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# **Rehabilitation of Internally Displaced Persons and the Support of Nepal Peace Trust Fund in Gorkha District**

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## **Abstract**

Rehabilitation of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) is an important agenda in the peace process of Nepal. The Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction and particularly, the Nepal Peace Trust Fund (NPTF) supported the rehabilitation process of these IDPs who were displaced during the Maoist insurgency. This paper has tried to analyze the process of rehabilitation of IDPs and the challenges faced during the process. It has also tried to assess the support of NPTF in the rehabilitation of IDPs. The research was carried out in the Gorkha district. It has applied a qualitative method during the process of research. The interview was used as the primary tool for collecting data. The IDPs registered at the District Administration Office (DAO) were purposively selected and interviewed till the theoretical saturation. The IDPs returned to their place of origin after the signing of CPA in 2006. But they faced a lot of challenges in the rehabilitation process, such as the condition of insecurity, difficulty in reestablishing secured livelihood conditions, psychological effects, lack of proper housing and lack of an appropriate local mechanism to facilitate the rehabilitation process. Most of the IDPs have received the relief package of Rs. 7200 through DAO provided by NPTF. This is the very minimum amount; and the IDPs used it as a household expense rather than using it in the rehabilitation process. So, the NPTF's relief package did not have a significant contribution to the rehabilitation of IDPs.

**Keywords:** Rehabilitation, internally displaced persons, Maoists, post-conflict

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### **Introduction**

The ten years long Maoist insurgency in Nepal caused a heavy casualty of human life and the destruction of physical infrastructures. According to the report of the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction (MOPR, 2014), 17,886 people lost their life and 1530 people who disappeared during the conflict remained missing. Besides the heavy loss of human life, many people were displaced. The Government of Nepal (GON, 2007) has defined Internally Displaced Person (IDP):

as a person who is living somewhere else in the country after having been forced to flee or leave one's home or place of habitual residence because of armed conflict or situation of violence or gross violations of human rights or natural disaster or human-made disaster and situation or to avoid the effects of such situations. (p. 3)

The number of IDPs had reached about 100000 to 200000 during the peak of the conflict (Internal Displacement Monitoring Center [IDMC], 2006). However, the official government record of IDPs in 73 districts, except Mustang and Manang, is 36,317 (Nepal Peace Trust Fund [NPTF], 2010). The conflict continued for a decade. Up to this period, the state neither could defeat the Maoist nor could the Maoists overthrow the state regime. Thus, the conflict formally ended with the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the Seven Party Alliance Government and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) on 21st, November 2006. It was followed by an interim constitution, the election of the constituent assembly, and the declaration of the republic. After the CPA of 2006, Nepal remained in a transitional phase for a long time. The sustainability of peace depends on the effectiveness of peacebuilding initiatives. Realizing the institutional effort for peacebuilding, the GoN formed MOPR on April 1, 2007, and the activities of the peace process were carried out under the ministry. A separate funding mechanism named “Nepal Peace Trust Fund (NPTF)” was established in 2007 under the MOPR to support Nepal’s peace process. Rehabilitation of conflict-affected IDPs is one of the important issues to be addressed in the peace building process in Nepal. “Helping displaced populations to return and reintegrate can simultaneously address the root causes of a conflict and help prevent further displacement” (RSG, 2007, as cited in Koser, 2007, p. 12). The GoN has focused its attention on the rehabilitation of IDPs. NPTF is funding in this area through the project entitled “Special Program for Relief and Rehabilitation of Internally Displaced Persons”. The main objective of the project is to provide relief and rehabilitation support to an expected number of 50,000 persons who were displaced during the decade-long conflict (NPTF, 2012). Rehabilitation of a big number of people is very challenging without which the peace process cannot be successful. The CPA of 2006 created the appropriate environment for the return of IDPs. Article 5.2.8 of the agreement states:

Both sides express their commitment to allow the persons displaced due to the armed conflict to return voluntarily to their respective ancestral or previous places of residence without any political prejudice, to reconstruct the infrastructure destroyed as a result of the conflict and to rehabilitate and socialize the displaced persons with due respect. (CPA, 2006, p. 9)

So, many IDPs returned to their places after CPA. The rehabilitation process was backed up by the National IDPs Policy of 2007. Dhungana (2007), Tamang (2009), and Niroula (2008) argue that the policy has not been effective in the rehabilitation of the IDPs. Despite tremendous investment and continuous effort of government, it has not improved the

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situation as expected. According to the report of Refugee Watch (2010), the country is facing serious challenges in the rehabilitation and reintegration of IDPs in post-conflict transition. There are problems in registration, lack of sufficient funds, limited packages, obstacles in using own land, security problems and lack of better livelihood opportunities. In this context, this paper has tried to analyze the process of rehabilitation and challenges faced during the process and assess the role of government support, particularly the relief package of NPTF, in the rehabilitation of IDPs.

### **Literature Review**

#### ***Theories on the Return and rehabilitation of the IDPs***

According to Klaus Deininger (2004), the decision to return to their original place is determined by four factors viz. economic prospects of the place, vulnerability of the household, the intensity of trauma and the time of displacement. First, the desire to return is affected by the economic opportunities in the place of origin. If there is possession of assets for example land or employment opportunities, there is a high possibility of return. Second, more vulnerable households are more reluctant to return. Third, the rate of return is lower if the intensity of trauma of the conflict is higher and fourth, the rate of return is lower if the duration of displacement is longer. The return of IDPs is followed by the process of rehabilitation. It includes many important components. Green and Ahmed (1999) argue that rehabilitation of war-torn society should have interacting economic, political and social rehabilitation. The economic rehabilitation includes livelihood recovery of the people, reviving saving and investment and removing regulations that were imposed during the conflict. Similarly, political rehabilitation includes reconciliation, rebuilding basic service delivery capacity, sufficient accountability for the recognition of the values of the state and decentralization in decision making. In addition, another important component of the rehabilitation is social rehabilitation which includes rebuilding trust and re-establishing community-wide interactions to rebuild their social capital. Similarly, Rogge and Lippman (2004) state that those return and reintegration processes have been successful which have established pull factors such as better basic services, availability of livelihood opportunities and proper maintenance of law and order at the place of origin. The returnees who have been displaced by the push factors such as extreme discrimination or enmity by the local authorities or people need proper assistance and safety.

#### ***International Practices of Rehabilitation of IDPs***

Internal displacement has emerged as an important humanitarian issue encountered by the world today. As of the end of 2014, 38 million people around the world had been forced to flee their homes by armed conflict and generalized violence and were living in displacement within the borders of their own country (IDMC, 2015). Without the proper rehabilitation of this vast mass of people, it is difficult to achieve global peace.

The cases of Sri Lanka and East-Timor show that IDPs have been rehabilitated in different ways. The violent internal conflict broke out in Sri Lanka in 1983 as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), an armed group made up of ethnic Tamils, started an armed revolution to create a separate Tamil homeland in the northern and eastern part of the country. The report of IDMC (2011) stated that there are more than 327000 internally displaced people due to armed conflict before and after 2008; and over 194000 IDPs who returned their homes are in immediate need of protection and support. The return and resettlement of IDPs in post-conflict Sri Lanka was done in a very rapid and forceful way.

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Fonseka and Raheem (2012) stated that several large-scale resettlements were observed in Sri Lanka during the past four years. Although the government had termed the mass resettlement program as a model initiative, the process of return and resettlement has been criticized for its disregard towards informed voluntary return as mentioned in the Guiding Principles. It was also observed that the military played a crucial role by exerting force and sometimes adopting violent means for those IDPs who refused to return to their homeland. Similarly, Saparamadu and Lall (2014) argued that the process of centralization and militarization, led by the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL), as the most important factors shaping the resettlement process. The process was motivated by the GoSL's desire to consolidate itself in the areas that were previously controlled by LTTE. They further claimed that the top-down implementation of the resettlement process has constrained the decision-making power at the local administrative level.

East Timor practiced a different way of rehabilitating its IDPs. East Timor encountered two consecutive crises, one after the referendum of 1999 and the other in 2006. As the crisis of 1999 related to the referendum was settling down, again another crisis occurred in 2006. The crisis started with the petitioner's protest and continued till the assignation attempt of the then President Ramos –Horta in February 2008. Later on, the conflict settled with the death of a rebel leader in the action of security forces. However, the situation was already worse due to the huge displacement of people during the conflict. "At the beginning of 2008, an estimated 100,000 people remained displaced, with at least 30,000 living in 51 camps in and around Dili and the remainder living with family or friends in Dili or the districts" (Auweraert, 2012, p. 21). To solve the problems of displacement caused by the second crisis, the Government of Timor- Leste adopted National Recovery Strategy in 2007. Auweraert (2012) pointed out that the National Recovery Strategy was a remarkably efficient and effective way of ending a displacement crisis in East Timor. The cash grants provided for the destruction or damage of a house or other loss of property served as a real and effective remedy for the victims of internal displacement. The amount was not only symbolic, rather it was sufficient to make a real difference in the lives of the IDPs. Thus, East Timor was successful in dealing with the internal displacement crisis.

### ***Rehabilitation of IDPs in Nepal and NPTF's Engagement***

To address the issues of IDPs, the GoN brought National Policy on IDPs in 2007. Niroula (2008) argued that the policy had just focused on the safe return of the IDPs but it is silent about the permanent solution by addressing the IDPs problem. The government support is just limited to transportation and some incidental costs. He further stated that the important concerns of the IDPs for the rehabilitation and resettlement are the security of the returnees, return and compensation of the properties, rights to housing, reconstruction of the destroyed infrastructure, guarantee livelihood and concrete resettlement policy. Similarly, Ghimire et al. (2010) stated that the government focused much on the quick return of the IDPs without maintaining peace and security in the place of origin. The issue of confiscated land which is the main means of livelihood of the people was not settled. Moreover, a large number of youths who had learned skills and got better livelihood options in the urban area preferred to continue their stay in the urban area. Hence, many IDPs who returned to the village could not stay there for a long time and many IDPs even after receiving assistance did not return. So, the government plan to return IDPs to their place of origin did not succeed. The report of IDP Working Group (2009) stated that a return trend found momentum when the government launched the relief and assistance package in late 2007. It was found that 50% of the returnees interviewed were assisted by different I/NGOs during this time. More than

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50% of the respondents (returnees) expressed that issues regarding the property were the main problem in return areas. Moreover, livelihood opportunities, social harmony, and the security situation were reported as serious problems in the return areas. Likewise, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [OCHA] Nepal (2008) reported that personal security threats, unreturned property, poor livelihood opportunities and limited access to basic services are acting as obstacles to the return of IDPs. Psychological trauma is another problem in the rehabilitation of IDPs. Shrestha and Niroula (2005) criticized government rehabilitating programs as unplanned, unorganized, and minimum and most of the IDPs who have been benefited from the rehabilitation are politically affiliated persons. Karmacharya (2010) has tried to explore the reasons behind the reluctance among Nepal's policymakers to view rehabilitation as an important issue in the current peace process. Rehabilitation of IDPs in post-conflict Nepal is creating a serious challenge due to misconceptions and misunderstandings among the political parties. They first regard it in terms of relief and return instead of long-term settlement. Secondly, they view it as a technical solution rather than addressing the structural and socio-economic problems beneath it and thirdly, they are mostly engaged in accusing each other instead of taking the responsibility collectively to move ahead with the peace process. She further argued that the power politics of Nepal has not changed even after the peace agreement and when it is to deal with people needing rehabilitation, the leaders and the policymakers resist the structural changes and behave in Kathmandu centric way as they were before the onset of insurgency. Although there are a lot of problems in the rehabilitation of IDPs, there have been some attempts to assist the process. NPTF has been working in this area to provide relief and rehabilitation support to IDPs.

The monitoring report of Scott Wilson Pvt. Ltd (2011) on NPTF projects stated that awareness of relief availability has been raised at the local level. It further stated that some IDPs have been able to resettle well with the basic support but for most IDPs, the level of resettlement is poor due to inadequate financial support, delay in the processing of the application and existing sense of insecurity in some places of origin. In addition, another report on NPTF by Scot Wilson Pvt. (2013) stated that only 26 % of the people who applied for support were provided with relief packages. The report found that there was a very low level of satisfaction among the recipients as the amount was neither attractive nor truly designed to support their resettlement. It further stated that the process of resettlement was mainly hindered by inadequate support measures, social detachment due to absence for a longer period, or the personal psychological trauma associated with the time of conflict. These studies show that the IDPs have not been properly rehabilitated even after the end of the violent conflict. The NPTF funded project has been able to assist some portion of IDPs while many are left unassisted. The support provided to IDPs is very less in comparison to the loss they had to have during conflict and there are still many problems in the process of rehabilitation.

### **Methods**

This research was carried out in the Gorkha district. It was purposively selected because it is one of the most conflict-affected districts of the country since the beginning of the Maoist insurgency. It also belongs to the important project site of NPTF.

A displaced person being called so is considered as a social stigma and the topic of research is also sensitive. So, a qualitative approach was used in the research as it fits the nature of the study. Data such as feelings, attitudes, and opinions of the concerned persons were

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collected. The primary data were collected using interviews through intensive fieldwork. And the secondary data were collected from the reviews of relevant literature such as books, journals, dissertations, newspaper articles, research reports and documents of MoPR and NPTF.

472 internally displaced families have received rehabilitation support from NPTF (NPTF, 2010). Out of these 472 families, samples are purposively selected for the study. Adequate attention was paid to selecting the sample of IDPs of both categories- victims from the state and victims from the insurgents. The other respondent of the research was the official of the Local Peace Committee (LPC). The head of the available member of the family was taken as the respondents. The size of the sample was not pre-determined. The process of collecting data was continued till the theoretical saturation. As Flick (2009) argues sampling is finished when theoretical saturation has been reached. When no new things come out, the data is saturated. Hence, theoretical saturation ensures that required data are collected through an adequate number of samples.

The interview was taken as the main tool for collecting primary data. Unstructured and open types of questions were asked to the respondents; 30 interviews were audio-recorded with the respondents' consent. An interview was also conducted with the secretary of LPC to gather information about the various activities carried out by LPC and its impact at the local level and difficulties faced by the LPC. The qualitative data collected from the interview were transcribed, coded, categorized and then, interpreted. Descriptive and interpretive approaches were used for data analysis.

### **Data Presentation and Discussion**

#### ***The Rehabilitation of IDPs***

The literal meaning of rehabilitation is the restoration of someone to a useful place in society by re-establishing incomes, livelihood, living and social system. Rehabilitation is a long-time process that involves rebuilding people's physical and economic livelihood, their assets, their cultural and social links, and psychological acceptance of the changed situation (Fernandes, 2009, p. 4). The re-establishment of a multiparty government, the signing of the 12-point agreement between the Maoists and other parties in 2005, and the signing of the Code of Conduct in May of the following year allowed IDPs to resume rights over their land and property and encouraged many to return to their homes (OCHA, 2008; as cited in Tamang, 2009). So, the return of IDPs gained momentum after the CPA of 2006. Most of the respondents have returned after signing the agreement. A displaced political cadre stated,

*I just returned after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. Before that, I was unable to go to my village because of a security situation. I moved to my village as the political situation improved later on.*

Similarly, a former vice-chairman of Village Development Committee (VDC) said about the time of return as,

*I also returned after the peace agreement of 2006. I still had little fear at that time but I thought that they would not at least kill me.*

They felt that the period after the CPA was the right time to return to their home place. The situation was comparatively favourable for the return. The other respondents said that they

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returned at the time of the first Constitution Assembly (CA) election in 2064 B.S (April 2008). A youth activist affiliated with Nepali Congress (NC) shared his experience as,

*We started to return to our place after CPA and at the time of election. Although the political situation was a little bit improved, there was no guarantee of security. However, we went to the village one by one. Slowly, we built our confidence and settled thereafter.*

The security situation was comparatively improved and the election was an opportunity to exercise their democratic rights. So, most of the political cadres who were displaced during the conflict returned at the time of election with the political campaign of their respective political parties.

#### ***The Government's Initiatives for Rehabilitation***

Rehabilitation of IDPs is a matter of serious concern for the government. So, it has initiated a lot of programs and policies. Although the government established several compensation and resettlement funds and programs for displaced people, they were intended for a relatively short period. Some of them are Victims of Conflict Fund, 2001, Immediate Relief Package Program, 2002, IDP Rehabilitation Program 2003, Immediate Compensation and Relief to the Victims 2004, Task Force to prepare the Relief Package including Work Plan for IDPs 2004, 15-Point Relief Package for the Victims of Maoist, 2004, Assistance Program 2005, National Policy on IDPs 2007, the CPA 2006, Economic Assistance 2007 (Refugee Watch, 2010). The government concentrated more on assisting IDPs for rehabilitation after the CPA of 2006. Moreover, the MoPR was established in 2007 and assisted the rehabilitation process of IDPs by distributing the relief package managed through NPTF. The District Administration Office (DAO) in coordination with the LPC distributed the relief package and assisted in the rehabilitation of IDPs. Such LPCs were formed in all 75 districts of Nepal under the MoPR. LPC in Gorkha was just formed in 2011. It is an important mechanism to promote the peace process at the local level. The secretary of LPC stated,

*The LPC at Gorkha is working according to the directives of the government. It has formed 24 village level committees and tried to maintain harmony among the former conflicting parties by reducing the remains of the previous conflict. It has been conducting various interactions and training programs among the victims of the conflict.*

It shows that LPC also has its channels at the village level. Interaction and the joint training program among the former rivals' played a vital role in reducing the enmity present between them. It has also contributed to the peace process by collecting data on conflict victims and other damages and by helping conflict victims to receive compensation. The project entitled "Special Program for the relief and rehabilitation of IDPs" funded by NPTF is managed at the local level by DAO and LPC. The distribution of relief funds has a long process. According to the secretary of LPC-Gorkha, at first, LPC makes a public announcement for the registration of IDPs and the collected applications are examined. Then, it makes an initial identification and forwards it to the DAO and again, DAO forwards it to the district police for further identification. Later on, as reported by the police, the decision making body of LPC decides about the concerned individuals and forward it to the MoPR for

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approval. Finally, the relief fund is distributed to the IDPs by the DAO. Thus, LPC facilitates and plays an important role in distributing relief funds to the IDPs.

### ***Challenges in the Rehabilitation Process***

Although a decade long violent conflict has ended and the government with various other national and international organizations are working to address the issue of IDPs and rehabilitate them properly, there are a lot of challenges on the way. An internally displaced high school teacher stated,

*I still cannot feel secure. I don't rely on them. There is a difference between what they speak and what they do. I am scared when I go to my village.*

Similarly, another internally displaced businessman argued,

*The situation of complete security is not present in the village. They can do any things on any day. They are threatening me for donations.*

So, due to the condition of insecurity in some places, the IDPs have not been able to build up the confidence to return and settle in their place of origin.

The livelihood strategies of the IDPs were disturbed due to conflict and the resulting displacement. A returned IDP, who is also a political activist stated the situation of his land as,

*It was left barren for many years as we were not here to cultivate in it. The soil was very hard and it was all covered with grasses and other weeds. So, it was very difficult for us to till the land. As we do not have cattle these days, we are lacking manure to add on it.*

As these people were compelled to leave their village due to the security threats, their lands were left barren. Moreover, the Maoist conflict vacated a large portion of labour forces from the village and there was scarcity of people to work in the field. So, it was difficult to manage and cultivate that land which was left barren for a long time.

Similarly, another person who is running a small hotel in the village shared his problems as,

*The security forces broke my tables and chairs, threw the utensils and looted lots of materials when I was arrested. Later on, when I was released and returned to the village I faced a lot of problems operating the hotel. Even today, I am unable to operate it to the extent that I was doing earlier.*

It shows that persons returning after a long time have to face a lot of difficulties to reestablish their secured livelihood conditions. The psychological effect is also an important challenge in the rehabilitation of IDPs. A lecturer at Drabya Shah Gorkha Campus expressed his feelings as,

*After the murder of our father, we left our home. Some of us settled in Kathmandu and some of us settled in the district headquarter. We did not like to return due to psychological reasons. We did not like to stay in the home where the incident took place.*



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In addition, an IDP who is running a private school at the district headquarters stated,

*My father sold the house in the village at a very nominal price because they could not stay in the house in which their son was murdered. Then, they migrated permanently towards Chitwan.*

Those persons who lost their family members had a long-lasting psychological effect. So, such people don't want to return to their home place where the murder of their family members took place. Another challenge for the rehabilitation of IDPs observed in the study area is the lack of proper housing. As the houses were left for a long time they were in the worst condition and not appropriate for the shelter. There were some cases that some of them even sold the house and had no place to stay even if they returned to their village. Similarly, lack of appropriate local mechanisms and insufficient relief packages are the other two challenges in the process of rehabilitation of IDPs. There is no appropriate and specific mechanism to work in the rehabilitation of IDPs at the local level. The DAO which is already overloaded with the task to look after the various areas of the whole district is given the right and responsibility for the rehabilitation of IDPs. Another body to look after IDPs at the local level is the LPC which is itself facing a lot of difficulties. The political biases among the members of the committee are hindering the activities of the LPC. It has to be dependent on DAO to carry out peace-building activities. In addition, LPCs in all districts face very short contact extension periods for staff and frequent changes of secretary with the change of government.

### ***NPTF's Relief Package and Its Usage***

Special Program for the Relief and Rehabilitation of IDPs is one of the important projects of NPTF. According to the NPTF (2009), it covers almost all the areas of Nepal i.e. 73 districts except Manang and Mustang and has a budget of \$ 4,954,667. The main objective of the project is to provide relief and rehabilitation support to the IDPs. The details of the relief and rehabilitation package are as follows:

- 1) Transportation cost: actual expenses but an advance of Rs. 300- 1,000/ person- lump sum
- 2) Subsistence: Rs. 60/ person/ day for 4 months
- 3) Reconstruction of destroyed house: Rs.20, 000/ household- lump sum
- 4) House repair: Rs. 7,500 for repair/ household – lump sum (household)
- 5) Education: Rs 2,400/ child below 16 years – lump sum
- 6) Incidental: Rs. 500/ person – lump sum (person)
- 7) Loan for agriculture inputs and equipment: 5 year's interest-free loan of Rs. 20,000/ household – lump sum (NPTF, 2010).

According to NPTF (2013), 23,086 persons received transportation costs, 21,184 persons received subsistence allowance, 419 families received support for the reconstruction of houses, 4,769 children received education support, and 17,375 persons received incidental expenses. It stated that a significant portion of IDPs are aware of the support provided and the majority of IDPs are settled in their place of origin despite insufficiency of the relief amount. According to the secretary of the LPC- Gorkha district, 1341 people have received Rs. 7200 as the subsistence cost.

Although NPTF provided the relief and rehabilitation package for IDPs to support them in the process of rehabilitation, it was observed that most of the respondents utilized the

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amount for the daily expenses such as eating, paying rent, paying the loan and paying the fees of the children. An IDP who was a former member of the District Development Committee (DDC) stated about the utilization of the relief fund as,

*What could I do with those 6/7 thousand? I paid to the hotels in which I had meals and I also used it to pay my room rent.*

Similarly, another youth activist associated with NC shared his case as,

*I have also heard that the relief amount is for the return and rehabilitation in the village but I spent it here in the district headquarter. I could have gone but it was spent here.*

Likewise, a former chairman of VDC expressed how he used it as,

*I had borrowed lots of money from my friends and relatives and I used that relief amount to pay and reduce the loans.*

In the same way, an IDP who is operating a hotel stated as,

*Those amounts were spent on the expense of the children. I paid their fees, I bought them school dress and other required stationeries. I couldn't take my whole family back to the village with that amount.*

As the relief fund was just a minimum amount, the IDPs could not use it for their rehabilitation. Thus, the relief fund was mostly used as a household expense.

### **Contribution of the Relief Package in the Rehabilitation of IDPs**

The relief and rehabilitation package of NPTF was oriented towards the rehabilitation of IDPs. But in practice, it was just limited to the household expenses. Only a few of the respondents expressed their contribution in the sense that it is good to have something than have nothing. An IDP, who is a lecturer at Gorkha Education Campus, stated his evaluation about the contribution of relief package as,

*The small amount of package did not contribute at all. If possible the IDPs should be provided with employment or business opportunities. Otherwise, without the proper means of livelihood, it's difficult to rehabilitate in the village. People's houses were destroyed and they have even lost their family members. For those people, it's very difficult. What can be done with those seven thousand in the context where there is no house to live, no land to grow crops and no cattle to raise? At least there should be an appropriate environment to work and live in.*

Such kind of minimum amounts cannot have much contributions to rehabilitation. If they are provided with any employment or business opportunities, it can have long-term effects and contribute to the sustainable return and settlement of the IDPs. Similarly, another IDP who is operating a hotel at the district headquarter shared his feelings as,

*The relief package provided to us is just to show that the government had done something for the IDPs. It was not done to meet our necessities. It was just a showpiece.*

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Likewise, another high school teacher who was injured and displaced during the conflict expressed her opinion as,

*What can it contribute to us with such a minimum amount? It seems that the relief package was not intended for our return and rehabilitation. It was just to show the donors that they had contributed to IDPs. But actually, the relief amount distributed to us was just like the distribution of grains for the pigeons.*

The necessities of the IDPs were very high and the support provided to them was very less. There was a vast gap between the necessities and the support provided. So, the IDPs even questioned whether the relief package was designed for rehabilitation of the IDPs or just limited as the showpiece. In the same way, another IDP who lost her husband during the conflict argued,

*It is a very minimum amount because you can imagine how much it is necessary to raise and educate a child. However, it helped me to some extent as having something is better than nothing.*

Although the relief amount is low, it can support to some extent to cover the expenses. It is better to have even a minimum amount of assistance, rather than having nothing. The IDPs receiving only the subsistence amount of Rs. 7200 was found in the study area. But the project had also aimed to distribute other relief and rehabilitation packages such as reconstruction and repair of the destroyed house, education support and the interest-free loan for agricultural purposes (NPTF, 2010). There was no record of the distribution of such amount in the district office of LPC. Thus, the programs that could have played a crucial role in the rehabilitation of IDPs were not properly implemented. The support provided by the project was just limited to household expenses and travel costs. The progress report of NPTF (2013) has also stated that the financial support was insufficient. It has been realized in the report that if the support amount was higher it would have contributed more for IDPs in their rehabilitation process. As the fund was low, it was observed that most of the IDPs used it as a household expense or daily expense, rather than using it for the process of rehabilitation. Thus, the relief package provided to IDPs did not have a significant contribution to the rehabilitation process.

## **Conclusion**

The decade-long Maoist conflict had come to an end with the signing of the CPA. But the peace process has not been completed. The rehabilitation of IDPs is an important agenda to be addressed in the peace process. The sustainability of the peace depends on the proper rehabilitation of IDPs. The overall situation of the returned IDPs was found relatively well in the place of origin. The security situation has improved far better than at the time of the conflict and the returned IDPs have well integrated into the village. However, they are facing problems related to livelihood opportunities. So, the concerned agencies should pay attention for making proper arrangements to enhance the livelihood opportunities of the returned IDPs. The signing of the CPA raised the rays of hope among the conflict-affected people and they have started returning to their home place. The government of Nepal has taken a lot of initiatives for the return and rehabilitation of the IDPs. A national policy on IDPs was formulated in 2007 and some relief packages were also distributed. But the process of rehabilitation is still facing several challenges such as lack of proper housing, psychological problems, lack of assisting mechanism at the local level, livelihood problems,

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and insufficient relief funds. The relief package provided by NPTF is not sufficient for the rehabilitation of IDPs. It is a very minimum amount. It was used as just a part of daily expenses or travel costs. The outcome of the project funded by NPTF seemed very poor. Rather than providing a small amount of support, it would be better to focus on the capacity building of IDPs and providing loans to enhance the livelihood opportunities at the local level. It will only ensure the sustainability of rehabilitation of IDPs and peace in the country.

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