

## **Community Awareness Centers (CACs) facilitating income generation activity: Manufacturing of Candles locally**

Maya BK, a member of the Srijansil Citizens' Awareness Center (CAC) of the Thulipokhari VDC of Parbat district opines on the benefits of CAC "Prior to the establishment of CAC, we were unaware on how to work in groups and take benefits from each other. Three members of CAC taught us skills of manufacturing candles. It has been a very economically viable skill."

In 2068 BS as per the strategy of LGCDP, the assessment of the social and economic condition of the VDC was carried out by VDC leadership and with the involvement of INPRED, a local service provider. On the basis of that analysis, Ward Citizen Forums (WCFs) were formed in all 9 wards. Similarly, the ward number 4 of the VDC was identified as the ward having most dalits and economically poor people. Hence, a CAC was formed and named SRIJANSIL CITIZENS' AWARENESS CENTER.

The social mobilizer assigned from LGCDP facilitated during the meetings of CAC to explore local income generation opportunities. After much discussion and exploration of relevant income generation opportunities, candle manufacturing was mutually agreed upon. The CAC had 3 members who had already been trained in manufacturing candles from a skill development center in Pokhara.

The VDC council of Thulipokhari VDC approved the proposal prepared by CAC for manufacturing candles by CAC members in coordination with WCF and received fund of NRs. 20,000. CAC already invested NRs. 15,000 from the budget it received for CAC management from LGCDP. The machine for manufacturing candle was made available after the Chief of the Cottage and Small Industries Development Board (CSIDB) approved the proposal.

The trained CAC members coached other members of the CAC on manufacturing candles and first batch was made in the month of Bhadra 2069 BS. The candles were sold at a worth of NRs. 30,000 in the VDC and neighboring village. The VDC provided additional NRs. 20,000 in 2070 for up scaling this initiative. The CAC increased the volume of the production. In 2070 BS, CAC sold candles worth NRs. 50,000.

SRNANSIL CITIZEN AWARENESS CENTER has now been putting its efforts to institutionalize the candle manufacturing factory. The story of candle manufacture from Thulipokhari VDC has set a good example for other communities looking to create economic opportunities. The coordinator of the CAC Ms. Sita B.K shares the further plan "We have plans to manage an outlet in Kushma, the district headquarters. We will run it as a medium size enterprise in our village. In addition to this, we have plans to manage one full time dedicated person for marketing of our

product." The candles manufactured by Srijansil Citizens' Awareness Center have been preferred by the locals and other neighboring VDCs because of the quality.