
Voices at the Margins: Accessing Justice as Women with Disabilities in Nepal

A Research Report

2025
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Warm regards,
Gargi Nepal

President,
Access Planet Organization

Acronyms

ARPD: The Act Relating to Rights of Persons with Disabilities

CBS: Central Bureau of Statistics

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

CRPD: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)

GESI: Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

GBV: Gender Based Violence

ICJ: International Commission of Jurists

ICCPR: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

KII: Key Informant Interview

NFDN: National Federation of the Disabled- Nepal

NHRC: National Human Rights Commission of Nepal

OCMC: One Stop Crisis Management Centre

OPD: Organization of Persons with Disabilities

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

WHO: World Health Organization

Executive Summary

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that nearly 16% of the world's population have some or other form of disability, which makes them the largest global minority (WHO, 2021). Among them, 80% of Persons with Disabilities live in developing countries like Nepal (UNESCO, 2020).

Persons with Disabilities in Nepal comprise approximately 647,755 (2.2%) of the total population of Nepal. Men with disabilities comprise 2.5% of the entire male population while 2% of the total female population are women with disabilities (CBS, 2021). Studies show that persons with disabilities in Nepal experience various forms of discrimination at home and face barriers to access their basic rights of education, health, and freedom of expression. Approximately 68.2% of people with disabilities have no access to education, 85% have no access to health care facilities, and 77.8% have no employment to earn their living (Paudel et al, 2017). Girls/women with disabilities in Nepal experience further challenges; being a woman in a country with patriarchal ideologies and practices. The experience of girls and women with disabilities are shaped by their intersectional identities of caste, class, age, marital status, education, income and geographical location.

Although there have been many studies in Nepal in relation to women with disabilities, there is very limited study of women with disabilities who are trying to access justice. Study conducted by the National Human Rights Commission of Nepal (NHRC) in 2022 found that there has been progress in taking initiatives to make the justice mechanism more physically accessible. However, the study concluded that human resources in police, courts and other judicial bodies have not received orientation regarding special arrangements and support systems for people with disabilities. The current study focuses primarily on the experience of women with disabilities, which remains unexplored till date. The rationale behind this study is to bring forward evidence and data by conducting province-level research on the situation of access to justice for women with disabilities.

The broader objective of the study was to explore women with disabilities' experience in accessing the justice mechanism in four different provinces (Gandaki, Karnali, Koshi, Madhesh) in Nepal. The study was informed by the following specific objectives:

1. To explore women with disabilities knowledge on existing justice mechanisms in Nepal
2. To identify challenges and opportunities on women with disability's access to justice in Nepal

Research Methodology

In line with the disability rights principle “nothing about us, without us,” the study actively involved women with disabilities throughout the research process. Laxmi Nepal, Executive Director of Access Planet Organization, provided ongoing input to align the study with advocacy goals and accessibility standard. Women with disabilities participated as enumerators and social mobilizers, helping with data collection and site visits, which deepened the team’s understanding of the local context. The report was also designed to be accessible, with alternative text description in order to help the persons with disabilities understand the images and tables.

The study adopted a mixed-method approach combining both quantitative and qualitative methods. The study used mainly three methods: survey (200), key informant interview (19) and case study (19).

Study Setting and Site Selection

The study was undertaken in four provinces of Nepal: Koshi, Gandaki, Madhesh and Karnali. To address the financial and time constraints, the research team conducted a study focusing on one district (Gandaki: Kaski, Koshi: Morang, Madhesh: Rautahat and Karnali: Surkhet) of each province. The study followed ethical research protocols, obtaining informed consent for recordings, photos, and interviews while ensuring participants' anonymity and confidentiality. Accessibility was prioritized throughout, including the use of voice notes for communication and detailed descriptions of images and tables to support readers with visual disabilities and accessibility considerations.

Key Findings

- ❖ 194 (97%) of the respondents have received disability ID cards. However, among them, 68 said that they faced difficulties while receiving their ID cards. 7 participants it was very difficult for them to get the ID card. 64 of them were neutral, 51 said it was an easy process and only 4 said it was very easy. This shows that women with disabilities still face hindrances while receiving their disability ID cards, which is often linked to other factors like disability allowance, etc.
- ❖ Although 69 participants have completed their secondary level education, 32 have completed Bachelor’s level and 2 have completed Master’s level, 154 (77%) of the participants said that they are not employed. This shows that there is still discrimination towards women with disabilities in the employment sector.
- ❖ There are regional disparities in legal knowledge of women with disabilities. Women with disabilities in Gandaki province show significantly higher awareness of legal provisions (CRPD, CEDAW, ARPD) than those in Madhesh, where 39 out of 50 participants were unaware of any provisions.

- ❖ More than a quarter of participants (27.5%) did not have any knowledge of any of the services of justice mechanism. Only 32 out of 200 participants knew about One-Stop Crisis Management Centers (OCMC), a first service that provides integrated services for survivors of violence. Majority of participants knew about ward level reconciliation centers (108) followed by Judicial committee (103) in municipalities.
- ❖ Many participants from Gandaki and Karnali province are aware about the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Act Relating to the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ARPD) and CEDAW. In contrast, in Koshi and Madhesh province, many participants are not aware of any of the above-mentioned legal provisions.
- ❖ Regarding knowledge about justice seeking at a provincial level, participants from Karnali and Gandaki provinces have knowledge about various different justice seeking provisions. In contrast, participants from Koshi and Madhesh are not much aware about knowledge on justice seeking.
- ❖ Majority of the research participants (158) from all 4 provinces have said that they have faced violence in their lifetime. Among them, the highest number is Koshi, followed by Karnali, and then Gandaki, and finally Madhesh.
- ❖ This research shows details about the type of violence faced and the locations (community, family, public place and workplace) where the participants faced violence. Disability based discrimination is seen to be highest in the community (93) and public places (73). participants also shared that they have faced sexual violence mostly at the community level (66).
- ❖ In an alarming response, out of a total of 158 respondents who have said that they have faced violence, 64% of the respondents have said that they have not sought justice for the justice violation that they faced. 36% of the respondents have sought justice. This shows that there is a big gap in the overall justice system because the majority of the women have not sought justice.
- ❖ Among different services used while seeking justice, participants' responses have shown that they trust the police - they first reached out to police when they faced violence. However, there have been instances where police have refused to help women by not registering their cases or by simply neglecting cases on the grounds of intellectual disability. The research has shown instances where police have denied to register a case of gender-based violence claiming that it is inadmissible since she is not able to provide the statement (complaint) by herself.

- ❖ When asked about their experience while using justice mechanism services, out of 57 participants, 58% (33 respondents) said they have positive experience and 42% (24 participants) said they have negative experiences.
- ❖ In all four provinces, safe houses have been operating in different capacities. This has helped women with disabilities in a great manner. However, because of funding constraints, it becomes difficult for safe houses for a long period of time. There is a need for all shelters to be accessible for all women, including women with disabilities.
- ❖ The research also looked at various barriers to justice that the respondents faced. The total number of respondents (174) shared their experience. We provided a few options to them. Data showed that many (74) of them were not aware of the justice process and there was no one to support them (68) in the process. Few also said that they did not have financial resources (40) and some believed that they would not get justice (47). Few respondents also shared that there were other reasons for barriers to justice. Some of them did not understand much about the justice mechanism, some of them felt scared to report, some resisted verbally, some violence did not feel serious enough to be reported, some felt awkward to be stared in the roads while seeking justice.
- ❖ From schools to government offices to the police force, there is a widespread lack of understanding regarding how to support women with disabilities. People often fail to realize that this is a cross-cutting issue and often needs attention through a holistic approach rather than a single approach.
- ❖ When asked about enabling conditions on access to justice for women with disabilities, among the total participants (200) responses received, 95 respondents have shared that judicial bodies should behave in a cooperative and nondiscriminatory manner and should be physically accessible. 125 respondents have shared that Staff in judicial bodies should behave in a cooperative and non-discriminatory manner. 83 respondents have shared that Communication materials related to judicial procedures should be disability friendly. 95 respondents believe that Special needs related to the disabilities of women should be addressed. 168 respondents have shared that Cases of women with disabilities should be given priority, and one respondent shared that there should be Support to reintegration of women with disabilities after justice.
- ❖ There is absence of specific guidelines and laws addressing the rights of people with disabilities, particularly in relation to the judiciary, property issues, and gender-based violence (GBV). This creates a bigger impact in the overall upbringing of women with disabilities because they are often treated as liabilities, mostly by their immediate family members, denying them of property rights.

- ❖ The research has shown that the judicial system often overlooks cases involving persons with disabilities, particularly when the survivor is a person with intellectual disability.
- ❖ OCMC is looked upon as a place for medical/physical examination of a survivor. It has become a swab collection unit. The OCMC has been created to support gender-based violence survivors with comprehensive services like medical care, legal support, counseling, etc.
- ❖ In many cases, families do not acknowledge or support the person with disability, which exacerbates their struggles. Discriminatory attitudes within communities also contribute to the marginalization of women with disabilities.
- ❖ Policies related to disability and gender are often not specific enough, with little focus on the needs of women with disabilities. The lack of targeted provisions in the budget, particularly for access to justice for women with disabilities, reflects this gap.
- ❖ The transition to federalism has caused a power imbalance, where local governments lack the necessary autonomy and resources to implement the national policies effectively. The frequent changes in policymakers and ministries hinder advocacy efforts, as previous achievements are undone when new personnel take charge of the office and have their own priorities.

Recommendations

In the following section, the study team has provided few recommendations to increase access to justice for women with disabilities in Nepal. The recommendations are based on the key findings from both qualitative and quantitative data.

These recommendations are crucial because they collectively address the issues of structural and social barriers that prevent women with disabilities from accessing justice. With improvement in identification processes (through disability ID cards), employment opportunities and legal literacy, women with disabilities are able to claim their individual and collective rights and live with dignity. In addition, legal literacy and inclusion services will also help these women in autonomy.

The recommendations provided below will create a roadmap for government, NGOs and the local authorities to work towards inclusion and integration of women with disabilities in all aspects. The authorities need to make sure that women with disabilities are visible in policy and develop programs that are responsive to needs of these women.

1. Improve Accessibility and Efficiency in Disability ID Card Distribution

- Standardize and simplify ID card distribution procedures across all provinces.
- Establish a formal mechanism for reporting and addressing challenges during the application process.
- Conduct awareness campaigns to inform women with disabilities about the benefits of the ID card.
- Provide targeted support for women who have not yet received their cards.

2. Enhance Employment Opportunities for Women with Disabilities

- Develop and implement inclusive employment policies across public and private sectors.
- Promote equitable hiring practices in government, education, corporate, and development sectors.
- Address structural barriers that hinder labor market participation for educated women with disabilities.

3. Address Barriers to Justice for Women with Disabilities

- Improve physical, communicational, and procedural accessibility in the justice system.
- Train law enforcement, judiciary, and healthcare personnel in disability and gender sensitivity.
- Expand access to trauma counseling, legal aid, peer support networks, and financial assistance for justice seekers.
- Promote community and family-based support to reduce stigma and empower survivors.

4. Adopt an Intersectional Approach to Gender and Disability

- Integrate intersectionality in all policies to account for the intersecting effects of gender, caste, and disability.
- Ensure legal and social frameworks support women with disabilities facing family, property, and inheritance discrimination.
- Promote inclusive caregiving, emotional support, and agency within families and communities.

5. Strengthening Policy Implementation and Advocacy Impact

- Ensure consistent enforcement of existing disability and gender policies at national, provincial and local levels.
- Allocate dedicated budgets and resources to disability-inclusive programs.
- Establish independent monitoring bodies for accountability and progress tracking.

- Support civil society organizations advocating women with disabilities.

6. Invest in Disability-Inclusive Safe Houses and Shelters

- Develop and fund safe houses that are physically accessible for women with disabilities and staffed with trained professionals.
- Provide holistic services including childcare, psychosocial support, and reintegration planning.
- Address resource constraints and prioritize long-term sustainability of shelter systems.

7. Combat Gender-Based Violence (GBV) through Community Engagement

- Form local protection committees trained to identify and address GBV against women with disabilities.
- Establish mandatory reporting and case tracking mechanisms for GBV incidents.
- Conduct community sensitization initiatives to challenge harmful socio-cultural norms and reduce stigma.

8. Improve Legal Literacy and Access to Justice at the Local Level

- Launch legal awareness campaigns focused on CRPD, CEDAW, and ARPD rights frameworks.
- Train frontline service providers (doctors, nurses, government employees) in intersectional disability and gender sensitivity.
- Empower local governments to lead inclusive policy implementation with adequate resources.

Chapter One: Introduction

This report presents the findings of the study carried out by Access Planet Organization in November 2024-April 2025. The report is divided into five chapters. The Introduction chapter introduces the background and context of the study and presents the objective and methodology of the research. Second chapter: Policy and Legal Framework present an international and national framework that establishes Persons with Disabilities' right to justice. The third and fourth chapter presents the findings of the study. The fifth chapter presents conclusions and recommendations.

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 16% of the global population has disabilities. Among them, 80% of Persons with Disabilities live in developing countries like Nepal (UNESCO, 2020). A higher prevalence of disability is reported among women in poor families in low-income countries. The UNCPRD guarantees the sexual and reproductive rights of people with disabilities including their right to marry and have a family. However, many people with disabilities still experience discrimination, denial of their rights and unequal access to basic services.

The census of 2021 has reported that Persons with Disability comprise 647,755 (2.2%) of the total population showing an increase in the number of Persons with Disabilities over the last two decades. Further analyzing data from the census, 2.5% of the entire male population of Nepal have some form of disability in comparison to 2 % of the female population. This contradicts with global estimates that girls and women with disabilities comprise nearly one fifth of the world's total population of women (WHO, 2021). Within total number of reported persons with disabilities in Nepal, persons with physical disability are highest (36.75%), followed by Low vision (16.88%), Blind (5.37%), (Deaf 7.85%), Hard of Hearing (7.87%), Deaf and blind (1.56%), Speech impairment (6.36%), Psycho-social disability (4.2%), Intellectual disabilities (1.73%), Hemophilia (0.75%), Autism (0.75%), Multiple Disabilities (8.78%). 1.07% of the total population of persons with disabilities, hidden disabilities number is lower as compared to others (CBS, 2021).

This cumulative increase in the number of disabilities is linked to an increase in reported disabilities over the last decade. In addition to the decade-long armed conflict which has caused disabilities among many individuals, other factors such as disasters and increasing number of road accidents have contributed to the increasing number of Persons with Disabilities. Due to lack of disaggregated data on disability based on gender and other social identity markers, it is challenging to understand the magnitude of the conflict affected Persons with Disabilities.

Studies show that persons with disabilities in Nepal experience various forms of discrimination at home and face barriers to access their basic rights of education, health, and freedom of expression. Only half of Nepali citizens with disabilities are literate in comparison to the national average of 76% (Budhathoki, 2023). Approximately 68.2% persons with disabilities have no access to education, 85% have no access to health care facilities, and 77.8% have no employment to earn their living (Paudel et al, 2017).

Girls/women with disabilities in Nepal experience further challenges; being a woman in a country with patriarchal ideologies and practices (Maya Dhungana, 2006). The experience of girls and women with disabilities are shaped by their intersectional identities of caste, class, age, marital status, education, income and geographical location (Kim et al., 2020). Number of studies have established that women with disabilities are more vulnerable to various forms of discrimination and violence in low-income countries like Nepal (Emerson & Llewellyn, 2023). Number of studies focused on Nepal shows that more than half of women with disabilities (57.7%) have experienced violence in their lifetime (Khanal, 2009; Puri et al., 2015). Despite clear evidence that violence on women with disabilities are very high, there is very limited knowledge on whether women with disabilities seek justice, if they do, what is their experience of seeking service through different justice mechanism in Nepal.

The study conducted by the National Human Rights Commission of Nepal (NHRC) in 15 districts in 2022 is the only available research in the area so far in Nepal. The study found that there has been progress in taking initiatives to make the justice mechanism more physically accessible. However, the study concluded that human resources in police, courts and other judicial bodies have not received orientation regarding special arrangements and support systems for people with disabilities. The study does not explore women with disabilities lived experience of seeking justice and the challenges they face. The current research aims to fill this gap.

The current study focuses primarily on the experience of access to justice for women with disabilities, which remains unexplored till date. The rationale behind this study is to bring forward evidence and data by conducting province-level research on the situation of access to justice for women with disabilities. This study focuses on the challenges, issues and provides a way forward for enhancing access to justice for women with disabilities.

Understanding Disability and Barrier

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) Article 1 defines disability as the result of long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment, which in interaction with various barriers, restricts the individual's ability to participate in society on an equal basis with others. Disability is not the impairment itself but rather the product of attitudinal and environmental barriers. (UN. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol. 2006.).

Women with disabilities are those who have one or more impairments and encounter societal barriers. This includes girls and women of all ages with disabilities, living in rural or urban areas, irrespective of the severity of their impairment, sexual orientation, cultural background, or residence in the community or institutions. The social standing of women with disabilities varies depending on their individual circumstances and the country that they reside in. In developing countries, these women often face significant disadvantages, being among the most marginalized groups within the society. They

typically occupy the lowest social positions, compounding their disadvantages as both women and individuals with disabilities.

Barriers experienced by Persons with Disabilities can be broadly categorized into four: Institutional and policy barrier, social barrier, physical barrier and communication barrier. These barriers will be discussed in detail in chapter four in relation to intersectional barriers experienced by women with disabilities while accessing justice mechanism.

Rationale of the Research

Women with disabilities in Nepal often face discrimination at various levels - household, societal and professional. The barriers that they face at the personal and professional level often makes it difficult for them, as compared to others. An important but neglected area is access to justice. Although there have been many studies in Nepal, there is very limited study on these women who are trying to access justice.

The rationale behind this study is to bring forward evidence and data by conducting province-level research on the situation of access to justice for women with disabilities. This study will focus on the challenges, issues and provide a way forward for enhancing access to justice.

Objectives

The main objective of the study was to explore women with disabilities' experience in accessing the justice mechanism in four different provinces in Nepal. The study was informed by the following specific objectives:

1. To explore women with disabilities knowledge on existing justice mechanisms in Nepal
2. To identify challenges and opportunities on women with disability's access to justice in Nepal

Research Methodology

The study adopted a mixed-method approach combining both quantitative and qualitative methods. The study used mainly three methods: survey (200), key informant interview (19) and case study (19).

Aligning with the key value of the disability rights movement “nothing about us, without us”, the study team ensured that women with disabilities play an integral part in all processes of this study. This was integrated through a process of continuous consultation and feedback from Laxmi Nepal, Executive Director of Access Planet Organization. She provided suggestions and guidance to ensure that the study was designed in a way that its findings can identify issues for advocacy goals and accessibility standards to facilitate access to justice for women with disabilities. In addition to that, the research team decided it was integral that women with disabilities are involved in

the research process itself as knowledge creators. Guided by Executive Director of Access Planet Organization, the research team involved women with disabilities as enumerators for the survey accommodating their accessibility needs. The team also sought help of local women leaders with disabilities as social mobilizers to arrange key informant interviews. They also guided and supported the study team for site visits for the case study. This in turn enabled researchers to develop a deeper understanding of the local context through informal conversations with social mobilizers who accompanied us in the fieldwork. This report also has been written and formatted in an inclusive way to ensure that it is accessible for persons with disabilities.

Study Setting

The study was undertaken in four provinces of Nepal: Koshi, Gandaki, Madhesh and Karnali. To address the financial and time constraints, the research team conducted a study focusing on one district (Gandaki: Kaski, Koshi: Morang, Madhesh: Rautahat, Karnali: Surkhet) of each province.



Short Description of Provinces

Gandaki Province, with Pokhara as its capital, spans an area of 21,504 square kilometers. As of the 2021 census, the province has a population of approximately 2,479,745. The literacy rate, recorded in 2024, stands at 83.4%. With a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.638, it ranks as the second highest among Nepal's provinces. The province recognizes Nepali, Magar, and Gurung as its official languages. Centrally located within Nepal, Gandaki Province is celebrated for its remarkable natural landscapes, including the Annapurna Mountain Range and a variety of lakes. These

features, along with its cultural heritage, make it a prominent center for tourism and adventure-based activities.

Koshi Province, is situated in eastern Nepal and covers an area of 25,905 square kilometers. The province encompasses a diverse range of geographical zones, including the Terai lowlands, the mid-hill region, and the high Himalayan range. Its topography supports a wide variety of ecosystems and contributes to its rich biodiversity. Notably, Koshi Province is home to two of the world's highest peaks—Mount Everest and Kanchenjunga. The climate varies significantly across the region, ranging from subtropical conditions in the southern Terai to alpine environments in the northern Himalayan areas. In addition to its ecological diversity, the province is also known for its vibrant cultural heritage and ethnic diversity.

Madhesh Province, is located in the southeastern region of Nepal and shares a border with India. Covering an area of 9,661 square kilometers, is the smallest among the seven provinces in Nepal by land area. Despite its size, it is the most densely populated province, with a population of approximately 6,114,600 as recorded in the 2021 census. As of 2024, the literacy rate in Madhesh Province stands at 63.5%. The province officially recognizes several languages, including Nepali, Maithili, Bhojpuri, Bajjika, Tharu, Tamang, and Urdu, reflecting its linguistic and cultural diversity. Madhesh Province is characterized by its predominantly agricultural economy and is noted for its rich cultural and religious heritage. It is home to important historical and spiritual sites, making it a significant region both economically and culturally within Nepal.

Karnali Province, with its capital in Birendranagar, is situated in the mid-western region of Nepal. Covering an area of 27,984 square kilometers, it is the largest province by land area. However, it is also the least populous, with a total population of 1,694,889 according to the 2021 census. As of 2024, the literacy rate in Karnali stands at 76.6%. The province has the lowest Human Development Index (HDI) in Nepal, recorded at 0.469. Additionally, it has the highest rate of multidimensional poverty in the country, affecting approximately 51.7% of its population. Karnali Province is characterized by its rugged and mountainous terrain, which contributes to its limited accessibility and underdeveloped infrastructure. The region faces significant challenges in health, education, and economic development, making it the most socioeconomically disadvantaged province in Nepal.

Province specific data on persons with disabilities

According to Nepal Census 2022 (2078), 2.2% of the total population in Nepal have some kind of disability (CBS, 2021). Given the socio-economic disparities among provinces, it is likely that the prevalence and challenges faced by Persons with Disabilities vary:

Karnali Province:

Due to its high poverty rate and limited access to healthcare and education, Persons with Disabilities may face significant challenges in accessing necessary services and support.

Madhesh Province

With its high population density and lower literacy rates, there may be increased demand for inclusive education and healthcare services for Persons With Disabilities.

Gandaki and Koshi Provinces:

Higher literacy rates and better infrastructure may provide relatively improved conditions for Persons with Disabilities, but disparities can still exist, especially in remote areas.

Efforts are ongoing at both national and provincial levels to improve data collection and implement inclusive policies to support persons with disabilities across Nepal. Among the total population with disabilities, the following data provides a breakdown of the percentage of disabilities in each province:

- Bagmati Province: 19% of all people with disabilities in Nepal
- Gandaki Province: 12% of all people with disabilities in Nepal
- Koshi Province: 18% of all people with disabilities in Nepal
- Lumbini Province: 18% of all people with disabilities in Nepal
- Sudur Paschim Province: 11% of all people with disabilities in Nepal
- Karnali Province: 8% of all people with disabilities in Nepal
- Madhesh Province: 14% of all people with disabilities in Nepal

Survey

There is a lack of substantive data and evidence on women with disabilities knowledge and experience of justice mechanisms. The survey was designed and finalized after several rounds of consultations with the Access Planet Organization. This complemented with insights gained from the field work. The questionnaire was first developed in English and then translated to Nepali. The questions were broadly categorized into socio-demographic information, personal experience of justice violation, knowledge and experience of justice mechanism (**Annex-1**).

Women with disabilities led the survey as enumerators, each representing a specific district. The study aimed to reach as many participants as possible and successfully collected 50 responses per district, totaling 200 responses across provinces. Google Forms was used for data collection, as it was more accessible for the enumerators and allowed for efficient data analysis. The survey was conducted primarily through face-to-face interviews, but in areas with inaccessible terrain, enumerators also used phone calls to reach participants.

Key Informant Interviews (KII)

Study team conducted 19 Key Informant Interviews with different stakeholders: disability rights advocates, policymakers, government officials, health professionals, human rights activists and advocates.

S.N.	Province	Name	Designation, Organization
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1.	Gandaki	Anjana KC	Disability Rights Advocate, Independent Living Centre
2.	Gandaki	Maya Timilsina	Planning Commission Member
3.	Gandaki	Bina Silwal	Founder, Kopila Nepal
4.	Gandaki	Sajana Dhungana	Gandaki Hospital
5.	Kathmandu	Birendra Raj Pokharel	Former Chairperson, NFDN
6.	Karnali	Pabitra Giri	Director, Aawaaj Nepal
7.	Karnali	Nisha	Counselor, Aawaaj Nepal
8.	Karnali	Anita Gyawali	Women Development Officer, Ministry of Social Development
9.	Karnali	Kalpana Thapa	Nurse, OCMC, Provincial Hospital Surkhet
10.	Madhesh	Ritu Jha	Janakpur Zonal Hospital
11.	Madhesh	Sabita Pun	Coordinator, Our Sansar
12.	Madhesh	Dineshwar Sah	Aasman Nepal
13.	Madhesh	Sabitri KC	Shelter Home
14.	Madhesh	Kiran Kumar Pashwan	President, NFDN, Madhesh Chapter
15.	Madhesh	Rahul Jha	Advocate
16.	Koshi	Nabin Dhungel	President, NFDN, Koshi Chapter
17.	Koshi	Durga Bhandari Baral	Chief, Social Development Division, Ministry of Social Development
18.	Koshi	Saraswati Danwar	WOREC, Biratnagar
19.	Koshi	Sheetal KC	Koshi Hospital

Case Study

The study team collected 19 different cases of women with disabilities in different processes of seeking justice. We received 3 cases from Karnali, 9 cases from Madhesh, 3 cases from Gandaki and 4 cases from Koshi. Among them, 10 have been discussed in detail in relevant themes in the findings section. The process of identifying the relevant

case studies happened through a series of site visits and meetings with concerned stakeholders. It was challenging to identify the cases, as they were not documented and identified as cases of women with disabilities. Except for documentation in OCMC, the study team had to rely on memories of officers working in police stations and courts. The recorded information was confidential, and justice personnel were reluctant to show it to the study team. As majority of the cases that the study team collected were of rape and sexual abuse, the names of survivors were confidential. Abiding by the rule of the law and also research ethics, the study team did not seek information that would identify the survivors.

The sites that the study team visited in each respective district were as follows:

- ❖ One Stop Crisis Management Centers (OCMC)
- ❖ Shelter home
- ❖ Women Cell, Local Police Station
- ❖ Government Lawyer's office of respective district
- ❖ District court
- ❖ Disability Rights Activists in respective province

Data Analysis

Diverse methods of data analysis were done according to the nature of the data. Quantitative data generated from the survey was analyzed via MS-Excel/SPSS. The qualitative data from FGD and case study were coded based on the themes and analyzed.

S.N.	Name of data collection tools	Data collection technique	Data analysis
1.	Survey	Undertaken by trained enumerators, supervised by lead researcher	MS-EXCEL/SPSS
2.	Key Informant Interview	Undertaken by lead researcher in the field	Coding and thematic analysis
3.	Case Study	Undertaken by lead researcher in the field	Coding and thematic analysis

Table Description: Name of data collection tools, data collection technique and data analysis

Ethical and accessibility considerations

The study abided by the protocols of ethical research. Photos were taken only after taking the consent of concerned persons. Enumerators took time to explain about the purpose and process of research to participants before starting the interview. They also took consent from the participants and assured of their anonymity and confidentiality. The google form did have space to record participant's name and phone number (which was only visible to the study team). The names used in the case study are pseudonyms.

We have used real names of people whom we have interviewed for Key informant interviews. Besides these ethical concerns, the study team also tried to have accessibility considerations in all stages of the research process including this report. The research related communications were mainly conducted through voice notes, given that Access Planet Organization's Executive Director has visual disability and because it was easier to provide guidance through voice notes. This was done to ensure ease of access and swift decisions relating to research dilemmas. Similarly, all the images and tables used in the report are described in detail to ensure easy accessibility for readers with visual disability.

Chapter Two: Policy and Legal Frameworks

Women and girls with disabilities comprise nearly one fifth of the world's total population of women (WHO, 2021). Women with disabilities in Nepal often face discrimination at many levels - household, societal, professional. They face different barriers in their personal and professional lives which create even more difficulties for them. One such barrier is access to justice for women with disabilities.

CEDAW Committee, General Recommendation No. 33 defines access to justice as follows:

"Access to justice" is a broad concept, encompassing people's effective access to systems, procedures, information, and locations used in the administration of justice, including all judicial and quasi-judicial settings, religious, community, and/or customary legal systems and law enforcement. In this context, access refers to both direct or indirect participation in these systems, including complainants, defendants, witnesses, and prisoners.

International Legal Frameworks on Access to Justice

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) is the guiding principle to all state parties who have ratified the convention. Nepal ratified Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) on 27th December 2009. The CRPD and optional protocol came into force for Nepal on 6th June 2010

Article 3 of General Principles of CRPD requires that state parties should ensure that Persons with Disabilities have dignity, individual autonomy and freedom to make their choices. The article also establishes right to non-discrimination and full and effective participation and inclusion in society.

Article 12 and 13 of CRPD brings a paradigm shift in the legal recognition of the autonomy of Persons with Disabilities. Article 12 (equal recognition before the law) has five key provisions. They are as follows:

1. States Parties reaffirm that persons with disabilities have the right to recognition everywhere as persons before the law.
2. States Parties shall recognize that persons with disabilities enjoy legal capacity on an equal basis with others in all aspects of life.
3. States Parties shall take appropriate measures to provide access by persons with disabilities to the support they may require in exercising their legal capacity.
4. States Parties shall ensure that all measures that relate to the exercise of legal capacity provide for appropriate and effective safeguards to prevent abuse in accordance with international human rights law. Such safeguards shall ensure that measures relating to the exercise of legal capacity respect the rights, will and

preferences of the person, are free of conflict of interest and undue influence, are proportional and tailored to the person's circumstances, apply for the shortest time possible and are subject to regular review by a competent, independent and impartial authority or judicial body. The safeguards shall be proportional to the degree to which such measures affect the person's rights and interests.

5. Subject to the provisions of this article, States Parties shall take all appropriate and effective measures to ensure the equal right of persons with disabilities to own or inherit property, to control their own financial affairs and to have equal access to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit, and shall ensure that persons with disabilities are not arbitrarily deprived of their property.

It is important to note that CRPD makes three important points here. First it establishes that Persons with Disabilities have right to enjoy “legal capacity on equal basis with others” in all aspect of life. Second point it makes is that state parties need to take “appropriate measures to provide access” to persons with disabilities. The article also makes state parties responsible to ensure that “appropriate and effective safeguards to prevent abuse” are made in accordance of international human rights law

Similarly, Article 13-Access to justice has two key provisions:

1. States Parties shall ensure effective access to justice for persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others, including through the provision of procedural and age-appropriate accommodations, in order to facilitate their effective role as direct and indirect participants, including as witnesses, in all legal proceedings, including at investigative and other preliminary stages.
2. In order to help to ensure effective access to justice for persons with disabilities, States Parties shall promote appropriate training for those working in the field of administration of justice, including police and prison staff.

CRPD clearly asserts the need to recognize the legal capacity of persons with disability. Similarly, it argues that in order to ensure effective justice for persons with disabilities, there needs to be provision of “procedural and age-appropriate accommodations” envisioning persons with disabilities as both direct and indirect participants. Another important point CRPD makes is having provisions for training for personnel who work in different sectors associated with the justice mechanism.

Along with CRPD, other international treaties such as International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of

Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) establish the following rights of Women and Girl's access to justice. These include:

- ❖ Equal recognition before the law and access to justice
- ❖ Equality and non-discrimination
- ❖ Accessibility
- ❖ Effective remedy
- ❖ Fair Trial
- ❖ Legal assistance
- ❖ Effective participation in all legal proceedings through the provision of procedural, age-appropriate, disability related accommodations

In order to ensure effective implementation of CRPD, International Principles and Guidelines on Access to Justice for Persons with Disabilities has been formulated. This guideline is endorsed by the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), the International Disability Alliance. The guideline identifies 10 universal principles:

Principle 1	All persons with disabilities have legal capacity and, therefore, no one shall be denied access to justice on the basis of disability.
Principle 2	Facilities and services must be universally accessible to ensure equal access to justice without discrimination of persons with disabilities.
Principle 3	Persons with disabilities, including children with disabilities, have the right to appropriate procedural accommodations.
Principle 4	Persons with disabilities have the right to access legal notices and information in a timely and accessible manner on an equal basis.
Principle 5	Persons with disabilities are entitled to all substantive and procedural safeguards recognized in international law on an equal basis with others, and States must provide the necessary accommodations to guarantee due process.
Principle 6	Persons with disabilities have the right to free or affordable legal assistance.
Principle 7	Persons with disabilities have the right to participate in the administration of justice on an equal basis with others.

Principle 8	Persons with disabilities have the rights to report complaints and initiate legal proceedings concerning human rights
Principle 9	Effective and robust monitoring mechanisms play a critical role in supporting access to justice for persons with disabilities.
Principle 10	All those working in the justice system must be provided with awareness-raising and training programmes addressing the rights of persons with disabilities, in particular in the context of access to justice.

Table Description: International Principles and Guidelines on Access to Justice for Persons with Disabilities

National Legal Frameworks on Access to Justice

Declaration of International Year of Disability (IYDP) in 1981 followed by UN Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-1992) paved the way for recognition of rights of persons with disabilities in Nepal. Nepal adopted Disabled Protection and Welfare Act (DPW) in 1982: the first policy on disability.

Disability Rights Activists have criticized this policy being informed by a welfare-oriented approach rather than rights-based approach. As indicative of its time of formulation, conceptualization of disability in the policy is gender less and gender insensitive. With the reinstitution of democracy in 1991, the disability movement in Nepal grew with active participation of women leaders with disability. This led to growing recognition of differential needs and challenges of women and girls with disabilities within the disability and women's rights movement.

Nepal ratified Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) on 27th December 2009. The CRPD and optional protocol came into force for Nepal on 6th June 2010. The convention is a legally binding universal tool that guarantees the states which have ratified the convention are accountable to promote and protect the rights of Persons with disabilities. Gender equality is one of the key principles that CRPD promotes, Article 6 of CRPD establishes the state's obligation to take appropriate measures to ensure the rights of women and girls with disabilities. These measures include legislations, policies, and programs.

Nepal formulated a new policy, "The Act Relating to Rights of Persons with Disabilities" (ARPD) in 2017, after rigorous consultations with Organizations of persons with Disabilities (OPDs) and stakeholders concerning rights of persons with disabilities. This policy/act was formulated for application of CRPD and to replace the earlier disability policy based on welfare-oriented approach.

Article 15 of ARPD has specific provisions relating to the right to access to services, facilities and justice". The act mentions:

1. *The persons with disabilities shall have the right to have easy access to other services and facilities that are open or provided for the public, including educational institutes, housing, workplaces, buildings, roads, transportation, and electronic communication services*
2. *The persons with disabilities shall have the right to free legal aid in order to ensure that they have access to justice.*

Considering multiple challenges of women with disabilities, Chapter-4 of ARPD entitled "Additional Rights of Women and Children with Disabilities" recognizes the rights of these women and girls. The act also acknowledges specific needs of women and girls with disabilities such as reproductive rights:

- 1) The Government of Nepal shall make necessary provisions as prescribed to protect the rights of women and girls with disabilities and to create an environment that is conducive to the maximum use of their knowledge, skill, and potential.
- 2) The Government of Nepal shall make necessary provisions for the protection of their health and reproductive rights, taking into account, considering the special situation of the women and girls with disabilities.

Justice mechanisms in Nepal remain exclusionary towards women experiencing various forms of gender-based violence. Survivors with disabilities experience further challenges as justice mechanisms are not disability friendly. Review of policies and programs relating to justice mechanisms shows that "access to justice for women with disability" is not prioritized within both policies and programs.

The Government of Nepal has taken a positive step through formulation of the Access to Justice Commission on 25 July 2017. The commission has identified a target group that has challenges to access justice mechanisms. These target groups are identified as follows: children, women, indigenous/ethnic groups, persons with disability, poor and excluded people who are unable to seek justice. To fulfil its aim to make justice mechanisms inclusive and gender friendly, the annual plan of 2023-2024 mentions that the program will be designed and implemented to increase the access of justice to female survivors, marginalized people including persons with disabilities. The commission has formulated "Guideline for Interpreters" on 5th January 2016, but the guideline only includes language interpreters, excluding sign language interpreters, which is crucial to ensure access to justice for the deaf and hard of hearing.

During the study, the research team reviewed, second, third, fourth and fifth Strategic Plan of Nepali Judiciary. In the second plan (2009-2014) the need to make justice mechanisms inclusive for disability was acknowledged as feedback given by right holders' organizations. The third Strategic Plan (2015-2019) has identified "inclusive justice mechanism" as third goal. In order to achieve this goal, the plan has identified the need of having sign language interpreter in the court, it also mentions ensuring all courts as physically accessible. Similarly, fourth plan (2020-2024) identifies representation and inclusiveness as one of the nine values. However, the plan does not clarify

stakeholders and right holders for whom judiciary has to become inclusive. This shows that leadership in the judiciary in Nepal are not sensitized about issues and concerns of women with disabilities and their barriers to justice. The fifth Plan (2025-2029) has more specific action plan to implement the goal of “inclusive justice mechanism”. It aims to do following:

- 1) All court buildings have to be disability friendly and digital technology friendly.
- 2) Create audio versions of supreme court website and Nepal law magazine
- 3) Create targeted programme to facilitate justice for women, persons with disabilities and marginalized communities

Similarly, the study team reviewed annual reports of Nepal police, and the report does not have any mention of persons with disabilities and its move towards making its services more inclusive and disability friendly.

The study also reviewed Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) strategy for the Judiciary (2021/22-2025/2026). The GESI strategy follows the conventional method of using gender identity as a main reference point. The strategy only uses CEDAW as its reference point and ignores CRPD altogether as its guiding principle. The strategy also presented disaggregated data on inclusiveness of the Nepal Judicial Service during fiscal year 2018/2019. Among 789 officers, there were only 12 (1%) of persons with disabilities (National Judicial Academy, 2021, p.40). The GESI strategy identified following three key goals followed by the strategy. Here are the three key goals:

Goal 1: Increase access to legal education among women and target groups.

Goal 2: Ensure meaningful and substantive representation of women and target groups in the judiciary and judicial service.

Goal 3: Create an environment that enables the capacity enhancement and continuity of service among women and target groups involved in the judiciary and judicial service.

Persons with Disabilities are identified as target groups. Strategies identified for the third goal includes following provisions: “disability friendly restrooms” and “disability friendly or obstacle-free workrooms or working environments”. These are positive indications of understanding of physical accessibility. However, the GESI strategy does not offer nuanced understanding of intersectional barriers that women with disabilities experience to access justice.

One of the key challenges that Nepal faces in access to justice of persons with disability is lack of a constitutional body to coordinate and monitor rights of persons with disability. Many of the countries who have ratified CRPD have formulated an independent autonomous commission on disability. Nepal currently does not have a commission on persons with disabilities. The newly formed National Inclusion Commission has identified disability as one of the priority areas. However, the commission does not have any representation from the disability community. This violates the spirit of “nothing about us, without us”. It is important that the commission have representative members of persons with disability, and more importantly women with disability as a member.

There is provision for the Steering Committee and Coordination Committee in chapter 9 of ARPD Persons with Disability (2017). Section 38 of the chapter mentions that the committee is responsible to coordinate, monitor, and promote the activities related to the rights, facilities, services and protection of persons with disability.

The demand for autonomous commission on disability has been raised by disability rights activists, which has been largely ignored. To ensure that the rights of persons with disability is mainstreamed, government need to step up to do following: 1) Appoint persons with disability, including at least one woman with disability in National Inclusion Commission, 2) Form National Commission of Persons with Disability Nepal ensuring inclusion of women with disability. In addition to this, women with disabilities need to be included within every commission and constitutional body that has been formed to work on human rights, gender equality and social inclusion. So far women with disabilities have not been included within any of the key commissions such as National Women's Commission, National Human Rights Commission.

Justice Mechanism in Nepal

There is provision for the Steering Committee and Coordination Committee in chapter 9 of ARPD Persons with Disability (2017). The section 38 of the chapter mentions that the committee is responsible to coordinate, monitor, and promote the activities related to the rights, facilities, services and protection of persons with disability. In accordance to this, three tiers of disability rights committee have been envisioned: National Disability Rights Committee, Provincial Disability Rights Committee and Local Disability Rights Committee reflective of three tiers of government bodies. These committees can play an important role on facilitating access to justice for women with disabilities.

Government of Nepal have undertaken number of programmatic interventions to address gender-based violence in Nepal. Ministry of Women, Children and Senior Citizens (MoWCSC) is the main government body to address various forms of gender-based violence. The ministry has formulated National Strategy and Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence (2010-2025). In accordance to that, one stop crisis management center (OCMC) was established in 2010 in different hospitals throughout the country to facilitate integrated platform for gender-based violence prevention and response in Nepal.

Similarly, Ministry has established fund for survivors of gender-based violence for emergency support, legal aid and rehabilitation. The ministry has allocated budget of Rs 100,000 for every local level. According to news reports, only 115 municipalities out of 753 local bodies across countries have established the gender-based violence fund (Rastriya Samachar Samiti 2022). National Women Commission has established 24-hour toll free helpline (1145) to provide support to gender-based violence. Along with these government initiatives, non-governmental organizations such as Forum for Women, Law and Development (FWLD), Legal Aid and Consultancy Center (LACC) and Saathi have been instrumental on supporting in formulating policies, free legal aid and shelter homes to support survivors of gender-based violence.

Nepal transitioned into a federal democratic republic after the promulgation of its new constitution in 2015. With federalism, the justice system was restructured to align with the country's new political and administrative divisions, distributing powers across three levels of government: federal, provincial, and local. Federal court is represented as supreme court, followed by High court and district court. Based on the focus group discussion and site visits for the case study, the justice system mechanism can be visualized as below.

Federal governance system also conceptualizes informal justice mechanisms through mediation councils in respective wards of rural and urban municipalities. Nepal currently has 753 judicial committees operating at the rural and urban municipalities. These informal justice mechanisms have been created to address the problem of lengthy and expensive judicial processes.

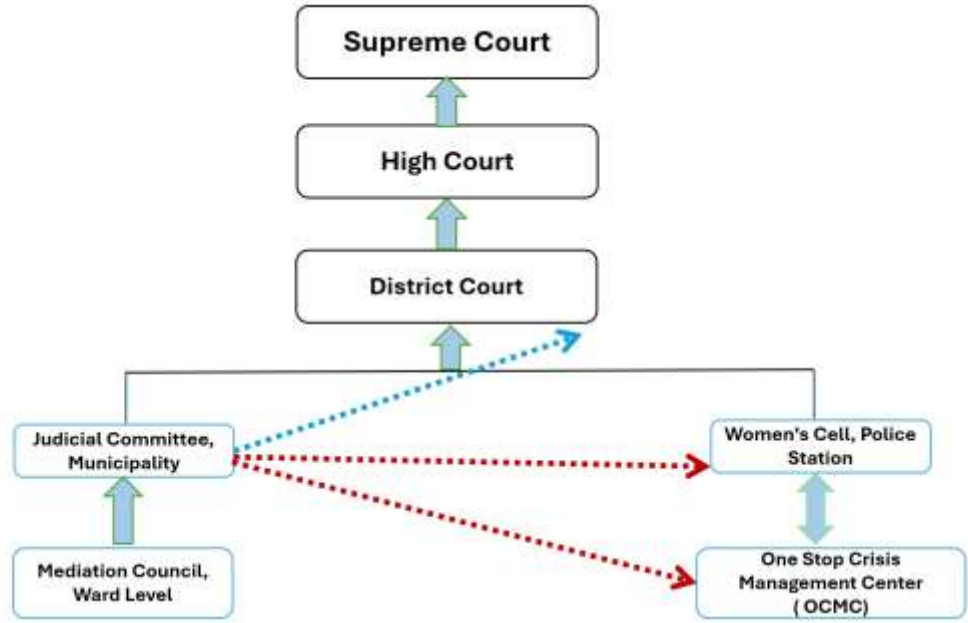


Figure Description: Justice Mechanism of Nepal

The figure above is visualized by the study team based on the qualitative study.

The image illustrates the justice mechanism in Nepal, showcasing formal and informal justice mechanisms available for addressing legal and justice-related issues. The top of the formal structure is the **Supreme Court**, followed by the **High Court** and then the **District Court**. At the local level, the **Mediation Council at the Ward Level** serves as an entry point, where matters are discussed. If the problem is not solved at the ward level, the matters escalate to the **Judicial Committee at the Municipality level**. From there, unresolved cases will proceed to the **District Court** and potentially advance to higher courts. The system also includes **Women's Cells at Police Stations** and **One Stop Crisis Management Centers (OCMCs)**, which provide immediate support for gender-based violence and other urgent issues for women. The diagram also reflects **informal linkages** (indicated by red dotted lines) between the Judicial Committee and both the Women's Cell and the OCMC, representing coordination and referral networks that operate outside the formal legal framework. These informal

connections play a crucial role in ensuring access to justice, especially in sensitive cases requiring integrated support services.

Chapter Three: Experience of Violence

Existing data and statistics related to women with disability in Nepal is very rare and scarce, often resulting in inconsistency and contradictions (Poudyal et al. 2018; Eide et al. 2016). The present study aims to bring experience of access to justice for women with disabilities in four different provinces (Gandaki, Karnali, Koshi, Madhesh) in Nepal. The main objective of this research is to fill the research gap on women with disabilities by focusing on justice violation and justice mechanisms.

In the current research, survey data was collected from a total of 200 women (50 women from every province) with disabilities. The quantitative data was divided into several sections (Socio-Demographic Details, Experience of Justice Violation, Knowledge about Justice Mechanism, Knowledge about Provincial Legal Provisions) to gain insights from their real-life experience. This chapter presents socio-demographic details of participants followed by experience of violence and knowledge about justice mechanisms.

Socio-Demographic Details of Research Participants

Province	Frequency	Percent
Gandaki	50	25
Karnali	50	25
Koshi	50	25
Madhesh	50	25
Total	200	100

Table Description: The research has covered 4 districts where all districts have 50 respondents each.

Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent
Hill caste group - Brahmin/Chhetri/Thakuri	89	44.5
Hill Dalit	37	18.5
Hill Indigenous group	48	24
Madhesi	19	9.5
Religious and linguistic groups - Muslim, Bengali, Punjabi/Sikh	3	1.5
Terai Dalit	3	1.5
Terai Janajati	1	0.5

Total	200	100
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Table Description: 44.5% of the respondents belong to High Caste Hill groups: Brahmin/Chhetri/Thakuri followed by 18.5% of respondents from Hill Dalit group. The Hill Indigenous groups comprised 24% of the respondents. 9.5% of the respondents represented the Madhesi community. 1.5% respondents were from religious and linguistic groups and Terai Dalit groups each. 0.5% respondents also comprised Terai Janjati.

Religion	Frequency	Percent
Buddhism	9	4.5
Christian	7	3.5
Hindu	181	90.5
Islam	3	1.5
Total	200	100

Table Description: Majority of participants (90.5%) reported following Hindu Religion followed by Buddhism (4.5%), Christianity (3.5%) and Islam (1.5%) respectively.

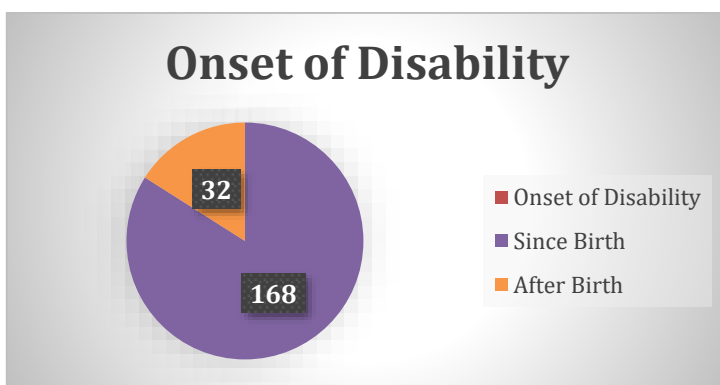


Image Description: Identified as a person with disability since birth or after birth. Majority of participants (84%) had acquired a disability since their birth. Only 16% participants reported having disability at a later stage.

Type of Disability	Frequency	Percent
Deafblind	4	2
Hearing impairment	5	2.5
Intellectual disability	10	5
psychosocial disability	6	3
Multiple disabilities	14	7

Physical disability	69	34.5
Speech related disability	16	8
Visual impairment	76	38
Total	200	100

Table Description: Majority of the participants reported having visual impairment (38%) followed by 34.5% of participants having physical disability. 8% of participants had speech related disability. 7% respondents had multiple disabilities followed by 5% of participants having intellectual disability. 3 % of participants had mental or psycho-social disability followed by 2.5% as hearing impairment. 2% respondents from the survey have deafblind.

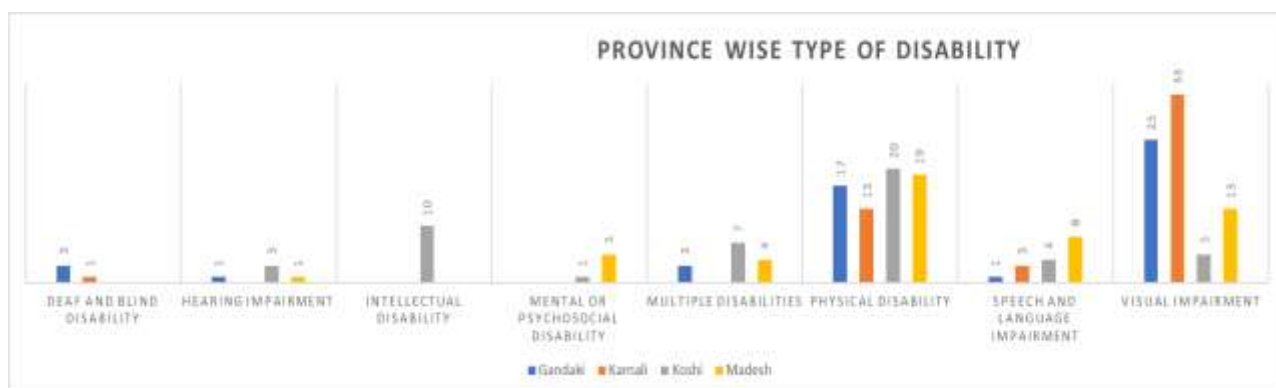


Chart Description: Types of Disabilities in Different Provinces. The chart above shows types of disabilities in different provinces. The highest type of disability is visual impairment – 33 in Karnali province, 25 in Gandaki province, 13 in Madhesh province and 5 in Koshi province, followed by physical disability – 20 in Koshi province, 19 in Madhesh province, 17 in Gandaki province and 13 in Karnali province. Speech related disabilities – 8 in Madhesh province, 4 in Koshi province, 3 in Karnali province and 1 in Gandaki province. Multiple disabilities have been seen mostly in Koshi with 7 participants, 4 participants from Madhesh province and 3 from Gandaki province. 10 intellectual disability cases were reported by participants in Koshi province. For mental and psychosocial disability – 5 in Madhesh province and 1 in Koshi province. Hearing related disability - 3 in Koshi province, 1 in Madhesh province and 1 in Gandaki province. Deaf Blind– 3 participants from Gandaki province and 1 participant from Karnali province.

Severity of Disability and ID Card

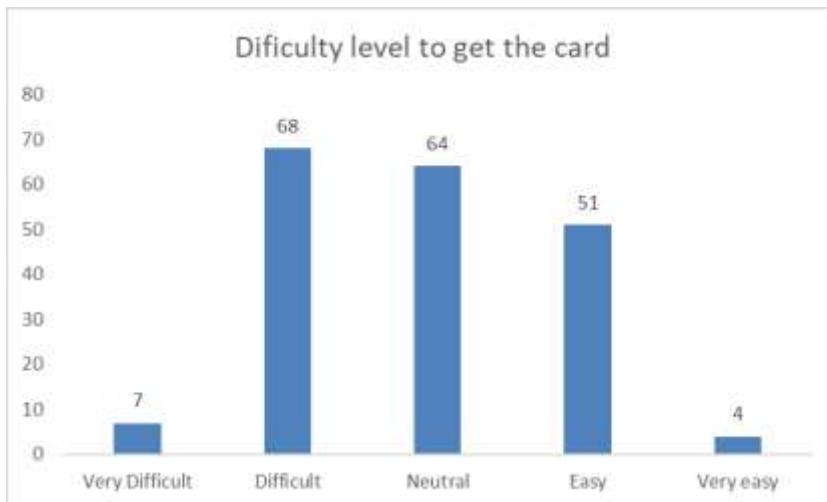
Majority of the participants (97%) reported receiving a Disability Identity card. Among them, more than half of participants (60.5%) have received Blue ID cards indicating **severe** disability. 18% have received yellow ID Cards indicating **moderate** disability followed by 12% participants receiving Red ID Cards indicating **profound** disability. 6.5% of participants had received a White ID Card indicating **mild** disability. 3% of the total respondents said that they do not have any kind of disability ID card.

Case- Study One: Challenges of receiving citizenship (Madhesh Province)

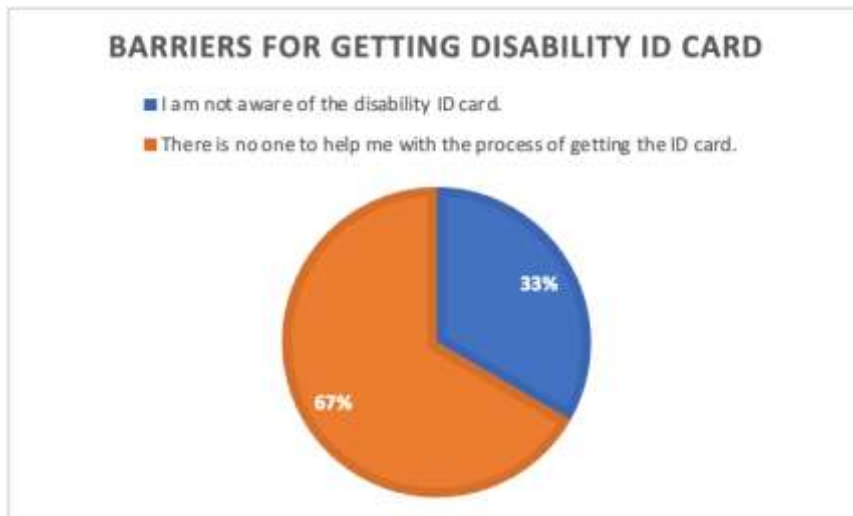
Ramila (pseudonym) is a 29-year-old Madhesi woman. She had an arranged marriage in her teenage years and became the mother of a son. Her pre-existing childhood illness got worse, and she lost her mobility. She was unable to walk and take care of herself. The situation got worse to the point that she could not go to the bathroom herself and started urinating in the bed. Her husband had a second marriage. Being a young bride, she had not received a citizenship certificate through her father. She requested her husband to help her to get citizenship through his identity. The marriage was not registered legally. He also refused on grounds of citizenship identity card being used to stake claim on his property. She could also not apply for a disability identity card, as it is tied with citizenship cards. This has prevented her from receiving an allowance from the government. Her husband made a citizenship card for his second wife. The husband claims he will provide a citizenship card to his son when he turns 16. The son also became estranged with his mother and would not care for her. Her case drew the attention of women rights activists in the community who had connections with the shelter home. However, the shelter home could not accommodate her due to her mobility issues. The staff from the shelter home visited her and counseled her son and family members. Her son has now started taking some responsibility for taking care of her. But her husband and second wife still treat her very badly.



We also asked the respondents with a disability ID card if it was difficult or easier to get it. Majority of the participants (35.1%) said that it was difficult to get the disability ID card, followed by 33% participants who said yes being neutral. 26.3% of the participants who received a disability ID card said it was easy for them. 3.6% said it was very difficult and only 2.1% said it was very easy for them. The data can be reflected from the bar graph **below**



The participants who said they did not have any kind of disability ID card were asked about the barriers in not getting one. Among the 6 participants from the survey who did not have any disability ID card, 67% said that they did not have anyone to help them with the process of getting the ID card and 33% said that they are not aware of the disability ID card. The pie chart **below** provides the same details



Age, Marital Status and Children

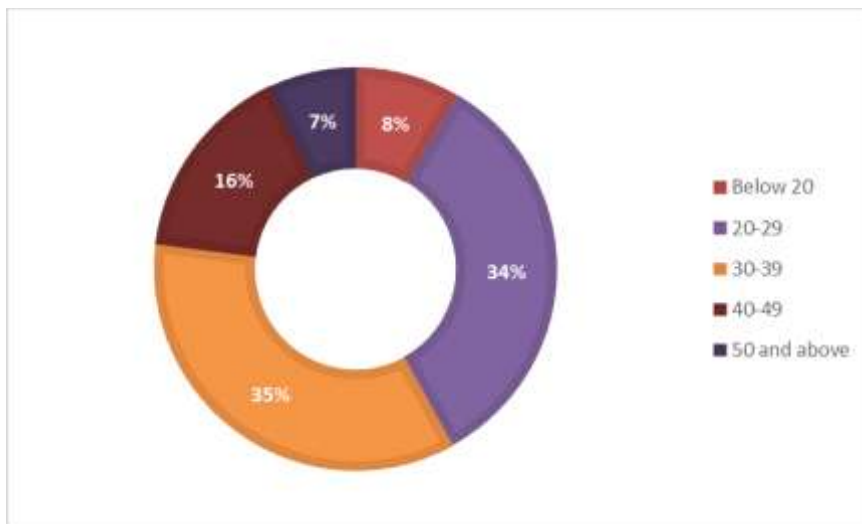


Image Description: 35% of the participants are between the ages of 30-39 yrs, followed by 33.5% of the participants between the ages of 20-29 yrs, 16% of participants are from the age group between 40-49 yrs, 8.5% of the population are below 20 yrs of age (and above 18 yrs of age) and 7% of the total respondents are above 50 yrs.

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Married	54	27
Unmarried	146	73
Total	200	100

Table Description: Among the total participants, 73% are unmarried and 27% are married.

We also asked **if they had children**. 77.5% of the respondents said they had no children and 22.5% said they had children. Among those who have had children, we asked them to specify the number of children. 40% respondents said they have 2 children, 26.7% said they have 1 child, 17.8% said they have 3 children, 8.9% said they have 5 children and 6.7% said they have 4 children.

Education Level

The literacy rate among persons with disabilities is seen as relatively low as compared to others due to geographical hardships, social discrimination and lack of infrastructure for persons with disabilities. Analysis of 2021 census data published in “National Census 2078 BS Disability Statistical Report” developed by National Statistics Office and NFDN, has shown that among the total number of persons with disabilities, the most literate are visually impaired (National Statistics Office & NFDN, 2021).

Among the totally blind, 63.3 percent are literate. In this cluster, 70.4 percent of men and 56.3 percent of women are literate. People with intellectual disabilities are the least literate. Only 20.4 percent of the population of this cluster is literate, the report reads that 22.8 percent of males and 17.8 percent of females are literate. Likewise, among

those with physical disabilities, 59.9 percent are literate. 68.3 percent of men and 47.8 percent of women are literate. Among the 44.6 percent literates with low vision, 59.6 percent are males and 30.5 percent are females. The literacy rate of the deaf is 40.4 percent, while that of males is 50.5 percent and that of females is 29.2 percent. Literacy rate of those with slow hearing is 41.5 percent, 54.3 percent of male and 28.4 percent of female. Similarly, the literacy rate of the hearing-impaired is 44.9 percent, while that of male is 56.1 percent and that of female is 32.4 percent.

The literacy rate of people with voice and speech disabilities is 38.8, of which 44.5 percent of men and 31.4 percent of women. The literacy rate of people with mental or psychosocial disabilities is 46.3 percent, while that of men is 53.9 percent and that of women is 37.7 percent. The literacy rate of people with hemophilia is 66.1, in which 76.7 percent of men and 56.4 percent of women. the literacy rate of people with autism is 30.4, with 38.8 percent of men and 23.6 percent of women. The literacy rate of people with multiple disabilities is 47.9 percent, while literacy is 53.1 percent and 41.1 percent for women (The Himalayan Times, 2024).

Education level	Frequency	Percent
Illiterate	52	26
Literate	25	12.5
Primary (1-8)	20	10
Secondary (9-12)	69	34.5
Bachelors	32	16
Masters and above	2	1
Total	200	100

Table Description: Majority (34.5%) of the respondents have completed secondary level of education, followed by 26% of the respondents being illiterate. 16% of the respondents have completed Bachelors Level education, 12.5% are literate, 10% have completed primary level of education and only 1% of the total respondents have education level of Master's or above.

Membership in Organizations

Memberships	N	Percent
Political parties	6	2.31
Saving group or cooperative	51	19.62
Non-Governmental organization	10	3.85

Organizations of persons with disabilities	164	63.08
No Membership	29	11.15
Total No. of Memberships in Different Organizations	269	100

Table Description: This is a multiple-choice question. Out of total research respondents (200) in the research, the research has shown that few research participants have membership in more than one organization. 6 have membership in political parties, 51 participants have membership in a saving group or cooperative, 10 participants are members of NGOs, 164 participants are members of organizations of persons with disabilities and 29 participants do not have membership in any type of organizations.

Employment Status

When asked about the employment status of our research participants, 77% respondents said that currently they were not working. 6% said they were self-employed. 5.5% each said they were involved in government jobs and private sector jobs. 5% said they had jobs in INGOs/NGOs and 1% said they had other forms of employment.

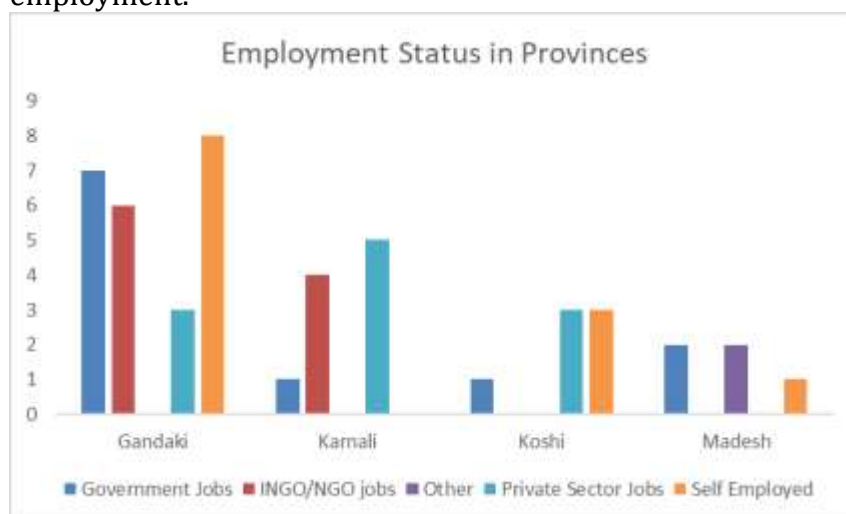


Chart Description: Respondents' Employment Status in Different Provinces

Among **those who were not working**, we asked about their **status of unemployment**. 40% said they were homemakers, 36% were students, 19% said that they were not able to work and 5% said they were retired. We also asked them if they had any **income source**. 64% said they had no source of income and 36% said they had some source of income.

We asked in detail about the **(multiple) sources of income** that those individuals without employment had. Among the respondents, 38.8% received disability allowance, 32.5% received family support, 19.4% received scholarships and 9.4% received allowance through program participation.

Knowledge of Justice Mechanisms

We asked our research participants to tell us about **all** the international and national legal frameworks that guarantee rights of women and persons with disabilities. The

stated provisions, presented on abbreviated forms were as follows: (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), Act Relating to the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ARPD), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

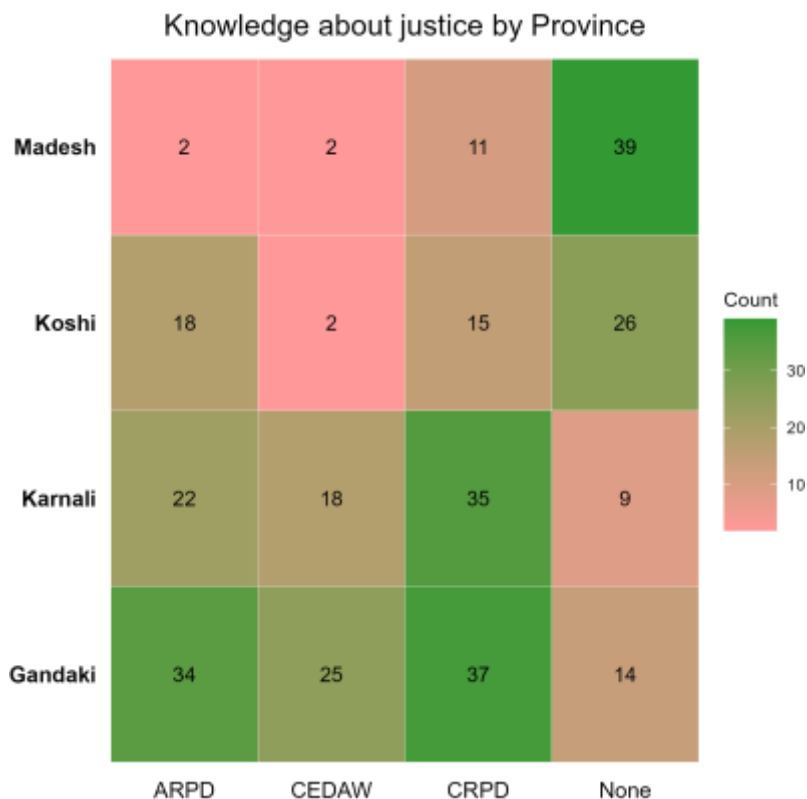
Knowledge of Legal Provisions

Province	CRPD	CEDAW	ARPD	None of the above
Gandaki	37	25	34	14
Karnali	35	18	22	9
Koshi	15	2	18	26
Madhesh	11	2	2	39

Table Description: When asked about the knowledge of justice and legal provisions among research participants, the table shows that most of them are aware about CRPD (Gandaki:37, Karnali: 35, Koshi: 15 and Madhesh: 11). Regarding CEDAW, the numbers are as given (Gandaki: 25, Karnali: 18, Koshi: 2, Madhesh: 2). On knowledge about ARPD, the numbers are as given (Gandaki: 34, Karnali: 22, Koshi: 18, Madhesh: 2). For those participants who are not aware about any of the legal provisions, the numbers are as follows: (Gandaki: 14, Karnali: 9, Koshi: 26, Madhesh: 39)

While comparing the above given table, it is clear that participants from Madhesh are not very aware about the legal provisions. In comparison, participants from Gandaki province are much more aware. Our research has shown similar data, since it has been clear that access to justice in Madhesh province is much more difficult for women with disabilities than other provinces.

A heatmap from the table below is provided below to help readers understand about knowledge on justice from a provincial lens. The data shows that women with disabilities in Madhesh province have less knowledge on legal provisions.



Knowledge of Service Providers

We asked the research participants if they are aware about different services within the justice mechanism in Nepal.

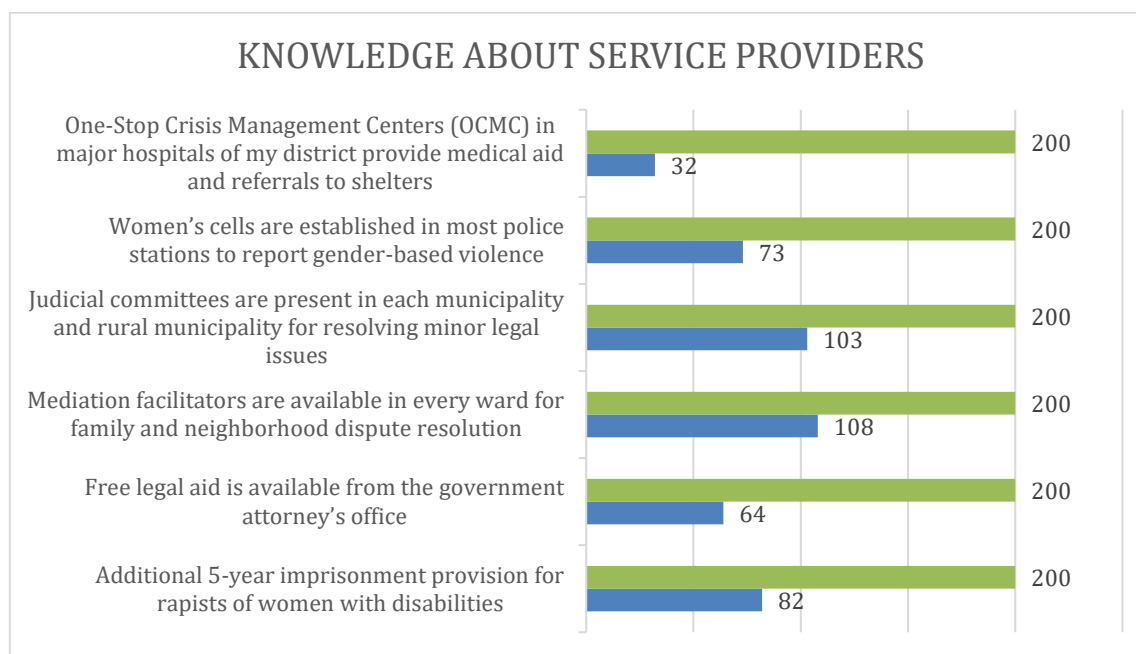
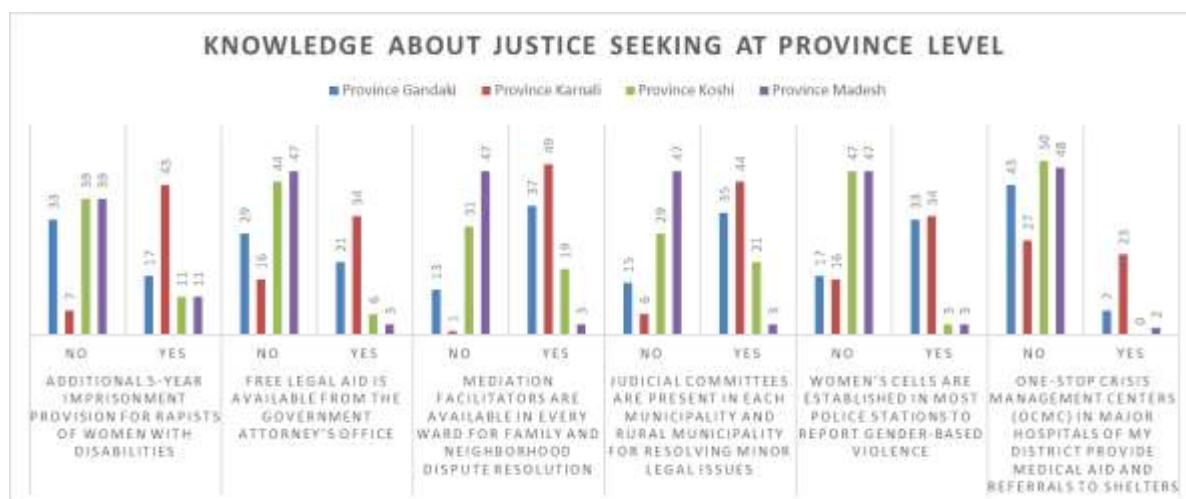


Image Description: We asked if the respondents are aware of the knowledge about the services (related to justice mechanism) provided at their provinces and asked them to let us know which all provisions they are aware about. Since this is a multiple-choice answer, out of the total responses received (462), 82 are aware about the Additional 5-year imprisonment provision for rapists of women with disabilities. 64 are aware about Free legal aid that is available from the government attorney's office. 108 respondents know that mediation facilitators are available in every ward for family and neighborhood dispute resolution. 103 respondents know that Judicial committees are present in each municipality and rural municipality for resolving minor legal issues. 73 survey respondents know that Women's cells are established in most police stations to report gender-based violence. Only 32 respondents are aware that One-Stop Crisis Management Centers (OCMC) in major hospitals provide medical aid and referrals to shelters and 55 of them are not aware about any of the legal provisions.

A graph below shows the knowledge about justice seeking of the research participants, according to different provinces



Experience of Violence

The participants were asked if they have faced violence from family, community, workplace and in public spaces. 79% respondents said they have faced violence and 21% respondents said they have not faced any violence.

A detailed overview has been provided in the **table below** which has shown the number of respondents who have responded to if they have ever faced violence or not. In Gandaki province, 16 respondents have said No and 34 respondents have said Yes. In Karnali province, 5 respondents have said No and 45 respondents have said Yes. In Koshi province, 3 respondents have said No and 47 respondents have said Yes. In Madhesh province, 18 respondents have said No and 32 respondents have said Yes.

	Violence Ever Faced		
	No	Yes	Total
Gandaki	16	34	50

Karnali	5	45	50
Koshi	3	47	50
Madhesh	18	32	50
	42	158	200

Types of Violence Faced

When asked about the type of violence faced, many respondents have shared that they have faced physical violence, sexual violence and disability-based discrimination in all the above-mentioned areas (family, community, workplace and public place). In addition, most respondents have also faced violence through lack of care/love during childhood, barriers to quality education, denial of property rights, restricted mobility and hindrance in economic empowerment. Some respondents have also faced violence through differences in wages in the workplace.

Violence Faced in Family: 63.5% respondents said they have not faced any violence from family members and 36.5% said they have faced violence from family members.

Violence Faced in Community: 50% respondents said they have not faced any violence from the community and 50% said they have faced violence from the community.

Violence Faced in Workplace: A striking 53.5% respondents said that they do not work. 37% respondents said they have not faced violence in the workplace and 9.5% of the respondents said they have faced violence in the workplace.

Violence Faced in Public Space: Out of a total 93 respondents who answered in yes or no, 87.09% shared that they have faced violence in public spaces and 12.91% respondents have stated that they have not faced violence in public space.

A heatmap is provided **below** to show the intensity of violence faced by the survey participants (those who have replied Yes to “Violence Ever Faced”) and the type of violence.

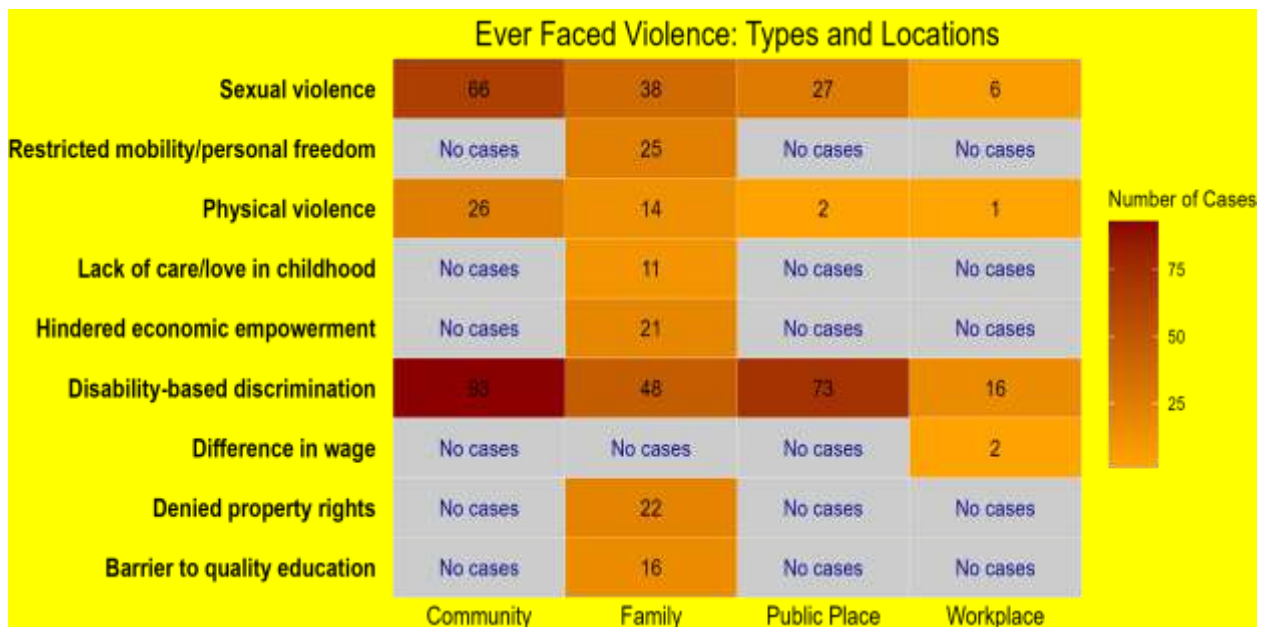


Image Description: The image above shows details about the type of violence faced and the locations (community, family, public place and workplace) where the participants faced violence. Disability based discrimination is seen to be highest in the community (93) and public places (73).

Respondents also shared that they have faced sexual violence mostly at the community level (66). In addition, at the community level, 26 respondents have shared that they have also faced physical violence. Many participants have shared that they have faced many types of violence from their families. 38 respondents shared that they have faced sexual violence, 25 respondents shared that they had restricted mobility, 14 respondents shared that they faced physical violence, 11 respondents shared that they did not get enough affection, 21 respondents shared that they faced hindrances in economic empowerment, 48 participants shared that they faced disability-based discrimination, 22 said they were denied property rights and 16 said they had barriers to quality education.

At the public space, 27 participants said they have faced sexual violence, 2 said they faced physical violence. At the workplace, 6 participants have experienced sexual violence, 1 participant said she experienced physical violence, 16 said they faced disability related discrimination and 2 responded that there was in difference in wage because of their disability.

The case study presented below shows how girls and women with disabilities are very vulnerable to different forms of violence within their family and community.

Case Study Two: Sexual Violence within family (Karnali Province)

Bimala (Pseudonym) is an 11-year-old Dalit girl with intellectual disability born in a poor family. Her parents separated when she was very young. Her mother left her in her father's care and remarried. Man. Bimala then lived with her father and elder brother. Later mother came to bring her to live together with her step- father. Her mother worked as a maid to make ends meet. So, Bimala was often left alone in the house. One day when mother came back home from work, she found Bimala showing signs of distress. She was shouting

and trying to sway something. She took Bimala to the hospital and was referred to OCMC as she showed signs of sexual abuse. Being a young girl with an intellectual disability, it was difficult to identify the perpetrator. The neighbors were able to identify the stepfather as the abuser. Stepfather was taken into custody. However, her mother refused to file the case. Bimala was taken to a safe house for four months. Safe house contacted her biological father. She is now currently living with her biological father and elder brother who is now married.

Case Study Three: Prolong Multiple Sexual Abuse (Gandaki Province)

Nisha (Pseudonym) is a 15-year-old girl from Janajati community. She was born with low vision. She was the youngest child in a family with five children. Both of her parents worked as laborers to make ends meet. They also drank alcohol regularly. Her parents sent Nisha to work in a hotel nearby. They, however, did not check on her welfare lost in their own work and alcohol consumption. The hotel where she worked sold heavy alcohol and meat. The customers started sexually abusing her. For a period of more than a year, she was regularly sexually abused by several people who frequented the hotel as customers. Community leaders sensing something was not going right, reported about this to a well-known shelter home run by Kopila Nepal. The shelter home rescued her. She had severe infection on her vagina due to prolonged multiple sexual abuse. She also showed signs of sex addiction. She would frequently masturbate or ask staff at shelter homes to touch her private parts. She is receiving regular physical and psychological care in a shelter home which is helping her recovery. However, the legal team at the shelter home is in a dilemma on how to report and file the case. The justice system requires the identification of the perpetrator to file the case. Being a minor with low vision, she does not have the memory and visual recollection of who violated her.

Family and Community Attitudes

The role of the family in supporting persons with disabilities is critical. Strong family willpower, even in the face of poverty, can make a significant difference. However, in many cases, families do not acknowledge or support the person with disability, which exacerbates their struggles. Discriminatory attitudes within communities also contribute to the marginalization of women with disabilities. There is often a lack of awareness and understanding, leading to neglect or abuse from family members and the community.

“Women with disabilities are particularly vulnerable to violence, both at home and in the community. The assumption that they are less likely to be believed or able to fight back increases their risk of exploitation. Lack of family acceptance is identified as a major gap in the successful rehabilitation and empowerment of women with disabilities. This social barrier prevents women with disabilities from fully participating in society.” - Shelter House Manager, Gandaki Province

Justice Seeking After Facing Violence

We asked the respondents if they ever decided to seek justice for the violence that they faced.

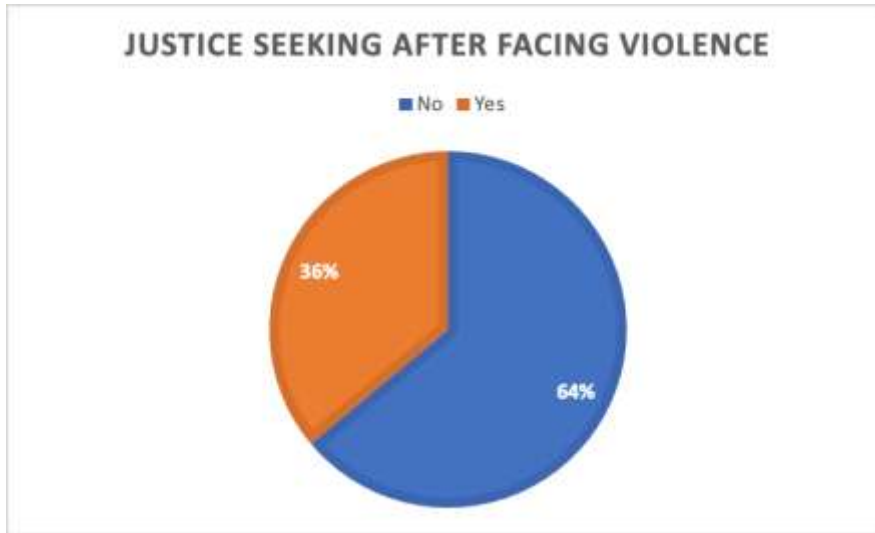


Image Description: In an alarming response, out of a total of 158 respondents who have said that they have faced violence, 64% of the respondents have said that they have not sought justice for the justice violation that they faced. 36% of the respondents have sought justice.

When asked about the services they have used while seeking justice, a total of 61 respondents replied. 93.4% respondents have taken support from used the police station, 3.3% respondents have been supported by used the ward-level mediation center, 1.6% respondents have used the municipality judicial committee and OCMC respectively. This can be seen in the table **below**

Type of Service Used within Justice Mechanism	N	Percent
Ward-level Mediation Center	2	3.30
Municipality Judicial Committee	1	1.60
Police Station	57	93.40
One-Stop Crisis Management Center (OCMC)	1	1.60
Total	61	100

Although respondents have shared that they go to the police station to report violence, one of the case studies has shown that the police discriminated against women based on her disability and did not report violence.

The research has shown that women with disabilities face multiple challenges and many intersectional barriers that hinder their access to justice. Although there are few women with disabilities who have chosen the formal justice mechanism, our survey data has shown that the majority of the women have not chosen to report the violence that they have faced. This chapter compliments the quantitative data by focusing on presenting findings from the qualitative data generated from Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

conducted in four provinces with various professionals working in justice mechanisms. These conversations were conducted during the site visits.

The KII was conducted via series of informal conversations with professionals working on following structure of justice mechanism:

1. OCMC (One Stop Management Crisis Centre)
2. Safe House/Rehabilitation Center
3. Local Police Station (Women's Cell)
4. District Court
5. NFDN Office
6. Disability Rights Activists

The qualitative data analysis has been done by generating themes from interviews taken with different professionals who are involved in the justice mechanism process. In order to create a clear outlook of the analysis, the themes have been generated according to data collected in different provinces that have been visited during the field visits. The themes have been supported with sub-themes and quotes generated during Key Informant Interviews (KII).

Chapter Four: Intersectional Barriers in Justice Mechanism in Nepal

Access to Justice is a basic principle of rule of law which provides a fundamental right to every citizen. Access to justice comprises legal awareness, legal protection, adjudication, legal aid, enforcement and civil society oversight. The Constitution of Nepal on its Article 20 has guaranteed the right to justice as a fundamental right of Nepali citizens. (Forum for Women, Law and Development (FWLD), 2024).

This chapter is broadly divided into different sections. First, understanding of four different types of barriers is discussed: Institutional and policy barrier, social barrier, physical barrier and communication barrier. In the second section, above mentioned barriers are discussed in relation to the experience of seeking justice by women with disabilities in Nepal. The chapter ends with discussion of good practices within the local level.

Analyzing Intersectional Barriers in Accessing Justice for Women with Disabilities

The United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in its preamble recognizes the connection between disability and barriers in the following way:

“Disability is an evolving concept and that disability results from the interaction between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”¹

The CRPD brings a historical shift on how disability has been understood worldwide, limiting it to physical and medical aspects of disability. This definition clearly points out that the marginalization and vulnerability that persons with disabilities experience has little to do with their physical and medical condition. Rather, the major cause of marginalization of persons with disability are the barriers they face.

This points to the need for conceptual clarity on how barriers are defined and conceptualized. The World Health Organization (WHO) describes barriers as being more than just physical obstacles.

“Barriers are factors in a person’s environment that, through their absence or presence, limit functioning and create disability.”

A barrier can also be understood as an obstacle or anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability.

Barriers can be both visible and invisible. Visible barriers are easily seen and recognized. Invisible barriers such as social stigma, discrimination and stereotypes cannot always

¹ [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(un.org\)](https://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.asp)

be seen directly, but they are felt deeply by the persons with disabilities who experience it. Thus, in this report we combine both forms of barriers. Earlier, barriers were broadly categorized into two areas: physical and attitudinal. Decades of research on persons with disabilities have now expanded these barriers into several categories. Scholars have identified six barriers: attitudinal, communication, physical, policy, programmatic, and social.²

Synthesizing the literature review and the experiences of barriers of women with disability, the research report focuses on four key barriers: Social, Physical, Communication and Institution and Policy. The definition of these barriers is also explored in the table below.

Type of Barrier	Definition
Institutional & Policy Barrier	Institutional and policy barriers occur due to lack of awareness or enforcement of existing laws and regulations to protect the rights of persons with disabilities. Additionally, this also includes programmatic barriers that limit the effective delivery of a public or private program for persons with disabilities.
Social Barrier	Social barriers are related to the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, learn, work and age – or social determinants of health – that can contribute to decreased functioning among people with disabilities. This also includes stigma, prejudice and stereotypes about persons with disabilities that impede their full participation in all aspects of society.
Physical Barrier	Physical barriers are structural obstacles in natural or manmade environments that prevent or block mobility (moving around in the environment) or access.
Communication Barrier	Communication barriers are difficulties experienced by persons with disabilities that limit their capacity to receive or send information, and to communicate with people.

Table Description: The table presents these barriers separately for conceptual categorization and clarity of understanding. However, none of these barriers work in isolation. These barriers are deeply interconnected and are shaped by intersectional identities of women with disabilities.

In Nepal, the justice system faces several barriers that impede fair and efficient access to justice for its citizens. These obstacles range from structural and systemic issues to socio-economic and cultural factors. Some of the key barriers include complex and slow judicial process, limited access to legal services, corruption and political interference and ineffective legal aid systems. These challenges become further complex for women with disabilities who experience intersectional barriers that are shaped by their intersectional identities of being women with disabilities.

² CDC. (2019, September 4). *Disability and Health Disability Barriers* / CDC. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/disability-barriers.html>

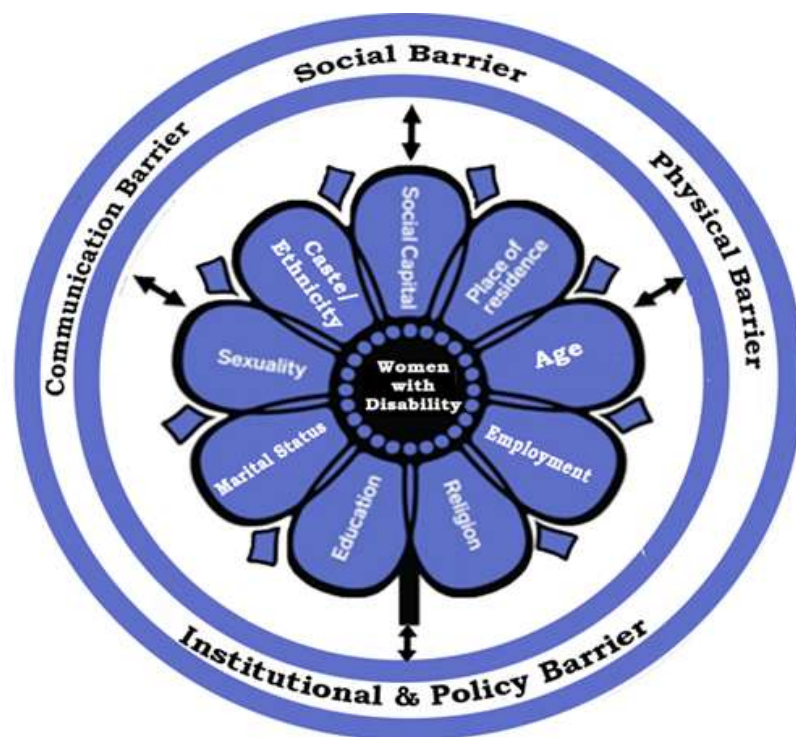


Image Description: Intersectional Barriers experienced by Women with Disabilities: The figure above explains the four different types of barriers (social barrier, physical barrier, communication barrier and institutional and policy barrier) faced by women with disabilities. The figure also integrates an intersectional approach within these barriers by including caste/ethnicity, sexuality, marital status, education, religion, employment, age, place of residence and social capital.

Institutional and Policy Barriers

This section presents the findings of the institutional and policy barriers that currently exist in justice mechanism in Nepal

Power Imbalance

The transition to federalism has caused a power imbalance, where local governments lack the necessary autonomy and resources to implement the national policies effectively. Local government entities are often waiting for central government actions to move forward, leading to stagnation in service delivery. Local governments often lack the power and resources to implement policies effectively, leading to a disconnect between federal policies and local execution. There is a notable gap in the successful translation of policies into actionable programs on the ground.

“There is a big gap in federalism, the sole responsibility is given to the local government even though they don’t have power. They are waiting for the government to start the policy that has been developed and take it into implementation. The local govt is lost on what to do and what not to do and they do not have enough budget for different activities focusing on persons with disabilities. In Koshi Province, the concerns of persons with disabilities are looked after by the Ministry of Social Development.” - Disability Rights Activist, Koshi Province

The frequent changes in policymakers and ministries hinder advocacy efforts, as previous achievements are undone when new personnel take charge. This instability prevents consistent progress on issues like accessibility and justice for persons with disabilities.

“The shifting responsibilities of disability issues across various ministries (from Social Development to Education and now Sports and Social Welfare) have led to a fragmented approach to policy making and a lack of coherence in addressing the needs of persons with disabilities.” - Person with disability, Madhesh Province

Vague Policy Language

Policies related to disability and gender are often not specific enough, with little focus on the needs of women with disabilities. The lack of targeted provisions in the budget, particularly for access to justice for women with disabilities reflects this gap. While there are efforts to create inclusive policies at the provincial level, the actual implementation at local levels is often inconsistent. The political will of local leaders plays a significant role in pushing forward policies, but frequent political changes affect continuity.

“Gandaki province has a draft of the Province Level Disability Act but it is not yet endorsed by the government till the date of research field visit. This Act helps in lessening the gap that has been created in the vague policy language in different documents for women with disabilities.” - Disability rights activist, Gandaki Province

Status of Policies at Province Level

The following table below presents the status of policy level and challenges in each specific province. This table is based on the information we gathered from case studies and key informant interviews

Province	Status of Policy Formulation	Challenge
Gandaki	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Province level Disability coordination committee is formed ❖ Disability rights activists in consultation with stakeholders have supported in formulating Disability Rights Act of Gandaki Province 	The draft policy is in process of being passed by the parliament at the province level.
Koshi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Province level Disability coordination committee is formed ❖ Formulation of Directive of Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation Program 2080 	Province level disability specific policy being discussed.
Madhesh	Consultation with different stakeholders on formulation of disability coordination committee and province level disability policy.	Constant change in ministry portfolio is responsible for persons with disabilities. Due to constant change in ministry portfolio, the responsibility of person with disabilities also keeps changing and making it even more difficult.
Karnali	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Province level Disability coordination committee is formed ❖ Province level Gender and Social inclusion policy is formed within which disability is integrated. ❖ Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation Partnership Program Operations Manual (2081), 2024 	Province level disability specific policy being discussed.

Maya Timalisina (Member, Planning Commission, Gandaki)

“The budget is never allocated for women with disabilities, in women development related funding, it could go, or disability related, but access to justice (funding) has not even occurred in anyone’s mind (There is very vague language used in the budget planning process specially for disabled people and there is no category for women with disabilities). An additional problem is when the province does not really have any implementation power due to which it is difficult to make certain kinds of decisions. We are still far from talking about access to justice because programs are still focused on basic issues related to disabilities. There are no discussions related to making the justice mechanism inclusive”

Systemic Barriers to Justice for Individuals with Disabilities

Legal Process Gaps

When it comes to addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities, especially women, there is a significant gap in the legal processes. This research has shown that the judicial system often overlooks cases involving persons with disabilities, particularly when the survivor is a person with intellectual disabilities, autism, psychosocial disabilities, deafblind and other profound and severe disabilities.

“Today, justice is divisive, it depends on whose party you belong to, whose ethnicity you belong to, which city you belong to. It is difficult for people who have no connection. The truth is that the attention that any case depends upon the network and personal connections rather than any systematic approach” - Disability rights activist, Pokhara

Another issue is the absence of specific guidelines and laws addressing the rights of persons with disabilities, particularly in relation to judiciary, property issues, and gender-based violence (GBV). This creates a bigger impact in the overall upbringing of women with disabilities because they are often treated as liabilities, mostly by their immediate family members, denying them of property rights.

“Women with disabilities face multiple marginalization. When they get married, many will not register their marriage and will have increased dowry expectations for marrying a woman with disability. In some cases, these women are accused of being a witch after they get married. The overall justice mechanism is not inclusive and the mindset among lawmakers is also negative when it comes to women with disabilities” - Shelter Home Counselor, Janakpur

Case Study Four: Mother of a Girl Child with Disability (Gandaki Province)

Kopila (Pseudonym) is a 35-year-old Janajati woman belonging to a middle-class family. She had relatives in Hong Kong. Upon finishing her school, she went to Hong Kong to support her family and make money for her comfortable future. There, she fell in love with a man. They began to see the future together. Kopila contributed a significant amount of her savings to buy a house together. They eventually got married. Only after marriage, she came to know that he already had a wife and children. He had a history of abuse with his first wife, which Kopila was not aware of. She was not treated well with her in-law. She was emotionally and physically abused by her husband and in-laws during her pregnancy. They kept pressuring her to give birth to a son. They told her “If the child is a girl, you better abort it”. However, she carried her pregnancy to term and gave birth to a girl. The abuse that she experienced grew within the family. Her child also showed symptoms of slow growth. The child also showed symptoms of going through seizures. With a lot of struggles, with support from her parents she took the child to hospital for medical support. The child was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy. Her husband’s physical and emotional abuse increased even more after that. One day, when the violence escalated, she ran to her neighbor’s house for shelter, who helped her report the case. However, police denied reporting the case. They said “We see no proof of any physical violence in your body”. Kopila sought refuge in a shelter home with her daughter. The activists at shelter home called out the police officers on their bias and supported her to register the case of domestic violence followed by divorce case. Kopila struggled in her quest for justice. The court would set the dates of her hearing at the last minute. She had to travel a long distance with her child with disability to go to the hearings. The hearings would also be cancelled last minute, often after she reached the court itself. With a lot of struggles, she managed to get divorced with alimony. She currently receives an amount of 8,000 rupees per month to take care of daughter. She also received some amount of alimony that she has kept secure as saving for her future. While living in a

shelter home, she got trained as a counselor. She is now currently working as a house mother for the shelter home that houses sexually abused girls.

Case Study five: Sexual Abuse of Woman with Multiple Disability (Koshi Province)

Kala is a 17-year-old woman with multiple disabilities. She is a little person and has intellectual disability. She lived with her mother, who worked as a domestic helper to make ends meet. While mother was away for work, the neighbor raped Kala. Kala's employers were sensitive and kind people and sensed something was wrong with Kala. They supported her to file the case. The police were called, the people in the neighborhood got agitated and tried to burn the alleged perpetrator's house. Kala was then sent to a safe house. The safe house had limited physical infrastructure and human resources to support Kala's recovery. She was mostly left alone and became isolated within the safehouse. Due to her trauma, she was also very violent with other people in the safe house, fearing they were trying to harm her. Disability rights activists pursued the case actively. This resulted in the perpetrator getting 8 years of sentence. Kala is in a difficult situation. The safe house is not able to house her longer. They want to rehabilitate her with her mother. However, her mother is reluctant to have her back. Social workers dealing with the case told the study team that her mother is receiving disability allowance on behalf of Kala.

Person who helped in Justice process	Frequency	Percent
Family	5	36
Friend	2	14
Police	6	43
Teacher	1	7
Total	14	100

Table Description: When asked if anyone has helped them in seeking justice, only 14 individuals replied. Out of the total, 43% responded that the police have helped them, followed by 36% respondents' families have helped them, 14% responded that their friends helped them and 7% responded that their teachers helped them.

Experience of the service used	Frequency	Percent
Negative	24	42
Positive	33	58
Total	57	100

Table Description: When asked about their experience while using justice mechanism services, out of 57 participants, 58% (33 respondents) said they have positive experience and 42% (24 participants) said they have negative experience.

Respondents who said they had negative experiences shared that they have been discriminated against because of their disability.

Respondents who shared that they had positive experiences have shared various different experiences. We identified a few positive experiences and asked respondents to identify all that they have experienced. Out of all the offered choices, respondents had a positive experience because service provider's setup was accessible and disability-friendly (54.1%), Staff were friendly and helpful (13.1%), disability-specific accommodations were provided, and Offices were physically accessible (11.5% each) and staff addressed their disability-related needs (9.8%). A total of 61 respondents have responded to this question. A detailed data is outlined in the **image below**.



Social Barrier

This section presents data on social barriers that women with disabilities face while seeking justice.

Case Study Six: Discrimination within Justice Mechanism (Madhesh Province)

Srijana is a 20-year-old woman with intellectual disability. She belongs to the Majhi (fisherman) community, a marginalized indigenous group in Nepal. Her family was very poor. Her parents and family members showed signs of mental health issues. Social workers while visiting the field, came to know about her history of being sexually abused by the man in the neighborhood. She was four weeks pregnant. Social worker brought her to the safe house. She had a miscarriage within 12 days of arrival in a safe house. Social workers shared the challenge of filing the case. The safe house took her to OCMC to get her physical examination. The forensic examination had lost its significance due to its delay of several months after incidence of rape. Safe house directed her case to the police station. The Police officers were dismissive of registering her case. They told the social workers "She is disabled, she cannot speak well enough to give testimony for filing of the case." Social workers supported the process of receiving disability identity cards. This has enabled her to receive disability allowance given by the government. However, the survivor was returned to the community by the safe house due to the limited capacity of the house. She

is now back in the same community where her perpetrator lives. She is very vulnerable to abuse in future.

Case Study Seven: Survivor turned hostile (Karnali Province)

Sunita is a 27-year-old woman with physical disability born in remote district - Dailekh. With support of her family members, she pursued her higher education in pharmacy. She had been successful in obtaining a license to run a pharmacy. Considering the reservation for persons with disabilities as government officials, Sunita started to prepare for the civil service examination. She moved to the center of Karnali province: Birendranagar. In order to meet the cost of living in the city, she ran a small pharmacy with investment from her friends and family. A young man came into contact with her through Facebook. She showed interest in her and professed his love towards her. He also started talking about marrying and having a future together. As a woman with disability in society, which views marriage prospects of women with disabilities next to non-existent, Sunita fell into his trap. The man not only sexually abused her but also started extorting money from her to fund his own living expenses. He was also coincidentally preparing for the civil service examination. He got selected for the government job and was transferred to Rukum, a different district. He started ignoring her and stopped his contact all together. Sunita reached out to disability rights organizations and women rights organizations who helped her to register the case. The case was filed at the district police station. She also had her physical examination, which was delayed. The case moved on further to the court. Sunita faced pressure from the perpetrator and family to drop the case. She also felt societal stigma and judgement towards her. In the court, she said that "Everything that happened between her and the man was based on her consent". This resulted in the case being dismissed.

This case is a perfect example of women with disabilities being more vulnerable to abuse despite their access to education and employment. Even though they may seek a formal justice process, they are likely to be hostile due to pressure from perpetrators and societal stigma.

Case Study Eight: Shame and Stigma of Sexual Violence (Koshi Province)

Gita is an 18-year-old Janajati woman with intellectual disability. Being from a poor family, her family members had to leave her unattended, while they worked in the fields. She was being regularly abused by one of her neighbors. The family were unaware about it until she stopped having her periods. By the time they figured out the details, she was already 12 weeks pregnant. The family took her to the nearby hospital for the abortion. The family was either unaware or not concerned about the incidence of reporting the case of rape. Due to societal conditionings, they felt shame and stigma of having an unmarried daughter being pregnant without marriage. The local hospital being small did not have abortion facilities. She was referred to the OCMC within the provincial hospital. The law of abortion in Nepal permits abortion within 12 weeks of gestation upon request of a woman. However, abortion is permitted within 18 weeks in case of rape, incest or if pregnancy poses danger to the women's life or physical or mental health or if there is a fetal abnormality. OCMC supported having the case registered while offering Gita abortion service. The case is currently ongoing in court. Gita is now currently living in a safe house.

Physical Barrier and Communication Barrier

This section presents findings on physical barrier

Non-Inclusive Infrastructure

It is difficult for persons with disabilities to integrate themselves in areas where there is no inclusiveness in infrastructure and women with disabilities find it often difficult to involve themselves in different programs due to lack of inclusive infrastructure. The lack of accessible infrastructure means that even though there are policies which are aimed at inclusivity, however, in practice it is different.

“Pokhara, often known for its tourism friendly economy, often seems lacking in terms of inclusiveness of persons with disabilities. The lack of accessible toilets, transportation, and physical infrastructure severely limits the ability of disabled people to participate in society, especially in tourist-heavy areas like Pokhara.” - Government Employee, Gandaki Province

“Women with disabilities who are students often find it challenging to go to campus premises where there are no disability-friendly toilets. They have bladder problems because they are not able to go to the toilet as easily as others. There is also another problem where schools and teachers are not supportive or encouraging to admit women with disabilities to their schools. They try to avoid talking to them and don’t support them in the admission process.” Person with Disability, Gandaki Province

Lack of Inclusive Infrastructure and Difficulty in Social Integration

There is an urgent need for inclusive infrastructure for women with disabilities at the local level. Community policies that support the social integration of people with disabilities need to be developed on an immediate basis, ensuring they are not marginalized or excluded from access to justice and resources. Surprisingly, in Madhesh Province, a person with disability requires to climb four floors to get a disability identity card, with no lift or ramp in place for those with physical disability.

“We need to have a collective effort in advocating for inclusive infrastructures for persons with disabilities. The local government should take initiative to work towards inclusive facilities at the local level. They should also make daycare centers for children with disabilities in order to help families. Additionally, I believe that women with disabilities should have a way through which they can be integrated in the market system for them to have financial independence.” - Shelter Home Counselor, Karnali Province

Limitations of Safe Houses for Survivors with Disabilities

In all four provinces, safe houses have been operating in different capacities. This has helped women with disabilities in a great manner. However, because of

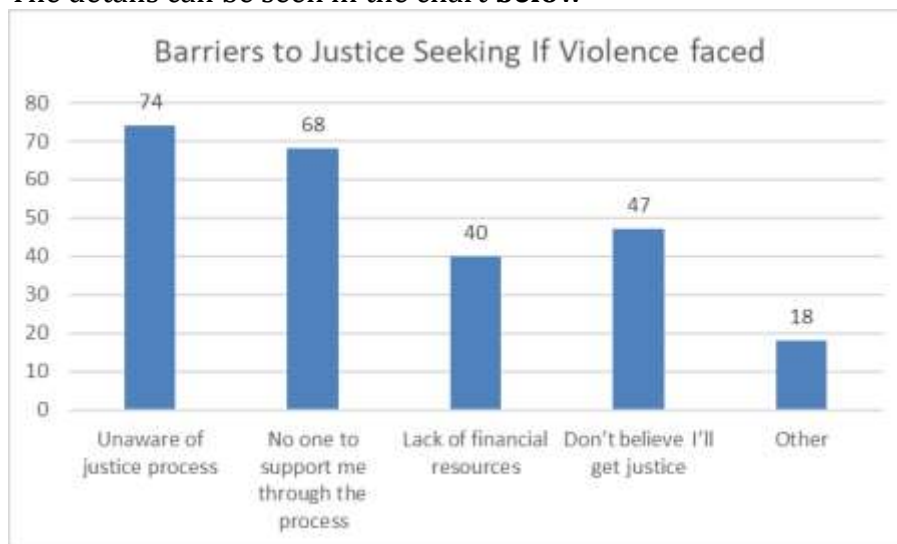
funding constraints, it becomes difficult for the safe houses to continue their services to GBV survivors for a long period of time. There are various challenges in running a safe house. The limited financial resources for safe houses, including the use of petty cash for survivor support, poses a challenge for sustaining services for survivors of violence.

There is a constant issue of funding the safehouse because of ownership problems. The federal, province and local governments should try to collaborate to run the safehouse. However, after federalism, there is no clear policy defining how the safehouse must be handled and by whom. Even with such problems, the safehouses are still running and providing temporary shelter for women.

“We have limited resources. Whenever any case of women with disabilities comes to us, we try to help the woman by keeping her in the safe house for a few days and then to try and reintegrate them back in the family and the community. But there is a big challenge in this also. Most of the time, families prefer to not take the woman back. There is also a problem of helping women with intellectual disabilities. Even though we want to help these women, we do not have the means or resources to do so and we have to prevent them from coming to the safe house.” - Safe House Counselor, Madhesh Province

“The main problem is that safe houses have not been given as much importance by the state like other issues. That is why we don’t fall in the priority category and we have to manage the funding for the safe house by ourselves, which is challenging at certain times.” - Safe House Counselor, Karnali Province

We wanted to know the various barriers to justice that our respondents faced. The total number of respondents (174) shared their experience. We provided a few options to them. Data showed that many (74) of them were not aware of the justice process and there was no one to support them (68) in the process. Few also said that they did not have financial resources (40) and some believed that they would not get justice (47). The details can be seen in the chart **below**

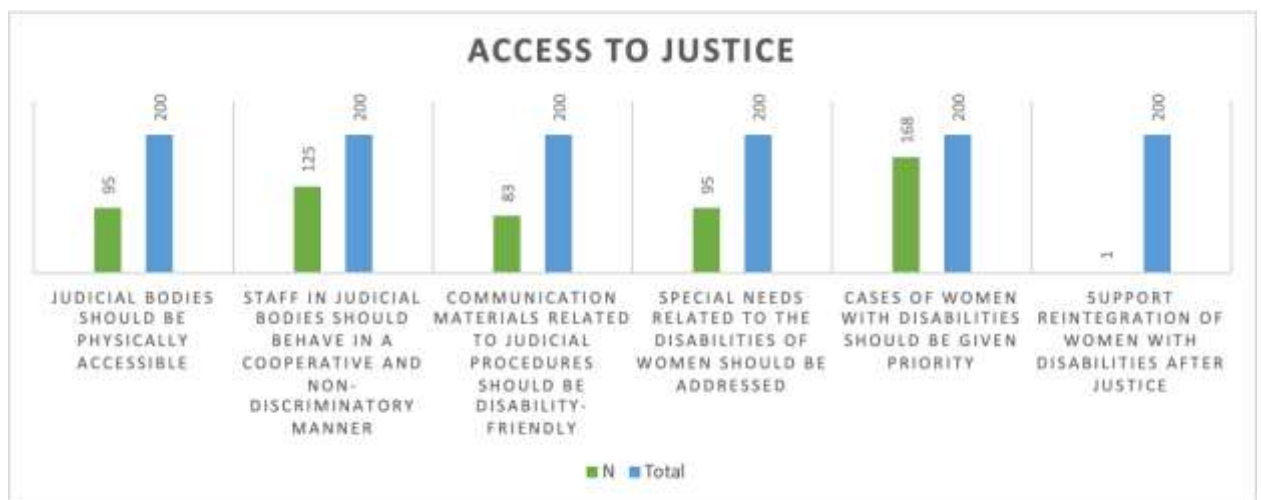


Few respondents also shared that there were other reasons for barriers to justice. Some of them did not understand much about the justice mechanism, some of them felt scared to report, some resisted verbally, some violence did not feel serious enough to be reported, some felt awkward to be stared in the roads while seeking justice.

Recommendations for Inclusive Justice Mechanism

The survey respondents were asked to choose different enabling conditions that would help in access to justice mechanisms for women with disabilities. We provided multiple choices and asked them to choose all that they think is important.

In the **chart below**, among the total participants (200) responses received, 95 respondents have shared that Judicial bodies should be physically accessible. 125 respondents have shared that Staff in judicial bodies should behave in a cooperative and non-discriminatory manner. 83 respondents have shared that Communication materials related to judicial procedures should be disability friendly. 95 respondents believe that specific needs related to the disabilities of women should be addressed. 168 respondents have shared that Cases of women with disabilities should be given priority and 1 respondent shared that there should be Support to reintegration of women with disabilities after justice.



Disability Inclusive Education and Training

Programs that focus on teaching teachers, police officers, and community members how to interact with and support persons with disabilities are crucial. Without proper training, these groups often unknowingly perpetuate harmful practices. There is a need for available and new shelters to be accessible for all kinds of women, including women with disabilities.

“There are efforts made from the partnership of local government, NGOs and disability rights organizations who are all working together in Koshi Province and have covered a wide range of issues. Examples are Disability Rehabilitation Program (अपाङ्गता पुनर्स्थापना कार्यक्रम). There is also Disability Help Desk (अपाङ्गता सहायता कक्ष) whose procedure has been designed by provincial govt. The employment for the above-mentioned employees is funded by both local and provincial govt. There are employees (persons with disabilities) employed by the Nepal govt. There is also a disability help desk for those who want information.” - Disability rights activist, Koshi Province

Lack of Awareness in Institutions

From schools to government offices to the police force, there is a widespread lack of understanding regarding how to support women with disabilities. People often fail to realize that this is a cross-cutting issue and often needs attention through a holistic approach rather than a single approach. This leads to further alienation and missed opportunities for inclusion. There is a need for continuous training programs for officials and staff in various sectors (e.g., education, healthcare, law enforcement) to ensure better handling of issues related to women with disabilities, particularly those with intellectual and other developmental disabilities.

“There is a need to disseminate the reports by development partners to various government entities with findings related to women with disabilities. Every province needs to work together to continue this kind of program. There is a need to develop strategies and planning that are focused on women with disabilities in order to understand their needs and cater accordingly. Additionally, this will also help in awareness raising.” - Government Employee, Koshi Province

Good Practices: Individual and Systematic Efforts

This section presents case studies and summarized findings from the key informant interviews.

Case Study Nine: Story of support and timely interventions (Madhesh Province)

Mira is an 11-year-old girl living with her single mother. Her mother worked as a maid to make their ends meet. Sometimes she was able to take Mira with her to work. When she could not, she would leave Mira in care of her neighbor. She was raped by the male tenant who lived in the neighbor's house. Upon finding out about the incident, Mira's mother took her to the police station. Her physical examination that included collection of vaginal swabs was able to be done within 7 days of incidence in the nearest OCMC. The perpetrator was easily identified and also convicted based on forensic test results. The perpetrator was taken into custody. Mira lives in a safe house and is visited by her mother regularly. Social workers at the safe house are positive that Mira's case is strong enough to be resolved positively in her favor.

Case Study Ten: Removal of Communication Barrier (Koshi Province)

Tara is an 18-year-old Janjati woman with hearing disability. Her parents had made arrangements for her education and care in an education institution for persons with disabilities. Her parents came to know that she has experienced sexual abuse. She was also 12 weeks pregnant by that time. Tara's parents registered the case in the police station. The police station directed Tara to local OCMC for her physical examination. The OCMC had hired the sign language interpreter. The interpreter was able to take the history of abuse and Tara was able to identify that it was her teacher who abused her. This was followed by DNA tests of Tara's aborted Fetus and perpetrators. The case is currently ongoing. The staff at OCMC are positive that the outcome of Tara's case will be positive.

Good Practices at Province Level

Gandaki (Pokhara)

- ❖ In Byas Nagarpalika, a woman with disability was hired as a government employee and a lift was specifically made for her convenience.
- ❖ Gandaki province has a draft of the province level disability Act, which is being readied to be passed from their provincial assembly: ownership of a local level towards disability policy.
- ❖ Kopila Nepal, an NGO in Pokhara, is currently running 4 shelter homes: under 18 minor sexual violence survivors, which also includes girls and women with disabilities, trafficking/entertainment sector shelter home, mental health patients' home, which includes women with disabilities and agro farm shelter to support gender based and sexual violence survivors

Karnali (Surkhet)

- ❖ OCMC, Police and Aawaaj Nepal (Local NGO) have very good coordination in Surkhet. One is ready to help the other as soon as an urgent case comes into the limelight. Integrated approach. Easier to work in a team.
- ❖ A separate doctor is assigned to distribute disability ID card for persons with disabilities
- ❖ Budget is released by local level for certain events related to persons with disabilities
- ❖ Karnali Province has सामाजिक समावेशिकरण नीती (Social Inclusion Policy). Disability is also included under this
- ❖ Ministry of Social Development has Sign Language Interpreter appointed
- ❖ 79 local level employees have been trained in disability rights and access

Koshi (Biratnagar)

- ❖ Local government initiatives focus on disease prevention and rehabilitation.

- ❖ By working with municipalities and local stakeholders, they aim to prevent disabilities and offer comprehensive rehabilitation packages. However, the challenges of implementation and family resistance are significant.
- ❖ Sign Language Interpreter (SLI) services are being expanded, with 14 districts in Koshi Province covered by SLIs, ensuring accessibility for persons with hearing impairments.
- ❖ NFDN and other organizations have focused on building the technical capacity of local government employees, including training engineers for designing inclusive infrastructure.
- ❖ The collaboration between local governments, disability rights organizations (like NFDN), and foundations (such as Karuna Foundation) has been beneficial in addressing disability issues in Koshi Province.
- ❖ Disability Assistance Rooms and Help Desks, set up by the local government, have been useful for providing information and supporting the employment of persons with disabilities, yet funding and communication gaps remain challenges.
- ❖ The government has employed a significant number of persons with disabilities in local government positions, which is a positive development. This inclusive approach is fostering employment opportunities and the empowerment of individuals with disabilities.

Madhesh (Janakpur)

- ❖ OCMC, Police, and Courts: OCMC works well with local police and courts, with positive collaboration between different entities to support women survivors.
- ❖ OCMC orientation is done in all wards of the hospital and employees are oriented on what type of cases should be sent at OCMC. All OCMC nurses in Madhesh Province have received psycho-social counseling.

Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendation

The constitution of Nepal 2015 provisions the right to equality as a fundamental right in Article 18 and also ensures the affirmative action for the protection, empowerment or development of Persons with Disabilities in 18 (3).

Persons with disabilities remain amongst the most marginalized in every society. While the international human rights framework has changed lives everywhere, Persons with Disabilities have not reaped the same benefits. Regardless of a country's human rights or economic situation, they are generally the last in line to have their human rights respected (Byrnes et al., 2007). Access to justice, as a fundamental right in itself and as a precondition of the enjoyment of all other rights, is especially crucial for a vulnerable population like women with disabilities. It provides a unique tool to counter the discrimination (and often disrespect, lack of dignity or even violence) that they face (Beqiiraj et al, 2017). Discriminatory attitudes and false beliefs dehumanize women with disabilities because of which they keep facing various different barriers while accessing justice.

Although Nepal has stepped into federalism, there are still steps that need to be taken in order to customize it to cater the needs of persons with disabilities, specifically in the issue of access to justice. The research and analysis carried out in this report has provided an insight of the barriers that women and girls with disabilities face while trying to access justice. The qualitative findings that have been identified during the research: Systemic Barriers to Justice for Individuals with disabilities, Challenges in Infrastructure and Accessibility, Role of Family and Community in Disability Advocacy, Policy and Governance Gaps, Disability Awareness and Training Gaps which have been integrated in different parts of the report based on similar themes/patterns of quantitative data.

Recommendations

In the following section, the study team has provided few recommendations to increase access to justice for women with disabilities in Nepal. The recommendations are based on the key findings from both qualitative and quantitative data.

These recommendations are crucial because they collectively address the issues of structural and social barriers that prevent women with disabilities from accessing justice. With improvement in identification processes (through disability ID cards), employment opportunities and legal literacy, women with disabilities are able to claim their individual and collective rights and live with dignity. In addition, legal literacy and inclusion services will also help these women in autonomy.

The recommendations provided below will create a roadmap for government, NGOs and the local authorities to work towards inclusion and integration of women with disabilities in all aspects. The authorities need to make sure that women with disabilities are visible in policy and develop programs that are responsive to needs of these women.

1. Improve Accessibility and Efficiency in Disability ID Card Distribution

- ❖ Standardize and simplify ID card distribution procedures across all provinces.
- ❖ Establish a formal mechanism for reporting and addressing challenges during the application process for ID card.
- ❖ Conduct awareness campaigns to inform women with disabilities about the benefits of the disability ID card.
- ❖ Provide targeted support for women who have not yet received their cards.

2. Enhance Employment Opportunities for Women with Disabilities

- ❖ Develop and implement inclusive employment policies across public and private sectors.
- ❖ Promote equitable hiring practices in government, education, corporate, and development sectors.
- ❖ Address structural barriers that hinder labor market participation for educated women with disabilities.

3. Address Barriers to Justice for Women with Disabilities

- ❖ Improve physical, communicational, and procedural accessibility in the justice system.
- ❖ Train law enforcement, judiciary, and healthcare personnel in disability and gender sensitivity.
- ❖ Expand access to trauma counseling, legal aid, peer support networks, and financial assistance for justice seekers.
- ❖ Promote community and family-based support to reduce stigma and empower survivors.

4. Adopt an Intersectional Approach to Gender and Disability

- ❖ Integrate intersectionality in all policies to account for the intersecting effects of gender, caste, and disability.
- ❖ Ensure legal and social frameworks support women with disabilities facing family, property, and inheritance discrimination.
- ❖ Promote inclusive caregiving, emotional support, and agency within families and communities.

5. Strengthening Policy Implementation and Advocacy Impact

- ❖ Ensure consistent enforcement of existing disability and gender policies at national, provincial and local levels.
- ❖ Allocate dedicated budgets and resources to disability-inclusive programs.
- ❖ Establish independent monitoring bodies for accountability and progress tracking.

- ❖ Support civil society organizations advocating women with disabilities.

6. Invest in Disability-Inclusive Safe Houses and Shelters

- ❖ Develop and fund safe houses that are physically accessible for women with disabilities and staffed with trained professionals.
- ❖ Provide holistic services including childcare, psychosocial support, and reintegration planning.
- ❖ Address resource constraints and prioritize long-term sustainability of shelter systems.

7. Combat Gender-Based Violence (GBV) through Community Engagement

- ❖ Form local protection committees trained to identify and address GBV against women with disabilities.
- ❖ Establish mandatory reporting and case tracking mechanisms for GBV incidents.
- ❖ Conduct community sensitization initiatives to challenge harmful socio-cultural norms and reduce stigma.

8. Improve Legal Literacy and Access to Justice at the Local Level

- ❖ Launch legal awareness campaigns focused on CRPD, CEDAW, and ARPD rights frameworks.
- ❖ Train frontline service providers (doctors, nurses, government employees) in intersectional disability and gender sensitivity.
- ❖ Empower local governments to lead inclusive policy implementation with adequate resources.

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Annex 1: Survey Questionnaire

“ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES in Nepal

Province

- Gandaki
- Karnali
- Koshi
- Madhesh

Participant's name (won't be shared)

Participant's phone number (to be collected to verify the information)

Section 1: Participants' General Information

1) Age

2) Gender

- a) Female
- b) Others (identify)

3) Caste/Ethnicity

- a) Hill Caste Groups
- b) Madhesi
- c) Hill Dalit
- d) Terai Dalit
- e) Mountain/Hill Janajati
- f) Religious and Linguistic Groups
- g) Others (pls specify)

4) Religion

- a) Hinduism
- b) Buddhism
- c) Christianity
- d) Islam
- e) Kirat
- f) Others (pls specify)

5) How did you become a person with a disability?

- a) Disability by birth
- b) Disability after birth

5.1 If you became person with disability after birth, kindly mention the age

6) Type(s) of Disability

- a) Physical
- b) Blind and Low Vision
- c) Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- d) Deaf and Blind
- e) Speech impairment
- f) Psycho-social disability
- g) Intellectual disabilities

- h) Hemophilia
- i) Autism
- j) Multiple Disability

7) Have you received a disability identity card from the Government?

- a) Yes
- b) No

7.1 If yes, what type of card did you get from the Govt.?

- a) Red (Complete Disability)
- b) Blue (Severe Disability)
- c) Yellow (Moderate Disability)
- d) White (Mild Disability)

7.1.1 If yes, how difficult was it for you to get the disability identity card?

1 = Very Difficult

2 = Difficult

3 = Moderately Difficult

4 = Easy

5 = Very Easy

7.2 If no, what was the reason behind not receiving a disability identity card.

- a) I do not know about the disability identity card
- b) I know about the disability identity card, but I do not know the process
- c) I do not have anyone to support me through the process
- d) I went through the process but found it very difficult
- e) I am in process of applying for the card
- f) Others (pls specify)

8) Level of Education Completed

- a) Illiterate
- b) Literate only
- c) Primary (1-8)
- d) Secondary (9-12)
- e) Bachelors Level
- f) Masters level and above

9) Are you currently employed?

- a) Yes
- b) No

9.1 If employed, what is the nature of your employment?

- a) Self- employed
- b) Government job
- c) Private sector job
- d) INGO/NGO job
- e) Others

9.2 If unemployed, what is your status

- a) Retired
- b) student
- c) homemaker
- d) Other (please specify)

9.2.1 If unemployed, do you still have any regular source of income?

- a) Yes
- b) No

If yes, what are the sources?

- a) Scholarship
- b) Disability allowance
- c) Allowance received in participation of programme
- d) Support from family member
- e) Others

10) Marital Status

- a) Unmarried
- b) Married
- c) Separated
- d) Divorced
- e) Widowed
- f) Living Together

11) Children Ever Born

- a) Yes
- b) No

12.1 If yes, number of children

12) Do you have membership in any of these organizations? (Tick all that applies)

- a) Political Party
- b) Saving and Credit Groups
- c) NGOs
- d) Organizations of Persons with Disabilities
- e) Others (pls specify)

Section 2: Knowledge of Provincial Legal Provisions

1) Identify which legal framework you know about that guarantees the rights of persons with disabilities (Tick all that apply)

- a) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)
- b) Act Relating to Rights of Persons with Disabilities (ARPD)
- c> Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- d) None of the above

2) Identify which legal provisions and support system you know about (Tick all that apply)

- a) Perpetrators of rape to women with disabilities get additional 5 years sentence
- b) Perpetrators committing rape on women with disabilities get additional 5-year sentence
- c) Government's lawyer office provides free legal aid to fight the case of women with disabilities and others
- d) There is a ward level mediation council for justice seeking and dispute solving

- e) Justice committees in the municipality settle disputes, mediate criminal cases, and refer cases to district courts.
- f) Most police stations have women's cell that register the complaint of women with disabilities and others
- g) District hospitals at this province has One stop crisis management centers (OCMC) which provide medical support and referral to shelter homes
- h) Police stations are required to bring sign language interpreters for women with hearing disabilities to register/file for complaints
- i) None of the above
- j) Others (pls specify)

Section 3: Experience of Justice Violation

1. Have you ever experienced any form of injustice within your family?

- a) Yes
- b) No

1.1 If yes, what was the nature of injustice you faced? Select all that applies

- a) Lack of physical and emotional care while growing up
- b) Physical violence
- c) Sexual violence
- d) Emotional and psychological violence
- e) Lack of support to receive quality education
- f) Denial of income earning opportunities
- g) Denial of property rights
- h) Discrimination on the basis of disability
- i) Restrictions on mobility and personal freedom
- j) Others (pls specify)

2. Have you ever faced any injustice within the community?

- a) Yes
- b) No

2.1 If yes, what was the nature of injustice

- a. Physical violence
- b. Emotional and psychological violence
- c. Sexual violence
- d. Discrimination on the basis of disability

3. Have you experienced any form of injustice in workplace?

- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) I do not work

3.1 If yes, what is the nature of injustice you faced

- a) Physical violence
- b) Emotional violence
- c) Sexual violence
- d) Discrimination on the basis of disability
- e) Wage discrimination

4. Have you faced any injustice in public spaces?

- a) Yes
- b) No

4.1 If yes, tick all that applies to where you have faced injustice

- a) Government offices
- b) Non-government offices
- c) Hospitals
- d) School and Universities
- e) Public transportation and road
- f) Religious and spiritual spaces
- g) Others (pls specify)

4.2 If yes, what was the nature of injustice

- a) Physical violence
- b) Emotional violence
- c) Sexual violence
- d) Discrimination on the basis of disability
- e) Others (pls specify)

5. If you answered Yes in questions (1,2, 3 and 4) have you tried to seek help through any formal justice mechanisms? (Police, ward, justice committee, court, etc.)

- a) Yes
- b) No

5.1 If yes, who supported you in the process

.....

5.1.1 If yes, which service did you use? (Tick all that apply)

- A. Ward Level Mel Milap Kendra
- B. Justice Committee
- C. Police Station
- D. One stop crisis management center (OCMC) in hospital
- E. Court
- F. Others (pls specify)

5.2 If you answered yes, in reporting the case, how was your experience?

- a) Positive
- b) Negative

5.2.1 If you answered “positive” in question 5.2, can you share your positive experience?

- a) Staff were friendly and supportive
- b) The offices were physically accessible
- c) The process was explained to me clearly and accessible manner
- d) Staff accommodated my disability specific needs
- e) Communication materials were accessible and disability friendly
- f) Others (please specify)

5.2.2 If you answered “negative” in question 5.2, can you share your negative experience?

- a) The justice mechanism was not physically accessible
- b) It was difficult to communicate due to accessibility barriers
- c) Service providers were discriminatory based on my disability
- d) Others (pls specify)

6. If you answered “No” in Question 5, what was the reason for not reporting (tick all that applies) -

- a) Not aware about the process
- b) Do not have anyone to help/support
- c) Do not have financial resources
- d) It will be useless to report; I won't receive justice there
- e) If others, pls specify

7. What do you think will be the enabling conditions to access justice mechanisms for women with disabilities like you?

- a) Physical Accessibility for Women with Disabilities
- b) Easy communication process with the officials
- c) Non-discriminatory behavior of government officials towards women with disabilities
- d) Procedural accommodation as per need of women with disabilities
- e) Accessible documents and resources
- f) Fast Track service for cases of women with disabilities
- e) If others, please specify