

Destitute Dalit family living in cave for 15 years



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BAJURA: Raibhane BK of Sappata-9, Muktikot, experienced poverty at its worst when he ended up in a cave with his family 15 years ago. Since then suffering has been his constant companion over the years.

He lost his wife in the cave ten years ago. He was too poor to educate his two children. He asked, "How can I feel happy when my stomach is empty and my body is not covered?"

His family neither has warm clothes to wear nor a mattress to sleep on. "We sit beside the fire to warm our bodies." He said he had received a change of clothes after eight years of life in the cave when an NGO provided clothes to each of his family members last year.

Though Raibhane once had a house and a little patch of farmland in the village, all his property, including the house and farmland, was swept away in a landslide. Since then he has been living in the Sigaure cave near Banjada forest.

Now in his 50s, he also does not have a citizenship certificate. He asked, "What's the use of citizenship if one does not have any property?"

According to Man Bahadur Rokaya, a local, Raibhane sharpens iron implements and receives food stuff from villagers, with which he feeds his daughter Laxmi (15) and son Sur Bahadur (13) in return.

Moreover, Laxmi is disabled and both children are illiterate.

Raibhane said he could never think of sending his children to school. "It is so difficult to feed them twice a day, sending them to school is totally out of the question." He hopes for happiness after sending his son to India for employment. He said, "Perhaps, my life will be better then."

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