

## **State Level Consultation on Water Quality Issues in Bihar**

**Venue: AN College, Patna, Bihar**

**12<sup>th</sup> August, 2015, 10 AM- 4 PM**

A state level consultation meeting was organized in Patna, Bihar on 12<sup>th</sup> August, 2015 to bring together a small group who has been working on water quality issues with communities, independent researchers, and funders on one platform in Bihar. Secondly, to understand the collective needs of communities suffering from water quality issue. Thirdly, to chalk out a rough strategy for a pilot plan for arsenic mitigation.

Academics, Independent Researchers, Medical Practitioner, Local NGOs, CSOs, and Government Agency like the CGWB and donor agency participated in the meeting.

After the round of introduction Safa apprised all about Arsenic and Fluoride Networks' work in terms of what are their focus areas and how they are engaging with different individuals and organizations working on water quality issues. She also spelled out the objectives of the meeting. After her presentation all the participants shared the body of work they have been doing in Bihar. It was discussed that how Arsenic is posing a great threat to parts of Northern Bihar and Fluoride is affecting the Southern part. Participants presented scientific and research data to validate their discussion. In the meeting success stories also featured, for example with the help of local NGOs communities have started to harvest rain water, reuse dug wells and discarded tube wells from drawing ground water.

It was also discussed in the meeting that the information on water quality is not very organized in Bihar. Also, the communities are mostly unaware of the perils of Arsenic and Fluoride in groundwater. It was felt by all that sharing of knowledge and building awareness are the major challenges.

Outcomes of the meeting:

- It was decided to build a central repository of knowledge about water quality issues in Bihar with pointers on a geographical map of Bihar of arsenic and fluoride hotspots, individuals, organizations (NGOs/ CSOs) and institutes (colleges/ universities/medical colleges) working on water quality issues in Bihar, water testing labs, etc.
- It was decided to build IEC materials for awareness generation
- To engage with local governing bodies such as panchayats to work towards addressing water quality issues
- To build a database of all researches done or being done on Arsenic