

Social Families

In the Empowerment of Marginalized People



SAMAGRA
Bulletin

Issue - 11

Bhadra 2067
September 2010

Page 1

VDC level Interactions

The five-year StOP(Strategic Operational Plan) of SAMAGRA entered into the second year with the completion of the first year action plan. In accordance with the current year work plan, the aim is to upgrade the quality of empowerment of all the 300 Social families(SFs) stationed in 70 VDCs in qualitative terms by organizing interaction programme at VDC level. This interaction meeting has also selected volunteers to support to mobilize the SFs in within their VDC.

In Sitapur of Siraha district, one interaction programme was organized at Ram-Mahanti Lower Secondary School, and there was the participation of 60 people (37 females and 23 males) representing seven SFs working in the VDCs , namely, Durga, Milan, Shreeram, Dalit Milan, Jayaram, Pachunath, and Jana Chetana. During the interaction, the



various SFs programme-related activities were discussed, including the prospective roles to be assumed on the way ahead. In order to support SFs of Sitapur, the event selected one volunteer (Manjor Kumari Ram, Sitapur-3, as the principal candidate and Ram Chandra Ram, Sitapur-2 as the alternative candidate). The interaction programme concluded with the common oath taken by all that they would aim at institutionalizing SF and also take lead role in resolving all forthcoming community issues.

Similarly, at the VDC level SFs' meeting organized at Rastriya Janata Primary School, Bhangaha, Saptari district, whereby, altogether 150



members, including 117 women, drawn from 6 SFs- Kriyashil Dalit Jagaran, Chandrabhoga Ka, and Kha, Samjhana, Laligurans and Dalit Adarsa, took part in the event. The participants observed that they have experienced great positive changes in their behavior and attitude, but for the lack of sufficient fund/resources, they regretted that they have to limit themselves to few developmental activities far beyond than what they could do. The event was chaired by Anirudra Prashad Mandal, the chairperson of Dalit Adharsha SF and the chief guest was Durga Datta Ghimire, General Secretary of SAMAGRA. One of the speakers in the event was Panayee Sada, a General Assembly member of SAMAGRA, who observed in his speech how the marginalized people have been empowered effectively. One of the outcome of the event was the nomination of Chandra Dev Ram and Bhupanarayan Ram as principal and alternative candidates respectively to assist the SFs of Bhangaha VDC.

In Udaypur district, an interaction programme of SFs was organized at the conference hall of Ramjanaki Community Forest Users' Group, Jogidaha, ward no. 2. It was attended by 30 participants representing Laxmi Mahila, Kopila, and Upakar SFs. The other 4 SFs could not attend the event as the members had to be engaged in farming due the onset of the monsoon season. The meeting decided to organize another interaction meeting in the near future. The interaction events are going on in other VDCs also.

Field visit, Regional meeting and Interaction amongst the staff

A field visit cum interaction event was organized under the framework of periodical monitoring and participatory programme review and planning at the instance of the central level programme staff, visiting both the Hills/Mountain and Terai districts. The visiting team, comprising of General Secretary and Executive Director, visited



Gorka district and held an interaction meeting with representatives of Mashar Janajagaran SF and Cooperative located at Prithivi Narayan Municipality. Along with that, a joint interaction meeting was held between the visiting team and the field level officials working in Gorkha, Dhading and Lamjung districts, whereby a review of the ongoing activities in all three districts was conducted and that was how the monitoring field

visit was concluded.



In the same way, the General Secretary and Programme Officer undertook a monitoring visit to Siraha, Saptari and Udaypur in the Terai and concluded their monitoring visit at Lahan, where they attended a regional review meeting. In the meeting, annual progress review was conducted, and the current status of the SFs's activities was also reviewed/presented by the concerned field officers/staff who were given opportunities to speak out their feelings/observations, one by one, on those topics. The speakers included Regional Programme Coordinator Durga Prasad Mahato, district Motivators- Ram Prasad Chaudhary and Arun Kumar Chaudhary; Motivators- Chandra Dev Ram, Prem Kumari Thapa, Ashok Sada and Raj Kumar Lama; Programme Officer Amar Singh Adhikari, and General Secretary Durga Datta Ghimire.

The Third Strategic Partnership Meeting

The third strategic partnership meeting was held at the head office of Samagra, Kathmandu, on 11th August 2010 and it was chaired by Bal Krishna Lal Joshi, Chairperson, SAMAGRA. The meeting reviewed the annual progress including budget and joint annual review report for FY 2009/10. Also at the meeting, the annual work plan and budget allocations for FY 2010/11 were also presented and discussed. On the occasion, Lars Peter Christensen, Programme Coordinator, DanidaHUGOU expressed happiness to what SAMAGRA is doing with innovative way of developing and empowering marginalized people at the grass-roots level through Social Families (SFs). He agreed with SAMAGRA's plan to focus on qualitative strengthening of the existing Social Families. In the same way, Dr. Pankaj Raturi of Dabur Nepal, observed that since women in Nepal are engaged more in agriculture and if they could be attracted to the



farming of such high value crops like herbal farming, they would raise their standard of living significantly. Expressing his pleasure in observing how SAMAGRA has been mobilizing the poverty-stricken people through the medium of social families in the rural areas, he said that Dabur Nepal is ready to work in partnership with SAMAGRA in the latter's mission of alleviating poverty of the poorest people. The participants, including Mukunda Kattel, DanidaHUGOU advisor and Dornath Neupane, Executive Director, also expressed their opinions on the occasion. The meeting was concluded after the vote of thanks from Dr. Chheki Sherpa, Executive Board member of SAMAGRA.

Some Key Achievements in the Last Year

- After obtaining the training on human rights (HR) monitoring, SAMAGRA's field level staffs have started doing the HR monitoring more systematically. When SAMAGRA carried out the HR monitoring along with the other HR organizations in the districts and released the report, SAMAGRA has now being known as the Human Rights organizations in the districts. SAMAGRA's regional coordinator at Lahan was recognized as the best Human Right activist of Siraha district for the year 2009 and was honored on the International Human Rights Day.
- Social Audits conducted have enhanced transparency and accountability of SAMAGRA which have increased trust of stakeholders on SAMAGRA and acted as lessons for other organizations.
- In the interaction program entitled 'New Constitution and the issues of Inclusion' held in Kathmandu, more than 60 SF representatives from Siraha, Saptari, Udayapur, Dhanusha, Mahotari, Gorkha, Dhading and Lamjung participated and put their issues and expressed their problems they have been facing at the community level in front of Constituent Assembly members, advocates, journalists and other resource



persons. This interaction has helped to identify and highlight the local issues / voices that needed to be included in the new constitution. The CA members gave their commitments to ensure that these issues will be raised and discussed in the CA.



Milan Social Family, Sitapur, Siraha

- In the communities where there are Social Families, the caste-based discrimination have been reducing to a great extent and even eradicated completely in some places. In Khoplang VDC (Annapurna, Milijuli and Mirmire SFs), the inter-caste marriage has been a regular trend. Similarly, Dalits were allowed to enter and worship in the temples along with the others. The empowered SFs in different districts have launched themselves more than 50 awareness campaigns against caste-based discrimination.
- With the help of SFs, the displaced people returned home in their village and started normal life. There are 11 families of such cases (5 in hills and 6 in Terai). Due to enhanced social harmony and cohesiveness in Social Families, no more *pahade* families have been displaced from Terai-Madhes where there are Social Families.
- Terai SF members including EC members from that region, in course of their exposure visits to hill region and Kathmandu, had opportunity to interact with SF members of hills and CA members and other resource persons in Kathmandu. This exposure visits not only gave them the exposures but also enhanced the cohesion between *Madhesi* and *Pahadi* people and reduced the gap between them.
- In the kidnapping case, the advocacy and networking initiated by SAMAGRA released the persons and hence protected their lives and rights.
- As a cumulative effect of the empowerment, 157 persons have evolved as local leaders, of which 104 are women, 57 are dalits, 45 are adibasi-janajatis and 2 are muslims.

- As a result of empowerment, the SFs have been able to claim the following rights / resources:
 - Registration of birth, marriage, death, etc. - 861
 - Dalit/janajati children receiving scholarship - 1,253 persons
 - Citizenship certificate obtained – 237
 - Old age / widow allowance – 807 persons
 - Skill development training – 397 persons, equivalent to Rs. 4,76,400.
 - Local infrastructures equivalent to Rs. 3,38,31,300.
 - Human rights and conflict transformation training – 71 persons
 - Livelihood and other socio-economic enhancement related things equivalent to Rs. 55,50,880. (the majority of the recipients were dalit, janajatis, women and other marginalized people.)

Field Observation Tour of Poverty Alleviation Fund (PAF) – program areas

SAMAGRA staff joined a two- day field observation tour in the areas where the partner organizations were implementing their respective programmes with the support from Poverty Alleviation Fund. The observation tour was organized by PAF for its partner-organizations including DDC staff. The SAMAGRA team comprised of General Secretary Durga Ghimire and staff from the head office and Dhading district office. On the first day, the observation team visited Haandi-Khola VDC-8, Runchegaun in Makwanpur district and Karaiya VDC in Chitwan district, where they held an interaction with the community groups, who took them to observe the ongoing field activities that were effectively implemented.

On the second day, they observed field activities at Patihani VDC in Chitwan district and held interactions with the various community organizations. In the process, they observed how the local farmers had benefited



from the drinking water project under which a water tank reservoir was installed, and Thopa (drip) Irrigation Project, that resulted in the enhancement of their standard of living including the promotion of vegetable farming.

The community vegetable farming initiated by the groups including landless families experienced comprehensive improvement in their lifestyle. Some other families undertook small businesses, which enabled them to earn handsome income with which they had started bringing up their families quite comfortably. Some others adopted livestock farming which proved to be very productive financially. All those outputs / results were observed and were reviewed at the interactions held with the local people during the field visit.

Contact Address:

Holistic Development Service Center (SAMAGRA)

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

Tel: 4469649, Email: info@samagra-nepal.org.np, Website: www.samagra-nepal.org