

Through our eyes

Changes and Continuity in Rural Landscapes

हाम्रो गाउँ-हाम्रै आँखामा



Preface

“Through Our Eyes: Changes and Continuity in Rural Landscapes” displays and documents some of the stories about the lives and livelihoods from two districts of Nepal. It showcases the tales of how people lived in two villages-Devitar in Chitwan district and Khasur in Lamjung district-through the period from 2015 to 2017 within which the photos were taken. Southasia Institute of Advanced Studies (SIAS) in Kathmandu worked with forest user groups in these villages in producing this collection.

The “Through Our Eyes...” emerged out of a photovoice project, which is one of the unique tools in social sciences that enables local people express truths about themselves, as seen from their own vantage points. Thousands of photos taken in this exercise went through initial selection within the women groups and subsequently amongst bigger group, involving members of the research team from SIAS. Accompanying photo stories were compiled after interviewing the local photographer and the villagers. The seemingly trivial, not-so-professional photographs snapped mostly by local women expressed not only the daily struggles for livelihood of the men and women of different socio-economic backgrounds, but also their ways of dealing with hardships, engaging in social intercourse, making fun, and seeking peace for themselves and for their kinsfolk who were already dead.

The photos that were selected for this collection reveal a multitude of ways for expressing livelihoods, culture, religiosity and local people’s encounters with modernity. A common theme through all this are the many ways in which fun and feasting continue vibrantly in the villages that otherwise looked isolated and labelled as “poor”.

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Khasur CFUG, Lamjung
Chelibeti CFUG, Chitwan

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Date : November 2015
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Bharat Ghale

Raksi or local liquor, which is prepared in individual households, continues to be of great importance to Gurung community. While commercial alcoholic drinks are also available and consumed in Khasur, the community members drink *raksi* during *pujas* and rituals, at marriages and other celebrations. The sale of *raksi* brings income to some households. At the same time, making *raksi* involves greater use of firewood, which increases the pressure on local forest resource.

The preparation of *raksi*, local liquor, in Khasur

Date : December 2015
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Bharat Ghale

The Tamu Lhosar, which is the celebration of New Year on Paus 15, (roughly 1 January) involves the exchange of wishes and blessings between villagers. The locals of Khasur village get together for a collective feasting and they share the expenses. Various “groups” within the community play different roles in the celebration-the prominent ones are the youth club, the progressive women’s group and the mother group and father group. The *sel roti* (rice doughnuts) is a common delicacy amongst Gurungs and other communities. It is almost always prepared by womenfolk.



The preparation of *sel roti* for Tamu Lhosar in Khasur



Date : February 2015
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Nanda Bahadur Ghale

The beautiful village of Khasur is populated by 138 households, comprising mainly Gurung families, with few households of Tamang, Magar, Bhujel and Dalits ethnic groups/ castes. The villagers are promoting tourism at Khasur through drawing upon the beautiful trails which lead up to the village and the magnificent views surrounding. There are several village-level committees that manage development activities, including those associated with sanitation, forest management and tourism.

A glimpse of the Khasur village

Date : March 2015
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Nanda Bahadur Ghale

Forest fire is one of the major factors contributing to forest degradation and loss of biodiversity. The people in Khasur recall that a forest fire that occurred in 1961 (2018 B.S.) had a profound impact on the community. It led to the death of numerous livestock and damage to food stocks. However, in recent years, the forest fire caused by humans has greatly reduced in Khasur. It has been so due to greater awareness on forest conservation amongst the local population. Their awareness was further raised through radio programmes, training, and village level discussions over the past few years.



**Forest fires, one of the causes of forest degradation,
continues to be a problem in Khasur**



Date : March 2015
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Nanda Bahadur Ghale

The indigenous Ghale/Gurung community in Khasur have close relationship with the forest. Traditionally the Khasur villagers have had three ways of seeing off the dead relatives-burial of the dead bodies in the forest, burning the dead or leaving the dead bodies off in the current of the river. The choice depended upon the date of birth of the deceased one. However, more recently, the dead are burnt in stone built structures in the forest. The community uses separate stone structures for the burning of male and female bodies.

Changing rites of passage-the burning of the dead

Date : April 2015
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Laxmi Ghale

Women are very intimately connected with forest. They are traditionally involved in the collection of fodder, fuel wood or wild edibles. This role has further expanded with the increase in the out-migration of men for overseas employment, which has left villages such as Khasur in Lamjung, with mostly women and children in their homes. Women now have all the responsibility for activities such as agriculture, household chores, and the collection of forest products.



A woman carries firewood in Khasur



Date : April 2016
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Rupa Ghale

The indigenous Ghale/Gurung communities in Khasur believe in Gods living in the hills and trees. The villagers worship these Gods once a year in April (Chaitra/Baisakh). The worship is performed by the priest known as *Gabre*, who invokes the names of these Gods and Goddesses during the night before and also chants the name of each of them during the worship itself. The ritual involves sacrificial offering of sheep and liquor for the propitiation of these Gods. After these offerings to the Gods, the meat and liquor are distributed amongst the villagers as *Prasad* (blessed food).

Traditional puja 'Sildo' performed in Khasur

Date : April 2016
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Nanda Bahadur Ghale

Firewood is the main source of fuel in most of the households in Khasur and other villages in Nepal. Firewood at Khasur community is mostly collected through the thinning and pruning activities that are carried out mostly during winter and spring seasons. The locals also collect dried and fallen branches during these “silviculture operations”. Firewood is then stored for the rest of the year under roof. However, some households have partially switched to the use of other energy sources; some of them use LPG (liquefied petroleum gas), biogas and electricity for domestic cooking.



Stacking of fuelwood at a household in Khasur



Date : October 2015

Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Sarita Ghale

The REDD+ Partnership Program, carried out by the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN), supported the indigenous and local people in Khasur in forest management, empowerment and livelihood activities. Pictured here is Sukran BK, who alongside two other members of the Dalit community, were supported with the tools for their traditional iron workshop-called *aron*. The new tool helped increase the efficiency of their work.

**A Dalit man in Khasur was supported by
REDD+ project in installing an 'Aron' facility**

Date : October 2015
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Nanda Bahadur Ghale

REDD+ projects can help local forest management groups to reap co-benefits. In Khasur village, eco-tourism is amongst the prominent sources of income for local Ghale ethnic group. A REDD+ project launched by the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN) supported the villagers in setting up eco-tourism (home-stay)-by providing training and other support on hospitality. When the tourists leave, local musician from the Dalit community give farewell to them. The project enhances income and supports local culture.



The artisan group of Damai in Khasur gives farewell to French tourists who came on home-stay



Women in Khasur plant millet while men are preparing the field in vicinity of a forest

Date : August 2015

Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Chitra Kumari Ghale

The indigenous Groups in Nepal have a strong community cohesion. The women and men in the picture engage in a form of labor exchange. They manage forest as part of the complex hill farming system, and with their own traditions. To be successful, REDD+ schemes should consider local traditions of collective action and the farming systems that have strong links with forest.

Date : June 2016
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Gyanu Ghale

Santa Maya Ghale, a member of Pragati Nari Group in Khasur village in Lamjung, is pictured plucking the leaves of *sisnu* (stinging nettle). *Sisnu* is a perennial wild herb, and the powder from its leaves is used in the preparation of soup and curry. Despite the great difficulty of handling this stinging plant, the curry and soup were consumed primarily by the village poor. But with more consumer awareness in favour of organic foods, the *sisnu* powder is now available in the market as it is believed to have both nutritional and medicinal value. The soup of *sisnu* also got popular amongst the visitors in a recent food festival in Besisahar, the district headquarter of Lamjung.



A woman plucks *sisnu* leaves in Khasur



Date : July 2016
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Nanda Bahadur Ghale

The use of *Dhadiya* (conical fish net) for fishing has become far less common in Khasur than it was in the past. Unlike in many other places, the use of *dhadiya* is practiced by Khasur households for fishing, especially for collecting fish for the ceremonial and ritual purposes. The fish species '*Asala*' (snow trout) is of great importance for the Gurungs of Khasur, and the fish is offered in *pujas* and death rituals. Locals prepare the *dhadiya* using bamboo as the main material.

Khasur residents need *dhadiya* for fishing for ritual use

Date : December 2015
Location : Khasur village
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Rupa Ghale

NEFIN (Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities)'s REDD+ program in Khasur encouraged the locals to revive their age-old practice of weaving *radi pakhi* (woollen carpet/blanket). As part of supporting livelihoods activities, the NEFIN program helped to revive and preserve the indigenous craft of weaving *radi-pakhi*. Many women in Khasur village weave *radi-pakhi* whenever they get free time after agriculture. The carpets are used in their own households and are sold through the Community Collection Centre.



Locals in Khasur revive the practice of weaving *radhi pakhi*



Date : November 2015
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Gyanu Ghale

The cultivation of *alaichi* (black cardamom) has become popular in Khasur. This crop is mostly cultivated in eastern Nepal hills, and is new to western Nepal where Khasur is located. The REDD+ pilot project had supported *alaichi* farming in other villages with trainings, but not in Khasur. But the Khasur villagers sought help from the people in nearby villages on technical knowledge and skill. Some youths have engaged in *alaichi* farming on a large scale and have received good earning. Farmers with larger landholdings have often replaced paddy cultivation with that of *alaichi*.

Women engaged in the plantation of black cardamom

Date : May 2015

Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Chami Kumari Rana Magar

Until some five years ago, it was rare for women in Devitar village to speak in public or with outsiders. As they started the formation of community forest user group, they discussed with themselves and met government officials and development workers. Aided by a REDD+ pilot project, and with experience, they have now become active community leaders, able to articulate their rights and responsibilities on forest management.



Anjali Magar, Secretary of Chelibeti Community Forest User Group, speaks in the group's fifth general assembly



Date : May 2016
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Chami Kumari Rana Magar

Bulkumari Magar, a farmer of Devitar village, received a seed grant of Rs 60,000 (about USD 550) for vegetable farming in 2015 (2072 B.S) from the Agriculture Development Office. She used this money on vegetable farming on 10 *katha* (0.34 hectare) of land, where she planted lady's finger. A total of 15 farmers have formed a farmers' group '*Suvakamana Krishi Samuha*'- and the seed grant is circulated among them. A member receives the grant in a year, and passes that fund to another in the next year. The grant is used mainly to buy crop seeds and fertilizer for the farming of vegetable and pulses.

Bulkumari Magar engaged in vegetable farming in Devitar village

Date : July 2016
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Anjali Magar

Some households of Chelibeti CFUG (Community Forest User Group) in Devitar are engaged in fodder cultivation. The planting of fodder-including tree and grass fodder-was introduced after training provided by an INGO in 2009 (2066 B.S). While fodder trees are part of traditional farming in the area, more systematic plantation of fodder is now expanding into individual fields. The fields, which were previously used for the cultivation of maize and millet, are increasingly replaced with the fodder species of *mendola* (*Tephrosia candida*), *epil epil* (*Leucena leucocephala*), *tanki* (*Bauhinia purpurea*), *bakaino* (*Melia azedarach*), *kimbu* (*Morus alba*), *stylo* (*Stylosanthes guianensis*), among others. The Devitar village now attracts visitors for the observation of fodder cultivation and the women-led management of the Community Forest. These visits provide a valuable income for the community, as they collect fee from the visitors.



Fodder cultivation in Devitar village attracts visitors



Date : July 2016
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Anjali Magar

Agriculture is the major source of income in Devitar village. The traditional practice of ropain is slowly being replaced by the use of tractors in more plain areas. The use of tractor makes rice planting easier and it requires less human resource. Many households, however, continue with old method of bull-driven ploughing of the land for rice plantation. They also engage in labor exchange during paddy plantation.

The farmers in Devitar start *Ropain*-the rice planting activity-at the terraced fields

Date : July 2016

Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Anjali Magar

Balkumari Magar is a single woman in Devitar and her household was identified as a “poor” one in the community well-being ranking. As idea about supporting the poor became more popular within their community, she received a buffalo calf from Chelibeti community forest user group (CFUG) from funds received from REDD+ pilot project. This support has helped with an improvement in her living standard. She has also received support for biogas from CFUG, and it reduced her dependency on firewood.



Balkumari gets support for rearing buffalo and biogas plant



Date : July 2016
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Anjali Magar

The villagers in Devitar in Chitwan received support for the installation of biogas plants with funds from REDD+ pilot program, as well as from the CFUG (Community Forest User Group) and a biogas company. Many households have installed the biogas units. Biogas has reduced dependency on firewood and thereby reduced the pressure on forest resources. It has also provided a smoke-free, and healthier kitchen environment.

Biogas support to households from CFUG and REDD+ pilot project in Devitar

Date : April 2015
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Bishnu Maya Magar

Hira Devi Magar, the mother-in-law of Bishnu Maya Magar, is 63 years of age but remains very active. Despite her age, she takes care of the cattle, engages in regular household work, including the care for the grandchildren, and also works in the field. This is not uncommon for the joint family that are maintained in Devitar village, where senior members of the family continue to contribute to family livelihood.



Hira Devi Magar, cutting grass in her field



Date : April 2015
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Bishnu Maya Magar

Nar Bahadur Magar is a resident of Devitar, who like many other youths in the village, works overseas. He has migrated to Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, for the past five years. He returns to his home in Devitar once a year for about a month of holidays. While at home, he helps the family on agriculture. He is pictured here carrying a load of maize cobs from his field as he spends time with his family.

Job during the holiday-Nar Bahadur helps the family in maize harvest

Date : April 2015
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Bishnu Maya Magar

During the monsoon, children like Pushkar Magar face the difficulty of crossing the Kayer Khola on their way to school. For some days at the height of monsoon rain in July and August, the water level in Kayer Khola rises and these children become unable to attend their school. The villagers were in need of a bridge over Kayer Khola, to improve access to the market and to reduce the difficulties and vulnerabilities of children on their way to school. A bridge over Kayer Khola, completed later in 2017, provided a much-needed help to Devitar villagers.



Pushkar Magar, 5, crosses Kayer Khola



Boys from Devitar swim to school

Date : August 2015
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Anjali Magar

Three boys in Devitar set off to school, with their shirts in the bags on their back. They study in a school across the Kayarkhola river. These boys will be swimming across the river to reach the school during monsoon and autumn seasons, while the river is not too big during winter or spring. The parents feel very worried about their safety, but the boys are well-versed in swimming. Since 2017, however, these boys no longer have to swim to the school as a new bridge has become operational.

Date : April 2015
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Bishnu Maya Magar

Anjali Magar, while working as a community leader, also has important social and livelihood responsibilities at home. She has two sons to raise, while her husband is working abroad. So she is left with all the responsibility of working in the field while also taking care of her family and for playing her role as the secretary of Chelibeti CFUG (Community Forest User Group). She convenes all the meetings of CFUG and carries out its administrative work. In the picture, Anjali is preparing for turmeric plantation. This crop is planted once a year in March and is harvested in January next year.



**Anjali Magar, while being a community leader,
has important domestic responsibilities**



Date : May 2015

Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Bulkumari Magar

Devitar village in Chitwan is frequented by visitors who want to learn fodder cultivation and women-led management of community forest. In the photo shown here, Chami Kumari Rana Magar (chair of Chelibeti CFUG) addresses the visitors-40 in total – from Pyuthan district. These visits have been a significant source of income for the group. Chami Kumari is pictured sharing her experiences of the hardships faced during initial phases of community forestry handover and how women can develop leadership through experience.

Chami Kumari Rana Magar, the Chairperson of Chelibeti CFUG, welcomes the visitors

Date : January 2015
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Bulkumari Magar

Most of the agriculture work in Devitar is done with manual labor, for which women's labor is the main source. The quality of life of women in rural areas is poor due to the heavy manual labor that they carry out, their limited access to education and poor voice in decision making.



A woman carries cow-dung manure to the field



Date : June 2015
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Bishnu Maya Magar

Agriculture and forest are integral part of rural livelihoods, and comprise part of the complex subsistence-based farming system in the villages of Nepal. Picture here is from Devitar village in Chitwan: a girl carrying grass for the cattle and a man with maize cobs in 'doko' (bamboo basket) from his field.

A girl carrying grass fodder and a man carrying maize in Devitar

Date : May 2016
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Gyanu Ghale

This flower, found in the fields in Khasur, is called Tatetyau in Gurung language and 'bojho' (*Acorus calamus*) in Nepali. It grows in moist conditions, or under tree shadows, in the sub-tropical areas. The Tatetyau flower itself is fragrant and its rhizomes are used for medicinal purposes such as treating coughs, colds, fevers, typhoid and generally strengthening the immune system. The medicine is made by pressing the roots and mixing them with water, or by drinking water in which the roots have been soaked. The rhizome concoction is used for both humans and livestock to cure and prevent the above diseases.



Tatetyau, a medicinal herb in Khasur village



Date : December 2016
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Chitra Kumari Ghale

Mamata Gurung (left), having been married to Khagendra Ghale (with white turban, in the middle), will soon be accompanying him to the UK. Khagendra, originally from Khasur, returned to the village for this marriage. He is one of the luckier ones to migrate to the UK amongst the village youths, who mostly migrate to the gulf countries where salaries and work conditions are less satisfactory than in the UK. With monies remitted from overseas, many families migrate to Beshahar or to bigger cities. Although this leaves agricultural land abandoned, the locals say that out-migration cannot be stopped. The lure of a better income from foreign employment proves too good an opportunity to miss.

Mamata Gurung married to Khagendra Ghale, a resident in the UK with his family

Date : December 2015
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Laxmi Ghale

The picture shows three elders in Khasur village, having been honoured by the locals by covering them with *bakkhu*. The *bakkhu* is a traditional blanket of the Gurung communities used for warmth and protection against rainfall. These elders, who are ex-servicemen in British army, are resettled in the UK, and they came back to the village to witness the completion of road construction that they supported financially. The *bakkhu* they are wearing was prepared in Khasur with traditional skills and simple tools. The REDD+ support program provided support to the community to reinvigorate the traditional craft of producing the *bakkhu*.



The villagers participating in a felicitation program in Khasur



Date : December 2015
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Gyanu Ghale

The *Putpute* is a ritual feasting to mark the birth of a son in Gurungs of Khasur village. It signifies a congratulation to the boy's parents from his maternal uncles. The ritual is held during the birth of the first son in the family and is celebrated on odd years after birth. If the family misses to perform the ritual, it can be done during the son's marriage. The village mothers' group - a co-operative of women in the village - offers blessings and garlands to the parents and performs a dance throughout the night.

Celebration of '*Putpute*' on birth of a son in Gurung communities

Date : March 2016
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Nanda Bahadur Ghale

The villagers of Khasur -who traditionally buried the deceased-have started to cremate the dead bodies in recent years. The deceased is led to the cremation by a procession of family members and villagers -with flowers and white cloth covering the dead body. The procession makes a round of the village before cremation. Male bodies and female bodies are cremated in separate places. The sons of the deceased, and sometimes daughters, light fire to the funeral pyre.



Villagers in Khasur paying adieu to the deceased villager



Cloth of death ritual hung in trees

Date : September 2015
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Nanda Bahadur Ghale

The cloths of the death ritual (*khada*) offered to the deceased person during '*argu*' (death ritual) are wrapped around the body of the dead person. They are then hung in trees as they are to be placed in the pure area. There is a common belief that offering the cloth by the relatives will prevent the dead person from rain in the heaven. '*Khada*' has multiple uses: it is also used for congratulating for achievements in the ceremonies and welcoming the visitors.

Date : November 2015
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Gyanu Ghale

Millet is a major cereal crop in Nepal's hills villages. It is grown in mostly rainfed land, as irrigated terraces are mostly preferred for paddy cultivation. The cereal is mainly used in the traditional dish of *dhindo* (millet pudding) and also extensively in the preparation of liquor, which is widely used in festivals and rituals of indigenous groups like the Gurungs in Khasur. The photo shows millet being thrashed after the crop is harvested in November/December.



Villagers thrashing millet with sticks



Date : December 2015
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Bharat Ghale

The Gurung and Ghale communities of Lamjung, while retaining their ethnic and Buddhist practices, also adopt some of the Hindu rituals. When they attain the age of 84, for instance, their family members organize a celebration called *chaurasi* (which literally means eighty-four). During the *chaurasi puja*, the individuals are weighed in a balance to determine the total weight of coins that their family offers to either a Buddhist Lama or a Brahman priest as *tuladan*. The pictured woman weighed 45 kg and she paid out Rs 45,000. This being an expensive feat, only the well-off individuals in Khasur afford this.

Saraswati Ghale weighs herself to donate the coins equivalent to her weight

Date : April 2016
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Nanda Bahadur Ghale

The economic blockade by India that Nepal faced in 2015-16 caused widespread panic in the cities, especially as essential commodities such as petrol and gas were in acutely short supply. In few weeks of the blockade, which started in September 2015 to oppose the promulgation of new constitution in Nepal, the shortage of petroleum gas led many in the cities to start using firewood for cooking food. At a point, the villagers in Khasur collected firewood from their community forest and transported a small amount (about a tonne) to Pokhara, a city close to Lamjung.



Firewood being stacked for transport to cities during blockade of 2015-16



Date : October 2015

Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Nanda Bahadur Ghale

Kanyathan is a sacred place inside the community forest in Khasur. It is a place of reverence for the forest goddess who is believed to protect cattle and crops. The Khasur villagers worship in this place twice a year: once in November during *Udhauli* (to symbolize time the cattle are herded to low-altitude cow-sheds from high altitude pastures) and then in April during *Uvauli* (when the cattle are moved to high-altitude pastures). While transhumance system is largely abandoned by the Khasur villagers, the worship of the goddess continues to this day.

Kanyathan - a sacred place-- in Khasur forest

Date : July 2016
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Anjali Magar

The President Chure Conservation Program under the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation in Nepal supports small-scale rural infrastructure work in an effort to secure local people's participation and support for the conservation of Siwalik ecosystems in Southern Nepal. In Devitar village in Chitwan, the Program provided financial support for drinking water. For this, four cemented wells were built in Devitar in 2013. These wells were particularly useful during the dry season, when drinking water becomes scarce.



**The government supported the wells to encourage
the conservation of Siwalik forests**



Purna Bahadur Magar, 61, performing Goth *Puja*, in Devitar

Date : May 2015
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Bishnu Maya Magar

The cattle are a very essential component of livelihood and cultural milieu in rural Nepal. The farmers in Devitar, Chitwan, also generate cash income by selling surplus milk to a nearby milk collection centre. The indigenous community of Magars in Devitar believe that they have to propitiate the Gods for the well-being of the cattle. The worship, called *goth puja*, is performed once a year on a full-moon day in April/May (*Baisakh Purnima*) at the cowshed. No service of a priest is sought for this *puja*—the householder makes a sacrificial offering of chicken on a mound of cow dung.

Date : April 2015
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Chami Kumari Rana Magar

The devastating Gorkha Earthquake that struck Nepal on the noon of 25th April 2015 left some nine thousand people dead, and some 21 thousand injured. Chitwan was not amongst the districts most severely affected by this, and there were no lives lost and no significant damage to buildings in Devitar village. However, the villagers lived through fear and shock caused by the earthquake. Indeed, most villagers made make-shift shelters to stay outside their homes for over a week after the earthquake.



A temporary shelter in Devitar after the Gorkha earthquake, 25th April 2015



A girl (middle) in the *gunyu-cholo* ritual, joined by birthday girl (left)

Date : June 2015
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Chami Kumari Rana Magar

Two girls are photographed here: one going through the *gunyu-cholo* ritual (centre), joined by another (left) in her birthday. The *gunyu-cholo* is a costume of the adolescent girls and women and ritual is the celebration of the entry into puberty age. In Devitar, girls between 9 and 13 years are given the costume of *gunyu-cholo* at some auspicious day. Parents offer them the costume, while other relatives give them blessing and money or gifts. Celebrating birthdays is also making inroads into Devitar, especially amongst the school children.

Date : July 2015

Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Bishnu Maya Magar

Two main forms of marriage are prevalent in Devitar- “arranged” marriage and elopement. The “arranged” marriage becomes possible if a) the families on both sides agree, b) the girl and boy indicate that they liked each other, and normally c) local astrologer confirms the pairing is good. Pictured here is beginning of the ritual in the arranged marriage, in which the bride (in red shawl) and the bride groom (white turban) cleanse themselves with holy water (or ‘Jal’).



Punam Magar and Shankar Magar get married (Devitar, Chitwan)



Date : May 2015
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Anjali Magar

The Chelibeti Community Forest User Group (CFUG) in Devitar is a women-only group. The CFUG holds a general Assembly once a year, or sometimes twice a year. The assembly brings together women members from all (or most of) the households in the CFUG and make decisions on funds, forest management operation, the selection of leadership, and work plan for the coming year.

Chelibeti CFUG holds its fifth General Assembly, 2015

Date : May 2015

Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Anjali Magar

Pictured here are two brothers belonging to Magar community that are engaged in the *shraddha* (death anniversary) ritual at their home in Devitar. This ritual marks the anniversary of the death of either of their parents on which the family invokes the deceased, pays homage to them and offers ritual feast to the deceased. While this practice is not so widespread among the Magar community, some of them have adopted this Hindu practice. It is carried out with the guidance of a Brahmin priest.



A Brahmin priest guides through the *shraddha* ritual in a Magar household



Date : May 2015
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Anjali Magar

In villages like Devitar, shamanism continues to be a method of healing. While Chitwan district has several modern hospitals and medical colleges, some local people consult the local shamans, or *Jhankri*. A *Jhankri* man pictured here is starting to treat the woman on his side. He does so by chanting of hymns so as to invoke evil spirits, tame them and chase away by using things like broom and plate and offering a chicken or goat.

A *Jhankri* gets ready to start his chanting

Date : April 2015
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Bishnu Maya Magar

The villagers living in subsistence farming in Nepal engage in labour exchange. Two or more households make such exchange relationship and carry out a rotation in activities such as cultivation, weeding or harvesting of crops. In so doing, they don't have to pay wage but take the day meal together. The household whose work was done in the day provides the meal. Pictured here are two women from different households dining together.



Women eat together during the days in which they exchange farm labour



Date : April 2015
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Bishnu Maya Magar

A communal ritual of *Sansari puja* is organized every year in the final Saturday of the month of Chaitra (mid-April). This ritual is performed in the community forest, where one or more animals are sacrificed and a collective feasting is organized. The local people believe that the *puja* will ensure good rainfall in the coming season and protects the people and livestock from diseases. The villagers collect fund from each household and one member from each household attends the ceremony.

Villagers performing *sansari puja*, Devitar, April 2015

Date : May 2016
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Jibraaj Ghale

The picture shows the scene after *Sansari puja* performed in the Khasur forest. This is one of several sacrificial rituals performed by Gurungs for the well-being and safety of villagers, their livestock and crops. Seven stone gods are worshipped in two Saturdays a year—once in November and next in April—traditionally to mark the movement of cattle up or down in the transhumance system. Dalits (*Kami*) also perform the ritual, but separately and differently than Gurungs. Dalits worship at a place along the roadside and sacrifice chicken or pig, while Gurungs worship inside the forest and sacrifice sheep. The sacrificial meat is then distributed amongst the respective community members.



The venue of *Sansari puja* in Khasur forest, Lamjung



Date : April 2015
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Anjali Magar

Aitabare puja, which is performed in the belief of keeping cattle safe, is held once a year for generations in Devitar village in Chitwan. The *puja*, which involves sacrificial offering of chicken to the deities, is performed early in the morning. It is done in three places in the forest-one each by a group of villagers who are divided into three groups. One member from each household participates in the *puja* and this member must stay pure for the *puja*, by bathing and fasting until the ritual is completed. Each household offers two chickens (1 male and 1 female) and their blood is offered to the deities, while the meat is eaten at home as *prasad* (blessed food).

Aitabare Puja performed in the forest in Devitar, Chitwan

Date : May 2015
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Anjali Magar

Mother's Day in Nepal falls on the New Moon day of May *Krishna Aausi* as per the Hindu calendar. People celebrate it in honour of their mothers for her selfless love, care and sacrifices she makes for them. The daughters and sons visit their mother's home and put red *tika* (coloured rice) on her forehead and offer her gifts and special food including fruits, meat, fish, eggs and *selroti* (rice doughnuts). The children wish for the long life and good health of their mother and mothers bless their children and wish for their success in life.



Feasting on the Mother's Day



Date : July 2015

Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Bulkumari Magar

The members of Chelibeti community forest users group (CFUG) in Devitar welcome visitors participating in an inter-district study tour by presenting them with flowers. The tour took place in June 2015 (Jestha 2072) and was organized by an aid-supported project on agriculture development. Several groups visited Devitar to observe and learn from the experiences of women-managed community forest. The CFUG also raises funds by charging a fee on the visiting team.

The Devitar villagers welcome visitors (seated on the chairs)

Date : May 2016
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Jibraj Ghale

The picture shows some youths repairing one of entrance gates to Khasur village in Lamjung. There are altogether three entrance gates in the village. These gates were constructed in 2011 by the village-level Khasur Community Tourism Development and Management Committee. When a group of tourists come to the village, villagers come with a small musical band and garlands to receive them up to these gates.



Locals repair Khasur Gate



Cottage of Pragati Nari

Date : November 2015
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Sarita Ghale

This cottage was constructed by a Women Group in Khasur in 2013 and has been used to a restaurant for domestic and foreign tourists who travel to Khasur for home-stay under community tourism. Home-stay facility is mostly managed by the members of the women group, called Pragati Nari. The members benefit from the restaurant, from where they also sell home-made *radi-pakhi* (woolen carpet). To operate the restaurant and home-stay, they initially received training provided by NEFIN (Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities)'s climate change partnership program. Working over the years, the women members have gained experience on the management for community tourism.

Date : September 2015
Location : Besisahar,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Bharat Ghale

In addition to having several religious rituals in the village, Khasur villagers also travel to temples outside the village. In the picture, a woman from Khasur, Krishna Kumari Ghale, worships the idol of Goddess Kalika in Udipur Kalila temple near in Besisahar. This temple draws devotees from surrounding areas on a full-moon day in December every year to get their wishes fulfilled. Those who cannot visit the temple remember the Goddess facing the direction of the temple.



Worshipping Kalika Goddess



Picnic spot construction in forest for tourism promotion

Date : July 2016
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Jibraaj Ghale

As part of promoting tourism in Khasur, the villagers are preparing a picnic spot, comprising a pond and a shelter, with a plan for a garden. This work is supported by the local government, who supported USD 2000 for the work, while the local people contributed labour and money. They hope to attract people from outside for picnic, while the pond will additionally provide water to wild animals and cattle. During the Dashain festival later in the year, villagers hosted a picnic in this place, when children enjoyed swimming in the pond.

Date : August 2015
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Laxmi Ghale

This rain-fed *bari* land down Khasur village is being ploughed to prepare for planting of *kodo* (millet). The crop is harvested in late November or December, and then, is dried and thrashed with wooden sticks. The crop is one of the traditional cereals in Nepal's hills and mountain regions and used in making the *dhindo*-or millet pudding . It is also used for making *roti* (unleaven bread) and in making local liquor extensively.



Getting ready for millet planting in Khasur Besi



Date : August 2015
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Chitra Kumari Ghale

The grinding mill in Khasur is owned and operated by a woman, Min Kasi Ghale, who joined this mostly man-only profession after her husband's death. The mill previously operated on diesel, which had to be portered from Besishahar, the town at an hour's walk from Khasur. The switch to electricity to operate the mill has saved her time and cost. Min Kasi's work on the mill has benefited the villagers who rely on it to grind grains such as rice, maize and wheat. By operating the mill, Min Kasi has been able to sustain herself and her three children after her husband's death.

A woman operates grinding Mill in Khasur

Date : August 2015
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Bimala Ghale

Sarita Ghale sits at her home offering 108 lights on the 49th day of the demise of her mother, who died at the age of 79. The lamp at the centre is the largest, and is surrounded by many other smaller ones. There is a belief that the lights offered prevents the dead soul from darkness and removes the bad spirits. This also spreads peace and welcomes Gods/Goddess. The initial light (odd numbers of light either 3/5/7) is offered by the eldest son/daughter of the deceased person, whilst other villagers offer a single light.



Lights for the soul of the deceased



Date : October 2015
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Nanda Bahadur Ghale

As the Gorkha earthquake of 25 April 2015 damaged the school building in Khasur, locals started to construct temporary buildings for the continuation of classes. In the picture, the students of Jana Jagriti secondary school are helping the construction of Temporary Learning Class (TLC). The earthquake created a great suffering in adjoining district of Gorkha, but in Khasur the damage was not that severe, but still created cracks in the school building. The students resumed classes in the newly constructed buildings.

Temporary Learning Class construction after earthquake of April 2015

Date : August 2015
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Sarita Ghale

Chitra Kumari Ghale (right) and Rupa Ghale (left), the members of women group of Khasur, pose for photograph in their traditional Gurung attire. The women usually dress in traditional way during special occasions, such as village fares, festivals, dance and cultural events as well as in welcoming group tourists. On their background is the board of the restaurant managed by the women group.



Women in traditional dress



Date : July 2016
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Bharat Ghale

The picture shows a senior-aged Dalit woman in Khasur, named Bich Maya BK, who carries on her back a load of maize harvest. The crop was harvested from her *bari* (rainfed land) land in Khasur besi and a *doko* (bamboo basket) made from bamboo is used to keep the harvest. On top of the *doko* on her back is a *ghum* which is made of bamboo and leaves to protect oneself from the rain or sun. Khasur gate is also visible on the background.

A Dalit woman brings home the maize harvest in *doko*

Date : April 2016
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Bharat Ghale

The Khasur people collect firewood from the forest during winter or early spring and stack at home for the monsoon season. The firewood is mostly collected from dead, dying or diseased trees, or from thinning of the forest. The decision for these “silviculture operations” is made by the executive committee of the forest user group. After the decision, villagers make five groups each under the leadership of a committee member, collect the firewood and distribute to the group members. Each household pays Rs 50 (50 pence) each year to the user group to cover its operational expenses.



Firewood stack in Khasur forest



A Dalit man logging off a tree in Khasur

Date : June 2016
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Bharat Ghale

An aged Dalit man, Ram Bahadur BK, logs off a *Chilaune* tree (*Schima wallichii*), which was felled during the road construction. The tree was bought by Jibraaj Ghale, who engaged Ram Bahadur to help logging it by paying a wage of Rs 500 (USD 5) per day. As the work plan of Khasur community forest was not renewed due to the conflict on forest boundary with adjoining villagers, the Khasur people were not able to fell trees for timber, except for other purposes such as building the road. However, users hoped to resolve the boundary conflict soon and get the work plan renewed so that the community could have *de jure* usufruct rights.

Date : March 2015
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Anjali Magar

The photo shows the cattle shed of Lok Bahadur Magar under construction in Devitar, Chitwan. Along with some other villagers, he received a support of Rs 5000 (USD 50) from a local *Suvakamana* Farmers Group. He owns two buffalos, a cow and 7 goats. The Farmers Group provided the support to those households who had cattle and were in need of support for improving their cattle shed. This new construction will make it easier for cow dung collection. In this construction, animal urine flows away easily, helping to keep the animals healthy.



Cattle shed under construction



Singti waterfall in Chitwan

Date : December 2015
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Anjali Magar

Singti waterfall, which lies at two hours' walk north of Devitar village, is becoming a more touristic venue in recent years – as more and more people from the towns of Chitwan come here during the weekends. In the vicinity of this waterfall lies the *Chamero gufa* (bat's cave) which is also the place of attraction for the visitors. Executive committee members of 16 community forest user groups (CFUGs) came to meet at this place in April 2014 (for Nepali new year retreat). During the meeting, they discussed the control of illegal logging and made a plan for forest plantation.

Date : February 2015
Location : Ghalegaun,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : School teacher

Bishnu Maya Magar (left), along with other female teachers from Devitar, pose for a photo before having breakfast in their trip to a place well known in Nepal for community-based tourism and beautiful sceneries of the Himalayas. These women teachers along with other teachers made a group of 55 people and went out to Ghalegaun in Lamjung district. The trip lasted for three days and they stayed a night in Ghalegaun, then moved to Ghandruk which is another touristic village west of Lamjung. While tourists in Nepal are normally understood to mean those coming from foreign countries, there has been growth of internal tourism in recent years.



Women teachers from Devitar become “tourists” in another district



Date : August 2015

Location : Tanahu, NEPAL

Photo by : Bishnu Maya Magar

This picture was captured by Bishnu Maya Magar, a resident of Devitar, while she visited her birth place in Tanahu to see her mother. She found her actively working in the rain-fed *bari* land, where two other relative women had joined her in the cultivation of millet. As most men and boys go out to cities or overseas in search of work, it is mostly the senior-aged men and women who take care of agriculture and household chores. The government provides old-age allowance and single-women allowance, but agriculture remains the main source of livelihoods for them.

Three women in millet plantation, Tanahu district

Date : April 2015
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : School teacher

Bishnu Maya Magar is teaching Mathematics for Grade 6 in the village school in Devitar. Having been an educated woman, she also volunteers to several community activities, including in forest management, where she plays important role in documentation of meetings. For her teaching, she finds that most of her students find Mathematics an interesting subject, but some find it a very complicated one. She was awarded the 'best Maths teacher' amongst the teachers in Shaktikhor area by the District Education Office of Chitwan.



Bishnu Maya Magar teaches Mathematics in her school



A grand-mother with the kids in Dashain

Date : October 2015
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Bishnu Maya Magar

Hiradevi Magar, seated at the front (centre), is the grandmother who poses for a photo with the kids in Devitar. She is 68 years old and has three sons and 10 grand-children. All have *tika* (coloured rice) in their foreheads, as a mark of the festival of Dashain when the seniors in the family offer *tika* to the family members and relatives. The red *tika* symbolizes victory of the good over the evil for which Dashain is celebrated. Nepal's Hindu population and several indigenous groups, including the Magars of Devitar, celebrate the festival.

Date : October 2015
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Anjali Magar

The swing is one of the traditional entertainments that people enjoy during Dashain celebrations. It is mounted on two bamboo clumps on each side, with a long rope hung in an open space. While it is mainly for children, there is a widespread belief that everyone should “leave the ground” by swinging during Dashain. The festival allows an opportunity for the family members and relatives-including those working abroad-to get together and share moments of happiness.



Swinging in the sky during Dashain



Date : October 2015
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Bishnu Maya Magar

The photo shows a man butchering a goat for the Dashain festival in Devitar. The festival involves the slaughter of animals in a considerable number in Nepal- in temples as ritual sacrifices, or slaughters at butcher's shop or at households. In Devitar, almost every household slaughters a goat-those with less incomes are also inclined to loan money for it. Even while mutton is more expensive as compared to other types of meat, it is the preferred meat for the festival amongst Devitar villagers.

Butchering a goat for Dashain

Date : September 2016

Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Sarita Ghale

The Gurung community in Khasur village in Lamjung exhibit richness of culture, celebrating Hindu, Buddhist as well as uniquely ethnic rituals and festivals. The Tihar-which is a Nepali Hindu festival of Deepawali-celebrated for five days in October or November is of special significance as it brings together married daughters to join their places of birth. On the fifth day of Tihar, the sisters put *Saptarangi* (coloured rice of seven different colours) on the foreheads of brothers by wishing for their good health and longevity, and it is reciprocated by their brothers. A group feast is organised for the occasion of *bhai tika* (offering coloured rice between brothers and sisters).



Tihar celebration in Gurung communities



Marching for *Kul puja*

Date : March 2015

Location : Sarkhet Palanse Village,
Makwanpur, NEPAL

Photo by : Anjali Magar

Anjali Magar, one of the women leaders in Devitar, captured this photo while she was visiting her parents in her birth place. The men in this photo are in march for a *kul puja*, a ritual that expresses the reverence of a clan group to their ancestral god. According to the tradition in Sarkhet Palanse, the *puja* is hosted in an interval of every three or five years. Each household offers a male chicken, which is sacrificed with a knife taken by the man in front of the procession in the photo.

Date : May 2015
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Chami Kumari Rana Magar

Chautari Samuha in Devitar is a group established in 2009 by 21 women who help themselves in saving money. The group meets the first Saturday of each month at the leader's house. In the meeting, each member deposits Rs 200 (USD 2), while one of the members receives the whole amount for that month. In rotation, every other member receives the money, with a cycle completing in 21 months. An interest rate of 12% per year is factored in this saving scheme.



Cash collection and distribution in local saving group, Devitar



Preparing to load the vegetables for sale

Date : May 2016
Location : Devitar Village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Bulkumari Magar

Over the past ten years, some of the villagers in Devitar have switched from subsistence agriculture to produce surplus vegetables that generate far more household income than the traditional cereal crops. This shift was made possible with training and support from NGOs and agriculture agencies. Some households in the village now cultivate both on-season and off-season vegetables for sale. The photo shows some back-loads of lady's finger grown by woman named Bulkumari Magar, who also grows other vegetables. She also received a grant of Rs 60,000 (USD 600) from District Agriculture Office. With the bridge constructed over Kayarkhola river, the sale of vegetables has become much easier as pick-up trucks reach Devitar village.

Date : September 2016
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Anjali Magar

Teej is a festival in July which traditionally provide an opportunity for girls and women to share their moments of grief and happiness with their friends and family. It expresses itself in girls and women singing, dancing, and ending on a day of fasting. This open show of celebration has in recent years given way to indoor partying outside traditional social relations. The photo shows male school teachers throwing a party to female teachers in Devitar. On the table is also a bottle of liquor.



School teachers in a *Teej* party



Date : December 2015
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Chami Kumari Rana Magar

The introduction of improved animal breeds is not an easy business for small-scale farmers. A farmer in Devitar, Nand Prasad Rana Magar, imported a cow of improved breed from the hotter district of Parsa. The cow was purchased at Rs 45,000 (USD 450), with the hope that it would help increase his income. However, according to the villagers, the climate of Devitar perhaps did not suit to the cow from another area. It died within a few days of its arrival in the new home.

Climate gone wrong: an imported cow dies in Devitar

Date : January 2016
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Anjali Magar

Chami Kumari Rana Magar (left) and her daughter, Sushma Magar (right) participating in a public celebration program on the occasion of *Maghe Sakranti* (around 15th January) in Devitar. This day marks the beginning of warmer and longer days. Simply, *Maghe Sakranti* is end of winter and beginning of spring. *Maghe Sakranti* is the festival of Sun God, the symbol of power, divinity and wisdom. Sun God is worshiped in this festival. All the family members come together and have a big feast for this festival especially as *selroti*, *tarul* (yam), ghee, *chaku* (hardened molasses), *gundruk* pickle (fermented leafy vegetables) and others.



Mom and daughter pose for a photo during *Maghe Sakranti* celebration



Starting the photovoice project, Devitar village, Chitwan

Date : April 2015
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, Nepal

Photo by : Bulkumari Magar

The photovoice project, which led to the photo stories collected here, involves several steps. The first step, shown in the photo, is a discussion between local community (Chelibeti community forest user group members) and CoCooR (Conflict and Cooperation over REDD+ in Mexico, Nepal and Vietnam) project's Nepal team (Hari Dhungana, Poshendra Satyal and Gyanu Maskey). They discussed the purpose of photovoice and worked out how the community could represent their lives and livelihoods through the photos and enable them express their stories. Through the meeting, the community made four "photo" groups and the CoCooR team handed over a camera to each of the leaders of the groups and provided them with needed skills.

Date : April 2015
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Bulkumari Magar

Three women are the key leaders in Devitar. Chami Kumari Rana Magar, the Chairperson of Chelibeti Community Forest User Group (middle), Anjali Rana Magar, the Secretary (left), and Bishnu Maya Magar a teacher and a CFUG member are pictured on their way to the General Assembly, dressed formally in a *Sari*. They are carrying the cameras, provided for photovoice, which were used for capturing the pictures of the general assembly.



Women leaders pose for a group photo



Date : May 2015
Location : Devitar village,
Chitwan, NEPAL

Photo by : Chami Kumari Rana Magar

The youths pictured here are taking photos at the General Assembly of Chelibeti CFUG (Community Forest User Group). The cameras were provided as part of the photovoice project to the local residents to capture photos of the activities out in the village. There were further discussions with the locals about the photos: the social and cultural significance, and interpretations.

Youngsters in Devitar village participate in photovoice project

Date : July 2016
Location : Khasur village,
Lamjung, NEPAL

Photo by : Jibraaj Ghale

The villagers of Khasur are discussing and selecting the photo stories for the exhibition planned at 'The Annual Kathmandu Conference' in Kathmandu from July 27th-29th 2016. Team for this photovoice project visited the village every 2-3 months and discussed the stories with the community members who took the photos. Four cameras were handed over to community members, who were trained on how to handle the camera, take photos and store them. The photos captured by the community included their moments in farming, culture and religion, forest management, visits and meetings, tourism, scenery and REDD+ activities.



Community selecting photos for Photovoice exhibition

Date : July 2016
Location : Hotel Shankar,
Kathmandu, Nepal

Photo by : Ellen Payton

The CoCooR (Conflict and Cooperation over REDD+ in Mexico, Nepal and Vietnam) research team from SIAS and the members of two forest user groups (Chelibeti and Khasur Community Forest User Groups) held an exhibition during the Annual Kathmandu Conference on Nepal and the Himalaya. The conference was held for three days in July 2016. The exhibition showcased the photo stories and enabled exchange between the photovoice team and national and international researchers on photovoice as a research methodology. Over a hundred conference participants observed the photovoice exhibit and interacted with the team. Two representatives from Khasur (Nanda Bahadur Ghale and Jibraaj Ghale) and two from Devitar (Anjali Magar and Bulkumari Magar) along with the SIAS members, Hari Dhungana and Gyanu Maskey are seen in the picture.



Photovoice team poses itself at their exhibition in the Annual Kathmandu Conference on Nepal and the Himalaya



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