

Situation of Women and Children in Rupandehi, Kapilvastu and Banke districts during Covid-19 lockdown

21 May 2020

Till 21 May 2020, there are 758 quarantine facilities with 26,336 bed capacity in Province 5¹ of Nepal. Altogether 17,059 people are currently housed in those facilities. However, despite the growing number of people entering to Nepal from India and suspects of corona infection increasing, the Rapid Diagnostic Test (RDT) has been conducted in only 10,532 people. Below is a data² collected by Advocacy Forum-Nepal that gives picture of number of people housed in various quarantine facilities of Province 5.

Rupandehi till 18 May 2020										
Details	Senior citizens above the age of 60		From 19 years old to 59 years old				Below 18 years old			Total
	Female	Male	Female	New Mothers	Pregnant	Male	Girls	Boys		
Infected			1	...	...	24	2		1	28
Isolation		2	9	..	...	59	3		6	79
Quarantine	16	33	198	...	...	2971	116		438	3772
Total	16	35	205			3054	121		445	3879
Kapilbastu till 19 May 2020										
	Female	Male	New Mothers	Pregnant	Children					
Infected	8	51								59
Isolation										
Quarantine	262	8429	1	7	120					8819
Total	270	8480		7	120					

Whether it is in home quarantine or government quarantine facilities, women and children are more exposed to various kinds of risks during this pandemic. There has been number of news surfacing about the increase in domestic violence. Advocacy Forum-Nepal analyzed whether the additional necessities of women, children, pregnant women and post-natal women have been addressed in the government facilities. Our analysis suggests that (i) There is a lack of special care and nutritious food for pregnant women and new mothers, (ii) Children and women are facing problems as there is lack of security and nutrition, (iii) Quarantines are not women and children friendly. For example, rooms are without doors and there are no separate toilets for women and children.

¹ In Province - 5 of Nepal there are 12 districts: Arghakhachi, Banke, Bardiya, Dang, Rukum, Gulmi, Kapilvastu, Parasi, Palpa, Pyuthan, Rolpa and Rupandehi districts.

² The data and information is collected via phone by contacting to authorities concerned and people kept at quarantine facilities.

In conclusion, the quarantine facilities of the government, some made up of tents as roofs without any doors are seriously threatening the security of women and children kept there. Apart from this, there is a lack of nutritious food and even clean drinking water is not available in many facilities which threatens the overall health of the people living there. Specially, the need of women and children have not been considered or addressed by the government facilities.

Gender Based Violence (GBV) in Banke

During the lockdown enforced by the government, there has been significant rise in gender based violence in Banke district.

Following table illustrates the situation of GBV in Banke:

S.N.	Nature of Crime	Number of Complaints	Remarks
1.	Rape	3	2 minor (girls), 1 woman
2.	Attempt to Rape	1	Minor (girl)
3.	Child Marriage	1	Minor (girl)
4.	Domestic Violence	16	Women
5.	Community level Violence	14	Women
6.	Sexual Abuse	1	Minor (girl)
7.	Hostage and Rape	1	Woman
8.	Murder	3	1 Woman , 2 minor (boys)
9.	Suicide	3	2 Women, 1 minor (boy)
10.	Abandon	5	3 minor boys, 1 minor girl and 1 woman
11.	Disappeared	3	Women

Source: Women, Children and Senior Citizens Service Center, District Police Office, Banke



ASI Shyam Kumari Magar informed that after lockdown imposed on 24 March 2020 there has been 3 complaints of rape, 1 complaint of attempt to rape, 1 complaint of child marriage, 16 complaints of domestic violence, 1 complaint of sexual abuse, 1 complaint of hostage taking and rape, 3 complaints of murder, 3

complaints of suicide and 3 complaints of disappearance. 2 minor (girls) and 1 woman have been victim of rape while 1 minor (girl) has been victim of attempt to rape. Likewise, there are 5 complaints of abandoned registered at the center during the lockdown period.

Highest number of GBV cases have been registered in Women, Children and Senior Citizens Service Center Nepalgunj of District Police Office Banke during this lockdown period. Out of 16 complaints, one complaint was registered at Area Police Office, Banke whereas remaining 15 complaints were registered at District Police Office, Banke. The service center also records 14 incidents of verbal abuse and beatings between neighbors.

Police Inspector Hridesh Sapkota from Legal Department at District Police Office, Banke informed that very few victims of domestic violence wants to go for legal proceedings. He added that women come with complaints but they hesitate to go for legal action or put their husbands behind the bars. Some cases are very serious one but as the complainant doesn't cooperate its difficult to take legal action against the perpetrators. Even during the lockdown, we receive 1 or 2 complaints (via phone) relating to domestic violence every day.

ASI Magar said that grave offenses should be immediately reported to the nearby police station. When we receive complaints we visit to the victims home to admonish the perpetrator and also carry out legal proceedings if needed. Magar further added that due to lockdown, they are facing difficulties in keeping victims of grave domestic violence in safe shelters. She said that after many requestes only one victim of domenstic violence was provided shelther by the Shakti Samuha.

Staffs of Women Cell of District Police Office Banke said that they are facing problems in carrying out investigations of violence due to the lockdown situation. Due to security and health concerns, police officers are not able to reach to communities for investigation and inquiries of violence. They complained that they don't have medical essentials such as masks, sanitizers, gloves that are needed to carry out their work.

As the domestic violence is on rise, many victims are forced to hide their pain inside them and suffer alone amid the crisis.