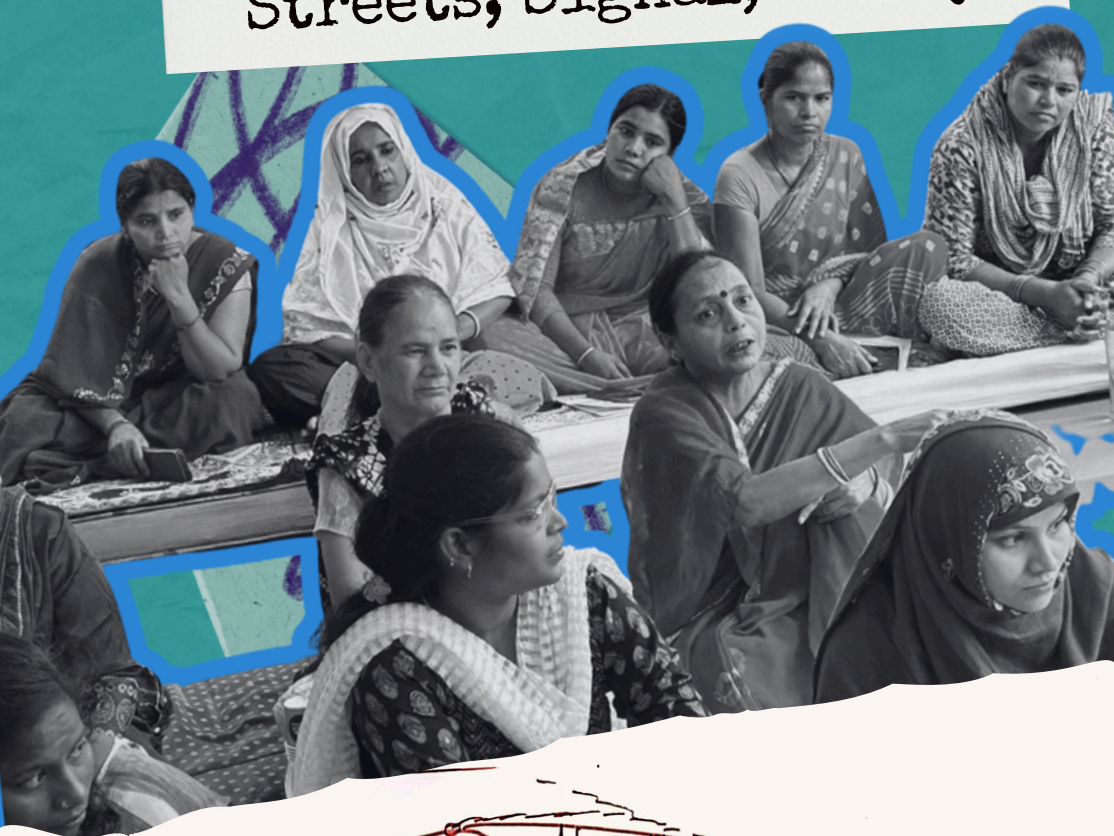


# Streets, Signal, Safety





Since 2016, the Martha Farrell Foundation (MFF) has been working with women domestic workers on the issues of safe and dignified workplaces. Being working women, they have a right to safe workspaces.

Women domestic workers rely on the use of public transportation to reach their workplaces, and often spend many hours of their day in them. That is why it is important that these public transports are safe and accessible to them.

On 26 April 2024, women domestic worker leaders from various communities of Delhi and Gurugram that are associated with MFF came together with us for a conversation.

During the conversation, the women talked about their various journeys on public transportation, their experiences, and their suggestions to make these spaces safer.

The women spoke about the following during the conversation:

- Their first experience on public transportation
- Their preferred mode of public transportation, on which they feel safest
- Their feelings when they travel by public transportation

**This Zine is a reflection of the  
conversation**



I feel nauseous in a bus,  
and i like to sit near the  
window. The first time I  
sat in a bus, I was sick for  
a whole week after.

I like to travel by train.

**Naseema**



I like to ride a bicycle - I used to take my cycle to school and work. When I was 23 years old, I would take my cycle for my beautician course classes. I used to get scared of all the traffic.

I was 8 months pregnant when one night I was returning on my cycle and had an accident with a car. After this incident, I stopped riding my cycle and did not use it for 5 years. Now I don't find work that is far from my house - I only work close by.

**Sonia**







The first time I sat in a bus I enjoyed myself very much, because I had gone sightseeing in Delhi.

We went all over Delhi, and then we also went by auto rickshaw for a ride. I took the metro with my children to take them to the market.

I like going around because I like to see the different sights in Delhi.

**Babita Devi**



khushbu

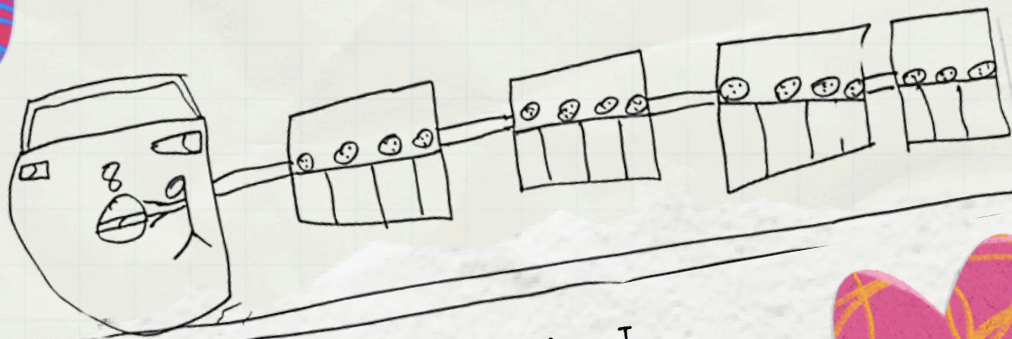


I came with my husband from my village in 1994, and when I sat in the bus I felt scared. I used to be scared of Delhi as well. But now I am not scared - now, I can travel alone in a bus, rickshaw or metro. Now I even take my kids to go around the city. I like it now.

Nandini



रेंन



The first time I sat in a train, I enjoyed myself very much.

But when I got off the train, everything was unsteady - I thought to myself 'where have I come?' I thought maybe I felt uneasy because I got off the train, but even when I got to my house, everything was topsy-turvy. I told my husband I will never travel by train again. He told me that I was probably feeling this way because it was my first time on a train - if I travelled more often, I wouldn't feel this way.

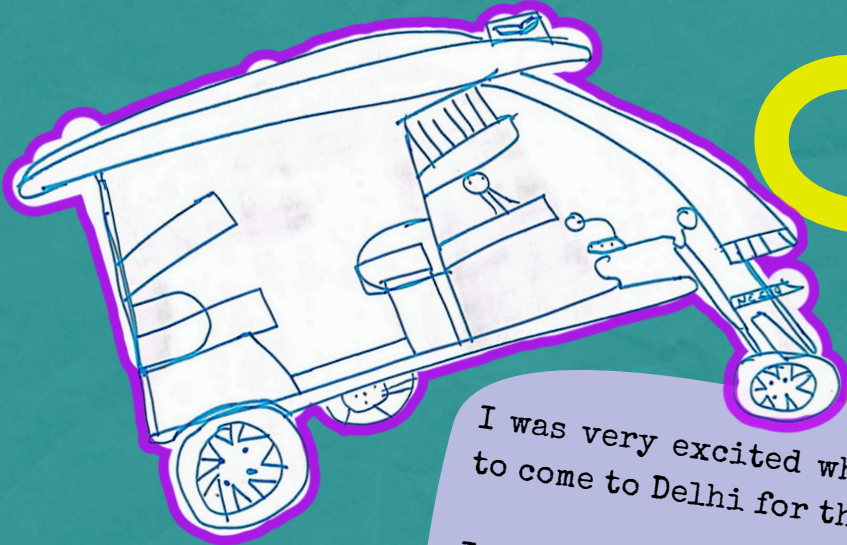
**Renu**



I went on a bus for the first time with my sister, and I was very scared about how I would go so far on the bus and how I would manage to reach my destination. But when I reached the city, I found Delhi to be very beautiful. It was evening time, and lights were lit prettily everywhere. I liked the tall buildings as well. I felt nice when I came to Delhi, and I am not scared anymore.

**Mamta**





I was very excited when I was going to come to Delhi for the first time.

I had never seen a metro before, or an escalator. When I sat in the metro for the first time, I felt nice. I didn't get a seat to sit on, but I was so excited I forgot about it and stood the entire journey.

I didn't know how to climb on an escalator, and felt scared. It took me a while the first time to get on it, and I stood for a while before I was able to get on. But now I don't feel scared anymore, and can climb an escalator easily.

Anju

In 2010, I sat in an AC bus for the first time and liked it a lot. It was so long and high, and the door opened automatically - I felt I was in an airplane.

Sylvie

I sat on a bus for the first time when I came to Delhi - I was scared because I didn't know the bus number or the road I was traveling on.

At first I used to feel scared, but now I do not. I have difficulties on the bus, but I do not have fear.

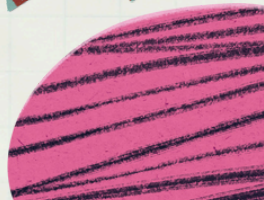
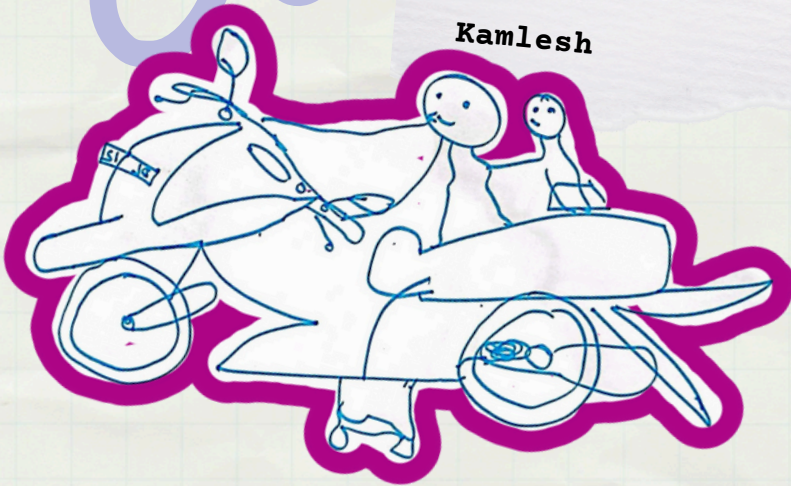
**Daraksha**

In 2009 I sat in the metro for the first time, and was scared the the doors might open on their own, or I would get stuck between them. I was also scared that the overhead metro track would fall down.

Before I got on the metro, someone told me that the computer talks to tell you the next station, so I was focused on that voice.

I was also scared on the cold AC on the metro, because I had seen on TV how the cold can cause ice to form, which can lock the doors in place.

**Kamlesh**







- Bus



Once I shared an Ola cab and there were men in it - it wasn't nice.

I go from Gurugram to Faridabad (where my in-laws live), but I don't take the bus. Because it is crowded, I don't get a seat, I get tired, and it also is not safe. The bus stop is also far in Gurugram from me, so there is no point in taking the bus.

To commute to close by places, I take an auto. It is easy to get, though it is more expensive. But on these routes, there is no bus service available.

**Sonia**

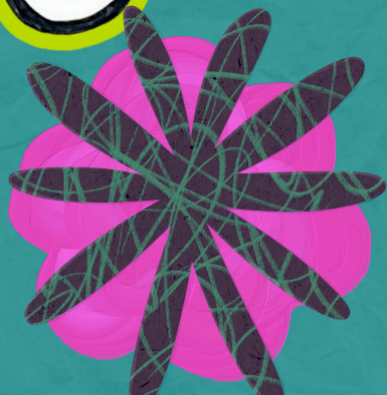


When I sat in a Delhi DTC bus for the first time, an interesting thing happened.

My son was 8 and I was taking him on the bus to his school. That day was the first time I was traveling by bus.

After dropping him, to get back home, I took another bus, not realising where the bus was going. I was scared, so I asked the conductor - he explained that this bus was going far from my home. I got off at the next stop, and then asked someone for directions. Thankfully I reached home safely.

**Kaliya Devi**







At first I used to be scared coming from Mukherjee Nagar to the MFF office for trainings. But in these 3 years I have come to the office so many times, I now know the way. I have to first take a rickshaw till the metro, then take the metro to Wazirabad, and then walk home. Even if no one is with me, I can find my way home.

**Deepa**



In the bus, men often harass women. When I am walking, they look at me in a wrong way and use abusive language with me.

I feel scared to go alone anywhere.

**Deepa**





Sometimes when the bus driver sees that women are waiting for the bus, they don't stop. They know that it is free for women to use the bus, so they don't stop because they won't get any money. Sometimes we wait up to 2 hours. That's why we hide behind men, so that the bus stops for them, and then we get on.

We don't get space to sit on the bus. No one gives their seat because they think that women do not give money so why do they deserve a seat?

But if there is a female conductor, then the bus stops, and she gets us a seat as well.

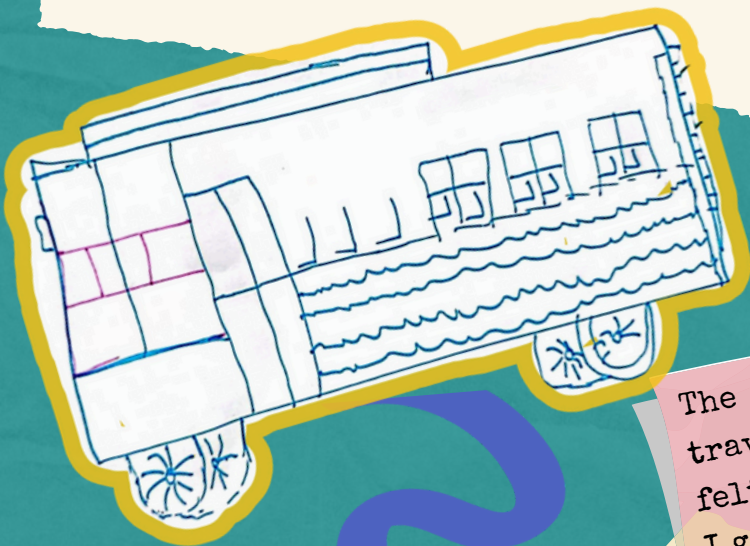
**Shakuntala**



I once wanted to go somewhere, and some other women were also with me. I went to four buses, but no one was ready to take us. One said that he was not going in my direction, another said that the bus would be in service in a while. They all thought that we are weak and helpless women.

So I went back to the first bus and told them that you are a driver or conductor of this bus, your job is to take passengers. When I raised my voice, the driver said "Ma'am, don't get angry, I will take you."

**Pramila**



The first time I traveled by bus, I felt sick as soon as I got on. It took me a while to get used to using a bus. Now I am not scared.

**Shobha**



When I go by metro, I use the ladies' compartment. I need to take care of my safety - if there are men in the compartment, I don't sit there.

I don't like to travel alone - I like to go in a group. I could not go to even India Gate alone - how do I know where I will need to get off?

**Pramila**



The first time I sat in a bus I was with my mother, and I enjoyed myself very much. I liked it because I was young and I enjoyed seeing the greenery, the trees, and the flowing water. We also went by auto.

**Khushboo**



# Martha Farrell Foundation

Founded in 2016, the Martha Farrell Foundation (MFF) is committed to creating a gender-just society by eliminating sexual and gender-based violence.

MFF envisions a world in which all formal and informal learning and working spaces are safe and gender equitable.

MFF works towards ensuring that all individuals feel safe and dignified in their learning and working spaces. We do this through:

- Education: Co-design learning programs to inform, make aware and empower individuals and institutions on safety and gender equity
- Research: Develop new knowledge on gender equity and the prevention of gender-based violence in learning and working environments
- Advocacy: Influence diverse stakeholders to design and implement effective policies, institutional practices and laws

An important aspect of our work has been with informal workers, especially women domestic workers. We have been working with women domestic workers around safety and dignity at work since inception.





