

CARE - NEPAL

DISADVANTAGED GROUP

STRATEGY PAPER

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OCT 1996

Acknowledgements

This report is based on a field trip to Bajhang in May 1996. The visit was the first step in designing a new project for Bajhang district. A multi-disciplinary team comprised of CARE staff and an outside consultant visited the area and wrote this report: Bishnu Pokhrel, Prabha Shrestha, Gobinda Neupane, Darlene Foote, and myself. Gobinda Rajbhandari assisted in the design of the data collection plan. Jopie Duijnhouwer made a very significant contribution to the editing of the report.

This report would not be possible without the assistance of so many local residents of Bajhang, as well as government officials and NGO staff.

We hope that this report provides useful background information for those initiating work in Bajhang.

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1. Introduction

CARE Nepal's efforts to reach and work with communities who are socially exploited and extremely poor have received increasing emphasis in the last few years. The need for this emphasis arose as it was realized that despite the organization's efforts, its regular program was bypassing this particular group of people. Various evaluations and project reports have shown that the rural poor have benefitted from CARE's regular programs. It has not, however, effectively reached the even more vulnerable communities.

CARE's concern on how to effectively reach and assist these groups who are socially discriminated against and also invariably the poorest of the poor has subsequently culminated in the **Disadvantaged Group Program** or DAG program.

2. Defining Disadvantaged Group

CARE has struggled for some time in defining and identifying the target groups or people who fall under DAG. Numerous workshops and discussions have helped to clarify the issue to some extent but ambiguities still exist. The issues have hinged on which criteria to prioritize, social or economic. What has added to the complexity is that Nepal's diverse ethnic fabric creates many exceptions to standard social or economic criteria.

This paper seeks to highlight the fact that being disadvantaged is not related to poverty alone. CARE's general program in Nepal is already designed to help the poor. However, it was obvious that there are people that are not only poor but socially discriminated against also. In other words, they are doubly disadvantaged. Thus the need to have a focused program addressing the latter groups was increasingly felt by CARE.

In many urban areas and areas where there has been recent migration, economic poverty is rampant even among the high castes, and all over the country ethnic groups fall under the category of the very poor whether they are Rais in Solukhumbu, or Tharus in Rapti. However, while they are definitely resource poor and to some extent exploited, they are not socially ostracized like low caste groups.

This strategy paper defines DAG group as:

Those group of people who are identified to be historically socially and economically discriminated against and/or who have been denied opportunities and access to resources thereby leading them to further poverty and exploitation.

3. Adopting the term - Disadvantaged Group

CARE Nepal has adopted the term "Disadvantaged Group" or "DAG" to identify the "historically

socially and economically discriminated" groups. All of CARE's present documents and LRSP have adopted this term which will also be used in this strategy paper. The phrase Disadvantaged Group or DAG has now been in use for some years and has become familiar in the projects and with the staff.

4. History of the Caste System

Nepal is a Hindu nation, and the caste system is an element of Hinduism. Castes originated with the division of functions. Over the centuries this has, however, transformed into a rigid system that advocates strict hierarchy of hereditary status. The rigidly vertical caste system has the top-ranking Brahmins, followed by Chhetris and Thakuris, the mid-ranking Matiwalis, and the lowest ranking or untouchable castes. The lowest castes not only suffer from poor social status but are also almost always illiterate, extremely poor and exploited.

Nepal's complex caste system has been sustained by age-long tradition and a Civil Code (Muluki Ain). The Civil Code of 1910 B.S.*¹ (1854 A.D) not only legally recognized these castes with several sub-castes that sprang up in the course of time as higher and lower untouchable castes, but also provided legal discrimination in the dispensation of justice. This Civil Code persisted until 1963 A.D.

The traditional Civil Code was amended in 2020 B.S. (1963A.D.). The new code, known as the New Civil Code, legally abolished all provisions of caste discrimination in matters of law. The constitutions of 1952, 1962 and 1990 also forbade caste discrimination in Nepal. However, untouchables in Nepal continue to be discriminated against in a variety of ways.

In Nepal the untouchable castes are found in the hill and mountain regions, and in the Terai. They constitute about 15% of the total population of Nepal. (See **Annex 1** for population wise breakdown of low caste groups.)

With education, adequate employment and sometimes grit and perseverance, many low caste people have succeeded in achieving better standards of living. Individuals, households, and sometimes small prosperous communities of low castes exist. Fortunately educated low caste persons are being accepted and assimilated in urban society but discrimination or uneasiness still prevails in villages and in more conservative households. And while educated low castes are given more respect, discrimination is still evident. In other words, though educated and economically better-off, low caste persons still do not enjoy the corresponding social status that their higher caste and educated colleagues take for granted. In this scenario, a poor, illiterate, unaware low caste villager is clearly subject to more discrimination. (See **Annex 2** for examples of caste based discrimination).

5. Other Socially Exploited Groups

It is important to realize that low castes are not the only ones to be socially discriminated though they do form the majority in this group. There are examples of other groups such as bonded labourers under the kamaiya system which is prevalent among the Tharus in the far west, and a number of small tribal groups.

¹ B.S. Bikram Sambat - is a Nepali calendar year which is about 57 years ahead of the I Georgian calendar. The present 1996 A.D. is equivalent to 2053 B.S.

The deplorable kamaiya system has forced a large number of Tharus in the far west to live almost as slaves working for landlords without wages in order to pay back debts incurred both during their lifetime and those of two or three generations ago. Many do not know how much they owe or how much more they have to work in order to repay their debts. And in the effort to do so they spend their lifetime working for others. This ignorance coupled with the gentle nature of this community have ensured that they are exploited by their "owners" and remain trapped under conditions where they cannot even declare themselves to be their own persons.

Then there are minority tribal groups scattered in pockets across the country. These groups have until recently always been semi-nomadic, living off the forests. The general population, therefore, regards them as less "civilized". Consequently they are subject to exploitation in the hands of their more "civilized" citizens. Some such tribal groups are Rautes in the west, Chepangs in the central, and Meches in the east. There are additional tribes such as the Koches, Danuwars and Chhantaals who also fall in this category.

Then again even within the general population there are groups of people who are looked down upon by society - the widows. They are deemed to have brought misfortune to their house and psychologically demoralized for being unfortunate enough to have their husbands die before them. In most cases Hindu widows do not remarry. They are not allowed to partake in any auspicious celebrations in the house and must remain invisible at such times. Hindu women pray for the long lives of the husbands and are considered to be more fortunate if they die before their spouses. In many cases, especially if they are young, widows are forcibly returned to their parents' house, or subjected to do the most menial of work and not given any status in the house as they are considered to be inauspicious.

Additionally an indirect impact of this discrimination has been the alienation of the above socially exploited groups from the educational process, resulting in their general lack of literacy. Consequently the extent of their participation in development processes has also been very limited. In other words, their share of developmental benefits has been minimal and they have fallen victim to further exploitation.

Even this cursory observation of these socially discriminated groups show that they tend to be those who are **less** educated, much poorer, and **less** healthy than the general poor population.

Until recently neither government planners nor development agencies such as INGOs/NGOs had developed special programs for the advancement of these groups. A Praja (Chepang) development program had been developed during the Panchayat time. However, this program has not made any significant progress in helping them.

In recent years there have been encouraging efforts within government and NGOs in development of programs to assist the disadvantaged groups. Moreover, educated members of DAG groups themselves, are forming formal bodies at the national level to fight untouchability and to bring about awareness amongst the general population for the need to eliminate this scourge.

6. DAG Strategy Goal

In line with the goals of CARE Nepal's Long Range Strategy Plan, the goals of the DAG program are:

- i. To enable the members of DAG groups to gain self-respect and confidence through opportunities aimed at raising their social standing and income.

- ii. To facilitate processes whereby DAGs are gradually accepted into mainstream society, thereby making them equal and responsible partners in their own development.

7. Selection Criteria for Identifying DAG

This strategy paper will focus on three main categories to identify the group of people who qualify as DAG.

These categories are:

- i. Low social status
- ii. Low economic status
- iii. Illiteracy or low literacy status

This paper emphasizes that the main criteria for identification of DAG is that a group or individual first fall under the low social status group. Then the same group should be identified to be having low economic status. When the group or individual is both socially and economically disadvantaged then they are identified to be DAG. Lastly, if that group is further seen to be illiterate, then CARE deems this group to be extremely disadvantaged.

Thus, being socially disadvantaged is the first basic criteria for being identified under DAG.

The paper clarifies that if groups or individuals are extremely poor but belong to the high castes, as are many cases in Bajura, they do not qualify under DAG. In other words, being economically disadvantaged alone is not sufficient for being identified as DAG. CARE's existing general program, which is designed basically for the poor, already addresses the poverty issues of the higher castes.

Thus low social and economic status are the most important criteria identified by CARE. The third criteria of illiteracy is important in association only. (Normally, socially and economically disadvantaged groups will also have a low literacy status.)

The projects have realized that given the diversity of the country's ethnic groups, its social fabric, and the remoteness of projects where CARE works, there are possibilities of different levels of disadvantaged groups. There will be some who are more disadvantaged than others. Staff will have to play the important role of identifying appropriate levels of DAG groups that most need their attention and assistance.

Staff should use the indicators within the three categories given below to first identify DAG groups. A simple flow chart diagram given later shows different levels of DAG groups, and should help staff to prioritise the level they can most effectively work with.

The indicators of the three main categories are given below:

- i. Low Social Status

CARE has identified the group of people who fall under the low social status to be those stated below:

- ◆ Low castes: In the mountain and hill regions the low castes includes the Kami (blacksmiths), Sunar (goldsmith), Damai (tailors), Thami and Sarki (cobblers). In the Newar communities of the Kathmandu valley they are the Kasai, Pode, Chyame, Kusle and Halhule. In the Terai there are the Dom, Halkhor, Dushad, Chamar, Khatwa, Musahar, Kaut, Satar, Tatma, Teli

and Sundi. Apart from these, there are the hill tribes like Gaine (singers), and Badis (community entertainers including the flesh trade) in the western region.

- ◆ Tribal groups such as the Chepangs, Rautes, Danuwars, Meches, Koches, Chhantaals, Jirel, and, in some cases, even the Tharus.
- ◆ Bonded labourers or the kamaiya
- ◆ Widows

ii. Low Economic Status

It will emphasized here again, that only when the group has been first identified to be socially disadvantaged do they qualify for the second criteria of low economic status. The indicators within the economic category have been identified to be those individuals or groups who:

- ◆ Have no resource base (no productive land, no skills, or no alternate income sources)
- ◆ Where food supplies are adequate for six months or less.
- ◆ Are highly dependent on daily/seasonal wages or wages in kind for daily survival.
- ◆ Have no secure or regular source of income to adequately feed the family or household.
- ◆ Are heavily in debt and have been unable to repay loans for over eighteen months.

iii. Illiteracy or Low Literary Status

An important aspect and contributing factor to extreme poverty and exploitation has been illiteracy. Not surprisingly most low caste and exploited members of Nepalese society have been deprived of this basic right. CARE has identified this category to be an important indicator for identifying DAGs.

CARE defines illiteracy or low literacy level in a family or household when:

- ◆ Every member is illiterate
- ◆ All adult members are illiterate and only children have attended basic schooling.
- ◆ Only adult male members have basic schooling of two to three years.

Using the above categories CARE defines the different level of DAG in the following manner:

Low Social Status ----- Low Economic Status ----- Illiteracy/Low literacy Status

LSS	LES	LLS
(Relatively DAG)	(Highly DAG)	(Extremely DAG)
LSS	LSS+LES	LSS+LES+LLS
(I)	(II)	(III)

The above design shows that the third group which falls under the low social, economic and literacy status is extremely or the most also disadvantaged and should be the first priority for DAG program.

The second group which falls under low social and economic status is also highly disadvantaged but not as that of the third; and lastly the first group which falls under the low social status is only relatively disadvantaged. *Projects needs to decided for themselves which level of disadvantaged groups they should work with depending on the context of the project area.*

8. Programming Principles

Given the nature of the geographical location of CARE's projects, there is bound to be diversity in DAG programs in terms of target groups, feasible interventions, types of subsidies, etc. However CARE believes that there needs to be some common programming principles in the implementation of DAG programs.

i. It is extremely important to ensure that the DAG strategy avoids inadvertent reinforcement of caste distinction and the communal sentiments that go with it. Working with the DAG should not reinforce the isolation of this group. An all out effort to integrate them into mainstream programming should be made.

Additionally, as much as possible the project should actively promote and encourage social integration of low castes with the general population whether in conducting trainings, forming groups, discussions with communities, excursions, hiring of staff, eating in groups, etc. The ultimate objective is to help facilitate a process by which the general population gradually accepts them as equal members of society.

ii. Due to the varied ethnic composition of different parts of the country, the DAG program will be area specific and tailored to address specific community needs and situations.

iii. The DAG program package should be developed with a longer-term and integrated perspective, covering a period of at least three to five years. It should not follow the normal annual program cycle of project. One year programs do not have much impact on these groups as their confidence and understanding of the project are not on par with that of the rest of the community.

iv. Programs must be linked with education and other awareness building components as these are essential to the empowerment process for these groups. In adults this will mostly be in the form of non-formal literacy but for children and young people, it can be both formal and non-formal literacy. Long term education and awareness building must be the integral part of the package if the total program is to be effective.

v. Literacy and social issues are long term changes and require time and patience and results take a long time to manifest. In order to raise confidence and gain trust economic issues should be addressed first in the program designed for the group.

vi. The hiring of DAG personnel, at all levels, as CARE staff and as local staff is essential. When members of the DAG community see someone of their caste who is educated, respected and earning money it can be a powerful motivation. It also serves to demonstrate that CARE is serious about empowering DAGs. Moreover, such opportunities offered to them at the local level allows other villagers to interact with them directly. Thus, eventually the general population will start to accord them the respect they deserve.

vii. In any community women and children are the most disadvantaged of all. In addition to caste, gender discrimination is another major problem. When compared with males, women and girl

children have less to eat, more to do, are generally less healthy, less educated and less aware. This is even more so in the DAG community. As in the general CARE programs, efforts to focus on this very vulnerable group are necessary for programs to have positive impact.

viii. Programs should be designed to benefit the whole family. This is important to ensure that interventions have a larger benefit and include more than just one family member.

9. Strategy for Implementing DAG Program

This section provides some basic guidelines for the implementation of DAG programs.

i. Allocating Time for Initial Ground Work

Before launching a program at least four to eight months of preparatory work should be done with the identified community in order to lay the foundation of trust and confidence building. This can be done through a variety of methods including PRA, rapport building, and applied social analysis methodology.

It has been acknowledged that simply introducing components of the different interventions into the lives of DAG people does not necessarily make improvements in their lives. In order to understand their psychology, overcome centuries of suppression and start a meaningful partnership the project must be prepared to spend a significant amount of time in consultation with the group prior to launching any program in order to better understand them and to build a platform of trust, and subsequently reduce the risk of failure in any interventions introduced for them.

Concerns, however, have been expressed on the negative aspect of only interacting with the community without providing any interventions. The project should, therefore be careful not to raise too many expectations initially in order to avoid frustrations with the community.

ii. Limiting Number of Groups Initially

Implementing DAG program in the beginning will require much more involvement and supervision by the staff. Therefore, it is preferable to start out such programs with a limited number of groups to which the staff can provide adequate time. However, working with only one group should also be avoided as it may give rise to jealousy and partisanship amongst the members of other similar groups.

Still it may not be always be possible to work in clusters and groups all the time. In many hill areas, low caste people live in the periphery of a higher caste community or village, and may number a just few or a couple of households only. In such cases, individual DAG programs or a single group may be far more appropriate and practical.

iii. Orienting CARE Staff

CARE staff have been regularly oriented on DAG issues. Many have been actively involved in designing and implementing innovative programs. This orientation should continue on a regular basis. Staff should be constantly encouraged to come up with practical and innovative ideas for effective DAG programs.

Furthermore, in order to ensure continuity and stability, staff who have been assigned to work directly with DAG groups should not be transferred too quickly in order to maintain stability and continuity. When staff do transfer, detailed orientation for the new staff, and documentation of

progress to date, should be ensured.

While it is acknowledged that all CARE programs are equally important, DAG is a relatively recent and challenging intervention and will thus require that much more attention from every level of project staff from the project manager to the field level staff.

iv. Forming Local Village Groups Responsible for Coordinating DAG Programs

Social integration is an important aspect of the DAG program. The project should make every effort to ensure that responsible local village groups are given the overall responsibility of assisting and coordinating DAG groups's efforts and also helping them to be assimilated in the general society. These village groups should be respectable bodies and need to be represented with member of DAG groups. While CARE's job is to facilitate the integration process villagers in general must realize the importance of treating DAG groups better and equally. They should also be made to understand that uplifting DAG can only help them to be more responsible citizens and perpetrators of social justice.

v. Ensuring Process Documentation

To study the impact of work done with the disadvantaged will require time. In the meantime it will be necessary to document the different process adopted by the project in their work with DAGs. This process documentation will help the project to monitor in detail the DAG program and provide appropriate feedback. It may be necessary to highlight this through special sections within the PIRs, case studies, human interest stories and separate DAG documentation. These reports should be compiled and filled annually and should be readily accessible for reference.

vi. Encouraging Participatory Approach.

Helping communities, especially DAG groups, in confidence building and gaining self respect requires intensive work. In line with the program cycle project should ensure that there is participatory involvement in every stage of needs assessment, design, planning, program implementation, and monitoring. These various stages in the process of programming should be familiar and understood by the members of the DAG communities if they are to have confidence in the work they are doing, and later to do it by themselves.

vii. Being Prepared for Problems and Obstructions from Threatened Groups

During the last couple of years it has become increasingly clear that launching programs with the DAG invites new challenges and problems. Much of this due to the fact that CARE itself has limited experience in working with the DAGs groups. Then there are pressures from the general villagers or landlords who feel threatened, others who feel jealous, and still those who deliberately wish to jeopardize the program. Special orientation to the general population and to the DAG needs to be given to help both parties understand the project's roles and the new emphasis on these groups, and how such programs can be beneficial to both parties.

For DAG groups who have lived with generations of exploitation, understanding and expressing equality, self confidence and self-respect will not come easily. They generally have low esteem of themselves and may, therefore, be quite vulnerable to the negative pressures of the more privileged villagers or groups. Nurturing and counselling are, therefore, necessary part of this program.

viii. Interlinking Groups

As this programs expands there will be a number of DAG groups both withing individual project and amongst other CARE projects. This will provide opportunities where DAG members can interact and share experiences with each other. Interacting with someone in the same level as themselves creates tremendous excitement, and sharing of ideas and experiences so these linkages should be highly encouraged.

On the positive aspect, more and more members of educated DAG groups are forming formal bodies, at district and national level, dedicated to fighting social discrimination. There are a growing number of Dalit groups now. DAG groups in project should be interlinked with these larger groups so that they are able to continue to work together after the project phases over.

If local clubs or grass root NGOs are present in project areas they should also be tapped and where, suitable, mobilized to assist DAG groups.

ix. Implementation Methodologies

In order to arouse the interest and confidence of these groups, different approaches should be used. This should make maximum use of educational and entertainment media such as dramas, plays, songs, puppet shows, simple documentary show, slides, etc. Hands-on training and observation site visits should be regular features. Training methodologies should be simple and adapted for illiterate participants especially women.

x. Advocacy Issues

CARE, on its part, can play a more active role in the support and advocacy of DAG groups. This can be both at the central and district levels. Through seminars, workshops, independent study, support to school children CARE can disseminate its efforts at assisting DAG groups to have higher social status in the general community.

CARE can also actively support or work with legal and reputed Dalit groups at district and national levels in order to have a bigger and more effective impact at the field level. Reputed Dalit groups can also form potential CARE partners in future.

10. Interventions

Before outlining interventions specifically targeting DAGs, it is important to emphasize again the need to “mainstream” DAGs, ensuring their representation and participation in groups, trainings, etc.

Over the years CARE has introduced a number of innovative and effective interventions in DAGs programs designed to help these groups. However, the tendency to design only income generation activities for DAGs group in very high. This is important and valuable so long as activities are feasible and sustainable. But in order to truly uplift these groups and help them to be self reliant there will other aspects of interventions that needs to be give equal important such as education and awareness building, management training, learning to link with other agencies for assistance, etc.

Clearly it is beyond the scope this paper to list the types of interventions project can carry out Moreover, CARE believes that the projects themselves are most capable of identifying and implementing the most appropriate interventions.

Still there are various existing and new interventions that can be adapted and introduced for DAG groups, and in many project a lot of them are already being implemented. Five main categories of

interventions for DAG have been identified in this paper. Most interventions identified or being implemented by project will probably fall under these categories. Furthermore the DAG strategy allows for the introduction of innovative ideas, even if they do not fall under the categories described below:

i Adapting Existing General Programs.

CARE already has extensive experience in implementing a variety of integrated activities in community organization, agriculture, forestry, training, rural infrastructure, family health, non formal education and income generation for the general poor. These interventions can be adapted to suit the needs of DAG groups better. This will also mean changes in implementation approach, subsidy provided interventions chosen, etc. Which project should initiate themselves.

Some examples of these adaptations could be allowing basic NFE classes of run for two years instead of one for DAG groups, encouraging private nurseries only or mostly with DAG groups, leasing land for the landless to grow vegetables, hiring mostly DAG people and training them to carry out skilled works in infrastructure projects, etc.

It will be important to realize that in many instances, projects do not have to go beyond the existing interventions in order to help DAG groups. Besides the activities itself, within the general programs there are important aspects of training such as management, community organization, problem analysis, conflict resolution, group dynamics, confidence building, etc which are equally important for DAG groups as any other activities and equally helpful in the long run.

ii. Loan Programs

CARE has not actively carried out loan programs. In some cases, limited loans have been provided to groups to carry out feasible activities.

Additionally CARE can actively link these groups with local banks to help facilitate loan processes and to make them members of specific bank programs such as SAGAN banking which focuses on DAG groups. If the need arises, CARE can also act as collateral for the DAG groups.

DAG members should also be encouraged to tap the loans from existing village group funds. In turn the communities should give priority to DAG in the provision of loans from their funds.

iii Skill Development and Follow-on Support

To provide long term benefits, viable skill training and development can be among the best interventions introduced for DAG groups so long as they are feasible. Many of the low castes have distinctive occupations which can be honed further. However, it will be limiting to restrict this to training alone. In many cases, the market for local skills is limited. The requirement in such cases may not be for training but better equipment which the project can certainly assist in. For example, a village tailor receiving more training in tailoring may help him. But chances are that if his sewing machine is always breaking down and if the villagers think that clothes made in the nearby town are more prestigious to wear then the training has not really helped him. In another case, more and more villagers buy farming equipment elsewhere so just training blacksmiths may not be enough. Updating his equipment may be far more useful. Before providing skills training such things should be taken into consideration.

On the other hand, newer skills such as gabion weaving, setting up and repairing water supply systems, masonry, etc, should be focused more for such groups as demands for such skills are growing.

Another important point to consider is to avoid creating too many experts in a particular skill. For example if there are too many skilled animal health workers in a project area, the market for each one is limited. For skills which have limited market, such issues can be vital as it not only limits incomes but also prevents skills from being sharpened thereby lessening the effects of the training and investment in the person(s).

Any skilled training provided for DAG participants should be based on the feasibility of using these improved skills in a profitable way, and should be supported with a minimum of basic equipment required to carry on his/her trade afterwards. This could include a castrator and basic medicine kit for an animal health worker, pruning knives and gardening tools for those trained in fruit grafting, basic gabion weaving equipments, etc.

iv. Educational Support

It has long been proved that education plays an extremely important role in the upliftment of any exploited groups. While various other interventions can be introduced it will not be as effective unless it is integrated with an educational component.

Illiterate adults should therefore be encouraged to participate in literacy programs. For the children and youth, both non formal and formal education should be introduced and made a precondition for any further support. Subsidies for non formal education already exist. For formal education provisions for support up to **SLC** for **DAG** students may be provided. (See Subsidy section 11 for details). This will be extended to include stipend up to the technical schools or any other technical academic qualifications or training up to the certificate level. For academic study above certificate level CARE will not provide any educational support.

v. Income Generation

Income generation activities will probably be the backbone of the many interventions introduced for DAG groups. Addressing the economic aspects of these groups will be essential and income generation activities will address this issue to a large extent. Off farm activities are especially important since often DAGs have little or no land, and on farm activities are not a viable source of income. It's critical that the feasibility of these activities be assessed. A list of potential IG activities are provided in Annex 3.

The focus in income generation activities should be on gradually increasing incomes so that groups are able to learn to deal with it slowly and confidently. Ambitious plans should be avoided as they are risky and prone to failure.

It has been increasingly acknowledged that scale of activities in income generation is largely responsible for the success or failure of a program. An example is in small animal rearing, where it has been realized that providing a couple of goats, pigs, rabbits or poultry to villagers has made no major differences in their incomes.

Because of the limited number of animals the recipients do not think it important to devote more time to their care, and in many cases there have been instances of high mortality especially amongst the animals supplied by CARE. On the other hand, if projects allow for larger scale animal rearing, such as enabling a DAG group of ten households to have 40 to 50 goats, the substantial number of animals

will compel the group to devote more time and care to look after the animals. As the potential income is definitely seen to be considerably high the interest and motivation is much higher. This kind of large scale animal rearing has been much more successful in projects designed for the landless by other organizations. There can be other such examples also.

There will be times when projects may be called upon to act as buffer should certain income generation activities fail. In such cases projects should be able to compensate for certain basic losses and should ensure that no activities introduced by the projects further depletes the economic resources of DAG groups.

11. Subsidy

In CARE's programs the general philosophy behind CARE's subsidy policy is to maximize community participation and contribution in order to make interventions more sustainable and to increase community self-confidence. A way of doing this is by reducing subsidies to the extent possible. CARE's subsidy policy is governed by the fact that subsidies are only a means to help groups help themselves.

However, for members of the disadvantaged groups it is clear that just to reach the level of their neighbours they need a lot of support. Requiring contributions from them in any field requires much more sacrifice on their part than it does from the others. Clearly CARE's subsidy policy has to be more flexible to accommodate these genuine concerns of the group.

CARE categorically states that its subsidy policy is flexible and can definitely be adapted to suit genuine requirements of the disadvantaged. This paper cannot and does not intend to give detailed information on subsidy in each and every category. The decision to do so lies with the project manager and his/her team of staff who should use their judgement when making special allowances for subsidies and take precautions to ensure that dependency is avoided and that these subsidy does not encourage the wrong kind of participation. Only when the scope of the subsidy is clearly too big for the project, such as buying land as was done in Mahottari, should the case be referred to the central office for further discussion, and if needed their approval.

Preconditions prior to granting subsidies

Projects should ensure that individual(s) and group(s) should fulfill the following conditions if they are to be eligible for special considerations for subsidies:

- * That either before or during the interventions they establish saving accounts preferably with the local bank.
- * That they are recommended by the village groups and staff concerned.
- * That they have reputation for honesty and hard work.
- * That they do not indulge in excessive alcoholism.
- * That they are committed to participate in literacy classes before of during the interventions.
- * That they are committed to the process and provide genuine feedback regularly.
- * That they are able to value the assistance and utilize it properly.

Additionally, in all cases formal designated village groups, concerned field staff, and the DAG members themselves will be consulted and their advice sought if major concessions are to be made

in the provision of subsidy to the members of DAG groups.

The subsidies outlined below are the upper limits of the benefits provided for any particular groups(s) or individual. This is to allow a certain flexibility and freedom for the projects. It must be cautioned that this benefit should not automatically granted to each and every DAG member.

i. Rural Infrastructure

Generally the project provides for skilled labour and unskilled labour. In case of infrastructure work targeting DAG, the possible subsidy will be:

- * Supply of all imported materials
- * Transportation of local material
- * Certain local materials which are difficult to obtain due to distance or unavailability of the same nearby (e.g. sand to be collected at a distance greater than two hours or so)
- * Skilled and unskilled labour

As many of the DAG members are daily wage earners the project will compensate for their loss in labor by:

- ◆ Half to full day labor costs to be provided in either cash or kind, per day for the days worked in the project. Preferably the precondition of this benefit should be that at least one to two days of voluntary contribution is provided during the course of work depending on the scale of the project and the economic status of the person(s) concerned.

ii. Training and Workshop

For a short one day training held within a given VDC the members of the DAG of that VDC will be provided only those facilities provided to the general participants.

For training of two days or more, whether within or outside the VDC, the DAG participants' family members will be supported by the provision of half to full day wage at local rate in either cash or kind. This will be guided by the economic status of the person(s) and will be provided on the concerned people.

iii. Excursion

With the exception of one day intersite visits, any long excursions will be compensated, with the provision of half day wage in cash or kind to the members of the family.

iv. NFE and Scholarship

In NFE CARE subsidizes all stationery, teaching materials and salaries of the facilitators and supervisors. However, participants are asked to contribute something towards a group fund in return. In case of DAG groups many of these contributions have been and can continue to be wavered.

Additionally our experience shows that for many DAG participants the allocated time in NFE courses even though flexible is not adequate for them to complete even basic courses. In such cases the project can make provision to continue these basic classes up to 2 years or more.

Support in the provision of NFE centers will be given such as thatch roofing, or poles. If buildings are available then the project can also provide for the rent.

CARE will encourage children and provide necessary support to help them attend both non formal and formal education. These can be in the form of support for books; admission, examinations and other routine fees; transportation; uniforms; etc.

CARE can make provision to provide stipends for deserving DAG students up to the SLC level. For deserving candidates who qualify to study in technical school after SLC will also be provided with stipend to cover schools and basic living costs. This will also include any technical training or academic schooling up to the certificate level. This support will also include two way transportation costs for those student studying outside the home district, once every year.

v. Agriculture and Forestry

Projects have not faced major problems in providing subsidy for DAG groups. In many cases members of the DAG have very little or no land so the case hardly arises. However, this very reason should stimulate the staff to think of innovative ways to provide support to the group in this intervention.

In agriculture provisions can be made to lease land for the landless group in order for them to carry out kitchen gardening or in the production of field crops. Ponds can also be leased for rearing fingerling, fish and ducks.

Private nurseries should be encouraged particularly among these groups leasing the land. A basic set of tools, and nursery equipment along with support in the establishment of nurseries can be made.

While establishing new plantations, provisions could be made to let members of this group utilize the spaces between seedlings for vegetable or other kind of cultivation as long as no harm is done to the plantation. This is being done in a couple of projects.

vi. Income Generation

This intervention allows for tremendous scope in subsidy and also allows for maximum misuse of the same if not wisely allocated.

For simplicity's sake the subsidy under income generation is categorized as follows:

CARE has made provisions for different types of grants as subsidies for the DAG group interventions. At present, CARE has allowed Rs. 25,000/- as grant to any individual, group, activity or number of activities. These grants can be of the following type:

- a. Individual grant: where projects allow an individual to be eligible for grants up to Rs.25,000/- . All preconditions for the eligibility of such benefits are to be fixed by the project itself. However, important considerations in allowing such grants will be i) the viability of the activity, ii) reputation of the person concerned, and the iii) recommendations of village groups.
- b. Group grant: where group(s) will be eligible for grants up to Rs.25,000/each. Usually, the group then provides loans to members. If the group requires more, this should be referred to the central level for further consultations and approval. All preconditions should be as in individual grants.
- c. Matching grants: If individual(s) or group(s) require matching funds against those that they have collected, the projects can provide up to three times as much in matching grants. This can be in either cash or kind.

12. Conclusions

Defining and identifying real DAG groups, and then introducing and implementing an integrated package designed to help uplift them is an enormous task. Projects have always acknowledged this to be a particularly challenging work. To be able to assist DAG groups to be more socially integrated, economically better off, and aware and educated about themselves and their surroundings will be a significant achievement. CARE has accepted this challenge to help these most disadvantaged of groups, to walk along the rocky path of development and assist them to stand up confidently on their own feet.

Populationwise Breakdown of Low Caste Group

	Caste/ethnicity	Population	Percentages
Hill dwellers	Kami (blacksmith)	963655	5.21
	Damai (tailor)	367989	2.11
	Sarki (cobbler)	276224	1.50
	Gaine (singer)	44484	0.24
	Badi (entertainer)	7082	0.04
Terai dwellers	Teli (oil extractor)	250732	1.36
	Kushwa	205797	1.11
	Chamar	203919	1.10
	Kalwar	162046	0.88
	Dushadh	93242	0.50
	Dhobi (washerman)	76594	0.41
	Khatwa	66612	0.36
	Mushahar	141890	0.77
	Raji	19103	0.1
	Total	2879459	15.57
The population not mentioned	Satar	Sunar (goldsmith)	
	Kisan	Hudke (singing caste)	
	Darau	Dom	
	Kasai (butcher)	Lohar (blacksmith)	
	Kushle (tailor)	Paswan	
	Pode (sweeper)		

Source: Statistical Pocket Book, CBS, HMG, 1994

Caste based discrimination is manifested in the following ways:

- * Sources of drinking water: untouchables are not allowed to touch the same water source
- * Hotels (with a few urban exceptions): not allowed to enter or required to wash their glasses or dishes
- * Shops (with some urban exceptions): not allowed to enter
- * Houses: not allowed to enter
- * Cowshed: not allowed to enter
- * Temple: not allowed enter
- * School: not allowed to touch the water pitcher, not allowed to mix with the higher caste students while eating and drinking
- * Feasts: not allowed to mix with higher castes
- * Job distribution: untouchables are highly discriminated

(source: Sharma, 1994)

Ideas for Some Potential Income Generation Activities:

1. Making bead (pote) necklaces
2. Making "lachhas" or traditional threads for tying hair
3. Making iron and copper wheel
4. Pottery with potters' wheel
5. Small animal rearing such as poultry, pig, goat, angora rabbit, may be buffalo!
6. Mobile shops
7. Weaving of dokos, naglos, etc
8. Sewing and tailoring
9. Shoe repair
10. Hair cutting
11. Allo processing (in the east)
12. Weaving of small mats, rugs, shawls
13. Running small tea shops/restaurants
14. Skilled masonry works
15. Fish rearing and drying of fish
16. Fingerling rearing
17. Bamboo/nigalo furniture
18. Dealership of small products (as middlemen), and also for transportation
19. Cycle, watch, torch light, radio, umbrella repairing
20. Carpentry
21. AHW training
22. Cultivation of ginger-turmeric
23. Small scale kitchen garden and seed production on leased land
24. Small private nurseries for forestry, vegetables and fruit sapling
25. Mushroom cultivation
26. Ghattas and small rice mills
27. Leashold forestry for forest by-products
28. High value cash crops (cardamom, medical herbs, etc) on marginal land
29. Smokeless stoves
30. Leasing land and ponds
31. Roof tiles