

Song

Lyrics: Matrika Devkota
Music/Vocal: KESHAR

Let's get medicine for external wounds,

Let's give psychosocial counseling for trauma,

It was so big, that all of us were suffered,

It was something, beyond our imagination,

Devastating earthquake took thousands of lives,

Tremors, again and again, broke our everything.



<https://www.youtube.com/koshishnepal>

KOSHISH chairperson gets biggest social sector Award of Nepal

KOSHISH chairperson Mr. Matrika Devkota got 'Rambabu-Gyanu Social Service Award' of two hundred thousand rupees to provide care and support to women and children who are on the street due to mental health problems. Rambabu-Gyanu Memorial Trust provides this award every year for one active in social service. This is so far the biggest social service award in Nepal.

Puja Laxmi is Mother now

A victim of sexual abuse in the street, Pujalaxmi turned emotional after successfully delivering her baby on 3rd September 2015. 'I am thankful for what KOSHISH has done for me', she said after the delivery at the hospital with KOSHISH's emergency support. 'I don't know where would I be now and what would I be doing', She added.

Rescued from the streets of Koteshwor, Pujalaxmi had schizophrenia. Pujalaxmi was not stable when she was brought to House of Hope on 23rd May 2015. It was the local residents of Koteshwor who helped get Pujalaxmi to House of Hope. Local residents reported that she had lived there for almost five years. She had made a tent using old clothes and pieces of plastic on Mitranagar, and used the place for staying at night. When KOSHISH team reached her, Pujalaxmi was five months pregnant. She had been raped in the street.

After three months of intensive care, support and treatment, Pujalaxmi's condition has improved significantly. She has given birth to a healthy boy child and loves her baby so much. She



wonders about the father of the baby and gets sad about not being able to remember her past life. Pujalaxmi does not remember any places other than Koteshwor. KOSHISH attempted to identify her family by taking her to several places, yet where she came from is still unknown. KOSHISH is trying its best to identify her family and community.

Pujalaxmi is safe now at 'House of Hope'. But giving Pujalaxmi a better future is still a challenge until we get to know about her family.

(More stories about rescue and rehabilitation on the last page)

Psychological problem among schoolgirls

Tribhuvan Higher Secondary School of Rupakot-2, Mainchowk of Tanahu district was badly affected when girl-students from grade 7,8 and 9 suddenly started crying out loud, shivering and frequently falling unconscious after they entered the school premises. Regular classes of the entire school became disturbed. A teacher said that the problem began from early April 2015 when couple of girls started showing such symptoms. The problem got even worse after the devastating earthquake of 25th April.

After the problem grew out of control, the school administration informed District Public Health Office of Tanahu. KOSHISH has been in Tanahu since January 2015 implementing its community based mental health practice. On the special request of District Public Health Office, a team comprising psychologist, psychosocial counselors

and social workers reached the school and identified the problem to be 'Mass Conversion Disorder'.

After a thorough check-up a few students were referred for special consultation with psychologist while other were helped to overcome the problem via several therapies, exercises and relaxation techniques. Within a short period the problem became mild and regular classes resumed in the school.

Teachers, local key stakeholders and parents were also informed and trained for primary care of mass conversion disorder along with basic treatment modalities. The aim of such program was to help local people understand problems like mass conversion disorders and help them take necessary steps when a problem hits the community.

Increase in Number of Psychosocial Service Seekers

The number of people seeking the psychosocial service has increased significantly in Bhaktapur district. The Emergency Psychosocial Response Program of KOSHISH, which is currently active in all four municipalities (Madhyapur Thimi, Suryabinayak, Anantalingeshwor and Bhaktapur) of Bhaktapur, was introduced in May 2015 to help general public overcome psychosocial trauma due to the devastating earthquake.

The team of experts including psychologists, counselors and social workers is active in Bhaktapur to identify psychosocial problems and provide individual and group



counseling to those in need along with an OPD service for psychiatric care. Till mid September 913 people of Bhaktapur district have received this service.

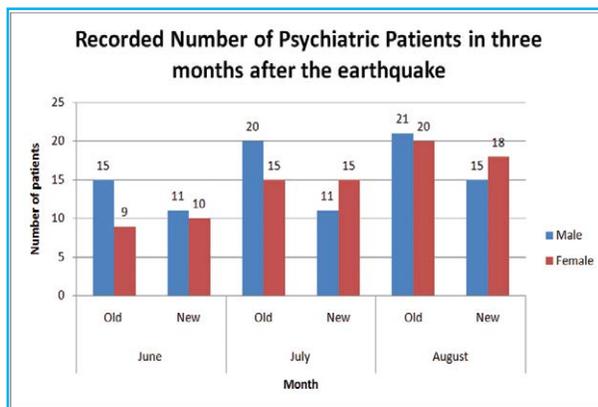
Early intervention and assessment is necessary to identify mental health problems and get proper treatment before it is too late. Therefore, KOSHISH is also focusing on building awareness among key stakeholders of Bhaktapur district for Psychological First Aid. Programs organized from June to September 2015 oriented 150 women health volunteers, 63 local police and 65 teachers on Psychosocial First Aid.

KOSHISH also provided training on psychosocial self-care to help individuals overcome psychosocial trauma due to disasters like earthquake and other unexpected life events. Several training programs were organized for women's groups, women health volunteers, local clubs,



teachers and students. In total 1810 people in Bhaktapur benefited.

Intensive programs, campaigns and trainings carried out to make the general public aware of mental health problems have directly impacted the OPD service provided by the KOSHISH in Bhaktapur. The number accessing OPD has notably increased. From June to August, a total of 80 new patients including 37 male and 43 females have obtained the psychiatric OPD service. Both new and old patients joining OPD service have got expert neuropsychiatric psychosocial service. All four municipalities (Madhyapur Thimi, Suryabinayak, Anantalingeshwor and Bhaktapur) have had OPD service once in a month.



Raising awareness through disaster preparedness and psycho-education

Several women from different districts along with their family members and members of their communities benefited from counseling aiming to reduce the trauma of earthquake. These women were those being rescued and treated in 'House of Hope' and were rehabilitated to their families after successful treatment of their mental health problem.



A team from KOSHISH comprising counselors and social workers reached many earthquake-affected districts to check the condition and problems of rehabilitated women. The team provided necessary support to clients and their families along with discussion and interaction with community members on disaster preparedness.



Till mid-September about 260 people have received such service and participated actively in the program. IEC materials like 'Overcoming Psychosocial Trauma after Disaster', posters and support materials were distributed.



Care for Caregivers

Group photo of KOSHISH team after a refreshment tour of Sauraha and Pokhara from 12th -15th September 2015

Taking lead on mental health sensitization



KOSHISH organized a daylong workshop with key civil society representatives on mental health in the context of the post earthquake situation of Nepal. The program was focused on discussing the role of civil society in addressing mental health issues.

Yubraj Chand welcomed the participants in the program while Akkal Lama, General Secretary and young poet recited his poems and shared his personal journey of mental health problems. That was followed by a short introduction to KOSHISH by Chairperson Matrika Devkota detailing its program to rehabilitate and approaches. A documentary related to treatment, care and rehabilitation of abandoned women was also screened in the program. The Past President of Nepal Doctors Association, Dr. Kedar Nursingh KC; Past Main Secretary of Nepal Government, Bhojraj Pokharel; Kabindra Saran, Dr. Birendra Mishra and other noted figures appreciated the work of KOSHISH. Advocate Sharmila Parajuli talked about discrimination and stigma being a barrier to the dignified life of people

living with mental health problems.

The facilitator of the program, Birendra Prasad Thapaliya, the President of Legal Research Centre, stated that focus must be given to economic, social and cultural rights not just civil and political rights. He added that there should be strong checks and balances of law along with institutional and structural improvement for effective implementation of the law.

Showing strong concern over problems faced by people with mental health problems, civil society representatives promised to stand along with KOSHISH for effective mental health advocacy.

KOSHISH with Social Workers

KOSHISH and Social Workers' Association Nepal (SWAN) organized a joint program to discuss the role of social workers in the light of the National Mental Health Policy at Kadambari Memorial College.

KOSHISH's chairman Matrika Devkota presented the paper titled 'Role of social workers in mental health service' while SWAN president Dr. Dilliram Adhikari presented paper on 'National Mental Health Policy'. Participants in the program included representatives of different social work colleges, social workers, and mental health professionals. They agreed to jointly campaign to make the government more accountable.

Documents published

KOSHISH has published two different documents in the form of booklets covering the Beneficiaries Review of the mental health legislation of Nepal. The booklets are titled 'Review Document from Beneficiaries on



Draft Mental Health Treatment and Protection Bill 2068 B.S.' and 'Review Document from Beneficiaries about Inclusion of Mental Health Issues on Proposed Umbrella Nepal Health Act'.



A weekly program for people experiencing mental health problems, the Peer Support Program, has turned into a good place to share and exchange feelings together. More than twenty people join KOSHISH's Peer Support Program regularly every Tuesday. Activities like Music therapy, psychosocial counseling, physical exercise and relaxation

Increasing attraction of Peer Support Program

techniques help members to overcome their problems. Documentaries and films that encourage and motivate people with mental health problems are also shown in the program. Members are also provided with free psychosocial support and psychiatric OPD service once a month.

'Initially, as I preferred staying alone I was not interested to come here. But within a few weeks I realized that I could even be happy. I feel I am being stronger to cope my mental health problem now. I can sleep well', said one member of the Peer Support Program.

Sexual abuse is common among women with mental health problems



Looking at her newborn baby Sumi (name changed) wonders about the father of the baby and feels sad. Thirty five year old Sumi gave birth to a baby on 14th September 2015 at Patan Hospital. She was rescued by KOSHISH about a month earlier on 18th August from Jiri-Charikot Street of Dolakha district. Local police suspected that she might have been the victim of sexual abuse while living on the street which resulted in the pregnancy.

Sumi is one of many women who still are forced to live a vulnerable life in street after becoming mentally ill. Among the 215 women supported so far by KOSHISH, 19 women were known to be victims of sexual abuse on the street. At the time of rescue some were pregnant, others had already given birth. At present five women are pregnant at the House of Hope. All of these women were abused and raped while living on the street.

Is she the same Namita?

Thirty-five year old Namita (name changed) is very happy to support daily activities at House of Hope. She also helps others to get involved in different activities. Namita has studied up to secondary level, and loves to write her feelings in a diary everyday.

A few months ago Namita was rescued from Jhamsikhel, Lalitpur. She had lived there for several months in tent made using old plastics and clothes. She struggled, satisfying her hunger with only the rotten foods from the garbage



collectors. Knowing her condition local people asked KOSHISH for support. On 23rd June Namita was rescued and brought to House of Hope. Since then her health has significantly improved. As her family has been found and she is soon getting to be with them.

Seeing Namita now, it is hard to believe she is the same person.

A young girl rescued



On 1st June 2015, an 18 year old girl Nirmaya (named changed) was rescued from the Mental Hospital, Lagankhel and brought to the House of Hope. According to local people, Nirmaya had been living in Lagankhel buspark for about a month. They reported to the nearest mental hospital for her treatment but the Mental hospital refused to admit her as she had no carer. On hearing of her, the KOSHISH team came to her rescue. Nirmaya's health is improving now.

Dignity kit distribution

Sixty-four women of Bhaktapur district were provided with a 'Dignity Kit' by KOSHISH with the support of UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) on 25th September 2015 in a program organized at Bhaktapur. The kit was given to women with psychosocial disability. Also, sixty-four kits were distributed to women currently receiving treatment at KOSHISH's House of Hope and those being rehabilitated in the community after treatment.



Kit contents included sanitary napkins, soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, nail-cutter, comb, whistle, torch-light, underwear and other clothes (including a sweater).

- You can be part of KOSHISH by:**
- ◆ providing social and spiritual support
 - ◆ providing food and cloths to the survivors
 - ◆ providing medicine support for the clients
 - ◆ providing time voluntarily
 - ◆ providing financial support



For the financial support:

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