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Durbar Bulletin -65

Durbar Sports Academy in Dana Cup

They do not get recognition as a representative of our so called mainstream society. They are even denied of their basic rights and opportunities but their hardship and struggledid not stop them from dreaming big and aspiring high. They are the children of the sex workers from Sonagachi and the other red light districts of West Bengal.

This year, Durbar Sports Academy consisting of the budding 16 footballers who belong to sex work community and from other marganilized communities were invited to take part in Dana Cup in Denmark, starting from July 25-30, 2016.



A total of around 1200 teams representing 47 countries participated in the Dana Cup.

This is one of the largest football tournament for the adolescents in the world.

Durbar Sports Academy opened their campaign in the Dana Cup with a win against Elverum FB of Norway by a margin of 3-0 goals. After the match, the players went back where they were residing and had a video analysis session and they had seen the match into the projector to find out mistakes what they have committed so as to rectify those errors in future. The players are desperate to correct their mistakes from the first match and go into the next match.

After winning the opening match of their campaign by a comprehensive margin of 3-0 goals, Durbar Sports Academy kept the winning momentum going in the second match against Stord FB of Norway too. Coincidentally, this victory was also by a same margin of 3-0 goals.

The team defeated Klebe SK 4-0 goals in the Horne stadium to qualify for the knockout stages of Dana Cup.

After a proven performance at the group stages of Dana Cup, Durbar Sports Academy could not produce the same or similar outcome in the first match of the knockout stages as they lost to Ready of Norway by a margin of 1-0 goals.

Durbar began well but lost their way through as the match progressed.

Although they lost the match after a tremendous fight, they could show their talent and expertise what received accolade from different countries. The coordinator of Dana Cup, Mr. Alison was very impressed with the team performance and on request agreed to be the brand ambassador of Durbar Sports Academy.

“Deadly” Sixteen- or decent condition for work

Media called this day as “deadly sixteen” when the domestic workers in the city declared a “bandh” to establish their demands. The media apprehended it will shatter the city life during the day of ‘Bandh’. It shows how important are the domestic workers for any city. 16th June was marked as the International Domestic Worker’s Day “declared by the International Labour Organization to recognize the contribution of domestic workers and to ensure decent working condition for them.

The unofficial estimate shows that more than 1.50 Lakh domestic workers are working in West Bengal while there is no official estimate by the Government. These large numbers of workers do not enjoy basic right of a worker without having minimum wage, weekends, holidays, health and maternity benefits including trade union rights and others. While the other states of India including Maharashtra, Tamilnadu, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Orissa took some progressive steps in this regard by including domestic work in the Minimum wage schedule, or forming Welfare Board for the domestic workers; on the contrary the labor department of Government of West Bengal shared no interest to take any progressive step for the domestic workers. So far Civil Society Organizations, Trade Unions has also failed to highlight the needs of the domestic workers and to form an integrated social movement.

Recently, the civil society organization and trade unions took an initiative to consolidate their effort to make the movement visible to the wider society. 11 organizations came together under one platform named “Griha Sramik Adhikar Abhiyan”. The platform took a decision to organize a rally on 16th June with their 13 point demands. Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee and their domestic worker wing Durbar Disha were part of the core committee who organised rally starting from the College Square to Rani Rashmoni. More than 1500 domestic worker from different organizations including Paschim Banga Griha Paricharika Samity, SEWA, Parichiti, INTUC gathered in the venue with colourful placards and banners with broomsticks, cooking utensils and others. Enthusiastic domestic workers shouted with slogans demanding minimum wage, paid leave, maternity leave and others. Tapashi Moira the convener of the platform commented that we will go to any extent to get our demand fulfilled. This platform is just a beginning to continue the fight. The rally ended with a promise to take forward the movement throughout the West Bengal.

On 18th June a team of domestic workers went to submit a deputation to the Honourable Governor of West Bengal. Honourable Governor listened to their issues and assured them in tally to take progressive steps in commending their matter to the respective Ministry.

‘Dowry death’-common in rural Bengal

How many women still have to die to stop dowry, is yet unknown. Recently a brutal case of dowry death took place in Mandirbazar Police station area of Diamondharbour, South 24 Pgs. Shabana Parbin(named changed) a mother of a three year old girl was beaten badly by her husband and in law’s family on 28th June 2016. The in law’s family including the husband left Sahana in the middle of the road at midnight. On next day she was found brutally injured and her father hospitalized her by mortgaging his only agricultural land. On 30th he went to police station to lodge a complaint but was refused to take it. On the next day local Sramajibi Mahila Samity intervened and the police took

the complaint lodging an FIR under Section 498A and 304 of IPC. But they failed to arrest any of the accused despite of the deputation to the SDPO followed by the transfer of the Investigating Officer for the case who was accused of taking bribe from the accused party. Finally the matter came to Das Theke Das Hazar (DTDH) a forum against sexual and gender based violence (where Durbar is an active member), and they submitted a deputation to the Additional SP of South 24 Pgs (West). Additional SP took immediate action by referring the case as special case and ordered the SDPO and OC of Mandirbazar to arrest the accused immediately. The members of DTDH constantly keep their eyes on the development of the proceeding in the police station. What they could find that week passed by there was no progress in connection to the FIR lodged. Finally on 28th of July Sahana, the victim who was in coma for the passed away. The death had broken the patience of the mass and the family of the victim who cannot even meet the funeral expenses of the family. Despite several requests from various members of Das Theke das hazar and SramajibiMahilaSamity, the police and administration failed to carry the body of the victim from Kolkata to Mandirbazar. Finally the community contributed by their won to meet the expenses.

Immediately after the death, the community, local organization SramajibiMahilaSamity and Das Theke Das Hazar decided to organize a protest march followed by a deputation to the Officer in Charge of Mandirbazar police station demanding justice for Sahana. In the meantime 2 out of 6 accused were arrested by the police. On 5th of August more than 150 people gather near Mandirbazar police station and marched around the nearby locality demanding justice. AstaBalaMaity from the SramajibiMahilaSamity demanded immediate arrest of all of the accused. Rama Debnath from Durbar termed the incident as a shame for the police and administration. "Sahana- have to die to get her due justice" –commented Abir another member of Das Theke Das Hazar.

This incident clearly shows the reality rural West Bengal where the influential can provide bribe, negotiate with the law enforcing agency to cover up their offences leaving the poor in a vulnerable situation. Poor people can be denied justice even in today's technologically advanced modern era.

Finally the Officer in Charge of Mandirbazar police station assured to take action and also promised to provide police protection for the two primary witness of the case. He also said that the charge sheet will be prepared soon.

Legal Consultation regarding Anti-Trafficking and Transgender Person Bill 2016

Durbar in collaboration with Human Right law network organized a legal consultation on 6th August 2016. Two proposed discussed in Kolkata as long awaited and Ultimately a bill was of Social Justice and Transgender Rights) Bill 2016 and approved the bill. In Dutta, renowned various problematic said while Supreme wish of the person to bill seizes the right of independent self to place the gender of to constitute a district every transgender this committee to get the entitlement as transgender. As transgender individual despite of stigma



bill is presently being both of these Bills are debated over the years. prepared by the Ministry Empowerment named Persons (Protection of the cabinet already her session Aniriddha Gender activist raised provisions of the bill. She Court is recognizing the choose the gender; the autonomy and declaration of individuals theirs. The act proposes level committee and should be registered to

and discrimination, there is no scope for reservation in schools and in jobs. Even the Bill is silent on preventing stigma and discrimination encountered by the transgender. She apprehended that once passed, the act may increase the police harassment of transgenders. Members of Anandam(the LGBTQH organization under the umbrella of Durbar) were also present in the meeting. Abhijit, Loknath and others shared their experience and voiced their concern regarding the level of stigma and discrimination. It was followed by a session of Sexual harassment at Workplace Act (2013). Sayanti from HRLN described various provisions of the act and to redress the issues of unorganized women workers. She said that Local Complaint Committee should have been formed as per the provision of the Act. However, till date no such initiative has been taken on behalf of the respective Ministry of State Government.

In his session veteran Lawyer Sadhan Roy Chowdhury shared his concerns on the upcoming Trafficking of Persons Bill. He was vocal about the Governments initiative without going through any consultative process regarding the issue. He said that Supreme Court ordered that no eviction can be done without rehabilitation and a bill like this will cause indirect eviction and is against the rights and dignity of the sex workers. he advocated for continuous and consolidated campaign against the bill to protect the rights of the sex workers and their families.

Raising voice against child marriage

A street corner was organized in Rambagan red light district of Kolkata(near Anandamandir club) on 16th of August 2016. Samar Chel from Durbar band sang the inaugural song. In her welcome speech, Ms. Puja Roy, the Secretary of AmraPadatik shared her concern on the rising marriage. She commented that the marriages are not always forced, sometimes they are consensual which is very problematic. Treasurer of Durbar Ms. ChameliSaha discussed about the need and objective for organizing this mass event. "Child marriage is a social problem and it is being practiced in our society, backed and encouraged by religious practices"- she commented and "it cannot be prevented unless we join hand together".



Local councillor, who was the motivation behind organizing the street corner, said "This is not a problem of the red light district only, rather it is practiced among different sections in our society. The customs, practice backed it for ages and now it is the time to challenge it". He shared some other local problems where he requires Durbar's intervention and support. "Each and every household is not a brothel here"-he commented and "to address local problem everybody should help and support each other".

A small skit named "ShishuBibaherBiruddheLorte Hobe Eksathe"(We have to fight together against early and child marriage), was performed by Komolgandhar and AmraPadatik to spread the messages to prevent early marriage. The skit was enjoyed by the bystanders and more than 150 people attended the show. Komolgandhar also entertained the audience by their classical and popular dance drama.

Ajmira Naskar, resident from Baruipur Rahul VidyaNiketan Home, shared the activities of AmraPadatik and said that it is very much important issue to discuss the Gender, Sex and Sexuality issues among young adults. Amra Padatik promote free and fair discussion what makes Amra Padatik distinctively different from other organization.

In the concluding session, Dr.Mitali Palodhi, Vice President, Indian Dietetic Association referred from the report of the Government depicting the dangerous picture of this social problem. “54% of the girls are married at early age” she commented. She described in detail about the harmful effect of early marriage on the physical and mental development of the children. “How can a child can bear another child” she asked aloud while commenting on early pregnancy and low birth weight babies. She mentioned about the vicious circle of malnutrition from adolescent young mothers to their babies which is carried over generation after generation.

The programme ended with the important information about the role of Ward Level Child Protection Committee, Child welfare Officer, Childline, District Child Protection Officer. She shared that, the Prevention of Child marriage Act, draws provision action against caterer who supplying food in a child marriage festival, the invitees, priests who are equally guilty in sponsoring child marriage directly or indirectly.

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