



Investigating the sustainability of cooperatives in the context of leprosy and the work of leprosy mission in Nepal: a qualitative study

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Self-Help Groups (SHGs): Community-Based Support Systems

- Self-help groups are small, informal groups formed by individuals with shared interests or conditions.
- They aim to provide mutual socio-economic support through collaboration and empowerment.
- In the context of leprosy, SHGs play a critical role by promoting self-care, providing financial support, encouraging peer connection, and enhancing knowledge and awareness.



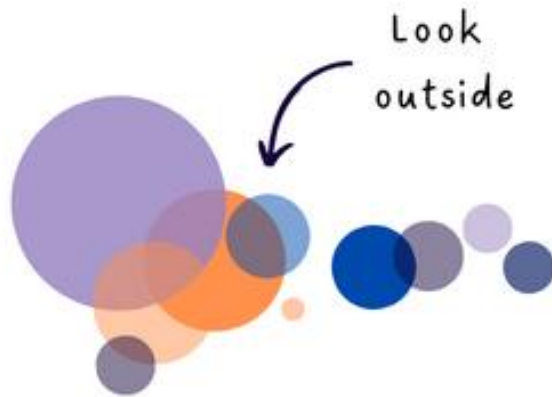
GAP in studies

- Self-help groups (SHGs) are widely recognized for their effectiveness during funded periods.
- Limited evidence exists on SHGs' sustainability, or the cooperatives formed during the funding period.

Sustainability refers to the long-term continuation of core activities without external support.



Research Objectives



1. Gather insights on projects interventions



2. Barriers to sustainability of the project formed cooperatives and solution.

Methodology

Research Method

- Qualitative

Sampling Method

- Purposive Sampling
- Snowball Sampling

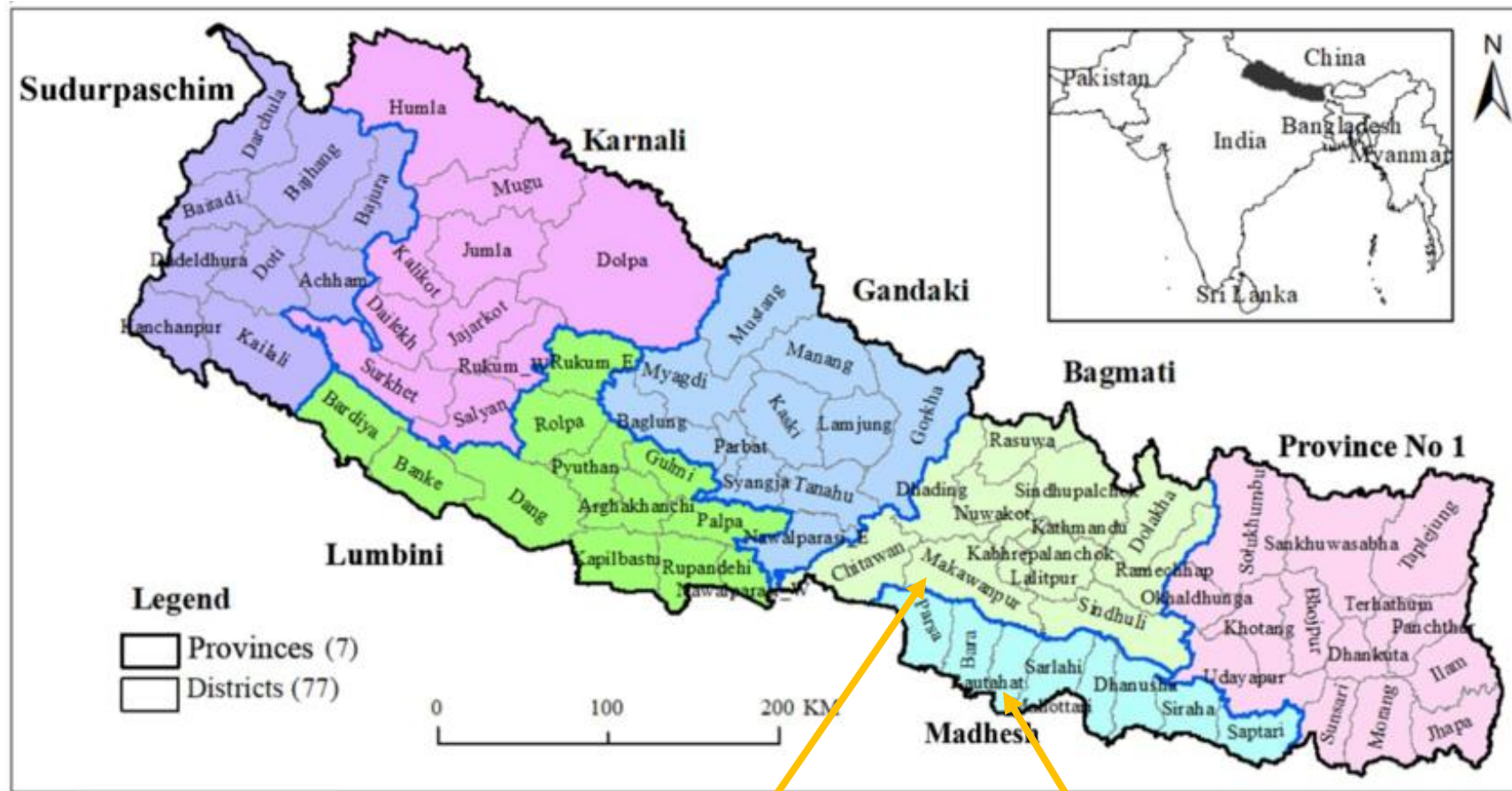
Data Collection

- Interview (face to face)
- Support: Field coordinator assisted with data collection.
- Settings: Data collected in either participant's homes or government offices

Data Collection Tools

- Open-ended interview guide.

Where it was collected?



Makwanpur

Rautahat

Eligible participants

Insiders:

- Staff responsible for overall governance of SHG programs.
- Staff involved in local implementation.
- Group members engaged with SHGs.
- Family members of SHG participants.

Outsiders:

- Staff in funding agencies with program/project knowledge.
- Officials familiar with SHG programs, such as government officials and local health facility administrators
- Community leaders or ex-leaders with awareness of local SHGs, including elected individuals.

Findings



Interview

Rautahat

SHG members :
14
Family
Members: 5
Cooperative
Manager: 3
Health post
incharge: 1
VDC Officers: 2
DTLOs: 1

Country
Director: 1
Leprosy Control
Division: 1
Funding
Agency: 1
Program
Facilitators: 3
Program
Manager: 1

Makwanpur

SHG Members:
12
Family
Members: 3
Cooperative
Managers: 3
Health Post
Incharge: 1
VDC officers: 2

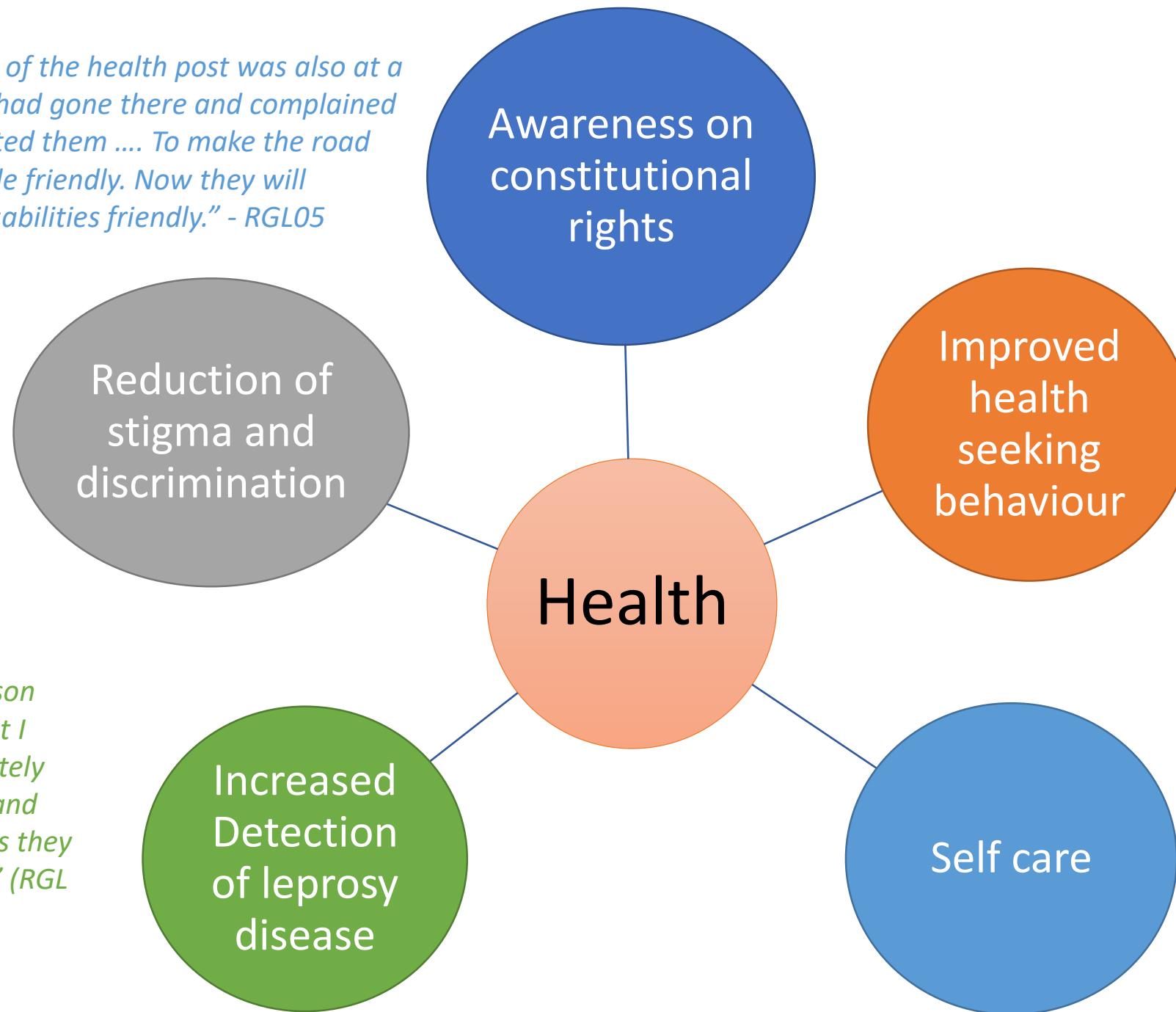


Impact

“Earlier the location of the health post was also at a difficult place and I had gone there and complained about it and requested them To make the road more disabled people friendly. Now they will probably make it disabilities friendly.” - RGL05

“A person who was hesitant to interact with us in the past, is now sitting with us and having tea, isn't this a matter of pride and honor for us?” - RGL 10

“I feel that the other person should not undergo, what I underwent, so I immediately make the person aware and suggest to them the steps they should take to do better.” (RGL 10)



“..... If people have any small patch or skin irritation, they immediately start to say that they have leprosy and they also need to be included in the group.” – RGL05

“We were given training on self-care by sir.”- MCM01

Empowerment

"I sell tomatoes worth two-three lakhs. This has been successful because I have taken the training."MGL09

1

Economic Empowerment

- Increase in income
- Access to credit or loans
- Income generation

3

Political Empowerment

- Community Council
- Local election

"We have a member from our group who is contesting elections for the position of a female member."- MCC01

"Even people who didn't have the disease would later come and ask, didi (elder sister) can't we be a member in your group – MGL08

2

Social Empowerment

- Social Network
- Community Engagement

4

Psychological Empowerment

- Self – esteem
- Confidence

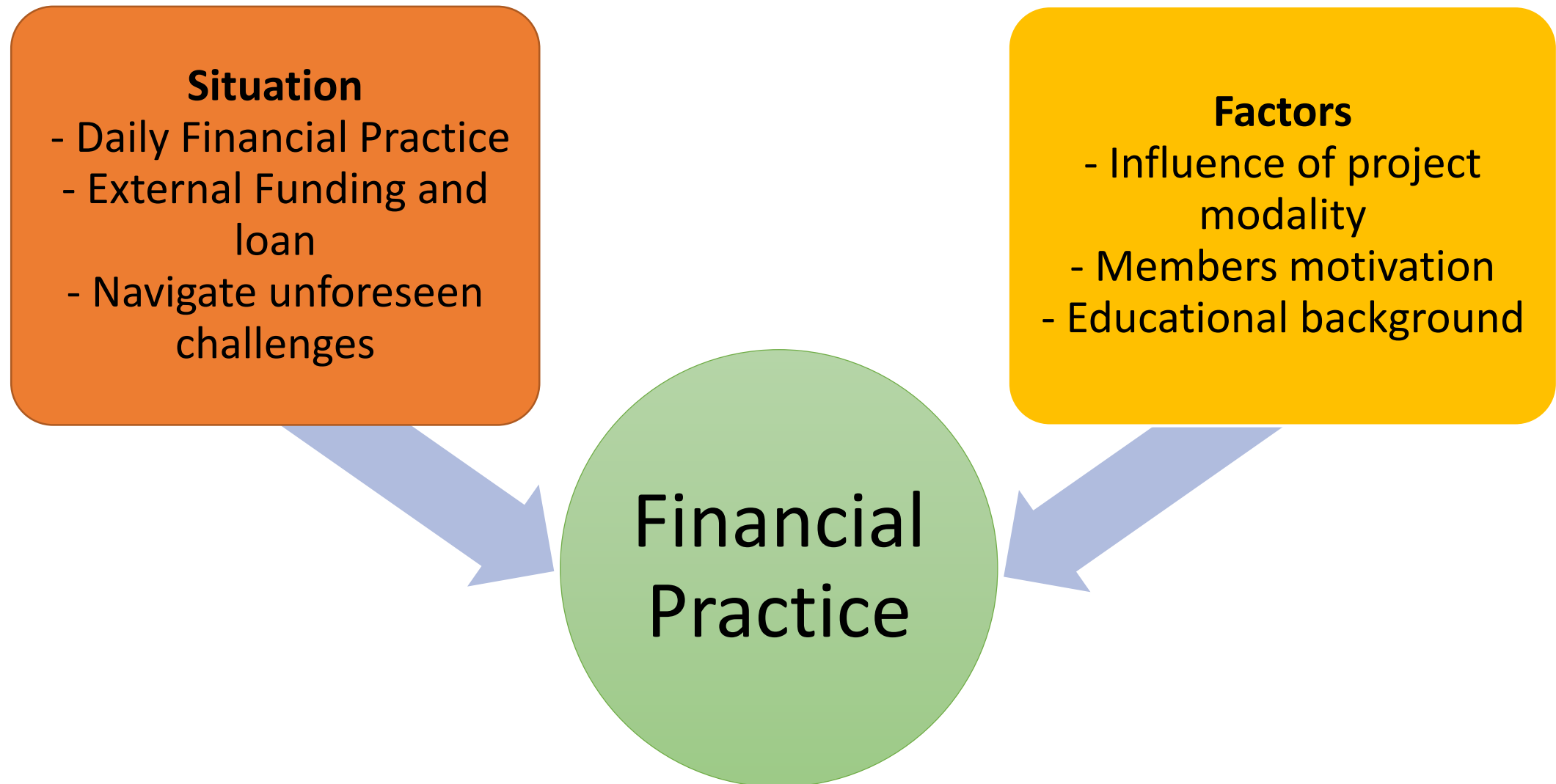
"people used to refer to me as 'Kedar's wife.' However, now they recognise my individual talents and outspoken nature." - MGL09

Categorization of the cooperative



* If the support from local wards and municipality is withdrawn, 1 will be in a struggling cooperative and another in Financial Constraints.

Facilitating/Barriers to sustainability



Conclusion

- Increased in 3 P's Power Property and Prestige of leprosy affected people and other marginalized people.
- Sustainability of the cooperative varied.
- Support is required to maintain the cooperative status for good and improve the status for bad.



Suyasha Koirala

Suyasha Koirala is a public health professional with a Master's in Public Health (Global Health) from the University of Southern Denmark. With extensive experience in health systems research and project coordination, she has worked on initiatives focused on NCD, disability, leprosy-affected individuals, marginalized communities, and maternal health in Nepal.



