

# Second National Conference of Women Farmer

'Women's Land Ownership and Identity: Livelihood and Self-dignity'



## SUMMARY REPORT

National Land Rights Forum (NLRF)

Community Self-reliance Center (CSRC)

## **Summary Report – Second National Conference of Women Farmer**

### ***'Women's Land Ownership and Identity: Livelihood and Self-dignity'***

Agriculture has always been considered as an important sector that can contribute to sustainable livelihood and improved economic opportunities in Nepal. Moreover, it has been the mainstream of national economy in the past and likely to remain the same for many years to come. In Nepal, women constitute 51.5% of the total population with more than 90 percent engaged in agriculture. Nepalese women, as in other third world countries, are responsible for food production, processing, supply of firewood, forage, water and perform most other works to sustain their family. In a patriarchy country like Nepal, a land right is a fundamental to women's empowerment and food security. Women are the one who contributes maximum time in agricultural works but sadly they are the one who are deprived from the land rights. Land rights bring about security, independence and confidence which together enable women to become active in all social and political arenas. Hence, women in the country are the key members of the farm families bearing major responsibilities for agriculture, forest and other natural resource management. Thus it is clear that women have multiple roles in increasing agriculture production and managing the natural resources to achieve the goal of sustainable agricultural and environmental development.

The Second National Conference of Farmer Women was held from 3-5 March, 2013 at Thimura, Chitwan with the participation of 162 women from 48 districts of Nepal. The conference was organized with focused discussion on 'Women's Land Ownership and Identity'. The conference well speculated the women's issues by announcing the action point. The conference was successful in raising the voice of land-poor and women farmer in the domain of ensuring equitable land rights. The program was jointly organized by National Land Rights Forum (NLRF) and Community Self-reliance Center (CSRC).

#### **Objectives:**

- Enhancing the knowledge of frontline leader to strengthen the women and land rights campaign.
- Sharing and exchanging learning and experiences of rural women frontline leaders and bringing forth the issue of women and land rights.
- Formulate the effective strategy and program for the implementation of Joint Land Ownership Campaign.
- Initiate the debate to ensure the issue of women and land rights on policy and planning through political parties, concerned stakeholders, agency/organization and media respectively.

## Outcomes

- Provided the platform for landless women farmer to express their feelings, build power along with exchange knowledge and learning.
- Enhanced the debate on women and land rights and also prepared action plan for the substantial expansion of joint land ownership campaign.
- Increased understanding on legal aspect of women's issues and build capacity of rural women farmer leaders.
- Enhanced the importance and procedures involved in making joint land ownership certificate.
- Provided a strong basis to take forward the movement linking it with human rights.
- Helped to entrench the culture of movement, deepen the agenda of movement and enhance the leadership of frontline leaders.
- The women farmers expressed that the women land entitlement will certainly build up their confidence and bring change in their living. Women' access to land along with natural resources will ultimately enhance the women's power. The government of Nepal has made policy announcement which makes it easier for women to be granted joint ownership of their husband's land. The cost to the wife of affecting this transfer of ownership is a tax of 100 NPR. In addition a 40% discount in the land registration fee will be granted to village women living in remote areas.
- The issue was raised upon regarding not only for the provision of discount while preparing joint land ownership certificate but it should be legally announced compulsory. The systematic approach and team must be mobilized in specific places for the expansion of joint land ownership campaign.

## Inauguration Session

Mr. Marceline P. Rozario, Country Representative of Lutheran World Federation Nepal (LWF) inaugurated the conference as a chief guest. Mr. Rozario stressed that women's movement for land rights is the fight for livelihood, justice and dignity. He extended his solidarity towards women's peaceful struggle for the land rights and considered it as a major endeavor to ensure women's land entitlement and ownership. Meanwhile, Jagat Basnet Executive Director of CSRC stressed that access and control over the land is a means of farmer women's identity and power, and we should struggle for the acquisition of our rights. The NLRF Chairperson, Som Prasad Bhandari shared, women is pragmatic focus in land rights movement. NLRF has been consistently raising the issue of women by which the joint land ownership campaign has also been possible.

### **Key Points raised in Inauguration session**

- A woman contributes a total of 60 Percent on agricultural work. But only 19.71 percent women have land ownership. (Nepal Census Report 2011). The rural women do not have an access over land, because of which they are not being able to come forefront and demand for their rights. A women's joint land ownership campaign has already started, but there is a need to further strengthen the campaign and give the model of women's economic security. There is enormous scope to link the women's economic security initiatives to the national land and agrarian reform movement and policy advocacy work. This is one of the major social empowerment campaigns but due to minimal public advocacy and dissemination of information the campaign is not reaching up to nationwide.
- Women's movement for land rights is the fight for livelihood, justice and dignity. Access and control over the land is a means of farmer women's identity and power. Land Rights is the issue of human rights and is the key to the entitlement of other rights. Women's status will be enhanced, only when they are secured in economic, cultural and political sector. If women are economically strong, then only we can move towards the social development, so the concrete action is needed for women to become economically strong enhancing social development.
- The conscious need of women's campaign and movement for the land ownership. Need of concrete action towards developing the definite plan for the community development through gender inclusion. State overlooks the women as a second class citizen. Hence the woman does not have an access to justice. The voices of women must be heard upon not as a woman but as a citizen. Moreover the women's movement is compulsion for reaching out nationwide, which can ensure the women's land ownership.

### **Training Session:**

#### **Women's Economic Rights: Krishna Pathak, Program Co-ordinator, Lutheran World Federation Nepal**

Women in developing country are the backbone of the subsistence economy and contribute significantly to economic production. Economic independence can be a source of empowerment for women. To ensure the holistic development of women, women must be well aware about the economic rights and economic security. Women should be involved in all stages of income generating activities; they should decide which activities to engage in and how to sell and market. When women are given opportunity to earn their own income; this empowers them by increasing their confidence and self-esteem. The women must enjoy the social security as well while talking about their rights and entitlement.

As women are deprived of land rights, they are most likely to be vulnerable towards domestic violence and other oppressions. But if they have a land entitlement then they will have a legal ownership of land which ultimately enhances their living and confidence. To ensure the women's access in economic sector, we should start from the community frontline leaders for bringing an expected change. Economic security is linked with women's life and security. Forming an agricultural co-operative, engaging in agriculture profession and expansion of co-operatives movement is to be prioritized for the sustainable security.

### **Women's Empowerment and Participation- Jyoti Baidya, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, CSRC**

Without the active and equal participation of women, overall development of nation is not possible. But due to poverty, lack of education and cultural beliefs, the women are not being able to equally participate in development process. Patriarchal values are dominant in Nepal and create barriers to women's participation at all levels. The existing culture of gender discrimination is hampering the women's empowerment process. The structure and development of the economy is based on the male ideology in which the contribution of women is undervalued. Women are expected to look after the home and only undertake the home-based income generation works so that they do not leave the home. Because of which women have not been able to have a sound representation in society, community management, women leadership, and political participation.

The participation does not mean making the women attend the program and registering their names but it is all about the meaningful participation. One must ensure that there is a committed participation of women and not a ceremonial participation. Women's involvement in decision-making at all levels is essential. Moreover it is equally necessary to discuss about the women's right, formation and mobilization of co-operatives and about active participation in their organization. Until and unless women does not get mobilized in a group, it is quite difficult to actively get participate in social activities. So making all of the women get involved in economic activities ultimately enhancing their confidence and capacity is one of the major initiatives with regard to women's meaningful representation and participation.

The term empowerment is all about women being able to take their decision on own and plan accordingly independently. The most important feature of the term empowerment is that it contains the word power. People must understand that through the process of women's empowerment both men and women will be empowered. Women's empowerment is not against men, but against the system of patriarchy and all its manifestations. If a woman is strong, then her husband will also have the support of a strong woman and contribute financially as well. And the husband will also be free from the burden of being the sole bread winner. Through the empowerment process, male domination will decrease and violence against women will also be eventually reduced

Access and control over the land and other natural resources including access to saving and credit is important to the empowerment process. When women are given the opportunity to earn their own income, this empowers them by increasing their confidence and self esteem. Similarly, income generating activities are an important step towards empowerment. Such activities provide women with access to and control over resources. Through which they can realize their independent source of income which in turn raises their status in society. If the word empowerment is simply used as a substitute for women in development programs then it will not be achieved. However if a program aims to bring change both to women's condition as well as their position, this will play a vital role in empowering process of women. Only with the joint effort of reformers, policy planners and committed workers strategies to empower women can be taken ahead effectively.

### **Struggle and Success of Single Women- Rajin Rayamajhi, Legal Officer, Women for Human Rights (WHR)**

The single women in our country have been overlooked and trapped within a cultural and religious framework. With the death of the husband the woman has to face varied problems and much harsher situation. There are some positive situations laws towards the rights of the single women but due to deep rooted cultural pattern of society the single women are compelled to stay single in their marital home ignoring the difficulties they have to face. They prefer to be dependent than be unwelcomed in her parental home. A young single woman is often viewed as an adversary. In a patriarchal society, we can see a single woman living a dejected life ignoring every reason to be happy as if they have committed a sin. One of the biggest traumas that the single woman faces after the death of their husband is the whole questions of support of shelter. A definite social change alone can alleviate the trauma of single women. The single woman needs social encouragement to get over her traumas. The first outmost thing is that single women require a time and space to meet organize and unleash their own power for change. The organizations agencies should be sensitized about the legal provisions with regard to single women and implement into practice. It is necessary to build social awareness and to change the mind of people towards single women.

WHR currently has 1050 single women groups in 73 districts with a membership base of over 80,000. These single women are organized and trained to act as agents of change in their respective communities. WHR has formed the National Network for Single Women which includes the Ministry of Women and other national and international organization. Over a time WHR has trained and mobilized thousands of single women as change agents which resulted in decreasing violence at local level.

### **Human Rights and Movement- Mukunda Kattel, Human Rights Advisor, DanidaHUGOU**

Land rights movement must be independent, equal and creative. Women have a power to change the structure. To ensure the women's right there is a need of effective policy and law with regard to reduction of women violence and oppressions. The women's right can be ensured by establishing friendly constitution, conscious attention of state on women's violence, equal share of men and women on parental property and providing equal opportunity in education and employment. So for attaining this we need to internalize about its acquisition process and must initiate a strong and peaceful movement.

Movement is the intellectual path of problem solving. If the movement has been organized with meaningful and genuine objective then it will be certainly focused on equality and justice. There will be participation of deprived people with strong voices. So we must be clear about the objective of initiating campaign and movement with specific demands. Then only we can reach up to our aim and enshrine our rights.

### **Joint Land Ownership Campaign, Kalpana Karki, Regional Program Officer CSRC**

Over a time a number of women led land rights campaigns have brought about important changes at national policy level. The campaign was started by members of NLRP and staff of CSRC, and supported by other like-minded individuals. This collective effort brought about important changes at national policy level. Thus joint land ownership campaign is one of the major social empowerment campaigns but due to minimal public advocacy and dissemination of information the campaign is not reaching up to nationwide which is to be geared up with definite action point.

The Government of Nepal directed the implementation of the joint ownership certificate of land which was announced in the budget speech of 2011 but people are not aware on this. Since the issue of women's land rights is also the cultural issue, there is a need of strong campaign at the household and local level bringing all the stakeholders in the process. Women's joint ownership campaign has already started in many districts. Moreover the cost to the wife of effecting this transfer of ownership is a tax of 100 NPR. In addition a 40% discount in the land registration fee will be granted to village women living in remote areas. It has been agreed that both the husband and wife would have ownership of the land to be provided by the state, and the assurance to simplify the procedure for transferring the ownership of land from the husband to the wife paved the way for ensuring women's right to land.

Unequal land ownership between men and women is one of the major barriers in our development process and it is one of the root causes of poverty as well as domestic violence. A woman may have a legal right to inherit property, but this may remain merely on paper if the claim does not have socio-cultural legitimacy or if the law is not enforced. There is also a

distinction between ownership and effective control of land. It is sometimes assumed that legal ownership carries with it the right of control in all its senses, but in fact, legal ownership may be accompanied by restrictions on disposal by socio- cultural norms and practices.

### **Women in Land Rights Movement- Jagat Deuja, Program Manager CSRC**

Women have a major role in production and utilization of natural resources. Being deprived of the land rights reflects being in state identity less and deprived of basic needs. Different campaigns and movement is ongoing for the access and ownership over land of tilling farmers. As per which simultaneously major two issues are being raised upon i.e. those who are landless must be provided a land and must ensure that both men and women have an ownership of land. Another is both men and women must have a joint land ownership of land.

The movement must address the poverty and injustice and bring positive and institutional change. Effective social movement is the process of social restructuring. The concept of movement is not only protest, procession and padlocking but rather it's a process of development of alternatives. In land rights movement there is a need of equal participation of women and men. Although there have been various attempts for promoting women's inclusion quantitatively but the representation of women is very minimal in decision making which is a serious issue to be dealt with.

The main objective of our movement is forming a real and genuine frontline leader who can actively work for the social change. They are the one to bring real change in the society. Basically state should have provided effective remedies and power to those who are powerless. But state is not giving proper attention to address these issues. That is why we need a strong people's organization. Organizing the people not only means forming and mobilizing the group but their action is more important. We need to focus on building the sustainable and self-reliant group. By ensuring the land rights of farmer, there is a need of subsequent increment in the production and productivity to increase the income. Women's access and control over land will certainly gear up the movement of equality. In land rights movement; there is enormous scope to work on women land rights and their leadership issues which is to be taken ahead considerately.

### **Women's Right on Natural Resources - Dinmani Pokharel, Legal Advocate**

Although women are legally entitled of basic rights they are not being able to enjoy their rights fully. In the constitution it has been stated that women are independent and equal. But only in the papers the equality of women is being clearly mentioned which is lacking in the implementation part. Hence there is an urgency of bringing it into action. In the periphery of campaigning rights the issues related to land, natural resources and water is the basic domain where women can claim over it. In the movement being aware with the fact that small activities play a vital role,



subsequently through the depth discussion definite action plan is to be prepared. In the existing law there is clear provision of joint land ownership and equal share of women on parental property which is not being exerted into practice. Further the effective campaign and strategies must be planned with regard to amendment of statute of community forestry by clearly mentioning women who are dependent on forest must have the right to utilize it. There is a provision of 33 percent of women representation in community forestry, for which all of the women must initiate a strong campaign to achieve it.

### **The Future of Land Rights Movement- Jagat Basnet Executive Director, CSRC**

The joint land ownership policy has been brought into practice with continuous struggle and various women led campaigns. Now there is a need to expand the campaign nationwide with an ultimate of increasing the women's land ownership. Only for the sake of preparing a joint land ownership with 2-3 couple will not bring visible impact. But instead tenant farmers themselves must initiate and understand the importance of joint land ownership campaign and the positive changes that it can bring in the women's life. For this intensive discussion and interaction on women and land rights along with strengthening the campaign is to be prioritized.

#### **Things to be considered in future:**

1. The campaign can only take lead when we are committed to initiate on own and become exemplary amongst all. Promise that I will also make joint land ownership certificate and inspire 5-10 couple to prepare the joint certificate.
2. Annually how many days and monthly how many days we can contribute our time and effort towards people's organization must be discussed and exerted into practice.
3. Land reform practice must start from the village level. We are the real practitioner of land reform process.
4. Community resource has got a power. The strong and self-sustained movement fund must be established in people's organization.
5. Each member must be alert and conscious on community issues and problems.
6. The joint land ownership campaign must expand from village level to national level.
7. There must be clear plan of people's organization of minimum 3 years on the basis of target and achievement.
8. In each organization there must be effective discussion regarding positive thinking amongst organized members ensuring good conduct and behavior.
9. We will get success only when we can move forward with new thinking, initiative and behavior.

**Walawati Rajbanshi, Jhapa**

I got married in early age and had to face a domestic violence. After I got organized in Village Level Land Rights Forum (VLRG), I became aware of the women's right and learnt to claim for our rights. Now I have succeeded in acquiring the share of property from husband as well.

**Yasodha Rakhal, Sindhupalchowk**

After being involved in land movement, I acquired the *Guthi* Land and subsequently made joint land ownership certificate. By now we have also initiated farming, from which good earnings is being received.

**Pabitra Aryal, Bardiya**

We spend maximum time in agriculture farming but do not have ownership over land. So we will strongly raise the issue through our campaign and succeed in acquisition of land ownership.

**Subhadra Bajgain, Lalitpur**

I was the first in the lalitpur district to prepare a joint land ownership certificate. Through the conference I have acquired other legal information required for expanding the campaign which I will implement it further to strengthen the campaign.

**Nirmala Tharu, Member Tesanpur Village Land Rights Forum, Bardiya**

I have reached till here facing a lot of struggle. I am looking after my family by working at other's home. I had to face a traumatic situation due to death of my son. But after the NLRG's Third National Conference held in Janakpur, I felt that my life has taken a new turn when I met many other people going through the same pain and suffering. We don't know how the land certificate looks like, why *Kamaiya* and landless people do not possess a land. We are the one who till the land but we don't own land. Our demand is all human must have equal rights. The place where we are currently residing is being evicted. This is the situation of all women in the nation. Thus, we need land rights and we are also equal to the men.

**Kalpana Dhamala, Central Committee Member of CPN-Maoist**

There is a conscious need of women's campaign and movement for the land ownership. For ensuring the women's land rights, major things to be considered are the women's labor work must be evaluated properly and must be counted in G.D.P as well, equal share of parental property to both son and daughter, women must have right to protect their body and equal participation of women in state protection agencies, army respectively. Hence we need to institutionalize these basic indicators for the equal representation of women. The women must have an equal access over the services and opportunities provided by the government.

### **Dr. Dila Sangraula- Chairperson of Nepal Women Association**

If women are economically strong, then only we can move towards the social development, so the concrete action is needed for women to become economically strong enhancing social development. The household work of the women must also be evaluated and move towards the process of social restructuring. Further there is a strong need of active mobilization of women in the increment of agricultural production and productivity.

### **Binda Pandey, Central Member, CPN-UML**

CSRC and NLRP have a key role in enhancing women's land entitlement. Joint land ownership campaign is indeed another alternative to ensure women's right over land. We are committed to involve the party members in expanding this campaign effectively.

### **Yamuna Ghale, Senior Program Officer, Swiss Development Corporation (SDC)**

Land rights movement is the movement of poor, landless women but tragic part is all of the benefits are being taken by privileged group. Further, the issue of land is not being properly heard upon by the state; so our struggle is towards state to provide land ownership and make our voice heard. We being a woman must fight with the state demanding for our land rights. For this major initiation there is a need of strong voice and support of rural women.

### **Mohna Ansari, Member of National Women Commission- Chief Guest of Conference**

In the present context as well, state overlooks the women as a second class citizen. Thus the woman does not have an access to justice. At present as well the women's issues are not addressed legally. The voices of women must be heard upon not as a woman but as a citizen. Moreover the women's movement is compulsion for reaching out nationwide, which can only ensure the women's land ownership. Women are genuinely demanding for the land ownership as land gives them identity, freedom and self-respect.

### **Som Prasad Bhandari, Chairperson NLRP**

The three days women conference has given us a strength and energy to expand the joint land ownership campaign in more effective manner. We have also announced the action points and declaration as an outcome of conference which will subsequently follow up for its practical implementation.

## Annex: 1

### 'Women's Land Ownership and Identity: Livelihood and Self-dignity'

Women Rights on Land: National Conference  
3-5 March, 2013  
Thimura, Chitwan  
Program Schedule

Date	Time	Program/Subject	Facilitator
First Day : 3rd March			
	8:30-9:30	Registration	Sarita Luitel and Geeta Pandit
Inaugration Session	9:30- 12:00	Chair: Renuka Poudel, Secretary Community Self Reliance Center	
		Guest Staged	
		Welcome : Saraswoti Subba Secretary National Land Rights Forum Nepal	
		Program Inaugration	
		Program objective and process	
		Speech : Sharing of Frontline leader (2 Person)	
		Song on the issue of land	
		Speech : Jagat Basnet, Executive Director, CSRC	
		Speech : Som Prasad Bhandari, Chairperson NLRF	
		Speech : Mukunda Kattel Human Rights Advisor, Danida HUGOU	
		Speech: Marceline P. Rozario, Country Director, Lutheran World Federation (LWF)	
		Speech: Revenue Officer, Land Reform and Management Ministry	
	Closing Remarks: Renuka Poudel, Secretary CSRC		
	12:00-1:00	Lunch	
Training	1:00-2:30	Women's Economic Rights	Krishna Pathak. Program Co-ordinator (LWF)
	2:30-3:30	Women Participation and Empowerment	Jyoti Baidya, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, CSRC
	3:30-3:45	Break	
	3:45-5:45	Struggle and Success of Single Women	Rajin Rayamajhi, Lawyer, WHR

	6:30-7:00	Documentary(Video) Show National Movement, Burundian Women Take Charge	–
<b>Second Day : 4<sup>th</sup> March</b>			
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Facilitator</b>
Review	8:30-9:30	Review of Previous day	
Training	9:30-11:30	Human Rights and Movement	Mukunda Kattel Human Rights Advisor, DanidaHUGOU
	11:30-12:30	Women's Right on Natural Resources	Dinmani Pokharel, Legal Advocate
	12:30:1:30	Lunch	–
	1:30-3:00	Joint Land Ownership Campaign	Kalpana Karki, Regional Program Officer, CSRC
	3:00-4:30	Women in Land Rights Movement	Jagat Deuja, Program Manager, CSRC
	4:30-6:00	The Future of Land Rights Movement	Jagat Basnet Executive Director, CSRC
	6:00-7:00	Break	–
Video Documentary		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Saree Soldiers</li> <li>• Jameen Jindagi</li> </ul>	–
<b>Third Day : 5th March</b>			
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Facilitator</b>
	8:30-9:00	Review of Previous Day	–
	9:00-10:00	Sharing and Struggle of Frontline Leaders	
Discussion and Debate	10:00-1:00	Rural Women, Struggle for Resources and Politics	Binda Pandey Kalpana Dhamala Dina Upadhyaya Yamuna Ghale
	1:00-2:00	Lunch	–
	2:00-3:30	Open Discussion and Discussion on Declaration Paper	–
Closing Ceremony	3:30-5:00	Speech: Mohna Ansari, Member National Women Commission	
		Closing with a Song on Land Rights	–