

***Towards a future where girls and women live  
free from fear, warnings, blame. I Never 'Ask For It'.***

**BLANK  
NOISE**

Photo: Project 'Meet To Sleep'





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NO EXCUSE FOR SEXUAL VIOLENCE

**I NEVER  
ASK FOR IT**

***Most women and girls, can remember the clothes they wore when they experienced sexual assault.***

[www.blanknoise.org](http://www.blanknoise.org)



Project: *I Never Ask For It*  
Type: *Street Intervention*  
Duration: *Ongoing - 2023*

[www.blanknoise.org](http://www.blanknoise.org)



Being raised in an environment of warnings and fear has led to blame being internalised. As a result most experiences of sexual assault, violence, threat and intimidation have been silenced and untold. The I Never Ask For It Clothes Project invites women and girls to become Action Sheroes, Heroes and Theyroes by bringing in the clothes they wore when they experienced sexual assault. Each garment is witness, memory and voice to the survivors experience of sexual assault. ***In 2023, 10,000 garments will stand together in sites of public significance, resonating, I Never Ask For It.***

Attitudes of blame permeate spaces, from the home, to streets, campuses, workplace, affecting women and girls across identities. The I Never Ask For It mission draws attention to the blame as systemic and works to create personal and collective healing.



Project: ***I Never Ask For It***  
Type: **Street Intervention**  
Duration: **Ongoing - 2023**

[www.blanknoise.org](http://www.blanknoise.org)

**I Never Ask For It**, Street Intervention  
MG Road - Church Street, Bangalore  
14th January, 2017



### ***Call to end justification for sexual violence. I Never Ask For It.***

Garments as testimonies of sexual violence build the I Never Ask For It mission. The movement is facilitated through events and actions designed by Blank Noise. Street interventions trigger public discourse on blame.

Members of the public, women and girls, join the I Never Ask For It movement, share their experiences of sexual assault. Male members of the public step in to carry the garments as a symbolic gesture of sharing responsibility of the issue.



Project: *I Never Ask For It*  
Type: **Workshops/ Listening Cirlces**  
Duration: **Ongoing - 2023**



The I Never Ask For It mission is rooted in collaborative efforts. It envisions working with a diverse range of allies including citizens as 'Action Sheroes, Heroes and Theyroes' (members of the Blank Noise community), women led organisations, high school students, college students, communities in India and globally. **Workshops and Listening Circles bring together women, to listen in, identify violence, blame and shame as experienced in their own lives.** The practice of listening in without judgement creates a safe space, making participants feel heard, understood; this is the opposite of an environment of blame. The session builds empathy, knowledge, and solidarity.

Audio testimonials from Listening Circles and Workshops will be made available for public knowledge via audio podcasts.

# Dein Gang Rape Lawyer Manohar Lal Sharma Says 'No Respectable Woman' Would Be Rap

**Reporting To Remember is a collaborative research project archiving reports where violence against women from India and the world where have been justified through blame.** An environment of blame justifies violence against women. When violence is justified it is perpetuated.

**Reporting To Remember is a pledge to not forget.**

नाहलाए नयादा लायगा ता रायण जाएगा ही: कैल

**विजयवर्गीय** *Jagran*, January 4, 2013

<http://www.jagran.com/news/national-mp-industry-minister-give-controversial-comments-on-women-10006743.h>

**लडकी को इतनी रात में बाहर नहीं घूमना**

**चाहिए था** *Jansatta*, August 7, 2017

Project: **Reporting To Remember**  
**#INeverAskForIt**  
Type: **Collaborative Research**  
Duration: **Ongoing - 2023**

Reporting to Remember is building archive of incidents where persons in influential positions have blamed women for experiencing sexual assault. It also includes instances where women and girls who have committed suicide due to fear of social stigma, and shame after sexual assault. The archive also gathers publicly known reports of women and girls being forced to marry the rapist due to social stigma around sexual assault. These ongoing reports live in collective public memory.

***Reporting To Remember will reveal and establish the deeply global and local nature of victim blame. The project will foster global collaborations and solidarity to end justification of sexual and gender based violence.***

The Archive will be built by multiple collaborators including activists, academics, students, organisations. It is currently being offered as a classroom project in colleges and has also been built by interns at Blank Noise.



Project: *I Never Ask For It*  
Type: *Movement*  
Duration: *Ongoing - 2023*

www.blanknoise.org

# #INeverAskForIt Overview

## Garment As Witness/ Memory/ Voice

*Movement towards collective healing from sexual and gender based violence.*

The I Never Ask For It Clothes Project invites women and girls to become Action Sherones by bringing in the clothes they wore when they experienced sexual assault. The garment is memory witness and voice.

### How

A range of participatory approaches towards personal and collective healing will inform the I Never Ask For It Clothes project. This includes workshops, listening circles, talks, street interventions, internet interventions, and audio podcasts via which women and persons will bring their clothes.

10,000 garments will be stand united in sites of public significance. They will form a monumental installation for the public to witness, experience, build together and heal. Garments will be accompanied with audio testimonials.

## Reporting to Remember

*Community Led Research*

Building global public led archive of when and how violence against women was justified and lives in collective public memory.

### How

The Reporting To Remember archive is being built on the efforts of college student interns at Blank Noise. It is also being offered as a class project to college students. The archive also envisions to be built by multiple collaborators including fellow activists in India

All reports will be mapped and archived for public knowledge, memory. We envision it leading to ending any future excuse or justification for sexual violence. The project will be shared on the internet and also take the form of a print publication.

Recall

Intervene

Heal

Building New  
Public Memory

Impact: Local and Global

Connect personal and systemic

Year 2023

Heal.  
Shift in public  
consciousness from  
blame to empathy.



Project: **Meet To Sleep**  
Type: **Public Action**  
Duration: **2014- Ongoing**

[www.blanknoise.org](http://www.blanknoise.org)

Meet to Sleep mobilises women to take a nap in their public parks. It was last held on December 15th, 2019, marking seven years since Jyoti Singh's gangrape and murder. ***Since 2014, Meet To Sleep has been built by 49 allies and over 2000 Action Sheroes, Heroes and Theyroes in 38 towns, cities and villages. Action Sheroes have slept in 89 parks and open feilds across India, Pakistan and Finland.***

Action Sheroes Meet to Sleep asserting their right to live free from fear and defenceless.





Project: ***Talk To Me***  
Type: ***Live Action***  
Duration: ***2012 - Ongoing***

In 2015, Talk To Me was the recipient of the International Award For Public Art.



Talk To Me invites strangers in sites of conflict, fear and threat to an hour long conversation, over tea and samosas. Two strangers, sit facing each other, talk about anything except sexual violence. The event is designed to fight fear, question fear politics, our story of fear and the possible biases within in it.

***Talk To Me, initiates possible friendships, connection, trust and empathy.***



Project: ***A Very Deliberate Manel***

Type: ***Workshop Event***

*A Pilot Programme was conducted at Max Mueller Bhavan, Bangalore in October 2016*



***A Very Deliberate Manel*** is a safe space bringing in 21 intergenerational men and 7 women to discuss an aspect of masculinity based on the lived experience of its participants. The event is audio recorded to be released via podcast series on masculinities. The project invites men to step in, reflect, build insight through the personal and collective experiences. The objective is to identify and articulate plurality within masculinities. It is also for men to locate their role in contributing to end sexual and gender based violence. We want to offer space for listening in as a tool for empathy building and change.





Project: **Akeli Awaara Azaad**  
Type: **Tshirt/ Merchandise**  
Duration: **2016- Ongoing**



Action Shero wearing Akeli Awaara Azaad Tshirt, produced by Blank Noise in 2017, championing the Action Shero spirit - ***The Right To Live On Her Own, Unapologetic And Free.***

*Akeli Awaara Azaad ( language, hindi ) translates as, On her own, Unapologetic and Free.*  
Since 2017, over 800 women have lent their voice to the Akeli Awaara Azaad campaign.  
The T Shirt will be translated and printed in multiple languages and worn by women across identities as they embrace the Action Shero Spirit.



Blank Noise Founder/ Director,  
Jasmeen Patheja at TED Talks India,  
Nayi Sochi, hosted on Star Plus  
with Shahrukh Khan. [Watch here.](#)

*Photo Credit: Amit Mahadheshiya 2017*



Blank Noise has been widely featured by media in across 22 languages in India and internationally. Press include The Hindu, BBC, New York Times, The Atlantic and more.

*"For [Jasmeen] Patheja, the artist behind Blank Noise, breaking the silence has been healing, even empowering...In India, thousands of women like her are becoming Action Heroes. We may not yet be ready to take back the night. But we are making a start on taking back the street."*

*"I'm really inspired by the Blank Noise project. It's these women who are doing public actions in India where they physically take up space to show that women are allowed to own and have their own physical space... It's a protest but it's also performance art around owning your own space and owning your own body. It's a response to street harassment and sexual assault."*

- Samhita Mukhopadhyay, TeenVOGUE editor

*"Started in 2003 by Jasmeen Patheja as part of her graduation project, Blank Noise mobilizes citizen "Action Heroes" through its projects, events, and campaigns, and it has played a major role in the snowballing discussion surrounding street harassment in India."*

*"We need to make ourselves safe by making [other people] familiar instead" says Patheja.  
"It requires a purposeful unclenching of the fist. Fear creates fear. Defense creates defense. We need to build safe cities with empathy" (About "Talk To Me")*

*"As we go through the rack, she points out a white dress, a swimsuit, a champagne-coloured gown, a pair of trousers, a school uniform - examples that she describes as "a mirror" to the fact that all women experience abuse and gender violence."*



Watch the video [here](#).







Blank Noise was initiated in 2003. At a time street harassment was perceived as 'eve teasing', and lightly dismissed as a non issue. Over the fifteen years, Blank Noise has mobilised thousands of 'Action Sheroes, Heroes and Theyroes'; citizens and persons across the globe. They have all been drawn together by a shared desire to shift the climate of denial and silence surrounding street harassment and sexual assault and the wish to create safe spaces for survivors of violence to speak, be heard and heal.

Blank Noise has designed public projects, inviting citizen participation and enabling them to act and become everyday Action Sheroes, Heroes and Theyroes. Projects are designed to confront fear, blame, shame, heal, trust, and build empathy. Blank Noise is built on the lived experiences of Action Sheroes, Heroes and Theyroes.

Action Sheroes, Heroes and Theyroes have participated in Blank Noise from across 188 cities and towns in India and globally, and 23 countries (including ,USA, UK, Pakistan, Colombia, Japan). The age group ranges from 9 -88 years, with a majority being in their 20s and 30s. Action Sheroes, Heroes and Theyroes include women, men and individuals beyond the gender binary.

Project ideas at Blank Noise have rippled into over 500 actions, taking shape across spaces from the streets, to campuses, the internet, classrooms, art venues, conference rooms, public talks, the mainstream media and a collective public memory.

Select projects include, I Never Ask For It ( mission to eradicate blame ), Meet To Sleep ( performative action, enabling women to fight fear by taking a nap in public parks), Talk To Me ( a project bringing male and female strangers to a conversation over tea and samoas.The project is designed to build empathy and trust)

***Continued below***



Blank Noise has been widely featured by media in across 22 languages in India and internationally. Press include The Hindu, BBC, New York Times, The Atlantic. View the press archive [here](#).

Founder/ Director Jasmeen Patheja was the recipient of the prestigious Visible Award 2019 for her commitment and approach to end victim blame and sexual assault through socially engaged art practice. The award was constituted by Cittadellarte-Pistoletto Foundation and Fondazione Zegna towards the project I Never Ask For It. View more [here](#).

Patheja was named in BBC's list of 12 artists who changed the world in 2019. The Vera List Center for Art & Politics awarded her the Jane Lombard Fellowship in 2019.

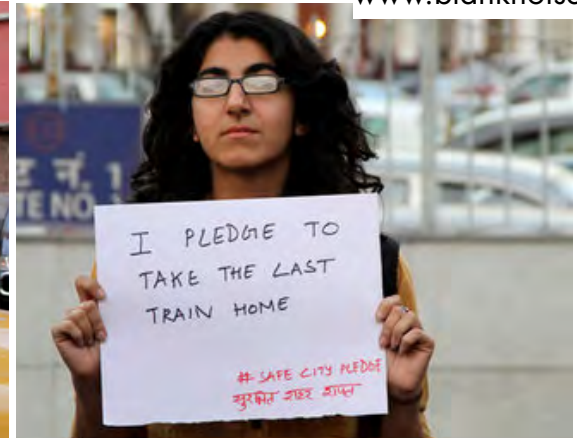
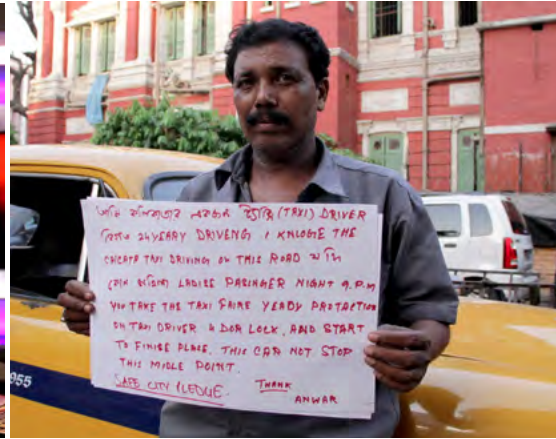
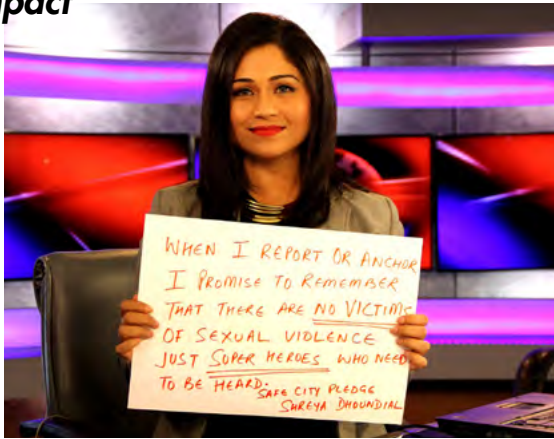
In 2015, Blank Noise was the recipients of the International Award For Public Art, towards the project, Talk To Me. View press article [here](#).

Blank Noise has exhibited its projects across art venues , including Bronx Museum of Art (2009), Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver (2010), Cornerhouse, Manchester (2007), Ars Electronica , Austria (2005). See more [here](#).

A recent academic study on the Global Anti Street Harassment Movement \* cites Blank Noise as the first initiative to address street harassment. Blank Noise is credited to have inspired newer anti street harassment movements and collectives, including Harassmap, Egypt.

Between 2003 and 2015 November, Blank Noise was run as a community led collective, without a formal status. In 2015, Blank Noise became a registered trust.





Since 2003, **Action Sheroes, Heroes and Theyroes** have participated in Blank Noise from across **188 cities and towns in India**. Globally, it has reached **23 countries including the USA, UK, Pakistan, Colombia and Japan**. Action Sheroes, Heroes, Theyroes include women, men and individuals beyond the gender binary. **The age group ranges from 9 - 88 years, with a majority being between 20-35 years.**



Action Shero, Hero, Theyro Volunteers, Interns, participants and allies between 2008 - 2020 reveal an all India/global connection and solidarity to ongoing efforts:

www.blanknoise.org



## ACTION SHEROES /THEYROES/ HEROES/ INDIVIDUALS/ GROUPS

from across the marked places have either volunteered/ interned or participated in Blank Noise interventions/ campaigns between 2008 - March 2020

**188 places ( towns/ cities/ districts)  
include :**

Agra, Agartala, Agonda, Ahmedabad, Ahmednagar, Akola, Aligarh, Allahabad/ Prayagraj, Amreli, Amsterdam, Anand, Asagao, Asansol, Austin, Atlanta, Bagasara, Bahawalpur, Bangalore, Bardez, Belgrade, Berkeley, Berlin, Belgaum, Bhatapara, Bhilai, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Bhuj, Bidar, Bijapur, Bikaner Brussels, Bogota, Bokaro, Bolpur, Borno, Boston, Brantford, Brisbane, Buenos Aires, Cambridge, Chandigarh, Chennai, Chhindwara, Chiba, Chikmagalur, Chittoor, Coimbatore, Cuttack, Dahanu, Darjeeling, Darmstadt, Dehradun, Delhi/ New Delhi, Denver, Dera Bassi, Detroit, Devgad Baria, Dhaka, Dharwad, Dibrugarh, Dimapur, Dubai, Espoo, Faridabad, Fremont, Freiburg, Funabashi City, Gandhinagar, Ghaziabad, Goa, Godhra, Gorakhpur, Grinnell, Gurugram, Guwahati, Haridwar, Harvard, Hassan, Hazaribag, Helsinki, Hong Kong city, Houston, Howrah, Iltiyar, Hyderabad, Indore, Islamabad, Jabalpur, Jaipur, Jalna, Jamshedpur, Jhansi, Jodhpur, Kalyan, Khandbari, Kanpur, Karachi, Kathmandu, Kochi, Kodaikanal, Kohima, Kolkata, Kota, Kothrud, Lahore, London, Lucknow, Ludhiana, Madrid, Mahoba, Maliya, Manali, Mangalore, Manipal, Mapusa, Meerut, Mehsana, Melbourne, Mohali, Montreal, Multan, Mumbai/ Navi Mumbai, Muzaffarpur, Mysore, Nagaon, Nagpur, Nasik, New York City, Noida, Ontario, Ooty, Palghar, Panchkula, Panipat, Panjim, Paris, Patiala, Patna, Philadelphia, Pune, Quebec, Raebarelli, Raipur, Ranchi, Raurkilla, Roing, Roorkee, Ropar, San Diego, Santa Cruz, Sangli, Satara, Secunderabad, Segovia, Shorampur, South Lyon, Sibmandir, Siliguri, Siolim, Sirsa, Srinagar, Stanford, Stuttgart, Succorro, Surat, Sydney, Tampa, Thane, Thrissur, Tirupati, Toronto, Turin, Udupi, Ulhasnagar, Una, Vadodara, Vancouver, Varanasi, Vasai, Vellore, Vijaywada, Vishakapatnam, Williamsburg, Zirakpur



Blank Noise Action Sheroes, Heroes, Theyroes volunteered, interned, and built interventions with allies from **129 cities, towns, villages in India.**



## ***Action Shero Testimonials***

"Being an Action Shero means the tiniest things for me. For example, right at the beginning, Blank Noise questioned why we use the words "eve teasing" for sexual harassment." *Action Shero Shuktara, Kolkata*

"To be an Action Shero is to walk at the edge where fear begins. The place is unknown to me. To help bring in a new normal by doing this simultaneously with others, drawing upon the collective strength"

*Action Shero Rutuja, Bangalore*

"I realised that there were many incidents that I had internalised not calling it out for what they were. I had belittled my own experiences, and becoming aware of that really opened my eyes." *Action Shero Eeshita, Baroda*

"When my 11-year old daughter was hearing the adults share, she kept whispering back to me, "what is the big deal about sleeping in a park". While she may be too young to understand this, my hope is that with movements such as these, she would continue to ask this question even as an adult woman living in India." *Action Shero Viji Chari, Bangalore*



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