8TH-11TH MAY 2011

The Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) in Assam is the highest in the country at 480. Almost double the national average of 254. Similarly, the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) is 66 versus the Indian average of 55. More than 36 percent of people living in Assam are below the poverty line, compared to the country average of 26 percent.

In recognition of the dire state of reproductive health care in Assam, HRLN developed and carried out a successful training in Guwahati on reproductive rights and the law in January 2011. The training was aimed to raise awareness about reproductive rights for adolescent girls by addressing an audience of college students, activists, NGOs and health workers. After discussions with grassroots health workers and activists, it emerged that the conditions of health facilities and services in Tea Estates (hereafter TE) are extremely poor and inadequate. Being private entities, tea gardens are not monitored nor are directly bound to provide health care. TE’s workers, most of whom are Adivasis from nearby states of Orissa and Jharkhand, face major difficulties in accessing basic services such as education and adequate nutrition. In addition, working conditions are often in contravention with constitutional obligations, with child labor widespread and casual laborers receiving only Rs. 30 a day.

To investigate the ground reality, HRLN in liaison with the local partner, PAJHRA, carried out a survey in two blocks of Sonitpur District: Rangapara and Biwsanath Chariali on the 8th, 9th and 10th May 2011.

All facilities surveyed and people interviewed have been filmed and photographed. In each Block the following hospitals were surveyed:

**Rangapara Block** TE’s Hospitals: Dhendai, Sonajulie, PHC: Rangapara PHC, Block PHC: Balipara BPHC

**Biswanath Chariali Block** TE’s Hospitals: Dhullie, Bormah Jan, Nirmala, Bholaguri Block PHC: Gohpur BPHC. In addition, the team visited the village of Amlonga, in Rangapara District. Background on MoU between Government of Assam and TE