

Food Security as a Contribution to Conflict Mitigation in 3 areas of Okhaldhunga & Udaypur

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1. Development in the Changed Context, Problem Analysis and Development Goal

In the present context of Nepal, in the process of mobilising various development activities down to the grassroots level, while we have experienced trouble-free situations in some instances, we have come across some complications in other instances as well. With the recent political changes that have taken place in Nepal, the people had big expectation of socio-economic development as a 'peace-dividend'. However, they now have become sceptical that their expectation will be faded away because of the instability of the government at the national level to implement socio-economic development programmes.

Despite such a political environment, the present situation as compared to the earlier decade-long conflict in Nepal is relatively more favourable for the non-governmental organisations to undertake development programmes at the grassroots level. Under the present circumstance, we have also found it more convenient to work with the local communities. We have been implementing our development programme by organising the local communities into various groups. The recent political environment can be considered as more favourable for implementing social, economical and political development activities at the community level. Therefore, the communities have been implementing the programmes being planned for this year in their respective communities. With the development of solidarity and collective action among the community people, they have also come forward with the concept that 'development is their rights', they must get this rights, and they have also some roles and responsibilities to fulfil to get these rights. Because of development of such feelings among the community people, it has become easier for the development actors including Sahas-Nepal to implement development programmes and activities in the remote rural areas.

2. Activities and Achievements

Okhaldhunga district

Right Based Literacy Class

As in the past years, especially for increasing the literacy rate of women under the Education for All activity, in this project period too, a training programme was organised for 14 facilitators from Ilaka 9 and 10. Having received training, the facilitators have started conducting classes in their respective communities. They have been conducting the classes systematically and



effectively. At the same time, the participants have been working hard and also have learned how to read and write within short period of time. The participants have expressed their happiness over what they have learned, and realised the fact that things can be learned even at this adult stage of life if really wanted to learn.



The participants have not only started showing their concerns over the development activities in their own communities, but also have started involving themselves in development activities. In the beginning, the adult participants had an unfavourable attitude towards education, and hence asked themselves as 'what could be done' by becoming educated through the adult learning classes at this age? Now they started realising that the adult education did not mean for

learning just to become literate, rather it also helps them gain other practical knowledge. These adult participants have expressed that, as a result of their participation in the adult literacy classes, they are now able to speak without feeling of fear and shy in various meetings and gatherings. With this the adults have started realising that even the adults could learn if worked hard to learn. In order to put their knowledge and skill to practice, the participants have started discussing in their groups to make action-plans regarding control of alcohol, cultivation of cash crops, and toilet construction.

Group Meeting and Facilitation

With the view to discuss and devise solutions about the problems of the groups being formed by the communities with their own initiatives, meeting have been held on a regular basis. The community members now have unity, and also initiated various types of development activities in their communities. With this, the communities have felt that such activities would also contribute to sustainable development. In the beginning of group formation, the communities were perplexed and had no idea as what to do in a meeting, and how to conduct a meeting. But now they have come to understand and realise the significance of holding meetings for mobilising their own groups. The staffs have been doing facilitation in various meetings as per the needs and aspirations of community members. This has not only helped develop the policies and regulations of their groups, but also helped in book-keeping of their groups in a transparent manner. It is now that the groups are able to plan their programmes, and make decisions and maintain meeting minutes. They have also been facilitating the activities like collaborating and contacting with various organisations with their groups.



School Teaching

The project staff have involved in hygiene and sanitation, and nutrition awareness teaching in the schools. They have used posters, games and group exercises during the sessions. The students had discussed these topics with their parents and other family members. During the follow-up session, many students expressed that they had built and used pit latrines. They have started washing hands using soap after toilet and also before eating meals. The staff observed that students were more clean and well-dressed up.



Porter Assistance

After the construction of the motorable road from Katari to Okhaldhunga there has been huge adverse effect on the daily lives of thousands of porters who had been sustaining their lives from the income earned by carrying the back-loads of goods. In present situation they are having extremely difficult times due to lack of livelihood options for them. For such porters, Sahas-Nepal has facilitated to form 'Porters Group' and supported for 276 households through 25 groups. Each group received NRs 5000.00 and with the assistance of the funds the porters initiated small enterprise, which involve buying and selling of the locally available goods such as food-items, fruits, beans, and chickens. With the initiation of this kind of enterprise they have experiencing a positive socio-economic change in their lives. They have now come to explicitly

express that with the income earned; they have been able to solve problems for a longer period in a year. They have started earning money (profits) ranged from Rs. 1000 to 12000 from the enterprises. They have also started other livelihood activities such as buying of piglets, chickens, and buffalo, which helped to transform their livelihoods.

Goat Raising

This programme has been providing support exclusively to the marginalised communities,



among the groups being formed with their own initiation, for collective goat raising. The project has provided goats to the 132 households belonging to the very poor families in the group. These group members have become very encouraged to keep goat, as they have been able to add seven more goats to the original 57 goats distributed by the programme to four groups. Moreover, the manure from the goat has also helped to increase their own food production. With the view of contributing to development of collective action, a collective fund has also been

established with the cash received from the sale of one of the goats. With this fund, they have also come to understand the significance of such funds. These communities have been getting more benefits than the expected from the proper management of the goat raising. This type of animal raising has helped not only sustain the daily life of the poor communities, but also achieving food security to a greater extent. From the learning, the group members expressed that we often do not give attention considering this only as a small activity, but we now realise that even the small activity could greatly contribute to our daily life.

Drinking Water Scheme and Toilet



before and after programme intervention

personal hygiene and sanitation. They gradually stopped open defecation and instead started using the toilets being constructed under the project. Realising the need for the community and its prioritisation, with the completion of construction of drinking water scheme by virtue of their solidarity, the group has been receiving safe water and have been free from the water born diseases. While such activities has further enhanced their mutual trust. These activities have also encouraged them to undertake other development activities. The community members have constructed the scheme by collecting the resources from various organisations. With this they have also come to realise that for raising funds they need to visit and approach many development organisations and local development bodies (DDC and VDC). The local people have been hauling the construction materials required for the construction of the scheme by them from the place, which is about one-day walk away from motor road.

Before the project intervention, the personal hygiene as well as the hygiene and sanitation condition was poor. For example, the communities used to practice open defecation. After the project intervention, they became aware about the need for sanitation and hygiene, and also

developed their attitude towards

The female household farmers, who earlier on used to go to distant place to fetch water, are also very happy to have the water supply right in the premises of their houses. While it has reduced the drudgery of the women, it also saved their time required to fetch water from distance places. They are now able to spend the time being saved from fetching water in other development activities, productive and income generating activities, taking better care of their children, besides paying attention to other farm and household activities.

With the availability of water, they have also started vegetable cultivation around their houses and they are able to get fresh vegetables, which has helped improve their nutrition and health condition. At the same time, the surplus vegetables are being sold in the local market and the income earned from the sale of vegetable utilised for buying other food items of daily need. Thus besides meeting the daily needs the income also contributed to improve the food security situation. The project benefited a total of 5000 persons from 9 drinking water scheme.

School Construction and Renovation

The students and teachers were at high risk in the schools due to the poor physical or in miserable conditions and could not run the classes due to water leakage from the roof. The schools used to observe holiday during the rainy days as it was not possible to run the classes. In order combat this problem, the groups, school committees and teachers took initiative to visit different organisations for raising resources for the renovation and new construction. Sahas-Nepal provided financial assistance as well as material such as cement, galvanised iron sheet, furniture and educational materials. The groups were success to renovate and or build additional class-rooms. Now a day, these schools are running the classes and day to day affairs with out any disturbances even during rainy season. Such support and the renovation/construction works have contributed to higher attendance of the students and quality education. The school management committee members have regular supervision and monitoring of school, which encouraged teachers and students to concentrate not only on their studies but also on extra curricular activities.

School Toilet Construction

As the schools and other organisations have not built their toilets in a systematic way, these toilets are now in miserable conditions in physical terms. In considering this situation, the local groups being formed around the schools have realised the need for reconstruction or improvement of these toilets. As the groups have submitted their request in written form for assistance, a two-room toilet has been completed with the joint efforts of the groups and Sahas-Nepal. After the construction of this toilet, the teachers as well as the students especially girls have felt very comfortable. With this, the hygiene and sanitation condition of the school have also been improved substantially.



Gender Sensitisation Training

Gender sensitisation training was organised in Okhaldhunga for the representatives of main committee from Ilaka 9 with the objectives of minimising various types of traditional superstitions including the unequal participation in development activities and the issues of untouchability prevailing in the communities. The training was attended by 9 female and 11 male participants. The training was facilitated by a consultant. The subjects being discussed during the training not only motivated the participants but also provided them with the opportunity to review and analyse the distortions prevailing in the rural



communities. A good understanding was developed in the participants about 'why we ourselves are encouraging the social disparity, and why not we are prepared and coming forward for minimising such disparities'. After the training, there was an indication that could be realised from the commitment expressed by the participants that the training could bring some changes in the participants about the role of women and men at household and community levels. The participants also realised the existence of gender-based violence in the absence of understanding about gender dynamics in the society.

Book-keeping Training

The groups being formed, with the assistance of Sahas-Nepal and active initiation of the communities, have been maintaining a 'collective saving' at the rate of Rs. 5.00 with a view to give continuity to their groups and mobilise this saving as and when required at a cheaper interest rate. The community people have been expressing that with the provision of such a saving scheme it has become easier for them to solve their problems and to invest in collective actions. With the increase in the group saving, there is a need to systematically manage the account. Therefore, Sahas-Nepal conducted a two-day training on 'basic book-keeping' to the treasures in each VDC of Ilaka 9 & 10. A total of 164 (100 male and 64 female) participants had participated



in the training. The training sessions discussed on such subjects as the past practices in the audit system, related problems and systematic management of book-keeping. Upon completion of the training, the participants understood about the book-keeping and the importance of auditing. Therefore, realising this, they approached the organisation and requested for appropriate training on advanced book-keeping in their groups. They also learned practical knowledge and skills to keep the book systematically. The training programme also presented the action-plans for their respective groups.

Public Audit

It has been 4 years since Sahas-Nepal started working in 5 VDCs of Ilaka 9. Within this period various programme activities have been implemented with the help of the communities. In each VDC while main committee has already been created in an organisational manner, the necessary process for establishment of a CBOs network organisation is in progress. Like in the past years, in this fiscal year also the annual review and planning workshop has been accomplished by

discussing the activities being implemented and the expenditures statements. While this types workshops have provided the information about what kind of activities have already been completed and total cost of programme. Such workshop has also created an environment of trust, open discussion, transparency and empowering the focus groups. The communities also discuss and plan the activities to be implemented in the near future.

Fruits Sapling Distribution

The community people have been some kinds of growing fruits around their houses in traditional ways. However, it is now that many of these fruit trees started vanishing. At the same time the fruit production has also been declining, and there is a possibility that the fruit cultivation practices may be vanished due to these reasons. There has been a discussion with the communities as why they started giving up fruit cultivation. After this discussion, as per the plan of the communities to plant new fruit saplings in their own localities, the distribution of a total of 1107 saplings of different kinds (mandarin orange, sweet organge, lime, mango, litchi, etc.) being brought from Dhankuta and Lahan has been accomplished in collaboration with District Agriculture Development Office. In this way, while the farmers have been encouraged to plant fruit trees, there has also been additional cooperation in the collaboration with the District Agriculture Development Office.

Organic Vegetable Cultivation Training

The communities have been growing vegetables around their own houses for home consumption. The supply of vegetables from their own farms has not only solved their problem of having vegetables in their daily diets, but also contributed to keep them healthy. With a view to motivate the farmers to transform their vegetable production towards commercial vegetable cultivation, a 3-day training programme on commercial vegetable cultivation was organised for the farmers from Ilaka 9. This training programme was participated by 13 female and 8 male farmers. The training discussed about the advantages of commercial vegetable farming and cultivation techniques. Having been motivated from the practical and technical knowledge gained from the training programme, the participants also prepared action-plan for commercial vegetable farming.

Formation of Community Based Network Organisation

It has been almost four years since Sahas-Nepal has been working implementing Food Security



Programmes with local initiatives in 5 VDCs of Ilaka 9 of Okahldhuunga district. Within this four years period, the communities have been undertaking various integrated activities (social, income generating and skill-oriented, education and health, agriculture and livestock, infrastructure development, etc.) in this area by forming various types of groups. On June 24 2009, a one-day interaction programme with the participation of representation from five main committees in Okhaldhunga district was organised, with the

view of getting these development activities undertaken in Ilaka 9 by the communities themselves and registering the community based network organisation. As the objective of the discussion in the interaction programme was to from an *ad hoc* committee, the discussion has also developed necessary action-plan with the selection of the following officials.

1. Mr. Nara Bahadur Katuwal	Chairperson	Cyanam VDC
2. Mrs. Muna Shrestah	Vice-chairperson	Katunje VDC
3. Mr. Peshal Adhikari	Secretary	Balakhu VDC
4. Mrs. Radha Devi Thapa Magar	Joint secretary	Sisneri VDC
5. Mr. Panch Bahardur Tamang	Treasurer	Mulkharka VDC
6. Mrs. Durga Kumari Tamang	Member	Balakhu VDC
7. Mr. Bir Bahadur B.K.	Member	Sisneri VDC
8. Mrs. Panchi Maya Tamang	Member	Mulkharka VDC
9. Mrs. Chitra Maya Katuwal Bhujel	Member	Chyanam VDC
10. Mr. Kaman Khatri	Member	Sisneri VDC (nominated)

While forming the above committee, gender and social inclusion was also taken into consideration. For this kind of community based organisation Sahas-Nepal plans to provide back-stopping support for their organisational development, financial and sustainability so that they will be in a position to take the responsibilities of carrying the committee's functions and other community development activities.

Weekly Open-Air Market Management Committee Meeting

A one-day interaction programme with the management committee was organised with a view to better organise the local weekly open-air market that the local people have been conducting in a traditional way for buying and selling of the locally produced items of daily use at one place. The discussion in the interaction programmes focused mainly on how the market is being managed so far and what kinds of policies and regulations need to be developed for better management of the market and mobilisation of income resource. It was realised in the interaction programme that the market has not been systematically managed owing to lack of the written policies and regulations, and other necessary things such as; sheds, slaughter house, blocks for similar items, etc. to effectively manage the market. The interaction programme also developed a plan to undertake various activities to systematically manage the market.

Village Animal Health Workers Training

With a view to develop the capacity of the local people at the community level so that they continue to provide services to the local people, Sahas-Nepal has been involving the local people in various skill-oriented training activities from time to time. As per this programme, four participants, one each from four VDCs of Ilaka 10, had participated in the Village Animal Health Workers Training (vahw)organised by Animal Health Training and Consultancy Service (AHTCS) in Pokhara. The training was organised in Pokhara for 35 days in 2008. In this training, the participants learned especially about the skills and knowledge related to treatment of animals including birds. The training was conducted with the objective of producing competent human resource at the local level so that the people do not have to travel to distant places for the treatment of their animals. Through out the training, because of their hard-work and commitments, the participants have been able to successfully render themselves as the competent Village Animal Health Workers. With this achievement, the local people, who were earlier on unhappy because of



unavailability of the competent animal health workers in their villages, have now expressed their extreme happiness. The communities had been suffering problems such as loss of their animals due to poor health and diseases and lack of facilities for treatment in their localities. It is now that they have been receiving health services for their animals at nominal prices right in their own villages. The animal health workers so trained have started establishing veterinary medicine shops in each VDC with the permission obtained from the District Livestock Service Office working in order to advance their identification even at the district level. After returning from the training, they have already treated 141 animals. By providing their service to the needy community, these workers have been able to earn from Rs. 500 to 5000.

Commercial Vegetable Farming Training

Commercial vegetable cultivation is one of the potential income generation activities and market facility in the project area. Thus the groups and good market



demand for the vegetables, training on commercial vegetable farming was organised. The training was participated by 6 farmers (1 woman and 5 men). The farmers told that this area have been able to increase their income by earning more profits from the commercial vegetable farming than cereal crops in their own lands. It is also expected that their health status will also be improved through this vegetable farming. The participant farmers often looked excited with their

participation in the training programme that aimed at fulfilling the local demand for vegetables by hauling to the local market. This training provided the new skills and farming methods to the farmers who have realised that vegetable farming is also one of the key sources of income generation. The farmers, who are motivated to grow new vegetables suitable to the local climatic condition, have also made their action-plan for commercial vegetable farming in order to further advance the vegetable farming in a systematic way. There seems to be no problem in terms of marketing of the vegetable produced, as there exist motorable road that extend from this area to the Okhaldhunga district headquarters and to Ghurmi Bazar of Udaypur.

Cash Crop Farming Training

A training programme was organised especially dealing chilly and ginger with the assumption



that there will be a good source of income if the cash-crop farming can encouraged in this area. Since there is a great potential ginger and chilly farming as well as their market at locally and outside of the district. It is expected that this type of farming will bring some about changes in the farmers. The farmers who were not having income but more interested in farming were selected for their participation in the training. During the training 500 Kg. of ginger and 4 Kg. chilly seeds were distributed to 40 and 48 farmers respectively. These seeds

were bought from the local market. These farmers, who had been adopting traditional farming, stated that so far never had chance to participate in commercial vegetable farming training programmes. The participant farmers have said that they have already sold dry chillies for at the rate of Rs. 1000 per Kg.

Nutrition Test

Before the project, the communities had severe problems related to nutrition and child mortality.



Lack of awareness raising and the absence appropriate modern treatment, they had no choice but to rely on the age old traditional superstitions. The mal-nourished children were also looked down upon in the community. Similarly, the pregnant women also do not pay so much attention to the importance of nutritious food. As a result, the effect of this could be directly observed in the newly born babies. The community were not even aware of the reasons for such health problems but often related the life of the children with

fatalism, saying that the problem was exclusively due to their own fate or because the God was angry.

To address the above mentioned problems, the nutrition test programme has conducted with the aim of raising the awareness level of the women and children in particular. The programme was widely involved by the communities. In the nutrition test, a total of 444 children had participated. The test confirmed that while 59 children were in Severe Chronic Malnutrition (SAM), 129 children were in Moderately Malnourished (MAM). This test provided the parents with opportunity to understand the nutritional status of their children.

The communities now understand that the objective of food security programme is to remain healthy by organising necessary health related activities for themselves. As a result of the Sahas-Nepal and its programme intervention, positive changes in various aspects of health and nutrition were experienced. For example, with the knowledge acquired and having been aware of the causes of such health problems, they now have different attitude and stopped believing the superstitions. With this they started giving proper health care practises and psychological treatment (showing love, affection, etc.), the rate of malnutrition (acute as well as chronic) reduced to a greater extent. Similarly, the child mortality also reported to be reducing over time.

Drinking Water Scheme Feasibility Study

Sahas-Nepal conducted various awareness raising, skill-oriented and other income generating



activities under the community development activities. Such activities have helped raise the awareness level of the communities and increase the income sources. The community people have started showing their concerns over the infrastructure development along with the social development activities. After the discussion held between the community members and the programme staffs about the possible support for drinking water scheme, some feasibility study were conducted in

the programme area.

Eye Camp

For the past several years, the people in the project area have been suffering from the eye related problems due to unavailability of the appropriate services. A one-day eye-camp was organised with the cooperation of community eye centre under the Branch Office of Nepal Red Cross located in Okhaldhunga district. The main objective of this eye-camp was to motivate the



community people to make them realise the fact that the eye is sensitive part of our body and it is our duty to take care of it. From this camp a total of 546 persons received the service. Of these persons, 27 persons were also recommended for surgical operations. The camp provided the patients with the treatment and medicines free of cost. About four hundreds of poor and helpless people have received the benefits from the camp.

Emergency Assistance

The people in this project area have been suffering from the natural calamities from time to time. In an accident, 26 houses in Thakle VDC caught fire, and one person was killed in the accident. The fire destroyed lots of the property; the houses were completely burnt and put the people into trouble. Sahas-Nepal provided emergency relief support such as food grains and cash to the fire victims. Similarly, Sahas-Nepal also coordinated with Nepal Red Cross Okhaldhunga district, District Development Committee, Nepal Army, District Administration Office to provide emergency assistance to the victim families.

Udaypur district

Group Meeting Facilitation

The group formation activity has been going on in the localities of the community beneficiaries.



So far, 19 and 15 various groups have been formed in Risku and Katari respectively. The members of these groups have also been trained regarding the group operation and management. In order to involve all the group members in the collective activity and to inform about the process of group operation, Sahas-Nepal has been monitoring and interacting with the groups on a regularly basis. Among the groups being formed, 22 of them have already prepared the rules and regulation together with the objectives and work-plan in written form, while the other

groups are in the process. This has helped the groups in operation and management of their activities. With their own initiatives, the groups have started their group activities like pit-latrline construction, resting-place (Chautara) maintenance and group savings by preparing their work-plans. While there has been development of collective feeling, they have also started understanding the importance of their groups. The have also approached the Village Development Committees with their work-plans to demand for resources. The group members have felt as if they have also been empowered with the additional information they received about human rights, women's rights, health and sanitation, nutrition education, resources, etc. They have also been able to put their own and their groups' problems before other individuals and the organisations. They have also developed the feeling that it is better to be self-reliant that to be dependent on others. The process of empowering the groups is also going on. The groups have been monitoring their activities, exploring the resources for their groups and have been encouraging to undertake activities by preparing work-plan. In particular, the groups have been helping the Dalit and landless by involving them in various activities like pig-raising, group saving and other income generating activities. These groups have been undertaking the activities by mobilising their own resources. Fifteen groups have submitted their application to the VDC for construction of 130 pit-latrines, 3000 meter road maintenance, Rs 1500 to 40,000 for saving fund, 30 garbage dumping pits, 2 meeting houses and for other resources.

The groups have started working by analysing the problems of their localities and by making work-plan in written form to solve the problems. The empowerment of women is going on through the workshops and training, while group facilitation work is going on regularly for the meaningful participation in decision-making and getting access of Dalit and women to natural resources. With this, all the people have been encouraged. The groups have been involved in school maintenance and preservation water sources by mobilising the resources from various organisations for resettlement to prevent from flooding by taking the land on lease. Having worked in this manner, the groups have being feeling as if they are getting additional motivation to work collectively.

Right-based Literacy Class

The regular monitoring work of the classes being organised for educating the group members, particularly the women, and for raising awareness about their rights is going on. Twelve such



classes are going in Risku and Katari on regular basis. A total of 233 women have got the opportunity to join the class. During the class, the participants analyse the problems of their localities and prepare work-plans for solving the problems. The women, who earlier on afraid of speaking (introducing themselves) in front of other people, are now able to articulate and introduce with their names and addresses. They have also expressed their happiness and feel empowered as they are now able to read and write. Besides, they also started resolving

minor problems/conflicts in the community. They have also been demanding for other development activities from the VDCs and other organisations as their rights. They have also been putting the things they have learned into practice.

Coordination with Government and Non-Government Organisations

The civilities of regular meeting with the district and VDC based government and non-government organisations and exchange of programmes are taking place. In this connection, the DDC and VDC are engaging in preparation of the progress report and also informing about the upcoming programme. Through these activities, besides improving the institutional relationships, the programmes are advancing with mutual cooperation and coordination. The work of submitting of the progress report and the plan for the next year to the Village Council has been completed. The VDC has also contributed in terms of resource sharing to the work-plan presented by the group. Sahas-Nepal is also a member of the Plan Selection Sub-committee and Literacy Committee in Katari and Risku VDCs.

Vegetable Farming Training

The farmers of this community usually do not grow vegetables in their won land. They have a tradition of exchanging the grains with vegetables. They often use meat in place of vegetables. But it is rather difficult for the people to buy meat. They are less aware of the advantage of consuming vegetable. Realising the fact that the communities should be encouraged to grow vegetable, Sahas-Nepal has been helping the communities by mobilising the knowledge skills and resources as per their need. In this connection, a 3-day training was conducted for representative of Katari and Risku VDCs from 4-10 January 2009. In all, 32 (27 women and 5 men) in Katari VDC and 53 (48 women and 5 men) in Risku VDC participated in the training. The training was conducted with the view of that the people grow vegetables for their home consumption as well as with the objectives of encouraging them for commercial vegetable farming. The other objective of the training was to change the community's habit of buying vegetable into growing in their own land.

In this 3-day training, discussions were held on off-season vegetable faming methods including pest control and compost making, besides proper utilising the waste water at home. After the training the participants were provided with vegetable seeds (radish, carrot, tomato, cabbage, egg-plant, etc.), while they were also asked to do practical exercises in their communities. Some groups have grown the vegetables quite well and also have sold in the market, while other communities are preparing for commercial vegetable farming. They were also found using home-made pesticides made from water mixed with tobacco and other locally available plants with medicinal values. About 50 per cent of the groups have developed kitchen garden and

contributed to expenditure to be incurred in buying vegetables, and 40 percent of the members have practiced vegetable farming. Among the group members, 5 per cent members have earned Rs. 600 to 2000 from the sale of surplus vegetables. Those who earned income have prepared to go ahead with plan to grow on commercial scale and also have come to demand for training. The income from vegetable farming has contributed to their house economy, and the even the neighbours have also started vegetable growing.

Village Animal Health Worker Training

Some communities are excluded from receiving the services and access. As some groups



members have been sustaining their live through agriculture and animal raising, a 35-day training for 2 representatives (Raj Kumar Gautam from Risku 9 and Dhanaraj from Risku 1) nominated by their groups was organised with the help of the institution called Animal Health and consultancy Service of Pokhara. After the training these workers have started providing service in the communities. While the communities received service right in their villages, the health workers have also been earning good income and doing social work as well.

They have been successful in giving treatment to the animals. At the same time, they have also demanded for resources by registering themselves with the District Livestock Service Office. The communities are getting service at the local level. So far the animal health workers so trained have already treated 200 sick animals.

Cash Crop Farming Training

It is essential to look for alternative opportunities to increase the income of the poor member of the community. It has been found that the poor community has been excluded from various types of services until their income was increased. They are going through very miserable life. They are not even aware of the fact that their right to food. Keeping these things in mind, a 2-day training programme on cash-crop farming was organised for members of landless and poor groups from 3 - 5 February 2009. In all, 15 (7 women and 8 men) from Risku and Katari VDC participated in the training. The discussion in training focused more on ginger, turmeric and chilly, which have better market demand and can fetch better price at the local market. The participants have been growing these vegetable to increase their incomes. One of the groups in collaboration with the VDC has demanded the turmeric grinder-machine, as the group has planned to sell the packed ginger powder in the local market.

Compost Manure Making Training

The main occupation of the group members is agriculture. Since the poor families own very little land, they face difficulty to sustain their life from the income earned from farming alone. It is necessary to improve the fertility of the soil to get more yields from the limited land. With the objective of enhancing the productivity and make compost by utilising local resources by the community, a 1-day training in each Risku and Katari was organised. A total of 14 people (12 women and 2 men) from the groups in Katari and 31 people (27 women and 2 men) in Risku participated in the training programme. The practical exercise of compost-making was done in the training. After the training, the training participants have started making compost in their

respective places. Thirty percent of the participants have improved the compost pit they already have, and those who do not have they have started making compost by digging new pits.

Small Farmer Monitoring and Interaction Workshop

In looking for alternative income opportunities for the poor farmers, Sahas-Nepal as per its objectives has helped the poor farmers for goat and pig-raising as per the plan of the groups. The support was provided to 24 farmers in Risku and 15 in Katari. The farmers expect to get extra income from this activity. The farmers who got the support (for goat and pig raising) earlier were able to earn Rs. 3000. With a view to raise the income of the poor Sahas-Nepal has been supporting the ultra-poor farmers for goat and pig farming. From such support 15 farmers in Risku VDC and 25 farmers in Katari KDC have received the benefits. Since there is good market potential for the sale of meat at Katari Bazaar, the farmers will be able to get good income from raising goat and pig. In order to give orientation on the animal raising to the farmers who got the animals, a 1-day interaction workshop was organised. The workshop was participated by 25 (21 women and 4 men) from Risku VDC and 15 (13 women and 2 men) farmers from Katari VDC. The workshop discussed on livestock production and management (method of selection of better animals, disease and pest control and animal feed). The farmers earned from Rs. 500 to 3000 from this enterprise. The farmers have started distributing the kids being reproduced from these stocks to other farmers in the community. Work-plans for the days ahead have been prepared for the management of animal shed and plantation for fodder.



Right-based Literacy Class Refresher Training

With the view of helping the plan prepared by the group, 12 classes of right based literacy were conducted. A 2-day refresher training for the assistance of these classes was organised. The training focussed the discussion mainly on the problems faced during the classes and teaching methods. One of the problems faced was to inability of the participants to be regular, as they have to walk long distance to work as wage-labourer. The class discusses the problems being faced in the villages and prepare the work-plan to solve the problem. The preparation of the work-plan for road maintenance, sanitation, toilet construction and pit for garbage dumping is being done by the participants themselves.



New Initiative for Garbage Collection

Management of garbage of the Katari Bazaar has become a subject of big challenge for shop-keepers and communities members. Sahas-Nepal supported the Doom and Musahar community, who have been involving in garbage collection since long time, with rickshaw so that they would continue the garbage management as their livelihood of in collaboration with the Katari VDC. The garbage management such that two rickshaws will be mobilised and the people from Doom community would get livelihood and the VDC will regularly monitor and manage other aspects for garbage



management. This system of management has helped ensure the right to food of Dalits because this provides them with the alternative source of income. Currently, two persons have been operating the rickshaws as their livelihoods, from which they generate income to support their family food needs and children's education. The Katari VDC also provided support to purchase the rickshaws.

Resources Sharing in Maintenance of Infrastructures: School, Drinking Water Scheme and Tube-well, and Irrigation Canal and Dam

The poor communities have minimal access to natural resources. There is a need to increase their access and rights to various resources. Their participation seems to be minimal in various committees and mechanism being conducted by the government and non-government organisations. Therefore, it is necessary to encourage the target groups for their participation and access in health, education and clean drinking water. Bearing these facts in mind, Sahas-Nepal has supported y sharing resources for the activities like maintenance of 4 school buildings' roof, 2 drinking water schemes, installation of 12 tube-wells and 1 irrigation scheme and maintenance of 2 dams operated by the community user groups. These resource sharing activities advancing with the participation of the VDC, Red Cross, Community Forestry and the communities themselves. The activities being supported are given below.

(i) Maintenance of School

The communities have been advancing their collective work by utilising the locally available limited resources. Due to lack of maintenance of the community managed schools, the school children in many places are bound to sit on the moist-floor and conduct the classes in the open-air. Because of these reasons the school children dislike to go to the schools and there is a growing tendency of giving up the studies. Keeping these things in mind, Sahas-Nepal supported the group and management committee for the maintenance of 5 schools. For accomplishing this activity, resources were also provided by the groups, VDC, community forestry and District Education Office. With this, the school has been functioning well and the students who had left have also re-enrolled in the schools. The process of encouraging the parents of Dalit children to send their children to schools is going on continuously.

(ii) Irrigation Canal Maintenance

The poor people are insecure due to small piece of the land, and landless the people who have been living on the public land have not been able to harvest from even from smaller areas of land due to unavailability irrigation water. Because of these reasons, they are continuously struggling for their food. Considering all these facts, Sahas-Nepal supported the Chyanga Women Group of Ward n. 2 of Katari VDC for the maintenance of the canal. The maintenance of the head-work has been completed with under joint cooperation of Katari VDC and the community groups. From the maintenance of the canal a total of 56 households have been benefited. The canal has irrigated 50



hac. of land and the people have started harvesting the production. It is estimated that the production from these land contributes to their food need for additional three months. The resources mobilised for the maintenance of the canal is as follows.

The farmers, who were earlier dependent on the rain-fed condition of farming but now they have irrigation facility throughout the year. There has been change in the cropping pattern of major cereal crops and has been increase in the production and productivity to a substantial extent, which eventually contributed to food security. Sahas-Nepal facilitated group members to visit different organisations (NGOs, VDC/DDC and line-agency) to access resources. The group was able to access resources such as money, materials, and technical support from VDC and DDC.

(iii) Maintenance of Water System and Source Conservation

There is minimal involvement and access of the poor communities in natural resource. They are being excluded from the access to clean and pure drinking water. They are not even aware of the fact that to have access to natural resource is their rights. The resources that exist in the community are under the control of dominant groups. The poor are compelled to spend 1 to 2 hours to fetch and drink dirty water. Sahas-Nepal has been empowering the excluded to enhance their access to natural resources. Sahas-Nepal helped the communities' groups to repair the water system situated Bakapati and Madiyan Pakha of Ward No. 9 of Risku VDC and Ward No. 7 of Jaljala VDC. From these maintenance works, 70 household of Bakapati groups, 22 households of Jaljala, 6 households of Madiyan Pakha groups and 24 households of Bhorle Siran Locality have been benefited. The maintenance work these schemes have saved the time of the community required to fetch water from distant places. It has also improved the health and sanitation condition of the community. The resources managed by the community groups to accomplish the scheme are given in the table below.

(iv) Hand-operated Tube-well Installation

In Terai areas, the underground water source is used. Because of the change occurring in the environment, the ground water is speedily drying over time. Particularly, the landless communities are not able use the water by installing the hand-operated tube-wells. So they are compelled to drink the dirty water from the river. With the objective of providing them with the clean water, Sahas-Nepal supported the community people for installing 5 hand-operated tube-wells in Risku VDC and 8 in Katari VDC. From this support, 175 families have been benefited. The groups that have been benefited from the installation of the tube-wells are as follows.



(v) Support for Dam Construction

Udaypur is a victim district of excessive soil-erosion, river-bank cutting and flooding. Due to the flooding many people have been rendered landless. As the poor communities reside near the river-bank and land-erosion prone areas, they become the hardest hit. Keeping these facts in view, Sahas-Nepal has supported these people for river-training on resource sharing basis in Ward No. 5 and 3 of Katari VDC. While 57 households in Ward No. 5 have been saved from the flooding, 30 hac. of land have been saved from cutting by river. Similarly, 800 hac. land in Ward No. 3 has been saved and 39 families have



started earning by using these land. From this 15 landless people have been benefited. With, they will have food managed for additional three months. The description of support dam is given below.

Food Bank Concept Training

In order to ensure the right to food of the poor community Sahas-Nepal has been conducting various types of programmes. The target groups often suffer more from food crisis and food price hike. Therefore, the groups have started saving food grains through an programme called 'Muththidaan' (contributing a fist-full) by two groups in Risku and two groups in Katari so that they could use this when there is crisis. A 1-day workshop on 'Food-bank Concept' was organised for the officials of these groups. The workshop was participated by 12 persons (10 women and 2 men) in Katari and 10 persons (9 women and 1 man) in Risku. The workshop discussed mainly on the 'Food-bank Concept' and right to food. The workshop participants have started saving a fist-full of the grains out of their daily meal. The storing of food-grain is done during the harvesting time from the members and utilised during the crisis and when there is price-hike, and the surplus is also sold. They have made plan to buy the food-grain from storing when the price is lower. In order to support the groups' this activity, Sahas-Nepal provided the food-grain worth Rs. 1000 so that the group members mobilise the grain by taking turns in a continuous manner. This programme has helped the poor communities to develop 'saving-practise' and help others who do not have sufficient food.

Workshop on Right-based Approach to Development

Sahas-Nepal has been helping the poor community by informing them about their right to food and by empowering them to claim their rights by exploring the alternative sources of income. Besides, it has also been helping them by providing with various knowledge, skills and sources. In this connection, a one-day workshop on the concept of right-based development and concept of food security was organised in Katari and Risku VDCs. The workshop was participated by the representatives from group leaders, political parties and VDCs and other organisations. The participants had expressed that it is the duty of every one to create an enabling environment for the target groups so that they could claim their rights to have access to resources and services. Similarly, the VDC representatives articulated that they would play a supportive role to help the groups for their plan and programmes. The representatives of the political parties, government and non-government organisations expressed their commitments to help the target groups to uplift their life-style as well as to have their plans prioritised by the VDC and achieve their goal.

VDC level Review and Planning Workshop

Sahas-Nepal has been working by giving emphasis to collaboration and partnership with the community and concerned government and non-government organisations. Such collaboration and cooperation has facilitated to reach the target groups and obtain their participation. In this process, the activities like schools, drinking water maintenance, Dam construction, irrigation canal repair, etc. by mobilising resources from organisations like VDC, Red Cross and Community Forestry have been completed. One-day workshop was organised in Risku and Katari about Sahas-Nepal's future work-plan its and implementation. The workshop was participated by 28 (19 women and 9 men) representative from political parties, VDC chairpersons, and various organisations in Katari and 46 (31 women and 15 men) in Risku. In the workshop, the report and expenditure statement on the activities completed with the active

initiation of the groups and with the cooperation of Sahas-Nepal together with the detailed description about the plan for the next fiscal year was presented. This plan was prepared as per the action-plan of the groups. From this, all got the opportunity to be informed about Sahas-Nepal's programme. With this, the participants expressed about the transparency being reflected and the additional help to be provided for the collaboration and resource sharing activity in the days ahead.

Interaction Workshop with Dalits Community

Sahas-Nepal has been advancing its activities by working with the Dalit, women, Janjati and Madhise communities who have been excluded from the development opportunities. It has been found that the caste discrimination is more rampant among the Terai Dalits as compared to hill Dalits. While Dalits have been suffering from the discrimination based on untouchability, they are still also excluded from the access to basic needs like education, health, etc. Dalit community is also the hardest hit from the food insecurity problem. Most Dalit are also suffering from malnutrition. The health and sanitation condition of Dalits is also very miserable, as this community has always been concentrating on managing their daily food. Hence, they are not able to pay any attention towards sanitation. In this context, one-day interaction workshop with Dalits was organised in Risku and Katari VDCs to discuss about the caste-based discrimination and other issues they have been facing. The workshop was participated by 21 (10 women and 11 men) representatives from various Dalit community. The participants expressed that this is the first workshop being organised with Dalits to discuss the caste-based discrimination. During the workshop the participants learned about the following.

- They realised a need to advance by not having inter-caste discrimination within the Dalit
- They came to know about the Dalits being listed by the government
- They expressed commitments to send their children to school at any cost, by realising the fact that education is the reason for Dalit lagging behind
- They realised the need to raise their voice for the Rights from the village level and to remain always prepared for the meaningful participation of Dalit in various meetings, workshops in their groups and committees.
- A 9-member committee with Kumar Diyali as coordinator has been formed to collect statistic about Dalits in Katari and Risku and also about their real situation. They have also collectively agreed to make additional work-plan based on the discussion on the statistics collected by organising another workshop. They also realised the need to organise such workshops from time to time in order to inform them about various laws and rights and other facts so that it helps in empowering them.

Women's day

Women are the main target group of this organisation. The social, economic, educational and health conditions of the women are miserable. There is a necessity to empower them to ensure their access and rights, and also to motivate them to ensure their participation all types of apparatus. The Rights are nothing, if there is no an enabling environment to utilise and benefit from these rights. Sahas-Nepal has been organising various awareness-raising programmes through women groups and in partnership with women in Katari and Risku. In this context, the 99th International Women Day was



organised with various activities in Katari and Risku at the initiative of the groups and participation of various organisations. The programme was convened in coordination with Nari Kalyan Bachat Tatha Reen Sahakari Sanstha (a cooperative group) in Katari and Munal Sahakari Sanstha (a cooperative) in Risku. The representatives from political parties and various government and non-government organisations had participated in the programme. There was a procession with various women that went around the Bazaar and villages and later on transformed into the meeting. The programme participated by 235 persons in Risku and 200 women in Katari. Various types of games, speeches, poems and songs were presented in the programme. The women were found to be celebrating this even as their festival. This programme gave the message that the women need to show their concern in order to claim their rights and to increase their participation.

Maize Seed Distribution

Farming is the main basis of sustaining the life of the group members. Even now, the communities are facing problems to obtain seeds and fertilisers despite their interest. Even if it is available, the poor farmers are not in a position to buy these inputs. Therefore, the seeds that have been used by the farmers are given to them for the extension purposes. For this, the group members were provided with 50 kg maize seed of Rampur Composite variety. The poor farmers are afraid of using the new seed variety and the risk, as they own only small patch of land around their homes. They might not get any yield if the new seeds do not grow well. Moreover, there has been a long drought this year, so the maize seeds may not grow well. If the crop grows well and yields this year, there is a plan to distribute the seeds next year from this crop to the group members. The maize seeds were given to 45 members.

School Education Programme

Sahas-Nepal has been continuously providing education related to child-health and sanitation in the primary and high schools of the working areas. It had completed providing education to 3 schools in Risku and 3 schools in Katari. The children showed their keen interest in the child rights and raised various questions related to child rights. The parents of the children who discussed about the importance of toilet have requested for toilet construction, and they have started constructing toilets.

Gender Sensitisation Workshop

The discrepancy between women and men, domestic violence and discrimination against women and their non-participation in meetings and workshop are some of the problems the women have been facing. Lack of access to economic aspects and marginalisation of women from health and education services are some other major problems. They have not yet been able to feel eased from the burden of household chores. Sahas-Nepal has been assisting in the activities of empowering women for their meaningful participation in various groups and committees. In this process, 2-day workshop on gender sensitisation was organised for representatives of the groups being formed in Risku and Katari VDCs. The workshop was participated by 22 persons in Risku and 28 persons in Katari. The workshop openly discussed the issues about the drudgery being faced by women. The women participants raised the issues like disrespectful acts and domestic violence that have put women



in a very awkward position. They have also expressed their grievances that they have the opportunity to participate in the workshops, meetings, training, etc. only after they have finished the household chores. At the end of the workshop, the women participants also suggested that this kind of discussion would be more fruitful and would contribute to minimisation of disparity if done in each group with women and men at a time. Women also had realised that they should be prepared to take the responsibility of leadership in their groups. In the workshop, the participants were also made clear about the gender related information, and conventions and rights related to women development.

Group Strengthening Workshop

In the 3-day workshop on group concept being organised from May 13-19, 2009 each in Risku and Katari was participated by 42 and 34 participants respectively. The workshop aimed at uplifting the life style of the communities through group formation in different localities and with different ethnic groups. The workshop also informed about different subjects for strengthening of leaderships with the objective of institutional development, sustainable and empowerment of their groups. The facilitation related to resource identification and mobilisation and importance of resource sharing and how it should be done including work-plan



and leadership development was also done. The group members are convinced of the fact that their groups will be institutionalised, and responsibility with the leadership has also increased. With this the groups have also prepared their work-plan by prioritising and discussing the activities to be performed. The groups have also produced the output of the activities they have successfully completed. With this, at the initiation of the groups, they have started looking for resources to undertake various activities in various places, while they have also mobilising their own labour and resources.

Female Health Volunteer Training

So far, there seems to be no any change the health status of the women in the communities. The health problem of many other women has not been solved because of the belief system in traditional practices. The female health volunteers have been helping to raise awareness while providing health related services. Training program was conducted for these female health workers who have been helping to minimise the health problems. The training program which was organised for two days from May 3-4, 2009 was participated by 19 participants. In the training, the female health volunteers discussed about the problems being observed and faced by the community, and provided more information about the health problems. They expressed the view for their health rights by forming volunteer groups. After the training, they expressed that the new information will help in their own work, and they also suggested that such training should be organised from time to time for creating teaching and learning environment.

Fruit Plantation Workshop

Katari and Risku are the VDCs that have good potential for fruit cultivation. Presently, the farmers are frustrated with the problems of fruit pest and diseases. The people have not been able to earn income and consume the fruits from the trees that were planted before due to lack of proper management and necessary training and pruning. At the request of the groups for fruit

management and fruit plantation, one-day training on fruit sapling plantation was organised to motivate the group members to commercial fruit cultivation. The training was participated by a total of 24 (16 women and 8 men) in Risku and 21 (18 women and 3 men) group representatives. In the training, the participants showed their interest to learn about plantation methods, reasons for stunted growth, less fruiting and fruit rotting and diseases and pests of fruits. During the training, the participants prepared the work-plans for digging pits for planting. The participants also demanded for more of such training and requested for making the fruit saplings available to them.

3. Project Objective

The main objective of this project is to help the livelihoods for the poor communities and to advocate for equal access. By internalising this objective, the level of awareness has been raised among the group members with the implementation of various development activities at the community. Besides, there has been development in terms of social, economic and capacity development in various aspects. There has been development of a value system in the society that the development should be initiated by self.

As per the objective of the project, the groups have been executing various integrated development activities at the community level. Because of this, there has been execution of various development activities in their own areas. As per the main objective of the project, Sunkosi Kakani Community Development Forum has been established with the association of 123 groups in Ilaka 9 of Okhaldhunga district.

4. Change and Conclusion

- Outstanding participation of the women in group meeting, training, workshop and other activities
- Feeling of solidarity and sense of belongingness in community work
- Dalit and women started seeking their rights after having been aware of their rights
- Groups' written rules and planning of programme
- Application submitted to various organisations for access to resource and mobilisation of local resource
- Implemented of various activities by mobilising local resources and skills such as toilet construction, saving fund, meeting room construction
- Group members motivated to take responsibility and to work for collective action
- Initiation of the work in women and Dalit groups by their active participation
- Programme planning for regular meeting, discussion and solution to problems
- Increased in income of the group members
- Developed of policy and rules with the objectives by the groups and initiation of group mobilisation as per these policy and rules
- Initiation of solving the problems by the groups themselves as far as possible
- Initiation of collective action by the groups by developing work-plan
- Positive changes with respect to feeling of untouchability (caste-based discrimination)
- Effective relationships and coordination at local level
- Increment in social inclusion
- Improved of the school after building construction and the students started going to school without any worries
- Started drinking clean water after construction of the scheme

- Women's participation in the development process
- Establishment of smooth relationships with NGOs working at local level and government organisations
- Regular meeting and coordination with the district based NGOs and government organisations.
- Progress in formation of Community-based Organisation

5. Learning

- The programme used multiple development approaches and sectoral activities in order to fulfil the needs and aspirations of the focus groups.
- The groups were able to access resources from VDC, DDC and other development agency through Sahas-Nepal facilitation and resources sharing approach.
- Need to give more time to increase participation and activeness of the poor, women and Dalits.
- Regular meeting has been great help in establishing relationships and coordination with local communities.
- Learning is effective during the training if the participants are homogenous in terms of gender and caste.

6. Problems

- In the present context, there is a problem in reaching the destination in time because of frequent strikes and closures.

7. Opportunities

- We find diverse physiographical situation while working in the remote areas, which results in many instances, problem in meeting with the groups, and lack of equal participation in the activities.
- While working with the very poor communities and landless in particular, they have problem for participation in development activities.

8. Conclusion

Sahas-Nepal has its own methods and process to work in the communities, which is determined with the communities themselves. So far, it has been helping in planning of the communities for community development programme in partnership with 199 groups of Okhaldhunga and Udaypur. In other words, Sahas-Nepal covered 4842 households in the programme areas. It means, Sahas-Nepal reached 60 per cent population of the working areas. With the help of Sahas, the groups have been implementing in drinking water source repair, school repair, prevention of river cutting and income increasing activities, besides the activity of mobilising the groups own resources and skills.

During this period, they have been encouraged, as the activities like realisation about solidarity, increasing the participation of Dalit and women in various training, workshop, discussion, interaction and meetings are continuously going on. The groups have been feeling comfortable to work, as they have their rules in written form and the work-plan. Still, there is a need to encourage the poor community in order to increase their access to development work. There is a need to create an environment in order for them to claim the development as their rights rather than it is some body's mercy. There is a need to facilitate to develop their bargaining capacity for resource mobilisation. It has planned to work in the future by giving priority to groups' institutional capacity development and coordination. There are 5000 households associated with the groups. From this, they have got the opportunity to understand the matters, obtain information and be directly and indirectly benefited. The activities implemented so far have been helping the poor, Dalit, women and other excluded communities. Because of this, they have realised the changes brought about in their daily life. As the economic condition of the poor communities is weak, the skill-oriented and income-generating activities have increased their income level to some extent. Therefore, they have been able to ensure food security for some time in their families. They have also realised the fact that institutional development is also very essential in order to conduct the development activities in the communities in a continuous manner, as the organisation's local community-based network has been established in Ilaka 9 of Okhaldhunga district. Moreover, the concept of 'we can do something by ourselves' has been developed in all the participating members of the organisation.

So far, Sahas-Nepal has been helping the poor and economically weak group members to keep their livelihood activities going on. In assessing the situation of the before and after project situation of the communities, it has been found that their food security situation has been improved. Earlier they had food enough just for months. Now they have food for 4 to 5 months for their families. Therefore, there has been realisation among the community that even the small scale activities can contribute in sustaining their life.

Appendix 1: Case Study

From Porter to Tailoring

After opening up of the Ghurmi-Okhaldhunga road the porters who had been earning their livelihoods as porters are in problem. For these porters, Sahas-Nepal has started 'support to porter' programme. Mrs. Pabitra Pariya, a resident of Ward No. 3 of Thakle VDC, who has been supporting her family was in a great trouble. In the facilitation of Sahas-Nepal, a group of the porters was formed in Pabitra's village. This group has received Rs. 5000 cash from Sahas-Nepal for increasing the porters' income. With this money, Pabitra started a small tailoring business by buying the materials like new cloths, thread, buttons, and fasteners and by selling ready-made clothes. From this business Pabitra could earn Rs. 1000 as profit in the very first month. With a happy-mood, Pabitra says 'with the income earned from this business I am able to meet the food need of my family and support the stationery and book needs of my children. It is now that Pabitra's husband has also starting helping her as much as possible in the business. They said that they plan to make this business more effective in future.

Nothing is impossible, if you do it!

Nepal is rich in water resource, but there seems to be lack of pure and clean drinking water at the community level. There were some projects implemented by the government and non-government sectors long time ago. But now, due to lack of maintenance and lack of local skills and resource, those projects are in helter-skelter. Because of this, the communities have been facing big problem due to lack of water. One of such projects is located in Ward No 1 of Katunje VDC, where there are tap-stands, but they are without water. This project was constructed in 1995 with the support of Asian Development Bank. In order to rehabilitate this scheme, a plan was made by the main committee of that VDC on priority basis with Sahas-Nepal to get support for the necessary materials for repair and maintenance. After that there was a bi-lateral agreement. During the construction period Sahas-Nepal provided continuous support for social and technical aspects, while the communities contributed their labour for laying pipeline, construction and local materials. With this, the scheme was completed in time and the people are now enjoying the water continuously. For this scheme Sahas-Nepal supported Rs. 65,728. The water users now say 'if the work was done in this way earlier, no repair would have been required now'. Before, due to lack of water the people had to walk hours to fetch water. The communities of Bhaisigada VDC are now happy to get water from the water-taps installed in their locality.

Goat fetched Buffalo

It will be difficult to believe perhaps, how come the goat fetched buffalo? But it is really true. A resident of Ward No. 3 Mulkharka VDC of Okhaldhunga, Mr. Suke Tamang has a family of four with their two daughters. By profession he is a farmer, and owns a house and three Ropni of sloppy land (20 ropani = 1 ha). Three years ago, in the facilitation of Sahas-Nepal, a group called 'Shanti' was formed. He also joined that group. The group has been advancing further by conducting meetings regularly and mobilisation of saving and credit. Under the small farmer support programme of Sahas-Nepal, it decided to support this group for goat-raising, and he was selected from the group and a pair of local goat was given to him. After this, so far, he has sold two goats for R. 4000, and bought one buffalo and he has already returned two goats to, be paid back, to the group. Presently, he has 2 parent goats and one castrated goat worth 3000. Interested in goat-raising from the very beginning, he said 'I will keep its off-springs and multiply them'. Chairman of the group, Mr. Dhana Kumar Gurung says 'our group has the goal of advancing the person like Suke'. Suke, a small farmer, thanked Sahas-Nepal for fulfilling his hobby of goat-raising.

The group is at the forefront in collective work

In facilitation of Sahas-Nepal, Srijanshil Mahila group of Ward No. 7 of Toksel was formed on 21 August 2008. In the beginning, this group had 35 members. But after understanding the significance of the group, the persons who did not want earlier on to be members also joined the group. Presently, there are 40 members in this group. In this group, mostly the women from the Magar community, who are excluded from the opportunities including social, economic and education sectors are included.

After the formation of this group, in addition to the development of policy, rules, small scale dispute resolution, roads and water taps, sanitation and repair and maintenance, in order to develop habits of saving the group members started depositing/collecting Rs. 10 per month. During the last year's Tihar festival, the group has been successful to collect Rs. 16000 through playing carol. Out of this 16000, the group done an outstanding job by contributing Rs.

15000 to Shri Shivaduti Primary School where the children of the group members study. The group has also procured the lamps and other necessary materials in order to make their group self-reliant. The remaining amount Rs. 14,490 has been lent out at minimal interest rate to the very poor members of the group for the purpose of their income generating activities and to ease their livelihoods.

Describing the group activities, the group chairperson Mrs. Til Kumari Magar says ‘Before we were illiterate, there was none to encourage and show us the way to unite together and advance further. But now Sahas-Nepal has showed us the way. We the women have done a lot through our group within four months. We also came to know that we should not sit idle, and even women can do a lot if we unite. We will keep this group alive for long time and we can develop our community through this group’.

Opened the eye of Sarbhe and Nandi Maya

A resident of Jakma of Ward No. 9 of Thakle VDC, Mr. Sarbhe has completed 45 years of his age and his wife Nandi Maya has also crossed 40. They have spent the whole life in managing daily meal for their children and themselves. They were not illiterate, nor did their children ever go to schools. Sarbhe says ‘We wanted to learn how to read and write when we were children, but due to poverty of our parents they could not afford our education. We worked since we were children together with our parents for earning our living. That is why we now are like blind-persons even if we have the eyes due to lack of education’.

Now a day, this couple now is associated with Jakma Producer Group. Being members, they are doing saving in the group besides various income generation activities. Besides, they are also attending the non-formal education sessions conducted by Sahas-Nepal. Through this, they feel that their eyes have been opened. They are working hard to learn to write and read, and they are happy. They have also improved themselves in terms of gaining knowledge and skills.

Expressing happiness, Nandi Maya says ‘back in those days, there was a saying that when women for education they would become witch. But I know now that this is not true. I am getting opportunity to educate because of Sahas-Nepal. I hope that a lot could be learned in nine months.

Not only Sarbhe and Nandi Maya, there are 25 women who are illiterate like them, but have been benefited from this adult literacy classes. They express their happiness as they have the opportunity to learn from their fellow friends during the free time after they have completed their household chores. The women of this locality have thought of becoming very active for involvement in the development activities by utilising this opportunity.

Kul Bahadur started earning

Mr. Kul Bahadur Thapa Magar, a resident of Ward No. 9 of Manebhajang of Okhaldhunga district, was forced to work as a cow shepherd for others since the young age of 6 years. Kul Bahadur, who continued his education up to Grade 5 while he was still working at others’ house, did not have any further opportunity for higher education. This is because; the income earned by his father by working as porter and the food produced from the land they owned was enough for just two months a year. So, Kul Bahadur had been directly experiencing the real life of the poor. As Kul Bahdur gets older, he stopped working as a cow-boy and started working as a porter together with his father. But their livelihood fell into crisis after the motorable road from Katari to Okhaldhunga opened up, and they had to be unwillingly displaced from this job. While Kul Bahadur started a little tea-shop by borrowing money, his father went back to their village. He is now having hard time to earn a living. But Kul Bahadur who has been earning for a 9-member family, has keen interest to work as a mechanic. He used to help those, whose motor-bike and vehicles went out of order while on the road. Kul Bahadur became very happy when he came know through Sahas-Nepal that the Vocational and Skill Development Training Centre in Okhaldhunga was going to conduct Motorcycle repair training form 22 July 2007. But he became very disappointed when heard that the participants will be responsible for the food and accommodation for the training period. After a meeting between Sahas-Nepal an Kul Bhadur, Sahas-Nepal supported him for the food and accommodation under the condition that Kul Bahadur would be committed and put the skills he has learned into practice. He was selected as the best participant in the training being conducted at the headquarters of Okhaldhunga because of his outstanding performance throughout the training period.

This gave him additional encouragement. He made a plan to open up a motorcycle workshop at Mane Bhanjyang if Sahas-Nepal invests money for the purchase of the necessary tools. As per his plan, Sahas-Nepal provided him with

the necessary tools worth Rs. 10,000. Till date, he has already fixed 21 motorbikes, and has earned more than Rs. 5000. With this money he has been supporting his family and himself. Besides, he has been able to present himself as a resource person. Kul Bahadur, who now says 'if a person is hard-working and dedicated s/he can stand on his/her feet', expresses extreme happiness and satisfaction from the success he got from his profession.

Dum (Dalit) formed Group first-time in their community

There is a settlement of 9 households of the landless on the bank of Tawa river of Ward No. 3 of Katari VDC. These Dums who have been earning their livelihood by involving in cleaning the toilets and sanitation activities and by cleaning the utensils in the restaurants, prefer to introduce themselves as Mallik as their caste. Although they have been receiving supports from various organisations, their life is still confined to involving in the cleaning activity. Sahas-Nepal also continued its efforts to meet them with the objective of working with their groups. In the beginning, they did not at all trust the Sahas-Nepal staff. But after long time, they started trusting the Sahas-Nepal staff and expressed their interest to work with Sahas-Nepal. The discussion led to formation of groups. Their very first question used to be 'what would Sahas provide us to feed ourselves, and what would we get'? To hold a meeting with them Sahas-Nepal went to their place on 22 November 2008. But some members including Mrs. Fulo Mallik were not present at the meeting venue. Since not all the members were present, it was decided not to hold the meeting. Those present also returned to their homes. Having discovered the reason for not being all the members present, Sahas-Nepal staff headed towards Mrs. Fulo Mallik's house. But Fulo was in a very sad mood. When she was asked 'why did not you come to the meeting', she started crying. As usual, Fulo had gone to the restaurant work on that day too. But after working when she asked for some money to buy vegetables, she was scolded with the saying 'how come you get food and money' and 'never ever come here to work from now on'. So she had to come back home empty hand. It was already 3 p.m. when she got back her home. Her children quietly started eating the cold plain rice with salt and chilly. After having seen all this, Sahas-Nepal staff went back saying 'you are invited to attend the interaction-meeting of landless at Sahas-Nepal office'. She did not go to work on that day, rather she attended the meeting. In the meeting, while all other talked about some income generating activities, Fulo quietly said 'I would go for pig-raising'. With her frequent request for support for pig-raising, Sahas-Nepal decided to provide one pig for her. Let us see how Fulo's pig-raising dream will come true.

Now, no animal would die from general disease in my village

My village is located in Ward No. 9 of Risku VDC. This locality is very much backward. Nobody would know what types of development, from where it would come, and where does it go to. The village has not experienced any social development activities. The people have been carrying on their life with various problems. When any animal suffers, the people would take the help of witch doctors and herbs. A number of cows and goats have been killed untimely due to lack of proper medicine and treatment.

When Sahas-Nepal started to encourage for social development activities in this village by forming various groups, we also formed our group. My group selected me for participating in the animal health training in Pokhara. After returning from the training, the animals in my village did not have to die of general diseases. I saved my neighbour's ox which was about to die and 22 goats suffering at a time. My neighbours became very happy. I have already saved 120 big and small animals, and just could not save 3. From this work, I earn Rs. 500 to 800 per month. Meanwhile, I have been a reputed person in the society. In future, I have a plan to set up an Agro-vet service centre in this village. My goal is to make my group sustainable and strong.

Danuwar Women Produced and sold Vegetables

Of 44 VDCs in Udaypur district, Risku is one of them, and Sahas-Nepal has initiated its programme in this VDC by determining its working areas since April 2008. In Ward No. 1 of this VDCs there is a locality called Puchchhar tole, where majority of residents are Danuwar, and there are 27 households.

The people did not believe that vegetables could be grown, in the rice field, because they say that it will not be successful if they cultivate. That is why they spent most of their time in fishing. When they find any bicycles carrying vegetables for sale, they would exchange their three kilogram of rice with one kilogram of any type of vegetable. There is a barter system of its own kind in this village. They eat their meal just with chilly and salt when they do not get any vegetable. After the women agreed to work by developing work-plan after a meeting held on 30 July 2008, they started the right-based literacy class. With this, they participated in 3-day kitchen gardening training organised by Sahas-Nepal to utilise the things they have learned at the centre to put into practice. They have now

realised the fact that vegetables could be grown in their farms also, and three Danuwar women from their group set the example by growing vegetables in one Kaththa of land. They felt happy with consuming the vegetables being grown in their own farms. From now onwards, they have planned to grow vegetables for home consumption and growing more for increasing their incomes. They said ‘Sahas-Nepal opened up our eyes, we now grow vitamin-A by ourselves’. They also started various programme activities by coming all the groups together. For example, with the initiation of hand-operated tube-well installation, meetings, saving and investment, toilet construction, etc, all the groups have felt the changes brought about in Danuwar community. In the community, there is more cleanliness around the houses and in the lanes. Danuwar women are now keen to participate in the training programmes.

‘To be educated is my rights’

Ms. Manita Tamang, 20, a resident of Chimtaghari in Ward No. 3 of Katari VDC of Udaypur district, was born in a poor family. There are 12 members in her family. This family has been sustaining their life by engaging in wage-based works. She did not get opportunity to go to school due to poverty and also due to many of her younger brothers and sisters. As she did not get opportunity to go to school as well as did not go around, she used to get afraid of speaking to her friends in the village. In July 2008, with the help of Sahas-Nepal, 33 women of this locality formed a group, of which Manita is also a member. By holding their regular meeting, the group prepared their work-plan and submitted to the organisation. The activities like right-based literacy class, support to small farmers, dam, drinking water and hand-operated tube-well were included in the work-plan. The first priority was given the right based literacy class, as there were many women who were illiterate. A total of 19 participated in the right-based literacy class and Manita was one of them.

Manita did not get opportunity to be educated due her large family and poverty. That is why she realised that she should also be educated after joining this group. After completing her household chores, she spends two hours discussion on various right based issues at the centre and learns to read and write. It is now that when her family members tell her not to go to the classes, she argues that to be educated is our rights and we should encourage our younger brothers and sisters for education. Manita, who used to feel shy to speak before others, is now very much articulate. She says ‘by being in the group I have got important opportunity in my life, because I would have been excluded from the opportunities if I had not remained in the group’. In future, she plans to sustain her life by having tailoring as means of livelihoods after attending the tailoring training.

Nirmala’s income is enough to support household expenses

Ms. Nimala Sarki (22) Ward No. 5 of Risku VDC lives in Budhabudhi Tole. She had inter-caste marriage with a Thapamagar man one year ago. She has a daughter. Even today, a low-caste girl marrying with a high-caste person is not acceptable to their families and society. Nirmala is also a victim of this social caste-based discrimination. Because of this she and her husband had to be looked down upon and suffering a lot. They had been hated even by their families and neighbours. Sahas-Nepal encouraged forming group in he locality. Nirmala also got the opportunity to be associated with the group. Nirmala also joined the adult literacy class with the active initiation of the group and with the support of the organisation. She is now able to read and write Nepal alphabets. She borrowed Rs. 1000 from the revolving fund being made available from Sahas-Nepal for income generation activities. With this money she started selling the stools being made by herself from the bamboo and ropes. From this she made Rs. 2000 as profit, besides repaying Rs. 1000 back to the group. While she still continued with her stool selling, she also has expanded her activity to a little grocery shop from the amount she earned. With this, she could earn a net profit of at least Rs. 100 a day. This earning has been great help to manage her daily food need. Her husband has gone out to Sikkim, India for employment. From the activities of her group and her own hard work, the extent of torture she had been experiencing due to caste-based discrimination has been substantially reduced. Even her family members and the neighbours have started visiting her house. The group members also started looking at her as a role-model. She plans to give continuity to the stool-making business as her profession.

Experienced like the life illuminated by becoming literate

Jaljale of Ward No. 7 of Udaypur VDC is such a locality, where until now no any organisations including government organisation has reached. Dalit population has a majority in this locality, with very few Janajatis (indigenous nationalities). This place has a grave problem of clean drinking water. The people of 17 households are forced to drink water from a local natural-spring. After Sahas-Nepal started working from 2007 in Katari and Risku VDCs in Udaypur, this place called Jaljale could not be excluded from its development activities. In August 2007, a

group consisting of 16 households was formed. With the objective of becoming literate the members of this group, as their first priority, requested Sahas-Nepal for literacy centre.

When the literacy centre started the right-based literacy class from December 2008, they felt as if their life is being illuminated. This is because the women of 16 household of this

Village have been utilising their rights to education by devoting 2 hours after they complete their household chores. Until recently, they were spending most of their time on household and farm activities. Today, they have become literate. These women have proved the saying 'where there is will, there is a way'. Now they are able to read, write and also able to introduce themselves to others because of the literacy class. They have also started putting what they learned at the centre into practice. For example, they have submitted a written request to Sahas-Nepal for drinking water scheme through mobilising local resources. All the households have prepared garbage dumping pits. They have also started kitchen gardening and repair of the roads in their village. Before this, they never paid any attention to such activities. The entire community is happy to observe the solidarity and excitement of these women. They say 'we now have the courage; we can do some thing for the community'. They intend to study further. They have started activities like discussion on women's rights and sending their children to schools.

The group initiated constructive activities by itself

With the start of food security programme implemented by Sahas-Nepal in the process of expanding its programme in Katari and Risku VDCs of Udaypur district, other activities have also been initiated from April 2008. In this area various other organisations have also made interventions. Even then, in the process of implementing community development activities, the relationships and coordination in partnership with the target groups was started by forming the groups and by informing about the organisation's policy and regulations. After personal relationship and having participated in the training, workshop, the groups have become more active. They started realising the fact that they need to self-reliant; many more things could be done with own initiation. Many people who were not associated with the groups have started working by joining the groups. Those inactive have become active. With this there is a start of health and positive competition among the communities. They have started learning each other, for example, group saving, formulating policy and rules, and started putting what they learned into practice. The 19 households of Bairini group of Ward No. 9 of Risku, who had been waiting for any development organisation to undertake activities in their villages, have initiated constructing toilets with their own initiation mobilising local resources. Before this, the households, which had expected that development agencies would come and construct toilets, have now started development activities with their own initiation to become an example. Mr. Chakra Bahadur Magar, husband of Dhana Maya Magar, a groups member, says 'the village would become very good now, but we need to be active for development activities'. They have become confident of obtaining resources from various organisations by trying and persuading them. With this, the groups have started activities by declaring their village as 'open defecation free zone' group saving, problem analysis and making work plan.

Similar initiations have been started by the Jhora Tole group of Ward No. 8 of Katari VDC. The chairperson of the group, Gayatra Dhungana, says that 30-35 persons assembled and made public resting place, and wooden bench with the planks brought from their own houses. It is now that the pedestrians have a good resting place with shades, while they also feel comfortable for holding their meetings. Everyone has appreciated this work. The chairperson Mr. Tek Raj Sunuwar of Kakaru Nishani group Ward No. 6 of Katari VDC expressed that the activities being undertaken like this is not only the new but also for the first time in the community. This group repaired the 800 metre long road, which was in a very bad shape for the people and animals to walk, has been widened by rearing in two days by 35 persons. With this it has become comfortable for the people going to forest, graze animal, and children to commute. Earlier they did not pay any attention. But now they have the feeling that whatever we do is for our own sake. Besides, they have also started constructing pit-latrines. In this way, the groups have initiated positive actions on their own. They have expressed to remain active for future undertakings as well.