

MOUNTAIN TRAIL 2018

**Living in the Mountains
Challenges and Opportunities**



हिमाली जोश
MOUNTAIN SPIRIT

Supporting Mountain Communities and Environment

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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Communities of mountain people lived throughout the Nepal Himalaya. They share a common culture, religion, and environmental conditions. Therefore, the challenges and opportunities they face are also similar. Despite these commonalities, mountain communities are kept apart by formidable natural barriers such as deep rivers and high mountains. The migration of mountain people into Kathmandu valley in recent years however created an unprecedented opportunity for them to meet, interact and learn from each other. Mountain Spirit is an organization born out of this opportunity. Mountain Trail is its expression and a platform for sharing activities, experiences, and aspirations among its members.

Mountain Trail 2018 includes a wide range of interesting articles. *Ching Lamu Sherpa* from Udayapur focuses her article on the worsening status of senior citizens in Nepal and also explores the challenges and opportunities of aging in the mountains. *Gopal Lama* of Helambu argues that the “one size fits all” education policies and programs of the past have disadvantaged the mountain people. Therefore, the new federal education policies must take into account the unique natural and cultural needs of the mountain region.

Lhakpa Tenji Lama of Solu laments that commercialization of Everest expeditions and glory seeking attitudes of the climbers have turned the Jomolangma, the sacred mountain to the local Sherpas, into a global junkyard. He recommends rigid implementation of zero waste policies and screening of inexperienced climbers on Everest. *Ang Phinjo Sherpa* of Khumbu shares a success story of a locally driven town beautification initiatives from Namche, the main gate way to Everest. *Laxmi Gurung* of Mustang shares the changes that came with the recent road connection to her village of Kagbeni. Road development to remote mountain regions can be both a boon and a bane.

Neema Sherpa from Okhaldunga shares her experiences of encountering blatant gender discrimination in Kalikot that starts right from birth of a child. *Ang Lami Sherpa* of Udayapur examines the status of women status in Sherpa community and points out the gender gaps exist within the seemingly egalitarian Sherpa society. *Dolker Lama* of Humla sees immense opportunity to develop women led trekking tourism in Humla, but fears that the marginalized status of women and the male dominated tourism sector may become a stumbling block. *Ang Rita Sherpa* from Khumbu presents the culturally and ecologically unique Limi Valley of Humla as a potential tourism destination to be developed. *Ang Tenzing Sherpa* (Udayapur) shares the ecotourism potentials of the Chitre area. Phurba Pradhan (Khumbu) shares the Eco-walk program 2017, a daylong outdoor program of Mountain Spirit. Choekyi Lama (Humla) presents an environmental poem. Finally, my contribution includes a Sherpa song composed to promote snow leopard conservation in the Himalaya. Happy reading !

Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa (Ph.D)

ABOUT MOUNTAIN SPIRIT

Mountain Spirit (MS) is a member-based non-governmental organization that advocates for social justice, human rights, and environmental conservation by supporting indigenous mountain communities. It was registered in 1996 under the laws of Nepal by a group of like-minded people from different mountain districts. The organization aims to improve livelihoods, protect the environment, and conserve mountain cultures through capacity building, awareness, empowerment, and sustainable development initiatives with the participation of local communities.

The strength and spirit of this organization lies in its members. MS consists of more than one hundred members representing 14 different mountain districts of Nepal. Members hold diverse expertise in issues related to health, education, gender sensitization, conservation, eco-tourism, community-based planning, and entrepreneurship. It's pool of experts have proven track records of successfully implementing Appreciative Participatory Planning Action (APPA), designing and conducting quantitative and qualitative research, and monitoring and evaluating projects.



MOUNTAIN SPIRIT'S MEMBERS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



Ms. Chhing Lamu Sherpa, *Chair*

Ms. Sherpa is one of founder and present Chair of Mountain Spirit has an educational background in Rural Development, Human Rights, Rural Extension and Women. She is a practitioner of participatory approaches and dedicated to environment conservation, marginalized mountain indigenous peoples and women's empowerment.



Mr. Ang Phinjo Sherpa, *Vice Chair*

Mr. Ang Phinjo Sherpa, a founder member of Mountain Spirit, is originally from Namche Bazar in Solukhumbu and now serves as the vice president of the organization. He received a bachelor's degree at Monterey Peninsula College and a master's degree at Rushmore University. In the past, Mr. Sherpa also served as the general secretary and executive director of Mountain Spirit.



Mr. Tashi Lama Hyolmo, *General Secretary*

Mr. Tashi Lama Hyolmo first became affiliated with Mountain Spirit in 2007 and became a general member in 2009. He is an indigenous youth activist, writer, and media mobilizer. He has been exploring the applications of his professional practices on technology, youth, and social activism.



Ms. Ang Diku Sherpa, *Treasurer*

Ms. Ang Diku Sherpa serves as the treasurer of Mountain Spirit and received a degree in Commerce Business Administration and Public Administration from Minbhawan Campus. She has experience and training in diverse fields, such as new and small enterprise promotion, health management, and HIV/AIDs. Ms. Sherpa has worked as a facilitator between domestic and international enterprises and has given trainings on participatory rural approaches.



Ms. Ram Maya Thakali, *Executive Member*

Ms. Ram Maya Thakali joined Mountain Spirit in 1999 and has served as chairperson, treasurer, coordinator and executive member. She holds a Masters Degree in Sociology. She has extensive experience of working with mountain communities. She is involved in Saphalata Mahila Samuha, Tin Gau Thakali Samaj, Uimesya Samuha (an organization of women from Thini who have migrated to main cities) and Women's climate change group in Kathmandu.



Ms. Anita Lama Gurung, *Executive Member*

Ms. Anita Lama Gurung is a social worker and businesswoman with an educational background in Sociology and an expertise in financial management. She is currently an executive member of Mountain Spirit, the Executive Managing Director of Samarpan Saving and Credit Cop. Ltd, and the co-chair of Prayas Nepal. She was also a former treasurer of Mountain Spirit from 2007-2010.



Mr. Janga Lama, *Executive Member*

Mr. JangaBahadur Lama is a tourism entrepreneur from Karnali in the Humla district. He has been affiliated with Mountain Spirit since 2014. He has been the owner of Firante Treks and Expedition P.LTD since 2007 and is also affiliated with several NGOs.

ADVISERS



Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa (Ph.D)

Dr. Sherpa is a Life Member and past President of Mountain Spirit from 2008-2012. He specializes in environmental protection and conservation of mountain cultures. Dr. Sherpa worked for the Government of Nepal's Department of National Park as Conservation Officer from 1980-2000. Later he joined The Mountain Institute and worked as foreign expert in TAR China followed by Co-Director of in Regional program in Nepal. Dr. Sherpa has a Ph.D. in Forest Resources from the University of Washington. He is a recipient of a Fulbright student scholarship in 1985 and a Fulbright Post-Doctoral Fellowship in 2009.



Dr. Shailendra Thakali

Dr. Shailendra Thakali has a PhD in Environmental Management from Lincoln University, New Zealand; and a master in Sociology and Anthropology from University of Surry, United Kingdom. Dr. Thakali worked in a senior management position for a number of national and international organizations such as National Trust for Nature Conservation, The Mountain Institute, Department for International Development and United Nations Development Programme. Dr. Thakali is currently working for snow leopard conservation project, funded by Darwin Initiative and implemented by Mountain Spirit.



Yankila Sherpa

Yankila Sherpa is among the first women to get a university level education from her community of Olanchung Gola. Ms. Yankila has spent over twenty-five years advocating for sustainable and responsible tourism and for the cause of women empowerment. She is the managing director of the Snow Leopard Trek, vice president of the Trans Himalayan Environment and Livelihood Program. She also serves as advisor to various organisations in Nepal.



Lhakpa Tenji Lama (Sherpa)

Mr. Lhakpa Tenji Lama (Sherpa) is originally from Solududhkunda-2, Tumbuk village of the Solukhumbu district. He is one of Mountain Spirit's founding members and previous served the organization in various roles including executive member, general secretary, and president. Mr. Lama has an academic background in community development and planning in tourism management. He has worked with various national and international organizations on community development using appreciative and participatory approaches.



Nima Lama Hyolmo

Mr. Nima Lama Hyolmo is an elected member of Provincial Assembly from Sindhupalchok District, Province (Pradesh 3). He joined MS in 1999 and served as general secretary and chair of the organization. He also served as secretary of Foreign Affairs for the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN). Professionally, he is a tourism entrepreneur and is actively involved in various community and social organizations, such as Trekking Agencies' Association Nepal (TAAN) and Yangrima Trust.

LIFE MEMBERS

SN	Name
1	Mr. Temba Dongba Hyolmo
2	Mr. Gelu Sherpa
3	Ms. Pema Doma Sherpa
4	Ms. Chhing Lamu Sherpa
5	Ms. Ang Diku Sherpa
6	Mr. Ang Phinjo Sherpa
7	Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa
8	Dr. Shailendra Thakali
9	Mr. Lhakpa Tenji Lama (Sherpa)
10	Mr. Ang Rita Sherpa
11	Mr. Tashi Lama Hyolmo
12	Ms. Ang Dali Sherpa
13	Mr. Jimmy Lama
14	Ms. Sonam Dolma Lama
15	Ms. Yangdu Sherpa

STAFFS & INTERNS

Phurba Chhetan Pradhan, Account & Admin Officer

Ngawang Thapke Sherpa, Programme Officer

Mingma Doma Sherpa, Field Assistant

Yangyup Bantawa, Intern

Pranabh Basnet, Intern

Choekyi Dolma Lama - Intern

HONORS AND AWARDS



Honorable Nima

Lama, Member of Provincial Assembly, Province 3.



Mr. Janga Bahadur

Lama, an executive member of the Trekking Agencies' Association of Nepal (TAAN).



Mr. Ngawang Thapke

Sherpa, recipient of Mingma Norbu Sherpa Memorial Scholarship for Masters Degree at Lincoln University, New Zealand.



Ms. Lhakpa Sherpa, received "Indigenous Women's Global Leadership Award on Human Rights and International Advocacy, Columbia University, USA.



Ms. Neema Sherpa, received scholarship to Swedish Institute for Masters Study in Sweden.



Ms. Tuka Chheki Sherpa

selected for Human Rights, Food and Future Security Program of FIMI, India.

GENERAL MEMBERS

SN	Name	Address
1	Ang Diku Sherpa	Kathmandu
2	Ang Mingmay Sherpa	Kathmandu
3	Ang Phinjo Sherpa	Kathmandu
4	Ang Tenji Sherpa	Udaypur
5	Anita Lama Gurung	Mustang
6	Nima Doma Sherpa	Solukhumbu
7	Chewang Lama	Humla
8	Chhoti Sherpa	Solukhumbu
9	Dhindup Lama	Sindhupalchok
10	Dinesh Lama	Kathmandu
11	Dolma Sherpa	Solukhumbu
12	Dr. Mingma Norbu Sherpa	Solukhumbu
13	Dr. Pasang Yangji Sherpa	Solukhumbu
14	Durga Bahadur Tamang	Rasuwa
15	Gelu Sherpa	Solukhumbu
16	Gyalmu Diki Sherpa	Solukhumbu
17	Indira Lama Negi	Bara
18	Janga Bahadur Lama	Humla
19	Jangmu Sherpa	Solukhumbu
20	Jemima Diki Sherpa	Soulkhumbu
21	Jiban Kumar Yonzan	Sindhupalchok
22	Jikme Tsering Sherpa	Udaypur
23	Jimmy Lama	Sindhupalchok
24	Kalpana Sherpa	Dharan
25	Kanchhi Maya Sherpa	Solukhumbu
26	Karma Gyaljen Sherpa	Solukhumbu
27	Kelsang Doma Lama	Sindhupalchok
28	Khandu Lama	Sindhupalchok
29	Kishor Sherpa	Taplejung
30	Kunjang Chhoti Sherpa	Solukhumbu
31	Lhakpa Sherpa	Solukhumbu
32	Dr. Lhakpa Sherpa	Bhojpur
33	Laxmi Gurung	Mustang
34	Lhadorchi Sherpa	Udaypur
35	Lhakpa Gelu Sherpa	Solukhumbu
36	Lhakpa Nuri Sherpa	Udaypur
37	Mingma Sherpa	Ramechhap
38	Mingma Sherpa	Udaypur
39	Mingmar Sherpa	Solukhumbu
40	Neema Sherpa	Okhaldunga
41	Nima Tshering Lama	Ninggale Kiul-6
42	Nono Lama	Sindhupalchok

SN	Name	Address
43	Pabitra Gurung	Mustang
44	Pasang Chhutin Lama	Solukhumbu
45	Pasang Lhamu Lama	Sindhupalchok
46	Pema Chhuti Sherpa	Solukhumbu
47	Pemba Sherpa	Kathmandu
48	Phu-doma Sherpa	Ramechhap
49	Phurba Chheten Pradhan	Solukhumbu
50	Phurba Sherpa	Solukhumbu
51	Praju Gurung	Mustang
52	Preeta Sherpa	Kathmandu
53	Priyanka Shakya	Sankhuwashabha
54	Ram Maya Thakali	Mustang
55	Rinzin Phunjok Lama	Humla
56	Sange Ngetup Lama	Sindhupalchok
57	Sangita Lama	Bara
58	Sarmila Gurung	Mustang
59	Sonam Chhoti Sherpa	Solukhumbu
60	Sonam Doma Lama	Sindhupalchok
61	Sonam Dolma Sherpa	Solukhumbu
62	Sonam Dorjee Sherpa	Solukhumbu
63	Sonam Lama	Dhankuta
64	Sonam Rinzin Lama	Humla
65	Surendra Lama	Humla
66	Tashi Lama Hyolmo	Sermathang-d7
67	Tashi Yang Chhung Sherpa(Gurung)	Mustang
68	Tenzing Chogyal Sherpa	Solukhumbu
69	Tsering Tenzing Sherpa	Solukhumbu
70	Tenzin Dawa Sherpa	Sindhupalchok
71	Tsering Yinghit Lama	Humla
72	Tsewang Lama	Humla
73	Tsewang Tashi Lama	Sindhupalchok
74	Tshering Domaa Sherpa	Taplejung
75	Tshering Lama	Kathmandu
76	Tshering Lama	Sindhupalchok
77	Tshhering Ongmu Sherpa	Solukhumbu
78	Tshering Sherpa	Solukhumbu
79	Tshering Yodin Sherpa	Solukhumbu
80	Tsiring Lhamu Lama	Dolpa
81	Tuka Chheki Sherpa	Udaypur
83	Yangdu Sherpa	Sangkhuwashabha
83	Yangji Doma Sherpa	Solukhumbu

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

SN	Name	Address
1	Ang Chuten Sherpa	Solukhumbu
2	Dr. Anup Gurung	Pokhara
3	Bibek Sherpa Lama	Udaypur
4	Bijay Gurung	Manang
5	Chhiring Sherpa	Solukhumbu
6	Doma Lama	Sindhupalchok
7	Gyaljan Lama	Humla
8	Indira Yonzan	Sindhupalchok
9	Kami Doma Sherpa	Namche
10	Karsang Lama	Sindhupalchok
11	Kinjo Ongmu Hyolmo	Nuwakot
12	Lhakpa Sherpa	Taplejung
13	Lhakpa Gelu Sherpa	Solukhumbu
14	Lhakpa Yangjom Tamang	Rasuwa
15	Linda Sherpa	England
16	Mendo Lama	Sindhupalchok
17	Mingma Yangi Sherpa	Solukhumbu
18	Mingma Chhiri Sherpa	Solukhumbu
19	Mingmar Kaji Sherpa	Solukhumbu
20	Ngawang Thapke Sherpa	Solukhumbu
21	Ngima Tenzing Sherpa	Namche

SN	Name	Address
22	Nisan Rai	Bhojpur
23	Norbu Lama	Humla
24	Pasang Lhamu Lama	Solukhumbu
25	Pasang Lhamu Sherpa	Namche
26	Pasang Tsering Sherpa	Sindhupalchok
27	Pasang Tsering Sherpa	Solukhumbu
28	Peema Sherpa	Taplejung
29	Pemba Lama	Nuwakot
30	Pemba Lama Sherpa	Solukhumbu
31	Phunzok Lama	Humla
32	Phuti Sherpa	Solukhumbu
33	Ringi Lama	Solukhumbu
34	Sagar Lama	Humla
35	Sharmila Rai	Khotang
36	Sonam Bhuti Sherpa	Solukhumbu
37	Sonam Choekyi Lama	Dolpa
38	Sonam Jangbu Sherpa	Solukhumbu
39	Tashi Lama	Sindhupalchok
40	Temba Lama	Dolakha
41	Tshering gurung	Mustang
42	Yankee Lama	Humla

PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES



Post-Earthquake Reconstruction of Thame Gonpa Monk's Hostel

In collaboration with Thame Sherpa Heritage Fund (TSHF), Mountain Spirit implemented the post-earthquake reconstruction of the Thame Gonpa monk's hostel in Khumbu. After 17 months of hard work, the project concluded at the end of July 2018. The hostel was built in an earthquake resilient manner using mainly local building materials. The total cost of the 10 room hostel is Rs. 1, 90, 00000. The building was inaugurated on 14 July 2018 by Ven. Tengboche Rinpoche followed by a public handed over ceremony in the courtyard of the Thame Gonpa. (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x-us-BCX0X0&t=20s>). A participatory evaluation workshop was held immediately after the handover and evaluation by government agencies is expected to take place soon which will complete the project.

Capacity Building Snow Leopard Conservation Saving and Credit Groups

Mountain Spirit and Snow Leopard Conservancy (SLC) made a collaborative agreement to strengthen the capacity of the Snow Leopard Conservation Saving and Credit Groups in the four villages of Sagarmatha National Park. Over past year, MS assessed the strengths and weaknesses of the groups, and carried out a series of interventions to build confidence of the group and increase their visibility and recognition by local authorities and encourage intra and inter group cooperation. Steps taken included, informing the existence and importance of the groups to the local authorities such as national park, buffer zone, the local Gaun Palika. Organizing joint meetings of the groups and supporting the groups to hold Annual General Meetings and conduct internal audits. The Thame Valley groups performed a Sherpa dance during the Great Vajraguru festival at Thame Monastery on July 2018. The song was written by Dr. Lhakpa Sherpa in support of snow leopard conservation. The song and dance is capture in a music video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDEDoKjc4Xw>) which is expected to have a pan-Himalayan appeal and help transform people's attitudes towards snow leopards. SLC contributed Rs.3,00,000 for this activity and MS matched an equal amount in kind through members voluntary time contribution.



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Political Economy of Conservation in Nepal under the Federal Structures: Challenges and Opportunities"

Mountain Spirit with in collaboration with The Asia Foundation (TAF) and Snow leopard Conservancy (SLC) through the expertise of a multidisciplinary team of Nepali and International experts proposed to develop a policy paper critically analyzing potential impacts and outcomes of Nepal's Constitution and the new law's/rules and regulations on government structures outlined under the this new federal structure. The team also organized a national level workshop on "Political Economy of Conservation in Nepal under the Federal Structures: Challenges and Opportunities" on 6th April 2018 at Hotel Yellow Pagoda. The workshop comprised delegates and government officials. Around 60 participants attended the workshop.



Indigenous Knowledge in Climate Change Adaptation Revisiting Past and Looking into Future

A short term project on "Indigenous Knowledge in Climate Change Adaptation Revisiting Past and Looking into the future" funded by FIMI, an indigenous womens's forum, USA was brought in by one of our general member, Ms. Lhakpa Sherpa. Under this project an orientation cum training workshop on "Indigenous Knowledge in Climate Change Adaptation Revisiting Past and Looking into Future" was organized on 25th

August 2018. This one day training workshop was organized by "Mountain Spirit" with the support of FIMI (International Indigenous Women Forum). The workshop was held in Opera Restro and Banquet which is located at Maharajgunj, Kathmandu. There were around 28 participants and 7 facilitators in total. Among them 23 were female and 12 were male. The main objectives of this one day workshop are: to orient selected indigenous members on the issue of indigenous people and climate change and to encourage the indigenous members to represent their indigenous group through their story.

The program was formally inaugurated at 9:30 am. In the first session of the event, Chhing Lhamu Sherpa, Chairperson of Mountain Spirit, welcome all the participants, speakers and facilitators with her encouraging speech. Then, various ideas on climate change, Indigenous knowledge and Indigenous People's issue were presented by Dr. Anu Kumari Lama, Tourism Specialist, ICIMOD. Similarly, the need of looking to indigenous through gender perspective and intersectionality were explained by Dibya Gurung. Dibya Gurung demonstrated the importance of intersectionality through various examples

Dr. Lhakpa encouraged a friendly and innovative sharing session about experience sharing on indigenous knowledge. It was enthusiastically anticipated by many participants by sharing their part of experience regarding indigenous knowledge.

Finally, the story writing technique was explained by Jemima Sherpa and through her presentation she shared some useful story writing techniques. She said that use of senses are contextual details such as sense of smell, feeling, hearing, tasting and touching which make the story alive.

Similar a days visit to ICIMOD Knowledge Park was organized on 1st October to observe the methodologies displayed and learn about the range of interventions that are possible to support integrate mountain farming, income generation, and livelihood improvement approaches. The visit will also enable our members to take with them the knowledge and skills that are used directly in village communities across the region along with the images and ideas that are passed on many times, building a potential for change in different parts of the country. Around 15 participants visited the park. Mr. Samden Lama Sherpa, Knowledge Park Officer gave a breifing on demonstrated renewable energy technologies, water management, agricultural technologies, soil management techniques, income generation activities, ecotourism and other approaches and practices applicable in different parts of Nepal.

Finally the traditional stories collected by the participants will be shared among the members and the best ones will get published in our upcoming edition of Mountain Trail magazine.



Buddha Dharma: Principles and Practices in the Nepal Himalayas

A talk program on "Buddha Dharma - Principles and Practices in the Nepal Himalayas" was organized by Mountain Spirit (MS) at Outdoor Adventure Centre Nepal (GAA Hall), Thamel on 28th October 2017,

Saturday. The proposed speakers for the program were Ven. Acharya Norbu Lama and Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa (Ph.D). More than 20 members and non members participated in the program. The program mainly highlighted on the origin of Buddha dharma and its practices in different parts of the world along with the teaching of Buddha.



Building Private - NGO Partnerships for Sustainable Community-based Tourism

A talk program on "Building Private - NGO Partnerships for Sustainable Community-based Tourism" was organized by Mountain Spirit at Hotel Seto Gurans on 25th November 2017. The guest speaker for the talk program was Ms. Wendy Brewer Lama. Around 30 participants from different organizations attended the program. Ms. Lama mainly highlighted on NGO partnership for sustainable community based tourism in Nepal and other parts of the world.

New Members Orientation Program

An orientation for new members of Mountain Spirit took place at Mountain Spirit office on 20th January 2018. Altogether five new members attended the program. Mr. Phurba Chheten Pradhan, account and admin assistant of MS gave a short presentation about Mountain Spirit which was followed by a one hour APPA session by Mr. Lhakpa Tenji Lama, adviser of MS. Furthermore Ms. Ram Maya Thakali an executive committee member shared her experiences in working with Mountain Spirit.



Exposure Visit

As a part of its annual program, a team of around 20 members from Mountain Spirit (MS) visited TEWA on June 18, 2018. The purpose of the site visit was to learn about the organization itself and how it has managed to be so successful. More specifically MS members were very keen on learning about various ways of carrying out projects, raising funds and managing programs in more detail at a higher capacity. We arrived at the facility at approximately 10: 15 am and were guided into the meeting room wherein we were greeted with refreshments and a short informative presentation which was followed by a tour of the facility. The program was led by Ms. Urmila Shrestha; Executive Director at TEWA and the presentation was facilitated by Ms. Shristi Jayana; Communications and Documentation Officer



at TEWA. After that we headed towards NEPAN's office located at Koteshwor, wherein we were warmly welcomed by NEPAN staffs. Mr. Fatik Thapa, executive director of NEPAN gave a wonderful presentation on NEPAN.

MS Environment Friendly Bags

With the initiation from Ms. Ang Diku Sherpa and Ms. Ang Dali Sherpa, this year, Mountain Spirit came up with an idea of producing environment friendly shopping bags with a tagline "Reduce, Reuse and Rethink". At initial stage around 150 pieces were produced. The main idea of this initiation is to minimize the use of Polythene bags that are extremely harmful for the environment and human health.





ECO-WALK 2018

Every year Mountain Spirit organizes a day-long Eco-walk to a nearby hills surrounding Kathmandu valley. Most of us today living in big cities get to spend less and less opportunities to walk outside in natural environment. Getting out and experiencing nature even just for a day can be a rejuvenating experience.

The Eco-walk 2018 was organized in Sundarimal area of Shivapuri Nagarjun National Park. Nearly 100 people purchased tickets and joined the walk.

The primary purpose of the Eco-walk is to expose people to natural environment increase their love for the environment so that we can become better stewards of the environment which also belongs to the future generation.

Following an hour long bus ride from the city, the group reached the entrance of Shivapuri Nagarjun National Park at Sundarimal. The program began with a briefing from by the general Secretary of MS Tashi Lama Hyolmo who welcomed and group and presented the program schedule. A packed breakfast was served and the walk began as soon as breakfast was over. An hour later everyone reached a not so clean picnic spot near the Sundarimal reservoir. Ms. Chhing Lamu Sherpa, MS Chairperson facilitated a participatory introduction of all the participants which took a while, followed by a power yoga exercise led by a professional yoga instructor Ms. Maya Gurung. After the yoga warm up, a competitive group sport was organized by

Mr. Tshering Lama and a team of volunteers. The participants were divided into ten teams with at least half a dozen members each team. The teams competed for a series of competitive games including ball kicking, water shifting, marble in spoon race, kicking bucket with blind folds. Each activity was supervised and scored by a volunteer judge. As the teams began to get very

competitive, the final item was presented which was collecting and making the biggest garbage pile. Within 15 minutes, the littered picnic spot became spotlessly clean. The collected rubbish was moved to a nearby collection site. With great satisfaction, the group broke for lunch at a nearby local restaurant. After lunch the group reconvened on the clean picnic ground and program resumed. Generally, Mountain Spirit honors its members who made significant achievement during the past years. This may include receiving higher degrees, job promotions, election for important public positions and other achievements.

The recipient for this year were Mr. Nima Lama Hyolmo, immediate past president of MS, who was recently elected as member of Provincial Assembly from Province 2; and Dr. Ghana Shyam Gurung, who was promoted to post of Country Representative at WWF Nepal. Both honored persons spoke briefly and thank for the recognition.

Other activities included a talk from a health activist, Dr. Aruna Uprety on importance of healthy lifestyle; Presentation of environment friendly cotton shopping bag and bamboo and cotton mixed biodegradable khada by MS members Ang Dali Sherpa and Ang Diku Sherpa. There were also a number of cultural song presentations by Bimala Tamang and Lhakpa Tenji Lama, Kinjo Omu Hyolmo and Lhakpa Doma Sherpa. Participants could not help but dance encouraged by the talented singers.

Finally, participants were thanked for joining the walk and requested to join again next year by Vice-Chair of MS, Phinjo Sherpa. He also acknowledged the voluntary team work of the various members and staff of Mountain Spirit. Many people came as strangers but left with many more friends. The program was a success.

Phurba Chheten Pradhan, General Member



Mt. Everest/Jomolangma (8848 m)

Mt. Everest: A sacred mountain or The highest junkyard ?

Lhakpa Tenji Lama (Sherpa)

Founder Member and current Advisor

The commercialisation of mountaineering has created opportunities to set records, and gain recognition for many people. It also presents opportunities for Nepal government to earn revenues and employment prospects for local people. However, the commercialization changes the definition of adventure mountaineering because of the guided help of the Sherpas. Mr. Kanchha Sherpa, the only living team member of the 1953 Everest expedition, once said, “I don’t see the challenge in mountaineering these days compared to the past”. He argues that commercial mountaineering these days allows just about anybody to reach the summit if one can afford it.

The Department of Tourism’s (DoT) statistics show that over 400 people ascended Mt. Everest during the spring of 2018. DoT issued 346 climbing permits accompanied by 457 high altitude workers representing 38 expedition teams. The Government earned Rs. 361 million in revenue in spring season alone.

More than 4000 people have reached the top of Everest since Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay set foot on it. Prior to this, the British Mount Everest Expedition in 1922 and 1924, solo expedition by Maurice Wilson in 1934 and Swiss Expedition in 1952 attempted to scale Everest first from Tibet and later from Nepal. However, they were not successful.

Between 1953 and 2018, various individuals and groups set multiple records on Everest. Kami Rita Sherpa recently broke the most summits by reaching the peak for the 22nd time. Apa Sherpa and Phurba Tashi Sherpa shared the previous records of having climbed 21 times. About 300 women have summited Everest since the Junko Tabei who was first woman to reach the summit in 1975.

Climbing Everest is also full of dangers. The total death on Everest between 1922 and 2018 including both foreign members as well as local guides, recorded approximately 300 people. The studies indicate that the death rate has been dropping in recent years. According to the Himalayan Database, the primary cause of fatalities has been avalanches; and others include fall, particularly into crevasses, and high altitude sickness.

Local perceptions about mountaineering fatalities are unique. Local people believe that Mt. Everest is the residence of Jomo Miyo Langsangma, widely known as Jomolangma. She is believed to be a female deity, with yellow complexion riding on a tiger, holding a gold bowl filled with food. Jomolangma has four other sister goddesses, together they protect Buddha dharma. Besides, they also look after different needs of the people. For example Jomolangma gives food; Tashi Tseringma provides longevity; Tekar Dosangma grants good luck; Chopen Dingsangma gives the blessing of wealth; and Tingi Shalsangma empowers people with telepathic powers.

Since Himalayan people believe that Everest is the sacred abode of goddess Jomolangma, climbing such a sacred peak is a sacrilegious activity, which could result in misfortune. However, climbing has become one of the main livelihoods for Sherpas. Therefore, they religiously perform deity-appeasing rituals at the base camps before starting their climbs and also their families perform many religious rituals at home for the wellbeing of the climbers. Unfortunately, such deity appeasing rituals at the base camp has become some sort of a formality. The escalation in littering and constantly increasing polluting actions on the mountain are instead tarnishing the home of the goddess.

With the ever-growing number of climbers, the problems of rubbish including the dead bodies of climbers are polluting the world's highest peak. It is said that there are over 200 dead bodies on Everest. Thus in western media, Everest is also known as the "world's highest junkyard". Nepal government made a provision of deposit USD 4,000 for each team to encourage climbers to bring their waste back from the mountain. However due to lack of close monitoring this has been only partially effective. The major rubbish includes used tents, climbing gears, oxygen bottles and human waste. Various efforts have been made to clean Everest but the problem continues. Therefore, Sir Edmund Hillary once suggested that the mountain should get a rest for a few years. Other suggested limiting the number of expeditions. However, the Sherpas were not in favour of limiting or stopping the expeditions because this has become the main source of their livelihood.



Sketch of Jomo Miyo Langsangma

Problems on Everest are becoming a serious concern. The central, provincial and local governments should coordinate and initiate discussions with mountaineering

agencies, climbers, and local communities to find an acceptable solution for sustainable mountaineering on Everest. The solution can also be up scaled to other mountains. Basically, there are three main options: (1) Not set limits on the number of expeditions and its members but enforce strict rules for zero waste; (2) Set limits on the number of expeditions as well as enforce strong rules and mechanism for zero waste; and (3) stopping expeditions for few years to give the mountain a rest.

Looking at these alternatives, halting the permits for climbing is neither possible nor practical since it will have grave consequences on the local and national economy. Limiting the number of expedition teams is possible but this does not guarantee financial growth for the locals. Therefore the option of permitting climbers with strict rules and effective monitoring mechanism

for zero waste on the mountains appear to be most acceptable solution. While doing so, the government should screen out the inexperienced climbers and workers on Everest. This will reduce the number of fatalities. The authorities need to come up with measures that increase safety of high altitude workers. For this, the government must assign qualified and skilled inspectors to monitor the activities on the mountain. There should also be strong regulatory and practical measure to remove and dispose dead bodies. All mountaineering stakeholders have the responsibility of promoting Everest as a sacred mountain, not as the highest junkyard. Because of the economic importance of mountaineering, governments at different levels should take the problems of Everest seriously. The new federal governance structure should provide fresh opportunities to come up with new ideas and systems that will improve the management of expeditions on Mt. Everest.



Women empowerment in tourism in Humla

Dolkar Lama
Associate Member

Simikot is known as the gateway to Mount Kailash and Lake Manasarovar treks but Simikot also creates a stepping stone towards numerous unexplored beautiful places in Humla. These places are located at the height of an elevation of 2945 meters, above the Karnali River and surrounded by the green glittered hills along with snow-covered peaks. The unique beautiful height valley where the nature's true gifts are still intact is unfortunately unexplored by the local tourists and the international as well. Who is responsible for promoting tourism potentials of this part of Nepal? Is it the government or the local people? Well, there is a famous idiom, "Charity starts from home" which means that the local promoters are more effective. But in case of Humla the half male population are involved in Politics and half migrates in search of works. So the women are left back at home for household chores without realization of the great tourism sector and economic improvement ability in the area. In places like Humla the culture has always been creating the limitation for the women to do activities of their own; had they been given a proper education on tourism and hospitality, they would be equally employed and places like Humla would be top upcoming tourism destination in Nepal in the future.



Though research in tourism from gender perspective is at infant stage, the minimal findings and outlooks show that the patriarchy society under age old feudal social-cultural and economic system undermining the roles and responsibilities of women as subordinate to men, dual role/work burden (maintaining both families/ children as well as household chores), weak position of women in power sharing & decision making, lack of strong government policies sensitive of gender issues protecting indigenous women under minorities and weak implementation modalities can be seen as major causal factors for low participation of women in mountain tourism in Nepal.(ICIMOD paper)

Culture plays a vital role in our society where women are dominated by the male. There is always a belief that man can only travel outside their home and women are only responsible to do household chores. This

belief forces women from discovering their abilities and grabbing opportunities that would increase their living standard. Women are naïve about the tourism and hospitality sector that the land has to offer them with. But this problem can be solved only if proper tourism education and trainings are introduced to the local women. When women are educated with women empowerment only then they will be able to work in the tourism sector. The training and educations will be able to guide the women to discover their inner strength, talents and explore themselves despite of living in such an isolated society.

Tourism and hospitality sectors offers handful of opportunities such a homestays, restaurants, tea houses and trekking guides. Women should realize that they are strong enough to be engaged into any of these aspects. Women trekking guides is the most interesting part as this job is entitled to only men. But a lady trekker who knows every corner of the Humla would be more exciting to walk with because ladies hardly trek. The lady trekker would make the job more attractive. Hence this activity would also help Humla to be promoted because of the warm hospitality and astonishing lady trekkers.



The aim is to bridge social, cultural and economic divides for women to become strong mentally and physically, take control of their lives, be responsible citizens, and understand that, with opportunities and support, women are equally capable of achieving success in life; and also to develop a sustainable tourism in places like Humla through women empowerment.



Improved Access to Quality Education: A Key to Mountain Development

Mr. Gopal Lama
General Member

Access to education in Nepal has gradually improved since the turn of the century. However the quality of education remained low and dropout rates high. Only 400,000 children out of the 1.4 million born in the year 2002 took their Secondary Education Examination (SEE) in 2018. Nearly three quarters of the students dropped out before they reached SEE level.

In topographically and ethnically diverse Nepal, the educational challenges are different from one geographic region to another. In terms of providing quality education, mountain regions bring a special set of challenges. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the challenges of providing quality education in the mountain region which constitute over 80% of Nepal's rural areas.

The dropout rate is particularly high in the mountain people where access to education remains poor. One of the important reasons for high dropout rate is the dispersed nature of the mountain villages which

makes travel between schools and home time and energy consuming. It is also difficult to attract qualified teachers from outside due to environmental and economic challenges. In recent years, many schools in mountain regions were either closed or merge with other primary and secondary schools worsening the problem of access to education.

Facilities for higher education are almost non-existent in most mountains districts causing mass exodus of youths to cities like Kathmandu and beyond leaving mountain villages empty of young people.

The demand for educational infrastructure is very high in the mountains because of the dispersed population. Every village needs a primary school because of lack of motorized transportation linking to distant schools. More critically, constructing quality school facilities in the mountain is costly because of the high transportation costs. Therefore, school buildings are mostly of poor quality and unsafe.

Therefore, when developing education policies and plans, the special difficulties and situations of mountain environment must be taken into account. For example, the requirement for number of students for schools and children pupil ratio for mountain schools cannot be same as that of other areas such as Terai and cities. It must be recognised that in Nepal one size fits all policies and programs are difficult to implement because of the environmental and cultural differences. School education is one such area which needs to take into account of the local differences. The lack of mountain friendly education systems has excluded many young people from mountain regions from attaining higher education. This educational inequity is leading to migration of young people from mountain regions to cities and foreign countries such as South-East Asian and Gulf countries. Their insufficient education excludes them from accessing suitable jobs in government and non-government sectors within the Nepal. Most mountain communities have their own mother tongue and Nepali and English are only learned in schools. Therefore, the lack of fluency in Nepali language and Devnagari script often become as stumbling block for mountain people. Therefore, inequity in access to education directly leads to exclusion of mountain people from public sector position of power in Nepal today. Real decision making positions power in politics and bureaucracy are mostly held by non-mountain people. Why? Why does this matter?

This exclusion affects the principles of equity, fairness and social justice which are fundamental characteristics of a democratic nation. These are the

values that will bring together the culturally diverse Nepali people form a democratic nation and sustain peace, stability and harmony in long run.

Conversely, the lack of fairness, equity and social justice will lead to conflict, instability and ultimately weaken national sovereignty. This point should be understood by all politicians and civil servants and public alike under the newly established federal governance structure.

For the mountain people, improved infrastructure, trained local teachers, higher student retention rates, and inclusion of local language and script in education are high priority to ensure higher enrolment and completion of tertiary education. These require adequate resources, political and policy support. It also needs commitment and creativity. For example, Buddhist monks can be trained to be teachers and Gonpa spaces can be used as community learning centres; elders can become volunteer resource persons for teaching languages and culture; and older youths can become mobilized to become mentors for younger ones.

Under the new constitution, the authority for education is devolved to local level. This provides an opportunity to reshape our education system to become more effective and efficient and address the challenges of the mountain communities. Those in position of authority and decision making power must consult researchers, academics and practitioners to find new ways. There are very few private parties willing to open schools in the mountain regions. Therefore, the responsibility of improving education system is on the government both local and provincial to ensure that “no child is left behind”.

Impact of Road Connection: An Observation from Kagbeni

Laxmi Gurung
General Member

I was born in the remote mountain village of Kagbeni in Varagung Muktichetra Rural Municipality of Mustang District nearly four decades ago. Today Kagbeni is the main gateway to restricted tourist destination of Upper Mustang. When I was growing up, Kagbeni was a medieval village with its establishment history dating back to 15th century. Until recently, it was the northern most area that foreigners were allowed to visit without a special permit. Located at an altitude of 2800 meters, surrounded by towering, snow-capped peaks and arid desert, landscapes around Kagbeni resembles Tibetan Plateau.

Gandaki River which has its source at the holy Damodhar Kunda and Muktinath with 108 water sprouts flows through Kagbeni which makes it one of the holy hub for both Hindu and Buddhist worshippers as well as foreign trekkers. The sparse population and the traditional Tibetan culture has given it an impression of a place that is still largely unspoiled by tourism. The majority of the villagers still engage in traditional farming and animal husbandry and continues to maintain many aspects of their ancient culture, rituals and way of life. For example, festivals such as Yartung (Horse), Chengu(Loshar), Dasyang (Archery), Kundang (throwing off evil spirit), Tempa tsultrim (holy ritual praying for good farming and the wellbeing of all living beings) are actively celebrated every year. These ancient practices are increasingly becoming a tourist attraction. In return, tourism is now viewed by the villagers as an important source of income and employment.

When I was growing up, there were stories about everything, stories about the food we ate; clothes we wore; festivals we celebrated; songs we sung; dances we

performed; the sacred lands we worshipped and so on. These stories had shaped our lives. Many years later, the memories are still fresh in my mind about what I saw and experienced as a child. For example, we used horses for travelling from one place to another; mules for carrying goods, goats and yaks for meat, cows for milk. All these different animals had different decorative bells around their necks that made melodious sounds and were beautiful to watch. But these beautiful sounds and sights are vanishing with road access. Horses and mules are now fast being replaced by motorbikes, jeeps, and trucks with their honking noise and air pollution. On the one hand, the road connected to Kagbeni with the outside world has brought new things from outside and has improved our mountain life through improved education and development. On the other hand, our traditional way of life, ancient culture, knowledge and identity are gradually getting wiped out. In the past, to go from one place to next involved long and hard travel. For example travelling from Kagbeni to Jomsom (11 km away) would take a full day of physically tiring and journey lugging goods on our backs. These days same journey takes only less than half an hour on a motorbike or a jeep. Besides, loads carrying are no longer necessary. Motorized transportation is saving time. The challenge is in using the saved time for other productive purposes. Another downside is the unpleasant noise, dust and fumes produced by stream of vehicles pollutes fresh mountain air.

Before the road, the choices of food was a limited to variety of locally grown products such as naked barely, buckwheat and yak meat which are rich in protein and organic. Also, the clothes and boots were hand-woven from local wool by our mothers and grandmothers

using special traditional designs, textures suited to the harsh mountain climate. These days, much of food is being brought in from outside are high in starch and carbohydrates. Imported products such as sodas, rice and white flour and often does not provide sufficient protein and fat needed to survive in high mountain environment. Similarly, traditional and locally made woollen clothing are largely being replaced by the latest nylon or polyester fad from outside. This is especially true among younger generation. These imported material are not only unsuited to the local conditions but further contributes to loss of traditional skills and cultural identity.

In the past education for women was a complete 'no-no'. But, these days, many young girls get to go to school. As a role model of educated woman with a Masters degree from a foreign University and now working as a Government Peace Officer back home, I have been able to encourage many younger women to get educated. An elderly woman stated, "even though we had two beautiful eyes we remained in darkness without education." In our mountain villages, electricity is also becoming more widespread. With this, modern communication such as internet and television allows us to explore the whole world from home. Development has definitely been beneficial to changing role of women.

In the past, people of Kagbeni had been isolated and had limited resources. We have been barely self-sufficient. Though lives were hard we still survived. Sometimes isolation can make a community independent and self sufficient. For example, in 2015 when the Indian government blockaded goods moving across Indo-Nepal border, city dwellers were badly affected mainly because of their dependency on fossil fuel dependent transportation. Many mountain communities remained unaffected because our ancestors had taught us traditional farming and live on the land. Sadly, mountain people are losing the ancient knowledge and skills under the influences of modernization and development in the name of progress.

This is just an example of a few of the changes that my village of Kagbeni is facing. Many mountain villages of Nepal may be facing similar situation where development of road access brings many benefits but not without impacts on traditional culture and knowledge. Road development is a two-edged sword. It can be both a boon as well as bane to our mountain life. Challenge lies on whether we as a mountain people can take advantage of the development while not losing our traditional knowledge, skills, and way of life that served us for so many generations. Only time will tell whether this is actually possible.



Chora Paune Lai Khasi, Chori Paune Lai Farsi: Gender discrimination in Kalikot District

Neema Sherpa
Associate Member

During my 45 days long stay at Kalikot district I often found locals making this remark implying disparity in care a postpartum woman received on account of delivered child's sex. She would be offered a treat of goat meat on occasion of male child's birth or else, pumpkin in case the newborn is female.

Kalikot district is situated in Mid-western region of Nepal. Administratively, the district is a part of Karnali Province. Geographically, it is divided into Himalayan region, Higher Mountain and Mid Mountains with elevation ranging from 738 m to 4790 m from mean sea level.

This writing is based on my experience during field research on "Care Seeking and Service Provider Factors Related to Potentially Serious Illness in Early Infancy and Early Childhood" at selected villages of Kalikot District incorporating some peculiar observations regarding still persistent gender discrimination and



some gradual shift in social practices. The visited villages had multi ethnic composition with Chhetri, Brahmin, Thakuri, Damai and Kami. In regard to infrastructure and development, majority of those

villages were still deprived of road access and required 2-3 hours walk (for the locals) in minimum to reach the nearest road. While some of the findings were overt and plainly apparent, others needed astute observation to be registered. Life for female child and woman have been steadily difficult in the past owing to gender based discrimination at household and community level, social taboos, illiteracy, rugged topography and geographical isolation. Slowly but surely, things are also changing for the better.

“In September 2005, the Nepal government announced it would provide rice to any family that had recently had a girl born in a bid to encourage change in social attitudes towards girl child” (source: Wikipedia). Nonetheless, in local society of Kalikot girls are apparently treated less favourably right from the time of birth. On occasion of a male child’s birth, the family and close relatives welcomed and marked his birth by playing *Panchai baja* [folk musical instruments comprising of trumpet, cymbal and drum]. The postpartum mother was treated special and offered with goat meat, its soup and local delicacies at home. She and the baby would receive extra care and comfort from immediate family members during postnatal period. In one incident, I came across group of villagers playing *Panchai baja* in front of local health post and later proceeding towards village with postnatal mother, newborn and the family. On inquiry with other villagers it turns out that a baby boy was born in the family. Likewise, there was a unique “*Ratyauli*” custom where relatives and villagers gathered at house, feasted sumptuously, sang and danced in celebration of birth of a male child. Neither of this was observed or practiced during the birth of female child. The care and support the postpartum mother and female child received would comparatively be meagre.

At individual household, sons have greater social importance than daughters. In that regard, local families were not content with having one male child. Bound by feeling of insecurity they had practice of giving birth to at least two male children. This is because infant mortality rate in past days was so high that families felt compulsion to have at least two sons just in case one died out of illness or any unforeseen tragedy, the other will be there. The significance of having at least one son in family roots down to the Hindu tradition where he is considered to spread family

tree to future generations, take care of parents in their old age and is regarded as the saviour who will perform parent’s death rituals so that they will go to heaven after their death. Therefore, in spite of already having a son, families often gave birth to multiple children until and unless the second one was born.

Girls and women on their monthly cycle were still considered impure. During menstruation period they were secluded from daily activities and avoided making contact with main parts of the house, especially kitchen. While menstrual taboo was still in practice, looking on the slightly visible silver lining the menstruating girls/ women in this region were not banished to “*Chau*” [cattle shed or makeshift hut] far away from the home. Instead, arrangements were made at the basement cabin of the house that was moderately hygienic and warmer. This showed a definite shift of attitude and practice towards menstruation.

On weekdays, 10 o’clock in the morning was very busy hour. The relatively quieter village used to be filled with sound of hurried footsteps and muffled laughter made by flock of school going children; both male and female. Girl’s education had become a regular normal activity. Moreover, there were provisions of adult literacy class particularly for women at various parts of villages. Many local women could at least read and write their names, a personal accomplishment they showcased with real pride. They were making a step. It might be just a baby-step, but it’s a step.

Speeding roadways development has been and is a regular phenomenon in Kalikot at present. With the roadways development gathering momentum there is a feeling of expectation that light of awareness will find its way to individual mind just like roads penetrating nooks and corners of the region, bring individual member of society together like roads connecting otherwise isolated communities due to topographical barrier and bestow affirmation on female child just like roads presenting local people the access long denied.

On second thought, I find slight humour in pumpkin treat to postpartum mothers with female newborns. After all, pumpkins are actually one of the most nutritious super foods. Unintentionally though, there is a touch of tenderness intended towards female child too.

Working with Saving and Credit Group: An experience from Khumbu

Mingma Doma Sherpa
Associate Member

I served as field assistant for Mountain Spirit's Khumbu Project from April to July 2018. This was also my first employment. Main responsibility included working with the Snow Leopard Conservation Saving and Credit Groups (SLC S&C Groups). Another responsibility was to support the Thame Gonpa Monk's hostel project. This article relates only to Savings and Credit Group activities.

My first job was to meet with the members of the different groups and get to know their program. Groups were formed in four villages of Khumbu – Thamo, Thame, Thame Teng and Phorche.

The Thamo group had 14 members (6 female and 8 male). They received Rs.150000 seed money from SLC which has now grown to Rs.850000. The group meeting takes place every 3 months. The members save Rs.200 per month/per member. Loaning the fund to group members for an economic is the primary purpose. Interest rate is between 10 to 20% based on group's decision. Group members usually take loans to run teashop and lodges and children's schooling. The group also works with the Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee (SPCC) and regularly collects garbage around the village for which SPCC provides a lump sum annual budget. Mountain Spirit provided the group a training workshop in 2016 which identified a series of potential investment opportunities for Thamo. When asked why these activities were not implemented the group chair responded - "despite of having a proper and suitable plan, we lack of experience, skills and training that prevented their implementation. Also, group members still do not fully understand the purpose of saving and credit program. The number of group members has also decreased which may affect the unity in among the villagers."

My next visit was to the Thame Teng group. I was beginning to like the work because it was connecting me to the community members and giving me an opportunity to improve my Sherpa language skill at the same time. I was introduced to the group by Dr. Lhakpa who comes from the same village. I interviewed group Chair Ms. Lhakpa Chamji who offered me tea and we started talking. They had 17 members (15 females and 2 males). She felt that they had adequate number of members but getting them to attend the regular meeting is a challenge. Some people do not come to the group's activities because of their own work. She said "members need to change their thinking and learn to participate and contribute to village activities" Thame Teng group saves Rs.200 per month. According to Lhakpa Chamji, the greatest benefits have been learning to save and also unify the village through the program. They have a total fund of Rs.11, 00,000. The biggest problem is group members not taking loans to initiate small businesses. Therefore they have been loaning it to people outside the group at a higher interest rate of 20% per annum. Thame Teng also received Rs.150, 000 seed money from SLC. According to Ms. *Kami Doma*, the Thame Teng group was also unable to implement the business activities identified in the MS support work plan.

Thame Village Group is called Sumdur Peak Group. I found it very difficult to get hold of the group leaders because of their busy schedule. There were also many festivals happening. After a patient wait, I was able to join one of their monthly meetings during which they did the village cleaning and also collected their monthly savings. It was good to see the group in action collecting interests from creditors and fines from people who have not attended the cleaning program. Some of the group members came to the meeting from faraway pastures and villages which demonstrated

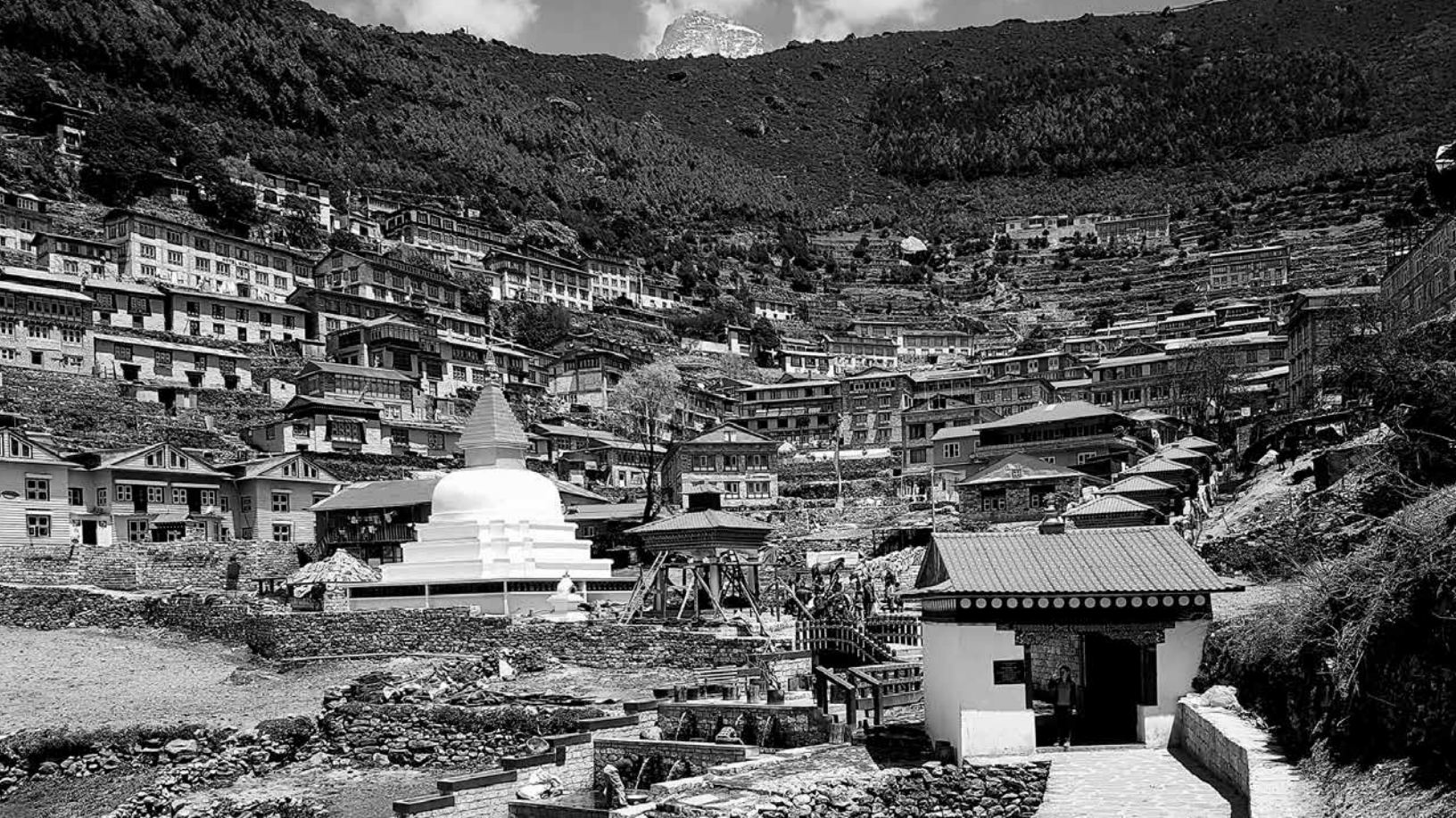
their commitments. Secretary Dolma Lhamu Sherpa lamented that *"It's quite difficult to maintain meeting minutes and accounts because of lack of education. Although, several members attended accounting and auditing trainings, they still couldn't manage it well"* The group have been getting help from Kami Doma Sherpa of Thame Teng S&C Group.

The 23 member Thame group was most impressive in terms of starting a business initiative. They have established a mineral water bottling plant investing around Rs.3, 00,000. The business will be registered and operational soon. Members are hopeful that it will be a success given the local demand. Thame hotels will not have to carry heavy bottled water from Namche. The group has also making donations to a number of community activities. They have also made jackets labeled "Thame Women Club". The male members of the group also wore the same jacket. When I asked why they wanted to re-brand themselves as Women's Group, they said that people locally knows them as women's group. They have Rs.13 to 14 lakhs in the fund. They also receive Rs.18000 annum from SPCC for cleaning.

Phortse is at least a day's walk away from Thame Valley. As I approached the village, a lady asked me where I was headed. I told her that I came to meet

with the "Him Chituwa Samrakshan Bachat Tatha Rin Samuha" She said she did not think there is such a group in the village. When I further explained, she suggested I go and see Mingma who serves as the treasurer. Phorche group has 133 members, almost every household in the village. It is served by 9 member executive committee. They had Rs.1500, 000 in the saving. But, the group lacked unity. None of the members in the village want to take loan because of stigma against taking a loan. The fund is put in a term deposit in a bank for 8% interest. Mingma was of the opinion that the group should be disbanded and savings distributed. They have already stopped collecting monthly savings. No one wants to take turn to serve in the management committee.

To conclude, the SLC S&C Groups are active. Women's are well represented. The sizes of the loan available through the groups are not big enough to establish businesses. But the groups serve important roles in cleaning and uniting the village. Some of the groups also contribute certain percentage of their profits to schools and community welfare. The group's Nepali and English names are too long. They tend to call themselves mothers group or women's groups. Reasons needs deviation needs to be understood and corrected.



Beautification of entrance to Namche Bazar

Phinjo Sherpa
Life Member

After the long uphill climb from Larcha Dovan, visitors suddenly will view the mountain town of Namche Bazar, the gate way to Mt. Everest. There is a saying “first impression is the last impression” and the villagers of Namche wanted to give that to thousands of international visitors that visit Namche every year.

The local community conceptualized a project to improve entry area. To carry out this project, a local committee "Namche Mani Chungyur and park construction committee" was formed under the chairmanship of Mr. Chhimi Kalden Sherpa. These 11 members and 3 advisors committee was responsible for managing funds, obtaining adjacent lands, construction of planned infrastructure. The committee commissioned an architectural firm to develop a master plan with design concepts using the existing opportunities. After several design updates, I was able to present the master plan to the village community during the public festival Dumji Festival in 2014. Community consultation and participation was important for future support. The plan was approved by the community committee and fund raising and the construction work followed.

The project was designed to address not only sanitation problem of the village entrance by create opportunities for religious activities, recreation and relaxation.

Structure included village gate "Kani" and recently rebuilt rows of water powered prayer wheels "Mani Chungyur", newly built Stupa "Chorten", public wash area, Pemba Doma Memorial Pagoda, Lotus pond and stone paved walkways.

The Stupa "Chorten" that was damaged during the 2015 earthquake was rebuilt on the same location, but little bigger and earthquake resistant to protect the valuable mantras, items and statues that were placed inside. The original prayer wheels are relocated around the "Chorten", making easier for people to spin and walk around. Pemba Doma Memorial Pagoda between the lotus pond and "Chorten" is a place where people can gather, take rest and observe the surrounding area, even during rainy or sunny weather.

The dilapidated waterspouts and the holy shrine "Lukhang" near the water source were rebuilt with traditional 'Dhungedhara'. Water channel was constructed for the stream water to flow beautifully and to spin the five prayer wheels, blessing the water with mantras as it passes. A gravity fountain inside the lotus pond is spectacular to watch. The local mason, carpenters, craftsman and artists were instrumental in building the structures that resembles traditional look and paintings in accordance with religious significance.

The village gate "Kani" was restored with the support of "Chaudobau" family. The public wash area was relocated and rebuilt with the support of Namche Buffer Zone User Committee and Nagono Ken Aokimura of Japan. Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee (SPCC) built the public toilet near the wash area. This is a place where the locals and tourists come to wash their clothes and cleanse their souls.

Because of the integration of many religious structure such as mani, kani, chorten and water driven prayer wheels, Venerable Tyangboche Rinpoche, representative of Venerable Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Lama Lhakpa of Kyarock Gonpa and village elders were closely consulted in the development process. They were also involved in installing and blessing holy objects. Several prayers (Puja) were held by Venerable Tyangboche Rinpoche and monks from the region to purify the religious sites.

The success of this project was made possible due to strong community consultation and participation and support of many donors. This famous Himalayan town of Namche now has a charming and welcoming approach that appeals thousands of international visitors.

"The benefit of turning the Dharma wheel is that negative karma and disturbing thought obscurations accumulated over beginning less rebirths are purified without effort. Even other mantras are without doubt completed." — Lama Zopa Rinpoche quoting Lord Buddha in "The Benefits of Prayer Wheels"



A Journey to Limi Valley, Humla

Ang Rita Sherpa
Life Member

My life being dream of visiting Nepal's remotest land, the Limi valley has become reality in May 2014 with my closest friend Thukten Sherpa. The Limi Valley in Nepal's Humla District is known as one of the country's true wilderness areas. In May 2014, I had the opportunity to visit the Limi Valley as part of the assignment of rebuild and restore one of the oldest the 11th century Rinchenling monastery in the village of Halji – one of the three villages of the Limi Valley.

I have been to many remote districts in Nepal from east to far-west including Dolpa, Jumla, Mugu and Humla. But I found Humla different than the other parts of Nepal as it is one of the most beautiful and remote places left in the entire Himalayas and is one of the country's last true wild areas.



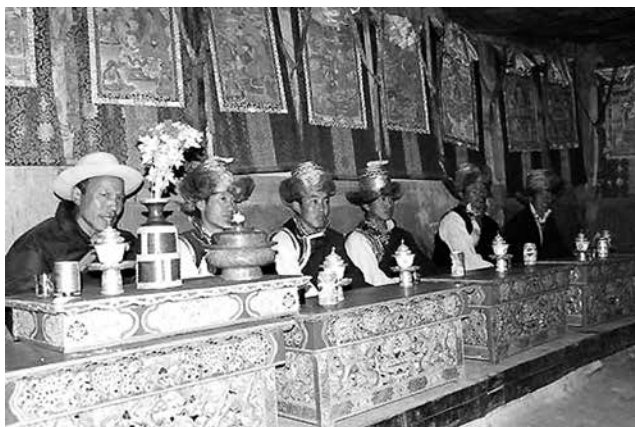
The Limi Valley is located in beautiful upper Humla, which borders Tibet. The valley is home to traditional Tibetan culture as the Tamang ethnic group has preserved the natural and cultural heritage of the area over time. This valley is so remote that it has been out of reach for most visitors until very recently.

Limi Valley is an ideal place for those with a real sense of adventure, who are happy to embrace basic living conditions in order to experience remote, rural mountain life in Nepal. Wilderness is deeply valued for cultural, spiritual, moral, and aesthetic reasons. Some nature writers believe wilderness areas are vital for the human spirit and creativity. They may also preserve historic genetic traits and provide habitat for wild flora and fauna that may be difficult to recreate in zoos, arboretums or laboratories.

The majestic Himalayan landscape, true indigenous mountain communities and the opportunity to meet with friendly villagers drew my friend and me to the Limi Valley. Going to the Limi Valley was like traveling back in time to the Khumbu in the 1960s and 1970s as the area is remote with very little access which makes it isolated, untouched and pure. The valley has strong ties to Tibet, and has maintained many aspects of traditional Tibetan culture where the old values of humanity and brotherhood dominate.

There are approximately 1800 inhabitants in the villages of-Jang (3930m), Halji (3700m) and Til (4100m). People in the valley are sustained by simple agriculture such as the barley and traditional wooden handicrafts for trading in Tibet.





As much as the area is important and popular for Tibetan culture, this region is equally important and popular for wildlife such as snow leopard, wolf, wild horse, blue sheep, and musk deer that enjoy spectacular high-altitude wilderness landscapes where the holy mountain Mt. Kailash is visible in the distance.

However, like other communities in the Himalayas, their way of life is fast disappearing. The people in Limi are facing tough times and severe challenges of survival as their traditional sources of income are drying up. Making wooden bowls, some of them very ornate, for ceremonial use in Tibet and China and the pashmina trade have traditionally been the major sources of income. According to local informants, the maple wood for the bowls is now expensive and scarce as trees are disappearing, and the competitive pashmina market has slumped locally. They are also facing a reduced ability to trade with Tibet following the opening of official borders of Tibet with India and Nepal. Unlike other mountain communities in Nepal, this region has

been so remote that the Government presence is very limited and the election is conducted at the local level except for the secretary who has been appointed by the Government. They have five-year terms and they will have fair election to become a member of the VDC.

Among the three villages of the Limi Valley - Til, Halji and Jang - Halji is the most populous with about 435 inhabitants and 83 households. Halji is situated at an altitude of 3,650 m on the northern banks of the Limi Khola - a tributary of the Humla Karnali Khola in a small valley surrounded by steep ridges and mountains. The houses in the village are clustered around the 11th century Rinchenling monastery, one of the oldest Tibetan Buddhist monasteries in Nepal.

I have been blessed by getting the opportunity to see the 11th Century old monastery the Rinchenling Gumpa in Halji village. Halji is located one-day's travel from Lake Manasarovar - an important pilgrimage site on the Mount Kailash pilgrimage route.



The Rinchenling monastery (also known as Halji Gumpa) is said to have been built between 1327 A.D-1391 A.D. According to the local informants, one of the Malla Kings from Sinja sponsored the Gumpa Construction and people from Jang, Halji and Til village built it with the help of the people from Mugu.

There are currently 35 monks in this monastery where many religious festivals and rituals are performed. This monastery has a Gumpa Management Committee with nine active members involved. It is five to six days walk

from the district headquarters of Simikot to Halji village. From Halji, the village of Til is three hours walk to the northwest and the village of Jang is also three hours walk to the southwest.

Halji Gumpa is a place of great beauty and it exudes a sense of peace and tranquility but the Gumpa requires significant repairs from physical damage and from the frequent floods that are cutting into the village and Gumpa area. I was able to raise small funds through Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP) of the US Embassy for the preservation of the 11th Century Rinchenling Monastery.

The small fund received from AFCP was used to conduct some river bank protection work using bio-engineering techniques, emergency external repair work to the monk's quarters of the monastery, and to assess the internal and external restoration needs of this monastery which is important an important natural and cultural heritage site. It was unforgettable experience from Limi valley that I would not simply find in other parts of Nepal. I respect all the residents of three villages, Til, Halji and Jang village.



Aging in the mountains of Nepal: Challenges and opportunities

Chhing Lamu Sherpa
Life Member

How to make senior citizens respected and valued members of the society and at the same time taking care of their basic needs are becoming a worldwide challenge. This article focuses on the situation of elderly from the mountain regions of Nepal. Mountain environment brings a very different set of challenges and opportunities for elderlies compared to lowlands and cities. Governments, society and organizations must be aware of these differences when developing support programs NGOs; welfare of the elderly people is becoming increasingly urgent in developing countries such as Nepal.

We all get older later or sooner and “All elder after certain age faces disability”. Elders are our source of inspiration and knowledge which need to be documented.

The United Nations Principles for Elder persons of 1991; Macau Plan for Action on Ageing of 1998; Madrid International Plan for Action on Ageing in 2002; and UN's official ageing issues endorsement of 2012 demonstrates the urgency of this issue.

The population of elder is also growing rapidly in Nepal as average life expectancy increase by 70 years which is 8.13% elders out of total population. About 85% of the elders live in rural areas (NEPAN, 2016) where suitable facilities such as hospital are lacking.

Traditional extended families becomes increasingly nuclear and young people migrate out from rural areas and move to urban areas and beyond to foreign countries in search of employment in industrial, businesses and as domestic sectors. Their parents and grandparents are left behind in rural areas without proper family support and facilities. The state has been providing a limited pension since 1995. However according to HAI and 2016 the government pension is received only by 61.4% of the eligible elderly and remaining 40% are yet to receive the benefit. The senior citizen Act 2006 and subsequent regulation 2011 provides some legal protection regarding the rights of the elderly. But only 30% elders go for legal recourses and 70% remain silent for fear of more repercussion.

Studies show that elderly people in Nepal suffer a wide range of challenges depending on their socio-economic conditions and support system. The major problems include lack of access to health facilities, low income and lack of spending money, mental health problems such as depressions, physical, mental and sexual abuses by family members and outsiders.

Elder people especially from mountain and rural regions of Nepal are often suffering from poor health, low economic condition, psychosocial problems, loneliness, physical disability, anxiety and worry for future care.

Situation of mountain elders is worse in terms of getting support from state as they often live in scattered household. Most of elderly homes of Nepal are either in cities or in flat land or near the Hindu temples and do not have such options in remote mountain villages in their cultural environment.

At the same time most of mountain elders are uneducated, unaware of policies and neglected. 75 old aged female mentioned “I used to reduce my burden of loneliness by talking with friends”. (Pandy, 2075). The cases would be representative and many unreported cases are found in our societies.

Elderly people in the mountain are vulnerable to all the social problems mentioned above such as abuse, neglect, and isolation. In addition, mountain areas lack health facilities that can cater for elderly care such as old people's homes and community centers. Hospitals are too far means of transportation lacking and people with disabilities faces more problems. There are no ambulances and sick people had to be carried. Man power is often lacking because most men are away from rural village. Mountain trails are difficult for people with disability. Mountain people are also economically weaker and less able to take the elderly dependents to cities for medical treatments. Until very recently, senior citizens in the mountain regions are also deprived of their old age benefits due to corruption. Beside that mountain areas also lack convenient energy sources such as electricity and gas is either not available or too expensive in most mountain villages which make

it difficult for elderly to prepare food and drinks. When life become difficult and painful, elderly often resort to drinking alcohol and alcoholism become a problem. Markets and shops are often too far away and not all commodities are available even if some elderly people have the purchasing power. Most mountain areas are cold especially during winter. Old people are most vulnerable to illness and death during harsh winters.

Aging in the mountain region comes with a number of benefits. They get to live in a closely knit community where people know each other. When the elderly lose memory there is less chances of getting lost or get into accidents because other members of the community watches out. Elder people can get plenty of physical exercises and healthy food from the fields. They can mind livestock, grandchildren and houses and be useful to the family. Both the water and air in mountain are clean compared to Kathmandu. They can visit other elderly people and socialize or go to village temples and religious sites to earn merits. At the final stages of their life, we find that most old people want to return to their villages to die even if they are well taken care of in the city by their children and healthcare providers.



During Mountain Spirit work in Tibet with the support of The Mountain Institute (TMI) in 1999s.

I still remember the calm, graceful blessing from elderly spiritual women with wisdom in Kyrong Trans-boundary area's steep mountain meditation cave of Tibet Autonomous Regions (TAR) of China. She was a head of the cave monastery among 14 different ages group Ani (nun) and elders are staying together happily with different age group.

The elder spiritual old women were confident, secure in care, respect and love. This is one way of securing a good future.

Similarly friends are important especially in the old age. If some have friends they share and get support each other. As

It is important for services to reach in rural mountain and hills and address the needs of mountain elders, where the needs are greater. Following suggestion will make elderly people happier in their own villages despite of lack of facilities.

1. Elder focused community recreation center where food and socialization is provided and elders enjoy going.
2. Government should respect elders through providing regular religious and teaching program in their own culture and context.
3. Government provisions for regulation for regular home visit complacence by local hospital doctors, nurses and community workers including reporting system from local to center.
4. Community watch groups: government should develop mended monitor system and make sure that elders are legally protected.
5. Community awareness program for people with disability and elderly care.
6. Provisions for tax deduction of elders who are above 70 years if the properties are belong to elders which will encourage their children to keep property in the name of elders.
7. Elder focus entrepreneur activities based on their traditional, indigenous and professional skills so that they can lead their lives with dignity without depending with their children.
8. Manage documenting the vanishing traditional and indigenous skill, knowledge and rich experiences of elder people which is the properties of the Nation.
9. Local and National level social acknowledge to those family who care their elders well and encourage other for replications.

In conclusion mountain people's way of lives keeps them active and happy. Elderly people mostly want to end their life in their home villages no matter how difficult circumstances and some even suffer from malnutrition. So there is great of need of government and social sectors' attention where our elders love to live with dignity. Government should create space to all culture groups in mountain do not leave single elder behind and reach with 100% elder especially in mountain and each corner of the country through social security pension, monitoring system, legal protection and community recreation center, skill and knowledge documentation, acknowledgement and entrepreneur activities.

हिमाली शेर्पा समाजमा महिलाको अवस्था

आडलमी शेर्पा, सम्बद्ध सदस्य

हिमाली जातिहरू मध्येका एक जाति हुन् शेर्पा । शेर्पाहरू नेपालको उत्तर-पूर्वी हिमाली लेकाली तथा पहाडी क्षेत्रहरूमा फैलिएर रहेका छन् । सन् २०११ को जनगणना अनुसार नेपालको जम्मा २,६४,९४,५०४ जनसंख्या मध्ये, शेर्पाहरूको जनसंख्या करिब १.२०५६% रहेको पाईन्छ ।

नेपालका जनजातिहरू मध्ये शेर्पाहरूलाई आर्थिक रूपले केही सम्वृद्ध तथा महिला पुरुषमा त्यति भेदभाव नगर्ने जातिको रूपमा हेरिन्छ तर पन्ध्रौ शताब्दी देखि हाल सम्म शेर्पाहरूले पितृसत्तात्मक पारिवारिक ढाँचालाई निरन्तरता दिएको पाईन्छ जस्तो राज्यको प्रतिनिधिको रूपमा नियुक्त भएका तालुकदार, मुखिया, जिम्वाल आदि सबै पुरुष नै थिए । त्यस ताका एकै पुरुषले धेरै श्रीमतीहरू विवाह गर्ने गरेको भेटिन्छ भने केही लेखकहरूले बिगतमा शेर्पा समाजमा बहुपतिप्रथा प्रचलन भएको बताउनुछन् तर हाल यो प्रचलन हेखिदैँन जुन अध्ययन तथा खोजको बिषय हुन सक्छ ।

सामाजिक अवस्था :

पितृसत्तात्मक शेर्पा समाजमा घरायसी कामको निर्णयको अधिकार शेर्पा महिलालाई भएता पनि समाजको हरेक मुख्य काममा पुरुषकै हात र हरेक कृयाकलापहरूमा (पुरुष पहिला) को परम्परा हाल

पनि कायमै छ । जस्तै पिउने, खाने कुरा सर्वप्रथम पुरुषलाई टक्याउनु पर्ने , माथिल्लो स्थानमा पुरुषको आसन राख्नु पर्ने, खाना खाने थाल तथा छ्याङ खाने चेनी (कप) महिलाको लागि सानो चेनी जस्ता विभेदकारी प्रथाहरू हाल पनि शेर्पा समाजमा व्याप्त छन् ।

आर्थिक अवस्था :

शेर्पाहरू परम्परागत रूपमा पशुपालन, कृषि तथा तिब्बत, तराई र भारत व्यापारमा बिसेष् संलग्न हुन्थे भने तेन्जिङ नोर्के शेर्पा र सर एडमण्ड हिलारीले सन् १९५३ मे २९ मा विश्वकै अग्लो हिमाल चोमोलुङ्मा (सगरमाथा) को सफल आरोहण गरे पश्चात् शेर्पाहरू पर्यटन तथा पर्वतारोहण पेशामा आवद्ध हुन थालेको पाईन्छ । वर्तमानमा आएर अन्य नेपालीहरू जस्तै व्यापार, व्यवसाय, स्वदेशी, वैदेशिक रोजगार, शिक्षण, संचार, चिकित्सा क्षेत्रमा समेत आवद्ध रहेका छन् ।

शेर्पा महिलाहरूलाई घरको मुख्य आर्थिक कारोबारको निर्णय गर्ने अधिकार अझ पनि दिईएको पाईदैँन भने दाइजोको रूपमा केबल घर तयसी सामाग्री, गरगहना तथा पशुधन बाहेक छोरीलाई पैतृक सम्पत्तिबाट बन्चित गरको छ । नेपालमा आएको २०६२/०६३ सालपछिको महान

परिवर्तन पश्चात् स्थापित संघिय लोकतान्त्रिक गणतन्त्रात्मक नयाँ नेपालमा समेत शेर्पा महिलाहरू अरुमा आश्रित हुनु पर्ने तथा केहि धनि तथा माथिल्लो स्तरको परिवारले दाइजो नल्याएको निहुँमा शेर्पा महिलाले शारीरिक तथा मानसिक यातना, घरेलु हिंसा सहनु पर्ने बाध्य भै उनीहरूको वृत्ति विकासमा असर पर्न गएको छ ।

पर्वतारोहण :

पर्वतारोहणमा शेर्पा महिलाहरू भने धेरै पछाडि देखि मात्र संलग्न भएको पाइन्छ । शेर्पा महिलाहरूमा यस जोखिम पर्वतारोहणको सुरुवात भने जुङ (जुनबेसी) सोलुखुम्बुकी डिमी शेर्पाले गरेकी थिइन् । उनले सन् १९८५ मा ७,८६५ मिटर अग्लो नुप्चे हिमालको विना अक्सिजन सफल आरोहण गरे भने सन् १९९३ मा स्व. पासाङ ल्हामु शेर्पाले सगरमाथाको सफल आरोहण स्वरूप राष्ट्रिय विभूति समेत घोषित भईन् । हालसम्म एक दर्जनभन्दा बढी शेर्पा महिलाहरूले सगरमाथा लगायत विभिन्न हिमालहरूको आरोहण गरी साहसिक इतिहास कोरिसकेका छन् र यो क्रम जारी छ । विदेशमा जस्तो एकपटक सगरमाथाको आरोहण गरेपश्चात् आरोहीको नाम, मान तथा जीवनस्तरमा प्रबल परिवर्तन आउने अवस्था नेपालमा भने नरहेको तीतो सत्य हो ।

शैक्षिक अवस्था :

परम्परागत बौद्ध धार्मिक शिक्षा प्रणालीमा केवल शेर्पा पुरुषहरूले मात्र माथिल्लो स्तरको अध्ययन गर्ने प्रचलन, त्यस्तै समाजमा धार्मिक आस्थाको रूपमा रहेको अवतारी तथा रिन्पोछे जस्तो उपल्लो स्थानमा केवल पुरुषहरू मात्र देखिन्छ । उता भने गोन्यामा अध्ययनरत भिक्षुणी (आनी) हरू पुरुष

लामाहरू भन्दा कैयौँ गुणा बढी शीलहरू जिवनमा प्रयोग गरिरहेको भए पुजाहरूमा पुरुष लामाहरूलाई बढवा र भिक्षुणी (आनी) हरूलाई सिमित दायराभित्र खुम्च्याइएको पाइन्छ । यसरी शेर्पा महिलाहरू कैयौँ अवसरबाट बन्चित र हिसामा समेत परेको छन् ।

शेर्पा महिलाहरू ५७.५ प्रतिशत साक्षर रहेको देखिन्छ भने शेर्पा पुरुषहरू ७५.२ प्रतिशत साक्षर रहेको पाइन्छ । हिमाली तथा लेकाली गाउँ बस्तीहरूमा स्कूलहरू घरबाट टाढा, शेर्पा महिलाहरू घरायसी काममा लाग्न बाध्य, अशिक्षित अभिभावक हुनुले नै शेर्पा छोरीहरू उच्च तथा राम्रो शिक्षाबाट बन्चित भईरहेको छन् तर शहरहरूमा भने शेर्पाहरूले छोरा छोरी दुवैलाई पढाएका छन् । यसरी शिक्षाबाट वन्चित हुनु परेको कारणले नै आज केही अपवाद वाहेक शेर्पा महिलाहरू सो अवसरबाट बन्चित छन् ।

राजनैतिक अवस्था :

राजनैतिक क्षेत्रमा पनि शेर्पा पुरुष नै सक्रिय रहेको र शेर्पा महिलालाई केवल घरधन्डामा सिमित राखिएको पाइन्छ । अपवादको रूपमा स्व. छिरिङ डोमा शेर्पालाई लिन सकिन्छ जो पञ्चयत कालमा सोलुखुम्बू जिल्लाको खुम्जुङ गाउँ विकास समितिकी अध्यक्ष थिईन् । तिनी एकल महिला रहेको र पारिवारिक भन्फट बाट टाढा भएको कारणले नै सफल भएकी थिईन् । त्यस्तै केही नगन्य शेर्पा महिलाहरू राजनीतिमा सफल भएको पाइन्छ । ती मध्ये याङकिला शेर्पा पर्यटन राज्य मन्त्री, सभासदमा ताप्लेजुङकी फुल्मु शेर्पा, सोलुखुम्बुकी आङदावा शेर्पा तथा संखुवासभाकी लक्की शेर्पा (हाल अष्ट्रेलियामा नेपाली राजदूत) हुन् भने स्थानिय तहको सरकारमा भने केही शेर्पा महिलाहरूले अवसर पाएका छन् । यसरी समाजले

महिलालाई बाहिर निस्कन प्रेरित नगर्ने र अर्को तर्फ राजनैतिक पार्टीहरूले समेत जिम्मेवारीपूर्ण भूमिका निभाउने अवसर प्रदान गर्न कन्जुस्याई गरिरहेको अवस्था छ ।

शेर्पा महिलाहरू पछिल्लो समयमा आएर घर व्यवहार, आय आर्जन, धर्म संस्कृति तथा पर्यावरण जगेर्नामा समेत लाग्नु पर्ने भएकोले कामको ओभरलोडले ग्रसित छन् । जसले गर्दा व्यक्तित्व विकास, शिक्षा आर्जन, राजनैतिक आवद्धता जस्ता अवसरहरूबाट बन्चित रहेका छन् । पछिल्लो चरणमा हिन्दू समाजको सामिप्यतामा मनुस्मृतीका भावहरू समेत शेर्पा पुरुषहरूमा जागृत भएको कुरा शेर्पा महिलाहरूले महशुस गरेका छन् । शेर्पा पुरुषहरू शहरमा आएर व्यक्तित्व विकास गर्ने, व्यापार आदिबाट आर्थिक स्तर सुधार्ने, देश विदेश घुम्ने तर त्यो अवसर आफ्नै श्रीमतीलाई समेत प्रदान नगर्दा या शहरमा ल्याए पनि चौघरामा सिमित राख्ने गर्नाले परिवारमा विकृतीहरू देखिन थालेको छ ।

शेर्पा महिलाहरूको स्तरलाई माथि उठाउन उनीहरूलाई उचित शिक्षा, तालिम, रोजगार तथा सरकारी निजामती सेवामा अवसर दिईनु पर्दछ । शेर्पा छोरीहरूलाई दाईजो होईन उचित शिक्षा तथा छोरा सरह पैतृक सम्पत्तिमा व्यवहारिक रूपमै अधिकार दिईनु पर्दछ तब मात्र ऊ आत्मा बलका साथ स्वावलम्बी बन्न सक्दछ । राज्यले ३३ प्रतिशत होईन जनसंख्याको प्रतिशतको आधारमा एकाउन्न प्रतिशत सक्षम महिला समावेसिता हरेक तह र तप्कामा कायम गर्नु पर्दछ । जसले गर्दा बढी भन्दा बढी शेर्पा महिलाहरू समेत राज्यको हरेक निकायको नीति निर्माण तह सम्ममा पुग्न सक्दछन् । फलस्वरूप आफ्नो, परिवार, क्षेत्र, समुदाय लगायत सिङ्गो राष्ट्रको सर्वाङ्गीण विकास तथा सेवामा योगदान प्रदान गर्ने अवसर प्राप्त गर्न सक्दछन् ।

चित्रेथाममा कृषि र पर्यटनको संभावना

आङ तेन्जिङ शेर्पा, साधारण सदस्य

उदयपुर जिल्लाको रौतामाई गाउँ पालिका वडा नं. १ अन्तरगत २०००-२३४४ मी. उचाइमा पर्ने यो चित्रेथाम र आसपासका गाउँहरू अति सुन्दर र प्राकृतिक सम्पदाका धनि मान्न सकिन्छ । यस ठाउँहरूले असोज कार्तिक महिना देखि फागुन १५ सम्म तुसरोको घुम्तो ओड्ने भएकोले अत्यन्तै चिसो हुन्छ । तापक्रमको हिसाबले हिउँद महिनाको राती ३ डिग्री से. देखि दिनमा २५/३० से. सम्म तापक्रम रहेको पाइन्छ । प्राकृतिक जडीबुटीको हिसाबले चिराईतो, पाखानवेत, ठूलो ओखती, इन्द्रेणीफुल, मजिटो, टिम्पुर, बोभो, जरिङ्गो, चरिअमिलो, ऐसेलु, सिस्नु लगाएत नाम थाहान भएको अन्य धेरै थरिका जडिबुटिहरू पाइन्छ ।

पर्याटकिय दृष्टिकोणले हेर्ने हो भने, जुजु बाजेहरूले मान्दै आएका नाग तथा देवी देवताका थानहरू, पोखरी, पुराना बस्तीहरूको संरचनाका अबशेषहरू देख्न सकिन्छ । २०००-२३४४ मी. उचाइको सेरोफेरोमा १७/१८ ठाउँहरूमा पानीका श्रोतहरू देख्न पाइन्छ । सोच्नै पनि नसकिने ठाउँमा पानीका श्रोतहरू देख्न पाउँदा मानिसहरू आश्चर्य मान्छन् ।

पैदल यात्रा गर्नेहरूको लागि पनि सरर चिसो हावा खाँदै र रमाउँदै विभिन्न गाउँ, खोला धानका फाँटहरू, उच्च डाँडा तथा हिमालहरूको अवलोकन गर्दै दिन बितेको थाहै लाग्दैन ।

खेतीपातीको दृष्टिकोणले आजभन्दा २५/३० वर्ष पहिला आलु, फापर, जौ, ऊवा, स्थानिय डल्ले मुला, भोटे लसुन, छ्यापी, रायोको साग लगाएको पाइन्थ्यो । आज भोली विश्वमा जलवायु परिवर्तनका कारण तापक्रम बढ्दै गएकोले यो ठाउँमा पनि खेतीको प्रकृति र प्रकारहरू परिवर्तन भएर गएको छ । आज भोली फलफुलमा किवी, ओखर, भुइस्याउ, चिया, अलैंची र तरकारीहरूमा फुलकोभी, बन्दा, गाजर, रायो, मुलाहरूको उत्पादन क्षेत्र क्रमशः बढ्ने क्रम छ भने बाह्रै महिना ताजा तरकारी तथा टमाटर उत्पादनको लागि प्लाष्टिक घर (Green House) को व्यवस्थापनले किसानहरूको आयस्रोतमा पनि केही परिवर्तन आएको छ । राम्रो अध्ययन तथा अनुसन्धान गरी वैज्ञानिक प्रविधिहरूको प्रयोग गरी व्यवस्थापन गर्न सकेमा आमूल परिवर्तनका संभावना बोकेको छ यो ठाउँहरूले ।

उल्लेखित सबल पक्षहरूको बाबजुत यहाँको चुनौतीहरू पनि धेरै छन् । यहाँ वैज्ञानिक प्रविधिहरूद्वारा चेतनामुलक ज्ञान सहित आधुनिक औजारहरूको प्रयोग गरी दिगो कृषि व्यवस्थापन गरी गाउँ गाउँमा रोजगारी सृजन गर्न जरुरी छ ।

यूवा जनशक्तिहरू बेरोजगार भएर वैदेशिक रोजगारमा जान बाध्य छन् र क्रम बढ्दो छ । छोरीबुहारीहरू नता नानीहरू पढाउन राम्रो स्कुलको

खोजीमा शहर पलायन हुने क्रम पनि बढ्दो छ । जस्तै गर्दा यो ठाउँ बृद्धहरूको आश्रम थलो पनि बन्न पुगेको छ । किनभने चिसो हावापानीमा जीवन बिताएका बृद्ध आमाबुवाहरू तराइको तातो हावामा पिलसिन मान्दैनन् । उपाय एउटै छ बृद्ध भत्ता खाँदै सिस्नु र आलुको बोटमा भुन्डिने । खेती योग्य जमिनहरू क्रमशः चरण र जंगलमा परिणत हुने क्रम बढ्दो छ ।

केही गैर सरकारी संस्थाहरूले बाख्रा पालन तरकारी खेती, बालपोषण जस्ता कार्यक्रम संचालन गरे ता पनि सरकारी स्तरबाट खासै परिवर्तनका कार्यक्रमहरू ल्याउन सकेको देखिदैन । यूवा, जनशक्तिहरू विदेश पलायन हुन र बसाइ सराईलाई नियन्त्रण गर्न खेती योग्य जमिनहरूको व्यवस्थापनमा बैज्ञानिक प्रविधिहरूको प्रयोग गर्न सरकारी तथा गैर सरकारी संस्था र निजी स्तरबाट पहल गर्नु पर्दछ र नयाँ संघिय संरचनाका विकासलाई अगाडी बढाउने प्रयासहरूमा टेवा पुर्‍याउनु सक्दछ ।

हाल सम्म तराईमा उत्पादित विषादि प्रयोग गरेका तरकारीहरू आयत गरी खाने प्रक्रियाले पहाडीमानव स्वास्थ्यमा पनि अप्रत्यक्ष रूपमा नकरात्मक प्रभावहरू पर्न थालेको छ । बैधानिक वन तथा चरण व्यवस्थान हुँदा क्रमशः नोडो डाँडाहरू अरु नाझीदै जान बाट रोकिने छ ।

आफ्नो जन्म स्थल पनि यही भएकोले ३१ वर्ष निरन्तर कृषि सेवामा जागिरको दौरानमा विभिन्न ठाउँहरूको र प्रविधिहरूको अवलोकन तथा अनुभवलाई उजागर गर्ने उद्देश्यले ३४ वर्ष पछि पूनः गाउँ फर्किएर ५-१० वर्ष भित्र नमूना गाउँ तथा ठाउँ बनाउन साथ दिने उद्देश्य तथा लक्ष्यका साथ "सगरमाथा अलैची तथा फलफूल" नर्सरीको

स्थापना गर्न लागेको जानकारी सबैमा गराउन चाहन्छु ।

यो चित्रेथाममा स्थापना भएको सगरमाथा अलैची तथा फलफूल नर्सरीले ५ देखि १० वर्ष भित्र यो ठाउँको हावापानी र भौगोलिक धरातलको सुहाउँदो र उपयुक्त किसिमको विभिन्न जातका फलफूल तरकारीहरू लगाएत वृक्षा रोपणका विरूवाहरू उत्पादन गरी सहुलियत रूपमा विक्री बितरण गरी हराभरा बनाउने र पर्याटनहरूको मन लोभ्याउने र क्यामरा र मोबाइलमा फोटो खिच्ने यो ठाउँको अवलो कनमा जो कोहीलाई निम्त्याउने आशालिएका छौ ।

यी विभिन्न कुराहरूलाई मध्य नजर गरी आ.व. ०७३/७४ म हिमाली जोस काठमाण्डौको आयो जनामा दिगो जैविक तरकारी उत्पादन, चिया र अलैची खेती, च्याउ उत्पादन जस्ता तालिमहरू संचालन गरेको थियो । त्यसै गरी बाह्रै महिना ताजा तरकारी उत्पादन गराउने उद्देश्यका साथ ल्याष्टिक घर (Green House) व्यवस्थापन तालिम तथा नमूना वितरण र पर्यटकिय क्षेत्रको संभावनालाई उजागर गराउन Home Stay को तालिम र सरसफाई तथा स्वास्थ्य रहन जनचेतनामूलक गोष्ठी संचालन तथा नमूनाका सामाग्रीहरू वितरण गरी उदाहरणीय काम गरेको छ । यस काता गाउलेहरूले ल्याष्टिक घर (Green House) मा टमाटर फलाएर विक्री गरी रहेको पाइन्छ ।

यहाँको संभावनाहरूमा एक माथि अर्को गरी थुप्रै चुनौतीहरूलाई साकार पार्न सरकारी तथा गै.स. संस्था र निजी स्तरबाट यस ठाउँको उपयुक्त व्यवसायी तथा पेसा सम्बन्धी स्थलगत तालिमहरू संचालन गराई व्यवस्थित गराउन प्रमुख दायित्व हो जस्तैः उपयुक्त फलफूल खेती, घरेलु व्यवसाय

राम्रो शिक्षाको लागि सरकारी वा निजी स्तरबाट अंग्रेजी माध्यमको स्कूल तथा होस्टेलको राम्रो व्यवस्था, व्यावहारिक विषयको अध्ययन अध्यापन तथा तालिम संचालन गर्ने र सहूलियत ऋण तथा अनुदानको व्यवस्था गरी यूवा जनशक्तिहरूलाई स्वरोजागरको व्यवस्था गर्नुका साथै शहर मुखीछोरी बुहारीहरूलाई पनि हाम्रो गाउँ ठाउँ भन्ने सिकाउनु पर्दछ ।

त्यस्तै व्यवसायीक रूपम िकिवी, अलैची, आरु, आरुबखडा, चिराउतो तथा उपयुक्त जडिबुडि उत्पादनमा प्रोत्सहान गराउनु यहाँका सबल पक्षहरू हुन । गाइघाट देखि चुहाडे, मुर्कुच्ची हुँदै, हलेसी सम्म पुग्ने राष्ट्रिय योजनाका बाटोले चित्रे थाम गाएलाई छोएको हुनाले भावी दिनहरूमा यो ठाउँ अत्यन्तै रमणिय स्थल र रौतामाई गा.प. वडा नं. १ को मुख्य आय स्रोतको बाटो खुल्ने छ भन्ने लाग्छ ।

यहाँ NCell / NTC को टावर निर्मित छ भने वातावरण सम्बन्धी ठूलो योजनाका काम हुन लागे को छ । यस ठाउँमा केही दिन अगाडी

देखि पर्याटनहरूको मन लोभ्याउने पारा ग्ल्याडिङ्ग उडानको परिक्षण भैरहेको छ । भर्ना अवलोकन गर्न, विभिन्न हिमशिखरहरूको अवलोकन गर्न र विहानीको सूर्य उदाएको हेर्न उपयुक्त ठाउँ मान्न सकिन्छ ।

२३४४ मी. उच्चाई देखि समुन्द्र सतहको नजिक रहेको कोशी नदी किनारको सेतो बालुवामा टेकेर पुनः उकालो लाग्दाको रमाईलो र रमणिय दृश्यहरूको अवलोकनलाई क्यामरा र मोबाइलमा भराउँदै हलेसी महादेवको दर्शन गर्न पुगिने छोटो बाटो पनि हो यो ।

यी विभिन्न कुराहरूको अध्ययन अवलोकन गर्न एक पटक अव पाल्नु/आउनु होला भन्दै आवश्यक सर-सल्लाह तथा सुझावका साथै सहयोगको अपेक्षा गर्दै विदा चहान्छु ।

The Lost Beauty

Choekyi Dolma Lama
Associate Member

Was indeed a beautiful morning
Walking by the river side
Tranquil and attire in turquoise blue
Autumn colour it reflects like a mirror

What a strange place?
My inner whisper rolled
Unknown to the place and it's charm
Still I walked with wonders in my eyes

Then was the wind
Whistling in my ears
Singing a song I never heard
Of cuckoo's and magpie robins

How mesmerized was I?
By the spotless white cloud
Playing hide and seek with the sun
By the flowers dancing in the field

Suddenly, distracted by a huge noise
Let my eyes wide opened
It was just a dream, I realized
Where is the nature and it's beauty?

How different do I feel now?
With the tune of this world
Cities filled with smokes
The monotonous sound of machines

The tiny whisper of reality
Countless undirected noise
The fantasy of the mundane world
Then I realized;

Nature is the only reality
That still seems undestroyed
The tender glimpse of beauty
Giving birth to life every spring it passes

But how long will it bear?
Because the witch of modernity
Sucking the nectar of beauty
Filling it's lung with pollution

Cutting the roots of life
Constructing giant robots
One day the human will loose
The humanity it possess
By the robots it's creation

Snow Leopard: A conservation song

༄༅། ལྷ་ལ་བཟང་ལགས།

Composed By: Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa

ཁུམ་བུ་གངས་རའི་བསྐྱར་བའི་ཞིང་ཁམས་ལ།
Khumbu, the paradise of snow peaks,

བྱང་སེམས་ཡོད་བའི་མི་ཡི་ཁྱང་བ་ལ།
In the land of compassionate people,

གངས་གཟིག་སྦྱིད་ཉལ་རྒྱག་ས་ལེགས་བ་ལ།
wonderful playground for snow leopards.

རི་དྭགས་ལྷ་ཚོགས་འཛུམས་བས་སྦྱིད་བ་ལ།
diversity of wildlife thrives peacefully.

གངས་གཟིག་སྤུ་བྱ་ཤིག་ཤིག་བྲག་ལ་ཆགས།
Spotted leopards live on rocky cliff,

ཡུལ་སྤྱི་འཁོར་དང་ཁྱང་བའི་རྒྱན་ཆ་ལ།
The entourage of deity and ornament of village,

འབྲི་གཡག་རྩ་མ་བེང་བེང་སྤང་ལ་ཆགས།
yaks and naks graze on green meadows.

སྤང་སྦྱོབ་ཨང་ཀེ་དང་པོ་དགའ་བ་ལ།
happily receives excellent protection.



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