



## ANNEXURE 1. Case Studies

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By Sex Workers and Allies South Asia (SWASA) and partners

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CR#1 **Struggling for Identity: Radhika's Journey Toward Citizenship** *(Extracted from Research study "Impact of citizenship laws on the rights of women in sex work, Nepal, Conducted by SWASA, SWAN, JMMS; 2024)*

Rk, a 37-year-old resident of Narephant, Kathmandu, has faced a lifetime of challenges stemming from the lack of a citizenship certificate. Born in Chandpur, Lalitpur, her life has been marked by struggle, resilience, and an ongoing quest for recognition in a system that has denied her the essential document to secure her identity.

### Early Life and Barriers to Citizenship:

Rk grew up without her parents' active presence. After her father passed away and her mother remarried, she was left with no access to crucial documentation like her father's death certificate or her own birth registration. Despite these hurdles, she tried to establish her identity through a marriage certificate, created with the help of a local secretary in her maternal village in Dhading. However, this document was insufficient to grant her citizenship. The bureaucratic demands for her father's death certificate or her own birth certificate have left her in a perpetual state of limbo.

Her late husband, who struggled with alcohol addiction, refused to help her obtain citizenship during his lifetime. His reluctance, fueled by his drinking habits, and his untimely demise three months ago, further compounded her challenges. Despite her efforts, she remains without the citizenship certificate that would have significantly eased her life.

### Challenges Without Citizenship:

The absence of citizenship has had a profound impact on Radhika's life. Without it, she is unable to open a bank account, save her earnings, or secure her children's future in school, where citizenship documentation may be required. She cannot buy even a small piece of land, depriving her of the opportunity to build a stable home for her children.

Radhika's three children, aged 14, 11, and 7, have their birth certificates, which could potentially help them secure citizenship in the future. However, for Radhika herself, the path remains fraught with difficulties. Her inability to access basic government benefits, such as social welfare for single mothers, has left her in financial distress. She laments how the lack of a citizenship certificate has stripped her of opportunities and assistance that could alleviate her burdens.

### A Life of Hardship:

Radhika's life took a darker turn after her husband's health deteriorated due to multiple accidents and surgeries. With mounting medical bills and the responsibility of raising her children, Radhika turned to sex work as a desperate measure to make ends meet. She explains that her husband's medical treatments left her with no choice, as her

income from daily wage labor was insufficient to cover expenses. Even in this line of work, the lack of citizenship prevents her from accessing financial safety nets or social support.

#### Attempts to Resolve the Issue:

Radhika has tried to navigate the bureaucratic maze to secure her citizenship. She approached local authorities, including secretaries in her village and her current ward, but the process demands documentation she does not possess. Her father's death certificate and her own birth certificate are prerequisites, but retrieving these documents seems impossible given her estranged relationship with her maternal family and the lack of records.

Her story highlights the rigidity of the legal and administrative framework, which fails to accommodate individuals like her, who lack familial support and formal documentation.

Despite her hardships, Radhika remains hopeful. She believes that with the right support from community organizations and a more flexible administrative system, she could finally obtain her citizenship. She advocates for reforms that simplify the process, particularly for marginalized individuals like herself who lack access to traditional family structures or documentation.

#### The Way Forward:

Radhika's story is a stark reminder of the challenges faced by women and marginalized individuals in Nepal when trying to secure their legal identity. For Radhika, citizenship is not just a piece of paper—it represents access to education, financial stability, social security, and a dignified life for herself and her children.

Her appeal is simple: "If my citizenship can be made, it would change everything. My children would have a secure future, and I could finally breathe easier knowing that I have a place in society."

Her narrative underscores the urgent need for systemic reforms to make citizenship accessible to all, regardless of their past or personal circumstances.

#### **CR#2 Rupa Bhandari's Journey to Obtain Citizenship** *(Extracted from Research study "Impact of citizenship laws on the rights of women in sex work, Nepal, Conducted by SWASA, SWAN, JMMS; 2024)*

Rupa Bhandari, a 29-year-old woman from Sindhupalchok, Nepal, has been navigating life without citizenship, facing numerous challenges in her personal and professional life. Despite being married for six years and running a small hotel business for four years, the lack of citizenship has hindered her progress, autonomy, and ability to fully participate in society.

#### Early Life and Current Situation:

Rupa was born in Sindhupalchok, and currently resides in Lukhusi, Lalitpur District. Although her parents registered her birth, she never received citizenship, which has profoundly impacted her life. Despite her efforts to resolve the issue, societal and familial barriers continue to stand in her way.

#### Barriers to Obtaining Citizenship:

The primary reason Rupa has been unable to obtain her citizenship is opposition from her husband. He refuses to support her application, citing a fear rooted in his past experiences. His first wife, after obtaining her citizenship, divorced him and took a share of his property. This has made him reluctant to help Rupa, fearing a similar outcome.

Despite attempts by Rupa and her in-laws to convince him, he has consistently refused, offering temporary promises without action. His dismissive attitude has forced Rupa into a state of dependence, preventing her from accessing opportunities that require legal documentation.

#### Challenges Faced Without Citizenship:

1. **Financial Barriers:** Without citizenship, Rupa cannot open a bank account or conduct financial transactions. Despite her hard work saving money, she cannot deposit her earnings in a savings or finance account, leaving her vulnerable to theft and financial insecurity.
2. **Housing and Property:** Finding a place to rent has also been challenging. Landlords often demand citizenship or proof of identity to finalize rental agreements, leaving Rupa with limited options.
3. **Employment:** Rupa's lack of documentation has restricted her ability to seek better job opportunities. Most employers require citizenship as part of the application process, which excludes her from formal employment and opportunities for growth.
4. **Her Child's Future:** Rupa's son, now 5-6 years old, also lacks a birth certificate because her husband insists that citizenship must be obtained first. This creates a cascading effect, potentially limiting her child's access to education and other rights.

#### Coping Mechanisms and Efforts:

Rupa has tried various approaches to resolve her situation. She has sought support from her in-laws, who are generally in favor of her obtaining citizenship, but her husband's resistance remains the main hurdle. In her frustration, she has even threatened legal action to force him to comply, but the process remains stagnant. She has yet to seek assistance from organizations or advocacy groups that could help her navigate the system, primarily because she is unaware of such resources.

#### Hope for Change:

Rupa believes that reforms in the citizenship process could ease the challenges faced by women like her. She stresses the importance of having a system where individuals can independently apply for citizenship based on their fundamental rights, without being reliant on their spouse's approval. She also calls for awareness campaigns to educate women about their rights and the processes to obtain citizenship. Support systems, such as legal aid and advocacy groups, could play a significant role in helping women assert their rights.

#### The Journey Ahead:

Rupa has set a three-month deadline for her husband to assist her in obtaining her citizenship. If he fails to act, she plans to involve her parents and consider legal measures to secure her documentation. Despite her struggles, Rupa remains determined to stand on her own feet and provide a better future for her child. Her story highlights the systemic and societal challenges that many Nepali women face in obtaining citizenship. It underscores the urgent need for policy reforms and grassroots support to ensure that no woman is denied her fundamental rights due to outdated laws or patriarchal norms. Rupa's journey is one of resilience in the face of systemic barriers. Her case serves as a call to action for more inclusive policies and better implementation of existing laws to empower women across Nepal.

#### CR#3 **Challenges in Obtaining Citizenship**

Ghimmire, a 32-year-old resident of Dallu, Kathmandu, shares a compelling story of challenges and setbacks in obtaining citizenship. Despite being born and raised in Nepal, societal and familial hurdles have prevented him from acquiring this vital document. Ghimmire's story sheds light on the significant barriers faced by individuals in similar

circumstances, emphasizing the interplay of personal, legal, and social factors that complicate the process of citizenship acquisition.

#### Family Background and Challenges:

Ghimmire's struggle begins within his own family dynamics. He mentions that his stepmother has consistently prevented him from applying for citizenship. When asked why, Ghimmire attributes her resistance to a desire to retain exclusive control over family assets. This issue of inheritance appears to be at the heart of the conflict. His stepmother fears that granting him citizenship might enable him to claim a share of the family property, thereby disrupting her dominance over familial resources. This lack of support from a crucial family member has left Ghimmire feeling alienated and powerless. He describes how the familial discord has not only limited his access to citizenship but has also deepened his sense of detachment from his household. His irregular stay in the family home, likely due to strained relationships, further complicates his ability to pursue the matter legally or socially.

#### Impacts of Citizenship Denial:

The absence of citizenship has created significant barriers in Ghimmire's life. Without this essential document, he has found it nearly impossible to access employment opportunities. "If I had citizenship, I could at least apply for jobs," he says, underscoring the direct impact on his financial independence and self-reliance. Beyond employment, Ghimmire struggles with routine activities that require legal identification, such as traveling, opening a bank account, or even participating in governmental programs. He highlights the inconvenience of being unable to handle basic tasks or access services that most people take for granted. The lack of citizenship, therefore, isn't merely a legal hindrance but also a social and economic limitation that has left him vulnerable.

#### Efforts and Hopes:

Despite these challenges, Ghimmire remains hopeful about resolving his situation. He acknowledges that his sister has been supportive and has tried to assist him financially and emotionally. Her efforts offer a glimmer of hope, even as the larger structural and familial obstacles persist. Ghimmire's reflections reveal a deep yearning for autonomy and the ability to live a dignified life. He believes that acquiring citizenship will be the key to unlocking numerous opportunities and mitigating the challenges he currently faces.

#### Conclusion:

Ghimmire's story reflects the broader struggles of many individuals who are caught in a web of familial disputes and systemic barriers. His case illustrates how the denial of citizenship not only deprives a person of their legal rights but also limits their access to basic opportunities and services, perpetuating cycles of inequality. Resolving such issues requires more than individual effort. It calls for greater awareness, legal reforms, and societal interventions to ensure that citizenship, a fundamental right, is accessible to all. Ghimmire's journey is a testament to resilience and the enduring hope for a better future despite seemingly insurmountable odds.

#### CR#5 Challenges in Obtaining Citizenship

Rita Pariyar, a 19-year-old resident of Dhading, Nepal, faces a life shaped by significant challenges due to the lack of citizenship. Rita, who was raised by non-biological guardians after losing her parents, has been unable to obtain her citizenship. This legal document, essential for accessing numerous rights and opportunities, has become a persistent obstacle in her journey to stability and self-reliance.

#### Current Circumstances:

Rita is unmarried and works as a cleaner in Kathmandu, earning a modest salary of NPR 10,000 per month. She rents a small room in Kalanki and struggles to save any money due to her limited income. Despite being financially independent, the absence of citizenship limits her opportunities for career advancement and access to financial institutions like banks or cooperatives. Her inability to open a bank account, enroll in e-sewa (a popular digital wallet service), or access other modern financial systems has further marginalized her economically. The lack of citizenship also prevents her from applying for better-paying jobs or formalizing her employment, leaving her vulnerable to exploitation.

#### The Root Cause:

The primary reason for Rita's inability to acquire citizenship is her complicated family background. Her biological parents are no longer alive, and the guardians who raised her, despite their care, have not facilitated her citizenship process. Nepal's laws require parental documentation, typically the father's citizenship, to issue this critical identity document. However, her guardians have shown reluctance to assist in the process, citing societal and bureaucratic challenges.

#### Impacts on Rita's Life

1. **Employment Limitations:** Without citizenship, Rita cannot apply for jobs in large offices or formal sectors where documentation is mandatory. **Financial Exclusion:** She cannot open a bank account or save money in formal financial institutions, leaving her financially insecure.
2. **Social Identity:** Citizenship is not just a legal document but a recognition of one's identity in society. Rita feels excluded and vulnerable without it.
3. **Future Uncertainty:** Marriage registration and various legal formalities require citizenship, creating hurdles for Rita's future personal and social life.

#### Legal and Social Challenges:

Rita highlighted the legal barriers and societal norms that compound her struggles. Nepalese law mandates the father's or both parents' involvement for citizenship issuance. In cases like hers, where parents are absent or unwilling, the law offers little recourse. Additionally, societal attitudes towards guardianship and adoption complicate the matter. Her guardians, though well-meaning, are hesitant to navigate the legal system to formalize her status, partly due to fear of social judgment and bureaucratic hurdles.

#### Potential Solutions:

Rita believes that reforms in Nepal's citizenship laws could make life easier for individuals in similar situations. Simplified legal provisions allowing individuals without parental support to claim citizenship independently could be transformative. For example:

- Introducing a provision where local authorities or courts can verify and grant citizenship in the absence of parental documentation.
- Allowing non-biological guardians or alternative witnesses to facilitate the process.
- Advocating for social campaigns to destigmatize alternative family structures and guardianship.

#### Conclusion:

Rita's story is a reflection of the struggles faced by many young Nepalis who are caught in bureaucratic and societal barriers. Citizenship is not just a legal document but a key to accessing fundamental rights and opportunities.

Addressing these gaps in the legal framework could help empower individuals like Rita, giving them a fair chance at building a better future.

#### CR#5 Overcoming Challenges in Obtaining Citizenship

Anita Karki, a woman originally from Ramechhap, currently resides in Dallu, Kathmandu, with her husband and daughter. Though she successfully acquired her citizenship, her journey reveals the systemic hurdles and societal attitudes that Nepali women face when navigating legal documentation processes, including citizenship, marriage registration, and birth registration.

##### The Initial Citizenship Process:

Anita obtained her citizenship through her parental lineage, a relatively straightforward process in her case. Unlike others, she did not encounter significant challenges with government offices or additional expenses. However, she notes that the ease of her experience is uncommon in her community. Many women face resistance, especially from patriarchal family systems, when seeking legal documents.

##### Challenges in Registering Her Daughter's Birth:

The real struggle began when Anita tried to register her daughter's birth. Despite legal provisions, societal perceptions and familial resistance proved significant obstacles. Her in-laws initially opposed the process, fearing that giving legal documentation to the daughter might later enable her to claim family property or leave the household. This mindset, which views daughters as liabilities or transient members of the family, delayed the process for five years. It took persistent convincing, discussions, and even conflicts for Anita to secure the required documentation for her child.

##### Insights into Community Struggles:

Anita observes that her case is not isolated. In her community, women frequently encounter similar resistance when trying to register their marriages, children's births, or even their citizenship. Husbands and in-laws often hesitate, citing outdated beliefs about property rights and women's independence. This hesitation exacerbates bureaucratic delays and creates additional emotional stress for women.

##### Proposed Solutions:

Based on her experience, Anita advocates for systemic changes:

1. **Mandatory Timelines:** Establish a legal requirement for marriage registration within six months of the wedding and birth registration within a fixed period.
2. **Simplified Processes:** Government offices should streamline procedures to reduce dependency on family approval, particularly for women.
3. **Awareness Campaigns:** Educating families about the importance of legal documents for children and women's empowerment.
4. **Direct Access:** Women should be empowered to directly approach government offices without requiring spousal or family approval.

##### Economic Struggles and the Drive for Change:

Anita's economic struggles also motivated her advocacy. With her husband's unstable job and the high cost of living in Kathmandu, Anita had to work in retail and cosmetics shops to make ends meet. Her financial independence reinforced her determination to secure her and her daughter's legal rights.

##### Conclusion:

Anita's journey is a testament to resilience and advocacy in the face of societal resistance. Her story highlights the urgent need for legal reforms and societal change to ensure women and children can access their fundamental rights without unnecessary barriers. By sharing her experiences, Anita hopes to inspire other women in her community to persevere and demand the rights they deserve.

#### CR#6 The Struggle of Priya Magar in Acquiring Citizenship

Priya Magar, a 32-year-old resident of Patan, has faced numerous challenges throughout her life. As a married woman and a mother of four, Priya's story reflects the struggles and perseverance of many women in Nepal who confront societal and systemic obstacles in obtaining basic rights such as citizenship. Her narrative is a poignant reminder of the hurdles faced by women when navigating bureaucratic systems, especially when personal circumstances complicate the process.

##### Life and Challenges:

Priya's journey has not been an easy one. She has lived her life balancing multiple roles as a mother, a wife, and a breadwinner. However, her struggles became more pronounced when her husband, instead of supporting her and their children, left her and started a new life with another partner. This betrayal not only left Priya emotionally wounded but also financially burdened with the responsibility of raising their four children. One of Priya's most significant struggles has been securing legal documentation, particularly citizenship. Despite having her own citizenship, she finds the process of obtaining it for her children daunting. According to her, birth registration was the first hurdle. Although she managed to complete it, the process was fraught with challenges, ranging from bureaucratic red tape to societal stigma. She recalls how difficult it was to gather the necessary documents and face the judgmental attitudes of people in her village.

##### Systemic Obstacles:

Priya highlights the complexities of acquiring citizenship for children in Nepal, especially when the father is absent or uncooperative. In Nepal's patriarchal society, the citizenship process is heavily reliant on paternal lineage, which places women like Priya in a precarious position. Priya explains that if mothers were allowed to grant citizenship independently, it would alleviate many of these challenges. For instance, Priya suggests that allowing women to process citizenship applications for their children from their current place of residence, without the need to travel back to their ancestral villages, would significantly reduce the burden. She emphasizes that requiring a mother's presence and documentation alone should be sufficient, sparing women from the additional scrutiny and judgment often faced in their communities.

##### Choosing to Work:

After her husband's abandonment, Priya decided to take charge of her life and her children's future. For the past five to six years, she has been working tirelessly to provide for her family. Her work, though unconventional and challenging, has given her the flexibility to balance her responsibilities as a mother. She opted for work that allows her to manage her time, ensuring that she can care for her children and fulfill their basic needs, such as education and nutrition. Priya acknowledges that working in this way has its own set of challenges, but she appreciates the freedom it provides compared to traditional 9-to-5 jobs. She notes that in conventional jobs, the rigid schedules make it almost impossible for single mothers to balance work and family life. Her decision to work in this manner reflects her resilience and adaptability in the face of adversity.

##### Advocating for Change:

Priya's story sheds light on the need for systemic reforms to make citizenship acquisition more accessible for single mothers and their children. She advocates for a system where mothers can independently apply for and grant citizenship to their children without relying on their estranged or absent husbands. She also calls for decentralization of the process, suggesting that applications be handled locally, based on the mother's place of residence. This would spare women the additional burden of traveling to their ancestral homes and facing unnecessary public scrutiny.

Conclusion:

Priya Magar's journey is a testament to the resilience and strength of women who navigate personal and systemic challenges to secure a better future for their families. Her story underscores the urgent need for policy changes to support women like her, ensuring that citizenship and other basic rights are not contingent upon patriarchal systems. Priya's courage and determination to advocate for her children's well-being make her a beacon of hope for countless women facing similar struggles. Her voice calls for a society that values and empowers women, recognizing them as equal contributors to the nation's future.

#### CR#7 Parbati's Experience in Obtaining Citizenship

Parbati hails from the village of Parvati in the Sindhuli district, specifically from Ward No. 7. She is approximately 30 years old, though this is an estimate. Her life story, as shared in the interview, highlights her struggles with personal and bureaucratic challenges, especially in obtaining citizenship.

Family and Background:

The respondent has been married, but due to personal circumstances, her marriage ended as her husband left her for another woman. She has children, but due to her inability to care for them, they have been placed in an institution. Regarding her citizenship, the respondent explains that her family's home is in Sindhuli, but her husband's family is from Nuwakot.

Citizenship Issues:

The issue of citizenship became a significant point of discussion. The respondent shared that she did not have her citizenship with her at the time of the interview, although it was at her home in Sindhuli. She faced challenges in obtaining her citizenship initially. She mentioned that her family did not initially support her in getting citizenship, as her brother-in-law, who was a stepbrother, did not show much interest in assisting her. At first, she approached her relatives to help her with obtaining citizenship, but there was reluctance. She later sought assistance from a lawyer, who helped her get the necessary documents in place, despite the initial hesitation from her family. The respondent noted that there were complications with government procedures, but she eventually succeeded in acquiring her citizenship after paying a bribe of 5,000 Nepali Rupees to expedite the process.

Challenges Faced:

The respondent explained that the bureaucratic process was difficult, especially for those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. She emphasized that corruption in the form of bribes hindered the smooth process of obtaining citizenship. She mentioned that the system is not friendly to the poor, who often do not have the resources to pay bribes. She suggested that the government should improve the system by making it easier for the poor to get their citizenship without paying bribes. Impact on Her Children: Her children's citizenship was also discussed. She confirmed that the institution where her children were placed had taken care of their citizenship process. However, due to her separation from her children and their placement in an institution, she no longer had direct involvement in their lives.

#### Personal Life and Employment:

Regarding her personal life, the respondent shared that she had worked in various jobs, including labor work and hotel work. She mentioned that, at one point, she was involved in a project with a contractor, but the contractor did not pay her for her work. This financial instability led her to seek other employment opportunities. She currently lives with a female friend, and she mentioned that living conditions have been challenging, often influenced by difficult personal interactions with men in her past, including alcohol consumption and violence.

#### Reflections on the Citizenship Process:

In reflection, the respondent highlighted that the citizenship process in Nepal, particularly for those from marginalized communities, could be much smoother. She stated that without bribes, the process would be less stressful and more accessible to everyone. She believes that the government should take steps to eliminate corruption and make the process transparent, ensuring that those without financial means can still acquire citizenship easily.

#### Conclusion:

The respondent's story reflects the complex intersection of personal, social, and bureaucratic challenges in obtaining citizenship. Her experience underscores the difficulties faced by many citizens in Nepal, particularly marginalized women, in navigating government systems that often require financial resources or connections to access basic rights. Her call for a more accessible and equitable process highlights a broader issue of social inequality and the need for reform in Nepal's citizenship laws and practices.

#### CR#8 Respondent's Struggle to Obtain Citizenship

Sunita Rai, is a 34-year-old woman originally from Gorkha, Nepal. She has been residing in Kathmandu for the past 1.5 years after the tragic death of her husband in a car accident two years ago. She has one daughter, aged 6. Sunita's life took a difficult turn after her husband's death, leading her to move to Kathmandu in search of work.

#### Challenges Faced:

Upon arriving in Kathmandu, Sunita faced numerous challenges. Initially, she struggled to find stable employment, with many people taking advantage of her vulnerability. She worked in various capacities, including in the hospitality sector, but the financial instability of her situation was overwhelming. She was forced into precarious work in Thamel, where she had to deal with exploitation, insecurity, and the stress of finding basic needs like food and shelter. Sunita had completed her ANM (Auxiliary Nurse Midwife) course and worked in hospitals for several years, but her career was disrupted when she became pregnant with her daughter. After giving birth, she had to stop working due to health issues and difficulties related to her child's care. Additionally, she faced another setback when her bag containing important documents, including a mobile phone, certificates, and money, was stolen, making it harder to rebuild her life.

#### Problems with Citizenship:

One of the major issues Sunita faced was the difficulty in obtaining her citizenship. Without citizenship, she could not open a bank account, access government services, or use digital wallets like E-Sewa, which are essential in modern-day Nepal. She had to rely on others for basic financial transactions, and her inability to prove her citizenship created barriers in her personal and professional life. Sunita recounted how the process of obtaining her citizenship became particularly difficult. Her mother had passed away, and her father was not present to help her navigate the

bureaucratic maze. Without her father's name on her official records, she faced delays and complications in securing her identity. While there was an option for a group of people to get their citizenship through a collective process, she was left out of this, despite her desperate need. She mentioned how she was forced to rely on others' help to even get started with the process. Sunita's story highlights the difficulties many people in Nepal face when trying to secure citizenship, especially if they don't have both parents to support them.

#### Citizenship Process:

Despite the setbacks, Sunita eventually managed to get her citizenship after a long and difficult journey. She was 18 or 19 years old when she finally received her citizenship. The process was neither easy nor quick; it took years of persistence and overcoming bureaucratic hurdles. Her experience reflects a common issue faced by many individuals who do not have the traditional support systems that others rely on to obtain their citizenship. Sunita also highlighted that, for people like her, the process of obtaining citizenship is far from straightforward.

#### Impact on Daily Life:

The lack of citizenship created significant issues for Sunita. Without it, she was excluded from many basic social and financial systems. For example, she couldn't register for certain government services, like health insurance or benefits, and had trouble saving money or accessing loans at the bank. Her struggles also extended to more personal matters. Sunita revealed that she faced stigma and exploitation, especially as a woman with no official documentation. Despite this, she continued to work hard and manage her life, striving to give her daughter a better future. She even made the difficult decision to temporarily stop working and focus on her health when her condition worsened, yet again highlighting the precarious nature of her existence without the proper paperwork.

#### Current Status and Reflection:

Today, Sunita has been able to secure citizenship, but the journey was fraught with challenges. She emphasized how the system is designed to favor those with family support and often disregards the struggles of those who don't have that privilege. For Sunita and many like her, obtaining citizenship should have been an easier, more accessible process, but instead, it turned into a complex and frustrating ordeal.

Through this case story, Sunita's voice sheds light on the broader systemic issues surrounding citizenship in Nepal, particularly for women and individuals without strong familial support. Her resilience is a testament to the struggles many face daily, fighting not only for their survival but for basic recognition as citizens.

#### CR#9 **Struggles in Obtaining Citizenship and the Impact on Employment and Life**

Siya Magar, a 31-year-old woman living in Kathmandu, Nepal, has been facing ongoing struggles related to her inability to acquire citizenship. Despite her birth in Nepal, she has not been able to obtain the legal documentation needed to access basic rights and opportunities. This has had a profound impact on her life, especially in terms of employment, personal stability, and mental health.

**Citizenship Challenges:** Siya has been without citizenship for many years. This has created significant barriers in her life, the most pressing being her inability to secure a job. She shared that without citizenship, employers are unwilling to hire her, as she cannot provide the necessary legal documentation. This has left her in a state of constant job insecurity. In addition to employment issues, the lack of citizenship has affected other aspects of her life. Siya explained that even when she wanted to travel or relocate for work, she was unable to do so because she could not obtain a valid identity card or the necessary travel documents. She also faced challenges in registering for government

services and obtaining a basic ID card. Without citizenship, she feels excluded from many opportunities that others take for granted.

Family Impact: Siya's struggles with citizenship have also had a significant impact on her family life. She revealed that due to financial and social difficulties, she had to give up her children for adoption. She was unable to provide them with the basic care they needed because she had no stable job or income, and without citizenship, she was also unable to access any state aid or welfare programs. The emotional toll of this decision was immense, and it contributed to her feeling of depression and instability. When asked about her children's citizenship, Siya shared that they were adopted by foreign families, and their citizenship was obtained through those families. She has no legal rights to her children or access to them. She does not have the ability to meet with them, which has further added to her sense of alienation.

#### Limited Support and Institutional Challenges:

Siya expressed frustration with the lack of support she has received from various institutions. She was told that schools could assist with the citizenship process, but these promises did not materialize into any practical help. Although she reached out to schools and other organizations, she did not receive the necessary support to navigate the legal complexities of obtaining citizenship. Additionally, Siya attempted to seek help from the police, hoping that they might facilitate the process by filing a complaint or petition. However, her experience with local authorities was unhelpful, as the process remained unclear and bureaucratic, preventing her from moving forward with obtaining citizenship.

#### Employment and Life Reflections:

Siya reflected that obtaining citizenship would open up new opportunities for her. She expressed that with citizenship, she could apply for jobs without the fear of rejection due to her legal status. She mentioned that she would even be willing to take on jobs such as working as a waiter, which she would have previously considered beneath her. Without citizenship, however, she feels forced into a narrow range of limited job options that are often not well-paying or fulfilling. Regarding her thoughts on the citizenship process, Siya believes that if the process were simpler and more straightforward, it would have been much easier for her to obtain citizenship. She thinks that a clearer path, perhaps with the help of local authorities or family members, could have made the process less frustrating. She also feels that if citizenship were more easily accessible, it would have given her a greater sense of stability and security in her life.

#### Final Thoughts and Future Hopes:

Siya concluded by expressing her desire to leave her current job if she were to obtain citizenship. She believes that having citizenship would allow her life to "settle" and relieve many of the daily challenges she faces. She feels that without it, she is stuck in a cycle of uncertainty that is difficult to break. Her job, which she currently struggles with, would be much easier to leave behind if she had the legal rights and security that come with citizenship.

Siya also shared her personal frustration with the difficulty of living without citizenship. The social stigma and legal barriers she faces have made life far more difficult than it needs to be. She hopes that with citizenship, she can finally break free from these constraints and live a life with more opportunities and stability.

#### Conclusion:

Siya's case highlights the profound impact that the lack of citizenship can have on an individual's life in Nepal. It affects not only employment but also family life, mental health, and the ability to access basic services. Her ongoing struggle to obtain citizenship is a reminder of the systemic challenges many face in Nepal, and the need for reform in the citizenship process to ensure that all citizens, regardless of their circumstances, can participate fully in society.

## CR#10 Challenges of Citizenship documents

Munna Darji, a 19-year-old woman, has faced significant struggles throughout her life due to the lack of citizenship. Her story highlights the difficulties many face when they are unable to access basic documentation and legal recognition due to complex familial and bureaucratic issues.

### Early Life and Family Background:

Munna was born in Kapan, Kathmandu, but was raised in Pulchowk, Lalitpur. She lost her mother when she was 16 years old, and has never had a relationship with her father, who left the family when she was very young. Her mother, despite being the primary caretaker, was unable to secure Munna's citizenship due to the absence of her father's details in the official records. Munna's birth certificate, which was created by her mother, lists her father's name, but Munna has never known him personally and cannot remember his face. She explained that her mother's side of the family helped in obtaining the birth certificate, but the absence of her father's information made the process complicated. The lack of a father's identification has meant that Munna was never able to acquire her citizenship.

### Challenges Due to Lack of Citizenship:

Munna's life has been marred by the absence of citizenship, which has affected her personal, social, and professional opportunities. Without a valid citizenship card, Munna has faced several barriers in her daily life. For instance, she cannot open a bank account, apply for a personal SIM card, or pursue most formal employment opportunities. Munna explained that when searching for a job, many employers demand proof of citizenship, and without it, she is unable to secure stable work. Furthermore, Munna's inability to obtain citizenship has created a sense of disconnection from society. She described feeling like she has no official identity, which has had psychological and emotional impacts on her. The fact that she is unable to officially identify herself has made it difficult to access healthcare, education, and other basic services that many citizens take for granted.

### Lack of Support from Relatives and Institutions:

Munna's efforts to seek help from her extended family members and local authorities have been fruitless. Despite her attempts to clarify her situation, including seeking help at her mother's family home, she has been told that they cannot assist her. Munna explained that her relatives, when asked for help, either denied knowing how to help her or refused to take responsibility, further deepening her sense of isolation. She also approached various institutions to seek assistance in obtaining citizenship, but no concrete support has been forthcoming. Despite being eligible for citizenship, the legal and bureaucratic hurdles, along with the absence of critical information such as her father's details, have left her in a prolonged state of uncertainty.

### Current Struggles and Aspirations:

Munna's current life is marked by a strong desire for change. She expressed a longing for her citizenship to be processed so that she can secure employment and pursue her education. Without citizenship, her prospects remain limited. She briefly attended school, but financial constraints and the inability to access scholarships due to her lack of citizenship have prevented her from continuing her studies. Munna dreams of bettering her life through work and education, but she feels trapped by the system. If she were able to obtain her citizenship, she would be able to take up a job, study further, and eventually become independent. However, without a citizenship card, she feels like an outsider in her own country, unable to fully engage with the opportunities around her.

### Recommendations for Citizenship Reform:

Munna's case reveals a significant gap in the country's approach to citizenship. If she had been able to receive citizenship through her mother's side of the family, her situation might have been very different. She emphasized that policy reforms to include maternal lines in citizenship laws could help people like her, who are disadvantaged by paternal documentation requirements. She also suggested that more practical support from local authorities and institutions could assist those who face similar struggles. Munna's plea is not only for her own citizenship but for the creation of systems that are more inclusive and supportive of people who, for various reasons, are unable to provide paternal details or documents.

#### Conclusion:

Munna's journey highlights the critical need for reforms to ensure that all individuals, regardless of their family circumstances, can obtain basic legal recognition and access to opportunities. Without citizenship, Munna's future remains uncertain, but with the right support and changes in the law, she could have a chance at leading a fulfilling life. Her story serves as a powerful reminder of the challenges faced by many individuals who are caught in bureaucratic and legal limbo, unable to access the rights and opportunities that should be available to all citizens.

#### CR#11 Challenges in Obtaining Citizenship

Savina Kadel, a 34-year-old woman from Chitwan, currently residing in Mulpani. Savina's story highlights the complex and difficult journey she faced due to the lack of citizenship, compounded by her marital situation and socio-economic challenges.

#### Early Life and Education:

Savina was born in Chitwan and grew up there, but her education was interrupted. She managed to complete up to grade 2, as family responsibilities and other challenges led her to drop out of school early. Despite this, she reflects on her life with resilience, recognizing the limited opportunities she had to pursue further education.

#### Marriage and Family:

Savina is married and has a daughter, now 21 years old. However, her marriage and its complications contributed to her inability to obtain citizenship. At the time of her marriage, her husband was unwell, and their living conditions were unstable. She describes how her husband's family was engaged in land disputes, which further complicated their personal lives. This environment, coupled with the lack of proper documentation, delayed any formal processes for securing citizenship. Savina shares that she never had a marriage certificate due to the circumstances surrounding her marriage. She was unable to register her marriage officially, which was one of the reasons she could not acquire citizenship. Her husband's citizenship was also delayed, and she only recently received a citizenship card for her daughter, who is now an adult. Her husband's reluctance to help her with the process also led to delays.

#### Issues with Citizenship:

Savina's main issue is the absence of her citizenship, which has caused her immense problems throughout her life. Without citizenship, she has faced difficulties in obtaining basic services, being unable to prove her identity in various official settings. This became particularly challenging when relief packages were distributed during the COVID-19 lockdown, and Savina, as a non-citizen, was ineligible for such aid. Savina explains that while her daughter now has citizenship, her own situation remains unresolved. Despite several attempts to seek help, her citizenship was never

processed until recently when her husband, after the lockdown, finally managed to get it done. She mentions that her daughter's citizenship was straightforward, as her father facilitated the process, but Savina was left to navigate the system alone. Her story reveals the profound emotional toll of not having citizenship—she feels as though she is invisible in society, with no official identity to claim. The sense of uncertainty and insecurity is overwhelming. Her life has been marked by a lack of legal recognition, which has affected her ability to make decisions, access services, and even live with a sense of dignity.

#### Struggles with Legal and Administrative Processes:

Savina recounts her struggles with the bureaucracy involved in acquiring citizenship. Her father-in-law's citizenship was processed with the help of his younger brother, who took responsibility for his identity documents. But for Savina, the process was much more difficult. Her own family, including her mother, did not have the necessary documents for her to complete the process either. As a result, she was left with no formal support from her immediate family, and this made her feel isolated and disempowered.

The lack of proper documentation in her family, combined with a lack of understanding of the legal system, led to further delays. Savina describes how the absence of marital registration and other necessary documents led to a complicated situation where no one, including the officials, knew how to help her. She also mentions that once the lockdown was over, her husband finally managed to help her acquire her citizenship, but by then, the emotional toll had already been significant.

#### Socio-Economic Challenges:

Without citizenship, Savina's opportunities for economic mobility were also severely limited. She explains that she could not access government support programs or engage in any formal work that required identification or citizenship documentation. This added to the sense of hopelessness she experienced in her day-to-day life. Despite these challenges, she has been working on and off, mainly in informal jobs. However, due to the instability of these jobs, she has not been able to improve her living situation.

#### Emotional and Psychological Impact:

Savina's story highlights the psychological impact of not having citizenship. She talks about the constant fear of being treated as an outsider, the anxiety that accompanies not having an official identity, and the emotional strain it has put on her family life. She also mentions the loneliness of not being able to participate fully in society, feeling that her lack of citizenship sets her apart from others.

Savina's situation illustrates the emotional and mental distress faced by many women in Nepal who, due to legal and bureaucratic hurdles, are unable to acquire citizenship. For women like Savina, the lack of citizenship is not just a technical issue—it is a barrier that limits their agency, creates insecurity, and forces them into an invisible existence.

#### Suggestions for Improvement:

Savina suggests that the process for acquiring citizenship should be simplified and more accessible, especially for women in situations like hers. She believes that there should be more support from institutions to help women navigate the bureaucratic maze and acquire the necessary documentation. She also advocates for more community involvement, where local leaders and civil society organizations could play a greater role in helping people like her understand the procedures and ensure that they receive the citizenship they are entitled to.

In conclusion, Savina's story is a powerful reminder of the difficulties faced by individuals, particularly women, who do not have citizenship in Nepal. It highlights the need for systemic reform, better support systems, and a more inclusive approach to ensuring that every citizen can access the rights and opportunities that come with having legal recognition in society.

#### CR#12. **Struggles in Obtaining Citizenship**

Sushma Pariyar is a 21-year-old woman from Sindhupalchok. She was born in Tham Paltar, a small village, and currently resides in a different small village in the area. Sushma's journey to obtain her citizenship has been fraught with challenges, primarily due to her family's complicated documentation process and the lack of support from her relatives. This case story explores the difficulties she has faced and the impact these issues have had on her life.

##### Struggles with Citizenship Documentation:

Sushma's challenges began when she needed to obtain her citizenship to secure a job, open a bank account, and gain access to various social services. Her mother, although aware of the importance of the document, was unable to help her acquire it. Despite repeated attempts to collect the necessary documents and complete the required steps, Sushma's citizenship process was delayed multiple times. Initially, Sushma's mother sent photocopies of documents for verification, but when the documents were submitted to the district office, they were rejected. Sushma's mother attempted to resolve the issue, but her efforts were stymied by a lack of cooperation from her father and relatives. The delays worsened after her father, who was supposed to assist her, failed to provide the required documents or follow up on the application process. As a result, Sushma faced immense difficulties. Without her citizenship, she couldn't access basic services, couldn't get a job, and even struggled to save money. She could not open a bank account, which further limited her financial independence.

##### Impact on Employment and Social Life:

The lack of citizenship had a severe impact on Sushma's life. She explained that without citizenship, she couldn't apply for formal employment. Every job application asked for a citizenship card, and without one, she was left with no options. Even when she tried to earn money, she couldn't save it properly, as she had no access to a bank account. In addition to employment challenges, Sushma found it difficult to manage her finances. She explained that her financial situation was fragile because she couldn't save money or invest in any future plans. Her inability to secure a stable income contributed to her struggles, and she became increasingly dependent on her family for support.

##### Personal and Family Struggles:

Sushma's personal life also revolved around this issue. She had a son who was born in her family home, and her child's birth certificate was also delayed due to the same documentation problems. When her husband was involved in the process, he too failed to help Sushma secure the citizenship card, leaving her in a helpless situation. She had hoped that the community or her family might come to her aid, but this support was non-existent. Even though her relatives were aware of her plight, they did not take any substantial action to assist her. The situation grew worse when Sushma's husband's family became involved. The tense relationship between them and her relatives meant that she received little to no help from her in-laws either. Her husband's relatives were not willing to help her with the paperwork, and she felt increasingly isolated and unsupported.

##### Emotional and Psychological Impact:

Sushma's emotional state deteriorated due to the continuous struggles and delays. She expressed feelings of hopelessness and frustration, noting that her inability to obtain citizenship had made her feel like a second-class

citizen. She had no legal recognition, which deeply affected her sense of self-worth. Moreover, she was unable to secure a stable future for herself and her child due to the ongoing challenges with the citizenship process. Sushma also shared her experience with domestic abuse during her marriage. Her husband would drink, and when intoxicated, he would become violent. This abusive behavior, combined with the lack of support from her extended family, left her in an incredibly difficult situation. She explained that the physical abuse, emotional neglect, and financial dependence caused immense suffering. She also mentioned the psychological toll that living without citizenship took on her, making her feel insecure and unsafe.

#### Current Status and Outlook:

Sushma's current status remains precarious. While her mother and some family members are sympathetic to her struggles, they have not been able to provide sufficient help to resolve the issue. She continues to live without a citizenship card, unable to fully participate in her community or access basic services. She remains hopeful that the situation will improve, but it has been an uphill battle.

#### The Way Forward:

Sushma believes that obtaining her citizenship is the key to improving her life and that of her child. She feels that without the proper documentation, her life will continue to be limited, with few opportunities for growth or stability. She has expressed a desire to work with organizations or institutions that can help her navigate the citizenship process. Sushma's case illustrates the profound impact that the lack of citizenship can have on an individual's life, especially in terms of access to employment, financial independence, and overall social inclusion. It highlights the need for more accessible support systems and legal assistance for individuals facing similar challenges in obtaining their citizenship.

#### Conclusion:

Sushma's story is a powerful reminder of the hardships faced by many individuals who struggle to secure basic documentation like citizenship. The obstacles she has faced are not just administrative but also deeply personal, affecting her family life, employment opportunities, and mental well-being. Support from institutions, relatives, and the government is crucial for resolving such issues and ensuring that people like Sushma can access the rights and opportunities they deserve.

#### CR#13. Struggles in Obtaining Citizenship

The respondent's story revolves around the difficulty in obtaining citizenship for their younger sister. Although the sister has completed her schooling and is currently pursuing further education, she remains without a citizenship certificate, a critical document for her future. Despite the lack of formal citizenship, the sister has managed to continue her studies, with colleges willing to admit her up to the 12th grade. However, her educational prospects are limited due to the absence of citizenship, as this is a vital requirement for further academic and professional opportunities. The respondent explains that they have made great personal sacrifices to ensure that their sister could receive an education. However, the absence of a citizenship certificate poses a significant barrier. The sister is now unable to pursue work or other opportunities that could secure her future, as citizenship would enable her to apply for jobs, access government benefits, or even pursue a better life abroad.

#### Key Issues Faced by the Respondent:

1. **Lack of Citizenship:** The central issue is the respondent's and their sister's lack of citizenship, which has created barriers in several key aspects of life. For the sister, this lack of citizenship means that she cannot secure a formal job, and even her education is not fully recognized without the necessary documentation.

Furthermore, without citizenship, she cannot enter the formal job market, and her future is at risk. Despite efforts to enroll her in college, this is a temporary solution, as further academic opportunities require official documentation that she does not have.

2. **Educational Access and Admission:** The respondent highlights the challenges their sister faces regarding college admission. While she has been able to attend school and even continue her education beyond the 10th grade, the requirement for a citizenship certificate to complete the admission process at higher levels of education is a significant hurdle. The respondent worries that the lack of citizenship will eventually stop their sister from pursuing higher education. The issue is more complicated in private schools or colleges, where the admission process might be stricter.
3. **Marriage and Legal Barriers:** The respondent also addresses the consequences of not having a citizenship certificate in the context of marriage. According to legal provisions, one's birth certificate and citizenship are critical documents needed for legal marriage registration. Without citizenship, the respondent fears that their sister will face difficulties in registering her marriage or establishing her identity legally. In such cases, even if she were to marry, she would face difficulties in securing legal documentation for the marriage and related processes, such as obtaining a marriage certificate and, in the future, registering her children's birth.
4. **Parental Citizenship and Documentation:** The story also touches on the complexity of the documentation required for various legal processes. If parents are deceased, the respondent explains, the death certificate is also necessary to obtain citizenship and complete any related processes. The respondent points out the legal requirement for both parents' citizenship documents or their death certificates to proceed with any further documentation, including for marriage and children. This legal stipulation adds to the challenges faced by individuals who have lost their parents.

#### Legal and Social Implications:

The respondent's situation is a poignant example of the social and legal struggles individuals face due to lack of citizenship. Not only does it affect their ability to work and live legally, but it also undermines their access to basic rights, such as marriage registration and education. The legal framework requires specific documentation for even the most fundamental aspects of life, and without it, individuals like the respondent's sister are left in a vulnerable state.

#### Conclusion:

The respondent's case highlights a broader issue of citizenship inaccessibility. It is not just about acquiring a certificate but about the implications that lack of documentation has on an individual's entire life. Whether it's education, marriage, or employment, the absence of citizenship can leave individuals at a disadvantage, making it difficult for them to realize their full potential and secure a better future.

The respondent strongly advocates for more accessible processes for obtaining citizenship and documentation, suggesting that it is crucial for individuals to have the proper paperwork to navigate legal and social systems effectively. In their case, they call for more urgency in resolving the bureaucratic delays and complications that prevent individuals from gaining access to their rightful citizenship.

#### CR#14. **Struggle for Citizenship**

Supriya Bhattarai, a woman from Chabahil, Kathmandu, faced an uphill battle to secure citizenship for both herself and her child. Born in 2048 BS (1991 AD), she grew up in Kathmandu but encountered several challenges throughout her life, particularly when it came to obtaining her citizenship and the birth registration of her child.

Supriya's marriage was marred by deep emotional and physical abuse from her husband. He repeatedly questioned the legitimacy of their child, disregarded her as his wife, and refused to acknowledge her as a person. Despite being

pregnant and enduring multiple surgeries after a difficult cesarean delivery, Supriya's husband remained neglectful, leaving her alone with a newborn while dealing with health complications and a lack of resources. Her efforts to survive, including distilling liquor to support herself, were overshadowed by her husband's emotional cruelty and eventual abandonment.

Her quest for citizenship began amid these struggles. With no guidance on how to navigate the system, Supriya turned to an older woman who suggested that, since she was born in Kathmandu, she could leverage this fact to apply for citizenship. Despite the abusive environment she endured, Supriya's determination to secure her child's future drove her forward. She worked hard, even while nursing her newborn and dealing with the surgical wound from her delivery, to save money for the long and arduous journey towards getting her legal rights.

Her father, who had not been a reliable source of support, initially dismissed her plight. However, after much persistence, Supriya persuaded him to help by convincing her husband to grant permission for her son's birth registration in exchange for a promise of property. Supriya's struggles were far from over, though. Once her son's birth registration was finally completed, she faced additional harassment from her in-laws and husband, who continued to mistreat her and demand her documents.

Throughout the ordeal, Supriya's courage was unwavering. She hid her important documents in a secret compartment of her clothing to protect them from being stolen or destroyed. She even managed to secure a marriage certificate, her son's birth registration, and ultimately, her citizenship—despite the intense physical and emotional abuse she endured.

Supriya's experience highlights several systemic issues within Nepal's citizenship process. She points out that single women, especially those who are abandoned by their partners, should have the right to acquire citizenship without requiring the involvement of a husband or the label of a widow. As a mother raising her child alone, Supriya realized how vital citizenship is for securing a stable future. Without it, she faced significant barriers, including the inability to save money, secure her income, or own property. It was only after receiving her citizenship that Supriya began to feel empowered and able to stand up for herself and her son.

Supriya's case underscores the need for reforms in Nepal's citizenship laws, ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their marital status, have equal access to citizenship. Her personal story of perseverance and determination to secure her rights, despite facing insurmountable challenges, is a powerful testament to the resilience of women in the face of adversity.

### CR#15 **Struggles with Citizenship**

Susmita Thapa, a 24-year-old woman from Byaas Pattan, Damuli, Nepal, is facing significant challenges in her life due to the lack of a valid citizenship certificate. Her father and mother hold citizenship, but due to certain administrative and legal issues, her name was not registered properly in the citizenship records. As a result, she has been unable to obtain her own citizenship, despite being married and living in her husband's household for several years.

#### Struggles Faced:

1. **Difficulty Accessing Services and Rights:**
  - Without citizenship, Susmita has faced numerous challenges in performing basic activities that require government documents. She cannot open a bank account, access social services, or even engage in certain business activities. Additionally, her child is unable to attend school because she cannot provide necessary documents like a birth certificate or citizenship card.

- She mentioned, “Nagarikta (citizenship) is required for everything. If you want to learn a skill, travel abroad, or even open a bank account, citizenship is essential. Without it, everything becomes a struggle.”
2. Marriage and Legal Barriers:
    - Susmita’s marriage has also added complexity to her citizenship issue. Her name was not included in the citizenship registration records when her parents moved to a new location. This has led to complications in both her marital life and legal identity.
    - Her husband, despite being supportive, has not been able to help her obtain citizenship. “Even after marriage, my husband couldn’t help me get a citizenship. Without his support, I’m stuck in this situation,” Susmita shared.
  3. Economic Hardships:
    - Being unable to secure a valid citizenship has significantly hindered Susmita’s ability to earn a living. Without a bank account or the ability to access loans or other financial services, she has struggled to generate income for herself and her family. “I can’t work freely, and there’s no financial stability. I can’t even save money for my child’s future,” she expressed with frustration.
    - Her challenges are compounded by the inability to prove her identity or eligibility for work in many sectors.
  4. Educational Challenges for Her Child:
    - One of the most distressing consequences of not having citizenship is her child’s lack of access to proper education. Without valid documents, her child is unable to attend school, which puts the child’s future at risk.
    - “I want my child to study in a good school, but without citizenship, how can I provide him with the education he deserves?” she said, highlighting the importance of citizenship for her child’s future prospects.
  5. Interactions with Local Authorities:
    - Susmita has approached local authorities multiple times for help in resolving her citizenship issue. However, despite her efforts, the authorities have not been able to provide any solution. “I went to the ward office several times, but they kept sending me back, saying my case is complicated because of the name omission,” she recounted.
    - She mentioned that even though the local office knows her situation, they refused to issue a recommendation or help her complete the necessary paperwork for citizenship.
  6. Cultural and Social Obstacles:
    - The societal expectations regarding women’s roles, particularly in relation to marriage, have further complicated her situation. There is a belief that a married woman should rely on her husband for citizenship matters. This cultural mindset has led to delays in solving her case.
    - “The ward officials asked me why I don’t have my husband’s citizenship. They think I should have depended on him for everything,” Susmita explained. This reflects a societal challenge where women are expected to defer to male authority figures for their legal and financial matters.

#### Reflection on Citizenship and Legal Barriers:

In Susmita’s case, the lack of citizenship has not only denied her access to basic rights and services but has also severely impacted her social and economic life. Her struggles are compounded by systemic issues in the registration process, societal expectations, and bureaucratic delays. As Susmita put it, “If I had citizenship, life would be easier. But without it, I can’t even dream of a better future for myself or my child.”

She believes that the process to obtain citizenship should be more straightforward, and that the government should make it easier for women, especially those who are married or who have moved to a new location, to access their legal rights.

#### Suggestions for Improvement:

- Simplification of Citizenship Registration Process: Susmita suggests that the citizenship registration process should be more inclusive and accessible, especially for women in similar situations.
- Increased Awareness and Support: There is a need for increased awareness among local authorities regarding the specific challenges faced by women in obtaining citizenship, along with proactive support.
- Social Reforms: Societal mindsets need to change to empower women to manage their legal affairs without relying solely on male relatives.

#### Conclusion:

Susmita's story is a powerful reminder of the challenges faced by individuals, particularly women, who do not have access to basic citizenship rights. The lack of proper documentation has not only isolated her from various services but has also created a sense of social and economic exclusion. Addressing these issues is crucial for ensuring equal opportunities for all citizens, regardless of gender or marital status.

#### CR#16. **Struggles of a Stateless Woman to Obtain Citizenship**

Sumitra Pariyar, a 65-year-old woman originally from India, who has been living in Nepal for the past 28 years without citizenship. Through her testimony, we explore the difficulties and challenges faced by individuals who are unable to obtain citizenship in Nepal, particularly those from marginalized communities.

Sumitra was born in Guwahati, India, and migrated to Nepal over 20 years ago. Despite living here for nearly three decades, she has never been able to secure Nepalese citizenship. Her situation reflects a broader issue faced by many individuals, especially women, from ethnic minorities and cross-border communities, who struggle with the bureaucratic hurdles surrounding citizenship.

#### Background and Key Issues:

- Citizenship Issue: Sumitra's inability to obtain Nepalese citizenship has been a major cause of distress in her life. She has faced countless struggles, including social and economic exclusion. She attempted to apply for citizenship through her husband's family, but the process was complicated. The local authorities demanded that she provide a "sifarish" (recommendation) from her maternal family, a requirement that was impossible for her because she has no surviving relatives in India. This added another layer of complexity to her situation, preventing her from accessing basic rights and services.
- Living Without Citizenship: The absence of citizenship has severely restricted Sumitra's opportunities. She cannot open a bank account, apply for government benefits, or even secure employment. She has lived in a state of uncertainty, unable to fully integrate into society. Despite her efforts, she has been denied basic rights such as old-age pensions and healthcare services. Moreover, Sumitra has faced challenges when attempting to prove her identity, especially in cases involving government services or legal matters.
- Financial Struggles: Without citizenship, Sumitra has been excluded from any form of government financial assistance, including welfare programs such as the elderly allowance. Her financial situation has been precarious, as she has been unable to save money in a bank or access any formal financial support. She has also struggled to secure work, as employers are hesitant to hire someone without proper documentation.
- Social Isolation: Sumitra's situation has also isolated her socially. As she does not possess any official documents, she has been unable to participate fully in community activities or access legal protections available to citizens. The discrimination faced by stateless individuals is evident in her narrative, and it has left her in a state of constant vulnerability.

#### Attempts to Obtain Citizenship:

Despite facing numerous setbacks, Sumitra has not given up on her quest for citizenship. She tried to navigate the bureaucratic maze by going to local government offices, including the municipal and ward offices in Pokhara. However, she was met with obstacles at every turn. Authorities insisted that she needed a "sifarish" from her maternal side in India, something she could not provide due to the loss of all relatives. Even though her husband and children are Nepalese citizens, Sumitra was told that her case could not be processed without this requirement. Despite the challenges, Sumitra has remained hopeful and continues to engage with local authorities, hoping that eventually, the bureaucratic hurdles will be overcome. She believes that if the government facilitated a more inclusive process, her situation would improve.

#### Impact of Statelessness:

Sumitra's experience underscores the broader issue of statelessness, which affects many individuals in Nepal, especially women from ethnic minorities and cross-border communities. Statelessness deprives individuals of their fundamental human rights, including the right to vote, the right to work, and the right to access basic services such as healthcare and education. The lack of citizenship also impacts economic empowerment, as individuals like Sumitra are unable to contribute to the economy in meaningful ways. The denial of citizenship rights has a lasting effect on the lives of individuals, reinforcing cycles of poverty and exclusion.

#### Recommendations:

Sumitra's case highlights the urgent need for reforms in Nepal's citizenship laws and policies. Her story reflects the struggle of many individuals who, despite living in the country for decades, remain stateless. It is crucial for the government to:

- Simplify the citizenship application process for individuals who have lived in Nepal for an extended period and contribute to society.
- Create an inclusive environment where marginalized communities can apply for citizenship without the need for complex, unreachable requirements such as "sifarish" (recommendation).
- Raise awareness about the legal rights of stateless individuals and establish programs to assist them in obtaining citizenship.

Conclusion: Sumitra Pariyar's story is a powerful example of the struggles faced by stateless individuals in Nepal. Her perseverance in the face of adversity reflects the strength and resilience of people who are often invisible in the eyes of the law. While Sumitra continues her efforts to secure citizenship, her case underscores the pressing need for comprehensive legal reforms that can help people like her fully integrate into society and exercise their basic human rights.

#### CR#17. **Struggles to Obtain Citizenship**

Miss Smita Nepali, a 25-year-old woman from Pokhara, Nepal, faces significant challenges in securing her citizenship. Despite her legitimate birth in Nepal, she does not have a citizenship certificate, which has led to numerous social, economic, and personal difficulties.

Smita's struggle began when she was unable to obtain a citizenship card due to her parents' inability to register her birth. Her father, who was supposed to help with the process, did not prioritize the matter, and her mother was also not involved. As a result, Smita's birth registration was never completed, and she could not apply for a citizenship certificate. Her situation has worsened over the years, with her family facing a lack of support and resources to resolve the issue.

The Situation: Smita, along with others in her community, has faced the immense challenge of being a stateless individual in Nepal. Despite being born and raised in the country, she is often questioned about her nationality. This has caused emotional distress, as she is often referred to as a "Madhesi" and asked to prove her identity, which she cannot do due to her lack of citizenship documents.

The problem worsens when Smita tries to engage in basic activities like opening a bank account, obtaining a job, or securing social welfare benefits. She recounts several occasions when she tried to open a bank account, but the bank officials rejected her due to her lack of citizenship. Similarly, she was denied the opportunity to access elderly benefits, which are essential for financial security in her later years.

Furthermore, Smita's experience with her extended family members has also been complicated. Her in-laws have refused to help her obtain her citizenship, even though they have the authority to do so. She has faced constant delays and refusals, with her in-laws arguing that her children should have citizenship before her. They say that it is unnecessary for her to have citizenship because she does not need it for any immediate purpose, but Smita knows that without it, she is unable to move forward in life.

#### Consequences and Impact:

The lack of citizenship has left Smita in a vulnerable position. She has had to work as a laborer for meager wages, struggling to make ends meet. She highlights the irony of having to live in poverty despite working hard, with her earnings being insufficient for basic necessities. Without citizenship, she is excluded from any formal work sector, and even when she tries to search for jobs, her lack of official documentation creates significant barriers. Smita's emotional toll is equally profound. The constant struggle to be recognized as a legitimate citizen of Nepal, combined with the rejection from various institutions, has severely affected her sense of self-worth. When she interacts with others, she often faces humiliation and is constantly reminded of her "status" as a non-citizen.

#### Desire for Change:

In her conversation, Smita expressed her hopes for the government to address the issues of citizenship accessibility, especially for people like her who are caught in bureaucratic limbo. She believes that people in disadvantaged situations, like hers, should be given priority to access citizenship without unnecessary delays or discrimination.

She passionately wishes to live with dignity and hopes that the government will simplify the process for those in similar situations. Smita advocates for the creation of a system that allows the poor and marginalized to obtain citizenship without having to prove their identity through complicated and often inaccessible procedures.

#### Conclusion:

Smita Nepali's case highlights the severe consequences of not having citizenship in Nepal. The issues she faces are not just legal but deeply personal, affecting her ability to work, her economic survival, and her emotional well-being. Her case also underscores the need for urgent reform in Nepal's citizenship policies to ensure that all citizens, regardless of their socio-economic background, can access basic rights and services. The government's intervention is critical in addressing these barriers and helping individuals like Smita lead dignified and secure lives.

#### **CR#18. Struggles to obtain citizenship**

A woman life experiences regarding her citizenship status, family issues, and social challenges. The conversation is deeply reflective, recounting struggles with her marital life, the absence of a citizenship document, and the resulting hardships she faces in everyday life. Some of the key points discussed include:

#### Citizenship Issues:

Swatika talks about how, due to her lack of citizenship, she has faced financial and social difficulties. She cannot open a bank account or access government benefits like old age pensions. This also impacts her ability to make significant decisions in her life, such as managing money or seeking government services.

#### Family Dynamics:

She mentions the tensions and conflicts with her husband, especially over the citizenship issue. Her husband's neglect and alcohol consumption have contributed to their strained relationship, leading to her decision to leave and live separately. The lack of communication with him has also left her without any support.

#### Childcare and Parenting:

Swatika is a mother to a son, but the child's birth registration is also an issue due to her own citizenship problems. This affects her ability to secure formal identification for her child.

#### Gender and Societal Expectations:

There are reflections on societal views about women, particularly in her own family, where daughters are sometimes seen as less valuable than sons. This gender-based discrimination influences the dynamics of familial support.

#### Future Prospects and Feelings:

Swatika expresses a lack of hope for improvement in her situation. She feels abandoned by her family and husband, and despite the citizenship issue, she doubts that anything will change in her life, including the prospects of getting married again.

#### Experiences with Poverty and Stress:

Swatika describes the heavy stress caused by her financial instability, the social stigmas of not having citizenship, and the impact of these struggles on her mental health and daily life.

In summary, Swatika's interview highlights the intersection of legal, social, and familial issues and the struggles faced by individuals without citizenship, especially women in rural areas. Her story underscores the critical need for better access to legal and governmental support for marginalized populations.

#### **CR#19. Struggles of Obtaining Citizenship**

Mina Sunar, a 43-year-old woman from Butwal, Rupandehi, has faced a multitude of challenges in her life due to the lack of official documentation, specifically her citizenship. Born in Nepal, Mina's situation highlights the severe obstacles faced by individuals without citizenship and the systemic difficulties in acquiring it.

#### Early Life and Family:

Mina was born in Butwal, Rupandehi, and grew up in a family where both her father and mother lacked proper citizenship documents. Despite her father having citizenship, her own was never processed. She was left without any official recognition of her identity, a situation that would later impact her opportunities and life choices.

#### Marriage and Children:

Mina married and had a son, who, in contrast to her own experience, was able to obtain citizenship. However, her personal situation remained unresolved. She struggled with the complex bureaucracy and hurdles surrounding the citizenship process, compounded by an abusive relationship with her husband, which led to further complications in securing the necessary documentation.

#### The Struggle for Citizenship:

Throughout her life, Mina sought to obtain her citizenship, but the process was marred by repeated failures. Authorities repeatedly promised that her citizenship would be processed, but the result was always the same: delays and empty promises. She was told to return again and again, only to face rejection without any clear reasons or solutions. This lack of clarity left her frustrated and helpless, without a way forward. Mina even sought help from organizations that assist people in obtaining citizenship, but those attempts proved equally unfruitful. Despite her repeated efforts, the organizations seemed unable or unwilling to understand her plight, and no tangible support materialized.

#### Consequences of Not Having Citizenship:

The lack of citizenship has had a profound impact on Mina's life. Without official recognition, she faced significant difficulties in securing employment. When seeking work, employers demanded proof of citizenship, which she could not provide. Even for simple tasks like renting a home, she was often asked to show proof of citizenship, which she did not have. This exclusion from basic rights and opportunities created a cycle of poverty and dependency that Mina was unable to escape.

Furthermore, the absence of citizenship meant that Mina could not access certain social services, such as the elderly or single-women's allowances, which she could have benefitted from given her circumstances. Without these supports, she struggled to make ends meet and to provide for her family, despite her hard work.

#### Social Stigma and Isolation:

Mina's lack of citizenship also isolated her socially. In a society where citizenship is closely tied to identity and belonging, Mina often felt like an outsider. Her social and community interactions were limited, and she experienced stigma for being an "illegal" resident, which further compounded her emotional and psychological distress. She also faced discrimination based on her gender. In her community, women in her situation were often marginalized, and without the protection that citizenship could offer, she was vulnerable to exploitation and neglect.

#### The Role of Organizations and the Government:

Mina approached various organizations for help, but despite some initial engagement, she did not receive the assistance she desperately needed. These organizations, while sympathetic, seemed overwhelmed and unable to navigate the bureaucratic complexities of citizenship applications. The government's response was no different. The promises of processing her application were not followed through, leaving her in a perpetual state of uncertainty.

In the absence of direct support, Mina resorted to pleading with her son to help secure a citizenship document for her, but even this process faced numerous barriers. She could not get the necessary paperwork in time, and every time she attempted to move forward, something would set her back.

#### The Emotional Toll:

Mina described the emotional toll of living without citizenship as a constant burden. The frustration of being stuck in a bureaucratic limbo, the pain of being excluded from basic societal privileges, and the constant anxiety over the future weighed heavily on her. "It is like living without a soul," she expressed, "You are there but not really part of anything."

A Glimmer of Hope:

Despite all the setbacks, Mina remains hopeful that she can finally secure her citizenship. She continues to reach out to the government and non-governmental organizations, hoping that someone will listen to her story and advocate for her cause. While the process is long and difficult, Mina is determined to fight for her right to be recognized as a citizen of Nepal.

Mina's story highlights the harsh reality faced by individuals who are denied citizenship due to a lack of proper documentation or because they fall through the cracks in the system. It underscores the importance of access to legal identity and the severe consequences of being without it. Her experiences also shed light on the need for improved systems and policies that can ensure that all citizens, regardless of their background or personal circumstances, are able to obtain their citizenship without unnecessary barriers.

For Mina, obtaining citizenship is not just about a piece of paper; it is about securing her dignity, access to rights, and the opportunity to live a life of equality and respect within her community.

#### CR#20 Challenges in Obtaining Citizenship

Janaki Joshi is a 24-year-old woman who has been struggling to obtain citizenship due to a lack of documentation and family support. Born in Mahendranagar, Janaki's life has been marked by the absence of formal recognition as a citizen, which has led to a multitude of challenges in her personal and professional life.

Janaki's primary issue stems from her inability to obtain a citizenship certificate. Her father, though a citizen, did not provide the necessary documentation to enable her to acquire citizenship. Despite multiple attempts to get her citizenship, including visits to various government offices and repeated pleas to her family, no one has assisted her in the process. Janaki feels neglected by her family, as they have not supported her in this matter, which has deeply affected her sense of belonging and identity.

Her struggles are compounded by the fact that she does not have a birth certificate, a document typically required to register for citizenship. Janaki has never been able to attend school due to the lack of proper documentation, and this lack of formal education has resulted in further social and economic disadvantages. She has faced rejection from several institutions and employment opportunities due to her stateless status. In her community, she feels like an outsider, often left without support when she needs it the most.

Her family's situation is complex. While her father holds citizenship, Janaki's attempts to use his documents to secure her own citizenship have been unsuccessful. The local ward office has advised her that a copy of her father's citizenship is necessary, but she has not been able to obtain it due to various bureaucratic hurdles and a lack of cooperation from her father. Janaki has also visited her hometown several times to try and resolve the issue, but each attempt has been in vain. Her father's refusal to help her has made her feel abandoned, and she has been left without any clear path to obtain the legal recognition she deserves.

The lack of citizenship has severely impacted her life. She is unable to get formal employment or access healthcare services in a country where these are often tied to citizenship status. Janaki dreams of a life where she could have had the opportunity to study, work, and live freely. Her inability to acquire citizenship has led to feelings of deep regret,

particularly as she watches others in her community—many of whom have the same family background—secure their own citizenship with relative ease.

Janaki's situation is a common problem faced by many women in her community, who are often left out of the legal documentation process due to gender-based discrimination, neglect from their families, and the lack of awareness or access to resources that could help them. She believes that if she had been given the chance to get her citizenship and education, her life would have been very different. She could have contributed to society in meaningful ways, whether by working in healthcare or joining the armed forces, as others in her family have done.

The respondent expresses deep frustration over the current system. She feels that had she been assisted in securing her citizenship earlier in life, she would have had the opportunity to lead a different life—perhaps even avoiding the physical challenges she now faces. As a woman without citizenship, she has experienced exclusion, both legally and socially, which has left her feeling hopeless.

Looking forward, Janaki wishes that the government or non-governmental organizations could step in to help people like her navigate the bureaucratic processes of obtaining citizenship. She believes that if the necessary documents—especially her father's citizenship—could be provided to her, she would be able to start a new chapter in her life. However, until that happens, she remains in a state of uncertainty, unsure of her future.

This case highlights the struggles of individuals in marginalized communities who face systemic barriers in obtaining citizenship. Janaki's story reflects the broader challenges faced by many Nepali citizens who, despite having a right to citizenship, find themselves excluded from the process due to family issues, lack of resources, or bureaucratic inefficiencies.

### **CR#21. Struggle for Citizenship and Dignity**

Pingki Sarki, a resilient woman in her mid-thirties, has endured immense challenges to secure her citizenship and establish a semblance of stability for her family. Born and raised in Kanchanpur, Nepal, Pingki's life is a testament to the struggles faced by countless women navigating systemic barriers, familial neglect, and societal indifference. Her story sheds light on the intersection of gender, socio-economic hardship, and the bureaucratic hurdles that marginalize women in Nepal.

#### **Early Life and Marital Challenges**

Pingki's marriage was marred by abuse. Her husband, an alcoholic, regularly beat her, while her father-in-law harassed her. Unable to endure the mistreatment, she left her marital home and sought refuge with her mother. However, this arrangement proved unsustainable, and she eventually moved into a rented space to support herself and her children.

Her separation from her husband lasted a decade, during which she faced severe financial and emotional hardships. Despite these adversities, she remained determined to protect her children and provide them with a better future.

#### **The Fight for Citizenship**

The lack of citizenship proved to be a significant barrier for Pingki and her children. Without it, her daughter was unable to attend school, and Pingki herself was excluded from accessing basic rights and opportunities. Despite persistent requests, her family refused to assist her in obtaining the necessary documentation.

The situation became dire after her husband's death. As the sole caregiver, Pingki needed her citizenship to claim her husband's pension and secure her children's future. She confronted her father-in-law, who initially resisted but eventually agreed to help after repeated persuasion.

### **Unimaginable Sacrifices**

Pingki's quest for citizenship came at a devastating personal cost. She revealed that she had to endure exploitation by her father-in-law to secure the necessary paperwork. This harrowing experience underscores the vulnerabilities faced by women in patriarchal societies, where they are often forced to trade their dignity for basic rights.

Even after obtaining her citizenship, the emotional scars of her ordeal remain. Pingki's courage in speaking out about her experience highlights the hidden struggles faced by countless women who suffer in silence.

### **Life After Citizenship**

While obtaining citizenship marked a significant milestone, Pingki's challenges were far from over. She continues to face financial difficulties, health problems, and the burden of raising her children alone. Her efforts to start a small business have been hampered by slow economic growth and limited support. Despite these challenges, she remains proud of her children, particularly her daughters, who have achieved independence and obtained their own citizenship.

### **Lessons Learned and Aspirations for Change**

Pingki believes her story is not unique. She emphasizes that many women in Nepal endure similar struggles but are unable to voice their suffering due to fear, stigma, and systemic indifference. She calls for systemic reforms to simplify the citizenship process and provide support for women in vulnerable situations.

Her message to society is clear: women must be empowered to speak out against injustice, and the government must create mechanisms to protect and assist women seeking their rights. She hopes that her story will inspire change and prevent others from enduring the suffering she has faced.

### **Conclusion**

Pingki Sarki's story is a powerful reminder of the resilience of women in the face of adversity. Her journey from oppression to empowerment highlights the urgent need for systemic change to ensure that no woman has to compromise her dignity for basic rights. Through her courage and determination, Pingki has become a voice for the voiceless, advocating for a more just and equitable society.

### **CR#22. Struggle for Citizenship**

Sun Kumari Chaudhary, a 31-year-old woman born in Bara, Bardiya, Ward No. 10, has spent her life battling the systemic and personal hurdles tied to a lack of citizenship. Residing now in Madhuban Municipality, Ward No. 5, her story highlights the cascading challenges of citizenship denial, spanning generations and impacting every facet of life.

### **A History of Disrupted Citizenship**

The root of Sun Kumari's challenges lies in her husband's inability to secure his citizenship due to missing documentation. Her husband's father, also lacking citizenship, went missing years ago, leaving the family without the legal anchor needed to establish their identity. Her mother-in-law's mysterious death during her search for her missing husband compounded the problem, leaving no marriage or death certificates. Consequently, her husband was left stateless for years.

Though her husband eventually obtained citizenship, the absence of marriage registration and other necessary documentation kept Sun Kumari from acquiring her own. Her situation exemplifies the generational impact of undocumented status, where one missing link in the legal chain creates insurmountable barriers for descendants.

### **Personal Struggles**

Sun Kumari's life is fraught with challenges stemming from her lack of citizenship. Her inability to secure this crucial document has denied her access to education for her children, employment opportunities, and a sense of belonging in her community.

"My eldest daughter is almost 15 years old, and she still doesn't have a birth certificate or citizenship," she explains. Without these documents, her children are barred from attending school. Her youngest child, now 8 years old, cries at the prospect of a future without education.

Employment opportunities are equally scarce for Sun Kumari, as many jobs require citizenship. Without a steady income, she struggles to provide for her family, compounding the emotional strain of her husband's decision to take another wife and separate from her. Her children now reside with their father, leaving her feeling isolated and unsupported.

### **Social and Institutional Barriers**

Sun Kumari has sought assistance from various sources, including the local ward office, but her pleas have been met with bureaucracy and indifference. Officials cite the lack of her husband's earlier citizenship and missing marriage registration as insurmountable obstacles. Each visit to the ward office ends with vague promises of help, which never materialize.

Her father-in-law's treatment further exacerbates her plight. Despite being a recognized figure in the community, he denies her any support, reinforcing her sense of vulnerability.

### **Impact on the Next Generation**

The lack of citizenship has a domino effect on Sun Kumari's children. They are growing up without the legal identity needed to access education, healthcare, or social services. Her eldest daughter's cries of despair resonate with Sun Kumari, who feels helpless in the face of a system that offers no solutions for people in her position.

### **Hope for Change**

Despite her struggles, Sun Kumari remains hopeful. She believes that the government and social organizations should step in to simplify the process of obtaining citizenship for people like her. She dreams of a system that prioritizes the needs of stateless individuals, enabling them to access fundamental rights and build a future for themselves and their families.

### **Conclusion**

Sun Kumari Chaudhary's story is a stark reminder of the profound challenges faced by those without citizenship. Her experience underscores the urgent need for systemic reforms to address generational statelessness. For Sun Kumari, citizenship is more than just a document—it represents hope, stability, and a chance for her and her children to thrive in a world that has long denied them their basic rights.

## CR#23. Struggles for Citizenship

Munika Chaudhary, a young woman from Deupur-6, Lamahi, faced significant challenges when trying to obtain her citizenship, a fundamental right guaranteed to every individual by the state. Munika's ordeal sheds light on the systemic barriers and bureaucratic complexities that many individuals in Nepal encounter due to their familial circumstances.

### The Beginning

Born in Bhajgau, Ward No. 3, Lamahi, Munika grew up in her father's hometown. Despite having a birth certificate issued by her grandfather, acquiring her citizenship became an uphill battle because her father did not possess one. This absence of her father's citizenship set the stage for numerous obstacles, leaving her to navigate an often-unsympathetic administrative system.

### The Struggles

Munika's journey to secure her citizenship began when she approached the ward chairperson's office. Despite her efforts, she was told that without her father's citizenship, her application could not proceed. The ward chairperson insisted that the process required her father's documents. Although she presented her birth certificate, issued under her grandfather's name, it was deemed insufficient.

Her attempts to seek assistance were further complicated when she learned that her grandfather's position as a former ward chairperson offered little leverage in speeding up the process. Despite his efforts, procedural requirements demanded her father's active involvement, which was not feasible.

### Family's Role and Additional Hurdles

Munika's grandfather and other family members, including her brother Manoj, tried to assist, but their efforts were often thwarted by the need for documentation her family did not possess. Officials recommended that either her grandfather or grandmother appear in person with additional papers. However, even their presence did not resolve the matter.

The family then turned to the municipality for help. After waiting for hours to meet the deputy mayor, Munika was told that the work should ideally have been completed at the ward office. However, recognizing the gravity of the issue, the deputy mayor attempted to call the ward chairperson. Unfortunately, the chairperson was unresponsive, leaving Munika and her family to rely on yet another suggestion: bringing any historical documents of her father that could help establish their case.

### Seeking Legal Assistance

Given the lack of progress through administrative channels, Munika and her family sought the help of a lawyer. The lawyer worked to strengthen their case by compiling documents and preparing legal arguments. However, even with legal intervention, the journey remained fraught with delays and challenges.

### The Impact

The prolonged process to acquire her citizenship not only tested Munika's patience but also caused emotional and financial strain on her family. Citizenship was more than just a piece of paper for her—it was the key to accessing her fundamental rights, including legal recognition, property inheritance, and opportunities for education and employment.

## A Reflection of Systemic Barriers

Munika's story is not unique. It highlights systemic issues within the citizenship process, particularly for individuals whose parents lack official documentation. Her case reflects the struggles of countless others who face generational hurdles in acquiring what should be a guaranteed right.

### Conclusion

Despite all odds, Munika's determination to secure her citizenship exemplifies resilience in the face of adversity. Her story underscores the need for reforms to make citizenship processes more inclusive and accessible, ensuring that no individual is denied their basic rights due to circumstances beyond their control.

### CR#24. Struggle for Citizenship

Savina, an 18-year-old from Sindhupalchok, currently resides in Satdobato, Kathmandu. Despite her youth, she has already faced significant challenges in navigating life without one of the most critical documents for a Nepali citizen—a citizenship certificate.

Savina's difficulties stem from a fractured family history. Her father left her mother when she was just a baby and remarried. Her mother later married someone else, leaving Savina in a precarious situation without parental support. She does not have a birth certificate, as her father, a key figure in the documentation process, is absent from her life. The lack of this foundational document has become the primary barrier to her obtaining citizenship.

Savina has turned to her paternal uncles for help, but their assistance has been minimal. They have promised to help her but continue to delay, citing procedural difficulties. Her brothers assure her that she might be able to apply when she turns 20, but this delay only prolongs her struggles. Although Nepal allows individuals to apply for citizenship at 14, bureaucratic hurdles and family complications prevent her from accessing this right.

The absence of citizenship has profound implications for Savina's daily life. She finds it challenging to secure employment, as most employers require official identification. While her current employer at a restaurant has shown leniency, her job remains precarious without proper documentation. If she loses this opportunity, finding another job will be nearly impossible.

Beyond employment, Savina faces constant limitations. Simple activities, like moving to a new area or accessing certain services, become significant obstacles. The lack of citizenship leaves her feeling excluded and powerless, as if she does not fully belong to the society she lives in.

Savina's case also underscores the lack of guidance and support for individuals in similar situations. She has not reached out to any organizations or advocates, partly due to her youth and partly because she does not know where to turn. She believes that a better system, coupled with community support, could ease her journey.

When asked about her feelings, Savina expresses frustration and hopelessness. Without citizenship, she feels trapped, unable to progress or make plans for her future. Despite her struggles, she remains hopeful that someone will step forward to guide her through the process.

Savina's story is a poignant example of the systemic and social challenges faced by many Nepalis without citizenship. Her case calls for urgent reforms to simplify the citizenship process and increased community support for individuals in similar predicaments. Until then, Savina continues her quiet battle, hoping for recognition and inclusion in the country she calls home.

## CR#25. A Journey to Citizenship Amid Struggles and Determination

Maya Shrestha's story is a testament to the resilience of a woman who faced seemingly insurmountable odds in her quest to obtain citizenship. At 54 years old, Maya has lived a life of hardship, yet her perseverance has become an inspiring example for others facing similar challenges. Born into a poor family, Maya's struggles began at an early age, and her battle for citizenship reflects the systemic barriers many women encounter in Nepal.

### A Childhood of Adversity:

Maya was married at the tender age of 10, an age when most children are carefree and playing. Her family's poverty pushed them to arrange her marriage early, leading her into a life of hardship and abuse. Her husband, over time, married three other women, leaving Maya marginalized and vulnerable. She suffered domestic violence and was eventually forced to leave her marital home. Returning to her parental home offered little solace. After a brief stay, circumstances forced her to leave again, and at 30, she moved to Kathmandu with minimal resources, hoping to rebuild her life.

### The Battle for Citizenship:

One of Maya's greatest challenges was her lack of citizenship. For women like her, citizenship was—and remains—a gateway to accessing fundamental rights and opportunities. When she initially sought citizenship, the process was fraught with obstacles. Officials demanded extensive documentation, reports, and recommendations. Despite being married for a decade, Maya faced rejection at every turn. Maya's persistence led her to file a case with the police, a bold step for someone with limited resources and support. Even then, she encountered bureaucratic delays and corruption, having to pay bribes and endure repeated trips to government offices. The process dragged on for years, and she finally obtained her citizenship in 1960 after nearly five years of relentless effort.

### Missed Opportunities and Continued Struggles:

The delay in securing citizenship had profound implications for Maya's life. Without citizenship, she was unable to take advantage of employment opportunities, including a lucrative airport job that could have significantly improved her financial situation. By the time she received her citizenship, she was 35 years old, and her age became a barrier to finding work. Despite these challenges, Maya secured a job as a security guard in a hospital, thanks to a recommendation from a friend. While it wasn't the career she had envisioned, it provided her with some stability after years of struggle.

### The Systemic Challenges:

Maya's story highlights the systemic barriers faced by women seeking citizenship in Nepal. Bureaucratic inefficiencies, lack of legal support, and corruption compounded her struggles. She often encountered officials who delayed her application or demanded bribes, forcing her to rely on connections and legal advocacy to move forward. Her experience underscores the unequal treatment faced by women, particularly those without family support. While her children were able to obtain citizenship through their father with relative ease, Maya's journey was marked by isolation and systemic neglect.

Reflecting on her journey, Maya emphasizes the importance of persistence and legal awareness. She advises others in similar situations to remain determined and seek legal support when navigating the complex process. "If I can do it, anyone can," she says, encouraging women to fight for their rights despite the hurdles.

Maya also advocates for systemic reform, urging the government to make the citizenship process more accessible and transparent. She believes that the constitution guarantees the right to citizenship and that no one should have to endure the hardships she faced to claim it.

An Advocacy for Reform:

Maya's story is not just a personal narrative but a call to action. Her experiences highlight the urgent need for reforms to ensure that citizenship is accessible to all, especially marginalized women. Her journey serves as a powerful reminder of the resilience required to navigate a system that often overlooks the needs of the vulnerable. Today, Maya's voice resonates as a beacon of hope for others fighting for their rights. Her story is a testament to the power of perseverance and the importance of advocating for a more inclusive and equitable society.

## CR#26 The Struggles and Triumphs in Obtaining Citizenship

Yashoda Nepali, a resilient 42-year-old woman from Dolakha, Nepal, has faced a lifetime of challenges and societal hurdles, many of which stemmed from her lack of citizenship. Her story is one of endurance, perseverance, and ultimate triumph over bureaucratic obstacles and societal prejudices.

### **Early Life and Struggles**

Yashoda was married young, in a love marriage, and moved to Bhaktapur with her husband. Despite their love, the marriage faced turmoil, and her husband left her without explanation or support. At the time, she was 29 years old and already a mother of three young children. The separation was abrupt, leaving her to navigate life as a single mother in an unfamiliar place.

Her struggles were compounded by the lack of citizenship, which prevented her from accessing basic rights and opportunities. Without citizenship, she could not open a bank account, register her children's births, or avail of government services. Her children were also directly affected, unable to obtain their own documents and education without her citizenship as a foundational step.

### **The Journey to Obtain Citizenship**

Years passed, and Yashoda decided to fight for her and her children's rights. The process, however, was anything but straightforward.

#### **1. Initial Barriers**

Yashoda's journey began at the ward office, where she learned that she needed to gather several documents, including proof of her husband's residence and her marital status. This was particularly challenging because she had no contact with her husband or his family. When she explained her situation, officials demanded witnesses and evidence, which were difficult to produce given her estranged relationship with her in-laws.

#### **2. Support from Organizations**

Seeking help, Yashoda turned to local organizations and individuals like Maya Didi, who guided her through the process. With their advice, she prepared a case, collecting documents and statements to substantiate her claim.

#### **3. Financial and Emotional Burdens**

The process required frequent travel between Dolakha and Kathmandu, staying in hotels, and paying for legal paperwork. In total, she spent nearly NPR 100,000, a staggering amount for a single mother working as a part-

time singer and cleaner at a local restaurant. Each trip involved long waits, repeated explanations of her situation, and skepticism from officials.

#### 4. The Role of Witnesses and Police Report

Yashoda faced another obstacle when asked to produce police reports to prove her residence and status. The police required her to bring witnesses from her community, but many were unwilling to support her out of fear of getting involved in legal matters. Despite these setbacks, she persevered, convincing a few neighbors and relatives to testify on her behalf.

#### 5. Victory at Last

After months of relentless effort, Yashoda finally succeeded in obtaining her citizenship. The document mentioned her marital status but omitted her husband's name, as she applied from her parental side. This decision allowed her children to acquire their citizenships shortly after, marking a significant victory for the family.

#### Impact of Citizenship

For Yashoda, obtaining citizenship was life-changing. It enabled her to open a bank account, enroll her children in school, and access government services. The newfound stability also allowed her to focus on her work and provide better opportunities for her children.

Despite her struggles, Yashoda remains optimistic. She acknowledges that the support of individuals and organizations played a crucial role in her journey. She also recognizes the need for systemic reforms to make the process easier for women in similar situations.

#### Reflections and Recommendations

Yashoda's story highlights the challenges faced by women in Nepal when trying to obtain citizenship, especially in the absence of familial support. She advocates for a more inclusive process where individuals can access their rights based on their birth and identity rather than being dependent on marital or familial ties.

Her recommendations include:

1. Simplifying the documentation process, especially for women without spousal or familial support.
2. Providing legal aid and financial assistance to those unable to afford the cost of obtaining citizenship.
3. Establishing clear guidelines for community verification to reduce dependency on reluctant witnesses.

#### Conclusion

Yashoda's journey underscores the resilience and determination of women in Nepal who fight against systemic and societal barriers to claim their rights. Her story serves as an inspiration and a call to action for reforms in the citizenship process, ensuring that no one is denied their basic rights due to circumstances beyond their control.

#### CR#27. Laxmi Chhetri's Struggle for Citizenship

Laxmi Chhetri, a 33-year-old woman from Kathmandu, has faced a challenging and lengthy journey to obtain citizenship, an issue that has impacted her and her family for many years. Born to a father of Chhetri origin and a Dalit mother, Laxmi's early life was marked by hardship. Both of her parents, who had migrated to Kathmandu from Hetauda and worked in a factory, did not have citizenship documents. As a result, Laxmi was born without citizenship, and she grew up without fully understanding the significance of this legal status.

Tragedy struck early in her life when her father passed away when she was just a child, and her mother died 18 years ago. Left to fend for herself, Laxmi struggled to make ends meet, enduring personal hardships, including a difficult first marriage to a man who drank heavily. Eventually, she remarried and had three children—a daughter and two sons. Despite the difficulties, Laxmi managed to send her children to school, with her oldest daughter currently studying hotel management, supported by an organization working on issues related to citizenship.

However, Laxmi's own journey to obtain citizenship has been a difficult, bureaucratic ordeal. With no official citizenship or documentation from her parents, Laxmi has faced numerous obstacles. She sought help from various organizations and government offices, but each time she encountered a new requirement, including needing death certificates for her parents and supporting documents from her family, which were hard to obtain. One of the most significant hurdles was the need to show proof of identity from her maternal side, a process that required her to go back to Hetauda multiple times to find a relative who could help her. After much persistence, she finally managed to secure her birth certificate, but the road to citizenship was far from smooth.

Despite having her birth certificate, Laxmi's application for citizenship was repeatedly delayed. The ward office required death certificates for her parents, and even after her brother's assistance, they demanded proof of a family land deed that spanned three generations, further complicating her efforts. In total, Laxmi made 17 trips to Hetauda over a span of one month, each time facing a new bureaucratic hurdle. In the process, she offered money to relatives and even tried to enlist the help of the ward chairman, but to no avail. Despite her best efforts, her citizenship application remains unresolved.

Laxmi's inability to secure citizenship has not only affected her but has also created barriers for her children. While her children's births have been registered, they cannot obtain citizenship without both parents' documentation. This has caused significant challenges in their lives, with her children unable to access government services, education benefits, or formal employment opportunities. Laxmi believes that without citizenship, it is almost impossible to find steady work, and even simple jobs require proof of citizenship. She has worked informally for years, earning a meager salary of two to three thousand rupees a month for cleaning jobs, which barely covers her expenses.

Laxmi's story highlights the profound difficulties faced by people in Nepal who are born without proper documentation. She advocates for reforms to make it easier for individuals like herself to obtain citizenship, especially those without family support. She suggests that the government should allow people born in Nepal to prove their citizenship through alternative means, rather than relying on the often unattainable documentation of parents. Her experience reflects the systemic barriers that many individuals, particularly women from marginalized backgrounds, face when trying to establish their legal identity and access their basic rights.

For Laxmi, the absence of citizenship has meant living in uncertainty and insecurity, with limited opportunities for herself and her children. She envisions a future where people like her can gain citizenship through a simplified process, one that doesn't depend on the often impossible task of gathering extensive and hard-to-verify documentation. Her plea is for the government to make it easier for people without parental documents to prove their Nepali identity, so that they can live with dignity, access opportunities, and contribute fully to society.

Despite her struggles, Laxmi remains determined. She continues to fight for her rights and those of her children, hoping that one day, the barriers to citizenship will be lifted for people like her. Her story underscores the urgent need for legal reforms that can help marginalized communities overcome the bureaucratic hurdles that limit their access to basic human rights.

## **CR#28. Struggles and Triumphs in Obtaining Citizenship**

A woman from Kathmandu who faced significant challenges in obtaining her citizenship, which impacted her life in numerous ways. It highlights the systemic issues and personal struggles related to the absence of legal identity, and the lengths she had to go to acquire her citizenship after years of hardship.

### **Early Life and Struggles with Citizenship**

The respondent, who is 35 years old, was born and raised in Kathmandu. From a young age, she faced obstacles in obtaining her citizenship, which began with her marriage at the age of 14. At the time, her family had planned for her to get married, but her citizenship process was halted due to her age and lack of official registration. Despite being married, she couldn't obtain her citizenship because she hadn't registered her marriage, and her family, particularly her mother-in-law, discouraged the process due to concerns over property ownership.

When she approached her family to help with obtaining citizenship, they were uncooperative. Her mother-in-law claimed that if she received her citizenship, she would be entitled to share in the family property, which led to further obstacles. At one point, her parents also refrained from helping, as they cited that a married woman could not obtain citizenship without certain official documentation, which she lacked.

### **The Role of Police Cases in Citizenship Acquisition**

After years of attempts, the respondent sought help from the police, which was the only way she could make progress. She filed a case, and through the intervention of the police, her case was reviewed and processed. Her mother-in-law, as well as her in-laws, continued to refuse to help her obtain citizenship. Finally, after much struggle, the police helped her with the necessary documents by verifying her status. However, even after her citizenship was granted, she encountered several challenges in obtaining official recognition of her marriage and family status.

### **Impact of Not Having Citizenship**

The absence of citizenship had a profound impact on her life. She was unable to open a bank account, deposit money, or save for the future. Without a legal identity, she was unable to access basic services and had to rely on others for work. She worked in other people's homes and engaged in various odd jobs to survive. Furthermore, her lack of citizenship made it difficult for her to enroll her children in school and register their birth certificates.

At times, her life felt stagnant and hopeless, as she couldn't achieve financial stability or even provide the basic legal documentation for her children. Her difficulties intensified when it came to registering the births of her children, and her lack of citizenship was an obstacle for them as well.

### **Overcoming the Challenges and Regaining Citizenship**

After her marriage ended, the respondent finally received her citizenship through her father-in-law's assistance. She was able to obtain an original copy after many years of waiting and numerous challenges. At this point, she also began to focus on acquiring her children's citizenship, which was another long, frustrating process.

The respondent's struggles were compounded by societal perceptions and a lack of awareness about the difficulties faced by women without citizenship. She faced significant emotional distress, especially when she realized the impact her lack of citizenship had on her children's future. But she was determined to fight for her rights and those of her children.

### **Assistance from Various Institutions**

Throughout this process, the respondent sought help from various institutions, but there was little knowledge of support systems. She approached her local ward office, and even though she explained her situation, no one was able to assist her. Eventually, with the help of a friend, she learned about NGOs and community organizations that could assist in citizenship cases. However, by the time she sought external help, the damage had already been done.

#### Reflections on the Importance of Citizenship

Reflecting on her journey, the respondent emphasizes how vital it is for women, especially those in vulnerable situations, to have citizenship. Without it, they cannot access basic rights and services. She recalls how, before obtaining her citizenship, she felt like a non-citizen, unable to contribute to society or even take care of her children properly.

Her message to others in similar situations is clear: no one should have to go through what she experienced. She believes that citizenship should be easily accessible to all, without bureaucratic hurdles or discrimination. She advocates for a system where every Nepali citizen, regardless of their gender or marital status, should have the right to obtain citizenship without facing barriers.

#### Conclusion

Today, the respondent feels a sense of relief and empowerment now that she holds her citizenship. She is able to work more freely, save money, and ensure that her children have access to education and proper documentation. However, her journey was marked by years of struggle, unnecessary obstacles, and a lack of support. Her story serves as a stark reminder of the need for reforms in the citizenship process to ensure that no one, especially women, is left behind.

#### CR#29. Struggles in Acquiring Citizenship

Sunita Darnal, a 31-year-old woman from Ramechhap, Nepal, faced significant challenges in acquiring her citizenship. Born in Mangal Bazar, Ramechhap Ward No. 9, she grew up in a community where the process of obtaining citizenship was a struggle, especially for women.

#### Challenges Faced:

Sunita's difficulties began when she approached the authorities to obtain her citizenship. The process was delayed due to issues regarding her age, and she was asked to provide proof that she was indeed the daughter of her father. Although her father had passed away 15-20 years ago, the authorities questioned her identity and asked for various forms of verification.

In order to obtain her citizenship, Sunita had to go through a complex bureaucratic process. The local authorities asked for several documents, including proof of her family background, and required her to provide affidavits from local witnesses to validate her claims. However, the situation became more complicated when she had to deal with the police and other authorities who were skeptical of her situation. There were even instances where Sunita and her family got into arguments with the police.

Despite these challenges, Sunita remained determined. She recalls how she and her family had to go through numerous hurdles before they could finally get her citizenship. The situation escalated when her family had to bring her grandfather to help verify her lineage, as the authorities did not trust their claims. After a long and difficult battle, Sunita was able to convince the officials with the help of her family, especially her parents, who played a vital role in providing support during this tough time.

#### Experiences in the Process:

Sunita describes how the process of obtaining her citizenship was not only bureaucratically difficult but also emotionally taxing. There were moments of doubt and frustration, as the officials raised questions about her marital status. At one point, the authorities suggested that she might have married already, and thus could provide proof through her husband's identity. However, Sunita had not married, and this created more confusion and delay in the process.

The authorities also questioned her background, implying that someone from a rural area like hers might not be fully trustworthy. Sunita recalls how she felt disrespected by the local administration's treatment of her, considering the skepticism about her identity. This added to her sense of alienation, as she realized that local officials often did not have much faith in people from rural areas.

Eventually, with the intervention of her parents and after presenting additional documentation, Sunita was able to secure her citizenship. However, the process was not easy, and she emphasizes that many women like her face similar difficulties in obtaining official documents in Nepal.

#### The Role of Family Support:

Throughout her journey, Sunita's family was crucial in helping her obtain her citizenship. Her parents, particularly her father, worked tirelessly to ensure that the paperwork was completed. Additionally, her siblings provided emotional and logistical support, helping her navigate the various challenges that arose during the process.

Sunita believes that without the support of her family, the process would have been much more difficult. She acknowledges that in many cases, the bureaucratic hurdles can be overwhelming, and having a support system is crucial for overcoming these challenges.

#### Reflection on the System:

Reflecting on her experience, Sunita feels that the system could be greatly improved. She suggests that the government and local authorities should conduct more thorough and compassionate investigations into citizenship cases, especially when it comes to women from rural areas. According to her, many individuals face unnecessary obstacles, and the process could be simplified to ensure that everyone, regardless of background, has equal access to citizenship.

Sunita also stresses the importance of better awareness about the process, as many people, particularly those from marginalized communities, are unaware of the procedures required to obtain citizenship. She believes that if the government provides clearer guidelines and support, many of the problems that individuals like her face can be avoided.

#### Conclusion:

Sunita Darnal's experience highlights the complexities and challenges of obtaining citizenship in Nepal. Her story reflects the struggles that many face in rural areas, where bureaucratic hurdles and systemic inefficiencies often delay or deny citizens their basic rights. Despite these challenges, Sunita's perseverance and the support of her family allowed her to overcome these barriers. Her case serves as a reminder of the need for reform in the citizenship process to ensure that all citizens are treated equally and with dignity, regardless of their background.

### **CR#30. Struggles in Acquiring Citizenship**

A 24-year-old woman named Tara Khatoon, born and raised in Thapathali, Kathmandu. She was born at Thapathali Hospital and currently resides in either Nagbahal or Mangal Bazar. She does not possess Nepali citizenship, and her struggle to acquire one has been ongoing since her birth.

#### Challenges in Acquiring Citizenship:

The root of Tara's issue lies in the discrepancies in her birth registration. When her birth was registered, the officials made an error, recording her age as significantly younger than it actually is. This error in her birth registration became a major obstacle when applying for citizenship. Tara explains that when she tried to apply for citizenship, her age was shown as being 12 years old, although she is 24.

The administrative delay and the mistake in her birth registration caused her to be unable to apply for citizenship at the proper age. Despite attempts to rectify the issue, Tara was told that she could not make any changes to her birth registration or get her citizenship until she reached the age of 24, which is the legal requirement. However, even now, she faces problems because her birth record has been altered in a way that prevents her from obtaining citizenship.

When she tried to inquire about the discrepancies in her birth registration, she received no help from the authorities, and was informed that she would have to wait even longer, which has led to much frustration and confusion. The inability to get the correct documentation has left Tara in a limbo where she lacks both the identification and legal recognition needed to move forward with her life.

#### Personal and Social Impact:

The lack of citizenship has severely impacted Tara's life in several ways. Without citizenship, she cannot travel abroad, and even though she has family members overseas who are willing to send her financial assistance, her lack of citizenship has prevented her from accessing this support. This has placed her in a difficult situation where she is unable to improve her life circumstances.

Tara also describes feeling a deep sense of alienation because she does not have official recognition of her existence as a citizen of Nepal. She points out that despite being born and raised in Nepal, the absence of citizenship makes her feel as if she is invisible. When interacting with others, she is often reminded that she does not belong, which has led to feelings of guilt and shame. This lack of identity is especially painful because, despite her situation, Tara feels connected to Nepal and her community.

Moreover, Tara's lack of citizenship has hindered her ability to secure proper employment or engage fully in social life. She has also faced difficulties when trying to access other services that require citizenship, such as education and healthcare.

#### Family's Role and Support:

Tara's family, including her father and brothers, have not been able to assist her in obtaining the necessary documentation. She believes that her family did not actively pursue fixing the errors in her birth registration, and as a result, she has had to navigate these challenges on her own. Tara has expressed that, despite the support of her family in other ways, they have not shown enough concern about her citizenship status.

#### Impact of the Loss of Her Husband:

Tara's life has been further complicated by the loss of her husband, who passed away some time ago. Although she is a widow with a daughter, she has continued to face difficulties in acquiring citizenship. Despite being able to seek help from her maternal family, she has not found the necessary support to resolve the issues with her citizenship.

Desire for Citizenship:

Tara's primary goal is to obtain citizenship to have an official identity and the right to access services and opportunities. She insists that it is not only about the ability to travel abroad, but also about having recognition as a Nepali citizen. She longs for a sense of belonging, to be able to say that she is a citizen of Nepal and has the same rights as other citizens. Tara believes that her inability to obtain citizenship has created unnecessary barriers for her and others like her, and she urges the government and relevant authorities to make the process more transparent and accessible.

The Bigger Issue:

Tara's case is not unique. She believes that there are many others in Nepal who face similar challenges in acquiring citizenship, especially women. According to her, there are thousands of individuals who are in situations where they are unable to prove their citizenship, thus preventing them from participating fully in society. She suggests that a reform of the current administrative process for registering births and granting citizenship is necessary, so that people like her do not have to suffer due to bureaucratic errors or delays.

Conclusion:

Tara's story highlights the significant challenges faced by individuals without citizenship in Nepal. From the lack of recognition and identity to the inability to access essential services, her experience underscores the urgent need for reform in the birth registration and citizenship process. Tara's case demonstrates how administrative inefficiencies can impact not only an individual's life but also their sense of identity and belonging.

Tara's plea for help and her desire for recognition serve as a powerful reminder of the importance of ensuring that all citizens, particularly vulnerable groups such as women, have access to the rights and privileges that come with citizenship.

### **CR#31. Struggles in Obtaining Citizenship**

A 40-year-old woman, is originally from Biratnagar but currently resides in Kathmandu, renting a room. She faced significant challenges in obtaining her citizenship, which involved navigating a complicated and lengthy process filled with bureaucratic hurdles and unexpected demands from officials.

**The Citizenship Struggle:** The respondent started her journey to obtain citizenship with hopes of a smooth process, but soon encountered numerous issues. The first problem arose when she was told to bring a marriage certificate after applying for citizenship. Despite already having her husband's citizenship, she was repeatedly asked for additional documents, including her father's citizenship. Even after providing these, officials demanded verification and insisted on further steps, such as a police report and multiple visits to various government offices.

A particularly frustrating part of the process involved the local police station. She was directed to go back and forth between the police and the ward office, where she was repeatedly told that more paperwork or verification was needed. These back-and-forths were not only time-consuming but also exhausting. The process dragged on for months, and she was frequently asked to bring in neighbors and obtain additional forms of verification.

**Assistance from Neighbors and Institutions:** At one point, the respondent sought help from her neighbors, particularly those living close to her rented home. Some neighbors signed documents to support her case, allowing her to proceed further. However, even after this, additional steps were needed. The situation became somewhat more manageable when a local institution member, whom she knew personally, provided advice and helped her navigate the complicated system. This individual, familiar with the challenges faced by women in such situations, directed her to other organizations and resources that could assist in the process.

Despite the help from these neighbors and the institution, the respondent's citizenship was not issued immediately. She continued to face bureaucratic delays, including additional requirements from the ward office and verification of her father's and husband's citizenship documents.

**Emotional and Social Impact:** The prolonged process caused significant emotional distress for the respondent. Not only was her own citizenship at stake, but also her children's ability to obtain citizenship and the related social benefits. She faced barriers to accessing basic services, like opening a bank account, which further compounded her frustrations. The constant need to prove her identity and fulfill bureaucratic requirements left her feeling marginalized and powerless.

Her experience highlighted the significant challenges individuals face when attempting to navigate the citizenship process in Nepal, especially for women who may have to deal with additional social expectations and obstacles.

**Suggestions for Improvement:** From her perspective, several reforms could make the citizenship process smoother. She believes that if authorities streamlined the process and reduced the bureaucratic red tape, it would help citizens obtain their rights more efficiently. A clear and transparent system, where individuals are informed of the exact requirements at the outset, would prevent the confusion and delays that she faced. Additionally, reducing the dependency on multiple forms of verification from unrelated parties (e.g., neighbors, police) would alleviate unnecessary delays.

Furthermore, the respondent feels that there should be greater awareness among government officials about the challenges people face, especially those who are less educated or are unaware of the intricacies of the legal system. She also suggests that more support should be available for individuals, particularly women, who may not have the social or institutional resources to navigate the complex system.

**Conclusion:** The respondent's experience in obtaining citizenship highlights the barriers created by an overly complex and inconsistent system. Through persistence, community support, and some institutional assistance, she was eventually able to obtain her citizenship. However, her story serves as a reminder of the need for comprehensive reform in the citizenship process to ensure that all citizens can access their rights without undue hardship.

### **CR#33. Struggles and Success in Obtaining Citizenship**

Sanukanchi Tamang, a 28-year-old woman from Kavre, Nepal. Sanukanchi's journey to obtaining her citizenship was long and filled with obstacles, but it ultimately resulted in success after years of hardship. Her story highlights the struggles faced by many individuals in Nepal who face challenges in accessing basic legal documents, such as citizenship.

#### **Early Struggles:**

Sanukanchi was born in Kavre, a district located in the central region of Nepal. She grew up with the constant uncertainty of not having a citizenship certificate. For several years, she lived without this crucial identity document, facing many difficulties in her daily life.

She shares how the lack of citizenship created multiple problems. Initially, her attempts to get her citizenship were met with repeated delays and promises from others, which never materialized. “I had a difficult time as I had no citizenship. I couldn’t register my children in school, and I faced problems in accessing health services. The authorities constantly told me, ‘Come tomorrow, come next week,’ but nothing happened. This dragged on for years.”

Her first major challenge was related to her husband, who was a driver. According to Sanukanchi, her husband initially promised to help her get the citizenship but later abandoned her for another woman. This left her with no support in acquiring the necessary documents.

#### **Obstacles Faced:**

The most significant obstacle in her case was the local government’s refusal to issue a recommendation letter (sifaris), which is essential for citizenship applications in Nepal. Sanukanchi went through numerous hurdles to secure this recommendation, as the ward office officials did not cooperate.

She recounts, “When I went to the ward office, they refused to give me the necessary recommendation. My brother-in-law tried, but they turned him down too. It was a difficult time, and I felt stuck. My children needed to go to school, but how could I provide a birth certificate without citizenship?”

Sanukanchi spent years running from one office to another, trying to get the necessary paperwork, often facing skepticism and reluctance from the authorities. She recalls how even when she finally managed to gather some paperwork, things were delayed because the officials would ask her to come back later, offering no real explanation for the hold-ups.

#### **Community Support:**

Eventually, Sanukanchi turned to local community members, who helped her navigate the system. Her family, particularly her brothers and sisters, played a crucial role. They provided financial support for the process, and even encouraged her to persist through the long and tiring journey. “My relatives helped me with small amounts of money, and they also talked to the local authorities on my behalf,” she explains.

Her case became more complicated when her husband’s absence further complicated her application. “Without my husband’s support, I had to find other ways to prove my identity,” she says. Through the efforts of her family and the help of a few influential people, she was able to get a recommendation letter and eventually managed to visit the district office in Dhulikhel, where she was finally able to get her citizenship after years of effort.

#### **Challenges After Citizenship:**

Although Sanukanchi was granted citizenship after a lengthy and exhausting process, the journey didn’t end there. The lack of documentation had delayed not only her ability to register her children in school but also prevented her from accessing basic services. “Before I had my citizenship, I was struggling to get a loan or open a bank account. No one would lend money or even let me join any group because I wasn’t officially recognized,” she explains.

When she finally obtained her citizenship, it marked a new beginning for her and her family. “After I got my citizenship, things got easier. My children could go to school without any issues, and I could even open a bank account and manage finances. It felt like a huge relief.”

#### **Life After Citizenship:**

Sanukanchi's experience shows the transformation that comes with obtaining citizenship. Not only did she regain a sense of identity, but she was also able to access legal rights, which had been denied to her for years. She feels empowered now, knowing that she can legally take part in society and support her children's future.

Today, she says, "It feels like a huge weight has been lifted off my shoulders. Now, I can be part of society without fear or hesitation. My children have the right to an education, and I can help them in their future."

Her children, aged 25 and 22, were also able to get their citizenships after hers, thanks to her persistence. Sanukanchi emphasizes that her family's success in overcoming the hurdles related to citizenship has made a profound impact on her life.

### **Lessons Learned and Final Thoughts:**

Sanukanchi's story is a testimony to the importance of citizenship as a tool for access to rights and opportunities. For her, the process was not easy, and the emotional and financial toll was immense. However, with determination and the support of her community, she was able to overcome these obstacles.

Reflecting on the journey, she shares, "Before I had my citizenship, life was very difficult. I couldn't get proper healthcare, my children's education was at risk, and I felt invisible. But after getting it, everything changed. I can now make decisions for my family's future."

Sanukanchi's experience underscores the importance of citizenship in empowering individuals and giving them the basic rights they deserve. Her message to others facing similar challenges is simple: "Never give up, even when it feels like nothing is working out. Keep fighting, and eventually, things will fall into place."

**Conclusion:** Sanukanchi's story is an inspiring example of resilience and determination. Despite facing abandonment, systemic hurdles, and financial difficulties, she eventually succeeded in acquiring her citizenship and transforming her life. This case highlights the critical role that documentation plays in accessing basic rights and services, and the immense impact that having a citizenship certificate can have on individuals and their families.

### **CR#33. Struggles with Citizenship**

Jyoti Upreti, a 40-year-old woman, has lived in Damak for over a decade. Originally from Biratnagar, she has faced significant challenges in acquiring citizenship, a process that has remained incomplete for years due to various obstacles. These difficulties have not only hindered her ability to access vital services but also placed severe limitations on her personal and family life.

**Citizenship Issues:** When Jyoti initially tried to obtain her citizenship, she encountered several hurdles. A key issue was the absence of her father's citizenship at the time of her birth, along with the lack of a birth registration. As a result, she was unable to prove her identity and connection to her father's family. This complicated the process of applying for citizenship, especially as she was living in another household when she was younger.

At the time, officials required proof of her father's citizenship and her birth certificate. However, she didn't know what was required, and when she was asked to sign documents related to her application, she was not aware of their full implications. She had no understanding of terms like "refugee" or the processes associated with being a Bhutanese refugee, which also affected her understanding of the necessary paperwork.

Despite facing these challenges, she still attempted to apply for citizenship, but the process was complicated further by bureaucratic delays and a lack of proper guidance.

**Current Situation:** Now, 20–25 years later, Jyoti is still without citizenship. She believes that a significant reason for her ongoing struggles with citizenship is her inability to dedicate enough time to pursue the necessary paperwork. As a result, she has been unable to complete the application process despite her intentions to do so.

Regarding her children, Jyoti mentioned that her daughter’s citizenship would be acquired through her son-in-law’s documentation, as her daughter’s birth certificate and her father’s citizenship are both in place. However, her son’s citizenship application is still pending, and Jyoti is hopeful that they can resolve it soon. She is considering going to Hetauda to finalize her children’s citizenship.

Jyoti has not received any assistance from local authorities or organizations to help with the citizenship process. She believes that had the process been smoother or had there been clearer guidance, it would have been much easier for her to secure citizenship.

**Impact on Life:** The absence of citizenship has had a profound impact on Jyoti’s life. Most significantly, she has been unable to save money in her name. If she wanted to deposit or withdraw money, it had to be done in someone else’s name, which has created a sense of insecurity and dependency. Furthermore, without a national ID or citizenship, Jyoti is excluded from accessing government services, such as social security benefits, elderly allowances, or any support offered to citizens.

Her children, although legally eligible, also faced challenges when it came to securing the necessary documentation. The process of getting a national ID card or opening a bank account has been equally difficult, and she is concerned about the long-term implications for their future.

**Future Outlook:** Jyoti remains hopeful that her citizenship will eventually be processed. She believes that once the paperwork is sorted, things will improve. However, the years of delay have left her feeling frustrated and disillusioned with the bureaucratic system. She does not yet have a clear sense of when the process will be completed but intends to pursue the matter once again in the near future.

**Reflection:** Jyoti’s case highlights the significant barriers that individuals like her face when trying to obtain citizenship in Nepal, particularly for those born in refugee-like situations or without the proper documentation. It underscores the need for a more streamlined and supportive process for people in similar situations to acquire citizenship, access basic services, and live with dignity.

#### **CR#34. Struggles with Obtaining Citizenship**

Poonam Rai, a 33-year-old woman from Biratnagar, has been grappling with the issue of not having citizenship for over five years. Despite having a birth certificate and a valid marriage registration, she has been unable to obtain her citizenship due to bureaucratic hurdles and the lack of support from her family.

#### **Early Life and Family Background**

Poonam was born in Biratnagar and grew up in a family with a complicated history. Her father had a citizenship, but after his death, Poonam and her siblings were left to fend for themselves. Her mother was uneducated, and the family did not prioritize citizenship papers for Poonam. As a young girl, she lived with others in the community, which further complicated her claim to citizenship.

## **The Struggle for Citizenship**

The root cause of her struggle lies in the lack of a formal claim to her father's side of the family. Poonam's father's relatives, including her uncles and brothers, have all been unreachable, and she has been told multiple times that she would need to present a representative from her paternal family to vouch for her citizenship. However, with no family members left to support her, Poonam has faced constant rejection when trying to secure the necessary documentation. She has even been told that she is "stateless" and would need to prove her roots in India, which is completely untrue, as she was born in Biratnagar.

## **Impact of Not Having Citizenship**

The lack of citizenship has severely impacted Poonam's ability to earn a living and provide for her family. She struggles to find work as people frequently ask for proof of citizenship, which she cannot provide. Without citizenship, she has been turned away from multiple job opportunities, including a bank job where she was initially offered a position.

The challenges have extended to her children as well. While her husband, who has citizenship, was able to secure citizenship for their daughters, Poonam's lack of citizenship continues to be a barrier for her family. The inability to access legal work and basic rights has left her feeling like an outsider in her own country.

## **Attempts to Resolve the Issue**

Poonam has gone through numerous channels to try and resolve her situation. She has visited the District Administrative Office (DAO) multiple times, bringing along various documents such as her birth certificate, marriage registration, and her husband's citizenship papers, but every time, she was sent back without any resolution.

She also sought help from a lawyer, who initially assured her that the process would be straightforward, but after multiple attempts, the lawyer asked for large sums of money, claiming that only after paying could she get "acknowledged citizenship." Even after paying the required fees, the process stalled, and she was again left without any resolution.

Poonam also approached her local ward office, but the situation became even more discouraging. The officials bluntly told her that without a proper guardian to vouch for her, she would not be able to obtain citizenship. They even labeled her as "abandoned" or "orphaned," which was deeply insulting.

## **Psychological and Emotional Toll**

The emotional toll of these repeated failures has been significant. Poonam has felt humiliated and dehumanized by the process. In her own words, she felt like a "stateless" individual, rejected by the very system meant to protect her. She reflects on how her inability to get citizenship has prevented her from living a dignified life. She cannot even access basic rights, such as working legally or renting a place without being asked for identification. Every day, she faces the challenge of how to provide for her two daughters, ages 17 and 15, while her husband, who works as a driver, is the sole breadwinner in the family.

## **Call for Legal and Administrative Reform**

Poonam's experience highlights the broader issue of bureaucratic inefficiency and the lack of support for women and marginalized communities in Nepal when it comes to obtaining citizenship. Many, like Poonam, struggle with the convoluted processes, where the system favors those with strong family ties or resources, leaving others in limbo.

Poonam strongly believes that reforms are needed in the citizenship process to make it more accessible and fair. She hopes that the government will make provisions for people like her, who do not have strong family support but are genuine citizens of the country. She also advocates for community awareness and support systems that can help individuals like her navigate the complex process.

## **Conclusion**

Poonam's story is one of resilience in the face of overwhelming odds. Despite the challenges, she continues to fight for her right to be recognized as a citizen of Nepal. She remains hopeful that, with the right support and legal reforms, she and others in similar situations will eventually be able to live with the dignity and rights they deserve as citizens of the country.

## **CR#35. Struggles in Acquiring Citizenship**

Susmita Nepali, a resident of Itahari, Nepal, faced significant challenges in acquiring her citizenship. Initially, the process was slow and difficult, but she managed to obtain it after prolonged effort. Despite this achievement, other obstacles in her life, such as the lack of marriage registration and the struggle to register her children's births, continued to hinder her progress.

### **Family Situation:**

Susmita's husband has two daughters from a previous relationship, while Susmita has children from her marriage. However, her children's birth registration was a major issue. The children's father, despite his position, refused to assist in registering their births due to unresolved legal matters from his previous marriage. The lack of formal recognition of their marriage complicated the situation further, leaving Susmita in a precarious position. Her husband's refusal to help with the birth registration was motivated by fear that the registration could potentially cause legal complications related to his divorce case.

### **Citizenship and Legal Challenges:**

While Susmita obtained her citizenship, she faced numerous challenges in registering her children's births, a process made difficult by her husband's refusal to cooperate. At the same time, the legal framework allowed Susmita to register her children's birth, even if her husband refused. She sought assistance from various organizations like the "Shramik Mahila Saja Manch" (Workers' Women's Collective), who provided her with much-needed support.

Before acquiring citizenship, Susmita was often faced with discrimination and lack of trust in various work situations. People demanded to see her citizenship before offering any employment. Some individuals even took advantage of her vulnerability, requesting money upfront, under the assumption that she would not be able to follow through. As a result, Susmita often found herself without steady work and in financial distress. However, after obtaining citizenship, she found new opportunities and began working in various sectors, including trading and sex work, which she openly acknowledged. She took pride in her work, especially since it provided her with financial independence.

### **Family's Financial Struggles:**

Despite the hardship, Susmita continued to push forward, especially because of her children's needs. Her youngest daughter, who had serious health issues requiring regular medication, was in dire need of financial support. Susmita was often faced with the dilemma of whether to buy her child's medicine or provide food and clothing for the family. This issue was compounded by her husband's repeated claims that they had no money to take care of their children's needs, including the expenses for their healthcare.

### **Citizenship's Impact:**

Susmita's citizenship opened up new possibilities for her work, allowing her to continue with her businesses and engage in trade. However, the real challenge lay in her children's future. Due to the lack of birth registration, her children were at risk of not being able to attend school or enroll in college when they grew older. Susmita's concern over her children's education and future prospects became a major source of anxiety.

### **Hopes for Improvement:**

Susmita emphasized that the current process for acquiring citizenship and birth registration for children needs to be more streamlined and accessible. She believes that improving the system would greatly reduce the burden on women like her, who are already struggling with familial and financial challenges. There should be clear support for children's birth registration, even when the father or other family members are not cooperative.

### **Conclusion:**

Susmita's case highlights the many difficulties faced by marginalized women in Nepal when trying to obtain legal recognition for themselves and their children. Citizenship, while a significant achievement, did not solve all her problems. Her ongoing struggles with her children's birth registration, her financial challenges, and the lack of support from her husband illustrate the deep-rooted issues women face in navigating legal systems and gaining the recognition they need to lead a better life.

### **CR#36. Challenges in Obtaining Citizenship**

Sunita Chaudhary, a 31-year-old woman, was born and raised in Nepal. Despite being a native citizen of Nepal, she has faced ongoing challenges in obtaining her official citizenship, which has significantly impacted her daily life and opportunities.

#### **Reason for Citizenship Issues:**

Sunita's main challenge lies in the lack of citizenship, primarily because she did not obtain it before getting married. She explains that before marriage, there was no initiative taken to acquire her citizenship. However, after her marriage, her husband's other wife was discovered, and due to societal issues, her citizenship was never processed. Attempts were made to secure citizenship from her maternal side after marriage, but those were unsuccessful as her marriage became known to the authorities, complicating the process.

#### **Impact of the Lack of Citizenship:**

The absence of citizenship has brought about several significant challenges in Sunita's life:

1. **Social and Economic Restrictions:** Sunita has been unable to open a bank account or deposit money anywhere, which restricts her ability to save or engage in basic financial activities. She has also struggled to engage with any formal organizations or institutions, as they require citizenship for any legal or financial transactions.
2. **Employment Limitations:** Sunita's inability to obtain citizenship prevents her from applying for certain jobs or even starting her own business. For example, when considering work opportunities, she finds that her lack of citizenship causes her to be excluded from the process, making it impossible to pursue many employment avenues.

3. **Psychological and Emotional Toll:** Sunita expresses frustration and sadness at the fact that despite being born and raised in Nepal, she is unable to claim her citizenship. This feeling of exclusion has led to feelings of disappointment and helplessness.
4. **Family Planning Issues:** Due to the lack of citizenship, Sunita also faces difficulties in planning for the future, including having children. She believes that the lack of citizenship might affect her children's future and prevent them from accessing their full rights.

#### **Efforts to Obtain Citizenship:**

Sunita has made several attempts to secure her citizenship. She sought help from her relatives and visited the local ward office to inquire about the process. Despite being told that it could be sorted out, the issue remained unresolved due to the complexities related to her marital status. Furthermore, attempts to resolve the issue through her maternal side were also thwarted when her marriage was discovered, complicating the process further.

She expressed that if her citizenship had been processed before her marriage, it would have been much easier to secure it, and she would not have faced these hurdles. Her belief is that if her husband were to give her a divorce, she could easily obtain citizenship from her maternal side, but this solution is also difficult to pursue.

#### **Challenges Faced in Seeking Help:**

When asked if she had reached out to any organizations or community leaders for assistance, Sunita mentioned that her efforts were largely limited to her family members. She has not sought formal help from any NGO or government institution. Although some community leaders and relatives acknowledged her plight, the fact that her marriage had created complications with her citizenship status made it impossible to resolve.

#### **Potential Solutions and Thoughts on Improvement:**

Sunita believes that a reform in the citizenship law or process could significantly ease the situation for women like her. She suggests that the process could be made more transparent and accessible, especially for women in similar circumstances. She also feels that if the law allowed for simpler procedures in cases of divorce, she might be able to secure her citizenship more easily.

#### **Future Aspirations:**

Despite the struggles she faces, Sunita has not lost hope. She has dreams of going abroad to learn new skills and improve her financial situation. However, she feels her lack of citizenship is a major barrier in achieving these goals. She believes that if she were granted citizenship, it would open up new opportunities for her to travel, work, and contribute meaningfully to society.

In conclusion, Sunita's case highlights the profound and far-reaching effects that a lack of citizenship can have on an individual's life. Her struggles with securing her citizenship are not only legal and bureaucratic but also deeply personal, affecting her social standing, financial stability, and emotional well-being. Her story underscores the need for reforms in citizenship laws that can better address the complexities faced by women in similar situations, providing them with the equal opportunities they deserve.

#### **CR#37. Struggles to Obtain Citizenship**

Sunita Devi Chaudhary is a woman who has faced immense challenges in securing her Nepali citizenship. She lives in a rural area where the process of obtaining citizenship was filled with bureaucratic hurdles, societal prejudices, and

financial struggles. Despite her persistent efforts, her citizenship application was delayed for years, affecting her and her family's ability to access basic rights and services.

**The Struggle:** Sunita's journey began when she reached the age of 52. Her original citizenship had been issued when she was 46, but it had not been an easy task. She recalls the long struggle to get her citizenship, which began when she first tried to apply, only to find that the local ward office and the community were not willing to recognize her status. This was particularly difficult because of her marital status and the perception that her marriage to a Nepali man did not guarantee her citizenship rights.

At the time, she had to deal with a lack of support from both the local administration and the society at large. She was told by the ward office that her application would not be processed. To make matters worse, her marriage to a man from Nepal did not seem to be enough evidence for the authorities. Sunita had to go through multiple rounds of verification, making trips to various offices and gathering numerous documents to prove her identity and marriage.

**Socioeconomic Hardships:** During this period, Sunita was living in a state of extreme poverty. She recalls that there were days when she did not know if she would have food to eat. The process of gathering the necessary documents was exhausting, and it cost her a great deal. She had to borrow money, sometimes taking small loans or asking for help from others in the community. This situation was compounded by the fact that she did not own a mobile phone or have easy access to transportation, which made traveling to the various administrative offices even more challenging.

Sunita's plight was not just about paperwork—it was about survival. She had to rely on others for basic needs, such as clothes and food. She would sometimes wear second-hand clothes that were given to her by others in the community. At times, the situation felt so desperate that she believed she might not survive without her citizenship, as it seemed like her entire identity and future depended on it.

**The Emotional Toll:** The emotional and psychological toll of not having citizenship was immense for Sunita. She felt like an outsider, disconnected from her own country. She often found herself questioning her place in society, wondering if she was truly a Nepali citizen, especially since her marriage had not been recognized initially. This uncertainty led to anxiety and deep frustration, and at times, she even felt a sense of worthlessness.

**The Turning Point:** After numerous attempts, Sunita finally sought help from her community. She gathered local support and approached the ward chairperson with the help of her neighbors. With their assistance, she was able to convince the authorities to accept her application. Despite the bureaucratic hurdles and the prolonged waiting period, she was eventually able to obtain her citizenship. However, the process did not end there. Sunita had to continue working hard to secure her children's citizenship as well. It was a slow, grinding process, but eventually, her children's citizenship applications were also approved.

**Challenges for Others:** Sunita is now working to help other women in her community who face similar struggles in obtaining citizenship. She has been advocating for a more streamlined process, especially for women from marginalized backgrounds who are often left out of the system. Her experience has made her determined to help others, and she has become a voice for the voiceless in her community.

**Reflection:** Today, Sunita's life has improved, but she is still aware of the struggles many women face when it comes to citizenship. She believes that while her situation has improved, the system must change to make it easier for others, especially women, to obtain citizenship. She has seen firsthand how the lack of citizenship affects people's ability to access education, healthcare, and other basic services. She hopes that her case will inspire change and that others will not have to endure the same difficulties that she did.

**Conclusion:** Sunita’s story is a testament to the resilience and determination of women who fight for their rights, despite the many obstacles in their way. Her struggle to obtain citizenship was not just a bureaucratic issue—it was a fight for her identity, her family’s future, and her right to be recognized as a full citizen of Nepal. Through her perseverance, Sunita has not only secured her own citizenship but also paved the way for other women in her community to have a smoother path to citizenship in the future.

### CR#38. Struggles to Obtain Citizenship

A woman named Lalmati Harijan, residing in the village of Banddevi in the Nawalparasi district of Nepal. She is 35 years old and faces significant challenges due to the lack of citizenship, a situation that has deeply affected her and her family.

**Background:** Lalmati was born in a family where her father did not have citizenship, which has directly impacted her ability to acquire her own. She explains that without her father’s citizenship, she cannot obtain her own, as citizenship is linked to parental records in Nepal. She shared that she had made several attempts to acquire citizenship by visiting the local authorities and officials, but the process has been delayed because the required documents from her father’s side are missing.

**Family Situation:** Lalmati has four children, and while some of them have their birth certificates, none of her children have citizenship, as they too are tied to the issues surrounding her father’s citizenship. Her husband has passed away, and although her mother’s side of the family has citizenship, her father’s side does not, which complicates the process even further. Lalmat’s family is struggling to make ends meet, with her children in school and her efforts to earn a livelihood through daily labor.

**Challenges Faced:** The absence of citizenship has led to a series of barriers in Lalmati’s life:

- **Economic Challenges:** Without citizenship, Lalmati cannot open a bank account, save money, or access financial services. This has hindered her ability to save or invest her earnings, and she struggles with managing her finances.
- **Legal and Social Barriers:** She cannot prove her identity, which makes it difficult for her to claim government services, benefits, or even interact with the legal system when needed.
- **Children’s Education:** Lalmati’s children, who are studying, face challenges as well since they do not have citizenship. Although some have birth certificates, the lack of citizenship prevents them from accessing opportunities that could help them build a better future.
- **Isolation and Discrimination:** Lalmati also spoke of the emotional toll of being unable to claim her identity as a Nepali citizen. The stigma and isolation she experiences as a result of her statelessness are significant.

**Efforts to Resolve the Issue:** Lalmati has made several attempts to acquire citizenship. She visited the local municipality to request help, but was told that her citizenship could only be processed if a team from the central authorities arrived. The process has dragged on for years, and despite the existence of her marriage certificate and her husband’s death certificate, the lack of her father’s citizenship remains the primary obstacle.

She expressed her frustration about the lack of support from local authorities, stating that while some people from her community have managed to obtain citizenship, it is only after long delays and many visits to the relevant offices.

**Support and Advocacy:** Lalmati believes that with the help of local women’s groups, more women could have their citizenship processed. She suggested that there should be better coordination between different governmental bodies and more active outreach to marginalized communities to address these issues. She also highlighted the importance of ensuring that women are not disproportionately impacted by the lack of citizenship, as it limits their ability to work, participate in society, and access basic rights.

**Conclusion:** Lalmati's case is a reflection of the broader issues faced by many Nepali citizens, particularly women from marginalized communities, who struggle to obtain citizenship due to bureaucratic hurdles and the lack of necessary documents. The absence of citizenship not only affects their legal status but also has far-reaching consequences for their economic opportunities, access to services, and ability to contribute fully to society. As she waits for a solution, her story sheds light on the ongoing challenges faced by stateless individuals in Nepal and the need for systemic reforms to address these issues.

### **CR#39. Struggles with Obtaining Citizenship**

Rajani Lama, a resident of Nijgadh, has faced numerous challenges in obtaining citizenship throughout her life. Born and raised in Nijgadh, her journey to secure her citizenship has been marked by a series of personal and social obstacles, beginning with her early marriage and continuing through her experiences of abandonment and struggles for legal recognition.

Rajani’s difficulties began after her first marriage to Bhattarai, during which she faced a series of familial and societal challenges. At the time, her husband left her when she was pregnant with their child. Struggling without the support of her husband, she sought refuge with her in-laws. However, things only worsened as her in-laws mistreated her, and she was confined in a room for several days.

The emotional and financial challenges intensified when her in-laws attempted to push her out of the family property, even forcing her to undergo physical abuse. The situation worsened when, after remarrying to a man named Lama, she was further ostracized from the community and denied her rightful inheritance and legal rights, including her citizenship.

As Rajani struggled with her own survival and the upbringing of her child, the issue of citizenship became even more pressing. With no proper documents and no legal recognition of her marriage, her son faced the risk of being stateless. Despite her efforts to get proper identification for her child, she faced continuous hurdles. Her son’s birth registration and citizenship were delayed for months, and every time she approached the authorities, she was sent from one office to another without resolution.

Rajani’s case eventually caught the attention of the local women’s association, which began to offer support. The association, along with some members of the community, helped her advocate for her rights and navigate the complex bureaucracy. After significant struggle, she was able to obtain her citizenship. However, it wasn’t an easy or swift process. Rajani recounted how her citizenship was delayed due to the complexities of her marital status and her inability to present her first husband’s citizenship papers.

As her story unfolded, the involvement of local authorities, her community, and the women’s association ultimately helped her secure her rights. The women’s association played a pivotal role in advocating for her legal identity, and community members also rallied to ensure her son’s citizenship was processed. The support of these organizations made a significant difference in Rajani’s journey toward gaining recognition as a legal citizen of Nepal.

Despite this success, Rajani continues to face discrimination and challenges within her community, where prejudices against her caste and marital history still linger. These social barriers are compounded by the continuous struggle to ensure that her son, too, has the right to citizenship, especially since the legal system still favors paternal lineage in determining citizenship.

Rajani now strongly advocates for reforms in Nepal's citizenship laws, particularly for children born to mothers who lack documentation from their fathers. She believes that children should have the right to citizenship through their mothers, as many women face abandonment or have absent fathers, yet still shoulder the responsibility of raising children.

Rajani's experience highlights the critical need for systemic reforms that address gender-based discrimination and ensure that all individuals, regardless of their marital status or social standing, have the right to citizenship and identity in Nepal. Through perseverance and the support of her community, Rajani was able to overcome many of these hurdles, but she remains committed to advocating for others facing similar struggles.

#### **CR#40. Struggles in Acquiring Citizenship**

Geeta Majhi, a 32-year-old woman, has faced significant challenges in her life due to the lack of citizenship. Born in Tanahu, she moved to Nijgadh in Bara District after marrying her first husband. Her life has been marked by a series of struggles, primarily because of the absence of citizenship, which has led to a host of problems related to identity, rights, and opportunities.

#### **Challenges Faced Due to Lack of Citizenship:**

- **Travel and Movement Restrictions:** One of the major issues Geeta faces is her inability to travel abroad. She has a strong desire to work overseas, but without citizenship, she cannot acquire a passport. This has stifled her opportunities for employment and financial independence, particularly as she feels that this is a prime time for her to earn money.
- **Financial Struggles:** Without citizenship, Geeta cannot open a bank account or access various financial services. Even though her husband sends money from abroad, she cannot store or manage the money effectively, as she is unable to open a bank account. This has created a sense of financial instability.
- **Personal Rights and Recognition:** Geeta describes a deep sense of personal frustration, as her lack of citizenship prevents her from fulfilling her personal goals, including the ability to save or secure her future. Her situation is exacerbated by her inability to gain recognition or legal rights that come with citizenship.
- **Challenges in Family Matters:** Geeta's situation is further complicated by her lack of citizenship in relation to her children. Her daughter, who is about 13-14 years old, has citizenship through her father. However, Geeta's lack of legal status has created a gap in her ability to fully access family rights, including participation in decisions and legal matters regarding her children.
- **Social Exclusion:** Geeta feels excluded from her community and society due to her citizenship status. She mentions that even for routine tasks like registering or obtaining a SIM card, citizenship is required. These limitations restrict her social participation and isolate her from the broader community.

#### **Attempts to Seek Citizenship:**

Geeta has made efforts to address her citizenship issue by discussing it with her husband, who has promised to help her acquire it, although it remains uncertain. She also approached a women's organization in her area for assistance, but as of now, she still lacks a legal identity and official recognition.

### Reflection on the Citizenship Process:

Geeta feels that the current process for obtaining citizenship is overly complicated and discouraging. She believes that the requirement for paternal identity in citizenship, such as needing her father's documentation, is an unfair barrier. She points out that her mother, who is still alive, holds citizenship, but that Geeta is unable to obtain it through her. She advocates for a simpler, more accessible process, where individuals could secure citizenship through their mother's identity as well, which she believes would be more equitable, particularly for women.

Geeta also emphasizes that the inability to obtain citizenship has not only hindered her personal growth but also the economic progress she could have made by contributing to her family and society.

### Future

### Hopes:

Despite the ongoing challenges, Geeta remains hopeful. She continues to look for ways to improve her situation and seeks support from organizations and individuals who may be able to assist her in navigating the bureaucratic hurdles of acquiring citizenship. She dreams of being able to travel, save money, and secure a better future for herself and her family.

Her case highlights the broader issue of how the lack of citizenship can hinder not only an individual's personal and economic development but also their participation in the social and political fabric of their country. Geeta's story is a powerful reminder of the need for reform in the citizenship process to ensure that all individuals, especially women, can access their fundamental rights and opportunities.

### CR#41. Struggles to acquire citizenship

A woman recounting the challenges she faced in obtaining her citizenship, the difficulties caused by the absence of citizenship, and the hardships she experienced due to health and family issues. Some key points in the interview include:

1. **Difficulties in Obtaining Citizenship:** The woman shares how she faced many obstacles in acquiring her citizenship, including bureaucratic hurdles, lack of support from her family, and financial constraints. She recounts the complicated process of securing the necessary documents, such as marriage and identity proofs, and mentions how the process was delayed by inefficiency and corruption.
2. **Health Issues:** She describes the toll that her health took on her life. She mentions suffering from a liver condition, undergoing medical tests, and dealing with the psychological and physical impacts of her illness. Her health problems were exacerbated by the financial strain of paying for medical treatments, which were made more difficult due to her lack of citizenship, limiting her access to certain benefits like insurance.
3. **Economic and Social Hardships:** The interviewee explains how her lack of citizenship also limited her economic opportunities. She mentions how, without citizenship, she faced exclusion from formal work opportunities, and had to rely on informal jobs or live in precarious housing situations. She was also subjected to social stigma, particularly in her interactions with landlords and employers.
4. **Struggles with Family and Social Support:** Her family relationships, particularly with her husband and children, seem strained. She describes how she was expelled from her marital home after her health deteriorated and her husband's family refused to support her. She also talks about her children's neglect and the emotional pain of being abandoned by her own family, even though she still cared for them.
5. **Challenges in Personal Survival:** The woman describes having to survive in difficult conditions, such as living in poor accommodations and struggling to make ends meet. Despite the hardships, she emphasizes her resilience and determination to survive.

The interview highlights the intersection of legal, health, and social challenges that people without proper documentation often face. It also reflects the emotional and psychological toll of living without legal recognition in a society that requires formal documentation for basic services and rights.

#### **Cr#42. The Struggles and Triumphs of Securing Citizenship**

Sakina Khatun, a 45-year-old woman from Bayalabas, had faced significant challenges in securing her citizenship, an essential document for accessing government benefits and exercising her rights. Her story reflects the hardships of those who struggle with bureaucratic systems, particularly those from marginalized communities or with limited resources.

##### **Journey to Citizenship:**

For many years, Sakina did not have a citizenship certificate, which posed severe challenges in her daily life. She faced difficulties when accessing government services and benefits, such as social security allowances. Her inability to prove her identity and citizenship left her vulnerable and unable to fully participate in society.

Despite the obstacles, Sakina persisted. In her pursuit of citizenship, she encountered several bureaucratic hurdles. She explained that the process was grueling, and she had to take loans from various people to gather the necessary funds to pay for the associated costs. The process was time-consuming, and Sakina often had to rely on others to help navigate the complex system.

##### **Challenges Faced:**

The first major barrier was the lack of formal documentation, which was required for citizenship. Her father, who had already passed away, had completed much of the paperwork for her, but the final step—securing the citizenship certificate—was elusive. To obtain her citizenship, she had to navigate through various obstacles such as proving her marriage status and establishing her identity.

She recalled a critical moment when the local authorities refused to issue her a citizenship certificate because she was not officially married, which was a requirement for some. Her marriage had not been registered in the official records, and the authorities demanded a marriage certificate. Sakina faced humiliation when they questioned the legitimacy of her marriage and her right to citizenship.

However, help came from an unexpected source: **Asmita**, a member of a local women's organization. Asmita and other women in the organization supported Sakina in her struggle. They helped her gather the required documents, including a birth certificate, and advocated on her behalf. The women's collective offered moral support, helping Sakina navigate through the bureaucratic maze and presenting her case to the authorities.

Her mother also played a crucial role in facilitating the process, ensuring that all other paperwork, including her father's documents, was in order. Sakina's case highlights the importance of community solidarity in overcoming systemic barriers, particularly for women who are often doubly marginalized.

##### **Overcoming the Hurdles:**

After a series of interactions with government officials and providing the necessary documentation, Sakina was finally able to secure her citizenship. It was a long and tiring process, but with the help of her family and the women's collective, she succeeded in overcoming the challenges.

Sakina's case is not just about receiving a piece of paper but also about regaining her dignity and the right to participate in society. With her citizenship secured, she is now eligible for various government benefits, including social security allowances.

### **Impact of Citizenship:**

Sakina expressed immense relief after obtaining her citizenship, acknowledging that the feeling of not having citizenship was psychologically damaging. It made her feel excluded from society, and she even contemplated extreme measures due to the stress of being denied basic rights.

However, now with citizenship in hand, Sakina feels empowered. She can apply for the government's elderly allowance and other benefits that were previously unavailable to her. The joy of having a recognized identity has lifted a huge burden from her shoulders.

Sakina's citizenship not only opens doors for her but also enhances her sense of belonging and participation in the community. She is now able to contribute to her family and society in a meaningful way, which was impossible before due to the absence of her official documents.

### **Reflection**

**and**

### **Conclusion:**

Sakina's story illustrates the profound impact that citizenship can have on an individual's life. The journey to citizenship was fraught with financial, emotional, and logistical challenges, yet Sakina's persistence and the support of her community ultimately led to a positive outcome. She reflects on the importance of making the process more accessible and transparent for others who may be in similar situations, particularly for women and marginalized individuals.

Sakina now has a newfound sense of agency. She is ready to fight for her rights and, if necessary, advocate for changes in the system to ensure others do not face the same difficulties she endured. Her case underscores the need for reforms in the process of obtaining citizenship and the significance of community support in navigating such challenges.

### **Cr#43. Struggle to Obtain Citizenship**

Pooja Devi Jha, a 23-year-old woman from Machchari village in Janakpur, has faced significant hurdles in her life, one of the most challenging being the process of obtaining her citizenship. Her story highlights the difficulties women in Nepal can face when navigating bureaucratic systems, family dynamics, and societal expectations.

#### **Early Struggles and Family Expectations**

Pooja was born in Machchari Gaudanda and grew up with a deep desire for independence. However, her family situation made it difficult for her to achieve this. When Pooja reached the age of 16, she tried to apply for her citizenship, but encountered numerous roadblocks. Authorities initially told her that she was too young to apply. Furthermore, the process was costly, and Pooja had to spend a significant amount of money to push through the bureaucratic hurdles.

Despite these challenges, Pooja was determined. The process to obtain her citizenship was not only complicated by the legal requirements but also deeply influenced by her family's attitude towards her quest for independence. Her husband, who had already obtained his citizenship, refused to assist her, believing it was unnecessary for her to have one. He even suggested that she should seek help from her parents or relatives, dismissing the importance of her

rights to a citizenship. His refusal was compounded by the belief that a woman needed a son, not a daughter, to be supported in such matters.

### **The Role of Her Family**

Pooja's parents, despite their own financial struggles, were instrumental in helping her navigate the process. Her mother, who was poor and had limited resources, went to great lengths to support Pooja. She took out loans, sold land, and worked tirelessly to ensure that Pooja's marriage was as prosperous as possible. Yet, Pooja's situation did not improve, and the lack of citizenship continued to hold her back in life.

Throughout this time, Pooja was treated poorly by her in-laws. Her father-in-law often belittled her, telling her that she did not belong in their house and should leave. These constant insults and the lack of support from her husband and his family left Pooja feeling isolated and helpless. She even had to lock herself in her room to avoid facing her father-in-law's harsh words.

### **The Struggle to Obtain Citizenship**

Despite the lack of support from her husband, Pooja remained resolute. She made multiple visits to the district office, where she faced rejection and discouragement. During one visit, the office staff initially refused to grant her citizenship. It was only after repeated pleas that they eventually agreed to process her citizenship within 15 days.

At 17, Pooja finally received her citizenship, but the journey had been fraught with emotional and financial strain. She had to endure not only the bureaucratic difficulties but also the lack of emotional support from her husband and his family. The feeling of not belonging, compounded by the belief that she was unworthy because of her gender, made this process even harder.

### **A Struggle for Dignity and Respect**

Pooja's journey did not end with the receipt of her citizenship. Even after gaining this legal recognition, she continued to face numerous challenges, particularly in her marriage. Her husband's refusal to support her in obtaining citizenship was not an isolated incident; it was part of a broader pattern of mistreatment and neglect. He was dismissive of her, often saying she was "useless" for not having a son, and accused her of being a burden on her family. The constant emotional abuse took a toll on Pooja, but her determination to assert her rights never wavered.

The issue of dowry further complicated Pooja's life. Her in-laws demanded more money, despite her mother's limited means. This constant pressure to meet their financial demands, coupled with her father-in-law's belittling attitude, led to immense emotional distress. She found no peace in her marital home and eventually decided to take matters into her own hands by filing a case regarding property disputes.

### **The Support of Organizations and Legal Help**

Throughout her struggle, Pooja remained unaware of the various women's rights organizations that could have potentially helped her navigate the citizenship process. However, as she learned about these organizations, she gained a deeper understanding of her rights and the legal avenues available to her. With support from the municipality, police station, and some local authorities, she was able to process her citizenship.

Pooja's case is not just about obtaining citizenship; it is about the broader struggles women face when asserting their rights within both legal and social systems. She believes that women in similar situations should receive more support

from both the government and society. She advocates for a more streamlined process that would ensure women do not face discrimination or unnecessary challenges in obtaining their citizenship.

## Conclusion

Pooja's story is a powerful reminder of the obstacles women in Nepal, and similar societies, face when asserting their basic rights. It speaks to the need for legal reforms that make the citizenship process smoother and more equitable, especially for women. It also highlights the importance of family and community support in overcoming these challenges. Pooja's resilience, despite the numerous setbacks and discouragements she faced, is a testament to the strength of women who continue to fight for their rights, even in the face of immense adversity.

Her call for stronger support from authorities, better family dynamics, and greater societal understanding is an essential message for all, advocating for a future where women are not only granted their legal rights but are also empowered to live with dignity and respect.

## CR#44. Challenges in Acquiring Citizenship

Rasila Rajwansi, a 24-year-old woman, was born in Jhapa but faced a series of complications regarding her citizenship due to the untimely death of her parents. Rasila's mother and father passed away when she was very young, leaving her and her sibling to grow up in a hostel. The absence of parental guidance and the lack of official documents related to her parents' identity created an immense barrier in acquiring her citizenship.

Rasila mentions that despite her attempts to seek help from various institutions and people, she was unable to find any proper records of her birth or her parents' details. She recalls the hostel system where a sponsor from abroad was financially supporting the children's living expenses, but the sponsor did not provide any help in formalizing their identity or legal documentation. Consequently, Rasila never received any formal documentation, including birth registration or citizenship.

When asked about the challenges of living without citizenship, Rasila shared her deep frustration. She highlighted how the lack of citizenship has hindered her ability to access basic services and rights. For example, without citizenship, she couldn't open a bank account, travel abroad, or even prove her identity, which resulted in her being treated as invisible in society. The absence of any national identity has also led to feelings of shame and confusion, especially when asked about her roots or family background. People often questioned her place of origin, and when she mentioned her ethnic identity as Rajwansi, it only deepened the sense of confusion, as she had no formal documentation to prove it.

The situation was further exacerbated by the fact that she did not have any supporting documents like a death certificate or a formal birth record of her parents. This left her in a state of limbo, unable to apply for a national identity card, health insurance, or participate in many civic activities that required proof of nationality. Rasila emphasized how crucial citizenship is in the modern world, where it not only provides a sense of identity but also enables access to various rights, including healthcare and financial services.

Rasila also described the psychological toll of living without citizenship. She noted that, on a few occasions, people inquired about her origin, asking questions like "Where is your hometown?" and "What is your ethnic background?" She felt disoriented and awkward, as she could not answer these questions clearly. Her inability to prove her identity or link herself to a recognized family background made her feel isolated and excluded from society.

In the absence of citizenship, Rasila has faced difficulties in her personal and professional life. She shared that without the right papers, she cannot get a job, open a bank account, or engage in other activities that require formal

identification. Even health insurance and government services are inaccessible to her because of the lack of a valid identity. This has left her without a safety net for emergencies or unexpected situations.

Rasila's case is a poignant reminder of the gaps in the system that leave individuals like her vulnerable. Despite her best efforts, she has yet to secure citizenship, and her situation highlights the significant need for policy reforms to address the challenges faced by individuals without proper documentation.

She believes that the government should be more compassionate and flexible when dealing with cases like hers, where parents have passed away at an early age, and the individual has no access to official records. She proposes that the government consider the names of deceased parents in the absence of formal documents and create a pathway for individuals like her to obtain citizenship. This would ensure that people who are born in Nepal, like herself, can be recognized as citizens and gain access to the basic rights and privileges they are entitled to.

Rasila's story is not just about the struggle for a piece of paper; it is about the human need for recognition, security, and the basic rights to live with dignity. Her experiences reflect the daily struggles of countless people who, like her, are caught in a bureaucratic limbo, denied citizenship, and unable to access essential services.

In conclusion, Rasila's case underscores the urgent need for policy change to address the citizenship issues faced by marginalized individuals, especially those who have no formal records of their birth or parental identity. By reforming the system, the government can help ensure that all citizens, regardless of their background or circumstances, can live with the rights and dignity they deserve.

#### **CR#45. The Struggles of Acquiring Citizenship**

A woman who lived without citizenship for an extended period, explains how she faced numerous obstacles, particularly in relation to registering her birth and acquiring a citizenship certificate. She recounts that the process was long and complicated, starting when she had to bring five people to verify her identity. She was asked to submit birth registration documents, but these documents were not accepted initially. Despite going through the steps to obtain the necessary documents, she faced rejection and delays, even when she followed the instructions given by the authorities.

For three years, she struggled to get her citizenship. The bureaucracy was unyielding, and the documents that were provided to her were no longer valid after the first attempt. The respondent recalls how she had to go back multiple times, and despite being promised that the issue would be resolved, it continued to remain unresolved. The process was further complicated by the unavailability of certain documents, such as her father's birth certificate, which was required for her registration.

During this time, she felt isolated, facing significant emotional and social challenges. Without citizenship, she was unable to access basic services, conduct business, or even be accepted into community groups. Her lack of official documentation severely limited her opportunities for work and social mobility.

After three years of struggle, her citizenship was finally granted, but the process had taken a toll on her life. She describes how her family situation was also complicated—her father's citizenship issues were tied to Indian documentation, which created additional hurdles. There was a lack of support from both her immediate family and the community during these challenging times.

The respondent's personal hardships extended beyond just bureaucratic issues. She was subjected to domestic abuse, and her lack of citizenship made it difficult for her to escape this situation. For years, she lived with a sense of

powerlessness, unable to make independent decisions or seek legal or social assistance because of her undocumented status.

As her situation worsened, she attempted to find help in the community. She tried reaching out to family members, but was rejected. The respondent was also involved in small jobs like selling goods, but even these efforts were undermined by the absence of official recognition. In her community, many women in similar situations faced the same struggles of acquiring citizenship and dealing with their marginalized status.

The breakthrough came when, after years of persistent efforts, the respondent finally managed to secure her citizenship. The process was made smoother with the support of a few people in her community who were willing to help her navigate the bureaucratic system. However, this did not erase the hardship she had gone through during the years of waiting and suffering.

Reflecting on her journey, she mentions how crucial it is to have a valid citizenship for personal and professional growth. Despite having obtained her citizenship, she feels that there should be more accessible support and clearer processes for people in her position. She strongly believes that the administration should make it easier for citizens to access the necessary paperwork without so many obstacles, and she advocates for a system that does not penalize individuals based on their background or family history.

The respondent's story is one of resilience in the face of extreme adversity. Although she now holds a citizenship certificate, the emotional and social scars from the years of struggle and suffering remain with her. Nonetheless, she feels a sense of relief and hope, knowing that she can now participate in society more fully, seek employment, and contribute to her community. However, she also continues to fight for the rights of others in similar situations, especially women who suffer from social marginalization and legal neglect.

This case story serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of citizenship and the profound impact that legal recognition can have on an individual's life. The respondent's perseverance, despite overwhelming challenges, highlights the need for systemic reforms to ensure that all citizens have equal access to their rights and opportunities.

#### **CR#46. Struggles of a Woman in Obtaining Citizenship**

A 31-year-old woman named Sima, hails from Baglung but has been living in Banagai Bharlawas-9 for years. Despite being born in Baglung, Sima has faced numerous challenges in obtaining her citizenship due to incomplete documentation and bureaucratic hurdles. The absence of proper records, particularly her birth registration and residence documents, has hindered her ability to secure a citizenship certificate.

**Challenges Faced:** Sima's struggle began when she realized that her citizenship application could not be processed due to the absence of her birth certificate and residence papers. Although her siblings had obtained their citizenships after fulfilling the documentation requirements, Sima's case was complicated by the fact that her name had not been included in her family's residence registration due to a mistake during the family's migration paperwork.

She explained that her father had not listed her name on the required documents when the family relocated, and efforts to rectify this issue proved unsuccessful. She was directed to go to Baglung to fix the paperwork, but financial constraints and the complexity of travel prevented her from doing so.

**Financial and Social Impact:** Sima's situation was worsened by the financial difficulties she faced. Her father, who had struggled with similar issues during his life, had passed away when Sima was young, and her mother died early as well. Her brothers, though married and supporting their own families, had limited ability to help her.

Without citizenship, Sima faced exclusion from many public services. She couldn't apply for loans, medical insurance, or other social benefits. Furthermore, her children also faced difficulties as they needed their mother's citizenship to complete their own registration processes, but Sima's lack of citizenship blocked this as well.

**Citizenship and Bureaucratic Hurdles:** Sima described the bureaucratic challenges she faced, including the high costs of fixing her birth certificate and residence papers. Even when she attempted to get assistance from influential community members, such as village leaders and government officials, the process remained stalled. She was told that she needed to go back to Baglung, but she couldn't afford the journey. She also tried going to local institutions to resolve her issues, but each time she was sent back with no progress.

**Current Status and Emotional Strain:** Sima's situation took a toll on her mental and emotional well-being. The lack of citizenship meant she was essentially disenfranchised, unable to exercise her rights, and was often excluded from any significant social benefits. This exclusion made her feel like a second-class citizen, unable to provide for her children in a manner that others in her community could. Moreover, the uncertainty of her future caused significant anxiety, especially regarding her children's future and what would happen if she were to fall ill or face a personal crisis.

Sima also discussed her health struggles, as she couldn't avail medical treatments or insurance due to her lack of citizenship. Despite these challenges, she had to rely on limited resources and face discrimination.

**The Emotional Toll of Citizenship Denial:** When asked how the lack of citizenship made her feel, Sima explained that it made her feel powerless. Without the ability to access her rights, she felt as though she was invisible in society. This lack of recognition and access to basic services made her feel isolated, as though her existence and contributions didn't matter. She expressed that without citizenship, she was deprived of the ability to claim her rights, including her inheritance and legal rights within her family, especially in cases where her spouse or family members may be unable to support her.

She lamented that without citizenship, she was unable to legally fight for her rights in a court of law, especially regarding inheritance or other legal matters. This feeling of helplessness was further exacerbated by her inability to engage with the institutions that could have provided her with the necessary support.

**The Need for Reform:** Sima's experience highlights the urgent need for reform in the process of obtaining citizenship, especially for individuals in rural or marginalized communities. She emphasized that with proper reforms and improved access to documentation, individuals like her could more easily navigate the bureaucratic systems. She also advocated for greater support from local community leaders and government officials, who should help those in need of proper documentation.

In conclusion, Sima's case underscores the dire consequences of not having citizenship, not just from a legal standpoint, but also from a psychological and social perspective. It is clear that the process of obtaining citizenship should be simplified and made more accessible for people in her situation, ensuring that no one is left behind in the pursuit of their basic human rights.

#### **CR#47. Struggles with Citizenship and Identity**

A woman in her 40s, discusses the complications she has faced in obtaining citizenship and the resultant socio-economic struggles. Her experience reveals a cascade of issues related to birth registration, the acquisition of citizenship, and the barriers that arise due to a lack of official documents.

*Family Issues:*

Initially, the respondent was unaware that her husband's birth certificate had been processed through his elder sibling's registration. She discovered this fact only two months after her marriage. This lack of transparency led to several personal and legal issues. At one point, her husband's family members falsely informed her that they would help her secure citizenship, but this promise was never fulfilled.

Regarding her own situation, the respondent reveals that she did not have proper citizenship documentation for a long time because her father's registration was either delayed or incorrect. Despite this, she managed to get a birth certificate for her child, but it was registered under the name of her elder sibling, not her own.

#### *Obstacles in Acquiring Citizenship:*

Her lack of citizenship has created significant problems in her life. The respondent recounts how she has been unable to get a SIM card or apply for a job, two essential aspects of daily life in Nepal. Moreover, she faced difficulty even opening a bank account or getting other legal services due to her status. She also mentions her desire to travel abroad, but without citizenship, this has remained out of reach.

Despite various promises from her husband's family members and others, she has not yet been able to secure citizenship. She recalls the words of certain individuals who had promised to help, but these promises never materialized. In her quest for a solution, she approached an NGO called the *Mahila Mukti Sanstha* (Women's Liberation Organization), seeking assistance.

#### *Impact of Citizenship Absence:*

The respondent is acutely aware of the severe consequences her lack of citizenship has had on her life. Not only has she been unable to access basic services, but her children also face the same challenges. They are registered under incorrect names, further complicating the process of getting them the citizenship they deserve. Her own situation is compounded by the fact that her father's birth certificate was only recently processed, making her and her family's situation even more complex.

Her frustration is palpable, as she reflects on the deep-rooted systemic issues that have led to this predicament. The inability to prove one's identity or access critical services has left her feeling disempowered and marginalized. The lack of citizenship, she says, has closed doors to almost every opportunity, both within Nepal and internationally.

#### *Current Status and Future Hopes:*

Despite the various hurdles, the respondent remains hopeful. She continues to seek support from organizations and government bodies. She expresses the wish that, with help, she will be able to secure the necessary documentation not just for herself, but for her children as well. She hopes that reforms in the citizenship process will address the bureaucratic and familial obstacles that people like her face.

She urges that the government pay more attention to issues such as the lack of birth registration, erroneous records, and delays in issuing citizenship documents, which have led to significant gaps in the lives of many citizens. As a result of these challenges, the respondent hopes that policy improvements will make it easier for people to acquire their rights and enjoy the full benefits of citizenship.

This case story highlights the pervasive challenges faced by individuals who lack proper documentation and the impact this has on their ability to access basic services, employment, and freedom of movement. The respondent's situation underscores the need for systemic reforms in the birth registration and citizenship issuance processes.

**SW#48. (Nari Awaj 30<sup>th</sup> May, 2024, Nawalparasi)**

I am a sex worker from Nawalparasi, got intercaste marriage but family of husband did not accept me as a family member because I was a sex worker and dalit. My husband also didn't register the marriage. After being pregnant I was not taken care by my husband and left me alone. She got no support from her husband or family. On 30th May ,2024 I reported to CBO Nari awaj which helped me by providing legal aid, shelter, and medical care. I won the case and got property share, but it caused me great emotional pain.

**SW#49. Nari Awaj, Nawalparasi**

I am a sex worker from Nawal Parasi. Me and my daughter faced domestic violence because I was a sex worker. From my earning I need to feed family too. Due to this condition I was not able to send my daughter to school. I wanted to send my daughter to school so I denied to give money to family and I asked to pay for my daughter's school fee to my family members. But my husband and his family kicked us out from the house on December 17 2022 we reported to Nari awaj in which I am a member. Me and my daughter are now living separately.

**SW#50. Nari Awaj, Nawalparasi**

I am a sex worker as a human right defenders from Nawalparasi. Previously, I was a survivor of domestic violence and due to this I was depressed and took medicine. During this time, I met Nari Awaj and joined the CBO. It helped me too. I became member of the CBO and started helping other women and sex workers through the CBO I was recovered well. On may 20 2024 I was helping another sex worker who was also a victim of domestic violence while fighting for her right I faced a lot of discriminations for helping sex workers. And I was being mentally week. I have to start taking medicines of depression again. I didn't get much support from other places other than CBO. We sex workers also need a lot of counselling and support for mental health.

**SW#51. Nari awaj, Nawalparasi**

I am 45 years old sex worker also a mother of a son. Due to physical and mental violence, I was compelled to leave my husband's house. Then I started living with my parents home, in the beginning my parents were good to me. In course of time I spent all my earnings for feeding my family and my sick mother's medicine. Nowadays I don't have proper income not even enough money for food. Nobody is looking after me as I am earning lesser. I was also beaten by my father on may 20 2024 and I was thrown out from my parent's home. Now, I don't have any home to live in, no money for food and my son's education. Just because I am sex worker do I have to be discriminated always ? My earnings from sex work is permitted but due to my work I am always rejected, is this fair ?

**SW#52. Nawalparasi, Nariawaj**

My name is Ch I am a sex worker I have experienced severe domestic violence at the hands of my husband, who not only physically assaulted me but also accused me of witchcraft. This traumatic incident was compounded by the fact that my daughter was a victim of rape, leaving us in a state of extreme poverty and emotional distress. Despite my attempts to seek help from local authorities, the response was inadequate, reflecting the systemic failures in addressing domestic violence in our community. The pervasive stigma surrounding these issues often forces sex workers like us into silence, highlighting the urgent need for societal change and better support for those affected by such injustices. I have reported to Nariawaj on April 22, 2022 and have been helped by Nari awaj.

**SW#53. Mahottari Mahila sachetana Kendr**

My name is Sp and my husband was a migrant labour. While her husband was working abroad for extra income she started sex work. She met a man who was helping her and won her trust. Later on he pursued her to marry her daughter and took her ten lakhs as well and made a document that she have taken 10 lakhs from him. He started putting her in fear of her husband as he was coming back and as a solution he proposed to go with him and he would take care of everyone. Later, the husband returned and knew about the pimp through neighbor and came in contact of mahila sachetana Kendra and with the help Mahila Sachetana Kendra, Women cell and the pimp was taken into custody it was found that he have sold them separately and all of them were rescued on August 27 2023. Sex workers are human rights defenders and helps in rescuing traffick victims.

**SW#54. Mahila Sachetana Kendra, Mahottari**

Sex workers as human rights defenders help those in injustice. Mahila Sachetana Kendra a sex workers led organization has helped a sex woker who have gone when she got married and have gone through a lot of domestic violences from her husband and inlaws because she gave birth to two daughters. After she came in contact with Mahila aawaz and the organization helped her to fight against injustice and filed a court case of divorce at last she won the case and got her partition of share on 2024 AD.

**SW#55 Hamro Sangathan, Kathmandu**

Two sex workers of age 40 and 50 working in Kathmandu, On August 29, 2022 both the women were walking on the street of Gaushala they were caught by some person, in the begining they thought they were arrested by civil police but they were not police they were employee of Anti-trafficking group. They were taken to so called safe house forcefully their phone were taken and head of anti-trafficking group and her staffs came and scolded them, their conversations with clients were listened and they made fun of sex workers breaching all human rights and right to privacy. The anti-trafficking group have given them relief support to sex workers few days earlier so they knew about their families as well. The anti-trafficking group insisted one of the sex worker to call her 14 years old son they threaten her to expose in front of her son she insisted not to do that but she was tortured for 10 days. She tolerated all the torture but denied to call her son at last she called her mother and they were released. The sex workers were wrongly detained and harassed by the anti-trafficking group's staff, violating their human rights.

**SW#56. Mahila Sachetana Kendra Mahottari)**

Sex worker led group as a human right defender has always been against trafficking and preventing people from being trafficked . Mahila Sachetana Kendra got a report on 9th July, 2022 that one of our member was going to be trafficked to India after a fake promise of a job. Members of Mahila Sachetana Kendra made a strong network and worked with police and shared informations and found her and helped her to escape and return to Nepal. She now works as an advocate for anti-trafficking awareness. It is suggested to recognize sex worker a primary respondent against trafficking.

**SW#57. Kanchan Kriyashil (KK), Kanchanpur**

A single woman (widow) sex worker, faced accusations of witchcraft from her in-laws, leading to violence and isolation. A CBO of KK helped her legally and gave her shelter. She now educates others about witchcraft-related violence. It is reported June 15, 2024 It is recommended to raise awareness to stop such harmful superstitions. Sex workers as human right defender protects women from harmful traditional practices so recognize and strengthen capacity of sex workers as a change maker in society.

**SW#58. Mahila Sahayogi Samuha (MSS) , Sunsari**

A 33-year-old sex worker resident of Pakli, Itahari, was deceived into marrying a man from Birganj who hid the fact that he was already married with a child. On August 11, 2024, after confronting him, she was physically assaulted by

his family and community members. Initially, she faced difficulties reporting the incident, as she was a sex worker she was blamed as she herself was wrong she was blamed of trapping the male. After the discussion and help of Mahila Sahayogi Samuha, the case was taken to the police, they work hard to register the case resulting in an apology from the perpetrators. she now lives alone and plans to visit Birganj to settle financial matters with that person before permanently separating from him, prioritizing her safety. She is still fighting for justice.

**SW#59. Mahila Sahayogi Samuha (MSS) , Sunsari**

I am 33-year-old sex worker a resident of Ithari 13 Khanar, worked in a polybag factory in Morang for four years. On August 31, 2024, my coworkers knew that I am a sex worker. They physically assaulted me, leaving me with severe injuries and blue blood clots that confined me to bed for three days. When I returned to the factory, the manager suspended me, blaming me. Feeling hopeless, I sought help from Mahila Sahayogi Samuha that CBO intervened by contacting the factory owner and explaining the situation. Despite the manager's resistance, the CBO assured me legal support and promised to take action against the factory and the employees responsible. I am still fighting for justice yet. Because of my work as a sex worker I face multiple violence, human right violation and again I am blamed at last.

**SW#60. Nijgadh Mahila Samuha, Nijgadh**

I am 23-year-old street-based sex worker from Nijgadh, hotels are not keeping condoms due to fear of police as there is no condom in hotels we have to had unsafe sex with client. Due to such unsafe sex I was pregnant it took me time to find that the health post was far from my place and I didn't have much money for traveling, check up and abortion after few weeks I collected some money and went for check up after checkup I found that I was pregnant for more than 12 weeks. I approached Nijgadh Mahila Samuha for an abortion, but it was above 12 weeks after 12 weeks of pregnancy abortion is not available legally. Nijgadh Mahila samuha searched a safe home for me to stay but it was also very few safe home and there was a fear of exposure of my identity and pregnancy so I can't stay in safe house. I chose to travel to India , where I decided to give birth,.

**Mahila Mukti Shang , Makwanpur**

**SW#61. (December 11, 2022, Hetauda) Mahila Mukti Shang**

A sex worker, resident of *Chaughada, Hetauda*, her family knew that she was a sex worker so she was physically and mentally tortured at house. She was not let to live in house because she was a sex worker. This incident was reported in Mahila Mukti sangh on December 11, 2022 and the matter was taken to the District Administration Office. However, at the office, her in-laws publicly insulted her by revealing her work and blamed her instead.. Deciding to move forward, she rented a room in Hetauda and started living with her children. She is still fighting for justice. As a human right defender sex workers led organization are working against domestic violence.

**SW#62. Mahila Jagaran Samaj, Jhapa**

On July 9, 2022, seven female sex workers were arrested from Everest Hotel, and two were arrested from a house in Suryodaya Toll, Birtamode Municipality-1, Jhapa District. Two sick individuals were sent to a hospital, while the other seven were taken to the District Administration Office for an extension of time. The arrests were part of a Community-Police Partnership program, initiated after complaints from the local community, involving Aama Samuha (Mother's Group), ward representatives, and police personnel. A video of the incident was shared on social media, showing the arrests and linking them to possession of condoms and PrEP medicines. In response, SWASA, JMMS, and other CBOs sent representatives to meet with the District Police Office and discuss the case with the DSP. A Zoom meeting was held on July 17, 2022, involving SWASA, JMMS, NCS SWAN, lawyers, and other CBOs. On July 18, 2022, the case was filed at the National Human Rights Commission and INSEC Nepal, with follow-ups at both national and provincial levels.

**SW#63. Mahila Mukti Sangh, Makwanpur**

I am a sex worker in Hetauda, I am also member of Mahila Mukti Sangh. My husband uses drugs and doesn't do any work and only rely on my work. I had a sexually transmitted infection, and I reported my problem on Mahila Mukti Sangh helped me get treatment. In 17<sup>th</sup> April, 2023 when I went to work at a hotel we deal to have sex for one time but the client forcefully have sex with me another time and he ran away without paying me. Because I knew the person's name, I reported the case to Mahila Mukti Sangh, and they threatened him and demanded money. However, I was afraid to take further action because my identity could be revealed and more violence on me could be there in my village.

**SW#64. Mahila Paribartanshil, Kapilvastu**

A sex worker from Maharajganj, Kapilvastu, living with her daughter, was called by a client for her service. Upon arriving, she was ambushed by multiple men, gang-raped, and left unconscious. After regaining consciousness, she sought help from Mahila Pariwartansil Samaj, who assisted her in getting medical treatment. The case was reported to the police with the help of the organization, and the police are currently searching for the perpetrators. This incident highlights the need for stricter government rules to prevent such violence and emphasizes the importance of safe mechanisms for sex workers to interact with clients.

**SW#65. Jagriti Mahila Mahasangh, Kathmandu)**

A sex worker, became a victim of cybercrime in September 28, 2022 when a video of her, taken without consent while she was intoxicated, was used to blackmail her. The perpetrator threatened to share the footage with her family. Overwhelmed, she reported the incident to Jagriti Mahila Mahasangh (JMMS) and then went to the Teku police station cyber bureau with photographic evidence. Despite filing a complaint, the police have not provided any updates. The blackmailer ceased contact, but she continues to live in fear, depression, and stress. This case highlights the need for stronger laws and awareness to protect individuals from cybercrime. Her experience emphasizes the importance of educating women and implementing stricter regulations to prevent such incidents.

**SW#66. Kriyashil Mahila Sangh , Kathmandu)**

On October 28, 2024, a sex worker was approached by men in civil dress pretending to be customers. After a conversation, they searched her purse for contraceptive devices and took her to the Babarmahal Anti-Trafficking Department. She was held until 8 p.m., when Kriyashil Mahila Sangh helped her secure her release. The next day, she received phone calls offering to meet privately, which she reported to the organization. They then took her to SWASA and later to the National Women's Commission, where she registered a complaint against the police, ensuring her privacy and security.

The report is still in process, and no further phone calls were received after the complaint was filed. The case highlights the importance of reporting such incidents, as fear of retaliation can lead to further suppression. It also emphasizes the need for privacy and security to allow individuals to safely file complaints against such activities.

**SW#67. Nari Ekata Samuha, Dang**

A sex worker originally from Dang is currently living in Kapilvastu. In March 2023, she became pregnant. For her health checkups, she had to travel to Ghorahi Rural Municipality, which is far from her area. During her pregnancy, she faced challenges in accessing health services due to the distance. She couldn't return to her village for checkups because she feared discrimination from the villagers, who might question the paternity of her child. She cannot go to private clinic because she cannot afford the private clinic. Because of that she cannot do her treatment which lead to miscarriage.

#### **SW#68. Jagriti Mahila Mahasangh**

Place:- Birjung, Parsa

Background of Case and process that we applied to know the exact situation:

On March, 2021 Birgunj Metropolitan City ,ward no 15 and District Police Office Parsa jointly destroyed 14 huts including a snack shop run by the Female sex workers at Bypass Road of Birgunj Metropolitan City .On which their livelihood was dependent. But as for our surprise, four shops were not destroyed as they were in shutters. Similarly, other 18 women who were running their shops were arrested. They were fully dependent on shops to fulfil their daily expenses, and among them two have small children were later released by police at the evening but they had to visit the police station early morning from that day on the following day for their attendance. A joint meeting of District Police office and ward office have decided that if they want to run their shops in the upcoming days, they have to take license and run their business in shutters not in huts .Also they imposed to keep only one staffs for their shops and if they are found running their shops in huts again, they will make public case and take the legal approach on them. They released them after signing on the warning paper along with threatening of not repetition of the same incidents. According to the victims, they have been warned to evict them from their homes, adding that they have become more insecure in open spaces and secluded places and the incidence of violence has increased. On remembering the past days, they have experienced that the police has been harassing them, dealing with the temptation of money and quenching their sexual thirst with them. In particular, they have complained that the local government has not provided any program or assistance to the women and gays/ lesbians who are earning their livelihood as female sex workers on which their main income and livelihood was dependent. Also, if they try to involve in any profession or business other than sex work, the government authority would trouble them.

#### **SW#69. Jagriti Mahila Mahasangh, Kathmandu**

On May 24,2024, multiple raids were conducted in Jorpati targeting home-based and hotel-based sex workers. During the first raid, four female sex workers (FSWs) were arrested, and in a later raid, five more FSWs were arrested. All of them were taken to the Boudha police station. The initial group of four was released after paying money.

In another raid conducted in Jambo Dhadha, Jorpati, four more FSWs were arrested and held in custody for 14 days. They were released after paying money.

The identities of the arrested workers were known, some police officers began demanding free sexual services, threatening to detain them in police vans if they refused. Additionally, police officers confiscated cash from the FSWs during arrests. When retrieving the cash, some officers came dressed in civilian clothing, while others sent intermediaries to collect the money, further compounding the intimidation and exploitation faced by the sex workers.

#### **SW#70 Kriyashil Mahila Sangh , Kathmandu**

One of the sex worker a member of Kriyashil Mahila Sangh was running a dairy shop in Jorpati, Kathmandu, On 14<sup>th</sup> January 2023 there was a quarrel with neighbor who was also a sex worker and the sex worker who runs dairy shop called police. As the police recognized her that both were sex workers instead of writing report and protecting them the police didn't protected them and their privacy and told everyone in society that they were sex worker and made fun of them. Everyone in neighborhood knew about them so she can't live there, she shifted her room closing her shop in somewhere else her son's education was also hampered because of shifting the room.

#### **SW#71. Mahila Sahyogi Samuha, Sunsari**

In a case of citizenship from Mahila Sahayogi Samuha two children of sex worker got citizenship from mother only after going to supreme court. Two children of sex worker from Sunsari were struggling from 4 years although there mother was a citizen of Nepal but their father died without making his citizenship . With a big struggle they got a

recommendation from the ward office but the CDO denied and with the help of Mahila Sahayogi the case was referred to FWLD. Although the case was ready it was difficult for them to come to Kathmandu and fight the case. SWASA helped in finding 'simple attorney' for the case and the case was held on supreme court. Supreme court gave an interim order on June 19, 2024 either to give them citizenship or if not why not to give its answer to be presented in court. Hence, they were successful in making citizenship within 2 months only after the case was heard in supreme court.

**SW#72. Mahila SaShaktikaran Samaj, Rupandehi,**

Sex worker as human right defender protects child rights. In Butwal during the field visit by Mahila Shaktikaran Samaj on mention date is December, 2023 ,we found in Argakhachi hotel there were 2 adolescent girls are working .We found they both are under aged girls. Then We convinced them and hotel owner as well that below 20 one must not be engaged in this work. the Hotel owners were convinced. We also did counseling to both girls, they were crying as they didn't have money to go back their home. So we collected money from our sangathan and sent them back their home in Gulmi.

**SW#73. Mahila Sashaktikaran Samaj, Rupandehi**

Sex worker as human right defender protects right to employment, No one is forced in sex work and if any one want to leave sex worker led community help them to leave as well. A member of Mahila Sashaktikaran Samaj, who was working as a sex worker. She attended our monthly meeting, during the meeting , she told to us, that “it was difficult to work for me, and I wanted to change the profession”. She told us to support to found job. So we have been able to searched a job for her in a slipper factory . She is enjoying her work there. This happen in March, 2024.

**SW#74. Mahila Sashaktikaran Samaj, Rupandehi**

Sex worker as human right defender are against crimes like rape. They were two adolescent girls of below 18 years of age . They were visiting Lumbini with their friends and they also went for a walk with some boys. It was known first to sex worker led group while walking around, it has become night. They have called a gang of 11 other boys. One of the girl has been raped by 7 people and the other was attempted to rape. They were afraid sex worker led CBO Mahila Sashaktikaran Samaj came forward and help them, a police case was filed. And the girl said that 7 people raped her, later a medical check-up was done, and when it was checked, it was true. The culprits are in jail. In this way sex worker played the role of primary respondent of crime and a guardian to minors

**SW#75. Mahila Sachetana Kendra, Mahottari**

In the Mahottari district of Madhesh Province, the Muslim community comprises a significant portion of the population. Women in this community often lack awareness of their legal rights and tend to rely heavily on religious laws. This reliance on religious laws has made women in this community more vulnerable and prone to exploitation.

One such case involves a woman from Mahottari district. She was married 15 years ago and gave birth to five children over the years. Her family consisted of her husband and her in-laws (father-in-law and mother-in-law). Her husband worked abroad and sent money in his father's name to support the family. The household depended entirely on this remittance for their livelihood. However, her father-in-law did not provide even the minimum amount needed for her children's care, forcing her to find ways to earn her own income.

In her struggle for survival, she began to step outside the home and interact with friends. Eventually, she was introduced to sex work. The income she earned allowed her to provide proper care for her children. However, her in-

laws grew suspicious over time, and her mother-in-law informed her husband abroad that she was engaging in sex work.

Without consulting her, her husband divorced her over the phone in accordance with Islamic customs by saying "**talaq, talaq, talaq**" three times. Her in-laws were present during the phone call, and the news of the divorce spread quickly within the community. Consequently, she and her children were forced to leave the house.

In this desperate situation, the woman moved to a market area and began living there. Her only option for survival was to continue in sex work. However, she now faces multiple challenges: societal judgment, administrative pressures, and difficulties crossing the open border to collect her earnings, which often involve threats and intimidation. Despite these hardships, she continues to fight for her survival and support her children.

#### **SW#76. Sangarsha mahila Samuha Bhaktapur,**

On **September 03, 2023**, a sex worker from Bhaktapur was arrested by Jagatey Police station at Baje Bhojanalaya Khaja Ghar following complaints from neighbors alleging sex work activities in the area and the neighbors complain that they were disturbing them. She was arrested in 12 pm day time and after that the police personnel demanded Rs 5000 for the release, the hotel owner paid the amount to police personnel and she was released. After that the police came repeatedly in civil dress and on the name of investigation sex workers have to face unnecessary question and extra surveillance. When they don't get paid by hotel owners on the name of investigation sex workers in the area are arrested on asking they say we have some complains from local we will do inquiry and leave if police don't get bribe the arrested women are charged with different cases.

#### **SW#77. Mahila Sasaktikaran samaj, Rupandehi**

Sex Workers as Human Rights Defenders are against domestic violences On May 29 2024, one of our member's younger sister faced a domestic violence. there was a report of a women who did a love marriage but after a few month of being married she was beaten by her in laws and her husband as well . She did not come to her parents' house and sometimes she would also go to her sister's house after 2 months she went to her parents , her husband came to take her. She didn't wanted to go with him as she was beaten by the whole family and he also beat her listening to the family. So She was afraid of going to his house. So the family of the girl and CBO convinced him not to do violence He apologized and commit to take care of her . Strengthening sex workers they can fight against violence.

#### **SW#78. Mahila Sasaktikaran samaj, Rupandehi**

Sex worker as Human Rights Defenders, so they are working in protection of child right. On 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024 It was found that two girls of below 18 years old have came to work in a spa where sex work was also done. They wanted to earn money and were ready to do sex work but the leaders of the CBOs convinced them that "you both are minor, and you can also earn money later on but this is your age to study". It was found that they didn't had money to go back home also, so the sex workers collected money and called there parents and convinced there parents as well and counsel them for studying and sent them back home.

#### **SW#79. Nari Ekata samuha, Dang**

On 9<sup>th</sup> of December, 2023. When sex workers go for checkup the health workers discriminates us one of the sex worker in Dang have to face discrimination after knowing that she was a sex worker and infected by HIV the doctor at first put double gloves and behavior was different from health service provider (doctor) in Institute of Health Science of Dang, Ghorahi.

#### **SW#80. Kriyashil Mahila sangh, Kathmandu**

I am a sex worker, on October 14 2024, and reporting on , December, 17, 2024. I went to hospital which is also a collage where MBBS is taught. The doctor with team of lots of MBBS student was checking me. It was found that there was swelling in mouth of uterus. After the examination," The doctor team asked me you have multiple sex partner ?" Because of fear and shy, I told them I have one boy friend only. They asked unnecessary questions and teased me saying "Does person with single partner have such uterus ?" and made fun of me in front of the whole team. I felt very bad.

**SW#81. Kriyashil Mahila Sangh, Kathmandu**

I am a sex worker, I have been going to hospital nearby me, Kathmandu the hospital for other STI also so the staffs knew that I am a sex worker and I frequently go to that hospital On 10<sup>th</sup> July 2024 I went to that hospital but they make me wait for long time. The staff were very rude to me I asked why I am not checked they answered rudely you can wait and in funny ways say "you may wait why so hurry for you." So asking or complaining was also insulting for me. Even we pay for the service they don't give service well to us because of identification of sex worker. – This case is reporting on , 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2024.

**SW#82. Mahila Ekata Samuha , Dang**

I am a sex worker, On August 20,2023, and reporting date is 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2024. a Health Service provider try to took my advantage. I have taken my father for checkup in hospital in Chitawan he said if you give me sexual favours I will open your father's case and get the work done quickly he even tried to search me in hotels. At that time if I were as strong as I am now I would have revolted against but I can't do anything at that time.

**SW#83. Krayashil mahila Sangh, Kathmandu**

I am a home based sex worker, On 20<sup>th</sup> July 2022 I was pregnant by mistake and I didn't knew where is the abortion centre located, from my friends I knew that government health service centre are rude so I can't go there . So I took a medicine from a medical at that time I also didn't knew about any place for safe abortion so I took medicine from medical but the medicine didn't worked. I was pregnant above 12 weeks so I went to a medical and have to spend sixty thousand for abortion. Reporting date on, 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2024.

**SW#84. Mahila Ekata Samuha , Dang Dang,**

I am a sex worker originally from Dang currently living in Kapilvastu. In 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2023, I became pregnant. I went for my health checkups, I have to travel to Ghorahi Rural Municipality, which is far from my area. During my pregnancy, I faced challenges in accessing health services due to the distance. I couldn't return to my village for checkups because I feared discrimination from the villagers, who might question the paternity of my child. I cannot go to private clinic because I cannot afford the private clinic. Because of that I cannot do my treatment which lead to miscarriage.

**SW#85. Bhaktapur Sangarsha Mahila Covid pandemic case**

I am a sex worker and I used to provide sex service to customers in different hotels, cottages, etc. Because of the lockdown in the country, I have not been able to do whatever I was doing, so there's no place to go, no food to eat which has been complicating my life even more. During the Covid I didn't received any help.

**SW#86. Street Sex Worker, by Hamro sangathan- Covid pandemic**

I am a street-based sex worker and provide services in hotels. But due to the pandemic, country has decided to shut everything and declare lockdown, because of which I have no other alternative to earn, I have been struggling to eat, get clothes and also, I don't have money for health service. I am unable to get medical help when my hand was wounded as I didn't have money for the treatment. COVID 19 has brought so many challenges for the sex workers like me, since we cannot move and travel places to provide sexual services. We are suffering from hunger, don't have extra savings left. The money I have was used it to rent the hotel room and stay but since now no money is left, I have been staying in public places wherever is possible.

#### **SW#87. Mahila Jagaran Samaaj Jhapa ,Covid pandemic case**

My name is Mn. I have been living in Jhapa, Damak. I am from Gauradaha. I have no work to do since there is lockdown going on. I have two kids to feed, also having trouble feeding the children at the moment, I have been borrowing money from regular customer but whenever it is possible Mahila Jagaran helps me. We cannot ask help to the local government because they are not aware of our identity so it is impossible to get help from them. We do not have any links and cannot afford to pay rent. I cannot go back to village also because I was kicked out of village after knowing that I am a sex worker and I am afraid they will never accept me.

#### **SW#88. Mahila Sahayogi Samuha Itahari –Covid pandemic case**

My name is Ur I have been working as sex workers for almost 10 years. I provide services in hotels. Because of lockdown I have not been able to do sex work. Most of my customers used to come from India which is not possible because of the current situation. Few of the customers do call during mornings and evenings for sexual service but the complication is that there is no place open where I can take them. I cannot call them in place where I am living cause if house owner came to know about what I have been doing or my occupation, they are likely to throw me out of their place and there will not be any places where I can stay. Since I haven't been working so there is no other source from where I can manage money. Due to which I am struggling to feed my family; I have not been able to provide medical service and medicine to my parents. Though MAHILA SAHAYOGI SAMUHA had provided us relief it will not last long. They too have problem providing relief package to everyone. It was already a struggle to look after family though I was working and this lockdown has invited extra problems.

#### **SW#89. Mahila Mukti Sangh Hetauda Covid pandemic case**

My name is At and I am 24 years old. I have been working as sex worker for 5 years now. I am living in Ratamate area of Hetauda. I provide on-call sex service. After lockdown I along with my friends are having financial problem because we have no work. I live in Hetauda city in rent and now I don't even have money to buy food. I cannot go back to my home because my step mother would not let her me go in my house. With the help of SWASA Nepal, MAHILA MUKTI provided us relief package but says it will not be enough for 3 months. We are out of cooking gas so we are using fire woods to cook food that is why our house owner scolds them for using fire woods. It is more satisfying when we work on our own and earn to survive rather than begging with someone else but unfortunately, we are not being able to do it due to restriction in movement. We will die out of hunger. Sometimes I feel like killing myself but that is also not the easiest thing to do or a good solution.

#### **SW#90. Sex worker PLHA-1, Hamro Sangathan Kathmandu From Covid Pandemic case (PLHA: People Living with HIV and AIDS)**

I am 35 years old currently living in Godawari, Hattiban. I live in someone else's cottage/hut. I have five children. Two of them have already got married. I use to work as labor before. My master used to use me for sex and gradually I started doing sex work and earns money. I started to work from 9:00 am in the morning and feed my family with the

money earned. I have been HIV positive since 10 years. I am on my regular treatment of HIV. Because of lockdown I have not been able to work and my fellows and sister helped me bring medicines from Teku. Though I have been taking regular medicine I cannot afford good food. My own CBO provided relief package but government did not provided help.

#### **SW#91. Sex worker PLHA -2 Hamro Sangathan from Kathmandu Covid pandemic case**

I am 20 years female. I have a 11-month baby. I am HIV positive. I have been taking ART as well. My husband has been suffering from mental retardation because he had hurt his head. So, I am the only one person earning in my family, my earning provide medical service to my husband and to provide necessary things for my baby. We have been living in a cottage which will soon be removed from there. We have been searching for a place to rent but it is not possible in lockdown. Recently my baby had accident (burnt with hot water). We did not have any money to seek

hospital. Because of ART treatment my body is also weak. This COVID has brought much more complications in life.

#### **SW#92. CBO of Jagriti Mahila Mahasangh, Chitwan – covid Pandemic**

I have been working as sex worker for more than 15 years now. I mostly provides service to my regular customers. Previously I use to sell vegetables, few times did labor work. During that time, I was abused by other businessman and owners. They would offer me to make them happy so she started working as sex worker afterward. After getting into sex work, I was able to admit my two children in private boarding school. I was able to fulfill their basic needs. I only do sex work with permission I have never preferred it without consent or interest. I have built a small house by doing sex work. Due to the lockdown, all my works has shut down. my customers cannot reach to me nor I can reach to them which have affected in income generation. I am struggling to run the family now. I have no savings because whatever she used to earn was just enough for my family.

#### **SW#93. Mahila Sasaktikaran Samaaj Butwal Covid Pandemi**

I am 27 years old. I use to look after my two kids, my physically impaired husband, my in laws who needs medicine and lives in her village by doing sex work. If I don't work, my family will suffer. my family is entirely dependent on me so I must work. I have no other property. My husband lost both his legs in an accident so I am compelled to work. I was giving good life to my children by doing sex work before. But because of COVID 19, mobilization has been restricted. My customers used to come from Sunauli (India) which is not possible for now. COVID 19 has made situation worse I can totally understand but nothing is more deadly than a hungry stomach so sometimes I feels like going to the customers to provide the sexual services but again I am scared. I am having a hard time. I cannot go back to my village because entire world is facing same crisis it will not solve my problem. I felt i will die by hunger rather than COVID 19. Since I was a migrant worker so local government was not supporting us.

#### **SW#94. Nari Ekata Samuha, Dang Covid 19 cases**

I am a single mother. I have been looking after my family of 5 i.e. 3 children, my mother including me by doing sex work only. I have rented one room for us in Ghorahi. At present her earning is completely zero. The lockdown that government has implemented has made my life difficult for me to go out and call out the customer to provide them service and earn some amount of money. There is no way I can invite them also because there is no hotels or lodges open. I am struggling to provide good food to my family and it has been months that I have not even had good snack

and food. I have no saving account also. Because I have no citizenship. I tried to get help from ward office also but because I had no citizenship they could not help me. "Time is challenging us and it is so difficult"

**SW#95. Kanchan kriyashil Mahilasamuha, Kanchanpur Covid 19**

I used to work as a sex worker in hotels. Now all hotels are closed. I don't have room of my own where I can provide sexual service to my clients as well. Currently I have been living with my friends. I too don't have enough income to sustain throughout the lockdown. I just wishes this lockdown to end as soon as possible so that I can get back to work and earn. I am not the only one facing this problem. There were 20-25 people who use to provide sexual service to customers coming in the hotels. But because of lockdown, either they were not being able to work or the client that comes for sex does not have money.

**SW#96. Naari Chetna Samaj, Kathmandu, Covid 19**

(Naari Chetana Samaj) Street Based Sex workers

Ratnapark, Kathmandu

Kamini

I am street based sex worker who waits more than an hour in the street for the clients. I am on this profession for seven years. I got involved in this profession when my husband went to Malaysia for foreign employment and remained out of contact with us. Currently, I am 31 years olds. I along with my two children (one son and one daughter) live in the rented house. I also do not have my citizenship certificate. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown happened as a result all hotels, restaurants and the places where sexual activities used to occur were closed after that I faced difficulties to do sex work to earn money and fulfil my basic needs and give proper life to my children. For me and my children the main source of income was sex work. Besides that, due to the lack of citizenship, I was not able to use the relief fund provided by government and different right based organization because of this we faced difficulties to eat, survive and fulfil our day to day living expenses. I was also not able to pay my house rent due to which house owner used to give us mental torture. One day my house owner insisted to have sex with me and he threaten to tell the people of my locality that I am sex worker if I did not give him permission to do sex work. After such situation also I did not agree to do sex with him and he physically assaulted me and he threw me and my children from the house where we were living.

**SW#97. Jeevan Jyoti Mahila Sangh Lalitpur Covid 19 pandemic case**

Currently, I am 56 years old and I am hotel-based sex worker. I have been working as a sex workers for nearly 30 years. By doing sex work, I am running my family and fulfilling their basic needs for existence. After the demise of my husband, to care my children I involved in sex work. I and my children do not have citizenship. Currently I am not able to pay my house rent due to which I face physical and mental harassment from my house owner. Along with that, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I am facing difficulties to search clients and if the clients are available they do not pay money or tell me to give later or start to negotiate. Because of all these circumstances I face difficulties to fulfil the basic living needs of mine as well as my children.

**SW#98. CBO of Jagriti Mahila Mahasangh, Chitwan – case study in covid 19 Pandemic**

I am 33 years old by age and I am living in a joint family. I am working as a sex worker from 8 years and running livelihood of the family through the income generated from this profession. Before COVID-19 pandemic, I used to go

from 10 am to 5 pm for this profession saying the families that I have a job at the office and they are unknown about this my

profession. But due to lockdown imposed I am unable to provide my services to clients, so my income generation got halted as a result there was a scarcity of money for the food, rent and other essentials. And as I told the family that I was working at an office and nobody called me from the office during the lockdown so my husband, mother-in-law and sister-in-law suspected in my profession. Later, as lockdown restrictions freed, I went to search for the clients, as a result sometimes I came at late evening as I had to go at a far distance as demanded by the clients and I was slowly earning money but the degree of the doubt increased in the family and they beat me hard saying that I lied to them and I am a sex worker and I got expelled from the house. Now I am alone and stressed nowhere to go and get the shelter on.

#### **SW#99. Scammed in the name of foreign employment**

This case is reported on ,December 17 2024 foreign employment there is also a case about one of sex worker have gone in Kuwait for a job in a company but she was taken for domestic worker and she was not paid and was locked in a room raped there. With high struggle later she came in contact with her family and was rescued.

#### **SW#100. Parijaat Mahila Samuha, Kathmandu**

I am a migrant sex worker, now I am in Tokha Municipality, Kathmandu. In local level like where I live many trainings are provided but we don't receive any services provided by government entity as we are migrated. On July 2, 2024 I knew that, Tokha municipality there is opportunity to get training I wanted to take the training but I was not given that opportunity. But I tried a lot and requested so at last I got an opportunity. But I was so much harassed whenever the ward members came to visit and they were harassing me for being part of the training. They repeatedly pressurize me since the opportunity was for locals only they formed groups and exclude me. Most of the sex workers are migrated and due to which they are deprived from many local level facilities.- **This case was reported on, 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2024.**

#### **SW#101 Hamro Sangathan , Kathmandu**

I am a street based sex worker " I have made my citizenship recently before my citizenship was made I had no opportunity to open bank account due to lack of documentation like citizenship and birth certificate I have kept my money , my daughter's and grand son's money in a co-operative named "E. trust co-operative" in, Kathmandu but as I have gone to make citizenship after I came back on 2nd January 2024 the money collector stopped coming for collecting money we went to office then we came to know that the cooperative ran away there office is not there, they are not picking up the phone. Not only me my friends also have deposited our savings in the co-operative.

#### **SW#102. Jeevan Jyoti Mahila Sangh, Lalitpur**

On August 3, 2024, while I was having lunch with a customer at a hotel, police came and arrested all the person who were eating in that hotel. Without letting any one say anything. They put all the people who in the hotel in a van and immediately took to the police station. After a lot of interrogation, and beaten by female police they said, "Tell the truth, who made you do this job, or else you will be kept here." They beat me up . Police regard there is no voluntary sex worker and regard voluntary sex worker like me as a criminal. I said I had to go to toilet, but I was not allowed to go . After telling many times, they finally let me go to toilet. I used this excuse to call the organization (Jeeban Jyoti) for help. The organization's staff immediately went to the police station the police station was full with people arrested from such hotel . When members of Jeeban Jyoti went to talk to the police about me, the police initially asked what kind of person would work in such a place. Members of Jeeban Jyoti requested to leave me as I have infant kid at home, so I was released. We sex workers are arrested for no reason at all our privacy are breached, if police was sure

that I was sex worker they wouldn't have released me and I have to face many court case for no reason at all. Luckily there were many other people were also there which made me easier for the release.

#### **SW#103. Jagriti Mahila Mahasangh, Kathmandu**

My name is kb I run a guest house for last 10 years in my guest house we hire waiter, cook dish washers etc. in my guest house many people come and go. Many hotels are being raided by police and anti-trafficking grou these days harassing the customers, staffs and hotel owners due to such activities our business is also in loss. On 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2024 my guest house was also raided and they arrested my staffs, customers and me. All of us were in custody for 25 days but I was not released. Later I came to know that anti trafficking act was imposed on me. I didn't get any legal aid as I was a viewed as a very rich criminal so I have to hire a private lawyer to defend myself later I got a bail I met my staffs and those who were released before me, they told me "We were made to sign documents and if we sign the document we will be regarded as victim and name would be kept private otherwise criminal charges would be imposed on us all of us were afraid so we sign the document, police didn't tell us what was written there." Later I knew that in the document it was written that they were exploited as sex worker and I was the main criminal it was a big shock for me I am an innocent person I have never exploited anyone till yet I invested and have created employment opportunity listening to such allegation I was shocked. Although I say myself an innocent person in legal papers I am a big criminal. The police and anti-traffickers are getting promotion by arresting simple person like me and in statistics they will show large numbers of traffickers are behind the bar on the other hand the real traffickers would be freely doing crimes. Is that fair?

#### **SW#104. Hamro Sangathan, Kathmandu**

My name is Sanjay I am an advocate by profession. On 28<sup>th</sup> June 2022 I got a call from SWASA Nepal that a sex worker women named Rita (Name changed) was arrested. She is imprisoned in Anamnagar police station. Her friends were waiting some one hundred meter far from police station gate she showed me in that police station she is kept but she didn't dared to come with me inside. Uma Budhathoki staff of Jagriti Mahila MahaSangh and SWASA came with me. I asked the police about Rita and the charge. The police told me most probably she would be charged with "prohibition of indecent conduct" and I met her as I met her 4 to 5 constables surrounded me and humbly they asked me from which organization have I came from. I told them that I am a human right defending lawyer and I have right to meet any prisoner in private such that no one other listens to our conversations I talked to duty officer there and he said there would be no disturbances now. As a lawyer I have met many accused persons but such treatment to me was for the first time. I was shocked. I started studying about prohibition of indecent conduct and came to know that its jurisdiction is District Administration Office which is a quasi judicial body. Very few lawyer goes to plead there. I sign her the appointment of attorney form, police were shocked one of the constable was saying its not important sir no pleading is done for this. I was very curious I was seeing something exactly opposite what we use to study about rights of general public. Later on I went to the department of case. One of the department officer I met him and showed him my appointment form and ask him time for plead he was shocked and told me that till yet there is no such pleading. In court we plead for weather to carryon putting accused in prison or not weather to keep a bail amount or to be in a simple date but the officer was telling me that there is no such provision here she won't be imprisoned bail amount would be announced I was shocked I told him people might not even have money for bail and they might be innocent I have studied Prohibition of indecent conduct in National code's section 118 its imposed when a person enters in illegal place or beats old or disable person but here the women have not beaten any one and she is saying that she was walking on the road so it seems she is innocent and general public must have a legal representation its not fair trial. Listening to me he told me I will ask with CDO and inform you till then please wait here sir he showed me his office and let me sit there but he didn't returned back. I ask after an few minutes what is happening in Rita's case the person bought the file and the decision is made bail of Rs 5000 must be paid. I met Rita after her friends paid the bailed amount I came to know that she have a small son at home to feed I told her not to miss the date but she was so afraid that she didn't even went to the district administration office again. There I knew how much fear they are living. The sex workers even can't go for their friends as they know that police knows them and recognize them

they might be arrested later on. Since its been so long year when I met Rita I asked her have you missed your date or taking she replied she have not gone there and she is afraid to go there. In this way there would be a criminal charges on them which will hamper there right to live with dignity. Sex work is just a work like any other work done to look after a family like we do but for doing a work or chosing a work sex workers have to tolerate inhuman treatment.

**SW#105. - Illegal raids and detentions (Extracted from Report “Violence Faced by Sex Workers in Nepal, 2024.; Conducted by SWASA Nepal in partnership with Hamro Sanghathan, JMMS”)**

18 October 2024. Members of Hamro Sanghathan, Kathmandu shared that they NGOs in Kathmandu are violating their rights and resorting to illegal raids and detention in the name of anti – trafficking. We were walking in Gaushala and Ratnapark area and caught by some people who beat us and put us in a Van. Initially we thought they were the police, but it is only later we found that they were from an anti – trafficking organization, Maiti Nepal. Despite our protests that we were adults and not trafficking we were forcibly taken to a shelter/ rescue home and locked inside. Our phone conversations were heard through loudspeakers, and we are laughed at. We were told that we would be freed only if we called our family members. One of our friends who was also caught had a fourteen-year-old son and was threatened by the NGO members that she would be exposed in front of her son. They told the woman to call her son. She refused and called her mother instead. Finally, after many threats, they agreed to release her. Sex workers are not able to complain to the police against such NGO’s committing acts of violence. Many times, the police also arrest and hand over sex workers to anti – trafficking groups so that they can’t lodge complaints.

**SW#106. Mahila Jagaran Samaj Jhapa Damak**

I am a 32 years old sex worker from Jhapa On 31st December 2024, I was called by a client. After sex I faced discrimination and was physically assaulted by the client. Following the assault, I went to the toilet, where the client locked me inside from the outside and ran around 4:00 AM. Despite my calls for help, no one responded until 9:00 AM, when hotel staff found me and released me. I got no help and no place for complaining such behavior because I went with strangers because we don't have a supporter who protect us from such violence.

**SW#107. Ekikrit Mahila Samuha, Tanahu**

I am a member of Ekikrit Mahila Samuha, my husband has gone to abroad in UN mission I am looking after two kids by taking house rent. In 29<sup>th</sup> August 2024, my brother in law took picture with client in a room my brother in law and in laws shared picture to my husband then my in laws and husband forced me to divorce. They insulted me and disclosed my incident in society my husband and his family were threatening me for divorce since my husband was abroad it was not possible. I couldnot stay in that society so I have to find another room and I got shifted from there. In support of Ekikrit Mahila Samuha, I complaint to woman cell of police . My in-laws shared the photo to police previously then police told me "You, yourself are wrong , we have seen your photo so we can't take this complain. If your husband loves and feels pity on you, then he may carry on the relationship otherwise he may divorce." The police refused to register the complain.

**SW#108. Mahila Sahayogi Samuha, Sunsari**

One of the sex woker leader described an incident from August 14, 2024, when a sex worker was beaten by a client, but the police refused to accept the complaint. The police reportedly dismissed the case because they were already familiar with the woman's status as a sex worker, so they said don't come here frequently bringing such cases of sex worker time and again. Saying this police refused to write complain.

**SW#109. Mahila Sachetana Kendra, Mahottari**

One of the sexworker leader described a case in Mahottari in 28<sup>th</sup> May 2024, where two sex workers were arrested after one was found waiting on the road and other was dealing for sex work with a client. The police suspected them

and arrested the client and the sex workers as well. The police not only arrested them but also took money from the client and coerced the sex workers into providing sexual favors. The case points to the exploitation of sex workers by law enforcement officers, including bribery, abuse of power, and the use of false charges. It reflects a broader issue of corruption and abuse within the police force, where sex workers are treated badly and subjected to further exploitation by those meant to protect them.

#### **SW# 110. Ekikrit Mahila Samuha, Tanahu**

I am a sex worker infected by HIV my daughters were also infected by HIV. My daughters were expelled from the school very near to my house then we admitted her to the school which was little far from our house. In that school also after knowing our status they were expelled again I reported to the organization on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2024 in order to give education to my children we have to shift to the nearest town we feel bad for our children for getting punishment for which they had no control but they were punished because of our status . Right to education of my children is violated.

#### **SW#111 CBO of Jagriti Mahila Mahasangh (Sudhar Mahila), Kathmandu**

My name is JB I am from Sindhupalchok now living in Kathmandu a member of Sudhar Mahila Sangh I fell in love and did love marriage with a person from terai region after our son was born on July 12, 2002 our relation was growing bad after few years husband left the house and never returned I was looking after the son as a single mother and while going to school the school asked me to bring birth certificate I went to my ward of my village but the ward office denied for making ward some teacher in school who has a good link with ward in Kathmandu where I have been living so for my son's future he talked to ward office in Kathmandu where I live and a birth certificate was made on that basis my son got chance to study he passed SLC and also passed his high school as his friend he also wanted to go abroad for further study applying scholarship but can't go because of lack of education for economical reason he wanted to study in government collage which was affordable to us but since he didn't have citizenship he can't enroll in the government collage so my son met his teacher and enrolled in private collage which is very expensive compared to government collage for further education he needs citizenship now he is working in a book shop for a very low salary he know that he won't get any other job so he now have to do that job and have to tolerate exploitations.

#### **SW#112 Hamro Sangathan ,Kathmandu**

When we started the process of registration first we held a mass meeting on March 21 2024 was done that decided to form an organization and a acting committee was formed, After the acting committee was formed the next meeting of acting committee decided name and address made a committee made the our **Bidhaan** (articles of association) then we get approval from ward and we went to District Administration Office at first they denied the name saying that it sounds similar to political party after that we went to DAO with names many times but every time our name was rejected one day they themselves gave a name but again next day they said that name also can't be done. Finally after that we took a staff for a lunch and did what he said so take a staff for lunch they approved the name after the name was approved the police report form was given while making police report two of the members police report didn't came it means they have some pending criminal charges so the two founding

member's were changed and at last again the logo was to be changed. Finally on December 1, 2024 it was registered with the different name and logo.

### **SW#113. Hamro Sangathan, Kathmandu**

One of the sex worker leader shared an incident on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2022 where Anti trafficking group during the COVID-19 pandemic, gave money and household items to sex workers, only to later recognize them and took them to safe houses. One particular case involved a sex worker being arrested along with her family, even though they were not engaged in any illegal activity from the house of sex worker even sex worker's guest, relatives were taken and inquiry was done. This case highlights the practices of anti-trafficking organizations that, under the guise of helping sex workers, often imprison them in safe houses, denying them the freedom to make their own choices and control their own lives.

### **SW#114. Hamro sangathan, Kathmandu**

I am a street based sexworker, working in Kathmandu I was earning by doing sex work, On October 23, 2024 I got a phone call from a client we had a sex work and paid me after two days he again called me I went with him but he took me in a very lonely place near Koteswor I was little suspicious that time and before I could run he started hitting on my head. I was unconscious he took all my belongings and money I had. When I was conscious I struggled hard and walk upto road people saw me I was fainted again when I got the consciousness again I found myself in emergency ward of Bir hospital. I told this to Hamro Sangathan and reported to police the case is still going on I also went to Women commission with a staff of SWASA Nepal and when they listened to our case and knew that I am a sex worker they scolded me and said it is your fault why did you go with that person the staff was very rude to us and they said we only register domestic violence case we don't take so I went back the perpetrators are not arrested yet I am going to police station time and again police says we are searching but the person is not arrested yet.

### **SW#115 Nari Ekata Samuha, Dang**

I am a sex worker originally from Dang Tulsipur I am 40 years old. I have been working as sex worker for last 10 years. In my job I need contraceptive devices like condom, PrEP but my house is far from the service center and CBO Condom and PrEP testing HIV is done by "Mn Swasthya Samaaj" a HIV related service center and CBO where we find condom and PrEP. In order to get condom or PrEP I have to travel long distance up to Ghorahi in CBO and health posts. Most of the time in health posts are also persons who recognize me. In fear of arrest, me and my friends don't carry condoms and PrEP with us. If I kept more number of condoms with us we may be arrested by police. In fear of my identity discloser I can't keep condom as well. Also availability of condom and PrEP is very low. So I am compelled to have sex work without condom due to such activity on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2024, I was very sick I got STIs and I also don't have money so other members from my CBO knew about it and collected money for my travel to hospital and helped me for my health expenses. According to Nari Ekata Samuha Condom and PrEP are not much easily available we have to go to district public health office, Family Planing Association Nepal (FPAN). We have to write application for condom still we get condom very less.

### **SW#116 Hamro Sangathan, Kathmandu**

I am a street based sex worker and a member of Hamro Sangathan right now living in Kathmandu when I go to health service provider in Kathmandu, they talk to us very rudely and the health service providers give me only cheap medicine, but I have to buy expensive medicines. They told me, I must go to private hospitals as I go there frequently, and the counselor is not good right now; they ask unnecessary questions. - **Shared on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2024 during FGD.**

### **SW#117 Kriyashil Mahila Sangh, Kathmandu**



I am a street based sex worker I am now 70-year-old woman from Balaju of Kathmandu, originally from Dhading, I live in Kathmandu for 45 years. My husband left 35 years ago, and I don't have his citizenship documents. Despite having my own citizenship and receiving an old age allowance, I now needs a national ID card, requiring her husband's death certificate, which is difficult to obtain. She faces challenges to access her allowance due to government rules and must travel to her village, despite not visiting it in decades.

#### **SW# 118 Hamro Sangathan, Kathmandu**

I am a sex worker and a community leader from Kathmandu. I work on the streets and face a lot of discrimination from many people. Despite this, I support my friends whenever they are arrested. The police are aware of my status as a sex worker. On April 16, 2024, when one of my friends was arrested, a police officer told me not to come to the station to help with her release. They threatened that if I showed up, they would arrest me as well and send me to jail. Since that incident, I have been living in constant fear of the police and have avoided going near police stations, even when my friends need my support.

#### **SW# 119 Goreto Nepal**

I am a sex worker leader in Pokhara, On March 10, 2024 we went to local municipality and ministry of health we requested funds to local government (*Pokhara Metropolitan city of Gandaki province*) as they knew that the CBO is working for welfare of sex worker the representative and staffs of local government scolded for working for such people and sent them saying "we will inform once the budget comes" but they never informed us"