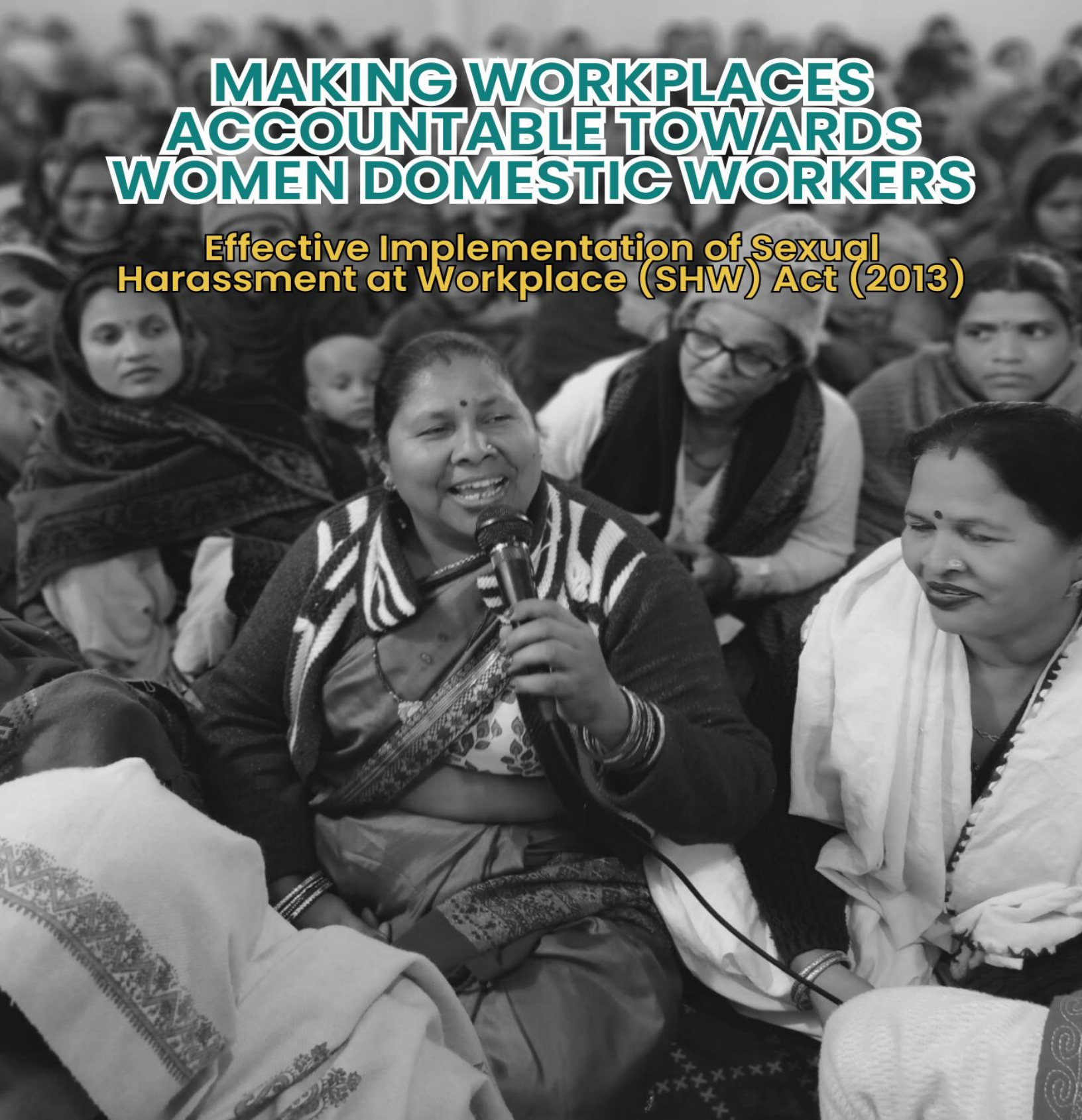




MAKING WORKPLACES ACCOUNTABLE TOWARDS WOMEN DOMESTIC WORKERS

Effective Implementation of Sexual
Harassment at Workplace (SHW) Act (2013)





Evaluation Report

Name of the Project: Making Workplaces Accountable towards Women Domestic Workers: Effective Implementation of Sexual Harassment at Workplace (SHW) Act (2013)

Location of the Evaluation Conducted: North Delhi, South Delhi, South-West Delhi, and South-East Delhi districts of Delhi and Gurugram, Haryana, India

Period of the project covered by the evaluation: 01/05/2021 - 15/08/2024

Date of the final evaluation report: December 2024

Name of the Evaluators: Ayushmita Samal & Meher Suri (Independent Research & Evaluation Consultants)

Name of the organization that commissioned the evaluation: Martha Farrell Foundation and United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women and Girls

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This report is an abridged version of the final report; edited by the Martha Farrell Foundation.

Disclaimer: This Evaluation Report has been developed by independent evaluators. The analysis presented in this report reflects the views of the authors and may not necessarily represent those MFF, its partners or the UN Trust Fund.

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

AWWs: Anganwadi Workers

CSOs: Civil Society Organizations

EVAW/G: Ending Violence against Women and Girls

FGDs: Focus Group Discussions

IDI: In-Depth Interview

IEC: Information, Education and Communication

KII: Key Informant Interview

LC: Local Committee

M&E: Monitoring and Evaluation

MFF: Martha Farrell Foundation

NCR: National Capital Region

OECD-DAC: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development - Development Assistance Committee

OH: Outcome Harvesting

SGBV: Sexuality and Gender-Based Violence

SHW: Sexual Harassment at the Workplace

SHW Act, 2013: The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013

UNEP: United Nations Evaluation Policies

UN Trust Fund: United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women

VAW/G: Violence against Women and Girls

WDWs: Women Domestic Workers

समाकृत बाल विकास परियोजना भागीरथी विहार, जिला पूर्वी

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Executive Summary

Project Background

The Martha Farrell Foundation (MFF), in collaboration with the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women (UN Trust Fund) implemented the project titled "Making Workplaces Accountable towards Women Domestic Workers: Effective Implementation of Sexual Harassment at Workplace (SHW) Act (2013)" from May 2021 to August 2024. The project covered 13 districts across Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR), Gurugram and Faridabad being the two NCR districts, with the overarching aim to address the pervasive issue of sexual harassment faced by women domestic workers (WDWs) at the workplace. It sought to raise awareness among WDWs about their rights under the SHW Act, 2013, and improve access to redressal mechanisms, while also strengthening the capacity of institutional stakeholders such as the Local Committees (LCs), nodal officers, and police personnel to handle SHW complaints more sensitively and effectively.

Evaluation Purpose

The evaluation was conducted to assess the project's performance against the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, including effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, sustainability, and impact. Additionally, it examined the extent to which the project contributed to knowledge generation, coherence with existing laws and policies, and integration of gender equality and human rights approaches. The evaluation's findings aim to inform future programming, policy development, and advocacy efforts in the field of violence against women and girls (VAW/G) and gender equality, particularly within the informal labour sector.

Methodology

The evaluation methodology employed a rigorously structured, mixed-methods approach that incorporated both qualitative and quantitative data collection to assess project impact, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, knowledge generation, relevance and coherence across multiple districts. This design was grounded in a participatory framework, adapted from the Terms of Reference (TOR) and further refined through initial consultations with project staff at MFF. Using a phased, triangulated approach, the methodology integrated outcome harvesting, thematic analysis, and quantitative validation to capture both intended and unintended outcomes, promoting inclusivity and amplifying diverse stakeholders' perspectives.

The primary methods included surveys, focus group discussions (FGDs), and key informant interviews (KIIs) with WDWs (primary beneficiaries) and various stakeholders such as Pehealkars, Anganwadi workers (AWWs), civil society organizations (CSOs), and district officials. The post-test design, with no comparison group, and a stratified sampling method, enabled balanced representation across five implementation districts. A notable feature was the use of outcome harvesting, a retrospective approach well-suited for complex social interventions, which allowed the evaluators to trace and validate emergent changes within the project. This, along with thematic analysis and data triangulation, fostered a nuanced understanding of the project's impact and effectiveness.

Ethically, the evaluation adhered to feminist and decolonial principles, centering marginalized voices and ensuring participants were actively engaged in a manner that respected their autonomy and experience. Limitations included challenges in assessing long-term impact and tracking migrated WDWs, but these were addressed through rigorous document reviews and participatory data collection, aligning with a human-centered and equity-focused evaluation approach.

Key Findings

1. Impact

- **Increased Awareness of Rights and Available Legal Protections:** A significant transformation was noted in WDWs' understanding of sexual harassment and their legal rights under the SHW Act. At the baseline stage, only 16% of WDWs were aware of sexual harassment as a legal violation. By the endline, 99.44% recognized sexual harassment as a crime, with 98.73% able to identify various forms of sexual harassment, including verbal, visual, and physical harassment.
- **Empowerment and Behavior Change:** The project led to a marked shift in the perception of sexual harassment among WDWs, from passive acceptance to active rejection of victim-blaming narratives. Participants developed the confidence to assert their rights and reject normalized abuse, taking action not only to protect themselves but also to generate awareness in their communities.
- **Leadership and Advocacy:** The project fostered community leadership among WDWs, with some taking on roles as Pehelkars (community leaders) and leading advocacy efforts. These leaders became change agents, mobilizing their peers, conducting safety audits, and lobbying district-level authorities to take action on SHW cases.
- **Community-Wide Impact:** The project's influence extended beyond WDWs, reaching other informal workers like Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) and male members of the community. Through training and outreach, the initiative contributed to a broader awareness of workplace rights and sexual harassment protections.
- **Increased Engagement with Legal Mechanisms:** By the end of the project, 88.01% of WDWs were familiar with the role of Local Committees (LCs) in addressing SHW complaints, and the majority were aware of the process of filing complaints. LCs also reported increased engagement from WDWs, signaling the project's success in linking marginalized workers with formal legal systems.

2. Effectiveness

The Martha Farrell Foundation's (MFF) three-year project effectively empowered Women Domestic Workers (WDWs) in Delhi, Gurugram, and Faridabad to demand and access redressal for workplace harassment while moderately advancing institutional accountability.

Key Achievements

- **Empowerment of WDWs:** WDWs have transitioned from identifying as "servants" to recognizing themselves as workers with rights. Over 99% are now aware of the SHW Act, advocating for fair wages, safe working conditions, and addressing harassment through collective action.
- **Cultural Shift on Sexual Harassment:** Sexual harassment, once taboo, is now openly discussed, with WDWs relying on peer networks for support and collective advocacy.
- **Expanded Workplace Definition:** WDWs now view their workplace as encompassing transit routes, communal spaces, and other work-related areas, empowering them to act against sexual harassment in diverse environments.

Institutional Progress and Challenges

- **Local Committees (LCs):** While established in all districts, LCs face resource shortages, limited outreach, and high turnover, limiting their effectiveness.
- **Police Engagement:** Improved in severe cases but inconsistent for harassment that is considered routine, necessitating continuous sensitivity training.
- **Training and Awareness:** Awareness of the SHW Act among institutional stakeholders has increased, but systemic barriers hinder consistent implementation.

3. Efficiency

- **Cost-effective Implementation:** The project was efficiently managed within its budget of \$148,870, utilizing a collaborative approach that leveraged partnerships with CSOs, government bodies, and local leaders. However, challenges such as frequent migration among WDWs and shifting priorities within government institutions affected the continuity of some activities across districts.
- **Adaptation to Local Contexts:** The project adapted its strategies to address varying levels of engagement and resources across different districts. For example, while all districts received awareness-raising sessions, some areas, such as North Delhi and South-East Delhi, required additional resources due to lower baseline awareness levels.

4. Sustainability

- **Long-term Empowerment of WDWs:** Evidence suggests that the project's outcomes will be sustained beyond its official end. WDWs have demonstrated ongoing mobilization efforts, with many continuing to collectivize and advocate for workplace rights through peer-led initiatives such as Pehelkars.
- **Institutional Continuity:** Local Committees, trained during the project, continue to function effectively, although ongoing support and capacity-building will be required to maintain their responsiveness. WDWs reported confidence in continuing to access LCs and other formal mechanisms for redressal.
- **Risk of Regression:** Without continued financial and logistical support, there is a risk that some of the project's gains – particularly around institutional accountability – may regress. While significantly improved, WDWs' engagement with legal mechanisms remains fragile, requiring consistent advocacy and support.

5. Knowledge Generation

- **Contribution to Global Knowledge:** The project contributed valuable knowledge to the global discourse on ending violence against women and girls, particularly in informal labour settings. The evaluation also revealed that the project has led to notable unintended outcomes, such as the expanded role of Pehelkars in community mobilization.
- **Sharing of Best Practices:** The project documented several emerging good practices, including the use of visual aids to raise awareness among non-literate WDWs and peer-led advocacy approaches that empowered marginalized women to take leadership roles.

6. Relevance

- **Empowerment and Self-Identity:** The project shifted WDWs' self-perception, enabling them to see themselves as dignified workers deserving respect, which is essential for demanding fair treatment and labour rights.
- **Awareness of Rights:** MFF's educational initiatives have equipped WDWs with knowledge of the SHW Act, empowering them to recognize and challenge mistreatment confidently.
- **Expanded Workplace Definition:** MFF broadened WDWs' understanding of "workplace" to include all work-related spaces, enabling them to address harassment wherever it occurs.
- **Willingness to Discuss Sexual Harassment:** MFF's approach normalized discussions on sexual harassment, fostering solidarity and making it easier for WDWs to report incidents without shame.

- **Collective Mobilization:** Legal awareness has empowered WDWs to mobilize collectively, strengthening their bargaining power and visibility in advocating for better working conditions.
- **Community-Based Redressal:** Inconsistencies in formal support led WDWs to rely on community networks for grievance redressal, promoting resilience and mutual support.
- **Responsive Redressal Mechanisms:** MFF's collaboration with LCs and police has improved institutional responsiveness, fostering accountability and accessible justice for WDWs.
- **SHW Procedures Implementation:** The project's work with authorities has embedded SHW protections, ensuring sustained support and promoting workplace respect for WDWs.

7. Coherence

- **Policy and Legal Coherence:** The project was well-aligned with national policies, including the SHW Act, 2013, and ongoing labour rights initiatives. It complemented existing legal frameworks by providing a practical mechanism for WDWs to access redressal mechanisms that were otherwise underutilized.
- **Synergies with Civil Society Efforts:** The project forged strong collaborations with CSOs, leveraging their networks and expertise to strengthen community outreach and advocacy. This multi-stakeholder approach ensured that the project's interventions were coherent with broader civil society efforts to promote women's rights in the informal sector.

Conclusion

The project successfully achieved its goals of raising awareness, fostering empowerment, and creating a safer and more equitable working environment for WDWs. By improving knowledge of legal protections, building capacity within institutional frameworks, and mobilizing women workers, the project has contributed significantly to addressing sexual harassment at the workplace faced by WDWs. However, maintaining and scaling these achievements will require continued support, especially in sustaining the engagement of LCs and expanding the reach of peer-led advocacy efforts.



Background and Context

Sexual harassment at the workplace (SHW) is a pervasive issue affecting women all over India, formal and informal workers alike. Acute challenges are faced by informal workers such as women domestic workers (WDWs), construction and waste workers, agricultural labourers, and gig economy workers such as beauticians, delivery executives, etc. The issue of SHW is exacerbated by the lack of effective and reachable redressal mechanisms that are available to informal workers. In the NCR of India, the prevalence of SHW among WDWs has underscored the urgent need for targeted interventions to address this pressing issue. The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013 is one of the only laws in the country that recognizes WDWs as ‘workers’ as well as their right to file SHW complaints with the LCs and/or nodal officers who are responsible for forwarding these complaints to the police.

SHW poses significant challenges for WDWs in the NCR region, where they often work informally without adequate legal protections. Despite legislative measures, implementation gaps persist, exacerbating the vulnerabilities of WDWs. Unique obstacles, including fear of job loss, lack of awareness, and social stigma, further hinder WDWs from exercising their rights and accessing redressal mechanisms.

Many of the WDWs working in Delhi are migrants from states like Bihar, Jharkhand, and West Bengal, which means they have to live in rented shanties and earn to support their families. Irregular and low wages, lack of paid leaves, and unpredictability of their jobs make WDWs susceptible to SHW, often resulting in them not filing complaints or even disclosing their experiences to their families, communities, and peers. These women also lack financial and emotional support from their families, and several of them are sole-earning members of their families, which increases their vulnerability.

Project Intervention

In response to these challenges, MFF implemented the project titled “Making Workplaces Accountable towards Women Domestic Workers: Effective Implementation of Sexual Harassment at Workplace (SHW) Act (2013)” from May 2021 to August 2024 to address SHW faced by WDWs in the NCR region. The project aimed to raise awareness among WDWs about their rights under the SHW Act, and the definition and types of SHW under the law. The goal was to empower them to access redressal mechanisms and enhance the capacity of local stakeholders, including LCs, nodal officers, and police officers to effectively respond to SHW complaints. Thus, the two-fold expected outcomes of the project are empowered and informed WDWs and institutional strengthening by making LCs, nodal officers and police officers accountable for the implementation of the SHW Act.

Project Background

The project was spearheaded by WDWs, facilitated by the MFF, and bolstered by the support of the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women and Girls (UN Trust Fund). It operated across the 13 districts of the Delhi-NCR region, encompassing 11 districts of Delhi, as well as the districts of Faridabad and Gurugram in Haryana.

The primary aim of the project was to combat sexual harassment within the domestic work sector. It endeavored to raise awareness among domestic workers and empower them to voice their experiences. Additionally, it sought to strengthen LCs and the police mechanisms to swiftly and sensitively address complaints. This was achieved through a collaborative effort to develop a redressal procedure within the framework of the SHW Act.

The overarching objective was to empower WDWs in the designated districts, recognizing their heightened vulnerability to workplace harassment. By facilitating access to sensitive, effective, and responsive institutions, the project aimed to cultivate safer working environments for the WDWs.

The project first received support from the UN Trust Fund in May 2021, and was geared towards the following key outcomes:

- Enabling aware and mobilized women domestic workers in 11 districts of Delhi, and districts of Gurugram and Faridabad to access a safe and time-bound complaint redressal system for their SHW complaints.
- Establishing duly constituted LCs in each of the 13 districts, comprising nodal officers and police personnel. These committees collaborate to sensitively and promptly address SHW complaints filed by WDWs, adhering to the prescribed process outlined in the SHW Act.

Collaborative Approach

The project adopted a collaborative and participatory approach, recognizing the need for coordinated efforts across sectors to address the multifaceted issue of SHW. Government agencies, civil society organizations (CSOs) working with WDWs and other informal workers, district and state officials, and MFF staff closely engaged with WDWs at the grassroots level and joined their efforts in creating safe working environments and promoting gender equality in the world of work of WDWs. The WDWs themselves became a key stakeholder in the project, as their needs and demands, ambitions, and challenges were duly noted in the project implementation activities. This can be seen in various participatory activities that the WDWs engage in such as conducting safety audits of their world of work, hosting advocacy meetings with district and state-level officials, co-creating information, education and communication (IEC) materials, etc.



The Evaluation

The endline evaluation of the project seeks to identify key learnings and conclusions from the project implementation to inform future interventions. It is an essential step to systematically collate and disseminate crucial information about the successes and failures, facilitators and barriers that the project encountered over three years. Additionally, the evaluation hopes to identify key unintended or unplanned outcomes and assess the project's contribution to the same. The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of the project while also reflecting on the knowledge generated (especially on effective and innovative strategies to curb violence against women and girls (VAW/G)) and the integration of gender equality and human rights approach within the project. By providing a comprehensive assessment of the project outcomes and processes, the evaluation will inform future programming, policy development, and advocacy efforts aimed at ending violence against women and girls (EVAW/G) and promoting gender equality in the workplace.

The effectiveness of institutional mechanisms is a crucial aspect of curbing VAW/G and implementation gaps exist everywhere. Literature attesting to the impact of participatory and community-based interventions in making institutions accountable for the violence faced by informal workers is also severely lacking. Evaluation of this project thus seeks to provide information and contribute to the existing knowledge to curb SHW faced by WDWs that can be replicated and adapted elsewhere, in different contexts and states.

The need for this evaluation arose from several factors:

1. **Growing Concerns about SHW:** There is a growing recognition of the prevalence and impact of sexual harassment in the workplace, particularly among vulnerable groups such as WDWs. This vulnerability is increased manifold because of the informal and unpredictable nature of the work done by WDWs, the general apathy towards their lives and livelihoods as well as rampant invisibilization of the violence they face at work and elsewhere. This evaluation sought to understand the effectiveness and impact of interventions aimed at addressing this pressing issue and delivered in a participatory manner.
2. **Accountability and Learning:** Conducting an evaluation demonstrates accountability to project stakeholders, including donors, partner organizations, as well the most important partners – the WDWs. It also provides an opportunity for organizational learning and improvement by identifying successful strategies and areas for enhancement.
3. **Resource Allocation:** Evaluation results will inform decisions regarding the allocation of resources for future programming. Understanding the effectiveness and efficiency of the current project will guide resource allocation to maximize impact and sustainability. Additionally, identifying barriers and failures encountered by the project stakeholders along the way gives them (and potential funders) the opportunity to identify key areas for further targeted intervention.
4. **Policy and Legal Implementation:** Evaluation findings can contribute valuable insights to inform policy development and advocacy efforts aimed at addressing SHW and promoting gender equality in the workplace at local, regional, and national levels.
5. **Institutional Strengthening:** Another key aspect of the project emphasizes institutional strengthening to enhance the effectiveness of implementing the SHW Act. Throughout the evaluation, the evaluators sought to become cognizant of key bottlenecks hindering the Act's effective implementation by the LCs and further brainstorm on locally suitable solutions that the LCs can actualize, to realize justice.

Scope of the Evaluation

Several factors have determined the scope of the evaluation, as follows:

- **Programmatic Scope:** The evaluation focused on the following core outcomes of the project:
 - WDWs in Delhi, Gurugram, and Faridabad are aware, mobilized, and accessing redressal for sexual harassment complaints through a safe and time-bound system.
 - Properly constituted LCs in 13 districts, including nodal officers and police, respond sensitively to SHW complaints, aligned with the SHW Act.
- **Geographical Scope:** The project spanned 11 districts of Delhi, and the districts of Gurugram and Faridabad, with activities like awareness sessions conducted across all districts. Five districts – North Delhi, South Delhi, South-East Delhi, South-West Delhi, and Gurugram – were purposefully selected for evaluation based on active WDW engagement and representation of all project activities.

Target Groups

- **Women Domestic Workers (WDWs):** Primary stakeholders, evaluated for their awareness, access to redressal, workplace safety, and unintended outcomes.
- **Anganwadi Workers (AWWs):** Trained as community focal points for SHW complaints and supported WDWs in navigating redressal processes.
- **Local Committees (LCs):** Assessed for awareness, capacity, and effectiveness in handling SHW complaints.
- **District Officers:** Evaluated for coordination, support, and facilitation of SHW prevention and redressal efforts.
- **Network Partners (CSOs):** Interviewed for their role in project implementation, advocacy, and capacity-building.
- **MFF Senior and Programme Management:** Reviewed for leadership, oversight, and integration of gender justice in the project.
- **WDW Leaders (Pehelkars):** Evaluated for their advocacy, mobilization efforts, and sustainability of the changes brought by the project.
- **UN Trust Fund Portfolio Manager:** Interviewed for support, guidance, and monitoring of the project.



Methodology

The evaluation methodology, adapted from the TOR and revised through consultations with MFF project staff, employed a mixed-methods approach. This included a review of project documents, monitoring tools, and reports. Data collection combined quantitative methods (focused on WDWs) and qualitative methods (involving all stakeholders, including WDWs). The analysis included triangulation, thematic analysis, and validation of unintended outcomes. This participatory, phased approach accounted for project changes, ensuring multiple perspectives and a contextual understanding of impact, effectiveness, and sustainability.

The following activities were conducted as part of the evaluation:

- Initial review of the project documents to identify specific project activities in each phase and triangulating project activities with intended outcomes
- Review of monitoring and evaluation tools used in the project, such as the baseline and endline data collected by MFF, status reports, meeting records, and documents for continuous monitoring of project activities
- Development of data collection tools, along with the timeline of proposed activities for the evaluation of the project
- Identification of unintended outcomes (that were not planned at the proposal writing stage) of the project using desk review
- Collection of descriptions for each unintended outcome through participatory consultations and focus group discussions (FGDs) conducted with the WDWs (primary beneficiaries of the project) and partner CSOs (neutral observers of the project activities, to validate the new outcomes)
- FGDs with WDWs and IDIs with Pehekars¹ to evaluate the intended outputs and outcomes, as well as the overall impact, effectiveness, sustainability, and knowledge created during the project activities
- Quantitative data collection to validate the unintended outcomes and assess the intended outputs and outcomes, as well as the criteria of effectiveness, impact, efficiency, sustainability, relevance, and gender equality and human rights
- Data analysis and report writing
- Final report writing

The evaluation employed a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods, including surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, document reviews, and observations. Data collection has been conducted in a participatory and affirming manner, and the evaluators were careful to include as many diverse voices as possible.

Description of the Evaluation Design

The evaluation design involved post-test without comparison group, owing to the limited time and resources available for the assessment. A sample of WDWs and other stakeholders was selected from all five districts that were included in the evaluation for surveys and qualitative interviews. The sample represents the overall primary and secondary beneficiaries as well as other stakeholders in the project across these five districts where the project was most active and was successful in completing most of the anticipated project activities and outputs.

In addition to this endline evaluation, MFF has collected (with the help of field enumerators) baseline and endline quantitative data from WDWs on some key parameters such as the WDW's awareness of SHW and its types; their familiarity with institutions such as the LCs and the redressal mechanism for SHW. The

¹ Women domestic worker leaders are called Pehekars

respondents in both rounds of surveys, however, were not tracked, hence only aggregate results were compared for the questions which were identical between the baseline and endline data collection.

Data Sources

Data sources for the evaluation of the programme encompassed a diverse array of both primary and secondary sources, ensuring a robust and comprehensive understanding of its impact and outcomes. Primary data collection methods included surveys, focus group discussions (FGDs), in-depth interviews (IDIs), and key informant interviews (KIIs) conducted across implementation districts. These methods facilitated direct engagement with stakeholders such as WDWs, programme teams, AWWs, CSOs, LCs, and key project stakeholders. Complementing these primary sources, desk research delved into internal documentation and publications related to the programme. Also, the evaluators have incorporated baseline and endline survey results undertaken by MFF, in addition to the survey carried out by the evaluators themselves. By triangulating findings from both primary and secondary sources, this evaluation endeavoured to provide a comprehensive assessment that informs evidence-based decision-making and guides future interventions.

Data Analysis

Analysis of quantitative data

Quantitative data was collected from a sample of WDWs from all five sample districts. The questions were designed to gather numeric responses to qualitative questions to gather insights, compare results and strengthen the insights gained from qualitative interviews and FGDs. Data collected on Kobo was stored on a server which was downloaded into Excel and transferred to SPSS for processing, structuring, and analysis. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the extent to which the project activities were successful in contributing towards social change. The results obtained from each district have been represented separately (South Delhi, Gurugram, North Delhi, South-East Delhi + South-West Delhi) to compare the results across districts.

Outcome Harvesting (OH)

Outcome harvesting is an iterative and participatory tool to evaluate social programmes and collect evidence of change (the “outcome”) and then work backwards to assess whether and how an organization, a programme or an intersection contributed to that change.

Outcome harvesting, on the other hand, first gathers evidence of the change that may have been created over the duration of the project (through project documents, preliminary conversations and consultations), validates the outcomes and then assesses a project’s contribution to that change. For example, in this case, project documents reveal that WDWs did not view themselves as ‘workers’ at the beginning of the project which seems to have been changed over the course of the intervention. OH was used to describe and validate this outcome and finally assess the project’s contribution to this change.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis is a qualitative analysis method used to identify, analyze, and interpret patterns, themes, or meanings within a dataset, to derive conclusions. The data is closely examined to identify common themes- topics, ideas, and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly. These patterns are ‘coded’, and each code is described. The two types of codes are inductive and deductive codes. Inductive codes are identified through a bottom-up approach where the codes derive directly from the data without any preconceived themes or categories. Deductive codes start with predefined categories and theories and codes are identified to fit under them. Both inductive and deductive codes are used to weave a story and derive key insights. In this evaluation both inductive and deductive were used.

Triangulation of data

Data obtained through all the above-mentioned methods were triangulated to provide the most credible insights in the final report. This will also ensure that multiple perspectives are duly credited and the entire evaluation follows a participatory and comprehensive approach.

Sampling

Sample for qualitative data collection

The key informants and interviewees apart from WDWs were identified using purposive sampling, based on sustained and overarching familiarity and engagement with the project. At the district-level, district officials and LCs were invited because of their involvement in the project. At the community level, the evaluators interacted with the Anganwadi workers, WDWs, CSO partners, and Pehelkars depending on their engagement with the project.

Overall, 20 FGDs and KIIs were conducted across five districts. Qualitative interviews were conducted in person to the extent possible by the evaluators and were recorded for later transcription, coding, and analysis. Only the KIIs with the LC members, district officials and UN Trust Fund were conducted online. The data was stored on an encrypted cloud software, and only the evaluation team had access to them. The data analysis tool Dedoose was used to code and analyze the data.

Sample for quantitative data collection

The evaluators obtained a dataset of 2,718 WDWs (and their ages) who have been part of the project over the last three years across the five districts. From this list, a sample of 225 WDWs was selected using convenience sampling. While the initial attempts involved randomized sampling, it proved to be challenging to identify WDWs because of migration. However, given the different number of WDWs across age groups in each of the 5 districts, the number of WDWs from each group who were invited for the survey was obtained using a proportionate stratified sampling method.

Limitations to the Evaluation Methodology

Determining impact, in general, may be challenging because impacts are long-term results influenced by various interacting and interdependent factors, where the journey from intervention to impact is rarely linear. Furthermore, change takes time, and as such the full impact of specific efforts may not be apparent in the short or even medium timeframe.

To mitigate this limitation, a thorough review of the project documents was undertaken to gather evidence and assess the influence of these efforts, and interviews with stakeholders to seek their perspective on how the programme helped them achieve (and retain) positive changes in their work, growth, and sustainability.

Evaluating interventions related to issues of marginalization, discrimination, and violence can introduce challenges to meaningfully involve those who are being marginalized/discriminated against, especially when meaningful participation and power awareness are not truly embedded in the design. From a feminist point of view, therefore, it was essential for the evaluators to ensure truly participatory approaches in the data collection and analysis processes, which allowed the evaluation team to make sense of the data in a decolonial manner, which centers the voices, interpretations, and recommendations of the last mile stakeholder(s).

Demographics

The demographic information was only collected from WDWs through one-on-one surveys. The same was not collected from the WDWs who were part of the FGDs. This was intentional given that the FGDs were conducted in a group which did not allow the WDWs privacy to be able to share their demographic information. Given that privacy and security were of the utmost importance for the evaluation, the evaluation team decided to only collect demographic information from WDWs during the surveys because the surveys allowed privacy.

Variable	Description	Total	Percentage
Education	5th pass	72	32%
	10th pass	17	6.66%
	12th pass	12	7.55
	Graduate	1	0.44%
	None	122	54.22%
Religion	Hindu	160	71.11%
	Christian	24	10.66%
	Muslim	40	17.7%
	Other	1	0.44%

From the demographics, it is clear that the majority of the WDWs reached through the project are not educated at all and are Hindu. The former has profound implications on the project activities and outputs because being able to file written complaints and being able to read information related to LCs and nodal officers can be a critical aspect of filing SHW cases with the LCs at the district-level.

Major Insights

To what extent has the project contributed to ending violence against women, gender equality and/or women's empowerment (both intended and unintended impact)?

The project has made significant strides toward addressing violence against women, promoting gender equality, and empowering WDWs. Through targeted interventions, the project aimed to dismantle the normalization of sexual harassment at the workplace and foster legal literacy among vulnerable workers. Initially, WDWs lacked the vocabulary and understanding to recognize their experiences as sexual harassment, using terms like "eve-teasing" or "being annoyed by miscreants." The economic vulnerabilities exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic further entrenched the abuse, as debt to employers made the workers more susceptible to violence.

In light of the stark realities that domestic workers inhabit among the larger community of informal women workers, MFF's training programmes catalyzed a fundamental shift, equipping WDWs with the knowledge, vocabulary, and confidence to identify sexual harassment, reject victim-blaming, and assert their rights. Importantly, the project activities enabled WDWs to identify and recognize sexual harassment as a crime which needs to be addressed, and is in fact, not an 'inevitable' part of their work and by extension, their social location. Interestingly, WDWs also pointed out that because they are aware of the laws and are vocal about this knowledge and their association with MFF at their workplaces, their employers have modulated their behaviour around them. This includes non-sexual harassment-related issues as well, such as withholding salaries, verbal abuse, forced labour, etc.

The project also fostered a cultural shift, with participants not only becoming empowered to protect themselves but also educating other informal workers, like Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) about SHW. The project's reach extended beyond expectations, empowering WDWs to engage with LCs and actively advocate for their legal rights. The FGDs with WDWs revealed that while earlier they would be wary of government offices and officials, they now feel empowered and are able to demand action and question inaction. WDWs' ability to assert themselves and effectively engage with government representatives such as the representatives of the Local Committee, is a critical step in the direction of women's empowerment, facilitated by the project.

Collectivization emerged as a key area of success for the project- with more and more WDWs informally coming together in groups to talk about their work, homes, families as well as SGBV, which has not gone unnoticed by their community and family members. Some of the WDWs also pointed out during the FGDs that their husbands, who would physically abuse them in the past, now recognize the fact that the WDWs are no longer 'alone' and will be able to mobilize many other women from the community if they face any form of violence. Thus, collectivization has also led to a decrease in the instances of domestic abuse that the WDWs used to face at home. It is important to recognize that while "mobilization" of WDWs is cited as an expected outcome of MFF's intervention, it was envisioned to be limited to SHW. It is therefore noteworthy that this mobilization has also allowed WDWs to tackle and respond to domestic violence and sexual harassment outside their world of work.

The project's outcomes illustrate a clear transformation—from passive acceptance of violence to proactive resistance and legal empowerment—demonstrating the effectiveness of sustained interventions in empowering marginalized communities and promoting gender equality.

The MFF project catalyzed a remarkable transformation in WDWs' awareness and responses to SHW. At the start, only 16% of WDWs recognized SHW as a crime, with many normalizing it as "eve-teasing" or minor annoyances. Economic vulnerabilities, especially debt during COVID-19, further entrenched this normalization. By the project's end, 99.44% acknowledged SHW as a crime, and 98.73% could identify its

multiple forms. Additionally, 88.01% of respondents knew they could report incidents to the LC. Overall, 91.1% (n = 225) of WDWs surveyed by the evaluators reported that they feel that MFF has been completely successful in helping them understand their legal rights in case they face SHW.

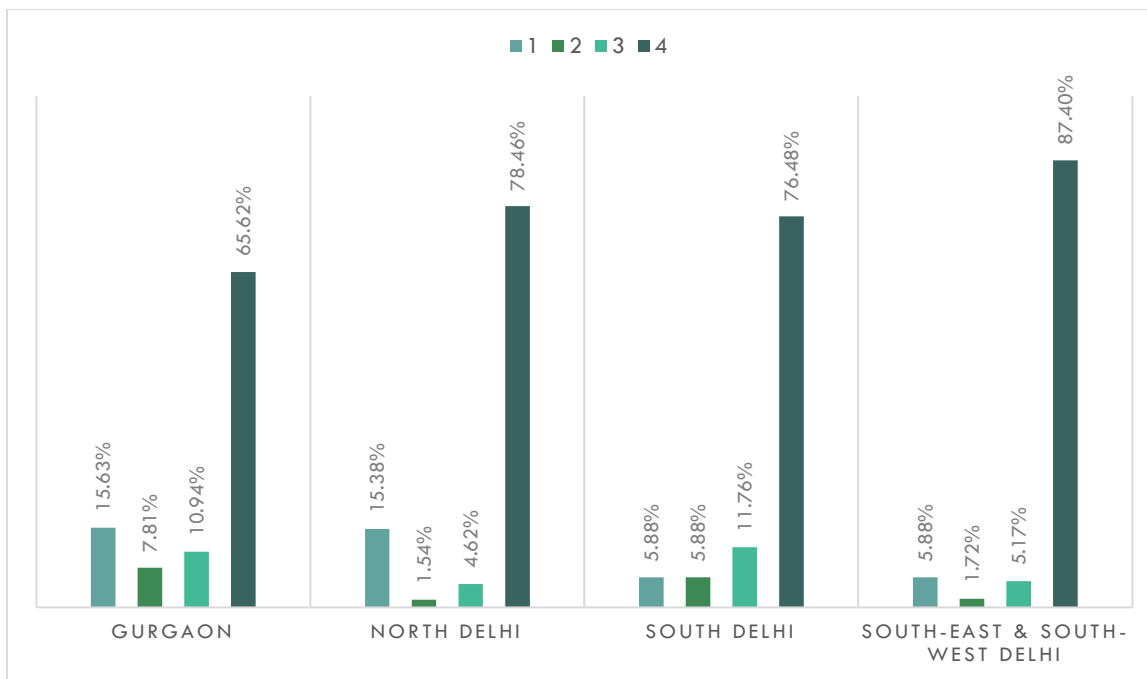


Figure 1: On a scale of 1-4, 1 being completely unsuccessful and 4 being completely successful, the figure illustrates how successful has MFF been in helping understand sexual harassment at the workplace and the various forms it can take? (n=225).

From the above-illustrated graph, it can be gleaned that the majority share of WDWs (across the five districts surveyed by the evaluators) consider MFF to be completely successful in building their knowledge capacity on the subject of SHW and the myriad forms it can assume.

FGDs revealed that WDWs initially lacked the vocabulary to define SHW, often blaming themselves for the harassment. Post-intervention, they could articulate their experiences, recognize SHW in all its forms, and reject harmful societal narratives. Visual aids proved particularly helpful for less-educated WDWs in identifying types of harassment.

Through targeted training by MFF, WDWs acquired legal knowledge not only about the SHW Act but also about broader labour protections, such as restrictions on police summons after 6 p.m. By the end of the project, 99.29% of WDWs (n=1,259) reported understanding how to file harassment complaints. This knowledge empowered WDWs to engage actively with LCs by attending consultations, submitting letters, and participating in advocacy efforts. WDWs also became change agents within their communities, sharing their knowledge with other workers.

The endline survey (n=1,259) showed substantial improvement, with nearly all respondents aware of the SHW Act and LCs. However, only 11.76% could identify their nodal officer's name and location, highlighting areas for further strengthening of awareness.

“Earlier we were scared, we would not raise our voice. Now we are not scared at all. Because now we know what is right and what is our rights. We can raise our voice now, that is why we are providing more information to others. If a woman experiences sexual violence then she gets scared, if she talks about it she worries what people will think of her. This is a wrong and outdated way of thinking. We shouldn’t be bothered by what others have to say but decide for ourselves as to what is right and wrong. If we stay quiet today, this will only enable people to misbehave. So, from early on, we should raise our voices. We now know what the law is and what our rights are.”

- **FGD with WDWs**

At the endline stage, the knowledge of the LC – both its concept and physical presence – was widespread, with 98.49% of respondents confirming their awareness. When asked where the LC sits, the vast majority (96.74%) correctly identified the local committee’s office, while a smaller fraction thought it was located at a One Stop Centre (2.07%) or police station (0.79%). A very small percentage (0.32%) did not know, and 0.08% believed the LC was based at the court.

The project’s impact extended beyond WDWs, influencing other informal workers, including AWWs. AWWs acknowledged how MFF activities enabled them to better understand SHW and support WDWs in their communities.

“I became a Pehelkar after learning about sexual harassment when I joined here (MFF). I now share this information with other women at home because we often don’t pay attention to these issues. Now, we pay attention, and inform others about them, protecting ourselves from these problems.”

- **KII with Pehelkar**

When it came to reporting such incidents, 46.23% said they would inform the LC, while 35.90% preferred telling their family. Others indicated they would report to their employer (11.36%), the group’s leader (3.97%), or the police (2.38%). A very small percentage, 0.16%, stated they would inform no one, indicating that while awareness is generally high, some workers still face barriers in seeking help or addressing harassment directly.

Most respondents (99.29%) were aware of the process of filing complaints in cases of workplace sexual harassment, with 80.06% knowing they could file a complaint by writing to the LC. Furthermore, 100% of respondents correctly identified behaviors such as physical touch, obscene pictures or videos, and sexual gestures as forms of workplace sexual harassment.



Figure 2: On a scale of 1-4, 1 being completely unsuccessful and 4 being completely successful, how successful has MFF been in helping WDWs understand what they can do when they face SHW, such as going to the nodal officer, local committee, etc.? (n=225).

From the graph illustrated above, it can be discerned that nearly 90% of women domestic workers surveyed by the evaluators across 4 districts of Delhi-NCR are in agreement that MFF has been completely successful in helping WDWs understand their rights when they experience sexual harassment at the workplace such as accessing the nodal officer and local committees, etc.

Despite these achievements, challenges persist. Practical barriers, such as limited awareness of nodal officers' details (11.76%) and difficulties accessing LC offices, hinder WDWs' ability to fully utilize available legal protections. While awareness of the SHW Act and LCs is high, less than half of respondents' view LCs as their primary recourse, indicating a need for further capacity-building and accessibility improvements.



Are there any unintended (positive and negative) impact of the project on the lives of WDWs?

Key Findings

Unintended Positive Impacts

1. Community-Led Action and Crisis Response

- One of the most striking unintended impacts was the emergence of self-organized rescue efforts among the WDWs. When one worker faced harassment or exploitation, others would mobilize, showing up outside the harasser's house to demand justice.
- As noted in an FGD, workers preferred this collective action over legal processes, which they found bureaucratic and untrustworthy. This grassroots pressure group approach empowered them to directly address exploitation, demonstrating how collective solidarity could replace formal legal channels.
- This form of action also helped WDWs develop resilience and community ties, which extended beyond work-related challenges. They began to respond to other forms of harm faced by their peers, including personal or domestic violence.

2. Emergence of Informal Leadership Structures (Pehelkars)

- An unplanned consequence was the rise of informal leaders or Pehelkars within the worker community. These individuals helped others advocate for their rights and navigate workplace and personal challenges. The absence of a formalized leadership structure ensured that power remained decentralized, encouraging other women to emulate these leaders and take on similar roles. This dynamic helped maintain equality and cohesion within the group.
- Pehelkars played an essential role not only in addressing harassment but also in facilitating crisis interventions and collective advocacy, making them instrumental in the long-term success of the project.

3. Expanded Advocacy and Awareness-Raising

- Initially focused on sexual harassment at the workplace, the project unexpectedly broadened to raise awareness on labour rights framing sexual harassment as a labour issue. UN Women recognized the project's role in reframing sexual harassment as a labour issue, thus contributing to national and regional discussions on domestic workers' labour rights.
- The project also empowered the WDWs to map and address violence beyond their workplace, such as harassment on public transportation or in their communities. This holistic engagement approach equipped them to respond to various forms of violence in their everyday lives.

4. Enhanced Confidence and Peer Support in Navigating Systems

- Another unintended benefit of the project was the increased confidence and peer support WDWs experienced. Collectivization not only reduced workplace harassment but also enabled women to confidently confront and question problematic behaviors in their homes and communities. For example, women would directly ask domestic violence offenders, "How can you do this?"
- Community and CSO leaders stepped in when escalation was needed, guiding workers to approach institutions like District Magistrate offices or One-Stop Centers, thereby connecting the WDWs with formal support mechanisms they were previously unaware of.

Unintended Negative Impacts

1. Safety Risks in Grassroots Mobilization

- While the self-organized rescue efforts were a sign of empowerment, safety concerns arose for the workers participating in these interventions. In one FGD, a participant expressed concerns that WDWs lacked adequate tools or protection to safely engage in such efforts, especially when confronting powerful employers or hostile situations.
- The lack of structured support or training for these activities posed potential risks, prompting discussions with stakeholders about the need to equip workers with practical knowledge and safety measures.

2. Unequal Access to Project Benefits

- Despite the overall success of the project, not all WDWs benefited equally. Migrant workers from states such as West Bengal and Jharkhand—who often lived with their employers or worked full-time—remained isolated and harder to reach. WDWs in all the FGDs pointed out that there is no way for them to reach out to the workers who live in the employers' house, also expressing concerns of forced labour and delayed salaries. Existing strategies were unable to fully engage this vulnerable group, leaving them out of the collective's protection and advocacy efforts.
- This highlighted the need for tailored strategies to connect with harder-to-reach workers who face additional barriers to participation, such as language, mobility, and restricted working conditions.

3. Over-Reliance on Informal Structures

- While the emergence of Pehekkars fostered community empowerment, the reliance on these informal leaders raised questions about sustainability and scalability. Without formalized leadership structures, the continuity of support and advocacy efforts could become vulnerable to burnout or individual leaders' withdrawal.
- There was also concern about power dynamics shifting subtly, with some workers beginning to rely too heavily on Pehekkars rather than developing their own capacity for self-advocacy.

4. Inconsistent Engagement with Formal Complaint Mechanisms

- Although collectivization empowered the WDWs to address harassment informally, it also reduced reliance on formal complaint mechanisms. Workers expressed a lack of trust in institutional processes such as the LCs due to logistical challenges, low confidence in authorities, and lack of awareness about the LC's functioning.
- This reluctance to engage with formal channels, though practical in the short term, could limit the systemic impact of the movement and reduce the pressure on institutions to become more accessible and accountable.



Figure 3: On a scale of 1-4, 1 being completely unsuccessful and 4 being completely successful, MFF's success in helping WDWs collectivize in response to violence and harassment faced at their workplace (n=225).

From the aforementioned graph, it can be illustrated that over 90% WDWs surveyed across the 4 districts of Delhi-NCR are in agreement that MFF has been completely successful in helping WDWs collectivize in response to violence and harassment faced at their workplace.

The project has had a transformative impact on the lives of women domestic workers (WDWs) by ensuring that they are aware of their legal rights, fostering collective action, solidarity, and grassroots leadership. The formation of informal support networks empowered workers to confront SHW, demand their rights, and respond to personal crises with newfound confidence. The rise of Pehekars as informal leaders and the shift towards community-led interventions reflect the strength of collectivization. However, challenges remain in ensuring the safety and sustainability of these efforts, especially when workers take on advocacy roles without adequate protection or training. Additionally, the exclusion of harder-to-reach migrant workers points to the need for more inclusive strategies.

While the project has expanded its influence beyond workplace harassment to address broader labour and gender issues, the reluctance to engage with formal complaint systems raises questions about long-term systemic change. To sustain and deepen these gains, the initiative must balance community empowerment with institutional engagement, offering structured support for advocacy while strengthening formal mechanisms. With these adjustments, the project's achievements can continue to serve as a powerful model for improving the rights and well-being of WDWs in diverse contexts.

What has been the overall impact of the project in influencing practices and governance of the Local Committees?

Key Findings

1. Establishment and Accessibility of LCs

- Functional LCs now exist in all implementation districts, compared to only 3 at the project's start.
- However, awareness among WDWs about LCs is low—many do not know the location of LC offices or their operational hours.
- No proactive outreach or visibility activities are conducted by most LCs, with only two districts displaying LC members' contact details at the administration office.

2. Barriers to Access for WDWs

- WDWs face significant challenges in accessing LCs due to long travel distances within large districts and the absence of remote complaint mechanisms (e.g., phone-based reporting).
- WDWs struggle to take time off work to visit LCs, highlighting the need for more accessible and decentralized complaint-handling systems.

3. Training and Capacity-Building of LC Members

- MFF's training sessions have been instrumental in building the capacity of LC members to understand SHW, particularly in the informal sector, and their roles under the SHW Act, 2013.
- LC members reported increased confidence in handling cases, with several indicating that they would not have accepted leadership roles without MFF's support.

4. Challenges in Attitudes and Governance Practices

- The effectiveness of LCs is influenced by varying attitudes among officials; some LC members showed empathy towards WDWs, while others dismissed the possibility of SHW affecting informal workers.
- Certain officials believed that SHW is irrelevant in informal sectors, perpetuating systemic neglect and resulting in a reactive rather than preventive approach to harassment cases.

5. Systemic Gaps in Governance Structures

- MFF's involvement highlights the critical gap in government capacity, as district administrations were initially unable to lead LC formation and training independently.
- Reliance on MFF underscores the need for institutionalizing such training efforts within government systems to ensure sustainability.

6. Impact Across Districts

- MFF extended its work beyond a single district, ensuring that LC members across the region were trained, contributing to the long-term effectiveness of LCs in managing workplace sexual harassment cases.

Evidence of functional LCs with notified committee members

The project began amidst a challenging scenario where only 3 out of the 13 implementation districts had functional LCs. Although the original plan for MFF was to provide training to existing LCs, the lack of functional LCs required a strategic shift. MFF first focused on ensuring the formation and notification of LCs across all districts. This process involved filing Right to Information (RTI) applications to gather information on existing LCs and leveraging media coverage to highlight the sexual harassment faced by WDWs and the absence of functional LCs in the NCR region. The Women and Child Development Department of Delhi responded by creating LCs in all implementation districts. Despite these efforts, it took two years for MFF to begin training the LCs.

While LCs are now functional, several barriers persist. Many WDWs are unaware of LC locations, and those who are often do not know when LC members are available. Accessibility is further hindered by the

absence of outreach activities or mechanisms for remote complaint filing. With only one LC per district, WDWs face logistical challenges such as long travel times and the inability to take paid leave to file complaints. These gaps highlight the need for decentralized LCs and improved accessibility.

MFF's training programmes have played a crucial role in enhancing LC members' understanding of sexual harassment faced by WDWs and their responsibilities under the SHW Act, 2013. LC members have expressed gratitude for MFF's support, emphasizing the foundation's role in building their confidence and capacity. For instance, one LC chairperson noted that they only accepted their position because of MFF's guidance and support, as district administrations typically do not provide adequate training for LCs. MFF's efforts included follow-up training and discussions on Standard Operating Protocols (SOPs), equipping LC members to handle cases effectively.

However, the project also revealed systemic challenges. FGDs and KIIs highlighted biases among some district officials, who dismissed the likelihood of WDWs facing sexual harassment due to their social class. Others underestimated the prevalence of harassment in the informal sector, assuming fewer complaints indicated fewer issues. These attitudes reflect a reactive governance approach, with authorities only addressing issues when complaints are made, rather than proactively supporting informal workers.

Despite these challenges, MFF has achieved significant milestones, including the establishment and operationalization of LCs and the enhancement of their capacity to address workplace sexual harassment. However, the reliance on MFF underscores the need to institutionalize capacity-building efforts within government frameworks for sustainability. To bridge existing gaps, proactive governance practices such as decentralizing LCs, conducting outreach activities, and introducing remote complaint mechanisms are essential. Sustained advocacy and engagement with stakeholders are vital to ensure that WDWs, as informal sector workers, can access justice and redress mechanisms with dignity and ease.



To what extent were the intended project goals, outcomes and outputs (project results) achieved and how?

MFF's interventions focused on transforming WDWs' self-identity, expanding their understanding of workplace rights, and fostering collective advocacy. By increasing awareness of the SHW Act and labour rights, MFF sought to redefine domestic work as legitimate labour deserving of dignity and protection.

Through awareness sessions, community mobilization, and legal education, MFF has promoted a shift from passive acceptance of mistreatment to active demand for respect and safe working conditions. The project also worked to establish responsive redressal mechanisms across 13 districts, including Local Committees (LCs) and increased police engagement, enabling WDWs to access formal support systems for addressing workplace harassment.

The project has made significant strides in achieving its dual goals of empowering and informing WDWs and strengthening institutional accountability among LCs, nodal officers, and police officers to implement the SHW Act. However, the extent of success varies between the two goals, with notable accomplishments in empowering WDWs and moderate progress in institutional reform.

Over the course of the project, WDWs have undergone a profound transformation in their self-identity, evolving from seeing themselves as "servants" to recognizing their status as workers with inherent rights and dignity. This shift, facilitated by the project's sustained awareness efforts, has enabled WDWs to demand fair treatment, paid leave, safe working conditions, and equitable wages from their employers. They now advocate for their labour rights with confidence, asserting their agency in ways that were previously unimaginable. For example, WDWs have begun to collectively organize strikes, confront harassment, and engage in peer-led education initiatives, spreading awareness across their communities and inspiring solidarity among fellow workers. This collective advocacy underscores the success of the project in fostering a sense of agency and empowerment among WDWs.

The impact of legal literacy has been particularly transformative. Awareness of the SHW Act has increased from 16% to over 99%, enabling WDWs to recognize harassment as a labour rights violation rather than a personal affront. This knowledge, coupled with an expanded understanding of the workplace including transit routes, common areas, and other work-related spaces, has given WDWs the tools to confront inappropriate behaviors in diverse environments. The cultural shift is evident in their openness to discussing sexual harassment, once a stigmatized topic. Through strategic, trust-building interventions, WDWs now openly share experiences, offer peer support, and collectively address harassment, marking a significant departure from the silence and fear that previously dominated their responses.

Despite these achievements, WDWs face systemic barriers in accessing institutional redressal mechanisms. While Local Committees have been established in all 13 districts as mandated by the SHW Act, their functionality remains limited. High personnel turnover, resource shortages, and inadequate outreach have hindered their effectiveness. Many WDWs are unaware of the committees' locations, meeting schedules, or even the identities of committee members, leaving these bodies underutilized. Moreover, the absence of visible signage and multilingual communication further isolates vulnerable workers from these formal mechanisms.



Figure 4: On a scale of 1-4, where 1 means completely unsuccessful and 4 being completely successful, how successful has MFF been in ensuring that the WDWs understand their roles, responsibilities and rights? (n=225).

From the aforementioned chart, it can be ascertained that over 3/4ths of WDWs across the 4 districts of Delhi-NCR agree that MFF has been completely successful in ensuring that WDWs understand their roles, responsibilities and rights.

“We were scared before. We didn’t raise our voice. Even when we got teased in the bus or on the road, we kept quiet. We used to say nothing. But now, from the inside, I am not afraid. I have got courage. There is someone behind us. If anyone will do something to us or say something we can complain. We are not afraid. We have got courage. Whether it is in the bus or in the shop. I cannot tolerate any women who are being mistreated.”

- FGD with WDW

Similarly, police engagement, though somewhat improved, continues to be inconsistent. While police officers have shown responsiveness in severe cases, such as overt violence, they often dismiss routine harassment as outside their jurisdiction. This inconsistency has fostered a fraught relationship between WDWs and law enforcement, leading many workers to resolve harassment informally through community networks or collective action. Although these grassroots approaches demonstrate resilience and solidarity, they also highlight the gaps in institutional accountability and accessibility.

On the institutional front, progress has been moderate. Training programmes conducted by the project have increased awareness among LCs, nodal officers, and police regarding the SHW Act and their roles in supporting WDWs. However, the practical implementation of new SHW procedures remains inconsistent due to administrative changes, resource limitations, and a lack of continuous training. While there has been progress in recognizing and addressing harassment beyond the traditional employer’s home, these gains are undermined by systemic inefficiencies that impede the sustainability of institutional reforms.

The project has made significant progress toward its first goal of empowering and informing WDWs, as evidenced by their increased legal literacy, collective advocacy, and self-confidence in demanding workplace rights. However, the second goal of institutional strengthening remains partially achieved. The establishment of LCs and increased awareness among institutional players represent important milestones,

but systemic barriers continue to limit the effectiveness of these mechanisms. To fully realize the project's goals, sustained efforts are required to address resource constraints, enhance institutional outreach, and foster trauma-informed, consistent responses from LCs and police. By building on the transformative changes already achieved among WDWs, the project has the potential to create a more equitable and accountable framework for addressing workplace harassment in the long term.

To what extent was the project efficiently and cost effectively implemented?

Key Findings

- 1. Efficient Implementation with Adaptability:** The project managed to complete most planned activities, despite requiring a no-cost extension of three months. This delay pointed to time management challenges, but the team's adaptability ensured key objectives were achieved without compromising quality.
- 2. Balancing Progress with Operational Challenges:** A delicate balance was struck between project progress and delays. Time management issues and ambitious targets added pressure, yet the team maintained a focus on participant well-being and meaningful engagement, reflecting a responsive approach.
- 3. Overly Ambitious Targets:** The project's aspirational goals, such as encouraging WDWs to report sexual harassment, were hindered by institutional and societal constraints. Stakeholders acknowledged the limited timeline as a barrier to achieving such transformative outcomes.
- 4. Alignment with Participant Needs and Well-Being:** Feedback from WDWs indicated that activities were thoughtfully aligned with their needs. Over 90% of participants valued their time spent in project activities, with minimal strain reported. However, wage loss was a concern in certain regions, signaling room for improved scheduling.
- 5. Operational versus Activity Costs:** The budget prioritized project activities over operational costs, maximizing community impact but potentially straining project administration. A more balanced budget may improve long-term sustainability and support adaptive responses across project phases.
- 6. Flexible Budget Allocation:** Strategic budget reallocation allowed the project to engage new communities and adapt to emerging needs. Future projects could benefit from a dedicated "responsive fund" to allow for real-time pivots in response to unforeseen demands.
- 7. Core and Self-Care Fund for Capacity-Building:** Funds for team capacity-building on sensitive topics, such as gender and sexuality, demonstrated a commitment to readiness in addressing workplace discrimination. However, this reliance on core funds highlights the need for a stable capacity-building budget line within project costs.
- 8. Human Resource Budgeting and Extensions:** The exhaustion of human resource funds during the no-cost extension suggests a gap in initial budget planning. Future budgets could benefit from contingencies for potential HR costs in extended project lifecycles.
- 9. Contingency Fund Use for Crisis Response:** Effective use of contingency funds for community crisis support, such as flood relief, reflects a commitment to participant welfare. A structured contingency framework could help balance immediate relief needs with ongoing project activities.
- 10. Barriers to LC Implementation:** Significant time was spent establishing LCs, as many were non-existent or inactive. Project staff had to first advocate for and establish these committees before beginning training, illustrating the external dependencies that slowed project progress.
- 11. Emotional Resilience and Peer Support:** Fieldworkers, engaged in emotionally taxing cases, relied on peer support and guidance from the Martha Farrell Foundation for coping. Their informal support network and training helped them manage mental strain, underscoring the need for psychological support systems in similar projects.

12. Community Engagement and Trust Building: Building trust with WDWs and other stakeholders laid critical groundwork for future impact, even as some project outcomes, like cultural shifts in SHW reporting, were not fully realized within the project’s duration.

13. Recommendations for Future Financial Planning:

- **Balanced Operational Budget:** Increased allocation for operational costs could support sustainable project administration.
- **Flexible Activity Funds:** Including a “responsive” budget line can enhance adaptability.
- **Dedicated Training Budget:** An explicit line item for team capacity-building ensures continued development without relying on core funds.
- **Contingency HR Budgeting:** Planning for HR contingencies could prevent disruptions during extensions.
- **Contingency Fund Framework:** A structured approach for emergency fund use would help balance crisis response with ongoing project needs.

14. Success Despite Delays: Overall, the project effectively completed the majority of planned activities, illustrating strong commitment, adaptability, and strategic planning despite facing significant external and internal challenges.

The project achieved most of its planned activities, though a no-cost extension of three months was required to complete critical tasks such as the final evaluation and end-line data collection. According to the UN Trust Fund representative, this extension was essential due to time management challenges that hindered completion within the original timeline. Although the delay suggests some inefficiencies in scheduling, the team’s ability to adapt ensured that the core objectives were met without compromising quality. This reflects a responsive approach, where the team prioritized thorough execution over rigid adherence to deadlines.

The project’s design was marked by ambitious and aspirational targets, including encouraging WDWs to report SHW to LCs. While these goals reflected the project’s transformative vision, they also proved challenging. Both internal and external stakeholders acknowledged that some targets were overly optimistic given the social and institutional barriers involved.

For instance, informal workers often face difficulties in openly discussing SHW due to stigma, fear of retaliation, and lack of institutional support. Additionally, the involvement of government institutions—beyond the project team’s control—slowed the progress toward achieving certain outcomes. Stakeholders agreed that the original three-year period may not have been sufficient to achieve the desired cultural shifts. However, significant groundwork was laid by building trust with WDWs, creating a foundation for future change beyond the project’s immediate timeline.

Despite these challenges, the project demonstrated commendable efficiency and adaptability, completing a majority of its planned activities and engaging WDWs meaningfully in raising awareness about sexual harassment at the workplace. While ambitious targets, such as increasing SHW reporting, encountered challenges due to systemic institutional and societal constraints, the project succeeded in laying the foundational groundwork for change by building trust with WDWs, establishing LCs, and fostering participant well-being. The team’s responsive approach, supported by flexible budget management and dedicated training, enabled significant progress despite delays and external dependencies.

Operational challenges underscored the importance of balanced budget allocations that consider both direct project impact and sustainable administrative support. Additionally, the reliance on informal peer networks and structured training contributed to the emotional resilience of fieldworkers, enabling them to cope with the psychological strain inherent in the project’s objectives.

Moving forward, incorporating a “responsive fund” within the project budget, establishing structured contingency frameworks, and planning for potential human resource extensions could further strengthen

efficiency and sustainability in similar projects. Overall, this project illustrates the impact of strategic flexibility and the importance of strong support systems in achieving meaningful progress within complex, resource-constrained environments. The groundwork laid here provides a valuable model for future efforts toward institutional change and participant empowerment.

To what extent will the achieved results, especially any positive changes in the lives of women and girls (project goal level), be sustained after this project ends?

As awareness of gender-based violence (GBV) and harassment grows, the project's focus on institutionalizing SHW redress mechanisms represents a critical step toward safer, more equitable work environments, particularly in the informal sector. However, with the end of UN Trust Fund funding, this evaluation explores the degree to which these achievements can be sustained without ongoing external support.

Through interviews and field research, this evaluation illuminates both the successes and challenges of the MFF's efforts. While the project has contributed to increased reporting, positive behavioral shifts, and the creation of robust community networks, it faces obstacles such as high personnel turnover, limited institutional support, and a reliance on individual commitment. The sustainability and effectiveness of LCs addressing sexual harassment at the workplace are largely shaped by the institutional mechanisms in place, as well as the dedication of their members. However, the perceptions shared by both LC members and District Officers indicate significant challenges that hinder the committees' functionality and long-term impact. Central to these challenges is the frequent movement of personnel and a structural weakness in the institutional design that relies heavily on individuals' passion and personalities.

“The kind of people who should be roped into the local committee should be driven and passionate, especially given the very high workload that the local committee must deal with. It is critical to have the right kind of people in the committee who are passionate, really mean work and are not easily distracted. However, in spite of this, we have put a clear system in place. So tomorrow, if I am not on the local committee, somebody else can take over. There is going to be clear cut handing over and taking over.

- KII with LC member

Frequent turnover of trained personnel in LCs disrupts continuity and weakens their ability to address sexual harassment at the workplace effectively. Despite significant investment in training by organizations like the MFF, personnel changes often necessitate repeated training, wasting time and resources. This reliance on individual commitment rather than institutional mechanisms leaves LCs vulnerable to disruptions.

To ensure continuity, LC members advocate for robust institutional processes that embed training, outreach, and complaint handling into the committee's structure. Recommendations include developing knowledge transfer mechanisms, comprehensive documentation, mentoring, and regular refresher training. Formalizing procedures would minimize downtime caused by personnel changes and maintain operational consistency.

Structural fragility extends beyond turnover. LCs often derive strength from individual members rather than institutional authority, limiting their capacity to enforce recommendations across departments. Unlike

Internal Committees (ICs), LCs lack administrative power, undermining their efficacy and compliance enforcement.

A stronger legal and institutional framework is essential to address these issues. Empowering LCs with administrative authority, formalized processes, and a zero-tolerance approach to SHW would ensure sustainability, reduce reliance on individuals, and improve policy implementation at the district-level.

Empowering Community Outreach: A Multi-Stakeholder Approach to Awareness and Action

LC members' multi-stakeholder engagement strategy exemplifies an effective approach to outreach and community sensitization, especially in connecting with informal women workers through trusted local influencers. Recognizing the challenge of reaching every woman directly, the team has established connections with ASHA workers, Anganwadi workers, self-help groups, and Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs), effectively utilizing their influence to amplify project messages within communities.

During a KII, an LC member highlighted the importance of this networked approach, explaining, "We need bridges who can send our message across in a ripple effect." ASHA and Anganwadi workers serve as these crucial bridges, receiving clear instructions and informational materials (often provided by the Ministry of Law) to share with local women during their regular interactions. "ASHA workers and Anganwadi workers...we keep sensitizing the ones which we are directly coming in contact with," they noted, describing how the strategy relies on leveraging local knowledge and trust.

In addition to the health worker network, the project has involved district self-help groups and collaborated with RWAs to spread awareness more widely. When a sexual harassment incident occurred in Kalu Sarai, for example, the District Magistrate's office coordinated with the team to draft and send circulars to all educational institutions in the area, ensuring swift, preventive action. The team shared, "The DM called me, and we discussed that in great detail and drafted circulars," demonstrating a responsive collaboration with government offices.

Overall, this layered approach engages local leaders as multipliers, fostering a community-centered, sustainable model of awareness-building that reaches far beyond the direct project team. This multi-stakeholder framework not only increases reach but also strengthens community accountability, creating a solid foundation for continued social impact.

Role of Education and Community Meetings

Education and regular community meetings are central to the Pehelkars' strategy for combating sexual harassment. Through these gatherings, they provide critical information on legal rights, protections, and the mechanisms available for addressing workplace harassment. These meetings, held consistently—sometimes monthly or even bi-monthly—serve as forums for women to share their experiences, learn from one another, and build the confidence needed to confront harassment. This regular engagement ensures that information remains current, accessible, and relevant, while also creating a sense of solidarity among participants. By maintaining this structured approach, the Pehelkars not only disseminate knowledge but also foster a continuous dialogue that empowers women to stand up for their rights.

The emphasis on community meetings reflects a deep understanding that ongoing education is vital to lasting change. The Pehelkars recognize that for women in marginalized communities, particularly those in informal sectors, empowerment comes from sustained efforts to keep them informed and engaged. This strategy has helped create a well-informed network of women who are increasingly aware of their rights and are better equipped to navigate legal frameworks to combat SHW.

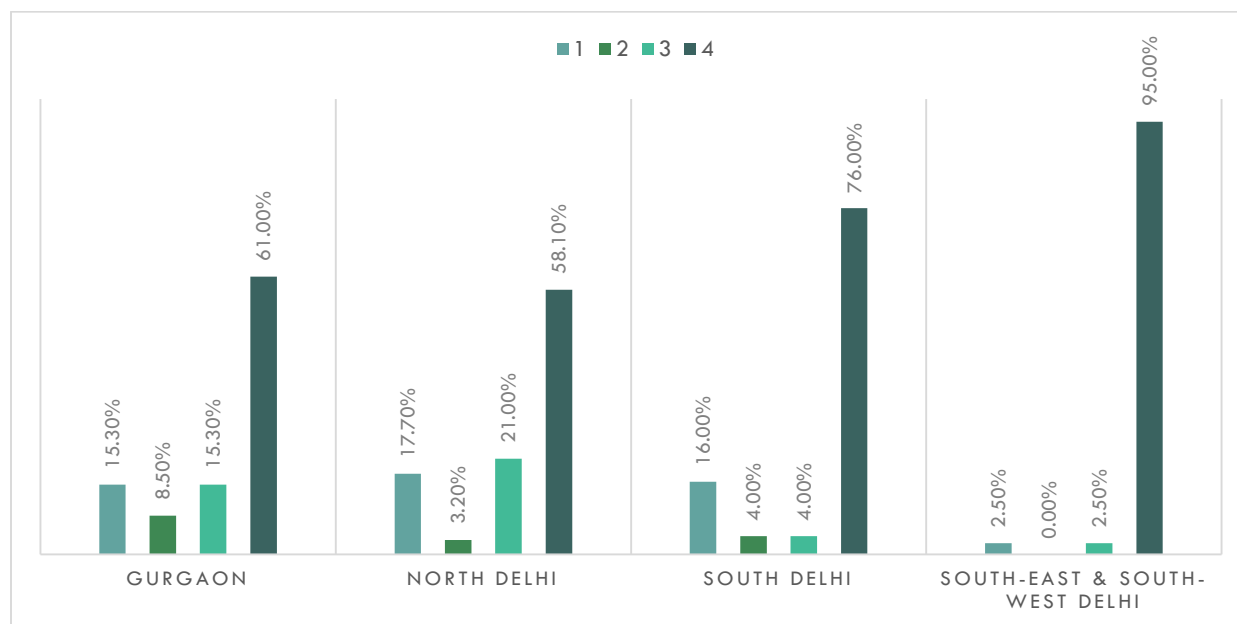
Impact of Losing NGO Support: A Threat to Sustainability

The potential loss of NGO support poses a significant threat to the sustainability of the Pehelkars' work and the broader community's access to justice. Despite their confidence in addressing SGBV in their communities, NGOs like MFF play a crucial role in maintaining accountability within LCs and ensuring that these bodies remain responsive to the needs of marginalized women. Therefore, a demarcation between addressing SGBV at the community level and escalating it to legal and government bodies can be seen here. While Pehelkars reported that they are confident they would be able to collectivize and mobilize against SGBV at the community level, they continued to express reliance on NGOs when it came to approaching the government stakeholders, LCs and police alike.

This is compounded by the fact that in some cases, the LC members refuse to give their contact information directly to the WDWs and prefer to speak to them through the MFF field staff². This means that the WDWs (and Pehelkars too) are dependent on the MFF team to be able to reach out to the LCs. Not all districts have advertised the contact information of the LC members in the community either, which created a disconnect between the WDWs and the LC members.

Without the pressure and oversight provided by external organizations, there is a concern that LCs may lose their effectiveness, particularly as many of these bodies depend on the presence of NGOs to function efficiently.

This concern is particularly acute given the challenges that already exist in the implementation of legal protections against SHW. While domestic workers and others in informal sectors may be aware of their rights, the actual enforcement of these rights is often weak. The Pehelkars note that even when women seek legal recourse, they frequently encounter systemic failures, which can discourage them from pursuing justice. This underscores the critical need for strong, persistent advocacy and support from organizations like MFF to ensure that legal frameworks are not only understood but also effectively implemented.



² MFF field staff refers to community focal points hired by MFF who are in constant touch with the WDWs, those who organize meetings with them and often live in their own communities or close proximity.

Figure 5: On a scale of 1-4, 1 being very unlikely and 4 being very likely, how likely it is that the Pehelkars trained by MFF will continue to support you and/or other women domestic workers in seeking redressal against sexual harassment faced by you/them at the workplace? (n=225).

Our qualitative findings were compounded by the results from the survey carried out by the evaluators - Less than 65% of WDWs in Gurgaon and North Delhi reported that they were fully confident (and gave a score of '4') that the Pehelkars would be able to support them in seeking redressal against SHW. This number was better in South Delhi at 76% and quite high at 95% in South-East and South-West Delhi. While in our qualitative interviews, we were unable to establish the cause behind this stark difference between the rest of the districts and South-East and South-West Delhi, further enquiry into this aspect would be interesting.

NGO dependence came up as a recurring theme across interviews and FGDs. A CSO representative reflected, "There is a clear concern about the potential loss of support if these NGOs were to leave or cease operations." Without NGO involvement, WDWs fear they would struggle to navigate LCs and government processes, which highlights the critical role that NGOs play in maintaining accountability.

Networking and Collaboration

Networking with other organizations focused on informal labour is another critical factor in sustaining these efforts. By collaborating with broader labour movements and women's rights organizations, WDWs can gain additional resources and advocacy power. A key aspect of this collaboration is linking with international organizations like UN Women, which has provided support for sexual harassment training and advocacy activities. This relationship was seen as an important pillar for sustaining the project's efforts, emphasizing that international partnerships offer both institutional backing and access to broader networks.

The formation of community groups and unions among WDWs, supported by NGOs and CSOs, has empowered domestic workers to advocate for their rights and challenge workplace sexual harassment. However, sustainability remains a key concern, particularly in light of the reliance on NGOs for support and information. Strengthening partnerships with local governments, expanding the reach of these initiatives, and fostering deeper collaborations with other organizations are vital for ensuring these efforts can continue. With these strategies in place, WDWs can build on the progress already made, offering lasting support to women across informal sectors and sustaining the momentum of their collective action. As one representative put it, "Building awareness and promoting gender sensitivity should be central in their collective efforts," ensuring that these unions remain effective and enduring agents of change.

Sustaining Community Empowerment and Collectivization

During an FGD with MFF, the team maintains that they are optimistic about the community-level sustainability of MFF's work, particularly among the women's groups that have been established. "The women will be able to sustain it," they affirm, noting that maintaining collective activities within these groups doesn't involve significant financial costs. These groups are equipped with self-sustaining tools, including bulk-produced informational and educational materials (IEC) and interactive games. A WhatsApp group for Pehelkars also fosters continuous communication, reinforcing group cohesion even in the absence of MFF's regular presence.

Additionally, MFF's field officers, including key figures will continue to visit the areas, albeit less frequently. The community's newfound autonomy means that "this thing will not stop" as the women's groups are strong enough to uphold the work independently. This focus on resilience ensures that the collective power established during the project persists, enabling women to continue organizing, advocating, and defending their rights even post-funding.

The Martha Farrell Foundation's project has made significant strides in addressing sexual harassment in the workplace (SHW), empowering marginalized women and establishing LCs as essential mechanisms for redress and support. Through community sensitization, multi-stakeholder partnerships, and training initiatives, the project has created meaningful cultural shifts, enhancing awareness and fostering collective action. Women now feel more empowered to speak out against harassment, both individually and collectively, marking a critical change in communities that previously relied on external support to navigate these challenges.

Despite these accomplishments, sustainability challenges remain, particularly concerning the reliance on individual LC members and the limited structural support within the district administration. Frequent personnel turnover, a lack of institutional accountability, and inadequate visibility for LCs pose ongoing risks to the project's longevity. While the LCs have seen progress in the form of reporting increases and community cohesion, their continued functionality will depend on more robust institutional mechanisms

that go beyond individual commitment and NGO intervention. This evaluation highlights the importance of embedding standard operating procedures (SOPs) and accountability frameworks within local governance to ensure continuity, even in the absence of external support. Continued partnerships with government bodies, capacity-building for community members, and structured knowledge transfer protocols are critical to preserving the momentum achieved. By addressing these areas, the foundation can sustain the impact of its work, contributing to a more resilient, self-sufficient system for addressing SHW and empowering communities long after project funding concludes.



To what extent has the project generated knowledge, promising or emerging practices in the field of EVAW/G that should be documented and shared with other practitioners?

The project's multifaceted approach to ending violence against women and girls (EVAW/G) has yielded significant advancements in knowledge generation, creating a foundation for sustainable, community-driven change. Through innovative strategies that prioritize community education, multisectoral involvement, and the establishment of resilient local committees (LCs), the project has empowered communities to understand, recognize, and combat gender-based violence effectively.

The engagement of community leaders and influential figures, coupled with culturally relevant outreach methods, has amplified the project's impact by fostering a collective responsibility to address and prevent violence. The project's emphasis on sustainable practices, such as technology-integrated record-keeping and public awareness campaigns, ensures that these initiatives are not only effective but enduring, capable of adapting and persisting within local governance frameworks.

For other practitioners, the project offers a replicable model that underscores the importance of foundational knowledge, inclusive community action, and strategic integration within local governance. By prioritizing these elements, similar initiatives can enhance their reach, strengthen public trust, and support the global movement toward gender justice and equity. The findings and practices from this project serve as valuable insights, furthering the field of EVAW/G and contributing to a broader understanding of how community-centered approaches can drive lasting impact.

Multisectoral Approach and Knowledge Sharing

LC members' cross-sectoral roles, including collaborations with the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), enriched project advocacy through diverse perspectives. MFF engaged stakeholders such as LCs, police, and unions to create inclusive frameworks addressing sexual harassment of WDWs. Initiatives like safety audits underscored the power of multisectoral synergies in shaping evidence-based advocacy and culturally resonant interventions.

Addressing Knowledge Gaps on Sexual Harassment

Educating communities and stakeholders on sexual harassment laws addressed initial knowledge gaps, empowering individuals to recognize and confront violations. This foundational understanding shifted societal norms, enabling collective accountability. Educating key figures, such as LC members, amplified awareness and promoted scalable, sustainable efforts in eliminating violence against women and girls.

Creative Educational Initiatives

Innovative strategies like *nukkad natak* (street plays) and letter-writing campaigns effectively raised awareness about sexual harassment. These culturally relevant approaches made complex legal concepts accessible, engaging communities and fostering collective understanding of workplace and public safety.

Community Solidarity and Advocacy

The project cultivated community solidarity and collective action by educating members about sexual harassment, and empowering them to support each other. Practices such as community-led documentation, including formal complaints through letter-writing, ensured visibility and accountability while strengthening advocacy efforts.

Sustainable Local Committees

MFF's strategies for embedding LCs in governance frameworks ensured sustainability. Technological integration for record-keeping and clear procedural handovers addressed challenges like personnel turnover. Local leadership engagement and institutional strengthening enhanced LC effectiveness and resilience.

Public Awareness for Effective LCs

MFF emphasized robust public awareness to maximize LC impact, bridging gaps between complaint mechanisms and community engagement. Strategic outreach campaigns and local government endorsement remain vital for long-term sustainability and trust-building.



To what extent do the achieved results (project goal, outcomes and outputs) continue to be relevant to the needs of women and girls?

Through a combination of advocacy, education, and community engagement, the project has sought to create safer environments for WDWs while also addressing the stigma associated with discussing sexual harassment.

The MFF project's goals, outcomes, and outputs remain aligned with WDWs' evolving needs for empowerment, safety, and institutional support. By enabling WDWs to advocate for themselves, understand their rights, and establish community and institutional support, the project meets both their immediate and long-term needs for dignity, workplace safety, and recognition. Through awareness-building, advocacy, and a strong foundation of supportive networks, the project has empowered WDWs to transform their work environments and assert their rights as dignified workers. Although challenges persist, especially in terms of trust in formal systems and community resistance, the project's achievements provide a lasting impact on WDWs' lives, fostering resilience and dignity within their workplaces.

The overarching goal of the MFF project was to empower WDWs to see themselves as dignified workers and to advocate for safe and harassment-free work environments. This transformation aimed to shift WDWs' self-perception, moving them from passive acceptance of mistreatment to actively demanding respect and workplace protection. By enhancing awareness of their rights and fostering access to grievance systems, the project created a foundational change in how WDWs viewed their place within society and the workplace. This goal remains deeply relevant, as it addresses the critical need for WDWs to view their work as legitimate labour deserving of dignity, which challenges the prevailing social norms that often exclude domestic work from protected labour standards.

This recognition of their labour as legitimate supports WDWs' self-advocacy, enabling them to assert their rights confidently and demand fair treatment. As they are often employed under precarious conditions, a reinforced sense of self-worth and agency is essential for them to claim their rights. Furthermore, by encouraging WDWs to see themselves as workers, the project aligns their self-perception with formal labour protections, thus encouraging them to engage with these systems rather than relying solely on informal approaches. This empowerment also equips WDWs to resist exploitative practices, enabling them to reject unjust treatment and advocate for equitable workplace standards. Consequently, this foundational shift is essential in allowing WDWs to create safer, more dignified work environments.

Each outcome achieved by the MFF project reflects a key dimension of WDWs' evolving needs, providing frameworks for rights awareness, harassment prevention, solidarity, and collective advocacy.

One of the primary outcomes of the project has been the empowerment of WDWs through an enhanced awareness of their rights. Through MFF's educational sessions, WDWs gained an understanding of their entitlements under the SHW Act and broader labour protections, fostering their capacity to demand fair treatment, safe working conditions, and respect. This awareness remains crucial to empowerment, as WDWs often face social and economic vulnerabilities that can discourage them from asserting their rights. Legal knowledge gives them the tools to identify and challenge mistreatment, thereby allowing them to confront employers or perpetrators confidently. By understanding labour laws, they can insist on their rights to fair wages, safe working conditions, and paid leave. Additionally, awareness of formal redressal mechanisms enables WDWs to access institutional support, which is critical for protecting their rights against harassment and other forms of mistreatment.



Figure 6: On a scale of 1-4, where 1 means completely unsuccessful and 4 means completely successful, how successful have activities conducted by MFF been in decreasing safety risks faced by them at their workplaces? (n=225).

From the aforementioned chart, it can be ascertained that over ¾ths of WDWs across 4 districts of Delhi-NCR agree that the activities carried out by MFF have been completely successful in decreasing safety risks faced by them at their workplaces.

Another key outcome is the expanded definition of “workplace” boundaries achieved through the project. MFF broadened WDWs’ understanding of the workplace to include all spaces they encounter in their work, such as transit routes and communal areas, aligning with the provisions of the SHW Act. This expanded perspective enables WDWs to recognize and address harassment beyond the traditional workplace setting. Given that many WDWs encounter harassment outside their employers’ homes, this broadened understanding is highly relevant, allowing them to acknowledge and address risks wherever they occur. By identifying transit routes, common areas, and interactions with individuals such as guards and drivers as part of their workplace, WDWs are empowered to confront harassment in any related space. This broader definition supports WDWs in seeking legal recourse and demanding safety measures that cover all areas associated with their work. By including the wider community in their understanding of the workplace, WDWs can engage trusted community members for support in cases of harassment, thereby strengthening their overall support network.

The project also enabled WDWs to engage in open dialogue about harassment, a critical outcome achieved through trust-building initiatives. Previously, harassment was a taboo topic, but MFF’s efforts have transformed it into a focal point of peer discussions, fostering solidarity and support among WDWs. This ability to discuss harassment openly addresses a crucial socio-cultural need, allowing WDWs to challenge stigma and isolation. Open discussions have diminished the societal shame and fear surrounding harassment, making it easier for WDWs to report incidents without feeling ostracized. Through shared experiences, WDWs have developed a strong network that supports a community-based resistance to harassment, enhancing collective resilience. Furthermore, by learning from each other’s experiences, WDWs are better able to adopt preventive strategies, which help safeguard them and their peers against harassment in various work environments.

Another significant outcome of the project has been the mobilization of WDWs for collective action. Legal awareness has inspired many WDWs to unite in collective efforts, such as strikes, to demand their rights and pressure employers and authorities to respect their protections. This mobilization has provided WDWs with the collective bargaining power needed to advocate for fair treatment, which remains an ongoing necessity in their line of work. Collective action has allowed WDWs to negotiate for better working conditions and wages, challenging the power imbalances that typically exist with their employers. Knowing they are not alone in their demands has reinforced their confidence, making them more determined in advocating for their rights. By publicly mobilizing, WDWs have also drawn attention to the unique challenges they face, fostering increased support and awareness within their communities.

Given inconsistencies in formal support, WDWs have increasingly relied on community networks for grievance redressal, showcasing an important outcome in terms of self-reliance. In the absence of consistent engagement from formal institutions, community-driven redressal offers immediate, accessible support, making it crucial for addressing their grievances. Community networks provide an essential alternative to formal systems, especially when LCs and police support are limited. This reliance on community-based solutions has fostered resilience and self-reliance among WDWs, as they gain confidence in addressing issues without the fear of institutional obstacles. Community networks encourage mutual accountability, offering an informal oversight that ensures WDWs feel safe and supported when confronting workplace mistreatment.

Each of the project's outputs supports its broader outcomes, ensuring that WDWs are well-equipped to confront and prevent harassment effectively. MFF's educational initiatives have provided WDWs with comprehensive knowledge of the SHW Act and grievance redressal mechanisms, enabling them to advocate for their rights. This awareness remains essential, as WDWs continue to need knowledge of formal protections to safeguard their rights effectively. With an understanding of the SHW Act, WDWs gain legal empowerment, allowing them to pursue their rights within a structured framework. The awareness cultivated through these initiatives has enhanced WDWs' ability to make informed decisions about addressing harassment, either through formal channels or community networks, aligning closely with gender equality goals. This knowledge has also helped dismantle gender-based discrimination within domestic work, fostering a cultural shift toward equality and respect.

The establishment of responsive redressal mechanisms has been another critical output, achieved through MFF's collaboration with LCs and police to improve responses to harassment complaints. Despite logistical challenges, this output remains relevant, as responsive redressal systems are essential for WDWs to access justice reliably. Having a pathway to formal redressal reduces reliance on informal solutions, giving WDWs access to structured justice. By engaging with LCs and police in addressing complaints, the project has fostered institutional accountability, creating a support system that encourages sensitivity to WDWs' needs. Additionally, a responsive system reinforces international labour standards, aligning WDWs' protections with global labour rights frameworks.

The implementation of SHW procedures by local authorities under MFF's guidance has helped institutionalize workplace protections, although ongoing training is necessary due to administrative challenges. Embedding these protections within institutional structures ensures that WDWs have access to sustainable and systematic redressal processes, addressing their need for long-term support. By establishing SHW procedures, the project has addressed procedural gaps, ensuring consistent protections for WDWs across various work settings. This formalization of protections promotes a culture of respect, ensuring that WDWs' rights are recognized and upheld.

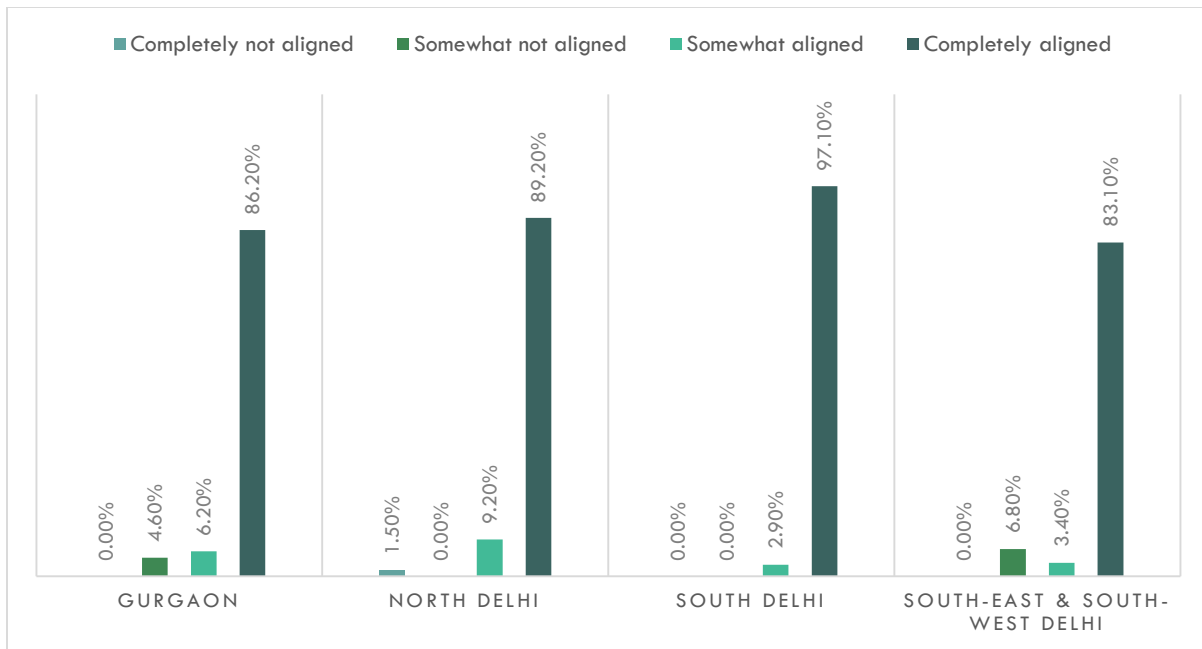


Figure 7: To what extent do you think the activities of this project are in line with your needs as a woman domestic worker? (n=225).

From the aforementioned chart it can be ascertained that close to 85% of the WDWs across the 4 districts of Delhi-NCR agree that the activities of the project anchored by MFF are in line with their needs.

To what extent is the project aligned (or not aligned) with other relevant policies, strategies, and initiatives at the national, state and district-level?

The evaluation of the Martha Farrell Foundation's (MFF) project aimed at enhancing the safety and security of Women Domestic Workers (WDWs) provides critical insights into the coherence of the initiative with relevant policies and frameworks at various levels.

The evaluation of the Martha Farrell Foundation's (MFF) project demonstrates that its efforts are strongly aligned with relevant national, state, and district-level policies, particularly the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013 (SHW Act). Through training, capacity-building, and the reconstitution of Local Committees (LCs), the project has enhanced compliance with the SHW Act and contributed to the effective implementation of district-level priorities on gender equality and workplace harassment.

Key findings show that MFF's training initiatives provided district officials and LC members with critical knowledge, empowering them to better understand and implement the SHW Act. This not only reinforced the legal framework but also bolstered local governance structures, ensuring that harassment cases are addressed in a systematic and compliant manner. The reconstitution of LCs post-COVID also highlighted the project's commitment to aligning its activities with legal mandates and ensuring the sustained functioning of these bodies.

Despite progress, challenges such as low awareness in semi-urban areas, logistical barriers, and political resistance continue to affect the accessibility and effectiveness of the grievance redressal system for Women Domestic Workers (WDWs). The project's focus on advocating for reforms to make the SHW Act more accessible, practical, and women-centric reflects its ongoing relevance and alignment with both national policies and the specific needs of informal workers.

Key Findings

- 1. Alignment with SHW Act, 2013:** The project demonstrates strong alignment with the SHW Act through the functioning and responsibilities of Local Committees (LCs) and district officials. MFF's training initiatives effectively educated these stakeholders, ensuring their activities were in compliance with the Act. District officials reported increased understanding of their responsibilities in addressing workplace harassment, particularly concerning informal workers.
- 2. Role of Training in Ensuring Compliance:** Training provided by MFF was crucial for district officials, clarifying their mandates under the SHW Act. Many officials, prior to the training, were unaware of the specific requirements necessary for implementing the Act effectively. This training has laid a foundation for deeper understanding and compliance, ensuring that committees are well-equipped to handle cases of workplace harassment.
- 3. Reconstitution of Local Committees:** The reconstitution of LCs, especially in the post-COVID context, underscores adherence to the SHW Act. Local Committee members emphasized the importance of aligning committee structures with legal frameworks, ensuring effective functioning and increased accountability. The reconstitution process, along with ongoing training, has strengthened the capacity of LCs to address the high volume of cases effectively.
- 4. District-Level Priorities:** The initiatives by MFF are closely aligned with district-level priorities focused on gender equality and violence prevention. The training programmes are not merely compliance-based but strategically designed to bolster the capacity of LCs and district officials, contributing to broader district objectives.
- 5. Need for Broader Education:** While the focus on workplace sexual harassment is crucial, there is a recognized need for broader education on various forms of gender-based violence. This gap

suggests the necessity for additional training modules that address challenges faced by informal workers, including domestic violence and other forms of harassment outside the workplace.

6. **Challenges in Implementation:** Despite progress, challenges remain in the implementation of the SHW Act, particularly in semi-urban areas where awareness is low. Barriers such as financial constraints, logistical difficulties in filing complaints, and language barriers hinder the accessibility of the grievance redressal system for WDWs.
7. **Framing Sexual Harassment as a Labour Issue:** Emphasizing sexual harassment as a labour issue rather than exclusively a gender issue is critical. This perspective calls for an inter-ministerial approach to implementing the SHW Act, ensuring safe working conditions for all workers, and moving away from patriarchal frameworks that position women solely as victims.
8. **Recommendations for Future Actions:** To enhance coherence with policies and improve the effectiveness of the SHW Act, recommendations include establishing more accessible complaint mechanisms, expanding training to cover a wider array of gender-based violence issues, and advocating for a gender-neutral approach to harassment laws. These steps can better serve the needs of all workers and contribute to a safer, more equitable work environment.

Alignment with rules and guidelines of SHW Act, 2013

The alignment of district-level efforts with the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act, 2013 (SHW Act) is evident in the functioning and responsibilities of LCs and district officials. MFF's training initiatives have played a crucial role in educating and empowering these committees, ensuring that their activities adhere to the SHW Act's guidelines.

District Officials: The Role of Training in Ensuring Compliance

MFF's efforts to increase awareness and ensure compliance with the SHW Act directly supported national-level laws and initiatives aimed at addressing workplace harassment. The government has faced challenges in popularizing and effectively implementing the SHW Act, particularly at the local level and among informal workers. MFF's training for district officials was aligned with this need, focusing on building awareness of the Act and ensuring that district staff understood their responsibilities under it, such as forming LCs to handle workplace harassment complaints.

This alignment with the SHW Act helped reinforce national efforts to create safer workplaces and promote gender equality, addressing gaps in the law's implementation by directly targeting those responsible for its enforcement at the district-level. By filling critical knowledge gaps and supporting compliance mechanisms, MFF's work was a crucial extension of ongoing government strategies to operationalize the Act more effectively across sectors, particularly in areas where informal workers are vulnerable.

Local Committee Member: Reconstitution and Adherence to the SHW Act

A key aspect of compliance with the SHW Act was the reconstitution of LCs spearheaded by MFF, particularly in the post-COVID period, which was heavily supported and influenced by the MFF team. One of the LC members reflects in their interview with the evaluation team on the restructuring of the LC in one of the districts in March 2023, noting that the exceptions made during the pandemic, such as allowing a member from outside Delhi, were necessary at the time. However, with the end of the pandemic, the committee was restructured to fully comply with the SHW Act. This reconstitution underscores the importance of adhering to legal frameworks, ensuring that the committee functions in alignment with the SHW Act.

Alignment with SHW Act, 2013

The alignment of both district officials' efforts and LCs' operations with the SHW Act is clear. The training provided by MFF has been instrumental in ensuring district staff understand their roles within the legal framework of the SHW Act, particularly in dealing with informal workers. The reconstitution of LCs in line with the Act's requirements, after the exceptions made during the pandemic, further emphasizes the

commitment to adhering to the law. As a result, these efforts collectively contribute to the effective implementation of the SHW Act, ensuring that workplace sexual harassment is addressed through legally compliant and well-supported systems.

Alignment with district-level priority areas

The district-level initiatives to address sexual harassment and promote gender equality have been significantly enhanced by targeted training and awareness programmes facilitated by MFF. These efforts are closely aligned with the district's priority areas, aimed at bolstering the capacity of LCs and district officials to handle cases of workplace harassment effectively.

Alignment with District Priorities

MFF's training programmes were not merely compliance exercises but strategically aligned with the district's broader objectives of promoting gender equality and addressing violence against women. By educating district staff about the importance and functionality of LCs, the training reinforced ongoing efforts to enforce gender equality policies and tackle workplace harassment. As the district official pointed out, "The training was specifically focused on the SHW Act" and played a critical role in informing district staff about their roles under the law. These efforts adhered to the regulatory framework that governs district-level operations, ensuring that officials were equipped to implement these guidelines effectively.

Foundation for Further Development

The training served as an "introductory orientation" for district staff, according to the district official as explained in a KII, helping familiarize them with the basic concepts of LCs and their function. This foundational training set the stage for more detailed sessions planned for the future. As the district official emphasized, the training was "in line with existing rules and guidelines" and provided the necessary groundwork for further capacity-building, ensuring that district officials would be prepared to handle complaints once they started coming in.

Insights from LC Members

As a direct result of MFF's training, the LCs were able to set up a formal office. "Ours is probably the only LC in Delhi which has a proper office," the LC member proudly stated, underscoring the tangible impact of MFF's capacity-building efforts. The LC member highlighted that "the capacity-building as far as the law was concerned and the implementation of the law is concerned was effective." This training significantly enhanced the LC's ability to operate in accordance with legal standards, ensuring better support for victims of workplace harassment. The aforementioned members of the LCs took *suo moto* cognizance of the need to set up an office to tend to the complaints of the informal women workers given the scale and the intensity of the harassment and violence experienced by informal women workers at their place of work. This process was catalyzed on account of the sensitization and advocacy efforts spearheaded by MFF.

Evidence of influence on local/state-level public policy

In a detailed discussion during a KII, an LC member delved into several critical challenges and systemic gaps in the implementation of the SHW Act, particularly in semi-urban areas. The conversation underscored the need for broader, systemic reforms to make the law more accessible and effective, especially for women in the informal sector. MFF's project activities contributed to addressing this need.

Need for Procedural and Logistical Reforms

To make the SHW Act more accessible, the LC member advocates for reforms in the complaint filing process. They recommend setting up smaller, easily accessible points where women can file complaints without the need for extensive travel or taking time off work. "You have a small office or you ask an NGO to double up as an office where at least... filing the case can be done," the LC member suggests. This

approach would ease the logistical burden for informal workers, ensuring that more women can access the redressal system. The LC member calls for a “rethink and re-read of the law” to make it more practical and user-friendly for those it aims to protect. MFF has played an integral role in unifying the stakeholders such as the LC members, the district officers and partner CSOs to advocate for the imminent need to re-haul the present system and re - re-constitute the procedures to make them easy to access and by default client-centric.

Additionally, it is critical to note that the team at MFF has engaged in gender-responsive training with the members of the LCs, they undertook sensitization drives with the RWAs and ensured adequate representation of members from CSOs. In this case, it can be ascertained that MFF has gone over and above their mandate, by necessitating the aforementioned requirements for members of the informal economy as opposed to restricting the same to the formal economy as mandated in the SHW Act.



To what extent has human rights-based and gender-responsive approaches been incorporated throughout the project?

By prioritizing the active participation of WDWs and conducting an intersectional gender analysis, the project aims to address the multifaceted challenges these workers face in securing their rights and navigating workplace environments often marred by discrimination and violence. The commitment to participatory methodologies not only empowers WDWs but also informs project design, ensuring interventions are contextually relevant and effective. This evaluation explores the extent to which these approaches have been integrated into the project, assessing the impact of participatory strategies and intersectional analysis on the experiences and outcomes for WDWs.

The project has effectively demonstrated the significance of incorporating human rights-based and gender-responsive approaches in addressing the challenges faced by WDWs. By prioritizing participatory methodologies, the project has not only empowered WDWs to actively engage in decision-making processes but also ensured that their voices are heard and valued in shaping interventions. The use of focus group discussions, safety audits, and advocacy meetings has fostered meaningful dialogue between WDWs and local authorities, enhancing accountability and responsiveness within the systems intended to protect them.

Furthermore, the integration of an intersectional gender analysis has allowed the project to recognize and address the diverse needs of WDWs, acknowledging the complexities of discrimination that arise from intersecting factors such as caste, class, migration status, and regional identity. This nuanced understanding has enabled the project to tailor its interventions, ensuring they are relevant and effective for various groups within the WDWs community.

The project's commitment to capacity-building across stakeholders, including police officers and civil society organizations, has reinforced the collective responsibility of various actors in combating workplace harassment. By engaging a broad spectrum of community stakeholders, the project has adopted a holistic approach that recognizes the multi-dimensional nature of the challenges faced by WDWs.

The feedback from WDWs reflects the project's alignment with participant needs and well-being. Most participants found the activities a valuable use of their time and reported minimal fatigue or wage loss, indicating that the project maintained participant-centered efficiency. However, isolated reports of wage losses in South Delhi, South-East Delhi, and South-West Delhi highlight areas for improvement in future interventions, suggesting the need for more flexible scheduling to avoid unintended financial burdens on participants.

Key Findings

- 1. Participatory Methodologies:** The project successfully embedded participatory methodologies by involving WDWs in decision-making processes from the outset. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) provided a platform for WDWs to share their experiences with workplace harassment, which helped shape project objectives and strategies. This involvement not only validated their concerns but also empowered them to voice their needs.
- 2. Active Engagement with Stakeholders:** WDWs participated in safety audits and advocacy meetings with local authorities, facilitating direct engagement with district officials regarding the challenges they face. This involvement helped ensure that the perspectives of WDWs influenced the mechanisms designed to protect them.
- 3. Capacity-Building for Stakeholders:** Training workshops and capacity-building sessions included various stakeholders, such as LCs, police officers, and CSOs. By ensuring that the voices

of WDWs were represented in these sessions, the project aimed to influence the systems meant to protect them, fostering a comprehensive understanding of their rights and challenges.

4. **Intersectional Gender Analysis:** The project employed an intersectional gender analysis, recognizing the complexity of the discrimination faced by WDWs. This analysis highlighted the interplay of factors such as caste, class, migration status, and regional identity, which contribute to their vulnerability in the workplace. By acknowledging these intersecting identities, the project tailored its interventions to address the unique needs of diverse groups within the WDWs community.
5. **Tailored Approaches for Diverse Needs:** Recognizing the low literacy levels among many WDWs, the project developed visual cues and tailored training materials to enhance understanding of rights and the legal framework. This approach ensured that the interventions were accessible and relevant, helping WDWs navigate the complexities of the legal system.
6. **Holistic Outreach to Informal Workers:** The project's outreach extended beyond WDWs to include other informal workers, such as Anganwadi workers and Pehelkars. Training these community stakeholders reinforced a holistic approach to addressing workplace harassment, recognizing the multifaceted identities and challenges faced by WDWs.
7. **Challenges of Marginalization:** The intersectional analysis revealed that many WDWs are migrants from socio-economically disadvantaged states, compounding their vulnerabilities. These workers often lack access to social safety nets, face economic discrimination, and are susceptible to sexual harassment in precarious working conditions.

The project embedded human rights-based and gender-responsive approaches across all stages of its planning and implementation. These approaches were evident through the project's commitment to both participatory methodologies and intersectional gender analysis.

Evidence of use of participatory approaches incorporated throughout the project implementation period

From the onset, the project prioritized a participatory approach to empower WDWs by ensuring their direct involvement in decision-making processes. Recognizing that WDWs are often marginalized and have limited avenues to voice their concerns, the project created spaces for their active participation in shaping both its objectives and its execution.

WDWs participated in 6 FGDs., which allowed them to share their personal experiences of workplace harassment and the barriers they face in accessing justice. These discussions not only helped to inform the project's design but also empowered the participants by validating their experiences and giving them a platform to voice their needs. Additionally, WDWs were involved in safety audits and advocacy meetings with district officials, where they could engage directly with local authorities about the challenges they faced.

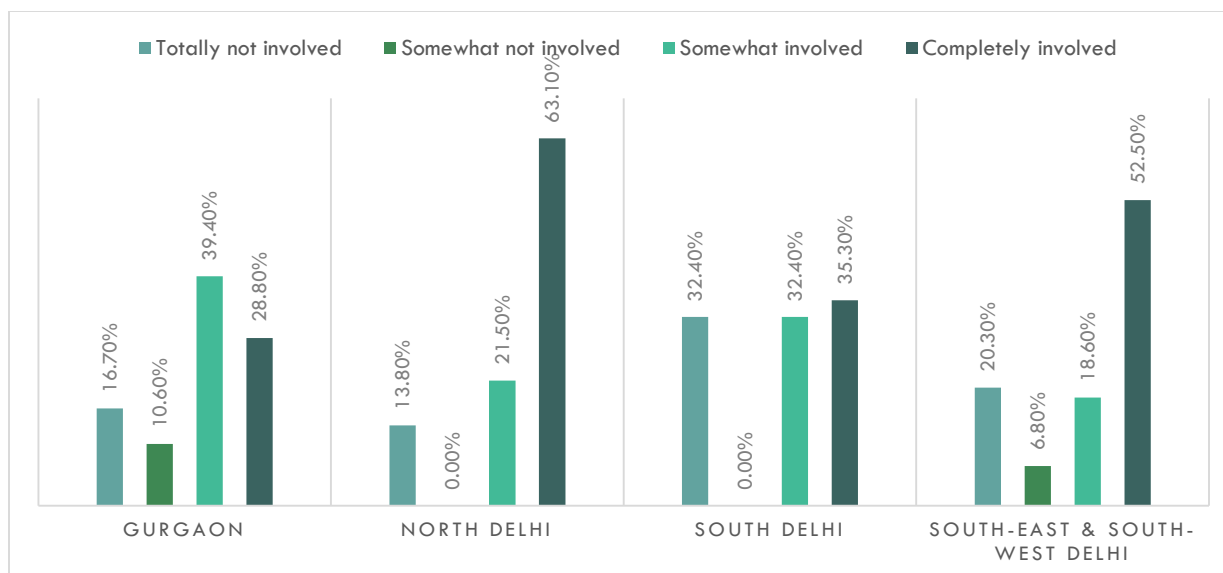


Figure 8: According to you, how involved were you in decision-making processes related to the project? (n=225).

From the above-illustrated graph, it can be ascertained that women domestic workers surveyed (n = 225) by the evaluators across the 4 districts of Delhi-NCR expressed a mixed response to whether they felt involved in the decision-making processes related to the project.

Training workshops and capacity-building sessions were designed not just for WDWs but for all stakeholders, including LCs, police officers, and CSOs, ensuring that the voices of WDWs influenced the very systems meant to protect them. This inclusive and participatory approach ensured that the interventions were contextually appropriate and grounded in the lived realities of the WDWs, further enhancing the project's impact.

The voice and the lived realities of women domestic workers were kept at the front and center while designing training workshops, capacity-building sessions and a fleet of other interventions for the entire gamut of stakeholders. The local committee members, district officers, police officers and other members of the state were sensitized both on the qualitative as well as quantitative notions of sexual harassment.

Further, conversations took place with the aforementioned stakeholders on the lived realities and social locations of the women domestic workers who come from socially disadvantaged and economically resource deficit backgrounds. Further, MFF engaged and interacted with prominent stakeholders from the State to begin a conversation and push for the importance of creating a safety net and the imperative for institutional safeguards to secure the basic and inalienable rights of informal women workers.

Evidence of intersectional gender analysis incorporated throughout the project planning and execution period

The project also employed an intersectional gender analysis during its planning and execution, recognizing that the challenges faced by WDWs could not be fully understood or addressed without acknowledging the multiple layers of discrimination they endure. The project employed an intersectional gender analysis while designing interventions, in the form of training, activities and advocacy campaigns while being present in the socio-economic location of the WDWs in question. These women not only face gender-based discrimination but also navigate intersecting forms of marginalization, including caste, class, migration status, and regional identity.

Many WDWs in Delhi-NCR are migrants from states like Bihar, Jharkhand, and West Bengal, where the social and economic structures further contribute to their vulnerability. The project acknowledged that these workers often live in precarious conditions, lack financial security, and are frequently subjected to caste-based and economic discrimination. These intersecting factors exacerbate their risk of facing sexual harassment at work, yet many of them lack the resources or support networks to seek justice.

By incorporating an intersectional gender analysis, the project ensured that its interventions were not one-size-fits-all. It tailored its approach to address the specific needs of different groups within the broader population of WDWs. For instance, visual cues and tailored training materials were used to cater to WDWs with low literacy levels, helping them understand their rights and navigate the legal system. Furthermore, the project took into account the compounded vulnerability of migrant workers who face additional obstacles, such as language barriers and lack of access to social safety nets, when advocating for their rights.

This intersectional approach was also evident in the project’s outreach to other informal workers, including Anganwadi workers and Pehekars, who were trained to support WDWs in understanding and reporting workplace harassment. By engaging these key community stakeholders, the project reinforced a holistic, multi-faceted approach to combating sexual harassment, one that recognized the complex identities and challenges faced by WDWs.

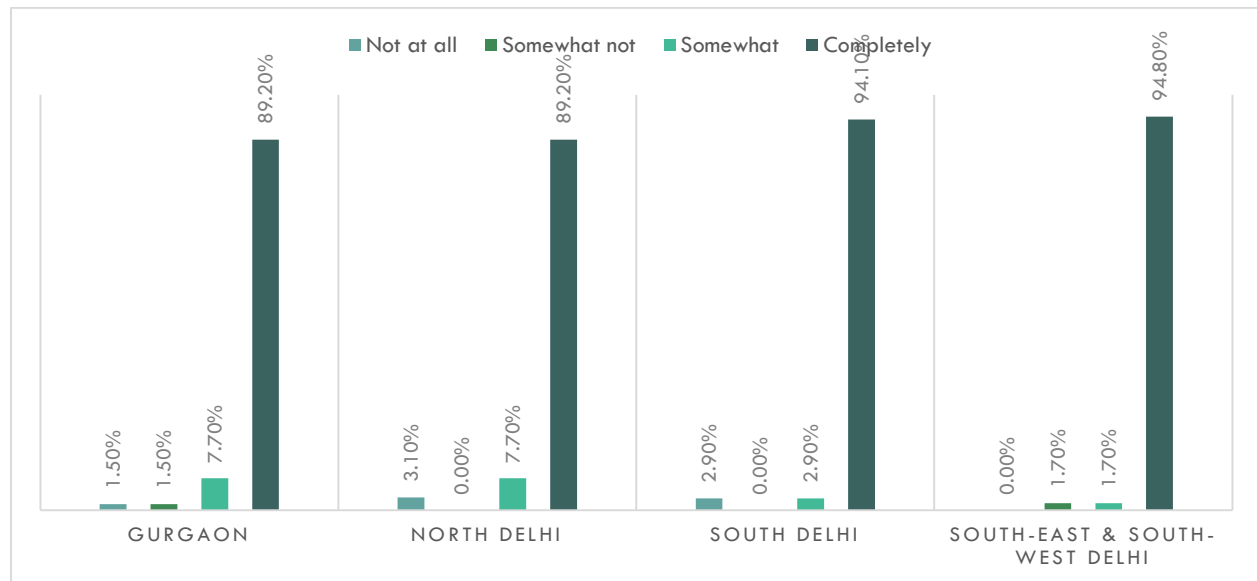


Figure 9: Did you feel equal, respected, accountable, and responsible for the project and its outcomes? (n=225).

From the above graph, it can be ascertained that nearly 90% women domestic workers surveyed (n = 225) by the evaluators across the 4 districts of Delhi NCR are in complete agreement that they feel equal, respected, accountable and responsible for the project and its outcomes.

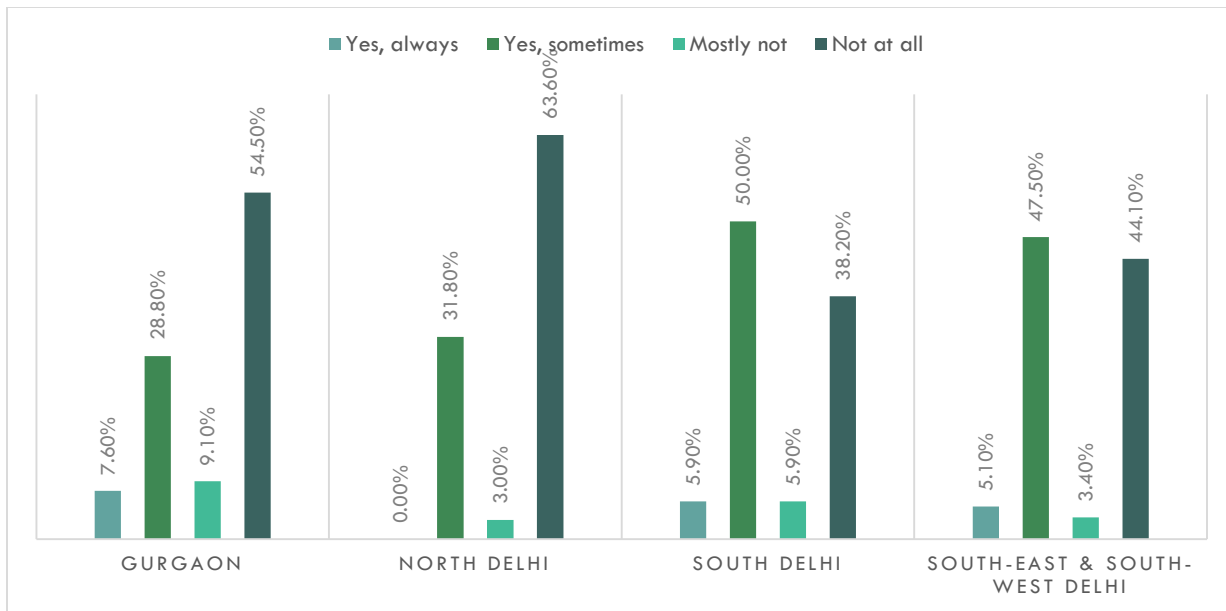


Figure 10: Did at any point throughout the course of the project, WDWs feel tired or strained because of participating in the project activities? (n=225).

From the graph illustrated above, it can be discerned that the WDWs surveyed (n = 225) by the evaluators across the four districts of Delhi-NCR have a mixed response to the question wherein, there is a palpable split among the respondents between yes and not at all, to the question, did the WDWs at any point throughout the course of the project feel tired or strained because of participating in the project activities.

Additionally, the MFF team members too expressed profound mental stress after numerous challenging meetings. One participant shared, “I used to get so stressed.” When probed further, they elaborated, “Sometimes there were such cases that I used to feel like my head would hurt. I used to feel like, what should I do? I used to feel very sad.” In response to these overwhelming emotions, they initially turned to her fellow team members. “Earlier we all used to talk together,” they explained. However, the weight of the cases they handled stayed with them. “When we used to go home, we used to feel sad. Thinking about how much certain WDWs were hurt. How many times I used to cry.”

In these moments of distress, MFF’s team members sought solace in the support system provided by the Martha Farrell Foundation. “Yes, I used to talk to them. And feel a little bit lighter,” one woman recalled. The discussions among the team members were a crucial source of emotional release, but they also recognized the enormity of their work. The monthly meetings with staff helped structure their work. “We engage in monthly planning. So, during planning we chalk up what to do and what not to do,” one of the MFF members described. These meetings provided guidance and training that helped alleviate the operational stress. “We were given so much training, so many modules, kits, that it didn’t seem like a big deal,” they explained. However, the emotional toll of witnessing violence and trauma remained. “The problem was that someone was beaten up, kidnapped, what happened to those girls, and when that woman was raped. So that was stressful.”

Over time, through continuous support and training from the Martha Farrell Foundation, the team members gained strength and resilience. “We got more information. We have become stronger,” one of the MFF staff proudly stated. They not only became stronger themselves but also passed on their learning to their children. “We are training our children at home and also outside. We are training our children from 13 to 18 about sexual harassment through the Martha Farrell Foundation.”

Despite the tension and challenges they face, the women have found ways to manage their stress. “We have learned to do it on our own, with understanding. How we can free our tension.” The training included practical tips for stress relief, such as painting and playing games. Reflecting on her journey, one of the team members shared, “I was very worried in the beginning. But now, after two years, I feel better when the case is solved.” The emotional load remains, but they have developed tools to cope with it, finding relief after resolving the cases they work on. “After it’s done, we feel relaxed.”

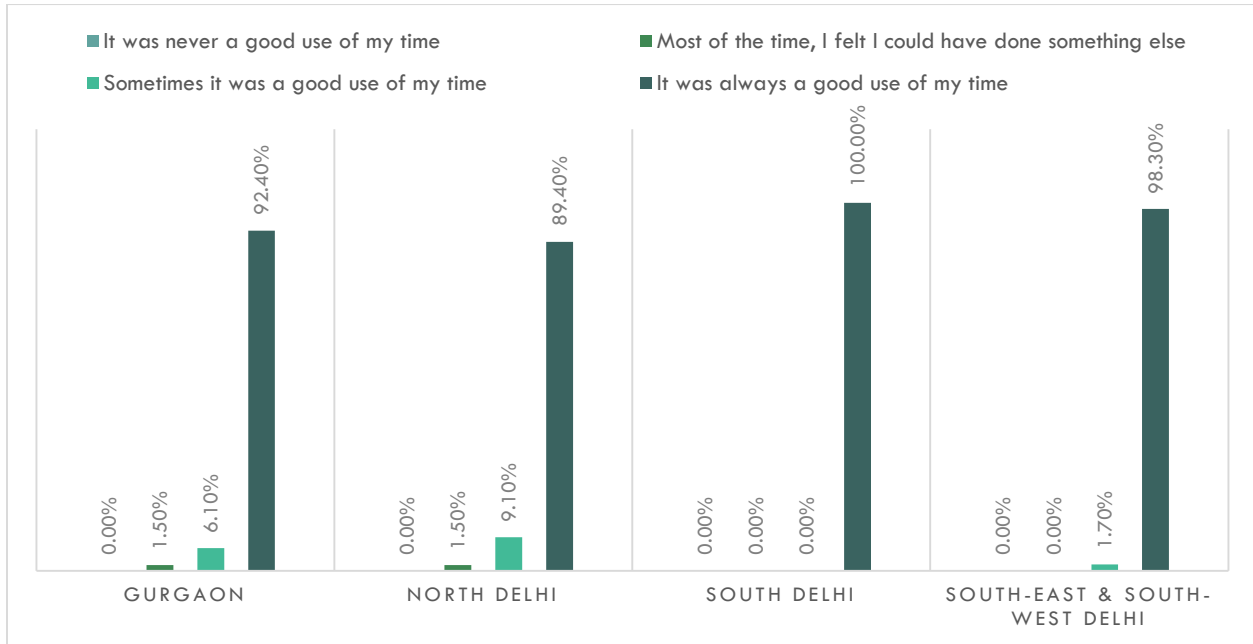


Figure 11: Would you say that the time you spent on this project, participating in activities, conversations or meetings were a good use of your time or do you think it would have been better if you’d spent that time elsewhere? (n=225).

From the graph illustrated above, it can be gleaned that nearly 90% of WDWs surveyed (n= 225) across 4 districts of Delhi-NCR are in agreement that the time they spent on the project, participating in activities, conversations or meetings were always a good use of their time.

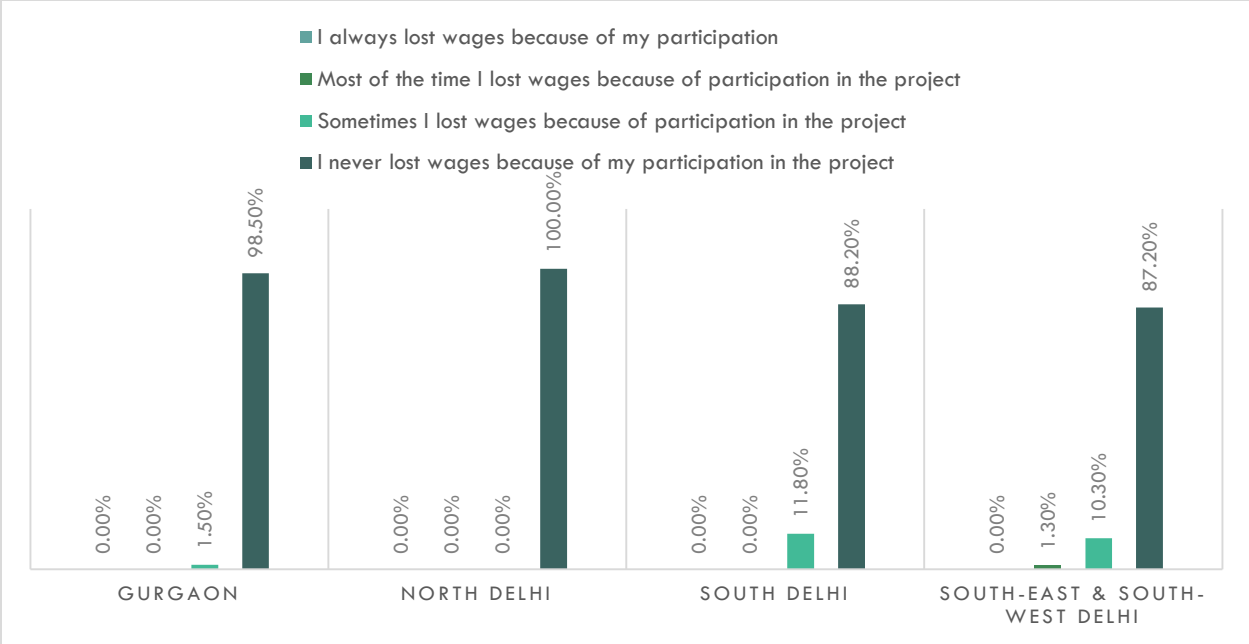


Figure 12: Because of your participation in the project activities, attending meetings or consultations, etc. did you ever end up losing money or wages? (n=225).

From the graph illustrated above, it can be ascertained that of the WDWs surveyed by the evaluators (n = 225) across the 4 districts of Delhi-NCR, less than 15% of women domestic workers have sometimes lost wages because of their participation in the project work spearheaded by the Martha Farrell Foundation.

The project's commitment to capacity-building across stakeholders, including police officers and civil society organizations, has reinforced the collective responsibility of various actors in combating workplace harassment. By engaging a broad spectrum of community stakeholders, the project has adopted a holistic approach that recognizes the multi-dimensional nature of the challenges faced by WDWs.

The feedback from Women Domestic Workers (WDWs) reflects the project's alignment with participant needs and well-being. Most participants found the activities a valuable use of their time and reported minimal fatigue or wage loss, indicating that the project maintained participant-centered efficiency. However, isolated reports of wage losses in South Delhi, South-East Delhi, and South-West Delhi highlight areas for improvement in future interventions, suggesting the need for more flexible scheduling to avoid unintended financial burdens on participants.

The project serves as a valuable model for future initiatives aimed at enhancing gender equality and human rights within vulnerable populations. The lessons learned from its implementation can inform policy and programme design, ultimately contributing to a more equitable and just society for Women Domestic Workers and similar marginalized groups.

Recommendations

For Local Committees

Recommendation	Rationale	Actionable steps
<p>Institutionalize and operationalize SOPs for handling Sexual Harassment at Workplace cases.</p>	<p>Absence of SOPs results in ad hoc operations dependent on individuals. A formalized process ensures consistency and efficient case-handling.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create SOPs with clear timelines for SHW redressal. 2. Mandate training on the SOPs for LC members, with retraining for new appointees. 3. Regular updates on SHW cases to ensure accountability.
<p>Strengthen LC capacity to provide consistent support to WDWs</p>	<p>Many WDWs remain unaware of the resources available through LCs, and inconsistent support across districts hampers effective redressal.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Train LC members on sensitivity to informal workers' issues and SHW law 2. Establish visible, accessible LC offices with regular operating hours. 3. Ensure that LCs have the necessary resources, both logistical and financial, to carry out their roles efficiently.
<p>Improve the responsiveness and accessibility of Local Committees (LCs) to ensure they meet the needs of WDWs.</p>	<p>Despite the presence of LCs, many WDWs are hesitant to report cases due to a lack of trust in their effectiveness.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure regular LC meetings are held in accessible locations and that LC members are approachable. 2. Provide training to LC members on handling cases of sexual harassment with sensitivity and promptness. 3. Create a transparent tracking system that keeps complainants informed of the progress of their cases.
<p>Create formal knowledge transfer mechanisms to retain institutional knowledge despite frequent personnel changes.</p>	<p>High personnel turnover leads to a loss of knowledge and momentum.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mandate comprehensive handover documentation for outgoing LC members. 2. Implement mentorship programmes where outgoing members train their replacements.

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Establish regular refresher training sessions to keep new members informed of case-handling best practices.
<p>Advocate for stronger legal frameworks that provide LCs with administrative powers to enforce their decisions across departments and organizations.</p>	<p>LCs lack enforcement authority, which limits their ability to ensure compliance with their recommendations.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advocate for legislative reforms to empower LCs with greater administrative authority. 2. Collaborate with local governance structures to enforce LC recommendations. 3. Implement mechanisms to monitor and penalize non-compliance with LC directives.
<p>Strengthen partnerships between LCs and NGOs to ensure continuous support for capacity-building, advocacy, and community engagement.</p>	<p>NGOs provide essential support to LCs, including training and advocacy.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Formalize long-term partnerships between LCs and NGOs for ongoing training and advocacy support. 2. Develop joint projects with NGOs to raise awareness about SHW and engage marginalized communities. 3. Collaborate on creating capacity-building initiatives that ensure LCs remain functional and effective after project funding ends.

For District Authorities

Recommendation	Rationale	Actionable steps
<p>District administrations should formalize and embed training programmes on gender-based violence, including SHW, into the induction and ongoing professional development of LC members and nodal officers.</p>	<p>The current reliance on external actors for capacity-building highlights a gap in systemic training provisions.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaborate with NGOs and experts to develop gender sensitivity modules. 2. Incorporate training into the existing administrative curriculum for district officers. 3. Ensure follow-up workshops and refresher courses to sustain knowledge retention.

For CSOs

Recommendation	Rationale	Actionable steps
<p>CSOs should expand the Pehelkar model with a structured support system that safeguards the well-being of Pehelkars and their communities.</p>	<p>Pehelkars have proven to be effective in mobilizing domestic workers.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a mentorship and support system for Pehelkars, providing them with psychological, logistical, and legal aid. 2. Introduce safety protocols for Pehelkars when engaging in rescue and advocacy work. 3. Expand the Pehelkar network to include more trained community leaders to share responsibilities.
<p>NGOs working with domestic workers should focus on targeted outreach efforts to engage hard-to-reach populations, particularly full-time live-in workers and young migrant workers from rural areas.</p>	<p>Many live-in domestic workers are isolated from broader networks and remain unaware of their rights, making them more susceptible to abuse. Focused outreach will help bring these groups into the protective net.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct targeted workshops and awareness sessions in migrant communities and informal settlements. 2. Partner with local government and labour agencies to distribute legal and educational materials in workers' native languages. 3. Establish informal safe spaces where live-in workers can access support and resources without fear of employer retribution.
<p>Expand training programmes on labour rights and SHW to deepen the understanding of WDWs and ensure continuous support.</p>	<p>The shift in WDWs' perception of their rights and roles has been significant. To sustain this transformation, more workshops and community-led sessions are needed to cover nuances such as labour laws and strategies for addressing SHW</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop targeted training modules on intersectional issues like gender, labour rights, and SHW to reach a broader audience. 2. Facilitate cross-learning between regions and create a mentorship system where trained WDWs can mentor others in understanding their rights.
<p>Strengthen collaborations between NGOs, civil society organizations (CSOs), and district-level governance to ensure coherence between the project's activities and broader national and district-level</p>	<p>Current collaborations are limited to specific areas like one-stop centers. Expanding partnerships to address workplace sexual harassment</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expand partnerships to include other organizations working specifically on gender-based violence and workplace harassment at district and state-levels.

policies on gender equality and workplace harassment.	more directly will improve the coherence of initiatives.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Create multisectoral task forces that can address workplace harassment from multiple angles, including legal, labour, and social welfare perspectives. 3. Facilitate dialogue between community-based organizations and government officials to ensure that informal sector workers' voices are integrated into policy discussions.
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For Policymakers

Recommendation	Rationale	Actionable steps
Policymakers should consider expanding the scope of the SHW Act to explicitly cover informal workers and ensure that domestic workers have easier access to the legal frameworks that protect them.	While the SHW Act, 2013, applies to all workplaces, its implementation remains weak in informal sectors like domestic work. Addressing this gap will provide domestic workers with the protection they need.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amend the SHW Act to include specific provisions for informal and domestic workers. 2. Strengthen enforcement mechanisms at the local level to ensure that LCs are accessible and responsive to informal workers. 3. Facilitate easier reporting through mobile-based platforms or local union representatives.
Strengthen legal frameworks and policies to provide better protection for WDWs and ensure enforcement of their rights.	Legal protections for WDWs are often weak or unenforced, leading to a lack of confidence in formal systems. Strengthening these protections will improve trust and accountability.	<p>Review and amend existing labour laws to include stronger protections for WDWs, including mandatory workplace harassment policies for informal sector employers.</p> <p>Ensure that local governments are held accountable for implementing these laws and that LCs have the necessary resources to handle cases effectively.</p> <p>Develop policies that mandate employers to inform WDWs of their rights and establish grievance redressal committees in both formal and informal workplaces.</p>

<p>Strengthen the inclusion of informal sector workers, particularly Women Domestic Workers (WDWs), in national and district policies addressing workplace harassment</p>	<p>Informal workers face unique challenges, and the SHW Act's implementation for this group remains limited. Expanding the focus on this group will ensure better protection under the law.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce district-level policies that mandate specialized support for informal workers, ensuring their inclusion in Local Committees (LCs) and other redressal mechanisms. 2. Amend national and state policies to include specific provisions for protecting informal workers, ensuring that they can easily access grievance redressal systems without logistical or financial burdens. 3. Conduct public awareness campaigns focused on informal sector workers, educating them about their rights under the SHW Act and other protective measures.
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For Donor Organizations

Recommendation	Rationale	Actionable steps
<p>Donor organizations like the UN Trust Fund (UN Trust Fund) should fund projects aimed at structural reforms, particularly in strengthening the implementation of SHW laws and building the capacity of Local Committees (LCs) in India.</p>	<p>While direct interventions have led to significant community empowerment, long-term change requires investments in systemic and policy reforms to ensure institutional accountability.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fund projects that focus on policy advocacy, legal reforms, and capacity-building within government institutions. 2. Support initiatives that aim to standardize and institutionalize LC procedures across different districts. 3. Encourage projects that push for the digitization of SHW complaint processes, making it easier for WDWs to file cases.
<p>Provide long-term funding and support for initiatives that promote WDWs' rights and SHW awareness, focusing on community-led advocacy and systemic reform.</p>	<p>The challenges of working with informal workers and government institutions necessitate flexibility. While efficient use of funds is essential, donors should recognize that certain behavioral outcomes (like reporting SHW) may take longer to materialize,</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build flexibility into funding agreements by providing a mechanism for requesting timeline extensions without it reflecting negatively on project success. 2. Focus on long-term impact and behavioral changes as key performance indicators, rather

	especially in complex environments.	than simply tracking immediate outputs.
Provide sustained funding and support to ensure that trust-building efforts within communities can continue over time.	Building trust in formal systems and creating lasting cultural change takes time, often beyond the typical scope of short-term projects. Continuous support is needed to reinforce long-term sustainability.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Allocate funds for follow-up projects that specifically focus on trust-building and the long-term sustainability of grievance redressal systems. 2. Encourage partnerships between NGOs and local governments to embed project activities into ongoing community governance structures. 3. Ensure that any new initiatives build on the success of current programmes by focusing on continuity and community ownership of grievance redressal systems.

For Workers’ Unions

Recommendation	Rationale	Actionable steps
Workers' unions and collectives should prioritize the establishment of sustainable structures that outlast individual projects, ensuring ongoing support and advocacy for WDWs even after external funding ends.	While MFF’s project has successfully mobilized domestic workers, long-term sustainability requires formal structures, such as registered unions or collectives, that can advocate for workers’ rights in a continued, organized manner.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitate the registration of WDWs’ collectives as formal labour unions or self-help groups. 2. Develop leadership training programmes to build the capacity of collective leaders in negotiation and legal literacy. 3. Create partnerships with existing labour unions to ensure WDWs’ interests are represented at the national policy level.

For Employers

Recommendation	Rationale	Actionable steps
Employers' associations or advocacy groups should launch awareness campaigns targeting employers, emphasizing the importance of compliance with SHW laws and ethical treatment of domestic workers.	One of the major sources of harassment and exploitation stems from the power imbalance between domestic workers and employers. Employers' awareness of SHW laws and fair labour practices is essential to reducing workplace harassment.	<p>Develop employer training sessions on the SHW Act and other labour laws.</p> <p>Establish grievance redressal mechanisms for domestic workers to report abusive practices anonymously.</p> <p>Incentivize compliance with SHW laws by rewarding ethical employers with certifications or public recognition.</p>
Employers should be encouraged to treat WDWs with dignity and respect and to adopt ethical labour practices, including paid leave and non-discriminatory policies.	WDWs expressed their desire to be treated with dignity and to work in fair conditions. Employers need to be more aware of their role in creating a respectful and supportive work environment.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct employer sensitization workshops led by CSOs to raise awareness of labour rights and dignity in domestic work. 2. Implement guidelines for ethical treatment of domestic workers, including fair wages, paid leave, and non-discrimination.
Encourage employers and community leaders to actively promote a safe working environment and support WDWs in their efforts to address workplace harassment.	In many cases, employers and male community members resist efforts to address workplace harassment, leading to a culture of silence. Engaging them in the solution is essential for lasting change.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organize workshops for employers and community members that focus on creating harassment-free workplaces, emphasizing the legal and moral responsibilities of employers. 2. Develop employer-led initiatives where they take active steps to prevent harassment, such as distributing written workplace policies on sexual harassment. 3. Recognize and reward employers who demonstrate best practices in supporting their employees, creating a positive incentive for others to follow

For Women Domestic Workers

Recommendation	Rationale	Actionable steps
<p>Continue strengthening peer-to-peer support networks and foster open discussions on SHW, rights, and dignity as workers.</p>	<p>The project has successfully enabled WDWs to view themselves as legitimate workers with rights. Continuing to build on this foundation will ensure sustained advocacy for fair treatment and workplace rights.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organize regular peer-led meetings to share experiences and strategies for confronting harassment and labour rights violations. 2. Form alliances with other informal worker groups to collectively lobby for better working conditions and legal protections.
<p>Build trust in formal grievance redressal systems to ensure WDWs feel secure reporting workplace harassment.</p>	<p>While WDWs feel empowered to take action, many bypass formal reporting due to distrust in these mechanisms. Strengthening trust in formal channels is critical for long-term effectiveness.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct workshops on the importance of using formal reporting mechanisms and provide clear information on the steps involved. 2. Partner with trusted community leaders to serve as intermediaries in filing formal complaints, ensuring that WDWs feel supported throughout the process. 3. Organize community forums where WDWs who have successfully navigated formal redressal systems can share their experiences and build confidence among others.