SAJHEDARI BIKAAS PROGRAM

Local Governance Perception Survey II

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Contracting Officer Represenative
Meghan T. Nalbo

Submitted to the DEC by

Nick Langton, Chief of Party, Sajhedari Bikaas Program
PACT Inc. Nepal
Sushma Niwas,
Sallaghari, Bansbari, House No 589
Budhanilkantha Sadad, Kathmandu, Ward No 3
Post Box No. 24200,
Kathmandu, Nepal

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Sajhedari Bikaas Project: Partnership for Local Development

Local Governance Perception Survey II

February 28, 2015

Local Governance Perception Survey

A perception assessment of local governance and community development in Sajhedari Bikaas project districts in Nepal's Mid-West and Far-West regions (October-November 2014)

Assessment conducted by Interdisciplinary Analysts (IDA) for USAID Sajhedari Bikaas Project (Contract number. AID-367-C-13-00003)

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The analyses, conclusions, and recommendations expressed in the report are exclusively those of the Sajhedari Bikaas/Interdisciplinary (IDA) study teams and do not necessarily reflect the views of the individuals and organizations mentioned above.

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Acronyms

CAC	Citizen Awareness Center
CBO	Community Based Organization
CDP	Community Development Project
CMC	Community Mediation Center
CMU	Community Management Unit
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAT	Data Abstraction Tool
DDC	District Development Committee
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IDA	Interdisciplinary Analysts
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
KAP	Knowledge Attitude Practice
KII	Key Informant Interview
LGCDP	Local Governance and Community Development Program
LNGO	Local NGO
LSC	Livestock Service Center
LYG	Local Youth Group
MS Excel	Microsoft Excel
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PPS	Probability Proportional to Size
RLG	Radio Listeners Group
SB	Sajhedari Bikaas
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
VDC	Village Development Committee
WCF	Ward Citizen Forum

Executive Summary

This Perception Survey was commissioned by Sajhedari Bikaas (SB), a five-year USAID-funded project with the primary goal of improving the ability of targeted communities to better direct their own development. SB commenced from 2012 and is expected to continue until 2017. Its implementation is led by Pact Inc., an international non-governmental organization (INGO), along with several national and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs). SB is being implemented in six districts in the mid-west (Dang, Banke, Bardiya, and Surkhet) and far-west (Kailali and Kanchanpur) regions. The project aims to cover 50 percent of the village development committees (VDCs) in each district, especially those with a low human development index.

The purpose of the Perception Survey is to monitor the demand and supply side[1] of local governance and community development, as well as the status of some of the indicators of SB. SB has provisions for undertaking a Perception Survey two times every year. The Perception Surveys for 2014 were awarded to Interdisciplinary Analysts (IDA); this report presents the results of the second bi-annual Perception Survey or Perception Survey II.

The Baseline Survey contained questions on both general perceptions and indicators. The first Perception Survey focused on mapping general perceptions while the second Perception Survey focused on the progress on indicators vis-à-vis SB's Baseline Survey. By and large, the questions for Perception Survey II were consistent with those of the Baseline Survey, but not with Perception Survey I. Where the questions were similar, the findings of Perception Survey II are compared with Perception Survey I and/or Baseline Survey, as appropriate.

Although the study commissioned by Pact and carried out by IDA is called a "Perception Survey," it includes both a survey and a qualitative component comprised of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key informant Interviews (KIIs).

Methodology and Procedures

The study comprised of both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

The qualitative portion was based on FGDs and KIIs. Altogether, 18 FGDs and 8 KIIs were held with the stakeholders of the six districts. A total of 173 participants took part in the FGDs. The average number of participants per FGD was around 10 persons. Of the 18 FGDs, 12 were VDC-level and 6 were district-level FGDs. The fieldwork took place in two periods: September 13-19, 2014 and October 6-22, 2014.

[1] While the demand side of local governance is the subject matter of the household survey, the supply side is the subject matter of the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). Thus, the study's two methods, quantitative and qualitative, are geared towards the demand and supply sides of local governance and community development respectively. Yet another component of quantitative method – Data Abstraction Tool (DAT) was administered to gather the information from VDC offices of sampled VDCs on different topics.

The quantitative portion of the household survey comprised of a structured questionnaire, which was administered in-person with the respondents. The data was collected through a smartphone using a platform known as "Mobenzi." A total of 2,005 respondents living in the Sajhedari Bikaas project area (Banke, Bardiya, Dang, Kailali, Kanchanpur, and Surkhet) were sampled for the survey. VDCs were selected taking into account the fact that SB is being implemented in 58 VDCs in the phase I (i.e. for the first 2.5 years) and in another 57 VDCs in phase II (i.e. for the next 2.5 years). The sample size for phase I was 1009 and for phase II it was 996. VDCs where SB will not work were not included in the sample. The fieldwork for the household survey took place between October 12, 2014 and November 8, 2014.

After the completion of the fieldwork, data was processed and analyzed using Microsoft Excel (MS Excel) and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

Respondents for the survey were selected randomly by adopting the probability proportional to size (PPS) sampling method. This random method ensures that the participants are evenly spread across various age groups, genders, caste/ethnic groups and VDCs in the districts that SB is working in. The randomness allows for increased accuracy while generalizing the results of the survey i.e., from the sampled 2,005 it is possible to generalize with increased accuracy for residents who are 16 years of age or over living in the project districts.

Demographics

Out of 2,005 sampled respondents, a majority was Tarai/Madhesi Janajati (44.9 percent), followed by Hill Brahmin/Chettri (28.6 percent), Hill/Mountain Janajati (7.8 percent) and Hill Dalit (8 percent). In terms of occupation, over half of the respondents reported agriculture (60.7 percent) as their main occupation, followed by housewife/house-maker (15.6 percent), student (8.4 percent), laborer (5.3 percent), industry/business (3.9 percent), and service (3.6 percent). An overwhelming majority of the respondents reported they have a citizenship certificate (88.3 percent) and have registered to vote (74.7 percent). A majority of the respondents were not members of any of the local groups (with the possible exception of savings and credit groups; 35.3 percent of the respondents reported they were members of such groups).

Findings

<u>VDC service delivery</u>: Most of the respondents were aware of the roles and responsibilities of VDC secretaries (78.4 percent), Illaka health post representatives (69 percent), and school management committee representatives (57 percent). Over half of the respondents (60 percent) said they did not receive any services from the VDC office in the past one year. Some said they received birth certificates (15 percent), recommendations for citizenship (13 percent) and social security allowances (7 percent) during the past one year. With regards to the effectiveness of the VDC office in providing services in the past one year, a majority of people thought it to be either very effective (9 percent) or effective (62 percent). The study also suggests that the reasons VDC offices did not score higher in this regard included delays in providing services and local officials' irresponsible attitudes. (Similarly, in the previous Perception Survey a majority of people felt satisfied (45 percent) or very satisfied (6 percent)

with services provided by VDCs.) The current survey also revealed that health posts followed by VDC secretaries are perceived to be the most effective entities in encouraging development at the VDC level. Some 34 percent of respondents said that VDC secretaries are 'always' available at the office, followed by those who said 'often' (28 percent), and 'rarely' (13 percent). This figure is higher than in previous surveys, suggesting VDC secretary office attendance is improving. However, as high as 56 percent of respondents felt that the use of VDC funds in their community is not transparent. This figure was higher than in previous surveys, though the proportion of those who said the use of VDC funds is transparent was also higher this year. (Correspondingly, the proportion who said 'don't know/ can't say' decreased in comparison to the Baseline Survey.)

Perception on agencies of development: Some 45 percent of the respondents assessed the performance of their VDC to be good or very good, in contrast to 26 percent who assessed it to be bad or very bad. The respondents who assessed their VDC to be good or very good cited the VDC's ability to undertake development activities (65.2 percent) followed by ability to maintain law and order (31 percent) and ability to provide access to education (20 percent). Likewise, the respondents who assessed their VDC to be bad or very bad cited the VDC's inability to undertake development activities (71 percent) followed by inability to maintain law and order (31 percent). Some 27 percent of the respondents assessed the performance of their District Development Committee (DDC) to be good or very good whereas 14 percent assessed it to be bad or very bad. Over half of respondents were unable to assess the performance of their DDC. The same reasons cited in assessing VDCs were echoed in assessing the performance of DDCs. When asked to assess local institutions, 73 percent of respondents thought public health posts have either very much or somewhat positive influence. Other institutions perceived as having positive influences included the police, media, VDCs, and school management committees. Political parties, Ward Citizen Forums (WCFs), Citizen Awareness Centers (CACs), Community Management Units (CMUs), and youth networks were seen as having less positive influences compared to the other institutions.

Conflict and Mediation: Eighty nine percent of respondents reported that neither they nor any member of their household have been involved in any conflict. Of the 11 percent who reported experiencing conflict in the past one year, 47 percent reported those conflicts to be domestic in nature, followed by disputes over property or belongings (17 percent). A substantial number (49 percent) did nothing to resolve the conflict, followed by 22 percent who tried to come to an agreement with the other party. Only 2.4 percent reported bringing the cases to a Community Mediation Center (CMC).

Community Development Projects (CDPs) and people's participation: One quarter of respondents reported having heard of CDPs; three quarters had not heard of them. The proportion of respondents who had heard of CDPs was lowest in Banke and Bardiya Districts and among women and Madhesi, Hill Dalit, and Muslim groups. Among the respondents who had heard of CDPs, 83 percent reported having understood the roles and responsibilities of CDPs. Likewise, they primarily prioritized CDPs related to infrastructure (76 percent),

followed by agriculture (46 percent) in both phase I and II VDCs. This response largely matches the findings of Perception Survey I, which also found that the highest proportion prioritized infrastructure (55 percent) followed by agriculture (48 percent). In perception survey II, 73 percent reported that there are a few people in the VDCs that determine the CDPs while 63 percent reported so in perception survey I. The 25 percent of respondents who had heard about CDPs were asked to rate various features on a scale from 0 to 10. In Perception Survey II, the mean rating of CDPs was 6.8 for transparency, 6.2 for quality, 6.1 for timeliness, 6.6 for participation, and 5.9 for maintenance. In Perception Survey I, the mean ratings were 6.3 for transparency, 6.1 for quality, 6.2 for timeliness, 7.2 for participation, and 6.2 for maintenance. Thus, increases were observed in ratings for transparency and quality but decreases were observed in ratings for timeliness, participation, and maintenance.

Participation of youth groups in the VDC planning process: Of the total respondents, 3.9 percent said they are members of youth groups. Eight percent of those who were members of youth groups said they participated in the VDC planning process and 77 percent said they did not. As for the reasons for not participating in the VDC planning process, 40 percent said their youth groups were not informed about the meeting. In the survey, a total of 29 percent of respondents were youth. Of the 29 percent youth, only 3 percent reported having participated in the VDC planning process during the past one year. Similarly, over three quarters (78 percent) said they are not involved in any economic activities.

Participation of WCFs in the VDC planning process: Of the total respondents, 3.9 percent said they are members of WCFs. Out of these, 32 percent said they participated in the VDC planning process. Among those WCF members who participated in the VDC planning process, the overwhelming majority, 92 percent, said they asked questions and made some suggestions during the meetings. As high as 74 percent of the WCF members who reported participating in the VDC planning process felt that their suggestion were heard.

Gender Based Violence: Different statements were read out regarding gender based violence and respondents were asked whether they agreed or disagreed. Eighty one percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that a woman's income should be given to her husband. Three quarters reported that a woman needs her husband's permission to do paid work. Sixty four percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that if a wife does not obey her husband, the husband has the right to punish her. Seventy-six percent were of the opinion that under no circumstances should a man beat his wife. A majority of the respondents said that when a woman is raped, she is not to blame. However, a significant number (24 percent) said she is to blame.

Role as a citizen: Some 11 percent of the total respondents said they attended WCF meetings. Only 5 percent of the total respondents reported attending meetings of the VDC planning process. Of these, 63 percent reported that they have asked questions and made suggestions during the meetings. Of those who asked questions or made suggestions, 83 percent reported that during the meeting representatives listened to their questions and suggestions.

Federalism and Decentralization: Only 34 percent of the respondents said that they had heard of federalism (as compared to 54% nationally). Of the 28 percent of respondents who had heard of state restructuring, over half (64 percent) supported or strongly supported the restructuring of Nepal's regions or districts into states/provinces. When asked if Nepal should be a federal or a unitary state, 22 percent supported a federal state (as compared to 24 percent nationally), 15 percent supported a unitary state, and 63 percent were ambivalent – saying they do not know or cannot say. Of the 22 percent who supported federalism, 51 percent said it should be based on geography - by integrating mountains, hills, and the Tarai (as compared to 50% nationally). Despite the ambivalence of many respondents on federalism, 22 percent thought federalism will bring more opportunities than risks (as compared to 24% nationally) whereas 14 percent thought it will bring more risks than opportunities.

Two thirds of respondents (66 percent) had not heard of decentralization. The proportion of those who had heard of decentralization was 16 percent. Of those who had heard of decentralization, 53 percent said that they are satisfied or very satisfied with the level of decentralization and the service delivery provided by the local authorities. Likewise, most (64 percent) said that decentralization brings more opportunities than risks; 23 percent said it brings more risks than opportunities.

VDC offices were the top-ranked local entity by respondents in terms of effectiveness in providing services and encouraging development, while political parties were ranked the most negative. This is so because people are in constant touch with the VDC to get services at the local level. Likewise, people are aware of political interventions on various activities ranging from selection of community development projects in their VDC to the open secret of 'internal corruption' in almost all selected and implemented projects and planning processes. There is a general low level of participation of people in the VDC planning processes. However, interestingly, the survey shows that VDC offices are seen as the most trusted organizations at the local level.

Conclusion and recommendations

The survey shows a mixed range of findings. On the one hand, people had positive perceptions of local governments' service delivery and encouragement of local development. In other words, people feel that the various local entities are able to encourage development at the local level. Responses regarding awareness of CDPs and media coverage were also encouraging. On the other hand, responses related to transparency of funds, membership in WCFs and Local Youth Groups (LYGs), and participation in the VDC planning process were not very positive. People believe the VDC funds are not transparent and that while people's participation exists on paper, in practice matters are decided by a closed coterie of local politically influential people. There is a weak articulation of demand on the part of women and marginalized groups. Due to weak articulation of demands by these groups, the budgets meant for them are actually spent on other projects like road construction or other infrastructure.

There are areas where SB intervention has yielded fruitful results. But there are also areas where SB's intervention has not produced desired changes. One of the prime areas that needs

attention is the gap between the supply side of the government and the demands articulated by the people. This study has shown that there has been an increase in awareness among the marginalized groups and women about their needs and demands. However, because they cannot clearly articulate their demands in decision making processes, local government bodies do not allocate funds to areas that are of relevance for them. Although marginalized communities and women have become much more aware of their needs, they have not been able to get funding in areas that they require. Another area that needs to be focused on is expanding the membership of various local level organizations like the WCFs and LYGs.

1. Introduction

1.1 Sajhedari Bikaas

Sajhedari Bikaas is a five-year USAID-funded project with the primary goal of improving the ability of targeted communities to better direct their own development. SB commenced from 2012 onwards and is expected to continue till 2017. Its implementation is led by Pact Inc., an INGO along with several national and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs). This year, 2014, is the second year of the implementation of Sajhedari Bikaas.

SB is being implemented in six districts in the mid-west (Dang, Banke, Bardiya, and Surkhet) and far-west (Kailali and Kanchanpur) regions. The project aims to cover 50 percent of the VDCs in each district, especially those VDCs that have a low human development index.

The Sajhedari Bikaas project aims to contribute to improving both the demand and supply side of governance and development at the local level. It aims to strengthen the ability of targeted communities, especially women, youth, and marginalized groups to play a more active role in decisions regarding allocation of resources, implementation of development projects, and mitigating conflict.

In order to achieve this goal, Pact and its partners support targeted communities to gain knowledge, skills and abilities to plan, fund and manage local development activities that the communities have identified in an inclusive and participatory manner. The project also provides access to appropriate community stabilization initiatives that address the drivers of conflict and establish an enabling environment for community development.

1.1.1 Project Objectives

SB's approach combines strategic interventions with four key objectives:

- **Objective A**: An enabling environment for community development is established
- **Objective B**: Communities will access resources for development
- **Objective C**: Communities will implement inclusive development projects effectively
- **Objective D**: New local government units will function more effectively

Four key principles guide the project: 1) Social inclusion, inclusive governance, and inclusive local development; 2) Flexibility in program approaches to address the changing socio-political dynamics; 3) Community based participation; and 4) Promotion of local accountability. Under these guiding principles, the program implements the following strategic interventions and approaches including:

1. Sustainability through building on existing resources
2. People-to-people peace building
3. Capacity building and skill transfer
4. Focus on women, youth, and marginalized groups

5. Utilization of media, especially local radio stations

Pact works in partnership with two national partners (Youth Initiative and Center for Legal Research and Resource Development, CeLRRd), a media partner (Equal Access), eight local NGOs (LNGOs) for governance, and four LNGOs for women's economic empowerment. LNGOs implement activities and promote long-term sustainability by ensuring that their communities can access resources for future development, engage women, youth, and other marginalized groups effectively in the community's work, and assume the responsibility to build a positive future.

1.1.2 Project Objectives and the Perception Survey

The SB team led by Pact has developed a detailed results framework showing the expected intermediate results and outcomes under each of the aforementioned four project objectives.

To monitor the demand and supply side of local governance and community development, as well as the status of some of the indicators, Sajhedari Bikaas has provisions for monitoring the status of the indicators every six months through a Perception Survey. The contract for carrying out the first two Perception Surveys in 2014 was awarded to Interdisciplinary Analysts (IDA). This report presents the main findings of the Perception Survey II.

Although the activity commissioned by Pact and carried out by IDA is called a "Perception Survey," it constitutes of a scientific (i.e., probability-based) survey and a qualitative component comprised of FGDs and KIIs. The next chapter outlines each of these methods in detail.

2. Methodology and Procedures

2.1 Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews

FGDs and KIIs were administered at district and VDC level in order to provide a qualitative foundation for the survey. This section outlines the details of the qualitative methods, techniques used, and the process of formulating the question checklist for FGDs and KIIs. It describes the pre-field work planning, field work logistics and details, and challenges faced during this process.

2.1.1 Overview

Altogether, 18 FGDs and 8 KIIs were held with stakeholders of the six districts. A total of 173 participants took part in the FGDs. The average numbers of participants per FGD were 10 persons. Of the 18 FGDs, 12 were VDC-level FGDs and six were district-level FGDs. All sessions were representative and participatory; each participant was given an opportunity to voice their opinions and views. The fieldwork took place in two periods: September 13-19, 2014 and October 6-22, 2014.

FGD and KII participants were selected purposefully based on the scope of work specifications about the topics to be covered in these discussions and the need to provide representative viewpoints of key stakeholders. The participants for FGDs included a member each from CACs, Ward Citizen Forums (WCFs), CMCs, disadvantaged groups, social mobilizers, and women's and youth groups. KIIs were conducted with key stakeholders who, because of their busy schedules, did not have the time to participate in FGDs. KIIs were conducted with VDC secretaries, planning officers and Local Governance and Community Development Program (LGCDP) coordinators.

2.1.2 Formulation of Checklist

The IDA team responsible for FGDs conducted a desk study and held numerous brainstorming sessions in order to formulate questions that fulfilled the objectives of the project. These questions were formulated in a way so as to provide deeper understanding of the social and political contexts of the districts and VDCs. They also sought to measure the project indicators in a qualitative manner.

The questions were first formulated in English by the IDA team. They were then sent to the Pact team for review and feedback. After receiving comments from Pact, the questions were revised. They were then sent for approval to USAID. Once approved, they were translated into Nepali. The Nepali version of the question checklist was used for administering the FGDs in the field.

2.1.3 Field Work

Two teams were deployed to conduct the FGDs. They worked concurrently in order to reduce the time required to complete the field work. Each team had one FGD expert and one Research Associate, and each team was responsible for three districts. FGDs were conducted prior to the Dasain festival in Dang, and between the Dasain and Tihar festivals in the other five districts.

A local resource person was hired to facilitate district level FGDs. This person helped in identifying and inviting suitable participants to the FGDs. Likewise, VDC Secretaries helped identify key stakeholders to invite to the VDC level FGDs. The FGDs and KII sessions were held in a nonpartisan, fair and participatory manner; all participants were invited to voice their opinions and views.

2.1.4 Challenges and How They Were Resolved

The team did not face any serious risks during the implementation of the fieldwork. They were able to work in a non-threatening social and political environment, and their work proceeded in a normal manner. The challenges in carrying out the fieldwork were primarily logistical. Some of the issues included:

1. Since the bulk of the fieldwork took place between the festivals of Dasain and Tihar, some of the local government staff had not yet returned to their duty stations from vacation. The IDA team had to adjust the timing of fieldwork so that the concerned staff would indeed be in their duty stations during the fieldwork.
2. In flood affected districts and VDCs, the DDC and VDC personnel were engaged in the distribution of the compensation packages to flood victims. It was challenging to schedule meetings with VDC Secretaries in such VDCs.
3. In some of the VDC level FGDs, the presence of the VDC Secretary during the FGDs may have discouraged the participants from opening up. This problem was overcome largely by probing and encouraging the participants to voice their frank opinions.

2.2 Survey

2.2.1 Overview

The Perception Survey was carried out among the people living in the project districts of Banke, Bardiya, Dang, Kailali, Kanchanpur, and Surkhet. The survey centered on local governance and community development issues. A total of 2,005 respondents living in the SB project area were sampled for the survey. This sample size was significantly greater than the Perception Survey I, which had 1,201 respondents. One of the primary reasons for increasing the sample size was to enable data disaggregation so that the findings would be generalizable at the district level.[2] The structured survey questionnaire was administered face-to-face with the respondents through a mobile phone, using Mobenzi to immediately transfer the data upon completion of the interview. The questionnaire had a total of ten sections: (1) respondent's identification (2) VDC service delivery (3) perception on agencies of development (4) conflict and mediation (5) CDPs and people's participation (6) gender based violence (7) roles as a citizen (8) federalism and decentralization (9) media and (10) VDC/CDP projects. After the completion of the fieldwork, data were processed and analyzed through MS-Excel and SPSS.

[2] The sample size was altered in consultation with Pact. The sample size of the previous Perception Survey was small and when generalizing at the district level, the margin of error would have been high. The new sample size allows for generalization of data at the district level within a reasonable margin of error.

2.2.2 Sampling design

Selection of Districts

The survey was undertaken in the six Sajhedari Bikaas Project districts, namely Kanchanpur, Kailali, Banke, Bardiya, Surkhet and Dang. VDCs were selected taking into account the fact that Sajhedari Bikaas activities are being implemented in 58 VDCs of the aforementioned 6 districts in the first phase (i.e. for the first 2.5 years) and the same activities will be implemented in another 57 VDCs in the second phase (i.e. for the next 2.5 years).

Selection of VDCs

The sampling frame for the survey, as specified in the RFP, was comprised of residents living in the 115 project VDCs of the six districts of the Sajhedari Bikaas Project. VDCs where SB does not work or will not work were not included in the survey. For sampling purposes, all the VDCs in phase I were pooled into 20 clusters and all the VDCs in phase II were also pooled into another 19 clusters. On average, each cluster contained three VDCs. For each cluster, the sample size was approximately 80. (The purpose of having three VDCs per cluster instead of one VDC per cluster was to ensure the adequate spread of the VDCs). Thirteen out of 20 clusters from phase I and another 12 out of 19 clusters from phase II were selected by employing PPS sampling technique.

In this sampling design, the primary sampling unit was the VDC. On average, three VDCs were sampled from one cluster, so altogether 37 VDCs were selected from phase I and 36 VDCs were selected from phase II, thus making a total of 73 VDCs. The sample size of 80 per cluster was further distributed to three sampled VDCs so that one VDC would have an average sample size of 27.

Selection of Wards

Each VDC in Nepal contains nine wards. In the survey, since each VDC was allocated an approximate sample size of 27, this number was divided equally among three sampled wards, chosen through the random sampling technique. In other words, each VDC had a sample size of around 27 individuals, and each ward had a sample size of 9 individuals.

Selection of Households

Nine households from the sampled ward were identified by using the random-walk method[3].

[3]The starting points for the random-walk method are recognizable locations such as schools, crossroads, chautaras, bazaars, etc. At first, the interviewers walk towards a random direction (using spin-the-bottle technique) from a starting point, counting the number of households at the same time. If the number was less than 22, the interviewers selected the first 11 households on the right hand side of their route. If it was between 23 and 32, the interviewers selected the first household and then selected every third household on the right hand side of the route until they covered 11 households. If the number of households was 33 or more, the interviewers selected the first household and then every fourth household on the right hand side of the route until they covered 11 households.

Selection of Respondents

After the household was identified, one member aged 16 or above was selected for interview through the KISH[4] method. Survey participants were selected randomly by adopting the PPS sampling method. This random method ensures that the participants are evenly spread across various age groups, genders, caste/ethnic groups and VDCs in the districts that Sajhedari Bikaas is working in. The randomness allows for increased accuracy while generalizing the results of the survey i.e., from the sampled 2,005 it is possible to generalize with increased accuracy for residents who are 16 years of age or over living in the project districts.

In this way, a sample of 1009 individuals was selected for phase I, distributed across 37 VDCs (13 clusters) and 111 wards. The sample size for phase II was 996, distributed across 36 VDCs (13 clusters) and 108 wards. In total, 2,005 individuals were selected, distributed across 25 clusters, 73 VDCs, and 219 wards in the 6 project districts.

The margin of error is +/- 3.1 percent at a 95 percent confidence level, 50% response distribution and design effect of 2 at the study population. The survey does not claim the same level of precision at either the regional or the district levels.

2.2.3 Formulation of Questionnaire

The questionnaire for this Perception Survey was formulated keeping in mind the objective of measuring progress on indicators. By and large, the questions for Perception Survey II were consistent with those of the Baseline Survey, allowing for longitudinal comparison. However, questions were generally not consistent with those of Perception Survey I. While Perception Survey I sought to map general perceptions, Perception Survey II sought to measure the progress of the indicators vis-à-vis the baseline. Based on the feedback on the report for Perception Survey I, Pact and IDA made an effort to better measure the progress on indicators in the formulation of the questionnaire for Perception Survey II.

The questionnaire was first prepared by the IDA team and then sent to the Pact team for review. The questionnaire was revised after receiving comments from Pact, and then submitted to USAID for approval. The first draft of the questionnaire was prepared on July 20, 2014 and was approved by USAID on September 3, 2014.

The questionnaire was comprised of three different sets of questions. One set of questions were from the baseline – these sought to map the changes in perceptions from the beginning of the project to date. The second set of questions was comprised of questions carried over from Perception Survey I, but slightly modified to meet the data requirements. The third set of questions included new questions designed to better measure the indicators which had not been included in Perception Survey I.

[4]The KISH method is a random sampling technique in which random numbers are listed. Using this technique, one individual will be selected randomly from the list of household members aged 16 years or older.

Since the interview was designed to be conducted orally, even illiterate people were included as respondents. Most of the questions were about the opinions and experiences of the respondents – not about their understanding i.e., knowledge-related questions. Illiterate people are as capable as those who are literate in sharing their experiences or perceptions. However, there could be areas such as those pertaining to sophisticated political concepts where a high proportion of illiterate people could have answered by saying they do not know or cannot say.

2.2.4 Pretest

A pretest for Perception Survey II was not conducted. However, on the last day of training, the enumerators were sent to nearby wards to practice the survey.

2.2.5 Training

Once the questionnaire was approved by USAID, it had to be converted to the Mobenzi platform for use in the field. This was completed in the third week of September. Training could not begin immediately because Dasain commenced from the fourth week of September. It was decided in consultation with Pact to begin the training after the Dasain holiday instead.

The training for the fieldwork personnel was conducted from October 8 to October 11 in Nepalgunj. Three staffs from IDA were present at the training – Field coordinator Mr. Hiranya Baral, senior statistician Mr. Balkrishna Khadka and Android phone and Mobenzi platform expert Ms. Shuvechha Ghimire.

The first day of the training was designed to make the participants familiar with the questions. During the second and the third day, participants went through the questionnaire using android mobile phones. The third day in fact had two purposes – one was to conduct mock interviews and the other was a short training to the Data Abstraction Tool (DAT) supervisors. On the fourth day, a team of supervisors and monitors discussed potential problems in the field and how to address them. The teams were divided into groups and assigned districts and VDCs for the fieldwork.

2.2.6 Field Work Management

The quantitative portion was based on three tools - DAT, Knowledge Aptitude Practice (KAP) survey and Household Survey.

DAT was conducted in a total of 73 VDCs.

KAP was administered to a total of 146 respondents in the same 73 VDCs - each VDC had two respondents. The respondents of KAP included VDC secretaries, community leaders, school teachers, social workers and other VDC representatives in the absence of VDC secretaries.

The household survey had a total sample size of 2005 respondents and was conducted in the six project districts. The fieldwork for the household survey commenced on October 12 and ended on November 8, 2014. The household survey was conducted through android mobile phones using the Mobenzi mobile platform.

There were a total of 23 enumerators and 6 supervisors for the household survey. In addition, 6 supervisors were trained to collect data using the DAT. Three monitors were trained to monitor the field work. While recruiting the field staff, their gender, caste/ethnic as well as language competencies were taken into consideration. Of the 35 enumerators and supervisors, 19 were women and 16 were men. While 27 belonged to hill castes (i.e., Bahun, Chettri, Sanyasi, and Thakuri castes), 8 belonged to Tarai-Madhesi Janajati group (Tharu). Although a majority of field staff were from hill castes groups, IDA selected only those who spoke local languages, mainly Awadhi and Tharu.

Field staff were recruited from among the same people who had been involved in the baseline and the Perception Survey I, such that they were already knowledgeable about android mobile phones and Mobenzi. Therefore, it was not difficult to instruct them on the basic operation of the smart phones.

During the Perception Survey, the supervisors helped with sampling at the ward/cluster level, in planning day to day activities and in solving enumerators' problems as they arose. The supervisors did not conduct the interviews themselves, but were involved in supervising the enumerators.

The Perception Survey also had a provision for hiring monitors to check the quality of the survey as it was in process, to rectify problems if they saw any and report directly to the survey field coordinator. The three monitors hired by IDA had also participated in the 5-day training. These individuals were familiar with Sajhedari Bikaas in that they had been involved as supervisors in KAP and DAT related activities during the Baseline Survey. The three monitors were deployed in the field with one monitor visiting two districts each. The work they performed helped improve the quality of the fieldwork.

At the beginning of each interview, oral consent was obtained from the respondents. They were informed about Sajhedari Bikaas and the objectives of the survey. Likewise, participants were informed that it was their voluntary decision to participate and they were assured of confidentiality. The respondents were informed that the information and opinions they provided would be valuable for assessing the current status of community development programs and for charting out more effective strategies in the future.

2.2.7 Risks and Challenges Encountered in Field Implementation

Climatic condition: The unforeseen advent of "Hud hud storm" affected the day to day lives of people for 3 to 4 days. The field staff had difficulties in conducting the survey during these days, but they did not stop the field work.

Harvest season: The fieldwork period coincided with the harvest season. This made it difficult to find respondents. In some cases field staff conducted interviews in the rice fields.

Festival season: Due to logistical challenges of staffing and field work during the holiday season, the survey was in fact conducted in two stages, one before Tihar and the other after.

Some community members were away in picnics utilizing income from '*deusi'* and *'bhailo'* programs that had accrued during Tihar, which added to the challenge.

2.2.8 Selection of Mobenzi mobile platform

In the Perception Survey, as in the case of the Baseline Survey, the interview was conducted through android mobile phones, using the Mobenzi platform for data entry and transfer. Mobenzi was used since it is user friendly and provides complete support to setup the survey. While the Mobenzi team in South Africa imported the questionnaire into the digital mobile format, fine tuning of the questionnaire was done by the IDA team. The IDA team also translated the questionnaire into Nepali using Unicode as the Nepali font and then exported this into the mobile platform.

Challenges of Android phones and Mobenzi platform

Problem uploading a section: The software had a character limit of 100 per section while uploading any questionnaire. A particular section in the questionnaire was not getting uploaded even after many tries. After getting in touch with the Mobenzi technical team it was discovered that the reason for this was because each section had a limit of 64Kb. It was the Unicode Nepali character set that increased this restriction.

The team was quick to reply and to solve the problem. Compared to the earlier two surveys (which had also been conducted through Mobenzi), the software was easier to handle and more compatible with the android system.

Charging Station: Though mobile phones had to be charged every day, electricity was not available in all the rural areas. Finding suitable charging stations in rural areas was a problem and in some cases the field personnel had to commute a fairly long distance, stay in the queue and pay Rs.10 to charge their phones.

3. Findings and Analysis

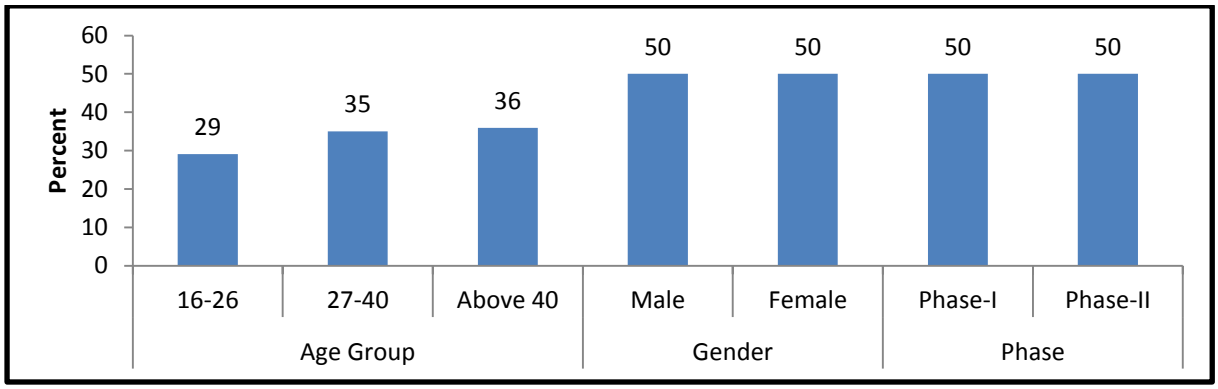
3.1 Survey

3.1.1 Overview of Demography and Variables

This section presents a brief overview of the demographics of the 2,005 sampled respondents spread across six project districts of SB. It also provides an overview of the key variables. The variables- district, phase (phase I vs. phase II), age, gender, caste/ethnicity, and education level- were taken as independent variables in this study. These independent variables have also been disaggregated in some cases with the purpose of examining how perceptions differ across the independent variables. Due to space constraints, the disaggregated findings of the survey are not presented in the main report. They are provided as cross tabulations in excel sheets and are in the annex report.

Of the total sampled respondents, 29 percent were aged 16 to 26, 35 percent were 27 to 40, and 36 percent were 40 or above. Regardless of the gender of the respondents, those aged 16 to 26 were considered as youth. Male and female respondents were equally distributed in the sample, as were respondents from phase I and phase II VDCs.

Figure 1 Distribution of sample by age, gender, and VDCs groups



Eighty eight percent reported having a citizenship certificate and 75 percent reported that they are registered in the voters' list.

Table 1 Distribution of sample by citizenship and voter registration

	Yes (%)	No (%)
A11. Do you have a citizenship certificate?	88.3	11.7
A13. Are you registered to vote?	74.7	25.3

In terms of education, a high proportion (25 percent) reported that they are illiterate, whereas 21 percent reported that they are literate, and the remaining reported having some years of formal education.

With regards to their main occupation, a majority reported agriculture (61 percent) followed by housewife/house-maker (16 percent), labor (5 percent), industry (4 percent), and service (4 percent). In terms of caste/ethnic composition, 45 percent of the respondents were from

Tarai-Madhesi Janajati category, 29 percent from Hill Brahmin/Chettri category, followed by Hill/Mountain Janajati (8 percent), and Hill Dalit (8 percent) categories.

Table 2 Distribution of sample by education, occupation, and caste/ethnicity

Educational Status	%	Main occupation	%	Caste/ethnic composition	%
Illiterate	25.4	Agriculture	60.7	Hill Brahmin/Chettri	28.6
Literate	21.1	Industry/Business	3.9	Hill/Mountain Janajati	7.8
Primary	15.8	Service	3.6	Newar	0.1
Lower Sec	12.7	Labor	5.3	Hill Dalit	8.1
Secondary	15.8	Student	8.4	Tarai-Madhesi Brahmins/Rajputs	3.7
SLC	1.3	Housewife/house-maker	15.6	Tarai-Madhesi Janajati	44.9
Intermediate	5.8	Retired	0.5	Tarai-Madhesi other castes	1.7
Bachelor &above	2.1	Unemployed	1.3	Tarai/Madhesi Dalit	2.2
Total	100.0	Other (specify)	0.6	Muslim	2.7

Respondents were asked about various community groups to document the information about their awareness and involvement in these groups. An overwhelming majority of the people said that they had heard of mother's groups (90 percent), forest user groups (89 percent), saving and credit groups (84 percent), the Agricultural Service Center (82 percent) and the Livestock Service Center (81 percent). Relatively few people had heard of WORTH groups (6 percent), CMUs (24 percent), CAC (28 percent), Radio Listeners Groups (29 percent), and WCFs (34 percent). Awareness about these institutions and organizations was lower among women than men, and among the Madhesi, Muslim and Hill Dalit groups as compared to other castes/ ethnicities.

Of the respondents who had heard about the aforementioned entities, over half of them reported they knew the roles and responsibilities of those entities.

The respondents who said that they knew about the roles and responsibilities of these organizations were then asked if they are currently members of any of those groups. In response, 35 percent said they are members of saving and credit groups, followed by forest user groups (30 percent), WORTH groups (23 percent), and WCFs (21 percent). Detailed findings are presented in the table below.

Table 3 Distribution of sample by awareness and involvement of people in community groups

Name of Organization	Have you heard of?	If yes, do you know the roles and responsibilities of?	If yes, are you currently a member (over the last one year) of?	Member-ship of (in %)
Responses	Yes (%)	Yes (%)	Yes (%)	Base = 2,005
WCF	34.4	54.0	21.2	3.9
CAC	28.2	49.6	8.9	1.2
VDC Council	60.0	72.2	6.7	2.9
School Management Committee	71.9	75.2	10.7	5.8
Mother's Groups	90.1	78.0	18.2	12.8
Savings and Credit Groups	84.2	83.4	35.3	24.8
Local Youth Groups (LYG)	63.0	63.8	9.7	3.9
Youth Network	26.1	47.6	7.6	0.9
Forest User Group	88.6	83.6	30.0	22.2
Radio Listeners Group (RLG)	29.3	46.3	4.0	0.5
Community Management Unit (CMU)	23.8	51.8	7.3	0.9
Community Mediation Center (CMC)	64.4	78.0	4.4	2.2
WORTH group	6.1	57.7	22.5	0.8
Agricultural Service Center	82.3	83.4	8.1	5.5
Livestock Service Center (LSC)	81.3	83.3	2.8	1.9
District Public Health Post Center	68.7	73.7	2.7	1.3
District education office	68.5	67.7	2.0	0.9

Out of total respondents, the survey revealed that 24.8 percent are currently members of saving and credit groups, followed by forest user groups (22.2 percent), Agricultural Service Center (5.5 percent), School Management Committees (5.8 percent), WCFs (3.9 percent) and local youth groups (3.9 percent).

3.1.2 VDC Service Delivery

Awareness about roles and responsibilities of entities at VDC level

One of the key objectives of the Perception Survey was to assess how effectively local level institutions and organizations are providing services at the VDC level. First, the survey assessed awareness regarding the roles and responsibilities of various entities at the VDC level. Over three quarters of people said they are aware about the roles and responsibilities of VDC secretary (78.4 percent). This proportion was relatively higher in phase I compared to phase II VDCs (79.5 percent vs. 77.3 percent). Over half of respondents said they are aware of the roles and responsibilities of Illaka health post representatives (69 percent), Illaka agriculture service representatives (54 percent), Illaka livestock service representatives (56

percent), post office representatives (56 percent), and school management committee representatives (57 percent).

The survey findings reveal that public awareness about roles and responsibilities of various entities at the local level is slightly higher in phase I compared to phase II VDCs.

Table 4 Are you aware about the roles and responsibilities of these entities in your VDC? [All and by phase, B1]

[B1, Base = 2,005]	All	phase I	phase II
Responses	Yes (%)	Yes (%)	Yes (%)
VDC secretary	78.4	79.5	77.3
Illaka Health Post representative	68.6	70.7	66.5
Illaka Agriculture Service representative	53.5	54.5	52.5
Illaka Livestock Service representative	55.7	57.2	54.2
Post Office representative	57.5	61.3	53.5
School Management Committee representative	56.5	57.5	55.5

Services received from VDCs and their effectiveness

The survey explored the types of VDC services received by the public and examined how the public assesses the effectiveness of the VDCs in providing such services. Most of the respondents (60 percent) said they did not receive any services from the VDC office in the past one year. Fifteen percent said they received birth certificates, followed by recommendations for citizenship (13 percent), social security allowances (7 percent), recommendations for buying and selling of land (5 percent), and marriage certificates (4 percent).

Table 5 During the past one year, what services have you received through the VDC office?

[B3, Base = 2005]	All	Phase-1	Phase-2
None	60.0	58.6	61.5
Birth certificate	14.6	13.9	15.3
Recommendation for citizenship	12.9	13.1	12.8
Social Security Allowances (Single women, senior citizen, PLWD)	7.0	6.0	7.9
Recommendation for buying and selling of land	5.2	6.2	4.1
Others	4.4	5.2	3.6
Marriage certificate	3.5	2.8	4.2
Development services	3.3	3.8	2.9
Employment related services	1.4	1.9	.9
Death certificate	1.1	1.6	.7
Migration certificate	1.0	1.2	.8

With regards to the effectiveness of the VDC office in providing services in the past one year, a majority of people thought it to be either very effective (9 percent) or effective (62 percent).

Relatively few people said services provided by the VDC office are not effective or not effective at all. These results were similar in phase I and II VDCs.

Table 6 How effective do you think your VDC office has been in providing services in the past one year (July 2013 to now?) [All and by phase, B5]

[B5, Base= 2,005]	All	phase I	phase II
Very effective	9.2	9.3	9.0
Effective	62.3	62.4	62.2
Not that effective	14.0	15.0	13.0
Not at all effective	1.1	1.3	1.0
Don't know/Can't say	13.4	12.0	14.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Of the respondents who thought the VDC office has been not effective or not effective at all, 48 percent cited delay in providing services, followed by the VDC officials' irresponsible attitude (26 percent), and political influence in the provision of services (16 percent). A lower proportion said there is political influence in phase I VDCs as compared to phase II VDCs (9 percent vs. 23 percent). On the other hand, higher proportions of respondents cited delay in providing services and VDC officials' irresponsible attitude in phase I compared to phase II VDCs.

Table 7 If you think your VDC office has been not that effective or not at all effective, why do you think so?

[B6, Base= 303]	All	phase I	phase II
Delay in providing services	47.9	51.8	43.2
VDC official's non responsible attitude	26.1	29.9	21.6
Bribery	5.0	5.5	4.3
There is political influence in the services provided	15.5	9.1	23.0
Others	3.0	2.4	3.6
Don't know/Can't say	2.6	1.2	4.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Effectiveness of local entities in encouraging development activities at the VDC level

The Perception Survey explored how effectively local entities are encouraging development at the VDC level. It found that over half of the respondents were of the opinion that local entities are encouraging development at the VDC level either very effectively or effectively, except for the post offices. Among various entities, health posts seem to be doing the best followed by VDC secretaries and school management committees. Slightly more people in phase I VDCs than in phase II VDCs thought that local entities are effective in encouraging development. This is summarized in the table below.

Table 8 Thinking about your Village Development Committee (VDC), how effective would you say it is in encouraging development in your community?

[B8, Base= 2,005]	All		phase I		phase II	
	Very effective	Effective	Very effective	Effective	Very effective	Effective
VDC secretary	7.3	55.6	7.9	57.6	6.7	53.5
Health Post	13.1	66.5	12.8	66.0	13.4	67.0
Agriculture Service Center	6.1	48.0	6.1	48.4	6.0	47.6
Livestock Service In Center	4.6	45.9	4.5	48.1	4.7	43.7
Post Office	1.4	27.0	1.4	25.7	1.5	28.3
School Management Committee	7.2	55.3	7.4	57.4	6.9	53.2

Coordination of local entities to plan and implement development projects at the VDC level

The survey sought to assess the coordination among various government agencies to work together to plan and implement development projects at the local level. Over half of respondents felt that government agencies are able to work together to plan and implement development projects at the local level (except for the post offices). The proportion of those who thought so was slightly higher in phase I VDCs than in phase II VDCs. This is summarized in the table below.

Table 9 To what extent do you feel that following government agencies in your VDC are able to work together to plan and implement development projects? Would you say that they cooperate?

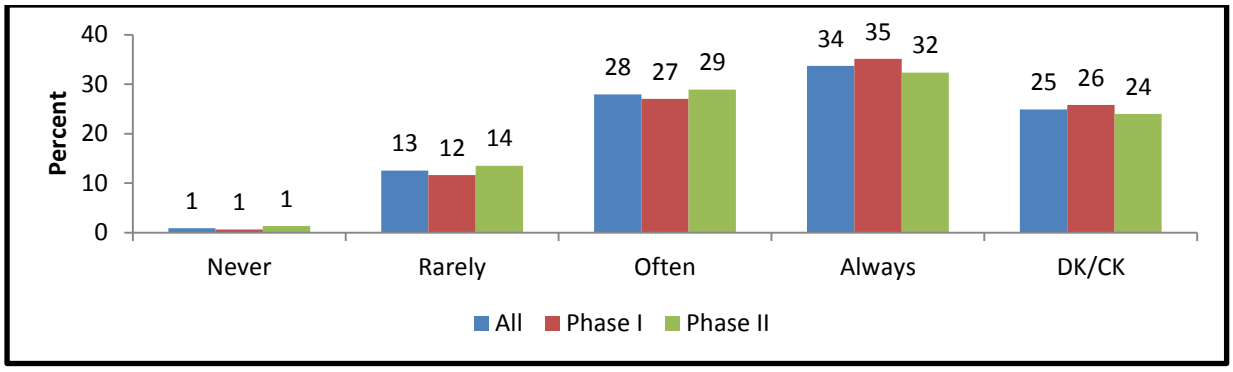
	All		phase I		phase II	
[B10, Base= 2,005]	Very well	Well	Very well	Well	Very well	Well
VDC secretary	6.5	53.4	7.2	53.8	5.7	53.0
Public Health Post	10.1	61.8	10.2	62.2	10.0	61.4
Agriculture Service	4.2	47.6	4.4	48.1	4.1	47.2
Livestock Service	3.1	45.1	3.3	47.5	3.0	42.7
Post Office	1.4	26.4	1.8	25.1	1.0	27.8
School Management Committee	5.9	54.6	6.5	55.2	5.3	54.0

Presence of VDC secretary at office

Most respondents said that their VDC secretary is available at the VDC office; 34 percent said that he/ she is always available and 28 percent said he/ she is often available. Some 13 percent were of the opinion that the VDC secretary is rarely available at the office, while one percent said the VDC secretary is never available at the office. The responses were similar

across phase I and phase II VDCs. In comparison to the Baseline Survey (which found 36 percent), the availability of VDC secretaries at their offices appears to have increased. This finding could be attributed to improvement in law and order in the Tarai districts.

Figure 2 Over the past year, how often was the VDC secretary available at the VDC office? [B12, Base= 2,005]



Opinions on development programs, trust, service and decision making process at the local level

VDC services delivery was assessed further by asking people's opinion on various issues. Specific statements pertaining to VDC service delivery were read out and respondents were asked whether the agreed, strongly agreed, or disagreed. Regarding the statement "Development programs in my village are designed as per the needs of local people," 15 percent said they strongly agree and 44 percent said they agree. Over 80 percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I have trust and confidence in my village development committee (VDC)." Some 70 percent of the respondents were of the opinion that the VDC secretary is the major decision maker for local development at the VDC level. Over two thirds said they are satisfied with the level of services provided by the VDC (69 percent). A significantly lower proportion of respondents (47 percent) said they were satisfied with services provided by the DDC. Similar types of responses were recorded between phase I VDCs and phase II VDCs.

Table 10 Opinions of the public on development programs, trust, service, and decision making process

[B13, Base= 2,005]	All		phase I		phase II	
	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Agree
Development programs in my village are designed as per the needs of local people	14.6	44.1	15.1	42.1	14.2	46.2
I have trust and confidence in my village development committee (VDC)	18.8	61.7	19.1	61.0	18.5	62.4
Currently, the VDC secretary is the major decision maker for local development in our VDC	18.8	52.1	19.8	50.1	17.8	54.1

Overall, I am satisfied with the level of services given to me by VDC	6.1	63.0	6.7	62.5	5.4	63.5
Overall, I am satisfied with the level of services given to me by DDC	2.0	45.0	1.5	48.0	2.6	42.1

Transparency of VDC fund use

Most of the respondents (56 percent) felt that the use of VDC funds in their communities is not transparent, compared to 28 percent who said fund use is transparent. Similar responses regarding transparency in the use of funds were found in both phase I VDCs and phase II VDCs.

In comparison to the Baseline Survey, there has been an increase among both sets of people – those who think that VDCs funds are transparent (19 percent in Baseline vs. 28 percent in Perception Survey II) and those who think VDC funds are not transparent (48 percent in Baseline vs. 56 percent in Perception Survey II). The proportion of respondents who said 'don't know/ cannot say' was correspondingly lower in Perception Survey II.

Table 11 Do you feel that the use of VDC funds in your community is transparent?

[B18, Base= 2,005]	All	phase I	phase II
Yes	27.1	27.7	26.5
No	55.8	56.3	55.2
Don't know/Can't say	17.2	16.1	18.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Survey findings on VDC services delivery reveal that people are satisfied to some extent with the VDC service delivery mechanism. However, just because people report that they are satisfied to some extent does not mean there is no opportunity or possibility to improve VDC services delivery. There is plenty of room on the part of service providers, including local bodies, to improve service delivery.

Most of the people are aware about the roles and responsibilities of various entities of their VDC and generally agree that these entities are effective in encouraging development in their community. People also think entities are working together to plan and implement projects to some extent. Public trust and confidence in VDCs and VDC secretaries is relatively high, and people think that VDC secretaries are the major decision makers for local development. However, most of the people are not satisfied with the level of transparency in the use of VDC funds.

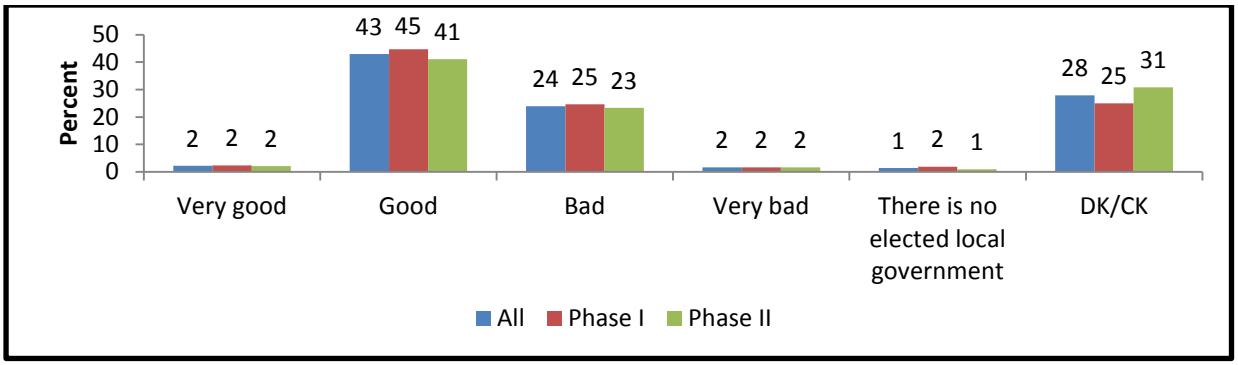
3.1.3 Perception on Agencies of Development
Assessment of performance of VDC

One of the main objectives of the survey was to document public perceptions of various agencies that are responsible for development at the local level, particularly of VDCs and DDCs.

Some 45 percent of respondents assessed the performance of the VDC to be good or very good, in contrast to 26 percent who assessed it to be bad or very bad. The proportion of respondents who assessed the VDC to be good or very good was slightly higher in the phase I group than in the phase II group (47 percent vs. 43 percent).

Responses regarding VDC performance showed improvements in comparison to the Baseline Survey. One of the primary reasons for this could be the increased availability of VDC Secretaries (mentioned earlier), since they are in charge of signing and approving many documents.

Figure 3 Generally speaking, how do you assess the performance of your VDC? (C1, Base= 2,005)



The 45 percent of respondents who assessed the VDC to be good or very good were asked to identify the reasons behind their assessment. Some 65 percent said the VDC is 'able to undertake development activities', followed by 31 percent who said 'able to maintain law and order', 20 percent who said 'able to provide access to education', and 9 percent who said 'able to control corruption'. The responses were consistent across phase I and phase II VDCs.

Table 12 If the performance of the VDC is very good or good respondents mentioned three reasons why.

[C2, Base= 904]	All	phase I	phase II
Able to undertake development activities	65.2	63.9	66.5
Able to maintain law and order	30.9	30.8	30.9
Don't know/ Can't say	19.9	18.1	21.9
Able to provide access in education	11.1	12.9	9.1
Able to control corruption	8.5	8.2	8.8

Likewise, the 26 percent who assessed the VDC to be bad or very bad were asked to cite reasons. Some 71 percent said 'VDC is unable to undertake development activities', followed by 31 percent who said 'unable to maintain law and order', 12 percent who said 'unable to

control corruption', 12 percent who said 'unable to provide domestic water', and 15 percent who said 'unable to provide transparency'. The responses were consistent across phase I and phase II VDCs.

Table 13 If the performance of the VDC is very bad or bad respondents mentioned three reasons why.

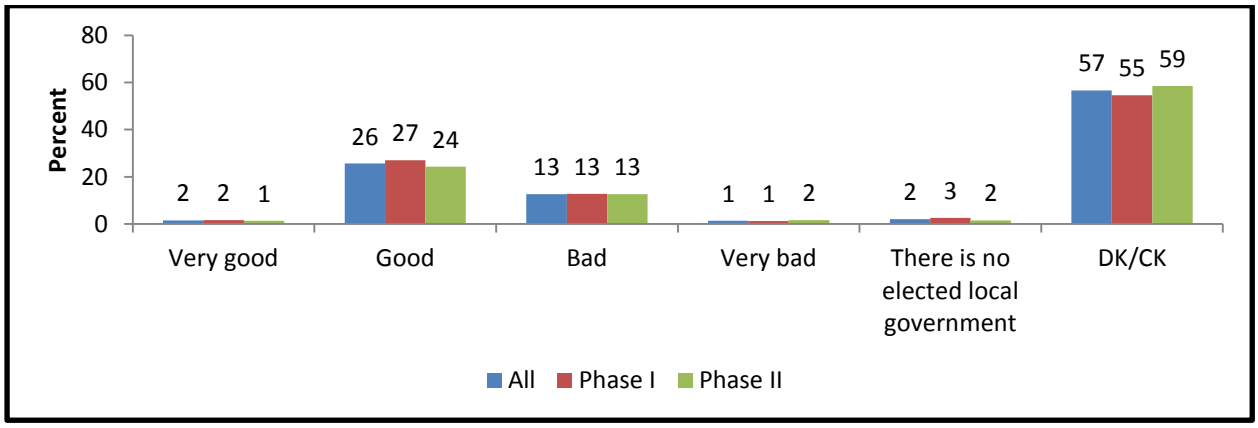
[C4, Base= 513]	All	phase I	phase II
Unable to undertake development activities	70.6	72.7	68.3
Unable to maintain law and order	28.5	25.0	32.1
Unable to control the corruption	23.4	24.2	22.5
Unable to provide domestic water	11.5	11.7	11.2
Unable to provide transparency	11.5	11.0	12.0
Unable to provide irrigation facilities	10.5	9.1	12.0
Unable to generate local employment opportunities	9.4	7.6	11.2

What these two sets of responses together reveal is that the VDCs are judged on the basis of their ability to undertake development activities, to maintain law and order, and to control corruption. People prioritize these responsibilities of VDCs.

Assessment of performance of DDC

A similar set of questions were also asked about DDCs. Some 27 percent of the respondents assessed the performance of the DDC to be good or very good (compared to 45 percent who made the same assessments for VDCs). On the other hand, 14 percent assessed DDC performance to be bad or very bad. Over half of respondents were unable to assess the performance of the DDC.

Figure 4 Generally speaking, how do you assess the performance of your DDC? (C6, Base= 2,005)



As in the case with the VDCs, people were asked to state the reasons for their assessments of the DDCs. Of the 27 percent who assessed the DDC to be good or very good, 56 percent said the DDC is 'able to undertake development activities', followed by 38 percent who said 'able to maintain law and order', 13 percent who said 'able to provide access in education', and 12 percent who said 'able to control corruption'. The responses were consistent across phase I and phase II VDCs.

Table 14 If the performance of the DDC is very good or good respondents mentioned three reasons why.

[C7, Base= 544]	All	phase I	phase II
Able to undertake development activities	56.3	53.1	59.8
Able to maintain law and order	37.9	36.1	39.8
Don't know/ Can't say	16.9	16.7	17.2
Able to provide access in education	12.5	12.2	12.9
Able to control corruption	12.3	12.8	11.7
Able to control crime/kidnapping/extortion/theft	9.9	11.8	7.8

Of the 14 percent of the respondents who assessed DDCs to be bad or very bad, 65 percent attributed this to the DDC being 'unable to undertake development activities', followed by 34 percent who said 'unable to maintain law and order', 21 percent who said 'unable to control corruption', and 13 percent who said 'unable to generate local employment opportunities'.

Table 15 If the performance of the VDC is very bad or bad, respondents mentioned three reasons why.

[C9, Base=283]	All	phase I	phase II
Unable to undertake development activities	65.0	66.2	63.8
Unable to maintain law and order	34.3	37.3	31.2
Unable to control the corruption	20.8	19.0	22.7
Unable to generate local employment opportunities	13.4	15.5	11.3
Unable to provide irrigation facilities	12.7	9.9	15.6

The assessments of the DDCs and VDCs suggest that in the public's view, the most important aspects of these bodies' performance are undertaking development activities, maintaining law and order, and controlling corruption. If these responsibilities are addressed, people will rate VDC and DDC performance well.

Positive and negative influence of various actors in development activities

Various entities and organizations at the local level can have positive or negative influences on the development activities in the community. These include local political parties, religious leaders, NGOs, Community Based Organizations/ Civil Society Organizations (CBOs/CSOs), WCFs, CACs, DDC, media, police, private business sector, local youth groups, youth network, CMU, community mediation center, Central government, VDC, user groups, agriculture service center, livestock service center, public health post, and school management committee. Respondents were asked to assess both the positive and the negative influences of each entity/ organization on local development.

Respondents were first asked about the positive influence of each actor. Unfortunately, a high proportion of people were unable to give an unequivocal response. However, among those who responded, 73 percent said that public health posts have either a very or somewhat positive influence. Other actors that received a relatively high assessment included the police, media, VDC, and school management committees. Respondents rated WCFs, CACs, CMUs,

and youth networks as having the least positive influence. This is summarized in the table below.

Table 16 Public opinions on various actors' positive influence on development in the community

Positive influence of	All			phase I			phase II		
[C11, Base= 2,005]	Very much	Some what	DK/ CS	Very much	Some what	DK/ CS	Very much	Some what	DK/ CS
Local political parties	3.4	29.7	14.5	3.7	30.5	14.2	3.1	28.8	14.8
Religious leaders	1.3	19.5	37.4	1.1	19.1	35.1	1.5	19.9	39.7
NGOs	6.7	41.5	28.1	6.1	44.2	26.1	7.2	38.8	30.1
CBOs/CSOs	5.6	47.9	25.9	5.3	49.8	23.4	6.0	46.0	28.4
WCFs	1.7	18.5	63.4	1.7	19.1	62.0	1.8	17.9	64.8
CACs	1.2	14.7	69.8	1.5	13.9	69.8	.9	15.5	69.8
DDC	3.1	36.2	41.1	3.0	37.5	38.4	3.2	34.9	44.0
Media	12.0	51.5	20.5	12.6	51.7	18.4	11.4	51.3	22.7
Police	8.4	62.6	10.2	8.1	61.3	9.9	8.6	63.9	10.4
Private business sector	4.1	40.2	28.8	3.9	38.1	28.3	4.3	42.4	29.2
Local Youth Groups (LYG)	1.8	31.5	38.7	1.5	31.0	38.4	2.1	32.0	39.1
Youth Network	.7	11.5	73.3	.6	12.9	70.6	.9	10.1	76.0
CMU	.7	14.4	69.6	.7	15.0	68.1	.7	13.9	71.2
Community Mediator Centers (CMC)	1.9	25.9	54.7	2.5	29.2	51.9	1.4	22.5	57.5
Central Government	3.1	37.8	33.3	3.8	38.0	31.2	2.4	37.6	35.4
VDC	6.7	57.0	13.0	8.1	55.8	12.6	5.2	58.1	13.4
User Groups	2.8	46.5	34.1	2.4	49.3	31.3	3.2	43.8	36.8
Agricultural Service Center	2.8	46.1	24.2	3.3	44.8	22.8	2.4	47.5	25.6
Livestock Service Center	1.9	42.5	26.0	2.0	43.2	24.9	1.8	41.9	27.2
Public health posts	11.3	61.6	12.2	10.6	61.4	11.5	11.9	61.7	12.9
School Management Committee	5.9	53.2	24.3	5.8	52.8	23.4	5.9	53.5	25.2

Respondents were asked about the possible negative influence of these same entities in community development. Some 42 percent of the respondents said local political parties have either very much or somewhat negative influence. Other entities with relatively high negative ratings included the private business sector, religious leaders, police, and media. In contrast, WCFs, CACs, CMUs, and youth networks were seen as having the least negative influence. The details are presented in the table below.

Table 17 Public opinions on various actors' negative influence on development in the community

Negative influence of	All			phase I			phase II		
[C12, Base= 2,005]	Very much	Some what	DK/CS	Very much	Some what	DK/CS	Very much	Some what	DK/CS
Local political parties	15.1	27.3	18.5	14.5	26.8	16.6	15.8	27.9	20.4
Religious leaders	6.2	11.5	38.6	6.0	13.4	35.8	6.3	9.5	41.4
NGOs	1.6	11.2	29.9	1.5	10.6	27.6	1.8	11.8	32.2
CBOs/CSOs	0.9	10.3	27.8	0.8	10.8	24.8	1.1	9.8	30.8
WCFs	0.6	5.4	61.6	0.6	6.2	60.2	0.7	4.6	63.1
CACs	0.5	5.2	66.6	0.4	5.3	67.5	0.6	5.2	65.8
DDC	0.7	8.8	42.0	0.7	8.4	40.0	0.8	9.2	44.0
Media	1.6	13.8	26.9	1.4	12.5	26.1	1.8	15.1	27.7
Police	2.3	13.8	16.4	2.9	12.6	15.8	1.7	15.0	17.0
Private business sector	3.8	12.6	30.7	4.3	10.9	31.0	3.4	14.3	30.4
Local Youth Groups (LYG)	0.8	9.0	40.1	0.8	8.5	39.0	0.9	9.4	41.2
Youth Network	0.4	4.6	68.9	0.4	5.0	66.7	0.5	4.2	71.1
CMU	0.5	4.8	64.7	0.6	4.8	63.5	0.4	4.8	66.0
CMC	0.4	6.4	55.5	0.3	7.1	52.2	0.6	5.7	58.7
Central Government	2.0	11.5	34.5	1.8	11.1	32.4	2.2	11.9	36.5
VDC	1.1	13.2	19.2	0.9	11.7	17.5	1.3	14.7	20.8
User Groups	0.6	8.9	35.2	0.7	8.0	32.8	0.5	9.7	37.6
Agricultural Service Center	0.9	12.4	27.7	1.1	12.2	25.9	0.8	12.6	29.6
Livestock Service Center	1.0	12.0	29.3	1.0	12.1	27.4	1.0	11.9	31.2
Public health posts	0.3	10.8	17.7	0.1	11.4	16.7	0.6	10.1	18.7
School Management Committee	0.5	10.0	26.0	0.7	10.0	24.2	0.4	10.0	27.9

Findings of the Perception Survey reveal that the local political parties are perceived to have more negative than positive influence. Public health posts are seen to have more positive influence than negative. The public thinks that WCFs, CACs, CMUs, and youth networks have neither positive nor negative influence on development activities in the community. The above questions are re-arranged in rank order and presented in the table below.

Table 18 Ranking of organizations in terms of positive and negative influence in development activities at the local level

Organizations	Rank in terms of positive influence	Rank in terms of negative influence
Public health posts	1	12

Police	2	4
VDC	3	6
Media	4	5
School Management Committee	5	13
CBOs/CSOs	6	11
User Groups	7	16
Agricultural Service Center	8	8
NGOs	9	10
Livestock Service Center (LSC)	10	9
Private business sector	11	3
Central Government	12	7
DDC	13	15
Local Youth Groups (LYG)	14	14
Local political parties	15	1
Community Mediator Centers (CMC)	16	17
Religious leaders	17	2
WCFs	18	18
CACs	19	19
CMU	20	20
Youth Network	21	21

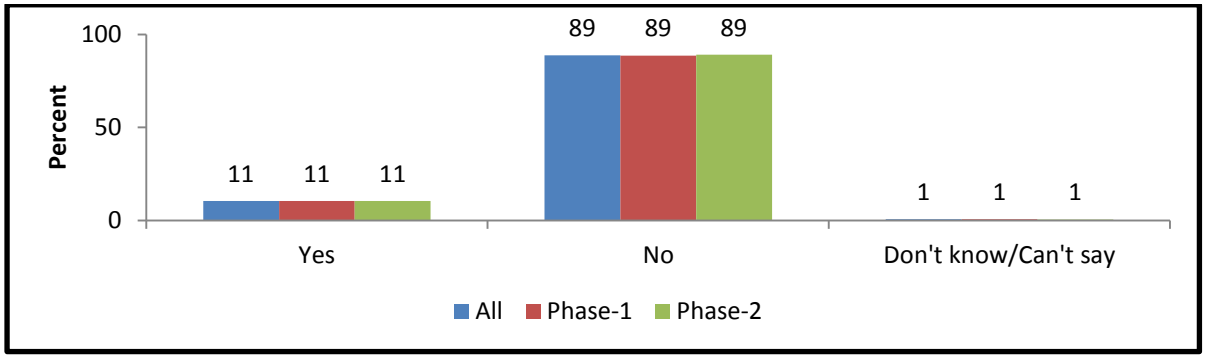
Public health posts were ranked the highest in positive influence, and relatively low in negative influence. Conversely, religious leaders were ranked high in negative influence and low in positive influence. Interestingly, the police and media are seen to have both significant positive and negative influence in development activities.

3.1.4 Conflict and Mediation

Experience of conflict and mediation at personal or household level

The Perception Survey sought to document the types of conflict and violence that respondents had experienced, and the means they used for solving these. The first question asked in this regard was: In the past one year, have you or your household members been involved in any conflicts or problems? An overwhelming majority of the respondents (89 percent) reported that neither they nor any member of their household have been involved in any conflict. On the other hand, 11 percent reported that they have been involved.

Figure 5 In the past year, have you or your household members been involved in any conflicts or problems? (D1, Base= 2,005)



Respondents who reported having conflict or problems in the past one year were asked about what led to the conflict or problem. Some 47 percent said that it was a marriage or domestic disagreement, followed by dispute over other property or belongings (17 percent), dispute over natural resources, i.e., land, forest, and water (12 percent), and physical assault (10 percent).

Table 19 In the past year what is the kind of conflict or problem that have been in your family or in your home?

[D2, Base= 211]	All	Phase-1	Phase-2
Marriage or domestic disagreement	46.9	52.8	41.0
Dispute over other property or belongings	16.6	15.1	18.1
Dispute over land, forest, water	12.3	14.2	10.5
Physical assault	9.5	9.4	9.5

The respondents who reported conflict or problems in the past one year were also asked what they did to manage the conflict. Nearly half (49 percent) said they did nothing to manage the conflict, while some 22 percent said they tried to come to an agreement with the other party. Some 14 percent brought the conflict to the police and 8 percent brought the conflict to locally important persons/community leaders.

Table 20 What did you do to manage the conflict?

[D4, Base= 211]	All	Phase-1	Phase-2
Nothing	49.3	50.0	48.6
I tried to come to an agreement with the other party	22.3	21.7	22.9
I brought it to the police	14.2	13.2	15.2
I brought it to locally important person/ community leaders	7.6	5.7	9.5
I brought it to Community Mediation Center (CMC)	2.4	4.7	0.0

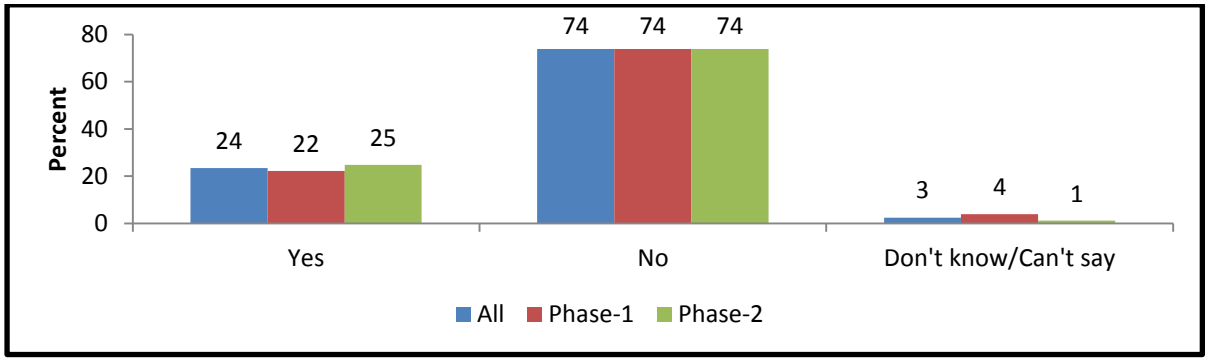
Thus, the survey revealed that a large majority of people did not have any kind of conflict, and that in cases where conflict did occur, it was most often related to marriage or domestic disagreements. Because marriage/ domestic disagreements are often considered private

matters, this may explain why a high percentage of respondents said they did nothing to resolve the conflict. It could be inferred that if the people have conflict or problems other than marriage or domestic disagreements, then these are generally brought to the police or locally important persons/community leaders to manage or resolve. The proportion of those who brought the conflict or problem to a community mediation center was 4.7 percent in phase I VDCs, and 0 in phase II VDCs.

Experience of violence in response to conflict at the community level

Most of the respondents (74 percent) said they have not experienced any type of violence in response to conflicts in the community. However, a sizeable number of respondents (24 percent) said they have experienced violence in response to conflict at the community level. The proportion of those who experienced violence in response to conflict was lower in phase I VDCs compared to phase II VDCs (22 percent vs. 25 percent).

Figure 6 In the past year (since July 2013) have you experienced violence in response to conflict in your community? (D6, Base= 2,005)



Of the 24 percent respondents who reported that they have experienced violence in response to conflict at the community level, 21 percent said it was related to a marriage or domestic disagreement, followed by physical assault (17 percent), dispute over land, forest, or water (13 percent), physical abuse (10 percent), and cultural abuse (9 percent).

Table 21 What type of conflict caused the violence?

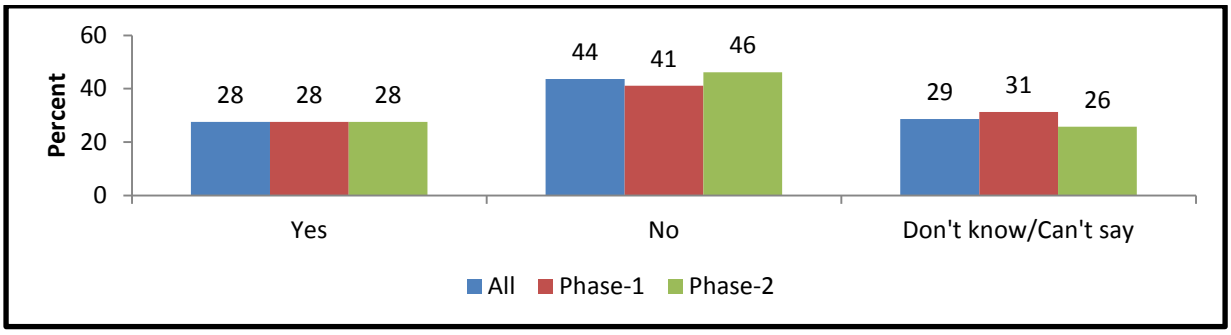
[D7, Base= 471]	All	Phase-1	Phase-2
Marriage or domestic disagreement	21.4	25.9	17.4
Physical assault	16.6	15.6	17.4
Dispute over land, forest, water	13.0	13.4	12.6
Physical abuse	9.6	8.0	10.9
Cultural abuse	9.1	9.4	8.9

Possibility of violence in future

Respondents were asked the question: Do you think there is the possibility of political violence in the near future? Some 44 percent of the respondents were of the opinion that there

is no possibility of political violence in the near future. However, 28 percent said that there is such a possibility. Some 29 percent were unable to respond to this question.

Figure 7 Do you think there is the possibility of political violence surging in the near future? (D9, Base= 2,005)



Another question – how worried are you that there will be new, wide-spread violence in the next 12 months? - was asked to all the respondents. In this case, only 29 percent of the respondents said that they are worried. On the other hand, 47 percent said they are not worried. A little less than a quarter of respondents were unable to express their opinion.

Table 22 How worried are you that there will be new, wide-spread violence in the next 12 months?

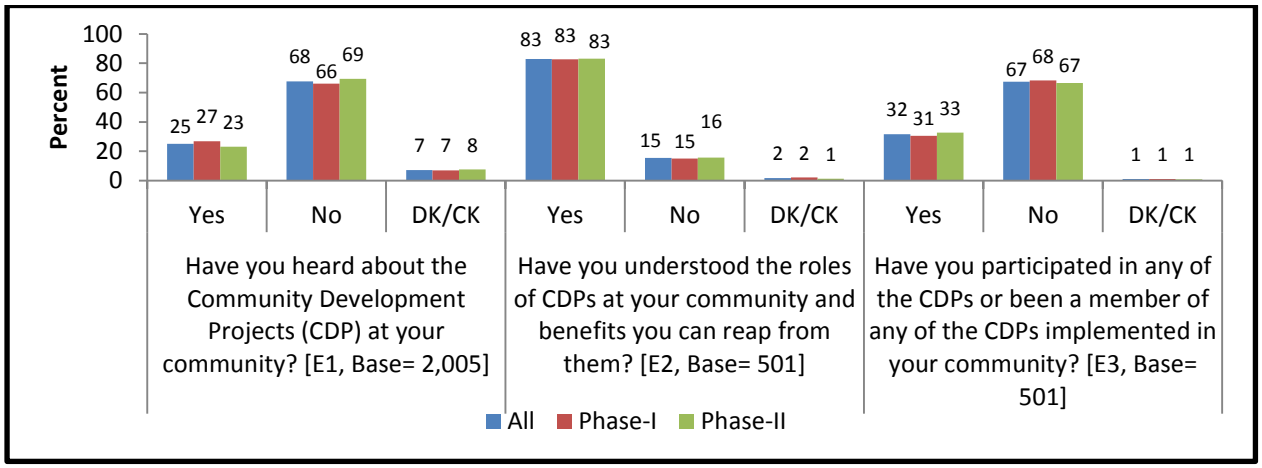
[D10, Base= 2,005]	All	Phase-1	Phase-2
Very Worried	10.3	10.7	9.9
Somewhat worried	18.8	18.7	18.9
Not worried	9.9	9.3	10.5
Not at all worried	20.3	21.5	19.1
I have not thought about this much	17.4	16.9	17.8
Refused	.0	.0	.0
Don't know/Can't say	23.3	22.8	23.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

3.1.5 CDPs and People's Participation
Awareness about CDPs

One of the goals of SB is to increase active and inclusive participation of people in the identification, selection, implementation, and monitoring of CDPs in their communities. A series of questions related to CDPs were asked during the survey. The first question was: have you heard about the community development projects (CDPs) in your community? One quarter of respondents (25%) said they have heard of them, whereas over two thirds said they have not heard of CDPs. A slightly higher number of respondents gave a positive response in phase I as compared to phase II VDCs (27 percent vs. 23 percent). The proportion of respondents who had heard of CDPs was significantly lower in Banke and Bardiya and among women and the Madhesi, Tarai-Madhesi Janajati, Muslim, and Hill Dalit groups.

Among respondents who had heard of CDPs, a large majority (83 percent) said they understand the roles of CDPs and 32 percent said they have participated or are a member of CDPs which were implemented in their community. Responses were similar in phase I and phase II VDCs.

Figure 8 have you heard about the community development projects (CDPs) in your community? (E1, Base= 2,005)



Participation and satisfaction in the implementation of CDPs

The 25 percent of respondents who had heard of CDPs were asked questions regarding their participation in community development projects at the local level. A series of statements regarding the different ways of participating in CDPs was read out to respondents so as to ascertain their agreement or disagreement. Some 41 percent said they agreed or strongly agreed that in the past one year, they were members of a user group that implemented at least one CDP. Some 29 percent said they agreed or strongly agreed that they attended one of the public hearings on a CDP, followed by those who said they were a member of a monitoring committee that monitored the implementation of a CDP (15 percent), attended one social audit on a CDP (14 percent), and attended one public audit of a CDP (12 percent). Responses were similar in phase I and II VDCs.

Table 23 Respondents who strongly agree or agree with the given statements about CDPs.

[E4, Base= 501]	ALL		phase I		phase II	
	Strongly agree	agree	Strongly agree	agree	Strongly agree	agree
In the past year, I was a member of a User Group that implemented at least one CDP.	10.2	30.7	8.5	29.5	12.2	32.2
In the past year, I was a member of a Monitoring committee that monitored the implementation of the CDP.	5.4	9.8	3.7	10.3	7.4	9.1
In the past year, I attended one of the public hearings on the CDPs	9.8	19.6	8.5	18.5	11.3	20.9
In the past year, I attended one of the social audit on the CDPs	5.2	9.2	4.1	9.2	6.5	9.1

In the past year, I attended one of the public audit of the CDPs	3.2	9.2	1.1	8.9	5.7	9.6

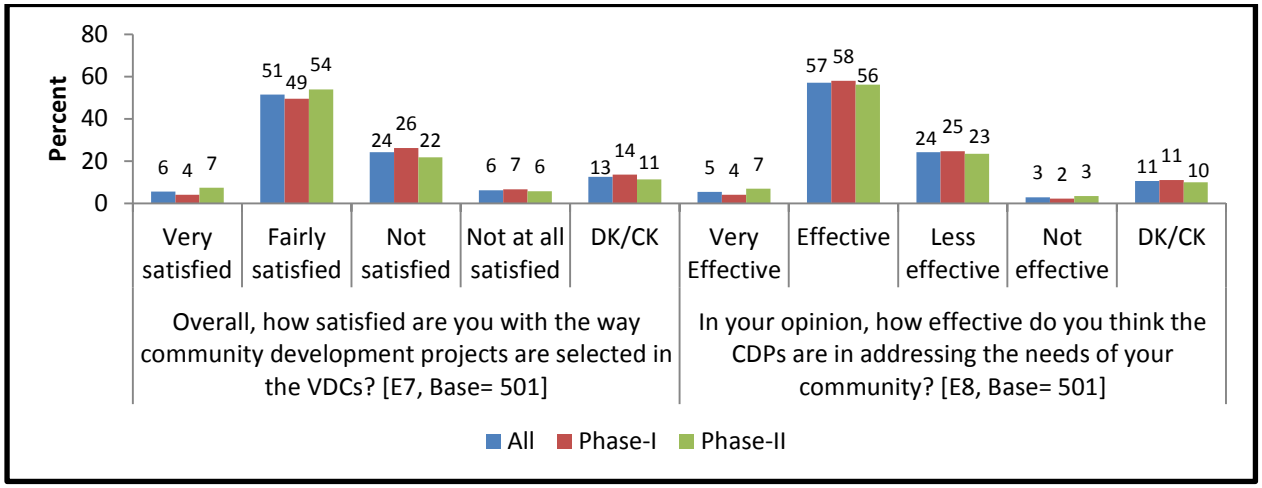
Respondents who reported having heard of CDPs were also asked what types of CDPs will help improve their community. CDPs related to infrastructure received priority from the most respondents (76 percent) followed by agriculture (46 percent), education (45 percent), health (41 percent), income generating projects (32 percent), and awareness raising projects (25 percent). This prioritization is consistent with findings of Perception Survey I, which also found infrastructure (55 percent) and agriculture (48 percent) CDPs to be of highest priority. More females than males said that awareness-raising projects are important (32% compared to 21%).

Table 24 Which type of CDPs will help improve your community?

[E5, Base= 501]	All	Phase-1	Phase-2
Infrastructure	76.4	75.6	77.4
Agriculture	46.1	43.2	49.6
Education	44.5	41.7	47.8
Health	41.1	38.0	44.8
Income generating projects	31.9	31.7	32.2
Awareness raising projects	25.1	32.1	17.0

The same respondents who had heard of CDPs were also asked about their satisfaction level regarding the selection and effectiveness of the implemented CDPs. Over half said they are satisfied or very satisfied with the way CDPs are selected in the community, and the proportion was similar across phase I and phase II VDCs. Sixty two percent said that the implemented CDPs are effective or very effective in addressing the needs of their community. This is an increase compared to previous studies. Likewise, 21 percent said they participated in community development events that selected CDPs and 78 percent said they did not.

Figure 9 Effectiveness of Community development projects in VDCs (E7 and E8, Base= 501)



Respondents who had heard about CDPs were asked to rate their ability to influence the CDPs on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 was no influence at all and 10 was strong influence. The mean average score was 6.5.

Information provided to the public in the selection process of CDPs

Respondents who had heard of CDPs were asked to state their level of agreement or disagreement with various statements pertaining to selection of CDPs in the community. 73 percent agreed or strongly agreed that there are few people in the VDCs who determine the CDPs. 68 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they knew about the CDPs only once approved and 60 percent agreed or strongly agreed that although they attend the meetings, they don't know how the CDPs are selected. 52 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they are generally informed or invited to the meetings that select CDPs. The proportion of the respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I am generally not interested in the selection process of CDPs" was 18 percent. Some 25 percent agreed or strongly agreed that there was no meeting that they knew of for the selection of the CDPs. Responses were similar in phase I and II VDCs.

Table 25 Respondents who strongly agreed or agreed with the given statements about selection of CDPs in their communities.

[E11, Base= 501]	All		phase I		phase II	
	Strongly agree	agree	Strongly agree	agree	Strongly agree	agree
I am generally informed/invited in the meetings that select CDPs	14.2	37.9	14.8	35.1	13.5	41.3
I am generally not interested in these affairs	5.4	12.4	4.8	11.1	6.1	13.9
Although we attend these meetings, we don't know how the CDPs are selected	13.4	46.3	17.0	48.0	9.1	44.3
We know about the CDPs only once	17.4	50.3	19.2	50.6	15.2	50.0

approved.						
There was no meeting, that I know of, for the selection of the CDPs	2.6	22.2	3.0	19.9	2.2	24.8
There are only few people in the VDCs who determine the CDPs	21.4	51.9	22.9	52.0	19.6	51.7

Effectiveness of implemented CDPs

Thirty one percent of those who had heard about the CDPs said that they know the CDPs that were implemented in the past one year in their community and 64 percent said they do not. Respondents who said they know the CDPs that were implemented in the past one year were asked to assess the CDPs in terms of transparency, quality, timeliness, participation and maintenance on a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 indicated not effective at all and 10 indicated very effective. The mean ratings were as follows: transparency- 6.8 points; quality- 6.2 points; timeliness- 6.1 points; participation- 6.6 points; and maintenance- 5.9 points.

Table 26 Effectiveness of the implemented CDPs in terms of transparency, quality, timeliness, participation and maintenance on a scale from 0 to 10.

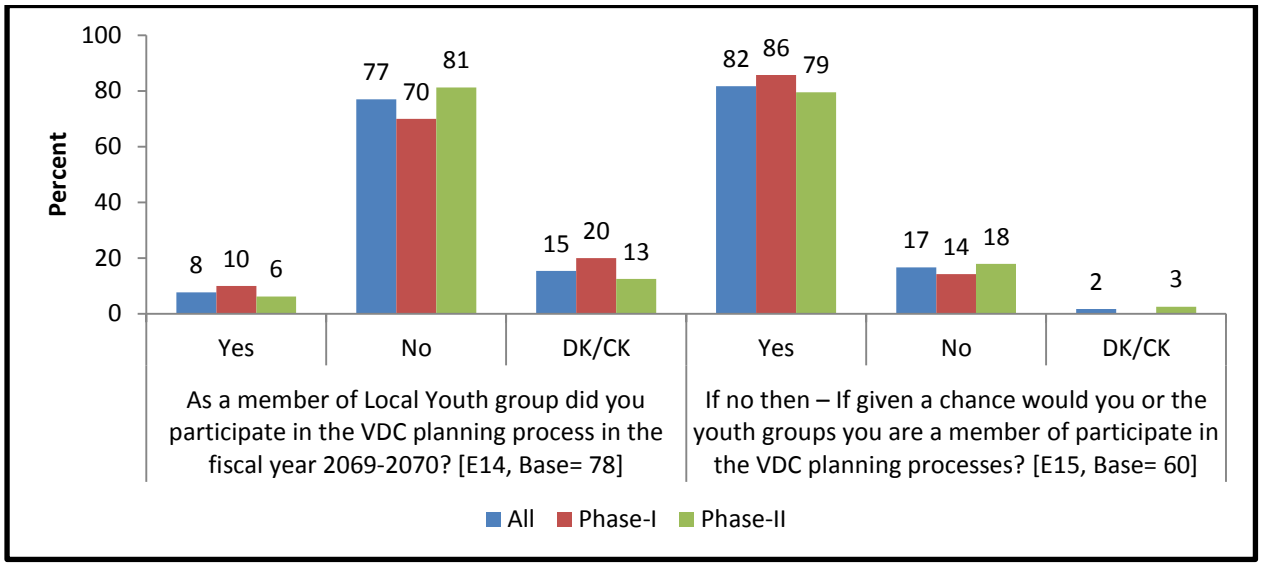
[E13, Base = 156]	All	Phase-1	Phase-2
	Mean	Mean	Mean
Transparency: that you knew of the budget of at least one of the CDPs and how the budget was spent	6.8	6.9	6.6
Quality: that you knew about the coverage of the CDP and that it achieved its coverage	6.2	6.2	6.2
Timeliness: that you knew when the CDP would be completed and it was completed within the time	6.1	6.1	6.0
Participation: that you, your family members or someone that you know contributed (in-kind, labor, cash) in the implementation of the CDPs	6.6	6.6	6.7
Maintenance: that you knew how the CDP will be maintained once the project is completed and that the plan was followed.	5.9	5.8	6.0

Participation of youth groups in VDC planning process

Of the total respondents, 3.9 percent said they are members of youth groups. These youth group members were asked various additional questions, the first being 'have you participated in the VDC planning process in the past one year?' Among the youth group members, 8 percent said they participated in the VDC planning process and 77 percent said they did not. The proportion was higher in phase I VDCs compared to phase II VDCs (10 percent vs. 6 percent). Of the 77 who said they did not participate in the VDC planning process, 82 percent said they would participate if given a chance.

As for the reasons for not participating in the VDC planning process, 40 percent said their youth groups were not informed about the meeting, while 29 percent said their groups were not invited, 14 percent said their youth groups were not interested in the VDC planning process, and 8 percent said the planning process is too politicized.

Figure 10 Youth groups and their participation in the VDC planning process



Participation of youth in the VDC planning process

Regardless of their membership in youth groups, all youth respondents (who constituted 29 percent of total respondents) were asked about their participation in the VDC planning process. Among youth, only 3 percent reported having participated in the VDC planning process in the past one year.

Table 27 Youth respondents who participated in the planning process in the fiscal year 2069-2070.

[E17, Base = 583]	All	Phase-1	Phase-2
Yes	3.4	3.4	3.4
No	85.1	87.3	82.8
Refused	.0	.0	.0
Don't know/Can't say	11.5	9.2	13.7

Involvement in economic activities

All respondents were asked about their involvement in economic activities. Over three quarters (78 percent) said they are not involved in any economic activities, while some 12 percent said they are. However, around 60 percent of the total respondents said that their main occupation is agriculture. This suggests that most respondents did not consider agriculture as an economic activity. The 12 percent of respondents who said they are involved in economic activities were asked to state which type of economic activity. Thirty five percent reported having their own business, followed by a part-time job (23 percent), or a full-time job (9 percent).

Table 28 Respondents involved in any economic activity?

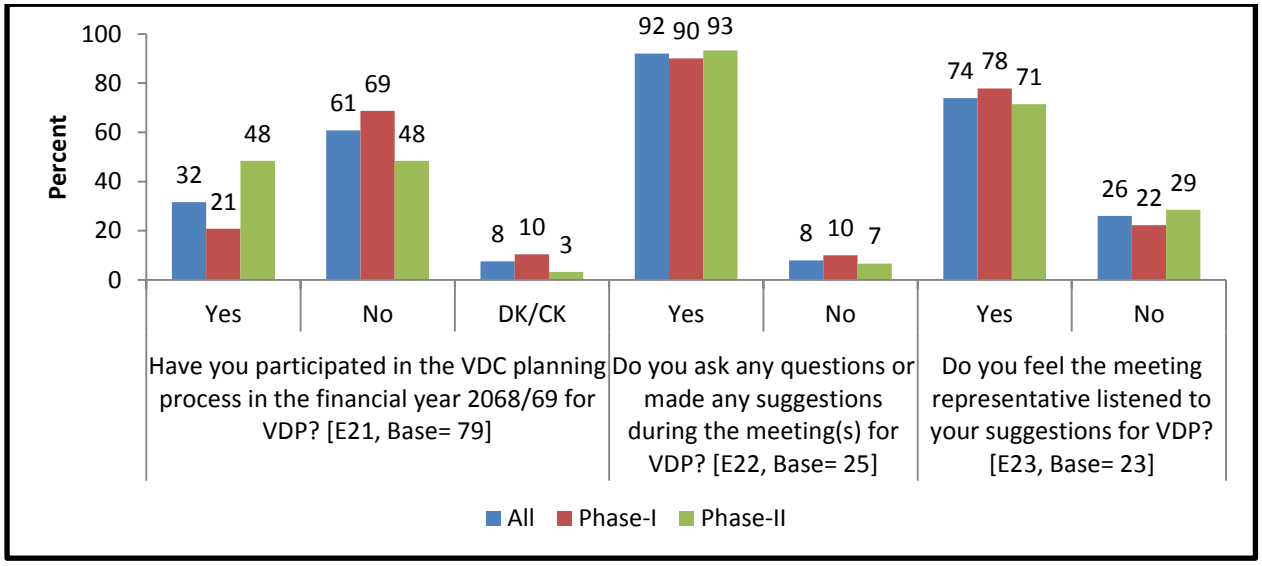
[E18, Base = 2005]	All	Phase-1	Phase-2
Yes	12.0	12.2	11.7
No	78.1	78.4	77.7
Refused	.0	.0	.0
Don't know/Can't say	10.0	9.4	10.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Participation of WCFs in the VDC planning process

Of the total respondents, 3.9 percent said they are members of WCFs. These respondents were asked about their participation in the VDC planning process in the past one year. Among WCF members, 32 percent said they participated in the VDC planning process, and 60 percent said they did not. The proportion of those who participated in the VDC planning process was relatively higher in phase II VDCs compared to phase I VDCs.

Among those WCF members who participated in the VDC planning process, a large majority (92 percent) said they asked questions and made some suggestions during the meetings and 74 percent felt that their suggestions were listened to.

Figure 11 WCF Related section



3.1.6 Gender Roles and Gender Based Violence

To explore the existing situation of gender roles and gender based violence in the community, respondents were asked to state their agreement or disagreement with a series of statements pertaining to women's rights to income, work, child bearing, and seeking community mediation. An overwhelming majority (81 percent) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement ‘a woman's income should be given to her husband’. One quarter of respondents

were of the opinion that a woman does not need her husband's permission to do paid work, while three quarters thought a woman does need her husband's permission. Sixty four percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that if a wife does not obey her husband, the husband has the right to punish her. Seventy six percent of respondents were of the opinion that under no circumstances should a man beat his wife.

Table 29 Respondents who strongly agree or agree with the following gender based violence statements

	All		phase I		phase II	
[Base= 2,005]	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly agree	Agree
F1. A woman's income should be given to her husband	44.7	36.6	43.2	37.6	46.3	35.6
F2. A woman does not need her husband's permission to do paid work	9.1	15.9	9.7	15.4	8.5	16.5
F3. If a wife does not obey her husband, he has the right to punish her	21.9	42.0	21.0	41.7	22.8	42.4
F4. Under no circumstances should a man beat his wife	37.9	38.7	39.0	38.3	36.7	39.1
F5. When a woman is raped she is to blame	7.4	17.1	7.3	17.8	7.4	16.4
F6. Both women and men should decide together about important decisions that affect their family.	66.7	30.9	70.0	28.1	63.5	33.7
F7. A man should decide how many children his wife should bear	4.8	17.8	4.8	16.2	4.9	19.4
F8. It is okay for a wife to seek community mediation if she has problems in the house	22.2	44.9	22.5	45.1	22.0	44.7

A majority of the respondents felt that when a woman is raped she is not to blame; however, a significant number (24 percent) said she is to blame. Likewise, a majority did not think a man should decide how many children his wife should bear, though a substantial number (23 percent) did think so. An overwhelming majority (98 percent) were of the opinion that both women and men should decide together about important decisions that affect their family. Interestingly, over two thirds (67 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that it is okay for a wife to seek community mediation if she has problems in the house.

The survey reveals that in general, women need their husband's permission to do many things in life. The survey also reveals that patriarchal norms inform the mindset of both men and women, though this is truer among older age groups than among youth. Patriarchal attitudes are less common among educated people compared to those who are illiterate or have low educational attainments. Education seems a significant factor that brings about a different orientation and leads to changes in orientation.

3.1.7 Role as a Citizen

The survey sought to explore people's roles as citizens by asking some questions pertaining to their presence in local level meetings. The survey revealed that a large majority of people do not attend community meetings. However, most respondents said they would attend the meetings if given the opportunity.

Some 11 percent of the total respondents said they attended meetings of WCFs; this proportion was relatively higher in phase I VDCs compared to phase II VDCs (12 percent vs. 9 percent).

Table 30 Respondents who attended various meetings in the VDC

	All	phase I	phase II	All	phase I	phase II
	Yes	Yes	Yes	Would if had chance	Would if had chance	Would if had chance
Attended meetings of a community improvement committee called WCF.	10.6	11.9	9.3	92.7	93.6	91.6
Attended meetings of a community improvement committee called CAC.	3.7	3.6	3.9	92.8	93.7	91.8
Refused to pay a tax or fee to government	.6	.5	.7	10.7	10.3	11.1
Attended public hearing of VDC projects	8.3	8.8	7.7	91.6	92.5	90.7
Attended social audit of VDC projects	1.7	1.4	2.1	84.5	85.1	83.9

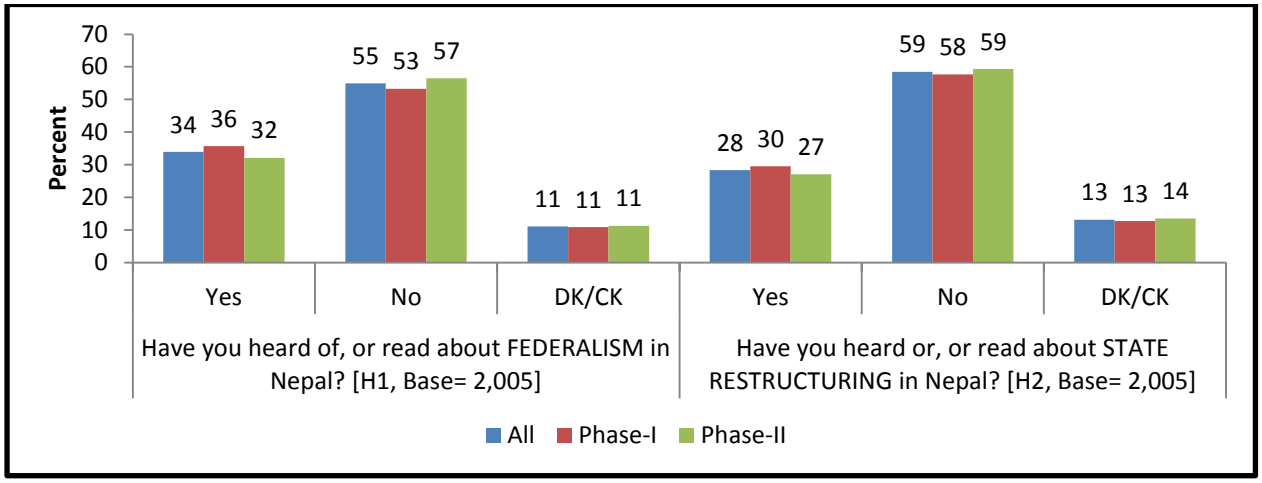
Only 5 percent of the total respondents reported attending meetings of the VDC planning process. This proportion was higher among WCF members (32 percent) than it was among youths (3 percent), and youth group members (8 percent). Among the 5 percent of respondents who attended meetings of the VDC planning process, 45 percent said they attended ward level planning meetings, followed by *Tole* level planning meetings (26 percent) and VDC planning meetings (26 percent). Likewise, 63 percent reported that they asked questions and made suggestions during the meetings; 83 percent of those who had done so said that the meeting representatives listened to their questions and suggestions.

3.1.8 Federalism and Decentralization

Awareness of and support for federalism:

One of the objectives of the survey is to measure the changes in citizens' views on federalism and decentralization in the six districts of SB project. Various questions were asked to respondents regarding their awareness, expectations, and the basis of federalism. 34 percent said they have heard of or read about federalism in Nepal, while over half (55 percent) said they have not. A relatively lower number (28 percent) of people reported having heard of state restructuring (decentralization).

Figure 12 have you heard about Federalism and State Restructuring? (H1 and H2, Base=2005)



Among those who had heard of state restructuring, over half (64 percent) supported or strongly supported the restructuring of Nepal's regions or districts into states/provinces as compared to those who opposed or strongly opposed it (28 percent).

All the respondents were asked whether Nepal should have a federal or a unitary state structure. They were further asked to score their level of support for each option on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 meant totally against and 10 meant totally supportive. A majority of respondents (63 percent) did not give an opinion. Around one fifth (22 percent) said Nepal should be a federal state, while 15 percent said it should be a unitary state. On a scale of 0 to 10, their level of support for the federal state was 7.8 and for the unitary state it was 7.9 points.

Figure 13 Public' response on federal vs. unitary state (H4, Base= 2,005)

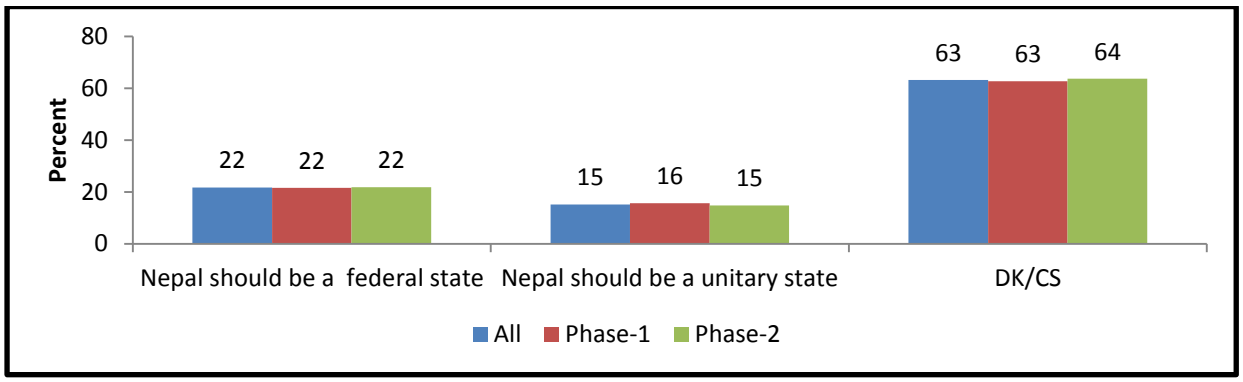


Table 31 Nepal as federal or unitary state

	Base	All	Phase-1	Phase-2
Nepal should be a federal state	435	7.8	7.8	7.7
Nepal should be a unitary state	303	7.9	8.1	7.8

Basis for creation of federal state

Respondents who said that Nepal should be a federal state were further asked about the basis for creation of federal states. Among this group of respondents, 51 percent said it should be based on geography - by integrating mountain, hill, and Tarai, whereas 13 percent said it should be based on ethnic identity, 12 percent said it should be based on geography- by separating mountain, hill, and Tarai, 9 percent said it should be based on existing development regions, 4 percent said it should be based on language, and 4 percent said it should be based on "identity and capability".

Expectation from federalism

All the respondents were asked about their expectations from federalism. In this case too, a majority of people were unable to unequivocally state their opinion. 22 percent said federalism brings more opportunities than risks, whereas 14 percent said it brings more risks than opportunities. Responses on this matter were similar in phase I and phase II VDCs.

In response to the question 'Do you think that federalism will improve local governance?', 62% said they do not know or cannot say. Some 26 percent were of the opinion that federalism will improve local governance, and 13 percent said that federalism will not improve it.

Awareness and satisfaction level of decentralization

Two third of respondents (66 percent) had not heard about decentralization, whereas 16 percent had. As compared to federalism, fewer people had heard about decentralization (34 percent vs. 16 percent).

Of the 16 percent of respondents who had heard of decentralization, over half (53 percent) said that they are satisfied or very satisfied with the level of decentralization and service delivery provided by the local authority, whereas some 32 percent said they are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Proportions of those who had heard of decentralization and were satisfied with the level of decentralization were higher in phase I VDCs than in phase II VDCs.

The 16 percent of respondents who had heard of decentralization were further asked the question: how much do you think resources at the VDC/local level are decentralized? In response, 16 percent said very decentralized, whereas 16 percent said decentralized to a large extent, 36 percent said somewhat decentralized, and 18 percent said not decentralized at all.

Expectations from decentralization

These same respondents were further asked about their expectations from decentralization. Most said that decentralization brings more opportunities than risks as compared to more risks than opportunities (64 percent vs. 23 percent). Another 64 percent said that decentralization in Nepal will either definitely or somewhat improve local governance.

Opinion on division of responsibility

A series of hypothetical questions was asked to gauge how people envision the division of responsibility/authority between the national/central government, state/provincial government and the local government under an idealized model of government. All the respondents were asked which level of government could best address the issues of national defense, basic education, improving roads, electricity, basic health care, crime/security, and border and custom control. Around a quarter of respondents were unable to give an opinion on these matters.

The survey reveals that most people view national and local government levels as best able to address these issues. A large proportion of people said that the national/central government can best address issues of national defense (55 percent), electricity (49 percent), crime/security (40 percent), and border and custom control (48 percent). Likewise, a large proportion of respondents said that local government can best address issues of basic education (38 percent), improving roads (44 percent), and basic health care (43 percent). The survey finding suggests that people do not have much confidence that state/provincial government can best address the identified issues. The detailed findings are presented in the table below.

Table 32 What level of government- national/central, state/province, or local- do you think can best address the following issues? [H14, base = 2,005]

[H14, Base= 2,005]	All			phase I			phase II		
Statement	National/ Central	State/ Province	Local	National/ Central	State/ Province	Local	National/ Central	State/ Province	Local
National defense	50.9	6.4	16.4	51.9	4.9	16.8	49.9	8.0	16.0
Basic education	34.7	11.4	28.7	33.8	10.5	30.4	35.5	12.2	27.0
Improving roads	37.9	9.6	30.2	37.6	8.5	31.3	38.3	10.7	29.0
Electricity/load shedding	43.8	11.8	20.0	44.3	11.1	19.6	43.4	12.4	20.3
Basic health care	33.2	11.5	31.7	33.7	11.2	31.6	32.6	11.8	31.8
Crime/Security	35.5	10.0	32.1	36.9	9.1	30.9	34.0	10.8	33.2
Border and custom control	47.2	8.9	19.6	47.4	8.7	19.0	47.0	9.0	20.2

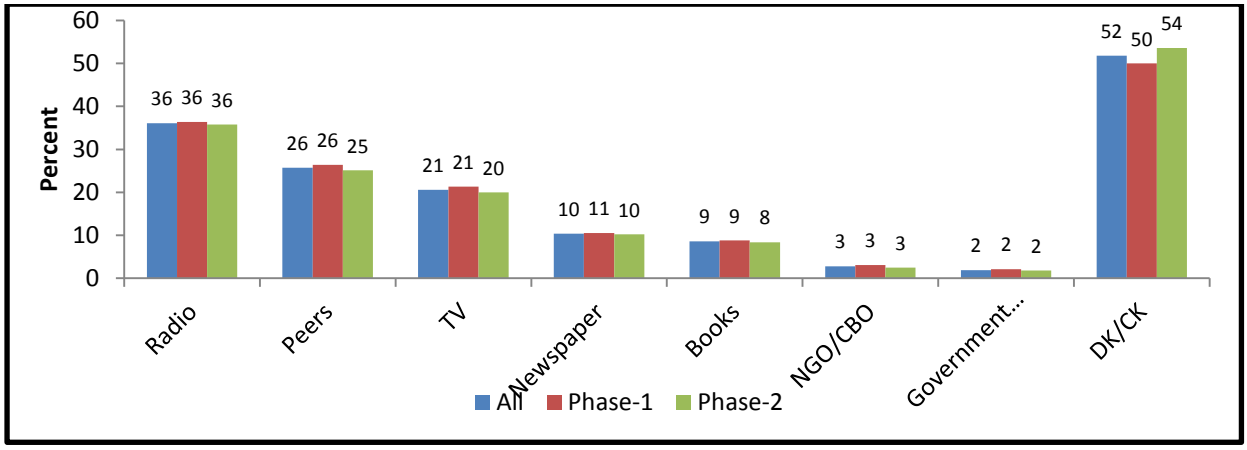
3.1.9 Media

Sources of information

The survey sought to document the sources of information through which the public generally gets information on local governance, democracy, federalism, and inclusion. Thirty six percent of respondents said they get such information from radio, followed by peers (26

percent), TV (21 percent), newspapers (10 percent), books (9 percent), and NGOs/CBOs (3 percent).

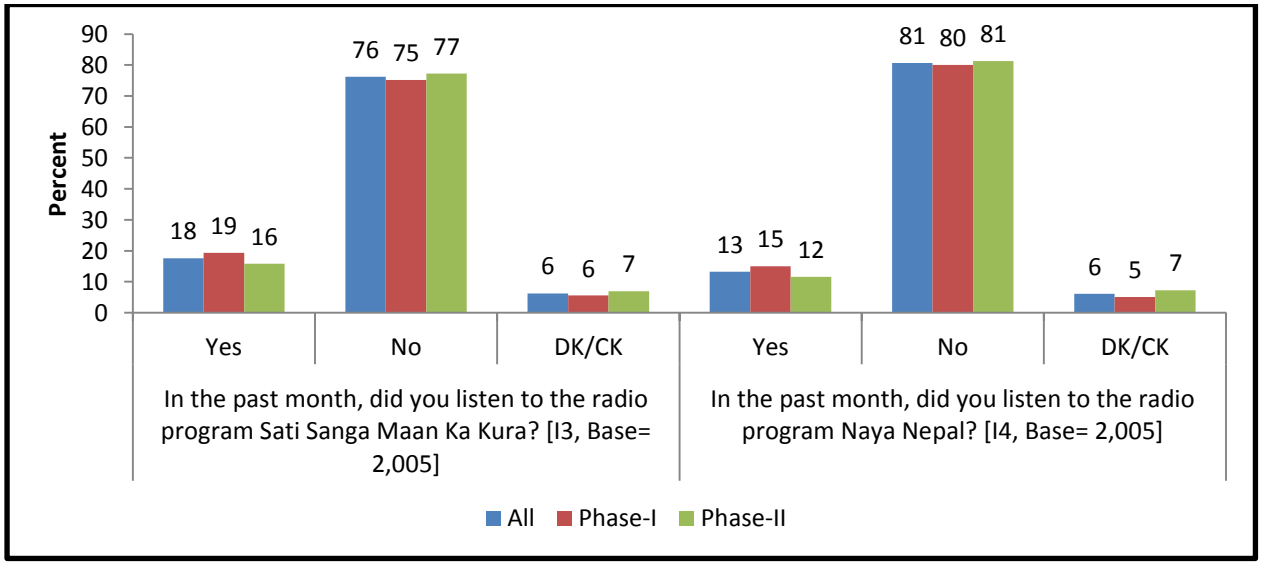
Figure 14 From what sources do you currently get information on topics related to local governance, democracy, federalism and inclusion? (I1, Base= 2,005, Percentage based on multiple response)



Radio program Saathi Sanga Man Ka Kura and Naya Nepal

Respondents were asked whether they had listened to two SB-supported radio programs, Saathi Sanga Man Ka Kura and Naya Nepal, within the past month. Eighteen percent said they had listened to Saathi Sanga Man Ka Kura and 13 percent said they had listened to Naya Nepal. For both programs, listenership was higher in phase I VDCs than in phase II VDCs.

Figure 15 In the paste one months, did you listen to the radio program Saathi Sanga Man Ka Kura" and Naya Nepal



3.2 FGDs and KIIs

This section focuses on the major findings gathered from the focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) conducted with various stakeholder groups at the district and local levels. It bears repeating that participants for the FGDs and KIIs were purposively selected; they were generally well informed members of their community who could

articulate their views. For matters of generalization, the survey is a better guide, since its respondents were randomly selected.

This section highlights some of the pertinent issues brought forward during the FGDs and discusses some of the implications. The findings are organized according to the following topics: (1) current working environment (2) planning processes (3) coordination between political parties and other organizations with local government bodies, and (4) situation of marginalized groups and women.

3.2.1 Current Working Environment

Amid prolonged indecisiveness at the national level due to political contestations regarding the form of federalism the country should adopt, the district and local levels of government are facing the challenge of having to plan and implement projects in the absence of locally elected bodies. This has created a sense of ambiguity in terms of the credibility of certain local bodies like WCFs, and longstanding issues of corruption, red tape, inefficiency, and lack of accountability and transparency remain unaddressed. This is not to say that positive changes in local development and participation have not happened. Despite the state of limbo, government bodies like VDC secretaries have been able to garner local support and informal mechanisms like CMCs have been able to mediate and resolve issues of community conflicts at the grassroots level.

The participants at the VDC level were able to point out both positive and negative features in the way development projects are planned and implemented. They stated that the prioritization of projects is done locally by a meeting of community members who list and prioritize their needs; only afterwards does the DDC approve the top-prioritized project. However, there are various inefficiencies in the process of project implementation due to which most of the projects are either incomplete, stagnant, or of poor quality. VDC level participants mainly attributed this gap in implementation to corruption, scattered budgeting, and inefficient and untrained personnel at both the VDC and DDC level. In contrast to VDC level participants, the DDC level participants stated that projects are implemented according to the rules and regulations and meet requirements for representation and participation of the public, representation of women and marginalized communities, and adoption of strategies to encourage local level participation in the development process. According to most of them, government guidelines are being strictly followed, though they did acknowledge that there is a gap in evaluating if the actual needs of communities are being met the projects.

One of the FGD participants in VDC level said, “This VDC building office used to be an old age home. Due to lack of budget, we were not able to maintain the old age home so currently the office runs from this space. If the DDC were to tell us to empty the building then we will not have any place to work from.” This shows that there is a discrepancy in the budget allocation for certain basic infrastructure. It was also observed that some of the infrastructure provisioned by various organizations remained unused. Computers that were distributed to VDCs and DDCs to increase efficiency of administrative work were not used because of a lack of proper training on their use.

A majority of the participants said that communities lack internal revenue sources, preventing the economic and social strengthening of the community capacities and capabilities to carry out local level initiatives. One of the participants mentioned, "We do not have much revenue. Recently, we wanted to collect road tax but we lacked trained people to carry out such activity. It is said that if the DDCs use the resources of VDCs then they will have to give a certain percentage to the VDC but that does not happen." (He was referring to the provision that whenever DDCs utilize local resources from the VDC level (like rocks and sand from river beds), they have to give back 40 percent of the revenue generated.) This suggests that the local level capacity building in terms of skilled manpower as well as resources has been made more difficult due to a lack of accountability of DDCs to VDCs.

3.2.2 Planning Processes

Most of the VDC and DDC level stakeholders were able to clearly discuss the various steps of planning processes. There was a consensus that there is a huge gap between the plans and their implementation. According to the VDC level stakeholders, most of the projects that are approved by the DDC have been prioritized at the local level. However, there have been times when the prioritized need or project has been compromised due to political pressure, mainly at the district level. One of the participants in a DDC level discussion mentioned, "We can still see that the projects are allocated according to the political parties. They distribute the budget as per the VDCs they belong to or are representing. There is a trend where these political parties say '*This is your VDC and you will get this much amount of budget.'*" This prevents fair and transparent budget allocation and distribution at the local level.

The VDC stakeholders simultaneously expressed grievances regarding implementation of approved projects. One of the participants in a VDC discussion said, "In our village, there was a road construction project which had received a 10 lakh budget. However, a large amount of money was siphoned off and the project was carried out in a poor manner. The contractor, DDC personnel, and technicians had their own secret terms according to which they fulfilled their personal interests." Most of the respondents said that only user groups or stakeholder groups with active members who have a certain amount of influence are able to bring projects and budgets in their VDCs.

Another important finding is that at the DDC level projects and programs are sometimes "made" representative in order to meet the quota. In reality, however, they are representative in name only. Although the representatives had heard of 'Do No Harm' and 'Safe Effective Development in Conflict', they lacked in-depth knowledge and understanding on the subject. They seemed to possess little understanding on the topics because they were not the participants of the 'Do No Harm' and 'Safe Effective Development in Conflict' trainings. This helps explain why a majority of the prioritized projects are limited to physical infrastructure like road construction. While the rural need for roads for transportation and economic transaction is valid, this prevents the diversification of the budget in developing "*samajik purwadhar*" (social infrastructure) at the local level.

The VDC stakeholders voiced a need for third party monitoring and evaluation because they do not believe that there is transparency in the system. They believe that the amount of

political pressure and influence is such that the evaluations conducted by the political parties cannot be considered valid. One of the participants said, "We can give many examples of projects that have not been implemented properly but we don't even have one project that we can claim to have been successful." This suggests that there is a need for an objective and neutral party to monitor and evaluate both the planning and implementing processes of the projects at DDC and VDC levels.

3.2.3 Coordination between Political Parties and Other Organizations with Local Government Bodies

While there has been some positive feedback on the coordination between political parties and other organizations with local government bodies, especially in the case of Sajhedari Bikaas and LGCDP, the participants at the VDC and DDC level highlighted some of the shortcomings in this coordination.

One of the major shortcomings is an evident gap in the communication between the organizations (NGOs and INGOs) with the local government bodies. One of the FGD participants said, "There is no coordination between the VDC and NGOs. Sometimes the NGOs and INGOs do not inform the VDC about their projects so we do not have any information on the details of the project. If someone were to ask me about the status of any program, I would be unable to give any details." He further added, "At times, there is also the issue of duplication because they are not well coordinated." This has been a recurring issue in the sphere of development work where due to lack of proper communication, coordination, and cooperation, programs overlap and budgets are wasted on implementing projects that are already being implemented by another organization. This issue can be solved with better collaboration between these agencies.

Most of the participants expressed a positive outlook towards INGOs and their activities in their communities. However, one of their major issues with these organizations was that they are bound by their own criteria to work on a particular project which may not necessarily be what the community needs. Because they cannot go beyond their fixed guidelines, their efforts are unable to benefit the people.

There were some issues raised at the district level regarding problems with the work of NGOs and development partners. According to one of the participants in a KII, "NGOs have worked a lot and created an immense awareness among the masses. But they have only been able to arouse the appetite but not provide food to eat." They stated that while the NGOs are doing many things, they fail to conduct follow-up on these projects and therefore, these people voiced their dissatisfaction with their activities.

a. Community support

One of the major findings of the FGDs and KIIs was that WCFs have been doing impressive work in making planning and decision making process more inclusive, representative, and democratic. WCFs have acted as an important institution to encourage people to participate and support government plans and policies – highlighting the importance of informed decision-making and grassroots participation of communities. One of the participants pointed

out, "This mechanism (WCF) is relevant to raise important issues of communities at the local and national level." However, it goes without saying that WFCs are not active in all the communities. One of the shortcomings of these local institutions is that there is membership duplication, whereby a select few individuals hold membership in many groups like WFC and CACs.

One of the issues raised during the discussions was the lack of community support in implementing projects. One of the key informants pointed out that, "For construction of infrastructure at the grassroots level, while people are participating in one form or another, they are not ready to provide volunteer labor. Instead, they are willing to pay money." The concept of "*jana shramdan*" (donation of labor) is gradually disappearing. This also implies a grimmer concern that people do not feel ownership towards the programs and projects implemented by the government bodies.

Most of the VDC level participants pointed out that regarding local projects, only those people who are more active and clever are called for meetings, make decisions, and benefit from them. This perception could be one of the reasons that communities feel less ownership and control over the projects. Youth are often perceived as being left out of projects. One of the respondents pointed out that, "Youths are only invited in the council meetings; otherwise, they are largely ignored. The government has not focused on youths and there is a lack of proper policy."

With regard to social audits and public hearings, it is clear from the responses of the participants that they are conducted as a matter of formality but in reality, due to the deeply entrenched culture of corruption, there is no transparency of budgets or accountability of officials. One of the participants said, "Public hearings and social audits are hardly held but when they are, then usually different hearings of various projects are held on the same day. Consequently, people do not get enough opportunities to know the details about these projects."

b. Government support

A majority of the participants expressed concern over the incompetency of political leaders and the inability of the government to build fundamental infrastructure. One of their biggest concerns was that in the absence of elected bodies at the local level, the government is unable to provide any legitimate form of services and programs for the community. One of the participants said, "When there is no local government, there is no bureaucracy and there is no one to advocate. There are people who are unofficially given the responsibilities and this has caused barriers in making social and economic advancements."

The participants agreed that there are many inefficiencies of the government – from disparity in budget allocation and distribution to lack of sustainable strategies to make the programs effective and beneficial for the public. Many of the participants pointed out that the government lacks formulation and implementation of strong policies. One of them said, "The actual needs of the districts (and people) are not addressed. This is all because of the center-oriented policy of the government."

3.2.4 Situation of marginalized groups and women

Many of the FGD participants were of the opinion that while the situation of marginalized groups and women has become slightly better, many issues of participation and representation still remain to be addressed. Most of the participants agreed that the 35 percent reservation provision has been followed at the DDC and VDC level in the formulation of groups and planning and prioritization of projects, at least on paper. However, they pointed out that officials have failed to practice this in reality. Although marginalized communities and groups have many demands, these demands are not being put forward at the VDC and DDC levels because they lack proper leadership.

The chairperson of Pichhada Varga Samiti (backward class committee) stated in one of the discussions that, "We are never invited in any programs of the DDC. We hardly hear about the allocation of the budget for backward people." Most participants remarked that budgets that are allocated for particular target groups are either misused or frozen because they are never utilized. Similarly, one of the KII participants reported that, "Although there are specific provisions for the marginalized group in terms of their share in the budget, they are not properly implemented. Most of the time, they (the marginalized people) are not aware of such provisions." He pointed out that social mobilizers must be used in order to better disseminate information. This indicates that provisions like reservations and quotas are being used as tokenism instead of as an effective tool for ensuring inclusiveness.

While some of the active women in communities have started to become more vocal and to participate in meetings, there is still a gap in identifying the real needs of the women. One of the VDC level female participants claimed that, "It has been two years that the budget allocated for women has been spent on building a maternity ward in the health post. The VDC board members which include the VDC secretary, and two other personnel from the health, agriculture and animal committee, made the decision and announced that the budget had been allocated. When I went to inquire about it, they told me that the decision had already been made." This suggests that women are often not included in the decision-making processes for planning and budgeting programs in their name. In addition to this, many of the participants pointed out that the budgets allocated for women are being spent on celebrating festivals like Teej and events like Women's Day, rather than programs with longer-term impact that focus on capacity building, skill development, or income generation for women.

It is apparent that despite policies to ensure that planning and implementation of local projects and programs are inclusive in nature, persistent power dynamics present an ongoing challenge for the meaningful participation of marginalized groups. Programs are planned without proper participation of the groups, and allocated budgets fail to address the actual needs of these groups.

4. Conclusion

4.1 General conclusion

This section makes an attempt to piece together the larger composite picture that emerges from both the quantitative as well as qualitative investigations conducted by IDA. Specific points emerging from each of the two methodologies have been summarized in the respective sections above. This section is about lessons gleaned by IDA and its researchers in the field with the objective of highlighting potential unforeseen surprises as well as shortcomings in the exercise that can hopefully be corrected in future rounds.

The VDC office was one of the highest-ranked actors in terms of positive influence on development activities, suggesting a high level of trust of people towards their VDC. The survey shows that VDCs are generally seen as more effective in providing services in the past fiscal year as compared to the DDC. One of the reasons for the lower ranking of DDCs is accessibility. VDCs are more accessible, and people mainly receive services from their VDC offices. Out of all the entities examined, Public Health Posts followed by police and VDC secretariat were ranked to have the most positive influence in encouraging development in VDCs. On the other end, political parties were ranked as wielding the most negative influence in development activities. People in villages are aware enough to gauge the political interventions on various activities ranging from selection of community development projects in their VDC to the open secret of 'internal corruption' on almost all selected and implemented projects and planning processes.

The survey found that people expect their VDCs to be able to (1) undertake development activities (2) maintain law and order and (3) control corruption in their dealings.

There are other aspects related to the performance of VDCs where the public sees some improvement. Compared to the baseline, in Perception Survey II, more people saw improvement in the VDCs being able to provide services. Moreover, slightly more people reported an opinion/ view about this in phase I VDCs compared to phase II VDCs.

Another improvement relates to the VDC Secretary being in his or her office more regularly. Compared to the Baseline Survey, during Perception Survey II, many more people thought that the VDC secretary is in his or her office regularly. However, there is no difference between the phase I and phase II VDCs in this regard. The fact that VDC secretaries are in their offices more regularly could be attributed to the improvement in law and order in the Tarai districts over the past two years. The research team believes in the years following the Madhesi Andolan (Madhesi Movement), many groups emerged in the Tarai, some of them resorting to violence and extortion. During such times, VDC secretaries regularly received extortion threats and for that reason preferred to work out of the district headquarters rather than from the VDC. With better policing, and with the improvement in law and order, such tendencies have declined.

The survey suggests there is a low level of transparency in VDC funds and that people do not know how the funds are being utilized. Paradoxically, compared to the baseline, in Perception Survey II, there has been an increase both in the proportion of people who think that VDCs

funds are transparent and the proportion who think VDC funds are not transparent, though the proportion that held the latter view is much larger. The increase in both of the views is due to a decline in the proportion of people who answered 'do not know' or 'cannot say.'

Of the various types of Community Development Projects (CDPs) identified and executed by VDCs, respondents prioritized infrastructure, agriculture, education and health projects. The research team holds that it is possible infrastructure projects are prioritized more often because these are tangible and ease hardship. The first and second types of CDPs prioritized by respondents were the same in Perception Survey II as in Perception Survey I.

Perception survey II, in comparison to Perception Survey I, documented an overall increase in the proportion of people who think CDPs are effective in meeting the needs of the community. Likewise, more people report satisfaction in the way the CDPs are selected, though there was no difference between phase I and phase II VDCs in this regard.

Compared to the baseline, more people in Perception Survey II reported being informed and invited to meetings that select CDPs. However, more respondents also reported that though they attended meetings, they do not know how CDPs are selected. Likewise, more people in Perception Survey II (compared to the Baseline Survey) said that only a few people in the VDCs determine which CDPs are selected.

Though a high proportion of people reported having heard about local institutions and organizations, a significant proportion had not heard about some institutions and organizations such as CACs, youth networks, radio listeners groups, community management units (CMUs), WORTH groups, etc. This proportion was high among both women and men and in both the phases (Phase I and Phase II VDCs). In terms of ethnic/ caste groups, lack of awareness about local institutions was highest among the Madhesi, Tarai-Madhesi Janajati, Muslim and Hill Dalit groups. Work remains for SB to better raise awareness among these groups regarding important local institutions.

Only one fourth of the people reported having heard about CDPs. The proportion of people who reported having heard about CDPs was significantly lower in Banke and Bardiya compared to other SB districts. Likewise, the proportion of people who reported having heard about CDPs was significantly lower among women and the following caste/ ethnic groups: Madhesi, Tarai-Madhesi Janajati, Muslim and Hill Dalit. It is important that SB continue its work to increase the awareness and participation of these groups in CDPs.

Although people reported radio, peers and TV as the most common sources of information on governance and development issues, listenership for the two national-level SB radio programs, Saathi Sanga Man Ka Kura and Naya Nepal, is not widespread. Listenership is relatively low in Banke and Bardiya compared to other SB districts, as well as among Muslims. This information may be useful for SB in targeting groups to increase the listenership of these programs.

Most respondents expressed the opinion that service delivery at the local level is good. Those who do not think it is good mainly cited delays in providing services and local officials'

irresponsible attitudes. Respondents from the Madhesi, Tarai-Madhesi Janajati and Muslim groups tended to express negative opinions of service delivery, attributing their opinions to politics and bribery. It could be inferred that these communities have faced discrimination in service delivery and have had to pay bribes to get services.

As the survey shows, participation in the VDC planning process and community development programs is generally low. Similarly, participation in project monitoring, public hearings and social audits is on the low side. Despite the low levels of participation, people feel that the selected projects meet their end needs and are satisfied with the way the projects are selected and implemented in their VDCs. There is also a general feeling that while participation exists on paper, matters are decided by a closed coterie of local politically influential people. Forums of participation are oftentimes places where foregone decisions are announced. The closely knit network of political groups also ends up justifying spending money specifically allotted to women and marginalized groups on infrastructure and road construction, with rationalizations that even women and the marginalized use the roads and are benefitted by them. In reality, such infrastructure work benefits local contractors and the transportation sector much more than deprived communities.4.2 Conclusion pertaining to the outcomes of SB and implications or recommendations.

4.2 Conclusion pertaining to the outcomes of SB and implications

There are areas where SB's interventions have yielded positive results – these need to be further consolidated. There are also areas where SB's interventions have not had tangible results, i.e., where results have not been positive or negative. Coordinated action with partners is needed in these areas. There are a few areas where the results seem to be negative for various reasons – special attention needs to be provided in these areas so that more positive outcomes are obtained.

SB's intervention in the last 2 years seems to be yielding definite outcomes related primarily to people's perceptions and orientations towards the local bodies, including the VDC. In VDCs where SB interventions are taking place, the public seems to assess the VDC secretary's role more positively. Likewise, the public sees various public bodies as encouraging development. Likewise, they feel that government bodies are able to work together and plan. They also tend to have a more positive assessment of the performance of VDCs. People's awareness about Community Development Projects (CDPs) also seems to be good.

Though most of the areas where a positive influence can be discerned relates to perception, in some areas these pertain to actual practices or behavior too. There seems to be more active participation of Local Youth Groups (LYGs) in the VDC planning process in SB VDCs.

Media outreach also seems to be good in that more people report having listened to FM programs Saathi Sanga Man Ka Kura and Naya Nepal in these VDCs.

Areas where little difference was observed between phase I and phase II VDCs included respondents' assessments of VDCs in providing services, the availability of VDC secretaries,

transparency of VDC funds, incidence of conflict and perceptions regarding possibility of violence. Likewise, little difference was observed in perceptions of the selection process for CDPs and participation in CDPs. More concerted effort, meaning coordinated action with partners, needs to be undertaken in these areas.

There are a few areas where the results were negative. For instance, only 3.9 percent of respondents reported being members of WCFs. This reported number could be low because many WCF members do not even know that they are in the WCF. More WCF members in Phase II VDCs reported participating in the VDC planning process than in Phase I VDCs. These findings indicate that there is a lot of room for improvement in areas associated with WCFs and LYGs.

Demand articulation, especially by marginalized groups and women, is low. Although 35 percent of the local government spending is allocated to marginalized groups and women, FGD discussions suggested that these target groups are mostly unaware of these provisions. However, compared to previous SB surveys, the level of awareness about their needs among women is high. But when it comes down to articulating their demands on paper, they lack sufficient knowledge and skills to do so.

One of the measures SB could adopt in this regard is to train women and people from marginalized communities, especially those who are members of WCFs, to articulate their demands in the type of Nepali language used for official purposes.[5] Because of weak demand articulation, those who are in decision making positions end up spending earmarked sums on programs of their own choice. This general and widespread weakness in demand articulation of the populace regarding their entitlements results in service mediocrity.

In articulating their demands in VDC meetings, members of WCFs should have the skills to put forth their concerns in a logical and persuasive manner. For instance, they need to say why the 35 percent earmarked for women, youth and marginalized communities should not be spent on infrastructure related work and counter the argument that such investments benefit all people, including women, youth and members of the marginalized communities. They should be able to state why the 35 percent needs to be spent in areas that directly benefit women, youth and members of marginalized communities and give examples of what those areas would be. If members of WCFs have the ability to state (both verbally and in writing) their demands in a logical and persuasive manner, VDCs will begin to institutionalize and cater to these demands.

In the FGDs, participants felt it is important to highlight the positive aspects and work done by WCFs. It was also seen as important to incorporate the provisions and usefulness of these institutions into national laws before the local elections (rather than just guidelines). Currently WCFs and CACs only come from a ministry *'nirdeshika,'* or guideline, which is an unstable foundation for continuation if local elections take place. It was observed that local

[5] This is a special type of Nepali language used in officialdom and courts. It is not the type of Nepali language spoken by people in their homes. Confidence in and control over this language is necessary if women and marginalized community are to be able to insert their demands in official processes and procedures.

political leaders are not fond of WCFs, since they represent a challenge to their own power. It is indeed possible that the political parties would do away with WCFs if given the opportunity. During their four years of existence, WCFs have seen a lot of positive changes – in the organizations themselves and in the perceptions of local people. Therefore, there is a need to make WCFs and CACs more firmly established in higher level laws and constitutional provisions on local bodies.

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