



A Note on Women and Conflict for Shadow report, Nepal

Action Works Nepal (AWON)

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Introduction:

In Nepal, the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) has passed its five year discourse. Despite the political instability, poor willingness of political parties, there are major policies are taking place particularly for women, marginalized groups. However, the implementation level is miserable especially in rural and conflict affected areas of Nepal.

Presence of conflict:

By national policy, the conflict is already over since 2006. Nevertheless, the rural and poor people have same feeling about the peace or conflict. Especially news about the limitation of Constitution, attitude and behavior demonstrated by the Maoist, emerging armed groups and lack of accountability among political parties, rural people have still persistent fear about the reverse the condition. In addition, they feel fear in front of the Maoist while making decisions at local level such as construction of public tape, utilization of natural resources etc. In addition, the reconstruction process, few initiatives are going on but the processes of these are not transparent, effective and efficient. Therefore, there is ongoing conflict at micro level. Likewise the identity issue is highly prominent therefore each political party, ethnic group etc like to participate in official groups and committee but the women and exclude group are not getting space as ensured by interim constitution as well as human rights instruments.

Equality in education

Most of the schools in AWON's working schools, Jumla (Karnali zone) the girls population is higher than boys because parents prefer to send boarding school to boys where as girls are sending to public schools. In schools, there are no toilets for girls, no water supply and no furniture. They should sit in floor and some schools in the ground due to lack of adequate infrastructure e.g. *primary school has been conducting three class whereas school has only two rooms (including office) and one teacher. School hasn't aware roles and responsibilities of parents and school management committee and vice versa.*

Equality and employment:

Even today, the women are not getting equal opportunity for employment. They are not sending for further study or technical study by their parents at the beginning. Women are only get opportunity in lower level and stereotyping employment such as teacher and women development office. It is saying; neither woman has capacity nor physically strong to cross the geographic tragedy. Likewise, women are

not getting equal salary as well. A woman who is school teacher is getting Nrs 3500/month (USD 50) where 8 hours have to spend a day e.g. a school teacher of Jumla.

Access to Natural Resources:

Most of the women are dependent in natural resources. Unfortunately, the life style is becoming hard. Each morning they have to wake up at four o'clock to collect fodders and firewood. Because the firewood is not available as it avail before 10-15 years due to deforestation. In other hand, women are not getting space in the decision making positions in community forestry user's groups. They have to walk for at least 30 minutes for bring fetch water otherwise have to use the stream water. Even the stream water is far of 30 minutes walking distance.

Impact of climate change:

The impact and its affects also ignored largely¹. The pro-longed dryness, decreasing the trend of snow fall also impacts crops and its productivity. Communities have been changing crops pattern as well where women have to take leading role for making decisions as well as arranging food management at home. But the adaptation and mitigation activities are not getting priority among the government and civil society activities.

Basic Services:

Women are deprived from getting the basic health services at their circumstances. Most of the time, the health institutions, and village development office are closed mostly. Neither they have service nor have medicines adequately. They do not have choices for Reproductive health and Family Planning methods.

Cowshed: during the menstrual period, women and girls have to go cowshed. The magnitude is differs but it is mandatory across Jumla and Karnali. Sometimes, women also feel comfortable to go there in order to be free from the household chores as well as pleased to their family god (Kul devata).

Rural Women-participation in development:

Neither women get neither information nor have knowledge and skills to participate (perception so do not like participate) and got opportunity for funding. Language, technology and time (leave from household work) are the major barriers for them.

Early Marriage:

Because of lack of awareness, not having confident on economic independence and poor educational background, persistently pushing by parents by saying no use of education for women because they must go outsiders and work for them, girls make early marriage. They do not know the impact of early marriage at all. They said that all seniors are doing same, living and enjoying so why not we. The degree of understanding on impacts is miserable.

¹ Gentle P. Impact of Climate Change on Livelihood of Poor people, Lamra, Jumla, 2010.

Women headed household

Most of the households are headed by women due to seasonal migration of men members, widowhood from conflict. They are in vulnerable situation socially, culturally and economically. They are excluded in participation and decision making process at their surrounding at both formal and informal setting.

Critical Areas of Concern:

1. The special provision has to make for the rural women to empower them. The blanket policy doesn't fit because within the rural setting the context varies region to region.
2. The policy working local NGOs and CBOs also needs to be different. There should be flexible to implement program and have to lead by the respective level
3. The educational system also needs to be reviewed to address the needs and aspiration of girls and parents
4. The special program for enhancing women's individual agency and collective agency including skills, trainings and income generating opportunities
5. In order to make pro-women services, government authorities also capacitate as well as initiate the system to monitor by civil societies for downward accountability