

15th December 2013



Durbar Bulletin -33

Komal Gandhar's participation in the ICAAP 11

The International Congress on AIDS in Asia and the Pacific was held for over five days from 18th to 22nd of November 2013 at Queen Sirikit National Convention Centre, in Bangkok, Thailand.



Komal Gandhar, the cultural wing of Durbar was invited to this congress to put up their cultural performance in the Asia Pacific Village on 20th November and in the Thailand Cultural Centre on 21st November, 2013. A seven member team of Komal Gandhar, supported by UNAIDS India went to Bangkok to perform their cultural program. On both the days they had 30 minutes time slot to put up their shows which was highly acclaimed by the audience.

Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee and Usha Multipurpose Cooperative Society Limited also organize their stalls in the Asia Pacific Village and both the stalls attend number of visitors who in addition to interacting with the members of sex workers collective also look into various handicraft manufactured by the 'Shrishti', the vocational unit of Durbar. The vocational unit which is in operation since last 7 years arranged various training programme to help in developing newer skill for aged sex workers and for their children, so that they can acquire additional or alternative occupation to create livelihood or to improve quality of life of sex workers community.

PrEP Consultation Meeting in South Africa

A five member team from Durbar visited Johannesburg (South Africa) to participate in a meeting on PrEP held on 11th and 12th November, 2013 at Wits Reproductive Health &

HIV Institute, Hillbrow, Johannesburg, South Africa. The consultation meeting was organized by UNAIDS and WHO, to understand whether and how best to incorporate PrEP as an additional preventive tool within the wider context of HIV prevention programme among the sex workers. The meeting was attended by several sex workers representative from Africa and India in addition to representatives from NSWP. Participants deliberate on the potential role of PrEP in sex work intervention programme including possible challenges. The consultation meeting discussed on the following issues:

1. Better understanding of the needs and opinions of potential users of PrEP
2. Listing of the major opportunities and challenges in incorporating PrEP within a broad combination prevention approach
3. Sharing of ideas how to address challenges and to capitalize possible opportunities
4. Plans for appropriate elements of a toolkit that could help community and policy makers alike in deciding when, how and whether to use PrEP.

3rd General Assembly NTUI Aluva (Kerala)



Representatives of Binodini Sramik Union and Durbar Disha Griha Sramika Mahila Samanwaya Committee attended the 3rd General Assembly of NTUI (New Trade Union Initiative) of India from 19th- 21st November 2013 held in Aluva, Kerala. Prior to the Assembly, the organizer hold colorful street procession which was attended by more than 6000 participants holding number of placards highlighting issues and demands. The assembly was formally inaugurated by the President D. Thankappan, General Secretary of NTUI. Among the speakers there were number of trade unionists eg. Anuradha Talwar and other trade union representative representing states (J&K, Haryana, Gujarat, Maharashtra, West

Bengal, Orissa, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Delhi etc). Gautam Mody, Secretary of NTUI introduced the foreign trade union delegates from UK, France, Japan, USA, Turkey, Bangladesh and Pakistan.

The main focus of the Assembly was to present the Secretariat Report and to provide a platform for the comrades from various participating states to deliver their feedback on the same. Rama Debnath, representative from Binodini Sramik Union delivered her speech in support of the General Secretary's Secretariat Report and also recommended to form the Working Women's Council to ensure the social and job security for the working woman both at state as well as at the national level. She stresses the need of prioritize issues for Working Women's Council e.g., equal pay for equal work, policy on sexual harassment at



workplace and provision for basic amenities in the workplace (toilets, crèche for working women, maternity leave with full pay for a period of six months etc.). She also emphasized on legalizing “sex work” as “work” and to establish trade union rights both for both the sex workers and domestic workers.

The 3rd General Assembly took two important resolutions namely:

1. Unity of the Working Class with Progressive and Democratic Forces to Defeat Imperialist Globalization and Resist the Right-Wing Offensive.
2. Building a Militant Struggle for a living Wage as per the standard norms of calculating wage based on the daily calorie requirement.

The Assembly ended with the election of the Executive body member where our representative from Binodini Sramik Union, Ms. Sima Fokla was elected as the Executive Member of the National Committee of the NTUI.

Durbar organized Bijoya Sammilini to strengthened the network of friendship

After a big struggle what culminated verdict allowing Durbar to organize Durga Puja in Sonagachi red light area. Durbar could successfully organize Durga puja of their own with support from friends and well wisher. To meet in person with all these who supported on endeavor and have been part of us and supported us in making it a success. Durbar organized Bijoya Sammilani on 7th December 2013 at Subham Hall. Prominent personalities from all walks of life attended the Sammilani. Supporters like Chandreyi Alam, Advocate in High Court, Debjani Sengupta, Advocate in High Court, Susmita Saha, Advocate in High Court, Sikha Mitra, MLA, Jiban Prakash, ex MLA, D. N. Chatterjee, Somnath Dutta , Debu Mukherjee, Member of All India Football Federation, Jagadish Ghose, ex goal keeper of Indian national Team, Kalyan Mazumdar, Secretary, Kingfisher East Bengal, Football Club, Amitava Bhattacharjee, Film Director, Dr. Sarmistha Dutta Professor from R G Kar Medical Colleges to name a few among many others allowed the programme. Representatives from teaching profession and Asoke Dutta and Samiran Dalal from State Bank of India did participate in the said Bijoya Sammilani programme.

Many of these dignitaries delivered their speech followed by the cultural team Komal Gandhar presented its performance. A teacher from a local West Bengal School shared with delight that she has never experienced such a wonderful performance. She has come across with loads of students on whom parents spend money, but they did not even achieve this level of skill to perform a cultural programme of this kind. She reiterated that children of female sex workers has its talent to excel in performing arts and people from mainstream society could learn from them and help our children in school to acquire skill and competency in this regards.

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