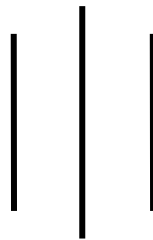


Proceeding Report: District Harawa Charawa Network Election Process (Conference) at Saptari, Siraha and Dhanusha



Submitted to:



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1. Context:

The underlying causes of victimizing Harawa-Charawa families includes their landlessness i.e. lack of ownership of cultivable land, with combination in lack of education or vocational skills, increases their vulnerability to landowners’ and/or money lenders’ demands. The deepening process of poverty into vicious circle faced by Harwa-Charawa family means that when additional financial expenses arise the only option is to obtain a loan from the landlord.

Once a loan is taken, the landlord/ money lenders expect the borrowers and their families to provide labour indefinitely to pay off the debt. Due to the unavailability of land and migration certification, at least 50% Harawa-Charawa (s) are unable to get citizenship certificate. As a result of this, they are deprived from government resources and services. They are taking loan to fulfill their general instrumental needs such as treatment, food and cultural activities. The interest rate is from 36% -120% in an annual basis. Harawa-Charawa (s) are deprived from freedom of employment selection, dignified labour exercise, and minimum wages.

2. Background:

Rastriya Dalit Network (RDN) Nepal has been implementing the project entitled as "**Network Capacity Building of Harawa-Charawa and their Organizations in Nepal-NCB Project**" since last April, 2018 with the financial support of the Freedom Fund (FF). The project aims to support each network’s development, strengthening network members’ leadership for advocacy, collective bargaining and negotiation skills, enabling members to challenge all the forms of exploitation and claim their rights.

Target beneficiaries (Harawa-Charawa) of the project have been organized in different saving and credit groups and freedom groups at community level. There are 3 district level H-C rights forums at Saptari, Siraha and Dhanusha. Although Harawa-Charawa organizations are formed at local, district and national level, they are not functional due to the inadequate operational capacity of those networks. In this connection, the conference of HC network at Saptari, Siraha and Dhanusha were held.

3. Objectives of the HC Network Election Process (Conference)

- To review the past progress of district Harawa-Charawa network at Saptari, Siraha and Dhanusha as well as develop the new strategy
- To sensitize the policy makers, elected representatives and concerned stakeholders on the socio-economic as well as cultural rights of Harawa-Charawa
- To elect the upcoming leadership of Harawa-Charawa network at district level by adopting democratic norms and practices

4. Venue and Date of Conference

The election process of Harawa-Charawa network (conference) at Saptari, Siraha and Dhanusha were organized in following date and venue in the presence of Ministers, members of provincial state assembly, concerned stakeholders at district level, elected representatives, civil society organizations, political parties, journalists, human rights activists as well as representatives from Harawa-Charawa networks

SN	District	Venue	Date	Participants
1	Saptari	Madhupatti-Surunga, Saptari	14 December, 2019	964 (Male-404 and Female-560)
2	Siraha	Jiro Mile-Dhangadhimai, Siraha	27 December, 2019	787 (Male-301 and Female-886)
3	Dhanusha	Barmajhiya-Ganeshman Charnath, Dhanusha	09 January, 2020	350 (Male-160 and Female-290)

5. Process and Methodology:

- Selection of representatives through meeting of district level H-C network
- Preparation of schedule of election
- Sharing of progressive reports of H-C networks
- Coordination with local government and FF partners and concerned stakeholders
- Delivery of commitment from chief guest/guest of the program in inauguration ceremony
- Conduct closing ceremony of the election process (HC conference)
- Development of Code of Conduct (CoC) for the election process by election committee
- Selection of new leadership through democratic process

6. Details of Election Process (Conference)

The election process (conference) of Harawa-Charawa network at Saptari was organized by district Harawa-Charawa rights forum Saptari in close coordination with RDN Nepal, JDS, HURYC-Nepal, SCDC and TSWC at Madhupatti on 14th December, 2019.



The conference was inaugurated by honorable Sailendra Sah, land reformation, agriculture and cooperative minister of province-2 and also chief guest of the program. Inaugurating the conference by lightening the candle, the minister said, *"There are more than 50-60 Lakh Harawa-Charawa also known as bonded labours in 8 districts of province-2. Among them, 80% represents from Dalit community. The provincial government is much more worried about the current emerging socio-economic issues of Harawa-Charawa. The issues of HC will be addressed by government same as like the emancipation and rehabilitation of freed Haliyas and ex-Kamaiyas."*

Similarly, Mr. Ganesh BK, national chairperson of RDN Nepal speaking as the special guest of the conference emphasized that the local and provincial government need to take necessary action to emancipate Harawa-Charawa system by alleviating the unnecessary debt. He also said that data collection and verification as well as distribution of identity cards are the priority of government before just rehabilitation.

Mr. Bala Ram Bhattarai, advocate and legal advisor of the Freedom Fund (FF) told that the new Nepal cannot be envisioned until the issues of Harawa-Charawa are addressed. He also



emphasized that political willing power is necessary to timely emancipate and rehabilitate Harawa-Charawa.

Mr. Kevin Groome, program manager of the Freedom Fund (FF) highlighted that we have common mission to eliminate HC system through collective effort.

On the occasion of inauguration ceremony of the conference, honorable norable Govinda Neupane and Rubi Karna, member of provincial assembly, Mr. Muktilal Chaudhary, mayor of Surunga municipality, Mr. Dayananda Gohit, Chairperson of Balanbihul rural municipality, Mr. Dasan Mandal chairperson of national HC rights forum, Mr. Raslal Ram, general secretary of national HC rights forum, Mr. Jiyam Shrestha, program advisor, Iswar Sunar, chairperson of Rastriya Mukta Haliya Samaj Federation Nepal and Partho Sarkar, chairperson of HURYC Nepal expressed their special remarks.

The closing session of the conference elected 15 members for upcoming leadership of Harawa-Charawa rights forum at Saptari in the chairmanship of Mr. Deblal Ras as mentioned below:

SN	Position	Name
1	Chairperson	Mr. Deblal Ram
2	Vice-Chairperson	Mr. Uma Kanta Sada
3	Secretary	Ms. Rita Devi Rajak
4	Treasurer	Sumitra Khang
5	Joint-Secretary	Mr. Rajdev Raya
6	Member	Mr. Bala Dev Mandal
7	Member	Ms. Chandra Devi Mandal
8	Member	Ms. Sunita Sada
9	Member	Ms. Sita Devi Ram
10	Member	Ms. Mina Devi Sada
11	Member	Ms. Sitiya Devi Khang
12	Member	Ms. Bhutani Devi Ram
13	Member	Ms. Sanju Devi Raya
14	Member	Mr. Prasad Sada
15	Member	One member will be nominated



Same as like following the process of Saptari mentioned above, the election process (conference) of Harawa-Charawa network at Siraha was organized by district Harawa-Charawa rights forum Siraha in close coordination with RDN Nepal, CDF, SF, DDF, DJKYC and BIDC at Dhangadhimai municipality on 27th December, 2019.

The conference was inaugurated by chief guest of the conference honorable Suresh Mandal, industry, tourism, forestry and environment state minister of province-2. Inaugurating the conference, he said," *Although Nepal has been restructured,*

Harawa-Charawa at 8 districts of province-2 in Nepal are still economically exploited, socially discriminated and politically excluded. In this regards, the issues of HC needs to be addressed in package under their emancipation and rehabilitation program. The provincial government is willing to take quick action for the timely emancipation and just rehabilitation of Harawa-Charawa."

Mr. Ganesh BK, chairperson of RDN Nepal speaking as special guest of the conference said, "Haliya and Kamaiya system have been abolished but more than 1 lakh Harawa-Charawa have not been emancipated yet. It is shameful situation for federal republic state so that HC are not getting dignified life. The local and provincial government needs to put-out roles for the freedom and justice of Harawa-Charawa."



In the inauguration ceremony of the program, Mr. Dev Lal Ram, chairperson of district HC network Saptari, Mr. Dasan Mandal, chairperson of national HC network, Mr. Bala Ram Bhattarai, Mr. Jiyam Shrestha, program advisor of Freedom Fund (FF) and Binod Chaudhary, chairperson of CDF expressed their views.

The closing session of the conference elected 15 members for. Upcoming leadership of Harawa-Charawa rights forum at Sirahaas mentioned below;

SN	Position	Name
1	Chairperson	Mr. Shyam Sundar Sada
2	Vice-Chairperson	Mr. Chalitar Mandal
3	Secretary	Ms. Mina Mahara
4	Treasurer	Ms. Gita Devi Sada
5	Joint-Secretary	Ms. Kaushila Devi Ram
6	Member	Mr. Mohamad Kasim Miya
7	Member	Ms. Ramdulari Das
8	Member	Ms. Amitra Devi Sada
9	Member	Ms. Aruliya Devi Ram
10	Member	Ms. Pukari Mochi
11	Member	Ms. Kabita Paswan
12	Member	Ms. Radha Chaudhary
13	Member	Ms. Aasha Devi Paswan
14	Member	Mr. Hari Ram
15	Member	Ms. Ishwarbati Ram

Similarly, District Harawa-Charawa Rights Forum (DHCRF) Dhanusha organized its 2nd conference on 09 January, 2020 at Barmajhiya of Ganeshman Charnath municipality. The election process was held in close coordination with Rastriya Dalit Network (RDN) Nepal, CIC and DSWCN.



The conference was inaugurated by chief guest Ms. Mina Kumari Yadav, deputy mayor of Ganeshman Charnath municipality in Dhanusha district. Inaugurating the conference, she said, *"As the federalism and inclusive development is under the practice of government, the priority of government is to eliminate the Harawa-Charawa system. We are also ready to make the HC freed municipality. The local government needs to address socio-economic issues of HC through the planning and budgeting of local government. Harawa-Charawa organizations should raise their strong voice for this."*



On the occasion of inauguration ceremony, Mr. Rajlal Yadav, ward chairperson of Ganeshman Charnath municipality ward-10, Mr. Jit Narayan Yadav, leader of Nepali Congress, Mr. Shreeprasad Sada, vice-chairperson of national Harawa-Charawa rights forum, Mr. Raslal Ram, general secretary of national Harawa-Charawa rights forum, Mr. Shyam Sundar Sada, chairperson of district Harawa-Charawa rights forum Siraha, Mr. Jiyam Shrestha, program advisor of Freedom Fund (FF), Mr. Bala Ram Bhattarai, legal advisor of FF, Mr. Sunil Kumar Thakur, chairperson of DSWCN, Mr. Sanjay Sah, chairperson of CIC and Mr. Hukum Bdr. Sarki, team leader of RDN Nepal expressed their special remarks.

Then the closing ceremony of the election process/conference was held in the chairmanship of Mr. Shreeprasad Sada, vice-chairperson of national Harawa-Charawa rights forum. The closing ceremony elected the following members for the future leadership of district Harawa-Charawa rights forum at Dhanusha;

SN	Position	Name
1	Chairperson	Mr. Rajdev Bin
2	Vice-Chairperson	Ms. Ful Kumari Gupta
3	Secretary	Mr. Prem Chadra Mandal
4	Treasurer	Ms. Purni Devi Batar
5	Joint-Secretary	Ms. Lila Devi Batar
6	Member	Ms. Asma Khatun
7	Member	Mr. Laxman Mandal
8	Member	Ms. Dukhani Devi Mandal
9	Member	Mr. Ajayamudin Sah
10	Member	Mr. Fekawa Paswan
11	Member	Mr. Ram Dayal Sada
12	Member	Ms. Chandra Kala Paswan
13	Member	Ms. Mina Paswan
14	Member	Ms. Bimala Paswan
15	Member	Mr. Hari Nath Yadav

7. Key Achievements

- Increased capacity of Harawa-Charawa and their organizations to successfully conduct the conference with an aim to generate new leadership for the growth and developments of Harawa-Charawa organizations/networks
- The newly elected body of Harawa-Charawa network at Spatari, Siraha and Dhanusha is at hand through democratic norms and practices
- Major stakeholders sensitized on the socio-economic rights of Harawa-Charawa
- Developed the upcoming plan of district Harawa-Charawa rights forums at Saptari, Siraha and Dhanusha for further advocacy campaign in regards to rights and rehabilitation as well as just rehabilitation.

8. Challenges and Learning

Challenges:

- Due to the cold wave, it became delay for participants to reach in conference venue in time.
- It was less easy to manage the budget to successfully conduct the election process of HC network at Dhanusha.

Lesson Learned:

- Coordination and collaboration with FF partners and concerned stakeholders was crucial for the effective implementation of the project activities
- Mobilization and partnership with media play positive and negative role. If the media is positive on the social issues, it brings the changes as soon as possible.
- Empowerment and capacity development are the best tools to raise the voice and concern of Harawa-Charawa in regards to influence in plan and policies of state mechanism

9. Conclusion and Way Forwards

The H-C networks from local to national level will play crucial role for the rights, emancipation and rehabilitation. As the federal government has devolved more powers to the local and provincial governments in the changed context, the following key action points have been determined by Harawa-Charawa networks at local and district level;

- Submission of appeal/memorandum to local government authorities for accessing Harawa-Charawa in land and housing
- Facilitate HC network to develop and submit the plan/proposals to local government authorities
- Advocacy initiatives to increase the meaningful participation of HC in SMC, HMC, CFUGS, MG, user committees etc
- Monitoring and follow-ups the advocacy plans of local HC networks
- Submission of appeal/memorandum to respective ministries, members of provincial assembly for the emancipation of Harawa-Charawa