

NEWSLETTER

Volume VII

Nov 2021-Jan 2022

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TOGETHER AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Editorial

The historical nature of gender-based violence confirms that it is not an unfortunate aberration but systematically entrenched in culture and society, reinforced and powered by patriarchy. Gender-based violence is a phenomenon deeply rooted in gender inequality, and continues to be one of the most notable human rights violations within all societies. Gender-based violence is a violence directed against a person because of their gender. Both women and men experience gender-based violence but the majority of victims are women and girls which is caused mainly due to patriarchal mindset of the society, unequal power relation between men and women and existing gender inequality. It is a serious violation of human rights and a life-threatening health and protection issue. It is estimated that one in three women will experience sexual or physical violence in their lifetime.

During times of crisis, the threat of GBV significantly increases. According to the United Nations Population Fund, 48 per cent of Nepali women say that they have experienced some form of violence at some point in their lives, with 15 per cent experiencing sexual violence (1). According to the Lockdown Report published by NWC, which has recorded cases from March 24, 2020, to July 21, 2020, the total number of calls received in the NWC helpline about domestic violence was 1267.

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1. <https://www.equaltimes.org/gender-based-violence-in-nepal-the-lang=en#.YfACCF5BzIU>

In the same way, according to the research conducted by WOREC, with the help of two hotlines, 23 psychologists, Women Human Rights Defenders, and Women's Community Organizations have documented the various incidents of violence from 29th April 2021 to 29th May 2021. The data shows that among 200 women, 45 percent of them are the victims of domestic violence. The consequences of gender-based violence are devastating with life-long repercussions including fatal outcomes. From acid attacks to poisoning, and from discrimination to intimidation, women around the country are being threatened, harassed, attacked and killed purely based on their gender.

Tarangini believes that violence against women is an outcome of deep rooted discriminatory social, political and economic structure nurtured by patriarchy. Different forms of harmful traditional practices under the umbrella of cultural and social practices are being used as tool to strengthen and gain control over everyone's life by patriarchy. To address, Tarangini has planned and implemented several programs to be specific, -Advocacy for the recognition of women's work as work, identity as equals and have control over their body by themselves. The 16 days of activism was used as an opportunity to showcase solitude and accountability along with togetherness against every form of violence against women.

Tarangini foundation works in two folds to address. First by providing psychosocial counselling to women, listening them through hotline or in person along with supporting for their livelihood options according to their need. Second, in conjunction with civil society organizations, medias, stakeholders and Women Human Right Defenders by raising voice, conducting movement building campaigns, showcasing visibility, pressurizing and sensitizing the responsible authorities and people in general against gender-based violence and the ultimate root cause of the issue. To make this stronger and from feminist perspective Tarangini is providing Feminist mentoring, leadership strengthening and psychosocial support to Frontline Women Human Right Defenders.

The issue is alarming; much progress has also been made in addressing gender-based violence. However, ground reality suggests that many more needs to be done to create environment where women can feel safe and realize the difference in their lives. Tarangini has been involved in defining the issues, collecting data and evidence to identify what works followed by facts-based advocacy and steadily improving the context of the issue to national agenda. Despite these advances, gender-based violence remains a national and global problem with the same root cause- inequitable gender norms. Unless and until those fundamental inequalities are addressed, which includes recognizing that women's rights are human rights and an attempt to bring about change in the deep-rooted patriarchal mind-set is brought forward, gender-based violence will not be terminated.

-The Editorial Team, Tarangini Foundation

REMEMBERING THE SISTERS WHO ARE WITH US WITH THEIR WORK AND STRUGGLE

December 6 is celebrated as Montreal Massacre Day. This day is celebrated in remembrance of 14 young women at Polytechnique Montreal, Canada. On Dec 6, 1989, a man fatally shot 13 students and an administrator and wounded others at the Montreal school, in one case declaring he was “fighting against feminism.” The anniversary later became the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. In National context, National Alliance of Women human right defender marks this day as a day to remember those who sacrificed their life for equality and left their footprints of struggle.

Therefore, in the 12th day of 16 days of campaign against Gender Based Violence, the National Alliance of Women Human Right Defenders and Tarangini Foundation organized an interaction program through virtual media in the memory of the deceased women human right defenders across Nepal in their honor. The program was started through life sharing in form of video exhibition of WHRDs who left the movement physically, leaving their work, fragrance of struggle and memory with the movement.

Remembering Women Human Right Defenders and their lives and struggle we reaffirm our commitment to fight the hatred that led to the tragedy and the misogyny that still exists today. In Nepal and around the world, women, girls, LGBTIQQA and gender diverse individuals face unacceptable violence and discrimination. In spite of sustained efforts of WHRDs from grassroots long way needs to be travelled to reach the goal. For this, creating an environment by acting collectively to get every woman’s work recognized, respected and values is the key.

Tarangini believes that due to the contribution and sacrifices of women martyrs, today we have been able to speak openly to some extent. Keeping this in mind, respecting the offerings of the late WHRDs, the continuous toil of Tarangini shall prevail.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH OF WOMEN AFFECTED BY CONFLICT (PIPAL AND KHARA VILLAGES FROM RUKUM AS A CASE)

SRHR encompasses the different human rights related to sexuality and reproduction, such as sexual health, sexual rights, reproductive health, and reproductive rights. Everyone, including children and adolescents, is entitled to SRHR.

In developing countries, more than 200 million women want to avoid pregnancy but don't have access to modern contraception (2). SRHR is related to multiple human rights, including the right to life, bodily autonomy, to be free from coercion and torture, to health, to privacy and to be free from gender discrimination and violence and have been included in key conventions. CEDAW includes SRHR largely within the ambit of Article 12 at core of the Convention. As such States have obligations to respect, protect and fulfill rights related to SRHR. Despite these obligations, violations are frequent and take many different forms

The current constitution presents basic health care services as a fundamental right (3). Yet the contraceptive prevalence rate (CPR) has remained stagnant in the last five years; in 2011 (50.0%) and in 2016 (53.0%). CPR for the modern method has not changed since 2006 (44.0% in 2006, 43.0% in 2011 and 43.0% in 2016) (4).

In this context, to study the sexual and reproductive health rights of the women living in West Rukum, Tarangini Foundation with the partnership of OHCHR's Surge Initiative conducted research at West Rukum to get deeper understanding on basic minimum health needs of women and available services for them. Rukum has strong association with the decade-long armed conflict.

It's an essential part of universal health coverage, which doesn't just include the absence of disease or dysfunction, but also ensures physical, emotional, mental, and social well-being.



When people's sexual and reproductive health and rights are denied, their well-being is threatened. People who live in poverty are disproportionately impacted by the lack of access to their full health care rights.



2. <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/sexual-reproductive-health-rights-srhr-explained/>
 3. Dulal, Ram Krishna. (2009). Health Federalism: The Role of Health Care Professionals in Nepal. J NMA; journal of the Nepal Medical Association. 48. 191-5. 10.31729/jnma.243.
 4. Ibid

Hundreds of people were tortured and victimized during this period (5). The focused group discussion was done among the women residing in the villages of Khara of the municipality of Triveni and Pipal of Rukum of the municipality of Bafikot. These villages fall within rural and remote hill country where the population was seriously affected by the decade long conflict in the early 2000. Women and girls in particular were affected by the conflict, including through sexual violence with ongoing grievous impact on mental health.



SCREENING OF 'PAHICHAAN'

'Pahichaan' refers to identity. One's identity is dependent on several factors; the work done by an individual, the family they belong to and the values they carry. In this society of ours, not every work is respected, dignified, recognized and identified to sustain patriarchal structure and values inculcated among people for centuries.

Domestic workers are those workers who perform work in or for a private household or households. The work basically includes household chores like washing dishes, cooking, cleaning and looking after the young children and elderly aged. Generally, we see two types of domestic workers; Live in (who stay with the family where they work) and Part time /day time worker (they can be part time or full time but stay with their own family). As domestic work is not considered as a work rather gets considered as mere extension of the care work assigned to them by patriarchal structure. It is estimated that three million women are in the Nepal's labor market, with 90.5% in informal employment. Survey results show that more than 80% of domestic workers have no written contract (6).

5. <https://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/people-of-conflict-affected-rukum-villages-submit-illegal-arms-to-govt/>

6. https://www.wiego.org/sites/default/files/publications/file/WIEGO_PolicyBrief_N20_Nepal%20for%20Web.pdf

Nepal's minimum wage does not apply to live in domestic workers. Thus, this kind of work generally leaves women being limited within a household and also does not generate a satisfactory amount of money to sustain the livelihood. In addition, due to the pandemic, most of the domestic workers have been unemployed and it's been difficult for the fulfillment of the basic needs as well. As domestic work is not considered as a 'work', there is no any place where the workers can go for complaints, forcing domestic workers to live with discrimination and uncertainty regarding income and livelihood.



Tarangini foundation, with an objective to advocate for their rights created a video documentation with the partnership of Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD) and Gauthali Entertainment. The screening of the video was done on International Women Human Right Defenders day on November 29th.

"MENTAL HEALTH CARE: A BASIS OF OBTAINING INTEGRATED HEALTH" CREATING COLLECTIVE UNDERSTANDING AND DEVELOPING INTEGRATED INTERVENTION PLAN

According to the definition of the World Health Organization, health means not only being free from any disease or disability but also being physically, mentally and socially healthy. Mental health is essential for complete health wellbeing of an individual. Integrated health care aims to reach the maximum number of people from minimum health care. The physical, mental and social aspects complement each other for perfect health. Various studies have shown that, on average, about 20 percent of the world's population suffers from mental illness at any age, given the current prevalence of mental illness (7).

At present, Nepal is facing increasing pressure of mental illness and new health challenges. It has been found that the number of people committing suicide due to mental illness is also increasing. According to the Nepal Police, an average of 20 people has committed suicide every day in the last fiscal year. According to the International Statistics of 2014, Nepal ranks seventh in the world in the number of suicides, while Nepal ranks third in terms of the number of female suicides.

7. <https://www.opmcm.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/npolicy/Health/Mental%20Health%20policy2053.pdf>.

Although efforts have been made in the past to achieve these objectives in the field of physical health treatment, very little has been done in the field of mental and social health treatment. As the government has not given priority to mental health, those with mental health problems have not been able to get reliable treatment and are forced to live with stigma. Individuals and families with mental health problems, and in particular women, are suffering by such situation the most

On this regard, Tarangini Foundation organized a workshop on “Mental Health Care: A basis of obtaining integrated health” in view of the fact that physical, mental and social health has not been integrated and so far, this theme has not even been projected. The main objective of this workshop was to sensitize policy makers and other stakeholders on need of integrated health care system with strong focus on Mental health prevention and care mechanism. General assembly of the foundation day was particularly chosen for this activity whereas parliamentarians, Ex ministers, Representatives from ind-



pendent human right bodies, municipalities and journalists among various other human right activists and government representatives were part of the program.

ADVOCACY WORKSHOPS AND INTERACTION ON RIGHT TO WORK, WHOLISTIC HEALTH AND IDENTITY; AN ATTEMPT TO TRANSFORM NON ISSUE TO NATIONAL AGENDA

Advocacy is a strategic process to influence the policies and practices that affect people's lives and is the process of bringing out the issues of the minority into the majority. It is about making the invisibles visible. In this way, a movement is built and the change can be possible.

Tarangini Foundation did conduct several fact-based advocacy workshops within the three months. The advocacy workshop was conducted in two places of Kathmandu itself, in partnership with APWLD where the women domestic workers, sex workers and entertainment sector workers were included as the beneficiaries. Within the mentioned period, we did conduct several advocacy programs creating visibility and taking the attention of the responsible authorities like parliamentarians, policy

Advocacy is the process where non issue is made an issue and the issue is then made agenda and then the national agenda and law makers, representatives of the organizations working

in the related field, media, press and women human right defenders. One of the positive things observed throughout this advocacy journey is that, our work of advocacy was not just limited to domestic workers but we had wide range of listeners, participants, activist and other audiences.

Advocacy workshops and interaction programs were conducted in Sarlahi, Chitwan and Tanahun with the partnership of The Global Alliance Against Trafficking Against Women (GAATW) for the rights and entitlement of overseas returnee women migrant workers. A network of Returnee migrant workers named Shramjibi Mahila Sanjal got evolved as self-representative network with an objective to advocate for their own rights.

The changes take time and in this sensitive matter, there has to be change in mindset from the grassroot and community level up to the policy making and implementing level. However, we have observed some positive changes throughout the process of the advocacy. According to Deputy Member of Workers' Groups of ILO Governing Body who participated in our advocacy workshop, Nepal Trade Union has already begun the piloting of new policy for domestic workers in three municipalities of Nepal including registration of the domestic workers. She also requested other municipalities to learn and begin the same process as those municipalities.



In the same way, the deputy mayor of one of the municipalities committed to bring about policies with proper implementation in her municipality.



Likewise, in the advocacy program, the two directors of the video documentation explained how their outlook towards women's work and identity has changed

in a positive manner throughout the process and provided their commitment to advocate for the work and identity as much as they can in the upcoming future. These might not be great changes but we believe, these changes matter in the verge of formation of a society where every work is dignified and respected.

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

Violence against women is a global problem. To address this problem, a 365-day campaign from the community level to the policy-making level of the world is needed throughout the year. From November 25 (Violence Against Women Day) to December 10 (Human Rights Day), 16 days have been celebrated around the world for 30 years as a 16-days international campaign against violence against women. Its main objective is to eliminate all forms of violence and crime based on gender, eliminate inequality between men and women, and create an environment in which people of all genders, including girls, adolescents, adults and the elderly, can live a dignified life without discrimination.

In the context of gender discrimination, girls and women of all walks of life are more affected, so more emphasis is placed on the rights of girls and women. This year, the campaign against sexual violence was celebrated with slogan, "सामाजिक रुपान्तरणको चित्र; महिला, श्रम शक्ति भित्र," by WHRDs all over the country.

Within these 16 days of activism, Tarangini Foundation conducted several programs, campaigns and rallies in order to advocate for a safe, belonging and respectful environment for every home and public place, an environment free from any kind of violence by sustained activities and campaign for social transformation. Tarangini foundation firmly believes that without meaningful activities for social transformation talking about elimination of violence is meaningless. Thus, Tarangini instigates sustained campaign for social transformation from below.



Tarangini Foundation with collaboration with Nepal Mahila Ekta Samaj, WOFOWON, WOREC and Jagriti Mahila Maha Sangh conducted a rally program on the occasion of Women Human Right Defenders Day on 29th November, showcasing the visibility and distinctness in the campaign. Petition sign program for the awareness against gender-based violence, webinars and advocacy workshops were continuously conducted within these days of activism against violence against women.



Testimonials

“We would like to work on another “PAHICHAN” project where the domestic workers would happily agree to show their face. This is the change we look forward which is possible only if the domestic work is respected, recognized and valued.”

– Sailesh Bikram Chhetri, A young director of the video documentation

"We have not just created the video but somehow, this process has created a new us-with new perspective about work and identity. This whole process has brought a change upon us”

– Aashruti Tripathi, A young Director of the video documentation

"We are in the place of policy formulation. And, after watching this video, we assure you that we shall begin the initiatives to do something in this sector as well from our level.”

- Saraswati Khadka, Deputy Mayor of Kirtipur Municipality

"Previously, I used to teach and aware the mass about gender-based violence and aware people about it. Now, I came to know I was doing so wrong. I never thought about the root cause of the violence that is, having no identity and respect to the women’s work. But now that I came to know about the work, its identity, recognition and need for advocacy in local and provincial level, I commit to advocate and work for this campaign in the coming days. We conduct regular programs in our districts as well, so I shall now on raise the issue of work and inspire others to do so as well. This has been a new and perspective changing experience for me”

- Bhagawati Gautam, A WHRD from Lalitpur

OTHER EVENTS:

PARTICIPATION IN RALLY AT RUKUM ON 25th NOVEMBER, BEGINNING OF 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

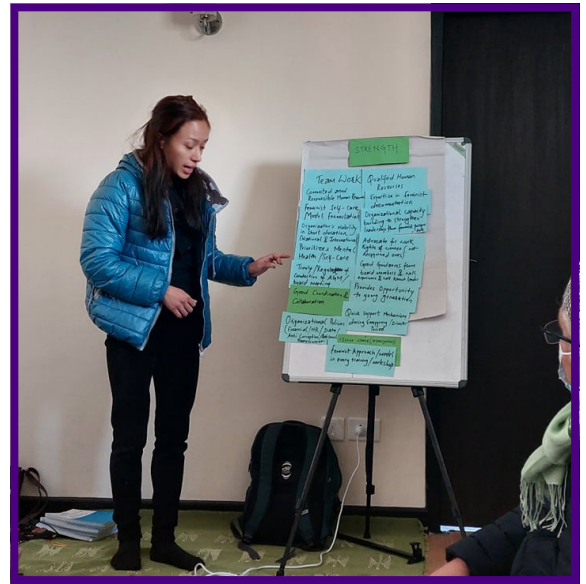




PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT IN HELAMBU RURAL MUNICIPALITY



STRATEGY PLANNING OF TARANGINI



PARTICIPATION IN SIGNATURE COLLECTION CAMPAIGN AGAINST GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN HETAUDA



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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