

## **Deuda: Encouraging women's participation for Covid-19 awareness**

“ I learned a lot about covid-19 from the “deuda” competition (*a Nepali genre of song and dance, performed in the Sudurpashchim and Karnali provinces of Nepal*) and a radio program of NRCS. I will keep on sharing these acquired information during our monthly health mothers’ group meeting; not only to the mothers’ group members but also to the whole village in the days to come.

**Kalika Shahi**, 43 years, *Tila rural municipality, Jumla* has been working at local level as a part of health mothers’ group since past few years.

Health indicators of *Tila rural municipality*, one of the local structures of rural Jumla district is quite low. The global pandemic further added to the perils of the local people in accessing basic health services and health information. Under the COVID-19 preparedness and response operation, NRCS conducted different awareness sessions on Covid-19 where women like Kalika were reached. The community-based sessions included *dohori*/ folk song competition, street drama along with school-based sessions, radio program/ jingle airing and miking of health promotional messages.



According to one of the research conducted in 2021, 64.4% of women in Jumla are illiterate and are mostly limited to four walls of the house. When the NRCS conducted community based programmes in Jumla, the women from the district had an opportunity to participate in the program for the first time. This gave them an exposure to the world outside their homes and chores.

Kalika appreciated these awareness sessions; especially adoption of local methods like folk-song/ *dohori*/ “Deuda” competition. She recalls the state of confusion and anxiety at the beginning of the pandemic. Women from rural setting like her had heard about Covid-19 but were confused as to what to do without good information. Their only source of information was radio or the community itself. Kalika appreciated the radio program of Nepal Red Cross Society since it provided her with clarity on Covid-19. She could now share

information on covid 19 with the members of her health mothers' group, family, relatives, and the community.



The women participants also appreciated the efforts of NRCS. “We are grateful to NRCS for providing entertainment along with health education in the language that we could understand,” says Kalika.



\*Deuda or Deuda Khel is a Nepali genre of song and dance, performed in the Sudurpashchim and Karnali provinces of Nepal, as well as in the Kumaon Division of Uttarakhand state of India.

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