

Optimizing Screening and Support Services for Gender-Based Violence and Trafficking in Persons Victims in Nepal

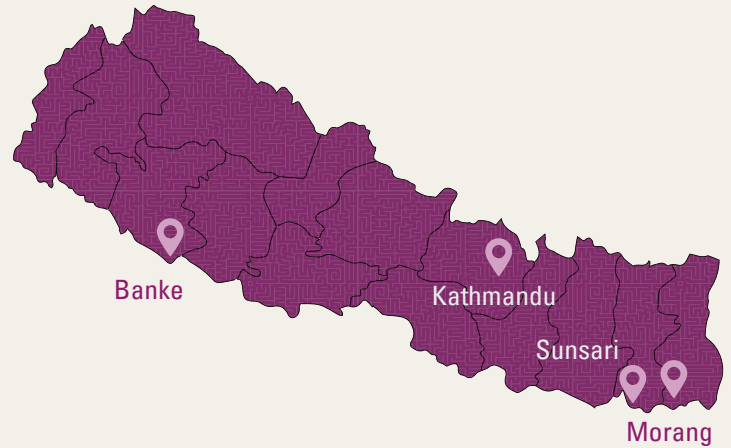


A qualitative research study of Nepal anchored by The Asia Foundation to critically examine how screening and service delivery can be optimized for victims of Gender-Based Violence and Trafficking in Persons.

This study found crucial issues in both the understanding of concepts and prevalence of TIP and GBV, screening and identification of victims, legal framework governing TIP and GBV, services and service delivery, and integration or separation of services for victims of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Trafficking in Persons (TIP) in Nepal.

Approach (Methodology)

Primary research was carried out in Kathmandu as well as in Morang, Sunsari and Banke, three districts bordering India, to collect information on victims of trafficking.



What people really think

People think TIP always involves trafficking across borders.

VS

the reality

In reality, trafficking takes place internally too. However, internal trafficking receives little attention from authorities.



A total of 72 interviews

A total of 72 interviews and two focus groups were conducted among stakeholders consisting of service providers, law enforcement officials, judges, prosecutors, and other government officials.



25 Men



60 Women

A total of 60 women and 25 men were interviewed. Most of these interviews took place over online communication platforms owing to COVID-19 restrictions. Victims of GBV and TIP were interviewed by individuals associated with the organisations running the shelter homes where the victims were being housed.

Gender-Based Violence can lead to Trafficking and vice versa



Key Issues



Understanding of concepts and prevalence of TIP and GBV

- Needed: Deeper understanding of GBV and TIP
- Lacking: Complete information on the intersectionality between TIP and GBV
- Complication: Discrepancy in data from NGOs and State.
- Highlight: TIP cases are prevalent among women; TIP cases among men are under-reported given the social stigma.



Screening and identification of victims

- Active assistance by NGOs to law enforcement to screen TIP victims.
- Victims and at-risk individuals dependent on NGOs.
- Lack of SOPs and institutional gaps hinder screening and identification.



Legal framework governing TIP and GBV

- Covered by the Constitution of Nepal, Penal Code and other laws.
- Gaps and challenges exist in the implementation of laws.
- Contradictions among existing laws allow manipulation.
- Complex legal proceedings a barrier to victims.
- Lack of informed officials.
- Poor attitude of officials toward victims.



Services and service delivery

- Victims referred to shelters by law enforcement officials, local governments, and NGOs.
- SOPs providing guidance on TIP and GBV are available, but awareness and implementation are poor.
- Shelter homes provide psychological and physical healthcare to victims, create economic and legal security, and educate and train them in life skills.
- Resource constraints challenge long-term service provision.
- Reintegrate victims after ensuring there is no risk to the victims from their family and community.

What can we do to combat these issues?



Effective screening and identification of victims



Positive interaction between shelter homes and victims



Public awareness to eliminate social stigma



Expand screening and identification away from known hotspots like border crossings



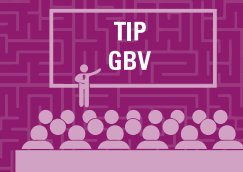
Expand screening and identification to cover all genders



Establish 24-hour hotlines



Train law enforcement personnel intensively on effective screening



Train government officials to help them understand the nexus between GBV and TIP



Enforce existing laws to protect victims.



Implement and monitor existing SOPs.



Revise laws to reflect new developments.



Streamline information systems



Allocate budgets for shelter homes and service providers



Monitor shelter homes and service providers



Integration of Services

- Requires less financial and human resources
- Provides a common platform for victims of both groups to support each other
- Encourages interactions between TIP and GBV victims which can help raise awareness on the types of violence women face in Nepal

Recommendations

▪ Strengthening legal and policy framework

Enact comprehensive laws on TIP and GBV; amend existing laws to suit the times and fast-track court cases for trials in TIP and GBV.

▪ Formulating standardized protocols and guidelines

Develop new guidelines on screening and identifying TIP and GBV victims for all relevant agencies.

▪ Improving coordination among stakeholders

Encourage the government to work together with NGOs and other service centres.

▪ Ensuring reach and access to services in rural towns and villages

Make sure that service centres and NGOs are evenly spreaded across the country.

▪ Developing an individual care and exit plan

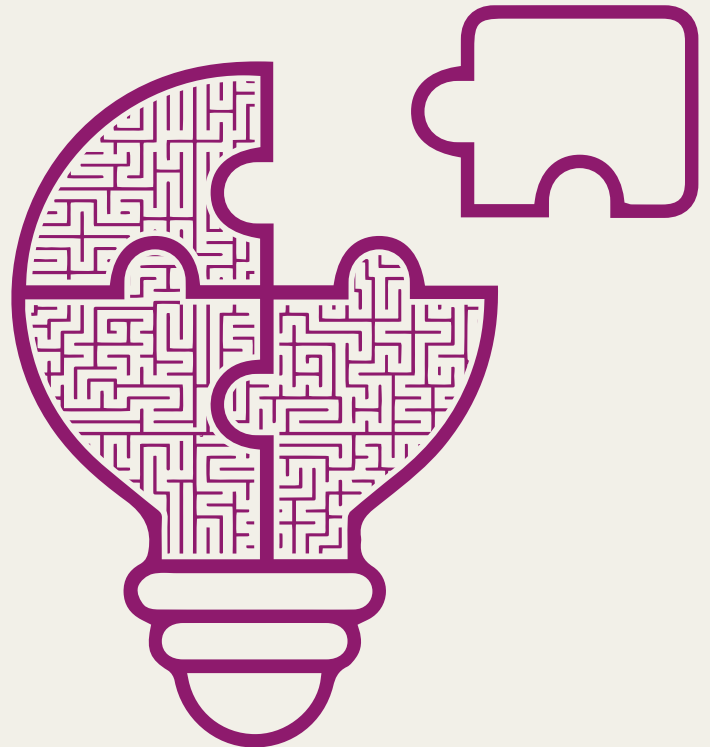
Organize programs to rehabilitate victims and help them reintegrate within the community in a proper manner.

▪ Separating shelter homes for GBV and TIP victims

Integrate services at a common location, but treat each victim separately depending on their experiences.

▪ Integration of possible services for GBV and TIP victims

Introduce common facilities like medical and legal assistance for victims.



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The opinions, findings and conclusions stated herein are those of the author[s] and do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Department of State.



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