



EXCELLENCE IN
WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

9TH MARTHA FARRELL AWARD REPORT

Award Ceremo



Knowledge. Voice. Democracy.

PRIA

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ABOUT THE MARTHA FARRELL AWARD



EXCELLENCE IN
WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

The Martha Farrell Award for Excellence in Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality has been instituted to honour Dr. Martha Farrell and her ideals. It is a first-of-its-kind initiative to discover, recognise and honour mid-career individuals and committed institutions which have made valuable contributions in areas of work related to women's empowerment and gender equality.

The Award was originally instituted by the Martha Farrell Foundation (MFF) in partnership with the Rizwan Adatia Foundation (RAF) and the Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) from 2017 to 2019. Thereafter, from 2020-2023, in partnership with the Rural Development Trust (RDT) along with PRIA. Currently, the Award is being supported by PRIA.

The Annual Award is given in two categories: Most Promising Individual and Best Organisation for Gender Equality with each winner receiving INR 1,50,000.00 as prize money. In 2020, the Special Jury Awards were introduced in each category, with each winner receiving INR 1,00,000 as prize money, with support from our esteemed jury member, Mr. Feisal Alkazi.

Since the institution of the award in 2016, we have received a total of 1,452 nominations over these nine years. These comprise 816 in the individual category and 636 in the organisational category.

MOST PROMISING INDIVIDUAL

The Most Promising Individual Award is given to:

- Any professional of any gender, between 25 and 40 years of age, who is working in government, business, industry, or civil society organisations in India.
- Any person who has worked consistently for at least the past five years to promote women's empowerment and/or gender equality within the workplace, in communities, in educational institutions, and/or in society at large.
- Person with innovative, practical, and comprehensive approaches to social change promoting women's empowerment and/or gender equality.
- Who is leading practising feminism in their everyday life.

BEST ORGANISATION FOR GENDER EQUALITY

The Best Organisation for Gender Equality is given to :

- Any organisation, including government, business, industry, educational, health, media, unions, federations, or civil society, registered in India or which is a department/center under a registered organisation in India.
- Has been actively implementing systems, procedures and practices that create a gender-sensitive and inclusive environment within their own workplace.
- Such efforts have been consistent for at least the past five years.
- Innovative, practical and comprehensive approaches to cultural and political change within the organisation towards women's empowerment or gender equality.

9TH MARTHA FARRELL AWARD 2025

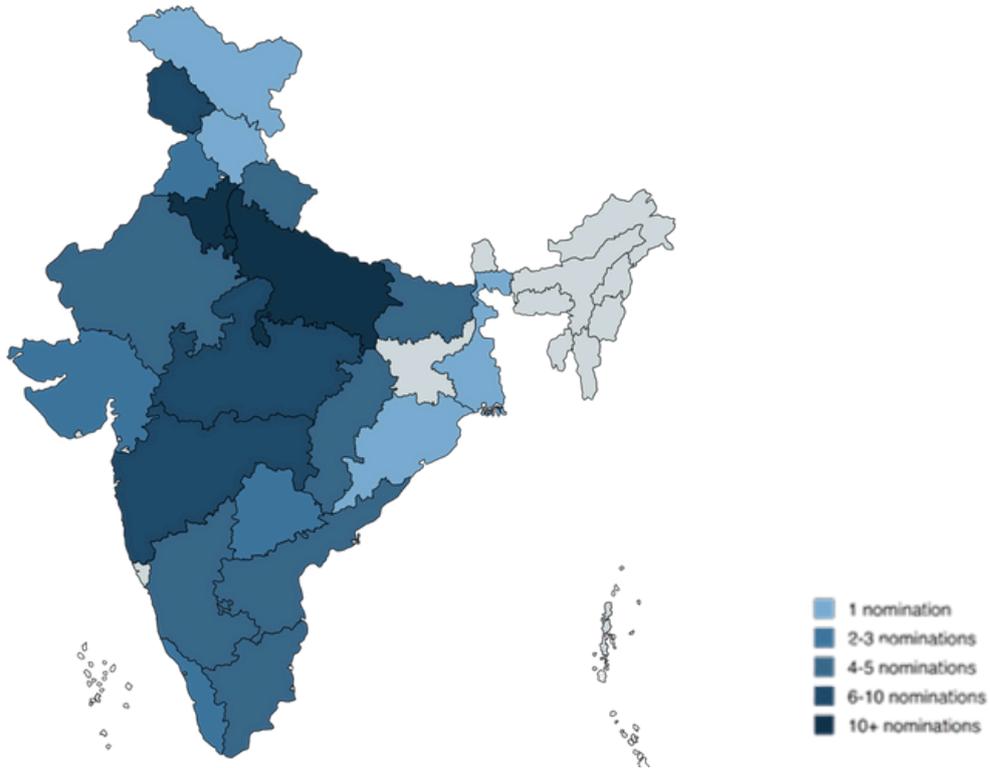
On 20 September, 2025, the Martha Farrell Foundation proudly hosted its 9th Martha Farrell Awards. Nominations for the Award opened on 6 January, 2025 and closed on 31 March, 2025.

A total of 187 nominations (100 nominations in the individual category and 87 nominations in the organisational) from 25 states and union territories across India were received, comprising a wide variety of individuals (social activists, professionals, educators, media persons, government officials, entrepreneurs) and organisations (grassroots, non-profits, corporates, academics, media, social enterprises).

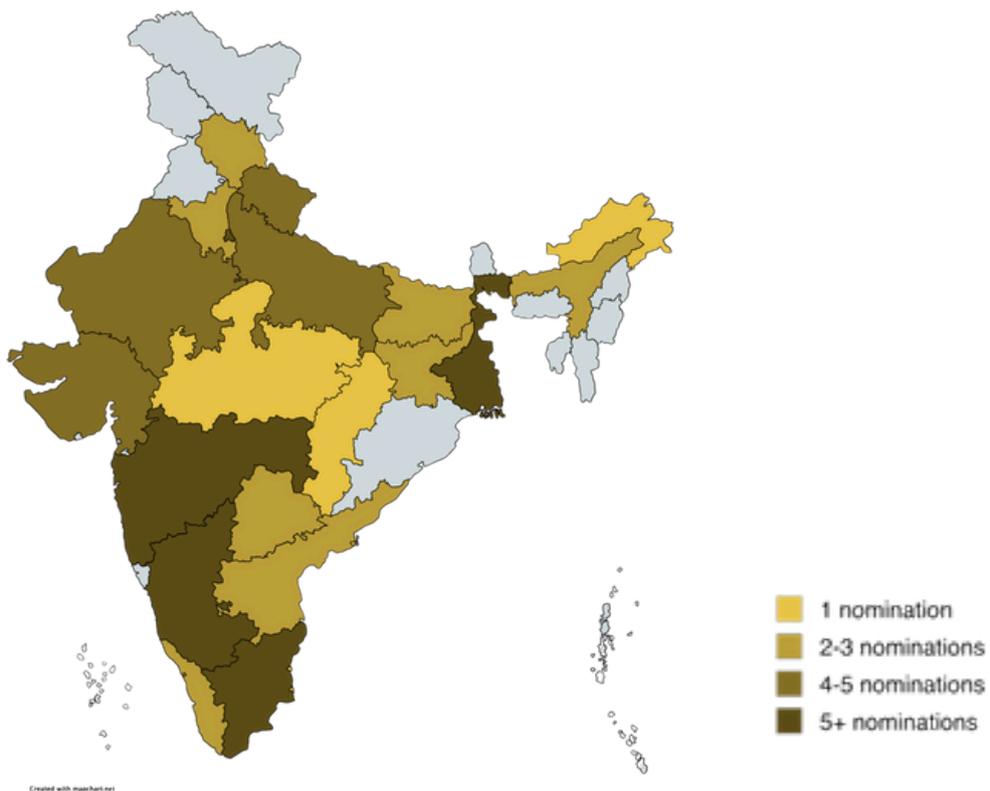
The Award nominees embodied the belief that working towards women's empowerment and gender equality is an everyday goal and illustrated the varied forms that activism and change can take.



INDIVIDUAL

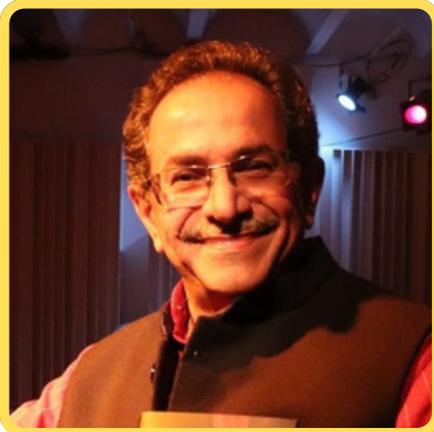


ORGANISATION



AWARD JURY

FEISAL ALKAZI



Feisal Alkazi, a distinguished theatre director and documentary filmmaker, has directed more than 300 plays and 30 documentaries. A counsellor and trainer with Sanjivini for over 35 years, he counselled Kashmiri children impacted by terrorism (2004–11) and served as a UN Master Trainer in HIV/AIDS prevention (2002–07).

DEEP JYOTI SONU BRAHMA



Deep Jyoti Sonu Brahma, founder of the Farm2Food Foundation, champions the idea of making agriculture an aspirational livelihood, particularly for vulnerable youth in Assam. With over two decades of experience, he has led initiatives in youth mentorship, education, climate change action, and building collaborative coalitions.

MIRAI CHATTERJEE



Mirai Chatterjee, a senior leader of the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA), heads SEWA's Social Security team as its Director and chairs the SEWA Cooperative Federation. She has also served as SEWA's General Secretary, playing a key role in advancing the organisation's mission and leadership.

AWARD JURY

DR. BHAVANI RAO

Dr. Bhavani Rao serves as Dean of the School of Social and Behavioural Sciences at Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham and leads two research centres, AMMACHI Labs and the Center for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality. Since 2016, she has also held the position of India's UNESCO Chair in Gender Equality.



SUDHA SRINIVASAN

Sudha Srinivasan leads Gender Practice at Samyak, Collective Good Foundation, where she advances women's health through community and public health interventions. Co-founder and advisor at 2nd Careers, she supports professionals in finding purposeful work and has provided leadership to The Nudge Institute in the past.



DR. RAJESH TANDON

Dr. Rajesh Tandon is the Founder-President of Participatory Research in Asia and serves as Chairperson of the Martha Farrell Foundation. Since 2012, he has also been the Co-Chair of the UNESCO Chair in Community-Based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education.



EVALUATION OF NOMINATIONS

After nominations concluded on 31 March 2025, a process of evaluating the nominees commenced.

The objective of this evaluation process was to prepare a shortlist of individuals and organisations, which was then presented to the jury for their consideration and the selection of winners.

The evaluation process was divided into four steps:-

1. Preparation of longlist

Nominees in each category who did not fit within the initial award criteria (age, number of years of work, and location) were excluded. After this screening step, 74 nominees in the individual category and 78 nominees from the organisation category moved ahead.

Questions were asked of these individuals and organisations to gain a deeper understanding of their work. Of the nominees who cleared the first screening step, 27 nominees in the individual category and 37 nominees in the organisational category responded to the additional information asked.

2. Preparation of shortlist

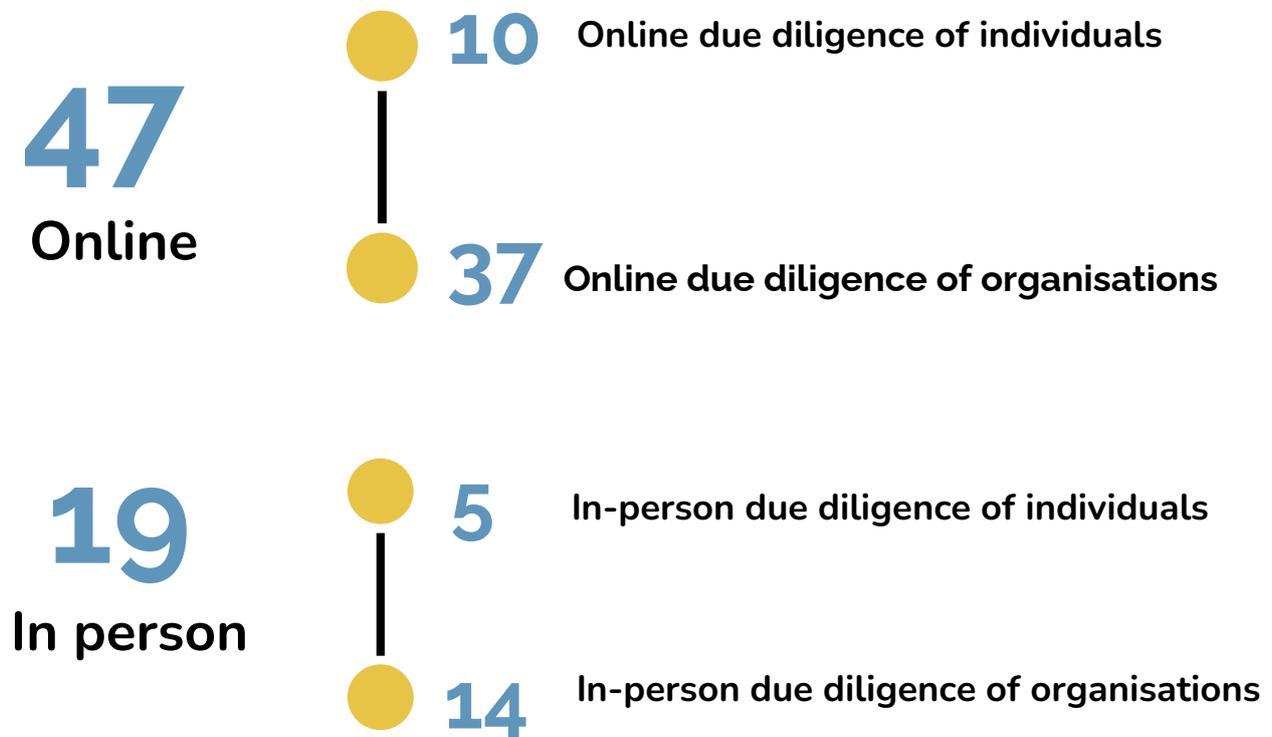
The nominees who responded were then shortlisted based on the following criteria:-

- Consistency
- Innovation
- Outreach
- Scaling-up/plans for expansion

and on the review of the responses received to the questions asked.

3. Due diligence process

Followed by the shortlisting process, a total of 47 online due diligence calls were conducted to understand the quality, consistency, and the depth of the work being done by the nominees in their respective regions. From 47 due diligences conducted online, 10 were conducted for the individual category nominees and 37 were conducted for the organisational category nominees. Followed by the review of online due diligence done, a total of 5 nominees in the individual and 14 nominees in the organisational category were selected for the offline due diligence.



The due diligence process (both online and offline) was carried out by team members from MFF, Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), Sahbhagi Shikshan Kendra (SSK), and the Centre for Youth and Social Development (CYSD), Odisha. During the offline due diligence conducted, evaluators went to the field locations of the nominees, and evaluated their work by understanding in detail from beneficiaries and local authorities. The process of due diligence both online and offline was completed by 15 June, 2025.

4. Jury Review

The feedback and evaluation provided by the due diligence team were qualitatively assessed by a core team consisting of MFF's Chairperson, Executive Director, and the Programmes-Lead. A list of nominees then selected and then presented to the jury for final review of the winners.

After the list of 5 nominees in individual category and 7 nominees in the organisational category were prepared from the due diligence round, a jury meeting was conducted on 19 July, 2025 where the jury made their final decision on the selection of the four winners, based on Dr. Martha Farrell's values, which include:

- Feminism in everyday practices and actions
- Personal examples of change
- Working with people of all genders
- Institutional gender mainstreaming
- Changing systems and cultures



9TH MARTHA FARRELL AWARD

FINALISTS - 2025 MOST PROMISING INDIVIDUAL



NAMGAIL ANGMO
Social Activist
Ladakh



DR. KAVITA NAMDEO WARE
Local Leader and Social
Activist
Maharashtra



JAYANTI BURUDA
Journalist and Social
Activist
Odisha



ARCHANA KR
Social Activist
Karnataka



TANYA KHERA
Social Activist
Uttarakhand

9TH MARTHA FARRELL AWARD FINALISTS - 2025 BEST ORGANISATION FOR GENDER EQUALITY



ASSOCIATION FOR ADVOCACY
AND LEGAL INITIATIVES TRUST (AALI)

Uttar Pradesh



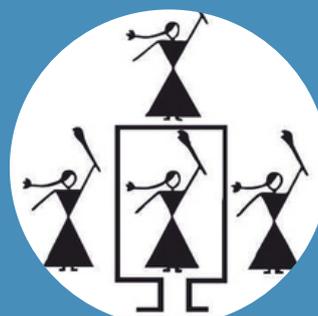
BREAKTHROUGH TRUST

New Delhi



DURBAR MAHILA SAMANWAYA
COMMITTEE

West Bengal



EKAL NARI SHAKTI SANGATHAN

Himachal Pradesh



MOITRISANJOG
SOCIETY

West Bengal



RURAL WOMEN DEVELOPMENT
TRUST (RWDT)

Tamil Nadu



SUTANUTIR SAKHYA

West Bengal

PRE-EVENT DISCUSSION

As part of the 9th Martha Farrell Awards, the Martha Farrell Foundation (MFF) went beyond the conventional felicitation ceremony to host a pre-ceremony dialogue. This initiative brought together winners and finalists from both individual and organisational categories for a full day of reflection, exchange of ideas and practices with collaborative learning. The session created a platform for participants to share experiences, discuss challenges, and strengthen strategies to promote gender equality and social justice across diverse regions of India.

Participants :

Individual category:

- Namgail Angmo (Ladakh),
- Jayanti Buruda (Odisha),
- Archana K. R. (Karnataka)

Organisational category:

- Nirmala Devi and Ruchika Sharma – Ekal Nari Shakti Sangathan (ENSS), Himachal Pradesh
- V. Alamelu Bannan and Bannan – Rural Women Development Trust, Tamil Nadu
- Arindam Das – Moitri Sanjog Society, West Bengal
- Madhuparna Ghosh – Sutanutir Sakhya, West Bengal
- Sukanta Paul – Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (DMSC), Kolkata
- Renu Mishra – Association of Advocacy and Legal Initiatives (AALI), Uttar Pradesh

This gathering and a pre-award discussion fostered collaboration, encouraged the finalists, winners, and our team at MFF and PRIA to exchange our organisational practices and journeys. Strengthening our commitment to building a strong network of individuals and organisations working for gender justice.

Opening remarks and context:

Dr. Tandon opened the session by emphasising the importance of experiential learning beyond formal educational degrees:

“Knowledge is not defined by degrees but through participatory and mostly experiential forms of learning beyond formal educational spaces. Democracy in everyday life is only possible when everyone gets to voice their opinions.”

Following this, the work of MFF and PRIA was introduced, Ms. Samiksha Jha moderated the session, providing context for the discussion and setting the stage for the finalists to share their experiences.

Namgail Angmo (Ladakh):

Namgail shared insights from her work in Ladakh, highlighting unique regional challenges:

- Emphasised on the issue that men, alongside women, need exposure to become agents of change.
- Noted that Ladakh is often misrepresented in popular culture; rural realities, particularly in remote areas, are starkly different from urban perceptions.
- Highlighted key challenges such as gender-based violence, lack of access to toilets, and infrastructural gaps of the region.
- Referenced ongoing advocacy, and presented her solidarity with Sonam Wangchuk’s struggle for scheduled status for Ladakh.
- Discussed innovative interventions by her such as preparing health-related videos for YouTube, working on health and waste management systems and documenting the history of Ladakh by recording voices of Ladakhi women and the folk music.

After Namgail's address, Jayanti Buruda from Malkangiri, Odisha, shared her experiences of working as a journalist and tribal rights activist in the region.

Jayanti Buruda (Malkangiri, Odisha – Special Jury Awardee):

Jayanti reflected on her journey working with tribal communities:

- She emphasised the importance of self-awareness and building understanding of one's own identity: **“मेरे लिए सबसे जरूरी था, पहले अपने खुद के बारे में जानना और अपनी समझ बनाना।”**
- Highlighted communication challenges within tribal communities and the role of media studies in driving social change and amplifying their own voices and narratives from the tribal community
- Shared the formation of Bodo Didi Union, a girls' group fostering community discussions.
- Advocated for tribal land rights since 2006, mobilising 50,000 people to pressure authorities to release land pattas.
- Collaborated with Adivasi Adhikaar Sangh to address exploitative practices (sahukaar waad).
- Reflected on educational challenges and social progress, noting she is the first journalist from her community.

After Jayanti's address, the discussion moved forward with the organisational category representatives sharing their insights:

Archana K R, Karnataka

- For Archana, the question of dignity was central, she sought to understand and challenge why society discriminated against Dalit people like her.
- Raised by a single mother in a matriarchal household, she credits her mother and grandmother for shaping her rebellious spirit.
- In school, she noticed the lack of proper toilets and discovered that only ₹1,200 was allocated for their maintenance.
- She launched an online petition demanding increased government funding, which led to the announcement of ₹100 crores for school toilet maintenance.

- Began working in Bapuji Nagar, helping residents access ration cards and voter IDs.
- Founded Stand4SHE, a collaborative movement for gender equality and inclusion.
- Archana aspires to “create 100 Archanas,” empowering young, Dalit, and marginalised trans individuals to drive policy-level change and build sustainable impact.

Madhuparna Ghosh (Sutanutir Sakhya, West Bengal):

Madhuparna traced Sutanutir Sakhya’s journey, which began in a small room of Madhyamgram:

- Courts were described as neither women-friendly nor child-friendly nor inclusive, and earlier, women advocates faced restrictions in even speaking in the courts.
- This is why Sutanutir focused on community advocacy first, developing youth-peer leadership programmes to ensure the POSH Act’s implementation.
- On the status of Local Committees (LCs) in West Bengal, Madhuparna noted a lack of office setups and quorums, limiting the functionality of LCs.

Sukanto Paul (Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee):

- Sukanto shared regarding Durbar’s journey and how the collective works in Asia’s largest red-light area, focusing on health and social security for sex workers.
- Initially, sex workers faced severe discrimination; the discrimination was such that even their children were denied admission in schools.
- To gain financial independence, sex workers formed their own cooperative bank (DMSC), listing their profession as “housewife” to avoid stigma towards sex work.
- Durbar advocates that sex work is legitimate labour: “we use our body, our service; it’s our profession,” mentioned Sukanto, highlighting the voices of the sex workers associated with Durbar.
- DMSC’s efforts secured legal recognition and rights for sex workers.

- In 2006, Durbar organised the “Durbar Express” Parliament March to protest discriminatory laws like the Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act.
- Durbar continues to create safe financial spaces as well for sex workers to support theirs’ as well as their children’s welfare and empowerment.

[Nirmal Chandel, Ekal Nari Shakti Sangathan](#)

- Nirmal Chandel shared that her experiences and supportive environment at SUTRA inspired her to establish the Ekal Nari Shakti Sangathan, a collective for single women’s rights and empowerment.
- While working with SUTRA, Nirmal created spaces to uphold the rights of single women.
- Initially, women didn’t understand the concept of violence; when she mentioned “hinsa” (violence), they thought she said “hissa” (land share).
- To engage women, Nirmal used her knowledge of accounts and theatre, training them in accounting and mobilising them through plays and participatory learning.
- Single women: widows, abandoned, divorced, separated, and spinsters faced immense challenges, juggling work, childcare, and safety, often walking through forests at night with torches.
- What began with 105 women has now grown to 19,870 members across the Ekal Nari Shakti Sangathan network.
- Early meetings faced resistance, once even being driven out of the village, but over time, government departments began to recognise and include single women in welfare schemes.
- Collaboration with single women gram panchayat leaders strengthened their advocacy; meetings were often held under trees in villages.
- ENSS moved beyond piecemeal aid to demand policy-level changes for single women and built national-level forums to amplify their voices.

Sumi Das, MoitriSanjog Society

- Sumi Das shared her journey advocating for the LGBTIQ+ community and other marginalised groups through MoitriSanjog Society.
- She highlighted societal prejudices: even presenting herself in a saree and makeup invited discrimination, including name-calling.
- Began her work by running away and begging for money; gradually received HIV/AIDS projects in Siliguri, which helped financially but did not end social stigma.
- Faced double discrimination: societal bias and misconceptions linking trans people disproportionately to HIV/AIDS.
- National leadership existed but was disconnected from grassroots realities; Sumi started community-based outreach in her own village.
- Focused on education access for marginalised children, especially migrant children facing bullying and stereotypes.
- Today, connected with 29 children, is part of the district transgender board, and aims to provide accurate information and rights awareness to the community in the next five years.

V. Alamelu Bannan, Rural Women Development Trust

- Born into a family of bonded labourers in Tamil Nadu and forced into child labour at age of 10, Alamelu Bannan transformed her personal struggles of bonded labour, sexual exploitation and harassment as an opportunity to advocate for the rights of the Arunthathiyar community especially their women and children.
- Rescued by a school teacher, after pursuing her education (B.Com and Diploma in Cooperative Training) and working for her community, in 2005, she founded RWDT.
- The organisation is led by bonded labourers from the Arunthathiyar community who rescue and rehabilitate bonded labourers, manual scavengers, and child labourers; raise awareness and advocate for community rights.

- Ensuring political, economic, and social empowerment of the Arunthathiyar community as a whole through forums like ***Arunthathiyar Social Justice Federation***, and ***Arunthathiyar Women's Liberation Movement***.
- It also uplifts Arunthathiyar women, children, and communities through education, social justice, and policy advocacy.

[Renu Mishra, Association for Advocacy and Legal Initiatives \(AALI\)](#)

- AALI works to make India's progressive laws accessible and implementable for women, trans people, and other marginalised communities.
- Believes that while the Constitution grants equality, laws are often not fully accessible or enforced for women.
- Our vision and mission is to ensure legal awareness and socio-legal support (free of cost) for women and trans individuals.
- Promote access to justice empowering one woman strengthens many others.
- Simplify complex laws into easy Hindi for states with low development indicators.
- Our key areas of work are disseminating and spreading awareness of the Domestic Violence (DV) Act and other gender laws.
- Training and mentoring young feminist lawyers, promoting feminist lawyering practices.
- AALI operates as one of Asia's largest chambers of women lawyers, handling over 2,000 cases.
- Builds the capacity of lawyers and communities, especially in rural areas, where laws remain inaccessible.

This discussion was followed by a visit to MFF's field location in Govindpuri, Delhi where domestic workers and adolescents from the Main Bhi and Kadam Badhate Chalo (KBC) programmes of MFF, shared their learnings and journey with the finalists and winners.

9TH MARTHA FARRELL AWARD CEREMONY

The 9th Martha Farrell Award ceremony was held on 20 September, 2025 at the Indian National Science Academy (INSA) New Delhi. For those who could not attend in person, the ceremony was also live-streamed on the Martha Farrell Foundation's YouTube channel. The Award ceremony started with a thought-provoking opening poetry on feminism by Ms. Stuti.

***“Rach rahe hain apni kahani khud hi,
Nariwadi soch sang, har kadam aage badhate.
Samaj ki chunautiyon ko peeche chhod,
Hum sabko apni kahani se prerit karte.
Aaj din hai unhe sarahne ka,
Har din hai unki koshishon ka,
Parivartan mein dhalte dekhne ka.
Salaam un sabko
Jo samaj ko nayi raah dikha rahe hain
Aur lengig samanta ke khwab ko
Haqiqat bana rahe hain.”***

A film showcasing the work of the Martha Farrell Foundation was played. Thereafter, the four winners in two categories were announced, recognised, and felicitated. The presentation of each award was preceded by the screening of a short video capturing the essence of the work being done by the winner.

Rita Sarin, Founder - Director of Martha Farrell Foundation, Chairperson of the PRIA Governing board and former Country-Director of the Hunger Project presented the award for Most Promising Individual to Archana KR. This was followed by the presentation of the Special Jury Award (Individual) by Mr. Ravi Seth, Treasurer of the PRIA Governing Board to Jayanti Buruda.

The Award for Best Organisation for Gender Equality was presented to Rural Women Development Trust (RWDT) by Edith Read, an international development professional and a supporter of the Martha Farrell Foundation's work. The final award - Special Jury Award (Organisation) was presented by Dr. Sanjay Bhatt, Professor at the Delhi School of Social Work and the Founder of National Association of Professional Social Workers in India (NAPSWI), Ekal Nari Shakti Sangathan (ENSS). The Award ceremony closed with a captivating dance performance by Raveena Singh. Their harmonious melodies and vibrant stage presence left a lasting impression, celebrating the joy of music and unity.



MOST PROMISING INDIVIDUAL



“ —

IF A GIRL LIVING IN CONDITIONS LIKE MINE CAN RAISE HER VOICE, THEN SOCIETY, PEOPLE, AND THE GOVERNMENT WILL ALL HAVE TO LISTEN. MEANINGFUL AND SYSTEMIC CHANGE IS POSSIBLE.

— ”

ARCHANA KR
(Karnataka)



FIGHTING SOCIAL EXCLUSION BY INSPIRING LEADERSHIP IN KARNATAKA

Archana KR is a social activist from Karnataka whose work stems from her own lived experience of exclusion. For over 15 years she has championed sanitation, menstrual hygiene and gender justice- working with Dalit, Adivasi and transgender communities across Bengaluru and Karnataka.

She founded Stand4SHE in 2018 to bridge marginalised voices with policymakers, driving systemic change in sanitation and hygiene. Growing up in a Dalit family without access to a toilet until age 14, Archana witnessed firsthand how poor sanitation, gender norms and caste inequalities intersect. Her participatory audits and advocacy helped secure a ₹100 crore allocation from the Karnataka government for toilet maintenance in schools.

Through Stand4SHE she has empowered women and transgender leaders, mobilised communities in slums, and resolved hundreds of civic-and-environmental issues- blurring the line between grassroots leadership and policy reform. Her work proves that when the most excluded lead, systemic transformation is possible.



“

THIS AWARD IS NOT JUST A CELEBRATION OF OUR WORK, BUT A TRUE RECOGNITION OF THE STRUGGLES, DREAMS, AND DETERMINATION OF THE RURAL ARUNTHATHIYAR WOMEN WHOM WE SERVE.

”

ALAMELU BANAN, FOUNDER
RURAL WOMEN DEVELOPMENT TRUST (RWDT)
(Tamil Nadu)



FROM BONDAGE TO FREEDOM : A DALIT WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN TAMIL NADU

Rural Women Development Trust (RWDT), founded in 2005 in Salem district, Tamil Nadu, is a grassroots organisation committed to dismantling systems of bonded labour, human trafficking, and caste and gender-based exploitation among the Dalit Arunthathiyar community. Over the past two decades, RWDT has worked across around 70 villages, supporting Dalit Arunthathiyar women, children and their families towards dignity, self-reliance and systemic change through social, economic and political empowerment.

Its founder V. Alamelu Bannan- who herself grew up in a bonded-labour household and experienced extreme hardship- led the organisation from a small team of four to five people into an institution with multiple offices. Under her leadership, RWDT rescues and rehabilitates bonded labourers, manual scavengers and exploited children; forms women's collectives; advocates for minimum wages, protection from sexual harassment and prevention of child marriage; and builds pride in Arunthathiyar identity while linking efforts to broader social-justice movements. RWDT's programmes are participatory and culturally rooted- community women, many of whom are survivors, serve as field officers using songs, street theatre, group discussions and art-based methods to engage low-literacy communities.

SPECIAL JURY AWARD - INDIVIDUAL



“

THIS AWARD GIVES ME STRENGTH WHEN I FALL OR STUMBLE. IT TELLS ME THAT I STILL HAVE A LONG JOURNEY AHEAD, BECAUSE MY COMMUNITIES ARE WAITING FOR ME.

”

JAYANTI BURUDA
(Odisha)



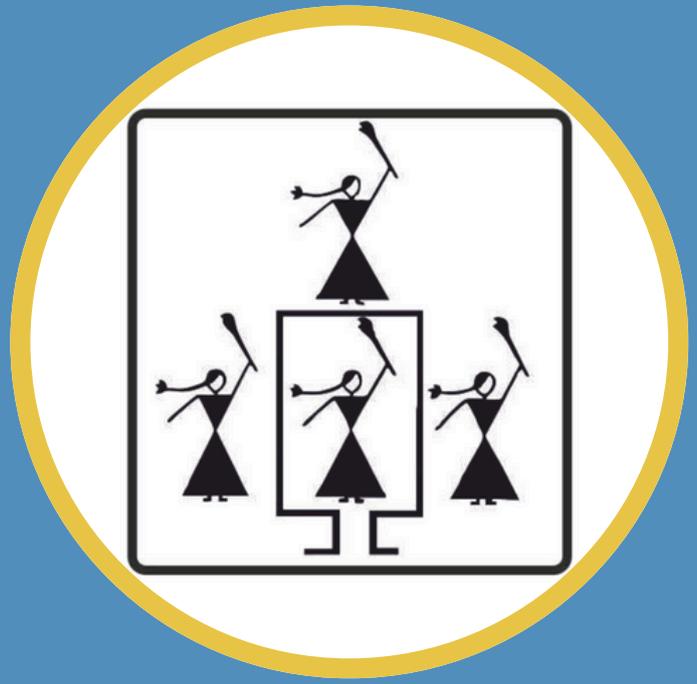
ADVOCATING GENDER JUSTICE AND TRIBAL RIGHTS IN RURAL ODISHA

Jayanti Buruda, from Serapali village in Odisha's Malkangiri district, is a journalist and social activist who for nearly a decade has been working to advance menstrual health, gender equality, community empowerment and forest-rights among tribal communities.

Born into the Koya tribal community, Jayanti experienced early restrictions on girls' education, mobility and access to dignity. Undeterred, she became her village's first student to pass the 10th standard and went on to study journalism to amplify her community's voice.

She founded Bada Didi Union, reaching multiple villages with initiatives that challenge taboo, support girls' education and build leadership among women.

Recognised nationally- she was listed among the 2024 Forbes India W-Power top self-made women, her work spans grassroots action and media training, and opens pathways for tribal youth to take control of their narratives. Jayanti blends lived experience, journalism and advocacy to transform personal struggle into collective change, working to build a more inclusive, equitable future for tribal girls and women.



“

WE MAY NOT HAVE FORMAL DEGREES, BUT THROUGH OUR STRUGGLES, WE HAVE EARNED A PHD IN LIFE, WE TOO DREAMED OF BEING GIVEN AN AWARD ON A BIG STAGE, TODAY THAT DREAM HAS BEEN FULFILLED BY THE MARTHA FARRELL FOUNDATION.

”

NIRMAL CHANDEL, FOUNDER
EKAL NARI SHAKTI SANGATHAN
(ENSS)
(Himachal Pradesh)



FROM SILENCE TO STRENGTH: A SINGLE WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE FROM THE HILLS OF HIMACHAL

Ekal Nari Shakti Sangathan (ENSS) is a grassroots collective in Himachal Pradesh founded in 2005, bringing together single women- including widows, divorcees, unmarried, abandoned, Dalit, Muslim and trans women- to challenge exclusion and promote dignity and rights.

Beginning with around 105 members in 2005, ENSS is now active across hundreds of gram panchayats in eight districts, with a membership exceeding 16,000 single women. ENSS engages women through street theatre, folk songs, and cultural events to raise awareness about the stigma and discrimination faced by single women.

The organisation has effected significant policy change in Himachal: for example, impacted welfare schemes for single women and institutional recognition of their status.

Driven by lived experience and peer leadership, ENSS builds leadership among single women, connects them to decision-making bodies, and creates inclusive spaces of sisterhood and empowerment.

MARTHA FARRELL FOUNDATION

The Martha Farrell Foundation (MFF) was set up in 2015, to support practical interventions, which aim to achieve a gender-just society and promote lifelong learning.



MFF takes forward the spirit and legacy of Dr. Martha Farrell, a renowned gender practitioner and civil society leader, and forwarding her path-breaking work towards gender mainstreaming and the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence in the private, professional and public spheres.

MFF believes that every individual and institution has the will and ability to facilitate change and invest in self-empowerment and growth. To this end, MFF's programmes integrate holistic, collaborative and participatory approaches to create safe, empowering spaces where every individual can be, learn and work safely, without the fear of sexual and gender-based violence or discrimination.

MFF's initiatives are carried forward in partnership with diverse stakeholders, facilitating change at the individual, community and institutional levels.

VISION

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

MISSION

To ensure that all individuals feel secure and valued in their working and learning environments 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

OUR REACH AND IMPACT

60,637

adolescents

collectivised and trained on gender, gender stereotypes and gender-based violence

3,59,336

lives impacted

Partnered with

96

institutions

- 199 schools, ITIs and colleges
- 32 civil society organisations and government

Trained

2,384

teachers and principals

Trained

50,151

EMPLOYEES AND

444

INTERNAL COMMITTEES

2,880

STUDENTS

PARTNERED WITH

293

corporates, civil society organisations, government and higher education institutions

Reached

67,416

WOMEN DOMESTIC WORKERS

150

COMMUNITY LEADERS (PEHELKARS)

23

LOCAL COMMITTEES

550

POLICE

trained on Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013

PARTNERED WITH

26

government-based

52

civil society organisations

26

districts

OUR PROGRAMMES



KADAM BADHATE CHALO

A unique collaboration between adolescents, the community, civil society, and administrative systems to enable collective action against sexual and gender-based violence, MFF's Kadam Badhate Chalo (KBC)

programme aims to foster a new generation of adolescent leadership that is able to identify issues related to sexual and gender-based violence in their everyday lives.

Co-designed and co-implemented with adolescent leaders, the programme supports adolescents as they undertake a journey of discovering their inner potential, learning skills, knowledge and developing their individual and collective voice and agency, to take collective action to counter sexual and gender-based violence in their lives.

#MAIN BHI



MFF's #MainBhi programme is one of the few programmes in the country which focuses on countering sexual and gender-based violence in the world of work for women informal workers, including domestic workers, home-based workers and construction workers, among others.

Given their contextual challenges, the #MainBhi programme is co-designed with informal worker partners and is being implemented in partnership with them. Through the programme, MFF supports women informal workers, providing them with the space, voice and agency, to collaboratively identify challenges to safety, co-create solutions and engage with institutions to strengthen mechanisms to ensure gender justice and safety in public, private and professional spheres.

MAKING WORKPLACES SAFE

MFF is committed to working with organisations to ensure that workplaces are safe, gender positive and inclusive spaces for all. We do this by building capacity of organisations and strengthening institutional mechanisms to mainstream gender in institutions, and put in place mechanisms to create safe and gender equal spaces within workplaces.

We work across sectors, including corporates, non-profits, civil society, government department, higher educational institutions and schools, among others, for institutional gender mainstreaming and meaningful compliance with the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.



SCHOLARSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS

MFF supports scholarships and fellowships to create new knowledge for the promotion of gender empowerment and prevention of sexual harassment.

Currently, MFF has partnered with the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) for the Martha Farrell Memorial Fellowship, which supports two staff members of universities in East Africa and Asia annually, providing training and support to institute safer and more conducive learning spaces on their campuses.

Previously, MFF had partnered with the National Association of Professional Social Workers in India (NAPSWI) to support Masters of Social Work (MSW) students in India in conducting research around sexual harassment at workplace.



PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH IN ASIA (PRIA)

Established in 1982, Participatory Research in Asia – PRIA is a global centre for participatory research and participatory learning based in New Delhi, India. It systematises locally contextualised knowledge to integrate in development policy and programmes.



PRIA is committed to promoting participatory and inclusive development and governance, ensuring gender equitable access to basic services by building capacities of the poor and marginalised.

Globally, PRIA is recognised as an intermediary support organisation developing capacities of civil society, non-profit organisations, elected representatives, government officials, and academia across the Global South. It is known for widely sharing through training and learning programmes its innovative methodologies to promote people's participation in development and governance.

For more information, visit PRIA's website www.pria.org.



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