

Association of International NGOs in Nepal Towards Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

October 7, 2021



The Stories of Change



Foreword

On the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of AIN, we would like to congratulate the entire team of AIN Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Working Group for creating with this wonderful publication “Stories of Change.” We appreciate GESI Working Group for its active engagement and for being an integral part of AIN since its inception in 2014. The Working Group has been continuously updating and sharing information within the AIN membership; taking responsibility to build understanding and capture the development aspirations regarding GESI.

GESI is a prime concern of the global development sector as well as in Nepal. It is an explicit priority for the Government, Private Sector, Bi-lateral and Multilateral Development Partners, academia, researchers and CSOs at local, national and international level. We are grateful that AIN GESI Working Group is committed and engaged in exchanging knowledge and expanding technical expertise, recognizing the growing need to mainstreaming GESI in their organizations, programs and projects directly and indirectly. The recent AIN survey shows that the SDG Goal 5 Gender equality is the top one in terms of AIN Member’s engagement.

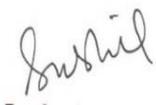
Women constitute more than half of the population in Nepal, yet the status of women, is still deprived and underprivileged. Discrimination against women and girls continues, and stark inequalities persists. This compilation of ‘Stories of Change’ have portrayed wonderful examples from the AIN membership on addressing gender-based violence issues, challenging the harmful practices such as chhaupadi, the power of educating girls to end discrimination and sexual harassment. We can also read about women as agents of change to bring reforms and women’s effort in engaging male advocate for gender issues, and leadership role against all odds and opening doors to their dreams.

These stories of good practices and experiences have showcased the exemplary work done by AIN members; this would promote in GESI integration and strengthening within the organization and in programs, and policy advocacy for GESI issues at all levels. These efforts of AIN members would help to maximize the potentials that AIN member organizations possess and would further support in fostering a common knowledge and understanding of the changing context of the country, GESI and development, opportunities for increased impact, and ways of working of AIN members and other relevant stakeholders.

We appreciate the GESI Coordinator Sunita Gurung’s and Co Coordinator Ratna Shrestha’s leadership and effort in creating this meaningful publication and thereby creating an environment for coordination and collaboration among members’ activities in establishing synergy in promoting GESI.

We are grateful to all the Members of AIN GESI Working Group for making this possible.

Keep inspiring.



Dr Sushil Koirala
AIN Chairperson



Sofia Olsson
AIN Vice Chair & SC Representative for GESI

The stories of change highlights the contribution and achievements made by GESI working group members of Association of International NGOs in Nepal (AIN) towards promoting gender equality and social inclusion in Nepal.

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**Behaviour changes of bus driver and conductors
to end sexual harassment in public buses**

Madi municipality is in Chitwan District of Nepal. It is around 40 km from the Bharatpur city and everyday people of Madi travel to Bharatpur city for employment, education, shopping for daily needs, hospitals etc. Everyday around 35 public vehicles move from Madi to Bharatpur in interval of an hour. Mostly the buses are crowded every time and women and girls face harassment and violence every day. The rules of the transportation in the public buses never used to follow by the passengers and conductors. Nobody raised or reported about harassment in the bus. Women and girls used to be silent and never complain and report about the cases. Many awareness programs were conducted but no changes had been seen in the public buses of Madi.



Orientation to bus driver and conductors on transportation rules and regulations

The situation is now changed in Madi in public buses. According to women and girls of Madi, they shared that now they feel safe to travel in public buses of Madi. This change has occurred when the bus drivers and conductors of public buses of Madi changed their behaviour. Under the Women's Rights Programme II, Chitwan Sakriya Women Foundation (CSWF) implemented the behavior change wheel framework to end violence in public buses. In 2019, identification of the behaviours and actors that influence the harassment and violence in the buses was crucial. During the behaviour identification processes, Bus drivers and Conductors and their behaviour was selected for the It was assessed that bus drivers and conductors are the most influential in the public buses and if they follow the rule and regulations of transportation and actively take part in ensuring it; changing their behaviour, the harassment in the public buses will be reduced. CSWF also analyzed that though many awareness programs had been conducted in the same area with different actors but had not been targeted bus drivers and conductors to change their behaviours to end harassment in the buses which in this Behaviour Change approach they were identified as crucial actor to change.

The targeted behaviour is to follow the rules and regulations of public transportation such as ensuring reservation of seats, stop violence and harassment, and report case of violence for bus drivers and conductors. The diagnosis of drivers and conductors were conducted where what knowledge, skills they need to know to change their behaviour, what are the challenges, obstacles for them, and what are the motivational factors for them to change their behaviour were diagnosis through COM – B model. After series of discussion and interaction with the drivers and conductors, the problems and needs were identified, and the intervention plans were designed to address those needs and



“ It's been 9 months i am working as conductor. I never used to take care who is sitting in reservation seats because that was not important for me. But after knowing the rules of transportation, i understood that the reservation seats for elderly people, women should be ensured and that is my duty. Now a day I ensure those things and many passengers do not want ot follow but I tried to convince them and follow the rule.” – Bibek Gurung, Conductor

requirements of bus drivers and conductors to change their behaviours.

Various interventions like Education, Training, equipment support to restructure the public buses, reward to bus drivers and conductors for motivation, coordination and formation of steering committees to address the opportunities gaps. During this intervention, CSWF also worked with other actors like Police, local government, transportation committee and youth to support drivers and conductors to change their behaviour and also remove the hurdles and challenges. Among 35 public buses, CSWF is working with 10 public buses where the changes are noted in drivers and conductors' behaviours. Besides, drivers and conductors, CSWF is also working with local government and police to change their behaviour to end harassment in public buses.

After these interventions, some changes have occurred. The drivers and conductors are taking their duties serious and are following the rules of transportation. They are reporting

“I used to ignore if anyone harassed girls and women in my bus. I felt it normal and never thought to interfere. But after knowing and realizing that this too is violence and its' also my duty to stop harassment in the bus, now I not only stop these activities but also help women and girls to report the case.” – Santosh Ghimire, Driver

the cases to police, stopping other passengers as well as themselves from using unpleasant (vulgar) words, ensuring that seats are reserved inside the buses and following transportation rules and guidelines. Similarly, Safety Audit

was also conducted in Madi and its findings were shared with various stakeholders including local government and after that in collaboration with Madi municipality, streetlights were places in insecure areas. A steering committee was formed to monitor the public buses regularly which consist of representatives from local government, police and youth volunteers. In collaboration with local government Madi municipality, various education materials (pamphlets, posters) were developed to educate the people, jingles were also developed and broadcasted in the local FM, additionally, CCTV cameras were installed in 4 public buses. Further, it is planning to work with other actors like police, local government, transportation committee to end harassment in public buses and places through changing their behaviours.

Nepal Retrofits Homes after Earthquake

Baudha is a remote village in Okhaldhunga, Nepal—a place that received its first road access only one year ago. In the five years since an earthquake left hundreds of thousands homeless in Nepal, the government has attempted to reconstruct villages by retrofitting homes that can withstand future shocks like earthquakes. But this approach has brought major challenges. Families are skeptical about retrofit techniques. Many would prefer to build new homes instead.

Doma Sherpa was the first CRS project participant in the district to retrofit her house. At 65, Doma has had a difficult life—taking risks is nothing new for her. Now a single woman, Doma raised five children. Her younger daughters, 18 and 15, still live with her in Baudha.



Doma Sherpa sits outside her retrofitted home, which is now more resilient to the effects of disasters like earthquakes. Photo by Nripendra Khatri/CRS

Doma and her husband built their home 20 years ago, and she has sweet memories of time spent with her family here. After the earthquake in 2015, her house was not safe to live in, so she moved to a temporary shelter with her two daughters.

“I got scared, especially at night, scared of rats and snakes, and sleeping with my two young daughters outside,” says Doma as she points to her temporary shelter. Doma didn’t have the resources nor the technical knowledge to retrofit her house, even though it qualified for retrofitting support. Initially, she planned to construct a new home, but finally decided that she couldn’t bring herself to demolish the old one. She also didn’t have enough money to build anything new. She received a government grant of \$1,000, but even that was not enough to fully restore her home.

So, Doma waited patiently for more than four years, hoping for a solution while living in temporary shelter. When she learned about the option to receive retrofitting support through CRS, she made a decision. “Many people told me to build a new house, and they discouraged me to retrofit. They said retrofit won’t make your house stronger and retrofit was not meant for a stone masonry house,” she says. But Doma felt that she should consider retrofitting as an option. “I didn’t know much about retrofitting, but I am happy that my old house can be restored as before and more strongly. The good thing is I can always cherish my memories,” she says.



Doma Sherpa sits outside her newly retrofitted home, which was heavily damaged in a 2015 earthquake. Five other residents took her lead over 25 days and were also certified as skilled retrofit masons. Photo by Nripendra Khatri/CRS

After multiple discussions with the CRS team, Doma began retrofitting. CRS provided her with \$750, six masons and a technical team—all government certified. They completed the retrofitting in 25 days.

Doma has since moved into her original home, which is now stronger than it was before the earthquake. Many people visit her to see how the work has been done. Others in her community have discussed the benefits of retrofitting. Doma has set an example for the entire district of Okhaldunga as the first person to retrofit her house. Journalists, media and government authorities, using Doma's example, have encouraged others to consider doing the same.

Doma is indeed a brave woman, who, despite being single and 65, dared to do what her entire community was hesitant to try.

At a handover ceremony, the ward chairperson credited Doma for her courage. "Hats off Doma," he said. "I hope others affected by the earthquake will retrofit their traditional homes and keep the Nepali heritage alive. If this is not done, even the villages of Nepal would be full of concrete."

Women activists are aware against the GBV

"Today, women in 60 households can safely sleep in their homes during period and eat nutritious food."

This statement was made by Mandhari BK, who is a member of Swasthya Sahara Ama Samuha Joroyal 2. Under her leadership, Mandhari BK put an effort to end to the existing evil practices (Chhapadi) and violence against women in the society in Joroyal Gounpalika-2, Melkhola, Doti. Despite the long efforts of governmental and non-governmental organizations, the practice of Chhapadi in Melkhola had not come to an end. In order to get rid of the traditional customs and bad practices through the GGS, she broke down the Chhaugoth and started sleeping inside the house.



Mandhari B.K an social activist

Her efforts were supported by other women in the group, who launched a campaign to demolish the Chhaugoth in their community. Despite initial protests from the

community, Mandhari and her group members eventually managed to demolish chhaugoth of 60 households. In the Dalit community of 80 households, women have been following the practice of chhau since last year and during the chhau, women have to sleep alone in a barn far from their homes. They have to do all the work outside the home, they don't eat nutritious food and they believed with their god will be angered if they sleep inside the home.

Mandhari BK- 37, a mother of two sons and a daughter was never go to school. After participating in the GGS, she realized that it was the society and traditional cultures that made women victims of violence.

She says, "We, the women, are the ones who have suffered the injustice of being deprived of family and society, that's why gender-based violence is increasing today." From the GGS we learned about the laws against violence against women, women's rights. Then I decided to leave the chhaugoth and stay at home to free daughter and daughter-in-law from violence against women in future. For a few days, the society protested, but all the women in our swasthya sahara Aama samuha said that the cowshed should be demolished now. We demolished the chhaugoth in 60 out of 80 houses and now they are sleeping safely in their own room of house.



Women Group Demolish Chaugoth

Some people are protesting and trying to provoke men, but with the support of our men, this problem can end on its own and become a community free from the practice of Chhaupadhi. Swasthya Sahara Ama Samuha of Joroyal Goun palika- 2 Buder is an organization by Dalit women of Melkhola. For the past two years, the mother group has been running a GGS under the Pariwartan Project run by EDC with the financial support of DCA.

Soni's determination

Soni is 13 years old and belongs to Muslim community in the district of Banke. She was born with hearing impairment. Soni is second among the eight siblings in her family. As a child, she was ignored by her parents as she could not communicate due to her hearing limitations. Her strong desire to study was always unnoticed by her family members.

Later, considering her strong passion to study, she was enrolled to a nearby school for her pre-primary level education. Though regular at school, she was compelled to drop out due to unavailability of resources and skills required to learn for children with hearing impairments in the school.



When project team met Soni, she was spending her days by getting involved and supporting in daily household chores such as feeding cattle, cleaning, cooking and even helping her parents in the field. She used local and self learnt sign language to communicate with her parents, brothers and sisters at home. She was not comfortable to communicate with others as the language she had been using is not common sign language that everyone can understand.

Seeing Soni's eagerness to learn, community volunteer got her to a bridge class, which was an informal class run for nine months in her community. Bridge class facilitator supported her to learn basic numbers, alphabets and words in the class. She loves writing and her handwriting is neat and clean. She is also fond of drawing the things around her.

Soni has been getting regular mentoring support from her community volunteers for getting education from bridge class and life skills educations. Community volunteers were regularly visiting her house for necessary support and also provided counseling to her parents to send her to the resource class where she could get enrolled and continue her education. Initially, her parents were not convinced to send their daughter to the school as she needed to stay in the school hostel. But after regular visits and series of counseling to her parents, they agreed to send Soni to the resource class. She got admitted to Nepal Rastriya Adharbhut School in Khajura, Banke and resumed her study. Now, she gets support from national volunteer for learning sign language that is supplementing and speeding up her learning in the school.

“I am glad that I have been able to resume my education,” Soni told us. She is very happy with the change that has happened in her life and is determined to continue her study. Nowadays, she is staying in the school hostel with her friends and getting involved in various extra activities such as remedial class, games, craft etc. Her parents have been sharing Soni’s story with the community so that more children with disabilities can receive adequate support and opportunities to better their lives.



Usha Leads

Funded by the DFAT and SDC, the *"She Leads: Women Leadership Program"* is IFES Nepal's flagship program that empowers elected women representatives with skills and knowledge to take on leadership roles in the political and electoral process through a series of capacity building training sessions.

Usha Subba Limbu, an elected women representative from Dharan-3, Sunsari recently got elected to the municipal committee member of CPN-UML. She shared that her recent success coupled with the training from the She Leads project was just what she needed to further her career.

"I am so excited to perform my duties. I feel like my hard work has paid off and my political party has recognized my contribution, so it has been a wonderful journey so far."



Usha Subba Limbu-Dharan-3, Sunsari

But her struggles are far from over. As a woman from an indigenous community, getting an education was a huge challenge for her. Thankfully her family supported her and even after marriage, she was able to continue her studies. "Though the present constitution of Nepal has removed most of the discriminatory laws along with the addition of the provision for the proportional representation of women in different government organs, it is not the end and we do not have time to spare, sit back and be content," she shared.

"The training has given me a new perspective, opportunities to learn something new, and provided a support system where all of us can share our experiences and learn from each other. Sessions on self-reflection, self-assessment were truly remarkable, and it is not often that we get to think about ourselves. After the training, I felt confident to be who I am and at the same time learn about my weaknesses," she says. She is optimistic about her political career and in the upcoming days, if she gets these types of encouragement and opportunity, she is planning to compete in the election for deputy mayor.

Women Unite for Agricultural Reforms

A Jagaran reflect women's group was formed by Society for Environment Education Development (SEED) - a local NGO in Dang which IM has been partnering with since 2016. The group was formed with the objective of empowering the women so that they are capable of claiming their rights and accessing government programs and services, ultimately contributing to their socio-economic wellbeing. Sita Chaudhary - Chairperson of the group in Ragaija - 5, Shantinagar Rural Municipality - shares about her experience of forming the group. "During the initial days, most of us were hesitant to join the group. We did not understand why was it important. If we attend group meetings who would do our chores at home? Plus, the idea of saving our money in the group fund scared us. Since we are not literate what if we get cheated? There were too many doubts," she said. Due to the perseverance of the social mobilizers from SEED, they were eventually able to win the trust of the elder women of the community.



Jagaran Reflect Women's Group members showing the support received from the local government

“Once we were convinced then it became our responsibility to motivate the younger ones to join as well since we are the elders,” she added. “We discuss various social topics and issues such as gender based violence, child marriage and women’s rights. We raised our savings, Rs 100 per person which goes into our group fund and any group member can access the fund in form of loan or credit.” The group is now registered in local government as Jagaran farmers group. To increase their fund, the group started communal farming by leasing a small plot of land. They take turns to work together in the land. They grow and sell vegetables from the land, the income from which goes to their group fund. The group fund has been helpful in accessing credit to these smallholder farmers who often do not have access to financial services. Recently, the group secured a water pumping machine for irrigation from the government.



Sita Chaudhary and the group members preparing to use the water pumping machine

The new machine helped farmers in the community to increase their income. Sita shares, “We have also received vegetable seeds, fertilizers, fertilizer tanks and storage crates for

vegetables. Our proposal for construction of a toilet for the community building was also approved. We also want to construct a bigger and more permanent community building. We can hold our meetings there and also store our machines, vegetables and other things. This place is also used to host different community events. Our proposal for this has already been passed. We have already formed a construction committee for this. Within a few months the building will be ready." The group plans to continue with their work and has big ambitions for their community's development. Next in line, they plan to construct an irrigation pond that will provide irrigation facility for more than 175 household in the village.



Seema's story: Opening doors through education

"I lost my ability to walk due to polio, but that doesn't define who I am," says Seema Gupta, 23, who was born and raised in a disadvantaged community in the Bara district of Nepal. On the contrary, she defines herself by what she's become: an educator. *"Education opened the door to my dream – my dream of working for a reputable organization."*

Seema is a teacher at the Community Learning Center (CLC) in her village, an educational initiative by the Aarambha Leave No Girl Behind project, which is led by People in Need (PIN) as part of the UK Aid-funded Girls' Education Challenge. The CLC, which is co-operated by Aasaman Nepal, works with married and out-of-school adolescent girls from Rautahat and Bara, teaching courses in literacy, numeracy, and life skills. The adolescent girls come from one of the most disadvantaged ethnic communities of Nepal, and are marginalized in a number of ways. All of these girls are married or are promised to be married. More than 50% of the girls have never been to school and the rest have dropped out at either primary or secondary schools. The barriers to access to education multiplies by folds when one has some sort of disabilities. Furthermore, 2.5% of the girls were identified as having some form of functional limitation.



Seema smiles with determination to educate more girls and help them break the harmful social norms.

Seema contracted polio when she was three years old. The disease affected both of her legs and she uses a cane to help her walk. Her parents grew vegetables to sell in the local market, and used the money to run their household and educate their four children. Though

money was always tight, Seema's parents encouraged her to study and she became the first member of her family to complete her secondary education. Although she does not attend college at the moment, she continues to study and hopes to enroll in the future.

Seema has always believed in the power of education, and she hasn't allowed her physical disability to keep her from her studies. *"During my childhood, my teachers or friends helped me get to school on their bicycles or motorbikes,"* she says. *"Sometimes, when I had to go on my own, I would be late. I was scared that the teacher would scold or punish me, but they did not. That also encouraged me to go to school. But not everyone was supportive, some of my schoolmates made fun of me or pitied me. Although it was upsetting, I didn't let them crush my dreams of studying,"* she says.

One day, Seema's brother told her about a vacancy with the Aarambha Leave No Girl Behind project. Seema applied for the job and was selected for the



Seema does not let her disability identify her and teaches young girls in the CLC in her locality - setting example for young girls to pursue education for better future.

position. Before she started working for the project, Seema used to dream of helping her family financially, as her siblings do not provide any financial support. At the CLC, Seema is teaching 23 out-of-school adolescent girls from her community, most of whom are married before 18, though the legal age of marriage in Nepal is 20. This is a common

practice in her community in Terai. As they are never provided with opportunities and access to education, they acquire zero bargaining power in the house. They have null or low literacy and numeracy skills and lack information about their rights, equality, sexuality, contraception and life skills. Survivors' access to justice remains limited as families often resolve conflicts without formal justice providers' involvement and with little respect to girls' dignity, need for support or well-being.



More than 50% of the girls have never been to school and the rest have dropped out at either primary or secondary schools. They have null or low literacy and numeracy skills and lack information about their rights, equality, sexuality, contraception and life skills.

Seema conducts classes in three groups every day, six days a week. For most of her students it is their first time in school, and several of them already have children. Seema says that she finds immense joy in seeing the girls interact with one another and open themselves up to learning new things. *"The girls at the CLC also help me by writing on the board, bringing me materials that are too far for me to reach, and being cooperative, so I feel comfortable with them,"* she says.

Seema is happy that all her students have learned to read, write, and do some basic math. She hopes that they will continue to pursue an education even after the classes at the CLC are over and says she would like to continue to support them in their studies.

Against all the odds

What Mina vividly remembers is the broom that she used to sweep the floor of her master's house every day. She recalls waking up to the cold hard ground each morning and starting her day with household chores from early dawn till late in the evening. Looking down at her palm Mina recollects, "My hands were so small that I could barely hold my own plate properly, but I had to prepare food for more than 15-20 people."

When Mina was only 12 years old, she was sent to work as a Kamalari - a bonded laborer - to a prosperous household a mile away from her home. Due to the financial hardship faced by her family, she had no choice but to accept the situation as her reality, "I worked tirelessly from sun rise till sundown and yet would be served with leftover food - that is if there was any."



Mina Tharu, Room to Read's Alumina Studying at Home.

Through the kitchen window, she used to momentarily watch other children of her age walk to school. As for her, education was something she did not dare to imagine, and going to school was a thought that was not meant to cross her mind. Mina still recalls nights that she slept to her own cries - not being able to live with her parent - not being able to go to school as others did. She saw her childhood disappearing right in front of her eyes. Fortunately, after five long years, she was rescued and was sent back to her family. Mina was later sheltered under Room to Read's program to help with her schooling. For the first time Mina saw purpose in her existence.

Her eyes sparkled as she spoke about her being able to write her own name. "When I first saw how my name looked in writing and when I was able to write my own name with my own hand, my happiness overflowed from my eyes." When Mina joined the program, she was older than the rest of her peers making her timid at first, but with the support of her social mobilizer and the life skills sessions, she grew to become confident and articulate to share her feelings.

In March of 2014, Mina completed her secondary schooling, and with the mentoring support she received through tertiary education sessions she was able to enroll in Babai Multiple Campus to study rural development. When girls discover they can communicate with confidence and persevere through obstacles, they can advocate for themselves and others, and forge their own paths.

Mina now volunteers as an advocate against *kamalari system* through Mukta Kamalari Bikash Manch. She shares her life's experience with girls who have recently been rescued or are working as bonded labor. She encourages them to voice their right to education and passes on the knowledge which she received through the life skill's session.



Mina working in her office

Rajan - the male advocate for girls' issues

Rajan is a 16-year-boy from Saptari who studies in class 10. He belongs to the marginalized Dalit community and was brought up in a male dominated society where child marriage, gender-based violence, domestic violence, and lack of education is a common scenario of every household. Girls in particular must bear the burden of most household chores and are likely to be forced into early marriage.

As Rajan grew older, he got the opportunity to participate in a child club from where his journey of gender norms transformation started. Later, he participated in a workshop on girls issue organized by Sabal Nepal in partnership with Save the Children under the 'Ending Discriminatory Gender Norms in Sponsorship Area' project. During the workshop, he became aware of various girls' issues like child marriage, household chores, teasing and bullying, GBV and domestic violence, deprivation of education and high rates of school dropout among girls. He also learnt about gender norms, gender equality and roles of male to achieve gender equality. The workshop was a starting point for him



to be a role model to his fellow male friends to act on achieving gender equality. He committed in not taking dowry and even convinced his parents to stop his elder sister's marriage, who was below 20 years of age and instead sent her to school.

He has emerged as a child right activist and was successful in stopping a child marriage in his community. He is regularly involved in raising awareness and informing police about probable child marriage happening in the community. He has recently helped a girl who had eloped at an early age of 14 and was later a victim of domestic violence. Her parents did not accept her back, but Rajan convinced them in coordination with Child Club Network and Girls Platform to reintegrate her back to home and now she has resumed her studies.

Since the workshop, he has conducted one street drama through his child club, and he is also supporting the municipality level Child Club Network for conducting campaign against child marriage and abolishing dowry system. He is advocating for girls' education in various public platforms and has conducted Door-to-Door Campaign for girls' education and spreading the message of "Beti Padhao, Beti Bachao (Educate Daughters, Save Daughters)".



Rajan with other participants during workshop on girls issue

Mostly, it is seen that girls and women have been raising their voices for their rights and against social discrimination in the community. The workshop was primarily focused on enabling males to raise the issue of dowry and child marriage in the community. The male participants were encouraged to express their thoughts and actions they would like to do in community to stop various girls' issues in community through male activism.

The 'Ending Discriminatory Gender Norms in Sponsorship Area' project works in close coordination with provincial, ward and municipal level government. The project has conducted a research to identify major barriers for girl children to continue their education in sponsorship working districts. The recommendation and findings of the research will be a guidance for planning and designing program for adolescent girls in sponsorship program and government initiatives for girl's education through "Beti Padhao – Beti Bachao" (Educate Daughter – Save Daughter) in Province 2.



Respecting women's untiring effort on land

Jagu Devi Aagri, a member of Bathpala farmers group, lives in Masta Rural Municipality in a family of 13. Farming is their main source of income. They prepared knife, secateurs, spade and sold it in the locality for income but faced difficulties to manage household needs. Problems of the scarcity of resources create difficulty and dispute in the family. She thought about how women rigorously engage in farming and household chores. From seeding, transplanting, weeding, intercultural operation, harvesting, processing to cooking and washing clothes, they were involved in the whole thing. Also, women must tolerate everything. Men are only involved in ploughing during land preparation and harvesting of crops. Jagu Devi was concerned about such issues and trying to find out the reasons behind it.

Jagu Devi remembered the day when UMN's partner Ekikrit Bikash Manch (EBM) staff conducted an orientation on joint land ownership and the message delivered with the slogan of Aadha Purush Aadha Nari, Jaminma Hak Barabari (half man, half woman, both have equal right on land). They said that the joint land ownership campaign is for the internal realization of males to glorify women by respecting her untired effort on land and household chores for family's prosperity.



Jaggu Devi with her husband after receiving a joint land ownership certificate

“It was heart touching to me and I was impressed. I talked with my husband about the message regarding the joint land ownership that I learnt in the orientation. Earlier, my husband said that all the property of his also belongs to me so there’s no need to name both. I convinced him that it is one way of respecting the hard work of women and better for future security too,” shared Jagu Devi. EBM staff also met with Jagu Devi’s husband and oriented about the joint land ownership, its background, importance and legal process. “My husband agreed to make a joint land ownership knowing its importance,” shared Jagu Devi. EBM staff helped to collect the documents (a receipt of land revenue, photocopy of citizenship, passport size photo, recommendation letter from ward and Palika, relationship certificate, marriage certificate) essential to make the joint land ownership.

After a week they went to the land reform office in Simkhet, Bajhang and prepared legal documents by paying NPR 100 (approx. USD 0.85) as registration charge at the land revenue office and got joint land ownership in the name of her and her husband. “I am so happy and feeling proud of being a landowner at the age of 53. It gave me the strength of having something. It helps to prevent the selling/lending of land by men without informing the family members. The relatives and neighbours gave a warm welcome thanked us for this,” shared Jagu Devi.

She further shared “I am thankful to EBM for awakening us and supporting to arrange all the documents and process financially and technically. My husband also feels delighted and admired by this work and suggests others to join this campaign. The project allowed me to become a landowner.”

Challenging Harmful Norms Around Gender Based Violence

Sangita (25) of Rajbiraj is a very happy, energetic, young 4 months pregnant woman. In the 5 years of marriage this is possibly the best time she has been living. Prior to implementing “SAHAJ’s” 10-weeks family centered sessions she had been subjected to verbal and physical abuse for not been able to give birth. Her mother-in-law was quite controlling from the moment she came to home as a newly married bride, but the abuse really started after not been able to conceive. The harassment escalated to extreme where her brother-in-law refused to call her sister-in-law in-fact he too misbehaved. She was physically, mentally, and emotionally exhausted.



Sangita’s family participated on GTN session where exercise on “Exploring Fertility and its challenges” provided the family with new hope. The exercise contributed her mother-in-law’s understanding that both man and woman’s reproductive health is responsible for infertility.

Later she took Sangita's couple for medical checkup where doctor addressed the infertility was due to her son's health condition. Sangita's family then started giving her especial care and helped her and her husband during the treatment process as she got pregnant, she is now supported with all the household chores.



Sangita's family is an example who fought against the harmful social norms regarding infertility and were able to break the culture of silence on myths of infertility and perception of society.

Knowledge about infertility and the violence lead by misconceptions and myths has reduced within the family. As well the practice by Sangita's family is looked as a remarkable point for acceptability of medical since rather than local healer.

"I had no idea a training could change my life and get a loving and supporting mother in the form of mother-in-law", says Sangita.



Association of International NGOs in Nepal

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