

Open Ground Fair Centering 100 years of Women's Day

8-14 January, 2011

Sradhananda Park, Kolkata

PRESS RELEASE

(Day-1)

Celebrating 100 years of Women's Day

Kolkata, 8 January: Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee, a marginalized working women's organization is celebrating two month's long program '**100 years of Women's Day, 1000 miles to go**' from 8th January to 8th March, 2011 in different states of the country. The inaugural ceremony of the program was held at Sradhananda Park, Opposite Purabi Cinema, near Sealdah Station, Kolkata-9, India.

The Chief Guest of the program was eminent Film Director Gautam Ghosh. The program was inaugurated by the fashion designer Agnimitra Paul along with the film Director and journalist Sudeshna Roy.

The Guest of Honors were Prof. K. J. Nath, Anindita Roy Choudhury (UNIFEM), Sangamitra Iyenger, (SANGAMA), Ms. Selvi (APNSW), ex MP, Shri Sudhansu Seal, SBI Regional Manager Mr. Navi, Dr. Partha Hazari, Debjit Bandyopadhyay, Riddhi Bandyopadhyay.

The inaugural day of the program was dedicated to Joymani Barman, an eminent freedom fighter whose name has also been associated with women's liberation movement but somewhere lost in the pages of history. A 7 day mela is being organized and each day of the Mela would be dedicated to women personalities who have dedicated their life to women movement.

The Mela was inaugurated by song by children of the sex workers followed by welcoming of the guests and lighting of lamps together and release of balloons in air marking a new era in women freedom movement. The Guest of Honors praised the work done by Durbar towards marginalized section of population and how they have been an inspiration for other communities in other states.

Mr. Goutam Ghosh, Film Director mentioned about his long association with Durbar and congratulated DMSC on its endeavor to take such initiative to celebrate 100 years of women's movement.

The days special attractions was folk songs and dances like Chhou and Song of Jatra and Drama.

For more information contact sonagachi@sify.com or www.durbar.org



PRESS RELEASE

(Day-2)

Celebrating 100 years of Women's Day

Kolkata, 9 January: The 2nd day of the program was dedicated to Jyotirmoyee Ganguli, an active participant of the Bengal Satyagraha movement and the first female Councillor of Calcutta Corporation

The chief guest of the day was the Mayor of Calcutta, Sri Sovan Chatterjee. Mr. Chatterjee thanked Dr. Jana (Chief Advisor) and mentioned his heartfelt thanks to Durbar for working with the marginalized women communities. He stated that 'women in sex work are my sisters and mothers'. Law has considered them as offenders but to me they are like any other citizen of this country.

He further assures that the Kolkata Corporation belongs to everyone irrespective of their caste, creed or profession.

He consulted with Ms. Bharati Dey, Secretary, DMSC and with Dr. Jana, to develop specific projects so that sex workers can access and avail medicare services. He is also considering to bring them under some health insurance scheme to be financed by Calcutta corporation so that the sex workers and their children get health and medicare services when they need most.

Here, Ms. Bharati Dey in her speech highlighted Durbar's stated objective which includes inclusion of sex work in the work schedule of labor department and recognition of Self Regulatory Board, successfully operating anti-trafficking activities all across the state of West Bengal.

Later half of the evening President of Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers, Selvi, gave a presentation highlighting how police & administration exploit & harass sex workers in various countries as well as in India

The days other attractions were Amra O Mahila, a drama by the cultural wing Komolgandhar followed by *Bihu* dance of Assam presented by *Banti Kolita* and *Puruliya's* Natuwa, a martial art developed in Manbhum districts across West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand.

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PRESS RELEASE

(Day-3)

Celebrating 100 years of Women's Day

Kolkata, 10 January: Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (DMSC), a working women organization in West Bengal is committed from last 15 years to work towards social, political and economical empowerment of marginalized women including Tribal, domestic and construction women workers. DMSC is celebrating centenary year of women liberation movement from 8th January 2011 to 8th March 2011 in different parts of the country.

A week long celebration is scheduled in Kolkata at Shradhanad Park and each day is dedicated to one woman who has significantly crafted the women movement in India. 3rd day was dedicated to Noti Binodini, a renowned Theater actress and thespian. She had immensely contributed to the field of music and theater. Ms Riddhi Bandhopadhyaya famous singer and Theater researcher acknowledged Noti Binodini's contribution in Bengali Theatre.

A theater performance "**Dulia**" by Nandikar theater group lead by Rudraprasd Sengupta was main attraction of the day. Bhawaiya performers from North Bengal and famous Baoul Singer Uma Dasi enthusiastically performed and showed their support to the cause

Arunima Haspish from HIV positive children group **Sneha Kunj**, also gave a heartwarming performance.

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PRESS RELEASE

(Day-4)

Celebrating 100 years of Women's Day

Kolkata, 11 January: Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (DMSC) continues to celebrate a weeklong celebration of centenary year of women liberation movement (8th-14th January). DMSC a women organization working with Domestic workers, constructions worker, sex workers and tribal community dedicated their 4th day of celebration to **Rani Siromani**. In 1799 she gave leadership to the revolt of **Chuar** near Medinipur. A strong team of 19 members from remote villages of Medinipur like Amlasole came for this program. Amlasole came in limelight 7 years back when few members of Sabor community died out of hunger. The team from Jangle Mahal shared their issues and challenges with other participant and general gathering at the mela.

Ms Leena Chaki renowned researcher acknowledges her contribution in crafting the women movement in West Bengal.

Md. Salim, an ex MP appreciated Durbar's work for the marginalized population specially women who are being mistreated by the society.

The program started with a dance from Muktaadhara an organisation of Infected and affected children.

"Shreekhandi" a dance and drama by Shreejan group, inspired by a character in Mahabharat beautifully reflected the problem faced by transgender at that era.

Nachinis from Manbhum Lok Sanskriti Nachinis research center, Purulia established by DMSC performed a dance drama reflecting the challenging issues that they face and showing solidarity to the women movement.

Savita Mondal and Gangadhar Mondal renowned Baul singers and Indrani Sen famous singer gave their voice to the celebration of women movement in Kolkata.

The program ended with a spectacular performance of Komal Gandhar, a cultural wing of DMSC.

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PRESS RELEASE

(Day-5)

Celebrating 100 years of Women's Day

Kolkata, 12 January: Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (DMSC) continues to celebrate a week long celebration of centenary year of women liberation movement (8th - 4th January). DMSC a women organization working with Domestic workers, Construction workers, Sex workers and tribal community dedicated the 5th day of the celebration to **Rani Rashmoni**, the founder of Dakshiniswar Kali Temple, Kolkata. She was one of the few women zamindar in the era of British Raj and a strong advocate of women education. She united the fisher's community and was able to revoke the repressive taxes imposed to them by the then British government.

DMSC has learned the power of community unity from her and how it has the ability to challenge the biggest empire. Sex workers today along with Domestic workers and Construction workers are asking the government to give them their rights and dignity.

DMSC today took the opportunity to acknowledge the contribution of ex Chief Secretary Mr. Ashok Mohan Chakraborti, renowned poet Mr. Subho Dasgupta, Music Director Mr. Kalyan Sen Barat, Choreographer Mr. Sujaya Thakur and famous actresses Ms. Lolita Chatterjee and Ms Chitra Sen each of whom are stalwarts in their respective fields.

Fashion show by sex workers and their children was the main attraction of the day's program. Raja Sen, famous film Director and Laita Chatterjee applauded Durbar in their role in giving the most marginalized community to express their creativity and talent.

DMSC has been relentlessly working towards supporting those cultural groups which are getting extinct over a period of time like Nachinis, Natua and Chau group from Purulia. Each of these groups has given spectacular performances in the Mela and has been applauded by thousands of people who were there in the audience.

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PRESS RELEASE

(Day-6)

Celebrating 100 years of Women's Day

Kolkata, 13 January: Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee(DMSC) a women organization working with Domestic workers, Construction workers, Sex workers and tribal community is celebrating 100 year's of women movement from 8th – 14th January. A weeklong celebration saw eminent personalities from various fields starting from the Mayor of Kolkata, ex Chief Secretary Mr. Ashok Mohan Chakraborty, academicians like Prof. Geraldine Forbes of State University of New York, Music Director Mr. Kalyan Sen Barat, Choreographer Mr. Sujaya Thakur, Film Director Mr. Goutam Ghosh and Mr.Raja Sen etc.

This 7 day mela aimed to mainstream the issues of domestic workers, constructions workers, sex workers as women issues and fight for their rights and dignity.

Prof. Geraldine Forbes from University of New York along with a team of students visited the mela and various stalls organized by DMSC. She took the opportunity to interact with the community members. She applauded DMSC for the work that they have been doing and providing such a platform for cultural exchange.

Each day of the mela was dedicated to different women personalities who have crafted the history of West Bengal. The 6th day of the mela was dedicated to **Matangani Hazra and Preeti Lata Waddedar** who gave leadership in some of the most important revolts during the British era.

There was a vibrant cultural program by the professional group Pulokita Ghosh (Film Artist), Jayanta Dutta Barman (Film Artist), Shreya Chatterjee (Singer) and many more who engrossed people from different walk of life present at the mela and showed their solidarity in the women liberation movement.

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PRESS RELEASE

(Day-7)

Celebrating 100 years of Women's Day

Kolkata, 14 January: Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee(DMSC) week long program celebrating **100 years of women day** from 8th – 14th January at Sradhananda Park came to a successful end. DMSC is a women organization working with Domestic workers, Construction workers, Sex workers and tribal community. This 7 day Mela aimed to mainstream the issues of these groups as women issues and to fight for their rights and dignity and create network among them.

The program was graced by eminent personalities of different field like Education Minister Partho Dey, Mayor of Kolkata, Counselors, film directors, academicians, fashion designers, media personalities, etc.

Concluding day of the celebration was dedicated to **Begum Rokiya Hussian** , who has been inspiring figure in field of women Education. Durbar emphasis has always been on education of children of marginalized communities so that they are able to exert their agency. Ms Malini Bhattacharya, **Chairperson Women Commission** applauded the work of DMSC in the field of education.

Today's program started with sports activities involving both community as well as general population. The main objective was to break the barrier between them. Media sessions had an in-depth discussion on challenges in bringing out the women leadership among the marginalized women communities. The debate reflected the limitations of the media houses but emphasized that these platforms would provide opportunity to different socio economic politically backward groups to unite and strengthen their movement.

Durbar has always supported the sporting talent among the children of marginalized communities. Thus DMSC took this opportunity to facilitate some of the most inspiring sporting personalities like Mr Prusun Banerjee and Ms Shanti Mallick , Arjun Awardees who have been a role model for many.

Transgender fashion show was the main attraction of the program. Ms Rashmi Mitra applauded Durbar in their role in giving the most marginalized community to express their creativity and talent.

Durbar Band was an ambitious dream of children of sex workers which came live at the concluding day of the celebration. The Band mesmerized the people with their performance and got a lot of support and applause.

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