

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



॥ समता फाउण्डेशन ॥

SAMATA foundation

"Striving towards a just and inclusive society, free from all forms of discrimination."

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

Samata Foundation proudly commemorates fifteen years of championing social justice for Dalits and marginalized communities across Nepal and South Asia. Over this period, we have transformed into a reputable think tank, leveraging intellectual rigor, rigorous research, and evidence-based policy advocacy to eradicate caste-based discrimination and advance inclusion of Dalits in Nepal.



During the Constitution drafting process, our cross-party dialogues and sustained engagement with political leaders,

Constituent Assembly members, and civil society actors ensured that Dalit perspectives informed critical provisions. Our advocacy contributed to enshrining Dalit rights in the Constitution, amending the Caste-based Discrimination and Untouchability Act, and drafting the Dalit Empowerment Bill.

Our network of more than 150 Dalit Human Rights Defenders facilitates grassroots access to justice for survivors of caste-based atrocities. Complementing this, our legal aid and strategic litigation services have empowered systematically disadvantaged Dalits to seek redress. With over 75 publications to date, our research shapes academic discourse; Tribhuvan University, Nepal's foremost institution, regularly incorporates our findings into its curricula.

Recognizing the intersectionality of caste, we have broadened our focus to encompass gender, sexuality, labor, migration, climate change, and mass media. In Madhesh Province, 160 young Dalit women serve as Youth Ambassadors for Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights and Gender based Violence, collaborating with local governments across all 136 municipalities to develop responsive policies and programs.

As we enter our sixteenth year, we reaffirm our commitment to realizing the egalitarian vision enshrined in our Constitution. In partnership with allied civil society organizations, we are advancing Dalit Rights Bills in each of Nepal's seven provinces and forging solidarity among all marginalized communities. Looking ahead, Samata Foundation will continue generating new knowledge, cultivating inclusive leadership, advocating for constitutional implementation, and elevating caste discourse on national and international platforms.

On behalf of the Board and the entire Samata Foundation family, I extend heartfelt gratitude to our government partners, donors, media allies, and fellow advocates for their unwavering support. We look forward to your continued collaboration as we pursue a just, inclusive society.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Madan Prasad Pariyar'.

Dr. Madan Prasad Pariyar
Chairperson

ABBREVIATION FULL FORM

- **GBV** Gender-Based Violence
- **SRHR** Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
- **CGS** Caste, Gender & Sexuality
- **CBO** Community-Based Organization
- **DHRD** Dalit Human Rights Defender
- **ADRF** Asia Dalit Rights Forum
- **APFDC** Asian Parliamentarians Forum on Dalit Concerns
- **ADRN** Asia Democracy Research Network
- **CBDU** Caste-Based Discrimination and Untouchability
- **LEA** Law Enforcement Agency
- **HRV** Human Rights Violation
- **FFM** Fact-Finding Mission
- **NOREC** Norwegian Agency for Exchange Cooperation
- **DASCOH** Development Association for Self-reliance, Communication and Health
- **DRCSC** Development Research Communication and Services Centre
- **CPJ** Center for Peace and Justice
- **SM** Sexual Minority
- **TECSAI** Combating the Impacts of Climate Change in Severely Affected Areas of the Ganges-Brahmaputra Basin in South Asia

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VISION

Samata Foundation envisions creation of a just and inclusive society free from all forms of discrimination.

GOAL



- To produce adequate knowledge to foster Dalit rights and Social Inclusion.
- To influence the policy makers of the country through informed-policy advocacy in formulating the Dalit friendly policies and laws and ensure the effective implementation of the same.
- To develop Samata Resource Centre as one of the major resource centres leading to 'Dalit Knowledge Bank' in future.
- To develop Samata Foundation as an 'emerging' independent think-tank on Dalit issues and rights.



VALUES

Integrity, Empathy, Equity, Trust & Voice against injustice



MISSION

Samata Foundation strives to make a meaningful contribution in Nepal and globally to the protection of human rights and dignity of Dalits and other marginalized groups.



INTRODUCTION

Samata Foundation was officially registered under the Company Act, 2063 BS as a profit-not-sharing organization in 2009. It engages in research both empirical and policy, and informed advocacy for the rights of marginalized people, especially Dalit social groups, both from Hill and Madhesh.

Samata Foundation firmly believes that desired change can be achieved by involving critical youth mass of Dalit and non-Dalit, disseminating knowledge, encouraging civic participation and preparing individuals from Dalit social groups to become leaders of the next generation. In this manner, it has been engaging in different thematic areas such as: Democracy and Good governance; Dalit Human Rights; Social Inclusion; Climate Change; Gender-based Violence (GBV) and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR); Land, Livelihoods and Food Rights; Caste Gender & Sexuality (CGS); and Culture, Education and Media.

Samata Foundation is emerging as an independent think-tank specializing in caste related issues concerning Dalit community of Nepal. Samata Foundation believes it has a crucial role in generating concrete and scientific information to bring positive changes in society, helping to develop appropriate policies and suitably amend when deemed necessary. Samata Foundation envisions creating a caste-based discrimination and untouchability free society in days to come.

With the financial support from various funding partners, Samata Foundation conducts various programs concerning Dalit and social exclusion issues through research, informed-advocacy, capacity building of Dalit youths, high level policy dialogues and discussions, and operation of Samata Foundation resource center to achieve its intended objectives. In this regard, researchers from Dalit social group have been involving in various activities mainly conduction of studies, compilation and analysis of Dalit related data, translation of documents related to Dalit issues both in Nepali and English language, providing necessary supports to Parliamentarians/Lawmakers with fact-based information, publications, review of existing government policies and laws on Dalit issues.



Research and
Evidence-
based Informed
Policy
Advocacy



Publication,
Communication
and Outreach



Cultivating
Leadership



Human Rights
and Justice



Our research seeks to expand the body of knowledge specific to issues and experiences of Dalit communities and other under-represented groups within Nepal. We have published a wide variety of books and resources covering ethnographic studies, social and political movements, philosophy, history, and literature related to Dalit communities and caste-systems. These resources have been produced to provide public an access to critical research works and raise awareness for positive change. In addition to publishing books, we produce advocacy briefs for necessary policy reviews and provide succinct recommendations to advance the rights of marginalized groups.

We conduct independent as well as collaborative research with partners. The outcomes of research are integrated into advocacy tools such as policy papers, advocacy briefs, informational briefs, newsletters, campaign materials etc. to disseminate among major stakeholders. The findings of research are scrupulously used for advocacy purposes for positive societal transformation.

Our policy advocacy efforts have aided law enactment processes and campaign for the amendment procedure of existing laws and regulations concerning Dalits human rights. Our advocacy and lobbying actions are extended to regional and international level. At the regional level campaigning and lobbying, Samata Foundation engages with the Asia Dalit Right Forum (ADRF). Asian Parliamentarians Forum on Dalit Concerns (APFDC) and Asia Democracy Research Network (ADRN).

1. Unheard Voices: Unveiling the Potentials of Dalit Women and Sexual Minorities in the Hills

A brief research study was conducted in Kathmandu, Sindupalchowk, and Dhading districts to explore the untapped potential of Dalit women and Dalit sexual minorities, focusing on their abilities as creators, leaders, and thinkers in the context of caste, gender, and sexuality (CGS). The study involved focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIs), with two of each conducted per district. Fieldwork took place on November 26th, 27th, and 29th, 2024, engaging 48 Dalit women and young girls, along with in-depth interviews of six Dalit sexual minorities. The research revealed valuable insights into their creativity, leadership qualities, and philosophical perspectives, areas previously underexplored.



2. Consultation Meeting on Engendering New Narratives on Caste, Gender & Sexuality in Nepal



A consultation meeting on Engendering New Narratives on Caste, Gender, and Sexuality was held on 6 December 2024 at Alfa House, Mid-Baneshwor, Kathmandu, Nepal. The event was well-organized and focused on fostering collective action to influence policies related to caste, gender, and sexuality (CGS) at both local and national levels. The meeting brought together 30 participants from three districts, including elected Dalit women representatives from rural municipalities, women-led civil society organizations (CSOs), and representatives of sexual minorities as well as women from the community level. The other participants included such as elected Dalit women, members from municipal executives, political leaders, advocates, social activists, media personnel, and representatives from various CSOs specializing in CGS issues. The primary objective of the consultation was to gather insights and guidance for future planning and actions aimed at creating new, inclusive narratives around caste, gender, and sexual minorities. The participants, including Dalit women social activist and Dalit sexual minorities, shared their lived experiences.



During the discussions, many of them expressed their aspirations of becoming leaders, creators, and thinkers, while highlighting the challenges they face, such as financial constraints and restrictive societal and familial norms. The consultation concluded with specific recommendations to pave the way forward for bringing meaningful change in the lives of Dalit women and sexual minorities (SMs).

3. State of Dalit Women in Nepal and Bangladesh: A Comparative Study



Samata Foundation research team has started new research on Dalit women in Bangladesh and Nepal. Researchers from Nagorik Uddyog in Bangladesh and Samata Foundation have jointly started to work on this research: "State of Dalit Women in Bangladesh and Nepal: A Comparative Study".

As a part of broad research fellows from Nepal and Bangladesh visited fields in Nepal and Bangladesh intervening Dalit communities and colonies. Case studies and reports on findings are drafted.



4. National Level Policy Dialogue with Political Decision Makers on Climate Change

On the 29th of December, Samata Foundation conducted a national-level policy dialogue among political decision-makers on climate change. During the program, Mr. Gopal Nepali presented a paper that covered three main points. First, assessment of the impact of climate change on Dalit communities.

Second, exploration of the existing local coping strategies in the Hills and Madhesh, and third, identification of the causes of climate vulnerability in four districts - Rolpa, Rukum-East, Siraha, and Saptari.



The dialogue was honoured with the presence of honorable, Ms. Rupa B.K., State Minister of Forest and Environment as the chief guest. The parliamentarians from the House of Representatives and National Assembly, government personnel, NGO representatives, and civil society leaders actively participated in the dialogue.



Research and Evidence-based Informed Policy Advocacy



Publication, Communication and Outreach



Cultivating Leadership



Human Rights and Justice



Since 2009, we have released over 60 publications. Our publications include books based on empirical research, policy papers, research reports, policy reviews, advocacy briefs, conference reports, newsletters, and annual reports. Publications are available in both Nepali and English language. In addition to published resources, information is shared through various other mediums including Samata Foundation's website, social media, radio, and video programs. Furthermore, talk programs and lectures series are conducted on a regular basis.

We have broadened the spectrum of our alliance at national and international levels for broader outreach and dissemination. At international level, we collaborate with the Asia Dalit Right Forum (ADRF) and Asia Democracy Research Network (ADRN).

In addition to contributing to building a greater body of knowledge about Dalits and their fundamental rights in Nepal, we have an on-site library i.e. Samata Resource Centre providing an open access to the public for availability pertinent information and research findings.

1. Dalit Human Rights Book, 2080

This book analyzes incidents of violence and discrimination faced by the Dalit community from a judicial perspective in Nepal in the year 2080 BS. The book captures thorough information of the incidents of Caste Based Discrimination and Untouchability (CBDU) against the Dalit community, actions taken by Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs), and a trend analysis of the nature of atrocities against Dalits. The basic objective of this book is to sensitize and hold the state accountable for the protection, promotion, and fulfillment of Dalit human rights. The details of these incidents are sought from various sources, including media monitoring, Dalit Human Rights Defenders (DHRDs), online and printed news media, Dalit Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Human Rights Institutions, and the National Dalit Commission.



2. Policy Briefs on Climate Justice

Three policy briefs were prepared under the project - Combating the Impacts of Climate Change in Severely Affected Areas of the Ganges-Brahmaputra Basin in South Asia (TECSA). The briefs are on 1) Impact of Climate Change on Dalit women, 2) Impact of Climate Change on Small Agricultural Sector, and 3) Differential Impact of Climate Change on Marginalized Communities in Nepal. These briefs are instrumental in reaching out to Lawmakers for climate concerns and help in devising appropriate laws for marginalized communities of Nepal.

<h3>नेपालका सीमान्तकृत समुदायमा जलवायु परिवर्तनको फरक प्रभाव</h3> <p>समता संश्लेषण नीतिपरिपत्र । अङ्क १७, माघ २०८१ । SAMATA foundation</p> <p>सूच्य</p> <p>जलवायु परिवर्तन भनेको कुनै निश्चित भौतिक स्वभावमा मात्रै लागू हुने कुरा होइन, यो सामाजिक, आर्थिक, सांस्कृतिक, लैंगिक, जातिगत, क्षेत्रीय, भौतिक, धार्मिक, शैक्षिक, स्वास्थ्य, रोजगार, आदि अनेकौं क्षेत्रमा असर गर्छ। जलवायु परिवर्तनको असर सबैलाई नभएर केही समुदायलाई मात्रै पर्छ। जलवायु परिवर्तनको असर सबैलाई नभएर केही समुदायलाई मात्रै पर्छ। जलवायु परिवर्तनको असर सबैलाई नभएर केही समुदायलाई मात्रै पर्छ।</p>	<h3>नेपालका दलित महिलामा जलवायु परिवर्तनको प्रभाव</h3> <p>समता संश्लेषण नीतिपरिपत्र । अङ्क १५, माघ २०८१ । SAMATA foundation</p> <p>सूच्य</p> <p>जलवायु परिवर्तनको असर सबैलाई नभएर केही समुदायलाई मात्रै पर्छ। जलवायु परिवर्तनको असर सबैलाई नभएर केही समुदायलाई मात्रै पर्छ। जलवायु परिवर्तनको असर सबैलाई नभएर केही समुदायलाई मात्रै पर्छ।</p>	<h3>कृषि उत्पादनमा जलवायु परिवर्तनको प्रभाव</h3> <p>समता संश्लेषण नीतिपरिपत्र । अङ्क १६, माघ २०८१ । SAMATA foundation</p> <p>सूच्य</p> <p>जलवायु परिवर्तनको असर सबैलाई नभएर केही समुदायलाई मात्रै पर्छ। जलवायु परिवर्तनको असर सबैलाई नभएर केही समुदायलाई मात्रै पर्छ। जलवायु परिवर्तनको असर सबैलाई नभएर केही समुदायलाई मात्रै पर्छ।</p>
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Research and Evidence-based Informed Policy Advocacy



Publication, Communication and Outreach



Cultivating Leadership



Human Rights and Justice

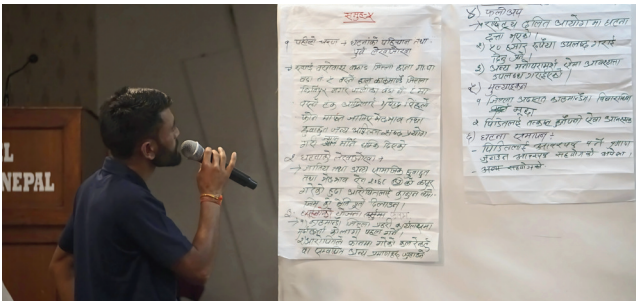


Through the creation of leadership programs and youth mobilization, we organize trainings for Dalit and non-Dalit Nepali youth under fellowship opportunities, courses, and educational events. Through fellowships and Dalit Human Right Defenders programs, we create pathways for youth and individuals engaging in human rights work to build upon their skills and knowledge to become leaders of Dalit communities in Nepal.

Our trained volunteers, the Dalit Human Rights Defenders (DHRDs) located throughout Nepal work to defend the rights of Dalit community members. They act as watchdogs based at their respective community level monitor and document incidents of Dalit human rights violations (DHRVs), support fact-finding Missions of Samata Foundation, engage with law enforcement agencies and local/provincial governments. The DHRDs carry out advocacy, educational and capacity-building initiatives related to the elimination of discrimination and control of HR violations against Dalit communities in Nepal. Currently, we have over 100 DHRDs throughout Nepal.

We have trained a number of Young Dalit girls from Madhesh Province. These young Dalit Madhesi girls are the Youth Ambassadors endowed with specific knowledge and skills on Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR). To date, there are 160 Youth Ambassadors from Madhesh who are aspiring Dalit leaders working in their community and who in turn help empower other young people within their communities.

1. Training of Trainers (ToT) for Dalit Human Rights Defenders on Case Management



A total of 23 Dalit Human Rights Defenders (DHRDs) from Karnali Province participated in the Training of Trainers (TOT) on CBDU Case Management. CBDU case management is a comprehensive six-step procedure that is designed to support the victims of CBDU amid the justice-seeking process. It prioritizes providing support to the victims through a referral mechanism, bringing local stakeholders together to address the multi-dimensional issues encountered by the victims. The six-day training program aimed to equip the DHRDs with the skills and knowledge needed to become official trainers in Human Rights and Case Management. Several sessions were conducted to enhance the comprehension level of Human Rights Defenders, providing an

in-depth understanding of their roles, responsibilities, and the unique challenges they face in advocating for Dalit rights. Additionally, the sessions focused on the intersectionality of gender and Dalit human rights, examining how gender dynamics influence the experiences and challenges faced by Dalit Human Rights Defenders. Strategies for addressing these intersecting issues were also discussed. One of the sessions provided a comprehensive introduction to Human Rights and Dalit Rights, explaining the fundamentals of Case Management and illustrating legal frameworks and mechanisms. This session also covered trial procedures for cases and detailed the specific processes involved in Case Management within the context of Nepal.

2. Training on Disaster Management and Climate Risk Preparedness

On the 22-23 of February 2024, the Samata Foundation team organized a ToT on disaster management and climate risk preparedness at Lahan, Siraha districts. The ToT was aimed at transferring knowledge and skills from DHRDs to all CBO members in four districts.



An expert from the Department of Agriculture - Lahan Municipality conducted the session on climate-smart agriculture and the effects of climate change on the agricultural sector, and measures to reduce the impact of climate change on the agricultural sector.

An Expert in disaster management delivered a session on climate-induced disasters, disaster prevention, preparedness, and adaptation to climate change, and preventive measures for flood, before/during/ after the emergency. He explained the disaster scenario in the context of Nepal and hazard ranking, Disaster Management Cycle, etc. In this session, he explained the climate risks, exposure, vulnerability, and resilience strategies. The expert briefly highlighted the disaster risk management (DRM) policies.



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Human Rights
and Justice



Our work in social justice and human rights includes investigation into Caste-based Discrimination and Untouchability (CBDU) and advocacy for its elimination. Since 2013, a series of fact-finding missions on Human Rights Violations (HRV) incidents have been carried out involving Dalit individuals who have been targeted because of their caste and experienced intimidation, discrimination, or violence. Fact-finding missions are carried out throughout Nepal to bring justice to the individuals and communities impacted by acts of discrimination and violence.

During the time of incident(s) or a possible occurrence of human rights violations, a Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) is carried out by staff member(s) and a team of volunteers trained under the Dalit Human Rights Defenders (DHRD) programs. FFM sensitively collects the detailed information and evidence of caste-based discrimination and atrocities against Dalits from incident sites and presents it to parliamentarians, lawmakers, and law enforcement agencies at the local and national levels appropriately for necessary actions and justice.

Rojan's Beacon: Shining Light Through the Shadows of Caste and Identity



Rojan, a brave trans man, embodies the intersectional struggles faced by Sexual Minorities (SMs) in Nepal. His journey is one of resilience, determination, and a fight against societal norms that marginalize not just his gender identity but also his Dalit caste. From an early age, he understood his identity as a boy trapped in a girl's body. However, over time, his journey of self-discovery led to a deeper understanding within his family. After completing his School Education Examination (SEE), he chose to leave home to explore his identity further. Eventually, this process of growth and exploration helped his father come to terms with his son's true self. Today, his father is not only supportive but also embraces him wholeheartedly, celebrating his identity as a sexual minority with pride and acceptance. His own experiences as a Dalit SM further compounded his challenges. When he tried to rent a room, landlords rejected him upon discovering his caste, even after accepting his gender identity. According to him, Hill Dalit SMs face heightened isolation compared to Madhesh Dalit SMs, who benefit from traditional recognition and closer-knit communities. This geographic and cultural disparity adds another layer of struggle for Hill Dalit SMs, who remain hidden and unsupported in their localities. Despite these hardships, SMs like Nikisha Shrestha, a talented dancer, showcase incredible artistry. Nikisha's performances highlight her skills, yet she faces relentless trolling and ridicule on social media due to her gender identity. Her sexuality overshadows her talent, limiting her growth compared to cisgender women in the same field. He observes that SM artists are celebrated only until their identity becomes known, after which they face harassment in various forms—verbal, physical, and sexual. But at the same time, it is crucial for society to recognize and honor the platform these artists occupy, especially in the realm of theater, where their talents go beyond just performance. The SM Artists in this field bring immense value to culture, offering fresh perspectives and new ideas. Their work should be respected for its depth, creativity, and capacity to break societal norms. Instead of reducing the conversation to ridicule, there should be more emphasis on understanding the power and significance of these platforms for creative expression. The true value of an artist lies in their ability to push boundaries, and this should be acknowledged by all, from mainstream media to social media platforms, in order to create an environment of genuine support and recognition. SMs, particularly those from Dalit communities, are often excluded from opportunities in NGOs and INGOs. Unlike non-Dalit SMs, who achieve higher education with some societal support, Dalit SMs rarely attain the same level of education or access to resources. Though present in some Palikas, public development programs fail to reach Dalit SMs due to a lack of networks and connections. Mental health challenges are prevalent among SMs, especially during puberty when confusion about their sexuality is compounded by practical issues like deciding which restroom to use. The absence of safe spaces to discuss sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) exacerbates their isolation. The resilience of Dalit SMs is evident in their leadership qualities. Their ability to adapt and thrive in adverse circumstances is a testament to their inner strength. Despite societal rejection, he and others like him continue to advocate for their rights and push for visibility. Dalit SMs are talented, resilient individuals who deserve recognition and support. Their journey, though marred by prejudice, is a powerful narrative of courage and the quest for equality. His story reminds us that inclusive development is only possible when every individual, regardless of gender or caste, is given a fair chance to thrive.

NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL MEETING, WORKSHOP AND TRAININGS

1. Felicitation Ceremony of PhD Scholars from Dalit Community



A historical event was organized on 8th November 2024 in Alfa House for the recognition of Dalit PhD Scholars. The event was followed by a book launching ceremony.

The program began with a welcome speech delivered by Dr. Madan Pariyar, the Chairperson of Samata Foundation. He welcomed the Chief Guest, Hon'ble Rupa B.K. State Minister for Forest and Environment, Founder President Padam Sundas of Samata Foundation, and other distinguished guests, including political leaders, intellectuals, activists, and Media persons from the Dalit community. During the speech, Chairperson highlighted the journey of Samata Foundation on research and evidence-based policy for advocating and supporting policymakers for the formulation and amendment of Dalit-friendly policies.

The names of 30 Dalit scholars with a PhD degree were announced. Each scholar present at the event was honored with a certificate of honor. Dr. Rabina G. Rasaily thanked the event organizer on behalf of the Dalit scholars with a speech with the words with appreciation. The event has been a huge inspiration for many younger Dalits who want to pursue a PhD degree program. The event was followed by felicitation of senior advocate Mr. Narayan Nepal for his contribution to the legal field.

Later, after the felicitation of the scholars, the Hon'ble State Minister initiated the launch of the book: "Dalit human rights book-2080".



2. The Semi-Annual Transnational Meeting to Combat Climate Change

A transnational meeting was concluded on June 30, 2024, at Hotel Landmark, Pokhara, Nepal, hosted by the Samata Foundation. Members from three countries namely Bangladesh, India, and Nepal, with the primary objectives of sharing experiences and learnings, and discussing the potential challenges the three countries face pertaining to climate change.

The project manager and Project Focal Persons from Samata Foundation, Development Association for Self-reliance, Communication and Health (DASCOH), Development Research Communication and Services Centre (DRCSC), and Mahideb Jubo Somaj Kallayan Somity (MJSKS) provided updates on their initiatives, major achievements, and challenges in their respective countries.



3. The Annual Transnational Meeting to Combat Climate Change



The 8th transnational meeting was held on 30th November and 1st December 2024, at Landmark Forest Park, Chitwan, Nepal, hosted by the Samata Foundation. Members from three countries, Bangladesh, India, and Nepal, gathered with the primary objectives of sharing experiences and learnings, and discussing potential challenges facing the three countries due to climate change.



The meeting was initiated by the Chairperson of Samata Foundation, Dr. Madan Prasad Pariyar, who delivered a welcome speech, expressing his gratitude for the successful completion of four years of the partnership and the exchange of experiences and learnings among the participants.

4. Training in Participatory Planning and Organizational Management

The training in Participatory Planning and Organizational Management was conducted in two provinces, Madhesh Province (Janakpur) and Lumbini Province (Bhalubang). A total of 66 participants, including DHRDs, CSO members, and CBO members from Siraha, Saptari, Rolpa, and Rukum East, participated in the training. The training was focused on the induction of knowledge on participatory planning and strengthening the organisational and analytical skills of the participants, promoting internal group accountability and transparency. Additionally, the participants received training in social entrepreneurship to equip them with the skills and interest necessary for starting new businesses using innovative ideas and local resources.



5. Annual Reflection Meeting of Climate Dalit Human Rights Defenders (DHRDs)

The Dalit Human Rights Defender (DHRD) annual reflection meeting was held from 22 to 24 December 2024 in Pokhara. The DHRDs are represented on behalf of different CSOs - Nepal National Dalit Social Welfare Organization (NNDSWO), Dalit Jana Kalyan Youth Club (DJKYC), Srijanshil Yuva Sanjal Nepal (CYN), and Dalit Women Awareness Center Nepal (DWAC) presented their experiences, challenges faced, and achievements.



The meeting provided an opportunity for all 21 DHRDs to share their individual experiences as climate champion DHRDs.

6. District Level Meeting & Discussion in Saptari, Siraha, Rukum West, and Rolpa

On September 2, 2024, a district-level meeting and half-yearly reflection were successfully held at Saptari. The program was attended by the chairman of NNDSWO Saptari, representatives from various government authorities and local NGOs, an officer from the agricultural department, and executive committee members from rural and municipal areas.



The meeting focused on addressing the growing concerns and impacts of climate change on local communities. The Dalit Human Rights Defenders (DHRDs) prepared the key discussion points based on the bi-monthly meeting agendas with the respective Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). One of the DHRDs emphasized issues related to agriculture, land, forests, biodiversity, and the need for forecasting and preparation for potential disasters such as fires and epidemics. Participants also raised concerns about Dalit human rights, women's rights, and other challenges exacerbated by climate change. The participants shared their views, discussing current climate change trends, including rising temperatures, erratic rainfall patterns, and extreme weather events affecting the district.



This meeting was held at Pacific Hotel Lahan, Siraha on 1 September 2024. It was attended by the chairman of the Dalit Jana Kalyan Youth Club (DJKYC) Lahan, Chief of the division forest office, Chief of the Department of Agriculture, and other government authorities, representatives from local NGOs, agricultural department officers, and executive committee members of the rural/municipalities.

A DHRD from Siraha gave a presentation on climate change trends, including temperature rise, erratic rainfall patterns, extreme weather, agriculture, land issues, forests, biodiversity, forecasting or preparedness for wildfires, epidemics, and other disasters. The participants shared their views, discussing current climate change trends in the district. The government authorities and political leaders expressed their commitment to support marginalized communities in climate-affected areas by conducting programs related to climate change.

The event was held on 26 September 2024, in Rukum East. The meeting was attended by the President of the District Coordination Committee (DCC), representatives from the Division of Forest Office, District Police Office, District Agriculture Office, Red Cross Society, and other executive members from Sisne Rural Municipality.



One of the DHRD gave a presentation on various issues related to climate change, focusing on hazards like landslides, as well as other concerns affecting Dalit human rights, women's rights, and child marriage in Rukum-East. A CSO member from Sisne 6, highlighted that Dalits were impoverished and marginalized due to the traditional beliefs of so-called upper-caste individuals, which historically confined the Dalit community to living near rivers and on sloped land. It was mentioned that the major issues in this area were landslides, drought, lightning, and water scarcity.

On 23 September 2024, an event was arranged in Rolpa. One of the local DHRDs facilitated the session, while another DHRD gave a presentation on the agendas gathered from the Community-Based Organization (CBO) meetings. The program was attended by the vice-president of the District Coordination Committee (DCC) and other guests,



including members of the DCC, the chief of disaster management, representatives from the District Forest Division Office, the Agriculture Knowledge Centre, and journalists. The chair of the District Journalist Association and the ward chairs of wards 1 and 6 of Rolpa Municipality were present as well.

A member of the CSO from Sunchhari stated that the major issue in this area is landslides. Another participant mentioned that most Dalits in the area were landless and were living on government land. Most of the speakers highlighted the importance of raising awareness against of climate change. One of the participants stated that the Agriculture Knowledge Center was consistently supportive of grassroots community-based organizations (CBOs) in providing agricultural knowledge. Representatives from the Disaster Management Office, the District Coordination Committee, the Division Forest Office, the Agriculture Knowledge Center, as well as journalists, ward chairs, and elected officials, all gave their feedback on the presentation and expressed their commitment to support marginalized communities regarding climate change and human rights issues.

7. International Seminar on Issues of Marginalized Communities Residing at Ganges-Brahmaputra Basin Areas

On 25th June 2024, Samata Foundation conducted the International Seminar on Issues of Marginalized Communities residing at Ganges-Brahmaputra basin areas under the project 'Combating the Impacts of Climate Change in Severely Affected Areas of the Ganges-Brahmaputra Basin in South Asia' (TECSAI).

The seminar was organized in partnership with NETZ, MJSKS, DRCSC and DASCOH. Participants were gathered from three countries; Nepal, Bangladesh, and India. The seminar was attended by approximately 49 people from various organizations working on climate change. Among the attendees, there were three members from the National Assembly, three were from the House of Representatives, one was a Mayor, and one was a Ward Chair who joined as a special guest.



Three papers were presented by each country representative, highlighting the current situation of climate impacts in South Asia. The impact on the settlers in Ganges-Brahmaputra basin area was thoroughly discussed. The coping strategies, adaptive capacity, and vulnerability were discussed. Experts shared views on joint strategies to cope with the situation in the Ganges-Brahmaputra basin areas.

8. Transnational Partners Meeting on Project Planning and Delivery

A two-day inception meeting was held in Dhaka on 18–19 September 2024. The primary recipient, Samata Foundation and sub-partners Nagorik Uddyog (NU) and Center for Peace and Justice (CPJ) participated in the meeting. The meeting was focused on the project's goals, activities, and timelines. All the organizations presented their roles and contributions, and a steering committee was formed to oversee the project's progress and decision-making. An interactive session was conducted to develop a detailed workplan outlining specific responsibilities, timelines, and deliverables.

The meeting was inaugurated by the welcome remarks by Dr. Madan Prasad Pariyar, the chairperson of Samata Foundation, followed by the remarks of the respective organizations by the head of the respective implementing partner organization. Zakir Hossain from NU and Dr. M. Sanjeev Hossain from CPJ briefly gave the remarks and shared about the possibilities of future collaboration with SF and NU.



The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss the project plan in detail, clarify roles, set expectations, and identify potential challenges.. Another important focus was reviewing and understanding the project's budget plan, ensuring all stakeholders were associated on resource allocation and financial management.

9. International Professional Fellowship (NOREC)

Two professional fellows from Samata Foundation, Nepal, and two from Nagorik Uddyog, Bangladesh, were mutually exchanged and groomed program under NOREC. The fellows spent about a year in home and host countries learning and contributing in areas such as human rights, women rights, child rights, right to information, research, advocacy, and network building. After a year-long program, each of the NOREC Exchange Participants received an experience certificate issued by NOREC during homecoming training at Park Village, Kathmandu.



10. Asia Democracy Research Network (ADRN) 15th Regional Workshop, Japan



Ujjwal Sundas from Samata Foundation presented a working paper on Vertical Accountability: Case of Nepal at the 15th Asia Democracy Research Network Regional Workshop in Tokyo, Japan, on 25-26th May 2024.

The workshop was attended by Scholars and Civil Society leaders from more than 14 nations in Asia. The study revealed the situation of vertical accountability in Nepal. The paper also highlighted the role of elected members and their accountability towards the public. It also emphasized the role of the Election Commission, Media, and Civil society organizations to hold elected members accountable to the Nepalese voters.

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Grant Award and Federal Financial Management Capacity Building Workshop

The Training was organized by the DRL U.S Department of State and facilitated by the DMP Group USA in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 30 April to 4 May 2024. Mr. Umesh Sapkota, Admin and Finance Manager of Samata Foundation participated in the workshop. The trainees had the opportunity to meet the federal award recipients around the globe and gain knowledge on the financial management system and compliance of the U.S department of State DRL grant awards.

This training was extremely valuable for Samata Foundation as a recipient to ensure the effective financial management and comply with the DRL grants regulations for the SURE project implemented in Nepal and Bangladesh.



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