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“Vocational Training to female Mukta Kamaiya and Kamlari and deprived women in Tikapur Kailali”.

Background

Kamaiya and Kamlari Prathas were two traditional systems of bonded labour which originated in the western Terai (plains) of Nepal, home to the Tharu people. Naturally resistant to Malaria, the Tharus lived undisturbed for generations in the swampy marshlands of Western Nepal. The Kamaya and Kamlari Pratha started in the 1950s when the swampy marshland was free from the mosquito-borne disease because of the spread of DDT. Thus, the people from hills moved to the plains in search of fertile land displacing and indenturing the Tharu population. The new landlords who migrated from the hills indentured Tharu women as well as children to work as Kamaiya and Kamlari for a very low annual sum and promises of education. Extreme poverty forced the Tharu people to accept the offer and work for their landlords in harsh conditions.

Need for the project

Mukta Kamaiya and Kamlari tradition has been in practice since a long period of time. Though the legal system of the country finds it illegal to have such practice, such a tradition is still found to be prevalent in the country. Nevertheless, people who are free from such traditions still have scarce resources and alternatives to run their life in a dignified manner. Government plans has not been effective to implement such decision in an effective manner. As such, it is of paramount importance that we impart skills that will not only help them in income generation but would in long run help to uplift the economic and social status of the whole family. I chose female Mukta Kamaiyas and Kamlaris because they have been reduced to the second class citizen not only in the country but even in their own family. They are the victims of social evils like child marriage, domestic violence. Likewise, I chose mushroom farming due to its low cost of inputs and high market value. This widely consumed cash crop in Nepal is one of the most profitable cash crops that can enable the targeted group to be self-reliant in no time.

Objectives of the Project

The main objective of the project are as follows:

- To impart overall leadership skills to the freed female Kamaiya and Kamlari and also the other socially and economically disadvantaged women.
- To impart technical skills, particularly Mushroom Cultivation Training to such targeted group of people.
- To teach them basic negotiation, calculation, and interpersonal skills.
- To create employment opportunity of the participants amongst the targeted population.

Target audiences

The targeted audiences of the projects will be female Kamaiya and Kamlari affected people and also socially and economically disadvantaged women of Tikapur Municipality. To be specific, Mauraniya and Baghamara of Tikapur Municipality ward no 4 will be taken as a targeted location. We will take assistance of the local administrative units under the Government of Nepal to find out the targeted audiences for the project. We will also ensure that the selection of socially and economically disadvantaged population to be based on the income of the family who have income less than the poverty line as specified by The World Bank standards (i.e income less than \$1.90 per day).

Training Plans

The project includes imparting of training for a period of seven days, for 30 different women. Women will be divided into two different groups for practical implementation of the project. The

program will be conducted in Agricultural Office of Tikapur Municipality of Kailali District of Far Western Terai of Nepal. The project intends to impart training programs addressing two different aspects; technical, leadership and marketing skills. This technical part of the project is planned to start on 21st of May and end on 27th of May. However, administrative staffs will continue to conduct such activities for the next two months which will be monitored by me throughout this time frame.

Technical skills

Mr. Lal Chaudhari from District Agricultural Office, Government of Nepal will coordinate for a period of seven days. Such training will involve imparting of technical nitty gritty of the mushroom cultivation. The program will involve both theoretical and practical approach. Both the approach will go on a parallel basis. As such at the end of the training, each of the group will have physical setup for practical inception of the project. Mr. Chaudhari has agreed to arrange all the presentation materials as he has been delivering such programs on behalf of Government of Nepal. Besides, he has also agreed to arrange certification for the training attendees. Such a certification will also assist the trainees to seek for job in the related fields, if need be.

Leadership and marketing skills.

Most of the time implementation of gained knowledge proves to be futile in the absence of leadership skills of the learners. Trainees gain theoretical knowledge but fail to implement such skills when they lack practical aspects. To address such shortcomings the I will impart basic leadership skills to the participants. I have worked in Samaanta Foundation as an English teacher and as event organizer which I believe will serve as an important experience while imparting leadership skills to participants. Such leadership session will involve lessons on negotiation, interpersonal skills, basic measurement and calculation skills, banking habits, financial literacy knowledge, basic accounts operations, etc. Further on administrative staffs will continue to conduct such activities for the next two months.

Similarly, the projects will make use of administrative staffs to make sure that the marketing activities goes smoothly even after the completion of the training programs. Such administrative staffs will be provided with a nominal compensation for a period of two months. To facilitate smooth conduction of marketing and banking activities each of the group will be provided with bicycle. The ownership of such bicycle will later on pass on to the group after two months.

Project Outcome:

Upon completion of this project, the freed female Kamaiya and Kamlari who were still working for their landlords could gain independence and be self-reliant. Likewise, after getting the training and learning banking habits they could not only indulge themselves in good income generating skills but also save and even obtain micro-loans if they wish to expand their mushroom business. As a saying by Dr. James Emmanuel Kwegyir-Aggrey goes *"If you educate a man you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a family"*. I believe that this project will in a way serve as a gatekeeper that not only supports significance of women empowerment but also brings about positive changes in the family. Empowerment of freed female could also lead to rise in female literacy as significance of education is realized. This would not only help in changing the notion that education is a luxury but also help in intergenerational mobility in long run.

Likewise, I aim to mobilize local trainers and build everything from locally available resources so as the carbon footprint of this project is as minimal as possible.