

Press Note

Gangtok, 27th April, 2023

Vi Foundation Introduces 'MyAmbar Suraksha Chakra' – A Safety Solution for the Informal Women Workers of Sikkim

- *Platform developed in collaboration with NASSCOM Foundation and Martha Farrell Foundation*
- *Engages with District authorities to help set-up and empower Local Committees for prevention, prohibition and redressal of harassment of women at workplace*

The informal sector, which is considered to be the backbone of the Indian economy, is estimated to employ over 90% of all working women in the country, as per a report by Human Rights Watch (HRW). To enable such women to earn their livelihoods in a safe environment and overcome various social, cultural barriers, and gender bias including sexual harassment, Vi Foundation, the CSR arm of Vi, in collaboration with NASSCOM Foundation's Connecting for Good programme and Martha Farrell Foundation have launched 'MyAmbar Suraksha Chakra' in Sikkim – a solution for the safety of working women, primarily in the informal sector.

The platform aims to promote gender equality and greater labour workforce participation of women in communities and informal organizations by preventing instances of workplace harassment. By leveraging technology, the platform empowers Local Committees to provide time-bound justice to women experiencing any sort of violence and help them overcome by reporting in an appropriate manner. The portal is designed to make a women feel more confident and secure in their everyday lives.

The implementation partner, Martha Farrell Foundation has worked with the Sikkim State Commission for Women and state authorities to help set-up Local Committees in the district magistrate's offices of North Sikkim, South Sikkim, East Sikkim and West Sikkim. These Local Committees enable prevention, prohibition and redressal of any kind of sexual harassment, particularly in the informal sector. In line with the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013, Martha Farrell Foundation in collaboration with Government of Sikkim has trained over 10,000 informal workers and 4 Local Committees in Sikkim on topics such as awareness about the law, rights of victims, effective prevention and redressal of complaints, among other things. The Foundation has also worked closely with the Sikkim government to facilitate training of trainers on the issue of prevention of sexual harassment, to enable statewide awareness and compliance.

Speaking about the novel solution, P. Balaji, Director, Vi Foundation and Chief Regulatory & Corporate Affairs Officer, VIL, said, *"Women are change makers – in the workplace, at home, neighborhood, and society at large. At Vi, we have been at the forefront of utilizing the transformative power of technology for women empowerment, safety and livelihood creation, thus helping build an equitable world. It gives me immense pleasure to introduce the novel tech solution 'MyAmbar Suraksha Chakra' in Sikkim for the informal women workers. The solution aims to create a world where every woman worker in the informal sector has the opportunity to thrive and reach her full potential in a safe environment. I hope this initiative inspires more people to join us in our mission to remove gender bias and promote gender equality as our collective efforts can help our nation progress from women's development to women-led development."*

The bi-lingual 'MyAmbar Suraksha Chakra' platform (available in English and Hindi) leverages technology to empower women to feel more confident and secure at their workplace. The solution creates a digital ecosystem where women experiencing harassment can file complaints with their Local Committees without hassle, from anywhere and at any time, and seek time-bound justice. It additionally offers women access to a rich repository of information on laws and prevention of harassment at workplace, among other things.

Speaking on the unique solution, Nandita Pradhan Bhatt, Director, Martha Farrell Foundation, said, *"We have been closely engaged with women informal workers, Local Committees and District Administrations for the last few years to facilitate the strengthening of redressal mechanisms under the Prevention of Sexual Harassment Act, 2013. The 'MyAmbar Suraksha Chakra' solution has come from our close engagement on the issue and is the next step in bridging the gap between women informal workers and the Local Committees to ensure timely and just redressal."*

The 'MyAmbar Suraksha Chakra' platform can be accessed through the link surakshachakra.myambar.org.

About Vi Foundation:

Vi Foundation, the CSR arm of Vodafone Idea Limited, believes that our mobile communications technologies can address some of the most pressing humanitarian challenges and our responsibility is to utilize our innovative mobile technology in mobilizing social change and improving people's lives. The Foundation focusses on addressing challenges relating to agriculture, education, health, equality and access. We are committed to enable people and technology to drive innovation, disseminate knowledge, and create shared value to improve lives. We work in partnership with key charities, development agencies and the community to drive social change on a large scale in India.

For more information, please visit: www.MyVi.in and www.vodafoneidea.com; Twitter: @Vodaldea_NEWS

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