

**Bulletin 3 (April 2011)**

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This large ESRC project runs from November 2009 to April 2012 and is a collaboration between Newcastle University, the Non Government Organisation ‘Shakti Samuha’ and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Mission in Nepal. It aims to explore the situation of returnee trafficked women. To date there has been little research on posttrafficking livelihoods nor how the issues raised by trafficking intersect with development agendas. A key aspect of this research is to gain knowledge that is grounded in the actual experiences of the Nepalese trafficked returnee women themselves. We are interested in how returnee livelihoods intersect with sexuality and citizenship.

**Fieldwork**

Phase two of fieldwork (interviewing trafficked women) started in April 2010 and was completed in January 2011. 37 trafficked women, returned from domestic and external trafficking settings, were interviewed. They came from 21 of the 75 districts in Nepal, including the mountains, hills and southern terai. Trafficked women from eight ethnic social groups, four religious backgrounds and ranging from 17 – 44 years of age shared their narratives primarily in Nepali however a few women also used their ethnic dialects to express their personal experiences of exploring livelihoods, claiming citizenship and living in violent relationships.

**Key preliminary findings**

* 1. Most of the women who have been trafficked are stigmatized as prostitutes and/or HIV carriers when they return to Nepal, whether or not they have been trafficked to India for sexual purposes, into the circus or forms of forced labour in other parts of the world. These women suffer from discrimination and feel threatened and scared.
  2. The research shows that once these women return to Nepal, they tend to focus their individual reintegration strategies on the local labour market and count on local NGOs. NGOs, in particular, play an important role in facilitating the rehabilitation of the returning women, providing them with skills training which covers traditional female jobs such as sewing, cooking and carpet making.
  3. The research also indicates that some ‘non-traditional’ jobs can be better options for women than others, such as driving ‘tempos’ (motorized rickshaws), or working as security guards, plumbers or electricians. However, since skilled service jobs are traditionally dominated by men, such as plumbers or electricians, and require building up a confident client base and going into people’s home to work, returning trafficked women often face prejudices for being female, and also for being trafficked.
  4. Reclaiming their identity through marriage remains one of the key strategies for trafficked women and also facilitates their access to citizenship and livelihoods in post trafficking situations. However, this research also suggests marriage is not always a durable option for women on their return as some women experienced sexual and physical violence once their trafficked identity was known to new husbands and families.

**Policy work as a strategic impact**

The project has fed directly into the current debates on citizenship in the Constitution writing process through ongoing dialogue with relevant subject committees of the Constituent Assembly and Women’s Caucus of the legislative parliament.

In addition to continued engagement with these committees and their political leaders, the purpose in timing the call for an activist workshop in February 17th as part of the project funded by ESRC this year in Kathmandu was to coincide with the last stages of submission of the first draft of various thematic committees to the constitution writing committee for the new constitution. This workshop brought together 80 participants including leading anti-trafficking NGOs, government representatives, donors and key members of the Constituent Assembly including the head of the Fundamental Rights Committee who is using case study material from the workshop in current press releases. Thirty trafficked women survivors also attended, responding directly to the preliminary research findings in a dedicated afternoon session which reviewed NGO programmes strategic development following the five core project themes a) reviewing current citizenship provision, b) inputs to the National Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking (NPA), c) reviewing NGO sponsored rehabilitation schemes, d) examining mainstream approaches to post trafficking livelihoods and e) challenges to the social reintegration of the women.

Extensive media coverage followed this event, including 8 interviews on Nepali TV stations (these are distributed to the diasporas internationally through the web) and 17 radio station interviews, as well as 3 print articles in the Nepali press by Dr. Poudel.

The workshop also prompted invitations for keynote appearances at follow-on events targeting the Constituent Assembly process organised by various NGOs and human rights groups, and media houses including one from the Canadian Cooperation Office in Kathmandu.

**Publication**

* An article was published by Poudel, M., Laurie, N., Richardson, D., and Townsend, J.(2010) in Global Eye on Human Trafficking, Issue 9/ December 2010, p7, IOM

**Forthcoming Publication**

* Poudel, M. (2011) Dealing with Hidden Issues: Social Rejection Experienced by Trafficked Women in Nepal, Lambert.

**Conferences and seminars in which we have presented**

* More than 20 conference papers, seminars or workshop presentations have been given to date both in Nepal and elsewhere including in the UK, the US, the Netherlands and Portugal. A range of disciplines have been targeted: Geography, Sociology, Development Studies and Women's Studies.

**We will be presenting at the following seminars during spring and summer 2011**

* Passing Borders: Sexuality, Stigma and Citizenship, Annual Conference of British Sociological Association, April, London School of Economics
* Geographies of Passing: Post Sexual Trafficking Citizenships in Nepal, Association of American Geographers, April, Seattle
* Confirmed Boundaries: Sexuality, Citizenship and Livelihood,Nepal Study Day 2011, Britain-Nepal Academic Council, April , University of Cambridge
* Search for an Identity: Sexuality, Citizenship and Livelihoods, Development Studies Association, June, University of York
* Sexuality, Development and Citizenship, Gender, Sexuality and Political Economy Conference, Department of Sociology, May, Manchester Metropolitan University
* Rights and Wrongs: Trafficked Identity, Citizenship and Livelihood, Oxfam GB, June, Oxford
* Living the Geopolitics: Geographies of Passing among Post Sexually Trafficked Women in Nepal, Performing Geopolitics, June, University of Durham
* Law, Identity and Livelihood Post Trafficking in Nepal: British Society of Criminology Conference 2011, Economies and Insecurities of Crime and Justice, July, Northumbria University

**We have contributed following during autumn 2010 and winter 2011**

* Project review notes were prepared on
  + National Report on Human Trafficking 2008/2009 Nepal and
  + Global Action Plan on to Combat Human Trafficking, formulated by the United Nations, and presented with United Nations County Team in Kathmandu
* Research training to Shakti Samuha: Two training sessions were conducted during this period focusing on an introduction to social research and methods.
* Conceptual input as a member of an expert team that advise the National rapporteur to prepare the National Report on Trafficking in Nepal,
* A guest lecture was offered to women’s studies students of Padma Kanya College, Kathmandu on trafficking, processes, trends and consequences of livelihood and citizenship of women given the policy context in Nepal.
* Orientation for NGOs working on labour migration on conceptual clarity on trafficking, smuggling and labour migration and gender issues of female migrants that they may encounter while working away from home.

For more information visit our web-site:

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