

# Mountain Trail

## 2023



हिमाली जोश  
MOUNTAIN SPIRIT

Supporting Mountain Communities  
and Environment

Photo by: Mr. Pemma Tsewang

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# About Mountain Spirit

Mountain Spirit (MS) is a non-profit organization registered in 1996 under the laws of Nepal. MS is formed by a group of like-minded people from different mountain communities and their friends. MS aims to improve livelihoods, protect the environment, and conserve mountain culture through capacity building, empowerment, awareness, and sustainable development initiatives with participation of local communities.

## Why Support the Mountain Regions?

The mountain regions in Nepal are rich in biodiversity and cultural heritages. But these regions are challenging places to live and work due to harsh climate, unproductive soil, and inaccessibility. Mountain communities are also marginalized as they have less access to decision-making positions in government and political parties. Therefore, most of the mountain regions suffer from migration to urban areas – as members of the community may search for economic opportunities, employment, education, and health facilities elsewhere. Therefore, Mountain Spirit has dedicated the first decade of its work in the areas of health, education, eco-tourism, gender sensitization, social mobilization, participatory planning, conflict resolution, social empowerment and institutional capacity strengthening in different mountains regions of Nepal.

**Vision:** Mountain Spirit envisions prosperous mountain communities with basic services, infrastructure, and conserved bio cultural diversity.

**Mission:** Mountain Spirit is committed to empower and facilitate the mountain women and indigenous communities in environment and culture conservation, resource mobilization and sustainable development initiatives.





## MS Objectives

- To **empower indigenous communities** and **mountain women** through advocacy, social mobilization, information sharing and capacity building.
- To **conserve the mountain environment**, promote and **preserve cultural heritages** through awareness, education, and research.
- To **improve mountain livelihoods** through resource mobilization and implementation of sustainable development initiatives.

# Executive Committee Members

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***Ms. Tuka C. Sherpa, Chair*** is originally from the eastern part of Nepal. She completed her MA in Rural Development from Tribhuvan University. She is Global Leadership School fellow of Indigenous Women, Program on ToT On Human Rights, Food and Nutrition Security. She joined Mountain Spirit as a volunteer and became an associate member in 2000. She was upgraded to a general member in 2004 and elected as an executive member in 2006. Ms. Sherpa was appointed as program coordinator of MS and play the main role in the implementation of the Education and Health support project, Udayapur and Chyangmetang Village Clinic, Solukhumbu. She is participated in Local Restoration and Global Leadership Program. She has experience in APPA practices and using tools and techniques.

***Mr. Sanoj Tulachan, Vice Chair*** is a development professional with more than 17 years of working experience in Plan International, Concern Worldwide, Refugee Action- UK, NEEDs-UK, Helen Keller International, WaterAid and Winrock International. He has extensive experience in program design, research, M&E, knowledge management, and learning in diverse sector that includes agriculture, livelihood, cross boarder trafficking, WASH, DRR/climate change, nutrition, hygiene and others. He was born in Mustang and holds Master degree in Anthropology and Master degree in International Development Studies from UK.



***Mr. Nima Tshering Lama, General Secretary*** joined Mountain Spirit as a associate member in 2014. He is from Helambu Rural Municipality, ward No. 2, (former Kiul Village Development Committee, ward No. 6, Ningale village) of Sindhupalchok District. He graduated Master in Development Studies from Purbanchal University. He is belongs to the Hyolmo ethnic community among different ethnic/indigenous community in Nepal. He has an in-depth knowledge and extensive experience of social services and social organization, as he was associated with several social organizations. He was general secretary for 6 years in Nepal Hyolmo Social Service Association, the organization of the Hyolmo community in Nepal. He was a secretary for three years at the Hyolmo Service Center, the strong organization of Hyolmo community based in Kathmandu.



**Ms. Choekyi Dolma Lama, Secretary** is MS general member, a former staff and intern of Mountain Spirit. She has worked for Mountain Spirit as Program and Finance Assistant for more than three years and served as intern for one year. She has a graduate degree in Social Work from St. Xavier's College and is currently pursuing her master's degree in Public Administration from Tribhuvan University. Besides, Ms. Lama has also worked in UNICEF Janakpur field office as Child Protection Trainee for 11 months as a part of UN Traineeship Cohort – IX program. Currently, she is working as Program Officer in LIFE Nepal supporting UNFPA's project in Janakpurdham, Madhesh Province.



**Ms. Ang Diku Sherpa, Treasurer** received a degree in Business Administration and Public Administration from Minbhavan Campus. She has experience and training in diverse fields, such as new and small enterprise promotions, health management, and HIV/AIDS. Ms. Sherpa has worked as a facilitator between domestic and international enterprises and has given training on participatory rural approaches.

**Ms. Sangita Lama** is from Nijgadh in Bara District and first joined mountain spirit as a volunteer in 2009. She then became an associate member and was upgraded to a general member in 2008, now she is one of an executive committee members. Her educational background is in financial management. Ms. Lama is actively involved in the research of indigenous people's rights & movement and authored some articles related to it. She has worked with indigenous communities in the rural areas using participatory and appreciative approaches to planning and capacity building. She has also facilitated the documentation of indigenous knowledge on climate change adaption and mitigation.



**Mr. Phurba Chheten Pradhan** is a permanent resident of Khumjung-4, of Khumbu Pasang Lhamu Rural Municipality currently residing in Budhanilkantha-2, Kathmandu. Mr. Pradhan has a master's degree in Development Studies from Kathmandu University and has been working in the development sector for the last five years. He initially joined Mountain Spirit (MS) as an intern in the month of June 2016 up until August 2016. Upon completion of the internship period, he joined as an Account and admin officer from September 2016 to May 2019, serving for a period of almost two-and-a half years. At present, he is working as a Programme Officer at Himalayan Trust Nepal, a Non Governmental Organization based in Nepal with the hope of continuing Sir Edmund Hillary's Legacy.

***Ms. Ngima Doma Sherpa*** first became affiliated with Mountain Spirit in 2010 and become Life member in 2017.



***Mr. Tashi D. Hyolmo, Immediate Past Chair*** first became affiliated with Mountain Spirit in 2007 and became a general member in 2009. He is an indigenous youth activist, writer, and a young media person who has been exploring the applications of his professional practices on technology, youth, and social activism. He served Nepal Indigenous Nationalities students federation, as chief of the foreign department of, National committee, Advisor of Hyolmo Student Association of Nepal, Advisor of Lumbini Help foundation, and various Hyolmo Indigenous organizations. He strongly believes in Youth as the future of any country and youth should be given meaningful participation in the decision-making process of the country.

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# Advisory Committee Members

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***Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa*** is originally from the Khumbu region of Solukhumbu district. He holds a Ph.D. in Forest Resources from the University of Washington, USA, and has over 30 years of experience in natural resource management and conservation of mountain ecosystems and cultures. He 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 the Co-Director of in Regional program in Nepal. He is a recipient of a Fulbright student scholarship in 1985 and a Fulbright Post-Doctoral Fellowship in 2009. Dr. Sherpa has a broad national and international experience as an advisor and expert consultant. He has also worked actively in conservation and promotion of mountain cultures and indigenous knowledge including language.

***Tara D. Gurung***, from Pokhara, is a development practitioner by profession actively involved in progressive development work at the grass-roots, local and national levels for the last three decades and has worked for national, bilateral and multilateral development agencies. She served as the Director of Development Policy and Programmes and the Country Manager for the Australian government's aid programme in Nepal, managing Australia's bilateral development cooperation in Nepal. With the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government of Nepal (GoN), she worked in the capacity of Tourism Planning and Monitoring Specialist for the Tourism for Rural Poverty Alleviation Programme (TRPAP). Tara Gurung started her development journey in April 1991 with the world class Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP). She worked with ACAP in different capacities, including as the Officer-In-Charge of its Sikles Regional Office and as the Senior Conservation Officer leading on ACAP's work in Sustainable Agriculture and Tourism Development. A conservationist from heart, and an advocate of inclusive development, she is also the Immediate Past Chairperson of the Chandra Gurung Conservation Foundation (CGCF), which has been established to carry forward the legacy of late Dr. Chandra Prasad Gurung, a world renowned leading conservationist from Sikles, Kaski. Currently, Tara Gurung sits in the Board of Trustees of Gandaki University. Tara Gurung holds a Masters in Rural Development from Tribhuvan University and a Post Graduate in Parks Recreation and Tourism Management (including International Rural Development) from the Lincoln University in New Zealand.







***Dr. Shailendra Thakali*** is from Mustang district. He holds a Ph.D. in Environmental and Development Governance from Lincoln University, New Zealand. He has over 25 years of experience working on environment, poverty, forestry, community development and tourism issues. He served as an Education and Information Director for the National Trust for Nature Conservation, Program Manager for The Mountain Institute and as a Livelihood Advisor for UK's Department of International Development, and provided advisory and expert services to a number of national and international organizations. He has successfully handled many large-scale projects including GEF funded projects. Most recently he is leading the Darwin Initiative and Snow Leopard Conservancy funded project in the Manang and Everest regions.

***Ms. 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 an advisor to various organizations in Nepal.



***Ang Rita Sherpa***, a native of Khunde village of Khumjung 4 of Solu Khumbu, is the Chairman of The Partners Nepal ([www.thepartnersnepal.org](http://www.thepartnersnepal.org)) in an executive member since its inception in 2012. Mr. Sherpa was the former Senior Program Manager at The Mountain Institute and had over 30 years of experience in protected area management, eco-tourism and community-based tourism, protected landscape management, natural and cultural conservation project planning and implementation, and sustainable development programs. Mr. Sherpa holds M.Sc. in Protected Area Landscape Management from the University of Wales, the UK, in 2000 and an undergraduate degree in Parks and Recreation and Tourism from Lincoln University, New Zealand, in 1986. He has volunteered for the National Parks Service in the United States, where he spent nine months working in Yellowstone, Grand Teton, Shenandoah, and Smoky Mountain National Parks. Ang Rita Sherpa was responsible for implementing the Ambassador Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP)-funded program in Pangboche Monastery, a 600-year-old Buddhist monastery's oldest monastery in the whole Khumbu region and also in the Limi Valley in mid-west Nepal in Humla district. He was the former executive and Chairman of the Himalayan Trust that Sir Edmund Hillary established in 1964. Mr. Sherpa is the president of the Everest (Sagarmatha) Chapter Committee under the Climate Alliance of Himalayan Communities. He is also a founder and life member of Mountain Spirit. Selection committee member of Mingma Norbu Sherpa Memorial Scholarship to New Zealand. Advisor of the Climate Alliance of Himalayan Communities (CAHC), Advisor and life member of the Khumjung School Alumni Association (KSAA), Mr. Sherpa, received the Sir Edmund Hillary Mountain Legacy Medal in 2011.



***Dr. Pasang Dolma Sherpa***, Executive Director of Center for Indigenous Peoples' Research & Development (CIPRED) has been working with Indigenous Peoples, Women and Local Communities for the recognition of the indigenous peoples' knowledge, cultural values and customary institutions that contributed for sustainable management of forest, ecosystem, biodiversity and climate resilience for more than a decade. Ms. Sherpa has obtained her PhD at Kathmandu University in 2018 on *Climate Change Education and its Interfaces with Indigenous Knowledge*. She has already served as Co-Chair of International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on Climate Change (IIPFCC), Co-Chair of Facilitative Working Group (FWG) of Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples' Platform (LCIP) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to the board of UN-REDD, Participant Committee of FCPF, World Bank. Presently, she is the Chair of IUCN CEESP Specialist Group on Indigenous Peoples' Customary and Environmental Laws and Human Rights (SPICEH), visiting faculty at Kathmandu University as well as representing in the different forums, networks and institutions both at national and international levels.



***Mr. Lhakpa Tenji Lama (Sherpa)*** is originally from Tumbuk village of Solududhkunda-2, Solukhumbu district. He holds a Masters in community development and planning in tourism management from Lincoln University, New Zealand, and Masters in Tourism Studies from Purbanchal University, Nepal. He is one of Mountain Spirit's founding members. He has worked as Senior Field Coordinator for EU funded Community-based forestry project in Sagarmatha National Park, Project Officer for The Mountain Institute, Executive Director and Chairperson for Mountain Spirit, Tourism Lecturer for Kathmandu Academy of Tourism & Hospitality, newsreader & program producer in Sherpa language for Radio Nepal and Country Coordinator for AWC-UK. He is also an expert advisor and consultant for a number of national/international organizations in project management, communication, rural development, project impact assessment, baseline survey, monitoring and evaluation, and participatory planning and training.

***Mr. Nima Lama Hyolmo*** is originally from Shermathang village of Kiul VDC, Sindhupalchowk. He joined MS in 1999 and became an executive member in 2008. He was elected as general secretary of MS from 2010 to 2012 and served as president of the organization from 2012-2014. 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.



***Mr. Ang Phinjo Sherpa,*** a founder member of Mountain Spirit, is originally from Namche Bazar in Solukhumbu. 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. He has played a significant role in the implementation of the MS-CESVI project in Sagarmatha National Park. He is also the chairperson and executive board director for various organizations dedicated to supporting mountain communities, such as EcoHimal Nepal, Farming for Health, and Khumbu Agro Tourism.



# Mountain Spirit Members

## Founder Members

Name	Permanent Residence
Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa	Thame, Solukhumbu
Chhing Lamu Sherpa	Udayapur
Ang Dali Sherpa	Salleri-5, Solukhumbu
Ang Diku Sherpa	Solukhumbu
Ang Phinjo Sherpa	Namche-2, Solukhumbu
Ang Rita Sherpa	Khunde, Solukhumbu
Tshering Sherpa	Solukhumbu
Kaji Sherpa	Solukhumbu
Tshering Tenzing Sherpa	Ramechhap
Lhakpa Tenji Sherpa	Beni-3, Solukhumbu
Late Nima Dawa Sherpa	Garma-8, Solu

## Life Members

Name	Permanent Residence
Temba Dongba Hyolmo	Sindhupalchok
Gelu Sherpa	Solukhumbu
Pema Doma Sherpa	Garma-8, Solu
Chhing Lamu Sherpa	Udaypur
Ms. Ang Diku Sherpa	Solukhumbu
Mr. Ang phinjo Sherpa	Namche-2, Solukhumbu
Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa	Thame, Solukhumbu
Dr. Shailendra Thakali	Mustang
Mr. Lhakpa Tenji Lama (Sherpa)	Solukhumbu
Mr. Ang Rita Sherpa	Khunde, Solukhumbu
Mr. Tashi Lama Hyolmo	Sindhupalchok
Ms. Ang Dali Sherpa	Salleri-5, Solukhumbu
Mr. Jimmy Lama	Sindupalchok
Ms. Sonam Dolma Lama	Sindupalchok
Ms. Yangdu Sherpa	Sangkhuwasabba
Dr. Pasang Dolma Sherpa	Udayapur
Mr. Gopal Lama	Sindhupalchok
Ms. Anita Lama (Gurung)	Mustang
Ms. Ram Maya Thakali	Mustang
Ms. Tuka Cheki Sherpa	Udayapur
Mr. Lakpa Nuri Sherpa	Udayapur
Dr. Pasang Tsering Lama	Sindhupalchok
Dr. Pasang Yangji Sherpa	Solukhumbu



## General Members

Name	Permanent Residence
Ang Dali Sherpa	Salleri-5, Solukhumbu
Ang Diku Sherpa	Solukhumbu
Ang Phinjo Sherpa	Solukhumbu
Ang Rita Sherpa	Khunde, Solukhumbu
Ang Tenji Sherpa	Udayapur
Anita Lama Gurung	Mustang
Bhuwan Kumari Sherchan	Mustang
Chhewang Lama	Bargaun-4, Humla
Chhing Lamu Sherpa	Udayapur
Choekyi Dolma Lama	Humla
Dinesh Lama	Kathmandu
Dolker Lama	Humla
Dolma Sherpa	Bhakanje, Solukhumbu
Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa	Solukhumbu
Dr. Mingma Norbu Sherpa	Solukhumbu
Dr. Pasang Dolma Lama	Udayapur
Dr. Pasang Tsering Lama	Sindhupalchowk
Dr. Pasang Yangji Sherpa	Solukhumbu
Dr. Shailendra Thakali	Mustang
Durga Bahadur Tamang	Rasuwa
Gelu Sherpa	Solukhumbu
Gopal Lama	Sindhupalchowk
Gyalmu Diki Sherpa	Solukhumbu
Janga Bahadur Lama	Humla
Jemima Diki Sherpa	Solukhumbu
Jikme Tshering Sherpa	Udayapur
Jimmy Lama	Sindhupalchok
Kaji Sherpa	Solukhumbu
Karsang Lama	Sindhupalchok
Kelsang T.L Sherpa	Solukhumbu
Kinjo Omu Hyolmo	Nuwakot
Lakpa Sherpa	Taplejung
Laxmi Gurung	Kagbeni -7, Mustang
Lhadorchi Sherpa	Udayapur
Lhakpa Nuri Sherpa	Udayapur
Lhakpa Tenji Sherpa	Solukhumbu
Mendhala Lama Gurung	Mustang
Neema Sherpa	Okhaldunga
Ngawang Thapke Sherpa	Solukhumbu

Name	Permanent Residence
Nima Lama	Sermathang Kuil-7
Nima Lama	Sermathang -7
Nima Tshering Lama	Sindhupalchok
Pema Chhutin Sherpa	Solukhumbu
Pema Doma Sherpa	Garma-8, Solu
Pemba Tshering Sherpa	Solukhumbhu
Phurba Chheten Pradhan	Solukhumbu
Preeta Sherpa	Kathmandu
Priyanka Shakya	Sankhuwashabha
Ram Maya Thakali	Mustang
Rinjin Phinjok Lama	Humla
Sangita Lama	Nijgadh, Bara
Sanoj Tulachan	Mustang
Sonam Dolma Lama	Sindhupalchok
Sonam Dorjee Sherpa	Solukhumbu
Sonam Lama	Dhankuta
Sonam Rinjin Lama	Humla
Tashi Lama Hyolmo	Sindhupalchok
Tenba Dongba Hyolmo	Sindhupalchok
Tenzin Dawa Sherpa	Sindhupalchok
Tenzing Chogyal Sherpa	Solukhumbu, Namche Bazar
Tsewang Lama	Humla
Tshering Gurung	Kagbeni, Mustang
Tshering Lama	Sindhupalchok
Tshering Sherpa	Solukhumbu
Tshering Sherpa	Solukhumbu
Tshering Tenzing Sherpa	Ramechhap/ Australia
Tshiring Lhamu Lama	Dolpa
Tuka Chheki Sherpa	Udayapur
Yangdu Sherpa	Sangkhuwasabba
Yangji Doma Sherpa	Solukhumbu
Yangji Sherpa	Kathmandu
Yankila Sherpa	Solukhumbu
Roshan Sherchan	Manang
Ang Pasang Sherpa	Udayapur
Bijaya Thakali	Thini, Mustang
Tenzin Choedon Lama	Humla
Jyotshana Ranjitkar	Bhaktapur

## International Life Members

Name	Permanent Residence
Mr. Robert Elliot Fairley	Scotland, UK
Ms. Wendy Brewer Lama	California, USA
Dr. Katie FM Marwick	Scotland, UK
Dr. Sara Louise Parker	England, UK

## Associate Members

Name	Permanent Residence
Choedon Yangchen Lama	Manang
Kami Doma Sherpa	Thameteng, Namche
Nisan Rai	Bhojpur
Palden Lamu Tamang	Sindhupalchowk
Pasang Tsering Lama	Sindhupalchowk
Pasang Tsering Sherpa	Solukhumbu
Peema Sherpa	Taplejung
Pemba Lama	Nuwakot
Pemba Thewang Bhote	Dolpa
Sonam Bhuti Sherpa	Solukhumbu
Sonam Choekyi Lama	Dolpa
Sonam Jangbu Sherpa	Solukhumbu
Sonam Lama	Dhankuta
Temba Lama	Dolakha
Yankee Lama	Humla
Bina Rai	Solukhumbu
Sunil Tamang	Rasuwa
Krishna Tamang	Rasuwa
Hem Bahadur Moktan	Makawanpur
Dalamu Sherpa	Bhojpur
Dolma Lama	Sindhupalchowk
Chhundul Zangmu Tamang	Humla





# A Note from the Chairperson

*Dear Members, Friends, Partners and Well Wishers,*

*Warm greetings from Mountain Spirit!*



Mountain Spirit (MS) is a member based non-governmental organization. It was registered in 1996 under the law of Nepal. MS has more than 100 members representing 14 different mountain districts of Nepal. MS aims to improve livelihoods, protect the environment, and conserve the mountain cultures through capacity building, awareness and empowerment and sustainable development. As the organization has been in action for over 2 and a half decades - I would like to wish MS a fruitful future in keeping the mountains' beauty alive.

Mountain Spirit would like to extend its gratitude to all of you – the founders, advisors, executive committee, former chairs, general members, associate members, volunteers, and interns for their valuable contribution to reach our silver jubilee.

I would like to thank all the Mountain Spirit partners and supporters, Mountain Spirit Deutschland (MSD) American Himalayan Foundation (AHF), Thame Sherpa Heritage Fund (TSHF), Sagarmatha National Park, WWF Nepal, Snow Leopard Conservancy-US (SLC), World Education, Namaste Nepal, International Indigenous Women Forum (FIMI), The Mountain Institute (TMI), National Indigenous Women Forum (NIWF) and all concerned government organizations for their great help in our journey.

COVID was an especially difficult time, with everyone around the world experiencing extenuating circumstances, facing many challenges, and witnessing several deaths. Mountain Spirit organization members also couldn't run away from these challenges and continued to persevere through networking among members and launching a virtual program so that members could communicate and share their issues and receive the necessary verbal and mental support.

I would like to really thank you all of you who supported the MS organization very closely. Special thanks also go out to our founder advisory Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa for giving the valuable feedback to the organization to go ahead. Similar thanks also go to Dr. Sailendra Thakali who always supported the organization by creating projects and leading the Snow Leopard Conservancy project and MS institutional development. Currently, Dr. Sailendra is also leading the SLC 2<sup>nd</sup> phase project. Finally, my thanks also go to MS vice chairperson Mr. Sajoj Tulachan who held the position of acting chair during my operation and health rest (January to March). Similarly, I would like to thank all our MS advisors for their valuable input and guidance for the organization's positive progress.

I am thankful to The Partners Nepal (Mr. Ang Rita Sherpa) Mountain Spirit advisory who provided 150 caps as a gift to Mountain Spirit especially for the Eco-walk program in 2023. Additional thanks also go to the CIPRED team and Mountain Spirit advisory Ms. Pasang Dolma Sherpa, who greatly contributed to selling tickets and encouraged five executive committee members (CIPRED) and three staff members to participate in the Eco-walk program. Thus, I would really like to thank all our Mountain Spirit executive members, members, and participants in making the Eco-walk fruitful after the initial waves of the COVID 19 pandemic.

Last but not least, I'd like to extend special thanks to our founder chairperson Ms. Chhing Lamu Sherpa who continuously supports MS and also supervises the Columbia University intern since 2017 up to now. Similarly, I would like to thank to our intern from Columbia University Ms. Sarah Hughes, who helped proofread and design the MS annual magazine Mountain Trail 2023. Without her support we wouldn't be able to finalize the magazine. I would also like to thank MS staff, Gyanu who provided the necessary documents for this year's edition of Mountain Trail.

Finally, I would like to request us all to respect our nature, our own traditional culture and save our mother earth

*Thank you very much!*

*Tuka Cheki Sherpa*

*Chairperson*

# A Note from an Advisor

*Dear Friends, Well-wishers, Partners and Members of Mountain Spirit,*



It gives me immense joy connecting with you all through the 2023 edition of "Mountain Trail" - Mountain Spirit's flagship publication. As with its previous editions, I am sure you will find this edition equally enriching and helpful in understanding and connecting with the Mountains and its People.

While I have in the past watched Mountain Spirit from afar, now, as an advisor, I am able to see its work more closely and better appreciate the work and the dedication of its members, staff and the Executive Board. I also better understand how the work of Mountain Spirit has been relevant in the past but is much more needed now and into the future in the changing national, regional and global socio-political and environmental context. Mountains and its People have largely been unable to reap the benefits of the socio-economic and political changes but continue to disproportionately bear the brunt of environmental threats coming from climate change and political-economic factors.

At 27, Mountain Spirit is well placed to bring and address issues pertaining to the Mountains and its People, which will continue to unfold in different forms for years to come. However, it will also need to continue to strengthen itself and adapt to changing circumstances to be able to deliver on its objectives and mission. I call upon all our Friends, Well-wishers, Partners and Members for strengthened support to Mountain Spirit in advancing the interest of the Mountains and its People.

*Tara Devi Gurung*  
*Advisor*  
*Mountain Spirit*



# A Note from the Editor

Written by: *Sarah Hughes*



This year's edition of Mountain Trail holds letters, articles, anecdotes, research papers and case studies - threaded together with a shared feeling of deep compassion, pride, and determination. Marking the 27<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the non-profit organisation, these pages reminisce on the humble beginnings of the Mountain Spirit (MS), noting the importance and sentimentality of building a truly bottom-up family through membership networks. Although there are painful memories recounted of political persecution, socio-economic marginalisation and even being stranded rurally with broken limbs – each story is underscored with respect for the resilience of the communities and friends that continue to support each individual

but also MS as whole. Perhaps this is the most notable takeaway I have learnt from the MS team. That even though on surface it operates as a non-profit, it genuinely prioritises the well-being, health and happiness of every person, every colleague, volunteer, and community member it works with.

Additionally, this edition contains research papers on the effects of natural disasters, Climate Change and Covid-19 on Indigenous and Mountain peoples in Nepal. These articles discuss the effects of the pandemic on wildlife revival in Sagarmatha National Park, the conversion of waste management into art installations and the question of balancing cultural integrity with business prospects in the Himalayan region. Though scientific in nature, they are written intimately - reminding us that global crises, domestic governance, and socio-economic systems are far from abstract, and are inherently interwoven with the personal.

It has been an honour to listen, learn and create alongside the Mountain Spirit team. Specifically, I would like to thank my supervisor Chhing Lamu Sherpa who held my hand virtually from Kathmandu to New York – guiding me with immense patience, warmth, and kindness. It has been eye-opening to understand that grappling with heavy rights-based issues starts, returns, and lives within the personal and the collective.

# Mountain Spirit's Journey in Brief

*“I met many friends, accepted some pain & overall made some of my happiest moments”*



Written by: *Chhing Lamu Sherpa*

Email Address: [chhinglamus@gmail.com](mailto:chhinglamus@gmail.com)

Most NGOs are not truly representative of civil society. NGOs who are dependent on outside funding, as most are, are bound by donor's agendas and interests and are thus unable to fully represent the voices of civil society. Those who do represent the local community and their rights may not access funds as easily and often face financial struggles. Mountain Spirit (MS) represents indigenous mountain communities in Nepal and has been raising environmental, cultural, and attainable livelihood issues since 1996. In

my work, I found that sustaining an organization is an arduous task that requires a leader and team who are consciously carrying out the organizational legacy with care, respect, and openness to participatory decision.

In 1993/1994, the late ND Sherpa, Kaji Sherpa, Chhiring Tenji Lama, Chhiring Sherpa, Chega Sherpa, and Pemba Sherpa asked me to join MS saying “*there is a concerning trend of our mountain people leaving the community for employment and education. Attention is not paid to our development. Why should we open a help group for our people?*” At that time, I was working on a bio-lateral project in the Makalu Barun National Park and Conservation Area (MBCPA) as a gender officer. So, I requested them to start MS and I would join later. I then consulted Ang Diku Sherpa, Ang Dali Sherpa, and Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa to ensure that we were on the right track. Dr. Lhakpa Norbbu Sherpa recommended that MS focus on issues such as environment, culture, and conservation. Then, we reached out to Ang Phinjo Sherpa, Ang Rita Sherpa, Lhakpa Tenzi Lama and a few others about their interest and input. In establishing the MS board, we selected more than 50% of women to lead. Mr. Kanak Mani Dixit, a renowned journalist at the time accepted the role as one of MS advisors. His external view focusing on mountain people gave us confidence. After further discussion with The Mountain Institute (TMI)'s conservation leader Dr. Gabriel Campbell, we decided on incorporating “Spirit” and “Mountain” in our name, leading us to call our new NGO

“Mountain Spirit.” Mr. Bob Davis of TMI gave a series of free training on Appreciative Inquiry (AI) and we added a participatory tool to the process.

Moving ahead with getting MS established, we recognized the need for gender balance on the advisory team too. So, we chose some of Nepal’s best people to serve:

- Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa (Male, Social and environment scientist)
- Ms. Yankhila Sherpa (Female, Expert in tourism development)-she is now a member of parliament & former Minister
- Mr. Kanak Man Dixit (Male, Renowned journalists in Nepal)
- Ms. Dawa Thapa (Female, Senior professional)

MS has been a self-made and self-motivated mountain people’s member-based organization since 1996. It has been sustained through members’ financial donations as well as contributions of their time. I remember the late Nima Dawa Sherpa who volunteered with us when MS had just started. He used to come to a one-room office in Gairi dhara and regularly volunteered from 9–5pm during the off seasons of trekking. At the time, we did not even have a computer, phone, or proper work environment. Similarly, the board and MS members paid MS office’s rent out of our own pocket. One American friend wished to send us a dozen second-hand computers based on our need. But our advisor alerted us that we should not make Nepal a dumping site. We had not thought about these implications, as we just wanted to provide our members

with new technology. We then requested our American friend Mr. Carl Zichella to send us a new computer which was MS’s first computer.

I value the contributions our members and advisors have made beyond project implementation. Dr. Lhakpa has been there to inspire our youth and bring attention to conservation. I also appreciate the Himalayan-focused contributions of senior journalist Kanak Mani Dixit during the beginning stages of MS and the inspiration of former Minister Yankhila Sherpa as founder advisors. Similarly I acknowledge the previous members, contributors and our present advisors; Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa, Dr. Sailendra Thakali, Lhakpa Tenji Lama, Minister Nima Lama Yolmo, and Dr. Mingma Norbu Sherpa, Tara Gurung, Dr. Pasang Dolma Sherpa and Ang Rita Sherpa’s professional contribution has been useful in MS’ journey. I value the remarkable contributions of life members, general members, support members, and friends of Mountain Spirit.

Now, with two and a half decades of experience, MS has become an expert in Appreciative Inquiry; Participatory way of development; capacity development of mountain youth; and conservation of both the environment and mountain Indigenous Peoples’ culture. I was so happy when MS successfully facilitated participatory community planning and involved from the beginning to project phase-out stages in (Sikkim-India), west Sikkim (India). Now local NGO KCC came out strongly and their



members are experts in ecotourism and biodiversity concerns.



***Biodiversity conservation project team, KCC members and community in Yuksam, Sikkim in 1999***

MS is involved in different community mobilization, gender sensitization and institutional development in different parts of Nepal including organic vegetables in high mountains and village planning in Thame development for Eco-Himal. This is where in the past Former VDC chair and recent Upper House Member of Parliament, Mr. Sonam Gyalgen Sherpa greatly implemented most of our community planning during his leadership in 2007.

MS has carried out multiple national and international projects planning, evaluating, and training on participatory approaches to

government staff of TAR with expertise from Dr. Rodney Jackson, Darla Hillar, Wendy Lama, Dr. Nandita Jain and Mr. Bob Anker. In 2002, during the Maoist movement in the Khumbu area, we had to hide from the army while we assisted with the participatory household survey between Khumjung and upper Namche. We were told not use our torch lights because the “army will point their gun toward us and fire from a distance.” So, our MS team including Ram Maya Thakali (past Chair and coordinator of MS), Anita Lama Gurung (life member) and Tenpa Lama Yolmo (first Nepali life member of MS) and team had to walk in the dark between Khumjung to our home in upper Namche Bazar. Earlier, we had heard that a young boy selling chilies was killed by the army in Namche Bazar as they had suspected he was a Maoist informant. We can only imagine how many innocent people were killed during the revolution.



***Ang Tenji Lama (left), Dr. Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa (middle) and Lhakpa Tenzi Lama (right) in Thame valley***

The next morning, we reached Namche Bazar, the venue of the participatory survey. While we were facilitating a community discussion,



*MS members & consultant in Namche Bazar during participatory Survey work with WWF-Nepal in 2002*

two soldiers interrupted us and requested that I go to the army office to explain our reasoning for mapping the army's location. I tried to decline but they forced me to go with them. I requested the women leader of Thame, who was one of our local facilitators to come with me. A group of soldiers questioned me, "why did you show the army camp your map," "how can you prove you are not a Maoist." I tried to explain but they kept saying how powerful they were and how they can kill anybody if they are not convinced with our response. I provided a few names as a reference, but they refused to listen. I looked rough and tough, but I was confident and insisted that we had nothing to do with Maoists. A local, woman leader Ms. Kanchhi Maya of Thame valley supported my answers, explaining my work and who my friends and relatives were. Finally, they let us go.

I also remember Ms. Kanta Singh (the daughter of congress' most senior leader, late Ganesh Man Singh) and I were in Kanchan Gangha Conservation Area Program (KCAP)'s for an evaluation for WWF. On our way to the last village of Kanchna Jangha Base camp (Ghunsa) and Topkegola, we passed Maoist guerrillas who were coming from training. One of them was a very confident young Maoists with black on their forehead. This encounter, combined with other conversations of Maoist guerrillas, was very disturbing and scarred me for a long time.

Mountain Spirit was also able to implement a health/HIV project in the field. I value the leadership of Ang Diku Sherpa who kept MS standing during the peak of the Maoist revolution. MS has had a great working experience with organizations such as TMI,



WWF, Department of Forest, Snow Leopard Conservancy (SLC)- USA and Sagarmatha National Park. MS has introduced Appreciative and Participatory Planning tools for survey and evaluation with Dr. Rodney Jackson (the founder and chair of the Snow Leopards Conservancy - USA) in Nyalam together with Qomolangma Natural Preserve (QNP) department's staff Tibet (TAR-China) and with few other development agencies. MS also has partnership experience working with Chandra Gurung Conservation Foundation, Nepal Participatory Action Network, Imagine Nepal, Khumjum School Alumni and Mountain Trans boundary communities TAR (China), India.



***Dr. Rodney Jackson - scientist (right), Lamu Sherpa (Middle) from MS and Tsbering Ngotup-la (left) from QNP Tibet. During session preparation for participatory baseline in Nyalam, Tibet (TAR)-1997***



***Doga la from QNP-TAR of government (right) & Chhing Lamu Sherpa (left) from MS during TAR's-boundary study and consultation in Kirong valley, Rasuwa in 1997***

We have all experienced suppression and suffering when talking about our identity, rights, truth, and issues regarding our mountain indigenous community. We are divided in the name of politics and power. Our voices have been ignored and our attainment of sustainable development goals has been hindered. However, I do not blame individuals as this is a result of structural problem of Nepal. How could we expect a perfect civil society when we are continuously producing individualistic and patriarchal standards within our own homes? Women and girls are still forced to do household care work on top of their professional work. We need great societal change. The issues of households and society impact individual organizations, forums, and institutions. It is important that we raise our children equally regardless of their gender. We are still learning, and in the process, we encourage the protection of our cultural values and work hard not be influenced by patriarchal values and other harmful practices.



# Mountain Spirit of Camaraderie

Written by: *Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa*

Mountain Spirit (MS) has more than 60 members spanning all ages and professional backgrounds. It also has a strong history of female representation. A majority of its members come from the marginalized *janajati* communities from the mountain regions of Nepal such as Sherpa, Bhote, Tamang, Thakali, Hyolmo, Dolpo, Nyimba and others. These communities share similar cultural and linguistic roots but are not united socially or politically. Their places of origin are poorly served by transportation, communication, health, and education facilities. Therefore, there is a huge gap in the standards of living between the people of

mountain regions and their counterparts in the cities and lowlands.

Wilkinson and Pickett (2009) published a book called "*The Spirit Level*" in which the authors prove conclusively that a high level of inequality is directly correlated with a wide range of socio-economic ills such as low life expectancy, higher infant mortality, poor mental and physical health, and even shorter stature. Therefore, inequality is a form of violence that is forcing mountain people to leave their place of origin in search of better opportunities.

MS was established out of concern for the mountain people's wellbeing. It aims to improve their livelihoods, save the environment and culture by raising awareness and build capacity and connectivity. MS has an opportunity to act as a bridge builder because of its inter-community focus.



A small NGO cannot do much through its direct activities. But a difference can be made if it can mobilize a large number of members. I became a member of MS in 1996 when I was a young government officer. Members have the responsibility to nurture their organization. Over the years, I tried my best to support MS by serving as a board member, offering advice and guidance, and securing projects whenever possible.

No one can expect to gain financial benefits or positions of authority by becoming a member of a non-governmental and non-profit organization. However, there are other rewards that members can get by joining an NGO. Some of these are far more valuable than pure material benefits. I would like to point out some of these rewards based on my own experience as a member of MS.



A member joins an organization if he or she supports its objectives. For me the opportunity to join a group of like-minded people to work on the development of mountain communities was a huge attraction. I was already working to save the mountain environment and biodiversity before joining MS. MS membership provided additional inspiration and support.

I maintained a strong interest in learning more about other mountain communities besides my own. My main interest was in learning how culture and language differ between different communities. MS is an ideal platform for fulfilling interests because it has members from different mountain districts to serve as informants.

Another advantage is that MS regularly celebrates the successes of its members. In 1999, MS organized an excellent felicitation program to celebrate the completion of my Ph.D. in the presence of distinguished guests such as Dr. Harka Bahadur Gurung, Minister Bal Bahadur K.C, member of Rastriya Sabha Mr. Lama Pasang and Senior Journalist Mr. Kanak Mani Dixit. The most recent felicitation program took place when former Chairman of MS Mr. Nima Lama Hyolmo was elected as Member of Parliament for Province 3 and again appointed to the post of Health Minister for Bagmati Province in November 2021. Unfortunately, at that time large gatherings were prohibited due to Covid related restrictions. Instead, a representative group of MS members visited the Minister at his home to present the congratulatory letter and *khata*. Many more members have been

honored over the years. These felicitations programs are an important part of the organization's goal to promote and encourage mountain people to strive for success in different fields.

Membership in organizations is important for young people wanting to establish their career. It is an important part of biodata. Organizations provide opportunities to learn how to interact and work with people in an institutional setting. Such experiences are sought after by perspective employers and interviewing panels. Organizations can also provide letters of recommendation and senior members can serve as referees for junior members when applying for jobs, scholarships, and other opportunities. I have always included MS membership in my curriculum vitae. I have also obtained letters of recommendation from MS on several occasions including for my Fulbright Post-doctoral Fellowship application in 2008.

An organization will have members with different backgrounds and skill sets. It is a reliable source of expertise. During my work in the Nepal Himalaya and Tibetan plateau projects, I regularly sought short and long-term technical support from MS members. Nearly a dozen members have participated in my projects such as the transboundary survey, participatory project planning, Beyul Conservation, and most recently the post-earthquake reconstruction in the Thame Valley. Compared to experts from lowlands, MS members are better adapted to mountain environment and culture. They are also committed to work in the mountains.

Members of the same organization are also a readily available source of advice and ideas for each other. For example, after my retirement in 2010 I wanted to explore the field of spirituality. But I was having difficulty finding a suitable path. It was during a casual discussion with my MS colleagues that I came to know about the Vipassana meditation. Immediately, I took a ten-day course to check it out and found the technique to be useful and suitable for me. I am now serving as an Assistant Teacher to help spread the benefit to many more people. I am grateful to Chhing Lamu Sherpa for introducing me to Vipassana and HH Tengboche Rinpoche for encouraging me to stay on this path.

Members of the same organization can become lifelong friends and colleagues. They can support each other during hard times and good times. Such social relations are vital for our wellness because we are social beings.

“

*Online communication... can promote discussions, generate ideas, promote learning, and motivate people to keep the spirit of the mountain alive. ”*

In conclusion, joining an organization can be beneficial. It takes initiative on the part of a member to make this happen. MS has a well-defined goal and a group of good people as its members. It has the potential to achieve much more. The role of the Executive Committee is important for the advancement of the



organization and its members. Since members are MS' main asset, they have to come together regularly to discuss issues, share ideas and develop initiatives to support organizational goals.

Regular functioning of an organization, especially meetings and gatherings, were made difficult over the past few years because of Covid-19. But it has also created an alternative way to connect such as online communication and meeting platforms that are cost effective and efficient. Given the future uncertainty of such pandemics, it is vitally important for MS to actively use these mediums. A lack of activity is a threat to an organization's progress. It can demotivate staff, leave interns and volunteers idle, and members can lose interest. On the contrary, regular meetings can promote discussions, generate ideas, promote learning and motivate people to keep the spirit of the mountain alive. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to all MS colleagues who enliven my life by working, sharing and interacting with me over the years.

*Tashi Deleg to you all.*

# Reflecting on My Journey with Mountain Spirit

“*It's truly remarkable to witness how MS has sustained its reputation in the development sector over the past twenty-five years.*”



**Written by: Phurba Chbeten Pradhan**

Time has certainly flown by! It feels like just yesterday when I became a part of Mountain Spirit (MS). Back in 2016, after completing my undergraduate program, I faced a pivotal decision: pursue postgraduate studies or gain practical work experience. Recognizing the significance of real-world experiences, I chose the latter path. Serendipitously, there was an

opening for the position of an account and admin assistant at Mountain Spirit, an organization to which I was already connected. In a matter of weeks, I secured the position, and that's how my journey with MS began.

In a relatively short timeframe, I became intimately familiar with the organization's structure. Beyond the routine programs, there were numerous exciting projects in the pipeline. Collaborating with a dynamic team of professionals has proven to be incredibly enriching, fostering significant personal growth. Additionally, sharing the workspace with young interns provided an equally valuable learning experience. Nevertheless, the unwavering support and guidance from the executive committee members and advisors consistently enhanced the value of my work experience.

MS, as a membership-based organization, boasts members hailing from diverse mountain communities. One of the notable perks of this affiliation was the opportunity to meet new people during various programs and projects. This exposure significantly broadened my network, introducing me to fresh knowledge and prospects.

It's truly remarkable to witness how MS has sustained its reputation in the development sector over the past twenty-five years. Personally, I take immense pride in having contributed to this organization. Here's to celebrating future achievements while cherishing the glories of the past!

Cheers to what lies ahead and the accomplishments we've already achieved!

# आदिवासी जनजातिहरूको पोशाक र खानाहरू

Written by: *Tuka Cheki Sherpa*

नेपाल एक बहुभाषिक बहु साँस्कृतिक विविधताले भरिपूर्ण राष्ट्र हो । नेपालमा १०० भन्दा बढी आफ्नो मातृभाषा बोल्ने समुदायहरू छन् । यी मध्ये नेपाल सरकारले ५९ समुदायहरूलाई आदिवासी जनजातिको सुचीमा सुचीकृत गरेको छ ।

नेपालका आदिवासी जनजातिको आफ्नो भेष-भुषा पहिरन र भाषा फरक-फरक रहेको छ । तराईमा बस्नेहरूको भौगोलिक बनावट र वातावरण अनुसारको पोशाक र पहाडमा बस्नेहरूको पहाडको भौगोलिक बनावट अनुसारको पोशाक र हिमालमा बस्नेहरूको भौगोलिक वातावरण अनुसारको पोशाक लगाउने गर्दछन् । नेपाल आदिवासी जनजाति उत्थान राष्ट्रिय प्रतिष्ठानको सन् २००२ को ऐन अनुसार ५९ वटा

समुहलाई कानुनीरूपमा आदिवासी जनजाति भनेर सुचीकृत गरिएको छ ।

नेपालको जनगणना २०७८ को तथ्याङ्क अनुसार सुचीकृत आदिवासी जनसंख्याको हिसावले पहिलो समुदाय मगर, दोस्रोमा थारु र तेस्रोमा तामाङ्को जनसंख्या रहेको छ । आदिवासी जनजातिहरूले बषौ देखि आफ्नो वासस्थानमा बसोवास गर्दै आएका छन् तर समयको क्रमसँगै वर्तमान अवस्थामा आफ्नो वासस्थान रहेको स्थानिय ठाँउहरूलाई मानिसहरूले आफ्नो सहजता-शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य र रोजगार लगायत अवसरले गर्दा आफ्नो थाकथलोलाई छाडेर बसाँई सराई भईरहेको पाइन्छ । बसाँई सराईले गर्दा आफ्नो थलोमा भएको चालचलन, रहनसहन भेषभुषालाई आदिवासीहरूले भौगोलिक बनावट अनुसार अनुसरण गर्नलाई पनि कठिनाई हुने गर्दछ ।

आदिवासी जनजातिहरूको पूर्खाहरूले आफ्नो परम्परागत पोशाक र खानपानलाई निरन्तरता दिदै आजका दिन सम्म हामीले आत्मसाथ गरि रहेका छौ । समयको परिवर्तन संगसंगै आजका दिनमा हाम्रो



*Two members of the Sherpa community in traditional clothing*



परम्परागत पोशाकहरु के के हो र खानाहरु के के छन् र यसको स्वाद तथा परिकार कस्तो छ भन्ने कुरा आजका दिन सम्म हामीहरुलाई घरका अग्रज व्यक्तित्वहरुले हामीलाई जानकारी गराउँदै आईरहेको पाइन्छ ।

तर समयको परिवर्तन संगै विभिन्न कारणले मानवहरुमा एक ठाँउबाट अर्को ठाँउमा आवतजावतले गर्दा परम्परागत प्रचलनको अभ्यासमा दिनानुदिन कमी भएको पाइन्छ । जानेर वा नजानेर आफ्नो खानपान र भेषभुषालाई जोगाई राख्नलाई समयको अभाव वा चेतनाको कमीले हो यस विषयलाई महत्व दिएको पाइदैन ।



*A Hyolmo woman in traditional clothing*

म शेर्पा भएता पनि मेरो जन्म भित्रि मधेसमा पर्ने उदयपुर जिल्लाको त्रियुगा नगरपालिका बाड नं ७ मा अवस्थित चुहाडेमा भएको हो । मानवलाई जन्म स्थानको आधारमा समुदायको प्रभाव ठुलो पाईन्छ भने जस्तै मलाई पनि स्थानिय समुदायको रहनसहन, लवाई खवाई पोशाक, भाषा, खानाहरुको प्रभावबाट टाढा रहन सकिन । मेरो छिमेकी मगर भएपनि अलि पर दनुवार जीतको बस्ती छ , र करीब एक किलामिटर पर चौधरी समुदायको बसोबास छ ।

दनुवार समुदाय भौगोलीक बासस्थानको आधारमा भित्री मधेस र तराईमा बसोबास गर्दछन । यो समुहले विशेषगरी पानी अर्थात नदीसंग आवद्धभई नदी, किनार, खोलामा माछा मादै र खेतीपाती गरी जिविका चलाउँदै आएका छन् । मैले धेरै दनुवारहरुको घरमा जाँदा खानासंग माछाको अचार जसलाई सितन भनेर र तरकारीको रुपमा घोझी खाँएको धेरैपटक देखेको थिए । दनुवारको विशेषगरी महिला दिदीहरुले आफ्नो पोशाकको रुपमा गुन्यु, चोलो लगाएको देखिन्थ्यो भने पुरुषहरुले पोशाकको रुपमा लुङ्गी र गंजी लाएर हिडेको मैले धेरै पटक देख्न पाएँ । नेपालको जनगणना २०७८ को तथ्याक अनुसार दनुवारको कुल जनसंख्या जम्मा ८२,७८४ रहेको छ ।

चौधरी समुदाय नेपालको पूर्वदेखि पश्चिम सम्म तराईका विभिन्न जिल्लाहरुमा बसोबास गर्दछन् विशेष गरी दाङ्ग, चितवन र उदयपुरमा चौधरीहरुको बाहुल्यता रहेको पाइन्छ । उनीहरुको आफ्नै पोशाक छन् चौधरी महिलाहरुले लगाउने पोशाकमा अचरा, खर्की र ब्लाउज लगाउने गर्दछन् र पुरुषहरुले सुतीको कछाड र गंजी लगाउने गरेको मैले प्रत्यक्ष अवलोकन गरेको छु । नेपालमा जम्मा चौधरीहरुको जनसंख्या १८०७१२४ रहेको तथ्याङ्क छ ।

राई समुदाय नेपालको मुख्यगरी सोलुखुम्बु, ओखलढुङ्गा, खोटाङ्ग , भोजपुर र उदयपुर जिल्लाहरुमा बसोबास गरेको पाइन्छ । उदयपुरको सदरमुकाम गाईघाट बजारमा जनसंख्याको हिसावले राईहरुको बसोबास उल्लेखनीय छ, यतीका धेरै बस्तीरहेको ठाँउमा पनि राईहरुको आफ्नो पोशाक के हो भनेर अन्य समुदायले थाहा पाउनु र हेर्नु परयो भने उनीहरुको वर्षादिनको चाँड, चन्डी (सकेला / साकेवा) कुर्नु पर्ने मेरो अनुभव छ । राई महिलाहरुले लगाउने

पोशाकमा चौवन्दी चोलो, छीटको सारी लगाउने गर्दछन् र पुरुषहरूले दौरा सुरुवाल, ढाँकाटोपी लगाउने गर्दछन् । विशेष गरी महिलाहरूले पोशाकहरूको अभ्यास र खानाहरूलाई निरन्तर आत्मसाथ गरेको पाइएपनि पुरुषहरूमा भने अभ्यासको कमीनै देखिन्छ । नेपालमा कुल राईहरूको जनसंख्या राष्ट्रिय जनगणना २०७८ अनुसार जम्मा ६,४०,६७४ रहेको छ ।

एउटा कथन - छ, महिला एक सक्षमता, शक्ति र सहनशीलताको प्रतिक हो । महिला भौतिकरूपमा शक्तिले भरिपूर्ण मानवशरीर छ, जुन शक्तिलाई पुरुषले चाँहेर पनि त्यो स्थान लिन सकेको छैन । महिलाले समाजका चालचलन, रितिरिवाज, भाषा, धर्म र संस्कृतिलाई विगत देखि वर्तमान-सम्म अभ्यासमा ल्याएकोले भोलिका दिन सम्म रहनेछ र आगामी दिनहरूमा यसरी नै अभ्यासलाई निरन्तरता दिईयो भने अवस्थ हाम्रो परम्परागत पोशाक र खानाको संरक्षण र दिगो रहनेछ ।

उदयपुरबाट विधालयको पढाइपछि म काठमाण्डौमा आए । बसाईको क्रममा नेपालको विभिन्न स्थान र जिल्लामा जाने मौका मिलेको थियो । सर्वप्रथम नेपाल पर्वतारोहण संघ र इको हिमालले संयुक्त रूपमा आयोजना गरेको Female Outdoor Leadership Basic Rock Climbing Training मा सहभागी हुने अवसर पाँएको थिए । तत्पश्चात विभिन्न समयमा गरी कार्यालयको कामले २०१९ सम्ममा म सोलुखुम्बुमा ४ पटक स्थलगत भ्रमण गर्न सफल भएको थिए ।

शेर्पा भन्ने वित्तिकै पुख्रौली थलो सोलुखुम्बु क्षेत्रलाई मानिन्छ तर पनि नेपालका अन्य जिल्लाहरू -जस्तै ताप्लेजुङ्ग, संखुवासभा, रामेछाप, दोलखा, उदयपुर, सिन्धुपाल्चोक, भोजपुर आदि जिल्लामा पनि शेर्पाहरूको बसोवास रहेको पाईन्छ । सोलुमा शेर्पा समुदायको बसोवास उल्लेखनीय पाईन्छ । मेरो भ्रमणको क्रममा खुम्बु क्षेत्रमा शेर्पा महिलाहरूले आफ्नो खानाहरू पकाउनका साथसाथै आफ्नो परम्परागत पोशाकलाई अहिलेसम्म निरन्तरता दिएको मैले प्रत्यक्ष अवलोकन गरेको छु । होटलमा जानुस वा पसलमा जानुस, वा बजारमा जानुस या कुनै खेतीपाती गर्ने बारीमा जानुस् शेर्पा दिदीवहिनीहरूले



*Members of the Tamang community in traditional clothing*

शेर्पा समुहको पोशाकको ईज्जतगरी आफ्नो परिचय आफैँ दिएका छन् ।

शेर्पाको विवाहमा केटाले लगाउने कपडालाई छयुवा भनिन्छ । केटी बेहुलीले लगाउने कपडालाई आङ्गी भनिन्छ । शेर्पा महिलाहरूले अगाडि लगाउने कपडालाई दोङ्गटिल भनिन्छ, भने पछाडी लगाउनेलाई मटिल भनिन्छ, जुन विवाहित महिलाले मात्र लगाउदछन् । शेर्पाहरूको परम्परागत पोशाक उनको लामो गाउन (छयुवा), सिल्कको कमीज (तेतुङ्ग), कपडाको पेटो (कारा), उनको टोपी (स्यामुङ्ग) लगाउने गर्दछन् । शेर्पा समुदायमा आफ्नो पोशाकलाई महिलाहरूले धेरै मात्रामा लगाएको पाईन्छ र पुरुषहरूमा बुढापाका र बालबालिकाहरूले बढी लगाएको पाईन्छ तर वयस्कहरूले महिलाको तुलनामा प्रयोग कमी देखिन्छ । यसरी आफ्नो परम्परागत पोशाक लगाउने र परम्परागत खानाहरू पकाएर खाने कामहरू महिलाहरूको मात्र हो त ? यसरी आदिवासी महिलाहरूलाई स्वतन्त्रता दियो भन्दैमा कार्यभार र उत्तरदायित्वले थिच्नेकाम र परम्परा धान्ने काम के महिलाले मात्र गर्नु पर्ने यो कस्तो स्वतन्त्रता, धेरै विषयका उत्तरदायित्वले महिलालाई स्वतन्त्रताका नाममा भारी बोकाएका छन् । नेपालको जनगणना

२०७८ अनुसार शोर्पाहरुको जनसंख्या १,३०६३६ रहेको छ ।

समयको चक्रसंगै सिन्धुपाल्चोक जिल्लाको हालको हेलम्बु गाउँपालिका अर्न्तगत सेर्माथाङ्गे गाउँमा सन् २००३ देखि सन् २००६ सम्ममा ३ पटक कामको शिलसीलनामा जाने अवसर मिलेको थियो । ह्योल्मो आदिवासी समुदायभित्रको एक समुदाय हो जो नेपालको सिन्धुपाल्चोक जिल्लाको हेलम्बु क्षेत्रमा बसोवास गर्दछन् । यस समुदायको पोशाक तामाङ्ग र शोर्पा संग मिल्दो जुल्दो देखिन्छ । केटाले लगाउने माथि देखि तलसम्मको कपडालाई छुवा र कम्मरमा लगाउने पटुकालाई करा भन्दछन् । केटीले लगाउने



*Member of the Chaudhary (Tharu) community in traditional clothing*

माथिदेखि तलसम्मको कपडालाई छुवा र कुम देखि कम्मरसम्म आउने स्वीटर जस्तो कपडालाई बुर्सक भन्दछन् । भाषागत रुपमा यहाँका पुरुष र महिला

दुवैले आफ्नो भाषाको प्रयोग गरेको पाइयो तर पोशाकमा महिलाहरुले नै बढी अभ्यास गरेको र पुरुषहरुमा अग्रज व्यक्तित्वहरुले प्रयोग गरेको देखे । यस क्षेत्रमा पनि महिला दिदीवहिनीहरुले नै आफ्नो समुदायको पोशाकको पहिचान, परम्परागत पोशाकको संरक्षण सम्वर्द्धन गरेको मैले पाँएको छु । नेपालको जनगणना २०७८ अनुसार जम्मा ९८१९ जनसंख्या रहेको पाईन्छ ।

समयको कमसंगै मैले पनि स्थान परिवर्तन गर्दै विभिन्न समुदायमा जाने मौका मिल्यो । सन् २००३ देखि २०२१ सम्ममा पटक पटक रसुवा जिल्लामा ५ पटक प्रत्यक्ष पाईला राख्ने अवसर मिल्यो । तामाङ्गको मुख्य बसोवास रसुवा, सिन्धुपाल्चोक, नुवाकोट, धादिङ्गमा रहेको पाईन्छ । मेरो भ्रमणको क्रममा रसुवामा पनि अन्य जिल्लामा जस्तै महिलाहरुले आफ्नो परम्परागत पोशाकलाई निरन्तरता प्रयोगमा आईरहेको तर पुरुषहरुले भने पोशाकमा बच्चा र ज्येष्ठ नागरीकहरुले मात्र लगाएको पाएँ । युवाहरुमा १ वा २ जना गन्न सकीने पात्रका रुपमा पाँए । यसरी हेर्ने हो भने तुलनात्मक अनुपातमा महिलाहरुको ठुलो योगदान रहेको छ । तामाङ्गको महिलाले लगाउने तलदेखि माथि सम्मको लामो पोशाकलाई पाङ्गदुड र कम्मरमा बान्ने पेटीलाई चे, टोपीलाई स्याडे र कम्मर पछाडी लगाउने कपडालाई गून्थु भन्छन् । केटाले लगाउने माथिको कपडालाई सोल्दो र तल लगाउने कपडालाई सुर्वाल भनिन्छ । खानाहरुमा मलिहलाहरुले यसलाई निरन्तरता दिएको विशेष गरी ज्येष्ठ नागरीक बालबालिकाहरु र महिलाहरुले आफ्नो परम्परागत खानाहरुलाई प्राथमिकताकासाथ ग्रहण गरिरहेका छन् तर युवाहरुले यसलाई निरन्तरता दिनको साटो, नयाँ खानपान र नयाँ पहिरनलाई आत्मसाथ गरेका छन् । रसुवा जिल्लाको विशेष गरी गत्लाङ्गमा काम विशेषले त्यहाका दिदी बहिनी र दाजु भाई संग छलफल गर्ने अवसर पाएको थिए । वहाँहरुको भनाईमा पनि महिलाहरुको उत्तरदायित्वको बोझ बढीनै भएको भनाई छ । कामको दृष्टिकोणले पनि महिलालाई धेरै समय दिनु पर्ने आफ्नो घरको काम सकेर पनि साँझमा फेरी आफुले जानेको सीप बुन्ने गरेको प्रत्यक्ष



र वट्टाहरूको अनुभव साटासाट गर्दा दिनचर्या बुझ्ने मौका पाँए । सवैभन्दा खुसीको कुरा त हाम्रो समुह आफ्नो दैनिक काम सकेर यतीकै गत्लाङ्ग गाँउ घुम्न निस्कीएका थियौ र बाटोमा जाँदा २ जना नानीहरु आफ्नो पोशाक लगाएर घर फर्कदै रहेछन् र हातमा किताव लिएर । पछि पछि म पनि लागे र सोधे तिमीहरु कहाँबाट आएकाहौ र नानीहरुले भने स्कूलबाट र हामीसंग रहेको स्थानीय साथीलाई सोधे के विधालयमा पोशाक सवैले लगाउछन् त भन्दा, यँहा धेरै जसोले आफ्नो पोशाक लगाएर आउछन् भनेर भन्नु भयो सारै खुसी आनन्द लाग्यो कमसेकम आफ्नो पोशाक लगाएर विधालय जान छुटै राम्रो देखिने रहेछ र यस्ता नानीबाबुहरुले हाम्रो पोशाक र खानाहरुको संरक्षण गर्ने हो भने पक्कैनि हाम्रो पहिचान सधै भरि दिगो र गर्भ गरीने ठाँउ रहन्छ । नेपालमा तामाङ्गको जम्मा जनसंख्या जनगणना २०७८ अनुसार १६,३९,८६६ रहेको पाईन्छ ।

### परम्परागत खाना

आदिवासी जनजातिहरुको परम्परागत खानाका परिकारहरु आ आफ्नै समुह अनुसार फरक फरक स्वादका परिकारहरु छन् । हिमाल, पहाड र तराई सबै भौगलीक क्षेत्रमा समुह अनुसार फरक फरक परिकारहरु भएको पाँउछौ ।

भौगलिक विशेषताले पनि वातावरण अनुसार खानाका परिकारहरु फरक फरक हुन्छन् । विशेष गरी दनुवारले नयाँ धान पाक्ने बेलामा **न्वागी** खाने चलन थियो म सानो छँदा मैले पनि धेरै पटक सानोमा खाँएको थिए । सायद त्यो अब प्रचलन कतै साघुरीएको छ की भन्ने लाग्छ । चौधरीहरुको विभिन्न खानाहरु मध्ये बगीया एक विशेष खाना हो । म पनि चौधरीहरुको विभिन्न खानाहरु मध्ये **बगीया** (चामलबाट बनेको परिकार) धेरै पटक सानोमा खाँएको छु । त्यसको प्रयोग पहिलेको तुलनामा कमी आएको छ की जस्तो मैले अनुभव गरेको छु । । शेरपाहरुले खाने **स्याक्पा, रिन्दोक, रीगीकुर** आदि जे जति खानाहरु छन् तुलनात्करूपमा अभ्यास कमी आएको पाईन्छ , कहीले काँही कसैलाई चखाउनु पर्यो , स्वाद दिनु पर्यो भने मात्र बनाउने प्रचलन रहेको पाईन्छ । त्यसैगरी **ट्यल्मो**हरुको खानाहरु परिकारहरु भएपनि मैले सो ठाँउमा बस्ता कुनै पनि स्वाद लिन पाईन किनकी होटलमा बाह्य मानिसहरु

जाँदा सामान्यतया खानाहरुमानै जोड दिएको मैले अनुभव गरेको छु । खानाहरुमा आलुबाट बनेको परिकार **रीन्दो** (ढिडो) र चामलको पिठोबाट बनेको **बाबर** मुख्य खानाको रुपमा भए पनि त्यसको स्वाद लिन हामी असर्मथ भयौ । तामाङ्गहरुको खानाहरु यती धेरै परिकारहरु छन् तर पनि खानाको आफ्नो परम्परालाई निरन्तरता दिनको साटो , नयाँ खानेकुराहरुमा बढी ईच्छा गरेको पाईन्छ । विशेष गरी नयाँ परिकारका खानाहरुमा ईच्छा शक्ति बढेको पाईन्छ । जस्तै तयारी चाउचाउ, मैदाका परिकारहरु, भात आदि । महिलाहरु वा पुरुषहरु जे जति परम्परागत खानाहरु छन् त्यसलाई अभ्यासमा निरन्तरता दिन सकेमा भविष्यमा पनि आउने भावी सन्ततिहरुले यसको अभ्यास र स्वाद लिन सक्छन् र हाम्रो मौलीक प्रचलनमा रहेको आफ्नो पोसाक र खानाहरु सधै संरक्षण र दिगो हुन्छ

नेपालमा आदिवासी जनजाति समुदायहरुमा आ आफ्नै रितिरिवाज चालचलन र प्रचलन रहेको छ । स्थानिय भौगोलिक वातावरण अनुसारको अनुसरण गरेको पाईन्छ । भाषा, संस्कृति, भेष भुषा र खानपान, रहनसहनमा पुरुषको तुलनामा महिलाहरु अब्बल रहेको पाईन्छ । मैले पनि हिमाली जोश संस्था बाट विभिन्न ठाँउमा जाने मौका पाँउदा मैले अनुभव गरेका कुराहरुलाई यस लेखमा उर्ताने जमर्को गरेको छु । यस हिमाली जोशले २६ औ बसन्त पार गरेकोमा संस्था प्रति हार्दिक बधाई दिन चाहन्छु ।



# Mental Health Awareness in the Himalayan Region

Written by: *Pema Sherpa*

Mental health is as equally important as physical health to be a healthy person. Currently, in the aftermath of the first and second wave of Covid-19, people have been suffering from stress-related disorders such as Pandemic Blues. However, people are still less aware about mental well-being, especially in the Himalayan region.

To be mentally healthy, each person should have the following characteristics:

1. A sense of personal worth and feelings of importance.
2. The ability to make adjustments.
3. The ability to solve their own problems.
4. A sense of personal security and understanding of other people's problems.
5. A sense of responsibility.
6. The ability to give and accept love.

7. Live in reality rather than fantasy.
8. The ability to show emotional maturity.
9. Have a healthy work—life balance

Although the pandemic has been a major etiological factor of mental health issues, other risk factors are also responsible, including brain trauma, heredity, old age, poverty, abuse, discrimination, unemployment, labor migration, long term illness (e.g., chronic kidney disease), etc.

Among several mental health problems like anxiety, alcoholism, drug abuse, and behavioral and emotional disorders, depression has been the most prevalent. Therefore, it is essential to know how to recognize when someone is experiencing depressive symptoms.

Recognizing symptoms of depression is not difficult, even for non-health care

professionals, using an acronym called “**SIG-E-CAPS**”.

**S** – Sleep Disturbances

**I** – Interest Decreased in Pleasure Activities

**G** – Guilty Feelings

**E** – Energy Decreased

**C** – Concentration Decreased

**A** – Appetite Increased or Decreased

**P** – Physical movement Decreased

**S** – Self-harm or Suicidal Ideation

Depression may be a normal state of mood if it is transient or short lived for a couple of weeks. All of us feel depressed at times due to unpleasant situations. But we come out of that gloom to our normal state. However, if one’s depressive mood is very severe in intensity, is prolonged and continues to interfere with the day-to-day activities of an individual—then it is disease. In worst-case scenarios it might lead to fatal consequences such as suicide. Unfortunately, these days such heart wrenching news is widespread. So, it is mandatory for us to know and be aware of the warning signs of suicide using the acronym “**IS PATH WARM**”.

**I** – Ideation (looking for ways to commit self-harm or suicide)

**S** – Substance Abuse (excessive intake of alcohol or drugs)

**P** – Purposefulness (no sense of purpose in life)

**A** – Anxiety (fearful, unable to sleep)

**T** – Trapped (feeling like there is no way out)

**H** – Hopelessness about the future

**W** – Withdrawal (withdrawing from friends, family & society or sleeping all the time)

**A** – Anger (uncontrolled anger)

**R** – Recklessness (engaging in risky activities without thinking)

**M** – Mood change (being sad and happy drastically)

If anybody has the above symptoms, they must be assessed for suicidality by asking the following questions in a culturally acceptable way:

1. “Have you had thoughts of killing yourself?” If you do not ask, a life may be lost.
2. Onset: When did these thoughts begin?
3. Duration: How long do these thoughts last?



4. Frequency: How often do these thoughts occur?
5. Intensity: What is the worst triggering factor?
6. Intent: Is there a plan of self-harm?

While asking these questions do not judge or act shocked. Reactions such as these will put distance between you and your clients. After asking such questions, ensure the other person feels safe. Be with them in the moment and help connect them with a medical and psychological care institution for further intervention.

***“Together, we can save lives”***

# The Sherpas of Khumbu Still Remember the April and May 2015 Earthquakes

Written by: *Ang Rita Sherpa*

This year marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Mountain Spirit (MS), a non-governmental non-profit organization established in 1996. The organization was formed by a group of like-minded individuals from different mountain communities. To pay tribute to the 25 years of achievements, I am very excited to share this article, "The Sherpas of Solukhumbu still remember the April and May 2015 earthquakes."

In 2015, a 7.9 magnitude earthquake struck 14 mountain districts in Nepal. This was a reminder of the earthquake that hit seven years prior, the impact of which was so huge that no one will be able to forget it in their lifetime.

The destruction following the earthquake killed over 8,700 people, injured approximately 22,000, and destroyed billions of dollars' worth of infrastructure. According to the elders of Khumbu, this was the worst natural disaster to strike Nepal since 1934. Altogether, the earthquake affected 30 out of

the 75 districts in the country, and 14 have been classified as "highly affected."

The subsequent earthquakes and recurrent aftershocks shook Nepal and caused considerable damage to many areas, including Solukhumbu which is home to more than 4,000 Sherpas. The Khumbu region suffered terrible damage to its monastery, cultural monuments, health clinics, and school infrastructure. The following is a list of impacts the earthquake had in Khumbu:

1. The second earthquake destroyed 90% of the households in Khunde and Khumjung;
2. People of Khumbu slept or sheltered in tarps and tents for over two months in the open sky at 13,000 to 18,000 feet without temporary shelter;
3. 70% of the residents' annual income is dependent on tourism—either catering, guiding, or portering—and many of the lodges and tea shops have been damaged as a result of the earthquakes;
4. Due to pre-monsoon season, there was a shortage of skilled labor at the time of rebuilding houses, lodges, private houses, and tea shops;
5. Poor communication systems due to remote geographic areas; and
6. The government approach and support was limited, especially in remote regions like upper Khumbu

“*The 2015 earthquake destroyed approximately 90% of the natural and cultural structures... [which is where] the Sherpa people draw their sense of cultural and spiritual identity - from these religious and communal hubs.*”

The earthquake had a devastating impact on the lives of people and their property. The 2015 earthquake destroyed approximately 90% of the natural and cultural structures like Chorten, Gompas, Kani, private homes, schools, and community buildings. Sherpas of this region are Buddhist by religion, and therefore, the cultural structures like Monastery, Chorten (Monuments), Kani, and the mani walls are an important cultural heritage site for the Sherpas of this region. The Sherpa people draw their sense of cultural and spiritual identity from these religious and communal hubs. Monasteries and Manilhangs are the centers for practicing religious rites where various festivals are performed each year.

In the past, the Sherpas themselves responded and rebuilt religious structures like Gompa (Monasteries), Chorten (Stupas), Kani, Mani walls, and Manilhang, etc., as they are an important component of their identity. Normally, the local Sherpas would maintain these cultural monuments themselves without much outside support, but the post-earthquake situation was different. Most local Sherpas lost their homes during this

earthquake. As a result, some of the families of Khumbu were homeless and lived in difficult situations. It required a huge investment to rebuild those private homes and lodges.

During these difficult times, the Sherpas invested ten or more years of savings earned from dangerous mountain work into rebuilding their homes and saving once again for their children's education and future in hopes of giving the next generation a better life. As a result, due to their dire situation, homes could not be rebuilt or repaired by locals as mentioned above.





### *Progress Made Towards Relief and Rebuild Programs*

Various institutions, NGOs, CBOs, and INGOs have provided relief assistance to earthquake victims in Khumbu. Relief materials have been collected and distributed based on the needs of the families. An assessment has been made to collect first-hand information during and after the earthquake. A temporary relief or rebuild group has been formed like Khumjung and Khunde Earthquake Relief Groups (KKERG), with goals to support earthquake victims.

Relief work began in Khumbu by Ken Noguchi, the founder and president of Peak Aid Japan, as he was a witness to the April 25 earthquake. Based on his knowledge and information, Mr. Noguchi accepted our request to provide relief assistance he made through KKERG. Mr. Noguchi provided approximately 300 households with tents and cash in Khunde and Khumjung, which was a great support for some families who had no financial security.

“*Cultural Monuments and structures such as Gompa, Chorten, Kani, and Manilhang, etc., and completed restoration of those structures by December 2019. It took three years to complete the conservation and restoration of those cultural structures.*”

Besides Ken Noguchi's immediate support to the low-income families, the Sherpas of Khumbu had collected numerous funds to conserve and restore the Cultural Monuments and structures such as Gompa, Chorten, Kani, and Manilhang, etc., and completed restoration of those structures by December 2019. It took three years to complete the conservation and restoration of those cultural structures.

Khunde and Khumjung villagers offered a certificate of appreciation to Mr. Ken Noguchi for his bravery in rescuing and assessing damage and casualties when the country was facing a difficult situation. The appreciation certificate was awarded to him at Khumjung Gompa, where the whole village attended the ceremony, followed by Sherpa welcome songs, dance, and Khatas with great enthusiasm. Mr. Pasang Dawa Sherpa, the coordinator of the Khumjung and the Khumjung and Khunde Earthquake Group accompanied Mr. Ken Noguchi at the ceremony.



# हिमाली जोसको यात्रा

आङ तै न्जि शे पा (लामा)  
(कृषि प्रविधिक)

Written by: Ang Tenji  
Sherpa Lama

Photographer: Jacob Kiran Weber

हिमाली गोरेटो भनौ या हिमाली जोस ! जोस नभए हिमाल चढ्दैँन, गोरेटो नभए जोस आउदैँन । यात्राको क्रममा कहिले दुःख कहिले सुख, कहिले रमाइलो त कहिले खिन्न हुनुपर्ने दिन तथा ठाउँहरुको पार गर्नु पर्ने बाध्यता र वास्तविकता हो । त्यसैले हिमाली जोस (एम.एस) २०५३ सालदेखि आज २०८० सालसम्मको २६ बसन्त पार गरेर २७ औँ बसन्तमा प्रवेस गरेको सुखद उपलक्षमा यस नाफारहित संस्थामा आवद्ध सम्पूर्णलाई शुभकामना व्यक्त गर्दछु ।

यो संस्था हिमाली जिल्ला तथा उच्च पहाडि क्षेत्रमा बसोबास गर्ने समुदायहरुलाई लक्षित गरी विकासको अनुभूति र जनचेतना तथा आयमुलक प्रविधि र सिपहरु जोस र जागरका साथ हस्तान्तरण गर्दै जाने उदेश्यले स्थापना भएको थियो । यो संस्था स्थापना गर्दा कोठाभाडा, कार्पेट, कुच्चो, डस्टबिन, फर्निचर तथा कागज कलम समेत जुटाउने काम संस्थापक सदस्यहरुबाट आ-आफ्नो क्षमता र इच्छा अनुसार संकलन गरी एउटा सुन्दर कोठाको निर्माण गरेको स्मरण

छ । सक्षम नेतृत्वको जोस र जागरले विभिन्न पेशामा आवद्ध व्यक्तिहरु तथा डाक्टर, इन्जिनियर, वकिल लगाएत विद्यार्थी कर्मचारीहरु यो संस्थाको सदस्य बन्न तयार भए र हुने क्रम जारी छ । हिमाली जोस (एम.एस) को जागर र हिम्मतको उच्च मुल्याक्षेण गर्दै विभिन्न गैर सरकारी संस्थाका विशिष्ट व्यक्ति व्यक्तित्वहरुको साथ र सहयोग साथै सल्लाहले आज

हिमाली जोस हिमाल जस्तै चम्किलो सफल भएको महसुस गर्न सकिन्छ । यो संस्थाको स्थापना काललाई फर्केर हेर्ने हो भने सुरुको २, ३ बसन्तको रिपोर्ट तयार पर्दाको हस्त लिखित प्रतिवेदनका दस्तावेजहरु पल्टाएर हेर्दा यथार्थ बुझ्न सकिन्छ । हिमाली जोसले विभिन्न चरणहरु पार गर्दै जादा सदस्यहरुको सिप र जागर तथा अनुभवहरुलाई हिमाल तथा उच्च पहाडी भूभागमा बसोबास गर्ने समुदायहरु सामु आ-आफना विषय र अनुभवलाई आदन प्रदान गर्ने र त्यस ठाउँका रहन-सहन खानपान, स्वास्थ्य, शिक्षा इत्यादिको अवस्थाहरुको अध्ययन तथा अनुगमन गर्ने र आगामी दिनहरुमा के सकिन्छ भन्ने योजना बनाउने सिपको विकास गर्ने मौका प्रदान गरेको छ । त्यसै सिलसिलामा मैले पनि सोलुखुम्बुको

नाम्चे, ठमो, उलाजुब, थामे, ताप्लेजुब जिल्लाको हाबदेवा र उदयपुरको रौतामाइ तथा भुट्टार र सिन्दुपाल्चोकको हेलम्बु लगाएत रसुवा जिल्लाको गत्लाब, गोलजुब, चिलिमे जस्ता उच्च पहाडी भू-भागमा बसोबास गर्ने समुदायहरु बीच आधुनिक कृषि प्रविधिहरुबारे छलफल, गोष्ठी तथा तालिम दिने र गाउँलेहरुसँग भएका परम्परा खानपान, कृषि प्रविधि त्यहाको रहनसहन जस्ता कुराहरु संकलन गर्ने सूचक अवसर पाएकोमा हिमाली जोसलाई धन्यवाद दिन चाहन्छु । ताजा तरकारी दिगो विकास कार्यक्रम संचालन गरी हावापानी र समय अनुसार तरकारीको बीउ वितरण, तथा लगाउने तरिका हरित

गृह ( Green house) को निर्माण तथा सामाग्री वितरण, कन्य च्याउ उत्पादन प्रविधिको तालिम तथा नर्सरी

स्थापना विधिहरुको व्यवस्थापन लगाएत आदिवासी जनजाती महिलाहरुलाई जनचेतनामुलक तालिम संचालन गर्ने काम गरेर हिमाली जोस अग्रपंक्तिमा फड्को मार्दै गएको अवस्था छ ।

यो संस्थाले विभिन्न सरकारी तथा गैरसरकारी संस्थाहरुसंग सहकार्य गरी आयमुलक तालिम, गोष्ठी संचालन गरी स्वरोजगार र आर्थिक वृद्धिका, कुराहरुलाई समुदायमा छलफल गराउने, योजना बनाउने र जिम्मेवारी वहन गराउने कामहरुले निम्न स्तरका समुदायहरुको मनोबल उच्च बनाउने काम भएको छ । भुक्मप तथा बाडी पिडितहरुको लागि आर्थिक तथा खाद्यान्न जुटाउने जस्ता महान कार्यहरु गर्दै आएको छ । कोभिड १९ को महामारीको बेला पनि उच्च पहाडी भेगमा परम्परागत खाना , समुदायको रहन सहन संस्कार र वीउ संरक्षण उत्पादिको खोज अनुसन्धान कार्यहरु भएको थियो । लामा, शेर्पा, राई, मगर, तामाब, थारु जातिहरुको परम्परागत खानपान चाडपर्व, तथा संस्कारहरुको अवस्थाबारे जानकारी र परम्परागत वालीको उत्पादन, वीउ संरक्षण विधिहरुको खोजि गर्ने काम तथा अध्यायन प्रतिवेदन तयार पार्ने काम भएको छ । पर्यटकिय क्षेत्रको विकासको लागि सहयोग पुग्ने किसिमले लोप भएका घरेलु सामाग्री तथा हस्ता कलाहरुको संरक्षण तथा वेरोजगार महिलाहरुलाई आर्थिक पक्षमा केही सुधार होस भन्ने हेतुले घर बास (homestay) सन्चालन गर्ने र त्यसको महत्वबारे जानकारी गराउनुका साथ घुम्न

आउने

पाहुनाहरुलाई कोसेलीको रुपमा स्वीकार्य सामाग्री तयार गर्ने र विक्रि गर्ने खालको स्थानिय खानाहरु । जुन समयमा जे सकिन्छ त्यो सहयोग गर्नु नै महत्वपूर्ण हुन्छ । पैसा दिएर मात्र सहयोग हैन की मन भए पैसा, शिक्षा, माया, सल्लाह जे पनि दिन सकिन्छ । यस सन्दर्भ एउटा सफल व्यक्तित्वको कथा यहा प्रस्तुत गर्न चाहन्छु । सायद यो कथा धेरै जनाले सुनि सक्नु भएको होला । जसले सुनेको छैन, वहाहरुलाई ज्ञान हुन्छ । आज संसारको सबै भन्दा धनी व्यक्ति “बिलगेट” भनेर सुन्नु भएर होला । विलगेट पनि सुरुको बेलाको अवस्थामा अति गरिबको सुचीमा पर्थे । एक दिन कामको विज्ञानपन हेर्ने मनसायले बजार तिर घुम्दै गएछ । एक पत्रिका व्यापारीलाई भेटेछ । तर विलगेटसंग पत्रिका किन्ने पैसा थिएन र भनेछ आज मसाग खुद्रा पैसा छैन,

अर्को दिन लैजाउला भनेर हातमा समातेको पत्रिका व्यापारीलाई फिर्ता दिएछ । व्यापारी अचम्म मान्दै, पैसा पर्दैन लैजानुस । केही दिन पछि फेरी त्यो पत्रिका व्यापारीसाग भेट भएछ र पुन लिएर जान्छ । समय वित्दै गएछ र १८, १९ वर्षपछि विलगेट संसारकै धनि व्यक्तिको सुचीमा परेछ र पत्रपत्रिकामा छापिएछ । १८, १९ वर्ष पछि विलगेटलाई याद आएछ कि पहिला उद्यारो पत्रिका दिनेको गणु । तिर्ने मनसायले बजार तिर गएछ र त्यो पत्रिकावालासंग भेट भएछ । पत्रिकावालालाई सोधेछ, “तपाइले मलाई चिन्नु भयो?” पत्रिका वालाले भनेछ, तपाइलाई यो संसारमा कसले चिन्दैन, “तपाइ

संसारकै धनी व्यक्ति भनेर” फेरी विलगेटले भनेछ हैन, हैन तपाइ र मेरो अर्कै सम्बन्ध छ । १८/१९ वर्ष पहिला तपाइसाग मैले पत्रिका उद्यारो लिएको थिए नि, हो त्यही व्यक्ति हु ! म अब त्यो सहयोगको गुण तिर्न आएको छु ! के माग्नु हुन्छ ? भन्दा पत्रिकावालाले भनेछ की आज तपाईसंग के छैन घर, बंगला, पैसा जे पनि दिन सक्नु हुन्छ ! तर त्यो गुण तपाईले तिर्न सक्नु हुन्न । किन भने तेतिबेला, म पनि त्यहि पत्रिका बेचेको नाफाले मेरो घर व्यवहार धान्नु थियो ! त्यही पत्रिका बेचेर मेरो रोजीरोटीका साथ जीवन निर्वाह गरी रहेको थिए । त्यसैले त्यतिबेलाको सहयोगको गुण अब तिरेर सक्नु हुन्न भने ।

त्यस कारण यो हिमाली जोसले प्रसस्त आर्थिक सहयोग गरेर हैन, औपचारिक, अनौपचारिक तालिम, गोष्ठी, मन विचारले सहयोग गरेको छ । त्यस्ता सहयोगी मनहरु खोजेको बेला पैसामा किन्न पाउदैन । त्यसैले हिमाली जोसले दिएका ज्ञान गणु का कुराहरुलाई समालेर राख्नु होला कुनै दिन, कुनै बेला काम लाग्छ भन्न चाहन्छु । साथै शुभकामना पनि भन्न चाहन्छु ।



# Impacts of COVID-19 on the Protected Areas of Nepal: a Case Study of Sagarmatha National Park

Written by: *Ngawang Thapke Sherpa*

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) was first identified in a seafood and wet animal market in Wuhan, China (Zhu et al., 2020). In Nepal, the first COVID-19 case was reported on 13 January 2020 concerning a student who returned home from China on 5 January 2020 (Bastola et al., 2020). With the outbreak of COVID-19 as a global pandemic, there have been unprecedented challenges to overall human health, the environment and the world economy.

Due to the spread of Covid-19, there have been significant implications on protected areas, especially on their conservation programs and activities. Whilst the restrictive measures to contain the ongoing pandemic have had some positive impacts such as reducing human disturbance on wildlife and increasing species' richness, these measures have also resulted in negative impacts (Manenti et al., 2020). The profound decline



in tourism-based revenues of the protected areas has jeopardized its conservation programs.

## *Positive impacts:*

In Sagarmatha National Park (SNP), problems such as overcrowding, commercial operation of helicopters and solid waste have long been spurred by uncontrolled tourism

“*In 2020, with the sharp decline in tourism activities, the operation of commercial helicopters was very limited – the wildlife in the Park were relieved from the intruding helicopter noise and enjoyed the silence.*”

growth. These problems pose a threat to the realization of cultural ecosystem services (N. T. Sherpa, 2020). During the last five years, SNP witnessed a significant increase in the number of commercial helicopters. In 2018 alone, SNP collected Rs. 11,371,694 from helicopter landing fees (SNP, 2019). During peak trekking seasons, helicopters start to fly as early as 6 am and continue to operate throughout the day.

The operation of commercial helicopters has had a significant noise and visual impact, compromising the “aesthetic importance” component of SNP’s OUV (Outstanding Universal Value) (Jefferies, 2016). It is apparent that the noise pollution generated by helicopters also has an impact on the park’s wildlife. In 2020, with the sharp decline in tourism activities, the operation of commercial helicopters was very limited – the wildlife in the Park were relieved from the intruding helicopter noise and enjoyed the silence. In January 2021, following the controversial and unauthorized filming of the Everest Base Camp and Kalapatthar by an Indian journalist (Pant, 2021), operation of commercial flights was restricted above Syangboche—except for rescue and supplying construction materials.

Solid waste is one of the challenging problems in SNP (Manfredi et al., 2010; Posch, 2013) which has been exacerbated by the uncontrolled growth in tourism (Byers, Gustafsson, Shrestha, & Chhetri, 2020). Following the significant decline in visitors and the reduction in tourism activities, the generation of solid waste also declined in 2020, thereby adding less waste to the natural environment and decreasing the need for routine burning activities.

“*Snow leopard sightings at elevations as low as 2800 m is unusual. Though, on June 6, 2021, a snow leopard was spotted at Jorsalle bridge in SNP.*”

The COVID-19 pandemic was also seen as a respite for SNP and its natural environment from uncontrolled visitor use. During the lockdown, there has been an increase in the number of wildlife species including the Himalayan Thar and other prey species (SNP Chief Conservation Officer, personal communication, January 4, 2021).

Snow leopard sightings at elevations as low as 2800 m is unusual. Though, on June 6, 2021, a snow leopard was spotted at Jorsalle bridge in SNP. It’s uncertain why the snow leopard came down to such elevation. One potential reason might be the increase in the population of wolves in the snow leopard’s habitats of SNP. Gyalzen Sherpa of SNPBZ suggests that the wolves have been killing livestock almost every day leading to an increase in the number of herders who have come to the Park office seeking relief. Another potential reason would be that the snow leopard may have come down chasing its prey species.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, there also has been a decrease in construction activities and human mobility which has lessened the human pressure on forest resources and wildlife.

#### *Negative impacts:*

In 2020, the nation-wide COVID-19 lockdown resulted in a spike in poaching activities in SNP. The poachers took advantage of the limited mobility of people and prolonged silence in the forest. A total of six musk deer were killed by poachers in SNP forest during the lockdown. An additional 54 wire traps were found and a golden eagle was

found dead in one of those traps (Nepal Times, 2020). This incident caused outrage among locals and they protested the Park's management for failing to control such poaching activities.



***Musk deer killed by poachers in SNP during lockdown (Photo: Lax Man/ Facebook)***

Over the years, there has been a decline in the use of fuelwoods with communities increasingly turning to electric heaters and LPG gas for cooking. Nonetheless, if the COVID-19 pandemic continues people may increase their dependency on fuelwood and other forest products, resulting in an increased reliance on forest resources.

The ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic has caused a sharp decline in the National Park and Buffer Zone revenue. In 2018, when the visitor number was at its peak at 58,030, the park revenue from visitor's entrance fees was NRs. 181,131,000. However, with the drastic fall in the number of visitors in 2020, SNP revenue dropped by 99% (Rastriya Samachar Samiti, 2020). The major sources of revenue for SNP include visitor's entrance fees, helicopter landing fees, trekking guide fees, adventure sports, and camping and forest

resource fees (SNP, 2019). Among these, visitors' entrance fees are the main source of revenue for SNP. The Park collects Rs. 3000 for international visitors, Rs. 1500 for nationals from SAARC countries, Rs. 100 for domestic visitors, Rs. 25 for porters (SNP, 2019) and Rs. 3000 for helicopter landings (Rastriya Samachar Samiti, 2020). As 30-50% of the National Park revenue goes back to the buffer zone, the decline in park revenue also means a decline in the buffer zone revenue.

In addition, due to the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic, there have been disruptions to the provincial government's proposed budget for SNP, particularly related to tourism infrastructure development (SNP Chief Conservation Officer, personal communication, January 4, 2021). With the dramatic fall in National Park and Buffer Zone revenue, it is almost certain that conservation programs and development activities in SNP would be affected in 2021. Nonetheless, Sagarmatha National Park Buffer Zone (SNPBZ) chairperson Sonam Gyalzen Sherpa suggests that the Buffer Zone will carefully restructure its budget and focus more on conservation programs and essential activities. On the other hand, SNP suggests that the regular patrolling activities will remain unaffected as the Park continues to receive a budget from the federal ministry for such purposes.

### ***Summary***

There are both positive and negative effects of COVID-19 on the protected areas. The first lockdown led to a major poaching incident in



SNP. The incident also caused local outrage, anger and frustration towards the Park management. The drastic decline in National Park and Buffer Zone revenue due to COVID-19 has created a major financial crisis for conservation organizations concerning the execution of their planned programs and activities. Notwithstanding the negative impacts of COVID-19, it has also been a respite for the natural environment of SNP from uncontrolled visitor use.

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Photographer: Jacob Kiran Weber

# जलवायु परिवर्तन र आदिवासी जनजाति समुदायबिचको सम्बन्ध

Written by: Sangita Lama

जलवायु परिवर्तन विश्वव्यापी रूपमा देखापरेको गम्भीर समस्या हो । यसबाट धनी तथा विकसित राष्ट्रहरूको तुलनामा गरीब तथा विकासोन्मुख राष्ट्रहरू बढी प्रभावित भएका छन् । नेपाल जलवायु परिवर्तनको जोखिममा रहेको छ । पछिल्लो समय नेपालमा आकस्मिक बाढी, हिमनदी विस्फोट, खडेरी, तातो र चिसो हावाको लहर र प्रत्यासित वर्षाहरू भैरहेका छन् । यसको प्रत्यक्ष असर समाजका सबै क्षेत्रमा परेको छ र विशेषगरी महिला र आदिवासी जनजाति समुदायको जीवन र जीवनयापन नै संकटमा परेको छ ।

विश्वमा ३० करोड आदिवासी जनजातिहरू आफ्नै विशिष्ट र मौलिक पहिचान, संस्कृति, जीवनशैली, भाषा, भेषभुषा, चलन र मुल्यमान्यताका साथ आफ्नै थातथलोमा बसोबास गर्दै आएका छन् । नेपालको राष्ट्रिय जनगणना २०७८ अनुसार नेपालका आदिवासी जनजातिको जनसंख्या ३५.८१ प्रतिशत छ । आदिवासी जनजातिहरूको जीवनपद्धती वनजंगल लगायतको प्राकृतिक स्रोत साधनसंग

अन्योन्याश्रित सम्बन्ध छ । आदिवासी जनजातिहरू सबैभन्दा कम कार्वन डाइअक्साईड उत्सर्जन गर्ने समुदाय हुन् । तर, उनीहरूको दिगो र कम कार्वन उत्सर्जन गर्ने पद्धतिलाई अबै राष्ट्रिय तहमा स्विकार गरिएको छैन । आदिवासी जनजातिहरूले आफ्नै मौलिक ज्ञान, सीप तथा

परम्परागत प्रविधिले प्राकृतिक स्रोतहरूको दिगो रूपमा संरक्षण र व्यवस्थापन गर्दै आएका छन् ।

जलवायु परिवर्तनलाई हामी निमिट्यान्न पार्न सक्दैनौ । यो प्राकृतिक समस्यासंगै मानव सिर्जित समस्या हो । तर सन्तुलनमा राख्न भने सक्छौ । जलवायु परिवर्तनको असरलाई कम गर्नको लागि विश्वमा अनेक उपायहरूको विकास भएका छन् । ति उपायहरूको विकास संगसंगै आदिवासी जनजातिहरू मावन जंगलसंगको आफ्नो अन्योन्याश्रित सम्बन्धमा बाधाहरू आईपलान की भन्ने डर छ । साथै परापूर्वकालदेखि भोगचलन हुदै आएको आफ्नो थाकथलोबाट विस्थापन हुनुपर्ने त होइन भन्ने चिन्ता आदिवासी जनजातिमा रहेको छ ।

जलवायु परिवर्तन सम्बन्धी बन्ने नीति तथा नियमहरूमा आदिवासी जनजातिहरूको अधिकार स्थापित गर्नको लागि सबैभन्दा महत्वपूर्ण अन्तर्राष्ट्रिय दस्तावेजहरू आदिवासी जनजातिको अधिकारसम्बन्धी संयुक्त राष्ट्रसंघिय घोषणापत्र (युएनड्रिप) र आदिवासी जनजातिको अधिकार सम्बन्धी अन्तराष्ट्रिय श्रम संगठनको महासन्धि आइएलओ १६९ हो । आइएलओ १६९ लाई नेपाल सरकारले २०६४ साल भदौ ५ गते अनुमोदन गरिसकेको छ । त्यसैले आदिवासी जनजातिको माग र मुद्दाहरूलाई सम्बोधन गर्नको लागि राज्यले ध्यान दिनु जरुरी छ ।



# Mountain Calling:

## What We Say vs

## What We Do?

*Written by: Sanoj Tulachan*

Undoubtedly there is a huge cry for protecting cultural identity among indigenous ethnic communities spread across the mountain region of Nepal. We are not tired of listening about our cultural richness and are often excited to share its significance to sustain and revive our mountainous traditions and rituals. However, we are not sure how much and how pure the cultural traits we inherit from our past are.

The cultures often change with time and environment. Currently, there seems to be a rapid change in the perception and understanding of our culture which is often convoluted with present need and reality. A conscious decision to construct a modern cemented house to uplift social status or operate hotels to promote tourism may not connect with the cultural identity of mountains. However, they fulfilled the growing needs of present families and offer modern facilities to tourists. Therein our cry for cultural identity “what we say” in many ways contradicts with “what we do”.

For instance, four years back, I asked the same question to one of the hotel owners, who had constructed a modern cemented house in Lomangthang, Mustang. I was worried such construction will ruin the aesthetic value and authenticity of Lomangthang and its raw and vernacular beauty. The owner had a very clear answer “*for the hotel we need toilets and bathrooms, we cannot build them in traditional mud and stone houses and a small leakage might destroy the whole house.*” I did not have any answers then. But I was deeply worried and felt helpless thinking that during my next visit there will be more of the same odd structures surrounding the Lomangthang palace and settlement. I felt “*how would a foreigner who wishes to see the real and authentic of this place will react*”.

“*We are good at easily accepting the changes that cost our identity but are also equally good at fostering our collective guilt of losing it gradually.*”

Moreover, I was confused “*is it truly necessary to commercialize our mountainous culture and their beauties?*”. Yes, or No -either way is problematic. There is a greater risk of losing everything in the name of business as well as depriving yourself of modern facilities in the name of cultural identity. We are good at easily accepting the changes that cost our identity but are also equally good at fostering our collective guilt of losing it gradually. We are not able to bring clarity on our thoughts either to solely dedicate ourselves to protect

our culture or warmly welcome the changes that the modern world offers to us. This has been the crux of our dilemma and confusion.



How we can engage in exploring an alternative perspective and approach to balancing these two greater needs and desires of mountainous communities, requires being more mindful of our identity as well as innovative to preserve it. Transferring the same spirit to the new generation- who are almost aloof from our cultural space - is a key challenge to hand over our efforts to protect our identity and traditions. Simultaneously we should be able to find an innovative approach to equally enjoy modern facilities, and not lose the beauty and aesthetic value of our cultural identities. How can we do this? This needs exploration of different practices and learnings across the globe and fitting them to the need of Nepal. There are greater examples of preserving cultural beauties and heritage to promote tourism that benefits local communities that also add to the national income.

Lastly, the role of an organization like Mountain Spirit, which is dedicated and working for mountain communities, is crucial in engaging local authorities, sensitizing new generations, and conducting research to offer innovative solutions to minimize ongoing cultural losses before it is too late.

# From ‘Saving Mount Everest’ to ‘Sagarmatha Next’

**A sustainable waste management concept  
for Nepal’s World Heritage –  
Sagarmatha National Park**

**Written by: *Phinjo Sherpa***

Since the first ascent of Mount Everest in 1953, the number of trekkers and mountaineers headed to the Everest region has soared—undeniably boosting the local economy. However, this has also resulted in increasing amounts of waste, which poses a severe threat to the fragile biodiversity and ecosystem. The region lacks the modern infrastructure needed to cope with the amount of solid waste and pollution. Further, local residents lack the expertise necessary for dealing with such large amounts of waste in an environmentally sustainable way.

The importance of tourism to the local economy has encouraged communities, the government, and local entrepreneurs to try and protect the area. One result was the Saving Mount Everest – Waste Management Project, conducted by Eco Himal and the Everest Summiters’ Association in collaboration with the Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee. The success of this

project was in large part due to the financial and logistical assistance provided by national and international organizations, with full support from the Government of Nepal (GON).

In spring 2011, the Saving Mount Everest – Clean-up Campaign was successfully implemented, led by the Everest Summiters’ Association in cooperation with relevant national institutions. Over eight tons of waste was removed from Mount Everest and was also sorted and handled responsibly in accordance with international standards. Press conferences and awareness campaigns followed.

Next, the Saving Mount Everest II project (2012–2014) focused on implementing a basic waste management system and further infrastructure development in the region. Waste collection facilities, waste containers, and public toilets were built along the trekking routes from Lukla to the Everest Base Camp; and extensive awareness-raising programmes and trainings in modern waste management were conducted for porters, lodge owners, and local communities, so that waste could be managed at the source. The Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee was the main partner in carrying out these activities, with the support of local institutions and authorities. Eco Himal Austria and Sweden’s Postcode Lottery Foundation also provided financial support.

Members of the Everest Summiters’ Association brought non-recyclable waste to Kathmandu, where the metallic waste was turned into sculptures by a group of Nepali



artists (DA Mind Tree). These artworks have been exhibited in Kathmandu and Sweden.

In late 2015, Himalayan Museum & Sustainable Parks was registered under the Office of Company Registrars and Social Welfare Council. The organization's first project is Sagarmatha Next, headquartered at Syangboche, located above Namche Bazar enroute to Everest base camp. The Saraf Foundation, which works toward similar objectives and arranges museums/exhibitions in Kathmandu, has provided financial and technical support. Also associated with this project are the Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee, Eco Himal, Blue Waste to Value, Dell Technologies, the US-based Denali Foundation, and Moware Designs. For further information, this can be viewed at: [www.sagarmathanext.com](http://www.sagarmathanext.com).



*Sourced from:*

*<https://www.sagarmathanext.com/the-centre/denali-schmidt-art-gallery/>*

The project aims to help manage the rapidly increasing amount of waste by up-cycling metallic waste into sculptures by renowned artists. An indoor and outdoor gallery will exhibit the artwork, thereby also informing visitors about Mount Everest and the region: its peoples, socio-cultural development, environment, and waste management system. A multimedia interpretation centre will provide information on cultural issues, mountaineering regulations, the flora and fauna of the region, and its biodiversity.

This multi-faceted waste management project focuses on tourism, sustainability, and environmental issues in Sagarmatha National Park and the Khumbu region. The vision is to help change perceptions of 'waste' by creating awareness and demonstrating that, if treated properly, 'waste' can have a value.

# A trip down memory lane

**Written by: Rammaya Thakali**

I grew up in a small village in Mustang called Thini, in the lap of Mountain Nilgiri (known as Lochogang in the local Thakali language) and the world's deepest gorge of the Kali Gandaki river. Growing up among the minority Thakali community and in close proximity to our fragile nature, I have always been motivated to serve the indigenous people of our mountain regions. This is why I have loved being involved with Mountain Spirit, a community full of like-minded professionals dedicated to serving our mountain communities. Our mountain communities are rich in history and social and cultural heritage. Yet life, and survival, is not always easy. Since I first joined Mountain Spirit in 1999, I have taken up various roles within the organization. In these roles, I have had the privilege to work with various communities in the mountain regions and gathered many unforgettable memories—all of which I cannot share in this short article. I therefore would like to share two memories: our visit to Shermathang village which resulted in the establishment of a community healthpost, and a misfortune while visiting Ghandruk village.

One of my earliest and fondest memories with Mountain Spirit is when I got the opportunity to participate in a training called Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) that was taught by Mr. Kamal Phuyel in the Mountain Spirit office in Ghairidara, Kathmandu. For the training's field visit, we were taken to Shermathang, Helambu. We were all very young and energetic then. We left Kathmandu early in the morning by bus. There was no motorway at that time to get to Shermathang, so we had to walk from Melamchi Bazar. This was my first visit to Shermathang, so I was excited to see and learn about this part of our country. We started our journey with an energizing lunch at Melamchi Bazar. Our trainer gave each of the participants a "mit." A "mit" was another participant who we had to help and support during the field trip. However, we were told to keep who our "mit" was a secret, even with the "mit" themselves unless disclosed by our trainer.

At the start, the journey was enjoyable as we stepped higher and higher into the mountains, learning about one village after another along the way. However, I was not quite prepared to walk in such steep terrain and in such hot weather, especially with a heavy backpack! Since we weren't experienced trekkers, our journey to Shermathang took longer than what it would have taken the locals. It got dark quickly and we were all exhausted. Thankfully, a helpful gentleman offered to carry some of my load, which was a huge relief. By the time we reached Shermathang at 11 pm, our faces were pale and tired. Despite this, we

immediately planned the next day's programme with a hot cup of tea.

The Hyolmo people were excellent hosts. Their hospitality, along with the wonderful view of crystal-clear mountains from Shermanthang, made this trip one to remember! At the conclusion of the trip, we discovered that an accessible health-post was the number one priority for the villagers at Shermanthang. With the financial support of Mountain Spirit Deutschland, Mountain Spirit Nepal supported the Shermathang Health-post for several years. By ensuring the long-term sustainability of the Health-post, we were able to eventually hand it over to the local people. I visited the Sermathang Helambu Heath-post several times after this trip for evaluations. I also spent time in four other VDCs in Sindhupalchowk to determine the feasibility of Sexual Health/HIV awareness programs during the peak of Maoist insurgency.

After returning from this first trip to Shermathang, our trainer disclosed our “mit” in Kathmandu. We gave each other a small gift in appreciation for the support we received. This was an interesting educational strategy and a wonderful way to learn about our team members' personalities and attitudes. The field trip was not only productive and educational, but also gave me the opportunity to get to personally know my team members, many of whom went on to become lifelong members and supporters of Mountain Spirit.

While the Shermathang visit was a highlight of my time with MS, seventeen years ago I had a misfortune during a field visit to Ghandruk. At that time, I was working as a Programme Coordinator for MS. We had been asked by Nepal Trust to develop a five- year tourism action plan for Limi village, Humla. We had planned to take twelve participants on field trips to various tourist areas around Nepal, followed by four days of workshops in Kathmandu. As planned, the twelve participants, an MS colleague, and I embarked on the trip. On the third day of our journey, we reached Ghandruk, a famous tourist destination in Nepal.



I had always dreamt of visiting Ghandruk, and this dream was fulfilled. Ghandruk's astounding natural beauty and it's warm, friendly locals made the long, exhausting walk to get there totally worth it. The owner of the lodge we were staying at had an interesting story. Sharing her journey in the tourism business with us, she explained how she started the lodge even though she did not know how to cook! She strongly believed in the Nepali



proverb, “*rati aayeko pahuna deuta hun, pharkaunu hudaina* (guests that arrive at night are gods, welcome them).” She started off her business by letting trekkers stay in her old house. The tourists taught her how to cook a variety of foreign dishes. And eventually, she started a lodge in her new house where we were spending the night. The next day we ate breakfast in the lodge, took many photographs, and bid goodbye to the lodge owner.



On our walk back, I suddenly slipped on a stone staircase and fell. I was disoriented and, when I tried to stand up, could not keep my balance or walk. Fortunately, one of the participants was an older gentleman with experience. He examined my foot, asked where I had pain, and confirmed that I had broken my leg. We were in a completely isolated area and therefore could not get help immediately. Two of the participants searched for some sticks and rope and the older gentleman braced my broken leg. This fundamental technique is practiced in villages when goats break their limbs in the forest. And at that time, without the presence of modern medical science, it was extremely useful for my broken leg!

Another participant carried me with all his might until we found a settlement. One of the local homeowners found a doko (basket) to carry me in until we reached a road that would lead us to Pokhara. This was a traumatizing experience and one I will always remember clearly. On the way, the locals would come around to see me and their first question was always “*how many children do you have and how old are they?*” This made me quite worried! After discussions among our group, we decided that one of the participants, who was a nurse, and the guide would come with me to Pokhara. My colleague kindly took on all my responsibilities and carried on the field trip as planned. I tried to support my leg by pulling it with my scarf and, by the time we reached Pokhara, my arms were in more pain than my leg. We reached Gandaki Hospital late at night, and I was finally able to contact my family. My relatives in Pokhara immediately came to see me. The doctor told me that my leg needed to be operated on and praised the stick and rope brace that the older gentleman had created! The doctors temporarily plastered my leg and I flew to Kathmandu the next morning. I went directly to the hospital with my husband and relatives and had a successful operation the same day.

I was on bed rest at home for several months following the accident. This, coupled with frequent visits to the hospital, was extremely stressful. I cried to myself many times over the next months. My family was very worried for me—my parents were concerned I might

become limp and my mother-in-law often cried on the phone. I will always be grateful for the attentive care and moral support from my family, relatives and friends during this difficult time. Mountain Spirit members and staff came to visit me often, their empathy always lifted my spirits. After a few months, to keep myself active, I started cooking meals at home with the help of crutches. In spite of these difficult moments, I tried to stay positive and kept myself occupied by reading books, exercising, and meditating. After five months of treatment and physiotherapy, my bone healed and I made a full recovery. An important lesson I learned during this time is that positive thinking and a

strong willpower is crucial to overcome any difficulties in life.

I have many fond memories of my time at Mountain Spirit—many uplifting, educational and inspiring stories. As a development practitioner at Mountain Spirit, the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) and Appreciative Participatory Planning and Action (APPA) training helped me not just professionally, but in my personal life too. When I started out at Mountain Spirit, the organization was small and had a limited budget. Today, I feel proud of all that Mountain Spirit has been able to contribute to our indigenous communities and feel equally delighted to see our once young members move forward in their careers, serving our country!





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