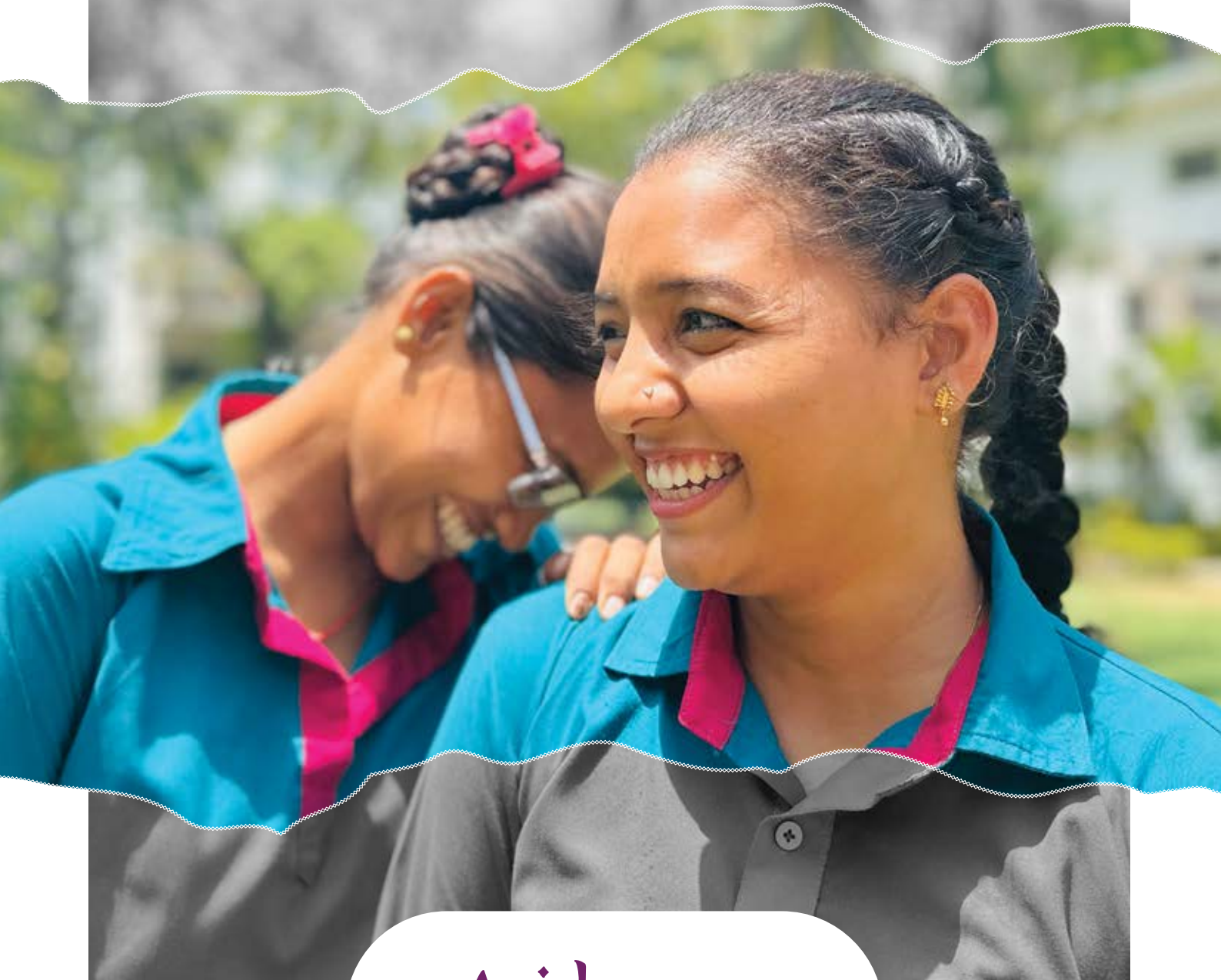


TRANSFORMING LIVES

THROUGH GENDER-JUST SKILL EDUCATION

ANNUAL REPORT | 2023-24



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*Non-Traditional Livelihoods

dear friends

**WE ARE
LIVING IN
A WORLD
ENGULFED IN
POLYCRISIS.**



As we write this note from a city of India, many other parts of the world are witnessing conflict and human rights violation against civilians including women, children and the elderly. The entire world is suffering from the consequences of mindless exploitation of the environment in the form of extreme weather patterns due to global warming, which is negatively impacting our overall well-being. Carbon emissions have increased from 0.8% to 1.5% in 2022. India's emissions grew at slightly more than 7% (CO2 Emissions in 2023 Report, IEA). Economic growth favouring some over the others worldwide has exacerbated inequality, with marginalised people bearing the brunt. In India, economic inequality and access to resources is further compounded by the hierarchies of caste, gender, region, and religion. The rich have become richer, and the poor have become poorer, with the top 10% of the Indian population holding 77% of the total national wealth (Oxfam India).

Top-down economic policies have left common people, particularly marginalised women, with limited choices. Although female enrolment in higher education has significantly increased in India, the percentage of early marriage remains concerning, with 23% of women aged 20-24 having been married before the age of 18 (NFHS-5). Access to skill education continues to be gendered, contributing to the low workforce participation of women. Women's labour force participation increased from 23% in 2017-18 to 37% in 2022-23, yet it remains much below the global average of 50% (PLFS¹, World Bank). The increase is also mainly due to women's labour in family enterprises and small businesses in

rural areas, even though women often lack access and control over their personal earnings, as their income is mostly included within the family's collective income (Ashwini Deshpande, 2023). In 2022-23, 36.1% of men and 18.6% of women aged 18-59 received vocational training. Despite 17% of ITIs² being women-only, only 7% of skill trainees were women candidates in 2021 (IndiaSpend). Women and girls' access to opportunities is further exacerbated by the rising gender-based violence against them. An NCRB³ report reveals shocking figures of 87% rise in crimes against women over 10 years between 2011 and 2021.

While these realities persist, Azad Foundation believes in a system change approach through its GJSE⁴ framework. We look at the entire ecosystem of change that needs to be established to enable marginalised women to access transformative skill education for meaningful employment in non-traditional livelihoods (NTL), economic and social empowerment, and a life of dignity. This gender-just ecosystem is created through a network of community change agents. In 2023-24, 416 young women and men change agents shared information to combat gender-based violence and provided support to access NTL to 5.8 lakh women and men. Men's perceptions about sharing unpaid care work positively changed from 43% to 61%. 511 women were supported in obtaining driving licenses through transformative capacity-building training. Azad continued training women to drive electric vehicles, and Sakha subsequently placed around 50 of these women in the green transportation market

¹ Periodic Labour Force Survey

² Industrial Training Institutes

³ National Crime Records Bureau

⁴ Gender Just Skill Education Framework

in 2023-24. Additionally, as a result of Azad's policy engagement with the Delhi Transport Corporation, 93 women are now driving buses. All of them are receiving training for operating electric buses, with a few already driving electric buses. This initiative aimed to empower women through new technology and promote environment-friendly transportation solutions.

In order to ensure women's sustenance in employment, Azad promotes gender inclusion in the larger ecosystem of policies, infrastructure and market. This year, an impact assessment study on Azad's work for over a decade (2008-2022) was conducted by Ambedkar University. It aimed to serve as a body of knowledge for scaling-up and mainstreaming the inclusion of women in non-traditional skilling and workforce. The study found that Azad's feminist approach in training and skill development empowers women to not just pursue careers in driving but reshape their lives and forge new identities. They empower themselves to navigate and assert control over the city, strengthening their rights as citizens.

Azad has always believed in alliance building and continued to work as the secretariat of the NTL Network for Women, a national-level network that promotes NTL for women. Along with this, Azad formed collaborations with many other organisations throughout the year. From campaigns to sharing learning journeys and holding the Kamla Bhasin Awards for Driving Gender Equality across South Asia, Azad demonstrated collaboration and inclusivity as core values of its work. The Kamla Bhasin Awards, instituted with two partner organisations, expanded its outreach and visibility of women practitioners of NTL and men working to create alternative masculinities across the South Asian region.



Last year, while the whole world was suffering from multiple catastrophes—from geo-political violence, to a broken economy to the scarcity of services—collective efforts and strategic partnerships helped us stay the course, enabling us to overcome challenges on the way. The Azad team tried its best to support women from marginalised communities in India to earn their livelihoods in non-traditional professions and live with dignity and distinct identities.

We commend the indomitable spirit of the women trainees, community change-agents and women drivers who became our pillars of strength. This was also made possible by the hard work of the Azad team, Azad's partners and the unwavering and generous support of its board.

As we look to the future, we remain hopeful and committed to fostering a world where women can access their rights and resources, live violence-free lives, and thrive in dignified livelihoods.

Let's turn the pages to see how we worked towards achieving our mission in 2023-2024!

With love and solidarity,
Dolon and Shrinivas

OUR DEMOGRAPHICS

Azad works with marginalised women and men across all intersections of class, caste, religion, sexual and gender identities in Delhi, Jaipur, Kolkata and Chennai directly, and with partners in Indore and Ahmedabad.

Profile of all change agents from Azad Kishori (AK), Men for Gender Justice (MGJ) and Feminist Leadership Programme (FLP), and trainees in Women with Wheels Program in 2023-24



THE PEOPLE WE WORK WITH

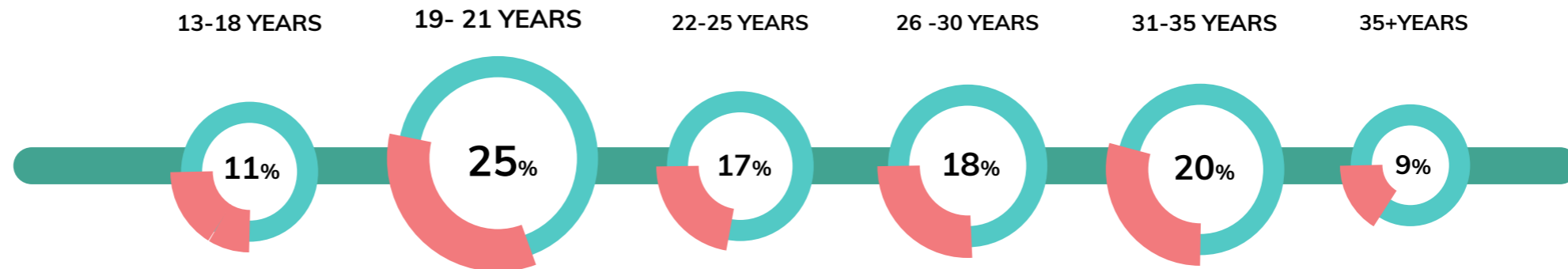
CASTE CATEGORY

65% of the people Azad works with belong to marginalised castes.

- 35% GENERAL
- 42% SC
- 18% OBC
- 5% ST

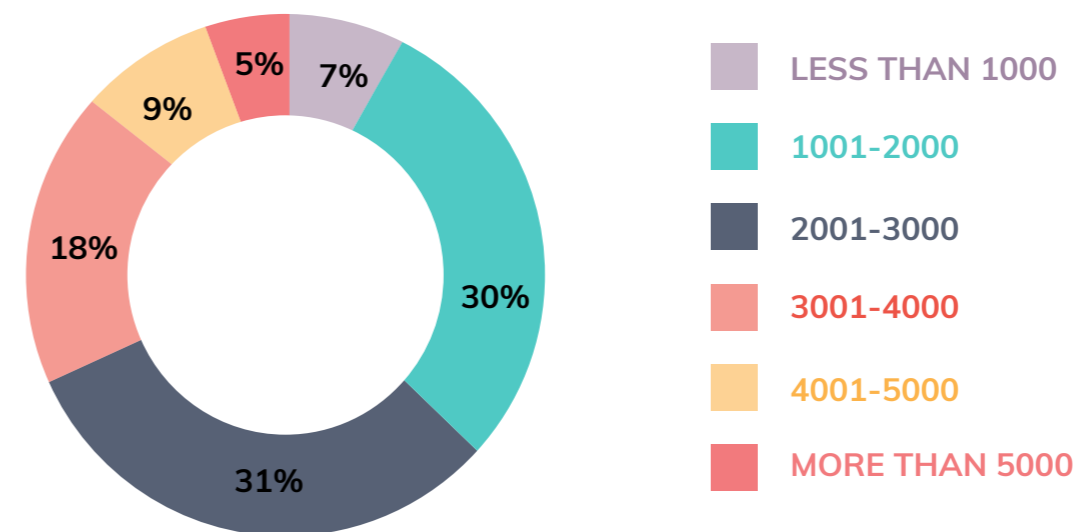
AGE IN YEARS

Azad predominantly works with young people in the age group of 13 to 25 (53%).



PER CAPITA INCOME

86% of the people Azad works with live below the poverty line, defined by the World Bank as having an income of less than Rs. 3,900 per month.



RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY

Azad strives to reach out to minority religious communities through its work.

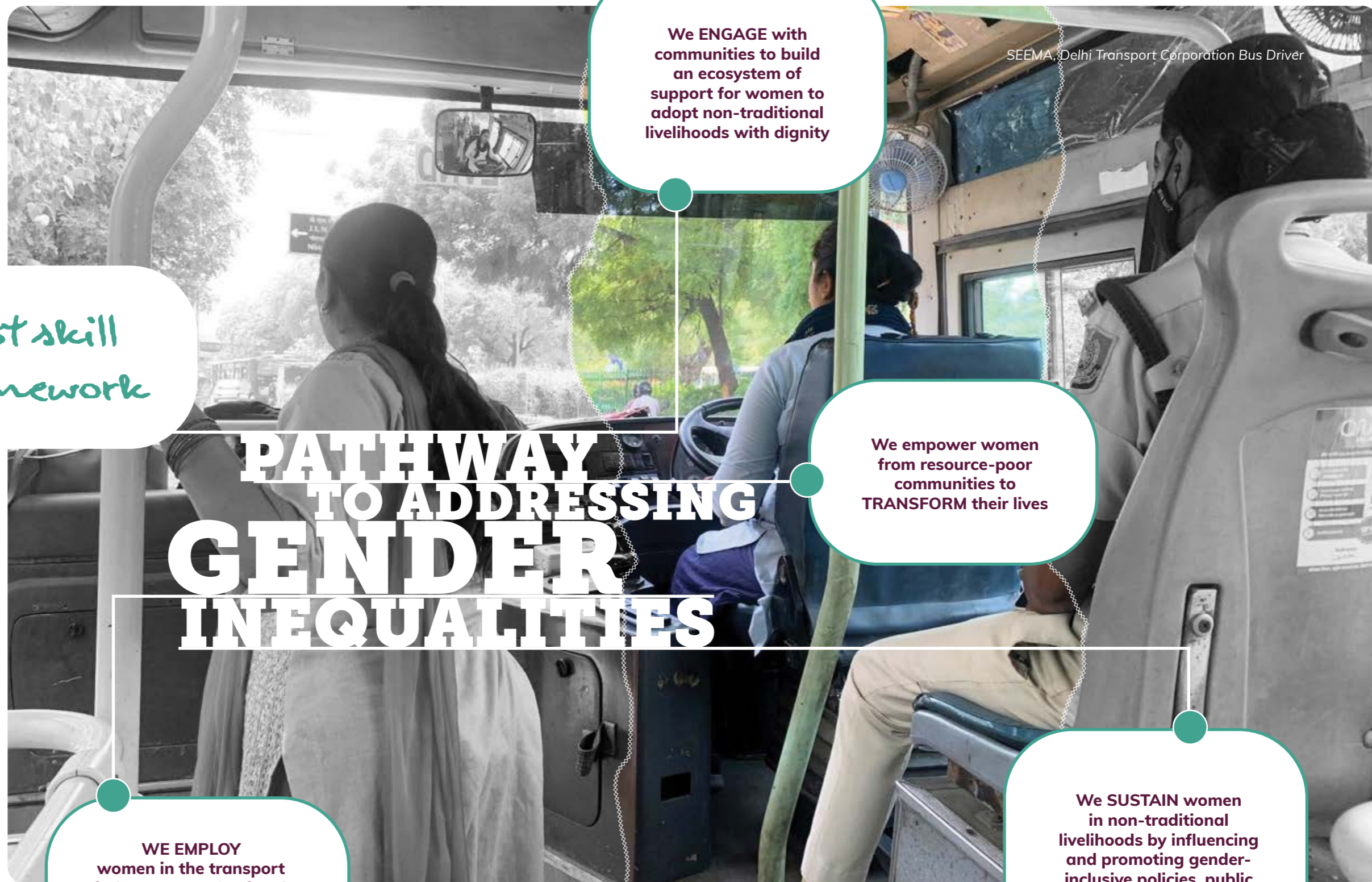
- 82% HINDU
- 17% MUSLIM
- 1% CHRISTIAN



OUR APPROACH

the gender-just skill education framework

The Gender-Just Skill Education (GJSE) framework plays a pivotal role in tackling the disparities women encounter when acquiring skills for jobs, particularly non-traditional livelihoods (NTL). It looks at the entire ecosystem of change that needs to be established to enable marginalised women to access transformative skill education for meaningful employment in non-traditional livelihoods, economic and social empowerment, and a life of dignity.



SEEMA, Delhi Transport Corporation Bus Driver

PATHWAY TO ADDRESSING GENDER INEQUALITIES

We **ENGAGE** with communities to build an ecosystem of support for women to adopt non-traditional livelihoods with dignity

We empower women from resource-poor communities to **TRANSFORM** their lives

WE **EMPLOY** women in the transport industry as professional chauffeurs and riders

We **SUSTAIN** women in non-traditional livelihoods by influencing and promoting gender-inclusive policies, public infrastructure and markets

Azad has been successful in articulating its praxis, within this transformational framework that has been co-developed by Azad and Non-Traditional Livelihoods (NTL) Network for women. We adopt a GJSE Framework throughout our programmes, providing women with the values, knowledge, and skills to challenge gender stereotypes and exercise equal rights.

OVERALL IMPACT



SHAMA PARVEEN, FLP Leader, Delhi

WE REACHED

5.8 lakh people from the community

1.6 lakh women

Across 397 bastis in Delhi, Jaipur, Kolkata and Chennai with information to access skill training for livelihoods with dignity in NTL, preventing and combating GBV¹, negotiating unpaid care work and increasing their autonomy.

311 women gained employment as professional chauffeurs and riders through Sakha in e-commerce and transport.

361 women survivors of violence supported through information, assistance in filing police complaints and linkages with psychosocial counselling and violence redressal mechanisms.

511 women became employable by achieving driving license.

2,372 adolescent girls, men and boys equipped with skills to negotiate decisions regarding higher education, marriage, sexual & reproductive health, skill training & unpaid care work and challenging heterosexual norms of masculinity.

12,827 people reached through online and on-ground campaigns like #SamantaBandhan and One Billion Rising, to challenge patriarchal control over women and rise against gender-based violence.

416 women, adolescent girls, young men & boys trained as change agents to support women in accessing livelihoods with dignity, lead violence-free lives, increase mobility and encourage men to share the responsibility of unpaid care work.

7088 women accessed citizenship documents and social security.

¹ Gender-Based Violence

Azad ensures **right to access GJSE** for marginalised women through **engagement** at individual, family and community levels. Our intensive community engagement programme ensures women have access to information on non-traditional livelihoods and are empowered to combat gender-based violence. We train women feminist leaders who assist women to access citizenship entitlements, negotiate their mobility and their right to a life with dignity.

We understand that social norms are ingrained at an impressionable age, hence our work with young adolescent girls helps open avenues for them in STEM² education & NTL and build their agency to negotiate decisions regarding higher education, skill training, sexual & reproductive health, marriage and gender-based violence. We also work with adolescent boys and young men,



Childcare Centre set up by FLP leader Ratna Routh in Kolkata

empowering them to embrace positive masculinity and become change agents who participate in unpaid care work and support women in combatting gender-based violence and joining NTL.

These change agents together facilitate a gender-just ecosystem by supporting women to access skill training and non-traditional livelihoods with dignity.

feminist leadership program

Feminist Leadership Program (FLP) trains young women in feminist principles through a yearlong capacity building training enabling these change agents to build a gender-just environment at the community level. These women emerge as dynamic young leaders who empower themselves and other women by building gender-inclusive infrastructure in communities, supporting women to access citizenship entitlements and social security benefits, join non-traditional skill building and livelihood opportunities, prevent and combat GBV and lead their lives with dignity.

Community Meeting organised by FLP Leader Mariyam in Delhi



Baby Halder, celebrated feminist writer, graced the FLP Convocation in Kolkata and was honored by the Azad team



FLP Leaders in Jaipur attend leadership training



ANITA, FLP Leader, Delhi



ENGAGING WITH COMMUNITIES TO BUILD AN ECOSYSTEM OF SUPPORT

² Technical disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics

EXTERNAL CONTEXT

- Crimes against women rose by 87% over 10 years between 2011 and 2021. (Source: NCRB)
- The Female Labour Force Participation Rate in India increased from 23% in 2017-18 to 37% in 2022-23, yet it remains below the global rate for women, just over 50%. This rise is mainly observed in rural areas, as urban participation stands at 25.4%. (Source: Ministry of Labour & Employment, Government of India)
- In 2021, nearly 56% of women who used public transport across Indian cities reported experiencing sexual harassment. This constrains women's mobility as they are compelled to limit travel to shorter distances, avoid public spaces at night, and travel with companions for safety. (Source: World Bank)
- The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) India successfully built 62.88 lakh individual household latrines (IHHL) and 6.37 lakh community and public toilets by 2021. However, when it comes to women joining the workforce, only 21% of factories in India provide separate toilets for men and women, with even fewer offering facilities for menstrual hygiene management. (Source: ILO).

ratna routh

Feminist Leader, Kolkata

Ratna has experience of working in the development sector, and has worked as an informal teacher and caregiver for children in organisations like CINI, Nandi Foundation and NCV.

RATNA ROUTH, A 30-YEAR-OLD WOMAN FROM KOLKATA, BEGAN HER JOURNEY AS A FEMINIST LEADER IN JANUARY 2023, INSPIRED BY HER MOTHER'S SOCIAL WORK AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL.



DESPITE FINANCIAL CHALLENGES, RATNA PURSUED HIGHER EDUCATION, BELIEVING IN ITS POWER TO FULFILL HER DREAMS.



AFTER JOINING THE FEMINIST LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME OF AZAD FOUNDATION, RATNA ATTENDED SEVERAL TRAININGS ON GENDER, PATRIARCHY, SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS, GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, LEGAL RIGHTS, AND WORKING IN THE COMMUNITY.



WHILE DOING HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS, SHE CAME ACROSS A LARGE NUMBER OF WOMEN WHO WERE IN DIRE NEED OF WORK, BUT COULD NOT GO OUT DUE TO CHILDCARE DUTIES. THEY WERE LEFT WITH OPTIONS OF HOME-BASED WORK LIKE SEWING AND SHOE-MAKING WHICH PROMISED ONLY A MEAGRE EARNING.



THIS ENABLED HER TO DEVELOP A DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF GENDER ISSUES AND ACTIVELY ENGAGE WITH HER COMMUNITY THROUGH SURVEYS AND COMMUNITY MEETINGS.



SHE STRONGLY FELT THAT HOUSEHOLD CHORES AND CARE WORK SHOULD NOT STOP WOMEN FROM GOING OUT AND BECOMING INDEPENDENT. HENCE, THE IDEA OF SETTING UP A FREE CHILDCARE CENTRE STRUCK HER MIND.

CHILDREN FROM THE AGE OF 3-12 CAME TO THE CHILDCARE CENTRE, MOST FROM FAMILIES WHERE THE FATHERS WERE ENGAGED IN ODD JOBS AND MOTHERS WERE DOMESTIC WORKERS OR FACTORY LABOURERS. SHE USED HER PREVIOUS TEACHING EXPERIENCE IN PROVIDING QUALITY EDUCATION TO THE CHILDREN.



RATNA'S DEDICATION TO WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT EXTENDED TO ORGANIZING COMMUNITY EVENTS ON MENSTRUAL HYGIENE AND CHALLENGING TABOOS AROUND MENSTRUATION.



SHE MANAGED TO ENROL 4 WOMEN IN AZAD'S WOMEN WITH WHEELS DRIVING TRAINING, GIVING THEM A CHANCE AT A DIGNIFIED LIVELIHOOD. OF THESE, 2 WERE MOTHERS OF CHILDREN WHO ATTEND HER CHILDCARE CENTRE.

RATNA'S ULTIMATE DREAM IS TO CREATE A WORLD WHERE WOMEN HAVE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES TO PURSUE THEIR DESIRED OCCUPATIONS AND ALL CHILDREN HAVE ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION.



REACH

100 FEMINIST LEADERS ACROSS KOLKATA, DELHI AND JAIPUR REACHED OUT TO:

3.6 lakh people in the community and 73,435 women with information on citizenship documents, social security schemes, combatting GBV and support to access non-traditional livelihoods across

113 bastis for the creation of gender-just infrastructure through installation and maintenance of washrooms, water facilities, street lights and organising health, documentation and self-defence camps

25 new bastis, expanding their impact

IMPACT

6,151 women assisted to obtain citizenship documents and access social security schemes

70 women supported to combat gender-based violence through assistance in filing police complaints and accessing counselling, shelter homes and violence redressal mechanisms

134 women enrolled in the Women with Wheels skill training program

Linkage with counsellor/ Mahila Suraksha Evam Salah Kendra (MSSK) in **11** cases

Support for reconciliation in **19** cases

Legal advice in **22** cases

Linkages with Police Station & Mahila Panchayat in **9** cases

Handholding throughout the case in **11** cases

274 women assisted to open their bank accounts



SANJU SINGH, Azad Kishori Leader, Kolkata

azad kishori program

Azad Kishori³ (AK) Program engages with adolescent girls from classes 9th to 12th to build their leadership capacity and enable them to create and influence peer groups in their communities. This program equips the adolescent girls with negotiation skills and the agency to achieve their dreams, negotiate the age of marriage, challenge menstrual taboos & gender-based violence, and choose non-traditional education⁴ and careers.

³ Kishori is a Hindi word for 'adolescent'

⁴ Such as in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines or vocational education

EXTERNAL CONTEXT

- Female enrolment in Higher Education increased to 2.07 crore in 2021-22 from 1.57 crore in 2014-15, an increase of 32%.
(Source: Ministry of Education, Government of India)
- In 2022-23, only 18.6% of women aged 18-59 had ever received vocational training. Only 7% of skill trainees were women candidates in 2021 despite 17% ITIs being women-only.
(Source: Indian Statistical Institute (ISI Delhi))
- Indian women are 19% less likely than men to use mobile internet.
(Source: The Mobile Gender Gap Report, 2023)
- Child marriage, for the younger cohort of women (18-19 years), declined from 37.7% in 2005-06 to 16.3% in 2019-21. However, education level plays a role here, as 48% of girls with no education were married below 18 years of age as compared to only 4% among those who attained higher education.
(Source: NFHS, 2019-21)



Chaupal Meeting with parents of Kishori leaders in Jaipur

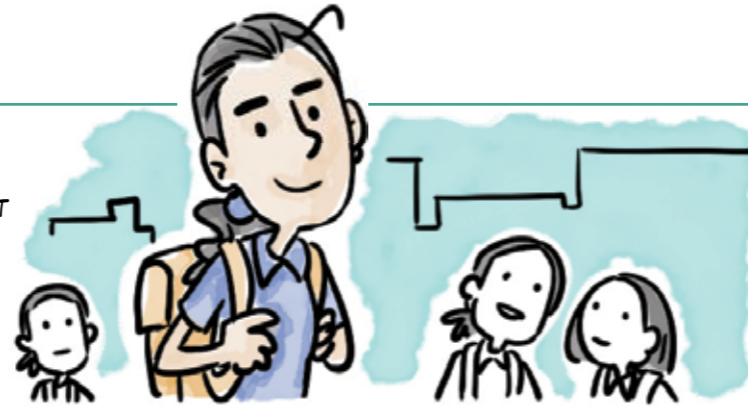
Kishori leaders in Delhi attending session on menstrual hygiene management



nazmeen guraishi

Azad Kishori Leader, Jaipur

NAZMEEN IS 17 YEARS OLD AND IS CURRENTLY PURSUING HER 10TH CLASS FROM GOVERNMENT GIRLS' SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL. SHE JOINED AZAD KISHORI PROGRAM IN NOVEMBER 2022 WHILE IN 9TH CLASS.



SHE LIVES IN A CONSERVATIVE COMMUNITY WHICH HAS RESTRICTIVE NORMS FOR WOMEN. HER FATHER IS A BATTERY RICKSHAW DRIVER WHILE HER MOTHER IS A HOMEMAKER. SHE HAS 2 SIBLINGS.



NAZMEEN JOINED AZAD KISHORI PROGRAM WHILE STUDYING IN CLASS 9TH. HER FAMILY WAS OPPOSED TO THE IDEA OF HER JOINING THE PROGRAM. BUT SHE WAS ABLE TO CONVINCE HER FAMILY, WITH HELP FROM HER SISTER AND AZAD TEAM, TO ALLOW HER PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM.

SHE ATTENDED SESSIONS AND LEADERSHIP CAMPS, DEVELOPING HER UNDERSTANDING ON GENDER, CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS, GOOD TOUCH AND BAD TOUCH, PATRIARCHY AND MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING.



THROUGH INTERACTIVE SESSIONS, SHE WAS ABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE STIGMAS RELATED TO PERIODS, AND LEARNT ABOUT GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND HELPLINE NUMBERS TO HELP SURVIVORS.

AT AZAD, SHE WAS ABLE TO GET A PLATFORM WHERE SHE CAN DISCUSS CONCERNS ABOUT HER CAREER AND SEEK GUIDANCE ABOUT THE CHOICES OF STREAMS IN SCHOOL.



SHE HAS NOW BECOME A STRONG VOICE IN HER COMMUNITY AND FORMED A PEER GROUP (ADDA) OF 15 ADOLESCENT GIRLS, DESPITE RESISTANCE FROM THE COMMUNITY.



SHE SHARES HER LEARNINGS WITH HER PEERS IN THE MONTHLY PEER MEETINGS AND HAS DEVELOPED THE CONFIDENCE TO SPEAK UP FOR HERSELF AND CHALLENGE TRADITIONAL GENDER ROLES.



SHE ALSO ENCOURAGES HER BROTHER TO SHARE HOUSEHOLD CHORES, DESPITE FAMILY RESISTANCE.



SHE ASPIRES TO BECOME A POLICE OFFICER. SHE HAS DISCUSSED HER AMBITION WITH HER FAMILY AND RECEIVED HER FATHER'S SUPPORT TO PURSUE THIS CAREER IF SHE QUALIFIES FOR THE EXAMINATIONS.



REACH

1050 peer members were reached by kishori leaders through **424 adda meetings⁵** with information and support to make decisions regarding their life

174 kishori leaders were engaged in the year through leadership training on digital literacy, gender, patriarchy, gender-based violence, legal rights and building negotiation skills for decisions regarding higher education, marriage, sexual and reproductive health

IMPACT

59 girls are continuing their higher education including technical courses like ITI, Paramedical, Nursing, Journalism, B.Tech and B.Sc.



Kishori leaders actively participated in the 'Olat-Polat' event in Kolkata smashing gender stereotypes

68 girls are attending high or secondary school

58 alumni kishori leaders in Jaipur formed the Alumni Association of Young girls (AAG), reporting a change in their perspective:

- » 98% of Kishoris can negotiate for education over marriage
- » 100% can challenge menstrual taboos
- » 82% are pursuing higher education
- » 100% believe in their self-efficacy
- » 76% challenged gender norms



Kishori leaders participated in the Collective Learning Event in Jaipur

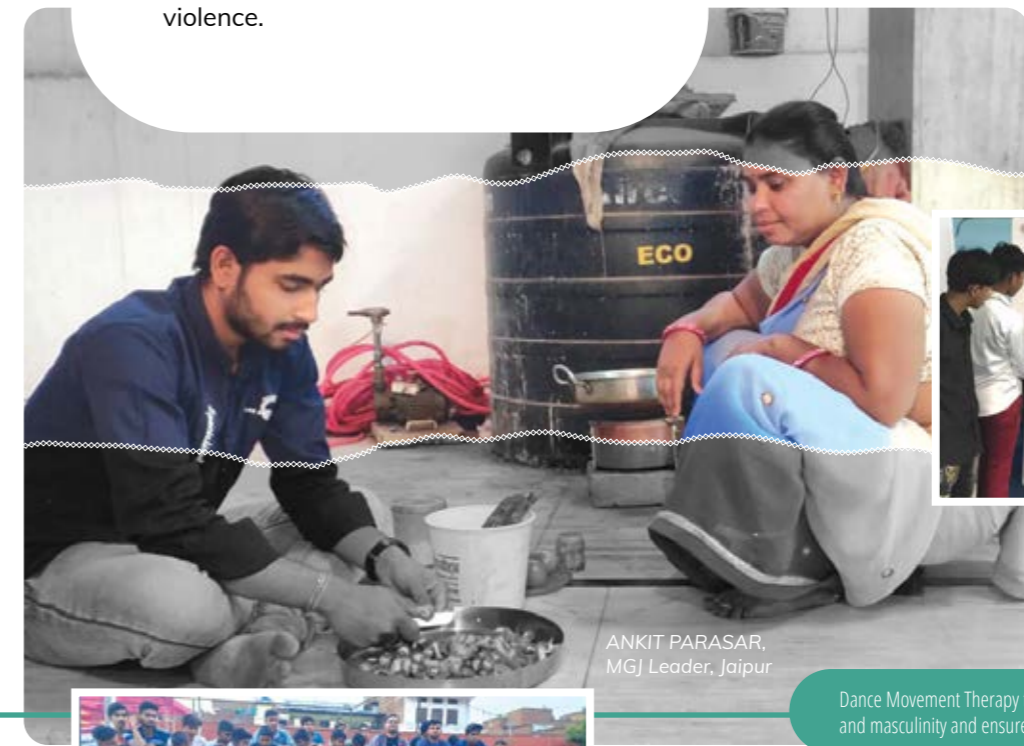
Building a Supportive Ecosystem for Adolescent Girls

Activities conducted to encourage parents to support adolescent girls in pursuing higher education and exercising their agency in life-decisions:

- **1907** Home visits
- **2809** Phone calls
- **29** Chaupal meetings with 379 parents of Kishori leaders and their peer members

men for gender justice program

Men for Gender Justice (MGJ) Program engages with young men and boys in the age-group of 14 to 20 years with the aim of strengthening the gender-just ecosystem. It empowers men and boys to embrace positive masculinity, equally share the responsibility of household work, support women to adopt non-traditional livelihoods, and prevent and challenge gender-based violence.



Leadership Training

ANKIT PARASAR, MGJ Leader, Jaipur

Dance Movement Therapy to explore concepts of gender and masculinity and ensure psychosocial wellbeing



Rally in Jaipur on International Labour Day to promote shared caregiving responsibilities.



EXTERNAL CONTEXT

- Women in India spend 312 minutes per day in urban areas on unpaid care work, while men spend only 29 minutes, highlighting a massive gender gap in caregiving duties. (Source: ILO, 2019)
- Women engaged in the workforce experience the double burden of paid and unpaid care work responsibilities, taking on approximately 6 times more unpaid care work than employed men. (Source: MWCD, Government of India)
- Among the 4,28,278 cases of crimes against women reported in 2021, majority included cruelty by husband or his relatives and assault. (Source: NCRB)

⁵ Peer group meetings

raj kumar

Men for Gender Justice Leader, Delhi

RAJ IS 22 YEARS OLD AND IS PURSUING B.A FROM THE SCHOOL OF OPEN DISTANCE LEARNING AT DELHI UNIVERSITY.



HE JOINED THE MGJ PROGRAM IN 2022. DURING THIS TIME, RAJ KUMAR FIRMLY BELIEVED IN GENDER ROLES AND FELT THAT HOUSEHOLD WORK BELONGED TO WOMEN.



ATTENDING PERSPECTIVE BUILDING SESSIONS DURING A TRAINING ON GENDER ROLES, MASCULINITY AND UNPAID CARE WORK, IMPACTED HIS PERSPECTIVE POSITIVELY. HE LEARNT THAT THERE IS NO HARM IN CONTRIBUTING TO HOUSEHOLD WORK.



AFTER RETURNING FROM THE TRAINING, HE BEGAN IMPLEMENTING POSITIVE CHANGES IN LIFE. HE BEGAN BY DOING SMALL TASKS LIKE MAKING TEA AND WASHING HIS OWN CLOTHES AND DISHES.



HE WAS OFTEN MOCKED BY HIS CLOSE FRIENDS FOR DOING 'WOMEN'S WORK'. HIS MOTHER WAS HAPPY TO SEE THE CHANGES IN HIM. HE WAS HIMSELF VERY HAPPY TO EMBRACE THESE CHANGES.

HE WAS SELECTED FOR ADVANCE LEADERSHIP TRAINING WHERE HE DEEPENED HIS UNDERSTANDING ON GENDER AND LEARNT THE SKILLS AND QUALITIES OF A TRAINER.



THROUGH THIS, HE WAS ABLE TO BUILD RAPPORT IN THE COMMUNITY AND MOBILISED A GROUP OF 20 MEMBERS TO BE ENGAGED IN THE PROGRAM.

HE HAS BEEN ABLE TO INFLUENCE HIS PEERS TO EMBRACE POSITIVE MASCULINITY AND SUPPORT WOMEN BY PARTICIPATING IN CARE WORK AND UPHOLDING WOMEN'S DECISIONS.



RAJ KUMAR HAS EMERGED AS A COMMUNITY LEADER AND BUILT RAPPORT WITH OTHER FAMILIES IN THE COMMUNITY AS WELL. MANY OF HIS FRIENDS APPROACH HIM TO CONVINCE THEIR PARENTS REGARDING THEIR CAREER CHOICE.

DEEPLY MOVED BY THE STRUGGLE MANY GIRLS IN THE COMMUNITY GO THROUGH FOR PURSUING HIGHER EDUCATION OR JOBS, RAJ KUMAR AIMS TO CONTRIBUTE TO A WORLD WHERE WOMEN CAN EXERCISE CAREER CHOICES AND AUTONOMY.



REACH

142 men and boys have undergone advance leadership training and have taken up initiatives to create a gender-just ecosystem in their communities

1,322 young men and boys were engaged in the MGJ program through perspective building sessions on masculinity, gender, patriarchy, unpaid care work, and gender-based violence

IMPACT ON PERCEPTION⁶

44% increase in disagreement to the view that men can touch, kiss or have sex with a woman anytime without consent

60% increase in understanding of various forms of violence

20% increase in disagreement to public-private division of work between men and women

IMPACT ON ACTION⁷

An MGJ leader spends an average of 75 minutes daily in unpaid care work, including planning & preparation of meals, fetching water, washing clothes & utensils and caring for children and elderly, compared to the 29 minutes average as per ILO, 2019

33% opposed violence against women in community and public spaces

CAMPAIGNS

UNITING FOR GENDER JUSTICE

Through campaigns and alumni meets, our community change agents and women drivers in Delhi, Jaipur, Kolkata, and Chennai have forged safe, empowering spaces for women to access non-traditional skilling and employment opportunities and live free from violence.

The campaigns reached out to 12,827 people through on-ground activities like street plays, puppet shows, rallies, signature campaigns, poster-making workshops, film screenings and through social media.



Samanta Bandhan, Kolkata



OBR, Delhi

SAMANTA BANDHAN CAMPAIGN REACH: 6945

A celebration of equality, unity and harmony, irrespective of gender, caste, class, community, religion, sexuality and disability.

The campaign redefined the festival of Raksha Bandhan by challenging patriarchal control over women's choices and mobility, and committing to gender equality.

This year, we formed collaborations with #MereGharAakeToDekho campaign, networks and civil society organisations working on working women's rights, rights of LGBTQIA+ community and religious harmony.

ONE BILLION RISING CAMPAIGN REACH: 5882

Young feminist leaders from Azad rose in solidarity with the One Billion Rising Campaign for the freedom of women and girls to exercise their agency & lead violence free lives and men to challenge toxic masculinity.

This campaign strengthened the supportive ecosystem in communities to ensure freedom of women and girls to choose non-traditional skill education and livelihoods, combat gender-based violence and create sustainable change in their lives.



OBR, Jaipur



Samanta Bandhan, Chennai

⁶ Based on endline survey findings with 349 members
⁷ Survey conducted with 132 leaders across Delhi, Kolkata and Jaipur

ALUMNI MEET

1,524 alumni trainees, women drivers, and community change agents from Azad Kishori, Feminist Leadership and Men for Gender Justice Programs came together for promoting women's inclusion in skill education and workforce.

Through these meets, Azad alumni strengthened their network and created a space for solidarity and co-learning on the themes of equality, diversity, gender justice and women in skill education and work.



Jaipur



Kolkata



Delhi

EMPOWERING WOMEN TO TRANSFORM THEIR LIVES THROUGH SKILL++ TRAINING



Azad ensures **rights within GJSE** to marginalised women through its **Women with Wheels (WWW) transformative skill building program**, based on the principle of Skill++. This training ensures that women can empower themselves, are aware about the choices to lead a more equal and violence free life along with gaining skills. It combines technical life-skills and self-empowerment training on gender, legal rights, bodily autonomy, self-defence and professional communication.

Through acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge to operate both four-wheeler and two-wheeler vehicles, women venture into the non-traditional livelihood (NTL) of driving. Since the policy reforms within DTC⁸ after Azad's longstanding engagement with the Transport Ministry, 46 women drivers trained from Azad have joined DTC as bus drivers. Through their actions, they challenge patriarchal stereotypes in the professional world and constraints on their capabilities.



Delivery partners with their own e-scooters in Delhi



Delhi trainees learning about electric car parts

⁸ Delhi Transport Corporation



Two-wheeler training in Kolkata

sivagami

Delivery Partner, Chennai

SIVAGAMI LIVES WITH HER TWO CHILDREN, A SON IN CLASS 5 AND A 2-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER, IN HER IN-LAWS' HOUSE IN CHENNAI. HER HUSBAND LEFT HER THREE YEARS AGO.



HAVING STUDIED UP TO CLASS 10 ONLY, SIVAGAMI PREVIOUSLY WORKED AS A SALESPERSON. AFTER COMPLETING HER TWO-WHEELER TRAINING IN AZAD, SHE STARTED WORKING AS A DELIVERY PARTNER.

AFTER HER HUSBAND LEFT HER, NEIGHBOURS DOUBTED HER ABILITY TO SURVIVE ON HER OWN. SHE HAS PROVEN THEM WRONG BY SUCCESSFULLY TAKING CARE OF HERSELF AND HER CHILDREN INDEPENDENTLY.



SIVAGAMI NOW TRAVELS FEARLESSLY ON HER BIKE, CONTRASTING WITH HER PREVIOUS FEAR OF TRAVELING ON OVERCROWDED BUSES.



SHE ENJOYS ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE, EARNING A DECENT SALARY. SHE IS SOMETIMES ABLE TO EARN IN A WEEK WHAT SHE USED TO MAKE IN A MONTH AT HER PREVIOUS JOB.

SIVAGAMI ASPIRES TO PROVIDE THE BEST EDUCATION FOR HER CHILDREN INDEPENDENTLY, WITHOUT RELYING ON ANYONE ELSE. SHE IS PROUD OF HER ABILITY TO MAKE DECISIONS FOR HERSELF WITHOUT TAKING ANYONE'S PERMISSION. SHE CAN SPEND HER EARNINGS AS SHE WISHES, SYMBOLIZING HER NEWFOUND AUTONOMY AND FREEDOM.



suman NAME CHANGED

Four-Wheeler Trainee, Jaipur

21-YEAR-OLD SUMAN STUDIED UP TO 4TH CLASS AND WAS MARRIED OFF BY HER FAMILY AT THE AGE OF 14. HER HUSBAND WORKS IN PACKAGING AND FOLDING AT A PRIVATE COMPANY.



SUMAN JOINED AZAD'S FOUR-WHEELER TRAINING IN 2023. SHE FACED IMMENSE CHALLENGES INCLUDING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE FROM HER HUSBAND AND A LACK OF SUPPORT FROM HER HUSBAND AS WELL AS NATAL FAMILY.

SHE LEARNED VARIOUS SUBJECTS INCLUDING LEGAL KNOWLEDGE, ENGLISH, PSYCHOLOGY, SELF-DEFENCE, AND RECEIVED MOTIVATIONAL TRAINING. THESE SESSIONS HAVE HELPED HER REDISCOVER HER SELF-WORTH AND POTENTIAL.



HER HUSBAND WOULD BEAT HER FOR MINOR THINGS, SUCH AS WHENEVER HE FOUND HER HAVING A GOOD TIME WITH HER SISTER. YET, SHE WAS DETERMINED TO BECOME A PROFESSIONAL DRIVER.

SUMAN SUCCESSFULLY PASSED HER PERMANENT LICENSE (PL) TEST ON THE FIRST ATTEMPT WHICH OVERJOYED HER.

SUMAN DREAMS OF ESTABLISHING A CAREER OF HER OWN AND BECOMING FINANCIALLY INDEPENDENT. SHE AIMS TO SECURE A JOB AS A DRIVER. HAVING EXPERIENCED SIGNIFICANT HARDSHIPS IN HER MARITAL LIFE, SUMAN ASPIRES TO BUY HER OWN HOUSE, WHICH WOULD BE A SAFE SPACE FOR HERSELF.



women with wheels program

Women With Wheels (WWW) Program enables young women from resource poor communities to become professional chauffeurs and riders through a transformative capacity building program encompassing technical driving skills, life-skills and self-empowerment skills.



SHARDA, Sakha Driver, Delhi



Meeting with trainees, their family and Azad's faculty in Delhi



Training for Learner's License in Jaipur



Delivery Partners in Chennai

EXTERNAL CONTEXT

- Women represent less than 20 percent of the global workforce in the transportation sector. (Source: ILO, 2018)
- Over 50% of Indian women (aged 15-29) are neither employed nor studying (NEET). 90% of NEET women cite unpaid care work as its primary reason. (Source: NSSO, 2023)
- Although, the female enrolment in higher education in India increased to 2.07 crore in 2021-22, an increase of 32% from 2014-15. However, the female labour force participation remains much below the global average, reflecting entrenched patriarchal norms. (Source: Government of India, World Bank)
- The rate of crimes against women in India increased by 12.9% between 2018 and 2022. (Source: NCRB, 2022)

shabnam

Bus Driver, Delhi Transport Corporation, Delhi

SHABNAM LIVES WITH HER HUSBAND AND TWO CHILDREN. HER HUSBAND WORKS IN THE UNORGANISED SECTOR AS A VEGETABLE VENDOR AT GHAZIPUR SABZI MANDI IN DELHI.



BEFORE JOINING AZAD, SHABNAM HAD ALWAYS BEEN CONFINED TO HER HOME. WHEN SHE DECIDED TO JOIN AZAD, HER HUSBAND AND RELATIVES INITIALLY OPPOSED HER DESIRE TO BECOME A DRIVER, SUGGESTING HER TO WORK IN A BEAUTY PARLOUR INSTEAD.



SHE JOINED THE WWW PROGRAM. AFTER TRAINING, SHE WORKED AS A SAKHA DRIVER FOR FOUR YEARS AND HAS BEEN A DTC BUS DRIVER FOR MORE THAN A YEAR. SHE IS PROUD OF HER DRIVING SKILLS.



SHE HAS BECOME FINANCIALLY INDEPENDENT AND A CHIEF WAGE EARNER OF THE FAMILY. SHE MOVED HER FAMILY FROM A SINGLE RENTED ROOM TO A TWO-ROOM FLAT IN DELHI, SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVING THEIR LIVING CONDITIONS.



SHABNAM HAS BECOME A ROLE MODEL FOR OTHER WOMEN IN HER COMMUNITY, DEMONSTRATING THAT THEY CAN ACHIEVE INDEPENDENCE AND BREAK TRADITIONAL GENDER ROLES.



SHE IS PROVIDING A GOOD EDUCATION FOR HER CHILDREN, WHO ARE STUDYING IN STANDARDS 9TH AND 6TH IN A GOVERNMENT SCHOOL.



SHE HAS GAINED THE RESPECT OF HER COMMUNITY AND HAS ALTERED THE PERCEPTIONS OF HER FAMILY REGARDING WOMEN'S ROLES.



SHE DREAMS OF PROVIDING THE BEST SUPPORT FOR HER CHILDREN TO BECOME SUCCESSFUL IN THEIR LIVES. SHE ALSO WANTS TO BUY HER OWN HOUSE.



SHE AIMS TO INSTIL VALUES OF GENDER EQUALITY IN HER TWO SONS, TEACHING THEM TO BECOME ALLIES IN THE FIGHT FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND EQUALITY.



IMPACT



713 women gained transformative skills through enrolment in the Women with Wheels two-wheeler and four-wheeler training across Delhi, Jaipur, Kolkata and Chennai



511 women became employable by achieving driving licenses



311 women placed as professional chauffeurs and riders in e-commerce and transportation industry

TRANSFORMATION



30% trainees challenged violence on others, in public and domestic spaces



27% trainees claimed their identity with dignity



34% trainees gained the confidence to engage with local government and access their citizenship entitlements



85% of trainees were survivors of gender based violence of which, 52% raised their voice against it



66% trainees increased their mobility by independently accessing public spaces at any time of the day

Working in Partnership with Civil Society Organisations

is a strategy adopted by Azad for amplifying the impact of its work and broadening its vision for decent livelihoods for women in the transport industry. We have strengthened our partnership with like-minded organisations with the belief that it is only through collaboration and building each other's capacities that we can achieve tangible and sustainable change.

Throughout 2023-24, Azad sustained close collaboration with its existing partners, facilitating knowledge exchange on Women with Wheels (WWW) opportunities.

JANVIKAS
A Quest for 'Just' Human Development

Janvikas enrolled 143 women across three segments, namely e-rickshaw, four-wheeler and heavy commercial vehicle driving. 94 women became employable by obtaining their e-rickshaw, four-wheeler and heavy vehicle driving licenses. 38 women were successfully placed in decent jobs as professional drivers.



Rights through GJSE are ensured by access to employment post skill training, through strategic partner Sakha. Gender plays a significant role in market dynamics and job prospects. While skill education is crucial for women to reach their maximum potential, it alone does not empower first-generation working women from marginalised backgrounds to secure employment. In addition to facing job segregation and unequal pay disparities, women encounter a lack of opportunities in skilled fields such as driving, plumbing, masonry, and more.

EMPLOYING WOMEN IN THE TRANSPORT INDUSTRY

Sakha
Sakha, Azad's Strategic Partner actively promotes opportunities and markets for women in transport and e-commerce as two-wheeler and four-wheeler drivers. It negotiates with the market to ensure safe and well-paying working conditions for women.



Sakha drivers and Sakha-Azad team in Kolkata at the launch of training course on "Creating Cohort of Skilled Women Electric Cab Drivers," in collaboration with the UK government, National Thermal Power Corporation and Snap-E Cabs

WWW PARTNERSHIPS



75 women were enrolled by Samaan Society in Indore and Pithampur, 65 became employable by obtaining their two and four-wheeler driving licenses. 43 women were placed in the job market, securing dignified livelihoods. Furthermore, Samaan is extending its support to Nirman in Pune to pilot a driving training programme for women.

Snap E-Cabs driver, Kolkata

28-YEAR-OLD JHIMLI STUDIED TILL SECONDARY SCHOOL AND LIVES WITH HER TWO SONS.



SHE STARTED WORKING AS A DOMESTIC WORKER AFTER THE BIRTH OF HER SECOND CHILD BECAUSE SHE WANTED TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE FAMILY AND NOT DEPEND ON HER HUSBAND TO BE THE SOLE PROVIDER.



JHIMLI HAS BEEN A SURVIVOR OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE. HER HUSBAND DID NOT SUPPORT HER DECISIONS OR CONTRIBUTE TO FINANCIAL MATTERS.



WHEN HER HUSBAND LEFT HER AND HER CHILDREN SHE PERSEVERED WITH THE HELP OF HER IN-LAWS AND NATAL FAMILY MEMBERS. SHE CONTINUED WORKING AS A DOMESTIC WORKER TO SUPPORT HERSELF AND HER CHILDREN EVEN DURING HER TRAINING AT AZAD.



AFTER COMPLETING HER 4-WHEELER TRAINING IN AZAD, JHIMLI JOINED AS A PROFESSIONAL DRIVER IN SNAP-E CABS, KOLKATA'S FIRST ELECTRIC TRANSPORT SERVICE.



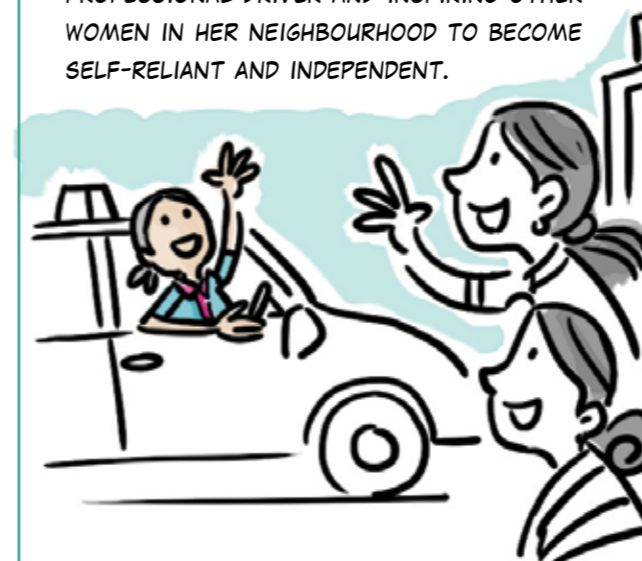
SHE EARNS INR 13,500 MONTHLY. THIS JOB REPRESENTS HER ENTRY INTO THE MALE-DOMINATED FIELD OF PROFESSIONAL DRIVING AND HAS BEEN A DREAM COME TRUE FOR HER.



JHIMLI RECEIVED COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING FROM AZAD, INCLUDING COMMUNICATION SKILLS, SELF-DEFENCE, SEXUALITY EDUCATION, AND LEGAL KNOWLEDGE. THESE TRAININGS HAVE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN BUILDING HER CONFIDENCE AND RESILIENCE.



SHE FEELS LIKE SHE HAS AGENCY AND CONTROL WITH HER HANDS ON THE STEERING WHEEL. JHIMLI DREAMS OF BECOMING A SUCCESSFUL PROFESSIONAL DRIVER AND INSPIRING OTHER WOMEN IN HER NEIGHBOURHOOD TO BECOME SELF-RELIANT AND INDEPENDENT.



SHE DESIRES FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE AND A PLACE OF HER OWN WHERE SHE CAN RAISE HER CHILDREN IN A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT.



SHE PLANS TO USE THE KNOWLEDGE AND TRAINING SHE RECEIVED AT AZAD TO INITIATE LEGAL ACTION AGAINST HER HUSBAND.



REACH

Fostering a Gender-Inclusive and Sustainable Market

Sakha forms strategic partnerships with potential employers to address gender disparities in the traditionally male-dominated transport sector. One of the successful collaborations in the year was with Snap-E Cabs in Kolkata. Snap-E Cabs established itself as a pioneering electric-driven public cab service in Kolkata, joining the likes of Uber and Ola in 2022. Seeking this as an opportunity, Azad and Sakha collaborated with Snap-E Cabs to establish gender-sensitive norms, including:

- On-job free of cost training in driving electric vehicles to women chauffeurs for a period of 15-30 days
- Job placement of women in Snap-E Cabs post training
- Working hours of 9 am to 6 pm, six days a week
- Monthly earnings of INR 13,500

With a supportive working environment and gender-inclusive norms, 29 women are undergoing training in electric vehicle (EV) driving and 12 women have been employed by Snap-E cabs.

The training, supported by National Thermal Power Corporation Group of Colleges, the British High Commissioner, and KPMG under the flagship scheme of Utkarsh Bangla, Department of Skill Development of West Bengal ensures women drivers find opportunities not only with Snap-E Cabs but also with other companies like Uber and British Telecom. This partnership is a significant step towards a gender-inclusive and sustainable transport sector.

Sakha expanded its reach by placing women in diverse roles and locations, from **public bus drivers in Delhi, electric cab drivers in Kolkata to trailer truck drivers in Hungary**, along with placement in two and four wheeler jobs across locations

Women were placed in **various corporations** like Blu-Smart, Snap-E Cabs, Lithium, Delhi Transport Corporation, Baton Transport, Porter, Big Basket, ShadowFax, Even Cargo, Delhivery and Dominos

IMPACT

311 women were placed as professional drivers and riders through Sakha in e-commerce and transport across Delhi, Jaipur, Kolkata and Chennai

INR 3.1 Cr+ cumulative wealth has been generated by them

These women are **reshaping their lives and those of their families** by gaining access and control over their earnings, accumulating assets and investing in their children's future



SUSTAINING WOMEN IN NTL BY INFLUENCING AND PROMOTING GENDER-INCLUSIVE POLICIES, PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE & MARKETS

Rights from GJSE in skill programs ensure women sustain in the workforce. Enabling employment is not enough as policies, public infrastructure and markets have to be made adaptable, inclusive and gender sensitive, so that women can sustain their workforce participation.

Azad conducts evidence-based research for engaging women in NTL and promoting gender-sensitive infrastructure like safe and hygienic public washrooms, well-lit streets and crèches near communities. It collaborates with civil society organisations, government entities, the private sector, and policymakers to create a more supportive environment for women in non-traditional livelihoods, with specific attention to the transportation industry. It holds the Secretariat for the Non-Traditional Livelihoods (NTL) Network, taking lead in advancing NTL initiatives across India.

RESEARCH

Impact Assessment of Azad's Work: A Feminist Evaluation by AUD

An impact assessment study on Azad's work for over a decade (2008-2022) was conducted by Prof. Krishna Menon and Prof. Rukmini Sen from Ambedkar University New Delhi (AUD). This study, emerging from a significant partnership between AUD, an academic institution and Azad Foundation, a civil society organisation, aimed to serve as a body of knowledge for scaling-up and mainstreaming the inclusion of women in non-traditional skilling and workforce.

The assessment has been conducted using feminist research methodologies and highlights the impact of Azad's Gender-Just Skill Education (GJSE) framework on enabling resource poor women to transform their lives through Skill++ training. The study found that the understanding of women as workers is closely intertwined with family dynamics, women's sexuality, care work and violence against women and hence, found Azad Foundation's work noteworthy as it aims to enhance women's agency and autonomy by entering non-traditional livelihoods.



Panel discussion on gender-just ecosystem creation with Nisha Dhawan (EMpower), Anita (DTC Bus Driver) and Namita Bhandare (Journalist).

The report of the study was released at a dissemination event on 8 August 2023. Over 110 individuals from funding organisations, media, CSOs, community leaders, trainees, drivers and Azad team came together for a dialogue on strengthening the gender-just ecosystem that enables women's entry and sustenance in non-traditional skills education and livelihoods.

Study on Gender and Transportation in India by UNESCAP⁹

The Subregional Office for South and South-West Asia, UNESCAP commissioned three country studies on Bangladesh, India and Nepal that sought to review the state of women’s participation in the transport and logistics sector, and the extent to which current transport services are safe and accessible for encouraging

women’s mobility and labour force participation. The perspectives of Azad’s trainers, cab drivers and their family members have been integrated in the India country study. Azad’s leadership team also participated in an Expert Group Meeting organised by ESCAP to review the study on India.

Impact Assessment Report released by Anuvinda Varkey, Prof. Krishna Menon, Prof. Rukmini Sen, Geeta and Meenu Vadera.



Challenges, Achievements and Demands of Women Bus Drivers in Public Transportation: Study of DTC¹⁰

Since the policy reforms for women in the DTC in 2022, owing to Azad’s longstanding engagement with the Transport Ministry, 93 women have joined as bus drivers of which, 46 have been trained by Azad. In 2023-24, Azad initiated a study to understand the challenges and systemic barriers faced by women bus drivers pursuing their job, including their working conditions, nature of job, payment terms, services and facilities availed. Based on the findings, Azad aims to further plan its policy engagement to establish a more gender-inclusive ecosystem within DTC for women bus drivers. The study report is scheduled to be finalised in 2024-25.

⁹ United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

¹⁰ Delhi Transport Corporation

POLICIES

Paving the Way Towards Gender-Inclusive Policies

Azad contributed to the State-level consultation organised by the Rajasthan Government for regulating the gig economy workforce, along with several CSOs and e-commerce companies. Gig economy largely includes ‘on-demand’ work guided by app-based platforms such as Uber, Ola, Urban Company, Zomato, etc. The demands for social security and recognition as employees for women gig-economy workers were put forward in the meet. Rajasthan became the first state to regulate platform-based gig workers at the legislative level by passing the “Rajasthan Platform Based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Act, 2023”. The act extends essential social security benefits to gig workers, addressing their distinct needs and paving the way for a more conducive environment for women riders entering the e-commerce sector.

Promoting Women’s Inclusion in NTL in Regional, National and Global Forums

Parallel Session at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF)

Azad co-organised a parallel session with Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) on ‘Education for Sustainable and Green Societies’ at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on 18 July 2023. Dolon Ganguly, Chief Functionary of Azad presented the organisation’s work on empowering women through skill training and livelihoods in the electric transport industry.

Panel Discussion by Asia Pacific Regional CSOs Engagement Mechanism (APRCM)

APRCM held a panel discussion on “Asia-Pacific Peoples’ Speak out: The Development & Future We Deserve” on the midpoint of SDG¹¹ 2030. Dolon Ganguly spoke in this panel held on 18 Sep, 2023, highlighting the progress and gaps in achieving SDGs 4 (quality education), 5 (gender equality) and 8 (decent work & economic growth).

Panel Discussion at the World Community Tourism Summit in Peru

Meenu Vadera, Founder of Azad and Sakha, contributed as a panellist through her insights on how tourism can empower women at the 20 years’ celebration of G Adventures and Planeterra on the World Tourism Day.



Panel discussion at the World Community Tourism Summit

¹¹ Sustainable Development Goals

Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68)

Azad co-hosted 2 in-person parallel events in New York and a virtual side event at the CSW68:

- a. Virtual side event titled, “How Non-Traditional Livelihoods can advance Gender Equality, Insights from India” was co-hosted by Azad Foundation, EMpower, UNDP India and Mahindra Group on 11 March 2024. Dolon Ganguly spoke on strategies for enhancing women’s workforce participation, particularly in NTL.



THE RECORDING IS AVAILABLE HERE:
https://youtu.be/bsC1RxoEy7U?si=OBx0qs-v_z7H6218



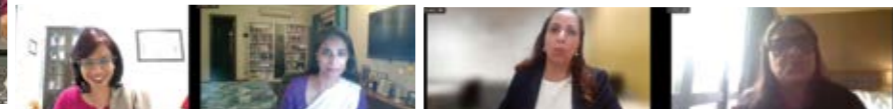
CSW68 Parallel Event

Webinar on “Innovation and Best Practices in Decent Work for All in Sustainable Value Chains and Gender Justice” by World Fair Trade Organisation

Shrinivas Rao, National Lead, spoke about Azad’s work towards ensuring decent work for women from resource-poor communities on 7 July, 2023.



CSW68 Parallel Event



CSW68- Virtual Side Event

- b. “Eradicating Poverty Through Innovative Strategies of Ensuring Women’s Social and Economic Inclusion,” co-hosted by Azad Foundation, International Council of Social Welfare Taiwan, Non-Traditional Livelihoods (NTL) Network and Gender at Work on 12 March, 2024. Dolon Ganguly shared the Gender-Just Skill Education framework for enhancing women’s participation in NTL by fostering a gender-just ecosystem in communities, markets, and the state.



In February 2024, Hari attended a workshop organised by Men Engage Alliance South Asia in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Hari Sharma, Thematic Lead-MGJ & State Lead-Jaipur, became the Co-Chair of MenEngage India and a member of the Steering Committee of MenEngage Alliance South Asia in 2023-24. The MenEngage Alliance is a network of individuals and organisations committed to ending patriarchal power and supporting women’s rights.

- c. “Engaging Men in Challenging Social Norms/ Systems for Gender Justice,” co-hosted by Azad Foundation, Breakthrough, in partnership with MenEngage Alliance and Equimundo: Center for Masculinities and Social Justice on 12 March, 2024. Shrinivas Rao, National Lead of Azad spoke about engaging men and boys for gender justice by challenging social norms and harmful masculinity.

Side event at the 11th Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD)

Azad co-hosted this virtual event with ASPBAE and United Nations ESCAP Sub-regional Office for South and South-West Asia on 20 Feb, 2024. Speakers with diverse experiences in the Asia-Pacific region shared strategies for empowering women from marginalised communities by engaging them in decent skill education and livelihood opportunities within the green economy.



THE RECORDING IS AVAILABLE HERE:
<https://youtu.be/ofnGa0ScVAw?si=7w41T6fXu8wtRNxI>



Azad team at the WSF



Hari Sharma joined as a speaker in a panel at WSF

Masculinities in Focus

Azad initiated a Podcast titled “Masculinities in Focus,” which was released on Spotify. Led by Shrinivas Rao from the Leadership team and the Men for Gender Justice Team, the podcast brought together experts in the field including Satish Kumar from CHSJ; Sanjay Srivastava, British Academy Global Professor and Jerker Edstrom, Research Fellow, Institute of Development Studies to uncover various aspects of masculinity such as politics, urbanisation, violence, etc.

World Social Forum (WSF), Nepal

A five-member team from Azad joined WSF to learn from and contribute to the global discourse on gender and women’s human rights, through experiences from our region.

Azad used the platform as an opportunity to promote the Kamla Bhasin Awards, 2024 encouraging more applicants among the South Asian Civil Society Community and popularise NTL.

Hari Sharma, State Lead of Azad Jaipur and Thematic Lead for Men for Gender Justice Program also contributed as a panellist in the discussion on “Shrinking Spaces of Civil Society Organisations in South Asia” highlighting the importance of creating more inclusive spaces.

ADVANCING NTL ACROSS INDIA



Key Note Speech by Nisha Dhawan, Empower



NTLN is a network of 27 organisations, 12 individual members, across 12 states who engage with policy-makers to bring marginalised women in urban and rural India into livelihoods which have traditionally been closed to them.

National Workshop on “Empowering Women: A Comprehensive Agenda for Inclusive Workforce Participation”

The Network organised a national-level workshop to develop a comprehensive agenda for promoting women’s inclusion and sustenance in non-traditional skilling and workforce. Held on 12-13 December 2023, the workshop brought together 42 participants who engaged in focused discussions on the 3 important pillars of a gender-just ecosystem, including the Family, Labour Market, and Education Institutions (like ITIs). NTL network members and guest speakers from Building and Wood Workers’ International,

Telangana Gig and Platform Workers Union (TGPWU) and Jubilant joined the workshop. Nisha Dhawan, Vice President, Impact and Influence- Empower, delivered the Keynote Speech shedding light on various aspects of women’s workforce participation.

The workshop was followed by the Annual General Body Meeting (AGBM) of the Network where the members shared recommendations for activities across Research, Policy Engagement, Capacity Building and Collective Learning to be taken up by the network in the next year.



Panel Discussion on Inclusive Labour Market Practices with Shaik Salauddin (Telangana Gig And Platform Workers Union), Geeta (Sakha Driver), Vivek Prakash (Jubilant Ingrevia Ltd), and Rajendra Bandhu (Samaan Society).



VIRTUAL DIALOGUE - Gender-Inclusive Infrastructure

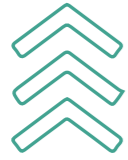


VIRTUAL DIALOGUE
Reviewing Skill Curriculum from a Gender Lens

Collective Learning

The network held 2 virtual dialogues covering discussions on reviewing skill-based curriculum from a gender lens and the need for gender-inclusive infrastructure for women in the workforce.

The conversations culminated with recommendations including career guidance in schools, integration of academic and vocational education, and training of ITI teaching staff for gender-inclusive skill curriculum and ensuring safe & hygienic washrooms & changing rooms, safety mechanisms like CCTV camera, street lights & panic buttons in public places and vehicles, sensitising markets for a gender-inclusive infrastructure for women in the workforce.



Staff Capacity Building

Through a collective approach, Azad strives to co-create an institution where a thousand flowers bloom. We aspire to strengthen our team to be effective, efficient and result oriented. We hold the conviction that transformative work with resource-poor women can best happen when the team is also working on itself—questioning, learning, growing, while breaking its barriers and limitations.

BUILDING COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP



Azad team members at the training by Prevention Collaborative in Nepal.

Trainings On Organisational Policies

Training of team members on Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 was held in Delhi, Jaipur, Kolkata and Chennai between August to September, 2023. The sessions enabled employees to understand what constitutes sexual harassment at the workplace, the process of filing complaints and redressal available, and laid down the guidelines for a healthy workplace environment.



PALLAVI CHAMAN, Former Finance Director, attended the Basic Leadership Development Course by ASPBAE



Training of Trainers

Collective Learning Opportunities

TRAINING OF TRAINERS

28 driving training faculty members from Delhi, Jaipur, Kolkata and Chennai participated in the training on adult learning principles, and learning methodologies for improved technical and empowerment training, along with emotional management and self-care, held from 31 August to 4 September 2023.



ISABS attended by Rubina Aziz, Research, Policy Analysis and Communication Team

CO-LEARNING CLUSTER PROGRAM ON PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN BY PREVENTION COLLABORATIVE

4 team members from across locations represented Azad in the training held in Nepal from 3 to 5 June 2023, among 6 different organisations from India and Nepal. It was a 3-day long participatory training aimed at strengthening the capacity of organisations to develop and implement effective Violence Against Women (VAW) and/or Violence Against Children (VAC) programmes. It enabled the participants to understand the intersections of violence against women and violence against children and develop strategies to prevent VAW and VAC in communities.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TRAINING

28 staff members including Program Implementers, Mobilisers and District Leads from across locations participated in the training from 30 October to 4 November 2023. The training aimed to enhance the capabilities of community engagement teams by fostering a deeper understanding of self, others and managing emotions. The training equipped the participants with the necessary skills to engage communities effectively, create a positive impact, and enhance interpersonal dynamics within their teams.

Individual Growth Opportunities

7 Azad team members across programs and locations were nominated for capacity building trainings to build their leadership skills and deepen their understanding on issues of gender, patriarchy, masculinity, and intersectionality. The trainings included:

1. Training Course on Gender by Jagori Rural & Sangat
2. Gender, Diversity and Social Transformation Training by Visthar Academy
3. Basic Leadership Development Course (BLDC) by ASPBAE
4. Rise Up Advocacy Training
5. Sports for Change Certification by Pro Sport Development (PSD)



Rise Up Advocacy Training attended by Hari Sharma, Thematic Lead-MGJ & State Lead- Jaipur



CELEBRATING KAMLA & THE TRAILBLAZERS EMBODYING HER SPIRIT

In November 2023, Azad with its partners National Foundation for India (NFI) and iPartner India celebrated the second Kamla Bhasin Award Ceremony. The day commemorated Kamla's life and legacy which has served as a guiding light for the women's movement in India and South Asia. The award received 57 nominations from various countries, each representing a long and inspiring journey towards empowerment and gender justice.

Rita Thapa, celebrated feminist educator and community activist graced the occasion with her inspiring words. The 4 winners were felicitated during the ceremony with virtual messages of support and admiration from Munizae Jahangir, Khushi Kabir and Radhika Coomaraswamy.



Rita Thapa, Chief Guest for the evening



Musical Performance by Shubha Mudgal ji and her team



Jayasree, Winner under Category 1, felicitated by Binda Pandey, Award Jury Member

Breaking free from all restraints, the women come...

Jaysaree PK and Parina Limbu are women practitioners of non-traditional livelihoods, shattering gender stereotypes and empowering many women to transform their lives. Jaysaree, a skilled mason currently working with Archana Women's Centre, was awarded in Category 1. Parina, the founder of Dristi Nepal, the first organisation in Nepal led by women who use drugs, received the Special Jury Award in Category 1.

Mahendra, Winner under Category 2, felicitated by Prof. Rama Baru, Board Member of NFI



Farhan, Special Jury Awardee under Category 2, felicitated by Anuvinda Varkey, Board Member of Azad



Parina, Special Jury Awardee under Category 1, felicitated by Dr. Sanjay Patra, Chairperson of i-Partner India.

Men of quality are not afraid of equality!

Mahendra Kumar and Farhan Akhtar embody Kamla's vision of a gender-equal world. Mahendra, the recipient of the award in Category 2, engages boys and men in challenging patriarchal norms and becoming allies for gender equality through his organisation MITRA. Farhan, recipient of the Special Jury Award in Category 2, initiated the Men Against Rape and Discrimination (MARD) campaign in 2013 to promote positive masculinity and challenge violence against women.

The day was a vibrant convergence of over 300 individuals from media, civil society organisations, donor & partner organisations, along with Azad's women drivers and young feminist leaders. The event culminated in a musical tribute to the gender equality champions and Kamla Bhasin, performed by the renowned singer Shubha Mudgal ji, leaving the audience inspired and hopeful for a more equitable world.



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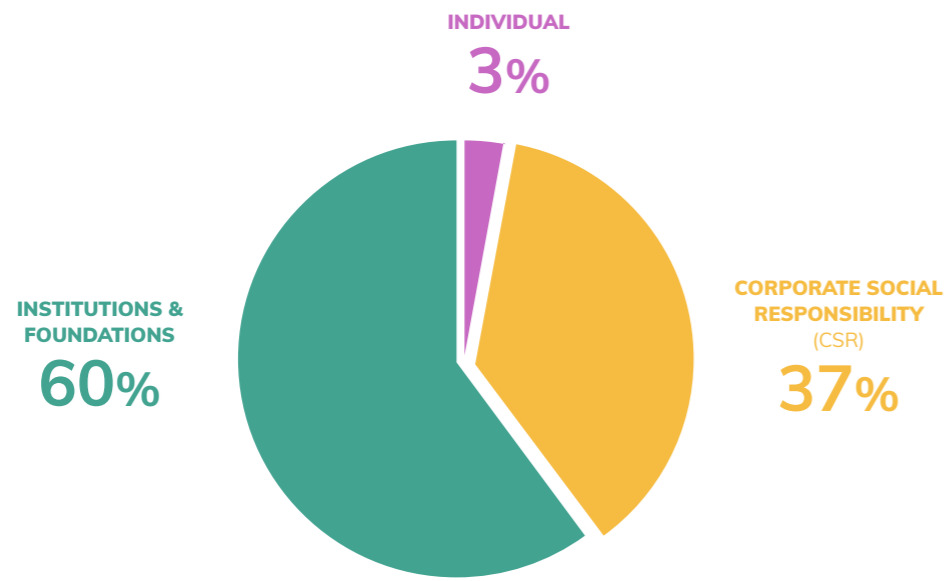
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- Subhan
- Suleman
- Tehnaz Darius Bahadurji
- Vishal Kalucha



We are grateful to all our donors for their continued support in this incredible journey towards empowerment and equality.

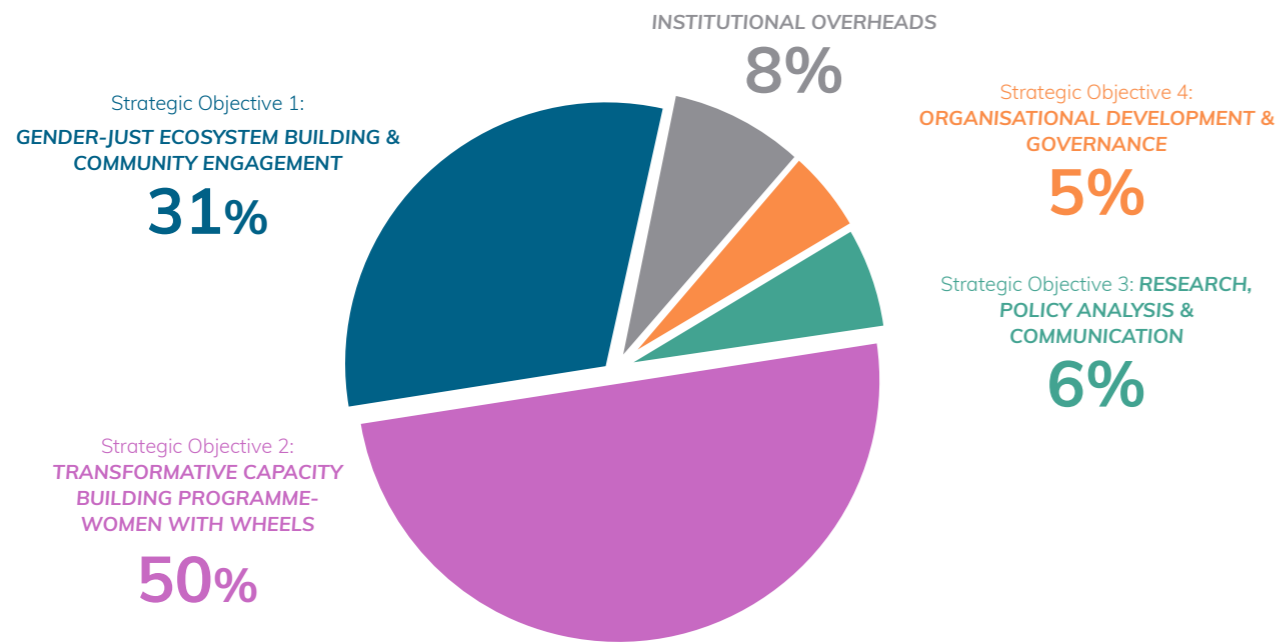
Your support has made it possible for us to empower resource-poor in realizing their dreams.

WHERE OUR MONEY COMES FROM



Total income of Azad Foundation in 2023-24 was INR 14.94 crores

HOW THE MONEY WAS USED



Total utilisation of Azad Foundation in 2023-24 was INR 10.68 crores

MEDIA FEATURES & AWARDS



Film developed by ITC Vivel in association with Azad, featuring the empowering stories from its Feminist Leadership Program



<https://youtu.be/dZSOxRu4CQ8?si=gfubN57nu34tj-um>

Stories of resilience of women drivers featured in Yuwaah India and Unicef India's #SakshamNaariKaSafar on International Women's Day



Asia gender fund recipients announced
Earlier this week, AVPN announced the first eight recipients of funding from its Asia Gender Equality Fund.

Selected from nearly 300 applications, they are Azad Foundation in India, Bababon Sangho in Bangladesh, GSI Foundation in Nepal, Enrich Hong Kong, Kenan Foundation Asia based in Thailand, Kross Social Investment Foundation, Nural Network in Cambodia and South Community Foundation in Pakistan.

Each will receive unrestricted funding over several years, in line with AVPN's commitment to advance trust-based philanthropy. The exact investment amounts have not been revealed.

The fund was launched last year and aims to raise and deploy USD\$10m within its first five years to support initiatives run by non-profit organisations to improve economic outcomes for women and girls in Asia. Investors include Foundation One, GSI and Nalanda Gender Foundation, The Tiger Foundation and members of AVPN's Asia Gender Summit.

Azad was among the eight exceptional non-profit organisations (NPOs) across South Asia, South East Asia, North East Asia who were recipients of the Asia Gender Equality Fund by AVPN in 2023. The announcement was featured in Pioneers Post.

Round table discussion on ensuring sustenance of girls in education organised by Rajasthan Patrika



Articles on women in public transport in LiveMint and Dainik Bhaskar featuring the work of Azad & Sakha and stories of bus and cab drivers.



The partnership between Baton Transport, Azad and Sakha for the employment of women as trailer truck drivers in Europe featured in India Times, Bangalore

Coverage on Azad and Sakha's partnership with Snap-E Cabs in Kolkata, and Azad's #SamantaBandhan Campaign in Kolkata's The Telegraph and Anandabazar Patrika



Meenu Vadera, Founder of Sakha and Azad received the Red Bangle Award for inspiring young women to higher goals. The award has been instituted by Zoe Timms, the founder of Women's Education Project. Meenu was felicitated by Zoe and Sonali Khan, Managing Director of Sesame.

MEMBERS OF THE NTL NETWORK

Nari-o-Shishu Kalyan Kendra was awarded the 7th Martha Farrell Award for Best Organisation for Gender Equality



Samaan Society was honored with the prestigious Dalmia Bharat CSR Impact Award at the India CSR Summit, in recognition of the unique efforts of Samaan's Women Mechanic Garage.

COORDINATION OFFICE

93, Nehru Apartments
Kalkaji, New Delhi-110019

SOUTH DELHI

R-10, Flat No. 7, Second Floor,
Nehru Enclave, Kalkaji,
New Delhi, 110019

NORTH DELHI

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

EAST DELHI

A-6, Lane Number 1, Near Jagatpuri Main Red Light
New Delhi 110051

JAIPUR

5-D, Jhalana Institutional Area, Jhalana
Doongri, Jaipur-3002004, Rajasthan

NORTH KOLKATA

P 282/A, CIT Road, Scheme-IV, Phoolbagan,
Kolkata 700054

SOUTH KOLKATA

11 A/3, North Road, Jadavpur
Kolkata 700032

CHENNAI

2, Srigeer Apartments, 11, Jamalia Nagar Main Road,
Perambur, Chennai 600012



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