



Creating Alternatives for Child Domestic Workers in Bangladesh

by *Rehana Absar*

Scrubbing dishes. Making endless cups of tea. Sewing garments. Going to bed hours after sunset and waking up long before sunrise. Vulnerable, isolated, and only thirteen years old. This is the life for many of Bangladesh's child domestic workers (CDW), typically ranging from age six to seventeen, who have little or no access to education and recreation time.

The need to protect our children is why Drishtipat has made the decision to partner with Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK) this year to help improve conditions for child domestic workers in Bangladesh, through public education and awareness. These children are in critical need of proper healthcare, education, and legal and social protection. But the question remains of *how* we are to ensure that child domestic workers receive the proper treatment they are entitled to and the fulfilling lives they deserve.

Because many of these children's fates are controlled by their employers and contained within households, much of the abuse that occurs goes by unnoticed, by neighbors, friends, and the parents of these children themselves. Therefore, Drishtipat is determined to break the silence and raise awareness of this serious issue.

Drishtipat's \$10,000 grant reaches 100,000 families through public service announcements, TV talk shows, and school debates. It also expands middle class Bangla schools, and directly supports an additional 500 child domestic workers at the ASK Drop-in Centers. Every \$100 raised trains three families on best practices and directly educates five domestic workers.

Through media outreach, workshops on best practice for employers, and creative education practice on becoming change-makers for Bangladeshi school children, the goal of sensitizing the Bangladeshi community and improving conditions for child domestic workers becomes one more step closer to reality.

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Friends admire an artwork exhibition displaying the children's work at a Drop-in Center

Our children in Bangladesh deserve the right to a proper childhood, where they can learn, play, eat properly, and live a life not subjected to any type of abuse. Through our voice and actions, Drishtipat and ASK hope to inspire and motivate Bangladeshis to stand up for the rights of these child domestic workers. We are all responsible for the well-being of these innocent and deserving children.

Other Featured Stories

An ASK Drop-In Center Volunteer Shares Her Story

“First of all, I was very pleased and relieved to see a group of people working so sincerely and passionately to "humanize" and bring to the forefront children, who as some people rightfully said in our last meeting, generally tend to be invisible in our society.” (Farah)

What I saw/learned:

Seven-eight extremely energetic children start showing up at 3pm onwards. They don't all arrive at the same time. They come between 3-4pm. At least once a week they get workshops on varied issues/areas like history, geography, hygiene, etc. Sometimes the workshops are held out-of-premises (e.g. Shishu Academy, National Museum, etc.). There is a very positive dynamic among the children. There is also a very positive and comfortable interaction between the teacher(s) and kids.

From my observations, what Drishtipat can do to help:

1. Organizing a book, toys and stationeries drive
2. Finding volunteers as the centers are understaffed
3. Help set up potential counseling
4. DP can help mobilize volunteers to help them develop their skills in music,dancing etc., which could result in talent shows that raise money for the centers
5. Organize workshops for teachers
6. Organize workshops for parents

Locations of Drop-in Centers in Bangladesh Dhanmond-19

212, Tangail House
West Dhanmondi-19, Dhaka

Kalabagan

76, Kalabagan (2nd Line)
Kalabagan, Dhaka

Kallyanpur

House: 53/4; Road: 05
Kallyanpur, Mirpur

Kallyanpur-3

372/B Ahmed Nagar
Mirpur-1, Dhaka

Kallyanpur-4

15/Ka, Tolarbag,
Mirpur, Dhaka

Batvilla Apartment

92/93 1st Lane
Kalabagan, Dhaka

If interested in internships or volunteer opportunities, please contact Asif Saleh at asifsaleh@gmail.com.

Breaking the Silence One Blog at a Time: “Unheard Voice” and Drishtipat Writers’ Collective

by Jyoti Rahman

Drishtipat writers have published over two dozen articles this year, covering a wide range of subjects, including the right to life, minority rights in Bangladesh, and women’s rights, which appeared in the May issue of the Daily Star Forum (please refer to next article).

It has also covered economic policy and challenges, the Pilkhana tragedy, and political commentary in the aftermath of December’s parliamentary election, such as Syeed Ahamed’s “Why the Awami League Won.”

“Unheard Voice” (UV) has continued to be the major English language blog in Bangladesh. By their very

nature, blog posts reflect what is currently topical. However, UV posts aim to provide perspectives that are not readily available in the mainstream media.

*“Writing is a struggle
against silence.”*

Carlos Fuentes

In January, blogs mostly reflected the aftermath of the election. In late February and March, the Pilkhana tragedy dominated headlines. There was live coverage, relying on eye witness accounts from Dhaka, simultaneously run from four

continents. Subsequent blogs provided commentary. More recently, we have written about women’s right and secularism.

Drishtipat writers and bloggers have also participated in a number of media events in Bangladesh and abroad in the past few months. Looking ahead, the Writers’ Collective has submitted a number of papers for the BDI Conference at Harvard University in October, while there are plans for a book on progressive politics in Bangladesh.

Things I Won’t Tell My Daughter

by Tazreena Sajjad

As Published in the Daily Star Forum, May 2009

This piece critiques male entitlement and looks to a more equal future.

When it comes to the issue of harassment or abuse, sadly most women have a story.

Unfortunately, there is little that is unique in a narrative of humiliation and suffering; experiences with degradation, whether physical, verbal or emotional, invariably reflect a pattern of those in power taking advantage of those without, of those who are ingrained with the belief that they can, exploiting and manipulating those who are

limited in their ability to protect themselves.

This forum is not for idealising the perfect victim and portraying the perfect perpetrator; neither is it for seeking personal catharsis. If either were the case, beyond capturing the attention of a few with some riveting stories, and possibly being dismissed by others who are bound to think that it has all been said before, this article would do little else.

After all, the realities of women’s second-class citizenship in Bangladesh in the spheres of

education, law, economy, politics, religious practices, and cultural norms, in the public and the private realms, are constant reminders of the power dynamics still at play in society.

Despite my hesitancy in writing a generic article about the biological and social constructions of the masculine and the feminine and the subsequent realities of power inequalities, my decision to write this piece is based on an attempt to reflect a little on the why it is that in the 21st century, more than fifty per cent of the

country's population is impatiently pacing the platform, waiting for the train to equality.

After all, one does not require a degree in women's and feminist studies to recognise that men and women are treated differently in society and by society; and that institutionalised practices of bad behaviour are cloaked in the guise of culture, religious practices, and social norms.



It's a Global Problem

Lest we delude ourselves into believing that the struggles of the Bangladeshi women are unique, whether it involves harassment on the streets, domestic violence at home, dismissal and ridicule at the workplace, consistent marginalisation in most public spheres of power, it is critical to remind ourselves that we are all part of a larger context where gender inequality is the norm, not the deviation.

We continue to live in a world where: of the 1.2 billion people living in poverty, 70% are women; 46% of the girls in the poorest countries have no access to primary education; while women work two-thirds of the

world's working hours and produce half of the world's food, they earn only 10% of the world's income and own less than 1% of the world's property.

While some countries do perform better than others in the gender empowerment index (GEM), gender inequity is more the norm than a deviation. From verbal abuse to sexual violence or homicide, sometimes it is more of a question of degrees in the continuum of ill-treatment rather than its complete absence that informs women's experiences.

Bringing It Back Home

Whenever the question of women's rights is raised, people react defensively and with a three-tiered response. First, what more do you expect from Bangladeshis? Second, we have come so far, look at our schools and the number of women working in the garments industry and look at the women we have in politics, in the economy, and we are doing so much better than (obvious culprits Pakistan, Afghanistan and some impoverished African nations) and you are asking for too much if you want this to be, say, the United States.). Third, you need to be patient, change takes time, you "young people" are too impatient.

Let's Respond

In terms of expectations, it's not just about the numbers. After all, I am not asking for all Bangladeshi women to be rocket scientists as proof of how well the country is doing in terms of gender parity.

And, unfortunately there are no indicators to measure domestic violence, verbal abuse and

systematic corrosion of self-worth through consistent deprecation. Perhaps the question is far more basic — an expectation that women will not be grabbed, prodded, fondled and ogled in public; that their bodies will not be owned, possessed, and abused by their spouses and partners; that they will not be subject to verbal, not just physical, abuse in their homes and in public spaces; that their marital status not be the subject of a tea-party discussion and be the reason why they are denied access to living accommodations; they will not be burnt with acid and/or gang raped because they dared say no to advances, are guilty of flirtatious behaviour, or for the transgressions of a family member; that their character will not be called into question and they will not be asked for sexual favours by friends and colleagues; that to intimidate the minority population, goons will not rape and abuse young women and girls for a few ballots; that the military, police and local militias will not use sexual violence to invoke fear among the indigenous population; that irrespective of age and personal connection, a woman's worth will be evaluated in a professional setting based on her credentials and personality, not on the size of her mammary glands.

Is That Too Much To Ask?

In response to the second question, pointing to the frailties and regression in women's rights in countries that are attempting to recover from over three decades of conflict (Afghanistan), repressive political regimes and military dictatorships overshadowed by consistent border wars (Pakistan), inter-

changeable images of poverty and violence of the amorphous “country,” Africa (never mind that the media still undermines strong women’s movements in places like South Africa and Zimbabwe and Liberia (which has the first woman political leader of the continent), the list goes on) are a cop out.

Admitting underlying gender biases society continues to hold and that is manifest in the law, economy and cultural practices does not take away the thunder of women’s achievements. It is indeed a credit to the women of Bangladesh that despite unequal treatment at home and in public, that despite religious and cultural practices that undermine women’s equal access to property, child custody and inheritance, women (and many men) have continued to push the boundaries of socialised intolerance.

Defensiveness does a disservice to the realities that women face in our country even today by turning a blind eye to the humiliation that comes with inequality; defeated admittance to the fact we cannot fare any better undermines both the potential and the possibilities of the simple truth that men and women can and should do better. It is the only way towards change.



This brings us to the third response. Admittedly, change takes time, and yes, youth and impatience are synonymous.

Change is happening in Bangladesh and is challenging many previously socially held norms and cultural dictates.

But are all changes progressive? Lest we become complicit, for every step that is taken towards women’s emancipation, there is also a counter current of regression. Violence against women has not depreciated over the years despite the numbers of organisations that are working to promote women’s rights and the increasing numbers of women have a keen sense of awareness about their rights.

The hungry eyes that followed my mother in her youth still take every opportunity to leer at me decades later. The reality of women carrying a disproportionate share of responsibility in the event of sexual abuse and harassment still persists; the actors in the discussions and the settings might have changed, but the finger-pointing and the moral judgement placed on the character of the woman precedes the moral condemnation of the crime.

Anyone thinking that this is an argument about what women should wear, wherever they want, here is a sombre reminder: for the vast majority of Bangladeshi women who are molested, abused, raped, and denied equal rights in the courts of law, the fantasy of wearing short skirts and partying in the rich areas of town are a far cry from reality.

We must not ignore the “real” realities of Bangladesh that have little to do with what one wears, and more to do with what the society gives some men license to do: the sexual and physical abuse and murder of under-aged

domestic servants; sexual abuse of minors by members of their own family; the rape of the little flower girls so visible on the Dhaka streets; selling fourteen-year-olds into prostitution rings; the denial of a mother’s right to have custodial rights over her son; marital rape and domestic abuse not just by partners but also by in-laws; the list is brutal and endless.

Personal Reflections

I am not an angry feminist, as some might wish to label me, but merely a befuddled and sometimes bemused one.

I find it odd that in the 21st century, in a world facing so many challenges, we still find time to contemplate the politics of the hijab and bestow virtues on those who wear it and secretly condemn those who do not.

I find it schizophrenic that while the current trend in society is toward gaining an educated and accomplished daughter-in-law as a crowning glory, the standards by which the same family judges their son-in-law and daughter-in-law are vastly different.

I find it intolerable that as mothers, sisters, friends, and colleagues, we perpetuate our own biases and continue to entrench practices that place a higher premium on the brother, husband, son — whom we are more willing to forgive and make excuses for than the women we know.

I find it shameful that, even in educated circles, we reward bad behaviour by unequal distribution of responsibility when it comes to issues of abuse, cheating, or ill treatment.

I find it unacceptable that seemingly educated and progressive-minded women continue to find new ways to consolidate the status quo and impose barriers on their own potential

I find it offensive that a young professional woman will not be treated with the same level of respect as her male counterpart in a circle of educated peers; that while he is coveted for his acumen, she is expected to play the role of a decorative wallflower; that while he is respected for his judgement, she can be at the most indulged with a patronising smile.

I resent the fact that despite all the changes that have swept over Bangladesh, a father and husband's name carries more worth than a woman's own merit.

I find it sad that unless rich women of established families get abused or molested, and unless people like myself write in English to condemn our complicity in questionable social practices, we continue to accept the daily abuse and harassment of the poor and the unprotected in our own cities.

If respect could have only been achieved with education, the world would have long done away with gender inequality at the societal, cultural, and institutional levels. If security and reverence could be achieved either through the burqa and the hijab, women in Afghanistan would not be seeking out self-immolation as the means of escape from domestic and public abuse and the lines for female immigration to countries like Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia would put the queues outside of the US embassy to shame. If

America is idealised by young women who question practices of female indignity in Bangladesh, let's note that every six minutes, a woman is raped and every fifteen seconds a woman is battered and in the United States, where spousal/partner abuse is the leading cause of death amongst pregnant women.

In a vast majority of these cases, the image of "short skirts" and "skimpy" outfits that "invite" trouble, as some of us would like to believe, is truly an illusion.

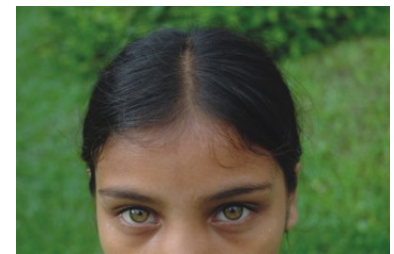
In the real world, women are neither saints nor saviours. They are peacemakers and war-mongers, victims and perpetrators, witnesses and collaborators, rapists and healers, murderers and doctors; educators, criminals, mothers, thieves, somebodies, and nobodies.

Valorising women or demeaning them is an exercise in societal control, creating little opportunity for human fallibilities and strengths. The important thing we forget in the process of socialisation is that women are humans, and, as such, beyond their societal roles, they are fundamental living, breathing, feeling individuals locked in a battle of a predestined status quo that requires them to be less, so that in general, men feel they are more. And while the dance of the sexes is fascinating, complex, and ever-evolving, the grim manifestations of power and its access make the two sides unequal partners.

From Azerbaijan to Afghanistan, Gaza to Jerusalem, Morocco to Bangladesh, from the United States to Central America, from border controls to cultural gatherings, official meetings, to television settings, from mosques

to temples, from the public to the private realms, as a woman, I am no stranger to harassment. It's not even amusing anymore. Frankly speaking, I am bored. I am bored by perceived notions of male superiority, however they are explained. And I am floored by the absurdity of how we continue to buy into practices, norms, and beliefs that undermine our very potential and possibilities as human beings.

I recognise when a society tries to define the boundaries of the "masculine" and the "feminine" what it actually does is define limits and potentials and control the politics of reproduction. When a woman is fondled or ogled, the message is simple: first, you do not belong; second, "I am doing this, because I can." Both stem from a sense of entitlement, an entitlement we have institutionalised, enforced, and reinforced in every single of our private and public interactions. And each day, millions across the globe pay the price.



If I have a daughter, I wonder if I can ever look her in the face and tell her she needs to stand at the back of the line to pray so that men are not distracted by her posterior as they worship their God; that she might have to break her fast during iftar after the men have been served; that she should focus on preening herself

instead of getting dirty in the mud playing football so that Prince Charming doesn't miss the opportunity of rescuing her; that she needs to accept the reality that some male friends and colleagues will ask her for "special" favours because they think they can get away with it; that if her partner verbally abuses her, but does not hit her,

she should accept it, because it's not a big deal that her self-worth is eroded over time; that she believes she cannot do or be something that her potential dictates because women around her tell her she cannot; that she needs to be a little less of herself so that her partner can feel he is just a little bit more, that a man will always try to take advantage

of her, simply because he can; that she may lose her children in a divorce if the court wills because that's the law; that although she may be ready to take on the world, the world may not be ready for her.

Somehow, I don't think I will.

Drishtipat Chapter Updates

Dhaka

Drishtipat Dhaka recently organized a run/walk/bike event, *Ey Poth Amadero*, representing women citizens and social rights in public places.

A concert at Rabindra Sarobar followed the rally. The concert was attended by almost 10,000 people, featuring the band Bangla and artiste Krishnokoli.



It began in Shahbag and ended at the Shahid Minar. The cause drew citizens of different

professions from all corners of Bangladesh.



Chicago

by *Rehana Absar*

Energized, driven, and focused is the only way to describe the **Drishtipat Chicago** chapter as a busy year ensues! With this year's primary focus being on child domestic workers, Drishtipat Chicago is planning new and creative projects and events for the community. The Board, which has welcomed both old and new members, met in early May to coordinate different strategies that will spread Drishtipat's message to a broader set of individuals, groups, and organizations in the Chicagoland area.

The first event held was the *Drishtipat Chicago Mixer*, which took place on Friday, June 5th at Japonais Lounge, from 6-9PM. Individuals were encouraged to attend and relax near the Chicago River, and meet others who were interested in learning about current events and projects that are raising awareness for child domestic workers in Bangladesh. It provides a great social benefit for those wanting to meet other advocates for Bangladeshi human rights.

The following Sunday, on June 7th, Drishtipat Chicago is holding a *Shishu Mela* event at the Morton

Grove Park District, where children are asked to come and enjoy a fun-filled day of Bangladeshi games. Activities include, but are not limited to, art, badminton, and *bou shaja/sharee pora*! In addition to fun and games, children and family members will receive an educational benefit in learning about the difficult ways of life for Bangladeshi child domestic workers, and what they can do to help. Optional contributions will go towards issues concerning children's rights, education, and public awareness in Bangladesh.

Hopeful future plans for Drishtipat Chicago includes an art auction to be held later this year. As 2009 continues, so does

Drishtipat Chicago's tremendous efforts and hard work. The Chicago Board looks forward to working with old and new

volunteers this year, as well as with its fellow Drishtipat counterparts around the world.

New York

by Ben Plantan

Drishtipat New York held a 2009 kick-off event on March 26th, in addition to a candlelight vigil on February 28th for the victims of the BDR Mutiny.



In Toronto, individuals also congregated, to honor the fallen from the BDR mutiny on Feb 25 2009.

The Vigil for Victims of the BDR Mutiny was held in front of Columbia University's main

library with attendees, Columbia's Club Bangla, and other friends. There were several readings, and attendees sang to "Amar shonar Bangla." Dinner followed afterwards.

Not long after, Drishtipat New York's *Independence Day event* took place on March 26th at Wetbar at The W Hotel. In the spirit of the "re-launch" of the Drishtipat brand in New York, a small event was put together, where individuals were asked to wear red and green, and make a small donation at the door. "Shadheen" buttons were handed out as a favor.

The Independence Day event sought to achieve keeping the Drishtipat name alive within the

New York community, especially among the younger crowd so that it would be easier to approach people for any large scale event that occurs in the future. Furthermore, upcoming causes and campaigns were showcased at this event, and fliers were created to provoke discussion.

Future events include an upcoming presentation on Bangladesh's climate change at the upcoming FOBANA conference in Houston over the Fourth of July weekend.

Canada

by Tania Hassan and Sumaiya Sharmeen

Since the tremendous success of Drishtipat Global's "Arnob and Friends – A World Tour Concert for Human Rights" fundraising initiative, Drishtipat Canada embarked on several opportunities in taking a stance in rights' issues affecting Bangladeshi people and the home country.



On December 7, 2008, Drishtipat Canada endorsed the "Global Rally Against Global Warming" day event with the Toronto Climate Campaign (TCC) organisers.

With the largest brunt of climate catastrophe forecasts in countries such as Bangladesh, who neither has the proper infrastructure or capability to protect itself from increasing speed of land deterioration – Drishtipat Canada feels it necessary to increase awareness to the local Bangladeshis and other South

Asians of the significance and immediacy of climate change related advocacies and alliances.

Chapter members were successful in mobilising the local youth and 11 other Bangladeshi community groups to endorse this event. Dedicated volunteers came out in the -20C weather to show support in this cause, and created banners and placards to march in solidarity with other environmentalists in the city of Toronto.

On February 28, 2009, after the horrific news of the BDR mutiny,

Drishtipat Canada once again sent out a message of solidarity within its community and congregated in a moment of silence and prayer to remember the fallen lives and their families. Candles were lit and stories were shared to commemorate the lost.

Drishtipat Canada's most recent initiative involved the current

times of economic recession and its impact on migrant communities, with particular focus on Bangladeshis in Canada.

A seminar was organised on April 30th, 2009 with panelists including: Professor David McNally (Marxist Scholar), Uzma Shakir (Journalist, Researcher and Immigrant Rights' Advocate) and

Syed Hussan (Migrants' Rights' Activist). Speakers highlighted the ways in which the current economic crisis in the West affects the local working class and immigrant communities and in turn the economy back home.

London

by *Sawsan Eskander*

Drishtipat London witnessed a very busy period in the last half of 2008, during which the creative wing played an active role. In 2009, the chapter will mostly focus on two projects, child domestic worker (CDW) and climate change (CC).

Recent work includes a musical concert organized as part of the *Unheard Voices World Tour* project. A cheerful audience clapped away merrily as Arnob, a popular Bangladeshi musician, sang many of his famous numbers with his band. The concert included splendid performances by some talented local artists who helped in making the show a success. We had a full-house!

Six Seasons, a production performed by Drishtipat Creative, depicted celebration of the dramatic change in seasons of Bengal that is found in the compositions of its greatest poets – Tagore, Nazrul and Jibonananda. It was a unique production that brought together

varied styles of music, dance and recitation. We spotted a few famous artists amongst the audience.

Jomila'r Laal Phita, a production by Drishtipat Creative was performed as part of a Tagore Festival in London. This piece, which uses traditional forms of music, dance and poetry, was inspired by the struggling life of Suraiya, a garments worker in Bangladesh. An emotionally charged dance drama, intended to address a crucial political issue, received inspiring reviews from the audience and guests.

As part of its awareness building campaign of climate change effects in Bangladesh, the chapter launched a portal site to monitor the effects and lobby for effective change <http://isanybodylistening.info/>. Drishtipat London has formed a UK Bangla Climate Coalition Campaign, which includes all the leading NGOs working on the same issue.

The coalition produced a document on the framework for managing the adaptation fund for Bangladesh, which was presented to the UK's Department for International Development (DFID).

An initial orientation meeting with new members was held in May this year where Drishtipat London introduced the two projects, CDW and CC. The chapter will be liaising with other Drishtipat chapters to work on the CDW project. The CC project will continue to raise awareness within the international community.

We look forward to a very productive year with our new members on board, who have come in with fresh energy and enthusiastic minds. Our goal is to make sufficient progress with CDW and CC projects as well as contribute towards any Drishtipat global initiative that may be undertaken this year.

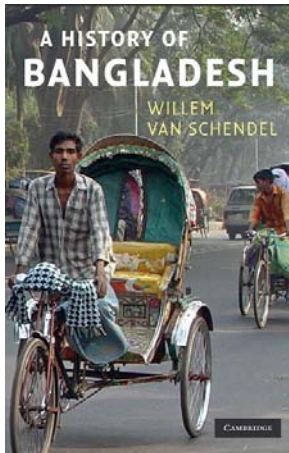
Australia

by Bina D'Costa

The activities of **Drishtipat Australia** stalled in early 2008 and most recent activities have been mainly through independent writings by members; seminars; and awareness raising activities on voluntary work and human rights.

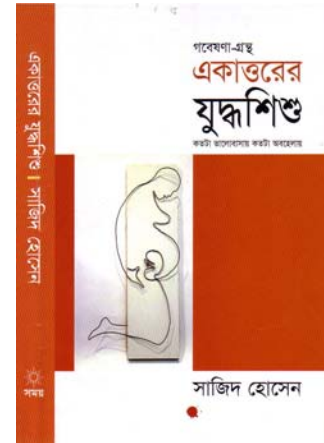
Maj-General Moniruzamman from the BIPS (Bangladesh Institute of Peace Studies) visited Canberra in August, 2008. An open discussion forum was held at the Australian National University where he discussed various issues of security and conflicts in Bangladesh. The event was attended by both scholars and practitioners interested in South Asian politics.

Prof Willem Van Schendel had a discussion with Drishtipat members on his recent book, *A History of Bangladesh*, in May, 2009. He mentioned that the book is written primarily for the Western audience who may not be very familiar with Bangladesh beyond its gloomy encounters with natural disasters and poverty.



He suggests that what we now know as Bangladesh is more than just the history of a nation-state in terms of its borders and boundaries. The 'vibrant and colorful past', the "geological history of the delta" and colonial rule has shaped the narrative of Bangladesh. This book is also accompanied by rare images of various communities of Bangladesh.

This year, Drishtipat Australia will hold a book club discussion on 2 June (in Canberra) and 6 June (in Sydney) on Sajjid Hussein's, *Ekatturer Judhyo Shishu*.



Supriyo Sen's *Abar Ashibo Phirey* will be shown on 27 June, 2009. This will be followed by a short discussion on partition and migration by a panel from both India and Bangladesh. For more details please keep an eye on the Drishtipat Australia website.

Drishtipat Australia is planning a major fundraising event in October, 2009 that will include several performers from Bangladesh. The primary objective of this program is to attract new members. Also, the funds will be used to support the Child Domestic Workers program of Drishtipat.

Drishtipat Australia looks forward to 2009 as year in which to expand the membership base and to extend its activities.

Drishtipat

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hear, speak out and help

We're on the Web!

<http://www.drishtipat.org/>

Drishtipat is a non-profit, non-partisan volunteer organization committed to safeguarding human rights in Bangladesh through action-oriented projects that provide direct assistance to those individuals whose voices remain unheard today.

Drishtipat Mission

The mission of Drishtipat is to empower and enable the underprivileged and the marginalized segment of the society and individuals living in social and economic poverty so that they can exercise their most basic human rights with dignity, opportunity and hope.

We do this by working with local, national and international partners in three core areas:

Economic and ecological development - We combat poverty and injustice by encouraging self sustainable opportunities for individuals and

their communities through young social entrepreneurs.

Advocacy and policy research- We mobilize the younger segment of society and collectively serve as advocates for the poor and the discriminated and launch awareness campaigns and educational projects to help leaders make informed decisions that eradicate poverty, injustice and discrimination. We assess and develop action plans in areas of concern that need activism for protection of the affected or improvement of the quality of life. Areas of advocacy and action include natural disasters, violation of human rights, cultural

freedom, right to civil liberties, access to justice against crimes against a group of people or individuals by any agency, poverty, environment or any form of violation of foundational and contingent human rights.

Volunteering and community philanthropy - We transform values and amplify the practice of community giving by promoting self help and philanthropy to create positive social change within Bangladesh and its Diaspora community.