

RESEARCH AND ADVOCACY FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION
(RAST)

Dhumbarahi, Kathmandu

Nepal

Annual Report 2011



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An Introduction

Research and Advocacy for Social Transformation (RAST) is a non-profit, non-governmental, social welfare organization. RAST is the effort of a group of young enthusiastic researchers from different fields of study to join together to form a team to help build a nation for the betterment of all societies in Nepal without discrimination or marginalization. It is the endeavor of these youths in transforming dreams of every society into reality. RAST organizes various programs in order to establish right-based development for socially and economically deprived communities. RAST aims to work in various fields such as economic, social, environmental, climate change, energy, health, tourism, culture, and other sectors by studying the issues in depth, conducting research, and advocating for the rights of the people.

RAST aims at providing positive transformation of societies by visualizing their development through academic researches. RAST is aware of the imperative need to understand the complexity of the Nepalese society in order to address the cause of the problem(s) that arises from different societies. RAST's working modality solely depends upon academic research addressing the root of the problems instead of addressing the symptoms. RAST believes that development practices must correspond with the understanding of the multi-layered complex Nepalese society to achieve its objectives.

Aim

To participate and conduct positive transformation of societies by visualizing their development through academic research and advocacy works

Mission

To develop societies in Nepal as well as in other countries around the world through thorough research followed by the adoption of sustainable development practices, and advocacy works

Objectives

- To organize various actions and research oriented programs for conservation and sustaining environment
- To facilitate local people for providing access to locally available natural resources and their proper use in improving their livelihoods through rights based approach obeying the national rules and acts on use of natural resources
- To research and advocate on social, economic, environment, and political issues
- To conduct research on conflict and peace, food and nutrition, human security, health, and climate change with special focus

- To organize programs and advocate for integrated development of marginalized communities

Activities in 2010

Activity 1

A project on “Hemp Production for Livelihood Security in Dhawang and Mirul VDCs of Rolpa District” was completed in this fiscal year which started in January 2010 with an aim to impact on the food security of the project area in Rolpa district. The project was funded by National Center for Competence in Research (NCCR) North-South. The district itself is being recovering from the effect of the conflict with its people trying to rebuild their lives and community. In this regard this project From RAST worked as a major contributor in their bid to the path of recovery. The project was overwhelmingly welcomed by the people of Dhawang VDC and the local government and non government organization and political parties.

Objectives of the Project

- Food security of people will be ensured by increased affordability through production and marketing of hemp products
- Development of skilled manpower by training local farmers on various aspects of hemp production using improved technology and marketing.
- Enhanced management ability and skills of hemp producers and manufacturers by initiating cooperative model of development for identifying and supplying to the marketing outlets and keeping records of transactions through cooperative management.
- Developed direct market chain between the producers and wholesalers minimising the effect of middle men.
- Publishing the best practice through video documentary and periodic publications (newsletter) and dissemination of the results.

Project Description

The project was conceived with the aim of securing the food security of the people of Dhawang and Mirul VDC of Rolpa district. The project directly trained 35 local women in different aspect of production of Hemp and Allo (*Girardiana diversifolia*) fibre, weaving clothes, knitting and sewing different handicraft out of the hemp and Allo (*Girardiana diversifolia*). A positive development immediately after the start of the project was that local people were willing to use other fibres like Allo for making cloth which has more demand and command higher price in the

market. Lately, they have started to use all kind of fibres to produce goods not only for the market outside the village but also for the village.

The local school Himalayan Lower Secondary school provided the room for production facilities where the trainings were held. Similarly, local institutions like Village Development Committee (VDC) office, Office of Small and Cottage Industry cooperated by providing personnel and other support during and after the project period, ensuring the sustainability of the project. Lately, the people from cooperative are in a process of acquiring support from the central government to construct the industry's own building and expansion of the production facilities.

The products even during the training period, sold fast ensuring the market inside the district to the delight of the local producers. Local cooperative supported with the raw material needed for training which a tremendous support is in the local context. Due to the geographical difficulty, people from Mirul VDC could not attain the training and hence in the project as a whole.

Achievements of the project

During the consultation with the local people, cooperative and Small and Cottage Industry Development Office it was decided to increase the training and add the training of fibre processing as hemp was farmed in the high hills which is unsuitable for other crops and the training originally planned was insufficient due to the complexity of work. Thus, the initial training period of 30 days for was extended to 55 days. Similarly, sewing training was extended to 30 days and knitting training was extended to 30 days.

10 women were trained in weaving the hemp products. Similarly, 15 women were trained in sewing different handicrafts like cap, mobile cases, purses, bags, camera cases, pencil box etc. 50 people were given basic weaving training and in the process they learned making cap, muffler, belt, bottle case etc.

The manufacturing facility was established as per the objective. Additional equipments were also added to the industry including the chairs for the people, *Warpin Drum* (Thread arranging machine), *Khutte Charkha* (Leg Operated Thread Making Machine) and *Hate Charkha* (Hand Operated Thread Making Machine) etc. are the equipment which were added to the original proposal to facilitate the fibre processing training. Similarly, a local NGO DECOS added 5 additional *Khutte Charkha* (Leg Operated Thread Making Machine) to the industry.

Partnership with an already established cooperative was done in order to prevent the possible split in the villagers. A mandatory provision of membership of the cooperative was made in order to ensure the participation of local people. The cooperative includes the member of local civil society, political parties, school headmaster and representatives from trainees.

Since the scale is small in this initial stage, partnership with local outlets in Kathmandu and Rolpa was done. Currently, partnership between three shops in Kathmandu has been established.

The industry and marketing chain has been handed over to the cooperative during the workshop in May 2011.

A workshop has been conducted on May 10, 2011 with participation from the representatives from the cooperative, NGOs, NCCR, Kathmandu University, representative from shops and department of small and cottage development.

Major outputs of the project

- Thirty five women trained in processing of natural fibre and dyeing. The number is five more than originally conceived in the proposal.
- Thirty five women in the VDC trained in weaving, Sewing and knitting.
- One manufacturing facility with all the basic equipment for sewing, weaving, knitting established.
- The establishment of cooperative was replaced by partnering with an established cooperative in the VDC and making the participants to become the member of the cooperative.
- Training on marketing of the produced goods and creating the marketing linkage with the major sales outlet in Kathmandu.
- One national workshop involving the local people, cooperative, NCCR North-South, Kathmandu University, Department of Small and Cottage Industry Development, Businessman and students.
- The manufacturing facility handed over to the cooperative during the workshop on 10 May 2011.
- The planned output of improving the farming technology for hemp production was not completed because of the priority on the training for weaving and knitting as well as fibre processing in consultation with the expert in the area.

The activity of Documentary and newsletter production could not be done due to the poor video footage quality and poor quality of publication.

Participation

Mr. Kiran Maharjan, the treasurer of the organization, successfully participated in a program “**Conservation Farming in Sloping Uplands affected through Shifting Cultivation**”

Practices” in one of the UNEP-EPLC project site of Manahari Development Institute in “Chuwarpakha village” in Handikhola VDC-7 of Makawanpur district **on 30 April 2011 Saturday.** Mr. Khop Narayan Shrestha, the Executive Director of MDI Nepal deliberated some notes on conservation farming methods (with focus to alley cropping systems) during the session.