

Pokhili Munda dares to fight

Pokhili Munda, poor widow lives with her three young children in the village called *Siloni*. She lost her husband in 2002. He died of tuberculosis at the age of 35. Husband's death brought several problems to Pokhili and her children. Though life looked bleak she did not lose her faith. She could manage the family as her husband had left behind some agricultural land (*Myadi Patta*). They could survive without any major problem as the small piece of land could meet their needs until a person called Md. Abbas Ali wanted to appropriate Pokhili's land. Md. Abbas Ali comes from a nearby village called *Khonamukh*. He tried to encroach and claim ownership to the land by submitting fake and concocted document to the concern department. He also started harassing Pokhili and threatened her to hurt her mentally and physically. Though she was harassed and had to handle a lot of pressure, she did not submit her to the tick tats of Abbas. She gave a petition to Circle Office case no 3/05/06 dated 05/06/06. Circle Officer also responded the case and submitted a report to the Deputy Commissioner of the Sonitpur District on the same date but till recently no action was taken.

Since many years passed, she started feeling that she was left without any support and decided to leave the issue in to the hands of God. At this juncture she came to know about DBSS especially the PNJSS – a people's organisation led largely by women at Rangajan Cluster. Rangajan cluster of DBSS, North East India is 40 km away from DBSS office situated in the district of Sonitpur, Balipara Development Block, Rangajan GP in the state of Assam. Inhabitants of Rangajan Gram Panchayats are mostly Muslim 52%, Adivasi 25%, Nepali 10%, Bengali 8% and others 5%. Though the area apparently looks peaceful, it is in no way different from other places in the country which are habitually oppressive and atrocities are carried out against women, tribals and dalits everyday. Those who are in majority take advantage of their numerical strength and use it over the meek and weak. This is what is evident in Pokhili's case too.

So when Pokhili approached one of the community enablers of DBSS and Secretary of PNJSS in May 2008, they could understand the seriousness of the problem and

immediately discussed and collected data to confirm the situation. After collecting all the necessary information and data Eva Rani Marki, community enabler placed in Rangajan Cluster along with PNJSS and local women's organisations took initiative.

During this time on 9 June 2008 Md. Abbas Ali again went to plough the land of Pokhili illegally, when Munda went to prevent him from entering the land, Abbas assaulted her physically and even injured her left hand. Pokhili Munda and CE along with PNJSS filed an FIR at Charduar Police out post (No: - 14/2008 U/S 447/325/354/379 Cr. PC dated 10 June 2008). The same matter was reported to the Deputy Commissioner, Sonitpur on 14 June and as there was no action so again they gave a memorandum to DC, Sonitpur on 14 July.

Later PNJSS and CE started monitoring the case and watching the response of the police. Even after a week there was no action from DC. Following this, a team from the people's organisation along with the community enabler went to the Commissioner of North Assam Division, Tezpur and placed this matter to him on 21 July. He studied the matter very seriously and immediately called his PA to draft a letter to DC, Sonitpur.

Subsequently, harvesting started. Abbas forcefully took away the paddy from the field of Pokhili on 4 December. On the next day, Secretary, PNJSS Rangajan Cluster filed an FIR at Sariduar Police Outpost. The police officials did not cooperate with PNJSS but as the Eva Marki and Nelson Dhan, the community enablers with the support of seven students body has come out to help PNJSS and put pressure. Feeling the pressure the police arrested the culprit and put Abbas in jail two days later after the incident. Now the local police is putting pressure on PNJSS' Secretary and community enablers to come for a compromise and settle down the case without going to Court. Now DBSS is consulting an advocate to take the issue forward. Though the situation is relatively under control but the people's organisation will see to that the Pokhili's land problems are settled permanently and propitiously.