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TARANGINI MAHILA ADHIKAR PRASHIKSHEN KENDRA

SHAPING A FUTURE WHERE RECOGNITION OF ALL FORMS OF WORK IS THE NORM

Editorial

Dear Readers,

Welcome to our most recent newsletter, in which we discuss the idea of bringing gender equality closer to becoming a practical reality rather than just a pipe dream, where woman's every work is respected, recognized and valued. As we celebrate the progress accomplished thus far, it is critical to recognize that there is still work to be done in order to attain full equality for all genders even. Let's imagine and work together to achieve a community where recognition of all forms of work is the norm that benefits both individuals and society as a whole.

Work encompasses much more than traditional employment. It extends beyond the boundaries of paid jobs and includes unpaid care work, domestic work, entertainment sector work, construction work, sex work, volunteerism and many other forms of contribution that shape our societies. Unfortunately, not all forms of work have received the recognition and value they deserve. According to Article 34 of the Nepalese Constitution, any worker or laborer who

does physical or mental work for an employer in exchange for payment has the right to decent working conditions. The same article also specifies that every worker has the right to reasonable pay, facilities, and social security that is

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based on contributions. Nepal has ratified 1996 International Convention on economic, social and cultural rights. According to its articles 6 and 7, the right to work and the right to a place of work includes the right of every citizen to choose employment, the right to recognize labor, equal pay in the workplace during employment, women's reproductive rights, and the right to food. Similarly, the convention indicates towards formulating legal provisions to ensure workers' right to social security, form and organize unions, promotion of sustainable livelihood options based on principles of equality and non-discrimination. In presence of all the existing laws, the women workers from unpaid care work are still not recognized.

Unpaid care work, predominantly carried out by women, plays a critical role in sustaining families, communities, and societies. From caregiving to household chores, this invaluable work often goes unnoticed and undervalued. It is crucial to recognize the significance of unpaid care work and strive for a fair distribution of responsibilities within households and communities. The workers from informal sector often face precarious working conditions, lack of social protections, and limited access to opportunities as these sectors are not given attention by the government as well as the community and family. As the care giving work is often linked with women's 'responsibility' that is led by patriarchal mindset, harmful traditional values and unequal power relation between men and women, it is merely recognized as work as the result of which most of the violence take place in this work area. By acknowledging their contributions and forming an environment where they feel empowered and can advocate for their rights, we can contribute in the formation of a more inclusive and just society.

For such future, it is essential to advocate for existing policies and practices in order to identify the gaps to support all forms of work which includes fair wages, decent working conditions, social protection systems, and policies that enable work-life balance. Tarangini Foundation commits to work in coordination with other civil society organizations, employers and government to work together to create environment where all women workers can thrive, demand their rights, talk about their issues and find fulfillment in their chosen forms of work.

In Solidarity,
Tarangini Foundation

Cultivating Wellness in Agriculture - Transformative Initiatives for Holistic Well-being: SELF CARE

The inaugural day commenced with a warm welcome and introduction of the 30 enthusiastic participants. The program's objective was presented, emphasizing the significance of self-care in the demanding lives of agriculture workers. The innovative use of narrative therapy allowed participants to reflect on their life experiences, providing an outlet for pent-up emotions. A therapeutic ball game followed, fostering camaraderie among participants. Post a refreshing tea break, Ms. Rupa Koirala delivered an insightful presentation on self-care, focusing on dietary habits and daily routines. The day concluded with joyous singing and dancing, reinforcing the sense of community. A reflective session gauged participants' experiences, revealing widespread satisfaction and enjoyment.

The participants engaged in rejuvenating yoga and breathing sessions, setting a positive tone for the day. The agenda included a thought-provoking "cheat game" designed to highlight personal challenges among participants. Singing and dancing added a lighthearted touch to the day. Ms. Rupa Koirala then presented on the power of personal narratives, emphasizing their impact on individual perceptions. A dynamic game, "Jiban ko Gatho," facilitated by Ms. Nirmala Kafle, illustrated life's challenges and strategies to navigate them with



community support.

The initiative transcends the conventional boundaries of agriculture-focused programs by recognizing and addressing the mental health needs of the workforce. Analytically, it underscores the interconnectedness of mental well-being, work productivity, and community support.

This program holds political significance by shedding light on the neglected aspect of agriculture worker welfare. Advocacy for policies that integrate mental health support into agricultural initiatives could pave the way for more comprehensive and sustainable rural development. Our commitment to the holistic well-being of agriculture workers marks a significant step toward reshaping conversations about rural labor and mental health. As this initiative gains momentum, it has the potential to influence policy discussions and foster a more resilient and empowered agricultural community.



Domestic Workers - Rights and Leadership Training Initiatives

The leadership training aimed at empowering domestic workers with knowledge, skills, and a heightened sense of leadership. In Nepal, where the informal sector comprises 90% of the workforce, the constitution grants significant rights to workers. Unfortunately, the implementation of these rights remains inadequate, leaving a vulnerable population, particularly women engaged in domestic work, exposed to exploitation and discrimination.

With 27 participants our objective was to educate participants on domestic workers' rights, policies, and the significance of leadership. Facilitator Ms. Bindra Maharjan fostered connections through an ice-breaking activity, uncovering participants' expectations. The presentation on leadership stressed vision, goals, and effective communication. A thought-provoking role-play session depicting various leadership styles enhanced



understanding, concluding with participants expressing appreciation for the insightful learning tool.

This program serves as a crucial intervention addressing systemic issues faced by domestic workers, shedding light on the necessity of legal recognition and protection. The emphasis on leadership development signifies the potential for collective advocacy and empowerment.

Advocating for domestic workers' rights aligns with broader political discourse on labor rights and gender equality. The program's focus on policy awareness and collective action suggests the potential to influence policy changes for the betterment of domestic workers.

This Initiative is a practical approach to addressing socio-economic disparities and advocating for the rights of vulnerable workers. As the impact of this program reverberates, it holds the potential to contribute to broader discussions on labor reform and gender justice in Nepal.



Social Transformation: The Foundations of Sustainable Change

As we all know, society is ever-evolving, and so too are the systems that govern it. Nepal's political landscape has witnessed a remarkable transformation, shifting from autocratic rule to a unitary centralized structure and now to a federal system of governance. These transitions have brought about significant changes in our nation's direction and priorities.

One crucial aspect that has gained prominence in recent years is the recognition that



women's labor, leadership, independent identity, and their unique experiences must be at the forefront of our national agenda.

The National Gender Equality Policy of 2077 (2020 AD) stands as a testament to Nepal's commitment to fostering women's participation in the labor market, thus ensuring their economic empowerment. However, challenges remain, particularly in addressing the informal sector and the often-restricted working conditions faced by many women.

We are unwavering in our commitment to incorporating the concerns of marginalized people into our policies, plans, and activities. We hope to address their individual needs and concerns in this way, ensuring equitable access to opportunities and resources. Our community's growth should leave no one behind, and this effort is our resolve to make that a reality.

Our municipality has recognized the paramount importance of the National Gender Equality Policy, emphasizing its inclusion in our policies and programs. We prioritize the creation of labor desks as a crucial step in ensuring the economic empowerment of women. These desks will provide invaluable support and guidance for both employers and employees, thereby promoting a harmonious and safe working environment for all. We're proud to announce that this initiative is already taking shape in four municipalities: Belka Municipality, Chaudandigadhi Municipality, Letang Municipality, and Duhabhi Municipality.

We stand at a pivotal moment in our pursuit of equality and justice, where it is vital to adopt a political and feminist perspective



in addressing complex societal challenges. In this newsletter, we will explore ongoing efforts that span various provinces, driven by our collective commitment to empower marginalized communities and confront deeply entrenched customs.



FEMINIST FORUM, THE CAMPAIGN - Breaking Barriers, Igniting Change

In a groundbreaking initiative, the Feminist Forum, a national movement with a presence across all seven provinces of Nepal, is gearing up for its pivotal event scheduled for September 2023. Spearheaded by the National Network of Women Human Rights Defenders and Women's Rights Organizations, the Forum seeks to challenge entrenched power structures perpetuating disparities based on class, caste, gender, sex, and race. The Forum addresses pressing issues such as the persistence of harmful customs like Haliya and Kamaiya, inadequate rehabilitation for marginalized individuals, and the multifaceted challenges faced by the Sudurpaschim Province due to annual floods, fires, landslides, wildlife crises, earthquakes, and aftershocks.

Central to the Forum's objectives is the recognition of the need for a paradigm shift in thinking, emphasizing transformational leadership, mental health, and land rights for sukumbasi people. A feminist perspective is crucial in analyzing humanitarian crises, particularly focusing on gender-related issues and the link between conservation and local community needs. The Forum aims to challenge deep-rooted traditions that regard women's bodies as property and combat violence against women.

“The historical oversight of women's power, freedom, and space is the rationale behind the Forum, providing a dedicated space for women from diverse backgrounds to come together, organize, discuss, and analyze issues. With a vision of strengthened unity and a platform conducive to addressing challenges through joint action, the Forum envisions the participation of approximately 2000 women representatives, women right activists, and Women Human Rights Defenders in September 2023. Readers can expect a comprehensive exploration of the background and purpose of the Feminist Forum, a thorough analysis of



current challenges faced by women in Nepal, the pivotal role of feminist movements, the Forum's goals and expected outcomes, methodologies employed, and key details such as the date, location, estimated participants, and coordinating organizations. The call to action resonates with an invitation for all to join in solidarity for women's rights, emphasizing the collective strength that lies in unified voices and actions. It is a political statement, urging society to confront systemic inequalities and embrace transformative change. Together, we can build a more inclusive and just society where all individuals can enjoy their rights without fear or discrimination.



Making Visible an Invisible Relationship: Interaction and Panel Discussion on recognizing and ensuring the rights of domestic workers

The highlights of our recent gathering focused on raising awareness and advocating for the rights of domestic workers. The event, held with a clear objective, brought together distinguished panelists, stakeholders, and community members to address pressing issues and pave the way for positive change. The gathering aimed to raise awareness about domestic workers' issues, foster collaboration, and establish respect for women's work. During the event, we unveiled survey findings that cast a spotlight on the harsh realities faced by domestic workers. Shockingly, a prevalent lack of contracts, minimal awareness of the minimum wage, and distressing instances of verbal and physical abuse were revealed, underscoring the urgent need for reform and protection.

Our initiative, "Recognizing the Invisible: Women's Unpaid Domestic Labor," emphasized the significant contributions of women engaged in household chores. Dr. Renu Adhikari stressed the urgency of acknowledging women's work as genuine labor, calling for a transformative shift in mindset and practical behavioral changes.

Insights from Kripa Basnyet (ILO) delved into healthcare access, unemployment insurance, and social security for workers.



The Social Security Fund Initiatives aimed at inclusivity by targeting the informal sector and self-employed persons, with a commitment to ensuring benefits for minimum wage earners.

The challenges posed by the absence of formal contracts and standardized protocols in addressing domestic workers' rights. Comprehensive policy development and legislative frameworks were recommended, including the recognition of employers and the inclusion of registered intermediaries.

Shram Jivi Mahila Sanjaal that is enthusiast for change making process. In a continuous manner, the forum has been widening their reach through interactive sessions at wards, discussions with other returnee migrant women workers with the support of Tarangini Foundation.

respected, and provided with the support they need to thrive in their roles.

Together, let's continue to make a meaningful impact in the lives of those who contribute significantly to our communities. By fostering collaboration, raising awareness, and supporting initiatives at the local level, we can create a ripple effect of positive change that transcends boundaries and transforms the experiences of domestic workers.

“The right to work is one of the most commonly violated rights for people with severe mental health conditions – who are also more likely to be underpaid than the general population”

Empowering Marginalized Voices for Sustainable Development : Transforming Nepal for a Just Future

In the ever-changing landscape of Nepal's political journey, we find ourselves at a crucial juncture where the voices of marginalized communities demand our collective attention. This newsletter aims to shed light on the challenges they face and the proactive steps being taken towards their integration into the broader tapestry of development.

Despite constitutional provisions and the National Gender Equality Policy, the struggle for women in Nepal's workforce persists.



A staggering 90.5% of women find themselves in the unorganized sector, battling issues such as sexual violence, social stigma, and a lack of employment opportunities. This section delves into the urgent need for comprehensive labor reforms. Sustainable development hinges on the enhancement of the Human Development Index (HDI). Leadership with a transformative vision is crucial for steering the nation towards prosperity. This segment emphasizes the recognition and addressing of the human development needs of women and marginalized populations for fostering national unity and establishing an equitable society.



At the core of a robust HDI lies gender equality. We delve into the imperative need to infuse gender equality policies at every local level. This not only aligns with the goal of transforming into a developed country by 2026 but also significantly contributes to the objectives outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals of 2030.

Societal transformation requires the collective efforts of government bodies, people's representatives, political leaders, media, civil society, and concerned citizens. This section highlights the indispensable need for a cooperative culture at the local level to pave the way for transformative change.

ligned with these principles, a one-day workshop is on the horizon. Its objective is to seamlessly integrate the municipality into the development process, focusing on the comprehensive development and rights of marginalized individuals. The workshop targets 21 executive officials and members, including the mayor, deputy mayor, ward president, women people's representative, and chief administrative officer. Additionally, 30 women human rights defenders from the city network are set to actively participate.

Your participation is pivotal to the success of this initiative. Join us in constructing a society that is inclusive, equal, and as together, we strive for a sustainable and equitable future.

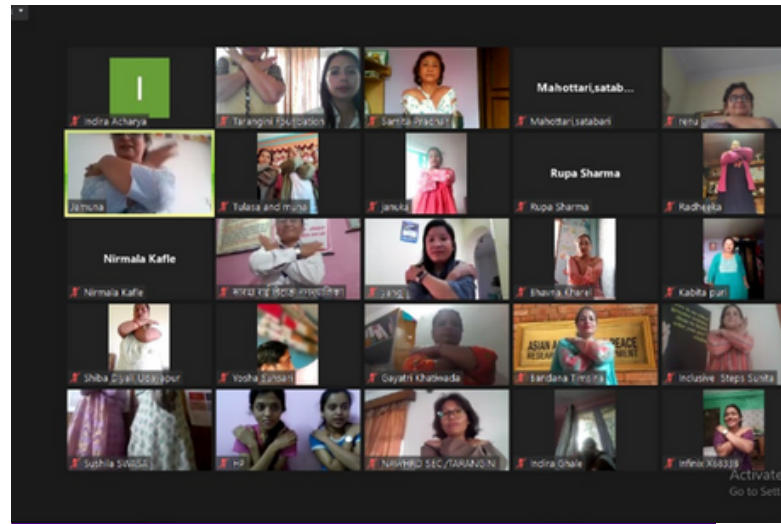
Nurturing Minds - "Care for Caregivers" on World Mental Health Day

In celebration of World Mental Health Day on October 10th, Tarangini Foundation orchestrated a virtual session with a powerful theme - "Care for Caregivers." Aligned with the global theme "Mental health is a universal human right," our session delved into the critical aspect of self-care, particularly for those who dedicate themselves to caring for others.

Hosted on October 10, 2023, via Zoom, the virtual session witnessed an inspiring participation of 88 individuals, including members from partner organizations, psychosocial counselors, and other stakeholders. Chaired by Ms. Samita Pradhan, Chairperson of Tarangini Foundation, the program unfolded at 3 pm, initiating a thoughtful discourse on mental health and self-care.

In the spirit of Audre Lorde's profound words, "self-care is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare," the session emphasized the revolutionary nature of self-love. In a world that often teaches women not to prioritize themselves, the feminist perspective champions the cause of self-care as a revolutionary act, making mental health a feminist issue. Dr. Renu Adhikari, founding chairperson of Tarangini Foundation, challenged the conventional view of caregivers. She asserted that everyone who takes care of others, not just certified counselors, is a caregiver.

Dr. Renu highlighted the crucial need for caregivers to receive care themselves, citing global data that



indicates high percentages of women facing mental health challenges. She underlined that the success of the feminist movement is intricately linked to self-care.

Ms. Jamuna Maharjan, a psychosocial counselor, delved into the intricacies of anxiety and stress. Using the ABC framework (Awareness, Balance, Connection), she advocated for self-love, time allocation for oneself, and emphasized the importance of a balanced lifestyle. Participants engaged in exercises promoting self-love, fostering a sense of appreciation for themselves.

Possible Health, an organization surveying domestic workers, shared insightful data on mental health issues in Madhesh Pradesh. The survey depicted a positive shift in women's awareness about their issues, yet it highlighted the prevalent stress and mental health challenges due to discriminatory social structures.

The session concluded with a poignant reminder that mental health and the feminist movement are inseparable. The discriminatory social structures place undue stress on women, making mental health a feminist issue. The call to action resonates - until women's labor is recognized and valued, caregivers will not be valued. It's a collective responsibility for counselors and activists to raise their voices for recognition and value of women's labor.

Rebuilding Lives - Jajarkot-Rukum Earthquake Response



The recent earthquake claimed at least 157 lives, injuring over 375 individuals. It left approximately 8,000 houses in ruins, both public and private, with Jajarkot and Rukum West districts grappling with the aftermath. In Jagarkot, 101 lives were lost, while 56 casualties were reported in Rukum West. The Nalgad Municipality of Jagarkot and Aathbiskot Municipality, as well as Sanibheri Rural Municipality in Rukum West, bore the brunt of the catastrophe.

Responding to this crisis, Tarangini Foundation, supported by OSF, took immediate action to address the needs, including psychosocial support, of the women affected by the earthquake. Although Tarangini does not have a physical office in the affected area, it worked collaboratively with WOREC Rukum to respond to the emergency.

Tarangini's response included the distribution of dignity kits and blankets to pregnant and lactating women, the elderly, and people with disabilities. Warm clothing for infants, Female Friendly Spaces (FFS), psychosocial counseling services, and community awareness programs on gender-based violence (GBV) were also part of the comprehensive assistance provided.

Collaborating with local palikas, Tarangini established Female Friendly Spaces (FFS) in strategic locations in Rukum West: Ward number 14 (Aathbiskot Municipality), Ward number 4 (Sanibheri Rural Municipality), and Ward number 1 (Sanibheri Rural Municipality).

These safe spaces serve as environments for women and girls to share their emotions, experiences, and challenges openly, fostering a sense of togetherness and support. Recognizing the challenges faced by women and girls residing in tents/tarpaulins as winter approached, Tarangini swiftly distributed relief packages. These included Dignity kits, Kisori kits, blankets, Sarbottam Pitho, infant clothing, and Psychosocial First Aid (PFA). The aid specifically targeted pregnant, lactating, elderly women, adolescent girls, and people with disabilities, providing physical and emotional warmth.

Acknowledging the critical role of Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDs) in crisis situations, Tarangini supported their travel expenses to assess the situation from a feminist perspective. Safety kits, including jackets, emergency lights, and sleeping bags, were provided to enhance their resilience and safety on the ground. WHRDs actively engaged with stakeholders, advocating for gender equality and women's leadership roles in humanitarian response.

WHRDs play a vital role in challenging traditional gender norms, addressing gender-based violence, and advocating for a more equitable and inclusive response to humanitarian challenges. Their presence in the field has expanded access to authorities and increased their influence, ensuring a timely and gender-sensitive response to the specific needs of women and girls during the crisis.



We express our gratitude to all those who supported and collaborated in this response. Your solidarity has made a significant impact on the lives of those affected by the earthquake. As we move forward in the rebuilding process, let us continue to stand together, championing equality and resilience.



Returnee Women Migrant Workers in Nepal

In the wake of Nepal's evolving migration landscape, where the number of women seeking employment abroad is on the rise, a critical issue emerges—the challenges faced by returnee women migrant workers. These women, despite contributing significantly to the economy through remittances, encounter formidable obstacles upon their return. Societal norms, compounded by restrictive policies and a lack of inclusive reintegration programs, cast a shadow on their return journey. The recently introduced "Reintegration Programme (Operation and Management) Directives for Returnee Migrant Workers, 2079" falls short in addressing the unique needs of women, further highlighting the structural inequalities embedded in Nepal's societal fabric.

Post-departure, returnee women grapple with social stigma, questioning of their character, and a lack of familial and societal integration. The Tarangini Foundation, in collaboration with key stakeholders, has conducted regional workshops to shed light on these challenges. Recommendations include the imperative need for awareness campaigns at various governance levels, emphasizing women's right to work and mobility. Recognizing the skills of returnee migrant women, particularly those in domestic work,

and ensuring formal, legal migration channels are crucial steps. Furthermore, the newsletter underscores the necessity for bilateral agreements with destination countries to safeguard the rights and safety of Nepalese migrant workers.

As we celebrate one year of advocacy, the Tarangini Foundation calls for a collective commitment to dismantle barriers hindering the reintegration of returnee women migrant workers. By fostering recognition, awareness, and inclusive policies, we aim to empower these women, facilitating their seamless return to society as valued contributors and not merely as "returnee migrant women." Together, let us champion safe migration, equality, and the holistic reintegration of all migrant workers, ensuring a brighter future for Nepal's returning heroines.



TARANGINI GALLERY



ABOUT US

Tarangini Mahila Adhikar Prashikshyen Kendra (Tarangini Foundation), established in 2017, is a non-profitable organization working on an initiative for integrated security and feminist documentation. The Sanskrit word 'tarangini' means tranquility in English. This term was chosen for the institute because it better represents the harmonious relationship among the women who have been engaging in the feminist movement of Nepal for a long. The reciprocity and exchange among the women activists and their organizations which has been continuing for more than 25 years are counted as an important asset to take the feminist movement to new heights.



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