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Encountering Bereavement

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Nepal was struck by an earthquake on Baisakh 12, 2072 that was measured as 7.8 Richter scale. It turned out to be one of the most devastating earthquakes recorded in the history of Nepal where more than 8 thousand people lost their lives. As the epicenter for earthquake was Gorkha district, its effect was high in that area. The fear of earthquake is still looming, and in the mean time we were called upon by HERD to work as a field researcher in Gorkha district for Rapid Structural (Technical) School Assessment project. As it was a wonderful opportunity, I decided to be the part of the project.

Juna Devi English Boarding school is one of the private schools of Gorkha which used to conduct their classes on Saturday and was closed on Wednesday. When we observed the building, we came to know that earlier the school had two floors and was made up of brick and mud. When we reached the school and met the principal, he recalled the terrifying moment when the disaster took place, *“We were running regular classes that day, but all of a sudden everything started to shake. All the students and teachers were inside the classroom and staff room”*.



The situation was even worse as the young children in the classroom were not aware about what was happening and how to react. All they could feel was a quiver. So, the staff members without losing their confidence helped the students to come out of the building and gathered in the ground. After a minute, the walls and the roofs of the school building started to collapse. However, no one was hurt and all the students were safe. The young children were frightened and started to cry while other students and staffs were stunned. After sometime, the parents came and took their children and were very happy to see them safe. With a sigh of relief, the principal said, *“May be God was with us. If we would have been a minute late, then we would have lost many lives. We are lucky that we survived”*.