

WIDOWHOOD IN NEPAL

Women in traditional Hindu culture marry in to their husbands' families and live in their husbands' multigenerational homes. This set up provides security as long as a woman stays within it. But if a husband is dying young the wife will be blamed for the untimely demise of her husband, she will be ostracized and she will remain stigmatized for the rest of her life. On top of this if she was "unfortunate" and gave birth to daughters only and a male inheritor is absent her fate might well turn from bad to worse.

Her husband's family might refuse to care for them. The widow will be treated as a slave and the daughters are not cared for, neglected, malnourished and they are forgoing school. In many such cases the widow and her daughters have to leave the house and they are left without any property, assets or money.

Without any support or any safety-net, these widows and their daughters are the most vulnerable and at risk of all the poor people in Nepal and at high risk of worst forms of abuse, exploitation and discrimination!

SUICIDE: A statistic by the WHO is stating that the suicide rate of women in Nepal is among the highest worldwide and they came to the shocking finding that suicide is the leading cause of death for women aged 15-49. Statistics are flawed because suicide is illegal in Nepal and relatives will not disclose the real cause of death to avoid legal problems and the social stigma associated with it.

For women in particular, the under reporting of suicides and suicide-attempts may be caused in part by a "culture of silence", especially in cases related to domestic abuse.

Given the fact that many young widows find themselves in desperate situation and that they live in constant anguish, there is evidence that the suicide rate of young widows is alarmingly high!

OUR IMPACT:

Currently we are caring for 25 such widows with dependent children and our support is vital for them. We are providing for their basic needs such as staple food, clothing, blankets, all that's required for a proper hygiene as well as medical and educational support, counseling and guidance.

Due to the pandemic and the collapse of the economy many more are in desperate need of our help. Too many of them lost HOPE. In the worst storms hope is the flickering candle that we must not allow to be extinguished.

Let us HELP; let us give these widows and their children HOPE again!