

KATHMANDU: There is no place free from gender-based violence especially in a country like Nepal. There could be a difference in the quantity of domination. But each day the cases of such violence are happening. Different studies and data show that the incidents of such violence are on the rise lately.

Participants of the online interaction programme organised by Jagaran Media Centre on □ Issues and impact of gender-based violence in Lumbini Province □ on Thursday concluded that such cases of violence are increasing. Women constitute the most part of the victims of such violence. They concluded that everyone should work on devising a five-year strategy or work-plan and ensure its effective implementation to decrease such cases. Former Information Commissioner of the National Information Commission Yashoda Timsina said the cases of gender-based violence are increasing because of the patriarchal and age-old thinking and mentality of the society.

According to reports at least 35 percent of women have been experiencing some type of v

iolence while 48 percent of the women have been subjected to some kind of violence at least one time in their lives, she said.

She also revealed that 40.4 percent of the women are the victims of mental violence. According to Nepal's Demographic Health Survey 2021, among the victimized women 51 percent are uneducated and from rural communities, 61.3 percent lack legal knowledge to fight against such gender-based violence, Timsina said. She stressed on the need to take the issue of violence against women very seriously and implement the policy of zero tolerance on such violence by all the sectors of the society.

Deputy Superintendent of Police Dan Bahadur Karki, who heads the District Police Office of Kapilvastu, various types of violence including gender, social, sexual and physical are rampant because the women and children lack education and necessary awareness. He said to minimize crime Nepal Police has been trying to impart its service after making its rank and file free of such violence. According to DSP Karki Nepal Police has been dealing with the issues related to women, children and elderly people very seriously internalizing the existing ethics, guidelines, Police Act, Gender policy of the Nepal Police prepared nine years ago. □ Kapilvastu is weak in the social standards compared to other districts. People cannot even speak and complain when they are in trouble, □ he said.

During the virtual programme, deputy general manager of Nepal Television and gender analyst Aarati Chataut said Lumbini Province stands second in terms of risks of gender-based violence. Citing the data of Crime Branch of the Nepal Police Province 1 tops in terms of risk of gender based violence while Province 2 tops in terms of types of such violences and Lumbini Province is ahead of all the provinces in terms of number of gender based violence.

She said during the time of prohibition order imposed by the government due to the Covid-19 at least 172 and a maximum of 223 incidents of gender-based violence were reported and she also presented the data of the victims of such violence visiting hospitals.

□ Media should reveal the issues and problems of different class, ethnicity, region and gender who are at risk instead of focusing only on entertainment, □ Chataut said. □ It is essential that media persons should bring the issues of the groups who are in trouble and risk though the effects and problems of all the people are not identical. □

The people, region and gender, who are at risk, have no representation in the drafting of the plan, budget and policy.

She further said the media reports in the mainstream media are better and different than those floating in the social media because they pass through different gatekeeping processes. □ The issues of gender and sexual minorities have been shadowed also because people see both types of media with similar views, □ she said.

According to the Director of Mitini Nepal, Sarita KC, the fight of the gender and sexual minority community was li

nked with the issue of identity. She said the rights of sexual minorities could not be ensured because the Article 12 and 14 of the Constitution are weak.

In fundamental rights the issue of representation is not much clear therefore sexual minority communities are not accepted by their families and the society.

□ With whom should we fight, □ she questioned. □ Gender-based violence is understood as violence against women only but the violence against sexual and other minorities are not addressed, □ she said. □ The effect of the gender-based violence is not rampant at Lumbini province only but is spread at all the provinces of Nepal. □

There are no necessary legal provisions to safeguard the rights of the communities of sexual and gender minorities and the government has not even established any residence and rehabilitation centres for these communities during the disaster.

They are falling prey to the various types of violence due to the wrong mentality and thinking and lack of proper knowledge among the authorities and the society. Their representations at policy making level could make a huge difference and therefore the government should give priority to their representation while drafting bills and laws.

Member of the Constituent Assembly and Chairperson of Jagaran Media Centre Kamal Bishwokarma said the new constitution has incorporated provisions to end all types of violence and discrimination against women and now they should be properly implemented by making necessary laws. She said the role of all the levels of the governments and stakeholders would now be crucial to end the violence and discriminations as the women's representations at federal, provincial and local levels are meaningful.

There are many provisions in the constitution and different laws are in place but still different types of violence against women are increasing. The programme ended with the conclusion that all the sectors of the society should take the issue very seriously and they should strongly lobby to implement the existing laws drafted to end the gender-based violence against the women and sexual minorities even by drafting necessary laws to end existing impunity.