

Critically discuss whether the policies pursued by national and international actors have been adequate in addressing the specific issue of women refugees / displaces.

**Women (IDPs) in protracted post-conflict peace-process: Engendering the issues of women displaces in national regimes.**

The issue of forced migration/internal displacement due to economic and other natural factors is well documented and acknowledged both by the academia and the state. Alongside, the conflict induced displacement has gained widespread attention in recent years with the growing internal conflict within nations (IDMC, 2012). Caught in between the conflict of the Maoist and the royal Nepal army, thousands of civilians were forced to migrate internally and externally from their place of origin. External or international forced migrants/ displaced persons received the recognition as refugees and therefore, were sheltered under the international refugee laws and conventions, however, plight of those who remained within Nepal's border and were forced to abandon their properties and belongings back at villages became miserable with insufficient provision of protection policies on IDPs by the state. The challenge was bigger for the female IDPs who ended up in extreme vulnerable situations while in their desperate attempts to search for livelihoods (Singh and others, 2007; Dahal, 2011; IDMC, 2012). It is estimated that up to 200,000 people have been internally displaced in Nepal by ten years of war 80 percent of whom were women<sup>1</sup>. The mentioned studies shows that rates of violence against women IDPs are extremely high, and without education or vocational skills, there are few ways for women IDPs to improve their lives<sup>2</sup>.

Since 2005, when the IDPs were first recognized as 'victims of conflict', the government has formulated different plans and policies on repatriation and relief of IDPs, however, critics point out government's failure to spell out a coherent set of practices and policies to address the protection and assistance needs of IDPs (Shrestha and Niroula, 2005; Singh and others, 2007; Dahal, 2011). Revised version of National IDP Policy- 2007 based on Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (GPID) on IDPs is yet to be adopted and properly disseminated (IDMC, 2012). Furthermore, despite of evident gendered nature of displacement and the consequences arising out of it, the issue has hardly been engendered in policies in order to provide relief to the women displaced by 10 years of conflict in Nepal. It is this still persisting discriminatory gap in policies, which this study intends to address.

In this context, by using archival research method, this paper will critically examine the adequacy of Nepal's policies on IDPs with a special focus on the issue of internally displaced women. In doing so, the study will not only focus on the space given to women's issues in policies but also, it will analyze the space they've gained in practice as subjects of conflict in post-conflict peace process. Using the theoretical underpinnings from conflict and gender studies, which views peace building processes as potential sites for women to advance their rights and to reconstruct power relations<sup>3</sup>, the study will also shed some lights on how women as an agency are working in order to integrate their needs into national IDP regimes (Ghimire 2011). Using semi-structured open ended questionnaire, a few Internally displaced

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<sup>1</sup> Women's empowerment program in Nepal, The Asia Foundation. <http://asiafoundation.org/publications/pdf/542>

<sup>2</sup> It has been reported that many women were forced to work in massage parlors, cabin room restaurants or other establishments where they were subjected to sexual abuse, exploitation and even trafficking.

<sup>3</sup> Duffield, Mark, 1994. The Political Economy of Internal War: Asset Transfer, Complex Emergencies and International Aid, in Macrae, J. & Zwi, A., eds. *War and Hunger: Rethinking International Responses to Complex Emergencies*, London: Zed Books.

women in Kathmandu will be interviewed purposively The collected data will be later re-arranged and analyzed by organizing it into conceptual categories in view of the specific objectives of the study.

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