

GOV-HER-NANCE

The Gov-her-nance is a unique model that generates new voices to fix old problems around gender roles, local development, and open government. The Gov-her-nance bulletin gathers gender-related rumors, myths, issues/concerns, and questions from communities across Nepal. With this bulletin, we hope to reduce the information gaps between local governments and citizens, lift up the ideas of women and gender minorities (representing various backgrounds across Dhangadhi) and provide a shared basis of understanding to make Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan a more gender-friendly city.



Local woman of Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan Ward No. 11 feeding grains in poultry, run by herself.

Photo By: Ganga Bhandari

POSSIBLE SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE OFFICE

According to the Sexual Harassment in the Workplace (Prevention) Act, 2061, any of the following acts committed upon the employee or service seekers in the workplace shall be considered as a sexual harassment:

1 Trying to touch or touching any part of the body with sexual intent

2 Use or display of words, images, magazines, audio-visual, other information technology, tools, objects or materials which are related to vulgar sexual activity.



3 To show obscene and sexual intent by writings, speaking or through gestures

4 To propose for sexual activity

5 Teasing or harassing with sexual intent



Source: <http://mowcsc.gov.np/uploads/uploads/Hqxlyo8DtBLN74sqmLlylUDpZT0lkbvmOy3H6MC0.pdf>

ISSUES & CONCERNS

I have heard that scholarships are given to poor and needy adolescent girls for higher education in technical subjects. What kind of students can apply for this?



To be eligible for the scholarship, the adolescent should have passed 12th grade or equivalent from a public school. In addition to that, adolescent girls whose both parents have died and is now orphaned, adolescent who is at financial risk due to death of one of the parents, whose both parents are remarried and the adolescent is living with relative, who is at risk of human trafficking, and adolescent girls whose both parents are with disabilities can apply for the scholarship.

Source: <http://mowcsc.gov.np/uploads/uploads/>

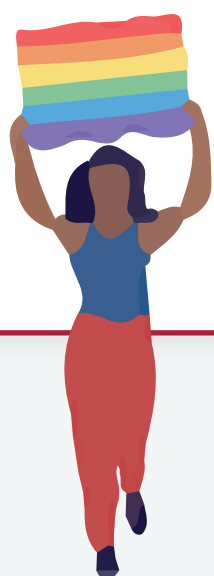
According to the law of Nepal, there is a provision of punishment for marrying and for helping someone get married before reaching the specified age. If a girl under the age of 10 is married, then there is a provision of imprisonment for 6 months to 3 years and a fine of Rs 1,000 to Rs 10,000. Similarly, if a girl is of age 10 to 14 years, there is a provision of imprisonment for 3 months to 1 year and fine up to five thousand rupees. In addition, if the girl is of 14-18 years, there is a provision of imprisonment of 6 months and fine upto 10 thousand or both. Or, if a man or a woman under the age of 20 marries or gets married, there is a provision of imprisonment for up to six months or a fine of up to Rs 10,000 or both.

Source: <http://mowcsc.gov.np/uploads/uploads/>

Despite knowing that child marriage is against the law, such practice has not stopped. What is the punishment for doing so?



My husband is Indian (I am a Nepali citizen), we have established a good business here in Nepal and have no intention of going to India now. Do my children get citizenship here?



Children born to a Nepali woman married to a foreigner, who is born in Nepal and have settled in Nepal permanently and have not taken citizenship from the country of father's origin will be provided with naturalized citizenship. One who wants to obtain such citizenship must submit a copy of the mother's Nepali citizenship certificate, recommendation of the concerned municipality about having permanent residency here in Nepal, and an application declaring that no other citizenship from father's country of origin has been taken.

Source: <http://www.lawcommission.gov.np/en/wp-content/uploads/>

Simran Serchan is a transgender woman, which means she was not born as a female (born as a male). Even though she was born as a male, she felt like a woman at the age of 13-14. She then believed she was a woman. However, she could not tell anyone about this. She was worried about sharing her feelings that she felt different. She somehow managed to study up to class 12. Then she went abroad after telling her best friend about the changes taking place within her. While living abroad, she faced many challenges. After a few years, her family started calling her home to get her married. She was again worried about sharing her true feelings. She returned to Nepal after her parents pressurized her, but she could not go home. Her family had arranged a girl for marriage back at home. When she found that she could not dare to go home. Though she had returned to Nepal with the motive of going home, visiting parents, her steps halted at Kathmandu. She thought, "How can a woman (she being a woman), marry another woman?". So, she stayed in Kathmandu for some time. She worked in a hotel here at Kathmandu.

As time passed by, she joined Blue Diamond Society where she met other people like herself. This made her feel a little more comfortable. While working there, she gave an interview on television. Her family found out about her after watching the interview. At that time, family members came to pick her up, however, they had not accepted her as a woman. After she claimed that she is their daughter and not son, her family abandoned her.

People belonging to the gender minority community are despised not only from society but also from their own home. Even though her family has understood her to some extent now, many like her still have to face problems. She says, "We also want to get married and settle down, but who will marry us? Some men love us, but that relationship does not last long." They refuse to marry. They are afraid of society."

Although the law guarantees rights for the sexual and gender minorities, it has not been well implemented. There is a need for further initiatives by the government to ensure the rights of sexual and gender minorities. In the same way, it is important for the family to create a comfortable and supportive environment. Only when they do not have to compromise with their identity in society and family will they be able to focus on other economic, political, social and personal concerns.

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VOICES FROM THE COMMUNITY

Divyashwari Shah

*Sudurpaschim Province Assembly,
Member*

I have struggled a lot in my political career. From the time of the Panchayat system till democracy, there wasn't a supportive environment for women to enter politics. One had to walk to reach places. There was no support from the society and family too. The attitude and perception towards women involved in politics was different. Despite such circumstances, I am actively involved in politics. It has been relatively easier for women now than before. That being said, this does not mean that all women are comfortable. Especially the condition of women from the marginalized community is deplorable. Women should be at the forefront as much as possible. Most political parties at the local level do not give women positions other than as a member at the local level. This does not mean that women cannot lead. If given the opportunity, women can cope with any situation. Therefore, women should now come forward in the mainstream and work as a chairperson and mayor.



Raamati Rana

*Local Women,
Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan City, Ward no. 11*

In our society, we still have the system of Bhalmansa (Bhalmansa is the most respected person in the Tharu community, who is consulted to settle conflicts and issues in the community). I also wanted to be a Bhalmansa. We too look after the people in the community when they are in trouble. When I propose for it, my husband supports me but I have to hear many comments from society such as, "Women will start making decisions now?", "Why should women be Bhalmansa?" and many more. Women are not even present when appointing Bhalmansa. In fact, our society still does not treat women as equal. We can still hear women being tortured in the name of witchcraft. I have never heard of men being tortured in such a way. Is it because it is easy to humiliate a woman? On top of that, we are not listened to either. So, we have stopped going anywhere. We are also occupied with the household chores.



DISCLAIMER

The sources of information presented here are collected from community volunteers, validated online sources, government offices, and fellows appointed by the Accountability Lab based on research and interactions with different people, directly and indirectly, over the past week. The issues highlighted here are chosen based on prevalence, relevance, and potential impact on Dhangadhi Sub-Metropolitan City. The information presented in this issue is correct at the time of publication.

**Gov-her-nance is brought to you by Accountability Lab Nepal
in collaboration with Dhangadi Sub-metropolitan City and the support of CFLI**