

Process of knowing each other and their community : co-designing Participatory map of Harijan Basti

Date: 5th February, 2021

Place: Harijan Basti, Gurgaon

Number of participants: 22 women domestic workers

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc on all levels of society and paralysed the economy; workers in both the formal and informal sectors are subjected to these unpleasant realities. They bore the brunt of the lockdown in the form of food shortages, health and safety worries, employment insecurity, rent and utility bills due, and fear of misinformation. As a result of the lack of money, there is a high level of poverty, hunger, and illiteracy, with many people migrating to the cities. Furthermore, changing gender dynamics at home, as well as a lack of focus on women in the current crisis situation, threaten to derail generations of progress toward gender equality and women's empowerment.

MFF, in collaboration with PRIA, Women on Wings, and Seeds, is undertaking this intervention based on its previous experience working with women informal migrant workers to provide a safe, secure, and dignified workplace for women. Through the establishment of a Resource and Support Center in Gurugram, the project aims to assist marginalized women who work as migrant domestic workers. This project believes that putting the money in women's hands implies gaining economic independence and breaking the cycle of poverty. The project's goal is to help migrant domestic workers gain social and economic empowerment.

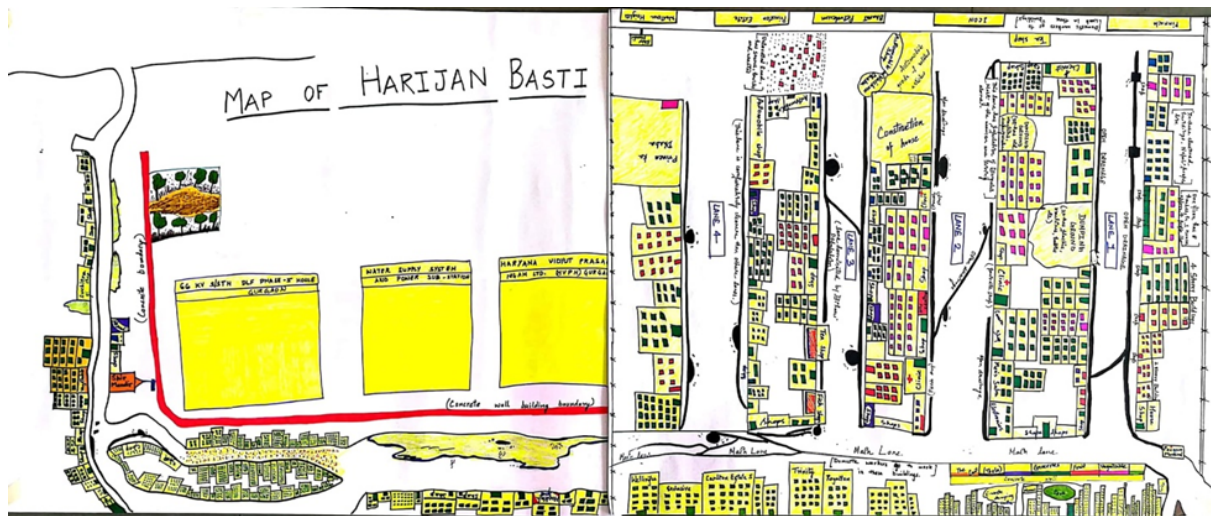
Highlights from the activity

During the Need assessment survey of Harijan Basti, many questions came up. One prominent question which was asked by every other woman was- Where will be the Resource and Support center located?

To address this question we asked them where you want it to be located? They were confused because many women don't know what their Basti look like with macro lenses. The women were mobilized to draw/ or to help us in drawing a detailed map of the Harijan Basti. Many women voluntarily joined in locating every single corner of the basti. They came together in a group and along with the program staff of MFF, they did a transect walk of the basti. It was for the first time women domestic workers were roaming in a group in the community. They divided tasks for each and every woman. Some women took pictures of the basti, while few counted the buildings in each and every lane. They also did resource mapping along with the transect walk and identified various facilities/services in the basti for them.

Initial Transect walk was helpful in drawing the outline of the basti and further the women’s participation has made the map more informative, elaborative and useful. Women domestic workers along with MFF intern drew the map of the basti. The whole process of drawing the map was participatory in nature where the knowledge of the women about the community was the foundation.

The women domestic workers felt that for the very first time, they visited each and every lane of their basti with confidence. One of the women domestic workers said, “*we were invisible in everyone’s eyes but with this map we have marked our identity.*”



Detailed map of Harijan Basti, Sector 43, Gurugram