Visit Details:

This is a different kind of visit than my last visit of December 2016. Mukti has been arranging a big exhibition-carnival near Raidighi/Kankandighi for past few years and this time, I joined a group of people from Kolkata to attend.

Mukti has celebrated their six areas of work (health, education, agriculture, livelihood, environment & rights) in these 3 days (5th, 6th, 7th January 2018). Apart from that, they have showcased organic farming samples and handicrafts in different stalls throughout.

On 5th January, we reached Raidighi around 1 pm and later, Jatar Deul ground around 3 pm where the Mela (Mukti exhibition) was taking place. I visited different stalls of organic farmers, handicrafts from self-help groups as well as Mukti coaching center booths. Slowly the number of people increased to more than thousands. There was a separate area where Mukti members were giving lots of information to attendees about their work, organic farming benefits and self help group efforts. Time to time, I greeted different coaching center teachers and other members of Mukti. I spent some time in Mukti booths in the Mela. After that, excellent dance performances were showcased by local students. As for the Mukti well wisher group from Kolkata, we got fresh food prepared and served by trained members of self help groups.
Mukti Booths

People near handicraft booths

Mukti stage for guests and discussions
On 6th January, we started the day by visiting organic farms. Different areas for farming bitter gourd, chilly, gourd, tomato and other vegetables were shown. An interesting experience was to see beekeeping in a box and to eat honey directly breaking a small piece from it. It is a good sustainable income source (300-400 Rs a month from each box). We went to Mukti Library campus next. The campus has a beautiful garden, ponds with fishes and recently 2 guest rooms are built for visitors on top of the library. After a failed attempt of fishing, we went for a boat ride through rivers and mangrove jungles. Later in the afternoon, we visited Mukti exhibition again. That day, a local lady talked about the need of women working in field and demanding equal payments. Apart from that, a renowned professor from Kolkata talked about environment. More discussions followed about new methods of farming. Then a local tradition of theatre (Gajanner gan) was presented. There were more than two thousand people at that time. I estimated more than 5000 total visitors in this exhibition. There were many food stalls and it was very enjoyable for locals. Sankar Halder from Mukti told me that they use this platform to spread awareness as well. Later that night, I stayed in the guest room above Library and talked about different programs of Mukti.

That day, we also visited the under construction coaching center and its possible expansion.
The visit to the farm

The compost pit and the product of organic farming

Me (Padmanava Sen) posing in the coaching center with Mukti well wisher Mr Dibendyu Sengupta
The under construction coaching center

The smiling students near a Govt school next to Mukti Library

Mukti Library campus
Mukti exhibition second day

On 7th January, we mostly spent in a boat trip to Sundarbans national park. In this trip I also got opportunity to meet other Mukti board members namely Mr Biswanath Halder, Mr Madhusudan Bairagi, Mr Satyajit Roy and Mr Asis Halder.

Mr Satyajit Roy and Mr Asis Halder, Mukti Board members

Me (Padmanava Sen) in a good mood during the boat trip