

3AN NEPALGUNJ STATION UPDATE – JANUARY TO MARCH 2020

To the PAPSDA community,

We hope this finds you well and safe.

Thanks to your support, the Nepalgunj team was in full operation for most of this quarter, and once again, impacted hundreds of lives.

On March 22, due to COVID-19, the borders were closed and Nepal went into lockdown. 3 Angels Nepal have needed to temporarily adapt their work because of travel restrictions and shutdowns. This pandemic will end, but the economic impact will be massive, and it will significantly affect the poorest people in developing countries around the world. Individuals will be more vulnerable than ever to human trafficking, and traffickers will benefit from their desperation. When work can resume to its fullest magnitude, we want to be ready for an increase in trafficking. Your support is helping us stay prepared and ready to respond when this outbreak is over.

During the January to March quarter:

- **146 girls and women intercepted**
 - 546 were taken aside and interviewed about their travel plans. They were stopped because they showed warning signs they might be in the process of being trafficked.
 - 146 were stopped from continuing their travel plans due to a number of concerns and risk factors surrounding their desire to migrate
 - Further investigation shows these girls may well be in the very process of being trafficked; they were informed on what was likely happening, counselled as necessary, and either returned home or picked up by their families
- **17 girls were referred to police and confirmed to be in the process of being trafficked** because substantial, hard evidence was given to police to confirm that trafficking was involved.
- **22 girls referred to Nepalgunj transit home**
 - Received counselling, medical care, and accommodation until they were reunited with their families
- **7 cases of domestic violence reported.** If it is a police case 3AN will help to file a written case on behalf of the victim. 3AN will coordinate with police authorities and Women's Welfare Department to take necessary legal action.

- **56 women received legal assistance**
 - This service provides help and advice for those who are abused or victimized
 - Women are informed of their rights and how to pursue legal matters
 - Some cases are referred to local lawyers for follow up; others are referred to the legal team at 3AN head office in Pokhara

- **6 Hamro Abhiyan Anti-Trafficking Awareness Programs conducted**
 - 540 students participated
 - Hamro Abhiyan is a highly acclaimed interactive program specifically designed to reach the youth. It has won the 2019 Asian Leadership Award for the best trafficking prevention strategy.

- **2 Community Awareness Programs held**
 - 58 people participated, composed of bus and auto rickshaw drivers

Protecting the Society by Educating the Youth

With the help of the local 3AN team, we were able to conduct 6 events of Hamro Abhiyan Anti-Trafficking Awareness Program in Nepalgunj. Across the 6 programs, total number of participants reached 540, comprised of students who were all very keen to learn new things regarding human trafficking. Their responses to our program were positive and inspiring.

Mr. Umesh Sharma, Principal of Samjhana Elite Academy says, *“We have a responsibility towards our students and that is to remind them of their duties towards the society. Our students have a vital duty to perform to keep the society safe from bad things like human trafficking. Human trafficking is like a wild fire that burns everything in its path. It destroys one’s life, family, relationships, and more. If our students raise awareness against human trafficking in our society then these things will stop and our communities will be safe.”*

**Photos from the said activities below.*

Photos of 3AN staff and students participating during the Hamro Abhayan program



Community Awareness Programs and International Women's Day Gathering

Interactive and sensitization programs were conducted among local bus and auto rickshaw drivers at the Indo-Nepal borders in the Nepalgunj region, where a total of 58 drivers participated.

The program was organised to raise awareness among the drivers about the issue of human trafficking and the roles they can play to combat it. Knowingly or unknowingly, they are the ones transporting potential victims across the border. The program has helped them to be cautious and informed about the issue. They now have an idea as well whom to inform should they see suspicious activities and operations.



Meanwhile, our partners in 3 Angels Nepal also commemorated the 110th International Women’s Day by organising and coordinating meetings with similar organisations and other stakeholders to discuss human trafficking and legal issues, and their roles and responsibilities to put an end to it.



Women Unsafe and Vulnerable in the Streets

Here are two accounts of two young women whose lives were endangered in the hands of friends and strangers alike.

**All names for all stories were changed for privacy and protection*

Geeta's mother passed away when she was young and her father married another woman. Her relationship with her stepmother was not smooth, and her father started to ignore her completely. She had to quit school and started searching for a job in order to provide for herself.

One day while searching for a job, her friends held her captive in a jungle and molested her. She did not reach home that night. Her family got worried and contacted the local police. The police circulated her information all over Nepal. After searching for a week, she was found by 3AN team members alone in the bus park area. After finding her, she was brought to a transit home while her family members were being informed.

When her family came to the transit home, they were given counselling regarding trafficking and its effects on a person and their family. She was thankful that 3AN was there to save her.

Shanti, 15, came from a small village. Last February, she boarded a bus to visit her sister who lives in another city. On her way, she stopped by a hotel to eat. She was then approached by a group of strangers and invited her to eat with them. She refused at first but eventually agreed because of their persistence. They also invited her to travel together saying that they were also headed to the same destination.

Apparently, the group had drugged her and Shanti felt unable to move her body. The group took off the bus and brought her into a nearby forest. Shanti called for help, and fortunately, a nearby police officer heard her and came to the rescue. The group ran away upon seeing the police officer but were caught.

Shanti reported the incident and she was referred to 3 Angels Nepal. She was brought to a transit home where she was counselled and informed about trafficking. Her family was called and her grandfather came to receive her. Her grandfather was also given counselling regarding human trafficking. They were both grateful for the police officer and to 3 Angels Nepal for rescuing her.

Grand Marriage Proposals

Asmita's husband started working in India to provide better for their growing family. As such, she was left home to look after their children. Apart from her and her husband's knowledge, her uncle was attracted to her. He would visit their house often to help and flirt with her.

Eventually, Asmita became attracted to him as well. She would often forget about her children and spend time with her uncle instead. One day, her uncle proposed for them to elope. He said that the society would likely oppose their marriage, but if they eloped and moved to India, they could spend their lives together. He promised to provide her a better and happy life. She was smitten, so she agreed, took her youngest child, and left the others at home.

Staff from 3 Angels Nepal stopped them at the bus station during a routine check. When interviewed about their travel plans, they were reluctant to answer, so they were brought to the office for further inquiry. It was then that they confessed the whole story, including their plans to marry and leave her other kids behind.

After hearing their story, the staff suggested that she was making a huge mistake – placing herself and her children in great danger by leaving them alone. They also shared with her stories of other women who trusted other people so much that they became victims of human trafficking.

Asmita felt sorry for leaving her family behind, and thanked 3 Angels Nepal for making her realize her mistake and preventing her from becoming a potential trafficking victim.

Lies and Abuse

Sati, 22, was a victim of domestic violence and was vulnerable to trafficking.

Like her siblings, Sati got married at an early age of 15. After five years of marriage, they began to face financial difficulties which forced her husband to work abroad. She was 6 months pregnant at that time and was hopeful that their lives would improve once her husband started earning more abroad. Her high hopes were shattered when her husband suddenly stopped contacting her.

She returned to her parents home, where she decided that she would marry again eventually. She met a man named Mayur who promised her marriage and a happy life. Sati fell for his words and agreed to elope with him.

After a few months, Sati found out that Mayur was already married and even had kids when they went to visit his home. She was devastated to learn that she's been cheated on. Days passed and Mayur began to abuse her physically and emotionally as well. She was 5 months pregnant at the time, and lost her baby due to the abuse and the medication her in-laws gave her.

As if all the cruelty still wasn't enough, Mayur brought her to the forest where he and his friends molested her. She found an opportunity to escape and ran until she reached her sister's home. The area police also helped her and referred her to 3 Angels Nepal.

Sati was brought to a transit home where she shared her story. The staff assisted her in filing a case against Mayur. Sati and her sister were reunited and were also both given counselling services.

Fake Job Offer

Padmini, 20, was spotted by our 3AN monitoring staff while doing their routine checks around the bus station. They saw her holding hands with a man but was reluctant to go with him. Upon inquiry, they found out that Padmini didn't know the man, so she was brought to a transit home where she shared her story.



A few days ago, she received a call from a stranger offering her a job. The man said that he owned lands and two big clothing shops and needed people who would be working for him. Padmini got interested and inquired more about the job since the offer was enticing. The man asked her to come to the bus station to meet him. They discussed contracts but was unable to agree, and he started convincing her to come with him.

Padmini was thankful that 3 Angels Nepal was there to help her. She said that had it been 5 minutes later, she might have been a victim of human trafficking. The staff informed her that traffickers usually offer fake jobs in India to lure women. She thanked 3 Angels Nepal for saving her and departed, while the man was kept in police custody.

Thank you once again for your commitment to support us, especially the team at Nepalgunj. These are challenging times for all of us, but we remain confident and hopeful we'll get through this.

Kind regards

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