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**Social and Economic of COVID-19 on Dalit and Marginalized communities**

After the government announcement of a lockdown in order to contain the possible spread of coronavirus, the marginalized population has been even more affected. Majority of the marginalized population is below poverty line, depend on their traditional professions paying very low and other daily wages jobs.

The fear of possible transmission of the coronavirus apart, the low-income households from the marginalized population are more concerned about the hunger than health. The population is also worried about the losing their economic opportunities recently provided by the government in the field of farming, agriculture among others. They are now worrying about the extra financial burdens to be imposed in the days to come.

Meanwhile, some castes from the Dalits community like Musahar, Dom, Badi among others traditionally depend on others for food and other necessities. Because of the scarcity in food they are not in the position to store or buy extra food. After the sudden imposition of lockdown as in attempt to regulate the Covid-19 pandemic, they are in total dismal.

Consequently, the pandemic has generated not only scarcity of food but left them with mental stresses and psychological trauma. A member of Dalit community said, “We mightn't be dying of Coronavirus infection but we are sure to die of hunger and mental stress if the current situation is prolonged.”

The distribution of the relief to most vulnerable groups or badly affected people in lack of concrete plans. The process of receiving relief distributed by the Dalits and marginalized community were not that friendly. Many individuals from those community lacks documents and identity cards, resulting to be left with no relief even if they are affected the most.

In Western part of the Nepal, the relief materials meant for the vulnerable population were distributed to non-marginalized population. While raising the voice, a youth representing Dalit community was thrashed by his own local representative.

The border closures affects the Dalit and marginalized. It is estimated that majority of the youths from bordering areas opt jobs in India to support the family. Members from the Dalit and Marginalized communities of province 6, 7, 5, and 2 choose to work in India as security guard, chef, porter among others. The border closures have snatched their job opportunities keeping their dependent families in dire conditions. The lockdown in the both countries has also made transfer of the money almost impossible.

The illiteracy and poverty, the misinformation or lack of accurate information hinders the marginalized populations the most. They easily believe in the information floated and couldn’t judge the consequences of rumors. As a result of that there are chances of additional health hazards or incidents might occur due to lack in clear information. As the habitats of the most marginalized populations are located in difficult topography and hence could not easily verify the misinformation with knowledgeable persons in their reach in case of any doubts.

**Caste Based Discrimination in quarantine:**

It is shocked to see several incidents of caste- based discrimination and violence that have been taken place during the lockdown period of the pandemic. It is really frustrating that caste based prejudices and orthodox thinking’s remain deeply rooted in our country in the 21st century.

In this pandemic, there has been a series of incidents of caste-based discrimination against Dalit community and caste based discrimination has been carried out even in the quarantine which has been set up by the government of Nepal. The Dalits in the quarantine set up by the government have faced caste based discrimination in different ways where Dalit members has to face a lot of inconvenience and humiliation

The so called upper caste people thinks they are one who have all the authority to be on top in all sectors of living the life. As the society named Dalits as ‘Untouchables’, the management in the quarantine has asked to prepare their food separately so that they don’t have mix them up other caste people, in terms of cooking food, fetching the water or living in the same room . This hideous behavior of the management in the quarantine brings more pain to the Dalits due to the caste discrimination.

**Right to Food: Basic Needs (Died without food):**

The basic needs of human life is food, shelter, and clothing. The Corona Virus (COVID – 19) has brought the life changing situation of the people who are from low level income and especially daily wage workers because it has adverse effect on sources of economy. Almost 3 months of lockdown in Nepal, people are suffering from many problems and hideous situation and one of the main problem is hand to mouth (food to eat) for low level income family, workers, daily labor, and poor people.

The people from low living and workers are facing the hardship to feed their children and families because they do not have work to go and earn for their living to sustain. The people from different level and positions are facing this hard times because there is no way of going outside of their homes to work and earn.

In Musahar community, a person has died named Malara Sada due to poverty in Pathari Rampur Tole of Kanchanpur Municipality-5. Malara Sada was 50 year old man who died after not being able to earn and eat due to two-month of lockdown. The Government of Nepal has committed that ‘**No one will go hungry due to poverty in Nepal’** but the commitment was not fulfilled during this situation. Malara sada was one of the helpless victim of this pandemic as he has to lost his life in this lockdown, his stove has not been burn for 4 days. He and his family were unable to cook and eat because of their low income earning which has been affected by corona. Due to corona virus (COVID – 19) the lockdown has hit them so that they were unable to have fulfilled their basic needs. His sons have gone to Gujarat for work but they had trapped in Gujarat because of the lockdown situation in India and Nepal. Due to the lockdown situation, his sons could not come for the rituals and his grandson gave him a dagbatti. The deceased Malara Sada and his wife Jileshwari Sada were living on a daily basis and sustaining their life in Kanchanpur Municipality – 5. The situation of Sada’s family was so bad that they did not had money for cremation purpose. The neighbors had collected the money as a donations to support the deceased family for the last rites rituals. The wife of deceased Jileshwari Sada said, ‘my husband died without food, who are we? “Neither my children nor the government looked after him when he died without food.’ We are scared of hunger than disease. The government of Nepal said, ‘No Nepali will die without food now but Malara Sada fought with hunger and gave up his life.’ The death of Malara Sada has mocked the government’s commitment.