



Dhanak of Humanity (DHANAK)

An organization of interfaith/caste couples

Annual Report 2015 -16

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

39 new individuals/couples from various places contacted DHANAK to seek counselling and support for their union, during the year 2015-2016. 26 cases were of interfaith background and 13 cases were related to inter-caste alliance. Out of 26 interfaith alliance cases, 17 are females are Muslims and Christian and 9 are Hindus.

The focus during the last year was to motivate aspiring couples for challenging the existing administrative practices related to marriage solemnisation under Special Marriage Act. Couples from state of Uttar Pradesh and Haryana were motivated for the same.

8 Perspective Building Meetings and Home Solidarity Visits (HSV) were organised with the couples in Delhi and NCR. Home Solidarity Visits are initiated as one of the new forms of meeting to extend solidarity and support to the newly married couples. Home Solidarity Visits are effective way of initiating social exposure of couple which is facing isolation after their decision of marriage based on right to choose.

Two meetings were organised under the banner of CHAYAN – A consortium for promotion of Right to Choice in Marriage and Alliance. The first CHAYAN meet was organised at Pune by Maharashtra Andhshradha Nirmulan Samiti (MANS). Second CHAYAN meet was organised at Delhi School of Social Work, New Delhi by DHANAK.

DHANAK participated in the activities organised by ANHAD and MANS, the two organisations are known for their work against faith and caste based polarisation. A debate on interfaith marriage was organised by ANHAD under its weekly debate named Baat Cheet. Similarly, MANS organised protest at Jantar Mantar for action against killings of Comrade Govind Pansare, Dr. Narendra Dabholkar and Dr.M.M. Kulbargi. DHANAK participated in both the activities and extended its solidarity for the cause.

The annual membership amount was raised from Rs.1200/- per couple to Rs.1200/- per individual which resulted in raising Rs. 66 thousand from the annual membership contribution. Rupees 30 thousand were received as donations from the individuals/couples in need for the help and support received by them from DHANAK. Rupees 1.63 Lakhs was raised for SAHAS 2016 in which around rupees 1.18 Lakhs was donation in the account of DHANAK and remaining rupees 45 thousand were the solidarity support from social organisations like Actionaid and Peace. The two organisations made the payment to the service provider directly and the money was not credited to DHANAK's account. Largely the expenses on printing of annual magazine, memento, stage and sound arrangements, food and lodging, etc. was covered by the solidarity support received from the two organisations.

DHANAK received its PAN (permanent account number) and is pursuing for 12 A and 80G certification.

ENDEAVOURS

A. Counselling and Support to Couples/Individuals

Around 55 old and new couples/individuals contacted DHANAK during the year were provided



socio-legal counselling related to their potential alliance or for their issues related to marital adjustments. 2 inter-caste couples were supported by providing accommodation and financial help due to threat to their life and liberty.

i. Reconciliation with Family

An inter-caste couple from Najafgarh, Delhi was referred to DHANAK after it received an order for police protection from Delhi High Court with the help of HRLN (Human Rights Law Network). The boy is orphan and the girl is Brahmin. There was a strong threat the family of the girl. So, the couple was helped by regular interaction with the parents of the girl over phone by DHANAK. The intervention of DHANAK by interacting with the family member of the girl resulted in easing the prevailing tension of forced separation and reconciliation with the family of the girl.

The couple was also assisted in registration of their marriage but, since the required papers for marriage registration of the boy was not complete therefore, the process got postponed. The marriage registration shall be facilitated on the basis of interest of the couple. Moreover, frequent shifting of house by the couple is also delaying the marriage registration process.



ii. Motivating Couples for Systemic Change

DHANAK tried to challenge the prevalent practices during the process of marriage solemnisation as per the Special Marriage Act by preparing the aspiring couples. Case study of one such couple from the state of Uttar Pradesh is given below.

Imran and Kritika

Imran contacted DHANAK over phone from Singrauli, Madhya Pradesh. The call was to get help in marriage solemnization with Kritika. The parents of couple are colleagues at Singrauli Coal Mines and stays as neighbours in the same township. Due to the same reason the couple was scared of their marriage solemnization in Madhya Pradesh and wanted to get it solemnized from Delhi. Imran was open for religious conversion of Kritika. He was also planning to shift to Delhi for his job and marriage. Moreover, Kritika found a job in Banaras, U.P. and was set to leave her parental house in M.P.

The couple was counseled against religious conversion and to get their marriage solemnized from U.P. by DHANAK. Once they agreed, help of AALI from Lucknow and MMS from Banaras was taken. AALI and MMS are also a member organization of CHAYAN. The couple was also motivated to challenge the practice of sending police enquiry and sending copies of intended marriage notice to the houses of the marrying couple by the office of Marriage Officer in U.P. The process of motivation and counseling took more than 2 months.

The Marriage Officer at Banaras delayed the acceptance of the papers till evening once he learnt that the boy is Muslim and the girl is Hindu. Later in the evening, after learning that, Kritika is using her rent agreement as address proof, he declined to accept the their papers for marriage. The Marriage Officer directed her to submit a letter of address confirmation from the local elected representative. The Councilor contacted by the MMS declined to give in writing. The MMS organization started exploring its other influential contacts and needed time.

In the mean time Imran got a job in Delhi but, the couple pursued the matter for a month. Later it decided to give up their efforts from U.P. and restart the process in Delhi. Imran used his house rent agreement and his official identity card while applying for re-applying for marriage solemnization in the office of Marriage Officer at Dist. South Delhi. He requested for police verification to authenticate the given address since his address proof was not a document issued by any government authority.

DHANAK met with the Marriage Officer to request her to issue directions to the SHO of concerned police station as the Marriage Officer. The Marriage Officer was avoiding to issue specific directions. Finally the couple managed to solemnize their marriage in Delhi after the efforts of 5 months.

iii. Financial Help to Couples in Need

Two couples in need were given financial help of Rs.20,000/- during the year. One was an inter-caste couple who was helped with Rs.10,000/- during an immediate need of financial help after the marriage. Another inter-religious couple, in live-in relationship was helped with Rs.10,000/- . Both the couples are based in Delhi. The financial help is given as a loan without interest. The money shall be returned in the form of donation by the couple as soon as the couple is in a stable financial situation.

B. Home Solidarity Visits (HSV)



It was realised by the members of DHANAK that it will be fruitful to shift the venue of Perspective Building Meetings by organising the meeting in the house of new member couples instead of couple of fixed venues. Such visits are named as Home Solidarity Visits. The decision was taken with consideration

to the fact that such meetings will prove to be a moral booster for a newly married couple who is facing the challenge of social recognition after their marriage.

Moreover, term perspective building was sounding too serious for young members. In most of the cases one of the couple is not that keen to discuss the present or prospective issues related to his/her marital life. So, renaming of perspective building meetings to home solidarity visits has increased the participation in meetings.

7 HSVs were organised during the year. They were organised on the month of April, May, June, August, September, October and December at Delhi, NOIDA and Gurgaon.



C. Home Exposure Visits (HEV)

Home Exposure Visits (HEV) is for newly married couple as a process of exposure and perspective building. Two couples, one from Rajasthan and the other from Delhi decided to go for HEV.

D. Mutual Learning by using Social Media

Mutual perspective building process is on with more than 500 individuals via Google Group, Emails and Whatsapp. The members can maintain their anonymity and all can participate irrespective of the distances.

E. SAHAS (Strengthening Alliances for Harmony and Secularism)

SAHAS 2016 was organised on 14th Feb 2016 at Delhi School of Social Work (DSSW), New Delhi. Around 200 individuals participated in the event that witnessed panel discussions, sharing, felicitation of couples and parents, fun activities for couples and their family.

Activities like discussions and sharing on issues of concern, taking the message of peace to people around the venue by the participants, songs and fun games were organised during the day of event.

The day started with welcome address by the President of DHANAK and release of SAHAS magazine.

“Religion and Social Change” & “Ways in Which People in Mixed Marriage Respond/React to Challenges in Social Interactions with Others” were the two topics of discussions and sharing.

Sheeba Aslam Fehmi, Hilal Ahmed, Dr. Manoj Jha and Shri.AvinashPatil shared their views on the topic of Religion and Social change. All the speakers expressed the importance for such events with respect to the present scenario of religious fanaticism, attack on students and rational personalities by Hindu fanatic groups. They shared examples based on personal experiences based on TV debates, association with Jawaharlal Nehru and Delhi University and their work related to social change. The speakers also felt that answers to the various conflicting socio-religious issues will come from couples in mixed marriage.



Parents of the couples in mixed marriage like Javed Malik & Neeraj Malik, Sarita, Vandita Arora & Vivek Arora and Ranu & Asif spoke and shared their experiences in the topic, Ways in Which People in Mixed Marriage Respond/React to Challenges in Social Interactions with Others. The objective of organising discussion on the topic was to highlight the questions or challenges that a mixed couple face from their families, neighbours and relatives and how they can be dealt with. The parents shared their experiences related to the situation before and after the marriage of their son/daughter.



Similarly, the couple in mixed marriage also shared their experiences related to dealing with the questions of parents. It was felt that the questions and treatment from all must be answered by developing a common understanding between the couple. However, one can keep the neighbours or relatives unanswered but, parents need to be answered or communicated in a non-offending manner with consideration to nature of and importance of relationship.

The activity related to taking the message of love, peace and humanity couldn't be performed due to some issues related to management of event venue.

One of the new members of DHANAK, Shrikant performed on guitar and Charul and Vinay filled the venue with music with cause. The music ended on a high note with collective singing of song "Hum Log, We the People".

Couples, parents and partner organisation were felicitated for their decision and support related to right to choose in marriage. The day ended with fun games for couples and prize distribution to the winner couples and children.

NETWORKING & LIASION

i. CHAYAN Meet

CHAYAN is DHANAK's initiative to build a national network of organisations/individuals working on the issue of Right to Choice (RTC). CHAYAN is a Consortium for Promotion of RTC in Marriage and Relationship. One meeting was organised under the banner of CHAYAN.



25 individuals from Association for Advocacy and Legal Initiatives (AALI) from U.P., Samajik Badlav Sangathan (SBS), Awadh People Forum from U.P., Parivartan Jan Andolan from Bihar, Tarksheel Society from Punjab, Maharashtra Andhshradha Nirmulan Samiti (MANS) from Maharashtra, Lok Chetna Sangathan from Odisha, NOBIN from Odisha, Federation of Indian Rationalist Association, DHANAK from Delhi, The YP Foundation from Delhi, Janmukti Sangharsh Vahini, Manaviay Ekta participated in a half day meeting was organised on 13th Feb 2016 at Delhi School of Social Work.

Renowned personalities like advocate Tanu Bedi and Ms. Neelam Katara also participated in the CHAYAN meet. Advocate Bedi is from Chandigarh High Court who has been instrumental in opening of Homes for couple in need in the state of Punjab and Haryana. Ms. Katara is fighting a long legal battle against the honour killing of her son Nitish Katara.

During the meeting, the back ground CHAYAN and the objective of the meeting was shared with the participants.



Also, a road map for CHAYAN was proposed by MANS based in its work related experiences.

The organizations that were attending the meet for the first time suggested that each organization will evolve its own activity plan and will come together for common topics of concern.

Important points of sharing during the meet

- Right to choice in marriage and relationship also includes right to deny forced marriage or relationship.
- Same sex relationship is also facing challenges related to caste.
- The efforts should also on establishing the humanitarian values in the society.
- The prevalent practices that lead to polarization of society on the basis of caste and religion must also be addressed by CHAYAN
- Services to couples in need being provided in the states of Punjab and Haryana can also be replicated in the other states. The only challenge in effective implementation of such services is absence of any NGO which can act as a watch dog.
- Challenging the prevalent religious beliefs and practices in the society can endanger the lives if members.

Decision Taken

1. Objectives of CHAYAN shall be re-circulated to all the organizations over the mail with the minutes of the meeting for their comments.
2. CHAYAN must work on its area of expertise which is right to choose in marriage and relationship. It is inappropriate to include of other burning issued like reservation/benefits based on caste, gender etc.

Next CHAYAN meet will be organized at Pune (Maharashtra) or Bangaluru (Karnataka), Maharashtra in the month of August.

Advocacy

i. Representation to Chief Information Commissioner (CIC)

Two cases related to appointment of Special Marriage Officers by the government of Delhi and required information from the PIO at District North West Delhi were pursued and taken till the office of CIC.

DHANAK has submitted its representation for appointment of Special Marriage Officers as per the advice of the Lieutenant Governor (LG) of Delhi. The concerned SDM at the office of Secretary Revenue, Shamnath Marg, Delhi has started the process related to appointment of Marriage Officers with the Finance Office after the receipt of the representation from DHANAK. The copies of the correspondences were shared by the PIO only after the

ii. Representation to Deputy Commissioner

DHANAK sent a representation to the Deputy Commissioner at Bhubneshwar Municipal Corporation in the month of June by post. The posted information on the official

website states that the marriage is registered under the Special marriage Act, 1954, where either the husband or wife or both are not Hindus, Buddhists, Jains or Sikhs. Moreover, the mandatory requirement about getting the signature of parents for marriage registration is also posted in the website.

The submitted representation was about making the required changes in the posted on-line information regarding marriage registration as per the Act which doesn't talk about the religion or caste of the couple who applies for marriage registration under the Special Marriage Act. Similarly, DHANAK suggested removal of essential requirement of parent's signature for marriage registration with consideration to the potential threat to life and liberty of the married couple.

iii. Representation to Government of Delhi

DHANAK submitted a representation to the government of Delhi in the month of February 2016. The proposed changes in the state rules and other essentials with respect to honour crime were given to the OSD (Officer on Special Duty) at the office of Deputy Chief Minister.

The submission included the proposed changes in state rules related to marriage solemnization and marriage registration under Special Marriage Act – 1954 and the following:

1. Online submission of details and documents to seek appointment for marriage solemnization and registration under Special Marriage Act.
2. Opening of Government Protection Homes in each district of Delhi for Couples in Need
3. Counselling, Guidance and Marriage Solemnization/Registration Centre for interfaith/caste couples
4. Public Awareness Campaign against Honour Crime.
5. Inclusion of Inter-Religion Marriage in Incentivization of Inter-Caste Marriage Scheme
6. Delhi state order against Honour Crime
7. Delhi state order against Forced Marriage
8. Appointment of a Gazetted Officer specifically for the purpose of marriage registration/solemnization.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

i. ORIENTATION OF STUDENTS

a. Delhi School of Social Work

DHANAK took orientation of final year students of Delhi School of Social Work in the month of July 2015. The General Secretary, the Secretary and one Co-Founder of DHANAK took the orientation session. The session was interesting as the students had

sharing related to mal-publicity related to Love-Jihad. The students were very much aware about the social issues due to their academic background. None of the students held the opinion that there is a religious conspiracy in the name of inter-religious marriage but, they were not aware about the situation which leads to religious conversion of one of the couple for inter-religion marriage.

Moreover, the students were also were oriented about the prevalent practices, rules of various state governments and the provisions in the Special Marriage Act. They were informed that how the prevalent state practices and rules are pushing the couples into a religious marriage.

b. Father Agnel School

Around 3-4 hundred students of Father Agnel School at Greater NOIDA were oriented on the topic of National Integration in the month of January 2016. The various issues like eating habits, socio-religious practices leading to conflicts in society were covered in the sharing related to the topic.

Two important songs, "Insaan Hai Hum" and "Hum Log, We the People" of Vinay and Charul were sung with the students to highlight the importance of Humanity and Concept of Nation to end the talk on the topic of National Integration.

ii. Participation in BaatCheet

DHANAK participated in ANHAD organised discussion on inter-faith marriage on 10th September 2015 during its weekly meetings called BaatCheet. An interfaith couple, Kavita and Khurram shared its experiences and participant from DHANAK shared its vast experience related to the issue with the gathering.

iii. Protest against killings of rationalists

DHANAK participated in a half day protest against the killings of Rationalists and Social Reformers like Dr. Narendra Dhabolkar, Dr.Kulbargi and Comrade Govind Pansare. The protest was organised by Maharashtra Andhshraddha Nirmulan Samiti on 12th February 2016 at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi. Activists from different states and social organisation participated and expressed their solidarity. They also demanded immediate legal action against the accused from an alleged religious organisation.

RESOURCE CENTRE

DHANAK resource centre is collecting information related to marriage by compiling the primary and secondary data related to right to choice in marriage. It is using the Right to Information Act, interviews and questionnaires for collection of the required information.

The person who was involved in assistance in collection of secondary data in the capacity of Office Assistant could continue his services from October 2014 till April 2015. DHANAK posted advertisement on internet for inviting applications for the required post on part-time basis. Based on the received response and short listing of candidates, interviews were held on September 2015. The selected candidate couldn't continue her services for more than 3 months with an honorarium of Rs.10,000/- p.m and therefore, the second selected candidate from the panel was called to join the post in the capacity of Assistant Program Executive.

Data from 9 districts of Delhi was collected and compiled. The collected information is given below:

S.No.	Year	No of Marriages Solemnized/Registered under Special Marriage Act – 1954	No of Marriages Registered under Hindu Marriage Act – 1955
1	1997	9	85
2	1998	14	116
3	1999	18	489
4	2000	13	1091
5	2001	29	1228
6	2002	47	1212
7	2003	46	1335
8	2004	151	1794
9	2005	174	2808
10	2006	197	3630
11	2007	221	3992
12	2008	186	4596
13	2009	257	4860
14	2010	263	5554
15	2011	269	6545
16	2012	229	7139
TOTAL		2,123	46,474
GRAND TOTAL		48,597	



PUBLICATIONS

DHANAK published a magazine viz. SAHAS 2016 which was released during SAHAS event on 14th Feb 2016. The magazine is 3rd consecutive publication of DHANAK and besides case studies, stories, quotes, photographs and poems of couples in mixed marriage, the magazine also covered secondary data related

marriage and information about marriage registration in USA.

Resource Mobilisation & Finances

A. Total Proceeds (April 2015 – March 2016)

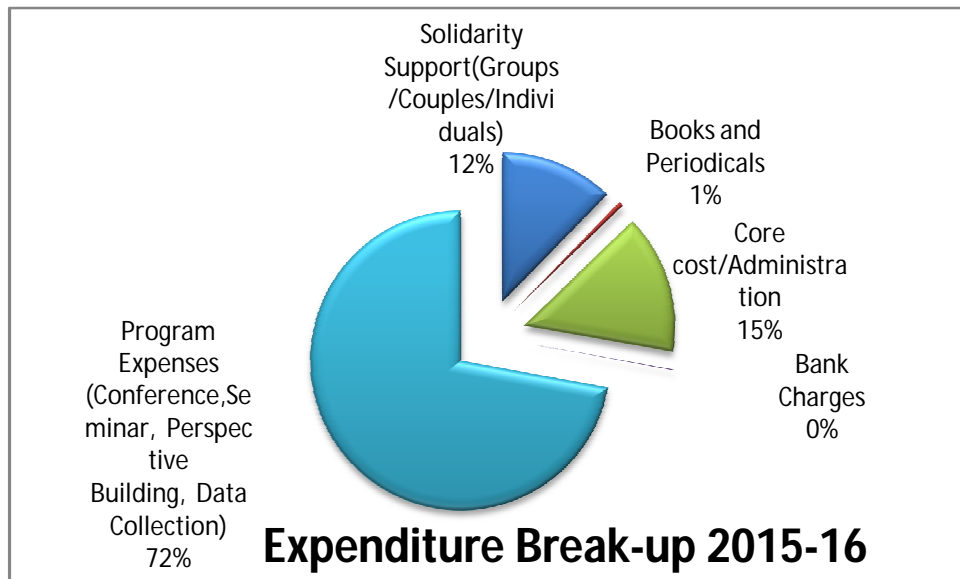
S.No.	Source	Amount (Rs.)
1	Donations	1,82,500
2	Membership	66,000
4	Bank Interest	2,984
A	Total	251,484
B	Balance at bank as on 01.04.2015	56,011
C	(A+B)	3,07,495

B. Expenditure Profile

Broad details of expenditure during the financial year 2015-16:

S.No.	Head	Amount (Rs.)
1	Program Expenses (Conference, Seminar, Perspective Building, Data Collection)	1,93,792
2	Solidarity Support(Groups/Couples/Individuals)	32,879
3	Books and Periodicals	1,350
4	Core cost/Administration	40,449
5	Bank Charges	212
Total		2,68,682

The pie chart below shows the percentage expenditure on the above heads:



Source: Balance Sheet 2015-16 (Annexure – I)

ADMINISTRATION & PERSONNEL

DHANAK TEAM

Major recurring expenses related to the office and activities of Dhanak of Humanity were taken care by is fortunate to get solidarity support from an organization viz. SRUTI based at HauzKhas Enclave, New Delhi. Following persons are managing the administration of the organisation:

1. Asif Iqbal	Co-founder & General Secretary
2. Shabana Siddiqui	Secretary
3. Dr. Rahul Das	General Body Member
4. Ms. Ranu Kulshrestha	Co-Founder
5. Mr. Suaib	Member Volunteer
6. Ms. Akanksha Sharma	Member Volunteer
7. Mohammad Asif	Volunteer
8. Mr. Shubhrajyoti Bhaumik	Volunteer
9. Ms. Prantika Das	Volunteer
10. Mr. Shiraz Ali	Volunteer
11. Ms. Steffi Jacob	Office Executive
12. Mr. Mohd. Umair	Assistant Program Executive

The General Secretary is involved with Dhanak of Humanity endeavours and administration in the capacity of honorary worker. The Office Executive worked on part time basis for 3 months on part-time basis. She was replaced by Assistant Program Executive from December onwards. Other individuals volunteered their time and expertise according to the requirements and their availability.