

Sex workers  
Millennium Mela  
The right to say NO  
অন্ধকারের অন্তরাল থেকে বাইরে



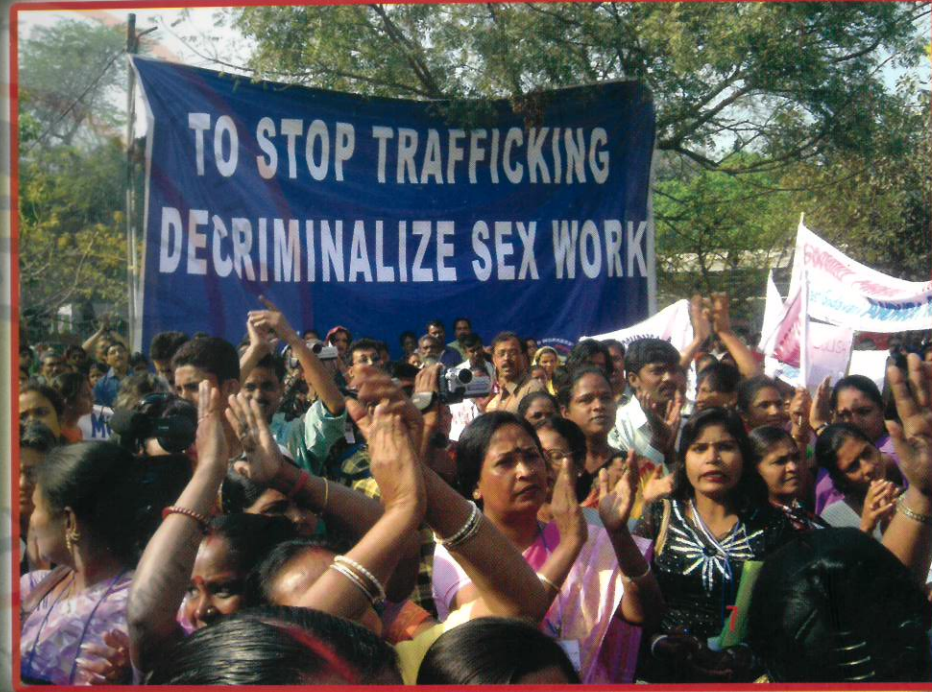
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# SELF - REGULATORY BOARD

A Rolling Success in anti Trafficking Program



Lessons Learnt from DMSC



**SELF-REGULATORY BOARD**  
A Rolling Success in Anti-Trafficking Program

Lessons Learnt from DMSC

Kolkata : Durbar □ 2007

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(Polling Success)

## Foreword

Trafficking in human beings is the business of buying and selling or bartering human beings by duping them with false or imaginary, non-real and non-realizable promises. This business is as old as the labour market. In this market only in the case of some forms of scarce labour, where the labour has a sellers' market, the contractual obligations are by and large fulfilled by the buyers of labour. In most other cases these 'contracts' are stretched or violated in the interests of buyer (= owner of capital). Thus understood trafficking is near universal in the human civilization that entails the existence of labour markets. Some parts of these markets are those of sexual services.

To get a larger picture of trafficking in women for providing sexual services, we must first look into the barter sector of it, because it is the larger part. It is euphemistically called what it is not—namely, the market of arranged marriage, in 80% of the cases in India, that of arranged child marriage. It is not an 'arrangement' between the spouses. These marriages are thrust upon them through lies and false promises, by their masters, i.e., their parents or guardians. Here, sexual and domestic services of a life time by the women are bartered against the often false promises of a decent livelihood. The entire



Indian society still condones this very large scale trafficking of women for sexual and other services.

Compared to this vast domestic barter sector, there exists a relatively small commoditized sex sector in India. Here some workers are trafficked, just as they are trafficked into agriculture, manufacturing, mining and many other sectors of the economy. The hypocritical Indian elite conflates trafficking into the sex sector with all trafficking, while enjoying the services of duped and abused wives, housemaids and servants at home. Even the concerned law of the land—the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act—condones most trafficking, save the trafficking that happens in the sex sector, as 'moral'.

In this bleak scenario, the Sex Workers of West Bengal, organized around their Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee, decided to take up the battle against trafficking in their work sites. When the rest of the Indian society blissfully sleeps over the abomination of rampant forced and child marriages, the sex workers of West Bengal have taken up a fight against forced sex and child workers in the sex sector.

What are they doing? How are they doing it? What are the results? To find out the answers to these questions, please read on.



## Innovative Approaches for Combating Trafficking of Girls and Women in the Sex Sector by the Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (DMSC)

### INTRODUCTION

Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee (DMSC) is a forum of sex workers of West Bengal and their children. In July 1995, a group of sexworkers from Sonagachi, perhaps the oldest and largest of the sex work sites of Kolkata, organized the entire community of sexworkers, to forge a positive identity for themselves as workers, to mark out a space for action to change their own lives and, to demand legal and social recognition of sex work.

The founding members of DMSC had come together through their work as Peer Educators (PEs) of the STD/HIV Intervention Programme (SHIP or 'Sonagachi Project') that began in the Sonagachi sex work site in 1992.

From its inception, DMSC activists realised that for creating an enabling environment in which individual sex workers could exercise choice and practice safer sex, it was necessary to address and challenge various structural barriers that controlled their lives within and outside the sex sector, and in order to achieve this, the sex workers needed to mobilise. This was the impetus for the sex workers to start their own organisation.

Explicit objectives of DMSC are : gaining recognition of sex workers as workers, a secure socio-economic existence for sex workers and, enhanced life-choices for their children. DMSC runs literacy programmes and vocational training classes for adult sex workers and their children. DMSC's

partner organisations Usha and, Komol Gandhar run a cooperative bank and, a performing arts training programme, respectively. In response to the felt-needs of sex workers, DMSC is active in reducing the rampant crime that exists in sex work sites. The Organisation fights for the rights of sex workers and raises its voice against all kinds of exploitation and oppression within and outside the sex sector.

### Section 1: Anti-Trafficking initiatives of DMSC: The Context of Self-Regulatory Boards

#### 1.1 Time Period:

Since 1996-1997, the Organisation decided to develop strategies to tackle the problem of underage and unwilling girls trafficked into sex work sites and, of unwilling women duped/coerced/forced into sex work. Informal rescue of underage girls who came into sex work sites, by DMSC, began in 1996-1997. Over the next two years, the structure of DMSC Self-Regulatory Boards (SRBs) was formalised. This document describes the experience of DMSC's anti-trafficking activities from 1996 to 2006. The anti-trafficking activities of DMSC can be broadly divided into the following phases:

- a) Phase-1 (1996-1998): Voicing concern about trafficking, informal approaches, advocacy and, demand creation within the Organisation.
- b) Phase-2 (1998-1999): Piloting of formal Self-Regulatory Boards in selected sex work sites in Kolkata and, advocacy in forums outside the Organisation.
- c) Phase-3 (1999-2000): Demand generation and increasing the reach of SRBs.
- d) Phase-4 (2000-2006): Self-Regulatory Boards established in many sex work sites in West Bengal and, formalising their activities and efforts.

#### 1.2 Need for Self-regulatory Boards of DMSC:

Movement and migration of human beings across national and international borders is not new. Globally, a large

number of people migrate from their places of origin seeking better livelihood opportunities and for other reasons. People who migrate also do so because there is a demand for their labour in the destination countries/sites. Such (often illegal) labourers are cheap as they are always at the mercy of their recruiters, who can easily get them evicted if they organised themselves or protested against exploitative practices or demand proper wages and/or benefits. As in other sectors, this demand for cheap labour from outside the destination zone (be it cross-border or within-country) is present in the sex sector as well; in addition, a majority of labourers who come in through irregular channels are people who come from low socio-economic backgrounds, with little or no literacy, who have limited skills. Migration to unknown areas/countries by poor people, without proper travel permits or adequate knowledge is often arranged with the help of unscrupulous persons or groups, who traffic unsuspecting people seeking better opportunities from sites of origin to destination sites. This 'unofficial' migration of people is well known and, has been going on for a long time. Recent evidence suggests that in response to the increased demand for labour, and for other causes including loss of traditional livelihoods due to globalisation, trafficking of human beings have intensified. Addressing this critical issue, and in particular, its impact on the sex sector, requires innovative approaches and strategies.

Ever since 1997, when DMSC activists articulated the issue at the First National Conference of Sex Workers, the Organisation has grappled with the problem of underage girls trafficked into sex work sites and of unwilling women duped/coerced/forced into sex work. DMSC is active in addressing and challenging the structural issues that frame the everyday reality of sexworkers' lives as they relate to their material deprivation and social exclusion. From this standpoint, it stands against any form of exploitation and infringement of rights of human beings that includes sex



workers and their children. DMSC is explicit, too, about its stand vis-a-vis forced or coerced labour in any form. If sex work is work, like any other, then it must be subjected to certain norms and conditions—decided upon and enforced by the workers in the sector, that must be fulfilled before anyone can start as a sexworker. Hence, DMSC is strictly against trafficking of minor girls and unwilling adult women into the sex sector. It is also DMSC's experience that the Immoral Trafficking (Prevention) Act or the IT(P)A, as enforced by the police, is insufficient to combat this trafficking with any great success. *Therefore, DMSC felt the need to constitute Self-Regulatory Boards (SRBs) in the sex work sites. DMSC reasoned that these SRBs would serve as a double check to prevent entry of minor girls and unwilling adult women into the sex sector, control the exploitative practices in the sector, regulate the rules and practices of the sector and institute social welfare measures for sexworkers and their children.* DMSC also reasoned that illegal movement of people across international borders may be prevented (to some extent) by law enforcement agencies and border police, but intra-country movement cannot be prevented in this fashion. *Moreover, there is no existing effective mechanism to combat trafficking in destination (sex work) sites and only a committed group of sexworkers can prevent the entry of trafficked underage girls or unwilling women into the sex sector.*

### 1.3 Objectives of the DMSC Self-Regulatory Boards are as follows:

**1.3.1 Preventing trafficking of women and under-age girls into sex work:** Sex workers are uniquely positioned as they live and work in sex work sites and, are the first to know when a minor girl has been brought into a sex work site; and the place/house where she is held. Consequently, they are in the best position to speak with the concerned site-manger and other stakeholders on prevention of minors from

entering the sector. They are also specially placed to meet and interact with the trafficked girl, to win her confidence, to know her place of origin (address) and, to discuss the options open to her in a fair manner. Additionally, Self-Regulatory Boards present in each sex work site are uniquely positioned to intervene in, and prevent trafficking into sex work, of minor girls and unwilling women from any part of the country and the world. The mechanism operative in the borders to prevent trafficking for sex-work, intervenes only at the international level (e.g., say, at the border between Bangladesh and India, or Nepal and India). No such mechanism is either present or possible to prevent inter-district or inter-state trafficking. However, as the Self-Regulatory Boards are located in the sex work sites, trafficking from districts or states too can be monitored and entry of underage girls and unwilling women into the sex sector can be prevented, irrespective of their place of origin.

#### 1.3.2 Changing inefficient laws controlling sex work:

The police use provisions of the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act of India, primarily to raid sex work sites indiscriminately and, to arrest or 'pick' women from the streets and indoor sex work sites on the charge that they are all 'minors'. Once these women are brought to the local police station, they are forced to pay for their release or are harassed further. Active and alert Self-Regulatory Boards prevent this from happening.

**1.3.3 Stopping exploitation in the sex sector:** Self-Regulatory Boards act as controlling bodies in sex work sites, to put an end to exploitative practices that range from exploitative contractual agreements through violence, other exploitation by local men, power-brokers and hoodlums, and financial exploitation of sex workers by madams/ pimps or moneylenders.

**1.3.4 Carrying out social welfare measures for sexworkers and their children:** Self-Regulatory Boards have heterogeneous membership. Apart from members of DMSC, each Board has the local councillor/ panchayat representative, local doctor, local lawyer (if available) and any other community leader/ influential person, who is willing to participate. This group is therefore in a position to demand social welfare schemes, oversee government projects undertaken in sex work sites and, see that social welfare measures reach the target group including children and retired sex workers. The Board acts, as a pressure group, and is able to pressurize the government to allot and undertake various welfare and development activities for the betterment of sexworkers and their children. These activities include adult literacy classes, children's education and, handicrafts and other skills training.

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## Section 2: Newness/Originality of the Self-Regulatory Boards of Durbar

The Self-Regulatory Boards of DMSC are innovative in the field of anti-trafficking activities in the following ways.

**2.1 Partnership with the Departments of Health, Labour and Social Welfare, Government of West Bengal:** from its inception, SRBs have developed links with the Departments of Health, Labour and Social Welfare of the Government of West Bengal. Advocacy among the Ministers-in-Charge and Department Secretaries are done regularly. Of late interactions are going on with the State Government on registering a State-level Coordination Committee of SRBs to facilitate rehabilitation of women and girls rescued by DMSC and, to ensure that they get another chance for changing their lives.

**2.2 Innovative public-private partnership:** Self-Regulatory Boards are collaborative efforts of sex workers and of people from the rest of the society. Sixty per cent of the membership is from the sexworker community and comprise of sexworkers, DMSC branch committee members and, peer educators of different intervention projects. Forty percent of members of SRBs comprise of local doctors, lawyers, councillors, Panchayat functionaries and local opinion leaders. Efforts are made to include, wherever possible, Social Welfare Officers, State Women's Commission Members, and other government functionaries.

**2.3 Focus of SRBs is to make recruitment of underage girls and unwilling women into the sex sector unviable** to sex-work-site-managers and madams. The central strategy is : rescue and rehabilitation of underage girls or unwilling women forced/coerced into sex work sites; SRBs concentrate their maximum energy and effort at identifying, rescuing and repatriating/rehabilitating girls/women trafficked into sex work. DMSC feels, that the central focus should be on the trafficked girl/woman and, that efforts should be made to rescue, repatriate and/or rehabilitate her. DMSC activists, being sexworkers and residing in sex work sites, are uniquely positioned to do this work successfully. In areas where SRBs are functioning, trafficking of girls/women for sex work has become unviable for traffickers and other controllers.

**2.4 Standardized guidelines, history-taking and medical examination formats** are used by SRBs for rescue, repatriation, rehabilitation and follow-up of women trafficked into the sex sector.

**2.5 Networking and partnership with the police :** SRB members regularly liase with the local police and continue advocacy of their activities with district and state police. In a number of sex work sites, local police entrust SRBs with rescue/rehabilitation of underage girls.

**2.6 Maintenance of comprehensive documentation,**



including photographs of rescued persons, by DMSC.

2.7 Rehabilitation of rescued girls in state-approved shelters and maintaining contact with them to ensure overall development of rescued girls, with the aim to improving their chances in life. This is the central post-rescue thrust area for DMSC : providing the rescued girls access to non-formal education, vocational training and cultural activities. This is in contrast to rescue of underage girls by law enforcement agencies, whose work ends, for all practical purposes, after the girls are rescued and put into a government-run rehabilitation homes where, a new series of nightmares wait for her.

2.8 Other efforts: To improve the quality of lives of sexworkers and their children and to give rescued women/ girls chances in life, DMSC runs adult literacy classes; education centres for children/girls and, provides skills training in handicrafts.

**Section 3: Implementation of Innovation**  
**3.1 Implementation of the programmes of the SRBs of DMSC a brief profile:**

Year	Events
1996-1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● First began in the Tollygunj sex work site.</li> <li>● First National Conference of Sexworkers organised by DMSC in November.</li> </ul> <p><b>Processes, Activities and Challenges Overcome:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Actual event: An underage girl, who was trafficked and forced into sex work in Tollygunj, was rescued by DMSC activists and was repatriated home.</li> <li>● <b>Demand creation and advocacy within the organisation</b></li> <li>● Reasons for initiating formation of self-regulatory boards articulated by DMSC activists for the first time:                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ To reduce police raids in sex work sites.</li> <li>➤ To prevent trafficking and entry of underage girls and unwilling adults into sex work.</li> <li>➤ To control practices in sex sector as a professional body like the Bar Council or the Indian Medical Association.</li> <li>➤ To provide welfare services to sexworkers and their children in sex work sites, namely, clean drinking water and sanitation, education, handicrafts training, etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● When decision to start SRBs was taken, resistance came from madams, local clubs and the local police.</li> <li>● Resistance was overcome through frequent meetings and discussions with madams, pimps and local clubs: it was pointed out that</li> </ul>

	trafficking of underage girls into the site would lead to frequent raids by local police and consequently all stakeholders would suffer.
1998	● Piloting of SRBs in 3 sex work sites in Kolkata.
1999	● Demand to form SRBs came from other sex work sites in Kolkata. ● SRBs established in other sex work sites in Kolkata—at Khidirpore, Kalighat, Chetla, etc.
2000	● Support to form SRBs in district sex work sites (Durgapur and Asansol) provided by Action Aid.
2002	● SRBs created in all district intervention sites of DMSC. ● A <b>Rapid Assessment Survey</b> conducted in Changrabandha (Cooch Behar), Lalgola (Murshidabad), Hili (Dakshin Dinajpur) and Basirhat (North 24 Parganas). The survey was funded by UNDP and primarily addressed sites where informal cross-border movement between Bangladesh and India (West Bengal) occurred. ● Meeting to address interventions around cross-border (Indo-Bangladesh) movement was organised in September at Dhaka. CARE-Bangladesh, DMSC, Bhoruka Welfare Trust and some Bangladeshi organisations participated.
2003	<b>Processes, Activities and Challenges Overcome:</b> ● Extension of Anti-trafficking activities of DMSC through collaborating with other organisations/NGOs who worked in cross-border transit sites between Bangladesh and India.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Efforts that followed the Rapid Assessment Survey founded by UNDP : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Orientation Meetings with local clubs, NGOs, policy makers.</li> <li>➤ Short-stay Home "Bhalobasa" established in Maldah.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
2004 and 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Funds received from Action Aid for all SRBs of DMSC.</li> <li>● A total of 30 SRBs organized and run by DMSC in 30 sex work sties.</li> <li>● Workshops held to plan formation of the Steering Committee of Self-Regulatory Boards.</li> <li>● Consultations held with Lawyers' Collective (New Delhi) and other organisations around the issue of law and trafficking in February-March 2005. This was part of a national debate around repeal/abrogation/change of the IT(P)A of India.</li> <li>● Detailed Terms of Reference of SRBs at state, district and local level prepared; guidelines for field workers and formats for use after rescue and repatriation of underage girls/unwilling women developed and implemented.</li> <li>● <u>Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (US)</u>, sought information of anti-trafficking activities of DMSC, on how SRBs function and their impact on trafficking.</li> </ul> <p><b>Process, Activities and Challenges Overcome:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sensitisation about SRB functioning done with sex workers and other stakeholders of sex sector.</li> <li>● Regular meetings of SRB initiated in sex work sites whenever a girl was rescued.</li> </ul>



- DMSC team follow-up 10% of girls rescued, visiting them at homes.
- DMSC teams regularly visit government-approved shelter-homes and monitor conditions of rescued girls and women, who have been placed there by their SRBs.

### 3.2 Perceived challenges and planned future activities:

#### Perceived Challenges:

- a. Repatriation/rehabilitation of foreign underage girls/women rescued through the SRBs.
- b. Formal Registration of SRBs and of DMSC Short-Stay Home.
- c. Development and registration of Central Steering Committee for SRBs with participation of State-level government representatives.
- d. Re-entry of underage girls rescued by DMSC SRBs, into sex work due to extreme poverty and discrimination they face once they are repatriated.

#### Future Plans:

- i. To work closely with the Department of Home (Government of West Bengal), and Bangladesh High Commission to prevent cross-border trafficking.
- ii. More advocacy initiative for influencing the Home and Labour Departments of the Government of West Bengal.
- iii. Intense advocacy among family members and neighbours of underage rescued girls to prevent their re-entry into sex work.
- iv. Education centres and vocational centres in all sex work sites.
- v. Training Institute approved by the Government and supervised by the SRB.
- vi. Home for elderly and retired sexworkers.

## Section 4: Impact of Self-Regulatory Boards of DMSC

### 4.1 Impact within sex work sites and within the Organisation

#### 4.1.1 Increasing number of sex work sites having SRBs:

Over the years, there has been a steady increase in DMSC's anti-trafficking activities through its SRBs. At first there was only one informal anti-trafficking board in Tollygunj. By 2005, SRBs operated in 30 sex work sites throughout West Bengal, of which 8 are located in different sex work sites of Kolkata and, the remaining 22 are spread over different districts of West Bengal.

#### 4.1.2 Increasing success of SRBs in identifying, rescuing and rehabilitating underage girls/unwilling women trafficked into sex work:

Table 1: Year-wise break-up of girls/women rescued by the SRBs of DMSC  
No. of Rescued Girls/Women (June 1996 to December 2006)

Year	Total	%
1996	03	0.91
1997	02	0.60
1998	02	0.60
1999	01	0.30
2000	01	0.30
2001	31	9.37
2002	40	12.08
2003	61	18.43
2004	143	43.20
2005	81	17.09
2006	109	23.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>100.00</b>

For Data upto December 2006 see : Annexure-I

**4.1.3 Increasing Median Age of sex workers Surveyed over years in areas where DMSC works:**

Table 2: Significant Increase in the Median Age of sex workers in areas where DMSC works

Year*	1992	1995	1998	2001	2005
Sample size surveyed	450	475	506	614	560
Median Age of sex workers (in years)	22	22	27	28	28

\*Data from Sonagachi Project Baseline Survey (1992) and Follow-up Surveys (1995, 1998, 2001 and 2005)

**4.1.4 Successes of SRBs in improving literacy in sex work sites through the Education Programme run by DMSC**

Table 3: Literacy Centers and No. of Learners Enrolled

Category	Centres	No. Enrolled
Adult sexworkers	17	344
Children	17	890
<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>1234</b>

Table 4: Outcome of DMSC Education Scheme over years:

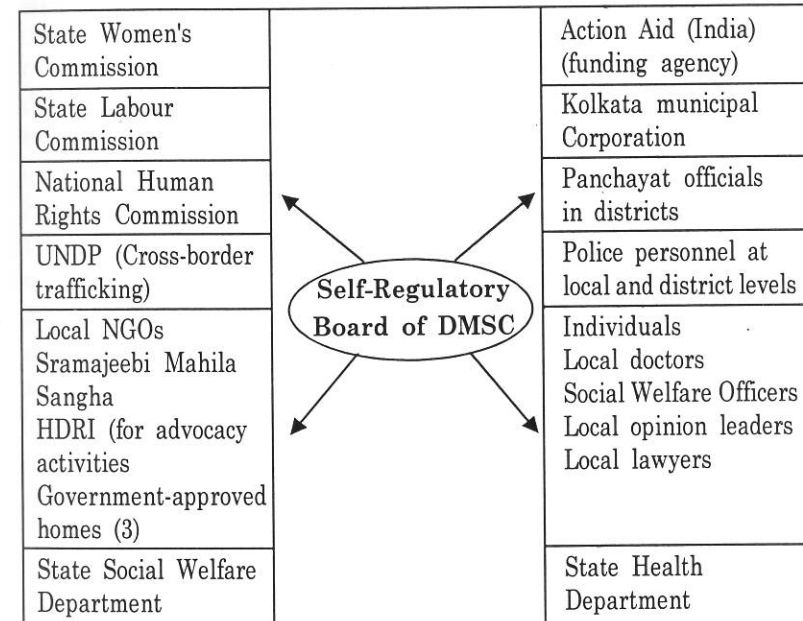
Category Adult sex workers	Category Children of Sex workers
No Enrolled at 530 "Korok" (Basic Course)	No. Enrolled at 650 Durbar Centres
No. Graduated 350 to "Digangana" (Advanced Course)	No. Admitted to 500 Local Schools
<b>% Learners 66 who advanced</b>	<b>% Learners 77 who were admitted in local schools</b>

Table 5: Outcome of Durbar Vocational Training School ("Srishti") over the years

Courses	Total enrolment till date	No Graduate	No. Self sufficient	% Graduated who are self-sufficient"
Handicrafts	68	50	50	100
Beautician	80	40	40	100
TV/Radio repairing	10	-	-	-
Electrician	20	-	-	-
Visual literacy (photography)	51	51	-	-

**4.2 Impact outside the Organisation:**

**4.2.1 Linkages established between DMSC, state government and civil society representatives through formation of SRBs:**



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#### 4.2.2 Self-Regulatory Boards gradually becoming an acceptable anti-trafficking strategy to prevent entry of underage girls and unwilling women in sex work sites:

- DMSC is invited to share its experience of combating trafficking into sex work sites in different forums. Recently, the organisation was invited by West Bengal Women's Commission to share its anti-trafficking experiences at a two-day workshop held in the West Bengal State Legislative Assembly (2 and 3 February 2005).
- Partnership with NGOs working at transit sites and at sites of origin developed by DMSC since 2002. DMSC has collaborated with Bhoruka Welfare Trust, UNDP and CARE-Bangladesh to address issues around cross-border trafficking. Out of this collaboration, SRBs were initiated in sex work sites close to Indo-Bangladesh border—at Changrabandha (Cooch Behar), Hili (Dakshin Dinajpur) and Basirhat (North 24 Parganas).

NGO

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## Self-Regulatory Boards of Dubar

*Field Guidelines for DMSC Activists - Action to be taken in the course of identifying, rescuing and rehabilitating underage girls or adult women who have been coerced / duped into sex work.*

Note

### INTRODUCTION:

Ever since 1997, when at the First National Conference of Sex Workers, DMSC activists first articulated the issue, Durbar has grappled with the problem of underage girls trafficked into sex work sites and of unwilling women duped/coerced/forced into sex work. Long before formalising the structure of Self-Regulatory Boards (SRBs), activists of Durbar, Peer Educators of the Sonagachi and District intervention projects and other sex worker members of the organisation, have built up their informal networks to seek out underage girls trafficked into sex work sites and, women duped into sex work (against their will) and, to assist them to return home (or assist them to gain skills for life, through education, and through skills-trainings like sewing/handicrafts, etc.). During the initial phases of building up the network that prevented entry of minors and unwilling women into the profession, activists and staff learnt many lessons and, as the volume of work increased and spread to different sex work locations across West Bengal, a need was felt to formalise the activity through creation of Self-Regulatory Boards consisting of sex worker activists and members of local civil society (in a 60%-40% ratio, respectively). The following guidelines for field workers arose from a series of discussions and consultations - based on field and real-life experiences - with DMSC activists and Durbar field staff active in and responsible for forming and running Self-Regulatory Boards in different sex work sites. The guidelines



address issues of identification of an underage girl/unwilling woman, preparing case history notes and medical examination, bringing her to the SRB, documentation, discussion of her choices, her final rehabilitation - at home or in a rescue shelter - and follow-up.

### **I. Identification and Notification of underage girls trafficked for sex work:**

1. During routine field visits: Durbar activists and Peer educators should ask sex workers during field visits, whether they have noticed any new (underage) girls in the neighbourhood recently. Observation and vigil of the neighbourhood during fieldwork for underage / new entrants into sex work should be done routinely. Besides direct enquiry, field staff and activists should discuss Durbar's stand on trafficking of underage girls and unwilling (duped/coerced) women in the sex sector with all sex workers to sensitise them and to clarify their role in identifying underage girls. Information on SRB and Durbar activists should be provided to all sex workers in the site, so that any information on underage girls can be conveyed to the relevant staff/activist at any time of day or night.
2. During Clinic Meetings and other meetings: SRB and issue of underage and/or unwilling girls/women and information regarding Durbar's actions about it should be part of the agenda at all clinic and field meetings - this would further sensitise sex workers on the issue and facilitate identification and notification of underage girls and unwilling women forced into sex work, to the SRB.
3. Sensitisation meetings with the managers and other stakeholders in sex work sites: The legal implication of forcing underage girls and unwilling women into sex work should be discussed with indoor-sex-work-site-managers during meetings with them. Risk of increased police raids and attendant disruption of the

peace of the neighbourhood should be highlighted as a reason why these managers should assist Durbar and the SRB in preventing entry of minor girls and unwilling women into the profession. The opportunity should be used to make clear to the site-managers that Durbar will be unable to assist anyone in case they are implicated in forcing underage girls and unwilling women into the profession.

4. Direct information from other sources - sex workers, site-managers, etc. : Whenever a sex worker or site-manager informs any Peer Educator or Durbar activist about a new entrant, the activist has to take note immediately and pursue the matter.

### **II. Action to be taken once an underage girl has been identified and notified as being trafficked in to a sex work site**

1. Confirmation that the girl has been trafficked: DMSC Branch Committee activists should visit the site-manager and by questioning him/her, confirm that the girl has been brought into the area. Once trafficking is confirmed, the following steps should be taken.
2. Informing the indoor site-manager: The site-manager must be firmly informed that the girl shall not be allowed to work as a sex worker in the neighbourhood.
3. The girl should be assured by Durbar activists and, brought to the Clinic or Durbar local office.
4. Preparing case history notes and documentation: DMSC activists should take note of the complete history of the girl, and simultaneously counsel her. Her name, parents' names, age and full postal address (village/town, block, police station, district and state) and, the route through which she arrived at the sex work site should be recorded using the format designed by the SRB. The girl's wishes regarding what she wants to do needs to be explored and recorded during this time.

5. Medical Examination: of the girl by Durbar Clinic medical officer has to be completed, and a primary age-range certificate based on history and clinical examination must be completed.
6. Overnight stay: In case the Self-Regulatory Board cannot meet for a few days, and the girl needs a place to stay, DMSC activists must arrange for the girl's stay in the DMSC local office/clinic/schoolroom. She should not stay alone, but a DMSC activist must accompany her day and night. In Kolkata, the girl should board at the Short-stay home run by Durbar at its office in 12/5 Nilmoni Mitra Street, Kolkata 700006. On no account should an activist keep the girl in her private quarters overnight, nor place her with her erstwhile madame (labour contractor/malkin).
7. Self-Regulatory Board Meeting: The Self-Regulatory Board should assemble as soon as possible - within the next 24 hours, if possible. Durbar activists should present the girl to the SRB along with the necessary documentation and age-determination certification. The SRB should confirm the girl's wishes and decide about the course of action to be taken. If she wants to return home, a team should be designated (comprising of one DMSC Branch member, two peer educators and a supervisor) to accompany her back to her home. If the girl wishes to learn skills, etc., the SRB may recommend that she be placed in a government approved shelter or home where she can learn livelihood skills.
8. Returning the girl to her home: The designated team must accompany the girl back to her home. Once they reach the girl's home, the team should hand over the girl to her parents / other natural guardians. They should assure the family that no physical or mental harm has come to the girl. Once the girl has been handed over, the team should request the head of the girl's family to sign a receipt (part of the format) that

- the girl has been returned to the family by DMSC and, that she is physically and mentally fit. This receipt should be witnessed by other local persons / neighbours / local leaders / panchayat members and duly signed by such witness.
9. Follow-up: The girl should be provided with DMSC contact information and, the team should assure her that should she want to, she was welcome to contact DMSC in the future for any further assistance. DMSC team should also randomly follow-up rescued girls by revisiting them at intervals.
  10. Documentation: For all cases of under-age girls rescued and re-integrated through the Self-Regulatory Boards of Durbar, the following documentation must be made and copies thereof preserved with SRB records:
    - i. Prescribed format must be completed, witnessed and signed.
    - ii. Age certification: In case of underage girl, must be obtained - in borderline cases, x-rays etc., may be required, but all underage girls should have a primary age-range certification based on history and detailed clinical examination, from the Durbar clinic medical officer.
    - iii. Photograph of the girl: at least 3 copies of it must be preserved for future reference.
    - iv. Signed note from a local dignitary - councillor, MLA, Panchayat leader endorsing that the girl has been rescued by DMSC and is being returned home by Durbar SRB (optional).
    - v. Receipt that the girl has returned home safe and sound signed by the girl's family and witnessed by local people.
  11. Admitting the girl to a residential home/shelter: On occasion, when an underage girl does not want to return home for fear of ostracism, domestic violence,

etc., the SRB may recommend her to be placed in a government-approved shelter for young women. DMSC activists, in such instances, should accompany the girl to the home (Malipukur Samaj Unnyan Home, and Sukanya Home are the two government-approved homes that Durbar currently utilises to place these girls). Routine follow-up of the girls placed in such homes should be done by DMSC.

### III. Action to be taken once an adult woman has been identified and notified as being coerced/duped into sex work

1. Confirmation and taking case history notes: DMSC Branch Committee activists should visit the site-manager and the woman and confirm from her history that she has been duped/coerced into sex work.
2. Informing the site-manager: The site-manager must be firmly informed that the unwilling adult woman shall not be allowed to work as a sex worker in the neighbourhood.
3. The woman should be assured by Durbar activists and brought to the Clinic or Durbar local office.
4. History and documentation: DMSC activists should take complete case history from the woman, and simultaneously counsel her. Her name, parents' names, age and full postal address (village/town, block, police station, district and state) and, the route by which she arrived at the sex work site should be recorded using the format designed by the SRB. Her wishes regarding what she wants to do needs to be explored and recorded during this time.
5. Medical Examination: of the woman by Durbar Clinic medical officer has to be completed, to see if the woman has been harmed in any way. This may assist the SRB later on to take action against the site-manager.

6. Overnight stay: In case the Self-Regulatory Board cannot meet for a few days, and the woman needs a place to stay, DMSC activists must arrange for her stay in the DMSC local office/clinic/schoolroom. She should not stay alone, but a DMSC activist must accompany her day and night. In Kolkata, she should board at the Short-stay home run by Durbar at its office in 12/5 Nilmoni Mitra Street, Kolkata 700006. On no account should an activist keep the rescued woman in her private quarters overnight, nor place her with her erstwhile madame (labour contractor/malkin).
7. Self-Regulatory Board Meeting: The Self-Regulatory Board should assemble as soon as possible - within the next 24 hours, if possible. Durbar activists should present the woman to the SRB along with the necessary documentation. The SRB should confirm her wishes and decide the course of action to be taken. If she wants to return home, a team should be designated (comprising one DMSC Branch member, two peer educators and a supervisor) to accompany her back to her home. If she wishes to learn skills, etc., the SRB may recommend that she be placed in a government approved shelter or home where she can learn livelihood skills.
8. Returning the woman to her home: The designated team must accompany the woman back to her home. Once they reach her home, the team should hand over the woman to her parents / other guardians. They should assure the family that no physical or mental harm has come to the woman. Once she has been handed over, the team should request the head of the family to sign a receipt (part of the format) that the woman has been returned to the family by DMSC and that she is physically and mentally fit. This receipt should be witnessed by other local persons / neighbours / local leaders / panchayat members and countersigned.



9. Follow-up: The woman should be provided with DMSC contact information and the team should assure her that should she want to, she was welcome to contact DMSC in the future, for any further assistance.
10. Documentation: For all cases of adult women rescued and re-integrated through the Self-Regulatory Boards of Durbar, the following documentation must be made and copies thereof preserved with SRB records:
  - i. Prescribed format must be completed, witnessed and signed.
  - ii. Photograph of the woman: at least 3 copies of it must be preserved for future reference.
  - iii. Signed note from a local dignitary - councillor, MLA, Panchayat leader endorsing that the woman has been rescued by DMSC and is being returned home by Durbar SRB (optional).
  - iv. Receipt that the woman has returned home safe and sound signed by the girl's family and witnessed by local people.
11. Admitting the women to a residential home/shelter: On occasion, when the woman does not want to return home for fear of ostracism, domestic violence, etc., the SRB may recommend her to be placed in a government-approved shelter for women. DMSC activists in such instances should accompany the girl to the home (Malipukur Samaj Unnyan Home, and Sukanya Home are the two government-approved homes that Durbar currently utilises to place these women). DMSC activists should do routine follow-up and counselling of the woman.

#### IV. Conduct of DMSC activists in the field when rescuing underage girls and adult women forced into sex work

1. Activists of DMSC and field staff must never be complacent but rather be vigilant about the possi-

- bility that underage girls and unwilling women may be trafficked into their sex work site.
2. Activists must be gentle to the girls and women, be sympathetic to them and, assure them that they are there to help them to re-integrate.
  3. The focus should be on assisting and reintegrating rescued underage girls and women. The activists must try and learn as far as possible, about the routes and the persons involved in trafficking.
  4. Activists must network with local civil society institutions, lawyers, local councillors and panchayat leadership to enable the SRB to function smoothly.



## Annexure-I

### A Factsheet on Durbar's Anti-Trafficking Activities Achievements:

The Median Age of sex workers in the sex work sites where the Sonagachi Project is operating is going up

Year	1992	1995	1998	2001	2005
Median Age	22	22	27	28	28

Details about Rescued Girls/Women  
(June 1996 to December 2006)  
Total No. of Girls/Women Rescued- 474

*1992-2005  
↑  
22 to 28*

Year	Total	%
1996	03	0.63
1997	02	0.42
1998	02	0.42
1999	01	0.21
2000	01	0.21
2001	31	6.54
2002	40	8.44
2003	61	12.87
2004	143	30.17
2005	81	17.09
2006	109	23.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*1996  
31  
30.17  
2006*

### Age Range of the Rescued Girls/Women

Age Range	Total No.	%
10-18 yrs	400	84.39
Above 18 yrs	74	15.61
<b>Total</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*minor*

### Literacy Rate of the Rescued Girls/Women

Literacy	Total No.	%
Illiterate	308	64.98
Can signed	29	6.12
Primary	50	10.55
Class V to X	75	15.82
Madhyamik(passed)	08	1.69
Higher Secondary	04	0.84
<b>Total</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>100.00</b>

### Reintegration of the Rescued Girls/Women By Self Regulatory Boards

Place	Total	%
Previous Residence	422	89.03
Government and Non-Government Homes	52	10.97
<b>Total</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>100.00</b>

### Girls/Women Rescued by

Rescued by	Total	%
DMSC (SRB)	411	86.71
Madams/Landlords and handed over to SRB	63	13.29
<b>Total</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*Note*

### Rescued Girls/Women from India and other neighboring Countries

Country	Total	%
India	465	98.10
Nepal	03	0.63
Bangladesh	06	1.27
<b>Total</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*Note*

### Rescued Girls/Women from different states of India

State	Total	%
West Bengal	429	92.26
Bihar	17	3.66
Orissa	02	0.43
Chhattishgarh	09	1.93
Jharkhand	01	0.21
Andhra Pradesh	02	0.43
Rajasthan	01	0.21
Assam	03	0.66
Uttaranchal	01	0.21
<b>Total</b>	<b>465</b>	<b>100.00</b>

*mu*

### Rescued Girls/Women from the different districts in West Bengal

District	Total	%
North 24 Parganas	111	25.87
South 24 Parganas	61	14.22
Kolkata	36	8.39
Howrah	31	7.23
Hooghly	22	5.13
Murshidabad	28	6.53
Nadia	26	6.06
Burdwan	24	5.59
Birbhum	32	7.46
Jalpaiguri	18	4.19
Coochbihar	11	2.56
Midnapur	15	3.49
Dakshin Dinajpur	04	0.93
Bankura	06	1.39
Purulia	04	0.93
<b>Total</b>	<b>429</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The activities of SRB need not be confined to combating trafficking but may also be extended to other areas that benefit the sex workers. We can visualize the work of SRB in the following way.

- To control the exploitative practices within the sex sector.
- To prevent the entry of minors into the sex sector.
- To regulate the rules and practices of the sex sector.
- To carry out various social welfare measures for and involving the sex workers and their children.



## Annexure-II

### Information Format to be completed for Rescued Girl/Woman



### Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee

12/5, Nilmoni Mitra Street, Kolkata-700 006, Indis

Phone : +91-33-25437560/25306619 Fax : +91-33-25437777

E-mail:sonagachi@sify.com.

URL : www.durbar.org.

information on the rescued underage girl or unwilling woman

1. Name :  
Widow/Married/Unmarried Do you have any
  - a. Husband's name children?
  - b. Husband's occupation Yes/No
2. Age :
3. Mother's Name :
3. (a) Occupation :
- 3.i.Father's Name :
- 3.i.(a) Occupation :
4. Literacy status:
5. Address:
6. With whom do you stay/who looks after you at home?
7. How many brothers and sisters you have at home?
  - (a) What do they do?
8. What are the economic conditions like at home?

9. When did you leave home and why?  
(Circumstances under which you left)
10. What is your status at home?
  - (a) I am accepted/I am happy, loved
  - (b) I am not accepted/I feel rejected/I am beaten, abused, (etc.)
11. Who helped/encouraged/enticed you to leave home?
12. What is your relationship with the person(s) and for how long have you known her/him/them?
13. What promises/assurances did he/she/they gave you?
14. By what route, and how did he/she/they bring you here (to this sex work site)?
15. Where did he/she/they take you first (to which house or person)?
16. Did you ever leave home/run away from home at any other time (earlier)?
17. If yes, what had happened then?
18. What do you want to do now?
19. Do you need any help from Durbar? How can we help you?
20. Do you want to return home?
  - (a) If yes, then why?
  - (b) If no, then why?
21. Do you have any plans (what do you want to do in future)?

**B. Information on the situation in which she was rescued and on help/hindrane faced**

- 22. From which location and in what condition was the girl rescued?
- 23. Who (person/s) rescued her?
- 24. Was there any trouble when the girl was being rescued?
- 25. Where are the persons(s) who brought her to the sex work site?
- 26. Has DMSC traced them (the traffickers)?
- 27. What decision (or action) has DMSC taken against the trafficker(s)?
- 28. What was the role of the madams (site managers)? Did they help, or hinder?
- 29. What was the role of the neighborhood club? Did they help, or hinder?
- 30. Was the Self-Regulatory Board informed about this rescue and about those who were associated with it?
- 31. What follow-up measures have been taken?

Woman's/Girl's signature  
 or thumb impression  
 Witnesses: (Name and Address)

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_

Date :



**Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee**

12/5, Nilmoni Mitra Street, Kolkata-700 006, Indis  
 Phone : +91-33-25437560/25306619 Fax : +91-33-25437777  
 E-mail:sonagachi@sify.com.  
 URL : www.durbar.org.

Date :

**Declaration by Parents/Guardians of the Rescued Girl/Woman**

I Mr./Ms/Mrs.....  
 son / daughter of.....and  
 residing in..... do hereby declare  
 that, my daughter/sister/wife Ms/Mrs.....  
 aged ..... (Who was untraceable  
 since..... till now), has been returned to me by Ms/  
 Mr..... of DURBAR MAHILA SAMANWAYA  
 COMMITTEE on...../...../..... (date).  
 I am grateful to DURBAR MAHILA SAMANWAYA  
 COMITTEE, for taking the necessary steps and assisting my  
 ward/daughter/sister/wife to return home safely. I further  
 declare that my daughter/sister/wife is unhurt and physi-  
 cally and mentally healthy.

Sincerely,

(Signature of the Parent/Guardian)

Address:

Date:

1. Ms/Mr.....of  
Durbar Mahila Samanwaya Committee have read out the  
aforementioned Declaration in full after it has been  
signed by the girl's guardian, in the presence of  
following witnesses:

Witnesses: [Name, designation (if member of Local self-  
government) and address]

- |    |    |
|----|----|
| 1. | 2. |
| 3. | 4. |