

Floods leave Sarlahi farmers worried

A torrential rain across the country has caused floods and landslides in various parts of the country. The southern districts of Nepal were submerged for some days. Terai which is famously known as food basket of Nepal is badly hit by the floods. According to Manoj Sah, head of District Agriculture Development Office (DADO) of Sarlahi, 6,9,30 hectares paddy field has been swept away by the recent floods. Almost 75% of paddy fields of Sarlahi were swept away. Mostly paddy fields of Mahinathpur, Harkathwa, Dhangadha, Bailhi, Dhankaul, Khairba Balra, Sundarpur, Shreepur, Bhadsar, Kaudena, Sakrol and Belhi rural municipality has been affected by the floods. These paddy fields have turned into barren land.



Similarly, 700 hectares of Maize, 500 hectares of vegetables were completely destroyed. The pisciculture in 400 hectares of Bhaktipur, Chandranagar and Padariya rural municipality has been ruined. According to Sadhu Chaudhary he bore a loss of Rs 40 lakhs for the fish of his ponds was swept away by the floods caused by swollen Lakhandehi River. He is worried that he could not pay the loan back. He stated that years of hard work had gone in vain because of the flooding. In recent times the pisciculture has flourished in the districts of Terai. The flood has demoralized the farmers who were attracted to pisciculture in recent years.

Laxman Ray, a farmer from Dhangadha, said that he never had to buy rice from stores for his family's consumption. However, this year he will have to purchase rice and that too at a higher price. He also stated that this year paddy farming was possible only by using water pumps that were also swept away by the floods. He is worried about how he will manage two meals a day for his family. Everyday there is a big queue of farmers in the District Agriculture Development Office to apply for compensation which the government has announced for flood affected farmers. Although the third phase of local polls, provincial and parliamentary elections are nearing the farmers are not concerned about it. They are worried about how they

will feed their family this year. How long will they depend on the support of the government and the national and international non-governmental organizations?



The government must ensure that flood affected farmers get due compensations without delay and any hassles. The government has not initiated any effort to adopt long term measures to prevent flooding in the Terai. Neither has the government any preparedness to deal with the tragedy of floods. Member of National Human Rights Commission Mohna Ansari recently wrote an article in the Kantipur stating that the government authorities did not have any resources and preparedness to deal with the floods. Floods have damaged people's granaries where the people had stored their rice, wheat and other grains. The government needs to do two things- first the government needs to take adequate measures to put in place measures needed to prevent losses from floods including the advanced warning systems across the Terai and secondly the government should establish a separate high level authority just like National Reconstruction Authority to provide adequate compensation to the flood affected farmers of the southern plains.

