

District Consultation- Jhargram, West Bengal

Organized by: HRLN, KOLKATA

In collaboration with: Paschim banga Lodha Sabar Samaj

Date: 22.02.2020

Venue: Hotel White House, Jhargram



Jharna Achariya the activist of HRLN of Jhargram conducted a District Meeting on 22.02.2020 in collaboration with Paschim Banga Lodha Sabar Samaj. 50 participants from Lodha Sabar tribes took part in this meeting. The participants came from Binpur-1, Binpur-2, Jamboni, Salboni Blocks. Some of them came

from the nearest district West Medinipur.

JHARGRAM is a newly formed district covers with an area of 3,037 sq. K.m. has a population of 1,136,458 where 96.52% live in rural area. The SC population are 20.11% and the ST population are 28.37% in this district.

Lodha Sabars are the most Vulnerable tribes have been in the focus due to massive work by Mahasweta Devi a renowned social worker and novelist in West Bengal. They were described as criminal tribe by the British who traditionally dependent upon the forest for a simple living. They are completely branded as uprooted tribe with their titles are Nayek, Mallick, Digar, Sardar, Bhokta, Kotal, Dandapat, Bhunya etc. Kolkata University and Vidyasagar University have done experimental studies on the development scenario of the Lodha Sabar tribes who were declared as a Primitive Tribal Group (PTG) by the Government of India.



At 11a.m. the programme was started with the welcome address by Jharna Achariya. She introduced HRLN and its previous activities done in the JANGAL MAHAL. She also told that HRLN gave judiciary helps to the village students to continue their study when West Bengal Government decided to use the schools as the camp of joint force during the time of GREEN HUNT. She also described the activities of HRLN to get the justice.



Mrinal Kotal the President of West Bengal Lodha Sabar Samaj focused on the atrocities on the Lodha Sabar tribes by other communities. He told that, Lodha Sabar community have been suffering from social exclusion for a long time. They are treated as criminal and always blamed with abusive language. Frequently they have to face the police harassment on stealing cases. They are bitten up by the upper caste when they use the common road to go market. Upper caste people grabbed their land forcefully and bound them leave the place. Ladha Sabar is not so strong and united tribe to raise their voice against the atrocity over them.

Mr. Mrinal Kotal said that the SC ST (Prevention of Atrocity) Act. could be the safe guard of the community to give them justice. He told that the act is very strong and effective for the SC and ST.

Jharna Achariya emphasised on the formation of GRAM SABHA suggested in the Forest Rights Act. 2006. She told that rights of the forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers include the responsibilities and authority for sustainable use, conservation of biodiversity and maintenance of ecological balance. It thereby strengthening the conservation management of the forests while make sure livelihood and food security of the forest dwellings Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers.

Gram Sabah the most powerful body is given the rights of designing, planning and governing of the notified forest area. She said that the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers are the actual LAND HOLDERS are given power to make any decision for their development in Forest Rights Act- 2006.



It was an open discussion took place after the session. So many participants raised questions they have been facing for long days as follows:

- ❖ Lodha Sabars are poorest of the poor tribe but they don't have ANTADAYA ration card.
- ❖ They applied for the PATTA of the land but it has rejected
- ❖ People from other community are forcefully grabbing their land they in possession for long time.
- ❖ There is no rehabilitation scheme when West Bengal Government acquired the forest land displaced the Lodha Sabar from their forest villages.
- ❖ So many villages in habitats with Lodha Sabars are excluded from the developmental programme taken by West Bengal Government in Binpur-2 (LALGARH) Block.
- ❖ Those who born after 2012 don't have Ration Card in Jamboni Block.
- ❖ Bamboos are the community product of the forest villages. It meets the minimum earning of the tribal of the forest villages. But the Forest Department has not been allowing the forest dwellers to collect bamboos.

Redressal Mechanism:

- ❖ HRLN is requested for a mass hearing about the rejection of application for the PATTA by the forest villagers.
- ❖ Survey to be done on "Food Security Scheme" with the help of Right to Food and Work-West Bengal.
- ❖ Deputation to be done to the BLRO and DM for giving the PATTA of the forest dwellers.
- ❖ HRLN is requested for legal aids in every aspect.

Jharna Achariya the activist of HRLN, Jhargram district gave vote of thanks to the resource persons and the participants came from different blocks. The meeting ended with taking food together.