



DOMESTIC WORKERS' LINK

publication of the Domestic Workers' Movement

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Editorial

When living in urban, developed cities, one is barely aware of the adversities that poverty brings upon women, especially those in the rural areas. But when the windows are opened, the emotions run wild and turn from empathy to anger to zeal and a new passion drives us to bring justice to the women and children. This is the present sentiments of the domestic workers of the Movement: the horrors of human trafficking for forced and bonded labour.

Anti-trafficking and Migration is one of the main task force of the Movement and the work is a collaborative effort of domestic workers in the source and receiving areas of human trafficking. The cunning agents of trafficking are like sharks waiting to lure women and innocent children into the trade of domestic work using, as their bait, the escape from poverty and the glamour of city-life. However, there are many women who when faced with male unemployment and domestic problems, seek the option of domestic work to support their families. They too pose as vulnerable targets for trafficking agents. Further, to add to all this, natural calamities bring in its share of reasons for trafficking and migration. The recent floods at Bihar have left the doors open for traffickers to scope the areas for helpless victims.

Women and children are brought to cities and literally 'sold' to the employers. But the indignation does not end here. What follows for the domestic workers is a life filled with atrocities and humiliation and for many, no road to turn back on. As a result of which, villages have lost track of many women and children who have left homes for the cities, through the offices of trafficking agents.

The issue has escalated to very high proportions that it has become absolutely necessary to make government bodies aware of the situation. All along trafficking was only seen in the light of commercial sex but we have brought to their notice that trafficking in women and children also extends to domestic labour wherein they are equally subjected to abuse and injustice. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has now established ties with the Indian government to strengthen the law enforcement in areas of human trafficking, be it commercial sex or bonded labour. Women Cells are being created in police forces and district administration to keep a check on the exploitation of women and children and to bring the perpetrators to task. And the Movement carries out, through the consistent efforts of domestic workers, awareness campaigns, safe migration programmes and builds stronger village vigilant committees.

With all the machinery in place, can we say that this menacing problem will come to an end?... Well, the path ahead is long and winding; the road blocks are plenty and the biggest pothole is poverty. However, we are on the right track. We need to maintain this pace and slowly gain speed especially with state and central governance. For when proper legislations are set and placement agencies monitored and regularised, we can hope for safer migration.

Until then, we have our work cut out for us. Nonetheless, we will not falter and continue to strive towards putting an end to this last form of contemporary slavery. We will work towards creating a society where women and children are no longer treated as commodities, 'packaged and sold,' but regarded as dignified humans. This is the motto of our Movement for we believe that Dignity for all humankind will sincerely lead to the creation of a more civilised world.

SANDRA VAZ

Ending Global Slavery Everday Heroes Leading the Way

*National Domestic Workers' Movement was among the 15 finalists, out of the 237 entries from 48 countries, nominated for the competition: **Ending Global Slavery—Everyday Heroes Leading the Way.***

The competition gave global recognition to organisations involved in combatting the issues of contemporary slavery. It was organised by the Ashoka's Changemakers, an initiative of Ashoka: Innovators for the Public that focuses on the rapidly growing world of social innovation.

Read more at:

<http://www.changemakers.net/node/8529>

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INTEGRATED ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING UNIT (IAHTU)

Fr. Desmond DeSouza presents a brief summary of the IAHTU project gathered from the UNODC, nodal anti-human trafficking agency for South Asia

THE CONTEXT AND RATIONALE OF THE PROJECT

- The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), regional Office for South Asia in partnership with the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India is implementing Project IND/S16 on ‘Strengthening Law Enforcement Response to Human Trafficking.’
- The project aims to intensify efforts to combat trafficking through capacity building of law enforcement personnel (police and prosecutors) in five States—Andhra, Bihar, Goa, Maharashtra and West Bengal.
- One of the components of this project is to develop or strengthen Integrated Anti-Human Trafficking Units (IAHTU) at the State level. The universal need for establishing specialist anti-trafficking units comprising all stakeholders has been recognized by UNODC.
- Human trafficking (HT) is an organized crime involving multiple abuses and abusers. Combating and preventing HT requires special skills and efforts.

The IAHTU has a comprehensive mandate for attending to:

- Prevention** – to prevent trafficking crimes
 - Prosecution** – to prosecute all offenders, conspirators and abettors
 - Protection** – to ensure best care and attention to the survivors and ensure that they are not harmed further.
- **The mandate of IAHTU** includes dealing with human trafficking for all types of exploitation including forced/exploitative labour under labour legislation and trafficking for other forms such as forced marriages, illicit adoption, begging, etc, under the relevant legislation. IAHTUs are to be set up in locations that require focused attention. These places could be the *source-transit-destination areas* where trafficking is rampant.
 - The police may, as deemed fit, draw up a separate Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with different stakeholders. NGOs can facilitate all activities of Anti-Human Trafficking starting with intelligence collection up to conviction of the traffickers. They have a major role in prevention of trafficking and re-trafficking of victims.
 - ⇒ Honorarium to NGO partners (subject to a maximum of three per IAHTU), a minimum of Rs 5000/- per month
 - ⇒ Developing and sharing a database on traffickers and victims should be one of the major activities of IAHTUs.

Judges' Feedback

On July 16, 2008, the judges reviewed the entries for the Changemakers “Ending Global Slavery” Competition and passed the following feedback for our entry. “Thank you for applying and for your hard work in the field. We are excited to archive your entry to serve as a leading solution for the worldwide community of innovators who are exposing, confronting and ending modern day slavery. We wish you continued luck with your sustainable, innovative, and socially impactful initiatives. All the best, The Changemakers Team”

DIFFICULTIES IN GETTING TRAFFICKERS CONVICTED IN GOA

The anti-trafficking cell set up by the Goa government – probably the only state in India – is poorly staffed. Mr P.M. Nair, head of the nodal anti-human trafficking agency and his office deal directly with the IGPs of each State. He immediately sent a letter to the IGP of Orissa about trafficking between Gajapati district and Goa. There is now an anti-trafficking cell in Orissa.

When it comes to the actual tracking of the traffickers in Goa, the police are dependent on cases made by NGOs. The paperwork needs to prosecute one trafficker in the court of law which is a time-consuming activity. The Public Prosecutors (PPs) in Goa have many other cases to attend to, of which, trafficking may just be one. It really makes no difference to the PP whether the trafficker is actually convicted.

Meanwhile the victim is kept in the Remand Home or made to work in someone’s house as a domestic worker which is against the very purpose for which the case was made. The PPs have admitted to the difficulties when the matter was brought to their notice. However, they still encourage NGOs to continue working for the issue. Maybe at a later date, such cases may be more successful in prosecution.

Only an alert and concerned civil society in Goa can begin to address the issues of inter-state trafficking of women and children. But the level of awareness and sense of horror needs to be heightened before an attempt at an adequate response will begin. Other more pressing social issues like land grabbing, building mega-projects for non-Goans and the fragile eco-systems of the villages push issues of trafficking to the backseat.

At the moment, there is hardly any local domestic help available in Goa. As a result of which Goans are resorting to taking women from other states, many of whom are trafficked.

FR. DESMOND DESOUZA
GOA DOMESTIC WORKERS’ MOVEMENT

I Have Heard My People Cry, Whom Shall I Send?

Sr. Lissy, state co-ordinator of the Andhra Pradesh Domestic Workers' Movement, relates her experience of the conditions of domestic workers in Orissa

Recently I had been to Orissa for a two-day workshop on empowerment of Women conducted by CBCI Women's Commission to discuss issues related to domestic workers in the state. The meeting was attended by about 35 representatives including women leaders, sisters, priests and both the bishops of Rourkela Diocese. The workshop also highlighted the gross violation on the rights of domestic workers in the state and all over the country.

Orissa has a significant tribal population and there is large scale migration of workers into the construction industry, entertainment industry, plantation work and domestic work. The state is rich with natural resources but the people continue to be poor as the resources are owned and marketed by the rich and influential. After the two day workshop I had a chance to visit some of the tribal villages and slums in Sundergarh district organised by our Orissa state coordinator, Fr Nicholas Barla along with his two animators.

I was instantly captivated by the beauty of the scenic nature in these villages abound with trees, mountains, forests, rivers and streams. It is richer with the presence of tribal people who live and work on the mountains, plains and forests with little or no communication with the rest of the world. It was a wonder we even reached these places which otherwise have very poor transportation and communication facilities.

We had the opportunity to interact with the girls and women who are domestic workers. The sharing revealed shocking, but not surprising, stories of their struggles. One girl who was a victim of trafficking had kept her story to herself for fear of being looked down upon as a failure in society. She was forced by the trafficker to leave the village, promised to give her a job in Delhi but finally landed in Hyderabad and was badly beaten by the employer, denied means of communication, served stale food and threatened. The domestic workers went on to pour out their woes and struggles: lack of proper housing, toilets, ration cards, just wages, paid leave, social security measures and pension schemes for the elderly and widows. They have and continue to experience injustice, violation of rights and exploitation at the work place.

Migration to urban cities is a common practice among the youth of these tribal villages. The limited basic services in the village like food security, education, water shortage, extreme weather conditions, lack of opportunity for recreation, skills training, job opportunities, low wages, transportation, communication, etc, are some of the compelling reasons for these young people to leave their homes. Going through the

villages and parishes, we discovered that from each place hundreds of youth migrate to cities in search of jobs through the traps of false promises by recruiting agents. Sadly, many of these boys and girls are now missing and the villagers have no information of their whereabouts. Some may be under the custody of traffickers and some may not wish to return to the struggles of the village life. Yet again there were cases of these youth returning with diseases alien to the villagers and in many cases terminal. Girls are raped, robbed and murdered and the district administration is yet to identify or arrest the culprits.

The tribal people are vulnerable and hence are in desperate need of comprehensive programmes of safe migration. Traffickers take advantage of their situations of poverty, limited civic amenities, simplicity of the tribes and lack of mechanism to address the issue. The border areas are the worst hit areas for traffickers and continue to be anonyms with interstate recruitments.

The harvest is great and the labourers are few. God stands at the door of every willing heart and says 'I hear their cry, but whom shall I send?'

Sr LISSY JOSEPH, STATE COORDINATOR-AP

At the CBCI workshop an action plan was drawn up to check the problems of Migration Trafficking and Domestic Work. These included:

1. A **state level Women's Wing** to cater to the needs of tribal women
2. **Training for Self-employment** or entrepreneurship development programme besides availing of employment under the government or private agencies.
3. **Promotion of Self Help Groups** of both men and women either separately or jointly.
4. **Create awareness** among the people especially parents about the tribulations faced by domestics, especially child domestic workers, in cities. The society should also help in putting an end to migration and trafficking.
5. Form **strong committees** in the parish, deanery and diocese level to manage the issue.
6. Each diocese should consider this issue as a **priority development intervention** with the entire church structure from the Bishop House to parishes including lay persons church bodies like Catholic Sabha, Mahila Sangh, Balsangh and Yuva Sangh should be energised to tackle the problems.

PROMILA KINDO, ORISSA DOMESTIC WORKERS' MOVEMENT

Awareness programme to prevent Trafficking of Girls

The Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers' Movement organized an awareness programme on 29th of July at Elavarasakottai, at the market place, where people from twenty villages usually gather. The programme highlighted the issues on trafficking of girl children to other states. Sr. Escaline inaugurated the programme projecting the status of girl children who are trafficked for domestic work to Kerala, Tirupoor and Bangalore and the harassment faced by them.

The cultural team performed the programme displaying the importance of education to girl children and indicating that children below 18 can avail of compulsory education. They also made people aware of the sexual harassment and physical abuse faced by children in domestic work and the consequences of sending their children to work.

The awareness songs, plays and speeches elicited a good and supportive response from the people gathered for the programme. They all vowed to send their children to school. One child was asked what he aspired to be and he expressed that he wanted to become the Collector. His father who stood next to him shed tears to hear his child's big plan for his future.

The Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers' Movement has identified 380 children in domestic work till date. The survey continues.

SR. JOSEPHINE AMALA VALARMATHI, ICM, COORDINATOR, CHENNAI- TAMIL NADU DOMESTIC WORKERS' MOVEMENT

Trafficked domestic worker escapes clutches of employer

Radha (*name changed*), 25, hails from Orissa. Her husband is a daily labourer and her two children are below 6 years of age. Educating her children turned out to be nightmare and her concern for her children's future forced her to leave her home and take up a job as a domestic worker. Through an agency, she and two other women were first taken to Delhi and from there Radha was placed in Hyderabad as a live-in domestic worker.

Life as a domestic worker was extremely traumatic. A week into the job and she faced humiliation from the employer: her work was never appreciated. Her employer kept finding faults with her work. Living with them was like hell on earth for her. She would curse the days she was beaten with slippers. The humiliation weighed down upon her. Radha would pass her nights in turmoil. She had decided to escape.

Then one morning while the family was having their breakfast, Radha sat in the toilet crying and praying that she would be able to escape this ordeal. The family looked for her and when she returned to the kitchen, her employer beat her with the slippers again. Radha's mind starting working fast. The main entrance was locked but she jumped through the balcony and walked hurriedly away until she stopped an auto-rickshaw and requested the driver to reach her to any church as she was in great distress. She did not know the local language, Telugu, but she was familiar with Hindi.

The driver took her to St. Theresa Church at Sanath Nagar. After mass, the nuns met her and learning about her problems informed Sr. Lissy, state co-ordinator of the Andhra Pradesh Domestic Workers' Movement. The nuns offered to keep Radha at the convent as she was suffering from fever. Meanwhile, Sr. Lissy began to trace the series of people involved in the trafficking, from the village recruiter to the employer. Radha spoke with her family, broker, agency and

the person who brought her to Hyderabad. The employer was finally tracked down but avoided meeting with the Sr. Lissy with several excuses.

Radha contacted her family with the possibility of getting a job as a teacher in her village and decided to return to her husband and children. She was accompanied by one of the staff from the Movement as she found it difficult to manage with the language.

Radha saved herself from her oppressive employers. Our concerns now lie with the two other women who had also travelled with Radha in search of domestic work. Their whereabouts are unknown and we worry about the problems they may face behind the closed doors of these private households. Would they be lucky enough to have a good household to work in or if not will they be able to escape the ordeal or continue to bear the consequences.

SR. HEMA ICM, ANDHRA PRADESH DOMESTIC WORKERS' MOVEMENT

ILO NEWS

Between 2008 and 2011, the International Labour Organization (ILO) will be developing a new international convention to strengthen legal protections for domestic workers. This is an opportunity for NGOs to advocate for strong legal measures to address the problems faced by both adults and children who work as domestic workers, including low wages, excessive hours of work, vulnerability to physical and sexual violence, and lack of government regulation and oversight.

NGOs can register to attend the International Labour Conference in Geneva in June 2010, when decent work for domestic workers will be discussed. They can make statements, and organize side events to raise awareness of ILO members on issues related to domestic work.

Government issues BPL/ AAY cards

Food grains at subsidized rate for domestic workers

Two days before the 5th Anniversary of the Movement of Domestic workers in Meghalaya, in a significant land mark achievement, the state Government agreed for food security to domestic workers. On Friday 30th May, the state government approved for AAY/ BPL cards to 750 domestic workers registered with the Meghalaya unit of North East Domestic Workers' Movement

These cards will allow domestic workers irrespective of age, caste, creed and religion to buy essential commodities like rice, dal, sugar and other food items, at a much cheaper rate, from the government approved fair price shop in the locality. Though small, it is still a fruitful achievement after three long years of struggle by the Movement to ensure domestic workers with food security. The card will not only provide food security to the domestic workers' family but also enable them to save and redirect their finances for the future and for their children's education.

The 750 women were approved from the 1st list of domestic workers prepared and submitted by the Movement to the state government. Following which a 2nd list was also

presented. In all, 2000 domestic workers names have been provided. The domestic workers who were rejected in the 1st list were due to the verification process carried out by the government.

The struggle for food security for domestic workers got stored in the government files for a long time. The Movement then filed a Right to Information (RTI) petition questioning the progress of the assurance given by the Supreme Court Commissioner, Harsh V., and the then Chief Secretary, S.K Tiwari, on the Public Distribution System. It was then only recently that the State Government notified the issue of AAY/ BPL cards for domestic workers. This is just the start, we have not lost hope for the domestic workers.

The Movement celebrated its 5th anniversary of its existence in Meghalaya on June 1st with the announcement of the domestic workers who were approved for ration cards by the state government. This achievement goes to prove that domestic workers, though illiterate, have the capacity to think, analyze and fight for their rights.

Sr. TERESA JOSEPH, CO-ORDINATOR, NORTHEAST DOMESTIC WORKERS' MOVEMENT

The Meghalaya unit of the North East Domestic Workers' Movement have successfully lobbied with the Government to provide food rationing cards for domestic workers

Domestic workers in Mumbai receive health care

Women domestic workers are most vulnerable to various health hazards being exposed to infection and disease, both where they reside and at their workplaces. They put themselves at risk of asthma, eye and skin irritation, headaches, rheumatism and burns. They are often required to work with toxic chemical cleaners without proper safety protections. Many of them neglect themselves and are afraid to receive medical attention primarily due to the unaffordable costs attached to consultancy and treatment. Domestic workers' vulnerability to illness affects not only themselves but their families as well. All of these health problems are the consequences of lack of sick leave and health insurance.

This quarter the Maharashtra Domestic Workers' Movement, conducted a series of health camps in different regions, in and around Mumbai and Thane district. These camps served two purposes: examination of physical well-being and the awareness of health conditions. The camp was held in collaboration with the Lions Club and Ashadeep Community Centre. Medical check ups have been done in the areas of Goregaon, Bandiwilli Hill and Mahim (W). Around 350 domestic workers and their children have benefited from these camps. They were treated for dental, gynaecological problem, nerve, osteoporosis, eye problems, calcium deficiency, malnutrition and skin diseases. Tests such as Random Blood Sugar Testing and cancer detection tests were carried out and follow ups have been pursued. Through the camps, the domestic workers felt recognized and were overwhelmed with the special care and concern given to their health. Understanding the problems of the domestic workers, doctors have come forward to give awareness on health issues in different areas. These awareness programmes in the areas will enable the domestic workers to pay close attention to their health. We are grateful to the doctors and nurses who have voluntarily supported us in this camp.



Sr. CHRISTY, ICM & Sr. JACINTA, MAHARASHTRA DOMESTIC WORKERS' MOVEMENT

Renovation of Domestic Workers' houses

Domestic workers at new Binnamangala slum, Karnataka, have their houses repaired by Belgian volunteers

The Binnamangala slum is one of the most deprived slums in Bangalore. There is no access to healthy and clean environment. There are no clean streets, no drainage facilities and no toilets. The surroundings are so unhealthy that people fall sick very often. To top it all, the main problem identified was that the people are deprived of their most basic need—shelter.

A visit to the slum shows the state of the people living in small and congested houses. It is hard to believe that a family of eight can live in a small passage with all their belongings, fighting heat, dust, and rain. When it rains, many of the houses leak and rainwater gets into the rooms. People use old plastic covers and papers as shields to protect their families. There are no proper walls, no proper roofs, and there are broken floors. People struggle for existence and work hard to protect their families from hunger and misery. There was a desperate need for help in these slums.

The Karnataka Domestic Workers' Movement (KDWM) took the responsibility of meeting every person in the slum and identified the houses that needed immediate renovation as the

condition of the people is and was devastating. As the KDWM works for domestic workers in the slum, it was easier to understand their problems and help them in repairing their houses.

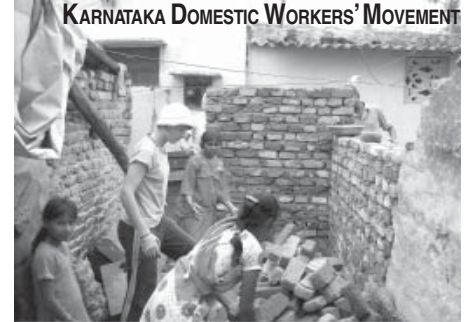
The renovation of the identified houses in Binnamangala started on 18th July 2008, with the help of eight volunteers from Belgium. So far 18 houses have been renovated. The renovation of houses was done by providing materials for construction like, sand, roof sheets, bricks, cement and daily labour charges for the construction workers who helped the people fix their homes.

The domestic workers were extremely grateful and many moved to tears by the support given to them by the Movement and the Belgian volunteers. Many of them knew that renovating their homes was something they would not have been able to carry out.

The hard work of the selfless volunteers who helped the people in lifting sand, bricks and cement for the construction of their houses, along with their sponsorship, has fetched the Movement and their initiative, a fabulous

response and appreciation from the people. The work proved to be successful and is still in the completion stages.

**SR. NISHA MATHEWS & BRO JERSON CUPPA
KARNATAKA DOMESTIC WORKERS' MOVEMENT**



*Many thanks to our Belgian Volunteers:
Bram Bracke, Kim Bruynooghe, Sharda de Caluwé, Sara de Coninck, Leen Quireyns, Lieve Smans, Leentje Swennen, Stefaan van de Perre.*



Independence Day Celebration by domestic workers

Domestic workers felt very important this Independence Day when they hoisted the flag and participated in the celebrations. Programmes were held in Andheri, Kalyan and Badlapur. At Badlapur, three domestic workers hoisted the flag, following which, a rally was held from the venue to the office of Mr. Kishan Kathore, MLA. More than 1500 women participated in the rally and raised slogans expressing their gratitude to the leaders who contributed to the freedom of the nation. At the office of the MLA, Mr. Kathore stated that the Movement is very selfless and does all its work with great commitment and dedication for the downtrodden which no one else can do. He also assured that he would contribute to their payment for Janshree Bima Yojna and will also help with the BPL ration cards, Sanjay Gandhi Niradhar Yojna and Shravan Bal Niradhar Yojna. He assured the Movement of his continuous support. After his speech the women tied rakhi on his hand to mark Raksha Bandan (which is celebrated on 16th Aug). The MLA was impressed by their gesture and assured them of a long-lived relationship.

SR. CHRISTY ICM, STATE CO-ORDINATOR MAHARASHTRA DOMESTIC WORKERS' MOVEMENT

Children Cry Out: End Child Labour

To mark Anti-Child Labour Day (12th June), the Maharashtra Domestic Workers' Movement held three rallies wherein children shouted slogans and expressed their intolerance to child labour.

Due to heavy rains on the 12th June, the rallies were postponed to three later dates: 15th June: Bhayander (W); 22nd June: Fire Brigade, Goregaon (W) and 15th August: Dharavi. Over a hundred children participated in each rally creating an awareness in society of the evils inflicted upon many vulnerable and poverty-stricken children. In one voice, children took to the streets shouting slogans, "*nahi chalegi nahi chalegi bal majduri nahi chalegi,*" (*child labour will not do*); "*Hum sab ek Hai*" (*we are all united*); "*Rothi, Kapda, makan hak hai hamara,*" (*we have the right to food, clothing and shelter*).

Child labour is extensive in the Bhayander and Dharavi areas where most of the population are migrants from different parts of India, Nepal and Bangladesh. In Dharavi, most children work under substandard and hazardous conditions. These families migrate to the cities for their livelihood and employment. As a result of which, their children have to drop out of the school and are not able to continue with their studies due to difference of language, poverty and many other reasons. They are involved in domestic work, zari work and other industrial jobs.

The rally sensitised these families and society of the importance of education and protection of child's rights. Children from the slum areas were joined by children from

night schools and unanimsly expressed their solidarity towards

the eradication of child labour. The rally also received support from community centres like the St. Michael's community centre. At the rally held in Goregaon (W), Mr. Nikam, from the Goregaon police station and Mr. Subhas Bhosle (High Court advocate) highlighted the laws against child labour and the need to raise our voices to protect the rights of children. The police provided full security and the people who witnessed the rally acknowledged the issue. They strongly felt that industries should stop employing children.

The rally held on Independence Day, 15th August, was memorable to the children for they felt they contributed to the struggle of the development of country. At the closing of the rally a child of Std. VI night school expressed: "*I am very happy to have participated in the rally today. This year would be my best experience of India's Independence Day as I can say I have done something for my country. I look forward to giving my assistance to my fellow brothers and sisters who are suffering due to child labour.*"

SR. CHRISTY ICM AND SR. JACINTA,
MAHARASHTRA DOMESTIC WORKERS' MOVEMENT



Mumtaz is a domestic worker and a mother of six children. The two children, Archana and Praveen, with her in the photograph lost their mother in their early childhood and circumstances made them child domestic workers. Initially, they all worked in the same house as their father worked, as a domestic worker himself. Praveen, being the elder, was asked to

A Mother beyond Boundaries

do more work, like sweeping and swobbing the floor and cleaning the utensils. He was beaten whenever he failed to do any work. Unable to cope with the situation he ran away. He wandered about in and around Andhra Pradesh until a good Samaritan re-united him with his father and sister. Their father found it difficult to bring up these children and placed them in two different houses for work. As usual, the boy would run off to his father's work place, due to heavy work and beatings.

Meanwhile in the city, the child labour department and NGOs began raiding houses to track down child domestic workers. So the employer of

Archana brought her back to her father.

Mumtaz who lives in the same slum where Archana's father lives was moved with compassion for Praveen and Archana and accepted them in her house, feeding them with her six children. As a mother she thought of their future and was convinced of educating them. But it was beyond her capacity to bring up eight children. She then, approached our office. We found a home for both the children to stay and study. For domestic worker, Mumtaz, love and compassion has no religion, caste or class.

SR. HEMA ICM,
ANDHRA PRADESH DOMESTIC WORKERS' MOVEMENT

Success to our long Struggle ...

On 26th July, the domestic workers of Maharashtra had a reason to cheer. The Maharashtra government introduced the long awaited Domestic Workers' Bill in the assembly. This was the outcome of months and years of lobbying and advocacy. The domestic workers, the leaders of the domestic workers group and the staff have been actively participating in this advocacy campaign, which included signature campaigns from the workers, communities, corporators, doctors, lawyers and other stake holders.

During the assembly sessions demonstrations were carried out and the delegation met with the ministers or their representatives. A dignity yatra was organised on the occasion of Domestic Workers' Day (January 9th) to remind the government to protect the rights of the domestic workers. Constant efforts were made to meet the labour

commissioner and labour minister and a memorandum with our demands was submitted.

We lobbied with MLAs, Mr. Raju Shetty, Mr. Kapil Patil (MLC), Mr. Kisan Katore, Mr. Raju Avle, Mr. Narsayya Adam and opposition leader, Mr. Ramdas Kadam, and legislative assembly speaker, Mr. Balasaheb Kupekarji, to raise the issue in the assembly. More than 2000 post cards written by the domestic workers were sent to the labour minister, labour commissioner, chief minister and the assembly speaker. We had planned for a press conference and demonstration to be staged during the monsoon assembly. However, prior to this campaign, we received the announcement that the labour minister had introduced the Bill in the assembly.

The Bill promises welfare board and social security schemes for the domestic workers. The assembly speaker has sent

The Bill aims to make provisions for :

- Welfare boards per district or a separate board for a local body
- The boards will have nominated members by the government providing representation to employers, the domestic workers and the state government.
- The board will undertake the task of the registration of domestic workers which would be optional.
- The board will create a fund for the welfare of domestic workers which will come from the government and the domestic workers.
- The government will appoint an advisory committee to advise the government upon matters related with the board and the welfare of the domestic workers.

a letter to us promising that further discussions will be activated during the winter session. We are confident that it will come up for further discussion during the winter session and will be passed very soon.

MR. SAGAR KAMBLE,

MAHARASHTRA DOMESTIC WORKERS' MOVEMENT

Aayos not Aayas

**Br. Santosh Ekka volunteered with the Movement in May 2008
He relates his experience working with domestic workers**

“Aayo” is the word in Oraon language for ‘mother’. However, it is not a simple word, it is pregnant with meaning. Aayo is an immense expression of love and care to a mother. It also conveys respect and dignity a mother deserves. Thus, addressing a mother ‘Aayo’ is the best possible way of expressing one’s love and respect.

Unfortunately, the word ‘Aaya’ is loosely used for the domestic workers. And when the word ‘Aaya’ is used to designate domestic workers, it is used with little or no respect for the persons. It is a degrading word, which connotes those who do the inferior qualities of work such as cleaning toilets, washing of utensils or dirty clothes. When domestic workers are addressed as ‘Aayas,’ they are not counted as one of the persons in the house. They are often seen as things to be used and not as persons to be loved and respected. They are seen as commodities at the disposal of their owners to be used and abused. Society also looks down upon them. On the whole they are discriminated and often inhumanly treated.

I too had the similar idea about the domestic workers before I could have my own experience with them while working for NDWM. I believed that they did menial jobs and did not deserve our respect. I often believed that they sell out their dignity and so their life is worth nothing. I, too, had looked down at them and called them ‘Aayas.’

However, after having worked with domestic workers, I strongly feel that we need to change our perceptions about them. They deserve to be respected and treated with dignity; first of all because they are humans and secondly because they are doing the “job”, the job perhaps even we would have found difficult to do. Thus, they make our life more comfortable. Then, why are we shying away in giving the dignified status?

I feel very happy to be associated with NDWM, which is working tirelessly for the right and the dignity of domestic workers. NDWM your cause is noble and the mission is difficult. But nothing is impossible. You have achieved a lot and still a lot more is there to do. Let us join our hands together and complete the good work you have begun.

Karnataka Domestic Workers' Movement Regional Meet



The Regional Meet of the Karnataka Domestic Workers' Movement was held at Mysore in Allanhalli Deepanjali Convent on the 4th and 5th July. Ninety-five domestic worker members of seven districts took part in the two-day programme discussing the activities carried out in their respective Movements during the year 2007-2008. The reports of the different centers were submitted by the members along with a lot of motivation that was given to the members to strive to realize the rights that are deprived to them. The chief

guests for the event were Mr. Rajashekar Koti (Editor of Andolan patrika), Ms. Hemalatha (senior inspector, department of labour commission), Mrs. Lilly (KLHP), Sr. Lilly Pushpa (Social worker, USF congregation), Sr. Nisha (KDWM co-ordinator), Archbishop Thomas Vallapalli (Mysore), Ms. Lurth Mary (Mysore Domestic Workers' Movement). Members of the Movement from other districts included from Hubli, Shimoga, Chikkamagalur, Mysore, Mandya, KGF and Bangalore.

A cultural programme performed by the domestic workers was also presented at the meet. After the reporting session there was a special screening of a movie, 'Kutty,' a story centered around a child domestic worker who faces daily humiliation and agony at her work place, her social life is completely disturbed and she is mainly deprived of her right to education, which is a guaranteed right for every child in the country. The

screening of the movie created such a great impact that it moved every domestic worker who participated in the regional meeting. An unforgettable achievement was that one of the domestic worker who sends her child to work as a domestic worker went up on stage and took an oath in front of the whole gathering that she would never send her child to work again and would give her child her deserved education.

The most important discussion was on the strategies that had been achieved by the respective Movements of domestic workers under the Karnataka Domestic Workers' Movement and the discussion of future plans and the ways and means to meet these plans. The different districts discussed about their future responsibilities, plans for the next forthcoming year and even provided their valuable suggestions to take the Movement ahead.

SR. NISHA MATHEWS & BRO JERSON CP
KARNATAKA DOMESTIC WORKERS' MOVEMENT

Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers Leaders State level Meeting

The leaders of domestic workers in Tamil Nadu once again assembled for the State level meeting. Discussions were held on the issues of legal laws for domestic workers, health, and trade union and the election of State leaders

The State level meeting of the Tamil Nadu Domestic Workers' Movement federation was held at Sathangai, Madurai on 7th and 8th of August. Sixty members from 16 districts participated in the programme. Professor Victor inaugurated the meeting and in his inaugural address he shared the present status of the domestic workers under the labour rules. He spoke about the unionization and trade unions, its benefits in the future, the importance of separate legislation for Domestic Workers and the need to increase welfare measures to domestic workers.

Adv. Stalin took an awareness session on Labour and Women's Laws and spoke about the harassment faced by domestic workers. He strongly emphasized that the women should have the courage to approach the police to report their



problems. Both speakers expressed the importance of being a strong support system for each other.

The groups were given different topics to speak upon. The leaders showed their talents by presenting the topics by speech, cultural program, songs and villupattu. Sr. Escaline conducted a session on leadership with two games and demonstrations. She highlighted the qualities and responsibilities of a leader and how to handle different situations in groups. After the demonstration, the new State leaders were elected and took the oath of office.

The Meet concluded with a sharing of the experiences of this programme and the Movement song.

MS. CLARA, COORDINATOR- MADURAI
TAMIL NADU DOMESTIC WORKERS' MOVEMENT

Girls sold as helps for Rs 2,000 in capital, one held

NEW DELHI: On Tuesday, a 25-year-old man was arrested by the IP estate police on charges of trafficking young girls from tribal areas of Jharkhand to Delhi, luring them with promises of well-paying jobs. The accused, Mr. Bhim, reportedly supplied girls to a placement agency dealing in domestic helps in Shakurpur where he sold them for as little as Rs 2,000. The agency, Birsa Bhagwan Tribal Society of India, registered under the Societies Act as an NGO, doubled as a placement agency and was allegedly involved in trafficking girls from Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Orissa.

The racket came to light when the mother of one of the girls Bhim had taken, a 10-year-old from a village in Jharkhand, never heard from her daughter after sending her to Delhi to work three years ago. The girl's mother approached Bachpan Bachao Aayog, which put her through to CWC which initiated the process of tracing the girl. "When we saw that police in Ranchi were not taking any action on our complaint, we followed Bhim to Delhi when he came to pick up another girl. We reached the Shakurpur placement agency and found that on the ground floor, they were running an NGO and the first floor was an apartment turned into a placement agency. We

found several young girls there who had been promised jobs, but where they actually ended up, nobody knew. There were no proper records of the girls either," said Naresh Sengar, national secretary, Bachpan Bachao Aayog. He added that the 10-year-old girl they were looking for could not be traced in the records. "We had seven other women who had come with us to look for their respective children. All returned empty-handed," said Sengar.

According to a police official, Bhim was arrested and charged with trafficking minors and abduction. He revealed the name of his accomplice, one Mr. Munni, who is now absconding. The owner of the placement agency and his brother were also arrested. Sengar alleged that the children were traded and trafficked like commodities and the "current rates" were around Rs 4,000 per child. "They are promised salaries of Rs 10,000 a month as lures. But the children end up either in the flesh trade or as domestic helps at salaries as low as Rs 1,200 a month. They are not paid for months on end, so that they don't leave. CWC helped us nab the criminals and thus we were able to rescue the children. However, the search for the other children are still on," said Sengar.

23 JUL 2008, MEDHA CHATURVEDI, TNN

Special Cell to check trafficking in Orissa

The Orissa government has decided to open a special women's cell at the district level in collaboration with the Tata Institute of Social Science to check the rising incidence of women trafficking in the state. Chief Secretary, Ajit Kumar Tripathy, who presided over a coordination committee meeting on women trafficking and sexual abuse at the girl child, told newsmen here that the cells would be opened by the Home Department and funded by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). He said the Home Department had submitted a proposal to the Union government to open anti-human trafficking unit in some selected districts. Official sources said a large number of women were being trafficked from the state every year. While in the border districts many women were being pushed to prostitution, most of the women from Nayagarah were being trafficked with the false promise of marriage. Similarly the labourers of western Orissa districts were being sexually exploited. The committee proposed to arrange special employment fair and sought Central assistance for the skill upgradation of these women and provide free legal aid to them. This apart the committee had suggested to keep a vigil and appoint retired police officers as special officers to monitor women trafficking.

UNI, 6/12/2008 <http://www.indlawnews.com>

"As if I am Not Human: A Report on the Abuses against Asian Domestic Workers in Saudi Arabia"

The Manila launch of the Human Rights Watch report, "As if I am Not Human: A Report on the Abuses against Asian Workers in Saudi Arabia" was organized by the Center for Migrant Advocacy (CMA), the Migrant Forum Asia (MFA), and Human Rights Watch (HRW) and took place on July 15th at Quezon City.

The report details the situation of Asian migrants and several stories arising from the HRW research conducted in Saudi Arabia. Recommendations included the improvement of services (including shelters, availability of counseling, and availability of trained staff) at embassies and consular offices in Saudi Arabia as well as a strengthening of regulation and monitoring of recruitment agents and an expansion of public awareness-raising programs for prospective migrant domestic workers.

The report is downloadable at <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2008/saudiArabia0708/saudiArabia0708web.pdf>



New Delhi: Even as people grapple with the tragedy of being displaced by the floods in Bihar, there is a silent disaster that is unfolding. With a large number of people migrating to Delhi and other cities, NGOs and activists warn that trafficking of women and children is likely to see an upsurge.

Of the 3.3 million people that have been affected, an estimated 42% are below 18 years. Activists say this is the most vulnerable group, prone to being misled into commercial sex work or bonded labour by middlemen on the pretext of providing help. Rishikant of Shakti Vahini said, "Our colleagues

Flood-hit may fall into trafficking

NGOs Say Upsurge In Migration Will Make Women, Children Vulnerable To Sex Trade

working in the field in Bihar have said that there are a large number of women and children who are being picked up. We are monitoring the trains arriving from Bihar."

According to a Unifem-NHRC study, the population of women and children in sex work in India is said to be between 70,000 and 1 million. Of these, 30% are under 20 while nearly 15% began sex work when they were below 15. Statistics by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) show that 89 cases of trafficking were registered in 2004, a 93.5% increase since 2003. Significantly, of the 89 cases, 35 — the second highest — were from Bihar.

Despite mounting vigilance, there has been little success in rescuing women and children in the past two weeks. NGO

Pratidhi's Raj Mangal Prasad, who works with children in need of care and protection, said there was no monitoring at entry and exit points. "There is no vigilance mechanism at railway stations that are hubs to find missing, kidnapped or trafficked children," Prasad said. He added that every disaster led to mass displacement of vulnerable groups. "Some parents send their children to relatives in other cities. They go missing or are trafficked after that," Prasad said.

Activists have also said that identifying those being trafficked was very tough and with many people travelling ticketless, there was no way to check the passenger's antecedents. Diversion of trains from New Delhi railway station to other stations has added to the chaos.

HIMANSHI DHAWAN, TIMES OF INDIA

National Domestic Workers Congress in New York

New York, NY - From June 5 to 8, a new national alliance of domestic workers organizations will hold the first-ever National Domestic Workers Congress

- * to support the New York State Domestic Workers Bill of Rights and
- * to build a national movement of domestic workers.

Organized by the National Domestic Workers Alliance, the Congress will bring together workers from Los Angeles, the San Francisco Bay Area, Boston, Washington DC, Miami, Seattle, Colorado, New York, Houston and San Antonio:

- * to share strategies
- * to begin to develop a national agenda, and
- * to march to pass the NY Domestic Workers Bill of Rights.

Qatar plans new law to protect expatriate domestic workers

Dubai: Qatar plans a new law that is aimed at protecting the rights of foreign domestic workers. "The local government here (in Qatar) is now planning a separate legislation for (expatriate) domestic workers and they are very close to bringing it to effect," he said.

Of the around 3,20,000 expatriate Indian population in Qatar, an estimated 40,000 fall in the domestic worker category, which mainly includes drivers and female household workers.

Elaborating on his proposal, Joseph said: "Since domestic workers aren't covered under labour laws, their employer has complete power over them since the employer is also their sponsor. In case of a dispute, the worker not only ends up losing his or her job but also faces the prospect of leaving the country."

It was because of this, he said, that having the government as the sponsor of the domestic worker would be a far better alternative.

"In case there is a dispute between the employer and the worker, the government agency can take back the worker and re-deploy him or her somewhere else. Or in a worst-case scenario, send the worker back to the home country. Otherwise, it is such a waste of human resource," he said, adding that the new law would lead to a win-win situation for both sides.

The ambassador said he has submitted his proposal to the authorities in Qatar and a copy was given to India's Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) last year.

JULY 23RD, 2008 ICT BY IANS

Freedom is Walking

It is spoken man/woman is born
equal and free
To a degree the world disagrees
Some foresee what others cannot see
Freedom is walking away with glee

We have a right to Christmas with a tree
We have a right to enjoy a shopping spree
We have a right to travel the land and the sea
We have the right to an educational degree

Stop the silly talking
Whilst Freedom is walking
Freedom is not a jubilee
Freedom is not a guarantee
Who says Freedom is free?

It is spoken, man/woman is free of thought
Without the need to fear higher courts
Some have spoken and finally resorted
To hide their thoughts from being reported

We have a right to a chosen culture
We have a right not to be tortured
We have a right to nationality and security
We have a right to be part of a minority

Stop the silly talking
Whilst Freedom is walking
Freedom is not part of community
Freedom is never an informality
Who says Freedom is immunity?

We want opinion without distinction
We want a world without discrimination
We want a kingdom of utter freedom
We want it in all shapes and form

Stop the silly talking
Whilst Freedom is walking
Stop the silly talking
Whilst Freedom is mocking

SYLVIA CHIDI



BOOK - POST

To,

For Correspondence : The Editor, DOMESTIC WORKERS' OFFICE 104, St. Mary's Apts A, Nesbit Rd., Mazgaon, Mumbai - 400 010.

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