

# Insight

*A Publication against Trafficking in Person*  
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## WOREC's Anti-Trafficking Movement

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*People rally against human trafficking*

Traffic in persons is a gross violation of human rights. It has been estimated that every year thousands of girls from the rural areas of Nepal are trafficked for the purposes of sexual and/or labour exploitation. Although existing data of trafficking is far away from being comprehensive and sometimes even contradictory, it is enough to provide evidence to prove that trafficking is a serious problem in the country. It is estimated that around 20 percent of the trafficked girls are minors. And it is not only India that is the receiver of girls and women through trafficking. Women and children are trafficked even within the country. In addition, in Nepal, people usually perceive trafficking as a synonym to the sex trade. For these reasons, WOREC has realized the importance of conceptual clarity on the issue of trafficking within the framework human rights.

Since its inception, WOREC has been fighting for the rehabilitation and human rights of the survivors of trafficking. WOREC has been addressing the inequities in the access and ownership to the natural productive resources and basic human rights; discrimination and exploitation; the patriarchal socio-political structure, unemployment and socio-economic crimes, such as traffic in and violence against women and children, factors which have led to a persistently declining quality of life of Nepali people, including social and individual security. Through a holistic approach, linking social



*People rally against human trafficking*

justice and equality, sustainability and equal human rights and opportunities for all, and combating trafficking in parallel, WOREC has been working in partnership with grassroots people, and local, national and

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Women's Rehabilitation Centre

international non-governmental organizations for resolving the major socio-economic, cultural, and human rights problems prevalent in Nepal. WOREC is working not only with the vulnerable groups of the community, especially women and children, and the marginalized and discriminated populace, but also with the survivors of trafficking.

Trafficking is not an isolated phenomenon and the reasons are complex and multi-dimensional. Human trafficking is a reflection of social injustice. It is a fundamental violation of human rights, and therefore requires a rights-based approach to address its root causes. It is against this background that WOREC has been addressing the issue of trafficking with a holistic approach based on participatory intervention strategies.

Facilitating the formation and strengthening of social democratic organizations (SDOs) through collective empowerment and social mobilization, has been the major thrust of the approach for social justice. Mobilization of these SDOs, such as local women's and youth groups, is broadly directed towards protecting the human rights of women and other marginalised populations as well as promoting their access to production technologies and other resources.

WOREC has always been active in the formation and functioning of network groups against trafficking and towards achieving its goal, it has placed emphasis on the production and dissemination of publications against trafficking. *Insight* is one of our publications. Your contribution to this journal is most welcome.

## **Cross-Border Trafficking of Boys**

*Trafficking in women and girls is a distinct discriminatory phenomenon that has been gaining increasing attention among concerned individuals and institutions in Nepal. Due to the continuous efforts of NGOs in areas of social mobilization, awareness and advocacy, trafficking in women and girls has become an issue of national priority. Although much attention needs to be paid, there is a strong realization of the significance of the problem, and concerned efforts are directed towards its prevention. However, little attention has been given to trafficking of boys. This excerpt from the Cross Border Trafficking of Boys'-a study done by WOREC and supported by ILO/ IPEC takes its departure in one concrete discovery of a case of what seems at the outset to be organized trafficking of boys from three border districts in Nepal.*

Exploring the trafficking of boys brings us to look at the patterns of migration in Nepal. The seasonal labour migration of men in order to earn income in cash is a very common socio-economic phenomenon. Although labour migration has been a common survival strategy among the rural poor for a considerable period of time, the issue of separated families due to migration and its social implication has only recently become known. One can assume that migrants have always faced hardship and challenges, even to the degree of abuse by new employers, as they are often employed without any legal status in the country they have migrated to. The frequency of men's migration has a direct impact on boy's migration, although this has never been perceived as an issue.

The research team members were shocked when they were shown a trafficked boy of six years who had returned a few months back after having problem with his eyes while working at the embroidery factory in Mumbai, India. They came to know that the Indian employers, particularly in Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkata were taking boys because the children's eyes are sharper compared to adults. Embroidery is a very fine work and requires sharp eyes and fine fingers. It is evident that such work will stress the eyes especially when the working environment itself is unsafe. The villagers reported that if a person continuously works in such a job for 10 years or more then his/her eyes will be severely damaged.

The reasons for migration may be numerous but indications suggest that elements of force, deception, involuntariness, economic compulsion or even deliberate trafficking through informal labour agents have been a part of the picture for a long time. However the migration of boys was not commonly known or talked about as being trafficking.

The Janakpur Information Booth of the Women's Rehabilitation Centre at the railway station intercepted a train wagon

and rescued 25 boys who were about to be taken to Mumbai. This was the first discovery of the organized trafficking of boys from Nepal to India.

**The case below depicts the situation of a boy who works in an embroidery factory/ in India**

**Name:** Md. Sarif (name changed)  
**Age:** 8 years  
**Address:** Mahottari District, Hoharpatti VDC Ward No.1  
**Family Members:** Mother & Father, 6 brothers, and 4 sisters= 12 members; all are illiterate  
**Current address:** Shivir embroidery factory, Andheri, Mumbai, India

Sarif started working in the Shivir embroidery factory in India 7 months ago and was a trainee in the factory. According to him the factory owner provides meals twice a day and tea occasionally. He said that he has been working there for 16 to 18 hours a day.

Sarif showed a lot of dark marks and wounds on his thigh and other parts of his body as a result of severe beating by the employer. He said that this is very common, particularly when the workers delay on their jobs. A person brought him there from Mahottari, named Mahommed, who was paid 1500 Nepali Rupees for taking him to India.

Generally, it is said that the factory owners provide wages after 6 months of work or the so-called internship period. On the day to receive the payment for his effort, Sarif was informed that his one-year training period wages plus one-and-half year wages was already taken by Mohammed. He is bonded to the factory owner.

“How will I fulfil my family’s as well as my own expectation of earning money, education and a good life? No one in this world really helps the poor.”

Upon inquiry, Sarif informed that the police get money from the factory owners and do nothing against such activities. Sarif further adds, “ while working if I fall asleep they pour salt and chili powder in my eyes. It’s been long that they haven’t provided the salary. When, if at all, they will give our salary is also unknown.”

From the analysis of the perception and attitude of the stakeholders, all stakeholders except the villagers pointed out that they were fully aware about girl trafficking but it was the first time that they heard about the trafficking of boys. In general, it was found that the majority of the villagers considered the entire phenomenon of trafficking of boys as a system of giving employment to poor children in order to solve their and their family's "hands to mouth" problems. There seems to be a clear difference of opinion between different stakeholders as the villagers strongly believed that the current system of sending their boys to India is neither trafficking nor a crime. According to them, it is the best option for their boys to be employed in India and to earn their livelihoods. Since the poor villagers are unable to send their children to school and here are no local employment opportunities or role models, the parents are found sufficiently motivated to send their boys to India.

*After the completion of the fieldwork in Nepal the research team reached the conclusion that:*

- ✦ A vast majority of the rural households have large numbers of children and do not have access to resources, which could support their livelihood.
- ✦ Wage labour is the main source of income. However, the wage rate is very low and therefore many adults as well as children are compelled to go out to other places in order to earn some income.
- ✦ The economically poor rural people do not have access to employment opportunities and education for their children. Such an environment is favourable for out-migration. Since information about job opportunities and conditions is not known, the traffickers take advantage of such a situation and children are forced to work under slavery-like conditions.
- ✦ The socio-economic set up, cultural-religious taboos, and marginalisation of the community by mainstream development programmes and agencies is also found to be escalating or perpetuating the problems leading to the trafficking of boys.
- ✦ There are no concentrated efforts for minimum wage standards, skill development and other activities to improve their living conditions. Neither are there awareness creation programmes, education for safe migration, and solutions to the problem of trafficking. *(To order the report please contact at [pub@worecnepal.org](mailto:pub@worecnepal.org))*

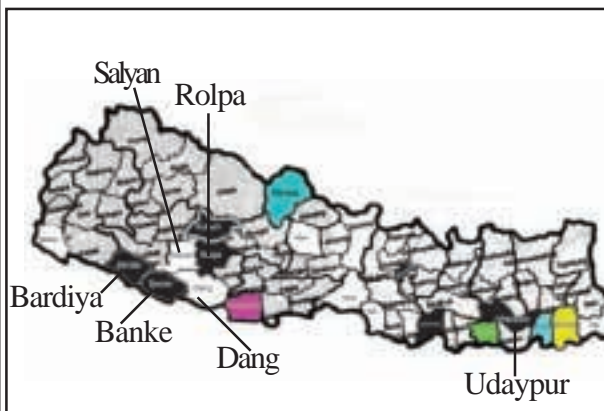
## Conflict puts women more at the brunt

Balaram Dawadi

The peace and prosperity of Nepal today is at-risk, the human rights situation is deteriorating, and women and children are in the most vulnerable position. During the situation of conflict, neither of the warring parties have been able to ensure the human rights of the populace. Instead, mass abuse, torture and killings, rape, threatening and exploitation have become more rampant. Large numbers of innocent people have been adversely affected due to the conflict. Many of them have lost their lives and insecurity within the country is increasing. The unprecedented levels of human rights abuses is putting the future of both women and children at-risk. Not only has the social and economic status of people largely deteriorated, but the locals' physical and mental conditions have also deteriorated due to the conflict.

The armed conflict has increased inhumane crimes and women and children are more at the brunt of such incidences. This article is excerpted from a study done on human rights violation in armed conflict affected areas and its impact on women.

WOREC conducted the study in 6 districts of Nepal that were under control of the Maoists groups. These districts included Udaypur, Dang, Rolpa, Salyan, Banke and Bardiya. Altogether 142 incidents of violence within the conflict situation directly related to women were collected in order to depict the unprecedented human rights violations that are occurring.



*Violence perpetuated as a result of the conflict include the following:*

- Threats, physical abuse, harassment of the general public
- Women used as an object of revenge. They were sexually abused, raped and made to keep silent about the violence.
- Arbitrary arrest, detention, deliberate killings and abduction of people.
- Severe torture and exploitation, and mass killings by both the government's security forces and the Maoists.
- Deterioration and degradation of trust within the social environment.
- Increase of social responsibility and duty among women in the affected areas as men tend to migrate or are abducted due to the conflict.
- Psychosocial impact and physical disability in women.
- Degrading social security.

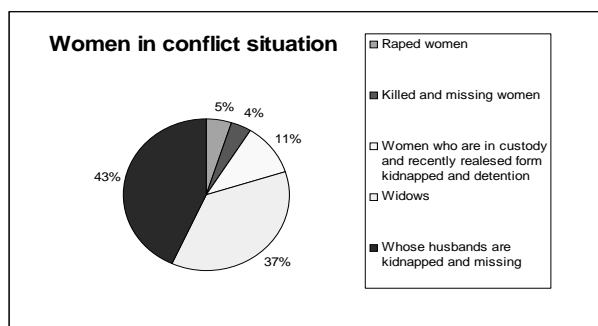
*Nature of violence on women in conflict situation*

Violence that women had to face during conflict situation was divided into five categories:

- Raped women
- Killed and missing women
- Women who were in custody and recently released after kidnapping and women who were under detention
- Widows
- Women whose husbands were abducted, disappeared and or kidnapped.

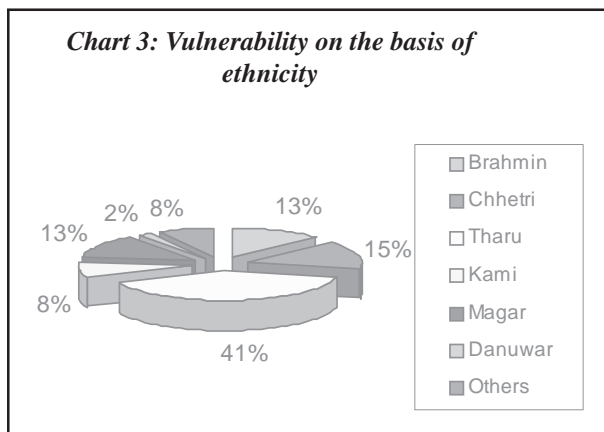
The findings summarised in Chart 1 show that 11% of the women who were under custody were severely affected by physical and mental violence; 43% of the women whose husbands were either

abducted or arrested had to bear frequent mental torture; 37 % of the women had to face the death of their husbands while 5% of the women were raped by security forces during investigation and unknown people at times of terrorisation in the villages. The remaining 4% of women were either killed or abducted during the encounter. It can be seen from the findings that the majority of the women were from the category whose husbands had either been abducted or arbitrarily arrested and women who were widows from the conflict situation. The second most affected were women who themselves were in custody or were recently released.

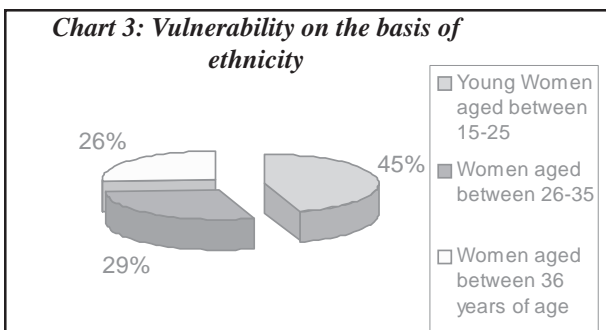


marginalized by the upper caste society. Twenty eight-percent of them were upper caste and 11% were dalit. Marginalized communities have been particularly affected by the conflict, as well as the discriminatory governance system, compelling them either to be submerged into acts of violence, or to be displaced. Violence and displacement has also increased the risk of trafficking for women and children.

This study, demonstrates that there has been a



The findings presented in Chart 2 show that the majority of those affected were young women. Out of the total cases, 64 women were between 15-25, 41 of them between 25-35 and 37 of them above 35. Though exact data is not available, it is estimated that very young women are more affected through displacement.



tremendous intensification of human rights abuses among civilians, including social workers and politicians who have been targeted and killed because they are considered enemies of the revolution. People who did not obey the orders given by Maoists have also been punished severely or killed. Similarly, it has been reported that children and women have been recruited and deployed in combat situations to provide care for the wounded. In addition, many unlawful killings have been fostered with the mission of disarming and defeating the Maoists. Innocent civilians have been shot dead because they were labelled Maoists. Maoist combatants and Maoist suspects have been killed in the name of encounters instead of arresting them. There has been several women and children killed unlawfully. This exemplifies the lack of interest of stakeholders to protect the right to life of the general public.

Of the total cases encountered and being studied, Chart 3 shows that 41% of the women interviewed were from the Tharu community, an indigenous ethnic group which is discriminated against and

After the declaration of the state of emergency in

the country, the security forces have been abusing the powers given to them. Of the cases of human rights violations that WOREC recorded, sixty-nine percent of abuses were found to have committed by the State. The situation of the people who have been killed during armed conflict is even more devastating. In particular, the violence has had an impact on the mental and emotional health of women and children, leading to stress, depression, etc.

As a human rights organization striving for social justice and equity, WOREC strongly demands an immediate cease-fire and for the start of a peaceful dialogue in the interest of Nepali people and the nation. All kinds of conflicts can be solved through peaceful dialogue but never by using force and weapons. In this light, the political conflict in Nepal needs to be solved by peaceful means in the interest of marginalized and exploited groups of people.

## **The changing face of globalization: negative impacts on trafficking**

**Shikha Manandhar**

Globalisation, one of the most heard terms in this modern, technology-driven world, is in fact trying to make the whole globe a single dwelling. Driven by integrated economy and free market, it has created new opportunities for many but, for people still living in the developing world, it has created a misty future, making them more poor, and their value underestimated.

Conceptually, globalisation is the flow of information, goods, services, capital and people, technology and culture across political and economic boundaries. Indeed, people have always carried information, goods, and capital across countries. It is not a new phenomenon. And we cannot deny the fact that globalisation is creating unprecedented new opportunities. The integration in global economy and utilization of opportunities, access to modern knowledge and technology are definitely impetuses for massive progress.

If globalization is promoted as a means of development and new opportunities for all, if it is to create a new pace of life and people are to live happily ever after, then we must ask whether the new world order is equitable, who it is that actually receives the benefits and whether or not the world is really developing. Socio-economic-political hierarchies, rising inequalities between developed and developing countries, elites and masses, rich and poor are rampant and the present global scenario is marginalizing millions of impoverished and vulnerable people. There is alarming rural poverty together with the acceleration in urbanization. There is competition, and a survival of the fittest, which is emerging as a challenge for urban poor. The urbanizing city that holds key economic significance is attracting enormous numbers of migrants from rural areas seeking economic opportunities. People turn to a variety of resources, including newspaper ads, acquaintances, marriage agencies, labour recruiters, etc. Ultimately, many of these migrants end up as victims of illegal and unscrupulous trafficking networks.

Although we should admit that globalisation has an enormous potential for national economic growth, there are troubling features, such as technological change, increased vulnerability and exposure, and a shift of economic power that have emerged as negative impacts, especially in the developing world. This is urging developing countries to globalise, transforming non-necessities into interests and then into needs. This is one example why globalisation has increased the trend of enormous migration for employment, because of the demand for cheap labour, the demand for women in the service sector. Moreover, this has encouraged increased illegal migration, which ultimately perpetuates the inhumane crime of trafficking.

Globalisation, a phenomenon of economic theory is based on a world economy driven by the market, which has grown too large. In the context of the developing world, it has had a tremendous impact on various sectors through economic transformation, new trade regimes, the electronic revolution, new forms of governance and trends of employment services. This has led to financial volatility, creating more unemployment, marginalization, exclusions of the poor and low-income people, and labour insecurity. Hence, people with less new skills in this modern world struggle to gain access to local markets, which creates a situation of extreme exclusion. There is increased vulnerability and insecurity in the new market due to economic changes. The tremendous promotion of import trade, especially in the markets of developing countries such as Nepal, which has been sustaining through these goods, cannot be neglected. Many foreign direct investments and joint ventures have been endorsed in the country. This has, to some extent, helped in the development but it poses a complex challenge to local trade, which has been rapidly declining.

We cannot deny the fact that trafficking is a result of an

unscrupulous globalisation trend. Trafficking is also being facilitated by the electronic revolution.

The technological revolution has been offering extraordinary opportunities through access to Internets, televisions etc which stimulates the need for luxury. But for people to have economic opportunities, they need to have access to these technologies. The media stimulates consumption habits, turning the interests into needs, enslaving people to make money and material. This world of a money-driven society ultimately encourages people to migrate. And the subsequent impacts on trafficking are already known.

In terms of combating trafficking, very little effort has been made by the government. But the reason may be that the role of the State is being transformed, and transnational

social and political movements are becoming more and more important. The areas of improvement in terms of laws and policies have not taken place. There is a great deal of discussion about partnerships between the private and public sectors at the national level where the government contracts private sector companies to undertake tasks which should be the responsibility of the public sector. The trends in employment services have also changed. As people's interest and needs have changed, the survival motivations have changed. Consequently, employment in the entertainment sector and foreign employment services have flourished. But the people who work here are the most marginalized, and often end up in conditions of stress, bondage, and forced labour with the limited rights. Hence, they may ultimately fall into the hands of traffickers who coerce them into exploitative situations.

## Violence and its Impacts- Challenges faced by Youth

**Soni Pradhan**

Being young and inexperienced, youth are traditionally considered one of the most vulnerable groups in the context of major social transformation and gender-based violence. In many families, youth are given the burden of elderly care, and at the same time, older people will have problems disciplining young family members who are thrust into their care. Prevalent gender-based violence continues to exploit youth in labor forces, keep many more of them from school, increasing their risk for drug use, sexual abuse, violence, crime, HIV/AIDs, and trafficking across borders for economic and sexual exploitation. In addition their physical, mental and intellectual development is compromised.

There are approximately 1.5 billion young people between the ages of 10 to 25 years worldwide. Out of them, eighty percent live in developing countries. In Nepal, it is estimated that there are 7.1 million youth making up 31 percent of the total population. Young people are defined as people in the age group of 10-24 years, which include pre-adolescents and adolescents (10-19years) and young adults (20-24 years) since the sociological, psychological and health problems they face may differ. The definition and understanding of the term youth often varies from country to country, depending on the specific socio-cultural, institutional, economic and political factors.

### *Nature and magnitude of violence*

Previous research on youth and adolescents, both in Nepal and South Asia, shows that violence among this group does exist. Both fatal and non-fatal assaults involving young people contribute greatly to the burden of premature death, injury and disability. Youth violence deeply harms not only its victims but also their families, friends, communities and nation. An average of 565

children, adolescents and young adults between the age of 10-29 years die as a result of interpersonal violence across the World (WHO 2000). A large number of these are from South-East Asia (2000). In Nepal, 43 percent of 165 rape victims seeking treatment in Kathmandu's Maternity Hospital during 1994-1997 were below the age of 19 years. Various studies conducted in Nepal also show that the magnitude of gender-based violence on adolescent girls and women is high in Nepal. Violence has not yet been studied systematically in Nepal, in particular violence among youth and adolescents.

In 2003 WOREC conducted a project research entitled, "Adolescents and Youth Speak About Violence and Its Impact". It was conducted at two different districts (Morang and Udayapur) of the eastern region of Nepal among 2000 adolescents and youth. The research was the first of its kind to find out the nature, extent and impact of violence as well as information about their attitude towards different forms of violence. Boys and young men are usually perceived as the perpetrators of violence, however it is not true that all women are good and all men, are bad. This research also tried to find out the perceptions and attitude of male or young people towards violence against women and the ways to overcome it.

### *Nature of violence*

The research findings show that youth and adolescents have to face different types of violence, such as physical, psychosocial, sexual and social violence.

### *Physical violence*

The finding shows that the most serious type of physical

violence occurs in schools. To discipline students, beating of students by the teacher is a normal phenomenon and is interpreted as a just form of punishment by the parents, who invariably blame their children for deserving the punishment for behaving badly or not paying due attention to their studies. Some people rationalize physical punishment at school or at home by saying that, in our culture, unlike in the western culture, children readily accept such beatings. But these types of beliefs have not been supported. Although many believed that beating is necessary to keep one under discipline but when it comes to their experience of such physical violence in and outside home they feel very revengeful, angry and describe feelings of low-self esteem. The findings also show that adolescents and youths themselves witness many instances of varied forms of violence, including wife battering, dowry-related violence, violence against 'witches' etc.

### *Psychosocial Violence*

The findings demonstrate that youth experience different types of psychosocial violence, including receiving threats and humiliating remarks from family and non-family members and allegations of having a bad character, particularly in relation to sexuality for girls. Many youth and adolescents reported having received threats from family and non-family members inside and outside the home.

### *Sexual violence*

The research findings revealed that sexual violence is a very common phenomenon in rural Nepal. Adolescent girls and married young women are exposed to varied forms of sexual harassment at home, in villages, schools and during public events, such as marriage ceremonies, cultural and entertainment programs and in the bazaar. The other disturbing fact was that many women implied that women's sexuality is closely linked to the honor, of the family, clan and even the entire village, and for sexual violence girls are themselves to be blamed for provoking men, or deserving sexual harassment.

### *Social violence*

The research findings attest to different types of social violence, such as polygamy, caste-based discrimination, class discrimination, gender discrimination, forced prostitution, trafficking, domestic violence, wife battering and denial of citizenship (especially for Terai Dalits). The analysis of the report showed that adolescents and youth tend to locate psychosocial and sexual violence in the wider context of social, cultural and economic structures and processes.

### *Extent of violence*

The survey findings indicate that Nepalese youth and adolescents grow up in a social environment of violence. Ninety-eight percent of the youth and adolescents interviewed believe that torture is justified if it is carried out against 'bad criminals' and is reflective of norms and values. Ninety-one percent of adolescents and youths believe that physical punishment is justified against misbehaving students to put them under discipline. These findings show that human rights awareness programmes have not even scratched the surface of some of the anti-human rights cultures of Nepal. With the issues of sexual violence, out of every five girls interviewed one girl reported that men have touched them in a sexual way. Also many adolescents and young girls reported having experienced or witnessed outright rape and other forms of direct and physical sexual harassments in the community by fake lovers, security personnel and powerful men in the community. It explains that many youth and adolescents are of the view that girls and women themselves are responsible for provoking men so they deserve sexual harassment and other forms of sexual violence. These findings demonstrate that there are still gender disparities, which define the role of women and men in society. These disparities have a negative impact on both sexes, with the issues of social violence polygamy, rape, caste and class discrimination. There is evidence which shows that there are many cases of caste-based insults. Of those interviewed, most reported having heard caste-based insults. Out of these, 28% said that they had heard many times and 66% said that they felt very hurt hearing such insulting remarks. These findings show that still there is feeling of strong caste stereotypes, which defines 'us' as good and 'them' as bad, a reality that has the potential for escalating conflict and communal riots.

### *Impact of violence:*

The research findings have exposed the impact of violence among youth and adolescents. They explore the impact of violence in terms of feeling guilty and worthless, losing one's appetite, and losing trust. The research demonstrates that psychological violence may lead to feelings of low self-esteem, feeling hurt, dropping out of school, becoming revengeful or starting to smoke, use drugs and other unhealthy behavior. Experiences of violence may also result in youth talking less and feeling like running away from home. The impacts of sexual violence are particularly profound, including physical repercussions, victimization as a 'bad girl' and feeling suicidal after rape.

### *Conclusions:*

Home, which is supposed to be the safest place for everyone, is not always safe. Gender-based violence towards



youth and adolescents starts in the home. Though many adolescents and youth support beatings against misbehaving children, the majority of them felt hurt or angry when they themselves had received such a beating. This shows that in Nepal, youth and adolescents are living in a violent environment. In their day-to-day life they have to face different types of violence, which starts from their home. Such an environment of violence seems to form and harden attitudes that violence is a fact of life and that it is the most effective way of expressing frustrations and resolving conflicts. In the issue of violence, girls and women are usually blamed saying they deserved it or they asked for it. Much of individual and collective cultural identity is woven around women's sexual purity and that seems to be internalized by young women, who thus seem to be defeating their own cause inadvertently. In the case of young boys, they are seen as a perpetrators of violence though young boys, too, experience negative impacts of violence, especially gender-based violence. Besides this, they grow up within the context of structural violence such as poverty, unemployment, disparities and patriarchal values that manifest into gender-based violence. The

gender roles, which have been defined for both male and female bring creates many challenges and obstacles, which hinder their future development.

On the positive side, the study shows that if a forum is provided for youth and adolescents, they are open to discussing the issues and finding ways to overcome violence. WOREC believes that this section of the population has the potential to have a huge impact on the future development of Nepal. The research supports may of WOREC's existing programs with youth. With the ultimate goal of empowering and mobilizing youth and adolescents to reduce level and impact of violence on them, as well as violence against women, and to safeguard their basic human rights, WOREC has been implementing programs with youth and adolescents. The goal is based on the notion that if young people are provided with the skills, knowledge, confidence and legal protection before they reach adulthood, they will be immune to any serious, even life threatening social problems. It is only through empowering the future generations that true social transformation will be achieved.

### **Information booth...an action towards prevention of trafficking**

Trafficking, as we perceive it today, is a 'hot topic' that is gaining the increasing attention of all levels of people. Concerned individuals and institutions in Nepal and abroad are aware that it is a global and a distinct discriminatory phenomenon. Despite continuous efforts of NGOs, activists and concerns of civil society, it is problem that has been increasing

Tremendous numbers of trafficking cases have come to the forefront. Sometimes we hear of groups of children being taken to India through border areas for forced labour, and sometimes of young girls being trafficked through fake marriages. And today, we often hear of young men and women being defrauded, both in the country and overseas, by employment agencies and middlemen with promises that they would help them with good jobs in foreign countries. The networks have grown stronger and the patterns have developed to the extent that trafficking of women and girls for sexual exploitation have broadened to human trafficking for all kinds of exploitative forms of labour.

As we know, trafficking is not a new phenomenon, but there is evidence that new forms, routes, and sources of trafficking have arisen in recent years. This is because of the reason that it is multi-faceted, affecting vulnerable groups, including women, children, and other marginalized

people who are unaware of their legal rights, and have limited access to resources. This means that prevention only through mass mobilization, frequent meetings and workshops alone will not curb the problem.



*Information booth at Rani in Biratnagar*

Realizing the need for adequate information dissemination and a change in behaviour of the migrating population and the general people, WOREC came up with the idea of establishing information booths through which messages on the consequences of trafficking, migration and HIV/ AIDS, and steps to prevent exploitation would spread. It was envisaged that these information booths would also provide counseling to the migrating population for safe migration.

The booths established in border areas also play an important role in trying to counter any cases of trafficking, through special coordination with police personnel and the local people residing in the locale.

WOREC believes that the propagation of adequate information through one-to-one contact will bring a change in conceptualization and understanding of migration. This has further encouraged WOREC to increase its service in all hub areas of Nepal where migration is very high so that a wide range of exploitative, slave-like practices and severe human rights violations would stop.

# "Breaking the Silence--Needs Identification of Survivors of Gender-based Violence "

Upama Malla

*"The body mends soon enough. Only the scars remain.... but the wounds inflicted upon the soul take much longer to heal. And each time I re-live these moments, they start bleeding all over again. The broken spirit has taken the longest to mend; the damage to the personality may be the most difficult to overcome."* - These are the words of a woman who survived gender-based violence in India.

The intensity of the impact of gender-based violence (GBV) can be highlighted from the above lines. But there are some eye-opening statistics to show that this is the reality of so many women in the world. One out of every five women in the world is physically or sexually abused by a man at some point in her life. In the developing world one third of women are subjected to daily domestic violence. The South Asian region has one of the highest incidences of gender-based violence in the world. Dowry-related incidents kill or maim at least 25,000 brides every year in India. Six hundred thirty-one women became victims of Karo Kari (Honour killings) during January to August 2003 in Pakistan.

Therefore, GBV is an urgent issue all over the world, and Nepal is not an exception. GBV is currently recognized as a societal and public health problem, and as a violation of basic human rights. Sadly, silence fosters the growth of GBV, and sends a message that GBV is tolerated and permissible in Nepali society. Many incidences of GBV go unreported since women are often reluctant to make public an issue that is perceived as a private or family matter. The results of one of the research studies conducted in Nepal shows that 77% of Nepalese women suffer from domestic violence.

The lack of informal and formal support networks

contributes to women's silence about the violence they suffer. Nonetheless, violence, if untreated, affects the ability of women to care for themselves, and their families and diminishes their productivity in society. GBV also adds extra burden to health services, law enforcement and legal services invested in response to its occurrences, consequences and prevention. Women who suffer domestic and gender-based violence are entitled to tell their stories, express their pain, and obtain the support they need to overcome the cruelty they suffer. Therefore, WOREC initiated a study to explore the different kinds of violence faced by women, the nature of violence, and the informal and formal support system needed by the victims of GBV on the basis of which effective intervention program could be planned. It also aimed to give a voice to women who endure GBV, which is the first step in breaking the silence, and working towards eradicating this form of human rights abuse.

## *Methodology & Scope of the study*

This study was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. A survey method with structured questionnaires, focus group discussions and case studies was undertaken. A non-probability sampling method with a purposive sampling technique was used. Sixty respondents were GBV survivors identified through the health workers of WOREC's reproductive health project in Udayapur and Plect-NEPAL's project in Kirtipur. This study focused on victims of GBV who are or were married, as in our social structure violence is more prevalent in conjugal relations. It is felt that the sample represents in a proper way only those sixty women that wanted and could answer.

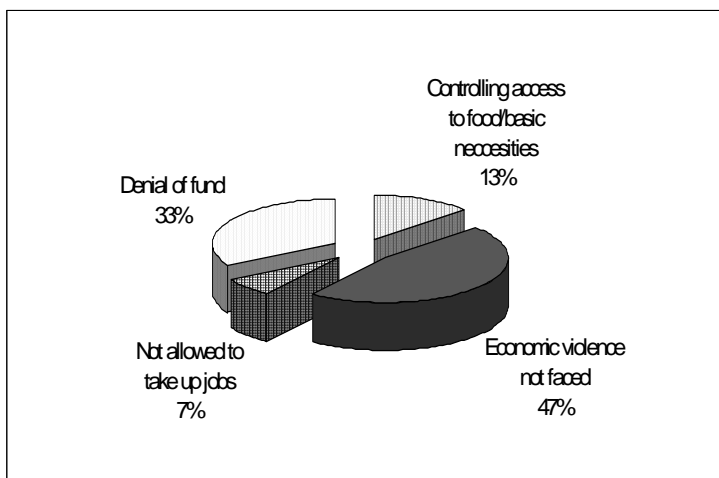
## Findings

*The major findings of this study are highlighted below.*

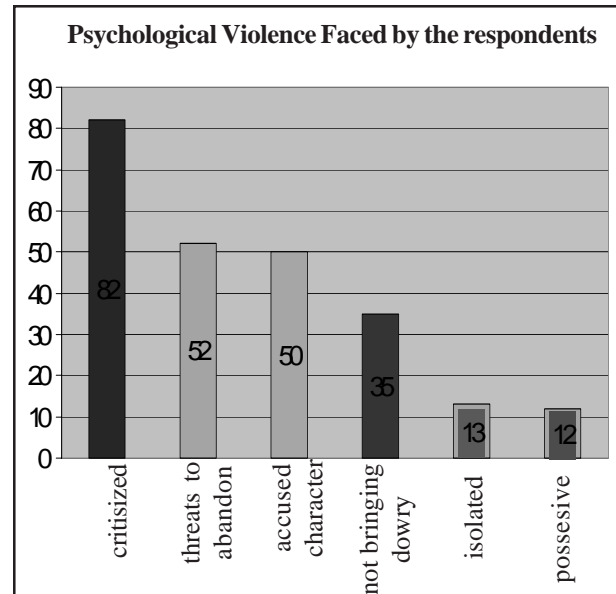
Three-fourths of the respondents were uneducated, and were economically dependent i.e. housewives, or were involved in agriculture, whereas more than one-third of their husbands had received secondary education. Such a difference in education between spouses reveals gender discrimination prevalent in the surveyed sample. One-third of the respondents belonged to higher castes (Bhramin/ Chhreti) and nearly half belonged to ethnic groups (Newar and Danuwar). The remaining 17 percent consisted of Magar, Tamang, and Sarki. This shows that violence cuts across caste and ethnicity in the surveyed sample.

The study also showed that more than half of the respondents were married before they turned 18 though child marriage has been illegal since 1963 in Nepal. Research has shown that the earlier the age of marriage, the more the incidence of violence. Also, more than half of the respondents cited economic factors, and husbands' drinking habits as major causes for conflict between themselves and their husbands.

Some of the respondents were found to suffer from economic abuse as well. One of the reasons for economic violence could be the economic



dependence of the majority of the respondents on their husbands. A study in China also showed that "financially dependent women, in particular, would rather suffer beating than hunger." (Breaking the Silence, 1999)



The high level of psychological violence suggests that most of the respondents do not have any status within their families, and that conjugal relations are not based on equality, but on subjugation, domination and dependency. This kind of psychological violence is the outcome of deep-rooted ideas of men that treat their wives as their property and refuse to acknowledge the independent identity and the basic rights of their wives. Likewise, physical violence was common among the respondents, as 83 percent reported that they were subjected to physical violence. Physical force is used as a means of control, or to express one's anger. The fact that such a high incidence of physical abuse was observed in the survey participants could be attributed to the prevalence of patriarchy in Nepali society. The family socializes its members according to prescribed patriarchal norms and values that perpetuate maledominance and control.

Eighty-seven percent of the respondents revealed that they had sometimes refused

to have sexual relations with their husbands. Likewise, half of the respondents were forced into sexual relations.

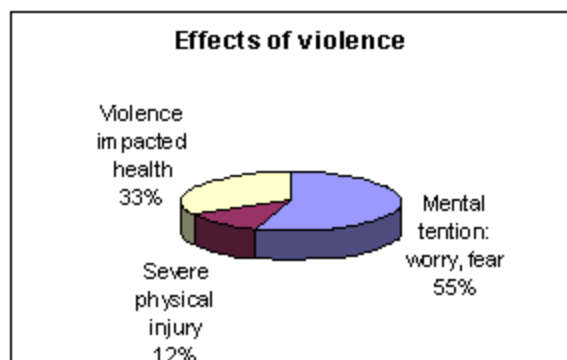
The fact that such a large number of respondents revealed that their husbands had forced them into sexual relations suggests that sexual violence inside marriage exists, but is not talked about openly. This is because sexual relations are considered an extremely private affair and to talk about it openly is considered a taboo in our society. Also, such a large response on forced sexual relations could be due to the fact that their husbands physically abuse 83% of the respondents and 72% of the respondents' husbands have a drinking habit. Also, under the prevailing law, forced sexual intercourse with one's wife does not constitute the crime of rape.

The respondents reported that the violence they

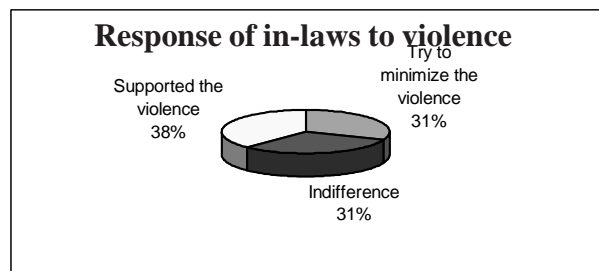


faced generally started for various reasons.

The research also revealed that violence affected the respondents in several ways as highlighted below.

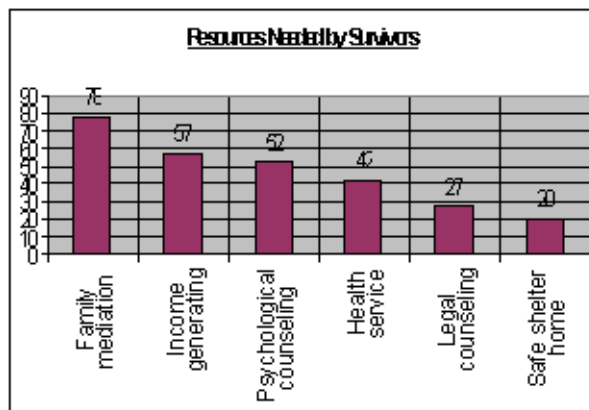


This finding has been supported by one study conducted in Nicaragua, where it was found that abused women were six times more likely to report experiencing mental distress than non-abused women. Likewise in the United States, women battered by their partners have been found to be between four and five times more likely to require psychiatric treatment than non-abused women. (Women's Health and Development, 1997)



### Exploring Informal Support Systems-

Out of the 83 percent of respondents who were living with their husbands, 72 percent revealed that their husbands' drank alcohol. Forty-two percent of the respondent's husbands had threatened to kill their wives, and 28 percent of the respondents reported that they felt scared to live with their husbands. This reveals the urgency to support the survivors of violence.



## Conclusions

↳ This study has clearly revealed the magnitude of different types of violence and its negative impact on the overall well-being of the survivors. It has shown that it has serious repercussions on the psychological, physical and reproductive health of women. Such violence not only affects the victim/survivors alone but also deteriorates the quality of life of the whole family. Children who are exposed to violence at home cannot grow up as healthy individuals. Violence leads to the disintegration of many families. If the family as a strongest social unit is not stable then community and society cannot be stable. This can seriously hamper the development of a nation as a whole.

↳ This study has shown that a victim support program is very much necessary. There was a high demand for family mediation and other types of counselling like psychosocial, legal and family counselling. Since trained counsellors are very few in Nepal, large number of professionals should be trained in psychosocial counselling to effectively counsel victim as well as their families. Also income-generating activities should be provided to the victims and efforts should be made to link victims of violence to economic development programs. Not only such income generating activities but the survivors should be encouraged to take up jobs that empower and give social status.

↳ Violence against women is a human rights issue. As the government of Nepal has ratified international human rights covenants like CEDAW, it should utilize the mentioned provisions. Support services, such as shelter homes and crisis centres, should be established and strengthened to help victims deal with violence. As the cases of domestic violence are a very sensitive issue, it should not be dealt with in criminal courts. A different family court to deal with such issues should be established. Also, effective law enforcement mechanisms should be developed.

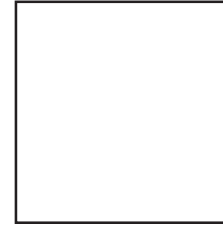
↳ Society's unfair rules, fear of social stigma and various other reasons can reinforce women's inhibition to talk about the violence they are facing. To help break this silence, the assessment and treatment of GBV can be integrated into reproductive health services since these are facilities where women already go and talk about their lives. Moreover the government can also include ending gender-based violence as one of the key agendas in its public health policy.

↳ Gender discrimination at the household and community level should be given due consideration. Patriarchal value systems and norms that favour gender bias and openly advocate the superiority and domination of men over women need to be addressed through social change strategies. The low status of women and the fear of ruining the family reputation needs to be mitigated through non-formal and family education programs. Men's participation and involvement has to be encouraged in programs against violence to change "traditional male dominated" attitude and mobilize them to prevent violence and abuse of women in society.

↳ Formation and strengthening of network groups to alleviate discrimination and violence through collective empowerment and social mobilization in the community should be encouraged. There should be strong networking and coordination among NGOs, GOs, and INGOs working on the issue of violence to alleviate violence from the society.

*Full report of this study can be obtained from WOREC, Nepal*

# Musahar- the socially segregated dalits



**Min Bahadur Basnet**



shared with me his family history that for generations they have been working for their landlords. They do not own any land on which they can build a house or even cultivate a field. The world is still in the same place for these groups of people. It was my encounter with this boy and the sharing with him that inspired me to learn more about the community of the Musahar- the Dalits.

I work as a research coordinator in Women's Rehabilitation Centre (WOREC), a non-governmental organization working for the attainment of human rights of the people, especially residing in the rural areas and who are marginalized, discriminated against and vulnerable to violence. I need to travel frequently, in all working areas of WOREC, and those are obviously the places where you will not find any kind of facilities, even the basic needs. Udaypur, a district in the eastern part of Nepal, is usually known as the territory inhabited by the so-called dalits, and the marginalized, and discriminated populace like Danuwars and Musahar.

Dalits, are the socially marginalized and untouchable castes of people in Nepal and India. They have been placed at the bottom in the Hindu caste hierarchy. Traditionally they have been treated as unclean and are discriminated against in almost every walk of life. If any of the dalits touches anyone of the so-called high caste people, then they are physically contaminated and need either to take bath or sprinkle gold treated water for purification. All of such problems exist due to the long held traditions of aristocratic society.

I happened to be in the Musahar community and came across a 10-year old boy sitting on a buffalo and grazing it. The sight did not let me think about the present but the past because I had also seen such a boy sitting on a buffalo in the 2000. But this boy was different. He called himself Mohan Sada. The boy, whose photo I had taken in 2000 was named Manoj, and Mohan came to recognize him as his elder brother. He is already married and now has become a cowherder, which is socially regarded as a more responsible job and now Mohan has taken his previous job. Mohan was actually hesitant to talk to me. But later on, he

Apart from being socially segregated, the dalits are economically and politically deprived and virtually denied of all basic human rights. There are three dalit groups in Nepal, namely the hill dalits, Newar dalits and the Madhesi dalits. Among the dalits mentioned, the Musahars are among the Madhesi dalits who are the most deprived among all.

They are homeless and find it difficult to meet even two square meals a day. They are facing an extreme level of poverty and their health status is virtually nil. For ages they have been working as bonded laborers for the rich higher caste people. They play an important role in agricultural activities. They hardly own lands of their own. They work on others land during the crop seasons and during the harvests. And what they receive is the grain that is not enough even

for a quarter of a year. This is the situation that makes them migrate to nearby cities or neighbouring countries for better livelihood options. But there too, what they receive is no fair pay for the effort put in. Musahar thinks that sending children to work is more urgent than sending them to schools. How can hungry parents send hungry children to school? - asked a 70 year old Musahar lady, all the sorrows and pain revealed in the lines in her forehead.

The Musahar Community is one such group that has been facing extreme marginalization in the Terai of Nepal. They are not only found in the inner Terai such as Udaypur, but are spread throughout Saptari, Siraha, Sarlahi, Dhanusha, Rautahat, Morang and Sunsari districts in eastern Nepal. These people lack access to rights and resources and are completely unaware of health and sanitation. They still believe in the Dhamis, the faith healers; hardly anyone takes medical consultations or goes to nearby health posts when they fall sick. Their main source of water is either through tubewells or ponds, and most of them use the ponds for drinking water as well as for washing clothes, bathing and so on.

This situation of the Musahar dalits is supported by the study done in three VDCs namely Bastipur, Padariya and Govindapur of Siraha district by WOREC. In and around these three VDCs, 300 Musahar families were found living in the area. Out of the total 291, were found to be uneducated and the remaining were educated till secondary level. Two hundred fifty-nine of the respondents worked as wagedworkers. Seventy-two of them did not have birth registration and 211 of them had no marriage registration. Of the total population of the Musahar in the area, 59 women were found to have suffered from violence, as they were unable to provide dowry to their in-laws.

The Musahar are one the most marginalized and discriminated against by the State. The elderly persons of the 152 families did not have citizenship, which shows that these groups' rights to basic necessities have been severely undermined. Of the total, 152 families, 256 of the people have been dwelling in

lands that do not belong to them. One hundred nine of them have migrated in search of work. Most commonly, young Musahars go to Punjab to work in the agriculture sector. Even there they are segregated and cheated of their innocence.

All these factors that reflect the lifestyle of these dalit groups indicates that less concern is made for the development of these communities. The globalizing pattern of the country's development and the growing physical needs of the people have changed the consumerism type, devaluing their skills and the mastery in certain areas of work. The same could be said about the lives of this community. Though they have mastery over the agriculture, the field has totally deteriorated, creating a misty future for those who are involved in it.

This situation calls for immediate action to make them aware of their basic human rights. They need to be aware of the social environment they live in and work within, their sanitary and nutritional problems, and health hazards. They need to realize their latent potential and resources for their own personal development household economy and native villages. All this requires is the empowerment of the groups through a continuous animation process to realize and analyse their basic needs, major problems and resources, to question themselves about the worsening conditions. Because these unequal social relations are not acceptable and have to be changed, these groups need to be empowered to cope with all of these challenges.

For this, civil society and the groups themselves should make the move to bring change to the inhumane situations and the discriminatory socio-political values. In this regard, WOREC realizing the need for the empowerment of these community, has long been working in the conduction of animation and development education programme for the empowerment of these people and in the facilitation of the attainment of rights, in particular the right to citizenship, to better livelihood and access to basic facilities, resources and opportunities.

# Recent publications of WOREC

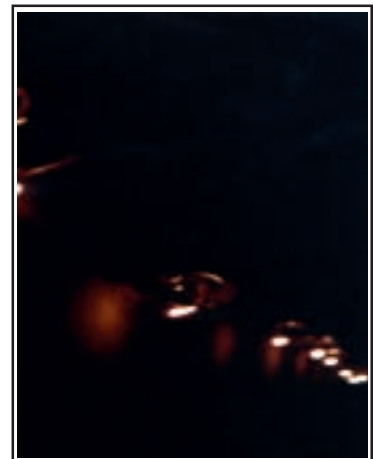


**Yubaharuka Lagi Shrot Pustika:** Exclusively written for youth, this resource guide provides information on the essentials for safe migration. This book comprises information on the rights and responsibilities of youth.



**Bhangalo:** The pictorial book is the second part of the previously published *Bhangalo* and it has been published with the heavy request from communities, non-government organizations and other civil society groups. This book provides information on trafficking and migration.

**Cheli Ko Byatha:** The trafficking that has engulfed communities needs a multi-faceted approach. This inevitably requires that every citizen grasps the issue and works towards combating it. WOREC has been publishing this quarterly publication in order to advocate against trafficking, targeting the main stakeholders and to influence policies.



**Sayapatri:** This is one of the quarterly newsletters of WOREC that is aimed at community women's group to provide information on women's health. It is published with a special focus on information dissemination to women, their environment, herbal treatments and to unravel their queries on their health.



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