



Jagaran Nepal E-Bulletin 141st issue

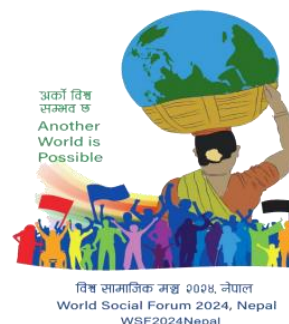
(For Women Rights, Peace and Governance)

(Bi-monthly publication of January and February 2024)

Activities by Jagaran Nepal

1. World Social Forum, 2024

World Social Forum with the theme of 'Another World is Possible' happened in Nepal from 15th Feb to 19th Feb 2024. This event served as a platform where all activists, civil society members, farmers, students, scholars around the globe gathered together to discuss the various burning issues related to environment, social, economic, peace, justice and security. Numerous panel discussions, workshops, and interactive sessions were held, covering a wide range of topics such as climate change, sustainable development, peace, justice, security, human rights, and political empowerment. WSF 2024 also gave an opportunity for the cultural exchange. By fostering this collective action, this forum contributed to the commitment of another world with human rights, unity, dignity, more equality, justice, freedom and security.



2. Activity organized by Jagaran Nepal on WSF, 2024

In the occasion of WSF 2024, Jagaran Nepal in the collaboration with IMADR Srilanka organized an activity titled "Religious Extremism and Gender Based Violence: South Asian Perspectives" on Feb 16, 2024. The discussion aimed to address the intersection of religious extremism and gender-based violence in South Asia, with a specific focus on the Chhaupadi system in Nepal. It sought to explore the root causes, impact, and strategies for combating religiously motivated violence against women, particularly within the context of harmful cultural practices like Chhaupadi. The session was chaired by Ms. Samjhana Pokharel, the chairperson of Jagaran Nepal and was moderated by Women Right Activist Ms. Sharmila Karki. Representative from IMADR, Srilanka Ms. Dharshika Sivapragasam and Ms. Oshara Deemanthi were present in the program. Ms. Dharshika shared her opinion on strategy for a South Asia action plan to foster communal harmony, social cohesion, rule of law and human rights. This discussion shed a light on the Chhaupadi system prevalent in Nepal, its detrimental effects on women's health and well-being, and strategies to eradicate this harmful practice from society. The program saw participation from various stakeholders including: representatives from various NGOs, students, women rights activist, students, local community leaders.

Key Highlights:

1. Introduction to Chhaupadi system

The discussion began with an overview of the Chhaupadi system, a deeply rooted tradition in parts of rural Nepal where women are banished from their homes during menstruation and after childbirth. They are forced to live in makeshift huts or cowsheds usually known as chhaugoth, away from their families, due to the belief that menstruating women are impure and bring bad luck.

2. Health Risks and Social Stigma:

Participants discussed the severe health risks associated with Chhaupadi, including exposure to extreme weather conditions, vulnerability to animal attacks, and lack of access to proper sanitation and hygiene facilities. Additionally, the social stigma attached to menstruation perpetuates discrimination and undermines the dignity of women.

3. Legal and policy framework:

The existing legal and policy framework related to the eradication of Chhaupadi was also discussed. While Nepal's Supreme Court has outlawed Chhaupadi and the government has enacted laws criminalizing the practice, implementation remains a challenge due to deep-rooted cultural beliefs and societal norms.

4. Community Engagement and awareness:

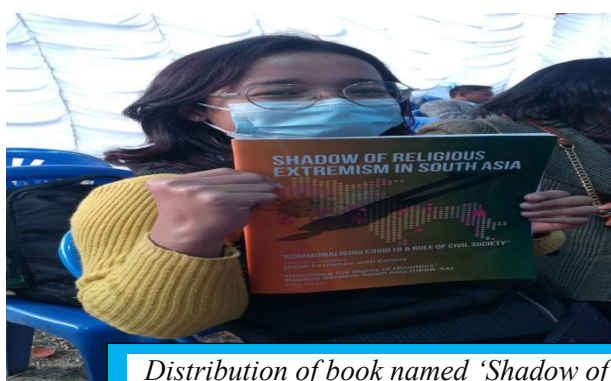
Participants emphasized the importance of community engagement and awareness-raising activities to challenge misconceptions surrounding menstruation and promote gender equality. They discussed the need for comprehensive education programs in schools and communities to change attitudes towards menstruation and eliminate harmful practices like Chhaupadi. Participants also indulged in the conversation about the destruction of chhaugoth which was once taken to combat the chhaupadi practice. They came to a conclusion that, destruction of the chhaugoth alone is not the solution to mitigate this social problem. The mitigation of the deeply rooted problem like chhaupadi needs the change in the mindset of the people.

Conclusion:

The discussion program served as a platform for stakeholders to come together and address the complex issues surrounding the Chhaupadi system in Nepal. It underscored the urgent need for coordinated efforts at the community, institutional, and policy levels to eradicate this harmful practice and ensure the rights and dignity of women and girls are upheld. Moving forward, continued advocacy, education, and collaboration will be essential in bringing about lasting change and creating a society where menstruation is no longer a source of shame or discrimination.



Picture taken during event



Distribution of book named 'Shadow of religious extremism in South Asia' after event

3. Programs as Co-organizer

A. Dialogue on Women Peace and Politics

Women Service Institute in collaboration with Jagaran Nepal, Beyond Beijing Committee, and Center for Social Change conducted an event on Dialogue on Women Peace and Politics on 17th Feb, 2024. The program brought together a diverse group of participants including Member of Parliament, Ex-minister, community leaders, NGO workers, students. The event focused on the significant role of women in promoting global peace and advancing political participation worldwide. It provided a platform to discuss the challenges, achievements, and opportunities for women's engagement in peacebuilding and political leadership at local, national, and international levels. Speakers (Mr. Prakash Bhattarai, Ms. Satya Pahadi, and Ms. Urmila Thapaliya) highlighted the invaluable contributions of women as agents of peace, emphasizing their unique perspectives, experiences, and approaches to conflict resolution and reconciliation. Participants discussed the barriers women face in accessing political leadership positions and strategies to overcome them, including affirmative action policies, capacity-building programs, and mentorship opportunities. Participants emphasized the need for global advocacy and solidarity to advance women's rights, peace, and security agendas. Networks and coalitions of women activists and organizations were recognized as powerful platforms for amplifying women's voices, influencing policy agendas, and holding governments and institutions accountable. The event served as a catalyst for advancing the agenda of women in global peace and politics, highlighting their vital role as leaders, peace builders, and agents of change. By promoting women's empowerment, fostering inclusivity, and strengthening global solidarity, participants affirmed their commitment to building a more peaceful, equitable, and sustainable world.



Pictures taken during WSI's event

B. Women Assembly on Unveiling the voices of multiply marginalized women and girls

Beyond Beijing Committee in collaboration with Jagaran Nepal, FEDO, Women Service Institute and other organization conducted Women Assembly on Unveiling the voices of multiply marginalized women and girls on Feb 16. The Women's Assembly on Unveiling the Voices of Multiply Marginalized Women and Girls was convened as a platform to amplify the voices of women and girls who often find themselves at the intersections of multiple forms of marginalization. The program brought together a diverse array of participants, including activists, scholars, policymakers, and grassroots organizations, to engage in dialogue, share experiences, and strategize for meaningful change. This assembly fostered a dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders to address the unique needs and concerns of multiply marginalized women and girls, raised awareness about the intersecting forms of discrimination faced by women and girls from marginalized communities, developed strategies and recommendations for policymakers and practitioners to promote inclusivity and equity for multiply marginalized women and girls. The Women's Assembly on Unveiling the Voices of Multiply Marginalized Women and Girls served as a critical platform for elevating the voices and experiences of those often overlooked or silenced.

By bringing together diverse stakeholders and fostering dialogue and collaboration, the program made significant strides towards promoting inclusivity, equity, and justice for all women and girls, regardless of their intersecting identities. Continued efforts and collective action are essential to translate the insights and recommendations generated by the assembly into tangible change in policies and practices.



C. Women and climate Justice:

Digo Bikas Institute in collaboration with Jagaran Nepal conducted activity titled "Women and climate justice" on 17 Feb. The program aimed to explore the intersection of gender and climate change, with a particular focus on the role of women in climate justice initiatives. It sought to raise awareness about the disproportionate impacts of climate change on women and to highlight the leadership and contributions of women in addressing climate-related challenges. Discussions highlighted the gendered impacts of climate change, emphasizing how women, particularly those in marginalized communities, are disproportionately affected by environmental degradation, natural disasters, and resource scarcity. Participants explored the links between gender inequality, poverty, and climate vulnerability. Participants discussed the need for gender-sensitive climate financing mechanisms, capacity-building initiatives, and gender-responsive climate governance structures to support women's participation and leadership. The program provided a platform for dialogue, learning, and action on the critical issue of women and climate justice. By amplifying women's voices, showcasing their leadership, and promoting gender-responsive approaches to climate change, participants reaffirmed their commitment to building a more equitable, resilient, and sustainable future for all.

4. Participation by Jagaran Nepal on various events:

A. Dimensions and Trends of Human Trafficking: Identification and Responses

Jagaran Nepal shown its participation in the program in the program titled Dimensions and Trends of Human Trafficking conducted by AATWIN on Feb 16. The program aimed to address the complex dimensions and emerging trends of human trafficking, focusing on effective identification strategies and responses to combat this global crime. It sought to enhance participants' understanding of the multifaceted nature of human trafficking and equip them with the knowledge and skills necessary to identify victims and implement appropriate interventions. The program provided an overview of human trafficking, including its definition, forms, and prevalence worldwide. Participants discussed the various dimensions of trafficking, including sex trafficking, labor trafficking, and trafficking for organ removal, highlighting the complexities and challenges associated with combating this crime. Speakers focused on emerging trends in human trafficking, such as the use of technology, social media, and online platforms by traffickers to recruit and exploit victims. Participants explored how globalization, migration patterns, and economic disparities contribute to the vulnerability of individuals to trafficking. The importance of comprehensive legislation, victim-centered approaches, and cross-border cooperation in addressing trafficking and ensuring justice for victims was also discussed. The program provided a valuable opportunity for participants to deepen their knowledge, share experiences, and enhance their capacity to combat human trafficking effectively. By fostering collaboration and strengthening identification and response mechanisms, participants reaffirmed their commitment to addressing this grave violation of human rights and achieving justice for victims of trafficking.

B. Sexual Harassment at workplace: Cause and Remedies

Women Security Pressure Group (WSPG) conducted a panel discussion on Sexual Harassment at Workplace on Feb 18. The panelists were from a diverse sectors like psychologist, senior advocate and NGO worker. This program was conducted to address the pervasive issue of sexual harassment in professional settings. Discussions covered the topics like introduction to the topic, understanding the dynamics of sexual harassment, legal framework and obligations; discussion on relevant laws, policies, and reporting mechanisms, impact on victims and bystanders: psychological, emotional, and professional repercussions, prevention and response strategies: training, awareness campaigns, bystander intervention, and support services. Participants had the opportunity to pose questions and share their perspectives. The panel emphasized the importance of empowering individuals with knowledge and resources to recognize, address, and prevent sexual harassment, while also calling on employers, HR departments, and leadership to prioritize eradication efforts and commit to concrete measures. The event concluded with a call to action for sustained advocacy and collaboration among stakeholders to effect systemic change and promote gender equality in workplaces globally. It empowered individuals with knowledge and resources to combat sexual harassment and advocate for change.



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