

## REPORT OF EXPOSURE VISIT

Titabar is one of the hotspot areas of arsenic contamination in ground water in Assam. Arsenic Knowledge and Action Network (AKAN) and SWaCHA have been engaged in Titabar area for many years with the objective of mitigation of arsenic exposure in human health. In reference to that, an exposure visit from Majuli to Titabar was held on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> December, 2017. The community people of the Titabar area have been taken local-level initiatives to reduce the arsenic exposure. According to a study undertaken by Ritusmita Goswami et al., 37.6% of water samples from Majuli exceeded WHO guideline in terms of Arsenic level. AKAN and SWaCHA have made several interventions in this area. To strengthen the activities of the network the exposure visit from Majuli to Titabar was conducted, which main objectives was to bring about an exchange of experiences and knowledge of the local water champions. From Majuli, Mr. Mitu Khataniar, Mr. Dipankar Hazarika, Mr. Saben Kalita and Mr. Hitesh Kumar Doley joined the two days visit. Mr. Ananta Khanikar from Titabar lead the visit. Mr. Churamoni Saikia also participated in the two days exposure visit.



In the first day, Mr. Anata Khanikar, Fellow AKAN introduced everybody to the various community level interventions to mitigate the issues of arsenic exposure in human health. He mentioned about the rejuvenation of pond, pond based bio sand filter, rain water harvesting to get the safe water. He also raised the importance of nutrition and government co-operation to mitigate the issues. He had also briefed them about their past experiences and challenges when they introduced and developed model to get the safe water. The team from Majuli also shared about the conditions of drinking water as well as the public water supply schemes (PWSS) in



Majuli. They were very interested to introduce the same work in Majuli on a pilot basis. In Majuli there is no lack of surface water. But most of the people prefer to drink water from the tube well which source is ground water. Most of the people may not be aware about the existence of arsenic and other chemicals and heavy materials in ground water and its health effects. That's why they would like to start their work in a small area of Majuli (riverine areas) which may become a model for the safe drinking water. Water sample collections and testing of arsenic would be also an activity of the network for both Titabar and Majuli. The Majuli team also interacted with the PRI members, school teachers and community members. In the evening, the Majuli team also saw the rain water harvesting plant and the pond based bio sand filter. Mr. Anata Khanikar explained them about the technologies involved in the process of both of them.

In the second day, the team went to see one more pond based bio-sand filter. But, due to the lack of maintenance it has not been functioning. Mr. Khanikar also said that due to the availability of PWSS in that area people have not used pond water. But, when they don't get water from PWSS for a several days then they again come to use it, but they wouldn't take water from tube well or others which main source is ground water. After that the team had a brief reflection of two days exposure visit and also planned about the next exposure visit which would be from Titabar to Majuli.

