

## **Mukti Visit by Asha volunteer Padmanava Sen (5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> January 2018)**

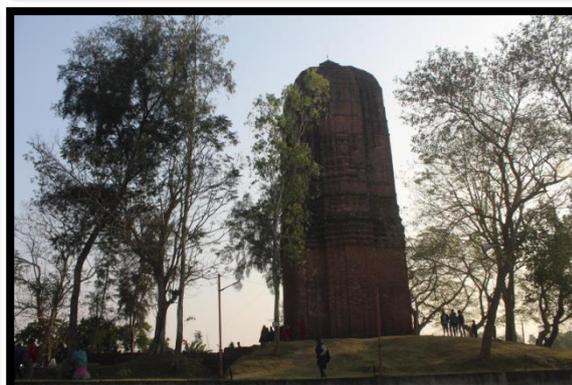
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### **Visit Details:**

This is a different kind of visit than [my last visit](#) of December 2016. Mukti has been arranging a big 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 (5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> January 2018). Apart from that, they have showcased organic farming and handicrafts in different stalls.

**On 5<sup>th</sup> 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 Exhibition in the Jatar Deul Ground near Raidighi, West Bengal**



People near handcraft booths



Mukti Booths



Mukti stage for guests and discussions



**Special guests from Bharat Sevasram and Mukti board members**



**Beautiful dance performances and crowds in the Mela**

**On 6<sup>th</sup> January**, we started the day by visiting organic farms. Different areas for bitter gourd, chilly, gourd, tomato and other vegetables are shown. An interesting experience was to see beekeeping in a box and eating 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 Dibandyu 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 7<sup>th</sup> 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**