

Domestic Workers' Rights Network Bangladesh (DWRN)
Activities and Achievement Report
Period: December 2006- June 2011
Secretariat: Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

The tradition of employing domestic workers as helping-hands in household activities is an age-old practice in Bangladesh. A large number of workers are currently engaged in domestic work. As there is no formal registration system for the domestic workers in the country, the accurate figure of the domestic workers is unknown. Generally it is estimated that about 20 lakh workers are engaged in this particular field¹. The official statistics coming from the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics through its Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2006 put the number however at a smaller magnitude. According to the LFS, there are 331,000 domestic worker/maid servants of age 15 and above in the country. Domestic workers in the country include both male-female adults and children. The official statistics does not cover child domestic workers under the age of 15, and also due to the specificity of domestic work itself i.e. invisibility, the reported number is largely underestimated. The official statistics over the years nonetheless amply prove that the numbers of domestic workers are on the rise, and also a substantial proportion of domestic workers are female, representing around 78 percent while male domestic workers are around 22 percent. According to ILO-UNICEF Baseline Survey 2007, the number of total child domestic worker in Bangladesh is 420,000, of whom 147,000 are working in Dhaka City Corporation area.

Domestic workers are currently excluded within the purview of present labour law 2006. They are not even recognised as worker and thus they have been highly victimised by their employers. There are some laws like Penal Code, Law against Oppression of Women and children, and Code of Criminal Procedure which can be used against torture and serious abuses.

Every year a number of domestic helps are killed and violated both physically and mentally by their employers. Sometimes they become victim of sexual abuse by the male family members.

Besides, the domestic workers are always deprived of fair wage, leaves, proper rest, medical facilities and many other basic rights. They work all day long but their contribution never calculated in the national GDP. They make our lives easier in exchange of lot of difficulties in their own lives.

In Bangladesh there are initiatives taken by the trade unions, human right organisations, professional groups and civil society members to protect the domestic workers from all these violations. But all these are scattered and individual initiatives. It had been an insistent necessity to bring all the efforts together to achieve something worthy for this deprived working people. In late 2006, when the new labour law declared without covering the domestic workers, the necessity of immediate action was felt and BILS initiated to development of the Domestic Workers Network under BILS-National Campaign on Safety Net for Workers Project. Domestic Worker's Rights Network was established in December 14, 2006 with the active alliance of 30 trade unions, human rights organisations. Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies-BILS is working as the secretariat of the network.

¹ Draft Code of Conduct for Domestic Workers, Developed by DWRN

GOAL

To initiate a healthy discussion with policy makers, civil society, different professional groups, trade unions and human rights organization for the protection of domestic workers rights.

OBJECTIVES

To protect and promote the rights and dignity of the domestic workers :

- include the domestic workers within the coverage of labour law.
- Raise a strong voice through mobilizing all forces concerned,
- Create awareness among the workers themselves to be organised and vocal for their own rights.

MAJOR ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN

Bringing the Domestic Workers under the purview of Labour Law is the major campaign of the Network. DWRN organised series of programs demanding approval of Code of Conduct and inclusion of the domestic workers in the Bangladesh Labour Act 2006 for ensuring protection & welfare of the domestic workers. For that the DWRN organised:

- Conduct research to identify the priorities and arguments for lobby and advocacy.
- National level seminar
- Roundtable Discussion
- Series of workshops
- Preparation of advocacy plans.
- Campaign through leaflet, stickers
- Preparation of MOU for Ministry of Labour.
- Press Conference
- Human Chain
- Campaign through media reporting
- Observe Human Rights Day, May Day and Child Rights Day with special focus on the rights of Domestic Workers.

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS OF DWRN

- The network prepared and submitted a draft on Code of Conduct to the Secretary of Labour and Employment Ministry on January 2008.
- The network prepared law recommendations for inclusion of the domestic workers in the present Bangladesh Labour Act 2006 through amendment.
- Advocacy campaign with Government to get the approval of Domestic Worker Protection and Welfare Policy -2011
- Convention on Decent Work for Domestic Workers has been adopted by two third majorities in the current International Labour Conference.
- Facilitating Domestic Workers' Rights Network (DWRN) to protect and promote the rights and dignity of the domestic workers
- Network has valuable contribution in preparing the draft of the newly adopted convention through filling the questionnaire provided by ILO, organising roundtable, workshop, seminar etc.
- The network has been advocating since 2006 with govt. to ensure legal protection and bring the domestic workers under the Labour Law. The Hon'able Minister for Labour and Employment Engineer Khandker Mosarraf Hossain expressed his solidarity to the networks demands and assured us in May Day 2011 program organise by BILS that the govt. would play positive role in the 100th International Labour Conference.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF DWRN

POLICY ADVOCACY: SUBMISSION OF MEMORANDUM TO THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT

Network submitted a memorandum on 9th January 2008 to the Ministry of Labour and Employment to incorporate Domestic Workers in Labour Law.

- A series of meetings held & Ministry agree to prepare a Code of Conduct (COC) for the domestic workers.
- Network submitted the COC to the Ministry of Labour and Employment on April 9, 2009 for legal instrument for protection of the domestic workers.



SEMINAR ON "RIGHTS OF DOMESTIC WORKERS, PRESENT SITUATION: ROLE OF DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS"

BILS organised a National Seminar on "Rights of Domestic Workers, Present Situation: Role of Different Stakeholders" on May 2, 2011 at Bongobondhu International Conference Centre, Dhaka under the Campaign on Ensuring Social Safety Net for Workers Project and Women Workers Development Project. Habibur Rahman Siraj, Chairman of BILS presided over the Seminar, while Nazrul Islam Khan, Secretary General of BILS gave the welcome speech.

Hon'able Minister for Labour and Employment and Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment Engineer Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain MP was the chief guest at the seminar and Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment Shafiq Alam Mehedi was the Special Guest.



Abu Sayed Md. Khursidul Alom, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Labour & Employment, Md. Habibul Islam, Chief Inspector of Factories & Establishment Inspection Department, Dr. Wajedul Islam Khan, Coordinator of Sramik Karmochari Oikya Parshad (SKOP), Abdul Matin Master, President of Jatio Sramic Leage and Advisor, BILS, Abdul Kader Howlader, President of Jatiya Sramik Jote Bangladesh were the Designated Discussant.

Prof ASM Atiqur Rahman of Social Welfare Institute of Dhaka University presented the keynote paper, while Sultan Uddin Ahmmmed, Asst. Executive Director of BILS moderates the program.

About 225 Participants were represented from Government, Trade Union, Different NGOs, Donor and workers.

Chief Guest of the Seminar Engineer Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain MP, Hon'able Minister for Labour and Employment and Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment emphasized that the govt. would take necessary measures to ensure domestic workers rights and the "Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy 2010" would be approved soon. He also stress that govt. take positive measures in the International Labour Conference (June 2011) with a view to developing ILO instrument(s) on decent work for domestic workers to provide appropriate guidance to constituents on policy and practice in the area of domestic workers.

ROUNDTABLE ON CODE OF CONDUCT FOR ENSURING RIGHTS OF THE DOMESTIC WORKERS

Roundtable on Code of Conduct for Ensuring Rights of the Domestic Workers was held on 20 January 2010 at IDEB Conference Hall, Kakrail, Dhaka. The purpose of the roundtable is to Advocacy with the Ministry of Labour and Employment with justification to approve the code of conduct for the domestic workers. And also include the domestic workers in the Labour Law 2006 through necessary amendments.



Md. Habibur Rahman Siraj, Chairman of BILS, Engineer Khandaker Mosharraf Hossain MP, Hon'able Minister for Labour and Employment and Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment, Nazrul Islam Khan, Secretary General of BILS, Dr. Wajedul Islam Khan, General Secretary, Bangladesh Trade Union Kendra and Coordinator of Sramik Karmochari Oikya Parshad (SKOP) Mohammad Nurul Haque, Secretary in charge, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Gagan Raj Bhandari, Deputy Director of ILO Dhaka Office, Hosne Ara Kashem, Executive Director, Shoishob Bangladesh, Wahida Banu, Chairman, Bangladesh Shishu Adhikar Forum, Advocate Delwar Hossain Khan, General Secretary, Bangladesh Labour Foundation, Taley Rahman, Executive Director, Democracy Watch, Ratan Sarkar, Coordinator, Together with Working Children, Abdul Matin Master, Chairman, NCCWE, Dr. A. S. M Atiqur Rahman, Professor, Dhaka University, Shah Md. Abu Jafor, President, Bangladesh Labour Federation, Abdul Kader Howlader, President, Jatiya Sramik Jote Bangladesh, Zafrul Hassan, General Secretary of Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal and Shafiuddin Ahmed, General Secretary, Jatiya Sramik Federation Bangladesh and Vice Chairman of BILS were present in the roundtable among others.

DIALOGUE ON ENSURING DOMESTIC WORKERS RIGHTS: STAND NOW

"Dialogue on Ensuring Domestic Workers Rights: Stand Now" was organised on 9 November 2009 at CIRDAP Auditorium,



Dhaka. Advocate Sultana Kamal, former adviser, caretaker government and human rights activist, Md. Israfil Alam MP, Chairman, Parliamentary Standing Committee for the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Dr. Wajedul Islam Khan, Coordinator of Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP), Md. Aminul Islam, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Abdul Matin Master, Chairman, NCCWE & President of Jatia Sramik League, Shaheen Anam, Executive Director, Manusher Jonno Foundation, Kazi Saifuddin Ahmed, Labour Advisor, Bangladesh Employers Federation, Md. Zafrul Hasan, Joint Secretary General, BILS, Shirin Akhter, Founder President, Karmajibi Nari, Abdul Kader Howlader, Member Secretary, NCCWE, Advocate A.K.M Nasim, Labour Law Specialist, Saidul Islam, Program Officer, ILO Area Office, Dhaka, Syed Sultan Uddin Ahammed, Coordinator, DWRN and Asst. Executive Director, BILS, Nazma Yesmin, Program Officer, BILS and Advocate Kohinur Begum, Deputy Director of BNWLA attended the dialogue among others.

HUMAN CHAIN:

A Human Chain Call for Immediate Adoption of the Code of Conduct for Domestic Workers and Inclusion in Labour Law organised at Shahbagh (in front of National Museum), Dhaka. in observance of the Human Rights Day on 10th December 2009. Md. Israfil Alam MP, Chairperson, The Standing Committee on Ministry for Labour & Employment, Hasanul Haque Innu MP, Chairperson, The Standing Committee on Ministry for Postal & Telecommunication Dr. Wajedul Islam Khan, Coordinator, Sramik Karmachari Oikya Parishad (SKOP), Shirin Akhter, Founder President, Kormajibi Nari, Adv. Delwar Hossain Khan, Member, NCCWE & General Secretary BLF, Abul Hossain, Advisor, Jatiyo Garhastho Nari Sramik Union, Md. Nurul Amin, General Secretary, Jatiyo Sramik Jote, Aklima, Domestic Worker expressed their solidarity with the demands of the Human Chain.



HUMAN CHAIN ON DEMANDING FAIR INVESTIGATION AND TRIAL OF THE MURDER OF DOMESTIC WORKER DHOLI BEGUM AND IMMEDIATE ACTION TO IMPLEMENT THE "DOMESTIC WORKER PROTECTION AND WELFARE POLICY 2010"

A Human Chain was organised Demanding fair investigation and trial of the murder of domestic worker Dholi Begum and immediate action to implement the "Domestic Worker Protection and Welfare Policy 2010" in front of the National Press Club in the capital on 24 January 2011. Md. Israfil Alam MP, Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee for the Ministry of Labour and



Employment was present as Chief guest on the occasion. Lata Begum (daughter of deceased Dholi Begum) and Mamunul Haque Badsha, General Secretary of Monipuripara Kalyan Somity on behalf of the local community spoke on the occasion. Among others, Mojibur Rahman Bhuiyan, General Secretary of Bangladesh Mukto Sramik Federation, Abdul Kader Hawlader President of Jatiyo Sramik Jote Bangladesh, Shah Md. Abu Jafar, President of Bangladesh Labour Federation, Md. Jafrul Hasan, General Secretary of Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal, Dr. Wajedul Islam Khan, Coordinator of Sramik Kormochari Oikyo Parishad (SKOP) and Shafiuddin Ahmed, General Secretary of Jatiya Sramik Federation Bangladesh, Advocate Farida Yesmin, Deputy Director of BLAST, Shirin Akhter, President of Bangladesh Jatiyo Sramik Jote, Abul Hossain, Advisor of Jatiya Garhostho Nari Sramik Union, Nahid Jahan, Coordinator of Shurovi, Tarikul Islam, representative of Nagorik Shonghoti, Jakir Hossain, Chief Executive of Nagorik Udyog, Advocate Jannatul Ferdous, representative of BNWLA, spoke on the occasion. Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmmed Coordinator of DWRN & Nazma Yesmin, Member Secretary of DWRN facilitated the Human Chain.

HUMAN CHAIN ON DEMANDING PENALTY OF MURDERER OF DOMESTIC WORKER NURJAHAN

A Human Chain was organized on Demanding penalty of murderer of Domestic Worker Nurjahan; arrest the murderer of Nurjahan; ensure exemplary penalty for oppressor; ensure compensation to the victim's family on July 25, 2010 at Shahbagh (In front of National Museum).



Dr. Wajedul Islam Khan, Coordinator of SKOP, Abul Hossain, Advisor of Jatiya Garhosto Nari Sramik Union, Sharifuzzaman Sharif, General

Secretary of Nagorik Shonghoti, Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmmed Coordinator of DWRN, Nazma Yesmin, Member Secretary of DWRN and representatives & leaders of National Trade Union Federations, Human Rights Organisations, professionals and Organisations within the Network were present and expressed their solidarity with the demands of the Human Chain.

HUMAN CHAIN

A Human Chain was organised in front of National Press Club on 15 March 2011. The Human Chain demanded quick arrest, justice and exemplary punishment of the criminals responsible for brutal torture and murder of domestic workers as well as compensation to the affected family members and immediate implementation of “Domestic Worker Protection and Welfare Policy 2010”.



Md. Habibur Rahman Seraz, Chairman of BILS, Dr. Wajedul Islam Khan, Coordinator of SKOP, Roy Ramesh Chandra, General Secretary of Jatiya Sramik League, Abul Hossain, Advisor of Jatiya Garhosto Nari Sramik Union, Rokeya Rafiq Baby, Executive Director of Kormojibi Nari, Sharifuzzaman Sharif, General Secretary of Nagorik Shonghoti, Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmmed, Coordinator of DWRN, Member Secretary Nazma Yesmin and representatives & leaders of National Trade Union Federations, Human Rights Organisations, professionals and Organisations within the Network were present.

PRESS CONFERENCE ON DEMANDING LAW FOR THE PROTECTION AND SECURITY OF DOMESTIC WORKERS

Press Conference was held on April 24, 2011 at Hall Room of the National Press Club, Dhaka. Major demands raised in the press conference were:

(i) Approve and Gazette publication of the 'Domestic Workers Protection & Welfare Policy 2010',

(ii) Active and positive role of the govt. in upcoming ILO Convention on 'Decent Work for Domestic Workers', to be held in June 2011,

(iii) Ensure penalty of torturers of domestic workers,

(iv) Introduce social safety net and rationing system for the domestic workers and (v) Ensure free legal support to the victim domestic workers by the govt. and monitoring the progress of the cases. Dr. Wajedul Islam Khan, Coordinator of Sramik Kormochari Oikyo Parishad (SKOP), Md. Jafrul Hasan, General Secretary of Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal, Shirin Akhter, President of Bangladesh Jatiyo Sramik Jote, Abul Hossain, Advisor of Jatiya Garhosto Nari Sramik Union, Zakir Hossain, Chief Executive of Nagorik Uddog and Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmmed, Coordinator of DERN were present in the press conference.



HUMAN CHAIN ON DEMANDING LAW FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS

Demanding law for domestic workers, ensure penalty of torturers of domestic workers and approve the 'Domestic Workers Protection & Welfare Policy 2010' a Human Chain was organised on April 24, 2011 at in-front of National Press Club, Dhaka.

Dr. Wajedul Islam Khan, Coordinator of Sramik Kormochari Oikyo Parishad (SKOP), Md. Jafrul Hasan, General Secretary of Bangladesh



Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal, Shirin Akhter, President of Bangladesh Jatiyo Sramik Jote, Abul Hossain, Advisor of Jatiya Garhosto Nari Sramik Union, Zakir Hossain, Chief Executive of Nagorik Uddog and Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmmed, Coordinator of Domestic Workers Rights Network and other network members were speak on the human chain.

MASS GATHERING ON DEMANDING LAW FOR PROTECTION OF DOMESTIC WORKERS

The event was held on April 30, 2011 at National Press Club Auditorium, Dhaka. Major demands of the meeting were: (i) Approval of 'Domestic Workers Protection & Welfare Policy 2010', (ii) To ensure penalty of torturers of domestic workers, and (iii) to ensure free legal support to the victim domestic workers by the govt. and monitoring the progress of the cases, (iv) Active and positive role of the govt. in upcoming ILO Convention on 'Decent Work for Domestic Workers', to be held in June 2011.



Coordinator of Sramik Kormochari Oikyo Parishad (SKOP) Dr. Wajedul Islam Khan, General Secretary of Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal (BJSD) Md. Jafrul Hasan, President of Bangladesh Jatiyo Sramik Jote Shirin Akhter, Deputy Director of Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLUST) Advocate Farida Yesmin, President of Jatiyo Sramik Jote Bangladesh Abdul Kader Hawlader, Advisor of Jatiya Garhosto Nari Sramik Union Abul Hossain, Coordinator of Domestic Workers Rights Network Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmmed were present in the program.

TRUCK RALLY AND CAMPAIGN ON DOMESTIC WORKERS RIGHTS:

A truck rally and campaign program was organised on May 1, 2011 in Dhaka city. Various kinds of leaflets on domestic workers rights were distributed and songs on workers rights were sang during the campaign in the city.



DISCUSSION MEETING ON DOMESTIC WORKERS PROTECTION AND WELFARE POLICY 2010

Discussion Meeting on Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy 2010 held in May 22, 2010 at BIAM, Dhaka. The meeting was organized by Ministry of Labour and Employment in cooperation with DWRN to seek opinion of trade unions and human rights organisations on the proposed Domestic Workers Protection and Welfare Policy 2010.

Mohammad Nurul Haque, Secretary in charge, Ministry of Labour and Employment presided over the meeting. Dr. Wajedul Islam Khan, Coordinator, SKOP, Md. Aminul Islam, Deputy Secretary (Labour), Ministry of Labour and Employment, Md.



Jafrul Hasan General Secretary, Bangladesh Jatiyatabadi Sramik Dal, Arun Kanti Aich, Joint Secretary, Khalilur Rahman, Deputy Secretary, Mizanur Rahman, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Abdul Hannan Sheikh, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, Md. Nurul Amin, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Social Welfare were present in the meeting.

Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmmed, Coordinator of DWRN presented the key note paper. A total of 33 participants from different sector, such as Government, Trade Union Federations, Human Rights and Workers Rights Organisations, Journalist and lawyers attended the program.

WORKSHOP ON FILLED-IN QUESTIONNAIRE ON DECENT WORK FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS: PROPOSED STANDARD SETTING IN INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE 2010

In view of the state of affairs of domestic work and workers globally, the standard setting needs on decent work has recently once again brought the ILO beyond the identification of non-compliance and towards the provisions of specific, constructive guidance on domestic work regulations. To this end, at its 301st Session (March 2008), the ILO Governing Body agreed to place an item on decent work for domestic workers on the agenda of the 99th Session of the International Labour Conference (2010) with a view to developing ILO instrument(s) to provide appropriate guidance to constituents on policy and practice in the area of domestic workers. To facilitate discussion on domestic work, DWRN supporting the consultation process involving the trade union and civil society organizations working on domestic workers' issues so their view are incorporated in Government's response relating to the issues of the domestic workers, and other discussions leading up to the ILC in 2011.

Workshop on Filled-in Questionnaire on Decent Work for Domestic Workers: Proposed Standard Setting in International Labour Conference 2010 held in 23 July 2009, BILS Seminar Hall, Dhaka. A total of 24 national trade union leaders and human rights activists attended the program.

The questionnaire, reviewed in line with the analysis on the law and practice on working conditions of domestic workers in Bangladesh as well as direct consultation of trade union leaders, civil society members and human rights activists, highlights actual situation of domestic work and workers and provides specific guidelines for changes in the labour regulations in the Bangladeshi context.



WORKSHOP ON A DRAFT CODE OF CONDUCT FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS

A Workshop on Draft Code of Conduct for Domestic Workers in collaboration with Performance Improvement Project of Team-H, Batch-19, MATT2 held on 15 December 2009 at Meghna Hall, BIAM Foundation, Dhaka. Mr. Md. Ataharul Islam, Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment was the chief guest while Ms. Panudda Boonpala, Director, ILO office in Bangladesh and Dr. Wajedul Islam Khan, Secretary, BILS was the special guests. Mr. A B M Abdus Sattar, Mentor, Team-H and Joint Secretary, Ministry of Establishment preside over the workshop.



Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmmed Asst. Executive Director, BILS & Abu Taleb, Deputy Secretary, welcome the guests. The discussion was initiated through presentation of a Network presentation by Nazma Yesmin, Program Officer BILS, and Md. Aminul Bar Chowdhury, Secretary, Bangladesh Services Ltd and Team Leader & Salma Momtaz present the research paper.

Workshop participated by about 60 Trade union leaders, representatives from human rights organisations, NGOs, Employer, Workers, professional groups and research organisations

LAW TO ENSURE RIGHTS AND SAFETY OF DOMESTIC WORKERS DEMANDED


To point out safety and human rights situation of domestic workers who are neglected at their workplace and aiming to ensure their legal protection and security, Domestic Worker's Rights Network organised a press conference today, 25 April 2009 held at Dhaka Reporters Unity Auditorium. Dr. Wajedul Islam Khan, Coordinator, SKOP delivered speech on behalf of the Network. Among others, Nazrul Islam Khan, Secretary General, BILS, Salma Ali, Executive Director, BNWLA, Farida Yasmin, Deputy Director, BLAST, Rokeya Rafique Baby, Executive Director, Karmajibi Nari, Md. Abu Taher, Director, Shurovi, and Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmmed, Coordinator, Domestic Worker's Rights Network were present there as representatives, while Nazma Yesmin, Program Officer BILS present the case studies in the press conference.



PUBLICATIONS:

Achievements

- DWRN campaign for inclusion of domestic workers in the labour law. A recommendation paper for incorporation of domestic workers' rights in Labour Law has been prepared through a series of workshop. And got positive response from many other equal minded networks, organisations, institutions, individuals at national & international level.
- Published flyer protection of domestic workers rights and distributed at national and international level in the occasion of May Day 2007. Through the flyer the Network has made its appeal to the citizens, trade union and other civil society organizations to contribute and raise their voices for protecting the rights of Domestic Workers in the country.
- Network also has designed its next three years campaign plan and start advocacy for protection of domestic workers rights.




Network Members

- Ain-O-Shalish Kendra (ASK)
- Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS)
- Bangladesh National Women Lawyers Association (BNWLA)
- Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST)
- Bangladesh Probin Hitushi Shango
- Jatiya Garhosto Nari Sramik Union
- Jago Nari Foundation
- Kormojibi Nari
- Matri Bangladesh
- Nagoric Songhoti
- SUROVI
- Shayshab Bangladesh

All the National Trade Union Federations associated with BILS are members of the Network.

DOMESTIC WORKERS' RIGHTS NETWORK (DWRN)



A campaign for protection of Domestic workers' rights in Bangladesh

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Supported by: Manusher Jonno Foundation

Domestic Workers' Rights Network (DWRN)

Background

Near about 2 million young and adults extend their labourous contribution to the household activities as domestic helps in Bangladesh. Among them 83 percent are female, who are mostly child and young in age. Nevertheless, this large number of working population is out of lawful protection as the countries labour law does not cover them. They are not even recognised as worker and thus they have been highly victimised by their employers.

Moreover, the government of Bangladesh has not so far ratified the ILO Home Work Convention-177. The employment pattern is one house one worker and thus they have no chance to be unionised for fighting against the violation of their basic human rights. Though they work in the family environment, they have to face tortures in different ways.

Every year a number of domestic helps are killed and violated both physically and mentally by their employers. Sometimes they become victim of sexual abuse by the male family members.


Besides, the domestic workers are always deprived of fair wage, leaves, proper rest, medical facilities and many other basic rights.

They work all day long but their contribution never calculated in the national GDP. They make our lives easier in exchange of lot of difficulties in their own lives.

About the Network

In Bangladesh there are initiatives taken by the trade unions, human right organisations, professional groups and civil society members to protect the domestic workers from all these violations. But all these are scattered and individual initiatives.

It had been an insistent necessity to bring all the efforts together to achieve something worthy for this deprived working people. In late 2006, when the new labour law declared without covering the domestic workers the necessity of immediate action was felt and BILS initiated to development of the Domestic Workers Rights Network (DWRN) on 14th December 2006, under BILS-National Campaign on Safety Net for Workers Project.



A meeting of the Network held at BILS Seminar hall

At least 23 organisations comprising trade unions, human rights organisation and NGOs who are working for the rights of workers came together to formulate the Network. Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies-BILS now works as the secretariat of the Network. Most of the organisations have already devoted their time & action to ensure the rights of the domestic workers.

Aims and Objectives

To protect and promote the rights and dignity of the domestic workers:

- Raise a strong voice through mobilizing all forces concerned.
- Create awareness among the workers themselves to be organised and vocal for their own rights.
- Initiate a healthy discussion with policy makers, civil society, professional groups, trade unions and human rights actors.

How The Network Acts?

DWRN acts like a neutral body with the assistance of a working committee. BILS works as the secretariat of the network. A BILS officer works as the coordinator of the committee and the network as well. It convenes networking meetings with the participation of representatives from all member organisations, once in every three months.

Major Activities Undertaken

- Collect and compile the information related to the rights of domestic workers.
- Conduct research to identify the priorities and arguments for lobby and advocacy.
- Preparation of lobby papers and advocacy plans.
- Preparation and implementation of awareness raising activity plan that includes discussions, meetings, rallies, workshops, human chains, etc.
- Produce campaign materials including poster, brochure, leaflet, flyer and others.
- Enhance media relation for more coverage of the issues related to domestic workers

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পৃথিবীতে অধিকার প্রতিষ্ঠা নেটওয়ার্ক
Domestic Workers Rights Network-Bangladesh (DWRN)

Web: www.hilo-bd.org