

NUTRITION STORIES FROM MOUNTAIN



Contents

An initiative taken by
Patrasi Rural Municipality

Nutrition Education
Initiated by School

Women into
Bean Farming

Rural Service Providers
Becoming Game Changers

The idea of
Bir Bahadur

Tilkanya engaged in
Learning and Teaching

Exemplary
Initiation of School

Our Health
has Improved

Kosheli Ghar Promoting
Local Agro-products

Sur Bahadur Sees Scope in
Walnut Farming



An initiative taken by **Patarasi Rural Municipality**

Patarasi rural municipality has decided to use local products in all the social functions in order to promote native food crops. It has underlined the need to utilize the locally grown products which were earlier treated as low in quality despite being rich in nutrients.

“We have decided to put a ban on all types of junk foods and promote the culture of consuming locally prepared food items. We, in doing so, believe that it will promote locally grown agricultural products and increase its market access at the local level,” said Punnakali Mahatara, the deputy chief of the rural municipality.

It is a good initiative on the part of the rural municipality to use locally grown products in all its sections, units and social functions. Jumla district is best known for its local products for a long time. Different kinds of locally grown agricultural products rich in nutrients are grown here in this rural municipality which is situated at a high altitude. Millet, barley, buckwheat, marshi rice, beans are the main products of this rural municipality. “We have initiated this work since these foods are rich in nutrients and it will also promote local agricultural products,” said Punnakali,

Patarasi rural municipality of Jumla has done an exemplary work for the promotion of local agricultural products. The decision to use locally available nutritious food items in all its social functions and its implementation has been a good initiative.

–Punnakali Mahatara,
Deputy Chief, Patarasi Rural
Municipality



stressing the need to promote the native food items.

The rural municipality, which is the powerful body of local government, has prioritized local farming and agricultural products in its programs and created various pocket zones to this effect. Similarly, rural municipality has also introduced various programs to attract the farmers to this sector.



Chief Administrative Officer of Patarasi rural municipality Tek Bahadur Budthapa said the local body has launched awareness programs to develop farmers' habit of eating nutritious foods and educate them about the importance of local agricultural products. Budthapa mentioned that local Rural Service Provider (RSP) also lent support to the rural municipality for the promotion of

local food products. 'The RSP has been playing a vital role in bridging the gap between people's representatives and local farmers. Similarly, Deputy Mayor Punnakali Mahatara said, "We became aware of the indigenous food value because of this program and it helped preserve local products." Because of the promotion, many people are getting income generation opportunities.

"Now-a-days, locally grown food items are known as organic foods. Locally grown foods are not treated as "inferior and substandard" like before," shared Budthapa, while expressing his views on the initiative taken on the promotion of native agricultural products.

"The rural municipality has introduced this program to promote the culture of eating native food items as a lifestyle. Local agricultural products are rich in nutrients. We should disseminate this awareness among people living every nook and cranny.



Nutrition Education Initiated by School

The school has designed a curriculum in which a subject on nutrition of 100 marks out of 600 full marks in aggregate is taught at the primary level. The subject deals with local culinary, homegrown production, agriculture, and local products.

Bishnu KC, the headmaster of the school shares, "The inclusion of nutrition as the text in the curriculum has been effective at a time when the local food items are gradually dwindling after the motor-road reached the district.

The day-snack program has been included in this initiatives. The schools are gradually putting a ban on junk foods such as noodles and biscuits provided by the government with locally prepared foods.

Mana Prasad Upadhyaya who has been teaching for the last 38-years, says the schools conceived the idea about nutrition after they received the training it by NMA HELVETAS. Schools had already put a ban on junk foods prior to the lockdown began and has planned to

A Saraswati Basic School in Jumla, which has initiated teaching on nutrition, has done an exemplary work. Other schools in the district have started teaching the subject initiated by the school which is based in Chandanath municipality-3. The school has not only created awareness by teaching about the nutrition but has also designed a curriculum.

- Bishnu KC

the headteacher, Saraswati Basic School, Chandannath-3, Ghurkat, Jumla



give continuity to the program in the future, too.

He says that the local foods available in Jumla are rich in nutrition and will help free of malnutrition. The campaign has been initiated from schools to give priority to native food grains.

The schools are hopeful that this initiative will also develop interest and positive attitude towards agriculture. The schools have started teaching students on nutrition after the observation visit teaching curriculum of the school based at Badichaur Surkhet. "The other schools in Jumla will follow the curriculum about the importance of native agricultural products," said Mana Prasad Upadhyaya, a teacher.



The students will disseminate the practical knowledge about organic farming and the nutritious foods at

schools among the communities, says Ajaya Budthapa, chairman of the School Management Committee.

"The local government has also taken with priority what we have been doing at the school level to promote local food items. The curriculum that deals with local agricultural products and the importance about nutrition will be taught at all schools in Chandannath municipality,"



Women into Bean Farming

Like in many rural municipalities, locals, especially men of Tilku, do go to India for employment. Since only women stay at home and do household works, the traditional farming has decreased. With the orientation about the importance of beans and local grains and beans, women here have started planting beans.

Tilku is a small rural village of Jumla district. It is based at Patarasi rural municipality-4. Most of the men migrate to India for seasonal work. Migration is very common in this village like other many villages of Jumla. Earlier, bean was the most popular farming in

Women in Jumla have been carrying out professional bean farming after its demand got increased. They have been utilizing every barren land available in the district to grow bean farming for the last 2- 3 years. The beans which take a longer time to ripen is rich in nutrition. The beans, which are traditionally consumed in this locality, is likely get good market in the future.

-Hajira Hahatara
Patarasi-4, Tilku, Jumla



this typical village but for the last few years it is on the decreasing trend because of the farmers' engagement.

Following the NMA interventions, local women farmers, after being trained by the local RSP, started sharing knowledge and technology among local farmers. They became aware of the importance of beans farming and knew about the nutrition value of this local grain. "Bean farming has not only helped generate income but is rich in

nutrition, too," said Hari Devi Budha, chairwoman of beans production group.

Hajira Mahatara, 60, says beans available here is organic, delicious and nutritious and far better than noodles and biscuits. Haridevi and Hajira have been doing an organized professional farming by utilizing every piece of barren land. NMA-trained local service providers impart training to the women on bean farming.

Sur Bahadur Bohara, an NMA-trained local service provider, says the both men and women have shown keen interest in bean following training, of late. Bean farming has turned out to be a boon to Jumla locals to upgrade their living standard since its demand is very high due to rich nutritious values.

The short term orientation have been given to the locals of Patarasi rural municipality-4 on bean farming. Locals, hence, have seen bright future in the bean farming due to the market access. Further, the district headquarters Khalanga is also not very far.

"Earlier, we would not get good prices for our agricultural products. But the situation has become better now," shares Uma Bohara, a local farmer. "We used to grow abundantly as our lives were dependent on agriculture before. When the motor-road reached the district, the trend of farming gradually dwindled. With the market access, it has been easier to sell the surplus of our food crops.



Rural Service Providers **Becoming Game Changers**

They have been disseminating awareness among the locals about the conservation of the locally available food items and its promotion. They have been playing their roles as the rural service providers in the districts with support of NMA- HELVETAS.

Sur Bahadur Bohara comes from Patarasi-4, Jumla. As a rural service provider, he has been growing and selling saplings of fruits and teaching the skills of nursery farming to other locals, too. He teaches those who come to his farm to buy saplings on how to grow, weed and protect them.

NMA-trained rural service providers have become the good conveyors about the importance of nutrition-sensitive agriculture and awareness about it.

-Maharup Khatri
Rural Service Provider, Dailekh



“We should learn new skills of farming. There has been a high demand of walnut in Jumla district. If plant saplings of walnut trees in the barren land in Jumla, we can make a quick buck. I am informing the locals about it,” says Sur Bahadur.

Sur Bahadur had received training on skills of nursery and grafting at the assistance of HELVETAS four years ago. This training has been a good source of income and has brought a lot of financial changes in his life.



Bhawani Jaisi Chaulagain, a member of Nari Utthan Tatha Sachetana Kendra, is a rural service provider who often goes to schools to enlighten them about the importance of local products and their nutritious values.

Maharup Khatri of Dailekh is also the chairman of Samajik Santha Sebak, Dailekh. His role is not only limited to the rural service provider but also works for them as a facilitator. He has been rendering his services for the promotion of home-grown

agricultural products. He said that they have been including the local agricultural products in their programs launched by organizations. Almost all the schools in Dullu municipality have decided to put ban on junk foods and promote local foods as the day sacks for students.

“As many as 53 schools in Dullu municipality have already put a ban on the use of junk foods at schools. It is itself a positive step on the part of the schools towards banning junk foods. This program has been initiated from the calendar itself. Students have learnt about the importance of local foods.”



The idea of **Bir Bahadur**

Bir Bahadur has been working for the promotion of vermi composting as a small-scale industry for some years. He has been producing and selling vermi compost after he received training on it from NMA project of HELVETAS and also teaching others about this skill. He has taken up an organic farming as a profession since 2014 has also begun vermi composting, of late. He started Everest Organic Farming in 2014 which, subsequently, turned out to be a lucrative profession for him. His all-family members are now involved in this agro-business. He has been doing this job since 2016 with the help of HELVETAS NMA Project. He will sell four quintals of earthworms for Rs 800,000 from his small farm in the near future. He has already received an order for it.

Bir Bahadur started agro business from organic vegetable farming for own use. He had been to Pilimot, India for exposure visit around seven years ago, which is 40 kilometers away from Banbasa, an Indian border to the far-west Nepal. A group of 20 farmers including

Bir Bahadur Hamal
has taken up vermi
composting as a
profession in Nepalgunj,
the district headquarters
of Banke at a time when
there has been a shop
of chemical fertilizers in
almost every house.

- Bir Bahadur Hamal
Everest Organic Farm, Nepalgunj



Bir Bahadur, who had been to Pilimot, brought one kg of gadaula (earthworms) each. From this one kg of gadaula, Bir Bahadru managed to produce more than five quintals of gadaula, which can sell for Rs 2,000 per kg.

They are selling vermi compost for Rs 3,000 per quintal these days. His wife Janaki Hamal also assists him in this occupation. She shared that the vermi compost plant has turned out to be a good source of income. "Earlier, I had no jobs except household work. Now-a-days, I am very busy from dawn to dusk for this work," said Janaki.



Bir Bahadur is also an RSP who assists many local farmers in producing vermi composting. He teaches others via cellphone and sometimes undertakes a field visit to observe their farming. This became instrumental for many farmers of this community. A local resident Nar Bahadur Hamal said, "Bir Bahadur has been

working for other farmers as a good service provider. Hence, many local farmers have been benefitting from his initiation. He is the role model for organic agriculture promotion."

Bir Bahadur regularly supports 30 local farmers. Most of them follow Bir Bhadur's ideas in their farming. Many farmers have also started producing vermi compost production. He got support from local agriculture knowledge center office and many farmers visit in his vermi compost plant for exposure. Bir Bahadur said, "Many farmers from other districts come to observe my small vermi compost plant. I share my experience with them. I feel happy to share my experience among others."

He does not only sell but also teaches farmer on how to keep them safe and the way of making vermi compost. Hamal, who earlier used to make 80 quintals of vermi compost, is going to produce 480 quintals of organic manure.

"I have taken up making vermi compost and selling earthworms as a profession. I have taken it as an organic industry. I am benefited from it and it will benefit others, too. If farmers can be orientated towards it, it will also do good to public health and nutrition."



Tilkanya engaged in **Learning and Teaching**

Tilkanya is a rural woman of this typical community. She is aware of organic production and nutrition value of local agro-products. She applied her learning in her farming for the last few years and also a role model for many other local farmers.

Tilkanya got some orientation and training from local Helvetas partner organization and became an RSP. As an RSP she has been supporting other local farmers. Many women members of this community also have been working for organic vegetable farming, thanks to her initiation.

Migration to India is a very common phenomenon for locals in Jumla. Many households are run by women. Hence, women are also generating income through vegetable farming.

Tilkanya Shahi is from Bhandaribada of Jumla. She is a rural farmer as well as RSP. Her learning and replication about the organic farming has been a great boon to many other farmers in the village.

- Tilkanya Shahi
Jumla, Nepal



Tilkanya Her field is full of various kinds of fruits and saplings. The local government has declared Jumla as the organic district. She says the farmers have to keep the soil of their field fertile into consideration to keep the agricultural products organic.

The farmers have been encouraged due to the market access and have shown interest in farming. People have also understood that the local agricultural products are rich in nutrients.



Laxmi Shahi, the husband of Tilkanya, has shared that her wife has turned the vegetable garden as a source of income and has also been teaching others on how to reap benefits from it. He said that her work has become a role model for many women of this community. "I am grateful to her support of this community," he said.

Local NGO leader and RSP Ghanashyam Shrestha also said, "Tilkanya is learning and teaching other women, as well. We appreciate her work."

"We have now learnt how to produce organic vegetables and organic grains. We, now will teach others about it. Many people like me are doing this job. We have to adopt the habit of eating local foods. We can generate income from it and it is good for health, as well."



Exemplary Initiation of School

The school, which is based at Bhalakatiya in Dullu municipality-2, has become an eye-opener to many other schools. It does not only carry out teaching learning activities but also imparts agricultural skills and vocational education on issues of nutrition.

“It is a new experimentation. We are planning to give practical education and skills to the students at their young age. We have to do something in the field of agriculture and produce manpower from here itself,” says Jara Singh Karki, the headmaster of the Nareshwor Uddhamseel Basic school of Dailekh.

The school has also planned to carry out agricultural farming and provide nutritious foods to the students at the school itself in hopes of disseminating awareness

A basic school based in Dailekh is full of flowers and plants. Teachers are known as the mentors and facilitators here at this school. The school has its own tunnel, a nursery bed, and a mushroom tunnel. There is a vegetable garden, too. There is a 100-ropani land where grass saplings have been planted and the school is planning to rear eight buffaloes.

-Gyanmani Nepal
Education Department Chief,
Dullu Municipality



of local foods among the community.

Local teachers, Janaki Shahi and Chandra Kumari Thapa, had received a 14-month training from a school based in Khotang. They have now started teaching at this school what they had learnt from the training.

The teaching includes organic foods, nutrition, local grains, ways of eating among others. Students are taught practically.



“We have created various departments at the school. Health, music, fruits, accounting departments have been formed with the aim of bolstering practical education,” says Chandra Kumari.

“We can teach very well about nutrition at the school. This school has done a unique experimentation for it. This kind of experimentation can be done by other schools, too. The best part is that junk food has

been banned in all schools in Dullu.”



Our Health has Improved

Ruilee is a local farmer of Rowa rural municipality-II, Mugu. Ruilee, who had lost her husband during the Maoist insurgency, belongs to Dalit community. Now-a-days, she has grown beans in her nearby-field and has developed the habit of green vegetables. It has helped improve her health.

The production of beans has grown double compared to before. Locals sell beans and other vegetables since their demand is high. They get good price for their products due to Kosheli Ghar at the district headquarters.

Baishali BK, the neighbor of Ruilee, has said she has been growing vegetables in her barren land. It has been helping her generate income. She had received

“We have understood that the local foods are healthier than junk foods. We have started planting green vegetables and learnt to eat them. Our health has much improved due to the consumption of green vegetables,”- says Ruilee Nepali.

- Ruilee Nepali
Rowa, Mugu, Nepal



training from NMA project for the last three years. Since the men do go to India for employment, women have to look after household works including the vegetable farming.

Baishali says the farmers do produce crops, eat and sell the surplus which will suffice for the education of children.

Millet, buckwheat, marshi rice, soyabeans, mixed beans, kaguno (foxtail millet) are the local grains here in the district. Once neglected, farmers have started shown interest in producing them with their demand increasing.

“Earlier, we did not use to grow green vegetables nor was there any trend of eating it. Now we have started growing green vegetables and developed habit of consuming it. Our health has improved after consuming green vegetables. We do not eat beans produced but sell.”



Kosheli Ghar Promoting Local Agro-products

The Kosheli Ghar, a local product shopping center, which was established at the Jumla district headquarters a few years ago, has now become a source of income for many Jumla people. Kosheli Ghar has turned out to be a boon to locals at a time when the local agricultural products have been gradually disappearing. It has done an exemplary work to promote home-grown agricultural products.

When the motor-road reached the district in 2062 BS, new changes took place in the agricultural sector in Jumla. With the road access, other agricultural products from outside the district also reached this district. With this, local products gradually started dwindling. The local farmers also started showing no

The concept of 'KosheliGhar' initiated in Jumla to generate income opportunities through the promotion of home-grown agricultural products has been an exemplary work.

-Govinda Acharya
RSP and Social Entrepreneur,
Jumla



interest in the native agricultural products. The production of local agro-products which take usually a longer time to ripen somewhat went down, shares Govinda Acharya, a local trader.

Stakeholders have started showing concerns in the conservation and production of local agricultural products for the last few years in Jumla. Local farmers have become aware of conserving and promoting the native agro products grown in the hilly region after knowing their nutritious values.



Acharya, a lead farmer in the village, has been running Kosheli Ghar in order to promote local agricultural products. Established four years ago, it had made a transaction of Rs 7.8 million in the first one year. Local farmers have got price for their local products

after this Kosheli Ghar came into operation.

“The production increases naturally when the farmers get good price for their products,” said Acharya, adding, “I will also reap benefits if the sales go up.”

Local farmers have also shown interest in farming after their products earned good price. Ratna Chanda Acharya, a local, says the source of income has gone up after the local agro-products got market outside the district. This indicates that there is an opportunity in the village itself even for those who have to go to India and outside the districts for employment.

The demand of locally grown agro-products - millet, marshi rice, buckwheat, barley, beans - has gone up, giving rise to the source of income for the locals. Besides, it has also created awareness about the value of nutrients in the far-flung district. The initiative taken in the hilly region to promote agricultural ecosystem has proven exemplary.

“Farmers have to get good price for their agricultural products. They will give continuity to the local products only when they get good price for their products,”



Sur Bahadur Sees Scope in **Walnut Farming**

The walnut nursery which he started four years has now become a source of income for him. He is a good farmer as well as an RSP. His nearby field is full of walnut saplings grown through grafting. Farmers have started doing walnut farming after its demand increased. Chaudhabis village was considered a far-flung village of the country until it had no road access. It, now, has got a new lease of life with the walnut saplings grown in every nook and cranny of the village. Local farmers have rolled up their sleeves to plant walnut seedlings in every piece of land they own since its demands went up in the local market as well as in the neighbouring districts.

The demand of walnut saplings is also coming from neighbouring districts -- Mugu and Kalikot -- since

Sur Bahadur Bohara comes from Patarasi rural municipality of Jumla district. It has been years since Sur Bahadur started planting apple saplings at Tilku in Patarasi rural municipality-4 of Jumla district.

-Sur Bahadur Bohara
RSP Patarasi-4, Tilku, Jumla



these districts share similar kind of climate. Sur Bahadur sees a lot of scope in the walnut farming. Not only Sur Bahadur, but also other farmers who received training along with him have started planting walnut seedlings in their field. Sur Bahadur's optimism has indicated that income generating opportunities can be found even in the remote parts of the country.

Sur Bahadur advises other local farmers to use organic manures in the walnut farming. They are using cow dung and sheep droppings for the walnut saplings so as to grow them in an organic way. With

the market access, the walnut farming has become a reliable source of income. Sur Bahadur shares that the demand and consumption of native agro products has gone up, boding well for the better future of Jumla people.

"Earlier, people used to ignore Jumla saying that it was remote. Productions of Jumla and food items were shadowed. Now the situation has changed. The concept of people has changed after they came to know that Jumla products are rich in nutrition."



Nutrition in Mountain Agro-ecosystem (NMA) Project

पहाडी कृषि पारस्थितिकिय प्रणालीमा पोषण परियोजना