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**Event Report on Marking International Domestic Workers Day
Swatantrata Abhiyan Nepal**

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Abbreviation

ADWC: Active Domestic Workers Consultancy

DW: Domestic Worker

GDP: Gross Development Product

HUN: Home Workers Trade union Nepal

ILO: International Labour Organization

ILC: International Labor Convention

PNCCI: Parvasi Nepali Coordination Committee

SAN: Swatantrata Abhiyan Nepal

Context

The earthquake in Nepal caused large number of deaths, injured people, destruction of government and private houses. The disaster of earthquake only did not destroy the physical structure and displaced people but also largely affected social structure, psychological health and livelihood opportunities and social inaction and trauma.



One of them is Domestic Workers who are particularly vulnerable to human right abuses because of their work, lack of control over work, long working hours, poor social support compound, high risk of accident in work place and occupational fatigue. Without legal and social status, their entitlement to social recognition, social security and recognition of rights are unattainable.

As a result many domestic workers right are being ignored. They are forced to leave their jobs, denied to share tents with employer and in required of food. Domestic Workers are denied of relief support from government because of their tenant status, unrecorded migration in the town office and because they belong to lower cast group. Their permanent residence is destroyed and current residence at employers and rent are also in high risk. While coordinating relief support to Domestic

worker in Kathmandu valley, it was found that among 132 domestic workers 10 has to left job and went back to home, 64 domestic worker's permanent home is damaged.

About the Program: An Interaction with Policy Makers

An Interaction with policy makers addressing domestic workers issue in post earth was conducted on 16 June 2015. The program aim to create a platform for domestic worker's to raise their voices among concern stakeholders. The program was scheduled with started presentation on current context of domestic workers with possible recommendations, Domestic workers saying their stories, policy maker's commitment and way forward. It also helped to explore actions and factors that recognize domestic worker as worker and provide assistance accordingly.

The program made policy makers to realize missing point on their program while assisting victims of Earthquake. In addition the program also opened a new avenue for domestic worker's to have access with policy makers to put their issues and problems. The program was conducted in Indreni Foodland New Baneshwor. There were 40 Participants, among them were parliament Members, Representative of Department of Labor, Representative from Lalitpur Sub

Metro Politian City Office, Madhyapur Thimi Municipality, Representative from ILO Office Nepal, Media personnel, Domestic Workers and NGO Representative.

Presentation on Post Earth Quake: Vulnerabilities of Domestic Workers

A presentation on Post Earth Quake and Vulnerabilities of Domestic Worker's was made by Ms. Writu Bhatta Rai. In this presentation, the presenter showed the status of domestic workers in Nepal, earth quake affects on DWs, Possible immediate actions and long term actions to promote domestic workers right.

During her presentation, she shared that there is no exact data on domestic workers' number and how it has been affecting on relief support. According to her, Majority of DWs are facing obstacles of increase room rent (temporary residence of Kathmandu valley), destruction and damage of permanent house, High risk work place, Discrimination of relief support, loss of job or quit job, Physiological problem, high risk of being trafficked, Single parent (widow, divorced and abandon Mothers), in high risk of abuse while sharing tent of others and settle in open places. The problems were identifying during discussion before Interaction with Parliament Members on date 14 June 2015.

She also shades some light over the how with the help of Domestic workers' Network Thailand and few generous individual friends had supported some of Dws on providing roof tent, Food and tent. She said that situation is horrible for every Nepali but due to working condition, migration and working place makes Domestic worker even more in risk. She also added some possible interventions to mitigate immediate needs such as

- ***Registratation of Domestic Workers in Local government and provide relief according to their need***
- ***Provide orientation or information on Occupational Health and Safety***
- ***Develop an accident insurance in coordination among DWs supply agency and DWs.***
- ***Develop an Earth Quake Relief Fund.***
- ***Ask Employer and Agencies to provide Full salary of DWs in emergency period and leave. In case of discontinue of Job, employers and Agencies must follow the rule as per agreement.***
- ***Aware employers and domestic workers on domestic worker's right, skills to prevent from violence, abuse and trafficking***
- ***Provide legal assistance to claim their minimum salary, benefits and rights, if they have been cheated from employer and agencies***

She concluded by saying that policy makers, trade unions, civil society and concern stakeholders have to make a commitment to protect and promote domestic workers right in Nepal. And it is possible through accomplishing long run activities given below:

- ***Formalization of Domestic Work: Documentation and registration of domestic worker's in local government like provide identity card as worker, a standard***

written contract system which defines work description, working hours, roles and responsibility.

- **Legal protection and Services: New Amendment Labor law address domestic workers' issue, expansion of labour offices and regular monitoring, Complaint and justice system, Clear and specific legal definition on minimum salary and benefits of domestic workers.**
- **Organizing and Empowerment: Formation and Expansion of Domestic worker's organization, Capacity building individual members and organization (Individual or collective bargaining skill, claiming own rights, leadership quality, professional skills etc).**
- **Economic and Social Security: Saving and credits, Insurance, Social security schemes**
- **Awareness campaign for Employers, Workers and Community: Door to door campaign, identifying good employer and reward, Felicitate workers, Radio/ T.V. Programs, sensitize and mobilize media personnel to raise domestic workers.**
- **Ratify ILO Convention 189 and recommendation 201: For Regulating Domestic Work and management**
- **Coordination and Collaboration with other social campaigns: World Day against Child Labor, World Day Against Human Trafficking, Slavery, Gender Equality**

Telling Our Stories

Unfortunately though not surprisingly, domestic work and workers has not been well treated in post earthquake in Nepal. Thus, a session telling our stories was designed to make all responsible actors from government, non-government, Trade unions, Media personnel and Academician to hear a terrible and heart touching story of domestic workers. Our motive was to have clear, concrete and constructive messages on protect domestic workers right in post disaster and in future. 20 domestic were participated in Program, among them 7 shared their stories.

No Home to Stay

"I am domestic worker, landless urban poor women, who had been working in Narayathan. But the third attack of earth quake destroyed my home and fractured Hand. Now, no work and home" says Januka Ghimire. According to her, one old tent was provided by village development committee and Roof tent from Domestic Worker's Network Thailand. Till date, none of government persons or other helping hand reached to investigate her situation.



Happiness in Eyes



Ms. Chanda Kumari is 17 years old domestic worker, recently engaged in domestic work profession, from Sindhuli. She and her cousin were staying in putalisadak but earth quake made them to stay in tent in Tudhikhel (play ground). Young lady feels bit unsecure staying in open place. Her home town is also destroyed and family is staying in temporary shelter. However, she has her dream to accomplish after she get pass in school leaving

certificate.

What should I Do?

I am Su Maya, domestic worker, living in Lalitpur. I am a mother of 3 children; my husband is taxi driver but drunkard. My permanent home is destroyed in kavreplanchowk; no one has reached to help my family there. Rent home where I am staying now is also damaged. We are risk but can't move because of price rent of rooms. I earn Nrs. 5000 rupees per month which need to spend on room rent, children education, food and other home expenses. My husband also contributes on home management but not as required. He drives as per his mood not regularly. In such condition, I used to have lots of problem and now this earthquake has raised more problems in my life. So, I request all people in program to tell me what should I do?

No time for making Home

Mr. Ganesh Danwar is a part time domestic worker residing in Phashupati Area. He is a part time domestic worker. He also works in private office as an electrician. He had been engaged in domestic work profession from 18 years but never faced challenge as this time. His permanent home in Kavre is destroyed; little support like 5 kg rice, a bucket and one tent is provided till date. Rainy season will start soon which makes his family in danger. He took one week leave but it was not enough. Taking more days leave make salary cut off and livelihood will be in problem. He is worried about safe shelter for his family. *(Swatantra Abhiyan Nepal in the support of Domestic Workers Network Thailand provided 2 bundle of Tinned roof)*

A story of single mother

Ranu Chettri, temporary resident of Dharmasathali has 2 daughters along with blind mother. Her rented house is destroyed. We used plastic to make tents but thanks to Swatantrata Abhiyan Nepal who provided Roof tent and now we are making small cottages using local resources. She is single women with all responsibility. As home is destroyed and can't leave blind mother alone in tent, as a result have to quit job. Now, I have challenge to feed my family, educating children, taking care of mother and many more. If the government had legislation for domestic workers such as good payment, holiday and most important treating us as human it would have been a great help. Governments also need to take care of domestic workers in such critical situation.

Who cares where we work?

I was washing clothes on top 5 floor in my employer's home. Everyone in house ran away and I was left behind. I am still washing clothes in tall buildings not because of courageous but bound to earn money for my family. Working in old cracked, tall buildings, partially damaged building always makes us terror as aftershocks are going on. Besides that we don't have any safety measures working in houses. What will happen to my children and family if something happen to me in working place? So I request all people in program to provide occupational health and safety in our working place that is home with insurance policy.

I may migrate to foreign land for Work

I am Anjana Pathak, a domestic worker, used to be a teacher and worked in travel agency. I am a single woman with responsibility to look after son. I broke my leg in earthquake and left job. I don't have any options for livelihood and day to day management. The news of people migration for work has been increased after earthquake, I say, why not? In this situation when government is not helping us, no job security, life in danger and most important how to raise our children? Many women workers are being trafficked in the name of good job to overcome above mentioned challenges. How government is stopping it? In my case, if my situation won't improve I may migrate to foreign country for my son. So, I request all the Parliament Members, government representatives and other concern people to make favorable environment for domestic worker like us who contribute in country's GDP otherwise all women workers have to migrate foreign land for work.

Key Speakers Commitment

Asha Koirala, Parliament Member

Honorable Parliament Member, Asha Koirala gave heartfelt thanks to initiate a program which helped them to understand domestic worker's problem hearing stories. She also highlighted some response providing Nrs. support and but this register in been political providing homes. She officials to accordingly.



She also mentioned that Parliament members had also discussed on domestic workers' right issue in their committee however a confusion is going on, one group is asking to have provisions for domestic workers whereas to other group is denying it as slavery practices and it must be abolish. She has asked Swatantrata Abhiyan Nepal to submit a brief report on why we have to have provisions for domestic workers to share it in Parliament members. She also asked government representative to find possibilities to register domestic workers in local government. She also added domestic workers also need to aware of their rights, organized and campaign. She concluded by saying that that she will take issue in her committee for further discussion and thanked organizer.

Dhama Pahari, Parliament Member

Honorable Parliament Member, Dhama Pahari, thanked organizer for hosting a program which gave an opportunity to interact with ground level workers whose voices are hardly heard. She expressed that all Nepali people are suffering from earthquake however situation and context of domestic workers' make them more vulnerable. "As per saying by domestic workers, there is no fixed salary, holidays and other benefits which shows there is need of policy and regulation", said P.M. Dhama Pahari. She focused on formulation of policy, implementation and effective monitoring.

Uday Gupta, Representative of Labor Department



Pertinent issue to be addressed for promoting domestic workers right in Nepal is to have written agreement between domestic worker and employer. There are many cases of labor right violation from employer but then investigation and prosecution could not happen in absence of evidences. Government must encourage agency and domestic workers to have written agreement.

Another is domestic workers need to have information on available facilities and provisions. The available provisions are:

- ***In case of violence and abuse, they can inform Police, Trade Union and Local government***
- ***If not getting salary- Complain to Police, Trade union and Labor Office***
- ***Difference in work from an agreement – Complain in Labor Office, Trade Union and Police***

He also added in case of foreign employment, one should have better understanding of law, policies and facilities of destination country before hand.

Prem Thapa, Lalitpur Sub Metro Office

Mr. Prem Thapa firstly thanked organizer for invitation and shared his warm welcome among guest and participants. Mr. Thapa Shared that despite challenges in current situation, Lalitpur Sub Metro office shows its commitment towards issue. The worker issues has been metro office priority, as campaign against child labor is going on. He pledges SAN to work closely with them to work on domestic worker issue in Lalitpur Sub Metro.

He also admitted that there were practical challenges on distributing relief support to people especially neglecting urban poor community; one of them is domestic worker. However, the government has taken initiation now that if domestic workers register in ward/VC with employer's recommendation as earthquake victim could get relief support. He also requested Parliament members to develop law/ policy for domestic worker's which will make implementation agency to take action.



Mr. Tulsi Bhakta Tako, Madhyapur Thimi Municipality

Mr. Tulsi Bhakta Tako, appreciated the initiatives of the organization to create a forum for



workers and policy makers in critical situation of post earthquake. He said that, “in my municipality if any domestic workers make available evidence of earthquake victim and register in ward, Thimi Municipality will provide relief support.” We understand the problems of domestic absence of legal policy for implementing agencies to work on this issue. He requested parliament members for developing policy for domestic workers.

He also put a point to domestic workers to develop their professional skills. Having better skills means to increase bargaining power to claim own rights. He also liked domestic workers wearing apron which shows their identity. He was happy to see big number of domestic workers together celebrating International Domestic Workers day.

At the end of his speech, he said” the most important thing is registration/ documentation of domestic workers”.

Bharati Sharma, ILO Office Nepal

The issue of domestic workers are multidimensional, first they themselves are categories into national and international domestic workers, aspects of working conditions, wages etc, said Ms. Bharati Sharma from ILO Office Nepal. She also added that the program provided an insight into the issues of domestic worker’s in post earthquake.

She highlighted that Government of Nepal has showed positive response to ILC 189 and became signatory. However, it has not been ratified yet. The ILC 189 talks about domestic work as decent work, standards and minimum wages. No doubt, we need to have lot of pressure to political parties, Parliament members and government representative to ratify C189. Besides that she also shared that ILO Office trying to incorporate domestic workers issues in National Labor Force Survey to document numbers of Dws .

In deed the vulnerability of domestic workers in post earthquake is devastated, hundreds of them endure untold sufferings because of their condition, accessibility and societal projected identity as subordinate. They are in high risk of trafficking, have psychosocial problem and mostly livelihood. However, She requested all the domestic worker participant to be courageous and independent to overcome the problems. She also asked government to have law and policy which protects domestic workers right in Nepal.

Sonu Dunwar, Home Workers Trade Union Nepal (HUN)

Wishing happy International Domestic Worker Day to all guest and participant, Sonu Dunwar said that “We, domestic worker are in problem but joining hands together will help to overcome our problem”. Our homes are destroyed and damaged but numbers of organization out there are helping us, like trade unions, political carded assisting in demolishing and building homes voluntarily, we need to outreach them.



She said that domestic worker faced many challenges in past such as organizing, forming trade unions, recognizing domestic work as work but we resolved it properly. In this meantime of crisis also domestic workers will work together to manage our problem, said Sonu Dunwar. She also asked domestic worker’s to be optimistic. She emphasized on continuity of domestic worker’s campaign on claiming their rights to be worker through ratifying C189 and incorporating domestic workers in new

amendment labor Law. At the end of her Speech, she thanked all the guest and participant to be part of Interaction Program.

Kul Prasad Khadka, PNCCI

He started with sharing his foreign employment experience in Saudi Arab. He shared the working condition of migrant domestic workers in gulf counties, mostly unlimited working hours, less paid, abuse and violence, live in terror and depends on employer to quit job. The rights of domestic workers are highly violated in these countries. As PNCCI provides legal assistance of migrant workers returnees and number of complaints are lodged of migrant workers.

To overcome challenges mentioned above government of Nepal does not have data on domestic workers which hinders in indentifying the problems, said Kul Prasad Karki. He suggested all the participants to have better information of destination country, available laws, culture and customs before leaving origin country. He also added the government also need to have GOG agreement to ensure rights of own people.



Prashant Dongol, Active Domestic Worker Consultancy (ADWC)

ADWC provide services to employer by supplying trained domestic workers, it was established



five years back and more than 500 workers has been employed, said Prashant Dongol. He added that the organization has become a means to provide employment opportunity to urban poor migrated women in Kathmandu valley. However, he also shared practical challenges of developing written contract, salary, leave while negotiating with employers as there are no legal bindings to pressurize them. Another hand, domestic workers' are semi skill and none skill which made them to compromise in low salary and facilities. He focused that there is legal policy gap which hinders implementing agency to work on domestic workers issues on other hand lack of knowledge and skills

among domestic workers make them venerable.

He pointed out that government need to take initiate developing law with effective execution and monitoring whereas trade unions and civil society need to empower workers in terms of knowledge and skills to claim their rights.

Way Forward

- Develop a post earthquake DWs victim relief fund.
- Develop a Brief report on Why Domestic Work and work needs to be addressed by policy makers and submit it to Parliament members for their discussion on committee.
- Advocacy with Local government for addressing domestic workers' issue.
- Advocacy at National level ministries and departments for incorporating DWs issue in new amendment Labor law and ratification of 189.
- Working with Trade unions for organizing and strengthening DWs.
- Sensitizing and mobilizing Media for making national concern on DWs Agenda.

Appendixes

Attendance Sheet

Name of Participants	Address	Organization
Asha Koirala	Tanahun	Parliament Member
Shital Maharjan	Maitidevi	Thames college
Kul Prasad Karki	Matatritha	PNCC
Kalpana Rai	Mahakal	Domestic Worker Forum (DWF)
Goma Bhandai	Hattiban	Domestic Worker Forum
Mina timalcina	Gwarko	Domestic Worker Forum
Subash Tamang	Ratopul	Domestic Worker Forum
Sarita Maharjan	Pulchowk	LSMC
Ganesh Danuwar	Pashupati	HUN
Prem Bahadur Thapa	Lalitpur	Lalitpur Sub-metropolitan
Ishwori KC	Patan	Domestic Worker Forum
Prashant dangoal	Dhumabarahi	ADWC
Udaya Kumar Gupta	Teku	Department of Labour
Dhama Pahari	Baitadi	Parliament Member
Renu Khadeki	Tahachal	HUN
Sumitra Khadaka	Chawhal	Domestic Worker Forum
Rama Maharjan	Lubu	Domestic Worker Forum
Sabitri Dungana	Chuchaepati	Domestic Worker Forum
Binita Shrestha	Dadikot	Domestic Worker Forum
Lalita Shrestha	Balkot	Domestic Worker Forum
Januka Ghimire	Sukedhara	HUN
Anjana Pathak	Sukedhara	HUN
Mena Timalshina	Gwarko	Domestic Worker Forum
Sunmay Tamang	Gwarko	Domestic Worker Forum

Tirtha Maya Tamang	Gwarko	Domestic Worker Forum
Basanti Shijapati	Gwarko	Domestic Worker Forum
Chandra Kumari Magar	Bagbazar	Domestic Worker Forum
Sushila Kharel	-	HUN
Bhawisha Koirala	Babarmahal	AATWIN
Nisha Poudel	Kapan	Domestic Worker Forum
Shaurabha Subedi	Baneshwor	NGO Federation
Tulasha Tarko	Thimi	Madhyapur Munciplaity
Shanchata Ghimire	Lalitpur	Rajdhani Dainiki
Rita Singh	Dhapakhel	USAID,Nepal
Astar Tolange	Dhulikhel	USAID,Nepal
Samjhana Bhetal	Sitapila	Nepal School of Social Work
Anisha Neupane	Bhaktapur	Thames college
Indu Tuladhar	Kathmandu	HIDR
Ranu Chettri	Dharmastali	Domestic Workers Forum
Suraj Chaudhary	Kathmandu	Domestic Workers Forum
Sarjan Chaudhary	Kathmandu	Domestic Workers Forum
Gyan Shova Maharjan	Lalitpur	LSMC
Milan Dharel	-	Swatantrata Abhiyan
Sita Rana	-	Swatantrata Abhiyan
Rekha Karki	-	HUN
Sonu Dhanuwar	Ratopul	HUN
Sushila Chaulagae	Ratopul	HUN
Binita Bhatta	-	Swatantrata Abhiyan
Susmita Hamal	Naikap	Swatantrata Abhiyan
Writu Bhatta Rai		Swatantrata Abhiyan