World Health Organization has stated that older adults are more at higher risk of being affected by COVID-19 especially if they have any underlying medical conditions. Therefore it is imperative for senior citizens to follow all the correct guidelines of this disease. In connection with this the panchayats and local gentry of Samseybong Ward under Poklok-Kamrang Constituency have come together and formed a reliable word of mouth network in order to inform the local population and also to bring down any kind of misinformation about this disease. Samseybong Ward is surrounded mostly by farmland but the mobile connectivity is pretty strong in the area permitting the masses to connect with officials via a phone call or from the various social media platforms. This connectivity no doubt will assist them to get an idea of officials who are distributing relief materials, medical practitioners and of many more vital official updates. However this boon of internet can only be utilised by youths as compared to the senior citizens of the area.

Amongst the many senior citizens, 70 year-old Krishna Maya Sharma, a resident of Samseybong Ward frequently sports a face mask if she has to visit her family or anyone in the locality. She has been told by village locals the importance of face mask during this pandemic. She doesn’t seem too perturbed of this disease and says that she has been asked by the panchayats and her family members to follow certain advice which is to avoid participation in large gatherings, maintain social distancing and not to spit in public. Krishna also demonstrates her near perfect hand washing technique which she said learned from watching television. She beams and says that if she is outside of her house then she always washes her hand frequently at a dhara (stream).

Similarly, 90 year-old Lakshmi Prasad Adhikari and 80 year-old Lakshmi Maya Adhikari of Samseybong Ward have been married for more than five decades. Interestingly this couple has lived through the era of Chogyal (monarch of Sikkim), witnessed the merger of Sikkim with India in 1975, experienced other calamity wherein the pair fondly recalls a time when they were asked to live in a shed in their farm alongwith their family. Nevertheless, the duo has not at all in their evergreen lifetime seen or heard about such kind of epidemic in which they have been requested to practise social distancing from their family and neighbours but they are optimistic that this unfortunate event will end soon. Commenting, on first time that they heard of COVID-19 was when their grandchildren appraised that the schools was closed for the time being due to the disease and added that they too at this ripe age and for the first time mastered the seven step of hand hygiene skill which they grasped by watching television. Explaining about the dos and don’ts of this virus they said that the panchayats and the family members has urged them to keep away from visiting any neighbours place, markets. They also assured that no one from the family has been allowed to visit
the bazaar as of now and added that they have also received the Chief Minister welfare relief material like rice, pulses, vegetables and many more from their local administration.

It can be safely said that hallmark of any developed place can be gauged by how accurately, well-informed the citizens of a locality are and it is commendable that elderly of Samseybong Ward are well aware of this pandemic. As for Krishna and Lakshmi the sheer joy of seeing their grandchildren joining back school will define the end of this crises.