

Final Report on

Supporting Livelihoods of Ex-Kamaiya Tharu families through package introduction of Income generating Agricultural Technologies
(NDM Project No 952)



Implemented by:
Social Upliftment through Participatory Program,
Research and Training Foundation
(SUPPORT Foundation) Bhimdatta Nagar, Kanchanpur
Nepal

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Background:

This project was implemented to address the poverty and livelihood problem of the *ex-kamaiya Tharu* families, who are living under extreme poverty conditions in four districts of far-west Nepal. The root cause of the problem is the lack of a suitable and viable opportunity/options and resources to sustain their livelihoods resulting from the vision less and inadequate preparedness of the government machinery before their freedom from the state of bonded labor hood. Despite being a bold step of social justice, this decision became a political stunt. Thus, these *Tharu* families are left without any viable strategy and means of livelihoods, which has previously been dependent upon the provisions received from their masters. Hence, with their freedom from bonded labor state, they are left without any livelihood options, thus facing disparate situation to manage their families. In this regard, despite being the bold step of social equality and justice, the freedom could not achieve its actual objective because of its inadequate preparation and inappropriate management, due to which, the freed *Kamaiyas* are having more acute problem than their bonded labor hood state. Each family was given only a small piece of poor land (5 *kattha*) insufficient to feed the family and they are without any resources or skills for skilled jobs. While the adult male member of the family are mostly on the manual job, the female folks are without any occupation suitable to them, and the whole family is dependent upon the labor income of one member, which is insufficient to fulfill the basic needs of the family throughout the year. Moreover, the market need of labor force is seasonal in the agrarian settings, thus acute shortage during some months and lack of work in other seasons when agriculture activities are minimal.

Since, the *ex-kamaiyas* have been involved in agriculture related activities; the most suitable occupation for them would be agriculture related, hence, this project aimed to introduce the package of income generating agriculture technologies to provide a sustainable livelihood strategy for *ex-kamaiya Tharu* families along with the initial support on enhancing their capabilities with training, inputs and market linkage. It is proposed that, initial investment on inputs will be recycled and used in future and the activities will be continued on their own.

This project aims to demonstrate the poverty reduction strategy for the *ex-kamaiya* families by implementing these technologies on a pilot basis so that the successful technologies could be replicated in other settlements as well, which comprises of about 4300 *ex-kamaiya* families in Kanchanpur district itself. Thus, four income generating agriculture technologies, which require small agricultural land were introduced in a package in such a way that outputs from one component could contribute to other but ultimately contributing to income generation and livelihood support. Four interventions like goat/pig rearing, kitchen fish pond, apiculture and *Bagar Kheti* has been packaged together in a single program so that outputs of each could provide a sustainable and year round income for the participating families and could become a sustainable basis of livelihoods. These interventions were supported by organizational development, inputs and training support, group saving scheme and capacity building on technical and managerial aspects to develop it as a sound and sustainable basis for income generation and livelihood improvement.

The income generating agriculture package included production of cucurbits on riverbank (*Bagar Kheti*), along with apiculture, kitchen fishpond and goat/pig farming. All these

activities complement each other with their outputs and contribute jointly to family income and livelihoods. All these income generating agriculture activities has been common to the Tharu communities and this trait of Tharu community was utilized with initial support on technical, financial/inputs, managerial skills and market linkage and which could be managed on limited land resource. The projected outputs of the project were production and marketing of off-season vegetables (mostly cucurbitaceae and beans), livestock (goats, pigs/piglets), fishes and honey. All these commodities have very high market demand but have less sophistication, have minimal risk and need relatively less purchased inputs.

It is expected that each activity will contribute to farmers income as goat/pig keeping is expected to provide about 10-12000 rupees per annum from the sale of animals from second year onward, *bagar kheti* would contribute about 1000-1500 rupees per kattha per year, bee keeping and fish farming would contribute about 4-5000 per annum each. All these income would add up to 15-20000 rupees per annum, which would contribute quite modestly to support the livelihoods of a family in Terai region, where cost of living is relatively low. The basic features of the project was the complimentary effort of one activity to the other and regular and sustained income throughout the year, utilization of unused riverbanks for vegetable production, and production of outputs with minimal land and external input requirements and of high market demand.

As one of the objectives of NDM projects, was to contribute towards peace building through the delivery of basic services and a viable means of income generation to the poor, disadvantaged and most deprived communities of the conflict affected areas. This project has certainly contributed towards this objective as it provided a suitable livelihood opportunity for the common mass of the most deprived community and thus contributed significantly for securing peace in the country.

ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN:

1. Site selection and identification of the ex-kamaiya resettlement camp:

Among the various sites visited by the SUPPORT team, the Bailkundia ex-kamaiya resettlement camp of Krishnapur VDC of Kanchanpur district located near the bank of a stream/river with sufficient *Bagar* area and with clay soil for pond digging was selected. The site consists of about 100 *tharu* families, which were provided with five *katta* of land.

2. Identification of target families and preliminary interaction:

The participating families were identified with the help of camp Mukhiya. Though the project aimed to include all families of the camp in the program, yet due to financial limitations, the first group consisted of only 50 families through lottery system. The group was dominated by female farmers comprising about 74 percent (37 out of 50) of the group. The list of participating farmers is presented as Annexure 1.

3. Organization of farmers groups and baseline survey:

Participating families were organized in a group with its formal structure as Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer. A bank account was initiated for the group with joint signatory of Chairman and Treasurer. Preliminary interaction and baseline data on existing income level, source, livelihood strategy and socioeconomic condition showed that most of the families are dependent upon wage earned economy and their daily hand to mouth is based on the wages earned by working as wage laborer in the nearby farms or in the nearby market of Ataria, which is 11 Km away or in Dhangadi, which is 27 Km away. None of the group members are in permanent jobs and as the agriculture jobs are season dependent, there is an acute shortage of food items during lean season. It was also learnt indirectly that during the lean season, some families are forced to live without food for some meals or meals are rationed to meet the family requirements. Some members have learnt carpentry, masonry and other trades, but the demand of the trade related jobs was also very poor in the local market as the construction work was minimal in the region. Hence, it appears that in absence of the local market for trade related jobs, these training have not been very successful to achieve their goal. The effect of centralized development planning in Nepal has created trade related jobs in and around Kathmandu valley, mostly occupied by cheap labor of Bihar and Orissa of India, while the internal labor force from remaining part of the country is without jobs despite having the required training and skills.

4. Training of participating farmers:

The participating farmers were provided with practical, informal, on the spot trainings on group formation and group management, group saving and credit, market and marketing, and on technical aspects like improved practices of goat and pig management, vegetable cultivation on the river banks (*Bagar Kheti*), bee keeping, and fish rearing on kitchen ponds. In addition, one local resource person was



Farmers training on group mobilization

trained further on specific technology to be able to provide immediate support to the community as and when required.



Bee-keeping training to the farmers

Group saving and credit policy was finalized through community consensus and each member of the group has to deposit Rs five per month to the group fund created by the group. This fund was supplemented by the project with contribution of Rs. 25,000 to initiate group fund activities.

5. Purchase and distribution of animals and inputs:

Fifty farm families included in the group were first provided with Rs. 1500 each to purchase essential inputs like nails, roof tiles etc to construct the goat shed or pig sty as per the choice of the participating member. The other requirements of the shed/sty were managed by the farmers themselves. The farmers were also asked to dig the kitchen fish pond for rearing *Magur* fish. Following the construction of sheds/sty, each farmer was provided with two goats or piglets as per the choice of the farmer themselves. In addition each family was provided with one beehive with bee colony on agreement that each family, getting the animals and bee colony will have to return back same number of animals/colonies once the animal has produced the off spring / new



Piglet offered by the project to the farmers

Woman farmer feeding termite colonies to fish

Colonies, which will be passed on to 50 new families as passing on gift, and this trend will continue in the following years. In addition, two goat bucks and one boar (male pig) was provided to the community for breeding their animals. Thus more and more families will be included in the program in the succeeding years.

SUPPORT Officials teaching the farmers about bee colony Management

were needed. Thus 39 new hand pumps were digged in to get sufficient water for the fish

pond as well as for other home requirements. These hand pumps were also considered useful for producing off season vegetables in the limited land they have got, so that these families could get higher income from the sale of vegetables in future. Except for few ponds, where water retention was a problem, all families were provided with fingerlings of *Magur* (*Clarias*) fish to be reared on homestead waste, animal waste, apple snail and restaurant wastage collected from nearby areas. One of the interesting features of fish rearing has been the use of termites collected from the nearby forest as fish feed, which was identified by the farmers themselves.

Despite the initial attempt of obtaining 5 *katta* of river bank for each family, the local community forestry group objected to provide the river bank for vegetable cultivation and only 50 *katta* of river bank was available to the group and each family was provided with one *katta* each of *Bagar* for vegetable production. Following the training and fencing (live fencing), all required inputs like seeds, fertilizers were provided by the project.

6. Participatory project management and market linkage:

The project site was regularly visited by the project officers and technicians and any problem encountered was sorted out on the spot. There was no difficulty for marketing the produced commodities and the local market was sufficient for selling the produced commodities. Moreover, the animals were not yet in full production cycle by the end of the project, so there was not much sale of animals and only the marketable commodity has been the vegetables produced in one *Katta* of the river bank remained after home consumption.

7. Monitoring of the project activities and its dissemination:

The project site was visited by a three member central monitoring team of Poverty Alleviation Fund (PAF), who interacted with participating farmers, project staff of SUPPORT Foundation and other stakeholders regarding the project activities, their status and expected outputs. The monitoring team showed its appreciation publicly and described the project as a model to be implemented in other areas too and promised to support for its continuation and expansion in other areas too. In this regard, the PAF office was contacted by phone and in person by SUPPORT officials; however, so far there has not been any decisions made in this regard, possibly due to internal management problems within PAF itself. The project site was also visited by media persons and nearby local farmers and some outputs have been disseminated in other areas too. An informal interaction workshop was also organized in the district involving concerned stakeholders.



PAF Monitoring team



Monitoring team observing vegetable farming in Bagar



Scientist teaching to construct animal shed



Monitoring team with farmers and officials

ACHIEVEMENTS:

The project has completed all its planned activities and achieved the target as envisaged in the project document. The implemented activities and their direct outcome is being presented as Table 1.

Table 1: Planned activities and their achievements

Planned Activities	Target	Achievements	Contribution to income	Problems encountered
Vegetable cultivation on river banks	250 katta	50 katta	100-1800 per family after family consumption.	The local community forest group did not allow getting more bagar for cultivation.
Goat rearing	Two goats per family for 30 families	Distributed 60 kids to 30 families	So far only one farmer has sold one goat for Rs. 3000 and 18 kids were passed on to other families.	No major problem encountered, goats are in production status and farmers will be able to sell more goats in coming months.
Pig rearing	Two piglets per family for 20 families	Distributed 40 piglets to 20 families	Two piglets passed on to other farmers.	Provision of adequate feed to piglets/pigs have been a problem in the resource poor families, hence high production from pigs might not be achieved.
Kitchen fish farming	28 families constructed fish pond.	Each family provided with 75 fingerlings	Fingerlings have been growing very nicely and	There is no major problem in fish farming except to get

		for each pond.	harvesting will be done in near future.	an assured supply system for the fingerlings at the proper time.
Bee rearing	50 families with bee hives with colonies	Each family provided with bee hive with colony	Honey extraction done by 13 families and one farmer sold 5 kg honey.	There has been the problem of bee grazing during the hot summer months when there were no flowers in the crop fields as well as in the forest area. Farmers were advised with sugar supplementation and provided with for some time, however, in the resource poor community, this approach might face some problem of adoption. Predator invasion was often encountered.
Hand pump installation/Repair	Not targeted	39 hand pumps installed as required for fish farming, vegetable production at present and in future and home water supply.	This activity provided required resource base to the farmers to get engaged for off season vegetable production in their limited land for home consumption and market sale for higher income.	Obtaining extra fund for this unplanned activity.

Apart from the direct achievements and lessons learned as mentioned above, the indirect achievements of the project are as summarized below:

- The poor community received technical know how and inputs to get engaged in the production of successful enterprises, which will support their livelihoods in future.
- The community got the permanent resource base which will contribute their livelihoods in a sustainable manner.



Woman farmer feeding termite to fish collected from the forest

- Goat farming could be a very successful and profitable enterprise for these resource poor communities and the available resource base could serve as a seed source for future production.
- Farmers have group saving and credit concept in operation, which will be helpful to support their requirements in future. Though the total fund availability in the account is quite low, yet it could grow as modest fund in future to initiate and support the activities.

LESSONS LEARNED:

During the implementation of this project, some useful lessons were learned, which are as below:

1. While implementing the development projects especially in the poor communities, the project duration should be longer than present, because the time duration of one year is just insufficient to manage the project activities properly to get the desired outputs. This has been even more critical when livestock related technologies are considered, because of their longer gestation period. Thus the short term nature of the project funding was just enough to act as a sensitizer to these communities and long term commitment and funding is essential to get the desired outputs of the project.

2. In the poorest of the poor communities as has been included in this project, continuous follow up support of inputs is required until the production can sustain the maintenance, which is even more critical when they have to feed the animals/bees on purchased resources. This was very clearly illustrated by the fact that while the family has the problem of getting its own meal, they could not be asked to purchase inputs from the markets for feeding the animals as they are in no position to afford to buy even rice bran to feed the pigs or sugar to bees. Hence some form of regular support is essential to get the desired outputs; otherwise the productivity level of this enterprise will remain very low.
3. Some form of continuity and support is needed to follow up the program otherwise, the high standard of work done during the project phase might be diluted and become ineffective in very near future.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The following are the recommendations of the project:

1. The project needs extension/replication of its successful activities in the present location and in the near by areas.
2. The poorest of the poor communities and families need considerable support to sustain their livelihoods and special consideration should be given to up-lift the livelihoods of these families. Special consideration and approaches should be developed to address these communities and programs like Poverty Alleviation Fund (PAF) could address these communities, because these are the communities where we do not need to identify the poor from the wealth ranking exercises as all community is in desperate need of support to sustain their families.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

SUPPORT Foundation, would like to express its gratefulness to the selection committee of the NDM program for awarding this project and to the PAF team to support and management of the project. We wish to express our thankfulness to the farmers of Bayalkundi, who participated so willingly in the project activities and despite their impoverished state, were always eager to welcome to SUPPORT staff members in their homes.

ANNEXURES

Annexure 1: List of Participating farmers

1. Asha Devi Chaudhari
2. Sunita Devi Chaudhari
3. Fulmati Devi Khuna
4. Rupa Devi Chaudhari
5. Ram Kumari Devi Chaudhari
6. Hari Bhagat Rana
7. Sukali Devi Khuna
8. Pati Ram Chaudhari
9. Gita Devi Chaudhari
10. Shanti Devi Chaudhari
11. Panch Ram Badayak
12. Saguni Devi Chaudhari
13. Bimala Devi Chaudhari
14. Parwati Devi Chaudhari
15. Bishnu Dangaura
16. Shiv Prasad Chaudhari
17. Dong Lal Dangoura
18. Guddu Devi Chaudhari
19. Pradesni Devi Chaudhari
20. Narita Devi Chaudhari
21. Parwati Devi Chaudhari
22. Rabindra Prasad Chaudhari
23. Hari Maiya Chaudhari
24. Maghi Devi Chaudhari
25. Kishni Devi Chaudhari
26. Janaki Devi Chaudhari
27. Mina Devi Chaudhari
28. Radhika Devi Chaudhari
29. Palta Khuna
30. Ramedas Chaudhari
31. Tej Bahadur Dangoura

32. Firima Devi Chaudhari
33. Kamala Devi Chaudhari
34. Kali Devi Khuna
35. Sunita Devi Chaudhari
36. Bashanti Khuna
37. Kishni Devi Chaudhari
38. Bashanti Chaudhari
39. Sita Devi Chaudhari
40. Kamala Devi Chaudhari
41. Ghumani Devi Khuna
42. Urmila Devi Chaudhari
43. Sushama Devi Chaudhari
44. Jug Ram Dangaura
45. Ratana Devi Chaudhari
46. Dil Bahadur Khuna
47. Jugari Devi Chaudhari
48. Hari Ram Chaudhari
49. Gita Devi Chaudhari
50. Basanti Devi Chaudhari

Financial Statement

Total cost of the project: 1997,000

Fund available from NDM/PAF: 1497,000

Fund available so far from NDM/PAF: 1347,300

Fund remaining with NDM/PAF:

Expense statement of PAF/NDM funding:

Particulars	Total allocated	Expense	Remarks
Personnel	270,000	272100	
Materials and equipments	350,000	350000	
Trainings	175,000	173100	
Travel	175,000	174700	
Evaluation and dissemination	80,000	80000	
Others	300,000	300000	
Overhead	147,000	147000	
Total	1,497,000	1496900	

Note: The expense for installing 39 hand pumps at the cost of 80,999.98 was spent from SUPPORT Foundation fund.