

# COVID-19: Fortnightly Update

Bulletin # 18

Civil Society: Mutual Accountability Project (CS:MAP)

Sep 23, 2020

CS:MAP's support for the COVID-19 response builds on over four years of engagement with media, civil society, and government in support of more responsive, accountable and inclusive governance. This bulletin is a peer-learning platform for sharing knowledge and experience, and for inviting further collaboration with everyone engaged in COVID-19 relief and recovery activities.

Bulletin No. 18 features stories that are emblematic of a range of efforts by CS:MAP partners. Cutting across all of these activities and worthy of special attention is the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on women, marginalized and other vulnerable groups.

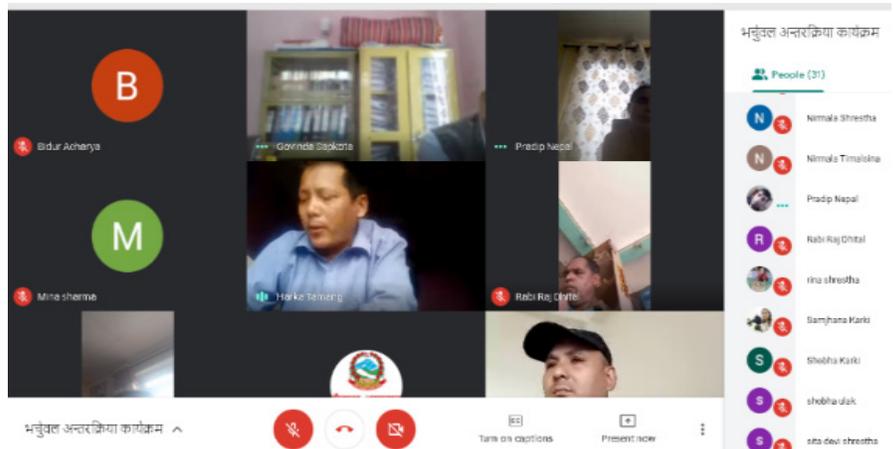
## 1. Budget monitoring and oversight related to COVID-19 expenses in Dadeldhura



On September 02 and 04, 2020 a seven-member monitoring team from the CS:MAP CSO coalition conducted budget monitoring and oversight related to COVID-19 expenses in Amargadhi municipality and Bhageshwore *gaunpalika* in Dadeldhura district. The monitoring team conducted a meeting with the Mayor and the Chief Executive Officer of the municipalities and obtained detailed information of the expenses related to COVID-19 response. The team will further analyze the information, and the findings will be shared with all the stakeholders in the district.

## 2. Interaction program on COVID-19 response budget in Sindhupalchowk

On September 09, 2020 Samudayik Sarathi organized a virtual interaction program on 'Disclosure of budget spent on COVID-19 response' by the 12 local governments in Sindhupalchowk district. The discussions revolved around local governments' expenditures on COVID-19 response for the management of isolation and quarantine facilities, ensuring safety and security of those living in the facilities, ensuring availability of masks and sanitizer, and ensuring disabled-friendly quarantine facilities. Speaking at the program, Durga Nepal, vice-chairperson of Tripurasundari *gaunpalika* said that the local government faced difficulties in managing quarantine centers due to limited budget and resources available. She further added that local government has maintained transparency in budget spent on COVID-19 response.



Krishna Gopal Tamang, chair of District Coordination Committee, requested all the local governments to disclose budget spent on COVID-19 response on a periodic basis. A total of 39 representatives from the local governments, media, civil society, academia and citizens participated in the interaction program.

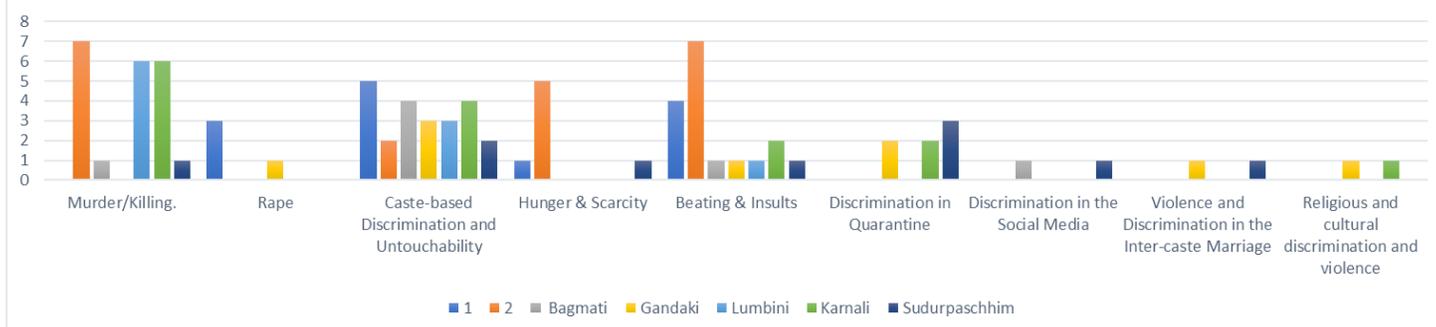
## 3. Tamakoshi *gaunpalika* plans to insure all the residents against COVID-19

HURADEC Nepal Dolakha submitted a suggestion letter to the Tamakoshi *gaunpalika* outlining various programs for control and management of COVID-19 in early September. Consequently, a stakeholders meeting held on September 12, 2020 in the *gaunpalika* has decided to spend 9 lakhs Nepalese rupees for insuring about 12000 residents against COVID-19 in collaboration with a local cooperative.

## 4. Human rights violations of Dalits during lockdown

Dalit NGO Federation (DNF) has been monitoring and documenting the cases of violation of human rights of Dalits since the start of the lockdown. Between March 23, 2020 to September 07, 2020 DNF has documented more than 80 cases of violations against Dalits. These reports of violation were compiled through media monitoring, and case reports by Dalit activists throughout the country.

## Human rights violation of Dalits by types and provinces (March 24 to August 31, 2020)



Along with monitoring of these violations, DNF as an apex organization of Dalit civil societies, has also investigated the cases when necessary, and collaborated with the National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) to campaign, lobby and advocate with the officials. A report of the human rights violations against Dalits during the lockdown has been submitted to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).

### 5. Civil Society discussed local government's efforts to COVID-19 response

On September 8, 2020, Information and Human Rights Research Center (IHRC) organized a digital dialogue in Bardiya. Civil society leaders, human right defenders, journalists and local government representatives discussed COVID-19 scenario, local government's preparations and response plan. The participants also discussed their plans and programs to support and oversee local governments' response and ensure they are aligned with national and international standards. Representatives from Badhaiyatal *gaunpalika* and Gulariya municipality shared their plans and programs in the presence of 15 participants.

Apart from the government plan and focus on COVID-19, the meeting also reviewed the previous decisions of local government to purchase and operate the PCR machine in the district. Lack of awareness among marginalized population for behavior change and effective implementation of prohibitory order were also the agenda of discussion. Concluding the dialogue, the participants agreed to produce a memorandum and handover to local governments and district administration for effective COVID-19 response.

### 6. *Sajha Sabha Nagarik Bahas* discussed COVID-19 scenario and the response plan in Banke, Bardiya and Dang

The *Sajha Sabha Nagarik Bahas*, a digital dialogue was held in Banke, Bardiya and Dang respectively. IHRC in Banke and Bardiya and RWDC in Dang convened these events with focus on current COVID-19 scenario and local governments' effort to respond to COVID-19. Panelist and participants comprising of provincial legislators, mayors and deputy mayors, government officials, journalists and civil society leaders discussed various aspects of COVID-19 impact on society.

CSO and media representatives explained, how they can collaborate on local government's plan and response, besides pointing out to local governments' failure to provide need-based services, especially in expanding testing, isolation and quarantine facilities, and public recovery support. The programs were broadcast live via local radio stations, television channels and social media.

### 7. Press briefing by CS:MAP's Gorkha District Coordinator

Mohasin Ali Miya, the District Coordinator of CS:MAP's project in Gorkha and a civil society activist has coordinates a press briefing of Gandaki Province's COVID-19 response every Monday. The Provincial Health Director Dr. Binod Bindu Sharma briefly explains COVID-19 status including total cases, total recovered cases, and total active cases. During the briefing, the Director further shares provincial initiatives of Critical Care Management, the capacity building support to medical and non-medical personnel, and further plan of action. The press briefing ends with a public appeal to follow precautions including the regular use of sanitizers, face masks, and maintaining of social distancing to combat COVID-19.

### 8. Assessing Public Information Communication Effectiveness: PSA Assessment

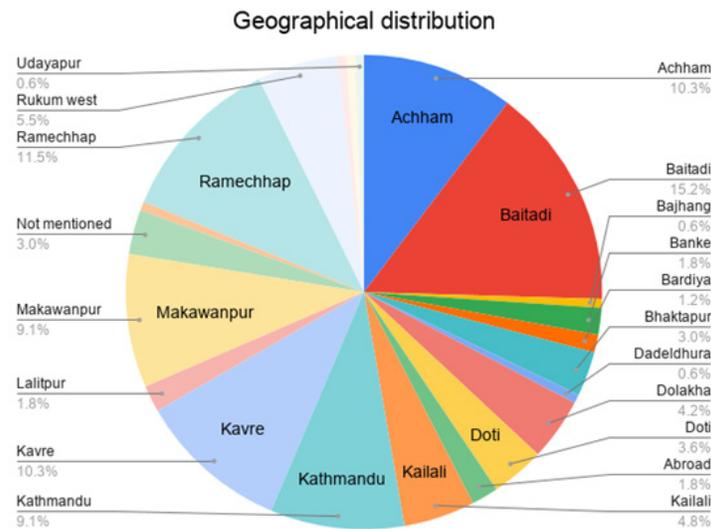
EAI continues to produce and broadcast PSAs on COVID-19 awareness and preventive measures, on the importance of staying in quarantine and isolation centers, maintaining sound mental and physical health while staying in these facilities, tackling fake information, rise in Gender Based Violence (GBV), ensuring safety and security of women, children and persons with disabilities in quarantine, preventing stigma and discrimination against returnee migrants, and frontline workers such as health, security and media personnel. More recently, the PSAs have included testimonies of people staying in home isolation with a message to stop discrimination and stigmatization. The PSAs have prioritized women and persons with disabilities and included their voices.

COVID-19 related PSAs were produced on a weekly basis from May to July 2020, and on a fortnightly basis from August 2020. They were broadcast from 39 radio partners, with each radio broadcasting a PSA at least 10 times per day. They were promoted through the *Sajha Boli* Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/RadioSajhaBoli>) and other social media platforms, including from the Facebook pages of the local radio partners. Targeting audiences from diverse backgrounds, the PSAs were produced in 10 different languages, namely

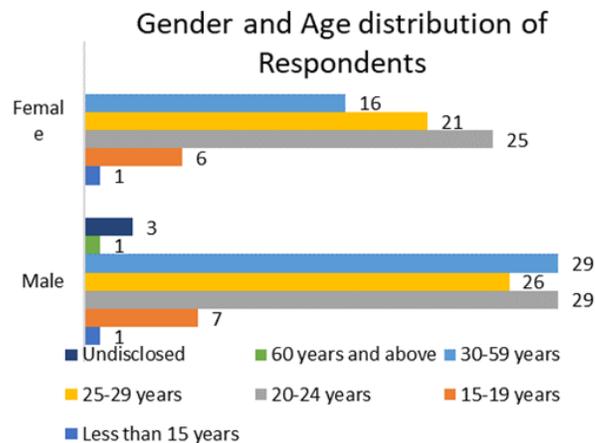
Achhami, Doteli, Baitadeli, Tharu, Awadhi, Magar, Tamang, Sherpa, Newari, and Nepali.

A PSA on safety measures to be followed while carrying out agricultural activities during COVID-19, that called upon listeners to use masks, disinfectants, and maintain social distancing while working in the field (<https://bit.ly/34T7jT5>), was assessed. The assessment aimed to gauge audience feedback on clarity and usefulness of the message included in the PSAs. The PSAs were broadcast from August 16, 2020 onwards and were shared through the *Sajha Boli* Facebook page. As of September 3, 2020, this PSA had reached over 3,150 people. A total of 14 PSAs posted on the Facebook page had reached 76,272 people (male - 64%, female - 36%), with at least 8% of the viewers watching at least one minute of the PSA's video versions.

The assessment was based on a short questionnaire survey (SQS) technique conducted using online google forms that were included in the Facebook posts about the PSAs. The assessment was carried out from August 26 to September 3, 2020 and 165 forms were received from 17 districts, 15 being CS:MAP project districts. While field mobilization was restricted due to lockdown, the online assessment provided an alternative for gathering audience feedback. However, as not all audiences had online access, an IVR push survey was also used. The IVR survey assessed listenership to PSAs and audience feedback on usefulness, clarity of message, and persuasiveness (call-to-action).



Of the respondents, 58% were male and 42% female, and a majority (69%) were 15-29 years old.



A majority (94.5%) of respondents found the PSA message clear and easy to understand. Among those who stated that the message was not clear, they suggested the use of local dialect. There were no major comments about the words used, complexity of language or dialects used. The respondents appreciated that the PSAs were also produced in their local languages.

Disclaimer: 'COVID-19: Fortnightly Update' is made possible by the support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID.) The information in this document do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government. The information is collected and verified in/through various GON sources including respective municipalities and provincial governments where CS:MAP is working.