

## Social Justice



Mid-day meal workers protesting in front of DC office demanding job security and higher wage



Bearers of Beedi Rollers Union submitting memorandum to Labour Commissioner

The work at the grassroots among women in villages and slums made us learn about the essentiality of addressing the issues concerning class discrimination and caste oppression of which majority of victims are women. Women laborer from Dalit communities face the burden of triple victimization as women, as laborers and as dalits. Therefore, we started our work among unorganized sector laborers and Dalit communities to achieve a holistic change. SPANDHANA also established '**SPANDHANA Labor Resource Center**', which has an **Information and digital support zone** that help laborers to digitally apply and access various welfare schemes, a **library**, where study classes are held to build awareness and a **counselling and legal aid center** which help laborers who are survivors of violence to access counselling, psycho social support and legal aid to get justice.

- **Unification of Unorganized Sector Laborers:** Unorganized sector in India comprises of 90% of the workforce. Unorganized sector laborers are mainly drawn from lower income communities and poorer sections of the society. As the nature of the informal sector, they are not recognized as laborers through legal and formal procedures and often they have to struggle to collect their daily wages. They are left without any benefits from the government as they are not recognized as laborers, unlike the formal sector workers. The informal sector also employs a large portion of not only women but also, unfortunately, children. In general, though all laborers are equally exploited and burdened, women and children are prone to be victimized more due to their identity in society, dependence, and helplessness. Therefore SPANDHANA started working among unorganized sector workers and especially women workers to ensure proper implementation of labor rights and gender rights of women laborer. Unification of unorganized sector laborers is the initial step to organize laborers to ensure the recognition of their status as laborers as well as to implement their labor rights and gender rights. SPANDHANA has organized successful unions among Midday Meal workers, Beedi Rollers, Construction laborers and agricultural laborers. Some of the major accomplishments in the path of unification of unorganized sector laborers are;

- Membership of more than 6000 laborers
- Issue of identification cards to 3200 laborers
- Implementation of minimum wages, food security and social security schemes to laborers including life and health insurance, scholarships, maternity benefits, housing grants and housing.
- Strong participation of women in all unions and for women members to constitute 3/4th of the total membership and hold all decision making designations.
- All women led Jamate have also been established by members of 'Beedi Rollers Union' in Ramanagaram district.

- **Dalit Activism and Emancipation:** The intervention of SPANDHANA in rural areas is chiefly focused among women and Dalit community. The Dalit community in every village is the most marginalized and downtrodden community despite several legal provisions. Therefore, SPANDHANA focuses on organizing dalits, women, youth and families of Dalit Communities in groups and awakens them about their rights and dignity enshrined in the constitution and about all the available social security programs and socio-economic and political rights. We organize associated programs to ascertain their rights from the government.



Members of Construction Laborers with the Labor Identity Card



Members of Beedi Rollers Union conducting a Campaign



Beedi Rollers Union Members being provided with Pukka Houses after continuous demand and protests