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Durbar Bulletin -69

Durbar organised a Conference on TB and Nutrition

Despite all advances in medicine to treat tuberculosis (TB), the disease remains a major public health threat worldwide. India is considered to be the highest contributor to the global burden of tuberculosis. The TB control program in India has made provision of standard diagnostic and treatment services throughout the country.

The and relapse year) in estimated to cases, of million cases diagnosed other million cases recorded in Experts fear number of India is higher. The estimates the number was



incidence (new TB cases per 2015 is be 2.8 million which 1.7 were and notified. In words, 1.1 were not that year. that the actual TB cases in possibly much same report that in 2015 of TB deaths 4,78,000,

making TB one of the leading causes of death in India. India may be considered as the capital of MDR TB. As per the estimate of WHO there are 73,000 MDR TB cases in India out of which less than 2% are registered under TB control program who are receiving treatment.

Access to proper diet and nutrition proved to be an important element for TB control program. Under nutrition plays a significant role in the expression and activation of TB organism in the infected individuals. Proper nutrition is an important requirement for recovery of the TB patients.

TB Circle is an initiative by organizations and concerned individuals working to prevent transmission of TB and to help access of government run TB treatment services with special focus to poor and marginalized

communities. TB Circle has its partners in Bihar, Jharkhand, Chattisgarh and in West Bengal and has been functioning since 2010 onwards.

Keeping in view the poor nutrition status of a significant proportion of the population in our country TB circle has organized a round table consultative meeting today (26th November 2016) with an aim to discuss on the issue and to identify and strategize plan of action to influence government policies of TB control program.

The program started with the welcome speech by Ms. Bharati Dey, Mentor Durbar whereas the inaugural speech was delivered by Dr. Krishnanshu Roy, Director, Institute of Public Health and Family Welfare, West Bengal. He in his speech emphasizes upon the relation between TB and malnutrition. He further mentioned that the disease is not a problem for European Countries rather it is for South Africa and subtropical countries like India. He puts stress on few points such as early detection, assessment of nutrition, protein consumption and care giving.

Dr. Smarajit Jana, Chief Advisor of DMSC highlighted the objective of the consultation. He informed that more than 40% of the Indian population at point of time inhaled Bacillus but have not developed the disease TB. Without adequate nutritional support the progress of recovery with treatment is slow and compromised. Supplementary nutrition is essentially required for poor and marginalized communities of our country, he added. "It should be a policy level issue to overcome the situation and a nationwide campaign is necessary for TB free India with a comprehensive plan of action," recommended by Dr. Jana.

Dr. Sanjay Suryabanshi, WHO Consultant on TB, West Bengal in his presentation mentioned shared information on TB related issues. He also discussed about the relation between HIV and TB. He commented that there are various government schemes to overcome the issues but due to lack of proper planning the issue is still not addressed effectively. He assured that WHO has a plan to continue the program till 2050 and many upgraded machineries will be supplied to the medical institutions to detect and treat TB patients.

Dr. Manan Ganguli in his speech put emphasis to share experiences of the groups/organisations/individual who are working in this arena. He mentions that TB though not exclusively for the poor but it has been proved that the rate of infection is the highest among the poor and marginalized communities such as tribal of Jharkhand, Bihar and West Bengal. To combat TB he suggested to develop policies and strategies to capacitate private medical institutions and doctors.

Anuradha Talwar, a Social Activist active represented right to food campaign. She in her speech mentioned that social security schemes has failed to solve the problem of poor and marginalized people of the country. She suggested to formulate few demands what could be placed before the government department such as to empower SHG groups to produce food supplements, provide food for TB patients through ICDS (for boys and girls) and mid-day meal scheme as well as through the existing PDS. She pointed out that TB and poverty are interrelated so we have



to develop and implement both for short term and long term policies. Public Distribution System is a short term solution for hunger but we must take part in various other development activities to ensure earnings, livelihood and access to social security networks.

The representatives of civil society organizations working on TB and representatives from the rights to food campaign took a consensious decision that it is high time that the Government of India adopts a comprehensive approach in the control of TB, addresses food insecurity and under-nutrition in tribal and other vulnerable communities, and provides nutritional support and enhanced PDS ration for all patients irrespective of their status.

TB circle decided to start a National campaign through initiating a meeting in Delhi in the month of Jan 2017. It has also been decided that the statement jointly developed with the representatives of Rights to food campaign will be shared with the Ministry of Health, National health mission, Parliamentary committee on Health in addition to the representatives of WHO and The Global Fund followed by the National TB circle will strategize activism both at state as well as in the National level.

Demanding Maternity Entitlements

Thousands of women from 15 districts across West Bengal, some of them holding their child attended the grand rally on 22nd November 2016, demanding for their maternity entitlements as per the National Food Security Act.

A number of organization including Right to Food and Work and Karmajibi Mahila Parisad came together to organize a long term campaign named Matrittokalin Adhikar Abhijan (Maternity Entitlement Campaign) to recognize the labour of child bearing and rearing by the women which is often neglected by the society. Durbar as the core part of both the platforms was an integral part of the campaign.

This day is observed in accordance with the nationwide action day on maternity entitlements and reforms on National Food Security Act, 2013. Two separate rallies merged together in the Y channel at Esplanade East, shouting slogans and holding, colourful placards. Women from different unorganized sector including housewives, domestic workers, tea plantation workers, sex workers among many others unorganised labor sector joined the rally. "We have applied for our rightful entitlements in the block office, but today we are here to show solidarity with other mothers" said Sombari Mandi coming from Jamalpur block of Burdwan district. Sombari shared testimony along with another pregnant domestic worker. "Only 4% of the women workforce are in organized sector where provisions of Maternity benefit Act 1961 is applicable, but for the rest of women motherhood is entirely unsecured and unprotected." Commented Anuradha Talwar, veteran activist in the Press Conference held on 21st November, prior to the rally. She also stated that the situations in tea gardens are also grave. "Khadya Sathai is the scheme of the West Bengal Government adjudged under the Act, but it is also not addressing the issue of maternity entitlement" commented Rama Debnath, representative from Durbar and Convener of Karmajibi Mahila Parisad.

The rally is not a climax, the campaign will continue with the post card campaign where mother will send post card to the Prime Minister's office demanding maternity entitlement under national Food Security Act. "Mothers are coming to us after knowing about the entitlements and we are listing their names and submitting to the respective block or municipality office to put pressure on the administration" said Asta Bala Maity from Sramajibi Mahila Samity another constituent member organization of the campaign.

Rally against Communalism

Twenty four years ago on a crisp Sunday morning, Babri Masjid was demolished by some extremist Hindus. This was a black day in the rich history of independent India maintaining communal harmony to large sex trend. According to some historians communalism in India developed as a weapon often used by the economically and politically reactionary social classes and political forces. The British Government also used it to counter and weaken the nationalist movement. In the present political scenario, when saffronization and extremism is on the rise, communalism has regained its significant adverse intent.

Several mass organizations including APDR, Hawker's Sangram Committee, Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee jointly organized a rally on 6th December 2016, to condemn Babri Masjid demolition calling to maintain communal harmony and peace. According to Ranjit Sur "All the media has forgotten this black day in our history" he said that as a citizen of a secular country one can always practice individual belief and religion without hurting the others. Shaktiman Ghosh putting stress on the role of the political parties in maintaining peace and communal harmony and to condemn demolition of Babri Masjid.

The rally started from College square travelling towards Moulali and ended with a public meeting and gathering. More than 1500 people attended the rally to show their solidarity to condemn demolition of Babri Masjid.

National Campaign for the Rights of Domestic Workers

National Campaign for the Rights of Domestic Workers was organized by Durbar Disha at Seva Kendra Kolkata on 12th December 2016. In this consultative workshop representatives from different partner organizations of IGSSS from Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odissa, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal participated. From Kolkata, representatives of different trade unions and similar minded organizations shared their opinions.

Sukanya Chatterjee, Regional Manager East, IGSSS started the consultation with her welcome notes. She discussed the present work of IGSSS and also future planning of working with the domestic workers.

If domestic work for one society will face The domestic work with they should condition and Government.

Dr. Smarajit of DMSC said

freedom from the British rulers. But since independence no political parties framed rules and regulations to ensure safety and security of the domestic workers. Though countries like USA, UK, and Germany already have law for the protection of the domestic workers. India's policy makers remained silent towards this issue. In patriarchal society women take the maximum responsibility of the family but her domestic work are not valued and not even respected. In line with this same attitude and approaches domestic workers are treated in our society. They are not 'and their work is not respected. Workers rights of



workers stop their day then our civil lots of problems. workers should dignity and for that discuss their living rights with the state

Jana, Chief Advisor that in 1947 we got

domestic workers are denied in countries like India. Domestic workers face many challenges in building their unity and solidarity.

Srabasti Majumdar from Jadavpur University said that from 2012-15 we started a research project which is based on domestic workers. Most of the women work in the houses of the employer after completion of their own works in their houses. When the male member of the family stops earning for various reasons the female members of the family start searching job. Recently in few states government has taken initiative to include domestic workers under minimum wage notification but in the absence of a central legislation none of these state level measures did really help domestic workers.

Anchita Ghatak, the Director and Secretary of Parichiti started with the miserable life story of a domestic worker. The issue of exploitation of domestic workers is frequent, not only in their employer's house but also in their own houses. They are regularly beaten up by their husbands and had to work long hours regularly. There is a big question in the security of the domestic worker also. So the domestic workers should be united for their rights for decent salary and security of their job.

The representatives of different Ngos described the situation of domestic workers in the states like Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odissa, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

The consultation was closed with the words of the Secretary of DMSC, Ms.Kajol Bose. She thanked all the participants and requested the domestic workers to stand together for their own rights.

Violence.....A human rights violation

Das Theke Das Hajar and Maitree had organized a programme on 10th December against all forms of violence focusing on wide range of issues of human rights which are flagrantly violated everyday by those states who were signatories to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10th December, 1948 in Paris. In the program it was discussed about the latest NCRB Report. From the report, daily 311 married women are tortured by husbands and in-laws, 21 are murdered over dowry demands, and 11 are drive to suicide as a result of tortures over the same.

Globalisation has pumping up of to the rich. pauperised for the not just foreign ones like Reliance have been the bulk of the their previously This meant a



meant a consistent wealth from the poor Peasants have been benefit of big capital, MNCs but also Indian Fresh. Poor peasants proletarianised. And proletariat has lost won social security. tremendous rise in

the burden on "care givers". The family was projected as the sole area where care is available. This mean a high premium on the ideology of the family, an increased load on women, who are often enough wage workers too, but who then have to carry out domestic duties. Young girls lose all their "childhood" and are exploited at home and outside. So the domestic violence that we see have to be related to the state, and capital, which promote violence.

The programme started through campaigning on different issues and by distributing brochures by the member-organisations of both Maitree and DTDH. This was followed by speeches, songs, slogans, plays and screening of the film "Nam Porbirtito", a documentary on sexual violence on women and how did they fight back. More than hundred people participated in the program.



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