

National Status Report On Child Rights 2004

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The world is ever evolving. Our society is on the move. All human beings aspire to seek positive changes in their lives. The majority of the population wishes that there were no disparities, exploitation, and injustices in our society. Nevertheless, a handful of people, or the class who has control over the resources, power, and authority (satta), always try to crush the movements for progression. If the available resources and materials are fairly distributed perhaps people wouldn't have to bear poverty, hunger, and disparity. Apart from this, if at least people could have a life free of bondage and slavery, so much frustration and agony wouldn't prevail. It is due to this existing exploitation, disparity, and authority that there have been wars and movements against unfair systems for ages. Nepal has become a burning example of this phenomenon.

Status of Economic Development

Nepal is a rich country in terms of its natural resources. The language, culture, traditions here are not only diverse, but are truly elevated. The geography of this country is also diverse. But why is this country with rich resources, culture, and full of hardworking people still poor? Why do poverty, inadequacy, disease, and hunger still rule over the general masses here? Why do disparities, exploitation, and unfair systems widely prevail here? It has been more than 235 years since the beginning of 'Modern Nepal', yet this country remains in the list of Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in the world. According to the World Bank, the per capita income of average Nepalese is only US\$ 230. The HDI index of Nepal stands at 143rd among the 175 countries in the world. According to the study of 175 countries Nepal is one of the least developed countries in terms of human development and in South Asia Nepal falls behind all countries except Pakistan. The labour force of Nepal is expanding with the population growth of 300,000 persons (2.45%) per year. But due to lack of productive education and training opportunities, unemployment and displacement of rural population to urban areas has escalated.

Similarly, there has been decline in the agricultural growth rate from 10.8 % to 5.9% in the fiscal year 2001-2002. The economic growth of the tenth national plan initiated to achieve ground-breaking changes has also been negative (-0.6) in the year 2002-2003. Nepal faced such a set back for the first time in 19 years. The 10th National Plan in implementation has planned to bring down the current poverty status from 38% to 30%, targeting the socially and economically deprived communities. But only the future will tell whether the targets will be achieved. Moreover, our national achievement will not only be negative but will be on the constant decline if violence, killings, and political chaos continue.

Status of Political Development

The current political situation is going to be the most painful course of time in the history of Nepal. The Nepalese people have never revolted against the traditional system and power before. The restoration of multi-party democracy in 1990 had been a milestone in the political history of Nepal. The Nepalese people have played a vital role in the course of establishing civil and political rights. However, the political forces and their leaders lost their popularity due to the short vision of political forces, the nexus of these forces with the bourgeois forces wanting to remain in power, and their silent acceptance of foreign interference in national issues.

Today the democratic system is weakening because of the immoral nexus developed by political forces for vested interest, the shrinking political culture, political corruption, immoral relationship with bureaucracy, nepotism, favourism, and their attitude of surrendering to traditional bourgeois forces. The emergence of CPN (the Maoists) and the "People's War" initiated by them is the product of all these situations, which is leading the country to the scourge of civil war. Never in the history of Nepal has there been such a enormous loss of people, national devastation, and incidences of abductions and disappearances. The current human rights situation in the country is very grave. The series of murders, violence, abductions, arbitrary arrests and killings, torture, and disappearances have been on the rise everyday. The right to life, the most precious and inherent right of citizens, is being curtailed. The political parties have blamed the king of reinstating autocracy, a one-party system, and militarisation in the name of a constitutional monarchy. Maoists are promoting the politics of violence, killing and destruction, including the one-party existence policy in the name of the "People's War," while the political parties are resorting to the politics of agitation in the name of the "Peaceful People's Movement" and a multi-party democratic system. Whatever the situation is, the present national mentality is divided. Political parties are becoming more and more self- centered. All political forces are trying to prove that they are closest to the people's sentiments and are the most influential force. If we analyse the present national context on the basis of sustainable political development, the traditional power centers are deteriorating. The progressive forces are in the state of development, but the violent path they are taking, and especially the one-party, autocratic attitude, seems to be inviting further devastation. Therefore, at this moment, it is imperative to find a way out for the nation, nationality, and for people's empowerment. In the present context, the main basis for the agreement and consensus among the political forces should be full sovereignty to the people, democracy based on multi-party competition, and an absolute constitutional monarchy. Alternatives should be sorted out from the political solutions like constituent assembly, national political conference, and amendment of constitution or restoration of House of Representatives for uplifting the country from the state of crisis.

Cultural and Social Status

Human rights are the culmination of civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. According to the principles of human rights, these rights are interdependent, indivisible, and universal. In our context, for a long time human rights had been understood only as political and civil rights of people. But after the restoration of democracy in 1990, economic, social, cultural rights are also gradually being recognised as important facets of human rights. Over the years, the existing disparity in the society, exploitation, injustice, rights of different nationalities, oppression, and women's and children's rights have emerged as concerns of the human rights movement. In fact, there will not be a positive outlet to the political crisis if there is inadequate understandings and analysis of existing social and cultural relations in the country. Perhaps, these are the reasons for not achieving any political development.

There is the major influence of nationalities and their culture in all the social and cultural sectors of Nepal. The current crisis is getting more complex, in part because the role of indigenous people, oppressed women, and minority groups has been minimized. Kept away from the mainstream, these communities are seeking identity and constructive roles in all sectors of national development. They are also seeking their participation in the democratic exercise of the nation.

But the reality here is more challenging than before. There is a grave crisis in the promotion of the rights of women, children, and dalit communities due to the ongoing armed conflict. Moreover, their influence over, and accessibility to,

education, health, and resources is also very minimal. Women have become the most vulnerable group, due to the existing poverty, scarcity, and negligence. That is why the dalit community, various nationalities, disabled people, women, and children have started becoming aware in order to bring about the resolution of this crisis of ongoing conflict in our society.

A study conducted by ESP (Enabling State Programme) in 2001 on the level of participation in governance on the basis of ethnic groups states that in the bureaucracy, judiciary, police, and army, the participation of Brahmins and Chhetris - the so-called upper caste - is as much as 77%, followed by Newars with 18%, Thakurians with 5%, Mongolians with 1%, and Dalits with 0%. Similarly, participation in the judicial sector, constitutional body, ministerial cabinet, and parliament follows a similar trend: 67% Brahmins, 13% Thakurians, 11% Newars, 8% Mongols, and 1% Dalits. In addition, women's participation in these sectors is negligible. It is very sad that Dalits (who comprise 16 % of the total population), do not participate in the bureaucracy, army, police or in decision-making.

Women's participation in national policy and decision-making is also nominal. Nepalese women have contributed a lot in all areas of social development and it has been proved time and again that women can contribute in all areas. But at national decision-making levels - political parties, government, parliament, judiciary, and bureaucracy - the rate of women's participation is still not encouraging.

Social transformation will remain a mere slogan until women's participation is ensured in development and in politics, and their access to decision-making is strengthened.

Status of Child Rights

When we talk about the situation of child rights in Nepal, looking at the situation 10 years prior, especially the situation of child education, and child health and awareness regarding child rights, there has been mentionable development. Though, when we refer to the National and International commitments and outcomes of the National Plan of Action, only 50-60% of the targeted programs have been achieved. Why could the nation not achieve any outcomes regarding child rights and child development, as it had aimed? What kinds of things are responsible for this? It is necessary to evaluate and review this appropriately.

Discrimination between son and daughter still exists in our society. Furthermore, the number of children who are deprived of child rights and child development due to children labor exploitation has not decreased in number. Due to existing misbeliefs and social discrimination in our society, such as child marriage, gender discrimination, untouchability, caste discrimination, exploitation, and social myths, there has been a negative impact on the protection and promotion of child rights. Everyone has started to realize that because of the ongoing armed Maoists People's War and the dispute between the state and the political parties have not been able to come to a positive conclusion, the goals of child rights and child development have been interrupted due to direct and indirect impacts of these conflicts.

According to the National Census Report of 2001 in Nepal, there are around 8,400,000 children below 14 years, 9,500,000 are below 16 years, and 10,400,000 children are below 18 years. Among these children, 80% children are enrolled in primary schools, with the largest percentage of children between 6-10 years of age. However, 49% of them can not complete their education. This is because they fall ill, or are deprived of going to school because of social beliefs regarding girl children, or have to leave because of domestic problems or for various other reasons, and the government, thus, can not reach its aim. If the series of dropouts can not be taken

care of in time, or if their education can not be given continuity, then the participation of children in primary education will slowly reduce.

When we study the situation of discrimination between daughter and son in the educational sector, there exists less discrimination in primary schools. As the school level increases, we find more discrimination between educational opportunities of son and daughter. If we are to look at the situation of the literacy rate in Nepal, it is only 54.1%. Within this rate, the highest literacy rate is found in Kathmandu - at 77.2% - while the lowest rate is found in Humla - at 27.1%. National statistics for literacy in 32 districts of Nepal is 54.1%, while the situation in the other 43 districts is less.

Child Development : Goals and Outcomes

In 1990, His Majesty Government legally approved, or to say it more clearly, the "Global Movement for Children" campaign, which targets the development of children, was completed. Over the next decade, the national plan of action regarding "children and development" was formulated. Fundamental matters regarding child health, nutrition, and child education were included in this plan of action.

Additionally, child-related issues such as child labor, girl and child trafficking, and poverty alleviation were addressed in century development aims. As a final step, for the first time even in Nepal, a national ten-year plan (2004 - 2014) was formulated for children on the basis of the declaration regarding children by the special conference of United Nations Organization.

It is highly necessary to formulate plans of action at the national level in order to conduct programs that have children as their primary focus. However, their success and effectiveness depend on the implementation of the planned actions. In this context, there have been exciting achievements so far; however, the government has not able to achieve all of the planned goals. There are various reasons and challenges behind this, but we are not going to try to discuss them here. But, in order to know what we have achieved according to the national plan, and to know what the present situation is, progress has been presented as follows:

National Plan and Progress for 2001			
S.No	Indicator	Goal	Progress
1.	Child Health		
	1.1 Infant Mortality Rate Minimization	50/100 Live Birth	64
	1.2 Infant Mortality Rate below 5 years age Minimization	70/100 Live Birth	91
	1.3 Maternal Mortality Rate Minimization	400/10,000	415
	1.4 Child Malnutrition and Minimization-Children Below 5 Years	25%	48%
	1.5 Supply of Clean Drinking Water	77%	72%
	1.6 Provision of Sanitation and Toilet	31%	25%
2.	Child Education		
	2.1 Accessibility of Basic Education	100%	80%
	2.2 Adult Literacy Rate	70%	49%
	2.3 Female Literacy Rate	61%	35%

Source: National Census Report, 2001, CBS/Nepal

According to the Indicator of Development Situation Report 2003, based on the 2001 census done by the joint initiation of ICIMOD, the Central Statistics Board, and SNV to see what the respective position was of the 75 Districts of Nepal with regard to child development, it was found that the five most developed districts of

Nepal (those that had the highest literacy rate) were as follows: Manang, Syangja, Ilam, Kathmandu and Kaski respectively.

Whereas, Mugu, Rautahat, Jumla, Mahottari and Humla fall under the most undeveloped districts. As a comparative example, in Manang the percentage of illiteracy among children between 10-14 years is only 3.31%, while in Mugu it is 51.75%. Moreover, in the three districts of Kalikot, Mugu and Rautahat, less than 33% of children are enrolled in primary schools, whereas in the three districts of Kaski, Chitwan and Manang, a great majority of the children are enrolled in primary schools.

The Present Situation and Future Goals Regarding Child Development

S.No	Indicator	National Goal				Remarks
		Status in 2002/2003	2007	2012	2015	
1.	Promotion of Healthy Life					
1.1	Infant Mortality Rate per 1000	64	45	30	20	
1.2	Infant Mortality Rate of Children Below 5 Years of Age per 1000	91	72	30	20	
1.3	Percentage of Services Available from Health workers	13%	25%	50%	100%	Millenium Development Goals
1.4	Use of Means of Family Planning	39	47	60	100	“
1.5	Crude Birth Rate per 1000 live birth	34	30	35	32	
1.6	Maternal Mortality Rate Minimization (per lakh)	415	300	250	213	
1.7	Child Malnutrition Minimization	48	40	30	20	
1.8	Minimization of Birth of Under- weight Children	30	X	X	15	
1.9	Accessibility of Health, Hygiene and Sanitation	25	50	70	80	
1.10	Guarrantee of Complete Immunization	80	90	95	100	
2	Provide Quality Education					
2.1	Accessibility of Basic Primary Education	80%	90%	100%	100%	
2.2	Enrollment Rate in Early Child Development	18%	32%	60%	80%	
2.3	Increase of Teachers with Eligibility and Training in School Level	50%	100%	100%	100%	
2.4	Minimization in Situation of Repeating Class 1 Class 5	30% 9%	24% 8%	14% 8%	10% 8%	
2.5	Increase in Literacy of 6-14 year-old Children Increase in Literacy of Children Above 15 Years	56%	75%	85%	90%	

		49%	63%	70%	75%	
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Source: 10th National Plan and Millenium Development Goals (MDGs)

Poverty and Children

Poverty starts with children. It is said that if anyone wants to know the situation of a country, it can be known through the situation of children in that country. According to the National Policy Commission's Statistics, in Nepal, 38% (i.e., 90 lakh people) live under the marginalized poverty line. This means that they have not been able to meet their basic needs, such as food, shelter, clothing, education, and health. If we study the existing situation of poverty in our country, we find that people living in rural areas - due to geographical inaccessibility, discrimination and exploitation - are primarily survivors of poverty (National Planning Commission: 2003). The situation of poverty in urban areas is 23%, while it has increased to more than 44% in rural areas (Poverty in South Asia-2003, SAAPE). When we study the effects of poverty on children, children four years and older are the most negatively affected by poverty. Of those found to be highly affected by poverty, 23% are newborn children, 27% are children up to 1 year in age, 37% are children up to 2 years in age, 47% are children up to 3 years of age, and 58% are children 4 years age and above. The statistics from the 2001 Census also included the situation of children deprived of basic rights. For this, they used child literacy, child economic activities, and child marriage as their main indicators. According to the census, among children between 10-14 years of age, 21.4% are illiterate, 20% are economically active, and 1.3% of children are literate.

Where do children live?

It is the first and foremost duty of guardians and parents to give appropriate care and protection for every child. Those children who do not get appropriate care and protection from their parents and care takers are most likely to fall into risky situations. If children do not get a suitable environment at home, then schools and day care centers need to bring up the children in healthy, secure, and loving environments. In this situation, children's well-being depends on better guardianship rather than on poor economic status. If children are not properly taken care of by their parents and caretakers, it is more likely problems will be found in these children. Those children who are most liable to face challenges regarding their psycho-social health are those who grow up in homes where there are domestic problems or disputes between parents, or in a society where there is not a child-friendly environment. It is said that childhood surroundings have a strong impact on the child throughout his lifetime.

Situation of Dependent Children (children below 16 years age)					
S.No	Description	Number	S.No	Description	Number
1.	Living with both Parents	8,305,230	2.	Living with Mother	25,887
3.	Living with Father	114,351	4.	Living with Father and Stepmother	78,843
5.	Living with Mother and Stepfather	64,442	6.	Living with Other Relatives	89,813
7.	Living with the Employer	63,231	8.	Living with Other Children	234,101

Source: Central Statistics Department, 2001

Among 95 lakh¹ children below 16 years of age in our country, around 83 lakh children live with their both parents. But around 12 lakh children do not stay with their both parents due to various reasons such as divorce between parents, death, or a second marriage of one parent. Among them, around 25 lakh children live with their mother, while 1 lakh 14 thousand children live with their father. Apart from that, around 1 lakh 43 thousand children live with their stepmother (79,000 children) or stepfather (64,000 children). Many children have been forced to run away from home or have been forced to leave home and survive on the streets.

From the very beginning of Nepali society, the culture was such that children who were orphaned, abandoned, or exploited were taken care of by their relatives or supported by other people. This kind of thinking and practice has diminished. Around 90,000 children who are working as domestic workers live with their employers. The remaining 2 lakh 34 thousand children are without family. Tens of thousands of children who are without parents, without a home, or who have been abandoned, are under the protection of various social organizations and children's homes.

The Situation of Dependent Children

Children are people in the process of development. It is obvious that children are dependent on their parents and guardians. Likewise, children between 0 -14 years of age are more dependent on adults. Adults between 15 - 59 years of age are the ones taking on the responsibility of children. At the national level in our country, 72.69% children are dependent on their parents and adults. When we study the statistics on the district level, there is wide stratification between the most dependent and least dependent children. Statistics show that 94.47% of Pyuthan children are dependent on their parents and guardians, while only 39.99% of Manang children are dependent on their parents and guardians.

Child Marriage

When statistics for the 2001 Census in Nepal were collected, data regarding the age of marriage were also collected. According to the above-mentioned statistics report, the average age of girls who are married off is 18.5 years in Nepal. When we calculate age at the district level, the Rautahat district has the lowest average age for marriage (17.22 years of age), while the Manang district has the highest average age for girls getting married (25.36 years of age).

In comparison to past statistics of child marriage in Nepal, there has been a mentionable decrease. If we look at the statistics, only 1.30% of the total marriages in Nepal are child marriages. At the district level, the highest number of child marriages occurred in Kapilvastu (68,753), while the lowest number of child marriages occurred in Manang (69). However, in 2001, child marriage for children ages 1-14 was 38,817 while child marriage for children ages 15-19 was 461,978. Until now, the districts where the highest rate of child marriage occurs are (from highest to lowest): Kapilvastu (68,753), Rupandehi (58,915), Bara (56,387), Parsa (55,483), and Dhanusa (53,739).

In the year 2001, among the 20-24 year-old age group (13,24,314 people) 1,21,853 got married between 10-14 years of age; and 7,87,180 got married between 15-19 years of age. If we study the situation of children below 19 years of age, it is clear that lakhs of children in our country are married at young ages. If we study the above-mentioned statistics closely, we find that there are 1 crore² 9 lakh people who have already got married at least once. Among them, around 13 lakh people

¹ A lakh is equivalent to 100,000.

² A crore is equivalent to 10,000,000.

experienced their first marriage between 10-14 years of age, and around 52 lakh people were between 15-19 years of age. But, if we look back over the years in five-year increments, we find that the number of child marriages in our country has been gradually decreasing. For this, we must be thankful for the increase in awareness and campaigns regarding the advocacy of child rights rather than the effectiveness of rectification of laws. However, researchers suspect that the main reason behind the decrease is that many people hide the reality of their age, increasing it in fear of legal interference and punishment. Whatever the reason, it is true that in comparison to the past 5-10 years, there has been a decrease in the figures of child marriage.

Economically active children

In our country, it is difficult to calculate with accuracy how many children are active in economically productive activities, as there has been not extensive study and research on this issue thus far. In looking at the economic state of our country, we find children from 5-6 years of age actively working as domestic workers and in restaurants, the carpet industry, stone quarries, and etcetera, to earn their living. According to a study by the International Labor Organization and Central Department of Population Statistics/ Tribhuvan University, carried out only a few years ago, it has been estimated that the number of working children between 5-14 years of age is 26 lakh. In Nepal, the average rate of economic activity of this age group is 20%. The average broken down by gender is 18.50% boys and 21.55% girls.

Among the 29 lakh 81 thousand children in this age group, 8 lakh 59 thousand children are economically active. Among the economically active children between the ages of 10-14 years, 1 lakh 85 thousand children are involved in agriculture, 62,900 are involved in wage labor, 12,479 are self-employed, 64,400 are involved in various other economic activities, 10,800 are in search of work, 1,72,000 are domestic labourers, and around 2 lakh are unemployed. Excluding this age group, among the other 23 lakh children of school going age, some are involved in economic activities. Among them, 19,873 children stay with their employers, 75,230 are involved in various earning activities, 2,30,903 are self-employed, and 2,83,408 children work as domestic workers in various families without receiving wages.

Children in the Age Group of 10 - 14 years
Who are Actively Involved in Economic Activities

qm=;=S.No	Description	Boy	Girl	Total
01.	Total Child Population (10-14)	15,33,806	14,48,126	29,81,932
02.	Economically Active	4,19,307	4,40,505	8,59,812
03.	Inactive in Economic Activity	11,14,499	10,07,621	21,22,120

The Situation and Challenges of Child Labor

Child labor exploitation, as part of the economic, social, and cultural aspects of our society, is a reality. Lack of familial awareness, unjust social relations, poverty, and marginalisation lead children to sell their labor for a living and for the support of their families. According to the ILO statistics, among children ages 5 - 14 years in Nepal, around 26 lakh are involved in child labor. Because of this, children are deprived of the bright light of education. Even among those children who do get enrolled in school, there are many examples of children who have to drop out, leaving their studies incomplete. Areas where child labor is commonly involved are: agriculture, forestry, industry, coal mining, domestic service, construction, factories, self-employment, and illegal areas. Due to constant social and human rights

campaigns against child labor in recent years, around 2 lakh child survivors of child labor exploitation have been provided protection against exploitation, relief, and educational support.

In the 2001 Census Report, under the survey report of child labor, it is mentioned that out of a total of 30 lakh children between the ages of 10 -14, around 6,05,000 children are involved in child labor. According to statistics mentioned in the above survey report, children are involved in child labor in around 16 -18 labour sectors in Nepal. According to the same report, 4,25,000 children are involved in agricultural and forest work, 40,000 in factory work, 20,000 in wage labor, 11,000 in domestic service, 9,000 in wholesale and retail businesses, and 8,000 are involved in construction work.

According to legal provisions regarding child labor, children below 14 years of age are prohibited from being involved in labor, while children 15-16 years old may be involved in labor between the hours of 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., with a half-hour break after every three hours. But in our country, tens of thousands of children below ten years of age are survivors of child labor exploitation. Moreover, 1,27,000 children are living their lives under the worst forms of child labor, working as porters or in carpet factories, plastic and garbage collection, bonded labor, coal mining, domestic service, and commercial sex work. Nepal has planned to eradicate the worst forms of child labor through the medium of time bound programs.

Being a state party, Nepal has ratified nearly all of the UN Conventions and international laws. Though Nepal's laws and national plan of action have been formulated according to international commitments, they have not been realized in action. Though the bill sanctioned by the parliament has been legalized, it has not been implemented in behavior.

Situation of Girls

According to the census of 2001, 51% of the total population is female, however, the statistic drops to 49% for the population of children below 16 years of age. The population of girl children decreased in comparison to boys during the two previous 5-year plans, but during the most recent 5-year plan, there has been an increase in the girl child population. With Nepal being a traditional and patriarchic society, we can see existence of discrimination between daughters and sons in every area of our society. But after democracy was instilled in 1990, and after increasing public awareness regarding matters of human rights, there has been a recovery in the situation of girl children in recent years.

But the development situation of female children as compared to male children seems weaker, due to child labor, child marriage, malnutrition, and illiteracy. In Nepal, there are 65% literate male children, and only 42% literate female children. Similarly, girl children are often survivors of various problems, such as child marriage, sexual exploitation and abuse, exploitation by in-laws, and trafficking for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation. Ongoing armed conflict in our country for the past eight or nine years is another contributing factor to the thousands of children falling into risky and difficult situations. So far, out of the total population of 10,000 people killed in ongoing-armed conflict, 300 are children - 100 of which are girl children. Among the thousands of children displaced and affected during armed conflict, it has been seen that many are from the girl child population.

The main cause behind the exploitation and abuse of girl children is the paternal social structure and the superstitions and social misbeliefs that stem from it. For these reasons, many people do not treat their daughters as they would treat their sons. Girls are still considered to be a strong work force for household chores, and for carrying out other domestic responsibilities, such as carrying water, gathering wood from the forest, etc. In addition to this, girl children also play an important supporting role in rearing their siblings, helping their mother, and in kitchen work.

Even now, the practice of providing education to daughters as well as sons is not one that is typically carried out in the rural areas.

With the passing of time, our society is gradually showing its concern for children's rights. The UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC), ratified in 1989, started argument for the rights of girls equal to that of boys, and the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women has started raising more general issues of justice, equality, and freedom. The follow-up and evaluation of the latter at the 4th World Conference on Women in Beijing resulted in the Beijing Platform for Action. This was ratified by Nepal in 1995, and its implementation has supported and strengthened the rights of girl children. It has been felt that social mobilization done through the formation of adolescent girls groups, adolescent girls' education, and child rights campaigns have contributed more in the area of social transformation. Unless and until there is minimization in pre-aimed violence, sexual exploitation, commercial sexual exploitation, child marriage, child labor exploitation, and bonded labor against girl children, it will be difficult to develop girls as a part of social transformation.

School and the population of school going children

In Nepal, there are around 41 lakh school going children in the 6-15 age group, however, there is a total of only 37,566 schools - including both private and government schools - for them. According to this statistic, there is only one school available for an average of 109 children between 6 to 15 years of age. There are 1.66 schools available per 1000 children. To further break down the data, there are 1.15 primary schools available per 1000 children. According to the above-mentioned statistics, 73.15% children between 6-10 years of age are enrolled in primary schools. But only half of the students remain there before the completion of Class Five. Similarly, there is an average 3.78 teachers available per one primary school. According to this statistic, at the primary level, there is one teacher available per 37.02% students. Among the teachers of primary schools, only 25.31% are women.

(Source: Educational Statistics of Nepal on school level, 2057)

Children affected by armed conflict

It has been nine years since CPN (Maoists) announced the "People's War" in order to bring about progress-oriented economic, social, and cultural transformations and initiated armed conflict against the state and existing injustices in our society. There have been innumerable ups and downs in our country so far. But CPN has not been able to create result-oriented work for citizens. So far, around 10,000 people have been killed in our country. Thousands of people have been injured and disabled, while lakhs of people have been displaced from their villages and places of living. If we look at the destruction of physical structures, many national assets, worth billions of rupees, have been destroyed. Meanwhile, the present national psychological state is being transforming into one of hopelessness and fear. Furthermore, ongoing political conflict between His Majesty and political parties in our country has created an additional crisis and state of confusion. As a result, there have been gradual negative effects on child development and child rights.

It is believed that the effects of the present armed conflict on children are getting more serious every day. When we study the conditions preceding the initiation of the "People's War," we find that almost 300 children have been killed, and 500 children have been injured and disabled. Around 2000 children have been displaced from their birth villages and places of living.

Murder, violence, armed conflict, natural disasters, and any kind of destructive activity always put children in difficult situations. The armed conflict that exists in our country is a repetition of similar destructive histories that have taken place all over the world. Last year alone, in the mid-western regions of Nepal, at least 300 schools

were closed at different times. Time and again many schools fell prey to armed conflict. The killing incident at Sharada Secondary School of Mudbhara VDC, in the Doti district is the most tragic incident among a series of such incidents. The use of many schools as barracks and military training spaces for the state military and Maoists was not fair. This year, through an initiative of CWIN, several organizations active in the field of child rights have participated in many programs under the "Children are Zones of Peace" campaign in various parts of the country.

Due to these efforts, there has been a tremendous increase in awareness that places such as schools, playgrounds, transportation vehicles, and human habitats where children are found cannot be targeted under any condition, and that everyone should respect the rights of children. However, insensitive activities time and again have directly and indirectly impacted children, and have additionally bruised the mental state of children. But CWIN, along with Save the Children-Norway, UNICEF, and other child rights organizations have been making a great contribution in providing relief, psychosocial counseling, rehabilitation, and social reintegration for child survivors of armed conflict. Apart from this, various programs under the "Children are Zones of Peace" Campaign have been successful in pressuring and influencing the State Party and Maoist Rebels.

Child Rights and the Commitment of His Majesty's Government

It was not long ago that organizations started raising the issues of child rights in Nepal. Nonetheless, issues of child rights have been raised in our country. We feel that we are moving ahead if we look at commitments made by His Majesty's Government in the national and international sector. There have been provisions for much-needed policy, rules, and laws for child rights to some extent. According to the CRC, the issue of child rights is a responsibility of state. The state which gives priority to the questions regarding the betterment of children is the state that also makes a contribution to its development and social transformation. In the context of Nepal, even though HMG has expressed its commitments, there has been minimum implementation and transformation. In the tenth 5-year plan (2002-2007), HMG has formulated various provisions for the protection and promotion of child rights. Apart from this, it has formulated national plans of action for matters such as child labor, trafficking in women and commercial sexual exploitation, human rights, bonded labor, and has also advanced programs regarding these matters. But, the government has been ineffective in managing, appropriating, and preserving the human power and resources necessary for the implementation of work plans, even though plans were made for the implementation of national and international commitments. The political instability and associated dilemmas have contributed to the lack of - and ineffectiveness of - national work plans.

The "Task force for the formulation of a 10-year plan" formed by HMG, has formulated one national plans of action for children, according to the commitment made in the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) regarding children. In this program, they have evaluated works done so far and have formulated a 10-year, intensive program for children. It has included various recommendations and suggestions for an organizational structure, as well as provided analysis of the different reasons for not being able to implement policy, rules, laws, and legal provisions for children in Nepal.



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