Focus Group Discussion

Chucchepati Site, Kathmandu
Facilitated by IOM
29th July to 31st July, 2015

Facilitators:
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Introduction

Six focus group discussions were held at Chucchepati site over the course of three days with the objective of finding out the return intention of the site residents. There are over 7,000 residents from 1801 households on site as of now, majority come from inside the Kathmandu valley and a few from the districts mainly Sindhupalchowk.

The focus group consisted of the following groups:

- Adult male-only (household heads)
- Adult female-only (household heads)
- Male youth of 17-20 years age group
- Female youth of 17-20 years age group
- Mixed group of male & female adults living in KTM before the EQ
- Mixed group of male & female adults who came to this camp from outside KTM valley districts after the EQ

Prior to starting the discussion, Participants were notified about the objective of the discussion. They were also informed that information they provide would be kept confidential and their identification would be kept anonymous. Facilitators made it very clear that they were free to answer, not answer or keep mum if they wished for any question asked during the discussion. Each group consisted of 8-10 members and the discussion lasted for about one and a half hour. Facilitators made sure that all the participants felt comfortable sharing their opinions and ensured active participation from all.

Key Findings from all FGDs:

- Majority of the population living on site is from Kathmandu Valley who used to live in rented apartments prior to earthquake. Those who have come from the districts are mainly from Sindhupalchowk, Nuwakot and Ramechhap.
- Many families with good income are also living on site out of fear of another EQ or access to relief distribution items and donations. It is hard to identify and isolate the real EQ victims.
- Finding an apartment that is affordable and nearby is challenging and therefore residents are not able to move out of the site. Those who used to own homes in districts can’t go back before the monsoon due to risk of landslides and earthquakes. They also do not have the resources to start building their houses as they have lost everything during the EQ.
- Majority of the residents work as daily wage laborers in industries like construction and restaurants, job opportunities are higher in Kathmandu than in other districts
- The site residents are unwilling to move out of the site unless the government or any agency provides them greater support in finding affordable housing or reconstruction. If the notice for evacuation is issued, the residents are most likely to resist.
FOCUS GROUP 1

Participants: 9 men (Household Heads)

Age group: 32 – 61 years

Education: None to 12th grade

Section 1: Population movements

Site residents started to resettle in the camp right after the first earthquake (about 100) of 25th April, but large scale migration started only after the second earthquake of 12th May. Residents are mostly from districts of Dolakha, Sindhupalchowk, Nuwakot, Bhaktapur, and Ramechhap. IDPs are increasing in the camp by 1 to 2 families every day. New arrivals are mostly from Sindhupalchowk district, who were residing in Kathmandu in rented houses (A few have also arrived from the district itself).

IDPs moved into this site because they feared frequent earthquakes, the houses they were renting had cracks and could be destroyed even with a minor aftershock and whatever they had was buried under the debris or inside the cracked houses where they were scared of entering. All of the site residents had been living in Kathmandu before the earthquake.

Some IDPs have left the site after they found a new place to rent in Kathmandu. A few have also left to their place of origin but this number is far less as compared to the ones coming in.

Section 2: Livelihoods

Most of the site residents made their living as vendors, shopkeepers, store owners or labors (construction, carpet, and painting industries) before the earthquake. Many IDPs have been doing the same work as before but there are far less opportunities after the earthquake than it was before. People with no income source now are getting by through their savings, a few through relief distribution and a few are also surviving by only one meal per day.

The income generating activity in Kathmandu has reduced significantly due to fewer opportunities and also due to competition from large influx of labors from India who are willing to work at lower wages. Income generating opportunity is the same, be it in Kathmandu and outside due to higher demand of agricultural labors outside of the Kathmandu valley. A few site residents with good income are also living in the site because their houses are destroyed and they are also scared of frequent of tremors.

Section 3: Information on housing and access to services

Most of the IDPs were living on rented houses in Kathmandu prior to the earthquake. Many houses are now partially or completely destroyed resulting in unavailability of houses to rent. Out of fear of earthquake, people now choose to live in single floored houses which are difficult to find. Houses available are now too expensive to rent due to price hike after the earthquake. A few families, who owned their houses in Kathmandu, have already started the reconstruction. A few other house
owners are waiting for government or other form of assistance or simply they don’t have enough money for reconstruction.

Nearly 70% of HHs sleep and access services at the site. A few access services elsewhere but sleep at the site. There are a few IDPs who come to access relief materials but are from other sites. Those who access services elsewhere are doing so at their previous residences. People from other sites and neighborhood come to this site whenever relief materials are being distributed.

Section 4: Intentions/ Expectations

Apart from a few who have lost everything in the earthquake, most people will leave the site at some point. However, it will take them over a year to do so. Many will resume their lives in Kathmandu; some would probably go back to their villages.

IDPs are now intending to build earthquake friendly houses made up of CGI sheets and plywood. They think that safe and proper residence and income generating opportunity in the site would support them in order to leave the site. They are also expecting the government would assist them in this process but they aren’t very hopeful about it.

In case the service (water and sanitation) was stopped at the site, IDPs would raise their voices to the government. There is an organization known as National Earthquake Struggle Committee, which as encouraged them to protest if the government decided to close the site.

Concluding remarks from participants:

Government should identify the real earthquake victims and provide proper assistance in order for IDPs to fully recover from the earthquake. Landlords should be more cooperative to remove IDP’s properties that are buried under their rented houses. Health facilities should be free for earthquake victims and government should do more to help the victims.
FOCUS GROUP 2

Participants: 9 Male Youths
Age Group: 17-20 years
Education: None to 12th grade

Section 1: Population movements
Site residents started coming in to the camp after the earthquake of 25th April, then they were reduced afterwards, but started coming in great numbers after the second earthquake of 12th May. Site residents are mostly from Sindhupalchowk, Dolakha, Kathmandu, and Kavre districts. 2 to 4 new IDP families are coming on site every day. Newcomers are from the district of SindhuPalchowk.

Newcomers came here mostly hoping to have access to relief materials as that wasn't accessible in their place of origin. Some families have also left the site, who have found places to rent and moved within the Kathmandu valley. Reasons behind them leaving the camp was fear of insects and snakes, as frequent tremors have nearly stopped but none of the families outside of Kathmandu valley have left.

Section 2: Livelihoods
IDPs were mostly working as construction workers, painters, small businessmen and transportation labors. Almost 80% of IDPs, who worked before, are doing the same work as before. Remaining ones, who have lost their jobs due to less construction work at present, are doing voluntary works just to feed themselves. Job opportunities have increased than before, even people from rural areas have come to the city to supply the high demand of labor. Opportunities of income are higher in Kathmandu than in other districts.

Many site residents with good income are also living in the site as they are scared of frequent tremors; some people’s houses have been completely destroyed. But some are also here only to access the relief materials.

Section 3: Information on housing and access to services
Most IDPs were living on rent prior to the earthquake. The houses they rented are either destroyed or cracked. Many also have already found places to rent but they still have shelters here so they could be able to get the relief materials. Many families, who had houses in Kathmandu, have started rebuilding their houses. Remaining house owners haven’t started rebuilding yet fearing bigger aftershocks would continue or due to financial problems.

Most IDPs sleep and access services in the site. A few sleep at the site but access services elsewhere. About 40 families access services at the site but sleep elsewhere. IDPs that access services and sleep elsewhere do so in their rented rooms or the houses they owned.
Section 4: Intentions/ Expectations

Most people would leave the site before the festival season. They would go back to their place of origin for festival but will return to Kathmandu afterwards live in rented houses.

Site residents would leave the site if they were provided with proper housing in their place of origin or if houses to rent are available in Kathmandu. Site residents don’t think that government or any other entities will provide that support.

In case the services were stopped IDPs, not knowing what else to do, would protest and if the site was closed, they would retaliate against the government.

Concluding remarks from participants:

IDPs don’t want to move from here till the end of monsoon.
FOCUS GROUP 3

Participants: Mixed group of 3 male & 5 female adults living in KTM before the EQ

Age Group: 21 - 70 years

Education: None – 4th grade

Section 1: Population movements

Most of the site residents are from Sindhupalchowk, Dolakha and Kathmandu. IDPs started arriving right after the earthquake of 25th April, but increased in great number after 12th May. People are also coming in every day even today. Newcomers are mostly from other sites in the valley and people from the neighborhood. Newcomers are coming in because of the fear of falling off of hung houses, expecting relief materials to cheat to access the relief materials. A few have come here also to access the water and toilets provided.

A few families have also left the site. They have gone to their own houses or rented houses. They have returned as they no longer feel that bigger aftershocks would hit and many also have found houses to rent.

Section 2: Livelihoods

Site residents’ main source of income before the earthquake was construction, transportation and other labor works. Only about 50% of previously employed IDPs have found the same work that they did regularly before. Remaining ones have been surviving by borrowing, through relief materials and also getting by eating lesser than before.

Job opportunities are lesser these days in Kathmandu than before. Even though, the opportunities are higher in Kathmandu than in other districts. Many of the site residents with good income are also living in the site. They do so to show off with their vehicles and other properties at night and to gain access to relief materials.

Section 3: Information on housing and access to services

Most IDPs were living in rented houses before the earthquake but significant amount of IDPs also owned houses. IDPs can’t go back and rent houses to live because there are fewer houses available to rent, and the available ones are too expensive for their income. A few families from Kathmandu living in the site have already started rebuilding their houses. Those who are not rebuilding probably don’t have enough money to rebuild.

Most of the families sleep and access services at the site. A few sleep at the site but access services elsewhere and many families access services at the site but sleep elsewhere. Those families who access services elsewhere or sleep elsewhere are mostly doing so at their own houses or rented houses.
Section 4: Intentions/ Expectations

Site residents won’t leave until and unless forced to do so. Fear of aftershocks and no places available to go are preventing IDPs from leaving the site. They would leave only if houses to rent were available at reasonable prices. IDPs expect that government or other entities would provide that support but aren’t very hopeful.

In case the services at the site was stopped, people with good income would leave the site but remaining ones would have no choice but to make do with whatever available. The site would turn into a very messy and dirty one. In case the government decided to close the site, the site residents would simply move to any other empty spaces available, even roadside.

Concluding remarks from participants:

Site residents are not happy about the way relief materials are being distributed. It is very biased and not equitable. Real victims are sidelined so proper identification of real earthquake victim should be done.
FOCUS GROUP 4

Participants: Single Female Head of Households

Age Group: 15-26 Years

Education: None to Bachelor’s

Section 1: Population Movement

The habitual residence of all participants was Kathmandu. All used to rent rooms inside the valley which was damaged or destroyed due to earthquake. The IDPs are of mixed origin, the latest group to arrive from Sindhupalchowk District. The main reason they are staying is because rooms to rent are scarce and extremely expensive, not close by the place where they lived as their kids go to school nearby. Only a few families have left the site because they have found rented place to live in. Many well to do families are also living on the site out of fear of another earthquake.

Section 2: Livelihood

The IDPs used to do labor work in construction field, but finding similar work has been tough since the earthquake since construction work has been down lately. They are still continuing the similar type of daily wage labor job, but they say the frequency has decreased and so has the income.

Section 3: Housing and Access to Services

Majority of the families on site use to live in rented apartments prior to earthquake. Only about 30 % have come from the districts directly. More than half of the site’s population do not sleep or cook or use services on site. They are only holding the space because they want to get hold of donations or relief items. A very few families come only to sleep out of fear of another earthquake and do not use any services on site.

Section 4: Intentions/Expectations

They are uncertain about the future. If the government forces them to evacuate, they will refuse and protest until the government designates a place for them to live in. If government or any agency can provide them a safe place, building or structure to live in they are ready to move. Those from the districts are not able to go back as of now due to risks of landslides and safety reasons, but intend to go back to their place of origin after the monsoon. They expect government and other agencies to offer help in reconstructing their houses.

Concluding Remark from the Participants:

Safe and affordable housing option is what the residents need to get out of here.
FOCUS GROUP 5

Participants: 8 Youths (Girls 17-20 years)
Age Group: 17-20 years
Level of education: 9th Grade to Bachelor’s

Section 1: Population Movement

Majority of the site residents are from inside the valley particularly of the close neighborhoods. They used to live in rented rooms prior to earthquake but now the houses are damaged and it is hard to find apartments to rent in previous localities, the rent these days has also escalated due to high demand post-earthquake. The recent families to arrive are from Sindhupalchowk districts. The main reasons for new people coming to the site are the attraction towards relief items and donations.

Section 2: Livelihoods

The main source of income of the residents prior to the earthquake was daily wage labor work in construction field or restaurants, which has lowered now post-earthquake. The restaurant business is slow and therefore less jobs. About 60% of the households are still holding daily wage labor works as a source of income. Villages have been literally destroyed by the earthquake; therefore there are more job opportunities in Kathmandu.

Section 3: Information on Housing and Access to services

Majority of IDPs living on site are from nearby localities that used to live in rented apartments. It is challenging to find an affordable apartment in the same area post-earthquake as many houses have been damaged, also the rent price has recently spiked. IDP’s do not want to go and live far away from where they used to live because they don’t want to disturb their kid’s school. Less than 5% of the total population has left as they have found a rented place to live.

Section 4: Intentions/ Expectations

Majority of the IDP’s doing not intend to return to their place of origin or habitual residence unless they are provided an affordable and safe housing options by the government or other organizations. For those who want to rebuild their houses, they are waiting for the government to provide at least partial funding or support in construction. Renting apartments has become extremely expensive for daily wage laborers and therefore are unable to move from there.

Concluding Remarks from the participants:

For the residents who have never lived in open spaces, living in a camp like this is already difficult, but it is even more difficult to find an affordable room to rent in the area.
FOCUS GROUP 6

Population: Mixed group of males and females from outside the valley

Age Group: 18 – 66 years

Education: None to Bachelor’s Degree

Section 1: Population Movement

Most IDPs that are on site are from inside the valley that used to live in the rented room. They came to the site right after the first earthquake of April 25. Those who have come from the districts have come here in reference to their relatives or friends in the area.

Newly arrived families have also come from inside Kathmandu Valley around Chucchepati area. There are real earthquake victims who are living on site, but more than half the population are not in need of any assistance, however they are living there just to get donations and access to relief items. More than half the families do not even sleep on site and come to the site only when donations are handed out. The SMC gives out cards to anybody who comes and sets up a tent on site.

Only a few families have left the site since it opened, as they have found rooms to rent. Those who have come directly from the districts have not moved at all.

Most IDPs that have come from the districts are from Nuwakot, Sindhupalchowk and Ramechhap.

Section 2: Livelihood

Agriculture, farming and livestock were the main source of livelihood for the Majority of IDPS from the districts; however for those from the valley, daily wage labor work in construction was the main source. About 80% of families have access to daily wage work. Post-earthquake, there has been an increase in job opportunities in construction and debris removal. Job opportunities are higher in Kathmandu than in the districts.

Families with relatively good source of income are also living on site as their houses are damaged and also there is fear of another earthquake.

Lack of labor, construction materials, and money are the preventing factors for IDPs to start rebuilding their houses

Section 3: Housing and Access to services

Majority of HHs used to live in rented apartments prior to earthquake. Now the rent price has jumped up and is unaffordable for low income families of the daily wage laborers. Those from the districts owned a house and some land which they will not be able to rebuild until the end of monsoon as aftershocks are still being reported and there is a risk of landslide. About 40% of the IDPs sleep and access services at the site, about 60% sleep elsewhere, in their rented rooms but come to the site only when there are relief distributions going on.
Section 4: Intentions/Expectations

The residents of the site have no intention to return to their place of origins as for those who have come from the districts their land has been swept away by landslides and their villages have huge cracks. Those who are from the valley won’t move unless they get to rent rooms close by in an affordable cost.

They expect the government to help them find affordable housing in the area and would not move from the site unless their demands are met. If the notice is issued for evacuation, they will resist.

Concluding Remarks from the Participants:

There are many families living on site who are not earthquake victims which means that they own houses or live in rented rooms but come here only during the relief distribution. Real earthquake victims should be properly identified and those who are not victims must be asked to leave for proper management.