

Statelessness and the plight of women in Nepal

Nepal has entered into the democratic republic country with an adoption of new constitution in 2015. The constitution is marked as a progressive constitution. The constitution guarantees the civil political and socio economic rights of people in more progressive way. It also guarantees the marginalized people's socio economic rights progressively. The constitution guarantees the right to equality and right to justice as a fundamental right to all citizen. Any forms of discrimination based on the sex, race, gender, caste, physical ability is strictly prohibited by the constitution. However, in reality, women in Nepal have been deprived of enjoying their civil, political and socio economic rights in full fledge. Many women in Nepal lack the citizenship, legal identity documents due the discriminatory constitutional provision and discriminatory laws. More than this, many women in Nepal lack the citizenship because of discriminatory behaviors from the government's service delivery institutions, and because of discriminatory practices from the family and society. Because of lack of citizenship, many women have been living as a status of stateless in their own country. Because of lack of citizenship, many women lack the marriage certificates. Women who do not have citizenship, have further been deprived of obtaining their other legal identity documents; marriage certificate and birth certificates to their children. They are deprived of accessing other socio economic entitlements. COVID-19 situation has added more difficulties in the lives of statelessness persons in Nepal as they have been deprived of getting relief and vaccines. They are more struggling for their livelihood as they have lost their informal jobs and are not able to get the formal job. There is a vicious cycle between the violence against women and statelessness in Nepal. This paper will explore how women have been discriminated by the state, society and family on their access to citizenship that has led them to live a life of statelessness in their own country. The paper further explores the impact of being a statelessness in women's lives and women's rights including their rights to nondiscrimination and equality. The paper will be based on literature review, interviews, case studies and the focused group discussions.