



# Looking Towards Tomorrow: A Study on the Reintegration of Trafficking Survivors

A partnership project between  
Asha Nepal, Shakti Samuha and Terre des hommes Foundation





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## The Research Team

The research team was led by Laura Buet (Asha Nepal) supported by a management committee chaired by Muna Basnyat (Terre des hommes Foundation) with members Smriti Khadka (Asha Nepal), Puja Mahato (Shakti Samuha) and Laxmi Puri (Asha Nepal).

The Research Team comprised; France and Nepal; Laura Buet

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UK and Nepal; Peter Bashford (Asha Nepal), Dr Jamie Hogg (Asha Nepal)

## Research Coordination

The overall research coordination was carried out by Peter Bashford (Asha Nepal), local coordination was managed by Muna Basnyat and Smriti Khadka.

## **The Final Document**

The Research Design and Methodology and the Findings were written and compiled by Laura Buet, Peter Bashford, Muna Basnyat, and the team; the case studies were compiled and edited by Smriti Khadka and Sue Carpenter (Asha Nepal).

Data was analysed by Pravash Pokhrel.

The Recommendations and all other sections were written and compiled by Peter Bashford and Muna Basnyat with input from the team.

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# PREFACES



## Asha Nepal

Many years ago at a Greenpeace conference I scribbled a quote from one of the delegates “Thought without action is meaningless” little did I know then the affect these simple words would have on my life. Equally important was a phrase a newly qualified nurse and I came up with while walking around a field in Jhapa district in 1998. We were discussing how agencies working with trafficking victims could improve, the answer was simple “always put the girls first”.

When I approached Shakti Samuha with the idea to set up the refuge that became Shakti Kendra those phrases rang loud in my ear. Many years later that same nurse, Smriti Khadka, and I sat in the Kathmandu office of the Terre des hommes Foundation with Muna Basnyat and Joseph Aguetant, the then Country Representative of Terre des hommes Foundation in Nepal , for their ideas and concerns, high on both our lists was what happens to those women and girls who have come back? How are their lives affected long term by the horrors and traumas of being trafficked and the social and cultural stigma they are forced to carry. Within months the bare bones of this study started to come together, within a year we were back in that office and with financial support from European Union and Oak Foundation put that original thought into action.

We started having regular shared up date meetings with Terre des hommes five years ago, two years after we started working in partnership with Shakti Samuha, relationships that have become both enjoyable and full filling but more importantly examples of good practice and partnership working. The cooperation between Terre des hommes, Shakti Samuha and Asha Nepal has created a wonderful synergy moving our common aims further forward than we could have imagined those years ago.

Let us give a voice to the countless victims of trafficking, talk to them, ask them what their wishes, needs and dreams are, put them first and turn their thoughts into actions.

Peter Bashford  
Founder, Asha Nepal

Although our relationship dates back from earlier years, Terre des hommes Foundation officially embarked on a journey with Shakti Samuha from February 2009 under the purview of a project titled “Protection and Quality of Care -Anti-trafficking Action (PAQCA)”, with financial support from European Union and Oak Foundation. As we cruised together, we unravelled intricacies involved in the process of trafficking of Nepali children to India for sexual exploitation purposes and the damage done to each individual life, most of the times the damage being irreversible. Under the ambit of the project we reached and talked to the girls who had taken refuge in shelter homes in India and listened to their life stories. We saw them yearn to come back home each day and night. All we could do was console them saying that the delay was caused due to the cumbersome court process and we were working to ensure their dreams to come back home would be fulfilled. As we weaved together beautiful pictures of their futures “back home” in Nepal, we were often jerked by the questions posed by the organisations in India on the whereabouts and well-being of many girls that they had repatriated back to Nepal since mid-90s. As social workers and professionals, they wanted to ensure that the girls were fine and in good hands. It then dawned on us that the focus had been on numbers instead of human being. It seems that nobody cared to collect accurate data and research whether those individuals had made it after coming back to Nepal. Some may have been shunned by their families, some may be no more due to illness, some may have become victims of bad marriages and some may have been even re-trafficked. But how do we know if no-one is keeping accurate individual data?

Thus, in order to explore and assess the situations of trafficked survivors who have been repatriated and reintegrated in the society we became part of this research with Shakti Samuha and Asha Nepal. This study allows us to understand that ‘reintegration’ is one of the most important components of services that trafficked survivors need. We would like to thank Laura Buet for being such a diligent researcher and Pravash Pokhrel for analyzing the data. Our common goal to ensure protection and quality of care to the trafficking survivors brought us in contact with Asha Nepal and our relationship since then has evolved beautifully and this study is testimony to this. We are indebted to Shakti Samuha and Asha Nepal for being our comrades in arms for this journey, which is eventful but also extremely fulfilling.

*Muna Basnyat*

Muna Basnyat  
Sr. Anti-trafficking Program Coordinator  
Terre des hommes Foundation

# Shakti Samuha



## Our journey continues .....

More than five hundred women and children were rescued in a well orchestrated raid by Mumbai Police on the 5th of February 1996 in Mumbai, Maharashtra, India. Thus, this particular day is monumental for Shakti Samuha as its journey began from this day only. Although, it is difficult to state how many out of the rescued women and children were Nepali, it is assumed that it must have been definitely more than two hundred and not less. The survivors were harassed, humiliated and their rights were violated, particularly by the media who were so avaricious to sensationalise the news that little heed was paid to the consequences it would have on the survivors at that moment and thereafter. Then, life was confined in a semi-detention like state in the government shelter homes in Mumbai for the next five months, while the debate ensued between the India and Nepal government each placing responsibilities to the other as if we were objects and not human beings. We are really grateful to the seven organisations namely CWIN, Nawajyoti Kendra, ABC Nepal, WOREC, Maiti Nepal, Shanti Punarsthapana Kendra and Stri Shakti, who despite all odds came to Mumbai and repatriated one hundred and twenty eight trafficking survivors in two batches on the 4th and 7th of July in 1996 respectively. The initial days after our coming back were equally tough as we were subjected to humiliation, stigmatisation and ostracism by the society and our own families. However, towards the end of the same year with support and initiation from WOREC, an anti-trafficking organization, we were able to come together to establish 'Shakti Samuha' meaning 'Power Group.'

Today after fifteen years of journey, full of struggle and successes, we are pausing to find survivors like us basically to assess their physical, mental, economic, moral and political situations and to identify the areas where they need assistance to live a life with their basic needs met for their survival and development. When we look back to our own journey, we realize that often times, quantity takes precedence over quality meaning we are more eager to count the number of survivors who have returned but we fail to find out how they are faring after coming back. We hardly know the whereabouts of less than twenty out of one hundred and twenty eight who were repatriated to Nepal in 1996. Thus, we can infer that reintegration is the component which is often overlooked and where scarce resources are put in. We are optimistic that this study will help us identify areas where our actions have to be driven to in order to assist any trafficking survivor to live a life with dignity like any other citizens of Nepal.

We are grateful to Laura Buet, who volunteered to conduct this study by individually talking to the survivors in different districts of Nepal. We also like to thank the respondents of the research, who shared their valuable thoughts and personal experiences; for their active participation in the interview and their motivation to support other survivors. We would also like to thank Pravash Pokhrel for analyzing the data and continuing his support to Shakti Samuha. Our sincere gratitude to Asha Nepal team in U.K. and Nepal, and in particular to Peter Bashford, for their relentless support extended to us not only as a donor but also as a mentor and well-wisher. We would like to extend our thanks to Terre des hommes Foundation for their continuous support in our endeavors and encouragement, especially to Ms. Muna Basnyat and Joseph Aguetant, the former Country Representative. We are grateful to European Union and Oak Foundation for their financial support in bringing out this study. Finally, we would like to thank the research team of Shakti Samuha for their cooperation and support extended while conducting this study.



Sunita Danuwar  
Chairperson  
Shakti Samuha

## How this Study Happened?

It is through music that I first became deeply aware and interested about women's rights when I went to university. I had the chance to study in North America where so much research on gender and women's rights is taking place. It is then that a strong feeling came inside me. I knew I wanted to change things, even in a small way, I needed to act.

From the age of fifteen I had wanted to give my time to a cause that would need it, and I was especially attracted to Nepal because of its beautiful mountains and sceneries. The opportunity to act came when I started working as a ski instructor again in 2010 because I would be free from the end of the winter season to the beginning of the next. I therefore started looking at organisations working in the field of women's rights in Nepal; gathering as much information as I could on that subject. I came across an article by Laura Agustin ; her approach to trafficking was strikingly different from most of the research I had read as she refused to victimise the women and emphasised the need to take into account the women's own choices instead of deciding what was good for them.

Empowering the women appeared to me the right way to go, for that reason I emailed her, asking whether she knew of organisations in Nepal who placed the needs and decisions of the women first. She suggested Shakti Samuha; from the Shakti Samuha website I found a link to Asha Nepal.

Shakti Samuha, Asha Nepal and Terre des hommes Foundation, had been planning to do this research for several months, and that is how we started writing the draft of the project together.

Since the beginning of my involvement in this project, I have learnt much, much more than I expected... Of course it has been an opportunity for me to finally put my dreams into action and live by the values I had been calling mine. But more importantly it has enabled me to meet the women and men who put so much effort and passion in their work to bring back a dignified life to trafficked women. However, the most remarkable discovery was the strength of the women who have been trafficked. These women, for their courage and optimism in spite of all that life put them through, have become examples to me.

We designed the project in order to answer questions that had been left out by previous research in the field of human trafficking; however my feeling is that this research opens the door to a whole new range of questions...



Laura Buet  
Chief Researcher



## I. The Study

### I.1 Background

The issue of trafficking is a world wide problem; it has been one of the major sources of criminal income and a never ending cycle of abuse and exploitation. According to the United Nations, approximately four million women, children, and men are victims of international trafficking each year. Trafficking is rife both inside country borders and internationally for various purposes of forced labours. In Nepal the history of trafficking girls into the sex industry of India goes back to the time of the Rana's ruling period. It has been reported that during the Rana Regime, an autocratic ruling system which lasted for 104 years (1846 -1951), young girls from hilly districts, adjoining the Kathmandu Valley would be brought to the palaces to work as housemaids and lead a life of servitude abound with sexual exploitation. Thus, it can be inferred that internal trafficking happened as early as the aforementioned time in Nepal. Anecdotal reports also show that after the fall of Rana Regime some of the women catering to the autocratic rulers accompanied them to India, and some having run out of options for survival were immersed in the sex industry of major cities such as Kolkata and Mumbai. Ironically later these cities started having a connotation attached particularly if young women in the villages are returnees from these cities.

In the history of Nepal, the advent of rescue of 484 young girls from the red light areas of Mumbai on the 5th of February 1996 shook both the Indian and Nepali governments over the magnitude of trafficking of Nepali girls and women to India, especially when 238 of them were identified as Nepali. The police raid carried out on the aforementioned date following the directive received from the Chief Justice of Maharashtra High Court showed the commitment to prevent and control child sex abuse and sex tourism<sup>1</sup>. However, various reports and testimonies from

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<sup>1</sup>Pradhan, Gauri. (1996). Back Home from Brothels

the survivors who were rescued then say that the rescue did not have after-care plans as they were languished in different remand homes in Mumbai without needed care and protection and were repatriated back to Nepal only five months later. Out of the rescued 238 Nepali women and girls, 3 of them died while in remand homes, 32 ran away and 75 of them did not prefer to comeback. Ultimately only 128 were repatriated and it was later reported that amongst them approximately 50% were reunified with their respective families back in Nepal.

A report from CWIN based on head count conducted in 1997 shows that there were 153,000 children trafficked to Indian brothels and amongst them 20% of were below the age of sixteen years. Although there is no official data except an undated figure of 5,000 -7,000 Nepali women trafficked to India annually from an unknown source and a figure from ILO/IPEC (2001) of 12,000 children from Nepal trafficked to India annually for commercial sexual exploitation no further research thereafter has been conducted to validate those figures. Thus, we can infer that although there are no real statistics of Nepali women and children in Indian brothels their presence cannot be overlooked. It is also hard to quantify how many of them are adults engaged in sex work but as per the study conducted by Terre des hommes Foundation<sup>2</sup> in 2005, Nepali girls enter slavery and debt bondage in the brothels of India at an average age of 14 to 16 years, implying that they are trafficked at a very young age.

In more recent years over and above abusive labour conditions, a growing number of girls along with men are trafficked in the pretext of finding labour to the Gulf States and Middle East but many are found to have been subjected to sexual abuse and exploitation. Media reports, studies and the testimonies from the victims themselves have presented the atrocities involved once trafficked. Thus, an eminent question has emerged on whether there is still a continuum of Nepali girls and women being trafficked to India or has this trend ended as new lucrative destinations have been identified by the traffickers. However, based on the observations made, the presence of Nepali women and children in the red light areas of Kamatipura (Mumbai), Kalighat, Sonagachi and Kiddipore (Kolkata), G.B. Road (New Delhi) and Budhabar Peeth (Pune) is still very visible today. Reliable sources have confirmed their presence in also other cities of India such as Meerut and Agra.

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<sup>2</sup>Terre des hommes Foundation. 2005. Summary of Findings: A Study of Trafficked Nepalese Girls and Women in Mumbai and Kolkata, India



Most often poverty is cited as the major cause of trafficking but then the question emerges on, are all poor people trafficked? Various studies show that the major cause of trafficking in Nepal are poverty, illiteracy, primitive cultural values and beliefs, patriarchal thinking, male dominance and discrimination towards women, beliefs and values, unemployment, lack of access for women toward the source and opportunity of economical development and security (Shakti Samuha, 2008). Similarly, a Terre des hommes Foundation<sup>3</sup> study has categorized two tiers of causes of trafficking and exploitation namely “Root Causes” and “Activating Causes.” Societal structure and social factors such as poverty, landlessness, gender discrimination, caste/class discrimination and lack of opportunities are the root causes to weaken people’s resistance to trafficking. Similarly, there are activating factors such as family dysfunction, critical poverty or family economic crisis, separation from family, violence, humanitarian crisis and others which pushes families and children into extreme vulnerability such that they fall prey to phenomenon such as trafficking. Case studies show that most of the girls who left their village dreamt of earning some money and supporting their families. But it all gets shattered when they end up being sold as an object to brothel owners and being used totally for their benefit. It should also be noted that based on different case studies a majority of the trafficking survivors relate that they come from a dysfunctional family. These evidences are visible in the case studies documented by Terre des hommes Foundation and Sanlaap while featuring a photo project titled “Another Me.”<sup>4</sup>

The chance of these girls to return back to their families is very low. They are reluctant to return to their home village because they are scared of being refused by their families and being discriminated against by the local community. A study<sup>5</sup> from Terre des hommes Foundation of trafficked Nepalese girls and Women in Mumbai and Kolkata, India (Terre des hommes Foundation, 2005), indicates that although the majority of Nepalese girls retained a strong love for Nepal, they were realistic that it was not possible to return, they stated that they would be excluded from their families, stigmatised by their communities and unable to earn a living. Although they

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<sup>3</sup>Frederick, J. Basnyat M, Aguetant J.L. 2009. Trafficking and Exploitation in the Entertainment and Sex Industries in Nepal: A Handbook for Decision- Makers

<sup>4</sup>Another Me is a photo project of trafficking survivors in which their pain transforms to power through different expressions of costumes and their voices ( <http://www.anotherme.org> )

<sup>5</sup>Terre des hommes Foundation. 2005. Summary of Findings: A Study of Trafficked Nepalese Girls and Women in Mumbai and Kolkata, India

attempted to return back they face a challenging and difficult future, many are still in their early teens and have not completed their education. For these young girls the chance of returning to full term education is slim though some organisations offer the opportunity of education side by side with employment while others keep the girls in a closed and institutionalised situation.

Of equal importance and often overlooked is the long term situation of returnees going back over several decades. A history of continued abuse, discrimination, low grade work, abusive marriages, physical and mental health problems often dog the lives of these innocent women.

Asha Nepal has been working closely since 2004 with its primary partner Shakti Samuha. Both organisations were formed in the closing years of 20th century, one in the UK the other in Nepal but both with the strong belief that the “we know best” institutional approach of the main NGO’s working in the field was neither practical nor in the best interests of the clients. Both organisations believed that the individual needs, aspirations and dreams of each girl returning from sexual slavery in India is the key to support their full and meaningful return into society. Self awareness, self belief and self sufficiency rather than years languishing in an institution being told what is best for them.

In 2004 Shakti Samuha and Asha Nepal set up the joint project Shakti Kendra, a refuge and rehabilitation for trafficking survivors. Over the years the partnership strove in objectives to put the client first with Shakti Samuha gaining more and more recognition for its work. Shakti Kendra has always been a sharp learning curve with input and support from a number of major international organisations working in the field of counter trafficking and human rights.

In 2009 Terre des hommes Foundation and the Shakti Kendra teamed up, with support from European Union and Oak Foundation, and initiated a project titled “Protection and Quality of Care – Anti-trafficking Action” basically to formalize a safe passage for the trafficked Nepali children subjected to commercial sexual exploitation through safe and voluntary repatriation and ensuring that they receive quality of care and protection once they are in Nepal. A holistic approach adopted by the project has helped the care-giver namely Shakti Samuha understand the needs of each individual starting from their rehabilitation to reintegration and follow-up.

Now in 2012, Shakti Kendra offers an effective, inclusive and individual rehabilitation and reintegration to a growing number of girls rescued from brothels of India, who are subjected to commercial sexual exploitation.

Since 2009 Asha Nepal has been assessing the potential approach to addressing the long term needs of survivors of trafficking. It is clear that a number of women and girls returning from India and having received some form of rehabilitation will return again and again to the NGO they feel closest to with a range of concerns. These range from physical and psychological health needs, through social, welfare and legal needs to the more basic need of sharing their fears and concerns with those who share and/or understand them.

To make this possible, and to provide the right level and structure of support programme, be it medical, psychiatric, therapeutic, vocational, welfare, social or legal we need to return to basics and fully understand the long term individual needs of those women and girls who have gone through rehabilitation and experienced life back in society.

## **1.2 Purpose**

The aim of the research is to qualify and try to quantify the long term needs of former trafficked women who have been re-integrated into society to create a holistic picture of what negatively and positively affects their lives, to identify what resources are needed to support them and avoid their future marginalization in society. The target group is fractured girls and women of nearly all ages, geographically spread, often hiding from their past, some are members of support organisations and women's groups, some stay away scared of the reactions of husbands, families, friends, employers and their own pasts. Three examples are appended in the case studies. Many have no voices and some that do aren't necessarily listened to. The starting point of any service delivery is to understand the needs of the client base. Many organisations work on a "we know best" basis. No one knows better than those who have experienced trafficking, experienced various rehabilitation processes and lived their lives in the aftermath of being trafficked. Some have faltered and got up on their own without any external support and so much for their resilience.

The objectives are to build on the work of Shakti Samuha and its partner organisations in creating as normal a life style and high level of independence to women returned from trafficking that their situation demands and to ensure that they are not dragged into a downward spiral by an inability to access relevant support over a range of health and social issues (eg. physical and mental health, employment, welfare, well-being, legal and therapeutic facilities). Most of all it is to understand the lives of the survivors, listen to them and use that information as a way to provide better rehabilitation programs and to look to the needs of any long term support they may need that are caused by having been trafficked.

## 2. Research Design and Methodology

### 2.1 Project Concept

This study was designed to answer a number of questions on the lives of trafficking survivors in Nepal not fully answered in previous research. Indeed, a variety of NGOs and INGOs exist that were created to help and take care of this group from rescue through rehabilitation and at times beyond. The importance and competence of these organisations has been shown, however our wish was to know how successful the reintegration of women into society has been and what the long-term needs of this very particular group are.

### 2.2 Literature Review

A literature review was conducted on the Nepalese trafficking situation: this review showed a great lack of information on the long-term reintegration of trafficked women. However the problems faced by women returning from a trafficking experience, along with their needs, were outlined. Significant areas to be investigated were drawn from this assessment.

### 2.3 Study Design

The format of the study was designed through consultation and regular contact between three organisations, Asha Nepal, Shakti Samuha and Terre des hommes Foundation, all of whom work to combat trafficking in Nepal and return survivors to meaningful lives in society.

The research was restricted to Nepalese women who have reintegrated back into Nepalese society after being trafficked to India for sexual exploitation. The research looks at the various forms of discrimination and life styles they face on their return.

From the experience of the three partners it was chosen that a qualitative study using interviews would be used.

## 2.4 Questionnaire

The key areas were defined as being:

- General Information
- Background information
- Return experience
- Elements of care provided
- Welfare
- Discrimination/Integration
- Physical health
- Mental health
- Awareness of body
- Awareness of rights

The team then worked together to create questions from these areas that focused on the present situation of the women. These questions were intentionally left open-ended. Four validated questionnaires were included to measure physical and mental health, hope and body awareness.

The questions were then reviewed by the three partners so as to validate that they were culturally relevant and adapted to the participants.

## 2.5 Sample and Study Sites

It was decided that the network of Shakti Samuha would be used to contact the participants. A sample of 100 or more participants living in the districts where the NGO is present was aimed for. It was also believed that a snowball effect would take place and that through that phenomenon, trafficked women outside of the Shakti Samuha network would be reached. Other NGOs working in the field were also approached but without much success.

The difficulty of getting in touch with the women even in the Shakti Samuha network combined with the fact that the expected snowball effect did not take place, the sample size had to be rolled-down. The choices of some of the survivors not

wanting to be interviewed was also duly respected and thus ultimately in total fifty-six trafficking survivors were interviewed.

**30** in Kathmandu

**7** in Makwanpur

**14** in Nuwakot

**5** in Sindhupalchowk

The validated questionnaires used to measure physical and mental health, hope and body awareness that were at first included in the research instrument were dropped since results yielded by a restricted sample are not significant.

## **2.6 Interviewing Strategy**

In order not to make interviewees uncomfortable, the interviews were carried out by a female team made up of a researcher and a translator. The answers were collected manually during the interviews which each lasted approximately an hour.

Items of the questionnaire were purposely written as areas to be investigated rather than questions to let the interview be carried out in a conversational tone. For the same reason, questions were open-ended and the interviewee was encouraged to speak openly and as much or as little as she wanted to. Verbal as well as written consent was taken from the interviewee before conducting the interview and they were also assured of confidentiality of the information that they shared with the research team.

## **2.7 Data analysis and Interpretation**

Besides some demographic variables, most of the data were qualitative. The data collected in the notebook were fed into Microsoft Excel which were later grouped together in similar themes or variables and tabulated. The incidences of the grouped data were counted.

Interpretation was done as per the frequency of the groups and textual data mentioned below in the tables.

## 2.8 Areas not Addressed and Limitations

The research design was a lengthy and painstaking process, starting in France with frequent consultation with Asha Nepal in the UK and various professional research bodies before an initial draft was shared with the partners, this raised a number of questions and modifications. The Research Team Leader and the Research Coordinator then relocated to Kathmandu where a number of meetings took place with the partners and the Nepalese team members along with health care professionals. A draft questionnaire was then tested on three volunteer trafficking survivors under professional observation, their input was invaluable and after further discussion with Counsellors from Shakti Samuha and Asha Nepal a final draft was produced.

We had concerns over the size of the questionnaire, some proved unnecessary, and a number of areas were shortened. A number of areas of limitation are addressed in the Recommendations as needing further research.

Although the rehabilitation process is relevant to the outcomes and recommendations rehabilitation as a process was not directly addressed and is well documented elsewhere. The findings highlight a wide range of areas that relevant agencies working with returnees may wish to coincide and these are itemised in the recommendations.

Based on purposive sampling, the study involves survivors of cross border trafficking who have been reintegrated in society and those who have spent some time in care facilities such as shelter homes and received services to facilitate in their reintegration.

Trafficking survivors who have not received services from any organisations and those who are receiving services from care facilities but are not reintegrated in the society are not included in the study. Trafficking survivors of internal trafficking are also not included.

The study had to face many constraints as well. Initially, it was difficult to identify the whereabouts of the respondents. Whilst in the field many of those persons identified proved not keen on sharing information. The choice of survivors not to



speak was duly respected. The interviewer had to travel long distances to meet the respondents as some of them were living outside of Kathmandu in the districts, namely Makawanpur, Nuwakot, Sindhupalchok, and Rautahat.

Language was also a barrier as the respondents tongue (Nepali) had to be translated into English and some of them were not so comfortable in speaking Nepali with their mother tongue being Tamang. Taking notes from the interview with the respondents was also a difficult job.

## 2.9 Significance of the Study

Studies on reintegration of trafficking survivors are limited globally. Many studies highlight the process and context of trafficking and make recommendations to planning, policy design and implementation<sup>6</sup>. In the case of Nepal, many studies are conducted on trafficking dealing with its various aspects- causes and consequences, the process of trafficking and plan and policy analysis. There are few studies on reintegration of trafficking victims in Nepal. Studies show varieties of challenges in society while returnees (trafficking victims) try to maintain similar position as other women do. An interview based study on the status of reintegrated trafficked women found that returnees are stigmatized from family and community even after their reintegration in the society<sup>7</sup> (Chen & Marcovici, 2003). They are perceived as prostitutes and are victims of gossip and 'name calling'. Moreover, they are also thought to be infected by HIV/AIDS and community people want to isolate them (Mahendra et al., 2001)<sup>8</sup>. In addition, their movement out of the village earns them a name of 'loose women' and they are potential objects of rape and sexual abuse in society (Chen & Marcovici, 2003).

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<sup>6</sup>Chuaulagai, Ganesh Prasad (2009), Trafficking Survivors in Nepal: An Exploratory Story of Trafficked Women's Experiences and Perceptions of their Reintegration, Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for The Degree of Master of Philosophy in Gender and Development Gender and Development Programme, Department of Education and Health Promotion, Faculty of Psychology, University of Bergen, Norway

<sup>7</sup>Chen Catharine and Karen Marcovici. (2003). Exploring the Status of Reintegrated Girls: A Participatory Study, Save the Children US: Kathmandu, Nepal

<sup>8</sup>Mahendra, B. S., Bhattarai, P., Dahal, D. R., & Crowley, S. (2001). Community Perceptions of Trafficking and its Determinants in Nepal. Kathmandu: The Asia Foundation

Frederick (2005) concludes in a study that existing programs and strategies for care and support for trafficking survivors intended for their reintegration are insufficient. He explains a limitation in care giving practices to the victims of trafficking due to lack of training for the officials, follow up of victims' cases, progress and process reviews. He argues that existing circumstances contribute to re-stigmatisation of the victims of trafficking. These include; counselors' poor training, insufficient clinical practice, lack of in-depth knowledge and qualification to work with victims of sexually violated women. He further argues that some organizations have no consideration to victims' rights to privacy (for example, convince or force the survivors of trafficking to test HIV) which again stigmatize the survivors.

In their participatory study on the status of reintegrated girls in far western region of Nepal, Chen and Marcovici (2003) discuss how communities treat the reintegrated women in society. People from their communities and own families commonly perceive them as loose, characterless women which infected them with stigma. Regarding the community people's perceptions, the reintegrated women believed that community people's response to them always reminds them of their past which again result in stigmatization. Moreover, survivors are afraid to disclose their past life stories in the communities as this will cut their relationships with their family and distort their whole life.

The proper observance of appropriate rehabilitation and reintegration mechanisms guarantees, in general terms, the longitudinal safety and wellbeing of victims and their community whilst simultaneously re-securing human rights and safeguarding against re-victimization, reprisal or retaliation (Desyllas, M. 2007).

Another study on community perceptions on trafficking conducted by Mahendra et. al,(2001) shows that women's status in the community is very low with comparison to males. Based on information from the community, this study stresses migration as a contributing factor for adolescents' and women's trafficking. Community people, however, blamed the women themselves for being trafficked. The researcher explains that the stigma and discrimination on trafficked women are severe when they are exposed to the community.

It is seen as a great challenge in Nepalese context where existing interventions lack focus on reintegration of trafficked women (NHRCN, 2008).

## 3. The Findings

### 3.1 General Information

#### 3.1.1 Age

In order to properly analyse the data, it was found essential to segregate the participants into age groups.

**Table 1: Age of the Women Interviewed**

Age	Frequency (%)
Below 16 years	1.8
16 – 20 years	10.7
21 – 25 years	5.4
26 – 30 years	19.6
31 - 35 years	17.9
36 – 40 years	7.1
Above 40 years	37.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Over a third of the women were aged above 40. The women aged between 26 to 35 years old were just over one third of the respondents. 10.7% of the respondents were aged between 16 to 20 years, 7.1% were aged between 36 to 40 years, 5.4% were aged between 21 and 25 years, only one respondent (1.8%) was below 16 years old.

It is important however to correlate those findings with the place of residence of the respondents.

**Table 2: Co-relation between Age and Places of Residence**

Age	Kathmandu (%)	Out of Kathmandu (%)
Below 16 years	3.3	-
16 – 20 years	16.7	3.8
21 – 25 years	10	-
26 – 30 years	36.7	-
31 - 35 years	23.3	11.5
36 – 40 years	3.3	11.5
Above 40 years	6.7%	17.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>53.6</b>	<b>46.4</b>

The younger trafficking survivors tend to live in Kathmandu while older women were found living outside of the capital in their respective districts. Almost half (46.4%) of the women interviewed lived outside of Kathmandu, in Nuwakot, Sindupalchowk, Makwanpur, Bara and Chitwan districts. Among those who lived outside Kathmandu (53.6%), nearly three quarters (73%), were above 40 years old. The rest of the women were aged between 31 to 35 years and between 36 to 40 years in equal proportions (11.5%) and there was only one woman who was between 16 to 20 years.

In Kathmandu, the majority of the women were aged between 26 to 35 years old (60%) whereas the women aged above 40 years only represent 6.7% of the respondents. 16.7% of the women were aged between 16 and 20 years, 10% were aged between 21 and 25 years, one respondent (3.3%) was aged between 36 and 40 years, and one was below 16 years.

A reason for the differences in the findings depending on the place of residence of the women can be the anonymity women feel in an urban setting and the potential of better opportunities for their survival. The internal migration from rural areas to

Kathmandu has made it easier for women to stay in the city once they come back rather than moving back to their own village. One other reason that can explain the differences in the age of the urban and rural respondents is also probably that the actions of the organisation Shakti Samuha are not the same in and out of Kathmandu or the survivors were already well settled in the districts outside Kathmandu before Shakti Samuha become operational.

### 3.1.2 Ethnicity

Traffickers often target socially marginalized groups. Researches in the past, as here, have shown that the Tamang community constitutes the most affected communities. Interestingly more than half of the women were from the Tamang ethnic group (58.9%), however this must be tempered by the fact that the interviews outside of Kathmandu were conducted in the Nuwakot, Sindupalchowk and Makwanpur districts where the Tamang are a significant ethnic group. 10.7% of the women were Brahmin and the other 10.7% were from the Dalit community, 5.4% were Chettri and 14.3% were from other ethnic groups.

**Table 3: Ethnicity of the Respondents**

Caste	Frequency (%)
Brahmin	10.7
Chettri	5.4
Tamang	58.9
Dalit	10.7
Other (Rai, Magar, Tharu)	14.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

### 3.1.3 Geographical Origin

Since the respondents accessed were mainly members of Shakti Samuha, the geographic locations were based on their place of residence as well as the willingness of the survivors to be interviewed.

**Table 4: Geographical Origin**

<b>Geographical Origin</b>	<b>Frequency (%)</b>
Nuwakot	37.5
Sindhupalchok	17.9
Other (Bara, Bardia, Chitwan, Dailekh, Dhading, Gorkha, Gorkha, Jhapa, Kavre, Kaski, Khotang, Makawanpur, Morang, Okhaldhunga, Palpa, Rautahat, Salyan, Sankhwashabha, Udayapur, Sindhuli, Kathmandu)	44.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4 shows that the respondents came from many different districts, however 37.5% of them came from Nuwakot district alone and 17.8% came from Sindupalchowk district. The 44.6% % of the women came from a different districts. The wide gap that exists between the high percentages of the women coming from Nuwakot and Sindupalchowk, and the rest of the country can be explained by the fact that these two districts are known to be highly prone to trafficking. In addition to this we must keep in mind that fourteen interviews (25%) were conducted in Nuwakot and five interviews took place in Sindupalchowk (8.9%).

The origins of the respondent were also categorized as urban or rural.

**Table 5: Urban/rural Setting**

<b>Urban/Rural</b>	<b>Frequency (%)</b>
Rural	92.9
Urban	7.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

From Table 5, it can be inferred that almost all (92.8%) of the respondents came from rural settings.

### 3.1.4 Current Living Place

The results of the study are largely based on the place where the interviews were conducted. A majority of the fully participating trafficking survivors live in Kathmandu.

**Table 6: Current Living Places**

<b>District</b>	<b>Frequency (%)</b>
Kathmandu	53.6
Bara	3.6
Makwanpur	7.1
Chitwan	1.8
Nuwakot	25
Sindupalchowk	8.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 6 shows that 53.6% of the women currently live in Kathmandu, 25% live in Nuwakot, 8.9% live in Sindupalchowk, 7.1% live in Makwanpur, 3.6% live in Bara and 1.8% live in Chitwan.

These results are to be compared with the geographical origin of the women. 53.6% of them now live in Kathmandu whereas only 7.1% originally came from an urban setting. This raises the question of the adaptation of the women to an urban setting instead of going back to their places of origin.

## 3.2 Current Situation

**Table 7: Time Since their Return in the Community**

<b>How long since return in the community</b>	<b>Frequency (%)</b>
More than 20 years	35.7
11 to 15 years	21.4
16 to 20 years	17.9
Few Months to 1 year	10.7
4 to 6 years	10.7
7 to 10 years	1.8
No response	1.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

A total of 35.7% of the women had returned to live in the community more than 20 years ago. 17.9% had been back in the community for between 16 to 20 years and 21.4% of the respondents had been reintegrated in the community for 11 to 15 years. Similarly, 10.7% of the women had been back for 4 to 6 years and the same percentage had been back from a few months to one year. In this instant returning back does not necessarily apply that they have returned to their community of origin.

The fact that twenty-six of the interviews were carried out in the rural districts of Nuwakot, Sindupalchowk and Makwanpur must be taken into account here. The public interviewed in these districts was much older than the respondents interviewed in Kathmandu (Table 2), their trafficking experience having taken place longer ago. The elements of care provided by the organisations are different from those provided in Kathmandu as the needs are different. Most of the women living in these rural districts had been back in the community for at least 10 years.

### 3.2.1 Current Job

As almost all the trafficking survivors are from rural areas, a majority of them do farming (farm work, livestock keeping) for living. One finding is that a quarter of the women interviewed have more than one job. In case of many women, they do



not do any paid jobs but do household chores such as cooking and taking care of family and siblings. The survivors living in urban areas were found to work as hostel warden, labourer, shopkeepers, and NGO workers. A few were handicraft workers, spa attendant and volunteer while a few were unable to work due to disability or sickness. Some are self employed in the business's run with support of NGOs like Shakti Samuha. Some are helpers, cleaners, gate keepers, and receptionists in offices in Kathmandu. Some also work as labourers in building construction sites, carrying bricks and sand. Some run liquor shops and hotels while a few work as street vendor. The handicraft workers make prayer flags and weave threads. Those working in NGOs are chairperson, counsellor, or coordinator.

### **3.2.2 Employer**

Half of the women are self employed. They either work as household worker or work in self run business such as shops, liquor shop, and hotel, or work in farming and keep livestock. However, we should keep in mind that most of these women live out of Kathmandu. Meanwhile, a lot of the women are employed by NGOs. Many do not know about their employer while a few are unemployed as they are disabled or are in formal schooling.

### **3.2.3 Income per Month**

The majority of trafficking survivors earn but not enough to meet all their needs. Their earning ranges from Rs. 1,000 to above Rs. 10,000 per month. A lot of them earn Rs. 5,100 to 10,000 per month while some earn Rs. 3,100 to Rs. 5,000. A few survivors earn more than Rs. 10,000. The survivors who earn less than Rs. 3,000 per month are very few. Some survivors do not earn while one of the survivors declared that she earns enough.

More than a quarter of the women were not able to estimate their income as they are mainly rural workers such as subsistence farmers.

The distribution of respondents according to international line of poverty (\$ 1.25 per day, NRs 106 per day) is given below:

**Table 8: Income per Month**

<b>Income Frequency</b>	<b>(%)</b>
Above poverty line	46.4
Could not estimate	33.9
Below poverty line	12.5
Doesn't know	3.6
Earn but not enough	1.8
Enough	1.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table shows that, 12.5% of the respondents are below the international poverty line, and nearly half of the women (46.4%) are above it. A third could not estimate their earnings which need to be taken into account, they made their earnings through sustenance farming.

Distribution of Respondents according to National Minimum Wage (NMW) - (Rs 6200 per month and NRs 231 per day).

**Table 9: Distribution of Income according to NMW**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Frequency (%)</b>
Above national minimum wage	35.7
Below national minimum wage	17.9
Earn enough	1.8
Not enough	7.1
Do not know	3.6
Could not estimate	33.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Approximately 60% are below the minimum wage agreed between government, labour unions and employers' organisations and formalized in May 2011. Those responding as "could not estimate" are mainly rural workers seen as subsistence farmers and are included in the approximation.

### **3.2.4 Contributor to the Family Income**

The study shows that more than half of the women are the sole contributor to the family income, while a quarter of the respondents reported that their husband also contributed along with them. Similarly, the husband was the only contributor in case of a few families. There were also few cases who reported that the husbands earned but do not contribute to the family income as the latter's earnings were mostly spend on alcohol. A few of women were being helped by their children and the others were supported by their siblings. One respondent said that all of the family members contributed to the income. Another respondent said that the second wife of her husband contributed by working in the fields. Similarly, in case of few respondents the contributor to the family is their parents. One of the respondents said that no one in the family earns and in case of one other respondent the support came from an NGO.

### **3.2.5 Land Holding**

In terms of gender, the access and control is held mainly by the male members of the family. The findings of the study shows that a large number of the women interviewed do not possess any land at all. Among them almost all of the women are living in rented rooms in Kathmandu (all except one). Similarly, a few respondents are living on a land that is not theirs. Some of the respondents possess land, although a few of them are sharing the land they own with other members of their family.

In most cases the land does not yield enough for the women but they are managing with the help of others. Either they share with others, take loans, live in a hostel, or share the expenses with others. In some cases, the land provides a yield only lasting for 3 – 6 months. For the rest of the year they have to depend on their own or their family members' earning. Only a couple of respondents said that they are able to manage from the income from the land.

### 3.2.6 Current Marital Status

**Table 10: Current Marital Status**

<b>Current Marital status</b>	<b>Frequency (%)</b>
Married	44.6
Unmarried (Single)	12.5
No response	12.5
Separated	8.9
Widow	8.9
Divorced	5.4
Lives alone	5.4
Married to a man with second wife	1.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Nearly half of the women (44.6%) were married and 12.5% were single.

Similarly, 14.2% of the respondents were married at some point in their lives, but they were now divorced (5.4%), separated (8.9%), or living alone (5.4%). One of the respondents is married to a man with a second wife. Widows represented 8.9% of the women interviewed. Some of the respondents (12.5%) refrained from providing information about their marital status.

### 3.2.7 Organisation of the Family

The women were found to live in diverse living situations. Some were living with their husbands, some with parents, some alone, some with siblings, some with children, and some in shelter homes. A notable point is that a majority of the women lived with their families. Among them most lived in a nuclear family with husband and children, some lived in a joint family with husband, children, and in-laws and a few lived in an extended family with husband, children, in-laws, and son's/daughter's family. Similarly, some of the women lived only with their husband. A few lived in an NGO shelter and a lesser number reported living alone because their husband was living with another wife and some were in other diverse situations living with friends, employers' family, and brother. One of the women reported to have lived with her husband for 5 years and later left him and remarried with another man as she had trouble with the former.

### 4. Background Information

It is often stated that women and children are trafficked in South Asia due to poverty. Although poverty cannot be ruled out as one of the major factors making people vulnerable to trafficking, but it is also interesting to understand the situations of those survivors before they were trafficked in more detail so as to identify other factors contributing to their vulnerabilities.

#### 4.1 Family Structure before Trafficking

Three quarter of the women lived with both parents before being trafficked. Only a few lived with only one parent and a few lived with their stepfather and/or stepmother or without parents.

Almost all the women had siblings. More than half of the women had more than three siblings while many had 2-3 siblings. Similarly some of the women lived with a brother or a sister and very few women lived with their step brothers and/or step sister and without siblings. Some of the women even lived with in-laws and few with cousins, brother and/or sister.

#### 4.2 Financial Decision in the Family

Adhering to the patriarchal norms of Nepali society, in nearly half the families, it was the father in charge of financial decisions, and only in some families it was only the mother and in some, it was both mother and father who were responsible for those decisions. A few women said that financial decision in the family used to be taken by a brother, sister-in-law, or step parents while a few were unable to recall about the person who made financial decision in the family.

### 4.3 Relationship with the Family

Most of the women had a close relationship with their families before being trafficked, however, most of them stated that there were problems in the family such as alcoholism, poverty, domestic violence, and burden of work. A very few women said their relationship with their family was bad and stated that their parents had separated or mother had remarried. Similarly, a nominal percentage of women said that their relationship with their family was not so good or not so bad. One of the women said that she had to work a lot and another said that the relationship was not so good because she was a daughter. One woman could not remember what the relationship to her family had been like then.

### 4.4 Education before Trafficking

**Table 11: Education before Trafficking**

<b>Education</b>	<b>Frequency (%)</b>
No education	71.4
Primary School Education (Class 1 – 5)	17.9
High School Education (Class 9 – 10)	3.6
Just literate	3.6
Higher School Education (Class 11 & 12)	1.8
Lower Secondary School Education (class 6 – 8)	1.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

The study shows a strong correlation between the level of education and being trafficked. A majority of the women were either illiterate, barely literate or just primary school educated. Nearly two thirds of the women had no education at all and 17.9% attended only to primary school. 3.5% reported they were just literate and 1.7% had attended lower secondary school. Only 1.7% of the women had higher secondary level education and 3.6% had completed 12th grade.

## 4.5 Age at the Time of Trafficking

**Table 12: Age of Respondent at the Time of Trafficking**

Age	Frequency (%)
11 – 16 years	53.6
17 – 20 years	25
Not sure (teens ?, 13 – 15, 17 -18)	7.1
6 – 10 years	7.1
More than 20 years	7.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

The youngest and oldest women to be trafficked were 6 years and 26 years old respectively. The above table shows that more than half (53.6%) of the women however were between the age of 11 to 16 years when they were trafficked, one quarter were between 17 to 20 years old, the others were between 6 to 10 (7.1%) or more than 20 (7.1%). Some of the women (7.1%) could not recall how old they were when they were trafficked.

## 5. Return Experience

### 5.1 How Long Under Trafficked Situation?

**Table 13: Duration of Trafficking**

Duration	Frequency (%)
1 – 3 years	41.1
4 – 6 years	16.1
2 – 5 months	12.5
More than 6 years	12.5
6 – 11 months	8.9
Some days – 1 month	7.1
Intercepted at the border	1.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

The duration of the trafficking experience ranged between 7 days to 15 years, but for most women (41.1%) it lasted between 1 to 3 years. The trafficked situation lasted between 4 to 6 years for 16.1% of the women and more than 6 years for 12.5% of the respondents. For 7.1% of the women the duration was less than a month, for 12.5% it was between 2 and 5 months and for 8.9% it lasted between 6 months and a year. One of the respondents was intercepted at the border.

The respondents said that they stayed at different government and non government organizations after being able to get out of the trafficked situation. They either ran away and went to those places by themselves or were taken to those places by the police who rescued them. They stayed in those centres for some time before returning to Nepal.



## 5.2 Return

The respondents returned from the trafficked situation by various ways and means. They either ran away, were rescued during a police raid or were freed after paying debt or after they were found sick. The findings show that the majority of the respondents escaped their trafficked situation using many different ways. Findings also suggest that police raids are responsible for the rescue of many of the respondents. In case of some of the women, they were freed from the owner of the brothel they were working in after paying back the debt they owed. A few were freed by their owner because of illness. A couple of the respondents were able to come out of the trafficked situation with the help of client and police.

The expectations of the women on their return varied. The majority of the women reported that they had positive expectations about their return to Nepal. They wanted to go home and live happily with their family, expected to have a normal life, get married, wanted to work in the fields. They thought the community would have a good response to their situation and wanted to continue their education. On the other hand, many of the respondents had negative expectations at the time of their return. They had no hope when they got back, feared the reaction of their family, suspected their family would not accept them and wanted to go back to the brothel. Very few were happy about coming back to Nepal but did not wish to go back to their family. They wanted to live in the police station and not be sent back home. A few preferred to stay in India. Some of the women came back wishing to fight trafficking, either by sending the trafficker to jail or by creating awareness. Some of the respondents did not know what to expect. They only thought that it was good to be rescued.

Upon their return to Nepal (or their rescue in India) almost half of the women were sent to shelter homes, some emphasize the fact that it was like being sent to prison and talk about the “jail” they stayed in, especially talking about the Indian shelters. They said that they stayed in Indian shelters for some months to a year where they were treated very badly. In Nepal they were sent to the shelters of Shakti Samuha, Maiti Nepal, and CWIN etc. Some of the respondents went straight home, a few got married, found a job, and a few got divorced. For some who went directly home they found it difficult there as they were not accepted by male members of their

families. “ *My father and brother were very negative and said many bad things to me. My brother still has not accepted me as his sister. Sometimes I regret having come back.*” A trafficking survivor, 38 years. Later, they left their home and came in contact with the NGOs, or even started working as a highway sex worker. Some of them also married after returning home. A few women state that they had difficulties with their parents when they got back. One third of the women did not respond to this question. A few stayed in friend’s house or lived in slum area.

Apart from two of respondents all passed through two or more different organization on their return, some through more than three organizations. The organizations were both in India and Nepal.

### **5.3 Response of the Community**

For half of the women, the response of the community upon their return was bad, they were discriminated against and rejected. Not only themselves but also their whole family suffered discrimination. They had to listen to backbiting, foul words, and gossip. They were not accepted and faced untouchability, stigma, and insulting behaviour. They were assumed to be carrying HIV. Some of them described the response as being not only bad but very bad. Some of the respondents regard the response of their community as being good although for many women this was due to the fact that they were able to hide their past from the villagers. A few of them said the response of the community was alright. Some respondents did want to respond to the question.

### **5.4 Response of the Family**

Almost an equal number of women reported that the response of their family when they got back was as good as bad. In the cases where the family response was positive, the women felt supported by the family members, however in one instance a women reported that the response of her family was positive because they had no knowledge of her having been trafficked. According to them, the mother was happy but the brothers were not happy. Some of the respondents saw a change in the response of their family over time, the family’s response was good at first but became bad later. The response changed because the respondents were either suspected of having HIV or have HIV, or because their father or mother was deceased. Similarly in the case of some, the families responded negatively at first and their reaction

changed and became better. The response got better as the family members were made aware on HIV. In a few cases the families didn't say anything, and the response was alright. One woman reported her family had no choice but to accept her and the other said she did not know about her family.

## 5.5 Relation with the Authority

The study shows that most women did not feel the police troubled them, however a quarter of the women reported having had problems with the police. They accused them of being abusive, arresting them and sending back to brothel, and restricting them in their return home. They said that Indian police beat them and behaved very badly. They felt that police worked in favour of the brothel owner. They were rescued from the brothel but sent back by the police. A couple of them even said that the police had helped the trafficker escape. A few respondents reported a supportive response of the police. One of them said that police had helped her to find a job as a domestic helper in India.

More than half of the respondents have not come in contact with the court and amongst them ones who have, nearly all of the women encountered problems with the court. Most women felt they were discriminated against by the courts, the intrusive questions made them feel bad and humiliated. According to them, they faced problems as the trafficker had bribed officials and the government lawyer made them feel guilty. One woman also reported a change in the attitude of the court towards her case after as she thought the trafficker had offered a bribe.

**Table 14: Cases Registered**

Case Registered	Frequency (%)
Yes	26.8
No	73.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Only one quarter of the women (26.8%) registered cases against the traffickers when they got back to Nepal although most of them were helped by an NGO or a family member to do so. A few of the women who did register a case were threatened by the trafficker and pressured to withdraw the case. A couple of women gave in to the threats and withdrew their cases.

Half of the women who registered the case were able to get the trafficker caught and/or jailed, however they were released on two occasions. In a couple of cases, not all of the traffickers are caught. Only some of the traffickers have been caught. Some of the women expressed pessimism as they saw nothing happen even though they filed cases. *“ I’m not satisfied that the traffickers are punished for 20 years, because after that they can go back and sell other girls. If life sentences were slapped then trafficking would decrease.”* A trafficking survivor around 40 year.

Nearly three quarters of the women have not filed any cases against their traffickers. Most of them did not do so because they could not recognize the trafficker and in some cases the traffickers were too old or dead. A woman said that she would like to file a case and take revenge but she is scared of the trafficker.

## 5.6 Children

**Table 15: Children**

<b>Children at the time of return</b>	<b>Frequency (%)</b>
No children	89.3
1 child	5.4
2 children	5.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Almost all (89.3%) of the women had no children when they came back to Nepal although one of them reported having an abortion when she was in India. Of those 10.8% of women with children, the number varied between one to two children (half in percentages).

Some of the women already had children when they were trafficked. Several of these children were trafficked along with their mothers. In the case of one woman, the children stayed with their father and were forced into work as domestic labourers. Some of the women gave birth during their trafficking experience. The children stayed with their mother when they came back from India, in one case the children were taken by the father after their divorce.

### 6. Elements of Care and Support Provided

**Table 16: Number of Organisations Providing Care and Support to the Respondents.**

No. of Organizations went through	Frequency (%)
One	46.4
Two	28.6
Three	17.9
More than Three	3.6
None	3.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Almost all (54) women received support from different organizations at one time or the other during the post-rescue period. Nearly half of the women (46.4%) were taken in charge by only one organisation since they came out of the brothels, 28,6% of them were helped by two organisations, 17.9% came in contact with three organisations and 3.6% came in contact with more than three organisations. Only a couple of women had not been in contact with any organization since their return to Nepal and are no longer in trafficking situations.

**Table 17: Organisations Providing Care to the Respondents**

<b>Organizations</b>	<b>Frequency (%)</b>
Shakti Samuha	76.8
Maiti Nepal	7.1
Rescue Foundation	3.6
Indian Government	3.6
Family Planning Association of Nepal	23.2
Makwanpur Mahila Samuha	5.4
Shakti Milan Samaj	8.9
Child Workers in Nepal (CWIN)	1.8
Jyoti project	1.8
Asha Nepal	10.7
ABC Nepal	1.8
WOREC	5.4
GAATW	16.1
MANK	8.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>175.1</b>

*(Total exceeds 100 because the respondents received care and support from more than one organization.)*

The above table shows that more than three quarters of the women (76.7%) reported Shakti Samuha as having provided help to them, 23.2% of the women benefited from care and support from the Nepal Family Planning Association, and 16% were aided by GAATW. Asha Nepal provided care to 10.7% of the women, Shakti Milan Samaj to 8.9% of the respondents, and a similar number of the women were supported by MANK. Maiti Nepal provided care to 7.1%, the Makwanpur Women Society and WOREC both supported 5.4% of the women each, the Rescue Foundation (based in India) and the Indian government each provided care to 3.5% of the respondents. CWIN, the CWS, Jyoti Project and ABC had each supported one of the women.

The women received various elements of care and support. They received shelter support, counselling, health care, capacity-building training, education, job counselling, income generation, job support, participation in various therapies, legal, and life skill training support. The findings show that education support was the element of care that was most often offered to the respondents. More than half of them benefited from this service in the form of both formal and non formal education support and school supplies.

Capacity building training in the form of vocational training was also found to be an element of care given to many of the women. Also more than half of the women received different kinds of capacity building training such as bead making, business set-up, social mobilization, beautician, painting, handicraft, furniture making, crockery, embroidery, tailoring, driving, computer training, and journalism training. Income generating support was given to almost half of the women. For example support was provided to start a beauty parlour, a shop, to rear cattle etc.

Shelter and healthcare support were also received by many women. The women were provided shelter in Shakti Samuha, Maiti Nepal, and in the shelters of Indian NGOs and Government. Regarding healthcare, they reported to have received regular health check-up and HIV test service. About a quarter of the women received job seeking support and the same number of women were given life skills training. The life skill training was on HIV, leadership and management, self confidence, communication, first aid, human rights, reproductive health, and empowerment. Similarly, a quarter of the women received psychological counselling, only one eighth received job counselling. Alternative therapies such as art and dance therapy were offered to 8.9% of the women and 5.3% of the respondents obtained legal support. A few women declared not having received any support.

The findings also show that a vast majority of the women judged the elements of care and support they were provided with were useful. According to them, capacity building training such as bead making, income generation support, education support, and life skills training were helpful. In a tenth of the cases the support provided was somewhat helpful although it did not entirely satisfy the respondents needs because the help provided was either not enough or not what they felt they needed. One of the women stated that the care she received from an NGO was not helpful at all.

Education support and income generating support were judged to be the most effective elements of care by the respondents. They indicated a high regard towards education saying that they would not have trafficked had they been educated. Income generation support has helped them to start small businesses and support their families. Similarly, job seeking support was the most effective element of care for many women. Life skill training and capacity building training were both as popular among the women also judging them to be most effective. They have been able to develop awareness, know about reproductive health, help each other, and develop leadership capacity from life skills training. Similarly social worker training and tailoring training have also been effective. A few women declared that building a network was the most effective support for them. They feel that they are not alone and have found another home. A few respondents reported that making art, being part of a financial saving group, receiving legal support and the presence of the NGO staff were the most effective for them. One of the respondents stated that every element of care that was provided to her was the most useful while another respondent reported that none of the elements were the most useful.

## **6.1 Suggestions given by the Respondents**

When asked what are the elements of care and support provided to them were not useful, a vast majority of them said that could not name any elements that were not effective and only a few listed elements of care that were not useful to them. Most of them said that training on driving, electrical work, handicraft and tailoring were not useful. Some of the training was good but not enough to survive on while in case of electrical training, it was difficult to work with male colleagues, this being a guardedly male dominated industry. Similarly, for some life skills training was not useful and for a few it was the environment of the organization. In those cases it was felt the environment of the office was not welcoming or confidentiality was not maintained as case studies naming them were published. Some of them were discriminated against within the organization.

Only a very few women made direct suggestions as to what could be changed to improve the care and support provided to trafficking survivors. Those suggested making others aware of trafficking and of the condition of the women when they come back, suggested emphasising self management and recommended sending the traffickers to jail with life-long sentences in order not to be able to traffic women again.



The respondents expressed various needs ranging from education and a safe shelter to monetary support, pension planning, and basic needs such as food and cloth. Education and training were the needs that were felt most by the women at the time of their return from India. Similarly some of the women reported they needed a job, financial support and a few said they needed income generating support and basic things such as food and cloth. Some respondents said they needed psychological counselling, shelter and awareness to be created around them so as to make their return in their community easier. A few women also wished they had met with NGOs earlier as their need was for support from those organisations; they needed self help meetings and health care support. Several women focused on their current needs and reported needing a pension plan because she couldn't work much anymore because of their age. One of them needed income generation support to buy goats. Some needed direct monetary support so that others would accept them easily.

## 6.2 Religion

**Table 18: Religion**

Religion	Frequency (%)
All gods	1.8
Buddhist	41.1
Buddhist and Hindu both	1.8
Christianity	1.8
Doesn't know	1.8
Family god	5.4
Hindu (I thinking of converting to Christianity)	41.1
None	5.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Although religion is not an element of care and support provided by the organisations, women can find care and support in religion.

The above table shows that as many women (41.1%) reported equally being either Buddhist or Hindu, 5.4% of the women believed in family gods, 1.8% of the women

(each) declared believing in all gods, being both Hindu and Buddhist, being Christian (1.8% of the women were thinking of converting themselves to Christianity) and 1.8% did not know what their religion was. 5.4% of the women gave no response and 1.8% of the women said they had no religion.

Even though most women declared having a religion, more than a third of them declared religion was not present in their everyday life. According to them, they do not think of religion. For the women for whom religion is present in their lives, said it was either somewhat present or very much present. More than one third of them said the religion was present as they regarded faith as important and attended the temple and prayed when in trouble or happy. A few of them said that religion was not much present in their lives. According to them, they believed in religion but did not go to the temple and did not spend money on rituals. A couple of respondents said that religion was very much present in their everyday lives, according to them things are easier because of faith and they listen to religious hymns and pray every morning.

## 7. Welfare

### 7.1 Living Conditions

Only just over a third of the respondents are living in their own houses. The houses were one, two, or three storied. The rest of them have rented a room or rooms to live in. More than one third of them rented and lived in a single room. Some of them even shared the room with friend/s. Only a few of them were living in two rooms. One of them used the other room as a shop. Only one respondent was living in more than two rooms. A couple of the respondents have rented a flat with four rooms. They live in the flat with their family. Three respondents were living in a shelter and couple of others lived in at the organization where they worked. A couple of them were living in poorly built dwellings which they termed as 'a hut.' Others were living in different conditions such as in their parents' kitchen, in an in-laws house, and in their boss's house suggesting that they have no place of their own to live in.

### 7.2 Support Structure

The respondents when asked about their support structure, more than one third of the women reported Shakti Samuha as being their support structure. Some of them said that they were receiving income generation support from Shakti Samuha. Some of the respondents sort support from Shakti Milan Samaj, Asha Nepal, and the Nepal Family Planning Association when they needed it. This shows the importance of the organisations in the supportive role since a total of more than half of the respondents still rely on them for support. One quarter of the women turn to their families when they need support. They ask their brothers, in-laws, husbands, and sisters for support when in need. Some also reported that they ask their friends, neighbours, co-workers, and the staff at support organizations when they needed help.

It is notable that a number of women feel they had no support structure to turn to and one of them felt she herself was her own support structure.

Most of the women judged their bosses to be good and some thought their boss was alright. A few said their boss was bad (one woman mentioned corruption in relation with her boss). A little more than half of the respondents did not respond to this question, for the most part as they had no boss.

### **7.3 Economical Welfare**

The women were asked what they used their earnings for. Their answers suggest that they spent all or most of their earnings on items such as food, clothing, education, and rent.

A majority the respondents used their earning in buying food, nearly one third of the women also used their earnings for buying clothes, and more than a quarter of the women also used them for house rent as a lot of them stayed in rented room. There were a significant numbers of respondent who used earning for their children's education or their own education and to buy stationery and pay fees. There were a notable number of respondents who used the earnings for health expenses, for their own needs and those of their, children or their husbands. Many of them used it for household expenses that ranged from maintaining the house to medicine. Similarly, some of the women used their earnings to supply their businesses; some used them for transport and to support their family while a few of the respondents reported using their earnings for personal expenses. Very few said that they used the earnings for festivals, ceremonies, for alcohol and smoking, or for buying livestock. One of them saved her earnings and the other used her earnings to buy art supplies. Also one of the women did not know where the money she earned went.

Some of the women reported that they had no earnings.

Almost a quarter of the women regularly supported their family financially. They supported their brothers, in-laws, and parents. They helped the family buy food and livestock. A small number supported their parental family financially, sometimes or only when they needed it. The majority of the women reported never supporting their parental family financially.

Similarly, almost all the women have not received any support from their wider family, only a few women reported being financially supported by them. In the case of some women, their families would like to support but were not able to.

Only a third of the women have personal savings. They saved in micro credit groups and cooperatives. They admitted to have saved for health and emergency expenses. The majority of them did not possess a bank account. Approximately a quarter of the women have accounts in banks and cooperatives.

## **7.4 Current Relationship with the Family**

More than half of the women described their relationship with their family as being good although some stressed the fact that the relationship had become better when they had started to earn money and support them financially. One of them said her relationship is good but she is not permitted to participate in family rituals. A quarter of the women however reported their relationship with their family as being bad. Some of them are not invited to visit or attend family celebrations, this may change after the respondents have an income of their own. In case of some, the relationship has been bad after the death of their parents. According to them, their families do not care about them. Some of the women had a good relationship only with some members of their family and reported that their relationship with their family varied, sometimes being good and sometimes being bad. One woman even talked about being tortured. In some cases the relationship with sisters is good while in some case the relationship with parents is good.

Two thirds of the women reported visiting their families. Only a few never visit their families. One of the reasons of not visiting the family is due to the cost of transport being too expensive. More than a quarter of the women lived with their families.

A quarter of the women visited their families only once a year (mostly for Dashain). Some visited more than once a year, but some were not able to visit their family every year. They visited their families over more than a year's time apart. But some were able to visit at least twice every week. A few were able to visit at least twice a month and one of them visited once a month. A few of the women reported that they visited often and a few said they went

sometimes. A few women did not go often while one of these women mentioned the fact that she does not like to visit her family.

Nearly half of the women receive visits from their family while some of the women never had family visiting them. The parents and brothers visit them.

The families visit twice a year, once a year, in some months, often or sometimes. Most of the families visit once or little more than once a year, others receive their families twice a year or more often.

## **7.5 Current Relationship with the Community**

Three quarters of the women judged their relationship with their home community as being good although some report that the community backbites about them, others stated that the relationship was good because their home community did not know about their past. Nearly a quarter of the women reported that their relationship was bad. They stated that they themselves and their children are discriminated against, everyone knows about their trafficked past, talk behind their backs and some do not want to go into their community. Some of the respondents reported the relationship as being alright. A few of them had not been back to their home community and couple of them did not care about their relationship with their home community.

The vast majority of the women have a good relationship with their current community although in many cases this is because people do not know about the women's past. This fact might explain why so many women stay in Kathmandu once they come back to Nepal, the community they live in is more anonymous than in villages and people "do not care" about other people's past. Some of the women described their relationship with the current community as being bad, and some as being alright. One of the women does not care about the community she lives in.

Nearly three quarters of the women have personal relationships with friends, relatives, and co-workers. They also have relationship with neighbours but some of them feel they have no time for it. Some of them declared they had no personal relationships.

## 8. Physical health

### 8.1 Substance Abuse

**Table 19: Substance Abuse**

Substance abuse	Frequency (%)
Alcohol	26.8
Smoking	32.1
Used to smoke	8.9
Used to drink	7.1
No substance abuse	14.3
Does not want to tell us/no response	10.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

Nearly one third of the women (32.1%) reported smoking. Among them, 7.1% did not smoke regularly, 8.9% used to smoke but had stopped. Over a quarter of the women (26.8%) of the women reported drinking alcohol, 10.7% of the women did not drink regularly, 7.1% did not drink alcohol anymore. While, 14.3% of the women declared not using any alcohol or tobacco 10.7% did not answer the question.

### 8.2 Health Conditions

Nearly half of the women reported being in good health or being generally healthy, however over a third of the women said that their health was not good. Notable health problems were related to the uterus, joints, breathing (asthma), and HIV infection. Besides this, some of them reported suffering from frequent allergies, headaches, low blood pressure, migraine, and weakness. Some of the women reported having

several health problems at the same time. They suffer from migraine, arthritis during winter, pains in body, headache, and gastro problems. However, during the interview it could be sensed that health issues were not of major concerns to some women.

Only half of the women were concerned about their health. Those that were felt concern about their health stated issues such as; because they were alone and had no children to look after them and some had health problems eg. HIV, physical pains etc. Some were concerned not only about their health but also their children's health. Some of the women were only concerned about their health sometimes. More than a quarter of the women reported their health was not one of their concerns.

### **8.3 Needs**

#### Healthcare needs of the respondents

The respondents had various needs such as medical treatment and medicine, good diet, and rest. Half of the women feel they would need access to a doctor and medical treatment to take care of their health. They needed to go to hospital, have access to specialist doctors, and have operations as soon as possible. A quarter of them would need medicine, (of which two needed ARV medicine). Some of them said that they would rely on alternative treatments including homeopathy as well as a traditional and faith healing (Lama – a Shaman). A few expressed the need of good diet and rest. A couple of them said that they do not need anything.



## 9. Psychological Health

### 9.1 Anger

Some questions during the interview were directed to gather information on the psychological health of trafficking survivors. Nearly three quarters of the women were subject to anger, nearly half of them felt angry sometimes and a nearly a third confessed feeling angry often, whereas only a few felt angry very rarely. Some of them cited that their anger was mostly towards their husband or when they felt disturbed or did not have money. A few of them said that they do not feel angry.

### 9.2 Sadness

Similarly, a large majority of the women said that they feel sad. Among which most feel sad often while a quarter of them feel sad only sometimes. Some of the respondents said that they feel sad when children leave home. Some of them pray when they are sad while some want to die when they are sad. Some said they do not feel sad at all, but they were a very few respondents saying this.

### 9.3 Tiredness

A majority of the women said that they feel tired. Most of them said that they often feel tired, less than a quarter said that they only feel tired sometimes and a couple of them said that they rarely feel tired. The cause of tiredness varies as some said that they feel tired because of work while others said it is because of school or lack of sleep. One of them said that she feels tired all the time and the other said she feels tired every day in the morning. A few of them claimed that they do not feel tired at all and the same number did not respond to this.

## 9.4 Fears

More than half of the women had fears. They were scared of the trafficker, more so during night time. Nearly half of them declared not being scared.

The respondents who said that they were scared and asked what scared them, said that were scared of themselves or other people, brothers, community, traffickers, ghosts, and wild animals. A few survivors who were scared of themselves were scared of committing mistakes and also due to a lack of confidence. They were scared of their husband marrying another woman. Similarly they were scared of being re-trafficked and harm from the traffickers. Some of the respondents were also scared of their future, darkness, nightmares, and loneliness.

## 9.5 Freedom

The women defined freedom differently. They defined freedom as a life without any barrier, restriction, order, and threat. According to them freedom meant living a happy, peaceful, secure and self reliant life in equality. They said that freedom for them meant to use whatever they wanted, to go wherever they wanted, to talk freely, to do whatever they want, to enjoy, to take care of themselves, to live, speak, and walk openly, and to live without any pressure and threats. More than one third of the women could not define the term and some of them had not even heard about the term. “ *Freedom is to be happy and not to live with fear and oppression .”* A trafficking survivor, 28 years.

## 9.6 Dreams

A large majority of the women reported having dreams. They had different dreams. The dreams ranged from having a home in Kathmandu, going abroad, to having their children back and educating their children. They dreamt of a good and happy life, good education for their children, confidence, punishment to traffickers and abusers, loving husband, having business and money, having good jobs, and completing their education. They even dreamt of their fellow survivors. They dreamt of providing support to needy women. More than a quarter of them declared not having any dreams. “ *My dream is to give education to my children and send them abroad for study. I hope they will help me in future.”* A trafficking survivor, 26 years.

All of the women who had dreams dreamt for their children as well. They dreamt of good education to their children, and wished to see their children be a good, happy, and respected person in society. They dreamt of their children being aware and educated.

## 9.7 Feeling about the Trafficker

The study shows that most of the women are angry at the trafficker and nearly half of the women would like to take revenge on their trafficker. They are angry because they have suffered discrimination from society because of their trafficker and also because the traffickers have not stopped giving them trouble. One of them made demands for the death penalty of the trafficker. They also want to find the trafficker and punish him. Some of the respondents feel no more aggression and negative feelings towards their traffickers. They want to let go. The women were very concerned about the awareness on trafficking and penalty to the trafficker. They wanted all the girls and women to be informed on the issue and the traffickers to be sentenced to a life in prison. They suggested awareness should be raised among the girls in village. Some of them even showed sympathy to the trafficker. The traffickers also longed for better life with good things to wear and eat. They wanted to earn money. In some occasions, the women showed disagreement with the interviewer. They said they have been interviewed many time but not received anything. Their life has always been the same. *“ I used to get very angry thinking about the trafficker and wanted to take revenge. But now I do not really care as my daughter is in a good place.”* A trafficking survivor, 32 years.

## 9.8 Future

A majority of the women see their future as being dark or they are sceptical about their future. They think that they will be alone in the future and there will be no one to look after them. They are also worried about getting sick when old and not having support from husband and children. A few respondents think things will not change in the future and are not optimistic. They are doubtful about their future.

Less than a quarter of the respondents think that their future is going to be good and bright. Some of them are hopeful of their studies and work and some say that the future will be bright if the disease they suffer from is cured. A couple of them also

expressed confidence to do something to make their life better. “*I want to complete my education and be an example showing that trafficked women can do everything. I also want to work with trafficking survivors.*” A trafficking survivors, 26 years.

Some of the respondents were not able to think about their future. They seemed sceptical and expressed doubt about their future becoming better.

The women who have negative feelings about the future represent the majority of the sample. It is notable though that three quarters of the women reported they would always find solutions when faced with problems, demonstrating their positivity. Some of them are definite that they can find solutions to the problems while some others think that they will be able to find solutions only sometimes. Only some of the women thought they would not be capable of solving problems. A respondent said that she did not know but would try. One other respondent mentioned that she would continue her education to become fully independent.

### 10. Awareness of the Body

Disassociation of the body and the mind is one of the mechanisms used to protect oneself from psychological trauma, the respondents understood the questions with difficulty and nearly always interpreted it in a health related way. Three quarters of the women reported knowing their own body. They said that they felt what going on in the body. Some are worried about their health while some think that their body is not like what they expect. The other quarter of the respondents said they did not understand their body. One of them was not willing to think about or feel her body.

When asked how they felt inside, nearly half of the women reported that they felt negative things inside them. They felt worried, tiredness, lots of aches and pains, diseases, and weakness. Some of the also felt that it is the time to die. They felt something wrong going inside their body. Some of the respondents said that they feel good inside their body. They said they like their body and feel good about the body. Some other respondents do not feel anything while a few said that they sometimes feel good and sometimes bad.

More than half of the women reported being able to predict some bodily responses like illness, tiredness and soreness, but a third of the women felt unable to do so.

## 11. Awareness of Rights

### 11.1 Respect

The respondents were asked what respect meant for them. The women said that respect meant behaving well, giving love, regarding well, not dominating, not interfering in other life, having good relationship, and understanding their feelings. They had other varying views such as; behaving without discrimination, honouring, talking politely, and involved in social and family rituals, these responses also give insight into their own treatment. They also regard respecting elder, not hurting others about their past, and greeting is respect. Some of them feel respected if they are listened to and well regarded while a few said that equity is respect. A few said that they do not know about respect while one of them said that she feels uncomfortable if anyone behaves in a respectful manner with her.

A large majority of the respondents felt they were respected in some way, although they answered “yes” to the question: “Are you respected”, most did not feel so in a general sense but could see signs of respect sometimes and from some people. They said that they were respected sometimes by some of the people they come in contact with. They were respected only in the shelter by staff, or only by friends, by husband, maternal family, and by younger people. Some of them also said that they were not respected by elder relatives and other people in the community. They suggested that though they received respect they only received it from a few people. They were not respected by everyone.

Some of the respondents felt that they were not respected at all while one of them did not know whether she was respected or not.

## 11.2 Information to Legal Rights

Nearly half of the women did not know what their rights were, some had heard the word, some had heard about having rights, but “rights” remained an abstract term for them while a few of them did not respond to the question. Others regard their rights to live happily and freely without discrimination, to get educated, to be treated equally, to speak and opine freely, to move freely, live secured lives, get medical treatment, and work for life. They also said that entertainment, food, freedom, and financial decisions are also their rights.

More than half of the respondents reported not having enough legal information while the rest said that they have legal information. A few of them said that they do not have much information while some said they have some information.

The women were asked whether they had enough support for legal information or not. Most of them said that they had support. A lot of them said Shakti Samuha proved their support. Others said that family members, friends, and NGOs were the support. A couple of them said that police should be the support. Some of the respondents said that they do not have such support and many said that they do not know about the support.

**Table 20: Citizenship**

<b>Do you have citizenship?</b>	<b>Frequency (%)</b>
Yes	87.5
No	12.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

More than half of the women knew about the Nepalese anti-trafficking law, although most of them had only a small knowledge of what was written in the law.

Most women (87.5%) had their Nepalese citizenship while the rest reported not having obtained it. This finding also has a correlation with the age of the women as a majority of them (more than 80%) were above the age of twenty five years and had returned to Nepal for a while, allowing them time to issue their citizenship cards.

Half of the women who said they did not have citizenship reported having faced no problems, but the ones participating in training expressed that they encounter problems and are barred from admission to those trainings without citizenship. One of them said that she could not get citizenship because she doesn't have parents and her husband's request was ignored.



## 12. Other Areas Discussed

### 12.1 Feelings of Difference

The respondents were asked whether they feel different from others. Two third of the women reported not feeling different from other people, however nearly one third of the women expressed that they did feel different. Some of the women judged that this feeling came directly from the fact that they were trafficked. Others felt different due to their lack of education, because they were taken to India, had children without a father, were HIV+, were disabled, and their way of thinking and working which was different from other people's. *" Sometimes I feel different than others when people say bad things because of my trafficking experience."* A trafficking survivor, 20 years.

More than half of the women felt that they were not seen as being different by others, but many others said that they were seen as being different. According to them, people behave in a different manner with them and at times they are ignored. They feel insecure and a few said they do not feel different in Kathmandu but in the village it is different.

It is interesting to note that more than half of the women reported being able to talk about their past with other people. A little less than half of the women said that they share their experiences with close friends, which also included fellow survivors with whom they were friendly. A lot of them share their experiences with NGOs like Shakti Samuha, Asha Nepal, and Shakti Milan Samaj and a few of them share with their husband, family members, relatives, like-minded people and support groups.

Almost half of the women said they could not talk about the past with anyone. They said that they are scared to talk about their experience in their family and community.

## 12.2 Marital life

Nearly half of the women said that they thought marriage was good and an important part of life. For these women, a marriage represented support, security and also a central part of tradition. Similarly, a few women regarded marriage neither good nor bad. They said that the happiness in marriage depended upon the person with whom one marries. They said receiving love, care, and support was more important than marriage. Some of the women had a negative image of marriage, for them it was a huge constraint put upon the woman.

When asked how their own marital life was going, most of the women reported that it was not going well. Some of them were separated or divorced due to their husbands or family members' negative behaviour. Quite a few mentioned torture and a lack of support, be it financial or emotional, from their husband. They also said that even their children are at risk at the hands of their husbands. They are abused because of the past experience as victims of trafficking. Less than a quarter of the respondents reported that their marital life was going well. These felt their husbands were good and they were happy with their husband. A few women reported their marital life as being average. They thought that their life would have been better had the husband quit drinking and one felt the relationship would be better had she had her own children.

A lot of the women did not have in-laws or they were not in contact with them. Among those living with the in-laws or in contact with in-laws, a majority said that they had a good relationship with them, although most women stated that they did not live together and their in-laws did not know about their past. Some of them had a bad relationship with their in-law family. One said that her in-laws used bad words and tried to kick her out of her house. Some of them said that their earnings are taken by their brothers-in-law. One of the women said that she is hated in the family by her in-laws because she does not have son. A small percentage of the women's relationships with their in-law family was average. Some reported they have a good relationship with their mother-in-law but that their father-in-law was a drunkard and/or abusive.

A lot of the women did not have children and many had step-children. The findings show that the relationship of the women with their children is easier than with

their husband or their in-law family with a quarter of the women reported their relationship with their children as being good. A couple of the women saw their relationship as not going well. They said that they had step children who did not treat them well. One of them reported the relationship as being average as the relation was sometimes good and sometimes bad.

More than a quarter of the women felt a sense of belonging to their birth place, childhood home, parents, family and community. Among them, most felt a sense of belonging to their birthplace and home while some felt a sense of belonging to their parents. One of them said that she missed her mother whom she had never met. A few of them felt a sense of belonging to their husband. Many respondents felt a sense of belonging to their children and some felt so to the NGOs like Shakti Samuha and Shakti Milan Samaj who had cared for them. A few felt a sense of belong to friends and fellow survivors. A quarter of them did not feel a sense of belonging to anybody. *“ My marital life was not so good before, but now it has become better as I am earning and supporting them financially.”* A trafficking survivor, 29 years.

### 13. Conclusions and Discussions

Internationally, there is no dearth of research conducted on the reintegration of trafficking survivors, but however, no specific research could be traced on the same issue in Nepal. Neither the government nor NGOs have data with updated situations of 128 trafficking survivors who were repatriated with the initiation and intervention of the latter from post-rescue homes in India in 1996.

Some concerns that exist are how many of those survivors are faring well in life? How many of them are still alive? And how many of them have been re-trafficked? In short, where are they now and what are they doing? It has become difficult even for an organization such as Shakti Samuha, established by the returnees of 1996 and with a network of trafficking survivors, to answer even a bit of these questions.

Before divulging into discussions, it is essential to understand how 'reintegration' of trafficking survivors is defined and understood in Nepal. A study<sup>9</sup> carried out by Chen and Marcovici (2003) to explore the current status of reintegrated girls in Kailali and Kanchanpur districts of Nepal, through participatory approach, calls for a collaborative effort to come up with a consistent definition of 'reintegration' and recommends that it should be related to programming that meets the needs of the survivors rather than family reunification which is generally understood as reintegration. However, even since then no common definition and understanding of reintegration has emerged/developed. Even the anti-trafficking law (Human Trafficking and Transportation Control Act 2064) enacted in 2007 has not been successful in defining 'reintegration' but once again emphasis is put on family reunification. Sutrees, R. (2006b)<sup>10</sup> in a background paper prepared for King Baudouin defines

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<sup>9</sup>Chen, C., and Marcovici, K. (2003). Exploring the Status of Reintegrated Girls: A Participatory Study, Kailali and Kanchanpur, Nepal, Kathmandu: Save the Children US

<sup>10</sup>Surtees, R. (2006b). Re/integration Programmes in SE Europe – a background paper for the King Baudouin Foundation. Brussels: KBF

re/integration as the process of recovery and economic and social inclusion pursuant to trafficking experience. She further elaborates whether the survivor returns to one's family and/or community of origin or integration in a new community or could be even in a new country but the survivor has to be ensured of settlement in stable and safe environment, access to a reasonable standard of living, mental and physical well-being, opportunities for personal, social and economic development and access to social and emotion support.

As a child focused organization, the reintegration definition of Terre des hommes Foundation is supported by Article 39<sup>11</sup> of UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (UN CRC). Terre des hommes Foundation defines 'reintegration' as a process that takes place after the return of the child to his home, city or country (place of origin) and "Integration" refers to the process that takes place in the new destination. However, either reintegration or integration will be opted will depend on the best interests determination of the child. But, in either situation, it strongly believes that reintegration activities must go beyond relief intervention and aim for a sustainable livelihood approach.

Similarly, Shakti Samuha, with the personal experience of its members as trafficking survivors themselves as well as based on the experiences gathered through its work believes that although one's family and community is the best place to be able to spend one's life after the trafficking experience, but due to various factors such as stigma, rejection from the family and community, discrimination, hardships and lack of economic opportunities and most often family and community not being the safest place, family reunification may not be the best solution for reintegration. Thus, for Shakti Samuha reintegration implies no matter where the survivor is, either back to the community and family or in a new setting, she is self reliant and independent and her needs are met.

Asha Nepal with its history of delivering services for the care and protection to trafficking survivors for more than a decade believes that the right, proper and best place for survivors is a return into the community. However this "return"

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<sup>11</sup>Article 39 of UN CRC: 'States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social re(integration) of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts. Such recovery and re(integration) shall take place in an environment which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child'

needs to be delivered in a meaningful, self sufficient process and without any form of discrimination. As with Terre des home its approach is defined by article 38. Their approach is also firmly based on the needs of the individual, this has been the approach taken in the founding of Shakti Kendra and of their other counter trafficking related activities. As with Shakti Samuha they recognize that however young the survivor may be that reintegration into the family is often not possible and a self sufficient place in society may be the only answer. In a society and culture where family ties and associations dominate everyday life such an alternative is fraught with potential areas of difficulty and failure. Reintegration therefore is not a collective action but an individual one, based on education, skills, ability, physical and mental health, confidence, security and a support network relevant to their individual needs. There is no short term fix, reintegration isn't a one of process it is a life time.

Human trafficking has become a widespread problem in Nepal and its gravity has intensified with the diversification of its forms and locations. Various reports and anecdotal evidences have shown that trafficking of human beings is not confined to twenty-eight districts listed as trafficking prone districts by the Government of Nepal. As per the national report on trafficking of women and children<sup>12</sup> the data obtained from the Directorate of Women Children and Service Center (WCSC) in the period of 2008/2009 a total of 139 trafficking cases were reported coming from thirty-six districts out of seventy-five districts of Nepal. Similarly, the vulnerability is not confined to specific ethnic groups but is touches all ethnic groups such as Brahmin, Chhetri, Dalit, Rai, Magar and Tharu. Due to the purposive sampling methodology adopted in this study the geographic locations from where the survivors come was selected and this had a co-relation of ending up with more than fifty percent of the survivors coming from Tamang communities. The recent report<sup>13</sup> published by the National Human Rights Commission shows that trafficking cases are reported in all regions of Nepal and although out of the reported trafficking cases 56.6% are of Janjatis, Chhetris also make a significant percentage of 32.1.

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<sup>12</sup>Office of the Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Women and Children (OSRT). (2010) Trafficking in Persons Especially on Women and Children in Nepal, National Report 2008 -2009, National Human Rights Commission, Nepal

<sup>13</sup>Office of the Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Women and Children (OSRT). (2010) Trafficking in Persons Especially on Women and Children in Nepal, National Report 2009 -2010, National Human Rights Commission, Nepal

However, more than ninety percent of the survivors come from rural setting and this also the case in general as cited by the national report on trafficking of women and children.<sup>14</sup> But at the same time due to various reasons cited by the interviewed survivors, most of them prefer to live in urban settings rather than going back to their respective communities. In a longitudinal research<sup>15</sup> from Chab Dai Coalition in Cambodia where ten shelter homes for trafficking survivors were assessed and it was found that during the focused group discussions that the survivors acknowledged family as key factor in their lives and craved for ‘unconditional love’ from their family members such as mothers and siblings but feared violence from the male members of the family such as fathers, husbands and brothers. Similarly, fear of stigma was existent but at the same time a desire to gain ‘honor’ in the community to overcome stigma associated with the past of experience with sexual exploitation was also existent. The same can be inferred from the current study where most of the survivors had positive expectations and wanted to go back home after the trafficking experience to lead a normal life such as get married, contribute to family through subsistence agriculture or even go back to school. However, upon return more than half of the survivors expressed that they were rejected and discriminated by the family as well as community. They were even feared of having carried incurable diseases such as HIV with them. Some of the survivors who said that the community treated them nicely confessed that it was because their past was not revealed. A study<sup>16</sup> by conducted by The Asia Foundation (2001) on community perceptions on trafficking and its determinants in Nepal talks about the high levels of stigma and discrimination associated with returned trafficking survivors and how the community looked upon them with hatred and were seen as HIV carriers in the community.

The findings of the study shows that many of the trafficking survivors interviewed had come out from the brothels by escaping on their own or through police raid. Similarly, they report having encountered violence, abuse and harassment pursuant to their rescue. It should also be noted that since the interviewed survivors have been back to Nepal since a long time, they were not repatriated through a formal process

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<sup>15</sup>Chab Dai Coalition. (2011). The Butterfly Longitudinal Research Project – A Chab Dai Study of (Re) – integration (Researching the Lifecycle of Survivors of Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking), Cambodia

<sup>16</sup>Mahendra, B. S., Bhattra, P., Dahal, D. R., & Crowley, S. (2001). Community Perceptions of Trafficking and its Determinants in Nepal. Kathmandu: The Asia Foundation

as such. Since the establishment of Child Welfare Committees, an independent body comprising of members from different streams, under the Juvenile Justice Act in 2000, the decision regarding the release and repatriation of children, both domestic and foreign, comes under its jurisdiction and authority. Under the purview of PAQCA (Protection and Quality of Care – Anti-trafficking Action) project supported by European Union and Oak Foundation, Terre des hommes Foundation in partnership with Shakti Samuha in Nepal and Sanlaap in India has developed a protocol<sup>17</sup> on safe and voluntary repatriation of trafficked Nepali children from India. In absence of bi-lateral agreement between two State parties ( India and Nepal) this document works as a guide to ensure that the rights and protection of trafficked Nepali children are duly respected by adhering to different articles prescribed by different conventions and of which both State parties are signatory. Besides providing guidance, the protocol calls for the need of ‘continuity of care’ where the sending organizations in India provides detailed information of physical and mental status, education level, skills and needs of the trafficking survivors so that that the care and protection services seamlessly moves into continuum even after coming back to Nepal. Recent experiences of Shakti Samuha have shown that adhering to this protocol has made it easier to deal with the repatriated trafficking survivors as well as to continue with their personal care plans. Thus, it has become imperative to share this protocol with the organizations in India and Nepal.

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<sup>17</sup>Terre des hommes Foundation, Sanlaap and Shakti Samuha (2010). Protocol on Safe and Voluntary Repatriation of Nepali Children



### 14. Major Findings

During the research we identified that three-quarters of the respondents felt bad or concerned about their future, or did not wish to think of it, or did not believe it would change. The same proportion had a positive belief that solutions could be found for their problems. The aim of this document is to identify those problems and recommend the solutions.

The findings indicate a number of clear patterns, all of which indicate a negative effect or change of lifestyle due to being trafficked:

- a high percentage move from place of origin to a new area, post-rescue
- non-parity of available support for those living in a rural and those in an urban environment
- a high percentage of failed or problematic relationships
- increased physical health problems
- the adverse effects of multiple negative outcomes on their lives
- inadequate knowledge of ways to improve their lifestyle/ personal environment
- ongoing discrimination
- Absence of continuity of care

#### 14.1 General Information

##### **Relationship, counseling, bodily awareness.**

The cultural, faith and social norms for women in Nepal is to be married. All the respondents are of marriageable age, 60.7% are currently married, 8.9% are widowed. Several of the women (14%) are in abusive or difficult circumstances.

Follow-up discussions with a number of agencies indicate that many trafficking survivors enter into marriage for cultural, faith and social demands and sexual needs rather than a genuine desire to be married or in a relationship. At times it is also for protection and security. A high number of such marriages become abusive.

The findings supported indicate a need for women to have a greater understanding of relationships and their bodies and a need for access to relationship counselling and bodily awareness training. The geographic spread indicates there is a need for outreach as well as centre-based service provision. A longitudinal study<sup>18</sup> conducted by Chab Dai Coalition shows that the survivors of trafficking look for “counselor” like people, who were part of their healing process while in shelter care, also once they are reintegrated. Thus, it is essential to take counseling services beyond rehabilitation and make it as part of the follow-up process in the post-reintegration stage as well.

## 14.2 Return Experience

### Education

Education in rural areas was historically poor and further blighted by closure and harassment during the time when Nepal was undergoing armed conflict. The findings indicate that only three women had attended high school (4.6%). Though access to education has improved, there are still huge gaps in rural areas. The findings support the view that trafficking is linked to poverty and a lack of education. Nepal is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Article 28 makes primary education compulsory and encourages access to secondary and higher education. More than 50% of the respondents had no education at all. Article 4 states that parties shall undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognized in the present Convention.

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<sup>18</sup>Chab Dai Coalition. (2011). The Butterfly Longitudinal Research Project – A Chab Dai Study of (Re) – integration (Researching the Lifecycle of Survivors of Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking), Cambodia

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the first legally binding international instrument to incorporate the full range of human rights civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights. All parties and especially relevant government agencies need to work towards millennium targets on education and to encourage schools to disseminate information on the risks of being trafficked and to work directly with local groups and NGOs to inform on traffickers who approach girls and spread information about any such approaches.

### **Community support action against discrimination and in support of trafficking survivors.**

Up to 67% were aged 16 and under, of which four women were aged between six and ten at the time they were trafficked. The period of captivity after being trafficked is usually between 1 -6 years (57%), with fewer than 30% being rescued or returning in the first year. Approx 34% escaped unaided. Feelings about being rescued vary. At least 50% had a bad response from their community on return and approximately 50% had a bad response from their immediate family.

Blame, stigma and discrimination are at the root of the extended misery the majority of victims face. All parties need to support the education of families and communities to support trafficking survivors, the vast majority of whom are innocent of any complicity. Local groups (women's groups, VDCs, etc) need to actively promote the acceptance and support of trafficking survivors and work with families and communities in the rehabilitation process.

### **Increased awareness, better understanding and relations with police forces both sides of the border, independent agency monitoring of the police.**

The respondents' relationships with those in authority were difficult to fully assess with 62.5% not willing or wanting to comment. 21.5% had an abusive or problematical encounter with the police and there were two instances of police complicity with the brothels/traffickers, resulting in the police returning the victims to the brothels.

All relevant parties need to further change of perception and greater understanding – e.g., police awareness training; government should be supported to offer better training at ongoing and cadet levels. The high instance of abusive behaviour indicates that Nepal would benefit from an independent police monitoring body. A similar need was also identified in a documentary made by Shakti Samuha with testimonies of trafficking survivors repatriated from India. They in anonymity spoke on they were harassed during rescue from the brothels, en route to Nepal from India and after entering the Nepal border by the police personnel.

**Correct application of law, support and security for the applicant, independent monitoring of the court process. Training for court officials and judges.**

Relationships with the courts were also difficult to assess with over 40% of respondents not willing or able to say whether they had filed a case or not. It was also difficult to assess whether justice had been done. Some were aware that an anti-trafficking law is in existence but were not totally aware of what the law entails of. Of the 15 cases registered, eight led to convictions, two women were pressured by the defendants to drop their cases, two reported that after conviction the traffickers were set free.

The punishment in law for cross-border trafficking is clear but courts rarely appear to act in accordance with statute and many traffickers seem to walk free within a short period. This is a field for further research but indications are that the judiciary is either ignorant of the law, discriminatory against the applicant, unwilling to apply the law, or at worst corrupt.

All parties should call upon the judiciary to apply the law correctly within the statutes of national and international law. All parties to work to ensure the support and security of applicants and witnesses. Court officials and judges should attend awareness training on trafficking outcomes. More research may be necessary but indications are that Nepal would benefit from an independent monitoring body on court procedures or a fast track court for trafficking cases as the prolonged time taken for court decisions increase the chances of cases being withdrawn due to pressure from the trafficker's sides.

## **A call for further research on the situation of children born pre- and post-trafficking to survivors.**

Asha Nepal is already working in the field of support for the children of trafficking survivors and runs an educational support scheme, a home for children of survivors at risk of extreme poverty, abuse or trafficking, and a foster care unit for respite care. Often times, the children are considered as an additional baggage of mothers (trafficking survivors) with no identity and rights of their own. This is a complex issue and needs further research.

### **14.3 Elements of care and support provided**

#### **Registration, minimum care standards and monitoring.**

There are a number of NGOs working hard to support trafficking survivors on their return and others who offer specific post-rehabilitation support. A range of rehabilitation processes are offered. Only just over a quarter (26.7%) were offered job-seeking support and approx just under half (44%) received income-generating support. Over half (51.7%) received education training. A quarter of the women received psychological counselling. One woman found the support given unhelpful; a further six did not feel they gained much benefit from it; one respondent had received no care or support.

Support seems to vary greatly from organisation to organisation. There is a need for registration, minimum care standards and monitoring of NGOs that offer such care. The government of Nepal has now developed national minimum standards for care and protection in residential care and standard operating procedures. Now with these tools in place, the government should be equipped to assess whether the shelter homes providing care and protection adhere to those standards or not. Periodic monitoring should be conducted with penalty for non adherence to the national standards.

As women may move from one organisation to another there is a clear need for Personal Care Plans that can pass between agencies with the client including their case histories.

## **A need for further research and the implementation and ownership of Personal Care Plans as a part of minimum care standards.**

Very few respondents made suggestions as to what changes they would like to see. Those who responded were too few to draw conclusions, which beg the need for further research. The lack of input may indicate the lack of involvement and lack of ownership of the respondents as to their own future. As noted above, there is a need for Personal Care Plans. The Personal Care Plan is a client-owned document in which the needs of the client are addressed; the client should be fully participative in its content and have a clear understanding of ownership.

## **Freedom of belief, freedom from caste discrimination.**

The majority of women have some religious presence in their lives; the relevance of religion may require further research. Both the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), of which Nepal is a signatory, call for freedom of all forms of worship. Many NGOs are exemplary in multi-faith worship and religious freedom though a number of complaints of caste discrimination have been voiced, an area that needs further research. All parties should respect the religious beliefs of the survivors and not evangelise or proselytise. All parties should ensure staffs are not discriminatory over clients' caste.

## **14.4 Welfare**

### **A safety net for those in need of support as a direct result of being trafficked.**

Welfare is a subjective issue and the aims and objectives of many NGOs working in the field of counter-trafficking work towards survivors making a meaningful and long-term return to a full place in society, though there are still cases of institutionalisation, a subject that also needs further research.

The majority of women lived in a single room with other family members or alone. Approximately a quarter of the respondents looked to family for support, and half to NGOs. The use of earnings is not an exact outcome but appears indicative of what is at the forefront in the respondents' thinking. The majority of women did not wish to comment on financial support. A third of the women had personal savings accounts and less than half had a personal bank account.

The living and welfare conditions of the women indicate that the majority remain in varying degrees of poverty. Poverty is a major concern in Nepal and all parties need to be realistic about the conditions survivors find themselves in. A safety net for those in need of support as a direct result of being trafficked is needed. The safety net should encompass key areas such as education, employment, physical and mental health, counseling (including relationship, family and behavioral counseling), abuse and risk, legal support.

### **A need for more access to qualified counselling skills via outreach and centre-based services.**

More than half the women described their relationship with family as good, though there were financial implications (e.g. when the survivor started to have an income). However, the number of times per year they visited family was low, though the information is fractured. Reciprocal visits were not high but over half did not respond (60.7%).

Access to counseling is limited and may be further limited due to the skills of semi-qualified counselors in some cases. As noted above, there is a clear need for more access to qualified counseling skills including relationship counseling, both outreach and centre-based.

### **Community awareness and counter discrimination.**

Nearly half (46.4%) of the respondents had good relationships with their home community and three-quarters with their current community, though these may have changed over time.

Approximately three quarters (73.2%) of the respondents were in personal relationships. As in tables 19 – 24 there is a need for community awareness and counter-discrimination acceptance, support not blame.

## **14.5 Physical Health Care**

Ensure medical access to survivors, potential need for greater specialist care, access to gynecological care, HIV specialist support. Outreach and centre-based care.

Over a quarter (26.7%) of the women took alcohol. We did not ask to what extent. Alcohol abuse is a major problem in Nepal. Further research to compare respondents' intake with that of the general public would be interesting.

A high number of respondents reported ill health, concern over their health and a high dependency on medical care and medicine. Uterine problems (8.9%) are high. Access to a doctor and cost is a factor as is ongoing medication. Physical deterioration due to poor health care is an issue. Though only a small percentage felt they needed specialist care, the true need may be higher, especially for gynecological care. Though HIV was present, the percentage was low, but may be unknown as some women may not disclose or be aware.

All parties need to work towards the assurance of access to medical care. There is a clear need for access to gynecological care. Specialist care is difficult to access in rural areas and calls for outreach as well as centre-based care. There is also a potential for greater access to HIV care through outreach and centre-based services.

## **14.6 Mental Health Care**

Ongoing support through membership groups, self-help groups and counseling, and psychological support through outreach and centre-based services.

Three-quarters of the respondents felt bad or concerned about their future, or did not wish to think about it, or did not believe it would change. In a separate table the same percentage had a positive belief that solutions could be found for their problems. Over three-quarters (78.6%) felt sad and tired and/or angry and directed



their anger at their trafficker and revenge. Taking into account that 75% of the respondents have been back in the community for ten years or more, the levels of potential psychological stress are high. It is probable that such problems affect their life style, relationships, work and leisure activities.

Body awareness was seen as an important but difficult section of the research. There is concern that a high percentage (46.4%) felt negative about feelings inside their bodies, which could indicate physical and/or psychological issues.

NGOs working in counter- trafficking take different approaches to long-term care, some cutting ties once the women have moved out of their care, others setting up membership opportunities to keep contact and offer ongoing support. The findings offer evidence that ongoing support, be it organisational, clinical or self-help, is called for. Those NGOs who cut off ties on completion of rehabilitation should consider offering ongoing support through membership or self-help groups. All parties should look to support and encourage the setting up of support groups. There is also a need for greater and easier access to counseling and psychological support.

## **14.7 Rights**

### **Easy and clear access to rights-based and legal information and support, easy access to gaining citizenship.**

The majority of respondents felt respected and had legal support, but were unclear of their rights. Fewer than 50% felt they had enough information. Over half felt they knew about trafficking laws. The scope of the research did not go beyond these areas and further qualitative research would be helpful in ascertaining the best form of communication and delivery of rights-based and legal information.

Citizenship is an issue in Nepal and it can be difficult and time-consuming to obtain. Lack of citizenship reduces employment opportunities. It is felt that many agencies do not understand the psychological effect of not belonging, and discrimination due to lack of citizenship. In one case where a girl has been trying to obtain citizenship she has been unable to get support either from the NGO who took her in, from members of her extended family, or the VDC of her place of origin.

Many agencies provide rights-based information, but this is often in the form of a lecture and/or basic literature, and may be forgotten, misinterpreted or mislead. There is a need for clarity and consistency and the means for trafficking survivors to access legal support and understand their rights in a manner appropriate to their individual educational standards. All parties should urge and support the government to give clear guidance on obtaining citizenship.

### **Reduction of discrimination, greater understanding of trafficking and the long-term effects of being trafficked.**

A third of the respondents felt they were different; of these nearly three-quarters (73.6) felt it was because of being trafficked. Interestingly more felt they were viewed as different as felt different about themselves. Just over 50% felt they had other people they could talk to about it.

A change in attitude is the only real opportunity for change in the discrimination against trafficking survivors. Greater effort is needed by the media to create understanding of both the outcomes and the risks of being trafficked. While the media does support NGO and government counter-trafficking activities and reports on trafficking cases it does little to educate the general population on the effects trafficking has on victims and survivors and how they can help to make the lives of survivors better. All parties need to work more closely with the media on the wider effects of trafficking as well as counter-trafficking activities.

## **14.8 Other areas**

### **A need for comparative research into abusive marriages and family relations. Further research into the effects of trafficking on the survivors children.**

Married life for many trafficking survivors is problematic; less than half the women felt their marriage was good, some marriages were abusive, relationships with in-laws was an area the majority of respondents did not wish to comment on. Well over half (67.8%) did not wish to comment on their relationship with their children.

Asha Nepal works with the children of survivors and feels this is an area that needs more research. Both Asha Nepal and Shakti Samuha witness situations of abusive marriages and related problems. Further research is needed to ascertain whether this is higher than in the wider community.

### **Fears, freedom and dreams.**

There are no specific recommendations on these subjects and the sections were included to obtain a wider understanding of the concerns and aspirations of the respondents both for themselves and their children. All of these are clues as to what the survivors of trafficking want for themselves, the things we should all be listening to.

The next stage is for all who read this document to consider their thoughts and assess their ability and capacity to make those changes that will facilitate a life free from discrimination and fear and create a genuine, full and meaningful return to society for trafficking survivors. To ensure that the lasting effects of being trafficked are fully negated or at least alleviated to a degree that they no longer affect their daily lives.

## Case Studies

### Case Study – Manju, Age 34, trafficked at age 24

Manju first contacted Shakti Samuha after being trafficked into an Indian brothel, from where she was rescued and returned to Nepal by Indian police.

Despite being a Brahmin from the highest caste, Manju comes from a very poor family. Prior to being trafficked, she lived in another family's home as a domestic help. When she was 14 years old, the owner of the house tricked her into marrying another domestic help, saying that he, the owner, would give her half his property. However, after the owner passed away, his son came back to claim his property. Although she was five months pregnant, the son asked her and her husband to leave the house as soon as they could. They left, not knowing where to go; they looked for work, and were even forced to sleep on the streets some days. She finally returned to her maternal home, where she was treated badly.

Manju found a job at a local tea shop and worked there for one and a half years. From there, she was lured by a man and trafficked into India. She was rescued by the Indian police after three months and returned to her home village. However, as is common in Nepal, having worked in the sex trade, though against her will, she was not accepted back into her community. Everybody knew her story. Her husband rejected her. Her whole family was discriminated against and it became so awkward that she left home again, in search of work. She found a job in a highway hotel. As alone, lost young woman, she became prey to men who tried to use her sexually. She became so unhappy that she even thought of killing herself. Then, after about three months she got to know one of the field staff of Shakti Samuha and from there everything changed.

By this time, her daughter was studying in class 4 and living with her father, who was then living in a rich person's house again as a domestic help. Although the little girl was allowed to go to school, she was forced to work as a domestic help in the home and was physically and verbally abused by the owners. The discrimination that had dogged Manju and her maternal family extended to her daughter at school. Even school teachers physically and verbally abused her daughter, saying that her mother was a Bombay returnee. This was troubling Manju deeply, so she raised the issue with Shakti Samuha, and with their help, her daughter is now in safe place receiving better education.

Manju came to live at Shakti Kendra for a year. She left when she got a job, but two years later the job ended and so she returned to Shakti Kendra for help. Due to the uncertainty of the work, she decided to do something on her own. Two years ago she got married again and together they run a street shop, with financial help from Shakti Samuha. She and her husband earn NRs9000 per month on average, which is enough to survive on generally. However, if one of them were to fall ill, there would be a financial crisis. Manju worries a lot about her future, as her husband is old and alcoholic and she fears anything could happen to him, and that they could lose everything they have.

Life in her home village has improved. Manju is much more accepted by her community these days and when she goes home at festival time she is welcomed. Her father is also called upon by villagers once again for rituals.

## Case Study B: Hari Maya age 48. Trafficked age 12.

Hari Maya aged 48, is the eldest daughter of her family. Her mother died when she was little and she does not even remember her mother's face. She has a stepmother and a younger brother and sister. She was trafficked when she was 12 years old, but was sent home after seven years, when she started to become ill frequently. Although the whole village was against her remaining in village, her family supported her and took care of her. She brought back about NRs200,000 from her work in the brothel, and with that money, her family was not willing to give up on her. But when all the money ran out, life was different. She was called names and ill-treated even by her own family. Back then there were no organizations to help her, but in more recent years she has been involved in a local organization. This involvement has made her aware of women's rights and issues, and so she has become more confident to seek help for herself.

About two years after her return, Hai Maya got married to a rickshaw puller, and she works as a labourer for daily wages. Her husband is an alcoholic, he hits her and accuses her of having relationships with other men, and never contributes to household expenses. Her elder son left home when he was 16; he is now married and living in Kathmandu, but does not earn enough to support her as he is struggling himself. Her daughter is married and is happy with her new family. Her younger son is still with them, studying in class 8.

Hari Maya and her husband have nothing. They live in other people's cowsheds and look after their cows. She earns NRs150 a day when she has work, but otherwise there is no income and she has to get by on no money. She says that as long as she can work, life will be OK, but she has no hope of support from her husband or her children. She feels that due to her disturbed background, she was unable to support and look after her kids when they needed it.

Hari Maya has health issues. A few years ago, she had a hysterectomy financed with the help of her women's group in her home village. Now she constantly worries about falling ill, as she will not be able to afford the medical care. Her main concerns are her younger son's education and her future, when she becomes unable to work physically. She strongly believes that when she can no longer work, she will go to some temple for refuge and beg.

## Case Study: Shova age 17. Trafficked age 13.

Shova,, 17, is the middle daughter in a family of six children, consisting of three brothers and three sisters. She is from Nuwakot. Her family used to depend on agriculture. Her brothers were sent to school but none of the sisters were, even though Shova very much wanted to go to. She had to do all the household chores, look after her younger brothers and sisters and sometimes work in the fields.

When she was 13, her friends used to talk about going to the city and working there and earning a lot of money to have a good life and help their families. One day a friend and her boyfriend asked Shova and her other girlfriends to join them, as they were going to Kathmandu to work as maids and earn a lot of money. At first Shova was reluctant, but when all four of her friends decided to go, she also ran away from home. All four of them were sold to brothels in India. Today she says she does not want to talk or think of that place.

She was rescued in a police raid when she was 16 years old and it took about six months for her to return Nepal. She did not want to go home directly because she was not sure how the family and community would perceive her. Finally, during the Dashain festival holiday, she went home and was relieved to be received back into her family. Now her family come to visit and call her often. Shova didn't stay at her home village because she wanted to be educated up to SLC level. So she came back to stay at the Shakti Kendra hostel and received care and support from them for about a year, including healthcare and psychological counselling. Then she trained as a housekeeper for six months. As she is very keen to study, she decided to join regular school, and has been admitted to class 4.

Together with her friend, Shova decided to set up a small restaurant in Gaurighat. Shakti Samuha provided financial support under their Income Generating Support project. She left Kendra a few months ago and is now living in a rented room with her friend in the same building as the restaurant. She is not taking any money as her salary as it is their business and they would like to pay back the loan first. But they are using some money for their personal expenses. She is happy working there and dreams of making her living independently one day.

Shova has not got so much hope for marriage; at the moment she says she does not want to get married. She believes that because of her past, she will not be able to find a good man, and having a bad husband is worse than remaining unmarried. She does not want to share her past with anybody because it hurts too much. She strongly believes that if she had been educated, she would not have fallen prey to trafficking. She wants to support her younger brother and sister's education, to give them a more hopeful future than her own.

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