

*Paincha in Adivasia (Sadri) is the bamboo string in the bow that catapults the arrow to its target.*

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 45 each, Children Group (CG) and Child protection committee (CPC) meetings were held during these three months.
- A camp for issuance of Birth certificate and Ration card was held in Narayanpur T.E. Sonitpur.
- Women's forum from five districts of Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Charaideo, Sivasagar and Sonitpur have registered two cases each in police station on trafficking.
- Orientation on low cost, nutritious food and kitchen hygiene management held for the women and adolescent girls of Lokhra, Adabari, Harchora, Sapoi, Hoograjuli, Dibrudarrang and Dherai tea estates in Sonitpur District.
- Adivasi youths performed streets plays on social issues such as alcoholisms, trafficking and education related issues in Thinkhuria, Dibrudarrang, Narayanpur, Dhekiajuli and Dherai tea estates in Sonitpur District.
- The Child Protection Committee of Dhekiajuli approached the SDO and lodged complain on the problem of electricity connection.

### ACHIEVEMENTS

- The child Protection Committee of Dhekiajuli rescued a minor girl Aarti Das from getting married.
- In Dhekiajuli the ration supply agents were collecting Rs. 200 each from new applicant of the new Cash for Food system in Dhekiajuli block and especially in the tea plantations. The reason stated was that the applicants did not have the proper documents to get the ration. After the matter came to the notice of the women's forum of the area, they complained to the Director of Food, Civil supplies and Consumer Affairs Department, Sonitpur, and after few days the agents gave back the money to the people from whom they collected money.
- 14 super structure and 7 tanks toilets were constructed in Narayanpur, Krantiline in Dhekiajuli Block.

### WOMEN'S FORUM'S HELPING HAND TO A PATIENT



Sujata Kandulna

Sujata Kandulna (16) daughter of Biru Kandulna and Cicilia Kandulna of Tarajuli T.E. of Sonitpur district was suffering from osteoporosis (a disease in which the density and quality of bone are reduced). She was admitted to Tezpur Medical College (TMC) for treatment. But to their horror, the doctors asked the family to arrange a sum of Rs. 2 lakhs for her treatment. She was even threatened to vacate the bed she occupied if the family could not pay the hefty sum. Since the family comes from a financially poorer background, it was a nightmare to arrange the fund for Sujata's treatment. It was under such circumstances, Sujata's parents approached the women's forum of Sonitpur with the expectation that they could find some ways to gather support for Sujata's treatment. The members of the women's forum studied the family's situation and decided to help them.

Taking the issue of Sujata's family the women's forum approached the Deputy Commissioner, Sonitpur requesting him to give concession for Sujata's treatment. The DC acted promptly and forwarded a letter to TMC Superintendent. Upon receipt of the letter, the Superintendent checked her details of

treatment, the X ray personally. He even rebuked the doctor who had demanded the large sum for the treatment to which he defended saying that the patient needs to be operated and so they were asked to arrange the money. But again, the doctor refused to operate the patient fearing something might go wrong and he would be held accountable and referred the case to Guwahati Medical College (GMC). At this the members of the women's forum became angry and there was a heated exchange of words with the doctor and the superintendent. If the doctor knew he could not operate, how dare he demanded the money, the women questioned and why is he given the post if he is incapable of doing his job.

However, later Sujata was taken to GMC. Her leg had to be amputated as that was the only option.

## RESCUED FROM CHILD LABOUR

Reshma Toppo is a 14 year old girl from Dhekiajuli T.E 5 no line. She has her father and a brother her mother expired when she was 4 year old. For a family with two children and no mother it was really unmanageable for Reshma's father to arrange the basic necessities for his children like daily food, education, clothes etc. Watching the pain and suffering of her father, Reshma decided to leave schooling and get engaged in work to support her brother so that he could continue his studies.



Reshma Toppo who was rescued from child labour

As days passed by, Reshma came in contact with a agent who was in fact her relative. Later she was taken to Guwahati and was given as a domestic helper in one of the house in Beltola.

Later the members from the Children Group and the Child Protection committee realized the absence of Reshma and began to enquire about her. Knowing the incident, the NGO worker and CG groups approached to her father and oriented him on the rights of the children. Eventually she was rescued from the

clutch of child labour and is re-united with her family and friends. She again enrolled her schooling from January, 2017, as a student of 9<sup>th</sup> standard.

*"I feel like I am a free girl and enjoy playing with my friends. I would like to continue my studies which will help me to achieve my goal"* – Reshma.

## COMMUNITY MEETING IN NARAYANPUR

A community meeting was held in Narayapur T.E on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2016. Around 70 women participated in the meeting. Freelance journalist Sarita Santoshini too was present as she was writing articles on endMMNow. Arpana Choudhury (Justice Program Associate, Nazdeek) and Bideswar Ganju (Field Mobilizer) and Basanti Topno (Community Para legal coordinator) facilitated the meeting. Basanti gave a brief on the entitlements for pregnant women. She gave speech on health and told about the schemes and facilities available for pregnant women. She also touched upon the issues that surround home delivery. She spoke about pregnant women working in tea plantations usually falling prey to anemia and the necessity to take IFA tablets and vitamins to curb the problem and advised them the urgency of low cost nutritious food and suggested all women to eat green vegetables and to manage kitchen garden in their homes. She then spoke about Mamoni and Majoni



Basanti Topno along with Arpana Choudhury facilitating the meeting.

schemes, free ambulance services, blood bank in Dhekiajuli CHC, free tests and the new cash for food system.

After the meeting some of the pregnant women approached them to ask questions and narrated violations that they faced. They identified three cases in the meeting, of which one was the woman's fault and not the health facility. Although she had received the money for Mamoni and JSY, she had not opened a bank account to an cash the cheque she had received. The two other cases were of Sabrina Munda who had not received her JSY cash entitlement and did not have a bank account and Omina murmur who had neither received Mamoni nor JSY benefits. These are the few problems often seen among the pregnant women.

### ROAD BLOCKADE DEMONSTRATED BY THE WOMEN FORUM

On 27<sup>th</sup> November the women from Hatiputi, Letukujan and Letukujan New Line along with the local people staged a road blocked at Titabor (connecting Mariani) for two hours. Around two hundred women protesters were present. More than a month had passed since complaint was lodged and the protest was against the inaction of the Forest Department on the



Road Blockade demonstrated by women forum.

menace of marauding wild elephants. The wild elephants often destroyed houses and damaged household properties. A minor child was also killed. The people were unable to sleep at night. The forest

guards who occasionally came on duty were often found drinking liquor and sleeping in others houses. Besides the number of forest guards deputed on duty were less and they were unable to chase away the elephants who came in large numbers.

The SDO met the protesters and assured them of all help. The people also demanded electrification of their Lines and the SDO assured them that she would take up the matter with the management of the tea garden. The next day three trucks, full of forest personnel arrived at the village, raided the house where liquor was being sold and took away the utensils.

### TUSSLE BETWEEN WOMEN AND TEA GARDEN UNIT TRADE UNION SECRETARY

On 12 November 2016 the members of the women's forum of Hatipoty T.E. in Jorhat district planned to meet the manager with their complaints regarding renovation of toilets and other issues of tea garden. While they were proceeding towards Manager's office, the unit secretary of the trade union of the garden Rakesh Munda stopped them. He asked them why they should directly meet the manager without consulting him. However, the women had informed him about the problem but he had not acted on it. And thus, argument between the women and Rakesh started. He, out of anger, caught hold of one woman and tried to assault her. While this was happening other women came running to rescue her. Seeing this he fled the scene. The women then went to the manager and expressed their problems. The manager assured them that the toilets would be repaired and their other demands would be met. After that they went to the Secretary Rakesh Munda house to question why he tried to assault the woman. In this regard the women had called for a meeting the next day and they asked the secretary to attend in it. But on the same night the secretary went to the house of the victim and apologised for his mistake. In the meeting on the next day, the women heard his plea and let him go with a warning to not do such acts and alerted the others to be aware of such instances.

## WOMEN FORUM OF BHALABASTI CAME IN AID TO RESCUE ASRIN BILUNG

Trafficking is a serious issue. Bhalabasti in Lakhimpur district situated at a distance of 15 km from the district headquarter is one village from where large number of girls have gone missing. Local agents are active in the village who take advantage of their poverty and other family problems, lure the girls and send them to Arunachal Pradesh to work as domestic help. In return they receive Rs. 1000 per person.

Asrin Billung was sent to Kimin in Arunachal Pradesh when she was 13 years of age by a local agent named Raju Nayak. After five years, she wanted to return home but the owner would not let her return. Asrin spoke to her father and said she wanted to come back home. Asrin's father then approached Raju Nayak and asked him to bring his daughter back but to his surprise Raju beat him up. Asrin's father then approached the women's forum of Bhalabasti and explained the incidents to them in detail. Taking the case the members of the women's forum convened a meeting in which Raju was also invited. They asked him to bring Asrin back safely home or else the forum would file an FIR. In three days Raju brought Asrin back and handed her to her family. Now Asrin remains with her sister in Koilamari T.E happily. "If the women's forum had not intervened, I could have been one

missing like many other girls" Asrin said to the women when she reached home.

## ACTIVITIES

- **Formation of unit committees** : 15 village committees and 4 regional committees of the women forum were formed in the districts of Sonitpur, Dibrugarh, Lakhimpur, Jorhat and Charaideo.
- **Awareness program on trafficking** : All total around 95 women participated on these programs. In the program the women shared and discuss that, due to poverty, ignorance of the parents, lack of education, large family members are the reasons of trafficking. Different mechanism were also discussed to tackle the issue like sensitizing the community, strengthening the women forum and network with the agencies who deal with the trafficking issue. These were conducted in the district of Sonitpur, Lakhimpur and Charaideo.
- **Leadership training** : Leadership training was conducted in the districts of Sonitpur, Dibrugarh and Charaideo. The goal of the training was to motivate the women to take up leadership of the forum and importance of women leaders. There were around 170 women participants.



Children Group from Dibrudarrang  
having a group study.



Women from Bandarmari having their  
Unit Meeting.