

# SKILL *Insight*

*A newsletter compiled by SKILL-Nepal*

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## Equipping the Thami community

The Thami belong to a Tibeto-Burman community and are a native of Dolakha and Sindupalchowk districts in Nepal. A peek into their economic condition illustrates that they are one of the weakest groups of the country. Most of them own lands that are less arable and thus they don't produce enough for a year round food supply for the family. Thami households do not have any reliable source of income. Some sell surplus vegetables or grain in local market while some work as wage labourers, very few are employed by the state and a handful of them are teachers and village administration. By far the largest majority of them earn the cash from unskilled work such as portering, road building and wood chopping.

SKILL has been working in the line of creating employment opportunities for youths through market oriented skill development trainings. In this context, we extended our support to 36 Thami youths (34 male and 2 female) in Suspachemawati and Sundrawati VDC of Dolakha. Bearing the market need, availability of local resource and the prospect for this community, carpentry training was provided to these groups. They belonged to economically poor community. It is a rare occasion when they manage to eat rice and afford oil to cook vegetables. They don't even own a set of neat and pristine clothes. Most of them worked as labourers. The two months training in carpentry has made a big difference in the lives of these 36 youths and subsequently in their family. All of them are gainfully employed. Some work in Charikot, some in Kathmandu and some in their respective village. Two of them have set up their own factory in Suspachemawati and provided employment to their friends.

Employment has given them financial independence and with it, they have been able to fulfill the basic necessity of their family. Besides that, an ability to earn through a respectable profession has made them more confident as individuals. There are many youths in various VDCs of these districts who needs a guiding hand. Amongst them are many women groups who are uneducated and unskilled but in need for a way of survival.



During the training, suspachemawati



Participants with their certificate during the closing

## EXPLORATION VISIT: *Seasonal Migrant Workers in India*

Poverty & lack of alternative source of income in the hometown have compelled lakhs of Nepalese to migrate to India. India, being a closer, employable and convenient destination for them. Some migrate for few months, some for a year and some have even settled across the border. The problem is not in migration but in crossing the border blindly. Consequently, the search for better life turns into burdened life in the form of added loans, hazardous work environment, health disorder and distance from family. However, the story is different for people who have some kind of saleable skill. A skilled person can earn as much as IC Rs. 10 to 15000.



**Palledaris in Manali (Migrants from Dailekh)**



**Boys from Dang in their Chinese restaurant**

Having realized that maximum numbers of illiterate Nepalese seek India as an income hole, SKILL felt the need to cater to these groups. As a part of various activities to provide marketable skill to these groups, an exploration visit to few states in India was planned to identify potential trades and understand their present employment situation in India.

Through various level of interaction we have determined that there is huge employment market in India, huge enough to absorb lakhs of Nepalese workforce. In the process, we have identified various marketable trades. However, the trend of Nepalese women going alone for work is very rare. Around 5% of them go to India. Most of the working groups were from Eastern and Central Nepal. Some accompany their husband and very few go single handed. The working men were against the idea of women from their family migrating to India for employment on their own. Majority of them were negative about this concept.

There haven't been major changes in the lives of these people since migration but they have been able to provide basic necessity to their family and have been able to send their children to school. Considering different employment sector, average income earned by majority of the respondents was IC Rs. 4000.

Skill training is very important for these groups. Majority of them realizes its importance but have no access to it. As a training provider reaching out to the disadvantaged section of Nepalese community, it is SKILL's obligation to touch these groups and support them in making a better life. Impact of training initially could be fruitful for an individual but the ultimate effect is going to be on the society and finally, the national economy.

## Case Study

**Name:** Gopi Thami  
**Address:** Ward no 4, Suspachemawati  
**Trade:** Carpentry



SKILL has conducted many training events in carpentry in different districts of Nepal. In 2007, we conducted carpentry training in Dailekh and Dolakha. Carpentry has proved to be a lucrative business in both rural as well as urban setting of Nepal. Bearing the challenges of rural Nepal, the package is made flexible by teaching participants to produce manually in the absence of electricity and the geographical hindrance is overcome by using the help of trainees in carrying heavy equipment to the training site.

SKILL conducts RMA before conducting any event in order to see the market acceptability of the trade. Before conducting training in Dolakha, we conducted RMA to validate the employability of this trade. We've also conducted RMA for this trade in Ramechaap, Dadeldhura and Doti and have plans to conduct the training in 2008 in these districts. Gopi Thami of Suspachemawati was one of our participants of carpentry training held in Dolakha.

### **Before the Training**

- Farming was his major profession. The income was not sufficient thus he worked as a labourer (be it during construction, helper to a carpenter or in other's farm).
- Had desire to send his children to boarding school.
- Low self esteem. Thought he was bound to work under someone as a labourer throughout his life.



**With his partner in the shop**

### **After the Training**

- Worked under a local furniture workshop owner for some time.
- Started his own furniture workshop in partnership with one of his colleague. Took a loan and invested in the equipments.
- Manages to pay his installment (credit amount), meet other regular household expenses and save Rs 100-150/day.
- His children go to boarding school.
- Generated employment opportunity for two of his friends. Pays one of them Rs 3000/month and the other one Rs 4000/month.
- Confident person. "Training gave me the guts to borrow loan. I know that my skill will lead me to the road of prosperity. It feels good to own something and provide employment to my friends."

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