



Himalayan Project

A Danish NGO dealing with Development Aid in Nepal

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PRELIMINARY REPORT

on

BASA WEP

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by Kurt Lomborg

On 22. November 2011 Namgyal Jangbu Sherpa, Janaki Khadka, Mummy Anne-Marie and I went from Nuntala, Trakshindu VDC to Basa VDC, Khastap Village having a meeting with 3 local Women Groups the following day. Leaving same day afternoon for Gumnamera Village in Kanku VDC.

The way from Nuntala to Khastap is very beautiful and fine. In the beginning with some confusing roads, but after a small school the road became distinct and well prepared, some places with deep abyss and very well build. The road is rather straight with few climbs. It took us 7 hours from Nuntala to Khastap.

The way from Khastap to Gumnamera climbs continuously but not very hard for 3 hours. We asked for accommodation with a young Sherpa woman, who immediately took us in. From Gumnamera the trail climbs further up for 3 hours to Ratmadanda with magnificent view and a small teahouse, and 2 hours down to Phaplu.

There are very few hotels in Basa of a quite low standard. The hotel in Khastap is very simple with 3 double rooms and on 5 bed room, but the hotel keeper is producing very fine and tasty dal bhat, but tea and coffee is very poor. In Thulo Dungha there is a small lodge with one 3 bed room and poor tea, but nice potatoes. It seems like WG, schools and others are not used to serve tea for visitors.

The following report is preliminary and contains only information in a very basic and approximate level taken from High School Teacher Chhiring Nuru Sherpa and High School Headmaster _____

The population consist of 60% Rai, 20% Chhetri, 10% Magar and 10% Bika and Dalit caste. All speak and understand Nepali but only very few speak English and even very poor. The population is around 10.000 of which 7.000 live in Basa, while a big portion of the rest is temporary migrant workers in Gulf countries and some living more or less temporary in Kathmandu. Most of those absent at home are men, leaving more women in Basa than men. There are around 800 households distributed in the 9 wards:

Ward 1: Khaskum Village	45 households
Ward 2: Dhamku Village	65 households
Ward 3: Basa-3	50 households

Ward 4: Khastap Village	65 households
Ward 5: Lemchi Village	75 households
Ward 6: Basa-6	65 households
Ward 7: Basa-7	130-150 households
Ward 8: Basa-8	130-150 households
Ward 9: Tholo Dungha Village	130-150 households

There is one Health Post in Khastap Village with one Health Worker and 2 ANM. It is newly reconstructed and still not in full function, but they give service Also to neighbouring VDC's. They perform around 6 deliveries at the clinic monthly, which is around 70% of all deliveries.

There is a Police Station in Khastap Village. A "Rai Culture Museum" is also situated in Khastap. There is a Monday market in Khastap. The VDC Office is situated in Dhamku Village. There are 6 hydropower stations (peltric set), one at Chalchik Khola (the southern border of the VDC), three at Mouri Khola and two at Aderi Khola (the northern border of the VDC).

There are 9 schools in Basa:

Ward 1: Siddhakali Primary School

Ward 2-3: Padmakanya Lower Secondary School

Ward 4: Himalaya Higher Secondary School (upgraded 2 years ago – faculty of education and management)

Private English Boarding Primary School (one year old)

Ward 5: Janpreya Primary School

Ward 6: Shikar Babu Chhirri Primary School

Ward 7: Kali Secondary School

Ward 8: Dependra Adarsa Primary School

Ward 9: Chandra Udaya School

But the educational standard is generally low, especially in the English medium. Last exam not even one passed SLC, and only 27 out of 60 passed class 12 and not even one of them in second division. Only two students from Basa have ever reached a higher educational level, one Staff Nurse and one Engineer, and none of them living in Basa. 15-20 has educated for Teacher and 3-4 as Overseer and most of them are living in Basa. Many, especially boys, go trekking in the season, which explains a majority of the failing students. But anyhow the vast majority of the population below the age of 30 can read and write Nepali, while most people above are illiterate.

The climate is quite warm due to the lower altitude and due to the situation of the hillside position towards south-east. The land seems quite fertile and the fields seem to have a good yield and many varieties of plants and trees. It seems like millet is the dominant crop and according to the locals followed by maize. Most of the products are exchanged in between the villages, and only very less is sold for other places outside Basa and mostly in Salleri. Especially oranges and bananas are sold in Salleri Bazar. There is an exchange of potatoes between Kankhu and Basa, as Basa potatoes are very big and not good for reproduction while they in Khanku produce smaller potatoes suited for next year production. There is a minor surplus of mustard oil which is exported. But they produce a lot of alcohol from millet and maize which is consumed extensively all over Basa.

Especially the Rai population eat a lot of meat, and especially they raise a lot of pigs, which is exchanged in between the village after a rotation system. Also many buffaloes are raised by straws from the normal crops, and to produce the necessary fertilizer, but peculiar enough they don't seem to be interested in taking milk from the buffaloes. They are exported for Kharikhola where they are slaughtered for the trekking areas of Lukhla and Namche Bazar. There are an abundance of chickens everywhere, but the production of eggs seems to be quite low. It is claimed that it is due to bad management. Most chickens are eaten locally but some is exported for Namche.

There is a minor production of honey mostly for the home market, as the production is very dependent on the climate.

Wood is scarce as most land is occupied by agricultural production. Therefore most houses have tin roof, because it is cheaper than wooden roof in length.

In some houses the women are weaving and sewing their traditional dresses, but very less are exported. Some few women are knitting. Many men are joining as porters, sherpas and guides in the trekking season. Some men are joining Ghorka Armies in UK and India. And many men are migrant workers in various countries, especially in the Arab countries.

It is difficult to imagine which productions could influence the society in future, but some suggestions were bamboo knitting, herbal medicine, tea, coffee, cardamom, ginger, turmeric and more extensive meat production.

The major problems of the societies of Basa are first of all the extensive production and utilization of alcohol, giving a lot of quarrelling and turmoil in the homes and in the villages. But also the very young age of marrying is mentioned giving less education and early economic problems in the young families.

Very few NGO's are working in Basa. Loraine Nepal is working with electricity. Young Star Club is giving various trainings on credit and smokeless stove. Basa Foundation is providing contact between foreign donors and various institutions like schools. Himalayan Health and Environment Service Solukhumbu (HHESS) has reconstructed the health post and are doing health programs like ultrasound scanning of pregnant women every 3 months, but they seem to withdraw from their activities. Ghorkha Welfare Service was performing projects earlier but has now stopped.

Meeting with 3 Women Groups in Khastap.

There are 3 women groups around Ward 4 Khastap:

Janachetana WG have 18 members and were formed 11 years ago by Young Star Club to run literacy programs. They have received funds and are collecting money for revolving funds from members to run microcredit to members who will invest in farming and planting trees. They have established a 4 kW peltrric set. They have established private toilet in each members household. They are cutting cowgrass and selling it for other villagers. They are performing illiteracy programs.

Ekta WG have 30 members and was established last year with support from Women Development Office, Salleri. They have monthly meetings and collect money

for giving loan to members for business. They are running a campaign for sanitation. Their objectives are to work as a group to face the problems which arise among the members.

Septarangi WG have 37 members And were established 2 years ago with support from Women Development Office, Salleri. Have collected funds and opened a bank account in Salleri. Giving loan to members, to the private boarding school and to other people. They have collected 52.000 Rs by now and will build a Meeting Hall when they have enough. Running literacy programs, stopping tobacco and other misuses, and are working on less dependency on men in smaller issues.

Individually expressions on main problems for women:

20-25 women took part of the meeting, some came late and some left early. 14 students of class 8-10 took part.

Household work is boring and not interesting, want supplementary income and employment from non existing production.

Bad kitchen with smoke, no flour mills. Want release from some work. But happy that husbands are now helping in housework. The only flour mill is private owned, so they can't have appointment and are regularly waiting for long time and sometimes in vain.

Husband support is now increasing by common awareness. Now 25% of husbands are helping in household, and the number is increasing.

Hard labour is a main problem especially when getting older.

Have no money, so no power to do anything.

Need knowledge and health awareness about their animals, chicken and cows.

Knowledge about farming and husbandry will be helpful.

Their skills are not sufficient to create income.

Cottage industry could be good but there are no market. Main problem is that they have no idea what can be sold.

Lack of cooperation between women and between women and men. WG can improve this but still many are not members, because they can't see their benefit. The problems don't arise because of the men.

Many have no understanding about revolving fund, and many feel jealousy when others are benefitted.

The people are basically healthy and also their children, so no specific health problems. They already have become aware because of Health Post awareness program, radio programs, posters and others.

Family planning is in effect. Most young families have only 2-3 children and no family will have more than 4 children, even when they are waiting for a boy. It is a mutual decision between husband and wife.

Too many family and villagers are giving different advice after birth, so they need a proper guidance from qualified persons. Have to work 5 days after giving birth pushed by mother in law. They are afraid of facing health problems of that reason.

Students response:

We don't want to be simple farmers like our parents – we want something better.

Our parents force us to study but they are not providing us a better future where we can utilize our education.

Awareness can change our parents in law's concept on life.

Want changes in her life, but if education isn't good, then she will be just like her parents.

There are problems around menstruation among young women, because they can't have proper explanation and guidance.

Women are having less opportunity in income than men, and that should be changed.

Conclusion:

It is our impression that the women of Basa are quite strong and self dependent. They feel free to speak out and to express their opinion. But they admit that they have less idea what and how to implement changes. But they are very much ready and are welcoming our WEP very much. Of course we did meet the most active women from 3 WG, so the situation could look different if we ask the rest. At least in Khastap it will not be necessary to start from bottom with forming WG, as they are already existing and in action, but probably there could be difficulties to unite those groups for common work.

The women expressed that they are ready to provide any service to the project team, like giving a clean and nice accommodation.

Map of Basa - UDC

POPULATION 10,000 - 7,000 LIVING IN BASA

