

Institutional Mapping

Scaling Opportunities and Institutional Strengthening for Collectives in Saptari, Nepal

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**Improving the livelihoods of marginal farmers, by outscaling
irrigation and agricultural practices, through collectives, in
the Eastern Gangetic Plains (WAC 2018 163)**

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Introduction

As per the 2015 Constitution of Nepal, the country is now a Federal Republic. The move from a unitary system of governance to a three-tiered one has institutional, programmatic and budgetary implications on the agricultural sector of the country. While new institutions have been created, existing ones are combined, expanded or eliminated at the federal, provincial and local levels. These changes offer both opportunities and challenges in institutionalization and scaling of the collective farming approach. Opportunities lie in the increased autonomy and authority of newly formed municipalities where policies are being formulated and new local leadership are found to be enthusiastic and open to new and innovative ideas. The challenge, however, is in the lack of coordination and collaboration between key institutions in the agricultural sector, which is further complicated by unclear roles and authorities among government entities in the three levels of government.

There are potential for complementarities between Province 2 policies and priorities for agricultural sector with collective farming approach. Collective approach can be strengthened and upscale by aligning with province priorities to increase agricultural production by ensuring all year round irrigation; use of surface and ground water for irrigation and development of special package for land leasing by improving land use planning. The priority of Province to improve cereal production as well as focus on integrating livestock aligns with project findings on the need to diversify farmer's livelihoods. Plans to develop market infrastructure with pesticide control mechanisms focuses on addressing the challenges marginal and tenant farmers often face. Furthermore, province plan to support farmer groups and cooperatives for developing model farm in crops and livestock commodities is where collective farming approaches can be replicated.

This study focuses on identifying and charting the linkages between different institutions at the local government (rural municipalities) level in light of sustaining and scaling farmer group collectives of Koiladi and Shambhunath municipalities. The rural municipalities, with the mandate to develop and enforce local level policies and budget formulation, can play a key role in institutionalizing the collectives approach to agriculture. In addition, other agricultural government and non-government agencies, along with the private sector also have important roles to play.

Following section on Institutional mapping is arranged by identifying each institutional function, opportunities and challenges they face, followed by next steps for establishing and strengthening linkages and lastly by presenting policy impact in relation to collectives. Furthermore, current institutional linkages of each institution with collectives and other relevant institutions are showcased in diagrams by presenting strong, weak and little with potential to strengthen coordination, represented by green, red and blue colored shapes. As COVID 19 unfolds in agricultural sector and collectives, while calls for more research, will certainly have significant implications. The economic and social impacts can positively and negatively affect collectives. A section on possible immediate and long-term effects of COVID have been outlined.

Farmer Group Association

Background

The Shambhunath Farmer Group Association was registered in January 2020 at the Rural Municipality. This nascent organization is led by Mehi Narayan Chaudhari, who is a farmer himself from the same municipality. The key objective of the association is to bring farmer groups together for voicing concerns and needs of farmer groups. The association brings together as many as 40 groups from the Shambhunath rural municipality in Saptari. Two DSI4MTF farmer groups from Kanakpatti are represented in the association. Details on opportunities, challenges and way forward for collectives and farmer group association are outlined in sections below.

Figure below depicts current linkages between institutions for strengthening and scaling farmer collectives. Red, green and blue arrows signify strength of linkage between farmer association groups and other institutions. Green signifies strong linkages, blue signifies existence of linkages but with room for linkage strengthening and red signifies weak or non-existent linkage that needs to be strengthened.



Opportunities:

- The association has the potential to garner recognition and support for farmer groups. The association can also facilitate information flow between the groups and agricultural agencies, rural municipality and ward offices. Equipped with the collective voice of farmer groups, the association can influence policy development and implementation. For this, the linkage between the association and rural municipality is critical.
- Association paves two way flow of information between association and Rural municipality on farmers' needs and types of support already provided. Support can be targeted to reach wider farmer groups based on records in RMs and ward. This could eliminate duplication of agronomic support among farmers.

- Agronomic information access has been a major challenge among marginal, tenant and women farmers. As a result, they are excluded from agricultural and irrigation services. So, this association can build linkages between farmers groups and other institutions bridging information gaps and strengthening linkages.
- Farmer Group Association is a perfect example/medium of collective farmer voice DSI4MTF is trying to build on. Collective voice of farmer groups is essential to influence policies at both local and higher levels.
- The association can also function as an entity promoting farmer groups and their concept of collectives. This can foster institutionalization of collectives.
- Farmer School approach can be promoted where farmer groups can cross learn through skills exchange among the groups themselves as well as facilitation through external intervention.
- Concept of land lease by tenant and landless farmers can be institutionalized through advocacy and demonstration.
- Government of Nepal extends agricultural support through farmer groups. So, associations can contribute in streamlining the support.
- The association can negotiate with landlords for fair land lease conditions.
- It is difficult for marginal and tenant farmers to insure crops in smaller land plots. The association can facilitate collective crop insurance.
- Opportunity to diversity agriculture livelihood beyond cereal crops and vegetables (such as mushroom farming, fishery, animal husbandry).
- The association can facilitate collection and sale of farm products whereby farmer groups will receive fair price for their products (can use DSI market rate app in wider scale)

Challenges

- Getting poor farmers to participate in farmer group meetings could be time consuming.

- Ensuring transparency and equitable distribution of support received by/through association can be challenging. Elite capture/monopoly
- Influence of political parties and local politicians can manipulate decisions of the association.
- Association is in its infancy. So, capacity building on effective functioning of association is required.
- Addressing diversity in farmer groups in terms of gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status can be challenging.

Next Steps

- Capacity building of the association for effective representation of farmers groups at both policy and programmatic levels.
- Support the association in strengthening linkages between the association and private and public agricultural agencies through meetings, workshops and field visits.
- Expansion of coverage of association through supporting creation of new groups, inclusion of existing groups, reviving nonfunctional groups.
- To address diversity in farmer groups, mapping farmer group diversity in terms of gender, ethnicity, socio-economic status is important.
- Support the association in internalizing and fully comprehending the benefits of farmer collectives through collective lease holding for advocacy.
- Landlords can be included to identify land characteristics (quality, fallow/cultivated etc) and potential to rent out land to landless farmers through association.
- Empower the association to work with the government to identify public fallow land lease out to farmer groups.
- Link private insurance companies with farmer associations to insure crops collectively to minimize risks.

Policy Impacts

- The association strengthens Government Policy of formation and utilization of farmer groups for production and marketing
- The association can influence the Rural Municipality to institutionalize a collective farming approach. Thereby, the Rural Municipality will include the approach in its policies, annual plans and budget.
- The association can play a critical role in promoting the farmer group collective approach as an environment-friendly and climate-smart concept.

Krishi Gyan Kendra, Rajbiraj

Background

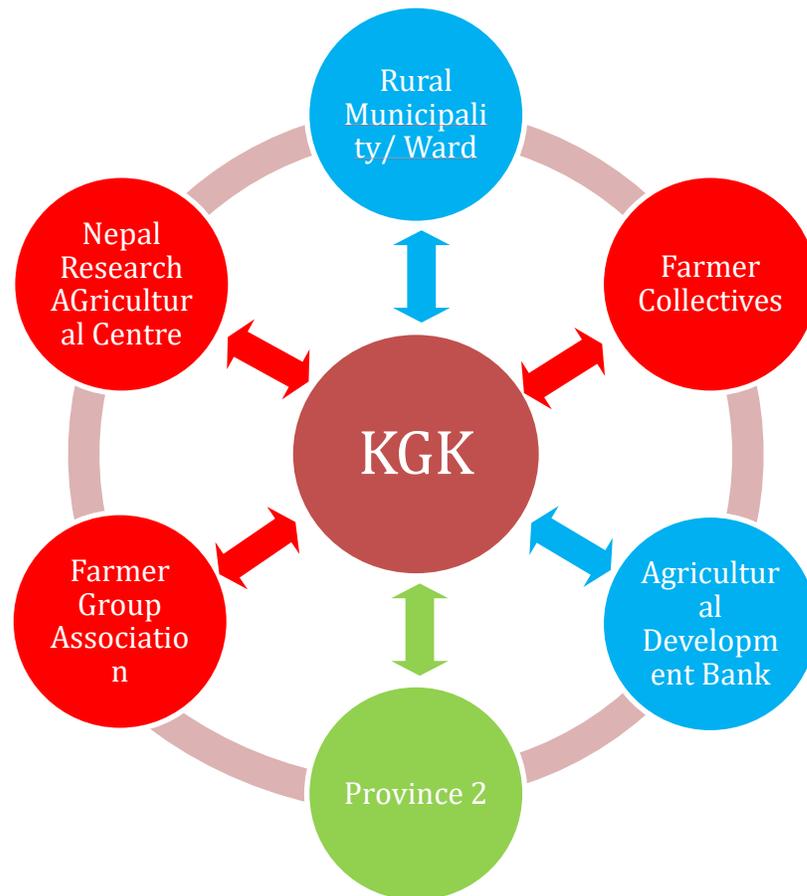
Krishi Gyan Kendra(KGK) Rajbiraj is an agriculture knowledge center established to demonstrate new agricultural technology and promote technology transfers. It also supports capacity building of farmers and extension workers in local units. Currently, it covers Saptari and Siraha districts with its services. KGK has provision for 17 staff members out of which 15 positions are currently filled. KGK comes under jurisdiction of province two.

Before federalism, Krishi Gyan Kendra functioned in the form of District Agriculture Development Office. DADO was a nodal agency instrumental in planning agricultural programs for Saptari district with 55 staffs. During the first two years of transition, key functions of KGK were led directly by Provincial government. Gradually these functions are now being devolved to the kendra. The Kendra is expected to develop annual programs and submit them to the provincial government for approval and budgeting.

In the first year, provincial government's focus was on supporting farmers through agri-machinery support such as thresher, rice harvester, power tiller and irrigation

equipments. In the second year, the focus shifted to commercial farming and promotion of new crops. The focus of this year is on collective farming (farmer's group)-Although the Kendra provides support to all typology of farmers, they have designed programs focusing on small farmers such as collective farming for improved seeds production; fruit and vegetable farming with focus on tomato, mushrooms and banana.

The transition from DADO to KGK also has budgetary implication. Although Kendra has increased budget allocation in comparison to DADO, lack of clarity in terms of rules, staffing, policies have created difficulty in fulfilling its mandates. Budget allocation to KGK Rajbiraj for the fiscal year 2018/19 was around 15 crores.



Opportunities:

- The function of KGK to build capacity of farmers aligns with the livelihoods approach taken by collectives. Benefits include agronomic training to not just farmers but extension workers in local levels. Strong link with KGK can help sustain collectives after project ends with support in capacity building, agricultural extension services and subsidies.
- Access to improved seeds is crucial agricultural development. Training on production of seeds and nursery raising supports in making farmers self-sufficient. This can help to reduce the risks of acquiring poor quality seeds from market.
- Training on commercial farming such as mushroom and banana creates opportunities for cash income and may help increase dietary diversity. This also helps diversify livelihood through shift from cereal based agricultural economy of the district.
- Promotion of agricultural produce and cross learning among farmers by organizing events such as agricultural fairs.
- Operating area of KGK Rajbiraj, Saptari and Siraha comprise majority of marginal and tenant farmers. In this context, KGK has the potential to share the collectives approach with other farmer groups in forming new collectives thereby help scale up. This can be done through exposure visit of farmers to project intervention area.
- ToT (Training for Trainers) to a few farmers from collectives can help to expand KGK's skill transfer and agricultural support services more efficiently.

Challenges

- There is no official obligation for KGK to coordinate with Rural Municipalities and wards. Lack of coordination may lead to overlaps in agricultural support to specific farmers while excluding others.
- KGK has limited staff capacity to adequately cover the needs of two districts.
- KGK is expected to build capacity of farmers and extension officers. However, extension officers themselves may lack up to date information since there are no

programs to train extension officers. This could seriously hamper mandate of KGK to strengthen agricultural extension in Saptari and Siraha.

- Making sure that KGK recognizes the benefits of the collective approach could require substantial time and effort, thereby convincing them for to support and promotion of the approach.
- Lack of clarity in plans, policies and targets could focus more on supply driven programs rather than need based.
- Fair and transparent selection of farmers for training and other supports including subsidy. Selection of farmers on the basis of gender parity does not adequately address inclusion of farmers who actually need support.
- There is a need to orient the KGK on benefits of collective approach among marginal, tenant and women farmers with site visit. Assessment of potential to integrate collectives with KGK's group farming approach is needed.
- Concept of collective land leasing could help utilization of fallow government land in the coverage area. KGK can help to justify the agricultural use of the fallow land.
- Need to forge coordination between KGK and Rural Municipalities. Organizing consultation meetings bringing KGK, Rural Municipalities, wards, DSI4MTF collectives and other farmers groups could initiate coordination.
- Participatory farmers videos on utilization of KGK's support services that are relevant for strengthening collectives. The video could also be audio visual aid for KGK to promote adoption of collective farming in similar contexts.
- Extensive institutional analysis of institutions working with KGK at local and provincial levels for more efficient delivery of services.

Rural Municipalities (Sambhunath and Thilathi Koildai):

Background

Rural Municipalities (RM) can play a pivotal role in the sustainability and scaling of farmer group collectives through conducive policies and supportive programming. Following the creation of municipalities as local governing bodies through Nepal Constitution of 2015, the municipalities have the authority to formulate policies and enforce them. However, while the municipalities have more power, they are newly established governing bodies that are yet to The two rural municipalities



Opportunities:

- Rural Municipalities (RM) have the authority to allocate budget for local development including agriculture. For instance, in Sambhunath RM, 40 lack was allocated for agriculture for this fiscal year.
- Rural Municipalities have the authority to independently formulate and enforce policies within their jurisdiction. In this regard, there is opportunity to advocate for the recognition and inclusion of collective farming approach in agricultural policies of the RMs.
- RM has the authority to allocate budget as per sectoral need.
- Subsidies provided by RM can be opportunity for farmer groups to support needy farmers. For instance, 50% wheat seed subsidy was provided to 138 farmers in this fiscal year which had a budget of 1.59 lakh. Furthermore, 80 sacks of seeds were distributed.
- Agricultural Section is within rural municipality with 2 agricultural officers and 1 technical assistant. The section can facilitate access of rural farmers to government support and opportunities to advocate for policy change with RM leadership.
- Farmers can easily reach out to agricultural officers due to close proximity of agricultural section. This will help farmers to access information on agricultural support offered by the section easily.
- Information of agricultural support are announced through local Radio stations. This also helps in easing information on agricultural support to all typology of farmers.
- Agricultural Section organizes training in commercial farming such as in nursery raising, high value vegetables (mushroom). This can help promote dry season agriculture through commercial cultivation and production of high value crops.
- Koiladi Rural Municipality chair is interested in promoting collective farming bringing in marginalized group to cultivate currently unutilized riverside land. This

is a great opportunity to promote collective farming approach while addressing limited land availability issue for marginal and tenant farmers.

- Engage with ward to ensure that collective farms are recognized in their annual programs submitted to the Rural Municipalities.

Challenges:

- Lack of adequate human resources at the RM makes it challenging for agricultural section to get approvals for finalization of drafted agricultural programs and budget. There is one officer and accountant to manage programs drafted by all the section of RM. Consequently, there are delays.
- Agricultural section which is responsible to look after agricultural development of entire RM only has 3 staffs. So, it becomes challenging for limited staff to support the needs of 12 wards.
- Agricultural Section Officers have not received trainings in the past 2 years. so, they lack up to date information on new agricultural technologies and approaches.
- Agricultural programs are not targeted but scattered. The programs are formulated in piecemeal basis lacking integration thereby diffusing the impact.
- Rural Municipality's focus on infrastructural development sidelines agricultural priorities and needs. So, small, marginal and tenant farmers are hard hit by declining agricultural support.
- There is limited coordination of RM with other important agricultural agencies such as Krishi Gyan Kendra. This could result in duplication of agricultural support in some areas while no support in others.
- Agricultural support is often handed out by leaders bypassing agricultural section. Selection of recipient is not always transparent.

Next Steps:

- Consultation with RM, ward chair and agricultural officers on benefits of collective farming approach to address agricultural challenges such as land inequities and limited agricultural investment capacities of farmers in Saptari.
- Advocate for inclusion of collective farming approach in Rural Municipalities policies, annual plans and budget through workshop , exposure visits and other required assistance to the RM.
- Engage with both Rural Municipality to work on identification of available arable riverbanks (Koiladi) and public land for cultivation through collective approach.
- Engage with Association of Rural Municipalities situated in Kathmandu to promote collective approaches to agricultural production. The association in turn can disseminate the information among all other Rural Municipalities in the country.
- The possibility of introducing the concept of land bank can be initiated with Rural Municipalities to assess whether it is practical.
- Assessment of diversification from crop based collective farming to integrate livestock and fisheries can help create sustainable livelihoods.
- Possibility to create agricultural decision support tool comprising information on micro weather, comparative local prices, pest infestation and so on through local radio station

Policy Impact:

- Possibility of developing local agricultural policies conducive to the sustainability and growth of collectives.
- Assimilation of existing farmer groups into new collectives.
- Create provision in the land use policy to collectively utilize public land by marginal and tenant farmers.

- Effective allocation and utilization of agricultural budget as per the needs of marginal and tenant farmers.
- Tenant farmers do not have access to agricultural subsidies and support. Policy reform to ensure landless tenant farmers have access to such support for use in their rented land.

Commercial Pocket Approach (CPA)

Background

The Commercial Pocket Approach (CPA) is an intervention developed by iDE in Nepal that works to develop smallholder market integration. The fundamental aim of the CPA is to increase farmers' incomes, enhance food security and nutrition and improve communities' abilities to resist stresses and shocks. iDE began to develop and implement the CPA in Nepal in 2003 and has continued to de fine and adapt the approach since then.

There are some principle of CPA which are :

- Layering and using a variety of components
- Participatory methods ensures commitment and engagement
- Demonstrating impacts on income, health and nutrition is essential for maintaining beneficiaries interest
- Practical, accessible and replicable training is important to build farmers confidence
- Actively targeting women and marginalized groups

The key elements of CPA are:

- Group ('pocket') of farmers organized through a Marketing and Planning Committee that have time/resources to reevaluate their production varieties and methods
- External provision for technical advice and capacity building support
- Development of Community Business Facilitators (CBFs) to provide last-mile supply chain support
- Development of Collection Centres (CCs) to link farmers to traders, provide pricing information, sales outlets and opportunities

Opportunities

- Increased self-reported and verified levels of empowerment
- Improved HH income and financial benefits
- Increased HH and community savings and culture of savings
- Enhanced social cohesion through shared experiences
- Strengthened institutions through CCs, cooperatives and integration in local government
- Resilient capacities have increased due to incomes, social networks and generation of savings
- Shifting gender dynamics and improved representation in decision making forums

Scaling the CPA

Horizontal Scale-Out

- Capable partners are in place
- Local adaptation (terrain, markets, culture, infrastructure)
- Communication of comparative advantage to stakeholders
- Clear understanding of the core methodology

Vertical Scale-Up

- Coordinated government leadership
- Private sector engagement, innovation and investment
- CSO and cooperative engagement
- Strengthening system sustainability

Impacts :

Through BRACED, IOD PARC was commissioned to complete a third-party review of the Commercial Pocket Approach (CPA) that was implemented by the iDE-led Anukulan project in order to determine whether the approach improves the livelihoods and resilience of communities. The study was composed of (1) a proof of concept study; (2) a market analysis, and; (3) a scale-up plan. An analysis of the Anukulan project showed **an increase in farmers' household income ranging from 26.5-55%** (with a 95% confidence level). Average profits for farmers ranged from 48-52% and market traders also improved their profits from 16-31% from selling vegetables.

Overall, the findings are that the CPA - as implemented by iDE - shows clear positive signs of improving the lives, resilience and incomes of farmers as well as empowering women in a cost-effective way. It can also form the basis for systemic and sustainable change when implemented in the right conditions and with the appropriate combination of environmental factors. The project therefore has the potential for scale up.

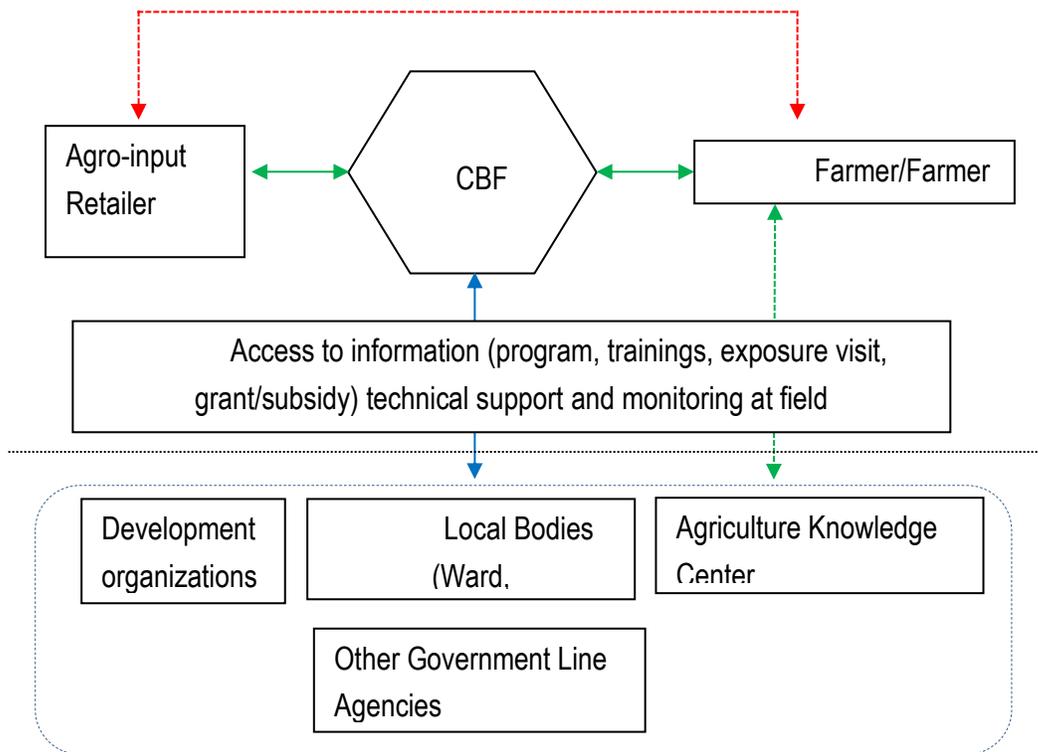
Community Businesses facilitator

Background

The Community Business Facilitator (CBF) is an entrepreneur based in rural communities who earn the commission on the sale from the agro-input suppliers and retailers. The CBF acts as a last mile supply chain actors to bridge the input supplies gap between private sectors and farmers. CBF provides appropriate and required input supplies demanded by farmers at farm level and also provides in-situ technical guidance, some insect pest and diseases diagnosis and recommendation to improve the agriculture production and income of the farmers. CBF does not only support and farmers but also supplement their own income and livelihood working as full time or part time entrepreneur.

Opportunities:

- The CBF could bridge the gap between private agricultural input retailers and farmers by providing agricultural inputs and services to the farmers at their door step at reasonable price.
- Crop selection, insect, pest and disease in the crops, their diagnosis and measures has been challenges to the farmers so CBF could plays vital roles in providing suggestion and recommendations.
- CBF could be complementary volunteer or paid worker in agriculture extension services for training, capacity development, implement of better agriculture practices.



Challenges:

- Trained CBFs are required for better services to the farmers, good income from commission and better inter-personal relationship with farmers, agro-retailer other development organization
- The character, behavior, intention and reputation of the CBF must be good otherwise mistrust between CBF and farmers and CBF and agro-retailers results failure of the model
- CBF sometimes tend to act as a staffs of the agro-retailers and focused towards stock clearance, higher commission and margin rather than quality of the product and services
- CBF in urban area, easy access to agri-inputs retailers by farmers and limited agriculture production are less suitable.

Next Steps:

- Development of commercial pocket which to ensure sufficient volume of agriculture production, input and output supply chain and linkage and coordination with other stakeholders
- Development of last mile supply in needed area
- Capacity building of CBFs regarding new and appropriate technologies and practices
- Facilitating private sectors to develop last mile supply chain actors and extend their services up to the grassroots levels.

COVID19 and Collectives:

- Challenges to market agricultural yield in haat bazaar (weekly market) which is the main selling place of produce for farmers
- Collectively farming and participating in group meetings requires social gathering. Performing these activities without social distancing could put people at risk.
- Institution level collaboration could be difficult for initiating discussion on upscaling and sustaining collectives. This is further constrained by lack of facilities for virtual meetings at local level.
- Budgetary priorities of local government can change in short run. Budget allocation can be diverted to addressing COVID-19. As a result, there could be decline in local agricultural support.
- There is a possibility of migrant households losing income due to increased unemployment at international labour market. This could significantly affect income source at household level causing decline in agricultural input investment.
- Irrespective of increase or decrease in agricultural yield, farmers are supposed to pay land rent. Due to potential reduction in agricultural activity and income, collectives may face difficulties to pay land rent.

- Farmers have reported Indian inputs such as seeds, fertilizers etc to be more affordable. There might be limited or no access to agriculture due to closure of India Nepal boarder. Most of the agricultural inputs come from India.
- The impact of COVID can have national implication in agricultural sector in years to come. Returnees of foreign employment can enter agricultural sector increasing investment and transfer skills learned abroad. Here, opportunities for formation of new collectives to enhance agricultural efficiency is a possibility.
- There is possibility of decline in agricultural investments at the national level straining marginal farmers. In this context, collective farming can be an approach to minimize agricultural investment but increase productivity.
- Unemployed young population may engage in agriculture enhancing the labor supply of collectives.
- As the collectives are impacted by COVID 19, the implication on women and marginalized farmers need to be investigated. At the same time, Gender and Social Inclusive approaches to address such implications need to be researched. Changes in economic and agricultural sectors that will affect the collectives must incorporate Gender and Social Inclusion approaches as collectives adjust to them.

Conclusion

Reflections and way forward from institutional mapping have been arranged in five broader themes: Policy and programming; agricultural value and linkages; agricultural livelihood diversification; research and evidence generation and communication and engagement.

Policy and programming:

- State restructuring is a major factor to be considered while upscaling the farmer collective approach. There is a need to understand priorities and function of respective institution identified with the more details in the next phase of the project.
- Given the new authority and responsibility of the rural municipalities, engagement with local government for institutionalization of the farmer collective approach should be a major component of the project in the next phase.
- Opportunities to utilize available public land through consultation with Rural municipalities, ward and marginal and tenant farmers should be assessed. To do this, available public land, land size and land quality in the RM should be identified and documented. At the same time, interest from potential marginal and tenant farmers should be determined.
- Explore new institutions created under federal system that can play supportive and positive role to promote and strengthen collectives.
- Ways to engage with and incentivize land owners in collective farming approach with mutually beneficial terms and conditions between two parties should be explored.

Agricultural value chain and linkages:

- Working in different phases of agricultural value chain would be important to understand relation between farm productivity and farmer livelihoods on one hand and capture implication of collective farming on the other.
- Strengthening linkages with private sector such as banks, irrigation equipment suppliers, agrovets, tractors should be pursued.
- Assess potential to replicate commercial pocket approach among farmer collective in Saptari.
- Identification of key institutions and strategy development to strengthen their linkages for sustainability and scaling of farmer collectives.

Agricultural livelihood diversification:

- Explore opportunities to diversify agricultural livelihoods by integrating livestock and poultry in current crop based farming.
- Identification of nonperishable crops for farmers that can generate higher price and avoid price fluctuation risks in coordination with RM and ward agricultural officers

Research and Evidence Generation:

- This study is was conducted after only three years since the state restructuring began. These institutions are still settling in with thier new roles and responsibilities. This analysis must continue in a more rigorous way in the next phase.
- Pilot of land banking approach can be initiated during the next phase of the project to examine the possibility of applying the approach in Saptari's socio-economic and cultural context.
- In view of the fact that, the next phase of the project assesses whether farmer association/cooperative model can be established as an umbrella institution to

strengthen current collectives, inclusive approaches to work with existing farmer association also benefitting marginal and tenant farmers have to be explored.

- Going beyond agricultural productivity and income to measure, food security by capturing nutritional benefits of farmer families through randomized control trial.

Communication and Engagement:

- A comprehensive participatory video capturing evolution of collective farming in intervention sites, challenges faced, benefits received both in agronomic and socio-economic terms should be prepared. This should be used as audio-visual tool to initiate deliberative dialogues on upscaling collective farming approach among policy makes and farmers.
- Engagement with local media (newspaper, radio stations and more) to promote collective approaches through farmer and project scientists interactions should be planned.
- Prepare a user friendly description of farmer collective approach in local languages for general readers so that they can have an understanding of different collective farming models.

Annex I : Case Study

Stakeholder Engagement in Saptari

Local government is the closet unit of government to the grassroots level people including poor and tenant farmers. They have the responsibility to accelerate social and economic development by creating enabling environment, public participation



in decision-making and institutionalization of local governance. In general, poor and tenant farmers have limited access to the government and they have not fully understood the changes in government structure of Nepal in 2015 and what the change means to them. Since the project implementation, the project team has been informing the poor and tenant farmers about the government structures changes, policies, program and priorities of the government through different formal and informal meetings and workshops. The project team and also organizing field visits of government staff including senior and junior staff and officials, local elected political leaders, agro-vets, traders and farmers.

During this project meetings with local government were organize on 9 and 24 January 2020 at Kanakpatti and Koiladi respectively. The objective of the meeting was to share the project approach, good practices applied in the field and learning. In addition, the meetings were held also to engage and interact with project farmers and local government people regarding their upcoming plans and commitments to support the farmers. Local government agriculture officers, ward chair, junior technical officers have visited the sites and interacted with the farmers. Raj Kishor Ray, a program officer from iDE Nepal shared information on the project approach, demonstrated solar and electric pumps, shared irrigation water management practices, ground water monitoring and market price monitoring activities. He further explained to the participants the commercial pocket approach and last mile supply chain model highlighting success and limitation in the current project area. He also shared the reliability, uses and replicability of the project approach and practices in the meeting.

Farmers expressed following expectations/demand in the meeting:

1. The municipality and ward chair will inform farmers and farmers group regarding new program, budget and planning on a timely manner.
2. Special consideration will be given for Dalit people in the municipality and in the ward.
3. Municipality will consider ways to control wild animals and control the loss of crops. Last season wild pigs and monkey damaged some vegetables in the field.
4. Municipality will be serious in outbreak of new insects, pest and their control in coordination with other organization
5. Women farmers should get extra and special opportunity or recognition from the municipality
6. Municipality should provide more support like electric pole in other field for pumping
7. Provide quality vegetable seeds and fertilizers
8. Visit farmers field time to time and provide some technical guidance.



Based on these expectations/demands, municipality also shared upcoming plans, and made some commitments. They committed to address farmer's concerns in coming program and plans. Some decision/commitments made by municipality were as follows:

1. This ward will be developed as a model ward of agricultural production.
2. Ward office and municipality will provide some support on irrigation infrastructure development like pipes for tube well.
3. Initiate reopening of the collection center in the traffic haat bazaar.
4. Farmer group registration is open for all. Dalit and women groups would easily be registered but group must renew every year.
5. For agriculture support farmer should contact us/local agriculture unit of the municipality for any kind of support.
6. DSI4MTF project farmers any training, seminar and exposers visit
7. 50% grant support will be provided in wheat and vegetables seed.



8. Will visit farmer's field time to time, interact with farmers and provide technical guidance. Farmers can visit their office at any time.
9. Municipality and ward will pilot those new practices and technologies applied in DSI4MTF project in other area or communities in coming days.

Therefore, change in government structure and advanced role of the local institutions in new federal structure, intensive social mobilization of the poor marginal and tenant farmers and engagement with local government is crucial. As local government is the key institution supporting the community, Interaction meetings between project, farmers and local government in not only about sharing the activities and plan but enhancing the relationship between local government and farmers. Further, it is also fruitful to the government authority to plan and replicate best approaches and practices in other areas and communities.