



## **Livelihood initiative Program**

### **Moitrisanjog Society cooch Behar**

**Address:**

**Vill: gangaler kuthi(near bosar hat bazar)**

**Post: Gheghirghat pin, 736134**

**Dist: Cooch Behar, West Bengal**

**Contact:**

**E-mail [moitrisanjog2011@gmail.com](mailto:moitrisanjog2011@gmail.com)**

**Website [www.moitrisanjog.weebly.com](http://www.moitrisanjog.weebly.com)**

**Phone no 7063418696**

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**About Us:** Persons who do not fit into the socially constructed gender binary and the heteronormative sexual behaviour, those who identify themselves as transgender, Kothi, Hijras have been facing tremendous violence and discrimination in our society which is plagued by the patriarchal mind-set. It has been quite challenging to grow up as an individual with all dignity, rights and equal opportunity for a gender-unidentified person and a person having a different sexual orientation. This group of people are unwelcome, and unaccepted in the family and in all other sections of a larger society as a result of which they have become the victim of rampant violence and discrimination. Most often they left with no other choice but to commit suicide or begging / sex work for living. The situation in the rural areas are even worse.

Given that back in 2009, a few transgender / gender variant persons based at Cooch Behar, North Bengal used to regularly meet and share their own stories of struggle and painful lives in order to vent out their pain and find solidarity in each other. Gradually more people were added to the informal group. Their ideas and thoughts started taking shape, they got enough strength from each other to collectively fight against the discrimination and violence inflicted on them. This solidarity group eventually turned out to be a community based organisation (CBO) back in 2011.

The CBO was named Moitrisanjog, meaning “a network to connect friends”. Thus, the Moitrisanjog Society got officially registered under Society Act as a CBO in the year 2011. The society is committed to protest the violence against the queer community. The main objective of our society is to provide a supportive network to ensure that everyone from the queer community gets equal opportunity, rights and entitlements to grow as a human being with dignity and respect. Our society strives to provide financial security to the community through establishing alternative livelihoods such as the craftsmanship program. We also provide the community members with health, counselling and legal-aid services. We advocate for equal access to education, employment etc. Besides, we organise awareness programs in the larger society to fight against discrimination and violence.

## **A, Short story of Mat-Making (Sital Pati):**

Moitrisanjog Society started working since 2009 from Ghughumari block-1. The main livelihood of the peoples of this area is Mat-Making. This is the handmade work. They made shoes, hand bags, cover files bed sheets etc. by Mat-Making with the help of raw Bet. We are helping the Transgender community people of

this area by teaching the work of Mat-Making. Now there are approx. 25 transgender community people who are learning this and the community peoples are helping them to learn. In 2018 we have taken 2 acres of land by lease for cultivating the bet by the organic way. In the week end in the local market they sell their hand made things which they have made by the raw bet. And from that profit 2% they invest in the community group.



Moitrisanjog Society has given the stalls of Mat-Making in different fairs across India. And with the stall Moitrisanjog Society aware the rights and duties of the Transgender community people for the society. This program gives a great psychological satisfaction towards the community people.



Now this time with the help of Goonj we have started a new Mat-Making project with 15 transgender community people. They will learn in this project that how to cultivate the raw bet, how to cut it, and after that how to make the handmade things like shoes, hand bags ,bed sheets etc. with the raw bet.



Moitrisanjog Society always will give the courage to the community people and will be always there for any kind of problems for the Transgender community people.

## B, Beautician course short story:

People are changing day by day, people are getting educated and for that their faith on few superstition are today baseless. The Transgender community people before earn money by giving blessings to the new born babies but now the society is not accepting them as faith but to as superstition.

For that reason Moitrisanjog Society formed in Cooch Behar at 2014 to speak and help for the Transgender community people.



Moitrisanjog Society firstly starts their livelihood program with 18 transgender community people with the handmade project of Mat Making (Sital Pati) and it was shown in the weekly market for business purpose.

In this work now we are getting help of Goonj. By their help we have done a beautician course with the 15 transgender community people for the period of 2months 15 days. The community people learn threading, facial, massage, spa, hair cutting etc. in this course.



Moitrisanjog started to think about the livelihood program when the Transgender community people starving in the time of Covid-19 pandemic. A lot of community people lost their jobs in this time. They were not able to work as a sex worker, or bagging in the train.



Moitrisanjog Society is working for this community people of our society and Moitrisanjog Society wants every transgender people to learn the handmade programs to have their own livelihood.



Those who have finally done the beautician course, Moitrisanjog wishes you to all the best and wishes for your better future.

## C, Brief story our Catering Service:

### -: Moitri Amantron Catering Service:-

An initiative taken by the transgender community at Cooch Behar.

Moitrisanjog is working since 10 years for the transgender community people. The main motive of Moitrisanjog is to have a financial support of transgender community people. Because in our society the people like Transgender has no authority to talk over any matter.

From many years transgender (Hizra) peoples are neglected by the society. They earn money by begging in trains, by giving blessings to the new born baby or by doing sexual work, apart that the society never gives them any other opportunities to earn money for their livelihood. For that Moitrisanjog always talk about alternate source of income for them and this initiative of Catering Service is one of the source of earning for their livelihood.



Now we are working on 3 projects and this Catering Service is the third one. In this project we got an order to serve a Birthday party. We have a great experience over there. Many people have taken our phone number and promised us that they also will contact us whenever is needed.

This Catering Service also helps to mobilize in the society for the other unknown community people. People are started to have us in more respective manner. We hope that we will get more opportunities in near future. Because after Covid-19 pandemic transgender community already losing their jobs.



Many transgender people who naturally works on trains or was a sexual working, now they are showing interest in livelihood projects.

Moitrisanjog society will continue work for the community people and in need of society's support.

