



5-year **REPORT**
2013-18

success **STORY**

belief **STATEMENT**

“

When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me - look for the helpers.

You will always find people who are helping.

”

- Fred Rogers

As told by Aks Crisis line volunteer - Priya Parkhi

Puja (Name Changed) called me on 4th of July, 2016. Initially unable to speak and sobbing, she eventually spoke in a very gentle voice, "My husband has beaten me up and I'm new to the city, I need help". I met an immensely distraught Pooja on the same day, along with her 2 and a half-year-old son. Having assured her that we would help, she told me her story.

This was her second marriage and it was in a terrible state. Her husband was not only eyeing her father's money but also abusing her physically and emotionally. Nishant would lose his temper, often over trivial things, and would assault her with whatever he found at arm's length, sometimes a hanger, a belt and on instances threw an alarm clock and jewelry box at her. He had shoved his fist in her mouth and scratched her throat. A petite woman, she would be pushed around often. He refused to give her money to run the house and, embarrassingly, she'd had to ask her parents for financial help. Her in-laws who lived in a different city had turned a blind eye towards the whole situation. Her first marriage ended when her husband was diagnosed with a personality disorder that made it impossible to live with him. Her parents supported her and helped her cope with that difficult phase. This time they refused to even acknowledge that she was being abused. Her father, in an attempt to understand and see his daughter happy, would buy Nishant expensive gifts and at times apologize on her behalf, which in turn would feed his narcissistic ego. The social stigma of a second failed marriage was something her parents were not ready to face. She showed me the bruise marks on her back and shoulders. Her response to the abuse was to try and normalize the situation by playing nice, while her husband would become cold and quiet. Their son had started realizing what was happening and after their fights, would hug her and wipe her tears.

The next day, a medical report confirmed that the bruise marks were caused by abuse. Unwilling to go to the police, Puja was consulted by our lawyer who made her aware of legal rights. We continued to meet at intervals, across eight months. Through our meetings, I educated her about the power and control wheel, created safety plans, successfully encouraged her to acquire a job and build a support system at work and in her society. We established safety codes which could be messaged during dire situations.

With time, when an abusive episode occurred, friends from work would pick her and her son up and take them home. Her husband started feeling shameful. She started retaliating and her neighbors soon found out too. Observing her support system getting stronger, her husband realized he could be punished and stopped hitting her but ramped up the emotional abuse to break her spirit. He hired a man Friday who acted as his informant. He forced her to pick up after the domestic help had eaten. He would drink with him at home and make her serve both of them, insulting her time to time by telling her that he would rather her leave than the man Friday.

She would call and cry hysterically, but over time and with a calm resolve she began taking necessary steps because she could clearly see Nishant's pattern of abuse. She began with saying "no", slowly she stopped apologizing when she was not at fault. Then she started giving him ultimatums, making him aware that his career would be ruined if she reached out to his company and he would also lose his son. Eventually, he started backing off. After more than a year of counseling, emotional breakdowns, going back and forth over a decision to take legal action or not, Puja finally found a middle ground and she stood firm.

This story does not have a fairytale ending but it does show the realities of abuse and the strength one has to take a stance against it. Puja did not back off, she faced the abuse resiliently and created her own space where she now commands respect. I did hear from her at scheduled times for a while but now the voice on the other side seemed much stronger and a self-confident one.

letter FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Aks is an NGO with a heart, a heart that is kept beating with the lifeblood that comes from our dedicated and selfless volunteers.

The Aks motto is to "listen, empathize, believe & empower"

The word Aks means reflection in Parsi. The reason I used the word reflection to represent our organization is because we are a reflection of the society we live in and we have to understand each and every caller within the context of this society.

Our volunteers act as the mirror to our clients to help them see and understand their own barriers that prevent them from breaking away from the clutches of violence and abuse.

Aks, was an idea, an idea that was planted in my head while studying in the United States and did my first few practicum and internships in Denton County Friends of the Family (DCFOF), where I later grew to be a staff counselor. The idea was to replicate this good work back home, a way of giving back to the country of my birth. It was a naive and idealistic plan and even though I came back with a lot of passion, I was doing this work only in an individual capacity for the first few years.

In 2012, the Nirbhaya case occurred and as a woman, my world shattered, my faith in humanity was questioned and my ideal view of what it is to be a woman in India took a rude shock. Was this possible? Could this happen to me just because I got on the wrong bus? My idea of a just world was challenged and I saw how patriarchy and its ideals were creating a country where women couldn't be truly free.

I had worked with rape survivors for over 3 years in the US and had over 3000 hours of counseling experience with survivors of all kinds of abuse and trauma and it took something of this magnitude to shake me out of my reverie. I could actually make a difference and here I was letting all that I had learnt go unused. As I walked at a silent candlelight march with tears in my eyes for Nirbhaya, I realized how futile it was compared to what my training and exposure could do for the women and children of my country. In that very moment, Aks was born - that is the day the seed of Aks grew into a small sapling. It took a fundraiser, training of keen volunteers and the Aks crisis

lines were launched on the 15th of August, 2013. No NGO status, just a hotline for people to dial into, in times of crisis.

"Today, the Aks crisis lines are almost 5 years old and we have received around 3000 calls."

The crisis line had only 3 motives:
+ No one victimized by gender-based violence should feel alone
+ Someone in crisis should be able to call at the very instant which meant that the lines would have to be answered 24/7
+ Our primary role as an organization would be to empathize and empower survivors, not to raid and rescue

I wanted every woman, child or man who had been abused and victimized to know they could reach out and have someone just listen to them. No judgment. Just acknowledgment and empathy. We started with just 6 volunteers in 2013 and we received only 47 calls in the first year! Today, the Aks crisis lines are almost 5 years old and we have received around 3000 calls.

Over these five years, we have grown from 6 volunteers to a core team of 3 people, 1 follow up counselor, 17 crisis line volunteers, 11 legal line volunteers and a community education team of 10 people (some who are also volunteers for the crisis lines). Every year we train more volunteers to run our lines and this year there will be over 30 people who give their time and expertise without asking for or expecting any monetary gain. Aks has survived all these years because of the dedication and passion of these people who put in their time and heart into making a difference to someone's life.

But as is with every growth story Aks has evolved into an organization beyond anything that I imagined but one that I did hope for. Women look to Aks for professional support, counselling, legal help and advocacy. We are now faced with a tremendous number of calls and the work in gender violence is not only demanding but calls for dedicated resources that can see cases through. A volunteer-only NGO does not benefit Aks in today's scenario and trained personnel and qualified staff have had to move on to other income based models. To answer the current needs of society, Aks not only needs to upgrade to paid employees but expand its core team to keep up with the amount of work. As of now, Even our legal support comes pro bono from Pune and Delhi but going forward we need to have that support inhouse.

Aks today has taken deep roots and needs greater nourishment and all kinds of support to grow into a mighty oak, offering support to all who seek shelter under its bows. I humbly, albeit proudly, acknowledge that though we are a mere speck in the sea of humanity and what we are attempting to do is create ripples in the fabric of the Indian society. Ripples that touch the lives of those in desperate need of some one to hear their wails and stand reassured that they are not alone. Once that is achieved Aks would have done what it set out to do !

Do join us on our exciting journey!

"Anything that's human is mentionable, & anything that is mentionable can be more manageable. When we can talk about our feelings, they become less overwhelming, less upsetting & less scary."

The people we trust with the important talk can help us know that we are not alone."

- Fred Rogers

BARKHA BAJAJ
AKS FOUNDATION

about **AKS**

Aks Foundation is registered under the Societies Registration Act 1860 (Central) and under the Maharashtra Public Trusts Act 1950. Aks Foundation is a Pune based organization working in the area of gender-based violence, primarily domestic violence, and sexual assault. It provides support to victims of abuse and violence in order to empower them to become survivors.

On 15 August 2013, Aks Foundation launched a 24-hour crisis line for survivors of abuse and violence. In the following years, we launched several initiatives to raise awareness, reach out to women & children and create real change.

Today Aks runs three programs to drive forward its cause:

- + Aks 24/7 Crisis Line and Advocacy Program
- + Aks Legal Line
- + Aks Community Education

EMPOWER SURVIVORS TO BECOME **CHAMPIONS**.

our **MISSION**

To empower victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and sexual abuse to become survivors and lead a life of dignity.

our **VISION**

A society based on gender equality where violence is not the norm and all people can lead a life free of abuse.

2013
aug. 15th

*Launch of Aks
Crisis Lines*

2015
may 26th

*Registration Under
Central Govt Societies
Registration Act 1860*

2015
jun. 2nd

*Trust Deed Approved by
Charity Commissioner,
Pune*

2015
oct. 17th

*Registration Under State
Govt. of Maharashtra,
Public Trusts Act 1950*

2017
jan. 6th

*Exemption Order U/S Sec
12AA[1]b(i) of IT Act 1961*

2017
apr. 11th

*Exemption Order
U/S 80 G (5)(vi) of
IT Act 1961*



Aks representative, Charu Mudholkar speaks at the seminar 'Transforming Women from Equality to Empowerment', sponsored by Maharashtra State Commission for Women.

aks HIGHLIGHTS

Over the years we have met our goals and achieved our targets, overcoming adversities. We've highlighted some of the moments that have been instrumental to our success.



Art workshop conducted to raise awareness about child sexual abuse.



Spreading awareness through Radio Mirchi



Barkha Bajaj (Exec. Director), conducting a workshop with TMC participants & having a real conversation about Domestic Violence with the young boys



Aks representatives meet Maharashtra State Commission of Women to collaborate on community based programs for law enforcement and medical communities.



Launch of 'Women Friendly', Pune

bitter REALITY

Measuring and understanding the devastating number of crimes against women and children is not an easy task. Every year, thousands of cases go unreported. Those that do, don't always receive the attention or empathy required in such instances. With our focus on Maharashtra, here are some key figures, as of 2016:

Approximately 3.4 lakh reported crimes against women

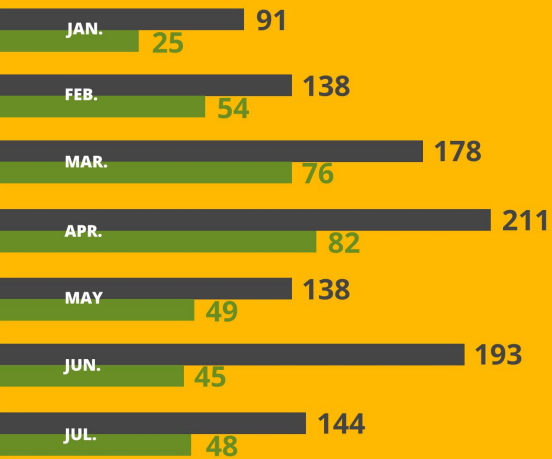


Maharashtra ranks highest in assault cases, at 11,396 reported crimes

Maharashtra reports 3rd highest number of reported rape cases, at 4189

Reported cases of crime against children reach an all-time high, at 106,958

aks' 2-STEP APPROACH: EMPATHY & ACTION



Aks call logs 2018 Jan. - Jul.

■ Crisis Lines (No. of calls)
■ Legal Lines (No. of calls)

17%
GROWTH IN CALLS
IN 5 YEARS

95
RESOLVED CASES
IN 2017

63
PAN-INDIA
OUTREACH
ASSOCIATIONS

2017 851
2016 310

2014 94

2015 100

2013 47

○ Indicates number of calls
Aks call logs 2013-2017

community EDUCATION

According to the Common Wealth Human Rights Initiative, more than 50% of crimes against women go unreported in Mumbai and Delhi. In light of this, Aks provides responsive support to victims and is constantly striving to reach out to women and children who need urgent assistance but are apprehensive of approaching the authorities.

TRAINING INITIATIVES:

*Figures indicate number of attendees

CRISIS INTERVENTION & PREVENTION PROGRAM

48

96 MOCK CALL TRAININGS

890

SEMINARS PARTICIPATED AS GUEST SPEAKERS

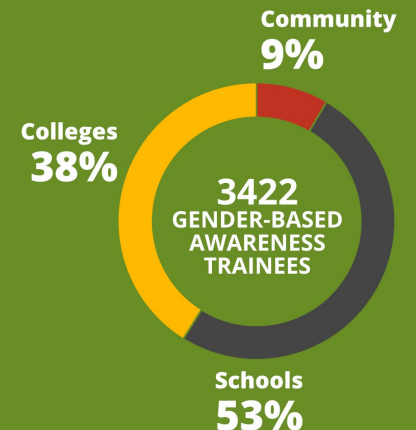
LEGAL TRAINING **18**

3422 GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AWARENESS TRAINING

SEMINARS PARTICIPATED IN AS GUEST SPEAKERS:

ATTENDEES | EVENTS

- 100 - Pune Women's Council Strive & Rise
- 100 - Transforming Women from Equality to Empowerment
- 35 - Rights on Women in India
- 100 - Workshop on Mental Health Issues in Women
- 200 - Child Protection Act (POCSO)
- 100 - Child Protection Task Force
- 180 - Prevention of Sexual Harrasment at Workplace (POSH)



2013-2017 Reported Figures:

4500+
PEOPLE TRAINED

80
TRAINING SESSIONS

41,250
VOLUNTEER HOURS

our BUDGET

	2018-2019			2019-2020			2020-2021			2021-2022		
	₹ Rate	No.	₹	₹ Rate	No.	₹	₹ Rate	No.	₹	₹ Rate	No.	₹
Event	500	900	450,000	500	1080	540,000	500	1296	648,000	500	1296	648,000
Individual Donation	25,000	4	100,000	25,000	6	150,000	25,000	8	200,000	25,000	8	200,000
Corporate Social Responsibility*	3,370,000	1	3,370,000	4,100,000	1	4,100,000	4,350,000	1	4,350,000	4,350,000	1	4,350,000
TOTAL INCOME (Proposed)			3,920,000			4,790,000			5,198,000			5,198,000
BALANCE FROM LAST FISCAL YEAR			753,614			9,876			89,576			89,576
CAPEX												
Laptops	25,000	8	200,000									
Work Desk	9,673	2	19,346									
Meeting Table	18,000	1	18,000									
Arm Chairs	12,000	2	24,000									
Microsoft Office	6,799	8	54,392									
Air Conditioner	35,000	2	70,000									
Total Capex			385,738									
OPEX												
Rent	35,000	12	420,000	38,500	12	462,000	42,350	12	508,200	42,350	12	508,200
Electricity	5,000	12	60,000	5,750	12	69,000	6,613	12	79,350	6,613	12	79,350
Maintainance of Furniture & Fixtures	5,000	12	60,000	5,750	12	69,000	6,613	12	79,350	6,613	12	79,350
Stationery	3,000	12	36,000	3,450	12	41,400	3,968	12	47,610	3,968	12	47,610
Software Work Management System	12,000	12	144,000	13,800	12	165,600	15,870	12	190,440	15,870	12	190,440
Travel	7,000	12	84,000	8,050	12	96,600	9,258	12	111,090	9,258	12	111,090
Training & Development for Staff	13,000	12	156,000	14,950	12	179,400	17,193	12	206,310	17,193	12	206,310
Telephone & Internet Expense	5,000	12	60,000	5,750	12	69,000	6,613	12	79,350	6,613	12	79,350
Event Expenditure	150,000	1	150,000	172,500	1	172,500	198,375	1	198,375	198,375	1	198,375
Community Outreach	300,000	1	300,000	345,000	1	345,000	396,750	1	396,750	396,750	1	396,750
PAYROLL												
Call Coordinator	25,000	12	300,000	27,500	12	330,000	30,250	12	363,000	30,250	12	363,000
Community Education Coordinator	32,000	12	384,000	35,200	12	422,400	38,720	12	464,640	38,720	12	464,640
Legal Coordinator	30,000	12	360,000	33,000	12	396,000	36,300	12	435,600	36,300	12	435,600
Office Reception	15,000	12	180,000	16,500	12	198,000	18,150	12	217,800	18,150	12	217,800
Junior Counselor 1	36,000	12	432,000	39,600	12	475,200	43,560	12	522,720	43,560	12	522,720
Junior Counselor 2	28,000	12	336,000	30,800	12	369,600	33,880	12	406,560	33,880	12	406,560
Social Worker	26,000	12	312,000	28,600	12	343,200	31,460	12	377,520	31,460	12	377,520
Executive Director	40,000	12	480,000	40,000	12	480,000	44,000	12	528,000	44,000	12	528,000
Chartered Accountant	2,000	12	24,000	2,200	12	26,400	2,420	12	29,040	2,420	12	29,040
Total Opex			4,278,000									
TOTAL OUTGOING			4,663,738			4,710,300			5,241,705			5,241,705
BALANCE			9,876			89,576			45,871			45,871

*CSR Amount planned to be raised through initiatives in the coming years.

individual DONORS

- + Mr. Gunjan Nawal
- + Lt. Gen. Mukesh Sabharwal
- + Lt. Gen. Dalip Bhardwaj
- + Smt. Surinder Bajaj
- + Ms. Chitra Sachdeva
- + Ms. Zareen Babu
- + Col. Y.B. Umralkar
- + Brig. P.K. Gupta
- + Col. Sudhir Bhatnagar
- + Mr. Kunal Bhardwaj
- + Brig. P. Raina

"I saw my friend in action, speaking to a troubled lady who was hesitant to give her name and disclose her whereabouts. With finesse she persuaded her to disclose her identity after an hour of convincing her that she was safe. Then she set the ball rolling and later I met Aks's Barkha and her team, who take the next steps. It's an amazingly well organised and professionally run NGO, that takes care of the victim and maintains her dignity and confidentiality. I feel happy that I am part of it with my support."

- ZAREEN BABU

"Domestic violence and sexual abuse is a common occurrence but one that is not talked about. There are very few organisations that attempt to assist the victim right from the initial contact till resolution and Aks Foundation does that. This is a charity we believe in and will continue to support it as long as we have the means."

- IMMANUEL BABU

WHY DONORS CHOOSE US

"Until a couple of years ago I never realised the magnitude of the issue. Meeting Barkha made me aware not only of its proximity but of the sheer magnitude yet the veil around it. That's when I knew I had to step up in any way I could. And Aks helps me channelise my will to make a difference in someone's life."

- KUNAL BHARDWAJ

"Aks Foundation is a beacon for the noble cause of awakening women in society. For Barkha, the young visionary founder and CEO of AKS, it is a "calling" for helping women in distress day or night. I consider myself honoured as they accept my humble contribution periodically. The organization is managed most professionally and has its heart in the right place. The dedication, commitment and focus of AKS to assuage the community at large, attracts me constantly to their cause."

- GEN. MUKESH SABHARWAL

our ASSOCIATIONS

Our partners across India allow us to reach more individuals in need of assistance and with the immediacy that is much needed. With thousands of cases being unreported, providing advisory support and legal advice as the first line of defense against abuse has become imperative. With 63 associations pan-India, we have successfully spread our roots and must continue to reach out to more regions.

19

MAHARASHTRA

15

KERALA

9

DELHI

5

GUJARAT

3

CHANDIGARH

3

TAMILNADU

2

BENGALURU

2

BIHAR

2

KOLKATA

1

HYDERABAD

1

REWA

1

NORTH EAST

our TEAM

Our journey would not be possible without the right set of people coming together at the right time. Our team consists of individuals who are committed to the cause and determined to take an initiative. Year-on-year we see a growth in the number of interns and volunteers, all of whom play a critical role. With the growing number of calls and events, we are rapidly scaling up our team, always on the lookout for the right kind of individual.

our PARTNERS



SUDARSHAN



SUNRAJ
SYSTEMS

RSP

SMT. SITADEVI
TAPARIYA TRUST



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REEVA GUJRAL



NAHAR &
ASSOCIATES



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CORE MEMBERS

BARKHA BAJAJ
+17 VOLUNTEERS
+1 FOLLOW-UP COUNSELLOR

NEERJA BAJAJ
+10 VOLUNTEERS

ADV. HEENA PANJABI
+11 VOLUNTEERS
+2 EXTERNAL LEGAL
COUNSELS IN PUNE
+1 EXTERNAL LEGAL
COUNSEL IN DELHI



2012

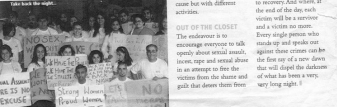
EVENT

EVERY NIGHT HAS ITS DAWN

April was World Sexual Assault Awareness Month. Aditya Kaul caught up with firebrand activist Barkha Bajaj, who has been a beacon of hope for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. An hour with her and he is all ready to help her 'Take Back the Night'.



BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATERS
With a BA in psychology from Fergusson College in Pune, Aditya Kaul is a social psychologist from Pune University and a expert in counseling psychology from the UK. Barkha Bajaj has been calling while speaking in family therapy and trauma. The event, which is observed as World Sexual Assault Awareness Month, has been organized by Aks Foundation. The night, which is held in Pune, is a rare opportunity for victims of sexual violence to speak out. On the one hand, it is a chance for the victims to share their stories and on the other hand, it is a chance for the community to listen and support them. The night is held in a safe space where the victims can feel safe and supported. The night is held in a safe space where the victims can feel safe and supported. The night is held in a safe space where the victims can feel safe and supported.



2009



2011

take BACK THE NIGHT

April is universally recognized as Sexual Assault Awareness Month. 'Take Back the Night' (TBTN) first appeared in Europe in 1976 and is today a sign of empowerment for men, women, and children across the world. TBTN Pune is an annual event organized by Aks Foundation to spread awareness about Sexual Assault and to take a stand to 'reclaim the night'.

Over the years, we have celebrated TBTN with art exhibitions, concerts, poetry, and humor, raising awareness and funds towards our cause. We will continue to discuss and raise women's issues unabashedly for years to come because the 'Night' belongs to all of us.

#TBTN



2013



2014



2015



2010



2016



2017



2018

success STORY

Date: 22 Apr 2018

Caller: Parth Mishra (Name Changed)

TIME: 2.32 AM: PM called and told Neerja, our night time volunteer on duty, that he was speaking from the Police Station in Mumbai. His lady friend and two other girls were harassed and assaulted by a drunk youth and his lady friend's face was badly swollen. He had tried to lodge an FIR at the police station but the Desk Officer refused to lodge an FIR and was merely noting down a simple complaint. The policemen, on his persistence, had sent them to a nearby govt. medical facility for a medical exam of the woman and a blood test of the intoxicated youth, but the facility was closed. The police flatly refused to take them to the govt. hospital some distance away. He wanted our help to have an FIR registered against the perpetrator.

TIME: 3.05 AM: Neerja repeatedly tried convincing the Desk Officer to register an FIR even if they could not be taken to the govt. hospital but he was noncommittal. Thereupon Neerja woke up her husband, a retired Brigadier of the Indian Army and asked him to speak to the police officer. Brig Bajaj first sought his name and then politely but firmly requested the Desk Officer to lodge an FIR, give a copy to the complainant and detain the youth. The Desk Officer assured that he would do the needful.

TIME: 3.25 AM: Parth rang up again and informed Neerja that the police were using delay tactics and no action was being taken because the youth apparently had political patronage and no amount of convincing by our volunteer seemed to have borne fruit.

TIME: 3.55 AM: Once again Brig Bajaj was requested to intervene. This time the Brigadier requested to speak to the police station in-charge. A gentleman named Mr. K came on the line and after a great deal of persuasion (and some veiled threats) the officer was convinced to do his duty to the aggrieved citizens. Mr. K promised to make an FIR, give a copy of the same to Parth and send the intoxicated youth to the govt. hospital at daybreak for a much delayed medical checkup.

TIME: 4.25 AM: Parth was spoken to and advised to camp at the police station and not leave till he had a copy of the FIR in hand.

TIME: 5.55 AM: Parth was rung up and asked if he had received the copy of the FIR. He confirmed that he had received the same and was leaving the police station!

A routine case for our volunteer to assist an aggrieved citizen but a major boost for Aks and our Cause!



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