



## E Bulletin - COVID-19 and It's Effect on Women

### Background

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease which is caused by coronavirus. Most people infected with COVID-19 will experience mild to moderate respiratory illness and recover without requiring special treatment. At the same time, the pandemic is creating a profound shock to everyone worldwide, with different implications on men and women. Women worldwide, face compounding burdens as they are contributing heavily in health system, continue to do the majority of unpaid care at households, face high risk of economic



*Ms. Pashupati Kunwar, task force member of project Upholding Rights of Minorities Beyond Borders speaking as a key speaker for Project Butterfly on 28th May, 2020*

insecurity, face high risk of violence, exploitation, abuse or harassment during the time of crisis and quarantine. Likewise, the situation is terrible in developing economies where the majority of women's employment i.e. 70% is in the informal economy and is exposed to risk with minimal protection against dismissal and

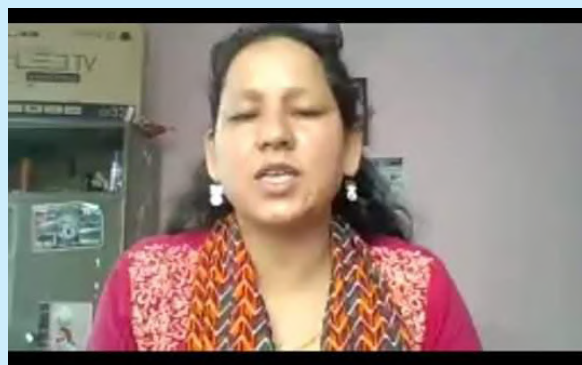
### Activities of Jagaran Nepal along with the activities of COVID-19 pandemic

#### Upholding Rights of Minorities Beyond Borders Project Working against ill customs of Chhaupadi

A. Finalization of Second Year Project of Upholding Rights of Minorities Beyond Borders (against Chhaupadi custom) along with the logical framework task, with various updates time and again, budget and other work as per the need. Along with this, JN carried out different activities and approached like-minded stakeholders and different youth led organizations.

B. Project Butterfly (Menstrual Talk, Dignity First" for youth and women)

On the very occasion of menstrual hygiene day (28th May, 2020) Jagaran Nepal collaborated with Nepal Health Corps and Sky is the Limit



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limited access to social protection as well. Similarly, In South Asia, 80% of women in non-agricultural jobs are in informal employment which breaks down the women's economic sustainability even high during the pandemic. From the past and emerging data, it is possible to project that the impacts of COVID-19 global recession will result in a prolonged dip in women's incomes and labor force participation, with compounded impacts for women already living in poverty.



*Local people of Kathmandu Metropolitan city in a queue, maintaining social distance to receive relief package distributed by Jagaran Nepal.*

In context of Nepal, women and girls are facing greater risk from this pandemic as they are systematically disadvantaged and often suppressed by poverty, violence, inequality, and marginalization. Since Nepal's lockdown began there has been a rise in the reporting of gender-based violence along with the heavy unpaid care duties and domestic work. The cases of gender-based violence included rape, attempted rape, allegations of witchcraft, polygamy, and domestic violence for a

to celebrate the occasion virtually via 4 days of webinar series, youth led network and organization; from 25th-28th May, 2020. Ms. Pashupati Kunwar – Chhaupadi victim survivor and task force member of Jagaran Nepal was the key speaker for day 4. The theme of the webinar was “Menstrual Talk, Dignity First”, with motive to ensure the dignity of every female during the time of their menstruation along with the importance towards healthier lifestyles. The webinar was designed around, bringing up the topics of menstrual hygiene, dignity, male perspective on dignifying menstruation, common health and social issues surrounding menstrual cycles. The Project had National level coverage of webinar via National daily newspaper, “The Rising Nepal” and 15 other Radio Partners as well as 14,000 audiences on social media. Therefore, Jagaran Nepal is also working with youth led organizations for the protection of women rights and their dignity to lead an educated as well as just society ahead.

## **Advocacy (specially focusing on VAW against Chhaupadi issues)**

During this period of pandemic, Jagaran Nepal participated on different activities related to the matters of COVID-19 and women among which most of the webinar was attended by Founder chair/ Technical Advisor, Ms. Sharmila Karki and other members of the office.



*Founder chair/ Technical Advisor, Ms. Sharmila Karki attending webinar.*

Technical advisor of Jagaran Nepal was one of the speaker foron webinar of “Effects on Women due to pandemic”



period of only 10 days preceding the lockdown. Also, due to the heavy unpaid work, they are being prevented from spending time and resources on education, training and skill development. Many women work in the service sector and their jobs cannot be done from home. Women and girls living in poverty, belonging from disadvantaged caste groups or in rural, isolated locations are even more vulnerable and likely to face extreme consequences.

Similarly in Nepal, women spend 268 minutes every day on unpaid work. Due to the deeply rooted patriarchal social norms that pressurizes women to take on every household works has increased the burden of taking care of every household members, particularly more of children and elderly members of the family. The pandemic has put all spheres of society and gender on risk adding more over in females. Likewise, before the pandemic only 58% of births were attended by skilled health personnel that means many women faced risks and problems of complications. But today, women are facing even more obstacles and barriers in accessing services and particular to maternal care, including movement restrictions, transport challenge and anxiety over possibly being exposed to virus.

### **Some major suggestion for concerned stakeholders to address women issues.**

- The government is requested to set up an "Emergency Presidential Women Rescue Fund" for the rescue, relief and management of all kinds of violence victims and women in distress based on the fact that many women in the community have been quarantined in ways due to COVID19.
- Given the recurring violence

from Nepal.

- TV interview of Ms. Sharmila Karki; Technical advisor of Jagaran Nepal on telecasted on National television- YOHO television and Mountain Television. The interview was focused on Increment of Women Violence during COVID19 pandemic.
- Technical advisor of JN attended COVID19 and Reproductive Health webinar with the experts from the National Level
- Technical advisor of JN attended webinar on Agriculture, COVID , Economic Empowerment and Women
- Virtual meetings with ministry of women, health and senior citizens
- 2 virtual meetings on Tax Justice, Women and COVID19
- 1 Research conducted and paper presentation on effects of women and COVID19.
- Mind and Spiritual on Women's Agenda – Sri Sri Ravi Shankar; attended with senior women representatives.
- Climate change and Women in Nepal – workshop
- SDGs, Women and Goal 5 conducted by VEANR and Nepal Planning Commission.
- Ms. Meena Bista – Vice President of Jagran Nepal, attended webinar on women issues conducted by AATWIN.
- Ms. Attended virtual discussion conducted by Women Friendly Disaster Management.
- Attended virtual workshop on “Diet in Menstruation”, organized by ATHOTA.

### **Global Pandemic related work supported by Upholding Rights of Minorities Beyond Borders (URMB) focusing on Chhaupadi affected districts**

Activities such as relief distribution and awareness raising activities regarding COVID-19 pandemic was carried out which during the period.

against women in quarantine, there is a need for a separate women-friendly quarantine act to end it.

- According to the studies from various fields, COVID-19 is particularly affecting pregnant and lactating women in the quarantine and community. During this period, pregnant and lactating women are facing difficulty in going to the hospital, getting admit to the hospital and neglecting the treatment due to fear of Corona even in the case of admission due to which, it seems necessary to make appropriate arrangements for pregnant and lactating mother.
- The PCR report of those who are in quarantine should be made available in time and should send to home with appropriate arrangements.
- In the view of the increasing violence against women due to lockdown, there should be a simple and accessible system where victims can lodge their complaints.
- The number of crimes and suicides is increasing in the society along with the news that many people are suffering from mentally due to various problems that have occurred during the lockdown. Considering the situation, there should be the availability of psychologists to raise public health awareness on psycho-social problems at every quarantine and ward level.
- It is necessary to provide services to women, children, the elderly and disabled in a comfortable and simple way.
- It is necessary to rescue and manage the women who have returned and are stranded from foreign employment.

## A. Relief Distribution carried out during lockdown period



*Distribution of COVID-19 relief materials on Chhaupadi working areas of Upholding Rights of Minorities Beyond Borders (URMB) project, Achham, Nepal*

Distribution of COVID-19 relief materials on Chhaupadi working areas of Upholding Rights of Minorities Beyond Borders (URMB) project. Total of 100 masks were distributed, 500 each on Achham and Doti districts to marginalized and deprived women of remote areas as a focus most to those from chhaupadi affected districts.

- Counseling to community women on pandemic situation and ways to cope up in daily life activities to continue with safety.

## B. Awareness Program



*Participants during the awareness program on COVID-19 pandemic, Dadeldhura, Nepal*

Awareness raising program on COVID19 and Women Issues in Chhaupadi affected Districts. JN has carried out this activity in its two working districts, Achham and Dadeldhura. The activity is coordinated under the leadership of Ms.

- Addressing the problem of wages earning women, it is necessary to bring a program with various facilities based on grants.
- Considering the reproductive rights and safety of women, it seems necessary to set up a birthing center with health workers at the local level.
- Every quarantine for women must have a female security guard.

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**for other details and we**  
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Pashupati Kunwar, task force member of project- Upholding Rights of Minorities beyond Borders and Ms. Anju Gaire, board member of Jagaran Nepal in Achham and Dadeldhura respectively. The one day activity was conducted with two different agendas impacting women life i.e. raising awareness on COVID19 issues and ways to protect against it via appropriate preventive measures and counseling on issues of women group. The activity was carried out targeting 1000 young girls and women who are at increasing risk of degrading mental health condition due to stress, violence and discrimination, lack of awareness and education. The activity was carried out solely targeting the local female leaders of the districts so that they could reach at least 500 women and young girls, mostly affected by chhaupadi custom and marginalization.

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