

Sexual Harassment of Domestic Workers at their Workplaces

An Ongoing Study on Part-time Domestic Workers in
Gurgaon, Faridabad and South Delhi

Context Setting and Release of Initial Findings

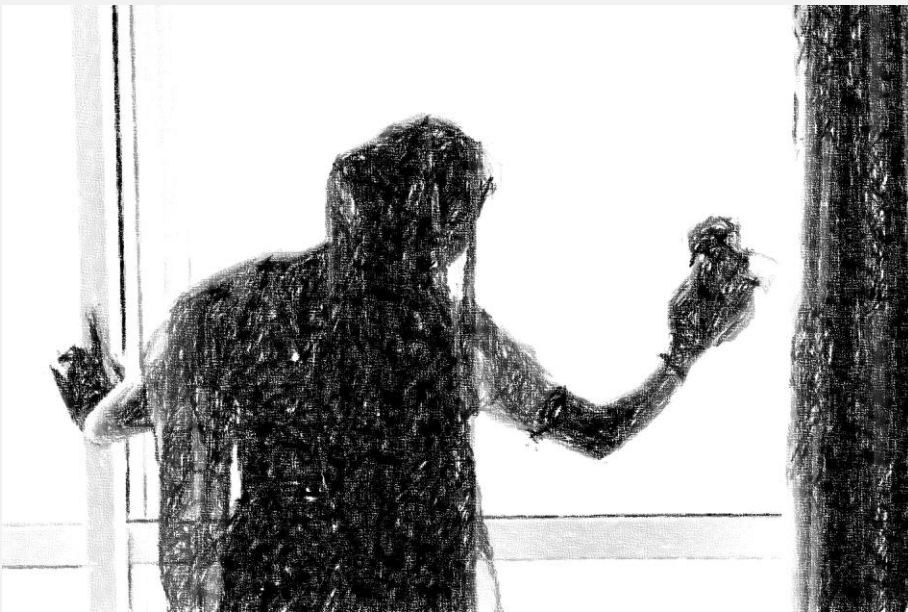


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1.1. Introduction:

Domestic work is a large – and in some countries growing – sector of employment, especially for women. According to International Labour Office (ILO), there are currently 52 million people employed as domestic workers worldwide. Out of these, 83% are women, accounting for at least 7.5% of women’s wage employment (ILO 2013). In India, according to the Employment-Unemployment Survey conducted by the NSSO, out of the estimated 41.3 lakh people employed as domestic workers in 2011-12, 68% were women. However, there are massive discrepancies between the official and unofficial estimates, with the latter showing up to 9 crore domestic workers in total (ILO 2013).

Although they make up one of the world’s most long-standing and widespread workforce, domestic workers are frequently overworked, underpaid, and unprotected. Even when the labor movement was at its peak in the different parts of the world and in India, they were left out of virtually all labor legislations and policy concerns. Once a workforce fed entirely by the unpaid work of women in the home, paid domestic workers today are primarily women and children who occupy the lowest rungs of the social hierarchy in which they live and work, supporting entire families on their meager incomes (Claire Hobden 2010). The majority are also migrants, whether internal, regional or international, placing them in a situation of even greater vulnerability (Claire Hobden 2010).

Global estimates have established that domestic workers tend to have lower wages, fewer benefits, and hardly any legal or social protections compared to most other wage workers. Very few domestic workers have labour contracts and have been confined to the informal economy. They usually have no access to pension, provident funds, maternity leave or health care. Since

they work behind the closed doors of private households, domestic workers are shielded from public view and attention, and are often hard to reach by conventional policy tools (ILO 2013).

The extremely invisible and privatized nature of domestic work also makes domestic workers very vulnerable to sexual harassment at workplace (SHW). A 2012 survey on sexual harassment at workplace conducted by Oxfam India and Social and Rural Research Institute found that daily wage labourers, domestic workers and women working in small-scale manufacturing units are the worst affected by SHW. Their lack of education, low awareness about the law, fear of loss of livelihood and stigma associated with the issue exacerbates their vulnerability, deterring them from reporting this violence. Also, lack of adequate redressal mechanism, continued indifference from policy-makers, employers and trade unions further invisibilizes the sexual harassment of domestic workers at their workplaces.

For the past two years, Martha Farrell Foundation (MFF) has been working with domestic workers in Gurgaon, Faridabad and South Delhi to collectivize them and build their capacities around the issue of sexual harassment at workplace. The work of the Foundation has also been focusing on strengthening redressal mechanisms and preventive measures, where it has been working closely with District Administration, unions and civil society organizations to mainstream the issues of sexual harassment of domestic workers.

In an attempt to bring visibility to this issue, MFF has been gathering both qualitative and quantitative evidence to capture the extent of this problem; how domestic workers have been dealing with it, their levels of awareness about redressal mechanisms and the readiness of redressal mechanism to effectively address this issue. As a part of this ongoing study, from 4th June, 2018 to 10th June, 2018, MFF conducted a rapid survey with 291 domestic workers in Gurgaon, Faridabad and South Delhi. This report brings out the initial findings of the survey and some of the experiences of sexual harassment at workplace of domestic workers. The report also attempts to define domestic work. It brings out the various problems of domestic workers, while highlighting how domestic workers who are at the bottom of the labour market, suffer from sexual harassment most often.

1.2. Defining Domestic Work

ILO defines domestic work as housework such as sweeping, cleaning utensils, washing clothes, cooking, caring of children and such other work which is carried out for an employer for remuneration. A domestic worker can perform multiple tasks and often, a single worker does different combinations of tasks in different households. It becomes further complicated because the quantum of labor involved in some tasks is related to the number of persons in the household (like washing utensils and clothes) while some depend on the floor space of the residence of the employer (like sweeping or cleaning) (Kiran Moghe 2006).

There are also different types of paid domestic workers. The 'part-time' or the 'live-out' domestic workers are the ones who work for certain hours every day. They might be working in one house or many houses. The 'full-time' or the 'live-in' domestic workers are the ones who stay with the family. The family provides them with accommodation, food and a minimum salary in exchange of their services. The contracted workers are also very similar to them. They also stay with the family on full-time basis. But they are contracted through Domestic-Help agencies.

1.3. Why Women Choose this Work

Many factors lead women to enter domestic work. Poverty and reduced livelihood opportunities for women in the rural areas, has forced them to migrate to the urban areas in order to secure viable options of employment. Saskia Sassen-Koob (1984) says that female migrants are characterized by a double disadvantage, one of gender and one of class. They don't get the opportunity of being employed in highly mechanized forms of production work which pay higher wages. Owing to gendered division of labor, women have been kept away from such forms of work limiting their employments options.

With few formal jobs available and facing gender discrimination, often coupled with discrimination based on caste or class, race or ethnicity, their options for decent work are few. And, as most are from poor households, they generally have low levels of education and few marketable skills, other than their skills in keeping house and caring for others (Elin Peterson,

2007). Cleaning and cooking, looking after children and the elderly is almost universally regarded as women's work, which means that men rarely compete with women in this job market. Domestic work is therefore one of the few employment opportunities open to poor women.

Moreover, as more and more women go out to work, they need domestic workers back at homes to take care of their households. Therefore, the rise in the demand for domestic workers can also be attributed to this reason.

1.4. Working Conditions:

Most domestic work is informal i.e. it is performed outside the purview of labour regulations and social protection. First of all, domestic workers are employed in private homes, rather than formal workplaces like firms, organizations or companies. This makes them invisible and isolates them from others in the sector. Also, their working conditions are dependent on the good or bad will of the employer.

With negligible or no regulation of their workplaces, domestic workers are often left very vulnerable to physical, verbal and sexual abuse. Also, differences related to class, caste, ethnicity, language and region increase this inequality. Domestic workers lack job security and employers often tend to dismiss them for petty reasons like 'excessive leaves', 'breaking a utensil' etc. Often a lot of them are accused of stealing which serves as an excuse to terminate them.

Because of a huge supply of paid domestic workers in a given area, there is always the threat of losing the job. The supply often exceeds the demand and as a result, a lot of workers continue to work in extremely harsh, demeaning conditions (Kiran Moghe 2006). This also results in a downward push on their wages. Since, there exists a large pool of paid domestic workers in a given area; the women aren't in a position to bargain. If they demand an increment, they are intimidated by their employers saying that they will be fired because there are other women ready to work at much lower wages.

Domestic workers also face excessively long hours; have no guaranteed weekly day of rest, no access to social security, maternity benefits, pension, provident fund or health care.

1.5. Sexual Harassment of Domestic Workers at their Workplaces:

“I used to work in a house which had a huge family. I thought that it would be safe to work there. But whenever there was no one around, the old grandfather of the family would find a pretext to get closer to me and touch me. I knew that even if I told someone, no one would believe me.” – Amina (name changed), a domestic worker in Gurgaon

“I used to work in a house. One day, when there was no one around, the man of the house closed the door behind me while I was sweeping the floor. Then he tried to get close to me. I was so scared that I ran towards the door, unbolted it and left. I never went back to that house.” – Pooja (name changes), a domestic worker in Nehru Nagar, South-East Delhi

Isolating and harsh working conditions leave domestic workers vulnerable to sexual harassment at workplace. Stories like that of Amina and Pooja, though unheard, are often everyday realities of domestic workers’ work lives. Already disadvantaged by their gender, class and caste status, domestic workers are often at the receiving end of sexual abuse. This is further aggravated because of their migrant status. Social ties and kinship are generally low in migrant communities, because of which migrants lack the necessary community support in a situation of duress. The migrant communities are inhabited by people, who are routinely disadvantaged by their class, caste and regional statuses and lack the necessary clout and resources for social action. Domestic workers, who are often migrants, are also isolated because they lack the necessary social support to improve their working and living conditions. Therefore, the isolated and highly privatized nature of their workplaces and their isolation as migrant women workers puts them at high risk of sexual abuse.

The social capital of the domestic workers is further reduced because they come from extremely resource-poor backgrounds (due to their class and cast status) and 50% of them are sole bread-winners of their families. They are often illiterate and unaware about the law, making it extremely difficult for them to speak against sexual harassment at workplace. The

impending threat of loss of employment and the stigma associated with the issue further deters them from reporting such violence. With hardly any other marketable skills, they do not always have the option of quitting their exploitative jobs. Also, as mentioned in the previous section, the supply of domestic workers always exceeds the demand for their labour. This makes it very difficult for a domestic worker to find a new job if she decides to quit a job which is sexually exploitative in nature.

Domestic Workers not just face physical forms of sexual harassment at workplace, but also verbal, non-verbal and visual forms of such harassment. Physical forms can range from touching without consent, groping, fondling and rape. Verbal harassment includes lewd remarks, sexist jokes, repeated and unwelcome requests for sexual favours and unwelcome compliments of sexual nature. If not verbal in nature, it also occurs through non-verbal communication, which does not involve physical contact or oral communication. Some examples are lewd or suggestive gesturing, winking, leering and staring inappropriately. Sexual harassment of domestic workers may also derive from visual media. Some examples of visual sexual harassment are sending phone messages or WhatsApp messages with sexual innuendoes, showing pornographic photos and videos to a domestic worker or watching them in her presence.

1.5.1. Understanding a Domestic Worker's Workplace

As per the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act 2013, a workplace is defined as “any place visited by the employee arising out of or during the course of employment, including transportation provided by the employer for undertaking such a journey” (MoWCD 2015). There has been much debate about the definition of the workplace in the context of sexual harassment. In the past, it was understood that the workplace only consists of the boundary of the premises where the employees work. Others have argued that even public places that are frequented by the employees, which constitute their extended workplace, should also be included in the definition (MFF and Govt. of Sikkim 2016).

It is now well understood that a workplace is any place where a working relationship between employer and employee(s) exist beyond the physical boundaries of the primary workplace or

office building (ibid). The definition, as per the law, also extends to the workplaces of informal sector women workers to include a dwelling place or house and workplaces of unorganized sector women workers (ibid).

The ILO uses the concept of “the world of work” to include the broader place of economic activities. The concept of the world of work helps capture paid productive work that does not take place within the traditional “public sphere” such as a factory or office, but which is employment such as selling products in the street or artisanal production or piece work in the home (PRIA and ILO 2013). It also comprises not just the place of work but related contexts where gender-based violence can take place, such as on public transportation going to work, or returning back home after a night shift (ibid). It is important to recognize and include the broader place of economic activities in any effort to prevent and address sexual harassment.

A domestic worker’s workplace, therefore, includes the residential complexes and houses that she works in. But since a domestic worker works in multiple workplaces (i.e. in multiple households), the constituency of her workplace also extends to the streets and the transportation that she accesses regularly to commute between her multiple workplaces. From the time a domestic worker leaves her own house for work till the time she comes back from work, all the spaces inhabited by her between that time, encompass her workplace. Also, often domestic workers are seen accompanying their employers to restaurants, events and other public places, where they are responsible for the care of the children of the employer. In fact, a domestic worker who visits a market/shop to purchase fruits, vegetables or groceries for her employer is also at work and in her workplace. All these spaces, which a domestic worker visits for the purpose for her work, also become her workplace or the ‘world of her work’, because she is engaging in productive work in all the aforementioned spaces and is vulnerable to sexual harassment (or any other form of gender-based violence) when she is inhabiting these spaces.

Given how fragmented and expansive a domestic worker’s workplace is, she is vulnerable to sexual harassment from not just her employer, but anyone who inhabits these multiple spaces, when she visits them for the purpose of work. There have been instances when a domestic worker has been sexually harassed by the guards of a housing complex or the plumbers, drivers

or shopkeepers in and around her workplace¹. They are also regularly harassed on the streets while they are on their way to work. All such instances constitute sexual harassment of a domestic worker at her workplace, because she comes in contact with these people for the purpose of work.

While the sexual harassment of domestic workers in their direct workplaces i.e. the homes of their employers is often invisible and ignored, the sexual harassment that they face in their extended workplace, is still not seen as sexual harassment at workplace. It might be seen as sexual harassment in a public place, which is also routinely ignored and belittled. The ignorance and indifference towards sexual harassment of domestic workers in their workplaces puts them at even a greater risk; either it is not recognized or it is not visible.

1.5.2. Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, Redressal) Act 2013 and its Relevance for Domestic Workers

In India, the Sexual Harassment of women at workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, Redressal) Act was passed in 2013. It was passed by the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha on 3rd September, 2012 and 26th February, 2013 respectively, and notified on 23rd April, 2013. It recognizes that sexual harassment results in the violation of a woman's fundamental right to equality under Articles 14, 15 and 21 - which provide for equality under the law, prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, and protection of life and personal liberty. The Act provides protection against sexual harassment of women at work and for the prevention and redressal of complaints of sexual harassment within the workplace. The Act uses the same definition of sexual harassment that was laid down by the Supreme Court of India in *Vishaka v. State of Rajasthan* (1997), and is seen as an important step in addressing gender-based discrimination and violence in India, even if some legislative gaps remain as it protects only women (and not men) from sexual harassment at workplace (PRIA and ILO 2014).

The Act clearly defines and includes in its ambit both formal and informal workers. It mandates the constitution of an Internal Committee (IC) at the institutional level and a Local Committee

¹ Such instances of sexual harassment at workplace have been shared by domestic workers during the course of MFF's work in Gurgaon, Faridabad and South Delhi in the last two years.

(LC) at the district level for prevention, prohibition and redressal of sexual harassment. The constitution of LC and its effective functioning is of particular relevance for the informal sector. According to ILO, there are currently 9 crore women in the unorganized sector in India and the provisions of the SHW Act extend to all these women. But despite having a law, a large majority of women are still regularly subjected to sexual harassment in all its forms in India.

As per the Section 6[1] of the Act, "Every District Officer shall constitute in the district concerned, a committee to be known as the "Local Committee" to receive complaints of sexual harassment from establishments where the Internal Committee has not been constituted due to having less than ten workers or if the complaint is against the employer himself."

The Act specifically defines the workplace in Section 2 and includes the unorganized sector and dwelling places and houses in the definition of the workplace in Section 2[p] and Section 2[0(vi)] respectively. Therefore, according to the act, a domestic worker means a woman who is employed:

- To do the household work in any household for remuneration whether in cash or kind
- Either directly or through any agency
- On a temporary, permanent, part time or full time basis
- For remuneration whether in cash or kind (PRIA and ILO 2014)

Therefore, both live-in and live-out domestic workers are protected under the SHW Act 2013 and have the right to seek redressal from the LC when they are sexually harassed at their workplaces. But this can only happen when the domestic workers and other informal sector women workers would become aware about the act.

The Act mandates the LC to conduct regular awareness and sensitization sessions for the workers and the employers to make them aware about the issue and provisions of the act. It also mandates the LC to appoint one nodal officer at the block/tehsil/taluka level to forward complaints to the committee. These nodal officers are to act as first points of contact, who will receive information about such instances of violence in the unorganized sector workplaces, report them and sensitize and generate awareness in their communities. But this is far from

reality. During the course of two years, MFF's interactions with the LCs in Gurgaon, Faridabad and New Delhi (and other parts of the country) have brought out how LCs are unaware of their roles and responsibilities in preventing sexual harassment at workplace in the informal sector². LCs haven't been conducting regular awareness or sensitization programmes, due to which women workers are unaware about their rights and employers continue to behave with impunity.

This is further aggravated because in most states, functioning LCs are lacking. According to a RTI query filed by MFF in 2017, out of 655 districts in the country, only 191 districts have setup a LC; out of these only 18% have conducted orientation of members or awareness programmes, 97% did not respond about SC/ST membership, four districts, one each in Jharkhand, Uttarakhand and Punjab (two) have male chairpersons, 11 districts have no NGO representative and 20 districts and 103 replied to say that they are yet to establish an LC. In Delhi, out of 11 districts, only 3 have constituted LCs and in Haryana, out of 20 districts, only 13 have constituted LCs.

With absence of LCs in many parts of the country and LC members unaware about their roles and responsibilities, it is needless to say that domestic workers continue to lack governance support to prevent sexual harassment at workplace.

1.6. Our Work

Martha Farrell Foundation, through its 'Making Workplaces Safe (MWS)' program, has been working with domestic workers in districts of Gurgaon and Faridabad in Haryana and district of South Delhi in Delhi for the past two years. MWS attempts to create safe and dignified workplaces for domestic workers by collectivizing and sensitizing them about sexual harassment at workplace. It also builds their capacities so that they can lobby and advocate with the state and other stakeholders to strengthen redressal mechanisms and preventive measures to eliminate sexual harassment at workplace.

² During the course of its work, MFF has been interacting with LCs across the country and training them about their roles and responsibilities. Recently, MFF played an instrumental role in constituting the LC of South-East District of Delhi. Please refer <http://www.marthafarrellfoundation.org/mwf-event-detail.php?eid=141> and <http://www.marthafarrellfoundation.org/mwf-event-detail.php?eid=145>

MWS also focusses on strengthening the functioning of LCs in the aforementioned three districts to respond effectively to the grievances of domestic workers. In addition, other stakeholders like the Resident Welfare Associations, placement agencies and other intermediaries like civil society groups, media, etc. are also being engaged and sensitized on the issue. A number of workshops and interface events are being organized to enhance their understanding on the situation and issues related to sexual harassment in informal workplaces.

We now aim to build a robust coalition of domestic workers based on the experience gained and lessons harvested from our work so far. This coalition will also include other civil society organizations, actors from the state, media and academia. These efforts will be scaled up to have an impact on national level policy advocacy and reforms. Also, these experiences will be documented in a manner so that critical knowledge can be built around the issue of sexual harassment of domestic workers and these interventions can be replicated in other parts of the country to ensure sustainability of action.

With its commitment towards building essential and critical knowledge around the issue of sexual harassment of domestic workers, MWS has been gathering data, for the past one year, through various qualitative and quantitative methods. This on-going study has been documenting the experiences of domestic workers, how they are affected by sexual harassment at workplace and its impact on their lives. It has also been documenting the response of the LCs and other stakeholders (like RWAs and placement agencies) in the three districts to analyze the efficacy of redressal and preventive mechanisms and the gaps and loopholes in the implementation of the SHW Act 2013.

While quantitative data is being gathered through surveys, qualitative data is being gathered through participatory research methods to document the safety or unsafety of domestic workers at their workplaces. MWS has been conducting participatory safety assessments (PSAs) with the domestic workers in the three districts to map their workplaces (or the 'world of their work') and how they experience safety or unsafety in their multiple workplaces. This evidence, which is generated by the domestic workers themselves, is then shared by them with the LCs or other stakeholders to demand appropriate action to ensure safe and dignified workplaces for

themselves. In the process, domestic workers co-create this knowledge and also use it to effectively lobby and advocate for their safety and welfare.

We also believe that it is important to bring out the extent of this problem by collecting quantitative data. From 4th-11th June, 2018, the week running up to International Domestic Workers' Day, MWS conducted a rapid survey with 291 domestic workers in Gurgaon, Faridabad and South Delhi. The next section describes the process of the survey and brings out its initial findings. We aim to gather more quantitative data on this issue by conducting this survey with more domestic workers in the three districts.

1.7. Rapid Survey

Making Workplaces Safe (MWS) conducted a rapid survey with 291 domestic workers in Harijan Basti, Gurgaon, Lal Kuan and Nehru Nagar in South Delhi and Mewala Maharajpur in Faridabad. The survey sought responses from domestic workers on their perceptions and experiences of sexual harassment at workplace, how they deal with it and how they support fellow domestic workers when they experience sexual harassment at workplace. The survey also attempted to find out how aware domestic workers are about redressal mechanisms like LCs and their readiness for taking punitive action when they are sexually harassed at a workplace.

While conducting the survey, the MFF team also recorded reactions and testimonies of the domestic workers. Some of them have been shared below.

1.7.1. Initial Findings of the Rapid Survey

- a. Out of the 291 domestic workers surveyed, 84 of them i.e. only **29% of them admitted to being sexually harassed at the workplace.**
- b. Seven forms of sexual harassment at workplace were stated in the survey, which included physical, verbal, non-verbal and visual forms. When asked to recognize these forms of SHW, the domestic workers:
 - i. Reported stalking as the most recognized form of SHW, with 65.6% of the respondents having recognized it.

- ii. This was followed by lewd gestures and whistling, with 61.8% of the respondents recognizing it. A domestic worker in Harijan Basti in Gurgaon said, *“When we leave our homes to go to work, we are often harassed by drivers on our way. They comment on us and sometimes even try to touch us.”* This reiterates the point made in Section 1.5.1 that a domestic worker’s workplace is highly fragmented and scattered and therefore, she is vulnerable to sexual harassment in multiple locations from multiple people.
 - iii. Sending SMSes or WhatsApp messages with sexual innuendos was recognized by 52% of the total respondents. This establishes how mobile, internet technology and social media have become a very important tool for abetting SHW and now forms a crucial part of a domestic worker’s workplace or ‘World of Work’.
 - iv. 49% of the respondents also recognized quid-pro-quo situations and some even said, *“We have never faced it but we have heard that others like us have faced it”*.
- c. Also, 40% of the respondents recognized all the seven forms of SHW listed in the survey. 35% of them recognized more than three forms of SHW, 16% of them recognized two or less than two forms of SHW and only 8% responded with 'I don't know' or 'none of the above'. This clearly establishes that while most respondents are aware about SHW, they are afraid of admitting that they have faced it. It has already been established in Sections 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5 that domestic workers face precarious financial conditions, have very low job security and lack the necessary social and political support in the cities that they have migrated to. In face of such vulnerability, they are scared to speak against sexual harassment at workplace and also skeptical about admitting it if they have faced it.
- d. The rapid survey also sought responses from the domestic workers on how they reacted when they faced sexual harassment at workplace. Out of the 84 domestic workers that admitted to being sexually harassed at the workplace:

- i. 19% of them said that chose to ignore the incident. Some of them said, *“We have no other option but to ignore. Whom will we complain to and who will listen to us?”*
- ii. 15% of them spoke to someone else about it (mostly friends or coworkers). Some of them also admitted that they cannot share such instances with their husbands or families, who will chastise them and deter them from working outside the home. Also, shame and stigma associated with this issue also deters them from talking to their families about it. This further thins their support system, where they are unable to speak openly to their partners and immediate families or seek their support.
- iii. Only 2 of them i.e. 2.3% of them said that they quit their jobs when they were sexually harassed. This yet again brings out the extremely vulnerable situation of domestic workers; their household poverty and lack of alternative livelihood options prevents them from quitting an exploitative job, making them even more susceptible to sexual harassment at workplace.
- iv. 13% of them said that they changed their route to work. A domestic worker in Nehru Nagar said, *“We have a huge forest area behind our slum. It is a very desolate area and often men and young boys gather there to drink and smoke. There have also been rape cases in that forest. We have stopped taking that route to work and never let our daughters go to school from that route. We will take the longer route to work but not that route.”*
- v. Only one of them complained in the building or the housing complex that they were working in when they were sexually harassed. This establishes that Resident Welfare Associations are not seen as approachable by the domestic workers; RWAs lack the necessary awareness, sensitivity and skills to effectively deal with this issue.
- vi. 17 of them i.e. 20% of them complained to the police, but when probed further, they could not share whether there were any outcomes of the police complaint. But they also said that police often hassles or ignores them.

- vii. 13% of them reacted on the spot, slapped or shouted at the harasser or sought the help of the passersby. Many of them prefer to 'take things in their own hands', rather than seeking the support of the police, family or community. While they distrust the police, they are unwilling to open up to their families or communities (refer point d.ii.)
 - viii. None of them complained to the LCs, which clearly establishes that none of them knew about the LCs. On International Domestic Workers' Day in 2017, MFF facilitated a meeting between the domestic workers from Harijan Basti and the Chairperson of LC in Gurgaon. This was the first time when the LC and the domestic workers had met each other; also the Chairperson of the LC was unaware about the responsibility of the LC towards informal sector women workers and hitherto, not received any complaint from them or reached out to them.
 - ix. 4 of them said that they don't know.
 - x. 9.5% of them chose multiple options but the ones who chose multiple options said that they even if they spoke to someone, they had to change their route or ignore the incident.
- e. Domestic Workers were also asked how they will react if they see someone else being sexually harassed at the workplace. There responses are as follows:
- i. 18% of them said that they will ask that person to ignore the incident. 23.3% of them also said that they will speak to the person but will ask her to ignore the situation and not take any action. A domestic worker in Lal Kuan said, "*We have no bonding in our community. People come out to watch the 'tamasha' (spectacle) but no one helps you in your problem. Everyone is very indifferent.*" As mentioned in Section 1.5, due to lack of community support in migrant colonies, domestic workers are often forced to ignore SHW, which also leads them to ignore the predicament of the others.
 - ii. 10.6% of them said that they will speak to that person or ask them to speak to someone else.

- iii. Only 1.3% of them said that they will ask that person to quit the job. This reiterates point d.iii. that the economic severity of the domestic workers disallows them to quit their oppressive jobs.
 - iv. 2.4% of them said that they will ask that person to change her route.
 - v. 5% of them said that they will ask that person to complain at the building or home she is working in and 11% of them said that they will support that person in filing a police complaint. 18.5% of them have said that they will support the person is making a complaint with both the building and police. These responses were most apparent in communities like Lal Kuan, which are largely inhabited by generational migrants, because of which community bonding and networks have strengthened over the years. A domestic worker in Lal Kuan said that if something like this happens, *“they will go together to the police and file a complaint”*. Communities like Harijan Basti, which are inhabited by fresh and moving migrants, hardly consider complaining to the police or the RWA as an option. Even if redressal mechanisms are strengthened, their efficacy cannot be realized without community mobilization. Both community and family support is crucial for approaching the police or any other authority to build pressure on them for necessary action.
 - vi. None of the domestic workers mentioned the LC as a way of recourse for sexual harassment at the workplace.
 - vii. 6% of them said that they don't know and 3.4% said that they if they something happening in front of them, they will react on the spot.
- f. Domestic Workers from Nehru Nagar also said that to avoid sexual harassment at workplace, *“they avoid working in places that are far away”* and *“they prefer to work in places near their homes”*. This reduces their commute time and susceptibility to sexual harassment at workplace i.e. it shrinks their ‘World of Work’.
- g. Domestic Workers in both Lal Kuan and Nehru Nagar said that they do not work in houses that are rented by young bachelors or ‘gents’. They fear rape and sexual assault in such households and therefore prefer to work in ‘family households’. They also

choose their working hours according to the availability of the women of the household i.e. they go to work when the women of that household are present. The presence of women family members at their workplaces makes them feel more secure and they reckoned that “men don’t dare to act funny in presence of their women”.

1.8. Way Forward

The initial findings of the rapid survey clearly establish that domestic workers are affected by sexual harassment at workplace on a regular basis and lack the necessary support and redressal mechanisms to deal with it. It also shows that advocacy with LCs, district administrations, state governments and RWAs is the need of the hour, so that they can be galvanized into action and perform their roles and responsibilities as per the SHW Act 2013.

The anecdotes shared by the domestic workers also bring out how they lack support in their own communities and families when they are faced with this issue. While governance institutions have to be strengthened, community sensitization and mobilization will also be imperative to ensure that domestic workers have support from every sphere and class, caste and gender barriers can be overcome to generate collective action for change.

As a part of this on-going study, Martha Farrell Foundation will collect further quantitative evidence to bring out the gravity of this issue. Also, as mentioned previously, the participatory safety assessments (PSAs), which are being conducted with domestic workers in the three locations, will become an important tool of community sensitization and mobilization and for lobbying and advocating with actors from the state, RWAs, civil society, media and academia. The data gathered from conducting and sharing these PSAs will also become an important part of this study to qualitatively analyze the issue, bring our gaps in the implementation of SHW Act 2013 in relation to this issue and suggest ways to strengthen its implementation.

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