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Durbar Bulletin -52

Inauguration of the 1st floor of Rahul Vidya Nikitan



The much awaited 1st floor of Rahul Vidyaniketan, a residential home for sex worker's children run by Durbar was formally inaugurated on 4th July 2015 by the former MP, Mr. Barun Mukherjee. He was greeted into the campus by the young children residing there. Mr. Mukherjee from his development fund supported construction of the 1st floor of the Rahul Vidya Niketan for the financial year 2014-2015.

The program commenced at 4pm with the ceremonial cutting of the ribbon by Former MP, Mr. Barun Mukherjee in the presence of Mr. Nirmal Mondal (Acting MLA), Mr. Sunil Sardar (Panchayat Pradhan), Ms. Bharati Dey (Secretary, Durbar), Dr. Smarajit Jana (Chief Advisor, Durbar). He also lit a lamp and laid the symbolic stone.

Other important personalities who attended the gathering were Mr. Ajay Kumar Chakraborty (Panchayat Vice President), Ms. Chandana Sapoi (Upo Pradhan), Mr. D. N. Goswami, Civil engineer and well Wisher of Durbar who planned supervised construction of the floor in addition to facilitating procurement of goods and materials for construction. The children of the home felicitated the guests with flower.

Ms. Bharati Dey formally gave welcome to all the dignitaries on the dais. In her introductory speech she expressed wholehearted gratitude to Mr. Barun Mukherjee, former MP for extending his support. She said that we dreamt of, such a place where children of sex workers get an opportunity to study in formal school, took part in sports, cultural activities and other carrier building training.

Mr. Barun Mukherjee, former MP greeted the members of DMSC and advised the children to utilize this platform to foster human values along with professional knowledge. He also added that this community is undoubtedly an exceptional category of underprivileged women. He expressed his deep pleasure seeing this development and effective utilization of allotted fund for the cause.

Dr. Smarajit Jana in his address expressed his thankfulness to all the dignitaries on the platform. He narrated the historical importance of Durbar and USHA and the struggle faced by the members. In their journey to regain rights and dignity he also highlighted the various activities done by Durbar and its sister organisations. D.N Chatterjee, a well wisher of Durbar and treasurer of Durbar Sports Academy, enlivens the programme through his luminous and inspiring talk.

The program ended with a cultural program, organised by Komal Gandhar and the children residing in the home and few songs were sang by Mita Mondal.

Fixing Minimum Wage in recognition of the domestic workers

Legislative protection for workers to receive a minimum wage, can be considered as the hall mark of any progressive nation. It is one of the fundamental premises of decent work. In India, the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 provides a basis for fixation and enforcement of minimum wages in respect of scheduled employments. The Act also requires the appropriate actions from the government (both at Centre and States) Department to fix minimum wages in respect to specific labor articulated in the schedule and also to review and revise the same at intervals not exceeding five years.

In India, around 395 million workers (86%) out of the total workforce of around 457 million workers constitute the unorganized/informal sector. Currently, the number of scheduled employments in the Central sphere is 45 whereas in the States sphere the number is 1650 (when all states are counted). From July 1, 2015 the National Floor Level of Minimum Wage has been raised to Rs 160 per day.

Domestic workers come under the purview of the Minimum Wage in some states of India including Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamilnadu, Rajasthan etc. But they do not fall under the purview of the act in West Bengal. Very recently the Government of West Bengal is trying to include the them in the act which means due recognition for the occupation as well.

Durbar Disha Mahila Grihasramik Samanwaya Committee as a member organization of Karmajibi Mahila Parisad(a forum for the working women in west Bengal) developed a proposal regarding the Minimum Wage for the domestic workers. As per the last Supreme Court verdict, considering the present wholesale price index the minimum wage calculated as Rs. 40/- per hour. The proposal was discussed in length with the joint Commissioner of Labor, Government of West Bengal. It was learnt in the meeting that government has created a committee to discuss minimum wage for domestic workers.

Celebrating the International Day against Drug Abuse by Amra Padatik

Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee and Amra Padatik (the organization by the children of Sex Workers) organized an event to sensitize people about substance abuse and its harmful effects. The said programme was launched in front of Sonagachi Sitala Mandir.

Eminent personalities from different walks of the society graced the occasion. Veteran activist and one of the pioneers in the drug field Dr. Debapriya Mallick attended the programme. He requested to stop abusers. Drug can destroy the abilities of a human being leaving him/her unproductive, commented. Dr. Mallick discussed about this wonderful initiative by the children of sex workers which is unique to him. Experienced teacher Mr. Banshi Badan Chattopadhyaya shared his observation about children's pleasure towards attraction towards producing substances.



He said about 50% adolescent try some or the other substance during this age. He also said that research says that people become addicted to substances within the age of 18-35 years which is the golden time of their life. Dr. A.K Singh and Dr. Charubala Gala shared information on the harmful physiological and psycho-social effects of substance abuse. Officer In -Charge of Burtolla Police Station Mr. Bhagirath Ghosh was also present in the programme. As per him, this initiative should go a long way to prevent social vices like substance abuse. Local Councillor Ms. Sunanda Sarkar assured her support towards Durbar and Amra Padatik.

“We, in DMSC believe in building a healthy environment free from any sort of violence and as per our experience alcohol use can cause domestic violence and unsafe sexual behaviour. It also have terrible consequences on the lives of the children”- says Bharati Dey, Secretary Durbar. Leaflets were distributed among the audiences on substance abuse by the members of Amra Padatik. It was followed by the street play named “Nesha Sarbanasha” by Komolgandhar- the cultural wing of Durbar.

“Our friends are often addicted to certain substance including glue sniffing and alcohol which hinders their growth and healthy development. As an organization of children of sex workers we dream that every child in the red light districts would grow and develop with equal opportunity to live a prosperous life”- says Puja Roy, Secretary ,Amra Padatik- the organization of the children of the Sex workers. With this pledge, the organization undertakes various initiatives to sensitize the community to resist substance abuse in the red light districts. Amra Padatik has planned to continue with their effort to sensitize the community through a series of street plays, poster presentations and distributing leaflets.

A seminar on the eve of 20 years of celebration of USHA cooperative, at Darbhanga Hall, Calcutta University

On 22nd June 2015 USHA Multipurpose Cooperative Society in collaboration with the Department of Commerce, Calcutta University organised a seminar in Darbhanga Hall. The topic of discussion was Cooperative movement-issues and challenges in India. The objective was to sensitize students on cooperative related issues and to open a discourse on various challenges.



The program started at 4pm where Mr. S.P. Chatterjee, Social Activist, Dr. Samar Kumar Dutta, Retd. Professor of IIM Ahmadabad, Prof. Snehmoye Bhattacharjee, Head of the Department (HOD), Commerce, Dr. Sekhar Basu Mallick, Advisor of USHA, Bangshi Badan Chakraborty, Coordinator, IGNOU graced the program with their presence. Other than the invitees, the staffs and members of Durbar and USHA and the students of the University were also attended the program.

The program started with a welcome speech of Rita Roy, Secretary, USHA. She narrated the formation of USHA cooperative and the struggle faced to register their cooperative. She also informed that in the year 2014-2015 Usha has been recognized as the best cooperative in West Bengal by the Cooperative Department, Government of West Bengal.

Prof. Bhattacharya in the speech expressed his overwhelming experiences to attend such a rejuvenated program. He also added that it's a matter of pride for the commerce department to be a part of the program. He also congratulated Usha for their effort. Mr. S.P. Chatterjee recollected the history of Cooperative in West Bengal and congratulated USHA members for their struggle.

Dr. Samar Dutta expressed his gratitude to USHA for arranging such a program in Darbhanga Hall, Calcutta University. He also said that as a professor of IIM, he had an opportunity to visit many renowned programs, but had never got the chance to attend any program in this legendary hall and it was only due to USHA he got the scope to attend a program in this famous hall. He in his speech highlighted about cooperative and cooperative department movement in India including various structural barriers. He also mentioned that Dr. Kalam is keen to visit USHA and expectedly he will visit during USHA *mela* and the whole process will be looked after by him. Dr. Sekhar Basu Mallick also shared his experiences as an Advisor of USHA.

The program ended with melodious songs of Tulsi Sardar (daughter of sex worker) and Mita Mondal, a girl rescued by Self Regulatory Board of Durbar.

Durbar arranged a sensitization program with police on Juvenile Justice Act

Durbar with the support of Goal India organized a sensitization program on Juvenile Justice (JJ) Act. The program commenced on 30th June 2015 at Durbar's Central Office (12/5 Nilmoni Mitra Street) where Mr. Bhagiroth Ghosh (O.C), Subratra Kr. Paul (A.O.C), Sankari Das (A.O.C), Chaitali Chakrabarty (S.J.P.U), Rina Sarkar (A.C.D.W.C), Amarendra Kr. Jadav, Dr. S. Jana, Banshibadan Chaktapadhya (Coordinator, IGNOU) were present in the program. Apart from notable personalities, the health workers, peer educator and counsellors from different red light districts of Kolkata did participate in the program.

The objective of the program was to propagate and aware the members of the marginalized communities and their children on JJ Act and the role and responsibilities of police. The topic of the discussions was:

- i) Mechanism to address JJ Act
- ii) How far law enforcement system is sensible to ensure the rights of child juvenile.
- iii) Juvenile in conflict with law.
- iv) Role of Child Welfare Committee (CWC) and the structure of Special Juvenile Police Unit (SJPU)
- v) Role & responsibilities of Police working with children
- vi) Conflict and mitigation strategies
- vii) Drug Addiction
- viii) Carrier/victims of criminal activities
- ix) Child labor
- x) Child trafficking
- xi) Child Marriage
- xii) Role of School teacher
- xiii) Role and responsibility of Police personnel

Players of Durbar Sports Academy won the 1st round Nursery League



This year the Nursery League which is organised by the Indian Football Association (IFA) with the sponsorship of Athletico- de- Kolkata started from 23rd March 2015. Like every year this year also the players of Durbar Sports Academy (Under 15) participated in the league.

Only the affiliated members of IFA can play in the league and Durbar Sports Academy got affiliation in the year 2012. The league is divided into 5 zones namely, South zone, North zone, East zone, West zone and Central zone and the players of Durbar Sports Academy comes under the South zone. This year a total of 7 teams participated from the South zone and the players of Durbar Sports Academy became the winner in the zone defeating 6 other teams.

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