

YCW India's Actions in Informal Economy

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Members of YCW India have analyzed their situation and that of the society since 1997. They could identify that the living and working condition of the workers in the informal economy is at risk. Various study sessions with the young workers helped to deepen the understanding of its causes and the impact it has on the workers.

India YCW organizes the young workers (men and women) in construction, agriculture, tailoring and making beedi (Indian Cigar) into groups. These workers receive awareness education on their situation at work, life and on their rights. YCW India helps them to form their own associations to join the trade unions. Through these programs they analyze their own problems and act on it.

The young workers in YCW India developed actions for various demands. It includes actions for wage increase for agriculture. Actions on right to access water resources. Actions were developed for the recognition and social protection for the workers. They organized post card campaign to protect the agriculture workers and demanding for the creation of welfare board. Actions were developed to create procuring centres for the beedi workers in the villages. Actions for access to safe drinking water, electricity, transport and sanitation for the workers in the informal economy was done. Petitions to demand the reduction of price of essential food and commodities were submitted to the government.

These actions were taken along with organizations like trade unions, NGOs, workers associations. Most of the actions were in the form of mass rally, public meetings to raise the awareness to the public. India YCW collected more than 60,000 signatures in support of the demands. Demands were submitted to the Federal government (New Delhi), ILO (New Delhi) and other organizations.

Positive Experiences of YCW India

YCW has obtained the support of the public where the groups exist. Awareness was developed among the public regarding the problems of the workers in the Informal Economy through the actions and campaigns. The workers who participated in these actions and programs have more awareness on their rights. Workers from the informal economy take the leadership of the actions and in trade union and YCW. Young workers are able to overcome the influence of the Caste System and its oppression. Young workers have developed their capacity to lobby with the Government. Network is established with trade unions, other organizations.

Young Christian Workers India, campaign for the rights of agricultural workers, construction workers, beedi making workers and tailoring workers. It did an in depth analysis on the situation of these workers. It developed several actions in support of the demand of the agricultural workers to form a separate welfare board to provide social security. As a result the Tamil Nadu government has announced in 2006 several social security schemes for the agricultural workers. The federal government has assured to introduce the bill that will provide social protection to the informal workers in the Parliament session in October 2007. The wage for the agricultural workers, construction workers and beedi making workers increased in a few areas.

In order to improve the living conditions of the informal workers, the groups took several actions. As a result they achieved drinking water, electricity, road and sanitation facilities in the living places of the informal workers.

India YCW organized more than 2500 young construction workers in to trade unions and in the welfare board since the year 1999. Most of them joined in the Construction Workers Federation of India (CWF). Some workers received finance assistance for education, marriage and maternity from the welfare boards. We are still continuing our actions for the demands of the informal workers.

