

## **Village/ Community level meetings at district – Cooch Behar**

We mentioned in our previous reports that in Cooch Behar two community based organizations were formed with the help of MASUM. These organizations are —Amra Chitmoholbasi and —Amra Simantabasi. —Amra Chitmoholbasi is looking after the human rights violation issues raised in erstwhile Bangladeshi enclaves situated in Cooch Behar district. —Amra Simantabasi is looking after the human rights violation issues in Indo- Bangladesh bordering villages situated in Cooch Behar district. On 04.07.2018 —Amra Simantabasi organized one village level meeting at village – Haridas Khamar situated under Dinhata Police Station, Cooch Behar district. Geographically this village is situated adjacent to Indo- Bangladesh fence. On that meeting the villagers of said village opened up their grievances against Border Security Force personnel of Natkobari Border Out Post. They explained how their livelihood rights are violated by those BSF personnel. On that meeting volunteer of MASUM narrated how they can take steps against this violation and also assured them to legal assistance to them. On 5-8th July —Amra Chitmoholbasi organized 4 village level meetings in four different erstwhile Bangladeshi enclaves namely Karola-I, Shibaprasad Mustafi, Batrigach and Kachua respectively. In these meetings the erstwhile enclave dwellers of respective erstwhile enclaves participated and shared their present condition. They complained that how they are victimized to get the social security services in all aspects. Volunteer of MASUM was present in every meeting and planned with them about the future course of action. On 15th July 2018, volunteers of MASUM were present at an interactive meeting with villagers of Khitaber Kuthi. The meeting was organized by newly formed community based organization named "Amra Simantabasi". On that meeting the villagers narrated on illegitimate restrictions by BSF personnel posted at the area. Most of the villagers have agrarian land at the other side of the fence. Meetings were

organized at Purba Moshaldanga and Batrigach erstwhile enclaves by "Amra Chitmoholbasi". On that meeting the erstwhile enclave dwellers have spoken about their disappointment on governmental apathies toward erstwhile enclave dwellers. On 16th July volunteers of MASUM attend 3 meetings organized by "Amra Simantabasi" at villages- Gitaldaha and Karala respectively. Two meetings were conducted at village Gitaldaha. In first meeting the attendees were the fishermen. They express their concern on the restriction in fishing by the BSF personnel. Volunteers of MASUM discussed about their rights and what are the way outs to fight on this continuous infringement on livelihood options. Second meeting was conducted with the PRI members of Gitaldaha Panchayet. The topic of the meeting was torture and other human rights violation s at bordering areas. The next meeting was organized by "Amra Simantabasi". The meeting was held at Karola village. Here also the villagers discussed about their plights and subjugation due to presence of Border Security Force personnel.

On 17th July volunteers of MASUM attended two meetings with villagers of Putia Baromasia and Gitaldaha Maricha respectively. Both these villages are situated close to the Indo - Bangladesh border. Villagers narrated their problems regarding restriction by Border security Force personnel. After that volunteers of MASUM attended another interactive meeting with the erstwhile enclave dwellers of Nalgram, Falnapur and Jongra. This meeting was organized by "Amra Chitmahalbasi". On that meeting erstwhile enclave dwellers narrated their difficulties. At the end of the meeting, MASUM invited them to come and join at civic discourse in Rabindrabhavan, Cooch Behar on 20th August 2018. On 18th July volunteers of MASUM present at 4 meetings with erstwhile enclave dwellers and 1 meeting with bordering populace. The meetings were held at Haldibari rehabilitation camp, Dhabalsuti Mrigipur No-13 and 15, Panbari erstwhile enclaves and No. 13 Bagdogra Dangarhat Kuchlibari.

