OVERVIEW:

The National Domestic Workers’ Movement Celebrated its Silver Jubilee this year (1985-2010). A look back at the journey the Movement undertook gives great joy. There is a commitment and a continuous effort to see that the domestic workers are recognized as professionals like any other workers with legally enforceable rights and benefits due to any other worker under the labor legislations of India.

The work of organizing, uniting and empowering the domestic workers to voice their rights over the years has ostensibly seen a sea-change in the attitude of both the domestic workers and the employers. They have become an inevitable part of the urban society given the economic upswing and the quest for better living standards by the middle class families where it has become imperative for both the partners to work.

Meekness, submissiveness, down-trodden attitude and suffering all ill-treatments from the employers have become the characteristics of domestic workers. They had not realized the power of their united voice. The Movement has driven the thought of their self-worth and the ability to assertively express their rights.

Children comprise another section of domestic workers. They are mostly children of domestic workers unable to go to school, children from poor families who need additional financial support, children who ran away from home and living in slavery of domestic work. NDWM made provisions for these children as well to wean them away from domestic work and bridge them to schooling thus paving a way for annulment of child domestic work and giving them a better future.

Constant lobbying and advocacy efforts of NDWM has seen 8 state governments include domestic workers in the Minimum Wages Act, the government of India has changed its stand on ILO by expressing its support to adopt a Convention, domestic workers getting unionized, the Movement was inducted as a member of Task Force by the Central Ministry of Labour and Employment to frame policy for domestic workers and so on. In short the recognition of domestic workers as contributors towards the economic wellbeing of the society is on the increase. This is the mileage that domestic workers have gained over the years and this has to continue getting infused in the minds of every person in the society.
HISTORY OF THE MOVEMENT:

To a society which spurned domestic workers as worthless people who could be dealt with in any way, speaking about domestic workers and their rights meant hardship. Under the Varnashrama dharma (the caste system in India) the domestic workers mostly hailed from lower castes and generally with little or no education and no social recognition. To make a living the domestic workers did everything their employers wanted them to do from cleaning and washing to looking after the sick and old people in return they used to get waste food, old clothes and little or nothing in cash as payments. Sadly many of them are harassed and abused sexually. They lived a life of slavery under their employers. They were treated as objects or machines rather that human beings with flesh and blood. Their feelings were never a concern for the employers.

Moved by the facts revealed about the subhuman conditions of domestic workers in India by the survey conducted by CBCI in 1978, getting into the psyche of domestic workers by regular interactions with them to understand the inexplicable pain they underwent within and a will to struggle with the domestic workers for their rights and dignity prompted Dr. (Sr.) Jeanne Devos, a Belgian Missionary to India, into founding the National Domestic Workers' Movement at Dindigul, Tamil Nadu, India, in 1985.

Since then the Movement has engulfed domestic workers from 20 states of India and the strength of domestic workers with the Movement has crossed the 3 million mark. The membership is growing steadily though the intention is not to have many domestic workers in the Movement but to get them their rights and dignity wherever they are irrespective of their being part of the Movement. NDWM believes in the empowerment of domestic workers as the only way to their progress and for that they need to be organized and made aware of their rights as workers and as citizens of India. Therefore NDWM conducts a bunch of programs like training on the rights of domestic workers, personality development, leadership qualities etc. to equip them with the knowledge required to voice their rights and be the leaders of the Movement.

25 years have gone by since the inception of the National Domestic Workers' Movement and we keep treading the path and moving ahead tirelessly advancing the cause of domestic workers and child domestic workers. Sticking together under the banner “Domestic Workers” would certainly have the desired impact on the people they want to influence to get them the status due to them. NDWM develops them in that direction.
OUR OPERATIONS:

NDWM is currently operational in 17 states of India. Each state has a state coordinator who runs the activities of the Movement independently in consultation with the National Office. The state coordinator plans the programs with the district coordinators and they are executed together with the animators and group leaders. Over the years we have empowered several domestic workers to take up responsibilities as leaders. We have inducted many domestic workers into the staff as group leaders, animators, district coordinators and assistant state coordinators. NDWM is the Movement of Domestic Workers and they are the drivers of our activities.

NDWM is now entering into the unionization phase. We have domestic workers unions already formed in 4 states they are: Jharkhand, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. We are poised to constitute unions in other states as well in view of creating a national union for domestic workers. The national team together with state coordinators is working on the modalities of a national union.

Our struggle goes on until we realize our dream and that day is not far away..........

State Centers:

NDWM functions through its state units. The state team led by the a state coordinator manages the activities. They carry on the work of the Movement almost independently. The following table shows our state units.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Name of the State</th>
<th>State Coordinator</th>
<th>State Office</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>Sr. Lissy Joseph</td>
<td>Hyderabad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Assam</td>
<td>Sr. Tresa Joseph</td>
<td>Guwahati</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bihar</td>
<td>Sr. Leema Rose</td>
<td>Patna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Himachal Pradesh</td>
<td>Sr. Anne Mathew</td>
<td>Dalhousie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Jharkhand</td>
<td>Fr. Chetan</td>
<td>Ranchi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Karnataka</td>
<td>Sr. Nisha Mathew</td>
<td>Bangalore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kerala</td>
<td>Sr. Sally Michael</td>
<td>Trivandrum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh</td>
<td>Sr. Rosily</td>
<td>Indore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>Sr. Christin Mary</td>
<td>Mumbai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Manipur</td>
<td>Sr. Maria Goretti</td>
<td>Imphal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Meghalaya</td>
<td>Sr. Tresa Salem</td>
<td>Shilling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Orissa</td>
<td>Fr. Nicholas</td>
<td>Bhubaneshwar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Rajasthan</td>
<td>Sr. Kirti</td>
<td>Udaipur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>Sr. Clara &amp; Valar</td>
<td>Chennai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>Fr. Alex Philip</td>
<td>Varanasi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Nagaland</td>
<td>Sr. Therese</td>
<td>Dimapur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Goa</td>
<td>Sr. Escaline</td>
<td>Porvorim</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The work of the Movement has directly affected more than 1 million domestic workers and indirectly all domestic workers in India.
**WE CARRY OUT:**

**TRAINING & CAPACITY BUILDING:**
Domestic Workers need to know their rights as human beings, rights as Domestic Workers and rights as citizens. Training alone can help impart knowledge of their rights and make them capable of demanding what is due to them. With that in mind NDWM conducts various training programs touching upon various areas of knowledge which are relevant to domestic workers. The training programs conducted during this year could be segregated under five heads and they are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal</th>
<th>Welfare</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Protection of Women Against Sexual Harassment at Workplace Bill, 2010</td>
<td>Welfare Boards and benefits</td>
<td>Health &amp; Hygiene</td>
<td>Housekeeping &amp; cooking</td>
<td>Leadership at different levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right to Education Act, 2009</td>
<td>Social Security Schemes and Savings</td>
<td>Health Awareness programs on HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>Tailoring, embroidery &amp; designing</td>
<td>Migration, trafficking &amp; Pre-departure training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Labour (Prohibition &amp; Regulation) Act, 1986</td>
<td>National Pension Scheme</td>
<td>Epidemic diseases</td>
<td>Computer application</td>
<td>Personality development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Wages Act, 1948</td>
<td>RSBY</td>
<td>Substance Abuse</td>
<td>Candle making</td>
<td>Training on SHG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Unorganized Workers’ Social Security Act, 2008</td>
<td>Janashree Bima Yojana</td>
<td>Cancer, Hepatitis B &amp; Blood Pressure</td>
<td>Baby sitting</td>
<td>Disaster management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO Convention 2010 and its possible impact on Domestic Workers</td>
<td>Widow Pension Scheme</td>
<td>Herbal Medicine</td>
<td></td>
<td>Union and its importance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Rights</td>
<td>Sanjay Gandhi Niradhar Yojana</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Policy for Domestic Workers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Violence Act.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Trainings Were Meant To:

- Build up their confidence to demand their rights from employers and policy makers
- Empower domestic workers, unite & organize them.
- Better participation and cooperation in the struggles of the Movement.
- Create powerful leaders to lead the Movement
- Instill a sense of solidarity among the domestic workers

Results

ยอม Several domestic workers have begun playing leadership roles in the Movement to the extent of becoming Assistant State Coordinators.

ยอม Many DWs participated in the lobbying and advocacy process which involved meeting political leaders and other eminent personalities in order to present their issues and to demand justice.

ยอม Some of them have emerged as trainers conducting leadership and skill trainings for other DWs.

ยอม Domestic Workers have become more vocal and vibrant.

ยอม There is a shift in their world view.

ยอม Greater awareness on various issues and topics, such as just remuneration, working hours, social security, entitlement, maternity leave etc.

ยอม Increased self-esteem.

A Glimpse Of Some Of The Topics Covered In The Trainings:

1. National Policy:
   The exploitative situation of domestic workers, the lack of legal measures to protect their rights, the need for a national legislation, the attempts of NDWM, the initiatives of the government (under the Ministry Of Labour Welfare ) were explained and discussed.

2. ILO Convention:
   The ILO process to bring labour standards for Domestic Workers, the preparatory process, the demands of the domestic workers in India, the position of the Indian government, the need for lobbying to change the position of the government at the ILC in 2011, were explained and discussed.

3. Unionization:
   The strength and power of Union, its functioning and working methods, its legal and administrative aspects, the need for unionization of domestic workers, the services it could provide, its funds, the position of the domestic workers’ Union in Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala were explained and discussed.

4. National Pension Scheme:
   The NPS was explained in detail and discussed and the modes of getting it for the domestic workers were also put forward.

5. Rashtriya Swasthya Bhima Yojna (RSBY):
   The RSBY scheme and the initiative of the Central Government of India under the Ministry Of Labour Welfare to extent the scheme to Domestic Workers.
6. The Unorganized Workers Social Security Act, 2008:
The inclusion of domestic workers in the definition of workers, the various schemes available under the Act were explained to Domestic Workers.

7. Protection of Women against Sexual Harassment at Work place Bill, 2010:
The exclusion of Domestic Workers in the Bill, the need for lobbying to include Domestic Workers, the need for media campaign were explained and discussed.

8. Leadership:
Domestic Workers need to be the leaders of the Movement and the future union leaders keeping that in mind trainings are provided to them to take up leadership.

9. Health & Hygiene:
In order to help DWs live a healthier life and trainings were provided on personal hygiene and sanitation.

Similarly several other trainings are conducted to benefit the domestic workers optimally. The feedback from them has helped us to understand that they were slowly becoming aware of their environment and the society in which they live and the rights that they are entitled to.

SOCIAL SECURITY:
Each state unit of NDWM conducts a periodic survey on all the available social security schemes, checks the eligibility of domestic workers in their state and gets all the eligible domestic workers enrolled in those schemes. Most of the domestic workers are not aware of the existence of such benefits. The animators together with the state coordinators make sure that all the paper works are completed and submitted to the respective departments to get these benefits to domestic workers. Some of the available social security benefits in various states put together are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Scheme</th>
<th>No. of DWs Enrolled</th>
<th>No. of Dws Benefitted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>BPL Card</td>
<td>7137</td>
<td>1405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Janshree Bima Yojana</td>
<td>8052</td>
<td>2507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Indira Gandhi Sr. Citizens Pension Yojana</td>
<td>5902</td>
<td>1512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Old Age Pension</td>
<td>8456</td>
<td>2329</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Widow Pension</td>
<td>2306</td>
<td>505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Death Benefits</td>
<td>1459</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Shravan Bal Yojana</td>
<td>4507</td>
<td>935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sanjay Gandhi Niradhar Yojana</td>
<td>5602</td>
<td>685</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Female Child Scheme</td>
<td>4505</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Marriage Benefits</td>
<td>3303</td>
<td>624</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Health Insurance</td>
<td>11200</td>
<td>1308</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NETWORKING:

Several like-minded NGOs and other organizations work with different purposes but most of them converge at one point and that is the well being of those sections of the society which most people tend to sideline and ignore. They could be children on the streets, children in domestic work, unwed mothers, battered women, trafficked girls, women in prostitution and so on. So it becomes necessary for us to work with them to get the best for the domestic workers.

We have the support of Unorganized Workers Federation, Women’s Federation, Women Workers Union, Paddai, Pennurimai Iyyakkam, Mottukal, Tamil Nadu children’s welfare system, Human rights Lawyers and other NGOs, for the implementation of Unorganized Workers Social Security Act 2008, Social Security Scheme for the Domestic workers, support for the I.L.O Convention, formulation of national policy for the welfare of the Domestic Workers, implementation of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, etc. Some of the organizations we networked with during this year are the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Networked With</th>
<th>Networked for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lions Club &amp; CHABUHAN</td>
<td>Health / Medical Camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour Departments</td>
<td>Min. Wages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impulse NGO</td>
<td>To counter Child Trafficking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Committee of Nagaland</td>
<td>To counter Child Trafficking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT International Hotel</td>
<td>Skill Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Bank of India</td>
<td>Savings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaty Ahe Mahilanvaril Ayacharacha Ant Abhyan</td>
<td>Implementation of Domestic Violence Act 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paddai</td>
<td>Rights of DWs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennurimai Iyyakkam</td>
<td>Rights of DWs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mottukal</td>
<td>Rights of CDWs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naga Women HOHO</td>
<td>For Peace in the State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naga Mothers Association</td>
<td>For Peace in the State</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic Workers Rights Campaign Committee</td>
<td>Comprehensive National level Bill for Domestic Workers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
UNIONIZATION

Over a period of time the Movement has realized the fact that DWs will be better recognized and represented as a union. In order to strengthen the existing unions in the four states and to initiate the process in other states we had the first level of trainings for the national core team, state coordinators and state key persons. Mr. Thiru supported by WSM/ACV helped us to understand and plan this process further. He brought a lot of clarity to the subject and put an orientation before us.

The four existing unions have a total of 10700 members in the unions (Andhra Pradesh - 3000, Jharkhand – 1500, Kerala – 1200 & Tamil Nadu – 5000). Some of the observations and challenges of the existing unions were:

**Observations**

- Identity as union members
- Willingness to support the cause in different ways
- Domestic workers and their families benefiting from the services
- Leadership emerging from D.Ws
- Able to put greater pressure to include and fix minimum wages for DWs.

**Challenges:**

- To increase awareness among the domestic workers on the need for unionizing
- Creating structures that are democratic, transparent, and accountable to its members
- Expansion of membership to gain more bargaining power
- Lack of trained leaders to train other domestic workers

LOBBYING & ADVOCACY:

During this year, both at the centre as well as States domestic workers have strongly lobbied for a number of causes, particularly the following:

1. To support the ILO Convention 2011
2. A National Policy & Bill for Domestic Workers
3. To include Domestic Workers in “Protection of Women Against Sexual Harassment at Workplace Bill, 2010”

Apart from the above, the state units also engaged in advocacy programs for the inclusion of domestic workers in the schedule of employment under the Minimum Wages Act, the Unorganized Workers Social Security Act etc. They met the leaders and government officials at all levels with their state specific issues and demands.
THE ILO CONVENTION 2010

What is ILC?
The International Labor Conference is a yearly event, held each June in Geneva, Switzerland, and is hosted by the International Labor Organization. The conference makes decisions on the organization’s general policy, work program, budget, and creates Conventions and Recommendations.

A Recommendation has no binding force on the Member countries. A Convention on the other hand has to be followed up by legislations within countries to ensure the protection of rights.

The ILO has a unique tripartite structure. In March 2008, the Governing Body of the ILO at its 301st session decided to have a double discussion on Domestic Work at the ILC in 2010 & 2011. In April 2009, the ILO released the Law and Practice Report along with a questionnaire. August 2009 was set as a deadline for submission of Member States’ replies to the questionnaire. The ILC in June 2010 adopted proposed conclusions in the form of a Convention and recommendation on decent work for domestic workers. In August 2010 the ILO published Report 1IV (1): “Decent Work for Domestic Workers” (the so called ‘brown report’) and invited governments to send comments to the ILO on the proposed text of a Convention and Recommendation. December 2010 was the deadline for the feedback on the draft instrument, which will be taken up for a final discussion and possible adoption at the ILC in June 2011.

Four common themes that emerged during the Convention which received unanimous support were:
First, new standards on domestic work had to be both robust and flexible, guaranteeing minimum protection to domestic workers while allowing for wide ratification and continuous improvement of domestic workers’ working and living conditions.

Secondly, new standards had to provide practical and realistic guidance to ensure that coverage would be real rather than a commitment on a piece of paper.

Thirdly, there was a need for better knowledge and dissemination of successful national practices in areas such as working time, occupational health and safety, social security for domestic workers and law enforcement.

Fourthly, there was a need for statistical information on domestic work.

What concerns us more is the item on Decent Work for Domestic Workers and item 1134 of the convention states: “From the deliberations, four common themes had emerged and received unanimous support.

New standards on domestic work had to be both robust and flexible, guaranteeing minimum protection to domestic workers while allowing for wide ratification and continuous improvement of domestic workers’ working and living conditions.
Efforts of NDWM for the ILO Convention:
To create an awareness of the ILO convention on domestic workers, the processes and to seek support of the National and State Leaders NDWM organized several rallies, campaigns, awareness program. NDWM organized a campaign in six states namely, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu (TN), Karnataka and Jharkhand.

The Objectives Of Our Various Efforts:
- To give a face and identity to domestic workers.
- To increase dignity and participation for DWs.
- To let the voice of DWs be heard.
- To learn about the standard settings of ILO
- To share experiences and knowledge on existing legislations and policies.
- To experience the magnitude of employment in domestic work.
- To show the strength and leadership of DWs.
- To identify priority issues that need to be strengthened.
- To create support structures between different states in India.
- To share dreams and hopes for the future.
- To experience liberation from slavery.

Participation of NDWM at the ILC in June 2010:
Sr. Jeanne Devos, (National Co-Ordinator NDWM) Bro. Varghese Theckanath s.g. (Co –Ordinator, Advocacy), Ms. Mary, (Representative of Domestic Workers), Ms. Sujatha, (Former Child Domestic Worker, Representative of Child Domestic Workers), Sr. Nisha (Guardian of Sujatha) and Sr. Escaline (Co-ordinator for the state of Tamil Nadu) actively participated in the conference to reinforce the need for a convention on Domestic Workers and Child Domestic Workers.
**Side Events at ILC Geneva:**

The side event organised by Anti Slavery International on 9th June 2010 was represented by child domestic workers from Togo, Peru and India. The event was chaired by the President of Human Rights Commission of Geneva and International Trade Union Leader Ms. Florence from the Philippines. They did support the four main recommendations made by the Child Domestic Workers. They are:

1. Do not employ underage workers. (Can work at 15 years and above under special protection).
2. Written Employment Agreements as a Protective Measure.
4. Registration of Young Domestic Workers and Opportunities to Organize.

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**Plan of Action**

- Create more awareness about the ILO Convention on “Decent Work for Domestic Workers” among all stake holders.
- Organize meetings, advocacy programs, rallies, campaigns etc. both at the states as well as at the national level.
- Improve the bargaining power of the Domestic Workers through a process of strengthening the existing unions of domestic workers and initiating a process of unionization in other states.
- Lobbying with people’s representatives, officials and other local, state and national leaders in support of the Convention.
- Memorandum to the Minister of Labour, Prime Minister and NAC Chairperson in support of the ILO Convention.
- Networking with Unions and Other NGOs working for similar cause to muster support.

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**SEXUAL HARASSMENT BILL 2010 & OUR EFFORTS:**

*The Protection of Women against Sexual Harassment at Workplace Bill, 2010* introduced in the during the winter session of the Parliament, seeks to ensure protection of women against sexual harassment at the workplace, both in public and private sectors, whether organized or unorganized. However, domestic workers have been excluded from the purview of the Bill. It is difficult to understand the logic behind such a move which clearly shows the lack of commitment on the part of the Government to protect and ensure the rights of domestic workers, who are mostly women and the most vulnerable and largest section of the unorganized workers of the urban society.

Quoting the Bill, “Employee means a person employed at a workplace for any work on regular, temporary, ad-hoc or daily wage basis, either directly or through a contractor whether for remuneration or on a voluntary basis and includes a contract worker, probationer, trainee apprentice, but does not include domestic maids working at home.”

In order to get the domestic workers included in the Bill several leaders both at the state as well as central levels were approached by our state and national leaders. The meeting with Ms. Sonia Gandhi, Chairperson, National
Advisory Council was an important one in this regard. We also organized Public Demonstration in Delhi during the winter Session of the Parliament and submitted memorandums to many M.Ps including Mr. Oscar Fernandes, Mr. Raja, Mr. Manick Takore, Ms. Agatha Sangma etc. In fact, Ms. Agatha Sangma, MP, raised the issue in the Parliament and urged the Government to intervene in the matter. The Committee, headed by congress M.P Oscar Fernandes, sought the opinion of various stakeholders, including the common person to fine tune the proposed legislation. Press Conferences, Public Meets and Signature Campaigns to highlight the issue and to seek support in favor of the inclusion of domestic workers in the Bill were also organized at different states. We have started to collect One million signatures in support of the inclusion of domestic workers in the Bill. Similarly, 16000 postcards have been sent to M.P.s and Ministers to seek their support for the same. On the occasion of a National Convention on Child Right in Chennai on 29th Dec. 2010, representatives of child domestic workers from 11 states shared their painful stories of being trafficked, sold and abused at a Press Conference.

We realize how difficult it is to get our rights. As we still wait for domestic workers to be included in the Bill, we continue with our lobbying activities until their voices are heard by the Government.

THE TASK FORCE & NDWM’S PARTICIPATION

In December 2009, the Ministry of Labour and Employment constituted a Task Force to deliberate on the issues related to welfare and regulatory measures for promoting decent work for Domestic Workers. The ministry included the National Domestic Workers Movement as a member of the Task Force. Some of the key recommendations of the task force were:

- Compulsory registration of placement agencies under the Shops and Establishments Act, which would help in monitoring the activities of the placement agencies and to curb trafficking of domestic workers.
- To extent social security schemes to domestic workers starting with the RSBY Scheme.
- A policy for domestic workers to be drafted.

ANTI-TRAFFICKING AND MIGRATION

Human trafficking has become one of the most lucrative clandestine businesses world over. Young girls and children are trafficked without their knowledge. This is primarily carried on by trafficking agencies who have very often a virtual existence. Young girls, women and children are trafficked under the pretext of giving better jobs with fat salaries. Their parents, especially in the villages are lured into believing that their wards would be safe in the employer’s location and they would fetch large sums of money to them. This makes the financially ill parents to accept the offer and send their children. Young girls and children thus brought to the urban areas are sent to prostitution, domestic work, sweat shops, small scale as well as hazardous industries or some involuntary servitude. Some of them never get to see their parents again, some never get paid and live a life of slavery and other try to escape the situation. Above all they are made to work round the clock, beaten up, abused sexually and made to undergo traumatic experiences.

Similarly women and young girls migrate to urban areas for domestic work. We have several cases from Delhi wherein the girls are kept at the Placement Agency for days and the employers visit the agency and pick them up.

The government of India prohibits trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation under Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act. It also prohibits bonded and forced labor through The Bonded Labor Abolition Act, The Child Labor Act and the Juvenile Justice Act. However these laws are ineffectually enforced and therefore these immoral activities continue.
What do we do?
- Identification
- Rescue
- Survey of girls who have moved out of the villages
- Make efforts to prevent trafficking of girls through community participation.
- Temporary Shelter Homes
- Give legal assistance and training
- Awareness programs on immigration.
- Reintegration

CHILDREN IN DOMESTIC WORK
National Domestic Workers Movement in collaboration with ASI and KU Leuven endeavors to protect Child Domestic Workers from abuse, exploitation and Slavery. This process entails identification, rescue, reintegration, empowerment, awareness campaign, network with Child Welfare Committee and educational support for Children in Domestic Work.

Campaign against Child Labor
During this year we organized the following events in order to create awareness on the rights of children and to protect them from abuse exploitation, and to sensitize the public, employers, parents and the governments.
- Press Conference
- Signature campaign in the communities, railway stations and other public places.
- Rally & demonstration.
- Awareness on trafficking through movie shows (Lacchi, Kutti etc.), visit to police stations.
- State Level Conventions
- Door to door campaign to employers homes to create awareness about child labour.

Training
- Personality development Child Rights
- Communication Skills
- Health & Hygiene
- Ecology
- Leadership
- Child Labour Act
- Value Education.
- Career Guidance
- Motivational Training

Workshop
NDWM organized a workshop for children in domestic work from five states to formulate recommendation for ILC 2010 in order to appeal to the Government to protect children from abuse and exploitation.

Educational & Vocational Training Support
Through NDWM around 850 child domestic workers have been rescued, some of whom are pursuing their education. We also provide special and regular coaching to some girls who are willing to take a public examination. Additionally, we also enroll child domestic workers in evening schools and improve their literacy and personality.
A good number of them have gone through the following vocational training courses during the last year:

- Beautician
- Tailoring
- Computers
- Housekeeping
- Candle and phenyl making
- Embroidery
- Mehendi design

**Crisis Intervention:**

**Swathi** (name changed) 15 years old, a daughter of a domestic worker, was given in marriage against her consent in her 15 years old and she was not happy in her married life. But her parents forced her to live with her husband. She contacted NDWM-AP for help. She was rescued on 2nd April 2010 from her own parental home and rehabilitated her in local shelter home. On 13th April the family took her home, as her mother was sick. But she was not sent back to shelter home. She was house arrested and beaten by her brother. Without their knowledge, she contacted the office. With the help of Amen Vedhiks, NDWM rescued her for a second time after counseling the family members. Swathi’s dream was to study. Now she is studying in 9th class and happy in the home and has many friends.

**Farheen** (name changed) went missing when she was five years old during the Ramzan festival. She was found by a auto driver who placed her in a muslim family for domestic work. She did all the work for five years. As she kept watching the employer’s children going to school, the desire to go to school grew within her. One day she expressed her desire to the employer. The employer’s anger and ill treatment had no bounds and it was beyond Farheen’s capacity to bear. Besides being beaten up, she not given food for many days. One afternoon, while the employers’ were asleep, she ran away from the house and was found by a police man. She was admitted in a shelter home and was going to school. The home management tried to trace out her parents. Meanwhile she was not happy in the home and reached NDWM in June 2009. She asked NDWM-AP to help her to get the salary for the five years that she had worked for the family. NDWM approached the employer for the salary to be paid and informed them of the violation of Child labour Act, 1986. The employer denied of her working in her house and said she does not know who the girl is. She was admitted in an intermediate college. Today she is doing her second year (final year).

**Impact**

- Children are aware of their rights and duties
- The confidence level has apparently increased
- Sharing by other participants from other districts have helped change their thinking and increased the motivation level.
- Able to understand the parliament functioning and the ways to form similar parliaments in their village.
- Number of school going children has increased.
SPECIAL EVENTS

1. SILVER JUBILEE EVENT:

To mark the 25th year of its existence NDWM organized the Silver Jubilee event at Chennai from the 5th to 6th February 2010. Over 5000 domestic workers from all the 23 states participated in the celebrations. The participation and involvement of the domestic workers is the greatest strength of NDWM. The chief guests for the event were Ms. Latika Saran from the India Police Service (I.P.S), the Deputy General of Police (D.G.P) of Tamil Nadu and Mr. Manick Thakoor, Member of Parliament (MP) Tamil Nadu. Other guests included Ms. M.P. Nirmala I.A.S, Commissioner Social Welfare. His Excellency Most Rev. Bishop Joshua, Mar Ignathios, Chairman of the Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI), Labour Commission, His Excellency Most Rev Dr. Lawrence Plus Dorairaj Auxiliary Bishop of Madras, Mylapore, Ms. Bharti Birla, Project Coordinator, Equality and Decent Work Promotion for Women in South Asia, International Labour Organization (ILO) Sub Regional Office for South Asia (SRO-New-Delhi), Rev. Sr. Oommen Rachel, District Superior of ICM in India, Fr Jose Vatakuzhi, Secretary of the CBCI Labour Commission, Ms. Rokkaiah Salma, Chairperson of the Tamil Nadu Social Welfare Board, Ms. Qudsia Gandhi, Chairman and Managing Director, Overseas Manpower Corporation, Tamil Nadu and Ms. Christine Lazaras, Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), Andhra Pradesh.

The first day was marked by workshop which delved on the following:

Challenges of Adopting the Movement Approach:

Speaking on the Movement Approach Mrs. Virgil D’Sami said:

1. “A movement is powerful only if it is people based. We need to check the level of community participation in our interventions. It is important to build the capacity at the grass roots. The next silver jubilee needs to be led by domestic workers themselves. We need a sustained movement.

2. Workers issue – We need to work with other unorganized workers movements. The issues of domestic workers are also the issues of dalits, tribals and victims of trafficking.

3. The movement needs to be broad based. We need to align with movements at the local level as well as the regional level. For example, Trade Unions, Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) and Members of the Parliament (MPs). We share a common goal, our approaches may differ but we need to work together towards the goal.”

Need for a National Bill for Domestic Workers.

Speaking on the strategies to be followed for a National Bill for Domestic Workers Ms. Medha Patkar said:

1. Solidarity – we have to be organized, as collective effort is the key to the success of any struggle.

2. It is important to create alliances with other unorganized workers movement. Our approaches may differ but we all have a common goal.

3. We need to demand a common Bill for all unorganized workers, but we need to have sub sections that would have special rights for domestic workers.
4. We need to be alert to the contradictions that may arise during process of enacting the acts and rules. The process of enactment needs to be participatory and empowering.

5. Involvement of employees is crucial as their sensitization will help to implement the benefits that we will get from the Bill.

6. It is important to dialogue with the government. They need to be informed about our problems, our progress as a movement and our demands.

7. Involvement of international organizations helps to increase the visibility of a movement.

8. We need to partner with political parties, institutions and organizations that work towards providing education, health services and legal aid to domestic workers. We need to link the rights of domestic workers with their right to food and housing. The problems of the urban poor are also the problems of the domestic workers.

9. The court can be used as a support system as well as a forum to place our demands. The movement needs to use the law very strategically.”

ILO’s Work on International Laws for Labourers.

Mrs. Bharti Birla began congratulating all the domestic workers and the staff of NDWM on behalf of the entire ILO team especially Jurist, Mr. Nana Palkiwala. She was impressed by the solidarity and committed spirit of the domestic workers towards achieving their rights. She said that the goal of ILO was to establish decent work standards for domestic workers. She also informed that the ILO had initiated a campaign, “Your work is important” and wished that the movement achieved its goals.

Decent work has been defined as “Opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity”. Mrs. Birla gave a detailed explanation about the process involved in adopting an ILO Convention.

On the 2nd day we had a public meet wherein approximately 5000 domestic workers participated from all over India and a Jubilee Walk which was inaugurated by M.P. Manik Thakur,

**Jubilee Walk**

Thousands of Domestic Workers Participated in the Jubilee Walk from Santhome to Marina Beach. The Domestic Workers in the **Jubilee Walk** created curiosity on the onlookers on the street. Domestic Workers went with pride to this tribute with head caps and giving information about the movement. This walk created awareness of the Movement among hundreds of people. May be the Movement has still a long way to go but we are ready for the struggle.
Inauguration of the Movement Documentary Film:
Mr. Thakoor inaugurated the theme poster and The documentary film and the movement song. “Ray of Hope” is a beautiful depiction of the solidarity of the domestic workers. It symbolizes hope and the way ahead. Ray of Hope has been composed, directed by Shaison P. The film has been produced by NDWM.

Release of the Souvenir in Tamil Language
The history of National Domestic Workers’ Movement was also released in Tamil as "Veerathin Velipaadu”. The book depicts the 25 years journey of the movement in Tamil Nadu from its inception, its achievement, and struggles and the future dreams and aspirations.

Domestic Workers Speak 😊😊

“I had never heard of any organization for domestic workers. The movement has taught us to live, every step in life is a struggle, we will win if you are with us” – Nirmala, Maharashtra

“I will always support women and children, because I know that the movement is with me”- Surekha, Maharashtra.

“Before joining the movement, my life was tough. I used to face abuse, but after joining the movement my life is better. I am happy to be with the movement” – Kurnan Rai, Manipur

“I am very happy today as we celebrate our silver jubilee. Everyone has a special day and so should we. Education and awareness have helped us to feel proud of ourselves as we celebrate our solidarity.” said Ms. Veronica,

“I have been with the movement since 2003. The movement makes us feel that we have someone to support us, we are not alone” – Manju, Bihar

“For seven years I worked on my own, then when I joined the movement I got trained in nursing and now I work as a nurse” – Nutan, Delhi.

“I am happy to be here and hope to move ahead in life after being with the movement” – Anshu, Goa.
2. CHILD RIGHTS CONVENTION 2010:

NDWM organized a three days National Convention on Child Right in Chennai from 27th to 29th December 2010, supported by Anti Slavery International. About 125 children from eleven states - Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, A.P, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Bihar, U.P, Orissa, Nagaland, Jharkhand and Manipur participated in the event.

The two days of workshop focused on the theme, “Children are the world’s most valuable resources and its best hope for the future”. Mrs.Virgil D’Samy, Director, Arunodhaya, Chennai with the members of Children Sangam facilitated the workshop with informative and educative sessions on Child Rights, Right to Participation and the need for organizing into groups. The participants were facilitated to prepare their recommendations to the ILO Convention to protect children from abuse and exploitation. They were briefed about the ILO Convention, the stand of Indian Government, NDWM’s role to lobby with the government to support the convention.

**Highlights of their recommendations are the following**

- Do not employ children below 14 years, free and compulsory education should be provided to all children.
- Children employed above 15 years should be provided special protection.
- Children should be safeguard from abuse – sexual, physical and emotional.
- There should be a safe and sound environment in the working place with a weekly off. Children should be treated with respect and dignity.
- Limit the working hours to enable them to go to school on time as they are asked to work between 12 to 15 hours a day.

The third day was made special by the Press Conference and Public Meet. The representatives of children addressed the media. They shared their life stories and what forced them to domestic work. Due to poverty, sickness, death of parents, alcoholic father etc children were pushed to work. While some of them were trafficked and sold by the agents, others were ill-treated and abused by the employers. The Movement has been instrumental in rescuing and rehabilitating them and making a difference in their lives through education.

The three days event gave the children a platform to explore their resources and potentialities. They realized that they could emerge as potential catalysts to protect and promote their own rights, especially the right to receive a free and meaningful education,
labor and economic exploitation and freedom from performing any work that is likely to harm their development. It was also an opportunity to organize themselves, learn from each other, and to let the society listen to what they had to say.

**Impact of the Convention on the Participants**

**Anita**, a participant from Meghalaya, expressed that she could find a new friend in the person of Deepa from Tamil Nadu. Anita also shared that she was fortunate to go out of her own state for the first time and was not ashamed to share her stories with her friends in Chennai. She has understood the importance of education and that every child should be educated.

**Sulthana**, from Bangalore stated, “The input sessions on ‘Child Rights (Right to Survival, Right to Development, Right to Participation, and Right to Protection) and Child Parliament, by Ms. Virgil and Co. were indeed motivating and filled with creativity. I liked it, and learnt so much from it”.

**Anima Munda**, from Ranchi shared “Chennai trip was my first journey outside Jharkhand. My dream of seeing the sea came true. While I felt happy to meet friends from other states, their stories made me understand the situation of child domestic workers in their states. The Convention on children’s rights enkindled a desire in me to fight injustice against children and encouraged me to work for the cause of child domestic workers”.

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**3. NATIONAL COORDINATORS MEET**

The National Coordinators Meeting is an annual event participated by all the state coordinators of National Domestic Workers Movement working in 20 states of India. This year it was held from 8th to 10th Oct. 2010 at Sarvodaya, Mumbai.

Sr. Jeanne Devos presented an overview of NDWM saying “25 years gone and we still have miles to go to meet our three objectives:

- Dignity of Domestic Workers.
- Legal Protection of Domestic Workers.
- Empowerment of Domestic Workers.”

Fr. Felix asked the coordinators to put forward their expectations and the feasibility and probable impediments in meeting the expectations were discussed in detail by all coordinators. A few of the expectations are: Knowledge about the unionization process, ILO Campaign and Awareness Programs, Extension of work to unreached areas, Creation of more and more leaders from among Domestic Workers etc.

Sr. Lissy asked for suggestion on the draft bill on a separate legislation for domestic workers and the participants and several suggestions were given. Some of them are: The Bill needs to go public and reach the parliament, translation of the Bill into vernaculars, consult with Ministry of Labor and other government departments to gain inputs to push it forward etc.
Mr. Thiru gave a bird’s-eye view of unions and the unionization process. He assessed the existing unions in Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Kerala and Tamil Nadu and spoke about trade unions as a joint force helping to gain greater bargaining power, solidarity, representation, dignity and respect for domestic workers apart from many other benefits.

Elaborating on the possible action areas of Domestic Workers Union Mr. Thiru said that we needed to represent DWs in the state and central labor ministries/departments and other relevant bodies. Campaigns, lobbying and advocacy work for legal recognition of the rights through state and national labor laws, ratification and implementation of ILO instrument on Domestic Work.

Speaking on our immediate priorities he said “Organize Trade Unions in the new states, consolidate the existing Trade Unions, create appropriate conditions to elect its own leaders from Domestic Workers, Register the Trade Unions in the States, conduct educational programs on the rights through the union etc.” He also said about the ways to finance the union.

Bro. Varghese T. explained about the process of an ILO convention getting passed and said about the five-pronged strategy that NDWM would follow to get the ILO Convention 2011 on “Decent Work for Domestic Workers” passed and they were: Study of Brown Report, Political Mobilization, Media Publicity, Signature Campaign and Participation in the ILO.

Emphasizing the need for training domestic workers for better discharging their duties Sr. Sally said that the professional training for domestic workers should be of three levels: House Keeping, Cooking and Baby Sitting & Nursing.

There were several other discussion and deliberations on the national task force, expectations from the states, implementation of social security schemes, finance etc. and finally the states presented their actions plans and the meeting was concluded with the note from Fr. Felix saying “we should not lose the ideological vision of the Movement. We should not become an institution. We appreciate and thank Sr. Jeanne Devos and all the others who have spent the productive years of their lives for NDWM. As long as the rights of domestic workers are upheld and respected that would complement our mission. Therefore our focus needs to be on our ideology and vision.
4. DOMESTIC WORKER’S DAY CELEBRATIONS
NDWM celebrates the 9th of January as the day of Domestic Workers and the day of the Movement. This day was marked by rallies, public meets and cultural events linked to domestic workers in all the states. Political leaders like MPs, MLAs and other influential dignitaries were invited to be guests on the occasions to make them aware of the plight of domestic workers. On this occasion this year among many other demands two primary demands of domestic workers across the country were:

- Support for ILO Convention 2011 on “Decent work for Domestic Workers”
- Inclusion and fixation of Minimum Wages for Domestic Workers

In Maharashtra there was a participation of about 17000 domestic workers from the districts of Mumbai, Thane, Solapur, Kolhapur, Satara and Sangli. In Kerala we had about 8500 domestic workers participating from Trivandrum, Kollam, Alappuzha and Ernakulum. Andhra Pradesh witnessed a huge gathering of 12000 domestic workers raising slogans in support of their demands. Tamil Nadu organized district wise celebrations in 16 districts. Around 3000 domestic workers gathered together to celebrate the event in Jharkhand. Similarly, there were celebrations in all the other states. Every year this day makes an impact on the respective governments as well as the public. More and more domestic workers become aware of their rights as workers through this event.

5. INTERNATIONAL DAY OF HOPE
The Movement celebrates 17th February as the day of International Day of Hope. This is the day of Child Domestic Workers and children of domestic workers. This year, on this day our state units organized various programs. Some of the programs organized on the occasion were awareness program on health, anti-tobacco campaign, workshop on child rights, career guidance, demonstrations, cultural items, painting, games, poetry and song competition etc. Through these events and programs the children are given an opportunity to learn their rights, and to make them feel that they are an important part of the society and that there are possibilities to realizing their dreams. A huge number of children participated in all the states on the Day of Hope with great enthusiasm and zeal.
AS A SUMMARY ....

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

- Induction of the Movement into the Task Force on Domestic Workers of the Ministry of labour & Employment.
- Induction of the Movement in the NAC Working Group on Domestic Workers
- ILO Convention 2010 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers “to set labour standards for domestic workers was a milestone
- Increase in membership - around 6200 new members joined the Movement during the last year
- Implementation of Minimum Wages in states (final notification in Kerala & first notification in Orissa)
- Emerging leadership among domestic workers (while handling complaints and cases of domestic workers, social security schemes and other demands, issues etc.)
- Successful initiation of the Unionization process in few more states (Jharkhand, Bihar & Orissa)
- Extension of the work in many districts (Dhulia in Maharastra, Virudunagar in Tamil Nadu)
- The visibility of the domestic workers have increased
- Rescue and rehabilitation of domestic workers, child domestic workers (40 in Tamil Nadu)
- Obtaining scholarship for children of domestic workers under the Janashree Bima Yojana (102 in Karnataka)
- Successful networking initiatives to rescue migrant workers (43 fishermen from Kathar)
- Getting 30 pension diaries for widows and aged through domestic workers’ intervention (Madya Pradesh)
- Making available Health Insurance of Domestic Workers in many states
- Solidarity among child domestic workers are strengthened through different means (Foot ball team in Jharkhand)
- Increased awareness on anti-trafficking and migration in schools, colleges, parishes and villages (Bihar & Jharkhand)
- 280 families received patta including 45 D.Ws through the intervention of D.Ws
- The state government Andhra Pradesh has included VDA to the wage of DW which is a sign of their acceptance of DW as any other workers.
- The workers are empowered to organise their meeting and take leadership.

LEARNINGS

- The activities of the Movement should affect the lives of the domestic workers concretely, for their major concern is day-to-day needs.
- Domestic workers are very receptive to gaining information and knowledge and becoming aware of the unjust and systematic exploitation tand are willing to take all measures for justice.
- The problem lies with the bureaucrats who do not seem to realize the gravity of the problems and injustice done to the domestic workers. We need to strengthen our lobbying with the officials.
• Not many N.G.Os seem to understand that the minimum wages claimed by the domestic workers are just wages. Greater efforts need to be made in order to recognize and to give due respect for domestic labour.

CHALLENGES

• Lack of cooperation from the employers in the process of organizing domestic workers as they feel threatened by the Movement.
• Majority of employers do not recognize domestic work as work.
• DWs’ refusal to join the Movement for the fear of losing jobs.
• Dismissal of DWs at the whims and fancies of employers.
• To convince the government officials to include domestic workers under the existing labour legislations.
• Extension of the Movement to other districts and states.
• Threat from political forces.
• Initiating steps for legal action against illegal trafficking agents due to their political linkages.
• Lack of legislations to regulate trafficking agencies.
• Fight against atrocities on Domestic Workers and to create a workforce
• Solidarity among members of the Movement.
• Due to false promises made by other NGOs, DWs find it hard to place their trust on NDWM.
• Exclusion of Domestic Workers from the Protection of Women against Sexual Harassment at Workplace Bill, 2010.

CONCLUSION

The ILO Convention 2010 has harbingered a positive, long sought-after and favorite conclusion and we hope that the drudgery and hardships of the domestic workers will see a dawn at the end of the ILO Convention 2011. The efforts for the extension of RSBY too is on war footing and NDWM hopes to see it extended in the near future. Every move and every activity of ours is targeted at achieving that goal which domestic workers across India and the world have in common. The process is on, the struggle is on-going and results are going to be in our favor sooner or later, but we will never grow tired.
The President of India, Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil, is happy to know that the National Domestic Workers' Movement is celebrating its Silver Jubilee on February 5th & 6th, 2010.

The President extends her warm greetings and felicitations to all those associated with the Movement and wishes the Silver Jubilee Celebrations all success.

Signature

Officer of Special Duty (PR)
National Domestic Workers’ Movement

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