



BULLETIN : 10

from **DURBAR**

15th January 2012

Views of sex workers regarding rehabilitation- a consultative meeting by Durbar

As per Supreme Court's order dated 19th July 2011 and consequent meeting held afterwards, DMSC organized a meeting with sex workers of Kolkata to know their views on rehabilitation. The number of participants attended in the meeting was much more than the expectation. More than 120 participants joined spontaneously in the meeting.

Keeping in mind about the varied nature and typology, age and changing need of the sex workers the participants gradually divided into eight groups in the following steps:

First the participants are divided in to two groups which are

- a) Part time sex worker/ Flying sex workers
- b) Full time sex workers

In the next step both the groups are asked whether they want rehabilitation or not. Each group is divided into two sub groups. In the next step the full time sex workers who are interested about rehabilitation are again divided into three sub categories namely sex workers having Babu/Partners, sex workers live with children and family member; sex workers having extended family including father, mother; sex workers who leave service live with family member.

According to the sex workers, rehabilitation means:

- Living with respect and dignity with family members with peace in mind
- Living without fear to be discriminated against by the society
- Not to be treated as 'Beggars' or 'Fallen Women'

- Sex workers want to leave the profession provided they are supported with jobs what they can do staying in the red light districts e.g. health workers / staff members of the Self Regulatory Board etc.

Sex workers wanted the following minimum assistance to leave the trade. They also suggested commiseration of following support service as part of rehabilitation process:

- One time financial assistance of 10-15 lakhs rupees.
- Provide a work/ or stipend at a minimum salary of 7- 10 thousand per month.
- Those who have their own land, government should provide full assistance to construct a house, may be under Indira Gandhi Abash Yojana or like this and those who do not have a land of their own should be provide with both land and a home to live with their family members.
- To create a care and support unit for HIV positive sex workers where sex workers /HIV positive sex workers can also work.
- Provide free medicines and vaccines to HIV positive sex workers.
- All need to be provided with free pass to travel bus or train within the country.
- Government has to take complete responsibility of sex workers/HIV positive children's food, education, health etc.
- Provide salaried job to work in the Self Regulatory Board or different projects of sex workers implemented in the red light districts with minimum salary of Rs 5 to 7thousand per month.
- Provide free education facility for their children. Simultaneously government has to create special quotas in Govt. / non Govt. sector.
- Ensure that all sex workers should provide B.P.L card, ration card, old age pension or widow pension facility without any harassment.
- Health insurance covering minimum Rs 1 lakh should be provided to the rehabilitated women. The premium of the insurance should be paid by the government regularly
- A minimum lifelong pension of Rs. 10 thousand per month would be ensured by the Government.
- Govt. should ensure proper vocational training for capable sex workers according to their potential interest and capacity. Within this training period government should provide financial support for their children and dependant family members and create provision to be included under BPL category.
- Small space or shop in the Market place run by the Municipality or Corporation at subsidized rate as well as flexible financial assistance should be provided.

Durbar celebrated Sabar Adhikar Dibosh in Amlasole

The Sabar people are one of the scheduled tribes in India who live mainly in Jharkhand, Orissa and in the Western part of West Bengal. Sabar's from Amlasole, a remote village of West Midnapore District with the help of Durbar since 2004 started mobilization of

these communities. A few years back i.e., in the year 2004, this remote village found itself in the news because many Sabar's of this region died of hunger, starvation and malnutrition. There was a big hue and cry about it. In such circumstances Durbar came forward to lend support to the community.

Many organisations had been there during the early phase providing food and clothing to community members in addition to organising health camps who left within an year when Sabar started posing their 'media credential' but Durbar remained there and continued to work in support of this community, building their collectives and capacity to lead from the front .

Gradually due to the efforts of Durbar, an organisation of Sabar's got formed in July 2004 and was named Amlasole Birsha Munda Gram Unnayan Committee. The organisation was formed with the objective that they will cater to their needs and problems themselves under their own leadership and initiative.

Again with the assistance of Durbar the committee started a non formal school with a name "Bera Bhenge" (Breaking fences) where the children from these marginalized groups can get education. Durbar also provided financial support to construct a house (Community centre) in Amlasole village to serve as an office to carry out the development work of the community.

In 2005, the organization of Sabar declared 30th December as 'Sabar Dibas' to commemorate their rich history and their struggle against Colonial British Empire. This year the organisation also observed the day with lot of fun and various activities.

On 30th December 2011 Durbar organised football match during this festival along with other games like Handi Bhanga, 200 meter race, 800 meter race, musical chair etc to celebrate 'Sabar Adhikar Dibas' at Amlasole. A total of 32 football team representing Sabar and Munda communities from different parts of West Bengal and Jharkhand participated in Soccer competition. Hundreds of men, women, and children arrive at the ground to lend their support for respective teams. Various eminent personalities like Gram Panchayat Pradhan, former panchayat pradhan, representatives of Amlasole Yuva Unnayan Committee, representatives of Birsha Munda Gram Unnayan Committee etc were also present in the program.

Durbar organized a Capacity Building Programme for the Sex Workers of Jharkhand, Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttarpradesh

DMSC in collaboration with All India Network of the Sex Workers (AINSW) conducted a 2 day capacity building program on Ranchi for the sex workers of Jharkhand, Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh on 14th and 15th December 2011. The purpose of the training was to strengthen and empower the sex workers collective and to sensitize them about various structural issues including laws and legislative practices, what criminalized sex worker and work environment, thereby increasing their vulnerability to police and administration including other stakeholders. The main objective of the program was to built capacity of the sex workers of Jharkhand, Delhi, Rajasthan and UP, to make them confidant building their self- esteem to build the leadership quality to strengthen the All India Network of the Sex Workers, to learn about human and women rights especially with reference to ITPA, addressing violence through community based approach, to provide the preliminary knowledge about advocacy , networking and partnership building, to motivate the sex workers to start and strengthen their own organization and to provide the basic knowledge about All India Network of the sex workers.

In the session the participants were explained Durbar's Self Regulatory Board which prevents the minor and unwilling girl to enter into the sex trade. During the sessions issue violated to structure and functioning of SRB's was discussed. SRB's far fletched implications in strengthening community led regulatory mechanism, what is considered a viable model of participatory democratic process, important for communities who live on the margins of the society with compromised social and political rights.

All together 36 sex workers representatives attended the workshop. After the end of the 2 day sessions participants were asked to give their feedback on the topic discussed. Most of the participants were very interactive to share their learning with the facilitators. They got deeper understanding about importance of networking to establish their rights. They also recognized the necessity to address legal issues and to carry out to influence policies and practices. During the training session it was observed that 7-8 sex workers have the potential to develop leadership.

A short trip of Mc Dowell Mohun Bagan to Rahul Vidyaniketan

On 18th December 2011 an Educational Trip was conducted for the trainees, volunteers and coaches of Kolkata Goalz organized by McDowell Mohun Bagan at Durbar's Residential Home Rahul Vidyaniketan, the hostel meant for the children of sex workers at Baruipur. These children get football training regularly the supervision of skilled coaches. The boys would feature in this year's IFA Nursery League and the girls in the Women's League. The 50 members of the Kolkata Goalz Team reached Rahul Vidyaniketan at about 10 am.

After brief introduction, exchange of pleasantries with each other and photo session; the Kolkata Goalz trainees presented a gift of comic books to their friends at Rahul Vidyaniketan. Thereafter the trainees of both teams played 5-a-side football match with unlimited substitutions, amid cheering by the spectators. Everyone got a chance to display his skills.

After the football matches, a movie named The Jail, an award winning hard hitting movie directed by renowned filmmaker Ms Alakananda Ray who herself was presented during the show. After that Kolkata Goalz Team was taken to a visit round the vast premises attached to Rahul Vidyaniketan, which comprises of agricultural fields, dairy farm, fishing ponds etc.

The audience thereafter were shown Hindi version of the fun movie, Home Alone 2: Lost in New York. The children had a gala team enjoying the movie. Finally at 5 pm the Kolkata Goalz Team bid goodbye to their friends with the promise to meet again in the near future.