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# Durbar Bulletin -53

## DURBAR becomes a partner of DOSTI Program

The DOSTI Project of British Council is being initiated in India and that too in Kolkata where two organizations from this city has been selected to partner British Council in this endeavor, DURBAR being one of them. DOSTI – Sports for Peace project was first initiated by British Council of Pakistan in their country and the success of the program has motivated the neighbouring countries Sri Lanka, India and Afghanistan to start similar activities. An experience sharing cum training program was organized at Colombo from 27th July 2015 to 1st August 2015, where there were participants from India and Sri Lanka and the trainers came from UK and Pakistan. two representatives from Durbar Sports Academy participated in the program. The training sessions included mainly how to motivate the kids between 12 – 18 years and coming from the marginalized section of the society to take up sports to build a successful career. There were theory classes along with group work, energizers and activities which made the training period very informative and interesting. The DOSTI Program will be launched on 1st of September, 2015, where DURBAR will train around 100 kids in Kolkata and Seouraphuli, a district in West Bengal.

## Durbar Disha Mihila Grihasramik Samanwaya Committee submitted a deputation to include them in the Minimum Wage Act

The Government of West Bengal, is planning to include the domestic workers in the Minimum wage Act. As per the Minimum Wage Act 1948, the State Advisory Committee is responsible to provide their suggestions and recommendation in this regard. The Government of West Bengal has formed a subcommittee to deal with the particular issue which unfortunately do not have any domestic worker representation. A meeting of the State Advisory Committee was constituted by the Ministry of Labor and has started functioning since 30<sup>th</sup> July 2015.

To raise the demands of the domestic workers members of Karmajibi Mahila Parishad,( a forum of the unorganized women workers including domestic workers, fisher women, jari workers, tea plantation workers, construction workers, brick kiln workers, sex workers, mid day cook, agricultural workers, trained mid wives, daily wage earners) gathered in front of the office of the MIC Labour. More than 50 women representing unorganized workers



slogans for the domestic workers with colourful placards and posters.

Representatives of domestic workers also demanded to stop discrimination of domestic workers at the workplace

in addition to making provision for basic facilities like washroom, safe drinking water sitting arrangement etc are among other demands. The Advisory Committee members assured to take positive steps in this regard.

It was just a beginning of their success which paved their way to fight for the rights for their community.

### **Strengthening Self Regulatory Boards to ensure child rights**

Self Regulatory Board (SRB) is a model to empowering the community in making decisions and implementation of their programs. Durbar established Self Regulatory Boards way back in 2000 in Kolkata primarily with an aim to prevent entry of minor girls and unwilling adults in sex trade. It is a joint endeavour of sex workers and the key stakeholders which includes doctors, legal professionals, Government Officials, elected representatives. In later stage SRBs extended its activities to include issues which are directly associated with the life and livelihood of the sex workers and their families. To ensure child rights became one of the focal activity of SRBs SRB took initiative to enrol children in formal education and others career building opportunities. With time, it was felt that these children centric activities requires children led approaches and Amra Padatik(the organization of children of sex workers ) was inducted in the SRBs.

On 31<sup>st</sup> July 2015, a SRB meeting was held in Seoraphuli, Hoogly. The meeting was attended by the Local Councilor Mr. Amiya Kumar Mukhopadhyay, Municipality Chairman Mr. Arindam Guin, Inspector in Charge of Srirampur Police Station Mr. Nandadul Ghosh, Local Reporter Mr. Tapesh Kumar Basu. Keeping in mind, about the importance of child protection in the locality through a peer led approach, Sutapa Majhi, a sex worker's child and a member of Amra Padatik was unanimously selected as a child representative in Seoraphuli SRB.

Apart from various local issues Durbar proposed to incorporate a child representative from Amra Padatik in the Ward level Child Protection Committee as per the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (a central Government Scheme to ensure child protection). This committee will be responsible to monitor and supervise child protection issues in the area. The local councillor and municipal chairman assured to look after these issues after getting the guideline from the government in this regard.

## Participating in a street corner to protest the recent reforms in labour laws

New Trade Union initiative is a federation of several independent trade unions for organised and unorganized workers in India. It came into existence in the year 2001 and it is the first trade union which recognized sex workers as workers and Binodini Sramik Union, an union of sex workers became their members.

Recent reforms in the labour laws poses a direct threat to the working class people putting their safety and security at stake. A bunch of labour laws along with its various pro-worker provisions will be altered in favour of capital. It is also narrowing down the applicability of the labour laws and scope to from trade unions. To protest against those reforms 11 Central Trade Unions called for a national strike on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2015. NTUI is one amongst these trade unions which is against these anti-worker reforms.

NTUI West Bengal State council has taken a bunch of street corners to sensitize the working class about the reforms with an aim to generate consensus against it. One such street corner was organized in front of Hatkhola post office near Shovabazar crossing in Kolkata. As one of the founder member, Durbar actively participated in the street corner. The Asst. Secretary of Durbar, Ms. Sima Phokla delivered her speech about the attack on the trade unionism. Ms. Anuradha Talwar, Mr. Swapan Ganguly from Paschim Banga Khet major Samity, Mr. Sushovan Dhar from Sunderban Banadhikar Samity , Mr. Somnath Ghosh from Hosiery Workers Union were amongst other speakers. The street corner was attended by several working class people and leaflets were distributed to sensitize the mass. Two other street corners will be organized in the month of August in other prominent locations of Kolkata.

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