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Durbar Bulletin -47

Usha organised field awareness program in red light districts

In Sonagachi:

The first awareness program of USHA Mela initiated its journey from the Sonagachi red Light district, the more than 10,000 Kolkata. The with a song sung and welcome Secretary of Roy.

Mr. Rabindra commented that banks and Life companies who lucrative business opportunities to



considered marginalized community of sex workers. This is also a success of USHA and he elaborated on the yearlong programs that will take place to celebrate such success.

Ms. Bharati Dey, Secretary of DMSC addressed the gathering by saying that till date there has been a number of Mela organized by DMSC and supported by USHA. This is the first time that USHA will facilitate a MELA in 2015 and DMSC will support it. The venue and schema of the USHA Mela has been arranged such that various stakeholders and the general population have no problem in participating the events. She also expects that through this conference the cooperative movement in the country will be brought in the limelight.

Among other participants who addressed the audience are the joint registrar of State Cooperative Department Mr. Nirmal Ghosh who mentioned that the growth of USHA Cooperative from the time of its inception has helped cooperative movement in the state in general which has gained a different dimension. His fellow colleague Mr. Ajay Giri criticized the chit fund and the related financial scandals. He also suggested that a report needs to be prepared on USHA and submitted to the chief minister for her kind perusal.

workplace for sex workers in program began by Mita Mondal speech by USHA, Mrs. Rita

Nath Goswami there are many Insurance are offering schemes and the hereto

Santanu Chatterjee, CEO of USHA, elaborated that other than the sex workers community there are many other marginalized communities like the indigenous people living in districts of West Midnapore, Domestic and the construction labors, Transgender and third Gender community who could benefit from the cooperative. Measures are also being taken to incorporate such marginalized communities under USHA cooperative.

In Kalighat:



The 2nd awareness program was held in Kolkata red light district on 31st January 2015. The program started with a welcome note by Rita Roy secretary of USHA. She introduced the purpose of the awareness program and asked for the cooperation from the sex workers community as whole stressing on the importance of savings in the life of sex workers. Cultural wing of DMSC, Komol Gandhar performed a ceremonious dance which was applauded by the audience.

Number of speakers emphasized on the role model of sex workers who built ownership over the cooperative by organizing and managing successfully.

Furtherance Ms. Bharati Dey, Secretary Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee elicited the importance of depositing money in the Cooperative of USHA and how it is different from the chit funds. She also kindled the inspiration to community development and capacity building through this endeavor of savings. Relating the past history of sex workers facing violence and exploitation to open a bank account and the present day scenario with economic independence very subtly invoked the zeal of inspiration towards savings among the sex workers. The practical implications of being a member of USHA and its scope to attain a better quality of life were elaborated through her speech.

Mr. Santanu Chatterjee, Finance Director of USHA shared the history of USHA from its inception and its journey from 1995 to 2000 stressing that not much effort was made to position USHA, as a movement of marginalized communities and its success in building economic security to thousands of sex workers.

In account to the USHA Mela initiative Federation Chief Mr. Sandeep Mondal congratulated all the members of USHA. He briefly explained the concept of Cooperative and its functions. He also narrated the historical aspirations of Federation of West Bengal Urban Co-operative Banks and Credit Societies Ltd. Mr. Mondal stressed on the ownership building strategies of the community members for active engagement and participation of community members.

USHA connects the Kolkata Bookfair

The 3rd awareness campaign of USHA was conducted on 3rd February, 2015 at SBI Auditorium at Milan Mela ground. The main theme of the program was to focus the importance of cooperative in community development. The program started with a welcome note by Mr. Tarun Basu, Sub-Editor, Durbar Bhavna followed by a new book named 'Unnoyoner Khoje' written by Dr. Smarajit Jana was launched. Dr. Jana briefly illuminated the history of USHA from its inception and also explained the meaning and

importance of cooperative for the development of the marginalized community. He then shared the news that this year USHA cooperative was adjudged as the best cooperative in the state of West Bengal.

Dr. Dipankar Dey, Dean, IBS in his speech said that the development policies and process which is going on now a days is not at all favourable for the marginalized community. We have to find a better or inclusive alternative process for the development of the marginalized community. Recently a new concept of '3rd sector' movement has been embarked in the world where the non-profit or the voluntary sectors are a part of it. The economic sector is jointly owned by government and the big private sector which is considered as a model for economic development, is seriously challenged by number of economist both in the past as well as in the present. Rabindranath Majumder, Retired Professor, precisely described the contribution of the Nobel laureate Rabindra Nath Tagore and Scientist Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy in the growth of economic development of our country.

Mr. Tarun Basu thanked all the participants and wind up the session.

Amra Padatik organised a seminar on SRB

Amra organised event at on 2nd The started

song of residing red light objective was to and ideas and Self



Padatik a one day Baharampur February 2015. program with a melodious sex worker in Baharampur district. The of the event discuss, aware exchange of activities of Regulatory

Board (SRB). Sex workers belonging to Murshidabad and Birbhum district namely from Farakka, Dhulian, Domkol and Seuri areas attended the meeting.

The sex workers who participated in the discussion session endorsed the problems faced by them while working in their respective areas. The sex worker of the Farakka red light district reported that due to police/GRP harassment the sex workers are unable to continue with their work even to prevent trafficking of minor girls in the area.

Dr. Jana, the Chief Advisor of Durbar in his speech said that as a member of the Supreme Court panel he and Ms. Bharati Dey (Secretary, Durbar) discuss the issues and challenges what a sex worker falls harassment and atrocities by the police in the country. He also added that the SRB should be constituted in the above sex work sites so that the sex workers who engaged voluntarily in the profession should be allowed to do so with dignity as well as to restrict the entry of minor girls in the profession.

Apart from the Chief Advisor of Durbar, Dr. Jana and Secretary Ms. Bharati Dey other members of Durbar and the sex workers of Murshidabad district were present in the session. The event was graced by the Municipal Chairman of Baharampur, District President,

lecturers from the University, teachers and Councillor. Mr. Nilratan Atya. Chairman of Baharampur Municipality, Mr. Siladitya Haldar assured his support to help and facilitate works of Durbar if and when required.

Sex workers coming from different red light districts were distributed into 4 groups to discuss the problem faced by them in their respective field and also to make a work plan for the next 6 months. After the completion of the discussion the meeting ended with few resolutions:

- Formation of an office of Durbar in Baharampur
- Another meeting will be conducted in Farakka between the month of March- April, 2015
- A deputation will be presented before the day to stop the violence or exploitation on sex workers by the police and GRF in Farraka, which will be coped to different government departments like Farakka police, Superintendent of police and GRP.

Durbar Prakashani in Kolkata Book fair- 8th time in a row

The 39th International Kolkata book fair, Asia's largest book fair was held from 28th January 2015 to 8th February 2015 with Great Britain being the focal theme of the fair. At least 20 countries participated in the mega event and more than 750 stalls representing different publisher opened up their published books and magazine for the book lover.

To highlight Britain's contribution to literature, a special segment 'Kolkata Literature Festival' scheduled from 6-8 February to celebrate Shakespeare's 450th birth anniversary and Welsh poet Dylan Thomas's 100th birth anniversary. The fair revolved around the theme 'knowledge is great'.

Durbar Prakashani, the publishing wing of Durbar has been taking part in Kolkata Book fair since last 8 years. Like every year this year also the stall was crowded throughout the period of 12 days with book lovers and readers like young students, academicians, various social activists etc. Many renowned authors, writers, philosophers and film actors and directors also visited our stall. Durbar Prakashani launched its new publication named 'Pusthi opusthi' in the book fair and another book written by Dr. Smarajit Jana 'Unnoyoner Khoje' was also launched in the SBI Auditorium at the bookfair Ground on 3rd February, 2015.

Books what draw attention of booklovers were 'Jibon Jounata aar Jounokarmi', 'Chena Desh Ochena Manush', 'Adhikar Bhawna', 'Bhinno Nari Anno Swar', 'Tonic na Velki', 'Babuder Andermahal', 'Amader Sorir o Jouno Rogh', 'Brihonnolader Jibon Sotto', 'Pusthi opusthi', 'Unnoyoner Khoje' etc. Durbar Prakashani made a good business through selling those books.

Highlights of Durbar Sports Academy

This year Durbar Sports academy has started its journey through winning trophy of Rajib Ganguly sports Tournament. The Tournament was organized by Friends of Kolkata. It has become an annual Inter NGO tournament which has been running since 2009 in honour of Rajib Ganguly after his tragic death in 2008. He was a student of Friends of Kolkata and was a keen sportsman and cricket fanatic.

The tournament the young and belonging to fortunate nursery team Durbar Sports participated in the won the match competitors and player of the announced as a football.



was organized for talented boys deprived and less communities. The (under 13) of Academy tournament and defeating other Rajib Mondal, a Academy was future star of

Again, on 1st February, 2015 the players of Third division team (Under 18) of Durbar Football Academy participated in Howrah Chapur tournament. the final tournament was played between the players of howrah Sahajatri Sangha club and third division team where the team became runners up.

Another elated news is that the academy for the first time initiated a day long sports program on 28th January, 2015 at Rabindra Kanan ground for all the staffs of Durbar. Games like musical chair, ball through, 50 and 100 meter race, needle threading race, spoon race etc were the attraction of the day. Along with all these the main attraction was the cricket match between the staffs of STD/ HIV Intervention Program (SHIP) i.e, central based HIV intervention program and Ganga Bhagarati Intervention Program (GBIP) i.e, district based intervention program where GBIP defeated SHIP by 5 wickets.

Opening a new Computer Centre at Rahul Vidya Niketan, Baroipur

On 20th January, 2015, with a joint initiative from Parinam Foundation and Ujjiban Financial Private Limited, a computer centre for the children of sex workers was inaugurated at Rahul Vidyaniketan, a residential home in Baroipur.

The main objective behind the establishment of the computer centre was to spread computer literacy among the children. The joy of the children was palpable as they explored the newly installed systems and started learning how to use them. Addressing the event, Ms. Bharati Dey (Secretary, Durbar) explained a brief overview of the diverse activity of Durbar and Rahul Vidya Niketan.

On behalf of Ujjiban Sanstha, Mr. Sumit Ghose and Ms. Mallika Ghose were present there. The children of Rahul Vidya Niketan graced the program with their music, dance and recitation which were greatly appreciated by them.

Durbar participated in the program of Rotary India Literacy Mission

On behalf of Durbar 50 inmates of Rahul Vidya Niketan and 15 children from Khidirpur Red Light District took part in an event organized by Rotary India Literacy Mission (RILM) under its Child Development project called Asha Kiran, a ray of hope on 31st January, 2015 at Maddox Square, South Kolkata. The Mission took an initiative to meet and interact with children from different NGOs. Over 500 children coming from diverse backgrounds but had less opportunity to continue with school student were present in the event. Many of them were school drop outs and in most cases financial constraint was the main cause. The participants were children of brick kiln workers, sex workers and children of sex workers belonging to disadvantaged rural segments of West Bengal. On the other hand this program

was attended by Rotarians & Rotary Clubs of RID 3291 who were mainly there to pledge their 'Support' to expand educational opportunities of these children. Komal Gandhar, the cultural wing of Durbar presents a dance drama which was applauded by all those who were present there.

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