

# MISAAL

## NEWSLETTER

Vol- 1.1

| September-October, 2016

| New Delhi



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Dear Friend of Misaal,

We are, at longlast, launching our monthly newsletter. Through this, we hope to keep you informed of our work and plans for future.

The newsletter is organized in three sections: (i) reporting updates on Misaal Fellowship programe, the core of our work, empowering local communities (ii) Special projects, on important thematic focus of our work; and (iii) our knowledge creation work, researching and documenting issues of concern to minorities and other excluded groups, to help with policy advocacy.

This being the inaugural edition, we thought it essential to provide some background information, as baseline. Future editions of the newsletter will be more informational, and concise.

We'd be grateful for your feedback on the newsletter, and our work overall. All feedback at: [info@misaal.ngo](mailto:info@misaal.ngo)

Happy reading!

Misaal

5<sup>th</sup> November 2016

## 1. Misaal Fellowship Programme:

**Our core work, creating awareness on rights and entitlements, organizing local communities, training and capacity building active members from them, and advocacy with state and non-state actors at local level, all to improve people's access to rights and opportunities.**

### BIHAR

#### **Madhubani**

In Madhubani, we work in Kaluahi block and cover 3 villages. Najmul Hafeez, our fellow there is one the senior members of Misaal team and gradually evolving as a resource for nearby areas. Najmul has been able to establish an effective network with officials too, helping with improved advocacy.



In the district, we have been working on *Talakshuda Scheme* and Scholarships for minority students. In October '16, focus was shifted from Minority Scholarships to PM *Ujjwala Yojna*. 16 applications were filed in the month. 3 applications were filed under *Talaqshuda Scheme*.

#### **Patna**

In Patna, we have two fellows ( ) who are working in slums of Phulwari Shareef area. These slums lack even the most basic amenities. Our fellows have been working in this area for a long time and share good rapport with the people. The focus of work at this site is women's rights and health.



In Phulwari Shareef, in October '16, we focused on connecting women with the specific schemes meant for them and organizing paperwork required to avail these schemes. On this site, 3 applications were filed under *Kanya Suraksha Yojna*. Along with that 11 applications for Minority Scholarship were made. 21 persons were assisted in getting Voter Identity Cards issued. 4 applications were made under *Talaqshuda Scheme* and 2 for Widow Pension.

## Sitamarhi

Sitamarhi is the newest fellowship site in Misaal. Our fellow there - Neamatullah - has experience of working in the field for many years, and has been able to pick up the pace quickly.



He has already started the work with household survey at his site and soon will develop a report of community profile.

In Sitamarhi, work on baseline survey is in progress. 164 households have been covered under the survey. While doing that, our fellow has been able to connect 2 volunteers with the work.

## Vaishali

Shahim also joined Misaal recently, working in Khwaja chand Chapra panchayat, and has been learning the work. He has been able to form a base in the community and has concluded work on the baseline survey. He will be working on different schemes on pension and social security in the next quarter



In Vaishali as well, the work has just begun and our fellow is conducting baseline survey. So far, 100 surveys have been completed. In the next month, the plan is start work on issues identified as priority areas, in the survey, to plan interventions.

## UTTAR PRADESH

### Banda

In Banda, our fellow - Nasir Ali - is working in Sul Khan Ki Purwa, in Naogawan



panchayat, villages far from even basic amenities like water, electricity and road. The community here faces structural exclusion and people are forced to live on the margins. There is no school in the village either. Nasir has, with support from local community - and a young volunteer teacher - been able to establish a non-formal school for out-of-school children of the village - almost the entire population of school going age children there. The part-time school has

been a big success, with parents and children now taking interest in education.

Besides education, we have been trying to link people with housing and food schemes. In the last month, a camp was organized to



enroll people in voter's list. 20 applications were filed under PM Ujjwala scheme. Out of these applicants, 7 people have already received the benefit.

## Jaunpur:

Jaunpur is our newest site in U.P. Here, our fellow - Faiz - has started working in urban slums of Jaunpur with a community traditionally marginalized due to their traditional association with begging. Education and socio-economic conditions are poor. The focus of the work will be around education, and food security.

Baseline survey has been completed and Faiz has developed a profile of the community based upon the finding. The focus will be on connecting people with pension schemes. A list of 19 people for Old Age Pension has already been developed.

## Faizabad

In Faizabad district, we work in Rudauli town, where our fellow, Saba runs a center for girls under the banner of *Prerna Kishori Vikas Kendra*. The aim of the center is to provide adolescent girls a place to come together, discuss issues of common concerns, build skills (sewing, tailoring,



computer literacy, language..) develop their confidence, and generally break out from the ghettoized environment they live in. The Center has provided vocational training to more than 100 girls and remedial classes to children from economically weaker sections.

Recently, Saba has, along with a group of volunteer members of the Kendra started, under Misaal Taleem programme, tuition support for underprivileged children where more than 20 children are being provided coaching in different subjects. And small steps are being made to also connect the families of Kendra members to social security schemes - pension and such like.

## Shamli

In Shamli, erstwhile part of Muzaffarnagar district, our work is primarily with victims of violence, displaced as a result of the 2013 mass violence and settled in resettlement camps. Misaal fellow there - Saleem, himself a victim of the violence - is trying to help the

community, rebuild their lives and livelihoods, and lay claims to rights and entitlements, in a situation where they have lost everything, including hope.



Most of the work has been around connecting people with entitlements – compensation for violence, voter I cards, pensions, MG NAREGA, pension and

schooling. Since a large number of people lost their livelihood, we have been trying to link people with livelihood opportunities.



In October 2016, we have been able to help 58 persons in getting them enrolled in the voter's list. 45 families were connected with PDS.

## 2. SPECIAL PROJECTS

**Our effort to develop models of delivery that work for the poorest, in areas of most critical need for them, such as education for drop-out and out-of-school children; and for livelihood security, through skilling and enterprise development**

### MISAAL TALEEM

*Misaal Taleem* is our experiment to improve access to quality education for poorest children. It is being run currently at our Madhubani, Patna, Banda, Faizabad and Shamli fellowship sites, in communities we serve already. We have been able to support 9 students financially in Rudauli and Faizabad, who otherwise would have dropped out of school/college for good. Some of the same beneficiaries have decided to give back to society, by volunteering to coach younger children to improve their educational attainments. Similarly, at our Banda site, we are working, together with community support – in the form of a high school going student, Mobin, to provide remedial teaching to over 25 out-of-school children, and bring them back within the education fold.

And under a programme to enable promising children from poor backgrounds to obtain admission in Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs that are free residential model public schools, one in each district of the country), we are providing coaching to a selected group of students from the community, for them to successfully sit entrance tests to JNVs at entry stage (Class 6). 32 students in Banda, 20 in Shamli, 12 in Patna and 3 in Madhubani are being provided intensive coaching, by tutors appointed for the purpose. Entrance test is on 9<sup>th</sup> of January 2017.



Learnings from these experience encourage us to scale up these efforts, from 2017, at all Misal sites, through providing regular tuitions, round the year, for students in 6-14 year group, to strengthen their foundations in core subjects, that their government school education does not provide.

### 3. Knowledge creation

**This is the research and documentation aspect of our work – on subjects we work on generally, as well as based on our own work on the ground. The effort is to fill the big gap in data there is on minority rights and exclusion generally; provide evidence for advocacy with governments for improved results, and also network with other civil society organisations for creating platforms of like-minded groups.**

Here our outputs are:

We have recently produced - working with other members of a trans South Asia platform called South Asia Collective, that we helped set up – a report on the state of minorities in South Asia, covering 6 major countries in the region (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka), looking at how minorities in each country are excluded their rights. We also provide recommendations for improvements. The report will be launched on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2016 in Kathmandu. We plan to produce these every year, to strengthen the South Asian minority rights platform and agenda, to help create a just and peaceful South Asia.

Alongside, as part of our partnership with Minority Rights Group International London, we are studying access of minorities to rights and entitlements in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, our Misaal fellowship states. Our ongoing research here, indicates the very low outcomes for poor minorities, but also poor community awareness and organization, and poor effort by government, as key findings. The reports will be published in December 2016.

