

VILLAGE LEVEL MEETING

Organized by: Ri-Bhoi Area Welfare Association (R.A.W.A.)

In Collaboration with Meghalaya People's Rights Forum

Venue: Marmaiñ Village

Date: 28th July, 2011

A REPORT

A team from Ri-Bhoi Area Welfare Association (R.A.W.A.) under the leadership of Mr. O. B. Ranee, the President of the organization and in collaboration with Meghalaya People's Rights Forum has conducted a one day Village Level Meeting on the 28th July, 2011 at Marmaiñ Community Hall, Marmaiñ village. The programme began at 11:30 AM. There were 31 members including village leaders, Self Help Groups and women representatives from Marmaiñ and Khulia vilages who attended this meeting.

The meeting began with a welcome speech from Mr. Michael Ronghang, the Local headman of Khulia village who was the chairperson for the day's meeting. Followed was a briefing on the objective of the meeting by Mr. O. B. Ranee, the President of Ri-Bhoi Area Welfare Association. He highlighted the importance of RTI, RTF, RTL and PDS. He also presented a brief report of the previous survey that was conducted by the organization in the previous years within Ri-Bhoi District. He also shared the advantages and the disadvantages of the survey that was conducted.

As per previous report, in Ri-Bhoi District, of 5 villages, only 25 cards were distributed to BPL, 8 cards to AAY and APL – Nil. This survey, he said it did not provide the accurate data. However, report has already been forwarded to the forum for further action. Therefore, many of the beneficiaries are out of the list which creates a lot of problems for them. Mr. Ranee also mentioned that many people have been neglected from Right to Food (RTF) and that is why the organization has taken this step to move forward and reach-out to those people who really need so they can raise their voice in order to enjoy their given Rights. He appeal to all the participants present in the meeting to take the initiative and share their needs, problems, challenges, suggestions or any other information with the organization so that further steps should be taken with the support of the Forum.

Ms. Alvareen Shangpliang, Coordinator, IGNOU, RAWA also shared something on the key point that were discussed during the Forum meeting that was previously held in Shillong.

Followed were the individuals' sharing on the needs and problems of the people in regards to Public Distribution System (PDS)

Mr. Owen Terang, the Headmaster of the Government L. P. School - "Ration cards have been taken back by the government after distributing them for re-verification. Thereafter, the beneficiaries never got them back and they were neglected from getting ration".

"There's a severe corruption when it comes to Mid-day Meal also as it doesn't regularly come as expected".

Mr. Owen Terang also added that he had a word with the Inspector of food supply with regards to Flour. The answer he got from the Inspector was "the village leaders, if they want to get flour for their people, they have to go and fetch themselves from Khanapara". The reason he told was that they don't supply flour to Ri-Bhoi district because many of the people in Ri-Bhoi doesn't like flour it seems.

Mr Jileng Klein said that those people who doesn't have the ration cards are the main victims because they fall under the AAY and BPL categories, yet they are unable to get ration but those people who are less deserve are more benefited than the deserve ones. Follow-up has been done by the village leaders to enquire the concerned department about the cards but still they got no proper response.

Mr. Diren Klein who is one of the retailers of Sub-villa Marmaiñ who present in the meeting also shared his views and problems that he faced as a dealer:

- Goods received from Food supply were not at all weighing, but at the time of distribution to beneficiaries, he has to weigh properly. In this regard, he faces great loss.
- For transportation, he said dealers have to bear the expenses from their own pocket. (Even though the government has sanctioned specifically for transportation as per the Report submitted by the Government to the Forum).
- Many of the people do not have the ration cards, so as per Food Supply Officer; the retailer was advised to simply distribute the goods as per the list provided by supply office without ration cards.

Impact of the meeting:

- The village leaders were very much impressed with the strong responsibility taken by the Forum to follow up with the Government on this issue so as to help the people who were neglected from their Rights.

Conclusion:

The meeting was summed up at 2:30 P.M. and the response that the organization received from the people of those areas were positive, the village leaders requested the organization to make a frequent visit to their areas so that they can share their new experiences and discuss further issues.



Mr. Michael Ronghang, Headman of Khulia
speech
Village delivered an introductory speech

Mr. O. B. President of RAWA during his
on PRF



Interaction Session on PRF
Govt. L. P.
problems



Mr. Owen Terang, Headmaster of
School share his experiences, needs &



Village Leaders and volunteers from RAWA during group photo

