



Notes on Activities - II

2022-2023

Himalayan Anti Aids & Anti Narcotic Drugs Society (H.A.N.D.S.)

Activity Report

2022-2023

1. Kalimpong District Superintendent of Police's first visit to H.A.N.D.S. Rehabilitation Center on the 2nd of April, 2022.

A visit to H.A.N.D.S. Rehabilitation Center at Chibu Busty, Kalimpong by one of the most concerned, proactive, and visionary Superintendent of Police (SP) that Kalimpong district has had so far. The honorable SP, Madam Aparajita Rai, who has worked selflessly and tirelessly against substance abuse and its illicit trafficking in her previous other postings as well, visited the in-house patients at the Rehabilitation Center, interacted with them -- motivating them to take the treatment seriously and to make successful comeback to mainstream society.



The SP, Madam Aparajita Rai with the in-house patients at H.A.N.D.S. Rehabilitation Center

2. Participation at Nepali New Year Rally on the 14th of April, 2022.

In-order to build confidence in the in-house patients undergoing intensive treatment at H.A.N.D.S.'s Rehabilitation Center and facilitate their smooth integration back into society, occasionally H.A.N.D.S.'s staff members take the in-house patients to attend and participate at public events in and around the region. Such activities are undertaken to make the in-house patients learn how to enjoy public events without the use of substances. One such public event,

i.e. a rally in celebration of Nepali New Year – 2022, was held in Kalimpong town on the 14th of April, 2022, where the in-house patients participated in the rally led by the then Center in Charge Mr. Palden Tamang along with other senior and follow-up patients of H.A.N.D.S.



H.A.N.D.S.'s staff member, in-house patients and follow-up patients at the New Year's Rally

3. Special session by psychotherapist at the Rehabilitation Center on the 15th of April, 2022.

H.A.N.D.S. organised a one-day mental health therapeutic classes with the Psychotherapist Madam Srijana Kumai, with whom, the in-house patients had a daylong session at the Rehabilitation Center. The main objective of this one-day class was to help the in-house patients identify key issues hampering their full concentration and effort in their ongoing de-addiction treatment.



Madam Srijana Kumai taking class with the in-house patients at the Rehabilitation Center

4. Awareness Program at St. Augustine's School, Kalimpong on the 21st of April, 2022.

H.A.N.D.S. and the Kalimpong District Police conducted an effective awareness program for the senior students of St. Augustine's School, Kalimpong. The Superintendent of Police (SP), Kalimpong District, Madam Aparajita Rai was present along with the Sub-Inspector, Madam Shovna Sewa and Coordinator of H.A.N.D.S., Mr. Nereus Mukhia to interact with the students. The awareness program was well received by students and the school administration who were attentive and responsive displaying effective understanding.



Madam Aparajita Rai with the students, Madam S. Sewa and the Principal of St. Augustine's School

5. Organisation of Skateboard Competition on the 24th of April, 2022.

Kalimpong District Police together with one of the local youth organisations, K-Town SK8DOWN and H.A.N.D.S. organized a first of its kind local skateboard competition in Kalimpong town. Skateboarding is quite in vogue in Kalimpong town amongst the youth and teenagers, attracting their interest, attention, and focus. Seeing that as an opportunity, the Kalimpong District Police, and H.A.N.D.S. partnered to provide a platform for the youth and teenagers to encourage them to hone their interest. At the competition, there was a high turn-out, with a large number of youth and teenagers gathering at the venue and participating. The H.A.N.D.S. members got a golden opportunity to identify, interact and conduct intervention counseling to the assembled youth and teenagers, preventing them from going astray. A few attended and showed up for follow up counselling with H.A.N.D.S. members.



Competition poster/advertisement



Team H.A.N.D.S.'s counter at the competition & participants

6. Launch of Project 'SHUDDHI' on the 30th of April, 2022.

A flagship program, 'SHUDDHI' was launched by the Kalimpong District Police, in partnership/collaboration with H.A.N.D.S. that directly engages with the youth of Kalimpong district, with the objective of sensitizing them about the ills of drug abuse and addiction including provide free treatment for six and a half months at H.A.N.D.S. Rehabilitation Center. The treatment is fully funded by Kalimpong District Police to the needy, marginalized victims of substance/drug abuse who cannot afford the treatment cost.

District of Kalimpong has been blessed with being only the second district in the entire West Bengal State to be granted the 'SHUDHDI' project and that its inauguration day, 10 patients were admitted at the Rehabilitation Center through this initiative.



IG North Bengal Mr. D.P.Singh along with other higher Police Department Officials at the launch of 'SHUDHDI'

7. Major monthly staff & clinical meetings held on the 5th of May 2022.

The staff and volunteers of H.A.N.D.S. Rehabilitation Center hold regular monthly meetings on every first Thursday of each month to discuss how the Center is faring, the progress of the in-house patients and other day-to-day issues in making the Center run efficiently and effectively. The Rehabilitation and Day Care in-charge provides a detailed monthly report of every in-house patients as well as follow up patients. Additionally a clinical review was also done to better understand the patient's progress during the treatment period.



Coordinator Mr. Nereus Mukhia along with the staff and volunteers attending one of the monthly staff meetings

8. H.A.N.D.S. Annual General Meeting with its Board Members held on the 13th of May, 2022.

Keeping up with the requirements and regulations of the organization, H.A.N.D.S. held its 18th AGM under the Presidentship of Mrs. Sharda Mukhia which was attended by 70% of its Board Members. The Board members were appraised on the day-to-day functioning, recovery rates, and the challenges that H.A.N.D.S., its staff, volunteers and in-house patients face including the family members of the patients. The Board members pledged to their continued support and help to the organization.



President Board of Management (HANDS) Mrs. Sharda Mukhia along with other board members

9. Awareness Program at Rockvale Academy (School), Kalimpong on the 23rd of June, 2022.

H.A.N.D.S. along with Kalimpong District Police conducted an awareness program for the students of Class 10 and above at Rockvale Academy (school), Kalimpong. The SP of Kalimpong District Police, Madam Aparajita Rai spoke extensively on the “trap of curiosity” for the various substances that the youth often fall into, leading to its addition and abuse. Sub-Inspector Madam Shovna Sewa and Coordinator of H.A.N.D.S., Mr. Nereus Mukhia addressed various queries and questions from the students. The awareness program was well received by the students including the Principal of Rockvale Academy, Captain Mr. Prakash Pradhan. The Program ended with gratitude expressed by the principal on behalf of his students.



Capt. Mr. Prakash Pradhan along with Madam Aparajita Rai and Madam Shovna Sewa

10. Celebration of International Day Against Drug Abuse & Illicit Trafficking on the 26th of June, 2022.

The 26th of June i.e. the declared International Day Against Drug Abuse & Illicit Trafficking, also being the H.A.N.D.S.'s Foundation Day, the staffs, volunteers and in-house patients including the Board members celebrated the 18th Foundation Day at the Rehabilitation Centre. The Board Members met and interacted with the in-house patients and motivated them to complete their recovery treatment so that they could succeed in changing their lives and integrating back to their families. The day ended with the cutting of the anniversary cake followed by a lunch.



Board Members attending the program at the Rehabilitation Centre

11. Awareness Program with the Tibetan Youth Congress on the 26th of June, 2022.

An awareness program was organised by the Kalimpong District Tibetan Youth Congress on substance abuse and its social ills in collaboration with H.A.N.D.S. staff for the youth of the Tibetan community in Kalimpong District. The participating youth were concerned about the ever-growing substance use amongst them and were keen on taking a pro-active precautionary measure.



H.A.N.D.S. staff conducting the awareness program

12. Legal Awareness Camp at Kalimpong District Correctional Home on the 22nd of July, 2022.

H.A.N.D.S. in collaboration with the District Legal Services Authority, Government of West Bengal has been a part of therapeutic and counselling classes organised exclusively for the inmates of Kalimpong District Correctional Home since 2021. One of the first classes was taken last year on the 6th of August, 2021 under the guidance of H.A.N.D.S.'s Coordinator Mr. Nereus Mukhia. This year, the awareness program was held on the 22nd of July 2022 for over 120 inmates. Along with an eye-opening session on substance abuse and its dependency prone character, a mental therapy was also conducted by H.A.N.D.S.'s staff Mr. Prayogti Kumai and Mr. Amar Tamang. The inmates were highly engaging, participative, and eager to learn and listen.



HANDS staff conducting the workshop at the Correctional Centre. Left: Mr. Amar Tamang



Mr. Amar Tamang of H.A.N.D.S.

13. Project ‘SHUDDHI’ Review on the 2nd of August, 2022.

Taking first-hand review of the patients admitted under project ‘SHUDDHI’ at the H.A.N.D.S. Rehabilitation Centre, the Superintendent of Kalimpong District Police, Madam Aparajita Rai interacted with each and every individual in-house patients, talking to them, taking note of their mental and physical health and monitoring their progress. As mentioned earlier, the ‘SHUDDHI’ project is a flagship program initiated by Madam Aparajita Rai, under Kalimpong District Police, partnering with H.A.N.D.S.



Madam Aparajita Rai with the 'Shuddhi' Patients at the Rehabilitation Centre

14. Independence Day Celebration on the 15th of August, 2022.

Independence Day celebration is one of the most awaited celebrations of the year because in Kalimpong, this day is celebrated by the public, school and college students including administrations with great pride, pomp and show. The patients in the Rehabilitation Centre too look forward to celebrating this day. Like any other year, H.A.N.D.S.'s staffs, volunteers and the in-house patients celebrated the Independence Day at the Center. The day started as usual with marchpast, which the in-house patients practiced for weeks. This was followed by flag hoisting and a day full of indoor games and sports in the form of mini tournaments such as carrom board, chess, and tombola.



Patients and Staff at Independence Day Parade and celebrations



Patients and Staff of H.A.N.D.S. on Independence Day, 2022

15. Awareness Program at Dr Grahams Homes School on the 19th of August, 2022.

H.A.N.D.S. and Kalimpong District Police conducted another awareness program for the students of Dr. Grahams Homes School, Kalimpong. The Superintendent of Police, Madam, Aparajita Rai along with Sub-Inspector, Madam Shovna Sewa gave out power point presentation on vulnerabilities of the youth addiction and abuse. The program was well received by the students. H.A.N.D.S. Coordinator Mr. Nereus Mukhia addressed the students and took questions.



SP, Madam Aparajita Rai and SI. Madam Shovna Sewa with the students at Grahams Homes School

16. Awareness Program at Chandra Lok Samaj, Kalimpong 4th of September, 2022.

ChandralokJanagrityPariyar, a renowned Community (Samaj) of Chandralok, Durpin, 35 No.Samasti, Kalimpong organised an awareness program on substance addiction and abuse to address the growing problem in their community, especially amongst the youth. The Superintendent of Police, Madam Aparajita Rai along with Sub-Inspector, Madam ShovnaSewa participated as resource people on the subject of substance abuse and addiction. The awareness program was attended by over 500 community (samaj) members.



SP Madam, Aparajita Rai, SI. Madam ShovnaSewa and 35No.SamastiSabhasadMr. Suman Gurung at the program [left]

17. Diwali Celebration in October 2023

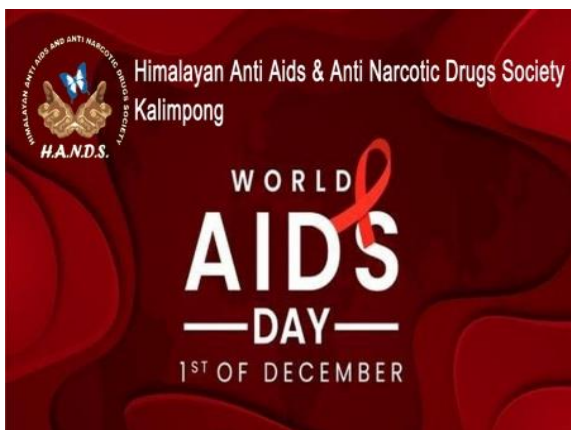
To make the in-house patients belonging to different religious backgrounds feel at home and learn to celebrate festivals happily without the use of substance and Alcohol, H.A.N.D.S.'s staff, volunteers and in-house patients celebrated Diwali – the festival of lights in the Rehabilitation Center by decorating the Center, lighting lamps, singing songs (as per Nepali tradition and culture) and playing games.



Diwali preparation during the daytime

18. World Aids Day Celebration of the 1st of December, 2022.

H.A.N.D.S. celebrated World Aids Day by reaching out to the masses on the streets of Kalimpong town for the entire day on a one-to-one basis in an endeavor to break the chain of stigmatization against HIV/AIDS and create awareness about HIV/AIDS spread associated with substance abuse and addiction.



H.A.N.D.S. staff Mr. Prayogti Kumai interacting with a shop keeper

19. Christmas Celebrations on 25th Dec 2022

HANDS has always celebrated Christmas with members of Christian Motorcycles Association (CMA) who visit the rehabilitation center on the 25th December morning and spend the day with the patients. The young members of CMA come early at 8 am to share the significance of Christ and Christmas with the patients – all of whom belong to diverse backgrounds. H.A.N.D.S. believe in religious diversity; and gives space and encouragement to its staffs and patients for the celebration of all religious and cultural festivals as celebrated in Kalimpong. The CMA members bring with them cakes and other food items for the patients. They conduct pray them, read Gospel parts and gave the patients a fun day. The purpose of such visits is to motivate the patients into believing that there is a life, fun and happiness without drug use.



Christmas celebration

20. CSRAid for Project 'SHUDDHI' on the 28th of December, 2022.

The 'SHUDDHI' project or initiative (launched by Kalimpong District Police in collaboration with H.A.N.D.S.) was able to secure Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) aid from Super Shakti Foundation, an organisation based in Kolkata, whose representatives visited Kalimpong town on the 28th of December, 2022 and donated a sum of Rupees Eight Lakhs (Rs. 800,000) to H.A.N.D.S. The CSR funding would not have been possible without the involvement of Kalimpong District Police, particularly the Kalimpong District SP, Madam, Aparajita Rai, whose continued effort in combating substance abuse resulted in securing financial resources to help the victims. So far, the CSR financial donation received has been utilized to provide free treatment (for six and a half months) to over twenty five needy, marginalized local substance abuse victims at H.A.N.D.S.'s Rehabilitation Center under project 'SHUDDHI'.



Handing over of the Cheque by the donor agency to President of H.A.N.D.S. Mrs Sharda Mukhia

21. Gorubathan Awareness Program 3rd Feb 2023

An awareness program on substance was organized by the Kalimpong District Police with H.A.N.D.S. for the first time in Block 2 of Kalimpong District, Gorubathan keeping in mind the ever-growing problem in the community, especially the youth. The SP Kalimpong, Madam, Aparajita Rai and SI, Madam Shovna Sewa and H.A.N.D.S.

Coordinator, Mr. Nereus Mukhia participated as resource people talking on the subject of substance to over 200 people who attended the program.



SP Kalimpong district Aparajita Rai and Nereus Mukhia at the program

22. Various Family Classes and Counselling

H.A.N.D.S. believes that family counselling via interactive classes is an important step that goes towards the final rehabilitation of the patient when they are discharged. Given this, H.A.N.D.S. have always made family classes and counselling a mandatory part of the patient's rehabilitation process. Smaller groups this time allowed us to interact more interpersonally than in big groups. In such classes, we explained to the family members what the patients are learning in the rehabilitation centers, how the patients must be handled/treated once they return to their respective homes, how to deal with the patients at home, what the patients have to continue doing at homes and so on. We also cater to the needs of our patients who have been discharged but must continue to attend their follow up sessions at H.A.N.D.S. Day Care Center.

23. Sober Birthdays: Celebrating success in treatment and recovery of patients.

Another key H.A.N.D.S. activity is the celebration of sober birthdays of patients who have recovered well and have remained off any kind of substance use/abuse. We celebrate this as a successful milestone in the patients journey towards full recovery; and invite our past patients for a cake cutting ceremony followed by a good lunch. But there is much more to this. We celebrate these success stories to motivate and show our in-patients that staying clean of substance is possible, being productive and living a normal life is possible, being

full-functioning members of the society is possible, integrating back into the society, community and most importantly their families is possible. We show our patients that

they too can overcome their recovery processes and walk toward the path of healing, free from substance use.