



RIB in the past had experimented with using interactive theatre as a tool for awareness-raising among the marginalized. More recently in January 2008, a three month long workshop was conducted by researcher Nishan Saber with the Santals, an adivasi (indigenous) community inhabiting north-western Bangladesh. The project lead to the formation of a Santal theatre group who won much accolade in the locality on its performances on issues that concerned the daily struggle of the Santals.

On 30th June, 2009 this group staged a show in honor of the commemoration of the rebel Santal leader, Sidu Kanu. The success story of this group led RIB to discuss with other communities belonging to ethnic backgrounds and Dalit groups in danger of losing their cultural traditions on whether such an exposure was important for them. Receiving their initial consensus, RIB went ahead in organizing a 5 days training camp on interactive theatre with the following 7 groups: among the ethnic groups were the Coch, from Gazipur, Bunos from Kushtia and Santals from Dinajpur. Among the Dalit groups were the Rishis from Shatkhira, Horijons from Kushtia, Robidas from Saidpur and Shobdokars from Moulvibazaar. There were about 18 participants from the seven groups mentioned. The workshop took place between 15th November and 19th November in the Farm Hat area of Dinajpur Sadar thana taking as its field the adjacent village of Khosalpur and the Santal neighborhood near Rural Electricity Board. The objectives of this knowledge generation and dissemination activity were:

To generate enthusiasm for the cultural traditions of the community and to help build up theatre organizations in these groups

To generate a positive feeling of self-help and confidence in ones own ability through cultural awareness

To prevent cultural aggression from dominant communities