



IN TOUCH IN TUNE

Engaging The Philanthropic Ecosystem

Friends, Allies, and Donors

South Asia Women Foundation India (SAWF IN) is a national women's fund set up with the objective of raising and influencing the flow of resources to women and trans women led organizations for the priorities they identify and the agendas they see as central for feminist movement building. We are delighted to reach out to you with our very first newsletter! Going forward we hope this becomes an exciting platform to share views, insights and compelling stories from the ground.

What is a women's fund?

Women's Funds are an important institutional mechanism to support self-led, gender transformative initiatives helmed by women. They work towards ensuring resources are available and reach the most dispossessed women's collectives, for the priorities they identify, and the claims they make. The role of women's funds is also to amplify needs and aspirations of women and trans people led initiatives within the philanthropic eco-system. There are currently 43 women's funds worldwide working under the umbrella of Prospera, the International Network of Women's Funds.

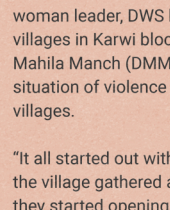
About Us

SAWF IN as a national fund emerged from efforts to build a vibrant feminist philanthropic eco system in South Asia. She was put forward as an idea by the Indian Board members of a regional women's fund, South Asia Women's Fund (SAWF) and registered in August 2015 in India as a not-for-profit Company under section 8 of the Indian Companies Act 2013.

OUR BOARD



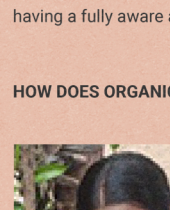
Suneeta Dhar is a Co-Founding Director of SAWF IN, an eminent feminist and has worked across several organizations. She is a trainer and facilitator of change processes for many women's rights groups. She serves on select committees of government and civil society organizations.



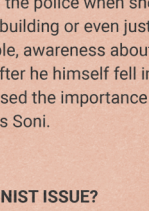
Priya Paul is a Co-Founding Director of SAWF IN and a renowned entrepreneur, a Padma Shri awardee and Chairperson of the Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels.



Tulika Srivastava is a prominent human rights lawyer and Co-Founder of Association for Advocacy and Legal Initiatives (AALI). She is presently the Executive Director of Women's Fund Asia.

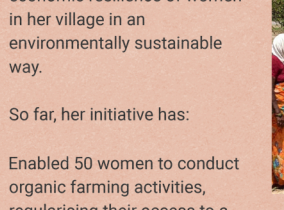


Gagan Sethi is a renowned development practitioner, organizational development expert, a gender trainer and co-founder of several organizations, networks and alliances at the national, regional, and international level.



STRENGTHENING FEMINIST LEADERSHIP

FIGHT AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

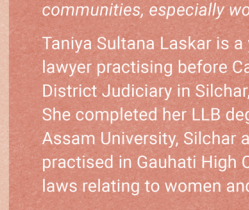


Our partner Diya Welfare Society (DWS) has been empowering women and fighting against gender violence in the Bundelkhand region of Uttar Pradesh state for almost 11 years. Started by Mamta Soni, a Dalit woman leader, DWS has established a peer support network across 12 villages in Karwi block, supporting over 1200 Dalit women under Diya Mahila Manch (DMM). This platform acts as the first responder to a situation of violence against women, adolescents, and children in their villages.

"It all started out with casual monthly meetings where the women from the village gathered and just talked about anything they liked. Gradually, they started opening up and raising their voice against domestic violence," says Mamta Soni.

She helped the women in the village understand their legal rights and made them aware of the steps that can be taken if they face any form of violence. "A woman who is now a leader in DWS was thrown out of her house by her husband after she threatened to call the police when she faced abuse. Her husband argued that while skill-building or even just chatting with other women in the village is tolerable, awareness about legal rights was stepping out of line. It was only after he himself fell in trouble with the law and landed in jail that he realised the importance of having a fully aware and empowered partner," says Soni.

HOW DOES ORGANIC FARMING BECOME A FEMINIST ISSUE?

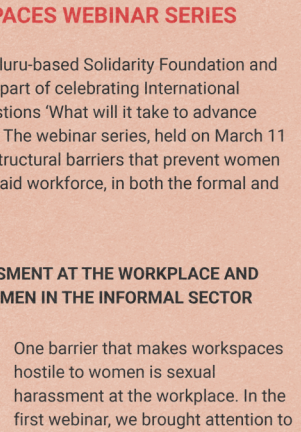


Bujji Pallegogu noticed how a solid waste management yard in her village in Krishna district, Andhra Pradesh remained unutilised. The waste lay in huge piles and the site attracted anti-social elements. It was then that it struck her that she could revive the dump yard and can even make it viable by converting the waste to vermicompost and selling it to the farmers.

Despite facing many challenges including caste discrimination, Bujji has become a well-known community mobiliser and has also worked as an Internet Saathi (a venture by Tata Trust) in her village. Her initiative now focuses on building the economic resilience of women in her village in an environmentally sustainable way.

So far, her initiative has:

- Enabled 50 women to conduct organic farming activities, regularising their access to a nutritious organic diet. It also leads to direct savings in their monthly expenses towards buying vegetables for the family.
- Regularised daily house waste collection, waste segregation and vermicomposting helping in reduction of soil and water pollution in the village.



Bujji has been nominated as the 'Green Guard' by the Panchayat.

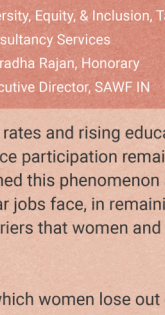
MAPPING TRANS PEOPLE LED MOVEMENTS IN INDIA

South Asia Women Foundation India (SAWF IN) is deeply committed to supporting groups and organizations led by women and trans persons. We conducted a mapping to understand the contours of transgender movements in India, their agendas and resource requirements, from a transfeminist lens. The idea is to develop a funding agenda ground up, based on the financial and non-financial resource support needs of groups and organizations working with and for trans and gender non-binary persons. Watch out for the findings from the report.

Meet our new fellow!

"I aim to make legal aid more accessible by providing pro-bono support to those from marginalized communities, especially women."

Taniya Sultana Laskar is a young lawyer practising before a Cacher District Judiciary in Silchar, Assam. She completed her LLB degree from Assam University, Silchar and has practised in Gauhati High Court for three years. She focuses on laws relating to women and children.



You can also support their work! Contact us to know more.

BUILDING CRITICAL SPACES

WOMEN & WORKSPACES WEBINAR SERIES

SAWF IN collaborated with Bengaluru-based Solidarity Foundation and held a two-part webinar series as part of celebrating International Women's Day to address the questions 'What will it take to advance women's economic participation? The webinar series, held on March 11 and 25, focused on some of the structural barriers that prevent women from entering and staying in the paid workforce, in both the formal and informal sectors.

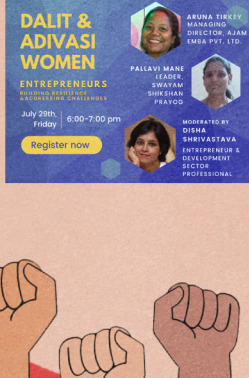
1. WEBINAR ON SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT THE WORKPLACE AND REDRESSAL MEASURES FOR WOMEN IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR

Speakers

- Madhu Mehra, Head- Research and Trainings, Partners for Law in Development (PLD),
- Meva Bharti, Convener, Rajasthan Mahila Kamgar Union (RMKU),
- Nisha Guler, Program Manager, Sangama and VP, National Network of Sex Workers, India,
- Anshu Jha, Program Associate & Advocacy Coordinator, SEWA Delhi
- Pushpa Achanta, Associate Director, Solidarity Foundation

One barrier that makes workplaces hostile to women is sexual harassment at the workplace. In the first webinar, we brought attention to this issue, especially among informal women workers and the mechanisms that need to be strengthened to address it. Some of the important points brought out by the panellists were:

- The need to implement the Sexual Harassment of Women at Work Place (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act (PoSH) more effectively for women in the informal sector.
- The ways women workers navigate these issues in their daily lives and lack of legal awareness among women workers in the informal sector.
- The importance of mobilisation and movement building especially for women workers from the informal sector, as it builds their access to legal justice.



2. WEBINAR ON WOMEN IN THE FORMAL SECTOR: IS THE WORKPLACE DOING ENOUGH TO RETAIN WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE?



Speakers

- Sona Mitra, Principal Economist, IWWAGE
- Shakti Sri Maya, Intersex and Trans Rights Activist
- Sreela Das Gupta, Lead SME, Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion, Tata Consultancy Services
- Anuradha Rajan, Honorary Executive Director, SAWF IN

Studies show that despite, decreasing fertility rates and rising education levels of women and girls, women's labour force participation remains low in India. In the second webinar, we examined this phenomenon and looked at the challenges women in white-collar jobs face, in remaining in the workforce. The discussion highlighted barriers that women and trans people face in the formal sector, such as

- the prevalence of 'benign patriarchy' in which women lose out on opportunities due to the assumption that certain types of work may be inappropriate or dangerous for women.
- the burden of unpaid care work that makes many women opt for flexible working options
- the yawning gender pay- gap
- the lack of understanding of health coverage needs for trans people

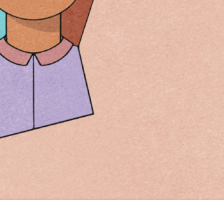
3. REFLECTION CIRCLE WITH GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS IN NAGPUR



Creating safe spaces for critical discussions, dialogue and reflection is a core area of SAWF IN's work. We see this as essential for strengthening networks and alliances that support and sustain movement building. Critical spaces are meant to enable grassroots organizations to connect with each other, share knowledge and learn from each other. It is also meant to highlight emerging agendas that need funding support.

With this objective in mind, we facilitated a discussion between groups based in the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra to understand emerging needs and issues which need to inform philanthropic agenda setting. Representatives from seven small to mid-size NGOs participated in this reflective discussion and key learnings that emerged included:

- **The need to work with both men and women:** Especially young boys and girls, to bring about sustained changes in people's mindsets concerning women's changing roles and rights in society.
- **Significance of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and collectives:** Organizations engaging with women and girls shared that creating SHGs and collectives was still more effective in mobilising women.
- **A shrinking funding landscape:** Some small and mid-sized groups also shared their difficulties in raising funds especially since their past donors ceased funding post the COVID phase. Most donors changed their programme priorities focussing more on relief work than on funding the long-term requirements of a project.
- **The importance of nurturing spaces for learning and sharing:** Convening such meetings, provides an opportunity for groups and organizations working in the neighbouring districts to come together and learn about each other's work, exchange resources and commit to a common change agenda.



4. WEBINAR ON DALIT & ADIVASI WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS- BUILDING RESILIENCE AND ADDRESSING CHALLENGES

Speakers

- Aruna Tirkey, Founder of Ajam Emba, Ranchi
- Pallavi Mane, Leader, Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP)
- Disha Srivastava, Entrepreneur and Development Sector Professional

To advance women's rights it is necessary to build their economic resilience. Entrepreneurs with innovative solutions can help to bring about a transformational change in the community by establishing new ideas, and business and employment opportunities. Women entrepreneurs from marginalized and socially disadvantaged communities, making use of the opportunities they spot around them, can help create a larger impact for other women in the community. Entrepreneurs Aruna Tirkey Founder of Ajam Emba, a restaurant specializing in tribal food in Ranchi and Pallavi Mane, Leader, Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP) who has started a goat rearing business in a village that faces an acute shortage of water shared their journey of developing their business.

They spoke of the entire spectrum of growth, starting from how they developed a basic business plan, how they implemented it and the many challenges, both personal and social, that they had to navigate.



AMPLIFYING VOICES OF MOVEMENT BUILDERS

Future Ki Baatein Podcast on Spotify



The idea of the 'future' has always been an optimistic ideal. It carries a vision of unlimited comfort, faster information processing, clean energy and machines overtaking mundane chores. However, this vision stands in stark contrast to the experience of communities facing the brunt of dwindling natural resources and

ecological disasters. Most of the time, marginalised communities living in fragile environments are not a part of the picture of this ultra-tech 'future'. Our podcast launched on Spotify looks at the vision of the 'future' for women and trans people by delving into their everyday life and analysing the impact of technology and the environment on them. In the first episode Anita Paul, Founder of Pan Himalayan Grassroots Development Foundation and S. Ashalatha from Mahila Kisan Adhikar Manch, MAKAAAM, talked about how changes in the environment impact the economic participation of rural women, especially from marginalised communities such as Dalits, and Adivasis.

