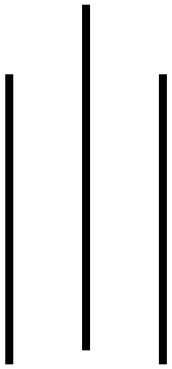
Endline Survey of Khori Women Empowerment Program

Implemented in the Remote Villages of Chhabis Pathivera Rural Municipality

Bajhang, Nepal



Submitted to:

HEAR Nepal (Health, Education, Awareness and Rights)

Dhapasi, Kathmandu, Nepal

September, 2024

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STUDY TEAM

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ABBREVIATIONS

INGO	: International Non-Governmental Organization
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organization
HEAR-Nepal	: Health Education Awareness and Right
KII	: Key Informant Information
FGD	: Focus Group Discussion

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Inspired by the success story of self-empowered women of the Khori village, Bajhang, who succeeded in bringing positive changes in their village by controlling alcohol-drinking activities and uplifting women's daily lives, similar activities were implemented in the new 10 villages of Chhabis Pathivera Rural Municipality to improve the socio-economic status of the women in the villages.

This study was carried out to assess the impact of the program activities implemented by HEAR Nepal in the 10 villages. The program conducted awareness campaigns, short-term training, counseling sessions, experience-sharing sessions, and networking activities. The activities run by the project inspired the women in the new villages. The team collected firsthand evidence about the success story and their approaches in the villages.

A qualitative approach was applied to collect information from the different groups of people in the program villages of Chhabis Pathivera Rural Municipality. Information from 1 Focus group discussion (FGD) with the women, 1 Interaction program with the women group, and 5 Key Informant Information (KII) were analyzed after grouping the information into the major themes and presented in the result section.

Overall findings revealed that after the program women in the ten program villages were enthusiastic, happy, and fully empowered. Their confidence while sharing their experiences reflected their leadership quality. Without any hesitation, each of them was excited to share the story of how they succeeded in their mission of controlling alcohol and gambling, and how it impacted their lives.

Earlier, alcohol drinking, gambling, fighting, conflict, and trauma were the daily routine in the villages. Women were beaten by drunkard husbands, and they spent all their money on purchasing alcohol. Women and children suffered badly, and their life was just like hell. To get rid of day today's tortures and frustrations, women in the village came together, to stop all hassles. They understood they had to solve their problem themselves.

HEAR Nepal supported the women's groups to change the disorganized and damaged villages. With small-scale support, the women in the villages continued their work. They made rules and set a certain amount of fine for those who gamble, sell alcohol, and drink alcohol. Initially, it

was a difficult task but gradually they accepted and if they were caught by a women group in an alcoholic state, they immediately paid the fine.

Currently, the women's groups are actively involved in the activities to make all the people in the community aware of the need to control alcohol and gambling and devote their time to income-generating activities. Now, police administration, local government, shopkeepers, community, and family members are supporting their campaign. There is no alcohol and gambling-related problem in the villages. People are constructive and helpful, started small vegetable farming, no expenditure on alcohol, school is in good condition, and living separately in Chhaupadi during menstruation is no more in practice.

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Learning from the Khori-I project, significant interventions were implemented in 10 remote villages of Chhabis Pathivera Rural Municipality in Bajhang district. The merit of attention is that the Khori-II project aimed to "enhance the social and economic empowerment of the rural women in remote villages by forming women self-help groups (SHGs). Each SHG comprised 10-15 women at the community level. The program led to an unprecedented mobilization of women and girls to create a community that would raise their voices against domestic/spousal violence, alcoholism, and gambling.

Nepal has banned harmful traditional practices affecting women, but many persist. It is for example prohibited to marry before 20. Still, one-third of girls are married before the age of 18, undermining their health and education prospects. Practices excluding women during menstruation still affect thousands of girls and women negatively, and polygamy continues to contribute to limiting women's opportunities. Therefore, women and girls need to be empowered, educated, and valued to uplift the status of women in the community. Women's empowerment equips and allows them to make life-determining decisions through the different societal problems. Women empowerment is "a fundamental human right of the women that is also key to achieving a more peaceful and prosperous world.

Nepal with a patriarchal society where women's rights are not up to the acceptable level in many contexts. If the women are not educated and not earning the situation is worse. In a patriarchal society, men are the ones who control society and if they are not in discipline then the whole community and their family suffer the consequences. It is interesting that even in such an odd scenario, women in the remote village of Khori have done exemplary work and become role model for women in other parts of the world. The women in the Khori village were distressed and hopeless because of the daily problem related to alcohol consumption by male partners, thus they decided to control alcohol and gambling in the village. They formed a women's group that succeeded in controlling alcohol consumption and selling in their village which ultimately upgraded the overall livelihood of Khori village under the women's leadership.

HEAR Nepal designed a program to replicate the Khori model in other remote villages of Chhabis Pathivera Rural Municipality to improve the social status of women in the villages and to control the abuse of alcohol. The program conducted awareness programs, short-term vocational training, counseling, introduction of appropriate income-generating programs, and networking with government institutions as well as other organizations with similar goals in those villages expecting changes in alcohol abuse and gambling.

In order to assess the impacts of the short-term program interventions in the villages, an endline study was designed and conducted in July and August 2024.

1.2 Project Objectives

1. To empower women and girls to overcome the barriers of personal and social development that existed in the remote villages of Bajhang district;
2. To support the women and girls to abolish the social stigma as well as to control the abuse of alcohol and gambling; and
3. To identify the possible solutions for improving the socio-economic status of women and girls in the remote villages of Bajhang district.

1.3 Study Objectives

1. To assess the current situation of the 10 remote villages of Chabbis Pathivera Rural Municipality after implementing a women empowerment campaign to improve the status of women and girls
2. To assess how the project activities impacted changing the knowledge, attitude, and behaviors of the community people to abolish the social stigma and the system of abuse of alcohol and gambling
3. To identify the change agent at the local level to empower women and girls to contribute to the improvement of the socio-economic status of the community.
4. To identify the areas of improvement in the village from a women's perspective.

Chapter II

METHOD AND MATERIALS

To fulfill the objectives of the study, a qualitative approach was utilized to collect the required information from the women in program villages.

2.1 Study area

Among the total 10 villages, 4 villages were selected for the study. Majhkhori, Jhuteda Mallagaun, Bannikot, and Motai villages were selected. The local government representatives, officials, and key people. These were the most remote and economically backward villages and alcohol consumption and production were common problems in these villages.

2.2 Study population and data collection

Information was collected through various methods with different study populations such as one interaction program with women groups, one focus group discussion with women group, 5 KII, and field observation.

2.3 Women's Group

One focus group discussion in Majhkhori village and one interaction meeting in Bannikot village was conducted with the women group. The focus group discussion was conducted in the Ward Office while the interaction was conducted in the public space of the Bannikot village. A total of 10 women from the "alcohol control women group" attended the focus group discussion. In the interaction program, altogether 15 women participated. The participants of the focus group discussion shared the story regarding their efforts to control the abuse of alcohol and gambling. They also shared the challenges they faced and the support they received from the men and adolescents in the village. The discussions were focused on the alcohol control campaign, their experience, challenges, approach to dealing with the situation, the current situation of alcohol consumption/selling/production, and women's status before and after. They further discussed and looked for the possibility of programs that educate them on earning techniques and upgrade their socio-economic status in the community.

2.4 KII (Key Informant Interviews)

Information regarding the story of the alcohol control campaign was collected informally from the local shopkeepers, senior members of the village, teachers, young boys and girls, and elected political members. The main focus was on the current scenario of alcohol consumption and alcohol selling in the villages. Almost all

participants appreciated the program interventions carried out by HEAR Nepal and the active participation of the women and girls to contribute to the campaign to bring out positive outcomes through the campaign.

2.5 Field observation

The study observed and informally talked to the local people in Motai village. The team didn't find anyone drunk or alcohol in the shops around the village. Most people of the Motai village were found busy with their household tasks and in income-generating activities. No one was found spending time without work. They were involved in farming, knitting, sewing, collecting firewood, gazing at the cattle, and helping their children in their studies, etc.

2.6 Data analysis and report writing

Information was collected in Nepali language. The Nepali written discussion transcripts and tape-recorded information were rechecked and listened by data collectors and were further scrutinized by experts. Tape-recoded data were transcribed from tape to paper in the same dialect. All transcripts were translated into English language and categorized under different themes and domains according to the objective of the study.

Chapter III

FINDINGS

The result in this section included the findings of 2 Focus Group Discussions, 6 Interaction Meetings (IM) with women groups, and 7 Key Informant Interviews (KII) in the 10 villages of Chhabis Pathivera Rural Municipality where the initiation of women empowerment campaign implemented. Endline information was collected through questionnaires that captured the data on the outcomes of the women empowerment campaign for banning alcohol production, sale, and consumption in the village. The endline survey captured information regarding the status of a decrease in alcohol production, drinking, and selling practices, initiation of income generation activities, prioritization of the education and training of the women and girls as well as elimination of social problems such as Chhaupadi system, child marriage, gender violence, social discrimination, and child labor, etc. The findings of the survey are presented based on the study objectives.

The project supported the new villages by sharing the alcohol-banning campaign run in the Khori village. The lead members of the Khori women's group visited the program villages and shared their experiences on the alcohol-banning campaign including the impact of the campaign in changing the attitudes, and behaviors of the community people contributing to the improvement of the socio-economic status of the villagers.

The project conducted orientation programs for women's groups in the program villages. The interactions and orientation programs on human rights, child rights, the importance of education, healthcare, economic independence, legal equality, and political participation were conducted in the villages. The team encouraged the women's group to contribute to ensuring equal access to education for school-age girls and healthcare services for all women in the villages. The women's groups were oriented on the strategies to ensure access to quality healthcare, including reproductive health services. The project team supported the groups to identify opportunities for women's economic participation and financial self-sufficiency.

The program initiated the activities based on learnings from the Khori Project. Those activities helped to elevate the individuals' and communities' level of understanding and awareness toward the benefits of banning alcohol and gambling. The activities empowered the individuals to control their lives and their surroundings through active participation in the groups and

maintaining the networks among the villages. The awareness campaigns under the project identified and addressed unequal power relationships in homes and communities, and supported to identify the opportunities for equal access to information and services. The initiatives under the campaign promoted the capacity of individuals and groups to claim their rights and take action to achieve their life goals. The activities have fostered a sense of ownership and belongingness and developed an inclusive space for women, girls, and marginalized communities.

The project team supported the women's groups in identifying the areas of improvement in the villages. Women and children in most of the villages were facing labor exploitation, child labor, neglect in the homes and communities, physical violence at home, and deprivation of familial care. Women and adolescent girls were facing a range of physical, social, financial, or other barriers in accessing opportunities and services due to gender inequality. Empowering women and adolescent girls to identify and access the opportunity of information, gaining or strengthening the skills as well as receiving support through community people and structures.

The program team supported and empowered women's groups to use their collective power and influence over their communities and societies to improve the daily lives of women and girls. The villagers were convinced of women's and adolescent girls' ability to have a meaningful influence on their homes and communities through information, participation, and leading in decision-making at homes and communities. The focus of the program activity was the foundational activities including women and adolescent girls knowing their rights, how to express their needs, and understanding decision-makers' interests and limitations.

The program activities were instrumental in making women's groups known the fact that the key stakeholders in the community, particularly community leaders and male community members are important for the campaign and need to be engaged from the outset of the empowerment campaign. They knew that such practices facilitated greater support for women and adolescent girls as well as men and older adolescent boys could play an important support role. Given their privileged position in patriarchal societies, men and older adolescent boys typically have authority over female family members and the power to influence other community members.

The initiatives of the project were founded on the principles of context-tailored, women and girl-led, and community-informed. All principles and strategies were implemented during the design, implementation, and monitoring of the program interventions.

3.1 Current situation of women in the villages (Women empowerment)

The respondents said that after the campaign started in the villages, women and girls started so many activities to improve the status of women and girls. There were visible changes in the daily lives of women and girls in the villages. The concerns and issues of women and girls were considered by the males and community people. The government authorities have also prioritized the programs and activities to address the problems concerning women, girls, and children. The attitude of the men and adolescent boys has been changed noticeably. The education and health of the women and girls have gained the priority of each household and the local government.

Through the women's empowerment campaign, especially the campaign for banning alcohol and gambling, the women in the village understood the pros and cons of alcohol production, use, and sale in the village. Through support from HEAR Nepal, they started initial activities of awakening women to control alcohol production, use, and sale in the village. They formed women's groups, youth clubs, and child clubs in the village aiming to support the alcohol-banning campaign as well as lead the community people toward achieving better education and health services. The women became quite aware of the services delivered through the Local Governments, and local-level institutions such as schools, health centers, and other organizations. The women are now actively engaging in empowerment activities, with significant positive steps in the areas of community leadership, education, social participation, agriculture, and income-generating programs. Many women are involving themselves in initiatives related to economic development, social welfare, and family decision-making. There has been a visible improvement in women's self-confidence and participation in decision-making processes both in their homes and within the community.

3.2 Starting of the Campaigns against Alcohol and Gambling

The respondents said that they started a campaign against alcohol and gambling in the village. The process began with a series of consultations, and discussions at home and within the community. The inspiration came from the successes of neighboring villages, particularly the women's group in Khori-1, who shared their ideas and experiences. Women from the village were convinced to ban alcohol and gambling by learning the negative impacts that alcohol and gambling had on family welfare, particularly on finances and relationships. Collaboration with Khori-1's group was key in formulating strategies for the implementation of the campaign in the village.

The respondents of the new villages described that they were spellbound while listening to the success stories of the women from the Khori village where women started an alcohol control campaign and succeeded in their mission. In most of the villages, women started similar kinds of activities to ban alcohol and gambling to engage their unemployed male partners in household tasks as well as encourage them to start small-scale farming, business, and other appropriate work in the village.

One of the respondents said that after the interaction with the project team along with the women leaders from Khori village, the women in their village came together to discuss the issues and challenges regarding alcohol consumption, production, and sale. They also invited the like-minded male members of the community in the discussions. Almost all participants of the discussion agreed that the abuse of alcohol and wasting of time on unproductive tasks such as gambling and playing board games were the key factors of lower economic status and violence in the village. Due to activities like alcohol consumption and gambling in the village, the adolescents were also badly affected which caused an increment in child marriages, rampant violence against girls and women, unemployment, and a lot of disorders in the villages.

They said that the first meeting decided to form Women's Groups, Youth groups, and Child clubs in the village to support anti-alcohol movements throughout the village. All the groups led by women and girls took measures against the liquor traders and the consumers. They developed a code of conduct for all the members and circulated a notice banning alcohol and gambling. Those groups organized rallies, demonstrations, raids, and destruction of alcoholic drinks and imposed fines on those who sold and drank alcohol. The groups also disseminated information regarding the negative impacts of alcoholism. They informed the villagers that alcoholism has a substantial amount of health burdens and economic costs, including productivity impacts. The groups tried to reduce exposure to harm for individuals and community people and promoted the health and well-being of people. Preventive strategies and actions to reduce the likelihood of disease, injury, and early death were implemented.

The villagers experienced that community actions were effective in bringing out positive impacts related to reducing the harmful use of alcohol in the community. Therefore, they strongly recommended the expansion of such community actions in other communities with similar contexts.

3.3 Problems existed Before the Alcohol Control Campaign

Before the alcohol control campaign, the village faced several challenges. Women face discrimination in access, ownership, and control over decisions, financial activities, and community affairs. Women face discrimination or disadvantage about control over ownership of land and household assets. Many men were heavily involved in alcohol consumption, which led to domestic violence and strained family relationships. Gambling was another major issue that washed out family savings and created conflicts. The prevalence of these activities negatively affected the village's economic situation, with many households struggling to make ends meet due to the loss of income to alcohol and gambling.

3.4 External Support for the Alcohol Control Campaign

Alcohol-related problems are always a burning issue in our village. Before the campaign, people used to produce, sell, and consume alcohol. No one in the village tried to complain or control the alcohol consumption and the by-product behaviors of the alcohol consumption. Even, the local government issued the license for the production and selling of alcohol. The women and girls with the support from HEAR Nepal, the ward office, the municipal council, schools, and other organizations started the alcohol control campaign in the village. Those organizations support raising awareness of women and girls, and alcohol control campaigns received external support from local NGOs, INGOs, and some government bodies. The village collaborated with [NGO Name], which provided training, educational resources, and financial assistance for public awareness campaigns. However, much of the initiative was led internally, with community leaders and women's groups playing a key role in its implementation.

3.5 Challenges Experienced to Start and Continue Alcohol Control Campaign

What was the reaction from community people including community leaders, men, women, alcohol sellers, producers, etc.?

The campaign faced significant resistance initially. Some community members, including alcohol producers and sellers, were opposed to the movement as it affected their income. Additionally, men who regularly drank were hostile towards the initiative. Convincing these groups to change their behavior was challenging, but persistent community meetings, awareness programs, and involvement of local leaders helped overcome these obstacles.

3.6 Significant Differences Experienced before and after the Alcohol/Gambling Control Campaign

Social and Economic Situation of Women

Banning alcohol has the advantage of improving household income because of savings from foregone expenditure on alcohol. People who might otherwise indulge in crime to spend on alcohol might refrain from doing so after prohibition. strong presence of collective action groups such as community health workers, agricultural credit societies, and self-help groups. This program seeks to enhance social and economic empowerment and played an important role in mobilizing communities to demand alcohol prohibition. We thus expect that the policy would have been more effective in districts with strong collective action

Educational Condition of Women and Girls

The respondents said that education is one of the most crucial tools in reducing inequality. Access to education is essential in knowledge-based decision-making as well as important for being able to break free from poverty. Education can lead to economic benefits, by granting access to work and income, and empowers individuals to live healthy lives. The campaign has a positive impact on the education of the children. The parents support children to enroll in school and support their learning at home and community as well.

Before the women empowerment campaign, most of the family's priority was the boys' education. Since the family's income depends on the male partner, the decisions of the family also depend upon them. Most people thought that the boys were the assets for the support in the old age. Therefore, the priority of the families was the education of the boy child. An uneducated mother without skills that are valued outside the home has less ability to influence choices within the family. An educated mother faces a higher opportunity cost of time spent caring for her children. She has greater value outside the home and thus has an entirely different set of choices than she would without education.

Now, the situation has changed a lot. Parents engage in the schooling of their children. There is no discrimination against the boys' or girls' education. The families are spending a large chunk of money in the education of their children.

Women's Status in Family and Community

The respondents stated that in the past, men felt contempt for women and they were not treated with respect. Women were harassed, scolded, and insulted for no reason. But the situation in the village has changed a lot. Nowadays there is substantial change in the behavior of men. Women are respected and valued by the men. There were no negative behaviors or abuse toward women and children. The men behave positively with children and women. They do not beat, scold, or hurt the children. Sometimes, drunkard people behave negatively towards women and children, but these are rare cases of scolding and beating by drunkard men. Sometimes the drunkard men used to quarrel in public spheres with each other after drinking alcohol which often created a distressed situation in the community.

Major Source of Income in the Family

Respondents were asked about their main sources of livelihood. It was found that producing and selling of alcohol was generally not a primary or secondary source of income. Farming one's land appeared to be the primary source of income while business, governmental and non-governmental service, agriculture and non-agriculture wage labor, and working in other fields were reported to be the secondary sources of income.

The majority of the respondents identified agriculture as their main occupation followed by daily wage labor. A few were involved in seasonal jobs, small businesses, government services, and migrant labor. In most of the surveyed settlements, people went to different parts of India in search of employment opportunities. All the rest of the people are working as laborers in nearby villages. Most people are living their daily lives by crushing gravel and doing labor. There are no people who are engaged in self-employment and no one is doing agricultural activities by establishing an agricultural firm.

In some settlements, people also make money from collecting Yarsagumba (Cordyceps synesis or Ophiocordyceps synesis), cattle rearing, poultry, fruit cultivation, preparing stinging nettle powder, and vegetable farming. One of the respondents stated that only three or four women are employed in Government Services, others are just doing their household work.

Changes in Alcohol Brewing, Selling, and Drinking Practices

The campaign has significantly impacted the practice of alcohol brewing, selling, and consumption in the village. Previously, most of the people engaged in the production, sale, and consumption of alcohol. Mostly, people brought alcohol from nearby villages and markets to

run liquor shops. They even run such kinds of shops in public places, in cultural celebrations and programs. Even, liquor shops appeared in the surroundings of schools and health centers. No one questions them for such behaviors in the village. However, the campaign to ban alcohol production, sale, and consumption started by the women's groups and supported by the youth groups, child clubs, and the like-minded men in the village reduced the previous practices of alcoholism.

Alcohol-drinking/Gambling Behavior of Men before and after the Campaign

Before the campaign started, there were some liquor shops in the village. Most of the males used to drink alcohol. There were drinkers in each household. Gang fights, quarrels, and household outbreaks of violence against women and children were normal. The men in the village spend their valuable time drinking alcohol and gambling instead of helping to do farming, business, household or other tasks that raise their socio-economic status in the village. Now, drinking alcohol and gambling have been stopped in the villages. Men, who previously spent large portions of their earnings on these activities, now contribute more to their families. The sale of alcohol has sharply declined as a result of the campaign, and many sellers have sought alternative livelihoods. There has been a marked improvement in the social relationships in the community. Alcohol-related domestic violence cases have decreased, and households are now saving more money. Economically, families can now better invest in education, family health, agricultural production, and small-scale businesses. With a reduction in alcohol-related problems, women and girls have more time and resources to focus on education. More girls are attending school regularly, and women have begun participating in educational programs. Women have gained more respect in both family and community settings. Their role in decision-making has expanded, and men are beginning to see the value of their contributions.

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Nowadays, when women start to do something new in the village, they get support from the men. When there is a training, seminar, or meeting in the village, men seem willing to send women to participate. Women are encouraged in every aspect of their empowerment. Now the village has improved a lot.

Women's Alcohol Drinking Practices

In the remote villages of Chhabis Pathivera Rural Municipality, women hardly consume alcohol. However, previously they are involved in the production and sale of alcohol. While a few women used to drink alcohol, the campaign has also led to a decline in their consumption. After the campaign, no one is allowed to drink alcohol in the villages. Therefore, the consumption of alcohol is decreased substantially.

Alcohol brewing Practices in the village

Production, sale, and consumption of alcohol are ever on the increase in the remote villages where there are no other means of business or work for their engagement in financial activities. Alcohol abuse is one of the serious problems in sampled villages. There are various consequences of alcohol abuse which they mentioned during the survey, such as deaths due to overdose, falling accidents, and fighting each other in the public sphere and homes. The drunkard people abuse and spread conflict in the village.

In villages, some of the households produce alcohol for domestic purposes, whereas others produce it for commercial use. Most of the houses in this village produce alcohol for their personal use. The shopkeepers are selling alcohol by bringing it from nearby villages and markets.

Usually, people drink alcohol in the evening, but sometimes addicted people drink alcohol in the early morning. In some villages, every household has at least one member who consumes alcohol such as a father, son, uncle, etc. According to them, women do not drink alcohol in the village. One modern young lady said she drinks beer at parties only. Some women brew alcohol at home for their husbands.

Although an effort was made to stop alcohol selling, brewing, and consumption by the community and local government, it was not successful. People bring alcohol from nearby markets and sell it secretly. There were mixed responses from the community people on banning alcohol. Some people helped them to ban alcohol while others opposed the campaign. Many people undermined the efforts of women saying that women can do nothing. In some

settlements, the respondents found it difficult to ban the consumption and sale of alcohol as the Local Government issued a license to the shopkeepers to sell and distribute alcohol.

Almost all respondents were positive toward banning alcohol production, consumption, and sale in the villages. They are encouraged by alcohol-banning campaigns in nearby villages. The people in the sample villages are expecting substantial support from the Local Government, INGOs, and CBOs for running such campaigns. They are willing to launch awareness programs and community-based interventions to ban alcohol consumption so that they can uplift the socio-economic status of the households as well as the village.

Alcohol brewing, previously common in the village for personal consumption and sale, has decreased significantly as the campaign discouraged these practices.

Alcohol Selling Practices

The alcohol control campaign banned the production, sale, and consumption of alcohol in the villages. No one was found guilty of abusing alcohol after the women started the campaign in the villages. The anti-alcohol campaign was mainly directed towards a prohibition approach with little attention to the cultural, religious, and social values of alcohol in Nepal. They mostly relate alcohol use with social crime and violence against women and children. The prohibition of alcohol in the context of its abuse related to delinquencies and deviant behavior to poverty, deprivation, low level of education, social injustice, social isolation. of alcohol.

3.7 Changes in the Village

After the anti-alcohol campaign initiated by the women's groups, there has been a decrease in alcohol consumption in the villages. Women who led or participated in the alcohol control program report feeling more empowered and honored in the community. They are proud of the changes they have helped bring about and are optimistic about the future. Many have expressed increased happiness and fulfillment in their roles as community leaders.

Before the campaign, people were heavily engaged in subsistence farming with limited choices of alternative income-generating activities. In addition, due to the limited opportunities for employment in the villages, people migrate to nearby settlements, India, and other foreign countries in search of employment. That has badly affected the traditional practices of agriculture as well as the transformation process of agriculture.

People in the survey now exploring the opportunities to transform subsistence farming into commercial agriculture. They started to reinstate traditional occupations such as preparing

hemp clothing and bamboo crafting. They established small-scale businesses such as pickle making, hosiery, knitting, and sewing. In addition, people are exploring opportunities for skill-based training on analyzing the market situation, expanding market networks, and exploring the places for selling the products. Some households have started vegetable farming such as potato, ginger, cabbage, and cauliflower, and fruit cultivation such as lemon, orange, and apple to make income for their livelihood. In some settlements, people were found engaged in sheep rearing, and cow/buffalo rearing to produce wool and dairy products.

After the campaign, the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of the people changed substantially. They were more sensitive toward the issues of women and children in the villages. There was a decrease in social discrimination, gender violence, and child exploitation. People cared for the education and health of their children and family. Due to the engagement in the income generating activities, the socio-economic status of the people in the villages improved and the people were found knowledgeable about human rights and the civic duties in the community.

3.8 Other programs run in the village

In addition to the alcohol control campaign, there were other ongoing programs in the villages aimed at women's empowerment, education, health, income generation, small business, and health. The village women with support from the local government and other NGOs/INGOs started the campaigns related to abolishing Chaupadi (Mensuration Taboos) Custom, Child Marriages, and declaration of Child-Friendly Village, and Free and compulsory education for all assured villages.

The participation and academic performance of the school-going children is poor in the village. Dropout rates among girls and children from marginalized communities and families remain higher. Due to the lower socio-economic status of the families, they struggle to afford the cost of education. They often prioritize the education of boys over that of girls, resulting in girls being pulled out of school to help with household chores or work to support the family financially. Therefore, the women and girls' groups started a campaign for the participation of all the children in the schools and focus on the academic performance as per the curricular standards. They understand that if the children, especially the girls and young women, are empowered and are provided with opportunities to educate themselves, they can shape the world around them. The campaign ensured girls participation in school education, informed them of the policies and programs of local government to support their education such as scholarship, mid-day meals and other kinds of support. The campaign also encouraged the

women and girls for equal freedom to speak out in public without fear of violence and harassment, and equal representation with an end to the promotion of harmful gender stereotypes that hold girls back.

The villagers also run Child Friendly Village campaign to empower parents and communities for ensuring children rights to education and freedom from the exploitation of child labor, trafficking, school dropout. The campaign reached to neediest children through advocacy, lobby, social mobilization, service delivery and empowerment. The campaign encouraged the participation of children as they were the future of the community and village. The major interventions prioritized in the campaign are, development of child friendly communities, united children into clubs and network, stop exploitation, enforce laws and lobby the government.

The respondents mentioned that they started the campaign against the Chhaupadi customs in the village. They said that some of the families in the village are still practicing the Chhaupadi system. This involves exiling women and young girls to mud huts or sheds for the duration of their period with no access to running water. They believe that they will otherwise bring bad luck or ill health to their families. They thought if women and girls do not follow these customs, this could have serious consequences. It is believed that crops may fail, and people and animals may sicken or die. In order to remove such customs in the village, we have set up women's groups, where local women can come together to find solutions to the challenges they face. During these meetings women have the opportunity to discuss the impact of chhaupadi on their lives and its illegal status. The women got sensitized that it is not the right thing to practice and initiated awareness campaigns to fully eliminate such practices.

Similarly, the women in the villages started the campaign against the child marriage practices. The campaign is aware and empowers children and their parents on the importance of ending child marriage through conducting community-level awareness campaigns. The women's groups actively lobby to eliminate child marriage practices to enable the concerned authorities and agencies to develop and implement an action plan against child marriage.

3.9 New Income-Generating Activities in the Village

The respondents said that after the women empowerment campaign, the women in the villages were exposed to the many opportunities that the women could take to increase family incomes. The villagers started exploring the ways for small-scale income-generation activities. As the women in the village had skills in small-scale plant farming, agriculture, animal production,

sewing, and knitting they preferred those traditional types of vocations with minor modifications. Some women started small-scale farming, handicrafts, and retail businesses. The Local Governments, other government schemes, and community-saving groups are also supporting the women to start the income-generating programs.

Most of the respondents said that they preferred starting sustainable income-generating activities to be undertaken in or near the home. In some villages, self-help female groups were formed with the support of the project for initiating group promotion activities. Currently, the women have started home gardens for producing vegetables, medicinal plants, and herbs as well as activities like nurseries of flowers, fruit tree nurseries, animal production, sewing, knitting embroidering, and carpet making. In some cases, women started the production of off-season vegetables under plastic tunnels or larger plastic houses. The poly-houses prove to be very successful with farmers increasing both their income and household consumption of vegetables. In addition, the women's groups started mushroom cultivation, beekeeping, and forestry-based income-generating programs.

3.10 Role of such Campaigns Empower and Uplift Socio-Economic Status

The respondents reported that such kinds of women empowerment and alcohol control campaigns play a crucial role in addressing the issues related to alcohol abuse within local communities and help support to uplift the socio-economic status of the people. During the campaign, the women's groups formed in the village to control the abuse of alcohol have actively conducted awareness campaigns to educate residents about the dangers of alcoholism and the benefits of banning such practices. The members of the groups regularly monitored and promptly reported the suspicious activities associated with substance abuse of alcohol and discussed in various meetings and forums in the village to address the problems. Additionally, the committees collaborated closely with local governments and other agencies to ensure instant actions against offenders and to maintain community safety. Through these proactive measures, the committees fostered vigilant and informed communities that were resilient against the threats posed by substance misuse of alcohol.

The respondents reiterated that the campaign run in the remote villages made women and girls self-dependent which gave them freedom and access to educational and health opportunities. The campaign has connected the well-being of women and girls with a larger social, economic, and political environment. It has enhanced the position of women in the power structure at

home and in the society. The campaign has facilitated the realization of women and girls' complete capabilities and strengthened their ability to negotiate in various spheres of their lives.

Another respondent mentioned that women's empowerment has served as a means to address several challenges that women encounter in the village. There was a noticeable reduction in the cases of exploitation, gender discrimination, and gender-based violence at home and in society. The women and girls were able to overthrow the age-old cultural practices posed by patriarchal forces such as Chhaupadi (Evil practices during mensuration), polygamy, and early marriage. The campaign enables women and girls to raise their voices to fight against exploitation, injustice, violence, and abuse done to them. It has facilitated women's greater participation, access to greater decision-making power and control, and transformation from powerless to powerful. Women's empowerment has provided an optimum opportunity for women and girls to participate in the decision-making process, enhance their choices, improve capacity building, and facilitate their presence in the community, employment, and access to resources.

Since, such kind of campaigns help support to improve living standards, solve problems, allow individuals to develop knowledge and skills, and develop their confidence and competence, women's empowerment has become a significant issue in social development. Therefore, the women and girls in the program villages found it instrumental in empowering women and improving socio-economic conditions in the village. They thought that it has contributed to a more stable and respectful environment where women can thrive. The women's groups highly recommended the implementation of similar kinds of programs in the future and other villages as well, as they believe it could lead to widespread positive changes in the village.

3.11 Impression and Suggestion for further Improvement of Women and Girls

Since women and adolescent girls from the community in the village are consulted, involved and engaged from the outset of the program activities, there has been an incremental increase in women's and girls' sense of empowerment. They are now raising voices on the issues related to the women and girls, they are showing activism in the abolition the unhealthy social and cultural practices, there is an increment in the ownership and influence over the social transformation in homes and communities showing that there is the substantial impact of the program initiated by the project. After the campaign, community people supported the women and adolescent girls to build their sense of empowerment. The initial step of the program serves as a catalyst not only to support women and girls through a process of empowerment but also to

ensure that women's groups, youth clubs, and child clubs are always responsive and accountable to the needs of its members.

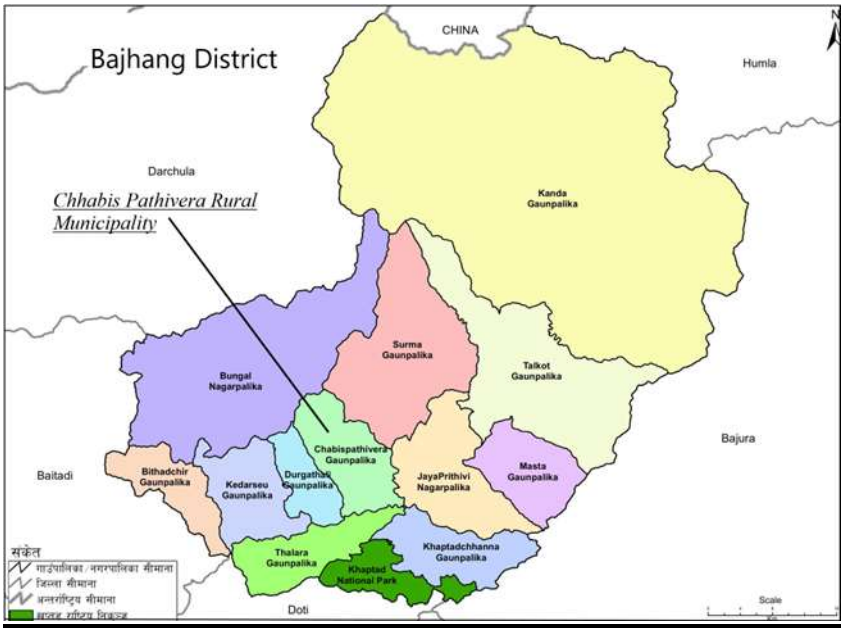
Overall, the program which aimed at women's empowerment through banning alcohol production, consumption, and sale as well as banning the gambling at village level so that they could engage themselves in productive tasks at the home and community level has had a positive impact on the village. To further improve these efforts, the community people suggested enhancing educational and health opportunities for women and girls in the village. There should be provisions for more resources for income-generating activities such as engagement in modern agricultural practices such as vegetable farming, poultry farming, herbal farming, and horticulture, and support them for access to market networks. Similarly, they are expecting support on running small-scale businesses, and support on skill-based vocations. Additionally, the women and girls need ongoing support from external organizations such as NGOs/CBOs/INGOs and local governments which is crucial to sustaining the progress made so far from the project initiatives.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Map of study Area – Chhabis Pathivera Rural Municipality, Bajhang







APPENDIX II

A// Study team

Prof. Narbada Thapa (Epidemiologist), Team leader

Mr. Dhan Singh Dhami, Education Specialist

Mr. Madhav Subedi, President HEAR-Nepal

Ms. Puja Shahi, Project Coordinator, HEAR-Nepal

Mr. Narayan Prasad Subedi, Program Coordinator, HEAR-Nepal

APPENDIX III

Study tools (questionnaire)

Khori Women Empowerment Project-II, Chhabis Pathivara RM, Bajhang

End line assessment

Questionnaire for discussion

A women empowerment campaign for banning alcohol consumption, production, sale, and gambling and improving the socio-economic conditions of the women in the 10 remote villages of Chhabis Pathivara Rural Municipality for 6 months from January 2024 to May 2024. In the project, programs like awareness campaigns, women's group formation, short-term training and orientations to women's groups, and advocacy programs were conducted to encourage women's groups in new villages. This endline survey aims to account for the changes that occurred in the behavior, practices, and lifestyles of the women's groups of Naura, Majkhori, Budkhori, Jhutera Mallagaon, Jhutera Tallagaon, Motain, Patagaon and Bannikot from the program initiatives implemented under the project.

Questionnaire

What is the current situation of women in your village? (women's empowerment, activities)

1. Did you do campaigns against alcohol and gambling in your village? How did you start the campaign (describe the process)? What was the main source of inspiration and motivation? Did you receive help and ideas from the women group of Khori-1?

What kinds of problems existed in your village before the alcohol control campaign?

2. Was there any other external support and help to start an alcohol campaign? Local NGO, INGO, Government) or you decided and implemented the campaign. If yes, describe the name of the organization and types of help.
3. What were the challenges experienced by your group to start and continue the program? What was the reaction from community people including community leaders, men, women, alcohol sellers, producers, etc
4. What are the significant differences you experienced in the following areas before and after the alcohol/gambling campaign implementation?

Social and economic situation

Educational condition of women the girls/ women

Women's status in family and community, respect from the men and people, decision making etc

Major source of income in the family? What do women and men do to earn money?

a. Alcohol-related: Is there any changes in alcohol brewing, selling, and drinking practices in your village after project implementation?

What is the alcohol-drinking and gambling behavior of the men before and after the campaign?

Do the women drink alcohol in your village?

i. What is about the brewing of alcohol in this village? Who and for what purpose do they brew alcohol? Are there any changes after the program?

What is about selling alcohol?

5. How did your life change after you got your rights? Are you happy with the work you are doing, specifically on the alcohol control program? Do you feel more honored than before?
6. What are the other programs besides alcohol control campaign in your village? What and which organizations are doing these?

Are there any new income-generating activities that you have started in this village? And who helped?

7. In your opinion, is this type of program "women empowerment and alcohol control" helpful to women's empowerment and socio-economic uplifting? Do you suggest similar type of program to other villages?

General impression and suggestion for the further improvement of women and village.