



Social Families

In the Empowerment of Marginalized Communities



SAMAGRA

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Observation Tour of Social Families by DanidaHUGOU officials

On 26th and 27th February, a team of DanidaHUGOU senior officials led by Programme Coordinator Mr. Lars P. Christensen visited Dhading and Gorkha districts on an observation mission. The visiting team also included Ms. Melisha and Mr. Mukunda Kattel, Human Rights Advisor. They had interactions with the members of the Pancha Kankya Social Family in Gajuri, Dhading and Janajagaran SF located in Prithivi Narayan Municipality, Gorkha. They also observed their field level activities. Soon after the interactions, the team also visited the SAMAGRA's district offices of Dhading and Gorkha and met with the field staff.



Presenting his observation, Mr. Christensen said "Social families have been facilitating the improvement of the quality of lives of the local people through awareness creation, promoting mutual cooperation, social cohesion, motivating the parents to send their children (specially girls) to schools on compulsory basis, and promoting sanitary consciousness and income generation activities. It is a pleasure to observe that the SF members have been living in a social environment of equality with dignity to all. It is a unique and innovative way of empowering poor and marginalized people and providing them with a feeling of high value and equal rights. The social families have also been exhibiting their empowerment by mobilizing the local resources. It sounds very interesting and relevant to observe that the social families extend financial assistance and moral / physical support to any family member as part of the institutional values while passing through mourning period mood due to the demise of a family member or during periods of sickness or maternity or wedding ceremony. Following the rules, they are used to contributing to the concerned family members in cash, or materials as assistance. This is a new form of Social Insurance / Security. It is heartening to learn that the social families have been able to coordinate their activities with the local authorities and bring projects from the central level. We are very happy to be partner of SAMAGRA and helping the SFs. I earnestly wish that social families continue the activities with greater energy"



“We are all equal and have equal access to all rights. All are equal without any discrimination. The process to access public services should be equal to all and without discrimination. No matter what caste we are born in, we are all equal. In political terms as well, we are equal and this notion is very relevant, specially when we are in the process of making ‘New Nepal’. We are not yet free from conflict; we have been facing several internal conflicts amongst ourselves. But we should never let it develop into violence. We can resolve all issues through peaceful methods. This is exactly what SAMAGRA is directed to. And it is quite a noble method as it can help us realize social transformation. It is necessary that the national political leaders learn a lot from the social families”

Prior to that, the social family members were competing one another to express their feelings/experiences about how their SFs had effected positive social impacts affecting themselves and the society in general. For example, Ms Biba Acchami, the secretary of Janajagan SF observed that all the women, soon after their involvement in the SF, got equal access to the single public drinking water service, without caste-based discrimination. They participated freely and independently in the SFs meeting, making an end to the practice of untouchability and caste-based discrimination. They also introduced private toilet facility at their homes, announcing the VDC as free from the open air toilet practices. Similarly the voiceless women have been transformed into effective public speakers. The practice of regular public savings instituted by SF led to the formation of Cooperative, currently in operation has benefited the people in several ways. Another senior citizen added saying “We are the mothers-in-law belonging to old generations freely participated in the meeting along with their young daughters-in-law, extend the helping hands to complete the works together and take food together commonly. I feel surprised to the changes we underwent comparing the Pre-SF and post SF environments.



Completion of the District level Human Rights and Conflict management Training

A three-day district level Leadership Development Training programme was organized at Gorkha bazaar from 26 – 28 February. There were 27 participants from Gorkha, Dhading and Lamjung districts. Of them, 16 were women and 20 persons were Dalits and Janajatis. In the inaugurating ceremony of the training event, the chief guest, the honorable District Judge Ms. Prabha Basnet observed that SAMAGRA had dedicated itself to its mission on transforming marginalized communities through awareness creation and that was appreciable as it promoted the culture of self-development instead of depending on state support.



She, however, cautioned that while struggling for an access to rights must not hamper others to enjoy their own rights. In the inaugural ceremony, several local dignitaries and office chiefs



representing government offices, press, civil society were present. All the speakers including LDO, District education Officer, Police deputy- superintendent, Assistant CDO, Senior Agricultural Development Officer commonly observed that SAMAGRA' endeavour towards upgrading the quality of lives of the local people through the adoption of inclusion through Social Family model has proved to be effective. They further wished that SAMAGRA make special efforts in future to bring the isolated and remote-located marginalized communities to their domain of target communities. They also wished that such kind of training might empower the SF to make solid advances towards the goal. The content of the training

included rights, duty, concept of human rights, the national and international human rights laws; HR violations & abuses, roles of SFs in protection and promotion of human rights, human rights monitoring, conflict cause analysis and tools negotiation, rights-based approach and advocacy techniques. The key resource persons / facilitators were HR Advisor Mr. Mukunda Kattel from DanidaHUGOU and Prem Raj Dhungel and Amar Adhikari from SAMAGRA.

At the concluding ceremony, Sthaneshor Duwadi, the central member of Human rights and Peace Society, distributed the certificates to the participants. On the occasion, he observed that such trainings would help the participants accessing their rights at the critical period of drafting of national constitution. From among the participants, Kamala Kumal, chairperson of Gorkah Phulbari SF; Urmila Lama, Chairperson of Rairang SF of Dhading District; and Ranjita Tiwari, Secretary of Chiti Lamjung-based Manangbeshi SF, all spoke in appreciation of the training as it had proven to be result-oriented. The participants expressed their commitment to share their acquired knowledge and skills with their SF colleagues and friends and also would put those lessons into practice.



Inauguration of SF Building

At a public ceremony, a local elderly citizen Phaiba Tamang inaugurated the new constructed SF building owned by Annapurna SF, Khoplang of Gorkha. The building was constructed at the total cost Rs. 145,000. Khoplang VDC and the local community forest management committee contributed each Rs 10,000 for the construction of the building. The remaining amount was raised partly through the public singing (Deusi-Bhailo at the festivals) and partly through labour contribution from the SF members as reported by Mrs. Manashree Tamang, Chairperson of the SF. She further added that the building would be utilized in conducting the periodical meeting of the SF and in accommodating social public ceremonies.



Participation in the People-centred Advocacy Workshop

SAMAGRA took participation in the capacity development workshop on People-centered Advocacy, an international level workshop cum conference, organized by DanidaHUGOU for the benefit of its strategic partners. The workshop cum seminar, held at Dhudikhel from 19-22 January, was jointly conducted by resource persons from Global Rights, USA and National Center for Advocacy Studies (NCAS), Pune. The participants and resources persons held intensive discussions following the presentations on advocacy related case studies from Nepal and India and the training focused also on the different techniques of advocacy. On the concluding day, the executive chiefs of all 13 NGOs and DanidaHUGOU were present. At the meeting, discussion focused on how the lessons learnt from the workshop cum seminar would be put into effect in their respective organizations and on furthering co-partnership amongst the strategic partners. Besides, the related plan of action was formulated.

Annual Ceremony and General Assembly of Annapurna SF

Annapurna SF of Khoplang VDC, Gorkha, convened its annual meeting as well as the first GA meeting on 30th January that coincided with the celebration of the Martyr Day. On the occasion, the local eldest citizen Paitu Tamang was invited as the chief guest and the function was chaired by SF chairperson Ms. Mansari Tamang. Sita Shrestha, Secretary of the SF presented the progress report for the last year as well as the workplan for the coming year. As per the report, SF made an income of Rs 228,263 against the total expenditure of Rs. 205,000 for that year. She observed that as a result of the SF efforts, the community women had become more organized and empowered with improved knowledge on human rights, enhanced rights- based awareness. At the initiative of the SF a community building had been built and the advocacy for public cleanliness and hygiene had been ongoing.



Under the framework of the approved SF work plan for the ensuing year, the SF members would participate in the VDC council meeting being held on Falgoon (February); take initiative in cleaning the road linking Bimire with Annapurna Temple; initiative for launching literacy classed in Chaitra (March). They would also request for the medical assistance service combining the services of Gorkha based Ayurvedic establishing linkage with District hospital doctors. They would approach the district agricultural office to seek improved variety of paddy seeds in Jestha (May) and start afforestation programme in Ashad(June) and clean road on Sravan(July) and so on .



The GA meeting elected the new executive committee for the SF. Accordingly, Mansari Tamang had been elected for the position of chairperson; Mankajee Shrestha for the post of vice-chairperson, Sita Shrestha for the post of secretary; Sushma Shrestha for the post of deputy- secretary; Dhan Kunari Shrestha for the post of treasurer. The other elected members were Eka Laxmi Shrestha, Parbati Shrestha ; Dhanmaya Tamang; Suka Maya Tamang. A cultural team presented dances etc. in celebration of the eventful occasion

Overview of the regular activities undertaken in the month of Magh & Falgun

Activities		No. of activities	Participants		
			Female		
1.1	Human Rights monitoring at the local level	1	29	5	34
1.3	Awareness campaigns against human rights violation	2	59	52	111
2.4	Regional level training on human rights & conflict transformation	1	15	12	27
2.6	SF level orientation on human rights, conflict transformation & good governance.	3	77	25	102
2.10	Network / Linkage / Lobbying	7 organizations			
3.2	Post-conflict re-conciliation events	1	3	18	21
3.3	Events on peace & harmony	1	30	3	33
	Workshop on organizational development of SFs	20 Social Families			

Transformation of Sataun Devi, a Voiceless Dalit Woman, into a Human Right Activist

Sataun Devi, 46 years, was born in ward 5 of Hardiya VDC and lives with the family of six members. In the beginning, she could not express herself eloquently (voiceless) and used to move around covering her face in veil and scared to talk with unknown persons. The economic condition of the family was very poor and all the family members earned wages working as casual labour. In 2061, Jana Kalyan Social Family (SF) came into being in her VDC. She felt that the credit to her career development went to the SF. She became the chairperson of the SF. She took participation in various training programmes including human rights. She is now conversant in several aspects of rights-based advocacy. In coordination with the district cottage industry department office, training on noodle making business was conducted. Similarly, the social family members acquired assistance from livestock development office in the form of two goats for each recipient for rearing as part of their drive for promoting income generating businesses. Organized and empowered under the SF, they approached different public service agents for tapping their resources and they have thus been able to mobilize financial assistance worth Rs. 1,000,000. She said "With the knowledge related to women's rights/empowerment that I gained, I have now become an advocate for women rights. Since I have engaged my family members to different income generating activities, I don't face any difficulty to run the household financially. I am now relieved from the burden of earning income as manual worker. I have now become a GA member of SAMAGRA. I get invitations to attend to different public events. I am now being recognized as a women leader. I find busy all through attending different public events. By undergoing the empowerment process in the SF, I have been living in the society with self- confidence and dignity."



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