

SEWA Delhi major advocacy campaigns

Street vendors

Daily, Delhi's women street vendors are subjected to acts of verbal and physical abuse, threat of eviction, and confiscation of goods. Around 5,000 women vendors have organized under SEWA Delhi in order to change the norm. Women members work with the municipal authorities to improve market safety and hygiene conditions. SEWA Delhi directly supports women vendors in some of the city's most popular markets: Velodrome road (150 SEWA members); Qutub Market (600 members), and the Book Bazar (200 members). SEWA Delhi street vendors have also set up their own market exclusively for women vendors known as the Ladies Market where 60 SEWA members and many others sell their goods without fear of persecution. SEWA women vendors help their sisters get registered with local authorities for their legal protection. With SEWA Bharat's policy interventions, women members have been represented in every step of the Street Vendors Bill. To better represent women vendors at the national level, SEWA Bharat helped form and is a member of the country's leading street vendor advocacy group, NASVI (National Association of Street Vendors of India).

Advocacy achievements for street vendors

- **SEWA Delhi member to high-level committees** - Street Vendor Bill Task Force Committee (2001) and the Draft Committee (2002)
- **SEWA Delhi leaders participated in policy formation:** the National Policy on Urban Street Vendors (2004), the foundation for the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Bill, 2012, that provides legal protection to vendors, secures their rights as equal citizens of urban space, and marks a historical effort for vendors' right to a dignified livelihood.
- **Passing of the Street Vendors' Bill in the Lok Sabha** (the lower house of the Parliament of India) in 2012; and then in 2013,
- **Brought the Bill to the floor of the Rajya Sabha** (upper house)
- **6,000+ vendor license forms facilitated** by and for SEWA Delhi

Domestic workers

Domestic work in India has increased by 75% in the last decade, but this crucial workforce is not given recognition and women are branded as 'invisible workers'. In particular, the increasing divide between urban and rural areas of India is driving women to Delhi in search of work. Thousands of desperate women migrants are taking up domestic work in the informal economy because they have little or no other options. The domestic workspace of other peoples' homes is informal and unregulated, and renders women workers vulnerable to devastating verbal and sexual abuse. Domestic workers maintain the cleanliness and comfort of others with low wages, no holidays, no social services and lack of job security.

By 2013, there were 4,376 women domestic workers in the SEWA Delhi union. Domestic worker members are sensitized on their rights in order to build their capacity and bargaining power to negotiate with employers for fair wages and safe working conditions. SEWA Delhi contributed to reforming the National Policy on Domestic workers. Members also ran a signature campaign to ratify the 189 ILO Convention on Domestic Work, which has been stalled by the Indian government despite the Convention passing in the International Labour Congress in 2010.

Achievements for domestic workers

- **Nearly 1,000 social scheme linkages for women workers:** 330 ration cards, 300 voter ID cards, 213 RSBY scheme connections, and 95 Adhaar cards
- **1,725 domestic workers have SEWA ID Cards**
- **7 cases resolved on the issues of wages and security**
- **Members successfully secured holidays for domestic workers** in 3 areas of Delhi (New Ashok Nagar, Anand Vihar, and Dhallu Pura) through a rally on the Domestic Worker Day in June 2013.

SEWA Delhi members participating in community action on Street Vendors' Bill
(Photo: SEWA Bharat)



Construction workers

Women account for half of the backbreaking construction industry that lays down the infrastructure for India's industrial growth. Women are almost exclusively confined to unskilled, casual work such as carrying bricks, digging earth, and breaking stones. Without legal awareness or recognition, accessible social protection, and opportunities to develop competitive skills, women construction workers remain impoverished while Delhi is booming.

Since 2005, SEWA Delhi women members have been liaising with the Delhi Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board (DBOCWWB) to protect women's rights and to ensure social security entitlements reach women workers. SEWA Delhi members have developed a government-recognized passbook-cum-identity card that legalizes their presence and is a necessary pre-condition for the accrual of benefits like insurance, scholarship for their children's education, medical assistance, maternity benefits, accident relief, pension, and loan advances for the purchase or construction of a house and tools.

Achievements for construction workers

- **Registration support to over 3,500 construction workers** through liaising with the Delhi Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Board since 2008.
- **Successfully reduced the registration fee** for construction worker from Rs. 265 to Rs. 25
- **SEWA Delhi construction workers secured scholarships** for their children worth Rs. 264,000 in 2013.
- In November 2013, SEWA Delhi and the Labour Commission jointly prepared a road map to ease registration for construction workers