

Impact Story 1: Participation, coordination and cooperation are indispensable for sustainable development

South Asia Partnership-Nepal (SAP-Nepal) has been conducting community development work as well as capacity building programs of various local governmental and non-governmental organizations at local, state and national level. In this context, SAP Nepal has been giving importance to the coordination, cooperation and participation of those from whom the development is intended. Currently, SAP Nepal, with the support of UNDEF, has been implementing project titled “Strengthening gender-responsive local governance of Nepal” in four municipalities (Haripur, Chandranagar, Barhathwa and Basbariya) of Sarlahi district of Madesh Province of Nepal.

This project is conducted with the aim of socio-economic and political empowerment of the backward marginalized Dalit Musahar, Majhi, Dushad, and Chamar communities of Sarlahi district for attainment of the sustainable development goals through promotion of participation, cooperation and coordination and by adopting policy of “whose question his initiative”.

In this regard, District Joint Coordination Committee has been formed within this project for liaison of SAP Nepal with Nepal National Musahar Association, Musahar Association of Sarlahi, NGO Federation of Sarlahi, Federation of Journalist Sarlahi, local media, and local government bodies to work in coordination and cooperation for development of the Musahar community. This committee has been regularly conducting meetings, formulating policy concepts, interacting for identification/prioritization/finding solutions to problems of the Dalit Musahar community and jointly advocating for upliftment of Musahars.

In the past, the government and non-governmental organizations programs was not targeted for marginalized Dalits, Majhi and Musahar Communities and hence about 99% of these communities were deprived of programs and benefits. These communities have been found to be used by the political parties only for collecting votes but ignored during development works. Chandeshwor Sada, Chair of Central Committee of Musahar Association, said that Musahar are deprived even of the state’s services. In this regards, he expressed his happiness and thanked SAP Nepal for its initiatives to coordinate and cooperate with Nepal National Musahar Association for upliftment of Musahars.

Rituraj Rishi, Chair of the Nepal National Musahar Association Sarlahi, says the project is the first of its kind that targets only the Musahar community. He said, he is positive that the project would bring economic, social and political change in the Musahar community, hence suggested that 2 years would not be enough to bring about significant changes and requested to extend the project to at least 5 years along with committing for full support for the cause.



Rituraj Rishi, Chair of the National Musahar Association Sarlahi, said that the project for the promotion of gender responsive good governance in the local government of Nepal that focuses

on the Musahar women empowerment has included only Musahar and Dalits. He added, that the Musahar Association is confident that the project would bring positive changes and is ready to support this project in every way possible. He also said that, previously Musahars did not participate in any programs or associate with any groups/networks, but this WoMEF group formed by SAP Nepal, along with building capacities has also developed habit of saving in groups. Also, because of initiating the process of registering this group in agriculture branch of the municipality, in days to come these groups will also benefit from the services provided by the ward and municipalities provided in the agriculture sector.

Chief of Chandranagar Municipality, Mahendra Mahato, committed that the municipality would provide necessary assistance as the project is targeted to Dalit and Musahar communities and expressed that he is more than happy to collaborate for effective implementation of the project. He said that increasing the capacity and knowledge of accountability of the local bodies would also help in making the local government transparent and accountable towards the target community. Local media person, Prakash Mainali, said that with the commencement of this project, it has been easier to collect information about the issues of these community. He added that, the issues collected would further be used for advocating through use of media for enhancing access of Musahar community to education, health, and income generation services; along with increasing participation of Musahar community in local planning and budget.

Samjhawati Majhi, said that through this training she has learned about importance of education, health, sanitation, saving, income generation, violence against women, caste based discrimination, women empowerment and social accountability. After being affiliated to WoMEF group and receiving training she now has gained confidence and has been actively engaged in registering their group in the municipality so as to bring program and budget for the upliftment of their community. Param Devi Majhi, mobile trainer and ward member of Haripur Municipality, said that she did not know about the program budget allocated to the marginalized community earlier to receiving this training. She said that she would now demand services and facilities from various governmental and non-governmental offices. Shivakali Devi Majhi, chairperson of the WoMEF group of Chandranagar-6, said that she is now encouraged for meaningful participation in all the steps of local government plan from planning to decision making level. Rituraj Rishi, Chair of the Musahar Association Sarlahi, said that this training about gender responsive governance and local government budget has resulted in enhanced knowledge of 483 Musahar women and suggested that such training should be provided to all 1525 members of WoMEF of all four municipalities in the days to come.