

Zoom Cloud Meeting on Labour Rights

Human Rights Law Net Works (HRLN)

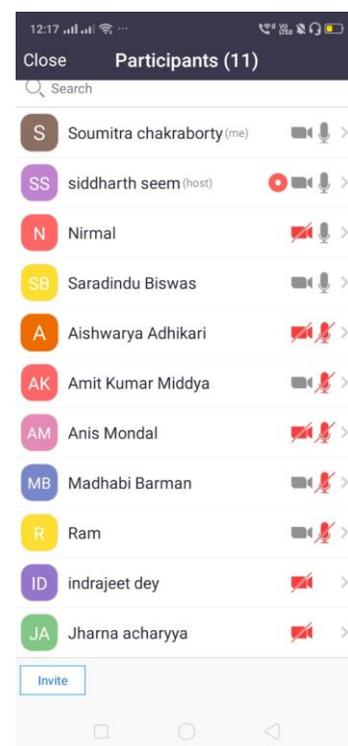
Date: 18.05.2020 at 12:00p.m.

Resource Person: Nirmal Ji

Moderator : Sidharth Seem

Participants :

1. Soumitra Chakraborty
2. Aishwarya Adhikari
- 3) Amit Kumar Middya
- 4) Anish Mondal
- 5) Monika Burman
- 6) Saradindu Biswas
- 7) Jharna Acharyya
- 8) Rampada Sardar
- 9)Indrajeet Dey



On 18.05.2020 Human Rights Law Network (HRLN)-Kolkata organized a zoom cloud meeting on Labour Rights. It was conducted by using of social media due to COVID-19 pandemic and lock down announced by the Government of India.

The Meeting was started at 12p.m. moderated by Siddharth Seem. He welcome the lawyers and activists of HRLN-West Bengal and invited Nirmal Ji an experienced activist of HRLN for discussing on Labour Rights. Nirmal Ji started with the problems those are facing by the labours across the country. He said that the unplanned lockdown due to COVID-19 pandemic forced lakhs of labours on the road in different cities for returning home.

Nirmal Ji also said that we saw how the labours are harassed by the police and local residents. Mr. Saradindu Biswas added that, the order of night curfew by the government as brutal as they want more suffering of the labours. Mr. Biswas suggested HRLN to take positive step against the cruel order. Mr. Siddharth Seem agreed with this suggestion as a valuable point for a legal action.

Again Nirmal Ji said, our government has no such plan for returning the labours to their home safely. Government of India don't have any data bank of the

labours have been working across the country. Even that, state government also don't have any data bank of the labours. He said that, in search of livelihoods most of the labours are trying to figure out their long journey in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chattishgarh, Assam, Tripura and many other states.

A huge number of labours don't have any legal protection in the unorganized sector. It means there are no social security, no work security, no food security and no savings.

Nirmal ji also said that more than 550 labours and children have died during this time. They have died by rail accident, by road accident or by suffering starvation when they were walking on the road or they have decided for a committed suicide. He also said that many farmers have dedicated to suicide in Maharashtra.

Nirmal Ji shared his work experience during the lockdown in Delhi. He went to a slum area with a Delhi based NGO where 500 Bengali labours have been staying without any food. Delhi police treated them as Rohingya and Musalman as they were speaking in Bengali language. Delhi police also suggested the NGO not to give them food. These labours are wanting to go back home but West Bengal government are not interested to bring them back. Not only Delhi, in every states in India Bengali labours have been suffering with the same situation.

Mr. Saradindu Biswas again added that, many workers have reached at Kharagpur rail station but West Bengal government are not allowing them to go their village as they suspected corona positive. He said that Jai Bhim India a peoples organization applied to DM and BDO to make arrangement of quarantine center for such labour in local school nearest their house. Nirmal Ji has ignored this arrangement as it may be cause of noise by the local people and it may be spread of corona positive to the corona negative labour. The home is the ideal and safest place for the labour he said.

Measure to be taken:

After a detail discussion Nirmal Ji came in to the action part. He said that, the work is too hard and too challenging but have to break the hardles.

- The activists, lawyers have to collect data and make a list of the labours with the help of local NGOs and CBOs.
- We have to forced the government safely come back the labours home and if necessary arrangement of quarantine center.
- We have to take care of their entitlement of food, medicine, sanitizer and other measures as the essential commodities during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown.
- We have to take care of whether “migrant labour Act.” is violating.
- Proper information to be collected for legal action.
- We have to take care of the daily wages and due wages of the labour.
- Taking care of loan announced by Central Government to the labours. If the labours are not getting the loan to be challenged by the layers.
- We have to do more and more fact finding and litigations.

Jharna Acharyya informed that, some of her relative has stucked in Delhi. He went to Delhi for treatment. Due to this sudden lockdown he is stucked. He don't have sufficient money for food. Siddharth said to Jharna that, the Delhi team will take the necessary action for that. Jharna also informed that another Bengali fellow stucked in Mumbai and not getting his salaries. Nirmal Ji requested Jharna to send his mobile number. The Mumbai unit of HRLN wil do the needful.

Siddharth Seem gave vote of thanks to the activists and district lawyers for participating the zoom cloud meeting.