**Background**

In initial of 2020, Nepal has transmitted COVID-19 in February 2020 from Nepalese student who travelled back home from Wuhan, China. Then it had gradually increased. Until last July, most of cases identified were among the people who came from India and abroad. Due to overwhelming influx of people in 20 Port of Entries (PoEs) throughout the nation sharing open boarder with India, near about 0.6 million Nepalese returned home. Few stayed in holding centres for certain days whereas most of them directly went home. It also intensified the cases in districts.

Nepal Government declared a complete lockdown since end of March. During the lockdown, the cases of COVID-19 was limited with slow increase and a trend of decrease after a certain point. However, after releasing the lockdown, the number of cases has been increasing as if like Nepal has entered the 2nd wave in the pandemic. But expert says; “Nepal is doing test under target/day so that we can’t see full pictures of COVID-19”. The government data reflects the increased death toll since last month and is rapidly increasing. Community people are scared with the rise in cases including the death toll which depicts the start of community transmission.

**Monsoon Updates**

Since July 2020, due to heavy rainfall and landslide in different part of country, more than 192 deaths, 71 missing and 120 injured has been reported by Disaster Management Department, NRCS till 17 August 2020. It has also displaced more than 8,087 households and directly affected more than 20,440 households. Nepal Meteorological Department predicts active monsoon for some time which may lead to come.

The affected communities are in immediate need of life saving items for emergency water, hygiene items. The numbers of affected has been increasing day by day as some of the affected area with challenging to access. NRCS has been responding to the landslides and flood in affected areas following the safety and security measures against COVID-19. The affected communities are in immediate need of life saving items such as tarpaulin, shelter, safe drinking and ready to eat food. NRCS through its 77 district chapters is relentlessly serving the mandate of Government of Nepal.

As per plan, NRCS is prepared and is responding affected people through its pre-stock materials and is in position for cleaning the affected hand pumps and water sources, construction of emergency toilets, water treatment and WASH relief items including shelter NFIRs.
SUJAN PARIYAR (31) resident of Pokhara Metropolitan City is very happy to see most of the people of his community to be well informed about the appropriate steps of hand washing, using a mask, gloves, and sanitizers. People practice hygienic behaviors and also motivates their guests to wash hands properly with soap and water before entering their home. Previously, community used to wash their hands with water only, but now they not only use soap but also does follow the procedure. Involvement of Sujan in NRCS program has developed the confidence to uplift the personal behavior. In his opinion, apart from various risks and challenges, the occurrence of COVID-19 has been a turning point for his community to adapt hand washing practice frequently.

'I extend my heartfelt thanks to Red Cross for being actively engaged for a humanitarian response even in this difficult situation and provided equal opportunities to put our skill in practice’, Sujan says.

Initiation for landless people during COVID-19

NRCS has been implementing ‘Strengthening Urban Resilience and Engagement (SURE) programme’ in seven municipalities from Kathmandu, Lalitpur, Bhaktapur, Kaski and Kailali districts since 2016. The programme has been engaging landless people through different programme activities. Landless people are at the risk of fire because of shack settlements and unmanaged electrical lines. Besides, community of landless peoples were facing challenges such as lack of water supplies for firefighting and under-supply of drinking water from the very beginning. With the objective to cope with fire-induced disasters and drinking water problem, NRCS supported in installation of two water tanks each with capacity of 5,000 liters at Sangam tole, Kathmandu Metropolitan City ward no. 26. More than hundred households have been benefited through the water tanks.

So far, 1,010,431 people have been disseminating IEC materials and information on proper hand washing steps, use of masks, gloves, and sanitizers. During this lockdown, Red Cross volunteers are vigorously involved in different campaigns with disseminating IEC materials and information on proper hand washing steps, use of masks, gloves, and sanitizers.

"After installation of hand washing station, we are feeling somewhat safe from corona virus. We come to water tank station for fetching drinking water for our house. This hand washing station build the confidence level because we wash our hand first and fill the drinking water in jar. Similarly, we have learnt the hand washing steps through champions and now we have developed the hand washing habit. Sometimes our children also come along with us for getting the water and they also have learnt about hand washing skills and they wash their hand regularly. Thanks to Nepal Red Cross for this great work and making us realize the importance of hand washing," says Gopal Lama, user.

Effect of pandemic in the community. NRCS is vigorously working in awareness session which has led to increase of knowledge on frequent hand washing, physical distancing as well as safe sanitization and hygiene behaviors. Even children these days have learnt the behavior and are transferring their skills and knowledge to their parents.

Gopal Lama, user.
Relief distribution in Sindhupalchowk

UNICEF and NRCS joint monitoring at PoE, Banke, Nepalgunj

Contactless handwashing station and bathing space for male in Birtamode PoE, Mahottari

Hygiene Promotion session for COVID-19, Salyan

Hygiene kit distribution in quarantine, Nepalgunj, Banke

Different organization providing joint services in Point of Entry, Banke
Nepal is one of the countries where the very first corona virus (COVID-19) case was found much later and had a sufficient time for risk minimization. On January 13, Government of Nepal (GoN) confirmed the 1st case of COVID-19 and the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) sensing the possibility of communal outbreak and its serious implications, GoN declared a complete lockdown on 24 March 2020 which is in solidarity with the WHO declaration of public health emergency of international concern. However, series of measures should be taken into consideration as this crisis may go beyond the capacity of our country.

International solidarity is required to ensure that the country is fully prepared to face the pandemic and address its impact in all sectors. Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) being a pioneer in WASH interventions in Nepal, has prepared a one-day orientation package of “WASH Risk Communication” with target participants ranging from staffs, volunteers to community people. This package has been prepared on the basis of guidelines from GoN and WHO that is based on the trends and developments of the global COVID-19 pandemic risk minimization. This orientation package is aimed to produce trained human resource which will be capable to disseminate the knowledge on risk minimization.

A risk minimization practice on COVID-19 is mainly based on dos and don’ts of the basic hygiene practices for all people. COVID-19 transmission can be minimized by following certain practices like physical distancing, coughing hygiene, nutritious diet intake, remaining in self-quarantine/quarantine, isolation and practising safe hygiene and sanitation practice during field mobilization. Risk minimization must be done in places where there is possibility of mass gathering such as banks, malls, public places, public transportation including ambulance, hospitals, offices and even homes. This training package shall be the stepping stone in NRCS WASH interventions as it will provide the dominant role in the sector of health, hygiene and sanitation.

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All NRCS actions related to COVID-19 are in line with GON MOHP, HEOC guideline and initiatives. NRCS province offices, district chapters and sub-chapters have remained in close contact with local authorities and supporting their plan for quarantine, isolation and holding site assessment, establishment and management. Participation in district disaster management committee meeting in all districts. Participation in WASH cluster meeting (national and provincial) and other meetings such as media interaction programme.

https://covid19.mohp.gov.np/#/
http://www.hydrology.gov.np/#/?k=vjscz2
www.nrcs.org
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http://watsanmissionassistant.org/
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Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Promotion

Water Bottle
114,708 Distributed

Emergency Latrine
10 Constructed

Hygiene Kit
568 Distributed

Soap Bar
35,501 Distributed

Hand Washing Station
766 Constructed

Bucket
4,648 Distributed

Hygiene Promotion
8,561 Reached

Disinfection
Supported in disinfection of public vehicles travelling in districts, quarantine sites and public places.

Update as on 17th August, 2020
Source: NRCS Daily Sitrep