

ANNUAL REPORT 2024–25

FREA/ Akshara

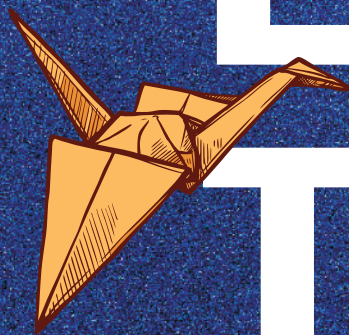
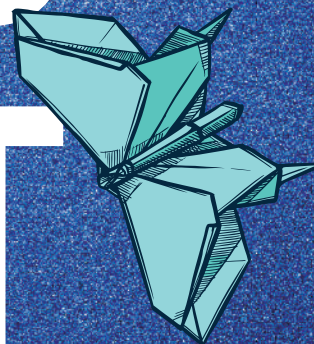


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Akshara On A Roll.....	04
Shaping Gender Just Cities	05
Empowering Dream Program	20
Youth for Change Program	28
Voices from the Field	42
Akshara's Roll of Honour	46
Financial Statements	48



AKSHARA ON A ROLL.....

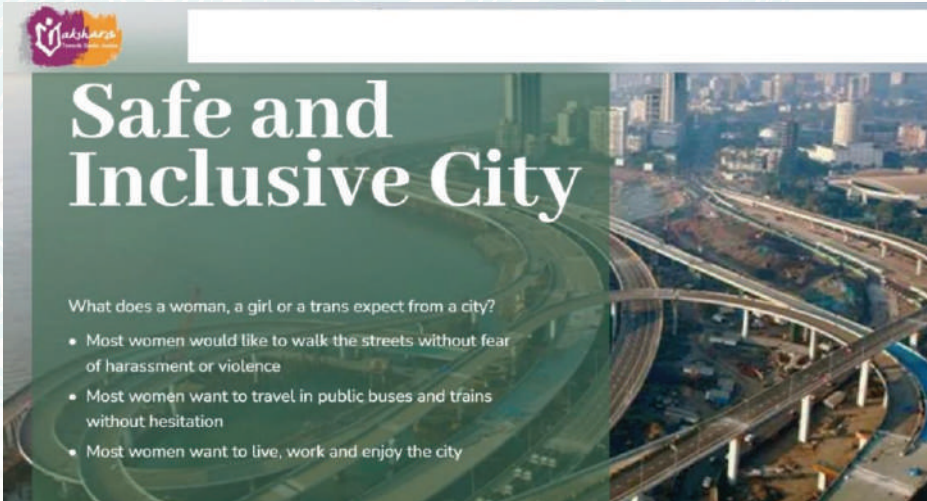
Two million women crisscross the city every day as they go to work, shop, drop children to school and do other tasks. 49% to 46% of them had said they had been sexually harassed in buses. This data prompted one of Akshara's ongoing Campaigns. **#JagaDakhava/JagahDikhao** (Put them in their Place!) Campaign was launched in 2023-2024 for inter-city buses, confronting

the normalised culture of sexual harassment during a bus commute. It garnered over 9.5 million views and won the Mommy Awards, the Indian Digital Marketing Award, and the Council for Fair Business Practices for Women's Safety and Empowerment Award. This recognition fuels our commitment to championing gender justice and driving meaningful change.



At the Women Empowerment Summit we were proud to showcase our impactful **#JagaDakhava** campaign - an initiative that aims to reclaim public spaces and foster safety through active bystander intervention.





SHAPING GENDER- JUST CITIES – SAFE & INCLUSIVE URBAN SPACES

Akshara’s work on gender just cities grew across three dimensions: public infrastructure, public institutions, and the public mindset.



The campaign was launched in Marathi in Maharashtra as Jaga Dakhava on 15th August 2024, in collaboration with the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) to spread the

message that “Aata jeva karel kuni ched chaad, tyana sarvan samor aana, tyana tyanchi Jaga Dakhava.” *Whosoever the harasser may be, show them up in public and put them in their place!*

महिलांचा सन्मान हाच एसटीचा बहुमान!



aksharacentreindia
 #JagaDakhava

Public transport should be safe for everyone! Akshara Centre, @msrtc_official & civil society groups took action across Maharashtra—raising awareness through street plays, discussions & surveys.

- 15 bus stops | 6 cities | 8,400+ commuters engaged
- Standing together against harassment!

Shoutout to our amazing partners for driving this movement forward! ✨
 @urja_foundation @gramvikassanstha
 Amhi Amchya Arogyasathi, Prakriti

#EndHarassment #SafePublicTransport
 #GenderJustice #AksharaCentre

Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation

The Jaga Dakhava Campaign with MSRTC and local organisations reached deep into urban and rural Maharashtra.



A slew of activities were conducted at 15 bus stations and bus depots such as street plays, poster displays, visits by school students and surveys and interviews to

register commuters' responses. Three 30-second videos showcasing the message were also telecast on digital screens of many MSRTC bus stations across Maharashtra.





**THE JAGA DAKHAVA
CAMPAIGN
RECEIVED WIDESPREAD
COVERAGE**

मराठी  **बातम्या** www.marathiebatmya.com

एसटीचे अभिनव "जागा दाखवा" अभियान..

अक्षरा केंद्र या सामाजिक संस्थेचे सहकार्य

Editor August 18, 2024 सामाजिक Leave a comment

[Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [Stumbleupon](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Pinterest](#)

राज्य शासनाने महिलांना सर्व प्रकारचे एसटी बस मधून प्रवास करताना तिकीट दरामध्ये ५०% सवलत दिली आहे. सध्या एसटीमध्ये "महिला सन्मान योजना" अंतर्गत लाखो महिला दररोज एसटीतून ५०% तिकीट दरात प्रवास करीत आहेत. परंतु केवळ महिलांना तिकीट दरात सवलत देऊन चालणार नाही, तर योजनेच्या नावाप्रमाणे त्यांचा "सन्मान" देखील केला पाहिजे या हेतूने अक्षरा केंद्र या सामाजिक संस्थेच्या सहकार्याने एसटीने "जागा दाखवा" हा प्रबोधनात्मक संदेश सर्व प्रवाशांपर्यंत पोहोचवण्यासाठी एक नव अभिनव अभियान सुरुवात केली आहे.

एसटीने जागा दाखवा अभियानाच्या माध्यमातून जनजागृती करण्याचा उपक्रम राबविण्याचे ठरविले आहे. त्यानुसार प्रत्येक बसस्थानकावर, समाज माध्यमाच्या द्वारे एसटीतून प्रवास करणाऱ्या प्रवाशांना एसटीच्या कर्मचाऱ्यांना विविध चित्रफिती द्वारे महिलांचा प्रवासादरम्यान सन्मान करावा असा प्रबोधनात्मक संदेश दिला जाणार आहे.

बऱ्याचदा गर्दीचा गैरफायदा घेऊन सार्वजनिक ठिकाणी, विशेषतः रेल्वे, लोकलचा प्रवास, एसटीचा प्रवास अशा ठिकाणी महिलांची छेडछाड केली जाते. त्यांना अपमानास्पद वागणूक दिली जाते. या विरोधात आवाज उठवणं अत्यंत आवश्यक आहे. किंबहुना महिलांनी अशा प्रकारच्या गैरप्रकारांना वेळीच आळा घालण्यासाठी पुढाकार घेतला पाहिजे, धाडस दाखवून पाहिजे त्याबरोबरच अशा महिलांना सहकारी प्रवाशांनी देखील सहकार्य केलं पाहिजे, असा संदेश देणाऱ्या चित्रफिती आजपासून प्रत्येक बसस्थानकावर दाखवल्या जाणार आहेत.

VIDEOS GO VIRAL!

Since their release, the campaign videos launched by Akshara have reached over 15.9 million views on Akshara's social media channels, with 587,382 interactions and an increase of 5,500 new followers. This remarkable reach not only amplified the campaign's message of shared responsibility for safety in public spaces but also deepened Akshara's collaboration with a vital public transport institution.

These awareness films were created with support from "82.5 Communications" and "BAD Studio".

In all three films, the crucial element is that the perpetrators are confronted and called out by various individuals on the bus, including a mother, the bus conductor, and an elderly lady. These brave individuals do not remain passive bystanders but actively address the issue. Instead of letting the eve-teasers go unnoticed or unpunished, they offer these culprits the seat they deserve, emphasizing the importance of showing them their rightful place.

The Significance of #JagahDikhao of MSRTC and Akshara Centre

The #JagahDikhao campaign holds great significance in the context of women's safety in public spaces. It not only raises awareness about the prevalent issue of eve-teasing but also encourages collective action. By displaying these films in bus depots, the campaign reaches a broad audience, emphasizing the importance of unity against harassment.

The campaign challenges the status quo where women often endure such behavior silently due to fear or social pressures. Instead, it empowers bystanders and fellow passengers to take a stand and support the victims.



The campaign sparked nuanced conversations on accountability, public safety, and gendered experiences.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT SURVEY – SAFE FOR THE PUBLIC?



1,984
Total Responses
Collected

70%
of Respondents
Were Women

60
In-depth
Interviews

The Jaga Dakhava surveys covered multiple talukas, capturing responses from commuters at various MSRTC depots. The respondent pool included both men and women, spanning different age groups and socio-economic backgrounds.

In most talukas, respondents reported feeling relatively safer during the day compared to night travel, with safety perceptions dropping by 30–40% post-sunset.

During the day, 80–85% of women reported feeling ‘safe’ or ‘somewhat safe,’ whereas at night this number fell to below 40%. Male respondents, by contrast, reported only a 10–15% drop in perceived safety from day to night.

Common hotspots identified for sexual harassment included bus stops, dark corners near depots, and inside crowded buses. Some depots such as those in urbanized talukas reported higher incident mentions, particularly after dusk. Visual analysis of the cross-tab data suggests a correlation between low lighting, absence of visible security, and increased reports of sexual harassment. Approximately one in four women reported either experiencing or witnessing sexual harassment in or around bus depots. Most incidents were

Only 40%
Women Feel Safe at night!

90%
reported improved understanding of
everyday harassment and its impact.

65%
reported increased willingness to
intervene as bystanders.

reported in the evening hours between 6 pm and 9 pm. Common forms of harassment included verbal abuse, staring, and unwanted physical proximity.

A majority of male respondents (around 60%) stated they did not intervene when witness to incidents of sexual harassment, citing fear or uncertainty. In contrast, about 40% of women indicated they verbally supported the victim or sought help from bus staff. This highlights the need for bystander sensitization across genders. Women respondents particularly emphasized the need for visible and quick action when incidents are reported, while men highlighted the need for awareness campaigns encouraging collective responsibility.

MSRTC SAFETY AUDIT

Building on our long-standing collaboration with the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC), this year Akshara independently partnered with the MSRTC Kamgar Sanghatana, a workers' union under MSRTC. The union expressed the need to strengthen their role in ensuring safe and inclusive facilities for employees, particularly restrooms. Responding to this, Akshara conducted a training on safety audits with 85 union members. A customised audit checklist was developed and digitised into a Google form, enabling efficient data collection. To date, 299 audits of employee restrooms have been completed. Recognising that commuter facilities also impact inclusivity, Akshara expanded the scope to review passenger restrooms and breastfeeding rooms at bus depots, ensuring that perspectives of both workers and commuters are addressed.

JAGA DAKHAVA

The Jaga Dakhava campaign, which became popular in Maharashtra was taken to Hindi speaking belt through a collaboration with Khabar Leharia which has a huge online presence reaching rural and semi urban audience.

Launched through an offline event in Bihar and spread via social media, the campaign engaged both rural and urban audiences through videos, audio stories, and interactive storytelling.

Allying with Khabar Lahariya enabled the Jaga Dakhava campaign to go beyond Maharashtra.

National ◊ ताजा खबरें ◊ मध्यप्रदेश ◊
महिलाओं के खिलाफ हिंसा

Jagah Dikhaao: सार्वजनिक स्थान में पुरुष भी महिला सुरक्षा के लिए उठाए आवाज़

द्वारा खबर लहरिया | April 4, 2025

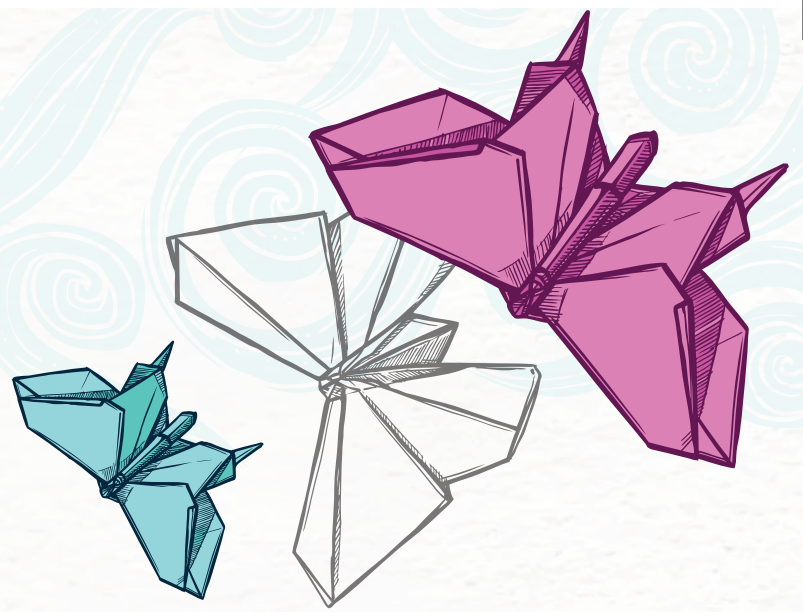
जब सार्वजनिक स्थान पर अन्याय दिखे, तो क्या करें? |
सुनिए रोहित अहिरवार की बहादुरी का किस्सा |

Jagah Dikhaao हमने पिछली वीडियो में आपसे पूछा था
- क्या कभी आपने किसी महिला...



MAIN HOON NA CAMPAIGN

Another campaign on Bystanders which was taken up with Railway Protection Force at CSMT and Dadar station with street plays, interactive booths, safety mapping engaged over 2000 commuters. Akshara's constant effort has been to come up with different ways in which one can build conversations with commuters and women survivors in public spaces.



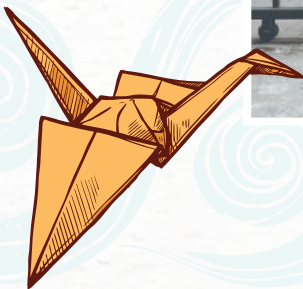
TRAINING LOCAL BUS TRANSPORT STAFF

Over the years, Akshara has trained 965 BEST bus conductors, including both men and women, through sessions integrated into their refresher courses. The trainings focused on respectful communication, gender sensitivity, and identifying and responding to incidents of sexual harassment. Conductors came from across Maharashtra, many from drought-affected regions, bringing a range of experiences from 2 to 30 years in service. Discussions revealed that while most were aware of molestation, many lacked clarity on workplace harassment laws. One conductor reflected, “Sometimes, even if women don’t complain, I act if I see misbehaviour, it’s part of my responsibility,” sharing how he intervened to remove a drunk, harassing passenger in Kurla. Another remarked, “After seeing the Jaga Dakhava films, I realised how important it is for passengers and conductors to act together.” Yet, many also expressed concerns about unclear protocols and fear of false allegations, highlighting the need for institutional support. These sessions didn’t just inform and create awareness, they opened up dialogue, built empathy, and reminded every conductor that ensuring safety is a shared responsibility rooted in dignity and rights.



ENGENDERING URBAN CHANGE PROCESS

Making Space in Public Infrastructure - Multi-purpose Housing for Women



The first Multi-purpose Housing for Women in Goregaon under the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's Development Plan 2034 was inaugurated on March 9, 2024. Along with a dormitory, it has provisions for entertainment and recreation, a canteen facility and a self-cooking

facility for meals. It is close to the railway station and offers stay facilities to working women whilst also providing temporary shelter to women in distress or emergency and can accommodate up to 180 women.

It is heartening that not only had the BMC reserved land for multiple amenities but

the Advisory Committee on Gender was constituted to work within the BMC for the implementation of India's first Gender Chapter in a Development Plan. Akshara hopes that the other five such planned facilities will come up soon to fulfil the demand.

Launch of Maharashtra Women's Directory for Support Services

In collaboration with Safetipin and the Maharashtra State Government's Special Cell for Women and Children, Akshara integrated a comprehensive directory of services onto the *My Safetipin* app, offering women reliable resources across districts—from legal help to counselling.

Safetipin

SAFETIPIN 11,428 followers
8mo • 🌐

+ Follow ...

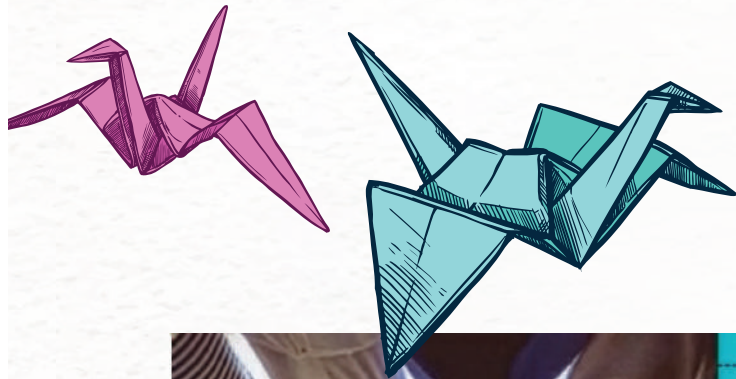
In moments of uncertainty, the real challenge isn't just danger, it's not knowing where to turn for help. That's why we're making safety resources more accessible with My Safetipin.

Today on Women's Day, we're proud to launch the Maharashtra Safety Directory in collaboration with **Akshara Centre** and the Special Cell for Women and Children in **#Maharashtra**. Now, women can easily access verified support services, helplines, and emergency contacts, because knowing where to seek help can make all the difference.

To access, simply click 'Find Support' on the My Safetipin homepage.

📲 Download **#MySafetipin** now:
Android: <https://lnkd.in/gnj9yyjD>
iOS: <https://lnkd.in/ghNYwnY3>

📍 Tamil Nadu and Delhi directories are already live! Want to see a safety directory for your state? Let us know in the comments or DM us
.#Safetipin #StaySafeWithMySafetipin #WomensDay #SafeCities UN Women Asia and the Pacific National Human Rights Commission of India National Commission for Women - India Ministry of Women & Child Development Government Of Maharashtra Women & Child Development Aditi Varda Sunil Tatkare



When people are informed and empowered, they can reclaim their spaces, their rights, and their freedom to move without fear.

Safetipin, Akshara Centre, and Special Cell for Women and Children bring you all the emergency support services at your fingertips



CHANGING PUBLIC MINDSET

Campaign on Sharing of Housework

GHAR KA KAAM SABKA KAAM

Akshara, in collaboration with Azad Foundation and Non-Traditional Livelihoods (NTL) Network, launched the campaign Ghar Ka Kaam Sabka Kaam to increase men's participation in unpaid care work, reduce the pressure of care work on women, and create enabling conditions for women to join the workforce.

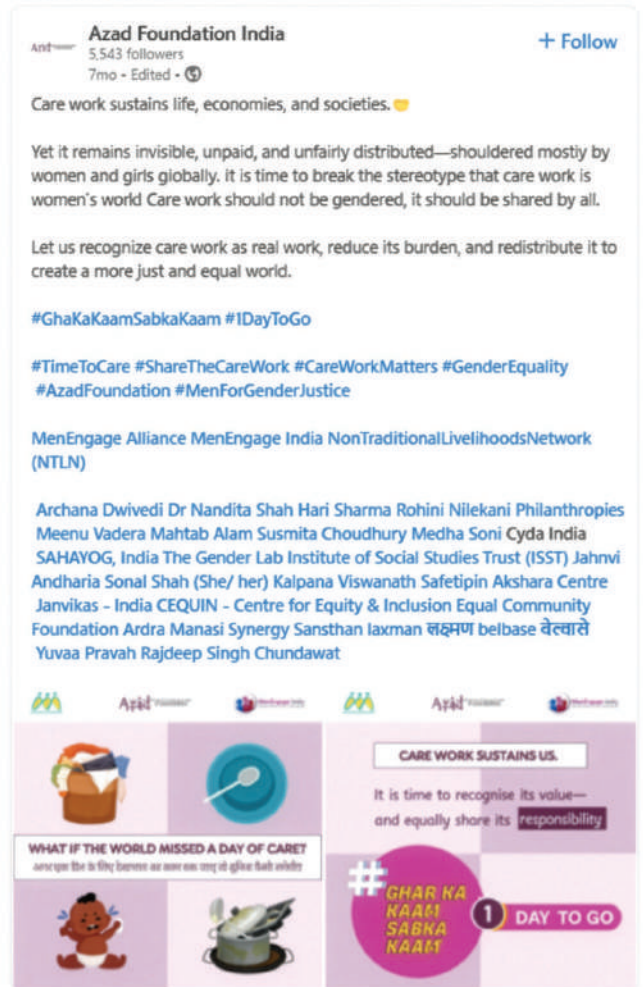
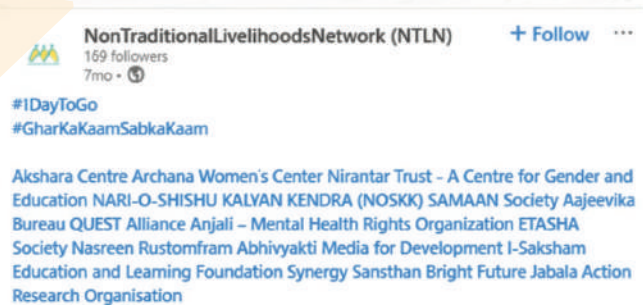
The month-long campaign saw enthusiastic student participation through an online campaign where youth shared pictures and stories that challenged gender roles, breaking barriers and making #GharKaKaamSabkaKaam a lived reality.

Akshara Centre
1 June 2024 · 🌍

Breaking barriers and sharing the load! 🌟🌟
Proud to see so many of you challenging gender roles and making #GharKaKaamSabkaKaam a reality.

Together, we're building a more equal home, one task at a time. 🏡 #EqualityAtHome
#SharedResponsibilities #azadfoundationindia #GharKaKaamSabkaKaam
#ShareTheCareWork #ShareTheLoad #GenderEquality #unpaidcarework #ChallengeTheNorm

AZAD FOUNDATION



RECLAIMING THE NIGHT CAMPAIGN

Sitare aur Sapne

APNI RAATEIN APNE HAKK

On the eve of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, 35 senior girls took part in this unique overnight campaign held at Marine Drive.



From watching the sunset to sharing stories through the Human Library and walking along Marine Drive, the night was filled with laughter, courage, and dreams. Girls described feeling like “free birds,” peaceful, thrilled, and deeply joyful. For some, it was an “unbelievable” and “unexpectedly fabulous” moment that they wished could become normal for every girl. This night was more than an outing; it was about reclaiming spaces, confidence, and voices—reminding us that nights belong to girls too.

MARATHON FOR WOMEN'S SAFETY

Akshara became a collaborative partner for the Enthusia VJTI Marathon, whose theme this year was Women's Safety.



About the Event

The Sports Group of Veermata Jijabai Technological Institute (VJTI), in collaboration with NCC VJTI, is proud to present a marathon dedicated to supporting Akshara Centre, an NGO advocating for women's safety, the cause of this year's event.

Pix Courtesy: Enthusia VJTI Marathon - running - BookMyShow



JOINING THE CONVERSATION



In the wake of rising cases like the R.G. Kar Hospital incident, 75 individuals came together in Mumbai to confront the harsh reality of violence against women. The session became a space of courage and reflection, where young girls openly shared their personal experiences and men engaged in honest discussions about their responsibility in stopping violence. One participant's powerful question "Are we just surviving, or are we living?"—challenged everyone to envision a society where every gender can truly thrive. The dialogue not only sparked awareness but also encouraged collective ownership. The evening reminded us that change begins with listening, empathy, and solidarity, and that collective voices hold the power to challenge fear and inspire hope.

The Conversation Continues...

A GENDER-EQUAL WORKSPACE

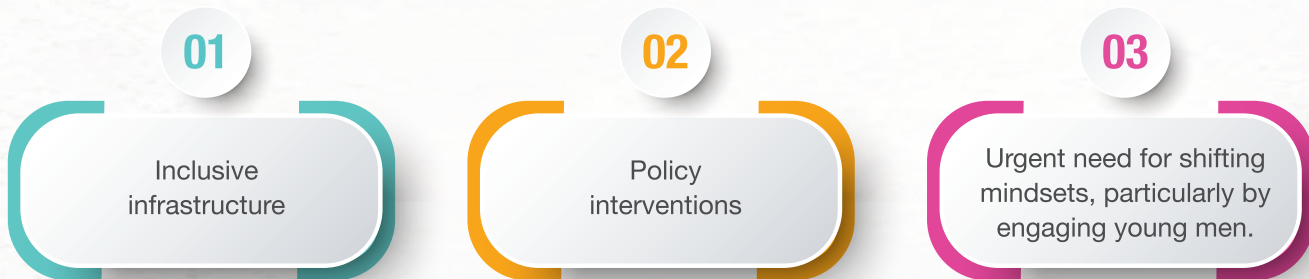
On 14th January, Akshara Centre, in collaboration with the US Consulate General, Mumbai and SPGRC-BMC hosted an insightful session on "Strengthening Voices, Building Allies: A Preventive Path to Gender-Equal Workplaces". The conversation between Merri Hanson, Director, Peninsula Mediation & Alternative Dispute Resolution and Sneha Khandekar explored proactive strategies for gender equality, the power of allyship, and empowering women to speak up.



ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN PUBLIC SPACES



THEMES



A vibrant platform of exchange, strategy, and collaboration where 30 organizations came together. Participants reflected on their diverse approaches, right from public place-level interventions to research-driven advocacy and jointly identified actionable strategies for the coming months. Discussions emphasized the importance of collective accountability,

rather than placing the burden of safety solely on women. The panel highlighted diverse experiences of harassment across gender, disabilities, and backgrounds, focusing on prevention and response measures. Together, we explored the critical roles of victims, bystanders, and government agencies in combating harassment.



Point of View

In early September, our wonderful colleagues [Yashita Kandhari](#) and [Riddhima Sharma, Ph.D.](#) attended [Akshara Centre](#)'s Roundtable Discussion on Sexual Harassment in Public Spaces, which brought together representatives from diverse organizations to share their experiences in preventing sexual harassment, and approaches to emergency response and redressal. We discussed the pervasiveness of sexual harassment and the importance of preventing everyday [#harassment](#) rather than only acting when it escalates into severe forms of assault.

During the discussion, participants explored effective strategies from national gender-based violence (GBV) surveys and community intervention techniques.

- 👉 We examined the mental health implications of sexual harassment and the specific threats faced by trans individuals.
- 🚫 We discussed approaches to response and redressal of [#sexualharassment](#) such as through the implementation of laws and policies, training bus conductors and drivers on prevention in public transport, collaborating with police, the importance of engaging men in prevention efforts, and the necessary role of bystanders in emergency responses.
- 📍 We spoke about the social context of harm, and the importance of accounting for social location in creating strategies for prevention and response.
- 🏢 Participants also brought up how the design of public and digital spaces contributes to perpetrating violence. For instance, certain office areas that become deserted at night or digital platforms where harmful content is amplified by algorithms.
- 🌐 While sharing insights from TechSakhi, Point of View's omnichannel, multilingual digital security helpline, along with strategies for enhancing online safety, we also discussed how violence is a continuum and the importance of including [#digitalspaces](#) in our discussion of public spaces.

We'd like to extend a big thank you to [Akshara Centre](#) for facilitating these important conversations! The [#roundtable](#) created a collaborative environment for us to brainstorm and work together on strategies to make a meaningful impact in curbing harassment.

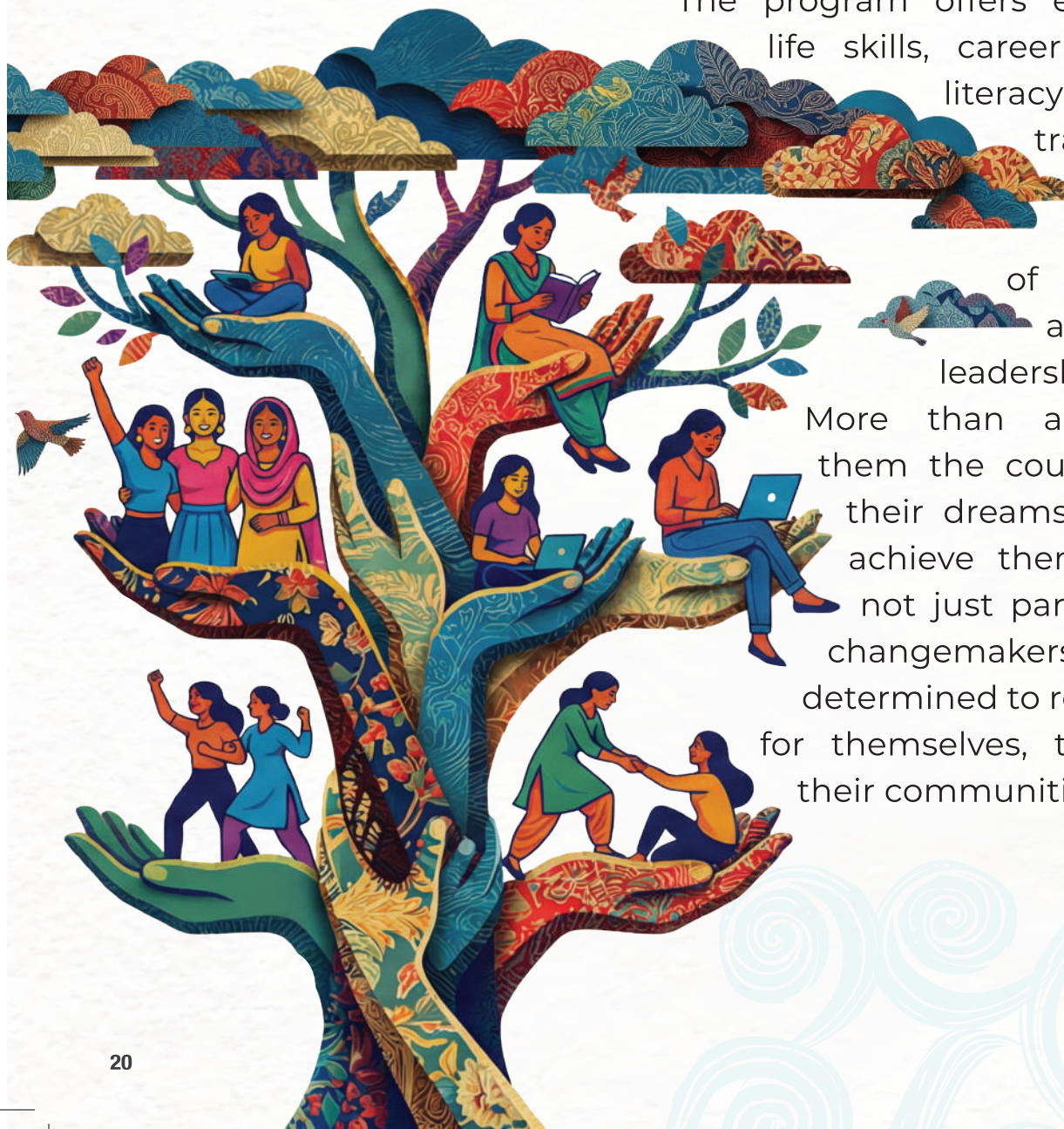
A shared action plan was drafted, with roles assigned for awareness-building, research, community sensitization, and policy engagement. Importantly, this space helped map strengths across organizations, fostering synergy for a more unified movement. The roundtable closed with a renewed commitment to deepen collaboration, advocate boldly, and keep public spaces responsive to the lived realities of women and marginalized groups.

EMPOWERING DREAMS – LEADERSHIP JOURNEYS OF YOUNG WOMEN

The Empowering Dreams Program (EDP), initiated by Akshara, is a journey of hope, strength, and transformation—led by young women who refuse to be limited by their circumstances. In a city like Mumbai, where inequality hides in plain sight, it is the girls from slum communities—often second or third-generation migrants—who carry big dreams despite the weight

of everyday struggles. Most are first-generation learners, pushing through economic hardship, gender norms, and lack of support to stay in college and imagine a different future. What they need is exposure, guidance, and a supportive ecosystem. EDP steps in here—not just with training, but with trust.

The program offers education support, life skills, career guidance, digital literacy, and employability training, all woven together with a strong foundation of gender rights awareness and leadership development. More than anything, it gives them the courage to believe in their dreams, and the tools to achieve them. These girls are not just participants—they are changemakers in the making, determined to rewrite the narrative for themselves, their families, and their communities.



PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Agency

is when a girl knows who she is, what she wants, and dares to say it aloud — even if her voice shakes

Financial independence

is not just a salary — it is the ability to choose, to save, to spend, to plan a future.

Social action

is when she sees an injustice — at home, in college, or in her neighbourhood — and believes she can do something about it.

Saksham

(1 year)

To build the perspective of the girls towards gender equality and to help them to understand their strengths and weaknesses.

Swayamsidha

(1 year)

To build their employability skills and to further educate them about gender and violence.

Swadhin

(1 year)

To build on their leadership potential and to receive more exposure through visits and individual support through Information and Placement Hub.

534 girls applied for education support. **42% of EDP applications** this year came through our Swayamsidha and Swadhin participants and recent alumni, highlighting the power of peer-led support. Out of which **251 applicants** were selected to join the Empowering Dream program.

38.7% applicants

through collaborating with local organisations and grassroots partners has shown us the value of collective effort in expanding outreach and was instrumental in establishing credibility and trust, particularly in communities that are cautious about an external program.

251 girls

Preference is given to girls belonging to socially marginalised groups with nearly half from Muslim households, and the rest representing SC, ST, OBC, and NT communities; and children of single mothers. Arts (12%), Commerce, Finance & Banking (28%), Science (15%), Mass media courses (32%).

Some Impact

95% of girls now feel confident speaking in groups, showing clear growth in self-expression.

86% improved communication skills, enabling them to better express opinions and navigate social/professional spaces.

Girls afraid to travel alone dropped to 3%

A Space for Girls

Pix courtesy: Akshara Centre:
Empowering Dreams, One Girl at
a Time,
<https://www.ourbetterworld.org/>



The Savitribai Phule Gender Resource Centre (SPGRC)

350 girls benefitted from the SPGRC as a place
of quiet study.
30 girls availed of the counselling support.

The Savitribai Phule Gender Resource Centre (SPGRC), run by Akshara in collaboration with the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has a Reading Room and library. A film screening of 'Laapataa Ladies' was also conducted at the SPGRC.





Pix courtesy: Akshara Centre: Empowering Dreams, One Girl at a Time, <https://www.ourbetterworld.org/>

“
It was an exciting and fun session, and I'm so proud of what we created. The BanaGloo team was amazing to work with!
- Shalu Sharma





CELEBRATING CREATIVITY AND CONNECTION AT THE ART WORKSHOP WITH BANAGLOO!





“
If my piece gets sold by BanaGloo, the proceeds will go toward a scholarship for one of us. That's what makes this even more special.
- Soni Sahu

The Akshara Centre at SPGRC, however, is much more than the services it provides. It becomes for many girls an oasis where they can have a moment for themselves to sit with their emotions and sort out their lifepaths without the outside noise that is often a constant in their lives. And also a space to vent creatively.

WORKSHOPS TO BUILD SKILLS, SELF-WORTH & UNDERSTAND SAFETY

From the everyday struggle of asking for a phone to the bigger dream of becoming financially independent, 15 sessions gave girls tools for life.



Pix courtesy: Akshara Centre: Empowering Dreams, One Girl at a Time,
<https://www.ourbetterworld.org/>



Some of the topics covered over multiple sessions included Communication Skills and Goal Setting; Violence awareness and disclosure; Negotiation; Reproductive health and sexuality; Why Women Should Work. The workshops became a first-time space for the

girls to open up and have honest conversations around issues of friendships and intimate relationships, to think deeply about power and gender, and to reflect on the steps needed towards building confidence, self-respect, and challenge what's wrong. They learned

the language, tools, and got the courage to name and question gendered violence, inequality in intimate relationships and assert bodily autonomy, recognize and name red flags and slowly build the courage to walk away from what doesn't support their growth.

From voicing their fears to imagining safer futures, each participant took a small but significant step towards building awareness, confidence, and solidarity. Some are now delaying marriage, others are exploring jobs — but all of them are beginning to see a future where their dreams come first. They now take the initiative to negotiate permissions, attend events, and travel alone — a major shift in the context of high-control families. They started having calmer, more honest conversations at home — not through fights or silence, but through small steps of mutual understanding. It's not just about "getting their way," but finding a language, building bridges and being heard.

NAVIGATING THE OUTSIDE WORLD

As the young women enter the second- and third-year levels (Swayamsidha and Swadhin), Akshara encourages them to take on the onus of advocating for themselves and their peers. The idea is that they should learn the ropes of interacting with authorities, organizing permissions for events and scheduling them, thereby learning how to deal with the real world and gain confidence in navigating it when they take the leap towards fulfilling their dreams. It's also a stab at knocking down

I often felt uncertain about talking to my parents, unsure of what to share with them or hold back. The workshop helped me build confidence in my own decisions and gave me clarity on communicating with them more openly.

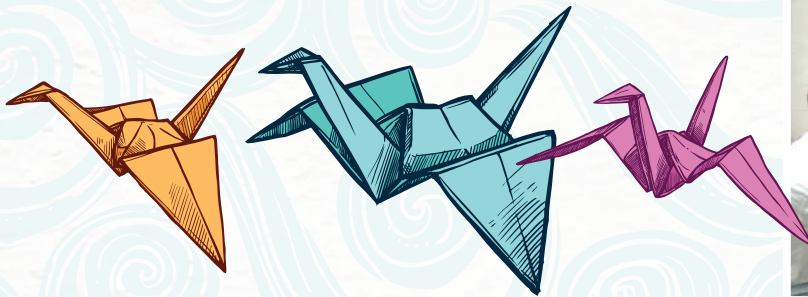
- *Debashree Kate*

the inter-generational divide as the young people have to engage more closely with those older to them and the latter can also understand where they're coming from. Most of them belong to communities who live on the margins for whom even stepping into a police station or a bank or setting up stalls on a campus is unheard of due to restrictions placed on them due to societal norms. The examples below are just a vignette of the range of outreach efforts that Akshara's young people undertake.

Young women learned about banking processes and safety in visits to a bank. This enabled girls to feel more confident about using banking services. Organized by senior girls from Swayamsidha group, it helped build the confidence of senior girls in organising community events, talking to bank staff, writing formal letters, and developing structured communication; and became a significant milestone in their leadership journey.



Bank Visit
Outreach to **202** girls across **20** communities



The girls got an opportunity to interact directly with local police officials and understand the functioning of police stations, the importance of filing complaints, and their rights related to safety and violence. This activity reduced fear and hesitation about approaching police stations, especially in cases of violence or abuse. It helped girls become more aware of legal support systems and boosted their courage to speak up and seek help. Senior girls who led the process also learned how to coordinate with authorities and plan such exposure visits.

Senior girls organised Gender Melas in **5 communities**, which reached out to **188 people** including parents, siblings, and neighbours.

A mela was organized by senior girls where interactive dialogues on gender roles and the division of labour were facilitated using traditional games and activities to challenge stereotypes. The mela gave senior girls a creative and engaging platform to spark conversations about gender equality. It helped them use cultural tools to promote change, improving their facilitation, teamwork, and public engagement skills.



Police Station Visit
132 girls across **14** communities visited a police station.

PEER LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

Fifteen senior girls, part of the Swadhin leadership group, took the lead in facilitating engaging dialogues on gender division of labour and menstrual hygiene using interactive games developed by Akshara as sensitization tools.

Outreach to **162 people** across Govandi, Malad, Mankhurd, and Borivali.

This impactful outreach was made possible with the support of partners including Apnalya, KGVF, Jan Jagruti Vidyarthi Sangh, and Bright Future.



KHULA AASMAN

A Proud Graduation Event

This year, we celebrated Khula Aasman as a graduation event—a vibrant and emotional milestone in the Empowering Dreams Program. The event was entirely planned and led by the girls themselves,

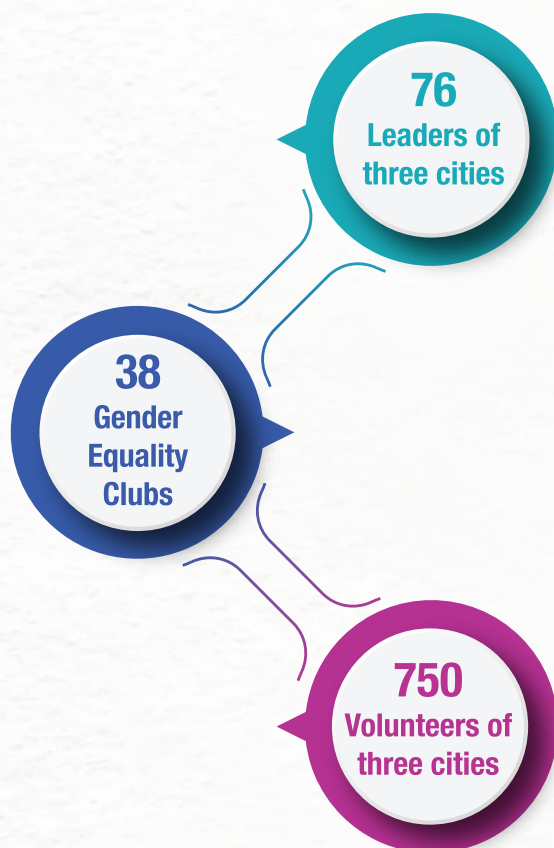
showcasing the leadership, confidence, and creativity they've developed over the years. The celebration was filled with cultural performances — songs, dances, and powerful stories of personal change.

Girls from Saksham, Swayamsidha, and Swadhin came together to create a joyful, inspiring space that reflected their journeys and growth.

YOUTH FOR CHANGE – BUILDING EQUALITY FROM CAMPUSES TO COMMUNITIES

The Youth for Change (YCP) program takes youth on a journey to critically reflect upon their own lived experiences to understand societal relations, their place in the dynamics of these relations and social actions they could collectively undertake in challenging gender discrimination and building an equitable society. Youth being agents of creating sustainable change undertake the exercise of realising a gender-just world by leading and participating in events to raise public awareness on gender inequality and in doing so they deepen their understanding of the complexity of social issues.

HOW WE WORK



EXPANDING OUTREACH

This year, the Youth for Change (YCP) program deepened its work with college youth across Mumbai, Pune, and Nashik, focusing on gender equality, inclusion, and active citizenship.

Akshara welcomed two new colleges from Nashik and partnered with more NSS units to improve the gender balance and ensure active participation of boys. Akshara also collaborated with various college departments beyond NSS and WDC, especially in Pune and Nashik, to strengthen and diversify student engagement.



OUR LIVES, OUR RIGHTS

Are We Really Equal?

IMPACT

Better understanding on citizenship, rights, and everyday rights' violations and how to challenge inequalities, advocate for their rights, and support others in doing the same. Stories highlighted issues such as dowry, domestic violence, religious pressures, labour rights, and gender equality in public spaces. Engaging conversations helped students recognize how societal norms shape their lives and the importance of speaking up. Through discussions and interactive activities, students examined how privilege and

power operate across different social groups, and reflected on systemic patterns of inequality.

Young people are paying attention. They care about rights, gender, and democracy. What they often lack are safe spaces to ask questions and connect these big ideas to their own lives. YCP aimed to create that space - for reflection, dialogue, and growth. And that's exactly what Akshara saw this year: the start of important shifts in how young people see gender, rights, and their own role in society.

TAKEAWAYS FROM THE PROGRAMME

01

Volunteers started to see rights not just as laws written on paper, but as something connected to their day to day life.

02

Students started asking questions about unfair rules around them.

03

Workshop helped young people talk about and make sense of what they see and hear in their everyday lives.

04

YCP is a space where students can openly talk & discuss about various topic.

REFRAMING VOCABULARY OF MASCULINITY

Beyond the Bro Code - 106 boys

Encouraged reflection, challenged stereotypes, and fostered a healthier understanding of masculinity.

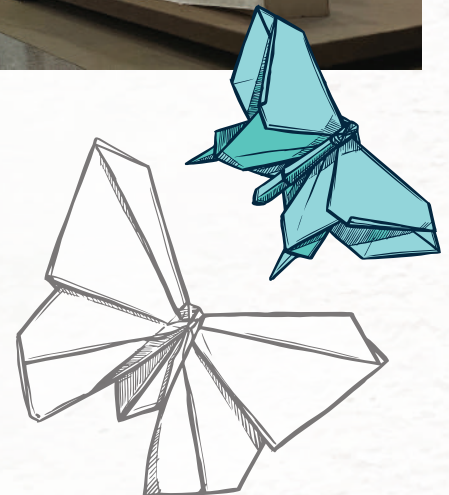
Akshara offered an exclusive safe space for boys to openly share and engage in discussions on patriarchy's impact on them. Held on the eve of International Men's Day, the session explored toxic masculinity, gender norms, and media influence, led by an experienced male trainer specializing in gender and men's engagement. Through real-life examples, he highlighted societal pressures, Bollywood's objectification of women, and the exclusion of intersex individuals.

“

Mujhe to bohot acha laga vo event like jo points pe hum normally baat nahi karte he vo points pe baat hui aur sabse memorable part vo dupata vala tha like kese dupata pehene ke tarike ko bhi gender se relate kiya jata he. Ek aur point tha about abusing ki ham bina soche samjhe abuse kar dete he but agar ham usse properly samjhe like ladai 2 individuals me hoti he aur abuse unke family ko kiya jata he.

- Omprakash,
Vivekanand Education Society's
College of Arts, Science &
Commerce

”



CLICK WITH CARE

Digital Safety and Youth - 288 students

The discussion on online safety and gender-based challenges emphasized responsible internet use rather than avoidance, equipping students with strategies to navigate online risks.

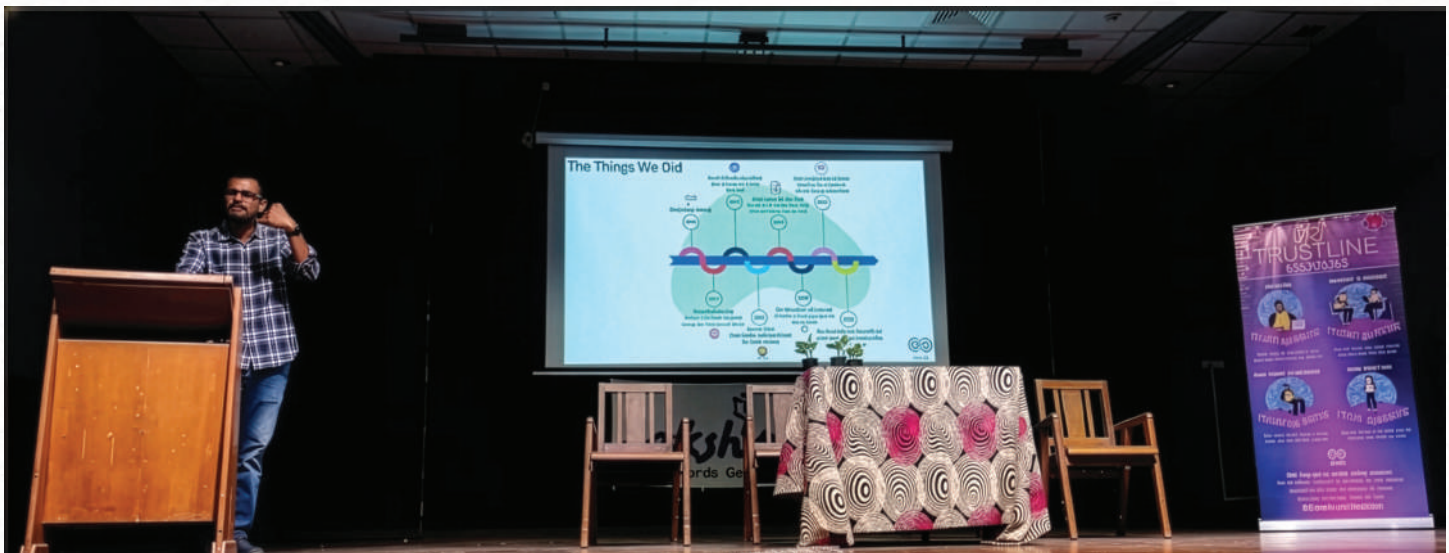
Using anonymous participation, the session addressed cyber abuse, surveillance, sextortion, and deepfakes, highlighting the additional barriers women face online. Practical safety tips were shared, including reporting abuse, collecting evidence, and seeking legal support. The interactive format encouraged students to ask questions and voice concerns, fostering a proactive approach to digital safety.

“

Before attending the digital safety workshop, my understanding of online safety was quite limited. However, the session has significantly boosted my confidence in using digital platforms more responsibly. I am now aware of essential tools, helpline numbers, and safety practices, and I can not only protect myself online but also help spread awareness among others.

- Nithya Suresh, Mithibai College

”



YUVAK YUVATI MELA

Held in 6 colleges, the Mela became an annual highlight where students designed gender-based games and activities. With fun yet thought-provoking themes, it provided a platform for leadership, teamwork, and raising awareness on gender issues.



FILM SCREENINGS

Students in 3 colleges organised film screenings followed by open discussions on gender roles, consent, and relationships. One college produced an original short film, while others used curated clips to spark dialogue and reflection.



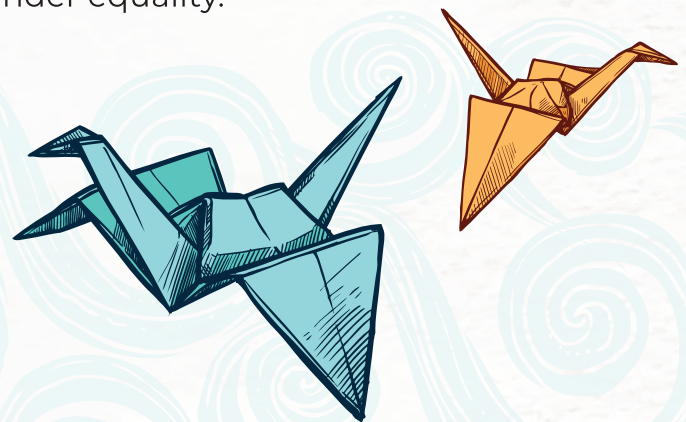
Social action is the heart of real change. Through the Yuvak Yuvati Mela, we aimed to address deep-rooted issues like gender inequality, social taboos, and the harmful mindset of male vs. female. The objective was to spark dialogue, break stereotypes, and promote equality in a healthy, open space. The event created visible changes in participants—many opened up for the first time, questioned social norms, and reflected on their own biases. It was not just an activity; it was a shift in perspective. This is why we do social action: to turn awareness into transformation.

- Anika Patel,
Narhar Balwant Thakur Law
College, Nashik



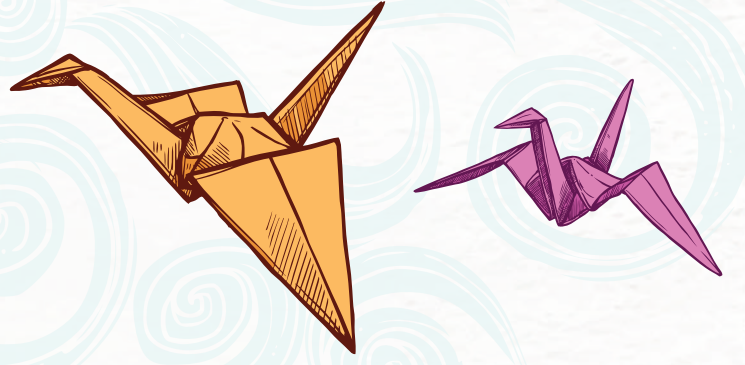
POSTER MAKING

Across 4 colleges, students used poster-making as a creative tool to raise awareness and encourage campus-wide reflection on gender equality.



GAANA REWRITE

In Nashik, students launched the Gaana Rewrite activity, encouraging peers to rework sexist Bollywood lyrics into gender-positive versions, promoting critical reflection on pop culture influences.



गाणं rewrite competition हा माझ्यासाठी एक नवीन आणि खूपच वेगळा अनुभव होता. मी या आधी कधीही गाण्याचे शब्द स्वतःच्या विचारांनुसार बदलून लिहिले नव्हते, त्यामुळे ही स्पर्धा माझ्यासाठी एक नवी संकल्पना होती. जेव्हा मी मूळ गाणं घेतलं आणि त्यात स्वताःचा दृष्टीकोन टाकून, सामाजिक संदर्भ देत एक वेगळा अर्थ तयार केला - तेव्हा मला माझ्या शब्दांची ताकद जाणवली. शब्द केवळ गाण्याचे नसतात, ते विचारांचे प्रतिबिंब असतात. हे मला प्रत्यक्ष अनुभवातून समजलं. या प्रक्रियेत मला स्त्री-सशक्तीकरण, स्वतःचा आवाज मांडणं, आणि विचार बदलणं यावर फोकस करता आला - जे माझ्या मनाला खूप भावलं. गाणं फक्त मनोरंजनापुरतं मर्यादित न ठेवता, एक प्रेरणादायक संदेश देणं मला खूप गरजेच वाटलं. यामधे मला नवं काहीतरी शिकायला मिळालं, स्वतःचा आत्मविश्वास वाढवता आला, आणि माझी लेखनशैली आणि विचारांना दिशा मिळाली. ही स्पर्धा म्हणजे माझ्यासाठी एक पहिली पायरी होती जिथे मी स्वतःचा आवाज ‘‘शब्दांमधून’’ पोहोचवला. म्हणूनच मला वाटतं, अशा स्पर्धा विद्यार्थ्यांनी, विशेषतः मुलींनी, नक्की करून पाहाव्यात - कारण त्या केवळ स्पर्धा नसून, स्वतःला शोधण्याचा एक प्रवास असतो.

- तेजस्विनी अनिता संतोष पवार

The Gaana Rewrite competition was a new and very different experience for me. I had never before thought of rewriting song lyrics on my own, so it was a novel concept for me. When I took the original song and rooted it in a social context arising from my own lived perspective altering its meaning in a refreshing way - that's when I felt the power of my words. Words are not mere lyrics; but hold up a mirror to our thoughts. I realized this through actual experience. In this process, I was able to focus on women's empowerment in my own voice and changed perspectives - which resonated deeply within me. I felt it was very important to not limit a song to mere entertainment, but to deliver an inspirational message. Through this, I learned something new, was able to boost my self-confidence, which gave direction to my writing style and thoughts. This competition was a first step for me where I was able to convey my own voice 'through words.' That's why I believe that students, especially girls should give such competitions a shot - because they're not just competitions, but a journey of discovering oneself.

- Tejaswini Anita Santosh Pawar,
KTHM College, Nashik



Y TALKS – CLOSING EVENT

750+ students from 41 colleges
across Mumbai and Nashik

Built around the theme “Building Safe, Equal & Open Relationships with Self, Peers, Parents, and Partners,” the day was packed with fun, learning, and powerful conversations. Y Talks 2025 was more than just an event, it was a student-led celebration of energy, expression, ownership, and conversations that truly matter to young people today. Akshara conducted it with the participation of its students and partner organisations (Agents Of Ishq, RATI Foundation, Point of View, Vidyalankar School of Information Technology), who along with peers, and the esteemed Chief Guest, Shri Yashasvi Yadav, shared invaluable insights and championed important conversations.

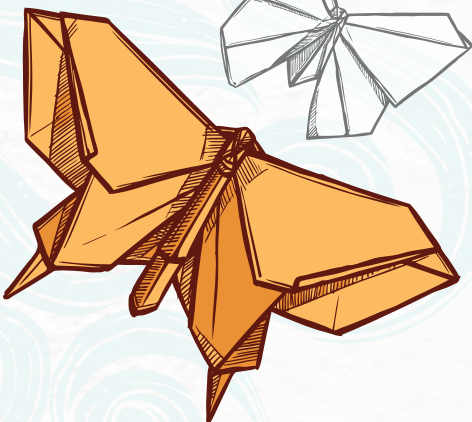


A LIVELY EVENT



Interactive stalls got students thinking about relationships, emotions, dreams, and gender roles in everyday life:

Creative corners like the Love Letter Wall, Doodle Wall, a stall by Point of View on digital behaviour, and a 360° photo booth for students to express themselves and capture memories.



The inauguration featured speeches from the Akshara team, the host college principal, and a talk on digital safety by the Chief Guest Inspector General of Police, Maharashtra, Shri Yashasvi Yadav, followed by a prize ceremony to celebrate student contributions.



5 five parallel sessions

Kal, Aaj aur Kal

a tete-a-tete of parents, teachers, and youth

Is social media curse or a boon

a debate on online relationships

But Main Eisa Hi Hu

a session on emotional well-being

Safety online

a workshop on safe digital spaces

Dil Se Dil Tak, But with Consent

a fun and honest session on love and consent

The day ended on a high with performances including a flash mob, group singing, dance acts, raps, a fashion show on modern relationships, and a touching story shared by a YCP student and wrapped up with a joyful DJ session that brought everyone together to celebrate.

Friendship Beyond Boundaries was an event organized by the Alumni of Akshara Centre during Friendship Week, bringing together 170 students to foster friendships beyond societal norms. The event created an inclusive space for youth to connect beyond gender, community, and background.

The event began with an icebreaker activity, where students were randomly grouped and tasked with creating a name, slogan, and song, encouraging new connections. A panel discussion followed, featuring students from various colleges who shared personal experiences on friendship, societal biases, online vs. offline bonds, and challenges like ghosting and closure. Their insights sparked engaging discussions among the audience, highlighting how true friendships transcend social labels and provide emotional support beyond family and romantic relationships. The celebration also featured performances — dance, poetry, rap, and music — showcasing themes of inclusivity and friendships that break barriers. The event emphasized the importance of building genuine, meaningful connections, proving that real friendships are based on trust, acceptance, and shared experiences, rather than societal expectations.



The event featured a panel discussion on various types of friendships, which I found very relatable, especially as it highlighted the challenges our generation faces in building and maintaining friendships. I also got to learn about new terms and different forms of friendship that I wasn't aware of before. What I enjoyed the most was the group activity

where we were randomly divided into groups of strangers. Each group had to perform an activity on stage, like singing, poetry, or any creative performance. This helped us break the ice, make new friends, and have a lot of fun. Overall, it was an amazing and memorable experience that allowed me to step out of my comfort zone and connect with new people.

*- Gauravi Khose,
Ramanand Arya DAV College - Friendship Day*



MANN KI BAAT

On the eve of World Mental Health Day, a session addressed students' mental health concerns about stress, multi-tasking, and overwhelming responsibilities. The session encouraged open conversations, challenged mental health misconceptions, and equipped students with practical self-care and stress management tools.

Topics covered included exam pressure, social media influence, and self-expectations, using videos, a panel discussion with alumni and volunteers, and a presentation on coping strategies.

226 students
25 Mumbai colleges
One common goal:
MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

Finding Solutions to everyday stress

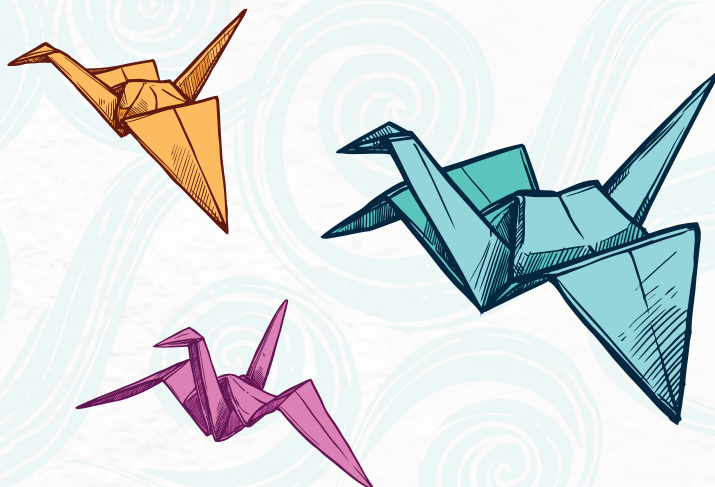
“

I attended a mental health awareness workshop that was both insightful and engaging. The panel discussion, provided valuable perspectives on mental health and social media's impact. I appreciated the open discussion opportunity, which allowed me to share thoughts and learn from others. The workshop successfully broke down stigmas and emphasized the importance of mental wellbeing, leaving me with a deeper understanding and appreciation for prioritizing mental health.

**- Priyanshi Jaiswal,
RJ College**

”

Panellists shared personal experiences, making the discussion relatable. A student's remark about hidden struggles behind smiling faces highlighted the need for empathy and support.



A SPACE TO SHARE, LISTEN, AND SUPPORT

Student-Led Panels

SMALL Y TALKS

This year, we focused on creating platforms for students to express themselves, as they often lack such opportunities in their colleges. Many shared that they had no space to voice their thoughts, seek clarity, or engage in meaningful discussions. Our Small YTalks provided a space for students to take the lead and actively participate. The Friendship Day event was entirely student-driven, featuring a panel discussion on friendships beyond boundaries and evolving social dynamics. Recognizing academic stress and multitasking pressures, we organized a Mental Health Awareness session, which students greatly appreciated.

OUTREACH TO ARCHITECTURAL COLLEGES

Besides expanding the YCP program, Akshara went beyond the traditional college outreach to throw the net wider and get more youth from diverse backgrounds to become champions of change. Akshara began to extend the scope of its work to architectural colleges and Industrial Training Institutes, as well as selecting Fellows to work within their communities.

Akshara's work for designing with a gender lens continues on the policy level with the State, but there was a need to also enable the future design ecosystem to be conversant with the concepts. Akshara's intervention with architectural colleges is to develop a gender sensitive and inclusive lens in designing for the city among the next generation of urban planners, designers and architects.

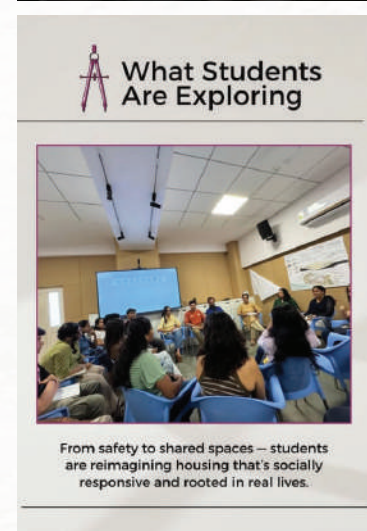
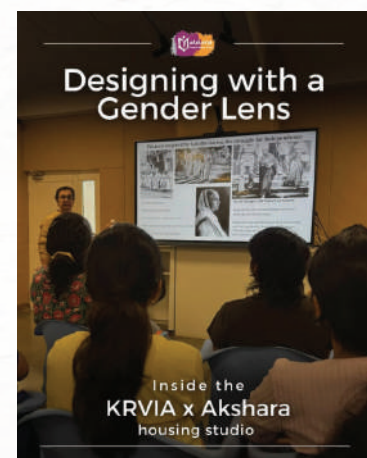
419 Urban Design students across Rizvi College, Pillai College of Architecture, Anjuman-I-Islam, and D.Y. Patil colleges.

The sessions sparked deep reflections about urban exclusion and helped future architects reimagine more gender inclusive cities.

TOWARDS THE FUTURE

YCP and National Education Policy

Akshara held a dialogue with senior staff and program officers of the National Service Scheme (NSS) and Women's Development Cell from various colleges to share insights on how autonomous and affiliated colleges are implementing NEP. During the meet-up, participants reflected on their experiences with Akshara's Youth for Change Program (YCP), the challenges posed by NEP, including increased student workload and the need for more meaningful community engagement. The meeting reaffirmed the relevance of Akshara's work and the collective commitment to deeper, long-term youth engagement.



OUTREACH TO ITI'S

Akshara is conducting the Hum Sab Equal curriculum for students in Industrial Training Institutes (ITI) who live in the far-flung suburbs of Mumbai and outside its municipal limits, some of whom must leave their homes at 5-30 am to make it in time to their classes. The initial responses during the 6-8 sessions showed that most students sorely lacked the ability to think about themselves, to have goals and aspirations. It underlined the importance of reaching out to students who belong to underprivileged communities and are not part of what are perceived to be more mainstream academic or vocational institutions.



3 ITIS

*Ramabai Ambedkar Girls ITI
Centre, Dadar*

*Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose
Government, Mulund*

*Veerangana Jhalkaribai ITI
Centre, Vasai*

141

Students

88

Boys

53

Girls

32

Mulund

63

Dadar

46

Vasai



This training taught me many new things that would be useful in future. I was unaware of the different types of violence and learned how to face them. I also got to learn many interesting games and songs.

*- Sanjna,
Ramabai Ambedkar Girls ITI Centre,
Dadar*

The riddles in the training taught me to think in a different way.

*- Shweta,
Ramabai Ambedkar Girls ITI Centre,
Dadar*

FELLOWSHIPS FOR COMMUNITY YOUTH

Akshara's Fellowship for Community Youth is a new initiative designed to be an experiment in learning with youth in the communities rather than teaching them. It is based on the belief that true leadership does not emerge from mere instructions or sessions but from experiences, dialogue, questioning, and a process of examining one's own role and

community. This process connected Akshara directly with the communities in the field, even without staff being permanently present in those localities. By empowering fellows from within these areas, it became a way to hear local realities in their own voices, not filtered through surveys or short visits. Fellows became a living bridge between Akshara

and their neighbourhoods, sharing insights, worries, and hopes that might otherwise remain hidden. It also introduced Akshara to many new youth—people who may never have walked into Akshara's office or attended a formal training but who became involved because someone they knew, a fellow, invited them in.

AKSHARA'S FIRST YOUTH FELLOWSHIP COHORT

Age: 21-25

Applications: 68

Selected: 5

Languages Hindi, Marathi

Skills Proficient in MS Office and smartphone use

Qualities commitment, eager to learn, and excited about community engagement.

Area of Residence

- 01 Appa Pada
- 02 Dr Ambedkar Nagar, Malad
- 03 Tufan Basti, Jogeshwari
- 04 Mayur Nagar, Aarey Colony
- 05 Aarey Milk Colony Unit 22

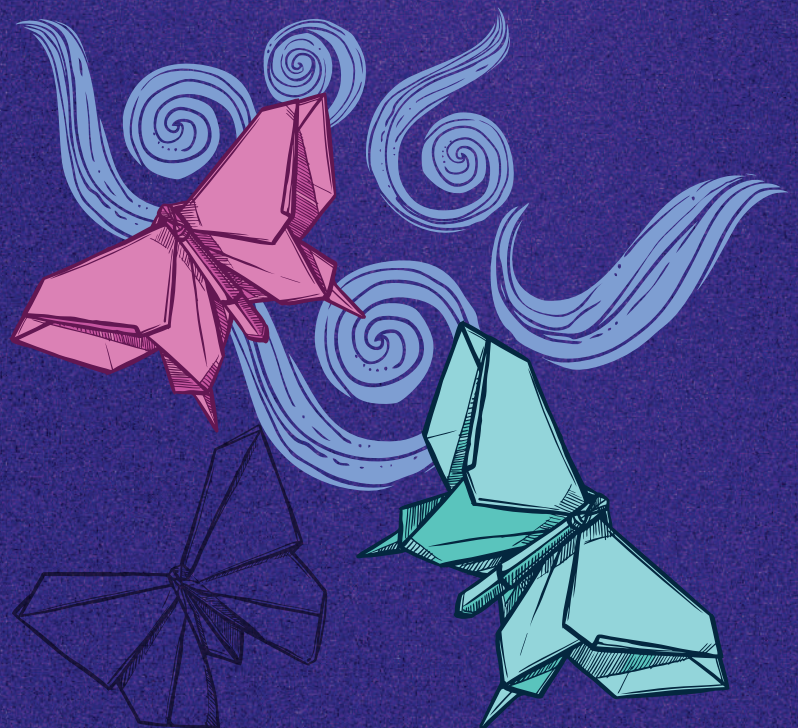


For Akshara, this first cohort was a vital reminder that meaningful change starts with listening deeply, walking alongside communities, and creating space for local youth to take ownership of difficult but necessary conversations about gender, safety, and equality. What stands out is not a list of finished outputs but the very real human process of learning and unlearning. Akshara did not “transform” these fellows into perfect activists. But walked with them as they wrestled with frustration, confusion, anger, and hope as they learned to speak in their own words about gender, power, violence, and responsibility.



In events like the Mela and YTalks, fellows learned the skill and art of facilitation. They had to negotiate venues, explain the purpose over and over, manage expectations, and handle interruptions—from curious elders to skeptical youth. They realized quickly that participatory activities weren’t “games” in the NGO sense, but opportunities for real conversations that could be uncomfortable or surprising. Safety walks, too, were learning spaces. Fellows learned to map unsafe spots, encourage women’s participation, and speak with local authorities—even if outcomes were partial.

For Akshara, this first cohort affirmed our belief that youth leadership is not about producing perfect deliverables on schedule. It is about building a habit of seeing one’s own world with clarity and compassion, recognizing power and inequality, and practicing the uncomfortable but essential work of asking better questions. In fieldwork, we saw fellows transform from cautious, formulaic question-askers to genuine listeners who could hold open-ended conversations. One fellow who at first rushed to offer advice learned instead to ask, “What would you want to see change here?” Another shifted from defensive frustration (“they don’t listen to me”) to humility about earning trust. And Akshara, too, learned to see its role with humility - not there to deliver answers or impose models but to walk with these young people as they asked new questions of themselves and their communities.



VOICES FROM THE FIELD

It is encouraging to know that the consistent efforts we have taken to create awareness and drive change are being recognised. But what we cherish more are the insights we receive from those with whom we work as they share how Akshara impacted their lives.

Akshara's workshop helped many girls speak up for the first time. 12% of girls mentioned 'home' is where they experience violence. This is a painful but important reminder that even trusted spaces like home can be unsafe. Such violence often

goes unnoticed and is rarely spoken about. Many girls chose 'Other' when asked about places of sexual harassment. This shows that there are emerging new spaces — possibly online or community spaces — that we need to understand better through conversations and stories.

We also created a safe, non-judgmental space to talk about puberty, menstruation, and body image, which has been deeply helpful. It's also a step toward bodily autonomy and comfort.

Understanding of the difference between sex and gender grew from 44% to nearly 80%.

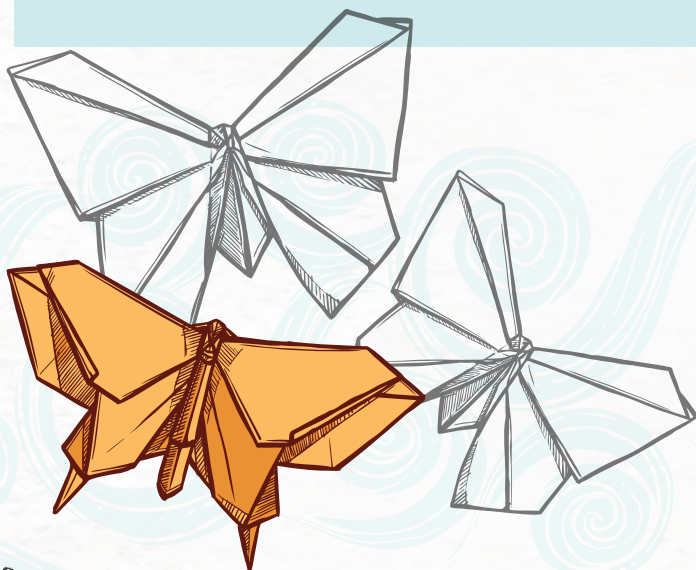
More students could talk about the Constitution, name Fundamental Rights, and explain how gender, caste, and class affect access to rights.

The number of students who thought a "good woman is obedient" dropped, and more began to question gender roles and double standards.

EMPOWERING DREAMS PROGRAM

Gulafsha Mohammed Umar Khan

Gulafsha, an 18-year-old Saksham participant pursuing Interior Designing from SNTD College, lives with her family in the Mankhurd slum area. Coming from a supportive but financially struggling background, she once dreamed of nursing but shifted to design due to high fees. Initially shy and afraid to speak publicly or travel alone, Gulafsha joined Akshara for a scholarship but found a life-changing space. Through workshops on gender, rights, and negotiation, she gained confidence—speaking English, traveling independently, and asserting herself with friends. She now supports her friends through tough situations, including helping one leave an abusive relationship and standing by another during a social media crisis. She continues teaching children at home through tuition classes just like her sister used to. Her father, who once dreamed of becoming a police officer, now sending Gulafsha's sister for training. Gulafsha's journey reflects how opportunity and support can transform fear into fearless leadership.



Nandani Krishnakant Rathore

Nandani, 19, is a B.Sc. Environmental Science student from Baiganwadi, Govandi, who balances college and multiple part-time jobs to support her family. Her father sells spices, her mother works as a security guard, and Nandani has become the main breadwinner. Though she once dreamed of studying Astrophysics, financial challenges led her to discover a passion for the environment and teaching.

She was introduced to Akshara through Apnalaya NGO. With Akshara's support—scholarships, travel allowances, and life skills sessions—Nandani transformed from a shy, introverted girl into a confident young woman. She took initiative in organizing visits to banks and police stations, experiences that strengthened her confidence and ability to lead. One of the most powerful shifts in her journey came through the negotiation workshop. Living in a household marked by domestic conflict and her father's alcoholism, Nandani once stayed silent. Today, she courageously steps in to mediate, using her training to defuse arguments and support her mother with compassion and strength.

YOUTH FOR CHANGE PROGRAM

Adityan's Path to Gender Equality

Adityan, a student from SIES College (Sion), has been welcoming of new ideas and changes he has encountered and has adopted a reflective exercise in consciously implementing what he has learnt in his daily life.

Gender, in his opinion, is how we look and identify ourselves and the fact that conversations about it don't happen in



For Nandani, Akshara is more than an organization, it's a turning point in her life. "Because of your support, girls like me get a second chance," she says.

Sometimes, the most simple pursuits brought families closer.



informal settings is concerning because, according to him, it is a stark reminder of how power plays a part in enabling these conversations. He was candid in taking accountability and responsibility for working towards change, wherever he sees the potential for it, and intends to begin the same with himself, his family, friends and community.

Reaching this realisation was a journey in itself. Articulating what he thought and sharing them with people had always been a hesitancy because of fear of being judged based on it. Over the years, Adityan shares, he has not let this fear and hesitancy get the better of him and has felt more confident in sharing his opinions and has improved his public speaking skills through platforms like Akshara.

Change also began to manifest for him by checking in and questioning his preconceived notions - he thought he knew it all and had a challenging time adjusting to and accepting the idea that he didn't. These new learnings that came his way were carefully nurtured realisations which do not evidently present themselves in everyday lives; understanding about them took time and investing a dedicated period of time in listening about.

it all which, in his words, 'opened new doors of knowledge' for him. This also developed an interest for him to hear differing perspectives with the intention of learning.

In sharing about his time with Akshara as a volunteer and a peer guide, Adityan pointed out how different his experiences were both the times because he was part of a space where different perceptions on different issues were shared. Additionally, he also credits attending the module sessions again to developing clarity in what has already been understood which gave him space to articulate his opinions clearly and confidently as well.

Despite realising and practicing these gradual and promising changes for himself, he still confesses to participating

in and using conventionally stereotypical phrases. He acknowledges this as a habit that needs changing and takes cognisance of how it is a product of his conditioning, upbringing and the people he surrounds himself with.

In mapping his journey, Adityan highlights how he has been able to improve relationships with himself by being vocal about his opinions in social settings, especially with family members, and speak openly and sensitively about periods, something which is conventionally considered to be a taboo subject to converse about. All of it, he believes, have contributed to shifting his deep-rooted mindset in the most fundamental of ways.



FELLOWS

Issues Fellows identified included addiction and related youth/children's issues; Water shortage and youth unemployment School drop-out among girls; Women's safety on public places and at home and the lack of clean and safe toilets; Access to government schemes and local governance gaps. In at least one area, fellows connected findings with local corporators or authorities. Fellows also acknowledged observing a positive shift in their friends' attitudes and behaviour.



We spoke about girls' education in a way that made people think.

*- Fellow
while conducting a Safety
Walk in their area.*



TESTIMONIALS

I want to thank Akshara Centre for its impactful YCP program. The initiative plays a crucial role in sensitizing young minds on issues related to gender equality, active citizenship, and social justice. By engaging youth in dialogue, reflection, and action, the YCP is not only building awareness but also empowering a generation to think critically and take responsibility as informed citizens. The interactive and participatory approach used in the program helps in fostering empathy, leadership, and inclusive thinking. Thank you for your continuous efforts in shaping a more equitable and aware society through the youth. Looking forward to more such transformative engagements.

*- Dr. Vijay Vishwakarma
NSS Program Officer,
Bunts Sangha's S. M. Shetty College*

On behalf of Ramniranjan Jhunjunwala College, Ghatkopar, we express our heartfelt gratitude to the entire team of Akshara for their enormous support to our NSS unit. The various activities and workshops conducted by Akshara were extremely well-structured and informative. The real-life scenarios explained during the session through group activities has always stimulated the student's thought process positively. Akshara's role has been significant in shaping a responsible and inclusive mindset among students for gender equity. We extend our best wishes to Akshara for all their future endeavours and wish to continue our fruitful collaboration in the future, too. Thank you once again for your cooperation and partnership.

*- Dr. Dan Bahadur Singh and Prof. Pranali Karnik,
NSS Program Officers,
Ramniranjan Jhunjunwala College*



AKSHARA'S ROLL OF HONOUR

This was a year of Akshara being recognized for its work but it's never been a solo journey and it's also acknowledging the team board members, donors and partners as well as all those who've walked, challenged and believed in Akshara.

Thank you!

MEET OUR TEAM



OUR PRESENCE ONLINE

587382

Engagement/
Interactions

81.82%

Increase

March 24 - 5500

Instagram Followers
increase

12.9M

Views

March 25 - 10000

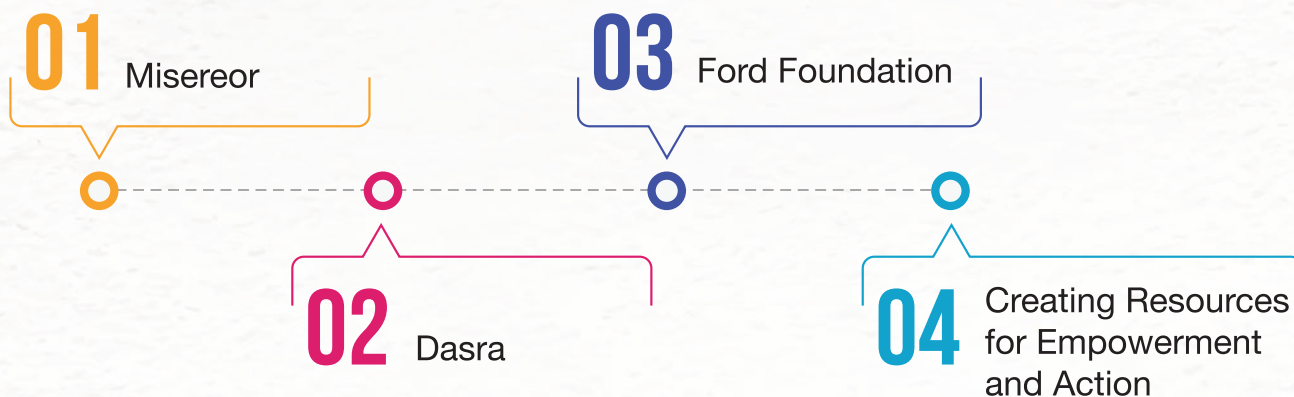
Number dropped to 9.6k
due to fake accounts
removal by Instagram

36.4 K

YouTube followers

FRONT FOR RAPID ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT OF INDIA (AKSHARA CENTRE)

FUNDING PARTNERS



PARTNERSHIPS:

Individual and Institutional Donors

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Vijayakumar Kadappa

Hansa Pardiwala

Urmila Salunkhe

ABRIDGE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE Year 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025

FRONT FOR RAPID ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT OF INDIA (AKSHARA CENTRE)

BALANCE - SHEET AS AT 31ST MARCH , 2025

Funds & Liabilities	Amount in INR	Assets	Amount in INR
Trust Fund/Corpus Fund	4,495,402	Immovable Properties	1,155,284
Other Earmarked Funds	26,239,478	Movable Properties	525,521
Project Balance Unspent	8,676,113	Investments	67,871,823
Liabilities and Provisions	995,421	Income Receivable	195,810
Income & Expenditure Account	32,304,187	Deposits & Advances	1,808,068
		Cash & Balance With Banks	1,154,095
Total Amount	72,710,601	Total Amount	72,710,601

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE Year 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025

Expenditure	Amount in INR	Income	Amount in INR
To Establishment Expenses	56,325	By Interest	4,717,055
To Public Trust Administration Fund	84,056	By Donation	585,357
To Loss on Sale of Scrap	60,000	By Rent Received	6,61,500
To Depreciation	6,679	By Income from other sources	82,070
To Interest transferred to respective funds	4,153		
To Donations transferred to respective funds	1,013,234		
To Surplus of Income over Expenditure carried to Balance Sheet	585,357		
Total Amount	6,045,982	Total Amount	6,045,982