



Documentation of Achievements,  
Change Stories and Lesson Learnt  
from

# Sambodhan

Integrated Platform for Gender Based  
Violence Prevention and Response Project



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# Foreword



It is my pleasure to share with you 'Sambodhan', a progress report, which encapsulates the efforts of National Women Commission (NWC) to prevent and respond to Gender-based Violence (GBV) through the Integrated Platform for Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response (IPGBVPR) Project in Nepal.

This is an account of the joint initiative of the NWC and World Bank (WB) and its partners towards better responding to GBV by enhancing efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery through helpline, raising awareness on GBV and women's rights and developing gender-equitable attitude among the people.

The NWC has the mandate to register complaints of GBV, carry out investigation, write the concerned authorities to initiate action against perpetrators and reconcile (in cases where Nepal Government is not a plaintiff and receives request from both parties). As a statutory body, the NWC has the authority to formulate its national policies and implement projects and programs concerning the rights and interests of women.

Against this backdrop, the NWC launched IPGBVPR project in April 2016. In the first year, the project developed necessary structures and created enabling environment while it focused on implementing activities in the second year. During the first year, the NWC owned the access code of GBV Helpline, formed project steering committee and organized awareness-raising activities. It signed a Memorandum of Understanding with partners, operationalized Khabar Garaun Helpline 1145, implemented and expedited activities to prevent and respond to GBV cases in the second year.

The NWC data shows that the numbers of reported cases of GBV has dramatically increased following the operationalization of the Helpline and full-fledged implementation of the project. As of November 30th, 2018, 11 months of the Helpline operation, a total of 1,275 cases of GBV were registered at the NWC and at its partner organizations. Court-representation support was provided to 367 survivors, legal counseling to 302 and 243 cases of GBV were mediated at the request of both parties in the second year.

Similarly, a total of 647 GBV survivors were provided psychosocial support, 7 psychiatric, and 8 para-legal support. Besides, 118 and 49 survivors received shelter and medical support respectively. Likewise, 15 survivors and their dependents were provided formal education and 43 non-formal education support. Out of 1,161 GBV survivors, 46 have been reintegrated into their families and communities.

Partnership, coordination and collaboration among different government and non-government agencies to better respond to GBV issues have been galvanized through the implementation of the project. I truly acknowledge the contribution of Child Workers in Nepal (CWIN), Legal Aid & Consultancy Center (LACC), Transcultural Psychosocial Organization (TPO) and Saathi to take the project to this height. Also, I like to thank Hospital Based One-stop Crisis Management Center (OCMC), Women and Children Service Directorate in Nepal Police, Nepal Bar Association (NBA), Forum for Women, Law and Development (FWLD), Center for Legal Research and Resource Development (CeLRRd) towards implementation of the project.

On the backdrop, I would like to take an opportunity to thank the World Bank for providing financial assistance to implement the project and partners to help the NWC to implement the project. This publication has been occasioned by the hard work and dedication of the editorial team, publication coordinator and writers. Therefore, I thank Mr Yubaraj Subedi, Ms Laxmi Pandey and Ms Palita Thapa for providing editorial support, Mr Umesh Pokharel for coordinating the publication, Mr Satkrit Gautam, Mr Ram Sundar Sapkota and entire IPGBVPR project team for contributing to this publication.

I also thank our staff, rights holders, implementing partners, donors and stakeholders including government agencies at the national and local levels for their contribution to break silence by raising awareness on and responding to GBV cases.

.....  
**Mr Anil Kumar Thakur**  
Secretary  
National Women Commission

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# Executive Summary

National Women Commission (NWC) which has the mandate to register complaints of Gender-based Violence (GBV), carry out investigation, write the concerned authorities to initiate action against perpetrators and reconcile (in cases where Nepal Government is not a plaintiff and receives request from both parties) has been implementing Integrated Platform for Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response (IPGBVPR) Project from 2016 to better respond to GBV by enhancing efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery through helpline, raising awareness on GBV and women's rights, and developing gender-equitable attitude among the people. Capacity development of NWC is one of the objectives of the project.

The IPGBVPR project is being implemented with support from the World Bank (WB) and in partnership with Child Workers in Nepal (CWIN), Legal Aid & Consultancy Center (LACC), Transcultural Psychosocial Organization (TPO), and Saathi. CARE Nepal provided technical support to implement the project. Also, Hospital-based One-stop Crisis Management Center (OCMC), Women and Children Service Directorate at Nepal Police, Nepal Bar Association (NBA), Forum for Women, Law and Development (FWLD), Center for Legal Research and Resource Development (CeLRRd) have offered supporting hands to NWC to implement the project.

Although NWC launched the IPGBVPR Project in April 2016, the idea was conceived in 2013. The World Bank's collaboration with IFC, Young Innovations and the Computer Association of Nepal to organize Hackathon on Violence Against Women (VAWHack) and its outcome paved the way for establishing an Information, Communication Technology (ICT) supported integrated platform for addressing Gender based violence.

During the first year, the project was limited to developing necessary structures and creating enabling environment while it focused on implementing full-fledged activities in the second year. During the first year, the NWC owned the access code of GBV Helpline, formed project steering committee and organized awareness-raising activities. It signed a Memorandum of Understanding with partners, operationalized *Khabar Garaun* Helpline 1145, implemented and expedited activities to prevent and respond to GBV cases in the second year.

*Khabar Garaun* 1145 Helpline, a toll-free 24-hour national-level Helpline backed by an innovative case management system (CMS), is the major component of the project. It

was operationalized since November 21, 2017. Crucial to this system is a survivor-centered design which uses a service delivery model to combat the entire spectrum of violence against women. Those GBV cases coming through the Helpline and directly to NWC are refereed to its primary implementing partners i.e. CWIN, LACC, TPO and Saathi, and secondary partners including NBA, Women Development Offices, OCMCs, Child Welfare Committee, Koshish Nepal, FWLD, and CeLRRD among others.

The NWC data shows that the numbers of reported cases of GBV has dramatically increased following the operationalization of the Helpline and full-fledged implementation of the project. As of November 2018, 11 months of the Helpline operation, a total of 1275 cases of GBV were registered at NWC and at its partner organizations. Court-representation support was provided to 367 survivors, legal counseling to 302, and 243 cases of GBV were mediated at the request of both parties in the second year.

Similarly, a total of 647 GBV survivors were provided psychosocial support, 7 psychiatric, and 8 para-legal support. Besides, 118 and 49 survivors received shelter and medical support respectively. Likewise, 15 survivors and their dependents were provided formal education and 43 non-formal education support. Out of 1265 GBV survivors, 46 have been reintegrated into their families and communities.

This apart, a number of activities have been organized to enhance the capacity of NWC in addressing and advocating GBV issues under the IPGBVPR Project. Similarly, it has been organizing different activities and program to increase awareness of GBV, rights and to develop gender equitable attitudes.

Now, the project has started showing signs of positive changes. At first, it provided an easy medium to report the cases of GBV. Second, it offered integrated service to the GBV survivors. It improved the life of GBV survivors and increased confidence among them. The major challenge now is to sustain these early signs of effective changes and to institutionalize them. Moreover, since most of GBV survivors don't get support from their families and society, the support system from external agencies including NWC and CSOs doesn't last long. Given the scenario, there is still a challenge of re-victimization even after a level of recovery from physical, emotional and mental violence.

Many GBV survivors have strongly felt the importance of Integrated approach that the IPGBVPR Project has adopted to address the GBV. To strengthen the structure and institutionalize the support system by addressing the existing challenges is an uphill task.

# Overall Progress of the IPGBVPR Project



Helpline staffs in NWC's help desk carrying out their regular duties. NWC helpline runs round the clock, seven days a week and 365 days a year. Photo courtesy: World Bank

NWC's IPGBVPR Project has contributed to prevent GBV through awareness-raising activities, outreach and activities that are aimed at developing gender-equitable attitude among people. Also, it improved the response to GBV in Nepal by improving the quality and reach of services for the GBV survivors including through a 24-hour national GBV Helpline.

Establishment and operationalization of helpline and integrated services to the GBV survivors from NWC's primary partners i.e. CWIN, LACC, Saathi, and secondary partners i.e. CeLRRd, FWLD, NBA, and OCMC among others are the first and major activities of the project while activities to contribute to enhanced capacity of NWC to advocate on GBV issues are other priorities of the project. Training, orientation, and interactions on a number of GBV-related issues are some of the activities conducted under this component. Similarly, some activities have been conducted to raise awareness on GBV, rights and gender-equitable attitudes among the people in the project areas.

Although the IPGBVPR Project was launched from April 2016, the first year of the project implementation was focused more on required preparatory work including developing

project implementation structures, strategies, formation of project steering committee, strengthening coordination and collaboration, policy advocacy. It came into full-fledged implementation upon signing a MoU with its primary partners. CARE Nepal provided technical support to implement the project.

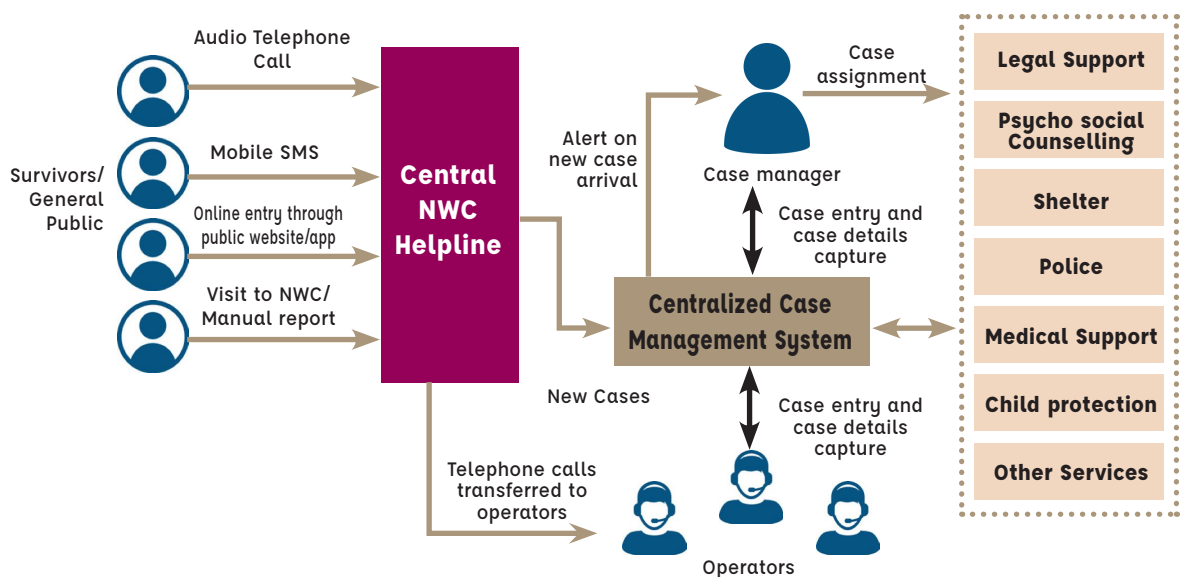
**Progress related to providing integrated service to the GBV survivors including through Helpline**

The Helpline named 'Khabar Garaun 1145', a major component of the project, was set up on 10 December 2017 and since then it has been one of the easy medium for the GBV survivors to report cases. The GBV survivors have been found feel comfortable to report through Helpline rather than talking to family members and other agents of the society. The system has enabled the GBV survivors to register cases either calling the toll-free helpline number 1145 or filling up online complaint form through the Helpline website. Also, it has the provision of manual registration which can be done upon visiting NWC office. NWC had a plan to introduce a system where a GBV survivor could register the cases through SMS. However, it has not been practiced yet.

Once the client reports an incident, s/he is provided a coordinated service from legal and psychosocial counselling to medical, child support and shelter. The clients are also provided information on Helpline services, linked to police in case of emergency, provided information on rules, regulations and provisions and about additional service providers. The Helpline service is provided through 10 well-trained operators, case manager, legal officer and psychosocial officer in addition to other project staff, service providers and NWC legal team.

Further, based on need assessment and necessity, their cases are referred to the NWC's primary partners namely CWIN, LACC,TPO, Saathi, and secondary partners such as Hospital-based OCMC, Women and Children Service Directorate at Nepal Police, NBA, FWLD, and CeLRRd among others. The partners provide the required services to the GBV survivors. The chart below shows the Helpline and case management system as a whole.

**Figure 1: Helpline and case management system**





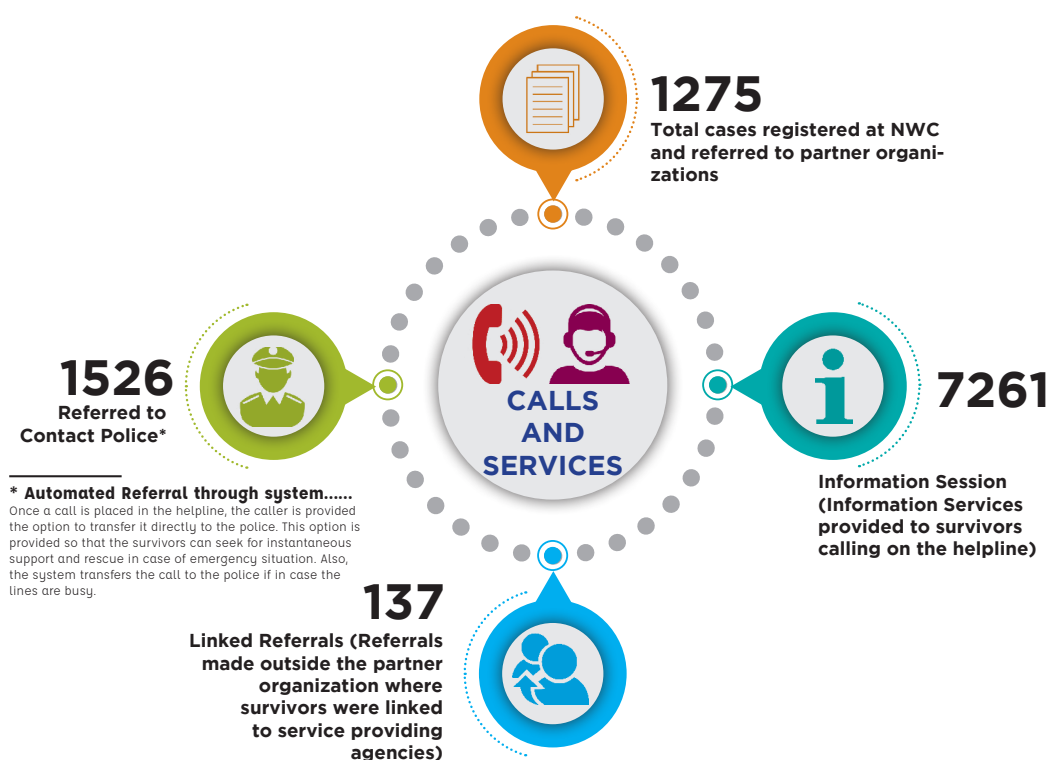
## Services provided through Helpline operation

The survivors after getting connected to the helpline are provided a wide range of services by case management unit at NWC and also through the partner organizations.

### Calls and services

Since the launch of the helpline, there are a total 1275 cases that has been registered through 1145 helpline till November 30th, 2018. This a dramatic increase in the number of the registration of GBV cases in NWC. It indicates the comfort of the GBV survivors to report their issues through helpline.

Similarly, there were 7261 information sessions where the helpline staffs have provided information services regarding NWC, its provisions, legal rights in relation to GBV, first aid counseling, advice on safety among others. Additionally, 137 clients have been assisted to make contact with another organization (legal or non-legal) outside the partner organization while 1526 calls have been directed to the police when the lines were busy and/or when the clients actually wanted it to be referred directly to the police in case of urgency.

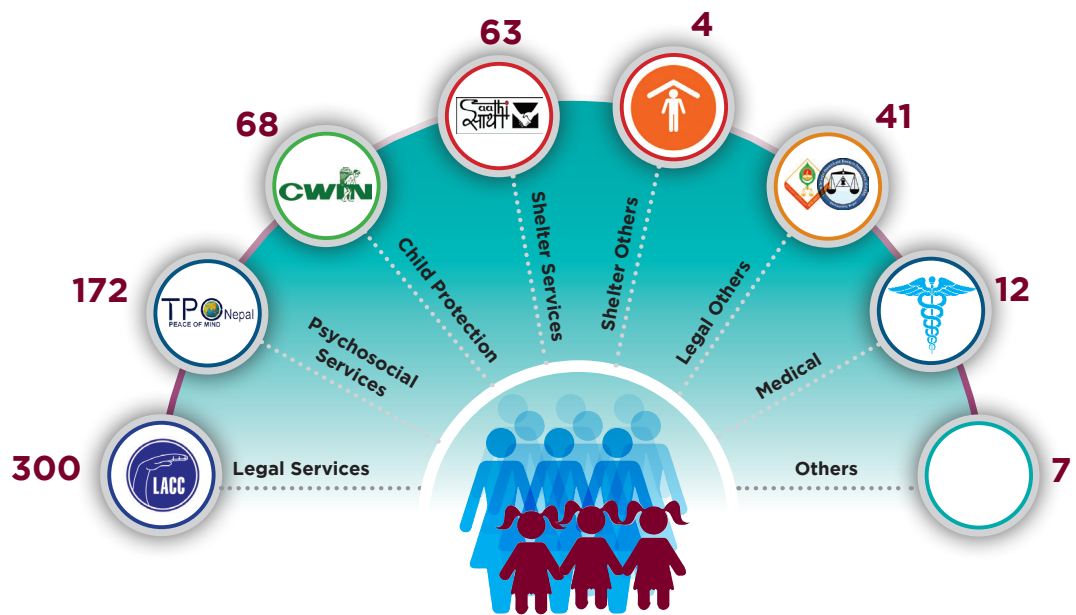


### Partner referral

As the figure displays, a total of 300 clients were referred to LACC for legal services including legal counseling, court representation, mediation, and paralegal services among others till 30th November, 2018. Similarly, 172 clients were referred to TPO for a wide range of psychosocial services including counseling and extensive psychiatrist support.

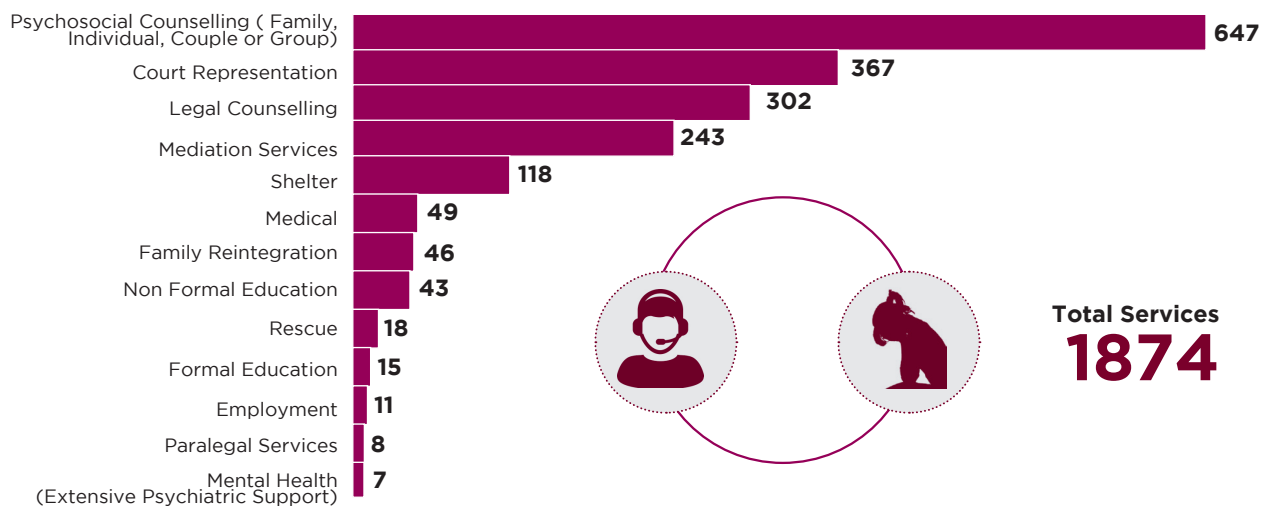
This apart, 68 children/juveniles were referred to CWIN for shelter, education and child support-related services. Likewise, 63 clients were referred to women shelter in Saathi.

Although the Helpline was set up in December 2017, partner referral was begun even before it upon signing of the contract with LACC, TPO and Saathi. The data includes the information from 21 November 2017 to 30 November 2018. NWC used to refer these partners the cases of the GBV survivors even when they were not formally contracted.



### Services to address the plight of GBV Survivors

NWC's data shows that court- representation support is provided to 367 GBV survivors, legal counselling is provided to 302 survivors and 243 cases of GBV is mediated upon request. Likewise, 8 GBV survivors received para- legal support. Similarly, a total of 647 GBV survivors are provided psycho- social support and 7 GBV survivors are provided

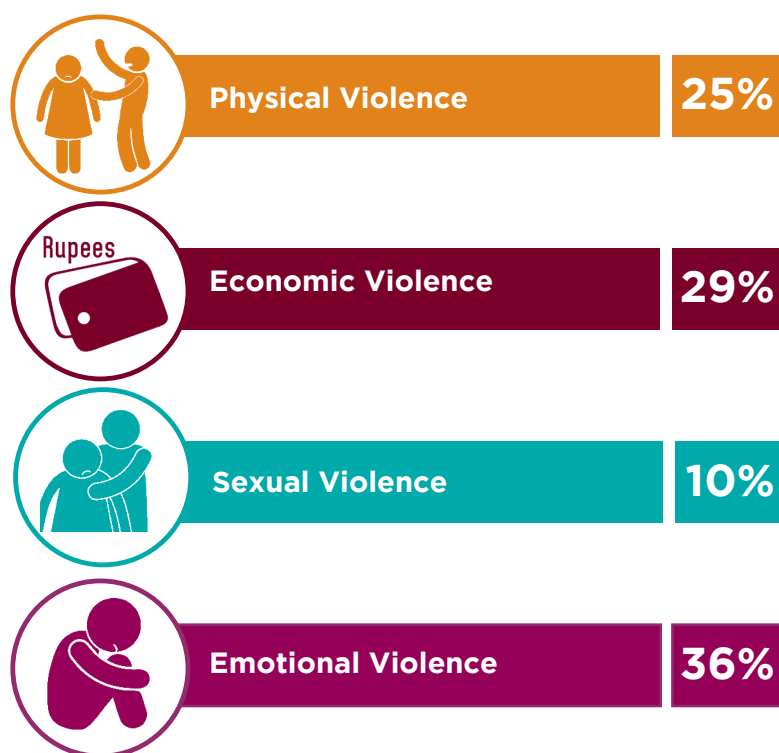


Services are double counted while segregating, as many clients receive more than one type of service.

psychiatric support. Furthermore, numbers of survivors receiving shelter support and medical support are respectively 118 and 49. This apart 15 survivors and their dependents are provided formal education and 43 survivors have received non- formal education support. Out of 1161 GBV survivors, 46 are already reintegrated into their families and communities.

### Reported violence and its type

Often enacted under many different manifestation, GBV incidences are quite widespread. These forms however aren't mutually exclusive because multiple kind of violence can be happening at once or through one act. The reported violence data of the helpline shows that the most frequently reported violence type is emotional or psychological violence ( 25%) which refers to any act of violence which causes psychological harm to an individual such as verbal defamation, torture and assault. Similarly, 29% of total reported cases were against economic violence (act or behavior which causes economic harm to an individual), 25% were against physical violence (causing physical harm and assault) and 10% were against sexual violence (sexual act without consent)



### Progress related to enhanced capacity of NWC in addressing and advocating GBV issues

Enhanced capacity of NWC in addressing and advocating for GBV issues is one of the expected outcomes of the IPGBVPR Project. In order to achieve it, a number of capacity building activities such as training in gender and GBV, standard operating procedures and ethical guidelines, appreciative inquiry, mediation, and Criminal and Civil Code have been conducted. Also, orientation to Gender Focal Points of different ministries was carried out

and symposium on women's rights and issues was held. A joint monitoring session was led by NWC along with Women and Children Service Directorate- Nepal Police to monitor and assess the existing activities of Women and Children Service Center (WCSC) which has been institutionalized by Nepal Police to ensure widely available, fair and specialized services for women and children.

Such activities were planned based on the findings of the baseline study which was carried out in 2017. It showed that only 16.7% of the surveyed staff of NWC were deemed knowledgeable on GBV i.e. they could correctly define GBV, state two types of GBV, correctly define referral mechanism and could mention at least four major referral actors of GBV. Majority of staff (58.3%) were able to define GBV correctly and cite two examples of GBV.

### **Progress related to increased awareness of GBV, rights and gender equitable attitudes**

Based on the finding of the baseline study about the level of awareness on GBV, rights and gender-equitable attitude among the people in the project area, a number of activities were planned and implemented to bridge the gap between the existing situation and the desired outcome. Some of the activities thus implemented are school orientation program, public hearing programs, interaction with NGOs working on women's issues, women group orientation, orientation to local representatives, orientation to youth volunteers, training to women journalists, and youth mobilization among others. Also, the project has focused on building relationships with the Judicial Committees and local bodies as they will be directly working on the issues of GBV.

Public hearing programs were held primarily to disseminate information about 1145 Helpline and solicit views, opinions, complaints and feedback from the general public while school orientation programs were targeted to enhance the understanding among the adolescents about gender, gender norms, GBV, women rights and existing legal provisions to combat GBV.

Furthermore, Sambodhan has also developed a mobile app, Android application that allows users in unsafe situations to discretely press the power button and message family and friends along with GPS location. In addition, orientation to women groups and local representatives, gender sensitive training to journalists, youth mobilization and youth volunteer mobilization were other activities the project carried out. Orientation to women group orchestrated to acquaint them on GBV issues, women rights and reporting mechanisms. Similarly, training to journalists was aimed at making them more gender sensitive especially whilst reporting and also to make them aware about GBV issues. Likewise, orientation to local representatives was carried out to orient the new locally elected representatives on legal provisions, their mandate and GBV issues while orientation to youth volunteers and youth mobilization were aimed at enhancing their capacity in bringing GBV awareness in their communities and also to administer outreach activities such as door-to-door campaign, public events and school programs.

# Promoting Gender-sensitive Media

The National Women Commission (NWC) has identified media as one of the strategic partners to facilitate to develop gender-equitable society. NWC views media as one of the change agents of socio-cultural transformation. NWC wants news reflects the world as seen through the eyes of women and men.

Keeping the philosophy in mind, the IPGBVPR project has carried out a number of programs that involves journalists and media persons. In May 2017, it organized an orientation for journalists to the 'Role of Media in GBV Prevention and Response'. "The program was a continuation of NWC's partnership with media," said Palita Thapa, Project Manager of the IPGBVPR Project of NWC.

During the orientation, journalists were presented a brief overview on how media have portrayed women from patriarchal lens. At the end of the session, they realized that they needed to be sensitive while dealing with the cases of GBV in particular and gender issues in general.

This apart, NWC has continuously been engaging itself with journalists. It invites journalists to report its regular programs, provides gender insights and analysis for their reporting, and organizes discussions and press meets.

One of the recent programs that NWC engaged itself with journalists was a press meet to share its findings from the content analysis report on the print media performance in relation to gender issues in Nepal. According to the report titled '*Mahila Himsaka Ghatana, Ujuri ra Patrapatrikama Prakashit Samacharko Bishleshan*' 2017, media are not sensitive when they report on the issues of GBV and sexual violence including rape cases. The analysis of the media content of the report shows that most of the news related to GBV includes the real name of survivors. The report interprets it as an inability of media to maintain the privacy of such a personal issue.

"The role of NWC to implant gender sensitivity in the heart and mind of journalists is very important and it should be continued," said Babita Basnet, a senior journalist.



NWC secretary Anil Kumar Thakur addresses an interaction program with media.

Photo: Eliza Subedi

# Finally, Life Does a One-eighty

■ **Umesh Pokharel**

Meena Bhatta (name changed), a 32-year-old lady who hails from Kailali, one of the districts in far western part of Nepal, is the respectful name for many students staying in a hostel at Tinkune, Kathmandu. The hostellers take her name for her excellent culinary skill and hard work from dawn to dusk. Meena, a GBV survivor, has been working as a cook at the hostel since August 2018. She ekes out her living from the job. She has two sons.

## Spousal violence right from the beginning

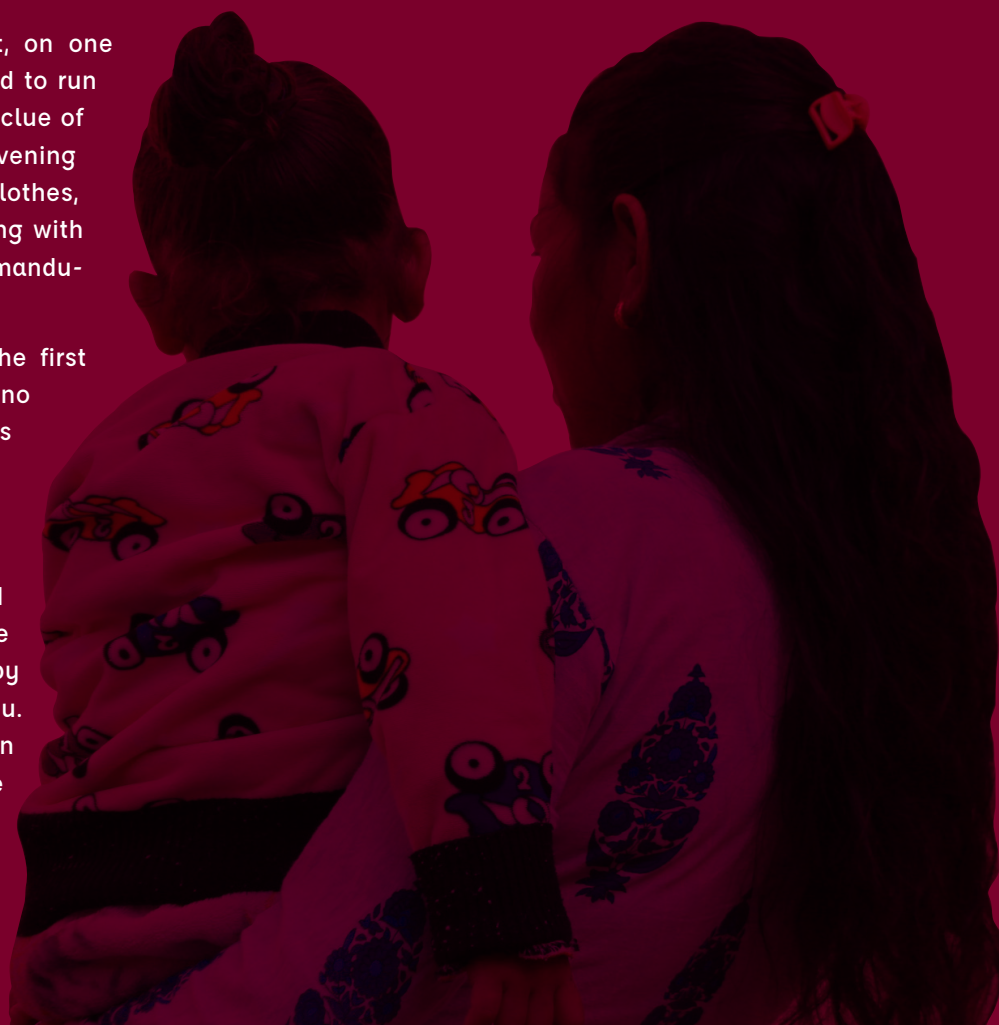
Meena faced discrimination right after her marriage for not bringing dowry to her husband. Verbal abuse by husband culminated in physical assault. Family members including her mother-in-law and sisters-in-law exerted pressure on Meena to convince her maternal uncle to give a piece of land as a dowry to their family. "How come a poor fatherless woman who was fostered by her uncle can persuade the uncle for the dowry?," she explains. As she declined to talk to her uncle on the matter the family grew more violent towards her.

## In search of solace

When brutality crossed the limit, on one evening of May, 2017, she decided to run away. She did not even have faint clue of her destination. It was late in the evening of May, 2017, she packed her clothes, reached Attariya bus station along with her two sons and boarded a Kathmandu-bound bus.

"Paying for the bus ticket was the first problem I encountered as I had no money. "Once I got off from the bus in Kathmandu Bus Park, I sold the earring of my elder son and paid the bus fare," she recalls.

She had no place to go. She had no relative in the entire city. She besought almost every passerby at Kalanki crossroad in Kathmandu. "One of them informed the Women Cell of Nepal Police and the



police rescued us," she said. The Women Cell then referred the case to Saathi, a non-governmental organization working for the rights of girls and women.

### **Saathi's shelter support**

Saathi has been providing shelter support to survivors of GBV for more than 25 years. It provides shelter to destitute children and dependents of the GBV survivors. It has separate shelters for boys and girls. "Upon receiving us from Nepal Police, Saathi provided shelter to me and my two sons including a three months old baby," she recalls. Saathi provided her shelter for a year from May 2017 to July , 2018 and hostel for her elder son. "We have been managing fund for shelter through the IPGBVPR project funded by the World Bank in partnership with NWC," said Sapana Maharjan, Project coordinator of Saathi. NWC has supported Saathi shelter for its operation and to help GBV survivors in shelter develop confidence.

Saathi reintegrated Meena after developing confidence and life instinct in her and is providing shelter and education to her elder son. Saathi reintegrates GBV survivors once they develop confidence, get life skills enough to be integrated into society. It also provides basic support like necessary utensils, bedding and transportation cost to facilitate integration into society.

### **Life turns back to normalcy**

Elated from the support of Saathi and good response from her employer, Meena feels that her life is gradually coming back to a right track. She draws NRS 11,000 a month, has a safe room to stay in hostel along with her 2-year-old baby. Furthermore, her elder son has got an opportunity to study. "My son has got an opportunity to study in a school in Kathmandu and he has got a good environment in shelter," she says.

She sees her elder son once a week and visits Saathi office frequently. She celebrated her son's birthday in the premises of Saathi recently. "I feel Saathi shelter as my maternal home. Therefore, I feel happy whenever I visit it," she says.

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"We have been managing fund for shelter through the IPGBVPR project funded by the World Bank in partnership with NWC," said Sapana Maharjan, Project coordinator of Saathi. NWC has supported Saathi shelter for its operation.

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# In Search for Justice



On an evening of July 2018, Maili Tamang (name changed), 15-year-old daughter of Mana Tamang (name changed), rushed towards her mum in fear. Mana, who was taking a bed rest due to an illness, got surprised because of the abnormal behavior of her daughter. Maili's cheeks were blushed. Maili did not look herself. Mana guessed some evil had happened to her.

Her guess turned to be true. Maili, who was washing her clothes in a bathroom, was brutally raped by the house-owner. Maili tried her best to protect her. But could not.

Bed-ridden Mana got up immediately and rushed towards Metropolitan Police Circle Baudhdha to file the first information report (FIR). Fortunately, the FIR was registered. However, she found that the police officer changed his behavior right from the second day. Then Mana along with Desh Maya Lama, a women's rights activist and member of an organization called Mahila Sashaktikaran Samuha (Women Empowerment Group) visited the Ministry of Home Affairs to exert pressure to expedite the process of the case.

Mana heard malicious rumors from her relatives and neighbors. Then she became skeptic of getting justice. Hopeless Mana then visited National Women Commission (NWC) seeking justice for her daughter. NWC registered the case and concluded that it needed legal support and her daughter required special protection. So, the case was referred to Legal Aid and Consultancy Center (LACC). LACC, one of the partners of NWC's Integrated Platform for Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response (IPGBVPR) Project, has been providing free legal service to the survivors of Gender-based Violence.



## LACC's Legal Support

Maili's medical examination report confirmed that she was raped. Also, during the police interrogation, the accused confessed it. "The accused, however, changed his testimony during the trial in the court," said Chandeshwori Tandukar, a senior lawyer in LACC. The accused countered that Maili's family had accused him of rape as he did not give them the money they had asked for.

Then LACC represented Maili in the court. Advocates from LACC at first provided legal counseling to Mana's family and later on they helped her to document the evidence. Now, the accused has been taken into custody for investigation.

## Hopeful about Future

Once the case was registered at the NWC and Maili received free legal support to fight the case, her mother has become more confident of getting justice. However, she is worried about the future of her daughter. Her daughter is living in a shelter in Kathmandu due to perceived insecurity.

Under the IPGBVPR Project, LACC has provided legal support to a total of 271 people from 21 November 2017 to 31 October 2018. According to LACC, the success rate of the cases they have handled is more than 98%. "Ability to manage cases and the dedication of the project staff are the reasons behind the successful handling of the cases," Bimala Khadka, Case Manager in NWC said.

### NWC's response made her confident



When Mana reached to National Women Commission (NWC), Nirmala madam responded her positively. NWC informed that if needed, she can be provided a shelter support. The positive message, according to Mana, provided her a relief.

NWC referred her case to LACC. LACC's legal support made her more confident. Now, she thinks that she is not alone to fight the case against the perpetrator.

I have been assisting Mana since the time she filed FIR of the incident.

**Desh Maya Lama**  
Chairperson  
Mahila Shashaktikaran Samuha  
Kathmandu

# No More Silent Suffering!



Namita Adhikari (name changed), 28, neither wanted to live with her husband nor she could tell him that she wanted to divorce him. Adhikari, who hails from Dolakha, had enough of violent behavior of and domination by her husband. According to her, she tried many times to tell her husband that she no longer can live with him if his misbehavior continued.

"Whenever I spoke to him of getting separated, he used to threaten me with committing a suicide," she said. She didn't want her husband die because of her. "Therefore, I condoned his brutality for more than eight years, compromising on my rights and liberty," she added.

After his atrocity crossed the limit, she decided to revolt against him. With the help of one of her friends, she visited women cell of Nepal Police and lodged a complaint. "Then Nepal Police referred the case to National Women Commission (NWC).

## Psychosocial Support from IPGBVPR Project

NWC has the mandated to register complaints of gender-based violence (GBV), carry out investigation, write the concerned authorities to initiate action against perpetrators and reconcile in cases where Nepal Government is not a plaintiff and receives request from both parties.

Then NWC registered her case in September 2018. The Helpline team in NWC assessed her situation and found her of having low self-esteem, guided by fear psychology and no aspiration to life. Then the case was referred to Transcultural Psychological Organization (TPO), a partner organization of NWC, which looks after psychosocial component of IPGBVPR Project.

In order to make the psychosocial support (PS) process easy, TPO has stationed one psychosocial counselor in NWC. Following her referral, Bina Shrestha, a psychosocial counselor from TPO, has been continuously providing psychosocial support including through counseling sessions, Yoga Therapy and others to her.

## The Result

According to Adhikari, PS has changed her perspective to life and reduced suffering. She developed positive instinct to life. "Earlier, I used to think of ending my life. But these days, I find hundreds of reasons to live," she said. Earlier, she was hesitant to express her suffering even to her mum and brothers. But these days, she is getting vocal and confident. "My next step is to get separated from my husband to get rid of the silent suffering," she added.

## Legal Support

One of the unique features of IPGBVPR Project is the availability of integrated service to GBV survivors. When Adhikari regained psychosocial well-being, her case was referred to Legal Aid and Consultancy Center (LACC) as per her interest. Adhikari is making necessary preparations to file a divorce case. LACC is providing free legal support to her.

Including Namita TPO Nepal has provided PS to a total of 173 GBV survivors in partnership with NWC. Out of them, 9 are the dependents of GBV survivors.

### Integrated approach benefits GBV survivors



**Nirmala Gurung**  
Legal Officer  
National Women Commission

Following the establishment of GBV helpline, GBV survivors are feeling comfortable to report the incidence of violence. Since they are provided psychosocial, shelter, legal, child protection and other support in an integrated way, the approach, according to survivors, is appropriate. Survivors like Manita are assessed their need at first and then referred to the NWC's partners for specific services.

# Protecting the Children and Dependents of Survivors



When Shobha Shrestha (name changed), mother of 15-year-old Liza Shrestha (name changed), knew that her daughter was facing sexual abuse, she tried to dissociate her daughter from the abuser. However, her efforts went in vain. Then, she reported the case to Nepal Police and visited National Women Commission (NWC) and Child Workers in Nepal (CWIN).

In October 2018, Liza was finally rescued by CWIN in coordination with Nepal Police. Since then she has been living in CWIN's transit shelter. There she got warmth and enabling environment to forget the bygone black days. Also, she received counseling to begin a new life with a fresh perspective.

"Ma'am's at CWIN Helpline transit home are very nice. They teach us positive things about life. We participate in dance and music therapy. The environment is very homely," Shrestha said. According to Sharada Rijal, Project Coordinator of CWIN, transit home

maintains a child-friendly environment where they can engage themselves in drawing, dance, singing or any other activities of their interest.

CWIN provided Liza a number of psychosocial counseling sessions to assuage her trauma. This apart, a pediatric psychiatrist from Kanti Children's Hospital is treating her to bring her to normalcy. CWIN has partnered with the hospital in a bid to address the psychosocial problems of the children kept in its shelter and transit home.

"Within a month or so, we have seen positive changes in Liza. Now, she expresses her feelings to us and has developed positive outlook towards life," Rijal says.

Liza is receiving dental treatment as well. CWIN plans to keep Liza in transit home until her parents develop a confidence to take her to their house. "If needed, we will send her to Balika Peace Home, a CWIN-run shelter home for girls at Panauti," Rijal said. The Home has been providing protection to 150 girls. "But this will be decided based on the need identification, risk factors and consultation with the parents or the guardians of the rescued children," she added. Those living in the Home can get education up to 18 years of age.

CWIN has provided protection to a total of 66 children under IPGBVPR project in partnership with NWC. Out of them, 11 children have been reintegrated into their families, 13 children are sent to Balika Peace Home and 24 children are provided education support. This apart, two children are kept in transit shelter.

CWIN has two separate child protection shelters for boys and girls and a transit home. It also operates a Child Helpline. The *Child Helpline 1098* provides children with a range of protection support including counseling, shelter, rescue, education and family reintegration.

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CWIN has been providing Liza a number of psychosocial counseling sessions to assuage her trauma. This apart, a pediatric psychiatrist from Kanti Children's Hospital is treating her to bring her to normalcy. CWIN has partnered with the hospital in a bid to address the psychosocial problems of the children kept in its shelter and transit home.

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# Government Needs to Allocate Resources for Helpline



**Ms Mohna Ansari**, honorable member of National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of Nepal is a well-known rights activist. She was a commissioner at the National Women Commission (NWC) of Nepal between 2010 and 2014. Launching a Helpline to address the plight of GBV survivors was something she advocated for long and initiated. Umesh Pokharel talks to Ansari about her efforts to establish GBV Helpline.



## **Could you please tell us some of the achievements during your tenure in NWC?**

When I was appointed as a Commissioner, I was clear about the necessity of reforms to be made. NWC had a broader mandate. However, it had not been able to function as per its jurisdiction. Staff were not retained and they used to take it as a transit point to jump at another office in Kathmandu.

During the period we advocated for women's human rights at different political fronts, developed women human rights activists at district level, helped to draft bills such as Anti-Witchcraft (Crime and Punishment) Bill, 2014, Anti-Dowry Bill and Local Self-governance and Local Administration Act. The bills were passed by the parliament and it offered an avenue to address GBV to a greater extent.

Although NWC is a statutory body, it had to act as a begging body because it had to depend on different government offices including Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare. We tried to make it more an independent entity. Development of NWC's five-year strategy 2014- 2019 is one of our steps towards making it truly independent. We reformed the complaint handling mechanism of the GBV survivors and advocated for the establishment of the GBV Helpline in order to address the plight of the GBV survivors.



**You mentioned about your efforts to establish GBV Helpline, could you please share your experience about it?**

We had a clear understanding that Helpline offers GBV survivors an enabling environment to report the GBV incidents. Therefore, we advocated for it at different fora. We developed an idea and approached with different donors. Finally, the World Bank agreed to our idea and offered a promise to fund it.

It was a great relief to find a donor to fund our idea. However, consensus could not be built among the government bodies to implement it. Particularly the Ministry of Finance had a reservation about it.

Since I had internalized the plight of the GBV survivors, I was impatient to see the Helpline established and integrated service delivered, obstruction from the government side used to upset me. Whenever a new Minister for Women, Children and Social Welfare was appointed, our first task would be to meet the minister, brief the situation and lobby to establish the helpline. It was delayed but not a single convincing reason was given to us.

Despite the discouraging environment, we didn't give up hope. We put our efforts continuously. That is the reason why the Helpline was finally established.



**The Helpline came into operation since December 2017. How do you feel about it?**

I am really happy to see the Helpline being operationalized. This is what I wanted to see since long. I think our priority now is to give quality service in time and to enhance its capacity. Developing other support system like saving fund, rescue fund, shelter support, staffing arrangement are the key to its institutionalization.

At present, it is funded by the World Bank. Gradually, this should be owned by the Government of Nepal and it needs to allocate resource to operationalize and institutionalize the Helpline.



**What are your strategic recommendations to NWC?**

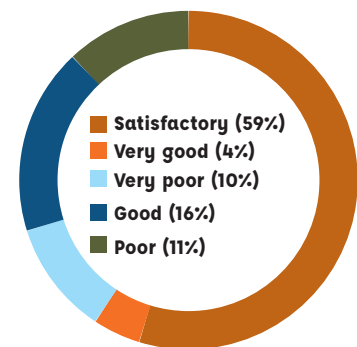
NWC needs to own and institutionalize the Helpline ensuring human and financial resources. Its next focus should to prevent GBV through awareness programs and developing gender-equitable attitude among the people and to protect the GBV survivors by providing quality service. We should focus more on results. NWC's another priority area should be legal reform. It also needs to develop allies and strengthen coordination, collaboration and cooperation among the government and non-government agencies.

# Satisfied GBV Survivors

A client satisfaction survey conducted in the first week of May 2018 shows that most of the GBV survivors who sought support from the IPGBVPR Project are satisfied with the quality of Helpline service, promptness in response and service from referral partners.

The survey demonstrated a moderately high level of satisfaction towards Helpline and its referral partners' service quality. The survey asked the respondents to rate the Helpline's overall service quality which showed that around 59% of the respondents rated the overall service as being satisfactory, 16% felt that it was going good, whereas, 10 % rated as "very poor". 175 callers (40% of the total registered clients till 30th April 2017) were sampled for the survey.

**Helpline Service Overall Rating (N=99)**

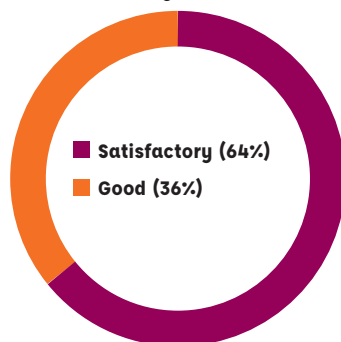


Similarly, in terms of call handling, 91 respondents reported that they found the operators to be friendly and polite while talking on the phone. Eighty-two percent of the respondents stated that operators were listening patiently to their problems. And 77% of the respondents confirmed that they were assured on confidentiality, and 79% of them expressed their confidence that their cases would be dealt confidentially at NWC helpline. 175 callers (40% of the total registered clients till 30th April 2017) were sampled for the survey.

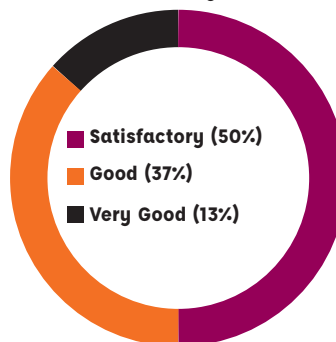
In relation to service quality of legal, psychosocial, shelter and child protection support provided by referred partners, 36% of them rated the overall service as "good" and 64% as "satisfactory." None of the respondents rated the overall services as "poor". Similarly, in terms of psychosocial service, 50% respondents rated the PS service provided by referral partner as "satisfactory." Eight percent of the total respondent who had taken shelter service and were surveyed reported that they were "happy" with the quality of the service.

The survey was conducted through telephonic conversation using structured questionnaire and online data collection tool in consultation with the GBV/GESI experts. Structured questionnaire was designed to capture both quantitative and qualitative information.

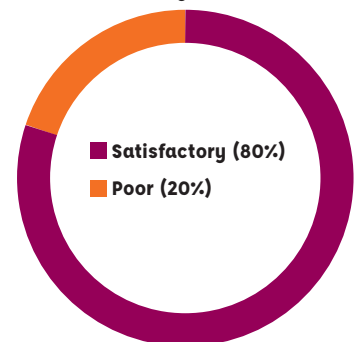
**CSO (Legal) Service Overall Rating (N=11)**



**CSO (Psychosocial) Service Overall Rating (N=8)**



**CSO (Shelter) Service Overall Rating (N=5)**







Despite the challenges such as no societal support system from family and community level and limited capacity of shelter service

providers among others, we always endeavor to render the GBV survivors happy by providing required service including PS, shelter, legal and child protection supports. The integrated approach of the IPGBVPR Project is the most liked by the GBV survivors.

**Anil Kumar Thakur**

Secretary  
National Women Commission



Our team has been deputed to provide justice and maximum happiness to the GBV survivors. I am happy for what we have been able to offer on

the joint initiation of World Bank and implementing and referral partners. We are gradually developing a basis for the sustainability of the structure that has already been set up.

**Palita Thapa**

Project Manager  
IPGBVPR project



I feel happy when I behold cheerfulness in the eyes of children who were brought to our shelter. Most of these children are from poor background and are destitute. Therefore,

a strong support system from the government side to address their plight is an urgency.

**Sharada Rijal**

Project Coordinator  
CWIN



Since Saathi was operating shelter for long, support from the World Bank and NWC is an encouragement to strengthen it. Also, the partnership offered Saathi

a number of functional alliances with NWC and civil society organizations providing specific support to the GBV survivors. Another important point is the increased level of satisfaction of the GBV survivors is something which always motivates me to work on the issue.

**Uma Shah**

President  
Saathi



Satisfaction of the GBV survivors indicates the enhanced ability of NWC and its partners to deal with the GBV cases. The number of cases being

reported has increased and the GBV survivors have also begun to think PS as one of the important issues. Now, our direction is towards sustaining the changes we have made so far.

**Pitambar Koirala**

Project Manager  
TPO



Since the number of cases seeking legal support in LACC is increasing, the GBV survivors have to wait for some time to get their cases proceeded.

Therefore, we get complaints from the survivors. However, once their case is proceeded, they become happy.

**Chandeshwori Tandukar**

Project Coordinator  
LACC

## I feel more confident walking alone in the street

### Smriti Chapagain



I am one of the participants in self-defense training organized by NWC. During the training, we were taught about the ways to protect ourselves from potential risks and abuses. Since girls are mostly harassed in public places, self-defense training helps them to develop confidence to tackle untoward incidents.

Now, while walking alone in the street, I feel more secured. Also, I started being alert every now and then. If survival skills are provided to each girl, they would be much more confident in tackling with any such unfortunate incident.

*(NWC had organized self-defense training in April this year. It was meant for female staff of NWC. Daughter of an NWC staff, Smriti is a school girl.)*

## We are attached to the GBV survivors

### Bhawani Rokka

Helpline Operator, National Women Commission



A GBV survivor feels much relieved when that person shares her/his painful experiences with someone. This is what I have felt while listening to the survivors who have called to NWC Helpline 1145.

When a GBV survivor comes to NWC, we first try to understand the type and depth of the problems and then refer the case to appropriate service providers including CWIN, LACC, TPO and Saathi. Often there are cases that can be settled at NWC level through mediations. But our relations with the clients continue. Often unknowingly an intimate relation develops between us and the clients. The radiance on their face often makes us satisfied from within.



Warm up session before self-defense training.

# Understanding Survivors' Sentiment is a Key

## **Oja Lamichhane**

Helpline Operator, NWC

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This incident took place when I was new to NWC's IPGBVPR project's Helpline desk. I was on my morning duty. It was around 9 am. As usual, the Helpline phone rang. I received the call. As usual, a female spoke on the phone. The unusual thing was that the speaker said that she had poison and she was going to kill herself. She was crying. Then she hung up on the phone.

The telephone from an unknown person made me suffocated. Instantly, I dialed the number. By this time, she was sobbing. "Are you okay? Can you talk to me further?" I utilized my skill as a helpline operator. "If you can, please save my life," she pleaded. The voice not only gave me an opportunity to provide support, but also shifted the onus of saving her on me.

Although it was a difficult moment, I maintained calm and tried to provide telephone first aid to distract her from the suicidal thoughts. She stopped sobbing after five minutes of psychosocial counseling. "The way you talked to me made me feel that you understood truly the situation I am going through," I recall her remarks.

Unknowingly, I happened to win her trust. Then she explained the incidents in detail and disclosed her name as Rama Shahi (name changed). Then NWC provided her necessary support.

This is the incident that made me realize that being sensitive to the issues of survivors and understanding their feeling is truly a first aid to the wounded heart including that of the GBV survivors.



## Our school has prioritized domestic Violence as a theme of extracurricular activities

### **Rajendra Basnet**

ECA Coordinator, Health Faculty  
Shramik Shanti School, Chyasal, Lalitpur

Our students found the school-level program useful because it helped them to enhance the understanding of school-going children on women's rights issues and on the existing provisions to address the GBV issues.

Through the program, we know more about the NWC's newly established Helpline *Khabar Garaun 1145* along with the details of services to be provided to the GBV survivors.

Though CWISH and a few other NGOs have previously collaborated with us for awareness raising campaigns, this type of program is new to us and we are really excited for future collaborations.

Following the program, we have developed domestic violence as a theme for different sorts of extra-curricular activities including drawing competitions.



## The Commission should have provincial structure

### **Amrita Anamol**

Journalist, Kantipur Television

NWC is one of the agencies to report domestic violence (DV) cases. It has been not only raising awareness against domestic violence but also registering DV cases for further action. More importantly, the commission is solely led by women, thereby indicating women's power. The commission needs to have provincial-level structure. It needs to focus on programs and activities that promote gender equity and develop gender-equitable attitude among male and female. Commission's current activities are targeted only to female which doesn't help to develop gender-equitable attitude.



# Challenges and Lesson Learned

## **Overall challenges**

As most of the GBV survivors lack support from family and society and external agencies including NWC and CSOs may not bring permanent solution to the problem. There may be a chance of the GBV survivors being revictimized even after a level of recovery from the physical, emotional and mental violence.

## **Challenges related to psycho-social support**

The GBV survivors, who are facing psychosocial problems, hesitate to accept that they require psychosocial support due to the social stigma and discrimination associated with it. Lack of knowledge on PS issues also partly contributes to it. Those who need psychiatric support and medication don't opt for them. And those who take medicine don't complete the required dose.

## **Challenges related legal support to GBV survivors**

Since a large number of the GBV cases are referred to LACC under the IPGBVPR Project, it often corresponds to high workload which impacts on the timeliness and quality of the legal services rendered to the GBV survivors. A GBV survivor needs to wait for their cases to be taken forward. When interviewed, LACC informed that lack of availability of the legal documents including vital registrations makes it difficult for the GBV survivors to move ahead with the legal process. It has been found that the cases ending in mediation has a probability to reoccur.

## **Challenges related to shelter support**

Capacity of the shelter for the GBV survivors is limited, but the ratio of the emerging GBV cases is increasing. Therefore, it has been a challenge for the project to provide shelter support even to the needy. Also, protection of the dependents of the survivors is one of the pressing issues. This apart, specific shelter is required to address the needs of the GBV survivors. For example, we need to have separate shelter for the GBV survivors having mental problems.

# Best Practice and Lesson Learned

## **Integrated and quality service delivery through Helpline**

Integrated approach to address GBV helped the GBV survivors to access hassle-free quality service from a single platform. This approach has been widely appreciated by the

GBV survivors, government and non-government actors. In keeping with importance of the approach, it needs to be strengthened and institutionalized.

### **GBV survivors: Central to project design and implementation**

The IPGBVPR Project places a high emphasis on the need and satisfaction of the GBV survivors. Therefore, periodic client satisfaction survey is commissioned. In addition, activities are designed based on the findings of baseline survey. The information on and opinion of the GBV survivors and national policy context are considered while designing the activities and implementing them. NWC follows up on the cases more frequently after their referral. It also provides phone counseling in order to address the emotional problem of the survivors. That's why the GBV survivors have mentioned NWC as the only organization which follows up on them over the telephone. According to them, such follow up helps them feel confident and empowered.

### **Mediation: An effective tool to understand different perspective**

Mediation is not only about asking both parties to reconcile, but also to make both parties understand each other's perspectives and make a rational decision. Although, it has pros and cons, NWC has been using it as one of the effective methods to resolve the problems related to GBV.

### **Linking shelter support to economic empowerment**

Shelter support to the GBV survivors is just a temporary arrangement for a limited period of time. In order to make the life of the GBV survivors easy, linking them to economic empowerment activities is one of the recommended strategies.


### **Coordination and collaboration brings synergetic effect**

Apart from its regular partners, NWC has forged partnership with different government institutions and civil society organizations. That's why a functional relationship between Nepal Police, OCMC, different shelter service providers, legal, PS support and child protection agencies have been established and strengthened. According to NWC, the IPGBVPR Project has referred 137 cases of the GBV survivors outside the regular project partners.






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