



ANNUAL PROJECT REPORT

APRIL 2017-MARCH 2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Rockefeller Foundation provided a grant to the Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) to enable the Martha Farrell Foundation (MFF) in its practical interventions that are committed to achieving a gender -just society and combating gender violence and sexual harassment. MFF used the grant support by strengthening its two major initiatives, namely:

- Building youth leadership through Kadam Badhate Chalo (KBC) programme, to end violence against women and girls, and
- Enabling gender-just and safe workplaces in formal and informal sectors through Making Workplaces Safe (MWS) programme.

The activities of these programmes were carried out across 29 locations, and 17 states of the country As a result, more than 20,000 boys and girls, men and women have been successful in bringing the issues of sexual violence against women and girls (VAWG) into the public discourse. In all the locations, boys and girls are presently working together to end VAWG. In fact, one of the biggest achievements of KBC has been its success in activating the local youth and facilitating open dialogues on gender equality.

The approaches of research, capacity building, and handholding of Internal Committees(IC) and Local Committees (LC) have been adopted through the MWS Programme to ensure meaningful compliance of the 2013 Act on prevention, as well as prohibition of sexual harassment in the both formal and informal sectors. While 4000 working women and men have been oriented, MWSP has facilitated formation of Internal Committees and Local Committees. More than 1300 members of the Internal Committees and Local committees have been trained.

The programmes reconfirmed the importance of building the capacities and leadership of youth and women to change their communities and institutions to end gender-based violence.

Despite the advances that have been made in achieving gender equality, conservative gender norms still remain pervasive and persistent in India- in communities and institutions. Gender equality is not a strong agenda for the various local institutions across the country. It requires sustained and committed action to mainstream gender equality and safety. Despite challenges, the MFF is committed to carry forward its mission on the basis of tremendous lessons it has learnt.

CONTEXT

Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) is a global pandemic that affects 1 in 3 women in their lifetime.

In India, following the gang rape of a student in the capital, the country witnessed the passing of two landmark judgements that was aimed at providing appropriate redressal of crimes against women and girls. The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 which provides for amendment of Indian Penal Code, Indian Evidence Act, and Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 on laws related to sexual offences came into force on 3 April 2013. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, Redressal) Act, 2013 was also passed in the same year.

However, despite such progressive laws, crimes against women and girls do not seem to have diminished. In fact, in the recent past, there has been an unprecedented increase in the number of cases of sexual violence against women, especially against young girls. Crimes of sexual violence against women and girls, especially of women in the workplace are grossly under reported, with the paucity of data making it difficult to determine the actual rate of increase in the numbers of crimes against women and girls. According to the latest National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data (2016), crimes against women had increased by 34 percent over the last four years. The institutional apathy, lack of commitment and the very public collusion between the police, political parties, judiciary and even the community, have brought down rates of conviction in comparison.

These elements became even more evident in the most recently reported cases from Kathua and Unnao; the gang rape and murder of an 8 year old girl in Kathua and the rape of an 18 year old woman in Unnao. But what was even more alarming was the reaction of the community at large, both men and women; when large numbers of them stood up in public support of the accused, one could not help but wonder about the socialisation of children in the homes of these individuals.

Despite the advances that have been made in achieving gender equality, conservative gender norms still remain pervasive persistent in societies - it continues to be accepted as the norm among men and women, boys and girls.

DETAILS OF PROGRESS MADE AS THE PROJECT ADDRESSED THE ISSUES

Several studies have shown that children growing up in violence are more likely to become victims or perpetrators of violence in the future. The interventions described in this report have been designed with the assumption that the roots of gender-based violence are firmly entrenched in the patriarchal attitudes and the resultant social norms, policies and systems, wherein women are relegated to a subordinate status compared to their male counterparts. The interventions are intended to reach out to and influence the attitudes of all individuals directly linked to the everyday lives of women and girls, in particular the men and boys, who have, for decades, been left out of these discussions.

This project was designed to achieve broadly the following two objectives:

- To increase institutional accountability for the safety of women and girls
- To influence attitudes and behaviors that perpetuate sexual harassment and VAW/G

More than 20,000 boys and girls, men and women have been successful in bringing the issue of sexual violence against women and girls into the public discourse through the interventions of this project. As a result; where there was silence earlier, there is voice now: 13 year old Arti Kumar from Japla, Jharkhand feels that “the system” of her village “is problematic ... the rules for boys and girls are too discriminatory”; 18 year old Pooja Parmar from Sehore, Madhya Pradesh asks why she was engaged to be married - to someone with a criminal record - at the age of 12, and was pulled out of school when she protested. 15 year old Ashutosh from Raipur, Chhattisgarh wants to know why only girls are discriminated against. 16 year old Mohit wants to know “What is the big deal about the taboos around menstruation? It’s natural and biological”. Kavita, a young woman working in a public institution demands to know why she is required to accept the sexual advance of her HR director in order to ensure that her position is made secure. Smita, an older woman working in a construction site can’t figure out where she must go to file a complaint against her supervisor”

And where there was fear earlier, today there is courage. Mohit, Arti, Pooja, Ashutosh, Kavita and Smita along with others have managed to bring the discourse on gender discrimination and violence against women and girls into the public forum. Their advocacy has begun influencing institutions to action in several different ways. The Sarpanchs of some villages in Haryana and Maharashtra have taken pledges to make their villages, private and public institutions (including government schools) safe for women and girls. The district level governments have begun to form and strengthen institutional mechanisms mandated for the protection, prohibition and redressal of sexual harassment of women at workplace as per the law of 2013. The strategies that were followed to achieve the same, made use of participatory methodologies of enquiry and change by:

- Creating safe, non-threatening spaces for meaningful dialogue
- Encouraging the asking of difficult questions as a means of analysis
- Encouraging personal responsibility towards achieving collective and individual visions of a new world
- Promoting equal participation of both boys and girls, men and women in the discourse

STORIES OF CHANGE

18 year old Nupan Bishwakarma from Siliguri was only 14 years old when he lost his father. He had to drop out of school and work to make ends meet at home – teaching dance and singing at a bar from the age of 15 years. Because of this project, Nupan yearned to be back in school. An A grade student, Nupan is in school now, and the most popular senior.

As a leader of change, Nupan is active in engaging with the students of his school as well as with the community to bring an end to gender discrimination and violence against women and girls.

Nupan is a leader of Kadam Bhadhate Chalo, in this picture, he is speaking at Antargoonj: The National Youth Workshop, an annual event of Martha Farrell Foundation, held in New Delhi. He pledged to work with other youth to create a new world, beginning with stopping the violence taking place in his neighbour's house.



Kadam Badhate Chalo is a unique collaborative effort between boys and girls that provides them with the opportunities to come together to design, strategise and spearhead a campaign that addresses the issue of violence against women and girls.

KBC OUTREACH

We are present in:

- Bhachau, Kutchh District, Gurjarat
- Wardha , Maharashtra
- Ahmadnagar, Maharashtra
- Sehore, Madhya Pradesh
- Panna, Madhya Pradesh
- Raipur, Chattisgarh
- Bhubaneshwar, Odisha
- Japla, Hussainabad Block, Jharkhand
- Siliguri, West Bengal



KBC representatives from West Bengal, Delhi, Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra sing a Nepali song together

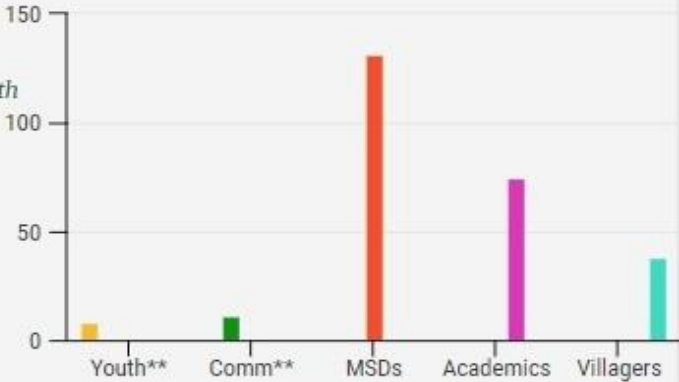


KBC 2.0 Outreach



Indirect engagement by youth

- Youth groups
- Schools
- Community
- Stakeholders
- Events



STORIES OF CHANGE

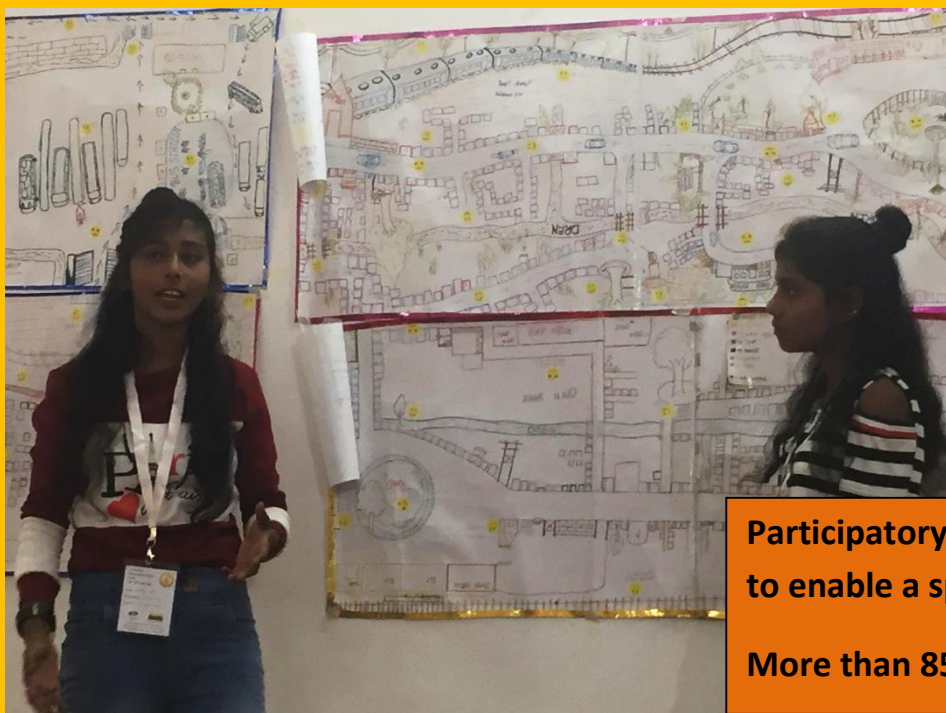
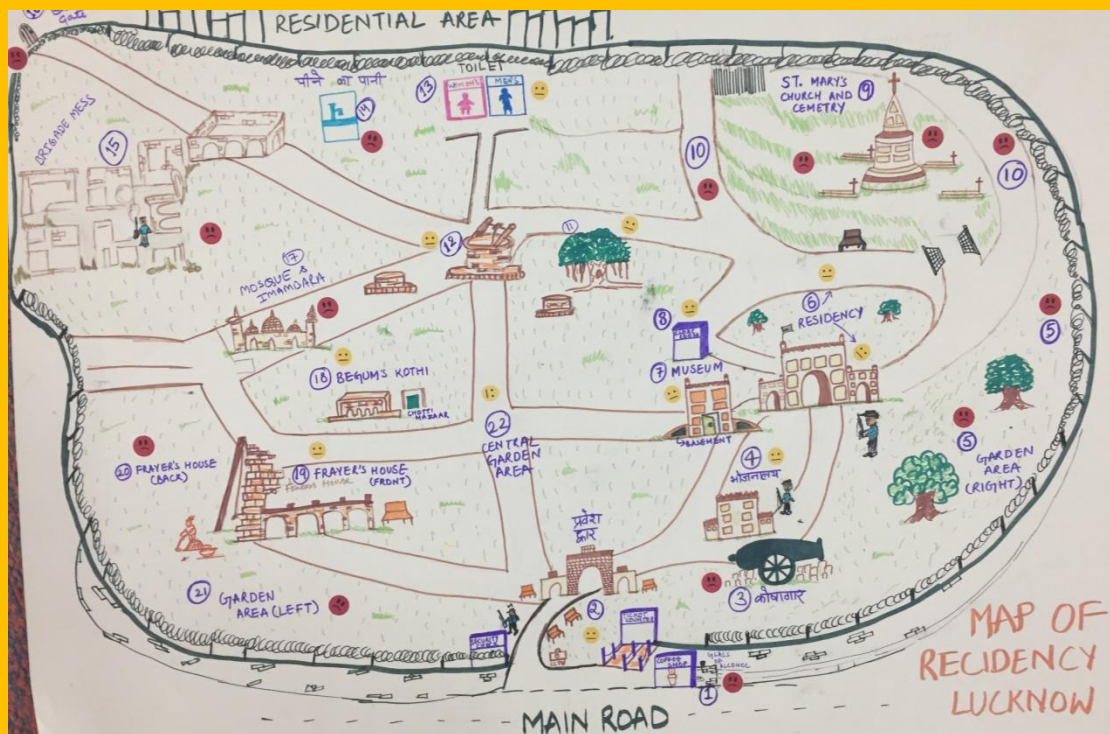


Jainab, 21 years from Cholapur, Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh) was 17 years old when she joined KBC as a participant in a workshop. Today, as a recognised activist and youth leader on ending violence against women and girls, she along with other members of her group conducts participatory safety assessments in villages around Varanasi and leads them to advocate for structural changes with the existing institutions to ensure safety of women and girls. In this picture, she is explaining the artwork that she produced along with 10 other youth leaders from other KBC locations. “There is no end to the violence against women” she says “It is time to act ... this is the context of our work as KBC leaders.”

KBC ACHIEVEMENTS

- In Siliguri, the KBC youth, along with the mothers, shared the findings of their Participatory Safety Assessments (PSA) with the police and ward council. As a result, the police and ward council supported them in closing the local alcohol shop, which had become a hub of various unsafe activities. The police enhanced patrol in the area, so that women and girls could safely access public spaces.
- In Japla, Sehore, Panna, Siliguri and Raipur, PSA has also helped in producing evidence on how open defecation can lead to unsafety of girls and women in public spaces. As a result, the panchayat has supported in the construction of toilets that can be easily and safely accessed by girls and women.
- In Maharashtra, KBC activities are being undertaken across 90 villages with the support of panchayat representatives. Participatory Safety Assessments were conducted in 50 government schools in districts of Wardha and Ahmednagar. The findings of these PSAs brought out how schools are also very unsafe for girls. Thereafter, the KBC youth and facilitators shared the PSA findings with their Panchayats, as a result of which they succeeded in instituting Internal Committees (ICs) in 7 schools. Moreover, it was made mandatory that the key of the complaints box (for sexual harassment at workplace) shall remain with the head of the IC, and not with the school principal or the school management.
- A school in Raipur also instituted the IC after the KBC youth from that school shared their PSA findings with the school management.
- In continuation of the KBC efforts from last year in schools in Haryana, the teachers and school management are supporting the local KBC leaders to report and stop instances of child marriage. Awareness sessions have been held for protection officers, who are also engaging with KBC leaders and the schools to stop child marriage.
- The youth in Haryana received written pledges from their local panchayat leaders that they will support KBC in ending VAWG in their communities. The youth leaders also shared their PSA findings with the panchayat. As a result, local transport now comes inside the villages so that girls can safely commute to their schools.
- In all the locations, boys and girls are working together to end VAWG. In fact, one of the biggest achievements of KBC has been its success in activating the local youth and facilitating open dialogues on gender equality. It has also created a community concern and consciousness that prompts direct and immediate attention.

“लड़कें और लड़कियां मिलकर आवाज़ उठा रहे हैं | अब महिला हिंसा की बात बंद कमरे में नहीं होती | यह स्कूलों, पंचायतों में खुल कर होती और यह बातचीत बहुत महत्वपूर्ण है |” (Girls and boys are raising their voices together. Now, conversations around VAWG are not happening behind closed doors. It happens in schools and panchayats and these conversations are very important.) – Archana Tai, KBC Facilitator, RSCD, Maharashtra



Participatory Safety Assessment is a tool developed by Martha Farrell Foundation to enable a spatial assessment of the safety or unsafety of spaces.

More than 85 Participatory Safety Assessments were conducted by KBC members

ACTIVITIES: KBC

Sports-based Activities:

- <http://www.marthafarrellfoundation.org/kbc-event-detail.php?eid=118>
- <http://www.marthafarrellfoundation.org/kbc-event-detail.php?eid=122>
- <http://www.marthafarrellfoundation.org/kbc-event-detail.php?eid=129>
- <http://www.marthafarrellfoundation.org/kbc-event-detail.php?eid=125>
- <http://www.marthafarrellfoundation.org/blog/bridging-the-gender-gap-through-sports/>

Campaigns:

- <http://www.marthafarrellfoundation.org/kbc-event-detail.php?eid=113>
- <http://www.marthafarrellfoundation.org/kbc-event-detail.php?eid=60>
- <http://www.marthafarrellfoundation.org/kbc-event-detail.php?eid=116>

Trainings and Workshops:

- <http://www.marthafarrellfoundation.org/kbc-event-detail.php?eid=114>
- <http://www.marthafarrellfoundation.org/kbc-event-detail.php?eid=130>
- <http://www.marthafarrellfoundation.org/kbc-event-detail.php?eid=137>
- <http://www.marthafarrellfoundation.org/kbc-event-detail.php?eid=138>
- https://youtu.be/7p_ZRKs6dQ

Blogs:

- <http://www.marthafarrellfoundation.org/blog/harish-kishnani-a-kbc-youth-leaders-journey/>
- <http://www.marthafarrellfoundation.org/blog/documenting-the-untold-stories-my-journey-with-kadam-badhate-chalo/>
- <http://www.marthafarrellfoundation.org/blog/reflections-from-sweet-water-day-in-haryana/>

Kadam Badhate Chalo: Giving voice to youth - more than 20000 youth, including boys; Creating leaders - more than 1350; Promoting equal partnership between boys and girls; Changing the world right side up – one footstep at a time.



This photograph was taken on the third day of 'Antargoonj – Voices of Change', a three-day national leadership programme held for 40 KBC youth leaders in April 2018 in Delhi. The youth can be seen here with KBC facilitators, Mr. Suheil Farrell Tandon, Executive Director, MFF, Dr. Rajesh Tandon, Founder-President, PRIA and Mr. Rizwan Adatia, Founder-Chairperson, Rizwan Adatia Foundation.

STORIES OF CHANGE



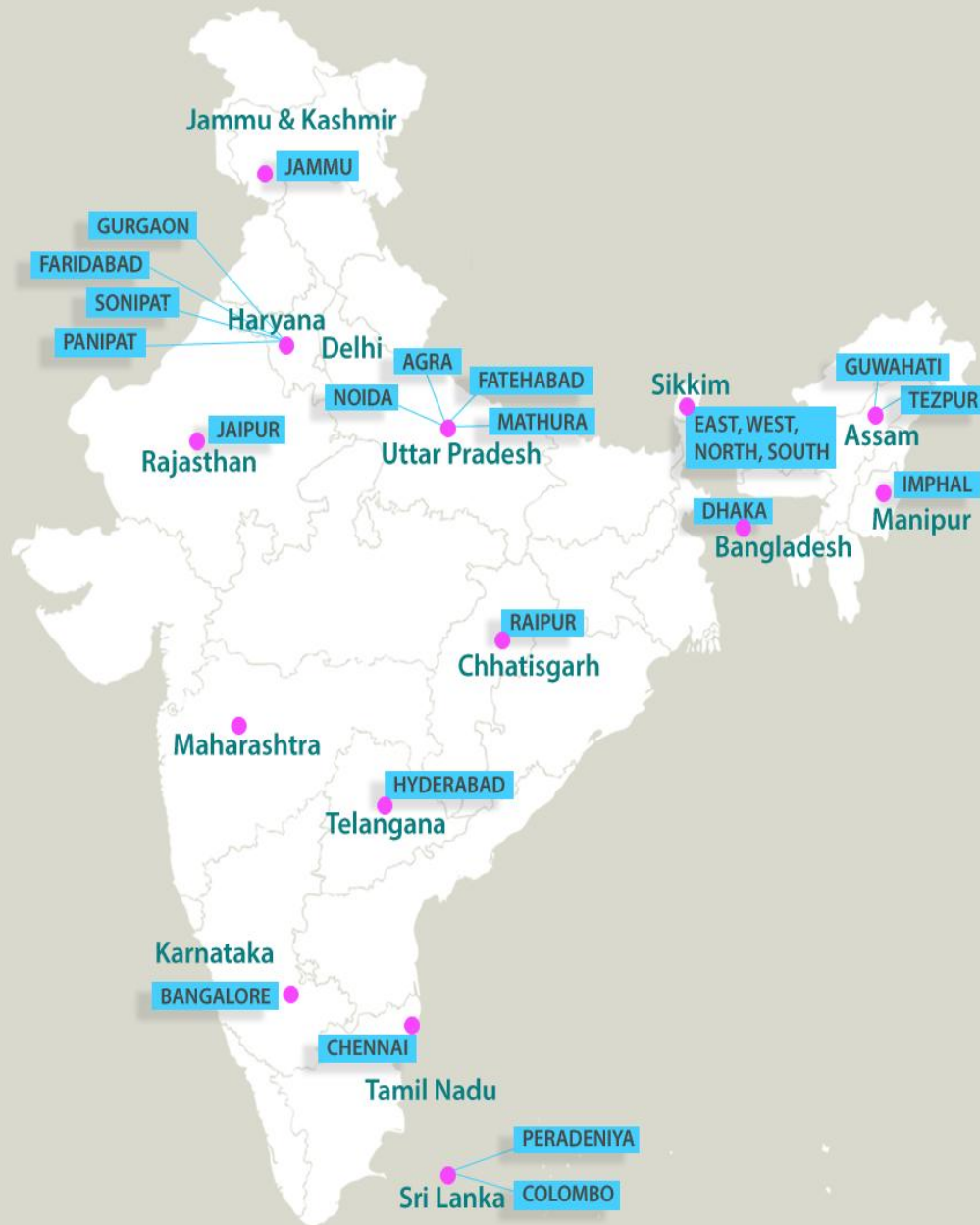
**MAKING
WORKPLACES
SAFE**

“I was born into a deeply patriarchal family, so much so that I had unconsciously begun imbibing the tenets of patriarchy and believing that men should hold the ultimate authority and women’s role is to listen and make him happy at all times because if he is angry, he can even hit you..... I am a victim of sexual harassment at workplace, I did not realise what it was at that time but I knew it was something that should not have happened to me. Now I know what it is and pledge to ensure that no other woman suffers what I did”

Sonia Khatri, 29 years of age, is a field facilitator in PRIA and is responsible for implementing KBC and the Making Workplaces Safe projects in Haryana.

She has been actively facilitating safe panchayats including the formation of Internal Committees for the prevention, prohibition and redressal of sexual harassment in Government Schools.

The Making Workplaces Safe (MWS) programme, with its uniquely designed activities, focuses on the prevention of sexual harassment at workplace with an emphasis on creating gender just, safe and conducive workplaces for both males and females in both the formal and informal workforce.



A three-pronged approach is adopted through the Making Workplaces Safe Programme to ensure the meaningful compliance of the 2013 Act on prevention, prohibition of Sexual Harassment in the both formal and informal sector:

- Capacity Building
- Research Studies through fellowship
- Handholding of Committees (Internal and Local)

MWS OUTREACH

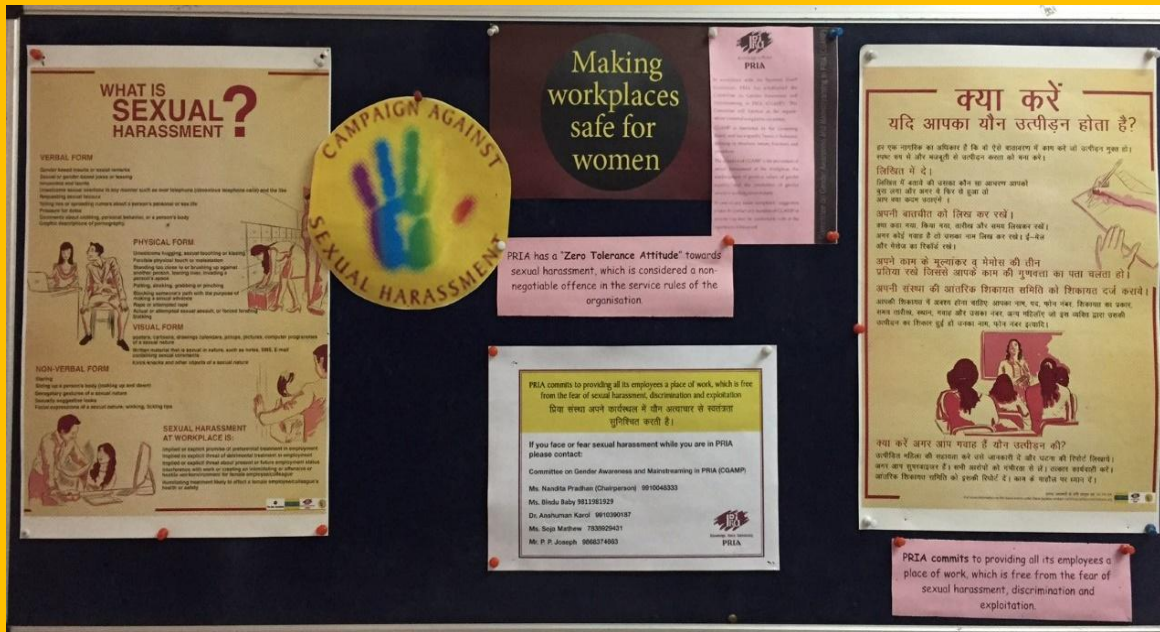
4000

4000 WORKING WOMEN AND MEN ORIENTED

1300

1300 INTERNAL COMMITTEE AND LOCAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS TRAINED

Martha Farrell Foundation helps create safe workplaces by meaningful compliance of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, Redressal) Act, 2013 in both organized and unorganized sectors



It is now 20 years since the Supreme Court of India passed the Vishakha Judgement in 1997 and almost 5 years since the 2013 sexual harassment law came into place.

But a large majority of women at the work place are still regularly subjected to sexual harassment in all its forms in India. Mechanisms to address the issue have still not been put into place. 76% of the Civil Society Organisation (CSO) leaders who were participating in a Third Party Facilitator training being conducted jointly by Martha Farrell Foundation and PRIA in Lucknow early this year reported that sexual harassment exists at their workplaces and that more than 50% of them had not met any compliance standards. In another study conducted this year, among 300 organisations in Delhi, only 69% were found to have constituted their internal complaints committees after the enactment of the law. Among these, 41% had not circulated their policies and 56% had not conducted any training for committee members.

- **Conducive workplaces trainings were conducted with employees of 15 institutions during the project period**
- **Third party representation in Internal Committee of 5 committees**
- **Gender Audit conducted in 1 organisation**

STORIES OF CHANGE



Martha Farrell Foundation is committed to supporting state and district level Governments to strengthen LCs. Its partnership with the district administration of South-East Delhi has resulted in the formation and proper constitution of the LC in the district. To ensure 100% meaningful compliance of the law from bottom-top, frontline workers like Aanganwadi Workers, ICDS supervisors, CDPOs and union members are being trained and capacitated. Their preparedness as first points of contact is necessary for preventing and reporting sexual harassment in the informal sector and for generating awareness in the communities.

“If this is the definition of sexual harassment at the workplace, then it is something that we face every day during the course of our work”, participant at the training.

MWS ACHIEVEMENTS

- In Delhi, to strengthen redressal and prevention mechanisms against sexual harassment of women workers in the informal sector, MWS facilitated the formation of Local Committee (LC) in its South-East district. This was done in collaboration with the District Administration. This is currently being followed-up by training the committee members, nodal officers and frontline workers on their roles and responsibilities as per the law.
- In Gurgaon, MWS succeeded in facilitating a regular interface between the LC of Gurgaon and domestic workers working over there. The LC was unaware about its role in protecting domestic workers and other informal sector women workers from sexual harassment at workplace. After interacting with the domestic workers, the LC members and nodal officers participated in MWS trainings to better understand their roles and responsibilities as per the law. To further strengthen this action, a network of civil society organizations, labour unions and resident welfare associations was formed to closely work with the LC and to report instances of sexual harassment of domestic workers at their workplaces.
- In continuation of our efforts in the state of Sikkim, the LCs in all the four districts and ICs in all the government departments of Sikkim were properly constituted and trained by June 2017. This included the capacity building of 200 members of LCs and ICs, 70 trainers and 1500 government employees.
- Two open forums were held in Bengaluru and Anantpur to convene a dialogue across sectors on prevention of sexual harassment at workplace. The open forums were attended by more than 200 employees.
- MFF is currently a third party representative on the ICs of various government, academic, non-profit and corporate organizations. As per the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013, all ICs are mandated to have one third party representative i.e. an external, non-partisan member on the committee, to ensure a fair redressal process.

“The LC of the South-East District of Delhi has committed itself to strengthening systems for the prevention of sexual harassment in the unorganized sector. We could not have done this without the support of MFF. This will also set an example for other districts; they also need to set such systems in place to ensure that women workers get justice” ~ Dr. Bharti Sharma, Chairperson, LC, South-East District of Delhi

STORIES OF CHANGE



Female Sarpanchs in Maharashtra contextualised the Sexual Harassment law according to their workplace – they discover that the entire panchayat is their workplace, and demand protection from sexual harassment. They pledge to make their panchayats safe.

In India, the Sexual harassment of women at workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act came into operation in 2013. It 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 (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.

While it is a known fact that women in the formal sectors face such harassment, the sexual harassment of women in the informal sector has been relegated to the backburner. According to ILO estimates, currently 94% of the total women workers in India are engaged in the informal sector. Majority of them come from extremely resource-poor backgrounds 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 this form of harassment. They also fear loss of livelihood and the stigma associated with the issue, which further deters them from reporting such violence.

During the course of its work, Martha Farrell Foundation has found that out of 712 districts in India, only 107 have constituted a LC. The members and the representatives of the LC are unaware about their roles and responsibilities and haven't been provided with any forums or platforms to build their capacities. The situation in Delhi, India's capital territory isn't ideal either. Out of the 11 districts in the city, only three have constituted their LC.



Bangle makers in Mathura: Home is their workplace

They now demand effective implementation of the sexual harassment law

ACTIVITIES: MAKING WORKPLACES SAFE

Workshops, Trainings and Consultations:

- <http://www.marthafarrellfoundation.org/mwf-event-detail.php?eid=106>
- http://www.marthafarrellfoundation.org/uploaded_files/pdf_files/1526905741_Process%20Documentation%20on%20Training%2026th%20Oct%202017.pdf
- <http://www.marthafarrellfoundation.org/mwf-event-detail.php?eid=126>
- <http://www.marthafarrellfoundation.org/mwf-event-detail.php?eid=127>
- <http://www.marthafarrellfoundation.org/mwf-event-detail.php?eid=147>
- <http://www.marthafarrellfoundation.org/mwf-event-detail.php?eid=124>
- http://www.marthafarrellfoundation.org/uploaded_files/pdf_files/1526378198_District%20Consultation%20Gurugram.pdf
- <http://www.marthafarrellfoundation.org/mwf-event-detail.php?eid=59>
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Blogs:

- <http://www.marthafarrellfoundation.org/blog/antar-gooni-the-inner-echo/>
- <http://www.marthafarrellfoundation.org/blog/%E0%A4%85%E0%A4%A8%E0%A5%8D%E0%A4%A4%E0%A4%B0%E0%A4%BE%E0%A4%B7%E0%A5%8D%E0%A4%9F%E0%A5%8D%E0%A4%B0%E0%A5%80%E0%A4%AF-%E0%A4%98%E0%A4%B0%E0%A5%87%E0%A4%B2%E0%A5%82-%E0%A4%95%E0%A4%BE%E0%A4%AE%E0%A4%97/>
- <http://www.marthafarrellfoundation.org/blog/do-not-hide/>
- <http://www.marthafarrellfoundation.org/blog/domestic-workers-still-treated-as-slaves/>
- <http://www.marthafarrellfoundation.org/blog/mai-bhi-hun/>

Videos:

- <https://youtu.be/JxhvXYhX7Cw>
- <https://youtu.be/LuboRclB63k>

LESSONS LEARNT:

- **Sports as a Great Equalizer** – Sports proved to be a great way of engaging with youth. It helped them in overcoming various gender, class and caste related stereotypes, develop critical communication and leadership skills and take their first step towards becoming local champions of gender equality.
- **Engagement with Schools** – Introducing KBC through schools proved to be very effective, especially because schools are seen as important social institutions, which can help in sustaining and spreading local KBC action. They play an important role in influencing attitudes and behaviours. It is important that teachers and school management become an active and a meaningful part of KBC, so that they can facilitate safe spaces for discussions on gender and motivate local youth to join KBC.
- **Engagement with Parents and Families** – KBC youth leaders from various locations innovated strategies and activities to engage with their parents and families. Families and parents can become great agents of gender equality and their support can also help in strengthening institutional accountability.
- **Making Local Institutions Accountable** - Locations like Maharashtra, Raipur and Haryana have effectively included Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in KBC activities. This helped in making VAWG an agenda of local governance; to involve panchayats to make it a community concern and influence other local institutions (schools, police, and families). Also, the changed attitudes of panchayat leaders, school principals, teachers, police officials and parents had an influence on the larger community, pushing them to support local KBC youth-led action.
- **Gender Difference in Perceptions and Experiences of Safety** – Girls and boys have different perceptions and experiences of safety. Girls' understanding of safety is largely based on their own experiences of it or lack of it, in their schools, public spaces and homes. On the other hand, boys, who enjoy far more mobility than girls carry various perceptions and assumptions of safety. Therefore, in KBC, for girls and boys to work together, a participatory approach helped in overcoming the gendered differences between girls' and boys' perceptions and experiences of safety. It also helped the youth in understanding their own gendered socialization, as a result of which they have a differential access to opportunities and choices.

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LESSONS LEARNT:

- **Prevention is the Way Forward** – In both KBC and MWS, there was an equal focus on both prevention and redressal. While it is important to strengthen redressal mechanisms to ensure that justice can be accessed by all women and girls, it cannot be ignored that often redressal processes are lengthy, inactive or delayed. By working at a preventive level, KBC and MWS were also able to address attitudes and perceptions that abet gender-based violence and enable safe and empowering workplaces and communities for women and girls.
- **Working with both Institutions and Communities** – Both community action and institutional action have to walk hand in hand, especially when working with informal sector women workers to end sexual harassment at workplace. This two-pronged approach helped in generating awareness in the community, making institutions accountable and facilitating an interface between the two.
- **Use of Art-based Methods** – In both KBC and MWS, it was found that participants engage more when an arts-based approach is used. Arts-based methods allow both young and old participants to connect with the trainings and sessions at a personal level, critically reflect upon themselves and develop empathy towards each other. Also, they use these methods to further engage with their institutions and communities, which have a better impact than traditional methods of engagement.
- **Strengthen Existing Systems** – To ensure grassroots level awareness about the SHW Act, it is important to build the capacities of frontline workers that are placed within existing systems of public health and legal support. Through MWS, the reach of the LCs has been widened by training frontline health workers, Child Development Project Officers (CDPOs) and representatives from trade unions. They are the first points of contact in the community and can immediately report instances of sexual harassment of informal sector women workers.

KEY CHALLENGES:

- **Indifference and Hostility from the Community** - One of the biggest challenges identified by the KBC leaders and KBC facilitators is the hostility and indifference that they encounter from their neighbours and communities. Often, this comes in the form of ridicule, mockery or contempt. Youth leaders find this very discouraging and often hesitate in engaging with the hostility and the indifference.
- **Patriarchal Mind-sets of the Community** – Patriarchal mind-sets are also big deterrents in carrying forward KBC in various locations. Even if the community and the institutions are not hostile or indifferent, their everyday attitudes related to gender are very regressive and difficult to overcome.
- **Institutional Apathy** - Gender equality is not an agenda for various local institutions of governance, law and order (like police, ward council, panchayat). It will require sustained and committed KBC action to mainstream gender in governance and legal action. Schools also project hostility towards introducing KBC with their students. KBC facilitators and youth leaders are often met with questions like, “How will the school benefit from doing KBC activities?” Also, the annual calendars of schools and examinations schedules make it very difficult to conduct regular KBC activities in schools.
- **Skeptic Parents** - In various locations, parents are also not very supportive of KBC activities. They are skeptical about girls and boys interacting and working together. Often, it is more difficult to engage with the fathers, than it is to engage with the mothers. And due to lack of direct engagement with the fathers, the mothers wield considerable influence on them and can easily turn them against KBC activities.
- **Lack of Institutional Response towards SHW** – District administrations, state governments, LCs and employers are largely unconcerned about SHW. While there has been compliance in the formal sector to some extent, mechanisms to address issues of Sexual Harassment at Workplace for the informal and unorganised sectors are grossly inadequate. Even if there is compliance, it is not necessarily meaningful compliance, where employers are actively working towards enabling a safe and dignified workplace for women. In a series of RTIs filed by Martha Farrell Foundation (between 2016-2107) to enquire about the status of LCs, it did not receive a response from 60% of the 712 districts in the country.

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KEY CHALLENGES:

And the districts that responded, their responses were either inadequate or incomplete. Many district officers refused to cooperate when they were contacted for further information. This shows that institutions responsible for the redressal and prevention of SHW are disinterested, lax or hostile. This is currently one of the biggest deterrents towards the meaningful implementation of SHW Act 2013.

- **Class and Caste Based Prejudices** – Majority of the informal sector women workers belong to the lower rungs of the class and caste based hierarchy in India. Their class and caste status often results into their complete dehumanization by employers and institutions, which often belong to the dominant class and caste groups. These prejudices and stereotypes deem informal sector women workers as unworthy of rights and entitlements and categorize them as ‘needy’, ‘thieves’, ‘dirty’, ‘liars’ etc. Such prejudices become an impediment towards engaging with employers and institutions and eliciting a desirable action from them.
- **Low Awareness Levels of Informal Sector Women Workers** – Most informal sector women workers are illiterate and unaware about the law, making it extremely difficult for them to speak against this form of harassment. They also fear loss of livelihood and the stigma associated with the issue, which further deters them from reporting such violence. This also makes it very difficult to collectivize them; their capacity-building and awareness generation is often a lengthy process. And if there aren’t immediate results of the collectivization, they become disillusioned and lose interest.