

### Fundamental Human Rights and the HR Monitoring-related Training

A training programme on fundamental human rights and monitoring techniques was organized in Lahan from 3-5 March with the objective of capacity building of the field level staff and volunteers, stationed in Siraha, Saptari, Udaypur, and Dhanusha districts. There were 25 participants, including 7



women. The training content included human rights and peace education, universal declarations and standards of human rights, global and national institutions, human rights facilitation principles, the difference between human rights violation, abuses and crimes, human rights monitoring techniques, including its limitation, principles, phases and report writing, etc. Milan Shrestha, assuming the role of the resource person, taught the participants on the above-mentioned topics. Amongst the participants, Geeta Rawat from Dhanusha district, expressed her impression about the training in the following words: "I have now learnt what human rights means in real terms; what are the rights guaranteed by legal provisions... "My self-confidence has enhanced and I will disseminate my knowledge with my colleagues in my social family." In the same way, Jang Bahadur Tamang, the motivator from Udaypur, and Anirudra Prasad, the secretary of Saptari district SF, observed that they were capable of promoting the culture of human rights practices, including its monitoring, at the grass-roots level.

Soon after the programme, a three-day training programme on fundamental human rights and

monitoring techniques was organized at Beshisahar, Lamjung from 10-12 March. There were 25 participants, including 19 women from Dhading, Gorkha and Lamjung districts. They comprised of SAMAGRA field staff and volunteers. The training covered all rights-centered human topics as done in Lahan event. In addition, it also dealt with human rights protectors and monitoring agents, human rights and information disseminations as practiced, report writing, common questions raised in reference to human rights advocacy and monitoring phases. All these were handled by the resource person Milan Shrestha, who conducted the training to the participants systematically, dwelling upon theoretical and practical aspects of the topics under discussion. Distributing the training certificates to the participants, Uttam Nagila, Local Development Officer of Lamjung district observed that the training would contribute towards minimizing the incidences of human rights violation in the rural communities. At the end, SAMAGRA's General Secretary Durga Datta Ghimire advised the participants to put into effect all the knowledge gained from the training in a systematic and disciplined manner, when they return to their work-fields.



### Regional Review Workshop

In pursuance of the work plan for the ongoing second year of the five-year Strategic Plan, regional workshops was organized in Lahan/Siraha from 18-19 February and in Gorkha Bazaar from 25-26 February. The objective was to review and reflect the effectiveness of the ongoing empowerment campaign addressing the marginalized communities. In the workshop held at Lahan, there were 31 participants, including 10 women, and they comprised of senior motivators, motivators, volunteers, regional coordinator, and the GA members from Siraha, Saptari, Udaypur, Dhanusha and Mahotari districts and senior staff from the central office of SAMAGRA. Similarly, in the workshop held at Gorkha bazaar, there were 28 participants -18 females and 10 males, comprising of motivators, senior motivators and volunteers from Dhading, Gorkha and Lamjung districts, and regional coordinator, and the GA members and

senior staff of the central office of SAMAGRA. During the two workshops, the review and the subsequent discussion focused on the half-yearly progress (from mid-July to mid-January), management status of the district and regional offices, institutional development of SFs,



mobilization of volunteers, preparatory activities related to report writing, and the activities planned for the following six months until mid-July.

### SFs Celebrated the Women's Day

On the occasion of the 101th International Women's day, majority of the SFs in Siraha, Saptari, Udaypur, Dhanusha, Mahottari, Gorkha, Dhading and Lamjung celebrated it through various programs. In Siraha district, for instance, the SFs stationed in Sitapur, Kachnari, Sisbani, and Lahan organized street rallies with the slogans demanding equal access to education, training in the field of science and technology, putting an end to gender disparity, and ensuring equal participation to all. The Mankamana SF of Badaharamal, Dalit development SF, Kamalamai SF, Himal SF led the public rally chanting the slogans, such as "Ensure the prevalence of the women rights". While chanting the slogan, the rally walked around the VDC and the event adjourned following a corner meeting, convened at the premise of the VDC office. In addition, an eloquent contest was organized addressing the issue of domestic violence in Godar VDC of Dhanusha district.

In Hadiya of Udaypur, the members of Janjagaran SF, dalit Integrated SF, Munal SF led a public rally chanting the main slogan as follows, "Let us work together to build a clean/pure society, by ensuring the eradication of violence against women". Presenting her view on the occasion, Kumari

Pariyar, a member of Jagaran SF, pleaded to all for the assurance of women's rights, including their equal access, thereby putting an end to caste-based discrimination against women, and allegation of practicing witch-craft to women. In the same way, Sayapatri SF and Janapriya SF, and the women representing Risku, VDC, 1-9 wards, chanted the



slogan, "Hand over pens to boys and girls to write not the brooms and provide them education not dowry" and thus the programme was adjourned.

In Rajviraj of Saptari district, a rally of various organizations including SAMAGRA and journalists highlighted the women rights. The members of Mahalaxmi SF of Pipra-paschim, Dadaji SF of Diman, Mahabir SF and Saraswati SF demanded to bring awareness programs for women workers. The

SFs of Mahottari, Gorkha, Dhading and Lamjung also celebrated the Women's Day by organizing

interactions, rallies, duet song competitions.

### Abstain from slavery attitude .....

Anirudra Prasad Mandal Khatwe is a resident of Sabaiya tole in Bhangaha-4 in Saptari. The Khatwe community is branded as dalits in terai. At his initiative, Adarsha dalit SF was formed on 22 Bhadra, 2063 (September 2005) in his own locality. He reports as follows: "The SF, with members representing 26 households, has its own organizational system. They meet once a month; discuss all problems/issues facing the community, and put on record whatever conclusions/decisions are arrived at, following the discussions, and they ensure that they are adopted in effect, treating them as the primary responsibilities of the members of all ranks." One primary responsibility of the SF is how to reduce the worries of the local people to the minimum and enable them to lead comfortable lives, while making their children literate. The people living adjacent to the SF were highly impressed with the unity displayed by the people of Sabaiya Tole and some others felt even jealous about that. Although Anirudra had reached 48 years of age, he displayed his energetic vigour like a youth. Wherever he goes, his attention is focused all the time on how to promote the welfare of his fellow beings. Talking with him for a short while, one gets a high impression about him. Had there been in existence the like-minded personalities in other VDCs and localities, progress, thereof, will be at hand. He has a big family, consisting of one wife, one daughter, and two sons and two daughters-in-law, four grandchildren, altogether 10 members. "Since the past 11-12 generations, the Khatwe communities have been residing at the southern foot of the Chure hills and all through they have been treated as untouchables. "I can not recall any Khatwe family, being recognized as well-to-do and living luxuriously. Living on meager source of livelihood, they somehow meet their basic needs by selling fire-woods collected from the nearby jungles, while some others work as daily wage- earners," says Anirudra. As an exception, he runs a small medical store in his own locality. As a child, he felt very humiliated, when the so-called high caste people instructed him to stay away from them; but, I had no alternative but to obey the order." he recalls. He wanted transformation of the society. But it was a wishful dream since he was all alone and helpless due to his poor economic condition. When he observed that all the affected people got united in

the form of a SF, he felt very elated and encouraged



especially when his fellow people listened to him positively. Soon after that he underwent rights-focused training. He gained additional knowledge through his participation in various public meetings and finally he dedicated himself to the mission. "Assuming the role a human-rights activist, my enthusiasm enhanced greatly and, soon I approached various local government, local NGOs, VDCs and DDC office, located in the district headquarters of Saptari district and tapped the resources, set aside for public welfare enhancement. I led the campaigning against discriminations and in this connection, I tapped financial resources amounting to Rs.37,000 from VDCs. Out of the fund, Rs. 17,000 were spent on public awareness programme which included as human rights awareness, campaigning against caste-based discriminations, public sanitary awareness, and organizing seminars / discussion forums on public concerns such as promotion of literacy. Skills development training was organized for rural women at a cost of Rs 10,000. In his SF there were both women and men as members without any discrimination. Responding to the query as to how he felt about caste-based discrimination in the past, he has a recollection of bitter experiences in this regard. In the past, the houses of the high-caste people appeared to him as if there were castles normally seen in New Delhi, where entrance for us is prohibited. When he is invited to a party hosted by high caste people, he is required to stay away from other invitees and no entrance beyond the main gate. There was separate arrangement for drinking water collection from the public tap / well. The water taps, set aside for his community, were located far away, and they got dried up during the dry season. Whereas, the water

taps used by the high-caste people have perennial water supply in all seasons, but they were debarred from collecting water from the taps. They were not allowed even to get physical touch with high caste people, in case they did, they were punished. They had to work as labour without pay in the agro-farms owned by high caste people. During lunch-time, they were given dry and low-grade food and they were required to eat them, sitting at a remote corner. As remuneration for the labour, we get only two kg paddy mixed with roughage. How do you find the difference now? In reply, he said, "Life has become very easier; we have now been able to live in equality. We are not required to wash off the tea glass in which we are served tea in the restaurant. Our children are treated equally with other kids in the schools; they are not required to study, staying aloof and separate from other class-fellows. With the support from SAMAGRA, we have learned a lot; we have installed eight foot-pump, donated by DDC and other local institutions. Similarly, we have also other water pumps for drinking water. Wells have been renovated". He had made a list of the offices he has visited seeking assistance and the seminars/public meetings that he had attended. He got stationary including some paper boxes, donated by DDC which he utilized in maintaining the book-keeping records and in inventory management. When he was asked how he managed to be self-reliant by undertaking income generating business, he replied in the following words, "Our collective saving fund, collected from 26 household members who paid monthly contributions at the rate of Rs 20 each, amounted to Rs. 30,000. We have deposited the money in a bank which is loaned out to our members on the basis of urgency assessment, and the interest, thus earned, is added up to the cumulated fund. Those who borrow loan from the collective fund, repay the loan with interest honestly as per the rule. Having undergone vocational training, the female members have tried their hands at different trades. For example, some have tried vegetable farming; some others have planted fruit trees (bearing mango and lichi fruits). An awareness has commonly dawned on all that they should undertake some kind of business of their own to lead independent lives and it is inappropriate to rely on others all the time, working in their farm lands as farm labour. The labourers' wage rate has also been raised. These days, nobody works as a casual labour at a rate less than 5 kg of paddy per day". On being

asked what was the most impressive work he had performed so far, he replied that he was instrumental in delivering dalit certificates to ten dalit members through the members of National Dalit Commission, which enabled them to get easy access to all facilities or quota set aside only for dalit community. Concluding his observations, he said at the end as follows, "we have achieved a lot through the medium of SF. We do not allow anybody to indulge in human rights violations. Since we have discussed a lot about this publicly, in case somebody is found to have violated human rights in dealing with others, we make official complaints against him/her and get them registered in the concerned offices seeking legal actions against the culprit. Consequently, situation has turned out much better. We resolve local conflicts by ourselves unlike in the past when we were obliged to approach, in slave-like humility, the socially recognized people holding authorities, such as landlords, team of five senior villagers, etc. seeking justice. Social life has thus become very easier as we are not required to act as slaves and we are living in peace and harmony. We are happy because we commonly share amongst ourselves our woes and pleasures. We are the masters of our own ..."

#### Activities accomplished in Falgun (Mar - Apr)

Activities	No. of Participants				
	Title	No.	Male	Female	Total
Human rights monitoring at the local level		31	513	176	689
Awareness campaigns against human rights violation		18	703	228	931
Pre-implementation study		3	139	49	188
SF level Orientation (OD)		156	3041	787	3824
Awareness Campaign for the fulfillment of civil/political rights		64	1142	229	1371
Participatory Planning and Resource mapping		23	301	202	421
Celebration of human rights related days		33	1073	434	1507
Events on peace & harmony		10	322	114	436
Resources / Rights claiming		7	116	43	159

#### 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)