**REPORT ON VISIT TO GORKHA DISTRICT**

Gorkha District is one of the parts of the Gandaki zone located in the Western Development Region of Nepal. It is historically connected with the creation of the modern country of Nepal and the name of legendary Gurkha soldiers. The district is the location of the famous temple, Manakamana, Gorakh Nath and Goddess Gorakh Kali. Chepe, Daraudi, Marsyangdi and Budhi Gandaki are the major rivers of the district.

The earthquake which came on 25th April 2015 with a 7.8 Richter scale magnitude badly affected most of the hilly parts of Nepal. The centre point of this earthquake was my district Gorkha. Gorkha was fully destroyed by the earthquake. I (Sarita Gurung) had been trying to call my family in Gorkha to find out if they were okay but due to the network problem I couldn’t contact them. Finally in the evening I could contact them so I asked them if everything was okay. My elder brother (Sujan Gurung) told me that my little brother (Bikash Gurung) was dead because he was buried under the house of a relative while watching television. After hearing this news I was frustrated and I cried a lot for losing my little brother who was just 10 years old. Bec had been sending messages to me to check if I was alright, though I didn’t come to the hostel to meet with the Mitrataa family. On 29th April Nimu (Team Leader) called me to ask if I was okay and also if I could come to the hostel to discuss about providing food and tents to the people of my village, as Bec had been providing food and tents to the people of other districts too. So as soon as I came to the hostel I met Bec, Nimu and Rohan. Bec and Rohan gave me a giant hug to make me feel that everything will be okay. Then we discussed about ways of helping people who were in need. Bec gave me the golden opportunity to go and help the people of my village. So, I made the list of the food to provide for the people in my village. As soon as we finished making the list, Nimu gave me money to buy the food. I went with three boys from our hostel for shopping. We bought two boxes of apples, two boxes of noodles, two sacks of beaten rice and five packets of biscuits and brought them to the hostel by taxi. After finishing the shopping we went in search of a vehicle so that we could take it to my village with the all the food. When I called one of my relatives to inform that we were going there with the food, he told me to bring the tents instead of food. So, we also bought the tents while going to search for the vehicle. It was not that easy to find a vehicle and tents in Kathmandu city at that time as all the people were going to their villages. There were less vehicles and the tents were also almost all sold. But we didn’t lose our hope to find the vehicle and the tents. Finally we found a taxi and the taxi driver helped us to find the tents in the place named Kalimati. We bought five small tents and one big tent.

The next morning one of my friends from the Mitrataa family (Ramraj Bohara), my mother and I went to my village. We had to travel more than 6 hours in the taxi. Due to the unconstructed road, the taxi couldn’t go any further after 6 hours. So we caught a bus from the place where we were stuck (Chorkate to Chanaute). Still we had to walk for at least 6 hours after we got off the bus. We walked through the jungle in the dark night until we reached the place where my family has been staying after the earthquake destroyed our house. It was getting late at night so we kept all the stuff in one safe place and we went to sleep. We woke up the next morning and did the morning duty except toilet because there were no toilets due to being destroyed by the earthquake. After having the morning meal, we went to distribute the food for the needy people. They were very happy to get support from us. But some of them asked us whether we can provide them rice, lentils and curry instead of junk food. So, we called Bec and told her everything in detail. Bec decided to send rice, lentil, oil, salt, tea leaves, sugar and also some more tents. All the required things were sent the next morning with Ashwini Siwakoti, one of the students of Mitrataa Foundation. As she came by van it was unable for her to reach my village directly. So we took a reserved bus to the place where she was stocked. We couldn’t reach home on that day. We spent the night in the place named Baluwa, the last bus stop to my village. Altogether we had 10 people: 2 were the driver and conductor, 5 were the people from my village who had come to carry the foods with us and 3 were me (Sarita), Ramraj and Ashwini. We ate dinner. There were no places to sleep as we were in another village so we had to spend the night in the bus.

Early in the morning, on 3rd May 2015, we drank tea with some biscuits and started to walk carrying the food. We couldn’t carry all the stuff ourselves. So we carried only half of it. Ramraj and Gore stayed in Baluwa to look after the leftover food. We walked as fast as we could and reached the village. We sent some more people to carry the leftover food. Finally all the food had been brought except one sack of rice and a tent. We distributed the stuff to a village called Sirubari which has 28 houses, to a village named Mahavir with 16 houses, then to my village called Simjung with 57 houses, and to 7 people from a village named Taple who had come to my village.

*At first when I saw the people of my village I felt sad as well as angry looking at their condition and selfish attitude. We didn’t give them the food that we had taken at first. Instead we gave it to the people of Sirubari because the people of this village are called low caste people and aren’t given much priority as most resources are given to the high caste people. But when we went to distribute the second trip’s food we came to know that the low caste had been getting food from everywhere more than the other villages. Still we distributed the stuff to them equally by ourselves, and gave the responsibility to one of the villagers to distribute the tents equally to the other villagers. We still had to take one very big, long tent and one sack of rice to another village because the next day we had planned to come back to Kathmandu. We distributed the leftover food to the people of my village and to all the people from Mahavir who had been living in my village.*

*We had to walk here and there in very hot sun while distributing but we felt very happy and lucky to help those people and be with them at least for some time during the occurrence of the earthquake. We also got the opportunity to share our knowledge with them about the earthquake. We taught them what to do and what not to do when the earthquake comes. As the toilets were all destroyed, we suggested that they dig deep holes to use as toilets and to dig new ones when they get full. We taught them to drink boiled water and to wash their hands with soap before eating and after using the toilet.*

*This helped us to experience how to be responsible as well as to be helpful when someone needs us. People have got the tents to live in but the monsoon is coming soon so they’ll have to suffer the difficulties a lot. And we have heard from people that they have planned to re-build the houses which will have the tin on the roof but they don’t have enough money to buy the tin. As a recommendation, I think it will be good if we help them to buy some tin or teach them new ideas about building safe houses which the earthquake won’t destroy again. We need to suggest to people that earthquakes will keep on occurring but they can’t always stay having the fear of the earthquakes. They have to start doing the work which they used to do before the earthquake occurred.*

*We would like to thank Bec, Nimu, Rohan and all the people who are involved in helping us from our hearts because their support saved lives of thousands people. Thank you so much again; I (Sarita) don’t know when and how I’ll be able to help you back like you have done.*

*Thank you,*

*Sarita Gurung*

*Ramraj Bohara*

*Ashwini Siwakoti*