are strange times to be sharing our Annual Report. Despite all the challenges that COVID has pushed us to reckon with, we did not want to lose sight of the efforts by the communities that Azad works with and what its team put in over the last year. As we try to make our way into this very unfamiliar, difficult future, we still need to keep the best of the past with us, for that will also pave way to “build back better” hopefully. So, here it is, our Annual Report for 2019-20, this time only an e-version, to save costs and minimize any possibility of spread of infection.

As you will see, year 2019-20 was also a typically full year, complete with its highs, lows, difficulties and achievements. We decided to tell the story this year by sharing stories and voices of those people, we normally don't do. And these are the people who

make things happen, who put in long and arduous hours, who work with passion and commitment and without whom there would be no Organisations, no Institutions – “the Team”. At Azad, we have always believed that development or social change is not just about what we do or what we make happen out there, but it is as much about what happens to us – to the doers, makers or facilitators of this social change. Since social change is mostly about disrupting the existing power structures that manifest in unequal social relations, it is equally important to also continually reflect upon the relationships that we, the changemakers, establish amongst ourselves and with the communities. An important part of this is to be able to see this relationship with communities as a two-way process, where we each learn.

We bring to you the work of Azad through the lives and experiences of some of our team members as they share what they have learnt in their work with women and men over the years. So we hear Rama from Delhi say how she has grown over her eight years of association with Azad, Akash from Jaipur talks about how he has started taking responsibility for the unpaid care work at home and Shampa from Kolkata, formerly a trainee and now a driving faculty expressing her aspirations to excel in her work.

You will see the faces of all our team members in the pages to follow. And this Annual Report, we dedicate to them all, to express our gratitude to them. For enabling us all to learn and work together, for bringing in their energies and hopes, their aspirations for a better world, their fears and concerns and putting all of it into the pot called Azad Foundation, letting it simmer, sometimes boil, but finally helping cook the diverse programmes about which you will read inside.

Since the Annual Report was about ‘people behind’, we also bring to you the voices of people who are behind this team. We have Sarah from AJWS, sharing her experience of supporting Azad and Susmitha, who has supported Azad’s work on individual fund raising for many years sharing what it has meant to her. Individual donation comprised 5% of our overall turnover this year and we are grateful to all those individuals who have continued to have faith in our work and have stood by us. We are thankful to all the institutional donors (Foundations and the Corporates) and the specific individuals in each of these, who have been our co-travelers.

I cannot end this without mentioning about the pandemic. We know it is going to demand the best from us. As per the World Bank (statement in HT, 9th June 2020) – “The corona virus pandemic will plunge the world into a severe recession, the deepest since WWII, shredding per capita incomes and pushing millions into poverty.... In India,

the GDP will shrink 3.2% in the fiscal year 2020-21”... That is not all, Debraj Ray (Professor at New York University) and S Subramaniam (a retired professor from Madras Institute of Development Studies and a former member of the advisory board of the World Bank’s Commission on Global Poverty) have stated (in their working paper titled Interim report on India’s lockdown).. “in India, a ‘developing country with great sectoral and occupational vulnerabilities, this dramatic reduction (in economy) is more than economic, it means lives lost”... “Lives lost through violence, starvation, indebtedness and extreme stress are invisible, in the sense that they will diffuse through category and time”..

These are dire predictions, and we believe that the civil society has always rallied itself at times of crisis – whether these are natural, human or medical disasters. Azad’s work will have greater relevance as we rebuild livelihoods, specifically in urban spaces. Livelihoods for urban resource poor women while addressing gender based inequalities at home and outside will have to be amongst one of the more effective strategies for “building back better”. But the task is daunting, and we will need to pull together across institutions and sectors to build collaborations that can reach to the last person.

In Hope and in Solidarity,

Meenu



A mobilizer conducting a door-to-door household survey in Delhi.

BUILDING A SUPPORTIVE ECOSYSTEM

outreach & mobilization

Azad informs women in resource poor communities about social security, citizenship documents and work opportunities. Our **outreach & mobilization team** regularly engages with women and their families through community-level activities like canopies in marketplaces, mike-led campaigns and plays; and household-level interaction like surveys. Azad supports them to get or rectify essential citizenship documents, avail of their rights and enrol in the training program women with wheels to develop vocational skills for decent jobs.

The mobilization team reached out to 118701 people in 545 *bastis

*Refers to resettlement colonies across Delhi, Kolkata and Jaipur.

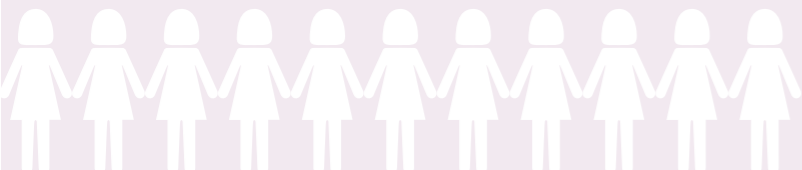
Household survey is the most effective mobilization activity. While collecting personal and household data, the mobilization team builds rapport with women and their families; and identifies interested and eligible women for women with wheels. 17,762 households were surveyed in 2019-20 across Delhi, Jaipur and Kolkata, accounting for 61% of enrollment in 2019-20.

Working with its mobilization partner organizations -Talash, Thoughtshop Foundation and Development Action Society - South Kolkata achieved 102% of its commitment of enrolment for the year.



Team Outreach and Mobilization | DELHI

<p>Wajda MOBILIZATION COORDINATOR North Delhi</p> 	<p>Rahana MOBILIZER North Delhi</p> 	<p>Sweety MOBILIZER North Delhi</p> 	<p>Madhubala MOBILIZER North Delhi</p> 	<p>Rama MOBILIZATION COORDINATOR East Delhi</p> 	<p>Neetu MOBILIZER East Delhi</p> 	<p>Bharti MOBILIZER East Delhi</p> 
<p>Firdos MOBILIZER East Delhi</p> 	<p>Shanti MOBILIZATION COORDINATOR South Delhi</p> 	<p>Ritu MOBILIZER South Delhi</p> 	<p>Hemlata MOBILIZER South Delhi</p> 	<p>Ranju MOBILIZER South Delhi</p> 	<p>Sunita MOBILIZER South Delhi</p> 	



I CAN PROMISE YOU THAT
WOMEN WORKING TOGETHER—
LINKED, INFORMED AND EDUCATED—
CAN BRING PEACE AND PROSPERITY
TO THIS FORSAKEN PLANET.

Isabel Allende

A canopy in East Delhi-Canopy is a mass mobilization activity, conducted at central areas like markets and busy crossroads. It informs women and men about Women with Wheels. In 2019-20, 130 canopies were installed across Delhi, Jaipur and Kolkata.



WOMEN ENROLLED IN AZAD 2019-20

Delhi 290

Jaipur 80

Kolkata 120

TOTAL 490



I JOINED AZAD

eight years ago as a mobilizer, my first job after shifting to Delhi. Today, as a mobilization coordinator, I have not only seen Azad grow, but I have grown myself. My engagement and facing the challenge of breaking age-old norms at the community has taught me patience and the skill of effective communication. I learnt management and leadership as a mobilization coordinator managing my own team. The numerous challenges I faced have also made me realize my resilience.

For the mobilization team, every day brings new challenges as they aid resource-poor communities tackle violence, natural calamities and their everyday struggles. But it is a commitment that they make to support them not just for the program but beyond it, for it is a relationship that they nurture and take pride in.

RAMA JOSHI
DELHI MOBILIZATION COORDINATOR, AZAD
*Refers to resettlement colonies across Delhi, Kolkata and Jaipur



SAKHA CAB CAMPAIGN Strategy to inspire by demonstration

It is inspiring to see a woman chauffeur driving a Sakha cab with mobilization materials and a speaker informing the community about Women with Wheels. The women chauffeurs also feel proud as they drive through their bastis. 22 such campaigns were conducted in Kolkata in 2019-20.



An auto campaign progresses through the narrow, winding lanes of Kolkata, promoting Women with Wheels. 35 auto campaigns were organized in 2019-20.

Puppet show in Jaipur

Performed by professionals, these shows use traditional story-telling to inform the community about social norms gender, women's workforce participation and the value of their unpaid household work.



"There was a time I didn't even know how to get my own citizenship documents, now I help others, organize campaigns and engage with families of our trainees without any hesitation.

Being a mobiliser, my confidence has increased manifold," says Vidhya, who is a mobilizer in Jaipur, (shown in the picture on the right)

Vidhya began her journey with Azad 3 years ago as a Parvaz leader. She says, "There are a lot of challenges in this work as it is never easy to change perspectives, however, working in the community I have learnt not to give up. My family also greatly respect my work and the person I have become with it."

Team Outreach and Mobilization | KOLKATA & JAIPUR

<p>Hira MOBILIZER North Kolkata</p> 	<p>Reshmi MOBILIZER North Kolkata</p> 	<p>Deotima MOBILIZATION COORDINATOR South Kolkata</p> 
<p>Sanchita MOBILIZATION COORDINATOR Jaipur</p> 	<p>Vidhya MOBILIZER Jaipur</p> 	
<p>Rekha MOBILIZER Jaipur</p> 		



BUILDING A SUPPORTIVE ECOSYSTEM

PARVAZ

feminist leadership programme

The Parvaz (meaning 'flight') Feminist Leadership Programme (FLP) creates a cadre of change catalysts who spread awareness in their communities, and help resource poor women access resources and services they are entitled to. Over a year, the FLP has four residential trainings followed by field training in the form of community intervention activities.



Residential Training for feminist leadership program at Raktokorobi Karugram, Shantiniketan, West Bengal

IF WOMEN UNDERSTOOD
AND EXERCISED THEIR
POWER THEY COULD
REMAKE THE WORLD.

Emily Taft Douglas



THE FEMINIST LEADERSHIP

was introduced in Kolkata in 2019. Through our experience of FLP in Delhi and Jaipur we have seen women become passionate change agents in their communities, advocating for women's rights and supporting over 6,000 women in multiple ways, like helping them access social security schemes and citizenship documents, seek redressal and survive gender-based violence.

Over this year this has proven to be the case for Kolkata as well. The feminist leaders have enabled more women to come forward and take up driving as a livelihood. They have also helped in access of citizenship documents, social security schemes and also build community level infrastructure, washrooms, running water, dustbins, ensure cleanliness and health drives. As I write this, many of them have been working courageously ensure food delivery in communities during the COVID lockdown."

DOLON GANGULY
PROGRAMME DIRECTOR, KOLKATA



I believe that the programme is a platform where an ordinary woman becomes an extraordinary person.

NEHA KHATOON
PARVAZ LEADER, KOLKATA

IMPACT OF THE PARVAZ LEADERS

25
WOMEN

were helped to enroll in the women with wheels training (21% of the total enrolment in Kolkata)

560
PEOPLE

from communities were supported to access citizenship documents and social security schemes

5125
COMMUNITY SURVEYS

conducted by feminist leaders



Convocation for the first batch of the Feminist Leadership Programme in Kolkata on 20 February 2020

Team Feminist Leadership Programme

Nandini

BOARD MEMBER
AZAD FOUNDATION
& ADVISOR TO THE
FEMINIST LEADERSHIP
PROGRAM IN KOLKATA



Deotima

MOBILIZATION
COORDINATOR,
SOUTH KOLKATA



Reshmi

MOBILIZER



CHANGEMAKERS

First batch of Parvaz Leaders displaying their stories of transformation in the poster exhibition at the convocation, Kolkata



Sumona Roy



Chumki Basu



Shabnam Khatoon



Arpita Bhowmick



I NEVER THOUGHT

that I will work at Azad, that I was capable of working and being self-reliant. All of this changed due to the training I received as a Parvaz Leader. Earlier I was afraid of what the society might think about me but now I don't feel any fear. FLP training has made me aware of the shackles of patriarchy that constrained my life and taught me to challenge these norms.

It's because I believe that women can be professional drivers and financially independent that I can make other women believe in it too."

RESHMI BEGUM

PARVAZ LEADER, BATCH 1

Reshmi has joined the Women with Wheels programme as a mobilizer and encourages other poor women to pursue non-traditional livelihoods.



Feminist leaders sharing a photo album about the women with wheels training to women in the community during a household survey.



A feminist leader conducting a household survey



I HAVE BEEN

working in Azad Foundation for the last 2½ years, and the organization has provided me with opportunities and spaces to grow and learn as a professional. Working with young resource-poor women has helped me introspect, reflect on my privileges, helped me become patient and a problem solver. Learning from their experiences, I now realize that I can learn from my failures. This has led me to become more accountable towards both my failures and my successes and helped me become a learner in the true sense.

DEOTIMA

PROGRAM OFFICER

BUILDING A SUPPORTIVE ECOSYSTEM

men for gender justice

Boys and Young Men grow up aping what they see and hear. Few have the opportunity to question the heteronormative masculinity paradigm. But Azad helps Young men and boys initiate such an enquiry, to learn about alternative perspectives on masculinity, and about power and inequalities. We do these through individual and group activities, peer-group meetings and mentoring. Our objective is to help them understand and adopt processes that support a more equal home, community and society. The Men for Gender Justice (MGJ) programme operates in Delhi and Jaipur.

MEN AND THEIR RIGHTS
AND NOTHING MORE,
WOMEN AND THEIR RIGHTS
AND NOTHING ELSE.

Susan. B Anthony



Fortnightly peer-group- Pakhwada Meeting with senior mobilizer Aakash engaging in discussions on gender and masculinities in Jaipur



ONE OF THE BIGGEST

changes I have experienced being part of the Men for Gender Justice programme is in my own understanding of gender and masculinity.

I realised about the unequal power distribution in my own family. This helped me change not just myself but even my father who, despite showing resistance initially and complaining when I asked him to contribute to household work, changed eventually. **Today my father also participates in household work.**

This also led me think: 'Unless I change myself, how can I bring change in my family, how will I challenge social norms, how will I change society?'

VIRENDRA
MGJ MOBILISER



THE PROGRAM ENGAGED WITH **360** BOYS AND YOUNG MEN

WHAT THEY DID

BOYS AND YOUNG MEN AGED 14-20 YEARS ATTENDED SESSIONS ON GENDER AND MASCULINITIES AND PARTICIPATED ACTIVELY IN 25 SPORTS SESSIONS

WHAT THEY SAID

69%
respondents* believe use of violence is not justified even when women go against the wishes of men

52%
respondents* were ready to share domestic work 'cook and clean utensils'

*Results from the baseline survey conducted with 360 young men and boys across Delhi and Jaipur



I WAS NOT TAKEN SERIOUSLY when I talked to people other than my colleagues, like my friends and cousins, about issues of gender, unpaid care work, domestic work and hegemonic masculinities. When I encouraged them to contribute to household work, they would laugh at me or even mock me.

But gradually I have seen a change in me, in the way I explain these issues with more in-depth understanding, patience and conviction and that has led to a change in their attitudes as well.

HARI
MGJ PROGRAM MANAGER



Sports Session in Delhi: Engaging boys through sports to discuss about gender norms and masculinity

WHEN THE PROGRAM

started, there wasn't much discussion on domestic or care work. Even in my personal space I had no understanding of it. In the past two years I have not only learnt but have taken ownership of unpaid care work in my home. It is only when I understand and take action will I be able to build the perspective of young boys.

AAKASH
MGJ MOBILISER, JAIPUR

**Team Men For Gender Justice
DELHI & JAIPUR**

Hari

PROGRAM MANAGER,
JAIPUR



Aakash

MOBILIZER,
JAIPUR



R Kishnan

MOBILIZER,
JAIPUR



Ashutosh

MOBILIZER,
DELHI



Prateek

PROGRAM OFFICER,
DELHI



Veeru

MOBILIZER,
DELHI



Narendra

MOBILIZER,
DELHI



I NEVER KNEW

or understood that there are so many tasks at home or how time consuming they can be. Even simple looking ones like kneading dough. But now I not only understand the pressure household work puts on the women but also that it is everyone's job irrespective of gender. Therefore, I ensure I have a routine where I wake up early, make tea for everyone, fetch water, make everyone's bed and clean the house. This gives my mother and sister some time to relax."

UMESH, 17

MGJ PARTICIPANT, JAIPUR

Shown below In this picture of a session on unpaid housework (activity: kneading dough), he is first from the left



Kishori Addas

(peer-group meetings)
created and managed by
Kishori Leaders who are
supported by Sanginis



AZAD KISHORI

programme has been an opportunity to teach and learn for me. In the three years that I have worked with Azad Kishori Programme, I have learnt a lot while teaching the young girls. I realize how much mental stress adolescent girls carry. It is so important to support them, by counselling them as well as by engaging with their parents, so as to give them a chance to realize their aspirations! I get inspired by their zeal and determination to make their dreams come true."

SHUCHI,

PROGRAM OFFICER, AZAD KISHORI

She is seen here on the left with Kishoris who received the 'Meeto' scholarships



**BUILDING A
SUPPORTIVE
ECOSYSTEM**

**azad
kishori***

Young girls have aspirations, they dream, but to transform these dreams into reality, they need information, guidance, and nurturing. The Azad Kishori program for adolescent girls initiated in Jaipur (since 2015) aims to nurture young minds through its 'school to work' transformative trainings at school with young girls in grades 9th -12th, followed by community interventions to build leadership and mentoring young minds to become change makers of tomorrow.

*Kishori means adolescent girls

Program Highlights



Azad Kishori School Programme

This in-school programme for 9th-12th grades takes girls through a 32-hour curriculum on gender, patriarchy, sexual & reproductive health, career building and communication.

1,317 girls from 6 schools were trained in 2019-20.



Community Engagement

Sanginis (community engagement mobilisers) conduct monthly Kishori Addas (meaning 'hang outs'), with adolescent peer- groups made by leaders.

Quarterly Choupals (meaning 'town square') meetings are organised with parents of adolescent leaders and peer group members.

Total 60 Kishori Adda and 35 Chaupal meetings were held in 2019-20.



Leadership Programme

It offers scholarships to selected schoolgirls to receive residential leadership trainings and ongoing mentoring, enabling them to continue their education and become agents of change.

60 girls received the scholarships. 50 additional 'Meeto' scholarships were provided by Ms. Kamla Bhasin.

IMPACT OF THE PROGRAM

95%

reported increased awareness of their bodies and sexuality

94%

have a basic understanding of the impact of gender inequality & patriarchy in their daily lives

91%

reported increased increase in communication skills

88%

reported increased awareness on non-traditional livelihoods

86%

reported increased awareness of their choices

*Source: azad data analysis report 2019-2020, basis the data of pre and post training analysis of 559 school girls from 9 to 11th

I LOVE TO SEE A YOUNG GIRL GO OUT AND GRAB THE WORLD BY THE LAPELS.

Maya Angelou



Azad Kishoris doing yoga during the day time at the leadership camp.

Leadership Camp

On 17-28 May 2019 a 10-day Azad Kishori Leadership Camp was organized at Bodh Parisar resource centre at Kukas, on the outskirts of Jaipur, for 30 Kishori Leaders.

The residential training was intensive but invigorating. Through creative methods and intensive workshops they learnt about women's issues, self, gender & sexuality, menstruation, body, contraception, relationships, violence, gendered roles & patriarchy and work & career opportunities.

For most, it was the first time that they spent a few days with their peers away from their families. Hence, learning from one another's experiences created new bonds. They also learnt how to express their emotions.

The camp ended with an exciting tour of Nahargarh and Jaigarh forts.



THE PROGRAMME

has evolved manifold through the years, especially with the leadership program for Kishoris and now the community-level engagement through peer-groups. It was my first time as a trainer and over the years I have not only become much more confident but have also learnt and developed many training techniques. Simultaneously, I completed my Masters in Psychology (counselling), which meant not only taking my education forward but also helped me engage with girls better.”

SARASWATI

AZAD KISHORI PROGRAM MANAGER

Saraswati joined Azad in 2015, the year the Kishori programme was piloted in Jaipur, and helped design and implement it.



Kishoris attending a session on communication & career development as part of the school program



Chaupals (town-halls) engaging parents of Kishori Leaders, conducted by Sangini (mobilisers) and the Kishori team



Azad Kishori Team participated in a Learning Journey to Milaan and Medha in Lucknow from 9-11 September 2019. In this picture The Azad Kishori Team is seen at the learning visit in Medha



Attending a session on 'body mapping' to gain knowledge about bodies and health at the leadership camp



The Azad Kishori Sangam

A Kishori Sangam (meaning 'confluence') was held on 5 January 2020 to celebrate the selection of a new batch of 30 Kishori Leaders along with their parents. In the picture, Shrinivas Rao (Chief Operating Officer) and Anita Mathur (Program Director Jaipur) give scholarship cheques to the Kishori Leaders.

Team Azad Kishori | JAIPUR

Shuchi

PROGRAM OFFICER,
JAIPUR



Saraswati

PROGRAM MANAGER,
JAIPUR



Shakuntala

AZAD KISHORI
SANGINI, JAIPUR



Shivshankari

AZAD KISHORI
SANGINI, JAIPUR



Mena

AZAD KISHORI
SANGINI, JAIPUR



Maya

AZAD KISHORI
SANGINI, JAIPUR



CAMPAIGNS

building solidarities across institutions & movements

One Billion Rising (OBR) is a campaign against violence launched in 2012. It began as a call to stand with the one billion woman and girl survivors of violence. Last year Azad's OBR events took place from 26 November 2019 to 5 February 2020. Participation in OBR enables the team at Azad, trainees, Parvaz Leaders and Men for Gender Justice participants relate to a global solidarity and be energised by being part of a larger movement as they collectively express their solidarity through slogans, dances and community theatre for raising awareness about violence. Azad also joined other state and nationwide campaigns against shrinking spaces for democracy in India.



Azad Foundation reached out to 4000 people across Delhi Kolkata and Jaipur during OBR.



IN AN ERA WHEN

most campaigns are restricted to community-led events on social media platforms, standing in solidarity and supporting each other in action made me feel empowered. I felt motivated that I was given the responsibility to manage the OBR campaign in Delhi and felt fulfilled by its success.

This year there were nationwide protests against shrinking spaces for democracy too, and I feel happy that I could, through Azad, share a platform with the community, a space where we could raise our voice in support of each other.

PRATEEK
PROGRAM OFFICER MGJ, DELHI



Trainees from Jaipur participate in a dance on women's empowerment at the OBR event in Jhallana

As part of OBR, Azad organised a Diversity Festival with Know Your Neighbour, Swayam, Anjali, Right Track and Government Girls General Degree College, Ekbalpur. The festival had a car rally, with five Sakha cabs, and a career fair.



Sakha Cabs participate in the Diversity Festival Car rally in Kolkata



Sakha Cab chauffeurs share their journey at the Diversity Festival career fair in Kolkata

119

AZAD TRAINEES

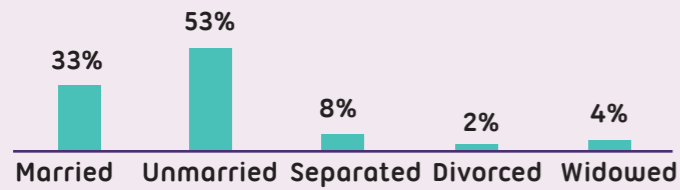
in Azad shared that this was their first experience of participating in a large community campaign *

***From 282 trainees who have shared their journey of change during the participatory tool, badlav ka safarnama in 2019-20*



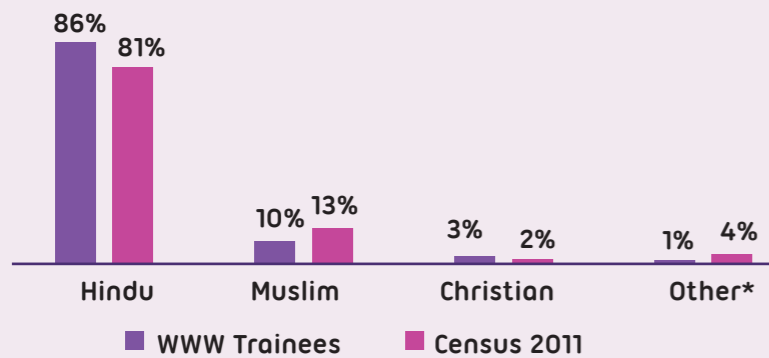
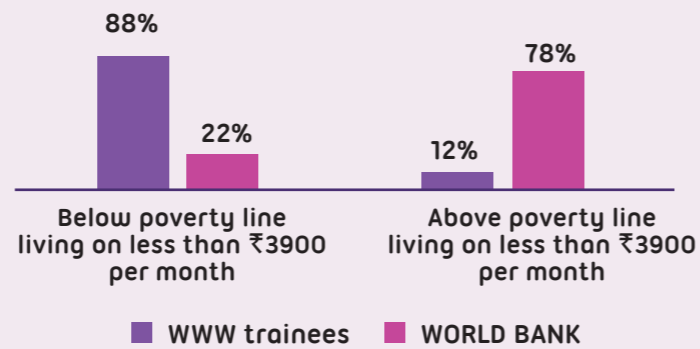
Azad trainees and team participate in a rally at Majnu Ka Tila, Delhi, raising slogans: "Ghar ka kaam, sabka kaam" (Housework is everyone's work) and "Asli mard ki yahi pehchan, gharelu kaam ka karein samman" (A real man is known by his respect for housework).

who are the **women** behind the wheels?



Martial Status

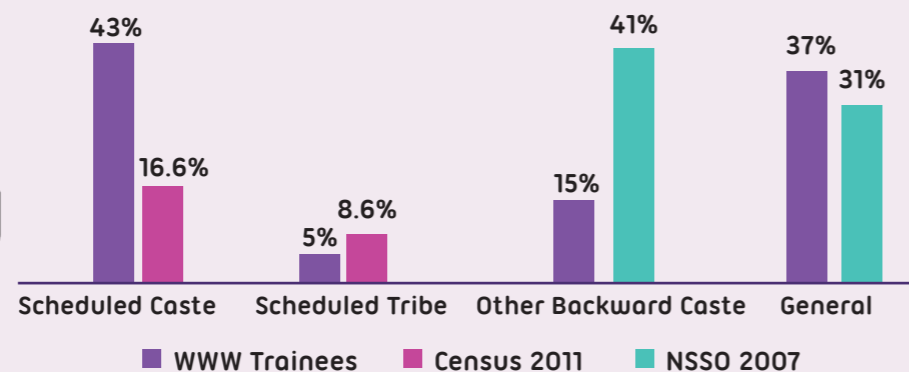
Per Capita Income Profile



Community

*Sikh, Buddhist and Jain

Caste Category



The Ram Mohan scholarship was initiated by Azad because our annual monitoring for 2017-18 showed that enrolment of single women in the Women with Wheels programme had dropped and enrollees were leaving midway because they had to earn a living. To help single women complete their training, the scholarship provides ₹ 5,000 towards their living and travel expenses.

24 trainees received the scholarship in 2018-19, of whom 11 are working, 10 are job-ready and 3 are under training. 20 trainees have received the scholarship in 2019-20.

Ram Mohan was an inspirational leader who, to quote Rudyard Kipling, could 'walk with kings yet never lost the common touch.' A vivacious person who loved nature and had deep empathy for his fellow human beings.

Ram Mohan laid the foundation for Azad's technical training modules and trained the first three batches of women enrolled in the Women with Wheels programme, before mentoring Shrinivas Rao to take over the reins.

His empathetic approach of considering trainees' personal situations while assessing their progress continues to define our training. To honour his invaluable contribution and his spirit, Azad Foundation initiated the Ram Mohan Scholarship in July 2018 during our tenth anniversary.

The scholarship instituted in honour of Ram Mohan has been supported by the following:

Late Rammohan's family: **Geeta Ram Mohan, Nandini, Nikhil and Lena**

Naga Nandini, Gouthami and Sridevi in honour of their late father K. Madhava Sarma

Azad Board Member **Nandini Narula**

We salute their spirit with gratitude.



THE SCHOLARSHIP

helped me pay the legal fees for a case on violence that I had filed.

SEEMA RAISWAL

Seema works at an all-women garage in Jaipur post training at Azad



Driving faculty Poonam from Jaipur taking technical training sessions

BECAUSE I AM A WOMAN, I MUST MAKE UNUSUAL EFFORTS TO SUCCEED. IF I FAIL...THEY WILL SAY, "WOMEN DON'T HAVE WHAT IT TAKES"

Clare Boothe Luce

Women With Wheels training believes that WOMEN CAN. But to enable them to succeed, they need the right tools, skills, awareness of rights and the confidence to challenge their realities. The transformative capacity building pedagogy is focused on equipping resource poor women with these tools in the form of technical skills –i.e. professional driving, understanding of gender, rights and their entitlements and communication skills to excel as a professional. It does not stop at just that, It also provides trained women access to trades where they can use these tools i.e decent work opportunities in the transport sector through Azad's strategic employment partner Sakha.

WOMEN WITH WHEELS training

Data snapshots of WWW

State wise breakup	315 women became Employable:	159 women Cleared Employability Test
Delhi	160	98
Jaipur	68	40
Kolkata	87	21

14% Increase over 2018-19

12% increase over 2018-19



Earlier I did not understand why women should work but now, as a trainer, I feel so proud when a trainee whom I taught breaks the societal barriers to emerge as an empowered and self-reliant individual.

GAURAV, FACULTY, SOUTH DELHI

Gaurav has been working with Azad for 7 years in South Delhi



Omkari from East Delhi teaching her trainees how to ace the permanent license examination.



Trainees receiving technical knowledge on how to repair a puncture in Kolkata



Self-defence training sessions in Jaipur

Trainees who have become driving faculty at Azad give us hope and confidence and inspire new trainees to become self-reliant. We salute the drive and ambition of all our trainee-turned-trainers:

- Omkari & Rajrani, East Delhi
- Lalita, North Delhi
- Khushi, South Delhi
- Poonam, Jaipur
- Shampa, South Kolkata



I STARTED AS A

trainee with Azad in 2018. Within a year of completing, after my first job, I got the opportunity to join Azad as a faculty.

During the trials, I realized the patience and hard work that goes into being a trainer.

As a driving faculty I travelled to Jaipur and Delhi and met other faculties who, like me, had started as trainees. This gave me a lot of confidence and I learned many training techniques. I am thankful for this opportunity as it has made me more responsible and patient in my personal life while giving me a new identity and ambition.

I want to excel at being a faculty so that I can inspire more trainees to become professional drivers and, maybe, someday become a driving trainer themselves.

SHAMPA

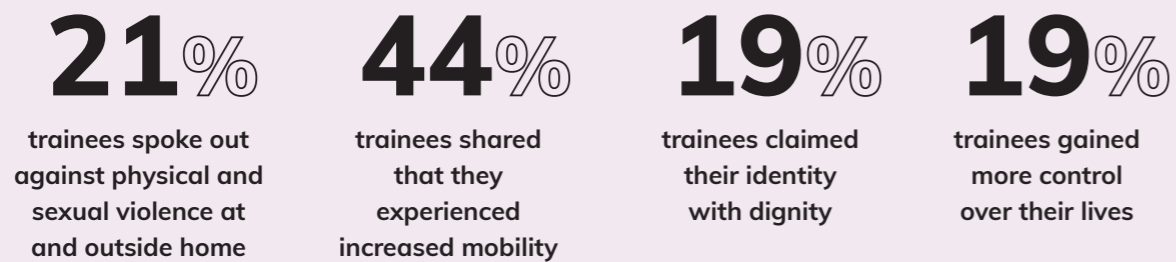
FACULTY, NORTH KOLKATA



Training on maps navigation and GPS navigation sessions in in South Kolkata. These sessions enable women to use technology to navigate around the city



IMPACT OF THE TRANSFORMATIVE RIGHTS BASED TRAINING



The data is drawn from self-reported changes shared by 282 trainees who shared their story during sessions on a participatory tool 'Badlav ka Safarnama' Journey of Change

EXPLORING NEW GEOGRAPHIES

Azad Foundation undertook a feasibility study to understand the potential of expanding Women With Wheels (WWW) programme in Chennai. The Study was conducted for the period of three months from Jan-March 2020 by Ms.Gouthami to understand Chennai city, its administrative setup, assess the landscape of chauffeur placement and cab service, the market for Sakha and to develop a strategic plan for organization. The study revealed that Azad should initiate its work in Chennai from the southern clusters of Kannagi Nagar, Ezhil Nagar, Semmencherry and Perumbakkam. There are about 50,000 families in these areas providing an ample pool of potential women drivers. The WWW Programme will cater to those who drive a car or hire an auto/taxi (10.3% of working women) and target about 20% of those who currently go by bus, train and two-wheelers (51.5%). Overall, the programme aimed to reach 20% of working women in Chennai over the next five years.



THE STORIES OF

women fighting for their basic rights and the struggle they have undergone without giving up the fight have immensely inspired me to work with and for them. When they share their small but significant victories with pride and zeal, it motivates me to go on. They inspire and keep me upbeat and renew my commitment to do my part to promote gender equality and women's economic participation.

BIDYA
TRAINING COORDINATOR, NORTH DELHI

Women With Wheels Training Team

Dolon PROGRAM MANAGER, DELHI	Bidya TRAINING COORDINATOR, NORTH DELHI	Lalita FACULTY, NORTH DELHI
Pramod FACULTY, NORTH DELHI	Raju FACULTY, NORTH DELHI	Sunil FACULTY, NORTH DELHI
Sanjay FACULTY, EAST DELHI	Omkari FACULTY, EAST DELHI	Jugal FACULTY, EAST DELHI
Khushi FACULTY, SOUTH DELHI	Manish FACULTY, SOUTH DELHI	Rajrani FACULTY, SOUTH DELHI
Mousumi TRAINING COORDINATOR, SOUTH KOLKATA	Pradip FACULTY, SOUTH KOLKATA	Somnath FACULTY, SOUTH KOLKATA
Gobindo FACULTY, SOUTH KOLKATA	Subhasmita TRAINING COORDINATOR, NORTH KOLKATA	Shampa FACULTY, NORTH KOLKATA
Hemant FACULTY, JAIPUR	Poonam FACULTY, JAIPUR	Vikram FACULTY, JAIPUR

ALONE WE CAN
DO SO LITTLE;
TOGETHER WE CAN
DO SO MUCH.
Helen Keller

partnerships

Working in Partnerships is one of Azad's core principles. We have been joining forces with like-minded organizations with the belief that it is only through collaboration and building on each other's capacities and strength that we can achieve tangible change and see our vision grow.



Annual Partnership Meet

The meet was hosted by Samaan Society in Indore on 14-15 November 2019. It was the first partnership meet with our two new partners, Humsafar and CYSD, and facilitated cross learning, with each partner understanding and learning from another's strengths and experiences. In the picture left Kirti Vipul Joshi (Janvikas), Neha (samaan), Swati (CYSD), Shrinivas Rao (Azad), Mamta (Humsafar), Paridhi (Azad), Sapna and Rajendra Bandhu (Samaan).



THE PARTNERSHIP

between Samaan Society and Azad is not limited to implementation of a program but has been a partnership to further our vision of gender equality and an equal and just society. We also found space to innovate and initiate many new things within the Women with Wheels programme, which strengthened our programme. More importantly, Azad Foundation welcomed these changes and established a system of cross learning, which has kept this partnership creative and fruitful.

RAJENDRA BANDHU
DIRECTOR, SAMAAAN SOCIETY



Indian Film Director Imtiaz Ali met with the trainees of Humsafar and took a ride in the E-rickshaw with Driver Lalita. Humsafar has modified the WWW program to meet the market demand of the city of Lucknow training women as E-Rickshaw drivers

12566
WOMEN

across 213 settlements
were provided information
on the Women with Wheels
programme



185
WOMEN

were enrolled in the
women with wheels
program



124
WOMEN

have become
employable as
professional
chauffeurs



THE EXPERIENCE

of partnering with Azad Foundation has been an extremely satisfying one. It gave Humsafar an opportunity to reach out to the most vulnerable and support them in acquiring a professional skill, which enabled them to earn a livelihood with dignity. Moreover, the entire concept of Women with Wheels, has helped these women (trainees and drivers) to connect with their own strength to reclaim a life with dignity and rights as a citizen.

RICHA
PROGRAM COORDINATOR, HUMSAFAR



Festival Drive by Samaan Society

As a mobilization strategy, Samaan reaches out to large gatherings of women during different festivals to inform them about women with wheels.



Partnership In Testing Times

In April 2019, CYSD worked actively towards relief efforts during Cyclone Fani, in which many of CYSD trainees among other people lost their homes. Azad facilitated their connection with our donors and they received a grant from American Jewish World Service for relief operations.



AS I LOOK BACK

on the last few years of an encouraging journey with Azad Foundation, it is remarkable how much CYSD has accomplished as a partner. Not only in terms of techno-financial collaboration but also building networks with like-minded organizations for extending service to the community and people in need, especially during disasters. Azad Foundation's purpose inspired us to help women in resource poor communities to take up non-traditional livelihoods.

NILADARI
PROGRAM MANAGER, CYSD



Samaan demonstrating their board games for teaching road rules, English alphabet and math

The games help trainees de-stress before they train and ensure that they focus on training.



THE PARTNERSHIP

between Azad and all us partners is essential as it brings us all under an umbrella and reminds us that we are not working in silos. The Partnership Meet helps in facilitating this process further through cross learning. Together we become a resource, learning from each other's strategies as well as our limitations.

KIRIT V. JOSHI
CEO, JANVIKAS



Track practice by trainees of Janvikas. During the meet, Janvikas shared that they liaised with a private track owner to allow their trainees to practice at no cost. This decreased the duration of training required to clear the permanent license examination while increasing the number of successful examinees.

sakha

Sakha exists because women have overcome challenges to become empowered professional drivers. Beginning from a situation where women in transport was a non-existent idea, Sakha has worked to create markets for women chauffeurs, giving them wings to fly. Sakha, the strategic employment Partner of Azad Foundation, works to create gender sensitive markets in the transport industry. In 2019-20 Sakha has been successful in making inroads into new markets with the launch of the first ever All Women Cabs at Indore airport and subsequently at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi.



Inauguration of Sakha's airport counter on 4 November 2019 in Indore by Shankar Lalwani, Member of Parliament, and Aryama Sanyal, Airport Director

THE ONLY WAY TO DEAL WITH AN UNFREE WORLD IS TO BECOME SO ABSOLUTELY FREE THAT YOUR VERY EXISTENCE IS AN ACT OF REBELLION.

Albert Camus

Our impact across Delhi, Jaipur, Kolkata and Indore

137
WOMEN

employed in 2019-20
1000+ women provided with employment opportunities till date

116,004
SAFE RIDES PROVIDED

1.25 million safe rides provided till date

4700
FOREIGN NATIONALS

provided with safe transportation

INR 1.2+
CRORE

US \$ 161,706
cumulative income generated by Sakha drivers



EVERY NEW DAY

is another chance to be a better person than you were the day before. In the past three years that I have worked with Sakha I grew both professionally and personally.

At a professional level, I grew from a call centre executive to airport manager, taking more responsibility and learning to navigate through diverse challenges.

At a personal level, I learnt patience and resilience from our drivers and their struggles. The common strength that we receive as a team helps all of us keep going and not give up even in trying times. I have drawn inspiration from the journey of Sakha and the drivers who make it. It has affirmed in me the belief that we can succeed.

AJAY KANOJIYA
AIRPORT MANAGER
SAKHA CONSULTING WINGS



Sakha Airport Counter at IGI Airport, Delhi



OUR AIRPORT

duty started from 9th of January. I was excited when our fleet manager informed that we are going to work at the airport. Whenever I would visit the airport, it made me really happy to see the response of the passengers and their admiration for Sakha cab service.

GRACE
SAKHA CHAUFFEUR



WHEN I LEARNED

that we were to take up duties at the airport I was really thrilled and extremely happy to explore new journeys, new passengers, and new locations. All of it was like a dream. The passengers who travelled with us for the first time were surprised to see an all-women cab service at the airport. Till the lockdown was announced our work was going really great!

ANJANA VERMA
SAKHA CHAUFFEUR



I AM PROUD

to be part of Sakha, a one-of-its-kind initiative in Indore. In four years of my journey, I feel happy to be part of an innovative initiative, feel proud that people today know about Sakha and I have been able to contribute to increase the visibility and market for female drivers'. Today, Sakha Indore receives not just intra-city bookings but also for IIM and IIT which are situated 21kms away from the city, tourist destinations like Ujjain, Mandu, Mandelshwar among many other. Opening a counter at Indore International Airport gave this journey a huge boost and has really made me confident that we can go much farther

MAHESH NAKHATE
PLACEMENT COORDINATOR
SAKHA CONSULTING WINGS

Research Advocacy & Communications

knowledge building & influencing policy change

At Azad, we believe that learning, unlearning, understanding from our failures exploring reasons for success is important to fuel our growth. Our research advocacy and communications process looks not just within to build knowledge but creates collaborative platforms to harness knowledge creation and advocacy to build an ecosystem that supports women's access to decent work.

KNOWLEDGE, LIKE
AIR, IS VITAL TO
LIFE. LIKE AIR, NO
ONE SHOULD BE
DENIED IT.

Alan Moore



THIS YEAR

I had the opportunity to work on the organizational newsletter, Azad Parindey, and participated in the learning journey to Kerala as part of the Non-Traditional Livelihoods Network. Both events gave me insights into stories of women and also organizations outside Delhi. During the Kerala learning journey, we shared experiences, challenges and needs of organisations promoting non-traditional livelihoods, identified areas of collaboration and build synergies in promoting NTL.

PADMA PANDEY

TRAINING COORDINATOR, DELHI



Building capacity for effective local strategies

A day-long training was conducted in October 2019 to help Kolkata teams and partners understand how to use data to monitor and improve efficiency



Lady driver Bengali edition book launch

Bengali translation of LADY DRIVER, published by Rhito Prakashan, launched on 9 March 2020 by Anita Agnihotri, eminent Bengali writer and poet. The book has 14 stories, including two new ones penned by our Kolkata Director Dolon Ganguly.



MY EXPERIENCE

in Azad and the Research team has been one of new learnings, challenges and growth. I was a researcher by practice but communications for advocacy was a new area for me and I learnt with every challenge, from annual reports and donor updates to strategic social media presence and advocacy across local and global platforms. In 29 months of my journey with Azad, the environment for taking up challenges and support from across teams has helped me evolve as an individual, a leader and a professional. The year 2019-20 has been exciting not only as we expanded our advocacy, independently and with the network, but also because we obtained the coveted UN ECOSOC (United Nations Economic and Social Council) status; shared our experiences at various conferences; and contributed to the review of Beijing +25 and Sustainable Development Goals. All this through saying farewell to old teammates and welcoming new members. It has been very enriching."

AMRITA GUPTA

DIRECTOR - RESEARCH ADVOCACY & COMMUNICATIONS

POLICY ADVOCACY

local and global efforts to impact the landscape of livelihoods and gender

Adding our voices to the review of SDGs and Beijing +25



Amid the UN High Level Political Forum reviewing its Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) No. 8 (on decent work and economic growth) and 4 (on quality education), Azad partnered with American Jewish World Service (AJWS), Win-Win Strategies and EMpower—The Emerging Markets Foundation to convene a donor discussion on non-traditional livelihoods and their potential to empower young women at Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice, New York City, on 15 July 2019. The key discussions were around how NTL give women access to money and challenge gender norms, rights-based training and the need to involve men.



Nationally, Azad was a co-organizer at a two-day session in February 2020 on SDG 5 (on gender equality) contributing to the voluntary review of SDGs in India. Azad discussed the importance of unpaid care work in achieving gender equality.

Azad Kolkata Director Dolon Ganguly was also invited to the eastern region review of Beijing Platform for Action 25+- held in September 2019 in Bhubaneswar, which enabled us to contribute to the National review report coordinated by UNWomen.

Azad was also scheduled to participate at the CSW64 in March 2020 which was cancelled on account of COVID19 pandemic. Azad was hosting a parallel event titled 'Non-Traditional Livelihoods: Building Skills that Bust Stereotypes for

Substantive Economic Empowerment and was also a panelist at a side event hosted by Breakthrough

Local advocacy initiatives

We met Delhi's Minister of Transport & Environment, Mr. Kailash Gehlot, on 5 March 2020 to present our demands for promoting women in Delhi Transport Corporation.

In Rajasthan, advocacy with the state's Transport Secretary, Mr. Rakesh Yadav, helped Azad reduce delays in getting permanent license from the Road Transport Authority.

Knowledge building through Global Conferences

Meenu Vadera, our founder, was invited by booking.com to Canada to speak on World Tourism Day in Sept 2019.

Shrinivas Rao was invited to share Azad's work on men and masculinities panel presentation during the Men Care Global Meet in Rabat on 19-22 November 2019. He also presented on Women with Wheels at to the 2019 Women & Transport Africa Conference in December 2019.



Knowledge building & advocacy in national forums

Azad Foundation was invited to speak at two national forums on how non-traditional livelihoods become a disruptor for women, challenging gender norms, and how rights-based transformative training is essential for women to build agency.

One forum, titled REFRAME: Participation of Women in Workforce—Looking at Solutions, was organized by Breakthrough in July 2019. The other was at the Ministry of Women & Child Development Conference in February 2020.

Team Research Advocacy Communications

Paridhi

PROGRAM MANAGER



Radhika

PROGRAM OFFICER



The network which began in 2016 has emerged as a strong initiative with 32 members across 11 states. Azad functions as the secretariat. The year has been a productive year for the network in terms of peer-learning, visibility, inter-personal learning within the network and collective advocacy at state and national level.

building collective advocacy with a vibrant ntl network

Peer-Learning Visit in Kerala



The Kerala visit in December 2019 was hosted by Archana Women's Centre and included an immersive field exposure along with a relaxing boathouse ride in the backwaters. Azad, Jabala, Samaan, Open Eyes, Nirantar, Raasta, CYSD and NOSSK participated in this visit.

Peer-Learning visit in Delhi



The Delhi Peer-to-Peer learning visit was organized in August 2019 by Azad-Sakha, Nirantar, Etasha and Quest. Abhivyakti, Archana Women's Centre, Open Eyes and Carmdaksh participated.

Advocacy with the network



The Panel on Non-Traditional Livelihoods at the Livelihood Summit India in Dec 2019 gave visibility to the voices of practitioners from Sakha, Quest and Magic Bus.



The first round-table to discuss gender sensitive markets was organized by the secretariat along with Magic Bus India and Quest Alliance on 20 February 2020. There were 31 attendees: 15 NTL partners, 2 from National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), 3 from industry and 2 from EPower, Azad's donor partner.

Annual General Body Meeting



The NTL network's annual GBM was held at Neembadi educational campus in Ahmedabad on 5-6 September 2019. Attended by 23 institutional and 2 individual members, it focused on future advocacy around three key areas: Training & Education, Gender Sensitive Markets and Unpaid Care Work.



Amrita
PROGRAM DIRECTOR,
RESEARCH ADVOCACY

Amrita is also the national coordinator of the NTL network

institution building

Azad foundation identifies itself as learning organization. Azad understands that its ability to translate into reality the commitments it makes depend directly on human potential and institutional processes. A team that is competent, committed to the vision and goals and has its values aligned with the institutional will not just be able to implement the plan in action but also in spirit.



LEADERSHIP RETREAT 2019 December 18 - 19

A retreat for senior managers of Azad and Sakha was conducted by Mr. J.M. Radhakrishna, a certified leadership coach, at Zorba the Buddha, Delhi, on 18-19 December 2019. The retreat focussed on processes of building emotional awareness, understanding leadership styles and adapting them to address various situations, building teams and leading with empathy by building residence within.



HOW MUCH

I loved being part of teams at Azad & Sakha. As I look back, my time here has been a magnificent & glorious ride, filled with learnings and challenges, to rise above situations. My whole experience has been steered with passion, enthusiasm and team spirit as we all journeyed through this untrodden path making each step filled with new experiences & learning... Proud to have been a part of this vision and the teamwork that is setting high the bar for livelihoods with dignity. Having created memories along this journey with teams and colleagues who have turned to friendships, these are moments that will stay with me. At heart I know I will always be connected.

SUSMITHA ALVA
CONSULTANT,
RESOURCE MOBILIZATION



TEAM RETREAT 2020 January 14 -16

A three-day residential retreat was held at Zorba the Buddha, Delhi, for Azad teams from Delhi, Jaipur and Kolkata on 14-16 January 2020. The retreat began by reintroducing the team with Azad's institutional values and reflecting on the performance of different programs from April to December 2019. Days 1 and 2 had four sessions: Power, Patriarchy & Privilege, Performance Management System, Non-Violent Communication and Citizenship & Democracy. There were two activity-based team building sessions too. Participants were divided into two groups, who attended parallel sessions. Both days concluded with fun activities like a screening of movie, Ted Talks India and one-on-one sessions for anyone to share and seek redress for work-related difficulties in a safe and non-judgemental space. A common session on Sexuality and its relevance in the context of working in multicultural teams was held on day 3. The retreat closed with teams sharing their learnings and overall experience.



strengthening governance systems

Internal Complaints Committee Sexual Harassment at Workplace

In 2019-20, Azad's Internal Complaints Committee received and led an enquiry on two cases under the purview of Sexual Harassment at the Workplace. The first case inquiry led to a strict warning, a 6-month transfer of the respondent along with providing a written apology to the complainant. The second case inquiry led to the following recommendation for the respondent - counselling sessions on professional conduct; a letter of assurance given to the Executive Director, agreeing to be conscious about his conduct in professional space and cognitive during interacting with female colleagues of the impact of his behaviour.



IT'S BEEN A

privilege to work with the Azad / Sakha family. In my 6 years association as a Trustee on the Azad Board, I have witnessed with delight the exponential growth and the stellar work this wonderful organization is doing in the NTL space. What's also heartening to note is the emphasis on emulating best practices to ensure transparency. Azad believes in doing what is correct rather than what is expedient!! My best wishes to the Azad team.

ROHIT BHASIN
TREASURER, AZAD BOARD



I HAVE BEEN

extremely fortunate to be part of the ever growing resilient community of Azad Foundation. My governance journey has been a great learning experience as I have seen how good governance has enabled the women of Azad to live their lives with dignity. This is something to celebrate every day.

ANUVINDA VARKEY
CHAIRPERSON, AZAD BOARD

INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP TEAM

Meenu

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Pallavi

FINANCE DIRECTOR



Shrinivas

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER



Dolon

PROGRAM DIRECTOR KOLKATA



Amrita

PROGRAM DIRECTOR, RAC



Snehalata

PROGRAM DIRECTOR DELHI



Anita

PROGRAM DIRECTOR, JAIPUR



Our Gratitude to You All

individual donors

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Harsha		William Bradford Meese

Thank you to all the anonymous donors who contributed through Benevity, Global Giving, Instamojo and other sources.



institutional donors



PARTNERING

with Azad Foundation has been such an inspiring and great learning experience. It has been exciting to watch them expand from ground-breaking on-the-ground programming that gives women and girls increased life options and choices, and then bring their deep experience in non-traditional livelihoods into advocacy spaces at national and global levels. Their convening power and thought-leadership challenges typical notions of livelihoods approaches for women and girls, making them a resource to fellow practitioners and an influencer in the funding and policy spheres.”

SARAH GREEN

SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR
- SEXUAL HEALTH & RIGHTS,
AMERICAN JEWISH WORLD SERVICE

finance



THE WORK environment and different trainings, such as Gender and Self Evolution, have enabled me to build my perspective and change my way of conversing on the issues of gender. At the same time I got the opportunity to learn new concepts and software related to finance through different workshops and in-office trainings. Azad has truly been a platform for me to share my ideas and now I don't feel hesitant to do so, unlike before."

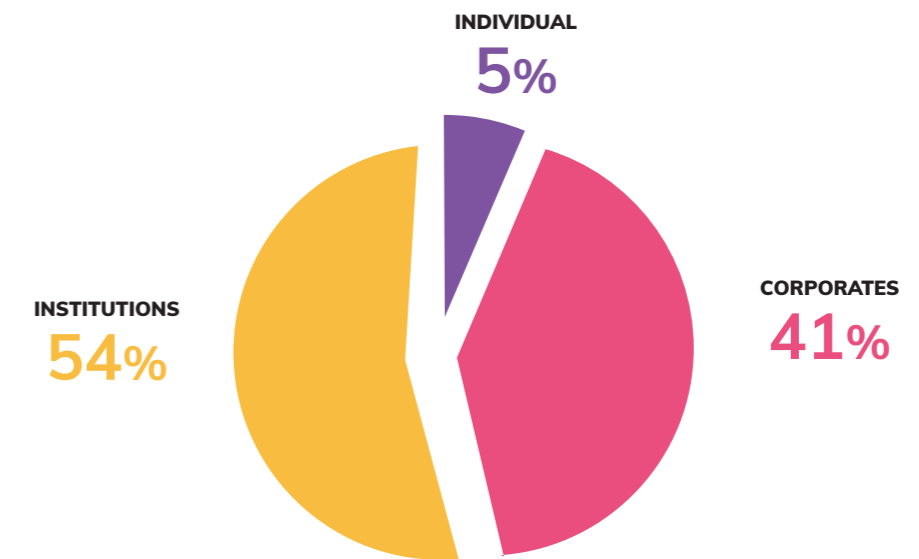
KRISHNA ROY
PROGRAM OFFICER, FINANCE
When Krishna joined Azad in 2014, it was his first job in the social sector. He describes his work here as 'life changing'.

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION TEAM

<p>Deepali HUMAN RESOURCE, CONSULTANT</p>	<p>Krishna PROGRAM OFFICER, FINANCE</p>
<p>Aarti PROGRAM OFFICER, FINANCE</p>	<p>Vishnu ADMIN SUPPORT NORTH DELHI</p>
<p>Tapan ADMIN SUPPORT DELHI</p>	<p>Arun ADMIN SUPPORT SOUTH DELHI</p>
<p>Jalebi ADMIN SUPPORT EAST DELHI</p>	<p>Sujit ACCOUNTS & ADMIN KOLKATA</p>
<p>Sutapa ADMIN SUPPORT NORTH KOLKATA</p>	<p>Pratima ADMIN SUPPORT SOUTH KOLKATA</p>
<p>Mahendra ADMIN SUPPORT JAIPUR</p>	<p>Shivji ACCOUNTS & ADMIN JAIPUR</p>

INCOME

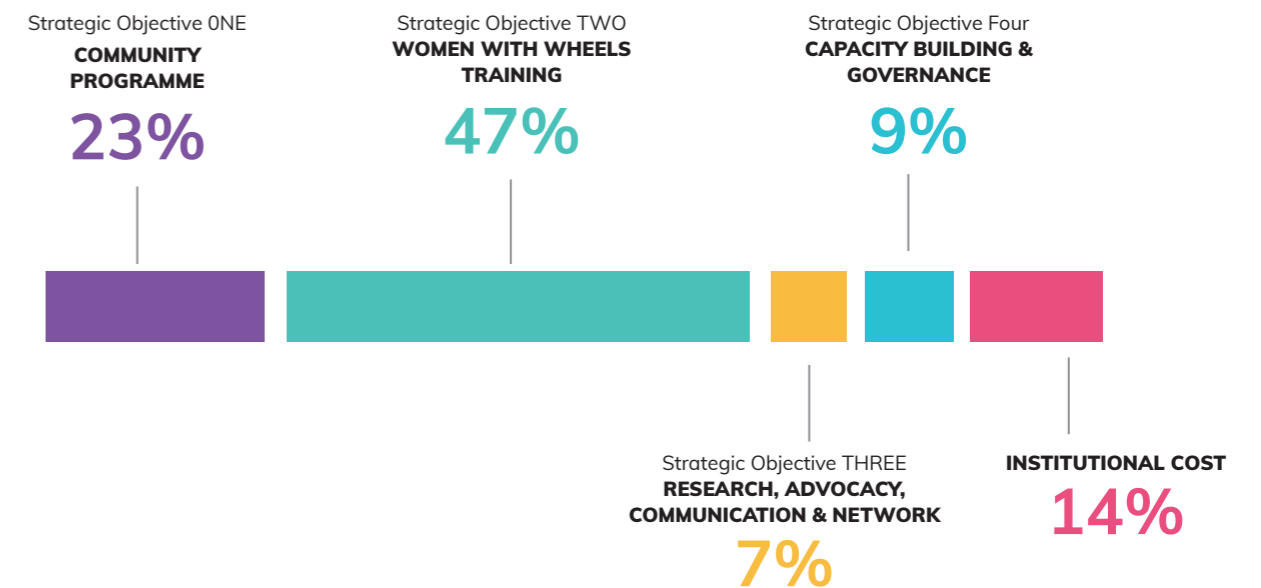
Where our money comes from ?



Gross Income of Azad Foundation in 2019-20 was Rs. 7.77 crores

UTILIZATION

How the money was used ?



Total utilization of Azad Foundation in 2019-20 was Rs. 7.48 crores

media coverage & recognitions

RAJKUMARI SHARMA TANKHA

She is the cynosure of all eyes at Anand Vihar in East Delhi where she lives. While men respect her, women are in awe of her—many tell her they too want to be like her. And Sufina happily guides them to the Sakha-Azad Foundation office. “I want these women to break their shackles,” she says, adding, “I will ensure my daughters study as much as they want to. One of them wants to be pilot.”

DRIVEN TO DESTINY

Anand Vihar resident Sufina battled many odds to stand on her two little feet

able to hire 24x7 from Sakha ‘Women With Wheels’ exclusive booth at Arrival Forecourt T3. But this was not always so. There was a time when she was battered like many others. How she transformed into a confident woman is an extraordinary tale of grit. Sufina was married at 16 to a daily wage earner and became a mother at 18. Often, there was no food at home. But Sufina, now 28, had fire in her belly. She wanted to rise over this pitiable situation. So, when a Sakha volunteer approached her, it felt like a godsend. “They told me to enrol for driver’s training. The thought that I could turn financially independent excited me, but I was too scared. I knew neither my husband nor my parents would agree. But I am glad that that Sakha volunteer kept pestering me, and I enrolled.”

The journey ahead was not easy. While her parents expressed displeasure, her husband, a painter, didn’t stop at that. “He would beat me up and lock me up before going out for work,” she says, quickly adding that now her husband is most supportive. “I will ensure my daughters study as much as they want to. One of them wants to be pilot.”



Sufina, a chauffeur with Women With Wheels | SHIBHAR YADAV

of her work. Revisiting her past, Sufina says, “One day I decided that enough was enough. I had to find a way out. I took my mother into confidence. So after my husband would leave for work, my mother would come and open the door for me, and I would promise her that I’d be back before he returns home. She didn’t want any altercation with her son-in-law.” That’s how Sufina completed her driver’s training. She got her first job as a private chauffeur where she worked for over two years. All this while her husband never got to know that she was working for, she adopted the same modus operandi that she did when she underwent training. She was always back before her husband returned.

But the changes in her did make him suspicious. And one day, as was his habit, when he raised his hand, Sufina stood up telling him that she will not take it anymore. “I was fed up of the daily beatings. By this time, I had also saved some money from my salaries,” she says, adding, “He was stunned, but he stopped and has never hit me again.” Then one day, her husband got very sick. Despite their differences, Sufina admitted him to a private nursing home and got him treated with her savings. “It was then that he started to trust me and understood the importance of my job. I am happy he has changed, but I often wonder why does a woman have to undergo such stifling circumstances to prove herself? What if he had never fallen sick?” she asks pensively. “That’s a big question for all you men out there!”

आजाद फाउंडेशन ने किया महिलाओं को प्रशिक्षित

नई दिल्ली | गैर लाभकारी संगठन आजाद फाउंडेशन ने 2000 से ज्यादा महिलाओं को प्रशिक्षित किया है जिनमें से 1000 से ज्यादा महिलाएं दिल्ली, जयपुर और कोलकाता की सड़कों पर कामशियल चालकों के रूप में कार्यरत हैं। संगठन ने महिला दिवस के मौके पर माननीय प्रधानमंत्री और महिला एवं बाल विकास मंत्री से जेंडर सेंसिटिव इन्फ्रास्ट्रक्चर उपलब्ध कराने की अपील की है, ताकि देश के कार्यबल में महिलाओं को योगदान बढ़ सके।



Savitri Vishwakarma Sakha Chauffeur from Indore has received Surma Samman in the year 2018 by Abhyuday Sanstha



Need more #WomenBreakingGlassCeiling We urge Government to enable them with

1. Full time creches for children
2. More affordable and safe working women hostels
3. Safe and accessible women's shelter
4. Ensure basic public provisions like piped water
5. Safe, hygienic and functional washrooms
6. Safe Public Transport

Women at the wheel

Azad Foundation’s ‘by women, for women’ cab service is driving change in a big way

PREETI MEHRA

In January this year, a news report announced the launch of a cab service at Delhi’s Indra Gandhi International Airport specifically for women travellers. They would now be able to negotiate the unsafe Capital any time of the night and day, chauffeured by women drivers trained in self-defence.

In less than two months, the service, initiated by social enterprise Sakha, has gone beyond its original brief. Now, some of the women drivers have started multitasking as guides and take tourists not only to Delhi’s famous destinations but also to the golden triangle of Agra and Jaipur.

But behind the enterprise by women, for women, are stories of those behind the steering wheel that inspire awe for sheer perseverance. It certainly was not an easy drive for them, given parental, family and societal pressures.

Take 24-year-old Moida’s story. She hails from Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh and has been driving a Sakha cab for one-and-a-half years. Along with ferrying passengers to and from the international airport, Moida is also a trained guide and part of the Spice Tours initiative. She takes visitors on walking tours in Delhi and on guided tours to Agra and Jaipur. But it hasn’t been easy for the young girl and she still faces pressure from the extended family and the community.

“I love the work I do and I keep trying to explain to them that I only ferry women passengers,” says Moida, who has undergone training both in driving and as a tour guide.

Training beyond the job

A lot of effort goes into the training process. “Our training is not simply teaching women how to drive. It has 14 flexible modules imparting skills beyond those required for the immediate job. Sometimes it is so difficult for women to just come out of the house and breaks take place in training. For some women the training takes five to six months... after all, women have been left out by design,” says Meenu Vadera, the Director of Azad Foundation, a professional feminist organisation that questions the very core of patriarchy and works across social and religious divides to empower resource-poor women and engage them in non-traditional livelihoods.

Sakha is the Foundation’s cab service venture to increase work participation of women. Azad Foundation started in 2008 and since then has made over 2,000 women employable. Apart from Sakha, today more than 1,000 women are working as professional chauffeurs in places like Unicef, the US embassy, five-star hotels, the Delhi Commission for Women and the Municipal Corporation of Indore. Over the years, the Foundation has provided over 1.25 million safe rides and

generated a cumulative income of more than ₹17 crore.

It also gave Delhi its first DTC bus driver. However, it has not been able to place more women as public bus drivers. “The buses are designed such that only those drivers who are 5.3 ft and above can drive them. Women in India are mostly 5 ft or 5.1 ft in height. We have been trying to bring about a change in this and have spoken to bus manufacturers as well. We are hoping some change takes place,” explains Vadera who, in 2017, seeded the Non-Traditional Livelihood Network, a collective of 32 organisations and individuals that make training and market opportunities available to marginalised women in diverse professions like masonry, house painting, plumbing, carpentry, and, of course, driving.

Change starts at home

Talking about change, it is visible in the homes of several Sakha cab drivers. Take, for instance, 28-year-old Sufina from Purnea district in Bihar who has been on the job for the past four years. Though she has an awfully busy day, which starts with filling water for the household from the community tap and sending the children to school, if she gets late dropping off a ride from the airport, she does not have to get stressed about the situation on the home front.

“My husband chips in with looking after the children and helping in the house,” she says, with a smile. The couple also share all expenses. “This has helped me save up and I have also bought my own house,” she says.

Vadera has found the change emerging slowly over the years as Azad works with the community to give support to women and also runs a ‘men for gender justice’ programme for male family members. “It all takes time. The core idea is to equip women with transformational skills, give them confidence to take on the challenge, impart ethics and gender justice and incorporate critical skills,” she says.

And Sakha, like the women it trains and empowers, is also spreading its wings. It is present in Jaipur, Indore, Delhi and Kolkata, but will soon reach Bhubaneswar, Lucknow and Chennai.



Steering her life Moida, seen here with tourists, is both a trained driver and guide

PM urged to provide gender sensitive infrastructure

New Delhi: On the occasion of Women’s Day, Azad Foundation, a non-profit organization working since 2008 to provide livelihoods with dignity for resource-poor women in urban areas across India, has appealed to the PM and minister of women and child development to create gender sensitive infrastructure to enable increased work participation of women. The declining women’s labour force participation (from 37% in 2006 to 18% in 2019), gender pay gap (at 23%), high rates of informal work (at 93%) with lack of social security are seen as impediments to the goal of gender equality and empowerment of women in India. IANS



Azad and Sakha met Mr. Kailash Gehlot, Minister of Transport & Environment, Delhi, to advocate for women-driven Delhi Transport Corporation buses that will make public transport more gender equitable.

Azad appealed to the Prime Ministers Office and Ministry of Women & Child Development on Women’s Day for creating gender sensitive infrastructures to increase participation of women in the workforce in India.

‘Women workforce down to 18% from 37% in 13 years’

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Women workforce in the country fell to 18 per cent in 2019 from 37 per cent in 2006, non-government organisation Azad Foundation said on the International Women’s Day on Sunday.

The World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap Report this year ranks India at 149th position out of 153 countries on economic participation and opportunity, the organisation said and appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to take create gender-sensitive infrastructure.

According to the Foundation, the Global Gender Gap Report estimates that raising women’s participation in the labour force can increase India’s GDP significantly.

“The declining women’s labour force participation (from 37 per cent in 2006 to 18 per

cent in 2019), gender pay gap (23 per cent), high rates of informal work (93 per cent) with lack of social security are seen as impediments to the goal of gender equality and empowerment of women in India,” the Azad Foundation said in a statement here.

Azad Foundation believes that infrastructure and norms play a crucial role in impeding women’s entry and sustenance in the workforce.

“We appeal to the Prime Minister and Minister of Women and Child Development for their attention and positive action towards creating gender sensitive infrastructure,” Azad Foundation Founder and Executive Director Meenu Vadera said.

The gender-sensitive infrastructure included full-time creches for children, affordable and safe working women’s hostels, and basic public provisions such as piped water, she said in the statement.

The organisation also suggested hygienic washrooms at

public places and safe public transport for enabling women to access decent and dignified livelihood opportunities.

Meanwhile, the ITC said it has been encouraging participation of women in its manufacturing facilities across the country.

ITC’s Pudukkottai (Trichy) unit in Tamil Nadu... Has close to 85 per cent women workforce across all three shifts in a day,” the company said in a statement.

The company’s foods unit at Mysuru in Karnataka is the first FMCG factory in the region to deploy women across all shifts and their ratio is around 60 per cent, it added.

“To encourage the participation of women in workforce, ITC’s foods business has been carrying out several other initiatives at its factory locations. As a confidence building measure, family members of the women employees are invited to the plants to show them the work environment and culture,” ITC said. PTI



Sakha was awarded the Astitva Samman 2020 by the Women & Child Committee of PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry on 22 February 2020 in recognition of their work as ‘exemplary advocates for women empowerment and gender sensitive workplace.’

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, C.I.T. Road, Scheme IV (M), 1st Floor,
Kolkata 700006

SOUTH KOLKATA

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



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