

# THE FEDO POST

*Official newsletter of Feminist Dalit Organization*



## REACHING THE UNREACHED



# FEDO'S RESPONSE TO COVID-19 IN 2020

COVID-19 pandemic invited a crisis in Nepal like many other countries globally especially affecting Dalit and marginalized communities. The cessation of access to daily income for the Dalit communities is one of the major issues brought about by this crisis as almost half of the Dalit population in Nepal is living under the poverty line. Most of the Dalits are landless and millions rely on daily wages from the informal sectors, ultimately having no income and facing a dreadful crisis amid the lockdown. Now people are more afraid of starvation and insecurity rather than dying from the virus. Ensuring at least the minimum standards in food security of such communities the government has been working in it rigorously. However, due to limited resources, it's not able to reach every needy person with relief materials.

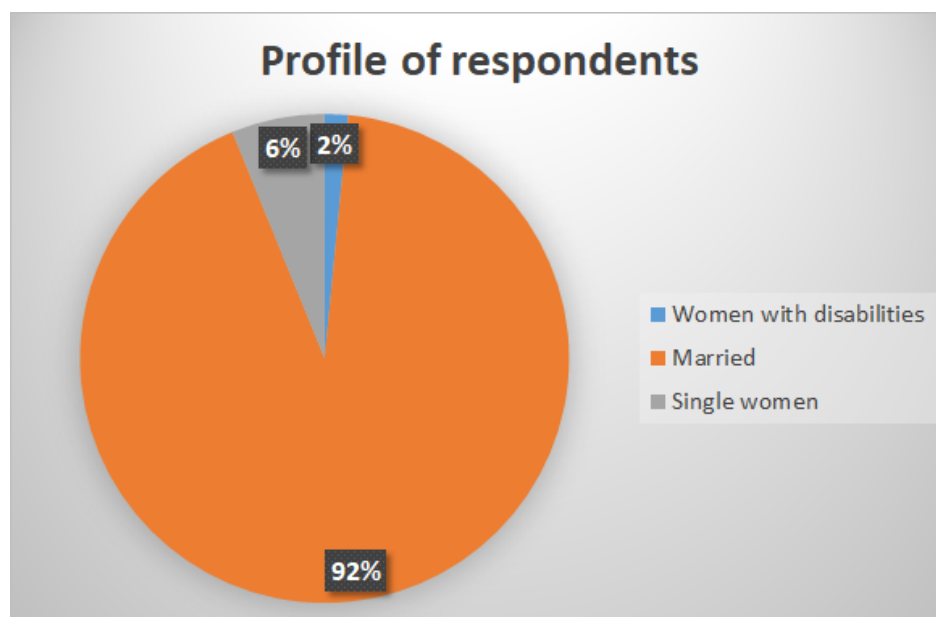
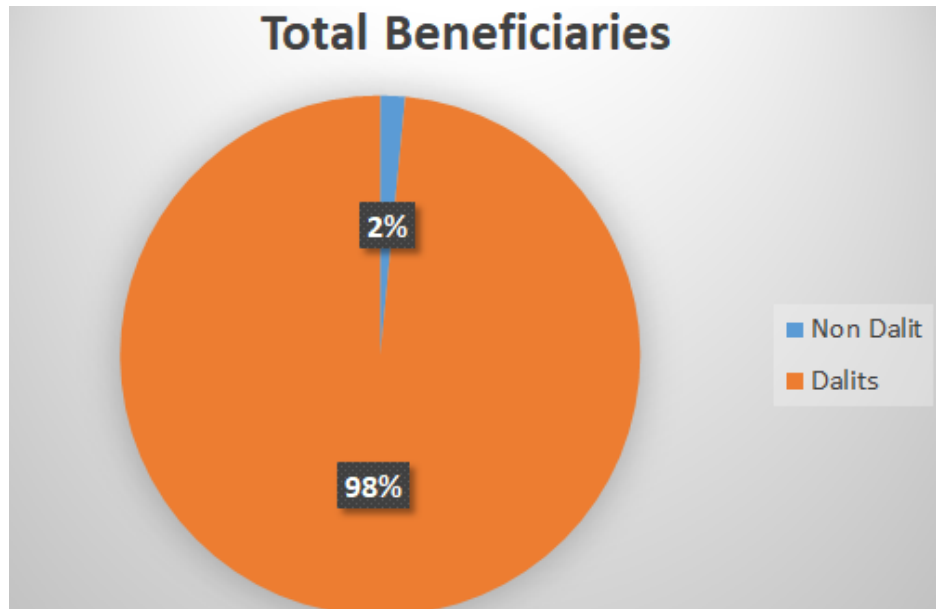
So, addressing the most urgent needs of Dalit communities and marginalized groups, Feminist Dalit Organization (FEDO) diligently provided daily essentials as well as rations such as rice, pulses, mustard oil, wheat, flour, potatoes, salt, sugar, soap, mask, sanitizers, mosquito-net, a towel to support & help Dalits, poor and the most vulnerable ones during the challenging time of the first wave pandemic. Not only the food items but, FEDO also distributed sanitary pads and other medical kits to girls and women of different districts to ensure their improved menstrual hygiene and good health.

Last year only, we distributed these essentials in 16 districts benefitting **4060 households (marginalized, poor, and vulnerable people)** in collaboration with different donor agencies. It was and will be a great challenge for us to step outside our home and work in the field for the ones in need during this crisis but we won't stop until the empty stomach is full.



# PROVINCE 1: UDAYPUR DISTRICT

In this province, we covered only **1 district with altogether of 130 beneficiaries**. There we distributed some food items and other essentials (Rice, Lentils, Oil, Beaten Rice, Vegetables (Beans, Potato), Horlicks, Mask, Soap, Dalmoth, etc) to Dalit and marginalized group of Triyuga and Belaka municipality of Udaypur district.

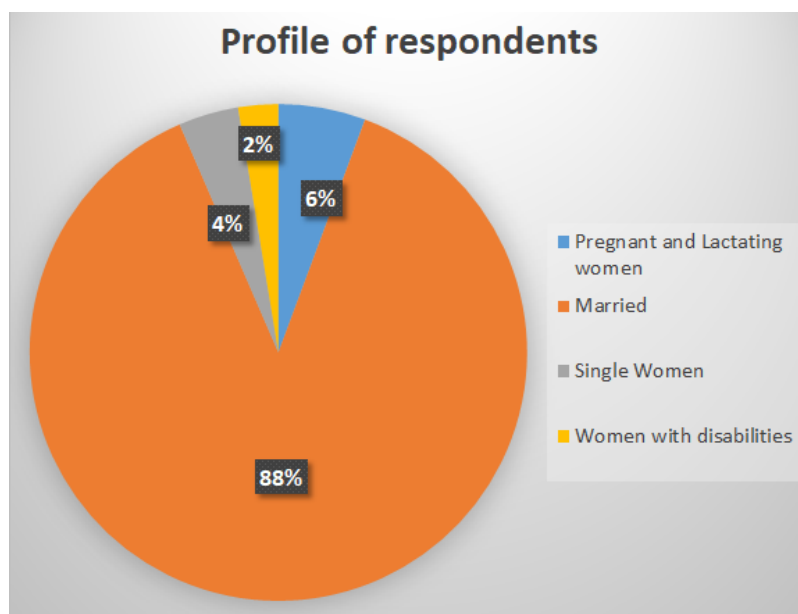
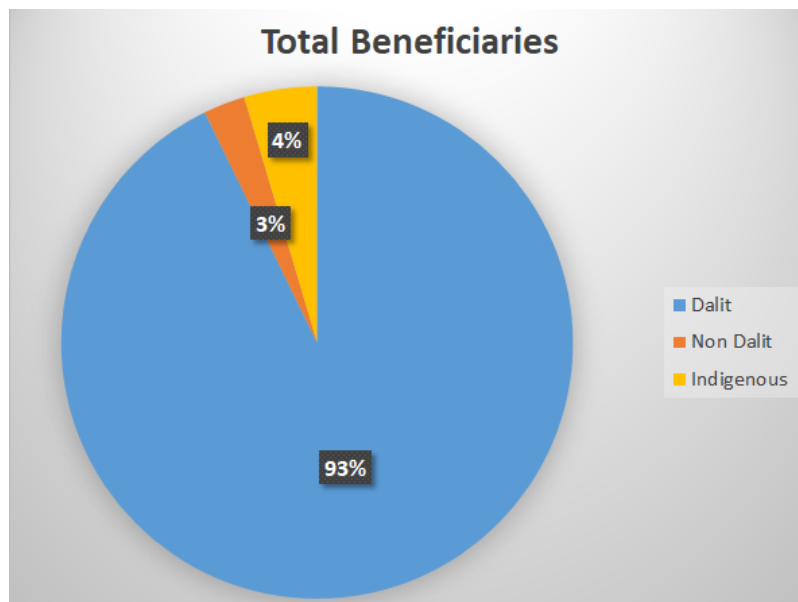


*This pandemic has made our life worst as we don't have any means of earning money. We're really very grateful to FEDO for helping us even in such hard time.*

## PROVINCE 2

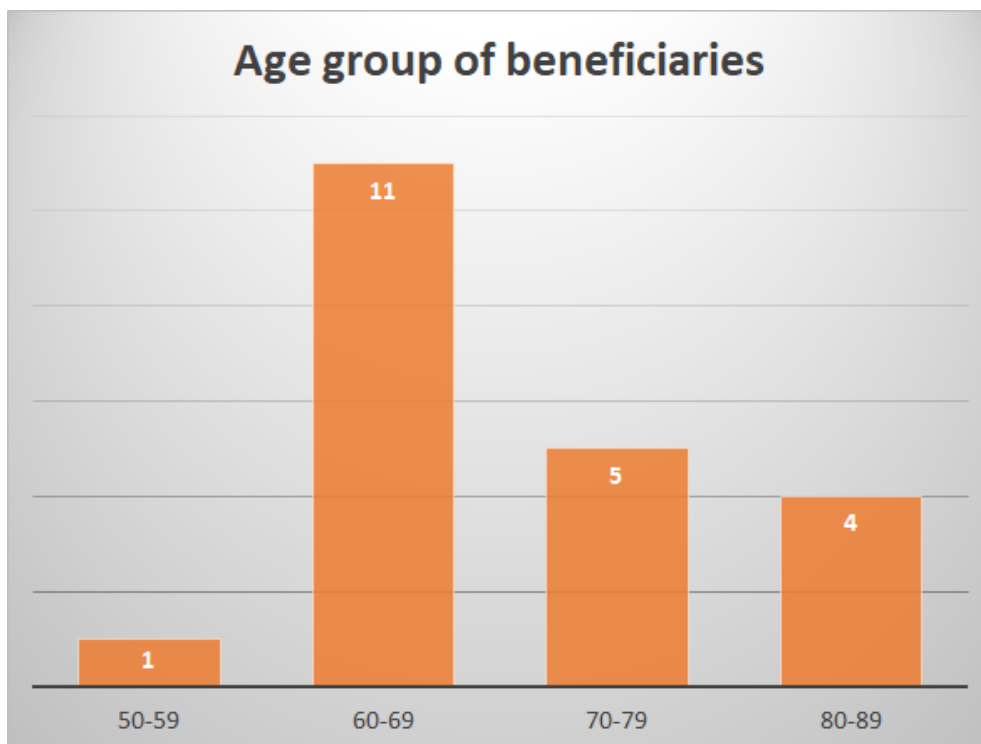
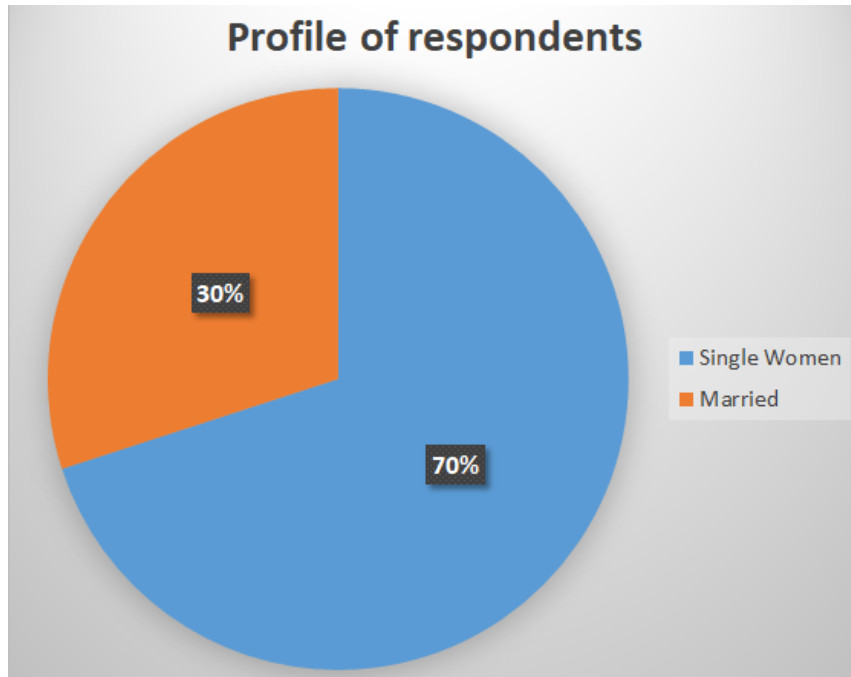
Likewise in Province 2, we distributed essential items to **913 households of 4 districts namely Bara, Siraha, Saptari, and Parsa**. Among these, FEDO made a small effort on distributing Gas stoves, cylinders, and mobile phones to help and support 500 Dalit and marginalized people of Siraha and Saptari district for sustaining their livelihood and economic empowerment.

Not only this but considering the advancing cold across the country, we also distributed some necessary winter clothes ( warm jackets, pants, shawls) to 320 Dalit, single and disabled women, children, and senior citizens of Parsa and Bara district.



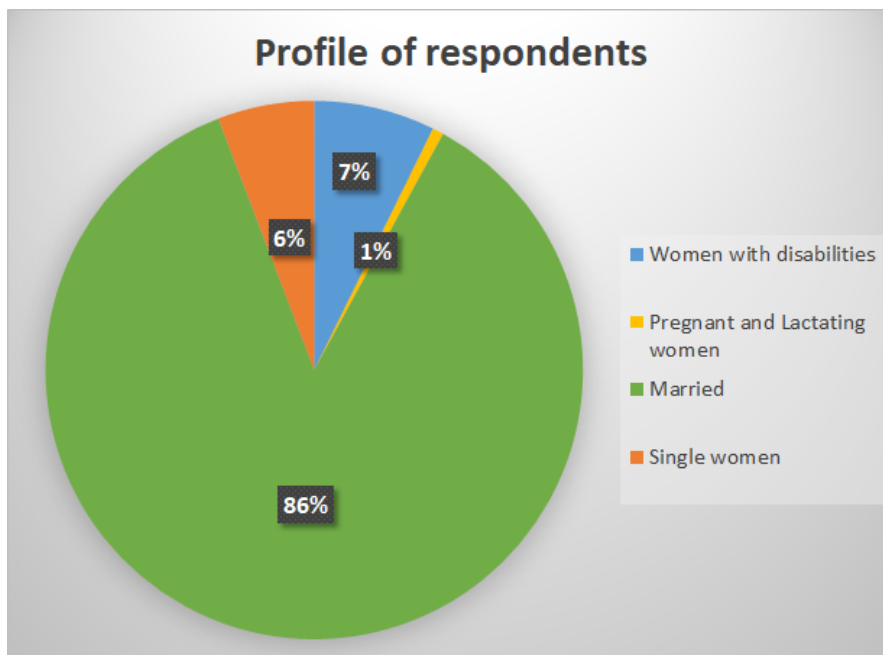
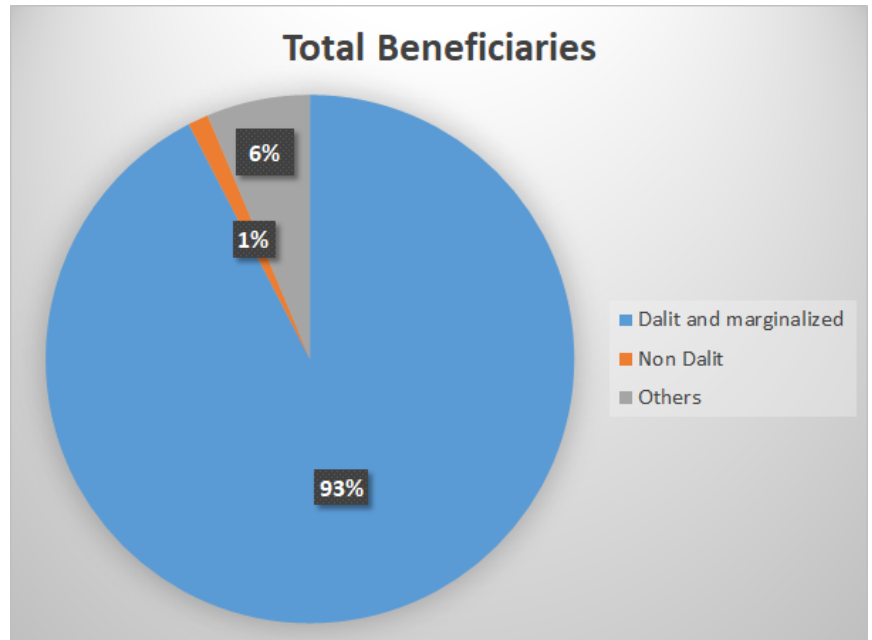
## PROVINCE 3

**20 Dalit women** of Lalitpur district were benefited from the relief distribution effort carried out by FEDO. We distributed Food material, clothes, and some hygiene kits: Rice- (30kg), Salt- (1 kg), Oil (1 ltr), Dal (35 kg), Sugar, Mosquito Net (1) Saree (1) Soap (5) Mask (12 pcs) Shawl (1) Towel (1) to them.



## PROVINCE 5

Covering **1596 household of 6 districts: Dang, Bardiya, Rupandehi, Palpa, Kapilbastu, and Banke**, we distributed food items and some hygiene kits: rice, pulses, mustard oil, wheat, flour, potatoes, salt, sugar, soap, mask, sanitizers, mosquito-net, towel and many more to Dalits, poor and the most vulnerable ones.



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*The government effort of relief distribution was never up to our reach. If FEDO haven't provided us with food and essentials, we'd have died of hunger*

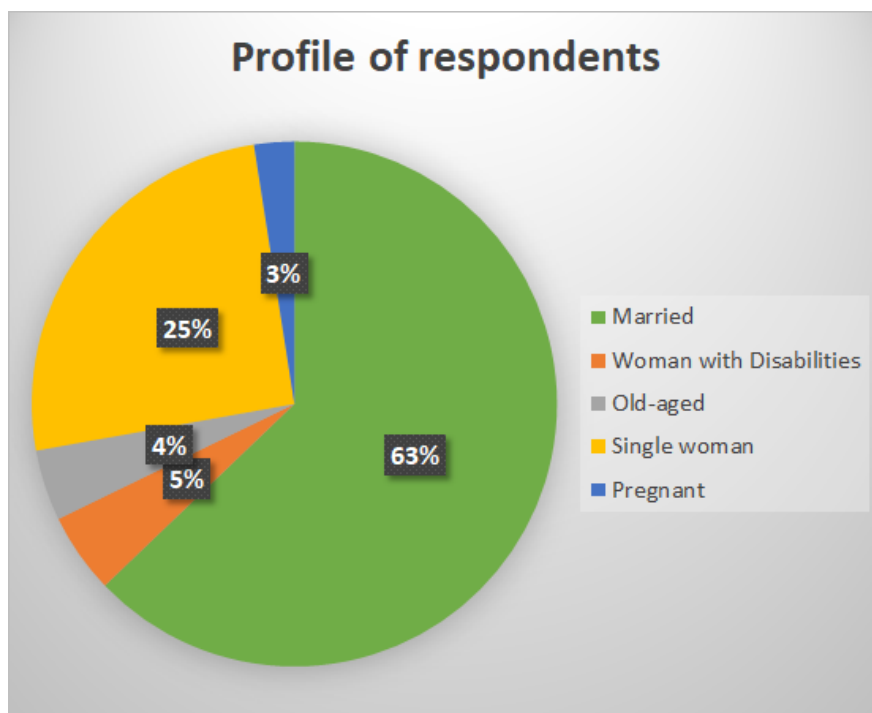
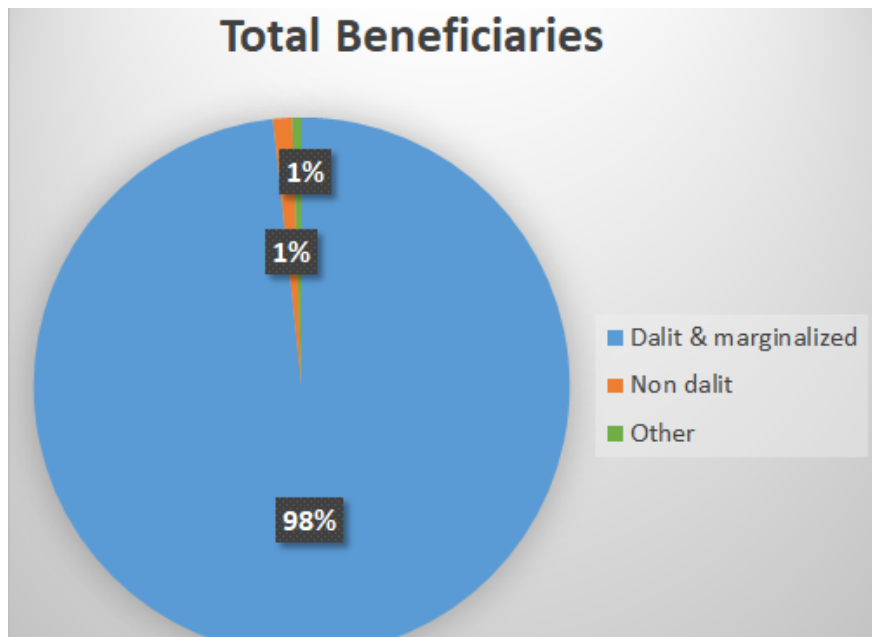


Moreover, FEDO successfully handed over Bicycles to 53 women entrepreneurs of Baijnath Rural Municipality of Banke district in order to support and encourage Dalit and marginalized women entrepreneurs and representatives towards income generation. This event was organized with an aim to support the empowerment of individuals specifically Dalit women to diversify income opportunities as to reduce inequality and vulnerability by ensuring sustainability in their development.

## PROVINCE 7

Similarly, in province 7, we carried out a relief distribution effort in 4 different districts aiming to address the most urgent needs of Dalit and marginalized communities. A total of **1401 households of Kailali, Bajura, Dadeldura, and Achham district** were benefitted as we distributed food items and hygiene kits to the neediest ones of that area.

Likewise, FEDO also distributed Gas stoves, cylinders, and mobile phones to help and support 500 Dalit and marginalized people of Kailali and Bajura district for sustaining their livelihood and economic empowerment.



## THE RELIEF PACKAGE SAVED HUMANITY

Ms. Bisna Dagaura Tharu lives with her two young daughters in Thapapur, Ward No. 5 of Lamki Chunha Municipality. She is a 39-year-old marginalized woman. Her husband died due to Malaria disease three years ago. Community still treating her debt-ridden husband. She still owes Rs 500,000. Loan interest is rising day by day. Her daughters used to work and pay the interest of the loan. However, Covid-19 and its Lockdown have even created problems to earn from daily wages and her family has been facing difficulties to survive and to pay the loan.

She could not go outside for daily wages work due to the pandemic and lockdown. However, if she gets a job, she can earn only 300 rupees a day. But more than that, the interest of the lenders to pay the interest has disappeared on Bisna's shoulders. She had a hard time figuring out how to save her daughter and her life. At the beginning of the pandemic, she thought that she is going to die and the pandemic will kill her along with her hunger. At that time, All the energies of her life had cooled down.

Her brother-in-law and sister-in-law became more jealous when she received a relief package from FEDO. She said that she has been facing domestic violence from time to time due to bad social phenomena. During the Covid-19 and lockdown, she invited her father to her house and feed him because there were problems with food in her mother's house as well. She received relief packages such as rice, pulses, salt, chana, sugar, oil, soap, medicine 3 times along with and gas cylinders, gas stove and mobile phone, vegetable seeds, etc.

She has been planning for the kitchen garden. She could not earn money during the Lockdown and her income was nothing. There is no land to cultivate. This support helped her and her family to survive.



PICTURE OF MS.BISNA DAGAURA THARU

She said that she would not have been alive today if FEDO didn't make the relief package available.

Similarly, FEDO has opened a savings account in her name at the Agriculture Development Bank and now she is walking with a checkbook in her hand. She has been feeling proud of all this. She also said, if she has cash at home, she doesn't know when it's over, but now she can save a little bit in the bank. She has a responsibility to repay the loan by forcing the amount. She can afford and took out a loan but she could not save her husband. Tears welled up in her eyes.

She has a plan to start a pig-keeping business with the money received from FEDO. She showed her ongoing construction of a pig hut to FEDO where two pigs were kept. With a happy face, she requested FEDO for continued assistance on creating livelihood opportunities and solving the hand-to-mouth problems of many women like her.



## WIDOW'S ALLOWANCE NOT ENOUGH TO LOAN



**Ms. Aasha Sunar** has been living with her daughter in Byabsthit Basti Ward No. 3 of Lamki Chuha Municipality. She is a Dalit widow and currently lives with her youngest daughter who is studying in class 9. After giving birth to two daughters, her husband died at a very young age. After her husband's death, her mother-in-law began to despise her and sad days began in her life. Unable to bear much pain, she reached the shelter for her mother's family. Her father died while she was staying at her mother's house. After the death of her father, it became very difficult for her to make a living and choose another marriage to survive. After giving birth to a daughter, the second husband also died. The daughter, who was from the first husband has got married. Her daughter from the second husband was her only support on old age. She has been receiving widow's allowance, which not sufficient to repay the loan.

During the conversation, Ms. Sunar cried many times, remembering her past. She said that she has been facing multiple discrimination from society and relatives being a Dalit woman and a widow with very poor condition.

She earns Rs. 300 a day to solve her and her family's hand-to-mouth problems. Even though, she doesn't always get work in the community. She was very scared to solve hand-to-mouth problems during the lockdown. Her fear mitigated when she got relief packages from FEDO. She received food and non-food items, such as soap, medicine, hand wash, sugar, dal, rice, salt, gas, chana, gas stove, mobile pad, etc. She felt relief when she got basic needs such as food and non-food items. She cried and said, if she did not get the relief supports, she would be bedridden today. She again crying and adding, the relief I received from FEDO made me look like a human being and I am alive today. The villagers used to say that even when I went to visit someone else's house, they came to ask me for food, but the relief supports stopped me from going to someone else's house and also stopped being despised. The relief package stopped her from going to the courtyard of the slum house and being hated.

The firewood is not available in the forest and she has no money to buy gas stoves and cylinders for cooking. After receiving the gas stove and cylinders, she and her daughter time have saved. Now, her daughter has got more time for her study because she doesn't need to go searching the firewood in the jungle. Asha Sunar also got time for a daily wage. The use of mobile has made it easier to find and go to work. She is happy to be able to talk to her relatives in her spare time and brightened his face. She revealed that the savings of the bank have increased the social prestige and even the sisters who did not speak these days are starting to speak.

Ms. Aasha plans to save Rs 500 per month from the widow's allowance with the cash-based support provided by FEDO, which will help in her old age. The hut where she lives is the meeting point of five streets. She wants to set up a stationery shop in that place in the future. She hopes that FEDO's support and goodwill will be needed for that event. With FEDO's support and goodwill, poor people like us survived the epidemic of Covid-19 and Lockdown, so they started burning gas stoves to cook their own food, wishing for the organization's worldwide fame and its big popularity. She was of the view that the assistance provided by this organization in case the money received from the widow's allowance was not enough to repay the debts of the loan providers, was assistance that would never be forgotten in life.



## **FEDO IS GRATEFUL FOR THE SUPPORT OF OUR PARTNERS**



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