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Kingdom of the Netherlands



## Annual Report 2016-17

December 2017



# Ending Sexual Harassment

Making Institutions Accountable towards  
Women Workers in Informal Sector

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## List of Abbreviations

ADB: Asian Development Bank  
BPL: Below Poverty Line  
DW: Domestic Worker  
FGD: Focus Group Discussion  
ILO: International Labor Organization  
LC: Local committee  
NCW: National Commission for Women  
NGO: Non-Governmental Organization  
NSSO: National Sample Survey Organization  
PRIA: Participatory Research in Asia  
SHW Act: Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act

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## Executive Summary

The Ending Sexual Harassment: Making Institutions Accountable towards Women Workers in the Informal Sector Project seeks to organise women domestic and construction workers to increase their capacity for lobbying and advocacy to prevent sexual harassment in their workplace. The organised women will demand for effective grievance redressal from LCs and other governance institution. These institutions will be supported to respond effectively to such lobbying and advocacy efforts by women workers. The project will multiply demands from women workers by working with and building advocacy capacities of other intermediary organisations like civil society, trade unions, and support organisations.

The **results** of the project in its first year have been the following:

1. Mapping of **80 domestic workers** through case studies and in-depth interviews from Gurgaon, Faridabad and South Delhi
2. Outreach to **1260 domestic workers** from the three districts through focus group discussions and meetings.
3. Engaging **7000 active users in Social Media** through twitter, Facebook and blog posts on the project
4. Mapping of stakeholders **Interviewed 13 stakeholders**: Local committee of Gurgaon, 2 Police officials from

Gurgaon and South Delhi, 6 Civil Society Organisations working with Domestic Workers, 1 representative from Resident Welfare Association, 1 Placement Agency, 3 officials from Dept of Labor, Govt of Haryana and 2 officials from Women and Child Development Department, Haryana.

5. **Participatory Safety Audit** of Workplaces of Domestic Workers from Gurgaon and Faridabad.
6. **1 Multi Stakeholder Consultation in Gurgaon**, Haryana and **1 Training Workshop with Champions and Field Coordinators of partner NGO's** on Community Mobilisation for Implementation of Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act, 2013, attended by 24 participants.

In the first year of the project the focus was on raising awareness and organising the domestic workers in the three districts. Workers collectives were formed in two locations to discuss the challenges they face in everyday work life. Linkages were built with different government and non-governmental organisations working with domestic workers on the issue of sexual harassment at workplace.

Indicators of achievement	Achievements in the first year
Number of DW	<b>1260</b> workers

impacted through direct or indirect engagement.	
Number of Champions Identified	<b>8</b> Champions
Outreach to civil society organisations working with DW	<b>6</b> organisations
Outreach to other stakeholders	<b>17</b> Representatives
Number of Field Visits	<b>45</b> visits
Number of group discussions	<b>24</b> group discussions
Number of stories documented	<b>80</b> stories
Number of Consultations	1 multi stakeholders consultation, 24 participants.

## Introduction

Throughout Indian history, women have been relegated to the role of managing the housework due to the gendered division of labour. However, in the last few decades, women from middle-class and upper middle-class families have been taking up jobs outside the home and outsourcing their household chores to other women – the domestic workers. 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 <sup>1</sup>. However, there are massive discrepancies between the official and unofficial estimates in India, with the latter showing up to 9 crore domestic workers in total (ILO, 2013).

Women are expected to know how to perform chores like cooking and cleaning, because these tasks are seen as part of their ‘natural’ skillset. As a result, women who are uneducated often see domestic work as their only option as they also feel that it does not require education or skill training. Since the housework that women do in their own households is not seen as productive work, the same neglect is accorded to paid domestic work as well.

The lack of value and dignity accorded to domestic work by employers and consequently, by the workers themselves, contributes to their dismal working and living conditions and low wages. Many of the workers are migrants. They move to cities to escape the conditions of poverty and lack of job opportunities in their villages. They tend to take up domestic work as it is the only marketable skill they have.

<sup>1</sup> Indian Express- [indianexpress.com/article/india/law-to-regulate-working-condition-of-domestic-workers-demanded/](http://indianexpress.com/article/india/law-to-regulate-working-condition-of-domestic-workers-demanded/)

It is important that the domestic workers understand when they are being exploited and stand up for their rights. The women themselves must play an active role in improving their working and living condition. Therefore, there is a need for collectivisation of the domestic workers so that they can discuss their grievances amongst themselves and come up with viable solutions. This participatory approach towards social action has been found to be much more effective than the devising of solutions by outside experts.

Intervention carried out in 3 Districts in the National Capital Region : Gurugaon (Haryana), Faridabad(Haryana) and South Delhi.

In the districts we identified domestic worker groups in Gurgaon: **Harijan Basti**, South Delhi: **Taimoor Nagar, Sangam Vihar, Madanpur Khadar and Abul Fazal Enclave**, Faridabad: **Mewla Maharajpur**

## Domestic Work in India

### Who is a domestic worker?

First, it is important to understand how the term 'domestic worker' is defined. A domestic worker is an individual who is employed to carry out housework and other activities in a household.

### Types of domestic workers

Domestic workers can be divided into two categories on the basis of where they stay, live-in and live-out<sup>2</sup>. Live-in (or full-time) workers stay with the family of the employer and do not have any fixed working hours. They are often made to work long hours without adequate remuneration. On the other hand, live-out (or part-time) workers live in their own homes, usually in informal settlements. They may work at a single household and go back home in the evening or they may work at different houses and perform a combination of different tasks. These tasks range from cleaning, washing and ironing clothes, chopping vegetables and cooking to taking care of children and the elderly. While part-time work allows for some flexibility in terms of working hours, the nature and availability of work is unstable<sup>3</sup>.

### Legal Provisions related to Domestic Work

Domestic workers are not provided protection under several labour laws that deal with social security, decent working conditions etc. Further, India is not among the countries that have ratified the Domestic Workers Convention which was adopted by

<sup>2</sup> Mehrotra, S. T. (2010). Domestic workers: Conditions, rights and responsibilities.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid

the International Labour Organisation in 2011. The convention entitles domestic workers world-wide to a “decent working condition” which includes but is not limited to a weekly-off, overtime pay, minimum wage and other benefits<sup>4</sup>. Owing to their neglect in labour legislations in India, the working conditions and wages of the domestic workers are completely dependent on the employer.

Several attempts have been made for legal protection of domestic workers. A Legislation for domestic workers was drafted for the first time in 1959 with the Domestic Workers (Conditions of Employment) Bill<sup>5</sup>. However, this was never passed as a law. Two legislations that are applicable to domestic workers – the Unorganised Workers Social Security Act 2008, and the Sexual Harassment of Women at the Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013 – were formulated<sup>6</sup>. Some state governments like those of Kerala, Maharashtra and Karnataka have issued notifications to make the minimum wage legislation applicable for domestic workers working in their states. However, these laws exist merely on paper. Barely any action has been taken for their effective implementation because it is

difficult to regulate working conditions when the workplace is a private household.

The Ministry of Labour and Employment established a task force which drafted a comprehensive national policy for domestic workers<sup>7</sup>. A comprehensive legislation is much needed for the domestic workers in India, in order to ensure that they are not exploited.

### **Workplace problems and challenges**

Domestic workers face several problems in the course of their work and their daily lives. Sometimes, the women workers have to travel long distances to reach their place of work. They tend to have long working hours and excessive workload, lack of benefits like a weekly holiday and extra pay for working overtime, and low wages. There is no fixed system for determining the wages of domestic workers. It could be done on the basis of the size of the house or the number of family members. For jobs like washing and ironing clothes, wages could be determined on the basis of time spent working or the number of items. In the absence of a fixed system, the employers are at liberty to decide the wages according to their convenience. The benefits the workers receive and their conditions of work are also dependent on the goodwill of their employers. Further, domestic workers

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<sup>4</sup> (2013) Ratifications of C189 – Domestic workers convention, 2011 (No. 189) [www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11300:0::NO:11300:P11300\\_INSTRUMENT\\_ID:2551460](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11300:0::NO:11300:P11300_INSTRUMENT_ID:2551460)

<sup>5</sup> WIEGO – background note

<sup>6</sup> Ramanujam, R. 2005. Influx of tribal domestic workers: A study of role of placement agencies in Delhi. - WCD

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<sup>7</sup> (2016) National Platform for Domestic Workers- National Consultation on Domestic Workers

have no job security. They are often sacked because of petty reasons like taking excessive leaves, breaking a utensil or alleged theft. Employers do not think twice about firing their workers because of the huge supply of paid domestic workers in Indian cities.

Sadly, the grievances of the workers often remain unnoticed because they usually do not take any action when they face unfair treatment or harassment. They feel that the only solution is to leave and find a job elsewhere.

### **Domestic Work and Sexual Harassment at Workplace: Forging the Link**

Empirical knowledge on gender discrimination and sexual harassment is relatively low in India (*Ibid*). Women face a plethora of problems in workplaces both formal and informal. According to an ILO-ADB Report (2011: 111) cited in Farrell 2014” 13, on Asian women and the labour force, “*women continue to disproportionately face a range of multiple challenges relating to access to employment, choice of work, working conditions, employment security, wage parity, discrimination, and balancing the competing burdens of work and family responsibilities*”.

The informal sector becomes the primary source of employment for women in most

developing countries. Even in India, according to the ILO analysis of 2004-2005 data on employment and unemployment based on NSSO survey, 90% of domestic workers in India are women<sup>8</sup>. Most of them are non-literate and are semi or unskilled. Their employment as domestic help is mostly unrecognized.

Low income based domestic women workers are from one of the most vulnerable and exploited group. The reasons for this vulnerability can be manifold ranging from low bargaining power, lack of financial literacy or access to institutional credits, low economic status, lack of knowledge about welfare schemes, lack of control over income, unequal gender relations, lack of social security or welfare legislations etc. Women as such, face harassment in different forms.

Sexual Harassment in India has been recognized following the implementation of Vishaka Guidelines. The new act i.e. Sexual Harassment at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) has replaced these guidelines in 2013. The act details all provisions related to handling cases of sexual harassment at workplaces in India .

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<sup>8</sup> Source: <http://ndwm.org/domestic-workers/>  
Farrell, M. (2014). Engendering the Workplace: Gender Discrimination and Prevention of Sexual Harassment in Organisations. Uppal Publishers

## Ending Sexual Harassment: Making Institutions Accountable towards Women Workers in the Informal Sector

PRIA has been one of the pioneers in implementing the Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act in India right from its inception.

Sexual harassment of women workers in myriad forms is pervasive in informal workplaces. It is under reported and invisible. In India, the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, Redressal) Act was passed in 2013. It includes in its ambit both formal and informal workers. It mandates the constitution of a Local committee (LC) at the district level for prevention, prohibition and redressal of sexual harassment. Despite this, LCs have not been formed and wherever formed it has remained ineffective and unresponsive to informal sector.

The Ending Sexual Harassment: Making Institutions Accountable towards Women Workers in the Informal Sector is a part of PRIA's ongoing efforts to mainstream gender in the development agenda. The **overall objective** of the project is to ensure a safe, secure and dignified workplace for women domestic and construction workers in Gurgaon, Faridabad and South Delhi districts of India.

After its inception, in the first year the project focussed on working with domestic

workers, and stakeholders related to the domestic work sector and stakeholders related to implementation of Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act 2013.

The lack of organisation, capacity, and support, in the informal sector make the challenges women face doubly difficult. Sexual harassment therefore goes unreported. And it is an issue that is yet to be seen as a problem that needs to be systematically tackled. The lack of awareness of the procedures to be followed and harassment at workplace is exacerbated by the ambiguities and the lack of understanding of what constitutes sexual that exist in the Act and its Rules as far as scope of implementation of the Act for women working in the informal and unorganised sectors are concerned.

While the Act has been able to enforce compliance in formal organisations to some extent, mechanisms to address issues of Sexual Harassment at Workplace for the informal and unorganised sectors are grossly inadequate. The role of the LCCs as mandated by the law is the forum for redressal and prevention of sexual harassment at workplace for women workers in organisations with less than 10 employees including informal or home based workers.

The lacuna lies in the constitution of LCCs and their effective functioning. For instance,

only 3 LCCs have been formed in total of 11 districts of Delhi.

In the project we followed the strategy of building collective voice and advocacy. In the **first quarter** of the project the focus was more on daily life assessment of the domestic workers to find out the struggle and challenges they face in day to day life. The focus in the first quarter was also on understanding different form of harassment and sexual harassment the women workers experience at their workplace, public places and also in their own house. In the **second quarter**, we worked closely with the workers. We spent time to listen their stories, and discussing pressing issues in the groups. At this time we engaged ourselves in the process of collectivisation of the workers. The process of togetherness among the workers helped them in creating collective identity as domestic workers. the first group which they formed was also named as *EKTA*, (Unity). In the **third quarter** of project's first year slowly we moved from discussions which were centred to individual struggles to struggle of different form of harassment at workplace. Till that time collective build a safe trustworthy space to discuss their issues. When we thought that the group was ready we asked them to participate in a participatory safety audit and draw their workplaces. In the process women shared different incidents of

sexual harassment which they experienced and the places which they feel are not safe for them. In the **fourth quarter**, the focal point shifted to other stakeholders, we initiated discussions with other stakeholders like civil society organisations working with domestic workers, domestic workers union, trade union, residents' welfare associations (RWA), police government women and child development department, labour department, local committee (LC) which was constituted under SHW Act 2013 in the three districts and by the end of first year we organised one district level consultation in Gurgaon. In the same time we also organised training for the community workers and the staff of the organisations working with domestic workers in the region. The training was to build capacities of the new champions on the issue of sexual harassment with focus on domestic workers.

By the end of first year we were able to achieve the expected impacts as we thought at the time of inception of the project.

- Visibility: Public awareness about the extent of Sexual Harassment among female domestic workers.
- Voice: Organised Women workers demanding accountability from the governance institutions on issues related to sexual harassment at workplace

- Inclusion: Civil society groups working on labour issues include (youth groups, trade unions, NGO) include sexual harassment of informal workers into their agenda
- Accountability: Government institutions become accountable and effective (formulation and effective functioning of LC under district administration, labour ministry and commissions, women's commissions, law and judiciary)

Since its inception **visibility** was one of the top priorities of the work. For the awareness we not only work with the domestic workers but we also focused on the employers' side through the use of social media. Last year we celebrated International women's day and International domestic workers day with the workers and with them we discussed the issue of sexual harassment. From the same event we managed to attract 7000 people on the social media who got to know about the extent of sexual harassment among the domestic workers.

In the process we worked at different levels to ensure the participation of the parties. The team initiated the process

of collectivization to organize the workers and create awareness among them on the issue of sexual harassment. So that the workers **voice** their concerns and demand their rights. In the process of creating space for dialogue we also **included** different organizations which are connected with the workers and the stakeholders from government side, especially the implementing agency **accountable** under the act.

**Project Process:****Phase 1: Year 1****Strategy 1: Conceive. Assess. Visible.**

The specific focuses of this strategy are as follows:

<b>Outlined Strategy in Project Proposal</b>	<b>Achievements in the first year</b>
Mapping of domestic workers in the three districts	Identifying domestic worker groups in Gurgaon: Harijan Basti, South Delhi: Taimoor Nagar, Sangam Vihar, Madanpur Khadar and Abul Fazal Enclave, Faridabad: Mewla Maharajpur
Mapping of relevant stakeholders and institutions including unions working with domestic workers in these locations	Identifying and network linkages with 6 partner organisations working with Domestic Workers in Delhi-NCR region  LC in Gurgaon, Police Verification Office from Sushant Lok Gurgaon and Malviya Nagar South Delhi, Sub Inspector from Malviya Nagar Police Station,
Situational analysis of occurrences of sexual harassment within the informal workplace	Documenting experiences of 80 domestic workers through case studies and indepth interviews from the 3 districts.  Participatory Safety Audit conducted with Domestic Worker Groups from Gurgaon and Faridabad
Mapping of existing non formal practices to prevent and combat workplace sexual harassment	Information collection through Focus Group Discussions and indepth interviews with worker groups from the three districts
To assess the level of awareness and understanding among domestic workers of the existing legal provisions for the prevention, prohibition and redressal of Sexual Harassment at Workplace	Information collection through Focus Group Discussions, informal meetings and indepth interviews with worker groups from the three districts  Information collection through discussions during Participatory Safety Audits

<p>To understand the capacity building and training needs in order to develop a comprehensive and relevant capacity building strategies and modules</p>	<p>1 Training organised with field coordinators from 6 partner organisation and champions from Domestic Worker groups on 26.10.2017</p>
<p>Sharing of findings with relevant stakeholders</p>	<p>1 District Level Dialogue with LC Gurgaon and Domestic Workers on 16 June, 2017 1 Multi Stakeholder District Level Consultation on 24.10.2017</p>
<p>Outline a strategy to influence increased institutional accountability for the prevention, prohibition and redressal of sexual harassment at workplace</p>	<p>Deliverable and milestone based planning involving active engagements with stakeholders prepared for second year of project cycle.</p>

The Project is currently functional in three areas in the Delhi-NCR region. The identified areas are:

1. Harijan Basti: Gurgaon
2. Mewla Maharajpur: Faridabad
3. Sangam Vihar, Taimoor Nagar, Madanpur Khadar : South Delhi.

**The Activity Mapping Matrix is as follows:**

Activity No	Identified Activity in DPR	Activity Description	Activities undertaken	Process	Documentation
1.1	Mapping of women Domestic Workers from 3 districts	A data base to be prepared through the mapping of women domestic workers in the three districts using secondary and primary data. The primary data will be collected through interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with institutions and stakeholders (e.g. police stations, Resident Welfare Associations, placement agencies, trade unions, etc.). This activity will be conducted to record both quantitative and qualitative data.	Interviews  Database Created	80 Individual Interviews 17 meetings with DW's (5 FGD's, 6 Meetings, 7 informal discussions for relationship building and orientation on sexual harassment at workplace)	Database Survey Template
1.2	Documenting experiences	Qualitative documentation of	Case Studies Focus Group	80 Case Studies	Database

	<p>of women domestic workers</p>	<p>experiences of women domestic workers with regard to sexual harassment that they face in their workplaces will be undertaken in all three locations. Assessment of gaps in knowledge and attitude of women domestic workers about SHW and gaps in institutional mechanisms to implement the law will also be documented. An analysis of the data will be done to record the gaps in the knowledge and application of skills in the implementation of the law. The exercise will be conducted using participatory research methodologies. Basic orientation of the workers on the issue will be a large part of this form of data collection.</p>	<p>Discussion</p>	<p>collected through semi structured indepth interviews over the past 1 year Participatory Safety Assessment of workplaces of DW's from Gurgaon</p>	<p>Report Safety Maps</p>
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1.3	Sharing of findings	The study findings and lessons will be shared in three district level consultations. This will be done in the presence of stakeholders who represent a cross section of the countervailing powers that plays an important role in the implementation of the law.	Meeting with LC and LC Nodal Person, Gurgaon  District Level Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One meeting with LC Chairperson Ms. Anuradha Sharma, LC Nodal Person and Domestic Workers (16.10.2017)</li> <li>- One Consultation with stakeholders on 15.12.2016</li> <li> </li> <li>One District level Consultation with stakeholders (24.10.2017)</li> </ul>	Report  Report  Report
1.4	Designing strategies for intervention	Champions (combination of workers and other stakeholders) will be identified during the participatory safety assessment and sharing processes. There will be a	One training of male Security Guards and Maintenance staff One Training of DW's and field coordinators of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One training of Security Guards and Maintenance staff of Carlton 4, DLF Phase 5</li> <li> </li> <li>One Training of 24 participants</li> </ul>	Report  Report

		coalition of these champions in each district. A series of meetings will be held in each of the sub districts to further define the intervention.	partner organizations	including DW's and Field Coordinators of partner organizations	
1.5	Organizing the workers and setting up the helpline	A helpline will be instituted at the inception of the project to provide support to informal domestic worker. This is significant in the absence of an effective institutional mechanism. A mobile SMS based application will be developed which can help those women domestic and construction workers who have access to simple mobile phone to report any instances of sexual harassment. In addition, this will also facilitate them to connect to each other and form a coalition of informal workers.	Information collection on existing systems at place facilitated by International Labour Organisation and the government of Delhi		

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**Time Chart of Ending Sexual Harassment: Making Institutions Accountable TowarWomen  
Workers in the Informal Sector: November 2016 – October, 2017**

November 2016	December 2016	January 2017	February 2017	March 2017	April 2017	May 2017	June 2017	July 2017	August 2017	September 2017	October 2017
Finalizing Project Design	Human Resource allocated for DW Project	2 FGD in Gurgaon and South Delhi	Data Collection from 3 districts	Participatory Learning Exercise in Gurgaon (07.03 .2017)	2 FGD in Faridabad and South Delhi	Field Visits to Faridabad, South Delhi and Gurgaon	Training with Guards and Security Staff of Carlton 4, Phase 5, Gurgaon	6 Meetings with Domestic Worker's in Gurgaon	Questionnaires for Stakeholder Mapping	Stakeholder Mapping	Safety Mapping of Gurgaon DW
	1 Consultation with stakeholders (15.12 .2017)	Field Visits to Gurgaon , Faridabad and South Delhi	Inception Report of the Project	Data Collection from 3 districts	Field Visits to Faridabad, South Delhi and Gurgaon	Group Formation in Gurgaon, Faridabad	Meeting with LC	Field Animator for Gurgaon identified and inducted	Orientati on and Discussion for Safety Mapping ( 3 in Gurgaon, 1 in Faridabad)	Three Discussion with Gurgaon DW Group	Visits to Govt Depts for Stakeholder Mapping

								for Proje ct			
	Initial Visits to Gurga on, Farida bad and Delhi	Survey Questio naires for data collecti on			Data Colle ction from 3 distri cts	Bi- Annu al Repo rting	One FGD in Farid abad	Data Colle ction from 3 distri cts	Data Collecti on from 3 districts	Initial Discussi ons with Teach For India Commu nity Centre in Sangam Vihar for collabor ation	One District Level Consultat ion with stakehold ers in Gurgaon
		Data Collecti on Started			Data Colle ction from 3 distri cts		Data Colle ction from 3 distri cts				One Training of DW's and Field Coordinat ors of Partner NGOs
											Planning next 6 months
											Annual Report

## Overall Findings of the Mapping Exercise:

### Task 1: Mapping of Domestic Workers in three districts

As per the strategy we initiated the work with an ethnographic study on issues and challenges of domestic workers in the district of Gurgaon, Faridabad and South Delhi. The data was developed in the form of stories which covered four broad areas:

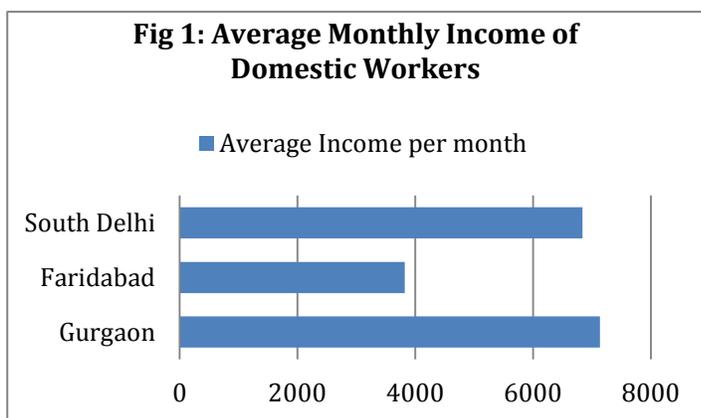
- Daily routine
- Issues and challenges
- Life history- Her story
- Skilling



The areas came out of the focused group discussion which we conducted in the initial phase of the project. Those discussions help the team in shaping the plan of action. Other than the group discussion, thorough review of the available literature was done to understand the sector.

With the domestic workers the data was collected in two forms one was quantitative and other was qualitative. The qualitative data helped us developing the stories of domestic workers.

The quantitative data reflected the socio-economic profile of the respondents, basic working conditions, nature of work, social security and issue and challenges at work. The findings are highlighted below:



The average age of a domestic worker is between 20-27 years. Nearly 88.57% of respondents of the study were married, while 8.57% were widowed and 2.85% were unmarried.

The average age of a domestic worker is between 20-27 years. Nearly 88.57% of respondents of the study were married, while 8.57% were widowed and 2.85% were unmarried.

Fig 1 shows the average monthly income of Domestic Workers from Gurgaon, Faridabad and South Delhi. While Gurgaon DW's have a marginally higher average income, workers from Faridabad has the lowest.

**Fig 2: Average no of working places vs working hours**

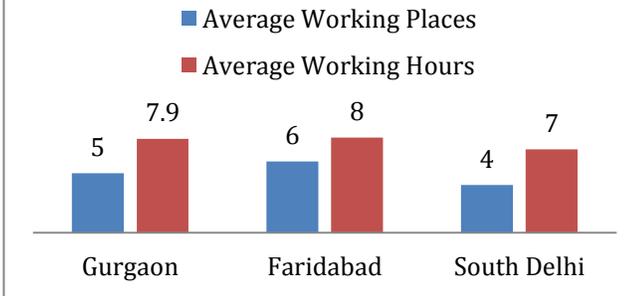
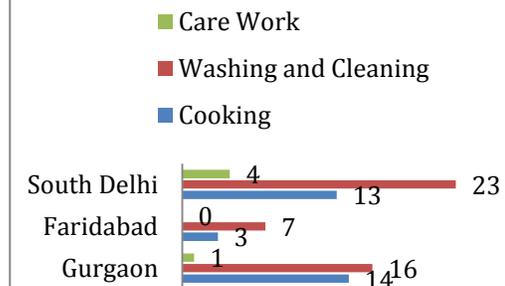


Fig 2 shows the average working hours versus average no of workplaces for domestic workers from Gurgaon, Faridabad and Delhi. For domestic workers from Gurgaon, the average working hours in 7.9 hours per day while no of workplaces is 5 households, for domestic workers from

Faridabad, the average working hours is 8 against 6 workplaces and for South Delhi it is 7 hours against 4 workplaces.

Fig 3 shows the type of domestic work done by domestic workers ranging from care work to washing and cleaning to cooking. While lot of domestic workers from South Delhi are engaged in Washing, Cleaning and Care work, workers from Gurgaon prefer cooking. This also reflects on the marginal higher income of Gurgaon Domestic workers, since cooking generates a substantial income than washing and cleaning.

**Fig 3: Type of Work done by Domestic Workers from 3 districts**



**Fig 4: No of leaves available for domestic workers from 3 districts**

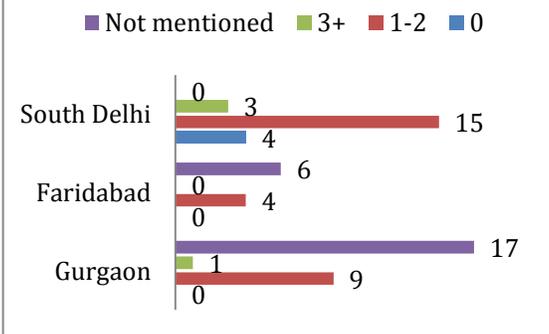


Fig 4 shows the number of leaves domestic workers are entitled to in a month. 6.71% of Domestic workers from South Delhi have shared that they are not entitled to any leave in a month and if they take, their remuneration for that day is cut, while 21% have shared that they are entitled a maximum of 2 leaves per month while only 4.28% are entitled to more than 3 leaves. 4.28% of workers from Faridabad have also shared that they are entitled to 1-2 day leaves per month. Nearly 24.28% domestic workers from Gurgaon have not disclosed the

no. of leaves they are entitled to, while 12.85% are entitled to maximum of 2 leaves and only 1.4% have shared that they are entitled to more than 3 leaves in a month.

Fig 5 and 6 shows data on the number of domestic workers who do not have access to basic social security services viz Aadhar Card, Ration Card, Bank Account and BPL Card. Nearly 87% of the respondents do not have Bank Account which means all their earnings are received in liquid cash and are spent/saved likewise. 63% of respondents do not have Aadhar Card, 79% do not have Ration Card while 74% do not have BPL Card.

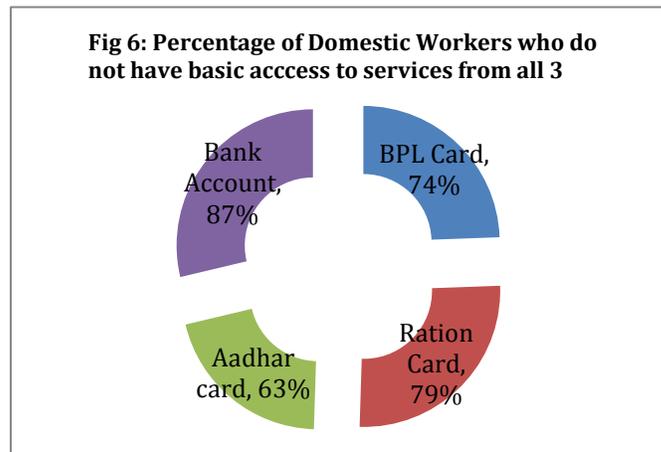
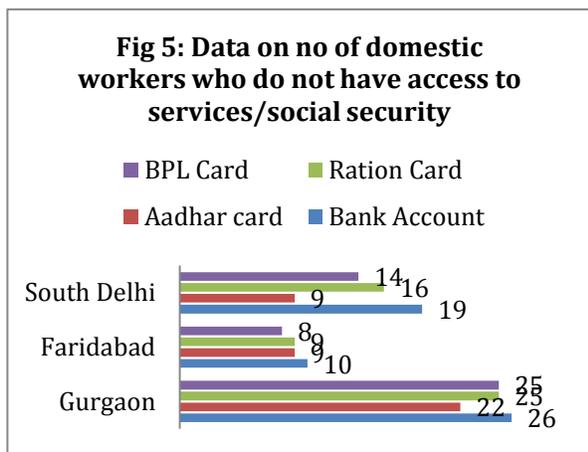
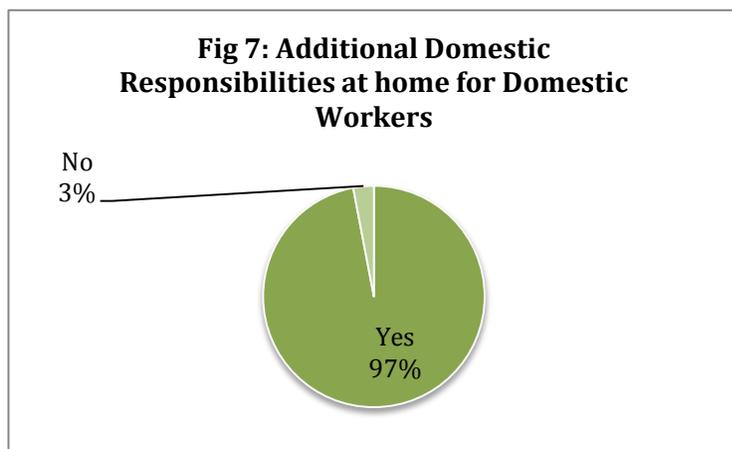


Fig 7, shows the additional responsibilities at home for domestic workers and nearly 97% of the respondents have additional responsibilities at home. Responsibilities included taking care of children and elderly, cooking food and cleaning and washing etc.



In the process of mapping stakeholders, the following were interviewed using semi structured interview questionnaire:

1. Placement Agency
2. Police Verification Officer
3. Police
4. NGOs working with Domestic

- Workers
5. Unions
  6. Resident Welfare Association
  7. Guards and Maintenance staff
  8. Local committee, Gurgaon

9. District Social Welfare Officer, Gurgaon

10. City Magistrate, Gurgaon

The objective of the mapping exercise was to understand the gaps in knowledge related to Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act, 2013. The data collected can be broadly classified into three thematic areas:

- Roles and Responsibilities
- Assessing priorities with respect to Domestic Workers
- Processes and mechanisms to address Sexual Harassment at Workplace
- Key observation

**Stakeholder Mapping Matrix: The following table highlights information collected from stakeholders through semi structured interviews at Gurgaon, Faribad and South Delhi.**

Themes →	Roles and Responsibilities	Assessing priorities with respect to Domestic Workers	Processes and mechanisms to address Sexual Harassment at Workplace	Key Observation
Stakeholders ↓				
<b>Placement Agency</b>	Training and Placement of Domestic Workers	Sourcing of domestic workers from different states in India through social media and print media advertisements  Semi-skilling of domestic workers prior to placement	They generally do not provide support specifically on cases related to sexual harassment except replacing the place of work	The <b>agencies are not aware about the Sexual Harassment of Workplace Act.</b>  There is no proper redressal mechanism for cases

			of the victim	
<b>Police Verification Officer (PVO)</b>	Verification of Domestic Workers prior to placement in employer's house	Thorough checking of documents of Domestic Workers	Investigations done after any domestic worker complains of sexual harassment	<p>The primary work of the PVO is only to check documents of Domestic Workers.</p> <p><b>The responses by the officers reveal that they are not aware of the law and according to them cases of robbery, theft are lodged as sexual harassment.</b></p>
<b>Police</b>	Maintenance of Law and Order in their jurisdiction area.	Domestic Workers nature of complaints are on low wages, or property disputes or misbehavior of employees	<p>Primary investigation is done with no proper follow up of cases</p> <p>Counseling is provided on a case by case basis.</p>	<p><b>Police is not aware of complaints registered under the SHW Act, 2013.</b></p> <p><b>According to the officer, in usual cases, it is the fault of the Domestic Worker as they misbehave with employer's and</b></p>

				<b>demand more money.</b>
<b>NGOs working with Domestic Workers</b>	<p>Domestic Worker's collectivization for their labor rights and human rights</p> <p>Capacity building of Domestic Workers for policies and schemes available for them</p>	<p>Collectivisation</p> <p>Awareness and mobilization for labor rights</p>	<p>All cases related to sexual harassment are referred to NGO's working on women's rights.</p> <p>Follow ups are taken sometimes and counselling is given if needed</p>	<b>Organisations are not working directly on the issue of sexual harassment at workplace.</b>
<b>Domestic workers' Unions</b>	Unionization of Domestic Workers	Providing work licenses to domestic workers	<p>Internal Complaints Committees are there in the Unions.</p> <p>Internal reconciliation is done in some cases and FIR is lodged if the</p>	<p>Unions Were not aware of the SHW Act and the existing redressal mechanism provided by the law</p> <p><b>Basic orientation of Sexual</b></p>

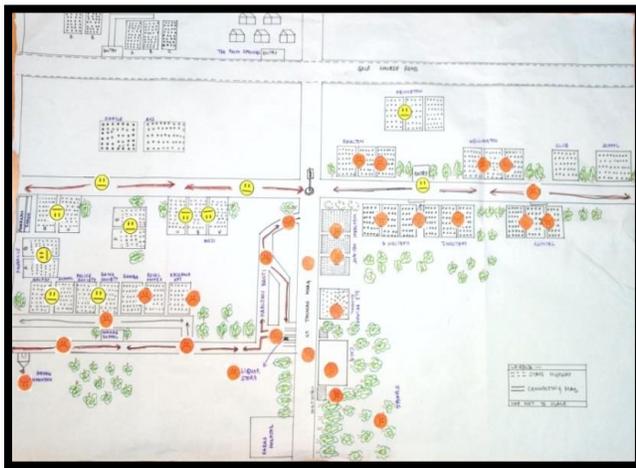
			case is of grave in nature.	<b>Harassment at Workplace is given but needs further capacity building on the Act and compliance of it.</b>
<b>Resident Welfare Association (RWA)</b>	RWA is a civic body that represents the interests of the residents where Membership is voluntary, and the leadership is usually elected by fee-paying members.	Welfare of residents of a particular apartment/society.  Ensuring smooth functioning of facilities to be provided to residents	According to the RWA, training on sexual harassment is provided by the Placement Agency. Any complaints received for sexual harassment is internally solved	<b>The RWA plays an important role in ensuring safe and secure environment for domestic workers yet the awareness about the issue and law is marginal</b>
<b>Guards and Maintenance staff</b>	Providing safety and security to the residents	Physical checking of domestic workers in the entry gate	There is no committee to report cases of sexual harassment.  Sometimes Domestic Workers	<b>The guards and maintenance staff received training before employment but the trainings don't provide any information on</b>

			informally complain of low wages or nonpayment of wages	<b>sexual harassment at workplace</b>
<b>Local committee, Gurgaon</b>	Redressal for Sexual Harassment at Workplace	Addressing issues of Sexual Harassment at Workplace for Informal Sector workers	The Nodal Officer was not clear on the no of cases registered in the respective LC  The LC has not been able to reach out to informal sector so far	<b>The gaps in implementation of the SHW Act are quite visible. The LC has not been able to reach out to the informal sector and give them coverage as mentioned in the law</b>
<b>District Social Welfare Officer, Gurgaon</b>	Coordinating the implementation of women and child related schemes	The priorities of the department is to provide old wage pension and widow pension to women who has domicile of the state	The department doesn't work with migrant workers and as such no information on Sexual Harassment at workplace for domestic workers is available with them	<b>The department doesn't work with migrant workers at all. It was made clear that only Haryana domicile widows and old women receive pension</b>

<b>Labour Department, Government of Haryana</b>	Labour policies and schemes	The priority of the department is to monitor the implementation of policies and schemes for labourers. They do not consider Domestic Workers as laborers since their work timings and wages aren't fixed in nature	No concrete policies for sexual harassment. The officer said if they receive any complaint, it is referred to the Social Welfare Department	<b>The department doesn't have anything specifically to work with domestic workers though the involvement of Labour Department is crucial under the SHW Act, 2013</b>
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**Task 2: Documenting experiences of Domestic Workers:**

The data collection further involved collecting case studies from domestic workers from South Delhi, Faridabad and Gurgaon. This also involved preparing participatory safety audits of workplaces of domestic workers from Gurgaon. The maps prepared are below:



The map was drawn by the Domestic Workers group from Gurgaon. This map outlines the workplaces of the group and how safe/unsafe they are.

According to the narrative of the workers they fear going to the most of the places which are part of their own workplace. The workers also shared that guards, housekeeping staff, other staff also harass the workers.

other staff also harass the workers.

In the workplace harassment issue they also included the route which they travel to reach their workplaces. We prepared a small video documentary highlighting the daily struggle of domestic workers on the route to their workplace.

(<https://www.youtube.com/user/PRIIndia/search?query=domestic+workers>)

Incidents of Harassment, Sexual harassment and Unsafe Environment as recorded from Domestic Workers on the map:

### Incidents of harassment

- Full time DW 's are not allowed to go outside the employers house
- Part time DW's not given food or water/ stale food served at times. They are also not allowed to bring their own food to eat at work.
- DW's not allowed to go to places/recreational facilities in apartments (can accompany employer's children)
- Guards call employer to confirm about salary payment, only then DW's are allowed to go home.
- Non-payment of salary on time
- Constant suspicious treatment by employer at work
- For the same money they are asked to work more.
- DW's are not entitled to leaves and employers replace them easily if they fall sick without compensating or giving them notice

### Incidents of sexual Harassment

- Domestic Worker (minor) locked up in homes
- A DW from Gurgaon who was alleged of stealing from an employer's house was stripped naked in front of everyone.
- A DW arrested by police after 6 pm without a female Police officer's presence.
- DWs are physically checked at the entry gates everyday
- DW's purse etc are checked everyday (More than Rs 100 is not allowed inside the apartment)
- Sexual remarks, stalking and voyeurism on way back by guards, maintenance staff and cab drivers.
- Threats and verbal abuse by employer's
- A minor DW was found dead in Gurgaon just a few days after she joined work at the employer's house.

### Unsafe Environment

- During winters, rape and murder are common events.
- A 11 year old girl from Gurgaon was raped and murdered a year back
- Unfriendly police
- Guards seek favors for getting employment for DW
- Stalking, lewd sexual remarks very common for domestic workers.
- A DW's 9 year old daughter was abducted and raped, and thrown on the road in Gurgaon.
- 8 year old daughter of a DW was abducted and raped for 4 days. She was thrown on the road. The girl's father did not file a complaint with the police fearing for her daughter and family.

**Task 3 and Task 4: Sharing of findings with stakeholders and designing strategies for intervention**

In the process of stakeholder discussion, on the occasion of International Domestic Worker Day the project team organized a meeting of domestic workers with LC chairperson of Gurgaon district Mrs. Anuradha Sharma.



To share the findings of the study and create a dialogue between different stakeholders on the issue of sexual harassment at workplace, a district level consultation was organized on 24.10.2017 and training on 26.10.2017.

#### **Multiple Stakeholder Consultation:**

A district level consultation was organised by Martha Farrell Foundation and Society for Participatory Research in Asia in collaboration with Embassy of Netherlands on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2017 in Gurgaon District at the Community Hall of Carlton 4, DLF Phase 5, Gurgaon. Officials from the government departments such as the Labour department, Local Complaints Committee were invited. NGOs and Unions were also invited along with the domestic workers from Harijan Basti. This consultation was seen as a platform for bridging the gap between the domestic workers, unions and the government.

The initial discussion started with talking about the problems of the domestic workers face in their day to day lives and how frequently do these women face harassment at their workplace regarding wages, job security, health, leaves, etc.

One of the participant domestic workers said that, *“it is the fault of the women. If she behaved inappropriately then she will be harassed”*. In response to this, another domestic worker, Sarita said, *“women stay quiet and this is the reason behind their harassment”*. She also felt that women must not speak if they want to secure their jobs. This is the only choice women have.



When asked about why domestic workers do not speak about issues of harassment at workplace, the participants talked about their fear of losing their jobs, false accusations and denial of entry to their workplaces.

The law on Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act 2013 was discussed to refresh what the law talks about and that there is a provision for the domestic workers as well. The representative from the Labour Department explained about the services they provide to the labourers but has no provision of services for the domestic workers.

Other participants discussed about the possibility of organizing a domestic worker's union and the difficulties they face while approaching the labor dept.

The Nodal officer of Local Complaints Committee represented the services that can be availed by the women. He explained that procedure in which the victim of sexual harassment can seek

redressal from the LC. The procedure is receiving the complaint, reviewing the law, interviewing the two parties, reasoning, finding and recommendation and finally submitting a report within 90 days of receiving the complaint.

The discussion round started with questions on how the processes and functions of the LC could be made more effective with respect to domestic workers. They are unaware of the procedures and they don't even have access to the helpline number. How should the women collectivise then? If they are not able to speak to each other due to lack of time, they would not be able to collectivise at all. How can we bring justice to the grassroots level? How difficult it is to engage the District Collector and the Additional Collector on these issues.

In every state, each district is mandated to have one District officer and s/he will look after the proceedings of the LC. The LCs are formed to provide justice to the victim of sexual harassment in the informal sectors. It was recommended that the LC should go to the women rather than expecting the women to come to them. They must identify themselves as the agency that is there to look after the safety of the women.

These women are constantly facing violence in their everyday lives which is mostly sexual in nature. They are groped while they are on their way to work, they are threatened to be thrown out of their jobs if at all they raise their voices, and they are kept locked inside homes so that they can't communicate with others for the harassment they are facing.

**Outcome:**

1. Strengthened knowledge of participants on Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act, 2013
2. Common consensus on working on the issue of sexual harassment at workplace with domestic workers
3. Networking with other organisations and stakeholders who work on the same thematic area



### **Training: 'Community Mobilisation for Implementation of Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act'**

Social activists, domestic workers from various organizations and PRIA came together to give this important issue the right advocacy effort for the domestic workers. This participatory training was on the topic of "Community Mobilisation for Implementation of Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act" moderated by PRIA team. The training was conducted on 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2017 at the PRIA Head Office, New Delhi.

The objective of the training was to orient the participant's on the Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act. Taking this issue at hand, various methods and tools of community mobilization was imparted through learning based activities and de-brief sessions.

The feedback received has been encouraging. Participants have shared their opinions on the effective participatory methods used in the training. The outcome of the training was:

1. The training gave the scope to further strengthen the efforts of organisations working with domestic workers.
2. It gave the participants to build advocacy strategies for addressing sexual harassment at workplace for unorganized sector.

**Problems and Recommendations that came out from the participants from the Consultatioand Training:**

**Problems of Domestic Worker's with respect to Sexual Harassment**

- 1. Unfriendly Police**
- 2. Very less awareness about the law.**
- 3. Domestic Worker's hesistant to participate and discuss issues**
- 4. Local administration , RWA's do not cooperate**
- 5. No place safe for domestic workers : Sexual Harassment at Home, Workplace and on the streets is common**
- 6. Gaps in existing law to address the issue of sexual harassment for informal sector workers**
- 7. Employer's offer very little support.**
- 8. No social security for Domestic Workers**

**Recommendations**

- 1. The LCC could - collaborate with the RWAs so that domestic workers are able to contact immediately.**
- 2. If something happens, what are some of the procedure women have to follow in order to file a complaint?**
- 3. There is no system in place at the grassroots level. Nodal officer should make him /her visible to the women.**
- 4. Contact number of the appropriate officer should be readily available for assistance.**
- 5. The punishment that could be given to the perpetrator should be explained to all the employers before hiring domestic workers.**
- 6. There should a formal document which tells who is the employer of the domestic workers. The employers keep all documents of the domestic workers, but women have no information of the employers.**

### **Task 5: Organising workers and setting up helpline**

Through the course of work, the project team discovered that there are existing helplines for Informal sector workers to register complaints of sexual harassment for eg ILO has set up a helpline for informal women workers who can easily lodge their complaint through missed calls. As a part of this task, the idea is to strengthen and popularize the existing systems and mechanisms, hence during all meetings, consultations and discussions, the ILO helpline no is shared widely amongst the participants.

### **Challenges faced by the team in the last year:**

The major challenges from the past year's project implementation are as follows:

1. The most challenging task has been to engage with Government Officials on the issue.
2. Another challenge was to make inroads with domestic workers from Faridabad and South Delhi
3. Another challenge was to organize the domestic workers since their work timings are different.
4. The focus of next year would be to work more with the network of organisations that work on the same thematic area.
5. It is utmost essential to engage proactively with stakeholders to consolidate the knowledge and resources available on the issue and arrive at a common departure for implementation.
6. The strategy for next year would be to mobilize the unorganized workers at different levels.
7. Assessing the training and capacity building needs of field coordinators on the issue and strengthening their advocacy efforts to effectively implement.

## **Annexures**

## Stories of Domestic Workers

Story of Sarita

*Sarita is a highly motivated, confident 30 year old woman. We met her in the afternoon at the bus stop where she was waiting for her daughter's school bus to arrive. She has three children, two daughters and one son; she lost her first child during childbirth. She speaks with a lot of confidence, but she says she wasn't always like this. When she first came to Gurgaon with her 3 year old girl from Darbangha, Bihar. After marriage she use to stay in the village dividing her stay between her in laws place and her parents' home. Her husband would come and visit her once or twice in a year in the village as he was working as a 24hour domestic help in Gurgaon. She came to Gurgaon as her in laws were troubling her and she did not want to stay away from her husband.*

*Sarita rents two rooms in Harijan Basti, Gurgaon for which she pays a total rent of Rs 6,000. In one room she stays with her family and the other room is use as a kitchen. Her room is in the basement of the building and is little dingy with no sunlight coming in. If she rents the room in the above floor she will have to shell out Rs 2,000 extra. Her monthly electricity bill ranges from Rs7,00-1.000 and the landlord charges a high rate of Rs10 per unit. The toilet is shared with other families and sometimes leads to fights. Though there is water supply and Sarita is the one who has been given the responsibility by the landlord to operate the motor, she does not find the water to be portable. She gets drinking water from the place where she works. She travels to work place in a cycle so it is easier to transport the water. She does not have a gas connection and ends up filling up gas for cooking from the black market for which she is charged Rs70 per kg from a local shop nearby, earlier the rates were higher Rs90 per kg but now they have come down.*

*A day in the life of Sarita starts at 06:00am she quickly gets ready and leaves around 06:25am. Her older daughter does the household chores in the morning and hence Sarita does not need to spend time doing it in the morning. It takes her 5 minutes to reach her work place. During summer she will have to start her day early and reach by 06:00am. She cooks in three houses in Princeton, Trinity and Carlton and earns Rs18, 000 a month and gets free by 12:30pm-01:00pm depending on the work. She works in the evening from 04:00pm to 07:00pm. Her daughter studies in DPS and she usually goes to drop her at the bus stop at 01:00pm. These days she is not doing that as her relative is here and he goes to drop the daughter at the bus stop.*

### **Story of Shahana**

Shahana is living in Delhi from almost 20 years. She has six members in her family. Her husband is not educated and works as a showroom personnel. Her eldest daughter is not educated and is about to get married. The other three children are studying in government school.

Shahana sweeps 5 showrooms and 2 houses. There are no leaves. Only in emergencies, after much pleading, leaves are sanctioned. If she takes leaves without permission, then wages are deducted. There is no extra-pay for over-time. In case of injury at workplace, there is no compensation by owners.

After doing work in showrooms, she goes back home to cook lunch for family. In the evening, she comes back for work in houses. In a month, the travel expense is Rs. 1200/-. This is given from her own salary. She presently, lives in Madanpur Khadar in a rented accommodation and pays Rs. 4000/-. She buys RO water cans, 2 every day.

She belongs to Dankaur in Dadri, Ghaziabad but was born and brought up in Seemapuri and then, began living in Madanpur Khadar. She began working as a domestic worker 8 years ago. Initially, she used to feel disgusted and had never imagined that she would be working door-to-door. But due to extreme poverty, she had to work. She began working as a casual wage labourer. She later, began working as a cook for Rs. 2500/-. Later, it kept increasing. She wants her children to be educated, financially independent and find good jobs. Also, she wants her daughters to get married. She doesn't have Aadhar Card and pan card but does not have voter ID. She does have a bank account but no savings. She is registered at police station. Her employers are good but at times, are very rude and harsh. They at times, threaten her of kicking her out of job and deliberately, point out mistakes. She was also harassed by a guest at her employer's showroom. She was asked him to have sex for money. She refused and hit him hard on being harassed. She did not register a complaint after being apologized by the employer. Also, she did not want to lose the job as she needed money.

### **Story of Anjum**

Anjum is a 35 year old woman who lives in one room house in Tigri with her three children and husband. She started working as a domestic worker due to financial constraints in the family. Her in-laws used to trouble her so she decided to live separately due to which the financial constraints on the family increased. In her words she said she does not want the children to live

like the way they do. Her two daughters go to school and her son is learning the skills to become a barber. Anjum wanted him to study further but the son left school looking at the financial situation of the house as he wanted to contribute to the family income. Her husband would earn Rs 4300 which was not enough and out of that would only give Rs 2000 at home, this gave the push for Anjum to get into domestic work. The work was suggested by her neighbour Nafeesa who was already working in a PG.

Initially, Anjum did not inform anyone that she had started working cause her husband did not want her to step out of the house. She would go to work after husband would leave for work with the excuse that she is going to the doctor, she continued like this for 2-3months. Finally she told her mother in law who was supportive of her work as she knew that the family was in dire situation financially. Thereafter, she told her husband as well who got very angry that time, but now he is very supportive of her work. She works in a PG where she cooks food and likes to work there. The employer does not visit often and the boys staying in the PG are cordial to her. Employer only comes to give her the monthly salary. Her work timings are from 10:00a.m to 04:00p.m. She starts her day at 05:00 as the water comes at that time in the morning. The morning time till 09:30a.m is spent in doing household chores, getting children ready for school and making food for her husband. She leaves her home at 09:30 a.m and takes a bus to travel which is the cheapest mode of transport and takes 30 mins to her destination. She did not face any issues using the appliances as she has been using them since childhood. With her work she earns Rs5500 a month and tries to save a little in her savings bank account. She gets monthly two days off and her salary is not cut if she takes extra leaves. Her only issue is that earlier in the PG there were two women who were doing the same work she now has to do alone and she thinks she should given more salary like around Rs8000. She has more of personal problems wherein there are too many fights with her husband. He does not give full salary at home, does not talk to children or go to the school for parents teacher meet , he does not even talk to anyone in the neighbourhood. Anjum feels that her husband is mentally challenged. That is why she is very happy that she started working as this allows her to take care of her children, meet their demands and educate them.

### **Story of Sadhna**

I was only 12 when I first started working as a domestic help in Wazirabad, Delhi. I used to work as a part-timer but later I was hired as a 24 hr domestic help in the same household. I was a child myself and I was asked to take care of the employer's children. My employers were good

initially and they promised to pay INR 6000 for my work. But as time passed, my employer would ask me to sleep sometimes in the drawing room, kitchen and even BATHROOM when guests would come! I was given stale food which was difficult to eat. I didn't like the way I was treated but I had nowhere else to go. I used to cry every night but embraced myself in the hope for a better tomorrow. I couldn't sleep at night thinking what might happen the next day.

I was barred from speaking to my parents on the phones when they called or meet my parents. My employers would say that I'm engaged in some work at that moment. I used to lie that I am going for tailoring classes and meet my mother there. There was no other way of meeting her. One day, without any prior notice I was taken to Chandigarh by my employers and when I protested, there was no response. I had no means of telling my family what they were doing to me. My parents sensed that something is not right and demanded for an explanation from them. My lady employer told my father very casually that I was not in Delhi and my father immediately told them to bring me back. After arguing for days I was finally brought back to my family. My father's support saved me from further harassment".

She was not paid for whatever work she had done. But his father was happy to see her smile and no amount of money could ever replace that. Now she is 19 years old and a few months ago she got married. She works as a cook now in 2 households. Experiences from her past have made her strong and with her family's support she is now able to take decisions herself. She didn't regret working under such harsh situations; it only made her conscious of her rights.

### **Story of Barnali**

Barnali lives with her husband Ajay in the Harijan Basti from past 13 years. She came to the city after a family dispute. She asked her husband to leave the place and get somewhere else to start a new life. They belong to Vardhman district and her husband had a small electrical product shop there before coming to the city. The earning was very less there and that too her husband used to give to his mother. Barnali wanted that her husband think about their son also, for a better earning opportunity, they decided to come to this place. Barnali never worked in her life when she was living in the village, she used to teach small kids for an hour and was getting Rs. 120 as fees from them. Here she started working as domestic help after understanding that the city is too expensive and to manage their life both husband and wife needs to work. Barnali earns 8000 from the 4 houses where she works. Her husband cleans cars of the residents in one of the buildings. And he also earns around 8 to 10000 in a month. For the initial four years, she work as domestic worker, she was doing the cleaning and dusting work and after that she

*started taking work as cook and now from last 9 years she is only doing this work. She says that now after 2-3 more years she wants to go back to Bengal. She said once she will return back to her village, she will not do any work there in the future. She is also looking for a loan to build a house there in her village.*

*Barnali works for 6 hours in a day, her timings are fixed. 6-9 in the morning as well as in the evening she spent in the households for cooking. She goes to work on her cycle and it takes around 10 minutes to reach there. Other than this most of the time she spent in her house watching Sony channel shows, and doing household chores. In her daily activities Barnali adds one more work that is taking drinking water from the building where she works. This helps her in controlling the expense of safe drinking water, which not available free of cost in the colony. Barnali pays a monthly rent of 4500 for the room where she is living. Her total expenditure for a month is around 7-8000. She suffers from high blood pressure and thyroid and her medical expenses also goes around 500-1000 a month. Monthly she sends Rs. 4000 to her son for his education and other needs. Her son aspires to be a police officer or if he gets through his wish to join the army. She wishes that her son gets through whatever he aspires for. She asked one of her employers whose father is brigadier in the army about her son. The girl's father assured her that if he completes matriculation, then he will help her son in getting the army job. She said in two years she will get to know what her son is doing in life, she can't say anything for now.*

*Her expenses are such that she doesn't have any scope to save money. On saving she said: Gurgaon bohot mehnga hai bhai, paise ka sochenge to khud jeena bhul jayenge.. (Gurgaon is too expensive, if I think about saving more money all the time, I will stop living my life also) She added that last year she suffered from dengue, it was so chronic that she was vomiting blood. She had no option but to get admitted to the Paras Hospital. Paras Hospital is a private hospital and is very expensive. For her treatment which took almost 15 days, she paid 52000. Her employers helped her a lot, financially as well as they saved her job also as she could not go to work for almost a month. And they did not cut any money for the leaves, she took at that time. She cooks food for girls in all the four households, they live as flatmates. All the girls see Barnali as their guardian, she believes and give the same kind of love and respect for her. Although some time she feels that she is just a domestic help and people see her that way only. She added that sometimes the girls talk in English so that she does not understand the conversation. They helped her when she needed the most, and she is happy for that. She took money from them at the time when she was admitted to the hospital, and now slowly she is returning their money through her monthly salary. Barnali is living in near Delhi from past 13 years, but she did not get any time to visit the capital and roam around. She knows a few areas of Gurgaon and*

also knows every gali of her colony. She says that nowadays outing is very expensive and they do not have any money to spend on outing. She remembered once when her mother came to Vrindavan with some group she called her also to Vrindavan for an outing. The hotel charged Rs. 600 and the food was so expensive that they did not think of going for outing again. Although she did like the place very much and enjoyed the time there.

About her initial days in the city, she explained her initial struggle also, she said, *Pehle Pehle to gungi ho gayi thi, kuch samajh nai ata tha. Par pehla malik bihari tha, uske yaha thoda samajh ata tha, usne hi bhasha sikha diya. Bihari aur bangali ne mil kar sikha diya kaise bolna hai. Ab to TV se bhi bohot sikhne ko milta h.* ( In her initial days of work, she did not know or has the confidence to speak Hindi and as a result to which she was not speaking at all. But her first employer was Bihari and they taught her the language. In the colony, Bengali friends and the Bihari employer taught the language and gave her confidence to speak. Now a days people learn from TV also so not a big problem for now.

She did not believe that there is any problem in the outer world, she believes that if she is doing the right thing then nothing will go against her. She shared an incident, she was coming home from work on her cycle and her cycle got punctured, she called her husband and they were coming towards their house. In the midway, few men called them from the back side. They were four men and were drunk. She got so scared that she could not move from there. One of the men came towards them and asked for match box. He understood that Barnali was scared by looking her expressions and asked them to leave. She added to the incident that nobody does wrong to anyone if the other person is innocent. And she had a very strong view about the girl who was kidnapped from the road a few days back. She said there must be something wrong with the girl and as a reaction to the incident happened otherwise I am living in the same community for past 13 years now and nobody did anything wrong to me. I asked if the building guards ask for money for providing information about the work? She said they never asked for money from her and even the guards never does that. Against the information the maids themselves takes sweets from her first salary for them and people see that wrongly. The guards do not ask for money or any kind of bribe from the workers. She added that even about the work also people say that they get less pay for the work they do, she added that in the building she works there is a chart, on which minimum wages for domestic help also is written. And that amount is sufficient. We do not get 5000 if we ask 5000 from the employer and similarly we do not get 500 if the employer asks us to work for 500. The system is in place in Gurgaon made by the housing societies and accordingly we work.

### **Story of Dilkat**

*I was roaming in Harijan Basti looking for somebody to talk to a domestic worker when I saw her sitting outside her room on the steps. I approached her and explained my work to her which started my conversation with her. Dilkat has faced a lot of troubles in her life. She is 45 years old and stays in Harijan Basti with her son who is mentally challenged. She lost her husband 17 years back due to cancer and the burden of raising her family fell on her. Her husband did not have any agricultural land and would work as an agricultural labourer in the village. The lack of assets to save her from sudden shocks led her to abject poverty. Life in the village became very difficult and everyday was a struggle for her to put food in her families plate and raising three sons with no regular employment became a nightmare for her.*

*One of her relatives use to work in Gurgaon as domestic worker and with her help Dilkat migrated in search for a better future for her family. She left her children in the village with her family as she did not have enough financial means to take them along.*

*She started working as 24 hours help and was paid Rs5,000 for her services. She did not like working for 24hours as she was given stale food to eat, there use to be a lot of work and she would end up sleeping at 12a.m or maybe at times as late as 2 a.m. She had left her family back home and being alone in an unknown city would make Dilkat sad. She would go home every 3 months to met her family. She was taught work by her friend who would take her along to where she worked. She left that job after working for 4 years and decided to do part time work.*

*Since the time she started doing part time work she is much more happier with her work as she can rest in the afternoon and does not have to work late. If she does not like an employer she does not work there and looks for another household to work in. She says when you work as part time worker one has more freedom choose and many options to explore.*

*Her typical day starts at 05:00 she reaches her work place at 05:30 and it takes her 10 mins to walk down to her work place. She works till 12:30 wherein she does cooking in 4 different houses spending almost 1 to 1.5hrs in each house and earns Rs12,000 per month. She goes again in the evening and works from 06:00 p.m to 09:00p.m. The time she gets in afternoon is spent in cooking, cleaning and other household chores and she also manages to take out time to rest. She rests in the afternoon as her age is catching up with her and the work is tiresome and at the age of 45 it is difficult to do such hard laborious work.*

*Apart from working as domestic worker she also has a kirana shop which she has recently opened after taking loan of Rs5,000 from money lender. She will have to repay Rs6,000 in 60*

days to him. Dilkat says that there was no other option then taking loan at a high interest rate as they do not have financial linkages and hence do not get loan from the bank. She does have a bank account and tries to save Rs2000 every month after paying a rent of Rs5000 and other household expenses. They have to pay separately for electricity which comes around Rs500-600. She opened up the kirana shop so that her son who is mentally disabled is busy doing some work when she is away. After coming back from work Dilkat sits in the shop for an hour so that her son can get a break and have his lunch and bathe. Her other two sons do not live with her. One son is still in the village and the other one works as an auto driver in Delhi.

Water supply is available but she still prefers to get drinking water from her employers house. There is one toilet which is shared among 6 families and according to her there are constant fights over using it. There is no mechanism to heat water and they have to take bath with cold water even during winters.

Dilkat does miss her hometown Malda but prefers the city life then the village. She says that had she not decided to move to Gurgaon she and her sons would have died due to hunger. The city gave her the opportunity to start her life afresh and have a comfortable living.

### **Story of Sangeeta**

Sangeeta lives with her three kids, her husband Jitendra, and her brother in law, Ravindra at Mewla Maharajpur Village near sector 21C Faridabad. In the village there are two kinds of habitants, the people who belong to this place and other are the migrant workers. The place is the hub of migrant workers, as the village is surrounded with different factories and residential complexes. Most of the men work as daily wage labors and women work as domestic help. Sangeeta works as domestic help in two kothis of the same village. She earns around 3000 from those two households. Her husband is an auto driver, he takes the auto on rent and earn around 200-250 per day after paying the auto rent. The brother in law is not working now, he just lost his job last month, and these days he is looking for a new job in nearby factories. Sangeeta takes care of all the family members; she cleans her house look for the children, cooking etc. She makes herself busy in the household chores only.

Sangeeta is living in the Mewla Maharajpur Village since she was 12 years; she goes to her village and after some time comes back. She came here with her family for work on building houses in the Sector 21 colony. She was also working on the construction site and the owner of

the land asked if she could work as domestic help. She started working in the house and since then she is working as the domestic help in the colony. She is living in a rented accommodation, for one room she paying 1650. For the cooking purpose, they use local gas, which cost around 800-900 in a month. Sangeeta shared two major problems in the village, which is part of daily struggle for her. One is the open defecation, they have to go to the railway tracks, and other places to defecate. Second is the quality of water she said the water is too bad and the RO dispenser is very costly it takes around 20 per dispenser. They are using the supply water for drinking purpose. The daily struggle is also the boys of the colony who pass comments on the women and girls. This bothers her when she goes for the work also. This is the reason that she never likes to roam around the community and stays at home mostly after work. She does not find the community very safe, due to the drunker problem.

Sangeeta wakes up at seven in the morning, and start working on preparing food for the other members, cleaning work, and washing of clothes etc. After sending her husband, brother in law to the work and kids to school she goes for her work. She takes help of one of her neighbor to take care of her youngest child Chinki who is just one and half years old. First shift she does for three hours and comes back to her house and for the second shift she works for only one hour. Her rest of the time goes in the household chores and with her kids. Her work takes around 3 hour in the first shift for dusting and cleaning work in two kothis. Both the houses where she is working, the area is 500 yards for both the places. The area is too much and after that, she walks for her house. The day becomes very tiring for her and no body helps her in the process after reaching home also. She also added that at work also the older women of the house keep eye on the workers and ask for doing the work properly. The process of convincing the people also takes some time at work only. Sangeeta gets two leaves in a month, and if she takes more leave the employer cuts the salary. Other than this, she said for all the extra work or time we give in the house for work there is no compensation for that. When asked if the others in the community helps? She said that no body helps financially here neither the kothiwale, nor the neighbors. Although once she remembers that, her daughter was in fever and her neighbors helped her financially. In addition, the neighbor helps her by taking care of her daughter while she goes to the work.

Sangeeta started working as a child labor, she got married also when she was a child and she became mother of her first child before turning to 18 years. She likes the city for the lights in the city, she never liked her village where there is no electricity, and she fears to the darkness. I tried to ask her about the darkness that bothers her but she did not answer. She does not like the village but to give birth to her last child she spent about a year in the village. In addition, she

still saves money in her village bank account and never had a permanent space in the city. Moreover, Sangeeta is not even thinking about it. She ended the discussion by saying it depends on her husband if they will go to the village or will continue to live here. About the police verification, she said that she never did the police verification, as the employer knows her from many years. About the work, she said that she is doing this work, as she is uneducated and have to do this work. There is no other option.

### **Story of Sita**

Sita is a 42 year old Hindu woman who is originally from village in Hardoi, Uttar Pradesh. She migrated in 2007 with her family after her house caught fire and the family had nowhere to go. The whole village got burnt down but nobody knows how the fire started. Her brother in law and her wife suggested that they come to Faridabad and work. When Sita came to Faridabad she stayed with her relatives for 15 days. Her sister in law helped her in finding work and took her to potential employers. Her sister in law was the one who explained the wage rate she should negotiate for to be done as she was already working as a domestic worker in Faridabad. Sita is very thankful to her sister in law for helping her in her time of need.

Sita lives in Mewla Maharajpur Village in Faridabad where she lives in a rented room with her husband, son and daughter for which they pay a rent of Rs 1500 which includes the electricity as well. She pays rent for another room as well where her son and daughter in law stay and where the cooking for the whole family is done. The rent is Rs1500 for this room as well. The entrance to the lane leading to the place where she lives is filthy and filled with garbage. The municipal corporation does not clean it up and everyone in and around throws the garbage in the empty plot (Fig.1). Her room is another 50mtrs ahead. There is two toilets which are shared with our people in the colony (Fig.2). The toilets are filthy and landlord only gets them cleaned once in a month. Sharing of toilets often leads to fights among the neighbours. For bathing there is one very small place and very few residents bathe there. Sita and her family prefer bathing inside their room as the door for bathroom is broken from below.

A typical day in the life of Sita starts at getting up at 06:00am and getting ready for work. She has tea in the morning which is prepared by her daughter in law. She leaves her house between 06:45-06:50am walks down to her work place. She works in four houses two of which are in Karthik Society and two are independent houses. Sita is back home by 12:30pm and after coming back she bathes and has her lunch which is prepared by her daughter in law. Since, the

daughter in law does not go out to work the household chores are handled by her and Sita helps if required. She spends some time with her family and rests after lunch as she gets tired and her body aches.

The day we went to meet her Sita was resting in her room as her husband was not there. Her husband is an alcoholic and drinks regularly and physically and verbally abuses Sita.

She said today is one of the lucky days that she gets to sleep in her room otherwise in the afternoon she rests in her sons room as her husband does not go to work regularly.

Sita is very troubled with her alcoholic husband as he blows away the earning on drinking. Even her children were very traumatised by their fathers behaviour.

The family generally sleep by 09:00-09:30pm after having dinner. The time in between Sita spends chit chatting with her family

She has no identity cards with her, she paid thrice to get her aadhar card made but still has not got it. Sita paid Rs2000 to an agent to get her duplicate ration card made so that she can get a gas connection, otherwise they have to buy gas cylinder from the black market at Rs 800 per cylinder. She did open a bank account under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana but has not deposited money in it due to expenses in the house.

Sita has struggled a lot to bring up her children. Her husband has not been very supportive and does not give money at home at times he gives Rs2000. He does not go for work regularly, he works in some company but she is not sure about the exact name of the organization. He keeps the money with himself to purchase alcohol. She has tried everything from asking the relatives to counsel him as well medication but it has had no affect on her husband. She said "**daru ne ghar barbaad kar diye hai**" (alcohol has destroyed a lot of homes). She has raised five children without much help from husband. She got her eldest daughter and one son married and even managed to construct a house in the village. Sita plans to go back to her village once she is not able to work anymore.

### **Story of Kamlesh**

I met Kamlesh on a sunny afternoon in Faridabad, Sector 21. She was sitting on the floor chit chatting with other domestic workers and waiting for me. I parked my car and we started walking towards her house, one of the domestic worker said that I should follow in car as the place is a little far , but I preferred to walk so that I could understand the daily travel routine. We started walking with other five domestic workers and two of my colleagues. As we walked for approx 300 mtrs the stench of decaying garbage in the open hit us, you could see the garbage strewn

all over. I have been to Mewla Maharjpur earlier too and the sight of the garbage dump close to where these people stay is disheartening. There are no garbage bins in sight and so the people are left with no choice but to dump it open.

Kamlesh told me that a little further away from the garbage dump there is a railway line where the people from Mewla Maharjpur go to defecate as there are no toilets. The governments vision of making Faridabad open defecation free is miles away from being achieved.

The road that leads to Kamles's house passes through dilapidated buildings, drainage water flowing freely and garbage strewn all over. Kamlesh's house if you can actually call it a house cause it's just one very small room she cooks, bathes and sleeps in that one room with her girl in that one small room. Her son stays with her brother as she is not able to take care of her needs financially. Her husband does not stay with her and lives in the village where he does odd jobs to earn enough money to buy alcohol and get drunk. He does not support Kamlesh in any way. He does not even come and stay with her all he ever does according to Kamlesh is drink and fight. When Kamlesh was unwell he only came to stay with her for a month and did not bother after that. Kamlesh had gone through a troubled time and was hospitalised and on bed rest for last one year as she had got electrocuted while cutting wood for burning chullah. She was rushed to the hospital and underwent treatment for almost a year. The people of Krishna Vihar and some other societies came together to help her out financially and morally to get her out of this tumultuous time.

She started working again two months back and is currently working in three house. She gets up at 05:00am in the morning to get water from nearby tap as there is no water connection where she stays. She and other people drink the same water that comes from the tap without filtering it. She reaches her work place at 08:00am and the time in between is spent in collecting water and doing household chores. She walks to her work place and takes around 15 mins to reach. She reaches back by 01:20 pm and the time in between is spent in doing household chores and resting.

Life difficulties, unsupportive husband and no source of income made her take up the job of domestic worker. She came to Faridabad 4 years back her relatives were the ones who suggested that she should migrate from Mathura UP to Faridabad. After migrating it was one of the relatives who made her understand the work and Kamlesh worked with her for a month to learn the work. Later on she started working on her own. She was happy to come to Faridabad as life in the village was getting difficult with constant fights with her in laws and drunken husband.

*Kamlesh is happy with her employers and is very grateful for the fact that them and other people helped her out in the time of difficulty. Her only issue is that the wages paid by them is very low and it is difficult to survive on such low earnings. The rent for the place she stays is Rs 1200 and the landlord increases the rent every year whereas the employers have not increased their wages in last two years.*

### **Story of Shameen**

*It was financial difficulties that Shameen's family was facing which acted as the push factor for her to start working so late in her life. She decided to work as a domestic worker as it did not require any particular skills as well as education. She used to earlier supplement her husband's income by making paper bags and embroidery at home, but the embroidery business dwindled as the factories shifted out of Delhi and the earnings from making paper bag was not sufficient. Her husband who is plumber by profession does not go to work in the society he is employed and earns Rs3,000 doing odd jobs out of which he gives Rs2,000 at home and Rs1,000 he keeps with himself. The earnings were not enough for Shameen to run the house and take care of her two daughters. Earlier her son who is married now would contribute his income for household expenses but is not able to do so as he has to take care of his family and his earnings are not enough to manage such a big family.*

*It was Shameen's neighbour who suggested to her to start working as a domestic worker and thus Shameen started working two years back. Currently, she is working in a PG where she works from 10:00am to 02:00pm and makes chapattis there and earns Rs5,000. Other than that she works in a house in Saket from 07:00am to 10:00am and from 05:00pm to 07:30pm in the evening where she does cooking, cleaning, washing clothes for which she gets Rs2400. For Shammen the day starts very early in the morning at 05:00am as she has to reach her work place by 07:00am so once she wakes up after her daily ablution and filling up the drinking water which comes in the morning, she walks to the bus stop which takes her 10 mins to reach and from there she catches a bus for Saket. Shammen does not take an auto which would be a faster mode of transport as the bus is cheaper and she ends up saving Rs10 everyday by taking the bus. Shameen reaches home anywhere between 05:30-05:45 and apart from going out to get vegetables she usually does not do any household chore as it is handled by her daughters and daughter in law. Shammen is happy with her employers and gets two months off and gets paid on time. Her only issue is that working as a domestic worker is difficult for her at this age and she often gets tired and has bone pains and as such does not like to work as a domestic*

*worker. She really wishes that her husband starts earning well so that she need not work. The first time she stepped out for work she was felt scared and had a lot of inhibitions in her head as the women in her family have never stepped out for work. For that matter her older daughter was not allowed to study after 8th standard as both the brother and father did not want her to step out of the house. She managed to persuade her husband to let the younger daughter study till 12th standard. There was lot of objection from her husband and son and in order to let her go out of the house Shameen had to go drop her to the bus stop and then had to go again in the afternoon to pick her up. That is how with so much struggle she managed to let her younger daughter complete school. She said that it was very difficult and sending her to college is a distant dream and is out of question. The family wants both the daughters to be married off and she has joined a chit fund so as to save money for her daughter's wedding. She deposits Rs500 every month and the chit fund is for 2 years and after 2 years Shammen will be able to take the money at 2 per cent interest rate for her daughter's wedding.*

## **Publication/ Reports**

**Celebrations at the roof top!**

The International Women Day celebrated at Gurgaon Harijan Basti saw 50 women coming in with their children. Dressed in their best attires and full of excitement; the ones who just came out of curiosity to see what the hype is all about would rush back quickly, I inquired them why are you leaving their reply would be- taiyyar ho kar aate hai (we will get ready and come). The event built in a lot of inquisitiveness in the men of the community and they would often approach and ask- 'ki aap mahilao ke liye kya kar rahe ho' , 'kya hum bhi aa sakte hai. I told them we are celebrating woman's day -'*mahila divas hai, aur sirf mahilao ke liye*' .

But, collectivising domestic workers is not an easy task given their double burden of work, different cultural social background and the scepticism towards anything new. My day started with going door to door to women and telling them the ones who did not know and reminding the ones who were already informed to come. I was often asked questions like- kyu aana hai, humara kya fayada hoga and sometimes a straight NO on the face.

The whole time I was anxious and kept my fingers crossed and hoped that they would come. The lunch was made and it was already 01:00pm and the time given was 01:20pm and I all I kept on thinking was- 'what about all the food which was prepared by some of the domestic workers' and 'what if nobody turns up'.

I checked my watch again it was 01:30pm, suddenly I hear women giggling and chatting loudly, I look up and see the women in beautiful colours walking in with their children, I was left baffled. From being worried that nobody would turn up to having a long line of happy, laughing women walking up the stairs, it was just a beautiful sight.

The lunch team got to the task of serving lunch, plates were passed and food was served and all this with the help of domestic workers. Everyone chipped in, they were not guest but they felt like they were part of the team, that they were the ones celebrating being a woman rather than somebody else reminding them of it. This camaraderie was not instant; you could just sense the clear distinction between women of different cultural backgrounds. Initially few women did not want to eat lunch, they came with excuses that they have already eaten but once they saw their other friends eating they also joined in. Though it is difficult for me to say what was the reason for initial inhibition and what made them change their mind

The lunch was followed by performances on the terrace put up by the girls of domestic workers which was prepared by them. They were the ones who volunteered and came with the whole idea.

The play left me fazed, through the play they showcased the disparity done within the household between a boy and girl, the harassment the girls face if they step out and the right to freedom they don't enjoy. This got me thinking and I am sure it got everyone else also thinking

that how knowingly or unknowingly we put so many bindings and conditions on our girls. The play was followed by an activity where we asked the mothers to write the aspirations they have for their girl. When I read their answers it left me spellbound with what they wrote. From- 'mein apni beti ko police inspector banan chahti hu', 'mein apni beto ko actor banana chahti hu' and almost everyone wanted their girl to study and do better than what they themselves are doing. The event concluded with a big smile on everyone's face and specially mine. From facing difficulty in convincing the women to come together for an event to women themselves voicing that they want to form a group.

Hope that one day of just celebrating the essence of being a woman left somewhere, if not a big impact but a dent in their life of taking pride in being a woman.

## उम्मीदों की ओर बढ़ते कदम

ये कहानी गुडगाँव की लम्बी लम्बी इमारतों के बीच बसी एक बस्ती से है | मार्च महीने की सात तारीख को सरिता के घर में बड़ी हलचल थीए सब लोग ऊपर से लेकर नीचे तक भागादौड़ी में लगे थे| नीचे खाना बन रहा था और ऊपर छत पर टेंट लगा हुआ था| ऐसा लग रहा था जैसे किसी की शादी हो या कोई और पार्टी... सरिता और उसकी कुछ साथी सबको खाना खिलने में व्यस्त थी वही दो महिलाएं दरवाज़े पर डटी थी और सबको आदेश दे रही थी की सभी लोग छत पर इक्कठा हो | सरिता के घर की छत पर आज एक कार्यक्रम का आयोजन हुआ था जिसमे मोहल्ले की सभी घरेलू कामगार महिलाओ को बुलाया गया था |

कार्यक्रम की शुरुआत बेटियों के कुछ सवालो से हुई जो की उन्होंने ने एक नाटक के ज़रिये सबके सामने रखे| इस नाटक में रिया सबसे सवाल पूछती है की ऐसा क्यूँ (वालिदादध)...? ऐसा क्यूँ की लड़कों को इतनी छूट मिलती है की उनसे कोई पूछता नहीं की कहा जा रहे होए कहा से आ रहे होघ और दूसरी तरफ लड़कियों को अपनी बात भी रखने का कोई हक नहीं है| उनकी बात कोई सुनना भी नहीं चाहता | एक सवाल ये भी था की जब भी कुछ गलत होता है क्या हमेशा गलती सिर्फ बाहर वाले व्यक्ति की होती है| वो व्यक्ति जो हमारे लिए बाहर का है| किसी के लिए तो वो भी घर का व्यक्ति होगा ना द्य हम कब अपने घर के लड़कोभाईयों और ) को पूछना शुरू करेंगे की वो क्या करते है (बेटों| बेटियों के इन्ही सवालो के साथ हमने महिला दिवस के कार्यक्रम की शुरुआत करी | ये सवाल आज जरूरी हो गए है की हम खुद से ये पूछे की मोहल्ले के अच्छा न

होने के बहाने कब तक हम बेटियों को घर पर बंद रखना चाहते हैं और मोहल्ला को सुधारने की जिम्मेदारी किसकी है।



इन सवालों की चर्चा से पहले सभी को ये जानकारी दी गयी की आज हम क्या बात करने आये हैं सरिता ने सबको बताया की 8 मार्च को पूरी दुनिया में महिला दिवस मनाया जाता है। और हम सभी यहाँ आज उसी के लिए इक्कठा हुए हैं। महिला दिवस की ज़रूरत हमें इसी लिए पड़ी थी क्योंकि महिलाओं और पुरुषों को एक सामान अधिकार नहीं थे। महिला दिवस की ज़रूरत आज भी इसी लिए है की 100 साल बाद भी हमें समान अधिकारों के लिए लड़ना पड़ता है और समाज उसे स्वीकारता नहीं

हम कैसा भविष्य अपने बच्चों को देना चाहते हैं। हम क्या सोचते हैं अपनी बेटियों के भविष्य के बारे में? क्या हमारी बेटियाँ घर में बंद रह कर वो कर पाएंगी जिसका सपना हम देखते हैं। सभी को एक कागज़ दिया गया जिसमें एक कदम की परछाई थी। सभी को कहा गया की वो अपनी बेटियों के लिए जो सपना देखती है वो लिखें। ये एक शुरुआत है की हम उन सपनों को समझे और उसकी तरफ अपने कदम बढ़ाये। उसके लिए सभी ने तय किया की बस्ती में हम एक ग्रुप बनायेंगे जहाँ हम उन सपनों को साकार करने के लिए काम करेंगे द्य ये महिला दिवस हम मना रहे हैं अपनी अगली पीढ़ी की आज़ादी और सुरक्षित और अच्छे भविष्य के नाम।

### **Working in the shadows**

Gurgaon, a concrete jungle in the making, with skyscraping towers and luxurious apartments can be seen as the growing force of capitalist market. With a huge number of multi-national companies investing, one could also see it as a provider of employment for a large section of the people. With the multiplication of apartments, there has been a rise in the number of migrant female domestic workers. These workers who belong to the poorer and uneducated sections of

the society are a vulnerable lot, subjected to various difficulties such as having to work for a long hours, not provided with food, non-payment of wages ,not granted leaves and also subjected to verbal and sexual abuse. Phase 5 in Gurgaon is the hub of many such luxurious apartments. Contrary to glam, what lies on the other side is a place called Harijan busti , home of many domestic workers and their families. Women from rural areas of West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh ,Bihar and other parts of India come to the city to earn their living working as domestic helpers.

The domestic workers face various difficulties one of them being sexual harassment in their workplace. This in turn has turned out to be a nightmare for them. From being eve-teased to guards misbehaving with them, these women have gone through extreme circumstances. Therefore in order to make their workspace safer for them, PRIA conducted a sexual harassment program with the staff of Carlton apartment. It included all the male staff of the residence and was attended by about 20 people who worked as guards, house keeping staff and drivers.

The session started with Mrs. Nandita Pradhan Bhatt, chairperson of the sexual harassment unit, addressing the crowd. The session was an interactive and informative one. It also showcased the mentality of men in India. I also felt it was an interesting session as it was the men who were getting lessons on their behaviour than the other way round. Society has been such that girls have been taught since a very young age, as to how they should behave while boys have been allowed freedom and space for wildness. The change hence was a fresh one in which men were in return being taught as to how to be a modest person. This is what I feel is neglected while raising boys, they are allowed the freedom to do anything, while girls are hidden away in their house. Why aren't little boys and girls taught similar things when it comes to their behaviour? Girls are always made to compromise, don't go out because you'll get raped, don't wear short clothes because it draws unwanted attention, sit with your legs together , whereas it's the complete opposite for boys. While boys are given the liberty to grow as wildflowers, girls on the other hand are oppressed and limited from blooming to their full potential. If only all the boys were taught how to behave with girls then this world would be a much better and safer place for girls to live in. It's not about teaching girls to cover up but instead the focus should shift to teaching boys not to rape. The session began with talking about what was considered an act of sexual harassment, defining workplace and ensuring that these men were aware of their actions and the meaning it implied. When asked a question as to why do you stare at a woman, one of the guards replied saying that if a girl wore only a meter of clothing and walked around how did they not expect for men to stare, in other words they were asking for it! This has been

the dominant thinking pattern for people in India. Where wearing a saree and showing their waist is considered ethical but if a girl wears a crop top, she's again asking for it. He was however given a very satisfying reply in which Nandita said that it wasn't about what a girl wore, but the mentality of the people that mattered. Boys too wear shorts or walk around bare chested with only a towel wrapped around them, never do they face any kind of teasing or harassment from the opposite sex. Hence proving that it was the thought process that mattered and not the meters of the clothes.

People in general are not aware of the laws regarding sexual harassment and therefore it is extremely important for people to educate themselves. I don't know about the impact this session managed to have on the men but I hope that seeds of change were sown in them and that they had a new perspective regarding women.

After this session, we left for office of the Local Complaint Committee in Gurgaon, where the rest of the team along with a group of domestic workers met the chairman of LCC, Anuradha Sharma, who gave us insightful information on sexual harassment in the workplace and other queries on this matter. We then left for Harijan Busti, where we celebrated international domestic workers day with tea, snacks and sweets at Sarita's house, who's been an active member working with us. Plans were formulated as to what they wanted to do next and suggestions for self-defence classes were proposed. International Domestic Workers Day however still saw a lot of women having to go to work as leaves were not granted and failing to show up led to their wages being cut off. Hence being an irony in itself.

It is essential to understand the needs of domestic workers. People fail to discern that they too are humans and therefore should be treated well. From facing verbal abuse to sexual harassment, they are denied the rights to use even toilets in their employers house. Indians are one of the most domestic worker depended people, from cooking to cleaning, to walking dogs and ironing. The least we could do is be kind and not let this idea of class being the new caste take over us.

The International Domestic Workers Day is celebrated on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June. It started with the International Labour Organization (ILO) adopting a landmark treaty, the convention on *Decent Work for Domestic Workers*. It requires countries to guarantee the same rights to domestic workers as other workers regarding working hours, resting periods, pay as well as protection against violence. It is celebrated as a growing movement to assert the rights of this vast but hidden workforce.

On 16<sup>th</sup> June 2017, PRIA celebrated this special day in Gurugram and Faridabad with the domestic workers. Sr. Program Manager, Nandita Bhatt had conducted a sexual harassment

program with the staff of Carlton apartment in phase 5, Gurugram. She is also the chairperson of the sexual harassment unit in PRIA. The program included all the male staff of the residence and was attended by about 20 people who worked as guards, housekeeping staff, plumbers and drivers. Going to work had become an ordeal for many of the domestic workers for various reasons; this program was scheduled to create awareness about sexual harassment in the workplace. The staff of Carlton 4 was however very reluctant initially. A lot of them looked nervous and a little scared. We were joined by the chairperson of the committee of Carlton, who was kind enough to let us have this session. The anxious crowd was explained as to why we were there, the topic being sexual harassment at workplace. Nandita explained how this was an informative session as most of them were unaware of what sexual harassment meant and also keep them vigilant in future if any cases were of sexual harassment were to be reported.

Under the *Sexual Harassment of Women at workplace (Prevention, prohibition and redressal) Act, 2013*, Nandita first explained what a workplace is and what all is comprised in a workplace. It was not just the building that you worked in but also comprised of the vicinity and the road from your home to the workplace. So any sort of harassment faced in these places would be considered as an act of sexual violence.

She then moved on to the next subtopic which was understanding sexual harassment at workplace, *what actions are considered as acts of sexual harassment?* This was a very informative session as it made one aware of little actions that one usually ignores but instead could be reported as acts of sexual harassment at workplace. This includes staring at a woman for too long, the way you stare at her, passing unwanted or unnecessary comments, playing raunchy songs, intimidation etc. She went on to discuss how sexual harassment can be divided into four categories, ***physical, verbal, non-verbal and visual***. Physical as the name states could be understood as any form of touching which makes women uncomfortable. Emphasis was also made on the impact and intention. She made it very clear that in cases reported on sexual harassment at workplace, it was the impact that an incident made on the victim that was prioritised over intention. This was further simplified with the help of an example of how singing a raunchy song while a woman is passing could be considered harmless by men but the kind of impact it will have on the woman is something which matters the most.

Verbal sexual harassment, she explained further, could be offensive jokes of a sexual or sexist nature, repeated and unwelcomed requests for sexual favours, repeated and unwelcomed requests for dates, excessive and unwelcomed flirting, unwelcome compliments of a sexual nature. It involved unwelcomed conduct which was repetitive and excessive.

Nonverbal sexual harassment on the other hand did not involve oral communication or physical contact. Some examples of nonverbal sexual harassment include lewd or suggestive gesturing, winking and leering. They were warned against using any such actions against the domestic workers working there.

Visual sexual harassment could be in form of lewd or sexually suggestive pictures, lewd or sexually suggestive videos, and offensive jokes of a sexual nature in written or electronic form, such as an email or text messaging. They were also informed about how they could face 3 years of imprisonment if found guilty in a sexual harassment at workplace case.

Over the session we also had some guards dozing off to sleep, we were not sure if it was the hot weather or the session to blame. There were interruptions by one of the guard's tacky 80's Bollywood ringtone. While most of the men in the crowd were not active in the discussions, with the help of some enthusiastic ones we were able to keep the conversations going and understand their mentality about certain issues. There were some queries from the housekeeping staff on issues relating to what they should do if they were called inside an apartment and there was only a woman inside the house. He was informed that he should decline to go in and even if there was some work inside he had to first inform the person in charge and only then should he go inside. As we reached towards the end of the session Nandita asked if anyone had any question, there was one hand that went up. "***There are some girls who are fully covered but there are some who only wear a metre of cloth and walk around, how does that girl expect men not to look at her?***" These kinds of queries were something we expected the participants to think about. With the help of an example she answered the question beautifully. A hypothesis was created in which while returning home she had some cash in her bag and she forgot it inside the car. She also forgot to lock the car. As there are always people passing by in the garage, a lot of people saw the money inside the car. The next day when she comes to collect the money she finds it stolen. But who did you think stole the money? Was it the guards because they were always around or the men who worked in the basement. "A person who was unscrupulous stole the money" a response came. Using the same logic she made them understand that the length or the meter of the clothes was not what mattered. It was the thinking that mattered because anyone with moral ground would not be concerned about the length of girl's clothes because the length is not a mean of judging the morality of a woman. The session ended with a group photo and hopes that this session had some impact on their way of thinking and that there would be some change in how they perceived issues regarding women

Later, we went to the office of Local Complaint Committee (LCC) in Gurugram, where the rest of the team along with a group of fourteen domestic workers met the Chairman of LCC, Anuradha Sharma, who gave us insightful information on sexual harassment in the workplace and other queries on this matter. She explained the laws regarding sexual harassment at workplace and who we could approach to file complaints. These included the Nodal officer and any member of the Committee. Under IPC, they could also go to police to file complaints. The meeting ended with group photos and then finally we left for Harijan Busti, where we celebrated International Domestic Workers Day with tea, snacks and sweets at Sarita's house, who is a Domestic Worker herself and she has been an active member working with us. We also looked at the pictures that were taken as part of a project in domestic workers. Plans were formulated as to what they wanted to do next and suggestions for self-defence classes were proposed.

In Mewla Maharajpur Village in Faridabad, it was the first formal meeting with the domestic workers. This day was used as a platform to interact with the women. It was supposed to be a session for the women living there however more than the women present, the men and the kids gathered around.

The session began with Deboshree, Program Officer at PRIA, talking about the findings from the survey that she and Praatibh had undertaken earlier about the financial literacy among the women of the area and the level of education. The findings revealed that about 50% of the women were totally uneducated, 30% of them had studied till 5<sup>th</sup> class, and 8% had studied till 8<sup>th</sup> class. When it came to the age of marriage about 16% didn't know their age when they got married, about 22% women got married below the age of 15, 3% women got married between 15-18 years and 38% women got married after turning 18.

Out of all the financial documents, Adhaar Card was the only ID proof that most of the women had, but still 23% women didn't have an Adhaar card. Even though they knew how to get the Adhaar card made and where to get it made from, they still didn't get it made because they charge Rs. 300 as commission to make the card. Most of the women had no idea what a Pan Card is and what it looks like. Only 15% of the women had a Pan Card. Less than 50% of the women didn't have Voter ID and Ration Card.

After this discussion, Rachel, an intern at PRIA gave her presentation on the domestic workers in Canada and the differences and similarities of domestic workers in Canada and India. In between Rachel's presentation a man came and stood there and refused to move and said that he also wanted to see what is happening and be a part of the session. After Rachel finished her presentation the young girls wanted pictures with her. Another man kept interrupting in between and said you are here to listen to the women but who will listen to my problems and started how

his wife ran away and left the kids with him and now he has to take care of the kids all by himself. Not only women, but men were also sharing their problems with everyone openly.

After the presentation, there was a general discussion about the problems the women face in the area. All the women were very unhappy as the area in which they live is very dirty and there are too many flies. One of the women said how “*will the government ever get to know how we have to live. They will never step in this colony. If the government officials have to go anywhere, they stop the traffic and empty the roads. Such officials will never know the problems we have to face.*” The women wanted to meet the local authorities to discuss their problems. A kid was also upset and said there are too many flies in the village and he wants to get rid of all the flies.

Due to the dirt around, people are falling sick very easily. An 11-year-old girl who had high fever died because she couldn't get proper treatment. Another case was very recent when a 7-month-old baby died because nobody could diagnose the disease properly. The baby used to cry all day and apart from the constant crying there were no other symptoms and due to lack of medical facilities and funds, the problem could not be solved.

Lack of cleanliness was not the only issue the women had. They were often subjected to eve teasing. They began narrating some of the incidents they faced or heard about from the other domestic workers. Once a man on the motorcycle started following a girl. The men on the bikes often touch them inappropriately while riding their bikes. The men often stop their car to ask if they want more work and stop them to chat. The old men often call them and tell them to come closer to them, inside the jungle “*to have a good time*”.

The session ended on a lighter note because 16<sup>th</sup> June is celebrated as International Domestic Workers Day so to celebrate with the domestic workers of Mewala Maharajpur Village we gave them sweets and soft drinks. They were very happy and one of the women told us to get more sweets the next time we go there to meet them. All the women and the kids shared the sweets and soft drink. However not all the women present attended the session. Many women were busy washing their clothes and doing their daily household chores. A few women got up in between to go fill up water also. Once the session got over 3-4 women came and asked what was the meeting all about and then they said they would definitely come for the next meeting and when we asked why didn't they come for the session they said we have to do so much work all by ourselves, nobody is there to help us so what to do. The kids also got excited with the idea of having a sports camp in the area.

International Domestic Workers Day however still saw a lot of women having to go to work as leaves were not granted and failing to show up led to their pay being cut off. Hence, an irony in itself!

### ***From Standing Alone to Finding Strength in Numbers.....***

We have been working in Faridabad with the domestic workers, talking to them, understanding



the issues and challenges and trying to get a glimpse into their world for past two months. The ultimate aim is to get the women together in a collective manner so that they can voice their rights

collectively , as they say -'there is strength in numbers'.

It all started the day we went to Faridabad to meet Kamlesh one of the domestic worker. She was sitting under the tree outside the society chit chatting with four other domestic workers. Praatibh and I introduced ourselves and then started walking towards Kamlesh's room.

One of the domestic worker suggested that I should follow in car as the place is a little far , but we preferred to walk as it gives us time to talk, understand their daily travel routine and I have observed the women tend to chat very freely. Once we reached their, other women also joined



in. We sat and chit chatted for almost an hour discussing problem of water, to cooking gas, to ration cards etc. We went away that day telling them that we will come again and meet a larger group and discuss their problem too. As we were driving back Praatibh and I kept on discussing how the issues they have can be solved if we can facilitate them, that was when we thought we are ready for the next step of collectivising them. Though I was still a little sceptical but Praatibh was enthusiastic about it,

he has experience in women group formation and he thought that it is the right step.



We started for Faridabad on a hot sunny Thursday afternoon and the throughout the way we just kept on discussing how we are going to initiate the process, as it is one thing to voice opinions sitting together with other women and it's another to formally join a group.

We straight away went to the place we visited last time and within 5 minutes seven women joined us.

We discussed our motive to come and meet them

and explained how if they come in a group they can help each other. The women did not require a lot of convincing as they were aligned with our thought process. The meeting ended with us deciding to meet on 11th April to formalise the group. The women till then will come up with the name of the group and talk to other domestic workers to collectivise.

इनविजिबल वर्कफोर्स ऑफ इंडियन हाउसहोल्ड्स:

*एक सप्ताह पूर्व नोयडा के महागुन सोसाइटी में हुई घटना हमारे समाज की एक ऐसी तस्वीर दर्शाती है जिससे पता चलता है की हम सब में बर्दाश्त करने की क्षमता खत्म होती जा रही है . ये इस बात पर भी प्रकाश डालता है की शोषित और वंचित वर्ग के साथ अत्याचार और भीड़तंत्र हमारे देश में धीरे धीरे स्थापित हो रहा है .*

पिछले दिनों जो घटना महागुन सोसाइटी में हुई वो जाँच अब पुलिस कर रही है .FIR दोनों तरफ से हो चुकी है.और अब मामला जाँच के दायरे में है , इस घटना से जहाँ सेठी परिवार में अभी भी तनाव की स्थिति है वही दूसरी तरफ ज़ोहरा बीबी और उनके पति लापता हैपुलिस , इस घटना और उसके बाद हुए पुरे घटनाक्रम पर हमने घरेलू कामगारों .उनकी तलाश कर रही है .से बात करी और जो पाया उससे जुड़े विचार यहाँ रख रहे हैं

डिवाइड एंड रूलबांटो : और राज करोये एक पुराना आजमाया हुआ नुस्खा है जि ,सकी झलक हमे यहाँ हुई कार्यवाही में भी दिखती हैपहले से बटे हुए लोगो को ये याद दिलाना बहुत ही .

,धर्म ,जाति) बस उन्हें याद दिलाना है की वो किस प्रकार ,आसन होगा शायद की वो बटें हुए है अगर .एक दुसरे से अलग है और आपका काम हो गया (काम और आर्थिक दर्जा ,भाषा ,रंग आपका तबका हाशिये पर है तो तोड़ने की प्रक्रिया और आसन हो जाती है नोयडा की घटना के . बाद जिस प्रकार सरकारी बुलडोजर का इस्तेमाल फल और सब्जी बेचने वालो की दुकानों पर रोटी पर आंच -जब रोजी .वो दिखता है की किस प्रकार गरीब तबके को तोडा जा सकता है ,हुआ आयेगी तो सही गलत का ज्ञान भी बेईमानी लगता है .और आवाज़ खुद ही बंद हो जाती है , 350 जिस सोसाइटी में .घरेलू कामगारों के प्रवेश पर रोक लग गयी 100 दूसरी तरफ वहाँ महिलाओ पर रोक लगा दी गयी और जिन को प्रवेश मिला 100 महिलाये काम कर रही थी वहाँ भी उनमे से कुछ को उनके मालिक ने काम पर नहीं आने दियामालिको को कहना है की वो . अभी कुछ दिन खुद से काम करना चाहते है और बाद में अगर जरूरत हुई तो घरेलू कामगारों -इस एक घटना से बहुत से लोगो की रोजी .को काम पर बुलाएँगेरोटी छिन गई और इस कारण से जिस प्रकार एक सप्ताह पूर्व घटना स्थल पर कामगारों की एक बड़ी भीड़ इकठ्ठा हुई थीवो , .आगे शायद कभी साथ न आए

जिसकी लाठी उसकी भैंसजब आपके पास प्रशासन की शक्ति हो तो प्रवासी मजदूर आपका , प्रवासी होने से राज्य सरकारों के लिए तो आप अदृश्य हो ही जाते हो .क्या बिगाड़ सकते है अगर शंका आपके बंगलादेशी होने पर है तो आप किसी भी सरकार के लिए शायद मायने नहीं रखतेमजदूर वर्ग के संगठन का टूटना भी एक संकेत दे रहा है की हमारा उच्च और मध्यम . हमारी ये संवादहीनता एक टकराव की .वर्ग अब मजदूर वर्ग की बाते सुनने को तैयार नहीं है ओर हमे ले जा रही है, जिससे मजदूर एवम मालिक के बीच मानवीय और भावनात्मक जुडाव खत्म हो रहा है .

भीड़तंत्र - हिंसक होते लोग पिछले कुछ समय : मैं हमे ये एहसास हुआ है के भारत की जनता का विश्वास भीड़तंत्र में बढ़ता जा रहा है .500 लोगो की भीड़ का आपकी गली या सोसाइटी में घुस आना जिनके हाथ में पत्थर और लाठिया है सोचने में ही यह ,दृश्य भयावह लगता हैलोग . और उन्हें मानवता या कानून की कोई फ़िक्र नहीं ,अपने बर्दाश्त करने की क्षमता खोते जा रहे है जब ऐसा कुछ होता है तो क्या लोग इतनी उतेजना या गुस्से से भरे होते है की उनकी .है जो लोग आए ,ऐसा नही है ?सोचने और समझने की शक्ति खत्म हो जाती है उनमे से कई लोगो ने अपना मुह ढका हुआ थाकहा .वो नुकसान पहुंचना चाहते थे पर आयोजित तरीके थे . .और इसका फायदा लोग उठाना सीख गए है .जाता है की भीड़ की कोई शकल नहीं होती घटना के तुरंत .प्रशासन ऐसे मुद्दों में कई बार फेल हो चुका है पर इस घटना में ऐसा नहीं हुआ बाद प्रशासन हरकत में आया और इसमें गिरफ्तारिया भी हुईये उदाहरण है प्रशासनिक इच्छा . अगर ,लोग हिंसक हो रहे है और आयोजित ढंग से भीड़ का फायदा उठाना चाहते है .शक्ति का जल्द ही सरकार ने इसपर काम न किया तो लोकतंत्र पर ये एक बड़ा आघात होगा जो हमारी भ .जड़ो को हिला देगाीड चाहे गाय के नाम पर हिंसा करे या मजदूर के नाम परइसपर , .अंकुश लगना ही चाहिए

अत्याचार की परिभाषाजैसा की खबरों के ,इस घटना ने अत्याचार को भी परिभाषित किया है : उनका फ़ोन छीना ,जोहरा बीबी के मुताबिक उनके साथ मार पीट हुई ,हवाले से पता चलता है गया और उन्हें एक कमरे में कई घंटो तक बंद रखा गयाजब वो कमरे में बंद थी तो उन्हें . अगर ऐसा हुआ है तो ये घटना अमानवीयता को भी अच्छे ढंग से .भूखा और प्यासा रखा गया इस घटना ने एक ऐसे सत्य को उजागर किया है जिसमे पता चलता है की .परिभाषित करती है हम घरेलू कामगारों के साथ किस प्रकार का व्यवहार करते हैइसी .और उनकी स्थिति क्या है , घटना से उठे सवालो पर केन्द्रित एक चर्चा का आयोजन प्रिया संस्था द्वारा किया गया जो की

और गुडगाँव में पिछले कुछ महीनो से ,फरीदाबाद ,घरेलू कामगार महिलाओ के साथ दिल्ली इस चर्चा का मकसद था ऐसी घ .काम कर रही हैटना की मानसिकता को समझना और ये जानना की क्या ये एक अपवाद था या ऐसा होना एक आम बात हैइस चर्चा के लिए हम . अखबारों में छपी तस्वीरो को साथ ले गए थे और अपनी चर्चा में हमने उन्हें पूरी कहानी जो की ये एक बड़ी घटना थी हमारे ल .अखबारों से हमे मिली थी उनके सामने रखीिएपर , उन्होंने ज़ोहरा बीबी के बारे में हमसे .आश्चर्यजनक बात ये थी की उन्हें ये घटना सामान्य लगी बीमारी की अवस्था में भी काम ,खाना न देना .पूछा जरूर पर शारीरिक दंड बहुत आम बात है धमकी देना और पीछ ,गली गलौच करना ,पैसे काटना ,छुट्टी न देना ,करने पर मजबूर करनाे पीछे घूम कर निगरानी रखना बहुत आम बात हैमार पीट होने पर .ऐसा तो रोज़ होता रहता है . काम छोड़ देते है पर इसकी शिकायत किसी से नहीं कर सकते क्योकि इसकी कही भी सुनवाई हमे बाहर का बोल कर हम से ही पैसे निकलवा ,पुलिस का साथ भी हमे नहीं मिलता .नहीं है .लिए जाते है एक महिला ने ये भी बताया की चोरी का इलज़ाम भी बहुत जल्दी लग जाता है , 10 साल में-जिसमे पुलिस केस के नाम पर हमसे ही पैसे निकलवा .केस तो हो ही जाते है 12 हमे .पैसो के अलावा लैपटॉप और मोबइल के नाम पर भी इलज़ाम लगाये जाते है ..लिए जाते है इस चर्चा में पता चला कीमार-छेड़ ,बीमारी की अवस्था में भी काम कराना ,खाना न देना ,पीट-छुट्टी न देना ये सभी अलग अलग प्रकार के ,भाषा पर टिप्पड़ी करना ,धर्म ,जाति ,छाड़ ,यौनिक उत्पीड़न ,शारीरिक दंड देना मौखिक गैर मौखिक .अत्याचार है जो आम तौर पर होते है हर प्रकार से कानून के खिलाफ हैअगर .र कोई दोषी है भी तो उसपर हाथ उठाने का अधिकार आपको नहीं मिलताअगर कोई ऐसा करता है तो वो भी एक बड़े अपराधी है जिन्हें कानून से . की जिस बिल्डिंग ,फरीदाबाद में हुई मीटिंग में हमे एक महिला ने बताया .सजा मिलनी चाहिए में वो काम करती है वही एक घरेलू कामगार महिला पर इसी तरह का इलज़ाम लगा और उसे

तुरंत घर की मालकिन ने मारना शुरू कर दिया मार पीट के बीच जब लोगो ने बीच बचाव , बाद में पता चला की जिस पर्स की चोरी पर इतना हंगामा हो .किया तब मामला कुछ ठंडा हुआ बात सही और गलत की नहीं है पर अगर चार .गया वो मैडम की गाड़ी में पड़ा था लोग आपके साथ भी खड़े हो तो आपको शक्ति मिलती है अपनी बात रखने की या कोई आपको मरेगा तो नहीं एक बात .और घरेलू कामगार महिलाओ के पास तो वो चार लोगो का संगठन भी नहीं है . वो ये थी की कामगार महिलाये सुरक्षित महसूस नहीं करती और ,जो दोनों ही समूहों ने कही अशि ,गरीबक्षित और प्रवासी होने के कारण उनकी कोई सुनवाई भी नहीं है .इसमें एक और बात जोडनी यहाँ बहुत जरूरी है की चर्चा में मौजूद सभी प्रतिभागियों ने ये माना की सब लोग एक जैसे नहीं होतीवहां ऐसे भी लोग है जो अच्छा बर्ताव करते है ,जिन घरों में वो काम करती है , और उन्हेंअपने परिवार की तरह रखते है .

हमे ये भी जानकारी मिली की धर्मलोग ,जाति और भाषा के आधार पर भेदभाव भी होता है , जो महिला .जिस वजह से इन्हें नाम बदलकर भी काम करना पड़ता है .काम पर नहीं रखते उसे घर का शौचालय इस्तेमा .आपके घर की सफाई करती है उसे गन्दा समझा जाता हैल करने की अनुमति नहीं होतीकुछ .उन्हें गार्ड के लिए बने शौचालय इस्तेमाल करने को कहा जाता है . अपना .और छुट्टी लेने की स्थिति में पैसे काटते है ,लोग महीने में एक भी छुट्टी नहीं लेने देते घंटे के सम 24 जो घरेलू कामगार .पैसा तय करने का अधिकार भी उन्हें नहीं हैय में काम करती है उन्हें खाने को ठीक से नहीं देतेउन्हें घर से बाहर जाने की इजाज़त नहीं है और , ये बाते सुनकर ये .ये सभी अनुभव पढ़े लिखे लोगो के साथ के है .उनपर गार्ड नज़र रखते है समझना मुश्किल है की हमारा समाज समय के साथ आगे बढ़ रहा है या और पीछे लुढ़कता जा रहा है .इन सभी बातों में जातीय व्यवस्था का प्रतिबिम्ब नज़र आता है .

करीब पिछले दशको से घरेलू कामगार अपने अधिकारों और अपने कामगार होने के दर्जे के 6  
.इंतज़ार में है 1959 में पहली बार घरेलू कामगारों के लिए एक कानून पर चर्चा हुई थी जो .  
बिल कभी सदन की चर्चा में भी शायद नहीं आया उसके बाद कई बार कोशिशें हुईं पर बात .  
ने 2011 पिछली बार सरकार के समक्ष महिला एवम बाल विकास मंत्रालय ने साल .नहीं बनी  
मजदूर और किसान के मुद्दे पर कोई बात नहीं .बिल रखा था जिसपर भी सहमति नहीं बनी  
पूंजीवाद और उदारीकरण के साये में हम इन अ .करना चाहता दृश्य कामगारों को भूल गए हैं जो  
की शहरों को चलाते तो हैं पर इन शहरों का हिस्सा नहीं बन पाए हैं .



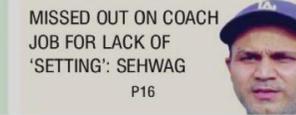
'CBI SHOULD QUESTION ME, NOT HARASS MY SON'  
P5



'DOMESTIC WORK CAN ALSO BE DIGNIFIED'  
P9



PAK APEX COURT DISMISSES SHARIF'S REVIEW PLEA  
P13



MISSED OUT ON COACH JOB FOR LACK OF 'SETTING': SEHWAG  
P16

## THE SATURDAY INTERVIEW

# 'Domestic work can also be dignified'

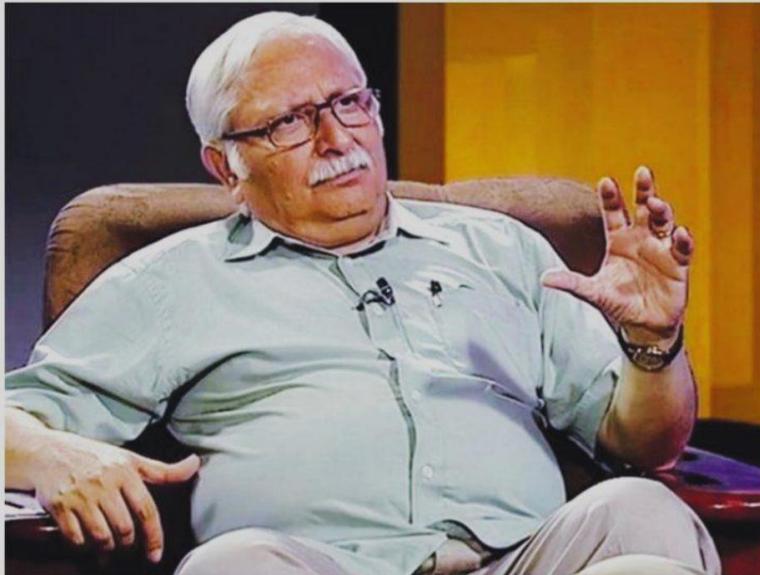
A recent incident of exploitation of a domestic worker in a housing society in Noida has brought the focus once more on the situation of workers in the informal sector in urban areas. Whether it is a case of domestic workers, construction workers or contractual labour, they seem to be the most exploited lot.

A non-profit organisation, Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), has done extensive research in this area. One of their research reports suggests that the contribution of the informal settlement dwellers to urban GDP is 7.53 per cent; if calculated further it is almost 4.5 per cent of the country's GDP. Their study, the largest in India on this particular issue, was conducted in 50 major cities across the country. About 5,353 households and 24,445 individuals were covered in the study.

In an interview with ASHA RAMACHANDRAN, Dr Rajesh Tandon, president of PRIA, highlighted that it is essential to sensitise people and inculcate in them a sense of dignity of labour. "We need to recognise that domestic work can also be dignified," Dr Tandon said, calling for skill-development of the unorganised workers in all sectors. Excerpts from the interview:

### Q. What is the status of the unorganised, or informal, labour force in our country?

A. The structure of Indian economy has not changed in terms of nature of employment. Thirty years ago, we spoke of organised and unorganised sectors. Around 30-35 years ago, much of employment was made up of an unorganised, informal workforce. Over the past 35 years, India's manufacturing and service sectors have grown enormously. The share of private sector has increased hugely, compared to late 1970s and 80s. But the informal nature of employment has remained stagnant. The vast majority of workforce - people who are not self-employed and work for somebody else for peanuts - that percentage has not changed at all. The industrial sector has shrunk. The agricultural sector has shrunk. The informal workforce there is contractual. When



nature of employment is vulnerable, people are highly exploited.

### Q. How much does this sector contribute to our economy?

A. There is a mindset that the informal workers dwelling in our cities are living off others. The question is, what is their economic contribution to a city? The answer, (according to a study by PRIA) is: 7.5-15 per cent. We used the study to approach political parties. This segment of population is a vote bank. But they are also an economic asset. In that study, we asked the opinion of middle-income group of people. They felt that the informal sector is a "burden to the city". But when

we asked if they could be moved out, the answer was a unanimous "No"! It is this mindset - that in the minds of the employers these workers are a burden as opposed to active economic agent - that needs to be changed.

### Q. Is there any law protecting their rights?

A. There is no law at the moment. Payment of Wages Act exists in our statute, but is rarely implemented. Exploitation of workers is so widespread that it evades any attention. While white collar jobs are as vulnerable for the lower end, comprising the vast majority of the workforce, the situation is even worse.

### Q. Regarding domestic workers, where does the proposed legislation, Domestic Workers' Welfare Bill, stand?

A. The problem is not the Bill but in its conceptualising. The Bill is still pending.

### Q. In the context of the recent incident in Noida, is there any change in attitude towards domestic workers?

A. Domestic workers fall under three categories: full time, where they stay 24x7 in a house; second, where they work in high security housing societies with tight regulations and where they work in a house; and third, where they work part-time in three or four

houses. None of them get the minimum wages. They spend 9-10 hours working. There is no concept of weekly off. Hardly anyone has benefited from social security. Because there is no standardisation, the question is, what can you bargain?

Part of our caste and hierarchical mindset is that we don't want to acknowledge that domestic work can also be dignified. We use derogatory terms such as "Garbage Persons" or "Shudra". We cannot improve their lot unless we can clean our own (dirt). I am really concerned that as a society, in 70 years of Independence we have not changed our mindset regarding dignity of work.

### Q. Since most informal workers are migrants from rural areas, what can be done to reverse, or at least stop this migration?

A. People come into cities as they cannot earn in villages. The glamour of cities draws them. In cities they are under-employed. Economic studies show that 62 per cent of people are living and working in urban areas. The criteria by which an area is determined as "urban" says any place with population density of 5,000 functions as a town. People doing agriculture form a very small percentage. Our criteria of zoning is outdated and needs revision.

### Q. What role has PRIA been playing to improve the lot of this informal sector, particularly domestic workers?

A. We are hoping to propose some sort of skilling certificates for domestic workers. The National Skill Development Mission has been captured by big industries. They can train plumbers and electricians but not domestic workers. A vast majority cannot work in a company but informally they do - for example as drivers or cleaners. They learn on the job but have no certification. We need to provide a certification and fix wages. We need to set skilling standards and occupation upgraded to next level. We do not have this system.

In PRIA, 6-7 months back, we started work with a group of domestic workers. The idea was to empower them, give them access to basic rights and benefits as well as social security. The problem is they are not registered. We then had an interface with the resident welfare associations (RWAs). They should take responsibility, have a Harassment Forum and standardise payment and leave system.

Norms are there but no mechanism to check. But the main thing is that the RWAs do not accept it is not there.

## DLF Phase 5, Gurugram



### Introduction:

A district level consultation was organised by Martha Farrell Foundation and Society for Participatory Research in Asia in collaboration with Embassy of Netherland on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2017 in Gurugram District. Officials from the government departments such as the Labour department, Local Complain Committee were invited. NGOs and Unions were also invited along with the domestic workers from Harijan Basti. This consultation was seen as a platform for bridging the gap between the domestic workers, unions and the government.

Nandita Pradhan, Senior Programme Manager welcomed everyone and there was a short round of introduction. The initial discussion started with talking about the problems of the domestic workers face in their day to day lives and how frequently do these women face harassment at their workplace regarding wages, job security, health, leaves, etc. Most

importantly these women do not want to talk about sexual harassment as they do not have any other option but to work.

One of the participants said that, *“it is the fault of the women. If she behaved inappropriately then she will be harassed”*. This participant Rahena Mandal is a domestic worker and she has observed that women are easily harassed when they voice their opinions. In response to this, another domestic worker, Sarita said, *“women stay quiet and this is the reason behind their harassment”*. She also felt that women must not speak if they want to secure their jobs. This is the only choice women have.

Many of the domestic workers have experienced that when they have helped somebody, those people have created problems. Domestic workers do understand that they must take a stand against the harassment they face in their everyday lives but they don't get enough support when the time comes. The facilitator asked why they are not able to speak up against the sexual harassment they face. Why so? The response received from the participants was that they are threatened with their job, they will be blamed for robbery, they will not be allowed to enter the building, etc.

The law on Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act 2013 was discussed to refresh what the law talks about and that there is a provision for the domestic workers as well. The representative from the Labour Department, Mr. Puran Chand, explained about the services they provide to the labour, such as giving INR 7000 to the expecting mothers, providing expenses for children's education, etc. But the Labour Department has no provision of services for the domestic workers.

Mr V. S. Raj from NDWM wanted to know if it is possible to have a union just for domestic workers, but it seemed that it is almost impossible to have a union just for domestic workers. Many such organisations face difficulty in forming a union.

The Nodal officer of Local Complaints Committee, Mr. Nagendra Singh, represented the services that can be availed by the women. He explained that procedure in which the victim of sexual harassment can seek redressal from the LCC. The procedure is receiving the complaint, reviewing the law, interviewing the two parties, reasoning, finding and recommendation and finally submitting a report within 90 days of receiving the complaint.

As he explains the procedure, the participants had some queries such that since these women are working in multiple households and some of them are part-time workers, how are they going to do all this? They are unaware of the procedures and they don't even have access to the helpline number. How should the women collectivise then? If they are not able to speak to each other due to lack of time, they would not be able to collectivise at all. How can we bring justice to the grassroots level? How difficult it is to engage the District Collector and the Additional Collector on these issues.

In every state, each district is mandated to have one District officer and s/he will look after the proceedings of the LCC. The LCCs are formed to provide justice to the victim of sexual harassment in the informal sectors. It was recommended that the LCC should go to the women rather than expecting the women to come to them. They must identify themselves as the agency that is there to look after the safety of the women.

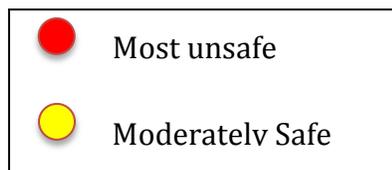
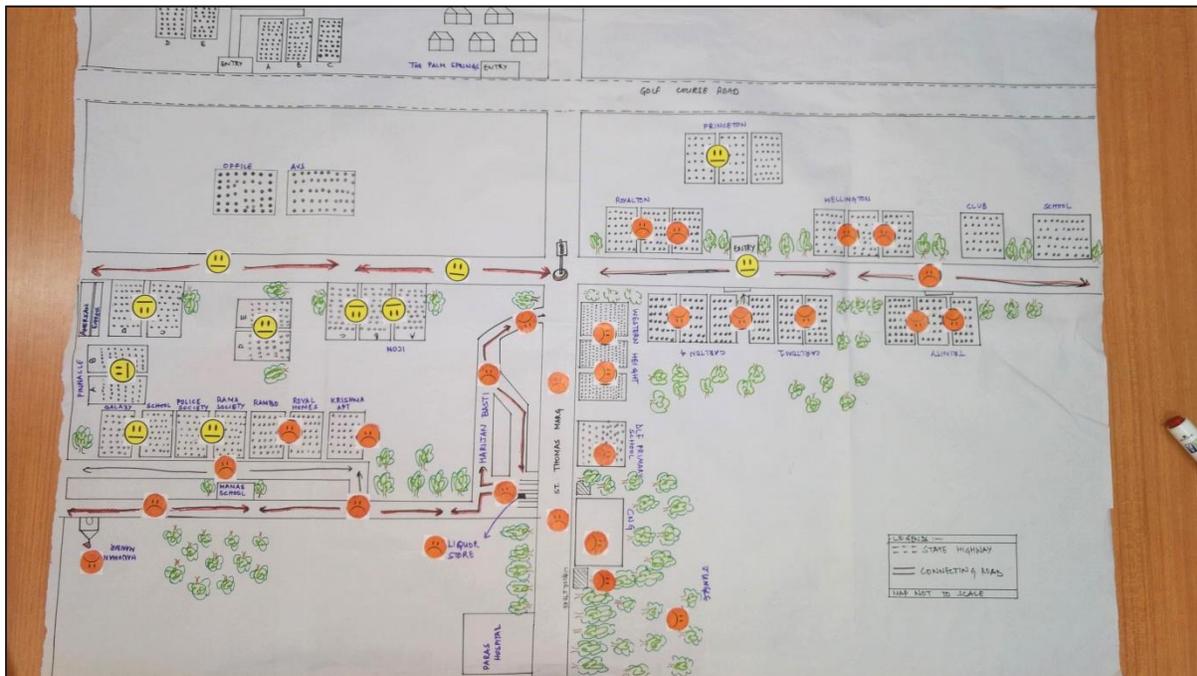
These women are constantly facing violence in their everyday lives which is mostly sexual in nature. They are groped while they are on their way to work, they are threatened to be thrown out of their jobs if at all they raise their voices, and they are kept locked inside homes so that they can't communicate with others for the harassment they are facing.



work. Following is the final map that was shared during the consultation. All the participants were overwhelmed to see the map as they had heard about the safety issue, but to have seen it in a map was something they were not anticipating.

## Safety Audit Map- Home to Workplace

A Safety Map was prepared by the domestic workers themselves. They assessed safety from their door step till their place of work. They were able to find out that not only are they harassed at their workplace but the path to workplace was highly unsafe as well. As these women started mapping, they covered all the apartments where they all

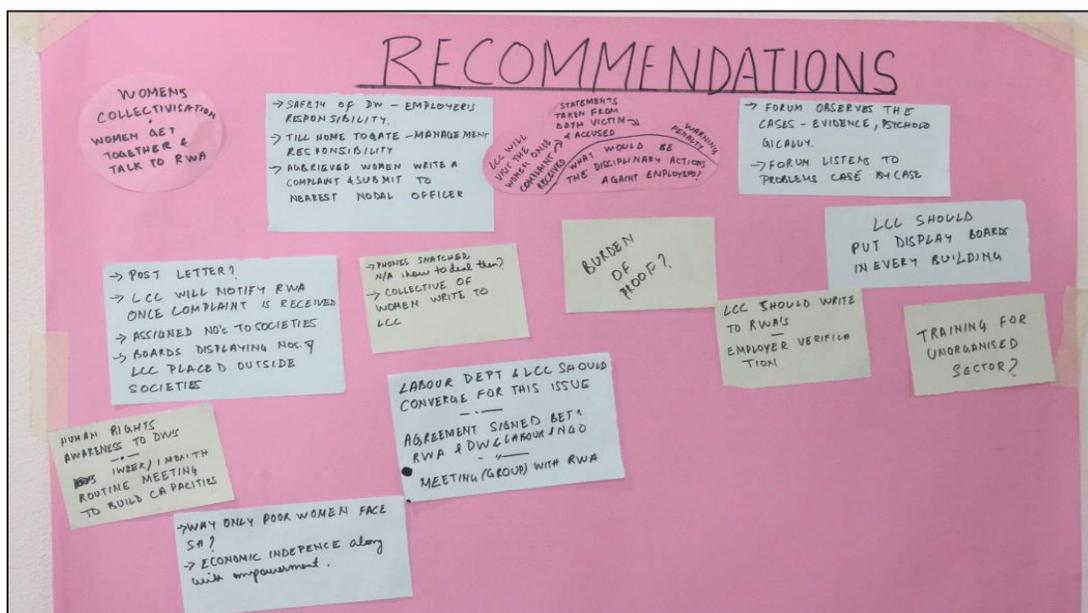


### **Problems discussed:**

- Domestic Worker (minor) locked up in homes
- DW who was alleged of stealing from an employer's house was stripped naked in front of everyone.
- DW arrested by police after 6 pm.



- The LCC could -collaborate with the RWAs so that domestic workers are able to contact immediately.
- If something happens, what are some of the procedure these women have to follow in order to file a complaint?
- There is no system in place at the grassroot level. Some officer should make him /her visible to the women.
- Contact number of the appropriate officer should be readily available for assistance.
- The punishment that could be given to the perpetrator should be explained to all the employers before hiring domestic workers.
- There should a formal document which tells who is the employer of these domestic workers. The employers keep all documents of the domestic workers, but these women have no information of the employers.
- One of the domestic workers present there said, *“there is no relation between the employer and employee. There is only an exchange of services for money. If there is accountability from both ends, maybe then the situation can change. I have witnessed how some of the employers do not even accept that so and so woman was working at their home. They do this so that they do not have to pay her”.*



The consultation ended with a note that the issue of sexual harassment will not be taken lightly. The assistance at the grassroots level should be strengthened therefore making it accessible to all. This was a first of a kind consultation where members from union, NGOs, government offices and domestic workers had come to. No one had ever talked about these issues before and it was a good learning for all to know more about this. The participants have been working with domestic workers for 2 to 3 years now and they haven't touched upon this. The participants wanted to conduct more such consultations in the future along with government officials to bridge gap between policy formation and their implementations.

### **Report on :Training Session on**

#### **“Community Mobilisation for Implementation of Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act, 2013”**

Social activists from various organizations and PRIA came together to give this important issue of the plight of domestic workers the right advocacy efforts that it needed. This participatory training was on the topic of “Community Mobilisation for Implementation of Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act” moderated by Ms. Nandita Pradhan. The training was conducted on 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2017 at PRIA Head Office, New Delhi.

Currently there are at least 67 million domestic workers worldwide. While no reliable statistics determine the number of workers in the sector in India, the data analysis of the NSSO (61st Round, 2004-5) reveals an approximate figure of approximately 4.2 million domestic workers in the country. Tasks performed by domestic workers are not recognized as ‘work’. Domestic workers in India continue to struggle for visibility and recognition. It is time to acknowledge the importance of domestic workers as valuable members of society.

Anyone who would have seen the training unfold could explain what a success this effort was. The eyes of social activists dancing with the new perspectives they have gained. As each activity ended, one could see new ideas of gender and sex setting in, the hopelessness slightly blurring, the new possibilities of a united stand encouraging them to work harder in the same direction.

It was informed that the way this session will go forth; this is the way usually training should be taken forward. In this session, the participants were being trained to hold such trainings in their communities as well.

#### **ACTIVITY – 1**

The training was divided up by different activities which led to different learnings. It started with an introduction session with a twist where the participants sat in groups of 2 and both had to

introduce the other. They also had to mention one thing that they liked doing, one thing that they like to eat and a secret of the partner; this in effort to make the individual start trusting each other.

Few did not open up saying that we are social workers; we don't spill each other's secrets, though the youngest of the lot quickly mentioned how they love going out without anyone getting to know about it in their family



*“Meri partner ko dance karna boht pasand hai,  
Bas isko dance karna aata nahi hai.”*

*“Hume naye logo se bat karne mein darr lagta hai,  
Par hum kisiko batate nahi hain.”*

*“inhone kabhi aaplog ko bataya nahi ki yeh ek single mother hain.”*

Before going to the next activity, the trainer had quickly did a recap of the consultation that took place 2 days ago, on 24<sup>th</sup> Oct 2017. The consultation was a platform to bring all the stakeholders on one platform and bridge gap between them. Nodal Officer, Labour department, Unions and NGOs were invited for this consultation. Domestic workers were also present to shed light on their experiences of sexual harassment and what support they need.

## **ACTIVITY – 2**

**GENDER RELAY:** The group was divided into 2 teams that had to play a relay game where each person from one team had to write one word describing a woman and the other team describing a man. They had to run to the board, and come back to hand over the pen to the next team member in line, just as in a relay race.

It was later shared that this competitive environment was set up to not give the members a chance to ponder and strategies, rather to put out their honest thinking on the board.



To motivate the teams, a bonus of 2 points was announced for cheering the team. After the game ended the table looked somewhat like this.

<b>Mahila</b>	<b>Purush</b>
	Honest
Patience	Mardangi (Masculinity)
Powerful	Weak
	Achhe (Good)
Gunwaan (full of good qualities)	Mahaan
Beautiful	Soch (Thinking)
Peaceful	Cooperative
Good	Ahankari (Egoistic)
Himmat	Sincere
Long hair	Fight
Khush (happy)	Zimmedar (Responsible)
Talkative	Shantipriya (Peace-loving)

After cancelling out similar words and adding the bonus points of cheering their teammates, the team named 'mahila' won.

**Twist** – The headings were interchanged. So all those attributes describing a male now came under the heading Female and all the attributes of a female came under the heading Male.

Further the group now discussed whether those attributes actually belonged to those categories or should be moved to the other side.\* The group gradually started picking up words and deciding whether that attribute should stay for this gender too or not. Giving justifications for all, somehow every word and attribute got accepted by the group and no word shifted sides.

While the discussions were happening, one of the participants said, *“Men have ego. They will not take another work whatsoever, but if there is a dire need a woman will take another’s work to support the household”*. It is normalised in our society that if a woman can’t multitask then she is not going to be a good caregiver. Even if she is working outside, the household chores are also a priority job for the woman. Man can refuse to do help with the household work but a woman can never say no.

*“Decision making power, property rights and the control over money lies with the men. Women still lack this even though they are excelling in every field..we say everyone is equal yet everything is different. Attitude, behaviour and thinking is distinctly different”* shared a participant.

The moderator raised one question after this activity,

**“What is the difference then? What is the fight about?”**

That silence was overwhelming as sitting there one could hear in the silence, the sound of something changing inside people. That realization was settling in that truly *‘we are not that different’*.

The moderator went on to discuss the reality of the issue that beside the biological differences, it’s the society and its role expectations that make us appear so different. The difference is in the thought process that each one of us is socialized with.

The other side of the coin was also discussed. The pressure on boys by the society like

- Don’t cry, boys don’t cry;
- Don’t express and talk so much like girls;
- Be the man of the house;
- Pressure of earning;
- Be strong always.

### **ACTIVITY – 3**

**BINDER ACTIVITY:** This is an activity with the strongest message, which gets conveyed in a very direct way. It deals with the restrictions that the society puts on the people, especially women.

Two volunteers were called, a man and a woman for this activity. The woman was given a name “RAMESH” by other participants and the man was named “PRIYA”. The moderator asked everyone what are the kind of restrictions we tend to put on girls and women and the same was asked for men and boys. Following were the responses:

WOMAN- PRIYA	MAN- RAMESH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't <b>speak</b> too much</li> <li>• Don't <b>look</b> at boys</li> <li>• Don't <b>go</b> there</li> <li>• Don't <b>think</b> about boys and bad things</li> <li>• Don't <b>stay out</b> of the house at wee hours</li> <li>• Don't <b>wear</b> skin revealing clothes</li> <li>• Don't <b>show your face</b> to boys</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't <b>stay</b> out late</li> <li>• Don't <b>say</b> foul words</li> <li>• <b>Focus</b> on your work, don't look here and there</li> <li>• Have to get a <b>good job</b></li> </ul>



Being said this, for every restriction, a ribbon was tied on the eye (for don't look at boys), ears (don't hear bad things), etc. In the end, we witnessed that PRIYA had so many restrictions and

she was not able to walk, bend or move at all. She was feeling sad, uncomfortable, scared and with a lot of effort she could not remove the restrictions. When others helped her, she was able to remove her ribbons.

RAMESH had less restrictions and he was able to remove them easily. He was free within a matter of seconds.

PRIYA said, *“It was difficult to remove the restrictions casted upon me by everyone”*.

RAMESH said, *“At first it was not easy but I was successful in removing all of the restrictions. I had few restrictions comparatively”*.

This activity gave a strong message to the participants that how women and girls are restricted from doing anything whereas men and boys have fewer restrictions which they are able to remove.

#### **ACTIVITY – 4**

At home we see that the women are trained to do all the household chores and the men are oriented to work outside the house to earn for the family. Boys and girls are oriented very differently from their childhood.

Girls are taught to learn the ways of running the household efficiently and boys are not asked to help. Even the parents assume that girls will ultimately get married and they have to do the work at home. This is also done to preserve the family reputation.

If a girl wishes to work after marriage and she is facing difficulty doing household chores or a baby, in such cases she is always forced to leave the job. But a man cannot leave his work because he has to ensure he is not falling out of the patriarchal image.

In this activity, the participants were asked to sit in 4 small groups and identify the violence which they have witnessed at home and workplaces. Later these groups were merged and then there were 2 groups.

