

# Preface

USAID's Safe-WASH II Activity is a five-year project implemented by SEBAC Nepal in four districts of Province No. 7. The project aims to improve the sanitation status and hygiene behavior of the community; to enhance people's access to quality drinking water; to improve local governance and maintenance of water, sanitation and hygiene facilities; and to empower local women and socially excluded groups. The activity also strives to promote efficient use of Safe drinking water in Kailali, Kanchanpur, Darchula, and Achham districts. USAID's Safe WASH II Activity contributed to declaring three districts-Kailali, Kanchanpur, and Darchula Open Defecation Free (ODF) in 2017 and 2018. The activity has constructed 40 well-functioning drinking water supply schemes, 49 public toilets, and 107 hand pumps at the community level.



We have provided glimpses of USAID's Safe WASH II Activity's achievements in this booklet as a collection of success stories in the areas of water supply management, sanitation, and hygiene. These stories reflect the changes brought about in the daily lives of people as well as their new voices, perceptions, and behaviors. Their lifestyle and health status has visibly improved. Thanks to the project and the community, it supported, each household in four districts has a toilet; and the number of cases of water-borne diseases has decreased. More remains to be done in this sector, and concerted efforts are going on at the local and provincial levels.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Shrestha'.

**Narayan Bahadur Shrestha**

Chief of Party

USAID's Safe WASH II and Safaa Paani Activity

*This booklet is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of SEBAC-Nepal and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.*

# WHO WE ARE

SEBAC Nepal is a national level service oriented non-governmental organization working since 1997, helping marginalized communities to improved their access to health, nutrition, sanitation, education, agriculture promotion, and income generation.

The overall objective of SEBAC-Nepal is to measure the achievements particularly in terms of changes adopted as well as to improve learning. It is accountable towards its stakeholders, donors and target beneficiaries to enhance learning for betterment of future missions.

The effective delivery of services results under the four thematic areas (WASH, Governance and Peace Building, Livelihoods and Natural Resource Management, Disaster Risk Management including Climate Change). Altogether, 52 projects are implemented by SEBAC Nepal. Out of which 7 falls under WASH, 12 under Agricultural / Livelihoods, Nutrition and Natural Resource Management, 5 under Disaster Risk Management including Climate Change, 7 under Governance and Peace Building, 11 under different construction related projects, 5 under Education and 5 under Health awareness programs. 1098 professionals' regular staff were deployed and mobilized for different thematic intervention.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene is a prime sector which SEBAC-Nepal has been promoting in various districts together with different donors. SEBAC-Nepal has been collaborating with district level NGOs to reach deprived communities in Doti, Achham, Bajura, Darchula, Kanchanpur, Kailali, Dolakha and Sindhupalchowk districts. It has put larger emphasis on slum dwellers, squatters and the poor while catering services on water supply, sanitation and hygiene. SEBAC-Nepal is equally committed towards advancing Open Defecation Free and Total Sanitation interventions led by the Government of Nepal keeping in view as its core development mandates and the spirit of the Sustainable Development Goal targets.

While implementing program the crosscutting issues such as – “Do not harm”, for Conflict Sensitivity Program Management, “Leaves no one behind” for GESI and “NO exceptions for any individual” for Human rights were always taken into consideration while implementing projects.

Till date, SEBAC Nepal has received 200 awards from various organizations for its outstanding performance in different thematic areas.

# Contents

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>SANITATION AND HYGIENE.....</b>                                 | <b>3</b>  |
| 1. Toilets for Dignity and Health in Far-West Nepal.....           | 3         |
| 2. Water Management for Village Sanitation.....                    | 4         |
| 3. Finally: When Toilets Become a Priority.....                    | 5         |
| 4. Investment in Toilets Pays Off.....                             | 6         |
| 5. Smart Leadership for a Cleaner Environment.....                 | 7         |
| 6. A Senior Citizen Shows the Way.....                             | 8         |
| 7. Public Toilet in Masuriya: A Sanitation Model.....              | 9         |
| 8. A Single Woman Advocates for Personal Hygiene.....              | 10        |
| 9. Please, Don't Wait for Donations for Home Toilets.....          | 11        |
| 10. For a Happy and Productive life.....                           | 12        |
| 11. Build Toilet, Save Money.....                                  | 13        |
| <b>DRINKING WATER SUPPLY.....</b>                                  | <b>14</b> |
| 1. Water Supply Scheme: Boon for Kitchen Gardening.....            | 14        |
| 2. Supply of Safe Drinking Water for Students.....                 | 15        |
| 3. From Open Canal to Safe Drinking Water.....                     | 16        |
| <b>CHHAUPADI.....</b>  | <b>17</b> |
| 1. An Eye Opener against Chhaupadi Practice.....                   | 17        |
| 2. Change in Perception and Practice among Menstruating Women..... | 18        |
| 3. Menstruating Woman's Journey from Chaugoth to Home.....         | 19        |
| <b>COORDINATION.....</b>   | <b>20</b> |

# SANITATION AND HYGIENE

## Toilets for Dignity and Health in Far-West Nepal



*Figure 1: A girl cleaning the toilet in Shantikaman Tole, Kanchanpur*

Shantikamana Tole is one of the most crowded settlements in Bhimdutta Municipality of Kanchanpur District. The settlement consists of 56 households with a heterogeneous community, having members of various ethnic groups. The majority of the households subsist on daily wages earned through menial labor. Houses in this community are attached to each other, leaving little or no space for separate toilets for each household.

Previously, 295 people defecated in open places. Consequently, there was a higher incidence of water-borne diseases in the community. There was no proper waste management scheme in place. This led to frequent outbreaks of various diseases.

The situation changed after USAID's Safe WASH II Activity was implemented in Kanchanpur District. It has contributed to improving the health behavior of the people and the overall sanitation status of the community.

All of this was not possible without the efforts of the project staff and community members. The staff organized meetings with household members to familiarize them with the concepts of sanitation and hygiene. They also oriented them to adopt healthy practices and convinced them to build toilets. Their advocacy for sanitation and hygiene continued. It also took them to open 'defecation fields'

in the wee hours, when they blew whistles to stop the bad practice and to remind people of sanitation and hygiene. After the implementation of Safe WASH II Activity, the communities were motivated to build toilets and adopt healthy practices. At present, the community has 16 individual household toilets and 21 communal toilets.

"The change is visible," says Sushila Urau, a local resident, "There are fewer cases of diarrhea and skin disease this year, as compared to previous years."

The project revisited the households and the families they supported and was gratified that the families are using their toilets. They also clean the toilets regularly and keep their surroundings clean. More children have developed the habit of using toilets as well as washing hands properly. The community leader, Dev Kumari Chaudhary, adds, "The community has realized the importance of functional toilets and sanitation. So much so, they saved money for toilet construction." The Safe WASH II Activity has helped the community live a dignified and healthier life. The people of Shantikamana Tole have declared it an 'open defecation free' community.

## Water Management for Village Sanitation

Tallo Sarsi of Marma Rural Municipality-6 in Darchula District is one of the remotest settlements in Nepal. The village lacks proper road access, health, and communication facility. However, the community has a social unit that is active and works for the welfare of the people. Around 276 people of the Chhetri population group reside in this village. They are farmers, and most of the younger community members have rejected farming and migrated to India for better employment opportunities.

Initially, the sanitation status of the village was poor with a higher incidence of water-borne diseases, improper waste management, and open defecation practices. Although some communities had toilets, they did not use them regularly because of water scarcity. The community also lacked information and awareness about sanitation and hygiene practices.

Now, the scenario of Darchula has changed, following the implementation of the USAID-supported Safe WASH II Activity. The activity supported the community with a drinking water supply scheme along with regular awareness-raising meetings to highlight the importance of toilets as part of its sanitation and hygiene campaign in Far-west Nepal. The village has a public tap. Each household has a utensil dryer, a washing platform, waste pit, and toilet.

“This village has changed completely. It is cleaner now. There is sufficient water. More people and children are using toilets regularly,” Dale Bista, a local resident, says with pride. He believes that if this sanitation and hygiene practices continue and spread to adjoining villages, the district will soon become healthy, happy, and prosperous.



*Figure 2: A community tap has helped keep the settlement clean in Tallo Sarsi, Darchula*

## Finally: When Toilets Become a Priority

Bhagiya Chaudhary lives in Ward No. 7, Thapapur village, of Kailali district with her son, daughter-in-law, grandson, and granddaughter. Bhagiya takes care of her grandchildren. Her son and daughter-in-law are away from home for work.

Since 2014, USAID's Safe WASH II Activity has operated in Thapapur. Under a district level campaign for Open Defecation Free (ODF) areas, the community started constructing individual toilets rapidly. However, Bhagiya was not keen on constructing a toilet, even though she was well aware of its importance. Convincing her to build and use a toilet at her house took considerable time and efforts. Project staff and community leaders met her several times and tried to convince her to construct a toilet soon. Yet, she made no response nor took any action.

On another front, the ODF campaign geared up and involved local schools. The schools emphasized the need to construct toilets through students who conveyed the messages to their parents. Students who had toilets at home were praised for their sanitation and hygiene practices.

This technique reached Bhagiya's grandchildren, who shared their learning with their grandmother. She still appeared indifferent to their request. Soon, they insisted that they would not go to school unless they could report that they had a toilet at home. They stopped going to school and threatened that they would not sit for their exams.

During one of the door-to-door visits, project staff visited Bhagiya and explained the benefits of having a toilet at home and the importance of hygiene and sanitation. Feeling the pressure from all sides, she finally changed her mind. Bhagiya constructed a toilet in five days and started using it. Her grandchildren resumed school and also use the toilet regularly.

"I was stubborn. I had decided that I would never build a toilet at home but my grandchildren opened my eyes and made me realize its importance. I have also realized that one needs determination first to build a toilet," Bhagiya says. "Better late than never! Having a toilet at home has made our life easier and healthy."



*Figure 3: Bhagiya Chaudhary in front of her newly constructed toilet*

## Investment in Toilets Pays Off

Joshipur village of Kailali District is multi-lingual and multi-cultural. Nar Bahadur BK, a blacksmith, belongs to this community where he lives with his wife, two sons, and a daughter in Bhitraiya community of Ward No. 3. Villagers pay him for his blacksmithing work in kind with crops, but his income is not sufficient to fully care for his family.

The Open Defecation Free (ODF) campaign launched by USAID’s Safe WASH II Activity encouraged Joshipur communities to build a toilet in for each household. As a result, numerous toilets were constructed—but not in the poorest households—and Nar Bahadur came from one of these. He could not build a toilet for his family, because he did not have access to cash.

Nar Bahadur attended orientation classes on hygiene and sanitation provided by USAID’s Safe WASH II Activity team. Realizing the urgency of the matter, he made up his mind to save a portion of the grains that he received in payment and sell them in the market to collect money and build a toilet at home.

Over several months, he saved, sold a portion of his hard-earned grains, and collected a total of NRs. 12, 000. With these earning, he built a toilet. “Saving grains and building a toilet is a great investment for me and my family for a healthier life,” he said.

These days, it has become easier for his family to use the toilet whenever they want. Good hygiene practices have helped his family keep diarrheal diseases at bay. Nar Bahadur BK is an inspiration for his community. Although his family did not have a steady income in cash, they sacrificed for the short term to have a chance to practice healthy behaviors that will help make their futures brighter.



Figure 4: Nar Bahadur and his children near his toilet at home in Kailali

## Smart Leadership for Cleaner Environment

A forest adjoining Barket, Gauriganga Municipality-9 was notorious for the foul odor it emitted relentlessly. The people of a nearby community were accustomed to rushing to the forest to answer the call of nature for many years. Using the forest as a toilet in odd and inconvenient hours was something the people especially women did not enjoy. Most of them did not fill their stomach well at dinner, because they wanted to avoid forest visits at night. They had no other option, because they did not have toilets on their premises. Things changed for the better after USAID's Safe WASH II Activity was implemented in 2014. The activity oriented stakeholders and Gauriganga Municipality officials in the Open Defecation Free (ODF) campaign; and they, in turn, motivated the communities to build toilets.

While the motivational campaign induced many to construct toilets, Barket community did not engage. The leaders of the community forest user group (CFUG) met and discussed the issue with the women of Barket community, who were all of the Dalit caste the so called "untouchable" caste. The women explained that they wanted to build toilets, but their daily income was not enough to do so.

The leadership knew this to be true. So, Prem Singh Tandi, CFUG Chairperson, raised the problem of affordability with other CFUG members; and they devised a solution. The CFUG offered to guarantee the payments for toilet construction materials purchased by Dalit community members. The Dalit women agreed to pay as soon as their husbands returned to their homes with income earned through migration. This solution was put into action; and, within a month, all 30 houses built individual toilets and stopped using the forest to relieve themselves.

"These days, we do not have to run into the bushes and jungle," said a community member. The community is thankful to Prem Singh for creating an environment that ensures sanitation and hygiene by offering 'collateral' between the vendors and the community people who want to build toilets and improve their lives and their communities.



*Figure 5: Each household in Barket community, Kailali, now has a toilet.*

## A Senior Citizen Shows the Way

Napata Bhandari, a 62-year-old single woman, lives in a small hut in Ward No. 12 of Bhimdatta Municipality. She lives on a monthly old-age allowance from the government.

Napata participated in an orientation event organized by USAID's Safe WASH II Activity. The event highlighted the harmful effects of open defecation, the need for household toilets, and the importance of personal hygiene and sanitation.

The orientation class opened her eyes and made her realize that she has been adversely affecting her community's health by defecating in open places. So, she became determined to construct a toilet as soon as possible.

"I decided to build a toilet as soon as I came out from that WASH orientation class organized by SEBAC Nepal," said Napata. "The orientation class made me realize that I had been doing a wrong thing by defecating outside and creating an environment for spreading diseases very easily. After I got my monthly allowance, I increased it by borrowing money from my friends and relatives and constructed a toilet near my house."

Napata stands as a good example for sanitation and hygiene in her community where some people still ignore the importance of having a household toilet and cite lack of money as an excuse for not having a toilet at home.



*Figure 6: Napata Bhandari in front of her toilet*

## Public Toilet in Masuriya: A Sanitation Model

Masuriya Toilet, which is situated in Masuriya Bazaar, Gauriganga Municipality of Kailali District, has become a model public toilet. It was constructed jointly by USAID's Safe WASH II Activity and Masuriya Market Management Committee. The facility has been rendering valuable service to travelers, market-goers, and local residents, offering both toilets and a shower space where the travelers can freshen up.

The toilet facility has a small adjoining fruit shop run by a caretaker who has been appointed by the Market Management Committee. Dhansara Devi Dewal, caretaker for the public toilet and the fruit shop, is energetic with sales and tending the facility from dawn to dusk.

"I am proud to work as a caretaker for the toilet and help the community," she said.

Dewal cleans the whole toilet facility five times a day. The users do not hesitate to pay after using the clean and well-maintained facility.

"The management committee has fixed a tariff for using the facility, and the users pay accordingly," she says. "The salary I earn as a caretaker plus the income from the fruit shop have helped me provide for my family."



Figure 7: (Left) Dhansara Devi Dewal cleaning a public toilet (Right) Dhansara selling fruits in her shop in front of Masuriya Public Toilet, Kailali

## A Single Woman Advocates for Personal Hygiene

Darchula women, who were commonly confined to their own four walls in years past, have come a long way in their independence and engagement in community development. One of these empowered women is Parbati Sarki, from Ward No. 7, Kharkada Village.

Parbati lost her husband two years ago, and she is illiterate. These two major life setbacks could easily derail a person, but Parbati is raising her four children and handling all household chores alone. Yet, she still finds time for social work and community development. With her helpful and friendly nature, she has played a great role in transforming her village and gaining Open Defecation Free status.

Despite her widow status and being the only adult in her family, she carried the stones, purchased the necessary materials, and built her family's toilet herself. Explaining her reasons for building the toilet, she says if she had not, her children could have been barred from obtaining scholarships; and her community may not have been eligible to receive funds for other facilities from their local government.

She didn't stop there. Parbati has helped other women who do not have male family members to construct toilets as well. Due to this, she was soundly felicitated in a district event for her continuous community development efforts.



*Figure 8: Parbati stands on the doorstep of her new toilet*

## Please, Don't Wait for Donations for Home Toilets

Dhannadevi Joshi is a widow living with her elderly mother-in-law and three children in a small hut in Ward No. 6, Pratappur Village, Kailali District. They migrated to Pratappur four years ago, and her husband passed away two years later. Solely responsible for a family of five, Dhannadevi works as a laborer at a dam construction site near the village and on does any other daily-wage-based work she can find. She does not have any assets other than her hut, which is on public property. She and her family used to defecate on riverbanks, in bushes and in open fields; and she always felt unsafe, fearing snakebites, attacks by wild animals, and ill will from others.

One day, she participated in a sanitation orientation program organized by USAID's Safe WASH II Activity. That day, she realized that a toilet would make their life Safer. She made the decision to construct a toilet to overcome her fears for her family and to improve the sanitation of her village.

She purchased the materials for toilet construction, but needed help to do the construction. So, she brought her problem to a community meeting organized by USAID's Safe WASH II Activity. Police Inspector, Nar Bahadur Thapa, immediately deployed seven police personnel from his staff to construct the toilet, which they finished in one day.

"After I decided to construct a toilet, I received encouragement and support from everyone, including my family," said Dhannadevi. "Never wait for financial aid from others to construct a toilet for your home. It is for your own good,"

Dhannadevi has become a role model for those who have modern gadgets such as televisions, cell phones, and motorcycles but wait for donations from others to construct a toilet. Dhannadevi has shown that that cultivation of desire and determination are more effective than waiting for charity. Dhannadevi set an example by constructing a permanent toilet for her temporary hut without seeking any subsidy. Thus, she contributed to her community's Open Defecation Free campaign.

## For a Happy and Productive life

Karan Raji, a 35-year-old resident of Bhuruwa Village, Trishakti Municipality, Kailali District, belongs to the Raji community who traditionally fish and collect honey and herbal plants. His indigenous community now relies on menial labor and a one-thousand-rupee government allowance for indigenous groups that are on the brink of extinction.

Due to the pressure of his precarious income situation, annual floods, and marauding by wild elephants, Karan had dropped into alcoholism.

“My excessive drinking habit made it difficult for my family to feed themselves twice a day. I did not care about them,” he says. “There was carelessness at home. In such a situation, we did not think about hygiene and cleanliness.”

His house did not have a toilet. “We used to defecate on riverbanks, open spaces, as well as around the house, which created a bad odor and an unhygienic environment,” he said. “My family frequently suffered from fecally-transmitted diseases.”

USAID’s Safe WASH II Activity initiated regular discussions, orientations, and awareness events on hygiene and sanitation in Bhuruwa; and Karan Raji joined them. It changed—and saved—his life.

“After participating in these activities, I realized the importance and benefits of having a toilet in my house,” he says. “I have given up my drinking habit,” he adds with a smile.

He has started vegetable farming and saving money and resources for rainy days. His family’s attitude towards sanitation and hygiene has changed too. USAID’s Safe-WASH II Activity team has observed that his family keeps their surroundings clean, uses the toilet regularly, and uses their fine hand washing stand.



*Figure 9: Karan Raji cleaning his toilet in Kailali*

## Build Toilet, Save Money

Ganga Thapa lives alone in Ward No. 3 of Kanchanpur Municipality. She is 41 years old and earns a living by running a small tailoring shop. However, her job did not provide her with an adequate income, and she was frequently ill.

“I had been defecating in open places until recently. I knew that toilets are a necessity and the harmful effects of defecating in the open, but I still didn’t build a toilet for myself. Instead, I defecated outside,” she says candidly.

She was suffering from diarrhea when USAID’s Safe-WASH II Activity visited her house as part of its awareness campaign.

“I talked about my health issues with them. We discussed the route of transmission of diarrheal diseases and other water-borne diseases. I shared the information about the money I had spent on my medical treatment. They advised me patiently. I finally realised that it was wiser to build a toilet and take care of my health instead of keeping on spending on my treatment for diarrheal diseases,” she says

Thapa then took a loan from a cooperative and built a toilet near her house. Her doing this inspired her neighbors to build toilets as well. Now, when she remembers her old habit of defecating in open spaces, she feels extremely shameful.



*Figure 10: Ganga Thapa stands in front of her toilet*

# DRINKING WATER SUPPLY

## Water Supply Scheme: Boon for Kitchen Gardening

Saradha Dhami lives in Dhami Gaun Pandora of Darchula district with her four children. Reflecting on how her life has recently improved, she recalls the old days of standing in a queue for hours to get her share of water from a public tap in a nearby village.

That all changed after USAID's Safe WASH II Activity supported the construction of Dhami Gau Pandora Drinking Water Supply Scheme, bringing water to 276 people in 40 households.

As the Secretary of the Dhami Gau Drinking Water User Committee, Saradha was actively involved in making this transformation for her indigenous community group. With their own drinking water scheme and water tap stands, women and girls there are relieved to give less of their everyday lives to fetch water from a distance.

At the water tap stand near Dhami's house, she has managed to use water drainage from the tap stand for kitchen gardening and sells her vegetables in a nearby market. Other people in her village have also started supplying their kitchen gardens with waste water.

"I have managed to grow vegetables and sell them in the local market," she says. "The vegetables have become a good micro-income generation activity. My family also has a regular supply of fresh and nutritious vegetables in the kitchen."

Saradha says "The Safe WASH II Activity provided awareness about hygiene and sanitation. It also constructed a drinking water supply scheme," she adds. "Now, it's our turn to take care of our drinking water scheme with good maintenance for its longevity."



*Figure 11: Saradha looks over her vegetable farming near a community tap*

## Supply of Safe Drinking Water for Students

Kailali Secondary School is located on the outskirts of Jhalari Pipladi Municipality in Kanchanpur District. It has 533 students and 19 teachers. The students relied on hand pumps for drinking water at the school, but unfortunately, the water was contaminated with arsenic.

“The only alternative that children had for drinking water was to bring water in bottles from home. During the summer, they would run out; and the shortage of drinking water caused frequent dizziness among the students. Some of them fainted,” recalls Madhu Bohara, the principal.

USAID’s Safe WASH II Activity met with the school water management committee in February 2017. They addressed the school’s problem by supporting the construction of a new drinking water supply scheme from the Safe Jhalari Drinking Water Scheme. Safe WASH II constructed a big water tank and installed several taps inside the school premises, and the school supported the scheme with construction materials and unskilled labor.

This investment has paid off well. Students no longer have to drink harmful water, nor do they have to carry drinking water from home. The students and teachers can drink arsenic-free water at school every day.



*Figure 12: Water tank and taps at Kailali Secondary School*

## From Open Canal to Safe Drinking Water

USAID's Safe WASH II Activity has helped numerous communities create Safer conditions for drinking, sanitation, and hygiene. Ranchani, a community in Ward 8 of Malikaarjun Rural Municipality, Darchula District had depended on a narrow, open, and unsafe water canal to fulfill their basic water needs. While the community was unaware of the importance of Safe drinking water and the different methods of water purification, its continuous use of contaminated water led to constantly re-occurring waterborne diseases and even child mortality.

Safe WASH II raised awareness of the links between unsafe water, poor health, and the tragic loss of community members. They assisted the community to build household toilets and contributed to Darchula's successful achievement of Open Defecation Free status. They also provided 25 households with Safe and clean water through the Ranchani Drinking Water Supply Scheme. With water more readily available, the families of Ranchani have adopted good handwashing practices. Safe WASH II helped Ranchani to fulfill its drinking water, sanitation and hygiene needs.



*Figure 13: (Left) Contaminated water canal used by villagers for drinking water in the past  
(Right) Community tap now used by villagers for clean drinking water*

# CHHAUPADI

## An Eye Opener Against Chhaupadi Practice

My name is Santu Devi Pariyar. I am 35 years old. I live with my husband, three daughters, and two sons in Ward No. 9, Hattikot of Achham District. My husband is a teacher at Kalika Secondary School.

Being the wife of a teacher, I am frequently asked whether I stay inside the house during my periods. This is how I reply.

“I used to stay at Chaugoth [a secluded hut for menstruating girls and women] when I had my periods. But I have started staying inside the house for the past three months, even when I am menstruating.”

I remember those days when I stayed outside the house in Chaugoth with my children. They often got sick from the cold. Sometimes the Chaugoth was so crowded that there would be no place for us to sleep. I also did not use our household toilet during my periods.

I changed my practice and behavior gradually. How did this happen?

My husband participated in an orientation event on hygiene, sanitation, and Chhaupadi issues. The event was organized by SEBAC Nepal. The orientation was an eye opener for him. He realized that women should no longer stay in Chaugoths and that the menstruating women should never have to stop using toilets to relieve themselves.

Although he was a teacher, he had never asked me to stay inside the house when I had my periods. That orientation has really opened my husband’s eyes and his attitude towards Chaugoth has changed. It has been three months since I have started staying inside the house. All is well in my family. I have vowed that I will never stay in Chaugoth and will not allow my daughters to follow the harmful cultural practice.



*Figure 14: Santu Devi Pariyar who went against harmful cultural practices*

## Change in Perception and Practice Among Menstruating Women

Ganga Kumal, a 38-year-old woman, resides in Ward No.6, Sanphebagar, Achham District with her three children while her husband works in Mumbai, India. Since their farm produce is not enough to feed her family, they depend on the remittance that her husband sends, without which they would be without food and other provisions. Life often feels precarious for Ganga.

Ganga has a bitter experience of staying in Chaugoth during her periods.

“In Chaugoth, we always slept crowded with our legs huddled up from lack of space. Sometimes, many menstruating women came into the hut; and that made for sleepless nights,” she said. “We were never given nutritious food during menstruation. We were compelled to take our small children to the temporary hut outside our house during menstruation. It was always a very difficult time for us,”

These are the problems not only of Ganga. What she faced is faced by all of the women who follow the Chhaupadi tradition in Achham District.

“Some years ago, Mastamandu was declared a Chhaupadi Free village. Due to external peer pressure, I stayed at home during menstruation. I thought it was wrong to stay at home during menstruation, and so I returned to Chaugoth again. I was not allowed to use the toilet during menstruation and I went to open places for defecation,” she said.

Now, Ganga and her daughter live at home during their menstruation and have abandoned Chhaupadi practices.

“Awareness and interactions” (changed my behavior), said Ganga. “I participated in one of the activities organized by SEBAC-Nepal on Chhaupadi behavior change. The discussion during the program opened my eyes,” she says.

People’s behaviors and attitudes cannot be changed by imposing new ideas and exerting pressure. Changes achieved through artificial means are short-lived. For long-term and sustainable change, people have to freely accept the new ideas and be willing to internalize the value of the change. The change in Ganga’s life was gradual, and now it looks natural.



*Figure 15: Ganga Kumal stays at her home even during her menstruation.*

## Menstruating Woman's Journey from Chaugoth to Home

My name is Mathura Upadhya. I am 48 years old. I live in Ward No. 9 of Jalpadevi Bahuni Gaun. I live with my three daughters and a son. Due to our poor financial condition, my husband works in Mumbai. We manage our living for six months a year from our farming and harvest. But, for the remaining six months, my husband's earnings support us to run our household.

"I am a Female Community Health Volunteer of my Ward. I report on the community-level progress made in health, sanitation, and hygiene to a health facility every month. I also provide them with information about child immunizations and what I learn on my advisory visits to the homes in my community.

I stay inside my house even when I have my periods. I have been following this new practice for the past two years. My menstruating daughter also stays inside the house. At the beginning, I was scared of the people around me. I was not sure they would support my decision.

Being a Brahmin, I pray regularly and change my clothes before a meal. Despite staying inside my house during menstruation, nothing wrong has happened to us. This is what I tell other community members too.

Previously, my brother-in-law used to ostracize me for staying inside the house and doing my chores during menstruation. I told him and other people that Chhaupadi practice is superstitious. It is a harmful tradition and a form of discrimination against women. My brother-in-law gradually became aware of this harmful practice. He started supporting me. Now he allows the female members of his family to stay inside the house when they are menstruating.

When I participated in the training provided by SEBAC Nepal on sanitation and hygiene, most of the participants had no toilet in their houses. I also did not have one. I decided to construct a toilet at my home, and I advocated for the community's sanitation campaign. As a result, my Ward was also declared an Open Defecation Free area. Being a leader in the community, I feel that change should start from me."



*Figure 16: Mathura Upadhya who is fighting for the rights of menstruating girls and women.*

## COORDINATION

*"SEBAC-Nepal is currently active in 10 out of 14 Wards in Achham District. It has been implementing various programs on issues of Safe drinking water and hygiene and also against harmful menstrual practices (Chhaupadi). The municipality has also been involved in these programs."*

*-Kul Bahadur Kunwar  
Mayor, Sanfebagar Municipality, Achham*

*"We are highly motivated to establish Kailali as the most hygienic district; we will proceed to achieve this."*

*-Surya Bahadur Thapa  
Chief, District Coordination Committee, Kailali*

*"It is more expensive to build toilets in the plains [Terai]. The water table is higher here. If we include construction materials, it requires over NRs. 15,000 to build a simple toilet. Cost was a major problem. However, we all played our roles to successfully make Kailali District an Open Defecation Free area"*

*-Narayan Prasad Kafle  
Chief, Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation District Office, Dhangadi*

*"Under 'one house - one latrine' program, every house in Kailali District has constructed toilets. The community has implemented the program whole heartedly and has also stopped open defecation."*

*-Ratna Kadayat  
Deputy Mayor, Godavari Municipality, Kailali*

# COVERAGE (1997-2018)



- Coverage made by SEBAC-Nepal
- Branch Office Kathmandu
- ▶ Total District Covered 36 (46.7%)

**Organization Thematic Areas**

- ★ Water, Sanitation and Hygiene/Health (WASH)
- Livelihood and Natural Resource Management
- ◆ Governance and Peach Building
- Disaster Risk Management Including Climate Change