

15<sup>th</sup> June 2013

# Durbar Bulletin -27

## Supporting the rights of garment workers in Bangladesh

The deadliest disaster of recent time is the Fire in Rana Plaza, in Saver district of Bangladesh. Bangladesh is the second largest producer of fast fashion product for export, although the workers engaged there are devoid of any basic amenities which should be provided by the employer. The five storey building was collapsed on 24th April, 2013. Investigation revealed that the building was developed violating safety and other construction norms. It housed 3500 garment workers and the death toll of the incident was as high as 1127.

Binodini Sramik Union as an affiliate of the NTUI State Council West Bengal participated in the rally jointly organized by NTUI, IFTU, SSU, SSF and TUCI on 9th May, 2013. 500 members from those unions attended a protest demonstration at AJC Bose Road, in front of Bangladesh Deputy High Commission. They rallied with slogan shouting, demanding justice and compensation for the workers who are dead in the fire. They walked through the road while the police stopped and ushered 5 representatives from those unions for meeting them with the official of the Bangladesh Deputy High Commission. Rama Debnath, a sex worker and the joint convener of Working Women Council was one of them. The official from Bangladesh Deputy High Commission informed that the workers who were dead in the fire already got Rs (Bangladesh) 2Lakh as compensation and the safety norms and labour laws are going to be implemented to ensure safety for the workers.

## Street Corners organized by Soni Sori Mukti Morcha

Soni Sori Mukti Morcha is fighting for the justice to Soni. The members of the morcha decided to organize a series of street corners in different places of Kolkata including College Square, Academy of Fine Arts, Hazra and Sealdah during the week starting from 22nd May -24th May 2013. The morcha also collected mass signature in a letter to Sonia Gandhi demanding



*Street cornering in College Square, Kolkata*

unconditional release of Soni. Booklet and leaflets were distributed among those attending street corners.

Durbar Mahila Samnwaya Committee as a core group member of the morcha played their role in organizing the street corners. Rabindra Nath Chakraborty from Sangrami Sramik Front, representatives from Independent Consolidation, Amitava Kar from Nakib, Pijush Guha, Arun Majumder attended those campaigns.

Common people attending the street corners expressed their shock and agony knowing how Soni Sori was treated in police custody. They signed voluntarily demanding unconditional release of Soni. 208 signatures were collected during the street corners and 33 booklets were sold among the attendees.

## Celebrating World Environment Day



*World Environment Day celebrated in Baroipur*

World Environment day is celebrated on 5th June every year since 1973. It is the day to take oath to protect the environment we live in. This day is celebrated all over the world to generate awareness on environmental issues and challenges such as global warming, pollution, deforestation, preservation of biodiversity and ecosystem focusing on governance and control over ecological problems.

Durbar is always vocal and felt the need to relate with the social problems like environment. This year Durbar celebrated this day at the Rahul Vidya Niketan premises, the inmates of this hostel are children of sex workers who took the leading role in

planting trees in the premises. It is a place where the sex workers children grow with the nature enjoy a close relationship with our mother earth. They took the oath to save trees and to protect the global. Local MLA Mr. Nirmal Mandal was present in the event. He assured to extend his support towards building a gym for the sex workers children residing in Baruipur. Representatives of SBI Staff Association (Mr. Arun Jyoti Das and Mr. Basab Mukherjee) were also present and enjoyed the event with the children.

### **Binodini Sramik Union showing solidarity for Maruti Suzuki workers**

Maruti Suzuki workers movement is the most well discussed trade union movement of recent past. It is the movement of workers demanding their rights to be united, while the Management always tried to fragment their effort, the workers stand against all the adversity.

Recently the Maruti Suzuki Workers Union call all the pro workers to join their movement demanding release of 147 workers from Jail, quashing all the cases against 11 accused workers and reinstatement of all the terminated workers.

Binodini Sramik Union one of the core group member of the NTUI West Bengal State Council participated in the demonstration in front of New Secretariat Building in a programme jointly organized by NTUI, SSU, IFTU and TUCI on 24th May 2013.

It was followed by a rally on 27th May 2013 starting from College square ending at Ramlila Maidan, Moulali. The rally was successfully organized which was attended by 1000 members from various trade unions in the state of West Bengal.

### **Building aspiration through value education**

Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee in collaboration with Warwick University, UK and Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata conducted a research study focusing on aspiration failure. The study was based on the hypothesis that persistent poverty is not only depended on the lack of infrastructure, education or other facilities. It is primarily linked with the attitude and lack of aspiration of the poor people. DMSC since its inception developed a dream building program to influence the mind set of sex workers. Keeping the importance of this initiative a pilot survey was conducted on 100 sex workers in Kalighat and Khidirpur on April- May 2011. After the completion of a successful pilot study a full fledged study was designed collecting a large number of samples.

The aspiration level will be boosted through a series of value education on various issues related to the life and livelihood issues of the sex workers which includes collectivization, violence, education and future dream of their and centering their children, savings and others. The method of the study is based on a standard approach with having a treatment group receiving value education and the control group who are not providing the scope of training and exposure. Both the group received same amount of incentive (in terms of money). Through an end line interview aspiration level was measured. Initial analysis showed that the treatment group started saving more money

after getting exposed to dream building program. The changes also observed at subjective level as measured by the improvement of self esteem, confidence control over responses, attitude change, towards violence and others. The preliminary findings were shared with academicians at Warwick University in a seminar duly organized by the department of economics, Warwick University where representative from DMSC and ISI did participate and shared their findings and experiences.

### Upcoming Events:

- Domestic Workers' vote in 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2013
- DMSC will participate in a Workshop on Sustainable Organising Strategies for Informal Sector Workers at Delhi in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> July 2013



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