

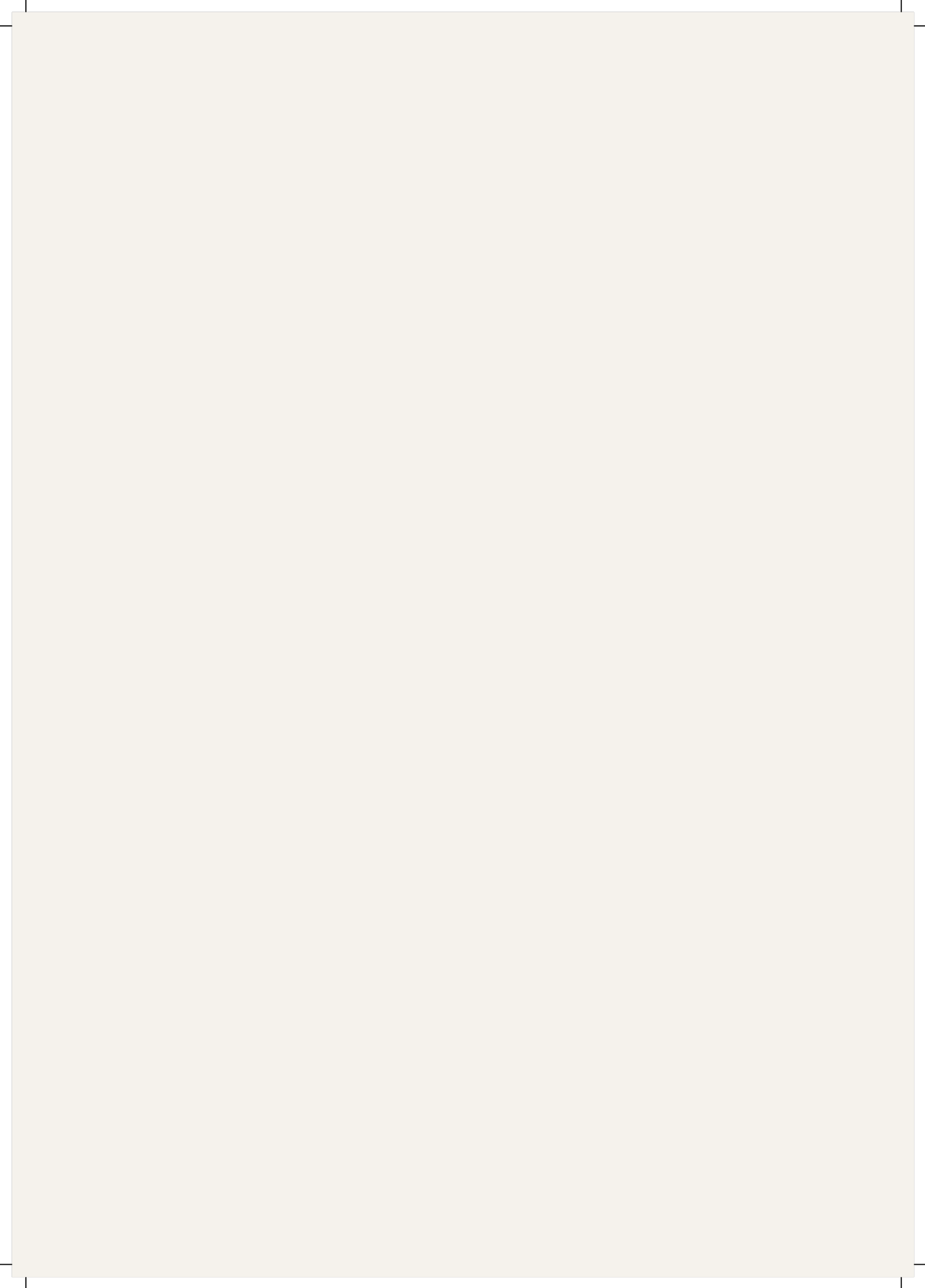
# FIRE AT MUNDKA FACTORY

## FACT FINDING REPORT

Fact-finding report on the issues  
concerned with the safety of workers



REPORT BY:  
A FACT-FINDING TEAM FACILITATED BY  
WORKING PEOPLES' COALITION, DELHI CHAPTER  
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## Introduction

On May 13, 2022, a fire broke out in a four-storey building of Cofe Impex Pvt Ltd, a manufacturing factory of electronic and surveillance equipment located in Delhi's Mundka industrial area. The incident occurred during a motivational lecture being attended by over a hundred workers - a majority of whom were women- and other company representatives. According to official data, the fire resulted in the death of 27 workers[1], out of which 21 were women[2]. This was not surprising since nearly 90% of the workforce in this factory were women. Most were below 30, some as young as 18-19 years. At least 40 workers were gravely injured and many others were reported missing[3]. Further, the incident has far-reaching administrative, legal and socio-economic consequences as well as gendered implications for the victims. A majority of the affected families have been forced to live in a state of severe financial hardship and emotional distress. Considering the gravity of this devastating incident, a group of experts including trade unionists, lawyers, women's rights activists, and members of labour rights NGOs embarked on a fact-finding mission and conducted a detailed investigation into the causes of the incident and the long-term impact and irreversible consequences on the workers, especially migrant workers.

## Objective

- To investigate and confirm the facts and factors which led to the fire in the company.
- To ascertain the loss of lives and its impact - gendered and otherwise - on the families of the deceased.
- To identify the lack of enforcement and regulation under various labour laws including safety and social security laws.
- To suggest necessary penal action against the employers/occupiers/regulators/any other person responsible for the occurrence of fire in the company.
- To draw attention to the gaps between mandatory enforceable laws and state directives and the actual conduct of the employer/employers.
- Recommendations for corrective measures for the full realisation of workers' rights and future perspectives of governance, security and transparent regulatory mechanism for better business.



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[1] <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/delhi-news/mundka-fire-probe-finds-lapses-by-civic-staff-3-officials-suspended-101652812129737.html>, retrieved on 22nd June, 2022

[2] <https://www.hindustantimes.com/opinion/mundka-fire-the-deplorable-working-conditions-for-women-101654260870782.html>, retrieved on 29th June, 2022

[3] <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/mundka-fire-probe-points-to-congestion-in-building-7924657/>, retrieved on 22nd June, 2022

## Methodology

The team investigated the cause of the fire incident by visiting and moving around the site and collecting information related to the incident, nature of work, possible factors that could have led to the fire etc.

- Houses of both victims and survivors of the fire were visited.
- Two additional localities in the same colony called Bhagya Vihar, near Mohalla clinic, and Chhat puja park were visited.
- Secondary research on company, municipality and media reporting was conducted.

## Building Code Violations and Workers' (Un) Safety

The Cofe Impex Pvt Ltd company was incorporated only in 2019 with Registration Number 358725 and Corporate Identification Number (CIN) U31909DL2019PTC358725 and is jointly owned by Harish Kumar Goyal and Varun Goyal[4]. However, according to the statements given to the fact-finding team by the workers, they had been working at the factory for many more years. Earlier, the building was under the jurisdiction of the Najafgarh zone of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD). When the MCD was trifurcated in 2012, the building came under the jurisdiction of the Narela zone of North Delhi Municipal Corporation[5] (NDMC).

According to a senior police official - "We conducted an initial investigation and found that on the first floor, there was a change-over switch/board for electricity connection. In the same place, they kept cardboard and dumped other materials which supposedly caused the fire to spread quicker. The building was congested due to storage and assembling units for CCTVs and Routers. We found that there were workstations and offices there. Steel sheets were used to separate the staircase. There were partitions which were also used as storage. But all facts will be clearer after forensic reports"[6].

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) constituted an enquiry committee headed by the Assistant Commissioner. A senior municipal official who was part of the enquiry team said that the four-storey building was located in the extended Lal Dora area of Mundka village. This violated the rules that do not allow industrial units in the Lal Dora or village land[7]. According to the inquiry, three floors of the building had been rented out to Harish Goyal and the owner of the building, Manish Lakra, lived with his family on the top floor. The basement was being used for storage purposes and the ground floor was vacant. The prima facie appears to be a case of laxity on the part of the officials of the general branch, house tax department, as well as the building department of the then Najafgarh zone of the erstwhile unified MCD. The building is situated on a road which has neither been marked for commercial nor mixed land use. The structure of the factory as well as its regulations were not conducive to women's well-being and safety. According to the municipal building department records, the building is 11 years old and it was booked by the then Najafgarh Zone officials on March 8, 2011, and June 20, 2011.

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[4] <https://vakilsearch.com/company/cofe-impex-private-limited/U31909DL2019PTC358725>, retrieved on 17 June, 2022

[5] <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/delhi-news/mundka-fire-probe-finds-lapses-by-civic-staff-3-officials-suspended-101652812129737>, retrieved on 22 June, 2022

[6] <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/delhi/mundka-fire-probe-points-to-congestion-in-building-7924657/>, Accessed 21 June 2022

[7] Mundka fire: Probe finds lapses by Delhi's civic staff, 3 officials suspended | Latest News Delhi - Hindustan Times, retrieved on 22 June

The owner never applied for the sanction of a building plan. The building was being used for industrial purposes which are not permitted in the extended Lal Dora area, and no valid factory licence was issued to the factory. No property tax had ever been paid by the owner even though notices were issued by the department. An action against the building in the past was taken in 2019. One the directions of the Supreme Court-appointed monitoring committee, a liquor shop that was running from the ground floor of the premises was sealed in January 2019. Then, on the orders of the committee in July 2019, the property was de-sealed after removing property. The ground floor stayed vacant since then"[8].

*According to an MCD official, who was a member of the inquiry committee "There were multiple illegalities involved, and were not acted upon by the officers concerned."*[9]

The factory was operating in complete violation of all applicable labour laws and safety regulations as the factory was in a congested place and was also without sufficient fire-fighting extinguishers. In addition, the factory was operating without a No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the Fire Department. There was no emergency exit and there was only one entry and exit in the factory, which is in contravention of the provisions of the Factories Act of 1948 of clause 4(a), which specifies that "Notwithstanding the provision of exits requirements as per Bye-law No. 4.8 (Chapter-4) each working room shall be provided with an adequate number of exits not less than two in number"[10]. However, this ultimately raises concerns as to how the Factory approval Inspector approved the factory in accordance with section 40(2) of the Factories Act 1948, which states "If it appears to the Inspector that the use of any building or part of a building or any part of the ways, machinery or plant in a factory involves imminent danger to human life or safety, he may serve [the occupier or manager or both] of the factory an order in writing prohibiting its use until it has been properly repaired or altered"[11].

## Site, location and area

On 11th June 2022, the fact-finding team[12] visited the factory site and surrounding area to enquire about the factory building, status of the locality and regulatory provisions and gaps. The team also looked at the basic infrastructure facilities from a public health perspective.

The four-storey building on the Delhi-Rohtak highway is located on the corner between the Mundka Metro station and the Mundka Industrial Area metro station of Delhi's Green Line Metro. In front of the building is the Delhi-Rohtak highway and an elevated metro passes through the middle. On the other side of the building is the Delhi Metro's walled compound. From the left of the building, there is a street leading to the village of Mundka, the width of which is less than approximately 15 feet. There was no entry from the front of the building. There was an underground floor in the building. The ground floor of the building was like a shop on the roadside. There is a factory on the first, second and third floors of the building. At the top of the building, there is a small structure in which the landlord had a residence.

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[8] Mundka fire: Probe finds lapses by Delhi's civic staff, 3 officials suspended | Latest News Delhi - Hindustan Times, retrieved on 22 June

[9] <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/delhi-news/mundka-fire-probe-finds-lapses-by-civic-staff-3-officials-suspended-101652812129737.html> , retrieved on 22 June

[10] <https://mohua.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/Chap-6.pdf>, retrieved on 19th June, 2022

[11] <https://labour.gov.in/sites/default/files/TheFactoriesAct1948.pdf>, retrieved on 19th June 2022

[12] Comprising Dharmendra Kumar, Mansoor, Arshad and Ravishankar



Fire Site



Street leading to the village, Mundaka

There was a stairway leading from the street to go up to the building which is the only way to get to the first, second, and third floors and the roof of the building. There was fibreglass on the outer wall of the entire building. Exhaust and windows were not available. A fibre glassed three-story building on the left side is also similar with space for shops on the ground. Behind the factory, there is a one-storey old building which has a small neighbourhood provisional store. On the right, beside the lane, a single-story old building exists with 5 small shops opening on the highway. The rear portion of the building is used for residence.

The location of the factory facilitated women's participation from neighbouring slums. Many women talked about starting work when the free transport facility services were accorded to the women. The fibreglass façade of the building was unbreakable during the fire and there were no windows. Next to the factory, the first small shop provides crane service. The crane belonging to the shop was used to rescue people before the arrival of the fire brigade. The resources which came to be of assistance to the workers were entirely dependent on luck.



Street leading to village



Open Drainage



Entry/exit gate

In the street next to the building, there is a very shallow 1-foot drainage system that was open, clogged and jammed.

Moving 50 metres from the building on the Rohtak highway towards Mundka Industrial Metro, a wide road is going to the left with a width of around 40 feet. At the beginning of this road, there was a board of Mundka Industrial Area Welfare Society which indicates that it is an industrial society.

There were factories and some offices on both sides of this road, out of which some of the major ones were as below.



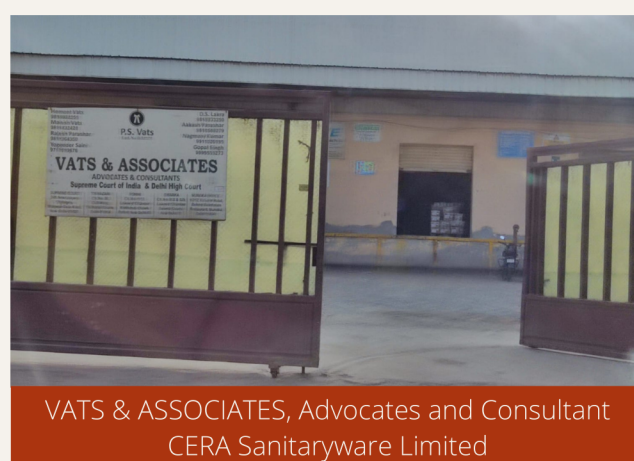
Madhubala Institute of Communication and ElectronicMedia, Affiliated to Guru Govind Singh Indraprastha University, Delhi



Mundka Industrial Area Welfare Society Board



Mahindra Showroom of Indraprastha Automobiles



VATS & ASSOCIATES, Advocates and Consultant CERA Sanitaryware Limited



Jove Conscious Foundation

Talking to the local people, it was revealed that it is not directly part of the Delhi State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (DSIIDC) like Okhla or Narela, but it has an extended part of it. DSIIDC and Mundka Industrial Area Welfare Society have partnerships to develop infrastructural support for the area. This is a different matter in itself to understand how this area is regulated. Locals also said that the owner of the factory has a member of the Mundka Industrial Area Welfare Society.



## Violation of Workers' rights in the factory

The fact-finding team has visited the factory and labour colonies located in Bhagya Vihar and interacted with the survivors of the incidents and heirs of the deceased employees of the company. The team tried to engage with the victims of this incident and other employees pertaining to the matters of the condition of employment, nature of duties, salary, statutory benefits and the situation post-incident of this fire. It has been observed that there is a violation of labour rights. Workers worked from 10 am-5 pm and were paid deplorably below the minimum wages in the state. The payment was monthly, in cash, on signing in a register. No appointment letters/work contracts/salary slips were issued. Deceased Sabiha, who had been working in this factory for two years did not survive the fire. Her mother-in-law told us that she (Sabiha) had no documentation related to her employment in the factory.

Salary deductions were made for late arrivals and holidays including Diwali and Holi. More than two or three leaves in a month meant the loss of employment. The company was quick to fire workers. Lunchtime was fixed but often got delayed, and the working hours were often extended. Karanveer lost his wife in the accident- her name was Ganga. She had been working in the factory for 5-6 years.

“

*Lunch ka time koi fix nahin tha agar kam hota tha to 3 se 4 bhi Bach jaate the. Karanveer ne bataya ki uski wife kah rahi thi ki vah bahut pareshan hai aur vah vahan se chhod ana chahti hai. Vishvajit ke anusar time kafi lamba tha 9:00 se lekar Kai bar jab kam hota tha to 9 ya 10 baj jaate the*

*There is no fixed time for lunch. If there is more work, it can also extend to 3 or 4 pm. Karanveer said that his wife was very dejected and she wanted to leave the work at the factory. According to Karanveer, work hours were very long. It used to extend from 9 in the morning to sometimes 9 or 10 in the night when there was more work*

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Apart from the anecdotal evidence generated by the fact-finding mission, research critically revealed coherent violations of multiple labour and GBV-related laws, the details of which are mentioned below:

- **Violation of Minimum Wages Act of 1948 and Directives of minimum wages of Delhi:** According to employees, the Company was not complying with the Minimum Wage Act and Directives of minimum wages of Delhi. For example, the company used to pay Rs. 6500 to its new employees, instead of Rs. 15400<sup>[13]</sup>, which is the statutory minimum wage as per the directions of the Delhi government. The company was not paying proper overtime pay to its employees. The Company has not maintained and preserved the required records of wages under the statutory laws of minimum wages.

[13] <https://labour.delhi.gov.in/sites/default/files/All-PDF/MWCabinet.pdf>

- **Violation of Payment of Wages act of 1936:** According to the employees, there was no fixed time for the payment of salaries, which violates the Payment of Wages Act, of 1936, which specifies “Fixation of wage-periods. — (1) Every person responsible for the payment of wages under section 3 shall fix periods (in this Act referred to as wage-period) in respect of which such wages shall be payable. (2) No wage period shall exceed one month”[14].
- **Violation of Equal Remuneration Act of 1976:** As mentioned above, most of the employees are women and yet, according to multiple women employees, women were not being paid as much as their male counterparts. This act itself is in contravention of the clause of the Equal Remuneration Act 1976, which specifies in chapter II, clause 4 (1) that “No employer shall pay to any worker, employed by him in an establishment or employment, remuneration, whether payable in cash or in-kind, at rates less favourable than those at which remuneration is paid by him to the workers of the opposite sex in such establishment or employment for performing the same work or work of a similar nature”[15].
- **Violation of Article 23 (Right against Exploitation) and Judgement of Supreme Court:** In the case of PUDR in 1982, the Court took a transformative approach by locating that the meaning of forced labour is not only stuck to the literal meaning of forced labour but also includes hidden connotations that may be related to some other factor to a person suffering from inequalities that ultimately contributes to the state of economic compulsion
- **Violation of Maternity Benefit Act of 1961:** Several women employees complained that the company never provided maternity benefits as per this act which states under clause 5 that “every woman shall be entitled to, and her employer shall be liable for, the payment of maternity benefit at the rate of the average daily wage for the period of her actual absence immediately preceding and including the day of her delivery and for the six weeks immediately following that day”[16] and further specifies under clause 10 “woman suffering illness arising out of pregnancy, delivery, premature birth of child or miscarriage shall, on the production of such proof as may be prescribed, be entitled in addition to the period of absence allowed to her under section 6, or, as the case may be, under section 9, to leave with wages at the rate of maternity benefit for a maximum period of one month”[17].
- **Violation of Interstate Migrant workmen Act of 1979:** Several employees iterated similar information, that the most of the employees were migrant labourers, especially, from Bihar and UP. This means that the company was required to register with the Labour Department to instate migrant labourers as employees under this Act.
- **Violation of Employees State Insurance Act of 1948:** Several employees mentioned that the employer didn’t provide any ESI card to any employees for further medical benefits, which includes accidental injury while at work, treatment of other illness and treatment related to maternity etc.
- **Inadequate/ineffective implementation of the Prevention of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal Act, 2013):** Several women employees shared that they never heard about the existence of any committee/platform to share incidents of sexual harassment. Women workers were not forthcoming to share any incidents of sexual harassment and it was realised that no regular discussions in the workplaces to encourage women to share such incidents were taking place.

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[16](Labour, Maternity Benefit Act, 1961)

[17] (Labour, Maternity Benefit Act, 1961)

Further, workers were not allowed to take mobiles inside; family members were not allowed to call or visit during work hours. Used as a disciplining strategy, this rule shows a disregard for women's safety and comfort during instances of emergencies and in favour of maximising their productivity. Aanchal, who had been working in the factory for a year, and has fortunately survived the fire, said that workers' phones were taken away and kept separately. When the fire started, their co-worker Preeti had her phone by chance. Through this phone, Aanchal could intimate her brother about the incident, who was able to reach the factory immediately with a rope for assistance. However, this was sheer luck. While cutting off informal workers from the rest of the world is a human rights violation in itself, in this case, it was fatal. The employer, showing an utter disregard for the lives of the workers, fled the scene after incurring minor injuries. The fact-finding team's conversations with those affected showed that the workplace had tables and chairs. Unlike other factories, work happened here in a production line, and the workers had chairs to sit on, which was very much appreciated by them. The factory had fans and ACs, one toilet per floor and cold drinking water. Our observation was that the workers saw these facilities as the benevolence of the employer rather than their rights as workers.

## **Interaction with the family members\* of the deceased and the employees of the company: Trauma, Precarity and Indignity in Death**

On 11th June, a team of around human rights and workers' rights activists[18] visited Bhagya Vihar, Rani Khera, Mundka, and West Delhi to talk to the families of deceased workers and interview the survivors. All families we met were migrant workers, who work under the challenges of low incomes and wages, without job safety, medical health, and social security provisions. They had moved from rural areas of Bihar and UP to Delhi in search of jobs. The areas we visited have concrete houses which are poorly constructed with no windows and small, dark and poorly ventilated rooms. Water supply had reached homes but many depended on the tanker. The waste collection systems were poor with overflowing and dirty drains. The poor living conditions imposed many unpaid care responsibilities on the women which added to the fatigue that women were already experiencing at the factory.

The fact-finding team observed that the official figures are underestimated. Workers reported to the fact-finding team that the fire killed more than 50 workers and injured many others. Of the 50 odd reported deaths in the fire incident, 45 were women workers. Reminiscent of Rana Plaza, the Mundka story is a gender story – of women's informal labour in industrial work, in an unauthorised building which grossly violated safety norms and an employer who flouted all protection accorded under the labour laws. In a city marked by one of the lowest women workforce participation in the country, the Mundka fire tragedy reveals how the migrant women of Delhi are a pool of cheap, exploitable labour. They work in conditions which reinforce gender inequalities and gendered division of labour, in casual, labour-intensive jobs in the lowest tiers, and unsafe places of work. The fire incident and the events that unfolded later, show an ingrained and stubborn apathy towards recognition of women's labour, and a shocking lack of dignity for them as workers – in life and death. The Mundka fire tragedy underlines, yet again, the promotion of women's work only as cheap labour with no efforts by the state and the employer to accord any rights or decent work conditions.

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[18] Fact finding team members are mentioned at the end of the report

\*The names of fire victims, survivors and family members of the deceased have been changed for maintaining confidentiality.



The employer preferred hiring younger women. Most workers were below 30 and some were as young as 18-19 years. Many young women were the sole earning members of their families. Our conversation with their families gave us the impression that older women like Ganga demonstrated some agency when negotiating for timings and wages, but many younger women workers we met had no awareness of their labour rights or minimum wages. They took no part in negotiations with the employer. Most women were from precarious households where men were also in informal employment with no regular jobs or earnings, worsened by COVID and lockdown. Most family members were from the construction industry or informal factory employment.

Salma started working 2 months ago. She makes Wi-Fi routers in the factory.

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*Taar jodte hain, chemical se safai karte hain, packing karte hai, main cream hota hai, wo lagaate hain, is kaam ke liye mitti ke tel ka bhi istemaal hota hai, 1 din mein lagbhag 500 pieces bana lete hain*

*We connect wires, clean with chemicals, do the packing. A cream has to be applied. For this work, kerosene oil is also used. In one day, we are able to make approximately 500 pieces.*

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Earlier she worked in a sports company; where she was told by someone that this CCTV manufacturing factory in Mundka gives better monthly wages and Provident Fund benefits. This led to her switching her job. Though there was a marginal difference between her wages in the previous and current job, she was still underpaid. Other women workers approached by the fact-finding team shared that no provident fund was paid to them by their employer. The case shows that the economic precarity of women often compels them to take up jobs without prospects of a significant margin and social security.

*Lajwanti is a 40 year old woman. She is one of the fortunate ones who could return alive from the site of the incident. She has been living in Delhi for 25 years. She was not employed earlier, and spent her time in domestic and care work. She has three children, and all of them go to school. Her eldest daughter is in the tenth standard. Her husband used to work in a hotel. However, because of the closing down of the hotel during the corona pandemic, her family had to bear financial hardships. They somehow managed through savings. However, they had to borrow money last year for the repair of their house. They had difficulty even in procuring food, because of which Lajwanti took up the job in the factory to contribute to household expenses. The chaos at the factory site on the day of the fire, caused a knee injury for Lajwanti. She is feeling better now. However, she is sad that her colleagues/ coworkers could not return safely and alive from the factory.*

*Lajwanti's case shows that the precarious condition of the households and the necessity of remaining employed, meant that women had to take up whatever jobs were available, without having much negotiating power with respect to the wages and working conditions.*

The team met Reena Devi, the mother of the deceased Pooja. Reena Ji had seven daughters. Her family is financially weak. All her children are emaciated. Reena Ji, herself is so frail that her bones have started protruding. All the family members are malnourished, and all of them have skin allergies. Reena Ji's husband used to work as a labourer and used to spend all his income on alcohol, rather than contributing to household expenses. He regularly inflicts domestic violence on his wife and children. The family's household expenses were supported by nineteen-year-old Pooja. Their neighbour Sheela Devi said that "Because of Pooja's work, her family's financial situation had started coming back on track. However, even this was not acceptable to god." The body of the deceased Pooja has been identified, and her family hopes that justice shall be done to her.

Identifying bodies was an ordeal. A few women's bodies are yet to be identified. Family members talked about the harassment faced by them in identifying dead bodies – shunted from one thana to another, having to give DNA twice- thrice, and lack of any dedicated support or information. The Labor Department and the employer have made no contact with the workers. All cost of treatment is being borne by the workers themselves, with some support from local NGOs. The households which needed this livelihood desperately are with no work currently. Salma is currently undergoing treatment in Sanjay Gandhi Hospital and is slowly recovering. So far, she has spent around Rs. 4,000 to 5,000 on medical expenses and travels to the hospital by auto, which has increased her financial burden.

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*As Karanveer said, Ganga ki dead body mil gai hai, Per Abhi offices ke chakkar hi Laga rahe hain Anye koi sahayata nahin Mili hai*

*Ganga's dead body has been found, but we are still making rounds of the offices. No support has been provided so far.*

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Those who escaped have been burnt and are facing acute mental trauma. The team met 6 women, 4 were between the age of 18 to 25, and only a couple were older than 30. Pooja who passed away was only 19, and Aanchal who survived was 18. Young girls spoke of losing close friends. Survivors spoke about the trauma of being trapped in the fire for two hours and trying to escape, seeing the room filled up with smoke and people fainting. Salma spoke about being locked inside a smoke-filled room for nearly two hours, people trying to break the glass walls and escape, some fainting even as more and more smoke filled up. She spoke about being burnt by the hot rope with which she escaped. Aanchal, 18 years old has had nightmares and anxiety attacks since the incident. She described the fire incident as follows

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*Aag lagne par sheesha nahin toot raha tha, window toda tha, rassi se utare the, sheesha garam tha, rassi garam ho gai the, sheeshe par paon bhi nahin rakha jaa raha tha, haathi jhul rahe the, dhuyen ke karan aaspaas kuch nazar nahi aa raha tha, 4.30 pm aag lagi, 6.30 pm baj gaye aag bhujaane ki gaadi waadi, Bahar gali mein rassi bandhi hui thi jahan AC laga tha, wahan se hum neeche utare, kuch log crane kejeene se bhi utare the, Crane road par tha, apni jaan bachte bachaate kisi tareeke se aaye hum neeche.*

”

“

*The glass was not breaking when the fire occurred. We broke the windows and climbed down through ropes. The glass and the rope got heated. It was very difficult to put the feet on the hot glass, and the hands were getting burnt. Nothing around was visible because of the smoke. The fire started around 4:30 p.m., but the fire extinguisher vehicles arrived only by 6:30 p.m. The rope was tied where the AC was installed, and we climbed down through that. Some people got down using cranes also, which were on the road. They could somehow get out and save our lives.*

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Identifying bodies was an ordeal. The Labor Department and the employer have made no contact with the workers. All cost of treatment is being borne by the workers themselves, with some support from local NGOs. The households which needed this livelihood desperately are with no work currently. Salma is currently undergoing treatment in Sanjay Gandhi Hospital and is slowly recovering. So far, she has spent around Rs. 4,000 to 5,000 on medical expenses and travels to the hospital by auto, which has increased her financial burden. As Vishwajit said

## Conclusion

The team's investigation of the Mundka fire incident coherently reflects that such a catastrophic incident could have been avoided by proper enforcement of the laws and by limiting human greed. The gory story which emerged is a tragic tale of monumental criminal negligence of workers' safety by employers in connivance with the administration. It is a heartbreaking narrative of the low value conferred to a worker's life and struggles in the city, leave alone dignity and rights. But underlying this tragic tale is the story of women's work in the city – informal, low skilled, low paid, unregulated, unrecognised, invisible and undervalued.

The Fact Finding team strongly recommends that since such tragic incidents are becoming frequent, all efforts should be made to prevent these. The ILO has recently included Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) as one of its key principles and as a signatory to the ILO, India must take the lead to raise global standards on OSH.

## Recommendations

1. The first and foremost task is to eliminate all kinds of collusion between the high-level officers of the industrial department, building and planning department, fire department, labour department, ESIC department and police with companies.
2. There is a need to ensure the enactment and enforcement of coherent and stringent laws and governance methods to protect workers' rights with these kinds of violations. There should not be any compromise on compliance with enforcement of the Minimum Wages Act, Equal Remuneration Act and Act on Occupational Safety and Health. Stringent punishment must be ensured for violators.
3. Formation of central, state and local level Monitoring and Enforcement Committees consisting of the above-mentioned departments, trade unions, and labour rights NGOs is necessary to investigate the violation of industrial and labour laws in the industrial areas of Delhi. The committee must own the responsibility to sensitise workers on labour rights. There should be an appropriate representation of women workers and informal sector workers in such committees.
4. There should be a provision of exemplary punishment in case of gender-based discrimination in factories and other workplaces. Ensure enforcement of the Maternity Benefits Act. Create awareness about POSH Act 2013 amongst employers and employees and formation of appropriate POSH Committee inside the factory and Local Committee at the district level.
5. There is an urgent need for compulsory registration of all workers including unorganised and migrant workers under statutory mandates like the Unorganised Workers Social Security Act and Inter State Migrant Workers Act.
6. In case of such man-made industrial calamity or incident, the Central and State Governments shall be held liable for compulsorily compensation payment to the families. In addition to adequate monetary compensation, survivors must receive free medical care and survivors and victims' families must be provided with psychological support.
7. Non-hazardous small and medium factories and businesses need to be streamlined by necessary fair affirmative actions and regularisation.

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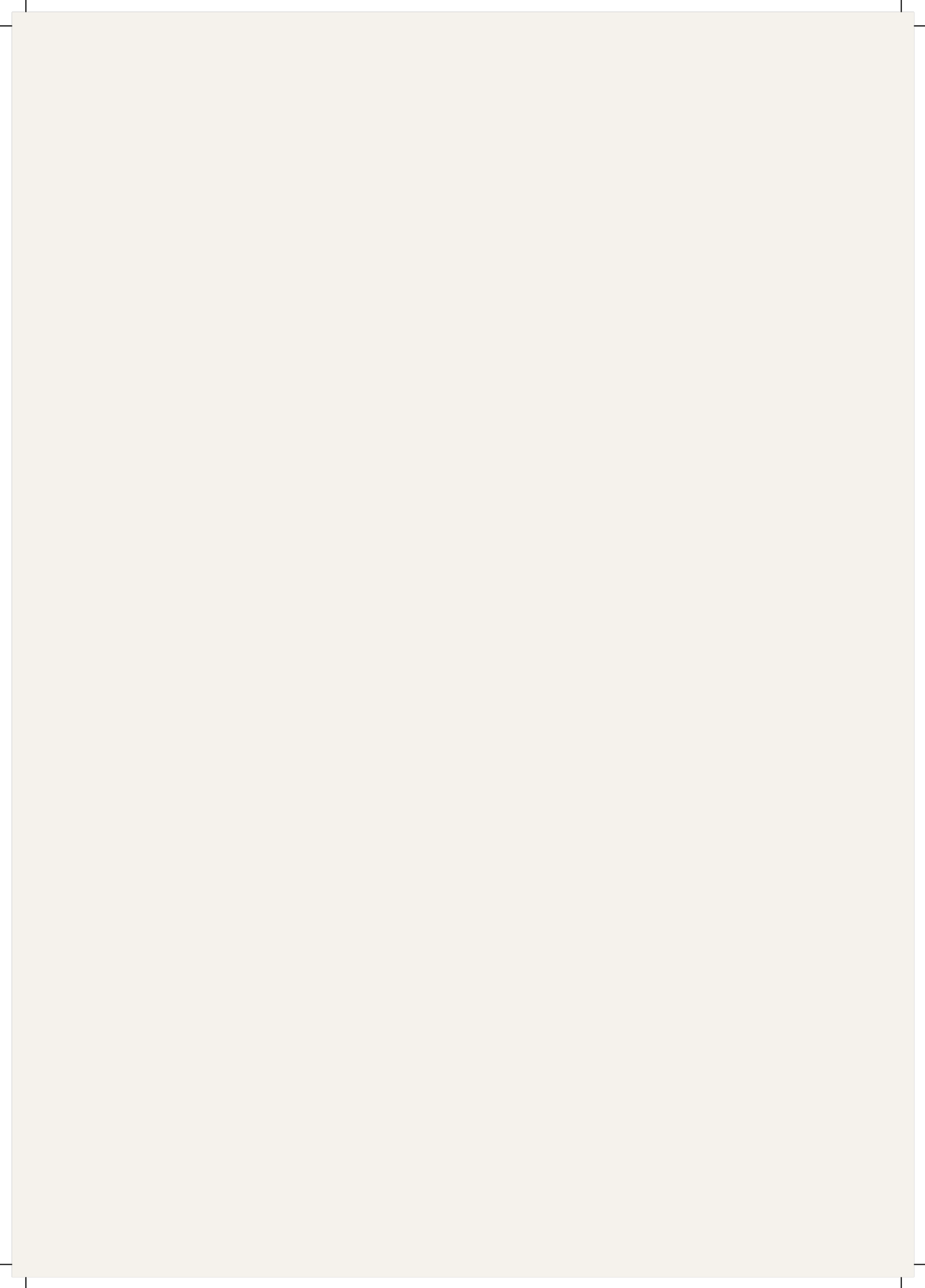
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**Following are the members of the Fact Finding  
Team:**

Ramendra Kumar  
Delhi Shramik Sangathan

Shalini Sinha, Independent  
Labour and Gender Consultant

Lata  
SEWA Delhi Union

Dr Indu Prakash Singh  
Expert on homelessness

Juhi Jain, Deepak Chand Sharma, Kundan,  
Dulichand and Shashi Kaur  
Centre for Advocacy and Research

Mukta Naik  
Architect-Planner

Lokesh and Ashok Kumari  
Centre for Education and Communication

Nirmal Gorana  
Working Peoples' Coalition

Shruti Batra, Sarita Balooni and Amrita Thakur  
Jagori

Jan Swasthya Abhiyan, Delhi

Dharmendra Kumar, Kamal Kumar Niyogi and  
Mansoor Raza  
Janpahal

Gayatri Singh  
Lawyers for Labour

Chinmayi Naik  
Labour Axis

Chandan Kumar, Ravi Shankar and Arshad  
Ahmed  
India Labourline

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WPC main office: 4th floor, Panchratna building,  
opp Chandelier Court, L R Papan Marg,  
Worli, Mumbai 400018  
Phone number: 022-40129763

Email: [workerscharterprocess@gmail.com](mailto:workerscharterprocess@gmail.com);  
Website: [www.workingpeoplescharter.in](http://www.workingpeoplescharter.in)  
Twitter: @IndiaWpc  
Facebook: @IndiaWpc  
Instagram: @IndiaWpc  
Youtube: Working Peoples' Coalition