**Interview and Field Note**

Field workers: RA and OC

Interviewees: HK and DA

Note Taker: OC

Note Checked and Edited by: RA

Language of Interview: Nepali and English

Note Transcribed by: OC

Place: 3nd floor, meeting hall, USAID; Maharajgunj

Time: 2:00 - 3:00

Date: 31st December 2014

**Major Highlights:**

* HK claimed that Suaahara is globally unique project.
* Suaahara is an example of project which includes multiple aspects of lives.

This is fourth meeting with staff at USAID and second meeting with HK and first meeting with DA. As we reached to USAID office, a staff informed to HK about our arrival for meeting with him and asked us (RA and OC) to take seats on meeting hall. In doing so, a staff opened the door of meeting hall for us. We thanked for her and went inside the meeting hall and took seats respectively.

After a while, HK entered into the meeting hall, we greeted to each other and OC made RA introduced with HK. After introduction of RA and HK. He met with us (JS and OC) last time few months ago. He also added, approval for study of the USAID projects been done and JS had meeting with Sandra for it.

Then RA told that, it seems you are aware about our research project. She also mentioned that, we are researching on safe delivery projects and we are keen to study *Aama Surakchya Programme*, as it has long history with different trajectories and it is also more international kind of project.

OC briefed to HK about the some progresses that project has been made since we had meeting last time. OC explained to HK that, two projects (i.e. SRH government of Japan through ADRA-Nepal funded projects and SAMMAN project funded GSK and implemented by Care-Nepal) were finalized for the detail study and we are keen to take Suhaahara as another case study and so we are going to have meeting with Pooja Pandey on 5th of January 2015. Also we are going to have meeting with Dr. Shilu Aryal, a focal person for safe motherhood, safe abortion and reproductive health at Family Health Division on 2nd January 2015 when we will be discussing about gaining access for *Aama Surakchya Programme* for its detail study as per the research design of New Norms and Forms of Development…. More or less we are close to finalize four cases (projects) for detail study as part of our research project.

HK, JS and OC briefed us about the introduction and background of the project previously so this time, what sort of information you are looking from us? RA we are looking for donors’ perspective and funding mechanism? OC, adding to RA’s point how do you select local partners to get project done? What are the selection criteria or eligibility of local partners and so forth? HK, have you brought any checklist as a guideline for conversation? Many of the information you could talk to Pooja ji.

Before designing of any project, we organize round of consultative meetings with people from related sectors, ministries and national planning commission (NPC) and then we thoroughly discuss how we (donors) could be able to reach to the ‘unreached’ groups by adopting need based approach in the community. Suhaahara, for instance is the project of such kind in Nepal. This project not only focused on maternal and child health but also integrated nutrition, agriculture, family planning, water and sanitation within it.

He further explained that once Lancet published that stunting will not be decreased until there is not modification in household behavior and social norms regarding malnutrition. Production alone will not be enough for reducing malnutrition at the community, there should be modification in the consumption habit as well. Agriculture should focused on production of nutritious production. Giving emphasis on the importance of multi sector approach he suggested us to see the Nepal Nutritional Assessment and Gap Analysis (NAGA) 2009 jointly prepared by World Bank, UNICEF, WHO and USAID.

Meanwhile, Debendra Adhikari, entered into the meeting hall, HK introduced him to us after his introduction, OC reminded to DA about the email communication we had earlier at the time of inception workshop during end of the July 2014. DA mentioned that although he was informed and invited, he could not make it as he had prior commitment in something else. HK, I will be talking to you until 2:30 then my colleague will carry on the conversation till 3:00 o’clock. RA, that’s fine, OC, no problem at all.

 HK, also mentioned that there is food security committee (FSC) under the aegis of NPC and vice chair of NPC is the focal person for FSC. After talking about FSC HK moved on to the topic of maintaining harmony among the different partners at the Suhaahara project. He explained that, Suhaahara has designed consultative meetings among external development partners (EDPs) initially which not only helps in meeting the target of reducing stunting by (65% in hill districts and 43% in mountain region) 2015 but also contributes in establishing coordination among themselves for moving ahead.

He further explained that we not only focused on the outcome/result of the project among people at the community level but also keep ourselves aware for not duplicating with similar project in the same community. We always keep in the mind for not overlapping our programme with other similar programmes at the same communities. In case, it happens we try to complement each other rather than duplicating in running programmes. For instance, if Suhaahara gives chicken to mothers than other projects gives something else to the mothers at the community.

Suhaahara is one of the globally unique programmes which reach to the community from multiple sectors HK mentioned. He added, people from agriculture, health, hygiene and sanitation, nutrition, social mobilization reach to the community and encourage and aware community people about the various aspects of human life.

HK also told that there have not significant initiatives been taken in the sector of nutrition in Nepal until recently. One meeting was held in 2000 AD about nutritional aspect, only after 2009 investment on nutrition also been increased and meeting among external development partners held quite often. He also asked us, what are the significant initiatives or programmes have been taken in the sector nutrition in Nepal? RA replied, from the long ago since I was nurse, I kept hearing about nutritional programme in Nepal. Also, united mission to Nepal (UMN) had done some works on it. OC added, I have heard that Tufts University has done some work on it and it has established nutritional lab in Nepal as well.

HK UMN did it only covering very small geography, I also worked two years at UMN before moving to USAID. And regarding to Tuft’s work it only did research. He further explained that Suhaahara is globally unique programme, it does multiple interventions covering multiple sectors such as it gives health message, it makes aware about water and sanitation and it emphasizes on behavior changes regarding maternal and child health. He also said that, before multiple sectorial nutritional plan only single aspect was given more emphasis. Vitamin A programme which initiated in 1990 for example, gives training on providing Vitamin A to children of age under 5. Training mentions about pre course, course and end course about Vitamin A.

Suhaahara is based on more integrated approach, we coordinate with people from various walks of lives teachers, traditional healers, social mobilizers, mobilize under ministry of local development (MoLD), people from health and sanitation, forestry and the like. He mentioned that breast feeding technique is highly appreciated one by the mothers at the communities.

Although we have established coordination among several ministries for getting things done smoothly and properly, sometimes it is difficult to demarcate for overlapping or duplication of similar projects in the same community.

Likewise, coordination among partners and planning, especially in case of Suhaahara like programme are the main challenges because every partner has its own individual priority. If the partner organization is specialized in nutrition, it gives more focused on nutrition and overlooks other aspect.

DA, cost effectiveness is one benefit of the partnership or collective work but sometimes there is problem in sharing credit work which could lead to the lack of belongingness towards project.

HK, why health programmes in the country has been progressed even during conflict in the country because frontline workers such as FCHVs, mothers group are mobilized who are well aware about the local system. He further added, only few health facilities, which are situated adjacent to village development committee (VDC) office were destroyed during conflict in Nepal. UN invited a team of 9 members from congressional staff to visit Nepal who made visit to the community level I also was in the team, they visited to the community observed the local scenario and talked with women, they were satisfied with their visit.

With this discussion, HK concluded his talk and left the meeting room. While leaving, he told that for any clarification and further information feel free to contact him but he suggested that, it is better to discuss with them (USAID staff) on policy related issues for other aspect such realities of field/programme it would good to talk with Poojaji. In the meantime, he also suggested that first make filed visit to Suhaahara implemented district and we could have next meeting for further discussion.

DA we also air programme on radio called *Bhanchhin Aama*, a mother tells; which is a radio programme air for 45 minutes and completed in 14 series. For making it easier to people belong to various languages, programme is composed in context/geography specific language.

RA can you tell us about staffing pattern of Suaahara programme? DA, at the central office of Suaahara representatives from all partners based like representative from Save the Children, Helen Killer International, and the like. And at the regional level specific theme based coordinators are assigned and other staff are assigned as per the working area including social mobilizers.

DA also mentioned that there is lack of link between production and supply which is the major gap for linking/bringing integrated approach of intervention in the community. We do not have responsible unit for linking health and nutrition at MoHP which not only could contribute in monitoring and evaluation of programmes but also can complement various goals simultaneously, for example nutritional goal of the country could be made through join planning between health and nutrition sectors.

He further explained that Suaahara inculpates both policy and science in it. As this programme promotes agricultural production which helps in reducing the stunting.

Likewise government of Nepal initiated open defecation free (ODF) which targeted make country as open defecation free zone by 2017.

He also mentioned that, midterm evaluation of the Suaahara project is going, you could get information from baseline survey report of it, and annual report

Local resources mobilization helps in sustainability of project which not only benefit to local communities but also supports entire government. One reason, why health programmes seem relatively successful because front line workers in such programmes are mobilized and they are local, DA added.

Lack of ownership in Suaahara like programme is another challenging aspect should take into consideration. Similarly, lack of accountability with elected body is another gap apparently seen, political instability is another difficulty in the country which bring obstacle in the partnership. Ministers are keep on changing he added.

As RA interested to explore some the nutritional programmes in the country, DA gave the contact person at World Food Programme (WFP) her name is Pramila Ghimire and suggested another project named KISAN which focuses on health nutrition and disaster risk reduction (DRR).

With this talk DA concluded the conversation. All of us left the meeting room, and we mentioned to HK that we are leaving for today. He suggested us to feel free for making further contact for future meetings. Then we left the USAID office. DA accompanied us all the way up to the main gate. While walking, he mentioned that action against malnutrition through agriculture (AAMA’s) learning helps a lot in designing Suaahara project. We departed from the gate received our belongings.

Reflection

*If we like to record interview/conversation, it would be better to arrange meeting with USAID staff outside their office. Recorder is not allowed to carry inside the office.*