A case study on the successful experience of the
Integrating marginalized ethnic groups into cooperative,
Bankariya, Makwanpur District

Members of
Small Farmers Agro Cooperative Limited (SFACL), Handikhola,
Makwanpur
List of Acronyms

SFACL: Small Farmers Agriculture Cooperative Ltd

NACCFL: Nepal Agriculture Cooperative Central Federation Ltd

DACU: District Agriculture Cooperative Union

DADO: District Agriculture Development Office

MDI: Manahari Development Institute

DDC: District Development Committee

VDC: Village Development Committee
Introduction

1. Summary

This case study analyzes the experiences and successful intervention practices on various actors involved in the lift irrigation in Manahari VDC initiated and implemented by the members of Small Farmers Agriculture Cooperative Ltd (SFACL) Manahari.

This case study was developed jointly by Procasur Asia and the Pacific, Nepal Agriculture Cooperative Federation Ltd (NACFL), District Agriculture Cooperative Union (DACU), Makwanpur, Small Farmers Agriculture Cooperative Ltd (SFACL), Manahari for the purpose of demonstrating the innovation introduced by SFACL Manahari to solve the irrigation problem of farmers. Information included in the case study was collected by using Procasur Learning Route tools with participation of stakeholders.

This case study focuses on construction and management of lift irrigation system by the community. This will mainly support various groups to understand the problems faced by them during implementation of activities which are demanded by community and have high priority but less chance of investment from government sector. This case will demonstrate how the community manage scheme can sustain and perform in the society.

2. Goal and Objective

Main goal of this case is to demonstrate how a community led development can bring change to the livelihood of society.

Objective of this case are as follows:-

- How can a community identify their requirement?
- How those required activities can be performed by the community with help from external actors.

3. Map of Actor

Different organization has played a crucial role in development of integrated farming. An organization like MDI Nepal, which was the first organization to start group in this area plays a crucial role in accessibility of farmers and access to fund through saving and credit facility. Beside this organization like District Agriculture Development, Chure Agriculture Cooperative Ltd, Fishery Development Center, Small Farmers Cooperative Ltd, Agriculture Development Bank, Rampur Agriculture College, and Local Market have played a role in development of integrated farming including promotion of fish, vegetables, fruits, pigs and poultry.
Integrating Marginalized Ethnic Groups in Cooperative

1. Background

Living in temporary shades inside jungles of Makwanpur and Parsa Districts for thousands of years, Bankariya, is one of the highly marginalized ethnic groups in Nepal. They derived their livelihood by making bamboo and wooden products and barter these products with outside communities. The Government of Nepal distributed land for leasehold forestry purposes to the Bankariya which started their settled life in 2061 B.S.

With the support from Small Farmers Agriculture Cooperative Ltd, Manohari, Small Farmers Agriculture Cooperatives, Hadikhola was formed in 2066 B.S. to involve Bankariya community in the cooperative movement. The Bankariya households were provided Nrs 1000 per month from the Government of Nepal which could be potential sources of funds for the cooperative. The Bankariya people used to spend the money in regular households activities. Sporadic support from different social organizations could not effect any change in the Bankariya community. A lack of trust of the Bankariya community with outside community increased difficulty for cooperative staff to organize Bankariya people in
cooperative movement. It took around 4-5 months to make them understand the concept about groups, saving and credit and membership of Cooperative. Bankariya joined the Cooperative with saving amount of NRS 10 per month and increased it later to NRS 50 and NRS 100 per month.

2. Process of Change
After starting settled life, Bankariya was provided with various programs and services from different agencies of the Government of Nepal in areas of income generation, training in agriculture production, support with seeds, livestock, health and other materials and equipments. Since these supports were sporadic and abrupt in nature, they could not yield any significant results. Initially members from Bankariya took money for household expenses but soon learnt to invest in small enterprises like vegetable farming and livestock. Bankariya rose to national fame after Ex Prime Minister Dr Baburam Bhattarai stayed for a night at the village with Bankariya people.

There was a long line of people with lots of police personnel. I was afraid they would hurt us despite not doing any harm. Later on they told me that Prime Minister will stay in my house.

Sano Sonal Bankariya

Bankariya are rich of indigenous knowledge. If these knowledge can be capture and utilized in regular income generating activities this will certainly result in the sustainable practice in the community. Some Bankariya are already involved in different crop plantations and have also change the regular food habit. Now they consume rice as the major food and some of them are involve in cultivation of rice. Some produce vegetable and sell those items in market.

Some of us cultivate and sell vegetable from our lands in nearby market. We get regular source of money.

Santamaya Bankariya

Bankariya people are sceptic of outside people which created challenge for involving them in cooperative. Initially, we started bringing all people in meetings. Then we talked about problems they were facing and informed them how cooperative can be helpful in ameliorating their situations. Paying membership fees of Nrs 10 they received credit facility which caught their attention. Moreover, the ethnic groups allowance from the Government of Nepal was also targeted to be deposited in the cooperative immediately after receipt. Currently, 4 Bankariya people have taken loan worth Nra 200,000/- from Cooperative which received loan from Small Farmers Development Bank and further invested in its members.

Surendra Kumar Titung, Manager SFACI, Handikhola
Mapping of Actors
Small Farmers Agriculture Cooperative Ltd (SFACL), Handikhola is the primary supporter of the Bankariya. They have taken loan from Small Farmers Development Bank and supported financially in trainings, social development and construction of houses. Nepal Agriculture Cooperative Central Federation Limited (NACCFL) have provided empowerment trainings, and conducted awareness programs to Bankariya. SFACL, Manohari is playing crucial role for their overall development. They supported Hadikhola on providing training in cooperative management, and provide support when ever required. Village Development Committee (VDC) provides per person allowance of NRS 1000 per month to Bankariya. District Livestock Service Office (DLSO) provides technical support to Bankariya mainly on Livestock, Livestock insurance, Free vaccination for animals, and breed improvement of goats. Agriculture Cooperative District Union (ACDU) provided free seed to Bankariya, training on vegetable farming, information collection and reporting to various networks. District Agriculture Development Office (DADO) suggests appropriate manure, seed, and technical support on crop production. Besides, other I/NGO are also supporting Bankariya in training, material and input for agriculture productions.

SWOT Analysis
Despite having low formal education, Indigenous Knowledge and practices are the main strength of Bankariya. Only one member of whole community has completed 10 years of schooling. They have less idea on various income generation activities beside their tradition waiving skills.
Bankariya have a close relation with forest and know how to use that. They stay in Leasehold forest area. They can start working in plantation of non timber forest product and market them as there is good demand for several of those products in national and international market. Government should train them in certification process, support in identification and establishing linkage with market and support in value addition. Most of the organizations are working with Bankariya on agriculture and livestock. There is a great fluctuation of demand and price in these products. This may create confusion among them. Focusing on activities which are trail at other communities may result in short term so all the stakeholders needs to focus on the specific intervention strategy.

Milestone of change
Bankariya were staying in different part of forest and totally depends on different food collect from forest. Because of this hardship there are only 81 members of this ethnic group in Nepal. Slowly the number is increasing as the mortality of the children is decreasing and they have access to health system. SFACL Handikhola is trying to ensure that they easily get involved in the regular income generation type of activities and regular saving and credit activities. They are being supported in various sectors like agriculture production and livestock. Regular supports in empowerment have slightly changed the community. Now they can face and talk with outsider easily but this need to continue for some time as they need more empowerment activities.

With support from various agencies and cooperatives we are able to change the way of our life. If this continue then we will be able to sustain our livelihood without support from outsiders.

Mrs. Santa Maya Bankariya, Leader of Bankariya

Maps
In the past, this group were scattered with temporary sheds in various part of Jungle in Makwanpur and Parsha Districts. Their main source of feeding family was through collecting various fruits and roots from jungle. Shades constructed by them were not so strong so they have to face harsh weather and because of this there was a high mortality rate among the children. Most interesting part of this group is they do not hunt from forest but totally depends on the collected foods and they used to prepare various traditional materials like box from wood, basket and mattress from bamboo. They used to exchange these goods at nearby village and exchange that for food and other necessary items. So in overall their number of population was going down and their source of livelihood was also becoming difficult because of encroachment in resources from outside.

Government provided them land under the Leasehold Forest User agreement and settled them in one place with some land for cultivating purpose. They receive monthly allowance from the government and this supported a bit for livelihood. Members of family are going in different places and mainly working in carpet factory with further supports family financially. They were accommodated in the cooperative as the members. There was a lot of reluctance from the members but due to regular mentoring from cooperative staffs and member they join the cooperative. They start with saving of NRS 10 per month and now they are saving NRS 100 regularly. 4 members from the community have also taken loan from the cooperative and involve in different income generating activities like goat keeping, pig, chicken and...
vegetable production. Others are depending on the support from the various agencies. They are sending their children in school and regularly visit health post when there is problem related with health. In future, they want financial support from different agencies without interest so all of them can be involve in income generation activities and sustain their livelihood. They are planning ask the government to construct the bridge in the river so their children can go to school during rainy season. Local traders visit them to buy various products. The Cooperative is searching a financial source to provide them with soft loan which will help in scaling up the income generating activities.

Indicators of change
Certain whims of change can be seen in Bankariya. Now they are not afraid to face people from outside. Some of them have started taking loan and investing in building small enterprises. Bankariya have started working in carpet industries in cities. They are sending their children to school regularly. The most conspicuous change in the community is the habit of saving and credit. Starting settled life and involvement in cooperative can be a learning lesson for development practiceners. NACCFL is trying to document these lessons. Activities of the Cooperative and Bankariya community can be very much useful tools for organizations working with ethnic groups from all around the world. This can establish linkage between the Bankariya people and outside community.

Achievements
There are 2 inter group members in cooperative who are regularly saving NRS 100. 4 members have taken loan for various income generation activities. They still need capacity building trainings in financial management and business literacy to document all the activities and to reduce the chances of moving out in search of other employment. They are using normal face to face sharing for exchange. PROCASUR, NACCFL, and SFACL Handikhola have initiated the process of documenting the activities using Learning Route tool which needs further exploration. There is a high risk of losing their indigenous knowledge (IK) as they are slowly integrated into modern society. It is necessary to document all those IKs.

Scaling up
The current activities need further enhancements to sustain their life in Bankariya. The existing lands and other amenities will not be enough to hold ever increasing Bankariya population. Organizations intervening in this place should come with plans which are concrete and coordinated. This ensures
sustainability of their interventions. SFACL Handikhola should develop a concrete plan of actions to support them in learning and institutional development within the community.

Conclusion

SFACL Handikhola have successfully assimilated Bankariya in Cooperative and involved them in various income generation activities along with regular saving and credit habit. This has played major role in supporting livelihood opportunities of Bankariya. They have slowly started integrating into the society building on their indigenous knowledge which is sure to guarantee sustainability of the community.