



# ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024





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# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

This past year has come as a reckoning for our country. Numerous conversations on safety in working and learning spaces have been ignited in India, highlighting the lack of institutionalisation of gender, and the lax responsibility taken towards making working and learning spaces safe for all, especially for women and other marginalised genders.



In early 2023, a protest was led by Indian wrestlers, as they spoke out about sexual harassment in the Wrestling Federation of India and took to the streets of Delhi. And as we write this note, the country is in uproar over the brutal rape and murder of a trainee doctor in a hospital in Kolkata. There are laws in place in the country, but what has been done to enforce them? Not much seems to have changed - the safety of women in workplaces is a growing concern, and gaping holes in institutional accountability still remain.



And these are just the reported cases - so many cases of sexual harassment, assault and violence go unreported, and these issues remain a painful reality for people of marginalised genders. Each incident of sexual violence is a disruption of dreams, desires and opportunities - not just of the individual impacted, but for all who face gender-based oppressions every day. There is an urgent need, thus, to address the root cause of sexual and gender-based violence.

In these times, we are more convinced than ever that the Martha Farrell Foundation's (MFF) work is still relevant, and the methodologies that we are using to achieve our vision and mission are the way to move forward.

The only way to tackle gender-based violence, which is so deeply entrenched in our societies, is to engage not only with people of marginalised genders but also with men and boys. To institutionalise gender perspectives in all aspects of our lives, it is important for communities to be empowered, and the only way for communities to be empowered is for them to identify the problem and develop their own solutions. Without their leadership, all attempts to bring about change are futile.

We continue to carry forward Martha's vision in this regard through our work and honour her legacy.

Through the Kadam Badhate Chalo programme, we engage with young people to take leadership to bring changes in attitudes and behaviours around violence. Young people are leading the movement to make their schools and communities safe, putting their demands for safety and specific solutions forward to Panchayat leaders and school administrations.

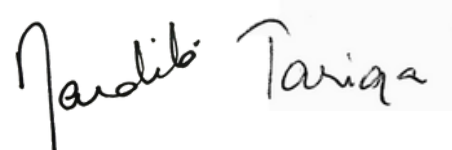
In our Main Bhi programme, we work with informal women workers to counter gender-based violence in their world of work, emphasising institutional accountability towards their safety. Our women domestic worker leaders - Pehelkaars - volunteered to come together to become community leaders, and this year, for the first time ever, they held a discussion with district administrations and Local Committee members to demand for their rights under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, Redressal) Act, 2013.

In our Making Workplaces Safe programme, we are working with various organisations and their employees to develop collaborative approaches to gender mainstreaming and workplace safety. As part of this programme, we have also been working with the Association of Indian Universities to ensure that universities and colleges across the country become safe spaces for all students.

Finally, through the Martha Farrell Awards, we honour those agents of change—individuals and organisations—who have successfully mainstreamed gender within their institutions and work. We carry forward Martha's vision by supporting unrecognised individuals and organisations, providing them with the space to grow.

Having completed eight years of advancing Martha's spirit, we also took time this year to reflect on and revise how our organisation has been operating, with a view to growing even further. This involved reviewing and redefining our vision and mission, approaches, and strategies to ensure they align with the work we are doing. We have also focused on strengthening our policies and operational procedures and reinforcing our institutional structures. Having streamlined our operations, we hope that the organisation will reach new heights.

We are ever grateful for the continued support of our partners and friends, without whom we could not have reached this far. We would also like to acknowledge our team members, whose dedication to the work and innovation in dealing with challenges has been essential to realising our vision.



**-Nandita & Tariqa**

# ABOUT US

Established in 2016, the Martha Farrell Foundation (MFF) is committed to creating a gender-just society by eliminating sexual and gender-based violence.

We believe that all individuals, communities, and institutions have the will and ability to facilitate change and invest in self-empowerment and growth.

To this end, MFF’s programmes integrate holistic, participatory approaches to build safe, empowering spaces where every individual can learn and work without the fear of sexual and gender-based violence or discrimination. Our initiatives are designed to work harmoniously on three levels—individual, community, and policy—engaging diverse stakeholders to enable meaningful change.

## Vision

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

## Mission

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

### Education

Co-design learning programs to inform, make aware and empower individuals and institutions on safety and gender equity.

### Research

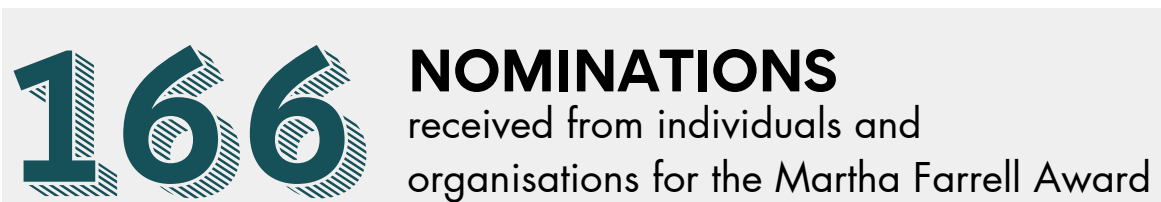
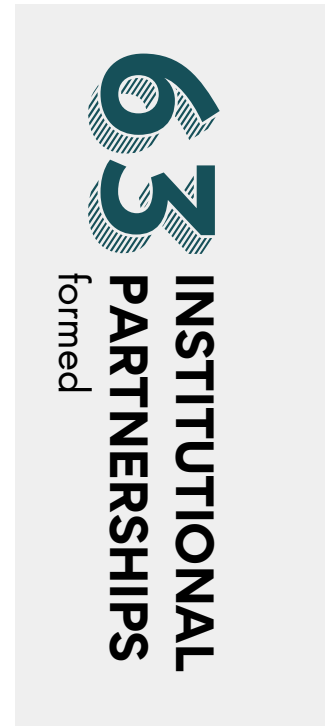
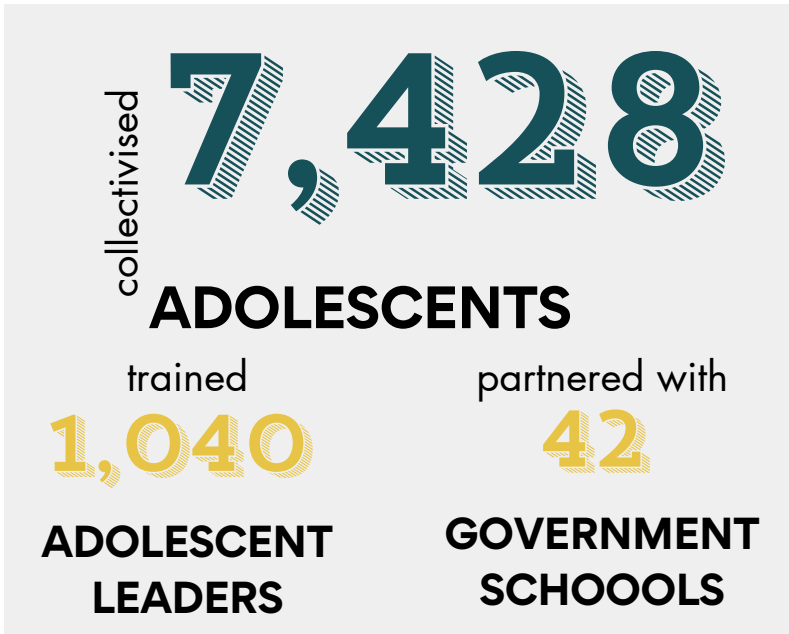
Develop new knowledge on gender equity and the prevention of gender-based violence in learning and working environments.

### Advocacy

Influence diverse stakeholders to design and implement effective policies, institutional practices and laws.



# OUTREACH | 2023-24



# KADAM BADHATE CHALO



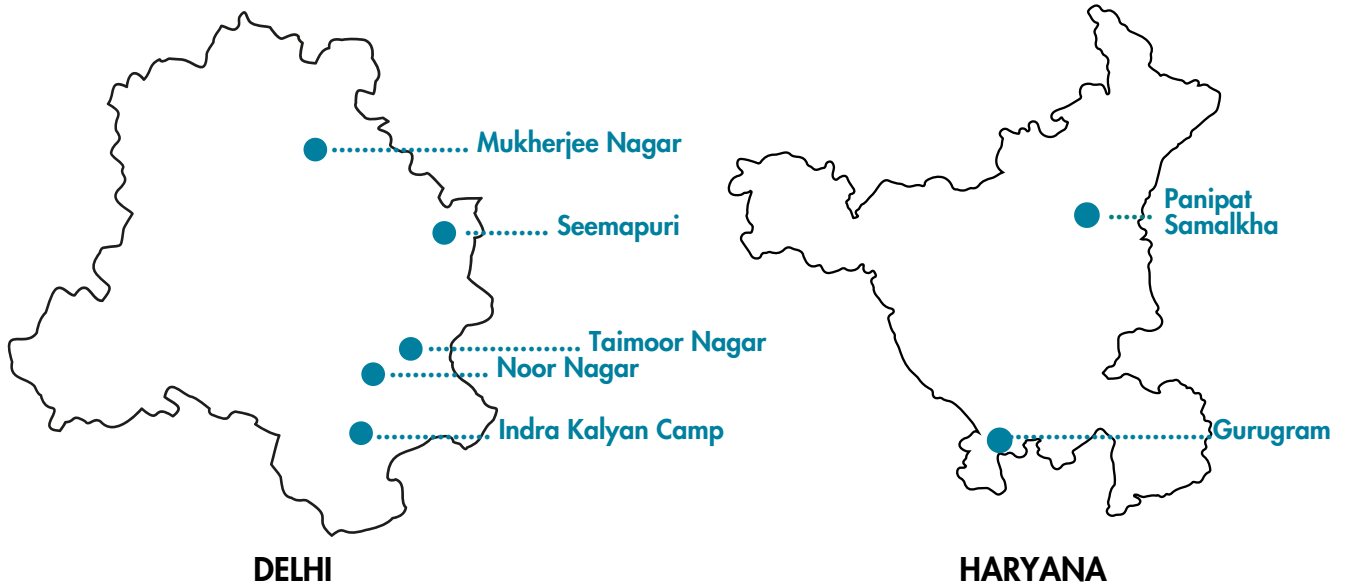


# KADAM BADHATE CHALO

## Collective footsteps to address sexual and gender-based violence

Kadam Badhate Chalo (KBC) is MFF's flagship programme, which fosters and initiates adolescent leadership to end gender-based violence through a comprehensive understanding of gender dynamics and social realities. Under the programme, KBC leaders embark on a journey of self-discovery, identifying their strengths, weaknesses, and potential to build a safer and more empowering world. Adolescents are trained with the skills and tools needed to lead change by identifying and countering sexual and gender-based violence in their communities.

## LOCATIONS



# OUTREACH



**7,428**

adolescents oriented on gender, gender stereotypes, and gender-based violence (4,033 girls, 3,395 boys)



**1,040**

adolescent leaders trained to recognise gender-based violence and to protect against sexual abuse (595 girls, 445 boys)



**97**

sessions held with adolescent leaders on understanding sexual and gender-based violence, along with reporting mechanisms for protection and redressal under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO Act)



**42**

government schools collectivised and oriented on understanding gender, gender stereotypes, gender-based violence, child sexual abuse, and reporting mechanism under POCSO Act



**250**

teachers and principals from 120 government schools trained on the prevention of child sexual abuse and their roles in creating safe learning spaces



**40**

members of Child Protection Committees trained intensively on the POCSO Act, reporting mechanisms, handling disclosures of violence cases, and fostering safe and inclusive educational spaces



**7**

Institutional partnerships formed to carry forward the KBC programme



## KBC DELHI-NCR

This year, the KBC programme extended its reach to various communities across Delhi-NCR, including Taimoor Nagar, Mukherjee Nagar, Noor Nagar, Seemapuri, Indrakalyan Camp and Harijan Basti (Gurugram). These efforts brought together new participants to foster a deeper understanding of gender and sex, challenge prevalent gender-based stereotypes, and address issues of gender-based violence within their communities. The programme also aimed to educate participants about the POCSO Act, including the complaint procedure and reporting mechanisms, with the ultimate goal of creating a safer environment for girls and women.

Along with our direct intervention with communities, MFF also collaborated with local civil society organisations to expand the scope of the programme to more communities in Delhi. Partnering with Team Up for Transformation and The Creative Thinkers Forum, the programme brought the KBC model to Seemapuri and Indrakalyan camp. A training of trainers was held to equip the trainers with understanding and knowledge of facilitating sessions on gender and gender based violence. Apart from this, MFF provided consistent support to the organisations, addressing challenges and gathering insights to enhance the effectiveness of the sessions with adolescents.

“

I started ignoring comments made about my choice of clothing and wore what I like. I have noticed a significant difference in my parents' thinking; their opinions have changed because I began questioning things I did not question before. Now, they allow me to step out of the house and encourage me to participate in sessions and let me wear whatever I want to.

- **Tanisha, 17, Taimoor Nagar**

”



“

In the past, school discussions about menstruation often excluded boys, reinforcing gender biases. It's essential for everyone to be educated about menstruation to promote understanding and inclusivity. By including boys in these conversations, we can break down misconceptions and create a more informed society. Menstruation is a natural process, and education about it should be free from discrimination to support a more inclusive mindset.

- Jyoti, 21, Mukherjee Nagar

”



## MERI ABHILASHA: KBC HARYANA

This year, MFF partnered with schools in the Panipat district of Haryana, through the Meri Abhilasha project. Collaborating with students and school administrations, the KBC programme addressed issues of gender, gender stereotypes, gender-based violence, child protection, and the redressal mechanism under POCSO Act of 2012. The project enabled students to recognise and address instances of violence that they may face or witness, especially within their schools, so that they can advocate for safer learning spaces.

## HOW THE MERI ABHILASHA PROJECT HELPED KAJAL OVERCOME OBSTACLES

Kajal, a class 10 student from Government Girls Senior Secondary School, Jaurasi, has been actively involved in the Meri Abhilasha project for the past year. Although initially hesitant, she attended the sessions with eagerness to learn. She gained the confidence to challenge societal norms and stand up against gender biases. She shared, “After every session, I used to tell my parents what I was learning. My parents started understanding me better and became more supportive of my aspirations, instead of limiting me to household chores.”



Inspired by the programme, Kajal and other students organised a stakeholder meeting with their school administration and the village Panchayat, advocating for safety measures in and around the school.

After presenting their safety audit findings and demands for safer schools, she noted a positive change in her school. She said, “The school took safety measures and formed a Child Protection Committee. We requested the principal to improve toilet facilities, including maintaining their cleanliness and installing a sanitary pad disposal machine. Thankfully, these changes were implemented! We also convinced the village Sarpanch to remove the liquor shop near the school and he assured us of taking action. I feel proud because these changes were initiated by us students, and I was the one presenting.”

# MAIN BHI (Me Too)



# MAIN BHI

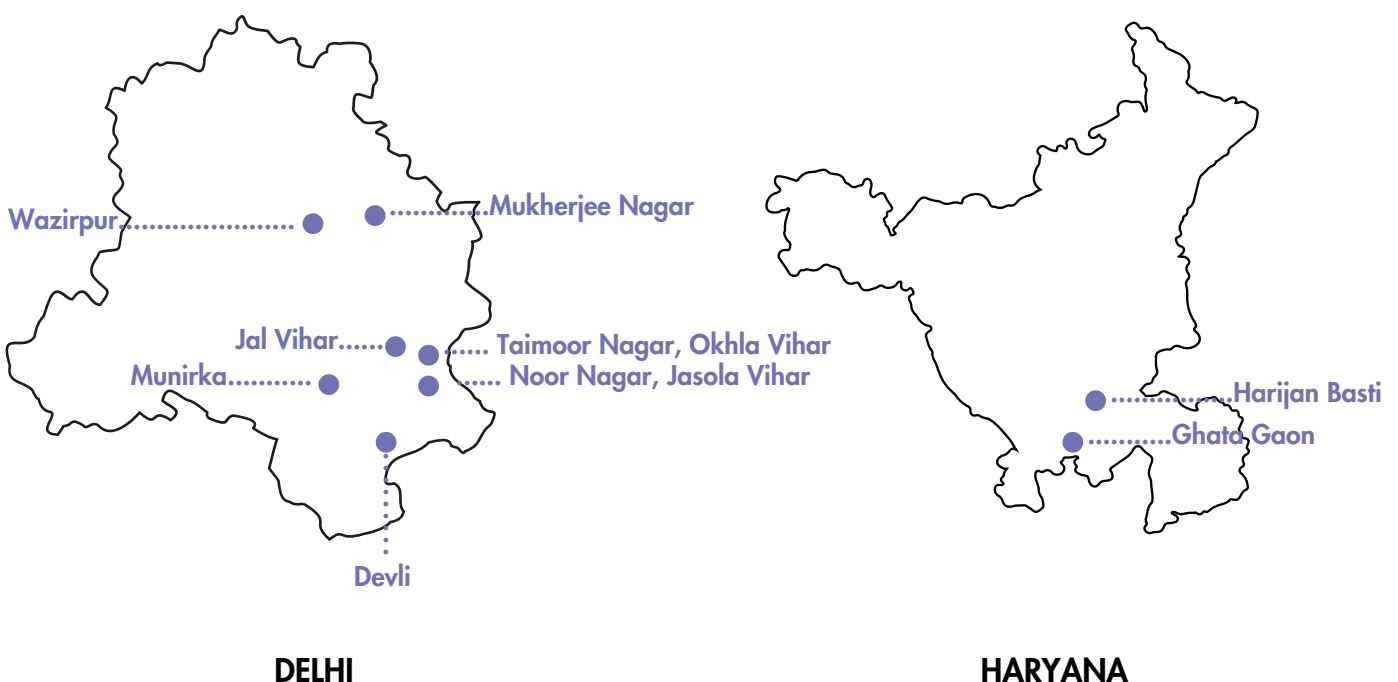
## Making institutions accountable to women informal workers in order to counter gender-based violence in their world of work

MFF is dedicated to ensuring that all workplaces are safe for every worker, including those in the informal sector. The Main Bhi programme focuses on creating secure work environments for India's informal workforce. Through this initiative, MFF empowers women informal workers by giving them a platform, voice, and agency. The programme helps them identify and address gender-based violence in all areas of their lives, negotiate their safety at work, and work in environments free from sexual harassment.

This year, we continued our #MainBhi project, which engages with women domestic workers to ensure they have access to safe workplaces and effective redressal mechanisms for complaints of sexual harassment. The project is being implemented across all 11 districts of Delhi and one district in Haryana (Gurugram). It aims to collaborate with women domestic workers, Local Committees, and the police to strengthen redressal mechanisms for cases of sexual harassment faced by domestic workers at their workplace. The project seeks to enable and empower women domestic workers to speak up, file complaints, and seek justice for their experiences of workplace sexual harassment through sensitive and responsive institutions.

Through this programme, MFF has ensured the formation and active participation of Local Committees in all 11 districts of Delhi.

## LOCATIONS



## OVERALL OUTREACH



**4,877**

women domestic workers reached out to



**60**

Pehelkaars (women domestic worker leaders) continued to be intensively trained on issues of sexual harassment, gender-based violence and gender equality



**11**

Local Committees trained in Delhi and Haryana to address complaints of sexual harassment at the workplace filed by informal workers, including domestic workers



**31**

Internal Committees of government departments trained



**50+**

Police trained in Delhi to handle complaints of sexual harassment at workplace from domestic workers



**160**

Anganwadi workers trained on sexual harassment at workplace, gender-based violence and gender equality





“

I am a woman, I can fight, I can be courageous.

- **Guddi, Pehelkaar, Jasola Vihar**

”

## DEMAND CAMPAIGN

A demand campaign was organised with women domestic workers of Delhi and Gurugram in April and May 2023. The women submitted a charter of demands to the District Magistrates of 11 Districts of Delhi and Gurugram, demanding the constitution of Local Committees, as mandated under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013 (PoSH Act), and spreading awareness about the process to file complaints to these committees. A total of 3,000 demand cards were signed by the women domestic workers.

Along with this, women domestic workers wrote 60 letters to the Local Committees of their respective districts, asking questions about the committee, the various forms of sexual harassment, ways to file complaints under the PoSH Act, and sharing their experiences of sexual harassment at the workplace.

These efforts initiated discussions in the District Administration offices amongst the officials and Local Committee members about the issue of sexual harassment at workplace with informal workers.



## ADVOCACY

As part of MFF's research and advocacy efforts, we have used the provisions of the Right to Information (RTI) Act 2005 to understand the status of the Local Committees (LCs) and the actions taken by the districts, as directed under the PoSH Act, 2013.

This year MFF filed applications in the 23 districts of Punjab and 21 districts of Haryana between in January 2024.

10 years since the enforcement of the PoSH Act, nearly half of the districts in Punjab and Haryana do not have a Local Committee constituted, which is one of the Act's basic provisions. Local Committees are the primary channel used by many working women to report cases of sexual harassment in the workplace.

Sexual harassment in the workplace remains grossly underreported, and having an operational LC is the first step in ensuring that women feel they can access justice. A properly constituted and well-trained LC is crucial for upholding the dignity and safety of women at work.



“

The road ahead is long, but I trust that women will continue to move forward, fighting through all challenges.

- **Sister Bibiyana Lakra, Field Officer**

”

## STATE-LEVEL CONSULTATION

MFF, along with women informal workers, organised a two-day state-level consultation on the effective implementation of the PoSH Act, 2013, in February 2024 at Vishwa Yuvak Kendra, New Delhi.

The purpose of the consultation was to create a safe space for women domestic workers and Local Committees (LCs) to discuss and deliberate on a collaborative approach to ensure a sensitive and responsive justice delivery system for cases of sexual harassment at the workplace. During the consultation, domestic workers interacted with their LC members and put forward their suggestions on how the LCs can be made more accessible for women like them.

A closed-door meeting of LCs was also convened to address the challenges they encounter in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities under the Act. The LC members engaged in a discussion to identify potential solutions and sought expert insights from a legal professional regarding the nuances of the Act.



“

Bhanwari Devi's struggle has inspired us and made us believe that if she can overcome challenges, so can we.

- **Nandini, Pehelkaar, Jasola Vihar**

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# MAKING WORKPLACES SAFE

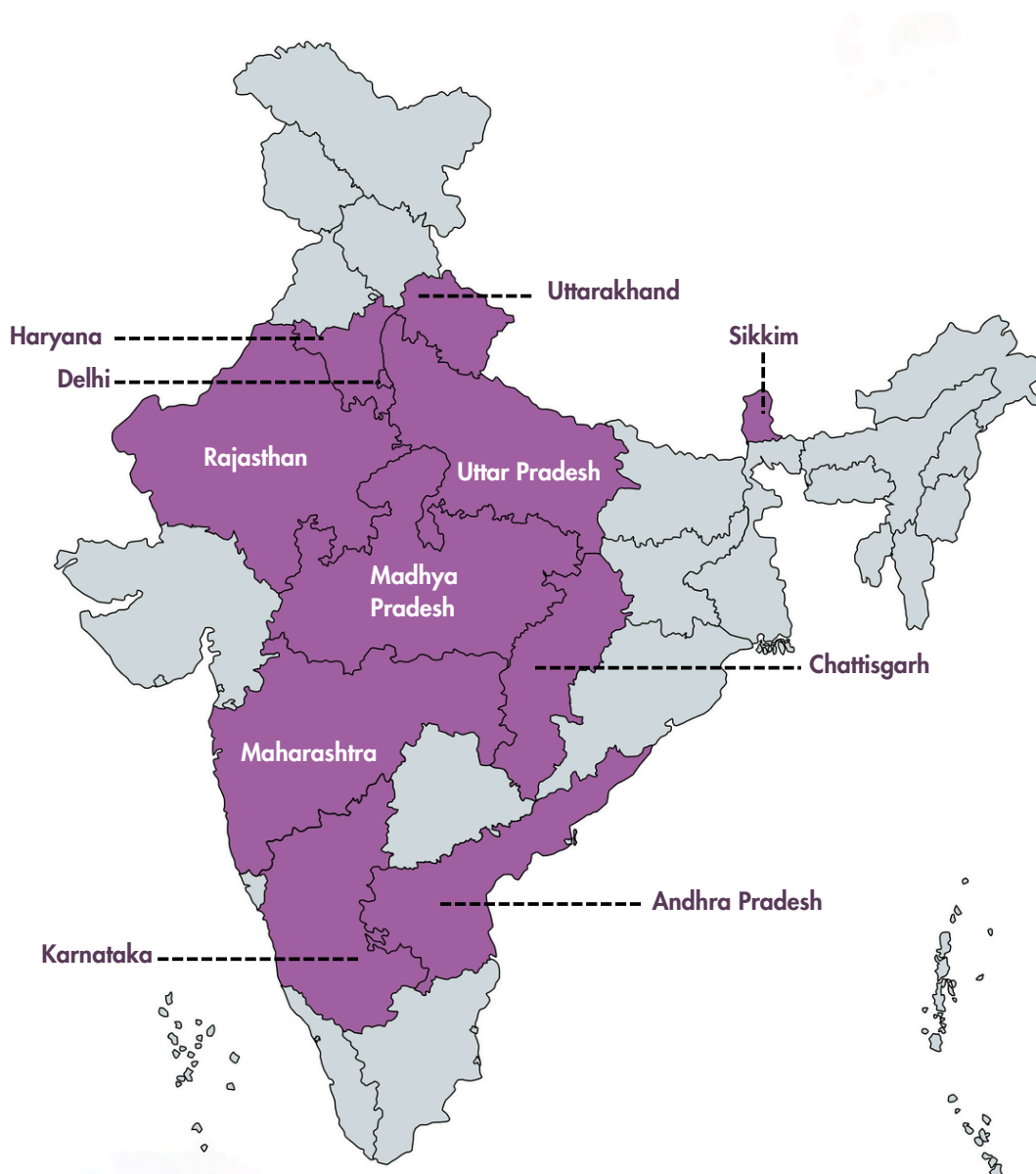


# MAKING WORKPLACES SAFE

## Supporting institutions to build a safe, diverse, inclusive and equitable workplace culture

MFF takes forward its commitment to create safe, gender-just, and harassment-free workplaces for all, by ensuring that workplaces have the capacity and the tools to be gender-sensitive and conducive spaces. In 2023-24, we reached out to organisations and institutions across sectors, including government, higher educational institutions, corporate, and civil society, among others.

## LOCATIONS



## OVERALL OUTREACH



**5,610**

employees trained on how to create a safe, inclusive and conducive workplace



**63**

trainings facilitated on the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2013



**34**

organisations trained on becoming gender-sensitive workplaces, including **23** civil society organisations, **6** government institutions and **5** corporates



**10**

higher education institutions trained on creating safe campuses for all



**18**

Internal Committees trained on their responsibilities in preventing and addressing cases of sexual harassment



**1**

Local Committee trained in Sikkim on their responsibilities in preventing and addressing cases of sexual harassment



“

Since completing the training, we have seen tangible improvements in handling sensitive situations and supporting those affected by gender-based violence. Our committee members now feel more confident and empowered, with clearer protocols for reporting and addressing incidents. The MFF's GBV training has enhanced our organisational capacity and fostered a more supportive and inclusive workplace culture.

-Dolma, Snow Lion Foundation”



# MARTHA FARRELL AWARD



## 7<sup>th</sup> Martha Farrell Award Ceremony

October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
KE Auditorium,  
Christ University  
Bengaluru





# MARTHA FARRELL AWARD

## Recognising individuals and organisations working towards the empowerment of women and gender justice

The Martha Farrell Award (MFA) for Excellence in Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality was established to honour Dr. Martha Farrell and her ideals. It is the first initiative of its kind to discover, recognise, and celebrate mid-career individuals and dedicated institutions that have made significant contributions to women's empowerment and gender equality.

## IMPACT

In 2023, MFF commissioned an impact assessment of the Awards to evaluate how six years of the Awards have influenced winners and advanced gender justice. The assessment revealed that the application process prompted both individuals and organisations to engage in critical reflection, encouraging them to introspect on their work, goals, strengths, weaknesses, successes, and challenges.

Winners also reported feeling appreciated, personally recognised, and validated for their efforts, which boosted their self-confidence and belief in their work. The Award increased their visibility and recognition in the sector, while the enhanced financial support enabled them to continue their initiatives.

Additionally, they highlighted that the sessions held prior to the Award ceremony with the MFF team and other winners helped to deepen their understanding of gender and the various approaches to this work.



# 7TH MARTHA FARRELL AWARD

For the 7th Martha Farrell Awards, a total of 166 nominations from 21 states and union territories across India were received, comprising a wide variety of individuals and organisations.



**166** nominations received



**97** nominations received in the individual category



**69** nominations received in the organisation category



**21** states and union territories from which nominations were received

The award ceremony was held on 16 October, 2023 at KE Auditorium, Christ University, Bengaluru. The ceremony began with a moving and passionate opening address by Sister Anna Ferrer (Executive Director, Rural Development Trust and President, Fundación Vicente Ferrer). Thereafter, the four winners of the Award were recognised, appreciated, and felicitated.





“As an activist lawyer, mother, and young leader in the mission for social justice, I stand with immense pride as I receive this special award! I owe this award to all my sisters, mentors, and family members who have stood by me throughout my life. Additionally, without Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and his revolutionary life, I would not be here today. This is my tribute to my beloved Babasaheb.”

**MOHINI DEVI** | Most Promising Individual

Karnal | Haryana



“The Martha Farrell Award is an incredible honour and a validation of our mission and our determination to break barriers, inspire change, and continue to champion gender equality. It provides us with a valuable platform to amplify our voice and influence, and enables us to engage with a broader audience to advocate for policies and practices that promote women's rights and gender equality on a larger scale.”



**Best Organisation for  
Gender Equality**

Rahima Khatun, Secretary, on behalf of  
**NARI-O-SHISHU KALYAN KENDRA**

Howrah | West Bengal



“The Martha Farrell Award will enhance the credibility of my work and serve as a powerful catalyst for change. This award is not only an honour to me as a transgender activist and social worker, but also inspires other social workers to join this noble and important cause of gender equality. It amplifies the messages of those working to bring about societal change and brings attention to the pressing issues they champion.”

**DEEPIKA THAKUR** |

New Delhi | Delhi

**Special Jury Award  
(Individual)**



“The Martha Farrell Award holds profound significance for RMKM. It epitomises our relentless pursuit of gender equality and recognition for our dedication to empowering women across diverse backgrounds. This award serves as a testament to our tireless efforts to sensitise communities to issues of gender inequality and create a supportive environment for women's advancement, both within our organisation and in the communities we serve.”



**Special Jury Award  
(Organisation)** |

Kshama R. Kaushik, Secretary & Chief Functionary, on behalf of

**RAJASTHAN MAHILA KALYAN MANDAL**

Ajmer | Rajasthan

# FINALISTS

## Most Promising Individual



Drishana Kalita



Pallabi Ghosh



Divya Hegde



Inshah Bashir

## Best Organisation for Gender Equality



Uninhibited



Maitrayana Charity Foundation



Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers Welfare Trust



Kalapuri Foundation

# GOVERNANCE



## TEAM

### Head Office

Nandita Pradhan Bhatt  
Tariqa Farrell Tandon  
Samiksha Jha  
Ridhima Rathi  
Yogita Hiranandani  
Piyush Poddar  
Samia Siddiqui  
Anshul Sharma  
Nitya Sriram  
Aanchal Seema Khulbe  
Nalini Menon  
Gaurav Jha  
Anshul Bhatt  
Varuna  
Shehwaaz Khan  
Rhea Bannerjee

### Field Staff

Sonia Khatri  
Anju  
Payal  
Sister Bibiyana Lakra  
Helen Raju  
Sarita Devi

## GOVERNING BOARD

Rajesh Tandon  
Tariqa Farrell Tandon  
Suheil Farrell Tandon  
Rita Sarin

## INTERNS

Srotoswini Karmakar  
Riyanshi Khera  
Aryan Thakur  
Ritu Lekhri  
Jishnu S.P.  
Simran Suri  
Noor Khan  
Ibad  
Mohd. Shahnawaz  
Mohd. Kamran



# WORKPLACE SAFEGUARDS

At MFF, we take the issues of child safety and the prevention of sexual harassment in the workplace seriously and are committed to ensuring that our staff are aware, informed, and sensitive to these matters, especially considering our work with adolescents and survivors of violence. In addition to having robust policies on these issues, MFF has established committees to address sexual harassment in the workplace (Internal Committee) and child safeguarding (Child Protection Committee). Furthermore, regular training sessions are conducted with all staff on sexual harassment at the workplace and child safeguarding.

## PREVENTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT WORKPLACE

### MFF Internal Committee

Samiksha Jha (Presiding Officer)  
Piyush Poddar (IC Member)  
Yogita Hiranandani (IC Member)  
Bharti Sharma (External Member)

- Number of training workshops conducted on the prevention of sexual harassment at workplace: **1**
- Number of new staff members oriented on the prevention of sexual harassment at workplace: **15**

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## CHILD SAFEGUARDING

### MFF Child Protection Committee

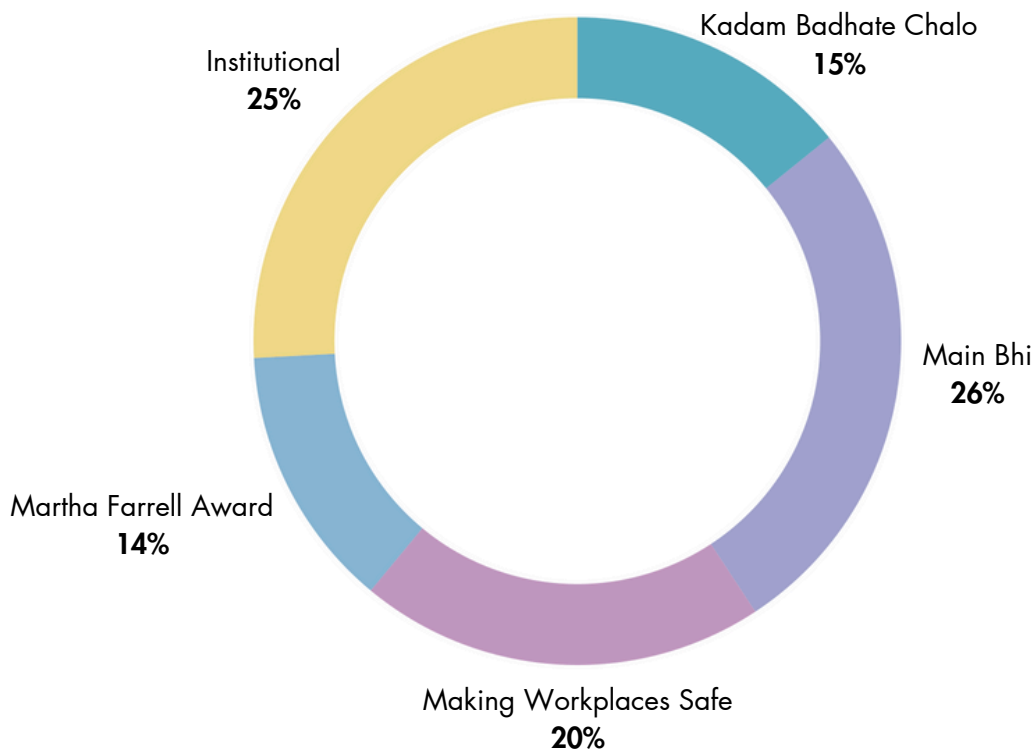
Ridhima Rathi (Child Protection Officer)  
Varuna (Child Protection Officer)  
Samia Siddiqui (Focal Point)

- Number of training workshops conducted on child safeguarding the POCSO Act: **1**
- Number of staff members oriented on child safeguarding and the POCSO Act: **9**

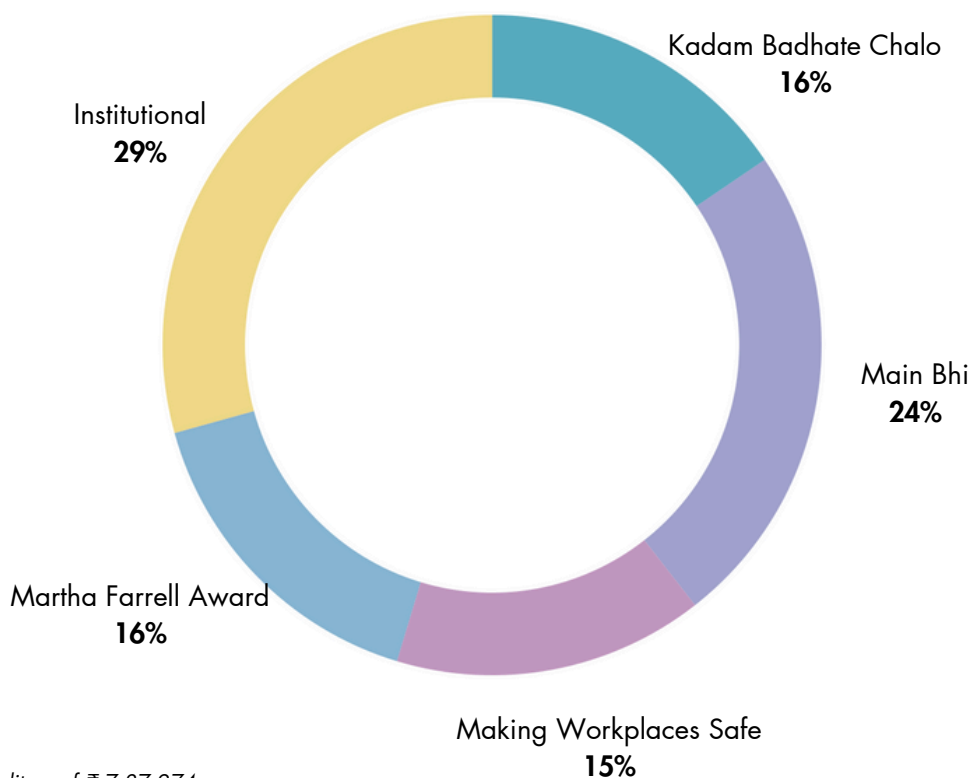


# FINANCIALS

## REVENUE - ₹ 1,44,90,906



## EXPENDITURE - ₹ 1,52,78,180



\*Excess expenditure of ₹ 7,87,274







# MARTHA FARRELL FOUNDATION

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42, Tughlakabad Institutional Area, New Delhi  
[www.marthafarrellfoundation.org](http://www.marthafarrellfoundation.org)

