

The Journey from a Drinking Water Project to a Home Stay Operation

Nir Magar is a 47-year-old single parent who lives with her son and daughter in Palpa Tansen Municipality ward No 7, Bougha Gumha .At a young age of 35, she had to go through unimaginable struggles due to the untimely demise of her husband. Her husband lost his life due to jaundice. In the society, it is customary for a woman to be termed as a single woman forever after the death of her husband or divorce due to any reason. But in reality, it is more appropriate to call them single parents rather than single women for raising and feeding their household on their own.

After her husband's death, the entire responsibility of her 15-year-old son and 14-year-old daughter fell on the shoulders of Nir Magar. Nir Magar was always worried about how to make them stand on their own feet and give them good education to ensure a bright future. Her only source of income for very long, was a small grocery store that she ran. Later, she started working at the post office. Since she had already spent a lot of money on her husband's treatment, she was struggling to earn enough money for her children and her day to day livelihood. Despite all of these financial difficulties and uncomfortable circumstances, she continued to work hard.

At the same time, the technology of rainwater harvesting, a type of water supply and sanitation scheme had reached her village with the financial support of the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Fund Development Board (RWSSFDB) along with the social and technical facilitation of Social Resource Development Centre Nepal (SRDCN) under the seventh batch of fund board's water supply and sanitation scheme .Accepting her grief as just another challenge in her life, Nir Magar participated in all kinds of programs and trainings under the water supply and sanitation project.

She regularly attended all the programs and trainings on health-sanitation, goat rearing, home stay, etc. It boosted her level of knowledge and confidence. She was also encouraged to become the vice-chairman of the Water Users' Committee of the Baugha



Old photo of Nir Magar's family

Gumha Water Supply and Sanitation Scheme. From an early age, Nir Magar had a desire to do something for the society as well. After becoming the Vice-Chairman of the Water Users' Committee of the Water Supply and Sanitation Project, she got the opportunity to fulfill her childhood desire and serve back to the. She actively spread awareness about hygiene and sanitation, savings collection and loan mobilization and income generation programs in every house of the village. Under the saving and small loan mobilization program that started immediately after the formation of the women's technical support service group, she borrowed and utilized the loan for goat farming and vegetable farming. Not only this, she also showed diligence in running the home stay. Currently, a lot of households in the village are running home stays in a very systematic way.

It gives her immense pleasure to feed her guests homemade organic vegetables from her own farm. She says, "All the programs of the water supply and sanitation scheme run by the Fund Development Committee have proved to be a boon for the overall development of our village and poverty reduction. The encouragement and income from the drinking water and sanitation project enabled me to educate my children to stand on my own feet. Thanks to the capacity building and income generating programs that inspired and enabled me to generate income with which I have been able to provide my children with quality higher education for them to stand on their own feet too."



Happy looking Nir Magar in her home stay

the society in the future.

It feels like a dream now when she remembers the community carrying out sand from Ranighat to make a tank (Ghainto) for rain water about a decade ago with the initiative of Social Resource Development Center Nepal (SRDCN) & with the financial support by Fund Development Board. Nir Magar's support and compassion to anyone in need is her unique quality, she started dedicating herself to work selflessly soon after her husband's demise which satisfies her. She wishes to see her children as well as the present generation of youth contributing to the society by joining social organizations so that more development works can be performed in

Furthermore, recalling the challenges and struggles faced when carrying out the rainwater harvesting program, Chop Lal Giri, Chairman of the Social Resource Development Center Nepal (SRDCN), said, I would like to thank all the supportive hands who have helped to change the look of this village. My best wishes to all. I hope all of us can move forward for the development of the village, he added.



A beautiful picture of the water, tap, toilet and utensils rack made after the WSS scheme and Lil Bahadur Rana, Chairman of the Drinking Water Consumers Committee.

(The writer is a livelihood Expert in the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Fund Development Board.)