



# Social Families

In the Empowerment of Marginalized People

Issue - 10

Ashadh 2067  
July 2010

Page 1

## Annual review of SAMAGRA's programs

In line with its monitoring and evaluation system, SAMAGRA carried out its annual review. As the first year of the implementation of the Strategic Partnership and Planning ( StOP) came to an end, an evaluation team consisting of three representatives- Mr. Hemanta Dahal, an independent consultant-cum-the team leader, one each from Danida HUGOU and SAMAGRA, as representatives from the strategic partners, was fielded to undertake the joint review of the first year of the program status.

In the process, the team undertook a field visit to Ghanokhara in Lamjung, Khoplang in Gorkha and Tasarpu in Dhading on 25, 26 and 27 June respectively and held interactions with the social families, SAMAGRA field staff and other stakeholders. After that, at the central office an open discussion was held between the team members and the SAMAGRA staff, including the members of the executive body.



## Workshop on "Enhancing the Roles and Responsibilities of Board"

A team of SAMAGRA representatives attended a one-day workshop on “Enhancing Roles and Responsibilities of Board”. Organized by Danida HUGOU for the benefit of its strategic partners as part of its technical assistance, the seminar was attended by Bal Krishna Lal Joshi, Chairperson, Dr. Chheki Sherpa, Executive Member and Premraj Dhungel, Programme Manager. The objective of the workshop was to inform and make aware of the characteristics of an effective board. Having actively participated in the workshop, the participating SAMAGRA

staff organized a common meeting with the management staff and other board members and shared with them the self-reflection techniques learned there which will be helpful to start an exercise of analysis of the board itself and to adopt necessary changes in their respective roles and responsibilities and contribute more.

### Basic Community Mediation Training in Gorkha

A seven-day Basic Mediation Training was organized and conducted by CeLRRD in the management of SAMAGRA from 8 to 14 June at Gorkha Bazar. There were altogether 25 participants, comprising of social family members and SAMAGRA field staff- from Lamjung (4 persons), Dhading (5 persons) and Gorkha (6 persons); and other 10 participants were from Community Self-Reliance Centre. The training focused on deliberating the participants on the methods, stages and principles of community mediation. In addition, the training covered how to become a good community mediator, the values of good hearing and positive thinking. It also included theoretical knowledge on social co-existence with demonstration of role plays. The training was facilitated by Narayan Regmi, the western region coordinator, Ganesh Luetel, the coordinator from Biratnagar and Sitaram Adhikari, the coordinator from Nawalparasi, all from Cellard. From SAMAGRA, there were Regional Coordinator Nakul Thapa, Bharat Shrestha, Senior motivator from Gorkha, who played active roles in managing the training. The participants appreciated the training programme saying that the knowledge and skills they gained from the training would prove to be very useful in promoting peaceful co-existence amongst the social families.



### Regular Activities conducted / completed in the month of Jesth:

Activiteis		No. of Activities	Participation		
			Femlae	Male	Total
1.1	Human Rights monitoring at the local level	2	43	8	51
1.3	Awareness campaigns against human rights violation	3	150	96	246
2.6	SF level orientation on human rights, conflict transformation & good governance.	4	107	34	141
2.10	Network / Linkage / Lobbying	12	179	87	266
3.1	Inter-caste conciliation / conflict management events	2	20	18	38
3.2	Interaction for peace building	2	25	31	56
3.3	Post-conflict re-conciliation events	4	84	25	109
3.4	Events on peace & harmony	6	128	50	178
4.1	SF resource management	1	17	6	23
4.2	Orientation to SFs on cooperatives	1	26	3	29
4.4	Cooperative Management training	2	40	9	49
5.1	Vocational / skill development training	1	7	20	27
5.2	Revolving fund management	1	18	5	23

### A Pensioner's Engagement in Social Family Activities....

In fact, I spent 30 years of my life in teaching children the basic Nepali alphabetical letters. Quite a large number of the students have progressed themselves in their career development, holding different senior and respectable posts. But I never got the opportunity to teach the adults. Besides, I realized lately that I lagged behind in acquiring knowledge related to social transformation and the related process. Lately, SAMAGRA took the initiative of formation of a Social Family in my village and I got the privilege of being a member of the organization. At the outset, I could not devote much time to it because I had not got the post-retirement pension fund. When I got an access to the facility of pension fund, I got actively involved in the activities of the Social Family, I began to realize I lagged behind in gaining such knowledge though I had served the society as a teacher. Currently, I am going through books related to human rights. I am imparting the knowledge to the members of the Social Family and have established myself as a human rights advocate. Had I not been given the opportunity to join the Social Family, I would have been debarred from this opportunity.

**Buddhi Bahadur Kumal**  
Navaprabhat Social Family  
a pensioner retired from the service of education  
Cheprak VDC, Ward, 9, Gorkha district



### Human Rights Monitoring at the local level .... ..

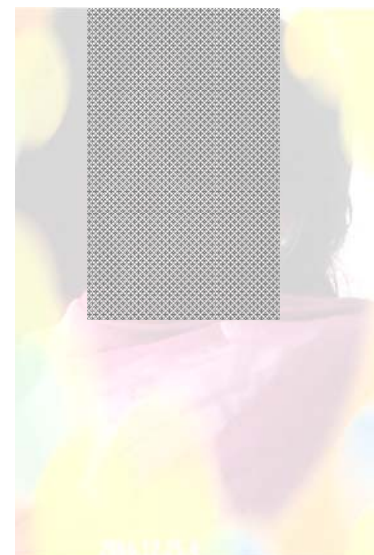
After having conducted the training on human rights monitoring for SAMAGRA staff and social family representatives at the local level, the trainees have started sending their monitoring reports when there is violation of human rights. Here is an illustration, amongst several others, of one monitoring report, as summarized below:

Sangita Bhujel, 30 years, the wife of Harka Bahadur Bhujel, a resident of Bhujel VDC in Lamjung district, Ward 8, has been alleged to have been practicing witchcraft on the ground of the age-old superstitions prevailing in the society. A monitoring visit was, therefore, organized jointly by a team comprising of SAMAGRA and Human Rights & Peace Society Nepal to explore the facts of the case.

#### Description of the Case:

Sangita Bhujel has been living in piteous condition with her two daughters and one son for the last 15 months following her husband's migration to Dubai in connection with his employment. As she occasionally faints with heavy perspiration following the attacks of epilepsy disease that she is suffering from. The monitoring visit revealed that she was alleged to be a witch-practitioner or a victim of insanity on the grounds of age-old social superstitions.

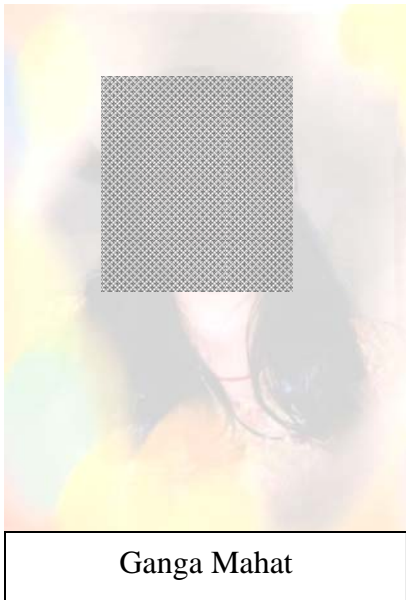
On 19<sup>th</sup> March 2010, while she got into an argument with the neighbor Ganga



Sangita Bhujel

Mahat on the issue of fence encroachment while she was working in her farm land, it took a serious turn. In 3-4 days following the incidence, her opponent Ganga Mahat fell ill and it was alleged that Sangeeta was responsible for the illness. The patient along with her family members and well-wishers quarreled several times with her and insulted her using very indecent language. They also consulted with several traditional healers –shamans (Jhankris). Since those actions proved ineffective, all the concerned unanimously confirmed that Sangeeta was, indeed, a witch. They were hatching a plan to torture her physically and mentally. She, therefore, took shelter at her mother's house to protect herself from them.

### **Victim's statement in regard to the incidence**



Ganga Mahat

I was suffering from the epilepsy disease for long time back. Whenever I felt the attack of the disease my body used to shake and I was unaware of this in the state of senselessness. Such incidences did occur when I was living with my husband. I did not face any allegations from them that time. Rather, I got support and assistance from all the people. But the situation turned adverse to me when my husband went abroad, as they started making false allegations of all sorts to me. In the past, we used to have occasional quarrels and exchanged arguments with my neighbour -Ganga and her family –in connection with the fence demarcation issue, but I never had to face such allegations that time. Finding me alone without husband as this moment, I have been blamed for evils they suffered. After a few days after our quarrel, Ganga Mahat fell sick. At this, in consultation with several shamans, they alleged me to have been practicing witchcraft and started challenging my moral integrity/character. They went to the extent of plotting to give physical torture in different ways. I was forced to take resort to my mother's house seeking protection.

### **Statement of the perpetrator:**

We are not the only ones alleging her practicing witchcraft; many others in the community have the same opinion. Please be informed that we have no intention to inflict physical and mental torture on her personally. Since I fell ill, I consulted our community shamans and, as advised, I am intending to take curative measures to get rid of the illness following the given procedure.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations of the Team**

- 1) It was concluded from the above episode that it was a clear case of violation of a person's right to live freely with dignity, preventing her from earning her livelihood;
- 2) The monitoring team makes an earnest appeal that "right to live with dignity" must be ensured to everybody, disregarding all kinds of superstitious practices.

### **Contact Address:**

**Holistic Development Service Center (SAMAGRA)**

**Hospital Road, Chabahil, P.O. Box 13278, Kathmandu**

**Tel: 4469649, Email: [info@samagra-nepal.org.np](mailto:info@samagra-nepal.org.np), Website: [www.samagra-nepal.org](http://www.samagra-nepal.org)**