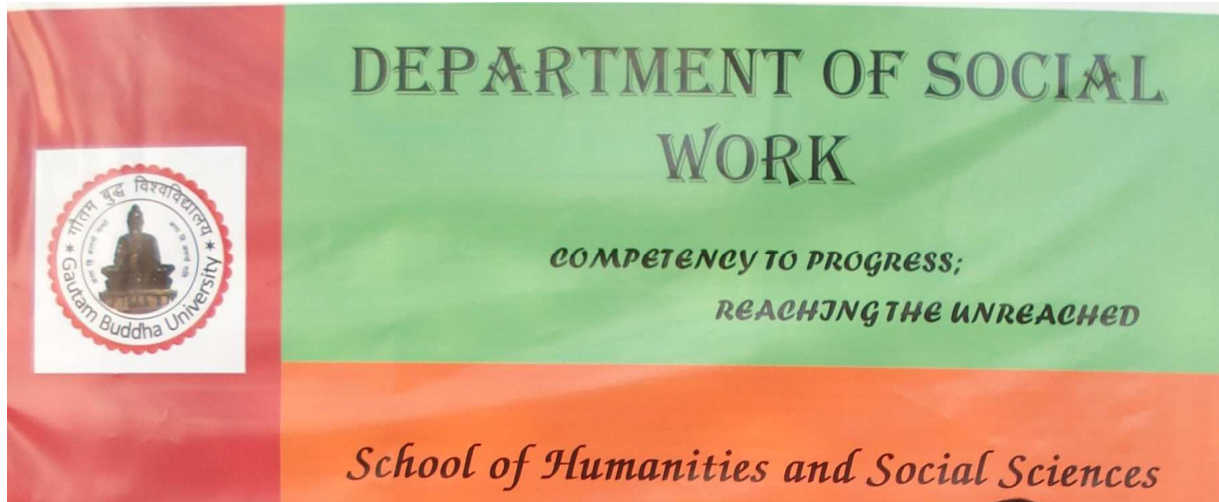


Department Encourages Self Help Groups and Small Cottage Industries

On the occasion of GBU's School of Engineering and Information, Communication & Technology's Annual Festival named 'I-TEC 2012', the Department of Social Work organised '*Paramita*' on 17th & 18th March, 2012. *Paramita* in Sanskrit



means *to cross over to the other shore*. The term was used as a metaphor for those women or artisans who belong to the lower strata of the society and have miniscule reach to resources for their basic living. Through social work intervention like with the help of Self-Help Groups (SHGs), they are empowered and enabled to create and produce products which can be sold and can become a source of income for their family and contribute to the economy in general. As cross country studies explain and reflect that microfinance slashed poverty through increasing income levels, and increased health care, children's education and nutrition and women's empowerment. A study by NABARD asserts that SHG memberships showed the average value of assets increased by 72 per cent and the average net income increased per household by about 33 per cent. Such commendable efforts lead to a silent revolution in improving the quality of life of the vast multitude mired in abject poverty.

SHGs are formed and supported usually by NGOs or increasingly by government agencies. Therefore, the Department of Social Work wants to be a medium for these NGOs to showcase their products for the following reasons:

- ❖ Those associated with GBU may gain awareness of the products being made by rural women/artisans and the richness it carries in terms of our traditions, local resources, labour and heritage among others.

- ❖ Students especially can be made aware of the Self-Help Groups and the kind of contribution it has made on the lives of millions of women, local artisans and their households and the empowerment it has brought about through its drive.
- ❖ This exercise may also be advantageous to the Department of Social Work, where further collaborative efforts can be made with these organizations for placement of students in field work (which is a mandate of the course) or beyond in the future.
- ❖ Collaboration with external agencies may also bring more awareness of the University among the NGOs and organizations working in the field of social development in the area.

The Department invited three NGOs which work towards women and artisan empowerment through SHGs and vocational training and facilitates in the marketing of the products made by the women artisans (like handicrafts, garments, bags, designer candles, pots and so on). The details of the organisations are as follows:

Tara Projects has been working since the early 1970s to fight exploitation, poverty, and the protection of rights of artisans against social injustices. Over the years, they have extended their services to reach nearly 1,000 artisans in several states in India. The department also visited the organisation as part of the fieldwork exposure visit for the social work students.

Sadrag works in the area of child rights and economic empowerment of migrant women. Registered in the year 2004, it is presently working in Noida, Ghaziabad and Delhi regions. The department also visited the organisation as part of the fieldwork exposure visit for the social work students. Sadrag has also provided support to the department by providing field work opportunity to the students of social work during their first semester.

Cheshire Homes for overall development and rights of Persons with disabilities in over 55 countries of world. The vision behind organisation is to develop a one-stop shop for all the livelihood needs for persons with disability. This centre aims to work and support self employment to disabled people among others. The department made an exposure visit at the Cheshire Homes office for its students.