

## **Socio-Demographic Impact of Poverty Alleviation Fund Programme (A Study of Sunarpani Village Development Committee, Ramechhap District)**

<sup>1</sup>Kamal Bahadur Thing, <sup>2</sup>Ramanand Pandit, <sup>3</sup>Ashok Pandey

<sup>1</sup>PhD Scholar, Sai Nath University, Jharkhand, India

<sup>2</sup>Researcher, Unique Star Education Foundation (USEF), Dillibazar, Kathmandu, Nepal.

<sup>3</sup>Researcher, Public Health Research Society Nepal (PHRSN), Chabahil 07, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Corresponding Author: <sup>1</sup>Kamal Bahadur Thing

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### **Abstract**

**Background:** Nepal is supposed to be the poorest country. More than forty % of the general public are under the poverty line. For eradication of poverty different kinds of Programme have been implemented. The major causes of poverty is not only economic but also personal, social and technological backwardness.

**Methods:** This research was done in the contemporary issues related to Poverty Alleviation Fund (PAF). This shows the impact of PAF Programme in Sunarpani village development committee of Ramechhap. This study focuses on socio-economic condition, impact of PAF program and socio-cultural change on the process of study out of 471 Households, only 50 Households were selected purposively.

**Results:** PAF focused to disable, women and marginal, transport and communication, empower the target people. The supportive activities were alternative energy to establish poultry farm, forest management, capacity development, drinking water, entrepreneur loan/agriculture loan, increased social mobilization, livestock farming, literacy rate and capital formation at local level.

**Conclusion:** PAF has implemented various project activities to the community organizations through Partner Organizations with the authority of local government agencies. PAF was trying to change the rural poverty with urban facilities.

**Key Words:** Constitution; PAF; Partner organization and Community Organization; Revolving Fund; Untouchable Caste; User Committee

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Poverty means the state of not having adequate money to take care of basic needs such as clothing, housing and food or a deficiency or lack of something(John, 2013). The Third World receives immense foreign aid from western nations, and poverty alleviation programs and projects in developing countries are influenced by the western concept of poverty (Pokharel, 2015). It can also be defined as economic, social and psychological deprivation occurring among the people or countries lacking sufficient ownership, control or access to the resources to maintain the minimum standard of living (World Bank, 2016).

Poverty is multidimensional phenomenon. Income poverty is only one feature of the deprivation. Education, health including reproductive health, employment, nutrition, social and political participation are supplementary elements of the deprivation of capacity and empowerment(John, 2013). Cross-cultural, socio-political conflicts and natural devastations have had a depressing impact on them. Indeed most countries have increased their income inequality with rapid economic development(Pandey Ashok, Subramanim Umashankar, Dai, I Hai, Pandit Chetraj, Kunwar Min, Pandey Madhu, 2015). Poverty Alleviation Fund is a targeted programme for poor started from the year 2004 through the issuance of "Poverty Alleviation Fund (PAF) Ordinance 2060"(2003 and subsequently. The poverty level has been quantified with the help of minimum subsistence level of income and consumption(YB Thapa, Nahakul Thapa, Laxman Pandey, Sita Ram Chaudhary, 2016). Poverty status of Mountain is 56 %, Hill 41 % and Terai 42 %. In addition, urban poverty is 23 % and rural 44 %. As a whole country, the % of poverty is 42 % above. Similarly, the other table shows the ethnic poverty situation of Nepal. It shows Limbus are in low rang 71 % are in poverty line and Newar are in the minimum rang 25 % are in poverty line. This data clears that the status of poverty is very poor in Nepal(Mohp, 2011).

The Poverty Alleviation Fund Ordinance 2060 has recognized PAF as an autonomous organization with inalienable authority. It is a professional organization sensitive to the poor with its executive office located in Kathmandu. PAF Board is chaired by the Prime Minister. With the Prime Minister as the Chairperson of the PAF Board, the PAF Ordinance reflects the conviction, support and commitment of the highest echelon of Nepal Government to the programmes and objectives of the Fund (Kumar & Das, 2015; Pandey, 2015; YB Thapa, Nahakul Thapa, Laxman Pandey, Sita Ram Chaudhary, 2016). From the establishment, PAF is contributing on bringing the level of poverty down to 10% in 20 years in reduce poverty. Among the 75 districts of Nepal, the total programme districts of PAF have reached to 55. Remaining 20 districts will be protected through poverty pocket approach (Poverty Alleviation Fund (PAF) Nepal, 2017).

Even after nearly five decades of planned development, one third of the Nepalese are still in absolute poverty- deprived of basic amenities of life such as food, clothing, shelter, health, education and drinking water (FAO, 2010). The poor live predominately in rural areas and engage in subsistence agriculture on small plots of low quality land, have limited access to credit, markets, infrastructure, and basic social services, often because of inaccessibility, and rely heavily on seasonal migration and remittance. The main objectives of this study is to know the socio-economic impact of Poverty Alleviation Fund (PAF) in study area. However, other specific objectives are; to analyze the socio-demographic condition of Sunarpani VDC, Ramechhap district people.

## II. METHODS

Sunarpani VDC is in the Ramechhap District, a district of Janakpur Zone, is one of the seventy-five districts of Nepal. The district, with *Manthali* as its district headquarters, covers an area of 1564.32 square km and has a population (2011) of 202,646. Ramechhap district falls in the 56 rank in the overall composite index. Sunarpani VDC were population of 2,440 people residing in 471 individual households. In the ancient time *Sunar* caste was lived so, after that time it was defined as *Sunarpani* name. This area is geographically very inaccessible, there are no bridges, but telephone, electricity facilities are just introduced. In this VDC, only sub-health post, post office and schools. So, health, sanitation and employment opportunities are very poor. The main ethnic groups residing in this VDC are *Magar, Tamang, Gharti, Newar*, etc. Among *Dalit* there are many categories such as *Damai, Kami, Sunar, Biswakarma, Sarki*, etc.

The sampling universe is the total number of community organizations of this VDC. The members of community organizations was selected by lottery by staff from Community Development Society (CDS). A purposive sampling technique had been employed for the selection of the study population for qualitative study. A total 50 Participants whereas 42 members from 14 Community organisation and 8 from a team of staff of CDS organization was the sampled population. Similarly, 21 households have been taken for observation.

The informant had been interviewed on the impact of community forestry on local activities, like development, living standard, income of user groups. In this process information had been taken from PAF members, local people, Politician, VDC Secretary, and chairperson of user groups, local teachers, and social workers and so on. The focus group discussion had been located in the renowned place of VDC with active participation of all man, women, ethnic groups, (*Madhesi, Dalit*) children, youths and old persons using checklist. The discussion was started focusing the poverty related organizations activities in local area and its impact on developmental activities and on more issues. The data were analyzed in socio-demographic sector, social sector and economic sector.

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### A. Socio-Demographic Sector:

**Caste/ethnic composition:** There were diverse of ethnic representation. There was Bramhin/Chhetri, Newar, Gharti, Taman (Matwali), Dalit and others etc. Among the sampled households under the study, Dalit represented the largest population 52%, followed by Bramhin/Chhetri 23%, Matwali 14% and others 4%. Out of sampled 50 households, 96% peoples are Hindu and 4% are Buddhist religion. The most of households are involved in agriculture 94%, and others are 6%.

**Family size:** Family unit size of the sampled Households was found from 2 to 11 members. The age between 1 and 3 represented over 21%, the age between 3 and 5 represented over 44%, 5 and 7 represented over 23% and 7 and 9 represented over 10%.

**Age-sex composition:** The Participants of the sample area were diverse in term of caste/ethnic groups, sex, users and different age group. The total population of sampled Households was 50, among them 24 were Female and 26 were Male. The study showed that population of male and female was little less. The age group in between 10 and 19 and 30 and 39 had dominated the total population, which covered 42% of the people and among them over 48% were female. There was only one woman who had crossed over 70 years.

**Educational status:** Majority of Participants 14% had lower secondary level education. The study shows that 10% were educated up to Matriculation level followed by only literate 40% and Matriculation 8%. But 18 % Participants were illiterate. The study also showed that the average literacy rate per sampled Households was 40%.

**Types of house:** The study area is located in rural place. Out of the total sampled households, 66% had got (*Kachhi Ghar*) house made by mud and wood and 34% had got *Pakki* (Cemented) house.

**Agricultural land holding:** The study found out that the maximum agricultural land holding of the sampled households was above 11 *Ropani* and minimum was less than 1 *Ropani*. Out of the total households, the average agricultural land holding was 4% has got above 11 *Ropani*; over 44 % has got 1 and 3 *Ropani*, 28% has got 1 and 3 *Ropani*.

**Animal husbandry:** In rural area, animal husbandry is an important productive asset. Thus, most of the sampled Households in the study area raised animal husbandry. Among them 62% Households had raised livestock only, Poultry 18%, 16% had raised both livestock and poultry and over 4% had others.

**Food sufficiency:** The main agriculture production in the study area was rice, potato, crown, maize and vegetables etc. Among the sampled households 42% was found to be completely dependent in agriculture and had sufficient production for their livelihood. Many of the Households 18% survives only for 3 months from their agriculture production.

## **B. Social sector:**

**Education and schools for disadvantage disable and marginalized group:** Now the target group has been aware to enroll their children in school. The importance of education is known by target community. They have access of school for their children. Most of the Participants are illiterate. The study showed that the access of education in the study area orderly; *Dalits* 50%, *women* 36% and other were 14% respectively. It showed that the level of awareness *Dalit's* are higher than the other communities.

**End of social maladies:** Before entering the PAF programme in that VDC, some of the people were playing cards, gambling and disintegration in participation. Now those things have been completely stopped and community organization has their revolving fund and use in their own purposes with reasonable rate of interest. The study shows that the status of the social maladies as quarrelling 16%, Trafficking 36%, Violence 32% and others (conflict, unsatisfied)16%.

**Establishment of social control:** It is practiced by the members of community organization and social integration has been set up. If there is something wrong, they decide the significant decision in the community. Thus, there is changed their attitudes for the social welfare. It found as the attitude level of the study area where positive 84% and negative attitude was 16% respectively.

**Social security:** They are engaged in group. During the meeting, they share their common interest and follow social norms and values. The study shows that the social aspects is higher than political, economic and others prevailing in the community.

**Social rights and Justice:** Generally, law and order is ruled by the state and public follow its all process. Society has made different caste, ethnicity, religion and culture however they respect to all and conserve their culture. When the people are outside the boundary of norms and values, they punish to respect live persons as legally. The study found as for getting the social justice the social 24%, political 18%, inclusive 52% and others 6% plays the role.

**Community participation:** For the lack of budget to do development activities, community has contributed their cash and kinds. Target people were participating in meeting. Women were participating in each and every activity. The study showed that the participation level clearly, where inclusive participation 52%, social 24%, political 18% and others 6% respectively.

**Level of awareness:** Target group has changed their level of thinking in case of using improved seeds, commercial vegetables farming use of improved technology livestock raising and traditional beliefs have been changed now. The study showed that awareness level of the community sample members where aware people were 54%, middle 32% and non-aware sample 14% respectively.

**End of stratification:** Mainly, social stratification plays the separation of people such as rich and poor, higher and lower caste and most of our target groups were exploited before PAF entering into the VDC. Now this misleading behaviour has been changed and they have a common goal and interest for the community

development. The study showed that that the level of stratification is found to be the lowest in maintaining hierarchies with 10% while 48% of the people have very low stratification.

**Self-esteem/Self-respect:** Due to the increasing of economic status of community members, the environment of personal hygiene and respect to each other has been increased. As the same way members of community organization are actively participated in meeting. The study showed that self-respect level were best 50%, good 14%, bad 20% and others 16% where best rank was higher than good and others.

**Social mobilization:** To bring change in the community, social mobilization is a must. Community has maximum utilization of local resources. For community mobilization, facilitation is necessary. The study found that the mobilization sector; inclusive 44%, social 28%, political 24% and others 4% respectively.

### **C. Economic sector:**

**Employment opportunity:** Within the Participants, some of them are engaged in their agriculture occupation such as vegetable farming, fruit farming, milk collection and selling, poultry farming, retail shop and others. These occupations have supported to them for the maintaining their livelihood now. The study showed that agriculture 38% and non-agricultural sector 14%.

**Regular income sources:** Most of the sources of Income are seasonal in community members. Because of the facilities of Irrigation, Seasonal vegetable farming is more profitable to them and there is high demand of consumers at the local market. The Participants have regular income sources from the vegetable farming, livestock raising, tailoring, retail shop, milk selling, etc. It found that regular income source of the participants were agriculture 74% and non-agriculture 26%.

**Income generation activities:** Now according to capacity of them, they have been done organic and commercial vegetable farming, fruit farming (citrus and deciduous trees), goat raising, buffalo rising, bee keeping, pig rising, poultry, sewing and cutting, small cottage industry, repairing and maintenance of electricity shop, retail shop, retail business and so on. The economic status of the community has been changed and they have per month income sources. The study showed that agriculture 68 %, Services 16% wage labor 12% and others 4% were found.

**Cooperative development:** A huge amount of money is mobilizing within their community organization. For the sustainable manner, it has to be developed as Institution and authorize from Nepal government. So, there are aware about concept of cooperative. Now there is formed of cooperative group. It is going to be registered in district cooperative. This cooperative will be done the transaction of saving and credit which is one of the main functions of cooperative and basically it is used in productive schemes. Now all the process for the management of revolving using has been developed and it is being used as sustainable way. The study showed that cooperative development where before launching PAF 32% and after launching PAF 68% which shows the realities of the development.

**Poor loan system:** The previous history of Households were very poor because most of them went to rich person for getting loan in 5% to 10% interest per month of NRs 100.00 amount and they were suffered from this system. For the time being, it was accepted hardly and after PAF entered in Ramechhap district, such type of system has been stopped and a lot of fund is in their own organization. According to their demand and participatory decision, all the members are responsible to manage their revolving funds and there is 1% to 3% interest per month of Nepali rupees 100.00 amount. They have rules and regulations for loan mobilization. The study showed that landlord (*Jamindars*) 32%, business person 18%, relatives 28% and others 22% loan taking system.

**Use of local technology:** The local and improved technologies are vital for the community development. In order to sustainable development, local resources identification and mobilization tasks play major roles. Now they have been used maximum local resources such as human resource, physical resource and improved skills in programme. So, they have improved vegetables, well sanitation, improved livestock farming, and small cottage industry etc. The study showed that technology use of the sample households where rural technologies 78% and modern use 12%.

## **IV. CONCLUSIONS**

The study has focused the PAF programme and the socio-cultural development of households of selected sample before and after handover and impact of PAF on the livelihood and local development activities. Majority of participants reported that they used poverty related programmes as mouth talk before PAF. After PAF formation; this types of thinkers were decreased and organized for the community affairs for poverty reduction. Only few of the Participants gave the negative attitude of PAF but mass Participants told the

positive attitude and works done by PAF in the study area. The condition after PAF is being increased and improved and numerous benefits have been gifted to socio-cultural change of Sunarpani VDC's households and local environment. After the emergence of PAF, total developmental outcomes achieved by local communities were as social, economic, infrastructure, capacity building and ecological respectively. Sufficient management and protection of PAF is for sustainable development and poverty reduction, which shows the programme "Garibiko Pahichan", which programme had helped to empower the local people in income generation.

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