

WOMEN'S INITIATION TO FIGHT AGAINST
VICTIMIZATION OF WOMEN

VICTIM WOMEN'S FORUM



INFORMAL SECTOR SERVICE CENTRE (INSEC)
Kathmandu, Nepal.

WOMEN'S INITIATION TO FIGHT AGAINST WOMEN'S VICTIMIZATION

A Report of VICTIM WOMEN'S FORUM

**FEB. 12-15, 1993
NEPALGUNJ**



**INFORMAL SECTOR SERVICE CENTRE
(INSEC)**

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FEW WORDS FROM THE ORGANIZERS

When late Prakash Kaphley was with us, we had conceptualized and discussed on the need of organizing a forum on "victim women". As a first step we organized such forum in Nepalgunj. The objective of the forum was to organize a gathering of victim women from various parts of the country and bringout their respective cases of victimization. This forum was also targetted to bring the operating NGOs and donor organizations closer to the problems of women victims.

As in other parts of the world, Nepali women too are behind their male counterparts almost in every sphares. We have been repeatedly told so by our politicians and educated elites. But nobody has paid closer attention to the sufferings of women and hardly there is any initiation to relieve their sufferings.

Forty percent of Nepali females get married before they are fourteen years old. Nepal ranks number one among the South Asian countries in terms of child marriage. Mainly the tradition we have inherited and values we share are to be blamed for the hard days a women face in the house of her husband. Our traditional beliefs has, regrettably, caused buying and selling of women in Jari system and offering of the girls to the god in "Kumari" and "Dewaki" system. These ill traditions have opened the path of sexual exploitation of women.

Economic deprivation has also been the cause of Women victimization. Trafficking of women from Nepalese villages to abroad for prostitution is going unabated. An estimate puts the number of Nepalese women working in Indian brothels to be around two hundred thousands. 40% of prostitutes in India are Nepalese women and it is horrific to note that 40% of them is said to test HIV positive. Few days back Mr. Binod Gupta, secretary of "Savadhan", a voluntary social organization from India told that there were 25000 Nepali prostitutes in Bombay alone.

Prostitution and rape cases are on increase within the country too. The number of prostitutes in Kathmandu alone is estimated to be 5000.

The Badi females of Gagangunj of Nepalgunj already in flesh trade are now looking for alternative profession. Even the administration under the present democratic system has not been able to bring them out from the inhumane and immoral practices. Coercive control measures would not yeild results. The solution is to provide suitable alternatives for employment. But due to the incompetence of central and local administration many Badi girl child born to unidentified fathers are being tortured and compelled to adopt prostituion.

Badi people say that they originate from Salyan, Phalawang, their ancestral place. They say earlier, they used to dance and sing in the palaces of Salyan king. They used to make living through the Bakshish (*Gift given for pleasing with the performances*). As the local kingship was eradicated the Badi families spread to different parts of the country. It is presently estimated that there are more than 200,000 Badis specially concentrating on Banke, Bardiya, Dang, Kailali, Surkhet and Rukum.

Badi women eventually turned to the prostitution when they started giving birth to children of unknown fathers. Their profession was otherwise confined to give dancing and singing performances. Badis in other parts of the country are not in such profession. Gangangunj with the Badi population has been a synonymous to prostitution. It is totally unfair. The authorities should rehabilitate the women who once were dancer or singers and compelled to be prostitutes by the society.

Before unification of Nepal, Doti was ruled by a powerful king Nagimalla. In a part of his kingdom, now known as Dadeldhura, there used to be a god Vageswore. When the king started insulting the god, there was catastrophe in the area. The legend is that Nagimalla then started deputing girls at the service of the god. This started the ill tradition of Dewaki system. These days some of the district in far western Nepal has a tradition of offering girls at the service of god. They do so in order to please the god expecting a favour to fulfill their wishes. The girls so offered are either the offerer's own daughter or the one purchased from others. She should be below ten years and once offered she cannot marry. The Dewaki are sexually exploited that they are equivalent to prostitutes. Devaki usually are from the Nayak, Negi, Rawat, Dhimi or Devakas tribes. Such girls so offered are 6 to 9 years old. The girls to be offered to the god are usually bought from Mellauli VDC of Baitadi district for Rs. 10000 or more. Majority come to know about them being sold or offered to the god only after they are grown up.

Another tradition that contributes to victimise women is the Jari system. Under this system, when engaged for marriage or married women elopes to second man, the pair have to pay compensation to the former husband or finance. The amount of Jari is fixed by the former husband. All the jewellery and clothings belonging to her should also be returned to the first husband. In Chandranath VDC of Jumla district, a farmer when married a woman who was married too but already discarded by a police Hawaldhar, had to pay twenty two thousands rupees. Jari system, even today, is deeply rooted in the society of Jumla district. There are sporadic Jari cases in other parts of the districts as well.

Growing industry and urbanization is also becoming cause of women sufferings. A cement factory established in Chovar in 1974 has adversely affected the local environment. All the residents are suffering from the pollution. Some 100 families have been the acute sufferers, the intensity of female sufferings is more than of their male counterparts.

Carpet industry which has emerged as major foreign exchange earner in the recent years, has equally become the cause of women sufferings. Girl children are pervertedly exploited in the factory. And also the grown up females are not only have less pay for their work but face sexual harassment and exploitation. A study done by Child Workers in Nepal (CWIN) has revealed that 45 percent of total female workers face sexual excesses in the work place itself.

A study conducted by Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC) within a span of eleven months has revealed that some 31% of eighteen thousand Bonded Labour of Bardiya, Kailali and Kanchapur district has borrowed Saunki or loan. Obviously more than five thousand bonded labour are living a life of a hell. They neither understand the meaning of freedom nor they can ever enjoy it. Other extreme part of women exploitation is that a bonded labour has to be meek spectator when his newly married wife is consumed by the landlord. The innocent Tharu girls who are impregnated by the landlord has to be accepted quietly by the males. Only very favourable landlords grant a 10-12 days maternity leave during her delivery to a bonded women labour. All day and night work and very destitute life has become reality of their survival. A visit to Kanara of Bardiya district where homeless bonded labour dwell, will reveal on their sufferings.

The culmination of people's movement in 1990 had overthrown the Panchayat system. Even before, many warriors had lost their lives in their struggle against Panchayat. Today the wife or dependants of the martyrs are claiming that the politicians are becoming stingy and have grossly neglected them. The wife of a noted martyr has presented her case in the forum which shall compel the politicians to think twice on the situation.

There are many other causes of women victimization. We have covered only the above mentioned areas. In our programme we have not limited ourselves in the survey and investigation. We have deviated from the traditional pattern and focussed on the victim women themselves. We have endeavoured to give the narration of victim women by themselves and presented their own point of view.

We had envisaged to include women victims of Jari, Devaki, Kumari system and also to include Badi women. Similarly victim of social injustice like Bonded labour women, victims of economic deprivation and urbanization, prostitutes and AIDS victims and Carpet victims. Victims of Developments causing degradation of environment was to be represented by women sufferers from Himal Cement Factory, Chovar.

Although, owing to different reasons, we could not solicit participation of Kumari and AIDS victims, but the enthusiasm of women to represent their concern and active participation has been quite encouraging. We are dispassionately looking forward to the redressal of the victims cases from government and non-governmental organizations. There may be many shortcomings and mistakes from our part as organizers. But we can conclusively claim that we have moved a step forward in the right direction.

We have yet to decide many things on strategies and actions for the initiation made with the "Victim Women's Forum". We think the path will be much more clear when we receive the reaction or interest on the product of the forum after the publication of this report.

I have to thank some of my colleagues for the completion of the forum. Starting from the days when late Prakash was among us, Meena Sharma enthusiastically involved herself in organizing the forum for which I should thank her.

I should thank Renu Upreti, Shanti Chaudhary, Parbati Pandey, Ganga Kasaju, Lata Pyakurel, Manju Thapa, Santosh Pyakurel, Shisam Mishra for compiling group reports. Further I should thank Ramesh Baniya for providing organizational supports. Similarly participant victim women and other participants should be heartily thanked.

I should appreciate active involvement of the co-sponsor Social Awareness for Education. The help of Dilip Pariyar from the organization contributed to the successful organization of the programme. Kabita Aryal, who contributed in the earlier part of preparation of the forum, should also be thanked. Similarly my thanks also goes to Ms. Hadewych Van Kempen.

Last, but not the least, I should thank Kundan Aryal, journalist, for editing group reports and compiling into the main report.

Sushil Pyakurel

Coordinator

Informal Sector Service Centre
(INSEC)

VICTIM WOMEN'S FORUM :

PREPARATION

We had decided to organize victim women's forum, a gathering of victimized women in 1992 itself. INSEC had conceived this idea in order to get involved in relieving the sufferings of women in our society. However, the programme slated to be held within the first half of 1992 could not be held then owing to different reasons.

We, Kabita Aryal and myself, had taken the responsibility to prepare for the forum. We had to workout on the modality of the programme and had to contact the victimized women in their respective places. We started preparing from November 1992. On our first visit, we went to meet the women residing around the cement factory in Chovar. Kabita and myself entered the village for the first time although it was located in between a famous shrine Dakhinkali and the city of Kathmandu. None of the NGOs were also found operating in the place. Thus we were lacking any network in the area and were to find out the contact person. Then we entered into a tea stall in front of the factory gate. We put forward our queries and were afraid of being rejected, as common people usually had not favourable opinion about the NGOs. Later on we came to know that many people had been there with the false assurances. They said "we are totally fed up by telling our stories but none of them (who had heard our stories) has done nothing to relieve our sufferings" We had hard time to convince the new people in the new place about our programme. As the date and venue for the programme was not yet decided, we informed them of our tentative programme. Sanu, with whom we were talking was student of some college in Kathmandu. She advised us to contact Ankam Karmacharya. We talked with Ankam didi (sister) who is a member of ACFOD, an NGO, with which INSEC is also affiliated. She assisted us to make our task easy. She seemed to be affiliated on other social activities as well. She used to let us contact the local females sometimes by herself and sometimes through others. Besides, we also used to contact local female directly. In our five visits to Chovar, we almost covered all the women in the locality who were competent enough to tell their cases. Thus we had covered women of different ages and groups.

We also contacted administrations of the factory. We had prepared a questionnaire for information collection. Later on, two old women from the area represented the Nepalgunj forum.

Similarly, we collected personal cases of victim women from carpet

factories and political victims in the vicinity of Kathmandu. Then on November 5, 1992 we started to Lama village of Nuwakot district to collect personal case of a rape victim. Her story was published in some newspapers and Kabita had contacted her when the victim had come to Kathmandu.

The next morning we started for Shikharbesi, Samundratar with Ram Sharan Pyakurel, INSEC's volunteer of Nuwakot district. There we had to contact women who had returned from Bombay. They were cheated and trafficked to India for prostitution. They were hesitant to talk with us suspecting that we were government's people. Through local help we were successful to contact number of India returnees. We spend five days with them in the village.

By then we had already decided on the venue and date for the programme. After completing the study on the trafficked women's issue, we had to cover the study on victims of Devaki system, Badi community, victims of family violence and bonded women. But Kabita, after the Nuwakot visit, could not spare time to continue with as she had to get involved in her study.

During the later part of preparation, Hadewych Van Kempen, a Dutch student involved herself and contributed actively in the preparation. Kempen and myself visited western Nepal on 24 November 1992 for study. INSEC had its network in the area which made our task easier. We could reach to the real victims with the assistance of INSEC volunteers and other active members. Visit to victims of Devaki system was rather not easy as in the case of bonded labour and Badi women. Our study visit coincided with the training programme for INSEC's district volunteers. We reached Mahendranagar of Kanchanpur district via Kailali. There we contacted bonded labour women during our three days stay. Kedar Chandra Bhatta, INSEC volunteer for Baitadi district promised us to take us among Dewakis of Mellauli VDC. Kedar, Hadewych, Dasarath Budathoki (INSEC volunteer for Far Western Region) and myself started to Baitadi. The years old bus, which frequently break, took us slowly along the dusty road and finally we reached Patan, a place near Baitadi. Upon our enquiry we were told that to walk from Patan to Mellauli is the swiftest way.

On 3 December 1992 we came to a retail shop belonging to Krishna Sing Nayak which was in the Mellauli VDC. A small gathering already sprout to see a foreigner together with other three of us.

Even though we were tired, we started to talk on Dewakis. The youths gathered there were not willing to talk about the Dewaki system. But it became clear to us that the system is still thriving.

Next day we had the programme to meet Dewakis personally. But it became very difficult to do as we had planned. The Dewakis were already bored and vexed by the visits from outsiders and were not willing to co-operate fully. We spend our time before the Mellauli temple (where Dewakis are offered) on discussing on the issue. It took half of the day to convince the local people to share

their stories. Till the evening we could talk with three Dewakis personally. Local dialect, although Nepali was not easily understandable. The Dewakis did not like to reveal whole of their story. They asked us not to publish their names and discriptions. The same evening a Dewaki contacted us to tell the story of her sufferings. The males, using their dialect were insisting her not to divulge her story. Still she had continued. It became easier from the day after.

Thus with some fear and some difficulties we prepared for the programme. We tried to include cases of maximum number of women in our study. Among them few women who were able to express their cases better were selected. We had selected women of different age, with different family backgrounds and various educational levels. It was done in order to enable them to put across their own cases in their own way. We were to some extent successful too.

We used to show the ways and means to those women who were interested and able to attend the programme. We visited some places again. For far off and remote places we used other means of contact. In many places we could contact the women through INSEC networks. Some victim women were fetched to the forum in Nepalgunj by INSEC volunteers themselves.

We had planned to bring two women victims from each issue, representing victims of social, cultural, economic, environmental and family violence. These are the areas from where women are victimized in an organized way.

“Victim Women’s Forum” has thus been organized. Preparation, in this sense is successful. But the forum organized in Nepalgunj itself is a preparation for a broader campaign. We have still a lot to do to relieve the sufferings of victim women. Our preparation must go on.

Meena Sharma

Women’s Section, INSEC

INITIAL CONCEPT OF VICTIM FORUM

Victim's Forum for women is set up for victimized women of our society. The basic concept of this is provided by Prakash Kaphley. As he is not with us, we are organizing the programme on his honor. The programme will keep rotating among SAARC countries. So, in our next turn we may come out with victimized cases from other sectors as well.

The basic concept of the programme is to make a platform for the victimized women. It should be such a platform which gives equal opportunities to victimized women of every cast, creed and sector to speak out their untold suffering and problems. In other words the object is to motivate them to realise their position of being oppressed and dominated. It is an Universal truth that change or justice won't come till the victims realise their position and struggle for it. It is also important that the basic concept of their needs, as can be fulfilled by the NGO movement, should come from victims themselves. . A "victimized woman" is a vague idea. Women in our society are the victims of everything. So, to be specific we have invited women of the mentioned sectors below on the platform to speak out. They are:

(1) Victims of Tradition:

- Jari
- Badeni
- Dewaki
- Kumari

(2) Victims of Social Injustice:

- Bonded Women

(3) Victims of Economic Deprivation and Urbanization:

- Prostitutes\Aids patients
- Carpet weavers

(4) Victims of Developmental\Enviromental Degradation:

- Women in Cement factories

Above mentioned women live in different parts of the country. But we did visit each area and talked with women and with local people.

We are also hopeful that the Victim's Forum will bring out unnoticed cases of victimization of women. People from different sectors, i.e., NGOs and Press are participating in the workshop. The issues will get wider publicity and concrete programmes in order to overcome women suffering may be launched.

WOMEN'S INITIATION TO FIGHT AGAINST WOMEN VICTIMIZATION VICTIM WOMEN'S FORUM

FEB. 12-15, 1993
NEPALGUNJ

PROGRAMME INTRODUCTION:

A FORUM for victim women was sponsored by Informal Sector Service Center (INSEC). It was held in Nepalgunj for four days starting from 12th February 1993. The venue was Local Development Training Center in Mahendranagar. As per the schedule, victim women arrived in Nepalgunj on 12th February to attend the forum. Subsequently on the next day they all were taken to the bank of Kanara river where the displaced people were dwelling in their hutments. The victim women, 26 in number got an opportunity to discuss their views and share their grief with the local bonded and homeless female labours who obviously were also victims.

This forum was organized in order to enable the victim women to empathetically understand and learn from the suffering of others through a free



(Victim Women from different parts - Discussing about their problems during Nepalgunj Programme)

and frank disclosure of each one's cases. After their return from Kanara, they had chats in a common room in Nepalgunj. After dinner they were shown movies, as per their interest. The theme of the movies were on social development.

The formal part of the programme was held on the 14th and 15th of February 1993. The proceedings of the two day forum are as follows.



FIRST DAY

FIRST SESSION:

The programme began at 10 o'clock in the morning. Opening the forum, Mr. Sushil Pyakurel, co-ordinator, INSEC highlighted on the objectives of organizing the forum.

"This programme might have given opportunity to understand and share the sufferings of others which by itself, I believe, relieves the agony to some extent. The representation of victimized women from various regions of the country indicates that the excesses and crimes committed against women are widespread. This gathering hopefully, will promote the urge for mutual co-operation and will increase the goodwill for the cause of victim". He further said "this forum is also meant to bring together the operating NGO's nearer to the problems of the victim women. This venue may be utilized to launch programme beneficial to the victims."

He further added "many foreign NGOs have been working for the cause of women upliftment. It is expedient to see whether such programmes have reached to the real victim women. It is very important to be concerned to understand, what type of assistance the victim themselves are in need".

He highlighted on the need of having extensive discussion between the NGOs and programme participants to identify and implement assistance programmes".

The stage for the forum was set in the central area of the training hall. The victim women took the seats arranged in the shape of letter "L" and the opposite sides were occupied by NGO representatives and observers.

After the programme highlight, a minute of silence was observed in order to pay homage to late Prakash Kaphley. Late Kaphley had initiated this forum. Mr. Pyakurel said "Prakash proposed to organize such forum long before. However, we had difficulty in accomplishing it in time. We are determined to complete the programmes initiated by him and give continuity to his concepts and ideas on preserving and promoting human rights and dignity"

The organizers had expected to receive maximum initiation and response from the participants themselves, so no strict pre-set schedule was followed. The participants themselves were incharge to enhance the proceedings. Moreover, they were structured to discuss on the following specific issues-

- Whether or not such forum is needed for future
- Whether or not a liaison agency or a co-ordinating committee is needed.
- Was there any need of encouraging agencies working in different sectors to come with additional programmes related to victim women

After the initial discussion, formal introduction was held between the participating victims. Mr. Sushil Pyakurel highlighted on the areas from where they had participated. After the short introduction of each participants, Mr. Pyakurel requested the victim women to express without any inhibition. He said "please tell your sufferings through your own words. Concealing the problems or fear to express is not the solution."

Addressing the participating women Mr. Pyakurel said "we, the persons sitting before you are nowhere superior, knowledgeable or better than you. All are equal. We, all sitting in the seats opposite to you are your partners, we are the members of your society you must understand that. You are not the cause of your victimized position. Our society i.e. Nepali society, is male dominated. There is someone to blame for a mistake or wrongful act. We must try to identify such person or situation. I don't see any mistake made by a woman, when she is lured and taken to Indian brothels, she is not the one to be blamed. Why nobody realizes that there she is deprived of her basic rights to life. After she is back home she is ostracized from her society. The life of a woman is closely intertwined to that of a man. The males have, in many cases, responsible to spoil the life of females. However, the male is protected by society. Male to a large extent is responsible to the ill traditions and excesses against women in Nepalese society. Please wake up and let's be prepared to fight against such social evils"

The first session of the first day ended with his remark "our colleagues have made ardent effort to bring you together in this forum. Ms. Manju Thapa has fetched a Jari (A system where a women have to pay for remarrying) victim from Jumla (A remote district in Nepal). Similarly Ramesh Baniya has beautifully provided management supports required to organize this forum.

Lastly, Meena Sharma threw light on the difficulties faced while organizing the forum. She thanked all attending participants, representatives and observers.

Participating representatives together with interested participant victims, discussed on the topics and contents for the succeeding sessions. The remaining sessions was conducted according the modality determined by the forum.

FIRST DAY

SECOND SESSION:

During the second session victim women presented their personal cases of victimization.

1. Political Victims:

- a) Name : Jivan Ghimire
Age : 40 years
Address : Dhumbarai, kathmandu, ph no. 221620
Representing issue : Political victim

" Political parties have not given any responsible position to the females compared to that given to the males."

I am representing those Panchayat victims who have lost their husband or other relatives and also of other woman political sufferers. I am hereby describing the story of our sufferings. I am telling how the present government or political parties have been assisting or honouring for the sacrifice they had made.

From the days as early as 1951, women participated in and contributed to the political movement. They participated in the secret meetings and protest rallies. Also the female are those who release males from the household responsibilities and encourage their participation in the political movement. The women thus, have lost their husband and other dear ones. Is not it a sacrifice? But the women do not get justice for their contribution. Males have always dominated the political parties and government. Political parties have not given any responsible position to the females compared to that given to the males.

Hundreds of cadres of the political party which is now in power had fought the struggle for democracy. Devi Prasad is one of such martyr. He was killed by military in 1962. He was arrested when his co-worker deserted and reported him to the police. At the time he was in exile to Acham (Nepal) when the political parties were banned in 1961. He was killed brutally. A hot tripod stand was

passed through the head and bullets were fired indiscriminately on him. All his property was confiscated. His family members were beaten and kicked out from their own house. Surprisingly enough such victim is not enlisted as a martyr. I am of the opinion that recognizing a martyr should not be politicalized. When such a martyr is not enlisted what comes of other political workers who have lost their lives during the 32 years of Panchayat rule. His son brought out their grievances with tears "we were known when our father was alive. Today nobody recognizes us. Our sacrifice is now lost in oblivion"

Government communication medias publicize the economic assistance given to the families of martyr and their children given education. Opposition leaders also have the same rhetoric. But such assistance has not reached to the victims.



Obviously, not all the martyr's family members can be in the leading front. But those who could come in front seem to have forgotten the people behind. The word "martyr's family" frequently appears in publications. I don't know whether such indifference is due to the dwarfing of "martyr's family's problems by other national and international issues. Those families are not even getting any moral or verbal sympathy. In the difficult period worriers were dragged out from their houses. Many made sacrifices for their country. Today nobody spare time to care of their families. In those days very few dared to lift the flag of struggle. I used to lead the March 8 -women's day rallies. I was once arrested by being incirculed by a number of policemen. Many people then lost their lives through state brutality.

When a person is asked to sacrifice for his country, the concerned political parties and the Nation should duly care his/her family. I don't think the democratic government is serious enough in this regard. The dependents of the

martyrs have not received any concrete assistance. The government and opposition have chosen to keep mum.

Last year, Forum for Protection of Human Rights approached our locality to prepare a report of the people who were killed or were missing in the struggle for democracy since 1951. I assisted the search in my area. Facts were available only on 2-4 persons. As far as I know, there were many people from our area who struggled against Panchayat rule. But now where are their families gone? If such search has been continued and their stories publicized well, then the facts on martyrs could have come forward.

We are remembered in public meetings, processions as members of martyr family. Practically we don't receive any assistance. Last year I was hospitalized in Kathmandu for surgery but failed to receive any support. But I have heard that there is fund available to support martyr's family on medicines. My daughter is a T.B. patient. I am receiving assistance from nowhere.

I am not standing here only as a wife of a martyr. I also have fought for the rights of the women and for the welfare of the country. I am sorry to note that our contribution is not evaluated anywhere. Even the party we have been affiliated has failed to do so. Women are brought forward during struggle or in adverse situations. But when the question of national leadership or that of party position comes they are simply ignored. In the public forum, the leaders speak on the exploitation of women and also promise to recognize their due place. In practice it is not done so. When women are not given a responsible role, women's liberation becomes a far-cry and equality of women is remote.

b) Name : Bishnu Poudyal
Age : 35 years
Address : Dharna VDC, ward no. 3, Sisaipur, Dang
Representing issue: Political victim

"The political party under which my husband sacrificed his life, also has not cared"

After the advent of multiparty system I got released from service. The problem of our children are same. I am being invited to speak on public meetings. But our main problem of poverty is unaddressed.

I do farming in a piece of unregistered hilly land. I can grow barely enough to feed my four children. They have yet to receive education. I have received Rs. 5000.00 (\$ 100) from out of the amount set aside for political victims and martyr's family. Nothing else have been received.

There are many things to be done for us. Nobody has paid attention to our problems. I am facing problem in educating children. The political party under

which my husband sacrificed his life, also has not cared. I am invited to the procession and meetings. If that is the honor they give to my husband and his family I have enough. I had supported my husband in his struggle by keeping him free from housekeeping duties. Does not that count as my contribution ?

2. Victims of Cement Factory:

- a) Name : Saraswati Shrestha
Age : 55 years
Address : Chovar VDC, ward no. 5, Kathmandu, Nepal
Representing issue : Cement factory resident

"My husband used to work in the packing unit in the cement factory. While in work, he got kidney problem and died"

We had been fetching spring water from Chakrethirtha. The spring water has now run dry. Earlier, we used to drink water from the stream. Then the stream got polluted and pipes were laid. Today that tap has also run dry. As a result, we have to waste hours for a pot of water. We are facing water shortage and at the same time we the villagers are not allowed to work for the round season operating factory. My husband used to work in the packing unit in the cement factory. While in work, he got kidney problem and died. As per rule the wife of the deceased had to be taken in the employment. I requested for taking me in the employment. The managers replied me that my children, still growing, will be given employment in future.

Women are not easily taken into the factory work under the pretension that "we are not handworkers". Local villagers are employed only in lower positions. We are competent to work as hard as outsiders. But the managers hire the workers from other villages.

- b) Name : Ram maya Tuladhar
Age : 60 years
Address : Chovar VDC, ward no. 4, Kathmandu, Nepal
Representing issue : Cement factory resident

"In the beginning of the rainy season the land form a kind of hard crust because of the cement dust and water"

After the factory came into operation outsiders got employment whereas local people got diseases. The smoke and dust coming out of the factory caused asthma, coughing, throat pain, voice obstruction. The surrounding air is full of suspension which is inhaled to lungs. We are helpless.

The spread of air pollution extends to other neighboring village as well. Our houses are dusty. We are compelled to clean the rooms six or seven times a day which otherwise needed single cleaning.

The stone crusher and filtering sieve is placed in a higher place. Most of the time the machine is in operation. The dust goes in the air indiscriminately. It causes reduced visibility. The dust deposit do not let the vegetable grow. The cattle do not get the grass. The daily blasting has damaged walls of many houses. People are residing in their torn houses with anxiety and fear. The factories causes vibration in the surrounding area.

Crops do not come up. The shoot can not come up due to dust particles. In the rainy days of Ashad-Shrawan (July) only some vegetable can be grown. In the beginning of the rainy season the land form a kind of hard crust because of the cement dust and water.

We have got cement factory but not a health post. The factory health post is available only for factory workers. The local spring water has run dry for past three years. The other three or four sources of water have also dried up. The factory is indifferent to these situations. From the past few months the factory is distributing water pumped from the stream. The distribution is limited to the factory buildings. The excretions and dusts goes to the same stream. The water is distributed without any treatment. We outsiders receive the water only when the factory people are in good mood.

Meena Sharma narrated the background of the subject. She said, "The cement factory is set up in Chovar, a village South of Kathmandu city. The factory was established in 1966 under German collaboration has later on expanded its capacity. There are two operating factories, two stone crushing units are being appended to increase the factory capacity. The concerned authorities neither have paid attention to the environment degradation in the area nor listened to the delegation of the villagers against the factory. Nothing has been done to preserve the water spring and to decrease or prevent the ill effects of the dust pollution. Two mothers, who had been residing in the serene land which later on was invaded by the factory have come to this forum to share experiences with us."

3. Women Bonded Labour:

- a) Name : Jugri Tharu
Age : 30 years
Address : Kanara, ward no. 1, Kanara, Bardiya, Nepal
Representing issue : Bonded cum landless labour

"We have to work from four o'clock in the morning to ten o'clock by night"

We do not receive any wages nor remuneration for the work we do. All of us in our family should work for the master. They gobble up our hens and goats we rear. We are beaten up by them. We have to work from four o'clock in the morning to ten o'clock by night. The chastity of many women is looted during the working hours.

From the panchayat (previous regime) days we are wandering from place to place as homeless. It has been three years since we are dwelling in kanara. Few months back our shelter in the riverside was bulldozed and destroyed by using elephants. Our family, together with many others, got suffered from the excesses.

We were then beaten badly by the forest guards and policemen. They also looted the chastity of some girls. Our voices went unheard. The crops grown by us through hard work for years was looted by Pahadi (Hill People) from nearby village. We drink water from

neighboring river. As you have already seen our shelter crushed by using elephants and dossiers. We have to spend the whole day in work otherwise have to pay fine. Only the head of our family is paid wage whereas the fine should be paid by all of our family members. We go on changing masters, whom we work for every year. But all the master have been one and same towards us.

Now we are working in a Zamindar's (local landlord) house. They frequently threaten us to expel and compel to pay back saunki (*loan borrowed from the master for which the borrowing family has to work for the lender*). We have no ways and means to pay for saunki. Nobody is prepared to buy us.

We are poor, there are only few to listen us. I contested in the past local election for the post of village chief. My opponent claimed "who will vote for a person who do not have his own shelter to be in?" There were three candidates standing against me. I lost the election by a single vote"



In the meantime Mr. Govinda Shrestha a representative form Creating Awareness for Social Transfer (CAST) said "the homeless people taking shelter in the Kanara bank has been driven away for three times by the government. Once driven away they have again come back to reclaim the shelter. Some big personalities or leaders are involved in settling them in the Kanara bank. Some leaders have even received money with the assurance to deliver them land. But the innocent bonded labour are in grave difficulties.

Mr. Sushil Pyakurel, programme co-ordinator expressed his views that each person should have opportunity to live a human life. He said "everyone has an urge to live a better life. Some miscreants have cheated the innocent people of the Kanara and designated their territories within 20 meters from the river. Why the innocent people suffer like this when the country is ruled by a popular government? Why the shelter of the poor is to be flooded in the monsoon rain? Why the government does not care to investigate and punish the culprit and rehabilitate the homeless? These innocent people can cast ballot to elect their representatives. But where is their right to basic life? Mr. Pyakurel further clarified the expectation of the sponsor that the real need of assistance should be identified by the victim themselves ".

b) Name : Gongi Tharu
Age : 45 years
Address : Kanara, ward no. 1, Kanara, Bardiya, Nepal
Representing issue : Bonded cum landless labour

"They are doing this because I am poor and illiterate"

My sons are still working to pay back the saunki. We can't dream of having things we want. Our desire to buy something is never fulfilled. My husband was beaten to death in connection with Kanara evacuation. There is nobody to share my grief. Often my master stinks to me "you can't flee without settling for saunki. Where should I flee?"

We made our own land here in our free time. We wanted to have something of our own. After a hard labour we prepared the land for cultivation. Some mustard were cultivated. One day cattle owned by some other people entered in our field. My husband went to drive the cattle away. The forest guard hit him with a stick on his back. His back got fracture. We carried him to the hospital the very next day he expired. I came to know that the back was not only fractured but severely injured which caused his death. In spite of our poverty we were together to share it. My son and daughter-in-law used to work elsewhere. But my husband was murdered. I want justice!

The villagers had reported of the incident to the police. Till now neither police has come for investigation nor me or others are summoned to the court.

They are doing this because I am poor and illiterate. Mrs. Tharu with these words burst into crying. Her eyes were growing watery as she was narrating her story.

With the cry of Mrs. Gongi Tharu, the environment became emotionally heavy. Shanti Chaudhary, from Srijana Vikash Kendra (Center for Creative Development) consoled Mrs. Tharu using her native language. Shanti drew the attention of the forum "if we cannot do anything to relieve their pain, it is our mistake to evoke their sufferings". Mr. Sushil Pyakurel noted "one of the objective of the forum was to apprise the problems to the working NGOs. There are various NGOs providing legal and medical advices and assistances. But yet many cases like that of Gongi Tharu remain hidden. Not even the Red Cross Society, Nepal has reached the displaced homeless people of Kanara. We have to listen such real life stories from the victims in order to lead the working NGOs to the homeless people"

4. Victim of Family Violence:

An INSEC volunteer from Parbat district, Mr. Biswa raj Pandey introduced Sita Devi. "Sita's husband after getting drunk chopped both of her fore-limbs. Parbat district has elected a female parliamentarian which may give an impression that women situation is better there. However there are common cases of women being violently assaulted raped or insulted."

a) Name : Sita Devi Lamichane
Age : 20 years
Address : C/O Man Bahadur Lamichane, Ramja Deurali
VDC, ward no 3, Parbat, Nepal
Representing issue: Family violence

"I saw my husband lifting Khukuri prepared to chop my neck"

Sita narrates "I was married at the age of fifteen. After marriage I accompanied my husband to Nagaland, India where he was working. After residing there for two and half years, a daughter was born to us. Then we came back home. After a few months time he reported back to work. I was staying in my home when he came back after one year.

In one evening of the Kartik (Oct.-Nov.) I came back from harvesting the paddy from the fields. I was breast feeding my daughter sitting nearby a mirror. I saw my husband lifting Khukuri (*Typical Nepali knife like weapon with sharp edges*) prepared to chop my neck. He was drunk. I quickly covered my neck with both of my hands. One of my palm got separated instantly whereas the other was connected by a thin skin. The doctors in the hospital had to amputate the other palm as well.

I have not sufficient means to feed and educate my daughter. My medical expenses is becoming unbearable. My father contributed twelve thousands rupees whereas I have borrowed twenty thousand rupees. My husband used to get drunk and gamble from earlier days. He used to enjoy with another women in my presence. He used to insult me in presence of his friends. I was against all this . That is why he had left me back in the village.

I have not received any share of property from my husband. That event took place last year. My husband is sentenced to prison for attempted murder for eight years. I am now with my parents. I may get shelter till my parents are alive. After them, I don't know what will happen to me!

5. Trafficked Women and Aids Victims:

- a) Name : Sanu Kanchi Tamang
 Age : 18 years
 Address : Dhobi khola, ward no. 8, Dist. Nuwakot, Nepal
 Representing issue : Trafficked to India for prostitution

"Probably, he might have sold me by then and was trying to escape from me"

I am from Dhobikhola of Nuwakot district (North-East of Kathmandu). I was cheated and sold for flesh trade in Bombay. We were two girls being taken to a Jatra (*festive gathering, common in villages*). Many days passed the place did not come. Instead we arrived to a big city. I could guess that it was probably Tala (*down connotes to the Bombay brothels*). Probably, he might have sold me by then and was trying to escape from me.

I went on following him for sometime but he was successful to flee. I was only ten years, so I began to be frightened of the place.

He left me in a house. After seven days in that house the owner asked me to come with him to a temple. I don't remember the place but on the way we went in a park for a while. The police came towards me, may be he suspected something and enquired about me. I told him in my native language that I am brought to rear. He took me to the police station. After five days I was sent back to Nepal.

- b) Name : Kamala Thapa
 Age : 29 years
 Address : Samundratar, ward no. 8, Dist. Nuwakot, Nepal
 Representing issue : Trafficked to India for prostitution



Informal discussion during Nepalgunj Programme

I am a resident of Samundratar VDC in Nuwakot district. I knew a man who had migrated to Hetauda from our village. I was then 18 years when he came back to our village in a Jatra. We both came closer and decided to marry. One fine morning we left for Kathmandu. He sprinkled Sindoor* in a temple there. He then proposed me that we together go to Darjeeling (a hill station in India), to which I consented. I had no reason to mistrust my husband. We arrived at a city after covering the journey by bus and train. We together went to a house. For about three days he was together with me and I had no fear. But the other day he suddenly disappeared. I cried and searched him. Other women consoled me. Then and there my darker days began.

They coaxed me to adopt prostitution. They used to threaten me that they may even kill me. Inhuman acts like depriving of food and beating were frequent. I was becoming serious due to hunger and beatings. They were not prepared to take me for treatment. By then I was already in the profession. But my sickness grew acute and was ultimately taken to the hospital. A sister (woman), known to me from my village arrived in the hospital. She promised me to take me back with her. I became hopeful.

I knew that I was sold for Rs. 10,000.00. The sister (woman) paid Rs. 15000.00 as compensation to the place where I worked. I started working in her house. After about 21 months I came back to my village with small saving.

After coming in my village I established a small retail shop. A man arrived in a local health post. We came closer and got married. within a few months he got transferred to some other place. These days I am alone in the village. I am trained by health post as maternity and child care volunteer. I am working there.

From our village alone nine/ten women are in Bombay. Villagers look down upon returnees from "Tala" with hate. Some men are prepared to marry those who have brought sufficient money with them. The rest of the girls pass their life alone.

6. Jari System Victim:

Name : Bishnu Maya Khatri
Age : 28 years
Address : Chunnath VDC, Ward No. 9, Malibir village,
Dist. Jumla, Nepal
Representing issue : Jari System Victim

"The ex-husband used to say that he own a horse in hill, that will bring a good sum."

My new husband has paid a sum of 22 thousands to my ex-husband. I am a resident of Malibir village, ward no.9, Jumla. My ex-husband had a second marriage some 13 years ago. I had stayed with him for one year then he had his second marriage. Then a situation developed where I could not pull together with him. I demanded my share of property to live separate. But my ex-husband beat me, looted my jewelleries and ousted me from the house. I went to my parents, stayed with them. I had a son with me. Brothers were still young. As the time passed by my mother died. I used to take care of my brothers and my son. Brothers grew up and got married. My stay with them began to be difficult. I made attempt to secure legal share in my husband's property. He denied to give my share. When all the doors were closed, I got married to a neighbor in last April.

My ex-husband was a police Hawaldhr. He was then posted to Dhangadhi. After hearing of my marriage he came to the village and demanded Jari from my new husband.

Mrs. Khatri sobbingly added, " The ex-husband used to say that he owns a horse in the hill, that will fetch a good sum. He used to take me as a horse which is due to bring handsome sum to him. He used to get drunk and come with his friends to threaten me and my husband. He went even to the extent of threatening our murder if we do not pay him on time. He had already taken away my jewelleries and clothings. He demanded Rs.25 thousand Jari. We were completely unable to meet his demand. Later on Jari of Rs.22 thousand was settled. We paid the amount through borrowings. But now the lenders are already demanding repayment. They ask us either to pay the loan with interest or to hand over our land and house. My twelve years passed while waiting. Now when I am hopeful of a happy life, he is there make it adverse.

7. Badi Women Victim:

- a) Name : Bimala Nepalee
Age : 33 years
Address : Gaganjunj, ward no. 8, Dist. Banke, Nepal
Representing issue : Badi community

"We were compelled to become mother of child with unidentified father. The males were not accepting those children."

I am a Badi from Gagangunj. Our Badi community had inherited the tradition of dancing and singing. From earlier days we used to give our performances in marriages and other festivities. We were paid for our performance.



(A view from Badi Tole, Gagangunj)

We used to live on such earnings. But the same society has later on spoiled us.

From purely a group of dancing and singing races, we were compelled to become mother of child with unidentified father. The males were not accepting those children. We are neither educated nor have any professional trainings. How can we rear the children? we do not have any capacity to start up any business. Nobody accept us to do their household works. We have no other way out except adopting prostitution.

Today Badi race itself is becoming defamed. we are spoiled but do not want to spoil our offsprings. So, we have generated a fund by setting aside 25% of our income. A school has been established with that fund. Our kids used to study there. We have also used the fund to run a training center and adult education classes. But the local administration and police does not want to see us reformed. Owing to different reasons it is difficult to run adult education class by daytime. The classes were run during the evening. The administration has closed the classes since months ago. Our teachers were arrested and kept in the custody for four days. The persons who guide us to better life are not allowed to be active in this reform process.

We are victimized by the society. It has to reform us. But the administration is adverse. Our house is in Gagangunj itself. We have got landownership certificate. But the police patrolling is for 24 hours a day. The plot of our land is in my husband's name. Police says only my husband can live there. They try to chase us away from my own house. They say none of my sons, daughter-in-law or daughters can live there. The girls from our neighborhood are driven off. When they are gone who is going to feed their parents.

Sobbingly Bimala said, "We want to change our profession. For that we should be given some time. It would be better, if we are given poison instead of displacing us like this. We are not educated. We don't have land to cultivate. Even then we are earning for the education of our children. we don't care that we are earning from such profession. But we want to see change with our coming generation. We wish them to lead a respectful life.



(A Badi Woman telling her painful story)

8. Carpet Industry Victim:

- a) Name : Shanti Jirel
Age : 20 years
Address : Jiri Sijel Tole, ward no. 6, Dist. Dolakha, Nepal
Representing issue: Carpet factory workers

"Managers not only beat the women workers but also tease them. Other male workers also join to tease or make fun of us".

Me and my husband had come from Dolakha district. We being uneducated decided to work in a carpet factory. Few months need to be spend on learning. We started learning under skilled weavers. They used to beat us. Even a small mistake would cost a meal for the day. As I know today, even in the training period wage and shelter should have been received. Nothing was received for the work done from 4 o'clock in the morning to 10-12 o'clock at night. We escaped from such a injustice. None will give work if they knew that we had fled away from earlier work.

Carpet workers generally secure loans to sustain their living. We are one of them. Once money is borrowed we can not take a leave even to go home.

Managers not only beat the women workers but also tease them. Other male workers also join to tease or make fun of us. A heap of garbage gets collected in the corner yielding fetid air throughout the working place.

Once the carpet we were weaving could not be properly done. He came over us very badly. We wanted to quit the factory but could not do so without settling our loan.

Carpet workers are not taken well by the people. We are embarassed when walking along the streets. Some owners have also spoiled the female workers. We work for 16 to 18 hours a day. We make our living through hard work. Why are we looked down by the society ?

In some factories there are cases of abortion too. Some male workers within a factory get married to female workers. Women comparatively work harder than their male counterpart. So, the women collect some savings. A male worker marries a female worker for her savings. After marriage she shifts her belongings to her husband's room. They start living together. Within few days they will have differences and ultimately the female is thrown out from the room beaten and deprived of her belongings. Such events frequently occur. The factory workers are sometimes married by army men or policemen and later on severed the relation. I have seen such cases. A husband leaving a mother and child had second marriage.

b) Name : Meena K.C.
Age : 18 years
Address : Priti VDC, ward no. 9, Dist. Ramechhap, Nepal
Representing issue : Carpet factory workers

"Amidst scarcity and rebukes I learned weaving in four months. I remained hungry for many times"

I am in Kathmandu since I was eleven years. I was then studying in class three. My cousin sister was working in carpet factory since her early age. She encouraged me to come to Kathmandu. I was not permitted to do so. I was determined to come to Kathmandu and ran away from home. Amidst scarcity and rebukes I learned weaving in four months. I remained hungry many times. One day some new workers joined the factory. They did not know weaving properly. They had a single loom. They wanted to exchange their loom with that of mine. I agreed. But the worker under whom I was working hit me with a rod just because she did not like the exchange of loom. I retaliated but went to hit her son. The conflict between us grew bigger. Next morning at four o'clock I fled away from the factory.

There are many such events in factory. These days I am working for 16 hours a day. But yet I am not able to generate savings to send home. Few months back a man from my village married me. After 15 days of being together we had misunderstanding. He left me. I am alone. I am still working.



(Depth discussion during the program)

SECOND DAY

FIRST SESSION:

The first session of the second day began with the formation of groups and discussion was held. The women were under control from their emotional outbursts of the previous day. Shanti Chaudhary proposed for songs. Few progressive songs were sang by the victims. Then the session proceeded.

Pitambara Upadhaya, principal of Local Development Training Center spoke on the subject "women's development" for half an hour. "In Nepal different programmes are being launched for women's development since 20 years ago. But still the status of female is unequal and inferior to that of men. There are very few women in decisive posts.

Pointing out that those people develop who get involved in the development process oneself, she said "there is no just distribution of work in our home or society. Despite that women work for 18 hours a day, their contribution is not recognized properly. To establish females in equal footing with males, there should be proper distribution of responsibilities. Females should be given decisive roles to play.

Then the participating members discussed on the obstacles for women's development. Taking up the issue Ganga Kashaju, a human right activist said "obstacle for women development are education and economic problems. Women development is simply impossible without overcoming these issues."

As the discussion started concentrating among the representatives Mr. Sushil Pyakurel drew attention on the need of active contribution from victim participants. Jeevan Ghimire, a victim woman said, "We were invited to share our stories of sufferings. But who will help us to relieve from this situation?"

Pitambara Upadhaya giving her version opined "a particular person or a group should not be given responsibility for this. Development should be self-motivated. Outside people or groups can only help to make aware on the issue and support the change process. We have to understand the main causes of the problems. The victim themselves should come forward with the right diagnosis to the problems."

Shanti Chaudhary added to the discussion "victim women have told their stories. They have expected assistance. They need different types of assistance. NGOs representative have to specifically point out areas of assistance that they are going to provide."

Mr. Sushil Pyakurel came forward with a proposal to end the discussion and form into groups. He said "Shanti's opinion comes within the scope of this forum. The participating NGOs and donor representatives should announce their commitment in front of the victims to work on the issue. INSFC is ready to extend

its co-operation. As there are representative from NGOs and Donor agencies, we can discuss the needs of the victims with them and design the programme". Four groups were formed -

FIRST GROUP

Political or Movement and Family violence victims:

- a) Jivan Ghimire
- b) Bishnu Paudyal
- c) Sita Devi Lamichane

SECOND GROUP

Carpet weavers and Jari system victims:

- a) Shanti Jirel
- b) Meena K.C.
- c) Bishnu maya Khatri

THIRD GROUP

Bonded Labour and Cement Factory victims:

- a) Jugri Tharu
- b) Shanta Rani
- c) Gongi Tharu
- d) Ram maya Tuladhar
- e) Saraswati Shrestha

FOURTH GROUP

Badeni and Trafficked victims:

- a) Kusumi Nepalee
- b) Bimala Nepalee
- c) Sanu Kanchi Tamang
- d) Kamala Thapa

SECOND DAY

SECOND SESSION:

Four groups were formed in the previous session of the day. There were extensive discussion within the groups on the targeted areas. The reports were presented in the full session. Based on the report, different NGOs and observers had their questions and ideas expressed.

POLITICAL OR MOVEMENT AND FAMILY VIOLENCE VICTIMS

Group Coordinator - Renu Upreti
Reporteur - Parbati Pandey

The group discussed on the problems and possible solutions on the issues.

RECOMENDATIONS:

Political victims:

- have provision to educate the martyr's children
- have an arrangement to provide medical facilities to their family
- reasonable arrangement for employment
- martyr's families be duly recognized
- provide employment opportunities to martyr's wives.
- further organizations of this type of forum on this issue alone.

Family violence victims:

- Sita is suffering form economic problems. Her loan used for her medical treatment need to be compensated .
- victim women need to be arranged some means of livelihood.
- The child of her should be provided with education.
- there is need of social awareness campaign in the villages. Creation of public opinion against social evils like child marriage, polygamy, marriage on age difference etc.
- stopping the adds on alcoholic drinks and control on the use of such drinks.
- Need of running literacy classes and launch skill development programs.

Evaluation:

Sita Devi commented on the program "this forum remained quite effective. I got some relief when I could put my problems before others. I told my story and also received that of others. Such programs should be conducted again."

She further said "my doubt become clear when I could hear and see other victims. The problems of women are still unchanged. When I came to hear about others, I felt that my problems are just insignificant. Such a program was never held before. We have come to look at the problems from near and understood the reality".

“We had gathered here with the expectation of getting solution to our problems. If nothing is done to solve our problems as a follow up, there is no real achievement. So, as an immediate relief, some action should be taken. Such programs and gatherings should be held in other places as well”

CARPET FACTORY AND JARI VICTIMS

Group co-ordinator - Manju Thapa
Rapporteur - Santosh Pyakurel

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The group discussed about the problems in the carpet factories and Jari system and the kind of programs the victims feel, is needed in the respective issues. After a long discussion among themselves the group has come with the following recommendations.

Carpet Factories:

- increase the remuneration presently received.
- reduce the working hours and fix the work time
- provide mask for the workers
- child care center should be established for the children of working mothers.
- women should be granted 45 days maternity leave with salary.
- The need of creating awareness for women workers against sexual exploitation.
- Provide job security and system of provident fund.
- Active support from organization for the above mentioned movement.

Jari Victims:

- literary classes or awareness should be brought among the women and local people against Jari system.
- Pamphlets, booklets, papers and magazines should carry the message and be distributed extensively.
- existing laws against jari system should be amended.
- the tradition of child marriage, forced marriage and unmatched marriage (as per age difference) should be stopped.
- Jobs be generated locally to stop youth migration to India.
- Gathering for singing, dancing at nights be stopped even by using “administrative” or police force.

BONDED LABOUR AND CEMENT FACTORY VICTIMS

Group co-ordinator - Ganga Kasaju
Rapporteur - Lata Pyakurel

The group discussed about the problems of the issue and victims themselves recommended for the follow-up actions. Specially the Bonded women are also the victims of landless labour. So, the solution for their problem has to come in two different aspects.

RECOMENDATIONS:

Bonded Labour:

- Each member of the bonded family should be paid for their labour.
- they should have holidays on special occasions.
- maternity leave should be permitted.
- the culprits of violence against women should be punished.
- Awareness among the labour on their rights.

Landless Victims:

About 11, 000 families are inhabiting in 42 different areas of Bardiya district. But in November 10 and 12, 1992 around 16000 people were forced to evacuate the place for the encroachment of forest (for detail see INSEC bulletin Nov./Dec. 1992 issue). The women representing the bonded issue were also the victim of this evacuation.

- Those people should be reestablished.
- An independent commission should be formed to solve the problems of homeless people.
- the food grains, clothings and other properties destroyed during the house destruction be compensated.
- Some women had miscarriages during the police assault. Some were raped. They should be given medical treatment. The culprits should be punished.

Cement Factory Victims:

- cover the crusher with cap while in operation
- provide clean water to the people
- houses destroyed during blasting be replaced and do the necessary maintenance to the cracked houses.

- take necessary steps to prevent chimney smoke and other polluting excretion.
- give priority to the local people for employment.
- have a provision of health post to the local people
- have provision to irrigate the lands
- conduct health check up of all the local residents of the factory area.

On the long term they recommended the removal of factory or the people to be shifted to other places.

BADI OR BADENI AND TRAFFICKED WOMEN FOR PROSTITUTION VICTIMS

Group co-ordinator - Shanti Chaudhary
 Reporteur - Shisam Mishra

It is an acute violation of women's right, right to their life. The group discussed and have recommended the following actions-

RECOMENDATIONS:

Badeni Victims:

- immediately stop administrative excesses.
- they should be ensured to live a respectful life.
- they should be provided with alternate income.
- provide land to them for housing and farming.
- provide education and vocational trainings.
- provide employments to the trained.
- Awareness against prostitution among the community.

Trafficked Women for Prostitution:

- involved vendor women and men should be penalized by society
- young women crossing Nepal boarder should have identity card issued by competent authorities.
- government and non-government agencies should launch a programme of skill development and social awareness by involving women returned from India
- education should be made compulsory for women
- the victimized women should receive employment as per their ability.

"The victim women has opportunity to put across their opinion for the first time. Many things might have been escaped. This forum is still open to the victim women to contribute some more" Mr. Sushil Pyakurel with these words opened the forum for questions answers and discussions. Bijaya Chalise a journalist made enquiry on the objective of the program and direct benefit to the women victim. Mr. Pyakurel answered to the query " why the cases women victim is not made a subject of national concern? how the culprits who make a life of many women hellish selling them to Bombay are let to escape by the administration or society ?"

OBJECTIVES OF THE VICTIM FORUM

The welcome speech was made by Sushil Pyakurel, the co-ordinator of INSEC. He explained the need and objective of the victim Forum. Mainly-

1. To find out the effectiveness of NGOs and INGOs programmes in those sectors through the eyes of the victims.
2. To make victims realise their victimized position and the way out they think of.
3. To bring out the hidden victimizing system and oppression upon women. So, that they will get wide coverage in press.
4. To motivate local NGOs to give action programme in those sectors.

In Victim Forum sixteen victimized women of different sectors were there to tell their sufferings and remedies themselves. The women were from different districts representing the different issues. Those were

1. Carpet weavers
2. Cement factory area residents
3. Trafficked women
4. Badeni
5. Bonded women
6. Political Victims
7. Jari
8. Family violence

Beside them other NGOs, INGOs, social activist, press people were present. Altogether the participants were more than 42. The victims were taken for an exposure trip on the 13 Feb. to the landless evacuated village, Kanara in Bardiya districts. In Kanara the village of bonded is situated on the river bank. The victimized women of other sectors shared their stories with them. Three

women came from Kanara to Victim Forum representing Bonded Labour issue. In the evening they were shown social films. Our aim is to make them more expressive and friendly. On 14 Feb. the formal programme was started. After introduction of each participants i.e. around 30 the programme proceeded for case studies. Each victimized women told their stories and observer tried to pull out of them. The victims were crying in telling their stories. The environment in the programme hall was pathetic and sad. The victims said "we are asked to share our sorrows for the first time". After each case studies other participants were allowed to express their views and reaction.

On the third day i.e. 15th Feb. the four groups were formed. Before the Group discussion the Director of Local Development Training Center and an active women activist took half an hour class on women and Development. The groups were

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|---|--|
| <p>1. Group 1st</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Political victims b) Cement factory area residents | <p>3. Group 3rd</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Bonded women b) Family violence |
| <p>2. Group 2nd</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Carpet weavers b) Jari | <p>4. Group 4th</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Trafficked women b) Badeni |

In each group the victims of related issues, a monitor, a reporter and some observer were together. The Group monitor and a reporter were motivated to find out from the victims -

- Their view towards their victimized position.
- The kind of programme they want
- Programme both in long and short term perspective
- The further need of this kind of Forum

On the second half of the day the findings of the group discussions were presented. After brief description of the programme and its flow the report were presented by the monitors. They have pointed out income generating and awareness raising programme as long term programmes and immediate relief like in Badeni and Family violence victims. Some participants NGOs expressed their commitment and enthusiasm to work on specific issues. Sushil Pyakurel on behalf of the Victims Forum stated that INSEC will organize a meeting of the participants NGOs in Kathmandu for detail discussion of the action programme. The need of this kind of Forum was strongly expressed by victims and other participants. The last part of the day was given to press people and other late arrival to talk with victims personally.

FORUM FOR VICTIM WOMEN

February 12-16, 1993 (Nepalgunj)

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE

1st Day: - Arrival

2nd Day: -Exposure Trip
-Vedio Films

3rd Day: CASE STORY BY VICTIM WOMEN
-Carpet Weavers
-Prostitutes/Aids victims
-Bonded women
-Cement Factory

LUNCH BREAK

-Jari
-Family violence
-Badeni
-Victims of Movement
-Others

4th Day: GROUP DISCUSSION
1st Group
a)Carpet weavers
b)Jari victims
2nd Group
a)Prostitutes/Aids victims
b)Badeni
3rd Group
a)Bonded women
b)Cement Factory
4th Group
a)Family violence
b)Victims of movement

LUNCH BREAK

-Report presentation
-Action Plan

5th Day: -DEPARTURE

PARTICIPANT'S LIST

VICTIM WOMEN:

1. VICTIMS FROM TRADITION:

- a) Jari system:
 - i) Bishnu maya Khatri
- b) Badi community:
 - i) Bimala Nepalee
 - ii) Kushumi Nepalee

2. VICTIMS OF SOCIAL INJUSTICE:

- a) Bonded women:
 - i) Gongi Tharu
 - ii) Jugri Tharu
 - iii) Shanta Rani

3. VICTIM OF ECONOMIC EVILS AND URBANIZATION:

- a) Flesh Trade:
 - i) Kamala Thapa
 - ii) Sanu Kanchhi Tamang
- b) Carpet factory:
 - i) Meena K.C.
 - ii) Shanti Jirel

4. VICTIMS OF DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION:

- a) Cement factory:
 - i) Ram Maya Tuladhar
 - ii) Saraswati Shrestha

5. VICTIMS OF FAMILY VIOLENCE:

- i) Sita devi Lamichane

6. POLITICAL VICTIMS:

- a) Bishnu Paudyal
- b) Jivan Ghimire

REPRESENTATIVES FROM SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS:

- 1) Arjun Karki
- 2) Govinda Shrestha
- 3) Kiran Koirala
- 4) Pitambara Upadhaya
- 5) Renu Upreti
- 6) Rosalin Costa (Bangladesh)
- 7) Rupa Rai
- 8) Shanti Chaudhary
- 9) Usha Thapa

JOURNALISTS:

- 1) Anju Chettri
- 2) Kundan Aryal
- 3) Shyam Shrestha
- 4) Susan Maskey
- 5) Vijaya Chalese

OBSERVERS:

- 1) Dilip Pariyar
- 2) Ganga Kashaju
- 3) Lata Pyakurel
- 4) Manju Thapa
- 5) Parbati Pyakurel
- 6) Shisam Mishra

INSEC FAMILY:

- 1) Sushil Pyakurel
- 2) Santosh Pyakurel
- 3) Ramesh Baniya
- 4) Meena Sharma
- 5) Tulasha Thapa

FOLLOW UP PROGRAMME OF THE FORUM FOR VICTIM WOMEN

Victim Women's Forum held in Nepalgunj with a consensus voice stressed the need for organizing such programs in the future too. INSEC was requested to take a lead role by including the following activities:

- All the donors and NGOs working for women's upliftment should come together to solve women's problems surfaced in Nepalgunj programme. Programme identified as to be launched should be taken up. INSEC should organize a meeting of those participating and other NGOs and INGOs.
- Such Victim women's forum should be organized in other regions of the country.
- Regular information should be collected on the programmes launched for the benefit of victim women after the Nepalgunj forum. Besides, the information should also be available on the progress and implementation aspect of such programmes.

Sita Devi Lamichhane, 20

Ramja VDC, Ward No. 3

Parbat, Nepal.



".....In one evening of the Kartik (Oct.-Nov.) I came back from the fields after harvesting paddy. I was breast feeding my daughter sitting nearby a mirror. I saw my husband lifting Khukuri prepared to chop my neck. He was drunk. I quickly covered my neck with both of my hands. One of my palm got separated instantly whereas the other was connected by a thin skin. The doctors in the hospital had to amputate the other palm as well....."

Appendices

Appendix : 1

WOMEN IN CARPET FACTORIES

TEAM : Meena Sharma, Kabita Aryal
PLACE : Kathmandu- Jorpati, Baudha, Kumarighal, Gaurighat
(five factories)
DURATION : 2 Days

CARPET functions as isolation for Europeans and an expensive floor covering for the rich. As rich and beautiful as these are so are behind it the labour and toil of around six hundred thousand of people. They mostly the people of the most productive age group from 10yr.- 55yr. are involved on it. There are estimated over 700 factories (provided by GEFONT)* and mostly they are in the capital. Authentic data are not available.

The labours in the carpet factory come from different part of the rural areas mostly from eastern part of Nepal. A contractor or middle man goes to the village for recruitment. Often the neighbors working in carpet factory beforehand motivate the villagers. Generally the new labours are brought in a group. For labour in the carpet factories the children are best choice. Carpet seek child for perfection. Their small finger is good for making knots and small palms have to give more effort to make the loom tight. The bulk of children are kept on Talab (salary). It applies to elders till they are trainee. But for children its forever i.e. till they can demand for themselves. Often the parents of child labour are paid on advance. So, a child have to work on bondage. She/he does not know how much middle man has paid to her/his parents. They neither know the healthy food and reasonable payment is their right in-return of hard labour. They are small and unknown to demand them.

The laborers who are involved in "Dhago Katne"(carding), cutting, washing, and weaving are known with the general term "carpet weavers". Although the salaries and the facilities they get do vary a lot. The highest paid work is that of a master, paid on monthly basis. Then comes the cutting and washing, paid on the basis of sq. meter. A weaver can earn Rs.100 for 18 hours of work while a cutting man makes the same amount in 2 hours. But unfortunately there are no women involved in these jobs. The most popular work that women do in factories are weaving and carding. For doing a kilo of threads they will be paid "Rs. 12 to Rs.20 (according to the factories scale and hold of union). They

can do 3 to 4 kilograms a day if they work from 5am. to 8pm. In weaving , mostly women are taken as their fingers are long and are patient. It needs that. The weavers are put in a group. Generally 3/4 persons are grouped for a big loom. For a square meter they are paid Rs.30.

A room like a hall with a high ventilation and no windows is the place that middle grade factories will provide. There are large scale, middle scale, low middle scale and small scale factories. Generally large scale factories have fenced area where the workers feel secure. But a middle grade factories, rent a house and for small scale factories a room will do. It also depends on the work that factories do. Generally large scale factories do carding, weaving , cutting and washing but middle scale ones will either do carding and weaving or weaving only. As for water and the location of the factories, the issue of pollution has been raised several times, but nothing has been done yet.

A room (as living quarters) is given to the weaver, cutting man and masters. But for cardineers they have to have a room of their own. Generally a room in Kathmandu costs Rs.700 or more. If one is working in a large scale factory one will get two beds in a room but has to share with more than 4 to 5 people. As for mattress and blankets, stoves, dishes, cooking pots all should be ones own. But weavers, masters and cutting masters of middle and small scale factories will get a room for themselves, but other property should be their own an additional advantage of being weaver, master and cutting man is that one doesn't have to pay for electricity and water. But while the facilities are be there the risks are more too. One cannot move freely as one does in carding, the hands will be rough and the 14 or more hours work in a stinky dirty room with monotonous heavy music and bright electricity will surely ruin their health. All this applies in carding too. As for weavers they have to sit on hard seats and will have to hang their feet as the loom proceeds. The dirtiness of drinking water has made common people either to buy a water- filter or boil it. But for workers in carpet factories these facilities are still far off. The sign of hazardous health, namely blue lips, disturbed dirty hairs, a weak, pale body and in-arranged dirty clothes can be seen in each factory. Are they paid for medicines? Actually "No". But the diseases they are affected with are yet to be checked. As for weavers they can cook their own food, although in a group but for cardinals the owner will give food: dal, low grade rice and a curry. For the tiffin, the owner fixes the amount that they can have from the nearby tea shop. In a factory of Gaurighat it is told that the kids can eat tiffin of a rupee and a cup of tea from the tea shop. But even going through all these hardships they cannot save. Often the workers take money in advance.

There are factories like "Mahakali Carpet" in Jorpati which do not pay the workers on time. The workers complain "the owner won't pay us even in 30 to 40 days. As for "rasin" (foods) he forces us to buy from his own shop, which is established here for that purpose. The prices they ask are vastly different from the

nearby shop." It's incredible that the owner should do this! As the workers are paid on the basis of the work they do in a day. If one does not feel well for a day, that day's income gone.

A pitch dark room, generally the corner room of the underground floor, with a bright electricity in the midday an eight year girl is working. The carding is the easiest work that small ones can do. But some are involved in weaving too. She works there with her mom from 6am to 7pm. In the factories where labour Union have a strong hold they have pressurized the management to stop child labour. But there is no such restriction on the middle grade carpet factories. The kids work under a "Nayike", a person who brings the bulk of them from the villages. He will pay them from Rs.200 to Rs. 500, one cloth in a year, food and lodging. But the payment also depends on the age and type of work they are involved in. Reena Lama has worked under one such "Nayike" for six months in Bhaktapur and is trained to keep others under her. She said that she has had three girls under her for a year. "Although I was beaten once by the Nayike and had low grade foods, I did not do these things to my trainees". The poor trainees are often brought under the violent act of their "Nayike". A month ago Prem Rai stabbed with knife a boy of 12yrs. in Pan Himalayas for spoiling a part of the loom.

Now-a-days most of carpet factories are closed. The labours are the most easy to recruit and to fire. The children of schooling age and even the grown-up labour are looking for the work. Their factory have been closed. It happened so suddenly some even couldn't collect their money from the owner. It is known that the children are supplied to India. It has open a passage to girls trafficking for prostitution.

Till this part of the paper we have been talking about carpet weavers in general. Women labourers, with having all the problems of a man, do have additional problems. The role of women is very complex in our society. They being beaten by the increasing complexities in the society have to perform a double role- work as an obedient wife in the house and play an active part in income generation. Most of the carpet weavers are unmarried but generally they get married while working in factories. They even get pregnant while living there. But at the time of delivery they won't be paid. So, it seems to be pregnant and sick is another term for quieting from the job. Cases of rape and sexual assault are reported in the press often. A month ago in Samakhushi three female carpet weavers were raped. The rapist escaped. After such incidents mostly the girls are forced to go back to their villages by the owners. Among the workers in the factories, the marriage is common. The girls are lured and married and divorced within the month. Mostly they are divorced after a baby is born. Santa Zirel said "on the previous factory in kamal Pokhari the police post was nearby. The policemen used to marry labour girls. They used to live with them in the factory. As weavers can have a room of the factory. The truth was that they pretend of being a husband till they have to live in Kathmandu. The marriage with a weaver

woman would save their house rent". Some organization has brought out the problems of girls trafficking for prostitution to India. Innocent village girls, who are generally illiterate and unexposed have come to the capital to earn more. "I was motivated by the elders especially those who go on a Holiday from here" says Geeta, a fourteen year old girl who has left her studies and ran away to see Kathmandu. But Kathmandu, the place they have thought so much of, makes them work more than 14 hours a day, without any healthy food and lodging. Living here is expensive. So, one tries to earn more the less holidays you will have. There are also rules in factories that they have to work on Saturdays, the day which is a government holiday too. They said " we have a day leave every 15th day, it's a rule". The workers change to other factories working places and owners, hoping to gain a better place and better superiors, but all in vain.

Appendix : 2

KUMARI: A LIVING GODDESS

GIRLS of 3 to 12 years i.e. before menstruation are established as a living goddess "kumari". This system can be found among the Newar community of the country, mostly in Kathmandu. Among Newar the youngest daughter from the Shakya cast can be a kumari. The Shakyas are also selected from other general Shakyas. She will be worshiped by people ranging from common people to the king.

Kumaris are established in eleven centers in Kathmandu valley. Among them Kumari of Basantapur is regarded important. She has to live in the Kumari house detached from her parents with adopted parents. A committee will look after her lodging and fooding. Kumari can play with the adopted brothers and sisters and toys. Her contact with the outer world is completely cutoff. She cannot come out from the kumari house except on Indra Jatra (a festival). On the very day she will be put as a goddess in a highly decorated chariot. Then she will be taken throughout the city. The people rushing in the street to have a glimpse of goddess do offer cents and flowers.

According to the rule of this system, kumari welfare committee have to look after the livelihood of ex-kumaris. But it is not carried sincerely. Only Basantapur Kumaris are provided with money, but it also is only on festivals. Kumaris are not provided education. Recently in Basantapur, a private tutor is appointed to educate Kumari. The expense of education are covered with the offerings to the goddess. The Newari people have a strong belief against the marriage of a Kumari. The husband of a Kumari will die or some misfortune will fall upon him. Now-a-days this belief is loosing its ground. These days most of the ex-kumaris are married and are living a family life. After having a life of a goddess, some kumaris do not want to come back to the reality. They still prefer to sit in isolation and decorated as a goddess for the worshiper.

The people of Newari cast feel proud of having daughter as a Kumari. They also regard it as a passage to the heaven. It's utmost difficult to make a Kumari speak of their past life. They take it as a god gift. Nobody want to speak against it. Either they are cheating themselves or are still ignorant of their right. The right of full childhood and self development. Some educated and exposed Newar people also consider it as a culture which should be continued in a scientific method. After having an imaginary life sometime up to twenty years it becomes very difficult for them to come to the real world. An isolated and unnatural life they have had will weaken them psychologically and physically.

(Prepared on the basis of news prints)

Appendix : 3

WOMEN IN CEMENT FACTORIES

GENERALLY common people think factory as "magic stick" which will eradicate their poverty and raise their living standard. Because of this concept of the villagers, whenever we go to villages and ask them the kind of the help they need, they give a readymade answer "factory". But the time has come to think over these answers seriously. Is factory a magic stick as the common people think? Applying them in Nepalee context the matter is more serious. Are the villagers with factories living happily?

To study the situation of the people of factory areas we visited one of the cement factory near Kathmandu. The cement factory was established with the collaboration of Germany in 1974. This German cement plant is situated in the South of Kathmandu.

Because of southern location, the rapidly blowing south wind brings all the cement dust to the bowl-shaped Kathmandu valley. Every resident and every corner of the valley are affected by it. The affects are becoming visible in our precious monuments and heritages, but the effects of the pollution on human being are discussed more but considered little. The factories do not have any pollution control devices. A study of environmentalist in 1983 on "cement factory and living being" has revealed that the factory produces five to six tons of dust every 24 hours. Out of this, about 1.25 tones are made up of tiny particles which remain suspended in the air. These particles are responsible for serious respiratory disease. In addition to air pollution, the agricultural land, the cultural heritages of Kathmandu and health of resident are deteriorating everyday. Often people have organized a number of processions to demand control devices or the closing of the factory. They said, "the management has promised to instal one. But the day has never come yet". Since this year the German cement plant is planning to increase its production capacity. There are already two factories running twenty four hours and they are going to add another crusher. This will make the life of the people more dusty and hellish.

The ugliness of the Chovar starts from few km. ahead reaching to the factory. The land has been dug for limestone. An old woman remembering her past said, "it was peaceful and green. But those scenery has disappeared already". Ugliness, noises and destruction is left every where. Hundreds of the heavy vehicles runs through the village with heavy loads daily. In winter many accidents happen in those areas. Because of the dust and fog the roads are almost invisible. Through out the year foggy type of environment remains in the village.

The blasting shakes houses. Many houses have fallen on heavy blasting. But the factory provides few bags of cement only as a compensation to the villagers. More than 100 families are living in the area. While talking with us all of them expressed desire to change the resident, but are forced to live there. They neither can find customers nor can afford a house in other places. Among the residents of the area most of the families are there since their grandfathers. So, everybody is forced to breath dust and feel dust in their life. It was difficult for me to breath in mine visit to the village, I wanted to get away immediately. How are the people living there? Ankam Karmacharya a local resident said "the dust is everywhere. We just can't breath". At present she can't speak. The voice just won't come. It is second time she is attacked by this disease. She is in Chovar since her childhood. Apart from cynus, she suffers from cough and respiratory disease.

The crusher used to be opened most of the season. When the crusher are active the dust blows. The blowers are naked. The dust is in everywhere, on their food, clothes, on body. More than this the dust making the life of the villagers and surrounding like a hell blows to Kathmandu. In the areas the bare lifeless dusty yellow trees and environment that people in Chovar and Sanga villages are forced to see daily. Sanga village is another village which is directly affected by the pollution of the Chovar cement factory.

Besides the pollution the people are suffering with other problems. The finding has put forward the cement factory produces more than 75 thousand meter cubes per day of effluent. These effluents into the Bagmati which contained heavy metals such as lead mercury and other. The villagers said their cows have died while drinking water from the river. Now-a-days the factory is supplying the polluted water for drinking to the villagers. Although some residents go to distance tube-well but most of the tea shops in Chovar use river water. They can't produce vegetables. They cannot eat even the fresh pick up. The vegetables are full of cement dust and its just can't clean on thrice washing. In summer the rain-water flows all the cement dust to their fields and the direct dust in their fields makes a hard crust layer. So, the villagers depend on the vegetables from other villages. Naturally it becomes more expensive. The rooms are always full of dust. They said "we close all the doors and windows. Even there is dust everywhere. At the time of blowing its very hard to breath". Because of dust women have an additional work of washing and cleaning thrice and fourth times per day. There is water crises. The women have to pass half the day to bring drinking water. The villagers said that there were four water sources. But they dried due to blasting and the increased influx of the people. After this they brought water in a tube from other part of the hill. This turn out to be useless. There is no health post in Chovar. A factory's health-post is only for the labors. The villagers said bitterly "our elected government is not looking over us". There has been no health checkup in the villages yet. It is revealed that most of the villagers are suffering from cynus, respiratory diseases etc. But till now neither

the policy makers nor the NGOs people have given any attention to the people who are suffering because of others. The rich people of Kathmandu who want to have a beautiful concrete house. How many has died of the diseases caused by cement dust and pollution and how many are about to die is still a matter of research.

The labors in the factory are from outside. Very few villagers work there. Among the villagers, some do not want to work there and some are not provided with. Sanu said, "villagers are recruited only on labor post. For official posts people from Kathmandu and other places come". There are three shifts work in the factory. For the night shift, the turn among the workers rotate. Women are considered unable for work inside the factory. So, they mostly work on carrying stones or outside works. While asking She said further "at nights the labors get drunk and create trouble". I asked them; what is the profit and facilities they get of having a factory, most of the villagers replied, "we can have vehicles on emergency. The factory has given some donation to the local school". Is the precious human life exchangeable with mere emergency transport facility ? The people who provided lands to the factory are almost all dead. But their successors are living in the village. According to them the government did not paid them reasonable compensation. Today they are asking the government to buy their land or provide land on exchange. But the government has turn deaf ear till now. The villagers of Chovar and Sanga are affected everyday, together the valley residents and Kathmandu itself is dying due to the monster in Chovar.

Appendix : 4

BADI AND BADENI IN NEPAL

Team : Meena Sharma, Hadewych van Kempen
Place : Dist. Banke-Gagangunj, Dist. Bardia-Rajapur
Duration : 5 days

OF THE two million population of Nepal, Badi community covers about 2 hundred thousand. Though it is a small community, the practices and the life style it is leading, is a matter of concern. A man in the community is called Badi and a woman Badeni. They are the nomadic tribe. Now-a-days, this community has been found only in the western, mid-western, and far-western regions of Nepal. They have been settling in the following places:

Banke : Kohalpur, Gagangunj,
Dang : Tulsipur, Ghorai, Parseni, Bagad, Chirkoti, Andra, Bharaiya,
Arjankhola, Bhalubang, Bangesala,
Bardia : Banbusari, Sati, Patharnoji, Rajapur.
Kailali : Tikapur, Dhangadi,
Surkhet : Chinchu, Surkhe,
Rookum : Chaujahari, Susikot, Jajarkot, Dailekh

The origin of this tribe starts the middle ages. The then Thakuri Kings of western Nepal used to keep concubine for entertainment. Gradually, the generation of concubine formed a community. The whole community used to move from place to place to entertain people with dancing and singing. They were also called on social functions like marriage, birth etc. They were paid for their performance. They used to be invited by feudal and powerful people for entertainment in their Havelis as well. Apart from few illegal relationship with feudal and powerful people, they did not practice prostitution. Still in hill villages like chinchu in Surkhet, the Badi women beg for living. But in half-town areas like Gagangunj, Rajapur, Sati etc, they openly practice prostitution. Their residential areas are known as red-light area for prostitution. Now-a-days, the prostitution has become the synonymous of Badi community.

The coming of television and radios with cinema decreased their original profession. Being a nomadic tribe, they were not settled and do not possess any fixed assets. But since few years back Badi families have begun to live permanently like Badis in Gagangunj and Rajapur. They were deprived of any

education and skill-development opportunities. As their profession are of less important than it used to be and having no alternate income they are forced to go for prostitution. In their community the birth of a girl is celebrated. In future she will be an only family's income source. The mother continues the profession till the daughter becomes eligible for the profession. The prostitution has become the family's profession. The male members are skilled to make "madals, harmonium" or the traditional musical instruments. But these are in less demand. Their large family can't sustain with these income.

Gagangunj is a half-town area on the border with India. The location too is supportive for their business. The Badi community began settling there since 2022 B.S. i.e. around AD 1963. Now-a-days it is one of the major prostitution flourishing center. The internal influx of Badenis to Gagangunj is increasing. Seeing an opportunity of earning girls from other parts like Bardiya, Salyan and Dang come there for the profession. They rent flat of the local residents. Girls from other than Badi community also work there as prostitute. It is found out that few people feed and pay girls to work as prostitute. A Badeni also keeps girls on her own guardianship. Generally these girls are cousin, sister and relatives from the villages. The owner takes more than half of the income from these girls. A father or the male members of the family brings customers for them.

Indian and local people are the regular customers. On a day a girl can have 5 to 9 customers. The maximum rate is Rs. 50.00 per man. Badeni girls said, "some do not want to pay this even". The house rent, electricity, water and other daily necessities consume most of their income. Seldom they can save. In Gagangunj an Indian customers are regarded as best. A girl said, "it is profitable to have an Indian customers. They pay IC 50.00 which becomes NC 83.00". The girls were complaining, "Nepalee customers want more on less money. Some dada (local gundas), police and military people try to entertain without paying". The income of a girl depends on the place she is working and on her looks. The girls in Gagangunj works for twenty four hours. The profession continues throughout the day and night. They prepare themselves since the early morning for the customers. So, even in the early morning we can see girls moving around with make ups.

Most of the houses in Gagangunj are of concrete. The rooms are small. Although they are separated leaving a passage. These work as two rooms for two customers. The cold, damp room with a bed in the corner is the place they have an intercourse. The parents or guardian live on the side room which is also separated with a concrete wall.

Rajapur is a small town in comparison with Gagangunj. So the customers are also less. There are more than 20 girls in the profession. A girl said, "we use to stand on the passage in a row and a customer can choose for himself". There is always a competition to have a customer. She said further, "we do our best to improve the looks. It's really tough to attract someone". They are seen with heavy

make ups and in most clean and attractive clothes. It is expository that she is given more as nearby her younger brothers and sister are in ragged and dirty clothes.

At present Badi community have lost their origin and social position. They are looked with humiliation and disregard by the society. Bal Singh Biswakarma in Rajapur said, "we can't bear them. Their language and life style will spoil our children". Similarly the anti-prostitute resident of Gagangunj said bitterly, "we feel ashamed to tell people the location of our house. While coming home we come in vehicle up to the nearby place and walk to here". The local people were complaining of disturbances at nights. The drunkards used to knock their door and ask for the daughters. The Badi community also feels these things. Mr. Kala Tharu in Rajapur said, "our ancestors were weak. Because of them we are leading this humiliating life. The Badis were frustrated with the behavior of the administration too. A woman said, "my son is educated up to grade ten. But he didn't get any job. She said further, "a daughter of her friend was expelled from the school for being a daughter of a Badeni".

Badeni girls are not supplied with condoms. In Rajapur girls go for injection. They said, "we cannot buy condoms. It's hard to keep the family how can we buy condoms?". But in Gagangunj the "SAFE", the community organization, supplies condoms to them. "Its difficult to convince the customers to put the condoms. Sometime we have an quarrel with them". The girls have lot of complains. They said, "we regret our life but, more than this, the people's behavior towards us are very humiliating. we are not allowed to enter into the temples. Our children cannot go to the school the others go. The guys pass low comments on the roads and tease us. The police never hesitate to take our money. Last month a Badi girl was arrested in the custom. She was to India for shopping. The custom people took her money. In the same way, Padmi Badi was also arrested and accused for going to India to sell her daughter. Actually she was taking her daughter for treatment to India. She was guaranteed by her brothers and they released. The women were saying "if we are to have alternative we would leave the profession".

Appendix : 5

TRAFFICKED WOMEN AND AIDS VICTIMS

Team : Kabita Aryal, Meena Sharma, Hadewychvan Kempen,
Ram Sharan Pyakurel
Place : District Nuwakot; Samundratar, Naubise, Kalleri, Bansbote,
Dupche, Bolung, Shikharbesi.
Duration : 5 days.

NEPAL with a population of about 18 million is divided into 75 districts. Almost from all districts girls are trafficked to India and other countries for prostitution. But especially in a few districts like Kavrepalanchok, Sindhupalchok, Nuwakot, Dhadhing and Rasua there exists an acute problem of girls-trafficking for prostitution. Also a large number of girls are involved in prostitution within the country, in such towns as Kathmandu, Dharan and Pokhara. There also exists the traditional and religious exploitation of women, which has forced them into prostitution. Nepalee girls can be found working in most of the red lights districts of India like Bombay, Calcutta, Goa, and Lucknow and in large numbers they are also working as prostitutes in Dubai, Frankfurt, Berlin and Hongkong (Nepalee weekly, Suruchi Oct. 25), as is shown by a news report on "Nepalee prostitutes in Hongkong" (Samichha Oct. 12) and by occasional reporting on girls-trafficking.

There exist no authentic data to show the number of village girls working as prostitutes in Nepal and being trafficked to other countries. But one Kathmandu-based organization claims that there are more than 2 hundred thousand of Nepalee women in Indian brothels alone. Raja Ram Thapa, resident of Kavrepalanchok district, researched on his own account the circumstances of women trafficked to India for prostitution. He claims to have spent 12 years on this research. In the course of it he visited 85 brothels in India and interviewed 86,703 prostitutes. In his report he has mentioned 4,994 names of traffickers, among which are politicians of the present and past regimes of Nepal. In the interim government period he even went on hunger strike to pressurize the government to punish the traffickers. But neither the interim government nor the newly elected government have taken any initiatives to that effect.

Women issues have recently begun to get space in the newspapers. Women in Indian brothels are given more attention than Nepalee prostitutes in

other countries. The reasons for this might be the easy access to news from India, some efforts which have been made by local organizations against the victimization of Nepalee women, the fact that the working conditions for prostitutes in India are worse than elsewhere, or the fact that the trafficked girls are physically tortured in India when they are reluctant to accept the profession.

During the Rana regime, which lasted until 1950, girls had to be supplied to the Rana palaces. Young girls from the Tamang community are considered to be very beautiful, and most Tamang people being poor they were tempted to earn some money by providing their daughters to the Ranas as concubines. After the overthrow of the Rana regime the Ranas fled into India, but the tradition of supplying girls continued, and girls came to be generally regarded as some material property. People also began to sell their daughters, wives, cousins and sisters to other people than the Ranas.

We have been reading about this subject and also we had met some girls who were rescued from Bombay brothels. But to see the people closely, we visited one of the major districts where women trafficking takes place: Nuwakot, to the north-east of Kathmandu. After a 13 hours walk from Trishulee, we arrived at Samundratar, one of the major center for girls-trafficking. Other major centers for girls-trafficking from Nuwakot to India are Samundratar, Ghangfedi, Gaunkharka, Betinee, Rautbeshi and Balkumari. One strange thing about this is that one has to walk for more than a day to reach these places, so the question is: how do the traffickers do this ?

The main residents of these places are Tamang (85%), low-caste people (Kami, Damai and Sarki), and Brahmins and Chettris.

A woman dressed in hill-dress, with short sari and blouse, big hill-ornaments in nose and ears, and barefoot, was working in a field. A local man pointed her out to us, saying "She is an ex-prostitute and has returned recently." Ex-prostitutes are recognized easily- by the big tile-roofed house they live in, the good quality watch on every family members' wrist and by having enough to eat and drink. These are signs of a return from "Tala", a special term for going to Bombay. A hotel manager in Chaughadha said "They come back dressed as local people, but are recognized by their language, luggage and expenditure habits." This is primarily applicable to Tamang families, while very few Tamang families in the village are well off. "Brahmin and Chettri girls in Bombay are lower in number because of their social prestige" says Sapana Chettri, a resident of Shikharbesi. Most of the Brahmin and Chettri families are farmers. The rice of Nuwakot is a famous field products. So, the field production is done mostly by Brahmins and Chettris. They also send their daughters to school but up to secondary level only. There is no other skill and opportunity for the villages as alternative income. There is a vast dependence of the villagers on the earnings of Bombay-prostitutes. To move away from the village and sell one's house or to sell field products, villagers have to wait for Bombay returnees to buy their

goods. Janak Acharya, headmaster in Dupche high school said "Bombay returnees are good customers of our products. For Families without anyone in Bombay, Bombay returned customers are good support". After stay of 4 or 5 yrs. in Bombay a women is qualified to open a brothel by herself. Being a woman from the village the knowledge of the grownup girls in the village is up-to-date. The villagers were saying "the big sorts are also running brothels in India. Some "Galla" (center form where girls are contacted) have been setup in the village itself". A National leader's niece and two daughter of Pandit of the village are in Bombay. Pundit is still continuing his preaching in the villages. The headmaster in Dupche said "we can not get labours for the field work" because most girls above 13 years old have already gone to Bombay and some are to be going soon. The traffickers come during holidays and some time the special man come to take at least two virgin girls to India. Some brothel have the provision of a guide to take and fetch the girls to and from the village. They are paid Rs.6000.00 with a set of clothes.

Mostly the innocent, illiterate and unexposed village girls are cheated by relatives in being trafficked to India. Kamala, a woman in Samundrarat, was trafficked to India when she was 16 years old. She said "We were married. He proposed to go and see places like Kathmandu and Darjeeling. I was delighted. After three days in the train, I saw a board written Bombay. I was suspicious and asked him about it but he replied negatively. I realized I was being sold only when a "Gallawali" (owner) hit me for being reluctant to accept prostitution."

Nowadays girls are also trafficked from carpet factories. Village girls come to work in the carpet factories and are then lured by a man to come with him, and this man then takes them to Bombay and sells them to brothels. Often the press has published stories about girls being drugged and trafficked to India. Recently "Shrijana Mahila Paribar" has published the report of a case study of a girl, who was sold in Bombay from carpet factory. Reports has come of the educated girls being trafficked from colleges are also trafficked. They are tricked and lured by the man. But in Nuwakot and some other districts the girls are trafficked to India with the consent of their parents. The poverty stricken girl is easily tempted by the money and golden ornaments that a Bombay returnee brings with her. The coming back of the girls in a chartered aeroplane forms another attraction for them. The parents compare their standard of living with that of the neighbors whose daughter is in Bombay. So they are elated when they have a daughter, because she can make their future easy. The birth of a daughter is cause for rejoicing as opposed to the birth of a son, which is something very uncommon in Nepalee culture. Only very rarely suits are filed against traffickers in Nuwakot. Whatever is done is done only for the sake of formality. The parents will go to the police after they feel certain that the daughter has crossed the border, because they are afraid that when their daughter would be retrieved by an active

police officer, their money source would be closed. Recently three girls from Gaunkharka were retrieved thrice from the border but on the fourth effort to cross the border they were successful.

The relation of the trafficker with the girl does not matter but her age should be 13 or more. From recent, Wives are also sent to Indian brothels. Women generally spend 7 years in brothels. During this period the Gallawali will make the prostitute earn back the money that was paid for her to the trafficker. Only very few women can make money in Bombay. The customer has to pay to Gallawali before coming to them. So, they save the tips they get from the customer and the limited pocket money given by Gallawali. We can imagine their life over there too. Always trying to cut expenses and send money back to home. As males from the family comes to collect the income twice a year. Often one man will represent every family in a village. In Bombay the prostitutes will give him money to take to their families and give him as a representative pocket money besides. This then has become a prosperous job for males in the villages. A man who had been in Bombay recently said "They were aggressive and bitter and pointing fingers at me as if I were the one who sold them". Sabitri Shrestha of Naubise has come home on a holiday after 7 years. She brought 1 hundred thousand with her along with some gold and clothes. Her maternal uncle is very happy about that. He is going to buy land with the money and is encouraging her to go back to Bombay again. Mahili Tamang of Bansbote came back two years ago with her child. She was taken by her neighbor to work in the house of a doctor, but later on the neighbor made her to be a prostitute. She wasn't able to save money during that time, so she and her 18 year old daughter are living very poorly. "to earn one should have luck and looks" Durga said showing her gold coated teeth. Women's teeth are coated with gold to add brightness in the face and its also a fashion there.

The women are mostly taken via Birgunj and Bhairahawa. There is a short cut road from Bhudanilakantha (Kathmandu) that goes to Samundrar. Most of the traffickers and girls use this road. "This road is safe from policemen" said Meera of Kalleri who used the road while coming back after being ill in India. She has Aids symptom-no desire for food, constant exhaustion and tiredness. But she doesn't want to accept the position as she is scared of the inhuman and disgrace behavior of the society. Now she is living in the village without any medical help. Her family have decided not "to pour water in the river". She said "I am waiting for the end, its very painful". Generally the girls come back after 7 years, and after a short holiday the majority of them return to practice prostitution. Few will come back to stay in the village permanently.

On their second visit to the village almost all of them have caught venereal diseases, for which reason they were sent home. Those who settle permanently in the villages are not looked on very nicely by the villagers. After Durga came

back for the first time she got married as a second wife and bought a house. But as she run out of money and her first child was born, her husband left her. He already had a first wife. The majority of the cases are similar. Some women's' husbands have quit the relation with them after they ran out of money, while some others with higher social status keep them as concubines. But in every form of relation the women become the first and easy one to quit and exploit. Even the village children tease them and disregard them. This even happened during interviews.

In Nuwakot there is one high school, five secondary schools and thirteen primary schools (report by Ram Sharan Pyakurel, INSEC's District volunteer), and among the students girls are in minority, and those are only Aryan girls. The mentality of giving emphasis to household work rather than the education in case of girl child is very strong in Nuwakot. Some school going girls are forced to quit from the school due to economic reason and responsibility to look after younger ones in the house.

In the village WHOREC has opened a "Bamboo skill" training center for Bombay returnees. Interviewed were complaining about them of taking only well to do women of the village. Those who were trained said "School only trains us to work neither gives tools nor helps on selling the products".

How do they live there ?

Dimble Tamang, giggling and feeling shy to tell about Bombay brothels, hiding her face with her clothes, said "Every day I had to serve more than eight men. But after I was chosen to be a "Banglow" type it became two or three." In brothels girls are put on the grades first, second and third respectively. After serving few months in pillow house, some are promoted for Banglow. Banglow is regarded as the most prosperous, prestigious place. Often the girls escaped from brothels have told the stories of being tortured in reluctance to accept the profession. The women we interviewed were also beaten and starved. "The temptation to have food, and the surroundings formed a strong force to make us accept the profession that we were taught to hate" said Durga. Women said "We were in a place where there was no hope for help. Once we were sold our life is finished. After we came back to our villages, society would behave as if we had invited our fates ourselves." Are they allowed to go out over there? "Yes, we go out mainly to see movies. If any customer would take a fancy for us we could marry too, but this happens seldom." Generally the girls are sold for in between Rs. 2000 to Rs. 50,000. The trafficker takes the money and the girls have to sell themselves to refund it to the Gallawali. How much do they earn per day? "It depends on the place where we're working. In Pillow House we could earn up to Rs. 200 IC (Indian Currency), and in Banglow much more. But cannot take money for ourselves. "As in pillow house the customer pays to owner before coming to us". In Banglow they can have the money for themselves. But have to

give half of their income to Gallawali for food, electricity, and lodging and from other half they have to save and also refund the Gallawali. A guy who has been to brothel said "mostly in pillow house three girls carry their profession in a room". Generally once a girl has entered a brothel, she will work day and night for at least four years. After this only few can have holidays. "My Gallawali insisted that I stay longer. Even after I had been working for seven years she (the Gallawali) was still complaining about my debt," said Dimble Tamang who doesn't know for what price she was sold. She said further "If one is timid and quiet they won't even give pocket money. But most Nepalee girls are like that: timid and quiet." In the beginning in brothels girls are given condoms and are checked regularly by the brothel doctor. It is also told that in the later years girls are sterilized. Meera Tamang did not know cause of her stomach operation neither the owner told her. She bleed to death. She said "since operation I am not well and now I know the reason of that".

Appendix : 6

BONDED WOMEN IN NEPAL

Team : Meena Sharma, Hadewych van Kempen
Place : District — Kanchanpur
Duration : 3 days

TWELVE years old Asharam was abducted and taken to the house of Mr. Bir Bahadur Bogati, a landlord of Majgaun which comes under Sripur VDC, Kailali. On the very day of his father's death, Asharam became Bonded Kamaiya, as the Saunki Rs 14,000 borrowed by his father from Mr Bogati comes to him. Asharam does not know about this Saunki. He neither has any "Tamsuk" (authentic paper). Since then, Asharam with his family are serving for Bogati for days and nights. Asharam remembers his father working in the field and his legs injured by plough. But he does not know that his father's Saunki has increased, instead of decreasing. All the members of their family have been working for Bogati for the last two generation. To pay off the Saunki his mother (55yrs.), two brothers (10 and 8 yrs.), sister (20yrs.) and he himself are working throughout the years. Besides, his sister has been the victim of sexual harassment. His elder brother couldn't bear all these and ran away from home. However, due to all responsibilities Asharam couldn't do so.



(A couple of Bonded Labour)

This is a typical case of bonded labour found in the western, mid-western, and far-western districts of Nepal. Mainly this system is prevalent in the far-west districts. Recently, INSEC has conducted an in-depth research on the issue and brought out many hidden and untold sufferings of estimated forty thousands Kamaiyas. During the research, 17,728 Kamaiyas were interviewed in the three far-west districts.

Kamaiya are those people who generally do farm work. They have to work for long hours with low remuneration. The whole family labours of a Kamaiya are paid with 6 Bora to 9 Bora (1 Bora=75kgs) paddy with few kgs of salts and chillies. Some are given a set of clothes too for a year. But the facilities varies according to the behavior of the landlords. Generally, these are the fixed things that a Kamaiya family gets. The Kamaiyas says that the Tharu owners are comparatively better than Hill owner (migrated from Hills).

A man who can plough and dig well and has healthy wife (or sister, cousin living together) is considered eligible for becoming a Kamaiya. Those either unmarried, below 14 years, old in age or have no female partner are not considered Kamaiyas. The pairs are known as a Kamaiya and get remuneration for their labour. But other members of the family do not get remuneration against their labour. Almost all works of the landlords are done by them. So, the landlord does not induce outside labour in the works. The kamaiya's family members cannot seek works outside if their owner has work for them. Though all the members of the family work more than normal hour, only a kamaiya and the boys above 14 years are paid for their labour. It is found by the research that 45 kamaiyas family are working under a same owner. A Kamaiya with more family members, specially women members, is a prior choice of the landlord.

Kamaiyas live in the "Bukara" (a mud hut for living). Bukara are made on the premises of a big wooden tin-roofed house. Kamaiya prefer to live on group. They can build small thatch house with two rooms and live there till the owner feels okay with it.

Of the interviewed Kamaiya, INSEC report has revealed that women on Kamaiya system are 15% more than male. But they are called Kamalari (woman Kamaiya) instead of kamaiya. Facilities and works varies depending upon terms and conditions. Women are mostly involve in works like- kamalariya (household with cattles), Bukarahi (cattles with outdoor work), Organi (household work), house staying (every work of the landlord's with occasional outdoor work). Besides these women have to collect fodder, thrash paddy and seldom help on festivals. Sarathis Tharu in Kanchanpur has to get up early in dawn. She cooks their day meal. It is usual time for kamaiyas to prepare their meal. Then the Kamaiya goes to landlord's house to clean the mess of previous night in the kitchen. After finishing the kitchen, house and surroundings works, she has to prepare cooking item. Often she has to help them in cooking. When their food is

ready, she gets permission to go to her own house and have meal. Immediately she has to be back to clean the kitchen and wash clothes of the landlord's family members. She gets free time in the late evening. It is her daily routine, but varies according to the seasons. During harvesting season she has to go to the field too. She says, "I have to be ever-ready to serve them. If I delay they scold and drag me to their house". Her landlord has four more kamaiya families. A friend of Sarathi has a different routine than herself. She has to look after cattles and fetch fodders as well as household works. Above all, women are forced to extend free labour. The work is overload. Sarathi couldn't manage alone both the work in the landlord's house and bringing up of the child. So, her sister is staying with her to help on child caring.



(Gongi Tharu : Telling her panic story at Nepalgunj Program)

Kamaiya system is deep-rooted in those districts. Naturally, Kamaiyas are illiterate, meek and innocent people. INSEC's study has shown that 93.3% of the kamaiyas are from Tharu community. They are indigenous people of Tarai zone of Nepal. They are patient, subjugating and in-aggressive in nature. As a result, it is easy for feudal to exploit them. It is found in the INSEC's research that the kamaiyas take the system as their birth-ridden and inhuman treatment by the landlords as their fate. In one case, a daughter of the landlord was present while interviewing. we asked her about the kamaiya system. She replied that she doesn't feel any odd about it. Every body has to work and there is always an employer and employee. Similarly, landlord in Suda, Kanchanpur said "the Bhramin shouldn't plough field, otherwise what is the use of feeding these people (Kamaiya). He has only a family as Bonded kamaiya. The kamaiya died recently. On his end-day, his widow Janaki was forced to go to landlord's house for work. After father's death, the Sunki of Rs. 16000.00 has come upon his twelve years son. He works as his father used to do for the landlord. At present three sons (12 years, 10 years and 8 years) work in his field. Mother looks over the household works of the landlord. They are paid low remuneration, battered and scolded as

well. Janaki in ragged and dirty clothes with uncombed hair and disturbed face said, "He has threatened to burn our house. Because we tried to stay a day longer for mourning than he permitted".

Kamalari are sexually exploited. Mostly, the girls in between 15 to 30 years are sexually harassed and abused. The seduction by the landlord and his relatives is a daily unreported and untold event. Women destitute and subjugating are easy to exploit. Often the culprit convinces them for intercourse. Janaki Tharu of Kanchanpur was seduced by her previous owner. Then she was in Jhospura under forest sub-divisional officer. He gave her a woolen sweater and had an intercourse with her. She said "they have bought us and can use us in whatever way they like". When she became pregnant, the owner sold her to another place. Her husband accepted the child. They weren't given any compensation. So, a child becomes another burden for the family but an extra worker for the landlord when he grows up. The landlords are freely seducing girls. If such incident happens, the whole villagers know about it. But nobody dares to speak against it. A Tharu women is Chomala V.D.C. in Kailali is going to bed with her landlord Dharama Singh Chand since her youth. She said, "still young girls have to go to bed with him ". The young girls working in the factories of the landlords are raped. A girl of 17, a daughter in-law of a Tharu Kamaiya family replaced her mother in-law in the rice mill of the landlord. On her second day in work, a brother of the owner asked her to bring a sack of paddy to the room. As she entered into the room, he closed the door. The girl told her story, "I screamed and bite him. After a long struggle I was able to flee". She has stopped to go there for work. But the landlord is pressing them to send a worker as before. This is an exceptional case. But majority of the girls cannot do that either. They mutely accept the happening. There is no report filed against these oppression of the owners. These incidents have a long-term effect on women. Bal Bahadur Chaudary, the Director of 'the Tharu society' said, "If the news spreads, the villagers will despise and humiliate the girl. The society thinks that she invited it". So, instead of going against the owner, they misbehaved with women. On the one hand, the unity and courage is lacking with them, while, on the other, owner threatens and harass those who try to raise their head. Those who tries to speak against the owner are murdered too. Recently, in Kanchanpur, a pregnant Tharu girl died in a hospital. She was raped by her owner. The owner was afraid that his deeds could be disclosed. So, he bribed the doctor and poisoned her. Everybody in the village believes it is true, yet no case has been filed against this incident. The woman said "It is no use of complaining. The owner bribes the policeman and administration. They will speak in favour of the owner and no justice for us. So, instead of creating fuss and loosing our position, we prefer to remain quite."

Parbati Chaudary; wife of a doctor in Mahendranagar, Kanchanpur told us about the situation of Kamaiya women in general. She is an active district

member of INSEC and has worked with the Kamaiya women on “Maternity Welfare” project of the government. She also belongs to Tharu Community, of which people are in bondage in a large number.

On the important feature of the Kamaiya system is Saunki or loan. The amount of money a Kamaiya borrows is known as “saunki”. The owner charges high interest on Saunki. If a Kamaiya break or lose something, an equivalent sum will be added on their Saunki. They borrow Saunki to maintain daily necessities and perform social events like marriage, birth celebration, festivals, to pay off Jari amount, etc. All of these are added on their saunki. So, the saunki goes always increasing, rather than decreasing, though they sometime pay cash from outside income. They can not afford food every day. If the saunki is high, the landlord sells their daughters. Mostly, this kind of incident happens if father is dead and there are only female members in the family.

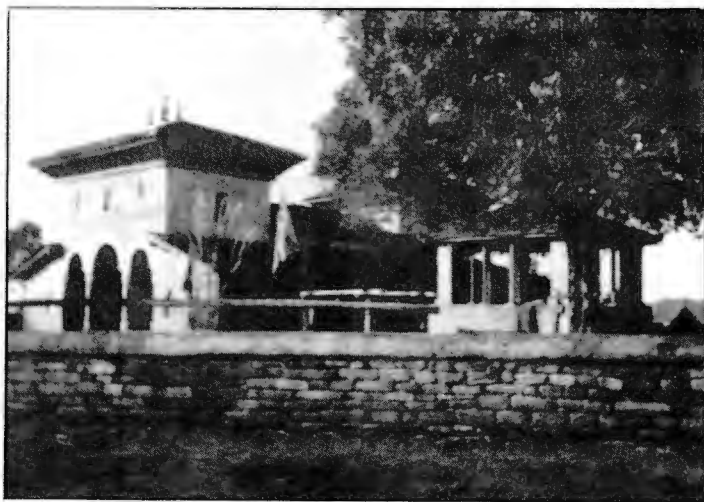
Child marriage is prevalent among the kamaiya families. It also depends on the debt the family has. Kamaiyas do not hesitate to marry a daughter of 3 years age. They have a custom of selling daughters. Whoever marries a daughter has to pay a certain amount of money to the father in principle. But the owner takes the money in practice. These kind of marriage are fixed by the owner. He finds a groom and fix the amount of money which, instead of going to kamaiya, goes to him. Jari system is existing there as well. If a girl eloped with another guy leaving her husband, the new couple have to pay money. Here again, the owner fix the amount and take it. There is also a custom of exchange marriage. A daughter is exchanged with a daughter of in-laws.

During delivery a woman gets seven days-long leave. They call this period “ghot basne”, which means “to live aloof”. As their term they are left for themselves. According to Bhramin custom, a woman with recent delivery cannot go to the kitchen and touch things for twelve days. Their belief is that she becomes untouchable during this period. But, in kamaiya system, woman have to come to work from 8th days of her delivery. She is made to do outdoor work.

Appendix : 7

DEWAKIS IN NEPAL

DEWAKIS are the women who are offered to look on the temple and goddess. They are called Devi which means goddess in local language. But unlike kumari system they are not worshiped. They are there to serve the priest and look over the temple. They are often regarded as "Prasad" of the temple which although being holy everyone can test. There are some legends related to Dewaki system. Among them the legend of king Nagimalla is correlated to the present system. According to it, the king Nagimalla was a powerful and proud king of Doti (one of the far western districts). At the same period god Bhageswar used to live in Dhadeldhur. He was also a very powerful god. The power clash between two provoked the God Bhageswar to spell the king for disaster. The natural disaster came in Doti. Because of the punishment king realized his mistake and promised god to offer his daughter to look after him. God asked him to give his daughters to his sisters. Then, after the people began to offer their daughters to the seven sisters of God Bhageswar. Now-a-days people believe that by offering a daughter they can make goddess happy and their wish can be fulfilled. These days this belief is more strong among wealthy and powerful people in comparison with common people.



(Mellauli Bhagawati : Where innocent girls are sacrificed)

The girls are offered at seven centers in western region of Nepal. In Mellauli the girls are offered most. Those offered have to go to clean temple daily early in the morning, and prepare worship materials for the priest and look after its properties. But these days, Dewakis rarely go to the temple. A Dewaki said "we only go on festivals". Dehimandu in Mellauli is a village of Dewakis. There are certain casts which do not exist in other parts of the country. They are the generation of Dewakis. The children of Dewakis cannot adopt their father's cast. So they mostly write Dewakas, Negi, Nayak etc. There is another legend related to the existence of Nayak and Negi cast. It says that an Indian king came to Mellauli in exile. The then king of Baitadi offered him a post of Nayak (leader) in a temple. He had an illegal relation with the then Dewaki of the temple. So his children adopted the title Nayak and Negi. As a rule of Dewaki system, Dewakis are already married to God. So, she can't remarry. But they can have their sexual life. We can find the illegitimate children of Devis. Generally the daughter of Dewaki are bought to be a Dewaki. A case study of Khute Devi and Birbal Singh Dhami of Darchula is a good example which reveals the society is responsible on the continuation of this system. In Darchula there are only two families of Dewakis. In one family, Kul Devi, mother of Khute Devi was offered to the temple. Her illegitimate daughter Mrs. Khute Devi was again made Dewaki. She was accepted by Mr. Birbal Singh Dhami with her illegitimate children. Birbal Singh wanted to save Muna, a daughter against being a Dewaki. So, he tried to take them to Kanchanpur. But the villagers opposed his idea asking who will look after the temple after Khute Devi?. They created many troubles to stop them from going. But finally Birbal Singh was successful to take them out of the village (Rajesh Gautam, Asmita).

Generally the girls from Nayak, Negi, Rahut, Dhami, Dewakas are bought for offering. It is also a truth that the girls are mostly bought from Melaluli. They are offered in another village. A family can have more than 10,000.00 for a girl. It also depends on their bargaining capacity. The girls are offered to the temples mostly to fulfill the wish of an offerer. It can be a recovery from the illness, to win a case, to have children, to stop the natural disaster etc. In the past the parents of the girl used to offer their daughter to fulfill their own desire. But these days the selling of their daughters have become a prosperous business. They are bought mostly by wealthy people, some landlords or powerful people. They go to the village or contact through the guardian or relatives of the girl. Mostly they pay cash or for those earning their land they negotiate with other items too. The buyer have to accept her as his/her own daughter. So, for it they used to take her to their house for few days. But these days taking a girl means creating fuss, which might put them in trouble. So, they accept her verbally. They also cannot go through all the rituals of offering. The actual process of offering is to take a girl to the temple with all the decoration and music. In the temple the priest would read

religious theology and put hot oil on girl's head. But these days they perform the religious reading on their own and bring the oil and put on the head of a playing kid. These happens to the girls on their childhood, mostly in-between the age of 4 to 12 years. The new parents promise to look after the livelihood of a Devi. But we can't find the offerers following their promise. Devis are only given occasional money and clothes. A Devi continues to live with her parents and play with her friends. Neither she knows of being a Devi nor the villagers know about it. It is done secretly. When a girl becomes a marriageable, her parents refuse any marriage proposal and tell her the truth. They are fanatic on anti-marry of a Devi. Once offered girl cannot be offered second time.

The role of Dharni and priest are very important in making a girl Devi. A Dharni is a witch doctor, who has a major role in the society. The local people go to him to consult on any illness and difficulties. Then they go to the health post. Even the educated people with exposure and education believe strongly on these belief. These days they are the main offers of girls.

Mellauli is a village with a school, boarding school, agricultural bank and health post. It is a day walk from the nearest town Patan. But it takes only two hours to reach to Indian town from the village. In the village the population of elderly man is almost nil. We can see women and children around. It came to our knowledge that the most of the men go to India on winter to earn. But it is also a truth that rarely Dewakis have husband. Majority of women live with mothers and children. Some have land from the landlord on lease. But its not enough to feed the family. The poverty can be seen and feel in the life of Dewakis. There are no other opportunities of earning. So, they are forced to go to bed with local man for small items like cooking oils, salts, clothes and sometime little money. It is also told that the local landlords and priests seduce Dewakis often. But all the Devis were reluctant to tell these things. They answered positively but did not admit for themselves. Because of poverty and poor mentality, their daughter's future is uncertain. They easily get tempted on money.

In past a Dewaki has to live in the temple. But now-a-days they can live with their parents, they can go to the school if her mother could support her. They can have a free sex life. Together with some positive changes, many bad things have appeared in the Dewakis system. Its an inhumanity itself. Together with it the girls are forced to earn their own livelihood. They, being illiterate, untrained and without any land are turning to prostitution for livelihood. In Mellauli where most of Dewakis are offered and buying and selling of girls take place. We can find no more than 30/35 Dewakis. The local people and Devis said that most have gone to Bombay and some to Mahendranagar and Neplagunj to work as prostitute. According to some villagers the prostitution is an income source for the most of the Dewakis in the village. A local inn keeper said "once a foreigner had come for research. In the night he asked for girl". The government officers

who are posted there keep a Dewaki till they stay there. Often they are taken to India by Indians and come back spending few months or years in India. Some are taken by some powerful people as a second and third wife. A Dewaki was taken by such man and left with five daughters. She was neither given any compensation nor any property, although she has a legal right over him.

The boys of young generation are admitted to the school. They feel shame and disrespect to talk about the issue. They do not want their sisters and mothers talking about the system. On our interview with a Devi they were constantly warning her against speaking. They said they are against it and won't let their sisters to be sold. But pity is that they do not know when and how his sister's has already become a Dewaki. They are also frustrated with the people promising of alternative. They said "people come for interviews and publish them in papers. On one hand our society and village are defamed on the other hand our sisters and mothers are exposed". Till now at least six group of people have been there promising them of some alternative for livelihood. But to their frustration their living condition and position are in the same stage as it was years ago. But these boys are also highly dominated by the culture and custom of the community. Although they talk in a big voice, on the time of action they will act as their ancestors did on the issue.

The government have opened a cottage industry. But it is closed already. The cottage industry trained Dewakis on sewing and knitting. But there is no market for their production. An industry has no system of helping them on marketing. Three Dewakis has been taken for the police force. But further motivation on Dewakis for other activities lacks on government as well as on NGOs plannings. Eight daughter of Dewakis has been taken for Education to Kathmandu. They are completely isolated from their home and their reality. How they can adjust on coming back to the village its still a question? Some big sorts has been to the village. They took eight years daughter of a Dewaki and promised for her schooling. But the villagers have heard that she is made a home servant in a friend's house of the promiser instead of going to the school.

In the past the society used to respect Dewakis. But with the increasing negative aspect on it the people are becoming negative towards them but not with the system. Very few people in west Nepal realizes the inhumanity and exploitation behind this system. There are no such law to punish the culprits of Dewakis. But they are punishable under the anti-human trade and flesh trade. The law also prohibits the polygamy. Till now eight people has been punished under the crime of offering Dewakis. It was in 2010 B.S. i.e. 39 years ago. Even the people's elected democratic legislation and the government have not recognize this victimization of women. Even today a girl is victimized, who knows!

Appendix : 8

VICTIMS OF LIBERATION MOVEMENT

BY THE phrase "victims of liberation movement" we have tried to bring out the present situation and living standard of the families of those people who sacrificed their youth, their beloved, their family member and some their healthy life and everything they had. In other word, the people who fought for the democratization of the country.

According to our history, Nepal was ruled by Ranas for 104 years. In 1950 AD (2007 BS) Nepalese peoples' struggle overthrew the Rana regime. Then, the united government of Nepalee Congress and Ranas was established. But, in 1960 the-then King Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah grabbed all power propagating that the multiparty system is no suitable for the country and introduced the autocratic regime "Panchayat system" which according to him was favorable for Nepalee people and the country. Since then, struggle against the autocratic system started. Finally, on April 26, 1990 Nepalese people became successful to overthrow the Panchayat system and establish multiparty system with constitutional monarchy. Among the forefront fighters of 1990's mass movement, some were politically motivated and most were not. Among the martyrs some were shot dead while passing through the way or while peeping through the window. The people involvement in the mass movement, consciously or unconsciously, sacrificed themselves for the freedom of the country and for the safeguard of human rights.

The Home Ministry has recognized only 26 as martyrs, but human rights organizations claim the number more than 85. Further, these data do not include the martyrs of the pro-democracy movement of 1990. During 30 years of Panchayat regime, the-then government has killed many people in the pretext of 'transferring jail etc.. The government data (after 1990 movement) itself says that more than 300 people are missing since 1960 apart from those declared as martyrs. The government formed many committees to find out information about missing as well as the culprits responsible for their missing. Among such committees Mallik Commission is one of the important Commissions formed to investigate into the loss lives and property during the mass movement persons responsible for these loss. The Commission has already submitted its report. Despite peoples' will and demand, the government has neither brought out the findings public nor take any action against the culprits.

The movement of 1990 was not only for a day. Even after the announcement of multiparty democracy incidents like killing remained continue. People were shot while participating in the procession. About ten people were shot dead on the jubilant night i.e. the night when multiparty system was announced. After the announcement, people were so much excited and demanding to punish the culprits. Such excitement could break any time and happened so. As a result, many people were killed. However, the government declared those as martyr who were killed before April 8. After the success of the movement, a large amount of donation was collected in the name of martyrs to help their families. The government decided to provide financial assistance of Rs 100,000 to the families of martyrs. But the families of those who were killed after April 8 could not receive this financial assistance. One of such families is of martyr Pushpa Napit's family. Now-a-days Usha Napit, widow of Pushpa Napit, lives with three kids. Although her husband was killed by Mandaleys during the mass movement, the government did not recognize him as martyr. Its funny that the family of martyr of a day before can get respect and financial help, the day after can't have this. However, both of them died for the same cause.

How the people and their families have been respected at present who sacrificed their lives for others and for the rights that we are enjoying now? The country used to celebrate a week long martyr memorial. But from this year it has made only a day programme, instead of a week. Looking things from practical side, the day-to-day survival of the family members of the martyr are important than the speeches in open ground and blood donation in the name of the martyrs. In this respect, the government has done nothing. Most of the forefront fighters were the source of income in the family. After their death or disability due to extreme torture, bullet injury etc. they can't be active on supporting family economically.

In every field women are always the back supporter of the fighters. In the politics of Nepal and in each movement women have played a major role. During Panchayat regime, political activities were carried out secretly. Women were as active as male on party activities.

"VICTIM WOMEN'S FORUM" was organized in order to highlight the problems of women suffering from injustice, economic deprivation and growing urbanization, unbalanced development and degradation of environment have badly affected the life of Nepali women. Informal Sector Service Centre (INSEC) organized a forum of victimized women in Nepalgunj. This forum has enabled the journalists, donors and other interested people to get a closer understanding of the problems of women suffering in Nepal.

The forum held in Nepalgunj is simply an initial step towards working for the cause of women victims. But this beginning has been fruitful in the sense that it helped to reveal the facts and issues on women sufferings calling for extension of such gathering to the national level and subsequently to whole of South Asia region. Given suitable forum, the experience shows, even the exploited and destitute women can bring out their voices and revolt against their sufferings.

Sita Devi, who is physically disabled and mentally tortured by her brute husband, is not the lone victim. There are also many bonded labourers and homeless women as represented by Jugri Tharu. Nepal forum had achieved the representation of may Sita Devis and Jugri Tharus to give frank disclosure of their cases. This report encompasses some of open voices of victim women seeking justice and parity with their male counterparts. INSEC will feel successful if this report could be of some help to national or foreign organizations involved in women's upliftment or to other interested people.
