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Durbar Bulletin -30

National consultation on rights and dignity of sex workers organised by
meeting in New Delhi, AINSW



All India Network of sex Workers (AINSW) is a collective who represent voices of the country. AINSW is a platform of around hundred community based organisation of sex workers from 16 states in India. This forum fights to establish the rights of people in sex work and has effectively partnered and managed HIV prevention

initiatives. In addition to that the member organisation of AINSW is active in preventing trafficking of women into sex work with an objective to eradicate trafficking and entry of minors into sex work. AINSW's articulated views are:

- Sex work should be included in the Labour Schedule of the National Government. The sex work and sex work environment should be decriminalized
- Sex workers representation in all policy making bodies in government and non government organization should be considered as rights what need to be with affirmative action.
- SRBs (Self Regulatory Board, a community led initiative of sex worker should be recognized and be implemented as a National strategy to remove minors and trafficked women from the sex trade.

- Consensual sex between adults should not be criminalized. It is not sex work which is dangerous. It is the absence of laws that protect sex workers which makes our work dangerous.
- Recognition of sex workers extraordinary contribution to the National AIDS Control Programme followed by the policy guidelines i.e., 'community ownership', need to be incorporated in all development programmes meant for sex workers and other marginalized communities.
- Women in sex work are like any other mother who should get all sexual and reproduction health related services in addition to other social security measures.

To raise these demands AINSW organised a two days National Consultation Meeting on 21st-22nd August 2013 at the premises of Constitution Club, New Delhi. The meet was attended by MPs Mr Abhijit Mukherjee, Barun Mukherjee, Saidul Haque, Basudeb Acharya, Oscar Fernandez Union Minister of Surface Transport and Highways, Government of India, also the President, Forum of Parliamentarians on HIV/AIDS, Sayeed Hameed, member of Planning Commission. Along with this representatives from NACO, member of health, Ministry of Home and Ministry of women and Child Development, UNAIDS, NALSA, NCW, UNFPA, CFAR, Lawyers Collective, DAC, UNDP, NARI, MKSS, School for Democracy, NMEW, CESSC, MPRD, PWN, participated in this meet. Renowned social activists e.g. Aruna Roy, Nikhil Dey and other were part of the consultative process.

Besides the physical presence of these eminent people Ms. K. Sujtha Rao, former Secretary, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India and Dr. C. Rangarajan, Chairmen of the Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council shared their views through Skype and videos.

The official inauguration of website of AINSW was made by Mr Oscar Fernandez Union Minister of Surface Transport and Highways, Government of India, also the President, Forum of Parliamentarians on HIV/AIDS on the first day of the convention

"The law enforcement agencies need greater sensitisation in handling issues faced by sex workers who are considered a social taboo, Congress MP Abhijit Mukherjee mentioned in his speech "Law enforcement agencies should have a more sensitive approach towards sex workers who are still considered as social taboo,"

The conference was ended through constituting a National Campaign Committee through representation of eminent personalities. The campaign committee will focus on the issues and would Campaign the rights and dignity of sex workers and their children.

Amra Padatik football league, 2013

How Talent in Sports could be an effective weapon to fight against discrimination and stigma and what has really happened in Durbar Football Academy could be an eye opener to many. Every year with support and guidance from Durbar, Amra Padatik organised football league in Rabindra Kanan at North Kolkata, West Bengal. This year Amra Padatik Football League started from 16th August, 2013 with 14 teams and continued till 24th August, 2013. The league was inaugurated by India's one of the retired footballer Mr Kromton Dutta. He was accompanied by Mr Jagadish Ghosh, ex Goal Keeper of Indian National Team, Mr Jiban Prakash Saha, Ex MLA, Dr Smarajit Jana, Chief Advisor,

and Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (DMSC), and Mrs. Bharti Dey, secretary, DMSC. “Amra Padatik Football League will receive all supports from State Sports Council”, Kromton assured in his speech. 14 teams participated in this League representing 35 red light districts of West Bengal.

“The Padatik League could be the ‘baby hatch’ for the Bengal Football team, so that we need not depend on our neighbouring state or other countries to win and sustain Bengal Football” said by Mr Debashish Kumar, MMIC Kolkata Uddyan (field) on the occasion of closing ceremony of Amra Padatik Football League. He was accompanied by few well known personnel from the arena of Bengal Football and State Government such as Mr P.K.Banerjee, famous footballer and ex coach of Bengal team, Mr Manas Bhattacharya and all time best footballer Mr. Chuni Goswami, Mr Basudeb Ray, Asst Secretary, IFA, Mr Prabin Lahiri, Mr Debashish Kumar MMIC Kolkata Uddyan, Mr Amitava Dutta, Mr Jiban Prakash Saha, ex MLA, Mr Kalyan Majumder, Secretary of East Bengal Club.

“We would like to include fellows from Amra Padatik Football Academy in our club” shared by Mr Kalyan Majumder in his speech. By addressing the young players Mr Chuni Goswami in his speech advised knowledge on Football. Dr Smarajit Jana, Chief Advisor of DMSC has shared in his speech that DMSC has started a process to help access social securities and entitlements to the existing sex Workers and their children who are deprived of their basic rights. Durbar has started providing services on Health, Education, cultural and other extracurricular activities including sports. But now DURBAR has decided to expand its program for the underprivileged children through establishing a Sports Complex in the Outskirts of Kolkata, Baruipur. He also added that Durbar seeks support to make ourthrough the support from the Government and other supportive organisation. Bharti Dey, Secretary of DMSC has also mentioned the same in her speech.

At the end of the day Nirmala Smriti Challenge Trophy was handed over to the Champion team Titagarh by P.K.Banerjee. Dada Debendra Narayan Chottapadhya Nagendra Smriti Challenge Trophy was given to Runners up Team Rahul Bidya Niketan which was handed over by Kalyan Mazumdar, supporter of DMSC.

Komol Gandhar Achieves Again: One more feather added to Komol gandhar’s crown

On 3rd and 4th September, 2013 a two days competition named ‘Amra Korbo Joy’ was organised by Paribar, a NGO based in West Bengal. Komol Gandhar, the cultural wing of Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee, participated in the competition and won the crown of Runners up competing with 31 cultural team representing states of west Bengal and neighbouring states.

Komol Gandhar was established in 1997 with the initiative to use cultural activities as pragmatic tool for preventing HIV as well as raising awareness and challenging stigma, and discrimination meted out to them. The team to a large extent is successful in raising sex workers' demands and challenging dominant stereotypic representations of sex work and sex workers. Komol Gandhar provides opportunity to the children of sex workers to claim their rights, to express their creativity and to share their plights of being children of sex workers through their performance.

Poverty and trafficking are not only reasons to join sex trade

Rina (name changed) a 24 year old girl came to Sonagachi with her Uncle on August, 2013. She belongs to a family of 5 people based in North 24 Parganas' remote village. In middle of August she was rescued by Durbars' team of SRB from Sonagachi. After the ossification test conducted she was declared as adult. In counselling session she revealed that she is staying with her step mother, father and two siblings. In a family headed by daily wage earners she had to face difficulties and was abused physically for being a girl child. One day early in the morning she came to know that she has to come to Kolkata with her uncle to earn livelihoods for her family. Without opposing her guardian she came to Kolkata and was recruited in sex trade as Adhiya with her acknowledgment.

Followed to 2 counseling session two options were given to her. 1. As she is an adult she could choose to stay in sex trade or 2. If she wants to return to her family Durbar will arrange everything for her. But when she refused to go back to her family Durbar gave her shelter in its short stay home. After knowing the fact that she is literate and passed Higher Secondary Level, Durbar offered her a post of Teacher in Rahul Bidya Niketan where she could live and carry out a technical profession with decent earnings but she refused it. After staying 1 week in home she informed the management that she wants to come back in sex trade as it provides her opportunity to earn more and with ease.

Upcoming Events:

- This year Durbar will celebrate Durga Puja in Sonagachi, Kolkata.
- Convention on NTUI on 28th September 2013 at Calcutta University hall.

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