



Issue No. 3, March-April 2012

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PICTURE SPEAKS LOUDER



A DROP OF DIFFERENCE: Bhawana Thami with her father, Kaluman Thami, giving a cheerful smile after receiving successful treatment. (Source: www.ekatnipur.com)

(Details are provided in CWIN in Action section)

International Women's Day 2012 marked

International Women's Day 2012 was marked across the country with fanfare on March 8. The themes for the day for 2012 were- 'Empower Rural Women – End Hunger and Poverty' and 'Connecting Girls Inspiring Future'.



On the occasion, The Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare organised a rally in the capital, where more than 100 organisations working in women sectors including CWIN-Nepal participated. The rally commenced from Brikhuti Mandap, travelled Putali Sadak, Bag Bazar, Ratna Park, Sundhara, New Road and concluded at Basnatapur Durbar Square.

Dan Bahadur Chaudhary, Minister of Women, Children and Social Welfare said that until and unless the women and girls in the country are empowered, the development of the country is impossible.

No more 'Siri Khusuri'

Bhawan Thami, an 8 year old girl from Kalinchok VDC, was born with the disease, 'Hairy Mole', a nevus covered with extreme hair growth. Half her face was covered with hair. Being born in a rural and socio-economically disadvantaged region of the country, she and her family were unaware about the disease and were considering it as their fate.



According to Kalu Man Thami, Bhawana's father, she was often teased by her friends with a name-'Siri Khusuri' where 'Siri' means 'lice', and 'Khusuri' means 'curly hair' in Thami language. She was ashamed being teased and hesitated to come out in public.

"She was also often called by term 'Boksi'. It really used to break down her innocent childish heart," Kalu Man said.

However, the teardrops are removed from her face and smile has returned back after she got treatment and assumed the look of 'normal' young girl.

Arjn Oli, the social mobiliser of TUKI-CWIN Resource Centre for Kalinchok VDC, Dolkha found Bhanwana on September 14 last year while observing Children's Day programme in the area. Then he passed on the information to CWIN Head Office.

After receiving the information, CWIN consulted with different medical centres and at last, Dr. Shankar Man Rai, a surgeon at Model Hospital, conducted a six-hour-long constructive surgery for Bhawana in March of this year, free of cost.

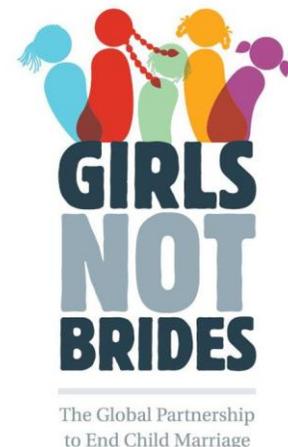
Bhawana has returned back to her home with her charming smiling face with her father.

National Network to End Child Marriage gets launched

A National Network to End Child Marriage was launched on March 24 in Kathmandu.

According to Khem Bahadur Karki, member secretary of the network, the main objectives of the network are to raise awareness of the harmful traditional practice of child marriage in the country by encouraging open, inclusive and informed discussion at the community, local and national level.

Karki said the network is affiliated to the global partnership to end child marriage, 'Girls not Brides', and it currently functions with the voluntary contributions of its founder member organisations – SOLID Nepal, Aama Milan Kendra, Centre for Research on Environmental Health and Population Activities (CREHPA), Child Workers In Nepal Concerned Centre (CWIN-Nepal), Child Welfare Scheme (CWS), Janaki Women Awareness Society (JWAS), and Samrakshak Samuha Nepal (SASANE). However, the network is open for all non-governmental organisations working to end violence against women and child marriage.



In the launching programme, Upendra Adhikari, Joint Secretary at Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare said, 'The law has guaranteed the legal provision of marriage but prohibits the marriage before completing the age of 18. However, the law alone cannot bring culprits to book. Instead, it needs support from all sectors including civil society.'

Meanwhile, Surendra Kumar Mahoto, an advocate said that the provision of law for punishing offenders is not enough to end child marriage. The community also should accept that the child marriage is an evil form of tradition and culture.

As per the UNICEF report 2011, 51 out of 100 girls tie their nuptials before the age of 18, either with their consent or from the family pressure. Similarly, Nepal Demographic

Health Survey (NDHS) report 2011 states that 39 out of 100 conceive a baby by the age of 19.

The Country Code 2010 states that the legal age of marriage is 20 for men and women and 18 for a woman where marriage is solemnized with the consent of the woman's parents or guardians. However, the society tends to ignore the law on the age of marriage and marry off their daughters at a very young age.

First district level adolescent network formed in Banke

The first convention of adolescent girls that was held on Banke district has formed a 15 - member District Level Adolescent Network (DLAN) in Banke district on April 10.

More than 100 adolescent girls from 47 clubs participated in the convention. The DLAN was formed with the chairpersonship of Tulasi Thapa. Meanwhile, Amrita Pun Magar, Durga B.Ka., Kisni Raidas, and Babita B. Ka were



chosen as vice president, secretary, joint-secretary and treasurer respectively. Meanwhile, Niharika Sharma, Preeti Patel, Renu Bhattarai, Sujata Karmacharya, Sita Chaudhari, Tulsi Sunar, Renuka Thapa Chettri, Deepa Shahi, Puja Shah, Sujata Karmacharya were elected as members.

Madhu Dawadi, regional team leader of CWIN-Nepal, said that the objective of the DLAN is to unify all the adolescent girls in the district under one umbrella by identifying and providing solutions to all the problems related to adolescent girls.

Meanwhile, Gauri Pradhan, the chief guest of the programme and spokesperson of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) said the formation of DLAN is a positive and replicable message.

In the same programme, Biswaraj Dotel, Local Development Officer of the district, said this type of adolescent girls based programmes should be included in plans of VDCs and municipalities too.

Thapa, the elected president of the network, committed to take the DLAN ahead as a platform to solve the problems of adolescent girls. Meanwhile, the Chief of Women and Children Office said that with the formation of DLAN, Banke district has given the message to the nation in favour of adolescent girls' issues.

The DLAN was formed with the joint coordination of Women and Children office, CWIN-Nepal and SAAC Nepal.

Training on Structure Decision Making held

CWIN-Nepal with the support of an Australia Youth Ambassador for Development (AYAD) provided a one day training on 'Structured Decision-Making (SDM)' to all the managers of CWIN Head Office at CWIN Head Office on 23rd April.

The main purpose of the training was to enable the managers of CWIN Helplines (CHL) and CWIN Balika Peace Home (CBPH) to train their staff in the tools of SDM.

Larissa Rossen, an AYAD volunteer, was the resource person for the training. After the brief introduction about the SDM and its importance, the participants were provided with CWIN Helpline Safety Assessment Tool and CWIN Balika Peace Home Reintegration Assessment Tool.

Sumnima Tuladhar, Executive Coordinator of CWIN-Nepal said that the SDM is very essential for CWIN to strengthen evidence based documentation in decision making practice for quality service. She also gave a directive to the CHL and CBPH managers to implement the SDM tool immediately. The first few months will be the trial phase of the tools. After August, the tools will be modified according to suggestions from the users and will be brought into effective implementation.

Tarak Dhital, General Secretary of CWIN- Nepal said that after the successful practice of the tools, CWIN –Nepal will move forward towards educating government authorities about the tools and engaging them at all levels in decision making for protection.

The programme was followed by the inauguration of a book – 'Structured Decision-Making Manual' written by Rossen herself.

CHILDREN IN MEDIA

Teachers take back stir, 'for now'

NIRJANA SHARMA AND ROSHAN SEDHAI

KATHMANDU, MAR 11 -

Agitating school teachers have decided to put on hold their indefinite educational strike for five days. The decision followed a four-point agreement they signed with the government on Sunday.

Various teachers' associations decided to withdraw the strike after Education Minister Dina Nath



Sharma expressed commitment to start the process of addressing their 47-point charter of demands within five days.

The demands include permanent status for teachers serving on a temporary basis, a hike in salary of private school teachers so as to make it on par with that of permanent ones, reinstatement or compensation for teachers affected by the conflict. The government also agreed to offer medical aid to teachers injured during the different phases of their agitation. The government further agreed to provide a copy of the proposed Education Act amendment to the chief whips of all political parties and their educational committees.

The amendment proposes a hike in the teachers' pay and perks.

"We have withdrawn the protest programmes until a new notice is issued," Guna Raj Lohani, the chairman of the Nepal Educational Republican Forum, told the Post.

Earlier on Sunday, representatives of the agitating teachers held a meeting with Constituent Assembly Chairman Subas Nembang and heads of major political parties' education committees. The parties' education committee chiefs had asked the teachers' associations to postpone the protest programmes and solve the problem through dialogue.

Source: www.ekantipur.com (March 12, 2012)

'Cattle grazing more exciting than studies'

Chandani Hamal

CHITWAN, April 16: Nine-year-old Suresh Chepa dropped out of school after class two. He is interested rather in grazing cattle. Moreover, that is what his parents want of him.

"Grazing cattle is far more enjoyable than attending school," Suresh grins. "We have a dozen cattle and I can go for swimming while I take them out to graze," he adds.

Chepa is certainly not alone in the list of such early dropouts.

Ramita Lama also hasn't gone to school after passing grade 1 last year. The 12-year-old, however, hardly has any regrets. Instead, she is excited that her parents are looking for a suitable groom for her! "They say the school is too far and that it time for me to get married. So there is no point in going to school," she said.



Yet another girl, Asmita Chepa, a 6th grader at Korak Thakaltar School at Thakaltar, is also preparing for her wedding. "It is now time for me to drop out of school as I will be tying knot soon," she said.

The lack of awareness regarding the importance of education among the children as well as their parents is quite apparent in this region.

There are altogether 37 schools under Kaule, Siddhi and Shaktikhor resource centers. According to Aryal, though school dresses, books and scholarships are provided to the kids on a regular basis it has had no effect. The scholarship amount provided to the students is actually used by their elders for buying liquors and new clothes for themselves.

According to resource chief at Shaktikhor, Bomprasad Aryal, the long queue of school dropouts is due to the acute lack of awareness. "Neither the children nor the parents understand the value of education. While children take studies as a burden, the parents do not mind misusing the scholarship amount," he said.

Aryal said that the parents believe just educating children is not enough and stop sending their kids to school after a year or two.

Source: www.myrepublica.com (April 16, 2012)

Study: 15% kids deprived of education

SURENDRA KAFLE

NEPALGUNJ: A survey carried out by Banke District Education Office shows that as many as fifteen per cent children in Banke have not been admitted to school at all.

According to the survey, 21,696 children of school going age in the district are deprived of the education. Man Prasad Regmi, section officer at District Education Office Banke, informed only 1,25,847

minors have been enrolled in the school out of the total 1, 47,543 children of school going age.

The report states that children from Madhesi, Muslim, Dalit, disadvantaged and downtrodden communities comprise large number of kids who are left out of the school.



Regmi said his office did its best to enroll children through this year's enrolment campaign that kicked off three days ago.

A large number of children from the rural areas such as Mataiya, Gangapur, Fattepur and Hiraminiya are also deprived of education. More than 1,200 children are outside school at Kohalpur area alone. Regmi said that his office will launch enrollment campaign in those VDCs where more than 500 kids are deprived of education.

Ekadev Panthi, Chairman of Nepal Teachers' Organisation Banke, complained that some public schools sans students despite having teachers.

Bhola Yogi, of Blind Association in Banke, said that many differently-abled children have not been admitted to school. He argued that conducive environment should be created in the classroom where differently-abled children would not be discriminated in the classes. Tanka Prasad Dahal, however, said that provisions for scholarship and educational materials have been attracting students to the community and some madrassas.

Acting DEO Ramsuresh Yadav said that every child should be given a chance to attend the school. He said his office has issued directive to schools to provide education for free from grade one to grade eight.

Source: www.thehimalayantimes.com (April 17, 2012)

HIV-affected kids to get Rs 1,500 a month

ARJUN POUDEL

KATHMANDU, April 26: Children under the age of 18 living with HIV/AIDS will receive Rs 1,500 per month from June this year following donor agencies' commitment to provide funds, an official of a government agency said.

There are an estimated 24,000 children living with HIV/AIDS in Nepal but only 2,200 children spread across nine districts will receive the money over the next five years, according to National Centre for HIV/AIDS and STD control (NCASC).



"The government cannot run the program across the country at once. So, we have given priority to the highly affected nine districts," said Dr Kk Rai, director of NCASC.

He said proper monitoring will be carried out to ensure money is utilized in education, health and nutrition of those children.

Surveillance officer at NCASC Deepak Karki and further decisions will be taken as per the impact of the program.

Officials said government and the donor agencies agreed to provide financial assistance to the children of the most affected districts as per the need of the affected children.

The Global Fund, the major donor in HIV/AIDS will provide around Rs 200 million to the government.

According to Gokarna Bhatta, coordinator of Global Fund's Country Coordination Mechanism (CCM) affected children who are deprived of basic rights will benefit from the program.

"Due to poor health, affected children lag behind in overall performance," he said. "They need special care and support program and need additional nutrition as well."

Source: www.myrepublica.com (April 26, 2012)

Edited by: Jenee Rai and Laura McManus